



Left to right: Tiana Horace,
Katherine Gan, Zadaiah Roye

GSF 2022 Seniors Present Honors Research

On April 29th, 2022 the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies proudly hosted the 2022 Senior Honors Research Presentations led by Director of Honors, Gabriel Rosenberg. Graduating students Katherine Gan, Tiana Horace, and Zadaiah Roye shared their year-long thesis projects in the East Duke Pink Parlor with a hybrid in-person and Zoom participant audience. The work of each student reflected their own identities, passions, and lifelong goals. The presentation was an incredible celebration of dedicated scholarship, academic achievement, and personal fortitude.

The first presenter, awarded Highest Distinction, Katherine Gan, was introduced by their research faculty advisor, Anna Storti. Storti described Gan as “remarkably talented” and emphasized her own amazement at Gan’s analytical mind and artistic creations.

Gan’s thesis, *Excavating the Afterlives of Empire through Asian/American Women’s Aesthetics & Poetry*, was initially inspired by Gan’s personal reactions to the murders of six Asian women in a series of shootings that took place in Atlanta spas and massage parlors in March of 2021. The thesis’ three chapters explore the aesthetics of colonialism and its effects in the poetry of Asian/American women poets.

The first piece Gan unpacks, Emily Jungmin Yoon’s *A Cruelty Special to Our Species*, allows for an exploration of the “afterlives” experienced by Korean women in the aftermath of the Korean War. Gan argues that in Yoon’s poem, “An Ordinary Misfortune”, the variations between first and third person demonstrate the afterlives of colonialism.

Gan's second chapter, "Unraveling Memory of the Vietnam War and Vietnamese Refugees: *Ghost Of*", explores Diana Nguyen's work, *Ghost Of*, as a lens to discuss the reconstruction of memory, particularly familial ties.

Finally, Gan's third chapter, "Contending with the Failed 'War on Terror': *If They Come for Us*", is an attempt to decentralize the East Asian dominance of the Asian/American political narrative. *If They Come for Us*, written by Fatimah Asghar, a Pakistani-American author, explores the themes of discrimination, violence, and terror experienced by South Asians. Gan examines the colonial and warfare aesthetics within Asghar's work and uses the gamification of drone warfare to question "for who?" does drone/aerial warfare serve?

The Q&A session following Gan's presentation touched upon their personal connection to the thesis topic, the potential for art to impact urgent social conversations, and the importance of their own artistic experience while crafting a scholarly narrative.

After an introduction by advisor Jennifer Nash, Tiana Horace presented her thesis awarded High Distinction, *A Narrative Approach to the Experiences of Black Queer Students at a Historically White University*. Horace's project is an exploration of the hidden history of Black queerness in both university spaces and within the world at-large.

Horace explains how her own struggles with identity pushed her to ask questions about the experiences of other queer Black students, and, while she was determined in her pursuit of answers, the apparent lack of documentation of these experiences presented both a personal and scholarly challenge. Horace describes the goal of her thesis as being to "document a history that has ultimately been left untold."

In chapter one, Horace reveals her findings from interviews conducted with LGBTQ Duke alumni. The four themes Horace emphasizes are community, (in)visibility, discrimination, and the racialization of queerness.

Horace's second chapter explores the themes of Black student "zines" from the early 2000s as a window into the Black queer experience at the turn of the century. Horace finds that conversations of "respectability", the imposition of a white normative beauty standard, and the further racialization of heteronormativity reflect the struggles of Duke's Black queer students in the early 2000s.

The thesis' third chapter outlines the experience of current queer Black students at Duke. Horace asks

students, "what does queer mean to you?", to first understand these identities in a contemporary sense before asking where and how the Duke community should change to reposition queer Black student experiences as valuable as well as acknowledged.

The third and final student, Zadaiah Roye, was introduced by advisor Gabriel Rosenberg and presented her thesis, *Partus Sequitar Ventrem*, which was awarded High Distinction by the GSF faculty. Roye's thesis title bears an intentional connection to the legacy of slavery particularly with its relationship to black motherhood. The first chapter, "Constituting Control: Black Motherhood & the History of Slavery", explores the foundational themes that have come to define Black motherhood in the United States.

The absolute subordination of Black women during the centuries of slavery and even the years after has allowed for the physical and emotional abuses of Black mothers and children for the profit of a white, eugenicist narrative.

Roye's second chapter explains that the historical forces of slavery came to shape the structure of the Black family and the Black population overall. In order to combat the "surplus" of these identities, referred to as the "problem" by eugenicists, white doctors performed the sterilizations of nearly 8,000 Black women in North Carolina, only 400 of which were consensual. Roye explains that after the end of slavery, Black reproduction was no longer profitable to white supremacy, and therefore had to be controlled.

In her third chapter, "Punishing the Negligent Black Mother", Roye examines the link between the carceral system and Black motherhood following slavery and the Jim Crow era. Roye concludes that the disproportionate imprisonment of Black mothers for drug offenses contributed to stereotypes such as the "welfare queen" and other caricatures of the "negligent Black mother".

Roye concludes overall that American slavery allowed for the devaluing of Black women and Black reproduction overall, and that the experiences of Black motherhood must experience a radical change to bring justice to Black women and mothers in the coming years.

During the Q&A section of the presentation, Roye was moved by the personal impact of her own work and the support she received from her family and Duke professors.

Congratulations and thank you to Katherine, Tiana, and Zadaiah for their incredible work and insightful observations.
By Charlotte Joyner



Congratulations

to the Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies Class of 2022

GENDER, SEXUALITY & FEMINIST STUDIES FIRST MAJORS

- Katherine Gan
- Tiana Nacole Horace
- Meghan Nicole Miller (2nd Major in Global Health)
- Zadaiah Royce

GENDER, SEXUALITY & FEMINIST STUDIES SECOND MAJORS

- Hannah Cheyne Kaplon (1st Major in International Comparative Studies)

GLOBAL GENDER STUDIES MAJORS

- Emma Cairns

GENDER, SEXUALITY & FEMINIST STUDIES MINOR

- Isabelle Adler (Interdepartmental Major in History & Psychology)
- Cassidy Dora Connett (Major in Public Policy)
- McKenna Caroline Crawford (Major in Chemistry)
- Martha Guthunz Dean (Major in Public Policy & Global Health)
- Veronica Rose Hineman (Major in Economics)
- Nehal Jain (Major in Economics)
- Clara Marie Love (Major in Public Policy)
- Maia Rose Matheny (Major in Environmental Science & Policy)
- Emily Caroline Mawyer (Major in Psychology)
- Anna Christine Mollard (Major in Computer Science)
- Maya Rajavel (Major in Psychology)
- Eden Faith Schumer (Major in Public Policy)

GRADUATE STUDENTS COMPLETING THE CERTIFICATE IN FEMINIST STUDIES

- Kathleen Megan Burns (PhD, English)
- Jessica Covil-Manset (PhD, English)
- Caoimhe Aisling Harlock (PhD, English)
- Amy Louise Jones (PhD, Carolina/Duke German Studies)
- Zachary Evan Levine (PhD, Cultural Anthropology)
- Margaret Rose McDowell (PhD, English)
- Lucas Power (PhD, Literature)
- Jacob Asa Silver (PhD, Cultural Anthropology)
- Kelly Chin Tang (PhD, Art, Art History & Visual Studies)
- Anastasia Kärkliņa (PhD, Literature)
- Mitchell Damian Murtagh (PhD, Literature)

Honors Thesis



"I consider the impossibility of closure and redress from war and imperial legacies."

Katherine Gan

Thesis Title: Excavating the Afterlives of Empire through Asian/American Women's Aesthetics & Poetry

Abstract:

I engage with selected Asian/American women's poetry collections to argue that the imperial past is ongoing in the present. I utilize an interdisciplinary methodological approach attentive to poetry and aesthetics. In doing so, I consider the impossibility of closure and redress from war and imperial legacies. In the first chapter, I closely examine Emily Jungmin Yoon's *A Cruelty Special to Our Species* (2018) to understand how the contemporary sexualization of Korean/American woman can only be understood through a reckoning with the history of Korean women being exploited as "comfort women" under Japanese colonialism and during the Korean War. I also argue that Yoon's poems about the Korean War provide an avenue to unravel how Korean women were camptown sex workers in service of American soldiers. In the second chapter, I analyze Diana Nguyen's *Ghost Of* (2018), in which she grieves the loss of her brother to suicide. I explore Nguyen's photopoems, contextualized by an interview I conducted with the poet in April 2021, to further challenge national American memory in relation to the Vietnam War and Vietnamese refugees. In my final chapter, I delve into the aesthetics of Fatimah Asghar's *If They Come for Us* (2018) to assert how American empire terrorizes South Asians, within the nation and abroad through drone warfare. I conclude with my own photo poem and relate this project and my approach to the contemporary political moment.



"I use slavery as a lens to further understand eugenics, the carceral system's relationship with black mothers as well as relationships between medicine and black mothers."

Zadaiah Roye

Thesis Title: *Partus Sequitar Ventrem: A Historical Approach to Reimagining Black Motherhood in the Southern United States*

Abstract:

Partus Sequitar Ventrem is a historical approach to understanding the southern United States' black maternal mortality crisis. Black mothers are losing their lives to obstetric conditions at disproportionate rates. This disparity should not exist anywhere in a country that has the infrastructure to prevent it. This paper seeks to understand what has allowed so much comfort with this situation. Aside from my home being Weldon, NC, I chose the context of the southern United States because of how often it is depicted as a lost cause. Rarely is the south viewed as championing human rights, thus I wanted to explore the history that perpetuates the harm done to black mothers in this location. This paper explores time periods beginning with enslavement and carrying through into the 21st century. The institution of slavery created an understanding that it was acceptable to subjugate and exclude black mothers. I use slavery as a lens to further understand eugenics, the carceral system's relationship with black mothers as well as relationships between medicine and black mothers. Subjugation of black motherhood is not new, this paper explores how systems have evolved throughout history to continue this dynamic.



Tiana Nacole Horace

Thesis Title: A Narrative Approach to the Experiences of Black Queer Students at a Historically White University

Abstract:

I use a narrative inquiry approach to explore the experiences of Black Queer students at Duke University over time. This investigation seeks to document an untold history, understand the factors that reproduce this invisibility, and conceptualize modes of resistance. Historically white universities are inherently racialized spaces, which are violent by nature. They have created an environment where Black Queer students feel isolated and unsupported, despite campus resources meant to combat this. These feelings are largely due to Queerness being constructed as white and the permeation of heteronormativity and homophobia into Black spaces. Current students believe the best way to improve their experiences would be an increase in visibility, community building, and education initiatives.

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Senior Stories

Meghan Nicole Miller

My name is Meghan Miller and I am a Global Health and Gender, Sexuality, Feminist Studies double major, on the premedical track with a minor in chemistry. I am so grateful for my GSF education because it has really balanced my science heavy course load while allowing me to forward my critical thinking, communication, and writing skills. Post-graduation, I plan to work in New York City as Northwell Health's Plastic Surgery Research Fellow with a focus in transgender medicine. I am currently curating my medical school applications for matriculation fall of 2023. My dream is to eventually be a gender confirmation surgeon for the transgender community.



Tiana Nacole Horace

My decision to take my first Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies course during my Freshman Fall completely changed the trajectory of my college years. Originally, I wanted to major in chemistry, but after taking more GSF courses, attending events, and speaking with my peers, I realized that the humanities and GSF were where my passions resided. This major has taught me how factors such as gender, race, sexuality, and class are woven into almost every facet of life. I am more critical of things that I have been taught were right and feel more validated in my own experiences. As I embark on life post-grad, I hope to use what I've learned to advocate for others (and myself), think about what voices may be missing, challenge heteronormativity in my environments, and as a tool for self-reflection.



Katherine Gan

I am incredibly grateful for GSF as an intellectual home. It is GSF that has given me the language in attempt to disentangle structures of power and understand my own racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences. My mentors in GSF, specifically my thesis advisor Professor Anna Storti, and my mentor Professor Jennifer Nash, are the reason that I have been able to conceive of and finish my senior thesis. Their support is particularly meaningful because of how they both have been personally, academically, and politically invested in me. Other mentors like Professor Frances Hasso and current postdoctoral fellow Sunhay You have provided the training and environment to nurture an intellectual curiosity in questions related to colonialism, race, and culture. I will continue my studies and questions surrounding gender, empire, and art for Asian diasporic subjects at the University of Michigan in the American Culture Ph.D. program in the fall.



Spring 2021 Research & Conference Travel Awards

Tessa Nunn

(Graduate Student, Romance Studies, and Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Attended American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) seminar entitled "Relations Between the Center and the Periphery in Narratives Focusing on Borderlands and Border Crossings". Nunn presented their paper "Choreographing Hybrid Grace in the Novels of Germain de Staël" which examines the concept of Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Srinivas Aravamudan's notion of Enlightenment Orientalism in relation to references to Orientalism in dance scenes. The conference pushed Nunn to reconsider the types and numbers of intended audiences for their future book.

Fall 2021 Research & Conference Travel Awards

Yasemin Altun

(Graduate Student, Art, Art History, and Visual Studies and Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Presented their paper at the annual conference of the College Art Association (CAA) on February 18, 2022. Altun's dissertation, "Collaboration as Freedom for Women Artists in France, 1648-1791" examines the gendering of early modern discourses of artistic creativity, and how it translated into the marginalization of women from the art historical canon as lacking novelty or genius. The paper focuses on artist Sophie Chéron who developed "novel strategies" of reproducing engraved gems through printmaking. The purpose of the paper is to decentralize the narrative of artistic innovation from its historically male focus.

Jieun Cho

(Graduate Student, Cultural Anthropology, Certificate in East Asian Studies, and Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Participated in the 2022 Association for Asian Studies Conference. Cho's presentation examined "the interconnected history of nuclear power and the nuclear family in postwar Japan's developmental history". The purpose of Cho's presentation was to highlight the relationship of radiation and life and its

re-imagination "in terms of national prosperity at the level of the domestic household."

Zeena Fuleihan

(Graduate Student, Literature, and Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Attended the Modern Language Association conference in January 2022. Fuleihan presented their paper titled "The Cyclical Motion of Discard in Schizophrenic and Ban en Banlieue" at MLA's special session "Contemporary Therapeutic Culture: Affordances and Limitations". Fuleihan's work examines Bhanu Kapil's challenges to assumptions of traditional Euro-American trauma theory by destabilizing narrative identity and engaging with a concept of somatic mind, or intentionally embodied discourse.

Dana Hogan

(Graduate Student, Art, Art History, and Visual Studies and Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Presented at the New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Hogan's paper, "The Early Female Audience of Donatello's Judith and Holofernes at the Palazzo Medici, 1455-95" was awarded the Snyder prize for best conference paper by a junior scholar. Hogan's travel allowed them to observe details hidden in photographs that were essential to the subject paintings and examine "the degree to which early modern European women artists' depictions of non-European women demonstrate cosmopolitanism."

Saehim Park

(Graduate Student, Art, Art History, and Visual Studies, Certificate in Feminist Studies)

Visited art pieces in Seattle, Washington as part of research for their dissertation. The first visit to the statue titled Sadako Sasaki Peace Child (1990) by Daryl Smith and Floyd Wilfred Schmoie, was an examination of the use of a "girl-child" as political medium. The second, to the Seattle Asian Art Museum's installations by Do-Ho Suh, *Some/One* (2001) and *Screen* (2007), explored the artistic responses to U.S. military presence in the Cold War present. Each visit advanced Park's understanding of the visual effect of the exhibit placement within in the built environment of the Peace Park and the museum.



Kathleen Burns

English, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Vegetal Forms: How Plants Cultivate Life in Literature and Science

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

Beginning with microscopy in the early nineteenth century and ending with geoengineering in the twenty-first, *Vegetal Forms* combines literary and cultural analyses to show how the language of plants circulates in literature, science, and art to produce biological understandings of life and the human. From Charles Darwin's *Insectivorous Plants* (1875) to Kehinde Wiley's portrait of Barack Obama (2018), literary and visual accounts of plants are sites of narrative contestation: plant animacy underwrites conceptions of how alive, intelligent, or political subjects are understood to be. Plants—the stories we tell them about them and our material relationships with them—mediate the rights assigned to living beings. By focusing on sites where scientific research and systems of plant cultivation converge—plantations, greenhouses, seedbanks, and gardens—my research demonstrates how regimes of plant domestication naturalize racialized and gendered

hierarchies of life. Ignoring the vegetal world in human histories, I argue, erases histories of human oppression.

The critical promise of plants lies in their capacity to disrupt assumptions surrounding biological differences. From sensitive Victorian plants that upended the colonial authority of science and engendered new genres of writing, to mutant primroses that offered American authors visions of non-heteronormative reproduction, my research examines cultural moments when uncanny plants demand new scientific and literary forms of signification. By challenging the basic assumptions of what it means to be alive, plants possess the potential to radicalize concepts of dwelling. As they unsettle our most basic beliefs about animacy and relationality, plants can inaugurate ethical systems of dwelling that reframe domestication—the creation of environmental homes—not as an act of domination but as a multispecies collaboration.

“Plants—the stories we tell them about them and our material relationships with them—produce biological understandings of life and the human.”

Jessica Covil-Manset

English, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Toward a Different Way of Knowing/Being/Speaking: Poetic Openings and Feminist Praxis in Contemporary Works

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

This dissertation looks at feminist and antiracist interventions in contemporary literature and culture and the ways in which poetry and the concept of poesis can be taken up to imagine more equitable political praxis. My first chapter offers a sustained close reading of Diane di Prima's *Loba* and its mythical, feminist intervention within "open field" poetry, a movement associated with the Black Mountain poets. The remainder of the dissertation extends my analysis of poetic "opening" into other contexts, advocating for newly imagined forms of care in the worlds of poetry, academic and online discourses, collective protest movements, and popular music. My project examines "poetry" not just as a particular genre or medium, but as

a mode of thinking and being in the world. I turn to poetry for the tools it has the capacity to give us: the ability to read closely and carefully; the understanding that "meaning" can be layered, subjective, and even contradictory; the desire to inwardly reflect and reach outside of ourselves, simultaneously; a call to witness. Poetry offers a way of writing, but also a way of reading, interpreting, and responding. In this spirit, I include "Interludes" that offer pauses, spaces for reflection, and bridges between the major contexts and concepts of different chapters; these Interludes, as well as my Introduction and Conclusion, each contain an original poem and encourage the interrelationship between scholarly and creative modes of writing.



"My project examines 'poetry' not just as a particular genre or medium, but as a mode of thinking and being in the world. I turn to poetry for the tools it has the capacity to give us. . . . Poetry offers a way of writing, but also a way of reading, interpreting, and responding."



Amy Jones

Carolina/Duke German Studies, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Metamorphoses of the Muse: Rethinking Gender and Creativity in German Poetry from 1800-1850

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

For a significant part of Western European literary history, the muse has been imagined as a passive female human figure who inspires and entices an active male artist with her beauty. My project unearths a more varied literary history of muse figures in German Romantic and post-Romantic literature, especially poetry, as a genre often associated with the invocation of the muse. The muse figure, while often hidden in the shadows of the more common genius figure, appears in the discourse about creativity and procreation from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Both muse and genius represent the unknown energy and vitality behind the creative act. In nineteenth-century Romantic and post-Romantic texts, such as those by the poets Karoline von Günderode, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, and Heinrich Heine examined here, the classical muse figure is reimagined and reinterpreted as an embodied figure – not always human – with which the

poet figure in a text interacts. The muse figure takes unexpected forms such as the corpse, the vampire, or the flower. In contrast to the discourse about the solitary male genius, sole authority over his work, the discourse about the muse is one of collaboration. The unconventional muse figures I notice in these texts challenge the normative expectations for the poet/muse roles and for their relationship. In some cases, the poet-muse relationship unsettles philosophical binaries such as gender (male/female), species (human/non-human), organic state (life/death), and agency (active/passive). The variety of new poet/muse relationships that arise in these texts respond to contemporary aesthetic, philosophical, and scientific trends and flourish into a broad array of possible creative paradigms. These paradigms refocus the muse a queer lens, remaining attentive to the unconventional, non-normative, and novel facets of the poet/muse relationship.

“In nineteenth-century Romantic and post-Romantic texts, such as those by the poets Karoline von Günderode, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, and Heinrich Heine examined here, the classical muse figure is reimagined and reinterpreted as an embodied figure – not always human – with which the poet figure in a text interacts. The muse figure takes unexpected forms such as the corpse, the vampire, or the flower.”

Zachary Levine

Cultural Anthropology, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE: Carceral Mediumship

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

Carceral Mediumship is an ethnographic elaboration of two years of fieldwork I conducted in Porto Velho, capital of the Brazilian-Amazonian state of Rondônia. It examines my daily work amidst incarcerated men at an NGO called Acuda, where state prisoners are treated with mind-body therapies (reiki, ayurvedic massage, yoga, etc.) and intensive psycho-spiritual rituals (Gestalt and Family Constellations), as well as undergo job training. Acuda emerged from a vision of the NGO's director in which the spirit of ayahuasca—an indigenous Amazonian plant medicine consecrated for the last half-century by the semi-Catholic Brazilian ayahuasca religions—sent him to conduct “quantic energy healing” with prisoners. Ritual labor with ayahuasca—whose religious rituals are given the name *trabalhos*, or “works”—is central to the solidarity of Acuda's staff, nearly all of whom are ex-prisoners. Meanwhile, in a program with a curious afterlife—dependent

on the whims of judicial and “astral” authorization—the NGO has furloughed hundreds of actively-held prisoners on trips six hours outside the prison to drink ayahuasca with the Barquinha religion. My dissertation explores themes of time, power, religiosity, spirit-mediumship, work, sacrifice, sexuality, light and shadow, life and death, and distinction and indistinction, across these complicated scenes of incarceration, healing, work, freedom, and rituals of dissolution. The text moves—like I did, for countless weeks—between the calcified darkness of the prison (and my close relationships with violent offenders there) and the sublime light-words of ayahuasca. It offers insights into how state-carceral and ayahuasca-religious epistemologies tie themselves around intractable bodies and spirits of power and dispossession—as well as into the untold complexities to which their entanglement was submitted.



“My dissertation explores themes of time, power, religiosity, spirit-mediumship, work, sacrifice, sexuality, light and shadow, life and death, and distinction and indistinction, across these complicated scenes of incarceration, healing, work, freedom, and rituals of dissolution.”



Maggie McDowell

English, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Against Compulsory Sexuality: Asexual Figures of Resistance

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

In the aftermath of the #MeToo moment, we are called to revisit old conversations about human dignity, gendered power, and the conditions under which consent can be freely given. To date, the shape of this discourse in the mainstream has lacked sustained analysis through the frameworks of critical feminist and queer theory, particularly these fields' insight that gender, sexuality, and behavior mutually inform each other. I argue that to understand and begin to repair the sexual politics of our present moment we must take seriously these fields' contention that sex, like gender, is a historically and socially determined category and, therefore, that its definition is malleable. Only by understanding what we mean when we say "sex" can we begin to disentangle the role sex plays in shaping social conventions and power differentials.

My dissertation reads the narratives of 20th- and 21st-century American

popular culture through the lens of the emerging field of asexuality studies. Asexuality studies constitutes a growing body of cultural as well as scientific inquiry. Asexuality can act as a useful critical foil to compulsory sexuality, that is, to the unspoken social imperative to desire and to engage in sexual activity with other people. We see evidence of compulsory sexuality not just in the omnipresence and presumption of the (heterosexual) couple in cultural and social institutions, but also in our own assumption, for instance, that a single individual must be in want of a partner. I offer no definitive way out of sexsociety in my dissertation. I extend an invitation, though, to think of asexuality not as an absence or withdrawal, but as a potential to disturb patterns by offering new perspectives on old patterns of objectification, complicated consent, and self-denial in the service of adhering to unfulfilling narratives.

"Only by understanding what we mean when we say "sex" can we begin to disentangle the role sex plays in shaping social conventions and power differentials."

Lucas Power

Literature, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Society Must Be Defragmented: The Data Shadow and Computational Life

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

It is difficult to remember and perhaps harder to imagine that, once upon a time, a person with no prior experience could build a webpage in a couple of afternoons. Today, due to increasing interactivity and dynamism, building out services and platforms is the domain of professionals and committed enthusiasts. As people who make use of the internet, we are distanced from a technology that supposedly democratized truth while we are simultaneously permeated by its fantastic lies. If parsing and arbitrating truth must take place prior to interface, but interface remains intrinsic to everyday life, then a need develops for interpretation before the interaction. It isn't enough to know what is said, the meaning must be known as well. As more people are more reliant on platforms controlled by distant experts, these same experts

become an organic choice for the authority to judge meaning. As with the development of the web, this complex task of arbitration is deferred to machines, even if there are only ever people on the other side of judgment. With this in mind, it is easier to see how power only slightly altered from prior forms emerges in an entirely new and permanently dynamic environment like the internet. This project is an exploration of the rationality behind such power, an apparatus which I am calling datafication. I argue that we can begin to understand datafication by way of comparison between the initial investment in data as utopian extensions of the self during the 80s and 90s and data's value for data-industries over the first two decades of the 2000s. This trajectory marks the most crucial shift from our early hopes about data to our late frustrations.

“...the ease with which users gravitate toward platform-organized vigilantism and/or co-operation is because of the momentary relief it offers from managing our own self-surveillance.”



Jake Silver

Cultural Anthropology, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

The Sky, Upended: An Ethnography of Palestine, the Planetary, and their Politics

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

When we look up toward the sky, what do we see? The answer may seem to be worlds detached from colonial conflicts on our own, but in this dissertation, I contend that the sky reveals the contemporary struggles that Palestinians in the West Bank face. At a moment when the Palestinian condition is haunted by a malaise over political possibility, I undertake an ethnography of the sky to Palestine to reveal how astronomer's own experiences with these curiosity-inducing realms offer a portrait of how politics feel for Palestinians in the West Bank today. An emerging institution of astronomy in the region offers Palestinians an exciting new horizon to study the expanses of the universe, and yet, astronomers' own efforts to forge the necessary infrastructures to support this institution frequently encounter obstructions set in motion by Israel—on earth and in air. Based on three years of ethnographic

work, this dissertation unfurls around these everyday activities and struggles of astronomers in occupied Palestine who work to bring the wonders of the universe to their own communities. As they deal with land seizures and air raids, atmospheric pollution, Israeli surveillance from drones, helicopters, and even satellites, and various other Israeli-enforced restrictions, many astronomers in Palestine attest that their work to learn about the galaxy also entails learning about how outer space is subject to human extraction, the colonial appetite, and the reaches of the nation-state form. From their experiences, I add to the ethnographic study of Palestine by following how certain aspects of coloniality take shape through air, using the sky as a prism to better understand how classic questions in the region concerning sovereignty and dispossession are entangled in elevation.

“As they deal with land seizures and air raids, atmospheric pollution... and various other Israeli-enforced restrictions, many astronomers in Palestine attest that their work to learn about the galaxy also entails learning about how outer space is subject to human extraction, the colonial appetite, and the reaches of the nation-state form.”

Kelly Tang

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, PhD and Certificate in Feminist Studies, Duke University

DISSERTATION TITLE:

The Fantastic Theater of Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

The literati stereotype of Modern Chinese Art began as a conservative adaptation of Chinese nationalist reform during the early twentieth century. Modern stereotypes provided an intuitive, common-sense way of acting and negotiating the complexities of difference. The *Fantastic Theater of Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* chronicles an alternate history of Chinese émigrés' embrace of the stereotypical image of literati culture. That stereotype was a modern form of visibility and recognition of Chinese identity. From China to diverse Western locales—Geneva, London, France, New York, and California—the literati stereotype reconciled the dual undesirable conditions of Westerners'

absent understanding and negative misunderstanding of China. The stereotype was a positive compromise of optics, expectations, and self-presentation.

The visual archive of the literati stereotype examines literati scholars and their associations with learning, philosophy, and ink painting. Sculpture, books, design, advertising, ceramics, photography, architecture, and personal ephemera allow me to assemble a new approach to the artists Zhang Daqian, Lang Jingshan, Zhang Shuqi, Yu Jingzhi, and Wang Jiyuan and to write a different history of the Bollingen Foundation, the lives of the Chew Family and their China Art Center in Carmel, and Mai-mai Sze, the little-known translator of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*.



"The Fantastic Theater of Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century chronicles an alternate history of Chinese émigrés' embrace of the stereotypical image of literati culture."



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GSF 199S	Thinking Gender Kimberly Lamm	GSF 369S	Transnational Feminism Frances Hasso
GSF 225	Women in the Political Process Rachel Gelfand	GSF 390S.01	Fabricating Race-Art, Clothing, Resistance Kimberly Lamm
GSF 256S	Climate, Culture and Identity Saskia Cornes	GSF 390S.02	Public Life of Black Feminism Jennifer Nash
GSF 265S	Digital Feminism Carolín Benack	GSF 390S.03	I Love the 90's Nikki Lane
GSF 278	Sex/Gender, Nature/Nurture Ara Wilson/Christine Williams	GSF 390S.04	Hot Girl Meg Nikki Lane
GSF 361	Money, Sex, Power Kathi Weeks	GSF 499S	Senior Capstone Ara Wilson
GSF 364S	Race, Gender, and Sexuality Anna Storti	GSF 960S	Interdisciplinary Debates Frances Hasso

All classes are subject to change as the schedule is finalized. These are the planned courses/times.