

Friends of the

PEMBROKE CENTER

Newsletter

SPRING 2023 / BROWN UNIVERSITY



A Year-long Focus on Reproductive Justice at the Pembroke Center

When the Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* was leaked in early May 2022, it confirmed and heightened the need for more public conversations about reproductive health, rights, and justice, informed by research and practice. With this at top of mind, Shauna McKee Stark '76 P'10 Director of the Pembroke Center Leela Gandhi selected reproductive justice as a focus of Center programming for the 2022-23 academic year, and the Center began building a robust program of public events, research support, and curricular enhancement.

The fall semester began with a splash: over 300 people attended the panel discussion "[Reproductive Justice after *Roe v. Wade*](#)," online.

The Center went on to co-sponsor a webinar with the Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender on reproductive justice and selected high profile, relevant speakers on the topic for the annual Elizabeth Munves Sherman '77, P'06 '09 Lecture in Gender and Sexuality Studies in February and the Pembroke Publics annual lecture in April. In the [February lecture](#), Emily A. Owens, David and Michelle Ebersman Assistant Professor of History, speaking from her recently published research, unpacked the legal doctrine of rape law in the context of violence against enslaved women. Owens' work is, in her

words, "a legal history that looks at the court cases of a handful of enslaved women who stood for their freedom.... It thinks about the context they were living in, the kinds of violence that they experienced, and then tries to understand what legal architecture made that violence possible."

Internationally recognized scholar and activist Dorothy Roberts (University of Pennsylvania) had been high on the Center's "wish list" for guest speakers since the start of the Publics series and spoke to a packed room about the importance of recognizing, integrating, and acting on all of the key principles of reproductive justice. Roberts' work, from *Killing the Black Body* onward, has made her an important advocate for reproductive justice and an essential leader in the public conversation about what true reproductive freedom might look like.

Reproductive justice was also a key topic in Gender and Sexuality Studies courses. In Wendy Lee's GNSS 0120: Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies, students examined reproduction (both biological and social), reproductive justice, and reproductive labor as issues central to feminist inquiry and to the study of gender and sexuality. And in Sarah Williams' GNSS 1510: Reproductive In/Justice,

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In Memoriam

DIANE LAKE NORTHROP '54, P'81, GP '13 '16

Diane Lake Northrop '54, P'81, GP '13 '16 majored in Actuarial Mathematics and was one of very few women in her time to graduate from Brown with this degree. She went on to have a career in mathematics and education and was a champion of girls in mathematics, the Pembroke Center, and other feminist causes. Three generations of Northrop women graduated from Brown, starting with Diane. You can listen to our Oral History Project interview with Diane, her daughter, and her granddaughter here: go.brown.edu/northrop.

Diane passed away on December 22, 2022 and is missed and remembered warmly by her Pembroke community. She served on the Center's Advisory Council from 1993 to 2022.

PEMBROKE CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I went to work in the actuarial department at New England Mutual Life Insurance in 1954. After a while, I went up to the head of the department and I said, "What's wrong? Everybody around me is a high school graduate." And he looked right at me and said, "Actuaries are officers, and officers are not women."

Diane Lake Northrop '54, P'81, GP'13, '16



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Editor of differences:
A Journal of Feminist
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Assistant Archivist

Mary Murphy
*Nancy L. Buc '65 LLD'94 hon
Pembroke Center Archivist*

Diane Straker
Administrative Coordinator

From the Director



I write to you from the finale of another busy semester at the Pembroke Center. As I prepare for a year-long sabbatical (more on that below), I am grateful for this chance to reflect upon everything we've accomplished, with your help, this spring.

Our year-long focus on reproductive justice resulted in two fantastic, high profile lectures on aspects of the topic this semester: the Elizabeth Munves Sherman '77, P'06 '09 [Lecture by Emily Owens](#), David and Michelle Ebersman

Assistant Professor of History, as well as the [Pembroke Publics Lecture](#), given by renowned scholar and activist Dorothy Roberts (University of Pennsylvania). Given the numerous challenges to reproductive freedom in the past year, this programming has been both timely and necessary. Both talks are available for viewing on our [YouTube playlist](#).

This has been an exceptionally active year for our graduate students. Our graduate certificate course experienced high enrollment and engagement in 2022-23, and we were delighted to support graduate students in organizing a popular and successful symposium on the work of Black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers in the fall featuring Spillers herself as well as both notable and emerging scholars of her work (keynotes also available on our YouTube playlist). We have also supported graduate students as Interdisciplinary Opportunity Fellows: Ashley Dun, doctoral candidate in English, was the proctor for *differences*; while Christina Gilligan and Courtney Lau served as teaching assistants for the GNSS introductory course. This program, administered by the Graduate School, gives advanced graduate students the opportunity to engage more deeply in interdisciplinary work across the university.

The Pembroke Center Archives team has had a busy spring processing several important collections – including the papers of Johanna Fernández '93 and Mumia Abu-Jamal, available to researchers this fall – and bringing in new contributions. You can read more about this work, including our archivists' trip to meet with Hortense Spillers in Tennessee, on page 6. The Fernández and Spillers papers add to our growing [Farnham Archive](#) (Fernández) and [Black Feminist Theory](#) (Spillers) collections, while the Abu-Jamal acquisition anchors the "[Voices of Mass Incarceration](#)" strategic collecting focus of the John Hay Library.

As an essential part of our mission to support and advance feminist scholarship, including faculty research and publications, the journal *differences* published a [special issue](#) at the end of 2022 on psychoanalysis and solidarity. Guest editor Michelle Rada urged readers to "consider what our unhappiness in common might generate, or foreclose, for collective bonds of solidarity beyond the consulting room." The Center also supported the work of two faculty working groups through our [seed grant program](#). You can see next year's seed grantee teams on page 7.

Of course, spring would not be complete without graduating students. I send every best wish to our senior concentrators: you have made wonderful contributions to the GNSS academic program, and we look forward to supporting you in what you do next. Read more about our concentrators and student prize winners on page 7.

The Friends of the Pembroke Center have been extraordinarily busy this spring, after a forced lull in activities due to the pandemic. About 240 people attended the webinar "[Cracking the Marble Ceiling: Perspectives from Women Elected Leaders](#)." Another "sold out" event was the New York City regional panel discussion "Un(der)told Stories of Black Activism" in April, which featured distinguished alumnae/i whose work engages with stories of Black activism, civil rights, and the Black Freedom movement that are underrepresented in mainstream history. The Friends-sponsored Commencement Forum featuring keynote speaker Dr. Megan L. Ranney MD, MPH'10, RES'08 also addressed a topic of national concern: the problem of gun violence in the U.S. and its relationship to mental health.

Finally, some exciting news for the Center as I embark upon my sabbatical: [Debbie Weinstein](#), Director of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society and Associate Professor of American Studies, has accepted our invitation to serve as Interim Director of the Pembroke Center. In addition to her distinguished career as a historian of modern science and medicine, longtime Friends may recall that Professor Weinstein served as Director of the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program and Associate Director of the Pembroke Center prior to joining the department of American Studies. We consider ourselves fortunate to have someone at the helm who knows our work so well. Welcome back, Professor Weinstein!

With best wishes for the summer ahead, Leela Gandhi

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Leela Gandhi". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

A Note from Your Co-Chairs

Thank you so much for your support and engagement as a Friend of the Pembroke Center this year. We hope you had an opportunity to participate in some of the exciting programming – whether you attended “[Cracking the Marble Ceiling](#)” with alumnae serving as elected officials or reunited with Friends at “Un(der) told Stories of Black Activism” in New York City or, most recently, returned to campus and attended the Center’s Commencement Forum on mental health and gun violence featuring Dr. Megan Ranney.

Even if timing didn’t allow you to attend a program this year, perhaps you enjoyed watching or listening to an oral history

recorded by Assistant Archivist Amanda Knox, or maybe you watched a recording of one of the talks sponsored by the Pembroke Center on our [YouTube playlist](#), such as the Elizabeth Munves Sherman ’77, P’06 ’09 [Lecture in Gender and Sexuality Studies](#) that featured Professor Emily Owens speaking about her book, *Consent in the Presence of Force: Sexual Violence and Black Women’s Survival in Antebellum New Orleans*.

In whatever ways you engaged with the Pembroke Center this year, we hope you found connection and meaning. Together, we explored questions of how gender influences leadership in the political arena and the hurdles women

face serving in government; told stories of Black activism and celebrated the work of alumnae/i who won’t be silenced; and sought to find solutions to America’s distinct problem of gun violence and its interplay with mental health.

We hope you have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to engaging with you in the fall!

Sophie Waskow Rifkin ’07
Chair, Pembroke Center
Advisory Council

Emily Coe-Sullivan ’99
Vice-Chair, Pembroke Center
Advisory Council



cont. Reproductive Justice at the Pembroke Center

students participated in birthworker training through a newly added doula certification lab. This lab offered a way for students to build a foundation in reproductive health, rights, and justice while also developing skills as birthworkers.

The Center is also strategically supporting research on reproductive justice. Visiting Assistant Professor of the Practice Sarah Gamble collaborated with Madina Agénor ’05, Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral

and Social Sciences, to create a research working group on reproductive health and justice. This group, primarily composed of faculty, will fully launch in the fall. Additionally, an upcoming issue of *differences* features Lucia Hulsether on the U.S. Supreme Court’s rulings on religion as they relate to reproductive justice.

Speaking on this year’s focus, Leela Gandhi said, “I am especially proud of our initiatives in public health this year. All our events (and community building)

▲ Images: 1. (Cover) Dorothy Roberts gives the annual Pembroke Public lecture ■ 2. Wendy Lee teaches the Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies course ■ 3. Students in Sarah Williams’ class ■ 4. Emily Owens gives the annual Elizabeth Munves Sherman ’77, P’06 ’09 Lecture in Gender and Sexuality Studies

around this theme have clarified the interdisciplinary and deeply reflective nature of our public facing work. Our approach has consistently engaged topical issues with historical perspective, an interest in futures and alternatives, with plenty of space for the most practical to the most abstract commentary. Let’s call it slow thinking in times of crisis.” ■

The 2023-24 Pembroke Seminar and Fellows/Interim Director Announced

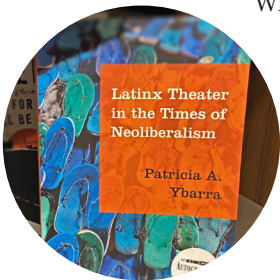
Announcing Debbie Weinstein as Interim
Director of the Pembroke Center



[Debbie Weinstein](#), Director of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society and Associate Professor of American Studies, will serve as the Interim Director of the Pembroke Center during Leela Gandhi's 2023-24 sabbatical. Professor Weinstein, a historian of modern science and medicine, has a long history with the Pembroke Center. She began as a lecturer in the Gender and Sexuality Studies

Program in 2009 and subsequently served as Director of the program and Associate Director of the Center before joining the American Studies department as an Assistant Professor in 2015. As Leela Gandhi remarked, "It is a privilege to welcome Debbie Weinstein as Interim Director. Professor Weinstein is an eminent historian of modern American science and medicine, with a core commitment to questions of gender and sexuality in these spheres. Her leading work in the human sciences is entirely in tune with the emerging disciplinary style of the Pembroke Center."

Announcing the Fellows for the 2023-24 Pembroke Seminar: De-Colonial Retro- Speculation with Patricia Ybarra



When [Patricia Ybarra](#), Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and author of *Latinx Theater in the Times of Neoliberalism* (2018), convenes the first meeting of the [2023-24 Pembroke Seminar](#), she will be joined by 13 faculty, postdoctoral, graduate, and undergraduate fellows. Participants will meet weekly in Pembroke Hall for "De-Colonial Retro-Speculation," the goal

of which is to look backward and forward to the liberationist movements, practices, art works, and theories of the recent past by queer, feminist, and/or global majority scholars, artists, political figures, and practitioners so as to offer new modes of understanding, and intervening into, our tumultuous present.

FACULTY FELLOWS



Patricia Ybarra,
*Professor of
Theatre Arts and
Performance
Studies*



Ariella Azoulay,
*Comparative
Literature and
Modern Culture
and Media*



Lisa Biggs,
Africana Studies



Kevin Escudero,
American Studies

GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



M. Cecilia Azar,
*Theatre Arts and
Performance
Studies*



Kate Creasey,
History



Marah Nagelhout,
English



Columbus Pruitt,
Political Science

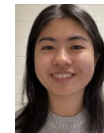


Kiran Sali,
English

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS



RL Wheeler,
*Sociology/Visual
Art*



Grace Xiao,
*History of Art and
Architecture*

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS



Sareh Afshar
*Artemis A. W.
and Martha
Joukowsky
Postdoctoral*

*Fellow Ph.D. 2021,
Performance Studies,
New York University*

Dissertation "Dying
to Be Somebody:
Performances of Death,
Power, and Personhood in
Postrevolutionary Iran"



Amira
Lundy-Harris
*Nancy L. Buc
'65 '95 LLD hon
Postdoctoral*

*Fellow Ph.D. 2023 (expected),
Women, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies, University
of Maryland, College Park*

Dissertation "Like I'm
Kin to Him: Black Trans
Publics, Relational Bonds, and
Collective Creation"



Emily Mitamura
*Shauna M.
Stark '76, P'10
Postdoctoral
Fellow Ph.D. 2023*

*(expected), Political Science,
University of Minnesota*

Dissertation "Plots of
Violence: Colonial Narrative
and the Cambodian Genocide"

Pembroke Center Archivists Mary Murphy and Amanda Knox have been busy. They have brought in several new acquisitions, worked on processing the voluminous Mumia Abu-Jamal and Johanna Fernández '93 collections, and made a collections trip to the home of Hortense J. Spillers to bring additional material to her papers already stored at the John Hay Library.

New acquisitions also include the papers of Rhode Island conservative feminist Donna M. Hughes as well as additions to the collection of Louise Lamphere (Brown University Professor of Anthropology). Speaking on the importance of these acquisitions, Murphy, Nancy L. Buc '65 LLD'94 hon Pembroke Center Archivist, stated, "These collections are considered 'majors,'

created by nationally recognized scholars and activists on the left and the feminist right. They offer a trove of rich archival material for those studying labor history, international anti-trafficking networks, and Black Southern life."

Bringing in the next set of Spillers' papers required a collecting trip to her home in Nashville, TN, to meet with Spillers and assist with identifying and sorting collection items. These included photographs from her childhood and those documenting kinship, unpublished writings, diaries, and course material from classes taught by Spillers.

Processing the papers of incarcerated journalist and activist Mumia Abu-Jamal has been an enormous task for Assistant



Archivist Mary Murphy with Hortense Spillers.

Archivist Knox.

Knox noted, "Not only am I managing a collection of well over 70 boxes, I am working with very personal evidence of a person's life in prison and trying to adequately capture the power of that in my processing decisions and description." The Abu-Jamal papers include artwork, prison records, and writing on a broad array of political and personal topics. ■

Friends Updates

Cracking the Marble Ceiling: Perspectives from Women Elected Leaders



On March 7, over 240 Friends and others joined panelists Maggie Hassan '80, P'15, United States Senator for New Hampshire; Tiara Mack '16, Rhode

Island State Senator and educator/activist; Katherine Tate, Brown University Professor of Political Science; and moderator Mara Liasson '77, NPR National Political Correspondent for this [online conversation](#).

Commencement Forum



The Pembroke Center's 2023 Commencement Forum, "Mental Health, Gun Violence, and America's Distinct Problem," featured Dr. Megan L. Ranney, MD, MPH'10, RES'08,

Deputy Dean, Brown School of Public Health and Warren Alpert Foundation Professor of Emergency Medicine in conversation with Sema Sgaier MA'99, CEO and Co-founder of Surgo Health, a healthcare technology company. The outstanding turnout reflected the Brown community's interest in this critically important topic.

Un(der)told Stories of Black Activism in NYC



On April 18, moderator Françoise N. Hamlin, Royce Family Associate Professor of Teaching Excellence in Africana Studies

and History, joined Brian P. Jones '95, inaugural director of the Center for Educators and Schools of The New York Public Library and author of *The Tuskegee Student Uprising: A History*; Brian Palmer '86, photographer and Peabody Award-winning journalist; and Yoruba Richen '94, an Emmy-nominated, Peabody-winning documentary filmmaker, for a discussion on untold stories about Black activism, civil rights, the Black Freedom Movement, and how the telling and uncovering of these stories is itself an expansion of the historian's work and our evolving national narrative. This was the first in-person regional event held by the Friends since 2019.

Advisory Council Updates

Our sincere thanks to outgoing Council members Ulle Holt '66, AM'92, PhD'00, P'93 '02; Ellen Hunter '04; and Lorine Pendleton '91.

Congratulations, Graduates!

We are happy to congratulate the Brown class of 2023, including our fantastic Gender and Sexuality Studies (GNSS) concentrators, as well as Ph.D. students who completed our graduate certificate program.

UNDERGRADUATE CONCENTRATORS

Aliyah Blattner '23
Georgia Chan '23
Cleopatra Elrashidy '23
Rachel Tam '23
Lily Willis '22.5

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Arlen Austin, *Modern Culture and Media*
Ashley Aye Aye Dun, *English*
Esha Sraboni, *Sociology*
Francesca Zambon, *Italian Studies*

Grants and Prizes Recognize and Support Innovative Work

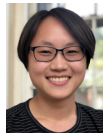
Each year, the Pembroke Center awards prizes for outstanding undergraduate and graduate student research. Here are this year's prize recipients.

Ruth Simmons Prize in Gender and Women's Studies



Sofia Sacerdote '22.5
American Studies
"Dead but Not Disabled': What the Lawsuit and Campaign to Change the CDC Definition of AIDS Reveal about Disability in Post-Reagan America"

Ruth Simmons Prize in Gender and Women's Studies (honorable mention)



Katherine Xiong '23
Comparative Literature
"Post-apocalyptic Body World(ing): Transpacific Racial Capitalism, Coloniality, and Queer/Asian/Female Speculative Futures"



Georgia Salke '23
History
"When Women Drink Like Men: A Gendered History of Alcoholics Anonymous' Early Years, 1935-1960"

Joan Wallach Scott Prize for an Outstanding Honors Thesis in Gender and Sexuality Studies



Rachel Tam '23
Gender and Sexuality Studies and Biology
"Not Actually Pro-Life, but Anti-Birthing People's Rights: an Analysis on the Operations of Crisis Pregnancy Centers in Rhode Island"

Marie J. Langlois Dissertation Prize



Nell Lake Ph.D. '23
English
"Mother. Nurse. Housewife. Maid: Women, Race, and the Politics of Care in America since 1900"

Faculty Seed Grant Recipients

Two Pembroke Faculty Seed Grants have been awarded for 2023-24. In their grant project "Fantasizing Freedom: Post-Work Imaginaries in Care and Erotic Economies," Elena Shih, Manning Assistant Professor of American Studies, and Emily Owens, David and Michelle Ebersman Assistant Professor of History, will lead a working group and symposium aimed at reigniting a conversation around the feminist possibilities of anti-work politics. And in their grant project "Why Me? First-Person Writing, the Subjective Turn in Contemporary Culture, and the Question of Factuality," Timothy Bewes, Professor of English, and David Wills, Professor of French and Francophone Studies, will host a two-day colloquium and series of seminars to examine the question of factuality in contemporary first-person writing.

STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS

Barbara Anton Community Research Grant

Rachel Tam '23

Helen Terry MacLeod Research Grant

Leona Hariharan '23

Linda Pei Undergraduate Research Grant

Elon Collins '23.5

Enid Wilson Undergraduate Fellowship

Simran Singh '23

Pembroke Center Research Development Grant for Graduate Students

Devon Epiphany Clifton
Graduate Student, English

Project "Psychoanalytics: Towards a Black Object Study"

Steinhaus/Zisson Pembroke Center Research Grant for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Malcolm Shanks '23.5
Aisha Tipnis '23

Ailish Burns

Graduate Student, Department of Sociology

Project "The Social Landscape of Severe Maternal Morbidity: A Regional Decomposition"

Alexandria Miller

Graduate Student, Department of Africana Studies

Project "Make Way for the Rebel Empress: Reggae Women and Gender Politics in Jamaica, 1960-2020"

Mohadeseh Salari Sardari

Graduate Student, History of Art and Architecture

Project "The Mislabeled and Misrepresentation of Miniature Paintings in Brown University's Minassian Collection"



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Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women

differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies

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Questions? Call Rebecca Jenkins at (401) 863-7700.