

PEMBROKE CENTER

Associates Newsletter

Sojourner House: Student Activism and the Struggle against Domestic Violence

by Cathy Lewis '75

"The Rule of Thumb"

1. *A broadly accurate guide or principle, based on experience or practice rather than theory.*
2. *English common law by which a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no wider than his thumb.*

PHOTO CREDIT: CATHY LEWIS '75



Christina Crosby, PhD '82

It was 1975. A group of Brown undergraduate and graduate women students met regularly as part of a campus-wide movement. The organizing issue was the University's proposal to dramatically reduce financial aid: an act that would have a profoundly negative impact on the students of color. Students held a campus-wide strike. After the strike ended, with some success in rolling back the cutbacks, the group continued to meet. Committing itself to the study of gender, race, and class, the group called itself the "Socialist Feminist Caucus."

Tracy Fitzpatrick '76 was an undergrad in 1975 when she volunteered at Rhode Island Legal Services. Fitzpatrick, a member of the Caucus, told the group that women were coming to Rhode Island Legal Services looking for restraining orders against their husbands and boyfriends. They were from all ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic groups. No one in the Caucus had ever heard of domestic violence, battered women, or spousal abuse.

"This was a time when domestic violence was not well understood, when women were blamed for angering their batterers," remembers Fitzpatrick. "Police and emergency personnel received no specialized training for handling those dangerous domestic calls, there was no public conversation about domestic abuse, and there were no shelters and few specialized services for abused women and their children."

"We began as a study group and collectively gathered as much knowledge as we could find about domestic violence against women. We discovered that any woman could be dominated in her home, which was private space protected from public view – the privileges of class would not protect her. This was a striking revelation – that home, far from being a safe haven, could be the most dangerous place for a woman and her children," recalls Christina Crosby, PhD '82. "We opened a telephone hotline, where we took calls from women desperate to talk to a sympathetic ear. It soon became vividly clear that women who were being emotionally dominated and physically assaulted in their homes needed a safe place to go that was hidden from public view, where a violent husband or boyfriend could not find them."

The group of about 12 young Brown women sought to create an organization that not only met the immediate needs of women and children fleeing from violent partners, but also to build the organization as a non-hierarchical and democratic structure. The intention was to model the change the group wanted to realize in order to create a more just and non-violent world. Collaboration with community individuals and groups were formed, pot-luck fundraisers were held, office space was rented, and women who wanted to end abusive relationships called for help. The agency they formed is Sojourner House, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary.

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From the Director

The Pembroke Center, with its interdisciplinary focus on questions of gender and difference, is particularly well prepared to explore difficult subjects. A great many conflicts are rooted in issues of difference – such as race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexuality – and this is where the Pembroke Center locates its work, even when the subjects prove difficult to discuss. Last semester we examined the discourses around campus sexual violence in our symposium, “Sex and Speech on the College Campus.” This semester we will grapple with the troubling subjects of rape and war.

We will host our International Conference on Rape and War in Pembroke Hall on April 15-16, 2016. Open to the public and the Brown community, the conference is part of a larger research initiative, “Seeing War Differently: Rethinking the Subject(s) of Warfare.” The April conference will bring scholars from around the world to question how rape is a constitutive aspect of war. Rape can be seen as part of war in many ways. It can be used as a weapon of war. Rape is sometimes considered to be an effect of war. It has been used as a metaphor for war, and is often described as a crime against humanity. During the two-day conference, scholars will explore these and other dimensions of rape and war.

We are pleased to be bringing to campus notable scholars, including: Dara Kay Cohen '01 (Harvard Kennedy School of Government), Miriam Cooke (Duke University), David Kennedy (Harvard Law School), Yukiko Koga (Hunter College), Wendy Kozol (Oberlin College), Emma Kuby '03 (Northern Illinois University) Lyndsey Stonebridge (University of East Anglia), and Jacqueline Rose (University of London). As this newsletter goes to press, we are still working on arrangements to bring a scholar from Ewha Womans University in South Korea, and three

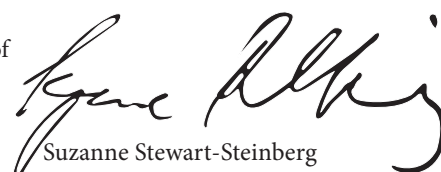
scholars from Nanjing University and Nanjing Normal University to discuss the “Rape of Nanjing” that occurred during World War II.

This conference underscores the deep connections that the Pembroke Center enjoys with scholars at other institutions. Dara Kay Cohen '01, for example, received the Center's 2000-01 Barbara Anton Internship Grant to further her research on her senior thesis while an undergraduate at Brown. Emma Kuby '03 was a double-concentrator in Gender Studies and History and also received the Barbara Anton Internship Grant. Miriam Cooke, Lyndsey Stonebridge, and Jacqueline Rose – renowned scholars in their fields – have pledged their scholarly materials to the Pembroke Center's Feminist Theory Archive, joining more than 130 scholars who have entrusted the Pembroke Center with the preservation of their work.

As the Pembroke Center invests in new collaborations with scholars at other institutions, we also are enormously grateful for our community of alumnae/i and friends – the Pembroke Center Associates. It is you who generously sustain our work, year in and year out. The Associates help the Pembroke Center offer opportunities for alumnae/i to stay intellectually engaged with the Center's work. To that end, please see page 3 for some events we have planned – on and off campus.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg
Director

IN MEMORIAM CHANTAL AKERMAN (1950-2015)

The Pembroke Center was deeply saddened by the passing of world-renowned feminist film director Chantal Akerman, whom the Pembroke Center had planned to bring to campus this semester. As a commemoration of her great impact on world cinema, the Pembroke Center remembered the Belgian filmmaker with a screening of Akerman's 1975 film, *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*. This film was “the first masterpiece of the feminine in the history of the cinema,” according to the *New York Times*.

Pembroke Center Spring 2016 Events

We are pleased to present programs, led by Brown's faculty and alumnae/i, on a range of topics. These events, held on and off campus, are among the ways in which the Associates work to connect you with issues that concern the Pembroke Center's research and teaching.

BLACK FEMINISM, POPULAR CULTURE, AND RESPECTABILITY POLITICS

The Annual Elizabeth Munves Sherman'77, P'06, P'09 Lecture in Gender and Sexuality Studies

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

5:30 pm

Pembroke Hall 305

172 Meeting Street, Providence



PHOTO CREDIT: © RICHARD HOWARD
PHOTOGRAPHY

Tricia Rose

Professor of Africana Studies and
Director of the Center for Race
and Ethnicity in America
Brown University

A READING BY CHRISTINA CROSBY, PH.D.'82 FROM HER MEMOIR, *A BODY, UNDONE: LIVING ON AFTER GREAT PAIN*

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

5:30 pm reception; 6:00 pm reading

Pembroke Hall 305

172 Meeting Street, Providence

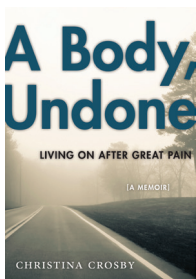


PHOTO CREDIT: NYU PRESS

Christina Crosby received her PhD in English from Brown University in 1982, and has worked at Wesleyan University since 1982, where she is Professor of English and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Her subfields are Victorian studies and feminist studies.

She has published *The Ends of History: Victorians and the 'Woman Question'* and essays and reviews in *Victorian Studies*, *PMLA*, *College English*, and elsewhere. *A Body, Undone: Living on after Great Pain*, published in February 2016 by NYU Press, explores living with a spinal cord injury, drawing on feminist theories of embodiment, queer phenomenology, and critical disability studies. This is the inaugural event of the Pembroke Center's *Out of the Archive* series featuring scholars who have contributed materials to the Feminist Theory Archive.

*Cosponsored by the Sarah Doyle
Women's Center and Student and
Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS).*

AN EVENING WITH AWARD- WINNING PLAYWRIGHT SARAH RUHL'97, MFA'01

*Hosted by Victoria Westhead '83, P'17,
P'19, Pembroke Center Associates
Council Vice-Chair*

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

6:30 pm

Brooklyn Heights, NY

Sarah Ruhl's plays include *In the Next Room*, or *the vibrator play* (Pulitzer Prize finalist; 2010, Tony Award nominee for best new play), *The Clean House* (Pulitzer Prize Finalist, 2005; The Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, 2004); *Passion Play*, a cycle (Pen American award, The Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from The Kennedy Center); *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Helen Hayes award); *Melancholy Play*; *Eurydice*; *Orlando*; *Demeter in the City* (NAACP nomination); *Late: A*



PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY
THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE
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Cowboy Song; *Three Sisters*; and most recently, *Stage Kiss* and *Dear Elizabeth*. She is also the author of *100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write: On Umbrellas and Sword Fights, Parades and Dogs, Fire Alarms, Children, and Theater*, which was selected as one of the "100 Notable Books of 2014" by the *New York Times*.

Her plays have been produced on Broadway, all over the country, and internationally; and have been translated into Polish, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Korean, German and Arabic. She was the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship in 2006. She recently received the PEN Center Award for a mid-career playwright, the Feminist Press' Forty under Forty award, and the Lilly Award. Ruhl studied with Paula Vogel at Brown and is on the faculty at Yale School of Drama.

Space is limited and preregistration is required. Kindly R.S.V.P. to Martha Hamblett by April 13, 2016 at 401-863-3433 or via email to Pembroke_Associates@brown.edu.

GETTING REEL: BROWN WOMEN IN DOCUMENTARY FILM

The Pembroke Center will be hosting its annual commencement forum on Saturday, May 28, 2016 at 11:00 am. Details will be announced soon.

Pembroke Center Student Research Grant Recipients 2015-16

The Pembroke Center's competitive research grant program is open to undergraduate and graduate students from any concentration or field. Grants help pay for travel, fieldwork, archival research, equipment purchases, interview transcriptions, and other research costs.

Christin Aucapina '16

Public Health

Helen Terry MacLeod Research Grant



Challenges on The Front Line: HIV Services Provided in Havana, Cuba

Aucapina's honors thesis seeks to develop

an understanding of how health care providers in Havana render HIV services and how variables such as gender, sex, and age moderate the delivery of such services. Through qualitative interviews with health care professionals on the front lines of HIV treatment and prevention, Aucapina provides reports on HIV treatment and an overview of HIV services available in Havana. Her thesis examines the different aspects that are taken into account in delivering HIV care and of how patients navigate through HIV care services.

Aucapina explores the history of HIV in Cuba, specific strategies for public health outreach, and services being provided to HIV positive patients. Her object is to identify how HIV services and outreach are delivered to patients and how Cuban public health accounts and makes accommodations for gender variation.

Arlen Austin and Beth Capper

Graduate Students

Department of Modern Culture and Media



Steinhaus-Zisson Research Grant

Wages Due! is a digital humanities project that revisits the formation of the Wages

for Housework movement of the early 1970s. The archive will make publicly accessible photographs, manifestos, and extended theoretical texts, many of which are previously unpublished or difficult for researchers to access. In addition, Austin and Capper are conducting oral history interviews with key participants in the Wages for Housework movements in the United States, Italy, England, and Canada.

This digital humanities archive will present a broader view of the theoretical richness and socio-cultural diversity of the movement than has been heretofore available, and will reflect the broad range of influences on which women in the movement drew: decolonial movements in the West Indies, welfare rights movements of the major northern metropolitan centers of the United States, Italian extra-parliamentary left movements of the 1960s, as well as the burgeoning women's movements in northern Italy and London. Documents will be included from movement centers in New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, and Padova, authored by the better-known campaign leaders and lesser-known figures, as well as collectively authored and anonymous texts. The launch of this online archive will foreground the pertinence of the movement to current discussions of post-Fordist labor practices, the politics of precarity, and a renewed interest in the "commons."

Kwang Choi '16

Visual Art

Steinhaus-Zisson Research Grant



Submerging and Resurfacing: Multimedia Investigation of the "Last Mermaids" of Jeju

Emerging from the depths of the Korea Strait unassisted by breathing

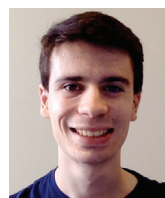
equipment, the "last mermaids" of Jeju Island, the haenyeo – literally translating to "sea-women" – manually scour the ocean floor gathering edible sea-dwellers. This distinctly feminized tradition has positioned haenyeo, for centuries, as the breadwinners, flipping the gendered domestic roles of the Confucian patriarchal system. The oft-noted "matriarchy" of the Jeju family structure, however, falls far from the Amazonian fantasy of total agency and socio-political power. Although contemporary attitudes regard haenyeo as the symbols of Korean female independence, the complex social positioning of haenyeo culture reveals its frictional relationship to the dominant Confucian ideology of South Korea. Now, as the rapid urbanization and shifting economic tides pose a threat to their cultural preservation, the declining population of the remaining haenyeo continues to age without sufficient recruits to succeed their trade.

Through photographic narrative and video installations, Choi's project aims to investigate the ambivalences in this condition of ephemerality – between bodily hardship and economic agency, between regional notions of womanhood and the national definition of femininity, between the preservation of tradition and reconciliation with new cultural possibilities, and between submerging and resurfacing – in order reengage and grapple with the transience of haenyeo culture.

Noah Fields '17

Classics

Steinhaus-Zisson Research Grant



"as I watch you, in fleeting glances, no talk is left inside me"

Noah Fields's poetry collection "even this poverty" is a gathering

of original translations, poems, and other lyrical pieces inspired by the Greek lyric poet, Sappho. The title, which comes from the fragmented final line of Sappho's poem 31, alludes to the paucity of words that survive from Sappho's output, as well as to the broader poverty of womyn's voices in the literary arts persistent from antiquity to the present-day. Fields's poems explore the feminist and queer valences in Sappho's work, placing Sappho's verse in conversation with contemporary poets such as Wallace Stevens, Sylvia Plath, and H.D. The collection is not a translation per se but rather a response to Sappho's words, with the goal of stretching the fabric of Sappho's poems creatively to illuminate them in new ways through experiments in form, perspective, and transposition. The Steinhaus/Zisson Pembroke Center Research Grant supports travel to Sappho's home at Lesbos for continued research, as well as publication expenses.

Anne Gray Fischer

Graduate Student, Department of History
Steinhaus-Zisson Research Grant



Arrestable Behavior: Vulnerable Women, State Power, and the Making of Law-and-Order America, 1932-1982

Anne Gray Fischer's dissertation examines women's sexual criminalization from the rehabilitative welfare state of the 1930s to the punitive carceral state of the 1980s. In this half-century, city and state law enforcement authorities shaped, and often derailed, the precarious lives of poor women by classifying them as "promiscuous" or "prostitutes" – two overlapping, often blurred, legal categories. Focusing on Boston and Los Angeles, Gray Fischer explores how and why the criteria for a woman's "arrestable behavior" changed over five decades, as dramatically new gender, sexual, and racial paradigms emerged in the United States.

Centered on the experiences and treatment of women in the criminal system – including policing, probation, incarceration, and parole – this project tracks the everyday practices of law enforcement authorities to underscore the political logic and functions of the sexual criminalization of women across the modern twentieth century. By restoring the lives of poor women flagged as "promiscuous" to the historical record and narrating the shifting racialized processes of women's sexual criminalization, this project aims to reshape our understanding of the relationship of urban gender, sexuality, and race to the development of modern legal regimes and incarceration in the United States.

Penelope Kyritsis '16

Postcolonial Legal Studies
Linda Pei Undergraduate Research Grant



Sexual Humanitarianism and the Politics of Pity and Control in Marseille and Athens

The term "sex trafficking" has gained significant traction in the past decade and is pervasive in the media, social and humanitarian debates, and policy discourses. Indeed, it is very common to see the state, private sector, and nonprofit organizations launching "anti-trafficking" campaigns throughout the world. Recent scholarship has critiqued a sex trafficking focus for being too narrow and obscuring issues of labor exploitation. This research complicates these debates by contextualizing sex trafficking policy and discourse without the current refugee crisis in Europe. The recent global concern around refugees has raised a new "moral panic" around more and more people being pushed into the irregular employment sector. How this concern around labor and migration will shift humanitarian interests in sex trafficking is a pressing question for scholarly inquiry.

Kyritsis's senior honors thesis research builds on Nicola Mail's concept of "sexual humanitarianism" (i.e., the management of sex workers and other sexual minorities through humanitarian interventions) in Marseille, France and Athens, Greece analyzed through the lens of postcolonial feminist theory. She considers liberal norms of human rights and compassion when exploring indifference to policies of control when it comes to immigration and prostitution.

Lakshmi Padmanabhan

Graduate Student, Department of Modern Culture and Media and History
Steinhaus-Zisson Research Grant



Representing Rape: A Visual History of Feminist Protest in India

Lakshmi Padmanabhan's dissertation

traces the visual history of feminist protest in India from the Partition of 1947 to the contemporary moment through photography and performance. The anticolonial struggle for Independence led to the emergence of the sovereign nation-state whose boundaries are shaped by the sexual violence enacted on women's bodies on either side of the India-Pakistan border. Since Independence, women have fought against the state's use of sexual violence to establish sovereign power by staging public protests, occupying public space, and re-imagining the possibilities for democratic debate in India. Their history of dissent has challenged and rewritten the laws around sexual assault and sovereign power, while their use of embodied forms of protest including starvation, nudity, and testimonial performances of collective public dissent have challenged the history of democratic debate in a public sphere that heavily circumscribes their movement and political speech.

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Sojourner House

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PHOTO CREDIT: SARAH DOYLE WOMEN'S CENTER

Christina Crosby PhD '82 and Sharon Kregel '80, P'12, P'16

Linda Kramer '77, was very active in helping to make the transition from a student study group to a viable community organization. Kramer recalls, "I was very involved with Sojourner House my senior year at Brown. I learned that I could take a leadership role. I learned that I could go to a mental health agency or a police department and talk about the problem of domestic violence in a way that could be heard, and answer their questions. I learned that I could help organize a training so that we could train volunteers to open the hotline the following year."

"ONE OF FEMINISM'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS WAS THE IDENTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A PREVALENT SOCIAL ILL MERITING BROAD COMMUNITY CONCERN."

Elizabeth Weed

Sojourner House operated as a collective for many of its early years. Staff and volunteers worked hard to build an organization dedicated to consensus decision-making and organizational transparency. It was very hard work but the most difficult reality emerged when funders made clear that they only would support agencies with traditional hierarchies. Several years into its existence, Sojourner House had to make a very difficult choice: stay true to the ideology or raise money to provide a much-needed service. Practicality won over process.

Sojourner House exists today as a state-wide shelter and transitional housing program for victims and survivors of what is now called intimate partner violence (recognizing that violence also affects men in heterosexual relationships as well as gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and includes couples who don't live together). For the past 40 years, Sojourner House has served over 50,000 individuals seeking relief from intimate partner violence. In addition to providing hotline, shelter, and transitional housing services, Sojourner House also offers HIV testing, Latino/a programs, services for the LGBTQ community, and educational outreach and advocacy. Please visit their website, www.sojournerri.org to learn more.

Much of the success of the Brown student effort can be attributed to the culture of feminist thinking and action nourished by the Sarah Doyle Women's Center, established at Brown, with great effort, in 1974. Elizabeth Weed, a former director of the Pembroke Center, was director of the Sarah Doyle Women's Center at the time Sojourner House was forming and she provided institutional support for the nascent organization.

"One of feminism's great achievements was the identification of domestic violence as a prevalent social ill meriting broad community concern," said Weed. "The group that formed Sojourner House not only contributed to the emergent national movement against domestic violence; thanks to much thought and organizational work, they developed a model that aimed to empower women rather than treating them as victims. And in this regard the Sojourner group demonstrates what the Sarah Doyle Women's Center has always stood for: social change through *both* theory and practice."

Since Sojourner House's inception in 1976, many members of the Socialist Feminist Caucus went on to work at the agency. In the past 40 years, many Brown students



have been involved volunteering and working in staff positions. As much as the “personal is political,” it is also true that the political is personal. So many in the original Socialist Feminist Caucus were profoundly moved by the stories of women escaping and surviving violent relationships. All were inspired by their courage and the enormous risks they took to make change.

Sojourner House inspired many by making what seemed to be only an idea into something that could make a difference. The first shelter facility that Sojourner House opened was created mostly with volunteer effort, including scraping lead paint from the walls and picking up donated furnishings from all over the state. Forty years later, the celebration of Sojourner House’s anniversary is bittersweet: the agency has come a long way, but domestic violence is still very prevalent.

While many in the group believed that a political movement against domestic violence could end it in a generation, the tenacious hold of sexism, racism, and class privilege has proven to be a struggle of enduring proportions. Perhaps it’s good that at that time the determined group didn’t know how hard the struggle would be.

“Sometimes the virtue of youth is not knowing how hard it is to change such a complex problem,” said Fitzpatrick. “We believed we could make a difference, and we did!”

The Pembroke Center is pleased to help celebrate this important part of Brown and Sojourner House’s history. In April, we will be organizing an oral history with several of the founders of Sojourner House: Christina Crosby PhD ’82, Tracy Fitzpatrick ’76, Linda Kramer ’77, and Cathy Lewis ’75. When edited and digitized, it will be available online on Brown Women Speak at www.brown.edu/initiatives/women-speak, the Center’s oral history website.

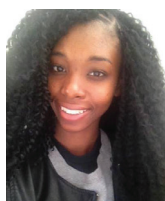
Research Grants

Continued from page 5

Lakshmi’s project follows the history of these embodied protest movements that challenge the state’s deployment of sexual violence, particularly the incidents of “custodial” sexual assault perpetrated and condoned by the state, to illustrate the ways in which feminist performances of protest serve as a model and archive of democratic participation that challenges normative conceptions of political speech. Additionally, the project takes up the visual mediation of these protests through photographs that restage these debates within the contemporary moment, and performances that document these protests to illustrate the ways in which photography, performance, and the moving image have been central to the formation of feminist publics and feminist genealogies of protest.

Yacine Sow ’16

Health and Human Biology
Barbara Anton Internship Grant



Project CARE Video Series: Encouraging Women to Make Contraceptive Choices while Incarcerated

Over the past fifteen years, the number of incarcerated women has increased by 153 percent. This exponential increase has been sustained by a jail and prison system designed for male inmates. U.S. correctional facilities were not developed to consider women’s biological needs, role in the family,

and how or why they commit crimes. Additionally, policies that have directly contributed to the exponential increase of incarcerated women already target a vulnerable population. Compared to women in the general population, incarcerated women have a higher rate of acute and chronic diseases, substance abuse problems, and undetected health issues – which include reproductive health needs.

Women in correctional institutions have substantial reproductive health problems; yet, they are underserved with reproductive health care. When women are released from prison, they have many competing needs for food, shelter, and safety – which often results in neglect of reproductive health care. Thus, incarceration is an opportunity to provide reproductive health services to a large population of high-risk women who may not otherwise seek health services. Sow’s work to develop the Project CARE (Contraceptive Awareness and Reproductive Health Education) Video Series will help to facilitate the process of accessing contraceptives by providing materials that can help women decide which method would be a good match. Because these women have disproportionate rates of reproductive health problems, but yet are still underserved, it is important to evaluate what types of interventions will help women make informed reproductive health choices.

PEMBROKE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ON WOMEN

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