

# **GENDER STUDIES SUMMER 2023**

at Queen's University

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Department of  
**GENDER STUDIES**  
at Queen's University



# HEAD'S WELCOME

## ***Welcome to the Department of Gender Studies Summer 2023 newsletter!***

This summer, we are welcoming a number of new faces to the department who you can read about in this newsletter. There's also a spotlight on our incredible staff, and a recap of some of the powerful events we've hosted over the past several months.

As I'm writing this, I've just completed my first year in the role of department head, and my first year at Queen's. It's been a whirlwind of a year during which so much has happened. A big part of my time this year has been spent on the department's self-study report for the Cyclical Program Review – that's the process that every university program has to go through every 7-8 years to make sure we're upholding educational standards. Our team produced a document and appendices of nearly 1300 pages that presents details of our department's history, our courses, our faculty, staff, and students. It's been a great way to get to know my institutional home, and to learn about all of your accomplishments! Huge thanks to Trish Salah, Melissa Houghtaling, Denita Arthurs, and Mel Côté for all their work on this.

I'm also writing this as we continue to process the recent violent attack on a gender studies classroom at the University of Waterloo. As a department, we have been working with folks across Queen's and across Canada to strategize about how we can keep ourselves safe. We have an incredible community of teachers, learners, activists, creators, healers, agitators, and leaders among us, and I'm so grateful we have each other.

Thanks for taking the time to read this newsletter, and I hope you have a wonderful summer!

*~ Sailaja*



# STUDENT PROFILES

## **Muna Dahir, Gender Studies PhD student**

As a Teaching Fellow in the Gender Studies Department this semester, I was granted the opportunity to step into the role of a course instructor for the first time. Through this experience, I was able to develop and lead my dream undergraduate course, "Black Diasporic Literature and Literary Theories." As a doctoral student, this course allowed me to expand upon key themes in my research while exploring new critical dimensions between the role of literary production and ongoing global struggles for Black liberation. During the Winter 2020 semester, I spent time developing the first iteration of this course, and I could not have anticipated how invigorating it would feel to see the theories I had previously engaged with in the quiet solitude of my room come to life through the eager and brilliant minds of my students. Teaching my special topics course has been a joyful and incredibly enriching experience for me and I have learned a tremendous amount about how I might continue to develop my pedagogical philosophy both inside and outside of the classroom. This summer, I am excited to continue my doctoral research at Emory University's Stuart A. Rose Library. I hope to use this time to continue to deepen my understanding of the complexities of Black authorship, archival practices, and print cultures and I am eager to see how this experience will inform my teaching and doctoral work in the future.

## **Carly Clemens, Gender Studies undergraduate student and Department Student Council co-president**

I have spent 3 wonderful years within the Gender Studies department, and it had changed my life in more ways than I can count. Working with the DSC this year, for the second year, has allowed me to further witness all of the different reasons that students and faculty are drawn to our department, and for that I am beyond grateful. This is a community unlike any other!



# STUDENT PROFILES

## Melanie Murdock, Gender Studies PhD student

Hi, my name is Melanie and I am entering the second year of my PhD in Gender Studies at Queen's. So far, my experience in the department has been wonderful! The support I have received from faculty and staff have allowed me to develop my confidence, to dream big, and to begin achieving my goals. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, **Dr. Karen Lawford**, who has empowered me to advocate for change in big ways and has helped me to recognize my potential.

Since beginning the program, I have gained practical knowledge and strategies to begin applying Gender Studies theories and methodologies to my research. My proposed research is to perform a program evaluation of Ontario's Midwifery Education Program to determine if, and how, they educate midwives to provide inclusive care to 2SLGBTQQA+ parents.

While preparing my doctoral research, I have continued working on projects with community partners. Particularly, I have been collaborating with a feminist non-profit to establish guidelines that help staff engage in feminist and ethical research. In response to staff needs, a colleague and I developed a tool for establishing reciprocal research relationships. This tool has been accepted for publishing in SAGE's Research Ethics journal for the Spring of 2023. I am excited to share this news with you first! The piece is entitled: "Research Responsibility Agreement: A Tool to Support Ethical Research" (DOI: 10.1177/17470161231166600) by Stephanie Erickson and myself.



## KEYS CELL PHONE DRIVE

Do you have a used, working cellphone that you can donate?

Queen's-KEYS Refugee Support Alliance is a coalition of Queen's faculty and staff, staff from KEYS, and others, who together are advocating for newcomer and refugee supports. We are working to support incoming refugees with urgent and necessary items, accessing services, and networking with the community. Cell phones are a crucial necessity.

If you have a cellphone that you donate, please bring it to us in the Department of Gender Studies (Fourth Floor, Sutherland Hall). We will collect them and pass them on to KEYS, where staff work directly with individuals in need.

Contact Sailaja if you'd like more information at [gndshead@queensu.ca](mailto:gndshead@queensu.ca)

# STUDENT PROFILES



## **Mars Atkins, Gender Studies undergraduate student**

Taking Gender Studies was one of the best choices I've ever made. The courses I've taken have greatly expanded my world view and sharpened my skills as a critical thinker. I'm so lucky to be able to pursue my passion for EDII work through my education and explore topics of interest within my studies. My latest project has been exploring the politics of space concerning transfat bodies. The Gender Studies program has not only helped me thrive in my academic pursuits, but has also aided me in my work. I'm very proud to bring what I've learned in my courses to my work at the **Yellow House** as a sexual and gender diversity programming assistant. I hope to continue to use my knowledge gained from Gender Studies in my future academic and career pursuits.



## **Amaiya Walters, Black Studies undergraduate student**

The Black Studies program has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on my academic and personal growth! The professors I have encountered are amazing and I feel their genuine interest and care in their students when they teach. The content and the way it is delivered, constantly requires me to think critically and creatively, and hold space for the exploration of my own identities and experiences. I have also been challenged to think beyond my own perspective and to explore ones that are different from my own in class. The knowledge that I gain within these courses shifts how I see the world around me to being more intersectional and this allows me to effect positive change within the Queen's community and beyond. As a Black student here, I have often struggled to feel represented in academic settings, however, within this program I know that I am valued and seen. I am grateful this program exists and it has been a pleasure to be one of the first students in enrolled in the minor and the course that go along with it. I cannot wait to see how Black Studies at Queen's will grow and develop over time.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

## administrative work as a site of activism



### **Denita Arthurs, Department Manager**

My name is Denita and I have worked in the Department of Gender Studies since the winter of 2020. As Department Manager, I get to work with the faculty, students, and staff across the Black Studies and Gender Studies programs, and I have to tell you – this is an incredibly special place.

Unlike most folks who find themselves in a Gender Studies department, I am absolutely enamored with administrative structures and processes. Growing up I was fascinated not only with “why” something was being done, but also, and perhaps more interestingly to me, the “how”. Previous careers had left me frustrated. When asked to focus on process, work lacked compassion and people were left behind. But focussing on people led to operational issues and an inconsistent application of rights and privileges.

Working in Gender Studies has helped me create a new path. I now see that administration holds the same potential for oppression as it does for liberation. Administration should make things easier, not harder! There is always a better, more compassionate way to do things.

Staff aren't tangential to the mission of Black Studies and Gender Studies – they are critical contributors to the department's feminist anti-racist mandate. I'm excited to introduce some of the amazing staff that I get to work with and to share a few projects we have been collaborating on. These folks are part of a larger web of people (like our colleagues in custodial services) who make intellectual labor and activist-organizing possible. These staff members are changing the world AND being part of this department is changing them. You know you're in the right place, when you wake up thinking “I can't believe I get paid to work and learn with these people!”

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

One of my initial impressions of Gender Studies was seeing colleagues do this world-shifting, radical work, and not draw attention to themselves. This semi-annual newsletter was an early effort to shine a light on our collective efforts, without being performative. We also wanted to connect with alumni and community partners in a new way. Last fall, we hired Claire to expand on our vision by creating graphics and posters and animating our physical and online space with aesthetics that match our mission. Claire has created compelling, provocative visuals that reflect the thought and impact of the activities they represent.



## **Claire Grady-Smith, Marketing Assistant**

My work has been transformed since I began my role as Marketing Assistant in GNDS, in September 2022. For the past 12 years, I've had a series of clients from the private sector, and was comfortable with working in isolation. I had no idea that being part of a team—especially a team committed to inclusivity and accessibility—could unleash such creativity. As my hours here are capped at 10 per week, I find myself pursuing other client work that complements what I do at Queen's. Anticapitalist, Queer, Trans, antiracist, disability advocacy, Indigenous sovereignty...these are the projects I wish to promote. My heart races thinking about this. What can happen if I insist that my productive labour be put in the service of transformative justice? How can I make images that shout from the walls, or online feeds, such that the attendant content is impossible to ignore? Marketing What Matters, reads my new **website** tagline. For the first time since my MA here, in Cultural Studies, it feels like my work might make a difference for the people I care about most in this world.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

One of our staffing strategies is to create a variety of casual jobs that bring in a diverse group of students and community members. We aspire to create meaningful, transformative, mutually beneficial opportunities. For the last three years I have had the joy of working with Emily. I have supervised hundreds of students in my career and Emily has impressed me with her level of reflection. Before she comes to me with a problem or wanting to talk through an idea, she has already gone through all the possibilities she can think of. She asks well thought out questions that will guide her next steps. We are excited to see her flourish as Assistant Manager with **Studio Q** in the upcoming year!

## **Emily Joyce, Work study student (2021-2023)**

Working for the Gender Studies department for the last two and a half years has been a rewarding and enriching opportunity. I have had the pleasure of working on a variety of video editing and content creation projects for the department as a video assistant work-study student. Through this position, I have grown professionally and personally while developing skills in a field I am passionate about through the guidance of the amazing staff within the department. The Gender Studies community is a welcoming, inclusive, and positive environment that has fostered my growth and development as a video editor. The experience has exposed me to different perspectives, ideas, and ways of thinking that have broadened my understanding of inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity. I am so grateful for the mentorship my work-study position has offered me. Working with the department has been a highlight of my undergrad.





# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

The fall of 2021 was an exciting time – after two decades of building Black Studies, it was coming to life... we were hiring a staff person! We had an amazing group of candidates, and we would have been well-served by any of them. When Taylor accepted the job, I remember thinking to myself “What an honour that I get to work with her and be part of her career journey.” Nothing could have been closer to the truth. She moved on to a new role with the Ban Righ Centre in January, but she will always be one of the founders of Black Studies and a critical part of the department’s history.

I am thrilled to share that Taylor was a recipient of the 2023 Black Scholars Excellence in Mentorship Award. As the first staff person to be dedicated to the new Black Studies program, Taylor played an integral role in welcoming, onboarding, supporting new Black Studies faculty members and fellows, walking them through Queen’s systems and processes, and connecting them to each other, to the department/university, and to the broader community. She also provided mentorship for new staff and was an important source of support for undergraduate and graduate students.

**“Taylor brings joy to the workplace. I don't know anyone else who is so committed to people and their well-being. Beyond campus, Taylor works and volunteers in communities of care, with youth and struggling folks. What a gift to have someone like her to look up to and to be among us.” ~Juliane Okot Bitek**

**Taylor Cenac, Black Studies Program and Administrative Assistant (2021-2023), Student Advisor and Program Coordinator, Ban Righ Centre**

It is heartwarming to know that my impact has been felt so deeply by my colleagues. Sometimes it can be the smallest gesture of kindness that sticks with us, and this gesture, this award, will stick with me as a reminder of the work I aim to do and the impact I strive for. Thank you, Gender Studies, for nominating me for this award.



# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF



The department's decision to move into Robert Sutherland Hall last spring coincided with the return of staff to campus after two years working from home. It was a strange thing – we returned to MacCorry, only to pack everything up and prepare for a June move. Staff went through the common areas, like the bubble-gum pink lounge, and made decisions on what we would move. We (at that time “we” was Mel, Taylor, Rosa and Denita) wondered what the new space would be like – and how we could welcome folks back to campus in the fall. And we definitely came up with the coolest idea ever. We installed some wall racks and had a custom mug made for everyone. We brainstormed some phrases for the bottom that would remind us of our mission. Everyone has a mug – it doesn't matter if they are a term adjunct or the department manager or a grad student or the person with most seniority. Everyone belongs here.



# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

We are currently undertaking a larger space project, building a kitchenette and freshening up common areas while the university builds two accessible, all gender washrooms in our hallway this summer. A working group of students, staff, faculty, and community members have been discussing how space can be used to build community and improve food security. We have had a number of meetings with the project management team, the architect and an internal designer, and they seem quite - how should I put this - fascinated... with our non-institutional approach. Sidd's MA application talked about how space design can challenge patriarchy and power structures, and we were excited when she agreed to work with us on this project. She created this phenomenal presentation where she (somehow, as if by magic) mapped our physical space on top of colour theory and the department's mission and values, and it became very clear how we could proceed. Construction began this week and will continue over the summer - follow the progress over social media!



## **Siddharta Rodriguez Rodriguez** *Space Design Project Assistant*

I had the opportunity to work on the department's space design project and apply my studies to a real-life project. This has been an interesting way of merging my special interests: gender studies and design. Throughout the project, I've gained a better awareness of the need for team communication as well as the need to be adaptable to ensure the project's success.

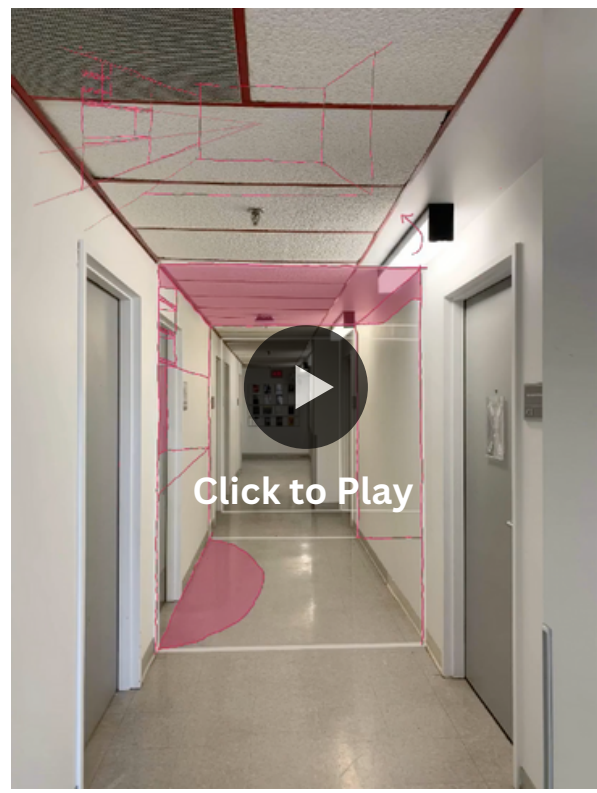
**Denita Arthurs** believes there is always a more caring and sympathetic way of doing things and counting me in this project -as well as my own

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

experience- can reassure that. She introduced me to a broad team of professionals from all backgrounds and levels of experience; it's been a fantastic learning opportunity since it allowed me to learn from each person's unique perspective.

I've been motivated to be more creative and imaginative since I can draw on the knowledge and experience of others around me. Learning the value of clear direction and guidance in ensuring a project works well has resulted in an inspiring and motivating atmosphere, and this experience helped me improve my multitasking skills because I had to manage numerous projects at once.

Learning is fun because of all the things that compound it: being curious about something you are passionate about, getting excited when you take in something new, looking for inspiration, meeting new people, creating safe spaces to discover new things with others, the feeling when something 'clicks' after you hear different perspectives. This experience has been fun, retrieving, and enlightening as an international student, a professional, and a person.



# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

We have also been in conversations with folks at the **Yellow House Student Centre for Equity & Inclusion (YH)** about different ways we can work together to serve students who identify as Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, and/or as People of Colour. We partnered with YH to develop a St. Patrick's Day resource for students, with recommended travel routes to campus, a list of alternative events, and a variety of safety resources. And we worked with YH Director Deanna Fialho to pilot a shared space model, where YH EDI Coordinators work from a Gender Studies office on a regular basis. Tianna has been the first YH staff working in our space, and she has brought a fun energy to the hall. It is exciting to see the synergies, support networks, and creative ideas that are resulting from this cross-pollination.



## **Tianna Edwards** *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator with Yellow House*

When Yellow House Director, Deanna Fialho, asked me if I would be interested in sitting in the Black/Gender Studies department it was an easy yes. I was looking forward to being surrounded by folks as interested in dismantling cultural norms and smashing the patriarchy as I am. I've admired the work of so many of you for so long. What I didn't anticipate is the small moments that would give me an even stronger sense of belonging like shared meals, great conversation, humouring my strong opinions on iced espresso mixed with lemonade and custom stickers that make me feel so seen in the best way. Creating a culture that makes being on campus a nice experience is a significant part of the battle that is existing at Queen's. Thank you all for the very warm welcome to your space and for making me feel like I am part of your team. I appreciate you!

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

We just finished a cyclical program review, and in preparing our self-study we invited folks to add an ending to sentences like “A big dream for the department is...” and “We could have done better at...”. During our staff consultation, Jarena shared her experience that “We’ve been amazing at... allowing folks to be themselves and creating space to laugh loudly”. There was a brief pause as we all looked around the room, wondering who would speak up. One person started, “But... Jarena, YOU are the one who helps us laugh and be ourselves!”. A chorus of agreement and laughter followed. Jarena is an example of how one person can quickly impact a group’s culture.

**Jarena Lee**  
*Undergraduate Program and  
Administrative Assistant*

I am so excited to be introducing myself as the newest staff member in the Gender Studies department! I have been the Undergraduate Program and Administrative Assistant for almost 8 months now and I can honestly say that I have loved being a part of this department.

Working with such beautiful, thoughtful minds who are moving our world forward has been incredibly enriching. I am so grateful to be part of a department that encourages social justice activism (of many kinds) and to keep learning. In fact, I'm currently taking an ASL course thanks to the Professional Learning and Development fund. Within this



# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

role, I am consistently considering what inclusivity and accessibility actually mean and because of that, I am seeing myself grow into the person I've always wanted to be.

I have learned so much from my colleagues just by being alongside them and getting to witness the important work they are doing. I am truly inspired by the dedication and passion that I see in everyone - staff and faculty alike.

Outside of my administrative role, I am also a multi-disciplinary artist. Recently, I completed a two-and-a-half-week theatre residency focused on anti-fat bias and creating spaces for marginalized bodies. It was quite a transformative experience. I was so excited to come back to the department and share my findings, which I knew aligned closely with the department's mission. It's been amazing to be in a workspace where my own projects are uplifted and supported.

I want to thank everyone for welcoming me into this space and making this transition as smooth as it could be. My door is always open, so please feel free to stop by for a chat and a little laugh! I am looking forward to seeing you all this Fall.

Over the last 12 months, Black Studies and Gender Studies faculty and staff have been working on a Community Working Agreement that identifies concrete ways we can draw on the department's mission and values in everyday interactions and how we talk about and work through conflict. The project has been facilitated by Yasmine Djerbal, who completed an MA with us in 2014 before completing a PhD in Cultural Studies.

Now Associate Director at the Centre for Teaching & Learning at Queen's, Yasmine oversees a team of educational developers to promote equity focused, research-informed and evidence-based strategies in teaching and learning. She is also a community organizer committed to social justice and social change, and is co-founder

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

of **Roots & Wings**, a local organization aimed at girl, trans, and gender-non-conforming youth of colour. We are delighted to share that Yasmine was awarded the **2023 Ban Righ Foundation Leadership Award** which recognizes an individual who self-identifies as a woman and who has built capacity and fostered opportunities for others, made positive contributions within the broader Kingston community, and been inspirational.



## **Yasmine Djerbal** *Associate Director at the Centre for Teaching & Learning and GNDS alum*

I am incredibly humbled and honoured to be recognized with a Leadership Award at this year's Ban Righ Foundation Inspiring Women Ceremony. Thank you to my nominators and mentors **Katherine McKittrick, Margaret Little** and Sayyida Jaffer for the incredible care and recognitions; thank you for the beautiful words and for your continued support these past 10 years. Thank you to the radical aunties, co-conspirators, collaborators, and comrades for the support; thank you to those I have learned with/from in the Gender Studies Department and beyond. I am who I am because of you. Thank you!

In a Community Working Agreement meeting last summer, a faculty member reflected that our department and committee meeting structure can privilege faculty voices over staff. As one outcome of the discussion, we decided to adopt a different approach to department meetings. In order to make staff labour and expertise more visible, administrative reports are no longer given by faculty program chairs and the department head. The faculty lead and staff lead from each area now give a shared report. We also hired Veronica to take minutes at department meetings, along with some other tasks, which has allowed staff members to fully participate in meetings alongside faculty colleagues. Her ability to do this work with such ease and proficiency has had a tremendous impact on staff workload and visibility while allowing the department to implement a collaborative structure.



# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

## Veronica Sewilski

### Communications Assistant



I graduated with my BAH in Gender Studies from Queen's in Spring 2022, but stuck around the university to work a job in Student Affairs. After a few months away from Gender Studies, I realized how much I missed the department. When I heard they were hiring a Communications Assistant, I jumped at the chance! In my part-time role, I send out weekly update emails to faculty, staff, and undergraduate students in the department, take minutes at department meetings, and compile documents as needed. It has been lovely working with professors who taught me during my undergrad and seeing what it takes for a department to operate. This job really affirmed how much the department feels like home for me, so I am very excited to continue my Queen's Gender Studies journey as I start my MA in the Fall!

This spring, first year MA & PhD students and a number of faculty/staff colleagues nominated Rosa for the SGPS Staff Excellence Award. Rosa has been a consistent advocate for graduate students, ensuring that program and departmental decision-making and strategy setting considers their voices, needs, work, and humanity. She consistently prompts us to center students, asking: “Have we considered the impact on grad students? Are we respecting the agency of students in the way this support is being offered? Will this address real needs?” She reflects on how we can recruit in an authentic way – balancing – “come study with us, we are really awesome” with “there are things about Queen’s and Kingston you just gotta know...” We were so thrilled to acknowledge the calm steadiness, ethical commitment, and warmth she brings to our department.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

## Rosa Gutierrez

### *Graduate Assistant*



It's been a whirlwind since I joined the Gender Studies department as a Graduate Assistant in November 2021! Whether it's welcoming incoming students in the fall, preparing for application season in the winter, or submitting nomination packages for major awards in the summer – no two days have ever been the same.

I genuinely like my job – and a large part of this comes from working in a front-facing student role. As the first point of contact for our graduate students, I'm there to support them as they progress through their academic careers – and to cheer them on as they inch closer to the finish line! I've had the treasured opportunity to build relationships with some incredible human beings who make the world a bit brighter.

I was recently surprised and incredibly honoured to learn that the students and department put forward a nomination for the SGPS Staff Excellence Award on my behalf. It's an honour that still makes my heart skip a beat! I'm incredibly grateful to work alongside such a wonderful group of people, who not only uplift one another but have uplifted me as well! While I've learned a lot about process, procedure, and policy in this role, it's the compassion, care, and thoughtfulness that continuously ripples through the department that has had the largest impact on my learning. I am very grateful to work in a department that encourages us to reflect on the work we do as administrators through the lens of social justice activism. It is through this lens I'm prompted to reconsider recruitment strategies, orientation, community-building, and student engagement – processes that very much fall into a site of social justice activism.

I've loved working and learning with a team of amazing folks who have welcomed me to this department with open arms. This fall, we will kick off another academic year. I look forward to working and learning alongside you all and having some fun along the way!

# FACULTY NEWS



**KATHERINE MCKITTRICK**

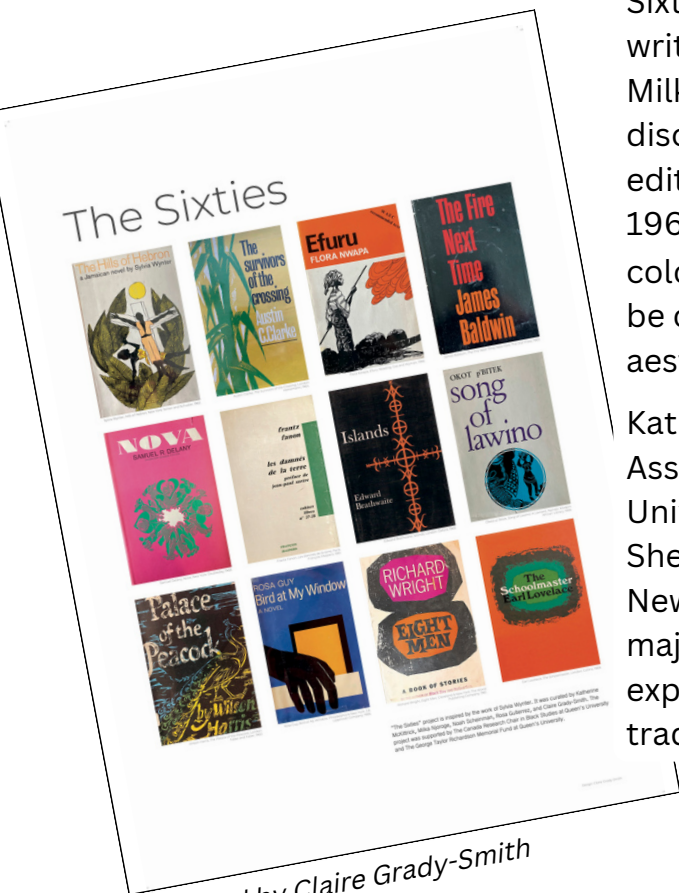
With **Cristian Ordóñez**, **Liz Ikiriko**, and **Lyse Hébert**, Katherine McKittrick finalized the Trick Not Telos box set. A limited-edition handmade book, Trick Not Telos was manufactured by Gas Company and includes five academic essays, in both French and English, that are experiments in repetition, revision, and translation. With only 100 copies in circulation, Trick Not Telos was mailed out to colleagues, photographers, libraries, and art galleries, with the support of Denita Arthurs, Paul Akpomuje, Milka Njoroge, Adesoji Babalola, and Dorcas Okyere.

With Milka Njoroge, Noah Sheinman, Rosa Gutierrez, and Claire Grady Smith, Katherine began a project called “The Sixties.” Inspired by the writings of Sylvia Wynter, Milka and Katherine studied, discussed, sought out first edition book covers from the 1960s that captured the anti-colonial struggles that animated the era. This project will be ongoing and is threaded to new research on black aesthetics and/as bookmaking.



*Photo by Cristian Ordóñez*

Katherine gave talks at the American Philosophical Association (with Denise Da Silva and Deb Thompson), University of Maryland, and University College, London. She has new work coming out at the Tate, London, in CR: New Centennial Review, and in Simone Leigh, the first major monograph on Simone Leigh’s multimedia explorations of community, Black feminism and the traditions and material cultures of the African diaspora.



*Designed by Claire Grady-Smith*

# FACULTY NEWS



TRISH SALAH

Associate Professor Trish Salah has poetry in the latest **Vallum Magazine** (19.3) and recently participated in "Decolonial Rearticulations: A Transwomanist Arab Roundtable Dialogue," with Rasha Abdulhadi, Amir Rabiya, Zeyn Joukhadar, Joe Kadi & Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán" for a "Trans/Feminisms" special issue of **Sinister Wisdom: A Multicultural Lesbian Literary & Art Journal**. Last winter, she screened creative work at the conference, Thinking its Presence: Racial Vertigo, BlackBrown Feelings, and Significantly Problematic Objects (Pomona College, Los Angeles, California) and at an experimental arts series revisiting Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons, *W\*o\*o\*я\*d\*S\_* (ΛΑΑΑ, Athens, Greece), and participated in Rewriting Feminisms, an online reading by trans women poets, hosted by the feminist caucus of the League of Canadian Poets for National Poetry Month. Additionally she is collaborating on the SSHRC Connection Grant funded project, "Our Aesthetic Possibilities: Lectures on Art-Making in the 21st Century," (P.I. Bart Vartour, Co-applicants Erin Wunker and Jerry Ropsom; \$25,705 awarded) and is honoured to be serving as Guest Judge for the **Etel Adnan Poetry Prize** (for a first or second book of poetry by an author of Arab heritage).



MELISSA HOUGHTALING

This past year Melissa Houghtaling developed and taught a new 400/800-level seminar special topics course on Feminisms, Class, and Economic Justice. In the first several weeks of the course, students examined different feminist theoretical approaches to economic justice, including Marxist/socialist, intersectional, and anarcha-feminist theories. The rest of the course explored activism, community organizing, and social justice movements that seek to address poverty, homelessness, unemployment and underemployment, wage inequalities, gendered and racialized divisions of labour, and other related socioeconomic inequities. Discussions and readings focused on

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feminist, anti-racist, anti-ableist, and intersectional critiques of capitalism and interventions by activists, community members, and scholars in envisioning and working towards a more economically just society. Some of the topics included Mutual Aid, Basic Income, Queer Poverty, Justice for the Unhoused, Decriminalization of Sex Work, Disability and Mental Health, and Environmental + Economic Justice. Melissa looks forward to teaching this course again in Winter 2024!



**VANESSA  
THOMPSON**

Vanessa Thompson is currently concentrating on her fieldwork for the multi-sited research project on the transnational dimensions of abolitionist worldmaking in the black diaspora, and is in the process of finishing her book manuscript *Black Socialities: Black Urban Activism and the Struggle beyond Recognition in Paris* (forthcoming with Manchester University Press). She presented at the transnational symposium **On Abolition** organized by Annette Joseph at Duke University, the series **Decolonizing Aid: Planetary Solidarity Beyond Aid** organized by medico international, and was a discussant at the event **Streitraum: Defund and Abolish – or: Democratization of the police** at Schaubühne Berlin. In March, she was in conversation with **Juliane Okot Bitek** and Yasmine Djerbal about **Liberatory Pedagogies and Imaginaries** as part of the Teaching to Transgress Series, organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Queen's. She contributed a commentary for the interface section of the Geographica Helvetica Annual Journal Lecture by Camilla Hawthorne on the relation between the **Black Mediterranean and liberation** and was interviewed for the podcast **Talk Social Science To Me** on abolition (together with Daniel Loick). She further co-organized a panel on food politics, war and resistance as part of the mini-series **Legacies of War. Imperialisms, Racisms and Transnational Feminist Solidarities**, which she co-organizes with Katherine Mazurok and Studies in National and International Development (SNID) at Queen's.

# FACULTY NEWS



**GRACE  
ADENIYI-OGUNYANKIN**

Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin was recently named a fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) new program, **Humanity's Urban Future**. She also co-interviewed the scholar-activist, Prof Sylvia Tamale with her colleague, Sylvia Bawa, as part of Antipode's "**Decolonial Thinkers from Africa**" series and delivered invited guest lectures at Western University (Geography Department, Jan 2023) and at École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Malaquais (March 2023). Finally, while on sabbatical, she has been experimenting with creative knowledge mobilization approaches: She presented her short story, "Moments" at the AAG conference in March and her collection of poems, "Estranged. City. Stranger(s)" will be part of the Venice Biennale Publication for the 18th International Architecture exhibition, titled **The Laboratory of the Future**.



**SCOTT  
MORGENSEN**

Building from the fall 2022 Gender Studies graduate seminar "Writing Ethnography," Scott Morgensen launched a new activity this spring for the Queen's Feminist Ethnography Network, an interdepartmental Writing Group serving graduate students and other Queen's researchers who are preparing ethnographic writing. You can also look on the spring list of Duke University Press for the imminent publication announcement of *Unsettling Queer Anthropology*, in which he is a contributor.

# CONGRATULATIONS

## Recent Gender Studies MA graduates

Annie Langford (Supervisors: **Trish Salah** & **Katherine McKittrick**)

Major Research Paper: "Retracing the Origins of Sexual Violence: An Exploration of Luzene Hill's Artwork"

Pravienna Gnanakumar (Supervisor: **Katherine McKittrick**)

Major Research Paper: "Exploring DIY Feminist Collage Epistemologies and Subverting Social Media Activism"

Lucia Luciani (Supervisor: **Trish Salah**)

Major Research Paper: "The Growth of Lucia Pet: An Analysis of R.P.D.R. in Comparison to Local Drag"

## 2021-22 Bev Baines Service Award

*Charlie Atkinson, 4th Year Gender Studies undergraduate student and DSC Student Representative*

Awarded to a student who has shown exceptional and notable service in Gender, Women's, and Feminist Studies. The winner reflects Professor Baines' steadfast commitment to expanding and enhancing the Department of Gender Studies and the meaningful committee work required to support a complex feminist vision at Queen's University. **Melissa Houghtaling** worked with Charlie on the Gender Studies Headship Committee last year and was very impressed with their dedication to represent (and empower) undergraduate student voices and their commitment to help shape the vision of our department. Charlie has made a similar lasting impression on their peers, who nominated Charlie for their exceptional and notable service to the GNDS department, the university, and the Kingston community.



"I am so honoured to have been chosen for this award. Upon entering Queen's, as a young disabled queer, I was uncertain if I would even be able to make it through my degree. Now, in my last year, I am eternally grateful for the people both in and outside of our department (Dr. Tomac, **Dr. Morgensen**, and **Dr. Brulé**, to name a few) who have supported and pushed me to achieve my goals, because I owe my successes in my time here to them. Together, we are striving to create more accessible models of education that allows people like me to study and flourish, and this award is a testament to our collective efforts." ~ Charlie

# CONGRATULATIONS



“Thank you GNDS for such a humbling award! It was a privilege and pleasure to teach the brilliant students of Feminist and Queer Ethnography in the department I graduated from. Teaching is a skill I learned from **Margaret Little, Katherine McKittrick** and **Scott Morgensen** and they continue to inspire me. Special thanks to them! Much love...” ~ Ayca

## 2021-22 Faculty Teaching Award

**Dr. Ayca Tomac**

Ayca taught GNDS 445 Feminist and Queer Ethnography in the 2021-22 year. The Awards committee was impressed by the impact Dr. Tomac has on her students and the learning environment she strives to create to encourage and support (and challenge!) them. One student nomination shares: “Dr. Tomac has been an incredible professor... She fostered a passionate and lively classroom whose discussions have forever changed my perspectives... She continuously challenged and supported my understanding and learning in ways I never thought possible. She brought her own expertise into the [course] while also creating an environment where we learned together. My best work has been created because of the support and critiques of Dr. Tomac, and I have no doubt that she has affected so many others in the same way.”

## Faculty Recipients of the Black Scholars in Excellence Mentorship Award

***Vanessa Thompson***

While Vanessa started at Queen’s just a year ago, she has already made a significant impact within our department, the university, and the Kingston community. Vanessa has brought an abundance of experience with social justice activism and community building to her work in building Black Studies at Queen’s. She has mentored faculty and staff with this knowledge, helping to develop a Community Working Agreement in Gender Studies and modeling deep commitment to working collaboratively with care for each other and a vision of how our work together can transform the world around us.



# CONGRATULATIONS



“Vanessa’s passion for social justice is inspiring. Watching the amazing work Vanessa has done in her short time at Queen’s has reinvigorated my commitment to solidarity work and reminded me to still have hope, no matter how discouraging things may be in the world.” ~ **Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin**



## *Juliane Okot Bitek*

Juliane is a poet, creative writing teacher, and an incredible mentor to students, staff, and colleagues. Since arriving at Queen’s, Juliane has inspired us with her creativity, generosity, and commitment to community. She has made beautiful mentoring connections with other new racialized faculty in Black Studies, Gender Studies, and English, and has consistently mentored and advocated for Black students and staff.

“As a new faculty member at Queen’s, even newer than Juliane, finding myself in the position of Department Head, I am so grateful for Juliane’s warmth, presence, and encouragement. Juliane has been so thoughtful about how Gender Studies might feel like a home to me, and she has done that through her kindness, empathy, and her gentle but forceful challenges to us to think creatively about how to build our community. I learn from her every day and am delighted to be in co-mentoring relation with her.” ~ **Sailaja Krishnamurti**



## *Katherine McKittrick*

Katherine’s mentorship comes in many forms. Her patient, persistent, visionary approach to building Black Studies has inspired change across the university. Mentoring of students and colleagues has been formal and informal, part of hallway

# CONGRATULATIONS

chats, collectives, and research projects. Katherine has not only mentored faculty, but she also actively invites students, staff, and administration colleagues to walk beside her and push for change together. It goes without saying (and far too often, has gone unsaid) that Black Studies at Queen's would not exist without Katherine.

**"Katherine is a black studies trailblazer, an intellectual and political touchstone, and a true inspiration! Her commitment, passion, support, mentorship and encouragement nurture and inspire so many of us!" ~ Vanessa Thompson**

## *Other Winners*

Cross-appointed faculty member **Kristin Moriah** and the "Black Feminist Interludes" co-mentorship group also received awards.

## *...And congratulations to:*

MA student Kunle Oluwawehinmi who welcomed baby Ololade in March 2023.

**Juliane Okot Bitek** whose book **A is for Acholi** is shortlisted for the **2023 Pat Lowther Memorial Award** and is a finalist for the **2023 Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize** and the **2023 Jim Deva Prize for Writing that Provokes**.

Black Studies faculty member **Jennifer Leath** and Gender Studies faculty member **Karen Lawford** who have both been granted Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor.

Cross-appointed faculty **Isabelle St-Amand**, **Reena Kukreja**, and **Shobhana Xavier** have also been granted tenure.

**Dr. Avery Everhart** (MA GNDS 2016) who started a **tenure track position at UBC**.

**Danny McLaren** (MA GNDS 2022) who presented work from their MRP at the **Moving Trans History Forward conference** at University of Victoria and was an invited reader at **VerseFest** in Ottawa.

*Would you like to share a quick update?  
Email us at [genderstudies@queensu.ca](mailto:genderstudies@queensu.ca).*

# JOURNAL OF CRITICAL RACE INQUIRY



**Cover Art: Alanna Lynch,  
"Concealed and Contained."**

Our cover art for this issue, features an image of Alanna Lynch crocheting hair that has dropped from her own head around her face, neck, and shoulders, working with her coarse hair to challenge Western notions of beauty.

Following this winter's **special issue on the current state of Critical Race Theory**, this spring issue of JCRI turns its focus to **Intimate Orientations**.

As editors **Juliane Okot Bitek** and **Kesha Fevrier** write in their introduction, this issue considers the ways in which spaces of power press upon racialized people and takes up "how folks think through, organize, and resist through a critical race lens. From the most intimate orientations—naming and misnaming—to (Xine) Yao's identification of "unfeeling" as an affective lens through which exclusion and inclusion are practiced, this issue asks us to think about and raise questions about presence, voice, articulation, claim, and re-presentation."

Emblematic of this focus, this issue's cover art, Alanna Lynch's *Concealed and Contained*, offers powerful visual articulation, deconstruction, and reconfiguration of naturalized and racialized conceptions of beauty, aesthetics, and Blackness.

Problematics of affect, power, and resistance thread through each of this issue's essays, in different ways. Vidya Shah and jeewan chanicka analyze how intersections between white supremacy, anti-Black racism, caste oppression, and settler colonialism produce "power asymmetries within and between Brown communities and between Brown and Black communities" and condition the possibilities for resisting anti-Black racism. Manjeet Birk

# JOURNAL OF CRITICAL RACE INQUIRY

explores counterstory as a method for re-narrating and re-valuing the lived experiences of Black and racialized women academics and activists facing erasure and violence, and Sunandha Shanmugaraj examines and theorizes the long-term impacts of the colonization of Tamil's students names in the Ontario school system.

Also in this issue, a photo essay by Fatima Jaffer documents the long history of women of colour and Indigenous women's organizing International Women's Day in Vancouver, BC and considers how easily that history can be erased by irresponsible media and organizers eager to promote "their first" as the "the first." And Marietta Kosma reviews *Disaffected: The Cultural Politics of Unfeeling in Nineteenth-Century America* by Xine Yao, a book about the racial and sexual politics of "unfeeling," as a response to compulsory norms of emotional expression rooted in white supremacy and anti-Blackness.

**Kesha Fevrier** edits the JCRI blog, and in solidarity with the uprising in Iran, over the last six months the blog has featured a series of statements, poems and artistic works by Ava Homa, Gita Hashemi, Bahar Orang and more. Check out their work: [jcri.ca/index.php/CRI/announcement](http://jcri.ca/index.php/CRI/announcement)

JCRI is soliciting book reviewers for upcoming issues. To receive a list of books we are interested in having reviewed or to make a proposal, contact us at [managingeditor.jcri@queensu.ca](mailto:managingeditor.jcri@queensu.ca).

Finally, we want to thank Milka Njoroge, our 2022/23 Editorial Intern, for the tremendous insight and energy she brought to this and our winter issue, and for her many contributions to the Journal over the year.

## JOURNAL OF CRITICAL RACE INQUIRY

# NEW FACES



## ***Elaine Cagulada, Post-doctoral fellow***

Elaine teaches and researches in the areas of disability studies, black studies, and sociology. Understanding narrative as a constitutive force animates her encounters with texts and spaces as stories. Elaine completed her PhD on opening interpretations of deafness, disability, race, and policing at University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her poetry and writing have been published in journals such as *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, and *New Sociology: Journal of Critical Praxis*. Elaine co-edited, alongside Tanya Titchkosky, Madeleine DeWelles, and Efrat Gold, ***DisAppearing: Encounters in Disability Studies***.

## ***Soji Cole, Black Studies pre-doctoral fellow***

Soji studied Theatre and Film at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, where he was also a teaching faculty for almost a decade before relocating to Canada. He was a Fulbright scholar in the School of Music, Theater and Dance at Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA. He is a winner of the African Theatre Association (AfTA) 'Emerging Scholars' Prize', as well as a winner of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR/FIRT) 'New Scholars Prize'. He has also won the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Playwriting Prize, and the Nigeria Prize for Literature. He has been a finalist of the BBC World Playwriting competition, and the Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature. His current research focus is on African Black Immigrants and Specters of Otherness, with particular focus on creating drama works on black African immigrants' experience of racism. Soji Cole has a PhD in Theatre and Film. He is currently on a second PhD program in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Brock University.



# NEW FACES



## ***Kharoll-Ann Souffrant, Black Studies pre-doctoral fellow***

Kharoll-Ann is a doctoral candidate in social work at the University of Ottawa. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in social work from McGill University. Her dissertation focuses on Black feminist activists and Black survivors' perspectives on the #MeToo movement in Quebec. Kharoll-Ann Souffrant is also the author of *Le privilège de dénoncer - Justice pour toutes les victimes de violences sexuelles*, a book that offers an intersectional perspective on the #MeToo movement. It was published in Quebec and Europe by Les éditions du remue-ménage. She has been named a 2020 United Nations Fellow for People of African Descent and is a columnist for several Quebec media outlets.



## ***Angela Stanley, Black Studies pre-doctoral fellow***

Angela completed a Masters in Critical Disability Studies at York University, writing a major research paper on Disability and Sexuality: Perceptions of Beauty, Sexuality and Desirability for Queer, Disabled Youth. Her doctoral research pays attention to the intersection of race/culture, queerness and disability in order to understand how people make sense of their intimate and sexual lives. She has presented original work on these themes at conferences within North America and her work has been published in Canadian peer reviewed journals. Accessibility is at the core of her work, and she is the current Accessibility Coordinator for the Ontario Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN). She has also shared her expertise on access/ accessibility needs with planning committees and research units at the university, corporate and non-profit levels, and is a reviewer for the Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal. She is Guyanese born and an avid fan of Star Trek.

# NEW FACES



## **Aaliyah Strachan, Concertinas Project Manager**

*Concertinas is a project supported by a Canada Research Chair in Black Studies and a Social Science and Humanities Insight Grant.* Currently based in Kingston, Ontario, Aaliyah is a first-generation Canadian, of Jamaican lineage. She obtained an Honours Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Carleton University in African Studies & History. Her appreciation for family pours over into a desire to bring people together and encourage community building through non-academic learning. Aaliyah is passionate about improving the community through volunteerism and currently volunteers with several local and international organizations. She spends her leisure time seeking out new adventures, and travelling globally in search of the best food she can find.



## **Harshita Yalamarty, Post-doctoral fellow**

Harshita holds a PhD in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies from York University (Toronto), and an MPhil and an MA in Political Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Most recently, she was an Assistant Professor in Women and Gender Studies at Saint Mary's University, Halifax (K'jipuktuk) and has previously taught at University of Delhi. Her dissertation was awarded the National Women's Studies Association/University of Illinois Press First Book Prize (2022) and the Mary McEwan Memorial Prize in feminist scholarship (2022) by the Centre for Feminist Research, York University. She also enjoys reading sci-fi and fantasy, watching baking shows, is a budding birder and can talk for hours about the transformative potential of playing tabletop roleplaying games.

# LEARN WITH US

As a department that is committed to challenging empire, racial capitalism, colonialism, cisheteropatriarchy, ableism, and other systems of oppression and exploitation, we acknowledge National and International days that are meaningful for our community and stand in solidarity with people who are experiencing harm and violence. Below is a list of curated resources for anyone wishing to learn more.

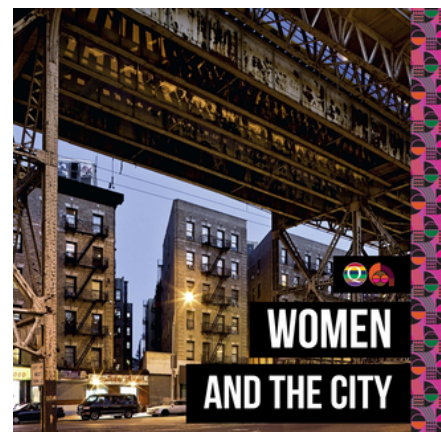
For **Black Histories/Black Futures month**, we asked Bianca Beauchemin, Channon Oyeniran, Leeza James, Timothy Yanick Hunter, and Nataleah Hunter-Young what they are reading, listening to, moving to, and moved by.

For **International Women's Day**, Gender Studies and Black Studies looked to the city –and thought about how feminist and anti-racist organizers, creatives, and researchers have challenged us to re-imagine, rebuild, and redefine the city, and better understand the global, transnational, and diasporic contours of the urban.

In response to a **blackface incident at Queen's**, Bianca Beauchemin and **Katherine McKittrick** held a teach-in (standing room only) and shared a list of recommend reading.

On the **Trans Day of Visibility**, we shared research and artistic work by trans scholars and creatives to claim the day and share trans joy!

And most recently, we wrote in **solidarity with the people of Sudan** who want a civilian-led government and a people's democracy with no military involvement.

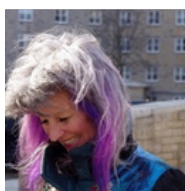




# WHAT ELSE?

## DONATIONS & GIVING

Please visit: <http://www.givetoqueens.ca/gnds>



### Terrie Easter Sheen Graduate Award

Donations will establish a graduate award for Gender Studies graduate students.



### Stephanie Simpson Bursary

Donations will support students who self-identify as Black Canadian entering first year of any first entry undergraduate degree program.



### Support Black Studies

Donations will support the development of the Black Studies program at Queen's University.

Sandra Brewster, "Untitled (Smiths)," mixed media on wood, 48x60", 2011

Contact us: [BLCK@queensu.ca](mailto:BLCK@queensu.ca)



### Other Funds

Poole Award in Women's and Gender Studies

Kathleen A. Herman Prize in Gender Studies

### Gender Studies Gift Fund

This fund supports general department operations. What type of expenses do we have?

\$20 welcomes an incoming graduate student with their own mug

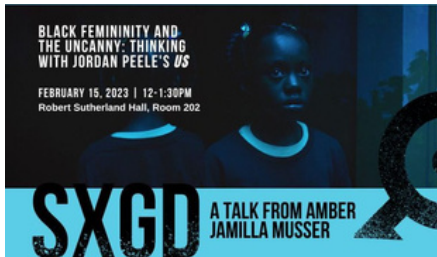
\$100 covers the cost of a coffee meet & greet with undergraduate students

\$250 pays the artist whose artwork is featured in a JCRI issue

\$500 goes toward the cost of a visiting speaker event

\$2500 creates a 60-hour Research Assistant position for an MA or PhD student

# WHAT ELSE?



## 2023 Sexual & Gender Diversity Speaker

**February 15 | Black Femininity and the Uncanny: Thinking with Jordan Peele's, 'Us'** Through the lens of black feminism, Amber Jamilla Musser analyzed how the idea of the uncanny in 'Us' helps to uncover the racialized dynamics of liberal subjectivity, desire, and domesticity.

## Gender Matters

**January 25 | Ghosts of Ottoman Slavery: Race in the Making of Hegemonic Turkishness.** Ayşegül Kayagil explored the simultaneous existence and denial of slavery within the Ottoman Empire and of a racialized history in modern Turkey.

## March 22 | Poetry Reading

**Chloé Savoie-Bernard**, newly cross-appointed to Gender Studies, and **Juliane Okot Bitek** read poems from their recent books. A conversation with both poets followed.

## Black Studies Speaker Series

Panelists discussed how *quare* resonates in their religious discourses and praxes

**January 19 | Black Queer Islams.** Featuring Red Summer's film 'Al Nisa' amina wadud, Red Summer, Asadullah Muhammad, and Lali Mohamed.

## March 16 | Black Queer Afro-Indigenous and New Religious Movements

Bianca Beauchemin, Meredith Coleman-Tobias, J.T. Roane, Lydon Gill, and Omise'eke Tinsley

## Graduate program updates

**Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin** has accepted a three-year term as Graduate Chair beginning July 1, 2023. Thank you to **Katherine McKittrick**, **Trish Salah**, and **Susan Lord** who served as Grad Chairs this year!

## Faculty member update

Professor Daniel McNeil has moved his appointment to the Department of History.

# WHAT ELSE?

## NEW SWAG STORE!

There is a new way to show your Gender Studies and Black Studies pride! Check out our new store full of branded apparel and items. In response to many requests from our students and alumni, we have partnered with Redbubble (a company with strong commitments to environmental sustainability and fair labour practices) to create an online Department of Gender Studies shop. Like any online store, you choose what you want, purchase the item directly from the store, and have your order delivered to your address. No need for us to collect individual orders and purchase items on behalf of the group. In order to keep these items as affordable as possible, no mark-up has been applied.

Visit the shop at:

[www.redbubble.com/people/BLCK-GNDS](http://www.redbubble.com/people/BLCK-GNDS)



## WE ARE HIRING!

**Black Studies Program Administrative Coordinator**  
Full-time, continuous position

For more information, visit [queensu.ca/gnds](http://queensu.ca/gnds)

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\*on leave