

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies



# FOCUS ON FACULTY

## Spring 2017

WELCOME TO FOCUS ON FACULTY

CLACS is pleased to bring you a new issue of Focus on Faculty. Comprising over 140 Brown faculty members in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences who work on Latin America and the Caribbean, the CLACS faculty community is broad and diverse (see page 9 for a complete list of CLACS faculty affiliates). *Focus on Faculty* opens a window on the cutting-edge scholarship, pedagogy, and public engagement of our colleagues on Latin America and the Caribbean. This issue highlights exciting research and teaching by our faculty on topics ranging from the botanical memory of the enslaved, to sustainable fisheries, to U.S.-Cuban connections. As always, many thanks for your support of CLACS!

**Jessaca Leinaweaver**  
**Director, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies**



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# Faculty Spotlight

"Liquid Knowledges: Botany of Memory and Experience" - Q&A with Geri Augusto -



Photo: A detail from the seed assemblage "Plants of Bondage/Liberation Flora" by Geri Augusto. On the left, some crops planted in maroon settlements throughout the Americas are symbolized; on the right, plantation crops from Brazil.

Geri Augusto, Gerard Visiting Associate Professor of International and Public Affairs and Africana Studies, recently co-curated a public art exhibit with CLACS Faculty Affiliate Anthony Bogues that examines the contributions of Africans to the ethno-botany of the new world as well as the ideas of the enslaved populations of the Americas. The exhibit "Liquid Knowledges: Botany of Memory and Experience" is currently on display until February 23, 2017 at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex, hosted by the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance in Miami, FL.

**CLACS:** You just co-curated a public art exhibit now on display at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex in Miami. Can you tell us a little about this project?

**Geri:** The exhibit "Liquid Knowledges: Botany of Memory and Experience" is part of a series that has been going on for several years now among Caribbean artists and communities in Miami. The series is called *Borderless Caribbean*, and this year's event was for the first time part of the official program of the well-known major art fair, Art Basel-Miami Beach. It is actually what *Borderless Caribbean's* Artistic Director Edouard Duval Carrie likes to call a "trilogy exhibit," deliberately conceived a bit outside of conventional museum approaches. So the exhibit merges historical research, contemporary art and cultural exploration in a flowing series of spaces. The public history part, which I co-curated with Professor Anthony Bogues, renders as a visual essay "Plants in the Gardens of the Enslaved." In the "Magic Garden" component, eight contemporary Caribbean artists, including Duval Carrie (Haiti), Firelei Baez (Dominican Republic) and Jose Bedia (Cuba), each present a sculpture or painting. The third component is an incredible mixed-media solo exhibition by Onajide Shabaka, focusing on ethnobotany in the continental Caribbean, especially Suriname. It is entitled "Antillean Lacunae." There was a very broad base of municipal and community backing for "Liquid Knowledges," as well as support from the Brown Arts Initiative, and a close extramural partnership with the Center for Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ), directed by Bogues, where I am a Faculty Associate.



Photo: Geri Augusto stands by artist Edouard Duval Carrie's painting "Cargo Bounty," the signature original artwork for the Miami exhibit.

**CLACS:** *While working on this exhibit, was your own understanding and knowledge of Caribbean ethnobotany challenged in any way? Are there any particular encounters or discoveries that stand out?*

**Geri:** Well, to be honest, I don't exactly subscribe to the concept of ethnobotany. But I have been studying for a while how different types of medico-botanical and environmental knowledges interact, particularly in Southern Africa, Brazil, Jamaica and even here in New England—zones of contact where colonizers, indigenous peoples and the enslaved were thrown together. I also already knew that, in most African knowledge traditions, plants usually have multiple uses, and that enslaved workers throughout the Americas often bore the additional burden of growing their own food and medicines. So I brought many years of research to the task of conceiving and writing what became our wall panels about eight exemplar plants which were brought from Africa to the Americas on ships of bondage. But what was most challenging, and in the end fulfilling, to me was probing the differences and commonalities in how the enslaved cultivated, adapted and used plants of African origin, under conditions of extreme duress, from island to island, and on the continental circum-Caribbean. So just finding out that the bitter cerasee tea I had often sipped in Jamaica, was prepared from the same plant as the much-respected, rum-infused asosí of Haiti, and also the sopropo of Suriname—and that everywhere it was a multi-use medicinal even if people prepared it differently--was a wonderful revelation to me. It inspired me to create an original assemblage of glass bottles and herbs, which I call "Liquid Remedies," based on various popular Caribbean folk medicines (*see above image*). It was bittersweet to learn that in the late 17th century, when Curacao went through a food shortage, slave-cultivated guinea corn (sorghum) kept enslaver and enslaved alike fed. And yet all of the plants were so beautiful! They made for a surprisingly lovely visual essay.



Photo: Panels showing plants of African origin which reappeared in Afro-Caribbean gardens of the enslaved

**CLACS:** *In what ways does this botanical history continue to shape contemporary Caribbean societies and their diasporas?*

**Geri:** Professor Bogues, Duval Carrie and I discussed this quite a lot. One of the advantages of a project which brings together experiences and knowledge from so many different spaces in the African diaspora is that it forces you to think about how legacies are both transmitted and reworked. The plants featured in "Liquid Knowledges" are part of a legacy of cuisine, of a people's pharmacopoeia, and also of a regional esthetic of fragrance, design and beauty that is alive and constantly updated across the Caribbean. It's alive as well in places like Miami, New York, London and Paris! Places where, as Stuart Hall pointed out, black people were "twice-diasporized."

**CLACS:** *Can you tell us about the research that went into creating this exhibit?*

**Geri:** Being based at Brown turned out to be optimal for two simple reasons: the JCB Library, and Brown student researchers! Most of the historical images we used for the wall panels were kindly provided by the JCB—thank you Ian and Kim! We had the excellent assistance especially of Cherise Morris, a public humanities masters student who is working with the CSSJ this year, as well as of Kim Meilum, an undergrad. Where else could I find what I needed, not just in English sources, but also in Spanish, French and Dutch, works documenting from the beginning those often-violent colonial encounters where differing ways of knowing plants played out on the same soil? I also spent quite a bit of time finding the right cultural references—Caribbean poems, slave work songs, proverbs—to juxtapose to the observations of European natural historians and plantation owners of the period. It was important to give both a sense of how enslaved Africans used their knowledge of plants to resist and survive, but also to disclose how their small plots yielded a bit of beauty and spiritual solace. It was important to note that the enslaved Africans also borrowed from Native American botanical knowledges, though that was not the focus of this particular exhibit. These are actually the same concepts I tried to design into the small symbolic slave garden at the CSSJ, but the locus is different, and the history is even older.



*Photo: Resin sculpture by the artist Edouard Duval Carrie in the exhibition “portal” which separates the two parts of the exhibit.*

**CLACS:** *Where do you see your work in this area of indigenous knowledges and knowledges of the enslaved going from here? Would you like to do more within the realm of using visual installations as a means of exploration?*

**Geri:** Absolutely! There are many ways to tell history, and many types of history. Histories about knowledge are particularly difficult to tell in a way that most people can understand. I came to understand years ago that looking at the art of imperial botany was one important entry point. So the opportunity to visually visit a particular history of botany and plant knowledge seldom told, a history of slavery and its material cultures, a history of maroon communities and the things that made self-freeing possible, a history of thinking about the environment—the one left behind and the new one to which millions were brought by force...and to do this through arresting images and works of art, as part of an art festival, but also within a community that is Caribbean and American at the same time--this was something that I had only dreamed about, and which I deeply appreciate.

# Research Highlights

## Towards Sustainable Fisheries: A Community Based Approach

# ISER CARIBE

## **Driving a new social and scientific praxis**

Ryan Mann-Hamilton, Cogut Center for the Humanities Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow and co-founder of the [Institute for Socio-Ecological Research](#) (ISER Caribe) has just begun work on a two year funded project through NOAA that aims to support sustainable fisheries in the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic. The project, *Understanding the ecology and social perceptions of commercially important fisheries for the development of long-term education and enforcement strategies to support sustainable fisheries in Bahamas and the Dominican Republic*, is being implemented by ISER Caribe in partnership with The Cape Eleuthera Institute, CEBSE-Samaná, and Instituto Oceanográfico James H. Ross. The community-based project, which began in October 2016 and will continue until September of 2018, is striving to promote sustainable fisheries of parrotfish and conch, two commercially and ecologically important marine species in the Bahamas and Dominican Republic.



cover in order to reduce coastal erosion and sedimentation of the seagrass beds on the Ponce Bay in Puerto Rico. The project, which is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is titled *Advancing the Conservation of Seagrass Habitats at an Anthropogenically-impacted Location in Southern Puerto Rico*. In addition to the restoration activities that are currently being undertaken, the project is integrating outreach and education activities to ongoing initiatives currently organized by the Ponce Playa community.



Photo by ISER Caribe [See More Photos Here](#)

Ryan Mann-Hamilton has also been working on another ISER Caribe initiative to restore and increase coastal vegetation

## New Research Project on U.S.-Cuba Connections since 1959



Jennifer Lambe, Assistant Professor of Latin American and Caribbean History, has launched “Beyond the Sugar Curtain: Tracing Cuba-U.S. Connections (1959-Present)” a research project that seeks to contribute to a new if fragile age of diplomatic normalization by exploring the past and present of travel and encounter between the



two nations. Pushing beyond depictions of a “sugar curtain” or “emotional embargo,” this project features spaces and moments of connection in the post-1959 period, including but not limited to those between the United States and Cuba. From students to activists, family members and journalists, human ties have long defied political obstacles, bridging the material and affective barriers wrought by diplomatic isolation. Even in the most unpropitious circumstances, citizens of both countries have thus found room for mutual inspiration, productive disagreement, and even friendship and love. The first issue of “Beyond the Sugar Curtain” focuses on the theme “Encuentros y desencuentros | Encounters and the Space between Them” and is now available on the [project’s webpage](#).

## In the Loop: News from your Colleagues

Join us in welcoming our Craig M. Cogut Visiting Professors of Latin American Studies who are in residence at CLACS and teaching LACA courses during the spring semester.



[Florencia Malbrán](#) is an Adjunct Professor at New York University in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Professor Malbrán is a critic and curator of contemporary art. States. Her teaching and research interests include contemporary art, curatorial practice, Latin American art history, and critical theory.

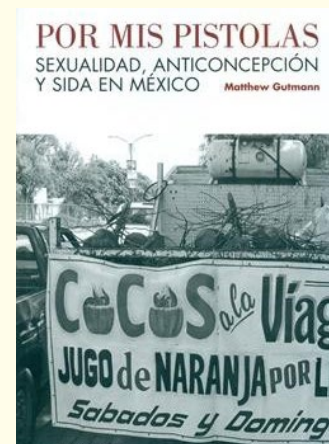
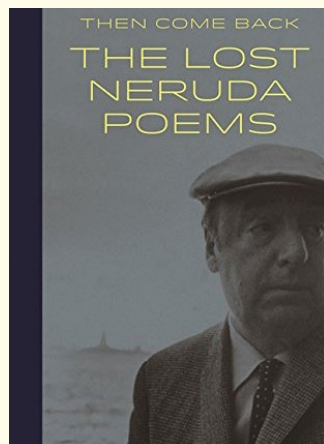
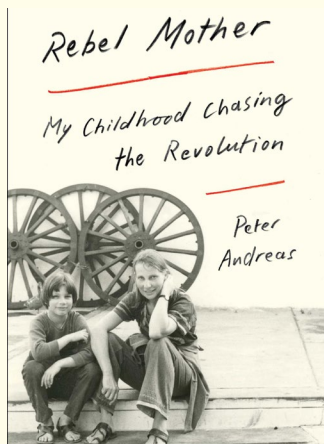


[Daniel Party](#) is an Associate Professor of Musicology and Chair of Graduate Studies and Research in the Facultad de Artes at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. His research interests include art and popular music of Latin America and its diaspora; gender and sexuality; music under dictatorship; and migration.

Andrew Scherer, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Associate Professor of Archeology and the Ancient World, has been appointed as a member of the editorial committee of the *Anales de Antropología*, published by the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Dr. Simin Liu, Professor of Epidemiology, was awarded the Functional Genomics and Translational Biology (FGTB) Mentoring Award by the American Heart Association (AHA). The award is given to individuals who during their career have dedicated leadership and success in mentoring individuals in scientific careers.

# CLACS Bookshelf: New & Forthcoming Releases



Peter Andreas, [\*Rebel Mother: My Childhood Chasing the Revolution\*](#). Simon & Schuster, April 2017.

Forrest Gander, [\*Then Come Back: The Lost Neruda Poems\*](#). Copper Canyon Press, May 2016.

Matthew Gutmann (Editor) and Jeffrey Lesser (Editor), [\*Global Latin America: Into the Twenty-First Century\*](#). University of California Press, September 2016.

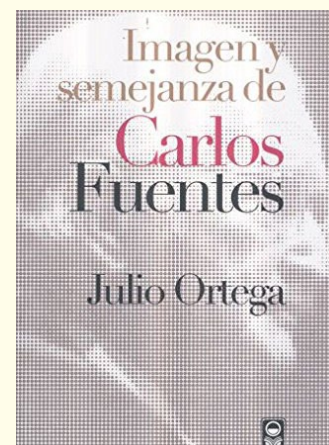
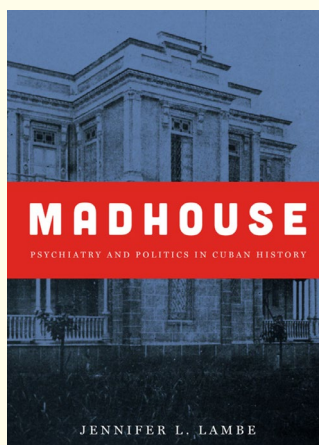
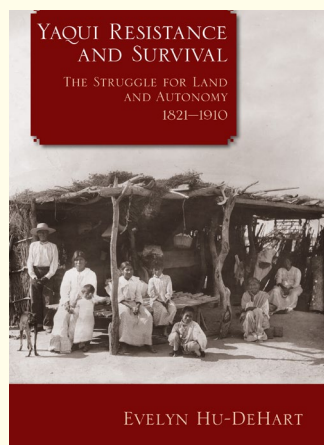
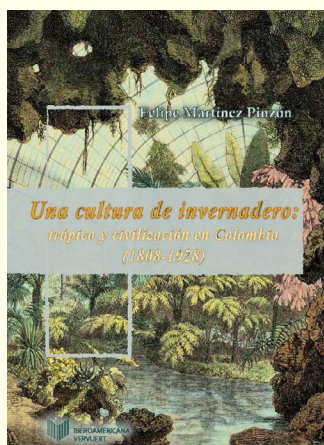
Matthew Gutmann, [\*Por mis pistolas: Sexualidad, anticoncepción y SIDA en México\*](#). Editorial Siglo Veintiuno, México, DF, July 2016.

Evelyn Hu-DeHart, [\*Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy, 1821–1910 \(Revised Edition\)\*](#). University of Wisconsin Press, November 2016.

Jennifer Lambe, [\*Madhouse: Psychiatry and Politics in Cuban History\*](#). The University of North Carolina Press, February 2017.

Felipe Martínez Pinzón, [\*Una cultura de invernadero: Trópico y civilización en Colombia \(1808-1928\)\*](#). Iberoamericana, July 2016.

Julio Ortega, [\*Imagen y semejanza de Carlos Fuentes\*](#). Orfila Editores, México, 2016.





# Journal Publications & Book Chapters

Geri Augusto, "Plants of Bondage, Liberation Flora and Colonial Sciences - Reflections for STS," In Chakanetsa Mavhunga (Ed.), [\*What Do Science, Technology, Innovation Mean from Africa?\*](#) MIT Press, forthcoming.

Jeff Colgan, "[Is Democracy Eroding?](#)" *Political Violence at a Glance*. March 24, 2016.

Jeff Colgan, Horst Machguth, Mike MacFerrin, Dirk van As, Joseph A. MacGregor, "[The abandoned ice sheet base at Camp Century, Greenland, in a warming climate.](#)" *Geophysical Research Letters*, 43 pp. 1-6, Aug. 2016.

Paja Faudree, "[Between Aspiration and Apathy: Shifting Scale and the 'Worlding' of Indigenous Day of the Dead Music.](#)" *Popular Music and Society*, 39(3):359-374, Mar. 2016.

Andrea Flores, "[Forms of Exclusion: Undocumented Students Navigating Financial Aid and Inclusion in the United States.](#)" *American Ethnologist*, 43(3):540-554, Aug. 2016.

Carlos Fuentes, [\*Aquiles o el héroe y el asesino. Edición y prólogo de Julio Ortega.\*](#) Fondo de Cultura Económica y Alfaguara Editor, Mexico y Madrid, 2016.

Jessaca Leinaweaver, "[Transatlantic Unity On Display: The 'White Legend' and the 'Pact of Silence' in Madrid's Museum of the Americas.](#)" *History and Anthropology*, 28(1):39-57, Nov. 2016.

Jessaca Leinaweaver, "[Andalusia, the Americas, and the Anthropological Object.](#)" Invited commentary for *American Anthropologist*, 118(3):626-627, Aug. 2016.

Patsy Lewis, "[The Repercussions of Brexit for CARICOM's Cohesion.](#)" *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs, Brexit and the Commonwealth Special Issue of The Round Table*, 105 (5):531-542, Oct. 2016.

William Miles, [\*In the Shadow of Moses: New Jewish Movements in Africa and the Diaspora\*](#) (co-edited by Daniel Lis and Tudor Parfitt), Chapter 11 "Who Opened the Seven Seals? Rastafarians and African Hebrew Israelites," by Martina Könighofer. TSEHAI Publishers, 2016.

Daniel Party, "Canciones y cantantes en la obra de Pedro Lemebel" (co-authored with Luis Achondo). In *Canciones que nunca callan*, edited by Fernando Blanco. Vervuert Iberoamericana, Madrid (forthcoming 2017).

Joshua Tucker, "[The machine of sonorous indigeneity: craftsmanship and sound ecology in an Andean instrument workshop.](#)" *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 25(3):326-344, Nov. 2016.

Luiz F. Valente, "[Fiction and Metafiction in Paulo Scott's 'Habitação irreal'](#)" *Romance Quarterly*, 63 (4) : 190-199, Sept. 2016.

Luiz F. Valente, "[Além dos 'porões fétidos da história': os rebel/amentos poéticos de Marcos Dias.](#)" *A poesia na era da internacionalização dos saberes: a produção, a crítica, a tradução e o ensino da poesia no contexto contemporâneo*. Ed. Charles Perrone, Maria Lúcia Outeiro Fernandes and Paulo César Andrade da Silva Assis. UNESP, 2016, pp. 82-94.

Luiz F. Valente, "[Machado's Wounded Males.](#)" *Emerging Dialogues on Machado de Assis*. Ed. Lamonte Aidoo and Daniel Silva. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016, pp165-179.

# Faculty Affiliates

## **Africana Studies**

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Daniel Party

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