

Environmental Histories of the Black Atlantic World: Landscape Histories of the African Diaspora

Garden and Landscape Studies Symposium

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Homo Sacer and Atlantic Slavery: Landscape Histories of Sacrifice and Commodification in a Sacred Grove near Fort Amsterdam, Ghana
Andrew Apter (History and Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles)

The slave forts and castles that punctuate Ghana's historic Gold Coast stand as monumental reminders of the rise and fall of Atlantic slavery, beginning with the construction of Elmina Castle by the Portuguese in 1492 and ending, at least officially, with Britain's Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Built as "factories" for bulking enslaved Africans for sale and transshipment to the Americas, they served as highly regulated sites of Afro-European exchange and interaction when the English, Dutch, Swedes, Danes and Brandenburgers entered the so-called African Trade. In this paper, I focus on one critical link in this transatlantic value-chain where enslaved captives from Ghana's hinterland were brought to Fort Amsterdam (formerly Fort Cormantin) and auctioned off to European traders en route to the Americas. Known as Otsir grove in the town of Abandze, which coalesced around the Fort, it is easily missed on the Accra-Cape Coast highway, overshadowed by Fort Anamabo which rose to prominence in the mid-eighteenth century, and generally invisible to all passersby. Located within a subcommunity of a subcommunity, however, Otsir's sacred grove conceals a landscape history of profound significance within its trees, throughout its grounds, and beneath the earth. It is a history that speaks to the autochthonous layers of an occupied territory, the core ritual template of the eighteenth-century Fante state, historically labile sovereign centers, and the fundamental relationship between the ritual execution of criminals and the transmutation of enslaved captives into human commodities.

Andrew Apter is Professor of History and Anthropology at UCLA, where he directed the African Studies Center and co-founded the Atlantic History Colloquium. His books include *Black Critics and Kings: The Hermeneutics of Power in Yoruba Society* (1992); *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (2005) which received the 2007 Amaury Talbot Prize awarded by the Royal Anthropological Institute; *Beyond Words: Discourse and Critical Agency in Africa* (2007), and *Oduduwa's Chain: Locations of Culture in the Yoruba Atlantic* (2018), all with the University of Chicago Press. He also co-edited *Activating the Past: History and Memory in the Black Atlantic World* (2010) with Lauren Derby. He is currently working on *History in the Dungeon: Atlantic Slavery and the Spirits of Capitalism*, a study that reveals how Atlantic slavery and its fetishized forms of "bare labor" remain deeply buried within the core of racial capitalism.

Behind the Atlantic coast, Fighting not to Enter the Atlantic World as a Commodity *Jacques Aymeric-Nsangou (Anthropology, University of Manitoba)*

The rise of the Atlantic world has seen the development of an agency among different actors, expressed and imprinted in the landscapes of the Atlantic world. As an interface between several spaces, the African Atlantic coast was the veil that covered the hinterland from which the enslaved people came. Individuals converted into commodities; captives were nonetheless actors whose agency was expressed in different ways. However, before entering this global market, what initiatives did Africans take to avoid falling into the commodification process? From the occupation of areas that are difficult to access to the setting up of fortifications in villages, the individual or collective responses to this question have exploited, generated and/or modified highly varied landscapes. Through examples from Senegal between the 17th and 19th centuries, my paper will focus on the environment and landscapes generated by communities whose members were threatened with enslavement, a process that was to make them commodities that could be exchanged and used in the various spheres of the Atlantic world. Through archaeological and historical research, we will see how the communities of eastern Senegal integrated themselves into the environment of the Falemme valley and constructed a defensive landscape mosaic of fortified villages and impenetrable bushes and forests. Thus, we will describe the construction techniques used to strengthen the villages. At the same time, we will look at the agricultural and agroforestry practices that modified the landscape to adapt it to the needs of communities threatened by the Slave Trade.

Jacques Aymeric-Nsangou studied at the Universities of Yaoundé I (Cameroon) and Geneva (Switzerland), where he got his Ph.D. in Archaeology in 2019. He is a specialist in African endogenous fortifications and the history of settlement. As a postdoctoral fellow, he did a research stay at the Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom and Villa I Tatti Harvard University Center of Florence (IT). Since September 2022, he has been a Swiss National Science Foundation Associate postdoctoral researcher at the University of Manitoba. His work aims to document the Islamisation of Northern Ghana influenced by the Gonja chiefdom through studying the ceramic change.

Vissungo: African-Descended Culture and the Environment in Brazil's Diamond-Mining Region

Victoria R. Broadus (History, Georgetown University)

This paper explores the relationship between the environment of Brazil's Upper Jequitinhonha Valley (northern Minas Gerais) and the renewal and persistence of African-descended cultural practices such as *vissungo* versing. Using interdisciplinary approaches, the paper reveals how the continued practice of African-language verses – and a whole constellation of related cultural practices – through the mid-20th-century and beyond was a product of the natural environment and the availability of diamonds. The paper identifies a local “*vissungo* culture” grounded in an Afro-descended autonomy that was possible in the region largely because of a remote landscape that facilitated escape; Africans' and their descendants' privileged knowledge of that local landscape and natural resources, and access to diamonds.

Victoria (Tory) Broadus has taught survey courses in Latin American history and Brazilian history. Her dissertation research is focused on Afro-descended work and ritual songs known as *vissungos*; the social and cultural formation of the Diamantina region in Minas Gerais,

Brazil, where vissungos were (and are) practiced; and how those regional cultural forms relate to other Black Atlantic cultural practices.

Maroon Geographies and Ecologies in the Danish West Indies

Justin Dunnivant (Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles)

The transatlantic slave trade era - marked by chattel slavery, racial capitalism, and exploitative plantation economies - radically transformed societies and environments in the Americas. Centering on the experiences of maroons, formerly enslaved Africans, I argue their freedom was predicated upon new geographical and ecological relationships in the Caribbean. I synthesize recent work on maroon geographies and ecologies, placing them in conversation with Sylvia Wynter's notion of "transplantation" to argue that (re)new ecological relationships emerged as Africans sought freedom in the Caribbean. Methodologically, I draw from the archaeology of maroon settlements, archival records of maroon experiences, and geospatial data from colonial maps, LiDAR, and ocean currents to show how maroons may have factored in geographic and ecological considerations in the colonial world. Theoretically, I engage scholars in Black Geographies to critically engage the ontological implications of this worldmaking project. This work uses a multidisciplinary approach to elucidate maroon geographies and ecologies, extending African diaspora geographies beyond the plantation and terrestrial landscapes. Taking into account various experiences of maritime maroons, I position the sea/ocean as a site of history, memory, placemaking, and liminality, phenomenologically positioning bodies of water and seafaring vessels as a (de)generative space of Black Atlantic sociality and possibility. In combining maritime and terrestrial experiences, real and imagined, I demonstrate how maroon geographies connected communities of freedom across islands and over various bodies of water, encompassing a wide range of geographic possibilities.

Justin Dunnivant is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA and co-founder of the Society of Black Archaeologists. His current research in the US Virgin Islands investigates the relationship between ecology and enslavement in the former Danish West Indies. In 2021, he was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer and inducted into The Explorers Club as one of "Fifty People Changing the World that You Need to Know About." His research has been featured on Netflix's "Explained," Hulu's "Your Attention Please" and in print in *American Archaeology*, *Science Magazine*, and *National Geographic Magazine*.

Knowingly And Naively: Enslaved Black Children's Relationship with the Black Atlantic Landscape

Mikayla Janee Harden (History, University of Delaware)

Often engulfed and surrounded by violence inflicted upon their community and sometimes themselves, black children forged their own relationship with the Black Atlantic landscape, knowingly and naively. Two enslaved adolescent boys- one enslaved in the Mississippi Plantation South, another in the French Caribbean Island Réunion- used their ingenuity and resilience to counter their marginalization being reflect upon the landscape they frequently migrated. This conference paper amalgamates material culture studies, black geographies,

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and conceptual frameworks to understand childhood to extract their relationship to nature. Although environmental historians, including scholars of black ecologies, acknowledge the ethnobotanical and agricultural proficiency of the multiplicity of African cultures in the Black Atlantic World, their analysis rarely extracts how black children become imprinted by land, as well as their capacity to imprint the land for themselves. Rather than seeing childhood as purely a social category, this paper cognizes how black children and their bodies -spatially, materially, and intellectually- interacted with land. Like enslaved adults, enslaved children developed their own relationship with the botanical material and spatial word that oscillates between play and pain. This paper will examine three geographical sites: the West African coast, the French Caribbean, and the Plantation South to further extract how black children interacted with agriculture, botany, and landscapes to exert their humanity. To center age in Black Atlantic environmental histories, I primarily rely on testimony from the enslaved through autobiography. These postscripts of slavery, although complicated, offer an insight into how enslaved people understood nature in their childhood.

Mikayla Harden is a doctoral candidate in the History Department at the University of Delaware. She specializes in African-American history and Atlantic World history, with a focus on the holistic wellness of enslaved black children before 1865. Harden received her BA from the University of Texas at Austin in 2018, where she majored in African and African Diaspora Studies.

Temples and Trees: The Ceibas of Havana as Icons of Black Spirituality, Cultural Politics, and Visual Experience in the Atlantic World, 1828-1928

Joseph R. Hartman (Art History / Latinx and Latin American Studies, University of Missouri-Kansas City)

This essay reconsiders the environmental history of the ceiba tree in Havana's urban landscapes within broader transatlantic narratives of Black spirituality, cultural politics, and visual experience. In 1928, Cuban President Gerardo Machado and a host of American officials planted a majestic ceiba tree in the axial center of a beaux-arts plaza in Havana. Situated in line of sight with the city's iconic neoclassic capitol building (El Capitolio), the tree was to honor the Sixth Annual Pan-American Conference. The ceiba however acted as a contested visual icon, which resonated with Cuban citizens of African descent. Practitioners of the island's major African diasporic religions, drawing from multiple networks in the "Black Atlantic," perceived the planting ritual as both sacred and ill omened. Rooted in colonial discourse, planting the ceiba activated a host of contradictory meanings for Cuba's Black citizens. The city of Havana was allegedly founded beneath a similar ceiba in 1519. Nineteenth-century colonial officials honored that tree with an emblematic neoclassic temple known as El Templete. Modern studies show how the same tree functioned as a picota, a marker commonly found in urban plazas and plantations meant for punishing enslaved peoples. In that way the ceiba and El Capitolio echoed the ceiba and El Templete, as sites of socio-racial hierarchy and state power over Black bodies. But the ceiba itself was a religious icon that transcended state-controlled narratives. Excavating the tree's religious valences, as well as its colonial legacies, then, unearths a history of Black resistance, homebuilding, and cultural survival.

Joseph R. Hartman is an assistant professor of art history and Latinx and Latin American Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Hartman specializes in the visual culture and built environments of the greater Caribbean. His forthcoming book manuscript, *Eye of the Hurricane: Politics of Art, Architecture, and Climate*, examines the impact of hurricanes and natural disasters on Caribbean architectural and political histories. He is author of *Dictator's Dreamscape: How Architecture and Vision Built Machado's Cuba and Invented Modern Havana* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), and editor of the volume *Imperial Islands: Art, Architecture, and Visual Experience in the US Insular Empire after 1898* (University of Hawaii Press, 2021). His writings have appeared in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Cultural Politics*, and *The Latinamericanist*, among others. His research has enjoyed the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Graham Foundation, and the American Philosophical Society.

The spatial fix in the Black Atlantic: the Structuring Contradiction of the Haitian Revolution and Brooklyn's Industrial Landscape
Emily Holloway (Geography, Clark University)

This paper explores the ways in which contradictions produce space. Through a case study of the Domino Sugar Refinery, a landmarked industrial structure in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, I knit together the contradictions revealed by a Black Atlantic mode of critique with the material contradictions of the spatial fix as a geographical maneuver. Using contradiction as a methodological guide, I examine how the Haitian Revolution, a foundational crisis of early modern capitalism, shaped a connected yet distant urban geography of the factory. I sketch out how attention to such multi-dimensional contradictions, specifically those that are rendered invisible by classical geographic frameworks, can enrich the study of urban landscapes. Theoretically, I draw on literature in Black geographies, Marxist urban geography, and the Black radical tradition. I will review selected archival findings from my project so far to suggest how an expanded perspective on the spatial fix can reorient our understanding of urban landscapes.

Emily Holloway is a PhD candidate in Geography at Clark University. Her dissertation, "Domino in the Longue Durée (1791-1887): Racial Capitalism and the Urban Questions," explores the history of the Domino Sugar Refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn through the lens of Black geographies. Prior to enrolling at Clark, she earned a master's degree in urban policy and Planning from Hunter College and a bachelor's degree in Government from Smith College. She worked for several years with various community development and urban research collectives in New York City, including the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative and the Brooklyn Waterfront Research Center.

Victuals from the Plantationocene: Slave Gardens and Black Personhood in an Eighteenth-Century Martinican Painting

C.C. McKee (History of Art, Bryn Mawr College & University of Copenhagen)

This essay centers on the relationship between the enslaved and their knowledge of the plantation landscape as it was represented in the painting *Esclaves Noirs (Black Slaves)* by Le Masurier, an itinerant French artist working in Martinique during the latter half of the

eighteenth century. Le Masurier's paintings of black life represent a decisive representational shift in eighteenth-century French depictions of the Caribbean because they construct a visual repertoire attentive to the nuances of racialization in environmental terms. Black personhood in *Esclaves noirs* is diffused into the landscape itself, permeating the entire picture plane. The painting constructs a vision of profligate-yet-picturesque idleness in the space of the slave garden that presses against the limits of the Plantationocene—a neologism that signals the central role of plantation agriculture to capitalist ecocide. From a colonial art historical perspective, the Plantationocene provides a heuristic through which the visual and material manifestation of plantation agriculture is positioned as the site of modern industrial capitalism. Attending to the relationship between the enslaved and the natural world in this canvas reveals the Black epistemologies and forms of contestation that emerged within, outside, and alongside the Plantationocene's systemic environmental exploitation perpetuated in colonial natural history. Through French Historian Gabriel Debien's theorization of two types of provision ground, the *jardin-case*, located within the confines of the plantation itself, and the *jardin-nègre*, the distinction between the plot and the plantation—to paraphrase Jamaican theorist Sylvia Wynter—becomes central to understanding slave life and persistence beyond the cane field.

C.C. McKee is Assistant Professor of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College, and a current Mads Øvlisen Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Copenhagen. In 2019 McKee received their PhD from Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and a doctorate from the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (Paris, France). Their research focuses on the intersections of art, colonialism, and natural science in the modern Atlantic World (c. 1750-1950) with an emphasis on the Caribbean. McKee also researches the exploration of colonialism and slavery's injurious ecological "afterlives" in contemporary Caribbean and African Diasporic art. Their writing has appeared (or will appear) in *Art Journal*, *liquid blackness*, *CASVA Seminar Papers*, *Bloomsbury's 33 1/3 series*, *Art Forum*, and *Hyperallergic*.

"the land will not expose their designs": African Atlantic Ecologies, Geopolitics, and Responses to Epidemic Disease in the Sixteenth-Century Atlantic World

Elise A. Mitchell (History, Princeton University)

In 1518, a severe smallpox epidemic swept the Caribbean and American coasts. Subsequently, in the 1520s, enslaved Africans, predominantly Senegambians, waged the first slave revolt in the Americas. Drawing on early modern European (predominantly Portuguese) chronicles about West Africans' holistic community healing strategies, this paper argues that revolt and *marronage* were geopolitical, ecological, social, material, and spiritual responses to the smallpox epidemic and other community health threats that Iberian colonialism posed in the sixteenth-century Caribbean. Africanists have long observed that health crises were pretexts for political and social transformation. West and West Central Africans associated epidemic diseases, especially smallpox epidemics, with geopolitical upheavals and transformations. Deities and sacred forces who controlled geopolitical claims and governed community ecologies, notably forests and groves, were also capable of inflicting or relieving smallpox and other contagious flesh disorders in many African cosmologies. Africanists have also observed the centrality of healers and healing guilds in early modern and pre-colonial African geopolitics and sovereignty claims. This paper reappraises early modern European chronicles for evidence of West and West Central African community health management strategies. I argue that Africans migrated these praxes to the Caribbean. They are evident in sixteenth-

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century slave revolts and burgeoning maroon societies. This paper resituates revolt and marronage as public healing strategies that countered the health consequences of European slavery and colonialism. Furthermore, this work expands our concept of the Black radical tradition to account for the role of healers and community health in the process of geopolitical claims-making.

Elise A. Mitchell is a historian of the early modern Black Atlantic and is currently a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in the History Department at Princeton University. Broadly, her work examines the social and political histories of embodiment, healing, disease, race, and gender in the early modern Atlantic World, with a focus on the Caribbean region. Dr. Mitchell earned her PhD in Atlantic World history and Caribbean and Latin American history at New York University in 2021. Fellowships and grants from New York University, the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, the Social Science Research Council's Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grants, the Huntington Library's Evelyn S. Nation Short-Term Research Fellowship, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Caribbean Digital Scholarship Collective have supported her work. She is also an editor and founding board member of the online magazine, *Insurrect! Radical Thinking in Early American Studies*.

Fugitive Landscapes and the Challenge of Black Atlantic Cartographies: Brazil, 1763

Matthew Francis Rarey (Art History, Oberlin College)

In 2004, Jill H. Casid argued that “landscape” is best understood not as an historical “European genre of painting” but “a vital but overlooked medium and ground for the contention of countercolonial strategies.” Taking up this point, this paper interrogates a unique work of Black Atlantic visual culture: an unsigned, hand-drawn map of Buraco do Tatú, a maroon polity invaded and destroyed by a Portuguese mercenary force in northeastern Brazil in September of 1763. I argue this map materializes the ethical and historical challenges that accompany efforts to describe the landscapes of slavery. Produced by immediately after the community's razing, this map uncommonly depicts detailed renderings of the quilombo's fortifications, buildings, and agricultural plots; thus it presents a unique archive of Africans' landscaping strategies for adapting against and connecting to the region's sugar plantations, Black communities, and Atlantic mercantilism. Yet the map's aerial view, its textual narrative, and its haunting rendering of Africans killed during the battle also collectively testify to the image's ambivalence: a colonial attempt to freeze a fugitive landscape as a precondition of its violent erasure. Analyzing this map in the context of archival research on anti-quilombo military campaigns; Africans' gardening and landscaping practices in eighteenth-century Brazil; and frameworks from Black feminist studies and ecocriticism, I argue that the map suggests colonists suppressed quilombos not only because they proved fertile grounds for Africans' unsanctioned forms of labor and land use, but because they also reproduced aspects of plantation agriculture which destabilized colonial landscaping's claims to power.

Matthew Rarey's research interrogates visual histories of Blackness and enslavement in the long eighteenth century, emphasizing material and intellectual dialogues and silences between West Africa, Brazil, and Portugal. His first book, *Insignificant Things: Amulets and the Art of Survival in the Early Black Atlantic* (Duke University Press, 2023), traces an accumulative history of bolsas de mandinga: amulets of transcultural origins that took on new forms and histories as Africans purveyed them in the south Atlantic between 1660 and 1835. He is

currently working on a second book about eighteenth-century maps of maroon communities in South America, and their afterlives in the work of contemporary Black artists and land rights activists. Rarey is also an active curator: in 2019, alongside Andrea Gyorody, he co-curated *Afterlives of the Black Atlantic* at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. The show garnered a 2020 Award of Excellence from the Association of Art Museum Curators.

Translating the Eighteenth-Century Plantationocene: Epistemologies, Landscapes, and the Place of the Enslaved African Cultivator in Brazilian Histories of Enlightenment Science

Neil Safier (History, Brown University)

How was the language of plantation society ported from the French and English-dominated Caribbean to colonial Brazil in the late-eighteenth century? What role did agro-industrial treatises play in the perpetuation of systems of enslaved labor as plantation societies shifted from sugar production to a wider array of foodstuffs, beverages, and profit-oriented utilitarian crops? Long viewed as powerful manuals for naturalists and slave-masters alike, these pragmatic instructional texts, focused around questions of climate, natural history, and commodity-driven agriculture, have only recently been understood to have circulated outside the narrow Caribbean world for which they were destined. One iconic protagonist of this translation process was the Franciscan friar José Mariano da Conceição Velozo (1742-1811), who served as a linguistic conduit for moving natural knowledge from an array of texts produced in colonial cultures around the globe into print – and into Portuguese, in particular. My paper examines Velozo’s multi-volume and multi-faceted *Fazendeiro do Brazil* (1798-1806) with an eye toward connecting the eighteenth-century natural sciences, the ambitions of expanding plantation-based economies, and the politics of translation across the multi-lingual geographies of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. It also pays attention to the epistemologies of translation and the notion of synonymy to describe the double-enslavement of the African subject – in physical as well as textual bondage within the pages of a much-heralded scientific treatise.

Neil Safier is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Brown University, where he is also affiliated with the Department of Hispanic Studies, the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society, the Program in Science, Technology, and Society, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative. He received his PhD from the Johns Hopkins University in 2004 and has held teaching and research appointments at the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. From 2013 to 2021, he served as Beatrice and Julio Mario Santo Domingo Director and Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library. The author of *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (Chicago, 2008), his current research relates to the transnational history of knowledge-making in the late-eighteenth-century Atlantic world and the connections between plantation cultures of the eighteenth-century Caribbean and Brazilian natural history, including sugar, indigo, coffee, and cotton. He also has an ongoing interest in the environmental and ethnographic history of the Amazon River basin, from the prehuman to the present.

Symposiarchs

N. D. B. Connolly is the Herbert Baxter Adams Associate Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University. He writes about racism, capitalism, politics, cities and migration in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His first book was *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (University of Chicago Press, 2014). Current book projects include *Four Daughters: An America Story* [sic]. This collective biography covers four generations of a single family, following the lives of four women of color whose forbearers migrated from the Caribbean to the United States by way of Britain between the early 1900s and 1990s. *Black Capitalism: The "Negro Problem" and the American Economy* offers the first sweeping account of how black economic success shaped the way Americans and immigrants understood the possibilities offered by capitalism in the United States. Connolly frequently contributes to public debates, including as a co-host on the weekly podcast *BackStory* and as Director of the Racism, Immigration, and Citizenship Program at Johns Hopkins University.

Oscar de la Torre is Associate Professor of Africana and Latin American Studies at UNC Charlotte. A University of Pittsburgh PhD, he has held Postdoctoral Fellowships from Yale University's Gilder-Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery and from the National Humanities Center. He investigates slavery and the post-emancipation period in Brazil and Cuba, with a special focus on its environmental, labor, and identity aspects. He also specializes in the history of Amazonia; the oral history of slavery; present-day Black peasant movements; and the comparative analysis of racial dynamics in the Americas. De la Torre wrote *The People of the River*, a socio-environmental history of black communities in Amazonia recognized by the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, the Latin American Studies Association, and the Brazilian Studies Association. He has published articles and reviewed books at *The American Historical Review*, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *The Journal of African American Studies*, and many others.

Moderators

Eric Avila is a professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles. Avila is an urban cultural historian, studying the intersections of racial identity, urban space, and cultural representation in twentieth century America. He began his undergraduate education at UC Berkeley in 1986 and left that institution with a PhD in History in 1997, writing his dissertation under the supervision of Professor Lawrence Levine. Since 1997, he has taught Chicano Studies and History at UCLA, and holds an affiliation with the Department of Urban Planning. He is the author of *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*, published by the University of California Press in 2004. His latest book, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, was published by the University of Minnesota Press in 2014. Avila also holds joint appointments as Professor of Chicano Studies and Urban Planning at UCLA.

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Dianne Harris is a professor of history and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington. She was previously a senior program officer with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Higher Learning program and was dean of the College of Humanities and professor of history at the University of Utah. Harris earned her PhD in architecture/history of architecture, master's degree in architecture and bachelor's degree with a major in landscape architecture, all at the University of California, Berkeley. Her scholarship, which has a broad temporal and geographic reach spanning from 18th-century Lombardy to the postwar United States, is united by a sustained focus on the relationship between the built environment and the construction of racial and class identities. Harris is particularly well-known for her scholarly contributions to the study of race and space. In addition to her many essays and scholarly articles, she is the sole author of three monographs, editor of an additional three volumes, and a series editor for the University of Pittsburgh Press.