

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2, 2020-2021

NOVEMBER 16, 2021

Our Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies was much advanced this year, despite and in deference to COVID-19 and calls for a more just democracy. In response, we are expanding digital content and making space for alternative voices. We hosted three academic year Mellon Fellows virtually: Alexander Stewart (UC Berkeley), Danika Cooper (UC Berkeley), and Arijit Sen (UM) while two additional fellows deferred to 2022-2022 and summer fellows Elgin Cleckley (UVA), Anna Livia Brand (UC Berkeley) and Pollyanna Rhee (UICU). Our virtual fellowships were remarkably productive. We hosted Zoom research reports, weekly discussions, and writing hours. We held our Mellon Midday Dialogue Series bringing scholars and practitioners to share work in progress with topics that included indigenous rights of the Lumbee Tribe in their quest for environmental justice to the importance of material ecology as a tool to recuperate the environmental history of slavery.



Public engagement remains a critical element of our Mellon Initiative. This year, our public lectures reached new audiences from around the world. Speakers included Dr. C. Delucia who explored the significance of land and place for Indigenous nations and people of New England and examined the ways that Native peoples and their past and present connection to their ancestral lands were impacted by colonial expansion. Dr. A. K. Sandoval-Strausz offered a lecture on Barrio America: How Latino Immigrants Saved the American City challenging the idea that the “creative class” was most responsible for reviving the city, arguing that Latino families, many of whom are newcomers, transformed urban America to create the urban landscapes we know today. In the spring, we welcomed Dr. D. S. Harris for her lecture, “Where Was Jim Crow? Living in Frank Lloyd Wright’s America”. Harris illuminated architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s role in the history of the divided and segregated American city. Mabel Wilson (Columbia) joined Dr. Harris following the lecture for a thoughtful discussion.





SYMPOSIUM

We offered a second virtual symposium, Land Back: Indigenous Landscapes of Resurgence and Freedom in summer, 2021. This symposium, led by Drs. Michelle Daigle and Heather Dorries of the University of Toronto, was organized over four sessions to explore what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains as “place-based ethical framework” of land relations that enables “process-centered modes of living that generate profoundly different conceptualizations of nationhood and governmentality—ones that aren’t based on enclosure, authoritarian power, and hierarchy” (2017, 22). Our Initiative funding supported invitations to discussants as well as captioning the talks to share them broadly.

COLLABORATIVE COLLOQUIUM

In Spring 2021, we formalized a partnership with The National Park Service, the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites, and Tulane University’s School of Architecture to develop a guideline and long-term plan for the NPS’s efforts to recognize, document, map, and explore frameworks for interpreting landscapes of Civil Rights in the District of Columbia. We are organizing a Colloquium and workshop supported by our Mellon Initiative. Intended for an audience of scholars, practitioners, and community leaders, we will share leading edge scholarship in the identification, documentation, and interpretation of landscapes associated with civil rights broadly conceived.

GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP

The 2021 Virtual Graduate Student Workshop *Public Landscapes and Public Health: An Inquiry into the Histories of Landscape Design in the Public Realm*, was held from May 10 to May 28, 2021. With funding from the Mellon Urban Initiative, we invited discussions with historians Drs. Carlyn Ferrari, Katherine Conti, Laura Pulido, and Sara Jacobs. Graduate students attended the 2021 Land Back Symposium and a discussion with Drs. Daigle and Dorries. The students developed group projects focused on teaching and pursuing urban landscape history research in a digital age.

VIRTUAL SEMINAR

We launched a monthly virtual seminar, *Alternative Landscape Histories*, for teaching faculty. We collectively determine readings and engage in discussions with the intention to learn from one another and deepen our teaching materials. This seminar currently includes 17 faculty members and is working on a shared syllabus and modules for teaching landscape history with attention to issues of democracy, race, gender, and identity.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

To share the power of design, we worked with local youth programs. We facilitated classes on the history of drawing in landscape architecture with students at the Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School. This spring, we partnered with the American Institute of Architects DC on their "Design Like A Girl" program to introduce middle school age girls to landscape architecture. The workshop featured talks by designers Diana Fernandez and Gina Ford. For teachers in high schools and colleges, we hosted a virtual workshop on using digital archives entitled "Teaching Urban Landscape History and Democracy" drawing from the Rare Book library.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

College of
Architecture



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES



Dumbarton Oaks
RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION

This project has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES GRANTS

We continue to expand the reach of our program by partnering on grant-funded projects related to democracy, race and place. We were awarded a NEH Digital Humanities Advancement Grant with LaDale Winling (VT) for "Connecting the Interstates." This project leverages our capacity to connect scholars of urban and landscape history. We received funding from NEH for a Summer Institute for College and University Teachers, *Towards a People's History of Landscape Part 1: Black & Indigenous Histories of the Nation's Capital*, led by Drs. T. Way (DO) and A. Roberts (TAMU) and hosted at Dumbarton Oaks from June 12 to July 1, 2022. This will engage twenty-five faculty including from Hispanic-serving, HBCU, tribal, and community colleges. The Institute responds to a broad call in the humanities for re-examining how we research and teach history through the lens of people in place with a focus on expanding critical spatial literacy.

DEANS EQUITY & INCLUSION INVITATIVE

In response to recurring questions about how to steward early career faculty from diverse backgrounds, with attention to BIPOC and other under-represented faculty, we invited deans of design and planning schools to explore how they might collectively address questions of equity, inclusion, and community, including supporting the teaching and research in new and challenging domains. The small Zoom discussions developed into a community of 20 schools comprising a [Deans Equity & Inclusion Initiative](#). We built a Fellows cohort program who attended a virtual Summer Institute organized by Dumbarton Oaks and taught by Dark Matter University, a network committed to anti-racist forms of communal knowledge and spatial practice, and mid-career faculty members from participating schools.

GOALS FOR YEAR 3:

1. Host and steward Mellon Fellows for the academic year at Dumbarton Oaks to create a stronger and broader network of scholars in democracy, race, identity, and difference in landscape studies;
2. Relaunch Midday Dialogues with in-person guests and engagements to strengthen the community of scholars and to introduce new scholars to the Dumbarton Oaks resources;
3. Refine our public programs drawing on the digital tools developed during COVID in ways that will complement our in-person programs;
4. Host a 2022 NEH Summer Institute, *Towards a People's History of Landscape Part 1: Black & Indigenous Histories of the Nation's Capital* led by Drs. Thaïsa Way (DO) and Andrea Roberts (TAMU) to engage twenty-five faculty from colleges and universities targeting those at Hispanic-serving, HBCU, tribal, and community colleges, convening at Dumbarton Oaks, June 12 to July 1, 2022. The Institute responds to a broad call in the humanities for re-examining how we research and teach history through the lens of people in place with a focus on expanding critical spatial literacy.
5. Initiate planning for continued progress for the Initiative including developing a proposal for phase 3.

2020-2021 MELLON FELLOWS

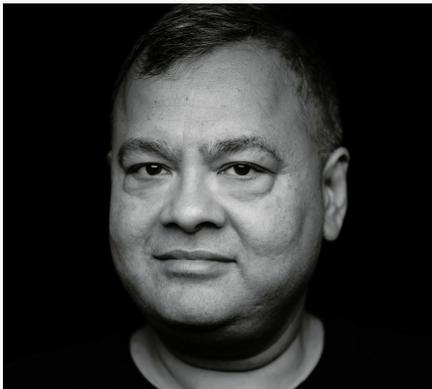
Yearlong Fellows:



Alexander Stewart received his Ph.D. in Architecture (History, Theory and Society) from the University of California, Berkeley. He holds a master's degree in Geography from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of California, Berkeley. His field of study encompasses twentieth and twenty-first century architectural and urban history, and he is particularly interested in researching and teaching about suburbanization, public space, race and ethnicity, and material and consumer cultures. Alec integrates cultural landscape methods including fieldwork, ethnography, and archival materials into his research. With a background in city planning practice and almost a decade of teaching experience, he is committed to promoting socially just urbanism.



Danika Cooper is an Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, where the core of her research centers on the geopolitics of scarcity, alternative water ontologies, and designs for resiliency in the world's arid regions. Her work incorporates historiographical research methods, data visualizations, and theories of urban infrastructure to evaluate and design for environmental and social justice. Specifically, Cooper is focused on emphasizing alternatives to the prevailing nineteenth-century conceptions that the aridlands should be overturned through technocratic solutions and neoliberal politics. Her work has been published and exhibited around the world, and she has practiced in both the United States and India.



As an architect and urban historian, Arijit Sen explores how our knowledge of everyday places and ordinary people can help us understand social change and strive towards a just and equitable world. His publications examine the cultural landscapes of immigrant communities and his current research examines methods to interpret cities from the bottom-up, by engaging voices and histories of marginalized urban communities. Since 2012, he has directed an action-research public-humanities project that engages students and community members in a collaborative exploration of the history of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. Since 2017, he has partnered with the Newark-based Humanities Action Lab to contribute to an international exhibit on environmental justice. Sen co-founded the multi-campus Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures area of doctoral research on architecture and cultural landscapes and served on the board of directors of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Vernacular Architecture Forum.

2020-2021 MELLON FELLOWS

Summer Fellows:



Elgin Cleckley, NOMA, is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at UVA with an appointment in the School of Education and Human Development and the School of Nursing. He is a designer and principal of *_mpathic design* - a Design Thinking pedagogy, initiative, and professional practice. After studying architecture at the University of Virginia ('93) and Princeton University ('95), he collaborated with DLR Group (Seattle), MRSA Architects (Chicago), and Baird Sampson Neuert Architects (Toronto) on award-winning civic projects. Before joining UVA's Design Thinking program in 2016, he was the 3D Group Leader and Design Coordinator at the Ontario Science Centre (Toronto). This work produced the world's first museum/design thinking architectural space (the Weston Family Innovation Centre). Elgin is the recent winner of the 2020 ACSA Diversity Achievement Award, and the University of Virginia's 2021 Alumni Board of Trustees Teaching Award. *_mpathic design's* practice includes collaborations with the City of Lynchburg, and the Albemarle County Office of Equity and Diversity. Elgin is also the Design Director at the UVa Equity Center, and the NOMA Project Pipeline: Architecture Mentorship Program.



Anna Livia Brand's research focuses on historical development and contemporary planning and landscape design challenges in Black mecca neighborhoods in the American North and South. She is investigating how redevelopment paradigms in the 21st century reflect ongoing racialization and her work interrogates the gendered, racialized and resistant constructions of the built environment over time. Her work on post-Katrina New Orleans examines how racial geographies have been reconstructed after the storm. Her comparative work on Black mecca neighborhoods traces historical and contemporary productions of racial landscapes and resistance to these constructions in New Orleans, Atlanta, Houston, Chicago and Washington D.C.. Anna received her PhD in Urban Planning from MIT and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California, Berkeley.



Pollyanna Rhee is Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign where she researches and teaches modern landscape history and is a co-director of the Environmental Humanities Research Cluster. She is currently completing her first book manuscript on the history of American environmentalism and the ways that affluent Americans used the built environment to reinforce and make visible their environmental commitments. She is also working on a second long-term project on the history of the concept of quality of life and its applications in architecture and landscapes. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in the *Journal of Design History*, *Modern Intellectual History*, *Architectural Design*, and *Avery Review*. From 2018-2020 Pollyanna was Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Environmental Humanities at the University of Illinois. She received her PhD in History and Theory of Architecture from Columbia University.