Thank you to the Leadership of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections

&

Mellon Foundation

for the tremendous support of this initiative

Additionally, we want to acknowledge the dedication and focus of our Mellon Initiative Advisory Board
Mellon Initiative: Democracy and Urban Landscapes
Race, Identity and Difference

Our Mellon Landscape Humanities Initiative was again generative and productive this past year. With Mellon fellows as researchers and teachers, we explored the diverse ways in which scholarship of, on and about place is engaged and furthered through pedagogy.

Through the work of our Mellon fellows, we contributed to expanding the Dumbarton Oaks community to engage scholarship in urban landscape histories as well as those of Mexican craftsmen and labor, Black landscape architects, and narratives of maroon communities within the Dismal Swamps. Our teaching fellows explored the built environments of refugee camps and the practice of democracy in the Greek Agora among other topics. Beyond our residential fellows, we hosted a series of virtual talks, discussions, and workshops seeking to expand our community and to support critical scholarship and teaching across institutions.
We are honored to share that Dumbarton Oaks has been awarded a “Humanities in Place” grant renewal by the Mellon Foundation. The grant will support research and scholarly programming on Democracy and Landscape with particular attention to questions of race, identity, and difference.

Over the past three years, the second installment of the Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks turned attention to the interrogation of Democracy and the Urban Landscape through questions of race, identity, and difference. By cultivating partnerships, supporting scholarly activity, and connecting with youth in the community, the initiative contributed to the inclusive dialogues required to nurture a dynamic democracy and address legacies of neglect and marginalization. The first phase produced publications on such topics as the resilience of river cities and the physical, social, and political relations between the production of food and urban settlements.

In this third phase, the Initiative focuses on “Democracy and Landscape: Race, Identity, and Difference” as a part of the Mellon’s “Humanities in Place” program. At Dumbarton Oaks, we are building scholarship in landscape, environmental, and place histories that recenter cultural points of view historically un-heard, shared, and/or honored. This work broadens the contributions of Dumbarton Oaks to scholarship that promotes and strengthens the essential role of humanities and history in the landscape and in place.
Annual Mellon Colloquium

Seeking to build collaborative research, we hosted our annual Mellon Colloquium, “Landscapes of Civil Rights in the District of Columbia and the National Capital Area” on February 25th, 2022, in partnership with the National Park Service, University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites, and Tulane University. This event launched a multiyear collaborative project led by the NPS to recognize, document, map, and explore frameworks for interpreting landscapes of civil rights in the District of Columbia and the National Capital Area with a focus on National Park Service lands. We also continued our collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Planning Project, “Connecting the Interstates,” led by LaDale Winling at Virginia Technical University with Thaïsa Way as a co-PI. This work included a workshop with participants to explore how we might collectively create a digital history project on the U.S. interstate highway system. This was possible due to our Mellon funding and initiative.
GLS & Mellon Annual Symposia

In 2022, we held our third symposium in a five-year series exploring what it would mean to curate histories of making landscapes. Building on symposia exploring landscapes of segregation and resistance in 2020 and the Land Back movement and Indigenous readings of land in 2021, this symposium, “Landscapes in Making”, interrogated stories of labor, craft, and stewardship as the work of making landscape. The talks sought to foreground those who have so often been silenced, including women, Black and Indigenous people, immigrants, and working-class laborers. As a collection the scholarship and counter narratives expand and enrich histories of land and place-making and underscored the potential depth and breadth of interdisciplinary approaches to histories of place and land.

We are honored to have Dr. N.D.B. Connolly (JHU) and Dr. Oscar de la Torre (UNC) as symposiarchs for our spring symposium, “Environmental Histories of the Black Atlantic World: Landscape Histories of the African Diaspora,” on May 12-13, 2023. The invited scholars will focus on place-based histories of landscapes, waterscapes, and environments of the Black Atlantic world from the fifteenth through the twentieth century. By engaging the geographic breadth of the Atlantic world and its complex relationships and networks, this symposium seeks to share scholarship on Black landscapes as individual places and as mapped connection sites within larger networks.
NEH Summer Institute
In June 2022 we were excited to host Dumbarton Oaks’ first NEH Summer Institute Towards a People’s History of Landscape: Black & Indigenous Histories of the Nation’s Capital Summer Institute for College and University Teachers. Twenty-three faculty members and graduate students from college and universities convened at Dumbarton Oaks from June 12 through July 1, 2022. Participants worked collaboratively to develop online, open-source curriculum modules that teach landscape-oriented social histories, centering Black and Indigenous historical narratives in the founding of the United States and the District of Columbia. These modules as well as shared syllabi will be made available on a new website as we identify ways to build our community of place-based historians and scholars. The Institute builds on our Mellon Initiative to respond to a broad call in the humanities for re-examining how we research and teach history through the lens of people in place and towards expanding critical spatial literacy.

Deans Equity and Inclusion Initiative
Through our Mellon program we initiated the Deans Equity and Inclusion Initiative that engages deans and directors of built environment schools committed to re-imagining our communities in support of a more equitable, just, and healthy future for all. A primary project of the collaborative is a new program to mentor early career faculty with attention to BIPOC and other under-represented faculty. We host cohorts of early career fellows who participate in a two-year program of mentoring, including two summer institutes, and bi-monthly working sessions. Comprised of over thirty-five leaders, this initiative identifies ways in which a community of schools can do more than any one individually to steward the next generation of design and planning faculty, including 23 current fellows.

Youth Engagement
Reaching out to engage D.C. public high school students, the Mellon Initiative included programming for three senior students at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts who are enrolled in the school’s Museum Studies program. Throughout the spring semester, students meet with different leaders at Dumbarton Oaks for career exploration and immersive learning opportunities within the garden. The students’ final project was a reflection journal on their semester that related to the garden. This was an exciting venture, and we hope to continue to work with students from this school just down the block from Dumbarton Oaks.
This year we welcomed three new members to the Mellon Advisory Board: Sarah Lopez, Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania; Andrea Roberts, Associate Professor, University of Virginia; and Gabrielle Tayac, Associate Professor, George Mason University. The Board also saw the departure of the following two members, and we thank them for their years of service: Dell Upton, Professor, Art History, University of California, Los Angeles and Michelle Wilkinson, Curator, (and LOEB Fellow), National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Sarah Lopez, a built environment historian and migration scholar, is an Associate Professor at the Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania. Lopez' book, The Remittance Landscape: The Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA, focuses on the impact of migrant remittances—dollars earned in the U.S. and sent to families and communities in Mexico—on the architecture and landscape of “rural” Mexico and “urban” USA.

Lopez is working on two book projects. The first examines the architectural history of migrant detention facilities in the U.S., a project that contributed to the Humanities Action Lab’s States of Incarceration national exhibit, on view from 2016 to 2020. The second examines the history of a transnational building industry “from below,” with a focus on cantera stone and embodied construction knowledge in both Mexico and the U.S. She researches and teaches at the intersections of migration, ordinary landscapes, urbanism, and spatial justice. Lopez’s book was awarded the 2017 Spiro Kostof Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. She has been the recipient of Mellon fellowships at Princeton, Dumbarton Oaks, and in 2023, the Center for the Study of Visual Arts (CASVA) at the National Gallery.
Dr. Andrea Roberts, is an Associate Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning and Co-Director of the School’s Center for Cultural Landscapes at the University of Virginia's (UVA) School of Architecture. Prior to joining UVA, Dr. Roberts was an Associate Professor of Urban Planning at Texas A&M University (TAMU). She is a scholar-activist who brings 12 years of experience in community development, nonprofit administration, and advocacy to her engaged research and public scholarship. In 2014, she founded The Texas Freedom Colonies Project, the vehicle through which she mentors and trains future planners, preservationists, scholars, and community-based researchers to challenge freedom colony invisibility, environmental injustice, and land loss through heritage conservation. She and her team richly map these settlements via the interactive The Texas Freedom Colonies Project™, Atlas and Study, which spatializes sites’ histories through participatory action research methods, including oral histories.

She has received awards for her engaged scholarship from The Vernacular Architecture Forum and the Urban Affairs Association. Roberts was a 2020-21 Whiting Public Engagement Fellow, an African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund grant recipient, and a 2020 Visiting Scholar at Yale’s Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, Abolition. Most recently, she served as Co-Project Director for the NEH Summer Institute for Higher Education Faculty—"Towards a People’s History of Landscape."

Dr. Roberts is also the Consultant/Owner of Freedom Colonies Project, LLC, which provides research and DEIA services to preservation organizations. She served as a Texas State Board of Review member and a National Monument Audit Advisory Board member. Dr. Roberts holds a Ph.D. in planning from The University of Texas at Austin (2016), an M.A. in government administration from the University of Pennsylvania (2006), and a B.A. in political science from Vassar College (1996). She is currently authoring a book, Never Sell the Land, about her experiences identifying Black planning and historic preservation practices that sustain cultural resilience within freedom colonies for The University of Texas Press.
Dr. Gabrielle Tayac, a member of the Piscataway Indian Nation, is an activist scholar committed to empowering Indigenous perspectives. She earned her PhD and MA in sociology from Harvard University, and her BS in social work and American Indian studies from Cornell University. Her scholarly research focuses on hemispheric American Indian identity, multiracialism, indigenous religions, and social movements, maintaining a regional specialization in the Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Tayac served on the staff of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) for 18 years as an educator, historian, and curator.

She engages deeply in community relationships and public discourse. She took a two-year journey to uplift the voices of indigenous elder women leaders, sponsored by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors prior to settling back at home. Drawing from her decades of experience as a curator, educator, and historian at NMAI and fieldwork supporting elders across the Americas, Dr. Tayac trains a new generation of public historians at George Mason in these methodologies. At Mason, with enthusiastic support in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and in her department, Dr. Tayac set up the Public History Lab to work with students to learn hands-on skills to create exhibits and put history into action – not only with indigenous topics.
2021-2022 Fellows

Glenn LaRue Smith (Founder and Principal, PUSH Studio, LLC, Spring),
The First Black Landscape Architects

Sarah Lopez (University of Texas at Austin),
A People’s History of Cantera

Farhan Karim (School of Architecture and Design at the University of Kansas),
“Landscape of Urban Marginality: Bihari Camps in Dhaka, Bangladesh”

Samantha L. Martin (University College Dublin), “Designing for Dissent: Democracy, Urbanism, and the Mediation of Conflict
2021-2022 Fellows

**Rosabella Alvarez-Calderón** (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú) “Negotiating the Future of Prehispanic Landscapes in Contemporary Cities: Rethinking Ancient Sites as Free/Raw Space”

**Danielle S. Willkens** (Georgia Institute of Technology), “From Plantation to Protest: Visualizing Cultural Landscapes of Conflict in the American South”

**Amber N. Wiley** (Rutgers University), “‘The Revolution Continues’: The 1976 Bicentennial and the Black Heritage Movement”
Summer 2022 Fellows

**Alissa Ujie Diamond** (PhD candidate, University of Virginia), “Entangled Histories for Indeterminate Futures: Racial Capitalisms, Resistances, and Space in Central Virginia”

**Jennifer Hock** (Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore), ““Breaking Ground: Activists and Experts Build the New Boston, 1960-1975”

**Delande Justinvil** (PhD candidate, American University), “Exhuming the Ex-Human: A Biocultural Investigation of Black Remains in the Town of George”

**Amanda Martin-Hardin** (PhD candidate, Columbia University), “Greenlining: Outdoor Recreation and Segregation in the United States”
2022-2023 Fellows

**Ashon T. Crawley** (University of Virginia), “in search of our mothers’ gardens.”

**Claire Dunning** (University of Maryland, College Park), “Funding the Urban North: Policy, Philanthropy, and Racial Equity ‘After’ Civil Rights”

**Rabia Harmanşah** (Cultural Anthropologist), “Mapping the Forgotten Landscape: People, Power and Belonging—the case of the Island of Imbros”

**Kathryn E. Holliday** (University of Texas at Arlington), “Telephone City: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Rise and Fall of the Bell Monopoly”
2023 Summer Fellowship

This fall we announced the 2023 Summer Mellon Fellowship focused on Black Atlantic Geographies. The program will support researchers, including predoctoral and postdoctoral scholars, whose work explores the lives and built environments of Caribbean, Latin American, West African, and Afro-European people.

The Mellon summer fellowships extend more than a year of programming and publishing on themes and topics related to the “Black Atlantic,” an understanding of cultural and political connectedness, commercial flows, and environmental change that foregrounds the experiences of African-descended peoples, decenters Europe, and locates in place and time the multiplicity of Black cultures.

Summer 2023’s fellowship recipients will follow a Spring symposium led by Dr. N. D. B. Connolly and Dr. Oscar De La Torre on the landscape and environmental histories of the African diaspora. Workshops during the Summer fellowship will include discussions of breakthroughs showcased at that symposium, as well as new directions being advanced by scholars, curators, and other culture-keepers committed to reshaping entire fields of study and practice from the Black experience outward.