

# MARY & WILLIAM

THE GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019: ISSUE 15



**Global  
Feminist  
Labs**

*Stefanie Wuschitz  
Visits W&M*



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*"Science, technology, and media are all important concerns for feminist researchers today. The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program at William & Mary is part of an international conversation about how issues of gender and technology inform the making of knowledge."*

Earlier this year I was invited to participate in a special two-day event that explored a provocative question: "What is a feminist lab?" This conference at the University of Colorado included researchers from all over North America, including people who directed campus labs, studied campus labs, or were members of experimental labs of artists or activists challenging the objectivity and neutrality of the laboratory concept itself.

Now that so many students in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies double major with fields in the sciences –

including natural science, computer science, and social science – it's worth rethinking how we can create space for learning, experimentation, collaboration, and knowledge creation that brings the humanities and sciences together. As you will see in one of our photo spreads, we invited Stefanie Wuschitz of Vienna, Austria, the director of Mz Baltazar's Laboratory, to campus. Wuschitz talked about ways to build inclusive environments for exploring topics in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). She also led a fun lesson about building your own amplifier from electronic components using principles from cooking in a communal kitchen.

It has also been exciting to expand our offerings that bring art and activism together with an international focus. One popular guest came from Bangalore,

India. Jasmeen Patheja leads the activist collective Blank Noise, and she explained how she combined social media, street protest, and public performance and art to advocate for the right to occupy public space without fearing for one's safety.

We are also excited to welcome a new faculty member this academic year to expand our offerings in media studies. We know that issues of representation and visibility matter for our field, so we are thrilled to have a faculty member help our students interrogate images and ideas from popular culture. Film and media have always been important for our program, beginning with our introductory courses, while gender and sexuality lie at the conceptual foundation of the study of film and media. So bringing in an instructor knowledgeable in both fields has been wonderful. I think you will enjoy reading the interview with Dr. Jonathan Branfman in this newsletter and seeing how GSWS is providing more coverage in masculinity studies and television studies as well.

Dr. Branfman gave an insightful brown bag presentation about his research on the popular television rom-com *Crazy Ex-Grilfriend*. Our brown bag series also included Shakespeare scholar Alicia Andrzejewski's latest work on "queer pregnancy" in the bard's work.

In the pages that follow, you will see that there is a lot happening with GSWS.

## GSWS CELEBRATES!

### HOMEcomings 2019



### BACK-TO-SCHOOL PARTY





# Global Feminist Labs

## Stefanie Wuschitz

Stefanie Wuschitz works at the intersection of research, art and technology, with a particular focus on Critical Media Practices (feminist hacking, open source technology, peer production). She graduated with an MFA in Transmedia Arts in 2006. In 2008 she completed her Master's at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and became Digital Art Fellow at Umeå University in Sweden. In 2009 she founded the feminist hackerspace and art collective Mz\* Baltazar's Laboratory in Vienna, encouraging technology and art that is developed from a feminist perspective.



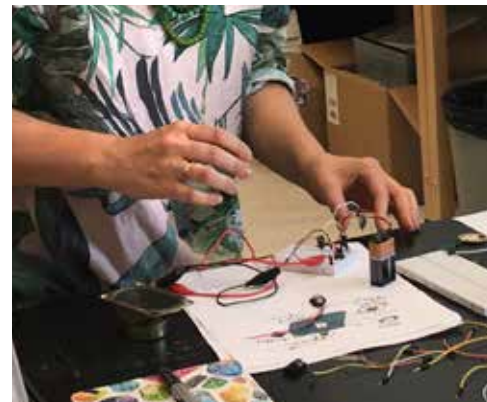
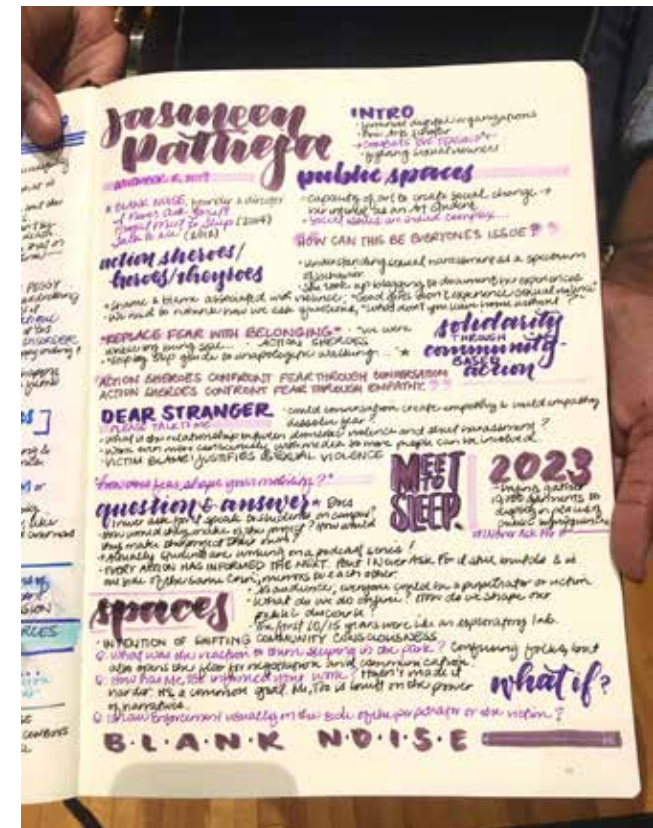
Continued on Page 6

## Jasmeen Patheja

Jasmeen Patheja is an artist, and also the founder and director of Blank Noise, a community of Action Heroines/ Heroes/ Theyroes, citizens, and persons across India and beyond, united to eradicate sexual, gender based violence. Patheja initiated Blank Noise in response to street harassment in 2003 as a graduation project, at a time when sexual violence in public spaces was viewed as a non-issue. Select projects at Blank Noise, conceptualized by Patheja, include I Never Ask For It (2004 - ongoing), where individuals become Action Heroes by bringing in the garment they wore when they experienced violence. The garment is witness, memory and the sender's voice to reject any excuse or justification of sexual violence. Talk To Me (2012) brings men and women to an hour-long conversation over tea and samosas, on unsafe sites, in efforts to confront our story of fear and its politics.

Continued on Page 6

Longtime popular instructor Dr. Victoria Castillo noted that Patheja's presentation was perfect for GSWS students who are working to come up with a creative response in developing an activism project. The ways Patheja solicits community involvement and encourages collective brainstorming were particularly imaginative.



### #MeetToSleep



### #INeverAskForIt





Stefanie Wuschitz (continued from Page 4)

In 2014 Stefanie finished her PhD on "Feminist Hackerspaces" at the Vienna University of Technology. She held Post-Doc positions at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Vienna University of Technology and collaborates with scholars at Michigan University (Ann Arbor). Currently she is teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and exhibiting her artwork in international venues.



GSWS Director Elizabeth Losh visited Stefanie Wuschitz's unique space in Vienna in 2019. Her lab is located in a storefront space in a neighborhood that is accessible to women from refugee communities. (At one point, Wuschitz studied in Syria.) To fit in as much equipment, electronics, and room for exploring as possible, there is fold-out ladder to get to the second floor!

Jasmeen Patheja (continued from Page 5)

Jasmeen Patheja's studio in Bangalore



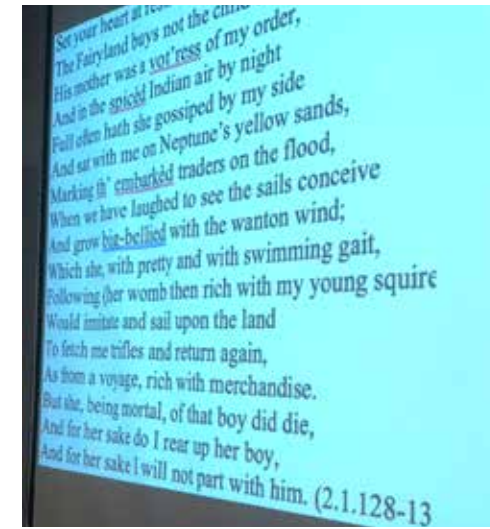
In recent years, Blank Noise efforts go beyond the street, towards building connection between spaces of violence, and the identities experiencing it. Project Meet To Sleep (2014- ongoing) brings Action Sheroes to sleep in their very own public parks, asserting the right to occupy,

and to live defenseless. They use hashtags to publicize their events in which members are encouraged to sleep in public and often document happenings on Instagram and Facebook. Director Losh first met Patheja and other Indian activists in Bangalore and Delhi in the aftermath of the 2012 Delhi rape case.



## Brownbag Discussion Series

Alicia Andrzejewski  
Queer Pregnancy in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



## Jonathan Branfman



## Nice Jewish Girl Meets Rom-Com





# ALUMNI UPDATE

## Juliana Costa

My name is Juliana and I work as a tech journalist and copywriter in São Paulo, Brazil. I write about how startups and technology are shaping the new economy, as well as the growing digital divide.

I was first introduced to these concepts by Liz Losh when I took her class on Gender and Digital Culture. It was among my favorite GSWS classes, alongside Black Gender, taught by Bettina Judd, and Trans Fiction, taught by Jenny Putzi. This degree shaped my critical gaze, and the frameworks imparted by great QPOC, trans and feminist thinkers continuously challenge me to stay aware and to stay uncomfortable -- uncomfortable with the injustices perpetuated in the name of progress, uncomfortable with my complacency and with that of others.

It's also given me a wonderful group of friends and scholars who keep me accountable for being authentic and brave. I'm so grateful for this program and proud to call myself an alumna.



*As a GSWS student Juliana edited Wikipedia, created digital art, and conducted ethnographic research on Reddit. She has advocated for preserving the archive of activism in the program.*

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Jonathan Branfman

By: Madysson Sanchez

**MS: What inspired your children's book *You Be You*?**

JB: I wrote *You Be You* to make feminist education more accessible beyond the university and accessible in more languages. As a GSWS professor, I love helping adult students to unlearn harmful myths about gender and sexuality—like the myth that there can only be two genders, or that only straight people can make good parents. But I also wish that no one had to learn these stigmatizing myths in the first place. Wouldn't it be great if we all learned accurate, stigma-free facts about gender and sexual diversity from the start, at the same time we learn our ABCs? This kind of learning can help LGBTQIA people to grow up without internalized stigma, and help more straight and cisgender people to support their LGBTQIA loved ones.

**MS: What made you want to be a visiting Professor here at William and Mary?**

JB: First, I like how my visiting professorship bridges GSWS with Film & Media Studies. The intersection of gender, sexuality, and race with pop culture is one of my favorite topics to research and teach about. For example, I had a great time this semester teaching a course on TV's New Jews (like Drake, Amy Schumer, and Zac Efron) and another on race/gender "passing" onscreen (in films like *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *White Chicks*, and *BlackKKlansman*). Second, William & Mary is an especially supportive community where students and colleagues look out for each other, and that climate is very appealing.

**MS: Do you think that films and media have any effect on how people view race and gender in real life?**

JB: I definitely believe that films and media (especially social media) shape the way people view race and gender in real life. A great example is the issue of "fake news." Competing news networks, blogs, and individuals today report opposite accounts of the same topics, and



dismiss each other's facts as fake. This informational competition especially surrounds topics like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and immigrant family separations. Depending on which news sources people consume, two people sitting next to each other in Starbucks can believe completely different narratives about racial and gendered inequality in the U.S. today.

**MS: Is there anyone in Film & Media today that has been doing any particularly inspiring work?**

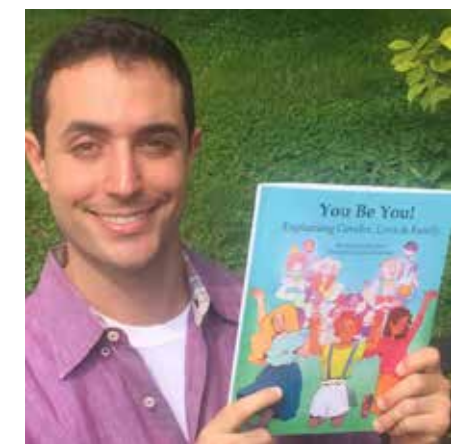
JB: In terms of academic research, I recommend Russell Meeuf's book *Rebellious Bodies* (2017), Aymar Jean Christian's book *Open TV* (2018), and Hannah Schwadron's book *The Sexy Jewess* (2018). All are great for understanding present-day media dynamics like web television and the rise of more diverse Hollywood stars. In terms of media to view, my favorites at the moment are the TV series *Schitt's Creek* and *Big Mouth* and the film *Good Boys*. They're all drop-dead hilarious, but their jokes also provide really neat commentaries of gender and sexuality. For instance, *Schitt's Creek* offers a complex, positive depiction of pansexual identity.

**MS: If you could give your younger self any advice as a writer, what would it be?**

JB: When revising, be pithier! The more you tighten your writing, the clearer it will be.

**MS: What do you see in the future for Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies?**

JB: At William & Mary and nationwide, I think that GSWS will keep addressing race, new media, and masculinities more deeply. These topics are so salient in our culture today. For instance, these days, how can we teach about dating norms without discussing dating apps? I also hope that the field will engage more deeply with Jewish Studies to understand anti-Semitism in the present-day United States. Recent events like the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally and the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting highlight that anti-Semitism remains an important topic for intersectional feminist, queer, and critical race studies.





# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

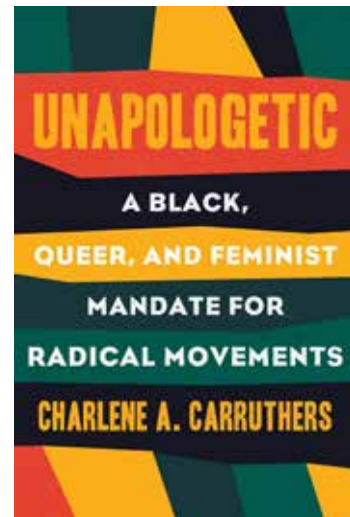
Upcoming GSWS Events

## April 9th

# CHARLENE CARRUTHERS

*Braithwaite Lecture*

Charlene A. Carruthers is a Black, queer feminist community organizer and writer with over 15 years of experience in racial justice, feminist and youth leadership, and development movement work. As the founding national director of BYP100 (Black Youth Project 100), she has worked alongside hundreds of young Black activists to build a national base of activist member-led organizations of Black 18-35 year olds dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people. Her passion for developing young leaders to build capacity within marginalized communities has led her to work on immigrant rights, economic justice and civil rights campaigns nationwide. She has led grassroots and digital strategy campaigns for national organizations including the Center for Community Change and the Women's Media Center. She has led grassroots and digital strategy campaigns for national organizations including the Center for Community Change, the Women's Media Center, ColorOfChange.org and National People's Action.



# GSWS GRADUATION 2019



GSWS Class of 2019: Sarah Smith, Madison Pellow, Xufan (Nadia) Ma, Annie Brinkley, Louise Ferrall, Rebecca Beale, Baldeep Kaur Mann, Laura MacDonald, Arika Thames, Nora Zimmerman, Nija Gray







## GIVE TO GSWS

Your contribution to the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program will help our faculty members provide the best learning experience to our students. You can contribute online with your credit card, using our secure web server at: [www.wm.edu/as/gsws/support/index.php](http://www.wm.edu/as/gsws/support/index.php). The contribution form will be pre-selected to direct your gift to the general academic fund for the GSWS, which supports student and faculty needs directly.

To contribute by mail, make your check payable to The College of William & Mary Foundation. Please be sure in your check's memo area to note how you are designating your gift to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

### Mailing Address:

*The College of William and Mary  
P.O. Box 1693  
Williamsburg, VA 23187-1693*

## LIKE

William and Mary Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies on Facebook!

Find us on Facebook and keep updated about everything GSWS!

[www.facebook.com/williamandmarygsws?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/williamandmarygsws?fref=ts)

## MARY & WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

### Editor

Madysson Sanchez

### Director of GSWS

Elizabeth Losh