

MARY & WILLIAM

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

FALL 2022/ SPRING 2023: ISSUE 20



BRAITHWAITE RESIDENCY SOUTH ASIAN DRAG AUNTY LAWHORE VAGISTAN / DR. KAREEM KHUBCHANDANI

*Photo: Workshop in critical drag student
participant Ass Thma/ Caleb Streat
Photo Credits to Alex Chen*

WHATS INSIDE?

**Director's Note • Faculty Recent Publications • GSWS Awards • Lips
Zine • Events • Duke Feminist Theory Workshop • Senior Spotlights**



CLAIRE PAMMENT

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year I began leadership of GSWS, with the support of my brilliant predecessors and with a vibrant cartel of colleagues and students. As we continue to emerge from the Pandemic, our work over the year has focused on strengthening interdisciplinarity, collaboration and community— arguably the foundations of feminist- trans- and queer-worldmaking.

Rebooting outreach efforts have been central to these goals. In the Fall, we had the eminent trans activist and historian Dr Susan Stryker on campus, who offered an intimate reading group and a campus-wide presentation on her new work around the seemingly intersex indentured servant Thomas/ine Hall of early colonial Virginia. Donna Kaz (“Aphra Behn”) from the feminist collective Guerilla Girls on Tour shared her activist methods of posters, protests, fax blitzes and street theatre actions to push against patriarchy and racism in the art and theatre world, inciting students to make a difference with art and activism. We have also responded to current legal challenges in collaboration with the Centre for Racial and Social Justice and the Law School. A fall panel on issues around reproductive justice, and a Spring Boswell panel on trans youth, have combined legal, academic and activist perspectives, to ask what we can do to fight back. While these events have focused on organizing in Virginia, we have also created opportunities for our students to engage with international and transnational contexts. The performance artist Loo Zihan reflected on performing queerness in Singapore following the 2022 repeal of the colonial era “anti sodomy act” 377A, Dr Esha Momeni provided insights on the ongoing struggle for women’s rights in Iran, and at the Ampersand Festival we screened Sankhajt Biswas’s film “A Home for My Heart” around trans experiences in India’s Bengal province. We also supported the Rainbow Coalition in hosting a panel on the situation of LGBTQI+ persons in Ukraine.

Rage and reflection have been accompanied by joy-making and collective care through the year. We have fostered relationships with student organizations, launching the semester with a Welcome Party fueled by poetry, song, stand-up and sketches by Inside Out Theatre, Pink Tax, and our own Lips. The WM Chapter of Lips restarted in 2021 through conversations with GSWS alum and founder of Lips Social, Annie Brown, has now published its third zine, committed to queer art and education. Financial support from GSWS alum and film-maker Ashley Glacel, enabled us to launch a new GSWS creative arts award, that in this inaugural year funded and offered a platform to three student artists to create and stage new work in a creative reception: a photography-literature project on biracial fictions and frictions, a queer cabaret lambasting body imaging in musicals, and an interactive queer collage. Glimpses of this work and features from LIPS will soon be on display in our newly renovated Gove Seminar Room, to offer a home for both student gathering and instruction.

Our grand finale to outreach, was a Braithwaite residency with Dr Kareem Khubchandani (Tufts University), otherwise known as South Asian drag auntie LaWhore Vagistan. Their public performance at Williamsburg Regional Library, "Lessons in Drag" had audiences up on the stage dancing, clapping along to Bollywood and lollywood hits, while introducing us to critical drag, South Asian gay nightlife and critical aunty studies, at the interactions of race, gender, sexuality, nation, globalization and religion. Through the week-long residency they led workshops with students in drag technologies and techniques, which resulted in a public showcase of 23 phenomenal student drag performances.

We have also been busy off campus. For the first time since 2019, we had faculty and student presence at the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop. GSWS colleagues participated in a panel "Rethinking the Work of Trafficking" at the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies at the University of Richmond. Furthermore, I am thrilled to see that our students are again taking up internships through the generous support of alum Carol Woody.

I want to celebrate the great work of our faculty in putting together a dynamic year of events, courses, mentorship, and for all the research and activism they do, putting women's, gender and sexuality studies in and across a wide variety of disciplines. This year we have further reached across disciplinary areas, welcoming new GSWS affiliates into our community: Jody Allen (History/ AFST/ the Lemon Project), Bené Ferrão (English/ APIA), Anne Rasmussen (Music/ AMES), Emily Wilcox (Chinese Studies/ AMES), and Andrea Wright (Anthropology/ AMES). A special shout out needs to go to our brilliant administrator, Latasha Simms, and to our work study student, GSWS major, and Lips executive director, Joey Houska- who has put together this newsletter and for all their creative labor this year. We are able to do what we do because of our dynamic community of students, staff, faculty and alum.

Finally, I want to wish our graduating seniors the very best in their future journeys. I know that the knowledge and experiences you have gained from GSWS will prepare you to make a difference in our worlds.



Claire Pamment (Associate Professor of World Theatre & GSWS)



Left to Right: Jennifer Putzi, Diya Bose, Emily Wilcox, Latasha Simms, Claire Pamment, Leisa Meyer, Simon Joyce

GSWS FACULTY & COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Diya Bose, GSWS/Sociology
Victoria Castillo, GSWS
Elizabeth Losh, English/AMST
Claire McKinney GSWS/ Government
Leisa Meyer, History/ AMST
Claire Pamment, GSWS/TSD
Jennifer Putzi, GSWS/English
Jody Allen, History, The Lemon Project/History
Alicia Andrzejewski, English
Jennifer Cross, Education
Helen Murphy, Biology
Joey Houska, GSWS, undergraduate student
representative
Maegan Thompson AMST, postgraduate
student representative

OUTREACH

Diya Bose (Chair)
Jay Watkins
Molly Shilo

PRIZES AND AWARDS

Victoria Castillo (Chair)
Bené Ferrão
Reya Farber

PERSONNEL

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Leisa Meyer
Victoria Castillo
Aaron Griffith

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Emma Evans
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Jennifer Putzi, GSWS/English
Suzanne Rait, Vice Dean for Arts, Humanities and
Interdisciplinary Studies/ English

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Jennifer Mendez, Sociology
Anne Blazer, Religious Studies
Leslie Cochrane, English/ Linguistics
Cheryl Dickter, Psychology/ Graduate Studies
Eddy Pamela, Education
Reya Farber, Sociology
Bené Ferrão, English/ APIA
Monika Gosin, Sociology
Aaron Griffith, Philosophy
Suzanne Hagedorn, English
Vivian Hamilton, Law/ W&M Center for Racial &
Social Justice
Kathleen Jenkins, Sociology
Simon Joyce, English
Deborah Morse, English
Helen Murphy, Biology
Vassiliki Panoussi, Classics
Sasha Prokhorov, Russian Studies
Anne Rasmussen, Music/ AMES/ Middle Eastern
Hannah Rosen, AMST/ Graduate Studies
Francesca Sawaya, English
Monica Seger, Italian Studies
Christina Stancioiu, Art History
Erin Webster, English
Emily Wilcox, Chinese Studies
Brett Wilson, English
Laurie Wolf, TSD
Andrea Wright, Anthropology/ AMES

FACULTY RECENT PUBLICATIONS: A READING LIST

Blazer, Annie. "Savage Symbols: Native American Mascots in the U.S." *Religion and Sport in North America*, 2022, pp. 216–234.

Bose, Diya, Gurusami, Susila, and Garcia, Rocio. "Abolishing Carceral Distractions: Refusing the Discursive Punishment of Latinxs." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 2022, pp. 1–20.

Farber, Reya. "Health Rights for Trans People Vary Widely around the Globe – Achieving Trans Bliss and Joy Will Require Equity, Social Respect and Legal Protections." *The Conversation*, 8 Feb. 2023, <https://theconversation.com/health-rights-for-trans-people-vary-widely-around-the-globe-achieving-trans-bliss-and-joy-will-require-equity-social-respect-and-legal-protections-194237>.

Ferrão, R. Benedito, and Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar. "Vamona Navelcar's Lost Suitcase: Drawing (from) the Impossibility of Nation in The Destination Is the Journey." *World History Bulletin*, no. Comics and Graphic Novels in the World History Classroom [Special Issue], 2022, pp. 10–16.

Griffith, Aaron M. "Basic Racial Realism, Social Constructionism, and the Ordinary Concept of Race." *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 2022.

Joyce, Simon. "Queer Theories of the 1890s." *Nineteenth-Century Literature in Transition: The 1890s*, edited by Dustin Friedman and Kristin Mary Mahoney, Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Losh, Elizabeth M. *Selfie Democracy: The New Digital Politics of Disruption and Insurrection*. The MIT Press, 2022.

McKinney, Claire. "Biopluralism, Disability, and Biopolitics," *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 2021.

Morse, Deborah. "The Brontes: Romantic Passion and Social Justice." *Audible*. Aug. 2021.

Pamment, Claire, Redding, Jeff, and Hossain, Adnan. *Badhai: Hijra-Khwaja Sira-Trans Performance across Borders in South Asia*. Meuthen Drama, 2023.

Prokhorov, Alexander. *Russian TV Series in the Era of Transition: Genres, Technologies, Identities*. Academic Studies Press, 2021.

Putzi, Jennifer. *Fair Copy: Relational Poetics and Antebellum American Women's Poetry*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021.

Rasmussen, Anne K. "7. The Politicization of Religious Melody in the Indonesian Culture Wars of 2017." *Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music*, 2022, pp. 112–130.

Wilcox, Emily, and Soo Ryon Yoon. "Inter-Asia in Motion: Dance as Method." Special issue of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, Dec. 2022, pp. 491–686.



GSWS AWARDS 2022 / 2023

NANCY GRAY PRIZE

This prize is awarded to one graduating senior in recognition of their academic and activist achievement, and their commitment to the ideals of the GSWS Program.

EMMA EVANS ('23)

GSWS PRIZE FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Awarded to two students whose work is evaluated as the most successful in advancing our knowledge of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

AUBREY LAY ('23) "DISORDERED BODIES: DIMENSIONS OF INTERSEX", DEVELOPED IN PROF. BOSE'S CLASS "GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE LAW"

GSWS CREATIVE ARTS AWARD

Several students were commissioned for artwork or performance pieces that engage feminist themes of women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality. Their work was celebrated at the first annual GSWS Creative Arts Award Reception on March 7, 2023.

SAGE FUTRELL('26)

AIDAN WHITE ('23)

CLAIRE WYSZYNSKI ('23)

GSWS STUDENT ACTIVISM AWARD

This award recognizes an individual, group, or campus organization that has done outstanding feminist activist work outside the classroom.

VOX: PLANNED PARENTHOOD GENERATION ACTION

CAROL WOODY INTERNSHIP AWARD

This award offers a "real world experience" as preparation for professional career and/or post-graduate opportunities, funded by W&M alum Carol Woody ('71).

JOEY HOUSKA: INTERNSHIP WITH ANNIE BROWN AND LIPS.SOCIAL

SCOTT SHAUNNA: INTERNSHIP WITH VIRGINIA POVERTY LAW CENTER.

CREATIVE ARTS AWARD

The GSWS Creative Arts Award Reception celebrated the work of three students commissioned by a GSWS committee panel to pursue creative projects centered on feminist and queer themes. Claire Wyszynski, Aidan White, and Sage Futrell presented pieces across various mediums that touched on embodiment, exclusion, space, and selfhood.



Claire shared a photo series that merged self portraits taken on her voyage to South Korea with prose from various books written by feminist, Asian, or biracial authors. Growing up biracial, Claire described living in a constant sense of awareness of how others might perceive her. She was asian to her white peers and white to her asian peers. Subjected to categorizations that denied her lived experience, Claire felt as though she was simultaneously white and Korean but primarily Other. These feelings of alienation changed when she embarked on a journey to South Korea alone last year. She uses the metaphor of spring to describe the process of coming into her own. Spring represents a state of constant change and growth. Learning to connect with her Korean community and heritage allowed Claire to embrace her identity in all its complexity.

Sage created a multimedia collage titled "Janus." Janus is the god of duality, looking in both directions rather than merely one or the other. In the collage, Janus is represented as simultaneously looking into the past and the future, gazing over the collage's compilation of queer history, Sage's personal artifacts chronicling their gender and sexuality journey, and the blank space left for the future, which contained an open invitation for community contributions. Sage contextualized the collage in terms of the erasure of queer culture, spaces, and people. "Janus" is their attempt to resist suppression through a piece that says, "We have always been here and we always will be." This radical act, this figurative body jutting out into space, claims this space as its own and forges a path into the future that makes room for us all.



Aidan concluded the ceremony with a cabaret depicting their relationship to theater over time. Growing up, Aidan was ostracized for being, "too much," whether too feminine, too loud, or too big. Then they found theater, where their too much-ness was their greatest asset. Theater gave them the opportunity to express previously suppressed facets of their identity in an environment where exploratory approaches to bodily habitation and presentation were encouraged and rewarded. Even though Aidan loved doing theater, they felt that theater would never love them back. Rather than give their all to a discipline that would judge them based on their body rather than their talent, they decided to retire. Stepping away from theater was not a resignation but a reflection of their self worth in queer cabaret. An acknowledgement that they don't need a stage when all the world's a stage, a world in which they can take up as much space as they please, be as loud as they want, and as queer as they desire.

By Joey Houska ('23)

LIPS ZINE

LIPS ZINE



Lips is a bi-annual zine and queer art collective sponsored by the GSWS program. Lips has a longer history on campus (originally founded by Annie Brown '10), but it has been active for a little over a year in its current iteration. Since its re-inception, Lips has provided a social and creative outlet for queer students, aiming to build a tight-knit community where everyone feels empowered to explore and express themselves. In addition to semesterly zines, Lips has hosted a successful Halloween Drag Show (behind-the-scenes seen above) as well as a collaborative art exhibition in SWEM. When they're not working on the zines, Lips meetings often entail member-led consciousness-raising sessions, like Levi's ('24) presentation on Transgenderism and Communism, or crafting workshops such as cyanotyping t-shirts, collaging with vintage women's magazines, or blackout poetry using outdated feminist studies books. More recently, Lips has organized excursions to Richmond for bonding activities like attending Burlesque Brunches. They're a passionate group of people committed to bringing people together and breaking the silence on important issues.

Check out their existing publications HERE: <https://linktr.ee/lipswm>

Other Events



(From *A Home for My Heart* official facebook)

***A HOME FOR MY HEART* FILM SCREENING, AMPERSAND FESTIVAL 3/2/23**

A Home For My Heart documents the experience of Suvana Sudeb, a South Asian transgender woman who must navigate the social, cultural, and psychological consequences of undergoing gender affirmative surgery. She experiences the pain physically and emotionally, distancing herself from her unsupportive family and expresses anger and frustration at a world and culture that has failed to celebrate her choice to transition. Sudeb speaks about how her experiences with sexist social norms have changed after transitioning, since she never had to confront sex-based prejudice when she identified as a man. The documentary ends with Sudeb and various other South Asian women and queer activists organizing events and coming together in solidarity, in celebration of their differences and dreams for the future. *By Diane Huang*

GSWS Welcome Back Party 9/28/22

To kick off the start of a new school year, students, faculty, and affiliated organizations joined together for a night of (re)connection, snacks, performance art, and collaging on the newly built SWEM patio. Lips, Pink Tax Comedy, and Inside Out Theater dazzled the audience with their poems, skits, and songs.

Homecoming Talk & Reception 10/7/22

Professor Simon Joyce provided a sketch of his new book, *LGBT Victorians: Sexuality and Gender in 19th Century Archives* (Oxford University Press) which considers whether there were Victorians that we might now call transgender, and how to identify them in the archives given that no such term existed then.

With English, GSWS, and W&M LAMBDA Alliance

Q&A W/ Dr. Deborah Fabian 10/11/22

A W&M alum and an advocate of diversity and inclusion issues in medicine, Dr. Fabian spoke candidly about her experiences as a transwoman in the field of orthopedic surgery and her life's journey more broadly, touching on topics such as mental health, and relationships.

With Biology & GSWS



Club Q Vigil Memorial 11/29/22

GSWS, Lips, and other community members joined together for a candlelight vigil on the sunken gardens in memorial of the violence at Colorado's Club Q on November 19, 2022.

Performing Queerness in Singapore W/ Zihan Loo 2/21/23

Zihan Loo, a PhD candidate in performance studies at the University of California, Berkeley and a Singaporean artist focused on performance and resistance, shared his experiences over zoom of reenacting Josef Ng's *Brother Cane* in 2012, and reflected on this reenactment post-repeal of Section 377A, the penal code punishing homosexual sex in Singapore.

PANELS

Reproductive Justice: Rights and Realities Post-Dobbs 10/27/22

This panel covered the subsequent national fallout from the Dobbs decision and discussed what we can do to fight back. Although the context of the panel was certainly enraging and depressing, the panelists nevertheless expressed hope and resilience in the face of an uncertain future. They all emphasized the need to continue to educate ourselves on issues of reproductive justice and urged everyone to get involved in some way, whether that's through mutual aid networks, lobbying, or advocacy. Importantly, as Stephanie Nash concluded, "We're gonna take care of all of us."

By Molly Shilo

PANELISTS

- Annie Pascua
 - *Hampton Roads Reproductive Justice League*
- Breanna Diaz
 - *ACLU-Virginia*
- Professor Vivian Hamilton (see above)
- Stephanie Nash
 - *The Blue Ridge Abortion Fund*

With GSWS and W&M's Center for Racial and Social Justice, in partnership with BLSA, NLG, and If/When/How



Trans Youth Panel in Session

Boswell Panel: Trans Youth: Pasts, Presents, and Futures 2/17/23

In the wake of a wave of anti-trans legislation, the Boswell Initiative and GSWS hosted a panel focusing on transgender youth. Following introductory remarks, the panelists engaged in a spirited Q&A, where they responded thoughtfully to questions about transgender healthcare, how to have meaningful dialogue with transphobic people, and what educators and students can do safely combat anti-transgender regulations within schools.

All three panelists reflected on how following a time of greater acceptance and lawful inclusion, we currently seem to be swinging back towards transphobic regulations and ideas. However, these three panelists represented a brighter possible future for trans youth with Shannon McKay, educating families with transgender kids, Professor Hamilton having founded the Center for Racial and Social Justice on campus, and Professor Rosenthal living a life that is true to herself as a trans scholar.

By Malise Foss

PANELISTS

- Dr. Samantha Rosenthal
 - *Associate Professor of History at Roanoke College*
 - *Co-Founder of the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project*
 - *Author of Living Queer History: Rememberance and Belonging in a Southern City*
- Vivian Hamilton
 - *Professor of Law & Founding Director of the Center for Racial and Social Justice at W&M*
- Shannon McKay
 - *Executive Director and co-founder of He She Ze and We*

With the John Boswell Initiative, GSWS, OUTlaw, NLG, and the Center for Racial and Social Justice

LGBTIQ+: *In Defense of Ukraine 2/20/23*

The “LGBTIQ+ In Defense of Ukraine” exhibition featured a series of photographs taken by Alim Yakubov of LGBTIQ+ individuals in service in Ukraine’s military and taking part in the wide-spread humanitarian response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Coinciding with the one year anniversary of the initial attack and with US President Biden’s surprising visit to Kyiv, the panelists accompanying the exhibition, Dr. Maryna Shevtsova and LGBTIQ+ rights activist Bogdan Globa, identified the goal of the exhibition as highlighting the majority of the LGBTIQ+ community who have remained in Ukraine to participate in its defense, with the additional hope of garnering support for civil-partnership legislation to be extended to LGBTIQ+ Ukrainians, particularly at a moment when many of these people and their partners are being denied the rights and benefits accorded to heterosexual couples. Globa also spoke at length about those LGBTQ+ persons who have left Ukraine, whether by choice or by necessity. Both panelists emphasized the importance of Ukraine as a leader in LGBTIQ+ rights in the region, comparing the nation to neighboring Poland’s notorious right-wing movement and to their Russian aggressor. The exhibition challenges us to consider Ukraine’s post-Soviet character in the context of civic duty and LGBTIQ+ identity and to recognize the complexity of national, gender, and queer identities amid the traumas of war.

By Jordan McRitchie

PANELISTS

- Bogdan Globa
 - Ukrainian *LGBTIQ+ activist*
- Dr. Maryna Shevtsova
 - FWO Senior Postdoctoral Fellow Ku Leuven, Belgium

Supported by Sociology, Russian & Post-Soviet Studies, GSWS, and the Rainbow Coalition

PANELS

Reproductive Justice & YOU:

Panel and Discussion 3/29/23

During Vox’s panel on reproductive justice, an audience member asked, what is the biggest barrier to providing abortions for your community? The answer was simple and obvious across the board - money. Abortions can start at 250 dollars and go upwards of 800 dollars. Healthcare in America is already expensive.

The topic of inclusivity and language was brought up throughout the discussion. Language surrounding gender and reproductive health should adapt to include the many different gender identities that can experience pregnancy. Interestingly, the laws that restrict abortion after a certain number of weeks are not based on science because of the fact that every pregnancy is different. A vast majority of the politicians who decide to ban or restrict abortions do not understand the science and thus cannot make informed decisions that would serve their communities. Many of these same politicians are even afraid to say the word “Abortion.” Abortion is not a bad word to say, and the more we include it in our vocabulary, the more we can normalize and destigmatize abortion in the context of healthcare.

By Kendal Sanders

PANELISTS

- Representatives from the Hampton Roads Abortion Fund, Historic Triangle Democrats, Physicians for Reproductive Health, and the Haven

Hosted by W&M VOX

SPECIAL GUEST SUSAN STRYKER

Dr. Susan Stryker is Professor Emerita of Gender and Women's Studies, The University of Arizona. She continues to serve as executive editor of TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly, and as co-editor of the Duke University Press book series ASTERISK: gender, trans-, and all that comes after. She is the author of *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (2008, 2017) as well as co-director of the Emmy-winning documentary film *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2005).

ON STRYKER'S LECTURE: THOMAS/INE HALL AND THE "HISTORY OF BACON IN VIRGINIA"

With *American Studies, History, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and GSWS*

10/10/23

As an intersex scholar-activist, it was so insightful to hear Dr. Stryker's thoughts and perspectives on Thomasine Hall. Learning how the colonial theories of race and sex are so inextricably linked helped me see this incredible human's life and story in new ways. In addition to the speaking event, I was grateful for the opportunity to meet Dr. Stryker one on one during the GSWS lunch event, and speak with her about trans-intersex alliances, current events facing our communities, and her experiences in the early days of the intersex movement. I walked away from Dr. Stryker's visit with renewed energy and a long (and exciting) reading list. This was a truly life changing experience for me, and I am so grateful to GSWS for organizing it!

By Aubrey Lay

SUSAN STRYKER'S READING LIST

- *Histories of the Transgender Child*, Jules Gill-Peterson
- *Confessions of the Fox*, Jordy Rosenberg
- *Hermaphrodites with Attitude* (Newsletter of now inactive Intersex Society of North America, ran December 1994 thru Spring 2003; available on ISNA website)
- And of course, Stryker's own *Transgender History*!

Susan Stryker (left) and Aubrey Lay (right)



1. HUDDLE UP

"A huddle is the start of a collaboration. It's the first step in a team effort."

2. COLLECT EVIDENCE

"Be ready to explain your point of view. If you know the facts, you can talk about anything."

3. THINK LIKE AN EXPERT

"Discover your expertise. YOU are an expert. You know a lot, have read a lot, have participated in a great deal."

4. USE HUMOR

"When you make someone laugh you get their attention. You need to have someone's attention to make your point effectively."

5. QUEER IT UP

"Make efforts to dwell in queer spaces inclusive to all."

6. THIS IS URGENT

"The time to take action was yesterday. Change must happen now."

7. LEARN TO PLAY DEFENSE

"Make no mistake, we are on the defensive end of a powerful offense."

8. CELEBRATE THE WINS

"Take credit for your work. When change happens, own it. Know you helped it happen."

9. WE GOT THIS

Excerpts taken from Kaz' book *Push/Pushback*

SPECIAL GUEST

DONNA KAZ *aka*
Aphra Behn from
Guerilla Girls on Tour

PRESENTS:
PUSH/
PUSHBACK
9 STEPS TO
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE
WITH
ACTIVISM
AND ART



With GSWS, Art and Art History, Theater, Speech
and Dance and Film Media Studies

“LESSONS IN DRAG” FROM YOUR FAVORITE SOUTH ASIAN AUNTIE

Dr. Kareem Khubchandani (aka Vagistan) is an educator, scholar, and artist invested in feminist, queer, and trans everyday aesthetics, particularly in South Asia and its diaspora. Their work is committed to uplifting the creative ways that minoritarian subjects live inside of oppressive structures, and use dance, fashion, and language to build something more beautiful for each other.

LaWhore Vagistan is everyone's favorite overdressed, overeducated, oversaturated desi drag auntie. Her music videos have screened at the Mississauga South Asian Film Festival, Austin OUTsider multi-arts festival, Hyderabad Queer Film Festival, and San Francisco 3rd i Film Festival. She has performed at the Austin International Drag Festival, Mustard Seed South Asian Film Festival, The Asia Society, AS220, Queens Museum, Jack Theater, Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, Not Festival, Links Hall, and A.R.T. Oberon. You can find her on YouTube delivering a TEDx talk titled, "How to Be an Aunty," and on Instagram at @lawhorevagistan.

On April 10, 2023, GSWS hosted a residency at William & Mary, which kicked off with "Lessons in Drag," and culminated in a public showcase of students' drag after being led through a series of workshops by LaWhore Vagistan, our favorite South Asian drag auntie. In "Lessons in Drag," Vagistan brought the nightclub to the classroom, explaining how critical social theory matters in queer nightlife. Touching on themes that include globalization, feminist theory, and Islamophobia, she stages the nightclub as a site of politics and pleasure. Part lecture, part lipsync, part audience participation, the show demonstrates how much drag teaches us, even requires us, to be in relation with the rest of the world.

It's no great secret that this is an incredibly tense moment for drag, particularly across the Southern United States. Bars and nightclubs that host drag storytelling hours for children or weekly drag nights are being bombed, or

receiving death threats. Tennessee passed the nation's first law limiting drag shows. In at least fourteen other states, anti-drag bills have been introduced. While a federal judge temporarily halted the bill in Tennessee, it is clear we cannot rest easily. All that said, it was incredibly affirming and energizing to see the packed house show up for our favorite South Asian auntie, from the South Asian student who vulnerably connected to Vagistan on the complex relationship with their auntie, to the group of students and faculty who enthusiastically joined Vagistan for a Zumba class on stage, to the participants in Vagistan's spelling bee, complete with their own drag monikers. "Lessons of Drag" was a blend of TEDx talk, critical theory pedagogy, and drag performance, expanding our notion of the potentiality of drag.

*By Addie Tsai,
Lecturer of Creative Writing*



"LaWhore embodied the purpose of the Aunty within society, which is to 'shepherd the stories of those before us' as well as 'guide and inspire the actions of those younger than us.' LaWhore Vagistan truly is the Aunty we all need in our lives, and continues to cultivate important connections between people from all walks of life" By Max Belmar

CRITICAL DRAG WORKSHOP

Dr. Kareem Khubchandani led two sections of critical drag workshops from Claire Pamment's Queer Asian Performance class, and from across campus, resulting in a public showcase of 23 drag performances.

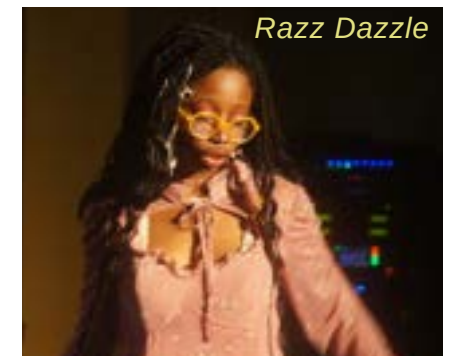


Photo Credits to Alex Chen

"I appreciated doing drag because I felt like it opened my eyes to the multiplicity of beings that existed inside me. I found that when I was performing on stage as a persona very different from myself, I wasn't pretending, and that taught me that identity is anything but fixed" By Alf A. Male/ Catherine Lashley

"I never thought I would do drag one day and had so much fun doing it. I purposefully created an embarrassed character because I thought I would be more comfortable doing that. Even moments before I went on stage, I remember thinking to myself: I do not see myself radiating positive energy. This changed, however, when I went on stage, when I realized that I am free. I think maybe drag is an extension of self in unexpected ways. I've also come to be more intimate with myself, which is such a magical feeling." By gochi mochi/ Gujie Shen

16TH ANNUAL FEMINIST THEORY WORKSHOP AT DUKE

Amid the buzz of colleagues and students catching up with each other, Dr Jennifer Nash, Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Duke, opened the 16th Annual Feminist Theory Workshop to welcome everyone back to another year of collective care and understanding. These actions continue to bring together the transnational feminist community, who, despite their different relationships to feminist theory, find ways to connect with one another. The Feminist Workshop is a manifestation of labor and love.

Keynote speaker, GSWS Yale Professor, Dr Roderick Ferguson, responded to the question originally posed by Toni Cade Bambara, "Can the world be saved from psychopaths?" Ferguson contends that the rise of Western individualism alongside the ideologies of Reagan and Thatcher, normalized psychopathy—the lack of acknowledgment of our existence as social beings— as a social formation. This normative psychopathy exists in certain branches of feminist thought such as carceral feminism or anti-trans feminism. Ferguson reminds us that, "Freedom can not be achieved through the regulation of the market or through the regulation of bodies" and that as feminist theorists, we are also cultural workers, who have the ability to resist psychopathy and develop new ways of being and understanding to better care for the collective.

Continuing with themes of collective responsibility, Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift put forward transness as a form of becoming and as a position of relationality. They argue for transfeminism as an ethics of care and solidarity from which liberation can form. The two discuss the hostile post-Brexit environment with its violate immigration laws and rise of TERF feminism. They understand present-day Britain to be a result of its colonial history, where the state continues to control who has access to the

fruits of the empire. Raha and van der Drift push us to consider how we are all complicit on some level with oppressive structures, rather than a binary of innocence—and acknowledging this prevents the formation of separatist politics and considers the nuanced intersects of systemic oppression, and moves us toward understanding positionality through the processes of connection.

Among other speakers, activists and artists, LaMonda Horton-Stallings, Professor of African American Studies at Georgetown University, uplifted the revolutionary power of storytelling and alternative forms of knowledge. She described storytelling as a form of post-knowledge or oppositional knowledge. Dr. Stallings invoked the erotic, similar to Audre Lorde's "Power of the Erotic", with her storytelling of childhood sexuality. She questions the Western dynamic of child and adult as she explores the importance of liberatory rhetoric for the bodily autonomy of youth. Dr. Stallings ends her speech by calling for new forms of relationality.

A smaller workshop allowed for more intimate reflection on the conference where we primarily focused on the meaning of embodied experiences as alternative forms of knowledge. We turned inward to ask ourselves what it means to return to sociality while existing within an individualized and digitized society. We turned to consider what it means not only in the abstract but how we can participate in tangential acts of solidarity. Almost a month after the conference I still find myself looking back on the discussions which took place at Duke both within my academic life and my interpersonal relationships.

BY STERLING HODGE



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Jess Atkinson

GSWS Major, Sociology Minor

I chose to major in GSWS because I felt passionately about social activism, inclusivity, and performing work. The professors in the GSWS program are the most kind, informed, and understanding people. They have allowed me to engage in academic discourse in ways I find interesting and meaningful for my journey as a scholar and as a human being. One of my key achievements on campus is promoting a greater appreciation of Black culture within a dance group I was on the exec board for during the majority of my time at W&M. I wanted to push the group to better understand Hip Hop as a piece of Black history and to appreciate it as such.



Christina Bostick (she/her)

Double Major in GSWS and Psychology



I think issues on gender and sexuality are important to discuss both in and outside academic settings. I believe that in the current political climate we live in, it is imperative that we learn and advocate for the rights of marginalized groups in society in order to ensure equality and equity for all individuals. As for achievements in my time here, I have made the Dean's list from Fall 2019–2022. I am also the secretary for *Essence: Women of Color* on campus, a club that provides a safe academic and interpersonal space for women of color on campus. I also helped set up a “Womanism vs. Feminism” panel for Women's History Month. After this, I plan on going to grad school and getting a job in activism, possibly lobbying in DC or with grassroots organizations.

Molly Goodman (she/her)

AMES Major, GSWS Minor



I chose to minor in GSWS after I took Intro to Gender Studies during the spring of my freshman year and absolutely loved it. My favorite thing about the GSWS program is that it has given me the opportunity to take classes about people/communities that get left out of history. I am in the ALD/PES honors societies and Order of Omega and I protested on campus several times during the BLM protests in fall 2020. I'm headed to GW in the fall to get a MA in International Affairs with a Global Gender Policy concentration.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Erin Rollins (she/her) Double Major in GSWS and Environmental Policy

I chose to major in GSWS because I greatly appreciated an academic discipline that valued experience as evidence. Within that vein, I have enjoyed being able to take part in academic spaces that are welcoming and inclusive to students that can speak to a breadth of experiences and identities. While at William & Mary, I've been most proud of my involvement in the Social Networks and Political Psychology (SNaPP) Lab where I have been able to research democratic processes, democratic erosion, and political polarization. I'm hoping to work in the political realm in Washington, D.C. for the next few years before returning to academia in the future!



Zeta Atoigue (she/her)

APIA major, GSWS minor



The topics that we covered in my GSWS classes helped me as I worked on my Honors Thesis on the oral history of the CHamorus during and after World War II. I received the 2023 Tomoko Hamada Award for Applied Research in APIA, but this would not have been possible had I not taken GSWS classes. Additionally, I am the president of the Filipino American Student Association on campus. Being in a leadership role as a woman, especially a woman of color, was definitely difficult at times. As I began to recognize the intersectional issues that women of color face both inside and outside of my organization, I confronted them head on. I credit this strength to the discussions with my classmates; without them, I would not have had the courage to speak against those issues. After W&M, I will be interning in the U.S. Forest Service as a reforestation researcher and communications assistant. After my internship, I aim to work more with indigenous CHamoru affairs and continue the work that my great-grandmother completed with revitalizing CHamoru culture and decolonizing Guam.

Bibiana Mirones (she/her) **Double Major in GSWS and Environmental Policy**

I majored in GSWS because it helped me better grasp my reality and the complex reality of so many others. I particularly enjoyed all the amazing and understanding professors. After this, I am planning to go to law school to study environmental law and hopefully help communities throughout the US.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Emma Evans

Double Major in GSWS and Government

I majored in GSWS because I've always been interested in gender issues and the department has a wonderful sense of community. We have the best, funniest, most knowledgeable, and most supportive professors who attract the most engaged and interesting students, which creates a completely unmatched classroom environment. This program has been incredibly formative for me, and I hope to be able to give back to it in the future. In my time here, I received the Diversity Fellowship with the Government Department and I hope to pursue legal aid and paralegal jobs after I graduate.



Gail Conk (Any Pronouns)

Double Major in GSWS and Government



Being a GSWS major enabled me to better understand the ways in which our identities interact with and are impacted by our society and its social, political, and economic systems. Being a part of this major has not only enabled me to seek deeper understandings of those things, but it has also encouraged me to apply this methodology to every aspect of my life, from my work, to how I love, and how I learn. I have found so much joy in GSWS thanks to the many inspiring instructors who have introduced me to diverse perspectives, challenged my viewpoints, and shown me new ways of thinking and being. Being able to speak candidly about GSWS texts with my peers about how they related to our lives truly helped me to see the ways in which the personal is political, and further ground the materials and lessons in our lived reality. I hope to go into non-profit or public service work. Being a part of the WM GSWS program helped me determine that what I want to do most is help my community directly, both through my job and in my own personal life.

Maddy Meekins

Government Major, GSWS Minor

Congrats, Graduates!

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