

## PRESENTER, PERFORMER, & CONFERENCE ORGANIZER BIOGRAPHIES

### **Gia Barboza**

#### *Keynote Panelist*

Gia Barboza is an expert on the relationship between public health indicators and social problems. Much of her research on topics ranging from racial differences in juvenile criminal behavior to bullying in schools to elder abuse in long-term care facilities is viewed through the lens of a public health approach. Her current applied research involves the African-American and Cape Verdean communities in Boston and in several New England states. Professor Barboza has published in such journals as *Criminal Law Bulletin*, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *Journal of Aging Studies*, *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*, *Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly* and *Latino Research*.

### **Monica Barra**

#### *Poster Presenter*

Monica Barra is a PhD student and the American Studies fellow at the Center for Migration and the Global City at Rutgers University. Currently she is working on projects examining the relationships between the arts and urban redevelopment and the social and cultural production of urban space in high-rise public housing communities.

### **Magnolia Barrett**

#### *Poster Presenter*

Magnolia Barrett is graduate student at Brandeis University getting her dual master's degree in Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies. She is committed to using an intersectional perspective to understand the dynamics of marginalization and oppression.

### **Zachary Blair**

#### *Panelist*

Zachary Blair is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His dissertation entitled "Boystown: The Social Geography and Political Economy of Queer Space" looks at identity and space in the neoliberal context.

### **Laura Braslow**

#### *Panelist*

Laura Braslow is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research interests include patterns of locational choice and neighborhood change, related to both structural factors such as policy, planning and economics, as well as street aesthetics, epistemology and urban space, and tensions around (in)visibility, (mis)identification and affect in urban life.

**Layla D. Brown***Poster Presenter and Discussant*

Layla D. Brown is a 2nd year PhD student in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. Her research interests include political organization, racial identity and mothering among Afro-Venezuelan Women. Her research will be based largely on fieldwork in the Venezuelan site of Caracas and Barlovento, over the next several years.

**Nia Imaney Cante***Poster Presenter*

Nia Imaney Cante is the Director of Home Based Services in Atlanta, Georgia with the Division of Family & Children Services. She recently successfully defended her dissertation titled "Negotiating Space: A Phenomenological Study of Women of African Descent Managing Multiple Marginalized Identities".

**Ryan Centner***Discussant*

Ryan Centner is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Tufts University. An urban sociologist, he joined the department in 2008. He is currently completing a book manuscript about neighborhood redevelopment amid IMF-inspired reforms in Buenos Aires, where he has completed more than two years of ethnographic fieldwork. Professor Centner is also working on several articles and other projects that grapple with urban social change and its connections to larger political struggles and the remaking of material space.

**Marika Cifor***Conference Organizer, Panelist, and Discussant*

Marika Cifor is a candidate for an MA in History and an MS in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives Management at Simmons College. She received a BA in History and Political, Legal and Economic Analysis from Mills College in 2007.

**Kathleen Daly***Panelist*

Kathleen Daly is in the doctoral program in American and New England Studies at Boston University. Her research interests are American material and visual culture, vernacular architecture, and landscape history.

**Jess Deshayes***Conference Organizer and Discussant*

Jess Deshayes is a graduate student in the Gender and Cultural Studies department at Simmons College. She received a BA in Comparative Literature from Wellesley College in 2007. She is interested in how discourses on "gender" and gender identities vary in different national contexts.

**Maria Diaconu***Panelist*

Maria Diaconu is a Ph.D. student in American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, currently writing a dissertation concerned with representations of September 11, 2001 in the novel. She is also working as a literature Teaching Assistant within an MAS program offered by the Heidelberg Center for American Studies.

**Hana Disch***Poster Presenter*

Hana Disch is a first year MAUD student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Before coming to Harvard, she studied Architecture at the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland and successfully finished her studies with a Master of Science in 2008. She is interested in the investigation of innovative approaches to the

conceptualization of public space, especially on sites where urbanism, globalization, and local culture come together.

**Petra Doan**

*Keynote Speaker*

Petra Doan teaches Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University. In addition to researching planning in developing countries, she has conducted numerous research projects on LGBT populations in urban spaces. Her latest project is an edited book, *Queering Planning: Challenging Heteronormative Assumptions and Reframing Planning Practice*.

**Erin Eckhold Sassin**

*Panelist*

Erin Eckhold Sassin is a PhD candidate in the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University and a full-time visiting lecturer in Art History at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

**Maryam Eskandari**

*Panelist*

Maryam Eskandari is an Architect at the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture in the School of Planning and Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her focus is on Gender and Space in Architecture. In 2010 she was the recipient of the prestigious Aga Khan Award in Islamic Architecture grant to travel and research on gender issues in architecture. In 2007 the American Institute of Architects awarded her with the Associate of the year award for commendable architecture in design. Her current exhibition "Sacred Space," which illustrates the spaces of woman in American mosques, is currently on tour at the Rotch Gallery as part of the 150 years of MIT.

**Elisabeth Fallica**

*Panelist*

Elisabeth Fallica is a doctoral student in sociology at The New School for Social Research. She is interested in racial and gender spectacle/performance and is writing her dissertation on the neo-burlesque movement.

**Virginia Ferris**

*Panelist*

Virginia Ferris is an oral historian and archivist for the Glucksman Ireland House Oral History Project at New York University. She completed her MA at NYU in Irish and Irish American Studies in 2010. Her interests include the role of gender and sexuality in the historical experience of race, ethnicity and migration, particularly among Irish and African Americans.

**Michele Friedner**

*Panelist*

Michele Friedner is a PhD candidate in Medical Anthropology at the University of California-Berkeley and the University of California at San Francisco. She is currently a research affiliate in MIT's Anthropology department. Her dissertation analyzes how deaf young adults living in Bangalore produce unintended deaf space.

**Julian Gill-Peterson**

*Panelist*

Julian Gill-Peterson is a PhD student in American Studies at Rutgers University. His work and research interests in gender and queer studies center on queer youth, particularly the role of fantasy, popular culture, affect and the institution of the school as a terrain of subjectivity for queer kids, and ways in which queer theory can engage with the category of youth.

**Elizabeth Harrington***Poster Presenter*

Elizabeth Harrington recently completed her master's degree in Near Eastern and Museum Studies at New York University. Her research and thesis center around questions of representation in museums and exhibition communities and projects of identity negotiation through artistic production. In particular, she is currently studying the impacts of the new museums being built in the Arab Gulf. Her experience includes work with the Getty, the Guggenheim, and Sotheby's.

**Fadia Hasan***Panelist*

Fadia Hasan is currently a PhD student in the Communication Department at UMASS, Amherst. Her research focuses on community economies, political ecology, sustainability and communications. She earned her BA from Hampshire College with an undergraduate thesis titled, "The Politics of Femininity in Mainstream Indian Films".

**Faye Antonia Hays***Panelist*

Faye Antonia Hays is a doctoral candidate at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. She is a Marshall-EPA Fellow. Her previous studies were in architecture, urban design, and developing world urbanism, and her current research focuses on intersections between avant-garde practices in architecture and film in the 1980s and increases in informal urbanism of the global South, specifically in the decade's diverging developments of slaughter grounds.

**Jenny Heineman***Poster Presenter*

Jenny Heineman is a PhD student at UNLV, co-director of Las Vegas' Sex Worker Outreach Project, and coordinator for Desiree Alliance. She recently received two grants to explore the legal/consensual and illicit/coercive/inhumane sides of Vegas' sex industry: the Sexual Economy Project Grant and a grant from CCI to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children, respectively.

**Seneca Joyner***Panelist*

Seneca Joyner is a cultural historian whose research focuses on black women's subjectivity as it relates to their experiences of race, gender, and modernity in urban Latin America and the Caribbean. She is currently a PhD candidate in Northeastern University's History Department working towards completing her dissertation, "Knowing Her Place: Afro-Latinas and the Geographies of Modernity, Respectability, and Femininity in Caracas, Venezuela, 1870-1935."

**Adina Koch***Panelist*

Adina Koch is a second year graduate student in the Sociology Program at Boston College. Her work is in the areas of contemporary theory and the sociology of gender, focusing on non-normative experiences of gender and sexuality in relation to institutional organization and oppression. She is also a trained sexual health educator, who conducts organizational and activist work for GLBT rights, trans-inclusion, and reproductive justice.

**Chi-Hsien Kuo***Poster Presenter*

Chi-Hsien Kuo is a Masters Candidate at Dartmouth College. Her research focus is on Globalization studies, especially economic and political impacts. Before

attending Dartmouth, Chi-Hsien was a reporter on Cti TV in Taiwan.

**Jacob Lederman**

*Panelist*

Jacob Lederman is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at The Graduate Center, CUNY. His research interests center around community responses to socio-spatial change, with particular emphasis on the political economic forces that shape urban identities and the reputational character of space.

**Jiting Luo**

*Panelist*

Jiting Luo is a master's student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, studying the settlement of Hakka people. Her research interests include space, gender and the Hakka community.

**Valerie Marshall**

*Conference Organizer*

Valerie Marshall is a second year Sociology master's student at Boston College; her research interest include: mixed methods, social policy, and poverty, homelessness, and inequality. This is the first conference Valerie has participated in, and she looks forward to helping with many more.

**Danielle Moran**

*Panelist*

Danielle Moran recently graduated with an M.A. in Gender/Cultural Studies from Simmons College. She is currently seeking a career in the nonprofit world working with youth, the arts, and education. She is grateful to present some of her graduate work at this years GCWS conference.

**Jason Nguyen**

*Panelist*

Jason Nguyen is a second year Ph.D. student studying the history and theory of architecture at Harvard University. He is interested in the relationship between the built environment and the development of secularism, public culture, and modern subjectivity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France.

**Kaia Niambi Finn**

*Performer*

Kaia Niambi Finn is an artist-activist who serves local and global communities, youth, students and non-profit groups by combining poetry and visual art to empower others to overcome violence, substance abuse, poverty and more. She holds a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts *cum laude* from the University of Massachusetts Boston, and is currently pursuing a legal degree to help strengthen the bond between creative expression and political power in the United States, the Caribbean and South Africa.

**Asimina Ino Nikolopoulou**

*Panelist*

Asimina Ino Nikolopoulou is a doctoral student at Northeastern University. She completed her master's degree in American Studies at Columbia University as a Fulbright Scholar. Her fields of interest include Gender Studies, Feminist Theory, Cinema Studies, Visual Studies, Contemporary American Literature, Modernism and Postmodernism, African-American and Caribbean Literature, Popular Culture and Literary Theory.

**Alicia Peaker**

*Conference Organizer*

Alicia Peaker is a doctoral candidate in English at Northeastern University. Her main academic interests center around 19th- and 20th-century women writers.

**D'hana Perry***Performer*

D'hana Perry is a DJ and MFA candidate in Media Art at Emerson college. Perry's work is a personal exploration of queer identity construction and self-expression, blending two distinct forms that contribute the strengths of documentary production and live digital DJ/VJ remixing techniques native to club culture. Within her exploration of identity, she is developing a concept of remixing as a process of identity construction and image appropriation as a mental and physical process.

**Sharon Reilly***Keynote Panelist*

Sharon Reilly is executive director of The Women's Lunch Place, an organization that provides a safe, comfortable daytime shelter, nutritious food, and services for women who are homeless or poor. Sharon's professional career has crossed every sector from higher education to Fortune 500. Prior to joining The Women's Lunch Place, Sharon was the Director of Community Relations at The Food Project. In 2003, Sharon moved to Boston from Ft. Smith, Arkansas where she was employed by Beverly Enterprises, Inc., a Fortune 500 company where she led corporate wide team projects on corporate compliance and business ethics, staff recruitment and retention. A native Mississippian, Sharon also has a passion for social justice issues. She grew up on a sharecropper's farm during the 1950s and 1960s and understands the plight of poor women and the devastating effects of poverty. Her recent awards include: Boston Celtics: Heroes Among Us Award, Back Bay Association: Heavy Lifting Award, Unity First: Common Ground Award.

**Karen Robbins***Panelist*

Karen Robbins is a third year PhD student in the American and New England Studies program at Boston University. Her research focuses on architecture, material culture, and women's history.

**Jessica Roscio***Poster Presenter*

Jessica Roscio is a doctoral candidate in the American and New England Studies Program at Boston University, focusing on American photography and painting, material culture, and gender studies. Her study of Frances Benjamin Johnston and her association with photography, gender, and the studio is a chapter from her dissertation, which focuses on the professionalization of women photographers from 1880-1930. She holds a BA in History from the College of William and Mary, and an MA in Art History from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

**Magdalena Sabat***Panelist*

Magdalena Sabat is a doctoral student with the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. She has a BA from the University of Toronto and a MA from the University of Amsterdam. Her primary training has been in the fields of visual arts and cultural studies. Her research interests include visual studies, the body and urban space.

**Julianna (J) Sassaman***Discussant*

Julianna (J) Sassaman is currently pursuing a master's degree in Architecture at MIT. With a background in furniture making, woodworking, and queer activism, J will be starting a thesis project in the fall that synthesizes these interests and interrogates the production of queer space.

**Fatima Sattar***Conference Organizer and Discussant*

Fatima Sattar is currently a second year PhD student in the sociology department at Boston College. Her research interests are in human rights, migration, inequality, poverty and race/ethnic relations and conflict. She obtained a BA in sociology from Aurora University and an MA in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago.

**Emily Schipper***Poster Presenter*

Emily Schipper is a second-year master's student in Anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Brandeis University. Her current research focuses on the intersections of citizenship and national identity politics as navigated by female migrant laborers in transnational urban spaces. Influenced by her research with Latino and Southeast Asian migrants in New York, her master's thesis explores problems of misplaced concreteness and coherentist assumptions under US law, particularly in labor reform.

**Lolly Spindler***Conference Organizer*

Lolly Spindler graduated from Boston University in May 2010. She is currently a Cultural and Language Assistant through the Spanish Ministry of Education and lives in Madrid, Spain.

**Shannon Struble***Conference Organizer and Discussant*

Shannon Struble is currently attending Simmons College, where she is in the dual-degree History/Archives Management program. She is completing work on her thesis and will graduate in May 2011.

**Sagarika Suri***Discussant*

Sagarika Suri is a second year MA student pursuing the SMArchS-Urbanism degree at the School of Architecture and Planning, MIT. She is currently researching the role and potential of small/intermediate cities in the context of highly centralized urbanism in India. She received her BArch degree from the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology, Ahmadabad, in 2006 and has worked as an architect in New Delhi.

**Andi Sutton***GCWS Coordinator & Conference Organizer*

Andi Sutton is the Program Coordinator for the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies at MIT. In addition to her role with the GCWS, Sutton is a performance artist whose work explores the ways performance art methodology can be used to create alternative models for community development and social engagement.

**Jackie Sutton***Panelist*

Jackie Sutton is pursuing her MA in American Studies at New York University, with a focus on gender, race, identity formation, and public space. She plans to complete her thesis on post World War II race relations in Connecticut.

**Jessica Tanner***Panelist*

Jessica Tanner is a PhD Candidate in Nineteenth-Century French Literature at Harvard University and is currently writing a dissertation entitled "Paris, (Dis)oriented: Urban Spaces of Prostitution in the French Novel, 1870-1905." Her primary research interests include the city, the novel, the body, naturalism, modernity, space and time, narrative theory, reading and writing, and mobility.

**Mitali Thakor***Panelist*

Mitali Thakor is a doctoral candidate in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, & Society (HASTS) at MIT. She has worked on various projects relating to mobile technology, sex work, public health, trafficking, and sexuality and identity. She has also worked with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, the Gujarat State AIDS Control Society, and the International Labor Organization-Bangkok. As a first-year graduate student, Mitali hopes to continue researching at the intersections of technology and anthropology with focuses on gender and varying forms of mobility.

**Ian Scott Todd***Panelist*

Ian Scott Todd is a PhD student in the English Department at Tufts University, where his research interests include the modern British novel and film studies. He is currently planning a dissertation on modernism and obscenity.

**Zenovia Toloudi***Discussant*

Zenovia Toloudi is a DDes Candidate at Harvard GSD, the author of PICANICO online game that predicts user's architectural taste, and the founder of BRAIN.STORMS lecture series on digital culture. She is also the designer of THE CAGE pavilion, part of Aristotle University's permanent Sculpture Collection. Her work on imaginary cities and structures has been exhibited at Venice Biennale, The Lab at Harvard, Athens Byzantine Museum, and other places like Thessaloniki, Torino, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.

**Brian Traylor***Panelist*

Brian Traylor is a first year Master of City Planning and Master of Urban Spatial Analytics dual degree candidate at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. Prior to joining PennDesign this year, he was working as a Senior Planner and Urban Designer for the South Florida Regional Planning Council, focusing on urban revitalization and the infill redevelopment of deteriorating corridor communities.

**Olivier Vallerand***Panelist*

Olivier Vallerand is an architect and PhD candidate at McGill University School of Architecture. He is interested in queer space, the intersection of art and architecture, pop architecture and retail spaces, and the representation of minorities in architectural history and discourse. He is also a member of 1x1x1 laboratoire de création, an art and architecture collective involved in public space.

**Dagmar Van Engen***Panelist*

Dagmar Van Engen is an MA student in English at Boston College. She is interested in 20th century literature and queer theory.

**Vanessa Vega***Conference Organizer*

Vanessa Vega is a GCWS Conference Organizer. She has a master's degree in Occupational Therapy from Tufts University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. As an undergraduate at Dartmouth College, she was trained in sociology and gender studies and she continues to bring these lenses to the work she does in health care.



**Fangfang Wen***Poster Presenter*

Fangfang Wen received her Master of Education from Boston College in 2010. Currently, she is an MALS candidate focusing on Globalization Studies at Dartmouth College.

**Mia Charlene White***Panelist*

Mia Charlene White is a third year doctoral student in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at M.I.T. She lives in student-family housing with her spouse and two young children. Mia's disciplinary focus is urban sociology, and her applied area is housing and community economic development. Her first year paper titled, "Gender, Race and Place Attachment: A Case of Historic Neighborhood Recovery in Coastal Mississippi", recently won the 2010 Marsha Ritzdorf Award for the Best Student Work on Diversity, Social Justice and the Role of Women in Planning, Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Mia's developing dissertation research is tentatively titled: "Structure, Culture and Community: The Search for Belonging in Six Community Land Trusts."

**Elizabeth Wilkinson***Panelist*

Elizabeth Wilkinson is a recent MAR graduate of Yale Divinity School in Religion and Literature, where she focused on ecology and maternity. Currently a stay-at-home mother, she is returning to doctoral work in the fall of 2011 in Literature and the Environment at the University of Oregon.

**Karen Tei Yamashita***Keynote Panelist*

Heralded as a "big talent" by the *Los Angeles Times*, extolled by the *New York Times* for her "mordant wit," and praised by *Newsday* for "wrestl[ing] with profound philosophical and social issues" while delivering an "immensely entertaining story," Karen Tei Yamashita is one of the foremost writers of her generation. *I Hotel*, which took over a decade to write and research, is her magnum opus. The author of four previous novels, Yamashita is the recipient of an American Book Award and the Janet Heidinger Kafka Award. A California native who has also lived in Brazil and Japan, she teaches at the University of California-Santa Cruz, where she received the Chancellor's Award for Diversity in 2009.

**Xiaodan Yan***Poster Panelist*

Xiaodan Yan is a graduate student of Neuroscience at New York University. She is interested in gender difference in social cognition and its neural basis.

**Lai Ying Yu***Conference Organizer*

Lai Ying Yu is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at Tufts University.