

HUMANITIES TRUCK

BIENNIAL REPORT



2019-2021

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WHAT IS THE HUMANITIES TRUCK?

DOCUMENT & INTERPRET

The truck creates a unique space for documenting participatory, cultural, and educational experiences in the humanities. It also can function as a recording studio for doing oral histories, a digitization station, a workshop space, or a pop-up exhibit gallery.



MOBILIZING THE HUMANITIES

Using the truck, we seek to mobilize the humanities and democratize the sharing of knowledge by bringing together scholars at American University with community residents across Washington DC.

EXHIBIT

The truck co-curates gathered materials through both our website but also by hosting events out in the larger community space.

IT ALL LIES IN COMMUNITY

Together we can collect, create, interpret, and curate stories that can return to the communities they originated from and circulate throughout the metropolitan region.



The Humanities Truck is a project through American University, made possible with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DAN KERR

November 2021

Dear Truck Supporters,

During this past year the Humanities Truck broke new ground in developing forms of public humanities work that embrace the principles of mutual aid, address basic human needs, and further the essential need we all have for understanding the world we live in.

This entirety of this past grant period (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021), has been shaped and impacted by the Covid-pandemic. In March 2020,

the pandemic forced the Humanities Truck project to halt operations and programming. By June, people in the city were experiencing mass unemployment, and many of them led major demonstrations protesting against police brutality after the murder of George Floyd. I convened discussions with the Humanities Truck Community Advisory Board, Faculty Fellows, and Faculty Advisory Board to reflect on the truck project's role in that moment. The overall sentiment was that we should neither do nothing (stay shutdown) nor simply do what we were doing before. While some argued we should focus on "real" needs – delivering food to people experiencing hunger – others argued that the humanities were more important than ever. We concluded that people needed both -- food and tools to understand what was going on in the world around them. Furthermore, it became clear that our distinction was a false binary. Ideas are shared around food, and



food and food networks play a critical role in community building, especially in communities experiencing forms of marginalization. These discussions gave rise to the Food Justice theme we explored through the 2020-21 grant period.

We had some turnover in the composition of our overall team. All six of the Humanities Truck project fellows from 2019-2020 received a yearlong extension for their projects. These fellows adapted to the immediate demands of the pandemic, and in some cases revised their focus. One new fellow from American University's Department of Health Studies joined them, Melissa Hawkins. Her project, Corner Store Communities in COVID-19, contributed significantly to our food justice theme. In order to extend our grant period for an additional year, we trimmed our graduate fellows from six to three (one of those three joined us mid-year). The Departments of History and Anthropology provided teaching and research positions for the remaining three. Our Community Advisory and Faculty Advisory Boards did not change.

As project director, I worked with project fellows Ludy Grandas, Naoko Wowsugi, David Ramos, and Melissa Hawkins to use the Humanities Truck to deliver thousands of food bags, hot meals, and food vouchers to residents across the city. To accomplish this task, we partnered with organizations such as Food for All DC, DC Central Kitchen, Kyanite Kitchen, We Are Family, Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, DC (TUWDC), Street Sense, HIPS, and the 1882 Foundation. I secured additional grant funding to support these groups as we contributed our expertise with the humanities, recorded stories and oral histories, edited documentaries, and built exhibits. When we reached out to HIPS, a harm reduction group that works with people experiencing substance abuse and sex work, to explore a partnership opportunity, their staff emphasized that our core mission was the reason they chose to partner with us. They had the capacity to do their immediate social service work, but they did not have the resources to organize spaces of reflection with the people they worked with.

Truck Fellow Ludy Grandas' led the way in challenging the boundary between social services and the humanities by providing significant aid to the day labor communities she worked with, while valuing their need for critical reflection and ideas. She worked throughout the year with Food for All DC and TUWDC to deliver food bags for day laborers who gathered at a Home Depot parking lot in Washington, DC. Through this work she deepened her relationships in the community and produced two incredible documentaries, *Eliza* and *This I Built/Esto Yo lo Hice* that can be found in our exhibit section on our website (www.humanitestruck.com).

Project fellow Laura Water Hinson collaborated with Street Sense Media to create an award-winning film, *Street Reporter*, that addresses the efforts of two unhoused street reporters documenting homelessness in Washington, DC. (<https://www.streetreporterfilm.com/>)

Benjamin Stokes worked with the DC Office of Planning and used the truck gather neighborhood stories in Pennsylvania Avenue East, leading to the creation of a website PennAveEast. (<https://pennaveeast.storytelling.city/dc/>)

Mary Ellen Curtain completed a multi-year project documenting the histories of AIDS Activism in the 1980s that led to the collection of Amelie Zurn's Queer Health Activist Papers, which she featured in a truck website exhibit: Taking the Truck OUT!

David Ramos developed a community mapping exercise that will continue to be used in future events. Melissa Hawkins, whose project will continue through December 2021, has brought the truck on a weekly basis to corner stores in Wards 7 and 8. She interviewed residents about the impact the pandemic has had on food security and distributed food vouchers so that they could buy produce in those stores. Naoko Wowsugi worked closely with Kyanite Kitchen, a grassroots mutual aid group led by a small group of Black women, and she delivered thousands of meals in Wards 7 and 8 with the truck. I founded the Mobilizing Against Homelessness Oral History project, which is led by a team of formerly unhoused interviewers. They have completed over thirty oral histories.

Three new graduate fellows worked with the project director in the virtual truck office to further the project's overall community partnerships, conduct oral histories and short form interviews, build physical and digital exhibits, and to design their own projects. We developed the web exhibit *From Me To You*, which documented the early days of the pandemic. To celebrate Washington, DC's first official Indigenous People's Day, we developed and showcased *The Trail to Indigenous People's Day*. Furthermore, the team processed and archived 110 full-length oral history interviews.

The fourth year of the Humanities Truck project looks to be our most exciting to date. In July, our Community Advisory Board selected six new project fellows for the coming year. They bring a wealth of experience and have started six new groundbreaking projects. These include projects that focus on Black women's health activism, impacts of drug criminalization, flooding and community resilience in the city's under-served riverfront communities, DC's homegrown music scene, community curation and the Sandy Spring Slave Museum, and youth stories from the children of day laborers.

We have three new graduate fellows, who have doubled the size of the office staff. With this team we hope to better support the Project Fellows and expand our programming with existing and new community partners.

We are developing plans to create a regular speaker series that will include faculty and graduate students from American University, community engaged scholars from around the world, and community partners from across Washington, DC. We are embracing a range of medium that will include live streamed events from the truck (in warmer months) as well as all-virtual programming.

The relationship between food and community will continue to be a focus, however, we project the next year will involve less food delivery and more humanities programming. We will continue to work with our core community partners and find creative ways to explore how the humanities can be relevant in a city where there remain significant unmet human needs.

Keep on Truckin'
Dan Kerr



HUMANITIES TRUCK BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2021

128

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED



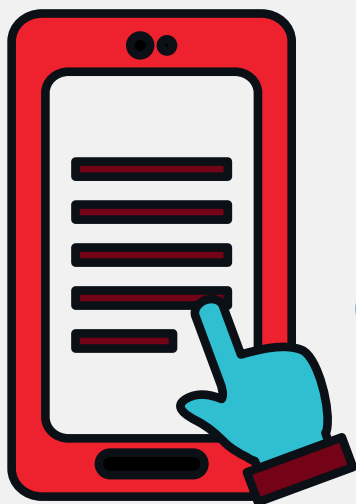
280%

TOTAL INCREASE
IN ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS
IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

MOST POPULAR EVENT:
ADAMS MORGAN DAY

7,680

PERSONAL INTERACTIONS



20+

ONLINE
EXHIBITS

81

EVENTS



TRUCK EVENTS & PROJECTS

SEPTEMBER 2019 - AUGUST 2020

09

- ▶ 09/08 Adams Morgan Day
- ▶ 09/14 Art All Night, & Taste of Petworth
- ▶ 09/22 Malcolm X Park

10

- ▶ 10/02 Naoko Photography Class
- ▶ 10/04 1969: Golden Eagles
- ▶ 10/06 Whose Hip-hop Cultures?
- ▶ 10/23 Truck Screening at Next Step Charter School
- ▶ 10/26 Whiteman Walker Walk and Run to End HIV

11

- ▶ 11/02 Ludy Grandas & Day Laborers
- ▶ 11/08 Naoko Portrait Project
- ▶ 11/09 It's a Small World, Petworth
- ▶ 11/16 Building Equity for the Future Community Festival
- ▶ 11/19 Naoko Portrait Project
- ▶ 11/22 DC History Conference

12

- ▶ 12/07 Lincoln Temple & Finding Your Way on Mount Pleasant Street
- ▶ 12/12 Who is DC?
- ▶ 12/19 Homeless Memorial

01

- ▶ 01/26 Lunar New Year

02

- ▶ 02/20 DC Afro-Latinos in Action
- ▶ 02/26 Day Laborer Photo Exhibit
- ▶ 02/29 Rooting DC Conference

03

- ▶ 03/25 Humanities Truck Speaker Series: Elena Gonzales

04

- ▶ 04/04 OAH Conference
- ▶ 04/15 DCPS Development Day

05

- ▶ 05/23 African Liberation Day

06

- ▶ 06/18 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE
- ▶ 06/19 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE
- ▶ 06/20 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE
- ▶ 06/23 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE
- ▶ 06/24 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE

07

- ▶ 07/10 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, Food Delivery

08

- ▶ 08/14 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, Food Delivery
- ▶ 08/14 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, Food Delivery
- ▶ 08/21 A Right to the City

TRUCK EVENTS & PROJECTS

SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUGUST 2021

09

- ▶ 09/04 Food for All Distribution to Day Laborers
- ▶ 09/22 Food for All Distribution to Day Laborers
- ▶ 09/13 Adams Morgan Day

10

- ▶ 10/13 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 10/17 Indigenous Peoples Day
- ▶ 10/20 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 10/27 Kyanite Kitchen

11

- ▶ 11/16 Corner Store Community
- ▶ 11/18 Corner Store Community
- ▶ 11/20 Memorial for Day Laborers & Candido Lopez

12

- ▶ 12/01 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 12/02 Corner Store Community
- ▶ 12/04 Food for All Distribution to Day Laborers
- ▶ 12/15 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 12/20 Homeless Memorial Vigil
- ▶ 12/22 Kyanite Kitchen

01

- ▶ 01/08 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 01/15 Food for All Distribution to Day Laborers
- ▶ 01/19 Kyanite Kitchen

02

- ▶ 02/09 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 02/12 Food for All Distribution to Day Laborers
- ▶ 02/16 Kyanite Kitchen

03

- ▶ 03/02 Kyanite Kitchen

04

- ▶ 04/16 'This I Built' Documentary Screening & Conversation
- ▶ 04/20 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 04/27 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 04/28 CCC Project

05

- ▶ 05/04 Kyanite Kitchen
- ▶ 05/08 National John Lewis Voting Rights Action Day
- ▶ 05/15 Community Collaboration with HIPS

06

- ▶ 06/26 Capitol Hill Village HIV/AIDS Activism
- ▶ 06/19 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE
- ▶ 06/20 Black Lives Matter Plaza-Food & PPE

07

- ▶ 07/12 HIPS Collaboration
- ▶ 07/17 HIPS Collaboration Voting Rights Action Day
- ▶ 07/23 HIPS Collaboration


08

- ▶ 08/23 DC Sparkle Squad
- ▶ 08/31 Overdose Awareness Day w/ HIPS

A LOOK AT OUR FELLOWS

The DC Humanities Truck Fellows include a multi-disciplinary array of scholars, both faculty and graduate students, who are committed to the practice of community-based research. The Truck Fellows are committed to an ethically grounded, collaborative research process as they engage communities in the DC metropolitan region. The truck project creates an exciting tool that draws these Fellows together to engage in deeper dialogue with one another in order to help enhance each other's practice.





TRUCK FELLOWS

The Humanities Truck Project Fellowship Program provides a year for the Truck Fellows to be able to use the truck for a collaborative project with the community. Truck Fellows build a collaborative process that involves community partners in each phase of their projects, from research and documentation to interpretation, and scholarly creation in the form of accessible exhibitions and performances. Throughout the year, Truck Fellows meet together to reflect upon the effective practices of community-engaged scholarship, and also to share the findings of their own projects.

2021-2022 TRUCK FELLOWS



MARTINIQUE C.G. FREE

BLACK WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TO RECLAIM OUR HEALTH

The Black Women's Movement to Reclaim Our Health Project aims to illustrate, highlight, and analyze efforts of health activists and organizations centered specifically on Black women's health through use of the Humanities Truck. In partnership with the organizations Black Women's Health Imperative, GirlTrek and Sippin' T with Nat & Z Podcast Group, we will explore how has health activism on behalf of Black women evolved within the last several decades, what unique ways are Black women's health issues being addressed through activism, how have these efforts translated into policy change, and what does the future hold for these activists and organizations in further elevating

This project looks for day laborers' youths to learn of the audiovisual form and tell their own stories utilizing the practical knowledge they acquire in the process. Through a series of practical audiovisual workshops, these youths will have the opportunity to watch short films, analyze them to learn audiovisual language; they will also engage in screenplay writing so that they can write their own stories for audiovisual form. Later, they will learn how to use their cell phone cameras to capture captivating video and photo based on their writing. Taking what they learn here, they will record both during the workshop and where they live. Later, using what they have captured, they will engage in an edition workshop and postproduction process. Lastly, they will create posters of each of their pieces to participate in a premier to showcase their audiovisual projects.



LUDY GRANDAS

YOUTH STORIES OF CHILDREN OF THE DAY LABORERS IN DC



JEFFREY MADISON

CLIMATIZE: HOW DC RIVERFRONT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES

A lot has been made in the media lately about how climate change-induced sea level rise in the Chesapeake Bay is already causing "daytime flooding" of the Tidal Basin on the Potomac River. Before the Potomac River's daytime flooding gets to the Tidal Basin, though, it overflows the banks of SW DC neighborhoods like Buzzard Point, the SW Waterfront; SE neighborhoods like Anacostia Park, the Navy Yard and Bellevue. These are predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods where they are largely left to fend for themselves when it comes to building mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies in the face of climate change. The aim of the project is twofold: to discover what how these communities are adapting and then share their stories of strength, hope and courage with the rest of DC.

"Out of Our Shells" is a year-long project that aims to freely record, promote, and provide a public platform for a range of local musicians working in different styles and genres across the Washington, DC area. Additionally, the aim is to collect their stories and reflections on their creative communities, capturing an oral history of local musical cultures in the nation's capital. The project will be undertaken in conjunction with Multiflora Productions, a local world music promotion company, as well as DCTV, the district's public access television network, creating free, openly licensed, and publicly available archives of the material in the form of a music compilation, a television program, and web-based materials.



ARAM SINNREICH

OUT OF OUR SHELLS: A CELEBRATION OF HOMEGROWN DC MUSIC



LAURA SISLEN

HIPS

In collaboration with the DC harm reduction organization HIPS, we aim to continue our project that brought open community conversations, education, training, and creative engagement to local communities about harm reduction, drugs, overdose, and opioid overdose reversal while introducing a stronger emphasis on storytelling, oral histories, and the impacts of drug criminalization.

We will be centering on the experiences and lives of people affected by drug criminalization in the District. This project will serve to assist HIPS' involvement in the decriminalize drugs in DC campaign and contribute to general education about the multifaceted and disruptive impacts of drug policy.

The Sandy Spring Slave Museum was founded in 1988, with an interpretive and historical focus on enslaved Blacks who were manumitted by the Quakers in the 1820s and the area's ties to the Underground Railroad. The museum hosts a broad range of programs, individual visitors, and school groups. The Humanities Truck and grant funding will be used for resources and programming that support the museum in augmenting its authoritative presence in Olney-Sandy Spring historic preservation and interpretation. This includes: developing and expanding public education and interpretation around free African American families residing in the area since the 1800s, and developing and expanding interpretation of the community as an important site through with to understand African Diasporas in the US.



RACHEL WATKINS

SANDY SPRINGS SLAVE MUSEUM

2019-2021 TRUCK FELLOWS



DAN KERR

WHOSE DOWNTOWN? THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE FEDERAL CITY SHELTER

Sitting two blocks from the Capitol building, sits one of the nation's largest homeless shelters, which houses up to 1300 people a night in a World War II era building that was originally constructed by the federal government as part of an alley dwelling clearance policy. The Whose Downtown? project will bring the truck to the Federal City shelter, document the experiences of the residents, share these experiences with other residents, and use the truck space as a workshop to reflect on the past and future of the shelter so that the residents can engage more effectively with the planning processes that will dramatically impact their lives. This project will continue through the duration of the grant and will document what could potentially be the last years in this iconic shelter's existence.

Today, treating HIV/AIDS patients is viewed primarily as a medical issue that can be solved by science. But during the 1980s and 90s, activists insisted that the HIV/AIDS epidemic represented a political crisis and a lack of moral leadership. Decades later, the work of these activists to stand up to censorship laws and public scorn to fight for the lives of AIDS patients and those vulnerable to infection has receded from view. Contemporary audiences remain largely unfamiliar with the AIDS crisis, ignorant of lesbian history, and unaware of the discrimination faced by LGBTQ activists. This project brings together scholars, public historians, and activists to collaborate on recuperating and documenting the history of lesbian activist organizations in DC.



MARY ELLEN CURTIN

TAKING THE TRUCK OUT!: RECORDING LESBIAN ACTIVISM IN THE AIDS CRISIS



LUDY GRANDAS

JORNALEROS/ MANOS INVISIBLES: DAY LABORERS

Day Laborers is a group exhibition of ten day laborers who photographed their own everyday lives as jornaleros using their cell phone cameras. Through their eyes, the day laborers' goal was to open an invisible yet all too present world to us; to take us through their day, to share their reality, one that for some is hopefully temporary but for others is a whole way of life. Put together, the photos take us from morning to evening and all that happens in between. This exhibit first took place at the Katzen Museum at American University. The Humanities Truck has made it possible to take the exhibit into the community. First successful stop, the corner of the only Home Depot in DC.

The CVL is using the Humanities Truck to run a community engagement project taking the 2019 CVL Film Series to non-profits across the city. The aim is to honor each specific community and to promote critical dialogue among these DC storytellers, their communities, and our students, arriving at a community interpretation of what these stories mean on a collective level. The CVL team will also produce a collaborative documentary centered on the newsroom at Street Sense Media, following a group of journalist filmmakers who have experienced homelessness as they report on the issue of DC's Tent City. The Street Sense filmmakers co-op will collaborate with our AU film team to tell the story of one of America's most unique newsrooms, reflecting the myriad perspectives on homelessness from reporters who know homelessness.



LAURA WATERS HINSON

COMMUNITY VOICE LAB (CVL): COLLABORATIVE FILM INITIATIVE



BENJAMIN STOKES

NEIGHBORHOOD STORYTELLING SYSTEM

This project investigates how the truck can be part of a “storytelling system” for neighborhoods, including to bring museum content to the streets. The Truck features stories from the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum (ACM), and its anniversary exhibit “A Right to The City.” We connect the truck to residents’ cell phones, paper maps, and even custom phone booths to record new stories. We are investigating how strong neighborhoods can tell their own stories by connecting platforms, especially physical to digital. In partnership with the DC Public Library and with funding from the ACM, the truck will anchor a series of activities and events around the city, each tied to neighborhood history and identity.

This project examines the city’s relationship with the river, and imagines what the city should look like in the future, in the face of rising seas and a climate in crisis. In the current emergency, there is no no-build option. We’ll use the Humanities Truck as a participatory, mobile design workshop, bringing visual tools to residents so that they can explore landscape changes in the past, share their own experiences with the city’s built environment, and to test future possibilities for how the city can respond. The project focuses on waterfronts, streams, and streets. We see the city and its waterways as a palimpsest, built of layers reaching back to before European settlement; the truck’s exhibits and programs will themselves be a palimpsest of personal visions, current data, and historical maps and images.



DAVID RAMOS

BEFORE THE FLOOD: USING DRAWING, MAPPING, AND DESIGN FICTION TO IMAGINE AN EQUITABLE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the complexities of food inequity. The goal of Corner Store Communities in COVID-19 is to illustrate the impact of the pandemic on DC residents' food security by interviewing residents about their experiences at community corner stores. This project brings together scholars, nutrition and health advocates, local corner stores, and community members to document food security challenges and resilience in COVID-19 in DC. In partnership with DC Central Kitchen Healthy Corners Program, we will elevate the voices of Ward 7 and 8 residents to share experiences and challenges accessing food.

MELISSA HAWKINS

CORNER STORE COMMUNITIES IN COVID-19

With the current political climate, there is a strong need to showcase our connection with people of all kinds, rather than what separates us. Group Portrait Journey in D.C. is a series of group portraits that will visually trace the intersectional nature of personal identity and our intangible connections as one large community in Washington, DC. The goal of the project is to document a series of social groups in formal portraits over the course of a year that will visually show how, through one individual, diverse groups within the city are connected to one another. In the process, the project will explore what we mean by the word “group” and invite participants to elaborate on their own notions of belonging—and perhaps surprise viewers by showing how many social roles one person can occupy.



NAOKO WOWSUGI

GROUP PORTRAIT JOURNEY IN D.C.



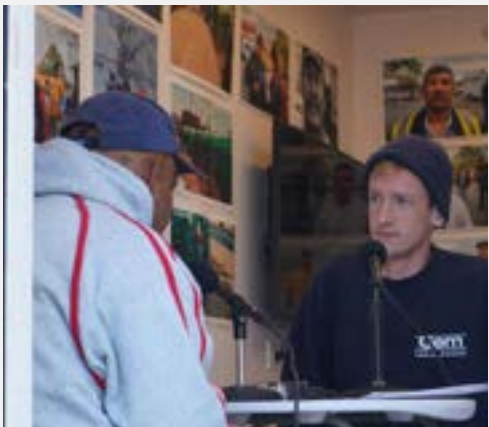
NAOKO WOWSUGI

GROUP PORTRAIT JOURNEY IN D.C.



LAURA WATERS HINSON

COMMUNITY VOICE LAB



LUDY GRANDAS

**JORNALEROS/ MANOS
INVISIBLES: DAY LABORERS**



MARY ELLEN CURTIN

**TAKING THE TRUCK OUT!: RECORDING
LESBIAN ACTIVISM IN THE AIDS CRISIS**



BENJAMIN STOKES

**NEIGHBORHOOD
STORYTELLING SYSTEM**



GRADUATE FELLOWS

The Humanities Truck graduate fellows run the behind-the-scenes operations in the office, from designing the exhibits to archiving the exhibits. The graduate fellows also facilitate the faculty fellows' year-long projects by helping them to imagine and realize the potential of the Truck.

2021-2023 GRADUATE FELLOWS



Morgan Carroll is a first-year graduate student in Public Anthropology. They received their bachelors in psychology from Sewanee: The University of the South and a masters in social work from the University of South Carolina. Her academic interests include food culture and tradition, representation, and community storytelling.

MORGAN CARROLL

MA STUDENT
PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Katy Shenk is a graduate student in the MA Public History program. She received her BA in History from Washington College, where she discovered a passion for working with oral and community history. Her other research interests include commemoration, memory, identity, and digital humanities. Katy is looking forward to supporting the work of the Truck and building relationships with new and current community partners.



KATY SHENK

MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY



Caroline Morales is a first-year MA student in the Public History program. She received her BA in History and Education from Principia College in 2017. Her background is in elementary and museum education. She is dedicated to community building and engagement in history for all ages.

CAROLINE MORALES

**MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY**

2021-2022 GRADUATE FELLOWS

Alexis is a graduate student in the MA Public History program at American University. She received her BA in History and Anthropology with a concentration in Public History from Gettysburg College. Her academic interests include museum studies, cultural history, and gender history. Alexis is passionate about pursuing social justice initiatives through the humanities. Her research will document and interpret the stories of people experiencing homelessness throughout Washington. Her work will support the future truck project, Mobilizing Against Homelessness.



ALEXIS ZILEN

**MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY**



Laura is pursuing their MA in Public Anthropology. Their undergraduate research examined the experiences and history of people who use drugs in America, including an ethnographic approach to understanding the roles of social narratives and embodiment of recovery from drug use in sober living homes. Their research will examine how power dynamics, policy, and ideology affect drug use, treatment, and recovery narratives, thus affecting access to care and the embodiment of “recovery”, health, and well-being. In 2019, Laura was also involved in the organization and programming of a large annual community health conference; their responsibilities included speaker selection and the development of novel workshop formats and topics.

LAURA SISLEN
 MA STUDENT
 PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Kai Walther is an MA student in Public History. Their research interests include memory and identity in the former Eastern bloc states, history as a tool of social activism, and formations of race and gender through time and space. As an undergraduate they contributed research for and helped plan the Humanities Truck’s 2019 Pride event and conducted oral histories with former DC AIDS activists for a faculty fellow. They look forward to continuing to build relationships with and learning from community partners in the DMV.



KAI WALTHER
 MA STUDENT
 PUBLIC HISTORY

2019-2020 GRADUATE FELLOWS



KIMBERLY OLIVER

**MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY**

Kimberly is a graduate student in the Public History program at American University. She received her BA in History and Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include public memory and community histories, particularly in the context of women's and Southern history.

Carmen is a graduate student at American University pursuing her Ph.D. in History with a focus on public history and environmental history. She comes to AU from William & Mary where she worked as Oral Historian for the past three years. Her research interests include oral history, public memory, and disaster studies, and she is particularly interested in how communities are impacted by and respond to disaster events. Working with the Humanities Truck provides the ideal opportunity to come alongside partners in the D.C. community, listen to their stories, and collaborate on how to amplify their collective voices in a meaningful and honoring way. She is most excited about learning from community members and most nervous about driving the truck whenever that day comes.



CARMENT BOLT

**PH. D. STUDENT
HISTORY**



MEGHAN DIECKMANN

**MA STUDENT
PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY**

Meghan is a graduate student in the Public Anthropology MA program at American University. She graduated in June 2018 with a BS in Anthropology and Geography from California Polytechnic State University, SLO. Her undergraduate research capstone paper analyzed welfare policies in the United States and how these changing policies affect different demographics of women. Her research interests include the intersections of gender, race, and class - and she is excited to apply these interests to local issues in the DMV.

Jenna is pursuing her MA in Public History at American University. Her research interests include women's history and local history, especially when used as a tool for community engagement. With a BA in English and French from Davidson College, Jenna believes in an interdisciplinary approach to engaging the past. She is thrilled to be working on the Humanities Truck, where she can get hands-on experience in involving a variety of communities with history and the humanities in the DMV.



JENNA GOFF

**MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY**



JULIE HAWKINS

DIGITAL STRATEGIST

Julie is a PhD candidate in twentieth-century history at American University where her research focuses on the politics of memory and identity, public commemoration, material culture, racism, gender studies. Her dissertation, among other topics, includes the instrumental work that educational traveling exhibitions performed during the early Cold War, a topic that segues nicely with the Humanities Truck.

Currently, Julie is developing the website and community archive for the Humanities Truck.

Maren is a graduate student at American University pursuing her MA in Public History. She earned her BA in Public History and Women & Gender Studies from Ball State University in her hometown of Muncie, IN. Her research interests include reproductive justice. Maren is passionate about finding creative ways to encourage dialogue within and between communities and underserved populations to reflect on issues of social justice. She believes that cultural institutions should initiate and provide space for these conversations while also encouraging them beyond the walls of the institution. Working with the Humanities Truck is an ideal experience because it provides her a hands-on opportunity to take the humanities into communities through community-based projects.



MAREN ORCHARD

MA STUDENT
PUBLIC HISTORY



COMMUNITY FELLOW



Angelyn (Angie) Whitehurst, is a native Washingtonian and active community who advocates for the homeless, the residents of the city, and for the country. She is a writer, poet, artist, actor, and film producer who also volunteers, serves on the Board for the DC Peace Team, and is a regular contributor to Street Sense Media and other local newspapers. Angie brings a plethora of experience having worked for the local government, federal government, and overseas.

ANGELYN WHITEHURST
COMMUNITY FELLOW

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Members of the Humanities Truck's Advisory Board provide valuable insight on the ways the Truck can more effectively engage with communities across the DMV region. They also assist in selecting Fellows and in strategizing for the project's financial sustainability.



KIMBERLY SPRINGLE
CHARLES SUMNER SCHOOL
MUSEUM & ARCHIEVES



NAIMA JEFFERSON
SHEPARD PARK CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION



NOEL LOPEZ
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



KERRIE COTTEN WILLIAMS
DC PUBLIC LIBRARY



NANCY SHIA
COMMUNITY
PHOTOGRAPHER



SAMIR MEGHELLI
SMITHSONIAN ANACOSTIA
COMMUNITY MUSEUM

HUMANITIES TRUCK COMMITTEE

The Humanities Truck Committee is comprised of individuals from the American University community, and consults with Truck staff on the selection of Fellows and more.



MJ RYMSZA-PAWLOWSKA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
HISTORY



LESLIE NELLIS
ASSOCIATE ARCHIVIST,
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



XIMENA VARELA
DIRECTOR, ARTS
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



ROB ALBRO
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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

As we moved into the second and third years of the project, we hoped to deepen our work with communities across Washington, D.C. In doing so, we drew upon the expertise and energy of our core staff and fellows to take the truck out on the street more frequently and to use it more creatively and with greater impact. The following are a few highlights of our projects and events from 2019-2021.

ADAMS MORGAN DAY

SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2019



The Humanities Truck kicked off the 2019-2020 school year at the 41st annual Adams Morgan Day. The interior and exterior walls of the truck functioned as exhibit space for the Anacostia Community Museum's "A Right to the City" exhibition. Visitors were able to watch oral histories about Adam's Morgan, see historic photos, and read about how the neighborhood has evolved. We also partnered with the DC Storytelling system, lead by American University Professor Benjamin Stokes, to expand the impact of the exhibition. Finally, the truck also powered a stage with performances from six local artists sponsored by the DC Public Library. From boogaloo to Brazilian samba, the truck was bumping with beats that encouraged passersby to sing, dance-along, and interact with the music reflecting the diverse heritage of the people who have shaped the neighborhood.

MALCOLM X PARK CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

SEPTEMBER 22TH, 2019



In the fall of 1969, Angela Davis spoke at Meridian Hill Park and called for the park to be renamed, Malcolm X Park. This exhibition celebrated that history through the photography of Nancy Shia, a local photographer, and activist. The truck exhibited the history and everyday life moments Shia captured from 1974 till 2014; from the everyday drum circles of the 1970s to protests, cultural festivals, and performance art presentations. The park, known for its beauty, art, and recreation, also has an illustrious history as a space in the city for free speech, especially for local African-American communities. The truck also collected numerous oral histories of community members throughout the event. This exhibition was part of a related National Park Service project to collect oral histories about Malcolm X/ Meridian Hill Park.

"DOWNTOWN DISPLACED" AT THE DC HISTORY CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 22ND, 2019



The annual D.C. History Conference provides a dynamic, friendly, and rigorous forum for discussing and promoting original research about the history and culture of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The Humanities Truck took part in the 2019 Conference presenting the exhibit "Downtown Displaced: A Case Study of Gentrification in Mount Vernon Square 1840-Present." The exhibit emerged from a four month collaboration with Street Sense artists, and it explored the social costs of neighborhood change in a long temporal context. The Truck also participated in a "performance" that included Street Sense artists Reggie Black, Angie Whitehurst, and DC filmmaker Bryan Bello. The artists/vendors provided their own interpretation of the neighborhood change and the meaning of Apple moving into Mt. Vernon Square.

DC LUNAR NEW YEAR PARADE

JANUARY 26TH, 2020



The 1882 Foundation and the Humanities Truck celebrated the Year of the Rat at DC's Lunar New Year parade in Chinatown. The 2020 parade was sponsored by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, an organization devoted to supporting Chinese-Americans and Chinese immigrants in the DC area. The Humanities Truck presented a portion of the Anacostia Community Museum's "A Right to the City" exhibit, telling stories of community change and organizing in Chinatown. We also partnered with the 1882 Foundation and Jenn Low for her "Project PDA: Love Letters to D.C.'s Chinatown." Visitors stopped by the Truck to create a love letter to Chinatown and shared their stories of the neighborhood for our "Mobilizing Memories" initiative.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

OCTOBER 17TH, 2020



The Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration and rally highlighted Indigenous people's activism and visibility along with cross-cultural partnerships through speeches and musical performances. The Humanities Truck and AU's Public History Program provided access to its web-based exhibit projects and digital repository. We also be conducted oral history interviews.

'THIS I BUILT': SCREENING & CONVERSATION

APRIL 16TH, 2021



'This I Built', a short documentary by La Pax Media and the Humanities Truck, follows a group of laborers from different economic sectors with different worldviews who share how their lives and work sustain a city, how their music keeps a city from falling silent, how their work helps keep a city standing proudly, and assures that politicians have appropriate facilities in Washington, DC. The virtual screening and following conversation were facilitated by the Humanities Truck as part of a larger conversation on the Jornalera community.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION WITH HIPS

MAY 15TH, 2021



The Humanities Truck in partnership with HIPS facilitated a community conversation including arts and crafts, a meal, and an open dialogue on how opioids and overdoses are affecting our community. This event was the first in a series of community collaborations with the local harm reduction organization, HIPS, and includes an online exhibition.

