

Fall 2015

Kahn Chronicle: Fall 2015

Smith College, Kahn Liberal Arts Institute

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.smith.edu/kahn_chronicle

 Part of the [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Smith College, Kahn Liberal Arts Institute, "Kahn Chronicle: Fall 2015" (2015). *Kahn Chronicle*. 3.
https://scholarworks.smith.edu/kahn_chronicle/3

This Book has been accepted for inclusion in Kahn Chronicle by an authorized administrator of Smith ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@smith.edu



Kahn 2015-16 Short-term Projects Look to the Future

The Kahn Institute will host three short-term projects in 2015-16 that will consider the future of collecting, archiving, research and scholarship within the academy.

Smith faculty and staff are invited to apply for participation in the projects. Application calls are distributed in the weeks prior to the respective project. (For more information on applying to Kahn projects, go to http://www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/fellowships_faculty_apply.php.)

Futurisms will feature two three-day colloquia in which leading thinkers will join faculty fellows in discussing meanings and methods central to collecting and categorizing objects and knowledge within institutions like museums and libraries in the 21st century and beyond.

Futurisms Part I: *The Ten Thousand Year Collection* December 10-12, 2015

Guest lecture: Elizabeth Merritt, Vice President of Strategic Foresight and Founding Director, Center for the Future of Museums at the American Alliance of Museums

In a public lecture to open the project, Merritt, through the chronological frame of 10,000 years (roughly the span of human civilization) will consider what preservation and interpretation could really mean across millennia. Participating fellows will continue the conversation with Merritt, addressing topics such as shifting institutional culture and the structures of knowledge, the ethics of collecting and displaying, the role of the digital realm within the future of collecting, and the value of tangible things in the preservation of heritage and culture for future generations.

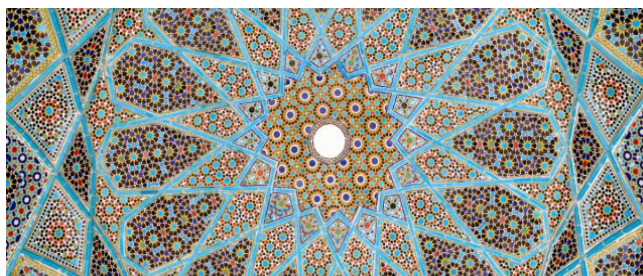
Futurisms Part II: *Intersections: Digital Humanities, Interactive Media and Cultural Heritage* February 25-27, 2016

Guest lecture: Anne Balsamo, Dean of the School of Media Studies and Professor of Media Studies, The New School

In her opening public lecture, Balsamo, a national leader in media studies, will consider questions of preservation, display, and historical memory engaged by the AIDS Memorial Quilt Digital Experience Project, an ongoing project started in 2002. Balsamo will discuss the creation of an interactive memorial designed to augment the viewing and documentation of the Quilt and will explore the cultural work of “public interactives” to examine how they influence practices of cultural reproduction—remembering, witnessing, archiving, and educating.

Future Fields: ‘Global’ Methodologies and Art of the Middle East March 31-April 2, 2016

In recent years, the field of contemporary art of the Middle East has become increasingly institutionalized within the humanities. The



question of *what* such a field might consist of has given way to the question of *how* to forge appropriate methodologies to research and teach cultural modernities of the Middle East. How can we reshape existing theories of culture, politics and society based in Western-derived histories and ideas in order to study the many cultural practices that are only now being integrated

into academia’s purview?

This three-day project will include international scholars of art of the Middle East for conversations across disciplines that will help situate these questions into a broader sociological, historical and political context.

Faculty Invited to Apply for Two New Kahn Fellowships

1. Kahn Alumnae Fellowship

Smith faculty who have participated in a Kahn Institute semester-long or yearlong project in the past three years (since 2012), and who have exhausted their original Kahn fellowship, are invited to apply for a Kahn Alumnae Fellowship for the purpose of funding ongoing research related to or extended from that project.

The Kahn Alumnae Fellowship offers a \$500 grant. Apply by November 1 online: http://smith.edu/kahninstitute/2015_AlumnaeFellowshipAPP.php.

2. The Marjorie Senechal Emeriti Fellowship

Smith emeriti faculty who have participated in a Kahn Institute semester-long or yearlong project are invited to apply for the Marjorie Senechal Emeriti Fellowship for the purpose of funding research related to or extended from their Kahn participation.

The Marjorie Senechal Emeriti Fellowship, named in honor of the founding director of the Kahn, offers a \$500 grant. Apply by November 1 online: http://smith.edu/kahninstitute/2015_SenechalFellowshipAPP.php.

Kahn Long-term Projects 2016-17

Smith faculty and staff and Five College faculty are invited to apply for faculty fellowships for the Kahn Institute's long-term projects for 2016-17. Brief descriptions of the two projects appear below. Full descriptions and online applications for each project can be found at www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/future.php. The deadline to apply for either long-term project is October 19, 2015.

Shaping Perception

Yearlong, 2016-17 :: Organizing Fellows: Chris Aiken, *Dance*; Daphne Lamothe, *Africana Studies*

Perception is both active and receptive. It is biological and creative. It is shaped by all that we have learned and all that we can imagine.

This yearlong project will explore the concept of "perception" as an essential form of human experience, an aspect of ourselves that defines who we are and how we relate to the world. Our sense of embodiment and self, our orientation to gravity, space and time, our sense of place and landscape are fundamentally linked to our perceptual systems.

Indeed, while the function of the senses is a biological fact, perception is culturally constructed. Sociologists and anthropologists parse the influence of family, school, community and nation on self-perception. Perceptual incongruities create profound differences among individuals and nations. Learned bias alters perception.

Research on false memory syndrome underscores the malleability of perception as do studies of patients who can transcend the perception of pain through meditation or other perceptual focusing techniques. Learning to perceive in new ways is one of the key components in our capacity to adapt and change our behavior. It is also a fundamental principle of the scientific process. Physicist David Bohm has described scientific creativity as "simply trying something out and seeing what happens." Embedded in this statement is the understanding that the essential part of the creative process, "seeing what happened," is perceptually rooted.

This project aims to bring together faculty in the arts, social sciences and sciences whose work engages the idea of perception, as it can be constructed and manipulated, with the belief that collaboration can make our own perception of our work more meaningful and more complex.

Modes and Models of Making

Yearlong, 2016-17 :: Organizing Fellows: Alex Keller, *Film Studies*; Dana Leibsohn, *Art*

Fundamental to daily life, and especially intellectual life, are our ideas about, practices of, and dream for making things, be they material, ephemeral, "real" or imagined.

This yearlong project will explore how the idea of "making" infuses our sense of the world. What does it mean to make something? Is making a mode of knowing? Why are some kinds of production driven by desires for innovation, others for commitments to habits and ritual? Why are some forms of making risk-averse and others risk-seeking? How do different disciplines approach answers to these questions?

The role of technology is pressing ever more firmly upon us to reassess how we share knowledge, circulate inventions, define

ourselves as humans (who make things at all!). This project invites considered reflection on what kinds of things have been, or are now worth making, and how models for thinking about creativity and craftsmanship shape why certain things (and not others) get made, re-made, and un-made. Are there ways of conceptualizing the constraints and possibilities of cultural, political, economic and environmental events for creating, preserving, or changing the world?

Projects are invited from any disciplinary or cross-disciplinary perspective and collaboration is welcomed within and beyond the seminar. Participants are encouraged to consider projects that involve making physical and digital things, along with making ideas, making conversation, and making noise.

Make a decision	make a difference	make a movie
make a scene	make music	make history
make mistakes	make love	make haste
make do	make money	make a mess

Kahn Short-Term Projects 2015-16

The Kahn Institute will host faculty fellows for several short-term projects this academic year. In addition to the series of projects considering the future of museums, archives and art (see Page 1), the Kahn will also invite faculty participation in the following projects:

1. **Refugees.** Organized by Darcy Buerkle, *History*, and Greg White, *Government*, *Refugees* will focus on accounts and cultural materials of displaced persons in examining individual and collective experiences of refugees and forced migrants. *October 31, 2015.*

2. **Excavating the Image**, an annual collaboration between the Kahn Institute and the Museum of Art that engages faculty in close consideration of a work of art in the museum collection. This year's subject will be a recent acquisition of video art, *Fac-tum Tremblay*, by Candice Breitz. *January 14-15, 2016.*

3. **The Empire of Cotton**, organized by Kiki Smith, *Theatre*, will engage participants in cross-disciplinary discussion around a book, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, by Sven Beckert, and the vast history of conflict, controversy and commerce that accompany the evolution of cotton around the globe for more than 5500 years. *Date to be determined, in spring 2016.*

Read more: <http://www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/current.php>.

2015-16 Long-Term Projects

Student Fellowships Awarded

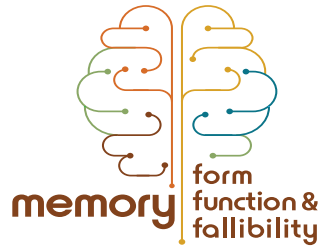
The following Smith students have been awarded fellowships in connection with the Kahn Institute's 2015-16 long-term projects.

Memory: Form, Function, and Fallibility

Fellows in the yearlong project *Memory: Form, Function, and Fallibility*, organized by Dawn Fulton, *French Studies*, and Adam Hall, *Biological Sciences*, consider the great range of mechanisms, uses and representations of memory across disciplinary fields, with a particular focus on how the limitations of memory, and the ways in which memory can be manipulated, impact both the individual and society.

Student Fellows in *Memory* are:

Aisha Amin '17, *Neuroscience and Theater*
Claire Bowman '16, *Economics*
Nikila Lakshmanan '17, *Philosophy and Study of Women and Gender*
Sarah Orsak '16, *Study of Women and Gender*
Jocelyn Proietti '16, *English Language and Literature*



Play

The spring 2016 project *Play*, organized by Michael Thurston, *English Language and Literature*, will aim to approach concepts of play from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in order to enrich understanding not only of what play is but also of what we might gain by seeing as play some practices currently defined in other ways.



Student Fellows in *Play* are:

Bree Currier '16, *Government*
Lucy Gouvin '16, *Art*
Emily Gross '16, *American Studies*
Katie Mikulka '16, *American Studies*
Olivia O'Connor '16, *Philosophy and Government*
Liz Tan '16, *History and Biological Sciences*
Maggie Weiler '16, *American Studies*

Visiting Lecturers Hosted by the Kahn this Fall

Important components of Kahn Institute long-term projects are the occasional public speaking events that accompany weekly seminars. This year's projects, *Memory: Form, Function and Fallibility*, and *Play*, will host several visiting lecturers throughout the academic year, including the two fall events listed below. The Smith community is invited to attend.

Tuesday, Oct. 20

Noon-1 p.m.
Campus Center 103-104



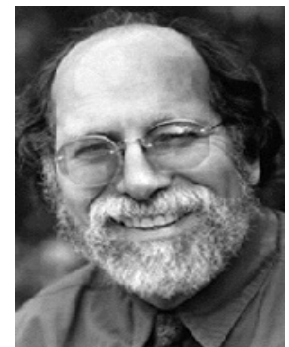
Daniel Blaufuks, Photographer and Video Artist

Through books, installations and films, Daniel Blaufuks explores connections between time and space and the representation of private and public memory. In conjunction with the *Memory: Form, Function and Fallibility* project, Blaufuks will speak on "A Visit to Terezin."

Lunch will be served.

Thursday, Nov. 12

5 p.m.
Neilson Browsing Room



Anthony Pellegrini, Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota

Anthony Pellegrini has written extensively on children's development and play, social dominance and aggression. In conjunction with the *Play* project, Pellegrini will speak on "The Role of Play in Human Development."

Refreshments served.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Some Bad News and Some Good

It is a pleasure to be back at the Kahn Institute after a great sabbatical. We at the Kahn (Eric, Liz, and I) are all grateful to Nalini Bhushan for her wonderful leadership in my absence.

Over the course of my sabbatical year away, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to enter into the lives and work of teachers around the world. My research was focused on secondary education and the changing nature of high school teaching, but that work necessarily resonated with lessons about higher education and its transformation in the face of shifting economies, globalization, and the widespread use of the Internet.

One particularly powerful understanding that emerged for me was the sorry state of the liberal arts, worldwide. In every country I visited, even those with long traditions of excellence in the liberal arts and humanities, teachers expressed concerns about their students' early careerism and a kind of anti-intellectual impulse that manifests as a disinterest in reading and a rejection of subjects like literature, history, and philosophy. Even as the world becomes more complex, inter- and cross-disciplinary discourse is disappearing in the schools. Developing countries are producing growing numbers of students interested in economics and engineering, but rarely are those students receiving any coursework in other subjects, subjects that enrich and humanize those fields.

Coming back to Smith, and to the Kahn Institute, one can't help feeling the extraordinary richness of our liberal arts tradition. The Kahn is more than a faculty research institute; it models for ourselves and for our students a way of being in the world: open, curious, intellectually generous, and engaged. What a relief to see it thriving here.

Speaking of generous...

I want to draw people's attention to some changes with regard to Kahn fellowships:

First, we have decided, starting this year, to raise the stipends of faculty fellows by \$500. Research fellowships at the Kahn have remained the same for the past fifteen years (\$3000 for yearlong projects, \$1,500 for semester-long, to be used over the course of three years). Given the rise in the price of books, of travel, and other expenses associated with research, a change seems overdue. I hope folks who have never participated in a Kahn project will see this as yet another reason to apply.

Second, we have created two new fellowship opportunities for faculty who have engaged in research through the Institute (see related notice on Page 1 of this edition).

- The first, the Kahn Alumnae Fellowship, recognizes that some research projects take a long time to finish. The Kahn Alumnae Fellowship allows those who are still working on major projects associated with their former research as fellows to secure additional funding.
- The second, a fund for retired faculty, recognizes that many of our colleagues continue to do important research after they have stopped teaching. The Marjorie Senechal fund, named for our glorious founder, will offer \$500 to a retired faculty member still engaged in a project associated with his or her former work at the Kahn Institute.

All of this seems like a good and important way to serve the liberal arts.

See you at the Kahn.



Rosetta Marantz Cohen, *Sylvia Dlugasch Bauman Professor of American Studies, Department of Education and Child Study*

Smith Alumna, Founder of *The Look for the Good Project* to Show Works at Kahn Gallery

Since launching the *Look for the Good Project* in 2011, founder Anne Kubitsky '05 has grown her nonprofit into an international phenomenon with thousands of responses to her positive message from people around the globe. *The Look for the Good Project* creates school programming and public awareness around the core belief that gratitude changes mindsets, reduces violence and improves everything for everyone.

Beginning October 1, an installation by Kubitsky, ***What Makes You Grateful?***, will be on display in the Kahn Gallery on the third floor of Neilson Library. Stop by any time to meet extraordinary people on a colorful journey around the world and close to home.



Reception with Artist Anne Kubitsky '05, Wednesday, October 7, 4-5 p.m., Kahn Gallery. Wine, soda, cheese & other refreshments. All invited.

Read the *Kahn Chronicle* Online:

www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/chronicle