

Spring 2009

Kahn Chronicle: Spring 2009

Smith College, Kahn Liberal Arts Institute

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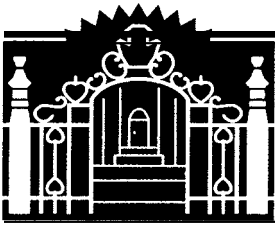


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KAHN CHRONICLE

KAHN LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTE, SMITH COLLEGE

Volume 11, Issue 1 • Spring 2009

FACT, CONSTRUCTION & INTERPRETATION

Photographs by Sandra Matthews, Chester Michalik and Stan Sherer

In December, 2008, the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute was handed an unexpected opportunity when Martin Antonetti, Smith's Director of Rare Books, asked if we would like to use the Neilson Library Book Arts Gallery for an exhibit in Spring 2009.

We seized that opportunity. The resulting photography exhibit features works relating to this year's two long-term projects, *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment* and *A Festival of Disorder*. Chester Michalik, a Faculty Fellow in the *Deceit* project; Sandra Matthews, a Faculty Fellow from the *Disorder* project; and Northampton photographer and digital fine art printmaker Stan Sherer conceived an exhibition titled *Fact, Construction, & Interpretation: Photographs by Sandra Matthews, Chester Michalik and Stan Sherer*.

The exhibition combines works that at first seem very different, but that reveal surprising connections when brought together.

Stan Sherer's works combine the lantern slides of British mathematician Dorothy Wrinch, who taught at Smith from 1942 to 1971, with photographs he made of dead leaves, decaying tree trunks, gnarled tree roots, bamboo shoots bent over from the snow, denuded bushes, and dried rushes along the

banks of Mill River. In describing his work, Sherer says, "The slides tell the story of a failed theory, the first theory of protein architecture. They take us back 70 years, to a time before penicillin and the electron microscope and the double helix, when ideas with regard to protein molecules were in a state of chaos. Chaos until Wrinch devised the beautiful, skeletal models shown in these slides. She made the unseeable imaginable, the unimaginable visible." His work both documents her slides and interprets them in a new way. He explains that it is intended to "speak poignantly to the passing of scientific ideas" and to show a state of life that—like the lantern slides and the theory they encoded—is lost or dormant." Combining his photographs with Wrinch's slides led him to what Nabokov called "a kind of delicate meeting place between imagination and knowledge, a point arrived at by diminishing large things and enlarging small ones, that is intrinsically artistic."



Military Air Show # 10 by Chester Michalik

created in her efforts to visualize molecular structure.

Chester Michalik's work centers around the interactions between military personnel and visitors at the Westfield International Air Show at Barnes Air Reserve Base in Westfield and at The Great New England Air Show at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee. The photographs were taken over the course of a decade or more, with the exact schedule driven by the irregular occurrence of those shows. He explains, "I have chosen to display these particular photographs in part because of my participation in the Kahn Institute's *Deceit* project. I tried to photograph these air shows as military propaganda, much of it directed at young people. I have also tried to show the appeal and sensual attraction of weaponry. Clearly, the images in this exhibition reflect my interpretations of events and they could be considered deceptive on many levels."

Sandra Matthews has titled her collection of photographs *Timelines*. They are selections from a project she began 20 years ago in which she photographed individual women—family, friends and acquaintances—against a backdrop of collaged newspaper. She said that she "recently returned to this early project, making new backdrops, re-photographing some of the original subjects and adding new ones. The

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



Life Study: Lantern Slide # 3 by Stan Sherer

Marjorie Senechal, an Organizing Fellow in the *Disorder* project, has prepared a companion exhibit to Sherer's images. That portion of the exhibition includes the actual lantern slides the photographer used, as well as information about Wrinch's research and techniques along with several models she

In This Issue

Fact, Construction, Interpretation	1
Faculty Fellowships Awarded	2
Call for Faculty Fellows.....	2
Applications for Student Fellowships.....	3
Reinventing Eurasian Identities.....	4
Calendar of Upcoming Events.....	5
Festival of Disorder Mid-Year Report.....	6
Deceit Project Mid-Year Report.....	8
2010-2011 Long-Term Projects.....	10
A Note from the Director.....	12

Who's Who at the Kahn Institute

Director & Staff 2008-2009

Rosetta Marantz Cohen
Interim Director (2008-2009)
Chair, Advisory Committee
Professor of Education and Child Study

Chrissie Bell
Administrative Coordinator

Kara Noble
Project and Publicity Administrator



From left to right, Kara Noble, Chrissie Bell, and Rosetta Cohen. Photo by Jon Crispin.

Advisory Committee 2008-2009

Patrick Coby, Professor of Government
Rosetta Marantz Cohen, Professor of
Education & Child Study, Chair
Robert Dorit, Associate Professor of
Biological Sciences
Dawn Fulton, Associate Professor of
French Studies (Sabbatical leave 2008-2009)
Mary Harrington, Tippet Professor in
Life Sciences, Psychology
Christopher Loring, Director of Libraries
William Oram, Helen Means Professor,
English Language & Literature
Andrew Rotman, Associate Professor
of Religion

How to Contact the Kahn Institute

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

KAHN INSTITUTE FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED FOR 2009-2010

The following Smith and Five College faculty and staff members have been awarded Fellowships in connection with the two yearlong Kahn Institute projects for the 2009-2010 academic year. Fellows in the project *Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement* will explore the effect of time on things and the implications of the temporal dimension on our ways of seeing the world and interpreting our place in it. Fellows in the project *Wellness and Disease* will consider the presence of illness and disease in our history, our culture, our social arrangements and in our mental constructions.



Organizing Fellows:
Bosiljka Glumac, *Geology*
Richard Lim, *History*

Darcy Buerkle, *History*
Nancy Bradbury, *English*
Carolyn Collette, *English (Mount Holyoke)*
David Dempsey, *Museum of Art*
Suzan Edwards, *Astronomy*
Nathanael Fortune, *Physics*
Jina Kim, *East Asian Studies*
Caroline Melly, *Anthropology*
Cornelia Pearsall, *English*
Sara Pruss, *Geology*
Carolyn Wetzell, *Biological Sciences*



Organizing Fellows:
Mary Harrington, *Psychology*
Benita Jackson, *Psychology*

Barbara Brehm-Curtis, *Exercise & Sports Studies*
Suzanne Gottschang, *Anthropology*
Leslie Jaffee, *College Physician & Director of Health Services*
Susan Levin, *Philosophy*
Albert Mosley, *Philosophy*
Jane Stangl, *Exercise & Sports Studies*
Christine White-Ziegler, *Biological Sciences*
Steven Williams, *Biological Sciences*

FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR REINVENTING EURASIAN IDENTITIES PROJECT

The Spring 2009 short-term project *Reinventing Eurasian Identities: Ghengis Khan Revisited (A Khan Kahn)* is now accepting applications for Faculty Fellows.

This project will include three discussion/presentation sessions and a series of film screenings examining the role and influence of Ghengis Khan and depictions of him in the development of Mongolian national identities. It is being organized by Jamie Hubbard (Religion) and Sergey Glebov (History). This project can accept up to ten Faculty Fellows. Each participating Fellow will receive a stipend of \$500.00.

A full description of the project, brief biographies of the visiting scholars who will present to the Fellows, and a detailed project schedule can be found on page 4 of this newsletter and on the Kahn Institute Web site. Faculty who are interested in applying are encouraged to read these materials and/or to contact the Organizing Fellows for more information.

Contact Information for Organizing Fellows:

Jamie Hubbard
Email: jhubbard@email.smith.edu

Sergey Glebov
Email: sglebov@email.smith.edu

To apply, send a letter of interest via email, campus mail or Five College mail to Rosetta Marantz Cohen (rcohen@smith.edu), the Kahn Institute's Interim Director on or before **February 20, 2009**.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2009-2010 STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

All students in the Classes of '10 and '11 are invited to apply for Student Fellowships for one of the Kahn Institute's two collaborative research projects for the 2009-2010 academic year, *Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement* (organized by professors Bosijlka Glumac and Richard Lim) and *Wellness & Disease* (organized by professors Mary Harrington and Benita Jackson). All Student Fellowship applications for these two projects must arrive at the Kahn Institute no later than Friday, February 27, 2009.

Each week when classes are in session, Student Fellows join Faculty Fellows in attending their project's colloquium meeting, at which they develop their research and discuss one another's work-in-progress. Each weekly colloquium session also includes a shared meal that continues the social and intellectual interaction of the group. These weekly meetings and meals form the core of the group's work and will have the following schedule:

Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement

Fridays, 12:30-3:30 pm

Lunch: 12:30-1:30 pm

Colloquium Meeting: 1:30-3:30 pm

Wellness & Disease

Fall 2009: Fridays, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Spring 2010: Mondays, 12:00 noon-3:00 pm

Lunch: 12:00 noon-1:00 pm

Colloquium Meeting: 1:00-3:00 pm

Student Fellows are appointed for the academic year and must be able to attend both the weekly lunch and colloquium for the full year.

In addition to their weekly meetings and meals, project Fellows invite visiting scholars to join them in colloquium discussions and to present public events (e.g., lectures, performances, symposia, conferences) that open the project's work to the rest of the academic community and to the general public. Student Fellows are also expected to attend special events associated with their project.

Since most students have not had much experience defining a research topic or doing original research, the Kahn Institute has established a research orientation program for Student Fellows. Participation in the following orientation sessions and activities is mandatory (NOTE: Special orientation arrangements can be made for students who will be studying abroad during Spring 2009):

Friday, April 24, 2009, 2:30-4:00 pm

Research instruction with college reference librarians

Friday, May 1, 2009, 3:00-4:00 pm

Orientation meeting with Kahn Institute Director

Summer 2009

Read five-six key works in your field of interest

July 2009

Develop and submit three significant research questions that could serve as the basis of your work during the project year; these questions should be one-two pages long.

August 30-September 3, 2009

Return to campus early to participate in a research workshop to refine and further focus their research project. (Housing and meals will be arranged by the Kahn Institute.)

Student Fellows will be paid \$500 for their work during the



*Molly Hamer '10 at a Festival of Disorder weekly colloquium meeting
Photo by Jon Crispin*

summer, and a fellowship stipend of \$2,000 in equal bi-weekly payments for their work during the 2009-2010 academic year (for a total of \$2,500).

Please note that you may apply for only one project during a given year. *Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement* will accept seven Student Fellows and *Wellness & Disease* will accept up to ten.

If you are interested in becoming a Student Fellow in either of these projects, you are encouraged to attend the project's informational meeting at the Kahn Institute (Neilson Library, Level 3 South). The informational meetings will take place on the following schedule:

Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement

Wednesday, February 19, 2009, 5:00-6:00 pm

Wellness & Disease

Thursday, February 12, 5:00-6:00 pm

If you cannot attend the informational meeting, you should contact the Organizing Fellow of the project that interests you for more details about it. In addition, you are encouraged to read the descriptions of the project, which can be found on the Kahn Institute website at <http://www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/future.php>.

Applications for Student Fellowships for the Institute's 2009-2010 projects should be submitted via email to kahninst@smith.edu and should include:

- A paragraph or two explaining why you are interested in joining the project and the types of questions you would like to explore during the project year.
- Your resume, including your telephone number, your optimum postal mail address and your preferred email address for project-related communications.
- A copy of your transcript. Please request your transcript using BannerWeb. Transcripts should be addressed to: Kahn Liberal Arts Institute, Neilson Library and should arrive at the Kahn Institute no later than Friday, February 27, 2009.

Please submit your complete application to kahninst@smith.edu. We will acknowledge receipt of your application. The deadline for applications is Friday, February 27, 2009.

SPRING 2009 SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

REINVENTING EURASIAN IDENTITIES: GHENGIS KHAN REVISITED (A KHAN KAHN)

by Jamie Hubbard, *Religion* & Sergey Glebov, *History*

The idea of a national identity as “constructed,” “competing,” or “imagined” is not new, yet it remains deeply relevant in the world today. The posturing and image-creation at play during the Olympic Games in Beijing took the discussion of national identity well outside academic circles, and the horrific carnage in Georgia vividly brings home the critical importance of the topic. New visions of “national identity” regularly emerge across the world, often presaged by disaster and accompanied by warfare. Who creates these new and competing nationalist projects? What strategies are used to communicate visions of national identity (e.g., speeches, pamphlets, visual culture, music, the news media, film, social networking on the Internet)? Why are some national identities more successful and enduring than others and why are people willing to fight and die for them? These questions are raised in many academic disciplines, including history, religious studies, media and film studies, economics, and many of the other social sciences.

This short-term Kahn Institute project will look specifically at exuberantly competing versions of national identity that are at play in one particular area of the world: contemporary, post-Soviet Mongolia. Exploring national identity through the lens of the Mongol empire makes sense for several reasons. First of all, the rich and complex Mongol history (specifically, the empire of Chinggis Khan) continues to fascinate scholars today. But the story of modern-day Mongolian statehood is also compelling. Mongolia was one of the first communist nations in the world. Situated between two giant world powers that are often at odds, Mongolia has played an important and strategic role in twentieth-century geo-politics. Mongolia was the first post-communist nation in Asia, and its historical legacy is at the very center of the battle for a usable past waged by the newly independent states and autonomous regions in Eurasia.

The work of the project will focus on three major themes: 1) a theoretical component in which we talk generally about national identity, strategies of constructing them, and the notion of their legitimacy; 2) an historical consideration of the Mongol Empire, in which we use the story of the Chinggis Khan and his legacy to explore the concrete geography and competing notions of “Eurasia”; and 3) a contemporary exploration of post-Soviet constructions of national identity in Mongolia and the region.

These three strands of inquiry will be explored through readings, visiting speakers and through viewing three films dealing with Chinggis Khan and contemporary Mongolia. The films themselves enact, through their conflicting depictions of both Chinggis Khan and Mongolia, the ways in which contrary visions of national identity get defined and disseminated.

The project will meet in three group sessions, with several film screenings available to let participants view the three films at a time that fits with their schedule. All project activities will take place at the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute in Neilson Library.

This Kahn Liberal Arts Institute project will take place very close to an international symposium on the rebirth of Buddhism in post-Soviet Asia, focusing on Mongolia. This Five College project will be hosted at Smith College March 27-29, 2009.

VISITING SCHOLARS FOR THE PROJECT:

Christopher Kaplonski is a Senior Research Associate at the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit/Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge in the UK. He is also Project Manager for the international project, *The Oral History of Twentieth Century Mongolia*. He has conducted extensive research in Mongolia since the beginning of the country’s transition from socialism in the early 1990s, and has written extensively on political violence, on the Mongols’ understandings of democracy, and on memory and identity after socialism, including issues related to Chinggis Khan. His book, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memories of Heroes* examines the rethinking of Mongolian identity and the use of historical imagery in the aftermath of the democratic revolution of 1990. His current project, *The Death of the Buddhist State: Violence and Sovereignty in Early Socialist Mongolia*, looks at the power struggles between the early socialist state and the Buddhist establishment from anthropological perspective.

Mr. Kaplonski received his MA and PhD in anthropology from Rutgers University and holds a BS in Chemical Engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He also spent two years teaching at the National University of Mongolia.

Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren is currently a Humanities and International Studies Fellow in the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Stanford University; he is also a Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the National University of Mongolia. His current project, entitled *Enmity of Independency: Ethnic and National Identities in Mongolia*, explores the dynamics of the emergence, formation and continuity of Mongolian national, ethnic, and sub-ethnic identities. He has researched and published extensively on the Mongolian national identity from the period of Chinggis Khan through the twentieth century.

Mr. Lhamsuren received his PhD from Hokkaido University in Japan; he also holds an MA and a BA from the National University of Mongolia. He is especially interested in collective identity, ethnicity, and nationalism.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

- Monday, March 23, 4:30-6 pm
Book discussion followed by dinner
- Thursday, March 26, 6-9 pm
Presentations by Christopher Kaplonski and Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren
- Monday, March 30-Saturday, April 4, Various times
Film screenings
- Friday, April 10, 2-4:30 pm
Wrap-up session

UPCOMING EVENTS

FACT, CONSTRUCTION & INTERPRETATION

Photographs by Sandra Matthews, Chester Michalik and Stan Sherer (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

focus of the work has shifted to the passage of time itself, as experienced through familial relationships among women." As she explains in her artist's statement, "The portraits in this exhibition are each constructed from two or more images made over intervals of time—days, months, years or decades. An individual may be pictured at two different points in her life, or with her mother, daughter, grandmother or granddaughter. The combination of images remind us that although a life unfolds from

birth to death, the experience of time is not strictly linear or measurable. I hope that they also suggest the complexities of what is transmitted, over time, between generations."

The images of all three photographers invite the viewer to explore the relationships between facts, interpretation and human constructions (both physical and philosophical). They represent the passage of time in varying ways, with each touching on the process of how life and ideas grow and change over time. They also examine how people make sense of the world and how they contribute to it as they move through their lives. Each of the images reveals how something can appear simple and straightforward on the surface while actually having many complex facets and dimensions.

The photography exhibition *Fact, Construction & Interpretation: Photographs by Sandra Matthews, Chester Michalik and Stan Sherer* will run from Tuesday, January 27 through Sunday, March 8 in the Book Arts Gallery on Level 3 of Neilson Library.

The prints in this exhibition were made by Stan Sherer on Iris, Hewlett Packard, and Epson printers.



Sandra, Rina and Ibi by Sandra Matthews

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

January 27-March 8, 2009: Photography Exhibition

Fact, Construction & Interpretation: Photographs by Sandra Matthews, Chester Michalik and Stan Sherer
Book Arts Gallery, 3rd Level, Neilson Library

Monday, February 2, 2009: Evelyn Fox Keller

The Mirage of a Space Between Nature and Nurture
Evelyn Fox Keller, Professor Emerita of the History & Philosophy of Science at MIT, discusses whether the language of genetics is keeping alive a debate that no longer has meaning. Presented by *A Festival of Disorder*.
4:30 p.m., Neilson Browsing Room, Neilson Library.

Sunday, February 8, 2009: Four Sundays in February

Being Harry Houdini
Three top illusionists demonstrate the magic and wonder that can come from a little deceit and wonder! Co-presented by *A Festival of Disorder* and *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment*.
2 p.m., Academy of Music Theater, Northampton, Tickets: \$8

Monday, April 6, 2009: Joy Harjo

A Map to the Next World
An evening of poetry and music with award-winning Native American poet, singer, and songwriter Joy Harjo. The lecture will be followed by a reception and book signing in the Atrium of the Smith College Museum of Art. Presented by *A Festival of Disorder*.
7 p.m., Graham Auditorium, Hillyer Hall.

Thursday, April 9, 2009: Peter Andreas

Blue Helmets, Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo

Peter Andreas, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Studies at Brown University, argues that internationalization created and sustained a criminalized war economy in Sarajevo and left a powerful legacy for postwar reconstruction. Presented by *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment*.
4:30 p.m., Neilson Browsing Room, Neilson Library.

Saturday, April 18, 2009: Collaborations Day

Student and Faculty Fellows from the two Kahn Institute yearlong projects, *A Festival of Disorder* and *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment*, present their research.
10:45 am and 1:30 p.m. Seelye Hall.

Friday & Saturday, April 24 & 25, 2009: A Festival of Disorder

A Festival of Disorder Fellows present a full-blown, disorderly and disrespectful celebration of the order-disorder continuum. A wide range of events will be included across the two-day festival. Full schedule of activities TBA.
Various Locations on the Smith Campus.

A FESTIVAL OF DISORDER

MID-YEAR PROJECT UPDATE

By **Elisabeth Armstrong**
Study of Women & Gender

Marjorie Senechal
Mathematics & The History of Math, Science & Statistics
Organizing Fellows

Photos by Jon Crispin

What do 1930s hobos, symmetrical graphs, Victorian mystery novels, a women's organization across rural India, the second law of thermodynamics, the arms trade in southern Sudan, Italian immigrant anarchist women, photographic portraits, Japanese Hikikomori, and Shakespearean revels have in common? More, much more, than you might think. At first glance the eclectic topics under study by the Faculty and Student Fellows of the Festival of Disorder project suggest more disorder than festival.

Throwing caution to the wind,
we filled our first weeks
of the seminar

presenting
projects
some of us
had only
just begun,
searching
for language
that could
reach across
our disciplinary
locations.

Organizing Fellow **Marjorie Senechal** led off with her research, "a full-blown, disorderly and disrespectful critique of the concept and role of symmetry in the sciences." She encouraged everyone in the project to look at order and disorder in new ways. Organizing Fellow **Lisa Armstrong**, talked about the disorderly protest of Hillary Clinton's speech at the 1995 UN Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. With an international women's movement as wide and contentious as its locations for solidarity, she asked fellows to see the interconnections between organizational politics of activists and movements and disruptive actions.

As we listened to one another, we not only began to examine the concepts of order and disorder more closely, but also to hear surprising connections between research projects on very different subjects pursued using very different disciplinary techniques.

Some of the connections we began exploring were thematic. Faculty Fellow **Al Mosley** (Philosophy) shared his work on epidemiological causation and models of disease and health as they cross projects based in psychology, anthropology, biology and philosophy. Several projects by Students Fellows treat epidemiology as a model or metaphor. Another connection developed around the ways states of disorder function.

Reyes Lázaro (Spanish & Portuguese) gave an example as she explained how of the Don Juan—

depictions a quintessential enemy of established order—have been used in Spanish literature to mourn colonialism. **Gillian Kendall** (English) showed how the revels in English Renaissance plays could construct political stability while at the same time revealing the inherent instability and disorder of the human condition. **Jennifer Guglielmo** (History) presented her research on the lives of Italian women who left a world of disorder in their native country at the turn of the last century to come to industrializing America, a world that was in some ways even more intensely disordered. Jennifer's presentation provided insight into the project of **Olivia Cummings**,

whose research concerns the anarchist tenets that guided Emma Goldman and, in her case, obscured racial hierarchy in the United States. In all these literary and historical examples, disorder signifies its seeming opposite, order as a binarism rather than the negation of order.



From top left, clockwise: Gillian Kendall, Lisa Armstrong, and Hannah Leung '09 at their weekly colloquium meeting

But “order” and “disorder” in the sciences means something else entirely, right?

We began to wonder after several weeks of discussion, particularly after the public lecture and group discussion with **Robert Laughlin**, who shared the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physics with Horst Störmer and Daniel Tsui. Laughlin’s talk, based on one of his recent books, *A Different Universe*, unsettled common notions of relations between wholes and parts. For Laughlin, so-called natural laws are “emergent,” bulk phenomena not directly traceable to elementary particles. His visit sparked discussions of determinism and reductionism not only in the sciences, but also in the social sciences and humanities. This suggested further connections.

Michael Albertson and **Debra Boutin**, mathematicians whose specialty is graph theory, described their research on graphs and problems connected with coloring their nodes and edges. We soon realized that a graph is a metaphor for the Festival of Disorder as a whole: our research projects are the nodes, and the edges are the links between them. The edges, naturally, can be colored: red representing thematic connections, blue subject-matter connections, green metaphorical connections, and so on.

Our discussions on all these issues were enriched by **János Pach**, the Smith College Nielson Professor for the fall semester, and one of the world’s leading graph theorists. During the fall semester, we also read and discussed excerpts from twentieth-century French historian

and philosopher Michel Foucault’s book *Power/Knowledge*, a set of essays and interviews in which Foucault interprets the conclusions of his own research on subjects ranging from madness and civilization to hospitals, prisons, schools, families and other organized forms of social life.

We also took the opportunity to explore connections across the campus. In November, we visited the Smith Art Museum to contrast and compare paintings by Cezanne, Monet, and

Vuillard. **Sam Rush** from the Theatre Department joined our final meeting of the semester to lead a discussion of Tom Stoppard’s play *Arcadia*. Because he directed the play in 2005, Sam was able to share an insider’s view not only of the portrayal of order and disorder through the characters and plot, but also to provide a first-hand look at the

decisions and effort required to bring

them to the stage.

We wound up our weekly colloquium sessions during the final disorderly week of classes, but are all looking forward to continuing our research and dialogue in the spring, not only through ongoing conversations in our meetings, but also through visits from distinguished scholars and artists and through special events we will sponsor for the college and the community. From January 27-March 8, we are co-sponsoring a photography exhibit titled *Fact, Construction, & Interpretation* in the Book Arts Gallery on the third level of Neilson Library that features works by Faculty Fellow **Sandra Matthews**, along with works by **Chester Michalik** (a Faculty Fellow in the Kahn’s *Deceit* project) and **Stan Sherer**, a Northampton artist whose work is based on a series of lantern slides by the late **Dorothy Wrinch**, a Smith professor who worked in the fields of crystallography, biochemistry, mathematics, and physics. Organizing Fellow **Marjorie Senechal**, whose Kahn project is related to the book she’s writing about Wrinch, has prepared a companion exhibit displaying the actual lantern slides Sherer used in his photographs along with information about and models of Wrinch’s work. On February 2, we will host a public lecture by MIT professor emeritus **Evelyn Fox Keller**, whose research focuses on the history and philosophy of modern biology on gender and science; her topic will be *The Mirage of Space Between Nature and Nurture*. On February 8, we are co-sponsoring *Being Harry Houdini*, a performance by three of today’s best illusionists that will be part of the Arts Council’s Four Sundays in February program. In April, Native American poet **Joy Harjo** will join us for a public lecture and book signing as well as a colloquium visit to discuss her work. And we plan to wrap up our year with a full-blown Festival of Disorder in late April.



Disorder Fellows at the Kahn Institute during their weekly meeting.



Project Fellows Donna Riley and Olivia Cummings '09 after a recent meeting of the Disorder colloquium.

MID-YEAR PROJECT UPDATE

by Mlada Bukovansky, *Government*
Organizing Fellow

Photos by Jon Crispin



Left to right: Nick Howe, Chester Michalik, Suleiman Mourad and Barbara Kellum at a recent Deceit colloquium meeting

In the first meetings of the *Deceit* Project, Fellows led discussions of selected summer readings. Our conversations began to reveal the contours of the vast social landscape of deception: its definitions, varieties, reasons, and consequences. We probed such varied issues as “artful speech” and the flattery of Roman tyrants; the reasons why hypocrisy is considered a major vice in liberal societies; the unavoidability of duplicity and hypocrisy in complex organizations; the reliability of voting machines and election fraud; the language of transparency in institutional fundraising; the eighteenth-century European conception of identity and the emergence of an “authentic” inner self; and the social and political effects of Marie Antoinette’s fashion choices. The fact that we were in a presidential election year provided us with ample material, so we devoted one of our sessions to discussing varieties of deceit in political campaigns and elections.

As our meetings progressed, we began to identify recurring themes and questions, such as the conditions under which deception may be thought of as wrong and those under which it is justifiable. We considered whether certain modes of expression and communication are less deceptive than others—or whether privileging one mode of communication as less deceptive is itself a delusion. We looked at the art and craft of performance in theater and in political, social, and religious life, and its relation to deceit. And we discussed the history and character of the “self” that is supposed to be authentic and truthful, as well as the underlying problem of how to define deceit and identify its opposite—be it truth, truthfulness, authenticity, sincerity, or something else altogether.

A range of visitors and special events enriched the project and opened up new avenues of exploration. David Shulman, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Lafayette College and author of *From Hire to Liar: The Role of Deception in the Workplace*, gave a lively public lecture based on his book. Rather than concentrating on extreme or notorious cases of deception, Shulman’s lecture focused on the small deceptions that characterize everyday life, such as shirking work, pretending to show deference or appreciation, and covering up transgressions. His public presentation fully engaged the audience, largely because we all could bring a wealth of personal experiences and examples to bear on the subject of everyday deceit. Shulman’s subsequent meeting with the seminar facilitated a deeper discussion of the social functions and consequences of day-to-day deception. Shulman also emphasized that the study of lies and deceit is currently a hot topic, of special interest to publishers—something to inspire project Fellows as they craft their own research.

Shifting gears from workplace lies to the use of computers to analyze the techniques of Renaissance master painters, David Stork, chief scientist at Ricoh Innovations and a consulting professor of electrical engineering at Stanford University, visited in mid-October. He presented his work using optical and computer techniques to assess the validity of David Hockney’s claim that the master painters of the Renaissance used lenses and mirrors to project images of their subjects onto canvas to achieve their stunning realism. Stork’s lecture drew a diverse audience of artists,



Deceit project Fellows (from left) Mlada Bukovansky, Dara Kaye '09, Barbara Kellum, Meredith Byers '10, and Suleiman Mourad



art historians, engineers, and computer scientists as he cheerfully dismantled Hockney's thesis and raised the issue of where we draw the line between "technique" and "cheating"—a question that echoed our earlier discussion of "artful" manipulation of speech, but exploring it in the context of visual media.

As our seminar was meeting amidst a global financial crisis, we took advantage of some local talent to invite **Roisin O'Sullivan** of Smith's department of economics to one of our meetings. Her talk, "The Role of Deceit and Transparency in the Current Financial Crisis," was a huge hit among project Fellows, shedding light on deceit and transparency in mortgage lending, securitization and the role of the secondary mortgage market, rating agencies, and regulation in the financial crisis. The discussion pulled into focus two important themes for the Fellows: how deceit can hide in complexity, and how more information does not always lead to greater transparency.

The project also brought to campus **Judith Hanna**, a renowned dance critic and Senior Research Scholar in the Department of Dance and Affiliate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Maryland. Dr. Hanna gave a public lecture entitled "Dance Communicates: Lies, Truth, and Seduction Fantasy in Adult Entertainment Exotic Dance." Her talk drew a large audience and provoked some heated discussion about dance and sexuality, and also about the moral status of the business of exotic dance, causing some of us to question long-held but unexamined assumptions. We delved into the issue of whether or not dance should be thought of as a language, and our discussion went on from there to challenge the notion that the body is an instrument of the mind. Despite our supposed liberation from Cartesian dualism, the latter assumption tends to lurk within discussions of how the body may be used to deceive.

Our next foray was into the world of photography, another medium that is often thought of as more truthful than other media, but which can be all the more deceptive because of that presumption. Project Fellow **Chester Michalik** presented a show of his photographic series documenting public air shows at Westover

Air Reserve Base in Chicopee and Barnes Air Reserve Base in Westfield, MA. His colleague, Frank Ward, presented a series of photos he took in post-war Bosnia. Their presentations generated discussion of the subject matter of the photos and their common theme of war and militaries, and also of the character of the photographic medium and its often complex and subtle capacity to "spin" and deceive.



Student Fellow Mikaela Mroczynski '09

Also on our busy fall agenda was a visit to the Smith College Art Museum to view a stunning collection of communist Russian propaganda posters from the early revolutionary period. These posters were designed to tear away the "false consciousness" of religious belief among the Russian people and to desecrate the Russian Orthodox Church in the great Soviet experiment in mass secularization by presenting religious figures and icons as instruments of deceit and oppression, often in collusion with representations of capitalism and imperialism. Museum curator **Aprile Gallante** set up a special exhibit of the posters for project Fellows, providing insightful introduction and commentary. Religion Professor **Vera Shevzov** enlightened us about the broader social and political context in which the posters were produced, as well as guiding us in understanding the specific symbols and icons present in the elaborately detailed works, and the background of some of the artists who produced them.

Toward the end of the semester, Project

Fellows began to share their own research. Student Fellow **Mikaela Mroczynski** presented her work on the performer-audience connection, leading the group in some theatrical exercises that got us moving out from behind our desks. **Candice Salyers** of the Dance Department also led us through exercises designed to deepen our discussion of her work exploring and developing the concept of "embodied knowing," in the context of a study of transparency and deceit in dance performance. Many of the project Fellows had a chance to see Professor Salyers perform a solo piece in the faculty dance concert around the time of her seminar presentation. Several student Fellows gave short presentations about how their projects had developed, and in some cases changed, over the course of the semester as a response to the issues and discussions we had engaged in as a working group. **Suleiman Mourad** of the Religion Department gave a fascinating presentation on Muslim activist discourse asserting Islam's exclusive "ownership" of Jerusalem. Professor Mourad inspired us to think deeply about how religious discourse can be used for political purposes, and also about how certain places and symbols come to embody multiple layers of religious significance. Finally, Organizing fellow **Mlada Bukovansky** of the Government Department gave a presentation of her work on hypocrisy as a problem in international relations, exploring the reasons why hypocrisy is inevitable in an environment where agreement on fundamental moral principles is lacking, and raising the question of whether hypocrisy undermines or sustains the legitimacy of international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization.

Overall, it was an extraordinarily stimulating semester. Our group never seemed to be at a loss for words and ideas, and our common theme has proven to be robust and productive of diverse and engaging scholarship. While the varied terrain we roamed perhaps prevented us from nailing down precise definitions of key concepts such as deceit and hypocrisy, truth and sincerity, we look forward to tackling this task and continuing our research and discussions in the coming semester.

2010-2011 LONG-TERM PROJECTS

WHY EDUCATE WOMEN? GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON "EQUAL OPPORTUNITY"

by Susan C. Bourque, *Government &* Rosetta Cohen, *Education & Child Study*, Organizing Fellows

Why educate women? What might appear to be a rhetorical question is, instead, the starting point for our proposed cross cultural examination of women's ongoing struggle to become literate, educated participants in the societies into which they were born. In the United States and abroad, in the 19th century and today, we see the question of women's education as a profoundly interdisciplinary one which draws on history, sociology, economics and religion, and which connects, in fascinating and complex ways, to issues of national identity and culture.

The history of female education in America represents an interesting starting point for tracing changes in cultural attitudes towards women's education, worldwide. In nineteenth-century America, for example, women's education was motivated by the powerful ideology of domestic feminism. Catherine Beecher's "Angel in the House" was a woman who required rigorous intellectual training exclusively for the sake of child-rearing; indeed, women's education was promoted as a way to ensure a protestant, moral space within the home, a far cry from the "equal rights" rationale for educating women that would emerge in the twentieth century. Similarly, as Jill Conway has demonstrated, the decision to employ young single women as primary school teachers in nineteenth-century America was dictated by economic considerations rather than a commitment to expand educational equity.

By 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments demanded a new conceptualization of female access and equality. At that time, arguments about educational parity were largely framed as a movement towards "equal co-education"—towards achieving parity of numbers not only on the playing field, but in calculus and physics classes as well. Since the 1980s, the American movement to return to girls-only education has been linked to the rhetoric of empowerment and a concerted effort to promote female independence and leadership. Single-sex education has experienced a resurgence of popularity in public schools like the Girls Leadership Academy in New York City and in the growing numbers of applications to single sex colleges and private girls' high schools.

In many other countries worldwide, enormous tensions still exist between the economic necessity of educating a broader workforce and the cultural norms and values that resist the idea of female education. Even in highly developed economies like Japan, the philosophical rationale for girls-only colleges is to maintain traditional roles and resist empowerment. Indeed, female education in Japan is often seen as a way to protect culture and teach girls to resist the lure of careerism.

In a number of societies, prejudices against women's education run even deeper. Religious and cultural practices restrict women to the home and to local agriculture. Educational opportunity for women is limited by the belief that literacy leads to sexual freedom and escape from patriarchal control. Despite the increase in women's leadership roles in countries around the globe, resistance to female education is a deep-rooted value. India, for example, embraced the notion of a female head of state many decades ago, and yet in rural parts of the country adolescent girls are prohibited by their families from attending local schools because of a lack of female-only toilet facilities. Class and caste differences continue to differentiate educational and political opportunities. In Africa, where women have also assumed important positions of political leadership and

play critical roles in agricultural production, parents fear the sexual exploitation of their daughters in co-educational settings. Those fears lead to restricted school attendance and limited educational access beyond primary schools.

In recent years, the goal of national political leaders to speed economic development has led them to strengthen the capacities of their human resources. This relatively new shift in attitudes has initiated an expansion of rural education opportunities, including education for girls and challenges to the restrictions on women's access to schooling. Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, has argued in his book *Development as Freedom*, that the single most important investment a nation can make in its future economic development and the well-being of its citizens is the education of women. This rationale for educating women is based on meeting a national need, rather than a claim of equality. Nevertheless, Sen demonstrates that women's access to education enhances their ability to exercise decision-making power in the home and enhance their control of the quality of their lives and those of their children.

These kinds of contradictions and dilemmas will serve as foundational aspects of this year-long Kahn project. The goal of the project will be to invite an interdisciplinary discussion of the rationales offered for efforts to expand, restrict, or redefine educational opportunities for women. We undertake this discussion at a moment when cross-cultural and interdisciplinary discussion will allow us to engage colleagues throughout the world. We will be able to build on the scholarly interests of a wide range of Smith faculty members and the growing network of women's colleges across the globe that are a part of Women's Education Worldwide, a network of women's colleges that encompasses institutional members from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania and, we hope in the near future, from Latin America.

Project Fellows could explore a wide range of interdisciplinary questions: Has increased access to the formal educational system enhanced women's economic, social and political participation? How have women leaders addressed the issue of broader access to educational opportunity? How does religion impact women's education worldwide? What is the psychological impact of single sex education for girls on student performance in particular subjects—both in the US and worldwide? What is the future of women's education and what role can Smith play in its evolution?

This project will be of interest to faculty engaged in research or teaching in the areas such as the history of women's education in the United States and abroad; the study of female "pedagogy", especially in the sciences, engineering and math; studies of gains and gaps in women's basic education worldwide, with a particular focus on literacy in developing countries; immigrant and refugee education; changes in higher education of women in specific countries; the development of government programs and policies to ensure educational opportunities for women; and the function or role of non-government organizations in advancing informal education for women

The organizers hope to conclude the project with a major, culminating event at Smith College, one that brings in teachers and scholars from around the world.

CONCEPTIONS OF MIND

by Nicolas Russell, *French Studies* & Adam Hall, *Biological Sciences*, Organizing Fellows

The question of Mind—what it is and how to define it—is one of the oldest philosophical problems humans have confronted, one that has intrigued researchers in a wide range of disciplines. The relationship between the brain and the mind stands at the very frontier of contemporary science and neuroscience. In the western literary tradition, the mind has been likened to a great range of objects—a forest, a labyrinth, an aviary, a storehouse, a book, a loom, and a mirror. Plato and the Christian philosophers described the mind and consciousness in otherworldly terms, as a reflection of the divine. The mind has long been considered the seat of reason; for many, the faculty that separates humans from all other creatures.

Throughout the twentieth century definitions of mind have continuously been redefined as disciplines including science, psychology and the humanities plumb not only the physiological characteristics of mind, but also the more ineffable aspects of consciousness. Across many fields, the question of “what is mind?” has been answered in radically different ways, but each of those answers has raised additional questions rather than providing a definitive solution to the mind’s mysteries. How then can we know the mind? Does understanding lie in decoding the brain’s relationship to neurons and chemicals? Can the mind be understood by resolving the problem of self-awareness—by discovering the key to our own ability to think about our mind at work? Or can a comprehensive understanding of the mind come only through an examination of the complex and intricate interactions between creativity, reason, emotion, learning and experience?

From a material perspective, the twentieth century promised that “mind” could be understood by reducing it to its simplest components—to neurons and networks of neurons charted and mapped through complex systems of organization. And yet, despite biologists’ success in identifying the chemical components of mind, a material explanation of consciousness still eludes us. Indeed, the problem of consciousness has emerged in the twenty-first century as a serious challenge to the twentieth century reductionist program of biology. Efforts to understand the mind are now directing science into new emergent properties—into a search for “something else” that cannot be fundamentally explained with reference to lower levels of organization.

The assumption that mind and consciousness are the exclusive domain

of humans has been challenged by research in fields as disparate as animal behavior and computer technology. Honda’s new ASIMO computer is designed to read emotions from facial expressions, and to respond with empathetic behaviors. Honda claims that computers like ASIMO will someday assist the elderly and disabled in their homes, proving perhaps better companions than their human counterparts. But ASIMO is merely a version, after all, of the feeling computers of science fiction—the HALs that not only control spacecraft, but that manifest consciousness through the assertion of will and the fear of death.

The two of us approach this question of mind from very different perspectives. One of us has worked on descriptions of mental faculties, especially memory and forgetting, in early modern texts. This work has led more generally to an interest in the great variety of theories and metaphors that have been used to explore and describe the mind throughout the Western tradition. The other has explored the cellular and molecular bases for anesthetic action in the mammalian brain and is therefore interested in neuronal mechanisms that may be critical for consciousness in humans.

In this year-long Kahn project, we would like to consider the many conceptions of mind that exist across disciplines; not only in philosophy of mind, psychology and neuroscience, but also in fields like linguistics, religion, literature, education, computer science and anthropology. By bringing together faculty across broad areas of interest who work on different aspects of mind and consciousness, we can consider how work in one field might impact and illuminate another. What metaphors and models are used in different fields? What different tools do we use to probe the mind? How is the mind shaped by culture and technology? What does it mean that we are drawn to investigating mind in the first place?

Today, as we move from the “decade of the brain” into what many have called “the century of the mind,” these questions are particularly germane. The scientific fields which study consciousness and the mind are at a new frontier—moving closer, perhaps, to those other fields like literature and philosophy that have long grappled with essential questions of consciousness. Ultimately, a complete theory of mind may need to connect radically different methodologies and approaches. This Kahn project is intended to participate in that work.



Far left: Fellows Albert Mosley and Jeannette Quinn '09 AC, at a recent meeting of the Festival of Disorder colloquium; right, Organizing Fellow Mlada Bukovansky leads a meeting of the Deceit colloquium.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

IN PRAISE OF WHAT WE DO

by Rosetta Marantz Cohen, *Education & Child Study*

These are not easy times for the academy. As if the financial meltdown wasn't enough, other forces are conspiring against our precious world of liberal arts colleges, a world of free thought, debate and open inquiry.

First, with the August renewal of the Higher Education Act, came a great wave of concern about college and university "accountability." *The New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* both ran articles describing a movement to institute post-secondary faculty testing-- requiring professors at public universities to pass periodic competency tests of the sort that now dominate and deaden the world of K-12 education.

Then a lead article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that Boeing and other corporations will soon become "a major force for college accountability" when they begin ranking colleges by their graduates' on-the-job success rate. According to the *Chronicle*, a published list will inform the public which colleges "produced workers" who were most productive and valuable. The Boeing model, according to a company spokesman, represents a new way to bring "scientific precision to the job of evaluating college performance."

And then there is the growing press for online education and for computerized courses, those efficient alternatives to the slow, messy process of class discussions and group debate. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the business of online courses is booming, as time-strapped students now log on at any time of the day or night to move through scripted programs that can culminate in a bachelors, masters or even a doctoral degree.

All of this, of course, is very different from what we do at Smith. Working at the Kahn Institute this semester, I've felt more strongly than ever the extraordinary value and importance of liberal arts colleges and all they represent. The interdisciplinary projects at the Kahn offer vivid, clear cut examples for why teaching and learning can't be quantified, scientifically evaluated or duplicated on a computer screen. In the last three months, the two long-term and two short-term projects have brought visiting scholars to campus who have incited debate, challenged, exhilarated and frustrated their packed and attentive audiences. First, an anthropologist who studies strip clubs and "exotic dance" deconstructed and defended a world that some in the audience found repellant. Her talk was followed by frank discussion and dissent. Then a Nobel Prize winning physicist drew dramatically conflicting responses from his lecture, again inspiring a heated follow-up debate. Less controversial speakers elicited no less engagement: A specialist in underwater mapping demonstrated new techniques for documenting images of the ocean floor, and a Stanford scientist tried to debunk claims that Renaissance artists used epidiascopes and other devices to help them convey realistic images on canvas. Three scholars of the Yucatec Mayan language engaged with Smith fellows on the subject of language



Rosetta Cohen, *Interim Director*
Photo by Jon Crispin

revitalization, the recording of traditional oral narrative, and the expansion of Maya and other minority languages into the mass media. Several of our own colleagues visited long term projects to discuss and debate topics ranging from Russian propaganda posters to deceitful banking practices. And then, of course, there were the weekly colloquia where faculty and students presented their own research, ruminated on shared readings, and debriefed after lectures and presentations. Behind the closed doors of the colloquium room each week, we in the Kahn offices could hear the steady hum of voices rising and falling, bursts of laughter and the rapt silence of group thought.

There may come a time when liberal arts education of the kind we have here at Smith disappears; when corporations control curriculum, faculty work from scripts correlated to preset outcomes, and online courses have replaced much of what we do in the classroom. But if someone was looking for a simple object lesson for why that should never happen—for the magnitude of what will be lost—they need only participate in a Kahn project.

Rosetta