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Land acknowledgement

The Program in Museum Studies at New York University acknowledges that it is located on Lenapehoking, ancestral homelands of the Lenape people. We recognize the continued significance of these lands for Lenape nations past and present, we pay our respects to the ancestors as well as to past, present and emerging Lenape leaders. We also want to recognize that New York City has the largest urban Indigenous population in the United States. We believe that addressing structural Indigenous exclusion and erasure is critically important and we are committed to actively working to overcome the ongoing effects and realities of settler-colonialism within the institutions where we currently work.

If you would like to learn more about this project please check the official site http://landacknowledgements.org

A word from the Director

Those of us who have worked in museums know that virtually every job requires flexibility and imagination. Whether two tour groups arrive when one was expected, or a prominent board member decides to prioritize a project that had been relegated to the back burner, museum work demands the ability to rethink plans, to problem solve, and to pivot in a new direction. So meeting the unique challenges of this academic year certainly will develop important attitudes and skills needed for your future career. But more than such general ways of thinking and acting, negotiating life during this pandemic and in our highly charged political environment mirror the logistical and moral issues that all museums must confront at this moment. This year these matters will play an even larger role than usual in our class discussions, as institutions deal with the pandemic’s financial and operational consequences and museums engage community concerns around racial justice, social and economic equity, toxic philanthropy, and the environment. Despite the many difficulties and inconveniences that we face, and our living with so much uncertainty in so many areas, this is an exciting time to study museums and to prepare for a museum career. I welcome our new students to this enterprise, welcome back our second-year class, and wish you all a productive and a safe year.

Bruce Altshuler
Director
Faculty Updates

MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

We are delighted to welcome Clare Bell as our new adjunct faculty to our program. This fall she is teaching Museum Collections and Exhibitions.

Clare Bell is a curator and currently the Senior Director of Exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Bell began her career at the museum where she contributed to shows on the works of Jenny Holzer, Roy Lichtenstein, Ellsworth Kelly, Georg Baselitz, Claes Oldenburg, and African Photographers among others. Following her years as a curator there, she became Chief Curator and Deputy Director at the Museum of the City of New York where she oversaw their vast collections of photography, paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, and costumes as well as their exhibition program. Bell next moved to PaceWildenstein Gallery in New York where she was Director of Exhibitions and responsible for their touring program. Following the death of Roy Lichtenstein in 1997, Bell was invited to join the new Foundation established in his name where she remained for 14 years as their Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions. She returned to the Guggenheim in 2016 where she is responsible for overseeing their exhibition program in New York as well as their international touring program. She is also the primary liaison to the Guggenheim’s affiliates in Venice and Bilbao.

Bell essays and publications include those on Lichtenstein, Al Hirshfeld, Installation Art and variety of other art subjects. She has taught at the School of Visual Arts in New York and has served as an advisor to the juried publication New American Painting. She is on the Arts Advisory Board of the Block Art Museum at Northwestern University in Evanston, Il.
Faculty Updates - Research

Bruce J. Altshuler  
Clinical Professor; Director, Program in Museum Studies

Bruce is continuing his work on the history and theory of exhibitions, Bruce Altshuler has published two essays in the past year. The first, commissioned by The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, “Innovating Sites” was published as the introductory essay in Paula Marincola, ed., Site Read: Seven Curators on their Landmark Exhibitions (Mousse Publishing, 2019). And originally presented in 2018 at the international conference organized by Arte Fiera in Bologna, Italy, his essay “The Art Market and Exhibitions of the Avant-Garde” has been published in Cristina Baldacci, Clarissa Ricci, and Angela Vettese, eds., Double Trouble in Exhibiting the Contemporary: Art Fairs and Shows (Milan: Scalpendi Editore, 2020).

Jane Anderson  
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology and Program in Museum Studies

Jane Anderson has been elected as Vice-Chair for the IEEE P2890 Working Group Recommended Practice for the Provenance for Indigenous Peoples Data.

Jane Anderson and Maui Hudson’s project ENRICH has received catalyst funding from the Minderoo Foundation, an Australian philanthropic organization. ENRICH is focused on Indigenous data rights, digital strategies and transforming institutional and research practices with Indigenous peoples.

ENRICH also joins ‘Future Says’ a project of Minderoo Foundation's Tech Impact Network

Jane Anderson has given numerous public talks on the TK and Biocultural Labels and Indigenous Data Sovereignty with Maui Hudson (University of Waikato) and Stephanie Carroll (Native Nations Institute, University of Arizona) over the summer including with OCLC ORCiD NASA, NASA Citizen Science and the Maskwacis Community College.
Last year some of my research related to Elaine L. Johnson, a curator at The Museum of Modern Art who took the lead on acquisitions and research related to artists from Latin America in an edited volume published in Spain, “Recuperando a Elaine L. Johnson, comisaria entre campos enfrentados en The Museum of Modern Art durante la Guerra Fría,” in Atlántico frío: historias transnacionales del arte y la política en los tiempos del telón de acero, Paula Barreiro-López, ed. (Madrid: Brumaria, 2019). My first artist’s book, Retratos Hablados/Spoken Portraits was published by Mudito & Co. 2020, a press from Barcelona, in English and Spanish. It includes a series of drawings and a bilingual essay. The essay is a campy, mordant, and feminist take on portraits of Spanish royals, aristocrats, and celebrities in relation to the history of royal portraiture and recent political controversies related to the monarchy. In January 2020 I presented a lecture in the Universitat de Barcelona “En un lugar preferente y de honor”: La crisis de la monarquía y el retrato oficial, about the history of royal portraiture in Spain since 1975, the stakes in recent controversies about the institution, and the work of contemporary artists that examine these issues.
Upcoming Events

The Local Museums Lecture Series Organized by Marisa Karyl Franz

Next month (October 12th), the Local Museums Lecture Series will feature Alexis Fleming, Curatorial Associate at the Museum of Food and Drink and an Alumnae of the NYU Program in Museum Studies. Alexis Fleming will join us via Zoom to discuss the upcoming exhibition African/American: Making The Nation's Table that follows the histories of people, food, and culinary knowledge from Africa to America and how this has reshaped the food of the United States.

Science Museum Fridays Organized by Elaine Ayers
Upcoming Events

Science Museum Fridays Organized by Elaine Ayers

DECOLONIZING LIVING COLLECTIONS
FRIDAY 9/18/20
6:00-7:30PM EDT

WAMBUI IPPOLITO
(FOUNDER OF BIPOC HORTICULTURAL WORKING GROUP)

NUALA CAOMHANACH
(NYU / AMNH, CO-CURATOR OF BLACK BOTANY EXHIBITION)

RASHAD BELL
(NYBG, CO-CURATOR OF BLACK BOTANY EXHIBITION)

LAURA BRISCOE  (NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN)

DEPRATOR
(EDUCATOR, NYBG VOLUNTEER, BRONX NATIVE)

CONTACT: ELAINE AYERS
(ELAINE.AYERS@NYU.EDU)
FOR ZOOM LINK OR MORE INFO

SCIENCE MUSEUM FRIDAYS SERIES
HOSTED BY THE NYU PROGRAM IN MUSEUM STUDIES (VIA ZOOM)
Upcoming Events

Grey Gallery
Grey Gallery is currently working on a few exciting public programs, however, none of them are quite ready to announce, so please keep an eye on their calendar, as well as our event page for future details.

Look-Back Virtual Tour of
New York Cool: Painting and Sculpture from the NYU Art Collection
On view at the Grey Art Gallery, New York University, in 2008
Created by and featuring Saga Beus

Enjoy this short narrated tour of the Grey Art Gallery’s exhibition New York Cool, created by Saga Beus, graduate intern at the Grey Art Gallery who received an M.A. in NYU’s Museum Studies Program in May 2020. Using both images of individual works of art and installation shots, she discusses how New York artists, many living downtown in Greenwich Village and, later, SoHo, fostered a new kind of personal sensibility in tandem with a seemingly impersonal geometric style. Allusive instead of expressive, understated rather than declarative, the painting and sculpture of this time set the stage for everything that followed. Closed captions available.

MSSO will be hosting a series of online events throughout the semester. While some are still in the works, check out the upcoming virtual social events below.

**Jackbox of Wine: A Game Night**
- Date: September 25th
- Time: 6-8pm
- Location: Zoom. Please RSVP to join us.
Grab a drink and get ready for a night of games! MSSO invites you for our first virtual hangout of the semester. We hope to connect with you and share in some laughs.

**Pour, Sip and Color: Art Night**
- Date: October 9th
- Time: 6-8pm
- Location: Zoom. Please RSVP to join us.
Come color, relax and unwind alongside your museum studies peers. Join us with your favorite beverage and art medium for a virtual hangout filled with creativity and fun!
Important Information and Deadlines

Maintaining Matriculation for 2 year students: If you are not taking any classes, you must register for Maintenance. Please register for the following: MAINT-GA-4747-001

Full Time Equivalency for 2nd year students: If you need to be listed as full time, please contact Candace Laning (cl134@nyu.edu) and she will update your account.

Important Links
- GSAS Academic Calendar
- Student Guidelines for MA Thesis

September
- 9/15 - Tuition Payments Due
- 9/15 - Last Day to Drop/Add Classes
- 9/22 - Due date for 2nd year students thesis advisor request forms

October
- 10/18 - Graduation Application Due for January 2021 degrees

November
- 11/3 - Election Day
- 11/26, 11/27 - Thanksgiving Recess

December
- TBA - End of the Semester Party
- 12/11 - Last Day of Classes
- 12/15-12/21 - Final Examinations
- 12/22 - Winter Recess Begins
Our Student Organization

Museum Studies Student Organization

The mission of MSSO is to provide resources for the academic, professional, and social development of graduate students in Museum Studies. We strive to foster a dialogue among Museum Studies students and alumni, faculty, and the larger arts and cultural sector in New York City through the events we host at NYU and throughout New York City.

Current MSSO Leadership

President: Sydney Yaeger
VP: Eli Fisher
Social Chair: María Suárez
Professional Chair: Emma Gutman
Alumni Chair: Michela Bridger
Digital Chair: Shenru Chen
Archivist: Melba Pearson
International Student Liaison: Marguerite Talbouret\nAcademic Chair: Jelane Da Silva

CONTACT MSSO BY EMAIL:
msso.nyu@gmail.com
BLOG -
https://nyumuseumstudies.wordpress.com/

Note from the president:

Welcome everyone! To all of the first-year students, I hope that you are adjusting well to NYU and the program and to the second-year students, I hope that you all had a great summer and are ready to take on the new school year! Despite the current circumstances, the MSSO Board remains committed to fostering a community within the Museum Studies Department, and that is why we are planning many exciting and engaging activities for the upcoming semester. Even though our events will be held online for the foreseeable future, we still hope to get to know all of the incoming students and create new experiences for everyone in the department. As the year goes on, remember that MSSO is always here to help! Please reach out to us at msso.nyu@gmail.com with any questions, comments, or feedback. Stay safe and healthy out there and have a great year!
Our Student Organization

Statement of Solidarity

To our NYU Museum Studies peers,

The current and former Museum Studies Student Organization Executive Boards strongly believe that Black Lives Matter. As a cohort, we can no longer remain silent in the wake of the dual pandemics facing our community: anti-Black racism and COVID-19. We stand in solidarity with our peers and other members of our community as they grieve, reflect, and take action in whatever ways they feel fit, now and in the days that follow. We first want to amplify the voices of NYU's Black students by sharing the Statement on Police Terrorism released by the NYU Black Student Union. As an executive team, MSSO acknowledges our role in helping to shape our program and thus our student community into a place that is accepting, supportive, and equitable for all. We want to recognize that our work does not and should not solely include discussions about professional development and student growth. We must instead work to create the community our students need. The Board recognizes that these comments may come too late for some or seem reactionary to others - for that we are sorry, and we commit ourselves to doing better. We recognize the many ways in which our nation's systems disproportionately impact and victimize people of color, especially Black individuals and communities. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, David McAtee, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Atatiana Jefferson, and too many others are horrifying reminders of rampant police brutality and state-sanctioned violence in this country. We acknowledge the ways in which these events intersect with LGBTQIA+ identities and cause harm to people like Tony McDade, Nina Pop, and Iyanna Dior. We also recognize that this country's criminal justice system and lack of accountability and prosecution has led to the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Kalief Browder, Trayvon Martin, and all those whose names we do not know. The widespread racism in the U.S. is a despicable and long-endured reality for Black individuals in our community. We also understand that the global COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected Black communities. According to the CDC, in New York City, death rates amongst Black and Latinx people from COVID-19 are significantly higher than those of other groups.* This is not only a chilling fact, it is also a reminder that our nation's healthcare system is rooted in racism and racist practices. Like so many other systems, healthcare must be reformed to better serve these communities.

We recognize that museums are built on, with, and through systemic racism. Historically, museums have excluded non-white peoples, and their collections were formed from objects which have been taken, looted, and appropriated from those excluded. Museums today continue to fill their galleries with these stolen objects, which are displayed for predominantly white audiences. In addition to the many other structural issues within the field, museum practices and museum labor have historically privileged white voices. The voices of Black artists, scholars, and employees are consistently excluded in conversations within the professional museum community today. As we have heard many times before, museums are not neutral. Neither are universities. As students in NYU's Museum Studies program, we also must identify the ways in which universities - especially private institutions - perpetuate systemic inequality. It is necessary that we ask ourselves, our program, and our current and future colleagues hard questions about our composition, our conversations, and the practices of higher education more broadly. There have been many incredible resources shared in the last week that we would like to share with you all. The Black Lives Matter movement has released an amazing set of resources linked here. Our organization has also compiled a list of materials, many of which are specific to the museum field, which you can access here. Feel free to contribute useful resources that you find through your own experiences by emailing them to msso.nyu@gmail.com. These resources are not meant to be static or used once - please read them, refer to them regularly, and apply what you learn to facilitate change. Finally, we would like to extend a call to action for our NYU Museum Studies peers. MSSO will be hosting a community conversation about these topics this summer. We hope that you will join us to share your thoughts, your feedback, and what you need from MSSO going forward. Please let us know if you are interested in getting more information about this conversation.

We are always available to you, so please do not hesitate to reach out at msso.nyu@gmail.com or submit suggestions for community programming you'd like to see from MSSO.

MSSO Executive Board 2020-2021
MSSO Executive Board 2019-2020


we will be holding programs centered around social justice throughout the year.
Melba Pearson
Archivist
Melba Pearson is a second year Masters of Museum Studies student at NYU interested in collections management, conservation, and art historical research. She completed her BA in History of Art and Architecture at Harvard, magna cum laude, focusing in Renaissance and Baroque studies. Her undergraduate thesis Spaces of Italian Cartography: Art, Science, and Politics in the Vatican Hall of Maps was highlighted at the University of Toronto’s International Art History Symposium in 2018. Melba has completed internships in collections management, conservation, archives, and publishing, and has worked with institutions such as Villa la Pietra (Florence), Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.), and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston). In her free time, Melba enjoys reading, hiking and spending time outdoors, and learning new things.

Eli Fisher
VP
Eli is a second-year student in Museum Studies with a focus on education in science museums. They have worked as an informal science educator and completed an internship at the Met last fall in School and Educator programs, with projects that included creating programming materials for exhibition-related educator events.

Marguerite Talbouret
International Student Liaison
Marguerite is a second-year Museum Studies student, and was born and raised in France. She is interested in Collection Management and Development with a specific focus on the ethical issues appearing with museum closures.

Jelane Da Silva
Academic Chair
Jelane is a second-year MA student in the Museum Studies program. As of recently she has been working as the Exhibitions and Collections Work Scholar at Aperture Foundation, and previously held a position in the herbarium at NYBG. Her academic interests rest with the intersections between art and science.
Meet Our MSSO Leadership

Emma Gutman
Professional Chair
Emma is a part time student in the program, with academic interests in American and German modern and contemporary history and professional interests in exhibition project management, collections management, and registration. She grew up in New Jersey, went to college at Brandeis University in Boston, and now definitely calls New York home. She enjoys exploring the city on foot, fitness, and Ben and Jerry's Phish Food.

María Suárez
Social Chair
María is from Dorado, Puerto Rico. She is a second-year MA student in NYU’s Museum Studies program. Recently, she interned at the Public Programs department American Museum of Natural History and previously held a position at the Education department at the Palmer Museum of Art. She received a B.S. in Biological Anthropology and a minor in Theatre from Pennsylvania State University. Her academic interests rest in museum education and accessibility.

Shenru Chen
Digital Chair
Shen is a second-year Museum Studies student. His research focuses on Chinese presentations in American museums. Shen is also passionate about fashion history, broadway shows and dismantling white supremacy and patriarchy.
On 9 March 2020, New York University announced that it was taking classes remote, and less than two weeks later the entire campus, including our beloved Bobst Library, shut down. While I was relieved that the university was taking the pandemic seriously and acting quickly to flatten the curve, the shut-down posed serious challenges not just to teaching but to research for both me and my students. Professor Ayers’ class, “Science, Art & Invisible Objects in Natural History Museums,” examined how natural history and anatomical collections, from the private Wunderkammern of the early modern period to the AMNH’s award-winning Hall of Biodiversity, have consistently struggled with the politics and poetics of representing objects without names, immaterial materials, and objects that, in fact, never really existed at all. Using things like gravid wombs, cosmic nebulae, rotting flora, spirits, and dinosaurs as our starting points, graduate students from NYU’s Program in Museum Studies and other departments traced the ways in which practitioners have worked to communicate, preserve, make visible, and display elusive objects of wonder and meaning across the arts and sciences. For the class’s final assignments, students could choose to explore the history of one object—from any time period or field—through a “traditional” research paper or through a “creative” project (you can follow #unessay on Twitter for examples of projects from other schools, departments, and classes). Both options required the use of primary sources, and without access to our library, let alone museum or archival collections, they worried about whether they would need to rethink the scope of the class entirely. Below, you can see their final projects.

For my final project, I embarked on a very large quest to represent black holes through embroidery. There are several different ways my project can be read: through the history of embroidery as a necessary domestic skill done largely by women, and through that a commentary on the place women have had in astronomy for centuries; as an educational tool whose purpose is to teach about the gravitational powers of black holes; as a play on the words “fabric of spacetime” and “string theory” (a theoretical study of cosmic “strings” that are capable of unifying the ideas of general relativity and quantum theory). But the main argument that I am making is that the full consequences of an action can only be seen by studying what happens to the matter (physical objects, people, places, events, etc.) surrounding that action, and that those consequences continue to infinity. Black holes are a fantastic representation of this idea because of their nature. They are, by definition, objects whose gravity is so strong that light cannot escape, and are therefore only observable through the study of how matter acts around them. The image of the center of M87 was praised as being the first image of a black hole, but it is actually an image of the gas and dust reacting to the tidal forces of the black hole. This is reflected in the fact that I only embroidered the matter around the black hole, and not the black hole itself. The black holes are represented as geometric shapes to make the strength of their gravitational pull more obvious, with each shape gaining a side until, ad infinitum, you get the image of M87.

Student Projects:
Theme — History of Botany


Ferns are one of the oldest groups of plants on Earth. Fossil records date ferns to the middle of the Devonian, approximately 390 million years ago. Recent divergent theories are suggestive that ferns were alive even earlier. Although most of these early species have since gone extinct, presently the fern is among the most diverse groups of vascular plants. The ancient fern has a lush history of symbolisms. By method of the human language, connotations have been tightly assigned to their existences that have commanded the definitive meanings of ferns. Into the 19th century, the knowledge attached to the history of collecting Nature's objects had been predetermined in the human consciousness. The most curious of objects were treated as novelties, rarities, and wonders, while the more common were ignored. The capture of Nature's novelty objects was the capture for means of human pursuit, or otherwise leisure. Natural history collecting and classifying approached its subjects superficially, by the means of sight. Perhaps this frame of mind was cultivated by Carl Linnaeus's publication, Systema Naturae (1735). To make describing and identifying Nature's objects easier for all, plants and animals were classifiable by a “sexual system” that separated natural bodies based on their apparent physical features. Thus, “information science” was installed and firmly grounded in the latter half of the 18th century. However, the affective epistemologies have revealed to be more than just a system that improved the global movement of scientific data. On the basis of sight, humans were given the opportunities to classify Nature's objects and introduce them to their historicity. This cultural history tempts nonconformity of sympathies and antipathies. The ways in which Nature's objects have been systemized, historicized, and theorized by humans has obscured and spoiled the potential power for humankind to access the deeply rooted values and hear the intrinsic voices of Nature and Nature's objects. (I say “Nature's objects” and “objects of Nature's” because these objects are not humans; they are if anyone's Nature's.) It was a complication beyond simple taxonomies. The attachment of words to Nature's objects transfers into a language of semantics. Historically, in the case of Pteridomania, this was a burden upon the fern's livelihood, inner ontological beings and further removed humanity from the natural world.


In the late nineteenth century, Darwin published the Origins of the Species (1859) and the Descent of Man (1871). It is the evolutionary time for people to have the idea of the process of evolution. Even though Darwin wrote this book in a rational and scientific way to build his theory, the public may use Darwin's theory to construct the racial differences to justify their certain behaviors. We all know that people of color were, and still are conceived to be having a lower status than people with a lighter skin, but this paper is to find out where that idea is coming from. The racial differences lead to a difference of treatments in culture, dominating by the scientifically constructed theories and public opinions. To be more comprehensively analyzed, I will include photographs, as a factual recorder at that time. Because of the peculiarity of the photography, it is normally used as a way to scientifically and objectively construct a cultural notion that people tended to believe. But because of the differences of settings and perspectives of taking these photos, this medium is deliberately used to document or circulate for certain audiences. However, from the expressions of the people in the photos, it is interesting to analyze the emotions and even guess the background stories when taking this photo. This article will focus on the general group of people of color when talking about the Darwinism and social Darwinism, but with major emphasis on the black people. It undoubtedly helps the public to build the conception of race. The social oppression that we often see in the history of nineteenth century originates from both the cultural differences and scientific beliefs.
For my final project I created models of Xerces Blue butterflies (Glaucopsyche xerces) accompanied by a model of a Deerwood (Lotus scoparius) branch. This species of butterfly was native to the coastal dunes of San Francisco and went extinct around 1941-1943. Their extinction was caused by urbanisation and expansive construction to build up the Presidio, a local military base and military housing built during World War II. The Xerces Blue was the first butterfly to have been known to go extinct in the United States due to human causes and has been a symbol of conservation and habitat preservation. I chose to make the Xerces Blue because of its resonance with wildlife conservation and because insects are not seen as charismatic as most highlighted extinct species such as the Dodo Bird or Ground Sloth. For my model I recreated this small iridescent butterfly using goldbeater skin, compressed pastels, compressed iridescent watercolor, sculpey, lace and synthetic hair. The branch the butterflies are feeding and laying eggs on is made out of sculpey and acrylic paint. This type of model, with a more complete and narrative imitation of the natural habitat, could be used in museums as an educational facsimile of the past to make examples of human caused extinction better known. Models are a great alternative to displaying the real extinct specimen because that eliminates the risk of displaying rare specimens under direct or uncontrolled lighting and an unpredictable visitor engagement. Models also make these stories and animals more accessible to museums and audiences that don't have the actual taxidermied specimens available to them. These also include prehistoric creatures that don't have any preserved forms. It is most common to see models of extinct creatures shown in prehistoric and evolutionary exhibits because there is a need to fabricate an unseen history. But I believe models should extend to current and recent extinctions because extinction and habitat destruction is now the most common cause of extinction and species endangerment around the world. Through examples and reconstructions of the past, I believe models can be a huge asset to education and make the effects of humankind's actions more obvious and undeniable. The Xerces Blue butterfly was a victim of time, location, and human needs and wants. Bringing models of extinct species, like my Xerces Blue, into museum spaces will help educate the public on their ecological footprint and make these species more tangible and easier to comprehend as real.
Dandelions draw attention to the forgotten in plain sight. The forgotten being that they were initially brought to the Americas for medicinal purposes from Europe and have since become known as a weed. In my creative project, through a series of unforeseen hurdles of acquiring dandelion specimens, learning the process of cyanotyping, and lack of access to resources I became focused on recording failures that would otherwise become archival silences. By preserving imperfect specimens using a process which distorts perception through shifting shadows, I created unpredictable yet archivally stable prints. My aim is to prove trials and failures are worthy of recording since they are an inevitable part of scientific and artistic practices. After researching both the flower and scientific practices of collection, preservation, and representation, I enacted the historical process of acquiring specimens through correspondence. I chose the process of cyanotype as a means to dialogue with the history of amateurism in photography and to better understand the difficulty of attaining desired results of objective representation. I did this through the use of desiccated, pressed, refrigerated and waxed specimens rather than fresh ones, allowing irregularities of emulation and different kinds of paper to yield a variety of results. Each sample was then attached to an herbarium sheet, logging the collector, location, date, and assumed defects on the verso. This allowed the items to breathe on the white page as artwork while still recording the scientific data, effectively separating art and science within the same object. Collectively, these prints are an archive of the experimental process of cyanotype and the intricacies of individual specimens rather than a hybridized prototypical ideal.
LOOKS LIKE
saffron touched a lemon's jaw
an orange aged, got bashful of its bright and took a
different seat in the theater
plumage of the oriole's chest ate the whole bird the way a
mouth around an egg
and the robes of monks a bruise's last bow and the apricot
and gold how it looks
on a flat page a child's choice for flame phlegm, warning of
a coming sick dusk leaves
the urine of a thirsty man

FEELS LIKE
shitting & burning like a wind-torn flag a harvest a
potent dose
labor graced with a break every hour to purge if the drug
acts with uncommon violence,
the pulse may fall [materia medica, vol. II.]&
that's just how it is
what is the word for the memory of a twice-slayed tree—
slaughter's last stop, then resin let slow like it knows years and
their goings on?
and the word for the duplication
slaughter said said said enough times to come out of a tube

SEE ALSO
a winsor & newton employee found bullets in a batch back
in london, lashing
the pigment to paint
said a back of words, like ruckus supply & demand
this particular batch of pigments had been harvested from a
killing ground
colors are sometimes soaked in blood that's just how it is
what is the word for the memory of a twice-slayed tree—
slaughter's last stop, then resin let slow like it knows years and
their goings on?
and the word for the duplication
slaughter said said said enough times to come out of a tube

FURTHER READING
if we name things their descriptors then we rid ourselves of
nouns,
and if we make adjectives nouns, then we rid ourselves of
adjectives too, and
only in this way can we put all the troublesome things back into
our mouths over and over again,
until we don't have a language for language, and the bullets in
the tree were never your fault,
even
though you've touched everything you've ever named with that
tongue, even though you've
called
a Rembrandt nice, or read a body count to a friend.
The English writer Virginia Wolf states that the future is dark and that darkness is the best thing the future can be. For Wolf darkness has nothing to do with tragic, rather, she’s envisioning darkness as a place of uncertainties, of possibilities. 2 Living in an uncertain world is the best scenario that we could envision for our future. If the future is dark then we are accepting to live in a world that is full of possibilities. Following Wolf, the Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret states in “Fireflies in Uncertain Times”, that the word darkness refers to the “uncertainty that could nurture hope”. 3 Historically the notion of darkness has been associated with the idea of hopelessness, a future that could not be nurtured with desire. Despret invites us to reflect in the absence and presence of light, of possibilities, of imagining small and vulnerable pulsations of significance that could lead us to be engaged with the erratic and unpredictable rhythms of life.

Ursula K. Le Guin proposes us to think in light through darkness, “only in dark the light”. 4 In this way, it is important to define the type of light that matters. I don’t want to reflect on the light in terms of brightness, illumination, or elucidation. For elucidation I will refer in a metaphorical way to the lights described by Pier Paolo Passolini in his article about “The Disappearance of the Fireflies” in Italy, “the blinding glare of the fierce spotlights: spotlights from watchtowers, on political talk shows, in sports stadiums on television screens. As for those strange machines that bump against each other, they’re nothing but the overexposed bodies, with their stereotypes of desire that confront each other in the bright light of sitcoms.” 5 These are the lights that elucidate, that makes things clear. The blinding lights of progress. There is any possibility for a weak light to survive in total brightness. A bright future is a future without possibilities. In this paper, I won’t focus on the lights that make things appear as whole but on the vulnerable, enigmatic, mysterious, undetermined, dim, and fragile lights that activate certain types of curiosities. I am not interested in tracing the lights that make life predictable or understandable. Instead, I am interested in looking for lights that make life uncertain and incomplete. These are the cold lights of bioluminescence, the lights that are capable of creating possibilities, the lights that evoke images, “unimaginable and to be imagined.”

Student Projects: Theme — History of Botany


The English writer Virginia Wolf states that the future is dark and that darkness is the best thing the future can be. For Wolf darkness has nothing to do with tragic, rather, she’s envisioning darkness as a place of uncertainties, of possibilities. 2 Living in an uncertain world is the best scenario that we could envision for our future. If the future is dark then we are accepting to live in a world that is full of possibilities. Following Wolf, the Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret states in “Fireflies in Uncertain Times”, that the word darkness refers to the “uncertainty that could nurture hope”. 3 Historically the notion of darkness has been associated with the idea of hopelessness, a future that could not be nurtured with desire. Despret invites us to reflect in the absence and presence of light, of possibilities, of imagining small and vulnerable pulsations of significance that could lead us to be engaged with the erratic and unpredictable rhythms of life.

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Alumni Updates

Alexis Fleming (Class of 2019)

Alexis is an Associate Curator with the Museum of Food and Drink; exhibiting cultural history through a culinary lense! Her latest endeavors include project managing, publishing MOFAD’s upcoming book and contributing digital content for the recent pivot due to Covid.

Lexi Echelman (Class of 2019)

When not getting immediate paid opportunities due to the pandemic, Lexi took the time to make virtual exhibitions with the Putnam History Museum in Cold Spring, NY as well as one creating a new online exhibition on the New York City Draft Riots of 1863 and why they are relevant today as Americans and New Yorkers. He implemented metadata and created tags that both supplemented cataloguing efforts as well as more streamlined Education programs to locate and interpret digital collections for the public.

NYC Draft Riots: 1863nycdraftriots.omeka.net

Putnam History Museum:
COVID-19 Updates

Testing
- Ongoing testing will begin the week of September 7, primarily within the student residence halls, and will expand campus-wide the week of September 14
- Students will be required to submit a sample every two weeks. NYU will be in contact with students to set up appointments.


Building Access
Access to 240 Greene Street is by appointment only. If you have an appointment to meet with an instructor, you will be buzzed in by staff and must show a green daily screener.

Library Access
- Starting September 2, Bobst and Dibner Libraries will be open for contactless pickup of physical items, classroom use, appointments, and reservable remote learning and study space Monday to Friday, 7:30 am to 9:30 pm. For detailed online and on-site building and service hours, please visit our Hours (opens in a new window) page.

- Entrance to libraries is restricted to NYU cardholders with an appropriate face covering (opens in a new window) and a valid daily COVID-19 screener (opens in a new window). No visitors will be granted access to library buildings.

- Physical library collections are closed to direct access and browsing.

- For more information about accessing physical library collections, please visit the Library Collections Access page. For information about other library locations, including IFA, ISAW, Courant, and Brause, please see the library locations directory.

- For specific questions related to the Museum Studies collections, we recommend contacting the Giana Ricci gr985@nyu.edu

Further Covid Resources
Please refer to NYU Returns for the latest on covid guidelines.