



**S** Syracuse University  
Humanities Center

Year in Review 2022-23  
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## From the Director

Vivian M. May, Ph.D.

Welcome to this look back at our past year in the [Humanities Center](#) (HC). Our annual [Syracuse Symposium](#) themes always resonate across disciplines and cultural moments, but this year's theme— “Repair”—seemed especially fitting. While the University's strategic planning focused on equity and global impact via research and public engagement, and while we collectively confronted climate change, war, economic inequity, and an ongoing public health crisis, our public events series aptly examined historical, political, and social questions of mending and redress.

The humanities are crucial for imagining a more just world and for addressing inequity, largely because they invite difficult dialogues while fostering a sense of community through shared experiences in film, music, fiction, philosophical pursuits, or the visual arts. In the following pages, you'll learn more about this year's faculty and student [Fellows](#)' cutting-edge research; artist Rina Banerjee's use of architecture, geography, philosophy, science, and social justice in her residency as [Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities](#); how the [CNY Humanities Corridor](#) launched collaborative projects across the region and beyond; and how we turned the page on another successful [Books in the Humanities](#) showcase celebrating new works by faculty, staff, and student authors.

Whether as director of the HC and CNY Humanities Corridor, or as co-chair of the [Research and Creative Excellence](#) strategic planning committee, it has been my privilege to advance humanities research and engagement on campus and beyond. We appreciate and thank our collaborators and partners across the College, University, broader Syracuse community, and region. Your questions and feedback are always welcome at [humcenter@syr.edu](mailto:humcenter@syr.edu).

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# The Fabric of our Work

## Laying it all out

Through numerous collaborations and our own signature initiatives, the **Humanities Center** connected campus and community audiences to more than 100 humanities-enriched activities in the 2022-2023 academic year:

- 32 free public [Syracuse Symposium](#) events across [Fall](#) and [Spring](#) semesters;
- 11 opportunities to engage with our [Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor](#), Rina Banerjee;
- 40 [co-sponsored activities](#), ranging from lectures and book talks to workshops, films, exhibits, and performances;
- 28 [CNY Humanities Corridor-supported public activities](#), hosted by Syracuse University organizers.

Schools and Colleges across the University reached out to the HC for funding and promotional support as they took up the humanities to spotlight important issues. We partnered with the School of Education to explore [questions of ecofascism](#). The School of Architecture examined the [pandemic's effects on our justice system](#) and [ecological warfare in Israel](#). The College of Law headlined an interdisciplinary seminar on [voting rights](#). SU Press, SU Libraries, and the D'Aniello Institute for Veteran and Military Families hosted [readings by military veteran writers](#). The Art Museum used sculpture to illuminate [food culture in the Asian diaspora](#). We collaborated with the Office of Research to offer a [day-long writing workshop](#) and “book sprint” opportunities with **Laura Portwood-Stacer**, plus inaugural [Book Manuscript Development awards](#).

We helped humanities faculty and graduate students [find and apply for grants](#), navigate the [changing landscape of academic publishing](#), and [improve writing focus](#), to name just a few of this year's research support and professional development offerings. You will read more about these initiatives and collaborations throughout the pages of this report.

# Co-Sponsorships

## Stronger together

Departments and programs throughout our campus community relied on the HC's inclusive, silo-breaking qualities to collaborate on a range of research initiatives and social justice projects. We supported these groups in 2022-2023:

- The [Syracuse University Human Rights Film Festival](#), the [Center for Global Engagement](#), and [CODE^SHIFT](#) activities, all rooted in the [Newhouse School](#);
- The [School of Architecture](#) and [College of Law's](#) Architecture, Law and Policy Colloquia;
- The [Atrocity Studies lecture](#) and the [Ganders Lecture Series](#) in the [School of Education](#);
- The [South Asia Center](#) and [Geography and the Environment](#) dept. in the [Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs](#);
- Partnerships with [Syracuse University Libraries](#), [Syracuse University Press](#), and the [Office of Research](#);
- Collaborations with [La Casita Cultural Center](#); [SU Art Museum](#); [Urban Video Project](#); [Community Folk Art Center](#); YMCA [Downtown Writers Center](#); [Society for New Music](#);
- Over two dozen humanities activities and events in the [College of Arts & Sciences](#); browse our [online calendar](#) for details.

**68 %** of our year-end survey respondents said their HC-sponsored event involved students and/or interacted with curriculum...

**31 %** of our sponsored partners cited engagement with wider publics beyond the university community...

**22 %** noted participation from beyond the region, including internationally

(Pictured: a [film screening of Nos Tenemos](#) at La Casita)



# REPAIR

## Syracuse Symposium

### Public events series invites reflective exchange

This year's event partners took up our theme of "Repair" by exploring issues of colonialism, reparations, inclusion, environmental, reproductive, and social justice. Campus and community members discussed films, immersed in poetry, and joined workshops on writing, quilting, healing, and activism. Explore the year's complete line-up—and past themes—at the [Syracuse Symposium page of our website](#).





## Fellowships

### Research projects unfurl with HC support

Applications for our faculty fellowships nearly doubled this year over last, creating a particularly competitive pool. Four [Faculty Fellows](#) and two [Dissertation Fellows](#) created brief presentations (viewable at the [Humanities Center's Kaltura channel](#)) and engaged in live discussion about their research during virtual “Meet the Scholars Coffee Hours.”

#### Humanities Center Faculty Fellows

**Luvell Anderson** Associate Professor, Philosophy - Arts & Sciences / “Symposium” Faculty Fellow

[Discourse Under Conditions of Oppression](#)

**Theo Cateforis** Associate Professor, Art and Music Histories - Arts & Sciences Faculty Fellow

[Alternative to What? Mainstreaming the Margins in 1990s Rock](#)

**Tessa Murphy** Associate Professor, History - Maxwell Faculty Fellow

[Slavery in the Age of Abolition](#)

**Dana Olwan** Associate Professor, Women’s and Gender Studies - Arts & Sciences Faculty Fellow

[Unfree Choices: The Politics of Marriage and Divorce in Jordan](#)

#### Humanities Center Dissertation Fellows

**Natalie El Eid** - Ph.D. Candidate, English

[Transnational Druze and Reincarnation: Remembering, Recording, and Reconnecting](#)

**Alexandra O’Connell** - Ph.D. Candidate, English

[Pained Subjects: Self-harm, Shameful Sex, and Communal Relation in the U.S.](#)

Learn more at the [Fellowships page](#) of our website!

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## Public Humanities

Publicly engaged student research projects connect past, present, and future

[Humanities New York](#) supported community-focused graduate student projects across the state through its [Public Humanities Grant](#) program, in partnership with the HC and Corridor. Awarded projects from Syracuse University were:



**Lauren Cooper** (Ph.D. Student, English) “Ecologies of Writing”

Cooper’s youth-focused public writing project was designed to generate humanities-based responses to environment, nature, and place. Local students from the North Side Learning Center, La Casita, and the YWCA’s Girls Inc. participated in writing workshops modeling collective interpretation and expression.



**Jessica Elliott** (Ph.D. Student, History) “A Children’s Story: School Desegregation in Syracuse, NY 1960-1970” cited The Board of Education (1954) as a turning point in the modern Civil Rights Movement, used by many to uphold racist Jim Crow policies and practices. Elliott’s project sought to upend that narrative by illuminating the voices of those who lived through school desegregation in Syracuse, New York from 1960-1970.

Additionally, the Humanities Center routinely partnered with SU’s [Engaged Humanities Network](#) (EHN) to publicize and support EHN’s various public programming, host graduate student networking lunches, and foster other practical applications of humanities research that weave together our communities.



# BOOKS IN THE HUMANITIES ©2022



## Books in the Humanities

### Springtime ritual inspires summer reading

Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual celebration showcased [45 humanities-related © 2022 books](#) by 44 Syracuse University authors and editors, drawing an enthusiastic crowd of celebrants to the Strasser Legacy Room on [May 3](#). Works ranged from scholarly monographs to creative writing, edited collections, and more. A [Research Guide](#) assembled by our partners at [Syracuse University Libraries](#) built upon our expanding digital archive of annual collections. This event was generously supported by the Syracuse University [Office of Research](#) and the [College of Arts and Sciences](#).

Any Syracuse University student, faculty, or staff member releasing a humanities-related book in the current calendar year is encouraged to tell us about it via the [book survey](#) posted at the [FORMS](#) page of our website.





## Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities

Artist Rina Banerjee

“Diaspora, Displacement, and the Science of Art” was the overarching theme for an [ambitious slate](#) of gallery tours, discussions, and workshops focused on the art and philosophies of Indian-born, New York-based scholar, **Rina Banerjee**. Faculty host, **Romita Ray** (Art and Music Histories), worked closely with the team at the [Syracuse University Art Museum](#) and its interim director **Emily Dittman** to orchestrate a semester-long exhibition attracting more than 5,400 spectators. Banerjee’s mini residency concluded with a memorable [Conversation with Gayatri Spivak](#). The [comprehensive effort](#) also

garnered support from the [CNY Humanities Corridor](#) and a grant from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), the first ever received for an SU Art Museum exhibition.

Professor Ray plans to develop a website to archive highlights from Banerjee’s residency. Read more about Rina Banerjee and previous visiting scholars at the [Distinguished Visiting Professors page](#) of our website.

(Pictured: **Joan Bryant** (AAS) with Banerjee)



# Central New York Humanities Corridor

## Expanding humanities research across the region

Since its founding in 2008, this [research consortium linking 11 universities and colleges](#) has grown and evolved to meet the needs of its participants. Self-proposed [Working Groups](#) found new ways to collaborate across institutions and disciplines, using Corridor funding to seed projects, advance their scholarship, and impact communities across the region. Working Group alliances helped those in small departments or in otherwise isolated locales connect with colleagues and resources, thanks to Corridor support. Our [online calendar](#) raised awareness and invited regional, national, and international participation in Corridor activities.



Directors from the Corridor’s founding campuses—Syracuse University, Cornell University, and the University of Rochester—met regularly to assess where resources could best be applied to advance humanities research, sustain project momentum, and create mentoring opportunities across the consortium.

One result of this brainstorming has been the successful [Fall Writing Retreat](#) at the Minnowbrook Conference Center in Blue Mountain Lake, NY—about to enter its fourth year. Our application cycle attracted a [diverse and competitive pool](#) of scholars vying for the time, space, professional coaching, and peer motivation offered by this unique opportunity, primarily aimed at supporting first-generation, LGBTQ+, and/or faculty of color across all ranks.

In addition to the fall writing retreat, directors organized several free workshops open to members from all Corridor institutions: “[Unstuck: Become the Writer You Already Are](#)” with Michelle Boyd; “[Land a Publisher for your Scholarly Book](#)” and “[Write an Outstanding Book Proposal](#)” with Laura Portwood-Stacer.



## CNY Humanities Corridor output and outcomes

Dozens of new and continuing working groups demonstrated how teaming up with colleagues within and beyond home institutions and across disciplines helps sharpen lines of inquiry, with depth and detail not always achievable when working independently. “[Moving Forward](#),” an article by the College of Arts and Sciences, illustrated the tangible, visible results of Corridor support in action.

As one example of exciting innovations taking place throughout the Corridor, a “Signature Event” organized by the [Afro-Latinx, Latin American, Caribbean and Indigenous Performance](#) working group employed a “[microteatro](#)” format to stage outdoor performances by students and faculty from Cornell University, Syracuse University and Onondaga Community College, built on CUSE grant-funded [Language Matters Research Initiatives](#).

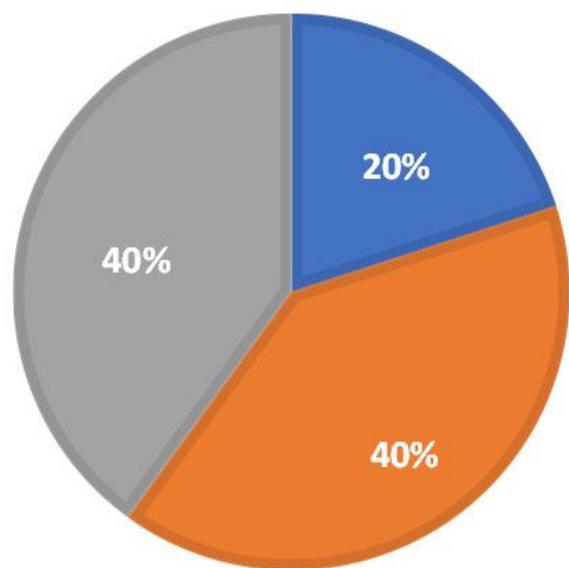
New or continuing groups comprised of collaborators from at least two Corridor institutions and locales are invited to propose activities for the following academic year by an annual deadline in late March. Explore the many [areas of humanities research](#) and collaboration currently supported by Corridor awards.

The Corridor continues to foster research connections far beyond the geographical boundaries of Central New York. We awarded **\$222,135** to **58** active Working Groups (**17** of them new) to support more than **134** activities, including **5** “Signature Events.” Working Groups collaborated with over **244** institutions and organizations across at least **34** states (including DC), **4** Canadian provinces, and **22** countries around the world.

# Budget Overview

## Stretching in all the right ways

Allocating our dollars wisely, we helped faculty, students, and staff connect with experts, colleagues, and spectators from coast to coast and even across oceans through a mix of in-person, virtual, and hybrid modalities. Prioritized investments in professional development workshops and our annual Books in the Humanities showcase demonstrated our committed support for humanities graduate and faculty research at all career stages ... from pre-publication to post-book recognition.



- Research
- Research-related / overhead
- Programming

Through our Syracuse Symposium public events series, Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities initiative, Special Programming and fellowship supports, Humanities Center funding contributed widely to scholarly inquiry across disciplines. Humanities Center awards and publicity shed light on important research taking place on campus, helping others advance their writing projects, forge productive new connections, and widen awareness for notable achievements at Syracuse University.

Our budget breakdown for 2022-2023 (at left) shows 40 percent allocated to Programming, 40 percent allocated to research-related / overhead expenditures, and 20 percent allocated directly to research.

# Advisory Board

## Agendas cover issues of the day

Our advisory board met twice each semester to exchange relevant concerns and ideas and relay useful information back to chairs and colleagues in home departments for broadened engagement and advocacy. Key topics taken up at meetings included navigating the changing landscape of “open access scholarship,” with robust discussion led by SU Libraries’ **Dylan Mohr**; brainstorming ideas to consolidate and disseminate SU’s growing number of humanities research support and public engagement opportunities, with input from Associate Provost **Marcelle Haddix**; and contemplating ways to rectify gaps and disparities in how the institution measures and rewards career achievement in humanities and creative work. As a group, we consistently prioritized issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in campus conversations, with pointed opportunities to do so via the forums, surveys, and town hall meetings of the Provost’s [Strategic Planning](#) campaign.

Additionally, theme ideas for each Symposium originate as board suggestions, with critical discussion and a final vote. This group also provides collective feedback for faculty-proposed [Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor](#) nominees and content for their mini-residencies. Several board volunteers engaged in additional service to award AY24 Faculty and Dissertation Student [Fellowships](#) and to help shape our next [Syracuse Symposium](#) public events series.

We thank this year’s board members for their time and service: Kristen Barnes, Lori Brown, Diane Drake, Kathy Everly, Rachel Fox von Swearingen, Michael Goode, Gerry Greenberg, Eric Grode, Timur Hammond, Ken Harper, Anneka Herre, Kate Holohan, Amy Kallander, Vivian May, Wendy Moy, Brice Nordquist, Tere Paniagua, Srivi Ramasubramanian, Miguel Rodriguez, James Rolling, Jr., Sascha Scott, Danielle Smith, Scott Stevens, James Watts, Sarah Workman, and Joann Yarrow.

Link to individual member profiles via the [People page of our website](#).

## Website | Social Media

News, announcements, and reminders... on-the-go

We take great pride in maintaining [the Humanities Center website](#) as a core resource for faculty, students, and community members seeking stimulating humanities [activities](#) to attend, [opportunities](#) to pursue, and [colleagues](#) to meet. Our [Forms and Funding page](#) outlines eligibility and application cycles for HC fellowships and other supports. Our [Research Support section](#) widens the lens to include humanities resources available across campus, in the community, and nationally.

Our [News](#) page presents a digest of stories generated at Syracuse and elsewhere, with ties to Humanities Center people, projects, and consortia. For example, a new phase of the [Perpetual Peace Project](#) co-organized by **Gregg Lambert** began this fall by introducing a new website to track its ongoing initiatives. We were also delighted to applaud P. Gabrielle Foreman and Robin Wall Kimmerer—past participants in Humanities Center programs—who each received 2022 [MacArthur ‘Genius’ Grants](#) for their respective bodies of work.

Thousands of campus community members received *This Week at the Humanities Center* -- a Monday morning e-blast spotlighting public-facing and curriculum-enhancing programming, invitations to workshops, info sessions, and other opportunities. Our digital communications and brand-compliant social media feeds on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) offered reminders about upcoming application deadlines, recognized successful humanities projects, highlighted SU humanists making news, and provided cross-promotional platforms for our supported partners.



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## Other Voices Add to our Story

### Partners and participants describe projects influenced by HC support

...The HC Faculty Fellowship was critical to the completion of my book...

...we addressed the importance of defending the Humanities as a vital field of study for modern society...

...Sara Safransky focused on the politics of urban redevelopment, with relevance to the future of I-81...

...Our three-part series focused explicitly on helping faculty develop strategies for interdisciplinary research...

...Our guest scholars' focus on 'how to repair civil discourse' led to generative conversations with students...

...Fuson Wang's literary history of vaccination could not have been more timely...

...My fellowship afforded me the time and resources to present my work across diverse forums, appear on a podcast, form writing groups and contribute to an edited volume studying the margins of the Arab world...

...In Q&A with German novelist Manja Präkels, students examined their own experiences of racism...

...Jamie Manson's presentations expanded our knowledge and perspectives on activism...

...Our SU book event was highlighted by the publisher to North American and Spanish audiences...

...This year's programming was all great, from the "Repair" theme to the workshops on book publishing...

...I appreciate the dedication of all HC staff and value its support to faculty of color on our campus...

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## Acknowledgements

The Humanities Center team for AY23:

**Vivian M. May**

*Director, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor; Professor, Women's and Gender Studies*

**Diane C. Drake**

*Assistant Director, Humanities Center*

**Miguel J. Rodriguez**

*Budget Associate, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor*

**Aimee Germain**

*Program Manager, CNY Humanities Corridor (as of March 2023)*

**Shannon Botsford**

*Office Coordinator (July 2022-March 2023)*

### Image credits:

- Stock images appeared in various *This Week at the Humanities Center* e-newsletters throughout the year
- Miscellaneous candid and headshots used courtesy of HC staff, event partners, or SU's PhotoShelter galleries
- Testimonial quotes acquired via feedback surveys and correspondence with project partners and participants
- "Repair" Symposium art developed by GiansantiDesign

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