



## SPRING 2021

### *Letter from the Directors*

Welcome to late Spring 2021! What a difference a year makes. In Spring 2020, the pandemic forced us to cancel the Gensler Family Symposium with the rather prescient title of “Feminist World-Making at the End of the World.” It was still unclear whether the world as we knew it would continue. The U.S. was in a death spiral, ignoring science, undermining the role of the free press, attacking academic knowledge—particularly around naming issues such as “systemic racism” as problems in need of a solution. As we tried to negotiate the political landscape and the pandemic last fall, we realized that we needed to offer our community deep feminist strategies for both survival and carving out a feminist future. That is why we invited Alexis Pauline Gumbs to speak to us about her work in *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* at the 2021 Gensler Symposium on Feminisms in a Global Arena. Gumbs’ work is a series of meditations on marine life, but also Black feminism, queer theory, post-humanism, and the connections between the enslavement of Black people and the killing of so many marine mammals to grease the machinery of racial capitalism. *Undrowned* is also a guide to imagine surviving history, for breathing deeply, for being undrowned as Black women in a world that has

constructed Black people outside of the human project. All of this complex theory and history is written as a highly accessible and poetic series of meditations. Needless to say, Gumbs made the Gensler Symposium a huge success for our community and also allowed those of us who read and listened to Zakiyyah Iman Jackson’s *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Anti-Black World* to connect these two groundbreaking works. Both authors pushed us to think about post-human worlds where Black people are not so much brought into the humanist project as the human no longer structures our lives. Whether it is through alien insect creatures in an Octavia Butler story or hunting blue whales for profit, both these feminist thinkers force us to reflect on what it means to be human and what the world might look like if we moved beyond this question. And finally, what we as feminists trying both to survive and make the world anew, learn when we breathe and reproduce beyond the human.

**Laurie Essig**

*Chair of the Program in Gender, Sexuality,  
and Feminist Studies*

**Karin Hanta**

*Director of the Feminist Resource Center at  
Chellis House*

# 2021 GENSLER SYMPOSIUM: ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS VISITS MIDDLEBURY

By Cat La Roche '21

On April 30, the writer, scholar, poet, and self-described troublemaker Alexis Pauline Gumbs visited Middlebury by way of Zoom for this year's Gensler Symposium. Gumbs discussed her book *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, which draws connections between Black feminist thought and marine mammals such as seals, whales, sharks, and dolphins, asking humans to learn from their aquatic neighbors. Gumbs' book discusses such lessons as how to live together, breathe, hide, and communicate. In her introduction, Dr. Laurie Essig, chair of the GSFS program, described *Undrowned* as "accessible, and at the same time extremely sophisticated and deeply embedded in so many theoretical traditions, from Black feminist thought and queer theory to Afro-futurism all swimming alongside a staunch anti-capitalist critique."

Gumbs opened her talk with a poem and then invited participants to take a series of deep breaths with her. For the main portion of the talk, Gumbs asked attendees to dedicate their participation to someone who moves between worlds—Gumbs devoted her participation to her father, Clyde Gumbs. Next, noting that the page counts of her

two projects—*Undrowned* as well as a new, yet unnamed, text in which she reflects on the constellations of the Carib and Arawak people—are roughly the same, she asked participants to join in an "oracle exercise:" they posed questions that related to their process of moving between worlds, as well as a number between 1 and 174, and Gumbs used the content of the page suggested to read from each manuscript and answer the question posed by that participant.

The presentation was preceded by a reading group sponsored by GSFS and the Feminist Resource Center at Chellis House, which took place the Friday before the talk. GSFS coordinator Victoria Luksch distributed free copies of *Undrowned* to students, faculty, and staff and also sent them out by mail. We convened to discuss themes and ideas from the book, as well as to collectively engage in a few exercises that Gumbs suggests in her book.



ABOVE: Alexis Pauline Gumbs. Photo courtesy of Gumbs's website, alexispauline.com.

# SENIOR WORK PRESENTATIONS IN FEBRUARY

by **Melanie Chow '22**

On February 5, 2021, four seniors in the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Program presented their senior work over zoom. Cat La Roche '21 shared her thesis, "Critiquing Work to Re-Imagine Love: A Feminist Project, Continued." Advised by Professor Hemangini Gupta, her project investigated how love can function in a world dominated by work. Cat focused on the concept of work because she noticed the ultimate privileging of paid labor in our current system. Throughout the pandemic, Cat noticed the ease with which we are willing to forego less economically productive activities such as small gatherings in the home, while still being able to visit stores and restaurants. She also explored the ways in

which "love" is invoked in getting people to work; the extra work that we do because we love other people; and finally, what love could look like in a world where there is no work. Cat explained that critiques of work were a rich space to look at love—as many authors argued for the abolition of work in order to create a more pure form of love that can exist outside of the home. She ultimately argued that a love that has shifted from the

private to the public sphere may be manifested in a politic that is exceedingly generous and includes a basic general income and universal healthcare.

The second presentation, "Police Abolition, the Nonprofit Industrial Complex, and Anti-Violence Activism: Reimagining Gender-Based Violence Work in 2020" by Luna Gizzi '21, evolved during an important moment in 2020. As movements to abolish or defund the police gained national momentum last summer, the status of gender-based violence work was questioned, as it has a tenuous connection to policing. Advised by Professor Laurie Essig, Luna considered the question of how to move toward anti-violence approaches that don't rely on collaborating with the police. Even though many organizations would like to radicalize their approach, their work is often limited by funding restrictions. Luna examined the history of



**Cat La Roche '21.**



**Luna Gizzi '21.**





**Tate Serletti '20.5.**



**Taite Shomo '20.5.**

work to eliminate gender-based violence and highlighted its radical beginnings. She noted that the universalizing strategy used to unify women has failed to recognize class and race as important factors that make certain women more vulnerable.

Advised by Dr. Carly Thomsen and Dr. Laurie Essig, Tate Serletti '20.5 focused on the topic of womb transplants. Entitled "The Movable Womb: Transplants, Technologies, and the Tautology of Sex," Tate's work explored the implications of womb transplants on different bodies and how these procedures move far beyond the act of simply reproducing a child. The media have focused on Jennifer Gobrecht, a woman born without a uterus, who emerged as the epitome of womanhood after receiving a womb transplant. This operation would supposedly allow her to achieve "perfect womanhood," i.e., pregnancy and motherhood. Tate compare the discourse surrounding patients such as Gobrecht to the one surrounding trans women who womb transplants. She highlighted the ways in which the procedure has been framed and entrenched in essentialist understandings of womanhood and further considered how this dynamic might shift if we consider the infertile body as queer.

In her presentation, "Seeing Sapphics: Erotic and Transgressive Potentials in Vienna 2554 and Ann Bannon's Odd Girl Out," Taite Shomo '20.5, a joint GSFS/History of Art and Architecture major, explored "Vienna 2554," a picture bible written for the French royalty in the 13th century. Taite, who was advised by Dr. Laurie Essig and Dr. Eliza Garrison, highlighted a lesbo-erotic image from the bible and connected it to the lesbian pulp fiction novel Odd Girl Out, written by American author Ann Bannon in 1957. Even though both of these representations of homosexuality condemn it as a sin or unnatural, the audiences of each might have found pleasure in these depictions. Taite compared the sets of conflicting beliefs behind these two artifacts, both as they condemn lesbian relationships and offer possibilities for resistance.





# Restorative Justice Pioneer

By Elissa Asch '22.5

From her senior thesis five years ago, to her first published article as a co-author a few months ago, Maddie Orcutt '16 has investigated how restorative justice can be applied to Title IX proceedings. The article, "Restorative Justice Approaches to the Informal Resolution of Student Sexual Misconduct," was published in *The Journal of College and University Law* in June 2020. It lays out three case studies from campuses that are currently using restorative justice processes, explains how a restorative justice model can be implemented in cases of sexual misconduct, and describes current legal considerations as well as possible pitfalls of using this model. Orcutt, who is in her final year of law school at the University of San Diego, was recruited to the project by professor David Karp, whom she met while completing her Middlebury thesis: "Reconsidering the Red Dot: Mapping possibilities for restorative justice." Orcutt explained how she reconnected with Karp in San Diego, "It was kind of funny because at the time I was dating a lovely woman ... and I was giving her a hard time about not reaching out to her academic mentors and idols. We were having this conversation and she said: 'It's so awkward to reach out to people' and I said: 'You're totally confident and capable, you should do it. Why don't you ask them out for coffee?' And then she turned to me and said: 'Well you have this David Karp



**Above: Maddie Orcutt '16**

guy and you could ask him out for coffee and you haven't.' So we both sort of lovingly called each other cowards academically and then both ended up having these really productive meetings." Once she met up with Karp and signed on to the project, Orcutt worked with her co-authors/mentors to pull all of the research together, a task that became all the more difficult when the 2020 Title IX Final Rule came into force in August 2020 and the article required significant updates. "It just took a lot of effort to pull everything together [in the last month], and particularly to go through the 2020 Final Rule because it was—and I'm not kidding— thousands of pages," Orcutt said.

Most college campuses, including Middlebury, have an adjudicative model for their Title IX office, which is very different from a restorative model. As Orcutt describes it, "A restorative justice framing is quite different. In some ways, it's less concerned with the practical details of 'did something happen or not happen' and sussing that out, and it's more concerned with recognizing the end result, which is that somebody has been harmed and somebody is responsible for finding ways to repair that harm." Restorative justice processes can also be more flexible, "There's a lot more space for being responsive to what people need in an actual scenario vs. having this template. I also think there's a really great opportunity for folks' autonomy to shine through and to really

start making decisions that make sense for them about how they need to move forward, rather than some process coming in and presupposing that it knows how to handle that." Orcutt also stressed that some people might really want an adjudicative model, and they should be entitled to that choice. The problem is that the adjudicative model does not make sense for everyone who experiences sexual violence, and there should be other pathways available to them so that they can make the best choice for themselves.

Orcutt, who went through a Title IX proceeding while at Middlebury, is one such person. She proceeded with the adjudication process at Middlebury because it was the only option (and still is), but she says, "For me personally, the process was almost worse than the event itself because it magnified that power differential and it made me feel like I didn't have any voice, although this time institutionally. For me, in my experience, it really replicated a lot of that same harm instead of working to mitigate it." Thinking back, Orcutt wishes she could have chosen a restorative justice model instead, "Why aren't processes occurring in the name of justice asking the people most affected what justice means to them?" Orcutt also addressed the fact that restorative justice must be implemented very intentionally and by people who have the proper training and expertise to facilitate it. If implemented correctly, survivors should feel like they have more agency, instead of feeling further oppressed. Restorative justice processes can look different based on the needs of the survivor, and can even be done through shuttle negotiations, "which is where a trained facilitator goes between the parties [instead] of two people being in the same room face to face." As Orcutt puts it, "As far as I'm concerned,

people that have experienced these things get to be in the driver's seat and can decide whether they want to report it at all, whether they want an adjudicatory process, whether they want to go to court, whether they want something that's restorative." The other positive of a restorative justice program has to do with addressing the culture or structure of a community and its values. "Restorative justice has the capacity not just to say here's what happened in an interaction between two individuals, but to realize the campus community as being an active participant in creating the norms, expectations and structures that can make these behaviors more or less possible. That's an important framing piece—to be able to recognize not only that this is an interaction between two individuals, but something that also maybe implicates a certain department, or a certain program, or a certain house, a certain way that behaviors and norms have been communicated."

Since Orcutt wrote her Middlebury thesis, restorative justice has been implemented successfully at multiple college and university campuses to address Title IX complaints, though it is still a recent development. Orcutt, who interviewed people from some of these universities said that she "was and was not surprised by how well the process was going. I think people overwhelmingly seemed to be really excited about this offering, and claimants and respondents seemed to be having good experiences." Orcutt also pointed out Middlebury's failure to implement restorative justice processes in Title IX, despite years of claiming they are interested in doing so or claiming that it was impossible. "There's part of me that's still stubborn and is like, Middlebury said this wasn't possible and wasn't good back in the day to me and that there was no interest in pursuing this. And to now be able to say I've interviewed schools that are doing this and they're really glad to have this offering, and also, by the way, Middlebury's been saying they're interested in this for a really long time and there have been so many excuses along the way about why it hasn't happened. I've met with so many folks over the years, administrators, even after I left Middlebury. So I don't know that a whole



lot has changed other than that I feel even more strongly now that this is a viable option that people are pursuing, and that there are plenty of models now for places like Middlebury to learn from and lean on." Orcutt also spoke of her frustration with Middlebury's inaction, "You hear people saying "we want to do this thing." But when you've heard "I want to do this thing" for six or seven years like I have, I don't know, at some point somebody just has to decide to do it."

In terms of Orcutt's future, she says that she plans to do legislative or policy oriented legal work that's in the public service realm, "probably not unrelated to these topics in one way or another. They keep resurfacing in my life, I can't get away from them even if I try." She also

emphasized her thanks to the GSFS program, and especially Sujata Moorti and Laurie Essig for "believing in me when these ideas were much less fully formed and much angrier, that was a really valuable and special place and time." Ultimately, Orcutt hopes to be "in a role that allows me to either dream big about the world that I want to live in or help other folks achieve their policy visions."

To read Maddie Orcutt's article, go to:  
<https://jcul.law.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RESTORATIVE-JUSTICE-APPROACHES-TO-THE-INFORMAL-RESOLUTION-OF-STUDENT-SEXUAL-MISCONDUCT-POSTED.pdf>

# White Boy

By Jarlenys Mendez '23

*He's fascinated by my hair  
He likes the way  
My body moves when  
the right songs play  
He like my attitude  
He likes where i come from  
Cuz he's been there a couple  
times  
"The beaches are so cool bro"  
He says  
But he dont know about  
Where I come from  
Where my people come from  
Abuelo was robbed  
At gunpoint in his own home  
My uncle carries around a gun  
When he's there  
My father say he proud to be  
dominican  
But He dont claim the depreci-  
ating poverty line  
Papi buys things local when we  
there  
Cuz its cheap  
Its cheap cuz people need to eat  
My people eat in the city  
In the heights we eat feasts  
Mangu con los tres golpe*

*Y un sancocho  
Que te llevara a la luz  
Cuz our cooking brings us  
A bit closer to god  
A bit closer to home  
A bit closer together  
He say he love my food  
Sometimes I feel sorry  
That his momma seasons  
his food with salt  
I feel sorry that  
Our biggest similarity is in our  
skin tone  
But mine and his dont mean the  
same thing  
Don't carry the same weight  
Don't tell the same story  
Colonizer vs. the colonized  
The colonizer:  
Men from spain  
Seeking a place  
A people  
To cleanse their inner demons  
To make themselves  
Seem more normal  
Seem bigger  
So they planted their  
"Seeds of disease"*

*Growing colorless trees  
Bearing no sweet  
Leaving only my hair texture  
To identify me  
With my people  
So I can walk in a store with-  
out  
getting stares  
Or get stopped by a cop  
Without the fear of getting shot  
But my people can't  
So i feel that pain too  
My mother wanted me to get  
married one day  
To be happy  
So I have said "I do"  
To carrying my culture with me  
Wherever I go  
So that  
When their breath goes hard  
And they grab my shoulder  
Cuz their dicks got hard  
Seeing my hips dancing  
To the right song  
My skin tone won't  
Fool them into thinking  
My body is where their hands  
belong.*

# Jamie Mittelman '10 Keeps Tokyo Torch Aflame

By **Melanie Chow '22**



Above: **Jamie Mittelman '10**

When the pandemic hit, WAGS minor Jamie Mittelman '10, a grad student at the Harvard Kennedy School for Public Policy, turned to podcasting. A former athlete, she wanted to explore the journeys of Tokyo's unsung women\* Olympians & Paralympians and the issues closest to their hearts. The result is the outstanding podcast, "Flame Bearers: The Women Athletes Carrying Tokyo's Torch."

**Melanie Chow:** How did your classes at Middlebury influence your podcast and what you are doing now?

**Jamie Mittelman:** I grew up with a great passion for women's issues, and at Middlebury I institutionalized that knowledge by becoming a gender studies minor. That was the first time in my life where I felt like I was given the academic rigor and understanding to really verbalize certain things. And it also showed me that there was this whole world out there of other people who cared about the same issues I cared about, and allowed me to see professional opportunities to work with women and girls. I would also say, as an international studies major, being able to work with cultures and people from across the world made me realize that experiences for women in the U.S. are very different from experiences for women elsewhere.

**MC:** What are you studying now?

**JM:** I'm a graduate student at the Harvard Kennedy School. I am pursuing a master's degree in public administration.

**MC:** What made you decide to start your podcast?

**JM:** I had been trying to pitch a position to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to go to Tokyo this past summer to support the IOC's efforts elevating women in sport. When COVID hit, I was trying to figure out a way that I could support the women Olympians and Paralympians in a safe and covid-friendly manner: that's when the idea of a podcast came about.



**MC:** Your podcast features a very diverse group of women\*. How do you select the women\* you end up interviewing?

**JM:** In terms of criteria, I look at a whole range of topics—what kind of sport they play, what country they are from. Are they an Olympian or a Paralympian? I also look at race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class. At least thematically, I try to feature women\* who have been the unsung heroes and oftentimes do not get the credit that they deserve. There are a lot of very outspoken well known athletes who come to mind. But there is also a whole class, and millions more athletes who are doing a lot of the work on the ground but don't necessarily get the credit they deserve. When I'm doing my research I try to figure out who the people are that are actually making changes behind the scenes.

**MC:** Have you had a favorite guest or episode?

**JM:** Oh that's so hard. I was a soccer player at Middlebury and really excited to work with Becky Sauerbrunn from the U.S. women's soccer team. All the other athletes are so different and hard to compare—they all have incredible experiences and stories. I really connected with Kimberly Alkemade of the Netherlands. I think she's had a really tough situation and it was really powerful to see how she overcame them.

**MC:** Can you talk a bit more about your experience playing soccer at Middlebury?

**JM:** The older I get, I realize that the ability to play and to be part of a team is a real privilege. To devote a chunk of your day to enjoyment and competition is pretty unique. I don't think I would have realized that while I was a grad student. I was a three sport athlete in high school. Sports have just been a huge part of my life. After you graduate, you get a job and you have to actively mark out that time if you want to play a sport.

**MC:** At Middlebury, it can feel like

there is a divide between student athletes and other students. Was that the case when you were a student here? What was your experience like being part of athletics and the WAGS program?

**JM:** There was definitely a divide, which I think is problematic. This points to an overarching issue: who are the students at Middlebury who will take a gender studies class. When I was at Middlebury there was a social stigma attached to gender studies classes that, in my opinion, is oftentimes permeated within the world of sports.

**MC:** What's been your biggest challenge with the podcast?

**JM:** First of all, the emotional and mental barrier of putting myself out there. I feel very vulnerable. I couldn't hide behind a team because it's my voice. I would also say, learning the language of podcasting. My background was in media and technology, but I had never used a microphone before. I didn't know the the basic setup for what you need to become a podcaster. I felt like I was learning a new language. It was definitely a steep learning curve.

**MC:** Do you have any concrete plans for the future of the podcast, particularly during and



Above: Cover image for Mittelman's podcast

## after the Olympics?

**JM:** My plan is to continue until the games start in July. I am toying with the idea of conceptualizing this podcast as season 1 of a much larger series on sports. I am in conversation with different corporations and nonprofits.

**MC:** I would like to go back to what you said about the stigma surrounding gender studies, particularly in athletics. Could you talk a bit more about that? Have you run into issues around that with the podcast?

**JM:** I actually feel like this podcast is in many ways a Trojan horse in the sense that it is an activist and feminist podcast, but you're able to access and connect with so many more people because it's about our world's best athletes. One of my goals is to engage people who are not necessarily interested in gender studies. The only way to do that is to speak in a language that they can understand. Sports for a lot of people is a good entry point. You have to find the right balance. A big part of me wants to actually bring in more gender studies experts, but also, not every female-identified athlete wants to talk about this topic. I'm trying to make this more about the individual woman\* and what they want to talk about than always having it be about sexism in athletics or pay equity, because there are many other fantastic sides to athletes that they often don't get to talk about

**MC:** How have you been finding ways to promote the podcast specifically to the audiences that you want to reach?

**JM:** In a variety of ways. Through partnerships—nonprofit partners, corporate partners. There's a whole distribution network through Harvard around women's work that I've been using. But then also by connecting with other podcasters. There's a whole community of podcasters that are looking for feedback or sharing opportunities. And then also through social media, my website, brand development that you can amplify with every episode. I have a whole social media kit that everyone who is in the episode is armed with and that they can share across their networks.

I'm reprioritizing my marketing efforts after having been so heads down on the content of the podcast. The other side is actually getting people to listen to it and promoting it. One of my mentors who works at NBC suggested doing 50/50 content creation—marketing.

**MC:** So you mentioned that you like to have your interviews follow what each athlete wants to talk about. Have you ever run into an uncomfortable moment during your interviews?

**JM:** To date, no. But I think that's because the way I approach it is very customized. Before I reach out to every athlete I do substantial research on them. When I approach them, I'm usually pretty well versed in the things that they talk about and the things that they don't talk about. And then I also caveat, you know, this is your interview. Here are a couple areas that we could talk about if you feel comfortable. Half of my podcast is dedicated to Paralympians, i.e., athletes with disabilities. In the beginning, I was a little nervous: Do I address their disability right away? How do you talk about disability? Some athletes actually don't even like to think of themselves as disabled. Honestly, the more just direct you are being like, "Hey, you have dwarfism. I saw you posted about this. Would you like to talk about it, yes or no" people will be more comfortable - because that's their life. I think it's when you don't address it directly that people would get annoyed.

**MC:** Are there any athletes that you really want to reach out to but you've had a hard time getting in touch with? Or particular people you plan to reach out to?

**JM:** I have been trying really hard to get Caster Semenya from South Africa. Caster is the reigning gold



medalist in the 400 and 800 meters. She's from South Africa, and she was actually sued by the International Athletics Federation and is banned from competing in those events because of her hormone levels. She was told she can compete if she undergoes hormone producing therapies, but she decided not to. I've been going back and forth with her manager but these things just take time.

**MC: How are a lot of the athletes feeling about the postponement of the Olympics?**

**JM:** I've spoken with athletes who are scared they're going to be aged out. Some had applied to medical school and postponed for a year, and now they're postponing for another year. They're worried about their bodies because they want to have children, and you know you can't do that if you're a woman and you're trying to go to the Olympics or Paralympics. There's a whole host of issues that come with the postponement that are definitely specific to being a woman.

**MC: Do you have any concluding thoughts?**

**JM:** The Olympics are a time of great hope and unity, and right now with COVID-19, we all are isolated and alone. We need more people that we can look up to, who are true role models of resiliency, and these athletes are doing exactly that.

**MC: Which episodes would you currently recommend?**

**JM:** We started our first bilingual episode with reigning Parapan table tennis champion, Tamara Leonelli. English here: <https://link.chtbl.com/TamiEmail> & Spanish here: <https://link.chtbl.com/TamiChile>. In the spirit of increasing access and broadening our reach in South America, we thought this was important to do. Tami's episode is about her experience with spina bifida and her dreams for the future. Tami had a life expectancy of 18, but he is now 23 years old, the first Chilean table tennis player to win gold at the Parapan American Games, and on her way to Tokyo. Our episode before features US Para Swimmer Sophia Herzog (already in the top 10% of all podcast episodes in the US!). This episode is in partnership with the Women's Sports Foundation spotlighting Team USA's Para Swimmers. Sophia's episode talks about her experience with dwarfism and use of her platform for social good.

**Check out Jamie's podcast at: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/flame-bearers-the-women-athletes-carrying-tokyo-torch/id1526192273>**



# BODILY MODIFICATIONS IN THE *NEW-HALF* COMMUNITY

By Christian Kummer '22

*Christian Kummer '22 entered his essay "Gender Subversion & Queer Spaces in Japan" into the contest for the annual Juana Gamero de Coca Day of Learning on Global Gender and Cultures, which took place during Women's History Month on March 11, 2021 and featured the Chilean feminist performance collective Lastesis, who talked about how art can transform minds and lives. Here is an excerpt from Christian's paper:*

Expanding upon the concept of the performative and working class gei community previously mentioned, the manifestation of the *new-half* community in Japan blurs the lines between drag performance, gender play, and transgender identity. *New-half* ladies are typically understood as men who dress in female clothing or transgender women who have physically altered their bodies through gender reassignment surgery (Mitsuhashi 2006: 204). What is particularly fascinating about the *new-half* community is that it is "situated within commercial businesses like entertainment (as hostesses of bars and clubs), show business (as dancers and performers), and sex services (as sex workers)," (ibid: 204). The *new-half* ladies embody a queer experience that aligns with more conventional notions of what it means to be transgender. While the kabuki and cross-dressing communities that were previously discussed did not explicitly incorporate changes to the physical body, "many *new-half* ladies compete to feminize themselves physically and make themselves more marketable utilizing body-altering high technology," (ibid: 205).

While *new-half* ladies are defined through an element of performance, their gender expression is more aligned with the goal of "passing" as "real" women rather than mocking the gender binary like drag queens who incorporate "being ugly and ridiculous" into their routines (Lunsing 2003: 24). In this sense, the phenomenon of the *new-half* reinforces Butler's heterosexual matrix as it creates a direct linkage between female bodily anatomy and the ability to successfully pass as a woman. Whereas heterosexual men who enjoy cross-dressing are not concerned with the anatomy that is present on their bodies at all times, *new-half* ladies "attempt to gain ideal bodies through permanent hair removal ... enlarging body and breast curves by taking hormones ... undergoing facial cosmetic surgery ... surgical castration, and vaginoplasty," (Mitsuhashi 2006: 205).

Certain *new-half* ladies additionally see themselves as existing in a state of gender fluidity and transcending the male-female binary. Shimada Toshiko, who identifies as *new-half*, notes that "he is neither male nor female," (Lunsing 2003: 27). Toshiko's reasoning for this identity rests upon his simultaneous desires to "engage in what he sees as rough masculine activities, such as riding a motorbike through rough areas, [while also acting] like a delicate woman - travelling by train and eating lady-



like box lunches,” (Toshiko, Lunsing 2003: 27). It is through anecdotes such as that of Toshiko where the *new-half* community strays from cisgender, heterosexual men with an affinity for dressing up as women and instead plays an active role in dismantling modern day notions of needing to identify with one (or any) gender identity.

The *new-half* community itself can be understood as queer through the ways in which individuals modify their bodies to successfully pass as the gender(s) or anatomical sex(es) in which they want to embody. However, the individuals the *new-half* entertain are less conventionally queer than one might assume. In fact, “*new-half* bars serve principally heterosexual men and women costumers,” rather than fellow *new-half* individuals, transgender people, cross-dressers, or even gay men and lesbians (Mitsuhashi 2006: 205). This power dynamic between entertainer and consumer demonstrates a level of exotification that is

placed on the *new-half*. Rather than being able to exist within their gender expression peacefully, the *new-half* are instead placed into a societal role of serving as a spectacle for more-privileged citizens. This notion is not made with the intent of stripping these individuals of their agency, but rather emphasizes the reality that gender-nonconforming individuals are often left with no other choice but to serve as performers and sex workers because they cannot find employment in mainstream society. Additionally, the *new-half* are marked as queer through their gender nonconformance rather than their sexual orientations. In fact, the sexual identities of the *new-half* are typically left in the periphery when attempting to define what it means to be a part of the community. It can therefore be understood that one can be transgender or non-binary while still being attracted to individuals who are not of the same gender/sex as them. While the *new-half* population in and of itself is queer through their deviance from their assigned sex and gender at birth, the people they entertain are far from the stereotypical definition of a queer community.

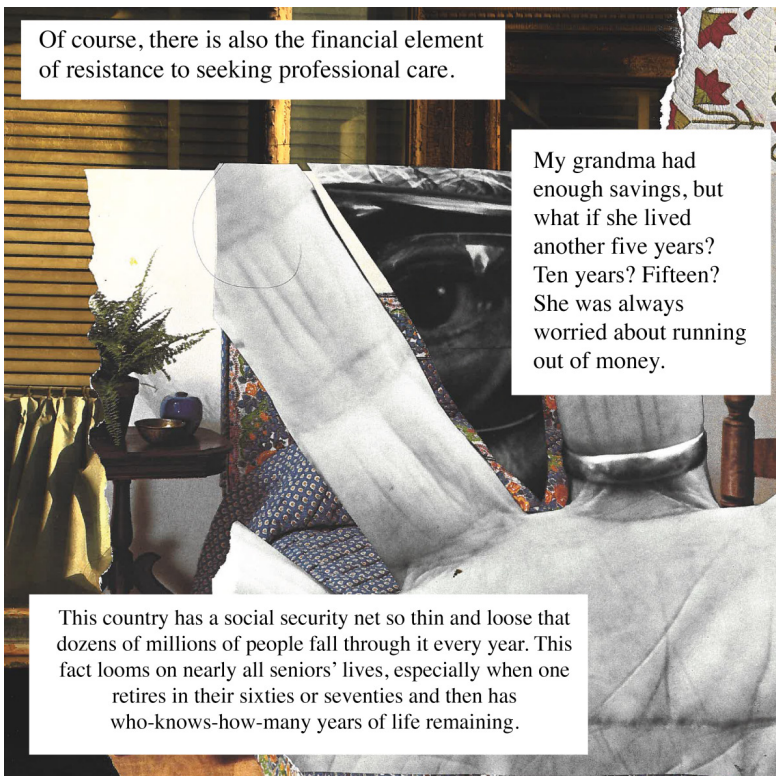


# The 2021 Fraker Prize

Like most of GSFS/Chellis events during the pandemic school year, the 2021 Fraker Prize ceremony took place on zoom on March 8, 2021, International Woman's Day. This year, 27 students were nominated for the award, which is given out to the best paper or project in the field of gender, sexuality, and feminist studies: Elissa

Asch (twice), Adrienne Coslick, Rayn Bumstead (twice), Alyssa Crogan, Regina Fontanelli (for two different projects), Laura Friedrich, Hadjara Gado Alzouma, Luna Gizzi, Harvey Hassan, Sophie Hochman, Erin Kelly, Christian Kummer, Cooper Lamb, Cat La Roche, Gordon Lewis, Sarah Miller, Ryo Nishikubo, Micah Raymond, Megan Salmon, Maia June Sauer, Nigel Shilling, Bel Spelman, Thomas Tarantino, Adriane Will, and Blake Zhou. In view of all the fabulous nominations, the jury had a tough time making a selection, but in the end discerned Megan Salmon's podcast with the prize. Produced for Professor Gupta's class "Feminist Foundations," "Unpacking the Sex Wars" examines and critiques Catharine MacKinnon's anti-pornography feminist arguments through a critical race perspective. The podcast is a re-contextualization of MacKinnon's theories in conversation with the history of criminal characterizations of Black men in the United States and can be found here: <https://www.teachingfeminisms.net/podcasts/unpacking-the-sex-wars>. The podcast is featured on "Teaching Feminisms," a collection of digital tools created by students in GSFS classes and curated by GSFS professors. Cat La Roche received honorable mention for her paper and artistic

project "On Caring for the Elderly, Before and During Covid." Created for Laurie Essig's class "Feminist Engaged Research," the project is a thoughtful reflection on the topic that also led to an Instagram awareness campaign ([https://sites.middlebury.edu/covidcontagioncracksintheframework/on-caring-for-the-elderly-before-and-during-covid/?fbclid=IwAR06igwJqVWEDXu-vzIPKyLTdCIhp7yx95j80M9a\\_DmiyWkyHwajutQYUtk](https://sites.middlebury.edu/covidcontagioncracksintheframework/on-caring-for-the-elderly-before-and-during-covid/?fbclid=IwAR06igwJqVWEDXu-vzIPKyLTdCIhp7yx95j80M9a_DmiyWkyHwajutQYUtk).) These two projects exemplify how intellectual thought, art, and activism can blend effortlessly into an organic whole and engage a wide variety of audiences.



**LEFT: A collage from Cat La Roche's runner-up project, "On Caring for the Elderly, Before and During Covid."**

# MORGAN GRADY- BENSON:

## Read her blog!

by Christian Kummer '22

**Christian Kummer:** I'd love to find out more about you—what you were doing at Middlebury?

**Morgan Grady-Benson:** I was a 2018 GSFS major and went to many Chellis House events. I worked with Karin on "It Happens Here" and did some other anti-sexual assault and racial justice work through Chellis.

**CK:** What have you done since graduating?

**MGB:** When I first graduated, I got an education outreach internship at a small nonprofit magazine, "Yes!," in Seattle, which was a great experience. We created curricula around social justice issues, which is something I never really

thought of as a career path. While I was doing that, I also held several other part time jobs. It was a major hustle. I only worked (haha), but you do what you gotta do. When I first moved here, I worked at a café, a bakery, and at a gym and then also started tutoring and editing for non-profits and other bloggers. Now I work at a food bank, and on the side, I still make coffee, tutor, and edit.

**CK:** Love it.

**MGB:** Yeah, we are living the dream.

**CK:** Tell me more about the food bank.

**MGB:** It's based in a city 20 minutes outside of Seattle. Right now, because of Covid,

all of the policies have changed, and it's in crisis mode. We've got people showing up on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays to pick up food. They can't come inside anymore, so people drive or walk to pick up pre-packaged boxes and bags. We serve ten times as many people as we did before the pandemic, which is staggering. It's repetitive work, because we are making boxes and sorting through vegetables every day. I do a lot of administrative work and grant writing, and I'm also definitely using my body in a big way, which feels important. It just feels good to be working there during this time.

**CK:** Super relevant. Alright! So, what brings us together today—your blog. I'd love to just hear about how you got started with this.

**MGB:** After my junior year in college, I was hospitalized for mental health issues and I started a blog about hospitalization. It was all comedic, and I never really thought I could write like that. But then, once I started, I thought, "Oh wow, I really like to do this, it really feels like the appropriate way to express myself." I found my voice through that blog, but it came to a natural close. When I moved to Seattle, I missed it and started "Read my blog, a blog by Mo." It feels so freeing to write this blog and say whatever I want. It's kind of a stream of consciousness project. I mean, I write it for me, but it seems like other people like it, so that's a good thing too.



**CK:** Oh, absolutely. What do you feel are a few of your most popular entries, or entries that you are proud of?

**MGB:** I don't know if it's necessarily my favorite, but I posted about auditioning for *The Bachelor* in 2019. Just the experience of doing that got a lot of reads, which was awesome. It's really fun for me to read back through the posts because I'm like: "Wow, what was I thinking about? How did my mind go this way?" So, I don't necessarily have favorites. They're all just really different from each other.

**CK:** Do you feel like you are still processing mental health issues, or has it turned into something more? What does it currently mean to you?

**MGB:** That's a good question. It is about processing mental health, but in a more covert way. To me it's more focused on talking about the trials and tribulations of day-to-day life as I see it. Connecting my everyday life to my history. It's an exploration of myself in a way that's not taking myself too seriously. I aim to write like I think, but also to create an exaggerated version of myself. I want the blog to feel like I have a conversation with the reader



Above: Morgan Grady-Benson '18.

as well.

**CK:** Do you feel like you've adopted this "blog persona?" Who is that person?

**MGB:** [Haha] Yes, I do. It's funny because a lot of people read it and either say: "That is so you" or "I don't know who this person is." I definitely think I am beefing up this version of myself, but it's still me, which is fun because I'm learning about myself along the way. There are a lot of people who will read it and say: "I didn't know you were actually funny." (haha) Oh God! Do I come off like dry toast in person?

**CK:** "Well yes I am."

**MGB:** Thank you... I guess?

**CK:** How does GSFS seep into this blog?

**MGB:** I see and analyze my life and the things I find important through the lens of GSFS and social justice. I try to be honest with the way that I think of the world, and the way I view the world is really filtered through things that I've learned in the GSFS program.

**CK:** I'm curious, where do you see the intersections between social justice and comedy?

**MGB:** That's such a good question. I think that some of the most powerful protests can be performed through comedy. It's an uncomfortable and engaging way to take up space or invade social norms. It'll pull people in who don't really know what they are hearing until they've already heard it, and it opens a gateway for understanding. If you are doing justice-based work, you have to find some humor in it, otherwise you're just going to shrivel. That is not to say that issues of injustice are funny or that we should take them lightly. It's more that we need to find some sort of joy in the face of those issues. The world

is dire out there, man. Things are falling apart. We're basically in the apocalypse. Whether it's just talking about your life and your small microcosm of society or you're talking about broader movements, you need humor as a form of rebellion, community-building, and healing.

**CK: How do you feel the pandemic has influenced your writing style or your viewership? How often do you write?**

**MGB:** I love writing, but I go through huge dry spells or periods where I feel like I'm too stressed or too self-conscious to put my thoughts out into the world. That's something I definitely want to work on. I thought that I would make more space for writing during

the pandemic because this seemed like the perfect fuel for writing, but I haven't felt that way so much. I have struggled with my mental health, and that has been a roadblock for me. I wrote a post at the beginning of quarantine about the experience of being in a new relationship in quarantine, so that was very rooted in that time. I've also written about my long unemployment stint, an experience that many have had, and also the new jobs that I got during the pandemic.

**CK: Do you feel like you'll ever take the blog into a different medium or will you stick with writing?**

**MGB:** As in, would I do a podcast or something like that?

**CK: It could be a podcast, a YouTube show. I don't know, the options are endless.**

**MGB:** That's interesting. I definitely would not do a YouTube show because I'm camera shy. I would just really suffer in that medium, but I have been thinking about podcasts. I remember this one time at Middlebury, there was this girl that I had such a huge crush on, and she told me that I had a podcast voice, and I just melted. Now I feel like living off that compliment—that I have a podcast voice.

**CK: You have to start it for her.**

**MGB:** Yeah yeah, for her.

**CK: Yes absolutely, that's so funny.**

**Left: Morgan Grady-Benson '18, as portrayed on her blog.**



**MGB:** I found that writing the blog has given me a lot of solace, a way to process things, a way to be more positive in my life. I think that I am generally a more negative person, and writing in this voice pushes me to see things in a different light. It's probably the thing I like to do the most. I'm hoping I can pivot this into more.

**CK:** Where would this take you?

**MGB:** I've followed a few other bloggers. Have you heard of Samantha Irby?

**CK:** I haven't.

**MGB:** Okay, she wrote this blog called "bitches gotta eat." I read a lot of her blog, and she wrote some books. I find her writing really inspiring because she also grasps at a self-deprecating, humorous voice, which I want to develop myself. So that makes me think that maybe there is a way that I can make this into some kind of career and get published. These are just high-flying ideas but maybe not so high flying.

**CK:** I'm curious to see where this takes you. Do you have a recommendation for our readers?

**MGB:** Okay, there's one that I write about the Swedish Club, which is a place in Seattle. The post's called "Snack on that lutefisk" that readers should just spend some time on. Peruse, you know? I had fun with it. It's weird. I actually didn't think anyone was going to read my blog when I started it because I'm just straight up trash. I purposely made the site look pretty shitty. It matches the ridiculous tone of the writing, which feels important to me. When I say purposefully, I mean mostly purposefully, but I don't have any skills, so it's just both those things at once.

**CK:** Your blog also features edited photos—you as a dolphin, a lemon, or a piece of salmon. Can you talk about that?

**MGB:** In highschool, I was really obsessed with the site "face in a hole." You just take a photo, cut a hole in it, and

you can put whatever photo of your friend in it. Then I decided to bring this back and take ridiculous pictures of myself. The photos are supposed to go along with something that I said in the blog, but sometimes I'll choose a really small piece in the post to highlight in the photo. Not always super predictable, I would say. I don't really edit my blogs at all. That doesn't matter to me so much. The fact that it's not polished adds to the blog and makes it more vulnerable and relatable. The point is for people to see inside my head and hopefully find some kind of connection. If not that, I guess it's just to show people that I am indeed actually funny.

**CK:** Thank you for the interview!

Here is Morgan's blog:  
Read my blog, a blog by Mo  
<https://squidfacemo.wordpress.com/>

For editing and tutoring requests, contact Morgan at:  
[mgradybenson@gmail.com](mailto:mgradybenson@gmail.com)





# BLACK HOLES

By Jarlenys Mendez '23

---

*The pain I feel for you  
Is as much of a rip  
as it is a stitch  
And with each pierce of the stitching needle  
Tendons tear a bit deeper inside me  
Like they pushed in you*

*How could one person fuck you up so bad  
When they're not even here to  
Conduct the symphonies of  
Circles and collisions  
Running through my head*

*U must have jumped me in my sleep  
In the whom  
born with bruises  
And cuts in place of dopamine*

*Your pain raised a fire to mine  
Do you see mine now and light a fire to yours?  
Can I do anything to ease that for you other than  
to  
Make mine disappear  
I was told I could  
move forward for you  
but my mind is stuck  
Trying to stitch itself together,  
Weave my pain into your path away from me  
Do you see me anymore?*

*I see myself in your lingering presence  
You linger in my thoughts  
Drag every hope to a slow pace  
Are you trying to push me forward?  
Is that why you gave me space?*

*The stars in the sky don't*

*have labels on them  
Rather than combing  
Through the stars  
My search is anxious  
consuming  
Raiding the sky for a glimpse  
of the one you sit on  
What type of star  
do you become when your  
alcohol percentage was  
higher than an acetone bottle  
I don't mind the taste it leaves  
on the fingertips  
So could you save me the time  
And Tell me  
Which one to look to?*

*I eat at my time  
Like the ground has  
sunken around  
The feet that  
I have to remind myself to appreciate  
Maybe wiggling my toes in my shoes  
Will distract me from the weight they have to  
carry  
How does DNA carry pain  
Carry psychological burdens  
Catastrophic bruises*

*Nameless black holes in the mind  
If I were to give them your name  
Would you name yours mine?  
I'm sorry that I allow your absence  
to consume everything  
But your shadow is a little too hungry for me  
I don't have enough to fight the  
Crows that lie in your wake*

---

# Towards Sexual Citizenship

By Melanie Chow '22

TW: Sexual violence

On March 18, 2021, the Title IX Office, the Feminist Resource Center at Chellis House, and the Office of Health and Wellness hosted a talk by Jennifer S. Hirsch and Shamus Khan, the authors of the book *Sexual Citizens: Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus* (Norton, 2020).

The event was moderated by Elise Morris '22, an intern at the Civil Rights and Title IX Office, who led the discussion with insightful questions. The talk focused on the question of why sexual assault rates are so high on college campuses.

Morris first asked Hirsch and Khan about what inspired them to write *Sexual Citizens*. Hirsch responded with a moving story. Luci, a student at Columbia University, was raped by Scott, a senior member of a fraternity during a night out early in her freshman year at Columbia. Luci said to Scott, “No, don’t,” to which Scott responded, “It’s okay,” and subsequently pressured her to have sex with him. *Sexual Citizens* is full of such stories, and less clear-cut stories,

about assault on college campuses. After sharing this story, Hirsch says that while our immediate reaction to hearing such a story might be anger at Scott, that anger doesn’t lead us to a solution to curb the prevalence of assault on campus.

Hirsch and Khan decided to take a public health perspective. They started their research by trying to understand the social roots of sexual assault and how the different facets of life on a college campus serve as indicators of the incidence. In their book,



Above: Jennifer S. Hirsch and Shamus Khan

Hirsch and Khan propose three concepts: sexual projects, sexual citizenship, and sexual geographies. Understanding these terms can help define and navigate the culture we find on college campuses and elsewhere. While a sexual project might sound like a strange term, it responds to the question: What is sex for? While “pleasure” might seem an obvious answer, there are many more reasons—a desire for intimacy, for a validation of gender identity, or for social clout, for example. Sexual geography is a term particularly important to consider on college campuses. Ac-

cess to space—whether for parties or for sexual encounters—is highly structured. Sexual geography describes the social networks that create hierarchies of power on college campuses which in turn dictate the physical space that can place vulnerable students at a disadvantage. A housing system that privileges older students serves to reinforce pre-existing power dynamics. Hirsch suggested that first year students should be given the opportunity to live in suites with private spaces instead of consistently being crammed into challenging circumstances upon arrival. Sexual citizenship is what we need to strive for, Hirsch said. To achieve this, “we need to acknowledge that young people have the right to have sex.” Sexual citizenship is something that has been denied to young people for so long, but once we grant them their self-determination, we can help reduce the predictability of sexual assault on college campuses.

To adequately address the problem of sexual assault that we see on college campuses and in our society today, Hirsch and Khan know that bystander interventions such as the “Green Dot” at Middlebury or other consent education programs are simply not enough. While such efforts can help bridge the educational gap on sex ed between students, the myriad factors that affect students cannot be parsed out sufficiently in brief sessions. We need to start a comprehensive sex education with students at a much younger age. If we start sex education in kindergarten by teaching children about their own bodily autonomy and that of others, we can prepare them for many of the encounters they will face in their lifetimes. Children can continue receiving a more nuanced sex education throughout their schooling.

While our rural location and small size makes the conditions at Middlebury quite different from Columbia University, we have a lot to learn from Hirsch and Khan. Incorporating *Sexual Citizens* could be an important step to help students understand the extent of this public health crisis on our own campus and beyond and make efforts to stop it.

“Profoundly eye-opening. . . . Hirsch and Khan present a novel model for explaining and responding to campus sexual assault.”  
—Claire M. Renzetti, *Science*

# SEXUAL CITIZENS

*Sex, Power, and  
Assault on Campus*

JENNIFER S. HIRSCH  
and SHAMUS KHAN





# IN MEMORIAM

## ART GENSLER JR. (1935-2021)



**Above: Art Gensler with Laurie Essig, Chair of the Program in Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, at Chellis House in March 2018 for the memorial event for his late wife Drue Gensler**

Our wonderful donor Art Gensler Jr. passed away on May 10, 2021. We are all very sad at GSFS/Chellis House, but cherish the memories of our moments with Art and his wife, the late Drue Gensler. Countless students in our program have benefitted from Art and Drue's generosity through internship and senior work stipends and travel grants. Each year, we host the Gensler Symposium on Feminisms in a Global Arena and award the Gensler Prize for best senior work. Art and Drue also endowed the Fraker Prize for best class work on a topic related to gender, sexuality, and feminist studies during a semester. Our program and the Feminist Resource Center at Chellis House would not have flourished without their support.

An architect and astute businessman, Art propelled a small practice, M. Arthur Gensler Jr. & Associates—which he co-founded with his wife Drue and partner James Follett—into the largest firm in the industry. With Gensler Inc., a global firm with offices in 48 cities in 16 countries, Art is widely credited with creating the blueprint for how many professional services firms organize and manage themselves today. Art's 65-year career as an architect is a remarkable story. His gift to the firm was not a vision for what it could be, but rather an ethos that allowed it to grow and prosper against all odds. That ethos was distinguished by a belief in collaboration, support of design education and career advancement, respect for individuals, dedication





**Above: Art with his granddaughter Aaron Gensler '08 at the memorial event for Drue**

to clients, and endorsement of sustainable design. His belief in the collaborative nature of architecture is best expressed in the Shanghai Tower, China's tallest, and the world's second tallest building. Art recognized that there was simply no way a building of such size, complexity, and significance could be built without a collaborative spirit and a global team comprising local and global talent.

Art embodied core values of mutual trust, respect, empathy, and team spirit and nurtured a collaborative culture that continues today. Through his work, leadership, and efforts to advance the profession, Art touched the lives of thousands of people and communities.

We were fortunate to get to know Art a little better when he—together with granddaughters Aaron '08 and Mamie, daughter-in-law Kinzie and son Doug—came to visit us for a memorial event celebrating the legacy of his late wife Drue. His warm and witty nature touched everybody who attended the event. Art will be sorely missed in our community!



**Above: Shanghai Tower, the tallest building in China, designed by Gensler**





**ABOVE:** Valerie Gutierrez '21, Meg Farley '24, Jarlenys Mendez '23, Rayn Bumstead '21, and Cat La Roche '21.

# THE 2021 FEMINIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Our last event of the year took place in person. All masked up and socially distanced, the nominees for the Feminist of the Year awards congregated in the beautiful backyard of Chellis House on May 7, 2021. In spite of this being a school year with mostly remote classes, students, staff, and faculty members still were able to give expression to their feminist activism. The following colleagues were nominated in the staff category: Diane DeBella, Assistant Director of the Writing Center; Janae Due, Assistant Director of the Anderson Freeman Center; GSFS coordinator Victoria Luksch; Renee Wells, Director of Education for Equity and Inclusion; and Sara Lohnes Watulak, Director of Digital Pedagogy and Media. In the faculty category Ellery Foutch, Assistant Professor in the American Studies Department;

Lana Povitz, Visiting Assistant Professor in the History Program; and Catharine Wright, Associate Professor in Writing and Rhetoric/GSFS were nominated. Students Destini Armstrong '21, Emma Bernstein '21.5, Kamli Faour '21, Meg Farley '24, Megan Job '21, Abi Judge '21, Cat La Roche '21, and Matt Martignoni '21 also received nominations.

The jury decided to award this year's staff prize to Diane De Bella, a long-time friend of Chellis House (she initiated the lunchtime walking project in 2018) and committed feminist advocate for students who seek to improve their writing and find their voices at Middlebury and beyond. Students describe Diane as holistic in her approach to their work as well as culturally responsive to their particular educational and





**ABOVE: 2021 Staff Feminist of the Year  
Diane De Bella.**

linguistic backgrounds and goals. In their sessions with Diane, students also learn to explore and empower their political voices. Diane juggles not only several roles in Middlebury's Writing Center, but also teaches feminist rhetoric online for University of Colorado at Boulder, and maintains a feminist blog, "I am Subject," an extension of the successful two-book project: *I am Subject Stories* (<https://www.iamsubject.com/>).

Ellery Foutch garnered the award in the faculty category. In her scholarship and many American Studies courses, Ellery brings an anti-racist feminist lens to material culture in the U.S. Her work ranges from interrogating traditional museum displays of humans and animals to celebrating artists who creatively and politically reframe topics such as hair. Her courses examine constructions of gender, race, class, dis/ability and sexuality in relation to notions of the American home and most recently, representations of American bodies and the vulnerabilities of certain bodies to systems of power. Ellery also engages in and writes about social justice and feminist pedagogy, and employs a universal design framework in her teaching, as evident in her article that talks about inviting students to recreate and reconceptualize historical tableaux vivants (<https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol2/iss2/3/>). As a public intellectual, Ellery has also maintained

a close collaboration with the local Henry Sheldon Museum, encouraging her students to mine the museum's archives for their academic projects. Just last January, she gave a zoom talk for the museum, "Forget Me Not: Memorial Practices in 19th Century Vermont."

The jury decided to award the prize to all of the student nominees this year. Six of them have worked in close collaboration in pairs: Destini Armstrong and Megan Job started the podcast *BLCKGRLMGC* in their first year, which explores the everyday life as



**ABOVE: Hemangini Gupta, Diane De Bella, Catharine Wright, Janae Due, and Emma Bernstein '21.5.**



a Black student at a majority-white college. Last year, they started thinking about adapting the idea to a Middlebury Alternative Break Program format. They originally wanted to visit other elite predominantly white institutions and meet with other affinity groups of women of color to discuss their experiences in those environments. When the pandemic hit, they chose to adapt their trip and turn it into a meaningful project where the participants were asked to read several books and gather remotely to build connections with each other grounded in listening to each other, taking care of themselves and one another, and critically examining their experience at their colleges. Across the distances, all those involved found solidarity as womxn of color.

Emma Bernstein and Abi Judge have served as presidents of Feminist Action at Middlebury for the past year. In weekly meetings, they created a space to discuss feminist issues and continued the club's collaboration with Planned Parenthood. They also made FAM an intergenerational space, connecting with the Bad Old Posse, a

group of women in their 60s and 70s who had abortions at a time when it was considered illegal. As a finale, they hosted an event on reproductive justice with former Middlebury students Morgane Richardson and Liz Bueno along with reproductive justice advocate Dorcas Davis, broadening the debate from reproductive rights to reproductive justice.

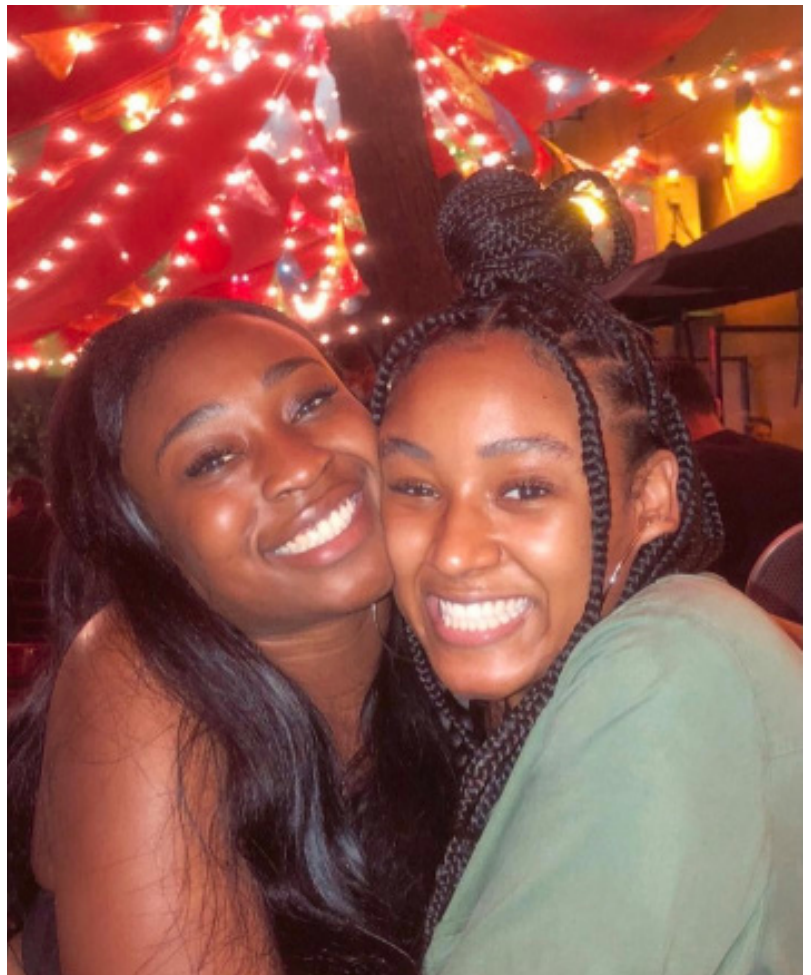
Kamli Faour and Matt Martignoni served as the co-presidents of Students for Justice in Palestine and have consistently created an organization that focuses on the most marginalized because only when the most marginalized are free, will we all be free. Additionally, they conducted group meetings and discussions that center the experiences of Palestinians. In addition, Matt has worked for Chellis House for three years, always giving a global input into our programming

Meg Farley is a first-year senator and an openly non-binary person at Middlebury. Their involvement in student government as a visible queer person is radical in and of itself. Meg is constantly approaching issues in the SGA that



**ABOVE: Faculty Feminist of the Year Ellery Foutch.**

**RIGHT: Student Feminists of the Year Megan Job '21 and Destiny Armstrong '21.**





benefit marginalized students, such as gender inclusive bathrooms. They are fighter for change and will be integral to Middlebury's progress over the next few years. Meg has been working with the trans community to combat the recent events of anti-trans sentiment on campus and is actively involved in environmental justice on campus and approaches their work through the lenses of race and class.

Cat La Roche has been instrumental in the Teaching Feminisms project, an online curation of student work that explains key concepts in feminist and queer theory. She has therefore shown an

unflagging commitment to feminist principles of access and public. A Chellis House worker for the past four years, Cat has designed library displays on inclusive pedagogy and lent her artistic talents to designing the newsletter, a memorial exhibition on our late donor Drue Gensler, and countless posters. Academically, Cat has written a wonderful thesis on gendered labor in care work. Again, she channeled her intellectual questioning into an impactful Instagram campaign.

A big thank you goes out to all the nominees for their hard work on making this world a better place!



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:**  
Student Feminists of the Year Meg Farley '24, Emma Bernstein '21.5, Matt Martignoni '21.5, Kamli Faour '21, Abi Judge '21, and Cat La Roche '21.