

THE INTERCOLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES NEWSLETTER

The latest news, updates and announcements

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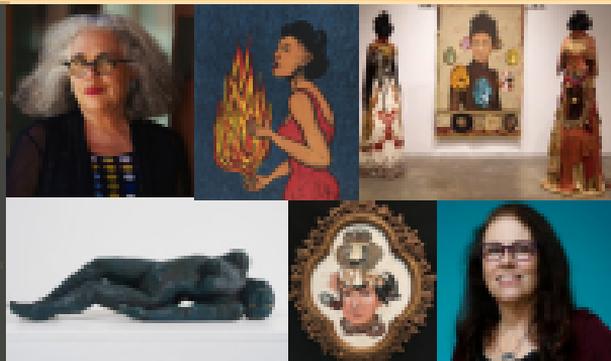
*The Intercollegiate
Department of Africana
Studies*



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www.collegeschwarz.com/aficana-studies/



Event Spotlight

34th Sojourner Truth Lecture:

Alison Saar & Lesley Saar

Sister Speak

Alison Saar and Lesley Saar are mixed-media artists, who have exhibited nationally and internationally. Their work addresses issues of identity, race, gender and spirit. Lesley spoke about her most recent projects, the methods and reasons for particular pieces and her sources of inspiration, both familial and societal, that continue to drive her creativity and innovation. Alison, a Scripps alum, talked about how she represents Black history, as well as the vulnerability and strength of Black communities, through her different pieces.

Pictured above are the sisters and some of the pieces they spoke about. Featured top left is Alison Saar, her Sifted sculpture (bottom left) and her Torch painting (top middle). Featured bottom right is Lesley Saar, her Vassa painting (bottom middle) and pieces from her show: A Conjuring of Conjurers (top right).

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What kind of jobs/fields are our alums involved in?

FILM/MEDIA:

"After graduating, I did an internship with two orgs from Sep-December. The first was against FGM/C in the US & the other was a Asylum Advocacy Service Organization for asylum seekers in the DMV area. It's not my long term plan – but just wanted to use this time to let myself be used in issues/communities I've always wanted to serve directly. My long term is to be a writer in fiction & screenplay) and a film director."
– Elidnand Ismail, Scripps '20

EDUCATION:

"I'm currently an Assistant Professor in Community Psychology at the University of Virginia. I went directly from Pomona to graduate school and got a PhD in Education & Psychology at University of Michigan."
– Seanna Leath, Pomona '09

"I am currently a 2nd year History PhD Student at Emory University in Atlanta"
– Alec Pugh, Pitzer '19

"Currently I'm working in education as a substitute teacher for St. Louis Public Schools."
(Long-term aspirations involve law/advocacy work)
– Simone Wolynski, Scripps '20

"I'm currently working as an educational consultant and college advisor to international students seeking to attend private high schools and universities in the United States and the U.K."
– Dray Denson, Pomona '20

WRITING:

"I'm pursuing a career as a speculative fiction writer at the moment. My emphasis is on telling Afrocentric and African-centric, and Pan-African stories, with the aim of positively influencing culture through art. As of last year, I got signed to the African Literary Agency as a speculative fiction writer, I haven't published anything through them just yet, but I'm hoping to within the coming years."
– Akotowaa Ofori, Pomona '20

ARTS:

"Currently, I'm working as a customer service rep at a company called Conduent doing tech support and serving as the assistant producer at a non-profit theatre company. My plans for the future are to get my real estate license in the next couple of months, complete my arts management masters and start an initiative to help children/young adults explore creative career paths."
– Ryan Finely, Scripps '20

HEALTHCARE:

"I am working as a Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC) for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York"
– Megan Lockhart, Scripps '20

NON-PROFIT WORK:

"I am currently working at a nonprofit organization as a case manager."
– Collins Mbugua, Pomona '17

Alumni Feature

Nikaya Manley CMC '19



Why did you major in Africana Studies?

My freshman year at CMC was pretty miserable and I simply wanted to be around more Black people. I craved a sense of community at the time and also couldn't bare the Government classes I was taking (my other major). So, I signed up for Intro to Africana with Professor Soliman and never looked back.

What are your career goals?

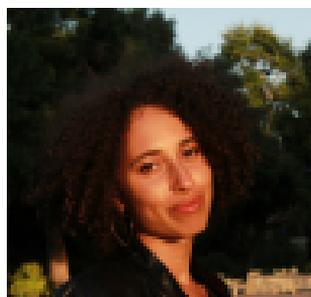
I want work in education/with educators to transform (decolonize) k-12 curriculum. I'm not entirely sure what that looks like for me just yet, but I try to stay involved in education initiatives here in NYC outside of my day job. Another dream is to be a screenwriter and hopefully produce my own tv pilot one day.

What was the most life changing or interesting thing that you've learned in an Africana class?

Some of the most interesting/life changing concepts I learned was related to Afro-pessimism and black social death (during Prof Soliman's Africana Political Theory class). I grappled extensively with these theoretical concepts in my senior thesis, thinking about what it takes for Black people to achieve social life (if possible at all).

The most transformative class I took was an Africana healing narratives/literature course with Prof. Valorie Thomas. I forgot the exact name of the course but I remember I was going through a lot at the time and this was the only class that didn't feel like a strain to attend. Black life and healing was the priority in the classroom and a lot of what we touched/discussed felt deeply personal and I think actually helped facilitate some of my own healing.

Zemia Edmondson PO '20



What have you been up to since graduating?

I just started working as a development assistant at Hot Sauce Productions, which is Samantha Taylor Pickett and Joy Bryant's new production company. And I am also pursuing screenwriting opportunities on the side.

Why did you major in Africana Studies?

The energy and depth of Africana Studies courses matched with the feeling of being displaced in other disciplines (I thought I wanted to be a PPA, then history major, but I didn't connect with the professors or feel particularly supported). I chose to major because I knew I'd have the best experience surrounded and taught by black people. Another benefit is the interdisciplinary nature of the major — as someone with myriad passions, Africana offered the flexibility of pursuing all that I loved. I was able to write a TV pilot for my Afrofuturist series, something I couldn't even have conceived of when I started my undergrad.

What sort of skills do you think you gained through Africana courses?

Discernment. Majoring in Africana meant having to unlearn most of what I thought was true and how approach ideas rooted in hegemony). True critical thinking. Self-care. I learned how to write with my own voice, collaborate, and creative ways to express myself intellectually.

Any professors or courses that you recommend?

Yes! I'd always recommend Prof. Soliman, who championed the major and is another reason I decided to major, as well as Profs. Laura Harris, Val Thomas, and Darryl Smith. All of their courses resoundingly changed my life and my perspective.

Student Features

Poetry with Ryan Collins PO '22

what/oh/what

coils of hair thrashing
bright skies behind metal giants
crowded streets and solemn faces

breath trapped behind masks
warming and filling as it goes
cool air whips its work asunder

ringing my hands in one another
catching the eye of Strangers
what, oh what has this world come
to?



An Ode to Zephyrus

The wind twirls around me
Pulling me / keeping me away
My feet planted on the ground
The leaves on the trees dance
Dance a subtle inviting dance

There's soul in the wind
A Blackness that refuses to be thinned
subtlety / ambiguity / mystery / longing
I wish I could be like the wind
Light as a feather flying / flying high
Above human trivialities / not wanting to cry
Because of the weight the world places
On bold / beautiful / tragic / defying Blackness
A Blackness that refuses to be thinned
I wish I could be like the wind



Student Perspectives

Interview with Oluyemisi Bolonduro PO '23



Oluyemisi is 2nd year and her research interests involve Nigerian parenting systems and understanding how the influence of tribes and colonization on racism affects people's cultural connections.

What interests you about the Africana major?

It is nice to learn about Blackness and anti-Blackness in primarily Black spaces. Also, the field emphasizes how Blackness is global and not just restricted to one part of the world. Another thing is the emphasis on community service. It's surprising to see an aspect of higher education that encourages community outside of academia.

What has been your favorite class or professor?

Professor Soliman's Intro to Africana Studies sequence has done a lot to fill gaps of knowledge. I know the history behind things I experience on a daily basis and the truth behind stories I was told during K-12. Also, this year's cohort is fun and it's nice having a sense of community despite the virtual classroom.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Solutions, features and/or public radio journalism are the most ideal things at the moment. I want to be in an environment where meaningful discussions about race are encouraged. For example, I think it would be cool to work with NPR's Code Switch because of how they talk about race. I'll be happy as long as I'm writing and regularly interacting with people!

Upcoming Events

March 2021

all featured times are in PST

*The Claremont Consortium's
Black and Brown*

Fri. 19th 2021 Women of
& Color
Sat. 20th Conference

For more information:
<http://theyard.com/WBC2021/index.html>

CMC Care Center

**The
P.E.E.R
Conference**
**Sat.
20th
9:45am**

For more information:
<https://per.cmc.edu>

HMC OI D

**Wed.
24th
6:30pm** Challenging
Complicity in
anti-Blackness

<https://www.google.com/events/d/6/1F74PQL2d7N-g92dn-8k8k226-8k8k226/1F74PQL2d7N-g92dn-8k8k226-8k8k226>

OBSA

**Order Black
Graduation
Packages!**
**Tues.
30th**

ALWAYS REGISTER FOR GRADUATION PACKAGES!
<https://bit.ly/2021BLACKGRAD>

Please contact the organizations associated with each event, for more information!

Email Marie Tano PO '21 at mtaa2017@pomona.edu if you are interested in being featured in the next issue of the Newsletter.