Aesthetic Education: A South-North Dialogue

The JHI is a collaborative research partner in a major shared project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Our partner in this project is the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. The project began in 2016-17 and will be active for the next three years. It will fund conferences, workshops and exchanges of faculty and graduate students engaged in Humanities Research between Toronto and Capetown. One of the endeavours of this project was featured in The ArtSci Effect report for 2016-2017. (Story by Diana Kuprel, photos by Sonia Norris)


Truth and Reconciliation in Elephantland

In the hot, arid, dust-storm-swept Karoo region of South Africa lies Barrydale, a culturally diverse town of English- and Afrikaans-speaking residents with a large expat community. The town still shows traces of apartheid, when it was divided to separate whites from non-whites, many of whom are direct descendants of the Indigenous Khoisan tribe. Over the hill is Smitsville, one of countless former townships where non-whites were forcibly displaced and segregated—out of sight, out of mind—during apartheid. Twenty-three years after South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the horrors of colonialism and its legacy persist in this region—a fact that is brought home sharply on the drive from the airport to Cape Town, which winds through a veritable sea of shantytowns stretching as far as the eye can see.

It was here, in 2010, that the founders of the Handspring Puppet Company—Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones, the inventors of the critically acclaimed War Horse—began a seven-year project to bring puppetry to the disadvantaged. Committing funding from their Handspring projects and in collaboration with the Barrydale community and the University of the Western Cape, they conducted intensive puppetry workshops with emerging artists.

They then took the annual Barrydale Parade—held on December 16, South Africa’s National Day of Reconciliation—and, together with hundreds of members of the community of all generations, created a veritable multilingual visual extravaganza that investigates slavery and other incendiary topics through the medium of object performance. In the process, Kohl and Jones nurtured the first Black South African puppet company, the Ukwanda Design and Puppetry Collective.

For the 2016 production, the artists decided to explore the Khoisan community’s ancestral connection to the land and animals, including the issue of land stewardship raised by game farms and tourist safaris. After spending weeks at Addo Elephant Park closely observing the animals’ behaviour, they constructed five life-size elephant puppets, and explored how to animate them as they developed a script in rehearsal. They titled the production Olifantland, based on a Lawrence Anthony book, Elephant Whisperer, a real-life account of a conservationist who adopted a herd of ‘rogue’ elephants.

Premesh Lalu, Director of the Centre for Humanities Research marches in the Barrydale Parade

In the lead up to the production of Olifantland, Sonia Norris, a Toronto-based theatre artist and PhD candidate at U of T’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, arrived to work as an assistant director. She had been invited by the director, Aja Marneweck, a Cape Town puppetry artist and artistic director of Paper Body Collective, to share her knowledge of clown and physical comedy with the performers through developing comic characters in rehearsal.

Norris was there as part of a four-year collaborative venture between U of T’s Jackman Humanities Institute and the University of the Western Cape’s Centre for Humanities Research on the topic Aesthetic Education: A South-North Dialogue, which was made possible by a philanthropic grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
Upcoming Conference: The Literature Section of Aesthetic Education: A South-North Dialogue presents

LITERATURE PEDAGOGY AND DECOLONIZATION: A WORKSHOP INVOLVING THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

16-18 NOVEMBER 2017 (PLEASE NOTE MULTIPLE VENUES)

This event is free and open to all. Registration is not required.

CO-SPONSORED BY THE CENTRE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH, UWC

Thursday November 16 – Victoria College Room 212
4 – 4:30 Welcome: Neil ten Kortenaar (UofT)
4:30 – 5:45 Why Read?
Lannie Birch (UWC) “Some thoughts on reading English literature (closely or widely) at the University of the Western Cape”
Sinethemba Bizela (UWC) “Spectres of Fanon? Reflections of the student-tutor on the Discourse of ‘Fallism’ and Decolonization in the English Studies Context”
Julie Nxadi (UWC) “Bilingual Writing: A Story of Conflict and Resolution”

Friday November 17 – Victoria College a.m. / JHB p.m.
9 - 10:15 History of English Studies – Victoria College, Alumni Hall
Heather Murray (UofT) “The Discipline in Formation and (Reform)-ation: The Contradictory Impulses of “English” in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada”
Kate Highman (UWC) “English Studies in South African Universities: A Regional History of the Discipline”
10:30 – 11:45 Affect in the Classroom – Victoria College, Alumni Hall
Chair: Anna Shternshis (UofT)
Scott Rayter (UofT) “Pedagogy and Affect: Aesthetic Interventions and Learning”
Dina Georgis (UofT) “Lessons from the Ignorant School Master”
Suzanne Akbari (UofT) “Reading Out Loud: Performing Affect, Forming Readers.”
12 – 1 Lunch
1 – 2:15 Others in the Classroom – Jackman Humanities Room 100
Chair: Paul Downes (UofT)
Melissa Gniadek (UofT) “Teaching America Now”
Corinne Beauquis (UofT) “Meeting the other in Francophone Literatures”
Sindiwe Magona (UofT) “Decolonisation: The Imperative vs the Images”
2:30 – 3:45 Teaching the Ecological Crisis – Jackman Humanities Room 100
Chair: Alan Ackerman (UofT)
Andrea Most (UofT) “Beyond Books: Immersive Literary Encounters in and out of the Classroom”
Alan Bewell (UofT) “Decolonizing Nature.”
Nehna Singh (UWC) “Reading The Hungry Tide: Reflections on the Ecological Crisis”
4 – 5:15 Keynote – Jackman Humanities Building Room 100
David Palumbo-Liu (Stanford) “Worlding the University”

Saturday November 18 – Jackman Humanities Building Rm 100
9 – 10:15 Nature of Assignments
Chair: Neil ten Kortenaar
Katie Larson (UofT) “Creative Approaches to Critical Writing”
Eva-Lynn Jagoe (UofT) “Experiments in Collective Critical Writing in the Neoliberal University”
Larry Switzky (UofT) “Spatial Role-Playing and the Pedagogy of the (Still) Oppressed”
10:30 – 12 New Canons and Old
Chair: Suzanne Akbari
Alex Gillespie (UofT) “White nationalism and premodern literary studies”
Uzo Esonwanne (UofT) “Reading Shakespeare Today”
Kira Schmidt (UWC) “Globalisation in a Kaleidoscope of Literature: Picaresque Writing in Ilija Trojanow’s Postcolonial Literary Work”
12 – 1 Lunch
1 – 2:15 Making Room for Other Perspectives
Chair: Michael Wessels (UWC)
Karina Vernon (UofT) “The Shifting Ground of CanLit: Black Scholarship and the Remaking of Canadian Institutional Literary Culture”
Blanche Assam (UWC) “Perspectives for Literature in the Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in South Africa”
Simone Davis (UofT) “Contraband – Passing Gifts in and Beyond the Prison Classroom”
2:30 – 3:45 Indigeneity
Chair: Neil ten Kortenaar
Cheryl Suzack (UofT) “Historicizing Indigenous Dispossession through Literature”
Ashley Morford (UofT) “Whose Land Are We On? Moving Beyond the Token Land Acknowledgement Statement”
4 – 5:15 Critique in the classroom
Chair: Lannie Birch
John Noyes (UofT) “What is critique and what is it doing in the literature classroom?”
Rebecca Comay (UofT) “Critique and Power: Antinomies of Academic Freedom”
Sasha Welsh (UWC) “Creative Writing and Critical Theory: The Novel as Decolonization Pedagogy”
Peter Kohler (UWC) “Schooldays”
5:15 Response in Closing
Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education

This symposium will bring together teachers of literature from the University of Toronto and the University of the Western Cape in South Africa to discuss questions of pedagogy raised by the present moment.

In 2015 a student protest movement arose in South Africa demanding that Rhodes Must Fall, that the statue of Cecil Rhodes be removed from the campus of the University of Cape Town. That movement became more far-reaching in its demands for decolonization of the curriculum and greater access to education. In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Report has made us aware of the injustice that lies at the heart of Canadian society and calls us all to action. As teachers of literature this is a call to re-examine our understanding of ourselves and what we do in the classroom. But this is also a moment characterized by the corporatization of the university, as the humanities appear to be under threat not only from above but also from below by forces that do not appreciate the values of critical distance and alternative imaginings that literature and its study foster. Teachers of literature from South Africa and Canada have many things in common—the forces we are responding to are global in nature—but we will learn best by listening to each other’s local stories and personal experience.
Karen Redrobe to present the Annual R.K. Teetzel Lecture in Art, Animation and the Contemporary Art of War, and a Workshop on The Woman Auteur

Karen Redrobe (formerly Beckman) is chair of the department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of Vanishing Women: Magic, Film and Feminism (Duke UP, 2003); Crash: Cinema and the Politics of Speed and Stasis (Duke UP, 2010), and is now working on a new book, Undead: Animation and the Contemporary Art of War. She has co-edited two volumes: Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography with Jean Ma (Duke UP, September 2008) and On Writing With Photography (Minnesota UP, 2013) with Liliane Weissberg, and is also the editor of Animating Film Theory (Duke UP, 2014), which explores the history of film theory’s engagement (and lack of it) with animation. Her articles address a range of subjects, including the evolving role of film theory in the 21st century, war and the academy, violence and media, community media, animation theory, feminism and terrorism, death penalty photography, the relationship between cinema and contemporary art, and cinematic tempo. Her workshop at the JHI, The Woman Auteur, on Monday 20 November from 4-6 pm, is now fully booked with a waitlist; the lecture, The Art of War, on Tuesday 21 November at 4:30 p.m. is free and open to all, with seats available on a first-come, first-served basis in University College Room 140.

Call Now Live:
Faculty Supervisors for the May 2018 Scholars-in-Residence

The JHI provides research support for UofT faculty (research and teaching streams) working in the humanities and interpretive social sciences. Participating faculty members select teams of five exceptional upper-year undergraduate researchers from a variety of academic disciplines and backgrounds. Students will spend the month of May 2018 living in residence, working on faculty research projects and participating in extra-curricular activities. Faculty members who participate for the first time are awarded $7,500 to support the time commitment involved in planning research projects and training undergraduate researchers. In addition to 20 hours per week of RA work (per student), faculty are encouraged to share their experiences and strategies with colleagues, and are provided with a knowledge base for building UR into SSHRC and other external grant proposals.

Deadline for Applications: 22 November 2017
Information and Application available here: https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/funding/id=6138

For more information, please contact Program Coordinator, Dr. Ira Wells at ira.wells@utoronto.ca

JHI is on social media! Follow us for all the latest fun

Twitter: @JIHevents
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JackmanHumanitiesInstitute/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jackman_humanities_institute/

Like the newsletter? We are developing a new listserv so that you can subscribe directly. If you want to be on the list, please send the email address that you want to use to JHI Associate Director Kim Yates at jhi.associate@utoronto.ca

We hope to see the new listserv in action for the December issue.

JHI Newsletters are available online: https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/JHI_newsletter

Curious about what the Fellows are up to? Follow the weekly Humanities at Large blog: https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/JHI_Blog
Upcoming Events (a selection)
Please see the JHI website events calendar for location and registration information.

For all events, see
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_year

3 November 2017, 4:00—6:00 p.m.
The Historical Experiences of Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial War in Taiwan
Lecture by Kae Kitamura, Hokkaido University
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3202

6 November 2017, 2:00—4:00 p.m.
State Capture and the Politics of ‘Elite Populism’
Lecture by Ivor Chipkin, U. Witswatersrand and U. Cape Town
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3258

8 November 2017, 3:00—5:00 p.m.
Mme. de Graffigny and the Eighteenth-century Post Office
Lecture by David Smith, U. Toronto (emeritus, French)
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3294

9 November 2017, 4:00—6:00 p.m. (UTM)
Digital & Mixed Reality Performance
Lecture & discussion by Jennifer Buckley, U. Iowa
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3208

10 November 2017, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
An Unlocatable Foreign: Narratives of Prisoners for Genocide Ideology in the New Rwanda
Work in Progress by Mark Antony Geraghty, JHI postdoctoral fellow
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3273

16 November 2017, 5:00—7:00 p.m. (RSVP requested)
The Sea: A Listener’s Odyssey
Northrop Frye Centre Lecture by Josiah Blackmore, Harvard U
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3254

17 November 2017, 3:30—5:00 p.m.
Sir Francis Willughby’s Lutebook
Workshop with John Edwards, Musicians in Ordinary
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3263

20 November—9 December (UTM)
Infrastructures and Aesthetics of Mutual Aid
Exhibition of art / performances
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3046

30 November, 4:00-6:00 p.m.
The Cross, The Medici, and the Jews
Lecture by Gianni Cicali, Georgetown U.
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3138

JHI Competition Deadlines
For funding competitions that are currently accepting applications, please see:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/funding

Scholars-in-Residence Faculty Supervisors (May 2018)
Deadline: 22 November 2017
Application is now live
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/funding/id=6138

Scholars-in-Residence student participants (May 2018)
Deadline: 8 February 2018 (date TBC)
For general information about Scholars-in-Residence, see:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/SIR

JHI Graduate Fellowships, 2018-2019
“Reading Faces, Reading Minds
15 March 2018
For information about graduate fellowships, please see:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/Fellowships#graduate

JHI Program for the Arts (events in 2018-2019)
“Reading Faces, Reading Minds
Deadline: 20 March 2018
For this year’s awards:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/announce_ProgArts_17-18

JHI Undergraduate Fellowships, 2018-2019
“Reading Faces, Reading Minds”
Deadline: 5 April 2018
For information about Undergraduate Fellowships:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/Fellowships#undergraduate

JHI Working Groups, 2018-2019
Deadline: 15 May 2018
For program information and this year’s groups, see:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/WorkingGroups

JHI Faculty Research Fellowships, 2019-2020
“Strange Weather” (12-month only)
Deadline: 14 September 2018
For information about Faculty Research Fellowships, please see:
https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/fellowships

Calls for applications for each of these competitions will be posted to the JHI website in the coming weeks. The normal application period is the 4-6 weeks before the deadline.

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