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Landscapes of  
Slavery,  
Landscapes of  
Freedom

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The African Diaspora  
and the  
American Built  
Environment

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HARVARD GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN

NOVEMBER 5–7  
2021



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This forum brings together scholars whose research investigates the relationship between the African diaspora, Afro-descendants, and the built environment of North America and the Caribbean from a variety of lenses that are specific to the scholars' fields of inquiry. The goal is to begin to expand the field of landscape history by taking into consideration questions that are not always deemed central to the practice of design, if design is understood as an activity that has featured—in the historical narratives—the presence of an author-designer, a client, and a variety of tools the former has used to communicate ideas about form, materials and use, to the latter.

By its very cross-disciplinary nature and topical organization, this forum questions a traditional mode of history writing that is based both on the description of linear developments and on the exclusive use of archival and written sources. Instead it argues for a relational historiography that considers what methods and what traces—written, spoken, or material, and whether found on the land's surface or below—may allow us to tell the story of the Black North American and Caribbean landscape of enslaved people, maroons and freemen. Without arguing for the obliteration of what is already known about the landscape of plantations and the settlements of early America, essays presented at this symposium will ultimately produce a landscape history that, paraphrasing Édouard Glissant, is latent, open, multicultural in intention, and directly in contact with everything possible.

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# Landscapes of Slavery, Landscapes of Freedom: The African Diaspora and the American Built Environment

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5

6 PM

Welcome remarks by Anita Berrizbeitia,  
Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture

Introduction by Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto,  
Conference Chair

6:10 – 7:30 PM

Keynote Address by Michael Twitty  
*Beyond 'Slave Food': Re-Organizing the Perceptions  
and Potential of African American Foodways*

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6

10 – 10:20 AM

Introduction by Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto

10:20 – 11:50 AM

Panel Discussion 1, moderated by Jarvis McInnis

*Hoeing, Harvesting, Healing & Hexing: The Earth and its Cultivation as Tools of Resistance to Enslavement*

Anne Bouie

*Forgotten Witnesses: Exploring Archaeological Sites of Labor at a Presidential Plantation*

James French and Matthew Reeves

11:50 AM – 1:30 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 – 3 PM

Panel Discussion 2, moderated by Matthew Mulcahy

*Nowhere and Everywhere: The Archaeological Footprint of Afro-Descendants on the Urban Landscape of 16th-Century Spanish Hispaniola*

Pauline Martha Kulstad-González

*The Plantation Cityscape: Slave Labor as a Circulatory System in the Urbanization of Colonial New Orleans*

Nicholas Paskert

3 – 3:30 PM

BREAK

3:30 – 5 PM

Panel Discussion 3, moderated by Jennifer Anderson

*“The Fences Have Flown”: Unsettling Enclosure in Narratives of Black Spatial Practice*

Elleza Kelley

*Landscape, Memory, and the History of Slavery in Mississippi*

Max Grivno

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7

10 – 11:30 AM

Panel Discussion 4, moderated by Andrea Mosterman

*Muted Place and Free Settlement Icons*

Everett Fly

*Working Freedom: Black Farmers and Industrious  
Landscapes in Maryland, 1866–1880*

Melissa Blair

11:30 AM – 1 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1 – 3 PM

Panel Discussion 5, moderated by Sara Zewde

*Toward a Black Historical Ecology of the Atlantic World*

Justin Dunnivant

*Beneath the Surfaces of Historical Landscapes:  
Archaeology, African and Indigenous Diasporic Commu-  
nities, and the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and  
North Carolina*

Daniel Sayers

*Living Freedom in the Maroon Landscape:*

*An Ecological Way of Life*

Diane Jones Allen

3 – 3:15 PM

Closing Remarks by Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto

All times are listed in United States Eastern Standard Time (EST)

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CONFERENCE CHAIR

**Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto** is a landscape historian, critic, and part-time lecturer at the GSD. Her approach to landscape history is guided by the belief that world-wide relations across spatial and temporal scales are best discerned and studied through an accumulation of commonplaces. Dr. Fabiani Giannetto is also an independent scholar and, when not in the classroom, she reads and writes about the productive landscape, early modern Atlantic history, and the roots of Western society's progressive alienation from the natural world.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Michael W. Twitty** is a living history interpreter, culinary historian, and food writer personally charged with teaching, documenting, and preserving the African American culinary traditions of the historic South and its connections with the wider African Atlantic world as well as parent traditions in Africa. He blogs at Afroculinaria.com. He's appeared on *Bizarre Foods America* with Andrew Zimmern, *Many Rivers to Cross* with Henry Louis Gates, and most recently *Taste the Nation* with *Top Chefs* Padma Lakshmi and a special guest appearance in Michelle Obama's Waffles and Mochi show on Netflix. HarperCollins released Twitty's *The Cooking Gene*, in 2017, tracing his ancestry through food from West and Central Africa to America and from slavery to freedom. *The Cooking Gene* won the 2018 James Beard Award for best writing as well as the book of the year, making him the first Black author so awarded. His piece on visiting Ghana in *Bon Appetit* was included in Best Food Writing in 2019 and was nominated for a 2019 James Beard Award. Twitty's next book, *Rice* with UNC press, is currently fresh off the presses. *Kosher soul*, about his culinary journey as a Jew of African descent, will be out in 2022 through HarperCollins. He was most recently named a National Geographic Explorer in 2021.

PANELISTS

**Diane Jones Allen**, D. Eng., PLA, FASLA is Program Director and Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Texas, Arlington. She is Principal Landscape Architect with DesignJones LLC which received the 2016 American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Community Service Award. She participated on the 2017 ASLA Blue Ribbon Panel on Climate Change. Diane serves on the board of the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) as vice president of education for the 2021 year. Diane is author of *Lost in the Transit Desert: Race Transit Access and Suburban Form*, Routledge Press, 2017, and co-editor of *Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity*, Island Press, 2017. Diane is part of one of two cross disciplinary teams that won the 2020 SOM Foundation Research Prize focused on examining social justice in urban contexts. She also received an appointment as fellow for Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks for the 2021-2022 academic year.

**Melissa Blair** is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is a historian of architecture, landscapes and material culture with 20 years of experience gained at public history and academic institutions. She teaches the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America and historic preservation. She is co-author of *Washington and Baltimore Art Deco: A Design History of Neighboring Cities* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). Her current research focuses on the Mid-Atlantic's rural buildings and landscapes, the farming patterns that shaped them, and their preservation.

**Anne Bouie** was born in Birmingham, Alabama; she grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and was deeply affected by the beauty and culture she experienced during summers on her grandparents' farm in Florida. Her family lived in six states and she had attended seven schools by the fifth grade before settling in Riverside, California, where she grew up, and eventually graduated from the University of California there. She left southern California and moved to the Bay Area to enter the graduate School of Education at Stanford University, where she earned a Ph.D. in Administration & Policy Analysis, a Master's degree in Secondary Education, and a Master's degree in African-American History. As a mixed media, assemblage artist, Ms. Bouie has exhibited at the Honfluer Gallery, Galerie Myrtis, the Nevin Kelly Gallery, Millennium Salon, and the D.C. Arts Center. She has also participated in exhibits in California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and India. She is a member of the Black Artists of D.C., the Millennium Arts Salon, Washington D.C. Friends of Brandywine, and the Women's Caucus for the Arts, the Honfluer Gallery, the Washington Arts Project, and the Pen and Brush Gallery in New York.

**Dr. Justin Dunnivant** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA. His current research in the US Virgin Islands investigates the relationship between ecology and enslavement in the former Danish West Indies. In addition to his archaeological research, Justin is co-founder and President of the Society of Black Archaeologists and an AAUS Scientific SCUBA Diver. In 2021, he was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer and inducted into The Explorers Club as one of “Fifty People Changing the World that You Need to Know About.” He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. His research has been featured on Netflix’s “Explained,” Hulu’s “Your Attention Please” and in print in *American Archaeology* and *Science Magazine*.

**Everett L. Fly, MLA '77**, native of San Antonio, Texas, resides in the city with his wife Rosalinda. An honors graduate of the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture, he is the first African American graduate of Harvard University’s Department of Landscape Architecture. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Fly’s forty-year practice as a licensed landscape architect and architect includes national multidisciplinary consultations for the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He served on the State of Texas National Register Board of Review and City of San Antonio Historic and Design Review Commission. He chaired the board of Humanities Texas from 1993 to 1994. Fly served appointments by President Bill Clinton to the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities from 1994 to 2001. President Barack Obama awarded him one of ten 2014 National Humanities Medals for his body of work preserving the integrity of African-American places and landmarks. Recent awards include the 2018 San Antonio Power of Preservation Foundation “Champion of Preservation Award” and the 2020 Conservation Society of San Antonio “Texas Preservation Hero Award”. He co-founded the San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum.

**James French** founded the Montpelier Descendants Committee (MDC) and joined the Board of The Montpelier Foundation (TMF) in 2019. The MDC educates the public about the social, intellectual and economic contributions to the nation’s founding of enslaved Americans across Central Virginia, including at James Madison’s plantation, Montpelier. Mr. French strenuously advocated for power sharing to a largely resistant board and led the MDC in achieving structural parity with The Montpelier Foundation by innovating a widely applicable model for resolving legacy power imbalances in organizations. The MDC is the only descendant organization to establish itself as an equal co-steward of a major historic site in America. Mr. French is a graduate of the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia and has worked in international banking, government and in entrepreneurial roles across the globe. Mr. French is launching a fintech startup focused on emerging economies in Africa and beyond.

**Max Grivno** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he teaches courses on the Old South, Slavery, and American Economic History. While completing his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, Grivno worked for several years as a research assistant with the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. Grivno has also served as a research historian for the National Park Service and has completed the historic resources survey for Ferry Hill Plantation and the Forks of the Road Slave Market in Natchez, Mississippi. Dr. Grivno has received research fellowships from the Gilder Lehrman, the University of North Carolina, and has been awarded the Humanities Scholar of the Year Award by the Mississippi Humanities Council for his work promoting slavery and public history. Dr. Grivno is currently working on a book on the last survivors of slavery in the United States.

**Elleza Kelley** is a Postdoctoral Associate at Yale University in the departments of English and African American Studies. Her current book project explores black spatial knowledge and practice through African American literature and visual art. Kelley is a co-founder of the BSA at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where she acts as a senior advisor, programming symposia and producing publications related to blackness and architecture. Kelley writes and teaches on a range of subjects from black aesthetics and black geographies to historical fiction. Kelley’s writing can be found in *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, *The New Inquiry*, *Cabinet Magazine*, and elsewhere.

**Pauline M. Kulstad González** has a B.A. in Latin American Studies and Anthropology from Macalester College in Minnesota (USA); a Masters in Latin American Studies from the University of Florida (concentration Archaeology) (USA); and a PhD in Archaeology from Leiden University (The Netherlands). Her consulting firm (PK Research and Translations) focuses on 16th century Spanish Hispaniola research, both archival and in the field. She specializes in 16th century paleography. Her work has focused mainly on translating and interpreting (English/Spanish), providing administrative assistance, and organizing meetings with multiple stakeholders. She has worked as in-country liaison in the Dominican Republic for various international commercial and educational organizations.

**Nicholas Paskert** is a doctoral candidate in African American history in the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. He is presently finishing a dissertation on urban slavery and the built environment in African colonial New Orleans from 1718-1852. His research has been supported by Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Charles Warren Center for American History, the Historic New Orleans Collection and Tulane University's New Orleans Center for the Gulf South. He received a BA in Psychology from Lawrence University in 2003, two BAs in Interdisciplinary Studies and History from the University of New Orleans in 2011, and an MA in African American Studies from Harvard University in 2014. His forthcoming article "Coercing the Delta: The French Grammar of Control in the African Landscape of New Orleans, 1699-1732" is scheduled for publication in September 2021 in the journal *Global Environment*.

**Matthew Reeves** is the Director of Archaeology at James Madison's Montpelier in Orange, Virginia. His specialty is sites of the African Diaspora including plantation and freedman period sites, and Civil War. In his 20 years at Montpelier, Reeves has developed a strong public archaeology program known for its citizen science approach to research. At the heart of this program is community-based research with a heavy focus on investing descendant communities in the research and interpretation process and governance of cultural institutions. He has also led the archaeological discipline in devising new ways to engage metal detector hobbyists and archaeological survey through his department's work locating the living and work sites of the enslaved community across the 2700-acre Montpelier property. These new site discoveries hold the future for Montpelier continuing to tell the story of the enslaved community.

**Daniel O. Sayers** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at American University in Washington D.C. As a Historical Archaeologist, Sayers has analyzed and interpreted many archaeological sites across the U.S. through landscape perspectives that are informed by his political-economic approach and orientation. He is the author of many academic articles, he has made numerous media appearances, and he has worked with several museums on archaeological exhibits. Sayers is the author of the book, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archaeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Great Dismal Swamp* (2014, University Press of Florida) and is completing a book manuscript, "Historical Archaeology of the Homeless and the Home" (also for the University Press of Florida).

#### MODERATORS

**Jennifer Anderson**, Associate Professor of History at Stony Brook University (SUNY), has an MA from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture and a PhD in Atlantic History from New York University. She is the author of *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2012) and headed the research team for "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North," an Emmy-nominated documentary about the Northern slave trade. She has received many awards and fellowships, including most recently Mellon and ACLS Fellowships. As Scholar-in-Residence last year at the Joseph Lloyd Manor (owned by Preservation Long Island), she helped develop an orientation exhibition about its most famous inhabitant—Jupiter Hammon, the first published African American poet. She recently completed research on the William Floyd Estate for the National Park Service; curated an exhibition about Sylvester Manor, a 17th-century slave plantation, at New York University; and served as an Advisor for Long Island Museum's ground-breaking exhibition, "Long Road to Freedom: Surviving Slavery on Long Island." Deeply committed to public history, she continues to collaborate with museums and historical organizations throughout the greater New York region.



**Jarvis C. McInnis** is the Cordelia & William Laverack Family Assistant Professor of English at Duke University. He is an interdisciplinary scholar of African American & African Diaspora literature and culture, with teaching and research interests in the global south (primarily the US South and the Caribbean), sound studies, performance studies, visual culture, and the archive. McInnis is currently completing his first book manuscript, tentatively titled, “Afterlives of the Plantation: Aesthetics, Labor, and Diaspora in the Global Black South,” which aims to reorient the geographic contours of black transnationalism and diaspora by interrogating the hemispheric linkages between southern African American and Caribbean artists and intellectuals in the early twentieth century. His work appears in journals and venues such as *Callaloo*, *MELUS*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *Public Books*, *The Global South*, *American Literature*, and *American Literary History*.

**Andrea Mosterman** is associate professor in Atlantic History and Joseph Tregle Professor in Early American History at the University of New Orleans. In her work, she explores the multi-faceted dimensions of slavery, slave trade, and cross-cultural contact in the Dutch Atlantic and Early America with special emphasis on Early New York. She has published in the *Journal of African History and Early American Studies*, and she curated the digital exhibit *Slavery in New Netherland* for the New Netherland Institute. In her book *Spaces of Enslavement: A History of Slavery and Resistance in Dutch New York* (Cornell University Press, 2021), she uses spatial analysis to examine enslavement and resistance in New York’s Dutch communities.

**Matthew Mulcahy** is professor of history at Loyola University Maryland. His research focuses on the history of hurricanes and other natural disasters in colonial British America. He is the author of *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624–1783* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) and *Hubs of Empire: The Southeastern Lowcountry and British Caribbean* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). He and Stuart Schwartz have recently completed a broad survey of disasters in the early modern Caribbean that will be published in Philip Morgan, J.R. McNeill, Stuart Schwartz, and Matthew Mulcahy, *Sea and Land: An Environmental History of the Caribbean to about 1850* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

**Sara Zewde** is founding principal of Studio Zewde, a design firm practicing landscape architecture, urbanism, and public art. Recent and ongoing projects of the firm include the Mander Recreation Center Campus (Philadelphia, PA), the Midtown Activation Project (Seattle, WA), and Graffiti Pier (Philadelphia, PA). Zewde’s practice and research start from her contention that the discipline of landscape architecture is tightly bound by precedents and typologies rooted in specific traditions that must be challenged. Without rigorous investigation, these cultural assumptions will silently continue to constrict the practice of design and reinforce a quiet, cultural hegemony in the built form of cities and landscapes. Her projects exemplify how sensitivities to culture, ecology, and craft can serve as creative departures for expanding design traditions.

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