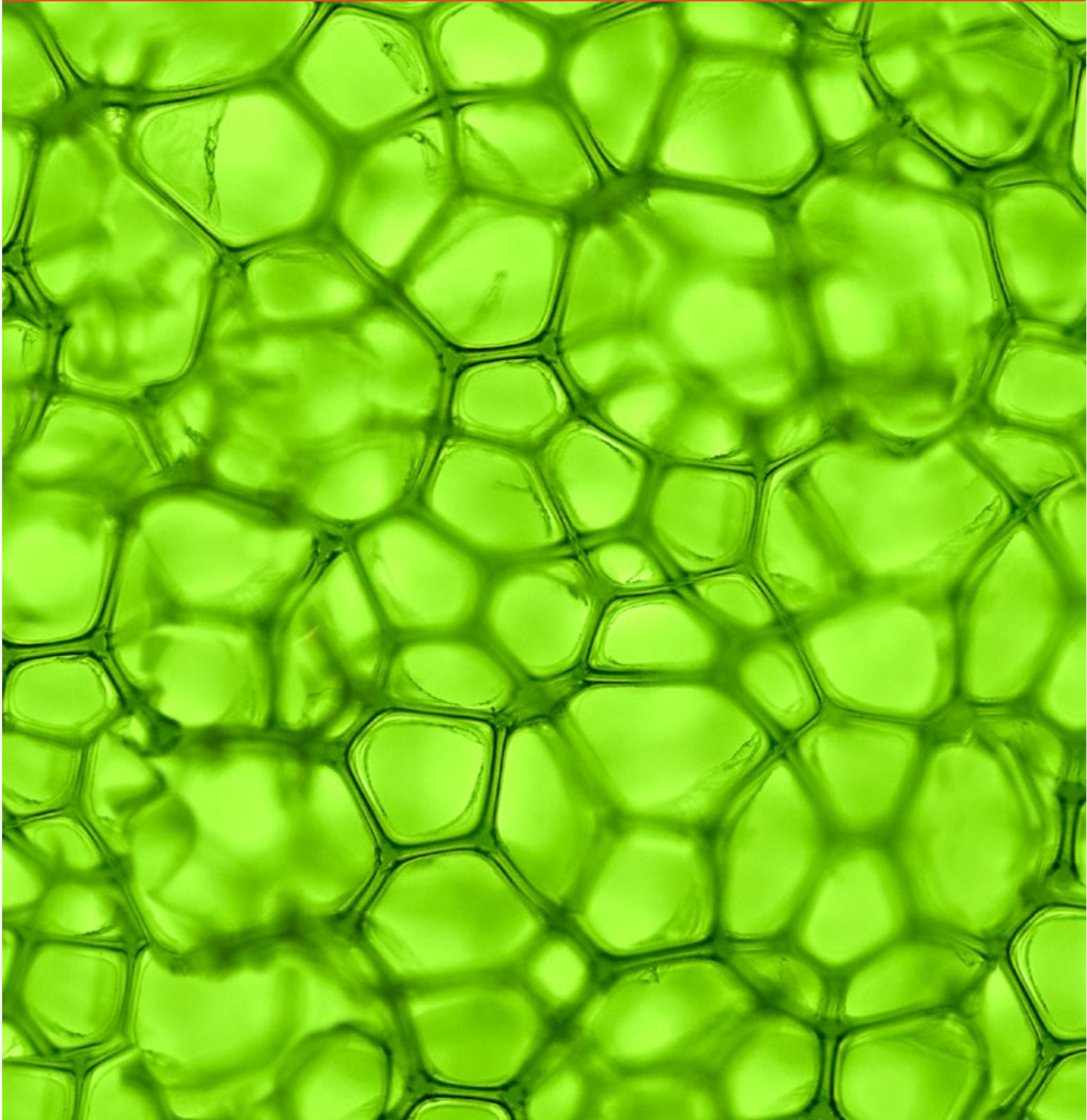


Newsletter of the UCLA Center for the Study of Women

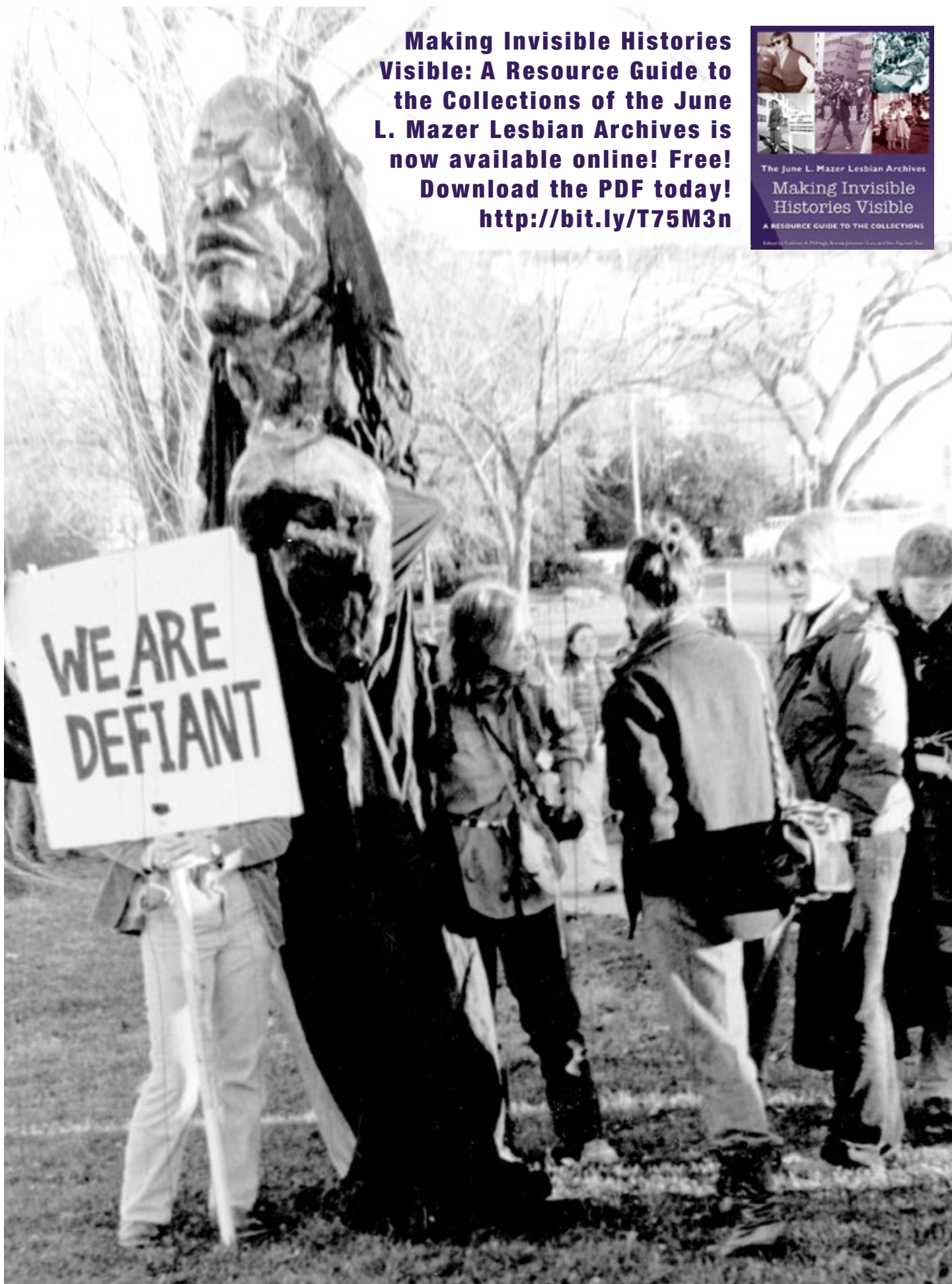
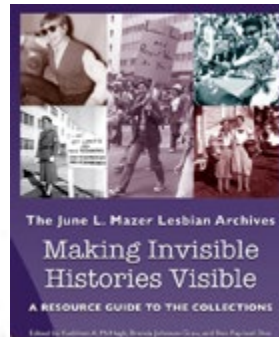


# *update*

**SUMMER 2014**



**Making Invisible Histories Visible: A Resource Guide to the Collections of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives is now available online! Free! Download the PDF today! <http://bit.ly/T75M3n>**





## Top Ten Things that I Loved About Being CSW Director



**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2014**, will be my last day in the office at CSW. In August 2005, when I accepted then-Dean Scott Waugh's offer of the director position, I little imagined I would be serving for nine years! I have loved being CSW Director and I will really miss the CSW community—faculty, staff, students, and research scholars. We have accomplished wonderful things together. By way of saying goodbye, I would like to steal from Gloria Steinem stealing from David Letterman and share the top 10 things I have loved about being CSW Director.

**Number 10:** Holding hands with Angelina Jolie. Not only did I

hold hands with her, I was on the red carpet with her and Brad Pitt when CSW, together with the International Institute, hosted the Los Angeles premiere of her film, *In the Land of Blood and Honey*. But number 10 is not just about her—I just started with Jolie for dramatic effect. Rather it is about all of the incredible women I have had the honor to meet in this position.

I had the great privilege of introducing and spending time with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi when Brad Sears and the Williams Institute hosted her book party and CSW cosponsored. Brad and the Williams Institute have been steadfast partners and an

inspiration for CSW and for me.

I also had the honor of being Gloria Steinem's escort for an evening when CSW co-sponsored the Chicano Studies Research Centers' celebration of their library's acquisition of Lupe Anguiano's papers. Lupe invited her two best friends—Gloria and Henry Cisneros and I had the distinct pleasure of seeing Henry walking down a hallway at Anderson swinging a CSW Thinking Gender tote bag.

Meeting Angela Davis, talking with her, and having her give a workshop with this year's graduate student recipients of the CSW Paula Stone Fellowship has been a high point and a tremendous boon to CSW, the students, and the campus. Kudos to Jenny Sharpe, Chair of the Department of Gender Studies, and faculty members Sharon Traweek, Michelle Erai, Sarah Haley, and Aisha Finch for working to bring Professor Davis to UCLA as a UC Regents Lecturer, a remarkable opportunity from which we all have benefitted.

I also want to mention all the scholars and leaders CSW has hosted over the years. I'll mention just the most recent: Colonel Grethe Cammermeyer and her lawyer, UCLA alum Mary Newcombe. They delivered the plenary for the CSW/

UCLA Library/Mazer Archives capstone event, which celebrated the completion of our \$300,000 NEH grant, on May 16th. In a 1989 security-clearance interview for her possible appointment as a general, Colonel Cammermeyer answered truthfully that she was lesbian. As she said, it would not have occurred to her to say anything else. She was summarily discharged and fought a years long and ultimately successful battle to be reinstated-- right as don't ask don't tell was being implemented. So for years, she was the only openly gay person serving in the military.

**Number 9:** Designing and renovating the CSW space with Don Simpson, then the space manager for the College of Letters and Science. Generously supported by Deans Scott Waugh and then Reynaldo Macias, this renovation allowed CSW to consolidate the staff and build a centralized place on



**Kathleen with Penny Kanner (right) at CSW Awards Luncheon, 2007**

the campus at 1500 Public Affairs. Through this years long endeavor, I learned that perseverance pays off.

**Number 8:** Working with UCLA Deans—I have had the pleasure to work with wonderful leaders—with benefits. Chris Waterman, Dean of the Arts and Architecture, showed me the very best view on the Richard Serra sculpture—from the balcony on

the eighth floor of the Broad Arts Building where you can look down and see the impossible torque of its two ovals. Tim Stowell, Dean of the Humanities, corrected clear wrongs when he discovered them. His successor, David Schaberg, has welcomed CSW projects through the Humanities division. Victoria Sork, Dean of the Life Sciences, has been a great supporter of CSW and particularly of Life (Un) Ltd, Associate Director Rachel Lee's groundbreaking multiyear research project. Teri Schwartz, Dean of Theater, Film and Television, who has also been a consistent supporter, has great taste in films and we share a passion for women filmmakers. Sandro Duranti, Dean of the Social Sciences, has endorsed and helped fund numerous CSW projects and also has great taste in film. Last, but certainly not least, Executive Vice Chancellor Scott Waugh has understood from the outset the



**Kathleen with Scott Waugh (left) and Carol Block (right), Open House, 2008**

importance of CSW and its role on the campus and has supported the center and me throughout, for which I am very grateful.

**Number 7:** Serving with CSW staff—our great new team, built by Pamela Crespin, assistant director, and including Lily Teper, and Kimberlee Granholme. Thanks for all your hard work this year and for organizing this event. Thanks also to former staff members, especially Dr. Julie Childers, Erma Acebo, Emily Walker, and Jessie Babiarz. A special shout-out to two members of the staff: Van DoNguyen was with me at the beginning, taught me about UCLA budgets, shared her extensive and invaluable institutional memory and has counseled me and other CSW staff ever since. Coming on board in my first year as director, Brenda Johnson-Grau, publications manager, created an substantial electronic presence for and the

**Kathleen with Myrna Hant (right) at CSW Awards Luncheon, 2011**



public face of CSW—our website, newsletters, policy briefs, and striking advertising.

**Number 6:** Being inspired by students—the incredible GSRs and undergraduate workstudy students who help keep CSW running and energized with their passion. They literally are the future. Among many, many of you, too many to name, I would like to acknowledge Marika Cifor, Jonathan Cohn,

Gerleroz Exconde, Mirasol Riojas Enriquez, James Hixon, Jackie Hunt, Susan McKibben, Rylan Ross, T.K. Sangwand, Ben Sher, Stacy Wood, Mila Zuo, and former student, now CSW staff, Kimberlee Granholm, for their outsized and inspired contributions to CSW.

**Number 5:** Collaborating with the directors of the ethnic study centers—Darnell Hunt, Chon Noriega, Angela Riley, and David Yoo. I love working with all of you. Our centers have collaborated very productively and you have all been important partners and friends. I don't want to play favorites, but I do have to mention that being married to Chon Noriega has come with very special professional benefits. He's been the very best interlocutor a center director could ever have.

**Number 4:** Partnering with research, community and campus scholars and units. CSW has a vibrant and brilliant community of research scholars whose work enriches their fields and who



**Kathleen with Pat Zukow-Goldring at (left) at CSW Awards Luncheon, 2014**



contribute to CSW in numerous ways. Special thanks to Dr. Myrna Hant for her advice and her generosity; to Dr. Pat Zukow-Goldring who has enabled many CSW projects; and to Dr. Penny Kanner and her husband Ed, who have enriched my directorship and been great friends to me as well. To Dr. Alice Wexler, Dr. Becky Nicolaides, Dr. Miriam Robbins Dexter and all the wonderful CSW research scholars whose scholarship and service so enriches CSW. To Ann Giagni and Angela Brinskele, our longstanding, dedicated community partners at the Mazer Archives. To Sharon Farb, Associate Librarian, creative, generous, with a gift for making contracts that work and enable people to work together. To Teresa Barnett and Jane Collings from the Oral History Research Center, with whom CSW has enjoyed extensive and

productive collaborations. This year, CSW partnered with the Center for African Studies and Director Françoise Lionnet for a project on gender equity and education in Rwanda and the trip there was a highpoint, thanks to Françoise, Claudia Mitchell Kernan, Azeb Tadesse, Sheila Breeding, Kathie Sheldon, and the rest of the team.

**Number 3:** The support of all the department chairs and faculty who I have worked with on CSW projects. To all the department chairs, your generous co-sponsorships and commitments have greatly expanded CSW's impact. Special mention to my chairs: Ali Behdad (English), Bill McDonald, Barbara Boyle, Steve Mamber (FTV/CMS), and Jenny Sharpe (Gender Studies), all of whom have generously collaborated with CSW. To the CSW faculty curators—I'll name just a few —Ellen DuBois, Abigail Saguy, Saloni Mathur,

and Jenessa Shapiro—who put together brilliant speakers series on topics ranging from gender and body size to stereotype threat. It has also been a pleasure working with CSW's affiliated junior faculty who have given back to the CSW in substantial ways—Ally Field, Lucy Burns, Mignon Moore, Sarah Haley, and Allison Carruth have been exemplary.

**Number 2:** The women who got me here and have kept me here. Chris Littleton sought me out to apply for the CSW directorship and Vivian Sobchack counseled me to take it. Vivian, a dear friend and mentor, long ago taught me the a's and b's of administrative demeanor. She advised that in conflict, "Be amused and bemused," advice I have passed on to my own mentees. Helen Deutsch, friend extraordinaire, advises on topics ranging from ideas to fashion and is an excellent yoga buddy. Debra Dralle has guided me successfully through every personnel decision, hire, and crisis I have encountered in my directorship. The former CSW directors, in whose distinguished path I have followed, envisioned, created, and grew CSW and have offered me friendship and advice: Karen Rowe, Anne Peplau, Lena Astin, Kate Norberg, the late and wonderful Miriam Silverberg, and Sandra Harding who early on worked with me on a provocative and wonderful gender and science conference. Sondra Hale, a longtime

Kathleen with Carole Browner (middle) and Rachel Lee (right) at the CSW Awards Luncheon, 2012





**Kathleen with Kirstie McClure (left) and Vivian Sobchak (right) at Thinking Gender 2008**

collaborator and friend, ran the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* through CSW.

In my time as director, CSW has had three dynamic Associate Directors, each of whom brought timely and cutting-edge research projects: Purnima Mankekar—The “Gender” of Terror; Juliet Williams, State of the Union: Marriage in the Shadow of Electoral Politics; and Rachel Lee, Life (Un)Ltd. I am especially grateful to Rachel for her inspiring ideas, for stepping in last year as interim Director, giving me a couple of quarters off, and organizing a wonderful going-away event.

I love CSWAC, the CSW advisory board that has given me sage counsel, especially concerning when to move forward and when an apparently great idea might exceed CSW's grasp. Special special thanks to Susan Foster, Chair of CSWAC, who has been my and

CSW's rock for nine years. Always calm, thoughtful, incisive and wise, she gets right to the pith of the matter with astonishing precision and economy. Belinda Tucker is another incredible mentor and friend from whom I have learned a lot and laughed with a great deal. (In addition to perseverance, a director needs a sense of humor). Claudia Mitchell Kernan has made time for long talks with me that have brought clarity to fraught situations. She is a role model and a master at resolving complexities as I have seen now on two continents, having recently traveled with her to Rwanda.

**The Number 1 thing I have loved the most about being CSW director:** UCLA and all of you. I have never been complacent about UCLA, never taken being here or being on the faculty for granted. I walk across this campus and I am astonished by its beauty

and even more impressed by the talents, insights, and brilliance of my colleagues and our students. This campus is rich in resources. We do so much so well, but we can always do better. When I became director, I had several goals—enhance and expand CSW's research mission; extend its visibility and reach on the campus and in the community, and improve climate issues, especially for junior faculty, women, and minorities. We've done a lot! But certain recent events indicate that there is much more work to be done. It requires that CSW hit on multiple fronts and not just focus on one area. Being director has been exciting, productive, and also rewarding for me, personally and professionally. Ultimately it is not about the individual who occupies the director position but about the necessary mission that reaches across campus, the field, and the community. That is not just a charge for the director, one I took very seriously, but instead requires the contribution of the entire community of scholars affiliated with CSW. I look forward not just to stepping down but to continuing to be a part of that community—training the next generation, supporting research across all fields, and engaging the community in ways that transform the campus, ever for the better.

**– Kathleen McHugh**





## EROTIC THRILLER OBSESSION IN ODETTE SPRINGER AND JOHANNA DEMETRAKAS' SOME NUDITY REQUIRED

# cinophilia as post-traumatic compulsion

BY BEN RAPHAEL SHER

CAN THE AFFECTS AND BEHAVIORAL tendencies that arise as symptoms in the wake of trauma contain elements of reparative pleasure? Can *cinophilia*, defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as a “love or enthusiasm for films,” be part of a self-destructive compulsion? Can a person be described as a cinephile because of her obsessive engagement with films that she hates? Odette Springer and Johanna Demetrakas’ documentary, *Some Nudity Required* (1998) answers these questions by presenting a complex portrait of the ways in which a woman’s cinophilia intertwines with her experience of sexual abuse trauma.

In doing this, it provocatively blurs the commonly assumed boundaries that separate trauma from pleasure.

Odette Springer composed music for the action, horror, and erotic thriller films released by Roger Corman’s Concorde-New Horizons Corporation in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 1991, she became Vice President of Worldwide Music for the company.<sup>1</sup> Springer found herself alternately offended and fascinated by the films she made and the industry in which she worked. She stated: “I was sick and stuff started coming up in my body. It got so I couldn’t stand the sexual violence, but kept being drawn

back in spite of the revulsion. I didn’t know why. It was a push-pull thing.”<sup>2</sup> Around 1994, she decided to deal with her conflicting feelings about the industry, and its gender politics, by making a documentary, titled *R-Rated: Sex and Violence in Hollywood*, about women in B movies.

As she viewed many erotic thrillers for research, she found herself becoming obsessed with them and watching them compulsively. She states “Originally I was going to make a straight documentary...but as I was watching these clips, I found myself getting turned on, and it horrified me.” The clips, she says, awakened



**"Sad,  
provocative,  
hilarious"**

-- *Billy Bob Thornton*

**"Brave, candid"**

-- *Kenneth Turan,  
LOS ANGELES TIMES*


**some nudity  
required**

**"breasts are the cheapest special effects"**

--*Fred Olen Ray*

SEVENTH ART RELEASING PRESENTS AN ONLY CHILD PRODUCTION "SOME NUDITY REQUIRED"  
A FILM BY ODETTE SPRINGER JOHANNA DEMETRAKAS AND KATE AMEND  
MARIA FORD • JULIE STRAIN • LISA BOYLE • ODETTE SPRINGER • ROGER CORMAN • SAMUEL ARKOFF • DAN GOLDEN • JIM WYNORSKI  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LIONEL BISSOON ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS LARRY JACKSON AND JAN ROFEKAMP CO-PRODUCERS RAINA PARIS  
AND JOHANNA DEMETRAKAS ORIGINAL MUSIC ODETTE SPRINGER EDITOR KATE AMEND CO-DIRECTOR JOHANNA DEMETRAKAS  
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ODETTE SPRINGER

**OFFICIAL SELECTION, DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION,  
1998 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

 **7TH ART**

[WWW.SEVENTHART.NET](http://WWW.SEVENTHART.NET)

© 1998

long-suppressed memories of being sexually molested as a child.”<sup>3</sup> Her perpetrators’ molestation included taking disturbing home videos of Springer as a child dancing naked. In its final form, the now-titled *Some Nudity Required*, co-written and co-directed by Demetrakas, became an autobiographical documentary. The film grapples with the ways in which Springer uncovered and began to process her own traumas through her alternately disturbing, uncomfortable, and pleasurable engagement with films, the film industry, and its participants. It disturbingly incorporates many scenes from erotic thrillers and from home movies taken by the perpetrators of Springer’s abuse.

Given that cinephilia is defined as a “love” or “enthusiasm” for film, it seems counterintuitive that it could take place in relation to movies that a person hates and is repulsed by and only watched to pay the bills. However, Springer’s engagement with these films is strongly reminiscent of how scholars have defined cinephilia. At the same time, it complicates their definitions.

Over the last two decades, a tradition has developed in which scholars have defined cinephilia as a person’s adoring appreciation of a film’s aesthetics and form, rather than its narrative, dialogue, or characters. Christian Keathley is arguably the most influential of these scholars. He states that cinephilic pleasure manifests itself as an overwhelming, almost orgasmic bodily experience.<sup>4</sup> He writes that



this kind of cinephilia, this “pure” appreciation of film aesthetics, is apolitical and separated from issues of identity and ideology.<sup>5</sup> He takes it for granted that the pleasure associated with cinephilia is a wholly positive, affirmative affect. *Some Nudity Required* powerfully complicates his arguments, insisting that cinephilic pleasure can deeply, inextricably intertwine with factors including the cinephile’s memories and life history, and her appreciation of *any* aspect of a film, formal or not. Furthermore, the film demonstrates that the pleasure associated with cinephilia can be tied to the most painful and negative affects.

In the final third of *Some Nudity*

*Required*, Springer’s fascination with the films that she watches and researches begins to clue her in to emotions that she cannot reconcile. While watching a film in which two actresses enact a BDSM striptease, she expresses horror (in voiceover) at her physical arousal by the scene. Springer’s description of becoming suddenly “turned on” sounds like the bodily experience of pleasure that Keathley associates with cinephilia. Her pleasure, however, is combined with a feeling of being repelled and horrified by the images that arouse her.

In her chapter about the film, Janet Walker aptly suggests that oblique traces of Springer’s memories of abuse reveal themselves throughout





**Odette Springer watches an erotic thriller in *Some Nudity Required*.**

the film and her described process of making it. The latter includes her narrated experience of being turned on watching erotic thrillers, and her incorporation of ominous clips of the home movies in which Springer, as a young child, dances around naked. However, her memories of abuse finally become fully legible while she watches and re-watches a sequence of actress Maria Ford, playing a woman who is accidentally choked to death as part of a sexual experiment. Over a close up of Springer watching and re-watching the scene at a console, her voiceover states, "That's

when I finally remembered."<sup>6</sup>

Walker writes: "There follows the film's revelation: that Springer was sexually molested in childhood by her aunt and uncle. The home movies from the beginning return in shortened form—the hands spinning the salmon-pink garbed girl and the little naked body—this time interspersed with close-ups of Springer remembering and overdubbed with Springer's account of their past actions."<sup>7</sup> "Where is my mother?," Springer asks in voiceover. "I'm so scared. I hate those pictures they take of me." Paul Willemen

influentially defines cinephilic perception as the propensity to experience "moments of revelation": "moments which, when encountered in a film, spark something which then produces the energy and the desire to write, to find formulations to convey something about the intensity of that spark." *Some Nudity Required's* "revelation," to use Walker's word, represents Springer's "moment of revelation," one strongly reminiscent of the cinephilic moments of revelation described by Willemen, together with the experience of bodily pleasure described by scholars

like Keathley. Through obsessive film spectatorship, Springer encounters “moments of revelation” about herself that spark in her the desire to write (literally, through the creation of *Some Nudity’s* screenplay, and more expansively through her co-direction of the film). However, Springer’s “moments of revelation” do not come in response to films that she unconditionally loves, but films that she is both repelled by and to which she is strongly attracted and cathected.

Janet Walker analyzes how Springer and Demetrakas use film form in order to work towards representing the “traumatic mindscape.” She writes:“(Auto)biographical traumatic documentaries may be recognized by their use of three strategies or three categories of footage: (1) home movies, (2) direct address to the camera or to an unseen interviewer, and (3) enacted and reenacted sequences. These...are woven together in the films such that their formal design echoes that of the traumatized mindscape, with its characteristic recurrent memories, dissociative tendencies, and involuntary reenactments.”<sup>8</sup> I would add to Walker’s argument by suggesting that the film is also concerned with representing and grappling with an element of the traumatic mind and bodyscape that seems strongly reminiscent of an Imprinted Arousal Pattern, or IAP.

Psychologist Neal King writes that:

“The phenomenon of an IAP, common among sexual abuse survivors, induces the individual to continue to be eroticized by stimulation and circumstances that overtly or covertly resemble the abuse circumstances. This phenomenon is a type of learned behavior that is imprinted as a traumatic effect of the abuse. It is repeated in an often excruciatingly dystonic cycle which is ultimately in the service of the person attempting to recover from the trauma...Useful understandings of otherwise puzzling behaviors of the victim of sexual trauma can be found in these ideas.”<sup>9</sup> Springer’s cinephilia is characterized by her initially inexplicable desire to watch the films again and again, even though she dislikes them. In her film, her cinephilic repetition compulsion does not just include film spectatorship but film production. Her narration describes much of her work in the B-movie industry as “puzzling behavior” that “overtly and covertly resembles the abuse circumstances.” In the film, her voiceover states: “So when I found myself in Hollywood, a place where I could compose and sing, I went for it. It felt familiar, like when I was a little girl. So this was my new family.” Later, she states: “Even though part of me wanted desperately to get out of this world of exploitation, something even stronger kept pulling me back.”

*Some Nudity Required* intimately engages with the ways in which cinephilia can manifest itself as a

symptom of repressed trauma. She finds herself re-enacting films in order to understand her emotional experiences. Springer writes: “My personal life started to sound like an erotic thriller. I dated a man who thought he was the reincarnation of the Marquis de Sade. He held a cheap whip over me and made me speak French...Another man wanted me to cook dinner for him wearing just my new bustier and stiletto heels. Then there was the married man old enough to be my father. He said he wanted to take care of me, but what he really wanted was to control me. Nobody gets to do that to me anymore.”

She finally becomes conscious of what might be her imprinted arousal pattern during her last cinephilic moment of revelation. Springer’s recollections of abuse include memories of feelings comparable to those that she experiences watching the films. She states: “That’s when I finally remembered. Aunt Lena and Uncle Johnny liked to play this game. I lie down on the floor and Johnny watches as she hovers over me. When I hear the flanking of her gold charm bracelets, I know her hand is reaching for me. She always laughs when she touches me...The little electric rushes feel good but I’m really nauseous at the same time...Degradation, pleasure, fear, that’s the basic formula for an erotic thriller. When I was violated, it felt good, and bad, kind of like getting your wires crossed. It was time to get



**Odette Springer and Maria Ford**

out, I quit my job.”

While Springer’s cinephilia first manifests itself as the symptom of an emotionally destructive trauma cycle, it evolves into a reparative tool of integration. Springer finally uses her cinephilia to raise her own consciousness about her experiences of trauma. In representing the making of their documentary, Springer and Demetrakas problematize wholly “positive” definitions of cinephilia by identifying ways in which cinephilia can be both symptomatic *and* reparative.

The film suggests that the pleasures of cinephilia, often

associated with positive affects and production, in the form of writing, may contain painful traces of trauma that create a barrier to productive personal growth. At the same time, the fraught pleasures that lead a person to re-enact her traumas, often thought of as destructive and counter-productive, may carry within them ameliorative tools. The unexpected encounter between trauma and cinephilia in Springer’s life leads her to experience conflicting affects that are ultimately necessary in order for her to integrate her experiences. Her film documents productively ambivalent pleasure.

In a lecture organized by CSW about actor/director Ida Lupino, Amelie Hastie, Professor of English and Film and Media Studies at Amherst College, stated that research about a film or star can constitute cinephilia. She states: “It’s the body of [Lupino’s] work and the process of investigation that her work invites, that leads to this feminist’s love of Lupino. To her cinephilia.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly, I would define Springer’s production of her documentary, in which she engages antagonistically with certain male directors but also forms strong, intimate bonds with other directors and stars, as cinephilic.





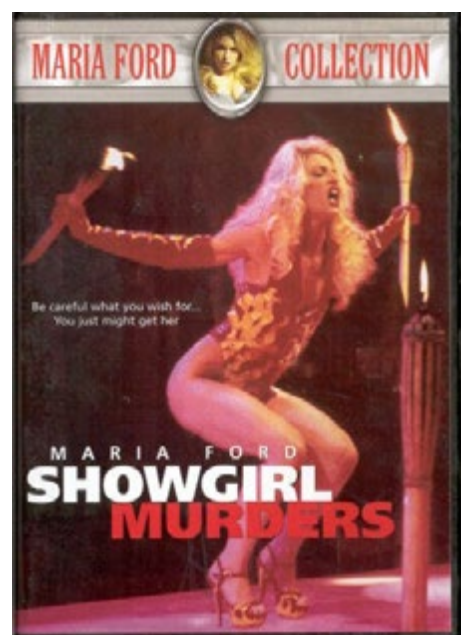
**Odette Springer and Maria Ford**

She demonstrates a complicated love for the process of researching erotic thrillers, even though her most conscious response to the films themselves is hatred. If the films that problematically engage Springer become stepping stones to uncovering her traumas, her research into their contexts and their makers helps her to understand and process them.

Much of the film focuses on Maria Ford, a B-movie star who expresses dissatisfaction at the film industry's requirement that she objectify herself in order to act. Springer forms a relationship with the star, and they find themselves opening up to each

other. Over a shot of Ford buying lingerie, Springer's voiceover states: "Maria pretends to be someone else when she's acting. I've pretended to be someone else most of my life. In my family, women were taught that sex is dirty, and only men enjoyed it. So you can imagine how daring it felt when I bought my first bustier at Frederick's of Hollywood right there with Maria."

In their theories of cinephilia, Willemsen and Keathley argue that cinephilic experiences "can only be seen as designating, for [cinephiles], something in excess of the representation."<sup>11</sup> They define



**Showgirl Murders, a 1996 film that featured Maria Ford and was directed by Dave Payne.**

*Jules and Jim*, a 1962 film by François Truffaut



representation as what filmmakers intend for the spectator to perceive and understand about the diegetic world that they create. In other words, representations constitute the filmmakers' constructions of narrative, thematic, and ideological meaning. According to Willemsen, cinephilia can only take place in response to something *in excess* of this diegetic world and its intended meanings, something that perhaps the filmmaker did not intend. For

example, Keathley states that a cinephile might have a moment of revelation in response to the beauty of the wind in the trees behind the actors playing out the narrative of *Jules and Jim*, or an unintentional gesture made by an actor that reveals something meaningful to a spectator that transcends the actor's character.<sup>12</sup>

Springer's film demonstrates that, indeed, cinephilia can take place in response to a film's representations,

or "constructed meanings." She experiences problematic, bodily experiences of pleasure when engaging with the narratives, *mise en scène*, characters, and simulated sex scenes in erotic thrillers. However, Springer also adds complexity to previous theories by suggesting that particularly meaningful cinephilia can take place as a result of the *interplay* of a film's representations and the unintentional moments of "excess" that transcend them.

Springer shows that such moments can be enhanced and illuminated for a cinephile when she conducts research about the contexts that surround a film's production. The juxtaposition between the roles Maria Ford plays (sex kitten, femme fatale), and her self-described identity (former honor student, feminist, aspiring serious actress) presents Springer with stronger identification, stronger cinephilic moments of revelation, than either Ford's public persona or her films could do alone. It makes sense that according to Springer, she had her most profound cinephilic moment of revelation—the revelation of her childhood sexual abuse—while watching Ford being victimized on film. She seems to identify most strongly with the contradictory relationship between Maria Ford's role, the erotic thriller's *representation* of her, and Ford's off-screen identity.

The press kit of *Some Nudity Required* states that “Unexpectedly along the way, Springer uncovered disturbing personal memories of her own, that turned her from observer into participant of *Some Nudity Required*—She found herself becoming part of the story.”<sup>13</sup> In becoming part of the story, and placing Roger Corman's films, particularly his erotic thrillers, in the context of the industry that creates them and her own experiences as a producer-spectator, Springer re-appropriates them, and makes an effort to rescind

the dominance of their ideology. In doing this, she brings to the surface and makes conscious the traumatic experiences and affects that they problematically resemble, evoke, and perhaps even help perpetuate (most prominently, the ways in which sex and violence often become disturbingly intertwined in the mind and body of a survivor of sexual trauma). In doing this, she uses cinephilic production to process her own trauma.

Springer follows her ambivalent cinephilia until it helps her become conscious of the roots of her distress, finally leading her to leave Roger Corman's studio, get another job, and produce a movie that creates a new, different dynamic for women engaging with erotic thrillers and their trauma histories. Her and Demetrakas' work shows that post-traumatic pleasure, rather than just a blocker that keeps repressed trauma from coming to the surface, may also have its uses in processing a trauma and growing from it. *Some Nudity Required* suggests that scholars can learn a great deal from investigating the negative affects that cinephilic pleasures can harbor, and the reparative possibilities contained within the pleasures that post-traumatic symptoms activate. I hope that I have begun this investigation here.

Ben Raphael Sher is a doctoral student in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA. He gave a version of this essay as part of the plenary panel at *Thinking Gender 2014*. This quarter he has been teaching a course he designed titled “American Genre Films and Domestic Trauma.” He is one of the recipients of UCLA's 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award.

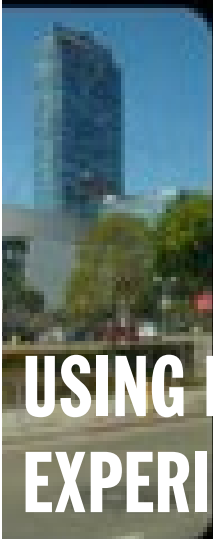
#### Notes

1. Press kit, *Some Nudity Required*, accessed at The Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills, CA.
2. Clark, John, “Some Nudity” Provided a Catharsis,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1998, n.p. (Accessed in clipping file at Margaret Herrick).
3. Clark, n.p.
4. Christian Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, or The Wind in the Trees* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 29-54.
5. Keathley, 28.
6. *Some Nudity Required*, dir. Odette Springer and Johanna Demetrakas (Seventh Art Releasing, 1998), VHS.
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# PICTURING FREEDOM

BY SUSILA GURUSAMI



USING PHOTOVOICE TO REPRESENT BLACK WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AFTER INCARCERATION

**I**N MY DISSERTATION PROJECT, I explore the use of Photovoice, a participatory-action method, as a way for theoretical and empirical engagement with the reentry experiences of formerly incarcerated Black women. Specifically, I point to three benefits from my preliminary research that articulate the value of using Photovoice in social science and humanities research: 1) The representation of spaces outside of researcher access; 2) Creating meaningful partnerships between researchers and marginalized communities; 3) Envisioning the future. All the photos you see here are ones produced by the women in my sample and they all provided permission for the inclusion of their pictures.

My dissertation project investigates how formerly incarcerated Black women—who are disproportionately represented among formerly incarcerated women—navigate the process of reentry into society. Specifically, this project links women’s racialized experiences of reentering society to the spatial configuration of Los Angeles. In doing so, this work provides critical insights into the way state policies and resources directed at reentry could be improved, particularly given the structural challenges posed by the landscape

of Los Angeles. I explore three dimensions of how Black women’s experiences with reentry are shaped by the sprawling expanse of the city and poor public transportation: relationships ties, labor challenges, and continued control by the carceral state.

My dissertation uses a qualitative mixed-methods approach, although I focus on participatory action methods in this paper. My field site is New Beginnings, a nationally-renowned comprehensive women’s reentry organization that provides housing in South Central Los Angeles for formerly incarcerated women and their children, case management, and rehabilitation services. Women are housed in one of their four reentry homes and also receive assistance with legal services.

In the first part of the project, I will use qualitative methods to investigate the lives and circumstances of the women at New Beginnings. I conduct 80 in-depth interviews with two groups of people: two-thirds with formerly incarcerated women at New Beginnings, and the remaining one-third with New Beginnings staff members and ancillary professionals, such as parole officers, law enforcement, and judges. All interviews will be audio recorded, fully transcribed, and analyzed for

patterns using qualitative coding software. Second, I conduct extensive participant observations as an intern with New Beginnings, through which I have collected 15 out of 18 months of data about interactions, policies, and materials produced by the organization, and the legal and funding conditions with which the organization interacts.

## PHOTOVOICE: MECHANICS OF THE METHOD

I use the participatory-action method “Photovoice” to motivate interviews with the formerly incarcerated women. In this method, participants take photos to present a visual representation of their experiences. Because it is not a commonly utilized methodology in sociology and does not provide enough substantive data to answer my research questions on its own, I pair Photovoice with in-depth interviews and fieldwork. Photovoice is particularly useful

**< The women pictured in the photos on page 16 captured their experiences travelling to and while at work. These are spaces that I do not have access to, but ones that are very important to their day-to-day experiences.**

The woman pictured in these photos was one of my first interviews. She explicitly told me that my interview guide was “useless” and that her pictures told the real story. From that point forward, it became clear to me that allowing the photos to guide the interviews elicited more productive and colorful narratives.





for centralizing the experiences of marginalized subjects; the subjects produce photos as primary data source that are generated from their own perspectives, and thus takes seriously that marginalized people and communities can be “expert” producers of knowledge. Such strategies minimize researchers imposing their own value systems, which are often rooted in positions of comparative privilege, on the realities of other groups. Additionally, this method does not require literacy as a prerequisite for participation; some of the formerly incarcerated women struggle with literacy skills, and this method allows them to provide a self-generated visual and metaphorical window into their experiences (Wang and Burriss 1997). I provide cameras to all of the formerly incarcerated women who agree to participate. As incentive for the interviews, I provide the women with personalized and printed photo albums from Snapfish.com using funding from a 2013 UCLA IAC Bunche Center grant.

I currently have nine moderately priced point-and-shoot digital cameras available for this project; purchased new, the camera costs range from approximately \$100-200 each. Six of the cameras are used and were donated by people in my personal networks. Professor Sarah

Haley used her research budget to fund three additional cameras and memory cards. I purchased the other six memory cards personally. All of the cameras are at least 5 megapixels to ensure that the image quality is sufficient for printing and publication.

## **REPRESENTATION OF SPACES OUTSIDE OF RESEARCHER ACCESS**

I provided the participants in this study with cameras and asked them to take between 30 and 50 photos that represented anything they felt was important to their lives or experiences. Each of the women kept the cameras between one week and one month, depending on their preference and when we were able to arrange an interview time. The range of experiences represented across the photos include commutes to work, experiences in the classroom, dentist appointments, and visits with family members. Some of the photos represent daily experiences, while others reflect an effort by some women to pursue and capture special moments because they had the

camera with them.

While I use ethnography to better understand the day-to-day experiences of the women at my fieldsite, standard human limitations (such as lack of a time machine or teleporter) make it impossible for me to go with each of the women to all of their daily activities. Their use of cameras in their day-to-day lives complement my own observations to provide a more cohesive picture of what the New Beginnings’ women experience in their everyday lives (see *photos on page 16*).

## **CREATING MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

The use of traditional qualitative methods, such as interviews and participant observation, reproduces the researchers’ perspectives of a another group’s social experience (Sandstrom and Opsal 2013).



**These photos challenge stereotypes of formerly incarcerated Black women as bad mothers and uninvolved in the work force. The image in the center of a poignant moment of reunion between two formerly incarcerated women who are now married also complicates racialized and heteronormative narratives of love and commitment.**

Despite efforts to be reflexive, my positionality undoubtedly colors my data from my worldview; I, like many other sociologists, study a population that generally has lesser social capital, financial resources, education, and are of a different racial background than myself, and this influences the types of observations I make (Rios 2011). Using data that is produced by the participants represents an intervention in addressing researcher bias, and therein is the strength of coupling traditional qualitative data with participatory-action methods.

Utilizing Photovoice quite literally reproduces the participants' world as they see and understand it. This presents an exciting possibility to extend previous methodological boundaries of sociology, and furthermore, creates a precedent in sociological research for rethinking the way that data and knowledge is produced.

Intersectionality scholar Patricia Hill Collins (2000, 2012) argues that Black feminism should engage marginalized communities not just as subjects of knowledge, but also as expert producers of knowledge. The use of participatory-action methods like Photovoice is a step towards more equitable knowledge-production in the academy. By working with the participants to produce data on their experiences, the participants are able to exercise greater agency in the research process. The inclusion of Photovoice bolsters my data and analysis since it offers a visual representation of how the participants understand their social world. Furthermore, it provides participants with the agency to narrate their experiences on their own terms; they are able to choose the narrative they present to me in the context of their research. Allowing participants to choose how they are represented in research is

an important step to preserving the integrity of communities that feminist researchers choose to investigate.

At the time of the interviews, I would ask for an explanation of the photos and ask follow-up questions as I felt they were pertinent. This process allowed the women to guide the interview because they were able to self-narrate meaningful pieces of their lives that they wanted to share. While interviews alone can produce powerful accounts of people's lives, the women featured in this project guide the direction of the interviews because the narratives are directed by the photos that they believe best represent their experience. This also created space for the women to share when they felt that my interview questions were not useful for contextualizing their experiences (see photos on page 18).

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Many of the women used the Photovoice opportunity to capture pictorial representations of their professional, academic, and personal goals in the context of what freedom from incarceration meant to them. At this time, I have completed nine interviews with formerly incarcerated

women and have an additional four women who currently have cameras and have scheduled future interview dates. Of these fifteen women, nine have specifically scheduled their interview dates around a special event, such as a conference or dinner, seeing family members, or dental procedures; two of the women even reflected during their interviews that they reunited with family they had not seen in years because they wanted to include photos of those people in the Snapfish Photobooks that I provided as incentives for participation.

While I would not argue that using Photovoice drastically changes the life outcomes of the women in this study, all of the women in the study thus far spoke about at least half, if not most, of their photos as symbolic of the progress they have made since their incarceration and a representation of hopes for their futures. For some of the women, building their photo library appeared to be a conscious act of envisioning a more concrete future with distinct goals, such as completing a course or aspirations to work in a particular location or industry. Sometimes, the women use Photovoice to mark their achievements, such as buying a car. I would argue that these preliminary findings make a case for Photovoice as not only a way for participants to



exercise their agency in research and to resist stereotypes of incarcerated women, and especially Black women, as bad mothers or women, but also as a strategy of creating or celebrating goals (see *photos on page 20*).

This preliminary discussion of Photovoice in my project raises three potential benefits of this methodology for my dissertation, but it is by no means a comprehensive discussion of how or why social science and humanities research might incorporate participatory-action as a normative dimension of methodological practice. I have pointed to three potential benefits of using Photovoice as they have been raised in my preliminary research: representing spaces that are otherwise obscured through

traditional methods, creating meaningful partnerships between researchers and marginalized communities, and envisioning the future. I also argue that Photovoice is producing stronger empirical and theoretical directions for my broader research question on the ways that Black women experience reentry in Los Angeles. I imagine this paper as a tool for sparking further discussion among feminist research communities about strategies of integrating participatory-action methods as matter of liberatory feminist theorizing and praxis.

**Susila Gurusami** is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology at UCLA. She received the CSW Constance Coiner Graduate Fellowship in 2013. Her dissertation project explores the ways that women with precarious legal claims to mothering—such as non-biological kinship status and incarceration history—negotiate their rights to motherhood. She is incredibly grateful to the undergraduates she has worked with in Sociology and the Intergroup Relations Program. Their engagement with social justice and knowledge-building is her

daily source of motivation. Gurusami aims to integrate this spirit of co-learning into her dissertation through the use of participatory action methods in tandem with traditional qualitative approaches, and she hopes the work generated by the participants for her dissertation will provide community-produced materials for mobilization against the Prison-Industrial Complex.

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# A Life of International Women's Health, Service, and Poetry

**BY JEWEL PEREYRA**

**T**HIS PAST SUMMER I had the incredible opportunity to attend UCLA's Global Women's Health and Empowerment Summer Institute sponsored by the UC Center for Women's and Reproductive Health. I met an eclectic assortment of women, from recent graduates, PhD students, doctors, and community activists from across the world, including South Africa, London, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the Philippines. My classmates were so inspiring and passionate, and I had the pleasure of working with UCLA professors Dr. David Gere and Dr. Paula Tavrow on a grant proposal to establish a doula health program in South Metro Manila, Philippines.

During the weeklong institute, I learned about the intersections of



crisis, empowerment, community organizing and international women's health. One such international program is the Social Work and Research Centre, popularly known

as Barefoot College, which is a non-governmental organization in Tilonia, India that provides services, education and vocational training to women in rural communities. The



**Samantha Hogan (left), student advisor in the Department of Gender Studies at UCLA with Jewel Pereyra at CSW Awards Luncheon, June, 2013.**

college, founded by Bunker Roy, offers programs that train and educate women on solar electrification, clean water, education, livelihood development and activism so that they may empower themselves by working and teaching in their communities in sustainable ways. One of my classmates was also a project manager for Sonke Gender Justice, an NGO in South Africa committed to promoting gender equality, preventing domestic abuse and rape and reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

One essential take-away I gained from the summer institute, my colleagues and from Constance Coiner, is to commit myself to service, community building and education. After attending the UC Global institute, I turned in an application to serve in the U.S. Peace Corps. I am very excited to announce

that starting July I will be serving as an Education volunteer in Cambodia and I cannot wait to gain skills in grassroots organizing, learn Khmer culture, history and language, develop cross-cultural community skills, and form amazing friendships during my service abroad.

Alongside my community work, I am still following my passion for literature and poetry. In August I started a poetry journal The Pear Trees Review (<http://peartreesreview.wordpress.com>.) The online journal features essays, book reviews and interviews with contemporary American poets. So far I have interviewed poets from across the California coastline including Camille Dungy, Robert Hass, Sholeh Wolpé, Brenda Hillman, Brian Stefans, Eric Gudas, Amy Gerstler, Harryette Mullen and Douglas Kearney. I am

currently transcribing the interviews for publication, and in the coming months, I hope to expand my project to the Midwest and east coast!

Having graduating from UCLA, I am excited to start my professional career in international affairs, public service and writing. After the Peace Corps, I plan to continue my graduate studies in American Studies or Comparative Literature and aim to enhance my research and studies in world literatures and languages, contemporary poetry, diaspora and migrancy studies and critical race and feminist theories. I am very grateful for the Center for the Study of Women's support and hope to carry on Constance Coiner's visions of social justice, gender equality, education, and global community engagement.

*Jewel Pereyra received CSW's Constance Coiner Undergraduate Award in 2013. She was born in Okinawa, Japan and grew up in Oceanside, California. She graduated from UCLA with a double-major in Gender Studies and American Literature and Culture. Passionate about social justice, feminism, and LGBT rights, she co-founded UCLA's first "Gender, Sexuality and Society" themed floor community that, along with gender-neutral housing, became a housing option for students in the 2013-14 school year. She completed her departmental honors thesis with Professors Jenny Sharpe and Harryette Mullen. Her research explores European colonial travel narratives, post-colonial counter-narratives and myths, and the intersections between the nation, erotics and the queer diaspora in Caribbean and African American women's literature (1980s to present).*



# TRAP LAWS

## *Protecting Women or Harming Them?*

**BY MICHELLE RAZAVI**

**I**N 2005, 21 STATES CONSIDERED A TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) bill that would grant authority to the state's department of health to impose facility and personnel restrictions on abortion clinics. Currently, at least 34 states have some type of TRAP law that places specific requirements regarding health facility licensing, ambulatory surgical centers, or hospitalization.<sup>1</sup> These requirements go far beyond the recommendations of national health organizations for abortion care and impose costly burdens on clinics in matters such as personnel qualifications, building/structural requirements, and procedures. Activists opposed to abortion allege that the procedure necessitates special regulation because they regard it as an unsafe and unregulated procedure. For example, president of Colorado Pro-Life Alliance, who stated in supporting stringent regulation of abortion clinics that "Our primary goal is to protect

women and their health, and protect them from being victimized by the profit-driven abortion industry."<sup>2</sup> In 2000, 13 states adopted at least four major abortion restrictions and by 2013, 14 more states fell into this category.<sup>3</sup>

Are the TRAP laws adopted by more than half the states of the US legitimately concerned with women's safety and protection? While anti-abortion activists claim that TRAP laws are necessary to protect women's health and safety, the empirical evidence actually shows that these measures have nothing to do with protecting women and everything to do with partisan political control of state government.

From state-mandated ultra sounds to waiting periods to mandatory parental consent for minors, there have been many efforts throughout history to prevent women from obtaining abortion. The origins of modern TRAP laws can be traced back to the 1992 Supreme Court

decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, permitting states to regulate abortion providers as long as they didn't place an "undue burden" on a woman's ability to obtain an abortion.<sup>4</sup> This undue burden standard weakened the legal protection for women initially established in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, resulting in a proliferation of state-mandated health regulation of abortion providers. Additionally, funding support for abortion quickly waned amidst the abortion movement. Just three years after *Roe v. Wade* passed, Congress ratified the Hyde Amendment, prohibiting the use of federal Medicaid funds to pay for abortions, unless a woman's life would be endangered or in cases of rape or incest.<sup>5</sup> In other words, health regulations can only be enforced if they help the state's interest in promoting the health of abortion patients *and* aren't intended to unduly burden a woman's ability to have an abortion.<sup>6</sup> However, TRAP laws

impose requirements that reduce access to safe procedures, significantly raise the price of abortions, and/or decrease the availability of abortion providers. Any of these consequences can result in burdening the woman's choice to receive an abortion, harming rather than promoting patient health.

The claimed "rationale" behind these TRAP laws is to single out abortion clinics because they are considered dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of women. However, abortion is one of the safest and most commonly performed procedures with less than 0.3% of abortion complications requiring hospitalization.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the risk of death from childbirth is in reality about fourteen times higher than that of abortion.<sup>8</sup>

Abortion in America is so safe because the National Abortion Federation (NAF) has published and annually updated its Clinical Policy Guidelines since 1996.<sup>9</sup> These standards provide a basis for ongoing quality assurance and cover a variety of topics, including infection prevention, treatment of complications, and use of antibiotics, sedation, and analgesia. NAF standards also require that functioning equipment and medication be available onsite

to handle emergencies, with strict protocols for medical emergencies and emergency transport. More importantly, all members of the organization must adhere to these guidelines in order to both receive and maintain membership. Abortion is already highly regulated. TRAP laws are unnecessary and segregate abortion providers from the rest of medical practice, relegating them to a level below health care. Women need safe, reliable places for this procedure and these restrictions result in inaccessible abortion services. There are many ways in which TRAP laws inhibit or discourage women from receiving a safe abortion.

First, TRAP laws frequently impose administrative burdens by requiring practices to adhere to regulations and procedures that are medically unnecessary. TRAP laws exist in different forms but the most burdensome are those that impose requirements on the physical plant, such as the width of hallways, height of ceilings, and the dimensions of counseling rooms. One notable example is in Texas, mandating that "licensed facilities must establish and maintain a written 'quality assurance program,' run by a quality assurance committee of at least four staff members, who must meet at least quarterly. 25 Tex. Admin

Code § 139.8(a).<sup>10</sup> This is a clear example of a medically unnecessary requirement imposed by the state to make it administratively more difficult and costly to maintain a license to perform abortions.

Similarly in North Carolina, architectural requirements that have nothing to do with the abortion procedure itself are required for abortion procedures and recovery rooms. According to 10 N.C. Admin Code. 3E.0206, each room "shall have a minimum of six air changes per hour, and 'all air supplied to procedure rooms shall be delivered at or near the ceiling' and must pass through 'a minimum of one filter bed with a minimum filter efficiency of 80 percent.'"<sup>11</sup> Not only are these requirements costly, difficult to measure, and unnecessary, but they have nothing to do with protecting women. No other similar medical procedure are expected to abide by these air filter requirements, indicating that this is an administrative effort to restrict abortion providers, thereby hindering women from receiving safe abortions.

Second, TRAP laws are written in a vague language, which makes adherence to them difficult to interpret or measure. For instance, Texas issued an ambiguous provision requiring that all licensed facilities

“must ensure that all patients are cared for in a manner that ‘enhances [the patient’s] self-esteem and self-worth,’ 25 Texas Admin. Code § 139.51. This is very difficult to interpret because it is impossible to truly evaluate a person’s self-esteem and self-worth. Also, self-esteem and self-worth have nothing to do with a woman’s safety and protection. Raising the administrative cost of providing abortions discourages women to delay or even forgo abortions that they would otherwise pursue. These obstacles disproportionately affect the most vulnerable women: those unable to afford the increased costs, travel longer distances, or otherwise overcome government sanctioned barriers to legal health services.<sup>12</sup>

Third, TRAP laws deter physicians from becoming or remaining abortion providers, interfering with their ability to “exercise their medical judgment in the best interests of their patients.”<sup>13</sup> Whether its subjecting physicians to criminal and civil penalties or intruding into their practice of medicine, these TRAP laws permit a level of harassment towards abortion providers that no other medical professional experiences. For example, Missouri requires that physicians performing abortions must: “have staff privileges at a hospital within fifteen (15) minutes travel

time from the facility or the facility shall show proof there is a working arrangement between the facility and a hospital within fifteen (15) minutes travel time from the facility granting the admittance of patients for emergency treatment whenever necessary.”<sup>19</sup> CSR 30-30.060(1)(c)(4) (Missouri).<sup>14</sup>

According to a recent policy review, requiring links to hospitals doesn’t contribute to long-standing patient safeguards, but instead grants hospitals veto power over whether an abortion provider can exist.<sup>15</sup> The medically unnecessary requirements placed on abortion providers actually harms women as the laws inhibit their physicians from doing their job to the best of their ability. Especially with a provider shortage already prevalent in the United States, this type of legislation discourages health care providers from offering abortion care due to the unnecessary limits imposed on them.<sup>16</sup>

Warrantless search provisions under TRAP laws are in effect in twelve states, authorizing state health departments to conduct unannounced inspections on abortion facilities. Although some provisions protect patient privacy and confidentiality, other regulations don’t. For example, a South Carolina regulation allows health inspectors

access to private patient medical records and permits them to make copies of those records and remove the copies from the office. According to 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 61-12 § 102(F) (2), “department inspectors shall have access to all properties and areas, objects, records, and reports, and shall have the authority to make photocopies of these documents required in the course of inspections or investigations.”<sup>17</sup>

Women who obtain abortions in these states run the risk of having their private medical information distributed to third parties. This lack of privacy could dissuade them from obtaining an abortion or reveal past abortions to their physicians, which impose repercussions on her health and safety.

While TRAP laws may seem well-intentioned and harmless at first glance, they severely threaten the process of receiving an abortion safely for women. TRAP laws single out abortion providers in order to further the agenda of anti-choice activists seeking to inhibit abortion procedures. Most of these provisions are pushed by conservative political leaders, demonstrating the partisan agenda behind these medical regulations. In fact, a recent report using historical analysis found that the ideologically anti-abortion

Republican institutional control of a state's legislative branches is positively associated with a state enacting a TRAP law.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, Democratic institutional control is negatively associated with a state enacting a TRAP law. These empirical results from 1974 to 2008 demonstrate that partisan political party control is the most important factor affecting the enactment of a TRAP law. Additionally, this report concluded that state legislators do not “mirror the abortion attitudes of the median voter [and thus] state policymakers are not responsive to the public's preferences about abortion policy.”<sup>19</sup> Given the numerous methods that activists have pursued over the years, we can see that TRAP laws are merely a new breed of obstacles disguised to discourage women from obtaining an abortion.

Abortion is a safe procedure, with rigorously developed standards that all providers must follow. However, the ideological partisan agenda has interfered with this medical procedure in an attempt to shut down abortion clinics with TRAP laws. By imposing administrative burdens, subjecting physicians to unnecessary requirements, and violating women's rights to privacy, these laws aren't protecting women but are rather another politically driven method to

inhibit women from safely receiving abortions.



*Michelle Razavi recently graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor of arts in Political Science and a minor in Spanish.*

*She graduated with College Honors as well as Phi Beta Kappa. Raised in a multilingual household by a single mother, she developed her passion for international affairs and female empowerment at an early age. She studied abroad in Madrid, Spain, where she took all of her upper-division courses in Spanish and met the U.S. Ambassador to Spain. She also interned over the summer with Hyundai Capital in Seoul, South Korea. Michelle will be moving to San Francisco in the summer to work full-time for the online ticketing company, Eventbrite. She received the CSW Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., Award in 2013.*

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# Sex Worker Activism in Latin America

## COSTA RICA'S ASOCIACIÓN LA SALA

BY MZILIKAZI KONÉ

**O**N MY FIRST TRIP TO LA SALA (*The Living Room*), I met the politically active advocates for Costa Rica's sex industry workers, the small country's invisible, but often either demonized or victimized population. The leaders I met defended the population of sex workers, despite the challenges.

While I did find conviction in the trio of leaders—Nubia Ordoñez, Gretel Quiros Pastraña and Carolina Rivera,\* La Sala's service provision at the time was unable to match that of the organization's headier days. In that moment they presided over a shell of a project in the heart of San José with very little funding.

La Sala is housed in a large building in San José, Costa Rica's notorious red light district. On the first day of walking there, I realized that it was situated in a dangerous area. A few doors from the building, ironically, there stands a police station. Several years ago, police officials decided to locate a station in the neighborhood to allegedly decentralize enforcement.

\* Pseudonym



La Sala is housed in an old Canada Dry building.



Some residents and workers, according to La Sala, reported that the added police presence stabilized the neighborhood and that compared to previous years, there was less crime now. On the west side of the block, around the corner, shoppers make their way to a large marketplace, where fresh vegetables, meats, household products and cooked foods are sold.

On the other side of the street, there are other commercial stores. Beginning at roughly eight in the morning, women line up to meet potential clients and ply their trades. In the other direction, on the east side of the block and to the right, sit a bevy of brothels, some six in a row. The culture in the brothels is very different than that of the women on the street, on the south side of the block. In these areas, the working poor meet the bustling shoppers in one of the cities busiest market places. In the middle of this block, stands La Sala.

As I would later learn during my research there, La Sala, like many Costa Rican non-profits, provide critical services for its constituents, but only when the organization can access public and private funds. If La Sala's cash flow is interrupted, a serious lack of resources results and the organization is unable to provide these services, including the most basic necessities and such critical utilities as water and power. On numerous occasions, I witnessed drastic cuts in these services, even as the leadership worked to pay its bills.

A critique stating that much of the research on sex worker organizations focused on the U.S. and Western



Front door of La Sala features condom posters in the windows.



**Front Sign: “A place for us... workers and ex-sex workers fighting for our rights”**

Europe generated substantial comment several years ago. Consequently, such texts as “Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance and Redefinition,” (Kempadoo and Doezema, 1998), came forth to detail the kinds of sex worker organizations that emerged throughout the global south. As Cabezas (2009), notes, many of these organizations arose out of attempts in the international community to fund HIV/AIDS prevention throughout the region.

Although numerous sex worker organizations continue to fight for funds to maintain health and HIV/AIDS prevention programs, many of them have expanded their work and

goals, over time, to include human rights, addressing police abuse and accessing health care as priorities.

The Asociación La Sala was born in 1994, out of a project designed by the Institution Lationamericano de Prevención y Educación (ILPES--The Latin American Institute of Prevention and Education), an organization based in the Netherlands, which targeted sex workers for education on HIV/AIDS, sexuality education and building self-esteem. The initial plan for La Sala was to create a series of workshops for a group of sex workers that could later be replicated and shared with other sex workers (Van Wijk, 4). It was hoped that this

cycle of education around HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention would continue among sex workers and perhaps even extend to their clients (Carvajal 6/15/12).

During my seven-month fieldwork that spanned between 2012 and 2013, I was able to observe La Sala in the early stages of a leadership transition that would highlight the shift from professionals: a social worker and a professor who previously led the project, to sex worker volunteers, who had long worked with the project. According to the project manual, this change in leadership was the goal of the Dutch social worker and founder of the



**“Felicidades Mamás!” [Congratulations mothers!], Mother’s Day Piñata, Asociación La Sala, Mothers Day Party, August 2013**



project, Karin Van Wijk.

The leadership transition occurred at the end of 2011, 17 years after the organization came into existence. Conflicts over funding, leadership and project control were all factor in the split, triggered by the steady ascension of sex workers to the board of directors that gave them enough votes to oust the previous leadership--the professionals--and wrest control over the organization.

Individual and collective empowerment has long been a primary goal of the project. Since its inception, the project was to provide services to this community of majority women, but to also include them in leadership roles in the project. From the start, the long-term vision for the project was for the women to one day lead the project. The project was to

help inspire self-determination and encourage women to fight for their rights, both as women and as sex workers. Carolina Rivera, a current leader of the project, described her perspective on empowerment strategies:

M: How does La Sala help other women empower themselves?

C: Well, that they believe in themselves. That they feel the value that they have as a human, this is first, that she feels that she is worthy in spite of her work, that they are valuable as people. From this, we help them learn that they are valuable as people, as women and that we are also valuable as mothers (3/21/12).

This interpretation of empowerment reflects a concept akin to self-esteem building amongst the women, including the affirmation for the role of motherhood that exists in

the lives of a majority of women that interact with the project.

La Sala’s current goals can be described in many different ways. They serve as both a service provider to the women who work in San Jose’s Zona Roja (red zone) occasionally working with state agencies and other NGOs’s to offer temporary events and services like HIV/STI testing, access to optometrists and hosting health fairs in the space.

Additionally, La Sala serves as a center of education, where free workshops and trainings educate women on basic human rights and sex education. La Sala has hosted numerous workshops, services and events for women working in the area. They have also provided access to various types of doctors at low or no cost. Early in La Sala’s history, the organization provided free and inexpensive dental visits, free visits for psychological services and access to a washing machine. La Sala continues to host events for women associated with, or using its services, including a mother’s day event, movie nights and holiday parties, among other activities.

Organizing sex workers can be challenging, especially given the socialization of many women conditioned to compete against each other, the inherent competitiveness of the location and the work, and the double standard around sex work that can have a negative effect on women’s self-esteem (Van Wijk, 2000). This double morality allows men to visit sex workers, but blames and stigmatizes women and acts as an additional factor limiting their willingness to “come out” as sex



workers. All these factors have direct effects on whether women were, or are, able to organize and become politicized around the project.

The double standard also plays a role in organizing since not everyone working in some aspect of the industry identifies as a sex worker, which can be a transient labor and identity. Consequently, using the term “sex worker” is an actively political tool to attempt to mobilize, engage and organize as an identity. Meanwhile, the dual roles of stigma and discrimination continue to be huge factors in determining one’s willingness to self identify as a sex worker, organize publically, or at all.

Gretel Quiros Pastraña, a project leader, described the need to develop solidarity among sex workers:

“Because I have done my homework in learning that she is not my enemy, she is my friend. How did I arrive at understanding this? Through workshops, trainings...they are not my enemies, they are my colleagues; I don’t say they are my friends like that...But they are people and I believe in them and that they have a lot of qualities and that because of this, I am here fighting.... they are part of the reason that I fight, without them, what is my cause? If I don’t believe in them, who will? I have to work so that people believe in them, just like someone believed in me” (3/27/12).

The project’s immediate goal is to secure adequate funding to keep the doors open and renew critical services. Somehow, in the interim, La Sala has staved off closure. Its organizers aspire to develop a larger network of sex worker organizations



**Nubia Ordoñez  
speaks at the  
workshop in Paso  
Canoas,  
June 23, 2012**

so workers nationwide can benefit from organizing. The current leadership has continued this goal by finding sites in outside provinces where workshops can be held for other workers.

In June, 2012, La Sala’s members left San José for Paso Canoas, a city along the border with Panama, where its leaders held their first workshop with the goal of developing a network of sex worker organizations in Costa Rica. Just before the workshop concluded, Gretel Quiros Pastraña spoke of her experience and the need for more organizing among sex workers:

“Being a sex worker does not mean we don’t have a right to health, to a dignified home and a ton of things like everyone else who works. This is a job, we are not the problem of anyone--we are the

solution to many problems. When we are organized and empowered, we are going to have a voice and a vote in the state. And we are going to be heard. True? This is not easy, I had 10 years in the organization that I had to experience in order to believe it and eat it. Because I used to say, I’m a sex worker; I don’t have a right to anything. But I have a right to things like anybody else! I pay... and I pay taxes too. We have a right to a pension. This will be when are 80, 90-years-old, I still have a lot of sex work left (*laughter*), but we need to be organized. I still have a lot to give... But we have to be organized to ask for our rights. Its not easy, but we can do it” (6/23/12).

When Gretel and Nubia discussed their desire to organize as sex workers, the women nodded excitedly in agreement as the leaders declared



their goals of recognition and accessing corresponding rights. In previous years, Nubia pointed out, as she compared La Sala's current position to its past state, they were an organization for sex workers, but now, she noted, they are a group for and by sex workers. La Sala's attempt to develop a sex worker network, given the project's on-going financial difficulties, highlights a larger need for increased organization and politicization among the workers. In discussing their desire to expand, the women's decision to push for the network highlights the need to be more politically organized as laborers, to show their face to sex workers throughout Costa Rica and gain the collective power needed to pressure the state for recognition as workers and to thus access the rights afforded them.



Mzikazi Koné (shown at left with Nubia Ordoñez) is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at UCLA with a focus on Race, Ethnicity and

Politics studies. Her dissertation is tentatively titled "Sex Worker Political Development in Latin America: from Informal Solidarities to Formal Organizing." She received a CSW Travel Grant to support her research.

**Author's note:** For more information on La Sala, visit <http://asociacionlasala.org/index.html>

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"In Defense of the human rights of women sex workers," May 1, 2012



Coordinator Nubia Ordoñez and Leader Gretel Quiros Pastraña respond to a reporter, International Workers Day March, May 1 2012.

# CSW AWARDS 2014

## Celebrating the Service, Achievements, and Scholarship of This Year's Recipients

Held on June 2, 2014, the annual CSW Awards luncheon was a wonderful opportunity to honor recipients, donors, and honored guests. We were pleased to welcome all the student award recipients (listed below) and Dr. Myrna Hant, Dr. Patricia Zukow-Goldring, Virginia Coiner Classick, Prof Kirstie McClure, Prof. Ellen DuBois, Prof Victor Bascara, Dr. Alice Wexler.

Named for the first woman to graduate from medical school and made possible by the generosity of Barbara "Penny" Kanner, Ph.D., Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., Awards honor a publishable research report, thesis, dissertation, or published article relating to women, health, or women in health-related sciences. This year's recipients are Sarah Pripas-Kapit and Lauren Hanover.

Created to honor the memory and continue the work of Constance Coiner, Ph.D., and her daughter Ana Duarte-Coiner and made possible through donations of family and friends, the Constance Coiner Awards support research on feminist and working-class issues and honor excellence in teaching and a commitment to teaching as activism. This year's recipients are Yvette Martinez-Vu (graduate student fellowship) and Angelica Munoz (undergraduate award).



**from left to right. Min Liang, Dr. Myrna Hant, and Cherry Lai**

Made possible through the generosity of Barbara "Penny" Kanner, Ph.D., the Penny Kanner Dissertation Research Fellowship funds an exceptional dissertation research project pertaining to women or gender that uses historical materials and methods. This year's recipient is Cassia Paigen Roth.

Made possible through the generosity of Myrna A. Hant, Ph.D., the Renaissance Award supports the renewed academic aspirations of women whose college careers were interrupted or delayed by family and/or career obligations. The recipients are UCLA undergraduate women who returned or are returning to college after a period of time. This year's recipients are Cherry Lai, Min Liang, and Janie Thompson.

Made possible through the

generosity of Mrs. Jean Stone, the Jean Stone Dissertation Research Fellowship funds an exceptional graduate student dissertation research project focusing on women or gender. This year's recipients are Renata Redford and Aidan Seale-Feldman.

The Paula Stone Legal Research Fellowship, which was established by Mrs. Jean Stone to honor her daughter, Paula Stone, helps fund an exceptional dissertation research project focusing on women and the law with preference given to research on women in the criminal/legal justice system. This year's recipients are Savannah Kilner, Melissa Whitley, Wendi Yamashita.

For more information on the awards and recipients, visit the CSW website.



# CSW AWARDS 2014



from left to right, Yvette Martinez-Vi, Virginia Coiner Classick, and Angelica Munoz



Janie Thompson



Cassia Paigen Roth



from left to right, Melissa Whitely, Wendi Yamashita, and Savannah Kilner



Aidan Seale-Feldman



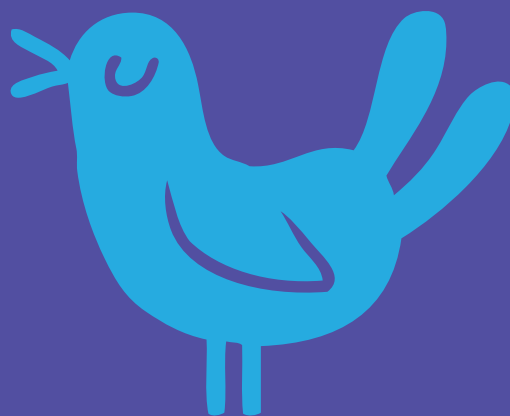
from left to right, Dr. Alice Wexler, Lauren Hanover, Sarah Pripas-Kapit, and Prof Ellen DuBois



Renata Redford



Have a  
great  
summer!  
See you  
in the  
fall!



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