Sara Bleich wants to change the way we eat. 
(Without making us feel bad.)
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The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University is dedicated to creating and sharing transformative ideas across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. The Fellowship Program annually supports the work of 50 leading artists and scholars. Academic Ventures fosters collaborative research projects and sponsors lectures and conferences that engage scholars with the public. The Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America documents the lives of American women of the past and present for the future, furthering the Institute’s commitment to women, gender, and society.
A Fantastic Fall

Looking back on my first semester as Radcliffe dean, I feel grateful and energized: I am grateful for the opportunity to return to Radcliffe and reacquaint myself with so many of the people who make this such a wonderful place—from faculty members, staffers, and fellows here in Cambridge to friends, supporters, and alumnae/i who span the globe.

And I am energized by the incredible public events and rich intellectual exploration that lit up our campus over the past few months, as well as by the ambitious spring semester that lies ahead.

Radcliffe Magazine gives me the opportunity to share some of the highlights from my perspective and—hopefully—inspire you to join us, in person or online, for one or more of the many fascinating programs we have planned. This fall, we welcomed six Radcliffe Professors to campus as members of our fellowship class, including Sara Bleich, the Carol K. Pforzheimer Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and a professor of public health policy at the Harvard Chan School, who is working to find innovative policy alternatives to prevent and control obesity. Among Sara’s “fellow fellows” are several remarkable scholars whose work contributes to the Institute’s ongoing two-year exploration of citizenship. They include Moon Duchin, a mathematician—and former Radcliffe Research Partner—who uses advanced mathematics to achieve fairness in electoral redistricting, and Hernan del Valle, the head of humanitarian affairs and advocacy at Médecins Sans Frontières, who is exploring fundamental questions of exclusion, identity, nationalism, citizenship, and human rights.

I encourage you to watch Duchin’s and del Valle’s fellowship presentations online. While you’re on the website, be sure to also watch our 2018–2019 Rama S. Mehta Lecture, featuring National Public Radio’s Ofeibea Quist-Arcton in a captivating conversation with Marco Werman, host of Public Radio International’s The World.

These programs only scratch the surface. It has been a wonderful—and wonderfully busy—fall and early winter at Radcliffe. I can hardly wait to kick off the spring semester, and by the time you read this, that’s exactly what we’ll be doing. I hope to see you very soon.

Tomiko Brown-Nagin
Dean
Around the Institute
"A sounding line, or lead line, is a length of rope with a weight, or plummet, attached to one end. This apparatus is an ancient tool, still in use today, that measures the depth of water. Here, the words ‘lead line’ and ‘plummet’ suggest a creative journey into uncharted depths of intellectual discovery."

For Lead, Line, and Plummet, the first exhibition of the 2018–2019 academic year in the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery, this year’s fellows were asked to contribute objects that represent, inspire, or result from their work. Thirty-eight fellows chose to participate—the largest number yet for a fellows’ group exhibition.

And what a truly eclectic variety of objects they contributed: a 1960s-era irrigation system once operated by Lucas Bessire’s great-grandfather; an interactive collection of pebbles and leaves housed in an aquarium contributed by Josh Levine; a T-shirt commemorating the American Coaster Enthusiasts, who enthralled EJ Hill as a child; colorful paper bags bought by Dana Sajdi in the papermakers’ market in the old city of Damascus. These items and many more illustrated that inspiration can come from anywhere—and excited us about the potential cross-pollination within this extraordinary class.
A New Era

SIXTY YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE FIRST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AT RADCLIFFE, MEREDITH QUINN BUILDS ON THE STRENGTHS OF HER PREDECESSORS TO BEGIN THE PROGRAM’S NEXT PHASE.

Meredith Quinn is the new executive director of the Fellowship Program, which brings 50 fellows to the Radcliffe Institute each year. Quinn is a familiar face on campus, where she most recently served as the chief of staff to Harvard’s provost. She earned a PhD in history from Harvard University, an MBA from Stanford University, and a bachelor’s degree from Harvard-Radcliffe Colleges. We sat down with her in her Byerly Hall office to talk about her experience, hopes, and vision.

Quinn was Brown-Nagin’s first hire as dean

You have been a valued member of Harvard’s community for some years. What was it about leading the Radcliffe Institute’s Fellowship Program that persuaded you to take on this new professional challenge?

The fellows who come here are just extraordinary. It’s such a privilege and a joy to be around them. Although there’s a lot of cross-disciplinary work on campus, it’s still rare to have such a broad range of disciplines represented—arts, sciences, social sciences, and humanities. To have that all in one place is actually unique. I am also inspired by Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin’s vision for a Radcliffe that is more engaged with the world around us and committed to opportunity. I often say that I have the best job at Harvard, and I mean it!

Although it’s early days yet, can you tell us a bit about your vision for the Fellowship Program?

Radcliffe’s theory of action is that when you bring together exceptional people from a broad range of disciplines, the mixture enables a special sort of creativity. Looking forward, we would like to better understand what sort of relationship our alumnae/i fellows want to have with us and how Radcliffe can continue to be of service to them. How can we give them an inspiring “Radcliffe experience” wherever they are in the world? Another core part of Radcliffe’s mission is sharing ideas with the public. For many years now, we have offered fellows workshops on topics such as public speaking and book publishing. We are exploring ways of expanding and deepening these programs. We want to support fellows’ efforts to have an impact on the world.

Can you share one of your favorite Radcliffe experiences thus far?

One of our fellows, Dana Sajdi, casually mentioned during orientation that she wanted to learn to sing. Inspired by her, a group of fellows, led by our two composers fellows, has been meeting every Wednesday evening to sing together around the piano in the Byerly basement. At last week’s holiday party, the group put on a joyful (and excellent) performance. It was proof of something that the fellow and cognitive psychologist Ani Patel had told us in his fellow’s talk: the power of music to create community.

What do you wish others at Harvard knew about Radcliffe?

I wish that more people knew about our Radcliffe Research Partnership program. We give fellows the option of hiring Harvard undergraduates to work with them. Fellows love it, because our undergraduates are so talented and dedicated; hiring them helps our fellows do more with their time. For the undergraduates, it’s an opportunity to dig deep into original research in the company of a leading artist or scholar. They often learn new skills. I think Radcliffe has cracked the code here, in terms of how to make those partnerships successful.

Aside from your impressive academic and work history at Harvard, is there anything you’d be willing to share with readers about yourself?

I really welcome hearing from alumnae/i of the fellowship program and of the Bunting Institute, the current program’s predecessor. I’m trying to get to know the Radcliffe community, and I appreciate when people reach out to me.
New Talent Arrives

Each year, the Radcliffe Professorships program helps recruit leading scholars to the Harvard community. This unique opportunity allows new faculty members to focus on independent research as they take part in the Radcliffe Fellowship Program during their first years at Harvard. For more about the program, see page 28.

**Erica Chenoweth** joins Harvard Kennedy School as a professor of public policy and the Radcliffe Institute as a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor. An internationally recognized authority on political violence, she was chosen as one of Foreign Policy’s Leading Global Thinkers of 2013. Prior to her current appointment, Chenoweth was associate dean for research at the University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

Chenoweth earned a BA in political science and German from the University of Dayton and an MA and a PhD in political science from the University of Colorado. She codirects the Crowd Counting Consortium, a project that documents political mobilization in the United States during the Trump administration.

After 16 years on the faculty of Princeton University, **Christina L. Davis** ’93, PhD ’01 joins Harvard as a professor in the Department of Government. She is also a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at the Radcliffe Institute.

Davis holds an AB in East Asian studies and a PhD in government from Harvard University. Broadly, her research connects the politics and foreign policy of Japan and East Asia and the study of international organizations, with an emphasis on trade policy. Davis’s books have won the International Law Book Award, the Chadwick F. Alger Prize, and the Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Prize. She is currently writing a third book on membership in international organizations.

**Jarvis R. Givens** is a Suzanne Young Murray Assistant Professor at the Radcliffe Institute and an assistant professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He earned his PhD in African diaspora studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to his faculty appointment, he completed a dean’s postdoctoral fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Givens’s research interests are interdisciplinary, falling at the intersection of the history of education, 19th- and 20th-century African American history, and black critical theory. He is currently working on his first book, an exploration of how teachers and black community members utilized the historian Carter G. Woodson’s critiques of the American school during the period of Jim Crow.

**A specialist in human-computer interaction, Elena Leah Glassman** joins the Department of Government. She is also a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at the Radcliffe Institute.

Glassman earned a BA in political science and German from the University of Dayton and an MA and a PhD in political science from the University of Colorado. She codirects the Crowd Counting Consortium, a project that documents political mobilization in the United States during the Trump administration.
Lauren K. Williams ’00 joins Harvard as a Sally Starling Seaver Professor at the Radcliffe Institute and a professor of mathematics. She is the only woman with a tenured faculty position in Harvard’s mathematics department. Williams’s research focuses on algebraic combinatorics; more specifically, she uses algebraic tools to study discrete structures in mathematics.

Prior to her current appointment, Williams was a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. She earned an AB in mathematics from Harvard College and a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and held a number of postdoctoral appointments, including a National Science Foundation fellowship at the University of California and a Benjamin Pierce Fellowship at Harvard.

With these distinguished additions, the Radcliffe Professorships program has recruited 29 faculty members.

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Promoting Engagement

As experts in their fields of study, Radcliffe Institute faculty directors develop innovative programming across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences that engages researchers, students, and the public. They are committed to creating connections among scholars, schools, and disciplines at Harvard University and around the world.

Immaculata De Vivo has been appointed interim faculty codirector of the science program at the Radcliffe Institute. She also holds positions at Harvard Medical School as a professor of medicine and at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health as a professor of epidemiology.

As an international leader in the molecular and genetic epidemiology of cancer, De Vivo applies a uniquely interdisciplinary approach, combining molecular biology, genetics, and epidemiology. Recognized by the American Cancer Society, her research focuses on how the environment can interact with genetic factors, which has the potential to influence a person’s vulnerability to hormonal cancers.

Alyssa A. Goodman AM ’86, PhD ’89, RI ’17 codirects Radcliffe’s science program. Goodman is the Robert Wheeler Willson Professor of Applied Astronomy in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences. In 2016–2017, she was the Edward, Frances, and Shirley B. Daniels Fellow at Radcliffe. Before joining Harvard’s faculty, she was a President’s Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley.

Goodman’s work spans astronomy, data visualization, science education, and the use of technology in academic research and teaching. Recently, she has focused on the history of prediction, ranging from Mesopota-
Evidence of Social Change?

The papers of the writer and trans activist Jennifer Finney Boylan come to the library.

Jennifer Finney Boylan, the inaugural Anna Quindlen Writer in Residence and a professor of English at Barnard College, is a well-known author, trans activist, and television personality. Among her 15 books is the award-winning memoir *She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders* (Random House, 2003). In February 2017, the Schlesinger Library was pleased to host “Gender, Politics, and Imagination: An Afternoon with Jennifer Finney Boylan,” during which she spoke about privilege, politics, and poetics. She has since donated her papers to the Library, and they were added to the online catalog in August. We spoke to her about her decision to entrust her papers to us.

Why did you choose the Schlesinger as the home for your papers?

Well, the Schlesinger has one of the world’s best collections of the works, the writings, and the artifacts of American women. Adrienne Rich’s papers are there. The archives of the National Organization for Women are there. The original drafts of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, by the Boston Women’s Health Collective, are there. It seemed like auspicious company for someone like me, someone whose womanhood has been hard fought—and hard won. I’m also honored, of course, by the connection to Radcliffe, which, both as an independent college and as a Harvard institute, is dedicated, among other things, to the role of gender in education.

Also, to be honest, it was Jane Kamensky who first reached out to me. I don’t have an obvious connection to Harvard, although I’ve spoken there on a couple of occasions. But some of the more obvious choices—Wesleyan, which I attended as an undergraduate, and Colby, where I worked for 25 years—didn’t seem exactly breathless at the prospect of acquiring my works. Jane Kamensky was different. She made it clear from the first that the fight for transgender rights and equal protection under the law were part of what the Schlesinger saw as an important cultural milestone in the 21st century. She made me feel that my papers would be valued and that they would be part of a larger collection dedicated to the progress of women—and men—as we seek to create a more just society.

In your view, how will your papers enrich the Library’s holdings?

You’re making me grin because you’re asking me to speak of my own work in an immodest, boastful manner, and that doesn’t really come naturally to me. Wasn’t there a character called Furious Frog in Aesop who kept puffing himself up larger and larger to impress everyone else, until finally he exploded? I want to avoid that fate. But let’s just say that in my various manuscripts and artifacts, archivists and readers might find evidence of a change in the culture’s understanding of gender and of the fight for transgender acceptance in particular. My memoir, *She’s Not There*, was the first best-selling work by a transgender American, and I hope that speaks to a sense of progress. One of the manuscripts I’ve donated to the collection contains handwritten edits and suggestions by my friend Richard Russo, who also figures as a character in that book. Since Rick won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, his annotations on a book that already has some historical significance are, I think, an additional treasure.

What was it like—logistically, intellectually, and emotionally—to review your papers in preparation for the transfer?

Well, in some ways it was grim, because I felt from the outset that it was like preparing for life after I’m gone. And as William Saroyan said, “Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case.” It felt like preparing for the grave. Jane Kamensky said to me, “Well, think of it more like picking out a nice burial plot”—a comment that failed to cheer me.

But after the initial sadness of it, there was joy, too, in part because now I know that some of the things I care about will have a good home. And a couple of manuscripts that I never published will be available and may indeed find readers in years to come. There’s a novel titled *Sex in the Wilderness*, about a group of friends through-hiking the Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine, with the ashes of a friend of theirs; their intention is to sprinkle those ashes on top of Mt. Katahdin. Only one of the seven of them makes it all the way. It’s a book I love and which I hope will bring joy to future readers.

How did you choose what to archive—and what to seal or immediately make public?

“But after the initial sadness of it, there was joy, too, in part because now I know that some of the things I care about will have a good home.”
I didn’t want to embarrass anyone, at least while I’m alive. I have a pretty vivid diary of my transition from male to female from 2000 to 2003 or so. That I’ll keep sealed up, since it names a lot of names. Also, there’s a manuscript of a screenplay called *The Language of Women* that I wrote with Rick Russo before transition—there are some fairly raw things in that as well, and I wanted to make sure I didn’t complicate my friendship with him or anybody else. After I’m gone, of course, everybody’s on their own.

**What do you hope future researchers will take away from your personal effects?**

I hope they will provide a snapshot of what it meant to be a working writer in the late 20th century. The first items I donated are short works I created while a graduate student in the 1980s; the collection goes right up to the current day (and there are more items to come in years ahead). I know that it’s my work on gender—and how that work is reflected in some of my fiction—that may catch historians’ eyes first. But I also hope that readers will be touched by the stories themselves—the memoirs and the short pieces and the fiction. I don’t know whether they will see these works as having been written by a man, or a woman, or someone who traveled between those realms. But I do hope people will be moved by these snapshots—some of them clear, some of them blurry—of what it meant to be alive during these strange, urgent years.
Cast of The Suffragists

Alice Paul            Shaina Taub
Carrie Chapman Catt  Jenn Colella
Inez Milholland       Krysta Rodriguez
Ida B. Wells          Erica Dorfler
Lucy Burns            Samantha Massell
Ruza Wenclawowska     Stephanie Hsu
Doris Stevens         Sarah Steele
President Woodrow Wilson Grace McLean
Dudley Field Malone   Ally Bonino
How are scientific discoveries made? We learn about the scientific method as an orderly process, starting with a hypothesis and ending with a result proving it correct (or not). But ask any scientist and you’ll find that science is far messier—and more exciting.

For its 2018 science symposium, the Radcliffe Institute explored how discoveries are actually made. “Science is not solved, it’s not boring, it’s not dry, and most of it is undiscovered,” said Alyssa A. Goodman AM ’86, PhD ’89, RI ’17, a faculty codirector of the Institute’s science program and the Robert Wheeler Willson Professor of Applied Astronomy at Harvard. “The Undiscovered,” held in October in the newly renovated Knafel Center, let scientists from diverse disciplines share the lucky breaks, fresh observations, and intractable puzzles that make the pursuit of science worthwhile.

Moving Away from the Formula
An underlying theme of the event was education: A poster session explored ways to bring the real excitement of the scientific process into schools. And the talks began with the Barnstable High School senior Ceili Magnus, who garnered a standing ovation for the eloquent reading of her poem critiquing typical science education: “The questions that need to be asked can’t come from a formula,” she said. (Read the poem in full on page 17.)

In his morning keynote, Stuart Firestein made a passionate case that ignorance, doubt, uncertainty, and failure are not the opposite of success but an integral part of it. Science follows a winding path, said Firestein, a professor of biological sciences at Columbia University and the author of Ignorance: How It Drives Science (Oxford University Press, 2012). He called the scientific method “a very wrong idea, because there’s nothing particularly methodical or recipe-like about doing science.”

Scientists don’t begin with a correct answer; they follow mysteries. From Benjamin Franklin to James Maxwell to Marie Curie, scientists and other thinkers have praised the unknown. “Ignorance grows with knowledge,” Firestein said. “The more you know, the more you know what you don’t know.” The point of knowledge is not to get rid of ignorance, he said, but “to pose a better question, a more sophisticated question, a deeper question.”

Challenging the Paradigm
Scientific discoveries often arise when observations challenge preconceived hypotheses. Robinson (Wally) W. Fulweiler, an associate professor of earth and environment and biology at Boston University, recounted a surprising discovery she made while painstakingly studying plastic bottles of muck collected from the floor of Narragansett Bay, in Rhode Island: a new pattern in the way microbes in ocean sediments process human-caused nitrogen pollution. At talks, other scientists admitted that they had ignored similar patterns because they challenged the working paradigm in the field. “I want to ban ‘working paradigm’ from science,” Fulweiler said.

She urged other budding scientists to follow evidence no matter where it takes
They. “It was this tiny plastic bottle that changed my life,” she said. “It’s super nerdy, I know. But embrace that nerd, because we need you.”

Working in a totally different field, medicine, Joel T. Dudley has also allowed data to steer his research in directions that challenge paradigms. Dudley, director of the Next Generation Healthcare Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center, uses large health-related databases—including genetics, lab test results, and medical records—to categorize diseases in new ways. The approach has shown that type 2 diabetes may actually represent three distinct conditions, and that Alzheimer’s disease may be linked to common viruses in the brain.

In some cases, science itself is clear but society’s responses to it are unpredictable. The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change finds overwhelming evidence that humans must make radical changes to stave off catastrophic global warming—“nothing less than a complete shutdown of the fossil fuel system over the next 30 years,” said Nathan E. Hultman, director of the Center for Global Sustainability at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy.

Such a transition may seem impossible, but Hultman pointed out that we’re often wrong about how quickly people can change. “When we think about what’s possible, we often think about drawing extrapolations from where we are today,” he said. “We can choose our future.”

**The Final Frontier**

The afternoon turned to the ultimate undiscovered territory: space.

Humans have speculated about alien life on distant worlds for hundreds of years, but now it may be possible to actually find it. “Within the next 10 years, we might detect the presence of life on planets orbiting other stars,” said David Charbonneau AM ’99, PhD ’01, a professor of astronomy at Harvard. Exoplanets—planets outside our solar system—were long deemed too challenging to detect with certainty. But Charbonneau’s finding in 2000 that an exoplanet could be observed as it passed in front of, or transited, its star “was the push that everybody needed,” said Laura Kreidberg, a junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows. After that, she said, “the floodgates opened.”

Close to 4,000 planets orbiting other stars have now been confirmed, with a greater diversity than we

High-school students took part in the symposium’s poster session.
could ever have imagined. Even more exciting, “10 to 20 percent of stars host an Earth-sized planet with temperatures appropriate for liquid water on the surface,” Kreidberg said. But she called the search for life on exoplanets “a calculated gamble,” because we have no idea which ones might harbor it.

How would we know whether a distant planet harbors life? One telltale sign, said Lisa Kaltenegger, director of the Carl Sagan Institute at Cornell University, is the chemical composition of its atmosphere. “What’s missing in the light that gets to the telescope—that will tell us about the chemical composition of these other worlds,” she said; this spectral fingerprint could reveal levels of gases such as oxygen and methane that indicate a planet teeming with life. But would life in such different worlds have the same chemical signatures as in our own? “As a first step, we can use Earth as a Rosetta stone,” she said, but we also need to look at extreme forms of life on earth that might suggest vastly different ways of living.

A Devotion to the Search

The afternoon keynote speaker, Jill Tarter, who cofounded the SETI Institute in 1984, embodies a commitment to the undiscovered. The inspiration for Carl Sagan’s novel Contact (Simon & Schuster, 1985) and its movie adaptation, Tarter spent decades searching for alien life before exoplanets were observed.

She explained that rather than search for atmospheric signs of life, SETI looks for “technosignatures” of advanced civilizations detectable over long distances of space. Because we see only snapshots in time of other planets, “if we have a success, then we know that on average technological civilizations are long-lived,” Tarter said, which may be reassuring about the longevity of our own.

Devoting a career to such an improbable search requires a fascination with questions rather than answers. Tarter pointed to new telescopes and technologies that are improving our ability to search the skies. When Kaltenegger asked about her motivation, she said, “I get out of bed in the morning thinking, ‘I’m going to make the search better.’”

The scientific method is “a very wrong idea, because there’s nothing particularly methodical or recipe-like about doing science.”

STUART FIRESTEIN
People have drawn a thick line between art and science, but what is science without the arts? The questions that need to be asked can’t come from a formula. When for centuries they’ve been deeply rooted in hearts of geniuses and prophets, with brains full of thought, it seems that over time humanity forgot how to think critically and to question with care. In an age of internet access, the answers are always right there. Schools are so focused on students having all the right answers, that they forget that we’re poets, and designers, and dancers. They drop facts on young minds like piles of heavy bricks, and expect us to absorb information stacked miles thick. They teach us so much but now we need to build from it. They marched with us to base camp, but our goals are at the summit. Applying what we know to explore the unforeseen, the undiscovered, is easier said than done when curiosities lie dormant and smothered. Every day I see young minds afraid to ask questions. It cripples the scientific world. Research never comes without curiosity, without a spark, and my spark would have died, too, but I found my light in the dark. My creativity led me to ask all the right things. Now I stand here before you to ask: “When will you change the tune that you sing? What will it take for schools to open their eyes to a world of unmatched opportunity that very clearly lies in the minds of young people who still have their fire?” When will you take their thoughts and lift them up higher?” Maybe you will be the one to inspire someone’s great questions, someone’s desire. Teach young minds to fall in love with the unknown. For every question we ask, there are many more to go. Nurture the creativity we all harbor in our hearts, and maybe we’ll give way for a new way of thinking to start.
The Serious Business of Comics

The world is full of visual stimuli, and the way we experience them isn’t just the stuff of comic book art but the essence of life itself, according to Scott McCloud. The locally rooted comic artist and theorist, well-known for his book *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (Tundra Publishing, 1993), drew a capacity crowd to the Knafel Center for “Visual Storytelling, Visual Communication.”

The lecture was introduced by Tomiko Brown-Nagin, dean of the Institute, and was followed by a discussion with Shigehisa Kuriyama, the faculty director of the Institute’s humanities program and a confirmed fan. McCloud’s talk referenced his books and a popular TED talk but went beyond the comics format to examine the nature of visual perception; illustrated with a fast-moving backdrop of nearly 300 slides, it was by turns whimsical, philosophical, and hilarious.

“Visual communication is a two-way street: we all meet the artist halfway,” McCloud said. He began by recalling his childhood in Lexington, Massachusetts, and his roots as an artist. “When I grew up in Lexington, drawing robots and spaceships and later superheroes, I was hoping someone could figure out what was going on in every panel,” he said. “Then, when I went to Syracuse as an art student, I found out that visual artists don’t always trust the idea of pictures sending messages. We expect it to be more inscrutable somehow, maybe even beyond meaning. But every picture is still saying something.”

McCloud’s central point was that there are no neutral visual decisions: every visual display we see is meant to communicate something, and every artist who creates one has a specific intention. To illustrate this, he demonstrated how people tend to organize images into certain patterns. He began with the most basic of images, a straight line and two dashes. If the dashes are moved above the line, we’re likely to see them as eyes and a mouth, a human face.

“We are animals, and it is our tendency to find ourselves in everything we see,” McCloud said. “This is how we survive as a species. . . . Pattern-finding is a basic human capability that we depend on for our survival and that a cartoonist also depends on.”

To demonstrate how people create these patterns, he showed a photo of a church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with two oval windows sitting above a triangle-shaped ledge. To judge from the laughs in response, he noted, most people were seeing it as the face of a “confused chicken.”

Sometimes the wrong visual decisions have consequences, McCloud said. He pointed to something most people have seen in hotels: a sign reading, “In case of fire use stairs, do not use elevator.” The standard version, he said, is “a masterpiece of incoherence.” There’s an overlarge stick man who appears to be running toward the fire, and a couple who appear to be getting fished out of an elevator with chopsticks.

McCloud demonstrated that with a few simple tweaks, the diagram could be made not only more pleasing visually but also clearer and more functional.

The good news, he said, is that even nonartists are now more inclined to communicate visually, with the popularity of emojis as an example. This in turn prompts people to consider the messages they send in face-to-face communication. “This is what it is to be alive,” he told Kuriyama during the Q&A session after the talk. “Look at what your body is doing to send these messages. That is fundamental; it should be a part of basic education. Also, it is so much fun.”

In a postscript to his talk,
McCloud described a vivid visual experience—a drive that he took with his wife and daughter, Sky, to view last year’s solar eclipse. Like McCloud’s father, Sky is partially blind and thus has a different experience of the world. “We all build models out of whatever our senses can give us,” McCloud said. “She has extreme light sensitivity, and sunlight is not fun for her, so she learns how to get the gist of a scene from split-second exposure.” The eclipse itself, he said, was a wondrous example of how nature creates symmetry. “We know that the sun and the moon are not the same size; we know that they are nowhere near each other and nowhere near us. Yet they keep trying to convince us otherwise. So you have to ask: Did we really come to see the sky today, or did the sky come to see us?”

This article originally appeared in the Harvard Gazette and has been edited for Radcliffe Magazine.

“Pattern-finding is a basic human capability that we depend on for our survival, and that a cartoonist also depends on.”

SCOTT MCCLOUD
Patience and compassion: even in an age of electronic media moving at breakneck speed, these old-fashioned virtues are essential to getting the story—and to getting it right. That was the message conveyed by Ofeibea Quist-Arcton, NPR’s Africa correspondent.

Delivering this year’s Rama S. Mehta Lecture, the Ghanaian journalist spoke about her in-depth efforts to amplify the voices of African women.

“African women, African girls—what they have to say is important, and we don’t hear enough of it,” she said.

As Quist-Arcton related the development of various stories to the audience, what came up repeatedly was her method—a mix of careful journalism and shared humanity, which has brought her work Peabody and Edward R. Murrow awards.

“We as reporters don’t dig deep enough,” she said. Finding interview subjects in the open-air markets of Dakar and Accra isn’t difficult, she said. What takes more work is uncovering the stories of those who aren’t always heard.

“You have to cut through the lines of eager young men who zoom in when they see a microphone,” said Quist-Arcton, who has also worked for the BBC and PRI’s The World. “You have to push back the masses, past those clamoring to talk, to go to the back—and that’s where you’ll find the women.”

Quist-Arcton talked about the rewards of making an effort to capture the diverse viewpoints offered by local women, who may be caught up in cooking or commerce or child care. “They have to work and they have families to provide for,” she said. “They don’t have time to rush up to reporters, but they know what’s going on.”

The effort may be as simple as spending a few hours in an area or exchanging small talk before an interview. In the field, she said, she often focuses on market women, even just to chat about clothes or jewelry. Meeting interview subjects for the first time, she’ll take a few moments to inquire after their families—to ask questions that don’t immediately relate to the assignment and to show empathy with their situations. “It makes such a difference when you have met the person with whom you are talking,” she said. “Some of the examples that have stayed with me—I gravitate toward them because there are so many untold stories.”

As an example, she detailed her reporting on the Boko Haram kidnapping of 110 schoolgirls in the Nigerian town of Dapchi in February. A month later, 104 of the girls were released (5 had died), and that development was the banner headline.

But Quist-Arcton found another story: that of the last girl, 15-year-old Leah Sharibu. One of the few Christian girls at the majority Muslim school, Leah had refused to renounce her religion and had not been released with her surviving classmates.

“‘African women, African girls—what they have to say is important, and we don’t hear enough of it,’” she said. “We as reporters don’t dig deep enough.”

As Quist-Arcton related the development of various stories to the audience, what came up repeatedly was her method—a mix of careful journalism and shared humanity, which has brought her work Peabody and Edward R. Murrow awards.
A video of this lecture is available at [www.radcliffe.harvard.edu](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu).

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Stitching Together History and the Stars

MEASURE—A RADCLIFFE EXHIBITION BY THE ARTIST ANNA VON MERTENS—HONORED THE ASTRONOMER HENRIETTA LEAVITT, WHOSE PIONEERING WORK HELPED UNLOCK THE UNIVERSE.

Her countless hours at Harvard mapping the stars are central to understanding the universe. Although she didn’t live to see the far-reaching implications of her work, a Radcliffe exhibition showed how her efforts helped unlock mysteries of the cosmos.

The Radcliffe graduate Henrietta Leavitt was one of the more than 80 women who worked at the Harvard Observatory from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s carefully analyzing a record of the heavens on glass-plate negatives, a collection that includes more than 500,000 celestial moments and is considered to be the oldest and most comprehensive archive of the night sky. But Leavitt died in 1921, before others used her observations of Cepheid variable stars (those whose brightness pulses at regular intervals)—and her discovery of the relationship between a Cepheid star’s luminosity and how frequently it pulses—to make a range of discoveries about our galaxy. Her work enabled other astronomers to measure the distance to the stars and determine the shape of the Milky Way. The American astronomer Edwin Powell Hubble built on her findings, proving the existence of galaxies beyond our own and showing that the universe was expanding.

Leavitt’s research became the first rung “on the distance ladder to the stars,” says the artist Anna Von Mertens, whose needle and thread honored the life and work of the “Harvard Computer” in the show Measure.

In a diptych on the walls of the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery, Von Mertens’s series of meticulous white and gray hand-sewn stitches on a black background—mapped out with help from star calculation software—depict the stars fading from the skies above Lancaster, Massachusetts, on the morning Leavitt was born, July 4, 1868, and the stars returning to view over Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the day she died, December 12, 1921.

“Story is key to the artist’s flow, and Leavitt’s life and career fueled the creative process. “If there isn’t some story and if there isn’t some idea that is with me along that path, I don’t get as engaged in the materials,” says Von Mertens. “But if I have that story, it feels like I am almost embedding that story into the material and then allowing that object to carry the story forward.”

After she was asked to create the exhibition, Von Mertens, whose work relies on careful research, turned to Harvard’s galleries and archives for inspiration. The Schlesinger Library’s collections moved her to consider the voices of “these women that were not heard.”

At the Harvard Observatory, Leavitt’s story stood out. “She was obviously so gifted and sharp, and she obviously saw things so uniquely, but there was really no vehicle for her voice,” says Von Mertens.

The works on view evoke the process of careful, precise repetition and pattern recognition required in Leavitt’s observations of space. They also ask viewers to consider, says Von Mertens, such questions as “What meaning is held in a single action? What meaning is built with the repetition of that action?”

“This exhibition is built on many units of measurement: the length of a single stitch, the density of lead in a 2H or 3H pencil, the distance a beam of light travels in a year, the brightness of a single star, the span of a life lived,” notes Von Mertens in the show’s catalog. “Each unit alone holds something: the echo of its making, the marking of time, the beauty of its specificity. Each unit accumulated gains something; with repetition, form takes shape, and shape takes meaning.”

For some, quilting may seem an unusual avenue for artistic expression, but Von Mertens was hooked. “I think a lot of people consider what it meant to make one quilt in their lives and think ‘That was enough of that,’” says the artist. “I was completely taken with the process. There was this richness to the context, but also the materials themselves, that I responded to so immediately that I just knew from that point forward that I wanted quilts to be how I worked.”

The idea of focusing on the night sky came to her several years ago as she considered what it meant to hang her quilts for viewers and as she realized that the wall “wasn’t [only] paintings’ terrain, it was about the act of looking,” she says.

“And what is the most quintessential form of looking? . . . To me it was stargazing.”

This article originally appeared in the Harvard Gazette and has been edited for Radcliffe Magazine.
A video of Von Mertens’s opening lecture is available at www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.
An Order of Public Health—Hold the Fat Shaming

The health and policy expert Sara Bleich has found that when trying to change the way people eat, being prescriptive isn’t always the answer.

By Deborah Halber

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FAWN DEVINEY
During a plane ride, Sara Bleich watched a flight attendant take an overweight passenger’s drink order. The passenger asked for cranberry juice.

“Cranberry juice is our highest-sugar beverage on the menu,” the flight attendant said. “Would you like a diet beverage?”

“Just give me the cranberry juice,” the passenger said.

As a public policy expert on obesity, Bleich, a Carol K. Pforzheimer Professor at the Radcliffe Institute and a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, knew that the flight attendant was right about the juice. At the same time, she admired the passenger’s pushback against fat-shaming.

Here’s what Bleich wrestles with: we are almost powerless to fight an industry that profits from loading foods with sugar, salt, and unhealthful fats that we are hardwired to crave. Telling people what to eat—and what not to eat—often backfires.

“We know that about a third of adults and a fifth of kids are overweight or obese,” she says. “We know that if you have excess body weight, it increases your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease, along with a host of other adverse health conditions. As a result, obesity is very expensive: $150 million a year in direct medical costs.

“To actually make a difference, we have to look at the broader environment, specifically all these cues that are trying to get us to eat more and exercise less. How can we make the environment healthier? What can we do to keep people from gaining more weight?”

Gluten-free, keto, or paleo may be cool, but to Bleich, calories are key. “If you look at adults in the US and across the developed world, we’re getting bigger because we eat too much, not because we exercise too little,” she says. “Of all the single behavior changes you could make, there’s probably the most evidence that drinking fewer sugary beverages would reduce your risk for obesity.”

At home, Bleich’s kids, five and seven, are allowed sugary beverages—think 100 percent juice, not Sprite or Pepsi—only at birthday parties. Given the choice of a slice of cake or a juice box, they often go for the forbidden juice. They’re not alone in craving sweet drinks. Young adults aged 18 to 34 drink more sugar-sweetened beverages than any other age group, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As a White House Fellow in 2015–2016, Bleich was a senior policy advisor to the US Department of Agriculture and the Let’s Move! initiative, Michelle Obama’s national campaign to reduce childhood obesity and improve children’s health. To Bleich, banning soda from school lunchrooms and vending machines was a no-brainer. (She’d like to see universities and hospitals do the same.) She believes that “Don’t drink soda” is a clearer message than “Don’t eat junk food,” which could apply to anything from candy bars to fast food—some of which is actually pretty healthful.

Bleich is encouraged by the recent passage of laws taxing sugary drinks in seven US cities. The nation’s first soda tax, in Berkeley, California, slashed sales of sugar-sweetened beverages by nearly 10 percent in its first year. “In Berkeley and in Philadelphia, which we’re now evaluating,” Bleich says, “a tax of less than two cents per
ounce can increase the price of a two-liter bottle of soda by 100 percent, depending on the base price. It’s sticker shock, and it does appear to impact purchases.”

Owing to the price hike, supermarkets are seeing an almost 60 percent drop in volume sales of soda. That matters, she says, because people who drink sugary beverages tend to be minorities. Forty-seven percent of African Americans consume at least one sugary beverage a day—more than any other ethnic group, according to the CDC. These and other soda drinkers also tend to have lower incomes and to be at higher risk for a host of weight-related medical conditions.

The beverage tax is controversial. But Bleich sees it as a way to shift funds from the multibillion-dollar soda industry to local communities. In Philadelphia, a beverage tax passed in 2016 pays for quality educational programs for three- and four-year-olds, among other city programs. “It’s one of these policies where not only is it targeting behavior we know is bad for you, but the money is being given back to low-income groups in the form of a free, universal pre-K program,” Bleich says. “That is a great example of a policy win.”

The struggles of the disadvantaged resonate with Bleich. The daughter of two public school teachers from inner-city Baltimore, Bleich and her family relied on food stamps for a time to make ends meet. She was close to her paternal grandparents—who once lived on New York City’s swanky Upper East Side—and to her maternal grandfather, a Maryland corn farmer who grew up poor and illiterate. Several years after completing a degree in psychology at Columbia University in 2000, she opted to pursue a PhD in health policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
“You’re going to make fat people thin?” [Bleich’s grandfather] said. “I told him, ‘You cannot call people fat, but yes, I am going to help people try to lose weight.’ He said, ‘Baby, I think that’s wonderful.’”

En route to Massachusetts, Bleich stopped at her grandfather’s farm. He beamed about Harvard but cautioned, “Don’t get too uppity.”

She didn’t get his meaning until months later, when she found herself working on theoretical research topics with little chance of affecting people in the real world. So she decided to study obesity—an issue that begs for workable and practical solutions. “I want to answer the ‘So what?’ question,” she says. “I have yet to come across someone—on a bus, on a plane, on a train—who hasn’t struggled with their weight or known someone who has. I have not had personal weight challenges, but my mother lost a lot of weight and kept it off for 20 years. All of us have stories, and you can learn a lot by talking to people about their stories. The science is one thing, but weight is a very personal issue.”

Bleich phoned her “corn farmer grandpa” to say that she’d decided to study obesity. “You’re going to make fat people thin?” he said. “I told him, ‘You cannot call people fat, but yes, I am going to help people try to lose weight.’” He said, ‘Baby, I think that’s wonderful.’”

Earlier this year, following weight-loss surgery, the author Roxane Gay recounted her struggle with the psychological underpinnings of overeating. Gay and others—such as the anonymous blogger with tens of thousands of followers who calls herself “Your Fat Friend” and Ashley Graham, who is Sports Illustrated’s first plus-size swimsuit cover model—have written about body shaming in America.

One message they sometimes convey is that you can be fat and healthy. “Your Fat Friend” claims that although her body mass index (BMI) puts her in the realm of the “super morbidly obese,” her indicators are normal. According to a 2016 study in the International Journal of Obesity, a significant percentage of overweight or clinically obese people are, in fact, metabolically healthy. But Bleich wants to be clear that she’s not talking about whether it’s possible for some weight-challenged individuals to have normal blood pressure, cholesterol, and insulin levels.

“BMI is an imperfect measure, but there are mountains of literature from epidemiology and other disciplines which say that as your BMI goes up, so too does your risk of all sorts of health conditions,” Bleich says.

The danger of celebrating large bodies is that “it implies it’s okay to be large from a health perspective, and it’s not,” she says. “But we know that stigma can be a real deterrent to seeking help and trying to actually lose weight. And so there’s this delicate balance between reaching out to people who have trouble with their weight and making them feel bad in the process”—as with the flight attendant and the cranberry juice–drinking airline passenger.

“Obesity exists. It’s getting worse,” Bleich says. “The solution to obesity does not lie with you or me. It does not lie with individuals. Yes, there are people who will get it together and will actually be able to lose weight and keep it off. But the fact that we have a $66 billion diet industry demonstrates that we’re forever falling off the wagon.

“There aren’t obvious solutions. There’s no pill that can fix it. Public health has limited reach and resources. I think the goal is finding sweet spots where the food and beverage industries maximize shareholder dollars but also maximize the population’s health.”

One such sweet spot might be making healthful beverages and sides the default in fast-food kids’ meals and adult restaurant combo meals—swapping a no-calorie beverage and salad or fruit, for example, for sugary beverages and fries. If restaurants don’t lose revenue from the switch, this could be a win-win. “Changing defaults can be a powerful public health tool, because diners tend to stick with whatever comes with a combo deal rather than change it for something else,” Bleich says.

There’s big money at stake: Americans spend half their food dollars on meals outside the home. But Bleich notes that the entire state of California, along with Baltimore and other cities, have already passed bills mandating healthful beverages as the default for fast-food kids’ meals.

“It’s going to take multiple efforts working effectively together to actually move the needle,” she says. “But progress is possible.”

Deborah Halber is a freelance journalist.
The Power of Fear
Recently at the center of the Mediterranean refugee crisis, the human rights advocate HERNAN DEL VALLE RI ’19 believes that it’s time to reframe the narrative around immigration—and that democracy depends on it.

BY SARAH ABRAMS  PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSE BURKE
Just north of Libya’s territorial waters, a rescue boat operated by Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières/MSF) awaits the call. A small wooden fishing boat, sometimes a rubber dinghy, overloaded with refugees to five or six times its capacity, is in distress—in danger of capsizing in the rough Mediterranean waters. Equipped with a search-and-rescue crew and medical team, MSF responds, locating the distressed boat; evacuating the men, women, and children; and treating them for ailments from dehydration to torture wounds they’ve sustained in arbitrary detention in Libya. MSF then transports the refugees to a safe port in southern Italy.

In the years of the NGO’s presence in the Mediterranean—from 2015 to 2018—MSF executed 425 of these rescue operations and assisted 77,000 people. As its director of advocacy and communications, Hernan del Valle RI ’19 witnessed the crisis up close, helping oversee MSF’s search-and-rescue operations for people fleeing conflict and famine in parts of Africa and the Middle East—and watching as Europe slowly but decisively turned its back.

From his third-floor corner office in Byerly Hall, on Radcliffe’s campus, del Valle—who is the 2018–2019 Rita E. Hauser Fellow—is stepping back and trying to make sense of what transpired during those tumultuous years when MSF stepped in to fill the void that Europe left when its policy toward refugees crossing the Mediterranean shifted from rescue to obstruction. Del Valle wants to better understand where things went wrong: how it all started, what was happening in the background politically, and how it is coming to an end.

“There was a massive transformation in Europe over a very short period of time,” he says. “When we started rescuing refugees at sea there was an outpouring of solidarity, but three years later we are excoriated and under attack. I want to write the story of the transformation of Europe. Today solidarity with fellow human beings is being criminalized.”

Although he is examining that transformation through the lens of his experience in the Mediterranean, del Valle believes that the issues in the United States and other countries receiving immigrants parallel those in Europe. “We need to understand migration differently,” he says. “Refugees and migrants are being framed as a threat to the political order—as a problem that needs to be solved. Rather, the relevant question is whether we can manage migration humanely. What kind of society are we, and what do we want to become?”

Search and Rescue

For decades, rigid border controls for migrants entering Europe from Africa and the Middle East have made sea crossing the only means of entry for those refugees. Since 2000, 35,000 have died
trying to reach Europe by sea. And as hardship and conflict have intensified throughout those regions in recent years, the number of sea crossings has grown. In 2013 alone, Italy’s Operation Mare Nostrum rescued more than 100,000 migrants. But soon, Italy, along with other European nations, was reversing its response to the refugees’ plight. In April 2015, MSF launched its first rescue boat. As del Valle explained at his Radcliffe Institute fellow’s presentation in October, although naval rescues are not part of MSF’s typical responsibilities, “we knew it was the right thing to do.” In June, MSF launched two additional boats. Groups of citizens from Europe also responded, and in just one year, more than 10 NGO-run rescue boats were operating in the Mediterranean.

MSF did not anticipate what came next, del Valle says. The refugee crisis became a central issue for several European countries, a weapon for fighting elections. Emboldened right-wing groups emerged from the shadows, spewing anti-immigrant rhetoric. In a final blow, European politicians negotiated with Turkey and then Libya to send Europe’s refugees back to them, with the understanding that both countries would control their borders and prevent further debarkation of boats. “That moment is when we knew that we were losing, that we had no traction, and there was no hope,” del Valle says.

Despite Europe’s decision to, in his words, “pass the buck,” MSF continued its operations. “We knew we were an obstacle, but we decided to keep going,” he says. A smear campaign against NGO-led search and rescue ensued, with prosecution and the impounding of NGO rescue boats. By the summer of 2018, MSF’s Aquarius was the only rescue boat left at sea. And by summer’s end—having been refused refugee debarkation in Italy and stripped of its flag twice by Gibraltar and Panama—the ship was forcibly immobilized, and MSF ceased operations. Today, no rescue boats are in the Mediterranean, and in 2018, 2,297 people died attempting the crossing.

“One thing I’ve learned is that there is nothing more powerful than fear,” del Valle says. “I have learned also through this experience how agitating fear and concerns work. People are worried about their jobs, as they should be worried. We shouldn’t dismiss this. This is a very legitimate claim. What is not a realistic claim is that people do not have these jobs because of the immigrant. That is the part of the equation that doesn’t add up. It’s not a zero-sum game of whether it’s us or them.”

A Personal Migration Story
Del Valle’s commitment to human rights and to the issue of immigration is informed by his family’s own story. His father’s parents fled Spain during the Spanish Civil War, settling in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the early part of the 20th century. His mother’s parents emigrated from northern Italy to Argentina around the same time. “The whole history of our family is about leaving Spain and Italy because there was no chance of staying and having a bearable existence or any prospects,” he says. “It was a search for a better life, and we found a country that welcomed us.”

But del Valle also bore witness to a dark period in Argentina’s history, when the country’s military waged war on left-wing political parties and 30,000 civilians were kidnapped and disappeared. It motivated him to study law and become a human rights lawyer, working early in his career at Argentina’s first NGO both to document human rights abuses and disappearances and to seek justice and redress for the victims. His subsequent practice, as an international human rights lawyer, most recently with MSF, has taken him around the world, from Colombia to Afghanistan to Pakistan to Papua New Guinea. For the past several years, he has made his home in Amsterdam with his partner, Jennifer, a consultant in the nonprofit sector, and their five-year-old daughter, Alma.

Reframing the Narrative
Opponents of immigration have spread fear by promoting a number of misguided and erroneous arguments, says del Valle. In addition to the threat of economic scarcity, opponents say, refugees pose a threat to a nation’s culture and security. “In Europe today, they talk about how we’re going to lose some essential culture, which is very ill-defined,” he says. “It is an ahistorical concept that there is a fundamental culture that is somehow at risk because of change. The reality is that it’s bound to change, and that is not a bad thing.”

“The other threat,” del Valle says, “is this notion that somehow Europe is being invaded: the Islamization of Europe. It has caught the people’s imagination, and it is being politically exploited. None of that has any ground in reality. We are focusing on all the wrong things. If we just focus on the mechanisms to ensure integration and inclusion, the refugees will find a way. It’s about having a smartly managed system that provides safe and legal alternatives for people to move across borders and contribute their share toward the collective. Promoting policies that marginalize and exclude hundreds of thousands of people is not only morally wrong but
also politically foolish.”

Del Valle believes that one of the most effective ways for people to go beyond the rhetoric of fear is to see the individuals behind the numbers. “Much of what I read about refugees presents such a global perspective that it turns into an intractable problem. It’s much better to have people tell their stories.”

He believes that’s why the story of Alan Kurdî—the three-year-old Syrian boy on the beach who drowned, along with his mother and older brother, attempting to reach Greece—received so much attention. It put a human face on a story that is often told in the context of a mass invasion. After being forced to flee their home in Syria in the midst of intense civil conflict, the boy’s family lived for two years under desperate conditions in a Turkish refugee camp. “I spoke with Abdullah, the father, who described the decisions that led up to the trip, and they were all rational decisions,” del Valle says. “He had two kids and a wife and found the life they had in Syria destroyed. There was no chance they could go to another country or stay in Turkey in misery. He tried all the connections he had to apply for asylum. In desperation, he paid $5,000 to a smuggler to make the trip and to pay for the best life jackets he could afford. It was only on the fourth attempt, after determining the first three crossings to be too dangerous, that they decided to make a go of it. You ask, How do people make these decisions? But when you talk with refugees, you realize you would do exactly the same thing.”

The Other Side of the Debate

Del Valle wants to move the immigration discussion to where people begin thinking about what they want their country to become. “The skepticism and apathy we see in Western democracies are not the answer,” he says. “We’re not just consumers of politics. We are active participants. That is what democracy is about.”

Despite the current negativity around immigration, del Valle believes that voices on the other side of the debate can and will emerge. “The notion of ‘our tribe first’ is as old as humankind, but there have also always been opposing responses from the political arena,” he says.

“Social processes often take years. We have proven time and again that we can change things, and I have no doubt we can. Argentina went from a military regime to building a democracy—one that has problems, but I have no doubt that it is 20 times better than having a military regime.”

On a recent trip to New York City, del Valle and his family visited the Statue of Liberty. “The inscription on that statue, the poem there, which I read to my daughter, begins, ‘Give me your tired, your poor,’” del Valle says. “Someone chose that poem. This tension has always been there, but we need to go back to that poem—we need to go back and ask ourselves, If America was ever great, what made America great?”

“As his fellowship year enters its final semester, del Valle is grateful to Radcliffe for offering him the time to reflect on what those four years of MSF’s efforts in the Mediterranean meant. “I have felt liberated to move beyond the operational challenges of rescuing people at sea to letting myself explore the fundamental ethical and political questions that are at stake in our world today,” he says. “It’s the first chance I’ve had to actually sit down and ask what happened over the past four years. And if that story is told in a book or something else, it’s only because Radcliffe gave me the space.”

Sarah Abrams is a freelance writer based in Cambridge.

> Video of del Valle’s fellow’s presentation is available on our website.
A Diverse Cast of History Makers

I'M NOT SURE when Richard Hofstadter’s *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* faded from high school US history syllabi. Two decades after its publication, in 1948, “Am Pol Trad” was on my desk in a California public high school AP class, and a few years later, I was happy to spot a dog-eared copy among the texts my boyfriend brought to Harvard from his East Coast prep school. The book was readable, and it crammed what was then thought of as everything into one volume that progressed from the founders to FDR in twelve neat chapters. Hofstadter had written up to his own historical moment.

Seventy years after Hofstadter, Jill Lepore has accomplished the same feat in a necessarily messier but supremely readable narrative that makes me envy the young people who will grow up on it. In 1968, few had thought to question Hofstadter’s certainty that it was “the Men” who had made American history or that US history began with those men. Lepore aims to tell “the story of American history, beginning in 1492, with Columbus’s voyage, which tied together continents, and ending in a world not merely tied together but tangled, knotted, and bound.” Even that beginning is acknowledged as a conceit when Lepore gives us Columbus’s arrival from the perspective of those on shore. Lepore writes as a historian handling documents that she then hands, figuratively, to the reader: *These Truths* opens with a 1787 newspaper that printed the Constitution for its readers to debate, alongside an advertisement for the sale of a “young NEGRO WENCH.” But Lepore’s chief gift is as a storyteller with a biographical bent. She bests Hofstadter with her diverse cast of history makers: Maria Stewart, Margaret Fuller, and Mary Lease step onto these pages as 19th-century reformers with messages as powerful as those delivered from the bully pulpit of the presidency. Her closing chapter brilliantly evokes the political personalities that dominate in America’s young third century, threatening to drown out democracy: “A nation born in revolution will forever struggle against chaos.”

“The course of history is unpredictable, as irregular as the weather, as errant as affection,” Lepore starts her epic tale. Yet in these words we sense her own steady affection for her subject, an unwavering passion that drives *These Truths* and her vital work as a public scholar.

**These Truths: A History of the United States**
by Jill Lepore
Bi ’00

*Miyazakiworld: A Life in Art* by Susan Napier ’77
Yale University Press, 344 pp.

Whether you are already one of Hayao Miyazaki’s millions of fans or simply eager for an introduction, Susan Napier’s compact yet comprehensive life-and-works is sure to delight. Napier blends analysis with exposition and biography so effectively, her film-by-film account speeds by in a succession of observations, insights, and revelations that may leave you breathless—an entirely appropriate feeling when considering such purely inventive works as Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* and *The Wind Rises*.

While Walt Disney Studios made animation synonymous with plundered fairy tales and dumbed-down children’s literature in the West, Miyazaki’s Studio Ghibli created originals with heroic children as their central characters, producing a new cinema that Napier was among the first scholars to recognize and celebrate. Miyazaki’s themes are never childish, except in the sense that we are all always children confronting the inexplicable, the tragic. “Miyazaki resolves these issues through fantasy,” Napier writes of the classic *My Neighbor Totoro*, “allowing viewers to confront difficult emotions through a filter of enchantment that overlays the darkness with a sense of the possibility of joy and transcendence.”
Not Quite Not White: Losing and Finding Race in America
by Sharmila Sen ’92
Penguin, 224 pp.

Writing into a historical moment in which the plight of immigrant families makes the front page every day and questions of how to redress enduring wrongs against America’s peoples of color are urgently pressed, Sharmila Sen has given readers an account of her move at age 11 from Calcutta to Cambridge, Massachusetts, that is both illuminating and inspirational.

Sen’s story is unusual—like all coming-to-America stories—and reaches back to the 1970s, when few immigrants from the Indian subcontinent were arriving in the United States. Although she was forced to answer, when asked, that her parents’ reason for leaving India was “for better jobs,” not something noble, like escaping war or political persecution, she had grown up in a high-caste family. The genteel poverty her family slid into left her greedily sharing the bus driver’s daughter’s free loaf of bread on rides home from school. But that indignity was nothing compared with the prejudice Sen faced when she “got race” on her arrival in America. Reaching Harvard for college and Yale for graduate school, Sen, now an editor at Harvard University Press, tells all with clarity, grace, and reasoned outrage.

The Cow in the Elevator: An Anthropology of Wonder
by Tulasi Srinivas RI ‘17

The daughter of M. N. Srinivas, an eminent anthropologist of caste, and herself a prominent scholar of Buddhist ritual in contemporary life, Tulasi Srinivas has brought her ethnographic powers to bear on her hometown, Bangalore, which in recent decades has grown into a global mega-city with an international “roster of smokeless factories, crucibles of experimentation in the new knowledgeware economy.” Srinivas grew up with an amnesia toward caste, believing the old order to be of primarily academic interest. Finding a “visible growth in ritual acts” in the new high-tech Bangalore, due to the rise of a “boomtown bourgeoisie,” at first confounded her expectations. Then, exchanging blue jeans for a sari, Srinivas found her way into temples she had never entered before and discovered “practices of wonder” and “ritual creativity” improvised to meet the needs of an anxious professional class prone to melancholic nostalgia. Follow Srinivas as she joins a sacred cow and its handler on an elevator ride to an eighth-floor Bangalore apartment to observe a purification ritual and learn how amazement can become “a sublime yet everyday experience.”

Florida
by Lauren Groff RI ’19

Florida, Lauren Groff’s second collection of stories and fifth work of fiction, may not leave you with a desire to visit or reside in the Sunshine State. More rain than sunshine falls in these pages. But you will wish to stay in the territory conjured up by Groff’s unique imagination, safe from the dangers she envisions but close enough to smell the air and feel the breeze.

A college professor failing to meet her school’s requirements for publication sinks into homelessness in a beach town. A writing mother of two comes to despise the subject of the novel she can’t start after dragging her sons on a research trip to France. A middle-aged widow refuses to leave the house in which she’d retired with her elderly husband when a hurricane blows in: “The wind played the chimney until the whole place wheezed like a bagpipe.” I savored each sip of wine and wondered what the end would be.” As disaster strikes, repeatedly, or merely hovers at the edge of a protagonist’s anxious consciousness (global warming is a preoccupation), the reader is grateful that, as Groff writes of the Francophile novelist, “the language she is most fluent in is story.”

Monument: Poems New and Selected
by Natasha Trethewey RI ’01

To the primarily historical poems of her previous four volumes, Natasha Trethewey has added 11 remarkable elegies to her parents: her mother, murdered by an abusive second husband when Trethewey was 19; her father, a bulwark in decades after, whose death came much later. We learn in the first of these lyrics, “Imperatives for Carrying On in the Aftermath,” which serves as prelude, that a “famous professor” advised the young poet to “write about something else, unburden / yourself of the death of your mother and / just pour your heart out in the poems.” Trethewey leaves us to consider the wisdom of this counsel while perusing its fruit, the rich and various poems of her prizewinning collections, before returning to her subject in a concluding series, titled “Articulation.”

“Why is everything I see the past / I’ve tried to forget?” she asks in “Waterborne”: “Always, / I am pursued. / Waking, I am freighted / with memory: my mother’s last words / spoken — after her death — in a dream: / Do you know what it means / to have a wound that never heals?”

The powerful directness of these later works is worth our having waited for Trethewey to write them.

WINTER 2019 RADCLIFFE MAGAZINE
CATCH UP ON INSTITUTE HAPPENINGS

Events Online

Disability and Citizenship: Global and Local Perspectives
How are contemporary notions of disability linked to concepts of citizenship and belonging? Leaders in advocacy, education, medicine, and politics consider how ideas of community affect the understanding of and policies related to disability—and how this has manifested itself in higher education, in particular. The conference is part of a two-year exploration of the broad theme of citizenship.

Science Sounds Strange: Ether Waves, Espionage, and the Theremin’s Odyssey
The musicologist and composer Dorit Chrysler demonstrates the eerie, endless range of the theremin, a unique musical instrument created by the physicist-turned-electronic-music-pioneer Léon Theremin as a result of his USSR-sponsored spy research into electromagnetic waves and proximity sensors. John Huth, the Donner Professor of Science in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, provides additional commentary.

Political Geometry: The Mathematics of Redistricting
Moon Duchin—the 2018–2019 Evelyn Green Davis Fellow at Radcliffe and a mathematician at Tufts University, where she is also a senior fellow in the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life and directs the interdisciplinary program in Science, Technology, and Society—looks at inroads made in understanding redistricting and how math models can help us do it better.
Grand Old Women and Modern Girls: Generational and Racial Conflict in the US Women's Rights Movement, 1870–1920

The 2018–2019 Mellon-Schlesinger Fellow and an associate professor of women, gender, and sexuality at the University of Virginia, Corinne T. Field explores the intersections of age, gender, and race in US history, focusing in particular on the political dimensions of adulthood in debates over women's rights and racial justice.

A Political Poetry: A Reading by and Conversation with Solmaz Sharif

The Radcliffe Institute visiting scholar and award-winning poet Solmaz Sharif reads selections from her acclaimed collection Look: Poems (Graywolf Press, 2016) and participates in a discussion with Evie Shockley, herself a poet and a 2018–2019 Radcliffe fellow.

Where We Stand in Earthquake Prediction

Marine A. Denolle shares her hope that—with new methods, through harnessing the data, and by expanding on short-term forecasting—one day we will be able to predict an earthquake. A seismologist, Denolle is a Radcliffe professor, a 2018–2019 Radcliffe Alumnae Fellow, and an assistant professor of earth and planetary sciences in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
The Constitution, the Court, and Social Change

DEAN TOMIKO BROWN-NAGIN GOES ON THE ROAD TO SHARE HER LATEST RESEARCH

October 3, 2018

How much does the Supreme Court matter for social change? It is very important, but maybe not quite as important as you think, argued Radcliffe Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin at the Institute’s most recent Radcliffe on the Road event, at the Harvard Club of New York. Here, excerpts from her talk.

I’m not here to argue that the identity of a Supreme Court justice is unimportant. On the margins, identity can matter, although not nearly as much as people assume.

Nor am I here to directly engage the assumption that the Court is uniquely situated to protect against tyranny—although I’ve written about that question, and in short, I’d say don’t count on it.

My thesis is at once more narrow and broader; it relates not only to the Court, but to our entire constitutional design and democratic system. I hope to persuade you that rhetoric about the Court’s role and impact—and about who sits on the Court—promotes a far too court-centric understanding of our constitutional democracy.

The overemphasis on the Court minimizes the role of “We the People”—as voters, donors, and members of interest groups in the legal order.

The particular point I want to make about law and social change is that movements deploy “rights talk” to frame disputes, tell stories, and move forward their agendas. They invoke legal discourses in four major ways: to make legal claims; for moral suasion; for cultural identification; and for political mobilization.

Which is to say, law is deployed strategically and opportunistically. Law and social change is about much
more than winning a case in the Supreme Court.

So, here’s the puzzle. If I’m correct—if SCOTUS typically has not been the heroic actor in struggles over social change—why have we come to place so much trust in the justices to protect against tyranny and inspire change?

It all goes back to the post-WWII era, to 1954 and the struggle over segregation in the South. The five cases that Thurgood Marshall brought challenging school segregation under the 14th Amendment ended up in the Supreme Court. As we know, Marshall prevailed on behalf of his clients.

The unanimous Brown case came to be seen as a textbook example of nine justices siding with a discrete and insular minority and against a majority bent on oppression.

The justices became the heroes of the story, and Thurgood Marshall became a legend in his own time.

In the coming years, commentators praised Brown as the greatest constitutional case of the 20th century.

So there it is. The outsized reputation of SCOTUS, and the fever pitch over who is nominated, all comes down to Brown—no matter that the case gives a misleading impression about the Court’s role in social change.

Dean Brown-Nagin will next appear at a Radcliffe on the Road event—presented by the Radcliffe Institute, the Harvard Alumni Association, the Harvard Club of San Francisco, and the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco—on April 2, 2019. If you are in the Bay Area and would like to attend, see our web calendar for more information.
Mourning a Beloved Friend and Scholar

Devah Pager RI ’18, a sociologist best known for her work critiquing the US prison system and exposing job-market discrimination, died on November 3. She had been battling pancreatic cancer. She is survived by her husband, Mike Shohl, and son, Atticus.

Pager was the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Harvard, the director of the Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality & Social Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and a past Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at Radcliffe. A Boston Globe obituary highlighted her book *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), while many of her peers took to Twitter to share favorite stories that exemplified her generous spirit. The New York Times Magazine remembered her in its end-of-year feature “The Lives They Lived 2018,” in which the writer Ta-Nehisi Coates spoke for the black community when he said, “The work that Devah did provided the science for a feeling that we all knew.”

A large circle of family, friends, and colleagues celebrated Pager’s life in early December at First Parish Unitarian Church in Cambridge. The sociology departments of Harvard and Princeton are also planning a celebration, to take place on August 9, 2019, prior to the meeting of the American Sociological Association in New York City.

Honor Roll

The Modern Language Association of America awarded its 32nd MLA Prize for Independent Scholars to Margaret Morganroth Gullette ’62, PhD ’75, B1 ’87, a resident scholar at Brandeis University, for her book *Ending Ageism, or How Not to Shoot Old People* (Rutgers University Press, 2017). The prize honors distinguished published research in the fields of modern languages and literatures and recognizes achievements and contributions of independent scholars.

Amy Bach RI ’04 received the 2018 Charles Bronfman Prize in recognition of her innovative humanitarian work as the founder, executive director, and president of Measures for Justice. Her organization is the first to apply data to quantify the performance of the criminal justice system across the United States.

Tiya Miles ’92 has received several awards for *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits* (The New Press, 2018): a 2018 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation; the 2018 Frederick Douglass Book Prize from the Gilder Lehrman Center, which she shared with Erica Armstrong Dunbar; and a 2018 Legacy Award in nonfiction from the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation. Miles, who is a Radcliffe Alumnae Professor at the Radcliffe Institute and a professor of history in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, also published a New York Times opinion piece, “An Olive Branch in Montana,” about finding hope in a social exchange.
The Jacobs Foundation bestowed a 2018 Klaus J. Jacobs Award on Rana Dajani RI ’18 for her Jordan-based program We Love Reading. This past summer, Dajani published the book on which she worked during her fellowship, Five Scarves: Doing the Impossible—If We Can Reverse Cell Fate, Why Can’t We Redefine Success? (Nova, 2018), which, said Nature in a review, “is part call to action, part research journal, and part autobiography: the five scarves are the different ‘hats’ Dajani wears as scientist, mother, teacher, social entrepreneur, and trailblazing feminist.”

Evie Shockley RI ’19 won the 2018 Legacy Award in poetry from the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation for Semiautomatic (Wesleyan University Press, 2017). Said the judges, “Despite the ugliness of the violence around us, she has written a collection of poems that both chronicles it and decries it, all while offering us the beauty of her lines.”

The installation artist Abigail DeVille RI ’15 is among the 45 2018 USA Fellows, an honor that carries with it a cash award. She is known for her site-specific works, which she has exhibited across the United States and Europe.

Two writers with Radcliffe ties were among the 17th annual Massachusetts Book Award recipients: Jane Kamensky RI ’97, RI ’07, the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library and the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, won the nonfiction award for A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley (W. W. Norton, 2016), while Margot Livesey RI ’13 won the fiction award for Mercury: A Novel (Harper, 2016).

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The illustrated book A Velocity of Being is a collection of letters that meditate on the power and pleasure of reading.

**Passing Down the Pleasure of Reading**

Claudia Zoe Bedrick ’85 has coedited—with Maria Popova, the Bulgarian-born writer best known for her blog Brain Pickings—A Velocity of Being: Letters to a Young Reader (Enchanted Lion Books, 2018). The collection of essays, presented as letters, brings 121 current-day culture makers together with an accomplished illustrator or graphic artist to create an anthology attractive enough to live on one’s coffee table.

Eight years in the making, the book boasts contributors as varied as Jane Goodall, Yo-Yo Ma, and Lena Dunham and includes such Radcliffe luminaries as Elizabeth Alexander RI ’08, Sylvia Earle RI ’08, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein RI ’07, Ursula K. Le Guin ’51, Martha Nussbaum ’71, PhD ’75, BI ’81, Ann Patchett RI ’94, Lisa Randall ’84, PhD ’87, RI ’03, and Ellen Handler Spitz MAT ’64, BI ’96. The letters, which Popova calls “micro-memoirs” in her introduction, contemplate the effects of reading on the writers’ lives.

Bedrick is the Brooklyn-based publisher, editor, and art director of the independent, family-owned Enchanted Lion Books—“known for publishing international picture books with a playfully subversive flair,” according to Publishers Weekly. All profits from the sale of A Velocity of Being will benefit the New York Public Library.

Sharon Weinstein ’72 received the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society’s 2018 Award for Outstanding Psychiatrist in Education for her teaching and program development in child and adolescent psychiatry. She has organized 168 symposia for the New England Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (NECCAP) and taught thousands of medical students. In addition to practicing psychiatry in Lexington, Massachusetts, she is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a clinical associate in child and adolescent psychiatry at McLean Hospital. Weinstein is also the director of continuing medical education and a past president of NECCAP, which honored her with its first Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013.

The Jacobs Foundation bestowed a 2018 Klaus J. Jacobs Award on Rana Dajani RI ’18 for her Jordan-based program We Love Reading. This past summer, Dajani published the book on which she worked during her fellowship, Five Scarves: Doing the Impossible—If We Can Reverse Cell Fate, Why Can’t We Redefine Success? (Nova, 2018), which, said Nature in a review, “is part call to action, part research journal, and part autobiography: the five scarves are the different ‘hats’ Dajani wears as scientist, mother, teacher, social entrepreneur, and trailblazing feminist.”

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Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), by Megan Marshall ’77, RI ’07, landed on the short list for the 2018 Christian Gauss Award, one of the Phi Beta Kappa Society’s book awards.

**Inklings**

During the immigration debate, Javier Zamora RI ’19 has been reflecting in various media on what it’s like to be an immigrant in today’s America. In a New York Times opinion piece titled “I Have a Green Card Now. But Am I Welcome?” the formerly undocumented immigrant and current Walter Jackson Bate Fellow examines his feelings around his new status as a permanent resident. His poem “Exiliados” ran in the New York Times Magazine with a short introduction by the Pulitzer Prize winner Rita Dove. Zamora also shared his story of crossing the Sonoran Desert as an unaccompanied minor in an episode of KCRW’s The Organist; titled “Borderlands,” that episode is available online.

Kaitlyn Greenidge RI ’19, the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Fellow, has published a couple of personal pieces in the New York Times. In “I Believe in Ghosts,” she tells of the otherworldly resident of her family’s home, and in “Could Our Sibling Bond Survive This U-Haul?” she examines sisterly dynamics as her family traveled with an older sister to her Iowa grad school.

After Guatemala’s president, Jimmy Morales, refused to reauthorize a United Nations–Guatemala joint commission, Francisco Goldman RI ’19 penned a New York Times opinion piece titled “Why Is Trump Tacitly Supporting Corruption in Guatemala?” In it, he says US foreign policy chiefs’ failure to stand up to the corrupt leader could help foster a coup. Goldman has long written about politics in Guatemala: In fact, Screen Daily has announced that George Clooney is set to narrate and executive produce a documentary series for Amazon based on Goldman’s book The Art of Political Murder (Grove/Atlantic, 2008), about the murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi Coned-Radcliffe Magazine

The *Boston Globe* profiled the National Book Award finalist and *New York Times* best-selling novelist **Min Jin Lee RI ’19** shortly after her move to Boston from New York. After Radcliffe, the Catherine A. and Mary C. Gellert Fellow will go on to a three-year residency at Amherst College.

The novelist and Emory University professor **Tayari Jones RI ’12** published a personal essay in *Time* titled “There’s Nothing Virtuous about Finding Common Ground.” In it, she connects a deeply affecting childhood episode with the current political moment.


The journalist and novelist **Geraldine Brooks RI ’06** contributed a short essay to *McSweeney’s* pre-midterms series One Small Blow against Encroaching Totalitarianism. Titled “Oh People,” the essay decries current US policy that victimizes children here and abroad.

An article in the *Hollywood Reporter* announced that *Shark Dialogues* (Atheneum/Macmillan, 1994), the novel that **Kiana Davenport RI ’93** finished during her fellowship, is being adapted for the screen by ABC. The potential hour-long drama—called *Ohana*, Hawaiian for “family”—is being developed by Viola Davis and Julius Tenion’s JuVee Productions.

**Stephanie DeGooyer RI ’19** published a look at denaturalization in US history and the present moment: “Why Trump’s De-naturalization Force Matters” appeared in the *Nation*. The Frieda L. Miller Fellow and Willamette University assistant professor of English also appeared on The Open Mind’s YouTube channel to discuss whether human rights are being protected today.

In 1972, despite being called “as useless, as we say, as a wine cellar without a cork-screw” by the legislator she replaced, **Elizabeth Holtzman ’62, JD ’65** became the youngest woman, at age 30, elected to Congress at that time. A *New York Times* article titled “Before Ocasio-Cortez, the Elizabeth Holtzman Effect” told her story—weeks before Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, at age 29, took over that title in the 2018 midterm elections.

An article in the *Atlantic* about the Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, “The Fragile Future of Reform in Saudi Arabia,” quoted **Hala Aldosari RI ’18**, a Saudi human rights activist and scholar. “He antagonized a lot of people,” she said, months before the crown prince was implicated in the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi. “His legitimacy is now more external than internal.”

**Patricia J. Williams JD ’75, RI ’18** weighed in on current events and their place in our nation’s history in an article titled “The Generational Trauma of Separating Families” in the *Nation*, for which Williams, the James L. Dohr Professor of Law at Columbia University, is a columnist.

In June 2016, **Kimerer L. LaMothe MTS ’89, PhD ’96, RI ’01** hosted 11 scholar/dancers for a Radcliffe Exploratory Seminar titled “Dancing on Earth: Ecstatic Dance and the Promise of Ecological Consciousness.” That seminar yielded a special issue of the journal *Dance, Movement & Spirituality* (September 2017), coedited by LaMothe with Sally Hess and Yvonne Daniel, for which nine of the participants wrote articles.

The *Saratoga News* ran a profile of **Audry Lynch ’55** titled “John Steinbeck Collection Becomes Lifetime Legacy for Saratoga Biographer.” Lynch—most recently the author of *Steinbeck Remembered* (Daniel & Daniel Publishers, 2015), one of her three books about the author—began collecting Steinbeck ephemera in 1970, when she moved to California from Cam-

**Addressing Climate Change, Illusion**

The artist Peggy Weil ’76, who is based in Los Angeles, specializes in digital media and large-scale installations. Her four-hour video **88 Cores** (2017) was exhibited last winter in New York City at the Climate Museum’s inaugural exhibition, *In Human Time*. The video is a two-mile descent through the Greenland Ice Sheet going back 110,000 years in time. The New Yorker reported, in “As the World Melts, an Artist Finds Beauty in Ancient Ice,” that Weil scanned 88 ice-core segments from the National Ice Core Laboratory, strung them together, animated them, and added an original score by Celia Holland, her daughter.

Prints from **88 Cores** were shown at the United Nations in September, as part of Secretary-General António Guterres’s address on climate change. After the Climate Museum, the video was on view at the Fordham University exhibition *Art for Arctic’s Sake*. It will show next at the Colorado University Art Museum exhibition *Documenting Change: Our Climate (Past, Present, Future)*, which is on view through July 20.

Also recently, Weil reprised her work 3D Wallpaper—originally part of her VES thesis—which is on view in the interactive exhibition **3D: Double Vision** at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art through March 31 of this year.

**LEFT: KRIS SNIBBE/HARVARD PHOTOGRAPHER; CENTER: SARI GOODFRIEND—origi-nally part of her VES thesis—which is on view in the interactive exhibition 3D: Double Vision at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art through March 31 of this year.**
very recently published *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students* (Harvard University Press, 2019). In it, he investigates how and why less-privileged students don’t thrive at elite colleges.

Now out in paperback is *Eternal Life: A Novel* (W. W. Norton, 2018), by Dara Horn ‘99, PhD ‘06. “The question at the heart of this wise and appealing novel is finally not how Rachel finds meaning in her eternal life,” said a *New York Times* review. “It is how we, despite our portions of sorrow, tedium, and disaster, persist in finding meaning in ours.”

Now You See the Sky: A Memoir (Gracie Belle, 2018), by Catharine H. Murray ’88, chronicles the illness and death of the author’s middle son, Chan. Said *Kirkus Reviews*, “As much a eulogy to Chan as a testament to the joy of life, the book is a heartwarming tale of dealing with life-altering loss.”

Daisy Hay RI ’13 has published *The Making of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein* (Bodleian Library, 2018), in which she explores the novel’s beginnings through manuscripts, portraits, and artifacts of the time.

Sarah Song ’96—a professor of law and political science at UC Berkeley School of Law and the director of the Kadish Center for Morality, Law, and Public Affairs—examines one of the most polarizing topics of our time.

In “Could an Ex-Convict Become an Attorney? I Intended to Find Out” is a powerful narrative about the weight of the past from *Reginald Dwayne Betts RI ’12*. In this personal history, which appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the poet and scholar outlined his complicated journey from 16-year-old felon to newly minted lawyer.


The work of David Gruber RI ’18 was featured in the *New York Times* in an article titled “Don’t Squish the Jellyfish. Capture It with a Folding Robotic Claw.” Gruber and his team have invented the “RAD (rotated actuated dodecahedron) sampler”—which the *Times* called “essentially a 3D printed, origami catcher’s mitt”—to catch marine invertebrates for study.

Shelf Life

**Anthony Abraham Jack AM ’11, PhD ’18**—a Shutzer Assistant Professor at the Radcliffe Institute, a junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, and an assistant professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education—has

A New York Times article titled “Octavia Spencer to Star in ‘Madam C.J. Walker’ on Netflix” alerted the world that the esteemed actress had signed on to portray the great-great grandmother of A’Leila Bundles ’74. The series is based on Bundles’s biography *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker* (Scribner, 2001). The limited series is set to air in 2019.
What Would Mrs. Astor Do? The Essential Guide to the Manners and Mores of the Gilded Age (NYU Press, 2018), by Cecelia Tichi ’73, closely follows Caroline Astor, who was the social arbiter of her time. Tichi is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English and American Studies at Vanderbilt University.

Jerome Robbins: A Life in Dance (Yale University Press, 2018), by Wendy Lesser ’73, investigates the life of the celebrated choreographer of such Broadway classics as The King and I and West Side Story. Lesser is the founder and editor of the Threepenny Review. The Wall Street Journal said of her in a review, “She deftly introduces readers to her complex subject and his many remarkable creative achievements.”

Dorothy C. Wong PhD ’95, RI ’03, a professor of art at the University of Virginia, has published Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645–770 (NUS Press, 2018).

Ellen Winner ’69, PhD ’78, BI ’99 draws on psychology research to consider a number of philosophical questions about art in her recent book How Art Works: A Psychological Exploration (Oxford University Press, 2018). Said the New Yorker in a review, “This is an engaging project, and How Art Works is exhilarating in part because Winner actually has some answers.” Winner is a professor of psychology at Boston College and a senior research associate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Project Zero.

Small Fry: A Memoir (Grove, 2018) is the debut memoir from Lisa Brennan-Jobs ’00, whose father was the Apple founder Steve Jobs. In a starred review, Publishers Weekly said, “This sincere and disquieting portrait reveals a complex father-daughter relationship.”

Freya Manfred BI ’76 has published Loon in Late November Water (Red Dragonfly Press, 2018), her seventh poetry collection, of which the writer Philip Roth says, “Wonderful poems. ‘Loon in Late November Water’ is my favorite, though I’ve read and reread them all.”

So Far So Good: Poems 2014–2018 (Copper Canyon, 2018) celebrates the verse of the late Ursula K. Le Guin ’51. “Of the poems assembled in this collection, readers may ask are they nearly as fast as, or faster than, light?” said a Publishers Weekly starred review. “They are koan-ical, comical, here a little Dorothy Parker, there a touch Richard Brautigan.”

For the past 20 years, Janet Mindes ’69, AM ’74 has applied her research psychology PhD to education, research, and publication in integrative medicine (IM) at Columbia’s College of Physicians & Surgeons and the Tri-State College of Acupuncture, in New York City. She is a coeditor of Integrative Sexual Health (Oxford University Press, 2018)—the first evidence-based effort to apply IM to the field of sexual health.

A professor of history at the University of Maryland, Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt RI ’05 has published The Science and Politics of Race in Mexico and the United States, 1910–1950 (UNC Press, 2018), a book she began to research during her fellowship year. A review on the Society for US Intellectual History’s blog called the book “a rich and provocative analysis of an especially vibrant vein of the discourse over race that emerged following the Mexican Revolution.”

A trove of old family letters informed War Torn: A Family Story (CreateSpace, 2017), a memoir by Felicity Vaughan Swayne ’59. In it, she recounts how she, her mother, and her twin brother came to the United States from England in the early months of World War II.

Coming in April is Mind Fixers: Psychiatry’s Troubled Search for the Biology of Mental Illness (W. W. Norton, 2019), by Anne Harrington ’82, the first comprehensive history of the discipline’s attempt to address mental illness through neuroscience, biochemistry, and pharmaceuticals.

In May, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall RI ’04 expects to publish Sisters and Rebels: A Struggle for the Soul of the Modern South (W. W. Norton, 2019), which follows three 19th-century Georgia-born sisters as they come to very different understandings of race, gender, and the South.

Also coming this spring is The Known, the Secret, the Forgiven: A Memoir (W. W. Norton, 2019), by Joan Wheelis ’77, who teaches psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and directs Two Brattle Center.

On Stage and Screen

The filmmaker Sky Hopinka RI ’19 is one of four artists chosen to receive a 2018 Art of Nonfiction Fellowship from the Sundance Institute, which awards an unrestricted grant. His short film Dislocation Blues (2017), which presents an alternative to the mainstream media coverage of the Standing Rock standoff in 2016, was recently on view at the Davis

A Win Sparks an Exhibition

Deborah Cornell BI ’88, an associate professor and the head of printmaking at Boston University’s School of Visual Arts, was a double winner at the 2015 International Print Triennial in Kraków, Poland—the first time the Grand Prix and Grand Prix d’honneur had been given to a single artist, or to an American. That win sparked a laureate solo exhibition, titled Eclipse and Deluge: Accidental Powers and Oblique Contingencies, which was on view last summer at the Kraków International Cultural Centre. A catalog accompanied the exhibition, which comprised large-format digital prints and an immersive collaborative installation with print, video, and sound; that catalog recently became available for online purchase through the gallery’s website.
Elise Adibi RI ’14 took part in the dual exhibition Elements at the Bowman, Penelec, Megahan Gallery at Allegheny College. There, she debuted four new large-format paintings made of plant-based essential oils and animal proteins. Her site-specific project The Outermost Painting: the presence of life sustains life opened alongside the exhibition.

Bouchra Khalili RI ’18 will show 22 Hours, the film essay she created during her Radcliffe fellowship, at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston on March 20. The event, which will include a conversation, will mark the film’s US debut.

Grace Notes

RumBarroco and La Donna Musicale—both directed by Laury Gutierrez RI ’09—released a new album, titled Latinas inFusion (2018). They held a CD-release concert in November at Boston’s Old South Church.

The composer and soprano Kate Soper RI ’13 toes the line between language and music—and she stopped by KCRW’s The Organist podcast last fall to talk about it. Earlier, the Believer ran a lengthy interview with Soper about her work.

Public Life

In early December, Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin RI ’17—along with the presidents of Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, and Vassar Colleges—took part in a panel at “Empowering Excellence,” the Girton College 150th anniversary symposium. Girton was the United Kingdom’s first residential institution for women’s higher education, and its event took place at the Harvard Club of New York.

The political scientist Claudine Gay PhD ’07, RI ’14 is the newest dean of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences. She is both the first woman and the first person of color to lead the school.
An assistant professor of science and technology studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and Radcliffe’s 2018–2019 Katherine Hampson Bessell Fellow, Nicole C. Nelson examines scientists’ assumptions about the natural world and how those play into their research. This year, at Radcliffe, she’s taking a deep dive into a scientific reproducibility crisis in which many findings, as it turns out, are not what they seem.

Who are your heroes?  
I’ve long had an academic crush on Anne Fausto-Sterling. Her research is hard to categorize—she works at the intersection of biology and gender studies—which is why I like her so much.

What is your most treasured possession?  
My fabric collection. I sew most of my own clothes these days, and I usually buy fabric while I’m traveling.

Who is your muse?  
Enigmatic people or counterintuitive events really get my brain going.

Describe yourself in six words or fewer.  
Naturally excitable (don’t feed me caffeine).

Were your life to become a motion picture, who would portray you?  
I polled some friends, and two out of two said Renée Zellweger. How’s that for a reproducible result?

Whose tunes do you enjoy?  
Icona Pop and Dua Lipa are in heavy rotation in my running playlist right now.

What inspires you?  
Scholars who build communities that are rigorous, inclusive, and supportive.

Name a pet peeve.  
Yoga instructors who give anatomically nonsensical instructions, like “breathe through your toes.” It breaks my concentration because I start imagining my toes having little lungs!

Science and Sewing

I wound up doing oral histories with scientists to uncover the moments when they began to realize that the discrepancies they were seeing were part of a larger problem. That, and my Radcliffe fellowship!

What is your fantasy career?  
If I weren’t an academic, I might try my hand at teaching sewing or designing sewing patterns. I remember how transformative it was for me when I first realized that I could make clothes to fit my body rather than trying to remake my body to fit into off-the-rack clothes, and I’d love to share that feeling with others.

What is the reproducibility crisis, and how did you become interested in it?  
The reproducibility crisis is a recent phenomenon wherein scientists have found themselves unable to reproduce results that they thought were well established. A study published in 2012 by the pharmaceutical company Amgen reported that its in-house scientists could replicate findings from the published literature on cancer in only 6 out of 53 cases (11%). That study got the attention of a lot of people in the biomedical community, including me.

What have been your methods for studying discrepancies in scientific results?  
I’ve been doing oral histories with scientists to uncover the moments when they began to realize that the discrepancies they were seeing were part of a larger problem. With my Research Partners, I’ve also been assembling a large database of opinion pieces, editorials, review articles, and newspaper articles, which we’ll analyze to identify key moments when the conversation about reproducibility starts to shift from a series of isolated events into something more systemic.

What are the ramifications of such widespread scientific inconsistencies?  
One of the potential ramifications of the reproducibility crisis is that it might erode public trust in science. The public image of science has long been out of sync with the reality—we like to think of science as giving us truth and certainty, but what it actually gives us is a way to challenge our beliefs and weed out the predictions that don’t align well with what we see in the world. That’s a harder message to communicate.

The answers to this questionnaire have been edited for space. See the unabridged version—and video of Nelson’s fellow’s presentation—on our website.
Maps to the Stars

What may seem to be an abstract drawing is actually an annotated image of the stars recorded on a glass plate on October 28, 1897, using a telescope in Peru. The red lines show a meteor’s path, while the black marks were made by unidentified women working as Harvard “computers” over a century ago. One of these computers, Henrietta Swan Leavitt, used this plate in her research, which led to her development, in 1912, of the Leavitt Law that provided astronomers a tool for telling distance in space.

In gallery events associated with Anna Von Mertens’s exhibition Measure (see page 22), curators displayed several of these plates, highlighting the remarkable work done in astronomy by Harvard’s underacknowledged early women. To learn more about upcoming Radcliffe exhibitions and their associated events, visit onviewatradcliffe.org.
On Radcliffe Day 2019, Friday, May 31, we will award the Radcliffe Medal to Dolores Huerta.

The trailblazing activist and organizer Dolores Huerta has worked for social justice for more than 60 years. In 1962, she cofounded the United Farm Workers of America with Cesar Chavez to ensure that farm workers could claim their basic human rights. In the years since, she has shaped policy and public opinion on many critical issues. Too often, however, Huerta has not received the same recognition as her male contemporaries.

Inspired by the work that first ignited Huerta’s activism, we will explore the complex intersection of food and social justice with an exciting program featuring Alice Waters, Soledad O’Brien ’88, Frances Moore Lappé, Jennifer Gordon ’87, JD’92, Sara Bleich PhD ’07, RI ’19, and others.

Online registration will open in March. For more information, go to www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.