

## Introduction

Welcome. We are thinking of everyone in the path of hurricane Laura and we hope that everyone is safe and out of harm's way. Today we gather for the third webinar in the AIA series: *Critical Conversations on Race, Teaching, and Antiquity*, sponsored by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee of the AIA. Recordings of the first two webinars, *Decolonizing Syllabi in the Archaeology and History of the Mediterranean Region* and *Teaching Race and Material Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean* are available on the [AIA website](#)

To quote a recent post on the [dangers of performative DEI](#) by University of Michigan Postdoctoral Fellow, Paulette Vincent-Ruz: "Equity and Justice are not a matter of opinion, they are a moral imperative. A true commitment to DEI is centering those principles in every decision and as the core values of any collaboration or organization". The DEI Committee and the AIA leadership envision these webinars as the beginning of a long and ongoing process of self-reflection on the road to the centering of these principles and in the quest of becoming better accomplices. We wish to thank the AIA for their support of this webinar series. In particular, we would like to thank Kevin Mullen for his logistical, technological, and zoom support.

My name is Morag Kersel and I, along with my friend and colleague, Machal Gradoz, will provide a short introduction and then will serve as moderators for today's webinar. I am an archaeologist and I teach in the anthropology department at DePaul University in Chicago. I am also the director of the interdisciplinary Museum Studies Minor. DePaul University is the largest Catholic university in the US. Of the 20K+ 60% of the students come from Illinois, and ~40% are students of color, a third of the students are first generation as am I, (first gen as defined as the first in their family to attend university) and 40% are transfer students, many from the city colleges of Chicago. The combination of these amazing students and a city filled with museums and cultural heritage resources makes for an excellent environment in which to teach.

Today Sanchita Balachandran (@Sanchita\_writes), Elizabeth Marlowe (@ElizMarlowe), and Alexander Nagel (@Dr\_Alex\_Nagel) join Machal (@MistaRemus) and I (@mokersel) to discuss *becoming better accomplices and instructors: justice, activism, and reflexivity in teaching museums and cultural heritage*. Each of us is a member and an active participant in the committees, meetings, and programs of the Archaeological Institute of America. We are also committed to the call for accomplices issued by the [Society for Black Archaeologists](#). During the June webinar sponsored by the SBA, "[Archaeology in the Times of Black Lives Matter](#)" panelists advocated for accomplices

over allies. This moment needs people who act, speak up, support colleagues, and make changes. I acknowledge that it is on me, a white woman of a certain age to take on the responsibility of challenging the archaeological, museum, and cultural heritage canons, addressing injustice, and changing the narratives in the classes, I teach.

I cannot and do not do this alone. I rely heavily on my students, friends, colleagues, and other accomplices for insights, wisdom, and advice. I rely on them to tell when I make mistakes, do harm, and need to do better, and when I need to step back. I also rely on them to let me know when/if I have made a difference. To be honest I would be nowhere without the twitter sphere, it is there I learn, engage, and understand better how to be an accomplice. I am indebted to the tweets of Laura Heath-Stout, April Beisaw, Steph Halmhofer, Paulette Steeves, Robin Nelson, Sarah Bond, [Michael Rivera](#), Heba Abd el Gawad, Jade Ryerson, Quinn Tessman, Katherine Blouin, Christina Riggs, Alice Stevenson, Roberta Mazza, Kisha Supernant, Alice Procter, Usama Gad, Rachel Mairs, Girish Daswani, Amara Thornton, Michael Press, Subhadra Das. The various folks from [Museum Detox](#), [Everyday Orientalism](#), and Mike Murawski and LaTanya Autry from [Museums are not Neutral](#) are invaluable colleagues. Dr Autry's [Art Stuff Matters](#) and [Social Justice and Museums Resource list](#) are fundamental to rethinking and retooling how I teach and work in cultural heritage and museums. This list of tweeters is far from complete and I know I have left people off who inspire and help me every day. You should also be following Dr. Robin Mitchell @ParisNoire #FrenchHistorianShoes and Art Activist Barbie @BarbieReports for great outfits, good shoes, and excellent content. For me teaching is one big group project and today we have together some of the most inspiring and innovative teachers, from whom I have learned much. This is an ongoing process, and I hope today, that we share strategies, discuss successes and failures and we all leave with some action items to implement in our teaching, research, and community engagement lives related to museums and cultural heritage. A word of warning – at the end of this there will be no magic checklist where you can tick boxes and think, “there I’ve “decolonized”, it is an constant process, and if you are serious about being a good accomplice you will always be reviewing, tweaking, changing, reading, tweeting, and learning, even when it is difficult and uncomfortable. It is going to be a lot of work but we are all in this together.

I now turn this over to Machal Gradoz.

A place to start in dismantling and acknowledging the settler colonial legacies where we live is with an acknowledgement of the ongoing systemic injustices in the places where we teach.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which the University of Michigan is situated is the traditional territory of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations. The 1817 Treaty of the Maumee Rapids, or Fort Meigs, allowed for the foundation of a university in the Detroit area, with the agreement that the youth of these Nations be educated there as well. The terms of this treaty were not fulfilled. In 1837, the land was sold when the university was relocated to Ann Arbor, and the proceeds went directly to the permanent endowment of the University of Michigan. No members of these Nations attended the University of Michigan for at least 130 years. I recognize the lasting consequences of the continuous effects of colonization, colonial violence, and struggle for recognition of indigenous sovereignty and I recognize the use of this land that has led to a level of financial security of an institution that has historically excluded and marginalized the Nations from whom it got its land. This acknowledgement is the education and inclusion that I, as a member of this institution, must practice to recognize the responsibility and commitment I have to reflect on how I've benefited from this trauma and to advocate for marginalized and excluded groups.

I would also like to acknowledge that I currently reside on the traditional territory of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and Sioux Nations. Though this land was retained by these nations in the Treaty of Ft. Laramie in 1851, the treaty was broken almost immediately, and in 1858 the federal government began to allow prospectors of the Pikes Peak Gold Rush to colonize it. The 1861 Treaty of Ft. Wise, signed by a minority of Cheyenne representatives, ceded this land to the federal government, and its unpopularity led to the Colorado War and the Sand Creek Massacre. I again recognize the violent and traumatic consequences of the actions that have led to my occupation of this land today and commit to being an accomplice in the struggle for recognition of indigenous sovereignty.

Writing these was a learning process for me, and I am open to correction and continued learning.

We want you to consider on which indigenous homelands you are situated during this webinar, and the histories of their colonial interventions. If you are in the US or Canada you can text your zip or postal code to 907-312-5085 or go to <https://native-land.ca/> for information on the original inhabitants and the treaties that intervened.

This webinar is being recorded, and will be posted on the AIA website soon after the session, along with any resources mentioned during the session. Links will also be posted in the Q&A. Please note that the chat is disabled, so please direct your questions to the Q&A. If you're live tweeting, please use the hashtag #AIADEI

**Twitter handles to follow**

@100\_worlds  
@KaraCooney  
@AprilMBeisaw  
@DimitriNakassis  
@MichaelDPress  
@lowerendtheory  
@kstsosie  
@fkeshk  
@AnthroYeti  
@nadirawho  
@nickmirzoeff  
@Girishdaswani  
@riveramichael  
@NorthernSirena  
@MuseumsUnlocked  
@ProfDanHicks  
@RockDocGeoarch  
@Ilisonmickel  
@lamortdemal  
@PauletteSteeves  
@littlegaudy  
@VivianLaughlin  
@induswaliarch  
@JaneEvaBaxter1

@aprocter  
@artstuffmatters  
@bones\_canada  
@kataplexis  
@archaeology\_aia  
@potatokitty  
@isisnaucratis  
@lauraheathstout  
@WBattleBaptiste  
@staceylcamp  
@Archaeo\_Girl  
@GawadHeba  
@alicestevenson  
@drchipcolwell  
@SAPIENS\_org  
@artcrimeprof  
@DrDonnaYates  
@CultureTraffic  
@museum\_detox  
@Crit\_Heritage  
@CorneliusKalmar  
@murawski27  
@wawaaba\_  
@Aleemagray

@photograph\_tut

@ParisNoire

@BarbieReports

## Elizabeth Marlowe

<https://sunderlandsocialsciences.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/panopticon.jpg>

[\*Shaky Ground: Context, Connoisseurship and the History of Roman Art\*](#) (on questions of object context)

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## Sanchita Balachandran

**Remarks prepared by Sanchita Balachandran** (email: [sanchita@jhu.edu](mailto:sanchita@jhu.edu); twitter: @Sanchita\_writes)

Thank you to Morag and Machal for the invitation to be part of this panel, and to my co-panelists Elizabeth and Alex, and to the AIA for supporting this conversation.

For those who may not be able to hear me, the full text of my talk is available at the URL being shared in the Q+A.

My name is Sanchita Balachandran. You may be hearing my voice, but I am sorry that I can't be on camera as I have the flu and feel pretty awful. For those who may not be able to see my profile picture, I am showing an image of myself, a brown skinned woman of south Asian descent with shoulder length curly black hair standing against the pink flowering trees that grow in my neighborhood in a place now called Baltimore but that is the ancestral homeland of the Susquehannock people. I also acknowledge the presence of the Piscataway, the Accohannocks, the Nanticokes, the Lumbees, and the Cherokees. I want to thank Peggy Mainor of the [Multicultural Initiative for Community Advancement](#) for helping me begin the work of learning the Indigenous histories of this place I now call home.

I am a conservator of archaeological materials and associate director of the [Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum](#) (JHAM). My archaeological fieldwork experience and the conservation work, teaching and research I do with museum collections has primarily focused on material from the ancient Mediterranean region. At Johns Hopkins,

I teach courses in the interdisciplinary [“Museums and Society”](#) program, working with undergraduate students across numerous majors. I am grateful for tremendous freedom in what I teach, from ancient technology focused courses such as [“Examining Archaeological Objects,”](#) to museological ones such as a [“Collections Management”](#) practicum and [“Critical Issues in Art Conservation,”](#) to courses that focus on topics such as [“Ancient Color”](#) or even specific objects including [“Roman Egyptian Mummy Portraits.”](#) [The google doc has links to these syllabi]. My teaching centers the care and use of the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum’s collection, and each year, up to 1000 students have some kind of in-person contact with museum objects.

For today’s conversation, I’d like to raise three concerns about how we might teach differently:

[Slide 1]1. **Model interdisciplinarity as a more diverse approach to studying the past.**

As a conservator, my work has always relied on being in conversation with people across disciplines including archaeology, art history, history, materials science, chemistry, and contemporary art-making, to name a few. Doing this kind of interdisciplinary work, requires, above all, a genuine sense of curiosity about what people in other fields have to say about the same topics and objects we claim to know best, and a willingness to learn and develop mutually agreed upon language for sharing and debating information. Modeling such interdisciplinarity in the context of an undergraduate class is invaluable because students have to work at understanding different kinds of methodologies, datasets, and perspectives; they have to struggle with teasing out the kinds of arguments being made; and they have to find a way to integrate sometimes even contradictory information, just as any of us do with our own research. For the course [“Recreating Ancient Greek Ceramics,”](#) which I co-taught with potter [Matthew Hyleck](#), 13 undergraduates across majors, then classics graduate student [Ross Brendle](#) and potter [Camila Ascher](#) spent a semester understanding Athenian red-figure vases from the perspective of art historians, classicists, materials scientists, and conservators while also studying ancient vases in the museum collection, all while producing replicas in our custom-built kiln. We also made a short film, [“Mysteries of the Kylix,”](#) and maintained a [class blog](#). It was a challenging, intense experience, but it also raised otherwise unknowable insights about what ceramics production in ancient Athens might have been like, and it also gave us an embodied understanding of these objects that otherwise just sit on shelves. I would argue that this is why many of us teach—to develop our students’ capacities for discernment and to be honest about what they don’t or can’t know; to give them tools to evaluate and integrate diverse forms of

evidence; to challenge them to ask new questions through the process of struggling with things that don't quite fit together.

[Slide 2] 2. **Teach with actual objects.**

I think instructors have a lot of different reasons for not teaching with objects: it's logistically complicated; it takes time out of lectures; objects without archaeological context are not "scientific" evidence. But not teaching with objects is a dereliction of our duty: we should be training students to look critically and patiently at real things because that is an essential skill for those staying in archaeology, art history, classics and allied fields. Every course I teach utilizes the Archaeological Museum collection, and it is truly a joy to see students hold ancient objects in their hands for the very first time; there is a sense of electricity to that moment of connection between them and the people of the past who once held or made these items, or were buried with them. Working with objects comes with its own set of protocols. First, context: these are ancient peoples' things, and we owe our respect and care to these people, and we must be aware that the colonial and extractive practices of museum building have removed many of these items from peoples' graves. Second, mindset: a real object requires our curiosity, patience, and willingness to be confused by what we see. Art history and archaeology students in particular come in believing that the objects we study should somehow hew closely to the descriptions they have read of them in textbooks, but real things are evidence of real peoples' interactions with them: they are messy. Third, participatory learning: My courses often involve utilizing technical tools such as multi-banding imaging and x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy to study objects. I always position myself as a co-learner with my students, emphasizing how I myself don't know what we will find out about the things we are about to examine, and this makes for a more engaged and collaborative learning process.

[Slide 3] 3. **Changing a single syllabus does too little if the class culture, the departmental culture, our institutions and our disciplines do not change.**

Let's step back and ask why we are having this series of conversations about changing how we teach. Perhaps the hope is that re-writing our syllabi gives us the chance of some literal course-correction. But changing a single course does too little to change the way our larger spaces operate, because students who leave your class feeling more engaged and maybe even seen still have to return to a department, an institution and a discipline that may not value them. I can only speak from my position as a cis-gendered able-bodied brown woman, but "diversifying" our fields means recognizing all the ways in which Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) are kept out at every level, and how this discrimination is "multiplicative" ([Sterling 2015](#)) if they identify as LGBTQAI+ or

have visible or invisible disabilities. Exclusion works in so many ways: never seeing a Black archaeologist in a children’s book as was recently mentioned in a panel of the Society of Black Archaeologists; not having enough money to complete a fieldschool requirement for an archaeology degree; being seen as needing “accommodations” for not coming into graduate school with all the requisite “classical languages” that their more elite peers might have learned in high school. At every stage, there is an emphasis on the “deficiencies” of people who don’t fit the white norm, rather than what they bring to the conversation and the field. As the only woman of color teaching in these fields at my institution, and who has seen many BIPOC students in my office over the last decade, I have seen the harm that these forms of gatekeeping and ritual exclusion have on students of color. Our fields do not have a diversity problem, they have a habitability problem. Perhaps some of you are thinking, but these are hard fields, you really need to want to be here. In my experience, there are two reasons why students—undergraduate or graduate—do not stay in our fields: 1. Extreme financial hardship, and 2. The constant micro-aggressions, hazing, exclusionary practices, and blatant racism that makes their own survival and thriving impossible. So, the question is, what are we willing to do that doesn’t just serve our own interests as instructors, because otherwise “inclusion” is just another useless word.

Marstine, Janet. 2007. “What a Mess! Claiming Space for Undergraduate Student Experimentation in the University Museum.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22:3, 303-315, DOI: 10.1080/09647770701628644

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**Alex Nagel**

NYC Archaeology

<https://nysarchaeology.org/new-york-archaeology-exhibits/>

[http://panycarchaeology.org/history\\_of\\_nyc\\_arch.html](http://panycarchaeology.org/history_of_nyc_arch.html)

NYC Seneca Village:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkY-Q6WiUD4>

## **FIT and FIT MUSEUM**

<https://www.fitnyc.edu/museum/research/fashion-and-diversity-reading-list.php>

<https://exhibitions.fitnyc.edu/black-fashion-designers/>

<https://fitnyc.libguides.com/antiracism>

## **NON FIT Related Resources:**

<https://fashionandrace.org/>

<https://wherearetheblackdesigners.com>

African American Design Nexus: <https://aadn.gsd.harvard.edu/>

NY Historical Society: Women and the American Story

<https://wams.nyhistory.org/>

Washington, D.C.

<http://www.archaeologyincommunity.com/>

## **TED-Talks for students**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQR8x3CCo0A>

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (2016)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en)

## **Other Videos**

“White at the Museum” (April 2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkwUCUwt3Rs>

Rear Video Black Athena Debate, 4 clips (1991):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCd66Tb0yF8>

## **BOOKS & ARTICLES:**

Betsch Cole, J., L. L. Lott eds. 2019. *Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums*. Rowman & Littlefield. (e.g., chapters, “A call to action;” “Museums, racism, and the inclusiveness chasm;” “Museums, diversity, and social value;”)

Adeyemi, K. 2020. “Black Women Curators. A Brief Oral History of the Recent Past,” In E. Chambers ed. *Routledge Companion to African American Art History*: 429-37 (= 8 pages).

Barber, R. 2020. "Picturing Freedom. The Legacy of Representing Black Womanhood," In E. Chambers ed. *Routledge Companion to African American Art History*: 382-92 (= 10 pages).

DiAngelo, R. 2011. "White Fragility," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3.3: 54-70 (= 16 pages). <https://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/viewFile/249/116>

Everything by <https://www.ibramxkendi.com/stamped>

## POETRY

Sharif, Solmaz 2016. Look. Graywolf Press: <https://solmazsharif.com/look/>

Excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ySrPq9Nlc>

Helal, Marwa 2019. Invasive Species. Nightboat.

Review: <https://brooklynrail.org/2019/06/books/Invasive-species-by-Marwa-Helal>

Larsen, David, transl. 2017. The Names of the Lion -- By Ibn Khālawayh.

<https://www.wavepoetry.com/products/names-of-the-lion>

## IRAQ | SYRIA | BEYOND

Baker, R., S. T. Ismael, T. Ismael 2009. *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered*. Pluto Press:

<https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745328133/cultural-cleansing-in-iraq/>

Çubukçu, A. 2018. *For the Love of Humanity. The World Tribunal on Iraq*. University of Pennsylvania Press:

<https://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/15864.html>

"Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991-2011" Exhibition @ MoMAPs1 2019-2020

<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5084>

Price, D. 2011. *Weaponizing Anthropology: Social Science in Service of the Militarized State*. Counter-Punch.

<https://store.counterpunch.org/product/weaponizing-anthropology/>

On the Weaponizing of Iraq Archives

<https://twitter.com/wisammy/status/1176567603415797760>

Critic on a recent exhibition @Penn: Raha Rafii:

<https://therevealer.org/destruction-on-display-the-politics-of-preservation/>

“Epic to Be Continued” (2017) Exhibition Washington, D.C. Students NYU on Iraq & Iran in D.C.

Table of Content:

[https://www.academia.edu/35311448/Epic\\_To\\_Be\\_Continued\\_An\\_Exhibition\\_2017\\_](https://www.academia.edu/35311448/Epic_To_Be_Continued_An_Exhibition_2017_)

Finney, M. Shannon, M. eds. 2019. *9/11 and the Academy. Responses in the Liberal Arts and the 21st Century World*. Palgrave: <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783030164188>

Nader, L. 2015. *What the Rest Think of the West since 600 AD*.

<https://anthropology.berkeley.edu/what-rest-think-west-600-ad>

Thornton, S. 2006. “What is History in US History Textbooks,” in J. Nicholls ed. *School History Textbooks across cultures: International Debates and Perspectives*. Oxford: 15-26 (= 11 pages).

Kreps, C. 2006. “Non-Western Models of Museums and Curation in Cross-Cultural Perspective,” in S. MacDonald. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Ed. S. MacDonald: 457-72 (= 15 pages).

For comments generally: Karl Sharro: <https://twitter.com/KarlreMarks>

## YEMEN

Sama'a Al-Hamdani: <https://yemeniaty.com/>

Yemen Cultural Institute for Heritage and the Arts: <https://www.yciha.org/events>

Shireen Al-Adeimi: @shireen818

MWATANA for Human Rights: <https://mwatana.org/en/>

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Wall Kimmerer, R. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed: <https://milkweed.org/book/braiding-sweetgrass>

**And for some fun in the class:**

Onion Article:

<https://local.theonion.com/metropolitan-museum-acquires-another-vase-1830499658>

## **Resource List**

AIA Webinars

[https://www.archaeological.org/aia-seminars-critical-conversations-on-race-teaching-and-antiquity/?fbclid=IwAR14tgt2by7E2YbLcU7T-Ayf\\_0BUeqwWC5H1tvfps1rJYPPt40hMY0tV5ss](https://www.archaeological.org/aia-seminars-critical-conversations-on-race-teaching-and-antiquity/?fbclid=IwAR14tgt2by7E2YbLcU7T-Ayf_0BUeqwWC5H1tvfps1rJYPPt40hMY0tV5ss)

Archaeology In the Times of Black Lives Matter

<https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/new-events/2020/6/25/archaeology-in-the-times-of-black-lives-matter>

Museum Detox [https://sked.link/museum\\_detox](https://sked.link/museum_detox)

Everyday Orientalism <https://everydayorientalism.wordpress.com>

Museums are not Neutral <https://www.bonfire.com/museums-are-not-neutral/>

Art Stuff Matters <https://artstuffmatters.wordpress.com>

Social Justice and Museums Resource list

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PyqPVsIEPiq0Twnn4YYVXopk3q426J95nISRxvkQI\\_Q/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PyqPVsIEPiq0Twnn4YYVXopk3q426J95nISRxvkQI_Q/edit)

Monument Lab <https://monumentlab.com>

100 Histories of 100 Worlds in 1 Object <https://100histories100worlds.org>

Decolonising Methods: A Reading List

[https://helenkara.com/2020/07/29/decolonising-methods-a-reading-list/?fbclid=IwAR2to9UUyMZb-Adv\\_Qod1H2JIm0J1qhf0IOJpDzGVe3zryx-A9T-qQdozP0](https://helenkara.com/2020/07/29/decolonising-methods-a-reading-list/?fbclid=IwAR2to9UUyMZb-Adv_Qod1H2JIm0J1qhf0IOJpDzGVe3zryx-A9T-qQdozP0)

## Resources for Online Teaching

Online archives/digital repositories of archaeological data, museum collections, libraries, etc.

<http://portal.ariadne-infrastructure.eu/>

<https://www.tdar.org/>

<https://www.europeana.eu/en>

[Followinghadrian.com](http://Followinghadrian.com)

<http://numismatics.org/ocre/> - Coinage of the Roman Empire

<http://numismatics.org/crro/> - Coinage of the Roman Republic Online

<http://numismatics.org/hrc/> - Hellenistic Royal Coinages

Tools for creating virtual exhibitions

[Artsteps.com](http://Artsteps.com)

Miscellaneous

<https://sketchfab.com/search> - create, discover 3-D content