



From the Global to the Local

Micro-Talks on the Power of Place in the Humanities

Imagining America Conference, October 3rd, 12:00 -1:00 p.m.

The Dresher Center for the Humanities supports and promotes research into the social, historical, and cultural dimensions of the human experience, at UMBC, in the Baltimore-Washington region, and beyond. The Center encourages intellectual exchange among UMBC faculty and students, cultivates interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship, and promotes the humanities as indispensable to the mission of the contemporary university. As an incubator for research, the Dresher Center supports a robust humanities environment that benefits the university, the local community, and the wider mid-Atlantic region. The Center fosters creative thinking about the role of the humanities in public life, and through its programs, participates in the public conversation about the value of the humanities to our increasingly interconnected world.

Dresher Center for the Humanities

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Dresher Center for the Humanities

Lunchtime Session

Dresher Center Conference Room

216 Performing Arts and Humanities Building

How does the power of place drive humanities research? What does civic engagement look like in both local and global contexts? This lunchtime session by UMBC faculty and Dresher Center Fellows offers a series of micro-talks on engaged, place-based research from the streets of Chennai, India to the neighborhoods of downtown Baltimore. The session will show the unexpected confluence of methods among place-based researchers and the surprising commonality of themes that emerge from their work.

MICRO-TALKS

Introductions: Jessica Berman, Director
Dresher Center for the Humanities



THE ATLAS OF CINEMATIC PARIS: CITY WOMEN SINCE 1957

Nicoleta Bazgan

Associate Professor,
Modern Languages, Linguistics and
Intercultural Communication

The Atlas of Cinematic Paris: City Women since 1957 (<http://aocp.irc.umbc.edu/>) is a digital project mapping film locations that situate women in on-screen Paris since the late 1950s. In this micro-talk, Dr. Bazgan will discuss how the concepts of gender, ethnicity, and social class are clustered on the Parisian cinematic map, interacting with the real city. Through a micro-political investigation of everyday movements in the city, the Atlas shows how female inhabitants engage with the normative power structures that dictate the use of urban space. This cartographic project provides an insight into the ways women are screened as city residents, aiming to inspire changes in the off-screen city through urban planning that takes gender into account.



STREET MURALS OF CHENNAI

Preminda Jacob Chair and Associate Professor, Visual Arts (Art History and Museum Studies); 2013 Dresher Center Fellow

From 2009-2012 a vast program of vividly-colored street murals covered thousands of feet of public wall space in the south

Indian city of Chennai, transforming unsightly "compound" public walls with a cheery slide-show of tourist postcard-style imagery. Part of a city-beautification initiative, the idea for painting murals throughout the city was proposed by out-of-work billboard painters. While murals alone were a not a remedy for the broken city infrastructure, they nevertheless signaled a concern for public space. By creating a series of landmarks throughout the city, the murals helped to focus attention on the spatial context while provoking interest and in some instances, pride about one's surroundings.



DOWNTOWN STORIES: PLACE AND PUBLIC HISTORY IN BALTIMORE

Nicole King

Chair and

Associate Professor, American Studies;
Director, Orser Center for the Study of
Place, Community & Culture

As part of a fall 2014 seminar, "Place and Public History in Baltimore," Dr. King and undergraduate humanities scholars researched and produced a radio series, entitled *Downtown Stories*. Developing these "forgotten" Baltimore stories challenged students to delve below the surface of traditional historical narratives to uncover the social history of the city. The stories that were broadcast by the students on *The Marc Steiner Show* (WEAA 88.9 FM) in January 2015.

WEAVING OUR STORIES INTO THE HISTORY OF THE BALTIMORE UPRISING

Denise Meringolo Associate Professor of History and Public History Program Director; 2016 Dresher Center Fellow

In response to the protests surrounding the death of Baltimore City resident Freddie Gray in April 2015, Denise Meringolo built a grassroots digital project, www.Baltimore-Uprising2015.org. Working with the Maryland Historical Society, as well as

faculty, students, and organizations from around the city, the project is gathering images, stories, videos, documents, and other materials. This micro-talk will speak to the relevance of collections, the value of collaboration, and the process of grassroots history-making during moments of unrest.



TOWARD A NEW VISION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION: DEVELOPING THE BALTIMORE COLLEGIATE SCHOOL FOR BOYS



Kimberly Moffitt Associate Professor, American Studies; Founding Parent and Board Member, Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys; 2014 Dresher Center Fellow

Growing in part from her research on depictions of African-American boys in popular media, Dr. Moffitt has helped to launch the Baltimore Collegiate School, the first public charter school in the city to serve boys with a continuous academic program from grades 4 through grade 12. Moffitt says, "This school matters because many of the ills plaguing young Black males today can be linked to the need for innovative educational opportunities." She will speak about the process of instituting and teaching in a new liberal arts model school during challenging times in Baltimore.