LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Center for African and African American Research has reached another crescendo in its three-year-old project to foster the best of multi-disciplinary, vertically integrated research on campus and to enrich both theoretical and experiential learning about Africa and its diaspora.

CAAAR has hosted an unprecedented number of public events, which are equally unprecedented in the multiculturalism of their themes and the diversity of their formats. In a score of settings, these events brought the Duke community and the general public state-of-the-art ideas and cutting-edge debates about race, religion, cuisine, and labor rights. CAAAR Associate Directors Michaeline Crichlow and Charlie Piot have displayed energetic and creative leadership in all of these endeavors.

CAAAR sponsors a thematic monthly lecture series each semester and one or two scholarly conferences per year. The topic of the fall 2011 lecture series was “Black Gods and Kings: Priests and Practices of the Afro-Atlantic Religions.” University scholars and priests examined—and illustrated—their topics through multiple media. Indeed, the priests performed ceremonies never before witnessed in the Duke University community. The spring 2012 lecture series, co-chaired by Professors Bayo Holsey and Charlie Piot, addressed “Race (Theory) and the Disciplines.” See p.2.

“Human Traffic: Past and Present” was the Center’s 2011-2012 scholarly conference. On 13-15 October 2011, this conference second-guessed the widespread comparison of contemporary human trafficking, which is often called “modern-day slavery,” to the Atlantic slave trade. See p.5.

CAAAR continues to sponsor the Distinguished Visiting Scholar Program, this year hosting renowned international sociologist and filmmaker Dr. Karen E. Fields. See p.4.

Led by David Stein and Michaeline Crichlow, the John Hope Franklin Young Scholars Program continues to introduce Durham Public Schools middle-schoolers to the insights and techniques of university-based research about African and African-diaspora history. See p.2.

Our Film Initiative that has now borne fruit in the form of three films. Most recent are “Can We Talk? Bridging the Humanities and the Social Sciences” and “Human Traffic: Past and Present,” both of which are now available for viewing on the CAAAR website. See p.4.

We are also supporting graduate-student research and filmmaking in Africa, and our online museum exhibition of African and African-diaspora sacred arts is nearing completion. See p.5.

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THE JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM

With the generous support of the Provost’s Office, the JHFYSP gives high-potential middle-school students first-hand experience at making history as scholars do it—through field and archival investigations, examination of historical artifacts, interviews, reading and discussion of secondary documents, and dramatic reenactments. 2011-2012 was the second year of the Program.

The Young Scholars learn about historical events such as the Wilmington Coup of 1898, which are little known to the general public and are absent from the Durham and North Carolina Public Schools curriculum. The Young Scholars then create novel ways of conveying their discoveries and interpretations to other students. For example, this past year, the 20 students of the first and second entering cohorts of the program studied “The Great Migration”—the massive early-20th-century migration of African Americans from the South to the North. A team of Duke University professors, archivists, a filmmaker, and Duke Outreach Coordinator David Stein, along with Durham Public School officials, led the middle-schoolers on an fruitful exploration that included excursions to Wilmington, NC, Philadelphia, and New York City—all important sites in the northward migration of African Americans during the Great Migration.

The Scholars then designed an interactive Smart Board presentation that details the biographies and the events of the Wilmington Coup. On March 19th, the Young Scholars demonstrated and explained the Smart Board application at the Duke-Durham Public Schools-sponsored Durham Technology Showcase. These sixth- and seventh-graders then returned to their respective Durham public schools to demonstrate this electronic application to their fourth-grade schoolmates. Thus they became heroes and role models of scholarship to the next generation of student leaders. They are also completing work on a Great Migration board game which will be used in the schools. Continued on p.5

CAAAR MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES

FALL 2011 LECTURE SERIES:

“Black Gods and Kings: Priests and Politics of the Afro-Atlantic Religions”

Chaired by J. Lorand Matory

Two internationally renowned scholars and four priests addressed the Duke community and the general public about African and African-inspired religions and about the broader social and political context in which they are practiced.

• On 5 October 2011, Professor Richard Werbner—Professor Emeritus of African Anthropology at the University of Manchester and Fellow of the National Humanities Center—screened and discussed his film “Holy Hustlers” (2009), concerning new Christian prophets in Botswana. He explored what he saw as the combination of charisma, efficacy, and chicanery that gave these young Christian prophets such power and invited an equal mix of credulity and doubt from even his most sophisticated Botswanan colleagues.

• On 19 October 2011, High Priestess, or Manbo Asogwe, of Haitian Vodoun Marie Maude Evans—from Mattapan, Massachusetts, and Jacmel, Haiti—discussed “Vodoun, Culture, and Healing” (see photo above). She spoke with conviction about the health-related and economic benefits of her often-stigmatized religion. The initiations of US Americans that she performs in Haiti sustain a small economic zone of farmers, chefs, drummers, tailors, artists, and priests.

• On 26 October 2011, Priest of Afro-Cuban Santería/Ocha Steve Quintana—from Hyde Park, Massachusetts—narrated “How a Yoruba Priest in the New World Practices His Faith.” He discussed the centrality of black dignity and divinity in his religion and why Ocha nonetheless holds great appeal to people of all races.

• On 29 November 2011, Professor Christopher Dunn, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and of African and African
Diaspora Studies at Tulane University, discussed quasi-devotional references to the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé religion by Brazilian artists and politicians of both the left and the right. His talk—“Doces Bárbaros: Candomblé, Counterculture, and the Idea of Bahia”—also addressed the broader issue of how countercultures resist authoritarian power in apparently apolitical ways by adopting the symbols of heterodox cultures. Such countercultures can give birth to more overtly political insurgencies, but they can also be coopted as nationalist folklore and new forms of consumerism.

- On 16 November 2011, Chief Priest, or Rumbondo, of Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, Amilton Sacramento Costa of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, detailed the distinctive beliefs and ritual protocols of his “nation,” or denomination, in a lecture titled “Jeje: the Dahomean Gods of Brazil.” He explained and indeed dramatized the struggle to preserve his denomination against the dominance and expansion of the Yoruba-identified Quêto/Nagô nation.
- Finally, on 30 November 2011, Nigeria’s leading priestess of Yoruba indigenous religion, Adedoyin Faniyi, spoke on “Gods and Kings: the Orisha of Nigeria,” explaining the complex pantheon, liturgical objects, and political context of her religion in a predominantly Christian and Muslim African society. She explained the role of her adoptive mother, Adunni Olorisha Susanne Wenger—an Austrian artist who abandoned European culture in disgust after the Holocaust and became a devotee of the Yoruba gods. Like her mother, Chief Faniyi has fought to preserve the forest, the source of the plants that bring down the gods and the diverse powers through which they benefit humankind.

On the Saturday following his or her Wednesday lecture, each of the priests also led a service in honor of the gods in his or her respective tradition at the home of the Director. Each of the priests also contributed filmed interviews for display in the Center’s future online museum exhibition of Afro-Atlantic sacred arts. This international series of lectures, class discussions, ritual performances, and interviews was exceedingly difficult to organize, but the Center staff is hitting its stride, and the series was a phenomenal success. This series was co-sponsored by the Department of African and African American Studies, the Program in Latino/a Studies, and the Department of Romance Studies.

SPRING 2012 LECTURE SERIES: “Race (Theory) and the Disciplines”
Co-chaired by Professors Charles Piot and Bayo Holsey.

Across a range of humanities and social science disciplines, the Spring 2012 series explored cutting-edge critical theories of race in our changing times.

- On 30 January 2012, Professor Jafari Allen of the Department of Anthropology at Yale University addressed “The Ethnography of Black Queer/Diaspora: Tracing the Circuits of Desire.” He highlighted previously unexamined theoretical parallels between the iconoclastic assumptions embedded in queer studies and in diaspora studies, illustrating these parallels through his ethnographic study of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people of color in socialist Cuba.
- On 15 February 2012, the Richard Perry University Professor of Communication and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, John Jackson, delivered a lecture called “Digitizing Africana Diasporas: Technology and Ethnobiology in the Black Hebrew Community.” He discussed how the Black Hebrews, a sect centered in Dimona, Israel, create a transnational community through the dissemination of digitally recorded films about a vegan lifestyle that they believe will make the members of that community immortal. Jackson also reflected upon how ethnography—a genre founded for the documentation of small, local communities—can be adapted to the anthropological documentation of long-distance and digital communities as well.
- On 29 February 2012, Duke University Professor of History and African and African American Studies Bruce Hall discussed “African Genealogies of Race in the Sahel,” examining the uses and transformations of racial ideas in West African Islamic jurisprudence from the 16th century to the 19th.

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THE FILM INITIATIVE
The CAAAR Film Initiative brings the best of scholarship to filmmaking. Our latest productions—“Can We Talk? Bridging the Social Sciences and the Humanities” and “Human Traffic: Past and Present”—are now available for viewing on the CAAAR website. Check them out at http://caaar.duke.edu/about. We have written a powerful script for “Orisha: A New World Religion,” and continue to seek major funding for this film. A film on race in the Sahel region of West Africa, based upon the work of Professor Bruce Hall, is in the planning stages. We have learned that filmmaking is a painstaking business and that patience and persistence pay off, bit by bit. For their special assistance on the Film Initiative, we thank Senior Associate Dean Ed Gomes, Technology Services Officer Michael Crispin, and filmmaker Frances-Anne Solomon.

PENTECOSTALISM AND POPULAR FILM IN BENIN REPUBLIC, WEST AFRICA
With CAAAR sponsorship, Cultural Anthropology graduate student Brian Smithson will be conducting research this summer in the Benin Republic about the production, distribution, and public reception of Yoruba films, many of which are deeply influenced by the global spread of Pentecostalism. He will be documenting his discoveries for his dissertation, for the Center's online museum exhibition, and in anticipation of his own future filmmaking about West African religion and media.

DISTINGUISHED VISITING SCHOLAR KAREN E. FIELDS
While at the Center, Distinguished Visiting Scholar Karen E. Fields completed, with Barbara J. Fields, Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life, which will be published this fall by Verso Books. Karen also taught two classes at Duke—“Sociology of Religion: End-Time Religion” (Sociology 151/Religion 161R) and “Africans in the Making of the New World” (AAAS 2995)—and delivered the John Hope Franklin Memorial Lectures at the Franklin Humanities Institute. She interacted widely with Duke faculty and students and presented in CAAAR's monthly lecture series. Her sojourn at Duke was co-sponsored by the Provost's Office, the Departments of Sociology, African and African American Studies, and Religion, and the Center for European Studies.

Letter from the Director (continued from page 1)

The final event of 2011-2012 was a unique revelation of Afro-Atlantic culinary history and a gustatory celebration of African-inspired cuisine—“Black Culinary Concepts: A Salon with Chef Mechal Thompson.” Thanks to the initiative of Professor Vincent Brown, the Center could not have ended its year on a brighter note. See p.7.

Of course, none of these events would have been possible without the thoughtful planning and diligence of the Center’s Administrator and the Managing Editor of this publication, Bernice Patterson.

True to its mission, CAAAR continues to foster excellence in research and outreach to people of all ages, disciplines, and backgrounds. Our work has not been easy or without its share of trial and error. What it has always been is innovative, thought-provoking, international, and multisensory.

Because of the breadth and novelty of the Center’s endeavors, we have required the assistance and thoughtful attention of many, a few of whom we must single out for special gratitude. On behalf of the Center, I would like to thank Provost Peter Lange, Deans Laurie Patton and Angela O’Rand, and Friedl Building Business Manager Susan Ryman. Indeed, we thank all of you who have attended the events of the Center and supported its mission.
Human Traffic: Past and Present

Conceived by CAAAR Associate Director Michaeline Crichlow and held on 13-15 October 2011, the Center’s 2011-2012 scholarly conference second-guessed the conventional comparison of contemporary human trafficking—which is often called “modern-day slavery”—to the Atlantic slave trade. Historians, social scientists, humanists, social activists, and artists illustrated and theorized how contemporary people with few opportunities make painful, ill-informed, and sometimes unavoidable decisions with consequences that are difficult to escape.

Trinidadian-Canadian filmmaker Frances-Anne Solomon, cinematographer Rodney Smith, and editor Rany Ly have just completed a 34-minute documentary excerpting the conference and illustrating its central themes and debates with real-world visual footage. We thank the Franklin Humanities Institute, the Kenan Institute for Ethics, the Department of African and African American Studies, the Duke Human Rights Center, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies for co-sponsoring this conference.

Check out our conclusions at http://caaar.duke.edu/lecture-series

Next fall’s conference: “Global Affirmative Action” (8-10 November 2012) will analyze and compare affirmative action programs internationally and detail both the reforms and the conflicts they have engendered. The conference will be sponsored jointly by CAAAR and the University of Malaya. Please mark your calendars.

Coming in October 2012

“Interwoven Histories: Luxury Cloths of Atlantic Africa”

A new art exhibition at Lilly Library Gallery, curated by Greta G. Boers and J. Lorand Matory

JHFYS Program (Continued from page 2)

The final JHFYSP event of the year was a gathering at Professor Matory’s house in which the Scholars learned about one of the most remarkable outcomes of the massive forced migration of Africans to the Americas, the Afro-Atlantic religions. The Scholars honed their analytical and documentary skills by examining and cataloguing some of the liturgical artworks that will appear in the online museum exhibition. Naturally, the Young Scholars raised questions and observed details that older and more experienced students of these artworks had overlooked.

The theme of next year’s JHFYSP session will be “Crafting Freedom,” concerning the ways in which African Americans used their verbal and manual skills to secure their freedom and their livelihoods during the era of slavery.

For more information see http://caaar.duke.edu/jhfys
today's US prison system as a further mechanism in the history of efforts by elite Europeans and their descendants to divide
the world into racial populations with fundamental rights and those without them.

• On 28 March 2012, this year's CAAAR Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Karen Elise Fields, addressed “Racecraft
in America.” Her Durkheimian perspective highlighted the non-scientific social logic that similarly undergirds race
and witchcraft accusations, creating pariahs through the repeated performance of exclusion, quite independently of
demonstrable physical evidence of categorical differences between witches and non-witches or among the “races.”

• On 11 April 2012, Alondra Nelson, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, spoke on “The Social Life of
DNA: From Genetic Kinship to Racial Justice.” In her talk, she explored the inevitably political motive of social group
consolidation that has shaped both popular and supposedly scientific readings of genomic data. She revealed the conflicting
impulses in popular interpretations of genetic heritage in black America. In Professor Nelson's view, the increasingly
popular celebration of shared African ancestry sidesteps and leaves unaddressed the more pressing issues of social justice
and equality. Indeed, she observes, DNA testing is a new form of consumerism.

The spring 2012 monthly lecture series was co-sponsored by Duke's Department of African and African American
Studies and the Program in Women’s Studies. We are grateful for their support. For her assistance in both semesters’
lecture series, we thank the Friedl Building’s Special Events Coordinator Maria Maschauer.

Next Year's Lecture Series: Jointly sponsored with the Africa Initiative of the Provost's Office, the CAAAR fall 2012
lecture series will explore new interdisciplinary approaches to African studies and to cooperation between African and
American institutions for our mutual benefit. The spring 2013 lecture series will concern humanistic and social scientific
insights into medical research and practice in Africa and the African diaspora. Charmaine Royal and Keith Whitfield
will co-chair the series. Royal is a geneticist and an Associate Research Professor in the Department of African and
African American Studies. Whitfield is a professor of Psychology and Neuroscience specializing in ethno-racial disparities
in health, as well as health and cognition among the aging. He is also Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs. The series is
titled “Humanists and Healers on Healthcare.”

“OLD-SCHOOL” HOLIDAY CELEBRATION
CAAR combines research and instruction with celebration. On 2 December 2011, our Holiday Party brought together
Center affiliates, other faculty, administrators, spouses, children, and students, as well as neighbors, to enjoy a Caribbean
meal by Golden Krust Catering and “old-school” African-American rhythm and blues, deejayed by Corey Gee.
THE ONLINE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

“Icons and Industry: New Yoruba-Atlantic Art” is now at an advanced stage. Duke’s Office of Information Technology has set up an excellent online platform for this photographic, cinematographic, explanatory, and interactive exhibition. The photographers have now documented most of the collection, and, with Professor Matory’s guidance, a team of students accessioned 160 of the approximately 550 objects in the collection, researching, and recording much of the information available concerning these objects and their history. The web page for each of these objects will be linked to digital footage featuring explanations and demonstrations by the priests who spoke during the Center’s fall 2011 lecture series, “Black Gods and Kings.”

Lead photographer Jerry D. Blow has worked on collections in the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Art, the Ackland Art Museum, the Nasher Museum of Art, and private collections throughout North Carolina. He says, the “Center for African and African American Research has what must be one of the pre-eminent groupings of items—big and small—related to those cultures.” He adds, “It has been the largest assignment of my thirty-year photography career and, very definitely, the most impressive.” Special thanks to Jerry, to Duke IT Analyst, Andy Smith, and to Media Support Specialist Samir Arora for their indispensable assistance.

A TASTE FOR KNOWLEDGE

The final event of the year, “Black Culinary Concepts: A Salon with Chef Mechal Thompson,” was in every way a unique pedagogical event at Duke University. The past quarter-century has seen a proliferation of scholarly work on Africa’s role in the remaking of global agriculture and cookery, and the Caribbean has been noted for its special role in this process. Hence, we have no explanation for the failure of black cuisines to penetrate the uppermost strata of elite restaurants to the degree that, say, French and East Asian cuisines have done. Chef Mechal Thompson, the Jamaican-American owner of the now-closed Maroons Restaurant in New York, prepared for the 20 specially-invited attendees of the Salon a gourmet meal based upon the African, Asian, Native American, and European ingredients that grow in the Caribbean and upon many of the African-diaspora culinary techniques that Chef Mechal first learned from his grandmother on the southern coast of Jamaica. He narrated his personal history along with the agricultural, political, aesthetic, commercial, and culinary history that lay behind the meal and the drinks that we enjoyed together. Guests included famous local restaurateurs Giorgios Bakatsias and “Mama Dip”— Ms. Mildred Council.

Clockwise from top left, Ceramic Statue of Yoruba Woman; Wooden Urn for the Afro-Cuban God Agallú; Crown for the Afro-Cuban God Dadá; Pakét Kongo Altar for the Haitian God Kafou.
Projects and Programs Co-sponsored by CAAAR in 2011-2012:

The China-Africa Reading Group and Lecture by Howard French (“China in Africa”). Jointly sponsored by CAAAR, the Provost’s Africa Initiative, and the Triangle China Forum on Urbanization and Migration.


Lecture by Angela Davis. Reginaldo Howard Memorial Scholars and Duke University Union.


Emmanuel Jal (musical and spoken-word performance by South Sudanese author, peace activist, and musician). Kenan Institute for Ethics.

Doug Glanville (“Reflections of a Major Leaguer: A Conversation with Doug Glanville”). Department of Cultural Anthropology.

The following Duke entities generously supported CAAAR programs:

- Office of the Provost
- Office of the Dean, Trinity College
- Program in Women's Studies
- Department of African and African American Studies
- Department of Cultural Anthropology
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Religion
- Center for European Studies
- Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- John Hope Franklin Humanities Center
- Kenan Institute for Ethics
- Duke Human Rights Center
- Program in Literature
- Program in Latino/a Studies

Mark Your Calendars:

Next Year’s CAAAR Featured Speaker

27 February 2013

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Award-Winning Nigerian Novelist

Author of

- The Thing around Your Neck (2009)
- Half of a Yellow Sun (2006)
- Purple Hibiscus (2003)

Winner of

- Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction (2007)

Check out one of her celebrated lectures at http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html