

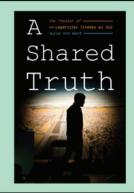


Join the LACLS UDRs and Dr. Patricia Alvarez Astacio (Dept of Anthropology) for a discussion about Professor Alvarez Astacio's career journey and work

> Usdan International lounge Refreshments Link to Register: bit.lv/loclssoc



Diálogo teatral con la poeta, profesora y traductora Julie Ann Ward, autora del libro A Shared Truth. The Theater of Lagartijas Tiradas al Sol





Wednesday, April 10, 2024 Shiffman 216, 2:30-3:50 pm

# Unjust Transitions

Sacrifice Zones in Latin

3 APRIL 2024 2:30 pm - 3:50 pm Zoom: https://bit.ly/4aBkeIh

or questions and preparatory



Activist, researcher, and book author; Head of Research at the Alameda Institute; Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South



A Conversation with Luis Islas (Co-founder of POTOMAC Intelligence and Mexico's former Deputy Executive Secretary of ublic Security System (SESNSP))

Moderated by Professor Alejandro Trelles (Politics Department)

Tuesday, April 2, 2:20-3:40 PM (Mandel 303 Reading F





Merienda con HISP y LACLS

ICC Swig Lounge Nov 9th 3-5pm

Learn how to make Cuban pastelitos and talk about course offerings!

# LATIN AMERICAN, CARIBBEAN, AND LATINX STUDIES PROGRÁM NEWSLETTER



### Welcome from Interim Chair

Sixty-one years ago the LACLS Program at Brandeis came into existence. For an anthropological archaeologist like me, such a span may seem like the blink of an eye, but qualitatively it is most significant. During that span the Program has brought awareness of Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx issues to our intellectual community, and has impacted the lives of students and the lives of those who benefit from the initiatives of our constituencies.

As one reads news of the impact of Latin America in global economies, or the rippling effect of local politics south of the Rio Grande, or the immigration debate here in North America, it becomes increasingly evident that we need to keep raising awareness about the cultures, histories, and peoples in this part of the world. Despite the many challenges that we face ahead, it is revitalizing to realize that student interest in our Program keeps growing at a steady pace. A heartful thanks to Elizabeth Ferry, outgoing chair who in the last couple of years placed the program on a strong footing, and much

BRANDEIS **UNIVERSITY** ٠

2023-2024

Dos Lágrimas Cuando nací Me pusieron dos lágrimas En los ojos Para que pudiera ver El tamaño del dolor de mi gente Humberto Ak'abal (K'iche' Maya poet, 1952-2019)

appreciation to Mangok Bol, our most able and resourceful administrator, who-thankfully-remains at Brandeis but working on other projectsA cheerful welcome to Armine Avetisyan who will take on some of Mangok's responsibilities. The fulfillment of our mission would not be feasible if not for the gracious support of our benefactors, the sustained commitment of the LACLS faculty, and the initiatives of our UDRs and students. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming year to keep strengthening Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies at Brandeis.

--Javier Urcid, At the great blue hill (Waltham, Massachusetts)

### In this newsletter:

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Welcome to Armine Avetisyan, our new academic administrator!

Armine Avetisyan is a peacebuilding practitioner and cultural operator specializing in conflict transformation through arts and culture. With extensive experience in project management, she has worked with diverse groups to promote cooperation and dialogue, particularly in Armenia and Turkey. Along with her Academic Administrator role at the School of Arts and Sciences at Brandeis University (including the LACLS program), Armine works as Program Manager at IMPACT and Global Community Engagement of COMPACT at Brandeis University. She co-directed the documentary "Haven't We Shared Much Salt and Bread?" (2016) and coauthored "What's Next? Civil Society Dialogue Work in Armenia and Turkey after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020".



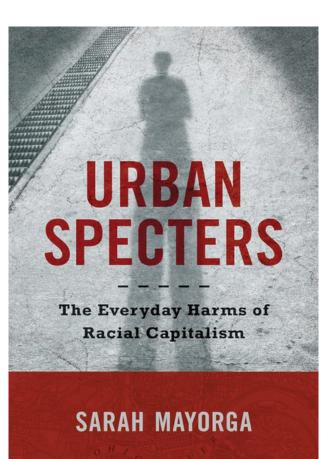
### Congratulations to the LACLS class of 2024!!

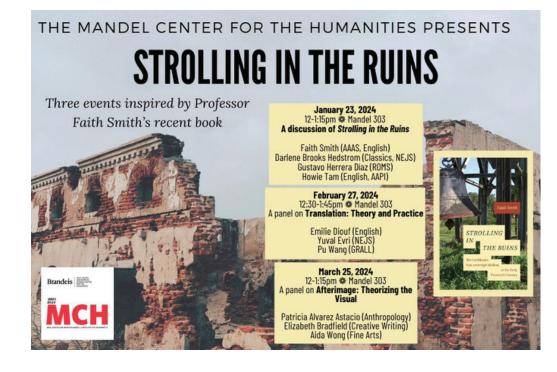
Majors:
Daphne Andre
Andrey Gonza
Leilani G. Segu
Minors:
Cyrenity JeAnı
Ana Veronica
Emily Ineke M
Eva Katherine
Evelyn Tejada

- ea Ballesteros
- lez- Baeza
- Jra
- na Augustin
- Loza Perez
- Ackerrow
- Richards
- Garcia

#### Javier Urcid, continued.

Collaborated with Alberto Aveleyra, member of the association Amigos de Museo of the San Miguel de Allende Museum in Guanajuato, Mexico, on an interpretation of a ceramic cylinder inscribed in Teotihuacan style. The study involved a computer-generated rollout drawing of the cylinder.







### 2023-2024 Events

**Climate Justice** in Latin America **Open Guest** Lectures Fall 23



Fall 2023 September 27: Indigenous Vision for Climate Justice

October 2: "Yes to Yasuní". the Referendum Against Oil Drilling in the Amazon

October 4: Threads of Memory, María del Carmen Castillo Cisneros, UNAM

October 5: LACLS Meet the Majors event

October 25: Decolonizing Environmental Governance

November 3: La Fuerza de Brandeis: Latinx Portrait Project with Shelley Polanco

November 3 Memoria de Frutas, Claudia Claremi

November 9 Merienda con LACLS and Hispanic Studies



IMAGINING LATINIDAD AND INDIGENEITY

Date of Event: April 5, 2024, 9:35 - 10:55 AM Location of Event: Heller School Building, Room G3. In-person only.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Americo Mendoza-Mor

res his career trajectory and projects to rai



### Spring 2024

February 6: A conversation with Jordan Salama, writer for National Geographic and The New York Times

#### February 9:

Class visit with Claudia Mattos Avolese on Brazilian Indigenous Art

#### February 27:

Violence Knows No Borders: a Continuum of Violence for Latin American and Caribbean Women

March 5: Joelle Powe and Latonya Style, Out There without Fear: Jamaica's Dancehall.

March 12: Cuban Bell Project presented in Patricia Alvarez Astacio's class.

April 2: Mexico's Security Crisis, Violence, Militarization and US-Mexico Cooperation

April 5: Américo Mendoza-Mori, Ethnicity, Migration, Rights Institute, Harvard University.

April 19: LACLS Spring celebration and REM grant showcase

### Jane's Travel & Research Grant reports, 2023-2024

Danny Daniel Mollericona Alfaro, COEX(M.A)

In the summer of 2023, I embarked on a five-week journey to La Paz, Bolivia with the purpose of reviewing archives to collect primary data for my research project, titled "The Sacred Motherland: Indigenous Narratives in Environmental Conflicts The Case of the Isiboro-Secure Road Conflict in Bolivia (2011)." Unlike in the United States, where we have access to extensive online archives, in Bolivia, we usually only have printed copies of newspapers in archives, even for events that occurred relatively recently.

During my stay, I had the opportunity to explore three key archives: the Archivo de la Biblioteca de la Vicepresidencia del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, the Archivo de la Biblioteca del Gobierno Autónomo Municipal de La Paz, and the Archivo de la Biblioteca de la Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. My primary goal was to gather information on how columnists interpreted the Isiboro-Secure Road march that took place in 2011 and which discourses of democracy surrounded them.





Additionally, I reviewed literature related to the event that was not readily available in online repositories. My days were filled with delving into newspaper articles about the event and attempting to comprehend the various perspectives on the marchers.

Furthermore, this journey allowed me to revisit 2011, the year of the march itself when I, along with fellow young sociology students, got some supplies to support the marchers and had joined them one night before they entered the city of La Paz from the mountains. We believed in their call for a new way of development. The grant undeniably aided me in my thesis work, but it also reignited my commitment to the indigenous people's struggle to safeguard their land in an inevitable climate crisis.

#### Alejandro Trelles (Politics)

#### Presentation:

"Why Elections Need Parties? Managing Free and Fair Elections in Latin America and Africa" at the LASA/AFRICA Congress, which was hosted by the University of Ghana in Accra, Ghana, in November 2023.

#### Javier Urcid (Anthropology)

**Publications:** 

Ritual y Sociedad en la antigua Oaxaca. In Realmente falso, hístoría de una urna zapoteca, edited by Adam Sellen and Justin Jennings. e-book published by the Centro Peninsular en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales, UNAM-Mérida, Mexico.

Las tradiciones de escritura en el suroeste de Mesoamérica. In *La escrítura índígena en Méxíco:* de la estela al texto dígítal, edited by Hans Roskamp, pp. 82-117. El Colegio de Michoacán, Zamora, México.

(under review) Remembering the Ancestors: Zapotec writing in funerary contexts. In Inscribing *Funerary Space(s)*, edited by Kaja Harter-Uibopuu, Leah Mascia, and Peter Schmidt. Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg, Germany.

Cuauhxicalli o vasija que simula un tambor? Arqueología Mexicana, vol. XXX (184): 68-73.

#### **Presentations:**

May 24, 2023 Monapostiac: Materialidad y ritualismo en la isla sagrada. Talk presented at the Coloquio Internacional Espacios Sagrados: umbrales y fronteras, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM-Oaxaca.

September 20, 2023. La escritura Zapoteca. Talk presented at the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM, Mexico (via zoom).

October 27, 2023 El Calendario post-Teotihuacano en el Altiplano Central: Una refutación a las propuestas de Morante y Helmke-Nielsen. Talk presented at the Coloquio Sitios y Materiales Arqueológicos del Epiclásico, Centro INAH-Tlaxcala.

April 25, 2024 Coloring the Script of Teotihuacan. Talk delivered for the Pre-Columbian Society of New York at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Consultant for the New York Times' writer Franz Lidz. His essay "What Lies Beneath the Vatican of the Zapotecs? An archaeological expedition in Mexico seeks what's left of the sprawling, centuries-old catacombs hidden below the ruins of Mitla." was published on December 30, 2023.

Collaborated with Edith Ortiz of the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas UNAM in the study of four stone monuments from Tuxtepec. I wrote brief interpretative entries now on exhibition at the Museo Comunitario in Tuxtepec, Mexico.

### Sarah Mayorga (Sociology)

I published two books this year. The first, Urban Specters: *The Everyday Harms of* Racíal Capítalism, was published by UNC Press in August 2023. The second,  $\mathcal{A}$  Good Reputation: How Residents Fight for an American Barrío, was published in May 2024 by the University of Chicago Press.

I also co-authored A Good Reputation with my colleague at UNC-Chapel Hill, Dr. Elizabeth Korver-Glenn. Thanks to funding from LACLS, I was able to support a Brandeis undergraduate research assistant (Alessandra Flores) to help on  $\mathcal{A}$ Good Reputation.

Fernando Rosenberg (Romance Studies)

My article entitled "Literature and Memory 1980-2000" just came out in The Cambrídge History of Argentínean Líterature.

In July 2023, I presented a paper and organized a panel on multi-species kinship for the International Institute of Latin American Literature conference at the University of Athens, Greece.

In June 2024, I presented a paper on new perspectives on law and the humanities at the Latin American Studies Association conference at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia.

I have been busy in my new role as Editor in chief of *Latín Amerícan Líterary* Review (lalrp.net).

#### Faith Smith (AAAS, English)

On March 19, 2024, it was a pleasure to be in conversation with Professors Patricia Alvarez Astacio and Elizabeth Ferry, in a joint meeting of ENG 168 "Plotting Inheritance" and Patricia's course ANTH 208A "Documenting Culture: Visual and Multimodal Ethnography." This allowed us to think about our trip to Cuba a year ago (June 2023), and the ways in which the Caribbean sugar estate, so foundational to western modernity, and to the ravages of enslavement and indentureship, continues to reverberate in our present in different ways. For instance, Professor Alvarez Astacio showed us a photograph that she took during our trip last year, of a lush landscape of sugarcane in central Cuba, and she asked us (in line with the work of Black feminist theorists such as Tina Campt who ask us to listen to the image) what it would mean to listen to the photograph.

Over the course of spring 2024, the Mandel Center for the Humanities held three events tied to my book Strolling in the Ruins: The Caríbbean's Non-sovereign Modern in the Early Twentieth Century. Participants were asked to use themes suggested by the book to present resonances in their own work. The result was three fantastic panels: a) riffing on "ruins" and "strolling":

Finally, on the evening of April 8, I gave a lecture entitled "DreadKin: Some Thoughts on Contemporary Caribbean Literature," in Wasserman Cinema, in celebration of my endowed chair, the Marta F. Kauffman '78 Professorship in African and African American Studies.

#### Juan Jimenez Garcia, HSSP

Colonization in Latin America has entrenched substance use disorders, disrupts natural inequalities among Indigenous communities, affecting lifestyles, and negatively impacts health. access to vital resources like food and healthcare. While Mexico, like many other Latin American Historical trauma theory reveals how long-standing countries. has free healthcare, there are still trauma from colonization continues to shape health issues that create barriers for vulnerable disparities today. populations, such as Indigenous communities in

Indigenous populations face social marginalization and limited healthcare access, resulting in shorter life insurance sectors. expectancies and poorer health outcomes. One major factor affecting many Indigenous populations'

While healthcare is constitutionally guaranteed, health is globalization. Indigenous populations often face barriers to accessing services due to geographic isolation, This has transformed Indigenous diets, introducing language barriers, and discrimination. With the calorie-rich, nutrient-poor foods and beverages like guidance of local healthcare workers and Coca-Cola. This shift from traditional, locally sourced professors knowledgeable about healthcare's diets to processed foods has led to health issues such social and dietary aspects, we proposed using an as obesity and high blood pressure among Indigenous intercultural health perspective, integrating communities within Yucatan. traditional healing practices with biomedicine to improve healthcare for Indigenous communities.



Centro de Desarrollo Marista

Furthermore, globalization increases the risk of

Mexico. Mexico's healthcare system comprises the social security, uninsured, and private

However, challenges still include socioeconomic inequalities that this doesn't address. In addition to this, we can also use the biocultural perspective to acknowledge historical and socioeconomic factors but face implementation challenges, such as geographic limitations and cultural resistance.

Addressing health disparities among Indigenous communities requires acknowledging historical injustices, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic factors. Decolonizing healthcare and embracing Indigenous perspectives can lead to more tailored and effective solutions, ensuring better health outcomes for these marginalized populations.

#### George Kollias, ANTH (Ph.D)

During the summer of 2023 I travelled to Chiapas, Mexico, with the aid of the Jane's Travel grant, to conduct archaeological investigations at the ancient Maya settlement of El Jovero as a member of the Provecto Arqueológico Busiliá-Chocoliá (PABC), directed by Dr. Charles Golden (Brandeis University) and Dr. Andrew Scherer (Brown University).

My research is situated in a region where, in the ancient past, several influential kingdoms vied for control of the landscape, its resources, and the peoples who inhabited the Usumacinta River Valley. In 2019 our research identified the capital of a long known kingdom controlled by the Sak Tz'i, or 'White Dog' Dynasty

My research investigates the impact of political boundaries and territories on the peoples inhabiting the landscape between the Sak Tz'i capital at Lacanjá-Tzeltal and two other major regional powers, the kingdom of Piedras Negras and the kingdom of Yaxchilan.

My excavations in 2023 focused on the investigation of ancient households, where ceramics, stone tools, and exotic imported goods like marine shell and jade jewelry, architectural features such as tombs, temples, and shrines, as well as landscape modifications such as agricultural terraces and defensive works help to build a picture of trade and social interaction in the ancient past.

#### Yura Yokoyama, ANTH (Ph.D)

The Jane's Travel Grant enabled my preliminary fieldwork that explores the bitcoin economy in El Zonte, El Salvador. This beach town, originally known as a famous surfing spot blessed with high waves, turned itself into a hub for bitcoin adoption. It draws attention from the crypto-curious from all over the world today. The locals there receive a salary, buy groceries, and pay their electricity bill in bitcoin while foreign settlers start their new cryptobusinesses. El Zonte eventually became a precursor for the state bitcoin policy that made bitcoin legal tender in the country in 2021.

From June to July 2023, I spent 6 weeks in El Zonte, hanging out with members of Bitcoin Beach. Bitcoin Beach is the non-profit organization that promotes bitcoin especially to high school students in the town and neighboring areas to change the dominant view that leaving for the U.S is the best way to improve their livelihood and contribute to their family. This notion is deeply ingrained in Salvadoran livelihoods that are dependent on remittances which accounts for more than 25% of the country's GDP.

Around one third of the Salvadoran population lives in the US as migrant workers and send remittance back home.

Under the circumstances, my project explores how bitcoin holds some contradictions together such as why bitcoin marketing becomes a way of educating and empowering local youth, why crypto-gambling becomes nation-rebuilding, and why risk is presented as chance.

#### Silvia Arrom, (History, Professor Emerita)

#### Publication:

"Retos y placeres en hacer la biografía de la Güera Rodríguez," KORPUS 21, vol. 4, no. 10 (2024): 35-44.

#### **Presentations:**

"Reproducing Exclusion: Erasing and Restoring Women's Activism in Mexico's Independence Wars," Berkshire Conference of Women, Genders and Sexualities, Santa Clara University, CA, July 2023.

3/2024 Faculti scholar interview (podcast) https:// faculti.net/la-guera-rodriguez/

#### Elizabeth Ferry (Anthropology)

#### Publications:

[with Aneil Tripathy and David Wood] Mrs. Columbo's Anti-Politics Machine: Quantification in Responsible Finance. Economic Anthropology 2023 (2) 1-13

[with the Brandeis History of Anthropological Thought Syllabus Collective]: Collectively Constructing a "History of Anthropological Thought" Syllabus. Society for Cultural Anthropology Teaching Tools website.

National Capitalism, Unhinged. Invited Commentary on Keith Hart, "The Rise and Fall of National Capitalism. Economic Anthropology.

Earth Relations and the Rhetorics of Otherness. Foreword, special issue on "Earth as Praxis, Environmental Humanities (2023) 15 (3): 140-144

#### Presentations:

Participation in roundtable on "More-than-Human Political Ecologies" organized by Patricia Alvarez Astacio and Stefanie Graeter, LASA 2024.

# **Faculty Highlights**

Gold, Paper, Crypto: Fabricating Ethics in Finance. Keynote address to Impact Hau conference, University of Bologna, May 3, 2024.

"Lupios," Artisanal Miners, and Modes of Belonging in Mexico. Interdisciplinary Symposium on Mines, Metals, Monies. Tulane University. March 8, 2024.

Roundtable presentation in honor of María Luz Cruz-Torres, Pink Gold. AAA meetings, November 14, 2023.

#### Gustavo Herrera Diaz (Romance Studies)

As a new faculty member, I have had the opportunity to contribute to the Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (LACLS) Program in various ways..

I was honored to be invited to the first event of a new Mandel Center for the Humanities series celebrating Brandeis faculty authors, where I discussed Faith Smith's book, Strolling in the Ruins: The Caribbean's Nonsovereign.Modern in the Early Twentieth Century.

I coordinated a Guest Discussion Series for my Latin American Theater class, featuring renowned authors and scholars such as Julie Ward, Carlos Celdrán, and Abel González Melo.

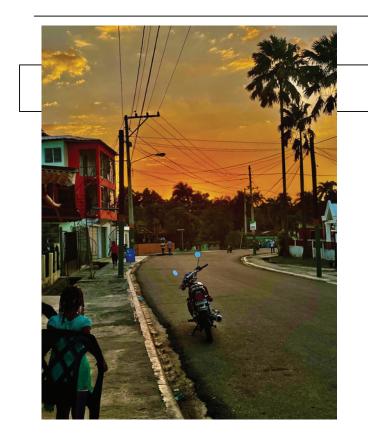
I presented a paper titled: "Ecos órficos y afrobrasileños en Réquiem por Yarini, de Carlos Felipe" at the 77th Annual Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, 2024

I coordinated a panel for LASA 2024 in which I will present the following paper: "Medea en el espejo de José Triana: "negros brujos" y etnografía en el teatro cubano."

### Anthony Ruiz, LACLS/ANTH

### Spring 2024-Photography Prize Award Recipient

**Alanis Gonzalez Hispanic Studies** "Esplendor Dominicano"



### Spring 2024-Essay Prize Award Recipient

**Hector Aguirre LACLS** "Resistencia: Bomba y Reggaetón"

### UNDERGRADUATE DEPARTMENTAL **REPRESENTATIVES (UDRs)**

Brandie Garcia is a returning UDR, a current senior double-majoring in Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies and Music, and is also pursuing an Independent Interdisciplinary Major based on African-American music.



Anthony Ruiz is an incoming UDR, a current senior double-majoring in Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies and Anthropology.



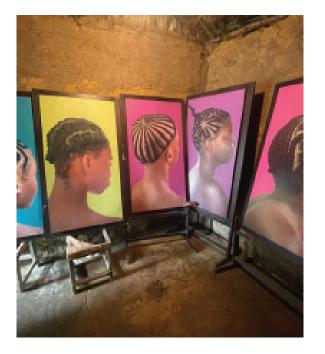
Thanks to the support from the Jane's Travel Grant, I was able to spend time this summer working with a local Mayan community in the archaeological zone called Ek' Balam, which is located in the municipality of Temozón, in the southern state of Yucatán in México. I worked with Dr. María Del Carmen Castillo Cisneros and her research team from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia as a research assistant, primarily conducting interviews with local members of the community and gathering data regarding the perception and attitudes surrounding the ongoing construction of the Tren Maya, a high-speed railway system that the Lopez Obrador administration is constructing throughout the country's southern region





Being that the Tren Maya is going to border the archaeological zone, my interviews and conversations focused on how the local community members felt about the impending influx of tourism that the archaeological site and neighboring village would face, and how—if at all they hoped to be involved in the government's revitalization of the area and other touristic attractions. Each day was truly different, as I was able to chat with community members about their life stories and how life was growing up in the village of Ek' Balam. I was honored to be welcomed into the community and be able to sit in on community meetings and hear from community leaders speaking about their experiences and desires for the community. Being able to live in a village amongst Maya people and getting a glimpse into their community was a life-changing experience, and I am extremely grateful to the community of Ek' Balam and Dr. Castillo Cisneros for welcoming me.

### Jolecia Saunderson, AAAS



Braided Hairstyles from Museo de San Basilio De Palenque

Through the Jane's Travel Grant this summer I was able to receive funding for my project which allowed me to explore the intersections of hair and race-based discrimination that is faced globally. I had the wonderful opportunity to visit San Basilio De Palenque, one of the first free towns in the Americas, close to Cartagena, Colombia.

My goal when visiting this place was to connect with its history in relation to Black hair as braids held history related and used as maps of freedom for those who were enslaved.

Visiting community members taught me so much about the importance of protecting the environment, honoring the voices and stories that have come before us. as well as creative modes of having fun and connecting to others. I was able to participate in weaving, making juice, music, and art with these people.

During my time there, I also talked about my passion for hair justice and how hair discrimination was also happening on a wide scale in the United States. One of my supervisors at the time Wendy wonderfully pointed me to a member of the community selling a book about each of the hairstyles and the significance of its history. Being a poet at heart and the book being my favorite color pink was such a surprise but I have treasured it like a gem due to the knowledge and stories it has provided me with.

Engaging with community members with different experiences of facing hair discrimination in a multitude of settings I was able to see how important giving visibility to a project like this is. Black hair and diverse hairstyles being prohibited in everyday settings is important because they should be allowed to show up authentically and unapologetically, without it being considered unprofessional.

#### Poetry Hair Book From San Basilio De Palenque



## Jane's Travel & Research Grant recipients, 2024-

#### Fall 2023 – Race, Ethnicity and Migration **Grant Awards**

#### Logan Shanks AAAS/WGS Black:Queer curatorial laboratory

project

#### Cyrenity Augustin, LACLS/ English Virgin Islands photography project, "V.I. Strong"

### Ana Loza Perez LACLS/Economics

"We are all mestizos" research project

### Armando Viscardo-Benites Social Policy (PhD)

Events with Americo Mendoza-Mori and Ricardo Godov

Shelley Polanco Politics/AAAS film project

Hong Zhang Anthropology (PhD) Research in Buriticá. Colombia

#### Spring 2024 Jane's Travel and Research **Grant Awards**

#### **Armando Vizcardo-Benites** Heller (PhD)

"Examining Immigration Stories and their Access to Social Programs in a Transnational Context"

#### Josefina Casper, ANTH/LACLS

"Streets of Expression: Unveiling Graffiti's Socio-Economic Impact in Buenos Aires"

#### Anthony Grant Heller (PhD)

"Research in Service: A Caribbean Lens on Relationship Building for the Future Studies"

#### Julianna Lasky ANTH Research at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City

