

# LAS noticias

the latin american studies newsletter

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# Science Fiction and Space Travel in Latin America

An Interview with Sarah J. Montross

By Susan Wegner

Sarah J. Montross, Andrew W. Mellon post-doctoral curatorial fellow at Bowdoin's Museum of Art, talks about the Latin American artists featured in *Past Futures: Science Fiction, Space Travel, and Postwar Art of the Americas*. On view through June 7

*The exhibition focuses on space exploration, imagined futures and the impact of the literary genre of science fiction on art from Latin America and the U.S. from the 1940s through the 1970s. Past Futures offers a fresh perspective on works by figures such as the Chilean artists Roberto Matta and Juan Downey; Mexico's Rufino Tamayo; Argentine painter, Raquel Forner; and U.S.-born Robert Smithson.*

**How did you come to investigate these themes of space travel and technological invention in art made during the Cold War?**

Half of my Ph.D. dissertation concerned the well-known video artist Juan Downey. Less well known are his early prints and drawings envisioning cyborgs soaring through cosmic spaces. I found that many new media and conceptual artists were inspired by science fiction film and literature before they developed their interests in video art and other technologies during the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Robert Smithson was an avid reader of science fiction as he started his career and was very taken by the concepts of time travel or alternative dimensions. These concerns inform Smithson's later earth art, such as *Spiral Jetty*

(1970) or his enigmatic travelogue "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan" (1969). I was also interested in the concepts of "otherness" and the "alien" as applied to Latin America in both literal and metaphorical ways. How does the idea of who or what is "alien" shift when starting from different geographical viewpoints? So many of these artists are transnational: Downey was born in Chile but works for most of his career in New York City; American Michelle Stuart travelled to ancient South American archaeological sites, eventually creating her own earth maps and star charts in response to ancient astronomers' works. The cultural diplomacy spawned by Cold War attempts to unite the Americas economically and ideologically also created new opportunities for artists to work abroad. Their resulting transnational experiences challenge the notion that art can be easily defined by national boundaries.

**What are some of your main discoveries or new perceptions as you created the exhibition?**

I found that using themes from science fiction as an organizing principle was very freeing. I did not have to be limited to retelling a history of modern art through lineages of, say,

surrealism, abstract expressionism, or other modernist movements. Instead I explored a vast array of artistic media created across the Americas by artists who shared visions of new vistas opened up by the Space Race or by the advancement of technologies in robotics or even early computer science. In so doing I was also able to plot new linkages between artists and writers. For example, the primordial landscapes painted by surrealist artists Max Ernst and Yves Tanguy impacted the British sci-fi writer J. G. Ballard. His novels such as *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Burning World* (1964) project apocalyptic futures characterized by bleak landscapes created by mankind's abuse of society and the environment through technology. A subsequent generation of artists, including Robert Smithson, avidly read Ballard's work. Smithson was inspired by the writer's vivid narratives, which the artist drew upon when conceiving of projects related to his earthworks. It became clear very quickly that this is an expansive topic and this first exhibition just opens the door to further inquiry. There are countless other artists who are not represented in the exhibition. And I felt that *Past Futures*



raises many complicated, loaded questions that deserve deeper discussion, some of them about cultural appropriation. There are instances where U.S. artists travelling south might risk seeing only ancient cultural works—the Mayan structures of the Yucatan, the Nazca lines in Peru—while not taking into consideration the contemporary cultures of the regions.

**If you had to recommend one object in the exhibition that viewers should not miss, what would it be?**

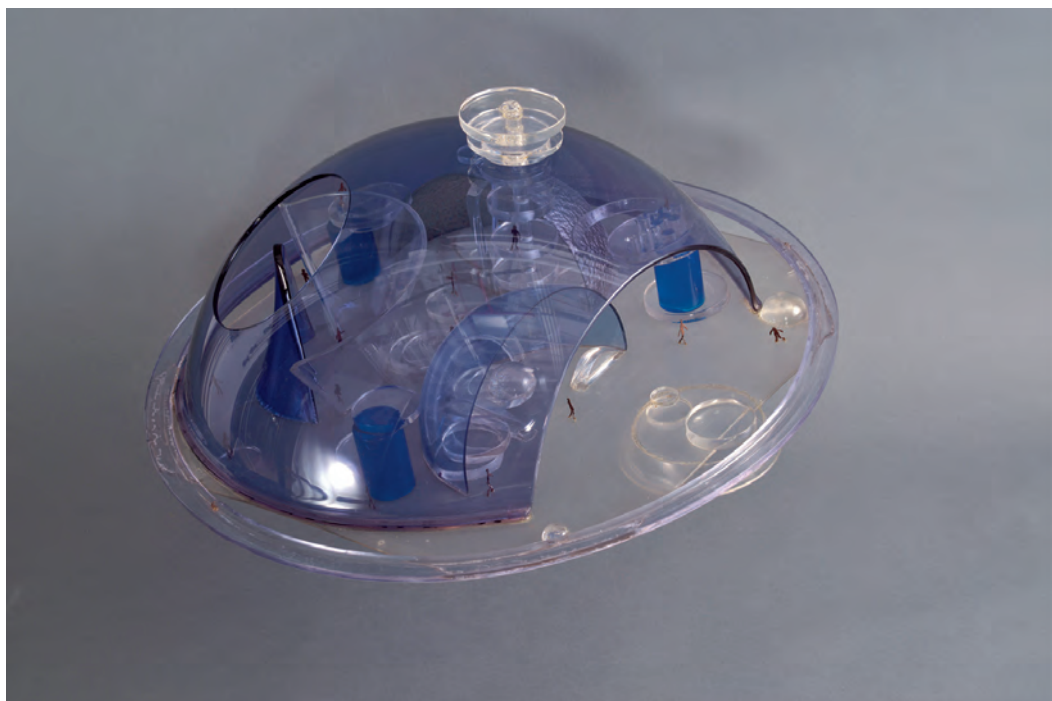
Not to be missed is Hungarian-born Argentinian, Gyula Kosice's Plexiglas maquette which is part of his on-going utopian project called "La ciudad hidroespacial" (Hydrospatial City), begun in the early 1970s. This small architectural model offers one example of the kind of habitats that Kosice believes will be necessary for humankind to live above the earth, once all natural resources have been depleted. Kosice has created dozens of these semi-spherical maquettes that project a utopian union of art, science, and technology. Accompanying drawings and diagrams describe spaces within these habitats for purely poetic experiences for living, such as "The embracing place, reduction of infinity" and a place "To glimpse physical and organic changes. Biological and cerebral transformation."

**Name one idea you would like viewers to take away from your exhibition?**

The realization that this exhibition, even with its range of themes and rich variety of media, barely scratches the surface of the subject of the relationships among modern art, space travel, and science fiction. New publications, such as Courtauld-based scholar Gavin Parkinson's *Futures of Surrealism: Myth, Science Fiction, and Fantastic Art in France, 1936–1969* (Yale University Press, 2015) are providing deeper academic treatments of these subjects. There is another forthcoming book by a well-known Pre-Columbian scholar, Esther Pasztor, who is the Lisa and Bernard Selz Professor in Pre-Columbian Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University. Her book, *Aliens and Fakes: Popular Theories About the Origins of Ancient Americans* will address the conjunction of the otherworldly and Latin American pre-history in popular imagination. Finally, it is a hope that after seeing *Past Futures*, museum-goers may discover how elements of the alien and otherworldly have an effect on their everyday lives. By following the lead of these artists, I hope visitors' perspectives on their surroundings may expand and change when filtered through the lens of science fiction.



Opposite page: Iván Puig and Andrés Padilla. SEFT-1 over Metlac Bridge, January 25, 2011. Courtesy of SEFT-A. / Left: Sarah Montross. Below: Roberto Matta (Chile). *La vie est touchée* (Life is Affected), 1957. Oil on canvas. Yale University Art Gallery, © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, ADAGP, Paris. / Gyula Kosice (Argentina). Model D- Habitat. Hydrospatial City), 1950. Blanton Museum of Art, UT, Austin. © Gyula Kosice.



# Faculty News

## Greg Beckett

Greg Beckett recently published two articles on Haiti. "The Ontology of Freedom" was published in *The Journal of Haitian Studies* and is a meditation on the legacies of European racial ideologies on contemporary understandings of the Haitian Revolution and Haitian sovereignty today. "The Art of Not Governing Port-au-Prince," appeared in *Social and Economic Studies*, is an exploration of urban crisis in Haiti. The article argues that the crisis is the outcome of a set of policies and procedures designed to create ungoverned and informal urban spaces. He also presented work on humanitarian intervention and post-earthquake relief missions in Haiti at several conferences and symposia and developed and taught a new course, "Contemporary Haiti" for Anthropology, LAS, and Africana Studies.

## Margaret Boyle

Margaret Boyle published an article in *Chasqui* about representations of gender and disability in Manuel Puig's novel *The Buenos Aires Affair*. She also spoke at the Modern Language Association in January 2015 about women's intellectual roles in pre-1800 Iberia and the Americas.

## Nadia Celis

Nadia Celis published her book, *La rebelión de las niñas: El Caribe y la "conciencia corporal"* (Madrid, Frankfurt: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2015 - see inset). She presented at conferences and gave invited talks on her new project: *On Intimate Realism. Love and Power in García Márquez*. In 2015, for the second time, she took students to Colombia as part of her seminar "A

Journey around Macondo: García Márquez and his Contemporaries".

## Elena Cueto Asín

In Antigua (Guatemala) Elena Cueto Asín presented a paper titled "Pablo Picasso en la poesía de Pablo Neruda y su toponimia de la Guerra Civil" at the Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica. Last november she attended the meeting of the Group de Recherche sur l'Image dans le Monde Hispanique in Lyon, France. The theme of this year's meeting was the representation of violence and she shared her work on the intersections of cinema, poetry, and visual arts on the subject of war with the talk, "Guernica: Éluard y Picasso ante la Guerra Civil Española, o la victoria intramedial de Alain Resnais". Her article "Sangre de Mayo: Galdós en la cinematografía televisiva de la Guerra de la Independencia" just appeared in the *Actas del X Congreso Internacional Galdosiano*. In addition to her regular courses on literature and film, she had a lot of fun directing an independent study on the Cinema of Guillermo del Toro.

## Gustavo Faverón Patriau

He gave invited talks on authors like Pizarnik, Borges, and Piglia at the University of Zaragoza, the Public Library of Seville, Ruiz de Montoya University in Lima, and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Lima, on the occasion of the Primera Bienal Mario Vargas Llosa. His book *Contra la alegoría* was reviewed in *Revista Iberoamericana*, *Hispanófila*, and *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*. A book of his journalistic work will appear in 2015.

## Marcos López

Marcos López is currently working on his book manuscript that examines indigenous farmworker resistance in Baja California, Mexico, due in part to economic and ecological disparities created through the rapid expansion of export-oriented strawberry production from the region. He presented this research at the American Sociological Association in San Francisco and at the Eastern Sociological Society in New York. This summer López will also present in Denmark at Aarhus University's workshop: "Postcolonial Natures: Landscapes of Violence and Erasure."

## Stephen Meardon

Stephen Meardon's article on the state of the scholarly field of the history of economic thought at the Universidad EAFIT (Medellín) and in Colombian higher education, "ECAES, SaberPro, and the History of Economic Thought at EAFIT," was published in *Ecos de Economía*. He gave an invited address, "The Hemispheric Ambitions of U.S. Protectionism in its Heyday," in absentia to the ESHET-Latin America conference in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. In March he gave a series of lectures, titled "The Role of Economic Ideas in the Formation of Trade Policy," to inaugurate a Ph.D. program in the history of economic thought, economic history, and political economy at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte.

## Laura Premack

After three years at Bowdoin as Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow of LAS, Laura will

### ALLEN WELLS

*Un Sión Tropical: el general Trujillo, Franklin Roosevelt y los judíos de Sosúa*  
The Academia Dominicana de la Historia published a Spanish translation of Allen Wells' book, *Tropical Zion*. It explores the fate of 750 Jewish refugees who fled Nazi Germany and founded an agricultural settlement in the Dominican Republic, then ruled by dictator Rafael Trujillo, as well as the role played in it by the Roosevelt administration.



### NADIA CELIS

*La rebelión de las niñas: El Caribe y la "conciencia corporal"*  
A study of the representation of girls in the work of Hispanic Caribbean women writers and a treatise on the relation of bodies and power in the Caribbean. "A magnificent book that makes substantial contributions not only to the field of Caribbean studies but also to the study of Latin American gender culture" (Beatriz Gonzalez-Stephen, Rice University).





start a position as Assistant Professor of Latin American History at Keene State College in New Hampshire. This year, she published a chapter comparing Brazilian and Nigerian Pentecostalism in *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora: Imagining the Religious 'Other'*, Afe Adogame, ed. (Ashgate, 2014); an article on "Prophets, Evangelists and Missionaries: Trans-Atlantic Interactions in the Emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism" in *Religion*; and "Dead Man Talking," an essay on Brazilian Spiritism, in the *Boston Review*. She gave a talk on Spiritism at Colby, but otherwise she spent her time close to home trying to convince her new baby to stay asleep.

### Krista Van Vleet

Krista Van Vleet taught two courses cross-listed with LAS this year: "Culture and Power in the Andes" and "Children and Youth in Global Perspective." A short version of her article, "Intimacies of Power: Rethinking Violence and Affinity in the Andes" (2002), will be republished in *The Gender/Culture Reader* (D. Hodgson, Ed). She also published an extensive review essay, "Ethnology of the Southern Highlands" (in *Handbook of Latin American Studies: No. 69*, published by The Library of Congress) and a book review of *Intimate Indigenities* by Andrew Canessa (in *Anthropological Forum*). During her sabbatical next year she will be working on her next book, *Circulations of Care: Young Mothers, Travelers, and Affective Labor in Neoliberal Peru*.

### Hanétha Vété-Congolo

This year, Hanétha Vété-Congolo published one book, *Le conte d'hier, aujourd'hui : Oralité et modernité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014 - see inset). She also published three articles in refereed journals. "Léon-Gontran Damas: Couper du fer qui coupe.... Le(s) fer(s) ou écrire au coutelas damas, l'amour et la justice" appeared in *Ethiopesques. Revue négro-africaine de littérature et de*

*philosophie*. "Créolisation, Créolité, Martinique, and the Dangerous Intellectual Deception of 'Tous Créoles!'" was published in the *Journal of Black Studies*. "L'humus de la 'memidentité' ou la métaphysique de pawòl dans Humus de Fabienne Kanor" appeared in *Présence francophone*. She also attended the Caribbean Philosophical Association conference in Mexico presenting her paper: "Broadcasting pawòl in Février 2009: Martini que and the New Communicative Technology."

### Susan Wegner

This year Susan's course "Introduction to Art from Ancient Mexico and Peru", focused on the importance of understanding indigenous flora and fauna. Plants and animals are central to creation narratives and concepts of the structure of the cosmos. Knowledge of the natural world aids an understanding of how status can be conveyed through costumes and rituals using brilliant feathers, animal pelts, and sea creatures.

### Allen Wells

Allen Wells' *Tropical Zion* was translated and published in Spanish as *Un Sión tropical: el general Trujillo, Franklin Roosevelt y los judíos de Sosúa* (see inset). The Academia Dominicana de la Historia invited him to lecture on the book in July and named him a corresponding member. Two essays, co-written by Gilbert Joseph (Yale) and Wells were recently published in Mexico: "Rivalidad económica e inquietud rural a fines del Porfiriato," and "El 'porfiriato prolongado.' La resistencia popular y de las élites, 1910-1915," in Vol. 4, *Yucatán en el México porfiriano, 1876-1915 of Historia General de Yucatán*, eds. Sergio Quezada, Jorge I. Castillo Canché, and Inés Ortiz Yam (Mérida: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2014).

### Genie Wheelwright

Genie Wheelwright is back at Bowdoin after her

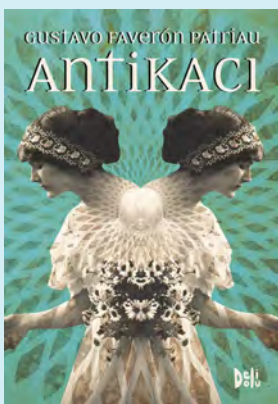
sabbatical. She is putting to use the 1000 new vocabulary words she learned and can usually be found with a small packet for review in her back pocket. She offered a new course this spring, "Accelerated Elementary Spanish." It is a wild ride, but no severe injuries yet. Genie continues her involvement in the Brunswick Trinidad Sister City Association.

### Carolyn Wolfenzon

Her book manuscript, *El discurso repetido: la novela anti-histórica en América Latina* was accepted for publication by Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. Her article, "Operación masacre de Rodolfo Walsh: una aproximación a la locura" appeared in *Escrituras a ras de suelo. Crónica latinoamericana del siglo XX*, eds. Claudia Darigrandi, Marcela Aguilar and Antonia Viu (Chile: Universidad Finis Terrae, 2015). "La figura del aparapita en Felipe Delgado: nacionalismo, misticismo y conflicto social" is forthcoming in *Chasqui*. At JALLA, Jornadas Andinas de Literatura (Costa Rica, 2014) she shared a paper about Elmer Mendoza's narco-novels. At the Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica (Antigua) she presented a paper on Mexican author Guadalupe Nettel's novels.

### Enrique Yepes

Enrique Yepes shared in several academic venues his research on the ways in which contemporary Spanish American poetry engages environmental concerns and history in the region, including interviews with Spanish American poets in the most recent international poetry festival in his native Medellín, Colombia. His course, "Poetry and Social Activism" last fall, included a community engagement component involving the production of materials on this topic for the Colombian newspaper *El Mundo*, that are being distributed weekly in public schools in Medellín as teaching aids to high school teachers of literature.



GUSTAVO FAVERÓN PATRIAU

*El Anticuario*

The English translation of *The Antiquarian* (2014) received positive reviews from *The New York Times*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus*, *Bustle*, and *Los Angeles Times*. *Publishers Weekly* considered it one of the best books of the year. Since then, a Spanish edition was published in Barcelona, as well as Turkish (photo), Chinese, Japanese and Arabic translations.



HANÉTHA VÉTÉ-CONGOLO, ed.

*Le conte d'hier, aujourd'hui: Oralité et modernité*

A collection of critical studies on the oral cultures of different parts of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. In it, translation, rarely a context from which orality (as an epistemological foundation for human kind) is examined, offers frameworks to analyze storytelling as much as literature, anthropology, sociology, etc.

# On Finding Home In the Places I've Left

By Christine Rheem  
Photos by Christine Rheem

*Christine Rheem '15 moved from Daejeon, South Korea to the United States in 2000. This year she is graduating with a double major in Spanish and LAS and a minor in teaching, and is taking home the John Turner Award for academic excellence in LAS. From January to May 2014, Christine studied abroad in Havana, Cuba. Thanks to a LAS Research Award she returned there last winter to continue her research on Chinese-Cubans and the changes to Havana's Chinatown after the Revolution. Christine will spend the next year as a tutor for Safe Passage in Guatemala City.*

It is New Year's Day, 2015. I am waiting for my friend Saymé to pick me up and bring me to her house in Cerro, where I've been invited to eat lunch with her family. In Cuba, one waits. For the bus, to pay a phone bill, to get money, to check mail, to get online, for appointments, at the stores. "Hay cola pa' to." A half hour and a few frustrating attempts to buy a public phone card later ("No hay, quizá en la otra"), I give up and get on the bus going back to Havana when I see her waiting on another street corner. The driver laughs and opens the door; I hurriedly apologize and disembark. We hug and kiss, laughing about the silliness of both of us waiting for the other, separated by a few blocks.

Saymé is a fourth-year biology student at the University of Havana. Like millions around the world, she has been bit by the Hallyu bug, the "Korean Wave," which refers to the explosive popularity of South Korean pop culture across the world. Her walls are covered in print-out photos of Korean celebrities. She deftly navigates through her Windows 98 operating system, showing me photos of Korean celebrities and copying Korean songs that I "have to hear" on her flash drive for me. As per her request, I've

downloaded new Korean music to pass to her, and she lets me copy her Korean Rosetta Stone and grammar books (she is teaching herself the language, and I am inspired to start learning it formally as well). Without mass internet access, music videos, television shows, movies, songs, and pictures get passed around like all information does in Cuba: through USB flash drives, *memorias*. In some ways, Saymé, born and raised in Havana, is teaching me more about Korea than I, born in Seoul, share with her, and it doesn't feel weird. She is singing along in Korean to songs I haven't heard, in words I don't know. I am listening to K-pop, something I never did in the U.S. It's not quite my taste in music, but the beat moves me. Saymé gushes over the choreography and I feel a tangible sense of pride and affinity with the country where I was born.

As an immigrant Korean-American, my immediate idea of home is my adopted country: the United States. Throughout my adolescence, the answer to the question, "Where are you from?" has firmly been North Carolina. Given that I know more about the Carolina basketball program's history than about South Korea's national teams, that I knew all the shortcuts in



Chapel Hill but couldn't tell you exactly where Daejeon was without looking at a map, that I could sing along to "Wagon Wheel" but not to the Korean national anthem, I felt more culturally competent as a Chapel-Hillian than as a Korean. Correctly or not, every time I was asked where I was from in the United States felt like an implication or an accusation, that I was a foreigner in the nation I believe I belong in.

In Havana, my Asianness was explicitly at the forefront of every first encounter I had. Whispers of "Hola, china," "Ni hao" or "Ching chong" were daily occurrences. While mostly exhausting, this explicit racialization also became a space for a more conscious navigation of my hybrid identity, of my place in the hyphen between Asian-American. In Cuba, where I was undeniably a foreigner, "¿De dónde eres?" didn't carry the same piercing meaning as "Where are you from?" And in Cuba, everyone was more sure of my being Asian than I was. If I answered that I was from the United States, people would roll their eyes and clarify: "No. Where is your family from? Where are your roots?" On the other hand, "Soy coreana" worked to my advantage. I could escape, to a degree, the label of "United States Foreign Exchange Student" that was attached to all of us who were studying abroad in Havana and which carried assumptions about wealth and naïveté. And Saymé was not the only Cuban genuinely excited about Ko-

rean culture, as I quickly learned when people would spout off names of Korean actors to me. I would recognize some names, smile and pretend like I knew the others, and be grateful that some part of me was so well-loved in this country where I also often felt exoticized.

I came to terms with being Korean by being *la chinita* in Cuba. In some ways, naming myself a Korean in Cuba allowed me to proudly claim my Koreanness in all places. In Cuba, ripped from any legitimate claim to "home" in the place that I was, I was asked to name where I was from. And somewhere along the way, I found belonging in the place where I was born. When I accepted being a foreigner in a way that wasn't exclusive, the celebration and valorization of my difference led to an unexpected and deep identification with it: My Koreanness is captured in my body, my family and the smells of my house, the place I was born, my recently discovered emo-

tional vulnerability to Korean television. These are my stories to tell and to share.

Identity has been the key theme of my studies at Bowdoin--identity not as a fixed label, but rather as a complex process of negotiation in the space or gap between experience and external perception. The

exploration of these questions has driven my coursework in Latin American Studies and Spanish. What makes an ethnicity stand out for its difference, the level of its acceptance into a national identity, perceptions of the essence of another culture, and the extent to which individuals fit into these perceptions, are all themes that connected my daily experience in Havana to the research I am doing now on Havana's Chinatown. But there is

something more deeply personal to this experience in Cuba than academic pursuits.

I identify as Korean and as an immigrant. And I have gained from my time in Havana a

more honest and deep way forward in navigating these two realms of myself. For future Christine and for my future students, I am committed to a lifetime of continued navigation at the intersection of self and world.

*"When I accepted being a foreigner in a way that wasn't exclusive, the valorization of my difference led to an unexpected, deep identification with it."*



*A sweaty taxi in Havana (opposite page). A hole-in-the-wall bookstore tucked away in the streets of Santiago. Christine with her friend, Saymé.*

# Learning through Engagement in Latin American and Latino Communities

As a complement to their work in LAS courses, every year students expand on their knowledge through immersion experiences such as Alternative Spring Break trips or the Global Citizens Grant offered through the McKean Center for the Common Good. In some instances, these experiences living and working in Latino and Latin American communities translate into community-engaged independent study.

## Global Citizens Grant

The Global Citizens Grant provides travel funding for students to work for the summer with grassroots organizations outside the U.S. and to deepen their understanding of issues such as education, public health, immigration, or sustainability within a particular cultural context.

**Meredith Outterson '17** worked last summer in a rural community in San Juan de la Concepción, Nicaragua, assisting with La Mariposa Spanish School & EcoHotel's community development programs. Meredith lived with a host family and tutored children in the mornings. She also ran after-school enrichment activities, organized a school field trip to a volcano, and facilitated long-term school improvement projects such as revamping the pre-school classroom and launching a program with educational tablets. The experience strengthened her commitment to work in Environmental Studies, and, having spent time there during high school as well, Meredith also appreciated getting to know the fabric of the community more deeply and working more closely with the families there.

Peru seems to be the destination of choice for the Global Citizens Grant recipients who will be learning in Latin American Communities this summer. Three of this year's eight grant recipients, **Rubi Durán '16**, **Sarah Frankl '16**, and **Chris Gys '17**, will be in Peru for ten weeks during the summer of 2015.

**Rubi Durán '16** will volunteer for Alianza Arkana, a nonprofit organization located in Pacullpa that works to protect the Amazon rain-

forest through strategic alliances, defense of indigenous rights, permaculture, and intercultural education programs.

**Sarah Frankl '16** will be assisting at Centro de Obras Sociales Maternidad de María in Chimbote, which addresses a variety of health issues, but particularly focuses on maternal and child health.

**Chris Gys '17** will spend the summer working with Changes for New Hope in Huaraz, where Marcus Karim '14 was a Global Citizens Grant recipient during the summer of 2013. This organization addresses proper nutrition, social competency, educational success, and creative expression. Stay tuned for details of their experiences in the 2016 newsletter.

## Alternative Spring Break

In March, student participants on three Alternative Spring Break trips increased their knowledge of issues facing particular Latino and Latin American communities through a week immersed in learning and working in Immokalee, Florida, Clarkston, Georgia, and Guatemala City, Guatemala.

## Cultivating Communities in Immokalee, FL (Leaders: Edward Mahabir '15 and Skyler Folks '15)

Participants engaged in hands-on work and communication with working migrant families in Immokalee. Key issues addressed on this trip included the impact of poverty and income inequality on immigrants' access to housing, education and social services. Additionally, students explored the role of language in shaping immigrants' identity and experience. A highlight of the trip was a visit with Immokalee residents and alums Primitivo Garza '12 and Helen Midney '12, as well as Bowdoin's 2014 Common Good Award winner, Mike Poor '64, and Allen Ryan, who serves on the Board of the Guadalupe Center where the students worked during their week in Immokalee.

## Refugee Resettlement in Atlanta, GA (Leaders: Preston Thomas '17 and Alex Sukles '17)

Students explored the path to resettlement, from citizenship to education to job placement, and the many obstacles refugees and immigrants confront in their new lives in the United States. Assisting in job preparedness workshops and English language classes, students gained insight into the lives of refugees from many nations. After a pre-trip discussion with Olivia Reed '15 and Bill De La Rosa '16 about detention and deportation issues, the ASB participants also visited El Refugio and the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, which opened their eyes to some of the most difficult immigration struggles for Latinos.

## Safe Passage to Guatemala (Guatemala City, GUA) (Leaders: Dieu Ho '15 and Kaylee Wolfe '15)

For the eleventh year, students assisted Safe Passage in its mission to serve the community surrounding the Guatemala City garbage dump by empowering families through education. Participants volunteered in English classrooms and engaged in creative projects aimed at fostering learning and team-building. They also learned about public health concerns for people living near the dump from the organization's new health educator, and they explored the historical, cultural, environmental and political context of the area and the legacy of Hanley Denning '92, who was the founder of Safe Passage.

## Cuba, LAS and Downeast Maine Connections

**Christine Rheem '15 and Ian Yaffe '09**

Last summer when Latin American Studies alumnus Ian Yaffe '09, Executive Director of Mano en Mano in Milbridge, Maine contacted Professor Allen Wells to ask for help in identify-





Alternative Spring Break students visit El Refugio, Georgia and Safe Passage in Guatemala City.

ing a Bowdoin student who might be interested in developing curriculum for the Blueberry Harvest School, he was delighted to have a fellow LAS major embrace the opportunity. But the connections between Christine Rheem '15, and Ian go further—as far as Havana, to be exact. Both are among the few Bowdoin students who have spent a semester studying abroad in

Cuba. In addition, both have a minor in the Education department. Christine is now completing a semester-long community-engaged independent study designing culturally relevant curriculum for the Blueberry Harvest School, an interdisciplinary and project-based learning summer school that serves children of migrant workers during the harvest in Washing-

ton County. One of the program's goals is to prevent summer learning loss and disruptions to students' education due to their migrant lifestyle. Rheem's study fuses her passions and academic interests into a tangible form. She is particularly excited about weaving social justice themes into the Blueberry Harvest School curriculum, as well as imbuing the curriculum with project-based learning opportunities. "We want students to have authority over their knowledge and be able to create knowledge," she said. This approach, she believes, will help inspire a love of learning in students. She is also researching Latin American resistance movements and alternative forms of production and engaging with the earth. She, Yaffé, and another collaborator from the University of Maine at Machias meet bi-weekly to develop the curriculum. "Our goal is to make the curriculum explicitly culturally responsive, relevant to students' lives and experience, and validating and embracing of their cultural background," Rheem explained. Will the Mexican roots of the Cuban Revolution find their way into what the students learn at the harvest school?

## Deportability and Latino Communities

Olivia Reed '15

Two LAS courses, "Immigration and the Politics of Exclusion" with Marcos López and "Latino Fictions" with Nadia Celis, inspired Anthropology and Spanish major and LAS student Olivia Reed '15 to pursue her interest in Latin American immigration further. With the help of a Forest Foundation Fellowship through the McKean Center, Reed spent the summer of 2014 at the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project in Boston alongside attorneys, asylum seekers and detainees. She helped compile asylum applications, prepared clients for asylum interviews, visited detention centers to deliver "Know Your Rights" presentations, and translated legal documents. "This experience furthered my understanding of immigration law and allowed me to put faces to the struggle of navigating our current immigration system, solidifying my desire to pursue a career in immigrant rights," she said. While at the PAIR Project, Reed became interested in how the status of being deportable affects immigrant communities, and this semester, in her course with Marcos López on Latinos and Latinas in the U.S., she is building on her work from last summer in a research project that explores the effects of deportability on different Latino communities.



# The Adaptable Legacy of the PRI

MICHAEL LETTIERI '05 ON MEXICAN POLITICS

Interview by Allen Wells  
Photos by Michael Lettieri



*“It wasn’t just the regime’s preponderance of power, but that the entrepreneurs were psychologically invested in the PRI project and felt like the system had clear ‘rules of the game.’”*

Currently a program officer at the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego, Michael Lettieri '05, received his doctorate in Latin American history from the University of California, San Diego in 2014. His article, “The Foremost Cacique: Power, Personal Networks and the Career of Rubén Figueroa,” will appear in *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* in August 2015. He is currently co-editing an anthology entitled, *Journalism and Censorship in Mexico, 1910-2014* for the University of New Mexico Press. In addition to his scholarly pursuits, Mike is passionate about photography. His photographs of Mexico, examples of which accompany this interview, can be found at his blog (<http://todoescuatitlan.blogspot.com>) and in his book, *Todo es Cuautitlán*, available through Amazon. Allen Wells, Roger Howell, Jr. Professor of History, interviewed Michael about his research, the current political climate in Mexico and his decision to pursue a career in academe.

Your doctoral dissertation, “**Wheels of Government: The Alianza de Camioneros and the Political Culture of P.R.I. Rule, 1929-1981**,” focused on the methods employed by the **Partido Revolucionario Institucional**

(PRI), the one-party regime that controlled Mexican politics from 1930 to 2000, to enlist and co-opt businessmen. You chose an unlikely group of entrepreneurs to research—monopolistic owners of municipal bus companies—whose routes served the working poor of Mexico City, one of the most sprawling and congested cities in the world. Why did you focus on these entrepreneurial *sindicatos*, and how does your research, which focused on the middle decades of the twentieth century, revise what scholars believe about the PRI’s vaunted longevity and its relationship to the private sector?

I came to the bus owners a bit by accident. I had originally set out to research Mexico City’s trash system, but found very little information at all. But I kept running into references about the political power wielded by bus industry entrepreneurs of the Alianza de Camioneros. It was pretty hard to resist what appeared to be a classic story of the PRI’s legendary “smoked-filled rooms:” a group of businessmen who became deeply intertwined with the country’s unique political system and acquired tremendous influence. Their connection to the PRI’s dramatic





Mexico City's central cathedral dates to the seventeenth century. Opposite page: Outside a church in Tlaxcala.

political theater made them particularly interesting: the regime undertook massive cross-country campaigns, even though the 'official' candidate was guaranteed victory by electoral fraud, and regularly staged huge demonstrations of rent-a-ralliers bribed with sandwiches to attend. Alianza buses provided the transportation for all of those activities.

As the project developed, I realized three things: First, classic stories of the PRI were rarely told by historians; the Alianza's influence hadn't actually been studied in any sort of detail. Second, the bus owners were such a compelling story because the private management of Mexico City's public transportation network created a knot of tension between the state, city residents, and the entrepreneurs. Because the city was entirely dependent on its buses—there was no meaningful public transportation alternative until the late 1980s and only one in fifteen people owned a car—urban transportation was a fascinating locus of conflict. That let me really see how the policymaking process worked, and how political concerns intersected with other policy issues. It offered a really unique window on the people who allied with the PRI. Third, I

realized that the relationship between the Alianza and the regime was not as simple as was often suggested: there were frequent disputes and disagreements and Alianza leaders often fell out of favor. Yet, overall, the bus owners never broke rank. This was really the key finding of my research: uncovering why ruptures between the regime and its supporters were so rare. What I was able to see with these entrepreneurs was that there was a real cultural aspect to all of this, that it wasn't just the regime's preponderance of power and the fact that there was no viable political alternative, but that the entrepreneurs were psychologically invested in the PRI project and felt like the system had clear "rules of the game." It was the regime's ability to maintain the loyalty of mid-level actors like the bus entrepreneurs through these cultural systems that really led to the PRI's stability from the 1950s to the 1970s.

**Critics of Mexican democracy argue that**

*“Cooptation and patronage, built under the PRI, are still strong.”*

**since 2000, although elections may permit an orderly transition of power and an end to PRIísta hegemony, the underlying corrupt, clientelistic political culture still remains no matter which political party reigns. Are these criticisms valid? If not, why? How has the bloody drug war that Mexico waged during and since Felipe Calderón's presidency (2006-2012), which has cost more than 70,000 lives, altered the political dynamic?**

The critiques are valid. There was a lot of democratic triumphalism in 2000, a lot of which was really premature. There are a few reasons for this.

First, the (right of center party) PAN, which held the presidency from 2000 to 2012, faced something akin to the problem nineteenth century Liberal reformers encountered: the reality of the country was very different from the Mexico their ideas were designed for. More troublingly, despite its professed commitment





La Merced Market, in Mexico City

to ending the corruption of the past, the PAN itself proved less committed to democratic practices than expected. In fact, in 2006, politicians blatantly violated electoral law with impunity. Second, all three parties inherited some form of the old PRIsta political culture. So the practices of cooptation and patronage that built loyalty under the PRI are still strong, only there's a lot of political cynicism now. Politicians who have clientelistic networks will change parties if they don't receive a nomination, and rival parties are always willing to accept a candidate with a network who can win. That's led to situations like the governor of Sinaloa, elected in 2010 on a joint PAN-PRD ticket, but only months before had been a member of the PRI. Lastly, the PRI didn't really leave power. They lost the presidency, yes, but they retained the majority of the governorships, which are, in Mexico, extremely important.

And the PRI's co-optive strategies have endured. If you look at the 2012 gubernatorial election in the Estado de México, for example, you see the PRI running a campaign where people were promised sandwiches to show up at a rally in support of the PRI candidate—really classic stuff. The real difference is that we know about those rallies in 2012 because people

filmed them on cellphones and posted the videos to YouTube: at least in some of the cities, there's a civic culture that's pushing back against the PRI's old-school tactics. That being said, the PRI is nothing if not adaptable and we're beginning to see the emergence of all sorts of new tactics for limiting free expression online. With regards to drug violence, it has really worked to close political spaces: if you look at Guerrero, which is a state where there's a long tradition of municipal level democratization dating to the late 1980s, drug gangs are killing candidates and officials, particularly those affiliated with the (left of center party) PRD, and really making politics an extremely dangerous game. The real risk is that at some point you're going to run out of people who are idealistic and brave enough to participate in the democratic process, and it's scary to think about what happens then.

**After being out of power for twelve years, the PRI recaptured the presidency when its candidate Enrique Peña Nieto won election in 2012. His tenure in power has been fraught with political violence and charges of impunity and corruption. In particular, the massacre of 43 college students from the Ayotzinapa normal school in the state of Guerrero (reportedly carried out by a drug cartel in Iguala**

**on orders from the city's mayor) has touched a nerve among everyday Mexicans who have taken to the streets and called for Peña Nieto's resignation. What are the likely political consequences of this heinous act for Peña Nieto, the office of the presidency and the PRI?**

I'm a cynic about this, but the suggestions that a new revolution was coming during the post-Ayotzinapa protests were a bit over the top. So much of the coverage of Ayotzinapa was breathless in suggesting that it was going to lead to immediate change. The reality is, there's no real structure that would allow popular indignation to remove a sitting president from office, no possibility of congressional impeachment, and no real proof that, in fact, Peña Nieto is guilty of anything beyond lousy leadership. The truth is that the mayor of the town, who is deeply implicated, belonged to the left-wing PRD. There is evidence that the federal military was, at best, passive during the assault on the students, but again, that doesn't necessarily trickle up to the president. Which is to say, pretty much the entire political system is tainted by Ayotzinapa. Yes, Peña Nieto should resign, but not because of any responsibility for the disappearance. Combined with the revelations of apparent corruption (specifically luxury houses belonging to



his wife and members of his government, built by a government contractor), his presidency has lost steam. His promised reforms have faltered, and the possibility for change that led *The Economist* and *Time* to see a “Mexican Moment” in 2012 seems to have gone up in smoke.

So I’m not really sure there are political “consequences” other than Peña Nieto is almost certainly going to have an unproductive second half of his presidency, especially if the economy continues to falter. Low oil prices have pushed down growth estimates and forced the government to cut its budget pretty dramatically. Moreover, the impact of Ayotzinapa on the midterm elections this summer seems, in fact, to be minimal—the PRI is polling strongly—and by the time presidential elections occur in 2018 it’s a bit hard to see the events really leading to a major change. That being said, I don’t think the PRI will have an easy road to reelection. I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that Ayotzinapa is hardly an isolated incident. It can’t be separated from the murders of nearly 200 migrants by the Zetas in Tamaulipas, or the disappearance of hundreds of others across the country during the past decade. That it turned into a flash point for mobilization and protest is a product of the Mexican (and U.S.) news cycle. There’s been a slow motion human tragedy occurring in Mexico for over a decade now, and it’s been largely ignored. There’s been a lot more “collateral damage” than anybody wants to acknowledge: the violence isn’t just cartel members killing each other.

**What experiences and preparation did you have as an undergraduate that convinced you to pursue a doctorate in Latin American history? How did Bowdoin prepare you for graduate school?**

Like a good historian, if I look back it’s pretty easy to see how I ended up getting a doctorate, but I remember that as an undergraduate, it wasn’t even on my radar until about the last month of senior year. I had taken a seminar on the Mexican Revolution my junior year, which was my first intensive exposure to Mexican history, and decided to do an honors thesis on Mexican democratization—a project that was inspired by my study abroad in Chile where I was intrigued by post-authoritarian politi-

cal culture. In anticipation of the thesis, I had the wonderful experience of doing research in Mexico City before my senior year, but it was entirely interview-based—I wouldn’t set foot in an archive for another three years. So while my honors thesis was historical, and while the experience of researching and writing it was transformative, I didn’t really see myself as a future professional historian. It wasn’t until the thesis was nearly complete that an offhand comment from my advisor planted the seed. Bowdoin certainly prepared me for graduate school, but in ways that weren’t always apparent. I realized early on that I didn’t have the intensive historiographical background in Latin American history that a lot of my peers did—they had done M.A.s or had gone to research universities. What Bowdoin had given me, though, was a high level of comfort with independent research and really strong writing skills that let me get a very fast start on my dissertation project, even as I had to catch up on the history of colonial Argentina, for example. Even more than graduate school, though, I think Bowdoin prepared me to teach. It’s hard to spend four years having history taught to you in wonderfully engaging seminars and not come out wanting to offer students the same experience yourself. So many of

*“PRI is nothing if not adaptable and we’re beginning to see the emergence of all sorts of new tactics for limiting free expression online.”*

my Bowdoin courses challenged me to explore topics outside of my core interests (an honest homage to distribution requirements) and many have stayed with me. Now that I’m on the other side, I can appreciate just how innovative some of the crossover Environmental Studies–History courses were, and how well-designed the survey courses were.

**While conducting your dissertation research you found time to pursue another passion of yours, photography. You’ve since published a collection of photographs on a**

**blog and in a book, *Todo es Cuautitlán*. What particular challenges were there to taking pictures in Mexico and what kinds of subjects were you attracted to and why?**

I first started taking pictures there as a way to both pass the time when I wasn’t in the archives, and as a way to share the experience of living in Mexico with my friends and family. It grew into something more pretty quickly, and became an outlet for creative expression and writing that counterbalanced the hours spent reading government documents. I think the hardest thing about photographing in Mexico was figuring out how to photograph people. Effective street photography really requires a degree of invisibility so you can capture what you see around you—that’s hard when you’re a gringo with a camera in some part of Mexico where neither of those things is all that common. When I reflect on it, I guess what I really wanted to do with my photography was to capture a different side of Mexico. There’s some really superb work that’s been done photographing the drug violence or its aftermath, and there’s a lot of classic México *pintoresco*, folkloric travel photography, but not a lot of photography that I know of that is reflective of the day-to-day experience there. And I think that as a historian, I also tended to see



Mexico in a particular way. A lot of the photos reflect a tension that I saw between modernity and tradition, and the experience of living through Mexico’s momentous social changes. If there’s a lot of melancholy in the photos, it stems from seeing things being lost. When an old flower shop in the florist district of Roma becomes a site for American apparel stores, as a visitor it’s hard not to feel something, and it makes you reflect on what that experience is like for the people who have lived in the neighborhood for years.





## Latin American Studies Research Grants for Bill de la Rosa and Sarah Levy '16

### Truman Scholarship and John Lewis Fellowship for Bill De La Rosa '16

Latin American Studies and Sociology major Bill De La Rosa's passion for understanding the experiences of undocumented migrants and for pursuing immigration reform was fueled in part by field research he carried out in the Sonora Desert along the U.S.-Mexico border during the summer following his first year at Bowdoin.

He assisted on the Undocumented Migration Project with University of Michigan anthropologist Jason De León, whom Bill met when Professor Krista Van Vleet invited De León to present a lecture at Bowdoin. The work on the border also introduced Bill to the San Juan Bosco migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico.

Determined to learn more there, with support from a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Bill returned to Nogales the following summer to explore how border security affects migration strategies. Listening to migrants' stories provided insight into what drove them, against reason and terrible odds, to continue trying to make the crossing. Recognizing the reality that it was impossible to deter migrants from attempting to reach the United States, Bill reasoned that he could at least strive to mini-

mize the costs of lives lost in the desert, and he began offering information sessions to educate the people at the refuge about the punishing environmental conditions they would face in crossing.

As Bill gets ready for further work in Nogales this summer in preparation for his honors research next fall, the importance of his focus on compassionate and effective immigration reform is also being recognized. Recently the Harry S. Truman Foundation awarded Bill a \$30,000 scholarship for graduate school and a stipend for a one-year internship with a government agency following graduation.

He has also won the Humanity in Action John Lewis Fellowship and will participate in an intensive program on diversity and civil rights, contributing to innovative initiatives to address issues including racism and immigration. He is as well a Bill Gates Millennium Scholar and a Michael and Susan Dell Scholar. In 2013 he was the youngest participant in Stanford University's Forum for Cooperation, Understanding and Solidarity, which promotes better U.S.-Mexico relations.

This year, LAS awarded research grants to Bill de la Rosa and fellow LAS major Sarah Levy '16. Bill's project, "Undocumented Migrant Strategies for Navigating the Arizona-Sonora Border", will be researched over the summer in Nogales, Mexico, where Bill will study Latino migration to the U.S. from a sociological perspective. Sarah's project, "Models of Masculinity: Socialization of Young Boys in the Andean Region", will send her to Shiripuno, Ecuador, to study the socialization of young boys in the Andean region of Latin America looking at their immediate communities and also the media.

Established in 2000 by the LAS Committee, these awards are given on a competitive basis to students wishing to conduct independent research in Mexico, Central or South America, the Caribbean, or on Latinos and Latinas in the U.S. Students engage in a semester-long independent study or year-long honors project under the mentorship of a faculty member upon their return to campus.





# One Welcome and Two Farewells

## Jennifer Baca

Jennifer Baca will join the Latin American Studies program as a CFD postdoctoral fellow for the next two academic years. A yoga enthusiast, she loves print-making and backpacking, particularly in Patagonia and the Andean altiplano. Born in Texas, she has lived in New Mexico, Chile—she is fluent in Spanish—and Palo Alto, California, where she attended Stanford University as an undergraduate. Specializing in political ecology and the commodification of nature, she recently got her Ph.D. at the Department of Geography at the University of California – Berkeley with a dissertation entitled “Pulp Friction: Conflict, Criminalization, and Accumulation in Chilean Forestry.” At Bowdoin she will teach courses cross-listed with the Environmental Studies program, beginning in the Fall 2015 with a class on “Environmental Politics of Latin America.”



## Michael Birenbaum and Laura Premack

Music and LAS Professor **Michael Birenbaum Quintero** is leaving Bowdoin this year to join the Music Department at Boston University starting in the fall. The Bowdoin community will miss Michael’s energetic presence in class and his spectacular public presentations as well as his nuanced approach to Latino and Latin American music and cultures in general. Recent courses he taught at LAS and the Music Department included “Cubop, Up-rock, Boogaloo and Banda: Latinos Making Music in the US” and “Music and Race in Latin America.”

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Latin American Studies **Laura Premack** will start a new position as Assistant Professor of Latin American History at Keene State College in New Hampshire also in the fall. Laura’s three years at Bowdoin were a rewarding experience for all who had the pleasure to work with her and benefitted from her vast knowledge of the history and culture of Brazil and the Atlantic circuits of migration and African diaspora. Among the courses she taught at LAS are “Demons and Deliverance in the Atlantic World,” “Beyond Capoeira: History and Politics of Afro-Brazilian Culture,” and “History of Brazil.”







# Key Moments in U.S.-Latin American Relations

An interview with Russell Crandall '94  
By Allen Wells

*Russell Crandall '94 is Associate Professor of Political Science at Davidson College. Among his publications are: America's Dirty Wars: Irregular Warfare from 1776 to the War on Terror (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); The United States and Latin America after the Cold War (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); and Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 2nd ed. (Denver: Lynne Reiner, 2008). He is currently writing up The Salvador Option: U.S. Counterinsurgency and Nation-building in El Salvador, 1977-1992.*

*Russ also has extensive policy experience, serving as principal director for the western hemisphere at the Department of Defense and director for Andean Affairs at the National Security Council. He also served as a national security aide at the National Security Council, as special assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as a consultant for the World Bank and the Andean Development Bank. He recently established the Crandall Family Fund, which will contribute greatly to enriching Bowdoin's Latin American Studies program.*

**How did you first become interested in the study of Latin American politics? After graduating from Bowdoin in 1994, you pursued your doctorate at John Hopkins' School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in D.C. What was distinctive about your grad school experience at SAIS?**

I had always had an interest in the world from an early age but not necessarily Latin America. It was in college when I decided to study abroad in Chile in my junior year (1992) that I fell in love with the region. Only a couple of years post-Pinochet, Chile was a veritable laboratory of politics and history and I couldn't get enough of it. I wanted a policy-oriented graduate program, as at that point I was not set on being a college professor. But I ended up coming to the Ivory Tower sooner in my career than I had anticipated—and

it's worked out well.

**You went to a small liberal arts college and are now teaching at a comparable institution. How did your experience at Bowdoin shape your pedagogy at Davidson? Do you ever have a hankering to work with graduate students and move to a R1 (research) university?**

My goal is to replicate my Bowdoin experience in what I do at Davidson—collaboration with students, high expectations, and a lot of fun. I'm quite fortunate in that I'm able to do research with my advanced undergraduates so it gives me all the "R1 fix" I need. If I were ever to make a switch, it would be to direct a large international relations graduate program that would allow me to focus on the overlaps between policy and academia. Maybe part of this is also the fact that I'm an politics-history-economics mutt—and certainly not your typical political scientist---and this makes both liberal arts colleges and policy programs a better fit.

**Your first book, *Driven by Drugs*, assessed U.S.-Colombian relations in the years prior to Plan Colombia, the collaborative, if controversial, bilateral agreement between the two countries that helped the Colombian government (and military) defeat a stubborn leftist guerrilla insurgency that had lasted for more than four decades. Looking back at the last twenty-five years of relations between the two countries,**



what lessons can we take from this unusual partnership?

I think the U.S.-Colombia case is particularly interesting in that for most of the Cold War Colombia was both an ally and a client. Today, though, it is far less of a client state and that's a good thing for them and us. I also think that U.S. policy has not been all that bad since a decade ago, when Washington finally got beyond its narcotized obsessions.

Since your first book your research has tacked from topical analyses of contemporary Latin American politics to historical studies of key flashpoints in U.S.-Latin American relations. Take us through your reasons for choosing a particular research topic and how has your scholarship evolved over the course of your career?

Ah, great question. I'm often fascinated about an element of U.S. diplomatic history where we think we know much of what happened, but when at second or third glance the reality might be different. So, for example, before I really started digging into the U.S. invasion of Grenada (for *Gunboat Democracy*) my general understanding was comically limited and inaccurate. As the onion layers start to peel, if I'm lucky, I wind up with a book that tries to help explain what I myself have learned.

You're working on a book about U.S.-Latin American relations during the Salvadoran civil war. Scholarship typically views U.S. policy in El Salvador during this period through the prism of the Cold War, with the latter serving as proxies for U.S. interests. How will your research

complicate or supplement this narrative?

This is easily the most delicate book that I've worked on as the proximity and polarization involved in the Salvador case make it an ideological and methodological minefield. Everyone who has an opinion on Salvador seems to have been involved in the episode in one shape or another. The good news is that there is an wealth of primary sources that helps reveal the internal deliberations and objectives, as opposed to what remains the conventional understanding gleaned from major U.S. newspapers. It's especially exciting that this project brings me back

shaped your teaching and research?

My key takeaway is that the evidence considered and level and type of thinking inside government are really no different than what goes on outside government. Everyone is very busy and there is not a lot of high-level attention paid to the region these days—which can be a good and bad thing. I recently wrote a piece on this topic in case our Bowdoin LAS readers are curious: <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/academic-policy-divide>

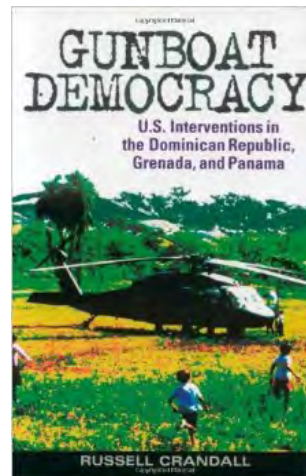
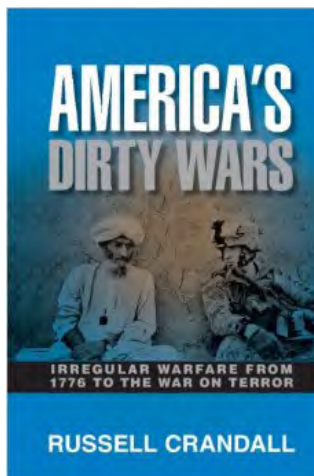
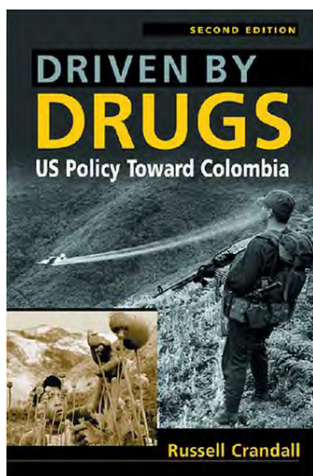
Your wife Britta is a specialist in Southern Cone politics? What's it like to have another Latin Americanist in the family?

A complete blast! We met as masters students at Hopkins and now are privileged to both be teaching at Davidson. We complete each other well as I'm hasty and she's meticulous.

You've recently established the Crandall Family Fund to benefit Bowdoin's Latin American Studies program. For a relatively young program like ours, this fund represents a golden opportunity for program faculty to think about how we might enhance research opportunities

for our students in Latin America, and to think more creatively about how we enrich the experience for our majors inside and outside the classroom. What prompted you to establish the fund and what are your hopes for it?

We established the fund in honor of my parents who were big fans of education and were especially proud that I went to Bowdoin. And we wanted the fund to be help institutionalize the marvelous ongoing activities that make for the rich and unique experiences that characterized my time at Bowdoin.



Crandall's books include *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*; *America's Dirty Wars: Irregular Warfare from 1776 to the War on Terror*; and *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama*.

full circle to my Bowdoin days, as I wrote my senior independent study project with you on U.S.-led judicial reform in El Salvador.

At various points in your career, you've stepped away from teaching and research to lend your expertise on Andean affairs to the Department of Defense and the National Security Council. What was that experience like? What should those of us outside the beltway know about the making of foreign policy, especially for a region as diverse and multifaceted as Latin America? How has your policy experience

## The Crandall Family Fund for Latin American Studies

Established in 2013, the Crandall Family Fund for Latin American Studies was created to support student research and to promote faculty-student collaboration. Thanks to a generous lead gift from Russell Crandall '94, Associate Professor of Political Science, Davidson College, this

fund will greatly enrich the LAS Program's curricular initiatives.

Those interested in contributing to the Crandall LAS Fund, please make your checks payable to Bowdoin College and write "Crandall Family Fund" on the memo line. Donations can be sent to:

Bowdoin College  
Office of Development  
4100 College Station  
Brunswick, ME 04011-8432



# Alumni News

## Kauri Ballard '10

My Spanish degree has been very instrumental in my career. I work in consulting now and travel to countries in South America a few times a year. I have been to Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala. I present in English, but my clients often discuss the results in Spanish. I always surprise at least one person in the room when I start to answer a question in Spanish or correct a discussion point. They never expect me to understand the language.

## Zulmarie Bosques '11

I have left the world of high school college counseling and am currently in my first year at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service and Administration masters program. I am concentrating on the administration track with aspirations of operating and managing a 501(c)3 in the future. Through the required internship, I have been working with Latinos of the Logan Square and Humboldt Park communities to help secure housing and financial resources.

## Jessica Britt '10

I currently live in Burlington, VT and work for an international development contractor called Tetra Tech ARD. As a member of the Democracy and Governance Sector I work on USAID-funded projects supporting local government strengthening, decentralization, improved service provision, and crime and violence prevention efforts, primarily in Latin America, but also in Thailand and Bangladesh. Travelling about 50% of the time keeps me quite busy and keeps my Spanish from getting too rusty! I'm also still actively engaged with Safe Passage as a member of the Development Committee having spent 2010-2012 working in Guatemala City.

## Christina Curtin '12

I currently live in Washington, DC, where I work as a Development Associate at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a progressive, multi-issue think tank. This work allows me the exciting opportunity to coordinate IPS' Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Awards, an annual event which both honors the memories of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, IPS colleagues assassinated in 1976 by agents of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, and celebrates and lifts up the work of new heroes and heroines of the human rights movement from across the United States and throughout the Americas.

## Nicholas Fenichell '12

After I graduated from Bowdoin, I wanted to be able to use my Chinese skills, so I moved to Shanghai and worked for a venture capital firm for half a year. After having exposure to start-ups in the vibrant Shanghai community, I fell in love with the thrill of having an entrepreneurial position and joined a start-up, which is now the largest online international real estate platform for Chinese buyers. I stayed in Shanghai for another year before I was transferred to the company's Hong Kong office, where I stayed for six months. All along, I worked closely with various charity organizations in Shanghai and organized city-wide fundraisers. After being in the private sector for two years, I decided I wanted to get a taste of the public sector and be able to navigate in both those worlds. So, I applied to the Master of Public Policy degree at Harvard's John F. Kennedy's School of Government, and am currently finishing up my first year. My long-term goal is to potentially become an advisor to Latin American governments regarding Chinese investments in the region, but until then, I want to keep gaining relevant work experience in both the private and public sectors.

## Elijah Garrard '12

I am currently teaching English to 2nd and 3rd graders in Eastern Turkey. I also run the school's Spanish Club, and am in the process of establishing a school library.

## Michelle Greet '93

I am continuing work on my *Transatlantic Encounters: Latin American Artists in Paris between the Wars* project. The project has various components: a book, a website, and a traveling exhibition. The book has been accepted for publication by Yale University Press and will most likely be released in late 2016 in conjunction with the exhibition. We are currently working on securing high quality images and copyright permissions. The website is up and running and can be accessed at <http://chnm.gmu.edu/transatlanticencounters/> The website includes a database of more than 300 Latin American artists living and working in Paris and two interactive maps of galleries exhibiting Latin American art and artists residences. I am also working with the American Federation of Arts in New York to curate a traveling exhibition of this art. My co-curator and I will be traveling to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Buenos Aires in March to negotiate loans and we are planning a trip to Havana

in May. The exhibition is slated to open in 2017 at three US venues (we hope to announce a full itinerary in the next few months). I have also published several related articles and exhibition catalogue essays which can be accessed at [Academia.edu](http://Academia.edu). I currently serve as the Vice President of the Association for Latin American Art and teach on the topic at George Mason.

## Matt Klick '98

Matt recently graduated with his PhD in International Studies (with concentrations in comparative politics and international political economy) from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. For his dissertation research, Matt traveled extensively throughout rural Guatemala in order to examine why some remote, highlands communities have managed to address hunger and illiteracy more effectively than their neighbors. He focused on the degree to which formal and informal actors -including indigenous leaders and community organizations- interact, and how local governance determines outcomes. Matt is currently an adjunct professor with the University of Denver and teaches classes on the Millennium Development Goals, Fragile States and Human Development, and Latin American Politics. He is currently launching a nonprofit dedicated to sustainable development and human prosperity in arctic and global mountain regions, including work with Guatemala coffee farmers, and closer to home, with Latino immigrants in Colorado's Rocky Mountain communities.

## Jae Lee '06

I think this is my first update since I graduated in 2006. I got married in 2010 with Scott Herrick ('05) and we have a beautiful boy, Nathan, who will be entering his terrible twos (he's kind of already is) this coming April. We recently moved to Cambridge and I started my PhD program in Education at Harvard last Fall. My research interest is on immigrant students' access to educational opportunities in the U.S. and I hope to do a research on Asian-Latinos in the U.S. (Asian immigrants to Latin America who remigrated to the U.S.).

## Kate Leifheit '12

I am living in Baltimore, working as a Program Coordinator for the Johns Hopkins "Center for Child and Community Health Research." Our



research focuses on social determinants of sexual/reproductive health and often involves close collaboration with city and state health departments. I also work with “Centro SOL” (Salud y Oportunidad para Latinos), a JHU group dedicated to improving health among Baltimore Latinos through community engagement.

### Bernardo Montero '92

I majored in History with a minor in Latin American Studies. I am currently the President of Somerset Academy Charter Inc. and simultaneously administer Somerset Academy Charter School (K-12, 3000 students) in Pembroke Pines, FL. I am currently working on my doctoral program in Higher Education at Nova Southeastern University. Given the high volume of Latin Americans in the South Florida area, I have been able to reap the benefits of the Bowdoin Education I received. Always grateful to the institution and the relationships I built there with peers and staff.

### Liz Pedowitz '10

I'm currently a fourth year medical student at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and applying for neurology residency. I'm excited to see where I'll end up on Match Day in March. Spanish has been so useful and helped me communicate with so many different patients. I'm so glad I majored in it.

### Alexandra Reed '10

I am in my first year at the University of Michigan Law School and adjusting to being a student again. As a break from subjects like Contracts and Property, I intern at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) in Ann Arbor. Working at MIRC has been a great way for me to keep up my Spanish and maintain a connection with the immigrant population I plan to serve after graduating from law school.

### Adrián Rodríguez '14

I work for Google For Work, a sort of start up within Google that is trying to compete with the likes of Microsoft, Dropbox, Box, Amazon, etc for enterprise services such as their email, file storage, productivity tools, maps, video conferencing, laptops, and many other technical things companies use nowadays. Everything that we offer is from the cloud, which we believe is the future of the enterprise world. My team in particular works with the email, file storage, productivity tools and video conferencing part. More specifically, I am in charge of finding new companies in Latin America (from Mexico all the way down to Argentina) and connecting them to our sales reps who would close any deals I bring them. My official

title would be Google For Work Associate. My day to day consist of finding these potential customers (companies) in many creative ways, creating and executing campaigns with other stakeholders to eventually initiate a conversation with Chief Information Officers and move them along the sales cycle.

### Emily Schonberg '10

Hi Bowdoinites, I hope you're all doing well! I'm currently living just outside of Boston with my boyfriend Evan and our dog Wendy (or Dingo, as we like to call her). I'm working for a really neat company called CIC in Cambridge that provides office space and services to start up companies. They let you take on all kinds of projects of your own design, so I'm introducing two very Bowdoin ones soon- 1) A sustainability challenge month to reduce our footprint and 2) A Spanish lunch hour where anyone can come and practice their Spanish speaking skills. All's well here, but we can't wait for the warm weather!

### Georgia Whitaker '14

Since graduating from Bowdoin last May, I have been teaching at a private, tuition-free, all-girls middle school in inner-city Hartford, Connecticut. Many of our students come from Thailand, Myanmar, Somalia, and Latin America, and I've enjoyed incorporating Spanish into classroom instruction and parent communication. I teach sixth grade Social Studies, seventh grade English, and coach a variety of sports, from basketball to badminton. This fall I will be starting a doctoral program in Latin American history at Harvard.

### Ian Yaffe '09

Ian has spent the past five years in Downeast Maine working as Executive Director of Mano en Mano / Hand in Hand and serving as Response Boat Coxswain in the Coast Guard Reserve. Mano en Mano is a non-profit that advocates for and provides education, social services, and housing to immigrants and migrant workers in Washington County, Maine. One of Mano en Mano's signature programs is the Blueberry Harvest School, a three-week summer school for the children of migrant workers where culture, the environment, and project-based learning combine to empower students and foster a life-long love of learning. This year, Mano en Mano is working with Bowdoin senior Christine Rheem to develop a robust curriculum that is reflective of the diversity students bring to the school and in March 2015, the program was recognized by the Maine Environmental Education Association with its annual award for excellence in environmental education.

## A Note from the Director

Our ongoing effort to include in our concept of Latin America the migration circuit of the Americas, the African diaspora, the Latino culture in the United States, as well as the Caribbean as a distinctive cultural space, both in its Spanish-speaking and Francophone incarnations, was reflected in our curriculum last year. Latino culture in the US was the focus of courses like *CuBop*, *Up-rock*, *Boogaloo*, and *Banda: Latinos Making Music in the United States* (Birenbaum) and *Latinas/os in the United States* (López). The relationship between the US and Latin America was also studied from geopolitical, economic and/or sociological perspectives in courses like *Political Economy of Pan-Americanism* (Meardon), *Global Politics of Work* (López), and *Latin American–United States Relations* (Tulchin).

The Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the African diaspora were present in our curriculum through courses like *History of Brazil* (Premack), *Demons and Deliverance in the Atlantic World* (Premack), *Contemporary Haiti* (Beckett), *The Haitian Revolution and its Legacy* (Wells), *Francophone Cultures* (Vété-Congolo), and *A Journey around Macondo: García Márquez and his Contemporaries*, which once again had students traveling to Colombia with professor Nadia Celis. Mexican, Central and South American literatures were studied in their connection with contemporary political issues in classes like *Poetry and Social Activism in Latin America* (Yepes), *The War of the (Latin American) Worlds* (Wolfenzon), and *Letters from the Asylum: Madness and Representation in Latin American Literature* (Faverón). The Andean region was the main concern of courses like *Past and Present: Historical Novels in Latin America* (Wolfenzon) and *Culture and Power in the Andes* (Van Vleet).

In the 2014-2015 academic year, the Latin American Studies Program offered a record number of courses, 34 in total, all of them cross-listed with other departments and programs like Africana Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, Romance Languages (French and Spanish), Music, and, for the first time, Government. Those courses, added to a number of independent studies, reached a total enrollment of 525 students, 63 more than the previous year. We are committed to match this growth with a continuing expansion in the scope of our academic vision of Latin America.

GUSTAVO FAVERÓN PATRIAU





Award winning Mexican novelist, Carmen Boulosa delivered a talk entitled "My Roots" on April 21, invited by LAS and Spanish professor Carolyn Wolfenzon.

# A Year in Events

## The Latin American presence at Bowdoin, 2014-2015

**Raquel Z. Rivera & Ojos de Sofia.** "Las Décimas del Amargue & Other Songs of Love". October 1, 2014. Studzinski Recital Hall, Kanbar Auditorium. Organized by the Music Department.

**Laurent Dubois** (Duke University). "Democracy at the Roots: Understanding Haiti's Political Culture". October 23, 2014. Visual Arts Center, Kresge Auditorium. Organized by the History Department.

**Erika Helgen** (Yale University). "It is Not a Crime to Kill the Infidel: Protestants, Catholics, and Religious Violence in Vargas's Brazil." November 11, 2014. Edward Pols House, Conference Room. Organized by Laura Premack.

**Michael Birenbaum Quintero** (Bowdoin College). "Teófilo Potes and the Counter-History of Black Politics in Colombia." November 12, 2014. Moulton Union, Main Lounge.

**History/LAS seminar, "The Haitian Revolution and its Legacy"** (Prof. Allen Wells) performed C.L.R. James' play, Toussaint Louverture: The Only Successful Slave Revolt in History, November 20, 2014. Memorial Hall.

**Álex Rivera.** *Sleep Dealer.* A Screening and Discussion with Filmmaker Álex Rivera. December 3, 2014. Visual Arts Center, Kresge Auditorium. Organized by Marcos López.

**Bowdoin's Afro-Latin Ensemble** under the direction of Michael Birenbaum Quintero. December 3, 2014. Studzinski Recital Hall, Kanbar Auditorium.

**Lucía Puenzo's *The German Doctor.*** Second Annual World Cinema Festival. Film screening. February 17, 2015. Sills Hall, Smith Auditorium. Presented by Carolyn Wolfenzon (Bowdoin College).

**Roger Ross Williams' *God Loves Uganda.*** Second Annual World Cinema Festival. Film screening. February 18, 2015. Sills Hall, Smith Auditorium. Presented by Laura Premack and Hanétha Vété-Congolo (Bowdoin College).

**Chantal Loial.** "On t'appelle Venus (They Call You Venus)." February 28, 2015. Visual Arts Center, Kresge Auditorium. Funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation cross-disciplinary initiatives. Organized by Hanétha Vété-Congolo.

**Mary Jane Doherty** (Boston University). *Secundaria.* Film screening and conversation with Filmmaker Mary Jane Doherty. March 30, 2015. Druckenmiller Hall, Cleveland 151.

**Noliwe Rooks** (Cornell University). "Because What is Beautiful is Good: Erasing Race and Selling Feminism in the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty." April 6, 2015. Kresge Auditorium. Funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Organized by Hanétha Vété-Congolo.

**Sarita Gaytán** (University of Utah). "Message in a Bottle: Tequila and the Performance of Gender and Sexuality in Mexican Popular Culture." April 9, 2015. Adams Hall, Room 208. Organized by Marcos López.

**Carmen Boulosa.** "My Roots." April 21, 2015. Hubbard Hall, Thomas F. Shannon Room. Organized by Carolyn Wolfenzon.

**Nadia Celis, Margaret Boyle, Alexxa León, Cailey Oehler, Christine Rheem, and Claudia Villar-Leeman.** Forum on Nadia Celis' book, *La rebelión de las niñas: El Caribe y la conciencia corporal.*