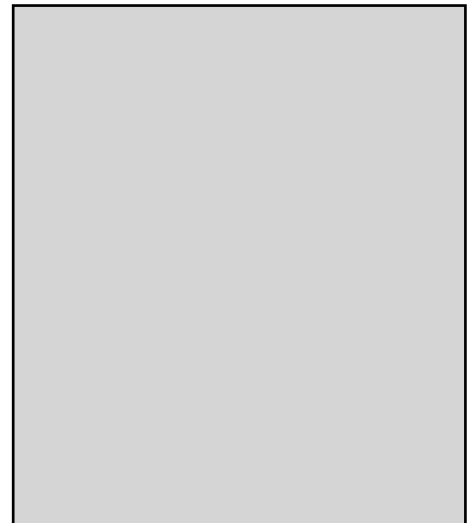
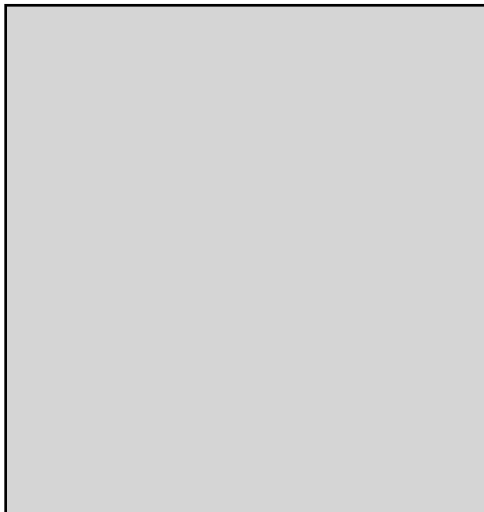
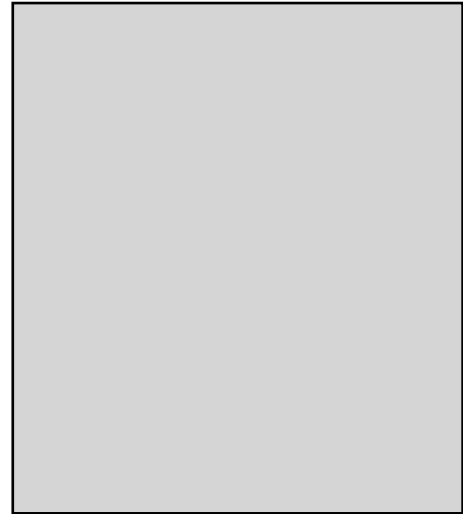


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DEPARTMENT
OF AMERICAN
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>>Phoebe Wolfskill

Spring 2021 Sabbatical

During her spring 2021 sabbatical, Phoebe Wolfskill published her chapter "Photographic Disruption in the Work of Emma Amos" in conjunction with the exhibition at the Georgia Museum of Art, "Emma Amos: Color Odyssey," curated by Shawnya L. Harris. The exhibition opened at the Georgia Museum in January 2021 and will travel to the Munson-Proctor Arts Institute and then to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Phoebe contributed to a panel on the exhibition via Zoom in January, and also presented a shorter version of this work at the College Art Association annual meeting in February. Phoebe has been working on two other projects that focus on Amos, including a book chapter "Narratives of Black Atlanta in Emma Amos's *Odyssey* series (1988)" and an article focused on Amos's study in London. Phoebe is also writing a short article on whiteness in the history of art, revising an article on photographic appropriation in the early work of Romare Bearden, and writing an article on Blackness and non-iconicity in Ben Shahn's FSA photography. Phoebe continues research on her book, *Photography, Painting, and the Early Twentieth-Century Black Subject*, which she hopes to further this summer in Washington DC, where she'll access the city's multiple archives and museums. Phoebe also continues to work with Alex Lichtenstein and Rasul Mowatt on their exhibition "Unmasked: The Anti-Lynching Exhibits of 1935 and Methods of Public Community Remembrance."



>>AMST Faculty Members Awarded Funding from the Public Humanities Project



In January 2021, faculty members Alex Lichtenstein (AMST,HIST), Rasul Mowatt (AMST, GEOG), and Phoebe Wolfskill (AMST, AAADS) were awarded \$25,000 from the IU Arts & Humanities project to plan their art installation, "Unmasked: The Anti-Lynching Exhibits of 1935 and Methods of Public Community Remembrance." The funding will be used to work with an assembled team of scholars, educators, artists and curators to hold workshops in 2021-22 in preparation for the eventual installation, anticipated for 2022-23, with the purpose of creating public awareness of lynching with the goal of passing federal legislation.

The installation will curate in tandem with two exhibitions that were held simultaneously in New York City to create public awareness of lynching. This project will re-unite these exhibitions for the first time in a single gallery space accompanied by African American modern and contemporary artists who confront lynching and other racial violence through their work. The show will pair historical concerns with ongoing reflections to recapture the contesting political spirit of the 1935 exhibitions and to illustrate the ability of art to raise significant questions of historical and current import. Given current controversies about the politics of displaying racial violence and the black body, the curators will consult with community stakeholders and wrestle directly with this question: how can political art represent racial trauma that risks offending sympathetic viewers? How have the dynamics of this dilemma shifted between the New Deal era and our own?

The work displayed in the installation can be especially sensitive, as it has the potential to upset viewers by portraying racial violence in order to critique and challenge such violence, just as the 1935 exhibitions did. Planning workshops will explore the best ways of presenting such disturbing historical and artistic material. The preliminary schedule for the art installation is to be exhibited in Marion, Indiana, site of a notorious lynching in 1930, and then move to the gallery in Maxwell Hall on the Indiana University Bloomington campus.

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>> AMST Graduate/ Alumni News

>Jed Kuhn, pictured top left, accepted a tenure track position offer from Dickinson College's Department of American Studies in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He will focus on Latinx Studies.



<Isabella Salerno, pictured top right, graduated with a BA in American Studies in 2020. Read the latest about her on pages 5-6



Read about IUAMST alum Alex Chambers, Earth Eats, a public radio show and more on page 7

Read about Jordache Ellapen, IU AMST alum, pictured above, on pages 3-4

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>> AMST Alum Jordache Ellapen

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AMST PhD Alum Jordache Ellapen is an Assistant Professor of Feminist Studies in Culture and Media in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto. Previously, he held an assistant professorship at the University of Oregon and a postdoc in the Department of African and African American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis.

He is seeking to develop frameworks to understand how South African queer, femme, and gender nonconforming individuals exercise freedom by refusing to be captured within the Western expectations of aesthetic and performative art.

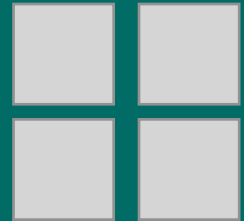
Dr. Ellapen is working on three projects. The first is a book manuscript titled *Sticky Erotics: Afro-Indian Intimacies and the Queer Aesthetics of Race in South Africa*, which examines the shifting nature of South African Blackness and Afro-Indian relationalities after 1994.

The second, *African Queer Aesthetics, Performance Art, and Decoloniality*, positions the domain of sexuality as pivotal to any project of decolonization by focusing on the performative art and aesthetic practices of queer, femme, and gender nonconforming Africans. This project examines the extensive aesthetic and performative art practices of the Black South African queer/femme duo FAKA who work across multiple media like photography, video art, live performance art, fashion, literary works, and sound art.

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> AMST Alumni Jordache Ellapen cont'd



The third and final project explores the affective and haptic nature of family photographs and family archives. Rather than privileging the upper middle-class, urban and activist South Africans of Indian origin, Dr. Ellapen focuses on the history of Indian indentured labor, a system introduced after the abolition of transatlantic slavery, and its afterlives in contemporary South Africa.

In the last year, Dr. Ellapen taught three undergraduate classes, a graduate course, and presented a lecture at the Center for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape, gave a talk on the symposium *The Aesthetics of Triple Consciousness: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Films of Akosua Adoma Owusu*, and organized a panel for the 2020 African Studies Association conference.

About living in Toronto, Dr. Ellapen says, "Toronto is one of the biggest North American cities and is often described as the most diasporic city in the world. The city has large diasporic communities from Africa, the Caribbean, Middle East and South Asia and is an interesting clash of cultures, traditions, and languages, ethnic foods, etc. This makes it an exciting city to live in. Although Canada positions itself as diverse and tolerant, it is a country entrenched in anti-Black violence, indigenous dispossession and genocide, and Islamophobia. It's a complicated country where Canadians struggle to recognize their own complicity in these violent regimes; instead, a lot of people actually believe that anti-Black violence, for instance, is a U.S. American problem. I am glad to be working with many Black women activists and scholars who have been engaged in anti-racist work in Toronto for decades. So, I am constantly learning, whilst recognizing how settler colonial logics morph, but remain constants, across the geographies I am most intimate with now: South Africa, the U.S., and Canada."

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In Her Words

>>AMST Alum Isabella Salerno



Isabella Salerno graduated with a B.A. in American Studies in December 2020. AMST Grad Secretary Kathy Teige caught up with her to find out the latest and her plans for the future

•**Why did you decide to pursue a major in American Studies?**

I decided to pursue a major in American Studies after taking “What is America?” with Dr. Sonia Lee my freshman year. To be honest, I wasn’t really sure what the major was about, but Dr. Lee called me into her office and explained the different aspects of the major and suggested I would be a good match for it. I was intrigued by the fact that American Studies allows you to take classes in different departments, allowing you to attain a well-rounded education. I liked that the small department would allow me to create more intimate connections with my professors and fellow students.

- **In what ways do you think your double majors - POLS and AMST - are in conversation with each other? How does your minor in SOC complement these majors?**

My two majors and my minor all explored political, social, and historical topics. My three areas of study complemented each other by addressing similar topics from different perspectives. I really enjoyed how my classes connected with each other, allowing me to attain a deep understanding of issues across the social sciences.

>AMST Alum Isabella Salerno **continued**

- **What are you doing now?**

Like many others, I have been staying home with my family to protect ourselves and others. Since graduating in December I have continued working part time for the Ken Nunn Law Office as a Legal Assistant while I interview for full-time jobs on the east coast. I have been enjoying post-grad life by reading and painting. I also recently got a new German Shepherd puppy, named Ranger, who takes up a lot of my time.

- * **What are your future plans?**

I hope to move to the east coast soon with Ranger. I am looking forward to the pandemic being over so I can travel and attend concerts again. I am considering some type of graduate school in the future, but for now I am enjoying my time off from school.



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In His Words >>AMST Alum Alex Chambers



In the midst of finishing my dissertation, *Climate Violence and the Poetics of Refuge*, I was asked to join the production team at *Earth Eats*, a public radio show out of WFIU Bloomington about food culture and politics. I jumped at the chance, and produced stories on what data networks can tell us about how we eat, the secret calculations that determine who gets food stamps, and the links between pupusas and poetry, among others. After defending my dissertation, which had, much to my chagrin, ended up much more about infrastructure (water, power, etc.) than I ever would have predicted, I joined a national nonprofit, We Own It, as an organizing fellow working with members of rural electric cooperatives. Also unpredicted, but as someone who cares about climate democracy, addressing fossil fuels and corruption that preys on rural households felt energizing. Since then I've also had the chance to produce documentary portraits of local Hoosiers for PBS's *American Portraits* and teach cultural studies of podcasts, and podcast production, at the IU Media School. I also pitched and received funding from Indiana Humanities for a podcast series called *How to Survive the Future*, about life today from the perspective of tomorrow. We ask farmers and poets, scholars and artists, children and abolitionists, to imagine a world where they have made it

through the challenges of the present, where they have faced the pain of the past, and tell us what life is like after that. From the interviews, we create sound-rich "imaginative documentaries." The concept of the show was indebted to my dissertation research on realism and imagination in the face of climate change. That show will be released, through Indiana Humanities, in January 2022.

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>> *Black Shoals*
Colloquium Monday,
March 8

Tiffany Lethabo King

The Black
Shoals

OFFSHORE FORMATIONS of BLACK and NATIVE STUDIES

The Spring 2021 American Studies Colloquium took place Monday, March 8 over Zoom, where AMST faculty and grad students discussed Tiffany King's *Black Shoals* (published in 2019 by Duke University Press). Some topics of discussion included cultural discovery, the idea of diaspora, and intersectionality.

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>>AMST *Black Shoals*
Colloquium
Monday, March 8

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