

Dialogues

Since April of last year, *Dialogues: Blog of the American Studies Journal* has published 14 new blog essays—original short-form essays that comment on culture, politics, academia, archives, technology, and much more. Several pieces speak to this specific moment via one of our themed series: On Teaching, On Writing, Protest Poetics, and Artist Scholar. Contributions have come from educators, researchers, librarians, archivists, artists, practitioners of digital humanities and social sciences, and community activists, each presenting historically-specific yet expansive dialogues informed by the multi-pronged issues that continue to be central to American studies.

Following AMSJ's 2020 summer issue (59.2), the Editors are happy to include below two blog essays reflecting on the moment. "Imagining Futures Through the Archives" by Victor Betts explores what it means to inhabit the space of the university while asking North Carolina State University students to "think beyond what is simply absent from the archive." Betts meditates on a serendipitous encounter while searching through the library collections—a photograph of Justina Williams, the first African American academic staff member to be hired at NC State in 1958. Betts suggests that educational spaces could think more critically about not only what/who is missing from the archives and collections, but how institutions have been built around a "calculated effort" to exclude. Indeed, Betts offers a case-study provocation for imagining futures through the archives. Likewise, Maurice Rafael Magaña's "Giving Form to Black and Brown" illuminates how a focus on Latinx and Black artists in Los Angeles, who are actively creating new forms of solidarities through creative expression, "opens up social and political possibilities." Magaña points to the music and memorialization of beloved L.A.-based rapper Nipsey Hussle, who was murdered in 2019. A surge of creative expression by Latinx muralists—including Nessi Arte (Vanessa Prado), Z the Art (Bobby Z. Rodriguez), and Danny Mateo, whose mural of Nipsey Hussle serves as the cover art of this summer issue—symbolize a shared history of resisting racism and state violence. At the same time, Magaña provides a nuanced reading of relational formations of race through analytics of visual culture that cautions too-easy solidarities across time, space, and racialization.

We present these essays here as part of our ongoing effort to archive the moment through multiple platforms. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much as we have.

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