
a Women in Carnival Network
SYMPOSIUM
Love, Labour and Play

Leeds Beckett University in partnership with the University of California, Santa Barbara

this is a hybrid event, video conference link below
free to attend



Dr. Samantha Noël
Keynote



- 📅 Wednesday 08.31.2022
- 🕒 09:00AM - 07:30 PM
- 📍 Rose Bowl, Leeds Beckett University.
- 💻 Microsoft Teams Link

Registration

<https://tinyurl.com/labourjoyplay>



Our Keynote Address



Dr. Samantha Noël

Samantha A. Noël is an Associate Professor of Art History and the Hawkins Ferry Endowed Chair in Modern and Contemporary Art at Wayne State University. She received her B.A. in Fine Art from Brooklyn College, C.U.N.Y., and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History from Duke University. Her research interests revolve around the history of art, visual culture and performance of the Black Diaspora. She has published on black modern and contemporary art and performance in journals such as *Small Axe*, *Third Text* and *Art Journal* and has an article forthcoming in the journal *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*. Noël has also contributed essays to exhibition catalogues as well as chapters to the following edited volumes: *Carnival is Women: Feminism and Performance in Caribbean Mas'* and *Transnational Belonging and Female Agency in the Arts*. Noël's book, *Tropical Aesthetics of Black Modernism* (Duke University Press, February 2021), offers a thorough investigation of how Caribbean and American artists of the early twentieth century were responding to colonial and hegemonic regimes through visual and performative tropicalist representation. It privileges the land and how a sense of place is critical in the identity formation of early twentieth-century artists as well as their creative processes. Noël is working on a new book tentatively titled *Diasporic Art in the Age of Black Power*. This book seeks to examine the impact of the Black Power Movement on visual art as it emerged in the political, historical, and social contexts of the United States of America and the Anglophone Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s. Noël was the 2021-2022 Smithsonian Terra Foundation Senior Fellow in American Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Her research has also been supported by The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Moreau Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Notre Dame. She has also received a number of grants and fellowship from Wayne State University.

She is a specialist in the 'Pretty Mas' aesthetic, delivering on 'The Jaycees Queen Competition and the Pretty Mas' Aesthetic' at this symposium.





Emily Zobel Marshall is of French-Caribbean and British heritage and grew up in the mountains of Snowdonia in North Wales. She is a Reader in Postcolonial Literature at the School of Cultural Studies at Leeds Beckett University. She is an expert on the trickster figure in the folklore, oral cultures and literature of the African Diaspora and has published widely in these fields, including her books *Anansi's Journey: A Story of Jamaican Cultural Resistance* (UWI Press, 2021) and *American Trickster: Trauma Tradition and Brer Rabbit* (Rowan & Littlefield 2019). She plays mas in Leeds West Indian carnival and has established a Caribbean Carnival Cultures research platform and network that aims to bring the critical, creative, academic and artistic aspects of carnival into dialogue with one another. She also consults arts and educational organisations on Decolonial methodologies and approaches. Emily develops her creative work alongside her academic writing. She has had poems published in several international journals and anthologies. She is Co-Chair of the David Oluwale Memorial Association, a charity committed to fighting racism and homelessness, and a Creative Associate of the Geraldine Connor Foundation.

Cathy Thomas, is a creative writer and literary scholar invested in black feminist and womanist pedagogy, practice, critique, and play. She studies American and Afrodiasporic Literature across periods and genres, especially speculative fiction, Caribbean culture, comic books, and science and technology studies. Her work agitates against androcentric modernity and antiblack humanism. She cosplays and plays mas considering how each may be rooted in similar embodied and 'playful' acts as performative and narrative cognates. She is an Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Her current book projects are the monograph "Unruliness: On a Genealogy of Afrodiasporic Women and Girlhood," a slipstream collection called *Girls on Film*, and a speculative fiction novel *Poco Mas*.



Dr. Adéqlá Dewis. I am a Trinidadian artist and cultural theorist interested in Carnival, masquerades and rituals. Informed by my experiences as a mother and Caribbean immigrant my work engages transformation, diaspora and performances of fragments.

Art projects include:

Mama dat is Mas' <http://mamadatsmas.blogspot.co.uk/>

Mama Mas': Conversations for Transformation <http://masmama.blogspot.co.uk/>

Play Yuhself <http://playyuhselfexp.blogspot.co.uk/>

Route to Roots <https://routetoroots2017.blogspot.co.uk>



Stacey Leigh Ross, MA, FHEA. is a UK-based Trinidadian Life Story Artist and educator who teaches at the University of the Arts London. She uses art to create social change by building confidence in individuals through Life Story Art - bespoke contemporary mixed media paintings that reflect the subjects' best selves, using their own experiences as evidence that they're loved, and capable of amazing things. Stacey also nurtures creativity, compassion and inclusion in communities through and Community Art collaborations with local organisations, and Workshops which help define and develop individual and social purpose. Her current project is Carnival of Compassion - a practice-based PhD that is interactive, socially-engaged, multi-disciplinary, and collaborative. It uses Caribbean Carnival culture and storytelling to inspire acts of compassion. Stacey has published articles and spoken at conferences about colourism, inclusive teaching, and social change curation.



Find Stacey everywhere - linktr.ee/byleighart



Dr. Janice B Fournillier self identifies as Black/ Caribbean/woman/native ethnographer. She is a Professor at Georgia State University's College of Education and Human Development. She has a major research interest in Carnival mas' art and the teaching/learning practices associated with the process and outcomes. Her research stretches across international borders impacting her academic peers as well as practitioners, graduate students, policymakers, and community members. As a researcher-professor who prepares future researchers, Dr. Fournillier's work challenges her students to push their thinking in the way she actively models the type of criticality and creativity needed to design and conduct qualitative and quantitative educational research.

"We See She" presented by Stacey Leigh Ross and Janice B. Fournillier

Honouring the daughters of mas who keep Carnival alive and authentic by stretching their artistry throughout and beyond "the arts". It's time to name the women who are straddling disciplines, cultures and industries to promote, evolve and push Carnival forward while diligently protecting our shared history.

Marina Poppa As a Designer/Maker, I have been making & playing 'Old Mas' approx 27 yrs, first at NHC & then in my native Yorkshire since 1997. I'm disabled, which has limited my access to Carnival at times: I aim to make Mas that is accessible for all bodies. And as a committed environmentalist, I have tried to focus on construction techniques that are sustainable. I would happily speak about any of those topics from a feminist perspective.



Kim Vaz-Deville. The Baby Doll tradition had been a fairly underground tradition in New Orleans for decades but recently become much more visible due to the research of women's studies scholar, Kim Vaz-Deville, a professor at Xavier University of Louisiana. Vaz-Deville authored the groundbreaking book *The "Baby Dolls": Breaking the Race and Gender Barriers of the New Orleans Mardi Gras Tradition* (2013) and edited the anthology *Walking Raddy: The Baby Dolls of New Orleans* (2018). She also curated the Louisiana State Museum's 2013 exhibition "They Call me Baby Doll: A Mardi Gras Tradition" and "Contemporary Artists Respond to the Baby Dolls of New Orleans" at the Leah and George McKenna Museum of African American Art, 2015.



Who is the "They" in "They Call Me Baby Doll"? Interrogating, Community, Curatorial, and Hegemonic Voices in Museum Exhibits.



Representation is contested terrain. Practitioners of the carnival arts joust with each other over the authentic ways to produce their masks and associated performativity. These expressions of the artform are then interpreted differently by the community, tourists, scholars, and the popular media. What ends up in the archive, especially for black working-class women, is scant at best and distorted absolutely as only the sensational tidbits of the practice find their way into print journalism, travel accounts, and memoirs written primarily by men. Only recently have black women's performative practices been deemed of interest for institutions looking to diversify their shows and tap into "outsider" communities to demonstrate organizations' relevance and compliance to pressures for equity and inclusion. With few opportunities to reach wider audiences, the stakes are high for the maskers. Emotions are strong, demands for respect are vociferously asserted, and "buy-in" is critical to bring an exhibition into being. The gains for the masking tradition can be substantial if practitioners, curators and institutions remain in dialogue together even as these conversations are tempestuous. This presentation addresses these issues based on the exhibits of the New Orleans Mardi Gras tradition of the "Baby Dolls."

Dr Tola Dabiri is a consultant in the cultural sector, specialising in project management, equality and inclusion, and fundraising. Tola will be launching Electric Piers this autumn, a new CIC which will build on the work of Brick by Brick CIC and Museum X CIC. Tola has over twenty years experience of in working in the cultural sector in the U.K., and has developed and managed a number of successful projects including the digital project Carnival in a Box (carnivalinabox.co.uk) in 2020, Fundraising for Archives for The National Archives, and UKCCA's HLF funded Carnival Archive Project, (www.carnivalarchives.org.uk) In her earlier career, Tola was a Senior Policy Adviser at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and managed library services across London. Tola Dabiri has a PhD from Leeds Beckett University, and her research area is orality and the intangible cultural heritage of Carnival and masquerade, and she has a special interest in Grenada.





Eintou Springer is a poet, playwright and cultural activist born in Santa Cruz, Trinidad. She is a founding member of various cultural organizations, including the Writers Union of Trinidad and Tobago, the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NDATT), the Caribbean Theatre Guild and the Emancipation Support Committee. She was honoured as Poet Laureate of Port of Spain from 2002 to 2009. She is the author of several books, including poetry collections, for both adults and children, as well as having her writings published in a range of publications and anthologies, including *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature* (1979, edited by Roseann P. Bell, Bettye J. Parker and Beverly Guy-Sheftall), *Daughters of Africa* (1992, edited by Margaret Busby), and *Moving Beyond Boundaries, vol. I. International Dimensions of Black Women's Writings* (1995, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie). Springer has received acclaim for her work as a storyteller and dramatist. In 2011, her play *How Anansi Bring the Drum* celebrated the United Nations' International Year for People of African Descent (IYPAD) and was part of UNESCO's Youth Theatre Initiative. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Eintou moved her storytelling pandemic online with a series titled 'Anansi and the Worldwide Web'. Her play *Kambule* is performed annually at the opening of Carnival celebrations and in 2021 was made into a short film directed by Maya Cozier.

Renella Alfred has been playing Rope Jab since birth
She is a very open minded person.
Carnival is my life it's who I am
I am carnival



Amanda T. McIntyre is the current Art Director at Pride Trinidad and Tobago. She was previously the Art Administrator at New Local Space (NLS), a contemporary visual art initiative based in Kingston, Jamaica. In 2020 McIntyre was part of the faculty for the La Práctica artists Residency and an advisor for the NLS, Curatorial, and Art Writing Fellowship. In 2018 she founded She Right Collective, a Caribbean feminist advocacy network that hosts platforms for contemporary literature, visual arts, and performance.

In 2017 she was awarded the title Ole Mas Champion, by the Bocas Literary Festival and the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2021 she was awarded a Futuress Coding Resistance Fellowship. Her art practice is mainly rendered through performance, costume design, photography, and film. McIntyre is the creator and performer of the Dolly Ma and Dolly Ma Brigitta Baby Doll masquerades.



Lorina Gumbs is Head Designer and Band leader for AnonyMas Carnival Leeds. AnonyMas is one of the largest Carnival costumed troupes in Leeds with 19+ years carnival experience and still growing. An inclusive, diverse brand, embracing participants and artists from all backgrounds, encouraging a feel-good family unit. AnonyMas have been credited with reinventing Carnival costume participation in Leeds. The team Lorina Gumbs, Cherise Hill and Fenella Gumbs are trained in Art, Design, Project Management and fitness. AnonyMas take pride in both the artistry and performance of carnival. They perform in eye popping feathered and embellished costumes, bring high energy and excitement to fashion shows, corporate meet and greet, launch events, film shoots, outdoor spectacles and not forgetting the streets at Leeds West Indian Carnival. Their flexible and adaptable skill set is transferable across all ages, genders and diverse backgrounds providing informal, corporate and tailored services:

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Guy Farrar I'm the Secretary of Harrison Bunday Mama Dread's Masqueraders, a Leeds based carnival troupe telling stories about social justice through our costumes, dance and music. I'm now retired but was a community project manager and educationalist. I've attended Leeds Carnival for over 30 years. I used to photograph Leeds Carnival, but for the last 10+ years have participated in it. I co-produced a photograph based account of the carnival titled 'Celebrate: 50 Years of Leeds West Indian Carnival'. After losing my partner Athaliah (Mama Dread) I have been more active behind the scenes, helping raise funds and organise supplies, as well as making and designing costumes. Mama Dread's Masqueraders in on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter: @hbmamadread



Abdullah Adekola is a Black writer and performer based in Leeds U.K. His breakthrough collection of poetry *Nigrescence* is out now on Adekola.bigcartel.com

Khadijah Ibrahiim was born in Leeds of Jamaican parentage. Educated at the University of Leeds, she is a literary activist, theatre maker and published writer, who combines inter-disciplinary art forms to re-imagine poetry as performance theatre. Hailed as one of Yorkshire's most prolific poets by the BBC, her work appears in university journals and poetry anthologies such as *Red*, *Magma 75*, *Weighted Words*, *Stand* and *More Fyah*. Her collection 'Another Crossing' was published by Peepal Tree Press in 2014. She's performed and produced art and theatre programs, in the USA, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. In 2010 she was a writer in residence for El Gouna writes, Egypt, and South Africa as part of the British council, Verbalized Sustained Theatre. In 2017 and 2019 she was short-listed for the Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowship. 2018, shortlisted for the Sue Rider 'Yorkshire Woman of the Year for her contribution to the arts. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Leeds Young Authors, Producer of 'Voices of a New Generation' poetry Slam, and Executive producer of the award-winning documentary 'We Are Poets'. She was a creative associate for Ode To Leeds for LeedsPlayhouse. A member of The Black Writers Guild, an associate artist with the Geraldine Connor Foundation GCF, and a coordinator for Inscribe readers writers for Peepal Tree Press. Her live arts commissioned work 'Dead and Wake featured part of Words in the City, and part of Opera North and Leeds Playhouse; her play 'Sorrel & Black Cake' A Windrush Story, was funded by Heritage Lottery as part of GCF. Other works include 'Hair Stories', 'I was a stranger – Prince Alamyu' a short Opera with Leeds Studio and the Black British Sound System symposium featured at The British Library, Goldsmith University, Leeds Library, and Chapeltown arts. Her live art installation 'My body is a Protest' - the Passover was created during the pandemic to open complex conversations around Black bodies, art as Joy and Wellness. Khadijah was curator for Africa Writes 2022 Leeds Royal African society of literature and 'In Memory of the Grief Café' featured at Bradford lit fest 2022. Khadijah is part of Collections in Verse, Poet in the City and the British Library the commission that celebrates poets to create new works inspired by British Library exhibitions and local histories, stories, and experiences.



Leah Francis is a Co-founder of Speak Woman Speak theatre collective. The Company formed in February 2013, and seeks to highlight hidden voices of diverse women. Some of the work by the company: *Loss*, *Unknown* and *Soledad & Betto* funded by Arts Council England. Performed at Yorkshire Dance and West Yorkshire Playhouse, Slunglow's The HUB in Leeds, at Fira B Theatre Festival in Palma De Mallorca Spain. Their current piece in development is *White Walls*, a piece about Mental Health and Black Spirituality. Leah is also a youth theatre practitioner at Freedom Studios. As an actor she has performed for companies such as Red Ladder, Heritage Corner and Chickenshop Shakespeare. She has experience in Directing for companies like Mind the Gap and Tribe Arts.

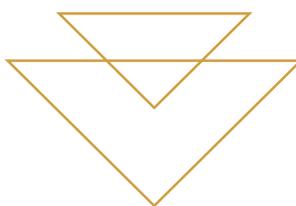


Theatre Performance 'It's Carnival' with Leah Francis, Tshayi Hercules and Ginalda Tavares-Manuel

Adanna Kai Jones (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Dance in the Theater and Dance Dept at Bowdoin College. She received her Ph.D. in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California, Riverside, and her BFA in Dance from Mason Gross School of the Arts—Rutgers University. She has performed in professional dance companies based in NYC and New Jersey, including the Julia Ritter Performance Group and Souloworks with Andrea E. Woods. With regards to her own creative pursuits, she has choreographed dance-theater pieces that were not only based on her research, but were also used as tools for generating more research questions. In July 2015, she choreographed “Wine & Tales” in Port of Spain, Trinidad, which was presented by New Waves! 2015 and the Dancing While Black Performance Lab. And each summer, from 2016 to 2018, she continues to perform new works in New York City with the support of Field Studies, a creative development lab designed for emerging artist/scholars. Each performance remained rooted in her ethnographic fieldwork.



As a scholar, her research generally focuses on Caribbean dance and identity politics within the Diaspora, paying particular focus to Trini-styled Carnivals and the rolling hip dance known as winin'. From 2017-18, she began working on her latest project as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Dance Department for Faculty Diversity at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. While there, she conducted a multi-sited, transnational ethnography that tracked the ways in which Caribbean choreographers play an integral role in the support and preservation of contemporary Caribbean identity politics within the US. In particular, this leg of her research attends to the ways these dancers complicate US-based constructions of black identity, ultimately putting both Dance and Caribbean Studies into a critical dialogue with Race Studies. Lastly, as an educator, she remains committed to anti-racist pedagogic praxes. In addition to being a member of the Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective, she is a current Steering Committee Member of the Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving. Both organizations aim to tackle, endure, unravel, and combat the pangs of white supremacy within academia and beyond.



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