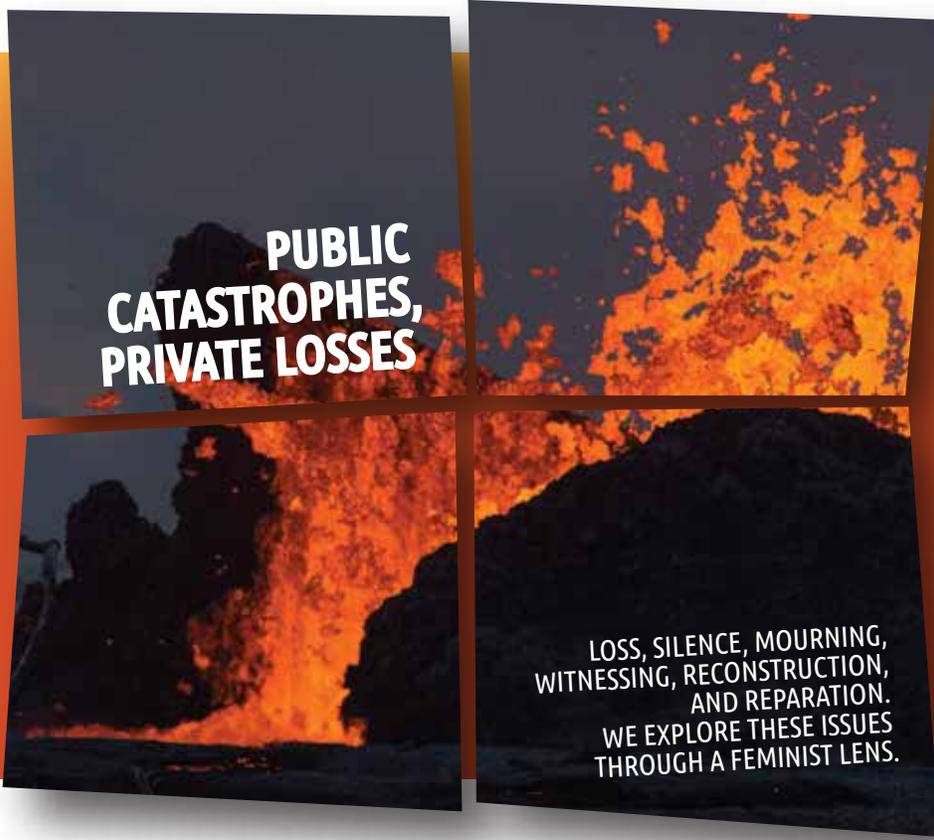


# IRW NETWORK NEWS

WINTER 2018-2019



**PUBLIC  
CATASTROPHES,  
PRIVATE LOSSES**

**LOSS, SILENCE, MOURNING,  
WITNESSING, RECONSTRUCTION,  
AND REPARATION.  
WE EXPLORE THESE ISSUES  
THROUGH A FEMINIST LENS.**

**W**elcome to the Institute for Research on Women's new print newsletter. For those new to us, the institute – or IRW as we call ourselves – was founded by Rutgers faculty and administrators in the mid- 1970s with the goal of expanding feminist scholarship and activism beyond the university's fledgling Women's Studies program. Today, IRW supports a broad range of feminist programming designed to stimulate research and activism on gender, sexuality, and women within and across the disciplines, throughout and beyond Rutgers.

Our core programming for 2018-2019 revolves around the theme of “Public Catastrophes, Private Losses.”

Inspired by feminism, we are interested in the ways the personal and public are intertwined, and how, in the aftermath of catastrophe, families and communities become repositories for loss, silence, mourning, witnessing, reconstruction, and reparation. Our distinguished

lecture series, seminar, and undergraduate learning community all explore this theme.

In addition to our core programming, we now run the Rutgers Public Engagement Project. In this capacity we provide skills-training for Rutgers faculty, students, and staff who seek to engage with audiences beyond the academy. Our Rutgers Public

Engagement Project workshops this year range from “Defending Democracy: Making a Difference in the Midterm Elections” to “Beyond the ‘I’: When Memoir Meets History.”

This newsletter will introduce you to some of our many activities, as well as the people who make IRW the special place it is. We hope you enjoy learning more about our work.

## ANNOUNCING IRW'S 2019-2020 THEME—THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE: FEMINIST RE-IMAGININGS

*This theme will link together our seminar, distinguished lecture series, and undergraduate learning community during the 2019-2020 academic year*

In January 2017, when millions of women took the streets to protest the Trump presidency, they chanted “Show me what democracy looks like! This is what democracy looks like!” But what does democracy look

like? And what should it look like? We will reflect upon democracy's history and future through the Institute for Research on Women's 2019-2020 programming. How do we imagine democracy, construct it,

critique it, and defend it? How can feminism help us to think through, and reclaim a sense of common purpose, cultivate empathy, and care for the most vulnerable?

# THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS: TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES AND MEMORY WORK

Intergenerational haunting was a recurrent motif at “The Inheritance of Loss: Transnational Families and Memory Work,” the first event in IRW’s 2018-2019 distinguished lecture series. Grace M. Cho (Sociology & Anthropology, The College of Staten Island), described her experience growing up in one of a handful of mixed race families in a small, racially homogenous town in the Pacific Northwest. Cho’s American father, Korean mother, and their family tried to assimilate into the wider community, deliberately avoiding any mention of Cho’s mother’s migration story. It was only when Cho was in graduate school and impelled by a feeling of being haunted by ghosts that she began to explore her family’s past. Cho eventually discovered that her mother came to the US as a Korean War bride after being ostracized

for working at a bar on a US military base. In the process of excavating this history, she realized that her family was emblematic of others in the Korean diaspora, shaped by shame, violence, and collective trauma—yet forced into forgetting the formative effects of war.

Katka Reszke (independent scholar) experienced a similar type of coerced forgetting in Poland, where she grew up unaware of her family’s origins. Raised as a practicing Catholic, Reszke experienced a strange affinity toward Judaism and by her teenage years began to suspect that she might be Jewish. Most of Poland’s Jewish community was obliterated during the Holocaust; the few who survived either fled before the Nazi takeover of Poland during World War II or hid behind an assumed Catholic identity. It took Reszke 20 years and the death of her



her own daughter, Reszke’s mother, to secrecy while she was alive—to verify her Jewish origins. Reszke’s experience is akin to that of a growing number of people from the third post-Holocaust generation in Poland. These individuals have a hunch that they are Jewish but encounter significant difficulty in confirming their connections to a lost but haunting past.

## NEW IN THE OFFICE



The first person you are likely to encounter on a visit to the second floor of 160 Ryders Lane is IRW’s new administrative assistant Andrea Zerpa. Andrea joined us in September 2018. A proud Douglass and EOF alumna, Andrea graduated from Rutgers in 2018 with a major in English Literature and a minor in Russian Literature. She is no stranger to the IWL Consortium—as an undergraduate she worked for two years with our sister unit, the Office for the Promotion of Women for Science, Engineering, and Mathematics. Andrea was also a member of our Fall 2017 undergraduate learning community cohort, where she produced a podcast on Venezuelan immigrant identity. We are thrilled to have her join our staff.

## CALLS

IRW **supports working groups** that seek to foster collaborative, interdisciplinary research on women, gender, and sexuality at Rutgers and **hosts visiting global scholars** from around the world. View the latest calls on our website at [irw.rutgers.edu](http://irw.rutgers.edu).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### February 21 RUTGERS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

“Public Engagement for Academics: The Use and Abuse of Story,” with Thaler Pekar (Thaler Pekar and Partners)

- RDJC conference room, 10.30 am to 12 noon

### March 7 RUTGERS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

“Beyond the ‘I’: When Memoir Meets History,” a talk and workshop on memoir with Mimi Schwartz

- RDJC conference room, 10.30 am to 12 noon

### March 28 IRW DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

“Slavery’s Shadows: The Afterlife of Dispossession,” a panel discussion with Yvette Christiansë (Africana Studies & English, Barnard College), Marisa J. Fuentes (Women’s and Gender Studies & History, Rutgers University-New Brunswick), and Christina Sharpe (Humanities, York University)

- RDJC conference room, 4 pm reception; 4.30 pm lecture

### April 4 IRW DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

“Labor of Loss: Climate Change and the Emerging Economy of Care and Repair,” Naomi Klein (Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair in Media, Culture and Feminist Studies, Rutgers University-New Brunswick) Cosponsored by IWL, WGS, and SCI

- RDJC conference room, 4 pm reception; 4.30 pm lecture

# MEET MARIA HWANG

Maria Hwang was a visiting Global Scholar between 2015 and 2017. She is currently Henry Luce Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Southeast Asian Studies at Rice University. She starts an appointment in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies and East Asian Studies at McGill University in Fall 2019. We talked with her about her experiences at IRW.

## What brought you to IRW?

[In] 2013, I had an AAUW fellowship, had completed all of my responsibilities at Brown, finished my fieldwork and was about to start writing my dissertation. I moved to New Jersey because my partner lived [there]. Unfortunately I had an accident in the summer of 2013 and [after] I started my recovery, my adviser suggested that I contact IRW to see if I [could] get an affiliation to help with my reintegration into academia.

## Please tell us about your time as an IRW Global Scholar. What is most memorable? What did you gain from the experience of being at IRW?

When I first joined IRW I needed to be part of an intellectual community because after the accident I felt really isolated. After that my needs shifted. I workshopped a paper [in the seminar] that was eventually published in *Women's Studies Quarterly* and then another that would get accepted at *Signs*. The input I got from the seminar was really crucial and I think that the *Signs* piece opened doors for me.

My last semester was busy as I got a job offer in October and had to file my dissertation on December 1. It was important for me to have an office and the intellectual space to finish in a span of three months. Throughout my time at IRW I was applying for jobs. Informal mentorship was crucial and so was the feedback I received when I did my practice job talk and the advice I got when I was negotiating on my offers. What is also really great about IRW is that we would have professionalization workshops every year in addition to the distinguished lecture series. These gave me additional skills that were very helpful.

## What are you doing now?

I'm working on my book manuscript right now and also getting started on a second project on migrant Filipinos in Singapore. I'm hoping to look at mid-level professionals and high-skilled workers to examine their relationship with low-wage Filipino workers. The main question driving the second project is how are class divides reconstituted transnationally? My aim is to complicate the idea of an imagined Filipino diasporic community.



## Is there anything else you'd like to add?

[During my campus interview at McGill] I had an informal chat with the chair of the department. I told her about what IRW does, putting together seminars on a particular topic, inviting junior and senior scholars and graduate students to participate, and doing this every year to create community and alumni, so people could be part of it, be away for a few years, and then come back. IRW creates an intellectual culture of feminist exchange. I asked her if there was a way we could get some initial seed money to start a project that's similar. She told me that the conversation was what distinguished me from all other candidates because I have a vision which is something that the other candidates didn't have. It was the reason I got the job. IRW is a model for me.

### April 11 RUTGERS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

"Storytelling and Social Change," with Thaler Pekar  
(Thaler Pekar and Partners)

- RDJC conference room, 10.30 am to 12 noon

### April 18 IRW DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

"Whose Lives Matter? Drugs, Criminalization, and Social Justice," a panel discussion with Angela Garcia (Anthropology, Stanford University), Donna Murch (History, Rutgers University-New Brunswick), and Jennifer Flynn Walker (Center for Popular Democracy)

- RDJC conference room, 4 pm reception; 4.30 pm lecture

### May 2 IRW UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Final Project Presentations

- Cook Student Center 202 BC, 4.30 pm to 6 pm

## Institute for Research on Women

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# SUPPORT OUR WORK

Visit <https://irw.rutgers.edu/support> to help support IRW's research and programming. Thank you for contributing to our continued success!

## JOIN IRW

Join our mailing list by sending your name, email, and street address to [irw@sas.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@sas.rutgers.edu).

## DID YOU KNOW?

- IRW Director Arlene Stein's most recent book, *Unbound: Transgender Men and the Making of Identity* (Pantheon, 2018) was named one of the most memorable books of the year by the *Washington Post*.
- IRW's most recent book, *Trans Studies: The Challenge to Hetero/Homonormativities* (Rutgers University Press, 2016) won the 2017 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies from the Center for LGBTQ Studies (CLAGS).
- IRW publishes an online journal, *Rejoinder*. The Spring 2019 issue will be on the topic of "Me Too."

### INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

**Arlene Stein**, Director  
**Sarah Tobias**, Associate Director  
**Andrea Zerpa**, Administrative Assistant  
**Sara Perryman**, Learning Community Coordinator

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Sylvia Chan-Malik**, American Studies & Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)  
**Mary Chayko**, School of Communication and Information (New Brunswick)  
**Brittney Cooper**, Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)  
**Asenath Dande**, Center for Global Services (New Brunswick)  
**Kayo Denda**, Mabel Smith Douglass Library (New Brunswick)

**Suzanne Kim**, School of Law (Newark)  
**Suzu Kim**, Asian Languages and Cultures (New Brunswick)  
**Sara Perryman**, Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)  
**Enmanuel Martinez**, Comparative Literature (New Brunswick)  
**Nancy Rao**, Music (New Brunswick)  
**Kyla Schuller**, Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)  
**Gail Caputo**, Criminal Justice & Women's & Gender Studies (Camden)  
**Whitney Strub**, History, American Studies & Women's and Gender Studies (Newark)  
**Mary Trigg**, Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)

### 2018-2019 IRW SEMINAR FELLOWS

**Kate Cairns**, Childhood Studies (Camden)  
**Sandy Flitterman-Lewis**, English (New Brunswick)  
**Sandra Medina**, Spanish and Portuguese (New Brunswick)  
**Priti Narayan**, Geography (New Brunswick)  
**Julie Rajan**, Women's and Gender Studies (New Brunswick)  
**Patricia A. Roos**, Sociology (New Brunswick)  
**Beth Rubin**, Graduate School of Education (New Brunswick)  
**Jordan Steiner**, School of Social Work (New Brunswick)

### 2018-2019 IRW VISITING GLOBAL SCHOLARS

**Eriada Cela** (Aleksander Xhuvani University, Albania)  
**Basuli Deb** (CUNY)  
**Danai Mupotsa** (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)  
**Voichita Nachescu** (Ph.D. University at Buffalo)  
**Leslye Obiora** (University of Arizona)