

# Editors' Note

---

NINA MORGAN, *JTAS* Editor-in-Chief  
ERIKA DOSS, Special Forums Editor

Welcome to the first Summer issue of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. As of 2019, *JTAS* will be publishing twice-yearly, thus recognizing the growth in our field, as well as the responsibility of our journal to accommodate the need for important research to be disseminated and quickly shared with our world of readers.

We are very excited therefore to announce that this inaugural issue presents a double offering, featuring two Special Forums: “Archipelagoes/Oceans/American Visuality,” and “Transnational Black Politics and Resistance: From Enslavement to Obama.” We could not imagine two more salient topics for the Summer of 2019 as we sit in the midst of US congressional hearings and testimonies on slave reparations while in Europe there are soaring summer temperatures and ever more reports of massive ice melting in the Arctic (in Greenland alone four trillion pounds of ice were lost in the space of one summer’s day!). What does a Transnational American Studies response to these contested zones and conditions look like?

For *JTAS* readers, the editors of these two special forums, Hester Blum, Mary Eyring, Iping Liang, Brian Russell Roberts (“Archipelagoes”) and Frank Obenland, Nele Sawallisch, Johanna Seibert, Pia Wiegink (“Transnational Black Politics”), have provided insightful introductions, collaboratively written, that will help position their forums’ issues and concerns within a Transnational American Studies frame and context.

In addition to traditional essays, the editors of the Special Forum on “Archipelagoes/Oceans/American Visuality” here offer readers a collection of art works, curated by Christopher Lynn and Fidalis Buehler, and “micro-essays” that together allow for an innovative, interdisciplinary cross-talk, engaging the essays and the art in the form of thought-provoking commentaries—all of which might properly find their way to timely application in the university classroom. Professors who might want to incorporate this first Summer issue of *JTAS* into their American Studies courses related to environmentalism, green movements, social movements, critical race studies, ecocriticism, literature, history/art history and activism, for example, will find in these essays and contributions a

cutting-edge resource for further analysis. Confronted with the question of how we might through scholarly research in the humanities address the vast complexity of the global environmental crisis, for example, scholars and artists as well as teachers and students need information and interpretation, concepts as well as images and strategies to enable new understanding and prepare individual thinkers on their way to historically better responses. Likewise, the Special Forum on “Transnational Black Politics and Resistance” pays tribute to the sustenance and diversity of Black political activism from the late eighteenth century to today. As the writers of the Introduction to this Special Forum observe, transnationalism has been part of Black experience in the West for centuries—not just since 2008, when Barack Obama was identified as America’s first truly “transnational” president. Their insights, and those of the five authors whose papers were originally presented at symposia at Georgia State University in Atlanta in 2017 and the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies in Mainz, Germany, in 2018, address the legacy of Black American political transnationalism in the wake of Donald Trump’s election in 2016.

These two Special Forums have been shepherded through the process by our new Special Forums editor, Dr. Erika Doss, and by our intrepid Managing Editor, Dr. Sabine Kim, who has tirelessly led these many diverse texts and images through the editorial process. Special Forums Editor Erika Doss encourages proposals and promises a speedy response to your inquiries. If you have an idea for a Special Forum that you would like to edit for the journal, or if you would like further information about how to make a proposal, please contact Dr. Doss at [doss.2@nd.edu](mailto:doss.2@nd.edu). Future Special Forums include “Transnational American Studies in the Context of the Arab Spring” edited by Eid Mohamed (Doha Institute) and “Transnational Nuclear Imperialisms” edited by Rebecca Hogue (UC Davis) and Anaïs Maurer (Colby College).

We are especially delighted to announce that we have recently added several prominent scholars to our Advisory Board: Dr. Chadwick Allen (University of Washington), Dr. Marlene L. Daut (University of Virginia), Dr. Macarena Gómez-Barris (Pratt Institute), Dr. Ronald Jenn (Université de Lille), Dr. Lázaro Lima (University of Richmond), Dr. Ana Minian (Stanford University), and Dr. Brian Russell Roberts (Brigham Young University). We are grateful to be associated with all of the members of the *JTAS* Advisory Board. Thank you and Welcome!

As we prepare for the Winter 2019 issue, which will feature—we are thrilled to announce—a special collection of essays on the poetry of fellow *JTAS* editor and cofounder, Dr. Shirley Geok-Lin Lim (essays curated and edited by Dr. Mohammad Quayum, International Islamic University Malaysia), we are also pleased to announce that the American Studies Association through the auspices of the ASA International Committee has established and will in 2019 inaugurate the Shelley Fisher Fishkin Prize for International Scholarship in Transnational American Studies. According to the ASA:

Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s leadership in creating crossroads for international scholarly collaboration and exchange has

transformed the field of American Studies in both theory and practice. This award honors Professor Fishkin's outstanding dedication to the field by promoting exceptional scholarship that seeks multiple perspectives that enable comprehensive and complex approaches to American Studies, and which produce culturally, socially, and politically significant insights and interpretations relevant to Americanists around the world.<sup>1</sup>

We could not be more excited about looking forward to these acknowledgements of our cofounders' contributions to and influence on our shared research and writing. *JTAS* editors Nina Morgan, Alfred Hornung, and Takayuki Tatsumi will also celebrate a panel at the ASA in Hawai'i in 2019 discussing work published in their new volume, *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies* (2019).

With this newest Summer issue, 2019 marks a big year for *JTAS*—indeed, it is our tenth year of collaborating on and publishing the journal. With tens of thousands of hits and downloads per issue, we are building a transnational community of readers and scholars. Thank you for joining us!

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The American Studies Association, accessed July 5, 2019, <https://www.theasa.net/about/news-events/announcements/shelley-fisher-fishkin-prize-international-scholarship-transnational>.