# Global Academy of Liberal Arts

11th biennial Conference
The Liberal Arts in Action: Catalysts for Change

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*Catholic University of Eastern Africa*
*Nairobi, Kenya*

Speaker Biographies

**Alexandra Hausstein**

Alexandra Hausstein is a scholar specializing in the integration of liberal arts and sciences in technical universities. She is Managing Director at the Institute of Technology Futures and program coordinator of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). As a sociologist, she explores practices of futurizing in technology development and innovation processes and analyzes functions of visions and imaginaries of future in modern societies. She has a particular interest in knowledge transfer and innovation, investigating how interdisciplinary programs can foster critical thinking, ethical awareness, and societal responsibility while enabling graduates to translate insights across fields and drive innovative solutions especially in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Her recent work focuses on interdisciplinary education, curriculum development, and the challenges of bridging knowledge cultures between technical and humanistic disciplines. She has contributed to studies on student learning experiences, knowledge transfer, and the design of innovative programs that combine engineering, natural sciences, and the social sciences and humanities. As a program coordinator, Alexandra is actively involved in the Liberal Arts and Sciences program at KIT, exploring strategies to foster critical thinking, ethical awareness, and societal responsibility in technically trained graduates.

**Andreia Machado Oliveira**

Andreia Machado Oliveira is a researcher at the CNPq and FAPERGS/Brazil, Associate Researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand/South Africa. Postdoctoral fellow at the City University of Hong Kong. Professor in the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM). She coordinates LabInter/UFSM.

**Andrew Brogan**

Andrew Brogan is a lecturer in Studium Individuale, a liberal arts programme at Leuphana University Lüneburg. His background is in a cross-over of political theory and higher education, exploring the questions of who teaches what, to whom, when, how, and why. More specifically, he is inspired by anarchist theory and practice in educational spaces, and how educational pedagogies can be developed and experimented with in ways that challenge dominant and oppressive educational and social structures. His current interests include turning this analytical lens onto the study of different liberal arts programmes across Germany and beyond.

Building from his research interests, he teaches on two core modules of the Studium Individuale programme: Freedom in European Modernity, and Analysing Contemporary Societies. These modules book-end the student experience, occurring in the 1st and 6th semester respectively.

**A. Jess Alexander**

A. Jess Alexander is an Associate Lecturer in Writing and Interactivity at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and a PhD candidate at Wits School of Arts (WSOA). She is the Studio lead for the WAFM research lab and an AAIR researcher.

**Ann-Marie McCormack**

Ann-Marie McCormack is a senior lecturer in short film production, scriptwriting and documentary at Bath Spa University. She is also a writer, director, podcaster, short film producer, having written and directed drama, documentaries for ITV and BBC. She currently maintains her professional practice through writing and directing short films and podcast creation - her specialist research interests, which are aided by HEQR Research Funding.

Ann-Marie co-hosts, produces and edits the world travel podcast series Parents Gap Year, which is accessible worldwide on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon and YouTube, with season 3 currently in post-production. The podcast's Instagram page has had over 40,0000 views and 2k downloads so far. She is also a regular radio presenter on BCfm's Real Women Show, as well as their audio technician.

Ann-Marie's current award-winning short film No Blacks No Irish No Regrets, stars Patrick Robinson, which is a proof-of-concept for a TV series and also has a filmed podcast series in development. Throughout 2024-25 the film screened at several international film festivals including USA, Canada, India, Turkey and UK and won the awards the Best Women's Film IIFF and Best Film-Female Filmmaker IBDFF. She has also produced a BFI Network UK short film HATS with Fam Films Productions, as well as a TV pilot and several of her own short films under AmmA Films and Productions.

Ann-Marie has an MA in Film, is a Fellow of Higher Education Academy and also a member of the Writers Guild of Ireland and British Equity.

**Astrid Breel**

Dr Astrid Breel is a researcher and educator, whose work explores participation, agency and impact within an interdisciplinary context. Her research explores meaning-making processes in a variety of contexts and in her practice focuses on developing situations that enable two-way engagement between audiences and artists to create meaningful experiences of participation. Within her work, she takes an interdisciplinary and mixed-methods approach; drawing on performance studies, cognitive philosophy and psychology, and combining theoretical, practice-based and audience research methodologies to enable an understanding of participation that incorporates multiple perspectives. She has developed a method for analysing the aesthetic experience of participatory performance practices (published in Vol.12:1 special issue of Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies) and a contextual approach to agency that highlights that agency needs to be experienced to be meaningful (https://doi.org/10.1080/14682761.2024.2391210).

Astrid is the Impact Research Fellow at Bath Spa University and the Co-Investigator on Bath Spa's AHRC Impact Accelerator Account. She is currently working on a project about Emergent Value, funded through an AHRC Research, Development and Engagement Fellowship, which examines the unexpected value of arts experiences. The project reconceptualises evaluation as a process that is meaningful for both participants and those evaluating, by using creative strategies, which will enable the capturing of richer experiential data. The first output of the project is The Emergent Value Playbook (https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.33404716).

**Balew Demissie**

Dr. Balew Demissie is an accomplished academic and communications professional with over 15 years of experience. He holds a BA, MA, and PhD in Literature and has served as a Professor of Literature at several universities. In addition to his academic work, Dr. Balew has held senior positions in communications and international relations at various government institutions and embassies in Ethiopia. He previously served as Director of Public and International Relations at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. He was also Communications Director for the Ethiopian Strategic Education Office, where he supported the implementation of Ethiopia's 15-year education roadmap. For the past five years, Dr. Balew has headed the Office of Communications and Publications at Ethiopia's leading think tank, the Policy Studies Institute (PSI). In addition to his work at PSI, Dr. Balew is now a faculty member at Addis Ababa University and a visiting professor of African studies at universities in Africa and Asia. He is also the recipient of several international research fellowships and has published widely in his areas of expertise.

**Benard Lango**

Dr. Lango is a Kenyan scholar, educator, and environmental consultant practitioner whose work sits at the intersection of liberal arts education, sustainability, community engagement, and social transformation. He holds a doctoral degree in project management, with academic training that emphasizes interdisciplinary inquiry, ethical reasoning, and applied research. His scholarly interests focus on sustainability education, environmental ethics, civic engagement, and the role of higher education in fostering community resilience and socially responsive development.

Dr. Lango has extensive experience in university teaching and curriculum development, particularly within liberal arts and interdisciplinary programs. He has contributed to the design and delivery of courses that integrate sustainability themes, critical thinking, and community-based learning, and has been actively involved in mentoring students engaged in applied research and social innovation initiatives. His academic work is informed by a strong commitment to linking theory with practice and positioning education as a catalyst for ethical leadership and environmental stewardship.

In addition to his academic roles, Dr. Lango is an experienced consultant, having worked with higher education institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners on projects related to sustainability, capacity building, institutional strengthening, and community development. His consulting work reflects a strong orientation toward participatory approaches, contextual sensitivity, and evidence-based decision-making.

Dr. Lango is actively engaged in scholarly dissemination through research writing, conference participation, and policy-oriented outputs. He is particularly committed to advancing Global South perspectives in sustainability discourse and to strengthening the relevance of liberal arts education in addressing contemporary global challenges. His work aligns closely with initiatives that promote socially responsible, globally engaged higher education and transformative learning for sustainable futures.

**Brent Epperson**

Dr. Brent Epperson is an Assistant Professor of conflict studies at Saint Paul University and has practiced as an ombudsman since 2014 in Europe, Canada, and the United States. His practical experience in conflict management directly informs his teaching and research. He is an ombuds and co-founder of Justéquitable, sits on the board of directors of ENOHE (European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education), and is a member of several other international ombudsman associations. He supervises students in ombudsman practice, conflict management, public policy, media framework and narrative analysis, and EDIA (equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging) policies.

**Carlos Alberto Galeano Marín**

Carlos Alberto Galeano Marín holds a PhD in Philosophy (Summa Cum Laude) from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellín, Colombia; an MA in History and Theory of Arts from the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK; and a degree in Plastic Arts from Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia.

He is a teacher at the Faculty of Arts, University of Antioquia, Medellín, leading undergraduate and postgraduate courses in subjects regarding History and Theory of Arts and Photography.

He is currently developing his first research project, “Ambientes naturales, imaginados y posibles: cruces e interacciones entre la creación transmedia y los ambientes inmersivos en el Humedal Madre Vieja, del Municipio de Rionegro.”

**Carolyne Sophy Mudeje Buya**

Dr. Carolyne Sophy Mudeje Buya is a philosopher, researcher, and university lecturer based in Kenya, currently teaching at the Technical University of Kenya. She holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, an MA in Ethics from Kenyatta University, and a BA in Philosophy, History, and Kiswahili. Her scholarly work engages epistemology, ethics, gender, African philosophy, and higher education studies, with

particular attention to the relationship between knowledge production, institutional governance, and social responsibility in African universities.

Dr. Buya has taught and supervised students across several institutions of higher learning in Kenya and has contributed to research and publications on women's leadership in higher education, cultural identity and ethical development in Africa, and the epistemic significance of questioning within contexts of social inequality. Her current research focuses on how gendered institutional practices shape the lived experience of academic freedom in Kenyan universities, especially within faith-based and secular institutional contexts.

She is a 2025–2026 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Fellow, where she is undertaking a comparative qualitative study examining academic freedom, governance, and gender in Kenyan higher education. Her broader interests include liberal arts education, civic engagement, and the role of universities in advancing socially responsive knowledge and transformative public life in Africa and beyond.

**Douglas Andrews**

Dr. Douglas Andrews is a Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. He specializes in school leadership, teacher education, inclusive education, and lifelong learning for teachers and school leaders, teaching postgraduate courses and supervising master's and doctoral research. Dr. Andrews has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals on inclusive education, lifelong learning, entrepreneurial leadership, teacher professional development, and school leadership. He serves as Secretary of the UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education for Diversity and Development at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In addition, he is the B.Ed Honours coordinator at Wits, Chair of the Ethics Committee, and sits on multiple other institutional committees. He currently leads an EU-funded Erasmus+ project developing open educational resources for higher education and STEM educators, and an Afretec-funded project focusing on professional development for school headteachers in South Africa and Rwanda. Prior to entering academia, Dr. Andrews taught Biology and Geography for 24 years, with experience in both South Africa and England, serving as Deputy Principal and Principal during his final 12 years in schools.

**Gabrielle Branche**

Gabrielle Branche (Trinidad and Tobago) is a doctoral student in Humanities at Concordia University. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from NYU Abu Dhabi, where she majored in Interactive Media and minored in Dance. Her academic formation has been shaped by international study and artistic engagement across the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Germany, and China.

With over twenty-two years of dance training, Branche's interdisciplinary practice bridges performance and emerging technologies. As an interactive media artist, she integrates

physical computing, robotics, remote sensors, and augmented reality into theatrical and choreographic works. Her creative research explores how embodied practice can intersect with technological systems to produce immersive, multimodal learning and performance environments.

She has taught dance in the UAE and has held multiple roles with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, including Arts in Education Intern, Virtual AileyCamp Content Manager (2020–2021), and Camp Counselor for AileyCamp New York (2022). She also interned with UK-based virtual reality company Atlantic Productions (Alchemy VR), contributing to immersive media initiatives and augmented reality development projects.

Following her undergraduate studies, Branche served as a live-in volunteer at Triform Camphill Community, a sustainable residential community for adults with developmental disabilities, where she provided direct support, coordinated community programming, and managed digital communications.

In 2023, she joined Teach For America as a Massachusetts Corps Member, teaching sixth-grade mathematics at Veritas Prep Charter School while completing a Master of Education at Boston University. She has served as a teaching assistant at both Boston University and Concordia University and is currently a research assistant under the Concordia University Research Chair in B/black Ecologies: Angelique Willkie.

Her doctoral research examines the integration of arts, technology, and education, with particular emphasis on embodied and interdisciplinary pedagogies in middle school math education.

**Gabriel Vieira-Posada**

Gabriel Vieira-Posada is a media artist interested in co-creation processes. He holds a Master's degree in Cinema (Paris-Sorbonne University), a PhD in Audiovisual Narratives (University of Antioquia/University of Montreal), and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Immersive Narratives (UQébec/NAD).

He has been a professor of narratives and filmmaking at the University of Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia, since 2004. He has produced numerous documentaries with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in his country, as well as audiovisual series for children on sensitive topics. His doctoral dissertation focuses on creative strategies in audiovisual narratives for children. His postdoctoral fellowship in Canada centered on immersive narratives that counteract racism and discrimination.

He participated in the design teams for the undergraduate programs in Audiovisual and Multimedia Communication, the Master's in Communications, the Master's in Audiovisual Creation and Studies, and the undergraduate program in Digital Creation.

He is a researcher on community co-creation processes through audiovisual and immersive narratives. He developed a career as a documentary filmmaker and audiovisual producer,

fostering the creation of creative collectives in Indigenous communities. He has also produced animated series for children with the Cantoalegre Corporation.

He worked as a co-investigator for the UNESCO Chair for the Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples of Canada on projects with the University of Quebec on Innovative Social Pedagogies, using audiovisual and media arts as a vehicle to promote community reflection on complex issues such as racism, sexual violence, and mental health. He was granted as a fellow at the MIT/Open Documentary Lab, where he worked on immersive projects for diverse audiences.

Currently, he is a co-researcher on Arts/Social Sciences and Arts/Health Sciences projects at University of Quebec and Universidad de Antioquia with Indigenous communities in Canada, Peru, and Colombia. His audiovisual works have received numerous awards and recognitions.

**Giulia Conti**

Giulia Conti, PhD in Communication Sociology, is currently a Contract Lecturer at the University of Parma (UNIPR) and a Research Fellow at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE). Her research primarily focuses on the intersection of urban space, play, and playfulness, exploring the social dynamics these elements foster. She is particularly interested in serious games and game-based learning, having published extensively in these areas.

**Helen Goodman**

Helen Goodman specialises in nineteenth-century literature, culture, and medicine, with a particular focus on the intersection of health humanities, gender, and the Victorian British novel. She was awarded a BA in English and an MA in Victorian Studies at the University of Exeter before completing her PhD in 2015 at Royal Holloway, University of London. Before taking up her current post as Postdoctoral Research Assistant at Bath Spa University, Helen taught English literature at Royal Holloway, New York University, and Regent's Park College, Oxford, as well as working for an education charity which sought to widen access to top British universities for students from lower-income backgrounds.

The subjects of Helen's publications to date include male patients in London's Victorian lunatic asylums, domestic abuse and marital rape in the novels of Anthony Trollope and John Galsworthy, inter-generational imperial masculinities in H. Rider Haggard's fiction, travel and adventure in nineteenth-century fiction, and the physiology of emotion in Charles Dickens's early novels. She has a book chapter forthcoming which explores the interconnections between the development of the psychiatric diagnosis of the 'psychopath' and representations of a new kind of villain in the international media and the sensation fiction of Caroline Clive, Wilkie Collins, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon in the 1850s and 1860s. She is currently writing a monograph on madness and masculinity in nineteenth-century literature,

culture, and medicine, which explores interdisciplinary dialogues between fiction, newspapers and magazines, lunatic asylum records, and specialist periodicals from the new medical discipline of psychiatry. Helen's next major research project examines international approaches to curing stress and the development of the wellbeing industry in the period c.1840-1910.

**Ingra Schmitt**

Ingra Schmitt is currently studying to obtain a master's degree in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM). She is a part of LabInter/UFSM and co-founder of the art collective AstroAnomalous.

**Ingrid Forsler**

Ingrid Forsler is an Associate Professor in Media and Communication Studies at Södertörn University, Sweden. She has a background in visual arts education and is currently teaching on the teacher training programs, as well as in media studies at all levels, from bachelor and master courses to doctoral training. She is also active in higher education pedagogy at the university where she is responsible for questions regarding digitalization of higher education. Within teacher education, Forsler has been involved in developing and implementing media literacy perspectives across all teacher programs and in introducing film as a pedagogical resource. She has also contributed to the development of an international media studies program that is starting in 2026.

In both research and teaching, Forsler is interested in visual, exploratory, and participatory methods. Her research focuses on imaginaries and future visions of digital technologies in education, as well as on the postdigital, material, and infrastructural dimensions of contemporary learning environments. In recent years, she has also studied the growing resistance to digital technology in education and how this resistance is discussed and justified in public debate. Since 2015, she has been editor of the collection Postdigital Dialogues and is engaged in supporting diverse forms of academic publishing and knowledge dissemination.

**Jessica Gustafsson**

Jessica Gustafsson holds a PhD in Media Studies and is currently a senior lecturer and program coordinator of the Media Studies programme at Södertörn University. She has conducted extensive research on media and marginalized groups, focusing on both media production and media use. Between 2007 and 2017, Gustafsson was involved in several research projects in Kenya, exploring community media in relation to community development, identity construction and peacebuilding and the appropriation of new media in relation to gender roles.

In her recent work, questions concerning participation, listening and recognition in plural democracies are explored from a media perspective. Some of her most important

publications include ‘Voicing the Slum: Youth, Community Media and Social Change in Nairobi’, ‘Community radio and peace-building in Kenya’, ‘Domestic Connectivity: Media, Gender and the Domestic Sphere in Kenya’, ‘Flyktpodden: Migrant and Minority Voices that Matter?’ and ‘Podcasting mundane practices of solidarity and resistance in post-migrant Sweden’.

**Julius Mutuku Mutunga**

Julius Mutuku Mutunga is a Kenyan scholar, researcher, and university lecturer with over 12 years of experience in Ethics, Philosophy, and Governance. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at the University of Nairobi, examining the liminality of corruption in Kenyan counties, with a focus on ethical alienation and dialectical impasse in Machakos County. He holds a Master of Arts in Philosophy (Ethics and Public Management) from Makerere University, Uganda, and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Zimbabwe.

Mutunga has lectured across Scott Christian University, South Eastern Kenya University, and Machakos University, teaching courses including Ethics, Socio-Political Philosophy, African Philosophy, Philosophy of Education, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Democratic Governance. He has co-developed the Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy and Administration at Machakos University and led the creation of diploma programs in Public Administration and Community Development at Scott Christian University.

An active researcher, he has contributed to studies on road crash data accuracy for KIPPRA and Kenya’s electoral preparedness with Jesuit Hakimani Center. He has authored research projects and dissertations on citizen participation in development funds and African cultural dimensions of development. Among his scholarly achievements, he presented “Ethical Disobedience and the Gen Z Uprising: Reimagining State–Citizen Relations in Postcolonial Kenya” at Hekima University College in October 2025.

Beyond academia, Mutunga engages in leadership and community service, chairing the Board of Management at St. Augustine Secondary School, Mwala, and facilitating workshops for county governments, journalists, and electoral trainings. Fluent in English, Kiswahili, Kikamba, and basic French, Julius Mutuku Mutunga is committed to fostering ethical leadership, integrity, and values-driven education that bridges scholarship with meaningful social impact.

**Kim Townsend**

Kim Townsend is Research Impact Manager at Bath Spa University (UK), where she supports researchers to develop collaborative projects with external partners that create meaningful social, cultural and policy change. She leads the university's AHRC-funded Impact Acceleration Account and works across research development, partnership-building and impact strategy, with a particular interest in inclusive and equitable approaches to research. Prior to joining Bath Spa, Kim worked in public engagement at University College London,

supporting community partnerships around the development of their new UCL East campus. Her career spans journalism, communications, community engagement and higher education, bringing a strong focus on connecting research with people, places and real-world challenges.

**Leandro Maia**

Leandro Maia is a Brazilian singer-songwriter, guitarist, composer and researcher, and Adjunct Professor at the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel), Brazil. He holds a PhD in Music from Bath Spa University (United Kingdom), where he developed the thesis *Poetics of Song: Songwriting Habitus in the Creative Process of Brazilian Music*, focused on artistic research and the analysis of creative processes in popular song. He also holds a Master's degree in Brazilian Literature from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), as well as degrees in Music and in Textual Creation.

His academic work is situated at the intersection of artistic research, popular music studies, songwriting, poetics and cultural policy. His research interests include creative processes in song, the relationship between music and territory, authorship in popular music, practice-based research methodologies, and the social and political dimensions of cultural production. At UFPel, he is a member of the Centre for Research in Popular Music (NUMP) and coordinates research and extension projects related to creative industries, cultural production, and social mobilisation.

Alongside his academic career, Maia maintains an extensive artistic practice, with a discography that spans albums, audiovisual works and collaborative projects in Brazil, Europe and Central America. Among his recent works is *Guaipeca* (2023), an autobiographical album released exclusively on vinyl through crowdfunding, which received wide critical acclaim and led to performances in Brazil and Costa Rica. He also authored *Caetano's Wants: From Song to Song*, a book dedicated to the analysis of popular song.

Maia has collaborated with artists from diverse musical traditions and has composed music for theatre, animation and audiovisual productions presented at international festivals. His work has been recognised with numerous awards, including the Ibermúsicas Prize for Popular Song Composition and multiple Açorianos Music Awards, consolidating a career that integrates artistic creation, academic research and cultural engagement.

**Laura Armstrong**

Dr. Laura Armstrong, Ph.D., C.Psych., is a Full Professor and clinical psychologist at Saint Paul University. Her research focuses on Meaning Mindset Theory and resilience in diverse populations. She supervises graduate studies, has edited three books, and is the author of over 35 peer-reviewed publications. She has designed and evaluated nationally-funded mental health promotion programs for school-aged children, and her work bridges psychotherapy and conflict studies, including the EASE coaching model for ombuds practice.

**M.J. Jesu Pudumai Doss**

Rev. Dr. M.J. Jesu Pudumai Doss is a Salesian (SDB) priest from Chennai, India. He holds post-graduate degrees in English, Education, Civil Law, Human Rights, Canon Law and Oriental Canon Law, and a Doctorate in Canon Law. From 2002 to 2021, he was a Full Professor and Dean in the Faculty of Canon Law, Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, Italy. From July 2021, he has been appointed as a Full Professor in the Faculty of Canon Law, St. Paul's University, Ottawa, Canada.

Apart from being a member of the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, India, and practicing sporadically in Madras High Court, India, he was also a Judge in the Ecclesiastical Tribunal (First Instance), Vicariate of Rome; member of the special commission for *favor fidei* Marriage cases at the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith; Defender of Bond for *rato et non consummato* Marriage cases at the special office of Roman Rota; and Consultor of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

He has published many books and articles in books and international journals on Canon Law, Civil Law (especially Child rights) and Education. His publications include approximately 20 edited books and 3 books.

**Maria Kyriakidou**

Maria Kyriakidou is an Associate Professor at the Department of Media and Communication Studies at Södertörn University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of global media, the mediation of international crises and audience studies. She is currently researching how media witnessing of the Ukraine war and other humanitarian crises is being transformed through social media and AI-generated images. She is also programme director for the UG programme on International Media Studies.

Before joining Södertörn University in 2024, she worked as a Reader at the School of Journalism, Media and Culture at Cardiff University. She holds a PhD in Media and Communications and an MSc in Social and Public Communication from the London School of Economics and a BA in Media and Communications from the National Kapodistrian University in Athens, Greece.

**Martha Wiggin**

Martha is a psychotherapist and student completing her PhD in Interdisciplinary Research on Contemporary Social Issues at Saint Paul University, with a focus on climate-informed psychotherapy. She has worked in healthcare and social services for over 25 years, providing care across clinical and community settings in Canada, the U.S., and sub-Saharan Africa.

Martha now works as a facilitator, designing and delivering workshops locally and at the provincial level for health care providers and individuals living with chronic conditions. She has presented internationally on topics such as sex and disability, expressive arts, trauma-

informed care, and motivational interviewing. The common theme through Martha's life and work is her concern about the climate crisis.

Martha's PhD thesis focuses on the need for all therapists to be climate-informed, and how psychotherapy education can be transformed for collective resilience. She is also the creator of a zine called *Tending* on topics about tending to the self, others and the earth in response to climate change.

**Melvine Chepkoech Lilechi**

Dr. Melvine Chepkoech Lilechi is a historian and Head of the Department of Humanities (History, Geography and Environmental Studies) at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). She holds a PhD in History from CUEA, an MA in History from Mount Kenya University, and a B.Ed. (Arts) from CUEA, and is a Certified Professional Mediator. Her research engages slavery and post-slavery studies, ethnicity and political representation, decentralisation and governance, gender, and security in Eastern Africa. Her doctoral work examined the Church Missionary Society's role in reconstructing post-slavery identities in Freretown and Rabai, Kenya. She has published widely, including *From Citizenship to Ethnicity: Politics of Identity, Belonging and Otherness in Kenya* (2019). Fellowships link her to Kenya, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. With over ten years of teaching, she supervises doctoral and Master's students and belongs to GALA. Scholarship included historicised identity, governance, and security in postcolonial Eastern Africa.

**Mukasa Situma Wafula**

Dr. Mukasa Situma Wafula is an ethnomusicologist, scholar, and arts administrator specializing in transcultural music studies and African performance aesthetics. He is the immediate former Head of the Department of Music and Performing Arts at the Technical University of Kenya, where he also serves as a Lecturer. With over fifteen years of academic and research experience and eight years in creative industry management, he combines scholarship, leadership, and artistic practice in advancing music as cultural heritage. Dr. Wafula earned his Ph.D. from the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar, Germany under the UNESCO Chair on Transcultural Music Studies, graduating Summa Cum Laude. His doctoral research examined the aesthetics of music performance among the Babukusu of Western Kenya. He also holds a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Music (First Class Honours) from Kenyatta University. His scholarship has been supported by the DAAD Ph.D. Fellowship. His research explores music performance, ritual, choral traditions, arts education, and the transcultural dimensions of African music. He has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and presented at international conferences across Europe and Africa. Dr. Wafula has convened scholarly panels, delivered guest lectures in Germany and the United Kingdom, and supervised numerous postgraduate theses in African musicology. Beyond academia, he previously served as Manager for Music and Movie Sales and Distribution at Nu Metro Kenya Limited, contributing to policy development and industry partnerships. A committed

educator and choral director, he continues to nurture talent while promoting research, curriculum innovation, and the safeguarding of African musical heritage.

**Natasha Kidd**

Dr Natasha Kidd is Director of Creative Engagement and Reader in Art Practice and Pedagogy at Bath Spa University, leading its Creative Engagement Unit. An artist, researcher and academic leader, her work connects creative practice, education and civic engagement with a focus on participation and the social and economic impact of culture.

For over 25 years she has made automated painting systems: machines that fill canvases from the inside through arterial pipes and pumps, and that need human caregivers. They make artistic process visible and work on what she calls partial control, creating conditions rather than dictating outcomes. The work has been shown at Tate Modern, The Lowry, Modern Art Oxford and Camden Art Centre, and internationally across Europe, the USA, Asia and Australia.

The question driving both her art and her leadership is what alternative ways of being in the world artists offer, and how that might matter beyond art schools. With Jo Addison she founded Inventory of Behaviours, an ongoing investigation into the distinct ways artists operate, learn and make sense of the world. She co-founded Doing Together, Bath Spa's annual practice research symposium, where staff, students and community make methods explicit through activity rather than description.

She does not separate her practice from her leadership: understanding how artists actually work is what informs how she leads. For her, artists' ways of working are tools with transformative social power, and a means to imagine different futures

**Patrick Leroux**

Louis Patrick Leroux is the Rector of Saint Paul University in Ottawa.
For twenty years, he was a Professor in both departments of English and French Studies at Concordia University in Montreal, where he also served as Associate Dean of Research at the Faculty of Arts and Science. He is currently on leave from Concordia but continues to supervise ongoing doctoral students. Previous to academic life, he founded and directed a theatre company in Ottawa in the 1990s, Théâtre la Catapulte and co-founded the theatre space La nouvelle scène. He has written, produced, and directed many plays in French and English, some of which have also been translated into Spanish, German and Bengali.
Dr. Leroux’s research spans from theatre to contemporary circus with additional involvement in research-creation, art for social change, and cultural discourse analysis. He has been a visiting professor/scholar at Duke University (2012), Charles University in Prague (2014), the Centre national des arts du cirque in France (2017) and Universidad de Chile (2018). In 2022, he was visiting professor at the Université de Toulouse and the École normale supérieure de Lyon.

**Perminus Matiure**

Growing up in a musical family, Dr. Perminus Matiure started playing the mbira at the age of twelve. The experiences gained through this engagement led him to decide to continue his studies in African music, which allowed him to promote African music and dance, publish ethnomusicological articles and book chapters. So far he has presented research papers at international conferences like ICTM, PASME, CIMCIM, GALA, Applied Ethnomusicology Study Group, and MESI. He has conducted several studies, some of which are classified as public sector ethnomusicology and others as ethnomusicology. Music instrumentality and materiality, the sacred efficacy of *mbira dzaVadzimu*, the preservation of traditional music heritages, San dance and singing styles, Kwando youth empowerment and transformation, and the role of music in societies were among the topics of some of the research. He has patented one innovation on marimba with ARIPO and leads a vibrant traditional group comprising students and community members. One ongoing study focuses on using music at the junior level in Windhoek to help children develop holistically. He can teach, building, tuning, and performing *mbira*, *chipendani*, *marimba*, and *ngoma.* He also teaches ethnomusicology, principal instrument study, music education, music video documentation, musicianship, and organology at the University of Namibia as a senior lecturer. Perminus was recently hired as an adjunct professor at the University of Venda's African Musicology Institute in South Africa.

**Phumelele Dlamini**

Phumelele Dlamini is a principal lecturer in Graphic Design at EDUVOS. She is a sessional lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a PhD candidate at the Wits School of Arts (WSOA). She is part of the GAIC lab research team and an AAIR researcher.

**Petter Falk**

Petter Falk is a postdoctoral Researcher in Media and Communication Studies at Södertörn University, Stockholm. His research is situated at the intersection of critical data studies, science and technology studies and liberal arts, with a particular focus on democratic institutions.

In his current research projects, through a combination of ethnographic and interpretive methodologies, he examines how algorithmic systems and data infrastructures are designed, implemented, and governed within the public sector, exploring how notions of democratic imperatives are articulated through data-driven logics, and how these reshape both administrative decision-making and the conditions of welfare provisions.

**Richard Blows**

Richard Blows is a PhD researcher with the University of Bristol and Visiting Research Fellow at Bath Spa University. His work sits at the intersection of the theories of history, archaeology, digital heritage and the liberal arts. His research examines developments in

historical theory since the 1990s, from the legacy of the Annales School through postmodern and post-critical approaches, and explores how these frameworks are challenged and reconfigured by digital and interactive technologies.

A central focus of his work is the use of video games, simulation, and digital twin technologies within heritage and educational contexts. He investigates how digital environments mediate experiences of the past, shape historical consciousness, and blur boundaries between scholarship, public history, and cultural production. His research is particularly concerned with the epistemological and ethical implications of technologically mediated history: questions of authority, authenticity, presence, and play.

Alongside his doctoral research, Richard is the founder of Time Machine Designs which develops applied digital heritage projects, contributing to the design and interpretation of interactive historical experiences for public engagement and learning. His broader interests include the role and relevance of the liberal arts in critically interrogating emerging technologies, the relationship between historical theory and practice, and the cultural work performed by digital media in contemporary society.

**René A Smith**

René A Smith is Associate Professor and Head of the Wits School of Arts and cofounder of the African Arts and AI Research (AAIR) group.

**Sabine Spangenberg**

Professor Dr Sabine Spangenberg is an accomplished higher education leader, economist, and academic executive whose career spans over three decades in UK and international universities. She currently serves as Deputy Provost (Faculty) at Richmond American University in London, where she oversees academic departments, leads institutional and programme assessment strategies, and drives curriculum development, portfolio restructuring, and workload reform. A Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE), she is recognised for advancing pedagogical innovation, digital learning, and staff development.

Sabine has held multiple senior roles at Richmond, including Head of Department, Head of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation, and Associate Dean. She has played a central role in major institutional initiatives, such as US accreditation processes with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and AACSB eligibility, as well as UK sector engagements through the Quality Assurance Agency, where she has served as a reviewer and member of advisory groups revising the Subject Benchmark Statement in Economics.

An economist by training, Sabine earned her PhD from Lancaster University, building on earlier studies in economics and business management at the University of Duisburg. She has published widely on themes including social welfare, economic philosophy, institutional economics, and international development, and is an editorial board member of the

International Journal for Happiness and Development. Her academic contributions include numerous conference presentations, invited talks, and editorial and peer-review activities across leading journals.

Sabine is also deeply engaged in professional and civic networks, including the Economy for the Common Good, the International Society for Social Ontology, and the World Interdisciplinary Network for Institutional Research, of which she is a founding member. Fluent in English and German, she brings a sustained commitment to the idea of higher education as a public good and to fostering student success through holistic, values-driven learning frameworks.

**Samuel Alfayo Nyanchoga**

Professor Samuel A. Nyanchoga is a historian.Served as an Erasmus Researcher at Côte d'Azur University in France and the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Germany. He was formerly the Director of Research and Innovation at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. His research spans governance, conflict, gender, labour, and slavery studies, with a deepening focus on African abolitionism and the legacies of slavery and colonialism. He contributes to several major international research initiatives, including the AFRAB (African Abolitionism) project, the SLAMRANET project on Slavery, Memory and Race (funded by France's CNRS), and the Slavery in Africa Network (SLAFNET). He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Nantes Institute of Advanced Studies in France. Served as a consultant with AMISOM; external reviewer for the Commission for University Education; external examiner for several Kenyan universities. He has also served on the Cultural and Scientific Committee of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO. He is a Certified Professional Mediator.He is the current GALA liaison officer in CUEA.

**Steven H. Corey**

Steven H. Corey, Ph.D., is Professor of History and Dean of Academic Operations at Columbia College Chicago where he oversees all academic programs and curricular matters, including the delivery of the undergraduate general education core curriculum. He previously served as Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences from 2015–2024, Chair of the Department of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences at Columbia from 2012–2015, and Professor and Chair of the Department of Urban Studies at Worcester State University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Corey's research and teaching interests are in environmental studies, urban studies, public history, and public policy. He is the co-author or co-editor of six volumes including the most recent *America's Urban History, Second Edition* (Routledge, 2024) with Lisa Krissoff Boehm and *Coastal Metropolis: Environmental Histories of Modern New York City* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021) with Carl Zimring.

While completing his doctorate on the history of solid waste management in New York City at New York University, he served as research curator for the exhibition *Garbage! The History and Politics of Trash in New York City* at The New York Public Library (1994–1995). At Worcester State, Corey received the highest faculty honor, the George I. Alden Award for Excellence in Teaching for innovative, student-centered pedagogy. His scholarship on inquiry-based education was also recognized by the American Historical Association with the William and Edwyna Gilbert Award for the Best Article on Teaching History for "Pedagogy and Place: Merging Urban History and Environmental History with Active Learning" (Journal of Urban History, January 2010).

**Thais Oliveira da Rosa**

Thais Oliveira da Rosa is a visual artist and PhD candidate in the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), Brazil. She was awarded a PDPG/CAPES scholarship (2020–2022). She is based in Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. She holds an MA in Visual Arts from the same institution, where she received a DS/CAPES scholarship (2016–2019). She is a part of LabInter/UFSM.

**Toine Minnaert**

Toine Minnaert is an assistant professor at Utrecht University. At Utrecht, he teaches in Media and Culture, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the English-language master's programme in Arts and Society. His teaching and research bring together cultural policy, arts education, and interdisciplinarity. He examines how cultural policy shapes cultural exchange, identity, and participation, in the Netherlands and internationally.

His work includes research as part of NETLINC, a collaboration among Dutch higher education institutions exploring innovative capacity, as well as the national evaluation of Dutch (inter)national cultural policy. He has also contributed to research on arts education in primary and secondary schools. He is part of the Creative Humanities Academy at UU, as well as the research group Subjects of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching.

Among his publications are the article "Footprint or fingerprint: International cultural policy as identity policy" (2012), his doctoral thesis *Verbinden en verbeelden: De rol van nationale identiteit in het internationaal cultuurbeleid* [Connecting and Representing: The Role of National Identity in International Cultural Policy] (2016), and "An international perspective on Dutch cultural policy" (2018). He also co-authored *Evaluatie internationaal cultuurbeleid* [Review of international cultural policy] 2017–2020 (2022), and "The Digital Museum: Learning through Interaction and Reflection" (2022).

Alongside research and teaching, Minnaert is active in university governance and serves on Utrecht University's committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. His academic work connects policy research with practice and encourages reflection on culture's place in education and society, and the role of culture in public life.

**Veronica Bremer**

Veronica Bremer is a post-doctoral research associate, lecturer, and advisor at Studium Individuale, a liberal arts Bachelor's program at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Germany. Her post-doctoral work explores the photography of Mariana Yampolsky and the sculpture of Elizabeth Catlett as part of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)) project "TransExil. Negotiations of Aesthetics and Community in Post-Revolutionary Mexico." Her work also explores visual culture and transformative pedagogy through visual and experiential learning and the didactics of art history. Her research has been funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Australian Research Council (ARC), Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art Research, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, and Claussen Simon Stiftung.