

Elena Gonzales
Curator of Civic Engagement & Social Justice
Chicago History Museum
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Exhibitions for Social Justice from Routledge's Museum Meanings, 2019

CURRENT PROJECT

Curator of Civic Engagement & Social Justice, Chicago History Museum (CHM)
In response to protests from Latine high school students in 2019, we are creating a special exhibition and related initiatives to address this third of the city by fall 2025. *Aquí en Chicago*, celebrates the historically persistent cultural presence of Latine communities in Chicago—from creating thriving Latine communities to proud displays of cultural heritage, to public actions to abolish white supremacy. In addition to curating content relating to civic engagement and social justice, I work with colleagues across CHM to repair systems that entrench white supremacy and eliminate barriers to participation.

EDUCATION

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|---|-----------|
| Brown University, Department of American Studies, Providence, RI PhD in American Studies Dissertation: <i>Museums Working for Social Justice: Resonance and Wonder</i> | May 2015 |
| Masters in Public Humanities | May 2010 |
| Cornell University, College of Arts and Sciences, Ithaca, New York Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, Cum laude, distinction in all subjects Honors thesis: <i>Vibes and the Residential Experience: Creating a Home at Cornell University</i> | May 2003 |
| <i>Universidad de Sevilla, Facultad de Geografía y Historia</i> , Seville, Spain Anthropology and museología | 2001-2002 |

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FIELDS

Qualified, November 2010

- *History and Theory of Cultural Work* with Steven Lubar, Director of the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage (JNBC) and Professor of American Civilization, Brown University
- *Visual Culture* with Douglas Nickel, Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University
- *Cultural History of the United States from the Gilded Age to the Present* with Elliott Gorn, Professor of History, Brown University
- *Cultural Crossings and Dissolving Divisions: Exploring Race and Ethnicity in America* with Matthew Garcia, Assoc. Professor of American Civilization, Brown University

EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROJECTS

Member, Exhibitions Committee, 2020-2021, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL

Co-Chair, Exhibitions Committee, 2015-2020, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL
Review all incoming proposals for exhibitions and from individual artists, assist in making selections and curating group exhibitions. Our committee acts as the curator for the Art Center, scheduling and organizing roughly 20 exhibitions per year. In 2020, we launched the center's biannual Curatorial Fellowship for BIPOC curators.

Contributor, 2016, Navy Pier redesign Arts and Discovery Plan, Working Group on History and Culture. Help shape the new programming plan for one of the top ten most popular destinations in the world (8-9 million annual visitors).

Co-Editor / Developer, in progress 2015-2018, *Museums and Civic Discourse: Past, Present & Emerging Futures*, A Digital Compendium and Conversation

Editorial Consultant, *Nuestras Historias: Stories of Mexican Identity from the Permanent Collection*, 2014, National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL
Reviewed and edited all texts and labels for the museum's new permanent exhibition.

Co-Curator, *Reimagining Columbus, Reimagining Columbus Day*, exhibition October 2010 – March 2011, Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University

Project Leader and Co-Curator, Public Humanities Student Project 2009-2010
Food On the Move, exhibition and programming, Culinary Arts Museum at Johnson and Wales University

Co-Curator, Public Humanities Student Project 2009, exhibition at the JNBC, Providence, RI
Remember the Old Times: Cape Verdean Community in Fox Point, 1920-1945

Visiting Artist Mentor, *New Urban Arts, Providence, RI*, 2008-9009
Co-leader for a high school student project, *Core Sample*, public program for *Art+History* exhibition

TEACHING

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

Spring 2020 **Visiting Scholar**, School of Education and Social Policy

Co-taught SESP 323, Holocaust Memory, Memorials, & Museums with Danny Cohen and JB Brager.

2020-2021 **Homeschooled** kinder – 3rd grade

Fall 2011 – Spring 2015 **Visiting Scholar**, American Studies

I guided the undergraduate majors in the department on quarterly field trips to cultural sites in the Chicago area and guest lectured for classes in American Studies and allied fields such as history, Latino studies, and public humanities.

Brown University, Providence, RI

Spring 2011 **Lead Instructor**, *Displaying Activism Then and Now: Making an Exhibition for Social Justice*

I developed the syllabus and all assignments for this writing seminar for freshmen and sophomores. The students curated an exhibition, on view at the John Hay Library through commencement, and all of the writing assignments moved them towards this project. I did all of the grading for the course.

Fall 2010 **Teaching Assistant**, Introduction to Ethnic Studies

I guest taught three discussions on films, helped develop two exams including multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions, and one paper topic, and graded roughly 20 students' work.

Spring 2010 **Teaching Assistant**, Introduction to Ethnic Studies

I led two weekly discussion sections of roughly 15 students each, helped develop exam questions, graded three essay exams, and held weekly office hours.

Fall 2009 **Teaching Assistant**, American Advertising: History and Consequences

I led two weekly discussion sections of roughly 20 students each, helped develop paper topics and exam questions, graded two 5-7 page papers and a final essay exam, held weekly office hours, and presented a guest lecture, "Green, Greener, Greenest, or Advertising and the Future of Humankind and the World."

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Karl Jacoby, Professor of History at Brown University, 2009 – 2010

The research focuses on William Ellis/Guillermo Eliseo, an African American from Victoria, Texas, who unofficially brokered the first treaty between the US and Ethiopia (then Abyssinia).

Intern for Peter Liebhold, Chair of the Curatorial Division of Work and Industry, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Summer 2009 (June - July)

Assisted in writing new collection plan for collecting the US / Mexico border, curated books of articles to spur discussion in the exhibition, *Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program, 1942-1964*.

Visiting Fellow, Anacostia Community Museum, Summer 2009 (July - August)

Trained staff and planned public programs in preparation for the opening of *The African Presence in México* and *Who Are We Now?*.

Exhibition Curator, *National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL* 2005-2008

Curated the exhibition *Who Are We Now? Roots, Resistance, and Recognition*, the companion piece to the NMMA's exhibition, *The African Presence in México: From Yanga to the Present*. Both exhibitions traveled nationally through 2010. Tour sites included: National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM; California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; African American Museum, Philadelphia, PA; Museo Alameda, San Antonio, TX; Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA; Smithsonian Institution Anacostia Community Museum, Washington, DC; DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago, IL.

CONFERENCES AND TALKS

2023 TV interview: "Young Lords Fight to Keep Lincoln Park," ABC 7 with Roz Varon and Blanca Rios, October

2023 "Coffee with a Curator," CHM, August

2023 *Aquí en Chicago* Project Kickoff and Community Gathering, CHM, July

- 2023 Radio interview: WRLL 1450 with Vicky Corces, March
- 2023 Invited speaker, Methods in Public Humanities (Steve Lubar), Brown University, March
- 2023 Invited speaker “Many Hats: Scholar, Curator, Facilitator, Listener, Convener, Amplifier, Northwestern University History Dept. lunch series (Gerry Cadava), February
- 2023 “A Lab for Social Justice Work: Aquí en Chicago,” Museums and Change, a series of virtual talks hosted by Avi Decter, principal of History Now, January
- 2022 Invited lecture, “Social Justice in Museums Today,” University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) Centennial Museum, October
- 2022 Guest teaching, “Creating an Exhibition for Social Justice,” UTEP Museum Studies (Elizabeth Sommer), October
- 2022 Guest speaker, “Frontiers in Latinx History”, History Day teachers, October
- 2022 Guest speaker, Intro to Museums and Exhibitions, (Emmanuel Ortega, lead instructor), University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), October
- 2022 Guest speaker, “Curate Means Care” presentation for Virtual Members’ Night, Chicago History Museum, May
- 2021-2023 Guest speaker, Proyecto Odisea first year art history course in Spanish (Jojo Galván, lead instructor) UIC, November
- 2021 Guest speaker, Native American Art at The Field Museum: An Anthropological Perspective (Alaka Wali, lead instructor), University of Chicago, November
- 2021-2023 Guest speaker, Chicago History Museum Experience course (Peter Alter, lead instructor), DePaul University
- 2021 Invited panelist, “The Evolving Museum of Conscience: Exhibitions for Social Justice,” Association of Midwest Museums, virtual panel discussion, July
- 2021 Moderator, “Exhibitions for Social Justice: Opportunities and Challenges,” American Alliance of Museums annual meeting, virtual panel discussion, June
- 2020 “[Exploring Social Justice on a Limited Budget](#),” a webinar for the Texas Historical Commission’s Museum Services Program, May
- 2020 “[What is Curatorial Practice? A conversation with Elena Gonzales, PhD](#),” Phantom Gallery Chicago Network, Blog Radio, November
- 2020 Invited contributor, “[Curatorial Collaborations: Exhibitions for Social Justice](#),” Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, September, online panel discussion
- 2020 Invited contributor, “[We Will Not Remain Neutral: Dismantling Structural Racism in Our Archives](#),” Lightning Talks with the Rare and Distinctive Collections (RAD) Hour of the Cornell University Library, June

- 2020 Invited guest lecture, Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA), webinar, June
- 2020 Public program, Bookends and Beginnings, January, Evanston, IL
- 2020 Invited guest lecture, The Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, January, Chicago, IL
- 2020 “[Museum Relevance: Exhibitions for Social Justice](#),” a webinar for the Texas Historical Commission’s Museum Services Program, January
- 2019 “Objects that Enable Curatorial Work for Social Justice,” PechaKucha Night, Chicago, IL, Vol. 52: That belongs in a museum...or NOT!, December
- 2019 Invited guest lecture, University of Kansas Museum Studies Speaker Series, distance seminar, November
- 2019 “The Decolonization Diet: From Action to More Action Through Exhibitions,” guest lecture for Alaka Wali’s course for University of Illinois at Chicago, “Native American Art at the Field Museum: An Anthropological Perspective,” November, Field Museum, Chicago, IL
- 2019 “Museum Issues for Spanish Speaking in Latin American and Latino America,” invited panelist, The Inclusive Museum, November 2019, Buenos Aires
- 2019 “Curatorial Work for Social Justice,” presenter, The Inclusive Museum, November 2019, Buenos Aires
- 2019 “Assessing Curatorial Work for Social Justice with Elena Gonzales,” Museum Archipelago Podcast, <https://www.museumarchipelago.com/71>
- 2019 “Exhibitions for Social Justice at the National Museum of Mexican Art,” Latinx Studies Program, Northwestern University, invited guest lecture, Evanston, IL
- 2019 “Elena Gonzales and Danny M. Cohen: Exhibitions for Social Justice, A Conversation,” invited public program, The Book Stall, Winnetka, IL
- 2019 “Exhibitions for Social Justice at the Evanston Art Center,” invited guest lecture, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL
- 2019 “Building *The Inclusive Historian’s Handbook: A Working Group*” participant, National Council on Public History, Hartford
- 2016 “Publicly Engaged American Studies: A Dialogue,” Invited contributor, American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Denver
- 2016 “Museums and Civic Discourse: Past, Present, & Emerging Futures” Working Group Facilitator, National Council on Public History Annual Meeting, Baltimore
- 2015 “Mitigating Misery through the Museum: Using Pleasure and Horror for Social Justice,” Panelist, American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto

- 2014 “Public Humanities in Practice: A Conversation with Elena Gonzales,” Invited lecture, Public Humanities Colloquium, Center for Civic Engagement, Northwestern University
- 2014 “Resonance, Wonder, and Empathy: Strategies in Curatorial Work for Social Justice,” Invited lecture, American Studies, Northwestern University
- 2013 “Curatorial Tactics for the Holocaust Museum of the 21st Century,” Histories of Violence Symposium: War and Memory, Northwestern University
- 2011 “What’s in a Name?: National Museums for Social Justice,” Panelist, New England American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Plimoth Plantation
- 2011 “Tactical Operations: Building a Toolbox for Social Justice Practice in Museums,” Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life National Meeting, Minneapolis
- 2010 “Time and Crime: Public Art Controversies as Catalysts for Conversations and the Perils of Permanence,” Panelist, New England American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Boston
- 2010 “The Sea is Our Destination: A Virtual Tour of *Food on the Move*,” Panelist, North Atlantic Society for Oceanic History Annual Meeting, University of Connecticut, Avery Point and Mystic Seaport
- 2009 Curatorial Tour for *Who Are We Now?*, Anacostia Community Museum, Washington, DC
- 2009 “Cultural Heritage as Currency: Reclaiming Cultural Heritage in the Spanish Empire” at Tensions in Society and Scholarship, Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, Brown University, Providence, RI
- 2008 “*Museos como ciudadanos: Un ejemplo de museología contemporánea*” (Museums as Citizens: An Example of Contemporary Museology) at *El futuro del los Museos Etnológicos* (The Future of Ethnological Museums) during the 11th annual *Congreso de Antropología* (National Anthropological Conference), Donostia, San Sebastián, Spain
- 2006 “*The African Presence in México: A Model for Tackling Controversy*,” panelist, American Association of Museums Centennial Conference, Boston; Association of Midwestern Museums Annual Conference, Quad Cities

PUBLICATIONS

“Aquí en Chicago: Piedras, Placemaking, and Politics in Pilsen,” co-author with Delia Consentino, Professor, History of Art and Architecture, DePaul, and Ismael Cuevas, Independent Scholar, Vol. 25, No. 1, *Diálogo*, interdisciplinary journal published by the Center for Latino Research at DePaul University, forthcoming January 2024

“[Why we’re saying ‘Latine](#),” CHM blog, October 2023

“[Summer of ’69: Young Lords in Lincoln Park](#),” CHM blog, August 2023

[“Turning Points in Latino/a/x History: Public History as a National History Day Model,”](#) with Crystal Johnson, Chicago Metro History Day Manager, *Turning Points in History: National History Day 2024*, June 2023

“Social Justice: Framework for the Future of Museums,” [Change is Required: Preparing for the Post-Pandemic Museum](#), edited by Avi Decker, Marsha Semmel, and Ken Yellis, AASLH, Summer 2022.

[“Curatorial Work in Our Climate Emergency: Guiding Principles,”](#) History@Work, The NCPH Blog, Fall 2021.

[“View from the Field: Equity-Oriented and Anti-Racist Curatorial Practice,”](#) *Inclusive Historian’s Handbook*, a joint digital publication of NCPH and AASLH, Winter 2020.

“The Role of Curatorial Work in Our Two Pandemics: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#),” *History@Work*, the blog of the National Council on Public History, Winter 2020 and Spring 2021.

“The Lower 9th Living History Museum,” *Exhibition Journal (NAME)*, Spring 2020.

[“Exhibitions for Social Justice: An Appreciation from Chicago to Providence,”](#) *John Nicholas Brown Center for the Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage Blog*, a digital publication of Brown University, Spring 2020.

[“Inside Exhibitions for Social Justice: Zoos and Aquariums: Inspiring Visitors, Inspiring Museums,”](#) *American Alliance of Museums Blog*, a digital resource for museum professionals, Fall 2019.

“Curation,” *The Inclusive Historian’s Handbook*, a digital publication of the National Council on Public History and the American Association of State and Local History, Fall 2019.

[“Anti-Racist Curatorial Work,”](#) *Activist History Review*, a digital publication dedicated to illuminating the relevance of the past to the present. The Antiracist Issue, September 2019.

[“Exhibitions for Social Justice,”](#) *Incluseum*, a blog that advances new ways of being a museum through critical dialogue, community building and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums; September 2019.

Exhibitions for Social Justice July 2019 from Routledge’s Museum Meanings

“Book Review: *Civil Rights Childhood* by Katharine Capshaw,” *caa.reviews*, College Art Association, Fall 2015.

“The Samuel Adams Brewery Tour.” *The Public Historian*, Vol 33, April 2011, Num 1, pp 74-78. Print.

“The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. Mashantucket, Connecticut. Kimberly Hatcher-White, executive director; Kevin McBride, director of research; Trudie Lamb Richmond, director of public programs.” *The Public Historian*, Vol 31 November 2009 Num 4, pp 120-124. Print.

“Museos como ciudadanos: Un ejemplo de museología contemporánea,” El futuro del los Museos Etnológicos, ANKULEGI antropológica elkarte, Donostia, San Sebastian, 2008.

“Who Are We Now? Roots, Resistance, and Recognition,” *The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present*. Chicago, IL: Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 2006.

SELECTED HONORS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

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| 2012 – 2013 | Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship |
| 2012 – 2013 | PAGE Senior Associate, Publicly Active Graduate Education, Imagining America, Syracuse University |
| 2011 – 2012 | PAGE Fellowship, Publicly Active Graduate Education, Imagining America, Syracuse University |
| Summer 2009 | Latino Museum Studies Program Fellowship, Smithsonian Latino Center, Washington, DC |
| 2008-2009, 2011-2012 | Doctoral fellowships at Brown University, Rhode Island |
| 1999-2003 | Cornell scholarships, grants, and work study in all semesters |

OTHER TRAINING

The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Certificate I, Sheridan Teaching Seminar May 2010

Certificate II, Sheridan Teaching Seminar May 2011

Collections Workshop Series 2009

with Ron Potvin, Curator, Nightingale Brown House, Providence, RI

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, North Carolina 2000-2008

Bookmaking with Jim Croft, 2000, Flatware & 3-D Tessellation with Julia Woodman, 2003, Wood Firing Stoneware with Dan Finnegan, Kevin Crowe, Michael Kline, and Mark Peters, 2003, Forging for the Kitchen with Joe Anderson, 2008

OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Brown University, Providence, RI

Fall 2009 – Spring 2011 **Fitness Instructor**, Graduate Student Council

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

1999-2001, 2002-2003 **Darkroom Instructor/Manager**, Willard Straight Hall
Darkroom and Risley Darkroom

North Shore School District 112, Highland Park, IL

2004 **Substitute Teacher**, bilingual (English/Spanish) special education, 5th grade and kindergarten

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Associate Development Director, *National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL* 2005 - 2008

Development Project Officer, *Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum (now National Museum of Mexican Art), Chicago, IL* 2004-2005

Print Room Assistant, *Mary and Leigh Block Museum, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL* 2001-2002

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

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| <i>Chicago Volunteer Doulas, Birth Doula, Chicago, IL</i> | 2020-present |
| <i>Dewey Elementary School PTA Translator and organizer of Dewey Translators, Evanston, IL</i> | 2017-present |
| <i>Board Member, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL</i> | 2015-2018 |
| <i>Brown University, Providence RI</i> | 2010-2011 |
| Graduate Representative of the American Studies Graduate Consortium to the Academic Search Committee for an American Indian Studies scholar at the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America | |
| <i>Midwest Workers Association, Chicago, IL</i> | 2003 – 2008 |
| The MWA organizes Chicago’s working poor to fight for a living wage. | |

Professional Associations

- American Alliance of Museums, since 2004
- National Council for Public History, since 2009
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, since 2009
- American Studies Association, since 2011
- Social Justice Alliance of Museums, since 2017
- International movement for a new museology (MINOM-ICOM), since 2017

Foreign Languages

- Fluent in writing, reading, and speaking Spanish