

Cover Letter

Dear Dr. Sonja Fritzsche and Committee Members,

We are requesting \$XXX from the CAL Engaged Pedagogy Funds for a collaboration between the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, the Department of English, the Creative Writing Program, and the Department of African American and African Studies, with an endorsement from Gordon Henry, the Leslie Chair in North American Indian and Indigenous Literary Studies.

The fund would support an integrated pedagogy and creative production project (“Writing Water / “Flint is Family”) which we have designed for undergraduates and the broader MSU community, in tandem with the LaToya Ruby Frazier exhibition “Flint is Family” set to open at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in September 2022. This proposal is modeled on the successful collaboration between some of these units in the lead up to the Claudia Rankine CAL Signature Lecture.

We thank the unit leads, Dr. Justus Nieland, Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown, for their letters of support, and Dr. Gordon Henry for his endorsement. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions.

Sincerely,

Divya Victor (CO-PI), Robin Silbergleid (CO-PI), Bria Morgan Dinkins (Collaborating co-writer)

English/Creative Writing/Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum

(LeConté Dill: Consulting Collaborator, African American and African Studies)

Evaluation Rubric for Unit Head(s)

Name of unit: XXX

Name of unit head: XXX

(Fill out on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being “excellent”)

_____The proposal meets the requirements as outlined in the call for proposals: Evidence of a collaborative proposal that meets the call for application standards above, including: addressing intersectionality, inviting one or more guest speakers or engaging with the community, including an event organized for the entire College community, and a complete application with clear budget page.

_____The proposal has great potential to advance course development in the proposed area and make an original and significant pedagogical contribution to the College curriculum.

_____The proposal is of high quality with regard to its clarity, methodology, scope, theoretical framework, and relevance to stated applicant and College pedagogical goals.

_____The project is feasible and the likelihood that the applicant(s) will execute the work within the proposed timeframe is high.

_____The teaching and scholarship record and career trajectory of the applicant(s) is strong.

_____ Includes an event organized for the entire College community.

Comments:

NARRATIVE

We are requesting \$XXXX from the CAL Engaged Pedagogy Funds for a collaboration between the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, the Department of English, the Creative Writing Program, and the Department of African American and African Studies, with an endorsement from Gordon Henry, the Leslie Chair in North American Indian and Indigenous Literary Studies. The funds would support an integrated pedagogy and creative production project (“Writing Water / “Flint is Family”) which we have designed for undergraduates and the broader MSU community, in tandem with the LaToya Ruby Frazier exhibition “Flint is Family” set to open at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in September 2022.

BACKGROUND

***Flint is Family* ACTS I, II, III.**

Flint is Family is a photography series which showcases deeply personal and nuanced portraits of quotidian life to expose and reflect on the human cost and daily impact of the ongoing Flint water crisis. Frazier’s series depicts Black life, environmental injustice and documents the resistance and survival of Flint residents who are the protagonists of this series. According to the Broad curators Steven Bridges and Rachel Winter, “LaToya Ruby Frazier created *Flint is Family* to ensure that the residents of Flint and the impact of the Flint water crisis that began in 2014 remained visible in national debates around environmental injustice.” This exhibition, scheduled for Fall 2022 at the Broad Museum is one of *three* in the region– each showcasing one “Act” of Frazier’s series. The photographic series will also be on display at the Flint Institute of Arts (Act I) and the STAMPS Gallery (Act III) at the University of Michigan.

Our Pedagogical Vision, Partners, & Impacts

The simultaneous circuit of three exhibitions (“Flint is Family ACTS I, II, III”) offers our student writers, artists, and scholars an important opportunity to immerse themselves in a deeper understanding of the human-made crisis in Flint and the longer history of Michigan’s relationship to water as a conflicted site. We view the Flint crisis as a corollary of the history of settler colonialism and environmental injustice. We see the citizen-activists in Flint as engaged in a longer battle for natural resources in the region, represented, for example, by the Line 5 conflict for the Straits of Mackinac between Waterprotectors and the Enbridge Corporation.

Engagements with interdisciplinarity are essential for a socially propulsive education. Students benefit immeasurably when they learn outside the classroom in *three* immersive sites curated by experts from multiple institutions, engage with artists, Indigenous and Black environmental activists, and members of the communities which they will someday serve. We are proposing two, integrally nested, pedagogical interventions related to this programming. (1) We have a critical opportunity for a cohort to have an immersive experience while attending artists talks, discussing ideas with community activists and Water Protectors, and participating in field trips. The proposed sequence will be framed by carefully curated materials and expert view points, and the sequence will culminate in a reflective writing and mentoring workshop, followed by a student-led and student-oriented performance. (2) The anchoring public events for this cohort would be open to our broader campus communities in conversation with the “Flint is Family” exhibition.

We are optimistic that this offers MSU undergraduates an unprecedented opportunity to immerse themselves in an interdisciplinary inquiry across literary and photographic arts and at the intersection of social justice, creative writing, museology, African-American and American

Indian/Indigenous studies. For this proposal, we have secured collaborative relationships between the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, the Department of English, the Creative Writing Program, and the Department of African American and African Studies, with an endorsement from Gordon Henry, the Leslie Chair in North American Indian and Indigenous Literary Studies.

At the curricular level, students across levels and creative foci (e.g. nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, filmmaking) will benefit from learning in an immersive environment. We are planning to have our students engage creatively with “*Flint is Family*” by advertising and encouraging the incorporation of the “Writing Water” project into a variety of courses taught by our colleagues. This list of courses is included in the Appendix. The faculty of record for this experience will be the Director of Creative Writing, who will serve as coordinator and guide, along with CO-PIs and Collaborators.

In addition to these broad pedagogical tie-ins, we will facilitate a guided experience for a selective cohort (12-15 students) who work in the disciplines of visual arts, creative writing, journalism, and literary studies. This cohort would be drawn from units across campus, while prioritizing students from CAL and RCAH. We hope to provide this experience within the context of a 1-credit course. Depending on final department and college-level approval, we propose running this course as either the Special Topics course AL491 or a dedicated section of Eng 200, Creative Writing Community, which already exists as a 1-credit pass/fail experience devoted to engaging local arts communities. We have the support of the Dept of English as well as Associate Dean Cara Cilano in pursuing this credit-based opportunity.

Proposed Sequence of Engaged Pedagogy events for cohort:

1. **Aug 2022:** Cohort is offered a resource kit with carefully curated books, critical resources, and an accessible bibliography. The proposed books (in discussion) are:
 - *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City.* By Mona Hanna- Attisha (MSU Faculty) (2018)
 - *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit.* By Vandana Shiva (2016)
 - *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock.* By Dina Gilio-Whitaker (Colville Confederated Tribes) (2019)
2. **Sept 2022:** Cohort attends LaToya Ruby Frazier’s Artist’ Talk at the MSU Broad (Open to Campus Community)
3. **Field Trip 1:** *Flint is Family ACT 1:* Flint Institute of the Arts
4. **Field Trip 2:** *Flint is Family ACT 2:* MSU Broad Art Museum
5. **Field Trip 3:** *Flint is Family ACT 3:* Stamps Gallery, University of Michigan
6. **Oct 2022:** Talk and Discussion with Water Protectors (Open to Campus Community):
 - a. Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson, Tsimphean/Nicola Anishinawbe originally from Yakima, Washington. She is a Grandmother of the Three Fires Midewewin Lodge.
 - b. [OR, depending on availability] Nathan Wright, founder of MackinawOde and a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.
7. **Nov 2022: Closing Developmental & Reflective Writing Session:** Dr. LeConté Dill (MSU Faculty AAAS): A scholar, educator, and poet, Dr. LeConté J. Dill is guided by Black Feminist epistemologies to enact her commitment toward transdisciplinary, community-accountable scholarship. Her work focuses on the safety, resilience, and wellness strategies of urban Black girls and other youth of color.

ABSTRACT

“Writing Water” is an integrated pedagogy and creative production project in tandem with the LaToya Ruby Frazier exhibition “Flint is Family” at the Broad Art Museum. *Flint is Family* is a photography series which showcases nuanced portraits of quotidian life to reflect on the daily impact and human cost of the ongoing Flint water crisis. “Writing Water” is designed to foster deeper understanding of the long history of Michigan’s relationship to water as a conflicted site. Beyond organizing a series of public talks, we will facilitate a guided experience for a selective cohort of undergraduate students.

This document was co-authored with input from:

Dr. Divya Victor, English/Creative Writing/CAL [Submitter, CO-PI]

Dr. Robin Silbergleid, English/Creative Writing/CAL [CO-PI]

Bria Morgan Dinkins, Broad Museum [Collaborator]

Dr. LeConté J. Dill, African American and African Studies [Collaborator]

APPENDED:

- 1. Courses identified for potential tie-in, assessment coordination, or advertisement to students.**
- 2. Budget**
- 3. Artist Biographies**
- 4. CO-PI and collaborator abridged CVs**

Appendix

1 Courses identified for potential tie-in, assessment coordination, or advertisement to students.

1. FLM 260: Intro to Digital Film & Media,
2. ENG 226: Intro to Creative Writing,
3. ENG 223: Intro to Creative Nonfiction,
4. ENG 229: Intro to Poetry,
5. AAAS 300 Communities in Action,
6. AAAS 307 Creative Expression as Craft,
7. AAAS 404 Black Ecologies and Environmental Justice,
8. AAAS 406 Pedagogies of Protest,
9. AAAS 832 Multicultural Pedagogy in AfAm and African Studies,
10. HA 252 Introduction to Contemporary Art,
11. HA 253 Native North American Art,
12. HA 488 Museum Curatorial Practices,
13. HA 498 Learning and Experience in Museums,
14. HA 898 Museum Visitor Studies,
15. HA 251 History of Photography

Please note that we will be able to finalize this list based on course availability in Fall 2022.

2 ARTIST & [PROPOSED] VISITING SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

VISITING ARTIST: LaToya Ruby Frazier

LaToya Ruby Frazier was born in 1982 in Braddock, Pennsylvania. Her artistic practice spans a range of media, including photography, video, performance, installation art and books, and centers on the nexus of social justice, cultural change, and commentary on the American experience. In various interconnected bodies of work, Frazier uses collaborative storytelling with the people who appear in her artwork to address topics of industrialism, Rust Belt revitalization, environmental justice, access to healthcare, access to clean water, Workers' Rights, Human Rights, family, and communal history.

Frazier's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions in the US and Europe, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art; Seattle Art Museum; The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; Musée des Arts Contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Belgium; CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, France; Carré d'Art - musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, France; The Silver Eye Center for Photography, Pittsburgh; The August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh; The Frost Art Museum, Miami; The Musée d'art Moderne, Luxembourg; and The Newcomb Museum at Tulane University, New Orleans.

In 2015, her first book about how she, her mother and grandmother survived environmental racism in historic steel mill town Braddock Pennsylvania, *The Notion of Family* (Aperture, 2014) received the International Center for Photography Infinity Award. In 2017 Frazier published *And From The Coaltips A Tree Will Rise* which expanded on her collaboration with a historic coal mining village in Borinage Belgium at Musée des Arts Contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Belgium. In 2020 Frazier received the Kraszna-Krausz Photography Book Award for her eponymous book published by Mousse publishing and MUDAM Luxembourg, which expanded on her exhibition at Mudam Luxembourg Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean and that same year Frazier published *The Last Cruze*, which expanded upon a 2019 exhibition at the Renaissance Society about her collaboration with autoworkers in historic labor union UAW Local 1112 in Lordstown, OH. That same year, Frazier was named the inaugural recipient of the Gordon Parks Foundation/Steidl Book prize for her book *Flint Is Family In Three Acts* about how working-class families survived the man-made water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Her work is held in numerous public collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Studio Museum in Harlem; Brooklyn Museum; The Bronx Museum of the Arts; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; The Baltimore Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, Los Angeles; Seattle Art Museum; Dallas Art Museum; Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto; Nasher Museum of Art; Princeton Art Museum; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and many others.

Frazier is the recipient of many honors and awards including an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Edinboro University (2019); an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Pratt Institute (2017); fellowships from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's MacArthur Fellows Program (2015), TED Fellows (2015), and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (2014); and the Gwendolyn Knight & Jacob Lawrence Prize from the Seattle Art Museum (2013). In 2015, the Allegheny County Council, Pennsylvania, awarded Frazier a Proclamation thanking her for "examining race, class, gender and citizenship in our society and inspiring a vision for the future that offers inclusion, equity and justice to all." LaToya Ruby Frazier is an Associate Professor of Photography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she currently lives and works. She is represented by Gladstone Gallery in New York City and Brussels Belgium, and Sant'Andrea de Scaphis in Rome.

WORKSHOP CONVENER AND LEADER: Dr. LeConté J. Dill

A scholar, educator, and poet, Dr. LeConté J. Dill is an Associate Professor of African American and African Studies at Michigan State University. Guided by Black Feminist epistemologies and using qualitative and arts-based research methods, Dr. Dill has a commitment toward transdisciplinary, community-accountable scholarship. Her work focuses on the safety, resilience, and wellness strategies of urban Black girls and other youth of color.

Born and raised in South Central L.A., Dr. Dill earned her B.A. in Sociology from Spelman College, her Master of Public Health degree in Community Health Sciences from the University of California Los Angeles, her Doctor of Public Health degree from the University of California Berkeley, and was a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Health Policy in the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. Her scholarship is critically informed by years of working in partnership with youth and community organizers, health educators, and policy advocates at community-based organizations and public health departments on issues related to chronic disease prevention, violence intervention, and juvenile justice. A Research Associate at the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, Dr. Dill also previously served on the faculty at several schools and programs of public health across the U.S.

Dr. Dill has been writing creatively from a young age. She was a Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop Fellow in 2016, a Small Orange Press Emerging Woman Poet Honorable Mention in 2019, and an Honorable Mention for the Zócalo Public Square Poetry Prize in 2021. Dr. Dill also integrates poetry into her ethnographic research with participants in what she has coined as "participatory narrative analysis." Dr. Dill's scholarly and creative works have been published in a diverse array of spaces, such as the *Du Bois Review*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, *Poetry Magazine*, *The Feminist Wire*, and *Mom Egg Review*.

Dr. Dill is deeply committed to teaching and mentoring. She actively works to amplify students as co-learners and co-scholars. Recently certified as a mindfulness instructor, Dr. Dill's emerging work around "centering wellness" integrates meditation, poetry, and somatics for students, other researchers, and community partners

[PROPOSED] VISITING SPEAKER: Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson

Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson, is a Tsimphean/Nicola Anishinawbe originally from Yakima, Washington. She is a Grandmother of the Three Fires Midewewin Lodge. Her responsibilities include ensuring the continuance of the teachings passed on from past generations on into the future.

She is a sixteen year Sun Dancer, a carrier of the water prayer, a veteran of Standing Rock, and a principal keeper of the anishinaabe wisdom and traditions.

Beatrice retired as Helping Healer for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. She was a Montessori Teacher for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe for five years previously and a Tribal Outreach worker for Uniting Three Fires Against Violence in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Her formal education includes a BA in Social Work from Michigan State University and a BS Degree from Ferris State University in Education. Beatrice studied/apprenticed in native practices for many years with elders of the community. She is a producer and director of several movies and a member of the Snow Bird Singers hand drum group and the Women of Traditions Hand Drum Group. She enjoys hunting, gathering and living a traditional lifestyle.

She resides in Cedarville, Michigan.

[PROPOSED] VISITING SPEAKER: Nathan Wright

Nathan Wright (Spiritual name: Spiritman from the Sun or Giizus Su Win en eh) of the Crane Clan, is a tribal member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians with First Nations ancestry. Nathan is a descendant of medicine people on both his parents sides. Nathan continues his ancestors' legendary plant medicine work by ethically wild harvesting and making medicines from the same areas as his ancestors.

He is the owner of the Herbal Lodge, which is a USA made, certified Native American and veteran owned company focusing on natural/organic skin care, pain relief and medicinal tea products using natural/organic and wild harvested herbs or mushroom ingredients. He has traveled the world in support of his business.

He is an Indigenous Herbalist and certified mushroom expert. Residing in Petoskey Michigan Nathan is a firm believer of his Anishinabek cultural teachings. "If you do things in a good way, good things will happen," is one of his favorite teachings. He offers many online videos for culture and herbal teachings. He has taught plant classes at University of Michigan Biological Station, Michigan State University Extension, Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference, Annual Great Lakes Foragers Gathering, Virtual Intertribal Food Summit and Master Gardener Association of Northwest Michigan.

He has upcoming classes this year at Intertribal Agriculture Council Food Sovereignty Symposium And Great Lakes Herb Faire.

Wright is a board member of United Plant Savers. And a proud Father of his daughter Autumn.