
MHRC

MEDIA HISTORY RESEARCH CENTRE



Dear all,

You are warmly invited to the MHRC's upcoming seminar with Gabrielle Moser on **November 28th, 3:30 – 5:00, in EV 11.705**. Please register for this talk [here](#).

Extra-Curricular: Photography, race and citizenship in Toronto's University Settlement House, 1946-56

What is the social significance of a photographic archive with no, or at most a very accidental, external audience? Is it akin to photographs that are taken but never printed, filed away as negatives in a basement or library? For a social historian of photography, interested in where photographs circulated and how viewers understood them, how can we begin to understand what these images meant to their authors and subjects?

This talk examines these questions through the photographic archives of Toronto's University Settlement House: a radical experiment in social work that foregrounded extra-curricular activities—art and music classes, theatre productions, recreational sports clubs, Sunday evening dances, and summer camps, but also language classes, library facilities, medical clinics and lunchrooms—as vital means for providing “lessons in citizenship and cooperative organization” (James 2001). Located in Toronto's Ward neighbourhood—a site of an influx of non-European immigration that middle class residents worried would disrupt the moral fabric of the city—the University Settlement House's activities were fastidiously documented by amateur photographers and now reside in the City of Toronto Archives.

As part of my wider project examining the history of photography and citizenship in Canada after 1947, this paper examines the ways photography, race, and extra-curricular activities came together as technologies of assimilation and settlement in the University Settlement House archive. But it equally asks how community members used these same technologies for acts of resistance, de-segregation and transnational alliance. Paying an inordinate amount of attention to these everyday images of extra-curricular activities that rarely circulated outside the walls of the settlement house, I argue that these photographs impart lessons of their own about the precarities of belonging in multicultural Canada.

Gabrielle Moser is an art historian, writer, and independent curator. She is the author of *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2019) and, with Adrienne Huard, co-editor of a special issue of *Journal of Visual Culture* on reparation (2022). Moser is currently at work on her second book, *Citizen Subjects: Photography and Sovereignty in Post-War Canada* (under contract with McGill-Queen's University Press). A founding member of EMILIA-AMALIA, Moser is Research Chair and Director of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art, and Associate Professor in Art History at Concordia University in Montréal.

MHRC PRESENTS:



MONTREAL MEDIA HISTORY SEMINAR

A series of public talks and discussions on recent media scholarship. All are welcome.

Contact: MHRC coordinator
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- September 25 Cait McKinney (Simon Fraser U)
- November 28 Gabrielle Moser (Concordia)
- January 22 Jennifer Stoeber (SUNY Binghamton)
- February 13 Will Straw (McGill)
- March 13 Sowparnika Balaswaminathan (Concordia)

Location and time TBA



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