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FOR
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21 FOR '21

A NEW LIBRARY
FOR A FEMINIST
FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

“We are beginning to understand that the world is always being made fresh and never finished.” Grace Lee Boggs wrote those words in *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*—a work she published at age 95 after having spent seven decades of her life fighting for civil rights, labor rights, and women’s rights. And of course she was right. Building the future is not a journey with an end point: *We’re here!* It’s an evolution, a series of moments—the one you live in being yours to seize.

So how does a person begin to think in fresh, new ways about the future? To go beyond whatever accepted truths we were raised with and learn to see new, transformational possibilities for women, girls, and nonbinary people? The 21 For '21 Syllabus is one place to start. In it, 21 visionary thinkers share works that they believe point the way to a better, more feminist tomorrow; works that have shifted their perspectives and opened their minds. We’ve organized the curriculum by contributor, instead of issue area, to punctuate the fact that there’s no one vision for the future. Rather, it’s a collective of individual voices, ideas, and agendas that form a broad intersectional road map.

We’re grateful to our contributors for building this road map—a kind of new feminist library-in-progress. The syllabus they’ve assembled is rich with solutions to challenges ranging from capitalism to the climate crisis to the care economy; gender-based violence to police violence; health care disparities to hierarchies. From W.E.B. Du Bois to Whoopi Goldberg, the materials referenced are wide-ranging, expansive, and not always in agreement with one another, like the humans creating (and reading) this list. Download it, and dip in wherever you feel inspired. Or create a group to dive into some of the works together. There’s room at the end for your notes—and your own essential works.

Which brings us back to that Grace Lee Boggs quote: “We are beginning to understand that the world is always being made fresh and never finished,” she wrote, “that activism can be the journey rather than the arrival.”

Onward.



RESHMA SAUJANI

FOUNDER, GIRLS WHO CODE AND MARSHALL PLAN FOR MOMS

Reshma Saujani has spent more than a decade building movements to fight for the economic empowerment of women and girls. As the founder of Girls Who Code, she worked to close the gender gap in technology—and now, with Marshall Plan for Moms, she is advocating for government policies to support moms impacted by the pandemic. Says Saujani, “Forcing a national reckoning around the way we still don’t value women’s work is crucial to the next chapter of our fight for gender equity.”

→ SHIRLEY CHISHOLM’S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENT

“Chisholm’s 1972 speech may seem like an odd choice for the ‘new’ feminist canon, but even while we celebrate all the amazing new work out there, let’s not forget where we came from—and the women whose fights made our current and future fights possible.”

→ THROUGH THE NIGHT

“A documentary by Loira Limbal, *Through the Night* is a portrait of three working New York mothers whose lives intersect at a 24-hour daycare center. This film is so important. We must elevate the stories of essential caregivers, like the real women in this film, and reckon with how we value care in our country.”

→ HOOD FEMINISM: NOTES FROM THE WOMEN THAT A MOVEMENT FORGOT, BY MIKKI KENDALL

“This book is urgently needed right now. Kendall not only points out problems with the feminist movement, but points us toward ways to fix them.”

→ JUST SOMETHING ABOUT HER WITH JENNIFER PALMIERI

“With a title inspired by one of my personal heroes, Hillary Clinton, this podcast is hilarious and smart, and gives you a window into a range of powerful women’s journeys. You’ll relate to their challenges, and their achievements will inspire you to keep going.”

→ THE HIGHWOMEN

“Named in homage of the legendary all-male country supergroup Highwaymen, this group of badass country women—including

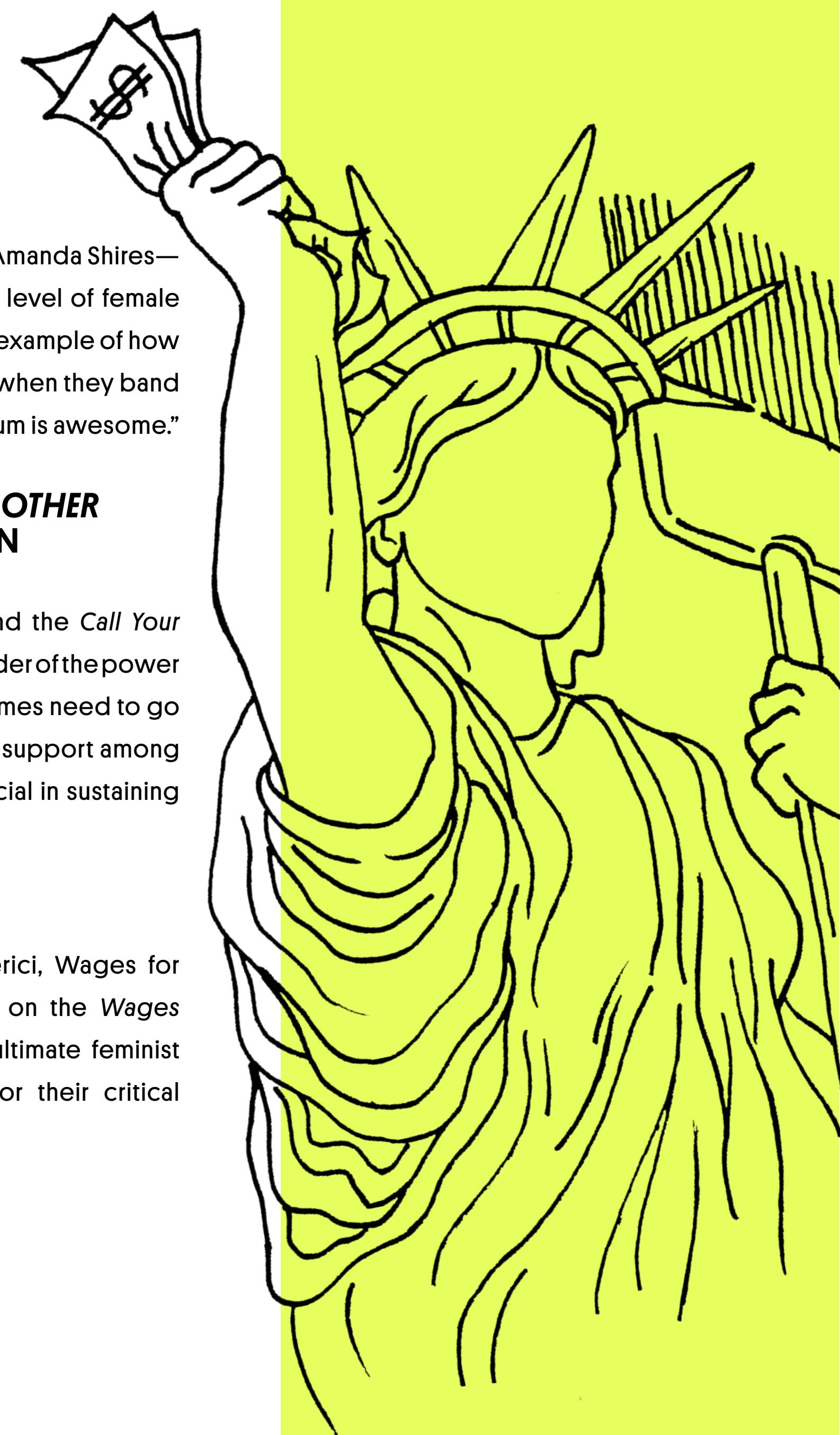
Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby, Maren Morris, and Amanda Shires—is making a statement about the still inadequate level of female representation in country music. They are a great example of how women can move the needle on gender equity when they band together and refuse to be ignored. And their album is awesome.”

→ BIG FRIENDSHIP: HOW WE KEEP EACH OTHER CLOSE, BY AMINATOU SOW AND ANN FRIEDMAN

“Written by the well-known best friends behind the *Call Your Girlfriend* podcast, this book is an important reminder of the power of female friendships and the lengths we sometimes need to go to keep the people we love close. Networks of support among women have been, and will continue to be, crucial in sustaining the gender equity movement.”

→ WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

“Edited by feminist and scholar Dr. Silvia Federici, *Wages for Housework*—published in 2017 as a reflection on the *Wages for Housework* campaign of the 1970s—is my ultimate feminist manifesto: We must value and pay women for their critical contributions. Now and always.”



**A FREER, FAIRER FUTURE
BEGINS WITH CHANGING
OUR POLICIES AND
CULTURE TO SHOW
THAT WE TRULY VALUE
WOMEN AND GIRLS...
AND FIXING OUR
OUTDATED AND BROKEN
SYSTEMS AROUND
CAREGIVING.”**

-Reshma Saujani



DR. AYANA ELIZABETH JOHNSON

MARINE BIOLOGIST, POLICY EXPERT, AND WRITER

Like many crises, the climate crisis puts women and people of color most at risk, with extreme weather events displacing us disproportionately. But Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson—cofounder of [Urban Ocean Lab](#) and [The All We Can Save Project](#) and cohost of the podcast [How to Save a Planet](#)—points out that women are also the most inclined to *fix* the crisis. Research shows that women are more likely to care about the environment, and to act on that care—and female legislators more strongly support environmental laws. For Dr. Johnson, there will be no future without women at the forefront of the climate movement.

PHOTO CREDIT: MARCUS BRANCH

→ THE FIGHT TO STOP OIL PIPELINES: “FOR WATER. FOR TREATIES. FOR CLIMATE.”

“This episode of the podcast *How to Save a Planet* (which I co-created and cohost) features four Indigenous women whose remarkable frontline anti-pipeline activism catalyzed a new wave of the climate movement. It also explains the role the climate community can play in the fight for Indigenous rights, inviting us all to stand by these remarkable leaders in the years ahead.”

→ THESE WOMEN ARE TRANSFORMING WHAT CLIMATE LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

“There’s really no way to summarize this conversation between Dr. Katharine Wilkinson, who leads The All We Can Save Project, and Maria Alejandra Escalante, Colombian climate justice activist at FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund. It spans psychology, philosophy, economic theory, gender, race, leadership, motherhood, and lessons from the pandemic. Trust me on this one.”

→ ATMOS’ THE FRONTLINE

“This is the only climate newsletter I read every single time it hits my inbox. Written by Yessenia Funes, the focus is on climate justice and it often features interviews with amazing women leading climate work in soulful ways.”

→ ALL WE CAN SAVE: TRUTH, COURAGE, AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE CLIMATE CRISIS

“An anthology of essays, poems, and illustrations written entirely by women, that I co-edited with Dr. Wilkinson. *Elle* magazine excerpted the essay Dr. Wilkinson and I wrote, “[Why We Need More Women Leading the Fight for the Planet](#),” which makes the case for why we need a feminist climate renaissance.”

“A freer, fairer future begins with feminist climate leadership.”
—Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

→ RAISING OUR HANDS: HOW WHITE WOMEN CAN STOP AVOIDING HARD CONVERSATIONS, START ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY, AND FIND OUR PLACE ON THE NEW FRONTLINES, BY JENNA ARNOLD

“I mean, the title sums it up pretty well. In the wake of the 2016 election, Arnold went deep into the research for this—including in suburban living rooms across America—and her insights are valuable.”

→ WE WILL NOT CANCEL US: AND OTHER DREAMS OF TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE, BY ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN

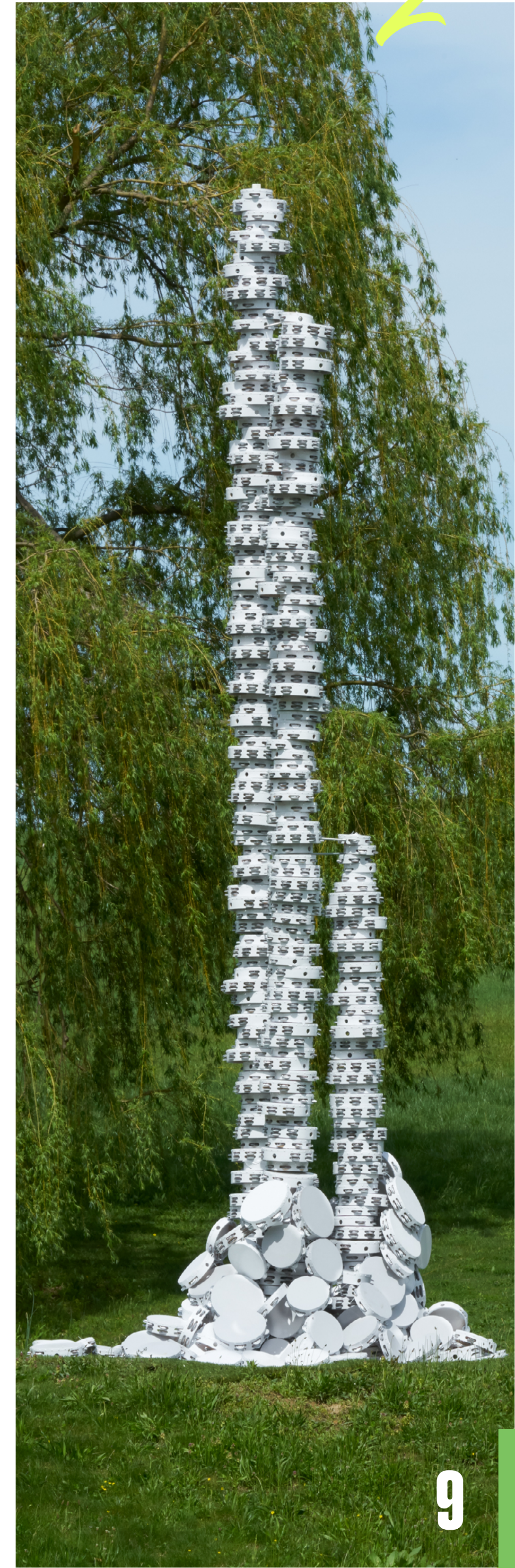
“This wave of quick-draw cancel culture *within* social movements is dangerous, particularly for women of color whose leadership is questioned at every turn. This book elegantly captures the precarity of this moment, offers a much-needed glossary, and suggests ways of conversing and convening that could lead to better movement outcomes.”

→ HOW WE SHOW UP: RECLAIMING FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, AND COMMUNITY, BY MIA BIRDSONG

“This book is a must-read for all of us who are thinking about how to build and nurture support systems beyond the biological immediate family, who want to think about family more expansively.”

ARTIST ALLISON JANAE HAMILTON’S INSTALLATION “THE PEO-PLE CRIED MER-CY IN THE STORM” (2018), AT RIGHT, CONTEMPLATES HOW CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS CAN EXPOSE EXISTING SOCIAL INEQUITIES, LEAVING COMMUNITIES TO CONTEND WITH TWOFOLD DEVASTATION

IMAGE: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY, NEW YORK AND ASPEN. © ALLISON JANAE HAMILTON. PHOTO CREDIT: JERRY L. THOMPSON.





EMILY LADAU

AUTHOR AND DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Emily Ladau, the author of the forthcoming book *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally*, thinks a lot about building a world that honors the humanity of all bodies and minds. “When we shift the paradigm toward accessible, disability-inclusive feminism,” she says, “we ensure that our fight for equity is truly for everyone.”

→ **CRIP CAMP: A DISABILITY REVOLUTION**

“For an intimate, exciting look at the historical context of the disability rights movement, this 2020 documentary directed by James LeBrecht and Nicole Newnham is the perfect starting point.”

→ **DISABILITY VISIBILITY: FIRST-PERSON STORIES FROM THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

“Filled with beautiful writing from a multitude of diverse disabled people, this book—edited by Alice Wong—will leave you with much to celebrate about disability culture.”

→ **SKIN, TOOTH, AND BONE: THE BASIS OF MOVEMENT IS OUR PEOPLE, BY SINS INVALID**

“An in-depth primer on the disability justice movement, *Skin, Tooth, and Bone* is vital reading to better understand that disability doesn’t exist in a vacuum, and to learn how and why centering the leadership of multiply marginalized disabled people is crucial for a more just, inclusive future. It’s based on the work of Patty Berne and Sins Invalid, which incubates and celebrates LGBTQ artists and artists of color with disabilities.”

→ **SITTING PRETTY: THE VIEW FROM MY ORDINARY RESILIENT DISABLED BODY, BY REBEKAH TAUSSIG**

“*Sitting Pretty* is the book I needed years ago as I grappled with my sense of self and my identity as a disabled woman, and the book that we need now to shift how we think about disabled womanhood.”

→ **THE ACCESSIBLE STALL: EPISODE 88: GENDER**

“In this episode of the podcast I cohost with my friend Kyle Khachadurian, we take a deep dive into our perspectives on how the social construct of gender interplays with disability—a topic

that must be addressed in gender-related conversations if we are to meaningfully move toward equity.”

→ **“I AM A BLACK WOMAN WITH A DISABILITY. HEAR ME ROAR,” BY CRYSTAL R. EMERY**

“This *Time* article is a bright, bold celebration of Black disabled womanhood and a rallying cry against anyone who dares to question it. Emery’s radical self-acceptance is the energy we need to practice embracing, as we cannot fight for love and acceptance without first finding ways to love and accept ourselves.”

→ **“IN THE WAY,” BY LAURA HERSHEY**

“In a world that insists disabled people—especially those who identify as female—take up too much space, this poem is a poignant reminder that not only do we have every right to be ‘in the way,’ but also that it is time for the world to make way for us.”



AT RIGHT, AN ILLUSTRATION OF ACTIVIST JUDY HEUMANN INSPIRED BY A SCENE FROM *CRIP CAMP: A DISABILITY REVOLUTION*

**A FREER, FAIRER
FUTURE BEGINS WITH
DISMANTLING ABLEISM
AND DECONSTRUCTING
ACCESS BARRIERS
SO EVERYONE CAN
COME AS THEY ARE.”**

—Emily Ladau



NATALIE FRANK

INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTIST

Natalie Frank is known for creating unforgettable female characters on the brink of radical self-discovery and transformation: Whether that's her gallery shows of drawings based on Brothers Grimm fairy tales or Story of O, or her latest, Cross-dressing for the Battlefield, a solo exhibition of feminist portraits that examines female identity and gender norms. (In a nod to artist Judy Chicago's iconic work *The Dinner Party*, Frank's exhibit features a cast of defiant women, including a cross-dressing Joan of Arc, all positioned around a table.) "Liberation, imagination, and freedom," she says, "are core to a feminist future."

→ KÄTHE KOLLWITZ'S WORKS

"Kollwitz was the first artist whose work I was introduced to, and when I looked at her work from the early 20th century, I saw the world through a grown woman's eyes for the first time. You can feel the weight of womanhood in her self-portraits, in her images of bereaved mothers, and in her famous print Raped, which to my knowledge is one of the first depictions of sexual violence from a woman's vantage point. I see empathy in Kollwitz's representations of women, and it's compassion that will sustain us through this time of tremendous suffering."

→ WANGECHI MUTU: A FANTASTIC JOURNEY

"The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum has given many women and female-identifying artists their first major museum shows, including Wangechi Mutu. In *A Fantastic Journey*, Mutu depicted female figures as part human, animal, plant, and machine in fantastical landscapes. I remember walking around the exhibition, and women were becoming animals, climbing up the walls. There's a metaphor in there for the future. With a little imagination, walls and barriers become a canvas you can turn into your own world."

→ BORN IN FLAMES: FEMINIST FUTURES

"For her first show at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Holly Block Social Justice Curator Jasmine Wahi assembled a group exhibition, in which 14 female and nonbinary artists envision the future and imagine new realities."

→ "THE RUNAWAY"

"I'm a huge fan of the work of choreographer Kyle Abraham, especially "The Runaway," which was his first piece for New York City Ballet. His shows mix traditional ideas of how men and

women dance. By disrupting conventional gender norms, we can give men, and women, agency over their own futures."

→ SOUL(SIGNS): AN ASL PLAYLIST

"Conceived by my friend Brandon Kazen-Maddox for the Until Now Collective, Soul[Signs] reimagines 10 songs by iconic black women like Gladys Knight and Nina Simone as ASL music videos. [You can watch them on Broadstream, a new arts streaming platform, when it launches.] Brandon's work has expanded my own thinking around communication as well as how important it is to make space for accessibility, queerness, exploration, and joy."

→ THE ISLAND OF HAPPINESS, TALES OF MADAME D'AULNOY

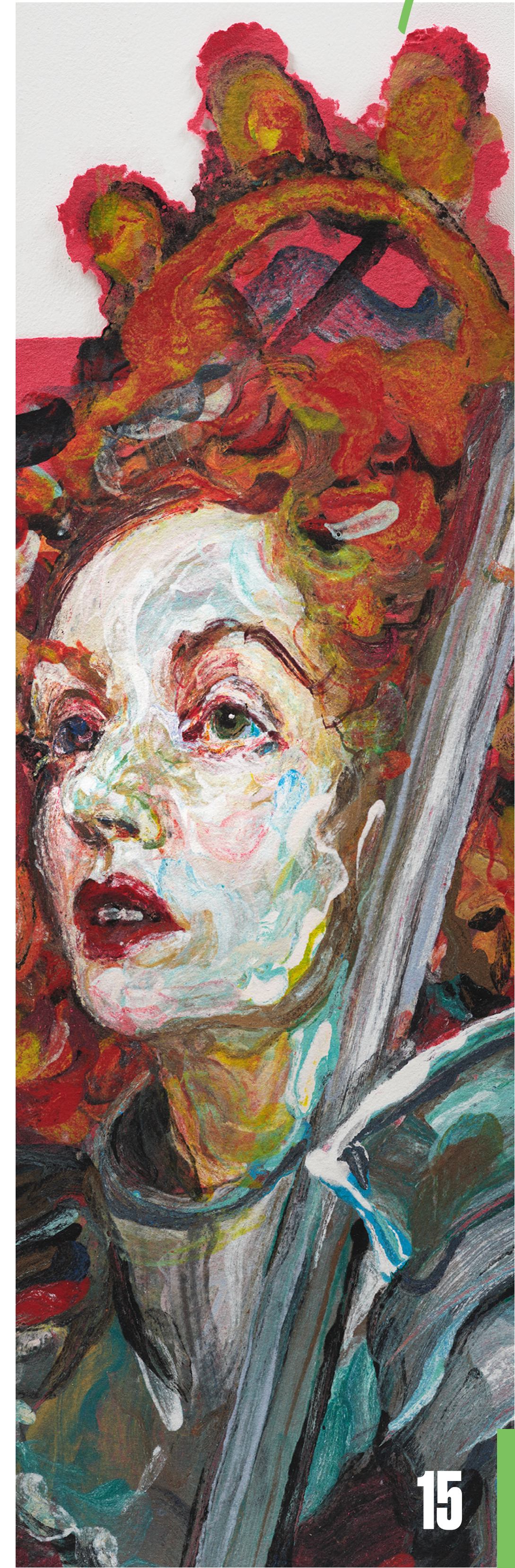
"Considered the first literary feminist fairy teller in history, Madame d'Aulnoy invented the word *conte de fée*, or fairy tale. My new book, in collaboration with the fairy-tale scholar Jack Zipes, resurrects the mother of the fairy tale and pairs her tales with my drawings. Importantly, in her stories, the fairies hold the power. Centuries later, that notion still points the way."

"Art shows us what's possible long before we figure out how to make it exist."

-Natalie Frank

NATALIE FRANK'S OWN "WOMAN WITH ARMOR" [2021] FROM *CROSS-DRESSING FOR THE BATTLEFIELD*, AT RIGHT

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF FARZAD OWRANG





JOSE ANTONIO VARGAS

FOUNDER, DEFINE AMERICAN

Jose Antonio Vargas is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Emmy-nominated filmmaker, Tony-nominated producer, and a leading voice for the human rights of immigrants, as founder of Define American. He believes that the fight for immigrant rights is unequivocally tied to the fight for feminist liberation. “These two social justice movements are as intersectional as ever,” he says, “knowing that there are so many immigrant women fighting for gender equity in addition to immigrant rights.”

PHOTO CREDIT: GERRY SALVA CRUZ

→ **LINGUA FRANCA**

“Isabel Sandoval wrote, directed, and starred in *Lingua Franca*, one of my favorite films of the past two years, a story about a character that is rarely seen on-screen: an undocumented, Filipina trans woman. Sandoval delivers a magnificent, nuanced performance, which will leave you with a greater recognition of the resilience and strength that’s required to navigate life as an undocumented immigrant and trans woman in America.”

→ **THE SOUL OF A WOMAN, BY ISABEL ALLENDE**

“Chilean writer Isabel Allende’s memoir speaks to early feminist identification—growing up in South America during the 1960s, influenced by her mother’s experiences. Allende’s memoir informs us about how the fight for gender equity and feminist liberation can begin at a young age, and points to the issues we must expand on to make that dream of a freer, fairer future a reality.”

→ **LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE, BY CELESTE NG**

“I am in absolute awe and admiration of everything that the amazing Celeste Ng does! As an Asian American, she wrote this supremely real, nuanced novel, and later a television series, that keeps on opening people’s eyes to issues of race, class, privilege, and motherhood. A must-read or [watch!](#)”

→ **CREATE DANGEROUSLY: THE IMMIGRANT ARTIST AT WORK, BY EDWIDGE DANTICAT**

“Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat describes life as an immigrant artist detailing stories of injustice and inequality. This is one of the best memoirs/essays I have ever read. We must shed light on narratives like hers if we’re going to build a more equitable future.”

→ **ANNE OF GREEN GABLES, BY LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY**

“Written by a Canadian immigrant in the early 1900s, this series of children’s books introduced me to a female heroine as a protagonist for the first time, in this case, a young girl. Reading this book series in my youth was truly transformational because it showed the importance of representation; today, this book continues to remind me of how expanding our notions of representation is key to our future.”

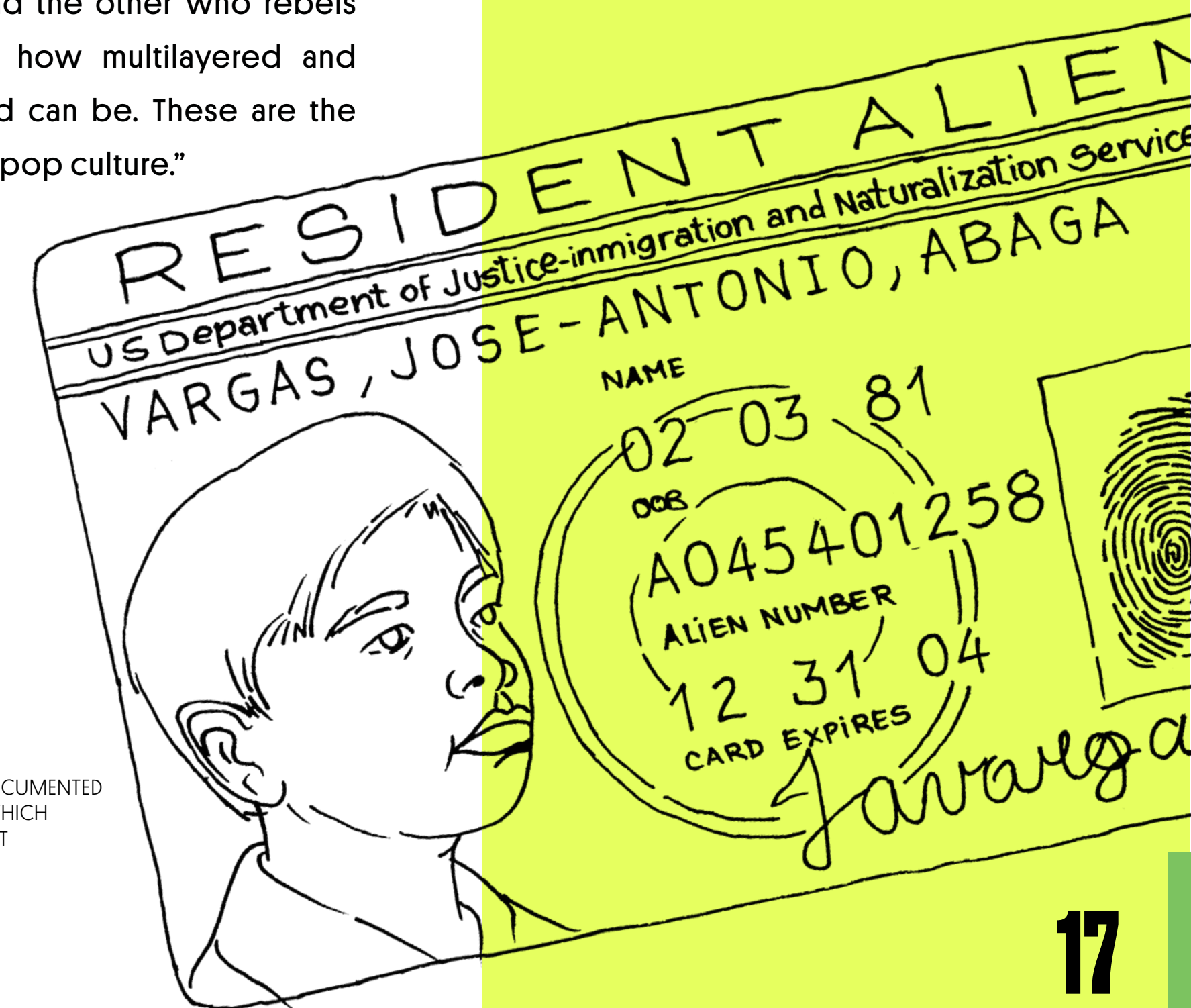
→ **I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER, BY ERIKA L. SÁNCHEZ**

“As the daughter of Mexican immigrants, Erika L. Sánchez wrote a coming-of-age tale that is a love letter to daughters of immigrants everywhere. By juxtaposing two sisters—one who embodies what a young immigrant ‘should be’ and the other who rebels against these notions—she points to how multilayered and nuanced an immigrant family household can be. These are the kinds of depictions we need more of in pop culture.”

IN *DEAR AMERICA*, VARGAS WRITES ABOUT HIS LIFE AS AN UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT. AT RIGHT, AN ILLUSTRATION OF HIS GREEN CARD, WHICH HE LEARNED WAS FAKE WHEN HE WENT TO THE DMV AT 16 TO GET HIS DRIVER’S LICENSE

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF JOSE ANTONIO VARGAS

“A freer, fairer future begins with powerful immigrant women.”
-Jose Antonio Vargas





ALICIA GARZA

PRINCIPAL, BLACK FUTURES LAB AND THE BLACK TO THE FUTURE ACTION FUND

Alicia Garza knows how to bring people together to create a better future.

As one of the country's leading organizers, she's founded Black Futures Lab, co-created #BlackLivesMatter and the Black Lives Matter Global Network, and acted as a senior advisor for the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Garza believes building Black political power is central to advancing gender equity. She says: "A freer, fairer future begins with undoing the rigged rules that leave us out and leave us behind."

→ **BLACK RECONSTRUCTION IN AMERICA 1860–1880, BY W.E.B. DU BOIS**

"This book outlines the Reconstruction period that immediately followed the Civil War, and the missed opportunities and alliances that could have ushered in an America where Black communities were powerful. If we are in another Reconstruction moment now, where the country looks to come together when we've fallen apart, how might we think about what we can learn from the first period of Reconstruction that we can carry forward into this one?"

→ **ROADS TO DOMINION: RIGHT-WING MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL POWER IN THE UNITED STATES, BY SARA DIAMOND**

"This book is my go-to for understanding how the conservative movement in the United States became the powerhouse that it is today, shaping culture and policy in ways that have left lasting impressions on every aspect of our lives. If we hope to be successful in building a new world, we need to understand the powerful movement that we are up against, their agenda, their strategies, and their methodology."

→ **SISTER CITIZEN: SHAME, STEREOTYPES, AND BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA, BY MELISSA V. HARRIS-PERRY**

"This book is critical to understanding the politics of citizenship, identity, and gender as expressed through Black womanhood in America. Black women are the heart of this country—from our economy to our democracy to our society. But if Black women are being kept from being full citizens of this nation, what are the prospects of citizenship for the rest of us? How can the movements we build ensure that no one gets left behind?"

→ **PATRIARCHY AND ACCUMULATION ON A WORLD SCALE: WOMEN IN THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR, BY MARIA MIES**

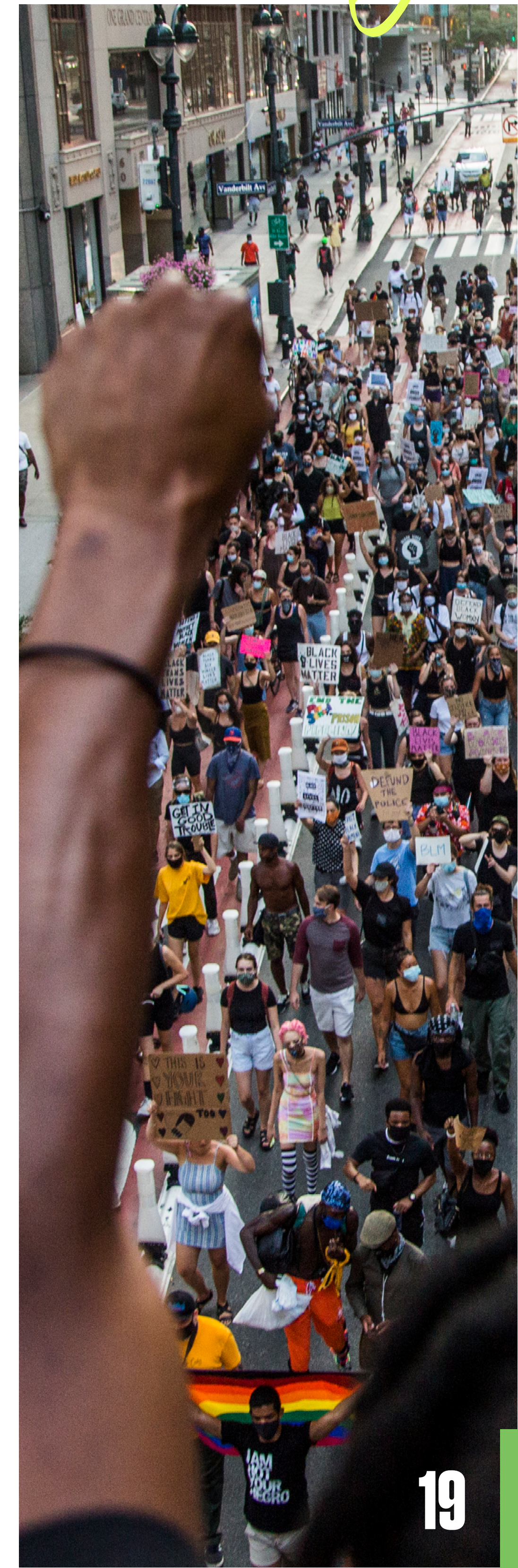
"This book is critical to understanding patriarchy and the economy, and in particular, how patriarchy drives the global political economy. You've heard of 'the patriarchy' before—but what exactly is the patriarchy? And how is it shaping our lives? If patriarchy is global, do our movements also need to be?"

→ **LADY DON'T TAKE NO, WITH ALICIA GARZA**

"My podcast *Lady Don't Take No* explores politics and pop culture through a feminist lens, giving all of the real and none of the fake."

→ **AFFIRMATIVE ACTS, BY JUNE JORDAN**

"My all-time favorite poet who explores Blackness, feminism, and liberation through her beautiful poetry."



PROTESTERS IN NEW YORK CITY'S TIMES SQUARE SUPPORTING BLACK LIVES MATTER IN JULY 2020

PHOTO CREDIT: GETTY

POWER IS ABOUT WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN, AND WHY—AND FOR TOO LONG, BLACK COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF POWER. WE HAVE TO CHANGE THE RULES.”

-Alicia Garza



PHOEBE ROBINSON

STAND-UP COMEDIAN, NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, AND ACTRESS

As a comedian, Phoebe Robinson's approach is, quite simply, to be "as authentic as possible."

Now, through her book imprint, Tiny Reparations Books, and production company, Tiny Reparations Productions, she's turning that motto into a movement. When Robinson envisions a feminist future, she imagines a world where all women are free to be themselves.

→ **EVERY WHOOPI GOLDBERG PERFORMANCE**

"From her one-woman show on Broadway to comedic performances in the *Sister Act* movies to a dramatic turn in *The Color Purple*, Whoopi has had an incredibly wide-ranging career. Women, and definitely dark-skinned Black women, are still not encouraged to take those kinds of risks, but Whoopi did—and EGOT'd. To me, Whoopi is the blueprint for the future: being left of center, doing what feels authentic. So I think people should revisit her entire résumé!"

→ **RHYTHM NATION 1814**

"This Janet Jackson album delves into feminist themes like race, love, and sexual exploration—topics that are as important to the future of feminism as they were 30 years ago when this album was released. These songs have something to say, and they'll make you dance your butt off."

→ **I MAY DESTROY YOU**

"Michaela Coel's HBO/BBC series shows a woman coming back from sexual assault and taking control of her own narrative—and it could be on this syllabus for that reason alone. But as a writer, I'm also moved by the truth of her writing in the series, which draws on her own story of sexual assault."

→ **KWAME BRATHWAITE: BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL**

"Images can sell a narrative, either a negative or a positive one. And to this day, Black people are still photographed through the white, often exploitative, gaze. Books like *Black Is Beautiful* honor the autonomy of Black people, and point to a future where we control our own image."

"A fairer, freer future begins with you and me, bringing the authenticity." —Phoebe Robinson

→ **SADE**

"With social media, there's this expectation that women are supposed to live their entire lives in front of a camera—be subjected to scrutiny, change based on public opinion, and offer proof of that change on social media again. To me, it's powerful to see an example of a woman who rejects that culture. And that's why I put Sade on this curriculum for the future. We should all study her willingness to be like, 'I will only tell you about myself through my music.'"

→ **THE GIFTS OF IMPERFECTION, BY BRENÉ BROWN**

"We live in a world that still tells women they have to be perfect. I highly recommend reading this Brené Brown book to unlearn some of that. It reminded me that feminism is not about perfection; it's about trying your best, failing, and trying again anyway."



ROBINSON CALLS WHOOPI GOLDBERG, AT RIGHT, "THE BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE"



GABRIELA GARCIA

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, OF *WOMEN AND SALT*, FEMINIST AND MIGRANT JUSTICE ORGANIZER

In Gabriela Garcia's debut novel, the *New York Times* bestseller *Of Women and Salt*, she writes about five generations of mothers and daughters, from Cuba to Mexico. [These are women she knows well, as she herself is the daughter of immigrants from Mexico and Cuba, raised in a "matrilineal family."] In her book, a mother snaps back after she is thanked for sacrificing everything for her daughter. She asks: "Is that what you think? That I'm supposed to sacrifice everything?" Garcia feels those words viscerally. "There can be no freer, fairer feminist future," she says, "without asking why we fetishize maternal sacrifice rather than questioning the material conditions that force sacrifice."

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRIA LO

→ **DETRANSITION, BABY, BY TORREY PETERS**

"In this novel, a trans woman, a cis woman, and a [detransitioned] cis man decide to raise a baby together. This novel speaks to expansive notions of womanhood, motherhood, and family that I ache for in an imagined feminist future."

→ **THE ARGONAUTS, BY MAGGIE NELSON**

"I have never stopped thinking about this brilliant work of auto-theory that interrogates notions of gender, motherhood, and family and provides nuanced thinking about love."

→ **ANA MENDIETA'S EARTH BODY SERIES**

"The late Cuban-born artist was a very close friend of my aunt's, and in recent years I returned with my aunt to the site of some of Ana Mendieta's series in the Jaruco mountains in Cuba. I was struck by how much the conversation about the intersections between earth, women, bodily autonomy, and power still speaks to the current moment."

→ **POSTCOLONIAL LOVE POEM, BY NATALIE DIAZ**

"In this poetry collection, Natalie Diaz speaks to desire: the personal, the political, a future free of settler colonialism, and what kind of love would flourish there."

→ **QUEEN & SLIM**

"This film, directed by Melina Matsoukas, is about police violence, and it's about love—love between two strangers, love for community, love for Blackness, and a radical politic rooted in love."

→ **THE SELECTED WORKS OF AUDRE LORDE**

"When I think about feminist futures, I think about what we can carry from the past too, about the women who carved space so we might have these visions now. And I have loved emerging myself in the brilliant mind of Audre Lorde, one the most influential feminist thinkers and a favorite poet, through this book of her writings, edited and introduced by my mentor Roxane Gay."

"Mothers and daughters play a critical role in shaping a future full of joy and freedom."

-Gabriela Garcia

NO FEMINIST SYLLABUS WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT AUDRE LORDE, AT RIGHT

PHOTO CREDIT: GETTY





JACKSON KATZ, PH.D.

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT,
MVP STRATEGIES

As an educator, author, and activist scholar, Jackson Katz, Ph.D., has been a major figure in the intersectional and global movement of men working to prevent gender violence and promote gender equality. Nearly 5 million people watched his TED Talk, "[Violence Against Women—It's a Men's Issue](#)," and many more have viewed his *Tough Guise* videos and read his critically acclaimed books, *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*, and *Man Enough?: Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity*. Katz's work focuses on masculinities and violence. His bottom line: "We must move toward more egalitarian, non-violent iterations of 'manhood' that are more sustainable and adaptable to 21st century social, political, and environmental challenges."

PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SHOUL

→ **THE GENDER KNOT: UNRAVELING OUR PATRIARCHAL LEGACY, BY ALLAN JOHNSON**

"Filled with profound insights about gender, race, and power, this classic book challenges men [and anyone with social advantage] to step off the path of least resistance and do more to push for justice."

→ **THE MASK YOU LIVE IN**

"Jennifer Siebel Newsom's documentary features a dynamic interplay between an ethnically and racially diverse and impressively introspective group of young men... and an empowering message for the future—that true strength in men resides in resisting pressures to conform to narrow and confining ideals of manhood and forging holistic, healthier, and adaptive identities for the 21st century."

→ **HIP HOP: BEYOND BEATS AND RHYMES**

"Groundbreaking and eye-opening, Byron Hurt's documentary film examines—with loving care and fearless analysis—the often narrow and constricting gender, sexual, and racial politics of mainstream rap music and culture. Hurt himself is a hip-hop head and a visionary profeminist, anti-racist educator and filmmaker."

→ **VOICE MALE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE PROFEMINIST MEN'S MOVEMENT**

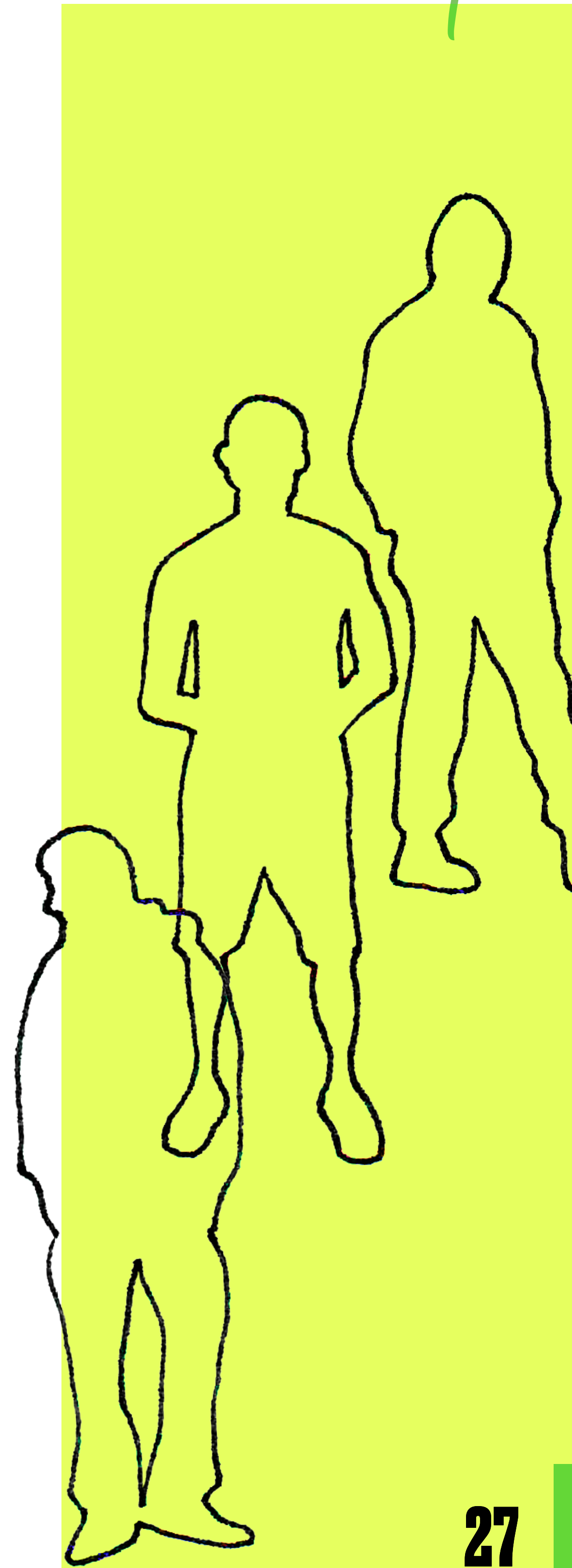
"This is the best collection of intersectional profeminist men's writing from the late-20th to early 21st centuries. Edited by Rob A. Okun, *Voice Male* contains articles written [mostly] by men across the ethnic, racial, and sexual identity spectrum about everything from men's violence against women, to fatherhood, LGBTQ issues, men's health, and the past, present, and future of masculinity."

→ **LOVE AND WAR: HOW MILITARISM SHAPES SEXUALITY AND ROMANCE, BY TOM DIGBY**

"Written by philosopher Tom Digby, *Love and War* is a brilliant and concise exploration of the dilemmas of human connection in a militarized, male-dominated culture and dares to envision a future of sexual and romantic relationships between the sexes free of martial values and war metaphors ['battle between the sexes']."

→ **THE MAN CARD: WHITE MALE IDENTITY POLITICS FROM NIXON TO TRUMP**

"Anyone who wants to understand why there has never been a woman elected president of the U.S. needs to see this documentary film directed by Peter Hutchison and Lucas Sabeau [hint: 'it's the masculinity, stupid'], especially if they want to help future women candidates navigate the complex terrain they face in a retro political culture that continues to see 'toughness' and 'leadership' as 'masculine' traits."



ILLUSTRATIONS INSPIRED BY THE COVER OF VOICE MALE

**A FREER, FAIRER
FUTURE BEGINS WITH
A REENVISIONING
OF CULTURAL IDEAS
ABOUT 'MANHOOD'
AWAY FROM THE LIMITED
AND FREQUENTLY
OPPRESSIVE
CONTEMPORARY
MODEL."**

-Jackson Katz, Ph.D.



ELIZABETH NYAMAYARO

HUMANITARIAN AND AUTHOR,
I AM A GIRL FROM AFRICA

Elizabeth Nyamayaro had a beautiful childhood in a village in Zimbabwe, living with her “Gogo” [her grandma], whom she describes as a fierce feminist fighter. Then a drought hit, destroyed the crops, and left her near starving. A fellow African woman working for UNICEF saved her life and inspired her career as a humanitarian, telling her: “As Africans we must uplift each other.” When Nyamayaro, who later became the United Nations senior advisor on gender equality, thinks about the future of feminism, she’s reminded of those words, and as a part of her list, she’s sharing work that centers solutions by Africans, for Africans.

→ **DEAD AID: WHY AID IS NOT WORKING AND HOW THERE IS A BETTER WAY FOR AFRICA, BY DAMBISA MOYO**

“This book unflinchingly confronts one of the greatest myths of our time: that billions of dollars in aid sent from wealthy countries to developing African nations has helped to reduce poverty and increase growth. It provides a bold new road map for financing development of communities in need.”

→ **I WRITE WHAT I LIKE: SELECTED WRITINGS, BY STEVE BIKO**

“An anti-apartheid activist, Steve Biko shares his conviction that Black people in South Africa could not be liberated until they united to break their chains of servitude. The book will inspire and educate all of us about the way that multiple aspects of discrimination—involving gender, race, sexuality, class, disability, and more—converge in people’s lived experiences.”

→ **SUNGI MLENGEYA, TANZANIAN ARTIST**

“Sungi Mlengeya’s art centers around women, specifically Black women. She sheds a light on their stories: their journeys, struggles, accomplishments, and relationships with their immediate societies. Her work will inspire us all to live our lives freely and uninhibitedly.”

→ **WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS, BY CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE**

“The book tackles the issue of feminism in the 21st century—one rooted in inclusion where women’s rights are as important as men’s rights. A future where we are all liberated from entrenched gender norms and stereotypes.”

*“The future begins with ‘ubuntu,’
a recognition of our shared humanity.”*
-Elizabeth Nyamayaro

→ **I AM A GIRL FROM AFRICA, BY ELIZABETH NYAMAYARO**

“My book explores issues of gender inequality globally—and to quote *Oprah Daily*, it is a book that ‘a girl from anywhere needs to soar.’ It is my hope that my story empowers girls globally to dream big, realizing that their dreams should not be limited by where they are born, nor their potential be limited by their current circumstances.”

→ **“VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN—IT’S A MEN’S ISSUE”**

“Jackson Katz’s bold and blunt TED Talk challenges male privilege and points out how violence against women is intrinsically a men’s issue. The talk is an open invitation for men to play an active role in ending gender-based violence and discrimination in our society.”

→ **MISS REPRESENTATION**

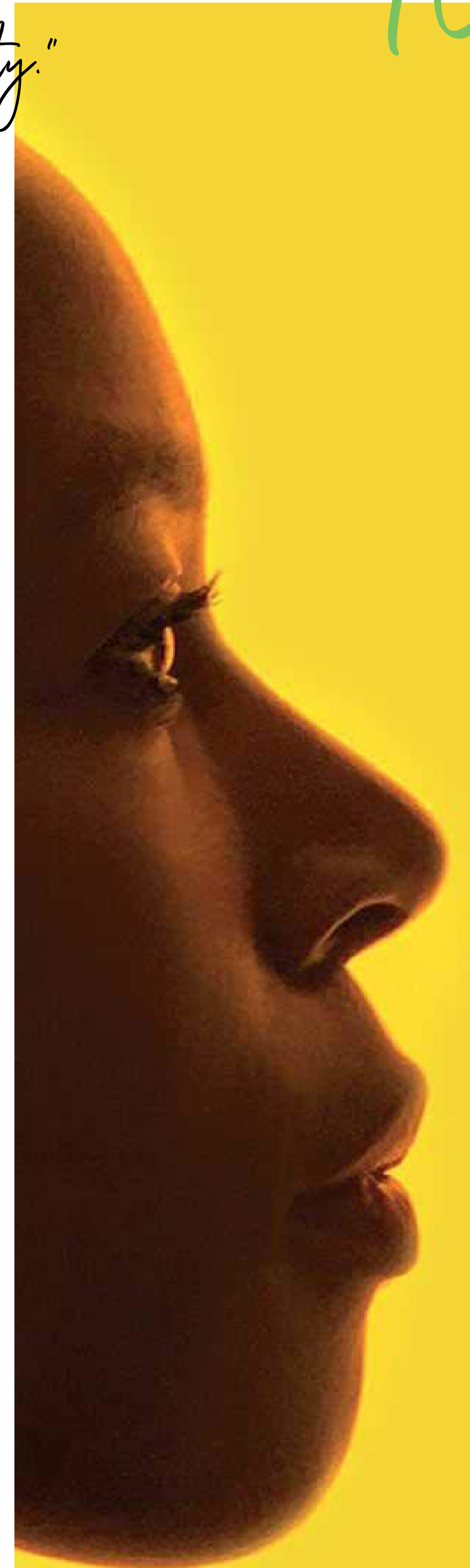
“This documentary, written and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, questions the glaring reality we live with every day but fail to see—how the media’s limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and girls make it difficult for women to feel powerful and achieve leadership positions.”

→ **“RUN THE WORLD (GIRLS)”**

“This Beyoncé song is a rallying call for girl empowerment, and in so many ways it is also a necessary acknowledgement of women’s contributions to society.”

A MUST-READ: ELIZABETH NYAMAYARO’S *I AM A GIRL FROM AFRICA* (SAMPLE OF COVER, AT RIGHT)

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF BEHIND THE CAUSE



10



JULISSA ARCE

ACTIVIST, WRITER, PRODUCER

Julissa Arce is the best-selling author of *My [Underground] American Dream* (which she's currently adapting for TV with America Ferrera) and the forthcoming *You Sound Like a White Girl: The Case for Rejecting Assimilation*. To imagine the future, Arce starts by reflecting on history. "The past informs our path forward," she says, "and we cannot envision a future of feminism without studying the history and significant contributions of Latinas."

→ **ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING WRITTEN BY YESIKA SALGADO...**

"... starting with her poetry collections *Corazón*, *Hermosa*, and *Tesoro*. The Salvadoran poet is teaching all of us to appreciate the bodies our souls occupy, to push back against outdated views of the roles women should play, and to unapologetically love ourselves."

→ **A DREAM CALLED HOME: A MEMOIR, BY REYNA GRANDE**

"Through her brilliant writing, the Mexican-American author details her experience as a first-generation Latina college student and shows us all what it is like to pave your own path as a woman—to do it against expectations, in the middle of the chaos—and to make a home for your dreams."

→ **ISABEL**

"This three-part HBO Max docuseries chronicles the life of living legend Isabel Allende, the world's most widely read Spanish-speaking writer, who has given a voice to women who are so often exploited, abused, and thrown away. The Chilean-American author has broken every boundary, and through her work, she's helping us all to break free from the status quo."

→ **CHICANA MOVIDAS: NEW NARRATIVES OF ACTIVISM AND FEMINISM IN THE MOVEMENT ERA**

"Edited by Dionne Espinoza, María Eugenia Cotera, and Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Movidás* will introduce you to Latina feminist icons whose efforts have gone uncelebrated for far too long. This book is essential reading for anyone who wants a complete history and vision of intersectional feminism."

"A freer, fairer future begins with you, me, us." -Julissa Arce

→ **LOOSE WOMAN: POEMS, BY SANDRA CISNEROS**

"No syllabus about a feminist future would be complete without Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros, and specifically without her poetry collection *Loose Woman*. Get ready for your 'raw navajas, glint, and passion' to come out in you, which you will absolutely need to carve out a feminist future."



LEARN MORE ABOUT ICON ISABEL ALLENDE (ILLUSTRATED AT RIGHT) BY WATCHING ISABEL ON HBO MAX



SHARMEEN OBAID-CHINOY

DIRECTOR, *SAVING FACE
AND A GIRL IN THE RIVER:
THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS*

Two-time Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy sees the future of feminism every day in the subjects of her films. “I am constantly inspired by the women I meet on my journey as a filmmaker,” she says. “Women who work tirelessly far from the glaring eyes of the headlines, who put their lives on the front line to create a better tomorrow for other women in small towns and villages, in communities and cities around the world. It is their stories that lay the foundation of feminism worldwide.”

→ *THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN: ACTIVISM, ISLAM, AND DEMOCRACY, BY AYESHA KHAN*

“I grew up hearing stories my grandmother told me of a Pakistan where women were free, a very different country than the one I opened my eyes in. Ayesha Khan’s book is a deep dive into how we lost our way and why I didn’t get to see the country my grandmother so lovingly spoke of. With the women’s movement in Pakistan at risk of shrinking, this book shows its enduring relevance.”

→ *WE SINFUL WOMEN, BY KISHWAR NAHEED*

“I love reading Kishwar Naheed’s poem “We Sinful Women.” It reminds me of the countless stories I have heard from women in hushed tones in the inner sanctum of their homes. Women who have defied the odds and stood up to violence and a male-dominated super structure.”

→ *CONFESSIONS OF SUCCESSFUL ASIAN WOMEN WITH ALIYA JANJUA*

“When I listen to Aliya Janjua’s podcast about successful Asian women, it reminds me that so many women in this part of the world are shattering glass ceilings while their societies are bound by culture and tradition. It makes what they do even harder when their own families often oppose their choices. The women she features are a constant reminder that women can indeed kick open doors.”

→ *AURAT AZADI MARCH ISLAMABAD STREET ART*

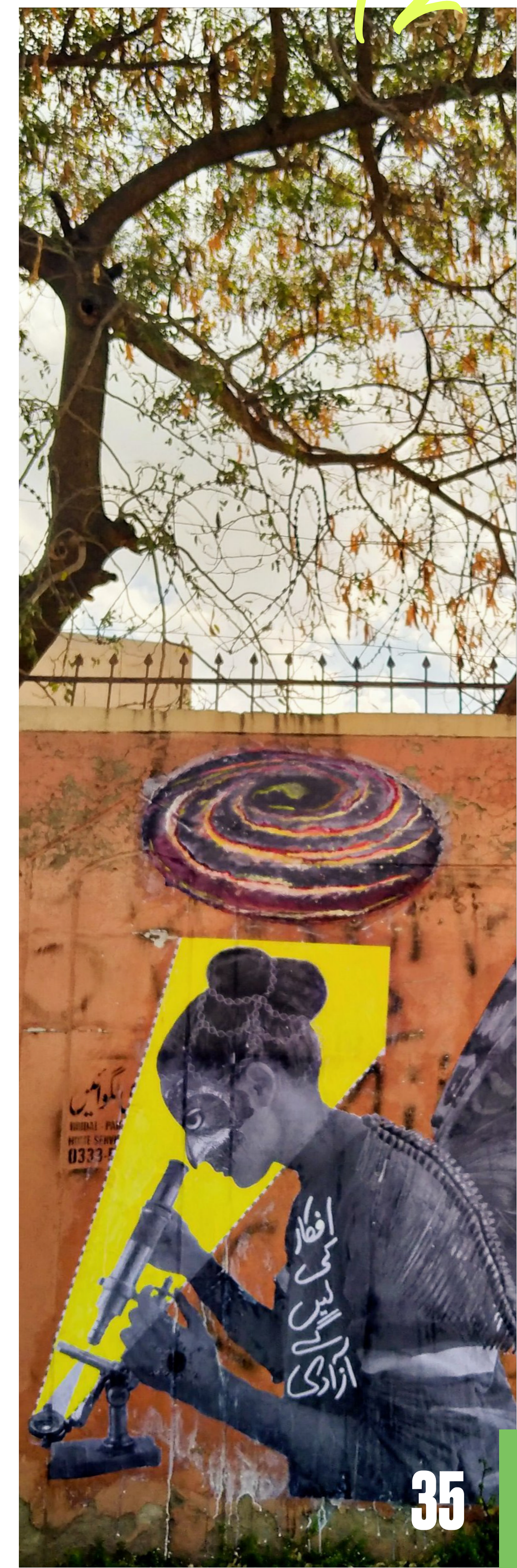
“During International Women’s Week this year, a team of street artists designed and pasted a series of images that inspired us to reimagine Pakistani women. These images sparked discussion across the capital city of Islamabad, where they were pasted. This is how young Pakistani women are choosing to express themselves in a country that is just learning about the power of women.”

→ *“MERA NAHI HAI”*

“This song is sung by The All Girl Band. The lyrics encourage young women to accept themselves and fight societal pressures: *No one is like you...that is your power.* In Pakistan, that is bold advice, and its very existence speaks volumes about how things are changing.”

STREET ART IN ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF [AURAT AZADI MARCH ISLAMABAD](#)



**A FREER, FAIRER FUTURE
BEGINS WITH KICKING
OPEN DOORS THAT HAVE
PREVIOUSLY BEEN
CLOSED TO US,
SO OTHERS CAN JUST
WALK THROUGH.”**

—Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy



FATIMA GOSS GRAVES

LAWYER, ACTIVIST, OPTIMIST

As president and CEO of the National Women's Law Center, Fatima Goss Graves leads the fight for gender justice in the courts, public policy, and society. "To move forward, we must recognize that racial disparities do not just happen; we have baked structural racism into our society," she says. "We must reject the idea that our care economy—child care, paid leave, elder care—is a personal problem. And rather than perpetuating the idea that harassment and violence are to be handled individually, we must place the responsibility on our institutions. If we uproot these old ideas, we can chart a path toward a freer and fairer future."

PHOTO CREDIT: FORD FOUNDATION

→ JUSTICE GINSBURG'S DISSENTS

"Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's legacy of dissent inspires me, especially because she did not necessarily write for any precise moment (though the *Ledbetter v. Goodyear* dissent did prompt Congress to pass the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act). Rather, she put a stake in the ground and reminded us of the value of dissent, of articulating a framework for the next generation to follow, and of naming harms to real people and to the law. In *Gonzales v. Carhart*, writing in dissent, she detailed how federal restrictions on abortion were rooted in sex discrimination, outdated ideas about women's place in society, and a desire to control our reproductive freedoms and futures. Even as our constitutional underpinnings of legal access to abortion are rooted in privacy, I have never forgotten that they are also rooted in equality and justice."

→ THE PURPOSE OF POWER: HOW WE COME TOGETHER WHEN WE FALL APART, BY ALICIA GARZA

"In her book *The Purpose of Power*, Alicia Garza reminds us...that it is worth it to do the hard work of staying together to build our collective power."

→ "JUICE"

"I love listening to 'Juice' by Lizzo, and yes to the line 'If I'm shining, everybody gonna shine.' I believe our power expands when shared...and that wins breed more wins."

→ 1619

"While I don't listen to a lot of podcasts, I listened to every bit of the Nikole Hannah Jones' *1619* podcast. I felt like I was hearing the history of the United States through the stories of my own family."

"I believe our power expands when shared...
and that wins breed more wins."
— Fatima Goss Graves

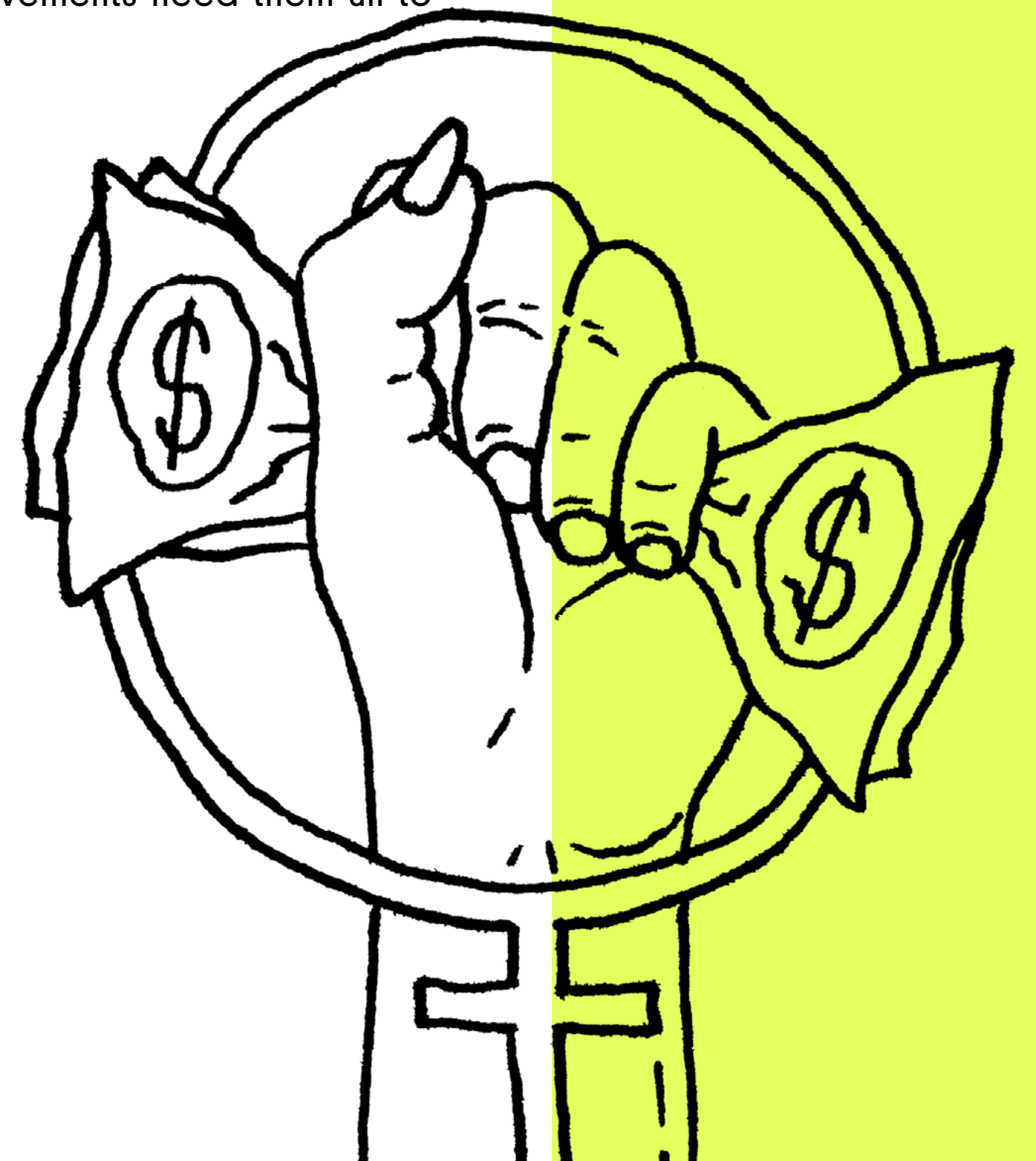
Our movement cannot forget about the power of storytelling as a core strategy. And what a reminder of our deep need to reckon with our history to understand the path forward."

→ GOOD AND MAD: THE REVOLUTIONARY POWER OF WOMEN'S ANGER, BY REBECCA TRAISTER

→ ELOQUENT RAGE: A BLACK FEMINIST DISCOVERS HER SUPERPOWER, BY BRITTNEY COOPER

→ AND RAGE BECOMES HER: THE POWER OF WOMEN'S ANGER, BY SORAYA CHEMALY

"In 2018 I read three books about women's anger: These books helped crystalize the potency of rage when organized, as well as helped me see the harm of suppressing that rage. Reading these led me to the understanding that rage and joy and love are not inconsistent ideas.... Our movements need them all to harness our power."





BIRD RUNNINGWATER

DIRECTOR, SUNDANCE INSTITUTE'S INDIGENOUS PROGRAM

For 20 years, Bird Runningwater [who belongs to the Cheyenne and Mescalero Apache Tribal Nations] has guided the Sundance Institute's investment in Native American and Indigenous filmmakers while building a global Indigenous film community. In that time, nearly 150 Indigenous filmmakers have been mentored and supported through Sundance Institute Labs, Grants, and Fellowships, and Runningwater has curated more than 110 films from Indigenous filmmakers to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. Runningwater's vision for the future builds on the wisdom of his ancestors. For this Syllabus, Runningwater, who has a new show, *Sovereign*, in development with Ava DuVernay and Sydney Freeland for NBC, shared this contribution.

PHOTO CREDIT: KAZ KIPP [NEZ PERCE]

Many Indigenous Nations—that have existed since long before British/French/Spanish/American colonization—practiced women-centered societal structures and leadership. I come from two Tribal Nations who still practice their own forms of matriarchy to this day. This is in absolute defiance of the gender-binary, male-dominated, Judeo-Christian founding principles of the invading countries and upon which the United States is founded. As Tribal Nations continue to evolve and flourish, Indigenous matriarchy is a strong influence and consideration in their futures.

I believe a new feminist canon, especially in the U.S., must include points of view on Indigenous ancestral matriarchy. Because this practice is held in theory and cultural practice embedded within Tribal knowledge, there are few published works to reference. But here are some authors where Indigenous matriarchy is embedded in their works:

- SARAH DEER (MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION)
- LOUISE ERDRICH (TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA)
- LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON (ALDERVILLE FIRST NATION)
- KIM SMITH (DINÉ)

"A freer, fairer future begins with Indigenous matriarchy."
-Bird Runningwater

AN APACHE GIRL AT HER SUNRISE DANCE ON THE SAN CARLOS APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION IN ARIZONA.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDERS RYMAN AND ALAMY STOCK PHOTO





JENNIFER FINNEY BOYLAN

PROFESSOR, AUTHOR,
THE NEW YORK TIMES OPINION
WRITER

No matter how bad things get, you can trust that Jennifer Finney Boylan's words will provide a subtle sense of optimism about the future. In a [recent opinion column for *The New York Times*](#), Boylan—who's a contributing opinion writer as well as a Barnard professor and the author of 16 books, including *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*—described how it's her late father's spirit that helps her feel a "reckless, inexplicable hope for this banged-up world, a place so beautiful and so sad." For her contribution to the Syllabus, she wrote this beautiful letter about the path forward.

At the end of *The Return of the King*, Frodo says, "We set out to save the Shire, and it has been saved. But not for me." Now, in 2021, I begin to fear that I'll never be the person I was before 2016, that four years of The Former Guy, combined with a year and a half locked inside, have left me once and for all as a more vulnerable, worn down soul.

So as I look to the future, a lot of what I'm interested in is healing and solace.

The music of Yasmin Williams provides both. Her work on the acoustic guitar is nothing short of amazing: original, imaginative, brilliant. For anyone who thinks of folk music as the province of white men wearing overalls, Williams' music says *think again*.

I'm also restored to life by the writing of transgender memoirist, poet, and essayist Joy Ladin. My favorite work of hers is the memoir, *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders*, which was (among other honors) a finalist for The National Jewish Book Award. Ladin's writing is wise and lyrical: She writes better than anyone else I know about the way trans people search for god. You can also watch her [TEDx Talk](#), "Ain't I a Woman?"

The paintings of Susan English are both gentle and unsettling. These abstract forms feel, to me, strange and uncanny—but there's something familiar about them too. When I look at them, I feel as if some part of myself I didn't even know I had lost has been restored. Her process is pretty wild too. Her paintings aren't

aren't painted; they're poured. [Which reminds me of that old *Saturday Night Live* bit about the cereal made out of rocks and pebbles: "Because Quarry isn't grown; it's mined!"]

I am determined to stay in this fight, in spite of the losses of the past five years. But I'm also determined to find a little joy. For me that means pizza, alcohol, and dogs. [My favorite cocktail book is from Death & Co](#); the best pizza cookbook is probably Ken Forkish's *The Elements of Pizza*. You want to adopt a dog, with whom you can hang out while you eat your pizza and drink your cocktail? A good place to start is [Petfinder.com](#).

I reread *The Lord of the Rings* every couple of years, too. If you've only seen the films, it's worth reading the whole thing. Its spell remains deep on me, even though there are almost no female characters. At one point, Éowyn says, "I want to be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren."

I want that too. Stories and music will help, as we work our way, day by day, back toward the light.



MUSIC FOR A MOVEMENT: YASMIN WILLIAMS, AN ACOUSTIC FINGERSTYLE GUITARIST, AT RIGHT



RENEE BRACEY SHERMAN

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WE TESTIFY

Renee Bracey Sherman's vision for the future is driven by reproductive justice, which "centers folks of color, queer folks, and all who are marginalized," she explains. "I believe that feminism is made stronger with reproductive justice's sex-positive, anti-capitalist, anti-white supremacist structural analysis and practices of centering Blackness at its core." That, and abortion access for all.

→ **LITTLE WOODS**

"Directed by Nia DaCosta, *Little Woods* is the clearest depiction of what it's like to obtain an abortion in the United States. It's a modern Western film about two sisters fighting to save their home, dodging the criminal injustice system, and navigating our nation's horrific lack of access to health care, all while grappling with the complexity of family. The film is a dire warning of what is to come if we continue to leave low-income families, rural communities living with addictions, formerly incarcerated women, mamas, and folks of color out of our most important health policy decisions."

→ **KILLING THE BLACK BODY: RACE, REPRODUCTION, AND THE MEANING OF LIBERTY, BY DOROTHY ROBERTS**

"Roberts' seminal work is the key to understanding how reproductive rights have been undermined and unsupported through the experiences of Black people in the United States. Reading the book sheds new light on history's 'heroes,' and the Black women they sacrificed for political gain, creating the devastating landscape and the racialized misogynistic tropes that thrive today."

→ **ORDINARY EQUALITY**

"In their podcast, cohosts Kate Kelly and Jamia Wilson explore the history of abortion, from ancient methods to the future of access we seek. Through historic audio, interviews with experts and people who've had abortions, and stories of their own personal evolutions on the issue, they take listeners on a journey to understand where we've been and where we need to go."

→ **OURS TO TELL**

"I'm an executive producer on this short documentary, which features some of We Testify's storytellers. It explores the lives of four people of varying gender identities and races who've had abortions and the impact it's had on their lives and families now, and the futures they are creating. The film invites audiences to open their hearts going forward to the myriad reasons people choose to terminate a pregnancy."

→ **MEDICAL BONDAGE: RACE, GENDER, AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN GYNECOLOGY, BY DEIRDRE COOPER OWENS**

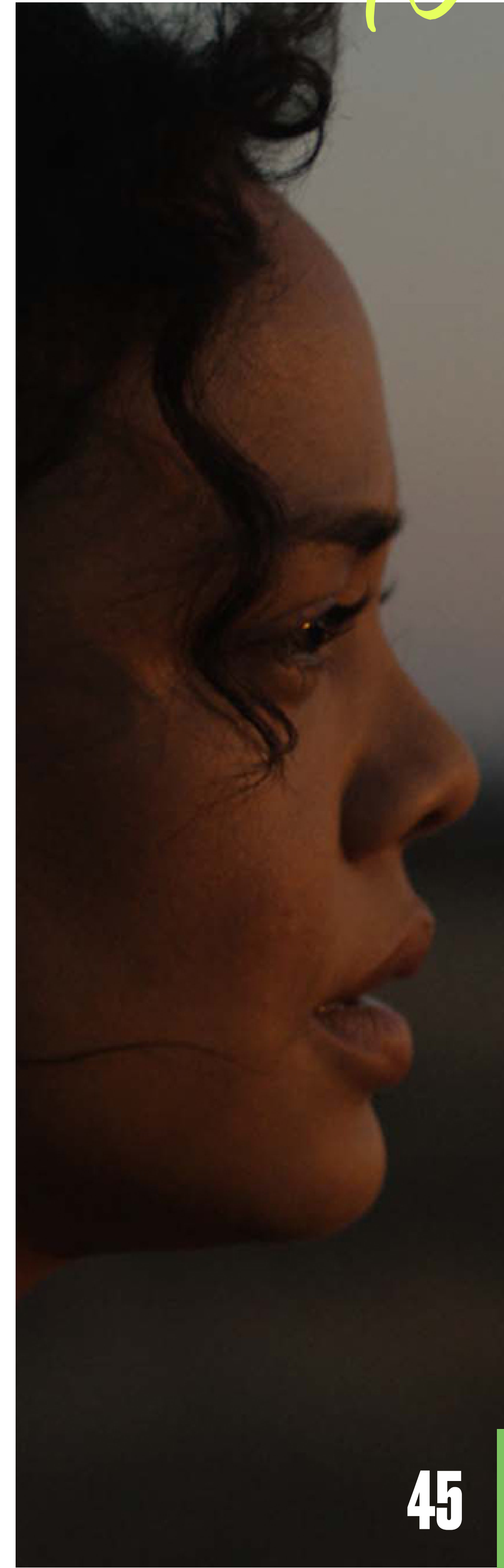
"Cooper Owens' meticulously researched book takes readers back through the history of gynecology and explores the way Black, Brown, enslaved, and indentured people were sacrificed in the name of science and saving white women's lives. This book is an essential read for anyone who advocates for reproductive rights—to understand our history so it is not repeated."

→ **WORK WON'T LOVE YOU BACK: HOW DEVOTION TO OUR JOBS KEEPS US EXPLOITED, EXHAUSTED, AND ALONE, BY SARAH JAFFE**

"Jaffe's insightful reporting on workplaces, gender, race, and reproductive labor leaves readers curious about our own role in a capitalist society. The book explores how our most revered jobs are feminized and then devalued, and invites us all to build a movement that revolts against jobs that exploit workers and treat them as disposable."

REQUIRED VIEWING: TESSA THOMPSON, AT RIGHT, IN *LITTLE WOODS*

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF *LITTLE WOODS* MOVIE



**IN ORDER TO HAVE A FREER
AND FAIRER FEMINIST
FUTURE, I BELIEVE
EVERYONE MUST BE ABLE
TO LIVE AND LOVE FREELY,
EXPERIENCE CONSENSUAL,
JOYFUL, AND ABUNDANT
SEX, AND DECIDE WHAT
THEY WANT THEIR FAMILIES
TO LOOK LIKE ON THEIR
OWN TERMS.”**

—Renee Bracey Sherman



MONA CHALABI

DATA JOURNALIST

Chances are you've seen Mona Chalabi's powerful drawings and data visualizations: Her timely graphics illuminating a wide range of feminist issues—from Covid-19's disproportionate toll on women in the workforce to abortion access to police killings—regularly go viral on Instagram. Chalabi's work has earned her honors from the Royal Statistical Society and exhibitions at several galleries including the Tate. (She's also co-creator of *Vagina Dispatches*, an Emmy-nominated video series that explores cultural and political dynamics around women's bodies.) When Chalabi thinks about the future, she imagines a redistribution of power.

→ **"NO ROMANCE," BY TIRZAH**

"OK, it might sound tenuous, but I really try to live by the words of this song, which for the most part are just: *No romance, no romance*. I think a feminist future is one without nostalgia for the past or romance about the present."

→ **DISABILITY VISIBILITY: FIRST-PERSON STORIES FROM THE 21ST CENTURY, EDITED BY ALICE WONG**

"This essay collection covers such a broad range of types of disability. The authors explore what it's like when you're living in a society that stigmatizes you for failing to fit in while also failing to adapt to your needs."

→ **PATSY: A NOVEL, BY NICOLE DENNIS-BENN**

"I loved this book [about a Jamaican woman who leaves her family to go in search of a new life in Brooklyn] for the complexity of the people in it—especially the portrayal of a mother [Patsy] who declined some of her responsibility and isn't presented as a piece of shit for having done so."

→ **MOMS, BY YEONG-SHIN MA**

"It's a graphic novel! About moms! With a thoroughly plausible fight scene in it. It's a wonderful reflection on middle-aged life, a period when many women are hidden away in our storytelling."

→ **TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA'S DRAWINGS**

"It's always difficult to describe why someone is your favorite artist. I guess all I can say is that the bodies in Odutola's work don't feel like 'characters' or 'subjects' [words I hate]; they just feel like real people who have exes and allergies."

→ **WTF VISUALIZATIONS**

"Finally, I recommend the Tumblr WTF Visualizations, where you'll see plenty of examples of bad data visualization. Some of it is just funny, but some of it shows just how powerful this tool can be when it comes to misleading and misinforming the public."

"A freer, fairer future begins with questioning the status quo."
 —Mona Chalabi

MONA CHALABI, IN A SELF-ILLUSTRATION, AT RIGHT

ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY OF MONA CHALABI
 PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF RICKY RHODES





JAMIA WILSON

FEMINIST ACTIVIST, WRITER, AND SPEAKER

As vice president and executive editor at Penguin Random House and the former executive director and publisher of the Feminist Press, Jamia Wilson is one of the most powerful people in publishing. She's also a literary activist: She believes books are weapons against ignorance and injustice—shaping and shifting systems of power. Wilson [who recently teamed with illustrator [Aurélia Durand](#) on the forthcoming *This Book Is Feminist* for next-gen changemakers] asks: “What can you do with your strengths, community, and values to help change the course of the future?”

→ **THE FEMINIST UTOPIA PROJECT: FIFTY-SEVEN VISIONS OF A WILDLY BETTER FUTURE**

“In this vibrant and accessible collection of essays, artwork, and more, edited by Alexandra Brodsky and Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, over 50 insurgent feminist voices envisage possibilities for a more just world. Mia McKenzie, Joey Soloway, Melissa Harris-Perry, Lori Adelman, Julie Zeilinger, Melissa Gira Grant, and Janet Mock provide a diverse array of insights on how to build a brighter and more inclusive future for all of us.”

→ **I LOVE MYSELF WHEN I AM LAUGHING...AND THEN AGAIN WHEN I AM LOOKING MEAN AND IMPRESSIVE: A ZORA NEALE HURSTON READER, EDITED BY ALICE WALKER**

“When I was a teen, my late mother handed me a first-edition copy of the landmark collection of Hurston’s short stories, novels, reportage, and folktales, and it expanded my thinking about creative vision...and what it means to commit one’s life to audaciously living your truth. When I worked at the Feminist Press, we crowdsourced a reissue of Hurston’s classic text, which is as relevant to our future as it was over 40 years ago. Zora Neale Hurston’s words inspired my own personal motto: We must define ourselves or someone else will.”

→ **COLONIZE THIS! YOUNG WOMEN OF COLOR ON TODAY’S FEMINISM**

“After witnessing Islamophobic and misogynistic hate speech and threats on my campus in the aftermath of 9/11, I actively sought out stories that uplifted the realities of women of color with a global perspective. *Colonize This!* was a powerful book for many reasons, but largely because it provided a sense of community on the page.

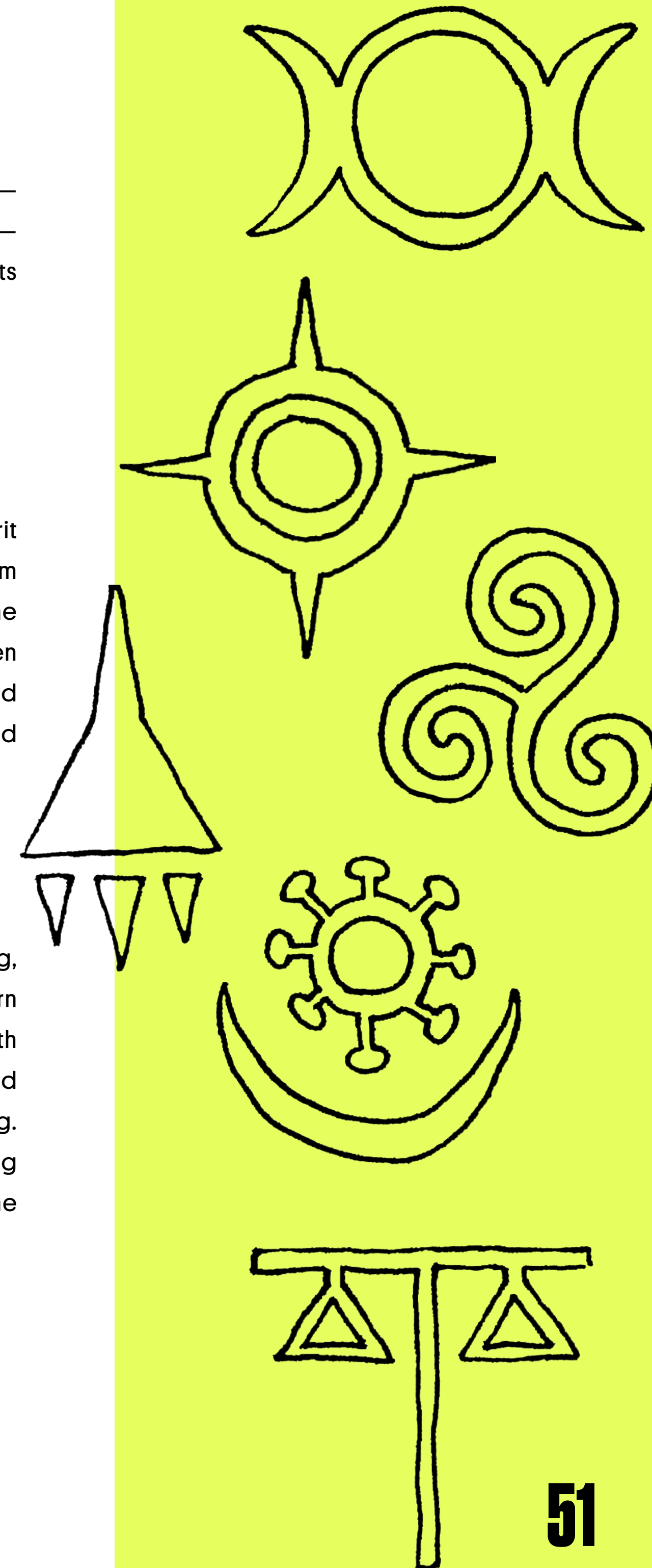
Edited by Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman, the new edition—revised and updated in 2019 for a new generation of readers—covers the impact of Black Lives Matter, transgender rights activism, and student immigration justice actions.”

→ **MARY MAGDALENE REVEALED: THE FIRST APOSTLE, HER FEMINIST GOSPEL & THE CHRISTIANITY WE HAVEN’T TRIED YET, BY MEGGAN WATTERSON**

“As a progressive Christian feminist who is also a person of spirit and faith, I gain strength from reading about and learning from the stories of spiritual women of all backgrounds who paved the way for seekers today. Meggan Watterson unearths the hidden and silenced realities of Mary Magdalene’s life and legacy...and points to a more liberated relationship with spirituality, faith, and the prophetic leadership of women who came before us.”

→ **PARENTING FOR LIBERATION: A GUIDE FOR RAISING BLACK CHILDREN, BY TRINA GREENE BROWN**

“Trina Greene Brown’s podcast and book about connecting, raising, educating, and inspiring liberated Black children was born out of an Afrofuturistic vision for the world...By collaborating with Parenting for Liberation, I learned how to better parent myself and the little people in my life with radical love and freedom seeking. No matter how old you are, this book and community will bring you and those around you both growth and joy. Now that’s the future of parenting for sure.”



ONCE I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT FEMINISM IS ALWAYS IN MOTION AND THAT I— AND ALL OF US— CAN PLAY A ROLE IN SHAPING IT, I FOUND A SENSE OF DEEP PURPOSE IN MY LIFE.”

-Jamia Wilson



ESTHER CHOO, MD, MPH

FOUNDER, EQUITY QUOTIENT

A prominent champion of race and gender equality in medicine, emergency physician Esther Choo, MD, MPH, founder of Equity Quotient, believes that medicine's top priority lies not just in the lab or the ER but in our approach to justice. "We must recognize the inequities built into our systems and societies," she says, "so that we can do the substantive work to ensure that all people can not only survive but thrive."

→ **MEDICAL APARTHEID: THE DARK HISTORY OF MEDICAL EXPERIMENTATION ON BLACK AMERICANS FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT, BY HARRIET A. WASHINGTON**

"This is foundational reading for understanding the history of racism in health care and medical research. It is impossible to build a fairer future without fully reconciling ourselves with the realities laid out in this text."

→ **THE PROBLEM WITH RACE-BASED MEDICINE**

"In Dorothy Roberts' TEDMED Talk, she challenges us to examine how race is harmfully embedded into our current practice of medicine. 'What if doctors joined the forefront of a movement to end the structural inequities caused by racism, not by genetic difference?' she asks. What if we did?"

→ **DR. CAMARA PHYLLIS JONES EXPLAINS THE "CLIFF OF GOOD HEALTH"**

"Nearly everything Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones says or writes provides insightful ways of thinking about health, public health, racism, and health equity. This video, in collaboration with the Urban Institute, is a powerful, brief explainer."

→ **MINARI**

"I'm sure no one thinks of this award-winning film about a Korean-American family who moves to an Arkansas farm in pursuit of the American dream as having anything to do with health. But as a physician and public health advocate, I was struck by the health crises at the center of this story: the son's heart condition, the mother's stress, the halmoni's stroke. It reminded me how health care gaps are not caused by any one factor—language, culture,

"It is impossible to build a fairer future without fully reconciling ourselves with the history of racism in health care—and the many ways our current systems uphold that past."
—Esther Choo, MD, MPH

distance, or poverty—but by compounding vulnerabilities that we must address as a whole if we are to achieve health equity."

→ **ASIAN AMERICANS**

"This PBS documentary series puts the racism and violence that Asian Americans are experiencing right now into the context of our history in this country—and gives us a trajectory for the conversations we need to have in order to heal."

→ **EVERY DAY IS A GIFT: A MEMOIR, BY TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

"Senator Tammy Duckworth [D-IL] is a biracial immigrant and veteran who grew up in poverty, improbably survived an attack on her helicopter while serving in Iraq, became the first woman with a disability in Congress, and was the first senator to cast a vote with her newborn on the Senate floor. Her mind-blowing story and career uncover many critical gaps in our health care system, especially for women—and points to policy priorities in upcoming years."

→ **THE HALF OF IT**

"And finally, this teen Netflix film is about friendship, communication, and overcoming isolation, stereotypes, and social conventions to connect and love authentically—exactly what the doctor ordered for recovery from this long year-plus of distancing!"

THE PBS DOCUSERIES *ASIAN AMERICANS*, AT RIGHT, EXPLORES THE ROLE ASIAN AMERICANS PLAY IN U.S. HISTORY

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES





JASMINE WAHI

HOLLY BLOCK SOCIAL JUSTICE CURATOR, THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS; CO-DIRECTOR, PROJECT FOR EMPTY SPACE

For her curatorial debut at The Bronx Museum this year, Jasmine Wahhi assembled *Born in Flames: Feminist Futures*. “This exhibition has prompted me to do a lot of soul searching,” she says. “Each artist has introduced me to brilliant new ways of thinking and radical new worlds. The exhibition is ultimately a constellation of visions for the future, because I personally could not settle on one monolithic idea of what the future means.” For the Syllabus, she’s chosen work from the exhibit, as well as material that collectively inspired its contributors.

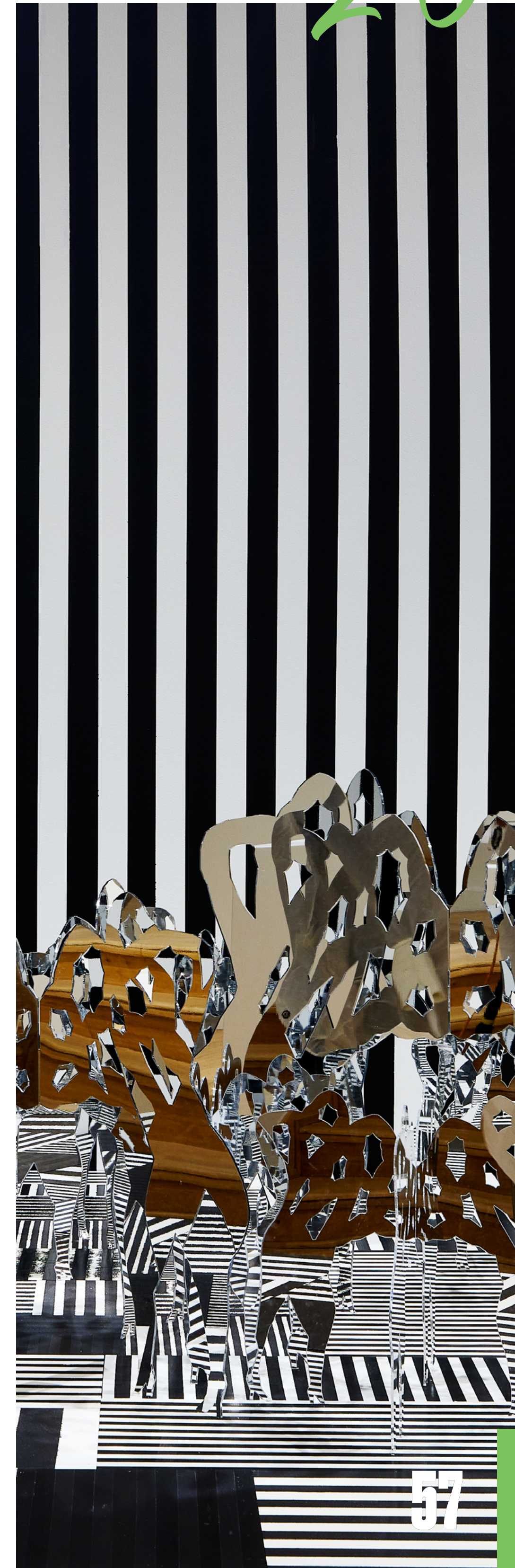
- **PARABLE OF THE SOWER, BY OCTAVIA E. BUTLER**
 “Every artist in this exhibit, and every artist I have spoken to who is interested in futurism, mentions Octavia E. Butler. Butler’s ability to create beauty from the chaos of a post-apocalyptic world, as she did with the *Parable* books in the nineties, has inspired all of us. Butler unapologetically positions Black women as the saviors of her grand worldsapes, which is revolutionary, particularly when considering the landscape of science fiction writing. Her work has helped me in how I think about my own life and direction as a futurist and a feminist.”
- **BORN IN FLAMES**
 “Created by feminist filmmaker Lizzie Borden in 1983, this film predicted a dystopian future, set in a 21st-century New York City, where a socialist government [in theory] still maintains the accoutrements of a capitalist society—racism, intersectional inequity, classism, sexism, and iniquitous hierarchies. Violence against queer people and women of color runs rampant. What struck me most about this film, watching it nearly half a century after it was released, was how depressingly predictive it was about our present. In 2021, we are still fighting for our basic rights to safety, freedom, liberty, and true justice. This film complicates the idea of a future that is either utopian or dystopian. But somewhere couched in both the film and in our present day is the potential for something better.”
- **SULTANA’S DREAM, BY ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN**
 “Commonly known as Begum Rokeya, she was a 19th century Muslim feminist visionary and political activist in Bengal. In her 1905 short story *Sultana’s Dream*, she depicts a feminist utopia [called Ladyland] in which women run everything. In Ladyland, the women are aided by technology, which allows for an anti-capitalist and anti-hierarchical world with laborless farming and flying cars. Feminist scholars there have learned how to harness the power of the sun to control the

weather. There is no crime, and the workday is only two hours long. The religion is one of love and truth. Who wouldn’t be inspired?”

- **CAITLIN CHERRY’S “HER WIDESCREEN TETRA”**
 “As an intersectional feminist, I’m particularly interested in bodily autonomy, and how femme bodies, especially femme bodies of color and Black femme bodies, have operated under particular types of ‘gaze,’ while also subverting that gaze for our own pleasure and benefit. Caitlin’s painting [2021], which is housed in a massive spaceship-like frame, predicts a future where Black femmes exist on their own terms in their own spaces of pleasure.”
- **SHOSHANNA WEINBERGER’S “TRAVERSING THE INVISIBLE LINES”**
 “Weinberger’s installation [2021] featuring mirrored sculptures explores a future in which racial lines are blurred and blended. The piece, which is made up of black and white stripes in different sizes and directions along with the voluptuous sculptures, is meant to create a sense of discombobulation for the viewer. No matter where one stands, one is never able to see themselves wholly—but is instead a fractured constellation of selves.”
- **MARÍA BERRÍO’S “THE PETITION”**
 “This bronze sculptural piece [2019] lives in a state of ambiguity. The central figure, which is a replica of the artist herself, lies on her back. It is unclear if she is resting or if she is deceased, whether the birds are scavenging around her body, or whispering sweet nothings to her. In ‘The Petition,’ the inevitability of death unsettles assumed hierarchies, reestablishing the preeminent position of nature above society and culture. Our future liberation requires an understanding of our place in nature, not something to be dominated and ordered, or somehow beyond the rhythms of the world.”

AT RIGHT: SHOSHANNA WEINBERGER’S “TRAVERSING THE INVISIBLE LINES”

ARTWORK: COURTESY OF SHOSHANNA WEINBERGER
 PHOTO CREDIT: ARGENIS APOLINARIO FOR THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS



A FREER, FAIRER FUTURE IS ONE THAT IS UNBOUND BY OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BINARY THINKING. THE FUTURE SHOULD EMBRACE THE GRAY AREA—THE IN-BETWEENS AND INTERSTITIAL SPACES.”

-Jasmine Wahj

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Which works in the Syllabus have you seen, read, or consumed? What other essential work do you think belongs on this Syllabus? Fill in your ideas as you go, and if you're so inclined, send them to us below.

SUBMIT YOUR ANSWERS >

→ **NOTES ON WHAT I'VE STUDIED:**

→ **AND THESE ARE MY OWN RECOMMENDATIONS—THE WORKS I THINK HELP POINT THE WAY TO THE FUTURE**

BOOK

PODCAST

FILM

ART

SONG

OTHER

You

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Emily Mahaney [editor]

Bianca Alvarez [art director]

Luis Aparicio [illustrator]

Stacy Cousino [copy editor and fact-checker]

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COVER:

Cover: Artist and activist Paola Mendoza performing “A Rapist In Your Path” in front of a New York City courthouse during the Harvey Weinstein rape trial. “A Rapist in Your Path” is a performance piece protesting violence against women; it was created by the Chilean feminist performance group LASTESIS.

Photo credit: Ginny Suss

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