**Humanities Initiative Project Support, Fall 2014**

*The Terms of Media* conferences ($10,000)
Wendy Chun, Modern Culture and Media

This project entails two international conferences, to take place at Brown University (in October 2015) and at Leuphana University in Lueneburg, Germany (in June 2015), and an innovative series of publications based on these conferences. The goal of these conferences is to produce definitive interventions into media theory, by engaging with the often elliptical “terms of media.” That is, rather than produce a series of explanatory keywords to describe media theory, we will investigate and delineate the conditions (the “terms”) under which media is produced, as well as the ways in which our uses of media impact and change these terms. The aim is also to strengthen ties between Brown University and the Centre for Digital Culture and Digital Cultures Research Lab, both at Leuphana University, as well as other cultural and arts-based organizations in Germany.

**Coco Fusco, visiting artist** ($3,400)
Wendy Edwards, Visual Arts

Coco Fusco is a Cuban-American interdisciplinary performance artist and writer whose award-winning work explores the politics of gender, race, war and identity. She has performed, lectured, exhibited and curated in many of the world’s most prestigious exhibition and performance venues since 1988. Working in a variety of formats, she has staged multi-media productions incorporating large-scale projections, closed-circuit television, web-based live streaming performances with audience interaction, as well as performances at cultural events that actively engage with the visitors.

**The VII International Conference on Transatlantic Studies at Brown** ($7,000)
Julio Ortega, Hispanic Studies

The Transatlantic Project is a cross-departmental academic initiative begun in 1996-97 with a series of colloquia at Brown and the University of Cambridge. Humanities Initiative funds will provide partial support for the 2015 colloquium, to be held at Brown in April, 2015. Topics will include new popular genres, the politics of memory, representing violence, new social contracts, migration, communication, archives and digital perspectives, as well as theoretical considerations on the concept of the transitional as change of political regimes.

**Humanities Initiative Project Support, Spring 2014**

**The Andean Project** ($4,200)
Laura Bass, Hispanic Studies; Jeremy Mumford, Department of History

This project is designed to foment research across the disciplines about the Andean world, an area corresponding principally to modern day Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Recent faculty hires in History, Hispanic Studies, Anthropology and Music have brought attention to diverse aspects of
Andean society and culture, making this a particularly timely undertaking at Brown. Catalyzed in part by the extraordinary growth of indigenous ethnic mobilization and political parties in the Andean nations in recent years, there has been an outpouring of recent scholarship on the indigenous Andes in disciplines across the Humanities and Social Sciences. There will be a research seminar in which faculty, graduate students and visiting scholars will meet three times a semester, discuss recent journal and book publications in the field, and share work in progress. There will also be an interdisciplinary lecture series of five public lectures during the fall and spring semesters of 2014-15, on topics relating to indigenous Andean culture, society and history.

**Performance in a Virtual World** ($5,000)
Kym Moore, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies; Todd Winkler, Music

What does it mean to “live” in a virtual world and how do we respond to it as humans? How are performance strategies in acting, directing and choreography transformed when operating in a virtual world? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in a production seminar for graduate students and upper level undergraduates that explores emerging technology in the context of theatrical performance. Humanities Initiative funds will support the visits of two guest artists: Wendall Harrington, a pioneer of projection design from the Yale School of Drama and Eric Mallet, principle actor, teacher, and member of the British theatre company Théâtre de Complicité.

**Textual Corpora and the Digital Islamic Humanities: A Workshop** ($4,500)
Elias Muhanna, Comparative Literature

Following on the success of the Conference on the Digital Humanities and Islamic & Middle East Studies in fall 2013, this specialized workshop on Islamic textual corpora will be held in the Digital Scholarship Lab in Rockefeller Library on October 17-18, 2014. Online libraries and digital repositories, which contain thousands of texts and hundreds of millions of words, are transforming the study of Islamic literatures, cultures, and history. The workshop will comprise a series of introductory sessions on digital tools and methodologies aimed to provide scholars of the Islamic world with an orientation to the valuable research possibilities afforded by these resources.

**Law’s Moving Image: Justice on the Small Screen** ($5,000)
Ravit Reichman, English

The cultural study of law has grown as a field over the past two decades, bringing together scholars across the humanities and social sciences, and broadening the study of jurisprudence well beyond the confines of law schools. One of the working assumptions of this cross-discipline holds that the cultural study of law ought to be distinct from the practice of law—that a rigorous intellectual approach cannot be instrumentalist in nature. In other words, the study of law should not be limited to producing lawyers, any more than the study of art is aimed at producing artists. Humanities Initiative funds will support a symposium at Brown in December 2014 on “Law’s Moving Image: Justice on the Small Screen.” The two-day meeting, which would be open to the public, will bring together scholars from a range of disciplines and institutions in a sustained conversation about how the
image of law penetrates and saturates our culture, animating it in contexts that far exceed the confines of formal legal institutions.

**Humanities Initiative Project Support, Fall 2013**

**New Perspectives on Guantanamo: Art, Activism and Advocacy** ($7,500)
Anne Valk, John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities; Esther Whitfield, Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies

From the perspective of the Humanities, the **U.S. naval base at Guantánamo** can be understood as a site where the languages of law, war and human rights have coincided, but also as a surprising context for literary and artistic production. Humanities Initiative funding will help to support a conference in fall 2014 that will coincide *with the nationally touring exhibition of the Guantánamo Public Memory Project* ([www.gitmomemory.org](http://www.gitmomemory.org)), to be shown at the URI Feinstein Downtown Campus Gallery. The conference and exhibition will foreground both the global political dimensions of GTMO’s current use and the more particular, local stories that have unfolded there and nearby. They will draw attention to testimonial and artistic representations of the distinct people, interests, and cultures that have converged at GTMO, among them **“War on Terror” detainees**, U.S. military personnel and their families, Cuban base workers, and refugees from Cuba and Haiti.

**Physics as Metaphysics Lecture Series** ($6,000)
Nina Emery, Philosophy

Philosophers and physicists often investigate similar topics: What is the nature of time and space? What are the fundamental constituents of the world? How do they causally interact with one another? Could the universe have been very different than it in fact is? Could the laws of nature have been very different than they in fact are? They also struggle with similar methodological concerns: How should we choose between theories that make all the same empirical predictions? Is a simpler theory more likely to be true? In what does simplicity consist? In what scenarios are we allowed to posit new fundamental laws?

The Physics as Metaphysics Lecture Series, scheduled for spring 2015, will investigate the ways in which philosophers can learn from physicists, and vice-versa, in their shared investigation of an overlapping subject matter. In doing so, it will promote the study of metaphysics and the philosophy of science within the Brown philosophy department and strengthen the ties between that department and other scholars at Brown who are interested in the nature of scientific inquiry, including members of the physics department and the science and technology studies program.

**Humanities Initiative Project Support, Spring 2013**

**Medicine and social movements** ($4,000)
Adia Benton, Anthropology; Lundy Braun, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Africana Studies, and Science and Technology Studies; Harold Cook, History; Sherine Hamdy, Anthropology, Science and Technology Studies, Middle East Studies; Dianne Ritchie, BioMed Family Medicine and Africana Studies; Soha Bayoumi, Political philosophy, (Harvard)

The medicalization of social life, defined as the expansion and redefinition of moral, social, or legal issues as medical problems, has become the object of social scientific study and critique. More generally, medicalization has been studied as a consequence of the ever-expanding reach of medical institutions in
post-industrial capitalist societies, whereby social and cultural processes such as birth, emotion, or poverty are recast as objects of medical intervention. Others have noted the ways that ‘the clinic’ and associated techno-scientific advances have seeped into popular discourse and interpretation of social life. Yet how clinicians themselves are consciously involved in this process as clinicians has been less explored. This grant will provide partial funding for a working group and symposium to focus on these topics.

**Global Exchanges: Translation and “Chinese Medicine” in Early Modern Europe** ($15,000)
Harold Cook, History

The processes of connecting people over distances without the direct involvement of the nation-state are various, and the “global” can be seen to be composed of many cultural locales. Global interactions have their own dynamics, producing a culture of exchangeable knowledge. Medical history is an excellent vehicle for examining this translation of knowledge. The Humanities Initiative funding will provide the catalysis for a project to convene an international group of scholars to examine this issue through the lens of Chinese medical texts translated into French and Latin during the late 17th century by Jesuit missionaries, collected and edited by members of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), and published in France and Germany, accompanied by letters and commentaries. The kinds of sources ranged from lists of plants used in healing, to descriptions of diagnosis via touching the pulse, to complex arguments about natural processes and their effects on the body. Some of the texts appear to have been translated without ambiguity, as in lists of plant names; others were translated only with the greatest difficulty because of the fundamentally different foundations of language and understanding, so that some terms such as qi (or chi) never found suitable equivalents in European languages. How these texts were interpreted and translated had far reaching effects on western understanding of eastern medicine, which still resonate today.

**Design and the Civic Space** ($7,500)
Erik Ehn, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies; Paul Myoda, Visual Arts; Dietrich Neumann, History of Art & Architecture; Roger Nozaki, Swearer Center

A coalition of Brown departments will host visits for a curated series of guests whose workshops are sequenced into an existing class moderated by Brown faculty, in spring 2014. The class is *Acting Together on the World Stage*, currently taught by Erik Ehn (TAPS) at the Granoff. It is structured to accommodate guests, to provide background in scholarship and cases on art for social change, and to express understanding through practical projects and written reflections. Ehn will facilitate the workshop-series for the Design class, pulling in a rolling series of Brown faculty as co-facilitators.

**JCB/Brown British Atlantic Seminar** ($5,000)
Linford Fisher, History; Philip Gould, English; Tim Harris, History; Dennis Landis, JCB; Evelyn Lincoln, History of Art and Architecture and Renaissance and Early Modern Studies; Margot Nishimura, JCB

This grant is to support an interdisciplinary seminar series for AY 2013-14 co-organized by and held at the John Carter Brown Library on the early modern British Atlantic World (called the JCB / Brown British Atlantic Seminar [JBBAS]). The purpose of the seminar series is to bring together people who work on colonial North America and those who work on early modern Britain. As such, it cuts across traditional geographical, chronological, and disciplinary fields in innovative and interesting ways. The organizers hope to promote a dialogue across and around the Atlantic – to bring scholars from different disciplines together with shared intellectual interests, albeit in different parts of the globe.
Fred McGraw Donner visit to Brown ($5,000)
Nancy Khalek, Religious Studies; Jonathan Conant, History; Anthony Watson, Middle East Studies and History; Eustratios Papaioannou, Classics; Mercedes Vaquero; Medieval Studies

Fred McGraw Donner is one of the foremost authorities on the rise and history of Islam in the English-speaking world. He is currently professor of Near Eastern Studies at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, and is widely considered a foundational figure in the history of Islamic origins, the rise and spread of Islam in the Middle East, and the historiography of Islam from the nineteenth century to the present. His latest book, *Muḥammad and the Believers: at the Origins of Islam* (2012) has sparked a field- and nation-wide conversation about the early Muslim community, its relationship to Christianity and Judaism, and the nature of Muslim/non-Muslim relations. More than a pioneer in the field, Fred Donner’s work and thinking continue to shape and drastically alter the study of Islam for generations of scholars in Middle East Studies, Religious Studies, Literature, Politics, and History. His visit provided a unique and valuable opportunity for Brown students and faculty alike to have direct and close collaboration with one of the foremost historians of Islam of the twentieth and twenty-first century, and helped to bolster the rapidly growing Middle East Studies program. Donner is truly a scholar of the Humanities whose work has a clear and important impact on issues of political and social significance today—precisely the sort of role model whose work makes obvious the continuing relevance and centrality of the Humanities.

Robotics, Instruments, and Musical Expression ($10,000)
Butch Rovan, Music

The field of robotics has become increasingly interested in questions of human-robotic interaction. Can robots understand and respond to human emotion? Can robots interpret human gesture? From the perspective of music, one might ask, more basically: Can a robot be musical? If a musician and a robot were to perform together, what kind of instruments would they play? These are the kinds of questions that will inform this interdisciplinary conference scheduled for the fall of 2014. Leaders from the field of musical robotics will join researchers and performers working on the design of new musical instruments for two days of talks, demonstrations, and performances. The hope is not only to highlight the creative work already being done at Brown but also to emphasize, more broadly, the important role of the arts in helping to address questions of machine learning and interaction.

Hidden Scars: History, Humanities and Mass Murder in the Aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake ($3,500)
Kerry Smith, East Asian Studies

September 1, 2013 was the 90th anniversary of the Great Kantō Earthquake, which devastated Tokyo and Yokohama, and left some 100,000 dead. In the aftermath of the natural disaster, as many as 6,000 Koreans and many others mistaken for Koreans are thought to have died at the hands of civilian “vigilantes,” soldiers and police in killing sprees that went on for days. Censorship, a flawed justice system and a powerful colonial apparatus suppressed most news of the killings. This symposium, held on September 28, 2013, and documentary film event served to both commemorate the disaster and explore how historians, specialists in literature, and cultural studies scholars are working to understand and analyze its legacies.
Humanities Initiative Project Support, Fall 2012

**25 Things from 250 Years: Brown’s Material Past** ($15,000)
Susan Alcock, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World and Classics

Archaeologists and material scientists share a common obsession with things: with how things are made, used, improved, broken, recycled, and destroyed. However, scientists are often unfamiliar with archaeological problems, and archaeologists are often unfamiliar with the potential of physical and chemical analyses for understanding archaeological materials, their dynamic processes of production, and more complex material-human interrelationships in the past. This project will be directly related to the upcoming 250th anniversary of the foundation of Brown University; the focus will be on identifying a range of artifacts drawn from Brown’s long history, and exploring their nature and composition through various forms of materials analysis.

**Engineering, Art and Design** ($4,000)
Kenny Breuer, School of Engineering; Richard Fishman, Program in Visual Arts

Engineering, despite its grounding in equations, physical principles and hard numbers, is at its core a visual endeavor. Data must be observed, interrogated, plotted and re-plotted in new and innovative ways before it can be understood and contextualized by a governing theory or numerical model. Physical principles, though they must be harnessed by the process of engineering design and optimized to the solution of a problem, must also result in a product that is attractive, usable, elegant and obvious. The best engineering process is also one that inspires our creative spirit, and examples abound in which a functional design has transcended its original purpose to become an icon of our society.

The School of Engineering and the Program in Visual Arts collaborate on a class, DesignStudio (ENGN193C), designed to encourage the union of the creative process with the engineering design experience. The Humanities Initiative funds helped to further this collaborative endeavor.

**Digital Islamic Humanities** ($20,000)
Robyn Creswell, Department of Comparative Literature; Beshara Doumani, Middle East Studies and History Department; Elias Muhanna, Department of Comparative Literature

Digital Islamic humanities is one of the four thematic areas that the Middle East Studies Initiative will pursue over the next few years as part of its strategic plan. The two projects which the Humanities Initiative funds helped support were a symposium on digital humanities in Islamic and Middle East Studies, and Digital Magazines: the Arabic Archive. While they are distinct projects, they are also part of several other planned programs around this theme, and the Middle East Studies Initiative will help coordinate areas of overlap, provide an organizational umbrella, and make sure that tangible products, such as software or funding opportunities, are shared.
**Cracking the Roger Williams Code** ($3,000)
Linford Fisher, Department of History

The John Carter Brown Library has in its possession a curious seventeenth-century book. The title, author, and year of publication of the volume are unknown, but the margins contain a mysterious handwritten code, long suspected to be the work of Roger Williams, the seventeenth-century theologian and founder of Rhode Island. A team of undergraduate researchers began the ambitious project of cracking the code in 2011. Utilizing an impressive array of interdisciplinary tools including computational and textual analyses, the team developed a method to slowly decipher the shorthand using a combination of statistical attacks and historical/paleographic clues. The team also uncovered historical evidence conclusively attributing the authorship of the marginalia to Roger Williams. The Humanities Initiative funding went toward completing this project and aided in the dissemination of the results.

**The Questioning Religion Symposium Series: Religion and Internationalism Project** ($5,000)
Tal Lewis, Department of Religious Studies; Nathaniel Berman, Cogut Center for the Humanities

For the past several decades, scholars across the humanities and social sciences, not to mention policymakers, have been increasingly preoccupied by a putative “return of religion.” A domain of human experience once thought to have been subordinated by “secularization,” religion is now often proclaimed to pose the single greatest challenge to the construction of a liberal legal and political order – and, perhaps slightly less often, as the greatest hope for the preservation and improvement of that order. The symposium series provides an opportunity to build the broad scholarly network required to address this global and interdisciplinary topic. Humanities Initiative funds provided additional support to the ongoing Religion and Internationalism Symposium Series.

**The Global Lowlands in the Early Modern Period** ($5,000)
Evelyn Lincoln, Department of the History of Art and Architecture

Recent research on Dutch and Flemish history and culture has extended the rich contribution of the Lowlands into a global context. These networks go far beyond the extraordinary influence of Dutch and Flemish art on the whole history of European art. Historians of economics have argued that the Lowlands region developed the conditions for markets on which early modern capitalism was built. Historians of politics have related the revolt of the Netherlands against the rule of King Philip II of Spain to the later revolutions in England, the United States, and France. Art historians have followed the export of prints and books from Flanders to New Spain, China, and Japan, and have analyzed how literature and visual communication shaped Dutch and Flemish perception of peoples in America, Asia, and Africa. Cultural historians have measured the transformation of life affected by an influx of goods from around the world to the Netherlands which changed everything from collecting to medicine. Humanities Initiative funds will provide support for a conference in the spring of 2014 that will engage leading contributors to the study of the Global Lowlands, the Brown and local scholarly community, as well as a larger group of interested faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students working in the early modern period.
Gender, Imperialism, and Global Exchanges ($2,000)
Naoko Shibusawa, Department of History

From antiquity through the twentieth century, imperial expansions were accompanied by transregional and global exchanges of goods, ideas, people, natural resources, practices and styles. As free and unfree labor travelled across spaces, so too did a variety of commodities and natural resources. Humanities Initiative funds provided support for a conference held in May, 2013 that explored the gendered impact of such exchanges on the metropole and/or the colonies, and how these dynamics were shaped by either gendered desires, gendered relations, or gendered ideologies.

Humanities Initiative Project Support, Spring 2012

The Thought of AIDS: Humanities and the Epidemic ($10,000)
Jacques Khalip, English

This one-day symposium brought together leading scholars who reflected on the diverse ways in which the epidemiological, social, and political crises of HIV/AIDS continue to pose important theoretical questions for the global humanities. By focusing on the persistence of HIV/AIDS as a problem relevant to a wide range of humanistic and other disciplines, this event created a bridge with the social and health sciences by offering multiple perspectives through which the virus comes to be represented as something that is influenced by and yet irreducible to social, political, and health policies. This timely symposium extended the Cogut Center’s medical humanities program, which promotes scholarship in a cross-disciplinary field of interest to medicine, public health, engineering, and bio-medical fields as well as to arts and humanities. The event helped to establish connections with contemporary speculations on theory, activism, and the value of the humanities in addressing HIV/AIDS.

Habits of Living: Global Networks, Local Affects ($15,000)
Wendy Chun, Modern Culture and Media

“Networks” have become a defining concept of our epoch. From high-speed financial networks that erode national sovereignty to networking sites like Facebook that transform the meaning of the word “friend,” from blogs that foster new political alliances to unprecedented globe-spanning viral vectors that threaten world-wide catastrophe, networks allegedly encapsulate what’s new and different. Studies of networks tend to emphasize their universal characteristics in relation to structures and technologies and do not adequately take account of differences between various “networks” or the ways in which networks can become transformed from a planning tool—a theoretical diagram, a metaphorical description—into actually existing phenomena, into lived experiences. To renew the conceptual power of networks, Habits of Living—a multi-year global collaborative project involving institutional partners in the US, Europe, and India—concentrates on changing habits of living. Habits are crucial to understanding networks not simply as broad organizational structures, but also as structures created through constant actions that are both voluntary and involuntary. Funds from the Humanities Initiative will help support a conference and other activities to be held at Brown that are parts of the larger project.
Alejandra Prieto: Puppet Theater Workshop ($6,000)
Kym Moore, Theater and Performance Studies

This grant supported a class offered by Professor Moore that introduced students to the fundamental principles of puppetry design and performance. It contributed funds toward bringing Alejandra Prieto back to Brown for a semester long residency. Prieto, who manages an internationally recognized puppet/performance company in Spain, co-taught the class with Professor Moore. Prieto’s most recent credits include serving as one of four puppet masters on Disney’s The Lion King in Madrid, as well as a critically acclaimed production of Federico García Lorca’s House of Bernarda Alba, which has been touring throughout Europe. She and Professor Moore collaborated on Brown faculty member Erik Ehn's play Yermedea, which opened at La MaMa ETC in New York City in November 2012.

Reimagining Providence ($5,000)
Dietrich Neumann, History of Art and Architecture

This grant provided support to enhance a new class at Brown on the new designs for downtown Providence, in particular for the parcels that have become available by the relocation of I-195. The course was co-taught by Professor Neumann and Professor Friedrich St. Florian, Dean and Professor Emeritus at the Rhode Island School of Design. The class consisted of equal numbers of Brown and RISD students. The funds from the Humanities Initiative supported collaboration with Professor Ed Mitchell from Yale University (also a Brown Alumnus) in teaching the course. Professor Mitchell offered a class with a similar focus on the same parcels in downtown Providence for his Yale students.

Experimental Philosophy/Moral Philosophy Research Group ($5,000)
Christopher Hill, Philosophy and Fiery Cushman, Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences

Over the last decade, the field of experimental philosophy has been exploring philosophical propositions in conjunction with empirical research in psychology. The Moral Philosophy Research Group (MPRG), established in 2003, is a working group of philosophers and psychologists that meets twice annually. Humanities Initiative funds supported bringing the MPRG meeting to Brown in Fall 2013, building a program of public lectures and other activities around the meeting to introduce experimental philosophy to a wide audience on campus and in the region.

Indigenous Music Workshop ($5,000)
Paja Faudree, Anthropology and Joshua Tucker, Music

Contemporary musical activities reveal new patterns and latent possibilities in indigenous mobilization and these matters are indispensably important for anyone interested in indigenous society more broadly. The indigenous peoples of Latin America have too often been the objects of anthropological representation rather than recognized as propagators of cultural forms.

This grant supported the workshop, “Global Indigeneity: Indigenous Music and Performance,” organized by Professors Faudree and Tucker. The workshop’s goal was to begin forging analytical tools that are adequate to understanding global indigenous music and performance, by bringing together leading scholars of contemporary indigenous music and performance.
The Space Between Society is composed of scholars studying literature, media, art, society, and culture between 1914 and 1945. The June 2012 conference, held at Brown, addressed the varied material cultures that shape the world within which people live, work, and make art.