

NECESSARY DIALOGUE

Professor of Africana Studies Tricia Rose arrived at Brown in 1986, as a doctoral student in American Studies who wanted to study hip-hop culture – work that would lead to her first book, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994). “Brown didn’t have an expert in the field at the time, but it offered me an interdisciplinary group of committed advisors on some key aspects of the work. A lot of schools wouldn’t have done that. I was the beneficiary of the kind of positive nonconformity that runs through the University.”

Rose is bringing the strengths of her creativity and passion for accessible, intellectually-informed dialogue to her role as director of Brown’s Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (CSREA), a post to which she was appointed in 2013. A well-respected scholar and national and international lecturer, active in media commentary and analysis, Rose brings a deep and eclectic perspective to the CSREA.

“Our overarching vision is to consider ways in which race and ethnicity affects us as a society, and to advance that work through expert insight, sophisticated ideas, and accessible language,” says Rose. “Our goal is to be a research institute that engages the world. We want to be a hub of both knowledge and public service.”

In the last year, the CSREA has convened a scholarly colloquium on race and incarceration, hosted capacity crowds of interdisciplinary faculty from across the University at weekly lunchtime research-sharing sessions called *What I’m Thinking About Now*, and awarded four competitive mini-grants:

- **Race in the Global Asias**

A faculty and advanced student working group culminating in a half-day faculty symposium examining the shifting boundaries between Asian and Asian American studies

- **Indigenous Performance, Commodities and Politics**

A faculty and advanced student working group on indigenous performance in the Americas

- **Latino/a Urban Aesthetics**

A faculty and student research group on the changing conceptions of Latino/a identities especially as it is expressed via urban street art that culminates in a street art discussion and performance panel

- **Educational Inequality in the U.S.**

A series of events on race, gender and educational inequality including expert speakers, a panel discussion, a screening and public discussion

Rose is considering opportunities for continued dialogue, including the possibility of launching a web-based vehicle that could provide a forum for real-time discussion of emerging issues and events. “What’s needed is a way to immediately engage in conversation, galvanize writers and journalists and others, and then serve as an archive after a particular episode is concluded, so that the legacy of the ideas and discussions and artifacts of the time is preserved for future education and analysis.”

“The spirit of Brown is to be a place for incubating ideas that are fairly unconventional, where people are open to free-form, improvisational, interdisciplinary work in an environment of intellectual rigor,” says Rose. “We’re all engaged in creating innovative space for tackling challenging social issues and ideas – which is imperative in our 21st century world.”

