

ASD Grant Application

Date of Submission: 10/20/25

Name(s): Kristine Nielsen

Department(s) or School(s): School of Art & Design

Title of Project: Article on Danish Artist Duo Randi & Katrine's The House in You

Amount Requested: \$ 2156 Your Email: knielse1@iwu.edu

Grant Term Requested: 1-year 2-year

A) If funded, would you be willing for the Thorpe Center to use your proposal as an exemplary submission in the online Handbook? • Yes • No

B) Will you use human beings as experimental subjects? • Yes* • No

**If yes, please submit the appropriate approval notice.*

If you have questions about whether IRB approval or exemption is required for your project, please read the "Policies and Procedures" at <https://www.iwu.edu/institutional-review-board/irb-policy-procedure.pdf>.

C) Will you use animals as experimental subjects? • Yes • No

a) If so, have you requested IRB and/or IACUC approval? • Yes* • No

**If yes, please submit the appropriate approval notice.*

(See the IACUC link to protocol forms at <https://www.iwu.edu/associateprovost>)

Please complete the following checklist by placing a check mark against each item to ensure that your application is complete. Incomplete and/or late applications will not be considered.

1. Project Summary as MS-Word file (emailed to fdc@iwu.edu)

2. One pdf that contains the following:

a) Cover page (this document) with signatures

b) Proposal as per format described in Handbook

i) Project Summary

ii) Previous ASD grants summary

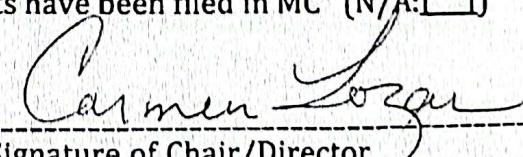
iii) Narrative (Sections A through G addressed)

c) ASD grant budget page

d) Brief Vita

3. Reports for previous ASD grants have been filed in MC (N/A:)


Signature of Applicant


Signature of Chair/Director
(if different than applicant)

Note: a recommendation letter from a direct supervisor or chair is not required for ASD grants.

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October 20, 2025

Kristine Nielsen (knielse1@iwu.edu)
School of Art & Design

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Title: “Article on Danish Artist Duo Randi & Katrine’s *The House in Your Head* and *The Village*”

My article will examine the Danish artist duo Randi & Katrine known for their playful sculptures. Focusing on the artworks *The House in Your Head* (2008) and *The Village* (2014), the essay explores how their projects anthropomorphize the house façade. The essay will be grounded in philosopher Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, on how the house fosters the imagination, and literary scholar Bill Brown’s “Thing Theory,” on how objects can act upon us. The article will argue these artworks function as reflective, community-facing spaces that turn our attention to the ambiguous threshold between what is considered inside (psychological) and outside (physical) and how we grant things agency. Randi & Katrine’s art restores a humanism of wonder and imagination. The end product will be a peer-reviewed academic article for an international journal of art history. It will be the first sustained, theory-led account of Randi & Katrine’s artistic practice.

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“Two Chapters for a Book Project, *Monuments Under Siege: Art and Iconoclasm in Transitional Germany*,” fall 2023, \$7000

End product near completion. This two-year ASD grant (2023-2025) supported a research trip to Germany, conducted spring 2024, visiting Berlin and Chemnitz monument sites and museums. It also supported the writing of Chapters 5 and 6 of my book manuscript, both chapters are nearly finished with completion expected this year (I am currently on sabbatical). Chapter 5 investigates a colonial monument in Hamburg to the Africa explorer Hermann von Wissmann, while Chapter 6 explores the Berlin exhibition *Unveiled: Berlin and its Monuments*.

“Image Wars,” Spring 2017, \$3500

End product achieved: conference paper, German Studies Association, *Marx at 200: Visual Culture after 1990*, Pittsburgh, 2018.

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The end product is a peer-reviewed, academic article to be published in an international journal of art history (target publication year: end of 2026).

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i. Nature of the problem to be examined:

To be human is to imagine, according to French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard focuses on every feature of the house and how it promotes daydreaming. He

sees the house as a “psychic state,” which is to say that it gathers our memories and gives them a place to live. The house hosts an emotional charge, an interiority that we bestow upon it and that “bespeaks intimacy.”¹ Partially inspired by Bachelard, Danish artist duo Randi & Katrine (Randi Jørgensen (b. 1974) and Katrine Malinovsky (b. 1976)) set out to create large, imaginative installations, which are a type of artwork that creates an immersive experience in a physical space. Randi & Katrine fuse architecture and sculpture, creating small-scale anthropomorphic houses, artificial gardens, mechanical ships, teapot pavilions, pinewood-forest playgrounds. They conjoin sculpture’s imagery with architecture’s utility, and the effect is one that summons for the viewer a sense of childhood or the fairy tale because of its scale and playfulness.

The essay will analyze two art projects: *The House in Your Head* (2008–2015) and *The Village* (2014). In the first iteration of *The House in Your Head*, presented at the Copenhagen art center Gammel Strand in 2008, the duo presented two houses and a small transformer station, each varied in scale but larger than the human body and smaller than an actual house. The materials are mortar, wood, acrylic glass, wires, and ceramic insulators. The house façades carry anthropomorphic features such as doors that look like mouths, windows as eyes, and low chimneys or a center window as the nose (Fig. 1). Motors and compressors animate the façades by letting doors move, and shutters lower and rise as if the window eyes are blinking. The two houses face one another, immediately creating a relational space for viewers walking around them and relational among the buildings themselves. They seem to “speak” to one another, and this expressivity is experienced by the viewer like an “encounter.” Rather than objects merely looked at, Randi & Katrine recast objects as presences that seem to address us, watch us and respond.

Randi & Katrine were inspired to work with the concept of the anthropomorphic house from an early modern print in the book, *Veridicus Christianus* (1601) by the Flemish Jesuit Johannes David. The book holds engravings by Antwerp artist Theodoor Galle in two chapters dedicated to the senses. Plate 66 (Fig. 2) shows the engraving *Adspectus incauti dispendium* (The cost of careless looking). It warns against the dangers of visual curiosity, lust and greed.² Galle portrays a house as a human’s head with the thatched roof as hair, the door as mouth, a protruding vent as nose, and the two windows on the façade representing eyes. All three languages (Latin, Dutch, and French) underneath the engraving warn the reader against letting one’s eyes wander in vanity or lust. The message conveyed is that the eyes are the windows of the “soul.” If you don’t guard them, death or sin will invade through them and capture your soul. This early modern image was a device for governing relations, teaching viewers how to look so that things don’t act on you the wrong way. The image also concerned the importance of the visual sense, which clearly needed proper training.

Whether Randi & Katrine’s houses convey danger or warmth depends on the house and its expression (what the façade suggests and how ominous the building appears). Their installation *The Village* comes closest to the idea of governing relations and borders (Fig. 3). *The Village* was part of the 19th Biennale in Sydney, *You Imagine What You Desire*, Cockatoo Island, Sydney, Australia, 2014. The location was a former shipyard and prison in the Sydney harbor and their art project was constructed inside an enormous warehouse. Their art installation consisted of two towers, a surrounding wall and five houses built from wood, acrylic glass, lights, smoke machines, paint, sand and iron. The houses emitted smoke from their chimneys and glowed from

¹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, transl. by Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 91.

² Jan David, *Veridicus Christianus* (Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana [Plantin–Moretus], 1601), plate 66, Internet Archive <https://archive.org/details/veridicvschristi00davi/page/218/mode/2up>.

within, suggesting life. However, the doors and windows were sealed. These miniature houses created a dissonance between the size of the environment (a huge warehouse) and the intimacy of the village. The five houses appear like five village members or family members standing in a circle facing one another and protected by a wall. Visitors were tempted to enter but still felt like outsiders. *The Village* may be referencing Australia's immigration policies and the viewer's inability to fully enter mirroring the experience of asylum seekers. There is an uneasy pull between invitation and exclusion, playing with the physical and psychological thresholds of interiority and exteriority. In *The Village*, hospitality and exclusion are staged as twin conditions, making the threshold itself the work's true subject.

ii. Artistic or scholarly context (or debate) being addressed

Several contemporary artists psychologize the house in their artistic practice. British artist Rachel Whiteread uses concrete to cast negative spaces of entire houses emphasizing memory through absence. German artist Gregor Schneider builds rooms within rooms in his family house, creating claustrophobic environments that destabilize the visitor. South Korean artist Do Ho Suh makes translucent fabric copies of his apartments and studios that are "physical, psychological and metaphorical skins" that embody his memories.³ Randi & Katrine's art focuses predominantly on exterior and expressive façades that playfully animate buildings' interior as present, personified characters. Their work also often ventures into art as a "social practice," a contemporary artistic movement where artists work with people and communities as their primary "medium" rather than, say, a paintbrush, paint, and canvas. Randi & Katrine always consider the visitor/user and have created art as social environments (playgrounds for children and even ones for grown ups, etc). Randi & Katrine are therefore both part of a larger artistic practice in contemporary art working with the house as a metaphor and engaged in art as a social practice. However, unlike the above-mentioned, well-established artists, very little scholarship exists on Randi & Katrine's art. The literature that does exist has not approached their art from the angle of theory. My methodological approach will therefore be new to the scholarship.

iii. Methodology to be used

The article's method is interpretive and case-based, pairing visual and spatial analysis with two complementary theoretical lenses: 1) Gaston Bachelard's 1958 book *The Poetics of Space* provides a language for lived interiors and the dialogue of inside and outside. Doors, windows, attics, and cellars are not neutral apertures; they are organs of intimacy and exposure zones where the self negotiates the world. Bachelard interprets thresholds as experiential hinges (waiting lamps, sealed entries, the curve that welcomes, the angle that repels) and tracks how these are staged materially in the house. Bachelard's ideas are directly relevant for Randi & Katrine's house projects. 2) Literary scholar Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" (2001) distinguishes "objects" (tools we look through) from "things" that interrupt use and seemingly announce themselves, seizing our attention: "we look *through* objects (to see what they disclose about us), but we only catch a glimpse of things," says Brown.⁴ In other words, where an "object" has meaning and can be looked both *through* and *at*, a "thing" exceeds the material object and presents a different relationship to the viewer, one that approximates, in Brown's words, a

³ Sean O'Hagan, "'Memories of these places never leave you': artist Do Ho Suh and the fabric of home," *The Guardian* (13 April 2025). <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/apr/13/do-ho-suh-walk-the-house-tate-modern-interview>.

⁴ Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (Autumn 2001): 1-22, 4.

“sensuous presence.”⁵ When a façade reads unmistakably as a face and appears to glance back, the architectural object ceases to be backdrop or architecture and becomes an active counterpart, a “thing.”

Part of my reason for exploring Randi & Katrine’s art is because, to me, the imagination is more vital now than ever. So much of daily life runs through digital networks and social platforms that the quiet inner realms of daydream and reflection are squeezed out. The force of AI is already evident, and its swift rise will likely diminish our sense of humanity, redefining what it means to be human, reshaping how we relate to one another, and recasting the very fabric of society. Randi & Katrine’s art restores a humanism of wonder and imagination that enriches our experiences.

iv. Contribution

Very little has been written about this duo’s art projects. What exists are important interviews with the artists, short and descriptive curatorial notes by museums, and magazine articles online that do not go into depth. My essay will offer the first sustained, theory-led account of Randi & Katrine’s artistic practice in a peer-reviewed, research article in an academic journal.

c. Professional Significance of the Project

The importance of this project’s development for me professionally is two-fold: Over the last several years, I have sought to engage with Nordic art historical scholarship and contribute to the contemporary discourse. This essay fits into my “five-year plan” of scholarship on Nordic contemporary art. Secondly, the publication of this article helps provide support for my upcoming application for promotion.

d. Proposed Expenses

I am requesting a grant of \$2156.

\$156 will go toward publication costs to publish images (4 photos x \$39 (the cost of each image on Alamy is \$39: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/randi-%26-katrine.html?sortBy=relevant>) and \$2000 as a taxable stipend.

I do not have any external or internal funding for this project.

e. Proposed Timetable

January-February 2026:	Research and write the article
March 2026:	Submit manuscript to the journal <i>Passepartout</i>
Late 2026:	After successful peer-review, publish the article

f. Student Assistants Not Applicable

g. IRB/IACUC Review Not Applicable

⁵ Brown, 5.

Appendix – Illustrations



Fig. 1: Randi & Katrine, *The House in Your Head*, 2008, installation. Gl. Strand, Copenhagen
Source: https://www.randiogkatrine.dk/the_house_in_your_head.html

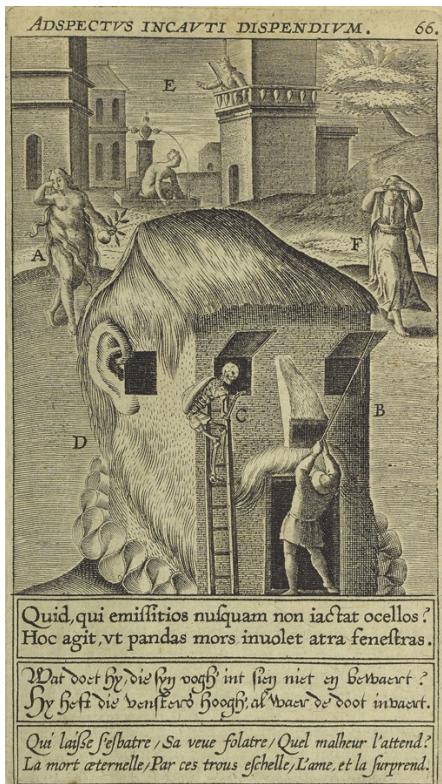


Fig. 2: Theodoor Galle, *Adspectus incauti dispendium* (The cost of careless looking), 1601, engraving. Johannes David's emblem book, *Veridicus Christianus*, 1601.
Source:
[https://archive.org/details/veridicuschristi00davi/page/n372\(mode/1up](https://archive.org/details/veridicuschristi00davi/page/n372(mode/1up)



Fig. 3: Randi & Katrine, *The Village*, 2014, installation. Cockatoo Island, Sydney, Australia.

Source: <https://www.randiogkatrine.dk/the-village.html>

ASD Grant Budget Page

Faculty Name(s) Christine NielsenProject Title Article on Danish Artist Duo Randi & KatrineA. Equipment Description (please give source of recent estimate) \$ 1B. Supplies and Services \$ 1
(please itemize below, & attach an additional sheet, if necessary)

C. Travel Expenses (please itemize) \$ 1D. Consultancy Fees \$ 1E. Living Expenses (see proposal guidelines) \$ 1F. Student Wages (see proposal guidelines) \$ 1G. Faculty Stipend (maximum \$2,000 per faculty member for 1-year; \$4,000 for 2-year) \$ 2 000H. Publication Expenses \$ 156I. Other \$ 0TOTAL: \$ 0 2156

(Maximum award \$3,500 per individual or \$5,500 for a joint proposal from two or more faculty members for a one-year grant and \$7,000 per individual or \$11,000 for a joint proposal for a two-year grant)

NOTE: List all expenses, even if the total exceeds the maximum grant. If your budget exceeds the maximum grant, explain how you will make up for the shortfall.

Kristine Nielsen
Ames School of Art
Illinois Wesleyan University
knielsen@iwu.edu

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Associate Professor of Art, 2018-present
Faculty Affiliate in International & Global Studies
Ames School of Art & Design, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois

Assistant Professor of Art, 2013–2018
Ames School of Art, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois

Visiting Assistant Professor of Art, 2012-2013
Ames School of Art, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities, 2010-2012
Humanities Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois
Position included an appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Program of Art History and the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Interim Director of the School of Art & Design, Illinois Wesleyan University, 2024-2025
Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program, Illinois Wesleyan University, 2021-2023

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Ph.D. in Art History, 2010
Specialization in Modern and Contemporary Art, minor in Historiography and Theory
Dissertation: “Gestures of Iconoclasm: East Berlin’s Political Monuments”
Director: W.J.T. Mitchell; Readers: Darby English, Jaś Elsner, Horst Bredekamp
M.A. in Art History, 2003

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark, and University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’, Rome, Italy
Cand. Mag. in Art History, 2001
Thesis advisor: Hans Dam Christensen; Thesis: “The Iterable Image”
B.A. in Art History, minor in Linguistics, 1999

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

“A Monument in Conflict: Transnational Resistance and the Politics of Commemoration in La Vaughn Belle’s and Jeannette Ehlers’ Monument *I Am Queen Mary*,” *ARTMargins*, Vol. 15, no. 1 (forthcoming 2026).

“Mapping Memories Anew in Liselotte Wajstedt’s Sámi *Nieida Joik*,” *Konsthistorisk Tidsskrift/Journal of Art History*, Vol. 93, no. 3 (2025): 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00233609.2025.2479473>

“Fugitive Aesthetics in Sámi Artists Lena Stenberg’s *Borders* and Pauliina Feodoroff’s *Matriarchy*,” Special Issue on Visual Sovereignty, *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2024.2430475>

“Disobedience in Sámi Artist Marja Helander’s Film *Birds in the Earth*,” *Third Text* 177, Vol. 36, no. 4 (2022): 295-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2022.2074198>

“The Sámi in Two Nordic Art Projects: Mattias Olofsson’s *Stor-Stina* and Jorman Puranen’s *Imaginary Homecoming*,” *Konsthistorisk Tidsskrift/Journal of Art History*, Vol. 91, no. 2 (2022): 95-115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00233609.2022.2037702>

“Monumental Attack: The Visual Tools of the German Counter-Monument in Two Works by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, and Horst Hoheisel,” *Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture*, Vol. 9 (2016): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18718000-12340057>

“Suspended Subject Positions: Cai Guo-Qiang and the Medium of Gunpowder,” *Studies in Visual Arts and Communication*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2015).

“Vittigheden som politisk våben” (Wit as a Political Weapon), Special Issue on Image Wars, *Periskop – forum for kunsthistorisk debat* 15 (2012): 98-123.

“Reframing The Workers’ Militia Monument in Post-Unification Berlin,” Special Issue on 3D-Sculpture-Installation-Monuments, *Passepartout* 32 (2011): 229-247.

PEER-REVIEWED BOOK CHAPTERS

“A Perfectly Nebulous Experiment: C.T.R. Wilson’s Cloud Chamber,” in *Art, Technology and Nature*, edited by Camilla Skovbjerg Paldam and Jacob Wamberg. London: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 175-184.

“*Quid pro Quo*: Assessing the Value of Berlin’s Thälmann Monument,” in *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture*, edited by Elaine Kelly and Amy Wlodarski. Volume 74 of the German Monitor Series. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. 65-89.

“What Ever Happened to Ernst Barlach? East German Political Monuments and the Art of Resistance,” in *Totalitarian Art and Modernity*, edited by Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen and Jacob Wamberg. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010. Pp. 147-169.

“Politisk ikonoklasme og idolatri i den moderne visuelle kultur” (Political Iconoclasm and Idolatry in Contemporary Visual Culture), in *Visuel kultur – viden, liv, politik*, edited by Hans Dam Christensen and Helene Illeris. Copenhagen: Multivers, 2009. Pp. 329-348.

RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND TALKS

“Fugitive Aesthetics in Sámi Artists Lena Stenberg’s *Borders* and Pauliina Feodoroff’s *Matriarchy*,” panel: *Nordic Activism: Indigenous and Urban Concepts of Location*, Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN, April 24-27, 2025

“Jeannette Ehlers and La Vaughn Belle’s Monument ‘I Am Queen Mary’ Countering a Danish Colonial Past,” panel: *Women Artists and National Identities*, College Art Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, February 14-17, 2024

“Charting Memories in Liselotte Wajstedt’s Film *Sami Yoik Daughter*,” panel: *Film and Television*, Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study Annual Conference, Austin, TX, April 20-23, 2023

“Disobedience in Sámi Artist Marja Helander’s film *Birds in the Earth*”
Faculty Colloquium Series, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL, March 31, 2022

“Bridging Spaces: Marja Helander’s *Birds in the Earth*,” panel: *Contemporary Finnish (American) Culture*, Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study Annual Conference, virtual conference, May 6-8, 2021

“Nordic Art in a Global Context: A Danish-Caribbean Contemporary Artist,” panel: *Denmark, Race and Empire, Nordic Art/Global Contexts*. Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study Annual Conference, Madison, WI, May 2, 2019

“Spaces of Speculation: Deimantas Narkevičius’ *The Head*,” panel: *Marx at 200: Visual Culture after 1990*, German Studies Association Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, September 30, 2018

“The Sámi and Two Nordic Art Projects: Mattias Olofsson’s *Stor-Stina* and Jorma Puranen’s *Imaginary Homecoming*,” Dialogues Across the Disciplines, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL, Jan. 24, 2018

“Performing the Sámi Experience,” panel: *Identities and Identifications: Political Uses of Collective Identities*, Fourth Euroacademia International Conference, Venice, Italy, March 4-5, 2016

“Inglorious Images: Postwar German Confrontations”
Invited lecture, 53rd Fine Arts Season Lecture Series, Fine Arts Society of Peoria, Peoria, IL, Oct 8, 2015 “Division and Unity: Cold War Memorials in East and West Berlin”

HONORS AND AWARDS

Stone Summer Theory Institute Fellowship, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2011

Getty Research Institute, Library Research Grant, Los Angeles, CA, 2011

The Lipman Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2008-2009

Visiting Committee on the Visual Arts Fellowships (2), University of Chicago, 2006/2009

Getty Research Institute, Dissertation Workshop Fellowship, Los Angeles, CA, 2008

Humanities Division Travel Grants (2), University of Chicago, 2007/2009

Harrison Doolittle Travel Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2008
Century Scholarship and University Grant, University of Chicago, 2002-2006
Kathleen J. Shelton Memorial Travel Fellowship, University of Chicago, IL, 2004

DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Global Engagement Curriculum Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2024
Continuous Professional Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, fall 2023
Artistic & Scholarly Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, fall 2023
Curriculum Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2021
Curriculum Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2019
Artistic & Scholarly Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2017
Mellon Foundation Team-Teaching Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2017
Mellon Foundation Class Project Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2017
Curriculum Development Grant, Illinois Wesleyan University, spring 2016
Mellon Humanities Fellow, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL, 2015-2016