

# THE WAYS *of* WATER

ART, ACTIVISM, AND ECOLOGIES SYMPOSIUM

## Panelist Bios

**María Arquero de Alarcón**



**María Arquero de Alarcón** is Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning at Taubman College. Operating at the intersection of architecture, landscape, and urbanism, her work interrogates the agency of design, promoting cultural and environmental values in the agenda of urban sustainability. Her research-based, collaborative design practice studio incorporates sustainable values integrating the knowledge co-generated with community members. She brings to the project program-building and leadership skills as well as extensive experience working with nonprofits in Cleveland and Detroit on socio-environmental agendas concerned with the legacy of urban rivers in the region.

**Daniel Brown**



Photo credit: [Huron River Watershed Council](#)

**Daniel Brown** coordinates the Huron River Water Trail and projects to revitalize the river corridor, and he is leading HRWC's efforts to address PFAS contamination throughout the watershed. Daniel has worked on climate change and environmental issues across North America, previously as Mass Audubon's climate change program coordinator and as a climatologist based at the University of Michigan. He enjoys empowering conservation based on sound science and getting people to enjoy Michigan's natural resources. He joined HRWC in 2018 and lives in the Horseshoe Creekshed. Source: [hrwc.org](http://hrwc.org)

**José Casas**



Photo credit: U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance

**José Casas** is a playwright, director, and actor. He is an associate professor and leads the Playwriting minor in the Department of Theatre & Drama. He is a board member of The Children's Theatre Foundation and a member of The American Alliance of Theatre and Education, TYA/USA, and the Dramatists Guild. Casas's plays have been produced across the country and include *la rosa grows beyond the wall*, *all brown all chingon*, *aDoBe*, *a million whispers all at once*, and *the vine*. His plays, *la ofrenda* and *somebody's children* received both the Bonderman National Playwriting for Youth Award (2005, 2009) and the AATE Distinguished Play Award (2007, 2010). His work has been included in a number of anthologies such as *The Bully Plays*, *Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre*, and *Theatre for Youth II: More Plays With Mature Themes*. His published work includes *la ofrenda*, *14*, *somebody's children*, and *Palabras del Cielo: An Exploration of Latina/o Theatre for Young Audiences*. Source: [smtd.umich.edu](http://smtd.umich.edu)

**Bonnie Devine**



Photo Credit: [Wind Speaker](#)

**Bonnie Devine** is a member of the Serpent River First Nation, an Anishinaabe/Ojibwe territory in central Ontario on the north shore of Lake Huron. She is an installation artist, painter, curator, writer, and educator. Her work emerges from a deep interest in and commitment to the storytelling and pictorial traditions that are central to the history and development of Anishinaabe culture. These interests are central to her art practice and are expressed in image and object, video and teaching, storytelling, and political ideas. They also inform her work as an independent curator. Source: [cacrart.com](http://cacrart.com)

**Doug Fogelson**



Photo Credit: [Seaberg Framing](#)

**Doug Fogelson** studied at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Columbia College Chicago. His works are exhibited with esteemed galleries and museums and included in collections such as The J. Paul Getty Center, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson and Staatliche Museum für Fotografie, Berlin. Fogelson has been recognized by The Brooklyn Rail, Photo District News, and AfterImage among others. Aside from creating art Doug founded and directed Front Forty Press, an independent arts focused publishing imprint, taught in the Photography Department of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and currently serves as President of the Board for Filter Photo.

**Amber Hasan and Shea Cobb**  
The Sister Tour



Photo credit: [SFMOMA](#)

**Shea S. Cobb** lives and works in Flint, Michigan, where she was born and raised. She is an artist, mother, author, musician, and co-founder of the grassroots organization The Sister Tour. She began her artistic career performing poetry during children’s summer programs and organizing poetry showcases in her community. Her books of poetry include *Travels in my Car: Dedicated to the Writer’s Freedom* and *Honey Tea and Hibiscus: Reflective Heart Poetry* (both 2018), and *Ruby in the Rough: A Dedication to LaToya Ruby Frazier* (2020), co-authored with Amber N. Hasan. Cobb studied communications at the University of Michigan—Flint and at Mott Community College. With Frazier and The Sister Tour, Cobb has traveled across the country telling the story of her community and the water crisis through public programs and performances.

**Amber N. Hasan** is a writer, wife, mother, actor, hip- hop artist, herbalist, and community organizer residing in Flint, Michigan. She has been writing for as long as she can remember, viewing the practice as a sacred vehicle for feeling spiritually whole and fulfilling life’s purpose. Among her publications is her collection of poetry written with Shea Cobb, *Ruby in the Rough: A Dedication to LaToya Ruby Frazier* (2020). She is also co-founder of The Sister Tour, which offers platforms, resources, and safe spaces for women artists and entrepreneurs. Hasan is the owner of *Mama’s Healing Hands*, a line of natural healing products that was launched to address hair loss and skin rashes suffered by Flint residents as a result of the water crisis.

**Alice Jennings**



Photo Credit: [Kate Levy](#)

**Alice B. Jennings** is a partner in the law firm of Edwards & Jennings, P.C. Ms. Jennings attended Michigan State University (MSU). She graduated in 1971 with a B.A. in Social Work. Ms. Jennings also performed work on her Masters in Social Work at MSU. She attended Wayne State University Law School, after working for the Detroit Board of Education as a teacher and social worker for several years. Ms. Jennings was a founding member of the Black Women’s Lawyers Association. She is a member of the National Bar Association, the Wolverine Bar Association, the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association, the American Trial Lawyers Association and Trial Lawyers for Public Justice. In 2007, the Black Woman Lawyer’s Association of Michigan presented Ms. Jennings with the Harriett Tubman Award as the “Trail Blazing” lawyer of the year.

Ms. Jennings has focused her most recent practice on employment/labor law, civil rights, and whistleblower cases. In addition, she is involved in personal injury cases and cases involving environmental justice. As part of her philosophy to expand social justice, Ms. Jennings has mentored hundreds of law clerks, lawyers, and community activists.

**Branko Kerkez**



Photo Credit: [Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Michigan](#)

**Branko Kerkez** is a Berker and Gokyigit Faculty Scholar and Arthur F. Thurnau Associate Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Michigan. He received his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2012. His research through the [Real-time water systems Lab at the University of Michigan](#) seeks to enable the next generation of smart and adaptive water systems. In 2018, Kerkez received The CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation, one of the most prestigious awards granted to early-career researchers by the NSF.

**Osman Khan**



**Osman Khan** is a Detroit-based artist interested in constructing artifacts and experiences for social criticism and aesthetic expression. His work plays and subverts the materiality behind themes of identity, home/land, social and public space through participatory & performative installations and site-specific interventions. He is currently a Professor at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan.

Khan’s work has been shown at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA); the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MoCAD); the Shanghai Biennale; the Zero1 Festival, San Jose; Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Ars Electronica Center, Linz; Socrates Sculpture Park, NYC; Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids (as part of ArtPrize 2014); Centro Internazionale per l’Arte Contemporanea, Rome; among others. He is a recipient of a 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship, an Art Matters grant, Ars Electronica’s Prix Ars Award of Distinction, and an Arctic Circle 2009 Residency. Articles about his

work have appeared in numerous publications including Hyperallergic, Artforum, Art in America, I.D., LA Times, NY Times, among others.

In addition to his artistic practice, Khan is also Co-Director of the Indus Detroit Artist Residency + Culture Lab, co-curator of Halal Metropolis, a recent series of exhibitions and programs exploring Muslim identity in southeast Michigan, and a member of the cosmic jazz group the Astro Mystic Sama Ensemble.

**Tony Kolenic**



**Tony Kolenic** is the Director of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum at the University of Michigan. Previously he was the Associate Dean for Research and Strategic Initiatives and Associate Professor of Digital Arts + Sciences at the University of Florida. Some of his strategic initiatives included numerous interdisciplinary research, curricular, and community outreach partnerships designed to advance sustainability and ecological restoration. In addition, Tony was a leader in gender equity and antiracist organization and institutional change within his college and across the University of Florida.

**Heidi Kumao**



Generating artistic spectacle through the intersection of cinema, sculpture, theater, and technology, **Heidi Kumao** reframes ordinary gestures to explore their psychological underside. Her interests have manifested a wide range of hybrid art forms including: a game interface which empowers users to hack live CNN broadcasts, provocative electronic women's clothing, electromechanical girl's legs that "misbehave," surreal stop motion animations, narrative video sculptures, short experimental films and "cinema machines," sabotaged household objects outfitted with handmade projectors.

She has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions in the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Canada and China including solo shows at: the Museu da Imagem e do Som (São Paulo), Museu de Arte Moderna (Buenos Aires), Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, Centro Cultural Light (Rio de Janeiro), Center for the Arts, Yerba Buena Gardens (San Francisco), Arizona State University Art Museum, Visual Studies Workshop (Rochester), Ceres Gallery (NYC), Three Rivers Art Gallery (Pittsburgh), and Art in General in New York City, among many others.



**Keynote: Winona LaDuke**



Photo Credit: Keri Pickett

**Winona LaDuke** is an economist, environmental activist, author, hemp farmer, and former two-time Green Party vice presidential candidate. LaDuke was named to the first Forbes “50 over 50 Women of Impact” list in 2021 and has been recognized by Time magazine, with the Thomas Merton Award and Reebok Human Rights Award, and was named the Woman of the Year by Ms. magazine in 1998. She has written a novel as well as several nonfiction books, including most recently *To Be a Water Protector: Rise of the Wiindigoo Slayers*. She graduated from Harvard University with a degree in rural economic development and devotes much of her time to farming on the White Earth reservation in Minnesota. LaDuke is an Anishinaabekwe (Ojibwe) enrolled member of the Mississippi Band Anishinaabeg.

**Lisa Lapeyrouse**



Photo Credit: [poverty.umich.edu](http://poverty.umich.edu)

**Lisa Lapeyrouse's** areas of expertise are in racial/ethnic disparities in mental health and health care access among Latino communities, including immigrant and border populations. Through interdisciplinary training in Women and Gender Studies, Mexican American Studies, and Public Health, her work employs an intersectionality framework where she investigates the impact of racial/ethnic discrimination, gender-based sources of acculturative stress, and culturally protective assets on mental health outcomes.

Lapeyrouse is the principal investigator of “Beyond Rhetoric: Confronting and Combating Racism in Genesee County, Michigan” a project supported by Poverty Solutions and the Center for Social Solutions. On June 10, 2020, the Genesee County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. Her research project aims to ensure this resolution has a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of residents of color, extending beyond mere rhetoric. Source: [poverty.umich.edu](http://poverty.umich.edu)

**Kate Levy**



Photo credit: Kate Levy

**Kate Levy** is a Detroit and NYC-based filmmaker. She received her Master in Fine Arts from International Center of Photography-Bard College in 2013 for advanced photographic practices. She has produced short and feature length documentaries, storytelling platforms, news features, music videos and campaign media in collaboration with legal advocacy organizations, scholars, community organizers, investigative journalists, universities, high school students and other artists. In 2015, she worked with the ACLU of Michigan to bring national attention the Flint Water Crisis. In 2017, she was awarded a Patagonia Media Works Grant to produce a film about access to water affordability nationwide (forthcoming late 2021). She is a 2018 MacDowell Fellow. From 2019-2021, she was the Co-Director of Youth Documentary Workshop at [Educational Video Center](http://Educational Video Center). Source: [katelevydocumentary.com](http://katelevydocumentary.com)

**Jade Marks**



**Jade Marks**, trained as a biogeochemist, is the Science Communication Manager for the University of Michigan Museum of Natural History. Through courses, workshops, and programming, Jade helps researchers use their stories to build scientific literacy and cultivate lifelong learning among public audiences. Her experience working at the intersection of science and society drives her passion for improving the accessibility of scientific research and environmental data.

**Shanna Merola**

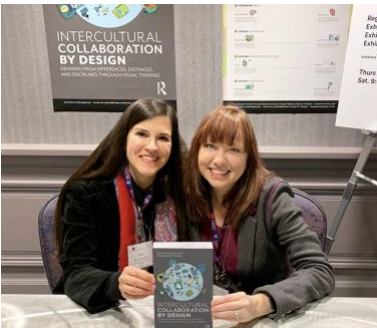


Photo Credit: [Interview Magazine](#)

**Shanna Merola** is a visual artist, photojournalist, and legal worker. Her sculptural photo-collages are informed by the stories of environmental justice struggles past and present. Traveling to EPA designated Superfund sites, she has documented the slow violence of deregulation – from her own neighborhood on the Eastside of Detroit, to Chicago’s Altgeld Gardens, and Love Canal, NY. Merola lives in Detroit, MI where she facilitates Know-Your-Rights workshops for grassroots organizations through the National Lawyers Guild.

Merola has been awarded studio residencies and fellowships through MacDowell, the Studios at MASS MoCA, Banff Centre for Arts + Creativity, Kala Institute of Art, the Society for Photographic Education, Bulk Space, the Puffin Foundation, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Art. Her collaborative projects include Detroit Resists: A Digital Occupation of the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2016), Oil + Water: Photography in the Age of Disaster Economies (2017) and Reuniting with Halima Afi Cassells, and the Restorying Agency Project (2021). Source: [www.shannamerola.com](http://www.shannamerola.com)

**Kelly Murdoch-Kitt + Denielle Emans**



**Kelly Murdoch-Kitt's** work and teaching integrate visual communication, interaction, user experience, and service design with behavior change and social engagement, drawing on her professional experience as a UX strategist in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her research explores intersections of virtual and physical communities, and the development of methods and tools to promote effective long-distance intercultural collaboration.

**Denielle Emans** is enthusiastic about the power of design to change the way people see each other and the world. Her research bridges design-based methods with intercultural learning to bring about this change at the group and individual level. While teaching at VCUarts Qatar, she has developed courses in design for social innovation, sustainability, and activism to encourage students to engage with creative action through the various modes and mediums of visual communication.

**Mustafa Naseem**



**Mustafa Naseem** is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Information at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. Mustafa's interests lie at the intersection of technology and poverty. His recent work has focused on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve public service delivery in global health, and water and sanitation (WASH) sectors. Mustafa has taught and led ICT, design, and entrepreneurship programs in six countries in Africa, Asia and North America, and prior to joining Michigan Mustafa was the ICTD Expert-in-Residence at the ATLAS Institute, University of Colorado Boulder.

**Andrea Pierce**



Photo credit: Anishinaabek Caucus

**Andrea Pierce** is the current Chair of the Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party and is one of the co-founders of the Anishinaabek Caucus. A Ypsilanti native, Pierce noticed the lack of a Native American caucus while at a political convention as a precinct delegate for Ypsilanti Township. After asking around, the Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party is the first Native American or Anishinaabek caucus in the state of Michigan.

The Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party's mission statement vows to educate, empower and advocate on issues "that Native Americans deem important to Indian Country, including but not limited to Treaty Rights and Tribal Sovereignty." The caucus follows a variety of issues such as gas & oil, line 5, Indigenous Persons Day, issues surrounding Manoomin, Michigan wild rice, disrespectful mascots, missing Indigenous women, Indian boarding schools, and tribal appointments. Source: [anishinaabekcaucus.org](http://anishinaabekcaucus.org)

**David Porter**



**David Porter**, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, works on narrative and transcultural studies and has experience in academic leadership and innovative, public-facing program building. He took a lead role in the creation of U-M's new MA program in Transcultural Studies and Great Lakes Arts, Cultures, and Environments summer program at the BioStation, as well as the organization of LSA's Great Lakes Theme Semester and the launch of the Detroit River Story Lab. As Chair of U-M's Department of English, he spearheaded the development of new community-based learning courses in first-year writing and long-form journalism, built internship programs for graduate and undergraduate students, and established the presidentially funded Great Lakes Writers Corps.

**Senghor Reid**



Photo credit: M Contemporary Art

**Senghor Reid** explores the interactions between the human body and the environment, creating visual representations of dreams, memories, and traces of human contact with nature. Reid earned a BFA from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI); a Masters of Teaching in Art Education from Wayne State University (Detroit, MI) and attended the internationally recognized Marathon Program at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture (NY, NY).

He is currently an Artist-in-Residence at the Cranbrook Schools (Bloomfield Hills, MI) and is a National Board-Certified Visual Arts Educator. He has received many awards including the Kresge Foundation's, Kresge Arts in Detroit Visual Artist Fellowship prize and the prestigious Governor's Award for Emerging Artist (Michigan). Reid's work has been exhibited in the U.S. and abroad in galleries and museums including the Museum of Contemporary Art – Detroit in Michigan, Kentler International Drawing Space in New York, St. Catharine Museum in Canada, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York. His work is in private, public, and corporate art collections. Source: [mcontemporaryart.com](http://mcontemporaryart.com)

**Rozalinda Borcilă**



Photo Credit: [icamiami.org](http://icamiami.org)

**Rozalinda Borcilă**'s artistic research traces local geographies of globalized racial finance. She makes videos, develops archives, writes, and organizes learning walks to probe the machinery of capital circulation, to explore its metabolism and to experiment with possibilities for collective trespass. She is co-editor of the book "Deep Routes: The Midwest in All Directions" and the publication AREA Chicago: Art Research Education Activism. She collaborates with Compass, NoName Collective, and Moratorium on Deportations Campaign, and is committed to autonomous noborder activism. She teaches in universities, social centers, art institutions, squats, refugee camps and in the streets. Source: [icamiami.org](http://icamiami.org)

**Justin Schell**



**Justin Schell** is the Director of the Shapiro Design Lab, a peer and engaged learning community in the University of Michigan Library. As part of his work in the Design Lab, he facilitates a number of community and citizen science projects, including the use of open source hardware with environmental justice community advocates, online crowdsourcing projects through the Zooniverse platform, and projects that increase the availability and accessibility of environmental data. In addition to his work at the Design Lab, he is a filmmaker, visual artist, and podcast producer. He holds a PhD from the University of Minnesota's Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society program, where he completed a multimodal dissertation on immigrant hip-hop in Minnesota. He was a Council on Library and Information Resources Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Minnesota Libraries, where he founded the Minnesota Hip-Hop Collection, which is part of the Givens Collection at the University of Minnesota Libraries.



**Perrin Selcer**



Photo Credit: [lsa.umich.edu](http://lsa.umich.edu)

**Perrin Selcer** is an Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in History at the University of Michigan. Selcer works at the intersections of environmental history, history of the human sciences, science and technology studies, and international relations. His first major research project showed how experts affiliated with UN agencies made the global human environment a central concern of the international community. His current research explores how knowledge and narratives about the origins of the Holocene informs contemporary anxieties about and responses to global environmental crisis. His research has been supported by the Social Science Research Council and the National Science Foundation. Source: [stppstage.fordschool.umich.edu](http://stppstage.fordschool.umich.edu)

**Cedric Taylor**



Visiting Associate Professor **Cedric Taylor** is a sociologist and a documentary filmmaker. His scholarly and creative endeavors focus on racial health disparities, environmental justice, and visual sociology. A former president of the Michigan Sociological Association, Dr. Taylor is a public sociologist who employs documentary film, visual media, and storytelling to engage the wider community in conversations around inequality. He is the director, and co-producer of *Nor Any Drop to Drink: Flint's Water Crisis* which has been screened throughout the country and internationally. Dr. Taylor holds the position of Associate Professor of Sociology at Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan. He received a Ph.D. from Michigan State University and MS and BS degrees from the University of West Indies in Jamaica.

**Joe Trumpey**



With its emphasis on biodiversity, modern agriculture, and ecological sustainability, **Joe Trumpey's** creative work has been exhibited in a wide variety of venues across the country. The depth of his devotion to these issues is evident in the fact that he lives and works on a small farm dedicated to preserving the genetic diversity of rare livestock.

As a freelance design consultant and illustrator, Trumpey has worked with the Toledo Zoo, the Detroit Zoo, the Smithsonian / National Zoo, the North Carolina Zoo, Houghton Mifflin Publishing, Wolfe Publishing, Lippincot Publishing, Gale / Thompson Publishing, Mosby Publishing, ScienceWorks, Inc., Appleton and Lang Publishing, Glaxo-Welcome Pharmaceuticals, and Stackpole Publishing. He has also conducted independent research in Kenya.

**Morgan P. Vickers**



Photo credit: Morgan P. Vickers

**Morgan P. Vickers** (they/them) is a writer, researcher, community historian, historic preservation storyteller, ethnographer, and Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of California, Berkeley. Their current work focuses on drowned towns of the Santee-Cooper Project in South Carolina, wherein 901 families were displaced in the name of New Deal “progress.” Thematically, Morgan’s work contemplates Black geographies and placemaking, federal dam and reservoir projects, affect, community memory studies, and questions of belonging.

Morgan received their B.A. in American Studies, Communication (Media) Studies, and Creative Non-Fiction Writing from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They previously worked with [Roadtrippers Magazine](#), the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#), the [Community Histories Workshop](#), the [Red Record](#) team, [The Association of Recovery in Higher Education](#), and the [Future Histories Lab Initiative](#). They currently serve as the Graduate Student Representative for the [Landscape Specialty Group](#) of the American Association of Geographers. Source: [morganpvickers.com](http://morganpvickers.com)

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*The Ways of Water: Art, Activism, and Ecologies* symposium is co-presented by Stamps Gallery and UMMA in partnership with UMMNH and the University of Michigan Library. It is co-sponsored by U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens and U-M Joseph A. Labadie Collection and supported by the U-M Office of the Vice President for Research and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

*The Ways of Water: Art, Activism, and Ecologies* Symposium is organized by Lisa Borgsdorf, Jennifer Friess, Jennifer Junkermeier-Khan, and Srimoyee Mitra.

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