URI Mini-Conference: “Phenomenology and the Arts Today”  
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017

**Morning program (Swan Hall, Hoffmann Room 154)**

9:30AM  **James Haile** (URI, PHL), “Frederick Douglass and Phenomenology of Photography”  
10:00  **Respondent – Cheryl Foster** (URI, PHL)  
10:15  Q&A

11:00  **Respondent: Vincent Colapietro**, Liberal Arts Research Professor of Philosophy and African American Studies, Pennsylvania State University  
11:15  Q&A

11:30AM  **Amy Foley** (URI, English), “Kafka Inspects from the Outside: The Joy of Mechanics in* Amerika.*”  
12:00  **Respondent: David Faflik** (URI, English)  
12:15  Q&A

12:30  Lunch Break  
(Hardege Forum Room, Multicultural Center)

**Afternoon Program (Swan Hall, Hoffmann Room 154):**

1:30PM  **Visiting Artists Installations, URI Fine Arts Center**  
**Room F103:** Lisa Karrer, City College, NYC;  
**Room F208:** Marta Nijhuis, Université Jean Moulin 3, Lyon, France  
[also available throughout the afternoon]

2:00PM  **Rajiv Kaushik**, Professor of Philosophy, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, “Merleau-Ponty at the Museum”  
2:45  Q&A

3:00-3:15  Break

3:15PM  **Meet the Authors: Book Publication Reception:** *Phenomenology and the Arts* (2016), ed. Peter R. Costello and Licia Carlson, Professors of Philosophy, Providence College, RI

4:00PM  **Mauro Carbone**, Professor of Aesthetics, Faculté de Philosophie, Université Jean Moulin 3, Lyon, France/ Institut Universitaire de France, “The Clouded Surface: Literature and Philosophy as Optical Apparatuses according to Merleau-Ponty”  
4:30  **Respondent: Stephen Barber** (URI, English)  
4:45  Q&A
Keynote Address

5:30PM  William Adams, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), DC, “A Sense of Place: Cézanne and Merleau-Ponty in Le Tholonet”

6:30PM  “Humanities and Arts Today and Tomorrow” Roundtable with NEH Chairman William Adams Participants: Dean Winifred Brownell, College of Arts & Sciences; Elizabeth Francis, Director, RI Council for the Humanities (RICH); Kathleen Davis, URI English, NEH Humanities At Large Grant; Marc Levitt, TV and radio host (Action Speaks), filmmaker, author.

Scholars and Artists: Brief Biographies

William D. Adams is the tenth chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Adams, president of Colby College in Waterville, Maine from 2000 until his retirement on June 30, 2014, is a committed advocate for liberal arts education and brings to the Endowment a long record of leadership in higher education and the humanities. A native of Birmingham, Michigan, and son of an auto industry executive, Adams earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy at Colorado College and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Cruz History of Consciousness Program. He studied in France as a Fulbright Scholar before beginning his career in higher education with appointments to teach political philosophy at Santa Clara University in California and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He went on to coordinate the Great Works in Western Culture program at Stanford University and to serve as vice president and Secretary of Wesleyan University. He became president of Bucknell University in 1995 and president of Colby College in 2000.

Bryan Bannon (Ph.D. Memphis, 2009) is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of Environmental Studies, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA. He writes primarily on how philosophical concepts can be used to consider environmental problems differently. He has published in leading environmental journals, including Environmental Ethics, Ethics, Policy and the Environment, and Environmental Philosophy, and his book From Mastery to Mystery: a Phenomenological Foundation for an Environmental Ethic was published in 2014. Currently, he is working on two manuscript projects. The first involves how a relational view of nature can be used to develop alternative standards for ecological health, and the second examines the potential role of friendship as a model for establishing a better relationship between humanity and the rest of the natural world.

Stephen Barber, Associate Professor of English at the University of Rhode Island, is completing a monograph titled Late Woolf, Late Foucault: The Art of Exiting. He has published articles on Virginia Woolf, Michel Foucault, literary theory, and the medical humanities. Barber is co-editor of a critical collection of essays (Routledge) on literary and cultural theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. (Contributors include Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Douglas Crimp, James Kincaid, Nancy K. Miller, and Kathryn Bond Stockton.) He teaches undergraduate courses and graduate seminars in literary theory and European modernism, topics upon which he also regularly presents at conferences in the humanities (in Canada, Great Britain, and the US). A recipient for seven years of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Award, Barber held a postdoctoral fellowship at Duke University until his appointment at the University of Rhode Island. At URI he has served as chair of the English department, as director of the department’s
graduate program, and as a member of the Center for Humanities’ executive committee. A recipient of the URI Foundation Teaching Excellence Award, Barber is also a Fellow of the John Hazen White Sr. Research Center for Ethics and Public Service.

Winifred E. Brownell, (Ph.D. SUNY at Buffalo, 1973) is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. Prior to her appointment as Dean in 1999, Dr. Brownell served as Interim Dean, Associate Dean, and professor of Communication Studies. In 1978-79, she served as an ACE Fellow at the University of Utah. In 1979, she became the first URI scholar to visit the People’s Republic of China to begin dialogues on faculty and student exchanges with key universities. In 1988, Dr. Brownell received the URI Foundation Teaching Excellence Award; in 1996, she received the Association of Academic and Professional Women “Woman of the Year” award; in 1999, in 2003, she received the Multicultural Center Administrative Excellence Award; in 2006 she received the Rhode Island International Film Festival Producer’s Circle Award; in 2014, she received the Dream Maker Award from the RI Film and TV Office, and in 2017 the Leadership Award from the National Language Flagship. Her publications include articles in Communication Monographs, Communication Quarterly, Personnel Journal, Communication Research Reports, The Encyclopedia of Aging, and The Gerontologist and essays in edited collections. In 1974-75 she coordinated the URI Honors Colloquium on "Aging, Dying and Death." In 1996, she co-coordinated the John Hazen White Sr. Honors Colloquium on "Mortal Questions." She launched the Beaupre Hope and Heritage Fund and the Harrington School of Communication and Media. A sustained advocate for the liberal arts and sciences, she serves on the boards of the R.I. Council for the Humanities and the R.I. Historical Society.

Mauro Carbone is Full Professor of Aesthetics at the Faculté de Philosophie of the University Jean Moulin Lyon 3, and a Senior Member of the Institut Universitaire de France. He is the founder and the co-editor of the journal Chiasmi International. Trilingual Studies concerning Merleau-Ponty’s Thought. Influenced by phenomenology, in particular by Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, his present researches focus on the connections between philosophy and contemporary visual experience. Among his recent publications: The Flesh of Images. Merleau-Ponty between Painting and Cinema, Suny Press 2015; Être morts ensemble: l’événement du 11 septembre 2001, MetisPresses 2013; An Unprecedented Deformation: Marcel Proust and the Sensible Ideas, Suny Press 2010. His most recent book has been published in Fall 2016 in French and in Italian. It is being translated into English under the title Philosophy-screens. From Cinema to Digital Revolution.

Licia Carlson is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Providence College. Her research interests include philosophy of disability, bioethics, feminist philosophy, phenomenology, and the philosophy of music. She is the author of The Faces of Intellectual Disability (2010) and co-editor of Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy (2010). She is currently writing a book about disability, music and philosophy, and is a violinist with the Longwood Symphony Orchestra in Boston.

Vincent Colapietro (vxc5@psu.edu) is a Liberal Arts Research Professor of Philosophy at the Pennsylvania State University (University Park, PA, USA). One of his main areas of historical research is the pragmatist tradition, with special emphasis on Charles S. Peirce. A main focus of his systematic work is the articulation and application of a general theory of signs. Though devoted to developing a semiotic perspective rooted in Peirce’s seminal work, Colapietro draws upon a number of authors and perspectives other than Peirce and pragmatism (including such authors as Bakhtin, Jakobson, and Bourdieu as well as such movements as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and deconstruction). His work is often comparative and trans-disciplinary; this is
nowhere more evident than his engagement with semiotics. He is the author of Peirce’s Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity (1989), A Glossary of Semiotics (1993), and Fateful Shapes of Human Freedom (2003) as well as numerous essays. He has served as President of the Charles S. Peirce Society, the Metaphysical Society of America, and the Semiotic Society of America. At present, he is completing a book on pragmatism and psychoanalysis, while continuing his research on literary theory, intellectual history, and other topics. His work has been translated into French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Japanese, and other languages.

Peter Costello is Professor of Philosophy and Public and Community Service at Providence College. He has published widely in phenomenology, including a monograph in 2012 on Husserl entitled Layers in Husserl's Phenomenology: On Meaning and Intersubjectivity with The University of Toronto Press. He has also edited a volume entitled Philosophy in Children's Literature, and, with Licia Carlson, co-edited a volume entitled Phenomenology and the Arts, both with Rowman and Littlefield. His most recent article publications include one on Merleau-Ponty and art entitled "Phenomenology and the Body Politic: Merleau-Ponty, Cezanne, and Democracy," and one on phenomenology and literature entitled "Towards a Phenomenology of Transition: E. B. White's Charlotte's Web and a Child's Process of Reading Herself Into the Novel.

Kathleen Davis, Professor of English at URI, focuses her scholarship on the fields of Old and Middle English literature, translation studies, and the history of periodization. She is the author of Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time and Deconstruction and Translation; as well as co-editor of Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of “the Middle Ages” Outside Europe. She has won many awards, including a URI Faculty Research Excellence Award for Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, a URI College of Arts and Sciences Research Excellence Award, and a residency at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton. Currently, Professor Davis is the Project Director of the University’s National Endowment for the Humanities Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant.

David Faflik is Associate Professor of English at the University of Rhode Island. The author of Boarding Out: Inhabiting the American Urban Literary Imagination, 1840-1860 (Northwestern University Press, 2012), he is currently at work on two book projects. The first of these treats urban reading practices in the nineteenth-century transatlantic; the other examines the relation between New England Transcendentalism and the antebellum understanding of spiritual “unbelief.”

Amy Foley is a PhD candidate (ABD) and instructor in Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Rhode Island. Her research interests include phenomenology, modernism, twentieth century fiction, the writings of Walter Benjamin, and material culture. Her work has been published in The Journal of Popular Culture and Hotel Amerika. Amy has presented her scholarship at the Northeast Modern Language Association and annual Faulkner Conference among others. She continues to write on the philosophy of our engagement with fiction.

Cheryl Foster is Carnegie Professor of Philosophy and Associate Director of the Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island, where she teaches and writes on subjects in philosophy, the arts, literature, and the environment. In 2013 Cheryl was one of seven educators nationally selected to be a Kennedy Center/ Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher, and that same year was named the 2013 Carnegie Professor of the Year for Rhode Island. As a contributor
Elizabeth Francis, as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, leads the Council’s promotion of public history, cultural heritage, civic education and community engagement. Before her role at the Council, Elizabeth was director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Brown University for 10 years. She earned her doctorate in American Studies at Brown, and her book, *The Secret Treachery of Words: Feminism and Modernism in America*, was published by the University of Minnesota Press in 2002. She completed her bachelor’s degree at Hampshire College. Elizabeth taught at Brown and the University of Rhode Island for several years, has been a member of the board of the International Charter School in Pawtucket, RI, and chaired the Grants Committee as a member of the board at RICH. As a member of the RI Commerce Corporation board in 2013-2014, Elizabeth co-authored a strategic plan to develop the creative and cultural economy. She currently serves as a member of the Advisory Council for the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University and on the Community Advisory Board for Rhode Island PBS. Elizabeth is also a member of the planning committee for URI's Next Generation Humanities PhD initiative supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. She lives in the historic Armory District of Providence’s West End.

James B. Haile, III received his MA from The University of Memphis and his PhD from Duquesne University. His areas of specialization are Philosophy and Literature (in particular, African American Literature and Poetics), African American Philosophy, and Philosophy of Art (or Philosophical Aesthetics). His publications include an edited collection, *Philosophical Meditations on Richard Wright* (Lexington Press, 2012 [2014]), which is now in its second edition (paperback). The collection situates Richard Wright as a Philosopher. He is currently working on another edited collection on James Baldwin, *Thinking through Baldwin*, and a single authored book, *Refiguring the Black Male Literary Canon 1850 to Present* for Northwestern University Press. In addition to these works, he has published essays in *Radical Philosophy Today* and essays in edited collections *The Liberatory Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr: Critical Essays on the Philosopher King* (2012 [2014]) and, forthcoming in *Philosophizing the Americas: An Inter-American Discourse and A Political Companion to Richard Wright*.

Galen A. Johnson is Jane C. Ebbs Professor of Philosophy at the University of Rhode Island. At URI, he has served as Chair of Philosophy, Director of the Honors Program, and Director of the Center for the Humanities. He has been Chairman of the RI Council for the Humanities, General Secretary (Executive Director) of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle (2005-2015), and has been a recent recipient of recent fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and American Philosophical Society (APS). He is editor of *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (1993, 1998), and author of *The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking Through Merleau-Ponty’s Aesthetics* (2010). His co-authored book, *Merleau-Ponty’s Poets and Poetics*, is forthcoming from Fordham University Press. His current research interests include the art and writings of Paul Klee and a study of the sublime and the baroque in Merleau-Ponty's late writings.

Marjorie Johnson is a museum educator for High School Programs at the National Gallery of Art, where she researches, designs, and teaches workshops for high school students. Prior to joining the staff at the NGA, she interned at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), and she worked as a freelance family educator at the Louvre and Notre Dame in Paris, France with the Muse Education Group (also known as Paris Muse). Marjorie holds a B.A.
from the University of Rhode Island in French and Philosophy and an M.A. in linguistics and art history from the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* in Paris, France. Her Master’s thesis examined the power dynamics evident in conversation between bilingual native and non-native speakers of French and English using linguistic conversation analysis. At the National Gallery of Art, she serves on the Professional Core Values committee of the Division of Education, working to ensure relevant continuing education and professional recognition for all colleagues.

**Lisa Karrer** recently completed her MFA in Digital and Interdisciplinary Art Practice at the City College of New York. She is an internationally known performer, composer, vocalist, videographer and installation artist. She tours, collaborates, records and performs with a wide range of fellow artists and ensembles. Karrer's long-term interests lie in developing non-linear, narrative-based installations that offer multiple visual and audio environments for the viewer. Her newest project, *OVERLANDERS*, is a study in digital set design based on pioneer migrations in America, focusing on women who settled the western regions of the United States. The installation incorporates historical figures appearing on green screen video, soundtrack libretto composed of journal excerpts and period literature, and an exhibit of mounted ceramic dwellings with micro-projections and embedded audio. In March, 2017, Karrer appeared as featured vocalist and video artist with composer/hyperpianist Denman Maroney, at the Stone in NYC.

**Rajiv Kaushik** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Brock University, Ontario, Canada. He has published widely in the areas of language, hermeneutics and aesthetics, and on the phenomenologies of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He is co-editor of a forthcoming collection of essays, *Chasms and Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty’s Legacy for Contemporary Philosophy*, which examines the debt certain contemporary issues in philosophy owe to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology. He also has two monograph books, *Art and Institution: Aesthetics in Merleau-Ponty's Late Works* (2011) and *Art, Language and Figure: Excursions in Hyper-Dialectic* (2013). These are concerned with the central role art work plays in Merleau-Ponty’s ontology. The first has to do with the way art exhibits what Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, calls primal-institution – the event of an unfixed and non-determined meaning that arises in the specific way subjects attend to and think about objects. The second book is an extension of this analysis, and deals specifically with linguistic structures. It argues that Merleau-Ponty’s proposed “figured philosophy” reorients linguistic figures to sensible figures. Currently, Rajiv is interested in how Merleau-Ponty’s own use of figurative language betrays an ontology that could not have been otherwise expressed.

**Marc Levitt** works at the intersection of the Humanities, Arts and Education. In his multi-faceted career, Mr. Levitt has been the host/co-producer of the National radio show, Action Speaks, Underappreciated Dates that Changed America, winner of the Schwartz Prize from Council for local humanities and heard on over 150 radio stations. He also created and directed a 'Museum in the School' project in an inner city Providence, RI school for which he received funding from both the NEH and the Disney Learning Partnership. Marc additionally directed and produced two PBS broadcast films, Stories and Stone and Woven and Time, both about the Narragansett native community. Mr. Levitt also produced audio art pieces at the Rhode Island School of Art and Narragansett Beach and has written and published three books on educational practice and philosophy, one by Corwin Press and the two others, out in June with Rowman/Littlefield. Marc, as an educational consultant and storyteller has worked in more than sixty countries and finally, Mr. Levitt was the first recipient of the Tom Roberts prize for Creative Use of the Humanities from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. He is currently working on his new film, Triple Decker, a New England Love Story and a book on US secondary education from the late 1960's to the mid 1970's. He lives in Wakefield with his wife, a contemporary art curator and twin, three year old boys.
Marta Nijhuis is an Italian-Dutch trans-medial artist based in Lyon, France. Due to her philosophical background, she is lecturer at the Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and at the EAC Lyon, School of Engineering in Culture, Art, and Luxury, where she delivers courses that intertwine her artistic and theoretical competences. Her artworks have been on show in several galleries, cultural associations, foundations, and institutions in Italy and France. Among these are the Cappelletti Gallery, the Ponte Rosso Gallery, the Press Circle, and the General Consulate of the Netherlands in Milan (IT), the Giorgio Correggiari Foundation in Bari (IT), the Manufacture des Tabacs in Lyon (FR), and the Maison de l’International in Grenoble (FR). Many of her works are part of private collections in Italy, France, England, Switzerland, China, and the United States.