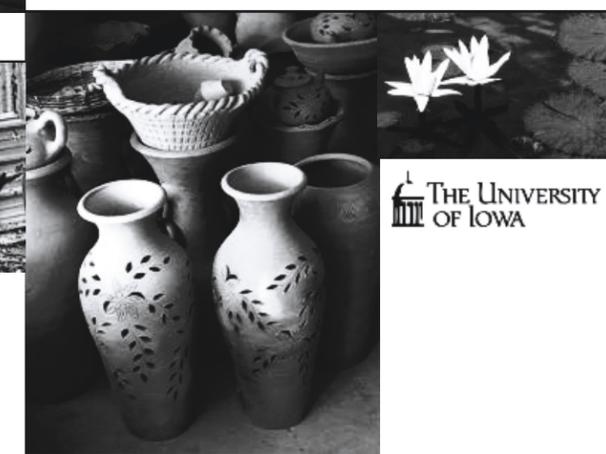


# CROSSING BORDERS SPRING 2003



**CROSSING BORDERS**— A program in interdisciplinary cross-area graduate training that prepares students for research at the intersection of two or more cultures

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 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

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## Crossing Borders is:



- an interdisciplinary cross-area graduate training program that prepares doctoral students in eleven social science and humanities departments for multi-sited research at the intersection of two or more cultures
- a set of unique, jointly-taught seminars and undergraduate courses that explore issues arising from globalization, its antecedents and accompaniments
- an annual convocation that serves as meeting place for the presentation of research by UI faculty and students and by distinguished scholars from other universities and abroad
- a set of faculty research projects that explore complex expressions of politics, culture and economics arising from global processes of mixing, exchange and struggle
- a series of "second-area travel-seminars" that result in rapid acquisition by faculty and graduate students of functional information, regional contacts, teachable courses and researchable issues in foreign areas
- part of a network of Ford Foundation-funded projects designed to revitalize university-based area studies

### Do You Have News?

*If you have news or updates on your area of research or involvement and would like to share it?*

For more information on Crossing Borders Newsletter, please contact:  
**IP External Relations Director,  
Lois Gray at 335-2026**

*For more information on the Crossing Borders Program:*  
**(319)335-2822**  
[www.uiowa.edu/~intl/ACAD\\_crossing\\_borders](http://www.uiowa.edu/~intl/ACAD_crossing_borders)

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## Once Upon a Time in Crossing Borders

**Patricia Solís**

[Crossing Borders Fellow, 1999-2001]

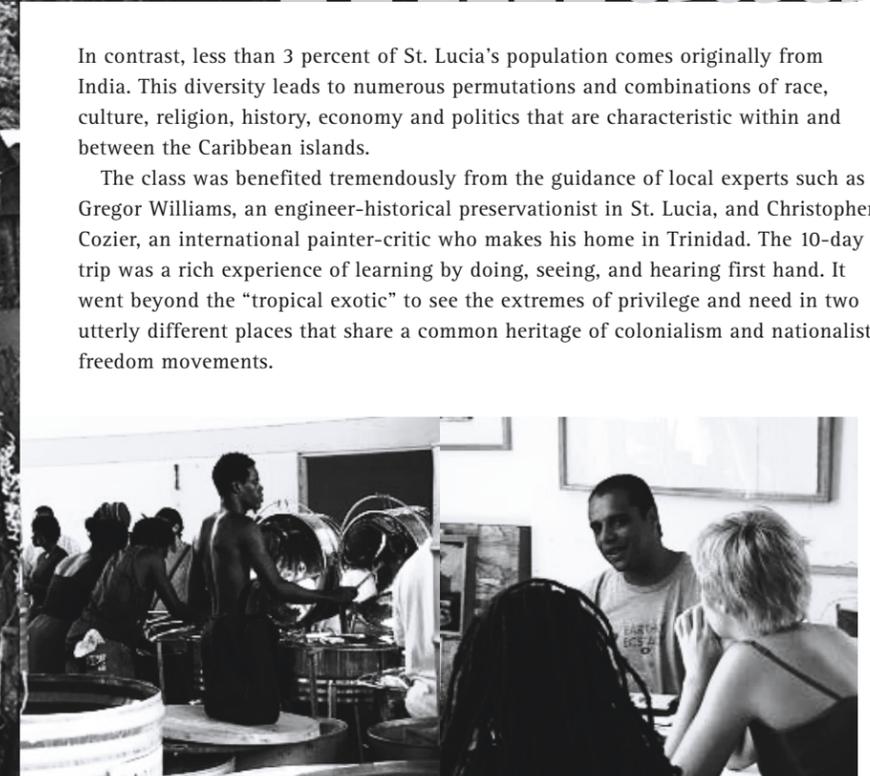
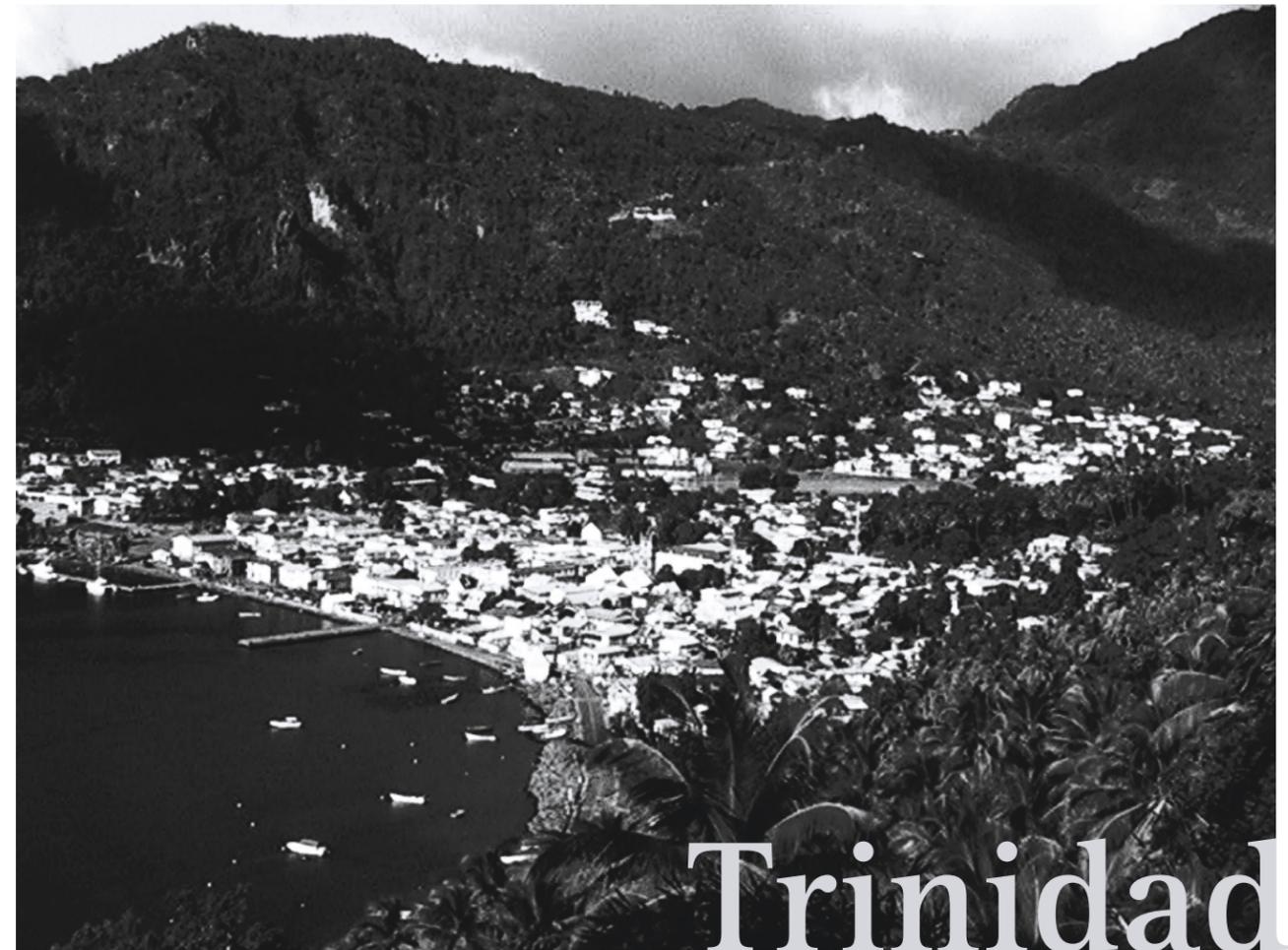


*Patricia Solís was a Crossing Borders Fellow, 1999-2001. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Geography in December 2002, and currently works in the Association of American Geographers as the Director of Research and Outreach. She gives a reflection on her experience as a CB fellow and how that serves her current career.*

When I received word about the CB program, I was just launching my doctoral research plan that would investigate a German-sponsored environmental project in Argentina to combat desertification. Having spent a year in Switzerland as an undergraduate, I was already fluent in German, and was hoping to gain additional language skills in Spanish and experience in Latin America to be able to critically investigate the use of new geographic and spatial technologies for environmental efforts in this region of the world. The CB program gave me the perfect framework to be able to extend my work in this area. As a geographer, I have already been sensitive to the central "crossing borders" idea that our understanding of contemporary issues demands a perspective that recognizes particular places in relation to other parts of the world and incorporates a theory of the global processes that help to create them. Through the coursework and interaction with other participants, the CB program helped me to make these central arguments explicit and provided an institutional justification for innovative and critical work that acknowledges place as a process.

Like many excellent but under-funded ideas, the program in itself could not provide enough direct financial assistance to us graduate students to support all of the extra field activities and language training that such research programs begged for. But in my case, it did help me to frame my work in order to generate sufficient support from outside sources. While working within such a flexible and innovative program enabled us the freedom to design our own projects in innovative ways, it also made it necessary to keep tabs on requirements and logistics that broke the mold of usual departmental fellowship administrative procedures. I personally enjoyed the extra benefit of working to improve communication among the fellows, participating professors, and administration as a representative of the graduate students. Certainly, the most rewarding aspect of participating in the program was the interaction with other fellows. I owe my colleagues a great deal of thanks and respect.

After four and one-half years at the UI, I finished my degree in December 2002 with a dissertation that was much richer for the CB experience. In January 2003, I joined the staff of the Association of American Geographers as Director of Research and Outreach. In this role, I am supporting the implementation and administration of existing projects that support geographic research and outreach as well as coordinating efforts to strengthen and develop new opportunities and partnerships for scholarly and educational initiatives of the organization. One of these new efforts is a broad assessment of regional studies in university geography departments. I believe I will be able to contribute a unique and valuable perspective afforded me by my experience in "crossing borders" in this effort that will strive to revitalize area studies within our discipline.



In contrast, less than 3 percent of St. Lucia's population comes originally from India. This diversity leads to numerous permutations and combinations of race, culture, religion, history, economy and politics that are characteristic within and between the Caribbean islands.

The class was benefited tremendously from the guidance of local experts such as Gregor Williams, an engineer-historical preservationist in St. Lucia, and Christopher Cozier, an international painter-critic who makes his home in Trinidad. The 10-day trip was a rich experience of learning by doing, seeing, and hearing first hand. It went beyond the "tropical exotic" to see the extremes of privilege and need in two utterly different places that share a common heritage of colonialism and nationalist freedom movements.

## From the field (Trinidad):



# St. Lucia

During the winter session of 2002-2003 Crossing Borders organized a short field course designed as a learning experience for students and faculty together. Five students and two professors traveled to the Caribbean islands of St. Lucia and Trinidad to see first-hand the visible evidence of a mixed or creolized cultural and social relationship among persons of African and of Indian descent.

It was diversity—as well as the ways that differences and distinctions are ignored and overcome in daily life—that was the focus of the trip. While St. Lucia and Trinidad are both nations whose modern origin lies in nationalist movements that threw off British colonial rule in the 1960s and 1970s, they are very different places and have different histories, peoples and public cultures. They also differ economically—St. Lucia is overwhelmingly part of the Caribbean leisure and tourism industry, although bananas and other agricultural products are still important. Trinidad, in contrast, is not particularly wedded to tourism; the country has abundant oil resources and export crops and products that make it economically more diverse than St. Lucia. The racial and ethnic composition of the two islands also differs: Trinidad is almost equally divided between persons of East Asian or Indian descent—mostly Hindu, some Muslim—and persons of African descent, who are mostly Christians.



UI students and professors traveled to the Caribbean islands of St. Lucia and Trinidad to see first-hand the visible evidence of a mixed or creolized cultural and social relationship among persons of African and of Indian descent.



top left figure 1: Helpful boys on pier at St. Lucian port of Soufrière. figure 2: Vernacular building style in coastal St. Lucia c. 1940. figure 3: Cricket at Queen's Oval, Port of Spain, Trinidad. figure 4: Professor Paul Greenough and graduate student India Dennis confer inside Hindu temple, Trinidad. figure 5: The Crossing Borders group pausing by roadside en route to Vieux Fort in St. Lucia. figure 6: Handmade pottery ware at Indian artisan shops, Chaguanas, Trinidad. Opposite page—figure 1 (top): The city of Soufrière on the southwest coast of St. Lucia. figure 2: Trinidad artist and cultural critic Christopher Cozier speaks with UI students Jenny Stokes (right) and India Dennis. figure 3: A steelpan band in Port of Spain, Trinidad beats out a song. figure 4: A vernacular dwelling in the Sea Lots section, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

## First-Year Crossing Borders Fellows

**Kelli Beer**, once a small town Iowan girl, earned her B.A. in Film & Media Studies at the University of Iowa and completed an honors thesis that proposed a theory of alternating desire between late capitalist selves and the otherness they fix upon, cultivate, and embody, as imaged/imagined across such media as fashion, design, photo essays, films, novels, and advertisements. Her anthropological M.A. work at the University of Chicago culminated in a thesis titled, "The Snake That Bit Medusa: One Phenotypically White Woman's Dread(s)." It charts the upheaval of bodily and racial order that dreadlocks on the "white" woman and the semiotic work that dreads do as an authenticating sign for both black essentialism [racial purity] and liberal attitudes towards cultural and racial hybridity [racial mixing]. Kelli is now pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Anthropology. Based on multisited research in Guyana, Jamaica, and Brooklyn/Queens, her doctoral research critically examines how cosmopolitan strategies, practices, and ideologies of mixing interact with variously manipulated discourses of race, desire, and cosmopolitan citizenship in Afro-Guyanese popular music culture, which predominantly sources the popular music cultures of Jamaican reggae/dancehall and, increasingly, U.S. hip-hop.

**Shanshan Chen** arrived in January, 2003 from Tianjing, China with a B.A. in English Language and Literature from the Nankai University, China. She attended a research program at Yonsei University, South Korea (Seoul) before she is enrolled in the graduate program of Art History here. Her research interest is East Asian Art, especially on the relationship between Chinese, Korean and Japanese art. She is now working on a research paper that examines Chinese influences on Japanese Ukiyo-e prints during the Japanese Edo Period. She has also been involved in a research on the Chinese women artists in Chinese Women Artists Association (Art Research Institute of Ministry of Culture, China) since 2000. She is currently investigating works done by contemporary Chinese women artists in the U.S.

**David Correia** is currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography. He has a B.A. with Honors from the University of Iowa in Anthropology and a M.A. in Community and Regional Planning from the University of New Mexico. His focus is on the intersection of culture and nature. Specifically he is fascinated by the forms and institutions people create to mediate human-nature interactions. His work can be generally fit within a broad area of research usually called "borderlands," however he defines borderlands in a way that includes southern Colorado and northern New Mexico and northern and central Mexico. Currently he is conducting research on surface water use and distribution and forest resource uses. He will be engaging in field work in both Mexico and New Mexico this summer and hopes to continue fieldwork next summer.

**Francis Dube**, from Zimbabwe, is currently an M.A.-Ph.D. student in the Department of History. He is interested in the environmental history of Africa, particularly Eastern and Southern Africa. He plans to do his research in Mozambique and Zimbabwe on issues relating to cattle diseases and human diseases. This summer he will visit Mozambique to do some preliminary field and archival research and getting advanced Portuguese training. He will then spend another month in Zimbabwe doing research.

**Karleen Jones** moved in fall 2002 to Iowa City from her home in Arizona to pursue a Ph.D. in Political Science. She earned her B.A. in Spanish and Political Science at the University of Arizona in Tucson in 2001. During her undergraduate career, she investigated interethnic intermarriage along the Arizona-Mexico border. Currently, she is interested in minority representation in Latin American political systems. This summer, she plans to use Crossing Border funds to travel to Brazil to perform intensive study of the Portuguese language, and to begin the preliminary investigation of Afro-Brazilian representation in the Brazilian legislature.

**Thomas Keegan** grew up in Massachusetts and received his B.A. in English and Bioethics from the University

of Virginia. He arrived in Iowa in fall 2002 as a Ph.D. student in English and is interested in the ways in which immigrant populations in Ireland (particularly West African) influence literature and cinema. He is also interested in the cross-cultural connections between the Irish and Harlem Renaissances, the rise of the graphic novel as a legitimate literary form, comic book cultures, and contemporary American and Irish poetry.

**Yung-Bin Kwak** is from South Korea and a second-year student pursuing a Ph.D. in film studies. His research interests lie in probing the ways in which European/Anglo-American film theory was received or re-appropriated by Korean filmmakers and scholars over the course of time. He is especially interested in the period when Korea was under Japanese Occupation, in particular in the 1920s-30s. An indispensable part of his project is to reread those original film theories in much more deeper and wider philosophical context. While in Seoul in summer 2003, he will do some preliminary archival research works and study intensive Japanese and try to gauge the varying degrees of refraction in receiving early film theories

**Alessandra Madella** is a second-year Ph.D. student in Communication Studies. She arrived in fall 2002 from Italy with a degree in Oriental Languages and Literatures from the University of Venice. She also spent two years studying Japanese literature at Tokyo University in Japan. In summer 2003 she plans to research the different reception, in Chinese and Japanese academic environments, of the work of the Japanese ethnographer Yoshino Hiroko. The use of Hiroko's work as textbook in China, and its simultaneous popularity in Japan, constitute an interesting and unexplained case. Alessandra will analyze the reception of Hiroko's work in China and Japan to gain a deeper insight in the cultural relations between the two countries.

**Cristiane Orfalais** is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She has a B.A. in Journalism from the Federal University of Brazil and a M.A. in Communication Studies from Northwestern University. She

*first-year fellows continued on page 4*

*first-year fellows continued*

is a first-year Ph.D. student in Media Studies (Communication Studies) and her work focuses on global media and audience studies. She is particularly interested in the impact of international media in Latin American countries and how mass-mediated texts are negotiated and appropriated in different ways according to local contexts.

**Danielle Snoddy** was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. She graduated from Furman University (Greenville, SC) with a B.A. in Art, focused in art history. She is currently a second year graduate student in the School of Art and Art History. Her specialty area is African art. She is currently writing her Master's thesis on contemporary Senegalese art and plans to begin the doctoral program in the School of Art and Art History in the fall.

**Ellen Sweeney**, a first-year Ph.D. student in Film Studies, commences with her pre-doctoral research on narratives of trauma related to sectarian violence in fiction films by researching in summer 2003 in Dublin, Northern Ireland and London.

## Student Update

**Brett Van Hoesen** is pursuing dissertation research in Berlin, Germany, for her project, "Institutions of Visual Culture and the Critique of Colonial Legacies: The Avant-Garde, Popular Press and Ethnographic Museums in Weimar Germany." In summer 2003 she will continue her work at the Staats Bibliothek und Archiv in Berlin and will begin research at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin-Dahlem. She also plans to make a research trip to Bremen to work with archival materials at the Übersee Museum and the Deutsche Presseforschung Center at the Universität Bremen.

**Vidya Murthy** is completing her second year in the Ph. D. program in History. She earlier received a Masters degree in Art History from the University of Kansas, where she wrote a thesis on the problem of exhibiting ritual objects in an art museum. She is currently working on a long paper in which she addresses the modern Indian state's role in the lives of handloom weavers. She is also interested in writing on contemporary Indian art and pursuing her drawing.

## From the field (Seychelles):

### Shaping Creolization Processes:

Expressive Culture, Power, and Identity in St. Lucia and Seychelles

**Jerry Wever**

[Ph.D. candidate, Anthropology & CB Fellow]

*Wever is finishing up his 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork, funded by Wenner-Gren Foundation and by the Social Science Research Council. In April 2003 he returned from six months in the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean, which was preceded by one year of fieldwork in St. Lucia in the Caribbean. His project is a comparative analysis of cultural dimensions of decolonization in two French-Creolephone island societies.*

In my project I view the process of identity formation in decolonizing and post-colonial St. Lucia and Seychelles as latter dimensions of creolization processes, wherein the majority of actors have a greater degree of control over shaping these processes than under the power relations of colonization. As these societies share many historical colonial circumstances and have both taken leadership roles in cultural decolonization in their region, the comparison has been fruitful. At a two-day conference on the Seychelles I recently co-organized, I presented my findings on the Seychelles in relation to St. Lucia. This stimulated good discussion about where the cultural institutions—once so crucially reclaiming colonially-estranged cultural identity resources—were now going in the post-colonial era.

Studying cultural creolization in the Seychelles has involved in depth study of traditions in its sister islands Rodrigues and Chagos, which were all once dependencies in the archipelago of Mauritius (a 100-plus island group spanning 10,000 square miles). Seychelles was the first to be separate (in 1903) and the only one to become an independent nation (in 1976). Despite great distances between them, the histories of the islands have been entwined since early settlement, and cultural forms have continued to cross-fertilize, making a study in any one intimately involve the others. Yet the isolation of each also accounts for many unique developments. A long trip to Rodrigues, as well as a visit to the Seychelles island of La Digue, provided me with much data for analysis. Within the Seychelles alone, a leading explanation of the uniqueness is the 'isolation within isolation' context of such distant outer islands. Decolonization never came to Chagos, due to its remote location on strategic oil routes. Independence and development were brokered at a devastating price for Chaggossians just so that the U.S. could put a military base on Diego Garcia. Most survivors live in Mauritian slums or in the Seychelles, and secrets of their silent removal have still not been revealed. Seychelles has absorbed many Chaggossian traditions without acknowledgment, and Seychellois colleagues with interest in creolization have requested that I include this in my study. Oral histories with Chaggossians in Seychelles and Mauritius, and research in archives in Mauritius and the Colonial Office archives in London have facilitated data for this important case study of the power dynamics of creolization during decolonization.

In my dissertation I will be making several interventions in creolization theory. I will trace the usage of the term creole and its many cognates from earliest moments of usage to some of the ways it is now being marshaled for identity purposes. Along the way I will demonstrate that the vast array of localized and layered specificity of the term need not be a hindrance and could instead be the touchstone of theoretical potency. The comparison between societies in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean will be central to the argument, and case studies from each, such as the Indian Ocean situations referred to above, will develop key points. The largest case study will involve the way that U.S. Country & Western music is being utilized in St. Lucia to bring elements of rural non-commercial Afro-St. Lucian storytelling dances out of their marginal existence vis-à-vis other more dominating Caribbean popular music forms, and I will examine how this plays out in local identity contestations.

## Crossing Borders Convocation

2003

# Biopower: Witnessing, Testimony & Gendered Violence

*The term "biopower" can be applied by extension to a range of contemporary global issues such as the politics of AIDS, the shifting projects of development, and the transformation of gender and culture under global capitalism.*



exercise and epidemics change the way in which cultures and nations interface with the world; and how large-scale environmental threats spur once isolated groups to transnational action. Professor Kamala Visweswaran (Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin) was one of the featured speakers and gave the closing remarks.

The 2003 convocation was honored by two distinguished filmmakers, Pankaj Rishi Kumar, an independent artist from India, and Christopher Laird, a producer-director of television documentaries and co-director of Banyan Productions, from Port of Spain, Trinidad. While Kumar's *Kumar Talkies* (1999) was warmly received at last year's Convocation, his most recent work, *Pather Chujraeri* (The Play Is On....[2002, 44 min]) stimulated vibrant discussions. The film documents the struggles of local Indian folktale performers to preserve Kashmiri theatrical tradition in the midst of the military violence between the Indian government and Kashmir guerrilla forces. Laird, on the other hand, presented his best-known work "And the Dish Ran away with the Spoon" (1992, 49 min), which explores the impact of American television broadcasting on local cultures in St. Lucia and Cuba. Both films stand as the witnesses to the damaging force of dictating power, whether it is military or commercial.

The 2003 Crossing Borders Convocation took place over Friday and Saturday, March 28-29, 2003. The theme of the convocation was "Biopower: Witnessing, Testimony and Gendered Violence." Students, faculty and guests presented research results that in many cases wrestled with large themes involving the concept of "biopower," which is associated with the work of Michel Foucault (1926-84). While Foucault's demonstration of a new kind of power was situated within his analysis of the transformations accompanying the rise of the nation state, the term can be applied by extension to a range of contemporary global issues such as the politics of AIDS, the shifting projects of development, and the transformation of gender and culture under global capitalism. Papers presented at the Convocation inspected biopower at the level of bodily fates under differing state and supra-state regimes. The speakers noted how social bodies are reshaped and re-presented against the backdrop of gendered normalcy in differing national contexts; how accounts of the body disrupt social, political and gender constructs; how sexuality and health come in and out of focus as

## Convocation Panels

### Panel 1. CONSTRUCTED BODIES/ GLOBAL MARKETS

- **Bridget Sandhoff** (Art and Art History UI) *Female Bodybuilders: Bodies in Crisis*
- **Kimberly Cleveland** (Art and Art History UI) *Mario Cravo Neto: Questions of Afro-Brazilian History, Culture, and Identity Through Sculptural Photographs*
- **Vidya Murthy** (History UI) *Representing the Local Body: Art Works of Ramesh Kalkur*
- **Brett Van Hoesen** (Art and Art History UI) *Neocolonialist Agendas and the Scripting of Cultural Policy in Weimar Germany*

### Panel 2. VIOLENCE & THE GENDERED BODY

- **Jill Moffett** (Women's Studies UI) *Moving Beyond the Ribbon: An Examination of Breast Cancer Advocacy and Activism*
- **Katharina Mendoza** (Women's Studies UI) *Filipino 'Comfort' Women: Sexual Violence, Nation, and the Politics of Apology*
- **Ellen Sweeney** (Film Studies UI) *Out of Time in the Wrong Place: Interpellation and the Chronotope in Neil Jordan's "The Butcher Boy"*
- **Kamala Visweswaran** (Anthropology UT Austin) *Just Stories [Gujarat2002 & Narratives of Violence]*

### Panel 3. ENVIRONMENTAL FEARS & BETRAYALS OF HEALTH

- **Brad Casucci** (Anthropology UI) *Ignoring Aids: Sharing, Modernity and Health in Kenya*
- **Jeannie Sowers** (Political Science UI) *Selling Toshka: State, Business, and Environmental Discourse in Egypt*
- **Richard Mtisi** (History UI) *The Great Limpopo Trasfrontier Park in Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe*
- **Eric Hines** (Political Science UI) *The Greening of Europe: Green Parties and the European Union*
- **Benjamin Willett** (Anthropology UI) *Visions of a "Modern" Maya: Ethnicity and Politics in Quetzaltenango*

### Panel 4. WITNESSING THE CARIBBEAN BODY

- **Michaeline Crichlow** (African-American World Studies UI) *LUCIANS! 'Just a Few Pricks' or Deep Cuts to the National Body*
- **Paul Greenough** (History UI) *Gambling as Social Practice and Metaphor in Trinidad and Tobago*
- **Jennifer Stokes** (Anthropology UI) *Music in We Blood*
- **Catherine Douillet** (Anthropology UI) *Mixed Couples: Making over Ethnic and National Identities in Trinidad and Tobago*