

BARBARA ADAMS

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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of Art, Design, and Social Justice, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design, 2021-

Director, Anthropology + Design Graduate Minor, The New School for Social Research, 2022-2024

Postdoctoral Fellow in Design Strategies, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design, 2020-2021

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Design, Center for Pedagogical Innovation, Wesleyan University, 2017-2019

Faculty, Bard Microcollege at Brooklyn Public Library, Bard Prison Initiative, Bard College, 2020

Associate Director of Research and Academic Initiatives, Parsons Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Lab (DESI Lab), The New School, 2019-2023

Co-Editor in Chief, *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum*, Taylor and Francis, 2018-

EDUCATION

Ph.D. and M.A., Sociology, The New School for Social Research, New York, NY, 2018

Dissertation: *The Artist in the Social Field: Contemporary Art and the Sociological Imagination*.

Committee: Terry Williams (chair), Shana Agid, and Elzbieta Matynia.

M.A. Pedagogical Sciences, Universiteit van Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 2003

B.A. English, State University College at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY, 1989

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Participatory art and design; the politics of altruism and social solidarity; artistic research; social theory; ethnography and participatory action research; inequality and social class; speculative design; urban studies.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2024-2025	Henry H. Arnhold Forum on Global Challenges, Faculty Research Fund (FRF) Award
2022-2025	Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, Faculty Research Award, The New School
2022-2025	Cross-School and School-Based Funding Awards, The New School
2019	National Endowment for the Arts, Art Works Grant, DESIS Lab and Brooklyn Public Library's Justice Initiatives
2017	Creative Campus/Center for the Arts Grant, Wesleyan University
2017	Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life Grant, Wesleyan University
2017	Service-Learning Initiative Grant, Wesleyan University
2016	Guest Researcher Residency, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)

2016	Travel/Research Grant, The New School for Social Research
2015-2016	Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, The Graduate Institute for Design, Ethnography and Social Thought (GIDEST), The New School
2013-2014	University Scholarship, The New School for Social Research
2008-2010	Professional Development Grant, PSC CUNY
2008	Most Remarkable Thesis Written in ISHSS History, Universiteit van Amsterdam
2005-2017	Teaching Fellowship, The New School for Social Research
2006-2009	Travel/Research Grant, The New School for Social Research
2005-2006	University Fellowship, The New School for Social Research
2003-2005	University Scholarship, The New School for Social Research

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2023 Adams, Barbara, "Proximity and the Ethics of Engagement," in *Collaborative Social Design with Indigenous Communities*, Carmen Malvar. Routledge.
- 2015 Acarín, Xavier and Barbara Adams, "Centers of Experience: Bodies and Objects in Today's Museums," in *Experience Design*, Peter Benz (ed.). London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 119-132.
- 2014 Adams, Barbara and Susan Yelavich (eds.) *Design as Future-Making*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

ARTICLES

- 2026 Adams, Barbara and Jilly Traganou, "when life is happening, design has meaning," *Design and Culture* 17(3): 259-263, forthcoming. (co-editor of special issue)
- 2025 Adams, Barbara and John Bruce, "Public Library Workers: Unconditional Hospitality and Shared Leadership," *Tensions of Care, Antipode*, forthcoming.
- 2021 Adams, Barbara and Denise Milstein, "From Improvisation to Institutional Change: Understanding the Pandemic through Oral History," *Design and Culture* 13(1).
- 2021 Adams, Barbara, Betti Marenko, and Jilly Traganou, "Design and the Pandemic: The Early Months," *Design and Culture* 13(1). (co-editor of special issue)
- 2019 Adams, Barbara, Mahmoud Keshavarz, and Jilly Traganou, "Introduction from the New Editorial Team," *Design and Culture* 11(2): 153-5.
- 2019 Adams, Barbara, Mariana Amatullo, John Bruce, Lara Penin, Eduardo Staszowski, "Public Libraries as Engines of Democracy: A Research and Pedagogical Case Study on Design for Re-Entry," *NORDES 2019: Who Cares?* no. 8.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

- 2021 Adams, Barbara, "The Coordinates of Speculative Solidarity." Project Unsung, Innovation Service, UNHCR.
- 2021 Adams, Barbara, "Art, Fabulation, and Practicing the Worlds We Want." Project Unsung, Innovation Service, UNHCR.
- 2015 Adams, Barbara, "The Best of 2014," *Código Magazine*.
- 2013 Adams, Barbara, "Old New Territories," International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP).
- 2012 Adams, Barbara and David Peppas, "This Must Be the Place," Spazio Morris.
- 2011 Adams, Barbara, "Dispatches from Occupy Wall Street," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*.
- 2010 Adams, Barbara, "Cranbrook Estate," Pulse Contemporary Art Fair.

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE PRACTICE

WORKSHOPS AND STRATEGY

- 2025 Organizer, *Beyond Borders: Territory Is a Meeting Place*, week-long field laboratory, Barcelona
- 2023 Co-Facilitator, *Fabulations, Fluxus, and Flow*, World Futures Studies Federation XXV World Conference, *Exploring Liminalities: Creating Spaces for Unlimited Futures*, Paris
- 2022 Co-Organizer of Creative Engagements, *Speculative Storytelling as Transformative Practice: Reimagining Narratives of Displacement*, PODIUM Artist-Run Gallery/Co-Futures: Futures from the Margins, The Science Fiction Research Association Conference, Oslo
- 2021 Workshop Designer and Facilitator, *Collective Effervescence: Transforming Narratives*, Project Unsung, Innovation Service, UNHCR, Geneva
- 2018-2019 Design Strategist and Research Lead, DESIS Lab x Brooklyn Public Library, New York
- 2019 Workshop Designer and Facilitator, *Transdisciplinary Methods and Mediations*, India China Institute, The New School, New York
- 2019 Design Strategist (with John Bruce and Anže Zadel), *Design and Policy: Inclusive, Participatory Decision-Making for Affordable Housing*, public workshop, Ljubljana
- 2017-2019 Program Designer and Facilitator, *Design Strategies across the Curriculum*, faculty pedagogy workshops, Wesleyan University
- 2016 Organizer, *Podcasting your Research*, The New School/Parsons School of Design, New York
- 2015-2016 Program Designer, *Ethnography Dialogues* series, GIDEST, The New School, New York
- 2016 Exhibition Co-Curator, *Ethnography in the Expanded Field*, The New School, New York
- 2014 Organizer and Facilitator (with Cameron Tonkinwise and Susan Yelavich), *(How design makes) What matters (Matter for us) Workshop*, Carnegie Mellon University

ARTIST COLLABORATIONS

- 2023 Organizer, *multipliCITIES: Experiments in Cohabitation*, PS 122 Gallery, New York
- 2022 Artist-Researcher (with Jane Pirone and Hala Abdul Malak), *Terra Testimony: Soil as a Living Archive*, The Feral Palace Multispecies Design Challenge, Ljubljana
- 2018 Organizer and Facilitator, *End of Life* film screening and discussion, Wesleyan University
- 2016 Facilitator (with Pablo Helguera), participatory event, Art Therapy 32nd Annual Conference: *Critical Engagement: Art and Community*, School of Visual Arts/Kent Gallery, New York
- 2013-2015 Co-Founder and Participant, artist collective, Institute for Art Scene Studies, New York
- 2012-2013 Collaborator, artist collective, *Workshopping the Unruly*, New York
- 2013 Artist (with Jenny Marketou, Dread Scott, Daniel Bejar, Juanli Carrion, Itziar Barrio, and Rob Carter), *Dialogues, a conversation piece*, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse/La Fonderie, Mulhouse
- 2012 Participant, *Bird-cum-ornithologist*, film on artistic production, Consonni Artist Space, Bilbao
- 2012 Artist-Researcher, *The Whole World Is Watching*, Ecole du Magasin, Grenoble
- 2011 Organizer, *Urban Undercurrents*, The New School Urban Festival, New York
- 2008 Artist (with Steven Day), *Emergency Room*, Galerie Taïss, Paris
- 2007 Performer, Christian Jankowski, *Rooftop Routine*, Performa 07, New York
- 2004 Performer, Fred Pelon, *Hoela Loop*, Amsterdam

PRESENTATIONS

INVITED SPEAKER

- 2024 "Fabulating the Future: Designing the Worlds We Want," Department of Design, University of Bergen

- 2022 "New Narratives for Humanitarian Futures," Project Unsung Webinar Series, UNHCR, Geneva
- 2021 "The Politics of Engagement: Fostering Inclusion and Building Equitable Relationships (beyond User and Consumer)," Master in Retail Design, Elisava School of Design and Engineering, Barcelona
- 2019 "Between Critique and Creation: Research, Design, Activism," The Festival of the New, GIDEST, The New School, New York
- 2019 "Thinking Design through Literature," a conversation and book launch with Susan Yelavich, Parsons School of Design, New York
- 2019 "The Politics of Service Design: Services Are the Soft Infrastructure of Society," Service Design Summit, Barcelona, with Lara Penin
- 2019 "Design and Policy: The Role of Inclusive, Participatory Decision-Making for Affordable Housing," Design Biotop, Ljubljana, with John Bruce and Anže Zadel
- 2019 "Design after the Designing Is Done" a conversation with Susan Yelavich, Parsons, New York
- 2019 "Site as Social Space," Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance (ICPP), Wesleyan University
- 2018 "Considering Site," Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance (ICPP), Wesleyan University
- 2017 "Site as Social Space," Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance (ICPP), Wesleyan University
- 2017 Discussant, Our Own Devices, Parsons School of Design and The New School, New York
- 2013 "Sociology (of and) for Socially Engaged Art Practice," Open Engagement, Portland, OR, with Pablo Helguera, Adeola Enigbokan and David Peppas
- 2013 "Conditions of Production," Constructing a Place, Independent Curators International, New York
- 2006 "Walter Benjamin, Experience, and Perception: Architecture and Mass Media," Project Media Space][Public Space: Space, Place, and Virtuality, The New School, New York

SELECT CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2021 "Public Library Workers: Unconditional Hospitality and Shared Leadership," The Social Life of Care, Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge, UK, with John Bruce
- 2019 "Striving for Solidarity between Designers and Workers: A Case Study with the Brooklyn Public Library," Socially Engaged Design Conference, Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
- 2019 "Public Libraries as Engines of Democracy: A Case Study on Designing for Reentry," NORDES 2019, Aalto University, Finland
- 2018 "Ethics of Engagement: From Helping to Solidarity," AIGA Design Educators Conference: MAKE, Herron School of Art + Design, Indianapolis
- 2017 "From Aesthetic Evangelism to Solidarity, From Resilience to Care," Making Home in Wounded Places: Design, Memory, and the Spatial, Parsons School of Design, New York
- 2014 "Changing Paradigms of Practice and Designerly Knowledge," Designer's Big Debates: Pushing the Boundaries of Design Research, Design Research Society, Umeå, Sweden
- 2009 "Critical Movements Are an Other Politics," Visuality/Materiality: Reviewing Theory, Method, and Practice, The Royal Institute for British Architects, London
- 2008 "Sublimating Contemporary Anxieties: James Bond, Technology, Politics," The Messiness of Human Social Life: Complexity, Contradiction, Tension and Ambiguity, Pacific Sociological Association, Portland, OR
- 2007 "James Bond and the Obsolescence of Q," Unnatural Disasters: Protest, Humor, Drama, and Creative Destruction, Society for the Anthropology of North America, New Orleans
- 2006 "Critical Movement: Navigating the (Non)violent Politics of Left and Right," Global Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability: Left Geographies, Royal Geographical Society, London

2006 "Architecture as Mass Media," *Critical Themes in Media Studies*, The New School, New York

EDITORIAL WORK

Co-Editor in Chief, *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum*, Taylor and Francis, 2018-

Co-Editor, *Strategies*, companion site to *The Journal of Design Strategies*, Parsons School of Design 2023-

Co-Editor, Special Issue: when life is happening, design has meaning, *Design and Culture*, 2026

Co-Editor, Special Issue: Design and the Pandemic, *Design and Culture*, 2021

Editorial Assistant, *Public Culture*, Duke University Press, 2004-2005

ACADEMIC SERVICE

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Symposium Organizer, Beyond Borders: Shifting Landscapes, Multiple Temporalities, Posthuman Horizons, The New School, 2024

Chair, Research and Creative Practice (RSCP) Committee, Parsons School of Design, 2023-

Search Committee (dual search), AMT Fine Arts and Illustration, Parsons School of Design, 2024

Reviewer/Juried Selection, Good Interventions, Parsons School of Design, 2023

Director/Advisor, Anthropology and Design Graduate Minor, The New School for Social Research, 2022-

Collaborator, Worldmaking Media Collaborative, The New School, 2022-

Co-Organizer, Papanek Symposium, "Design Anthropology: Critical Speculations," Papanek Foundation and The New School for Social Research, 2023

Organizer, "Bee Brave: A Space for Biodiversity," Parsons School of Design, 2022

Co-Organizer, Weiss Lecture Series, "Re:Frame. Interrogating Capitalism through Historical Narrative and Creative Practices," Parsons School of Design, 2022

Search Committee, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design, 2022

Reviewer/Selection Committee, Vera List Center, The New School, 2022

Reviewer, BioDesign Challenge, Parsons/The New School, 2022

Teaching Team Lead, Course redesign, Ethical Decisions and Leadership, Parsons School of Design 2022

Working Group, UNESCO Futures Literacy Network & Parsons School of Design Strategies, 2020-

Working Group, Radical Pedagogy, Parsons School of Design, 2021-

Program and Curriculum Development, Transdisciplinary Design MFA, Parsons School of Design, 2020-

Thesis Coordinator, Leadership Council, Transdisciplinary Design MFA, Parsons School of Design 2020-

Director's Council, Center for Pedagogical Innovation, Wesleyan University, 2017-2019

Author, Capstone/Thesis Handbook, Design Studies Graduate Program, Parsons School of Design, 2015

Organizing Committee, "Matter(ing) by Design," Parsons School of Design, New York, 2015

Program and Curriculum Development, Design Studies Graduate Program, Parsons School of Design, 2012

Sociology Department Admissions Liaison, The New School for Social Research, 2005-2008

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Reviewer, The Research Foundation of the City University of New York (RFCUNY), 2024-

Reviewer, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019-

Reviewer, *Designing in Dark Times*, 2019

Reviewer, *Media and Methods*, Sage Publishing, 2019

Reviewer, *Design History Society: Design and the Displacement of Peoples*, 2018

Reviewer, AIGA Design Educators Conference: MAKE, Herron School of Art + Design, 2018
Panel Chair, International Conferences on Design History and Studies (ICDHS) 10th + 1, Barcelona, 2018
Reviewer, Designing Experience, Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

GRADUATE COURSES

Anthropology + Design, The New School for Social Research (2022-2024)
Political Imagination, The New School for Social Research (2023)
Transdisciplinary Seminar II, Parsons School of Design (2023, 2024)
Collab: Speculative Storytelling, Parsons School of Design (2021)
Speculative Social Justice, project-based studio, Parsons School of Design (2020)
Superstudio, project-based studio, Parsons School of Design (2020, 2021)
Libraries as Sites of Unconditional Hospitality, project-based studio, Parsons School of Design (2019)
Thesis I & II, Transdisciplinary Design MFA, Parsons School of Design (2019-2022)
Ethnography and Design, Parsons School of Design (2016-2020)
Foundations of Criticism II, MFA Art Practice, School of Visual Arts (2019)
Advanced Capstone Prep, Parsons School of Design (2015, 2016)
Seminar in Methods and Theory, Parsons School of Design (2013, 2014)
Global Issues in Design and Visuality in the 21 Century, Parsons School of Design (2013)

NEW CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

Critical Design Fictions, Wesleyan University (2018)
Participatory Design: From Helping to Solidarity, Wesleyan University (2017)
Thinking with Things, Bard Microcollege, writing intensive (2020), Parsons School of Design (2023, 2022, 2014)
Wesleyan University, First Year Seminar (2017, 2018)
The City through the Body, Parsons School of Design (2023, 2013), The New School (2010)

SERVICE-LEARNING COURSES

Ethnography and Design, Wesleyan University (2018, 2019)

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Social Practice, The New School/Parsons School of Design (2023)
Integrated Research & Development: The Politics of Helping, Parsons School of Design (2021)
Senior Project I & II: Capstone, Parsons School of Design (2019, 2017)
Comparative Perspectives on Inequality, Barnard College (2014)
Global Issues in Design and Visuality in the 21 Century, Parsons School of Design (2008-2014)
Urban Sociology, Eugene Lang College (2013), CUNY (2005-2009)
Social Theory, St. Joseph's College (2011-2016), The New School (2009)
Sociology of Gender, St. Joseph's College (2010, 2014)
Inequality and Social Class, St. Joseph's College (2007, 2013-2015)
Introductory Sociology, St. Joseph's College (2014, 2016), CUNY (2005-2011), FIT (2006, 2007)
Sociology of Youth, St. Joseph's College (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017)
Social Problems, St. Joseph's College (2008-2017), CUNY (2008)
Sociology of Popular Culture, St. Joseph's College (2007, 2011, 2014)

TEACHING ASSISTANT/INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

Worldmaking: Design and Designing in Social and Political Context, Parsons School of Design (2016)

Design for this Century, graduate seminar, Parsons School of Design (2014, 2015)

Understanding Media Studies, graduate seminar, The New School (2008-2010)

PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Participant, Intensive: Writing-Rich Ideas for Teaching at a Distance, Bard Microcollege, 2020

Participant, Stanford d.school's Teaching and Learning Studio Faculty Workshop, 2018

Instructor, Writing across the Curriculum and writing-intensive courses, CUNY, Wesleyan, 2005-2018

Instructor, How to Succeed in Graduate School, research/writing clinics, Parsons School of Design, 2014-2015

Instructor, College Now, CUNY's collaboration with the New York City secondary public schools, 2007-2010

Participant in intensive pedagogical training, Writing across the Disciplines, CUNY, 2007

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001-2004 Board Member/Advisor, Planting Hope, Matagalpa, Nicaragua

2001 Project Coordinator, Community Energy Project, Portland, OR

1999-2000 Executive Director, KidWatch, Berlin, VT

1999 Educator/Crew Leader, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Waterbury, VT

1998-2000 Case Manager, Washington County Children and Youth Services, Barre, VT

1997-1998 Community Advocate, AmeriCorps, Portland, OR

1991-1997 Project Manager/Campaigner, Greenpeace, Washington, DC/Portland, OR

1989-1991 Rape Crisis Counselor, Rape Crisis Center, Oneonta, NY

October 2025