

Report on Minority Scholars Meet and Greet and Moderated Discussion

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May 2018

Moderator: Itohan Osayimwese, Brown University, USA

Panelists: Charles Davis, University of Buffalo; Lynne Horiuchi, Independent scholar; Jesus Escobar, Northwestern University; Melina Gooray, University of California, Santa Barbara

Date: Thursday, April 19

Time: 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Room: Meeting Room 11, Upper Level

Ahead of the meeting, the group convened digitally to brainstorm topics to discuss. The following topics were chosen:

- Brainstorm the potential purpose and structure of a SAH “Minorities Caucus.”
 - Who should the group be open to? Ethnic and racial minorities only? US minority populations or people of color more broadly (Jesús Escobar)? Other minorities? Allies?
 - Relationship of SAH Minorities Caucus to research on race and ethnicity studies. Does it make sense for SAH to develop a chapter entirely dedicated to race and ethnicity studies (Charles Davis)?
 - Challenges of publishing scholarship on race and minorities (Lynne Horiuchi)
 - Aoife McGrath, Editorial Assistant for the new Routledge series, *Minorities in Architecture*, reached out and asked that I invite members of the group to submit proposals to the series.
- Brainstorm the format of future annual meeting events or activities for SAH minorities.
- Discuss challenges faced by minorities in the SAH.
 - Outline a plan to mitigate these challenges through, for example, initiatives to increase the ethnic and racial diversity of the Society through recruitment of new members, support for existing members during meetings (e.g. hosting an event at each annual meeting and other efforts to develop a welcoming climate for all SAH members) and between meetings (e.g. by fostering communications between minority members using digital media for instance).
 - Write a “guidebook” for use by newer scholars from minority backgrounds (Melina Gooray). Perhaps we can publish some kind of handbook on the SA website. It could be shared with the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) and with the AIA.
- Discuss challenges faced by minorities in the discipline and professions of architectural history.
 - Navigating the job market as a minority.
 - Challenges of publishing as a minority (Lynne Horiuchi).
 - Propose initiatives to counter some of these challenges (e.g. Outreach to HBCUs, Native-American/Tribal Colleges, and Latino-serving schools that do not have graduate programs in architectural history—per David Rifkind. How about SAH’s international mandate?).
- Discuss specific challenges faced by students from minority backgrounds studying architectural history. Undergraduates? Graduate students?
- Explore challenges of research as a minority scholar.
- Discuss options for independent scholars who are minorities (Lynne Horiuchi)
- Explore challenges of teaching as a minority scholar.
- Discuss challenges of professional practice as a minority scholar.
- Volunteers for SAH Award Committees (request from Sandy Isenstadt, 1st Vice President)
- Other pertinent topics (proposed by the panelists).

I asked panelists to specifically prepare answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a need for this kind of meeting/group at SAH?
2. Why?
3. What format, in your opinion, should this meeting/group take?
4. What is one concrete next step that you would like to work on collaboratively with the group in preparation for Providence 2019 and Seattle 2020?

Meeting Minutes

- I estimate that at least 25 people attended the session. I am appending a list of attendees below (based largely on memory).
- There was consensus about the need to meet in order to discuss topics like equity, diversity, and inclusion in SAH and in architectural history in general. Beyond this general aim, there were different ideas about the precise nature and content of these conversations and the format they should follow.
- The name of the group was discussed.
 - There was a strong sentiment against using the term “minorities” because it suggests that the issues discussed are only of concern to a small part of the membership of the Society. By contrast, it was strongly suggested that these conversations need to take place in the mainstream rather than on the margins of the Society. Specific proposals were made for a plenary talk or a session on equity, diversity, inclusion, race, and power in architectural history at SAH 2019.
 - Likewise, I shared the board’s discussion of the term “caucus” and suggested that “affinity group” might be preferable. It was clear, however, that this term covers some but not all visions for the group.
 - No decision was made regarding name but this topic will be raised during the May conference call.
- Related to the name of the group is the issue of its format. We discussed different options including establishing a separate chapter but noted that this would require a high level of investment in terms of organization.
- There was a discussion of the SAH’s perceived disregard for inclusivity. Audience members stated that they felt that accepted session topics do not represent a commitment to thinking through these issues. The same claim was made with regard to topics covered in JSAH.
- I responded that from what I have heard, there is a problem with critical mass in that very few submissions address “global” topics so conference chairs do not have much to choose from in this regard. But there is clearly also the problem of how “global” is defined – whether a purely geographical approach is taken or whether global includes methodology and types of questions asked of “conventional” material.
- I also suggested that an “us versus they” approach is not productive and that it would behoove those present to “take ownership” of the Society and its policies and actions by participating actively in the organization.
- A question was asked about how session topics are decided. It was suggested that a committee rather than an individual should be tasked with selecting session topics.
- One audience member asked if there is a strategic plan and does it include specific goals with regard to this topic. I confirmed that there is a strategic plan and noted that the plan had been discussed at the business meeting. Perhaps the Society can do more to publicize the strategic plan? Perhaps each of the four goals of the strategic plan can be highlighted in four upcoming SAH Newsletters.
- There was a discussion of the new group fulfilling a need for students from underrepresented minorities and/or students researching topics related to equity, diversity, race, and power, who are working in institutional contexts where either their work or their identities are not adequately supported.
- It was agreed that this conversation should be continued at SAH 2019.
- Immediately after the conference, I shared Sandy Isenstadt’s request for volunteers to sit on committees with members of the panel. **Lynne Horiuchi (independent)** and **Melina Gooray (UCSB)** would like to volunteer. For SAH 2019, we will have a sign-up sheet for those who attend a proposed SAH 2019 Minorities Roundtable to volunteer for committee work etc. We will also have a sign-in sheet in order to better track attendance.
- Next steps:
 - Schedule a conference call May to develop a plan for SAH 2019.
 - This plan will likely entail organizing another roundtable discussion. Rather than being billed as a “Minorities Roundtable,” we may decide on a specific topic to be addressed to the entire Society rather than exclusively to “minorities.”
 - Ahead of SAH 2019, we would like to set up a Google Doc sign-up sheet for interested SAH members to sign up to be members of the group. We would like to advertise the URL for the sign-up on the SAH newsletter and/or website.

Approximate List of Attendees at 2018 SAH Minorities Roundtable

Lynne Horiuchi	Independent
Charles Davis	U Buffalo
Jesus Escobar	Northwestern
Melina Gooray	UCSB
Itohan Osayimwese	Brown U
Patricia Morton	UC Riverside

Claire Zimmerman UMich
Fredo Rivera Grinnell
Michelle Wilkinson Smithsonian
Tavleen Kaur UC Irvine
Mina Rajagopalan Pitt
Doyin Teriba Pratt
Shundana Yusuf Utah
Ken Tadashi Oshima U Washington
Anoo Siddiqi Barnard
Lydia Soo UMich (retired)
Shiben Banerji Art Institute