

Sawyer Seminars launch second symposium, 'From River Road to Copenhagen: Revising our Remembrance of the Past'

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'From River Road to Copenhagen: Revising our Remembrance of the Past' explores innovative approaches to publicly addressing the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade in the Americas, such as the Whitney Plantation. (Photo provided)

Tulane University's Mellon Foundation-sponsored [Sawyer Seminar](#), *Sites of Memory: New Orleans and Place-based Histories in the Americas*, co-organized by Adrian Anagnost and Mia L. Bagneris, art history professors at the School of Liberal Arts, will launch the second symposium in their multi-part series on Thursday, Feb. 10.

Sites of Memory, supported by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is a yearlong site-specific inquiry that engages scholars, artists and activists in exploring changing historical narratives in New Orleans and the greater Gulf South region. It takes New Orleans as a key case study for a broader understanding of settler-colonial, formerly slavery-fueled economies in the Americas, using the theme of site-based public history and memorialization. Combining scholarship and public history, the seminar examines accretions of myth and memory at contested sites of public history such as heritage sites; plantations and historic houses; monuments and memorials; “historic” districts; and site-specific artworks.

From River Road to Copenhagen: Revising our Remembrance of the Past, is a multi-part symposium running Feb. 10-15 that explores innovative approaches to publicly addressing the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade in the Americas, specifically in Louisiana and the Danish West Indies (now the U.S. Virgin Islands). This is the second symposium to be produced by the Sawyer Seminar and will feature film screenings, site visits, an artist talk and an in-depth conversation with guest speakers. *From River Road to Copenhagen* will also focus on changing approaches to curating historical houses such as the Whitney Plantation and Shadows-on-the-Teche in Louisiana. The symposium will also focus on the links between colonial sites in the Danish West Indies and I AM QUEEN MARY, an anti-colonial monument at the heart of Copenhagen’s colonial waterfront.

On Thursday, Feb. 10, students, staff, faculty and community members are invited to the screenings of *Fireburn: The Documentary*, written by Angela Golden Bryan and directed by Joel Fendelman, as well as Helle Stenum’s *We Carry It Within Us*. The screenings will take place at 6 p.m. in Stone Auditorium in the Woldenberg Art Center.

Community members are also invited to RSVP to one of the site visits to Oak Alley Plantation and the Whitney Plantation on Saturday, Feb. 12, and to Shadows-on-the-Teche on Sunday, Feb. 13. The purpose of the visits is to understand diverse approaches to public memory through the curation of objects and artworks, the framing of educational materials, the staging of tours and visitor experiences, and to question how historic houses offer memorials to the enslaved rather than act as monuments to slavery. Transportation, tickets and lunch is included in the visits.

On Monday, Feb, 14, artist La Vaughn Belle will be in conversation with Rosanne Adderley, associate professor in the Department of History at the School of Liberal

Arts. Artist La Vaughn Belle is based in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and her practice addresses the legacy of colonialism in the built environment and in historical memory. With Danish artist Jeannette Ehlers, Belle has worked to monumentalize Mary Thomas, leader of the 1878 “Fireburn” revolt by formerly enslaved indentured laborers in the Danish colony of St. Croix. The two artists created I AM QUEEN MARY based on combined 3D scans of their own bodies, reformulating the hegemonic memorial forms of monumental statues. The artists intentionally placed the statue before the building that formerly housed the Danish West India Company on Copenhagen’s waterfront.

More information and registration for the events can be found [here](#).

Additional events in the Sawyer Seminar will continue throughout 2022.

The 2021/ 2022 Sawyer Seminar at Tulane University is organized by the [Newcomb Art Department](#) and [School of Liberal Arts](#) and sponsored by the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#).