

Race and Cyberspace Symposium

April 23, 4-6 PM

Bartos Theater, E15-070
20 Ames St., Cambridge

The Race and Cyberspace Symposium, April 23, 1998 was jointly sponsored by the Media-in Transition Project and the Women and Cyberspace Lecture Series. Further funding was provided by the Deans of the School of Engineering and the School of Humanities and Social Science at MIT. The goal of the symposium was to foreground the various ways that digital media are shaping our conceptions of and experience of race in America. This symposium brought together scholars in the field to help identify the parameters, issues, and personnel for a conference on race and cyberspace to be held in the academic year 1998-99.

The program was designed to be far-reaching, touching on such topics as:

- the digital representation of racial difference
- the role of the internet and the web in building and maintaining minority communities
- the challenge of providing greater access to digital media for disadvantaged groups
- the role of hate groups and community activism online

An underlying assumption of this conference was that issues of race need to be understood within a multi-racial and multi-cultural context. The symposium and conference were intended to raise awareness in the MIT community about the relevance of race to our understanding of all of the issues posed by digital media.

Check out an article, "Bridging the Digital Divide: The Impact of Race on Computer Access and Internet Use," by Thomas P. Novak and Donna L. Hoffman, which was excerpted in the 4/17/98 issue of *Science*, at <http://www2000.ogsm.vanderbilt.edu/papers/race/science.html>.

Please send your questions or comments to womens-studies@mit.edu

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Participants

Glenn Kaino

Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies; UCLA

Glenn Kaino is an artist whose work targets interactions which expose how privilege and power are distributed unevenly by exclusionary mechanisms within contemporary societies, validated by an implicit race, class, and gender-based hierarchy. He has utilized on-line resources to create many projects which focus on the distribution of the artistic interests of many persons of color. As the board president of the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, he has developed a program to teach inner city kids media literacy and the effective use of the internet. This program has now spun off into its own non-profit called On The Line, and is in the process of launching its pilot project, Waking Hours. Contact: glenn@themarket.com

Tara McPherson

Cinema-Television, University of Southern California

Tara McPherson is an Assistant Professor of Critical Studies in the Film School at the University of Southern California. She is the co-editor of *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture* (forthcoming, Duke University) and is currently revising *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Place and Femininity in the Deep South*, also for publication by Duke University Press. Her newest research looks at the impact of new technologies on public and private spaces, and includes an investigation of the construction of whiteness and southern identity in neo-confederate websites and discussion groups. She began web surfing while a visiting instructor in MIT's Media Studies Program. Contact: tmcphe@usc.edu

Erika Muhammad

Cinema Studies, NYU; Whitney Museum;
Media Studies, New School for Social Research

Erika Muhammad is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Cinema Studies at NYU and an instructor in the Graduate Communications Department at the New School for Social Research. Her work examines strategies of race, nation and representation in visual media and investigates the issues of access and public policy around new media technologies. The former Assistant Curator of Film and Video at the American Museum of the Moving Image, Muhammad currently works in the Curatorial Department at the Whitney Museum of American Art. In addition to her curatorial work, Muhammad writes about film and video, contemporary art, and new media for numerous publications including *The Independent*, *Afterimage*, and *Ms. Magazine*. Her work on new media by artists of color will be published in the forthcoming volume *Strategies of Representation: African American Documentary Film and Video*, edited by Janet Cutler and Phyllis Klotman.

Brenda Cotto-Escalera

Theater Arts, MIT
Moderator/Respondent

Brenda Cotto-Escalera is an Assistant Professor of Theater Arts at MIT. Contact: cotto@mit.edu