

Kirin J. Makker

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Kirin Makker is a Professor of American Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. A scholar-artist trained in architecture with a focus on critical space theory, she integrates research and action, combining humanistic methods with visual arts. Her courses in material-based storytelling merge critical analysis, historical inquiry, and ethical reasoning with drawing, book arts, and sewing. Through her teaching, she connects scholarship with action, guiding students to contextualize inequality, amplify marginalized voices, and develop advocacy strategies. Her research takes multiple forms, including participatory art projects, juried exhibitions, and published scholarship in design and urban planning.

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Hobart and William Smith College, Geneva, NY

Professor of Architecture and Urbanism in American Studies	2023-present
Chair of American Studies	2022-2024
Associate Professor of Architecture and Urbanism in American Studies	2019-2023
Associate Professor of Architectural Studies	2016-2019
Chair of Urban Studies	2014-2016
Assistant Professor of Architectural Studies	2009-2016
Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellowship and Lectureship	2008-2009

Hobart William Smith College - Global Programs

Director, Auckland, New Zealand Arts and Culture Program	Spring 2024
Instructor, Alumni Arts Program in Cinque Terre	Summer 2018
Director, Auckland, New Zealand Community Arts Program	Fall 2016
Co-Director, Art/Architecture/Urbanism in Rome, Italy Program	Spring 2015
Co-Director, Art/Architecture/Urbanism in Rome, Italy Program	Spring 2012

Smith College, Northampton, MA

Program Director and Lecturer, Architecture	2006-2008
Assistant Lecturer, Architecture	2004-2006

University of Massachusetts

Visiting Lecturer, Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning	2003-2007
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Hampshire College

Visiting Lecturer, Architectural Studies	2005
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Mount Holyoke College

Visiting Lecturer, Art and Art History	2003
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RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Critical Space Theory and Practice	Visual Communication (hand/digital)
American Material Culture Studies	Participatory and Community Arts
Gender and Sexuality Studies	Printmaking and Book Arts
American Landscape and Planning History	Sewing and Fiber Arts

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2010

Dissertation: "Building Main Street: Village Improvement and the Small Town Ideal"

Advisors: Max Page and Ethan Carr

Fields: American cultural landscape history; material culture and historic preservation studies

Master of Architecture, University of Maryland College Park, 2002

Thesis Project: "Thresholds between Built and Unbuilt: A Writer's Retreat in the Adirondacks"

Master of Arts in English Language and Literature, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1997

Fields: American nineteenth and twentieth century literary and cultural history, material culture

Bachelor of Arts in English, University of Texas Austin, 1994

magna cum laude with Highest Honors in English

Honors Thesis in postcolonial literature

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Makker, Kirin and Sarah Allaback. 2025. [*Improving the Village: Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and the Laurel Hill Association*](#). Library of American Landscape History with University of Georgia Press.

Peer-Reviewed Essays

Makker, Kirin Joya, Abbey Frederick & E. Ainsley Rhodes. 2022. "A Clamoring Revolt: Restaging, Reseeing, and Reteaching the Womb Chair," *Art Journal*, 81:1, 44-61, DOI: [10.1080/00043249.2022.2040246](https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2022.2040246)

Makker, Kirin Joya. 2022. "Womb Chair Speaks." *Feminist Studies* 47, no. 3 (2021): 627-651. [doi:10.1353/fem.2021.0033](https://doi.org/10.1353/fem.2021.0033).

Makker, Kirin Joya. 2021. "Off Main Street: Black Space, Agency, and Community Building in the Jim Crow South." *Metropole*, the Official Blog of the Urban History Association. <https://themetropole.blog/2021/08/19/off-main-street-black-space-agency-and-community-building-in-the-jim-crow-south/>

Talmage, C. A., Annear, C., Equinozzi, K., Flowers, K., Hammett, G., Jackson, A., Kingery, J. N., Lewis, R., Makker, K., Platt, A., Schneider, T., & Turino, C. (2021). Rapid Community Innovation: A Small Urban Liberal Arts Community Response to COVID-19. *International Journal of Community Well-Being*, 4, 323–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26883597.2020.1794757>.

Makker, Kirin. 2015. "Mary Hopkins Goodrich and the Origins of Village Improvement in Antebellum America," *Landscape Journal* 34:1 (Spring): 1-13.

Makker, Kirin. 2014. "Village Improvement and the Development of Small Town America, 1853-1893," *Journal of Planning History* 13:1 (February): 68-87.

C. Schlund-Vials, K. Cardozo, M. Ouellett, K. Makker. 2008. "Thinking beyond the Department: Professional Development for Graduate Students of Color," *Journal of Graduate and Professional Student Development* (Spring).

Other Publications

Frederick, Abbey. September 2022. "Witnessing Each Other and Ourselves: A Conversation with Kirin Makker and Sejal Shah" in *The Common* [A Modern Sense of Place: Stories, Poems, Essays & Images].

Makker, Kirin, E. Ainsley Rhodes, Ethan Leon, and Grace Hammett. *Clothing Hacks*. 2019.

Makker, Kirin. 2018. "Mail Order Main Street: The Dove Block and the Metal Storefront Industry," *Save the Dove Block* (spring).

Makker, Kirin. 2015. "AT ISSUE: Sit. Look. Sketch," *Boston Architecture* 18:2 (Summer): 26-33.

Makker, Kirin. 2014. "Pop Quiz! An Excerpt from The Myths of Main Street: exploring the developmental history of the American small town in its heyday (1870-1930)," *NY Upstate Planner* 28:1 (April).

Makker, Kirin. 2014. "Factory, Made," *Dwell* magazine (March).

Makker, Kirin. 2014. "Tracking Down the Goods sold on Main Street USA," University Libraries, *Archives and Special Collections Blog*, University of Connecticut. May 7.
<http://blogs.lib.uconn.edu/archives/2014/05/07/tracking-down-the-goods-sold-on-main-street-usa/>

Makker, Kirin. 2014. "No. 53 on Main Street," *Winterthur Unreserved*, Museum and Library Blog. January 10. <http://museumblog.winterthur.org/2014/01/10/no-53-on-main-street/>

Makker, Kirin. 2008. Book review, *Sprawl and Suburbia*, Pioneer American Society *Transactions* 38:1.

Makker, Kirin. 2007. "Living Rooms," *Material Culture in America: Understanding Everyday Life* (eds. Sheumaker and Wajda), Bloomsbury Press.

Makker, Kirin. 2006. "The Gift of Poetry en Route," *Journal of Architectural Education* (Sept.).

Makker, Kirin. 2006. "Architectural Vision Missing in UMass Dormitories" *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (07.21).

Makker, Kirin. 2006. "What's with Ye Olde Street Lamps?" *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (02.18).

Makker, Kirin. 2005. "In Praise of Concrete" *UMass Alumni Magazine* (Fall).

Makker, Kirin. 2005. "UMass's Modern Legacy" *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (07.01).

Makker, Kirin. 2005. "Is an Antique Look Right for Hadley?" *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (04.24).

Makker, Kirin. 2005. "Smith Weighs in on The Gates" *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (02.28).

Makker, Kirin. 2003. "From the Assembly Line" *Architecture Boston* (October).

Makker, Kirin. 2003. "Building the Nation" book review, *Crit* (Fall).

Makker, Kirin. 2003. "Place" opening editorial, *Crit* (Spring).

Makker, Kirin. 2002. "The Urban Issue" opening editorial, *Crit* (Fall).

Makker, Kirin. 2002. "Rural Studio" book review, *Crit* (Spring).

Makker, Kirin. 2001. "Such Places as Memory" book review, *Crit* (Spring).

Makker, Kirin. 2001. "Learning from A Place of My Own" book review, *Crit* (Winter).

CREATIVE PRACTICE

Exhibitions and Invited Presentations

Womb Chair Speaks, invited, 6-month exhibition *Transformations! Contemporary Artists at Winterthur*, Winterthur Museum, DE

Womb Chair Speaks, juried poster session, *Endometriosis (R)Evolution: Making the Invisible Visible*, part of a narrative medicine project sponsored by the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aging and Care at the University of Graz, Austria. May 23-25, 2024.

Blueprints: Concerning Legibility - Eggshells, Portals and Portholes National Juried Exhibition, Main Street Arts, Clifton Springs, NY, April 16-May 26, 2022.

Touch, invited exhibitor for juried exhibition, *Warp and Weft*, a multilingual archive of stories that seeks to capture the 2020 zeitgeist, curated by Mara Ahmed. Rochester Contemporary Art Center, April 1 – May 7, 2022. <http://www.rochestercontemporary.org/exhibitions/the-warp-and-weft/>

Blueprints: Concerning Legibility - Eggshells, invited exhibitor, Davis Gallery, Hobart William Smith Colleges, Geneva, February 11-March 10, 2022.

Nine Months of Eggs, in *Small Works National Juried Exhibition*, Main Street Arts, Clifton Springs, NY, December <https://mainstreetartscs.org/exhibitions/small-works-2021/>

Nine Months of Eggs, in *Rochester Finger Lakes Exhibition*, Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY August 15-October 15, 2021 <https://mag.rochester.edu/exhibitions/67th-rochester-finger-lakes/>

Reliable Witness, in *Rochester Finger Lakes Exhibition*, Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY August 15-October 15, 2021 <https://mag.rochester.edu/exhibitions/67th-rochester-finger-lakes/>

Nine Months of Eggs and Oculus, national juried exhibition *Last Year on Earth*, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, March 5-May 8, 2021 <http://www.rochestercontemporary.org/exhibitions/last-year-on-earth/>

Touch, invited exhibitor, *Warp and Weft*, a multilingual archive of stories that seeks to capture the 2020 zeitgeist, curated by Mara Ahmed. Coordinated with Rochester Contemporary Art Center's spring/summer exhibition series. <http://www.rochestercontemporary.org/exhibitions/the-warp-and-weft/>

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, *Pain Journal* watercolor drawing, and *Betrayal Island* watercolor drawing, BIPOC Artists: Figure /Ground, Main Street Arts, Clifton Springs, NY, September 2020

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, national juried exhibition, *Environs*, Bret Llewellyn Art Gallery, Alfred State College, Alfred, NY. Awarded Juror's Choice. 2019

Womb Chair Speaks, installation, Graduate School of Design, *Womxn in Design* Conference, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2018

Listening to the Invitation of the Earth, letterpress print, Davis Gallery, Hobart William Smith, Geneva, NY, 2018

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, Dave Davis Gallery, HWS, Geneva, NY, 2018

Womb Chair Speaks, installation, Davis Gallery, HWS, Geneva, NY, 2018

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, *New York Six: Studio Practice and Pedagogy*, Richard F. Brush Art Gallery, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY, 2018

Folded Matter: paper and metal, University of Maryland Alumni Exhibition, College Park, MD, 2017

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, *Rochester Print Club Exhibition*, Nazareth, Rochester, NY, 2017

An Endowarrior's Wail, letterpress artist book, *Penland Summer Exhibition*, Penland, NC, 2017

Projecting Life in the City: Peopled Geneva, Linden Street, Geneva, NY, December, 2014

Projecting Life in the City: Charlie Chaplin's The Gold Rush, Linden Street, Geneva, NY, January, 2014

Cool Grey #7, postcard design for *Pantone Postcard Project*, exhibited nationally and internationally; included in *Pantone Postcard Project* (PPP) book, published 2013

A Cross Section of Time/Is Time, letterpress printed artist's book. Wells College, Aurora, NY, August 2012

A Tent Dress in Felt, Cracker Factory Biodance Concert exhibition, Cracker Factory, Geneva, NY, 2011

Vroom, letterpress print. Wells College, Aurora, NY, August, 2011

Embodied Energy on Main Street, Oresman Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, MA, December, 2008

Competitive International Artist residencies

Artist Residency, Pacific Studios, Masterton, New Zealand, 2016

Artist Residency, Lochmara Lodge, Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand, 2016

INVITED LECTURES/WORKSHOPS

History Happy Hour guest author, "Civic Beautification in Geneva and Beyond," Historic Geneva and Lake Drum Brewing, April 2025.

Womb Chair Speaks workshop for curatorial staff and graduate students, Winterthur Museum, DE, September 14, 2024.

Womb Chair Speaks workshop, open to the public, Winterthur Museum, DE, November 16, 2024.

Womb Chair Speaks workshop, open to the public, Winterthur Museum, DE, September 14, 2024.

"The Womb Chair Speaks," guest speaker in "The Art of Public Health," UC Berkeley, Mar 8, 2022 (zoom).

Land Acknowledgment Stones public art project, invited workshop with graduate students in Anthropology, University of Rochester, 2022.

Land Acknowledgment Stones public art project, invited workshop with graduate students in Anthropology, University of Rochester, 2021.

Land Acknowledgment Stones public art project, invited workshop with children 8-13, Penfield Public Library, NY, 2021.

Land Acknowledgment Stones public art project, invited workshop with teens, Hobart William Smith Summer Science, 2021.

"Demystifying the Bricks and Mortar of Main Street: An Early Story of Prefabrication," invited lecture, Women's Rights National Historical Park Sentiments and Declarations series, Seneca Falls, Nov, 2014.

"Developmental History of Small Town America: Storefronts," invited lecture, Smith College, March, 2013.

"Mail Order Main Street," invited lecture, State University of New York (SUNY) Purchase, October 2012.

"Building Main Street: Women and Village Improvement", invited lecture, Smith College, Feb 2011.

"Building Community 2.0: The New Future of Architectural Education & Practice," invited presenter, Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Administrator's Conference, Nov 2011.

SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Gender, Space and Narrative Reparation: *Womb Chair Speaks Project*," Endo Revolution, University of Graz, Austria. Poster session, May 24-25, 2024.

Womb Chair Speaks, artist talk, American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November, virtual. Panel: "Art's Reparative Turn: Creating Agency, Hopeful Futurities, and Movement toward Exit." This paper was originally accepted for presentation on 2020 program but was deferred to 2021 due to the pandemic.

Womb Chair Speaks, Modern Studies Association seminar on *Architecture and Narrative*, Columbus, Ohio, November 2019.

"Painting and Producing a Rockwellian Main Street: One Canvas, Myth-spinning, and Stockbridge, MA," American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2015.

"Occupying Main Street in the Jim Crow South," Society for American City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH), Toronto, 2013.

"Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Main Street," Urban History Association (UHA), New York City, 2012.

"Building Main Street" Urban History Association (UHA), October 2006.

"History, Memory and Nostalgia in Henderson, Kentucky" Society for American City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH), October, 2005.

GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS

External

Central New York Humanities Corridor Grant, "Textiles as Expressive Practice in the University Classroom and Campus Community" 2024-25

Central New York Humanities Corridor Working Group Grant "Feminist Architecture Praxis, Year Two" 2020-21

Central New York Humanities Corridor Working Group Grant "Feminist Architecture Praxis" 2019-20

National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship at Winterthur Library and Archives, 2013-14

Maine Women Writers Grant, University of New England, 2014

Strochlitz Grant, Archives and Special Collections, UConn Storrs, 2014

Columbia University Libraries Research Grant, 2013

Hagley Museum and Library Exploratory Research Grant, 2013

Wardlaw Fellowship for Texas Collection Research, Baylor University, 2012

Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellowship, 2009-2009

American Association of University Women American Fellowship, declined, 2008

Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities Scholar in Residence Fellowship, 2008

Internal

Faculty Research Grant, Hobart William Smith, annually 2009-23

Community Based Teaching and Research Grant, 2018-19

Fisher Center Fellowship, Hobart William Smith, declined, 2015-2016

Fellow, Kahn Institute, "Sustainable Homes & Communities" Smith College, 2007

Fellow, Kahn Institute, "City Lives, City Life" Smith College, 2005

Excellence in Teaching grant, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2004

Lilly Kibel Fellowship in Architecture, University of Maryland, 2001

Graduate School Fellowship, University of Maryland, 1999

Fellowship for Graduate Minority Students, University of Massachusetts, 1994

HONORS

ABC Good Morning America Who is Making Asian American Pacific Islander History in 2021: The GMA Inspiration List <https://www.hws.edu/news/2021/June/good-morning-america-profiles-makker-in-making-asian-american-pacific-islander-history.aspx>

Howard Foundation Fellowship, Brown University, finalist, 2018

Jones Fellowship, Ephemera Society, finalist, 2014

Smithsonian Institution Baird Fellowship, finalist, 2013

Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies, finalist, 1994

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Professional and Creative Leadership and Service

Outside Reviewer for manuscripts on design, craft and community arts, RIT Press, 2024

Project Manager for *Geneva Sketch Crawls*, community drawing program encouraging pride of place, 2014-18

Juror, New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), Architecture and Design Award, 2017

Consultant and Reviewer, Storefronts Adaptive Reuse Grant Program, City of Geneva, NY, 2018

City Council-Appointed Chair, Geneva Public Art Committee, 2015-20

City Council-Appointed Member, Geneva, NY Local Development Corporation, 2017-20

Downtown Revitalization Initiative, Streetscape Committee, Geneva, NY, 2016-19

Hobart William Smith Liaison, Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center (GNRC), 2010-19

Advisor, Hempitecture startup, 2014-16

Juror, Society for American City and Regional Planning History Scholarship Award, 2015

City Council-Appointed Member, Public Art Committee for the City of Geneva, 2012-21

Project Manager/Designer for Historic South neighborhood logo; community branding and tactical urbanism, 2014

Visiting Team Member, National Architecture Accreditation Board, 2001-2006

Consultant, Montague, MA Planning Board, 2005

National Park Service Multiple Listing Survey, Modern Planning/Building at UMass Amherst, 2005

Co-Author, Barn Surveys in Western MA, Massachusetts Historical Commission, 2005

Campus Leadership and Service – Hobart William Smith Colleges

Faculty Salary and Compensation Committee, Sub-Committee, Committee of the Faculty, 2023-present

Ombusperson, elected, 2022-27

Media and Society Faculty Steering Committee, 2020-present

Chair, Review III Committee, American Studies, 2023-24

Chair, Review II Committee, American Studies, 2022-23

Fribolin Farm Committee Member, 2019-21

Member, Review I Committee, Entrepreneurial Studies, 2020-21

Faculty Advisory Board Member, Centennial Center for Leadership, 2014-19

Architectural Studies Curriculum Committee, 2008-18

Architectural Studies Studio and Workshop Space Ad-Hoc Committee, 2008-19

Member, Tenure Review II Committee, Architectural Studies, 2018

Chair, Urban Studies Program, 2014-2016

Member, Search Committee, Studio Art one-year position, 2013

Member, Search Committee, Woodshop Tech Position, 2012

Member, Search Committee, Environmental Studies, 2011

Member, Tenure Review Committee for Studio Art Faculty, 2011

Strategic Planning Committee: Civic Engagement Group, 2010-12

Arthur Dove Block Renewal Project, Geneva, NY, 2009-11

Campus Leadership and Service – Other Institutions

Landscape Studies Steering Committee, Smith College, 2004-08

Campus Heritage Initiative Committee, Smith College, 2005-07

Coordinator, Moderate Income Housing Project, Amherst, MA, 2005-06

Coordinator, Campus Heritage Initiative, UMass Amherst, 2004-06

Coordinator, Graduate Students of Color Mentoring Program, UMass Amherst, 2004-05

Undergraduate Summer Research Direction

Clothing Hacks – Ainsley Rhodes '19, Ethan Leon '19, and Grace Hammett '20, summer 2019

Downtown Public Arts Advocacy – Hope Lee '20 and Caroline Turino '20, summer 2019

Womb Chair Speaks – Abigail Frederick '20 and Ainsley Rhodes '19, summer 2018

If you don't know where you are... Geneva from a students' perspective – Elva Ye '13, summer 2013

Undergraduate Honors Advising

Gratitude Children's Book -- Robin Kirchgessner '22

Activist Knitting: A Space for Gender Equality -- Claudia Carle '19

The Design of an Electric Car – Ned Pressman '16

Garments as Cultural Markers Across Time – Sara Abramsom '13

A Game for Teaching Literacy – Lauren Schwarzenberg '12