

TISHMAN CENTER · FEBRUARY 1, 2023

2022-2023 Tishman Center Student Awardees

In 2016, the Tishman Environment and Design Center created student awards to help support the work of students doing research and projects on environmental and climate justice. We are thrilled to announce the Tishman Center's 2022-2023 Student Award grantees, featuring nine projects carried out by students who represent a variety of colleges across the New School. These projects embody the transdisciplinary approach that both the university and the Tishman Center embrace as the

best way to address the issues of our time.

Carlos José Celis Ortega, Public and Urban Policy, PhD

I am a Colombian designer and researcher interested in the creative possibilities that arise from a multidisciplinary environment. My design and research agenda is currently focused on addressing Colombia's environmental and public health concerns.

Project: *Bogotá's Street Nature*

The main objective of *Bogotá's Street Nature* is to blur the frontier of nature and culture through photographs that illustrate the profound relationship between these two concepts. In this sense, on the one hand, these pictures are a critical portrayal of anthropocentrism. On the other hand, they also evoke a comprehensive view of nature and humanity as parts of one system. The photographs focus on animals, plants, and humans interacting in urban environments in Bogotá.



Mel Corchado, Fashion Design and Society, MFA

As a fashion designer producing my Master's in Fine Arts thesis collection, the most urgent question I am contemplating is how to disrupt the Fashion Industrial Complex and realize a fashion design practice that contributes to decolonial efforts within the industry. In this collection, I intend to translate participatory action methods to fashion design by engaging my community in every step of the design process. What does my community want to wear? What clothing not only makes them feel

empowered but serves them in their everyday lives? I hope to facilitate an experiential element of the design process that allows knowledge to be shared and encourages my friends to keep their garments forever, challenging the trend that treats clothing as disposable.

Practices of mending, repairing, exchanging, and upcycling will be prioritized when executing this collection. I envision all of the final garments to be upcycled from already existing textiles. I hope we can elevate the aesthetic value of upcycled fashion and contribute to the notion that redesigning already existing garments is not only sustainable but desirable.

Tian-Tian He, International Affairs, MA

Tian-Tian He is a student in the International Affairs Masters of Arts program at The New School, thrilled to be working with friends and collaborators Alicia Leong and Nia Starr on this project. She is interested in the intersection of climate and race, and the potential to strengthen intergenerational ties through conversation.

Alicia Leong is a medical student at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine at

Mount Sinai passionate about the intersection of health disparities in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, environmental sustainability, and cultural/historic preservation.

Nia Starr is a designer and emerging sustainability analyst in NYC. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Sustainable Environmental Systems at Pratt Institute, taking on projects focused on decarbonization & regenerative approaches to energy, agriculture, land, and water use across urban landscapes.

This project, conducted in collaboration with Think!Chinatown, will survey the Manhattan Chinatown community through semi-structured interviews to gauge their attitudes toward climate change and how it has impacted the neighborhood. Although Chinatown is disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards, little is known about the community's needs in their own words. We aim to help fill this knowledge gap, providing directions for future environmental justice work in Chinatown.

Some broad questions we hope to answer through our survey are:

What are the biggest environmental problems that residents of Chinatown are currently facing? Is support

available, and if so, what are the barriers to accessing this support? How interested are Chinatown residents in environmental activism? What barriers, if any, have prevented them from participating? In what ways can environmental movements be more inclusive of Asian-American or immigrant communities?

Zainab Koli, Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management, MS

Zainab Koli (she/her) is an Indian Muslim researcher, community facilitator, and storyteller whose research explores socio-ecological violences and power in the military and fashion industrial complexes, as well as alternative pathways for collective wellbeing. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Science in Environmental Policy & Sustainability Management at the New School.

This project intends to support the residents of my village of Kosadi in Gujarat, India in developing a sustainable waste management system for the town. Through participatory action research, I plan to collaborate with a group of co-researchers from the village who will lead this project and develop a plan for the sanitation system

through resident consultation, case studies of similar villages, best practices that are relevant to the village, and exploration of long-term funding sources. The funding from this award will help with this initial research and gathering the resources and infrastructure to get such a system running while developing a plan to finance the system long term.

Sofia Krasnaya, Public and Urban Policy, PhD

Today, an extensive discourse revolves around waterscape; a plethora of “eco-friendly” projects overrun urban waterfronts. However, often the problem of environmental inequality is hidden behind trendy green interventions. According to the Waterfront Justice Project, local communities, if not displaced, not only lack access to waterfronts but live in toxic sites and hurricane storm surge zones. The goal of my doctoral dissertation is to develop a critical space-making program for post-industrial harbors to enhance socio-environmental justice through collaborative practice. The urgent issues that concern researchers, ecologists, designers, planners, and policymakers today are how these harbors are reimagined in the post-industrial era and how this widespread

renewal reflects ecological and social concerns.

As an entry strategy, I have chosen typology studies, which are built on the comparative research between post-industrial harbors in New York City and similar projects globally. One of the types is represented by the Brooklyn Navy Yard (BNY). In 2018, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNY DC) and urban planning company WXY developed a master plan for the redevelopment as part of the Brooklyn Tech Triangle. Two main challenges for the regeneration are:

1. Climate change and water resiliency;
2. The gentrification and socio-spatial inequality in relation to the local communities.

Interdisciplinarity and public engagement, as two main research principles, require many people from different spheres to sit around the table. During this academic year, my objectives are to conduct a set of in-depth interviews ranging from local community members to professional ecologists; implement field research through immersive practices and qualitative studies; define stakeholders from different groups and organize diverse participatory mapping workshops.

**Barbara (Basia) Nikonorow,
Environmental Policy and
Sustainability Management, MS**

Barbara is a Masters of Science candidate in the EPSM program at The New School, with a special interest in energy and nature-based solutions. She works at NYC Parks, as part of the team caring for Riverside Park South, a stunning park along the Hudson River. She has co-led or founded community volunteer projects and was a Community Board 9 member. She did outreach for the NYC Dept. of Sanitation (about composting) and for NYC Parks (about capital re-design projects). Previous to public service, she was a children's TV producer of Sesame Street co-productions in Europe, and a film news program director for CANAL+Poland. This is her first children's book. (MA Cinematography/PWSFTiT/Polish National Film School; BA Comparative Literature/Dartmouth College.

Project: *17 Trees, To Be Precise*

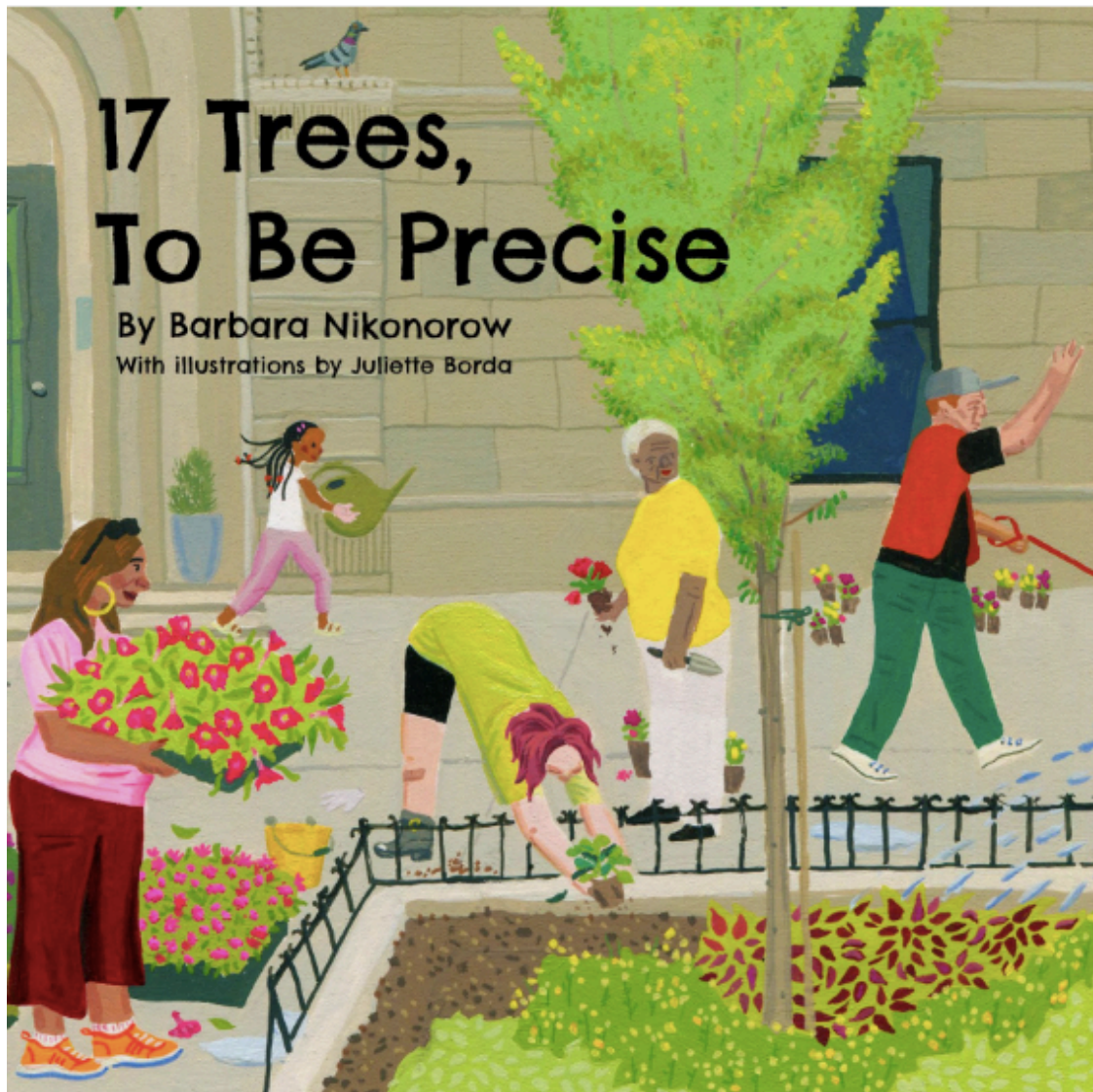
17 Trees, To Be Precise is a children's book (for ages 3-7 years) about the value of civic engagement and trees. It offers a starting point to talk with kids about community involvement and how anybody can be the spark in their neighborhood. It is illustrated by NYC-based artist Juliette Borda and written by Barbara Nikonorow.

The book is inspired by real events that took place on a small, plain street in Hamilton Heights. It'll be available in English and Spanish in Spring 2023, and the first edition of the book will be distributed for free to community groups. The book advances the Tishman Center's goal to nurture future climate leaders, positing that ALL kids and their caregivers can be empowered to move the needle in their neighborhoods. The illustrations and printing are funded through ioby campaigns that rallied nearly two hundred supporters, and by grants from City Parks Foundation, Con Edison (*PowerUp Neighborhoods Match*) and NYS DEC (*Environmental Justice and Sustainability Match Program*). Thank you, Tishman Center, for this great honor!

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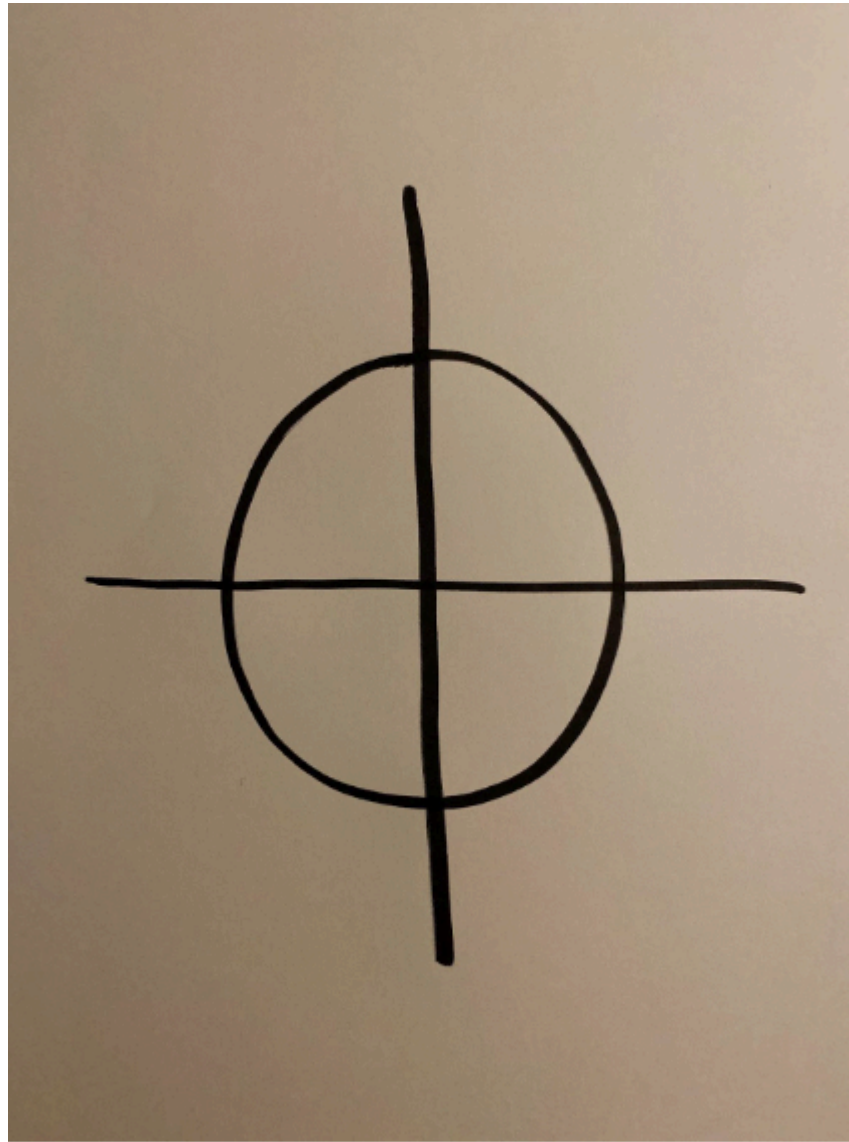


**Laura Poliné, Environmental Policy
and Sustainability Management,
MS**

Laura Poliné (she/her/ella) is an Afro-Caribbean researcher and food enthusiast whose research navigates the intersectional factors that have historically and continue to threaten our food systems, focusing on counter-hegemonic solutions to address inequities within this system. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Science degree in Environmental Policy &

Sustainability Management at The Milano School of Public Engagement, The New School.

This project will address the myth of Taino extinction from a food culture perspective. Identity plays a key role in the erasure narrative, in the Dominican case it is linked to the multiple heritage shared between African, Spanish, and Taino being the latter the most denied. Identity is deeply rooted in value systems, which for Taino peoples, are strongly connected to the relationship between humans and the environment, as well as care and love for the earth. I am certain that so many elements from our ancestral knowledge are necessary to confront the current climate crises while addressing the interconnected multiplicity of crises. To better understand the complex reality of identity I have interviewed people from the Dominican diaspora in NYC. With these funds I will travel to the Dominican Republic to expand my research and explore this same reality in the contemporary Caribbean context of the Dominican Republic.



**Enrique Valencia, International
Affairs, MS**

My research, done in collaboration with Ansha Zaman, seeks to answer the question: What constitutes adequate technical assistance for environmental justice (EJ) communities under Biden's Justice40 initiative? Justice40 is part of an executive order that seeks to distribute 40% of certain federal climate change investments to "disadvantaged communities". We use the EPA

Brownfields Program (BP), a Justice40 pilot program, as a case study to explore this question. The BP presents an interesting case study because it has led to inequitable outcomes for EJ communities, namely the displacement of long-term residents (i.e., environmental gentrification). Moreover, the BP focuses on financial incentives for owners of brownfields, with program success mainly evaluated by economic metrics. As a result, social and environmental outcomes receive a secondary priority and the EPA still struggles to address inequitable outcomes such as environmental gentrification.

This research is significant firstly because it critically examines what it means for the BP to be reframed and expanded as an EJ program through Justice40. Secondly, we hope to shed light on how the EJ movement interprets adequate technical assistance for EJ communities, which is presently undertheorized in the academic literature. Drawing from a capabilities and recognition EJ, we create a framework for evaluating the BP's technical assistance components. The methodology for this research includes a public document review, interviews with EJ activists who have first-hand experience participating in BP site redevelopments, and thematic analysis.

Monise Valente da Silva, Public and Urban Policy, PhD

Project: *"Faith in the Fight and a Foot on the Ground"*

Monise's dissertation is a transdisciplinary project that investigates the co-constituted and disputed relationship between bodies, policies, and space. Titled *"Faith in the Fight and a Foot on the Ground"*, her research draws conceptual references from feminist geopolitics, urban studies, and design to discuss the emancipatory potential of land and occupation practices designed and implemented by social movements fighting for housing rights in Brazil.



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