

# THE *Current*

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## **Center for Black Studies Research Publishes Book on Post-Quake Haiti**

For many years, the Republic of Haiti and its cultural, social and political landscape have been the focus of the Haiti projects at the Center for Black Studies Research.

Earlier this month, the center moved forward on its newest project by publishing "Beyond Shock — Charting the Landscape of Sexual Violence in Post-quake Haiti" by journalist Anne-christine d'Adesky. In it, d'Adesky maps advances in addressing the increase in sexual violence in the aftermath of the earthquake and in providing services to victims across key sectors of the reconstruction.

The book is the inaugural volume of "Onward," a new series initiated by Claudine Michel, professor of black studies, and produced by the Center for Black Studies research, that examines transformative work in Haitian studies.

D'Adesky will share her research in a conversation and panel discussion on Tuesday, Oct. 22, at 2 pm. in the multipurpose room of the campus's Student Resource Building. She will give a similar talk on Wednesday, Oct. 23, at Granada Books, 1224 State St., in Santa Barbara. Both are free and open to the public.

"The center is at the epicenter of Haitian studies work in the United States, including publishing the Journal of Haitian Studies," said Diane Fujino, the new director of the Center for Black Studies Research and a professor of Asian-American studies. "Anne-christine's book is a great one to launch the 'Onward' series. It is a unique

collaboration between the author, the women's grassroots advocacy group PotoFanm+Fi, the Haitian Studies Association and the Center for Black Studies Research. So it fits in with our work to bridge the campus and community.

"But it's not an academic book per se," Fujino continued. "It's a journalistic work that brings together data from a lot of different areas — social service agencies, survivors of sexual violence and government officials — and uses it to try to effect change in terms of government policy and services on the ground, as well as changing people's views and bringing international attention to the issue."

The "Onward" series is representative of the engaged scholarship initiatives Fujino hopes to advance as the center's director. Engaged scholarship, she explained, is a way of conducting research that connects scholars and communities. "It's sometimes called activist scholarship," she said. "It's transformative in that it changes the way we think about who are producers of knowledge, and shifts the connections between our research and questions of social justice and inequalities." She added that collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects will be developed around that idea.

In keeping with the center's academic and public missions, Fujino plans to continue the center's activities and projects, many of which already focus on critical examinations of structural inequalities in black communities and bridge the campus and the community. "Last year, the center published "Black California Dreamin'," which studies the crises of housing, imprisonment and poverty facing African-American communities, but also the hope inspired by activism, art and everyday resistance."

The center also has a long tradition of producing oral histories with the local black community, and Fujino sees this as a means for students to conduct engaged research. "Oral history interviews are more than just going out and talking to people," she said. "Students would have to learn national black history as well as local black history to be able to ask better questions and be able to interpret the answers and understand their meanings."

For Fujino, whose research and teaching interests center on Asian-American social movements, Japanese-American radicalism, Afro-Asian solidarities, race and gender studies and biography and oral history, this is a natural fit.

"The university brings abilities to do research, critical thinking and rigorous analysis of ways of knowing and of being," she said. "So what is it that the university can bring to the community that's unique and helpful to jointly forward social justice? How can we bring more equality in the projects we undertake, the ways we work and the outcomes we have?"

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