

**Sharon Willis**  
**Art and Art History**  
**University of Rochester**  
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### **Education**

Ph.D., French Literature, Cornell University

B.A., Cornell University, History of Art

Areas of Specialization: film history and theory, visual and cultural studies, feminist theory, comparative literature and critical theory, U. S. and French cinema.

### **Books**

*The Poitier Effect: Racial Melodrama and Fantasies of Reconciliation* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

*High Contrast: Race and Gender in Popular Film* (Duke University Press, 1997).

Co-Editor, with Constance Penley, *Male Trouble* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

*Marguerite Duras: Writing on the Body* (University of Illinois Press, 1987).

### **Work In Progress**

Book project: "Lost and Found, Telling in Two Times: World War II in Moving Images."

"Shock, Spectacle, Specters: *Django Unchained* (2012) and *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)."

### **Articles and Book Chapters**

"The Politics of Disappointment: Todd Haynes Re-Writes Douglas Sirk," substantially revised version of an earlier essay. Solicited for *Reframing Todd Haynes: Feminism's Indelible Mark*, Teresda Geller and Julia Leyda, eds., forthcoming from Duke University Press (2022).

"Scene Selection: Objects Lost and Found," for *The Wiley-Blackwell Concise Companion to Visual Culture*, eds, Aubrey Anable, Joan Saab, and Cat Zuromskis, eds. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2021).

"Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*," *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA*, Darby English, ed. (Museum of Modern Art, 2019) 272.

“Women’s Transnational Cinema: Displacement, Projection, and Identification,” review article for *Postmodern Culture*, Vol. 27, no. 2, January, 2018.

“Moving Pictures: Spectacles of Enslavement,” *The Cambridge Companion to Slavery and American Literature*, ed., Ezra Tawil (Cambridge University Press, 2016) 219-235.

“Afterword,” Marguerite Duras, *L’Amour*, trans., Kazim Ali and Libby Murphy (Open Letter Press, 2013) 101-109.

“‘Fire!’ in a crowded theater: Liquidating History in *Inglourious Basterds*,” in *Quentin Tarantino’s Inglourious Basterds: Manipulations of Metacinema*, ed., Robert von Dassanowsky (Continuum Press, 2012) 163-192.

“2002: Movies and Melancholy” in *American Cinema of the 2000s*, ed., Timothy Corrigan, in the *Screen Decades* series (Rutgers University Press, 2012) 61-82.

“Lost Objects: The Museum of Cinema,” *The Renewal of Cultural Studies*, ed., Paul Smith, (Temple University Press, 2011) 93-102.

“Jean-Luc Godard and Breathless,” segment of “The French New Wave at Fifty,” program #276 of *What’s the Word?*, the Modern Language Association weekly radio series (2009)

“A Cinema of Migrations: Ziad Doueiri’s *West Beyrouth*,” *Shifting Landscapes: Film and Media in European Context*, ed. Miyase Christensen and Nezih Erdogan (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008) 132-152. •••reprinted 2009.

“1991: Movies and Wayward Images,” in *American Cinema of the 1990s*, ed., Chris Holmlund, for *Screen Decades* series (Rutgers University Press, 2008) 45-69.

“(Re) Inventing *Camera Obscura*,” with Amelie Hastie, Lynne Joyrich, and Patricia White, in *Inventing Film Studies: Essays Toward the History of a Discipline*, ed., Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (Duke University Press, 2008) 298-319. •reprinted from “*Camera Obscura At Thirty*,” *Camera Obscura* 61 (2006) 1-25.

“*The Americanization of Emily*: Memory, Management, Marketing,” in *America First: Naming the Nation in US Film*, ed. Mandy Merck (Routledge, 2007) 136-156.

“*Do The Right Thing*: A Theater of Interruptions,” *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader*, ed., Jeffrey Geiger and R.L. Rutsky (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2005) 776-793.

“The Politics of Disappointment: Todd Haynes Re-Writes Douglas Sirk,” *Camera Obscura* #54 (2004) 131-176 .

"Race as Spectacle, Feminism as Alibi: Representing the Civil Rights Era in the 1990s" *Keyframes: Popular Cinema and Cultural Studies*, ed., Matthew Tinkcom and Amy Villarejo (Routledge, 2001) 98-114.

Editor, with Randall Halle, "Alterity and Marginality in New European Cinemas," *Camera Obscura* special issues # 44 (2000) and #46 (2001).

"'Style,' Posture, and Idiom: Quentin Tarantino's Figures of Masculinity," in *Reinventing Film Theory*, ed., Linda Williams and Christine Gledhill (London: Edward Arnold, Ltd, 2000) 279-295.

Review of David Savran, *Taking It Like A Man*, *American Literature* 72:3 (2000) 649.

"*Le Vice-Consul* and *L'Amour*: A World in Default," in *Critical Essays on Marguerite Duras*, ed., Bettina L. Knapp (New York: G.K. Hall, 1998) 128-158.

"Race on the Road: Crossover Dreams," in *The Road Movie*, ed., Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (New York and London: Routledge, 1997) 287-306.

"Telling Differences: Race, Gender, and Sex in *The Crying Game*," in *Boys: Masculinities in Contemporary Culture*, ed., Paul Smith (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996) 97-112.

"Feminist Identifications," *The Ends of Theory*, ed. Robert Strozier, et al (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996) 76-85.

"The Fathers Watch The Boys' Room: Race and Masculinity in the Work of Quentin Tarantino," *Camera Obscura*, 32 (May, 1995) 41-73.

•edited, with Constance Penley, "Sword and Sorcery, S/M, and the Economics of Inadequation: The *Camera Obscura* Interview," (Interview with Samuel R. Delany) in Samuel R. Delany, *Silent Interviews* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994) 127-163.

•reprinted from Samuel R. Delany, "The Column at the Market's Edge," *The Motion of Light in Water* (London: Paladin, 1991) 535-78.

"Hardware and Hardbodies, or What Do Women Want?: A Reading of *Thelma and Louise*," in *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, ed., Jim Collins, Ava Collins and Hilary Radner (New York and London: Routledge and American Film Institute, 1993) 120-128.

"Disputed Territories: Masculinity and Social Space," *Male Trouble* (University of Minnesota, 1993) 263-281.

•Reprinted from *Camera Obscura* 19 (January, 1989) 4-23.

"Finding the Enemy," *Sight and Sound*, II.: 2 (1992) 35. (Review of Tania Modleski, *Feminism Without Women*).

"Mistranslation, Missed Translation: Hélène Cixous's *Vivre l'orange*," in *Re-Thinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, and Ideology*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (Routledge, 1992) 106-119.

•Earlier version: "Mistranslation: Writing in the Feminine," *Sub-stance*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1987) 76-83.

"Special Effects: Sexual and Social Difference in *Wild at Heart*," *Camera Obscura*, 25/26 (1991) 275-295.

"'Lynch-ing' as Entertainment: David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*," *East-West Film Journal* 5.2 (1991) 93-114.

"Hélène Cixous's Portrait of Dora: The Unseen and the Un-scene," *Performing Feminism: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed., Sue-Ellen Case (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) 77-91.

•Reprinted from *Theatre Journal* 37: 3 (October, 1985) 287-301.

"*La Guerre est finie*: The Image as Mourning and Anticipation of History," *The Spanish Civil War and The Visual Arts*, ed., Kathleen M. Vernon (Western Societies Program, Center for International Studies, Cornell University (1990)) 37-45.

"Seductive Spaces: Public Fascinations and Private Fantasies in Popular Cinema," in *Seduction and Theory*, ed., Dianne Hunter (University of Illinois Press, 1989) 47-70.

"Spectacular Topographies: Baudrillard's Postmodern Spaces," *Restructuring Architectural Theory*, ed., Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham (Northwestern University Press, 1989) 60-66.

•Reprinted from *Threshold IV* (Spring, 1988) 62-68.

"Staging Sexual Difference: Reading, Recitation, and Repetition in Duras's *The Malady of Death*," in *Feminine Focus: The New Women Playwrights*, ed., Enoch Brater (Oxford University Press, 1989) 109-125.

"Writing in Transit," in *Remains to be Seen: Essays on Marguerite Duras*, ed., Sanford Ames (Peter Lang, 1988) 95-104.

"Feminism's Interrupted Genealogies: Review of Alice Jardine, *Gynesis*," *Diacritics*, 18:1 (1988) 29-41.

"Lettre sur des tâches aveugles: à l'usage de celles qui voient," *L'Esprit créateur*, XXIV: 1 (1984) 85-98.

"A Symptomatic Narrative," *Diacritics*, 12: 4 (1983) 46-60.

“‘Gilbertine’ apparue: A Reading of Proust’s *La Fugitive*,” *The Romanic Review*, LXXIII: 4 (1982) 331-345.

### **Invited Lectures**

“Shock, Spectacle, and Specters: *Django Unchained* and *Twelve Years a Slave*,” University of Pennsylvania, October 10, 2018.

“Moving Pictures: Spectacles of Enslavement in U. S. Cinema,” Literature, Film, and Theater Arts Department colloquium, University of Essex, February 20, 2014.

“External Memory: Film and Media Studies in the Digital Moment,” Special Session on Digital Humanities, North East Modern Language Association, March 15-18, 2012, Rochester, New York.

“Film History With a Vengeance: Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds*,” University of Binghamton, April 6, 2011.

“In the Museum of Cinema: Jean-Luc Godard, *Avatar*, and *Inglourious Basterds*,” at “Global Aesthetics: Intersecting Culture, Theory, Practice,” Symposium at Cornell University, Society for the Humanities, October 15-16, 2010.

“Black Mentors and White Redemption: The Extraordinary Career of Sidney Poitier,” Gilbert Lecture series, Southern Methodist University, March 26, 2009

“*The Americanization of Emily*: Memory, Management, Marketing,” Royal Holloway College, UK, February 1, 2007.  
Screen Studies Symposium, University of London, February 2, 2007.

“Sidney Poitier’s Cinematic Body,” Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, Brown University, Roundtable Symposium, “Mediation/Ethics,” March 15-16, 2007.

“Black Mentors and White Redemption: The Extraordinary Career of Sidney Poitier,” Department of Media Study, SUNY Buffalo, December 7, 2006; University of Western Ontario, March 4, 2007.

“A Cinema of Migrations: The Work of Ziad Doueiri,” for “Shifting Landscapes: Film and Media in European Context,” June 16-18, 2006, Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey.

“The Politics of Disappointment: Todd Haynes’s *Far From Heaven*,” Vanderbilt University, January 26, 2004.

“‘Practical’ Whiteness and Black Authenticity: *Pinky* and *Imitation of Life*,” Georgetown University, March 29, 2002.

"The 90s Reads the 60s: Representations of the Civil Rights Era in Recent Film," Tudor and Stewart Lecture, Johns Hopkins University, March 29, 2001.

"Civil Rights as Spectacle, Feminism as Alibi: The Case of *Pleasantville*," Ithaca College, Women Make Movies Festival, Keynote Address, March 2, 2001.

"Sentimental Histories: Representing White Women and Civil Rights in the 1990s," University of Oklahoma, Norman, February 28, 2000.

"Bad Sex in Popular Culture," Bad Sex Symposium, Johns Hopkins University, March 23-25, 1999.

"The Sincerest Form of Flattery?: Whiteness in the Work of Quentin Tarantino," Williams College, November 12, 1998.

"From the Literary Canon to Popular Culture," special seminar, Senior Scholars Program, English Department, Williams College, November 13, 1998.

"Translation Effects in Global Circulation," Roundtable, "Borderless Wor(l)ds," Symposium, sponsored by the Departments of French and Comparative Literature, Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, April 18, 1998.

"False Analogies: Gender, Sexuality, and Race in *To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything! Julie Newmar*," Rice University, February 23, 1998.

"Disciplinary Groundings of Visual and Cultural Studies," workshop leader at New Century College, Dean's symposium, George Mason University, April 22, 1997.

"Icons of Black Masculinity," at "Beyond the Boundary: Men, Race, and Culture," Symposium sponsored by New York University and the Whitney Museum, February 24-25, 1995.

### **Selected Conference Papers**

"Performance: Hate Speech and Violence in the work of Spike Lee and Quentin Tarantino," "Words That Kill" Conference, The American University of Paris, May 28-30, 2018.

"Media Studies Journals:

*Camera Obscura*," Plenary Session with

Journal Editors. "Console-ing Passions:

Television, Audio, Video, New Media, and Feminism," Dublin, Ireland, June 20, 2015.

"Moving Pictures: Spectacle and Specters in *Django Unchained* and *Twelve Years a Slave*," Society for Cinema and Media Studies, March 25-30, 2015, Montreal, Canada.

"*The Help's* Fantasmatic Ethnography" Society for Cinema and Media Studies, March 6-10, 2013, Chicago, IL

"American Accents: HBO's John Adams," Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies, Dallas, TX, October 20-22, 2009.

"Bodies of Work: Professors on Film," Modern Language Association convention, December 29, 2008.

"Unsent Letters and Found Footage," Narrative Conference, Dallas TX, May 6-9, 2008

"At First Sight: *The New World*," Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies Conference, Chicago, February 24-26, 2007.

"A Cinema of Migrations: The Work of Ziad Doueiri," "Shifting Landscapes: Film and Media in European Context," 2006 Film and Media Conference, Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey, June 16-18.

"Black Mentors and White Redemption," MLA convention, Philadelphia, Dec. 29, 2004.

Panel Organizer and Chair, "Bad Teaching Moments," MLA Division on Film, MLA convention, Philadelphia, Dec 27-30, 2004.

Panel organizer and chair, "Origins of the Species," MLA Division on Film, MLA Convention, San Diego, December 29, 2003.

"Dead Zones: Geometries of Space and Place in *Monster's Ball*," Screen Studies Conference, Glasgow University, July 4-6, 2003

"A Girl For All Seasons: Joan of Arc in the Movies," Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies, New Orleans, November 16-19, 2000.

Panel Organizer, MLA Division on Literature and the Other Arts. TV 2000 I: "What's News?"; TV 2000 II: "Sex and Sexuality"; TV 2000 III: "The Politics of Genre." Modern Language Association, December 28-29, 1999.

"Early Modern Virgins: Joan of Arc and Elizabeth in the Popular Imagination," Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies, Coral Gables, October 5-7, 1999

### **Professional Experience**

- Professor of Art History and Visual and Cultural Studies 2007-
- Professor of French and Visual and Cultural Studies,  
University of Rochester 2000-2007
- Visiting Professor, Film and Media Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, Spring, 2001.

- Distinguished Visiting Professor, Carnegie Mellon University, Spring 1992.
- Associate Professor of French and Visual and Cultural Studies,  
University of Rochester 1988-2000
- Assistant Professor of French, University of Rochester 1986-1988
- Teaching Fellow, Cornell University 1985-1986
- Assistant Professor of French, Miami University 1983-1986

### **Recent Courses**

Black Feminist Criticism and Theory  
 Slow Cinema: Agnès Varda,, Chantal Akerman, Michelangelo Anonioni, Jean-Luc Godard  
 Introduction to Visual and Cultural Studies  
 The Films of Jean-Luc Godard  
 Race and Gender in Popular Film  
 Classical Film Theory  
 Film History: 1959-1989  
 Film History: 1929-1959  
 The Road Movie  
 Feminist Film Theory  
 Identity, Violence, and Trauma  
 Resistance and Collaboration: World War II in France  
 Rhetorics of Everyday Life  
 Introduction to Feminist Theory  
 French Cinema: The New Wave  
 History of French Cinema  
 Contemporary French Film  
 Ideologies of Realism: The 19th century Novel

### **Professional Organizations and Activities**

Co-Editor, *Camera Obscura*, 1991-.  
 Advisory Editor, *PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association)*, 2015-  
 Member, Melodrama Research Consortium (founded 2013, international interdisciplinary consortium).  
 Executive Committee, MLA Division for Literature and the Other Arts: 1996-99; MLA  
 MLA Division on Film, 2002-2005.  
 Society for Cinema and Media Studies  
 College Art Association  
 American Studies Association

### **Administrative Service, University of Rochester**

- Film and Media Studies Program: Director, 1997-2001; 2002-2004; 2007-2013.
- Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Women's Studies: Director, 1991-93; Steering Committee, 1987-88; 1990-91; Chair, Curriculum Committee, 1987-88; Curriculum Committee member, 1989-90; 2002-4. Curriculum Director, 2006-2007.
- Visual and Cultural Studies Program, Steering Committee, 1989-.
- Interim Director, VCS Program, 2015-2016

- David O. Selznick Master's Program in Preservation Studies, Academic Faculty, 2004-.
- Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies, Executive Committee, 2002-.
- Executive Committee, American Studies Program, 2015-
- Mellon Humanities Corridor Committee, 2008-2010.
- FDI Director Search Committee, 2019-20