

KATRINA MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

Full List of Fellows and Their Projects

FILM



June Cross produced *To Have Not, And To Hold*, a documentary that tracks the failures of public policy and the trivial cruelty of politics by examining the plight of the Gettridges—a middle-class Ninth Ward family. Cross follows them as they weather insurance quagmires, bureaucratic nightmares, political dramas, and personal devastation. Their stories are explored in the context of Louisiana's poor public health system, cultural heritage, tourism industry, political history, and current rebuilding efforts. The documentary will air on PBS's "Frontline."



Dee Davis and **The Center for Rural Strategies** developed a media campaign to illustrate the struggles of rural Gulf Coast residents to re-establish their lives after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The project aimed to help Americans understand conditions along the rural Gulf Coast and explore how America's failure to formulate effective rural policy is reaping disaster. Davis received an OSI distribution grant to provide community based groups with video footage that will help them in their advocacy efforts.



Tia Lessin created a feature-length documentary titled *Trouble the Water*, which tells the story of an aspiring rap artist Kimberly Rivers Roberts and her husband Scott Roberts who survive the storm and then seize a chance for a new beginning. The film combines harrowing footage recorded by Kimberly as she and her husband waited out the storm, with Lessin's documentation of their journey after leaving the Red Cross shelter. *Trouble the Water* won top prizes at the Sundance Film Festival and the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.



Lolis Eric Elie and **Dawn Logsdon**, created a feature-length documentary, *Faubourg Tremé: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans*, which focuses on the historic neighborhood that, during slavery, was home to one of the oldest, most prosperous, and most politically active black communities in the country. The film uncovers important social, cultural, and political activities among free blacks in the early 1800s, and examines the impact of Katrina on the neighborhood's future. The film was screened at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival.



Jacqueline Soohen is producing *Fire Next Time*, a series of cinema-verité vignettes that follow individual Katrina survivors in New Orleans. The stories, specifically designed to keep Katrina on the national agenda, personalize larger public policy and racial and economic justice issues by showing how those issues intersect with the daily lives of Katrina survivors.



Christopher Tetens and Lauren Thompson are working on *N.O. Justice*, which profiles the story of five individuals from New Orleans—a recovering addict, a street-level hustler, an ex-con on a mission, a convicted drug trafficker, and a first-time felon—all up against impossible odds, but each on a quest to reclaim his or her life. Tetens and Thompson explore the failures of the New Orleans criminal justice system and the efforts of a few individuals determined to change it.

PHOTOGRAPHY



Debbie Fleming Caffery created a body of photographs titled *Portrait of Neglect*, which documents New Orleans communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. While Caffery's still-lives and urban landscapes record physical markings and damaged objects left behind by the disaster, her portraits provide more intimate studies of survivors. Caffery's work attests to the individual and collective will to maintain a sense of hope and faith amid the daily reminders of Katrina. The photographs have been included in several gallery exhibitions in New Orleans, New York, and Santa Fe, as well as at The Nation Institute office.



Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick are continuing their 30-year commitment to capturing the unique cultural, social, and religious customs of the African American community in New Orleans and rural Louisiana. McCormick and Calhoun lost two thirds of their negatives when their Lower Ninth Ward home and studio were ravaged by the floodwaters. As part of their fellowship, they worked to restore the remaining negatives and create new work on post-Katrina topics, such as displaced New Orleanians living in Texas and day laborers in New Orleans.



Stanley Greene and Kadir van Lohuizen collaborated on a project titled *Those Who Fell Through the Cracks*, which documents the many individuals and communities who were most vulnerable before the storm and continue to be neglected two years later. Greene focused his work on coastal communities in Mississippi and Alabama that were neglected by recovery and rebuilding efforts, while van Lohuizen explored the challenges of displacement faced by New Orleans residents now living in Texas.



Kamoinge, a New York-based collective of African-American photographers, documented ravished communities impacted by the hurricane and the devastation's far-reaching ramifications on the economic, social, and racial fabric of its residents. Photographers **Salimah Ali, Gerald Cyrus, Collette V. Fournier, Russell K. Frederick, Wayne Lawrence, John Pinderhughes, Radcliffe Roye, Frank Stewart, and Shawn Walker** traveled, at staggered intervals, to the Gulf Region, covering its most publicized areas (such as the Lower Ninth Ward or French Quarter), as well as forgotten coastal towns (such as Pointe à la Hache, in Plaquemines Parish). The resulting body of work explores the despair, as well as the hope and resilience of the many residents who have lived in these communities for countless generations.



Joseph Rodriguez created an extensive body of photographs that will be distributed as a book, featured in online exhibitions, and displayed as a traveling exhibition. Rodriguez follows Gulf Coast victims from varied backgrounds as they confront the many obstacles to reestablish their lives post-Katrina; while some are struggling to rebuild their communities in New Orleans, others are starting anew in places such as Denton and Houston, Texas. The upcoming book will be published by PowerHouse Books in late 2008.



Clarence Williams produced a photographic essay of post-Katrina New Orleans, from flood to aftermath to rebuilding, with a visual emphasis on the remnants of the cultural wealth and family ties that make this city unique. Williams was visiting relatives in New Orleans East when Hurricane Katrina hit, and he spent three days trapped in an attic with his family. His first-person account of the experience was published in the *Miami Herald* alongside his photographs. The photographs produced during the fellowship are an extension of that work.

PRINT



Ralph Adamo researched and wrote about the recovery of the New Orleans public school system in light of its troubled past. Adamo explored topics such as the post-Katrina education-privatization experiment that puts poor students at a serious disadvantage, and the Recovery School District's questionable approach and use of funds in their attempts to repair the public education system. Adamo has published this work in *The American Prospect* and *Dissent* magazine.



Larry Blumenfeld researched and wrote about the post-Katrina realities faced by the prime movers in New Orleans's musical subcultures—from jazz musicians and brass band players to tribes of Mardi Gras Indians and the Social Aid and Pleasure clubs—and the cultural crises that emerged in the wake of the 2005 floods. This work has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Village Voice*, and *Salon*, as well as featured in concert-program notes. Blumenfeld has presented his research in radio interviews, public readings, and panel discussions.



Sara Catania chronicled the impact of the hurricanes on New Orleans and Gulf Coast Vietnamese communities. The stories focus on topics such as the struggles for affordable housing in the post-Katrina casino boom of Biloxi, Mississippi, battles with FEMA over trailer park access, and hardships faced by Vietnamese Gulf Coast fisherman. For several stories, Catania partnered with Giao Pham (reporter for Vietnamese newspaper *Nguoi Viet*) and worked with Pacific News Service (an OSI grantee) to place her stories in Vietnamese language newspapers.



Annette Foglino profiled people determined to rebuild in the face of immense obstacles and the issues raised by their journey to recovery. These "post-disaster pioneers" range from ordinary citizens facing the aftereffects of disaster trauma to leaders in the community who come up with creative ways to help others put their lives back together—initiating daycare and legal services, for example, or publishing newsletters and organizing anti-violence programs.



Mark Hertsgaard focused on global warming and interviewed a wide range of people about what went wrong in New Orleans before Katrina, and how ongoing reconstruction and conservation efforts could protect the Gulf Coast in the future. He then visited Florida, Japan, Bangladesh and the Netherlands to see how these lessons compared to practices elsewhere. The goal of his project is to encourage a new paradigm for confronting global warming. His work has been published in *Nation*, *Time*, and *Vanity Fair*.



Dale Maharidge and photographer **Michael Williamson** collaborated on *Child of the Flood*, a documentary novel chronicling the story of John Boucher, an 18-year-old who is knocked unconscious and loses his memory as a result of the flooding following Katrina. As with previous collaborative projects, they use a format incorporating photography with text, and reportage with narrative fiction. An excerpt of an early draft was published in the Fall/Winter 2006 issue of *DoubleTake/Points of Entry Magazine*.



John McQuaid examined how government agencies, most notably Congress and the Army Corps of Engineers, are ill-prepared to deal with rapid environmental changes in the 21st century. The results of McQuaid's examinations can be found on his Huffington Post blog, *The Washington Post*, the Center for Public Integrity publication *City Adrift: New Orleans Before and After the Katrina*, and a series of articles on the *Mother Jones* website on New Orleans' future.



Steve Myers explored how outdated and inaccurate Alabama flood maps—which are supposed to identify areas likely to be flooded and are the basis for local building regulations and flood insurance requirements—underestimated flood risk and left coastal communities vulnerable to loss. The results of Myers' research were featured in a series of articles in the *Press-Register* entitled "In the Danger Zone." One direct result of Myers' reporting is that FEMA announced plans to remap Alabama and the western panhandle of Florida.



Katy Reckdahl covered the working poor in New Orleans, their struggles to return to the city after Katrina, and the hurdles they faced once they arrived home. She paid particular attention to the Treme neighborhood, which before the storm was home to a rich African American culture and the meeting place for many jazz musicians. Reckdahl wrote long-form pieces about outsiders' perceptions of New Orleans, public housing, and the struggles of musicians, benevolent societies, and evacuees.



Tim Shorrock has been researching and writing articles for national publications on how post-Katrina economic development in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast has been skewed towards powerful corporations and has failed to address the needs of the poor and dispossessed. During the fellowship his articles covered a range of topics, including: the health care crises in New Orleans; the impact of developers and the low-wage, non-unionized gaming industry on the future of Mississippi's coastal communities; and the militarized federal response to Katrina.



Amanda Spake explored health problems suffered by residents who had moved into FEMA-supplied trailers. Advocacy groups were able to use this information to pressure FEMA and a congressional committee on housing to demand that the inside construction materials of the trailers get tested. The story was picked up by the media, and FEMA finally agreed to get the trailers tested. In February 2008, the federal government acknowledged for the first time the presence of toxic levels of formaldehyde in FEMA-supplied trailers and mobile homes.



Dean Starkman explored the insurance industry's response to Katrina, exposing bare insurers' systematic violation of their legal obligations to provide prompt and fair claims service to policyholders. Starkman's work is featured regularly on his blog (insuratransparencyproject.com), which offers commentary and original reporting on political, legal, and corporate news affecting the insurance aftermath. He has also published his findings in publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The Biloxi Sun-Herald*.

RADIO



Kate Ellis and **Stephen Smith** completed two documentaries for America RadioWorks: "**Rebuilding Biloxi**," about families struggling to recover one year after the storm; and "**Routes to Recovery**," about whether the preservation and restoration of New Orleans's cultural life might provide the most enduring path to the city's rebuilding.



Tena Rubio developed the "**Katrina Uncovers**" series for the National Radio Project. As part of that series, she produced three 30-minute shows focusing on the immigrant/migrant workforce in New Orleans called "New Orleans Now: Immigrants, Labor Rights and the Human Cost of Rebuilding an American City," for which she received an award from the Society of Professional Journalists - Northern California Chapter. She also produced a special one-hour show, "**Two Years After Katrina: Still Weathering the Storm.**"



Eve Troeh was the only public radio reporter on the ground full-time in New Orleans after Katrina. She's reported on a wide variety of topics, centered loosely around three main themes: public safety, housing, and cultural rebuilding. Her stories aim to highlight individual and community efforts to rebuild, and how those efforts are hindered or helped by government at the local, state, and federal levels.

YOUTH MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS



DCTV, a youth media organization, paired two New York City youth with two New Orleans youth, to spend three weeks in New Orleans in 2006. The team produced two videos, entitled *Not As Seen On TV* and *Talking Water*, which offer a critical youth perspective on the events following the failure of the levees, the resiliency of displaced residents who have returned, and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one year later. DCTV partnered with the Ashe Cultural Center to produce and then distribute the videos for community dialogue.



Education Video Center's Youth Organizers Television (YO-TV) created a documentary titled *Still Standing*, which profiles three Hurricane Katrina survivors and the challenges they face six months after the storm. *Still Standing* was screened at the Tribeca Film Festival and has received numerous awards. EVC is now working closely with the New York Solidarity Coalition with Katrina/Rita Survivors to distribute the film and screen it widely to encourage viewers to take action and support the organizing and rebuilding efforts of survivors.



Students at the Center is a New Orleans-based organization that works with local youth on intensive writing and media projects, to develop literacy and civic skills and enable students to become catalysts for change in their communities. For this grant, they produced a series of short movies by youth from New Orleans that address the impact of Katrina on the daily lives of young people. The films explore the double-displacement felt by students who had evacuated and then returned, only to find themselves alienated from their friends, family, and homes.



Youth Radio partnered with local New Orleans youth media groups, schools, nonprofit organizations, and individual young people to create "Generation Katrina: Youth Voices from New Orleans." The documentary features a mix of personal narratives, sound-rich features, news-driven reportage, and cultural analysis of post-Katrina life in New Orleans. Local youth contributed stories, musical interludes, and original photography. The radio special is available online and is being distributed to Public Radio International stations nationwide.