



SMITH COLLEGE  
DIPLOMA IN AMERICAN STUDIES  
ALUMNI

## Newsletter No. 6, August 2018

Dear Diploma Alumna/us

Greetings from London, where we have been having a spectacular summer. The sun is lovely but does little to lift the gloom of the Brexit nightmare in the UK. This turmoil only serves to underline the importance of programs like Smith's Diploma that foster international understanding. Some changes are taking place with the Diploma Program and you should all have received an email in July from Professor Rosetta Cohen about these (and see below under News from Northampton) but the internationalism at the heart of the Program will remain, and even be enhanced, for which I am sure we are all grateful.

### Alumni Gatherings

The next Smith-in-Europe get-together will take place in Brussels this fall, October 11–14, hosted by Smith alumnae in the city. Registration closes September 15 and as space is limited make sure to register as soon as you can if you wish to attend. More than twenty Diploma alums have already registered. The registration fee is €400 for the full Reunion, or there is a Saturday-only option for €125, which includes all activities and the gala dinner. Registration fees do not include lodging. Bursaries are available, so please contact the organizers if you are interested in one. Registration and more information can be found at [SmithInEurope2018.eu](http://SmithInEurope2018.eu). Email questions to [smithineurope2018@gmail.com](mailto:smithineurope2018@gmail.com).

Wiebke, Elisabeth and  
Antje in Hamburg,  
May 2018

Of course, mini reunions of Diploma alumni take place at other times: in May, Wiebke Henning Am.S.Dipl '04, Elisabeth Muhlenberg Am.S.Dipl '66 (visiting from Chicago) and Antje Scherffig Am.S.Dipl '99 got together in Hamburg. And Pauline Pelsy-Johann and Filippo Cervelli, both Am.S.Dipl '12, had a mini-reunion in Paris in June.

I was lucky to be present at two Diploma gatherings last year: in Florence at the end of August with Mariarosa Pipparelli-Giordani



Am.S.Dipl '63, Gaia Cozzi Am.S.Dipl '14, Alice Cozzi Am.S.Dipl '17 and Simona Aniello Am.S.Dipl '11; and at the end of October with some of Diploma alumnae in Hamburg: Helga Bechmann Am.S.Dipl '92, Marijke Engel Am.S.Dipl '94 (and her daughter Matilda), Wiebke Henning Am.S.Dipl '04, Andrea Hofmann Am.S.Dipl '88, Janine Kolmorgen Am.S.Dipl '99, Brigitte König Am.S.Dipl '78, Antje Künnemann Am.S.Dipl '93, Pat Nehls Am.S.Dipl '16, Antje Scherffig Am.S.Dipl '99, Christiane Thurner Am.S.Dipl '92, Frauke Wolter Am.S.Dipl '00, and three Smithies from the Class of '69 (Marica Franzen-Hintze, Deanna Nebert and Gesine Pohl).



Above and left  
Diploma alumnae  
gatherings in Florence  
and Hamburg in 2017



## News from Northampton

Since the last newsletter in July 2017 another group of students has graduated and we welcome them to the Diploma Alumni Group. Pictured here at commencement are (left to right) Renee de Groot, Lucy Hilgers, Edoardo Schinco, Linda (Xiaoli Li), David Munoz Tord, Rocío Campos Aguilera, Marleen Wrage, Lygia Pavitt and Mégane Michaud. And the Class of 2019 group of twelve students has recently arrived on campus.

In the past year, two of Smith's former presidents have died. Jill Ker Conway (1934–2018), the seventh president, 1975–85, was the first woman to hold the position. She was a distinguished historian and also wrote an excellent memoir of her upbringing in Australia, *The Road from Coorain*, and an account of her time at Smith, *A Woman's Education*. Her successor, Mary Maples Dunn (1931–2017), the eighth president, was also a historian. After Smith, she became Director of the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe.



The 2018 Diploma  
students prepare for  
Commencement

## *Changes to the Diploma Program*

Rosetta Cohen, Elizabeth Mugar Eveillard 1969 Faculty Director, Lewis Global Studies Center, wrote to all of us at the end of July to explain the changes that have taken place in the Diploma Program. I hope that Rosetta's remarks helped to clear the fog that has surrounded this subject for three or four years now. I think it is worth quoting from her email at length.

*We have changed the name of the Program from the American Studies Diploma Program to the Interdisciplinary Studies Diploma Program. Here are the primary reasons for the name change:*

*1. American Studies, as a discipline, is in decline. Universities, both in and outside the United States are doing away with their American Studies programs in favor of "Global Studies" and other ways of organizing knowledge about countries that extend the parameters of scholarly inquiry beyond one country alone. Though we welcome Diploma students whose focus is in any aspect of American culture or in any area of comparative studies that includes the United States, we felt we needed a title that made clear that the Program sought applicants whose scholarly interests were outside the traditional confines of American Studies alone.*

*2. "Interdisciplinary Studies" captures the cutting edge focus of the academy here in the United States. Indeed, interdisciplinary study is transforming the liberal arts. Narrow subject areas and majors are being replaced by other ways for students to organize their academic courses and internship experiences. At Smith, students still major in one or two subjects, but we have also added a new designation for interdisciplinary work. These are "Concentrations," thematic areas of inquiry composed of courses from a range of departments and designed by individual students in consultation with their advisors. For example, students can now "concentrate" in Museums Studies, Global Financial Institutions, and Translation Studies, to name just a few. Since most AMS Diploma students were already taking courses around the curriculum (indeed, the Program has always been more Interdisciplinary than American in its focus) it made sense to adopt a name that better reflected the contents of the Program.*

*3. In recent years, we have received requests from our JYA partner universities with whom we have formal ties, as well as from other universities that have traditionally sent us their students, to allow an increasing number of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) students to participate in the Diploma Program in larger numbers. Again, in the spirit of interdisciplinarity, we wish to welcome those students and provide them with a liberal arts experience that moves them outside the narrow confines of a single discipline. Despite these minor changes, much remains the same in this exceptional and venerable Program. These are some of the continuing characteristics of the Program.*

*Academic rigor remains a cornerstone of the Program. Students in the Diploma Program take three-to-four courses each semester. These courses may be selected from across the Five College system in fields typically open to all Smith and Five College students. In the first semester, as in the past, one of those courses is a seminar on American culture and ideas, taught by Lane Hall-Witt, and designed exclusively for our Diploma Program students. We have retained this seminar because it is an important*

*introduction to a year in the United States and it models the kind of interdisciplinary thinking that the Program represents. In the spring, Diploma students still do a thesis—either a traditional research paper or the equivalent creative or scholarly work, overseen either by Lane or by a Smith faculty member with expertise in the area being researched.*

I would also like to draw attention to Rosetta's call for our help:

*I am turning to you, dear Diploma Program alums, with a request for help. In our efforts to strengthen and expand the scope and reach of the newly named program, your contacts and expertise feels crucial. One of my own goals is to make the Diploma Program cohort as geographically diverse as it has been in the past. In recent years, most of our students have come to us from our partner JYA universities. Though we very much welcome those students as a great, consistent core for the Program, we are able to accommodate an even larger cohort drawn from a wider international community around the world. I know that many of you teach or work in universities across the globe. Might we collaborate in encouraging students from your institutions to consider a rigorous, liberal arts program at Smith College? Any help you can provide would be much appreciated—either through your own efforts or by way of contact information that I will pursue. Diversity (intellectual and geographic) can only enrich the Program.*

Please contact Rosetta if you think you can be of any assistance. Those of you coming to Brussels will have the chance to meet Rosetta in person. I am sure we would all like to see applicants from a wide range of countries as happened in the past. If you want to read more about the new-style Diploma, here is the link to the relevant page on the Smith website:

[www.smith.edu/academics/interdisciplinary-diploma](http://www.smith.edu/academics/interdisciplinary-diploma)

At the 2017 Diploma reunion it was decided that the graduates of the newly named Diploma Program would be welcome in our group. The Class of 2019 will be the first to be awarded the Interdisciplinary Studies Diploma.

### *Campus Regeneration*

At Smith the rebuilding of the Library is progressing. Only the shell of Neilson is still standing. The project is scheduled for completion in 2020.



The view across campus showing the shell of Neilson on the left, Wright Hall on the right and Burton Lawn and the science buildings in the distance, August 2018



The view of Neilson Library from Burton Lawn with Wright Hall on the left in August 2018. The image below shows the same view as it will look when the remodelling by Maya Lin and the design firm Shepley Bulfinch is completed in 2020



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## Alumni News

### **Elisabeth Muhlenberg** Am.S.Dipl '66 (Chicago):

*For decades now, every trip I have taken back “home” to Germany from the U.S. has had one very special highlight: a visit to the Amanns in Siegburg near Bonn. Eva Am.S.Dipl '69 has been my dearest friend since 1967 – before she ever attended the Diploma program. We’ve shared so much since those days and, as we get older, life has thrown both of us some difficult curve balls. So, having a chance to be with each other is something I treasure. In good Smithie fashion, we talk about EVERYTHING – naturally, over a glass of wine (or two)! On this visit, my childhood friend from even longer ago (the 1940s!) was able to join us at Eva’s house with his wife. The joy and laughter and good feeling made our stay even more special than it already was.*

### **Peter Buckley** Am.S.Dipl '75 (New York):

*My news is that I’m now acting Dean of the humanities and social science at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. And also that I’m looking forward to retirement!*



Elisabeth and Eva in Siegburg, 2018

Peter in New York



**Julia MacKenzie** Am.S.Dipl '79 (London):

*I had a three-month long-service sabbatical last summer and spent a month of it walking 420 km on the Way of St Francis pilgrim route (although I am not religious) down Italy from La Verna monastery in Tuscany, via Borgo San Sepulchro, Gubbio, Assisi, Spoleto and Rieti to Rome. I was joined by ten friends (including one Smithie) over the course of the four weeks for the different stages and we had a fantastic time (I should point out that we did not carry our luggage – this was moved from hotel to hotel by a travel company). We met just twenty-five other “pilgrims” along the entire route (compared to the very busy Camino in Spain) so we had the hills and unspoilt villages to ourselves and were lucky that in the whole month of September there was only one morning of rain. I highly recommend the experience. I returned to work refreshed and with renewed enthusiasm – and very fit!*



Julia in the hills above Spoleto, Italy, September 2017

*Living in London I am fortunate that Diploma alumni pass through at fairly regular intervals. So in the past year I have met Margaret Freeman Am.S.Dipl '63, Elsa Kamden Am.S.Dipl '17, Wiebke Henning Am.S.Dipl '04, Andrea Clausen Am.S.Dipl '11, Andrea Hofmann Am.S.Dipl '88, Christina Hantel-Fraser Am.S.Dipl '64 and Katarina Dusikova Am.S.Dipl '10. I also met Enrica Balestra Am.S.Dipl '93 – who lives in London – for the first time at a Smith event held at Kew Gardens.*

Julia and Enrica at Kew, June 2018



**Kirsten Haaning** Am.S.Dipl '83 (Copenhagen):

*In July 2017 Tu Xuanru Am.S.Dipl '83 and her husband were visiting Copenhagen with a group of school friends from China. In the photograph you see Xuanru, her husband Youkun and one of their friends, my husband Preben and me.*



Kirsten and Xuanru with their spouses in Copenhagen, July 2017

**Ingeborg Adler** Am.S.Dipl '86 (Hamburg):

*I have been working for the Hamburg Centre for Ultrafast Imaging, which is a cluster of excellence at the University of Hamburg, for almost six years now. I am responsible for the public outreach activities, which means a lot of writing. Last year we organized an exhibition of scientific images and lab photos, which was shown in Hamburg's City Hall (that was why I couldn't come to the reunion). The colorful pictures were a wonderful means to reach the public. (If you want to have a look: [www.cui.uni-hamburg.de/en/events/arts-and-science/](http://www.cui.uni-hamburg.de/en/events/arts-and-science/)). Our researchers are looking into the dynamics of atoms and molecules, a topic that is not easy to understand (it's a combination of physics, chemistry, and molecular biology). Presently, I and my colleagues are waiting for the German Research*

Foundation's decision as to whether the project will continue for another seven years. So the times are somewhat exciting. We have also just been awarded the University's Equal Opportunity Prize worth 10,000 euro. Isn't that great? – also with regard to our Smith experience?

Summer in Hamburg is fantastic with lots of sun and no rain. And even more fortunately, the “kids” are doing very well, both living in their own apartment and studying law in Hamburg and always happy to go shopping with their mother and have coffee. However, Thomas and I still don't really know what to do with all the rooms in our house. Apart from that, we love traveling and Italy is one of our favourite destinations. The picture shows me in Piedmont in May.



Ingeborg in Piedmont, Italy, in May 2018

**Stefan Flückiger** Am.S.Dipl '86 (Bern):

In July 2018 I took up my new post as Ambassador and Head of Special Foreign Economic Service in the Swiss Economic Ministry. I will try my best to manage the team that negotiates Switzerland's international trade agreements, including the sudoku to find a new arrangement with a post-Brexit UK. More importantly, in May 2018 I had the honor to be elected Member of the Executive Board of the Smith College Association in Geneva, the forum that looks after Smith's Junior Year Abroad Program affiliated with the University of Geneva. Any time left is spent kitesurfing.

**Mercedes García Lenberg** Am.S.Dipl '86 (Madrid):

After decades in publishing, I have started a second life teaching English and German in Secondary School. And I love it!

**Inés Maturana Sendoya** Am.S.Dipl '86 (Boston):

In July 2018, Inés started a new job as Associate Dean of Students for Inclusion and Engagement at Wellesley College. She was previously Director of the Thea Bowman AHANA (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American) and Intercultural Center at Boston College for twelve years.

**Andrea Hofmann** Am.S.Dipl '88 (Hamburg):

I am interested in the German artist John Heartfield (1891–1961) and am currently exploring his time in England during the Second World War (1938–1950). An anti-fascist, Heartfield was a vocal advocate of civil rights and equal opportunities. He was also one of the greatest political artists and designers of the twentieth century.

This past May I went to London to meet John J. Heartfield, the artist's grandson. I've been contributing for a while to John's website ([www.johnheartfield.com/John-Heartfield-Exhibition/john-heartfield-art/famous-anti-fascist-art/heartfield-posters-aiz/fake-nazi-science-climate](http://www.johnheartfield.com/John-Heartfield-Exhibition/john-heartfield-art/famous-anti-fascist-art/heartfield-posters-aiz/fake-nazi-science-climate)) by writing articles about Heartfield's political photomontages. The website began as a means of stimulating interest in John's grandfather's work but has since evolved into an on-line museum to promote art and artists with

*integrity and courage. John and I share the conviction that political art can inspire political action. Incidentally, I also find decoding political art great fun and a nice mental exercise.*

*When Heartfield was in exile in England he stayed at the home of Fred Uhlman and his wife, Diana, in Hampstead, north London, for four years. They were a remarkable couple, known for their hospitality and open-mindedness. Fred Uhlman was a German lawyer who had escaped Nazi Germany and became a well-known artist and writer. The Uhlmans were among those who started the Free German League of Culture. Initially, this was a non-party, anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist refugee organization with the declared aim “to preserve and advance Free German culture and further the mutual understanding between the refugees and the British people.” Its honorary members comprised a wide spectrum of people who joined forces including Dr Julian Huxley, Ralph Vaughan Williams, J. B. Priestley, Dame May Whitty, Dame Sybil Thorndike and the Bishop of Chichester, to name a few.*

*While in London, I visited an exhibition at Burgh House in Hampstead called The Making of an Englishman, which was the first UK retrospective of Uhlman’s work in many years. By the way, The Making of an Englishman’ (1960) is the title of one of Fred Uhlman’s books, which is a very interesting read.*

*Particularly fascinating were the drawings Uhlman produced while he was interned on the Isle of Man during the Second World War. They are extraordinary. You can find some of Uhlman’s art on [www.artnet.de/k%C3%BCnstler/fred-uhlman/](http://www.artnet.de/k%C3%BCnstler/fred-uhlman/)*

*Thinking of refugees, in times like the present it is reassuring to know that one stays part of the Smith community, which takes a stand against cruel anti-immigration policies, racism and sexual harassment, to name just a few of the issues that threaten human rights so massively these days. Let’s cherish the international connections of the Diploma alumni group!*

*Recently, my family has had direct experience of its benefits. My daughter is currently studying in London and this summer she has been doing a short internship at Thames & Hudson, the publishing company where Julia Am.S.Dipl ’79 is senior editor. Hurrah for the Diploma network!*

*Julia and I met while I was in London and had a great laugh when I tried to take some selfies of us for the newsletter. So much for being modern media savvy!*

**Simone Walper** Am.S.Dipl ’90 (Fehmarn, Germany):

*We’ve had a great summer. The kids are growing up. Our younger daughter just turned 8. Work goes well also, though sometimes it could be a little less. I am writing much for our local newspaper, Fehmarnsches Tageblatt, covering concerts, theatre performances and lots of other things that are going on here on the island of Fehmarn. Apart from that I still work for a little magazine in Hamburg.*



Julia and Andrea in London, May 2018

**Antje Künnemann** Am.S.Dipl '93 (Hamburg):

*On our summer holidays in Norway I met Elisabeth Halvorsen in Bergen. We are both graduates of the Diploma Class of '93. Just before our trip to Norway I decided to get in touch with Elisabeth after more than twenty years. She invited us to her beautiful home in Bergen at the end of July. So my husband, Walter, and I spent a wonderful summer weekend with Elisabeth, her husband, Helge, and her two kids. We had delicious food and wine, great talks and an interesting exchange about our lives and thoughts on Norway, Germany and the rest of the world. We agreed that it surely won't need another twenty years before we catch up again.*



Antje and Elisabeth,  
Bergen, July 2018

**Gerben van der Marel** Am.S.Dipl '98 (Berlin):

*I moved last year from New York to Berlin. For almost six years I had been the correspondent in the U.S. for Het Financieele Dagblad, the Financial Times of the Netherlands. Last year my family and I moved to report from the capital of Germany about politics, business, and digitalization. We landed smoothly and we are enjoying our new home to the full.*



Gerben and family,  
Oregon, 2017

*The photo is from our farewell to North America trip last summer to the West Coast and Canada. My son and daughter are now five (Flip) and seven (Daantje).*

**Flavien Collet** Am.S.Dipl '02 (Smithfield, Rhode Island):

*This summer I enrolled in a seven-week Spanish program at Middlebury College in Vermont. I received a scholarship from the school where I currently teach (Bancroft School in Worcester, Mass) and one from Middlebury and it was a wonderful experience to be immersed in the Spanish language full time. I took classes at the advanced level, perfecting my pronunciation and learning about Latin-American Cinema as well as Theater. In the near future I would like to be able to teach Spanish in addition to teaching French.*



Flavien at Middlebury  
College, July 2018

**Enoch Wambua** Am.S.Dipl '08 (Nairobi):

Enoch was elected the Senator for Kitui County in the Kenyan Parliament in August 2017. He is a member of the Wiper Democratic Movement. Prior to that he was a journalist working as the Managing Editor of the Standard Group's weekend editions.

Enoch

**Lise Koning** Am.S.Dipl '15 (Amsterdam):

*I now work at the Noord-Hollands Archief (the archives of the province North-Holland and city of Haarlem) for education and events. Maybe it is fun to mention that I won the public prize for "Young*



Archivist of the Year” and the title “Young Historian of the Year.” Two separate titles and organizations. I’m just very very very lucky. And young! Both are national (Dutch) prizes. The Young Archivist of the Year was a public choice award for my contribution to digital archives. The theme was “Digital is in your DNA.” I work on the so-called “history room,” an online accessible database of Haarlem’s heritage for high schools: [www.geschiedenislokaal023.nl/](http://www.geschiedenislokaal023.nl/). The organizations that gave out this award are JONG archivariissen (YOUNG archivists), KVAN (Royal Society of Archivists in the Netherlands) and BRAIN (Branch Association Archives Netherlands). The Young Historian of the Year was a jury prize. I had to write and present a plan to the jury. My plan is to make sure more young historians visit archives. Most visitors to Dutch archives are 65 and older, retired and men. That is a pity because there is so much beautiful and great material to be found. I will organize a few events in archives for and by young historians and am going to try to connect to universities. The organizations that gave out this award are KNHG (Royal Dutch Historical Society, who also publish the BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review) and Jonge Historici (Young Historians).



Lise with one of her prizes, Amsterdam, 2018

Also, my article about a Dutch tradition, “Black Pete” – that I have been able to finish thanks to Professor Rozario at Smith – and its connection with blackface, will be published (in Dutch) in the renowned Dutch Journal for History.

I would also like to mention that I had a reunion with my dear friend and Diploma classmate Loren Da Costa in Seoul this past May.

**Loren Da Costa** Am.S.Dipl ’15 (Seoul):

The year at Smith was a life-changing experience. It was also the start of a period of self-reflection. After coming back, I decided to take a break, have time to think and to get lost. This led me to working as an au pair for a year in São Paulo, Brazil (2016–17). This was also a fulfilling, unique experience.

Lise and Loren in South Korea, 2018

I am currently enrolled in the Ethics, Ecology and Sustainable Development master’s program at Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University in France. As part of my studies, I have been working as an intern at the Asia Institute (a think tank in Seoul, South Korea) for six months. One of the best aspects has been to be surrounded by people who inspire me and who are passionate about the same issue. I gave a talk on cities in transition that led me to be interviewed for the Korea Times. Another enjoyable aspect of the internship has been the opportunity to be in Seoul. It is a city where tradition and modernity coexist. I am still a lover of languages, and it is one of my goals to be able to speak



*Korean fluently in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of Korea's history, culture and arts. I also had a Diploma mini-reunion in Seoul with my dear friend Lise Koning Am.S.Dipl '15, who was my running partner at Smith. So naturally we went for a hike!*

*After graduating in September 2018, I hope to go back and work in Seoul for a while, to take part in different kinds of sustainable initiatives, such as the Zero Waste Seorae project, in order to raise awareness among the younger generation. It would be a way to give back to the community. To quote Claudie Haigneré, the first French female astronaut: "We go through life, not for oneself, but to bring something to others."*

Do remember to keep [alumnaerecords@smith.edu](mailto:alumnaerecords@smith.edu) informed of changes to your email and postal address. We do not want to "lose" any alumnae/i.

And send me your professional and personal news for the next newsletter and *high-resolution* photos. Thank you.

On behalf of the Diploma Alumni Group Committee,

Best wishes

Julia MacKenzie Am.S.Dipl '79

President, Diploma Alumni Group

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