



WELCOME GREGG MITMAN, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES

MADISON, Wis. (July 23, 2018) – During the 2018-19 academic year, Sara Guyer will take a sabbatical from her position as the Director of the Center for the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, a position she’s held since 2008. During her sabbatical, Guyer will complete a book entitled *Anthropomorphism, and Other Scenes from the Humanities*, which explores the ongoing usefulness of anthropomorphism for contemporary criticism and recasts arguments for the value of the humanities in this context. Her work will be supported by a WARF/Kellett Professorship. Guyer will continue to serve as the President of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCHI) during her sabbatical.

The Center is pleased to welcome Gregg Mitman as interim director. Mitman is the Vilas Research and William Coleman Professor of History, Medical History, and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is an award-winning author, filmmaker, and teacher, whose interests span the history of science, medicine, and the environment.

During the last decade, Mitman has increasingly focused on public humanities projects. In 2007, he created the [Tales from Planet Earth](#) film festival that has brought together artists, academics, and the public to explore and further the power of storytelling through film as a force of environmental and social change. Under his leadership, the Nelson Institute's Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE), in collaboration with Munich’s [Rachel Carson Center](#) and Stockholm’s [KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory](#), hosted a 2014 experimental performance, [The Anthropocene Slam: A Cabinet of Curiosities](#). The project was duplicated in Australia and Switzerland and resulted in a 2018 book, [Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene](#), with the University of Chicago Press. He also recently co-produced and co-directed with Sarita Siegel two films, [In the Shadow of Ebola](#), an intimate portrait of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, and [The Land Beneath Our Feet](#), a documentary on history, memory, and land rights in Liberia.

Mitman is a co-organizer of the 18-month [Sawyer Seminar](#), beginning in January 2019, devoted to “Interrogating the Plantationocene.” The seminar will draw together anthropologists, artists, economists, environmental scientists, geographers, historians, lawyers, literary scholars, and sociologists to explore and deepen the concept of the Plantationocene, interrogating the past and present of plantations, their materialities, the economic, ecological, and political transformations they wrought, and their significance to the making of human bodies, capitalism, and land over the course of four centuries. The seminar is made possible through generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and support from the Center for Humanities, the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies, and CHE. The Center will host [several Humanities Without Boundaries events](#) in partnership with the Sawyer Seminar in the 2018-19 academic year.

Guyer will return to her position of Director of the Center for the Humanities in the 2019-20 academic year.