

SARAH LERNER

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I am a multidisciplinary creative — with formal training in art and historic preservation. I have over a decade of experience working in arts and heritage management, curatorial practices, and wardrobe styling. I am particularly interested in the ways cultural heritage and history are preserved through materials, aesthetics, place, and memory.

EDUCATION

M.S. Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, May 2020

Concentration: Public History

Thesis: “Sanitary Acculturation: The Social History of Progressive Era Public Bath Houses in Philadelphia”

B.A. Studio Art, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, May 2016

Minors: Folklore and Jewish Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

October 2023-Present

Freelance Creative

Working with clients to bring their creative visions to life.

Curatorial Practices

- **Hidden City:** Hired to lead research initiatives for [Philadelphia in Color: 1950-1990](#) a book project to feature street color photography of Philadelphia taken between 1950-1990. The book is scheduled for publication in 2026.
- **Philadelphia Water Department:** Consultant for an upcoming exhibit on waterways in Philadelphia.

Wardrobe Styling

- **Levi Strauss & Co.:** Worked with Levi’s Historian and Archivist to document vintage and luxury garments for the company’s special collection archive.
- **Universal Music Group:** Led the wardrobe styling for UMG artists’ digital marketing, commerce and social media presence. Roster of artists include Eminem, ODEZSA, Illenium, and Blue Note Records. Duties include research current fashion trends and artist aesthetic, sourcing items for looks, curating looks based on the creative brief, meeting with Creative Director and Producer to review proposed looks, prepping all outfits before shoot, working with an assistant on set to steam clothing and other props, pin and adjust clothing on-model on set, return all sourced looks, and work with producer to organize closet.
- **Anthropologie (E-commerce Styling Assistant):** A creative, detail oriented, and solution minded member of the Anthropologie creative team. Supports the creation of in-studio imagery by on-set assisting, steaming, style out assistance and styling closet organization.
- **Red Tettermer O’Connell + Partners:** Lead wardrobe stylist for E.J. Gallo wine brand.

Production Coordination

- **Universal Music Group:** Working alongside the producer on creative photoshoots to ensure a seamless on-set experience for all members of the team. Clients include Taylor Swift and The Rolling Stones. Duties include projects include but are not limited to prepping set elements (clothing and props), helping set up creative backgrounds, meal ordering and pickup, facilitating cars at the end of the day, etc.
- **Palette Group:** Hired by the Executive Producer to represent the company at all pre-production and in person meetings. Duties included, location scouting, scheduling production timeline, ordering all snacks and meals for the cast and crew, liaison between wardrobe stylist and cast members.

September 2020-October 2023

Manager, The Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites, Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia PA

Hired to launch a new research center at the University of Pennsylvania with the mission to remember, study and steward the legacy of civil rights histories in the United States. I managed a team that coordinates programming, administration, marketing, communication, and research initiatives; and assist the Faculty Director with development through budget management, donor stewardship, grant writing and building relationships with individuals, foundations and corporations. I also directed our National Register nomination writing initiative and manage preservation projects.

May 2020-September 2020

Design Fellow, PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia PA

Architectural historian and community engagement coordinator for projects in Washington DC and the Hudson Valley.

November 2018-September 2021

Freelance Photo Assistant

Assisted shoots with architectural photographers Christopher Payne and Joseph Elliot.

November 2018-February 2020

Architectural Photographer, Partners for Sacred Places

Philadelphia, PA

Responsible for documenting and recording pipe organs in the city of Philadelphia through digital photography.

August 2019-December 2019

Teaching Assistant, Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia PA

Assisted students with archival research and architectural photography. Also organized lesson plans and class presentations for HSPV 6000.

October 2017-August 2019

Freelance Event Coordinator, New York Times Live Events

Washington DC, Philadelphia and New York

Hired by the New York Times Live Events team to assist with live event production.

May 2019-August 2019

Curatorial Intern, The Tenement Museum

New York, NY

Hired by the Director of Curatorial Affairs to spearhead research for an exhibit which interprets the history of preservation and conservation initiatives at 97 Orchard Street, the original Tenement Museum building. This program launched in Winter 2022.

December 2016-June 2018

Director of Events, Dupont Underground

Washington DC

Responsible for the curation of exhibitions, production of events, and community engagement initiatives. Which included writing and reviewing artist and client contracts, exhibition production, marketing of exhibitions and events, managing contracted employees per production. Joined as an early team member

and spearheaded the creation of a new revenue stream – historic tours of the space - by creating all tour content, hiring and managing a staff of 10 tour guides and security members.

June 2016-March 2017

Intern, The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress

Washington DC

Hired to log interviews from the Civil Rights History Project and assist with all public events – which required interacting with the public and assisting artists and other professionals during performances.

June 2016-August 2016

Intern, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Washington DC

Hired as the research assistant for folklorist Marjorie Hunt – conducted research for the 2017 Smithsonian Folklife Festival and assisted with the coordination of the Ralph Rinzler Concert through the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Also, helped facilitate the children’s area as the 2016 Folklife Festival.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

“Sanitary Acculturation: The Social History of Progressive Era Public Bath Houses in Philadelphia,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 145 no. 3, 2021.

National Register Nominations

Sarah Lerner and Elizabeth Donison. “Federation of Southern Cooperatives Rural Training and Research Center” National Register of Historic Places. RS #100009125, Epes vicinity, AL. Listed October 6, 2023.

Sarah Lerner and Dr. Shari Williams. “St. Paul Baptist Church and Armstrong School” National Register of Historic Places. MP #100009106, Tuskegee vicinity, AL. Listed July 7, 2023.

Magazines

Cover Art for *Cellar Door Magazine*, The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Literary and Art Magazine, Spring 2014.

Exhibitions

Photography featured in "Inspired Sound: Philadelphia's Pipe Organ Heritage " Athenaeum of Philadelphia, October 2021.

Blog Posts

"Memorializing Covid 19," *Making Sense*, Weitzman School of Design Historic Preservation Program, March 16, 2020.

“Kentucky Bourbon, Millennial Tastes, and the Language of Folklore,” *Folklife Today*, American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, December 16, 2016.

MEDIA

Documentary

“HOPE Crew: Building the Next Generation of Preservation Leaders,” interview with National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew. Documentary film. October 4, 2023.

Journalism

“Paideia Program to Launch New Spring Courses on Grit, Civil Discourse, and Chinatown,” interview with Andrea Pinga, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, December 4, 2019.

“Eastern State Penitentiary: A Penn Class about the Past Speaks to the Present and the Future,” interview with Deborah Lang, *Urban Link by the Penn Institute for Urban Research*, May 22, 2019.

“Tunnel Vision,” interview with Alexander Nazaryan, *Vehicle Magazine by Uber*, 2018.

INVITED TALKS AND STUDIO REVIEWS

“Historic Preservation Studio, HSPV 7010,” University of Pennsylvania, Department of Historic Preservation, studio reviewer, 2020-2023.

“National Register Nominations in the Alabama Blackbelt,” guest lecture for the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s HOPE Crew Digital Documentation Fellowship Program, virtual, July 18, 2023.

“Piedmont, 601 Studio,” University of Pennsylvania, Department of Landscape Architecture, studio reviewer, Fall 2022.

“Academic Partnership: Tuskegee University School of Architecture and University of Pennsylvania Project Center for Preservation of Civil Rights Sites,” panelist for the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Consortium 2022 April Virtual Convening, April 28, 2022.

CONFERENCES & SYMPOSIA ORGANIZED

Organizer

Preserving and Sustaining Civil Rights Sites Symposium

The Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites, University of Pennsylvania, November 18-19, 2021.

Curator and Organizer

CPCRS Dialogues

The Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites, University of Pennsylvania, 2020-2022.

ACADEMIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Sustainable Site Management Assessments

The Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites in partnership with The Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Consortium and Tuskegee University, 2022-2023.

Preserving the St. Paul Baptist Church and The Armstrong School

The Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites in partnership with Tuskegee University, 2021-2023.

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Hume Graduate Fellowship Fund in History

Stanford University, 2024

The Anthony Nicholas Brady Garvan Award for an Outstanding Thesis

University of Pennsylvania, 2020

National Society of the Colonial Dames of America Fund Recipient

University of Pennsylvania, 2019

Robin M. Beckett Fund Recipient

University of Pennsylvania, 2018-2020

Kauffman Historic Preservation Fund Recipient

University of Pennsylvania, 2018-2019

Dean's List

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013-2016

SKILLS

Event Production

Historic Preservation

Digital Photography

Fashion Styling

Research and Writing

Curatorial Practices

Drawing, Printmaking and Painting

Adobe Suite

Project Management

Public Speaking

Grant Writing

Microsoft Office

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Urban History

Southern Studies

19th Century American History

20th Century American History

Cultural Landscape Studies

Architectural History

Material Culture

Vernacular Culture