



University  
of Glasgow

**JAMES McCUNE SMITH  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
2025**

# WELCOME FROM THE JMS SCHOLARS

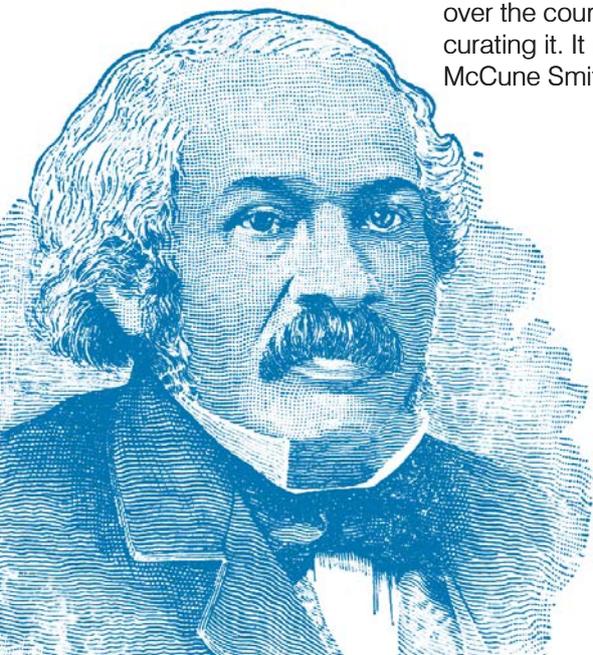
**On behalf of the Organising Team, we are delighted to welcome you to the 3rd James McCune Smith Annual Conference.**

At this special two-day event, we are thrilled to present a dynamic and interdisciplinary programme featuring outstanding speakers, facilitators, and inspiring research. As in previous years, this conference offers a space for thoughtful engagement, creative exploration, and meaningful dialogue – connecting our diverse interests to local, national, and global conversations. We continue to envision this gathering as a vital platform for Black academics to reflect on their unique experiences within Higher Education and consider how our personal and academic identities intersect with the University of Glasgow’s ongoing efforts toward decolonisation.

This conference is also a space to contemplate how we might collectively shape a more just, inclusive, and expansive future. Therefore, our 2025 theme, **‘From the Fringe to the Future: Reimagining Our Narratives of Tomorrow’**, centres Black imagination as a transformative force - one that reclaims space, reconfigures knowledge, and reimagines futures from the margins. Through this lens, we proudly spotlight the vital contributions of Black researchers, artists, and cultural leaders who are expanding what’s possible, those who are actively imagining, building, and communicating more equitable futures across disciplines.

Day one of the conference will feature keynote addresses from leading thinkers and pioneering research from our JMS scholars. Building on the thematic tradition established at our inaugural 2023 conference, day two will feature an ‘Unconference’, a space that breaks from traditional formats to celebrate the many ways knowledge can be shared, created, and experienced.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible University team for their unwavering support and enthusiasm in bringing this conference to life. To you, our JMS community, thank you for being present. We hope you find inspiration, connection, and insight over the course of these two days, and enjoy the programme as much as we enjoyed curating it. It is our deepest hope that this conference embodies the spirit of James McCune Smith himself: principled, visionary, and committed to meaningful change.



**James McCune Smith broke many barriers in his professional life**

# GUEST SPEAKERS/ FACILITATOR BIOGRAPHIES

## Dr Sigourney Bonner

Sigourney is a postdoctoral associate at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute at the University of Cambridge. She recently completed her PhD, developing novel models and therapeutics for a rare paediatric brain tumour. Alongside her PhD, Sigourney is a co-founder and the CEO of Black in Cancer, an organisation that aims to empower and encourage future Black Cancer leaders whilst reducing cancer disparities through education and advocacy. She was also named as a Forbes 30 under 30 honouree in 2021 for her work.



## Dr Peggy Brunache

Dr Peggy Brunache is a lecturer in the Public History and Archaeology at the University of Glasgow and the founding Director of the Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies. As a historical archaeologist, she has excavated sites in West Africa, Caribbean, and the United States. Many of her public-facing projects include designing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS), and working with national and international theatres, science and culture festivals. Her international media appearances include the Discovery Science Channel, BBCTV, ITV, and documentaries in the US and Germany.



## Clementine E. Burnley

Clementine is a poet and writer based in Edinburgh. Alongside her literary work, she is a trainee psychotherapist, trauma-informed mediator, and group facilitator. Her poetry has appeared in *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *Gutter* magazine, *Magma* and *Poetry Review*. Her poem *How to Eat Frogs* was selected by Hugh McMillan for *Best Scottish Poems*, curated by the Scottish Poetry Library. Her debut poetry pamphlet, *Radical Pairings*, was published by ignitionpress in 2023 and shortlisted for the Michael Marks Pamphlet award. Clementine is a joint winner of the James Berry Poetry prize and a recipient of an RSL Sky Award for creative nonfiction. Her first full-length poetry collection is due to be published by Bloodaxe in 2026. In addition to her creative work, she also regularly contributes reviews, short-form fiction, and nonfiction pieces for *WritersMosaic*. This autumn, Clementine will launch a free, bimonthly in-person reading group in Edinburgh, open to all.





## Dr Farai Chipato

Dr Farai Chipato is a lecturer in Black Geographies in the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow. His work has been published internationally in a range of books and journals in both geography and political science, and has been featured on a range of news media including podcasts and newspaper articles. Farai's research interests focus on Black social and political thought, environmental politics and international development. He has conducted field research in Zimbabwe, South Africa and the UK, and has worked with partners in NGOs, local government and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. He is also a member of the Infrastructure Humanities Group at University of Glasgow and is a co-convenor of the Black Anthropocenes Working Group. He is also the current Chair of the JMS Steering Board.



## Zaki El-Salahi

Zaki El-Salahi is a British-Sudanese lyricist, performance poet & community educator. Zaki is also a JMS Scholar with the University of Glasgow 2023-2027. To hear Zaki's audio bio and selected poems click here ([SoundCloud](#)). Zaki's work is rooted in Rap, Dub poetry, and the role of MC culture in grassroots Black British consciousness. For 20 years Zaki has created collaborative work and developed artist collectives with young people in Edinburgh and East Oxford; in community centres and care homes, in refugee centres and prison, in the street, online and outdoors. Zaki has been emerging as an artist in his own right since 2022, performing and publishing solo works as part of his Human Rights and Reparations activism in Scotland. His works feature in Scotland Black Writers Network 'Metaphors for a Black Future' series, Spit It Out's 'Transformative Justice' zine, University of Edinburgh's Race.Ed 'Undersong' podcast, and the 'Hip Hop Hurriya!' podcast.

To hear Zaki's audio bio and selected poems, visit his [SoundCloud](#).

## Professor Jason Gill

Professor Jason Gill, Professor of Cardiometabolic Health at the University of Glasgow, leads a dynamic research group focusing on vascular and metabolic diseases. With over 200 peer-reviewed papers, his research delves into the epidemiology of lifestyle factors, particularly physical activity, diet, and sleep, and their impact on cardiometabolic risks.

He actively collaborates across disciplines and with external stakeholders to develop sustainable lifestyle interventions for chronic disease prevention. Jason's influence extends to shaping UK guidelines on physical activity, type 2 diabetes prevention, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. As Chair of the Diabetes UK Research Strategy Group, he drives efforts in preventing and managing type 2 diabetes.

A fellow of prestigious societies, Jason established an MSc program in Sport and Exercise Science & Medicine at the University. He's dedicated to public engagement, making science accessible through TV appearances and public events. As one of the few Black professors in STEM in the UK, Jason advocates for diversity in academia and supports young scientists from ethnic minority backgrounds through mentorship and other initiatives. By championing diversity, he aims to enhance both organisational outcomes and the aspirations of underrepresented groups.



## Veronica Gordon

Veronica Gordon is a former ITV news journalist, radio presenter and podcaster. She combined 15 years of broadcast journalism expertise with 15 years of community activism to create Our Version Media CIC. The social enterprise challenges negative media narratives by equipping black communities with digital media skills - such as mobile journalism - to tell their own stories.



## Umloda Ibrahim

Umloda is a PhD researcher, studying the history of Sudanese Cinema and investigating how resistance appears in Sudanese films and modes of production. She has interdisciplinary experience working for a range of artistic and cultural organisations, including theatres, media charities, and film festivals. Her interests, other than coffee and finding a good book to disappear into, are in reclaiming narratives that have been overlooked and championing authentic stories about the communities around her.



## Professor Christopher Jackson

Professor Christopher Jackson is Director of Sustainable Geoscience at the engineering consultancy WSP and a Visiting Professor of Basin Analysis at Imperial College London. His research focuses on sedimentary basin analysis and the structure of the Earth's subsurface. Beyond academia, Dr Jackson is a passionate science communicator, regularly delivering geoscience lectures to public audiences and school groups. He has also featured in Several Earth science-focused television programmes and podcasts.



## Dr Chisomo Kalinga

Dr Chisomo Kalinga is a Chancellor's Fellow in the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh. Her research interests focus on disease, specifically HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, illness and wellbeing, biomedicine, traditional healing, indigenous beliefs and cosmologies and their narrative representation in African oral and print literatures. More broadly, her work engages in transdisciplinary and long-term collaborative research to activate social change through narrative and cultural competency. In 2017, she founded the Malawi Medical Humanities Network, a platform that centres indigenous knowledge systems and thinking in approaches to understanding health and wellbeing in Malawi. She is currently supporting its transition into a project based at the Malawi University of Science and Technology.





### Dr Mavis Machirori

Mavis is a Senior Researcher in Justice and Equalities at the Ada Lovelace Institute, where she focuses on projects at the intersection of public sector use of data and AI and their societal impacts.

Mavis is a former midwife with a PhD in Health Studies from King's College London. She has previously worked on projects in the ethical governance of health and genomic data. More broadly, Mavis is interested in issues of inequalities and power dynamics that impact people's experiences of health and care; especially those with marginalised voices



### Irenosen Okojie MBE

Irenosen Okojie is a Nigerian-British author whose work pushes the boundaries of form, language and ideas. Her debut novel, *Butterfly Fish*, and acclaimed short story collections, *Speak Gigantular* and *Nudibranch*, have won and been nominated for multiple awards. In 2020, she won the prestigious AKO Caine Prize for African Writing for her short story *Grace Jones*. Her journalism has been featured in The New York Times, The Observer, The Guardian, and The Huffington Post. She is a Contributing Editor for *The White Review* as well as *And Other Stories*. She co-presented the BBC podcast Turn Up for the Books, part of the *Novels That Shaped Our World* series. Her work has been optioned for the screen. Okojie has also judged numerous literary prizes, including the Dylan Thomas Prize, the Gordon Burn Prize, the BBC National Short Story Award, the Dublin Literary Award and the 2023 Women's Prize for Fiction. She is the former Vice Chair of the Royal Society of Literature and was named one of Red Magazine's "The Next 25 Visionaries to Watch". In 2021, she was awarded an MBE For Services to Literature. She is the founder and director of *Black to the Future* festival, a festival celebrating visionary voices across literature, art, and culture. Her highly anticipated new novel, *Curandera*, is published by Dialogue Books.

### Briana Pegado FRSA

Briana Pegado FRSA is an award-winning social entrepreneur, writer and cultural changemaker. Named one of Scotland's 30 under 30 Inspiring Young Women in 2017, she has led work at the intersection of creativity, equity, and social impact over the last eight years. She is the founder of the Edinburgh Student Arts Festival (ESAF) and has held leadership roles across Scotland's creative and cultural sectors, including the National Theatre of Scotland, Custom Lane, and Creative Lives. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh with an MA (Hons) in Sustainable Development, Briana later studied for an MBA at Central Saint Martins.

From 2019, she served as Chief Executive of Creative Edinburgh and Co-Director of Creative Informatics, an AHRC-funded initiative supporting data-driven innovation in the creative industries. She now serves as Data-Driven Innovation Ambassador for the Edinburgh Futures Institute. Briana has held key governance and leadership roles, including Chair and Interim Director of YWCA Scotland, Co-Director of We Are Here Scotland, and Creative Director of Fringe of Colour Film Festival. She currently leads *Good Trouble Co.*, where she works as a governance and anti-racism consultant for organisations such as Glasgow Museums, SPRE, UPEN, Rape Crisis Scotland, and Glasgow Life. She is the Chair of the Scottish Government Culture Fair Work Task Force and a sought-after speaker on equity in the arts. In April 2024, she published her first book, *Make Good Trouble: A Practical Guide to the Energetics of Disruption*.





### **Dr Dwayne Spiteri**

Dr Dwayne Spiteri is a researcher who enjoys spreading his passion for science. While studying Particle Physics and Cosmology at the University of Birmingham, he worked for the Physics Admissions department. Afterwards he moved to University of Glasgow to do a PhD with the Experimental Particle Physics group where he started the ATLAS UK Virtual Visit Program connecting schoolchildren and interested parties to scientists live at CERN. After this he pivoted to researching scientific computing and sustainability within the same group, and during this time helped to shape the James McCune Smith programme from its inception and currently serves as a member of its Steering Board.

### **Paulette Williams**

Paulette is a committed leader in education with over two decades of experience in fair access, equity, and education strategy. She has led a number of impactful initiatives which aimed to create communities within higher education and research; as well as drive systemic change across the academic pipeline. Her expertise in strategy, leadership, and education policy positions her as a powerful advocate for creating equitable academic environments.



# JMS SCHOLARS 2025

## RESEARCH DESCRIPTIONS

### Hanna Haile

#### Exploring the Shift in Food Consumption Patterns Amongst Urban Middle-Class Women in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

My research will examine how emerging food practices are shaped and sustained in the everyday lives of urban middle-class women in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Focusing on the impact of broader socio-economic transformations - such as rapid urbanisation, economic growth, and increased access to ultra-processed foods - I will explore how these shifts are altering the urban food environment and influencing consumption patterns. By shifting the analytical focus from individual dietary choices to consider the structural and social dynamics that shape food practices, my research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Ethiopia's urban nutrition transition, highlighting its gendered and class-based dimensions. I will also investigate how evolving foodscapes either reinforce or challenge traditional food norms and health outcomes, offering insights with practical relevance for public health and policy.

### Jovita Chinyere Adegun

#### Examining the Health and Non-Health Impacts of the 'Get Any Job Now' Approach: A Series of Systematic Reviews

The UK government's department of work and pension (DWP) is currently implementing a way to work policy called the 'get any job now', approach which requires unemployed individuals in receipt of universal credit to get into paid work in any sector within four weeks or they may be sanctioned. The assumption is that moving the unemployed into any job (irrespective of job quality, skills, personal circumstances, wishes) is beneficial for health.

My research aims to assess the potential health and non-health implications associated with delaying employment until securing a good quality job versus entering any available job initially with the hope of transitioning to a good job later.

### Adam Heron

#### Beyond the Biographical: Chevalier de Saint-Georges and the Vauban Manuscript

Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799) was amongst the first composers of African ancestry to achieve widespread acclaim in Western Classical Music. During recent years, his remarkable life has received due acknowledgement from biographers and journalists, also permeating the world of popular culture through the 2022 film Chevalier. However, analytical scholarship concerning his music is scarce, and many Saint-Georges compositions remain either lost or unpublished.

My research examines an extensive manuscript comprising around eighty original works, which currently resides at the National Library of France. The rediscovery of this extraordinary musical document - and the eventual publication of its contents - will further diversify Western Classical canonicity, enabling music lovers and musicians to engage with Saint-Georges and his timeless art.

## Jacob Simms

### Targeting PfCLK3: Design, Synthesis, and Evaluation of Novel Small Molecules for Selective Inhibition and Therapeutic Intervention Against Malaria

Malaria, primarily caused by *Plasmodium falciparum*, kills over 600,000 people annually. Resistance to frontline treatments is rising, creating urgent demand for therapies with novel mechanisms. The Jamieson group identified an essential *P. falciparum* kinase, PfCLK3, as a promising drug target, and later discovered TCMDC-135051, a potent, selective inhibitor with broad antimalarial potential. Due to growing interest surrounding covalent kinase inhibitors, the group have since developed a covalent inhibitor targeting the active form of PfCLK3, with enhanced potency and improved pharmacodynamics over TCMDC-135051. Because of the additional binding sites offered by the inactive form of kinases, a high-throughput screen was completed against the inactive form of PfCLK3. This identified Sorafenib as a micromolar inhibitor of the kinase. Docking studies showed proximity of Sorafenib to cysteine 510, suggesting potential for covalent targeting. This study uses Sorafenib as a scaffold for developing a type II covalent PfCLK3 inhibitor, incorporating an electrophilic warhead via late-stage diversification.

## Luis Zambrano Hernandez

### What is the Role of Oligodendrocyte Proliferation, Maturation, and Myelin Dynamics in Stress-induced Addictive Behaviour?

Emerging research suggests that drugs of abuse, like opioids and ethanol, can increase oligodendrogenesis – the process of oligodendrocyte proliferation and differentiation. Oligodendrocytes are critical for myelin production, which facilitates neuron signal transduction. Drug-induced oligodendrogenesis has been linked to sensitisation of the dopamine system, in turn affecting drug consumption patterns in animal models. Understanding this neurobiological mechanism is key to uncovering how myelination and environmental factors influence addictive behaviour. Our study will employ animal models to investigate whether morphine induces behavioural changes, as evidenced by morphine conditioning, and whether these changes correlate with increased oligodendrocyte activity. We hypothesise that morphine will lead to greater oligodendrogenesis compared to palatable foods, highlighting the role of synthetic rewards in addiction.



## Elizabeth Chege

### Visual Art as a Tool for Mapping Social Impact in the Built Environment

This interdisciplinary practice-based research seeks to understand the orienting appeal of participating and contributing towards visual arts in civic engagement amid an escalating climate crisis. While political ideologies are often cast in binary rhetoric, the lived experience is overlapping and more complex. Although the civic role has a long history of widening access, we lack a truly common language for the civic role of arts organisations. This inquiry will focus on the medium of film and is concerned with how power imbalances manifest in creative partnerships; how civic art can best be utilised to address the world's most pressing problems, and the entangled complexities of cultural identity within Scotland's post-colonial context.

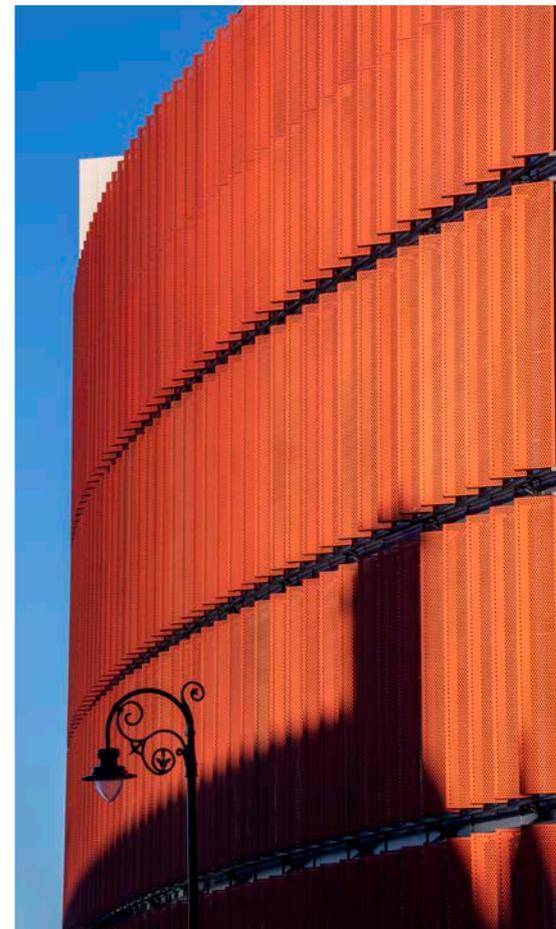
## Ikenna Njoku

### Resurgence of Torture by Proxy: Extraordinary Rendition, Torture and Victims Remedy in International Law – An African Perspective

Njoku's research explores the roles African States play in facilitating torture notwithstanding their human rights obligations within the international legal frameworks prohibiting torture.

He investigates the relationship between the doctrine of State sovereignty and self-determination, both doctrines being fundamental principles of international law. This research aims to explore the way African nations exercise the concept of their state sovereignty and territorial integrity in their conduct towards self-determination groups, which in some cases led to the rendition of members of these groups and the rendition itself being a form of torture.

His research aims to further explore the difficult balancing act between genuine groups seeking for self-determination and the imposition of a terrorist label on these groups by African States, a label which enables these states to justify torture on those groups.



## Natasha Boyce

### A study into how Black girls resist racial inequity through social justice projects

Since the murder of George Floyd and the relentless work of the Black Lives Matter movement 5 years ago, there has been a shift in conversations around race and racism. Focus has moved from interpersonal understandings to the language of systemic, structural and institutional racism. Simultaneously, the case of Child Q placed the spotlight on how systemic racism features in England, specifically through the intersection of race and gender in education.

Existing research shows that English schools are often hostile, unsafe environments for Black bodies, and Black girls are forced to navigate these spaces. My project aims to capture the ways Black girls resist racial inequity through agitation, disruption, and social action as a narrative of empowerment.

## Oyinkansola Peleyeju

### Investigating the link between TNF- $\alpha$ -mediated neuroinflammation and anhedonia and anxiety: A Cre-LoxP rodent model

Neuroinflammation is increasingly recognised as a contributing factor in the aetiology of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), with chronic inflammation in the brain offering an explanation for depressive symptoms, especially for those suffering from autoimmune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. To investigate this, we are developing a new animal model of chronic neuroinflammation, driven by the secretion of TNF- $\alpha$  from astrocytes (a type of immune cell in the brain). This model aims to replicate key behavioral phenotypes of depression - specifically anhedonia and anxiety. Developing this new model will allow us to investigate the limbic system (regions of the brain responsible for emotional processing) and the reward brain circuitry in greater detail, and will assist in proposing more suitable, and targeted therapeutic interventions. Current treatments for MDD are often inadequate, with high relapse rates and a growing prevalence of treatment-resistant cases.

## Aaron Pocock

### Keeping Up with the Kagans – The Reception of Ancient Sparta in 21st Century Neoconservative Thought

For my presentation I'll be providing a glimpse into a section of my thesis research, that being The Reception of Classical Sparta in 21st Century Far Right American Politics. The main purpose of looking at the Kagans (That being the American Classicist Donald Kagan and his two sons; Fred and Robert) is to understand how Sparta's use by neoconservative intellectuals after the Cold War possibly impacts the rhetoric of the far-right in their engagement with Sparta.

By looking at how Donald Kagan utilises Sparta to inform his understanding of US foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union, I can assess whether American far-right groups in the twenty-first century derive their knowledge and reception of Sparta from Kagan's work, which would reveal a nuanced revisionism of Spartan history that goes beyond a layman's appreciation of Sparta. On the other hand, if no engagement with Kagan can be found, it emphasises existing tropes of anti-intellectualism amongst the far right and further perpetuates a flawed understanding of classical Sparta.

Donald Kagan was an influential figure within American classics and the development of Neoconservative doctrine that would define the administration of George W. Bush. As a historian he was not shy with approaching history as a political tool that could aid the US in their geo-political goals in the New Century.



## Adebusola Ramsay

### “Race as technology”: exploring co-creation of anti-racism mechanisms in the public health data landscape

Adebusola’s research explores the public health data ecosystem and its relationship to anti-racism. Using co-design as a framework and centering an ethics of care, how can we co-create with racially minoritised people. Building from the critical foundation of Black radical feminist philosophies, her research focuses on how systemic anti-blackness functions. The intention is to investigate how to develop anti-racism mechanisms.

Adebusola believes we are in the age of data as a commodity. To use the language of European colonisation, data is the “new frontier”. Especially with the newly marketed technologies of algorithms, so called AI. The underlying data that feeds these automated systems matters. As these technologies grow, so does the evidence and awareness of their inherent harms and racism.

Her interdisciplinary approach draws on her practice as an artist, decades of experience working within public health data, and includes her independent research into the history of chattel slavery, colonisation and race ideology.

## Faisa Omar

### Understanding the mechanistic basis of immunogenic cell death

During development and throughout life, billions of our cells die while new cells regenerate, maintaining a homeostatic balance. Mitochondria are essential organelles found within our cells, play a crucial role in regulating cell death. When this process is disrupted, diseases can arise. In the case of cancer, cells evade their death sentence and proliferate uncontrollably. One of the main challenges in cancer treatment is resistance to therapy. In our lab, we are interested in exploring alternative mechanisms for future cancer therapies. One promising approach is to explore how mitochondria can trigger inflammatory signals and activate the immune system to help kill cancer cells.

## Alya Harding

### Home as an Archive: West African women, across generations imagining existence beyond survival

This presentation explores concepts of home through the experiences of Black and African migrant women. Revisiting bell hooks’ *Homeplace: A Site of Resistance* (1990) and building on Gabriella Beckles-Raymond’s (2019) work, it examines how 20th century migration to Britain shaped ideas of home through colonised and creolised histories. Using a Black and African feminist framework, the study centres intergenerational narratives as living archives, mapping survival and imagination. Home here is not foregrounded. It is negotiated between memory, movement, and resistance. Home is also a site of fugitivity, where material and symbolic acts of resistance shape methods of world-making, mapping joy, and the expansive possibilities of freedom.

## **Idris Akormadu**

### **Rural Poverty and Educational Outcomes Across Scotland**

These are reflections from the findings from my literature review, which explores the historical development of rural poverty in Scotland and its enduring impact on educational outcomes through a critical sociological lens. Challenging the notion that poverty is a post-industrial or purely economic phenomenon. It traces rural poverty's roots to early structural dispossession, internal colonialism, and the long-standing erasure of cultural and material autonomy amongst rural communities in Scotland. As such, this review draws upon classical social theory, alongside contemporary contributions in exploring how poverty is produced, legitimised and maintained in rural Scotland.

My literature review pays particular attention to the role of education as a key instrument in both the reproduction of inequality and the potential restoration of rural agency. By exploring the role of education as an equaliser and/or a vehicle for ideological conformity and cultural assimilation. Current analysis points to evidence in historical and modern practices, such as: the suppression of Gaelic and the privileging of urban norms, neoliberal and bureaucratic approaches in policy practices, and the prioritisation of performativity and centralisation over local needs and identities.

Through a combination of historical analysis and theoretical critique, this literature review repositions rural poverty as a structurally embedded condition shaped by land ownership, and institutionalised neglect. It highlights the need for the re theorisation of rural educational deprivation, one that centres lived experiences and reclaims education as a place of community voice, historical memory and social justice.

## **Shaun-Jones Eganda**

### **From schoolkid to chemist, developing critical thinking and self-efficacy in undergraduate chemists**

Shaun-Jones Eganda is 1st year PhD student undertaking chemistry education research in the School of Chemistry, under the supervision of Dr Frances Docherty. Chemistry education is a new field to him, having come from a more laboratory-based background but was always a topic of interest as it focuses on how students learn, and how learning can be applied to life and work outside university. As a chemistry graduate, he has learned that having theoretical knowledge of chemistry principles is not enough to be successful in the chemical industry and wider world, but transferable skills like self-efficacy, resilience and critical thinking are also just as important, especially as the majority of chemistry graduates go on to work in professions outside the chemical sector. It was this that inspired him to undertake this research looking at students' and teachers' understanding of the terms self-efficacy and critical thinking, and where they felt, if at all, they were being developed in the current curriculum and to create new innovations that leverage AI to introduce in the classroom to develop these transferable skills.

Over the past century our world as we know it has become more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. With a new world comes new challenges and therefore a new emphasis on essential skills needed by students to not just survive these changes, but also to thrive; the old saying of "a job for life" will no longer be relevant as we move into an increasingly technology-based world. Critical thinking and self-efficacy will be just two of the main transferable skills that will be vital if students stand a chance to be competitive in the new job market and greater life once they leave the safety of school. The aim of this study is to create new and innovative ways that take advantage of AI, in order to develop critical thinking and self-efficacy amongst undergraduate chemists.

## Anesu Matanda Mambingo

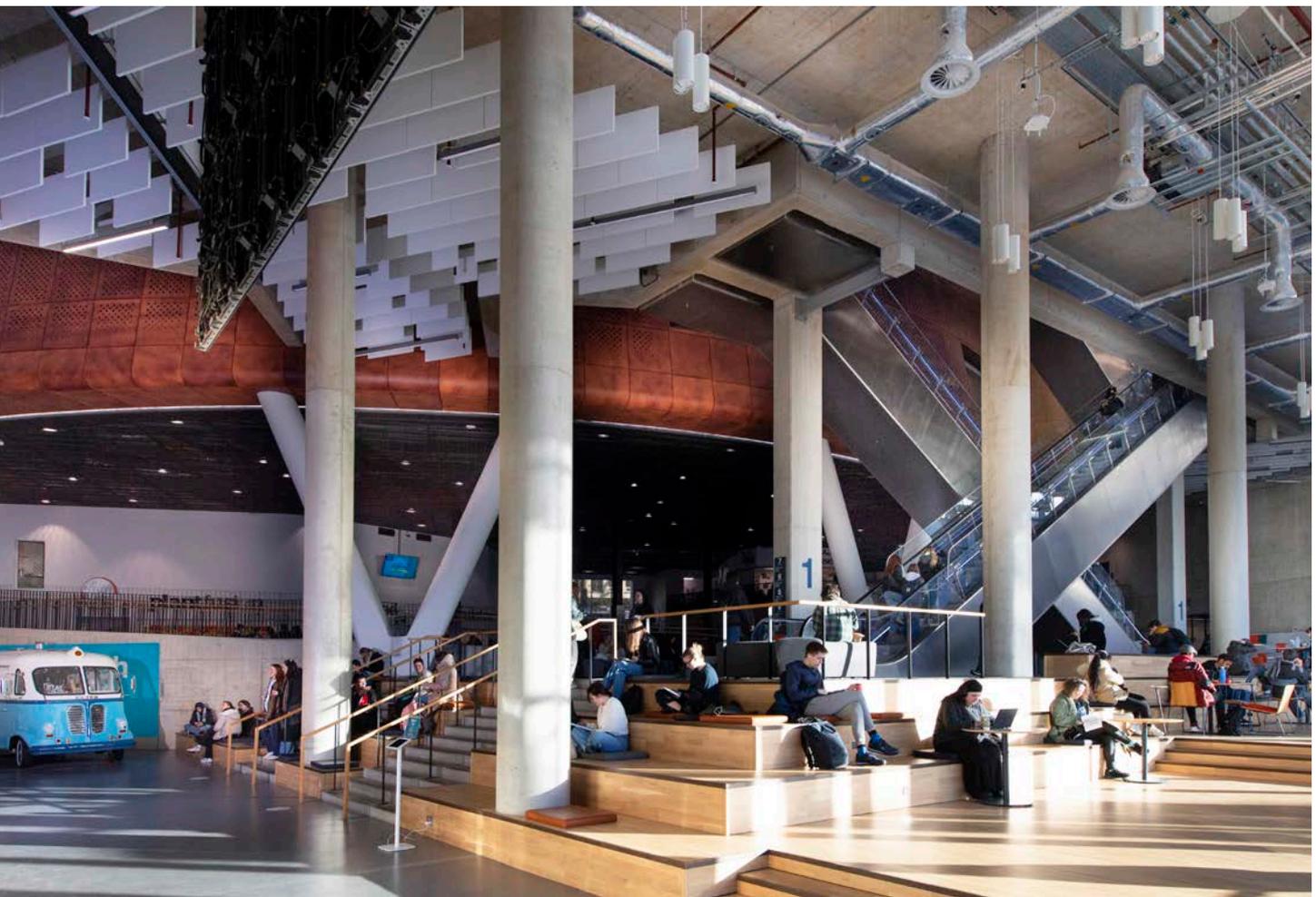
### Tracing the energies of climate learning: Affective, anti-colonial and alternative pedagogies beyond the institution

This research explores how climate learning takes place beyond traditional educational spaces, across community groups, activist organising, and everyday encounters. It focuses on energy as a relational and affective force that moves, builds, or becomes blocked in these spaces. Grounded in anti-colonial and feminist geographies, the project examines how climate education emerges in contexts shaped by care, resistance and historical struggle. It aims to understand how collective forms of learning can generate alternative pedagogies in the face of institutional failure, ecological crisis and colonial legacies. By tracing these dynamics, the research seeks to contribute to broader debates about how knowledge is formed, where climate education happens, what sustains it, and how it might be reimaged.

## Adèle Oliver

### World making, breaking and shaking: on electronic échos-mondes and 'distorção' poetics

As much about feeling as about hearing, music and sound-based performance tap into the vibrations of physiological and the metaphysical, the human and the non-human. The recent global explosion of Black electronic music from Reggaeton to Amapiano to Baile Funk underscores a disruption in US-mediated circuits of these vibrations across the diaspora. This presentation focuses on a burgeoning baile funk sub-genre called 'beat bolha', spearheaded by viral sensation DJ Ramon Sucesso. Looking towards Édouard Glissant's theory of Relation, I explore how Sucesso's vibration (his poetics of *distorção*) offers new ways of navigating the confluences of past, present, and future across the Black Atlantic.



# ACROSS THE ARCHIVE OF US: AN EXHIBITION

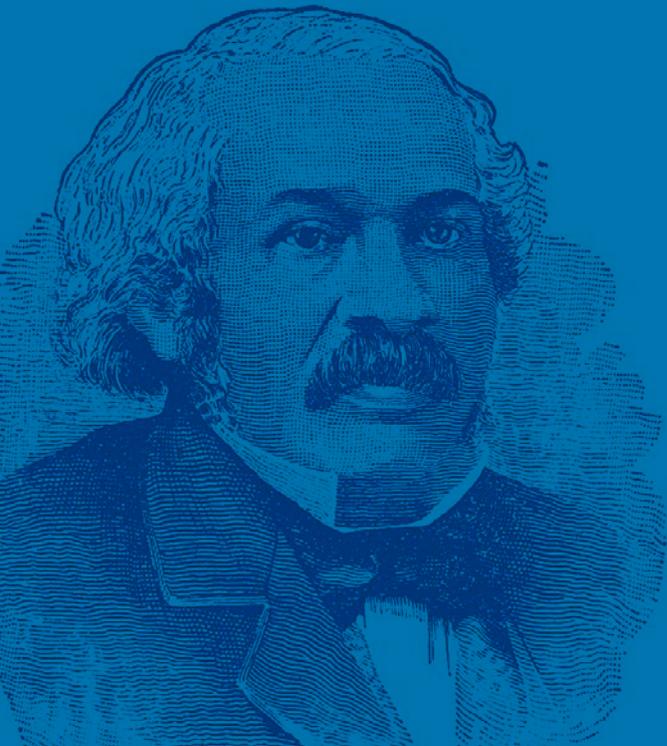
Across the Archive of Us is a visual exhibition showcasing the research-in-process by our JMS scholars. Reflecting the breadth of themes and approaches within the 2022 and 2023 cohorts, each Scholar has contributed an image they feel represents their research. Collectively, this interdisciplinary display offers a powerful lens into what it means to document, question, and create knowledge from a position that is often underrepresented in academic spaces, offering perspectives that are shaping the direction of scholarship itself. Among our Scholars are published authors, poets, activists, curators, scientists, community leaders, and musicians and it is a privilege to accompany them on their PhD journeys and to witness the impact of their work. We invite you to engage with this first-ever JMS exhibition, hosted in the School of Health and Wellbeing's Clarice Pears Building. Our JMS scholars have opened up their work, its questions, breakthroughs and possibilities for your reflection.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the James McCune Smith Scholars for their incredible hard work on delivering the conference. This is a hugely ambitious programme and we are privileged to work with such a fantastic group of students. We would also like to thank GSK for their continued support, and all the mentors and companies who contribute to our programme.

If you would like to sign up to the JMS Network to receive invites to our events you can click on the QR code.



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