



Ruth Asawa. Untitled (SF.031, Red Meander on Pink), c. 1950s, Late. Private Collection.
Artwork © 2026 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc., Courtesy David Zwirner

The Barnes Symposium on Creative Research in Collaboration with the PhD in Creativity at Rowan University

January 9 & 10 2026

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What does it mean to think creatively across disciplines?

Presented in partnership with Rowan University, this symposium explores how creative thinking drives innovation in fields as varied as writing, medicine, and music. Drawing inspiration from Rowan's pioneering PhD in Creativity—the first of its kind—three speakers share how unconventional approaches to research and problem-solving have shaped their work and opened new paths forward.

Day One

Location: Barnes Foundation auditorium, Friday, January 9
2:00pm-7:30pm

2PM “See the Beatles”

David Bianculli

Fresh Air TV critic and historian talks about his book in progress “See the Beatles,” and focuses on the creativity of John, Paul, George, and Ringo – not just musically, but also visually.

3PM Coffee and refreshments are available upstairs in the Reflections Cafe

4PM “Figure and Ground: Strategies for Defining Space in Painting and Surgery”

Ezra Teitelbaum, M.D., M.Ed.

Associate Professor of Surgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin speaks about the way his undergraduate training and continued interest in painting informs his understanding of anatomy and surgical safety in the operating room.

5PM Coffee and refreshments are available upstairs in the Reflections Cafe

6PM “A Process of Becoming to the ‘Upward Gaze’: Beethoven’s Choral Finale of the Ninth Symphony”

William Kinderman, PhD

This presentation explores how Beethoven’s landmark Ninth Symphony takes shape from mysterious ambiguity and culminates in a cosmic gaze, as collective humanity seeks a sublime deity beyond the canopy of stars.

Day Two

Location: Calder Gardens, Events Room, Saturday January 10th
9:30AM – 7:30PM

9AM Doors Open - limited seating, now fully booked

9:30AM “Imagine the Cosmos: a Film and Notes on Research”

Abel Tilahun, PhD

This documentary film explores the mutual influence of art and space science. Produced as an anthology of chapters with interconnected themes, or “constellations”, the film has a dual focus on art in relation to NASA history and Ethiopia’s space ambitions.



10:45AM “Researching Italy’s Wine: Prosecco Superiore and the Wines of Lazio”

Susan H. Gordon, PhD, MFA

Gordon presents two of Italy’s historic wine-making zones — Prosecco Superiore’s Conegliano-Valdobbiadene and Asolo hills and Rome’s Lazio region — as a two-centuries-long story of nationhood.

11:45am Break for Lunch in nearby restaurants

1:30PM “Noguchi to Asawa: Designing Postwar America”

Cindy Kang, PhD

The talk will discuss the development of this exhibition concept which will debut at the Barnes in the Fall of 2026.

2:30PM “The Ship That is The Body”

Christina Knight, PhD

The talk will discuss Knight's current book project which draws on methods from art history, performance studies, and black studies to explore how Black American artists from the 1980s and 90s engage spectators in the deconstruction (and reimagining) of time.



3:30PM “Alone with Nature: The Psychology of Environmental Attunement”

Eugene Hughes, PhD

Dr. Hughes will talk about his new book *Alone with Nature*, derived from his PhD in Creativity dissertation of 2022 and his current book in progress, *The Creative Enterprise* which includes discussion of the PhD in Creativity.

5:30PM Alumni Reception Buffet at A Mano Restaurant, 2244

For speaker bios and more information on Rowan University's PhD in Creativity please scan this QR code:



Thank you to the Barnes Foundation, Dean Richard Dammers, Senior Associate Dean Larry Butler, Martha Lucey, Juana Berrio, Bailey Roper, and the Barnes and Calder Gardens staffs for your support of this event.

Room One of Lorna Simpson and Alva Rogers' Five Rooms (1991).
Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Jacob.