

Dr. Vanessa K. Valdés

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Biography

Dr. Vanessa K. Valdés is a dedicated higher education administrator committed to student success and the transformational power of education. She served as the Associate Provost for Community Engagement at The City College of New York; the Interim Dean of the Macaulay Honors College; and the Director of the Black Studies Program at City College. An engaging speaker, she served as a professor at the City University of New York for seventeen years, from 2007-2024, earning the rank of full professor. As a scholar, her work focuses on the literatures, visual arts, performances, and histories of Black peoples throughout the Western hemisphere. The author and editor of seven books, including *Let Spirit Speak! Cultural Journeys through the African Diaspora* (2012) and *The Future Is Now: A New Look at African Diaspora Studies* (2012), she has written on literatures by Black women in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil with *Oshun's Daughters: The Search for Womanhood in the Americas* (2014) as well as the field-defining biography of Arturo Schomburg, namesake of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, *Diasporic Blackness: The Life and Times of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg* (2017). Additionally, she has written on episodes of history on Haiti and Puerto Rico in her edited volume *Racialized Visions: Haiti and the Hispanic Caribbean* (2020). Her most recent book, *Machado de Assis, Blackness, and the Americas* (2024), co-edited with Earl E. Fitz, focuses on Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908), Brazil's most widely-canonized writer. From 2021-2023, she co-curated *Juan de Pareja, Afro-Hispanic Painter*, an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and co-authored its exhibition catalogue, *Juan de Pareja, Afro-Hispanic Painter in the Age of Velázquez* (2023). In addition to her longstanding relationship with the Schomburg Center, Dr. Valdés has collaborated with Ballet Hispánico for its dance "Buscando a Juan" and Lincoln Center for their Legacies of San Juan Hill series. She is the editor of the Afro-Latinx Futures series at the State University of New York Press and is the co-editor of the Global Black Writers in Translation series at Vanderbilt University Press.