

19 May – Day One

9h00: Registration and breakfast

10h00: Welcome

10h15 – 12h15

Panel 1: Ethnographic Collections in and outside of Museums: Reconnection, Collaboration and Indigenous Methodologies – Chair Dr Awet Araya (SRU)

- Anna Weinreich (University of Amsterdam) – Revitalizing Culture: Indigenous Art, Collections, and Collaborations

This paper offers a methodological reflection on the creative and intellectual labor of reconfiguring ethnographic collections into vital conduits for Indigenous social memory and collective identity. It is empirically grounded in research on a collection of Indigenous art and material culture that was assembled on Gunditjmara Country in mid-19th century Southeastern Australia and is kept at the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. Bearing witness to extensive colonial entanglements between Germany and the ‘fifth continent,’ these ethnographic materials have been the focus of over a decade of Indigenous efforts to reconnect with and reclaim them as globally dispersed ‘Ancestral belongings.’

Taking this recent history of Indigenous engagements as a starting point, I present a multi-modal methodology that brings together critical provenance research, a collaborative approach to ethnographic fieldwork, and Indigenous methodologies of cultural revitalization. Developed in partnership with Indigenous scholars, this methodology highlights the pivotal work of Indigenous artists in reclaiming and revivifying knowledge that was affected by colonial disruption. Museum collections and archives play a key if ambivalent role in these efforts. In Southeastern Australia, the cultural labor of recovering and activating Indigenous histories, voices, and relationships often takes the form creative practices that are socially and materially embedded in local community contexts. At the same time, it requires Indigenous artist-researchers to confront the ongoing erasure or omission of their histories through imperial regimes of knowledge and value that operate at a global scale. By examining this vexed intersection, my paper highlights the decolonial work of ‘revitalizing culture’ and its critical role in unsettling the colonial legacies of museum collecting and documentation.

- Lisa Renard (Victoria University/Université de Strasbourg) – Kia Āta Titiro! Carefully Looking for Taonga in French Museums

In France, most Māori taonga (ancestral treasures) held in museums are housed at the musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (mqB-JC) in Paris, with 264 taonga listed on its website as part of the collections. Additionally, taonga can be found in museums, archives and private collections across Paris, Rochefort, Lyon, Lille, Rouen, La Rochelle, and beyond. Despite their significance, their exact provenance and biographies remain largely unknown, particularly to the Māori audience in Aotearoa New Zealand. Since 2011, through extensive fieldwork in Aotearoa and in Europe, I have worked closely with artists, museum and archive professionals who stressed their need for detailed information about these taonga and the stories of their circulation. In response, I developed an anthropological methodology to meet these needs. Grounded in ‘Kia āta titiro, kia āta whakarongo ki ngā taonga’ (carefully looking at and listening to taonga), this approach draws from my fieldwork alongside the caretakers and makers of taonga, both within and beyond museums and archives worldwide. This paper examines how I have applied this methodology in my ongoing research alongside a mysterious rakau atua (ancestral staff) linked to the 1827 voyage of French explorer Jules Dumont d’Urville aboard l’Astrolabe. Currently displayed in the permanent exhibition at the mqB-JC, very little is known about her. Yet, she calls for many stories to be uncovered and retold. Following her trails in museums, archives, workshops, books, and more in Aotearoa and Europe allows for the weaving and reactivation of relationships between places, taonga and people, which contribute to informing her past, present and future. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how provenance research can become community-driven, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and practices by advocating for Indigenous people to gain access to the treasures they feel connected to overseas.

- Hélène Trébuchet (Université Paris Nanterre) – From the Museum to the Kakita’an Ancestral House Recovering Ritual Power and Historical Knowledge through Objects and Archives in the Pangcah Society (Taiwan)

On the 19th of March in 2021, Pangcah shamans (cikawasay) from the Fata'an and Tafalong communities (niyaro'), came to the Museum of the Institute of Ethnology at the Academia Sinica in Taipei and performed a ritual to bring the souls of their ancestors (adingo no to'as) – contained in several objects of the museum's collection – back to their village, where they founded the Kakita'an Ancestral House. On the 3rd of September in 2022, in collaboration with local indigenous leaders, scholars from the Academia Sinica inaugurated an exhibition in Fata'an displaying the same objects. The following year, one of the shamans decided to work with the institution on a project about songs collected by Taiwanese scholars in the 1960s. Despite decades of repression of indigenous rituals due to political and religious colonialism from the Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945), the wave of Christianisation in the 1950s to the end of the White Terror period (1949–1987), shamanism has recently re-emerged in some indigenous villages in Taiwan. Objects associated with shamanism were burnt at the request of priests or pastors and became taboo (paysin) as symbols of ancient superstitions. Today, the reintroduction of shamanistic beliefs in an evangelical region has met with fierce resistance from local leaders. In this context, the academic institutions seem to be important supports for the re-legitimisation of shamanism. Using an example from our ethnographic fieldwork on the east coast of Taiwan, this paper will then explore the evolution of the complex relationship with material objects in the Pangcah society. We will see how younger generations, in our case shamans who have recently returned to their communities, take possession of past objects and archives, now considered as ethnographic collections, in order to recover ritual power and historical knowledge.

- Garance Nyssen (Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas – University of East Anglia) – Recovering the Secrets of the Maro Kura. Thoughts on a Collaborative Work in Ganā.

In 2022 and 2023, the return of seventeen ancient Polynesian objects to the Te Fare Iamanaha – Musée de Tahiti et des Îles (French Polynesia) provided the opportunity to reconnect these objects with the people culturally related to them. This group of objects includes a maro kura, a woven sacred chiefly girdle originally coming from the island of Ganā in the Tuāmotu Archipelago. In the scope of my PhD, for which I look at the aftermath of the return of these objects, I went to Ganā to investigate whether people still had memories of maro kura. I travelled to the atoll with the support of a Pa'umotu weaver based in Tahiti – French Polynesia's main island – who had secured the practicalities of my stay and who had assured me that she knew people in Ganā who would be interested in discussing about maro kura. However, fieldwork research on the atoll was challenging. Maro kura had been forgotten and people were confused about the fact that such objects could be part of their heritage. They were astonished by the intricacy of the object while at the same time they felt "ashamed" (ha'amā, honte) by the fact that they did not know anything about it anymore. For three months and a half, collaborative work was slowly but surely built to try to recover the maro kura's secrets. My paper will present the methodologies used during this work, such as looking at pictures of the object, discussing and investigating its life story, doing weaving experiments and reading as well as translating archives or academic literature about Pa'umotu material culture. It will also reflect on key concepts which are at the centre of museum, collaborative and ethnographical work and research: hosting and being hosted, waiting and respect.

12h30 – 14h00: Lunch

14h00 – 16h00

Panel 2: Creative Encounters: Contemporary Practice at Work With the Colonial – Chair Dr Karen Jacobs (SRU)

- Harriet Crisp & Joyce Deng (University of Stirling & University of New South Wales, Canberra) – "She" "她": Reimagining Museum Collections through Filmic Polyphony

Films exist as virtual sites, producing their own spatialities and temporalities through combinations and reassemblages of images and sound. Relocated to these alternative spaces and times through filmmaking and film viewing, dominant narratives about museum collections can be interrogated and reimagined and what was unseen can be transformed into dynamic flows of voices, perspectives, and knowledge. Through film, biographies of artefacts can be constructed to reveal/retain artefacts as tangled assemblages of people, places, pasts, presents, and futures. Film can enable ambiguity and alternative imagination, which are limited or absent in the traditional textual mode of museological interpretation. In this sense, filmmaking can be seen as a laboratory for creative experimentation rather than an interpretative practice. A collaborative and cross-cultural approach to filmmaking about museum collections can produce polyphony and layered subjectivities.

Harriet Crisp and Joyce Deng will revisit “She” “她” (2020), an experimental documentary film they created in response to a Guanyin figure in the Bristol Museum. Sparked by an interpretative label explaining that Guanyin figures were brought to Europe and interpreted as the Virgin Mary and the filmmakers’ curiosity about the provenance, status, and agency of the figure, the film imagines the object’s biography and charts the filmmakers’ experiences of Guanyin and the Virgin Mary in their respective cultures, ultimately questioning the ontological implications of the displacement of objects due to colonialism.

Crisp and Deng will reflect on “She” “她” and other artists’ films, including Christopher Thomas Allen and Paul Basu’s *Faces | Voices* (2019) and Elizabeth Price’s *A Restoration* (2016), to position filmmaking as a generative method for awakening potential histories and futures of museum collections. The dynamic relationalities that exist between the original cultural environment of museum collections, their contemporary museum settings, and the mediative role of filmmaking researchers enable more accessible post-colonial understandings of artefacts: as active pathways rather than flattened objects.

- Esther Siddiquie (Goldsmiths University of London) – Sensing the Archive: Re-Framing the Gap

My PhD research, *Co-Authoring the Archive*, investigates ways to challenge power structures within archival contexts and explores alternative modes of engaging with archival documents. This inquiry is deeply personal. When my father, Shabbir Siddiquie, a Bangladeshi documentary filmmaker, passed away in 2018, I inherited his archive—over 1,000 analogue film materials documenting UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites. Caring for this archive has raised complex questions about the exclusionary logic of traditional archiving and the need to develop decolonial practices. Drawing from Ariella Azoulay’s critique of archival systems that obscure the presence of subjects, laborers, and users, I position the body as integral to engaging with archival remains. Inspired by Tina Campt’s notion of “listening to images,” I move beyond looking at the archive to sensing it. What would it mean to listen to my father’s archive, to attend to its resonant qualities and embodied absences? This sensory engagement reveals the archive not just as a record but more like the frequency of a wild, anarchic chorus singing into being, not only the ghost that produced it, but also the absence of those who, by choice, negligence, chance, error, or mistake, failed to be caught by it.

I propose to reframe the archival gap as a space for both grievance and possibility. These gaps, rather than being voids or failures, are active and full of potential, producing ripples, resonances, and tensions.. They open pathways for reimagining relationships to history and memory through their material condition. By engaging with the archive through somatic practices, I approach its gaps as sites of potential—places to grieve what cannot be retrieved while also envisioning alternative futures. This practice redefines the archive as a dynamic and relational force, inviting ways of being with its unknown and imperceptible elements.

- Clémentine Debrosse (Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas – University of East Anglia – Freeing the archive from the Archive: Visualizing, Performing and Reading Archives Outside of their Walls

In May 2024, the Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain (FC) in Paris hosted a one-week event in partnership with The Centre for the Less Good Idea (TCLGI), an interdisciplinary incubator space for the arts founded by William Kentridge and Bronwyn Lace based in Johannesburg. Throughout the week, TCLGI workshopped and created alongside people from the Université Paris 8 – Vincennes, the musée départemental Albert-Khan (mdA-K, Boulogne, France) and the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (mqB-JC, Paris) both during private sessions and public shows. This Parisian multi-institutional gathering allowed all parties to explore, engage and experiment with the possibilities given by the encounter of performance and colonial archives. Thanks to the use of the Pepper’s Ghost, a 19th century illusionary optic theatrical invention allowing to make ghosts appear on stage, TCLGI was playing with various realms and temporalities in order to unravel the various stories kept in these archives. Furthermore, in conjunction with singing, dancing and live music, the Pepper’s Ghost was a means to giving new dimensions to the Archive which was not stored away, but experienced collectively.

By looking at these collective and collaborative encounters between archives, artists and public, I wish to interrogate the importance of taking the archives outside of their institutional walls in order to open up the ways in which people and institutions engage with and consider archival collections. I want to explore the potentialities created by the encounter of archives with performative arts in a space akin to a buffer zone – here the Fondation Cartier –, enabling, at least temporarily, for archives to be freed from their institutional weights thanks to the various remedial methodologies that were performed in a space untinted by their legacies.

- Sehr Jalil (Goldsmiths University of London) – 'I' the Granddaughter, between Lahore and London

The research enters from and introspects a personal and familial WWII scrapbook containing ordinary items such as opera tickets, laundry bills placed with maps of military movements across continents, of a South Asian, Indian Muslim soldier – my grandfather. Scholars like Gajendra Singh and Ghee Bowman have asserted the contributions and conditions of South Asian soldiers in WWII and their imperial erasure even in South Asian collective memory. As a Muslim, South Asian woman in London, I investigate coloniality, structural racism, and intergenerational archival encounters using the scrapbook as a navigational tool in this unfinished history to establish a biography of the research, encountering relevant archives in institutions such as the British Library and the Imperial War Museum. Scraps are fragmented, their disorder or incompleteness can reach out for new questions and conditions, obstruct timelines, and observe a new problem space. This paper is grounded in my PhD research and a chapter that I am currently working on: 'I the Granddaughter between Lahore and London. I seek to excavate autobiographical and messy temporalities by closely observing scraps of my everyday life in London within the atmosphere of post-colonial present conditions. The museum where I work part-time was an exhibition space for the Commonwealth Collections. My favourite local park in southeast London was born out WWII ruins. A WWII, Indian newspaper article in the British library microfilm reels is titled Forgotten Women of Lahore, and the author is herself forgotten, as I being a woman from Lahore had never heard about her until then. These temporal encounters belong to my grandfather and me, and I scrutinise the material, visual and archival temporalities of pasts, presents and future within them. The narrative is in transit between archival encounters and it demands a resistance to conventional order, embracing the intricacies of post-colonial temporalities in the making.

16h15 – 17h30: Sainsbury Centre exhibition visit

18h30: Dinner reception at The Yard Coffee

20 May – Day Two

9h00: Breakfast

9h30–10h30

Keynote – Wayne Modest

We are delighted to welcome Professor Wayne Modest as our guest speaker. Director of content at the Wereldmuseum and Head of the Research Center for Material Culture, Wayne Modest will introduce his new co-edited book *Museum Temporalities: Time, History and the Future of Ethnographic Museum* (April 2025 release), the first of its kind tackling the theme of temporality in museum lives and practices.

10h30 – 12h00

Panel 3: Curating change?: community, climate and heritage – Chair Sarah Wade (UEA)

- Dorothea Fox (University of East Anglia / Science Museum) – Subverting Histories of 'Innovation' in a Time of Planetary Change and Climate Injustice: Opportunities and Challenges in UK Science Museums

In recent years, the context of the changing planet has spurred critical re-examinations of history. According to historian Amanda Power, achieving 'sustainability' demands a critique of historical 'progress' as emerging from the unjust exploitation of both people and planet (2024: 9). To achieve 'just transitions' and sustainable futures for all, scientific and technological 'innovation' and 'adaptation' must be decoupled from the intersectional injustices—historic and present—that have been committed against humans and nonhumans by colonialist-capitalist enterprises.

Science museums are crucial sites to reinterpret notions of historical 'development' and 'innovation'. The UK's preeminent museum of science and technology—the Science Museum (London)—was founded on a desire to celebrate the colonialist-capitalist 'achievements' of the Industrial Revolution, with the premise that it would collect, display and preserve 'appliances which hold honoured place in the progress of Science' [emphasis added] ('The Bell Report' 1911: 4). The Museum's Energy Hall (opened 2005) and Making the Modern World gallery (opened 2000) continue to enshrine colonialist-capitalist and extractive principles of scientific and technological 'progress' (see Cameron 2024).

This paper, however, explores the recent work of curators of science and technology in critiquing these ‘traditional’ narratives of ‘development’ and ‘innovation’ as a form of climate action. Taking the Science Museum (London) and Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum as case studies, I examine the agencies and intentions of curators in collecting and interpreting museum objects in ways that challenge colonialist–capitalist notions of ‘historical progress’ while imagining hopeful, ‘sustainable’ futures. Nevertheless, the extent of curatorial agency in these endeavours is challenged by institutional context, particularly in relation to discomfort around ‘decolonisation’ and (controversial) financial relationships with industry. In this paper, therefore, I delve into the contexts—within and beyond science museums—that both facilitate and problematise the practices and decisions of curators in their engagement with the changing planet.

- Habiba Insaf (Humboldt University) – The Museum as an Ally(?) The “Naga Land” Exhibition at the Humboldt Forum, Berlin

In 2021, the Humboldt Forum—a new exhibition venue situated in a reconstructed imperial palace in central Berlin—inaugurated an exhibition on Naga communities, primarily those that are living in India. The temporary exhibition titled, “Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India,” draws from the collection of the Berlin Ethnological Museum. It attempts to explore the changes that the identities of Naga communities underwent within the historical frameworks of British colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as with reference to the community’s conflicts with the Indian state in the twentieth century. It is jointly curated by Roland Platz, curator of the South and Southeast Asian Collection at the Berlin Ethnological Museum; Zubeni Lotha, Naga photographer and curator; and Elisabeth Seyerl–Langkamp, curator at the Humboldt Forum Foundation in the Berlin Palace. In this paper, I assess the Berlin Ethnological Museum’s and the Humboldt Forum’s contemporary efforts to position itself as an ally of Naga people through an examination of the Naga Land exhibition.

The exhibition incorporates the voices and perspectives of Naga people—making space for necessary self-representation—and fosters dialogue by juxtaposing historical collections from the Berlin Ethnological Museum with contemporary Naga art practices. The exhibition’s collaborative and consultative process, which involves experts from the Naga communities, is a promising development that counters the lingering colonial narratives that have shaped public perceptions of Naga communities, in European museums and elsewhere, for centuries. Yet, it is also plagued by certain limitations, including the uncritical perpetuation of colonial tropes such as ‘headhunting.’ Specifically, I explore how the Berlin Ethnological Museum’s inability to fully reckon with its colonial legacy undercuts its present-day aspirations of building more equitable and ethical practices. My study questions whether the museum can truly become an ally to Naga communities without first acknowledging its role in colonial practices of collection and interpretation.

- Charlotte Vekemans (Ghent University) – Curatorial Contestation in and around Heritage Sites in Madaba, Jordan

Jordan is like an open air museum. We have āthār (archaeological heritage/ antiquities), we have ṭabī‘at (nature), we have turāth (heritage)” (USAID heritage development collaborator in an interview, June 2021)

How do Jordanian communities contest the (neo)colonial curatorial practices of heritage development? In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, heritage sites have been the subject of colonial interventions during the British mandate period and neocolonial interventions by European, British, and American development projects in the post-colonial present. As the Jordanian government tries to instrumentalize heritage as a resource for economic growth, places and pasts across the country are drawn into the tourism industry; presenting the country as an open-air museum to foreign visitors. This involves the reassembling of places to present remains of the past, or cultural traditions, as important heritage – but equally the silencing, destruction, or ignoring of other connections to the past.

The continuities between colonial archaeological interventions and contemporary heritage projects have cemented temporalities and histories in places that are often at odds with the shared understandings of history of the Jordanian citizens. Focusing on how Jordanians engage with these contested assemblages of the past, I explore the ways in which they challenge and subvert imposed temporal frameworks. By redrawing connections between objects, places, and pasts, they assert alternative narratives that resist (neo)colonial curatorial logics and reclaim agency over their heritage. I focus in this paper on heritage sites in Madaba, a city south of the Jordanian capital Amman. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork between 2018 and 2021, I trace the contestation of heritage curatorial practices. But I equally reflect on how my own methodology allowed for the noticing or ignoring of these points of contestation – positioning my own research critically in the longer history of post-colonial science.

12h00 – 13h30: Lunch

13h30–16h30

**Panel 4: Archival circulations: navigating histories through research, creation and collaboration –
Chair Dr Simon Dell (SRU)**

- Felix Rolt (University of Oxford) – Nigerian Intelligence Reports and the Making of History

My paper concerns 'Intelligence Reports', anthropological records compiled in the 1930s on the ethnic groups of southeastern Nigeria. They were compiled by the British administration in the aftermath of 1929 Women's War, a war fought to overturn the system of colonial rule. While the war's aim failed, the British reformed the system of 'Native Administration'. They began by gathering ethnological data, compiling their findings in documents known as Intelligence Reports which were often written hastily by colonial administrators with little or no anthropological training. The previous system of rule had been through an institution known as the Native Court which were staffed by local officials known as warrant chiefs who were notorious for abusing their power to acquire great wealth and compelling women to become their wives. In 1929 hatred of the warrant chiefs and the Native Courts boiled over into revolt. Women, who were often the subject of the violence of the warrant chiefs, rose up across the southeast of the country to attack the warrant chiefs and Native Courts. The short-lived revolt made the British aware of the fact they knew very little about the societies which they ruled. The greatest legacy of their attempt at reform are the Intelligence Reports which together form an enormous treasury of ethnological data. Today, the Intelligence Reports, which survive in the Nigerian National Archives, are not simply gathering dust. Well-thumbed photocopies circulate among the ethnic groups of southeastern Nigeria where they are treated not as inaccurate colonial documents, but the highest authority on the societies to which they pertain. In the burgeoning indigenous historiography found among the contemporary ethnic groups of southeastern Nigeria, the Intelligence Reports are viewed as the ultimate historical source and are even sometimes considered beyond reproach. In my paper, I explore the paradoxical afterlife of these documents.

- Luisa Marten (LMU Munich) – The "Mailopu Archive:" Curating the Shared History of an Expedition

As part of the colonial project, the transfer of so-called 'non-western' things into western regimes of classification, such as archives, constituted a powerful form of cultural oppression that "served to reinforce and institutionalize categories of difference and logics of governance" (Ghaddar & Caswell 2019, 77). Archives, thus, do not just embody static sets of records but encompass sedimented layers of historical dynamics, inherently including complex histories of knowledge generation and scientific practice. How can we mobilize the logics of the archive to work against the asymmetric power relations that it was designed to reinforce? Building on the archive's processual capacity (Battaglia et al. 2020), is it possible to turn an archive into a productive tool that enables the co-generation and co-interpretation of knowledge across temporal and spatial boundaries? This contribution discusses the challenges and possibilities of such approach, by presenting the digital "Mailopu Archive" which has been created to remobilize the dispersed collections of the "II. Freiburg Moluccan Expedition" (1910–1912). In 1910, three German scientists set out for the Maluku Islands (or Moluccas). During their journey, they met Markus Mailopu from the island Seram, who joined the expedition. Meandering somewhere between an informant, assistant, friend, he contributed to the expedition's academic research and output. This complex relationship is materialized in archival records that are housed in various German collecting institutions. Historical interlocutions like these influence contemporary knowledge claims, but their significance for the generation of knowledge is often overlooked. Using the "Mailopu Archive" as a tool, my research makes use of curation as intervention (Schorch 2023) to uncover the expedition's relational history and its impact on knowledge claims that still linger today. In my contribution, I will draw on this research to discuss how collaborative archiving practices can be implemented in a post-colonial world to reconnect shared histories.

- Anna Szulfer (Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas – University of East Anglia / British Museum) – Reconnecting Andean Collections with Archives at the British Museum: Nine Pottery Vessels and R. Stanton's Diary

While limited information about the British Museum's South American collections can readily be obtained from the online catalogue, details relating to individuals and means through which objects came to the Museum are often lacking. Thus decontextualised and divorced from our memory of historic people whose lives they once featured in, many of the BM's Andean archaeological collections appear out-of-time, with their stories locked in boxes. This paper reflects on my recent archival and collections-based work at the Museum. I ask how far these research methods can enrich our knowledge about the objects' journeys and cast light upon the identities of individuals associated with them (from donors and vendors to field collectors, intermediaries, makers and users) in order to better contextualise and make transparent the collections' current place at the Museum.

My findings show that the majority of the BM's written and photographic archive begins once objects have already left the archaeological record and eludes the identities of Indigenous agents. However, this is not always the case. I therefore highlight an assemblage of pottery, tupu pins, and an excavation diary. The latter, authored by R. Stanton, details the digging carried out on his behalf by Calixto Sanchez and Mariano Hozada in San Antonio de Esquilache (Peru) in 1915. In contrast to the diary and the "amateur archaeologist's" scientific narrative of the "ancient" artefacts he claimed through the act of excavation, a close study of the handmade pottery as well as one post-conquest vessel in the assemblage provides a different angle. Lastly, I question the extent to which Stanton's recording of the names of Sanchez and Hozada may be yet another aspect of his scientific archaeological practice which ultimately denied them voice, and compare this to the agentive actions of potters manifest in finger impressions on the miniature pottery Stanton took.

15h00–15h30: Break

- Luiza de Paula Souza Serber (University of Campinas, Brazil) – Ára Ymã to Ára Pyau: Reclaiming Kaiowá Temporalities through Visual-Archival Experimentations

The history(ies) of the Kaiowá – a Tupi-Guarani speaking people who inhabit present-day Central-Western Brazil and Eastern Paraguay – has been largely silenced in official regional records, reflecting the broader global erasure of Indigenous histories through colonial processes. When addressed in historical or anthropological work, these histories are often constrained by Western linear frameworks and confined to the written word, failing to capture the Kaiowá's unique perspectives on land, time, memory, and their understanding of the interconnected relations among people, things, animals, places, and other-than-human alterities (Viveros de Castro, 2002; De La Cadena, 2015). The Kaiowá way of being (ñandereko) – their modes of saying, seeing, caring, singing, traveling – has been systematically violated and marginalized by colonial expansion, particularly from the mid-20th century. However, this ancestral knowledge endures not only through oral traditions but also in a diverse array of visual-material artifacts, ranging from sacred ritual objects and ancient rock engravings to contemporary drawings, photographs, and maps – all of which are inscriptions (Ingold, 2000, 2007) of Kaiowá memory. In my doctoral research, in close collaboration with a Kaiowá family from Panambizinho village, I explore how creatively engaging with archival collections can offer alternative ways for Kaiowá communities to reclaim, re-signify, and narrate their own pasts (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999), while actively shaping their futures. Through visual montage experimentation (Bateson & Mead, 1942; Warburg, 2010; Samain, 2016), we present multidimensional narratives that emphasize the interplay between the visible and invisible, the tangible and intangible, and between ára ymã (ancient time-space) and ára pyau (new time-space), fostering what Azoulay (2019) terms "potential histories". By blending ethnographic and archival research with creative methodologies, our work positions collaboration, imagination, and creation as essential tools for anthropological inquiry, particularly within the field of Indigenous ethnology.

- Enzo Hamel (Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas – University of East Anglia) – Discussing Gregory Bateson's Archives with latmul Communities

This paper will discuss my PhD fieldwork research conducted in collaboration with latmul communities in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea around the archives of the British anthropologist Gregory Bateson. Between 1929 and 1933, Bateson spent almost two years collecting not only objects but also stories, series of names and other local forms of knowledge. He photographed important ceremonial and daily-life events at a shifting moment of intense colonisation and related social changes. Though the results of this research published in the book *Naven*, have been extensively discussed, the archives have received less attention. My current project is centred around the return of Bateson's photographs and field notebooks from his time in the region to the main villages that he visited. Against the vision of archival interpretation as a solitary practice, the return of archives to the related communities showcases overlaps, tensions and frictions between my own understandings of the "Archive" influenced by academic readings and local conceptions of archives and their relevance for the present and future of the community. Taking these communities and their (hi)stories seriously brings to the forefront new epistemologies that have the potential to redress colonial and racial narratives as well as erasures. Research therefore not only illuminates the complexity of interrelationships across time and place but also helps us to reflect on Western extractivist epistemologies and methods critically. These frictions have helped me to critically rethink the knowledge dynamics of power. I will explore how the notion of *sagi* – a local term used to refer to performed songs which contain many chanted (totemic) names – which was previously understood by anthropologists as referring to mythical and atemporal stories can be reevaluated as a local concept of history.

16h30: Closing Remarks