

# FREE ANTHROPOLOGY

Cover photo courtesy of Malaya Sandler

## **Acknowledgements**

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Department of Anthropology

<http://anthropology.columbia.edu>

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UNDERGRADUATE SENIOR THESIS SYMPOSIUM

# Schedule

9:30

## Refreshments

10:00-11:30

### Panel 1: Discipline(s) | Schermerhorn Ext. 457

Autumn Plumbo | Brianna Alston | Michael George Wedd

Respondent: Naor Ben-Yehoyada

11:40-1:00

### Panel 2: Inheritance(s) | Schermerhorn 501

Alyssa Mendez | Adama Sall | Caroline Yang | Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong

Respondent: Lila Abu-Lughod

1:10-1:40

## Lunch

3:00-4:30

### Panel 3: Circulation(s) | Schermerhorn Ext. 457

Iqraz Nanj | Laura Cadena | Malaya Sadler

Respondent: Marilyn Ivy

4:30-6:00

## Reception

## Keynote | 1:45 - 3:00

Schermerhorn Ext. 457

Prof. Susan Lepselter, Indiana University

Rescuing the Blonde Angel: the Fantasy  
Captivity Narrative and the Panic of 2013

## Panel 1: Discipline(s)

### Autumn Plumbo

#### Continuity, Ossification, and Critique: Reading Samuel Morton's Evidentiary Practice

I interpret the evidentiary practices of the 19th century physical anthropologist Samuel Morton. My work centers around a question about how the perpetuation of inquiry—as and in particular sets of questions, relations with objects, and structures of authority—happens. I use a pun between ossified ideas and ossified bones to analyze how Morton configures, and makes rigid, a set of possible relations between speaker or practitioner, epistemic meaning, evaluative capacities, objects of inquiry, and the world. I propose how these relations continue, even and especially in critiques of Morton's work.

### Brianna Alston

#### Ghosts Of Black Bodies: The Experience Of Race-Murder And Generational Trauma At Columbia University.

The scope of this project is to present and analyze the narratives of African American students at Columbia and their formation of their Black identity in the context of their experiences during their freshman year. The premise of the work being that the type of trauma experienced by the students in 2014 maps onto a larger trend of generational Black trauma rooted in the concept of the spectacular “race-murder”. The project works around three primary points of reference during 2014 including: the transition to college, experiencing race-murder, and Black institution building/coping mechanisms.

### Michael George Wedd

#### Music Therapy, Discipline, and Self-Writing: Toward a Neuroqueer Aesthetics of Autism

Exploring ethnographic fieldwork at The Music Settlement in Cleveland through “French” and queer theory, and using an experimental method of self-writing as autoethnography, I suggest music therapy requires us to rethink what we mean by “autism.” My introduction, “On the Clock: Semio-techniques of Late Capital” develops a Foucauldian and Weberian analysis of socialization-focused music therapy. “On the Other Side,” the third chapter, explores how music therapists imagine their own therapeutic practices. In “Misrecognition and the Tactics of Pretend Art,” one person and a new semiotic lens provide another way of thinking about tactical maneuvers within subjugated languages. In chapter five, I push against existing advocacy in the “neurodiversity movement” and propose the term “neuroqueer” as a way of rethinking “autism.” And in conclusion, I suggest neuroqueer activism should take the form of heterographic manifestations of self-writing as an aesthetics of existence that deconstructs “autism” and constructs a new relationship between a person, their self, and their autos.

## Panel 2: Inheritance(s)

### Alyssa Mendez

#### Ethnographer's Refusal: Politics of Give and Take in Collaborative Heritage Management

My work engages the ethics of ethnographic methodologies in archaeology and heritage management as these disciplines are used to represent the histories of living communities. Drawing on two summers of field work in a heritage management and archaeological project in Crete, I argue that the attempt to realize a open-ended, post-colonial research practice through ethnographic “encounter” is confounded by a goal-oriented structure which reduces ethnography to a collection of methods. I attend to the social ramifications of this reduction in the language of reciprocity, which I understand as an integral element of ethical human relations and thus integral to any post-colonial disciplinary intervention.

### Adama Sall

#### Materializing the History, Lives and Heritage of Black Women

The idea of representation, or lack thereof, is a topic that refuses to go away when studying Black female populations in the U.S. Whether it is in film, literature, politics, academia, tech, any cultural sphere of life, Black women and their stories continue to be vastly underrepresented. Representation matters in all its glorious diversity. Vocalizing minority stories within a majority culture fosters a sense of belonging and makes visible role models that a younger generation can latch onto. How can academia and popular culture continue shedding light on Black female contributions? How can we continue making sure that Black women, and their contributions throughout America's history, are visible?

### Caroline Yang

#### Close to the Tree: Filial Geographies and Expanded Genealogies in Wuxi River

My work draws on the *jiapu* (genealogy book) of Wuxi River and the emplaced narratives of my female relatives in order to expand the definition of genealogy past the prescripts of patriarchy. This “expanded genealogy” encompasses the everyday practice of narrating, extending, and reproducing notions of female filial belonging. Essential to this reworking of Chinese genealogy is how the geographical locale of the *lao wu*— the original or ancestral home— is discursively “dwelled-in” through intergenerational female narratives.

### Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong

#### Other Bodies, Other Temporalities: Nationalism & Homophobia in Modern Thailand

My work aims to situate homosexuality and transgenderism within the heterosexual structure of the Thai nationalism. The survival of such a structure predicates upon heterosexual kinship and its reproduction. Despite the absence of legal sanctions, homosexual and transgender bodies are perceived as threats to the nation's future because they are biologically non-reproductive. Drawing on in-depth interviews with non-heterosexual, male-bodied interlocutors in Thailand, I will investigate how each of them imagines, experiences, and interacts with the heterosexual nationalism differently.

## Panel 3: Circulation(s)

### Iqraz Nanji

#### **Continuity, Ossification, and Critique: Reading Samuel Morton's Evidentiary Practice**

When I arrived at the Clinique de La Borde people believed that the place no longer existed. The clinic's founders, Jean Oury and Félix Guattari, had passed. Its healing practice called Institutional Psychotherapy, a response to the maltreatment of the mentally infirm during the Second World War, was being replaced by traditional forms of psychiatric treatment. In this project I pick up traces of clinical, administrative, and social transformation at La Borde. I circulate with patients and staff through the clinic's woods and its therapeutic ateliers, in an attempt at recreating a place called La Borde.

### Laura Cadena

#### **The Things That "Belonged": A Discussion On Anti Counterfeiting Initiatives, Lost Futures, And The Sanitizing Powers Of Our Imaginations**

How legitimately can anyone claim that a future has been stolen from them? That it has been purposefully eroded or slipped from beneath their feet? This project takes seriously the sense of loss through which various current or former counterfeiters address the dissolution of the futures they envisioned for themselves in New York as consequence of urban anti-counterfeiting initiatives mobilized post 9/11. These initiatives are addressed through my interlocutor's recollections as well as through an analysis of the actuarial practices, mysterious alliances, and disorienting sense of priorities that drive them. By means of a speculative framework, this text enables conversations on the ways we authorize ourselves to dispossess certain desires and projections toward the future when they are born from communities which we see unsuitably fit to imagine the future alongside us.

### Malaya Sadler

#### **Empire Of Affect: Ethics And Aesthetics Of Late Capitalist New York**

To walk through New York City today is an experience both unsettled and unsettling. This project addresses the photographic and affective encounter with present day New York City, specifically in the neighborhood of Hell's Kitchen. I present a synthesis of visual and textual material addressing themes of historicity, consumption, the individual relation to the time-space of the city and a constant confrontation of an anonymous multitude, as well as the lived everyday and the habits and strategies it entails. Working with a New York that is considered a center for what is named neoliberalism, globalization, the cognitive-cultural capitalist economy, I propose that these words stand in for something else, a way of life that cannot simply be shorthanded as such. I use photography and a particular method of ethnographic writing to investigate the ethics and aesthetics of the pedestrian's lived New York.

## Presenter Bios

**Autumn Plumbo** is majoring in Anthropology at Columbia College. Autumn's studies began with English, traversed Evolutionary Biology, and ended somewhere in between. Autumn enjoys thinking about science, writing, and improvisation.

**Brianna Alston** is from Fresno, California and studies sociocultural anthropology with an informal concentration in medical anthropology. Her scholarly interests include postcolonial studies of medicine and diasporic identity.

**Michael Wedd** grew up on a small farm in upstate New York with seven siblings. He was entirely self-schooled before GS, and pursued a career as a concert pianist until age 21. After a two-year social impact fellowship, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in anthropology and continue his work on "autism" while founding a company with his siblings.

**Alyssa Mendez** is a Mellon Mays undergraduate fellow majoring in Anthropology with a special concentration in Hellenic Studies. Her interest in Greece was piqued by a rich experience in mountainous Crete in 2016, and although she plans to merge her interest in Greece with a focus on urban anthropology in future projects, she looks forward to returning to Gonies to continue carving marble with her friend Giannis.

**Adama Sall** is a Senegalese woman growing up in the U.S., Adama Sall has always been fascinated by the intersection of diverse cultures. She gets to indulge in her passion by studying Anthropology at Columbia, but also by being Head of Strategy at Mekanism – an advertising agency that encourages her to translate academic rigor, curiosity and fun into her work.

**Caroline Yang** is majoring in Anthropology and Latin American & Caribbean Studies and is the coordinator for the ESOL Program at Community Impact. Her scholarly interests are in oral history, subaltern feminism, and critical pedagogy. After graduation she will be working as a classroom teacher in Philadelphia.

**Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong** was born and raised in Samutprakarn, Thailand. He is majoring Sociocultural Anthropology and International Relations in the Dual Degree between Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris. His academic interests include queer theory, critical historiography, and Southeast Asian studies.

**Iqraz Nanji** is majoring in sociocultural anthropology and has dabbled in various types of literature and science. His interests include continental philosophy, psychoanalysis, and satire.

**Laura Cadena** is originally from Bogota, Colombia. Aside from Anthropology, she enjoys thinking about sound, music, fear, and performance.

**Malaya Sadler** is from San Francisco, California, and studies sociocultural anthropology and art history. Her interests include literature, contemporary and 20th century art, and the joint projects of anti-capitalism and decolonization.