

# Shaping Asia

**EMBODIED, EMOTIONAL AND SENSORIAL KNOWLEDGE:  
PERSPECTIVES FROM ASIA  
16 and 17 February 2023**

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
SHAW FOUNDATION BUILDING, AS7, SEMINAR ROOM B (#01-17)  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**



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## ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Analytical and comparative endeavours of elucidating how everyday life and its variegated avenues are mediated through the senses and the body have rarely been pursued in non-Western academic scholarship. Since this includes issues of morality, foodways, power relations, religious beliefs, and class dynamics, we ask what such neglect says vis-à-vis the production of knowledge in disciplinary fields such as sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, architecture and so forth? How can the study of the body, senses, and emotions thus help us understand social relations and social structures/institutions further in different regions and societies in Asia? How does the body, senses and emotions delineate the boundaries of selfhood and “others”? How do smell, sound, touch and other sensory modalities produce moral and emotional orders which govern access to spaces in specific contexts in Asia? How are urban spaces built and designed through emotional, embodied and sensorial knowledge in Asia? How can we use the lens of emotional and sensory politics to talk about cities as sites of deep structural inequalities and asymmetries? How do food, rituals, performance, religion, tradition, consumption, aesthetics, education, popular culture, and other aspects of the everyday intersect with the embodied, sensory and emotional knowledge, and urbanity?

While there has been a long and sustained history of analysing and studying the centrality of the body in society, it has often been treated as banal, habitual, routine, and mundane. This lack of attention similarly applies to the theoretical and empirical interrogations of both the senses and emotions. The uses and shaping of sensory knowledge and its various routes and paths of circulation remain a fairly neglected domain of sociohistorical and cultural inquiry in the social sciences. Only during the last decade have cultural meanings of the senses in society garnered scholarly attention in disciplines such as history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and geography. More specific to societies in Asia, this workshop invites participants to reflect on and discuss emerging scholarship and collaboration in relation to the construction of knowledge. We are interested in theoretical, methodological, empirical and comparative deliberations on these broad queries and themes critically mapping out the primacy of the body, emotions and/or senses in the production of knowledge in societies and contexts in Asia broadly conceived. These may include but are not limited to embodied, emotional and sensory ethnographies; the regulation and organisation of everyday life and the body, emotions and/or senses in settings in Asia; sensory and emotional orders and disorders; cities in Asia as sensorial spaces of power, belonging and exclusion; cities, memories and the senses; and urban change and social transformation through the body, emotions and the senses. Such lines of inquiry and knowledge making, which are grounded in sociocultural frameworks stemming from societies in Asia, avail comparative possibilities within different societies in Asia and beyond where analytically relevant, and the manner in which these interrogations are connected to one another. Conceptualising Asia in this manner underlines the mobility, porosity, and relevant comparability of embodied and sensory practices.

Such practices, to be identified through sense-making scripts across cultures and social groups, intersect with, contest and/or complement other forms and domains of knowledge to include religious beliefs, foodways, morality, aesthetics, and others. Such conceptualization importantly adds to renewed approaches towards studying a variety of social collectives across a range of different societies in Asia. This allows for a more productive analytical comparative exercise that renders the connectedness and/or disconnectedness between different sensory modalities in these contexts and beyond. As a densely populous region that has undergone manifold transformations and developments over the centuries, and as a site that is steep in religious traditions, philosophies, linguistic practices that both converge and diverge across different webs of connectivities and relationships, Asia and its connected historical and contemporary contexts

serve as a productive and legitimate transcultural site for developing newer theoretical interventions in examining sensory knowledge and practice.

**Organisers:**

**Kelvin E.Y. Low | National University of Singapore**

**Noorman Abdullah | National University of Singapore**

**Thomas Stodulka | Freie Universität, Berlin**

∞∞ WORKSHOP PROGRAM ∞∞

SINGAPORE STANDARD TIME	DAY ONE - 16 FEBRUARY 2023 THURSDAY
1000 – 1030	<b>REGISTRATION AND MORNING TEA</b>
1030 – 1045	<b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTORY REMARKS</b> Kelvin E.Y. Low   National University of Singapore Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka   Bielefeld University
1045 - 1215	<b>PANEL 1 - KNOWLEDGE AND SENSIBILITIES</b>  Chair – Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka   Bielefeld University
1045	From Talent to Expertise: Cultivating Medicinal Sensibilities among the War-Khasis Living in the Bangladesh-Northeast India Borderlands  Éva Rozália Hölzle   Bielefeld University
1105	Faith, Trust, and Solidarity: Tasting the Soil and Sensing the Future in Timor-Leste’s Permaculture Youth Camps  Thomas Stodulka   Freie Universität Berlin
1125	Between Scientific and Sensory Knowledge: Exploring the Enactment of Clay Sensibilities among Clay Artists in Singapore  Kelvin E.Y. Low and Suriani Suratman   National University of Singapore
1145 – 1215	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>
1215 – 1330	<b>LUNCH</b>
1330 – 1500	<b>PANEL 2 - EMBODIMENT AND GROUP DYNAMICS</b>  Chair – Thomas Stodulka   Freie Universität Berlin
1330	The Sense of Academic Merit: Dalit Students at South Asian Universities  Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka   Bielefeld University
1350	Rickshaw driving and the performance of embodied masculinities in far-west Nepal  Matthew Maycock   Monash University (zoom presentation)
1410	Corporate team buildings in Vietnam as embodied enactments of togetherness  Rossitsa Bolgurova   RMIT Vietnam

1430 - 1500	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>
1500 – 1530	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
1530 – 1700	<b>PANEL 3 - PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION</b> Chair - Éva Rozália Hölzle   Bielefeld University
1530	Beyond Schools: Perspectives on Multisensory Learning in Informal Contexts Birgitt Röttger-Rössler   Freie Universität Berlin
1550	Teaching with and through the Senses: Instigations with Race, Multiculturalism and Everyday Life Noorman Abdullah and Kelvin E.Y. Low   National University of Singapore
1610	Sensory modalities in the transmission of Odissi dance in the city of Bhubaneswar in the early 2020s Barbara Curda   French Institute of Pondicherry
1630 – 1700	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>
1730 onwards	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER FOR PRESENTERS, CHAIRS, ORGANISERS (One-way transport provided)</b>
<b>SINGAPORE STANDARD TIME</b>	<b>DAY TWO - 17 FEBRUARY 2023 FRIDAY</b>
1000 – 1030	<b>REGISTRATION AND MORNING TEA</b>
1030 – 1200	<b>PANEL 4 - URBAN SENSESCAPES AND CITY SENSORIA</b> Chair - Noorman Abdullah   National University of Singapore
1030	Tasting Sounds: Ways of Listening to the City of Hyderabad Khadeeja Amenda   National University of Singapore
1050	Fair or Fowl: Human-Animal Relations, Sensory Boundaries and Social Control Kelvin E.Y. Low   National University of Singapore
1110	“You need to listen to the market”: Decision-making and timeliness in China’s largest flower market Sun Rui   Chinese University of Hong Kong
1130 - 1200	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>

1200 – 1315	<b>LUNCH</b>
1315 – 1445	<b>PANEL 5 - MIGRATION, SENSORY OTHERS, AND POLLUTION</b> Chair – Catherine Earl   RMIT Vietnam
1315	The Odour of Segregation  Jusmeet S. Sihra   Sciences Po, Paris; Hebrew University of Jerusalem (zoom presentation)
1335	Investigating ‘Dirt’ in Migration: Sensory Embodiment of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Handling Japanese Food  Median Mutiara   Independent Scholar (zoom presentation)
1355	<i>Stres</i> and Knowledge of Self-protection: An ethnographic Account of Embodied Precarity in Asian Labor Migration  Samia Dinkelaker   Academia Sinica, Taiwan
1415 – 1445	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>
1445 - 1515	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
1515 – 1645	<b>PANEL 6 - POLITICS, MEMORY AND CITIZENSHIP</b> Chair – Kelvin E.Y. Low   National University of Singapore
1515	Senses as method: Decentering authoritative accounts of remembering and forgetting in social memory making  Catherine Earl   RMIT Vietnam
1535	‘Pedagogy of Fear’: An Ethnohistorical study of the institutionalisation of fear to create a subservient citizenry  Tirthankar Chakraborty   Freie Universität Berlin
1555	‘Dwelling with’ through distance: Reflective accounts on conducting an oral history research on memories of HIV among transgender women community in Yogyakarta Indonesia  Ferdiansyah Thajib   Friedrich-Alexander-Universität (FAU) Erlangen-Nürnberg
1615 – 1645	<b>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>
1645 – 1715	<b>PUBLICATIONS DISCUSSION</b> (for presenters only)

**From Talent to Expertise: Cultivating Medicinal Sensibilities among the War-Khasis Living in the Bangladesh-Northeast India Borderlands**

Éva Rozália Hölzle | Bielefeld University  
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In War-Khasi villages—situated between the borders of Bangladesh and Northeast India—, the local doctors are called nong sumar, which literally means ‘the one who does the care’. Nong sumar is an inherited profession, meaning that older male relatives who practise medicine pass on their medical knowledge to their younger relatives who demonstrate talent (abor). Talent is a key requirement in transferring the art of healing. Older nong sumars watch the growth of their kin closely from their childhood. Medical knowledge—involving rituals, plant-based medicines, and different physiotherapeutic techniques—is passed on to offspring who show interest, discipline, curiosity, and empathy. In other words, a suitable medical apprentice must demonstrate talent. However, such a predisposition does not guarantee that a novice practitioner will become a good doctor. To excel as a healer, one must cultivate talent through lifelong learning while experimenting with diverse plant-based remedies, expanding on ritualistic knowledge and continuously honing sensitivity (sha-shep) including the tactile and auditory senses when dealing with patients. This paper focuses on the lifelong cultivation of medical talent through portraits of three doctors living in a Bangladeshi village close to the Tripura border. By calling attention to the stories of these three nong sumars, the aim is to shed light on local medical practices and the continuous efforts of local doctors striving for medical expertise. In this way, healing highlights the interplay of ethics and knowledge and the expertise gathered and deepened through experience. Such forms of knowledge are marginalised not only because they are often produced at sites that happen to be national peripheries, as in this case, but because they rely on practice rather than standardised written sources.

Éva Rozália Hölzle is a social anthropologist affiliated with Bielefeld University. She has been conducting ethnographic research in the borderlands of Bangladesh and Northeast India exploring the nexus of land dispossession and nation state formation, violence and agency, as well as indigenous life politics. Her first monograph *Land, Life, and Emotional Landscapes at the Margins Bangladesh* was published by Amsterdam University Press in 2022. In her current postdoctoral project, *Cultivating Ethics across Generation* funded by Fritz Thyssen Foundation, she examines the interplay and transformation of ethics and kinship through the history of an extended family.

## Faith, Trust, and Solidarity: Tasting the Soil and Sensing the Future in Timor-Leste's Permaculture Youth Camps

Thomas Stodulka | Freie Universität Berlin  
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In this talk, I localize the travelling concept of permaculture in different contexts of learning across Timor-Leste as a systematic pathway into studying emergent ecological awareness regimes and learning practices. For example, juxtaposing and contrasting permaculture-based school curricula and water conservation projects in Timor-Leste with projects implemented by international NGOs based on global learning and decontextualized food sovereignty policies opens up anthropological inquiries into a variety of phenomena, such as contrasting the shaping of young person's selves, personhoods, and future citizenship, issues of planetary health, nutrition, and well-being, or ways and strategies of (un-)learning and contesting normative gender roles. By focusing on the practice-oriented and sensorial pedagogy of permaculture youth camps in Timor-Leste, I inquire whether localized ecosocial solidarity movements can contest state-tolerated inequalities and marginalities through revitalizing local knowledge and forms of translocal collaboration through working with and sensing the soil.

Thomas Stodulka is Junior Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology, with a special focus on Psychological Anthropology, at FU Berlin, Germany. His work focuses on the interplay between affect, emotion, youth, alternative economies and education, mental health and illness. He conducted long-term fieldwork with street-related children, young men and women in Yogyakarta, Indonesia and he has directed international research projects on the role of affect and emotion in fieldwork and ethnography, travelling concepts in mental health and illness, envy in transcultural perspectives, and critical perspectives on big data. He is currently working on permaculture, learning and shaping futures at the margins. Thomas is Associate Editor of *Ethos* and Brill Book Series Co-Editor of *Social Sciences in Asia*.



## **Between Scientific and Sensory Knowledge: Exploring the Enactment of Clay Sensibilities among Clay Artists in Singapore**

Kelvin E.Y. Low and Suriani Suratman | National University of Singapore  
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This paper explores how clay artists in Singapore utilise both their scientific and sensory knowledge of clay-making in producing clay works. Based on a preliminary and ongoing study on the biographies and sensory experiences of clay artists and the clay phenomenon in Singapore, we make a case for how clay artists rely simultaneously on their scientific knowledge and understanding of clay firing processes, temperatures, and glazing, together with an enactment of their sensory judgement and experience of the same set of processes toward producing clay works of different design, effect and form. Thermoreceptive understanding and knowledge of how clay reacts and behaves toward the different styles of firing ranging from wood-, gas-, to electric-firing are deployed through both a scientific calibration of temperature, as well as one's sensory evaluation – including visual and sonic judgements – of fire-control towards producing intended textures and forms as conceived by clay artists. Through making sense of how scientific and sensory knowledges are concurrently enacted but not without contradictions, we make a case for how creative clay work-making straddles across different domains of learning, knowledge use, teaching, and evaluation emerging through *kairotic* moments. Our initial analysis of data is contingent upon the embodied experiences of clay artists, drawn as well from one of us who is a clay artist. The paper therefore contributes to extant debates on art worlds, material culture, sensory knowledges and embodied experiences through clay work as a medium of analysis.

Kelvin E.Y. Low is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore. His research interests include sensory studies, migration and transnationalism, food and foodways, and social memory and heritage. He is author or editor of six books, with the most recent being *Sensory Anthropology: Culture and Experience in Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2023). His other works have been published in journals including *The Sociological Review*, *American Behavioural Scientist*, *Asian Studies Review*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnography*, and *Journal of Historical Sociology*. Kelvin is also President of TG07 Senses and Society, International Sociological Association.

Suriani Suratman, a social anthropologist, is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies and Convenor of the Minor in Gender Studies at the National University of Singapore. Her teaching covers areas on Malay culture and society, lived experiences of families and households as well as artmaking in the Malay and Indonesian archipelago. Her research focuses on Malay ethnic identities and the (re)production of portrayals of Malays, gender relations and inequalities in Malay families and households as well as politics of remembering. She is also a ceramic artist. She carries out her ceramic practice and teaches pottery at Jalan Bahar Clay Studios.

## The Sense of Academic Merit: Dalit Students at South Asian Universities

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka | Bielefeld University

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Contemporary universities are full of modern ambivalences: while universities impose pressures and regulations on teachers and students, they simultaneously are and provide spaces of possibilities and freedoms for those working and studying there. How such complexities are experienced and how they shape the socio-spatial constellations inside and outside of university 'classrooms' can only be captured by grasping how embodied, emotional and sensorial knowledge shape students' experiences of non/belonging. These affect significantly how constellations within university social spaces contribute to, or counter-balance students' disparities in life-chances. South Asian universities – as is the case with universities all around Asia and beyond – are characterized by an increasing heterogeneity of students and the disparity of their chances in student life. How are inequalities and exclusions experienced, tackled and overcome within the social spaces of the university? This presentation is based upon own research among Dalit students enrolled at Nepalese universities as well as on new literature on Dalit students at Indian universities. Their experience is significantly molded by class, gender, race, ethnicity, and other differentiating markers that are decisive for their sense of non/belonging and the modalities of inclusion and exclusion. Especially class and power differentials have not yet been adequately discussed from the venture point of sensorial experience and knowledge. These will be analyzed by observing personal trajectories of students through their educational pathways against the backdrop of socio-spatial constellations that are made and unmade on university premises. Different forms of 'sentimental education' will be of importance: constellations within class-rooms as well as social encounters in leisure times when food, rituals, consumption may reproduce marks of distinction and enhance or mitigate the sense of non/belonging. How are inequalities and exclusions experienced, tackled, and overcome within universities? How does the 'new generation' of students in India and Nepal experience perceived symbolic and social boundaries while simultaneously seeking to forge their belonging to and within the academic realm? How do the experiences of difference and their - changing - embodied, emotional and sensorial knowledge influence students' social navigations during the study course? How are the social realms of universities co-created and challenged in the process? Is the sense of academic merit possibly changing?

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka is a senior professor in social anthropology at Bielefeld University. She conducts research the Himalayan and in the South Asian region, in the middle-European immigration societies as well as within the social spaces of universities. Her contributions to the theory of belonging currently focus on the nexus of inequality, heterogeneity, and power. Her recent book is titled *Belonging in Motion: Contested Social Boundaries in South Asia* (Social Science Baha 2022). She is also the co-editor of *Universities as Transformative Social Spaces: Mobilities and Mobilizations from South Asian Perspectives* (Oxford University Press 2022).

## **Rickshaw driving and the performance of embodied masculinities in far-west Nepal**

Matthew Maycock | Monash University  
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Despite being a common sight in many streets in cities across Asia, and an essential form of transport in particular South Asia, rickshaws and those who drive them have not been the focus of sustained analysis. This paper seeks to redress this omission through analysing emergent embodied masculinities amongst a group of rickshaw drivers in Dhangadhi, a city in far-west Nepal. This paper's purpose is to explore emergent subaltern Janajati (or indigenous) masculinities, which are evolving in part as a consequence of rural to urban migration. The men who form the focus of this paper were prior to 2000 within a system of bonded labour (the Kamaiya system), and moving to a city is a key marker of freedom for this group. Having moved to local cities after being freed, economic opportunities have been limited, with rickshaw driving providing an opportunity to get a foothold in a new place and earn a small amount of money. This paper will illustrate that working as a rickshaw driver has profound implications for both the bodies and the masculinities of the men involved. Tensions emerge between the rickshaw drivers' expected and encouraged performances of masculinity and their own bodies and their frailties. Such tensions are explored using a variety of ethnographic material collected through two periods of fieldwork in Kailali district, Nepal in 2009 and 2022. During fieldwork the author generated material principally through interviews and participant observation (the possibilities of which were quite limited, which will be critically reflected on). Theoretically, this paper borrows and adapts Wacquant's research on bodies and boxing (1995, 2006), through a focus on forms of competition and the denial of pain, both of which are integral to the embodied performance of being rickshaw driver with profound implications for the bodies of the men who do this job.

Matthew Maycock, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Monash University and was previously Baxter Fellow in the School of Education and Social Work, University of Dundee. He previously worked at the Scottish Prison Service undertaking research often on gender issues in prison as well as facilitating staff development across a range of areas. Before that he was an Investigator Scientist within the Settings and Organisations Team at SPHSU, University of Glasgow undertaking postdoctoral research in Scottish prisons. Dr Maycock is an experience project manager, having managed research projects within the UK Civil Service and in academia. Dr Maycock undertook a PhD at the University of East Anglia that analysed modern slavery through the theoretical lens of masculinity. Throughout various studies, Matthew has consistently worked on gender issues with masculinity and prisons being a particular focus. Dr Maycock sits on the editorial board of the Prison Service Journal and the Journal of Criminal Psychology, has co-edited two books with a further two in preparation, written one monograph and published in leading criminology and public health journals.

## Corporate team buildings in Vietnam as embodied enactments of togetherness

Rossitsa Bolgurova | RMIT Vietnam

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Workplace events such as team buildings, year-end parties and anniversary celebrations are organized by employers for their employees to encourage cooperation, promote the organizational culture, and, ultimately, to improve company performance and results. These value-oriented and normative functions of corporate festivities are to be achieved through the sensorial, emotional and bodily engagement of staff. Employees would be expected, for example, to dress thematically, to build human pyramids or trust circles, and to feast lavishly, while also sharing their experiences on social media with a customised company hashtag. The term team building has been adopted widely in its English version, including in Vietnam, where this globalizing corporate festive genre has been practiced by both international and local companies over the last more than two decades. This paper explores the adoption of the concept and practice of team-building in Vietnam from the point of view of the organizers of such corporate events, i.e. the employers and the events agencies which specialize in their delivery. Through a series of interviews and observations the conceptualization and instrumentalization of sensory and emotional experiences is explored. These embodied corporate rituals are anthropological chronotopes delimiting a special festive time and space. They are also occasions for both representing and constituting the values and moral orientations of employment relations. Finally, they are mediated promotional events informed by the principles of the experience and attention economies. In other words, team buildings are sensory formulations and enactments of togetherness that are both personally embodied and corporately instrumentalized.

Dr. Rossitsa Bolgurova is a lecturer in the Professional Communication bachelor program at RMIT University in Vietnam. She completed her PhD in Cultural Anthropology in 2021 at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski in Bulgaria where she also taught in the undergraduate Cultural Studies program. Her PhD thesis is titled *Festivities as promotion: ethnography of post-socialist company celebrations*. Prior to that she has worked in various professional positions in management consulting, the telecom industry, and the UN. Her research interests are in the fields of economic and organisational anthropology, digital humanities and critical heritage studies.

## **Beyond Schools: Perspectives on Multisensory Learning in Informal Contexts**

Birgitt Röttger-Rössler | Freie Universität Berlin

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It is not a new finding that much human learning takes place implicitly outside of educational institutions in informal, everyday contexts, yet these learning processes receive comparatively little systematic attention within the current anthropology of learning, education and schools (Blum 2015, Lancy 2010). Based on my long-term research in rural Indonesia (Sulawesi), my contribution will focus on the complex multisensory forms of learning through which children acquire a large part of their competencies and their extensive environmental knowledge. I will focus on the mixed-age "communities of practices" in which this knowledge is transmitted and acquired, and show that affective bonds influence which out-of-school areas of competence children acquire. I conclude with some critical reflections on the general devaluation of the extra-curricular, non-formal and environmental forms of learning, which can be observed not only in Indonesia but worldwide and seems to be closely related to the global spread of Western psychological theory models about the healthy socio-emotional and cognitive development of children, supported by global institutions like UNICEF, World Bank, Save the Children etc. Although the organizers of the workshop emphasize the importance of sensory practices in urban spaces, I think it is also important to look at rural contexts: on the one hand, because a large part of the population of Asia lives in rural areas, and on the other hand, because it is precisely in comparison that the specificity of cities as "sensory spaces" can be grasped.

Birgitt Röttger-Rössler, Prof. Dr. is senior professor of social and cultural anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin. She is specialized in psychological anthropology; her regional focus is on Southeast Asian societies (Indonesia and Vietnam). She has long been involved in the interdisciplinary study of emotion and affect, and served (2015-2022) as director of the Collaborative Research Center "Affective Societies. Dynamics of Sociality in a World in Motion" at Freie Universität Berlin. Her latest research is directed on childhood, socialization, parenting and schooling; she conducted several years of fieldwork, mainly in Indonesia. Her current projects deal with the socialization of emotions in cross-cultural comparison and with the formation of feeling in the transnational social field of Vietnamese Berlin.

## Teaching with and through the Senses: Instigations with Race, Multiculturalism and Everyday Life

Noorman Abdullah and Kelvin E.Y. Low | National University of Singapore  
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Teaching effectively, inclusively, and critically about the power and politics of race and difference remains a protracted yet important struggle. Race is an emotionally laden and provocative issue facing many societies, and the concomitant privilege and ideology that upholds it are oftentimes surpassed through processes and mechanisms of 'invisibling'. In this paper, we add to the plethora of debates and discussions concerning race as an organising principle by showing how through the sensory, seemingly one of the most mundane, banal and quotidian aspects of social life, can be a potent epistemological tool with which to teach how 'race' can be reconstructed, negotiated and perpetuated by social actors in the context of multicultural Singapore. Social formations of 'race' undergo new ways of categorisation, perpetuation and judgement with the sensory as an emotive medium of recognition and placement. We foreground some of the pedagogical strategies we have employed that draw on emotions and the senses to instigate meaningful and critical class discussions, and the variegated classroom responses to the teaching of race and multiculturalism in everyday life. More specifically, we show how students as well as their respondents deploy emotions and the sensory in practices of inclusion and exclusion upon racial selves and others. A more creative and inclusive classroom environment is therefore imperative to stimulate discussion, particularly alternative, critical and meaningful ways of thinking about race. This, we contend, will necessitate a reflexive re-configuration of power relations within the classroom setting, and our experience in teaching undergraduate students through particular kinds of strategies we have used during discussion groups have reaped interesting outcomes, both on the parts of the instructor as a reflexive participant and the students in the classroom.

Noorman Abdullah is presently Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and holds a joint-appointment at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore. His core research interests and publications focus primarily on religion and society, particularly in relation to spirit possession and everyday religiosity; sensory studies; and deviance and social control, with a strong empirical component grounded on ethnography, everyday life and qualitative fieldwork. His recent publications include 'Coastal Urbanities: Mobilities, Meanings, Manoeuvrings' (Brill, 2022, co-edited with Siriwardane-de Zoysa, Low & Hornidge), *Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie*, and *American Behavioral Scientist*.

Kelvin E.Y. Low is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore. His research interests include sensory studies, migration and transnationalism, food and foodways, and social memory and heritage. He is author or editor of six books, with the most recent being *Sensory Anthropology: Culture and Experience in Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2023). His other works have been published in journals including *The Sociological Review*, *American Behavioural Scientist*, *Asian Studies Review*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnography*, and *Journal of Historical Sociology*. Kelvin is also President of TG07 Senses and Society, International Sociological Association.

## **Sensory modalities in the transmission of Odissi dance in the city of Bhubaneswar in the early 2020s**

Barbara Curda | French Institute of Pondicherry  
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Odissi dance is considered by the government of India to be the “classical dance” of the Indian State Odisha. In the capital of the State, Bhubaneswar, the dance is commonly described as “traditional” and apprehended to be representative of the “cultural identity” of the State. The past twenty years, however, have brought by intense economic growth, digitalisation, and an accelerated urban expansion, and therefore new tastes and expectations, new ways of experiencing the environment as well as social relations. For example, mobile phones have modified the way in which social relations are being enacted; but also, they have had a strong effect on individual’s apprehensions of geographic space. In this context, I propose to explore the teaching modalities that are being deployed in transmission situations in Odissi dance schools in the city. The act of teaching implies a complex set of activities which can vary considerably, and pursue several goals simultaneously (e. g. getting the learners to incorporate the dance in its physical aspects but also in its emotional ones, or getting them to act in ways that are considered appropriate for a dance class). Certain activities may be absolutely necessary for a particular goal to be achieved, whereas others may not. In any case, they can be achieved by using different sensory skills. On the basis of the detailed analysis of case examples, this paper will aim at examining which sensory skills are being mobilised by teachers in their teaching activities. How are the sensory modalities of everyday life and the activity of teaching connected? What are the objectives of the use of certain types of sensory skills? How do verbal and non verbal actions coordinate? Which values, which moral orders are mediated through the use of particular sensory transmission modalities? How are power relations, class and gender dynamics mediated through them? And are the modalities efficacious in conveying to the learners a sense that they are being trained in a form of “traditional” know how?

Barbara Čurda is an anthropologist, presently working as a Marie Curie fellow on the project GATRODI (Gender asymmetry in the transmission of Odissi dance in India – a case study), funded by the European Commission as a partnership between the University Clermont Auvergne (UCA) in France and the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) in India. Her research is focusing on relational dynamics and conceptions of know-how amongst dance practitioners, using qualitative methodologies involving classical ethnographic methods, but also videography. Barbara has been teaching general anthropology and the anthropology of dance at the University Clermont Auvergne in France, and also at the University of Vienna in Austria. Additionally, she initially trained as an Odissi dancer.

## Tasting Sounds: Ways of Listening to the City of Hyderabad

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This study is on the methodological possibilities of studying the sonic/acoustic or what is popularly called as sound through the senses. Thinking through the *mulkis* (people who originally belonged to the then state of Hyderabad) of Hyderabad, the study tries to find the gap between existing scholarship on sound and sensory studies and the need to study sound through the senses. Hyderabad is the capital city of the south Indian state of Telangana, and Hyderabad State was the princely state in the Deccan region of pre-independence India. It engages with the question of can the methodologies of sound studies, a largely Eurocentric discipline are sufficient enough to listen to the past and present lives of communities beyond the sensory realm of Europe? Even if sound studies as a discipline and practice try to break the sensory hierarchy, what are the possible interventions that need to be done while studying communities that are sensorially different to that of a largely ocular-centric, post- Enlightenment west? The existing methodologies on sound may be of a dilemma for communities like that of *mulkis* as, unlike most post-colonial South Asian subjects, their colonisers never departed their lives. Contrary to the rest of the mainland, the *mulki* lives are still under their 'colonisers', which is the modern Indian nation-state. Through multiple factors like language integration, education standardization, intentional wiping out of visible markers of the past like architecture, and affirmation of mainland food habits, the colonization continues for them even in a post-colonial world. Such state-led initiatives are also manifestations of sensory erasures. Being predominantly followers of Islam, practices of listening are an embodiment of their lives. The sonic methodologies that are formed based on societies with visual prominence may not be sufficient enough to understand the intricacies of the life of the community. This study is part of the doctoral work on the sound and senses as a possibility of listening to the past and present of Hyderabad. Some of the questions asked here are; what is it like to study sound through the senses? From the intersections between sound and senses and sound as senses, the study thinks around the differences in the relationship between sound and its manifestations in societies with different sensory hierarchies. It also asks the question of how much sound studies can be done through the ears.

Khadeeja Amenda is a year two graduate student in the Cultural Studies in Asia programme based in the Department of Communication and New Media, NUS. Her area of research interest includes sound studies, sensory studies and visual culture. She has done her MPhil from the Centre for Media Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi. This paper is a part of her doctoral project tentatively titled *Sound, Senses and Hyderabad: Listening to the Past and Present of a City*.



## Fair or Fowl: Human-Animal Relations, Sensory Boundaries and Social Control

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Urban living in densely populated cities requires a balance between polemic human-animal relations and the accompanying sensory boundaries of conduct and lines of transgression. Noise and smell which emanate from animals as a civic nuisance and thereby transgression serve as a source of disturbance that importunes the authorities to intervene and resolve such transgressions. Yet, there are substantial numbers of residents who rear animals in or around their public housing flats, thereby serving as a source of complaints by their neighbours. It was reported in November 2022 that over 4000 complaints surfaced with regard to live chickens in residential areas in Singapore that were lodged with local town councils and agencies. These complaints centre around the noise and smell of the chickens that are perceived as inconveniences, in addition to authorities' concern about safeguarding both human and animal health. More than half of the complaints emerged from residents living in housing and development board estates, while the rest came from those in private estates. Transgressions manifest as threats to hygiene, use of space, and an intrusion of one's residential rights. According to the Ministry of National Development, a maximum of 10 poultry may be reared by those living in private properties for non-commercial purposes. In contrast, residents living in public housing are not permitted to rear chickens or other poultry, owing to concerns of public health and amenities management. Lines are thereby drawn up between the polarities of human/animal, private/public, and health/disease among others. This scenario brings to the fore, contested claims and rights over urban residential spaces that are most of the time shared, and how the presence of non-human animals has elicited such contestation. As stigmatised sources of sonic and olfactory transgressions, these animals therefore are perceived as not having the sensory and spatial rights to occupy what is deemed as urban residential spaces only to be taken up by human actors. Such contestations if not negotiations unfold across a proposed three-pronged analytical framework; to consider (1) human-animal relations in the city; (2) sensory transgressions and contestations of sensory and physical spaces; and (3) rights to such urban residential and living spaces as forming a part of sensory citizenship.

Kelvin E.Y. Low is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore. His research interests include sensory studies, migration and transnationalism, food and foodways, and social memory and heritage. He is author or editor of six books, with the most recent being *Sensory Anthropology: Culture and Experience in Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2023). His other works have been published in journals including *The Sociological Review*, *American Behavioural Scientist*, *Asian Studies Review*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnography*, and *Journal of Historical Sociology*. Kelvin is also President of TG07 Senses and Society, International Sociological Association.

**“You need to listen to the market”:**

**Decision-making and timeliness in China’s largest flower market**

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The Dounan flower market located in Southwest China’s Yunnan province is a “hot and noisy” (renao, 热闹) place. Millions of tons of fresh-cut flowers grown in the nearby areas are transacted and distributed in Dounan through three ways of trade: the auction, the e-commerce platform, and the spot market. This essay focuses on the spot market where flower traders deploy their own “feelings of the market” to make decisions on price. A carnation vendor Zhaojie considered “being sensitive” as the indispensable quality of flower traders. “You need to listen to the market,” she said. She elaborated that a booming market is a loud market which is noisy (auditory sense) and hot (an embodied feeling). The “hot and noisy” market is composed of the engine sound of motor tricycles, the noise of carts rubbing the concrete floor, the honk of reversing vehicles, and the voices of bargaining, chitchat, teasing, and sometimes quarrelling among traders. As time proceeds, the crowd dispersing gradually, the sound of bargaining diminishes, and the noise of vehicles fades away, the market of the day is going to an end. Feelings of the market is a matter of practicality for flower traders to make decisions on when to close a deal. The prices of flowers can fluctuate wildly in these couple of hours. But unlike stocks in a stock market, which can rebound after days of plummeting, the prices of flowers follow a general tendency of declining as the freshness of flowers wears off. Orienting towards timeliness in seeking for the best economic value for their flowers, traders cultivate embodied perceptions of their surroundings. Senses are, as my ethnography will showcase, an aesthetic totalization of being-in-the-world. Drawing on a phenomenology approach, this essay answers the question of how market practitioners make decisions at the right moment of a deal through embodied feelings of perception.

SUN Rui is a Ph.D. Candidate at Department of Anthropology, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (<https://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~ant/sc/saprofile/sun-rui/>). She is currently revising her dissertation on the values and temporalities of fresh-cut flowers in Yunnan Province, Southwest China. Her research interests cover the commodity value chain, low-level Chinese entrepreneurs, market and marketplaces, and the materiality of flowers. She recently published a paper on cross-species relationalities of flower cultivation: “Yunnan Flowers: Storying Cross-Species Love Beyond Metaphors.” *EBHR* 58: n. pag. Print. <https://journals.openedition.org/ebhr/530> She was 2021/22 Visiting Fellow at Harvard-Yenching Institute where she got the training on linguistic and semiotic Anthropology and has since been working on applying “qualia” to analyze the aesthetics of flowers.

## The Odour of Segregation

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Despite shaping the lives of as many as 47.5 million urban ex-untouchables in India, caste-based segregation remains a largely neglected subject in the sociological literature. Indeed, segregation studies based in the US cities like Chicago or Philadelphia have dominated our understanding of segregation not only in the US but also globally. It theorizes segregation as concentration, social isolation and consolidation of race, place and poverty. Marco Garrido (2020) "opens up" the concept by bringing Global South experience of segregation from Manila, Philippines. Garrido argues that class-based interspersed slums and enclaves, unequal interactions and spatialization better capture segregation in the Global South. While race appears dominantly in the Chicago model, and class in Manila's, both these models do not adequately explain segregation patterns of ex-untouchables in India where caste is the primary driver of segregation and does not have visible racial or phenotypical identifiers. Focusing on the segregation of ex-untouchables in a medium-sized Indian city, Ajmer, with a population of half a million people, I ask: how are ex-untouchables as a diverse minority without phenotypical identifiers spatially segregated in urban spaces? Drawing on a mixed methods approach that combines a georeferenced household survey of 697 households, cartography, and ethnographic observations, this paper argues that caste, along with the stigma of untouchability, is spatialized to segregate ex-untouchables. I uncover what I call a concentric contiguous form of segregation, where upper castes live closest to the main streets and poorest ex-untouchables are relegated to deeper core pockets of the neighbourhood. Segregation is played out along an intricate mix of the built-in environment, filth and odour, disadvantaged topographies and neighbourhood nomenclature. A configuration of these factors creates and reproduces the spatial as well as social boundaries leading to the segregation of stigmatized ex-untouchable castes in the city. For instance, open sewers and massive waste depots systematically surround the ex-untouchable ghettos. It makes putrid and noxious smells a part of the everyday urban ex-untouchable's life, but which also sets the boundary of these ghettos both physically as well as sensorially. Thus, in the absence of visible identifiable markers for caste, neighbourhoods become a marker of one's caste identity. The research has implications for theories of segregation, social visibility, sensoria and pollution, and highlights the need for theorization of segregation from a South Asian perspective where caste remains the most important dimension of inequalities.

Jusmeet S. Sihra is an urban and political sociologist, pursuing his joint doctorate in the Department of Political Science, *Centre de Recherches Internationales* (CERI), Sciences Po, Paris and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His dissertation, titled *Relegation of Ex-Untouchables in Urban India: A Study of Socio-Spatial Segregation in Ajmer*, studies the mechanisms of ex-untouchables segregation and how caste-based inequalities are reproduced through space. His other research interests include sociology of shared sacred shrines and local politics in Rajasthan.

## **Investigating ‘Dirt’ in Migration: Sensory Embodiment of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Handling Japanese Food**

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Migrants often have to work in dirty, dangerous, demanding (the 3D), and unattractive lowpaid manual jobs shunned by the locals, with everyday encounters with dirt. While public discourse and research work often explain how migrants are stigmatized and defined with negative stereotypical metaphors, very few discuss how migrants’ logic of dirt towards the dominant groups. How do migrant workers identify and cope with dirt in handling the food of others? This is the question of this paper, stemming from my fieldwork in a small town, in rural Japan from 2016 to 2018, where migrants from North Sulawesi, Indonesia, live and work in food processing factories for more than 15 years. I conducted sensory ethnography in their everyday domains (factory, church and neighbourhood), by living in the neighbourhood, actively participating in the migrant church activities, and working in the sweet-potato processing factory to experience handling the food of Japanese. Working in food factories includes cleaning, sorting, and arranging food products that require human sensorial abilities. This study finds that migrant workers classify the job into two ‘classes’ based on its level of dirtiness: wet—the cleaning and sorting—regarded as the dirtiest and the least favourable, and dry—the packing—regarded as the cleaner one, and thus is more favourable. In the factory, they acquire the sensorial knowledge by listening to the Japanese sensorial words, imitating the ways the factory owner sort the food, and refining their performance for years. However, in many cases, there are cultural differences in the conception and categorization of dirt, causing migrant workers experience disgust in handling the food of Japanese and avoidance in consuming it in their everyday life. Food sorting requires sensorial embodiment that may go against migrants’ preconceptions to dirt and trigger their bodily defense mechanism. To cope with the disgust, migrant workers negotiate their bodies and senses as boundaries as well as social skin to separate the work and non-work domains.

Median has been conducting research specializing in Indonesian migrants in Japan for more than ten years. She completed her Ph.D. at Nagoya University with a project on the sensory ethnography of Nikkei Manadoese in rural Japan. In 2020, she was interviewed by Asahi Shimbun, and her insights on the relations of migrants and local people appeared in the national newspapers and the website of Asahi Shimbun Globe+. Her latest writing, “Indonesian Migrants and the Emotions in Noise Conflict in Rural Japan,” is to appear in an edited book published by Liverpool University Press. She is currently working on a project intersecting migration, senses, and artificial intelligence (AI).

**Stres and Knowledge of Self-protection:  
An ethnographic Account of Embodied Precarity in Asian Labor Migration**

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This workshop contribution discusses embodied experiences of Indonesian migrant laborers working in Taiwan's fishing and manufacturing industries. Building on an ongoing research project, I explore, on one hand, how migrant laborers perceive the risks, hazards, and insecurities amidst migration and labor regimes that render them in various ways precarious. On the other, I discuss the knowledge repertoires workers draw on to protect themselves. Ethnographic inquiry allows for a more nuanced account of migrant precarity than represented in public discourse. In the case of migrant fishers, public discourse has scandalized cases of severe abuse on Taiwanese distant water vessels and recruitment practices leading into unfree labor arrangements. Migrant laborers in manufacturing, in turn, have received less public attention. My contribution looks at embodied migrant experiences below the radar of public accounts. I discuss the multiple facets of migrants' accounts of the Indonesian notions of stres, or kentir in Javanese, which is the first language of most Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan. Stres or kentir express an exposure to an entanglement of physical, mental, economic, and spiritual hazards, as well as violations of migrants' person-value and freedom. These risks stem from dangerous working tools, the work at sea, arbitrary bosses, strained relationships with coworkers, spiritual forces, the separation from family, and the possibility of forced repatriation. The workers employ various forms of knowledge, ranging from emotional preparedness to face the working conditions and various relationships, to negotiations of work arrangements that provide more safety, and to specific mechanisms of conflict mediation developed among migrant communities. I look at particular forms of knowledge of self-protection shaped by different workplaces: large vessels operating in distant waters, smaller vessels in the coastal fisheries, and the small and medium sized factories that largely make up Taiwan's economy on land. Thus, I seek to explore how a materialist perspective on labor processes can be made productive for inquiries into migrant sensescapes in Asia.

Samia Dinkelaker is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Her current research project explores practices of self-protection among Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan's manufacturing and fishing industries. Previously, she was a research associate the Chair of Critical Development Studies – Southeast Asia at University of Passau and at the Institute of Migration Research and Intercultural Studies at University of Osnabrück. She earned her PhD from University of Osnabrück with a dissertation entitled "Negotiating Respect(ability). A Transnational Ethnography of Indonesian Labor Brokerage." Following her research interests in (gendered) labor migration regimes and workers' subjectivities, she has done extended fieldwork in Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

## **Senses as method: Decentering authoritative accounts of remembering and forgetting in social memory making**

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This paper is inspired by fieldwork and post-field challenges encountered through conducting social anthropology research in an authoritarian context. Drawing on my own and other field researchers' experiences, I examine three aspects of knowledge production that highlight how senses, emotions and memory can be applied as method in accounts of authoritarian and post-trauma societies in Southeast Asia through an example from Vietnam. My presentation focuses on an example from Saigon Bus, part of the mass transit system in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam. The example, which involves four ethnographic moments, can be interpreted in multiple ways if sensory, emotional and memory experiences are included as contextual factors in the analysis. Rather than drawing on narrative interviews with bus riders on that journey, I draw on two decades of field research in and around HCMC. I present the example through the lens of the contextual factors that could shape the analysis using a speculative fabulation approach. This enables me to question authoritative accounts of knowledge production and to draw attention to the relevance of at least including if not emphasising the senses, emotions and memory in ethnographic fieldwork accounts. This example is part of a broader project that challenges dominant readings of social interactions with the aim of decentering authoritative accounts of knowledge production. In the broader project, I examine cases that reveal the differential value placed on senses, emotions and memory in telling personal and community stories. I analyse to what extent geopolitical and academic disciplinary contexts shape authoritative knowledge claims that overlook sensory experiences and silences in building and reporting field accounts. Firstly, I am inspired by methods from archaeology that produce cogent narratives from incomplete pieces. Memory and experience recorded in personal accounts of refugees and other migrants displaced to a new world context challenge official and semi-official narratives. Secondly, I draw on methods of historiography that incorporate lost or omitted accounts and question the preservation or survival of certain narratives. Recovering accounts in post-trauma truth telling and reconciliation processes expands and unsettles official versions. Thirdly, I turn to astronomy and theoretical physics to implement a postcolonial approach that decentres a Western rational scientific paradigm as the main ontology of knowledge production. Revealing unknown accounts and new interpretations for how senses, emotions and memory contribute to knowing generates productive contestation and dispute. I conclude that these remain essential but are potentially overlooked as a result of disciplinary expectations, institutional requirements, researcher ambitions and a form of authoritarianism in knowledge production in social anthropology.

Catherine Earl is a social anthropologist and Senior Lecturer at RMIT Vietnam. Author of *Vietnam's New Middle Classes: Gender, Career, City*, she has written extensively on the changing nature of work and welfare, mobilities, gender and social change in contemporary Vietnam and Australia.

## **‘Pedagogy of Fear’: An Ethnohistorical study of the institutionalisation of fear to create a subservient citizenry**

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In my doctoral dissertation, I examine how a democratic state used (can use) fear to create a subservient sensibility in the citizens, not as a by-product but as a direct method/tool of governing by shaping behaviour. Through an ethnohistorical method of intensive fieldwork and archival research, this project will explore the practices of arousing fear in the citizenry to make them subservient; how this fear was experienced, and how it shaped the everyday lives of those who were targeted, the university-going student population in Calcutta during the 1960s and 70s – at the backdrop of the Naxalite revolution. I argue it to be the point of departure as massive surveillance, the crackdown on dissent, and governance through fear were routinized in the Indian polity. Using the analytical framework of political affect, this study will theorise the institutionalisation of fear in the mind, body and habits of ordinary and extraordinary members of the student population during a revolutionary, social movement. This refers to the politics of memory, affective behaviours, change-in-sensibility and ideas, and how individuals and societies are made to 'fall in line' to not be an outlier in the states' perspective. The routinization of governing by fear and the 'culture of silence' instilled by a democratic state has not been explored, especially in the context of South Asia, and particularly, India. Unlike the studies which have focused on the threats as subjects to be feared, this study wants to focus on the institutionalisation of fear amongst the subjects who are deemed as threats - which also has hitherto not been studied.

Tirthankar is pursuing Dr. phil. in Psychological Anthropology at the Freie Universität, Berlin theorising the institutionalisation of fear in a democracy to create a subservient citizenry, using the analytical framework of political affect. He worked as a research assistant with The University of Chicago on a project studying the economies of slums in India, and has also designed a survey-cum-intervention to understand the extent and awareness of sexual harassment and assault at the Heidelberg University campus (where he completed his second MA in South Asian Studies). Through research, advocacy and rights-based empowerment, he has worked with suppressed groups across rural and urban India for many years.

## **‘Dwelling with’ through distance: Reflective accounts on conducting an oral history research on memories of HIV among transgender women community in Yogyakarta Indonesia**

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The conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, like other major world events, prompted a rethinking of ethnographic conventions. At the same time, ethnographers began to question the neoliberal conditions of knowledge production. Ethnographers working transnationally forged new experiments in collaboration and participation. The broader economy of knowledge production within which ethnographers (and other researchers) participate was made visible in new ways. Models such as “patchwork ethnography” (Günel, Varma and Watanabe, 2020) called to rethink the relationship between field and home in new ways, articulating other ways that a long-term, ethically grounded, and reflexive sensibility might be honed. However, calls for shifts in ethnographic research practice have not been as attentive to the broader relations that condition the global economy of knowledge production. In this workshop I focus on the field research methods based on an ethnographic account of memories of HIV in transgender women communities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It draws on oral history interviews which is initiated by Benjamin Hegarty (Deakin University, Melbourne), Amalia Puri Handayani (Atma Jaya University, Jakarta) and myself and conducted as a participatory action research with activists of two local trans community-led organizations: Kebaya Foundation and Waria Crisis Center and their ecosystem members in Yogyakarta from across generations. Extending patchwork ethnography to collaborative models, we advance possibilities of producing knowledge with and about communities. The research aimed to understand how communities are shaped by epidemics and pandemics, using COVID-19 as an entry point to understand historical experience of HIV as shaping community life. More than this, we remained attentive -because of ethical sensibilities to shifts demanded of conditions of COVID-19- to how the community were figured as subjects of research. As a community that has been researched many times/invited to share their experiences as research subjects, we also focused on how narratives and the very meanings of community and the field are enactments of particular relations. Seeing ethnographic research as slowly sedimenting relations - extended from ongoing relationships between teams of researchers, research subjects/community dynamics, and institutional infrastructures - reveals dwelling with as a method not of colocation but inhabitation. The discussion on ‘dwelling with’ in this workshop harks back Veena Das’s 2007 rendition of Stanley Cavell’s Wittgensteinian understanding of “finitude in a gesture”. Through this gesture I would like to explore what does it mean to dwell with a certain research subject and community through sensorial engagements across distance and proximity. Under the neoliberal conditions of science competitiveness and innovation that overdetermine the making and breaking of junior scholars’ career paths through the logic of productivity, where is the place for maintaining senses of devotion, felicity and commitment to the wellbeing of the researched communities? How to activate these embodied senses not only in our research methodologies as well as modes of analysis and representation, but also through everyday labor of teaching, publishing and disseminating knowledge in the world?

Ferdiansyah Thajib is a social and cultural anthropologist. The foci on anthropology of emotion and gender and sexualities have been strongly present in his research and teaching engagements. He completed his doctoral study at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin in 2020. Before joining SDAC, he was a Postdoctoral fellow at the “Children and Nature” working group at Leipzig Lab, an interdisciplinary research hub at Leipzig University. In addition to his academic engagements, Ferdi has been actively working in the field of cultural production, mainly as an artist and community educator focusing on transformative potentials of self-



organisation and alternative pedagogy. These interests are deeply tied to his activism within Kunci, a transdisciplinary research collective in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which since its founding in 1999 has been experimenting on modes of producing and sharing knowledge through studying together.