

## INTRODUCTION

The 2016-17 PlatForum editorial team welcomes you to the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of our publication. PlatForum is the longest running, student-organized Anthropology publication in Canada, and we strive to provide an accessible and open platform such that all Canadian anthropology graduate students may contribute. We notably depart from a tradition of featuring the works of students from a cross-section of Canadian universities, and showcase instead the diversity and richness of graduate student research interests from within the University of Victoria. The theme this edition is ‘contemporary anthropology,’ and we asked authors look at ‘pushing the boundaries’ of anthropology in order to encourage and promote new types of investigation, practice, and knowledge formation.

Recalling the function of academic institutions as critical sites of knowledge production, we revisit the academic context which has undoubtedly shaped and influenced this current publication. We cast our gaze between the thematic research foci of the University of Victoria’s Department of Anthropology, and the research interests of the authors featured in this 2016-17 edition. The articles herein reflect some of the ways in which emerging scholars are integrating framings, concepts and methods that span and crosscut departmental and disciplinary thematic clusters.

Authors unpack dominant or state, legal, academic and mainstream discourses, highlighting voices which have otherwise been silenced in the production of knowledge. These articles challenge power inequalities by privileging the perspectives of Indian Residential School Survivors, Indigenous internal migrants and Southeast Asian sex workers, illustrating how these diverse groups continue to shape, combat, and act on the circumstances of their world in the face of significant adversity.

Authors have worked to move beyond epistemologies which risk over-simplification. Neale seeks to overcome the problematic rural-urban dichotomy in order to debunk assumptions around Indigenous people’s ‘cultural assimilation’ in urban centers. Earnshaw rejects a unilinear model of evolution, instead favouring a notion of co-evolution to explain complex adaptations to terrestrial and marine resources. Both Anor and Wenzel explore the hidden or subverted dimensions of violence, which they argue from different

perspectives, is inherently more complex when we pay attention to how individuals frame their experiences of violence.

Anthropologists today are shifting their analytical objects from persons and ‘cultures’ to materials and objects, both visible and invisible. This expansion of disciplinary focus is reflected in the Visual Anthropology and Materiality departmental theme. Hagestedt’s case study on YouTube videos uploaded from mobile devices of a Pearl Jam concert is an exploration of the relationships between technology, objects and individuals through Actor Network Theory (ANT) which emerge through the experience of creating, circulating, consuming and narrating online videos. Specker develops a case study from two local choirs (Victoria, BC) using a sensory-based anthropological approach. From the perspectives of choir members and directors, she critically considers singing/song/voice as a form of physical sound production, which when shared in practice, can “build bridges with sound,” or in other words - generate feelings of community bonding.

Anthropology’s value is bringing into view the assumptions and framings which shape how we understand and engage with the world. By refocusing from the general to the particular, the dominant to the subversive, from the visible to the invisible, we can appreciate and possibly challenge exceptions to the presumed rules, status quo, normative frameworks and worldviews.

Sincerely,

Ursula Abramczyk and the PlatForum Editorial Team