

Performance Ethnography: Enlivening the Field Through Theatrical Techniques

**One-day Workshop
with Tom Bailey,
Theatre Practitioner
(Mechanical Theatre
Company)**



**Organised by Dr Tess Altman
In association with the
Political & Moral Economies
of Voluntarism
Reading Group**

**Monday 10 June, 9am to 5pm
Daryll Forde Seminar Room
UCL Anthropology, 14 Taviton St WC1H 0BW**

Ethnography is an attempt to evoke lived moments and interactions. Yet, sometimes our presentations of ethnographic data—in conference papers, fieldnotes, and writing—do not always capture the vibrancy and dynamism of these moments. Dialogues and encounters that had so much nuance and context when we experienced them become curtailed examples, followed by anthropological analysis. This workshop seeks to enliven our ethnographic accounts and broaden our anthropological toolkit by drawing on techniques and strategies from theatre and performance arts. Theatre practitioner Tom Bailey will facilitate learning of approaches and techniques such as physical theatre, comedy, vocal techniques, story telling, and character development. These techniques will be applied to participants' fieldnotes and field scenarios, aiding in developing richer presentations of ethnography. Questions relevant for anthropologists around the politics of representation will also be discussed.

About Tom Bailey

Tom is a professional theatre maker, performer and director, creating work through his award-winning company, Mechanical. During 2017-2018, he was Leverhulme Artist in Residence at UCL (Geography), making a new performance in response to his experience of creating theatre with refugees and migrants in the Calais 'Jungle'. He is currently creating new theatre, in collaboration with researchers, through UCL Performance Lab (6 & 7 June in the Grant Museum, see: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/whats-on/vigil>).

Programme

9am	Welcome from Tom Bailey and Tess Altman
9:15am-10:30am	Introduction to theatrical techniques
10:30-10:45am	Morning tea
10:45am-12pm	Learning theatrical techniques
12-1pm	Lunch
1-3pm	Applying techniques to fieldnotes/data
3-3:15pm	Afternoon tea
3:15-4:15pm	Informal showcase
4:15-5pm	Reflections for anthropology

Details and Booking

This event is for PhDs, postdocs and staff from anthropology and related disciplines who have undertaken a significant period of fieldwork, topic/region open. Participants will be asked to bring along a field excerpt (fieldnotes, a fieldwork vignette/scenario, or interviews) incorporating dialogue. These excerpts will form the basis of the afternoon exercise and informal showcase, in order to learn how to apply theatrical techniques. Lunch, tea/coffee will be provided.

The workshop is limited to 20 places to ensure an intimate, focused environment and the ability for everyone to perform in the informal showcase. To express interest, please email Tess Altman at tessa.altman.14@ucl.ac.uk, including a short description of the fieldwork you plan to draw upon, and what you hope to get out of the workshop.

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This workshop is run in association with the RRG Political and Moral Economies of Voluntarism. The idea builds on a conference presentation that piloted the use of performance ethnography, entitled “Humanitarianisms in/outside borders: A collaborative ethnographic story,” by UCL Anthropology PhD students Tess Altman, Victoria Tecca, Sabine de Graaf and Ioanna Manoussaki-Adamopoulou (discussant Professor Ruth Mandel) at the Anthropological Association for Social Change and Development, Roskilde, Denmark, 22-26 May 2018. It is inspired by a spoken word conference performance at the 2017 American Anthropological Association Conference entitled “Anthropology and The Matter of Whiteness.”

Photo caption: Tom Bailey performing ‘Zugunruhe’ at the Edinburgh Festival, developed through UCL in 2017.