

CURRICULUM VITAE

SAMUEL MARK ANDERSON

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EDUCATION

- 2014 Ph.D. Culture and Performance, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
Dissertation: "Celebrity, Violence, and the Mystic Arts in Postwar Sierra Leone"
- 2009 M.A. Performance Studies, New York University (NYU)
- 2000 B.A. Anthropology and Drama, University of Washington (UW)

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Politics and aesthetics, visual and multimodal ethnography, visual and material culture, publics, media, performance, postcolonial theory, war, violence, humanitarianism, development, Islam, ritual, healing, local medicine, pop and subcultures, West Africa (Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Nigeria), India

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2026– Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Planning
Arts and Humanities Division, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD)
- 2022– Senior Lecturer, NYUAD
- 2017–22 Lecturer, NYUAD
- 2015–16 Research Associate, Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard
- 2014–15 Postdoctoral Fellow, Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard
Andrew W. Mellon Seminar on "Violence/Non-Violence: War"

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS

External:

- 2013–14 Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson Foundation
- 2011–12 International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
Country: Sierra Leone
- 2006–08 Fulbright Artist Scholarship, Institute of International Education
Host Country: Burkina Faso, Field of Study: Directing
Project: "Masquerades of Burkina Faso: Traditions of Artistic Integration."

University:

- 2026 Palm Teaching Award, NYUAD
- 2021– "Culture, Rights, and Representation in and for the 21st Century" Research Kitchen
collaborative research fund, Arts and Humanities Division, NYUAD
- 2013–14 Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA Graduate Division
- 2012–13 Graduate Student Fieldwork Fellowship, UCLA International Institute
- 2010–11 Dean's General Scholarship, UCLA School of Arts & Architecture

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed:

- 2024 “Crosscurrents of Contagion: Snakes, Rumors, Rivers, and Ebola in Sierra Leone’s Borderlands.” *Antipode: A Journal of Radical Geography* 56 (4): 847–71. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.13000>.
- “Improvised Access: Listening for African Migrants’ Journeys through an Abu Dhabi Public Park” (sound walk and story map, co-authored with Y. Nurhidayat and the Abu Dhabi Public Spaces Collective). *Global Performance Studies* 7 (2). <https://gps.psi-web.org/article/view/131>.
- 2020 *The Art of Emergency: Aid and Aesthetics in African Crises* (co-edited with C.R. Ndaliko). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190692322.001.0001>.
 • Honorable Mention, 2021 African Studies Review Prize for Best Africa-focused Anthology or Edited Collection
- “Times Past Under Fire: Accounting for the Efficacy of Reconciliation Rituals in Postwar Sierra Leone.” In *The Art of Emergency: Aid and Aesthetics in African Crises*, OUP, 249–79. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190692322.003.0011>.
- 2019 “A Disarmament Program for Witches: The Prospective Politics of Antiwitchcraft, Postwarcraft, and Rebrandcraft in Sierra Leone.” *Cultural Anthropology* 34 (2): 240–71. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca34.2.04>.
- 2018 “Letting the Mask Slip: The Shameless Fame of Sierra Leone’s *Gongoli*.” *Africa* 88 (4): 718–43. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197201800044X>.
- 2009 “Inherent Vice: Contagion and the Archive in The Times Square Show.” *e-misférica: Performance and Politics in the Americas* 6 (1). <https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-61/6-1-essays/inherent-vice-contagion-and-the-archive-in-the-times-square-show.html>.

Other:

- 2021 Review of *Out of War: Violence, Trauma, and the Political Imagination in Sierra Leone*, M. Ferme. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 27 (3): 730–2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13588>.
- 2019 “Sierra Leone: History, Culture, and Geography of Music” and “Sierra Leone: Modern and Contemporary Performance Practice.” In *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*, edited by J. Sturman, 1947–51. SAGE Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483317731.n645> and <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483317731.n646>.
- 2016 Review of *Harmattan: A Philosophical Fiction*, M. Jackson. *American Ethnologist* 43 (2): 384–5. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12320>.
- Review of *Visions from the Forests: The Art of Liberia and Sierra Leone*, eds. J.-L. Grootaers and A. Bortolot. *caa.reviews* (May 5). <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/2695>.
- 2015 Review of “Poetics & Politics: A Documentary Research Symposium” (co-authored with A. Singh). *Leonardo Reviews*. <http://leonardo.info/reviews/sept2015/singh-sharma.php>.
- 2011 Review of “ACASA Fifteenth Triennial” (co-authored). *African Arts* 44 (3): 1–9.
- “Les masques face au visage politique,” “Les pouvoirs du «zangbeto»,” and “Politique, identité et croyances au Nigeria.” *Puck* 18.

Manuscripts in Preparation:

Disappear Appear Loss Change: The Political Work of Deep Spectacle in Sierra Leone (ongoing book project).

“Urban Diversions: (Un)Intended Uses of an Abu Dhabi Park” (co-authored with L. Assaf, O. Duncan, and P. Mustamaki, in press with Sharjah Architectural Triennial for *Living Continuity*).

“Propaganda’s Promise: The Improvisation of Affective Relations Across a Sierra Leonean Life” (article submitted and under review).

“The Public Demands of a Secret Society” (article submitted and under review).

“The Internet Is Helping Us / The Internet Is Killing Us’: Pedagogies of Online Graphic Violence during Sierra Leonean Elections” (article in progress).

DOCUMENTARIES, INSTALLATIONS, AND VIDEO DESIGN

- 2023 *Unsettled Accounts*. Curator. Exhibition of interdisciplinary visual research from four projects. Project Space Gallery, NYUAD.
- “*The Internet Is Helping Us / The Internet Is Killing Us*.” Photo installation of research on social media use in Sierra Leone’s elections. *Unsettled Accounts*, Project Space, NYUAD.
- 2022 *The Shameless Ugliness of Gongoli*. Video and photo assets for installation co-created with AIC staff. *The Language of Beauty in African Arts*, The Art Institute of Chicago.
- “Rhythms of Abu Dhabi.” Co-organizer. Display of urban ethnographic research. *The Transformative Power of the Anthropocene*, Project Space, NYUAD.
- 2018 *An Incident at the Theechamundi Kavu*. Video installation. *117th American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meeting*, San Jose, Ca. Nov 14-18.
- 2017 *Projet Z.E.R.O.*, dir. by H. Jégat. Video design. CréatureS Cie, Alençon, France.
- 2016 *UC Davis Punjabi Pioneers Digital Archive*. Camera, editor. Video contributions for a digital archive on the Punjabi American community in California.
- 2013 *Lutu Chuktiwa*, dir. by D. Shorter (22 min). Editor. Collaborative ethnographic film describing a Yoeme funeral in Sonora, Mexico. 2013. Screened at 2015 *RAI Int’l Festival of Ethnographic Film* (Bristol), 2015 *Ethnografilm Festival* (Paris), 2014 *Society of Visual Anthropology Film Festival* (Washington), 2014 *Int’l Ethnographic Film Festival* (Quebec).
- 2012 *Ndogboyosoi*. Video installation. *Interstices, Kochi-Muziris Biennale*, Kochi, India.
- 2010 *ShowTime Ouagadougou* (4 min). Co-director, camera, editor. Dance film collaboration with French choreographer P. Ménard.
- Star Maps* (10 min). Director, camera, editor. Profile of an immigrant salesman of celebrity home maps.
- 2009 *In|side|out* (10 min). Co-director, camera, editor. Collaboration with choreographer P. Ménard and Burkinabé dancers. Screened at 2010 *Dance Camera West* (L.A.).
- 2008 *Esther Bubley: a Life in Photography* (10 min). Director, camera, editor. Documentary on a WWII-era photojournalist.
- Rendezvous with Kafran Salma* (15 min). Director, camera, editor. Documentary on spirit possession in Niamey, Niger. Screened at the 2008 Brave Festival (Wroclaw, Poland).
- La Vie dans un Jour*, dir. by N. Bernstein (6 min). Editor. Documentary on a roadside mechanic in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
- 2007 *Ouaga Paris*, dir. by H. Jégat. Video design. CréatureS Cie, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
- Formation Professionnelle* (20 min). Director, camera, editor. Documentary on the first session of training at Ouagadougou’s new Centre de Developpement Chorégraphique.
- Videography for festivals and arts organizations in Burkina Faso, including Festima 2008, FITMO 2007, and Dialogues de Corps 2006.

PRESENTATIONS

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- 2026 “What We Learn from WhatsApp: Image Theory and Praxis in Sierra Leonean Social Media” *Theory and Praxis: Rethinking Anthropological Engagements in Africa in the 21st Century, The Association for Africanist Anthropology (AfAA)*. Ibadan, Nigeria. Jul 2–5.
- 2025 “Sierra Leonean Translations of ‘Violence,’ in All its Senses.” *62th African Studies Association (ASA) Meeting*, Atlanta, GA. Nov 20–22.
- “Rewriting ‘Violence’” panel (co-presented with M. Chatterjee and R. Natarajan). *Society for Cultural Anthropology Biennial*, Stony Point, NY. May 8–11.
- 2024 “Online Imaginations of National Crisis: Graphic Social Media during Sierra Leonean Elections.” *19th Triennial Symposium on African Art*, Chicago, IL. Aug 7–11.
- “Riding on the Edge of Extreme Heat” (co-presented with P. Mustamaki). *International Conference on Urban Affairs*, New York, NY, Apr 24–27.
- “Jah Brother and the Propaganda of Repair.” *American Ethnological Society (AES) and Assoc. for Political and Legal Anthropology (APLA) Joint Meeting*, Pittsburgh, PA. Apr 4–6.
- 2023 “A Way Station for Self-Reinvention: Migrant Improvisations in Abu Dhabi’s Electra Park” (co-presented with C. Cheah and P. Mustamaki). *28th Performance Studies international (PSi) Conference*, Johannesburg. Aug 2–5.
- 2022 “Sensing Public Space in Abu Dhabi.” *American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meeting*, Seattle, WA. Nov 9–13.
- 2021 “Objects Inside Out: Mystic Weapons as Remedy, Recreation, and Power in Sierra Leone.” *AAA Meeting*, virtual. Nov 17–21.
- “Waiting for NGOs: Aspirational Aesthetics in Sierra Leone.” *18th Triennial Symposium on African Art*, virtual. Jun 16–20.
- “Spectacular Reconciliation and Spectacular Justice in Postwar Sierra Leone.” *11th Intl Conference of the Mande Studies Association*, virtual. Jun 16–19.
- 2020 “The Social Life of Weapons: Explorations in the Materiality of Violence” roundtable participant. *AAA Raising Our Voices Virtual Conference*. Nov 5–14.
- 2019 “Becoming Partisan: Mystic Games and Mystifying Politics in Sierra Leone.” *62th ASA Meeting*, Boston, MA. Nov 21–23.
- “Crowd Disruptions: Political Rallies and Audiences of Electoral Violence in Sierra Leone.” *8th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS)*, Edinburgh. Jul 12–15.
- “Potential/Violence: Manifesting Uncertain Futures during Sierra Leonean Elections.” *AES and Assoc. of Black Anthropologists (ABA) Joint Meeting*, St. Louis, MO. Mar 14–16.
- 2018 “Multimodal Ethnography and Oral Histories as Models for Academic Writing.” Invited Speaker. PSMO College, University of Calicut, Malappuram, Kerala, India. Aug 8.
- “Shifting Past Violence: Mystic Arts as a Model for Post-war Transformation in Sierra Leone.” *Africa in the World joint conference of AAA and ASA*, Johannesburg. May 25–28.
- “‘When Old Banana Trees Die, the Young Suckers Must Grow’: Resemblances in Professional Lineages of Mystic Artists and Healers.” *AES and Society of Visual Anthropology (SVA) Joint Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA. Mar 22–24.
- 2017 “Tactics of Tactility for Disarming and Reintegrating Witches in Postwar Sierra Leone.” *60th ASA Meeting*, Chicago, IL. Nov 16–18.
- “‘A National and International Player’: King Hassan Jalloh and the Local Authority of Foreign Acclaim.” *17th Triennial Symposium on African Art*, Accra, Ghana. Aug 8–13.

- “Un don pour l’intégration : La production mystique de cadeaux et de publics dans la Sierra Leone de l’après-guerre.” *10th Intl Conference of the Mande Studies Assoc.*, Grand Bassam, Côte d’Ivoire. Aug 2–6.
- “Art and Culture in Postwar Sierra Leone: An Introduction to *Sierra Leone’s Refugee All-Stars* (2005).” Invited Speaker. Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. May 25.
- 2016 “Ex-specting the Worst: The Ebola Response’s Border-zone Blindspots.” *115th AAA Meeting*, Minneapolis, MN. Nov 16–20.
- “Fambul Tok and the Reinvention of Tradition in Rural Sierra Leone.” *The Art of Emergency: Aesthetics and Aid in African Crises* conference, Chapel Hill, NC. Oct 27–28.
- “Viral Incoherence: Snake Charmers and Sensitization at the Outbreak of Sierra Leone’s Ebola Crisis.” *AES Spring Conference*, DC. Mar 31–Apr 2.
- 2015 “Rebranding Culture: Infusing the Familiar and the Strange with SLITHU.” *114th AAA Meeting*, Denver, CO. Nov 18–22.
- “The Public Life of Poro in Sierra Leone.” *6th ECAS*, Paris. Jul 8–10.
- “The Tedium is the Message: The Laborious Extravagance of *Theyyam*.” *Poetics & Politics: A Documentary Research Symposium*, Santa Cruz, CA. May 15–17.
- 2014 “Times Past Under Fire: Fambul Tok and Traditions of Spectacular Justice in Sierra Leone.” *57th ASA Meeting*, Indianapolis, IN. Nov 20–23.
- “Manifestations of Invisible Worlds: West African Masks in Action.” Invited Guest Speaker. The Baobab Cultural Center, Rochester, NY. Oct 31.
- “*Ndogboyosoi*: Histories of Invisible Horror on Sierra Leone’s Back Roads.” *AES and SVA Joint Meeting*, Boston, MA. Apr 10–12.
- “Cultivating ‘True Sons of the Soil’: War, Diaspora, and Popular Culture in Sierra Leone.” *The University of Texas Africa Conference*, Austin, TX. Apr 3–6.
- “Letting the Mask Slip: Exception, Fame and the *Gongoli* in Sierra Leone.” *16th Triennial Symposium on African Arts*, New York, NY. Mar 19–22.
- 2013 “Conjuring a New Public: Mystic Arts and National Culture in Postwar Sierra Leone.” *112th AAA Meeting*, Chicago, IL. Nov 20–24.
- 2012 “Redressing Conflict: Agency, Attire, and History in the Mystic Arts of Post-War Sierra Leone.” *Sierra Leone Past and Present 2012*, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Apr 22–27.
- 2011 “Rough Cuts: Video and Spectacle in Post-war Sierra Leone.” *Chew On This! World Arts and Cultures Departmental Lecture Series*, Los Angeles, CA. Mar 8.
- 2010 “Masking Relocation: Migration and Spirit Societies in West Africa.” *53rd ASA Meeting*, San Francisco, CA. Nov 18–22.
- “Those Who Eat the Night: Policing the Invisible on the Benin Coast.” *16th PSi Conference*, Toronto. Jun 9–12.
- “*Gyinna-Gyinna* goes Gaga: Fashion and Fear from an African Mask to MTV.” *Anxieties of Over-exposure: 2nd Nat’l Grad. Conf. in Performance*, Los Angeles, CA. Apr 30–May 1.
- 2009 “Possessing Itineraries, Possessing Choreographies: Ouidah’s National *Vodun* Day Festival.” *Emotion in Motion: Tourism, Travel, and Movement*, Leeds. Jul 4–7.
- “Kafran Salma’s Polish Invitation: Hauka Spirit Possession and the Intercultural Impossible.” *15th PSi Conference*, Zagreb. Jun 24–28.
- “NZAMBI – ZONBI – ZOMBIE: A Genealogy of the Living Dead.” *Specters, Hauntings and Archives Graduate International Conference*, Amsterdam. Jan 15–16.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2017– Senior Lecturer, New York University Abu Dhabi
 ANTH-UH 1102: Anthropology of/as Media
 CADT-UH 1044JX: Sensory Ethnographic Methods in Kerala
 CCEA-UH 1011: Ritual and Play
 WRIT-UH 1115: The Art and Aesthetics of International Aid
 WRIT-UH 1116: The Politics of Spectacle
 WRIT-UH 1125: Graphic Violence
- Fall 2016 Adjunct Professor, Emmanuel College Department of History
 HIST 1107-1: Themes in African History
- 2011–13 Teaching Assistant, UCLA Dept of World Arts and Cultures/Dance
 WAC C180: Video Practice – Dance and Camera (Prof. D. Rousseve)
 WAC C180: Video Practice – Documenting Culture (Prof. A. Sharma)

RESEARCH SUPERVISION

- 2021– Project Co-lead on “Participation in Abu Dhabi’s Public Spaces”: student-conducted sensory ethnographic research on Abu Dhabi’s public spaces and how they might indicate challenges to conceptions of publicity and privacy amidst environmental change
- 2024 Faculty Committee Member for Maya Muwanga’s Capstone Research Project on History, Memory, and Fugitivity in New Orleans, NYUAD
- 2021–22 Faculty Advisor for Yusril Nurhidayat’s Capstone Research Project on Immigration, Theatre, and Public Policy in Germany, NYUAD
- 2020 Faculty Committee Member for Tzy Jiun Tan’s Capstone Research Project on History, Memory, and Insurgency in Malaysia, NYUAD
- 2019 Faculty Committee Member for Ankita Sadarjoshi’s Capstone Performance Project on Performance, Materiality, and Violence, NYUAD
- 2017–18 Faculty Advisor for Sofia Gomez-Doyle’s Capstone Research Project on Diaspora, Heritage, Theatre, and Public Policy in Ghana, NYUAD

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- 2021– Steering Committee Chair, Research Kitchen on “Culture, Rights, and Representation in/for the 21st Century,” NYUAD
- 2019– Search Committee Member, four (4) searches for writing, anthropology, and interdisciplinary faculty
- 2017– Member, NYUAD African Studies Committee
- 2022–25 Arts & Humanities Representative, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and Chair of Arts & Humanities Curriculum Committee, NYUAD
- 2017–22 Pre-major Academic Mentor for incoming students (approx. 4 each year), NYUAD
- 2021 Interim Writing Program Representative, Core Curriculum Committee, NYUAD
- 2017 First-Year Dialogue Facilitator for eight students, NYUAD

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- 2015– Peer Reviewer for the Journals *American Ethnologist*, *African Arts*, *Africa Today*, *Mande Studies*, and *SAGE Open*
- 2022– Co-organizer, “Campus Rights” lunch meetings and “Language(s) of Rights” book series
NYUAD “Culture, Rights, and Representation” Research Kitchen
- 2022– Co-organizer, annual “Culture, Rights, and Representation” workshop
NYUAD “Culture, Rights, and Representation” Research Kitchen
- 2021 Co-organizer, *Explorations in the Indian Ocean World and Beyond* workshop
NYUAD “Heritage, Memory, and Mobility” Research Kitchen
- 2019 Reviewer, Social and Cultural Anthropology Diploma Programme
International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization
- 2016 Co-organizer, “Demonstrating the Art of Emergency” panel
59th Annual African Studies Association (ASA) Meeting, Washington, DC.

Co-organizer, *The Art of Emergency* conference
University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
- 2015 Advisor and Contributor, Arts and Ebola Response Network
University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine
- 2014 Organizer, “Violence Visualized: Staging Image and Injustice in Africa” panel
57th Annual African Studies Association (ASA) Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.
- 2011 Organizing Committee, Professional Development Workshop
UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures
- 2010 Organizing Committee, *Anxieties of Overexposure*, national grad student conference
UCLA Center for Performance Studies

Oral History Training Workshop
UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research

FIELDWORK

- 2015–23 Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Kailahun, etc.) for follow-up research and new work on responses to the Ebola outbreak and elections. Seven trips, twenty-four weeks.
- 2015 India (Kerala) to document Theyyam and other local rituals. Two trips, seven weeks.
- 2011–13 Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Kailahun, etc.) and Liberia for dissertation research in urban and postwar spectacles. Eighteen months.
- 2010 Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo) for ongoing study of urban and postwar art. One month.

Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo), Nigeria (Lagos, Osogbo, Ibadan), and Benin (Porto Novo) on comparative pilot research on African urban performance. Two months.
- 2009 Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou, Boni) to study and film a village initiation. One month.
- 2006–08 Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Niger on Fulbright-funded research in masked dance and other arts. Detailed study in Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and multiple Burkinabé villages. Additional research in Tombouctou, Abidjan, Ouidah, Cotonou, Osogbo, Makurdi, Agadez, and Niamey. Twenty months.
- 2002 India, Nepal, Thailand, Laos, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia for informal research in performing arts including Kathakali (Indian dance drama), Chhau (Bengali masked dance), Hun Lakhon Lek (Thai rod puppetry), Chinese Opera, and Wayang Kulit (Indonesian shadow puppetry). Nine months.