

What is/where is Ethnography in Multimodal Anthropology?

International Workshop

12th and 13th March, 2024, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway

From Autumn 2025, UiT plan to offer a new Masters program in Anthropology, where the students will have the possibility to work "Multimodally". Building upon the legacy of the long-standing Visual Anthropology tradition at UiT, the new programme reflects recent changes in the cultural and media landscape that we engage with as anthropologists:

- 1) The democratisation and integration of new technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones. We recognise that digital and visual tools have developed considerably since the establishment of the Visual Anthropology programme at UiT, as well as students' familiarity and capability with these tools. Our new programme is thus open to teaching and expressing other ways of telling anthropological stories than only through classic ethnographic film.
- 2) The shift toward engagement and collaboration in anthropological research, particularly in Indigenous contexts, and the dynamic roles of anthropologist's vis-a-vis the public and the communities in which they work. We emphasise that all anthropological research today has an obligation to maintain a dialogue with its "fields" about the development and dissemination of knowledge. Ethnographic action is a concept we want to discuss, to address our field collaborators' purposes for contributing and collaborating in research projects. What is in it for them, and how can visual and other multimodal forms of storytelling contribute to a more engaged anthropology? How can such initiatives be presented in the students' projects and output?
- 3) Master's theses and traditional academic texts are only one way to achieve such communication. Our new programme will experiment with visual and other multimodal forms of storytelling in the form of student projects and output.

In this two-day workshop we welcome experts in audio-visual and multimodal anthropology to learn and discuss: what should - and can - these other multimodal outputs be?

UiT has extensive expertise in visual research methods and editing strategies to ensure good quality of ethnographic work in the films that are made. The questions we ask in this workshop are: "Where is ethnography in "the multimodal"? How to ensure anthropological quality in such work? And what are the best terms to use to describe this new venture? We aim to discuss and reflect more about this new profile, together with those anthropologists already working in the field.

The workshop starts with our two seniors, Lisbet Holtedahl and Bjørn Arntsen, each of them presenting on the legacy and existing strengths of the master's programme and its potential for new directions.

Then other invited guests will share their experiences working with multimodal anthropology.

At the end of the second day, we will have a roundtable to discuss the potential and challenges of integrating multimodal outputs and approaches to our teaching and student experience. We hope to assess the opportunities and limitations of the multimodal turn, including setting parameters for evaluating multimodal outputs such as photo-essays, websites, and podcasts alongside ethnographic film.

Participants

Lisbet Holtedahl (UiT)
Bjørn Arntsen (UiT)
Trond Waage (UiT)
Richard Fraser (UiT)
Bente Sundsvold (UiT)
Rossella Ragazzi (UiT)
Carolina Némethy (UiT)
Francisca Prudence Uriri (UiT)
Julián David Pineda (UiT)
Peter I. Crawford (UiT)

Mihai Leaha (University of Barcelona)
Sidylamine Bagayoko (University of Bamako)
Jonathan Larcher (Paris Nanterre Université)
Thomas John (Universität Münster)
Paula Bessa Braz (University of São Paulo)

Master of Visual Anthropology students – past and present

Schedule

12th March: Day 1 (B1005 Auditorium)

9:00 – 9:15 **Welcome and Introduction** (Trond Waage & Richard Fraser)

9:15 – 9:45 **Baby, Bathwater and Multimodal Anthropology: Heading for the Future with an Idea of Where You Came From** (Bjørn Arntsen)

9:45 – 10:15 **The VCS legacy vs/and techno-optimism: Reflexivity and «the other» in Anthropological Storytelling** (Lisbet Holtedahl)

Coffee Break

10:30 – 11:15 **Multimodal Anthropology in a Discipline of Words and Images** (Mihai Leaha)

11:15 – 12:00 **Finding the Right Form for Content: Students' Engagement with Multimodal Productions** (Thomas John)

12:00 – 12:45 **Storytelling as Ethnographic Action** (Bente Sundsvold)

12:45 – 13:15 **Discussion**

13:30 – 14:45 Lunch

14:45 – 15:30 **Multi-Institutional Collaboration and Multimodal Research Politics and Practice In Visual Anthropology** (Sidylamine Bagayoko)

15:30 – 16:15 **Images, Discovery Processes and Ethnographic Storytelling** (Trond Waage)

16:15 – 17:00 **Photographs, Digital Repatriation, and Ethnographic Action** (Richard Fraser)

17:00 – 17:30 **Discussion**

18:30 – 20:30 Dinner

13th March: Day 2 (B1005 Auditorium)

09:30 – 10:15 **How to Use Personal Audiovisual Archives in Ethnography? Two Contrasting Relationships from Mexico and Romania** (Jonathan Larcher)

10:15 – 11:00 **Multimodality, Music and the Audio-Visual** (Paula Bessa Braz)

11:00 – 11:45 **Interactive Ethnography** (Carolina Némethy)

11:45 – 12:15 **Discussion**

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:30 **Roundtable & Coffee** (C1005)

End