
Dialogue Session -- ***Facing the Public: Professional Anthropology beyond academia and methodology***

15th Annual Public Anthropology Conference
American University
Saturday Oct 27, 2018
Mary Graydon Center, Room 247
2:30 pm - 3:50 pm

Organizers:

Alexandra Sellassie Antohin, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.
Andrea Kim Neighbors, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center

Abstract:

This open-format dialogue will discuss the role of anthropology for enhancing public-facing roles in the fields of education, public policy and governmental affairs. Motivated by a common refrain about the applied nature of anthropology, dominantly confined to iterations such as bio-medical research, consumer ethnographies, corporate relations, and now U/X design, how can we also attend to the more intellectual and interpersonal orientations to cultural difference that inform our work? How does consistent interactions and relationships with participants at museums, P-12 classrooms, policy sessions, formulate a less-acknowledged type of anthropological orientation that is distinct from the discipline's transferable skills and methodologies?

Short bios of Organizers:

Alexandra Sellassie Antohin is the Senior Research and Program Manager at the Avoice Virtual Library Project, one of the nation's largest online digital archives capturing black legislative behavior in the United States House of Representatives. She is also the managing co-editor of what will be the first-ever policy journal launched by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in 2018. Alexandra will share her anthropological approach to participants' experiences at the Annual Legislative Conference, a hallmark forum for public policy at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. She has found that a "local-level" focus on attendee profiles, motivations, and aspirations not only provides deeper data for research and analysis but also helps promote more self-reflection about the organization's mission and how their initiatives translates publicly. Alexandra completed her doctorate in Social Anthropology at University College London and is currently a professorial lecturer at George Washington University.

Andrea Kim Neighbors currently serves as the Education Specialist for the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, where she collaborates on co-creating models of future-focused education programs for P-12, family, and adult learners. Before joining the Asian Pacific American Center, Andrea was Manager of Community Partnerships at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC and Tour Manager at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle, WA, designing customized museum experiences to best fit the needs of local educators. She will share her anthropological approach to a "student and teacher first" practice in museum education, and how listening closely to students and teachers have shaped the design of in-gallery experiences. Andrea is an active museum community member, serving as a board officer for the Alliance of American Museums' Diversity Committee Professional Network. She is also a member of the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School's Arts and Culture Advisory Team and a book reviewer for the Asian American publication *Hyphen Magazine*.