

Archipelago Conference Schedule

March 20-22, 2025

MIT, Cambridge, MA

Host: Erica Caple James

Thursday, March 20, 2025 (Half-Day Event)

Start Time	Length (min)	Event	Location
3:00 PM	30	Registration	<i>Building E14-638 Winter Garden</i>
3:45 PM	15	Opening Invocation (MIT Chaplain Nina Lytton) Welcome Address by: Hashim Sarkis Chris Zegras	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
4:00 PM	90	Film Screening: Manthia Diawara, Introductory remarks <i>Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation</i> Discussion by Chris Walley, Garnette Cadogan, and Chris Boebel.	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
5:30 PM	45	Opening Plenary Panel: Édouard Glissant, Archipelagic Thinking, and Contemporary Politics Discussion with Garth Myers, Mimi Sheller, Gabriella Carolini, and Erica Caple James	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
6:15 PM	45	Reception	<i>Building E14-648 Silverman Skyline</i>
7:30 PM	90	AES Board Dinner (invite-only)	<i>Offsite</i>

Friday, March 21, 2025 (Full Day Event | [click on event to access abstract + participants](#))

Start Time	Length (min)	Event	Location
8:15 AM	30	Registration with coffee/tea/light pastries Breakfast by Yafa Bakery and Cafe	<i>Building E14-638 Winter Garden</i>
9:00 AM	75	Concurrent Panel Sessions – Round 1 <i>Panel 1: Separated by Proximity: Urban Archipelagos and the Politics of Space</i> <i>Panel 2: Intersecting Isles: Transnational Archipelagos and Diasporic Exchange</i> <i>Panel 3: Archipelagic Resistance and Solidarity: Indigenous and Decolonial Methods</i>	<i>Building E51 Panel 1 - 095 Panel 2 - 275 Panel 3 - 063</i>
10:30 AM	75	Featured Workshop/Panel Discussion: Urban Archipelagos: Indigenous History of Boston's Harbor Islands Panelists: Elizabeth Solomon, Faries Gray Moderator: Erica Caple James	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
12:00 PM	60	Lunch Break Graduate Student Networking	<i>Building E14-638 Winter Garden</i>
12:00 PM	75	Featured Workshop Teaching Introduction to Cultural Anthropology Kenneth Guest	<i>Building E14-633 Lecture Hall</i>
01:30 PM	75	Concurrent Panel Sessions – Round 2 <i>Panel 4: Performance as a Site of Inquiry and Exploration</i> <i>Panel 5: Health and Environment: Response and Adaptation In a Time of Global Crisis</i>	<i>Building E51 Panel 4 - 095 Panel 5 - 275</i>

1:30 PM	75	Concurrent Panel Sessions – Round 2 <i>Panel 6: Negotiating the Sacred: Religious Archipelagos and Conflict Mediation</i> <i>Roundtable A: Race, Caste, and the Global Rightward Turn</i>	<i>Building E51</i> <i>Panel 6 - 063</i> <i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
3:00 PM	75	Featured Panel Discussion: Archipelagic Methodologies <i>Panelists:</i> Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, Karilyn Crockett <i>Moderator:</i> Doreen Lee	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
4:30 PM	45	Keynote Speech: John Drabinski Island Imaginaries: Five Theses on Archipelagic Thinking	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
5:15 PM	55	Q&A Session with Keynote Speaker and Panelists Discussants: Patrick Sylvain, Sandy Alexandre	<i>Building E14-674 Multi-Purpose Room</i>
5:45 PM	60	Networking Reception	<i>Building E14-638 & E14-648</i>
7:00 PM	-	Communal Dinner with Keynote Speaker, Presenters, Discussants, and Moderators: all conference participants invited	<i>Building E14-638 & E14-648</i>

Saturday, March 22, 2025 (Full Day Event)

Start Time	Length (min)	Event	Location
9:00 AM	75	Concurrent Panel Sessions – Round 1 Panel 7: <i>Material Memory: Archipelagic Remembrance, Commemoration and Contested Landscapes</i> Featured Panel A: <i>Drifting Boundaries: Archipelagic Thinking and the Reimagining of Knowledge</i> Featured Panel B: <i>Archipelagic Thinking and Relational Politics</i>	<i>Building 66</i> <i>Panel 7 - 154</i> <i>FP A - 160</i> <i>FP B - 168</i>
10:30 AM	90	Featured Workshop: <i>Making Canoe, Kin, and Place: Archipelogics of Indigenous Watercraft and Ecological Knowledge</i> <i>Panelists:</i> Vicente Diaz, Troy Phillips, Cassius Spears <i>Moderator:</i> Ping-Ann Addo	<i>Building E14 - 674</i> <i>Multi-Purpose Room</i>
12:00 PM	60	Lunch Break	Offsite
1:30 PM	45	Featured Speaker: Christina Gerhardt <i>Sea Change: An Atlas of Islands in a Rising Ocean</i> <i>Discussant:</i> Gediminas Urbonas	<i>Building E14-674</i> <i>Multi-Purpose Room</i>
2:30 PM	75	Featured Workshop: How to Publish in <i>American Ethnologist</i> , Jesse Grayman	<i>Building E14-633</i> <i>Lecture Hall</i>

2:30 PM	75	Concurrent Panel Sessions – Round 2 Panel 8: <i>Oceans Across Borders: Transnational and Trans-Species Interactions</i> Roundtable B: <i>Thinking with diabetes: An archipelagic approach to bodies, technologies, care, and sugar</i>	<i>Building 66</i> <i>Panel 8 - 154</i> <i>Roundtable B - 168</i>
3:45 PM	30	Closing Remarks and Reflections	<i>Building E14-674</i> <i>Multi-Purpose Room</i>

Panel 1

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 095

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Separated by Proximity: Urban Archipelagos and the Politics of Space

Description:

This panel explores the geography of archipelagic thought in relation to the infrastructural, the urban, and the regional. The papers offer nuanced understandings of the separations that emerge from the anthropogenic transformation of territory, tracing how spatial, ecological, and social divisions shape interactions across human and non-human entities. Through cases spanning Central Africa, South Asia, and North America, the panel examines how fragmented geographies—whether produced through technology or racialized spatial management—mediate exchange, belonging, and exclusion.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Jason Jackson**

Papers:

- **On Nodes and Flows:** Radio Connectivity and an Archipelago of Villages in Central Africa
 - *Scott Ross*
- **The Sea Ahead:** Reorienting Karachi's Urban Environmental Geography
 - *Salwa Tareen*
- **Conditional Inhabitants:** Regional Legibility and Identity in Appalachia
 - *Taylor Gilliam*

Panel 2

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 275

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Intersecting Isles: Transnational Archipelagos and Diasporic Exchange

Description:

Each paper in this panel explores a case of how cultural practices exceed and engage with borders through migration and diaspora. Themes of community care, identity, and structural violence are woven through each panelist's work. The resultant conversation demonstrates that each of these themes is problematized differently across transnational contexts.

The panel discussion will be moderated by **Michael Fischer**.

Papers:

- **Archipelagic Thinking** and the **Afro-Brazilian Experience** in the NYC Metro Area
 - *Vasconcelos Dias Fernanda*
- **Transforming Ethnographic Navigation:** From Principles of Azerbaijani Ontological Hospitality to Postures of Ethnographic Practice
 - *Calvin Tiessen*
- **Archipelagic Kin Economies:** The (Re)production of Family and Business Across Borders
 - *Garcia Miranda*
- **Disrupting Discourse in Touristified Islands:** PAR and the Politics of Subversion in Mallorca's Rural Urbanization
 - *Rossello Xamena Miquel*

Panel 3

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 063

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Archipelagic Resistance and Solidarity: Indigenous and Decolonial Methods

Description:

From Brazilian quilombos to Shi'i women's seminars, the papers in this panel explore relationships between colonialism, resistance, and sovereignty. Colonial infrastructures are co-opted, rejected, or recontextualized, and the potential for radical solidarity through archipelagic thinking rises. Stepping back from the case study, each author interrogates hegemonic research methods and considers how archipelagic thinking might inform decolonial methodologies for learning from and with indigenous communities.

The panel discussion will be moderated by **Amy Moran-Thomas**.

Papers:

- **Islands of Empire, Waves of Resistance:** Grassroots Movements Against U.S. Military Presence on the Japanese Archipelago
 - *Hsieh Chu-Wen*
- **Refusal as “Romanticization” and/or Decolonization:** Accounting for Difficult Fieldwork Situations in the Islamic Republic of Iran
 - *Tawasil Amina*
- **“Our Brother Natives”:** Archipelagic Thinking, Creolization, and Proto-Nationalism in Depression-Era Belize
 - *Kray Christine*
- **Navigating Archipelagic Thinking:** Reflections on Stepping Back from Indigenous Language Revitalization Research
 - *Borgia-Askey Melissa*

Panel 4

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 095

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Title: Performance as a Site of Inquiry and Exploration

Description: How does performance, in the form of theatre, dance, and language, serve as a conduit of political and cultural identity? Through case studies spanning Chicago, Berlin, Suva, and Inner Mongolia, this panel will explore the role of performance in community-building, cultural and public diplomacy, and language revitalization. It will examine how performance, as practice, space, and metaphor, has been wielded to claim and contest notions of citizenship, solidarity, and survival.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Christopher Fung**

Papers:

- **Bodies, Chairs and the Spaces In-Between:** Materializing Violence and Futurity in Chicago's Improve Theatres
 - *Charman Lauren*
- **Dancing Between Nations:** Banyans, Archipelagos, and Metaphors of Interconnection
 - *Cox Nicole*
- **From Movement to Movement:** Shifting Political Subjectivities on the Dance Floor
 - *Pierce Reid*
- **Echoes of a Language:** Performing to Speak Mongolian in Inner Mongolia, China
 - *Kaat Skylar*

Panel 5

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 275

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Title: Health and Environment: Response and Adaptation In a Time of Global Crisis

Description: From the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change, contemporary global crises are reshaping our understanding of the interconnections between health and environment in localities around the world. This panel will explore responses to health and environmental challenges by state, non-governmental, and international actors in Brazil, Kenya, the Maldives, and Cabo Verde. It will analyze the challenges and tensions embedded in these efforts, as well as document attempts to advance community sovereignty and mobilization.

This session would be moderated by **Cal Biruk**

Papers:

- **Archipelagic “Global” Health?** Constructing and Contesting Globality at Africa’s Premier Population Research Center
 - *Daniel Krugman*
- **Permission Structures:** Adaptation and the Archipelagic Geopolitics of Ocean Avoidance in the Maldives
 - *Eric Hirsch*
- **Isles of Victimhood:** COVID Denial and Struggles for Reparation in Brazil
 - *Vinicius Cardoso Reis*
- **Surveying Perceptions of Climate Change and Health** in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
 - *Cindy Xie*

Panel 6

21st March 2025

Building E51 - 063

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Title: Negotiating the Sacred: Religious Archipelagos and Conflict Mediation

Description:

This panel explores the geography of archipelagic thought in relation to how people navigate histories of marginalization, reform, and globalization through local practices—whether in religious education, urban networks of care, or contested claims to the past. Rather than passively receiving global ideologies, these communities actively reshape them to negotiate social hierarchies and establish new modes of coexistence.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Dwai Banerjee**

Papers:

- **Archipelagic Islam:** Communal Agency in Zanzibar between Neoliberal and Salafi Reforms
 - *Caity Bolton*
- **Archipelagic Possibilities of Networked Care** Sites in Athens, Greece
 - *Hannah Howard*
- **Comparative Modes of Historical Consciousness:** An Ethnography of a Neighborhood Dispute in Urban India
 - *Nomaan Hasan*
- **Racializing Development:** Maiming Mosques and the Logic of Islam's Sinicization in Contemporary China
 - *Ruslan Yusupov*

Roundtable A

21st March 2025

Building E14-674 | Multi-Purpose Room

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Title: Race, Caste, and the Global Rightward Turn

Description: This roundtable places race and caste at the forefront for understanding Glissant's call for 'archipelagic thinking' regarding enduring systems of stratification across geographies. Our roundtable brings together anthropologists whose work attends to how the categories of race and caste operate in dynamic relation in the present moment as right-wing political movements surge across the globe. We are particularly interested in the ways academic knowledge production—particularly, but not exclusively, in the Euro-American academy—reproduces an area-siloed approach to each and the repercussions of this in the age of right-wing revanchism. For example, the scholarly conversation on caste has tended towards “provincializing,” understood as only relevant to South Asia, India, and/or Hindus. This siloing has worked within Orientalist understandings of where and who caste is pertinent to and has allowed the Hindutva state to argue that caste is a culturally specific “internal matter” not to be discussed, debated, or challenged in global conversations on oppression. Similarly, race has only recently been taken seriously as a scholarly category in the context of South Asia, primarily because race has been largely understood in relation to the Americas while South Asia has remained captured in the colonial lenses of religion and caste. How do we attend to the implications of this siloed geographic legacy in ways that activate an attention to the connectedness and conceptual differences of these projects of hierarchical differentiation? How might, for instance, a global caste critique challenge right-wing politics and allow us to see aspects of caste that may operate in contexts not usually associated with it while, simultaneously, thinking through the ways racism functions as part of authoritarian projects?

This session would be moderated by **Arjun Shankar**

Presenters:

- *Gabriel Dattatreyan*
- *Brian Horton*
- *Pinky Hota*
- *Renny Thomas*
- *Sareeta Amrute*

Featured Panel Discussion

21st March 2025

Building Building E14 - 674

3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Title: Archipelagic Methodologies

- ***Archipelagic History as Method: Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam during the Vietnam War Era and Today***
 - *Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi*

Abstract:

This talk offers archipelagic history as one method for engaging wayward archives of global South solidarity. Unlike other models of writing history across multiple locales, such as world history, global history, transnational history, or diasporic history, archipelagic history is not organized around a particular empire, superpower, nation-state, or ethnic diaspora. Rather, it traces connections between spaces on the seeming margins of grand historical narratives to draw attention to South-South relations: the exchange of political knowledge, military strategy, solidarity rhetoric, and intimate relations between subjects of the global South who resist aggression from the global North. Archipelagic history upends linear notions of causal temporality and instead attends to the concurrent reverberations of war and imperialism across multiple sites. As a case study, this talk will model an archipelagic history of Vietnam, Palestine, and Guam during the Vietnam War era, noting how these three spaces became entangled in, and yet exceeded, circuits of US military empire between 1967-75. I end with some reflections on how Vietnam and Palestine have become newly entangled during the ongoing War in Gaza, as well as how the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and the start of the Vietnamese refugee exodus to Guam has occasioned a praxis of archipelagic history as public history-making.

- ***Reclaiming Archipelagos of Collective Memory and Action: Mother Power, Black Power and the 'New Boston' (1962-1969)***
 - *Karilyn Crockett*

Abstract:

On April 23, 1962 a truck carrying debris from an urban renewal site in downtown Boston killed six-year-old Laura Ann Ewing as she attempted to cross a street in her neighborhood. Laura's death sparked massive demonstrations by local mothers enraged by the city's urban renewal plans and the daily threat these plans posed to their children's lives. This story looms large in the memories of Boston's grassroots activist communities yet the story itself is incomplete. This paper explores a public collaborative research and action project that brings together area residents, students, activists and archivists to explore 1960s-era social movements to repair collective memory loss and plan more liberatory urban futures. Called "Hacking the Archive" (HTA), this project theorizes urban social movements as communal moments of intergenerational dreaming, frustration, possibility, knowledge creation and action. HTA's experimental, gamified approach demonstrates that research exploring past social movements and seeking future social change requires a methodology that is collective, intergenerational and attentive to data disharmonies between lived experience, archival records, social memory and government-authored histories. For wealth-extracted populations battling land loss, displacement and death due to capital penetration, reclaiming cross hemispheric, transoceanic, time-expansive and multi-generational archipelagos of memory holds the seeds of durable pedagogies for self-determination and survival.

Moderator: Doreen Lee

Panel 7

22nd March 2025

Building 66 - 154

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Material Memory: Archipelagic Remembrance, Commemoration and Contested Landscapes

Description:

This panel explores themes of remembrance, commemoration, and contestation as they relate to archipelagic reorderings of time, history, and place. Through the material artifacts of war, heritage, and displacement, the presentations examine how memory is inscribed, erased, and reconfigured across landscapes and diasporic spaces. From war memorials that shape national narratives to bioarchaeological sites that mediate historical reckonings and museum collections that complicate institutional authority, this panel considers how objects, bodies, and monuments function as sites of political struggle.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Erica James**

Papers:

- **Monumental Silence:** War Commemoration as Erasure
 - *Jelena Golubović*
- **Straddling the Disciplines:** The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection as Case Study
 - *Paulette Curtis*
- **Archipelagos of Sound:** Collective Music Practice in East LA
 - *Stainova Yana*

Featured Panel A

22nd March 2025

Building 66 - 160

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Drifting Boundaries: Archipelagic Thinking and the Reimagining of Knowledge

Description:

Edouard Glissant invites us to consider our worlds with “archipelagic thinking” as a way to reimagine the uncertainty, diffraction, and diversity that make up our lives. This way of thinking embraces the process of detour—not in the sense of evasion but rather as a way to create relations outside the rigid boundaries of continental and systematic thought. Building on Glissant’s idea, this panel seeks to address how archipelagic thinking reconfigures and reimagines anthropological epistemologies, not only in their relationality but also through the circulation of knowledge across disciplines and communities. What happens when the flow of anthropological knowledge trespasses the borders of existing discourse, reinscribing them along the drifting shores or archipelagos? How do knowledge and ideas get into tension with one another, and what are the possibilities at these points of friction? As we work through these questions, our panel aims to chart the subtle interplay between the bounded and the fluid and invites a reimagining of knowledge as relational, porous, and transformative.

The panel discussion would be chaired by **Christopher Nelson**

Papers:

- **Afterlife of Closure:** Victimhood and Redress after Toxic Exposure in Japan
 - *Shoko Yamada*
- **Bridging Empire:** Jeju Island in Japan’s Colonial Vision
 - *Youjoung (Yuna) Kim*
- **Plantation Archipelago:** Newfoundland Salt Fish and Caribbean Sugar
 - *Katherine McNally*
- **Archipelagic Repair:** Psychodramatic Knowledge and The Concept of the Human After Mass Violence
 - *Talia Katz*

Featured Panel B

22nd March 2025

Building 66 - 168

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Title: Archipelagic Thinking and Relational Politics

Description:

Linked theoretically by the productive concept of archipelagos, these papers work to think across scales, considering the politics of theorizing difference and sameness as these are mobilized by diverse actors: Malaysian governmental actors addressing multispecies encounters, Tibetan nomads' tribal identities in the face of Chinese state policies that disrupt shared histories and connections, national myths of inclusion to which Indonesian women's pious fashion is recruited and through which it is contested, and notions of Japanese national-cultural identity which emerge, through an archipelagic lens, as shifting and discontinuous. Together, these papers highlight moments in which hierarchy and power are revealed as socially and politically relevant and the moments in which differences are (sometimes forcefully) erased and the ways insider and outsider status play out across ontological and epistemological boundaries, which themselves are ever-contested.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Goldfarb Kathryn**

Papers:

- **Navigating Island Geographies** in Malaysia's Human-Monkey Interfaces
 - *Kymberley Chu*
- **Reconnecting and Reclaiming** Tibetan Kinship and Identity among Nomads
 - *Sanggay Tashi*
- **Contrasting Compasses:** Between and Among Styles of Piety in Indonesia
 - *Carla Jones*
- **An Archipelagic Japanese-ness:** Mixed and Multicultural Claims to Japanese Identity
 - *Jessica Hiroshima Misiorek*

Featured Workshop

22nd March 2025

Building E14 - 674

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Title:

Making Canoe, Kin, and Place: Archipelogics of Indigenous Watercraft and Ecological Knowledge

- *Vicente Diaz,*
- *Troy Phillips*
- *Cassius Spears*

Description:

Why and how are Indigenous Peoples across Oceania and Turtle Island restoring their traditional watercraft and water-related traditional ecological knowledge systems, and to what political and analytical effects? How do Indigenous watercrafts and the craftwork of Indigenous knowledge systems embody and materialize Indigenous cultural and social relations and self-understandings, and how do these technologized relations shape how we interact with the environment? In this workshop, leaders in Oceanic and Massachusetts-based American Indian tribes and Indigenous peoples talk shop about waa (Micronesian Carolinian) and mishoon (Nipmuc; Narragansett) to conjure up the deep social, historical, cultural, political, spiritual, and analytical stakes involved in making canoes for distinctly Indigenous aims and purposes.

Moderator: Ping-Ann Addo

Featured Speaker

22nd March 2025

Building E14 - 674

1:30 PM - 2:15 PM

Title: Designing land and seascapes for climate change

Abstract: Low-lying islands are least responsible for the climate crisis but they are at the frontlines of its impacts. Professor Christina Gerhardt, Leir Chair of Comparative Literature and Co-Founding Co-Director of the Environmental Humanities at Clark University, will share research related to her book, *Sea Change: An Atlas of Islands in a Rising Ocean*, which shares both these impacts and the solutions to them. Centering the voice of Indigenous Pacific Islanders and Afro-Caribbean Islanders, *Sea Change* shares the actions they are undertaking to ensure environmental justice.

Discussant: Gediminas Urbonas

Panel 8

22nd March 2025

Building 66 - 154

2:30 PM - 3:45 PM

Title: Oceans Across Borders: Transnational and Trans-Species Interactions

Description: Oceanic territories have long served as sites for inter-exchange as well as conflict and oppression. Through case studies of the mangrove and “rayo” tree species as well as fishing jurisdiction and regulations in Puerto Rico, as well as linguistic exchange in the Pacific, Indian Ocean, and Tasman Sea, this panel will explore how oceans can help us both better understand the forces of colonization and imagine alternative narratives and futures.

The panel discussion would be moderated by **Mimi Sheller**

Papers:

- Botanical Approaches to the Opaque Landscape
 - *Carlo Cubero*
- Puerto Rican Fishers: Archipelagic Orientations to the Sea
 - *Hanna Garth*
- Lands of Life, Factories of Dreams: Theorizing Trans-Oceanic Island Geographies
 - *Gabrielle Robbins*

Roundtable B

22nd March 2025

Building 66 - 168

2:30 PM - 3:45 PM

Title: Thinking with diabetes: An archipelagic approach to bodies, technologies, care, and sugar

Description: Drawing together a variety of ethnographic and embodied perspectives on diabetes, this roundtable aims to spark conversations that demonstrate the potential of diabetes as a critical methodology that might call into being new worlds and relations that exceed the narrow confines of conceptual containers like the body or the island. Thinking with diabetes and the figure of the body-as-archipelago, we suggest, provides a conceptual toolkit for forging connections and solidarities across space, time, and species.

This session would be moderated by **Cal Biruk**

Presenters:

- *Lyndsey Beutin*
- *Amy Moran-Thomas*
- *Erin Moore*