

LINDSAY COLE FRENCH

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Department of History, Philosophy and the Social Sciences
Rhode Island School of Design

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Social Anthropology, Harvard University, November 1994
Dissertation Title: "Enduring Holocaust, Surviving History:
Displaced Cambodians on the Thai-Cambodian Border, 1989-1991"
- M.A. Cultural Anthropology, University of Michigan, August, 1985
- B.A. with high distinction, American Culture, University of Michigan, June, 1978
Phi Beta Kappa, 1997

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Anthropology, Rhode Island School of Design, Dept. of History,
Philosophy and the Social Sciences, 2002 to the present.

Chair, Department of History, Philosophy and the Social Sciences, 2008-2011; 2020-
2023.

Faculty, Global Arts and Cultures MA, Liberal Arts Division, RISD.

Concentration Advisor, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, 2005-2008;
2014-15, 2016-17, 2018-2019.

Graduate Thesis Advisor in Photography, Sculpture, Industrial Design, Graphic
Design, Teaching + Learning in Art + Design, and Digital + Media

Undergraduate Thesis Advisor in Development Studies for Brown University

Frequent guest critic in the Departments of Industrial Design, Architecture, Interior
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Photography at RISD.

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Rhode Island School of Design, Dept. of History, Philosophy and the Social
Sciences, 1996 to 2002

McKenna Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

Dartmouth College, Department of Anthropology, 1995-96

RISD TEACHING GRANTS

Social Equity and Inclusion grant to participate in the Decolonial Teaching in Action seminar, Fall 2020.

Research Collaboration and Events Grant, with Kate Irvin, curator of Costumes and Textiles, RISD Museum, to bring Amy Lee Sanford, a Cambodian-American artist, to the Museum to participate in its year-long museum exhibition "Repair and Design Futures" through an afternoon performance of "Break Pot", a powerful evocation of damage and repair in Cambodia. Sanford also offered a public presentation in my oral history class "(Hi)Stories of Repair", Fall 2018.

FTFA New Technologies Fund grant to support a graduate technical assistant in "(Hi)Stories of Repair", Fall 2018 and "Stories of Transformation and Change", Spring 2016 and 2107.

Academic Enrichment Fund Grant to co-teach "This is the Woonasquatucket: Stories of a Living River" with Mairead Byrne, Professor of Literary Arts and Studies, Spring 2015.

Kyobo Fund Grant to co-teach "Representing the 'Real'" with Daniel Peltz, Assistant Professor of Film, Animation and Video, Spring 2006

PUBLICATIONS

"(Hi)Stories of Repair" IN: Markus Berger and Kate Irvin, eds., Repair: Sustainable Design Futures. United Kingdom: Routledge, 2023.

"Looking Back and Projecting Forward from *Site IP*" IN: Leslie Barnes and Joseph Mai eds., The Cinema of Rithy Panh: Everything Has a Soul. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021.

"Refugee Narratives; Oral History and Ethnography; Stories and Silence" IN: *The Oral History Review*, (46:2) Summer/Fall 2019, pp. 267-276.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/737016/pdf>

[Author interview: Lindsay French on Oral History as a Complicated Form of Social Engagement.](#)

"From Politics to Economics on the Thai-Cambodian Border: Plus Ça Change...." reprinted in Spanish from International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society (2002) IN: John A. Marston, coordinador. La antropología de las fronteras de Tailandia como espacios de flujo, Centro de Estudios de Asia y Africa, El Colegio de México, 2016.

Commentary on "Cultures of Trauma", a special section IN: Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, (28:2) June 2004 (pp. 211-220).

"Exhibiting Terror" IN: Truth Claims: Representation and Human Rights. Mark Bradley and Patrice Petro, eds. Rutgers University Press, June 2002 (pp.131-155).

"From Politics to Economics at the Thai-Cambodian Border: Plus Ça Change" IN: International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society (15:3) March 2002 (pp. 427-470).

“Hierarchies of Value at Angkor Wat” IN: Ethnos (64:2) June 1999, (pp. 170-191), a special issue focused on the circulation of objects and meanings entitled “Objects On The Loose”.

"The Political Economy of Injury and Compassion: Amputees on the Thai-Cambodia Border" IN: Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self, Thomas J. Csordas, editor, Cambridge University Press, 1994 (pp. 69-99).

Displaced Lives: Stories of Life and Culture from the Khmer in Site II, Thailand. 1990: International Rescue Committee, Bangkok, Thailand.

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of Archiving the Unspeakable; Silence, Memory and the Photographic Record in Cambodia by Michelle Caswell, University of Wisconsin Press, IN: Journal of Asian Studies, (74/1), February 2015.

Review of Forest of Struggle; modalities of remembrance in upland Cambodia by Eve Monique Zucker, University of Hawai'i Press, IN: Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (45:2) June 2014.

Review of Cambodian Culture Since 1975: Homeland and Exile, May M. Ebihara, Carol Mortland and Judy Ledgerwood, eds. University of Hawai'i Press, IN: American Ethnologist (22:4) Nov 1995.

MEDIA

“Krom Akphiwat Phum; Rural Development in Battambang Province”, a 35-minute DVD, co-produced with Peter O’Neill (RIS FAV), profiling one of Cambodia’s most successful independent village development NGOs, June 2013.

RESEARCH: FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Sabbatical Research, Providence and Cambodia, 2017 to the present. Two projects:

Working with Peter O’Neill (FAV, RISD) I initiated a new film project in Cambodia that focuses on an unusual neighborhood on the outskirts of Battambang town where Buddhist temples co-exist with a large Catholic compound dating to 1870s, several mosques that serve the local Chvea community (a Muslim minority group that has lived harmoniously with the majority Khmers for several centuries) and a new Evangelical Christian Bible College. This work will result in a documentary film about religious co-existence in a time of tremendous transformation and change in Cambodian society. I have received support from the RISD Professional Development Fund for two research trips in summer 2018 and 2019. Work on the film is ongoing.

A separate project developed out of our work on religions in Battambang: a life history of Fr. Peter Tonlop Sophal, the first Cambodian to be ordained as a Catholic priest in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge Revolution, when all five previously ordained Cambodian priests were murdered. As the son of a Vietnamese mother and a Khmer Father, Fr. Sophal's life story encapsulates the fraught history of relations between Vietnam and Cambodia over the last 65 years, and the conflicted role of the French Catholic church in that history. Fr. Sophal's life has taken him from pogroms in Phnom Penh to a refugee camp in southern Vietnam, conscription into the South Vietnamese army, several attempts to get escape to Thailand, delayed resettlement in Canada, seminary in Montreal and Lyon France, and ultimately back to Phnom

Penh for his ordination in 1995. He has worked to revive the Catholic faith among Cambodians ever since. He lives now at the Apostolic Prefecture in Battambang.

I hope to complete an article on Cambodian youth and Christian evangelicalism in the context of dramatic political and economic transformation in Cambodia in the last 25 years once the above two project are finished.

Sabbatical Research, Cambodia, spring 2012. Two projects:

With Peter O'Neill, I began work on a video project documenting the work of Krom Akphiwat Phum, a progressive and innovative Cambodia community development NGO operating in rural Battambang Province since 1993. Shooting took place in Battambang in February, March and April 2012. A 34 minute DVD was completed in June 2013. Funding for post-production costs was provided by RISD's Professional Development Grant.

My ongoing research on evolving structures of power and authority in Battambang Province currently focuses on the rapid growth of Korean evangelical churches, in Cambodia in general and in Battambang in particular. Research began at RISD in 2011 with Korean students who had been on Christian missions to Cambodia, and continued in spring 2012 with visits to evangelical churches, offices, and a Bible College in Battambang, and conversations with pastors, lay preachers, and congregants. Although Cambodia has been a Theravada Buddhist society since the 7th century, Protestant Christianity came to Cambodia in the 1920s and evangelicals of many nationalities are active in Cambodia at present. I am looking at the links between Korean evangelism, the growth of Korean business in Cambodia, and organized Cambodian labor migration to Korea to understand the powerful draw of Korean Christianity in Cambodia today. A second short research trip was conducted in summer 2014. Partial funding for transportation and research assistance in Battambang has been provided by the Liberal Arts Humanities Fund.

Sabbatical Research, Cambodia, 2004 and ongoing. I am engaged in an ongoing investigation of changing patterns of hierarchy, power, and authority in northwestern Cambodia, close to the Thai border. The field research for this project focuses on families that have been divided by the Khmer Rouge, civil war, and its aftermath in Battambang Province. It has been conducted through the collection of oral histories during five months of my sabbatical in 2004, with follow-up interviews over two months 2012. The project builds upon my doctoral research with refugees from this area, and the work I have done on border trade and interactions between Cambodians and Thais on both sides of the border in the years since then. It has been supported by grants from the RISD Professional Development Fund and the Liberal Arts Division's Humanities Fund. Research and writing on this material is ongoing.

Research Advisor, Providence, Thailand and Laos, 2003 to 2011. Advisor for a film project revisiting Hmong families from Providence who were the subject of a 1982 documentary film entitled "The Best Place to Live." The new film project, produced by FAV Professor Peter O'Neill and called "Better Places" follows several Providence families to the Midwest, California, Thailand, and Laos to uncover the ways life has developed and changed for Hmong in America over the last twenty-five years.

Post-doctoral Research, Thai-Cambodian Border, 1996-1997. Six months of combined library and field research on the history of Thai-Cambodian border relations, and the significance of extra-legal cross-border trade. This study was part of a large, multi-national research project sponsored by the International Center for Ethnic Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka entitled "Multiculturalism and Ethnic Coexistence in Asia." Research was funded through a grant from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation; writing was funded through a Richard Carley Hunt post-doctoral fellowship from the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Post-doctoral Resident Writing Fellowship, Program for Cultural Studies, East-West Center, Honolulu, HI, 1994-5. This fellowship provided a year of support for revisions on my doctoral dissertation, toward eventual publication

Doctoral Research, Thai-Cambodian Border, 1989-1994. Twenty months of ethnographic research with Cambodians displaced to the Thai border, on social relations in the aftermath of great social and cultural trauma. Fieldwork was carried out in 1989, 1990, and 1991 in Site II, a camp of 180,000. Research was supported by the International Rescue Committee, a non-governmental refugee relief agency. Writing was funded in part with a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. The dissertation along with additional research conducted in Cambodia in autumn 1994 and summer 1996 provides the basis for an expanded book manuscript under consideration at the University of Hawai'i Press, entitled "The Border Khmer: Between History and Memory".

Doctoral Study, 1986-94, additional funding for doctoral work included two pre-doctoral fellowships from the National Institutes of Mental Health, two Foreign Language Areas Studies Summer Fellowships, and two Teschemacher Travel Grants from Harvard University.

Oral Historian, 1983-1987. The Oral History Center, Cambridge, MA.

Worked on all aspects of several community oral history projects which collected and presented the life stories of members of Cambridge's diverse cultural communities. Served on the Board of Directors of the Oral History Center for four years.

CONFERENCE PAPERS, PANELS, AND INVITED TALKS

Invited conference participant, Everything Has a Soul: The Cinema of Rithy Panh, Joseph Mai and Leslie Barnes, organizers. The Bophana Center, Phnom Penh, summer 2019.

Invited speaker, roundtable presentation, "The Said and the Unsaid: Honoring the Legacy of Mary Margaret Steedly", American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, November 15-18, 2018. Title: "Indeterminacy". (Unable to attend.)

Invited speaker, 7th colloquium on "The Task of Memory, Writing, and Historical Research", Silver Spring MD, September 22-23, 2017. Title: "Listening for Stories, Attending to Silence: hidden histories and the search for understanding in Cambodia".

Invited speaker, "Engaging Refugee Narratives III: perspectives from academia and the arts", University College London, Dept. of Anthropology, June 16-17, 2017. Title: "Listening for Stories".

Invited Speaker, "Displacement and the Making of the Modern World", Watson Institute, Brown University, April 21-22, 2017. Title: "From Collateral Damage to Refugee Victims to Deportable Felons: Cambodians in the shifting focus of American policy priorities". (<https://displacementmes.com/displacement-mes-conference/>)

Invited speaker, "From Local Displacement to Global Refuge" panel at the Harvard Graduate School of Design Conference, Scales of Syria, March 25, 2016
<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/club-medina-symposium-scales-of-syria/>
<https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/event/scales-syria-symposium>

Invited participant at the 4th annual Saint'Egidio Conference entitled "Poverty and Peacemaking: an Interdisciplinary Conference and Gathering of Local, National and International Leaders", Princeton University, September 19-20, 2014. (**scan poster**)

Discussant for the panel “Re-Imagining Cambodia” at the Cambodian Studies Conference at Northern Illinois University, September 2012.

Discussant for the panel “New Forms of Social Organization in Rural Cambodia” at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Honolulu, Hawai’i, April 2011.

“‘Dark Dream’: Looking at Photographs of Cambodia”. Invited talk at the Bannister Gallery, Rhode Island College, on an exhibition of photographic installations by Eva Sutton, Associate Professor of Photography at RISD, on the subject of contemporary Cambodian experience. October 2008.

“Cambodia’s Ongoing Crisis”. Presented at a two-day workshop at Harvard University entitled “Inadvertent Documents New (and Old) Form of Political and Historical Mediation”. This workshop is part of a multi-year collaborative project called “Signs of Crisis in Southern Asia” which investigates communicative technologies and contemporary politics in the South and Southeast Asian post-colonies. April 2005.

“Poverty, Political Instability and Fine Art Patronage: The Political Economy of Temple Looting in Cambodia.” Presented at a RISD Museum Symposium entitled Relics, Ruins, and Rights: Who Owns Cultural Treasures ? October 23, 2004.

“Dialogues with ‘Cultures of Trauma.’” Presented at the Medical Anthropology and Cultural Psychiatry research seminar at Harvard, entitled “Memory, Suffering and Global Security” October 2003.

“Our History Too.” Essay solicited for the program of “Silence of God”, a new play about recent Cambodian history, by Catherine Filloux. This play was commissioned by the New American Theatre Festival in Shepherdstown, WVA, and was one of four plays that made up the summer 2002 season.

“‘Outsider Art’ in the Aftermath of Violence.” Presented at a workshop on Art, Media and Violence in Southeast Asia, Harvard University, May 10-11, 2002.

“(Re)-presenting Cambodia in America: Some Notes on Art, Ignorance and Opportunity.” Presented at “Fact and Fiction in Post-Authoritarian Societies,” a symposium organized by the Legacies of Authoritarianism Project, Global Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 2001.

“Tuol Sleng at the MoMA and Other Unlikely Venues: the Ethics of Exhibition in a Digital, Transnational World.” Presented at the 8th annual conference of the Joint Center for International Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, entitled “Between the Global and the Local: Making Human Rights Claims in the 20th Century” in April, 2000.

“Secular Power and Buddha Power in Cambodia Today.” Presented at the Harvard Buddhist Studies Forum’s 1999-2000 lecture series, Harvard University, December 1999.

“Exhibiting Terror.” Guest scholar at the University of Oregon Center for Asian and Pacific Studies; paper presented at “Violence, Suffering, Image,” a conference sponsored by the Savage Endowment for International Relations and Peace Studies, May 1999.

“Hierarchies of Value at Angkor Wat.” Paper presented as part of a panel I co-organized for the 96th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington DC, November 1997, entitled “Objects At Loose.”

"Border-Crossing: Thailand/Cambodia 1996." Paper presented as part of a panel I co-organized for the 95th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, November 1996, entitled "Border Incidents."

"Battlefields Into Marketplaces: Politics and Trade at the Thai-Cambodian Border." Presented to the Southeast Asia Program's Brown Bag Seminar, Cornell University, October 1996.

"New Ethnography in Cambodia, Parts I and II." A double panel, which I organized and chaired, at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Honolulu, April 1996

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Provided guidance and interview training for The Point Association in Newport RI as they began development of an Oral History Project about this historic neighborhood in Newport RI, Summer 2016. <https://thepointassociation.wildapricot.org/history>

Conducted an external evaluation of the Junior Faculty Training Program, a program of the Center for Khmer Studies in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, August-September 2010. This program sought to strengthen the institutional capacity of Cambodian universities and the academic capacity of young Cambodian scholars by providing graduate level seminars in Southeast Asian Studies taught by international scholars over a six- year period. The evaluation was conducted at the end of the second funding cycle for the program, in anticipation of new funding proposals.

Introduced and provided running commentary for a performance of classical Cambodian dance, produced by Firstworks and performed at RISD by the Angkor Dance Troupe, June 2009.

Presented three lectures on the history of recent and ongoing crises in Cambodia, as part of an enrichment curriculum on Current Issues in Southeast Asia for K-12 educators, at Primary Source, a private, non-profit educators resource center in Watertown, MA. May-July 2007.

In conjunction with "The Spirit of Cambodia....A Tribute", a two month-long series of events around Providence honoring Cambodian art and artists in Fall 2002, I helped to arrange and co-hosted the screening of five films by Rithy Panh, award-winning French-Cambodian filmmaker, at the RISD Auditorium. Panh himself came from Paris to attend the screenings and speak about his films. It was an unusual gathering of students, academics, Cambodian-Americans, and people who have worked with Cambodians in a variety of contexts over the previous 23 years. The films were well attended and extremely well received by all constituencies. It was a remarkable community event, and provided the foundation for future collaborations between RISD and the event's co-sponsor, the Cambodian Society of Rhode Island.

In response to a number of critical issues that arose in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in Washington and New York, I organized a public speaker series for Wintersession 2002 entitled "Current World Crises: Contexts and Frameworks." On five successive Thursday nights, scholars and practitioners came to RISD to discuss the role of the news media in unfolding world crises, civil liberties in times of war, artists' responses to great political and social upheavals, Islam and radical Islam, and the Pashtun culture of Afghanistan.

Served from 1999 to 2001 as advisor and oral historian for "Signs of the Market," an exhibition of handpainted Cambodian shop signs, curated by Laurie Beth Kalb, Ph.D., and exhibited at the Mills Gallery, Boston Center for the Arts, March & April 2001. My participation was supported

by a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, which requires humanities scholars' participation in all the projects it funds.

Presented two seminars on the history of Cambodian refugees in America at Middlesex Community College, Lowell, MA as part of an NEH- funded initiative to bring in scholars to educate MCC faculty about the backgrounds of their refugee and immigrant students, Oct. 1999.

Presented a talk to the Cambridge Hospital Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit on conditions in Cambodia under Pol Pot and in refugee camps, experienced by people who were eventually resettled to the United States. The purpose was to provide historical background to the distress that Cambodian patients presented on their unit. 1997.

RECENT COLLEGE SERVICE

Department Chair: July 2020- the present

coordinated the department's successful application to the SEI Cluster Hire, fall 2020

facilitated the transition to fully on-line teaching and learning with Zoom and CANVAS; hired Bryce Dubois as faculty coordinator to assist with the technical aspects; with Bryce, created a HPSS Remote Teaching Google site with resources for faculty (<https://sites.google.com/risd.edu/hpss-remote-teaching-20-21/>), and set up weekly, then eventually less frequent, Zoom meetings with Bryce for faculty to discuss on-line challenges and pedagogical successes;

facilitated on-going discussions in the department around the meaning of de-colonizing our curriculum; rewrote the description of HPSS S101 in light of SEI priorities;

organized and introduced "Indigenous Landscapes: Narragansett Homeland and History" a public lecture geared to S101 students, by endawnis and Cassius Spears, Jr.

Faculty Committees:

Instruction/Wintersession Committee, 2019-20.

Global Partners and Practices 2013-2019, co-chaired 2015-17.

Search Committees:

Environmental Sociologist (Lauren Richter) 2018-2019

Political Economist Search (Namita Dharia and Alero Akporiaye) 2015-2016

Middle East History Search (Andrew Robarts) 2014-2015,

Fulbright or Maharam interviews: 2014, 2016, 2020

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Anthropological Association (AAA), 1986 – the present

Association of Asian Studies (AAS), 1986 – the present

elected to the board of directors of the Thai/Lao Cambodian section of the AAS, 2015-2018