

2018 MAYS Annual REPORT

On Oct 5th-6th 2018 the 9th annual MAYS meeting “Creative Methods and Participatory Arts Research in Medical Anthropology” took place at Freie Universität Berlin (Germany). The meeting was organized by Ursula Probst (Freie Universität Berlin) and Lilian Kennedy (University of Edinburgh) with support from the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin. In January 2018 the MAYS annual meeting had to be rescheduled, due to changes in the residency circumstances of Erica Niebauer (University of Heidelberg), the previous MAYS coordinator. She had to step down and was replaced by Ursula Probst (Freie Universität Berlin) as co-coordinator alongside Lilian Kennedy (University of Edinburgh). As this change also affected the location of the 2018 MAYS meeting it was postponed until October 2018 to allow for adequate preparation.

The 9th Annual meeting was attended by 20 participants from different institutions around Europe. Attendees were asked to present their work in a peer-review format in three different groups by commenting on the papers of their group members that had been previously been circulated among participants.

As in previous meetings, the program consisted of different presentation formats to better engage participants in discussion and exchange. Apart from the parallel presentation sessions a participatory brainstorming session on various dimensions of the application of creative methods was conducted and moderated by Judith Albrecht (Freie Universität Berlin), Nasima Selim (Freie Universität Berlin) and Maria Ibiß (Freie Universität Berlin).

On Friday and Saturday afternoon, two parallel workshops were run by (medical) anthropologists working with different creative methods. Friday’s workshops included: a visual methods workshop from Franziska Seise (Freie Universität Berlin) which offered insights on the photo elicitation interview methodology, and a workshop by Stefan Reinsch (Charité Berlin) exploring different uses of photography in medical anthropology. On Saturday, Maria Ibiß (Freie Universität Berlin) offered a workshop on the application of circus arts in fieldwork and Maayan Ash (LSHTM) introduced participants to use of spatial methods like mappings and drawings in anthropological research.

In line with the theme of the meeting, participants were also invited to bring the products of their creative research endeavours to the meeting. This was organised into a exhibition on Saturday in which participants were able to explore and experience these projects in a less rigid way. The exhibition included a 45 min film, short film clips, soundscapes, photographic documentations, and a comic book based on research into addiction and recovery.

The meeting provided an opportunity for young scholars at different stages in their academic career (MA and PhD students as well as postdocs) to discuss their work among peers and in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. In informal and formal feedback on the MAYS meeting, participants reported that they enjoyed the discussions within their parallel groups, but also those had over lunch, during the exhibitions, and in workshops. Many reported that these groups and workshops provided helpful and specific feedback on their own work and project proposals, but also opened up broader questions about the application of creative methods in Medical Anthropology. All participants gave positive feedback on the inclusion of an

exhibition format, highlighting the learning that comes from 'seeing' methods in action and output, as opposed to 'only talking about it.' The friendly atmosphere of the MAYS meeting was also mentioned, and tied to younger scholars' sense of confidence in being able to share their work and thoughts.

After the annual meeting, a call for coordinator applications was sent out as Lilian Kennedy is stepping down from her MAYS coordinator role in November 2018. Members of the network then voted for one of four candidates that applied with a short academic CV and a statement about their qualifications and ideas for MAYS in the next two years. Francesca Cancelliere (University of Lisbon) was elected new coordinator for a two-year term.

Following the coordinator elections Francesca Cancelliere and Ursula Probst, who will continue her work as coordinator until mid-2019, started working on the next annual MAYS meeting, which will also mark the 10 year anniversary of the network. The aim, as in previous years, is to have coordinators serve two-year terms, with new coordinators being elected each year. This way, a more senior coordinator who has already planned a MAYS annual meeting will be on hand to help the new coordinator as they take the lead planning the next MAYS conference at their institution.

Beyond planning for the MAYS Meeting in Berlin, Ursula Probst also conducted an online survey among MAYS members in July and August 2018. This survey collected data about MAYS members' experiences with the network as well as their ideas and wishes for future activities. Preliminary results of this survey were discussed at the Medical Anthropology Network meeting at EASA 2018. The survey will serve as a basis for future network activities.

The 10th MAYS Meeting is set to take place at the University of Turin in July 2019 and revolve around the theme "Medical Anthropology in Action".