

Attending to the Moment: Aesthetics, Politics, Sound

Ethnomusicology and Anthropology of the Arts have long wrestled over how to depict the relationships among aesthetics and politics. With an ear toward the present in which we find ourselves and an eye on the vitality of bodies and breath, how do we attend to the moment? What kind of research, analysis and writing succeeds in keeping the details of artistry that lend art its persuasive or affective power on the page? What approaches succeed in grasping the specific political efficacy of the arts, without reducing artistic process to a political act? What does an ethical analysis of the sonic arts look and sound like?

Louise Meintjes



Professor of Music and Cultural Anthropology, Duke University (Durham, USA)

A distinguished anthropologist and musicologist, Louise Meintjes' evocative writing and thinking revolves around the question of how music and the world relate to and act upon each other.

For her book *Dust of the*

Zulu: Ngoma Aesthetics after Apartheid (Duke University Press, 2017), she co-won the Society for Ethnomusicology's Alan Merriam Prize.

Anthropology of Music

Lecture Series and Master Class

The Anthropology of Music Lecture Series is part of the initiative to strengthen and expand the focus on music at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies (ifeas) at the Johannes Gutenberg University (JGU) Mainz, Germany.

The public lecture series is held by one of the field's most established representative and is combined with a master class designed for young researchers to present their works. This new format provides a unique opportunity to discuss ongoing research and reflect on the current state anthropological engagements with music and sound. Different to the lecture series, the master class is not open to a wider public. However, we welcome students and scholars with a special interest in the topic.

Please contact us for registration and further information: anthro-music@uni-mainz.de

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Attending to the Moment

Anthropology of Music Lecture Series 2022

with

Louise Meintjes
Duke University (USA)

July 13 - 16, 2022



Department of Anthropology and African Studies
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

Lecture 1

Attending to the Moment: Artistry and Politics in Zulu Song and Dance

Wed. July 13, 5 pm, Institut Français (Schillerstr. 11, 55116 Mainz)

Drawing on my longterm study of Zulu song and dance, I discuss instances of forceful ngoma vocal performance that have prompted me to think about the idea of breath and aesthetic vitality, limned by violence during the global turbulence of the last two and a half years.



Lecture 2

Multimodality in Music Ethnography

**Thu. July 14, 5 pm, African Music Archives
(Zentralbibliothek, GFG 00.156)**

A collaborative experiment at lifting my ethnography, *Dust of the Zulu*, off the page into a multimedia installation raised questions about the risks, challenges, promise and pleasures of multimodal ethnographic work about song and dance. I address the process and outcome of remixing the aesthetic, sensory and political registers of the book as a form of reciprocity and participation in a public anthropology of the arts.



Lecture 3

The Bellow of the Sacrificial Ox: Sound in precarious times

**Fri. July 15, 1 pm, African Music Archives
(Zentralbibliothek, GFG 00.156)**

I explore the aesthetic value of cattle in Zulu song and dance, including in courting and wedding rituals. Worsening drought, floods, overgrazing, unemployment and inflation (exacerbated by the pandemic's wrath), and a legacy of violence point to a time of dire economic contraction in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal. Yet largesse that includes cattle prevails. I listen in to celebratory events to consider this seeming contradiction.

