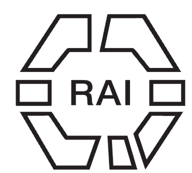
'Such intimate relations'

On the process of collecting string figures and the paradigm of participant observation fieldwork

Robyn McKenzie



Royal Anthropological Institute

Anthropology & Art

A new open-access publication series edited by the RAI Anthropology of Art Committee. The series stems from the international conference Art, Materiality and Representation organized by the RAI in collaboration with the British Museum and the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2018. Its aims are to make available to a wide audience works that engage with the connections between visual, material, aural and other expressive human practices and the lived worlds in which they take place from an anthropologically informed perspective.

We solicit new contributions from anthropologists and others – such archaeologists, art historians and practitioners – that will enhance and expand our collective understanding and appreciation of this important area of social life.

Guidelines for submission:

Texts should be of maximum 8,000 words (including endnotes and references). We welcome original works that explore the meaningfulness of images, artefacts, sounds and performances and engage with anthropological approaches and/or analysis. There are no restrictions regarding the emphasis on the visual and textual aspects of the contributions and authors are welcome to discuss their proposed submission with the editor (paolo.fortis@durham.ac.uk).

Authors will be responsible for clearing all image permissions and rights to publication for both their and other's images. Manuscripts should be submitted to: admin@therai.org.uk.

Editorial Committee

Editor: Paolo Fortis (Durham University)

Editorial Assistant: Amanda Vinson (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Iside Carbone (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Max Carocci (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Charles Gore (SOAS)

Ian Herbertson

Susanne Küchler (University College London)

Sarah Walpole (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Leslie Joynes (Columbia University)

Rowland Abiodun (Amherst College)

Volume 1 *Stories in the making: what artists made of the 2018 RAI Art, Materiality and Representation conference*
Angela Brew and Gemma Aellah

Volume 2 *Moulding Quilombola identities and ethnic politics: understandings and practices around 'Quilombo heritage' in Brazil*
Katerina Hatzikidi

Volume 3 *Animism and the Mbya-Guarani cinema*
Rodrigo Lacerda

Volume 4 *'Such intimate relations': on the process of collecting string figures and the paradigm of participant observation fieldwork*
Robyn McKenzie

Forthcoming

Art, ethnography and the possible fate of hidden remains
Teresa Fradique

Some ethical implications of de- and re-materializing artefacts, using taonga pūoro (Māori musical instruments) as a case study
Jennifer Cattermole

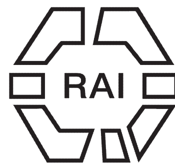
Redefining curatorship as skilled practice
Carine Ayélé Durand

Socio-creativity and the neolithic
Eloise Govier

'SUCH INTIMATE RELATIONS'

On the process of collecting string figures and the paradigm of participant observation fieldwork

ROBYN MCKENZIE



Anthropology & Art No. 4

First published 2022

Cover image: Lantern slide. 'Girl doing Cat's Cradle. Maipani, Bamu R., BNG.' 1914. Photographer: Kathleen Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (LS.124551.TC1).

ISSN 2634-8004
ISBN 978-0-900632-60-0
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Prequel

In the group of people who made significant contributions to the field of string-figure studies, the number of professional anthropologists is matched by those who were not. Notably, sisters, daughters and wives of anthropologists were foremost among them.

Caroline Furness Jayne (1873–1909) was introduced to string figures by A.C. Haddon, when he visited Philadelphia in the summer of 1904. They met through her brother William Henry Furness, an anthropologist, colleague and friend of Haddon's. The Furness family was part of Philadelphia's independently wealthy intellectual and social elite, with close links to the University of Pennsylvania (Sherman 2003). After her introduction to string figures, it seems Jayne lit immediately on the idea of writing a book about them. Jayne's *String Figures: A Study of Cat's-Cradle in Many Lands* (1962 [1906]) – with an introduction by Haddon – was a landmark publication, and is still in print. It consolidated all the designs published to that date, as well as gathering new designs from a variety of sources. Jayne's book had a twofold aim. It was a scholarly compendium of the current state of knowledge meant to inspire further discoveries; and it was an accessible 'how to' manual for a wider public.

Haddon had encouraged Jayne to collect figures from First Nations peoples at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St Louis World's Fair). 'Living exhibits' of exotic races had become a standard feature of the international exposition as it developed through the latter half of the nineteenth century (Parezo and Fowler 2007:1–8). William J. McGee, organizer of the anthropology section at St Louis, thought the variety of peoples represented was unprecedented. He celebrated it as: 'The world's first assemblage of the world's people' (ibid.:237). This was Jayne's field site. She visited the fair several times from August through to November that year, sometimes accompanied by her brother. Jayne collected thirty-one new figures in all: from different ethnic groups on the Philippines Reserve, from Native Americans (Navajo, Osage, Chippewa and Apache), two figures from a 'Topek Eskimo from Alaska', one from 'Ottobang', a 'Batwa Pygmy' from the African Congo, and one from an Irish girl. (Jayne 1962). The largest number of figures (over half the total) were collected from Zah Tso, a Navajo schoolgirl, and her mother – noted weavers, from Gallup, New Mexico (Parezo and Fowler 2007:121–2). Collecting this many new figures was no mean feat. Jayne described the process almost plaintively, as requiring 'relatively so much time and such intimate relations' (Jayne 1962:3).

Introduction

String figures are patterns or designs constructed with a single continuous loop of string, 'by co-ordinated movements of the fingers of both hands, assisted by the teeth, neck, elbows, knees and toes when necessary' (McCarthy 1958:279). When first observed among Indigenous peoples in the early to mid nineteenth century, they were deemed fundamentally different to the well-known European children's game of cat's cradle. Cat's cradle involves two players who 'turn and turnabout', 'take off' the strings from each other's hands to produce a set sequence of designs that can be endlessly repeated. By contrast, string figures – commonly made by a single person (with others coming to assist when necessary) – comprise sequences of manipulations leading to a final design that is representational of some 'thing' in the world. They could be simple, but were often extremely complicated. In many places they seemed to have an association with myth and story. Whereas the cat's cradle was a limited form, Indigenous string figure

repertoires were seen to show variety, invention and development.[1]

In 1879 E.B. Tylor had suggested that the comparative study of string-figure designs might be of value to anthropology as a way of tracking cultural diffusion (Tylor 1880:26). As more repertoires were documented, it was confirmed that some designs were found in many different places. However, while in appearance they might look exactly the same, their method of making could be quite different. For comparative analyses, therefore, a record of the methods of construction of figures came to be deemed essential. The first publication of instructions for making string figures was in a short notice by Franz Boas (1888). He illustrated the final stage of five designs collected during fieldwork amongst the Inuit of Cumberland Sound in Baffin Land in 1883–4, and gave instructions for making two of them, *Cariboo* or *Reindeer*, and the untranslated *Ussuqdjung*.

The study of string figures in the anglophone world developed concurrently with the establishment of a museum tradition within anthropology, in the period 1880–1920. Anthropological interest in string figures and popular enchantment with them developed in parallel, and often hand in hand. Any distinction between the 'professional' scientist and the 'amateur' enthusiast is often hard to draw; especially, if we consider them existing within one and the same person. Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940), the major force in the development and promotion of anthropological interest in string figures, was both an expert and an enthusiast.

Haddon attributed much of his fieldwork success to his knowledge of string figures – as a medium for interacting with people and creating rapport, where shared language did not necessarily exist. His daughter Kathleen Haddon attested: 'When I got out my string the natives soon decided that I was one of them.' (K. Haddon. quoted in Anon. 1996:177). Even among 'wild head-hunting cannibals' of the Middle Fly, 'the string worked its magic' (Haddon, K. 1997:218). W.H.R. Rivers concurred on the value of string figures for the fieldworker:

> *... in bringing him into sympathy with those who are, for the time being, his fellow-workers. Hours spent in the trivialities of cat's-cradle may be well repaid by help given in paving the way for the revelation of the secrets of religious and magical custom or belief.*
>
> (*Rivers* 1907:112–13)

At home, as much as abroad, Haddon found string figures a pleasurable and useful social tool. As his biographer A.H. Quiggin (1942:127–8) has written: 'String figures were a peculiarly Haddonian contribution to Brighter Cambridge.' At departmental garden parties, dinners at the Haddons' home, or visits to his study, 'dons and students alike fell under the spell of "Funiculomania" [string-craze].'

The heyday of anthropological interest in string figures was in the 1920s and 1930s. But with the relevance of the study tied to the fortunes of the diffusionist project, interest petered out gradually over subsequent decades. By the second half of the twentieth century the study of string figures was being dismissed by North American anthropologist Joseph Birdsell (1962:411), as 'one of the bric-a-brac figures in

1 See Ball 1971:9; Davidson 2006:768; A.C. Haddon 1962: xxii. Later, cat's cradle came to be appreciated as an example of a type of string figure common in Asia, which, it was speculated, was brought to Europe from Japan and China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by sailors engaged in the tea trade (Abraham 1988:6–7; K. Haddon 1912:xv).

the cabinet of anthropology', associated with an earlier era. According to Paul Sillitoe (1975:13), then a postgraduate student, by the mid-1970s in Britain it had come to be thought of as 'an oddity if not something of a joke … conjur[ing] up visions of fusty intellectuals accumulating masses of apparently useless material for some obscure academic purpose.'

In his 1975 article 'Why string figures?' Sillitoe sought an answer to the importance they held for Haddon, and those who, through him, were persuaded to take up the study. In looking at this question, he is dismissive of their value as a way of making friends or connecting with people in the field. He characterizes this idea as 'comical', associating it with the 'superficial and extensive style of fieldwork' practised at that time – on a level with 'an afternoon's casual survey of a settlement, between interviews with informants in the Commissioner's bungalow'. This is a riff on Malinowski's (1926:92–3) caricature of the anthropologist conducting their research from a 'comfortable position on the longchair on the verandah' (sometimes sipping on a whiskey and soda). Sillitoe (1975:19) writes:

> *It was not until Malinowski established his influence that intensive fieldwork and an intimate acquaintance with native life became accepted fieldwork techniques and with the advent of these methods Haddon's advice appeared in a humorous light.*

Evaluations of Malinowski's role in the development of intensive fieldwork as the signature of anthropology in the twentieth century have become more nuanced since Sillitoe was writing in the mid-1970s. Historians in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Urry (1993a and b),[2] Langham (1981), Stocking (1983) and Kuklick (1991), in reappraising his role, all outlined an evolutionary development of ideas. They characterize participant observation as emergent in the work of the generation prior to Malinowski, as much as within Malinowski's own fieldwork practice and that of his contemporaries. In his article, Sillitoe does acknowledge the importance of Haddon as 'one of the instigators of direct observation in the field' (Sillitoe 1975:19).

In this paper I argue that the collection of string figures prefigured key aspects of 'participant observation' in fieldwork. The process of collecting string figures, as I will show, confounds the distinction commonly made between the surface ethnography of the nineteenth-century survey approach to fieldwork, and the depth of the long-term 'intensive study'. It pre-empted two central elements that characterized the later approach: the shift in the location of research from 'the deck of the mission ship or verandah of the mission station' to amidst the life of the village; and the shift in the role of the researcher from inquirer to participant, and with that an engagement of their embodied subjectivity as a means to understanding (Stocking 1983:93). Further to this, my central contention is that the activity of collecting string figures, and the 'intimate' interpersonal interactions that involves, played a significant role in the development of participant-observation methodologies and sensibilities.

An important source for my argument is Kathleen Haddon's (n.d.) unpublished account of her experience collecting string figures while accompanying her father on a tour of the Torres Strait and New Guinea in 1914. On this trip the Haddon's visited Malinowski, who had just begun his fieldwork on the island of Mailu. While Malinowski deferred to Haddon ('I showed Haddon my notes'), he was at the same

2 Chapter 1 in Urry's book (my reference 1993a) was first published in 1972; Chapter 3 (my reference 1993b) in 1982.

time snidely dismissive of his work in private, writing in his diary: 'In the village Haddon and his daughter loafed about; he – (with) boats, she – cat's cradle.' (Malinowski 1967:36). What is at stake in this sniping, are judgements of the nature and quality of relationships formed in the field. This complex subject forms a separate but related line of inquiry here.

It is striking that, despite or perhaps because of what Stocking (1983:103) has identified as the 'inherent ambiguity and asymmetry of almost all ethnographic relations', the term 'intimate' or 'intimacy' is commonly used to describe the relationship between researcher and informant that is sought from the participant-observation method (Madden 2010:16). Jayne's field experience in the transplanted display villages at the World's Fair in St. Louis was a unique one. Given the circumstances and with her focus exclusively on collecting string-figure designs, Jayne's level of engagement could not be described as anything but shallow and partial, and yet she describes her relationship with her informants as an 'intimate' one. In the penultimate section of this paper I correlate the different meanings of the term intimate/intimacy used to describe field relationships, including Malinowski's specific definition of the 'intimate side' of life that the fieldworker can best attend to by 'joining in'.

In the final section of this paper I look at the study of string figures in relation to the 'somatic turn' in anthropology of the later twentieth century, when Michael Jackson, for example, recommended 'using one's body in the same way as others in the same environment' as a 'methodological strategy' for mediating anthropological insights (Jackson 1983:340–1). As a development of participant-observation methodology, the study of techniques of the body became of interest to the discipline of anthropology.[3] The fact that those studying string figures had to learn how to make them yielded interpretative insights from very early on, including the kinaesthetic qualities characteristic of different repertoires. To bookend with this, I begin now by looking at the development of the importance of making to the collection and study of string figures, as pioneered by Haddon and his team on the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait of 1898, itself a critical point in the development of modern participant-observation field methodology.

Haddon and the Torres Strait Expedition of 1898

In Britain in the nineteenth century, anthropological enquiry had become fragmented, in the sense of it being divided between 'armchair theorists' at home and the people they relied on in the field to supply them with information: travellers, missionaries, colonial officers, settlers. Research was often conducted on an opportunistic and ad hoc basis. It commonly derived from interviews with Indigenous informants conducted through an interpreter. Field contacts were supplied with lists of questions to be asked. *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, first published in 1874, was a compendium of subjects of interest organized into categories, with information on relevant concepts and terms. Its purpose was specifically 'to enable those who are not anthropologists themselves to supply the information which is wanted for the scientific study of anthropology at home.'[4] The primary significance of the Torres Strait Expedition was that it broke with that division, and integrated observation with analysis through the first-hand experience of the scientist on the ground.

3 I am thinking here of Greg Downey's *Learning Capoeira* (2004), for example.

4 As quoted in the 5th edition, 1929:vii.

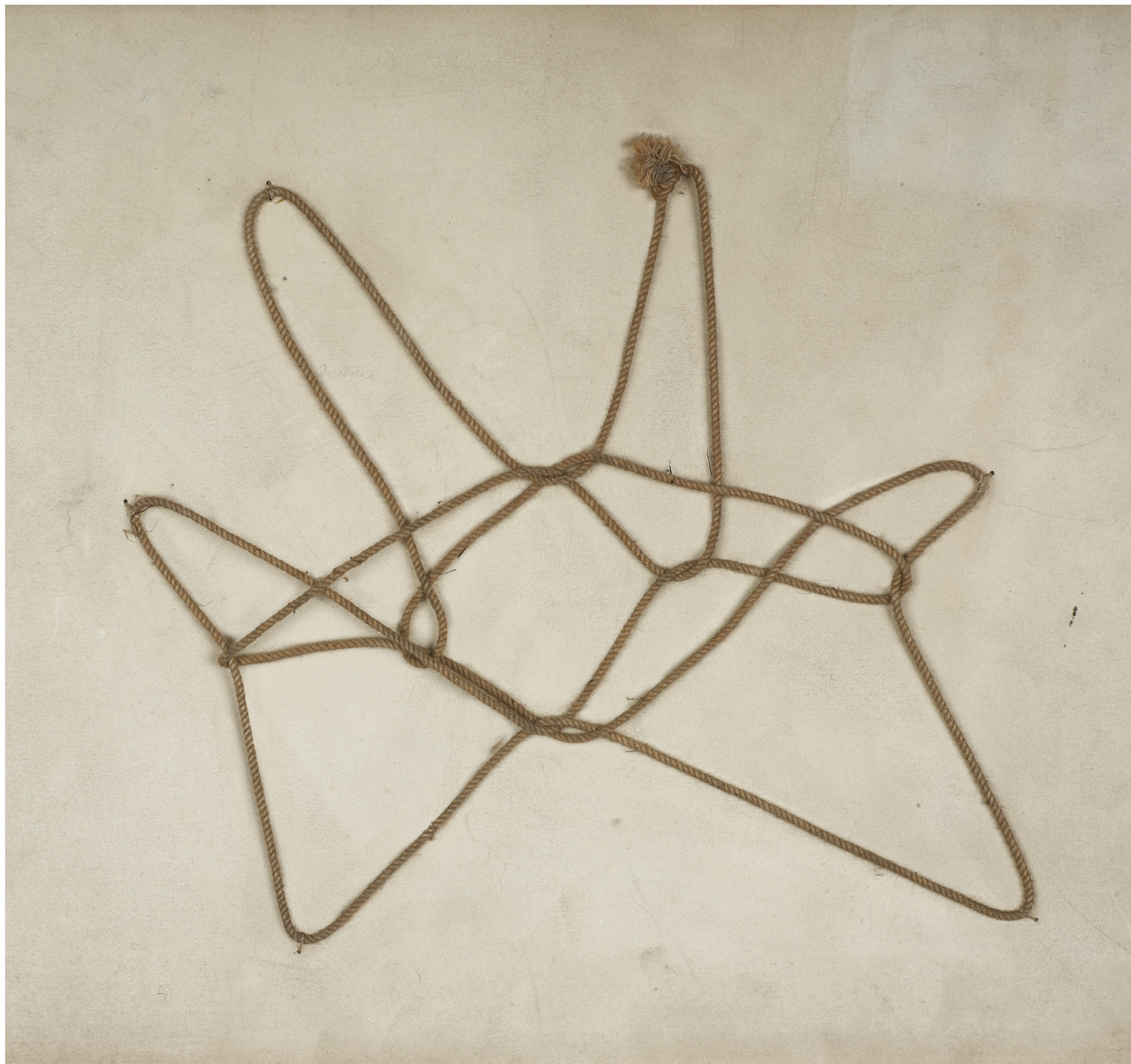


Figure 1 *Kaiar (Crayfish), one of eight mounted string figures collected in the Torres Strait by A.C. Haddon, 1888. European fibre (cotton?) on cardboard. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

Haddon first went to the Torres Strait in 1888–9, as a zoologist, to study coral reefs. Once in the field he was struck by the changing life of the islanders and became convinced it was his duty to collect all the ethnographic information he could from the older men, before it would surely be lost with their passing (Haddon 1890:297–8). As described by James Urry (1993b:64), 'with the skill of an experienced natural scientist Haddon recorded "customs", collected word lists and stories and made notes on aspects of the islanders' lives.' He also collected artefacts, which were on display at the British Museum within two months of his return. Among these were eight mounted string figures – the final designs taken from the maker's hands and sewn down on to card. These are the earliest known mounted string figures in a museum collection (Eastop 2007; Probert 2004).

When Haddon returned to the Torres Strait with a small, multi-disciplinary team of researchers on the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition of 1898, he and William Halse Rivers Rivers (1864–1922) devised a descriptive language for recording the construction techniques for making string figures. Their goal was to create a systematic terminology that would enable any operation to be described in 'comparatively few words', and so reduce the difficulty of gathering data (Rivers and Haddon 1902:147). They specified terms to designate fingers, loops, near and far strings (ulnar, radial, distal, proximal), common starting positions and openings, and provided a standard form of language to describe characteristic manipulations or movements. On the 1898 expedition no mounted figures were collected, and nor were photographs taken as a means of documentation. String figures were collected by recording the instructions for making them.

What is not well recognized is that in order to record the instructions for making designs, it is necessary for the researcher to learn how to make the figures themselves. Haddon recorded in his journal,

> *Every now and again we run one thing hard, for example one week back we were mad on Cat's Cradle, at least Rivers, Ray and I were – McDougall soon fell victim and even Myers eventually succumbed.*
>
> *(Haddon Journal, 16 August 1898)*

On their return to Britain both Rivers and Ray were confident enough in their prowess to perform 'strange and complicated feats with strings' in front of the Folklore Society (Anon. 1911:128).

In 1902 Rivers and Haddon published 'A method of recording string figures and tricks' in the Royal Anthropological Institute's journal *Man*, illustrated by examples of twelve Torres Strait figures they had collected on the 1898 expedition. The article was a success, in terms of their aim of 'induc[ing] field workers to pay attention to the subject' (Rivers and Haddon 1902:147). After the publication of their 'method', reports of string figures collected amongst different peoples followed. Rivers and Haddon's article led to string figures – 'a knowledge of a few types, and ability to record others' – becoming part of the anthropologist's tool kit, equipping them for the field (Hingston 1906:156).

It should be noted that Haddon and Rivers' article defined a terminology or language for writing instructions for string-figure designs, and was limited to that. It did not address the field experience as such. It had nothing to say on the process of learning the figures, the type of interaction involved in this exchange, or how 'learning and recording' might be combined. In

fact, the idea that the collector should learn the figures by learning how to make them themselves is only implied. In his field diary, rather than commenting on the process of learning how to make the figures, Haddon focuses on the difficulty of recording the instructions for making them:

> *Generally Rivers and Ray work out the description by slowly doing the movements and dictate it to me, while I do not see what they are doing. Then they read out the description and I try to make the puzzle from the verbal description alone and this is a good check, for we are not satisfied till it can be made from the written instructions without any possibility of mistakes. We have many fights over the descriptions but feel very proud of ourselves when one is satisfactorily finished. But I can imagine that some people would think we were demented or at least wasting our time.*
>
> (Haddon Journal, 16 August 1898)

Haddon became a key figure in the establishment of anthropology as an academic discipline and a profession in Britain. He was appointed Lecturer in Ethnology at Cambridge University in 1900, and Reader in 1909. Along with his Torres Strait Expedition alumni – Rivers who was also at Cambridge and Charles Seligman at the London School of Economics – he was instrumental in establishing intensive fieldwork as an essential part of the training of the next generation of anthropologists (Stocking 1983:81–2). After the Torres Strait expedition, Haddon advocated for continued research in Melanesia. He called for 'extensive surveys' of the region to be complemented by 'intensive studies of restricted areas' – which, became as George Stocking puts it, the 'emblematic slogan' for the next generation of anthropologists who entered the field as lone researchers (Stocking 1996:114–15).

An English girl in New Guinea

> *The method of collecting these figures in the field is extremely simple: you take with you two pieces of string of the right size, give one to the nearest native, squat on the ground, and go ahead.*
>
> (Haddon, K. 1997:217)

All three of Haddon's children, Ernest, Mary and the youngest, Kathleen, were adept at making string figures. Photographs of their constructions of the Torres Strait figures were used as the basis for the illustrations to the 1902 article (Figures 2 and 3). Starting with *Cat's Cradles of Many Lands* of 1911, Kathleen Haddon (1888–1961) went on to publish a number of books on string figures, popularizing this aspect of her father's research. She also made her own original contributions to the field, most notably in her book, *Artists in String. String figures: Their Regional Distribution and Social Significance* (1930). Kathleen studied for a degree in Natural Sciences (Zoology) at Newnham College, one of the first two women's colleges in Cambridge. She graduated with Honours and in 1911 was appointed as a Demonstrator in the Zoology Department at Cambridge, the first woman to hold such a position (Rishbeth 1999). In 1914, then aged 26, she accompanied her father on a two-month trip to the Torres Strait and New Guinea. Kathleen had travelled with her father previously, through North America in 1909. On this trip, as an official member of the scientific party, she acted as Haddon senior's assistant and photographer. Her other job was to collect string figures.

In the Haddon archives at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are a number of photographs taken on this trip, of Kathleen Haddon sitting down with people making string figures. These images were most likely taken by her father

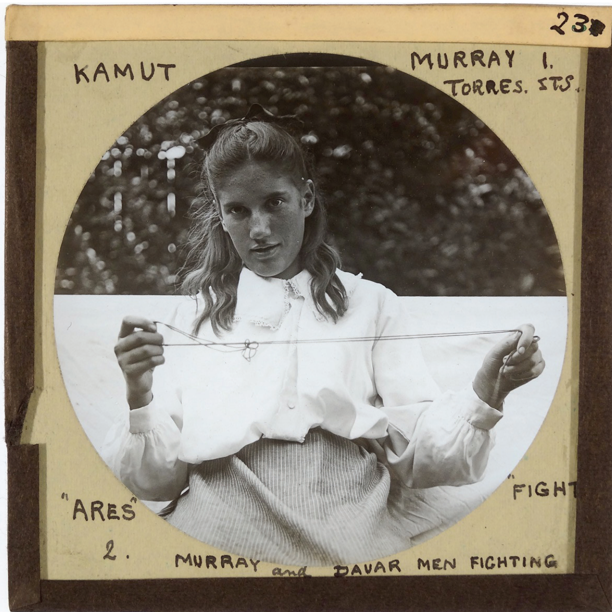


Figure 2 *Lantern slide. Kathleen Haddon executing the final stage of the figure Ares or 'Murray and Dauar Men Fighting' (c.1898–1902). Photographer: A. C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (LS.124565.TC1).*

> *... they 'fight, fight, fight,' and one loop eventually remains. When done carefully this loop can now be drawn to one hand along the two strings, it represents the Murray man carrying off the Dauar man's head.*
>
> *(Rivers and Haddon 1902:151)*[5]

using her Vest Pocket Kodak. As Joshua Bell has documented, the Haddons took two cameras with them on this trip, a stand camera for 'scientific work' – documenting physical types and material culture, architecture and objects, canoes (importantly on this trip) and pottery making – and Kathleen's portable Vest Pocket

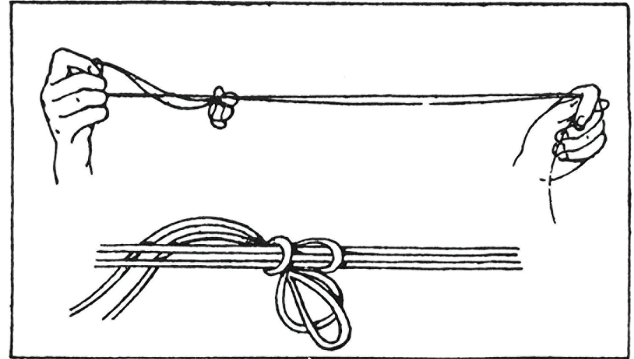


Figure 3 *Illustration of the final stage of the figure Ares (from Rivers and Haddon1902:150).*

Kodak, ideal for observational snapshots of daily life. Bell argues that the close physical proximity and the 'collaborative and intimate embodied engagement with Papuans' that was involved in collecting string-figure designs, can be seen reflected in the images she took with this camera (Bell 2009:143–7). The series of photographs I discuss here, along with her account of the trip in the unpublished manuscript 'An English Girl in New Guinea', document that engagement.

The major part of the Haddons' time in New Guinea was spent progressing by boat along the coast of the Gulf of Papua, from Daru Island to Port Moresby, and travelling inland along riverways, stopping mainly for one, two or three nights at villages and mission stations on the way (Figure 4). At each of these stops Kathleen Haddon collected string figures or 'cat's cradles' as she called them. Her account of the trip provides insight into her process of collecting as part of an engaging commentary on the nature of the exchanges the introduction of string figures elicited in the field.

The Haddon's tour along the New Guinea coast was emphatically on the survey model.[6]

5 Kamut is the local word for string figures in the Eastern islands of the Torres Strait.

6 For an account of the purpose and itinerary of this trip, see Bell 2009:149–54.

Figure 4 Kathleen Haddon with Mr Riley of L.M.S. Daru on Ada in the Fly estuary, 1914. Photographer: A.C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (P.47802.ACH2).

Haddon senior collected data primarily on canoes. They spent no more than a few days in any one place, often only a few hours. They stayed at mission stations or settler plantations, and travelled with government escorts. And yet, despite the 'superficial' nature of the general terms of engagement, as with Jayne's collecting at the St Louis World's Fair, Kathleen Haddon records episodes of genuine connection and exchange – some made almost incandescently intense by their random or surprise nature, brief duration and evident joy.

The Haddon's tour of the Torres Strait and New Guinea followed on from the British Association for the Advancement of Science meeting held in Australia that year. This incorporated visits to most of the state capitals, and various side trips, including one to Milang on the shores of Lake Alexandria, at the end of the Murray River system in South Australia, where 'Narranyeri natives' who lived at the mission station performed a corroboree for about thirty guests (Balfour diaries, 10 August 1914). While there, Kathleen Haddon took the opportunity to collect string figures from one old man (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Kathleen Haddon making string figures with Narrandjeri, at Milang, Lake Alexandria, South Australia, 10 August 1914. Photographer: A.C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (P.141908.ACH2).

We see her sitting down on the ground, learning a string-figure design from her informant sitting beside her, while in this case others, standing, watch on. On this day Kathleen collected six designs, which she published in 1918.

Kathleen Haddon's method of collecting involved first learning how to make the figure herself, before recording the instructions.

> *In order to write down the new figures I had to learn each one, and this was occasionally rather*

> *trying, for toes and mouth are frequently used in manipulating the string and I found it almost impossible to keep one piece of string for my private use. The natives were usually unprovided with string and used mine as I always carried several pieces about.*
>
> *(Haddon, K. n.d.:23.)*

She would usually write down the instructions for a figure on the spot, once she had learned it, so that she could collect 'several at a sitting without getting them mixed' (Haddon, K. 1997:218). The process of learning by doing ensured that the operations by which a figure was made were properly understood. By reconstructing the figure, instructions could be tested and rechecked to ensure accuracy.[7]

On this trip, at each of the villages they visited, while Haddon senior 'gathered information from the men', Kathleen worked with the women and children collecting string figures. Most of her collecting was done in communal village spaces, as at Mawatta: 'almost instantly I had a huge crowd around me, even the men finding that it was not beneath their dignity to join in the game' (Haddon, K. n.d.:23). Malinowski was staying on Mailu at the time they visited, and while he and her father worked together, Kathleen 'set about learning cat's cradles'. On this occasion she was presented with a figure that was so 'long and complicated' that she could not learn it in one sitting:

Figure 6 Kathleen Haddon making string figures on Mailu, 1914. Photographer: A.C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (P.48641.ACH2).

> *After finding one or two ordinary ones I was shown a tremendously long one, the longest I had ever seen, illustrating the life of a crab. I started learning this, and when my father came along an hour later I was still at it; as it was then lunch-time he wrote down what I had learned and we left the rest for another time.*
>
> *(Haddon, K. n.d.:126)*

It is probable that Figure 6, showing Kathleen making string figures on the beach on Mailu – with the main village near the Mission House where they were staying in the background – was also taken at this time.

There is another photograph (Figure 7) of Kathleen Haddon sitting on the ground with five policemen outside a government building in Port Moresby, learning string figures. Governor Murray had organized members of the native

7 Raymond Firth, who collected string figures on Tikopia in 1929, used the same methodology as Kathleen Haddon, but did things in the opposite order: writing down the instructions through observing the movements of his informant first, and then learning the figure:

> *I made it my practice to master each figure myself when I had recorded the movements from my informants. This was assisted by having two strings. If we did the figure together I could then imitate the movements of the informant and correct my record if this was inaccurate.*
>
> *(Firth 1970:1)*

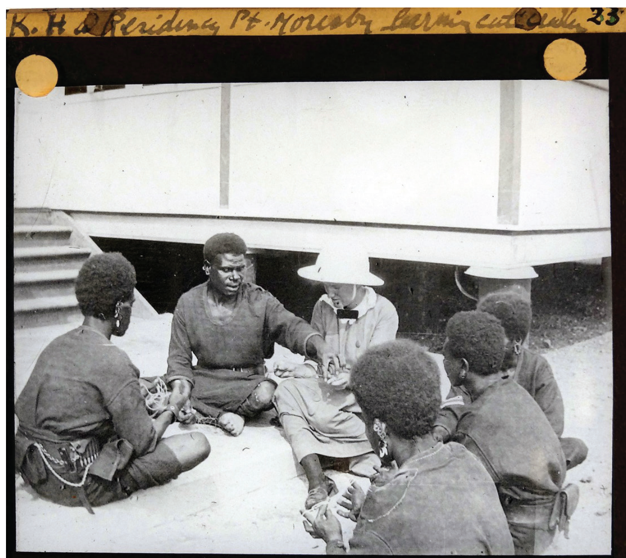


Figure 7 Lantern slide. Kathleen Haddon making string figures with members of the Armed Constabulary force, Port Moresby, 1914. Photographer: A.C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (LS.124553.TC1).

armed constabulary to work with her. The men chosen came from different parts of the country, so they could teach her figures she would not otherwise have seen. [8] Even in this formal and official situation, the collaborative nature of the exchange – with the man to her right correcting the organization of strings on Haddon's left hand – is evident. Another photograph (Figure 8) taken on the trip at Daru, the entry port to Papua, while badly under-exposed, appears to be in a domestic interior – behind the man that Kathleen is engaging with, is a woman and baby.

Making string figures with someone, either teaching or being taught by them, involves a particular kind of exchange, a tacit agreement

Figure 8 Kathleen Haddon making string figures, Daru, 1914. Photographer: A.C. Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (P.47871.KH).

or understanding that could well be described as 'intimate'. The activity involves being in close physical proximity to the other person, and often in having direct physical contact. Notably, as we see in the photographs, Kathleen Haddon assumes a position 'on the same level' as the person she is learning from, usually on the ground. The 'levelling' is not just physical, but

8 Kathleen Haddon recorded that it was evident the police felt this was 'beneath their dignity', but they took the order 'in good part' and 'kindly condescended to instruct me' (Haddon, K. 1929:269, n.d.:109).

comes from being engaged in a common activity with a shared goal, through a collaborative process. In this situation, the collector is not in a superior position, but is more often the clumsy supplicant. As Jayne (1962:12) wrote about her experience collecting the figure *Apache Door* from her informant Lena Smith: 'She was much amused at my blunders.' Kathleen Haddon (1997:217) tutored: 'It is advisable to know a few figures beforehand, as the beginner is naturally slow and natives may not be patient teachers.'

This picture is counter to the conventional image of fieldwork practice in the survey mode – of 'interviews with informants in the Commissioner's bungalow' as satirised by Malinowski and Sillitoe. Kathleen Haddon's methodology for collecting string-figure designs was inherently participatory. It meant that she sought people out in the midst of 'teeming village life', sitting down cross-legged with them on the ground. As she travelled, she initiated a series of these exchanges.

> *I remember one village we visited on the Fly River... The natives did not understand English, and I knew not a word of their language, but we had one common interest. I drew my string from my pocket, squatted down and started to make figures; immediately there were shouts of joy, and although these natives had hardly ever before been visited by a white woman they lost all their shyness, and played Cat's Cradles and examined my clothes with the ease of an old acquaintance...*
> *(Haddon, K. 1997:218.)*

At the village where the above scene took place, the party only stayed a couple of hours: 'we took a few photographs and measured some canoes, and then set off on our homeward journey' (Haddon, K. n.d.:34) – downriver about four miles to the coconut plantation where they were staying.

There is a longer and more detailed description of this episode in Kathleen Haddon's manuscript 'An English Girl in New Guinea'. Kathleen had arrived at the village on her own, with the rest of the party following behind. As she wrote (n.d.:33–4):

> *The great advantage of this was that the native women all came out to see me instead of remaining in their houses, as is their custom when strange men arrive, so I was soon the centre of an interested crowd of men, women, and children, all smiling and shaking hands.*

This was when she took the opportunity to get out her string. Her narrative continues:

> *By this time we all felt thoroughly at home, and various podgy brown babies were produced for my inspection, so I tickled and patted them, a proceeding that commonly resulted in howls of terror at my white face. The natives squatted down all round, and the women fingered my skirt and examined my puttees... The men were, as usual, busy smoking, and one in an indulgent moment handed the fag-end of his cigarette to the women, each of whom took a puff and then passed it on; in the end it came down to me – I fully appreciated the honour, but I am afraid that my courage failed and I faltered some excuse. By this time the others had arrived in the dinghy and all the women fled, in fact the whole village seemed upset at the newcomers, for all the dogs congregated together, put their noses in the air, and howled like lost souls.*

This brief episode of ease and intimacy as described by Kathleen Haddon was made

possible, it seems because of her gender, but it was, as she tells it, specifically triggered by her squatting down, getting out her string and making string figures. On numerous occasions she elaborated on the 'magical' effect making string figures had in 'establishing confidence and a basis for understanding' (Haddon, K. 1930:7).

> *No one who has not experienced it can realise with what rapidity one can get in touch with a tribe through this means, when other and more formal means would take ever so much longer.*
> *(Haddon, K. 1997:219)*

> *It is notoriously difficult for a European to make contact with primitive peoples. And by contact we mean not mere acquaintance and observation, but the more subtle contact of mind and sympathy.*
> *(Haddon, K. 1930:7–8)*

Through making string figures, doing something that they themselves did, the people she was engaging with recognized, as she put it, 'that I was one of them' (K. Haddon quoted in Anon. 1996:177).

A participatory aesthetic

It is my contention that, rather than belonging to the 'old school' survey approach, the study of string figures was an attendant at the conception of the 'new school' of intensive participant-observation fieldwork. The task of collecting string-figure designs would have aided the development of field-research skills, and the experience, most importantly, would have seeded the idea of the potential of this mode of practice: the researcher joining in the activities of the life-world of the group being studied, creating relationships of reciprocal understanding through shared experience. The process involved in collecting string figures was a model for the type of 'hanging out', which back then, as still today, was seen as the basis for building rapport in the field (DeWalt and DeWalt 2010; Sluka 2012).

The series of photographs (taken by A.C. Haddon) discussed above (Figures 5–8) documents the close physical proximity and intersubjective engagement Kathleen Haddon had with people when she was involved in the process of learning string figures with/from them. Joshua Bell (2009) has argued that the study of string figures influenced Kathleen Haddon's own photographic style on this trip: that the embodied engagement with her Papuan subjects through her string-figure research, and the close proximity it allowed, was expressed in the naturalistic and intimate snapshots she took with her portable Vest Pocket Kodak camera. Bell further argues that the 'intimacy' of this experience was the source of the 'sensitive and humanistic eye' Kathleen Haddon displayed, as well as informing the 'Indigenous countersigns or agency' we might equally discern in her photographs (Bell 2009:160–1).[9]

The cover image to this pamphlet is of a young girl that Kathleen learned several figures from, one afternoon about halfway through their trip, when their boat was moored off Maipani at the mouth of the Bamu River. The captain had gone ashore to attend to some business, leaving Kathleen and her father on the boat. They spent their time learning string figures from local villagers who visited them onboard (Haddon, K. n.d.:46). The angle and framing of this shot expressively encode the relationship between the photographer and subject of this encounter: it is

9 The concept of '"Indigenous countersigns" – oblique traces of the imprint of local agency on foreign perceptions and representations of encounters' – was developed in the work of Bronwen Douglas (2013:392 and 2008).

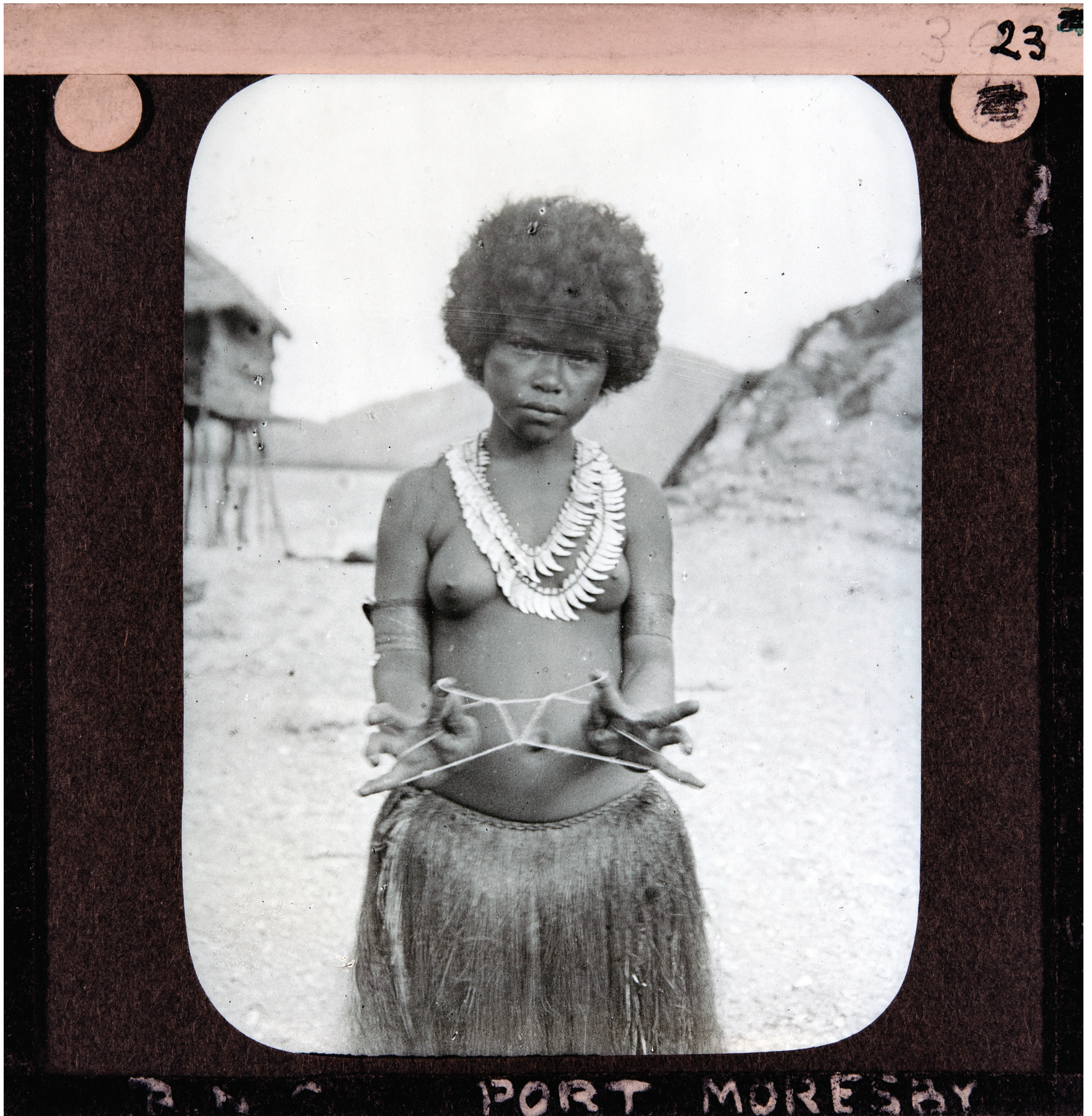


Figure 9 *Lantern slide. 'Girl doing Cat's Cradle, Port Moresby, BNG.' 1914. Photographer: Kathleen Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (LS.124552.TC1). This form of final display of the figure, suspended from the index and little fingers on each hand, is known as the 'Caroline Extension'.*

close-up, unstudied, of the moment. No doubt snapped with Kathleen Haddon's Vest Pocket Kodak, the girl, absorbed in her task, does not look up, either unaware or ignoring the fact that her photograph is being taken.[10]

In contrast, the young girl in Figure 9 looks squarely at the camera as she holds up the string figure she has made in front of her. This photograph was taken in the Motu villages on the harbor in Port Moresby, only ten minutes from Government House, where the Haddons were staying. It was taken on their last morning in the capital, when Kathleen took the opportunity to go 'exploring … and taking photographs' (Haddon, K. n.d.:109). These villages (five in all) were built on the shoreline, with the houses characteristically raised on stilts or piles, as can be seen in the background of the photograph. In this photograph there is a distance reinstated between photographer and subject, who presents herself to the camera, we sense, on request. The photographs taken that morning were all shot with a large-format stand camera requiring a more formal set-up than the snaps taken with the unobtrusive Vest Pocket Kodak. Kathleen commented that the people seem 'little affected' by their close proximity to Port Moresby. The women, for example, continued to prefer 'the graceful "grass" petticoat to the shapeless calico dresses provided for them by the white people'. The exception to this was that they 'expect to be paid every time one photographs them' (Haddon, K. n.d.:109–10). The girl's expression is difficult to interpret: wary, quizzical, defiant. As reflected in the photograph, Kathleen Haddon's relationship with her subject on this sightseeing trip is quite different to the participatory engagement on board the boat.

Joshua Bell's 2009 article belongs to a body of work by contemporary scholars interested in the relationship between anthropology and photography and the archive. Their work can be seen in the wider context of a rethinking of the politics of representation and reductive critiques of the Western vision of the other through excavating, as Elizabeth Edwards explains, 'the complex historical relations' from which the photographic encounter was constituted (2011:171–7). In a series of complementary articles revisiting the field photography of early ethnographers, they offer analyses that 'challenge the stereotype of pre-Malinowskian fieldwork as distanced and non-participatory', unsettling the presumption that he was the harbinger of a sudden and radical methodological shift (Edwards 2001:89). In this regard, Elizabeth Edwards (2001) has written on Diamond Jenness, Anita Herle (2010) on John Layard and Christopher Morton (2009) on Evans-Pritchard, a slightly later figure. The focus of these scholars has led to the identification of an emergent 'participatory style' that exceeds the purely observational, and which uses the camera as 'a site of interaction'. The argument is that this can be seen as a reflection of the 'participatory' tendencies of their fieldwork style more generally.

Haddon was instrumental in the field placements of the first students to undertake intensive fieldwork in the opening decades of the twentieth century (whether studying at Cambridge, Oxford or the London School of Economics): Radcliffe Brown working in the Andaman Islands (1906–8), Gunnar Landtman (1910–12) and Diamond Jenness (1911–12)

10 Kathleen Haddon developed a technique for taking photographs without the subject's knowledge and so avoiding a stiffened pose: 'concealing my vest-pocket kodak in my hands I looked in another direction and fired off at them sideways with the result they did not expect anything' (Haddon, K. n.d.:49 as discussed in Bell 2009:143–5).

working in Papua, and during the First World War, John Layard in Vanuatu (1914–15) and Malinowski on Mailu and later in the Trobriand Islands (1914–15, 1915–16 and 1917–18). Radcliffe Brown, Landtmann and Jenness all collected string figures, and probably Layard did as well. While Malinowski did not collect figures as such (that is the instructions for making them), he recorded designs and observed their use (Malinowski 1957:334–9). Collecting string figures continued to be a staple of the fieldwork regimen of the next generation working between the wars. Both Raymond Firth and E.E. Evans–Pritchard, students of Malinowski at the LSE and key figures in the development of social anthropology in Britain, collected string figures on their fieldwork placements: Firth on Tikopia (1928–9) and Evans-Pritchard among the Azande in North Central Africa (1926–30).

In his essay 'The ethnographer's magic' (1983), George Stocking discusses the importance for Malinowski of Rivers' formulations on method published in the years just before his departure for the field. Rivers' wrote a 'General account of method' for the extensively revised 1912 edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, which notably included an abridged version of Rivers' and Haddon's article, 'A method for recording string figures and tricks'. He further elaborated on aspects of his concept of 'intensive' field work in a 1913 statement (Rivers 1913). Rivers' prescription for an 'intensive' study was for 'the worker [to live] for a year or more among a community ... study[ing] every detail of their life and culture ... in concrete detail and by means of the vernacular language' (Rivers 1913:7).

Acquisition of competency in the local language was a basic requirement for Rivers, as a way for the researcher to gain access to Indigenous concepts and logics of thought, and guard against the imposition of those from their own culture. He cautioned against direct questioning for the same reason. His mantra was that 'the abstract should always be approached through the concrete' (Rivers 1912:110) – that the best way for a researcher to get to the tacit principles governing this or that behaviour is through the explicit facts of an event or occurrence – the sort of knowledge best gained through first hand observation and experience. River's final point was that 'the inquirer' was to develop 'sympathy and tact', without which 'it is certain that the best kind of work will never be done' (Rivers 1912:125). Reporting on her recent Papuan adventure in the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*, Kathleen Haddon explained the usefulness of string figures 'in helping one to become friendly with the people of strange lands', very much on Rivers' terms, as 'evidence of sympathy with their ways of thinking and acting':

> *They are accustomed to have the white man come to teach them and tell them of the new ideals that he is trying to introduce, but it i[s] altogether different and extremely pleasant to find a white man interested in their old customs and anxious to learn from them. After all, it is only natural to feel friendly towards some one who is so interested in you that he even wishes to learn your games.*
> *(Haddon, K. 1915:140)*

Kathleen Haddon described string figures as a particularly effective way of 'get[ting] in touch' or 'making contact' with Indigenous people. To reiterate: 'And by contact we mean not mere acquaintance and observation, but the more subtle contact of mind and sympathy.' (Haddon, K. 1997:219, 1930:7–8).

During his fieldwork on the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski famously moved from the Government Station on the coast to the inland

village of Omarakana, where he lived for some six months: 'without other white men, right among the natives' (Malinowski 1922:6). In the introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* ('The subject, method and scope of this enquiry'), Malinowski talks at some length about the process of immersion in the round of village life (ibid.:1–25). The advantage of living in the village was in practical terms, proximity: 'whatever happened was within easy reach, and there was no possibility of its escaping my notice' (ibid.:8). This led to an 'intimacy' in terms of the level of detail of village life available to the researcher – one sense in which Sillitoe uses the word, i.e. as in an 'intimate knowledge of' or 'intimate acquaintance with'. But what it meant to be 'really in touch with the natives' (ibid.:18) was more complex than this (and here Malinowski's language echoes Kathleen Haddon's). It involved, as Malinowski put it, '"the feeling" for' rather than a knowledge of: '"the feeling" for native good and bad manners' (ibid.:8), an awareness of the 'typical details of intercourse, the tone of their behaviour in the presence of one another' (ibid.:20), an understanding of 'their manner of being' (ibid.:22). This was what Malinowski referred to (ibid.:20) as the 'intimate side' (as opposed to the 'legal frame' or societal rules governing relationships) that was best accessed by the researcher 'join[ing] in himself in what is going on': 'He can take part in the native's games, he can follow them on their visits and walks, sit down and listen and share in their conversations.' (ibid.:21).

A feeling for string

Both Kathleen Haddon and Malinowski describe a state of understanding that stands apart from the amassing of factual information about another person or people – one that is accessible by 'joining in'. In his essay 'Knowledge of the body', Michael Jackson (1983:340) describes insights from his fieldwork with the Kuranko of Sierra Leone, which similarly came from 'joining in' in a practical physical way and 'inhabiting their world': 'to participate bodily in everyday practical tasks was a creative technique which often helped me grasp the *sense* of an activity.' There are a number of incidents described in the literature on string figures which talk about the 'sense' of string-figure making as an embodied physical performance practice or technique.

On their way to New Guinea in 1914 the Haddons travelled by boat through the Torres Strait. One of the stops they made was to visit Chief Maino, whom Haddon had met on his first trip to the Torres Strait over thirty years earlier, at his home on Iama (Yam) in the central islands.[11] People had piled into the one-roomed house to see the visitors. Following some general conversation, Kathleen took out her string. A young Islander called David, a church deacon, taught her a few designs. She then showed him some from other countries, including the Native American Indian *Lightning*, a figure 'which flashes out in a most realistic fashion':

> *As soon as they understood what it was they were enormously pleased and I had to do it again and again, the whole house-full of people screaming with joy at each flash. At this David decided that he must learn it, which he did with surprising rapidity, and when he produced a flash of lightning it fairly brought the house down.*
>
> (Haddon, K. n.d.:8.)

11 Maino was Chief of Iama (Yam) and Tudu (Warrior) islands between the 1880s and 1890s. He had been one of Haddon's principal informants on his earlier research trips.

This was the same figure that Cambridge mathematician W.W. Rouse Ball demonstrated at the beginning of his lecture on string figures at the Royal Institution, London, in 1920. He had timed himself: finding it took six seconds for him to make it.

> *You see the final result appears suddenly, almost dramatically, and I regard this as an excellent feature of it. Observe also that the production of the figure is rapid... I think quickness, which comes easily as soon as one knows the moves, adds finish to the working and is worth cultivating.*
>
> (Ball 1971:3–4)

He then makes the point that the movements used to make the figure are easy to learn – 'a boy of eight or nine, if taught practically, can learn it in a few minutes' – but that it is difficult to describe those movements in words.

In a similar way to playing an instrument or learning a martial art, the making of string figures can also be thought of as a disciplined technique of the body. While often referred to as a children's game, the more complex figures require skill and dexterity, and a technical knowledge and memory of the repertoire. The working of the figure *Lightning*, as discussed above, relied on speed of movement for its effect. Other figures involved a continuous working that mimics the movements of their subject, as first noted by Haddon in relation to the Torres Strait figures he collected in 1888 (Haddon, A.C. 1890:361): 'Various movements appropriate to the object represented are also made – thus, swinging movements are given to the limbs of the spiny lobster; or, by drawing the hands apart, a sinuous motion is given to the snake.'

As research continued and more collections were documented, characteristic regional and local traits were identified. As well as differences in terms of the formal properties of finished designs (the asymmetry of Inuit designs for example), characteristic openings used, movements and extensions of figures, were noted. Some movements were identified by local communities themselves. In Papua, Diamond Jenness had noted that two characteristic movements that recurred with frequency in the Goodenough Island figures, usually following each other, were given specific names: *nauwa* and *luatataga* (Jenness 1920:300).

After his time in Papua (1911–12), Jenness spent three years working with the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913–16), during which time he collected designs from various Inuit tribes. Having collected string figures in both Papua and the Inuit territories of North America, Diamond Jenness was able to make comparisons. Among the Inuit, a characteristic movement involving 'the interchanging or combining of the loops on opposite thumbs or fingers' – named *Katilluik* (put two things together) – he noted, 'is rarely found in Melanesia'. On the other hand, 'that most characteristic feature of Melanesian figures, the "Caroline Extension" with its outward position of the palms' (see Figure 9) – was unknown among the Inuit (Jenness 1923:294).

The connection between string-figure method and styles of movement as cultural artefacts was elaborated by Erich von Hornbostel (1877–1935) – an Austrian ethnomusicologist, colleague of Boas and Haddon – in the preface he wrote to accompany Julia Averkieva's monograph on Kwakiutl string figures.[12] Commenting on the similarities between the Kwakiutl repertoire and Inuit string figures, he ventured:

12 Julia Averkieva, a student of Franz Boas', collected string figures among the Kwakiutl in 1930–31, but publication of her paper with von Hornbostel's introduction did not go ahead.

> *Even more than by statistics, experts will be convinced when they themselves making Kwakiutl string figures will feel their characteristic Eskimoan style. For style in string figure making, as in dancing and singing, is deeply rooted in motor behaviour. (For the same reason tribes, or individuals, chiefly differ not in what they make but in how they make it.) ... Apart from what may be called 'kinetic melody' (which of course, cannot be described), the type of motor habit common to both peoples is revealed by various features of their string game technique.*
>
> (von Hornbostel 1989:32–35.)

It is noteworthy that this stylistic aspect of string figures is something that von Hornbostel identified primarily as a 'feeling' that could be best (most convincingly) understood by someone through experience — 'when they themselves' make the figures.

Conclusion

> *To recognise the embodiedness of our Being-in-the-world is to discover a common ground when self and other are one.*
>
> *(Jackson 1983:340)*

One of the reasons for the lowly status of string figures in Paul Sillitoe's eyes, was that among the Wola in the Central Highlands of Papua New Guinea, with whom he did his doctoral fieldwork, he claimed he could find no significance for the practice. It was 'nothing more than a children's game' (and not a very popular one at that). He documented fourteen figures as the total of the known repertoire in the community in which he lived (giving the instructions for three of these), with the caveat that most children only knew how to make one or two of the simpler figures.[13] When Sillitoe complains that string figures have no 'deeper meaning' for the Wola, he is referring to a symbolic, representational or textual 'meaning'. He does note, however, that in other communities (among the Kiwai and the Goodenough Islanders, as recorded by Landtman 1914 and Jenness 1920, respectively), it is 'the act' of making the figure that is significant — as in both communities the functionally and formally homologous act of twining in the making of string figures is associated with ensuring the strong growth and a good harvest of yams. Sillitoe's comment gestures toward the relationship between embodiment and meaning — the sliding door between being-in-the-world and representation — as in the idea of the *feeling* of 'Eskimoan style'.

In her experience, Kathleen Haddon found making string figures to be a short cut to a state of reciprocal understanding or sympathy with the First Nations peoples she met 'when other and more formal means would take ever so much longer' (Haddon, K. 1997:219). The close physical and intersubjective engagement involved in collecting string figures — the 'intimate relations' that Caroline Jayne found so confronting and arduous in her fieldwork at the St Louis World's Fair — established an instant rapport. It is not my intention to suggest an equivalence between the single, one-off engagements Kathleen Haddon describes in her manuscript and relationships formed through repeated exchanges over a prolonged period in the field. Indeed, it is perhaps the fleeting nature and happenstance of events like the visit to the village on the Fly River — free of any transactional obligations and the strains

13 It was a different story elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. From 1972–5 Philip Noble worked as a missionary in the Mangalas District of Oro Province, where he collected some 140 string figure designs (Noble 1979).

Figure 10 Two young women on Iama (Yam) Island, Torres Strait, making string figures, 1914. Photographer: Kathleen Haddon. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (P.1131. ACH1).

of maintaining a longer term relationship – that marks them out and gives them a liminal energy. I am arguing rather that these experiences should be recognized as valid, and valuable, in their own right.

Due to A.C. Haddon's enthusiasm, the collection of string-figure repertoires was a ubiquitous part of the field regimes of the first generation of university-trained anthropologists who undertook intensive fieldwork placements as individual researchers. The process of collection entailed the researcher learning how to make the figures themselves, following the instructions and copying the movements of their informants. This act of 'joining in', of doing something that the other does, in the same way as them, can be seen as modelling the concept of a participatory hermeneutics. Rather than being a hangover from the past, I argue that the study of string figures can be seen as a key influence in the formation of participant-observation fieldwork methodology.

Kathleen Haddon conferred with her informants in the field by sitting opposite them on the ground, like the two young girls she photographed making string figures on Iama (Yam) island in the Torres Strait are seated (see Figure 10). Learning how to make a string figure involved copying the other's movements in literal imitation. Such bodily inhabitation of another's world, is for Jackson the ground for 'an empathic, even a universal, understanding' (Jackson 1983:341). To reiterate Kathleen Haddon's experience, this identification went both ways: 'When I got out my string the natives soon decided that I was one of them.' (K. Haddon quoted in Anon. 1996:177).

Acknowledgment

As recipient of the Australian National University's inaugural Australian National Fellowship in 2019, while attached to the Menzies Centre at Kings College London, I was able to consult UK archives and collections for the development of this article.

I would like to thank Jocelyne Dudding, Manager of Photographic Collections at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge for her assistance in navigating the Haddon Collection, and Gaye Sculthorpe, Curator of Oceania, for access to the Haddon collection of Torres Strait string figures at the British Museum. Thanks also to Ingrid Wassenaar and Elizabeth Stephen for the many conversations about writing and string while I was in London.

References

Abraham, A.J. 1988. *String Figures*. Algonac, Michigan: Reference Publications.

A Committee of Section H, for the British Association for the Advancement of Science (eds) 1929. *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 5th edn. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute.

Anonymous. 1911. Short notice of the publication of 'Cat's Cradles from Many Lands'. By Kathleen Haddon. Longmans, Green, & Co., 1911. *Folklore* 22(1):128.

——— 1996[1956]. They Always Carry String. *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association* 3:177–9. [Sydney Morning Herald, 14 June 1956.]

Ball, W.W.R. 1971[1920]. *Fun with String Figures*. New York: Dover.

Bell, J.A. 2009. 'For scientific purposes a stand camera is essential': salvaging photographic histories in Papua. In C. Morton and E. Edwards (eds), *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame*, pp. 143–69. Farnham: Ashgate.

Birdsell, J.B. 1962. *Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land. Number 2: Anthropology and Nutrition*, ed. Charles Mountford [review]. *American Anthropologist* 64(2):410–12.

Boas, F. 1888. The game of cat's cradle. *Archiv Fur Ethnographie* 1:229–30.

Davidson, D.S. 2006. *Aboriginal Australian String Figures.* Aboriginal Studies Series 24. Carlisle, Western Australia: Hesperian Press.

DeWalt, K.M. and DeWalt, B.R. 2010. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Plymouth: AltaMira Press.

Douglas, B. 2008. In the event: indigenous countersigns and the ethnohistory of voyaging. In M. Jolly, S. Tcherkézoff and D. Tryon (eds), *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, pp. 175–98. Canberra: ANU E Press.

——— Philosophers, naturalists, and Antipodean encounters, 1748–1803, *Intellectual History Review* 23(3):387–409.

Downey, G. 2005. *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eastop, D. 2007. Playing with Haddon's string figures. *Textile* 5(2):190–205.

Edwards, E. 2001. Visualising history: Diamond Jenness's photographs of the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, Massim, 1911–12. In her *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, pp. 83–105. Oxford: Berg.

——— 2011. Tracing photography. In M. Banks and J. Ruby (eds), *Made to Be Seen: Perspectives on the History of Visual Anthropology*, pp. 159–89. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1972. Zande string figures. *Folklore* 83(3):225–39.

Firth, R. 1970. Preface: string figures in Tikopia social life. In R. Firth and H. Maude *Tikopia String Figures*, pp. 1–6. Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Paper 29. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

Haddon, A.C. 1890. The ethnography of the Western Tribe of Torres Straits. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 19:297–440.

——— 1962 [1906]. Introduction. In C.F. Jayne, *String Figures and How to Make Them*, pp. xi–xxiii. New York: Dover.

Haddon, K. 1912[1911]. *Cat's Cradles from Many Lands*, 2nd edn. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

——— 1915. In Papua with a piece of string. *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* (July):140.
——— 1918. Some Australian string figures. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 30(2):121–36.
——— 1929. In the Gulf of New Guinea. *Country Life* (24 August):268–70.
——— 1930. *Artists in String: String Figures: Their Regional Distribution and Social Significance*. London: Methuen.
——— 1997[1916]. Cat's cradles. *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association* 4:216–19.
Herle, A. 2010. John Layard's photographs on Malakula: from observational to participant field research. In H. Geismer and A. Herle, *Moving Images: John Layard, Fieldwork and Photography on Malakula since 1914*, pp. 73–120. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
Hingston, A. 1906. *String Figures: A Study of Cat's-Cradle in Many Lands* by Caroline Furness Jayne [review]. *Man* 6:155–6.
Jackson, M. 1983. Knowledge of the body. *Man* 18(2):327–45.
Jayne, C.F. 1962[1906]. *String Figures and How to Make Them*. New York: Dover.
Jenness, D. 1920. Papuan cat's cradles. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 50:299–326.
——— 1923. Eskimo string figures. *Journal of American Folklore* 36(141):281–94.
Kuklick, H. 1991. *The Savage within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Landtman, G. 1914. Cat's cradles of the Kiwai Papuans, British New Guinea. *Anthropos* (January–April):221–32.
Langham, I. 1981. *The Building of British Social Anthropology: W.H.R. Rivers and his Cambridge Disciples in the Development of Kinship Studies, 1898–1931.* London: D. Reidel Publishing.
Madden, R. 2010. *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. Los Angeles: Sage.
Malinowski, B. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: G. Routledge & Sons.
——— 1926. *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. New York: Norton.
——— 1957. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia*, 3rd edn. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
——— 1967. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. London: Routledge and Paul.
McCarthy, F.D. 1958. String figures of Australia. *Australian Museum Magazine* 12(9):279–83.
Morton, C. 2009. Fieldwork and the participant-photographer: E. E. Evans-Pritchard and the Nuer rite of gorot. *Visual Anthropology* 22:252–74.
Noble, P.D. 1979. *String figures of Papua New Guinea*. Boroko: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.
Parezo, N.J, and Fowler, D.D. 2007. *Anthropology Goes to the Fair: The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
Probert, M. 2004. The Torres Strait string figures in the British Museum A. C. Haddon Collection. *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 16:140–56.
Quiggin, A.H. 1942. *Haddon the Head Hunter: A Short Sketch of the Life of A.C. Haddon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rishbeth, H. 1999. Kathleen Haddon (1888–1961). *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association* 6:1–16.
Rivers, W.H.R. 1907. *String Figures. A Study of Cat's-Cradle in Many Lands* by Caroline Furness Jayne [review]. *Folklore* 18(1):112–16.

——— 1912. A general account of method. In B. Freire-Marreco and J.L. Myres (eds) for the British Association for the Advancement of Science. *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 4th edn., pp. 108–27. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute.

——— 1913. Report on anthropological research outside America. In W.H.R. Rivers, A.E. Jenks and S.G. Morley (eds), *Reports Upon the Present Conditions and Needs of the Science of Anthropology*, pp. 5–28. Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Rivers, W.H.R. and Haddon, A.C. 1902. A method of recording string figures and tricks. *Man* 2:146–53.

Sillitoe, P. 1975. Why string figures?. *Cambridge Anthropology* 3(1):13–26.

Sherman, M. 2003. The extraordinary family of Caroline Furness Jayne. *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association* 10:42–57.

Sluka, J.A. 2012. Introduction. In A.C.G.M. Robben and J.A. Sluka eds, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*, 2nd edn., pp. 137–42. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Stocking, Jr., G.W. 1983. The ethnographer's magic: fieldwork in British anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski. In his *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology*, pp. 12–59. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

——— 1996. *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology 1888–1951*. London: Athlone.

Tylor, E.B. 1880. Remarks on the geographical distribution of games. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 9:23–30.

Urry, J. 1993a. Notes and Queries on Anthropology and the development of field methods in British Anthropology, 1870–1920. In *Before Social Anthropology: Essays on the History of British Anthropology*, pp. 17–40. Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers.

——— 1993b. From zoology to ethnology: A. C. Haddon's conversion to anthropology. In his *Before Social Anthropology: Essays on the History of British Anthropology*, pp. 61–82. Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers.

von Hornbostel, E.M. and Sherman, M. 1989. Kwakiutl string figures: a preface. *Bulletin of String Figures Association* 16:25–48.

Archive materials

H. Balfour diaries: Australia. 1914. B.A.A.S. (British Association for the Advancement of Science). Meeting in Sydney etc. Notebook 1: London – Sydney: www.prm.ox.ac.uk/australia-1914-baas-british-association-advancement-science-meeting-sydney-etc (accessed 28 June 2020).

A.C. Haddon journal: kept on Second Torres Straits Expedition, 10 March 1898 – 20 (March?) 1899 (File 1030). Haddon Papers, Cambridge University Library.

K. Haddon. An English Girl in New Guinea, unpublished typescript, n.d. Box 322 OA2/16/18. University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Archive.

Anthropology & Art

A new open-access publication series edited by the RAI Anthropology of Art Committee. The series stems from the international conference Art, Materiality and Representation organized by the RAI in collaboration with the British Museum and the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2018. Its aims are to make available to a wide audience works that engage with the connections between visual, material, aural and other expressive human practices and the lived worlds in which they take place from an anthropologically informed perspective.

We solicit new contributions from anthropologists and others – such archaeologists, art historians and practitioners – that will enhance and expand our collective understanding and appreciation of this important area of social life.

Guidelines for submission:

Texts should be of maximum 8,000 words (including endnotes and references). We welcome original works that explore the meaningfulness of images, artefacts, sounds and performances and engage with anthropological approaches and/or analysis. There are no restrictions regarding the emphasis on the visual and textual aspects of the contributions and authors are welcome to discuss their proposed submission with the editor (paolo.fortis@durham.ac.uk).

Authors will be responsible for clearing all image permissions and rights to publication for both their and other's images. Manuscripts should be submitted to: admin@therai.org.uk.

Editorial Committee

Editor: Paolo Fortis (Durham University)

Editorial Assistant: Amanda Vinson (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Iside Carbone (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Max Carocci (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Charles Gore (SOAS)

Ian Herbertson

Susanne Küchler (University College London)

Sarah Walpole (Royal Anthropological Institute)

Leslie Joynes (Columbia University)

Rowland Abiodun (Amherst College)

Volume 1 *Stories in the making: What artists made of the 2018 RAI Art, Materiality and Representation conference*
Angela Brew and Gemma Aellah

Volume 2 *Moulding Quilombola identities and ethnic politics: understandings and practices around 'Quilombo heritage' in Brazil*
Katerina Hatzikidi

Volume 3 *Animism and the Mbya-Guarani cinema*
Rodrigo Lacerda

Volume 4 *'Such intimate relations': on the process of collecting string figures and the paradigm of participant observation fieldwork*
Robyn McKenzie

Forthcoming

Art, ethnography and the possible fate of hidden remains
Teresa Fradique

Some ethical implications of de- and re-materializing artefacts, using taonga pūoro (Māori musical instruments) as a case study
Jennifer Cattermole

Redefining curatorship as skilled practice
Carine Ayélé Durand

Socio-creativity and the neolithic
Eloise Govier

ISSN 2634-8004

ISBN 978-0-900632-60-0

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.