

WINTER 2016 COLLOQUIA SERIES

Date: Wednesday, March 9

Time: 3:15 – 5PM

Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261



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Suspended Animations: The Eschatological Gap and the Time of Life in the Secular

Cryopreservation techniques have served to highlight issues of temporality in the age of biotech. Using fieldwork in cryonics - the practice of freezing people in order that they may be revived at a later date - I extend the analysis beyond the technical manipulation of cellular or individual life to explore the ways in which the ability to stop and start life is conditioned on, while at the same time reconfiguring, secular imaginaries of finitude and end-times. Neither dead nor alive, the cryopreserved figure is considered to be a patient, a 'future person' with potential bio-viability beyond the age of the universe. Thus, the cryopreserved figure occupies what I call an eschatological gap in the secular, filling the void between personal and cosmological horizons. Linking the fringe of cryonics to more mainstream projects, I argue that in secular modernity, where biological crises get translated into temporal crises, biotech often becomes an eschatological technology.

Abou Farman is an artist and anthropologist teaching at the New School for Social Research. He is the author of *Clerks of the Passage*, a literary essay on movement and migration. His research has been published in *Cultural Anthropology*, *Anthropological Quarterly*, *History and Anthropology*, *Anthropology Now*; he has published widely in the more popular press, with essays nominated for a National Magazine Award in Canada, selected for the Best Canadian Essays and twice awarded the Arc Critics Desk Award. As part of the artist duo *caraballo-farman*, formed with his late partner Leonor Caraballo, Abou has exhibited work internationally in galleries, museums and other venues, including at the Tate Modern, UK; PS1/MOMA, NY, and the Havana Biennial. He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including a Canada Council for the Arts Grant, a New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship, a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship. Amongst other film work and credits, he was producer on Iranian filmmaker Amir Naderi's *Vegas: Based on a True Story*, which was in competition at the Venice and Tribeca Film Festivals in 2008, and is producer and co-writer of a 2016 narrative feature film, *Icaros: A Vision*, co-directed by Leonor Caraballo and Matteo Norzi. The film is about illness, hallucinations and dying in an ayahuasca center in the Peruvian Amazon.

