

ICS SEMINAR SERIES 2024

Doing Kalavata: The Materiality of Fijian Collectivity

17 October 2024 | 11:30am - 1:00pm

Room: EZ.G.22 Parramatta South Campus

Abstract

Clothing is often understood as the surface through which social identities are formed and maintained. In countries such as Fiji the practice of doing kalavata, or wearing shared patterns and colours, represents one of the key examples of expressions of unity and community especially in indigenous (iTaukei) families and villages. This paper examines the expanded practice and performance of doing kalavata amongst the diverse communities that live and work in urban Fiji. Connecting the materiality of clothing and fabric to globalisation and urbanisation, the paper will highlight the complex ways in which individual style and fit are being expressed within a broader system of communal aesthetics. I conclude by reflecting upon the role that doing kalavata plays in the collective imagination of being Fijian.

Biography

Heather A. Horst is an anthropologist who examines contemporary social and cultural changes related to digital media, technology, and material culture and the Director of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. Her publications include *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication*; *Hanging Around, Messing Around* and *Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*; *Digital Anthropology*; *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practices*; *The Moral Economy of Mobile Phones: Pacific Island Perspectives*; and *Digital Media Practices in Households*. She has also produced two documentaries on smartphone use in Fiji and Papua New Guinea and is currently collaborating to produce a film about the Fijian fashion industry to be released in 2025.

Presenter: Heather Horst
Discussant: Amanda Third
Chair: Aimee Hourigan

NEXT SEMINAR:
24 OCTOBER