

ETHNOGRAPHY TALKS

TRANSDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND BEYOND

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Autumn 2025

October 14th

**‘Serving’ NGO ‘realness’ at the United Nations:
the colonial ambivalence of the internationalization
of Ghanaian(anti)LGBT activism and networking**

Kwaku Adomako (University of Lausanne)

4:15–5:45 | The Square ARENA 11-2091

Considering the intensification of political homophobia from 2019–2024, this talk discusses how Ghanaian activists compete in transnational networks to influence local political and legal dynamics regarding LGBT* rights at home through the United Nations of Geneva. They ‘NGOize’ their movements, replicating discursive and corporeal codes legible to their ‘Western’ funders. I call this ‘serving’ NGO ‘realness,’ borrowing from the queer Ballroom Scene, popularized beyond New York by the 1990 documentary “Paris is Burning” and RuPaul’s Drag Race decades later. Conversely, these networks help reinforce colonial legacies that position economically wealthy ‘Western’ countries previously as purveyors of ‘civilization,’ and now of ‘development’ and ‘human rights.’

This series is
organised by the
critical ethnography
collective at the
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