From the Editors

We are pleased to present our final volume of *vis-à-vis: Explorations in Anthropology*. In publication since 2008, *vis-à-vis* has been dedicated to providing graduate students with a platform to publish research. It has also been a space for graduate students to review and edit the work of peers, and gain professional experience in the process of academic publishing. However, despite initial enthusiasm surrounding *vis-à-vis* among editorial staff and its readership during its first three years of operation, high turnover rates among the board, and a corresponding lack of institutional memory, have of late become major obstacles preventing regular publication. Entirely reliant on volunteer staff, the regular tasks involved in maintaining a publication have been a challenge. The neoliberalisation of tertiary education did not help present circumstance. At least in the field of contemporary anthropology, graduate students are progressively centered on individual efforts to professionalise on specific research topics. Consequently, voluntary work within a departmental academic journal has to focus on the changing interests and capabilities of students in graduate school. To this end, graduate students within the department have expressed interest at revisiting our current model and examining co-learning models of collaborative research and publication.

This volume is the result of a steadfast commitment to this final set of papers on the part of both authors and editors. Dahlin writes about the emergence of “Narco-vocabulary”, a new vocabulary used to describe the activities of the narcotraficante (drug trafficker) and their activities in Mexico. The state employs Narco-vocabulary to distinguish between the regulated and unregulated movement of people, information, goods and services across its borders. This she argues, is part of a wider strategy to assert power and legitimacy by redefining the parameters of what constitutes legal transnational mobility. Gastmeier looks at how contemporary beauty practices, including hyper-sexualised forms of femininity, articulates with feminist movements. Drawing upon a small but diverse set of interviews with women from burlesque dancers to makeup artists, she observes that while these women embody a sense of feminine power and identify with the feminist movement, they find their perspective sidelined by the movement.

Gillian Slogett provides an extensive literature review of the paleoecological environment of the ‘Makapansgat Formation’ in Makapansgat
Valley, Limpopo Province, South Africa. She focuses on the implications of site features for *A. africanus* in particular, noting that the relatively moist environment of Makapansgat would have supported the diet diversification of *A. africanus* and its bipedal tendencies. Duignan assesses the social roles children played in the past, noting that these roles differ from those of contemporary childhood. Coming from bioarchaeology, she notes the limits of mortuary archaeology, and draws from ethnographic studies and case studies to argue for an ethnoarchaeological approach to interpreting past understandings of childhood. Finally, Liliana Gil-Sousa and Filipa Queirós highlight the importance of method in developing ethically responsible applied health research projects. Arguing for a patient-centered and narrative-oriented approach, the authors examine the role of social science in studying health knowledge by retracing the steps through which the methodology for a literacy assessment project focused on asthma, cancer and child obesity came to be developed.

The editorial board of *vis-à-vis* is aware of the pivotal academic service it provides to the student community. While this is to be the last volume of the journal, we are in the process of planning a new publication. We remain committed to our initial vision of a graduate student run publication within the department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto that provides a platform for students to publish and professionalize. Among our key concerns is that the new publication utilizes social media and new strategies of communication that better reflect how graduate students share and acquire new knowledge. Starting in Fall 2016, we will begin a series of conversations with students about how they envision building a platform that allows for contemporary sharing and discussion of research within a graduate student anthropology community.

Finally, we would like to thank the individuals whose patience has made the publication of this last volume possible. We depend on our pool of readers, reviewers, and editors, and the process of releasing this issue has been a long and dedicated process. Over the year, editors have carefully read and reread manuscripts, offering comments and suggestions in close collaboration with authors. For all who have dedicated their time and thoughts to the journal over the past 8 years, we would like to offer a heartfelt thank-you. We hope to draw upon your support in the upcoming year as *vis-à-vis* transitions to a new format.

Sincerely,

The *vis-à-vis* Editorial Team:
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