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## Summer Roundup: Features

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By Deanna Day

This Friday, we are rounding up a set of feature essays that were published on *Somatosphere* over the summer. Unlike our previous summer roundups, which have focused on posts in a particular series, these features are varied in content, tone, and form.

[Ethics \(etc\) in a box: How a disinfectant spray became my friend and ally](#)

*“It is my first day of fieldwork in a London hospital, and I am following Joan into the wards for the first time. I fail to notice her stamp her palm against the red button before swinging the ward door open. A couple of steps in she stops, and I almost run into her back. “Just clean your hands before you come in,” she says. I look around, see the box, push the button, awkwardly, twice, to get enough spray onto my hands, and smear them together. The disinfectant is thin and disappears so quickly that I wonder if it does anything at all. The next time I am better prepared. I watch how Joan pushes the button without changing pace, and rubs her palms together swiftly while leaning into the swing-door with one shoulder. I push the button once, firmly, slowing only a little. I soon have this down to an art. I push the button without looking at it, without losing my stride, and feel a little rush.” —Courtney Addison*

[Creating Methods that Speak Across Disciplines in Medical Anthropology](#)

*“The multi-level analytic strategy I developed was fundamental to my ability to bring this research into dialogue with a broader audience. I made sure to analyze the narrative data not only for the “emergent themes” but also for how the narrator made sense of the events of her life. Like Cheryl Mattingly’s theory of “emplotment” of narratives in the clinical space that “do” something, my research revealed how documented and undocumented Mexican immigrant women used narratives to*

*reconstruct a meaningful life, and especially to make meaning and in some cases link traumatic experiences together.”—Emily Mendenhall*

### [How to make a “vulnerable population”](#)

*“The category of the ‘vulnerable population’ is itself a product of modern (American) bioethics, which invented the concept in its recent vintage and gave it specific meaning in public parlance. The field of modern bioethics emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the post civil-rights period, the bioethical concept of the ‘vulnerable population’ was coded with contemporary rights-based concerns: about minorities, about prisoners, and more. The specific meanings and people associated with ‘vulnerable populations’ were embedded in 1970s human-subjects regulation, as well as in popular discourse. As a consequence, a new understanding of past experiences came into being for some people (like Eddie Flowers, a post-addict prisoner) but fit awkwardly with the institutional logic that brought other people into experimental settings (like Wilmer Wedel, a Christian service worker).” —Laura Stark*

### [Image as Method: Conversations on Anthropology through the Image](#)

*“I would certainly see my interest in montage as linked to my attempts to understand and write about the between as much more than a matter of classificatory ambiguity. I see montage as a practice of the between in this expanded sense — not just a method of cinematic or literary composition but a way of engaging the world that might be equally applicable to, say, thinking about genetic mutations or geological processes. I think you’re right then to say that a lot of my work seeks a performative as much as a conceptual engagement with montage. This comes partly out of a conviction that the between should be approached as a site of experimentation rather than something to be theorized and explained. It’s also informed by my sense that perhaps anthropology’s most radical potential to intervene in the world is not so much a matter of documenting existing actualities as of performing into being new realities, enacting new ways of being human (or other than human) that result from various kinds of*

*encounters across difference.*” —Stuart McLean, interviewed by  
Andrés Romero

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