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## **With Objects at Hand: Reinterpreting Invisible Genealogies**

### **Abstract**

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropologists travelling between national museums initiated transnational research networks that were brought into ever-increasing dialogue via exchanges of ethnographic and working materials they sent shuttling between institutions. This lecture introduces a recently completed investigation into the impact of circulations of, and material exchanges with, German-speaking scientists on the practice and institutionalization of Americanist anthropology. Merging a transnational approach to the history and sociology of science with methodological elements drawn from museum anthropology, this research uncovered a long-forgotten matrix of New York City and Berlin-based anthropologists that by the fin de siècle had organized and launched a self-consciously international program for Americanist anthropology. Suspended just before World War I and fundamentally transformed in the inter-war era, the internationalist origins of Americanist anthropology have fallen into obscurity. Utilizing theories of entanglement, this research provides a new model for tracking and reinterpreting invisible genealogies—for identifying how flows of scholars and materials within and between overlapping knowledge landscapes reconfigured the cultural and material contours of science—and in so doing argues the imperative of heeding objects as documents of disciplinary transformation.