SFU African Studies Working Group presents

**Youthful Africa: Navigating Activism & Aspiration**

Two public talks from research in Kenya and Botswana

**Tuesday, November 20, 2018, 5:30pm – 7:30pm**

SFU Harbour Centre, Room 1430

Reception to follow. Everyone is welcome. Please RSVP or send questions to: eccooper@sfu.ca.

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**Urban Youth Activism(s) in Nairobi, Kenya**

Dr. Deborah Durham, cultural anthropologist and author of *Elusive Adulthoods: The Anthropology of New Maturities* (with Jacqueline Solway, 2017) and *Generations and Globalization* (with Jennifer Cole, 2006).

Drawing from over a decade of research and community activism in Mathare, a poor urban settlement in Nairobi, this talk explores the many alternative and situated activisms that young people in Kenya engage in. These are intersectional endeavours, anchored in experiences of growing up in excluded spaces, which creatively bridge past and present in order to work to bring about more just, creative and equal futures (or futurisms). In so doing, these imperfect and dynamic youth actions actively contest mainstream framings of their generation and critique the status quo that has been normalized in the country.

**‘The Way She Carries Her Handbag’: Aspirations to marriage and middle class life in Botswana**

Dr. Wangui Kimari, social anthropologist and fellow with the African Centre for Cities

A university student said, “You can tell a married woman by the way she carries her handbag”; others noted that married women can wear blanket-shawls at traditional ceremonial events. The average age of first marriage in Botswana is in the mid-30s and many women never marry at all. Yet almost all women in Botswana say they hope to marry. Is it the handbags and the broader middle class life they signal? Respect among women? Or is it the love and companionship that they say they want, often overlooked by anthropologists writing about Botswana marriage? This paper considers all three issues in the context of the new consumerism that has overtaken the country, examining how the desire for marriage and desire for things are both elusive in this upper-middle income country.

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