



Department of Anthropology

Spring 2023 Trevor W. Purcell Lecture

The Biophysical Afterlives of Coral or The Persistence of Colonial Violence Dr. Ayana Flewellen

Thursday, April 6th • 6p.m. ET

Click for a [LINK to registration](#)

Mined coral lays at the foundation of colonial architecture on the island of St. Croix in the USVI. These structures, built by Black hands still stand making encounters with the colonial past a quotidian experience for present-day residents. As a result, colonial structures act as ruptures in conceptualizations of time and serve as palimpsestual reminders of the past in the present. In recent years cultural politics have been at the forefront of public dialogue. Coral as an architectural artifact is the starting point of this presentation. It is discussed as an “intercultural space created at the crossroads of the novel and the familiar.” This presentation looks at three distinctive encounters with the colonial past mediated through coral, demonstrating the varied ways this organic material ruptures time and demands us to tend to the persistence of colonial violence.



Ayana Omilade Flewellen Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Stanford University
President, Society of Black Archaeologists
Board Member, Diving with a Purpose
Editorial Board, American Antiquity
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