



## **Refiguring the gaze: identities through practice and connection**

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### **Abstract**

In my presentation I will introduce two related methodological and theoretical orientations that might usefully be considered when working towards conflict intervention and the facilitation of peacefully coexisting identities. These 'ways' include: 1) recognizing the power of creative identities in practice over static event-centric identifications; and 2) storytelling and other grounded approaches that reorient the object of our gaze away from 'knowledge of' the other and towards 'connection with' the other. I will consider how established ideas from 'action anthropology' may productively align with humanistic work on identity. I will draw in part from my study of men living in the shadow of death on Death Row in California to discuss how we might enlist a person- and present- and practice- centered approach to understanding identities in violent contexts. This approach is juxtaposed with public, political and legal perspectives that tend to focus on events and produce ideas about static violent identities that act within those events.