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Vehicle of Death: Traffic, Trauma, and Movement in India

A public lecture by
Harris Solomon (Duke University)

Friday, March 24 at 1:00pm to 3pm
1080 Derby Hall

This paper stems from an ongoing ethnographic research project about traffic accidents in Mumbai, India. It is based primarily in the emergency room and trauma ward of one of Mumbai's busiest public, municipal hospitals. In the context of traffic accidents, traffic in the ward is in many senses contiguous with traffic in the world outside the hospital. The bleed between the two domains is one of my primary interests. India's roads are quickly becoming the world's deadliest, in no small part because urban space is constantly under construction and repair. This phenomenon plays out in bodies. While traffic is often understood as primarily a problem of urban planning and policy, I argue that traffic is also a somatic problem, and that medicine is a primary site of traffic's resolution. The paper elaborates this claim through the ways that patients, their families, ward staff, and physicians reckon with the thorny merger of city and body.

Harris Solomon is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Global Health at Duke University.

This event is sponsored by the STS@OSU Discovery Theme's Cultures of Science Working Group and co-sponsored by the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis at The Ohio State University. Contact person: Juno Parrenas <parrenas.1@osu.edu>.