

JEAN CHIA
Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

- 2025 PhD, Anthropology, University of Toronto. Dissertation Title: Looking Towards the Past: Resonant Histories in Singapore’s Forgotten Infrastructure.
- 2009 Master of Arts, Anthropology, University of Alberta. Thesis title: Picturing Calgary: An analysis of a collaborative, urban photography project.
- 2004 Bachelor of Arts with Distinction, Double Major in Anthropology and human Geography, University of Alberta.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

2008 to Present

Principal, Fields Consulting.

Advising on the drafting of sociocultural Impact Mitigation commitments in IBAs, indigenous engagement agreements, and drafting First Nations’ input on Ontario’s strategy for securing critical minerals. Developing co-management framework integrating community-led social and cultural programming in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) process and aimed at managing diverse interests. Writing community handbooks and advising on EA operationalization and strategic integration of community benefits for impacted First Nations.

August 2025 – Present

Researcher, Ethnography Lab, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto.

Research lead on a community project of Toronto’s Don River Valley and Port Lands development, employing ethnography along with semi-structured and open-ended interviews to investigate experiences of infrastructure change.

December 2022 to June 2025

Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto.

Researcher in a co-lab of five departments across Canada/USA developing new qualitative mixed methods and data collection. Introduced the concept of gaming and play as method, and facilitated workshops and presentations based on findings.

January to June 2016

Researcher, commissioned by the Canada Revenue Agency, Canada

Ethnographic research on tax compliance obstacles facing small business owners in Kensington Market, Toronto,

June to December 2015

Researcher, Ethnographica, Singapore.

Ethnographic study of Pulau Ubin commissioned by the National Heritage Board, Singapore

January to May 2015.

Project Designer and Facilitator. Picturing Chinatown (光影纪实：牛车水旧事新说).

Community photography workshops, exhibitions and prints organized by the Singapore Heritage Society.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS

November 19, 2023

American Anthropological Association/CASCA Annual Meeting. Toronto.
“Infrastructuring Ethnography: A Collaborative Exchange”

November 17, 2023

Ethnography Lab workshop, University of Toronto. “Play! Infrastructures of Collaborative Ethnography”

November 15, 2023

American Anthropological Association/CASCA Annual Meeting. Toronto. “Buried Waters: Heterochronous Infrastructure and Abandoned Railway Tracks in Singapore”

May 2, 2019

SUNTA/SANA Biennial Meeting. San Juan, Puerto Rico. “Adventures in Infrastructure”.

January 27, 2017

Global Careers Through Asia, Asian Institute at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. “Translating Anthropology: Ethnographic research outside academia”

June 22, 2016

Asian Dynamics Initiative Conference, University of Copenhagen. “Vertical kampungs: Singapore’s public housing estates as urban villages”

July 12, 2015

Chinatown Library, Singapore. “Picturing Chinatown: photography, placemaking, and community building in Chinatown”