The Society for Cultural Anthropology (SCA) is proud to award the ninth annual Gregory Bateson Prize to Susan Lepselter for her book *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny* (University of Michigan Press).

In this exquisitely crafted ethnography, Susan Lepselter explores how the uncanny saturates the everyday among believers in UFOs in the American West. Rather than objects of elite disdain or sideshow curiosities, Lepselter’s interlocutors emerge as poets and theorists whose reflections on odd coincidences and eerie happenings offer a “strange mirror” on the experiences of late empire and late capitalism. Lepselter’s subjects rely on elaborate conspiracy theories and casual hunches to inhabit a landscape haunted by violent colonial conquest and the presence of a vast, “secret” military base. Deeply invested in an American mythology of freedom, they palpate the edges of the felt, the seen, and the known as they go about their daily lives convinced of the presence of pervasive but out-of-sight, alien powers—technology, the market, the state, the extraterrestrial.

In writing that hews closely to the forms of her subjects’ language and thought, Lepselter evokes the affectively charged sediment of stories and memories whose persuasiveness rests not on logical coherence but on a set of potent resonances across seemingly disparate domains of experience and action. Enfolding her readers in a dense tissue of narrative fragments, she conjures a structure of feeling in which people experience a sense of confinement and a longing for release. Class, gender, race, and regional history indelibly inflect this structure of feeling. Yet in treating stories as mutating communal property that is continuously claimed and repurposed through creative acts of telling, Lepselter refuses to pin narratives reductively to singular subject positions or fixed social locations that would definitively author or explain them. Deeply informed by a wide range of thinkers from Jakobson to Freud and Foucault, Lepselter never merely applies theory but rather allows her ethnographic material to bend and rework it in unsettling ways.

Both in form and in content, *The Resonance of Unseen Things* challenges ethnographic conventions, inviting us to examine our expectations of the genre and to explore modes of writing intimately attuned to the subjects we engage. Thanks to the support of libraries participating in the Knowledge Unlatched initiative, an open-access digital edition of the book is also freely available to read. Exemplifying ethnography’s potential to illuminate the political through immersion in the mundane and the apparently marginal, *The Resonance of Unseen Things* casts a startlingly penetrating light on our current moment.

The jury is also pleased to recognize Nitzan Shoshan with an honorable mention for his book *The Management of Hate: Nation, Affect, and the Governance of Right-Wing Extremism in Germany* (Princeton University Press). In this conceptual and ethnographic tour de force, Shoshan locates the management of affect as central to emerging neoliberal forms of governmentality, arguing that right-wing nationalist movements form a “constitutive outside” that both troubles and enables Germany’s post–Third Reich, postreunification identity as a tolerant, democratic nation-state. The figure of the extremist appears not as an exception, but rather as a critical site of intervention crucial to the very production of liberal conceptions of order, the public, and legitimate nationalism.
In this compelling ethnography, Shoshan unsparingly tackles the challenge of his “uncomfortable proximity” to a violent movement. Yet his analysis does not rest only on intimate engagement with right-wing youth in Berlin, but expands outward to the social workers who sympathetically care for them, to the penal forms and legal codes that police the unstable border between democratic freedoms and dangerous expressions of hate, to the state and civil society institutions designed to prevent, monitor, and counter extremism, and finally to the public discourses and spectacular performances by which Germany confirms its democratic and tolerant self-image. Moving ambitiously across scales, the book never compromises on the depth of its analysis, drawing these interlocking elements into a richly detailed yet coherent analysis of contemporary forms of neoliberal democracy and the specter of “bad” nationalism. The result is a timely, powerful portrait of the ways contemporary modes of statecraft are mobilized around the figure and force of right-wing hate. Drawing on and extending a wide range of theoretical conversations in anthropology and political theory and profoundly illuminating of current political contexts in Europe and beyond, *The Management of Hate* offers the kind of essential, incisive political intervention that ethnography best provides.

The *Gregory Bateson Book Prize* is awarded by the Society for Cultural Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association. Named after distinguished anthropologist, semiotician, cyberneticist, and photographer Gregory Bateson, the award reflects the SCA’s mandate to promote theoretically rich, ethnographically grounded research that engages the most current thinking across the arts and sciences. Welcoming a wide range of styles and argument, the Gregory Bateson Prize looks to single out work that is interdisciplinary, experimental, and innovative. In selecting the winners for this year’s prize, the jury, which consisted of Karen Strassler (Queens College, City University of New York; 2017 Bateson Prize Chair), Amira Mittermaier (University of Toronto), Lucas Bessire (University of Oklahoma), and Paul Eiss (Carnegie Mellon University), considered over one hundred books from more than thirty presses.