

Dr. Nadia Naomi Mbonde

nadianmbonde@gmail.com | drnadianaomi.com

PROFILE

Researcher and strategist who identifies what is driving a system — behavioral, institutional, structural — when the surface explanation falls short, and translates that read for the people who need clarity before they can act. Methods travel across policy, advocacy, arts, and government contexts. Research funded by NSF, SSRC, and the Mellon Foundation. Published in peer-reviewed and public-facing outlets.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Anthropology | New York University | 2026

Certificate in Culture and Media | NYU Anthropology & Cinema Studies | 2024

B.A., Africana Studies & Dance | Barnard College of Columbia University | 2017

Summa Cum Laude · Phi Beta Kappa · Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow

CONSULTING & APPLIED WORK

Research & Development Consultant | New Yorkers for Culture & Arts (NY4CA) | 2022–present

- Built a 65+ entry development list for the NY4CA Awards Gala 2026, organized by sector and verified against primary sources.
- Drafted strategic communications for the Executive Director, including a stakeholder memo on mayoral administration relationships.
- Built a City Council outreach tracker mapping 22 Budget Negotiating Team members to districts, constituent cultural organizations, and direct staff contacts.
- Co-facilitated the annual Cultural Convening (January 2026) with artists, arts organizations, and elected officials.

Freelance Grant Writer | Hyp+Access Organization | 2026

- Wrote and restructured Letter of Intent for a major foundation grant cycle.
- Developed the funding argument around a NYSDOH regulatory gap delaying Medicaid contracting for a state-licensed outpatient clinic serving patients with hypermobility and related chronic conditions.
- Presented on panel “Building Our Own Systems — Healthcare × Disability × Class” to educate donors on reproductive mental health and holistic approaches to care (2024).

RESEARCH

New York University | Dissertation Research | 2019–2026

Black Reproductive Mental Health in the Afterlife of the Plantocracy

- IRB-approved multi-site ethnographic study of psychiatric governance and obstetric management of Black reproductive life, conducted across clinical, legal, and community settings in New York, Texas, and online health communities.
- Methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, archival research, discourse analysis, community-based participatory methods, digital ethnography, participatory filmmaking.
- Archives consulted: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Audre Lorde Papers, Spelman College; Ntozake Shange Papers, Barnard College; medical archives.

NYU – Ginsburg, Rapp & Mills Labs | The Disability COVID Chronicles | 2020–2023

- Collected and archived firsthand accounts, artwork, and materials documenting disability experience during the pandemic; archive housed at NYU Tamiment Library.
- Interviewed parents with lived experience, clinicians, and birth workers on perinatal mental health.
- Research contributed to the edited volume “How to Be Disabled in a Pandemic” (NYU Press, 2025).

Barnard College – Nelson & Griffin | Embodying Ancestry | 2017–2018

- Produced an ethnographic portrait series with young women of color in New York using oral history, archival methods, and embodied practice to explore ancestry and identity.
- Recipient of CAETR Seed Grant, Columbia University — most junior awardee in the cohort.

SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

The Anthropologists Theatre Company | Anthropologist-in-Residence | 2024–present

- Collaborates on performance ethnography examining race, gender, and embodiment.
- Co-developed “axes, herbs & satchels,” a play on reproductive care, ritual, and resistance through Black feminist and decolonial frameworks.

Postpartum Is Forever (2023)

- Experimental film on reproductive mental health and diasporic grief among Black mothers whose children were killed by police violence. Screened in academic and community forums.

An Astrological Diagnosis (2022)

- Autoethnographic film on mental health and motherhood. Screened at AAA, University of Florida, University of Pennsylvania, and other venues. SVA–Lemelson Fellowship recipient.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapters

2025 “Mental Health and Black Futurity: Life, Birth, and Caregiving in Double Pandemics.” *How To Be Disabled in a Pandemic*. Eds. Faye Ginsburg, Rayna Rapp, and Mara Mills. New York: NYU Press.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

2025 “Wading in Digital Waters: Black Mad/Cripistemologies of Motherhood and ‘Mental Illness’ in Online Support Groups Amid the Double Pandemic.” *Disability Studies Quarterly*. Eds. Efrat Gold and Michael Rembis.

2023 “Media, Mediumship & the Supernatural.” *American Anthropologist*.

Essays

2023 “Mad/Cripistemologies of Pandemic Parenting: Insights for Our ‘Post-COVID-19’ Present.” *Mad in America*.

2021 “Visions of Black Futurity Amidst the Double Pandemic of COVID-19 and Police Brutality.” *Somatosphere*.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

2026 Panel Chair & Presenter | Mad Studies Conference, University of Victoria.

2024 Panelist | Hyp+Access Organization, New York. “Building Our Own Systems — Healthcare × Disability × Class.” Donor education on reproductive mental health.

2023 Presenter | American Anthropological Association, Toronto. “Forty Years of Feminist Anthropology on Reproductive Politics.”

2021 Panelist | Institute for the Development of Human Arts (IDHA). “Decarcerating Care.” Carceral mental health systems and reproductive health.

2021 Panelist | CRASSH, University of Cambridge. “Visions of Black Futurity: The Double Pandemic of COVID-19 and Police Brutality.”

FUNDING & AWARDS

2024 Dissertation Fieldwork Grant | Wenner-Gren Foundation

2023 Predoctoral Research Development Grant | Social Science Research Council–Mellon Mays Program

2022 SVA–Lemelson Fellowship | Society for Visual Anthropology

2021–22 Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant | SSRC–Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Program

2019 Graduate Research Fellowship | National Science Foundation

2015 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship | Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant, NYU Department of Anthropology: Medical Anthropology, Global Biocultures, Disability Worlds (2022–2025). Teaching Assistant, Barnard Africana Studies (2018). Public teaching at Project LETS and Birthing Advocacy Doula Trainings (2021–2023).

SKILLS

Research methods: Multi-site ethnographic fieldwork (NYC, Texas, digital communities) · IRB-approved research design (NYU) · In-depth interviews · Participant observation · Archival research · Discourse analysis · Community-based participatory methods · Digital and visual ethnography · Participatory filmmaking

Writing & communication: Peer-reviewed publications · Public-facing scholarship · Grant writing (federal and foundation) · Stakeholder memos · Donor communications

Languages: English (native) · Spanish (conversational) · French (conversational)