

# Nordic TAG 2024 Conference Turku 6.–9.3.2024

## Archaeology/ Heritage

## Abstracts



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## What can failing tell about the relationship between heritage and archaeology?

Visa Immonen

According to Anna Karenina's opening line, 'all happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way'. Like unhappiness, also other forms of failing expose fundamental differences between entities or groups and their conduct. Failures are unintended, unwanted, disorienting, and often unforeseen, and in this paper, they are used to chart the relationship between archaeology and heritage. In recent years, the archaeological study of past failures – for instance, in rituals, adaptation to change, and production processes – has gained momentum, but failings in the conduct of the professional community are also sternly identified and discussed. While the broad sphere of heritage partly corresponds to that of archaeology, failures in heritage studies usually refer to the issues of risk and project management, and inadequate or inequitable policies. In this paper, however, failure is approached as a temporally savage event, which casts doubt on both past and future actions, makes one hesitate. Such violence introduces the question of power, divisions into winners and losers, and the circumstances in which failings are identified and reacted to. Although archaeology and heritage are close concepts, and heritage issues have become more and more integrated into archaeology, failures in archaeology and heritage still bring out frictions between them. This is salient in the idea of public engagement, and the associated notion of 'heritage community'. Archaeological failures typically stem from the discipline itself and are brought about by its experts, whereas in the heritage context the identification and criteria of failing become defined by a broader variety of actors and interests, revealing how volatile yet powerful events of failure are.

## Take a walk on the wild side or why should we be creative in archaeology?

Joel Santos – University of Leicester  
Inês Castro – Nova University of Lisbon  
Tania Casimiro – Nova University of Lisbon

Be creative. Innovate. Make something new. Most of us have heard this recommendation from others or even from ourselves when trying to figure out what kind of archaeologists we are or want to be. Often this results in two polar opposite reactions; either we aim for creativity or avoid it, thinking it would mean sacrificing the scientific objectivity or seriousness of the discipline.

A general definition of creativity is the use of imagination or original ideas to create or invent something or to look at what exists from a different viewpoint and give it new meanings. Whatever it is, it is always associated with new meanings, new ideas, and new perspectives. As archaeologists, we try this daily in our minds, our teaching, our projects, our grant applications, our teams, and even our dreams.

This session aims to debate how being creative can help us develop different ways of seeing the world. We want to discuss how creativity is something that shouldn't be feared but rather something that is important and even necessary, something we should embrace if we truly want to fully engage with the past. We invite people that have generated new ideas for investigating and showing how archaeology can be creative in academia, in public presentations, in literature, in paintings, in music, in movies, and in any form of demonstration.

## Professional archaeology, alternative voices and cultural sustainability

*Sebastian Gerberg Høstrup*

Alternative viewpoints regarding our past are continuously having an impact on public understanding. Public interest in them, coupled with their incommensurability in relation to current scientific paradigms, has led to a widespread disliking of them among archaeologists. A lack of functioning forms of involvement has led to a stalemate and archaeology finds itself in an awkward position regarding the many alternative voices which find their way to the public. Previous forms of engagement are questioned, and from the theoretical perspectives of epistemological anarchism and democratic relativism, a series of rationales behind facilitating new methods with which archaeology can recommence engaging the phenomenon are presented. They emphasize a broad collaborative effort, a positive discourse and public inclusion.

Keywords: Public archaeology, alternative archaeology, democratic relativism, epistemological anarchism.

## Changing our perceptions. How can we rethink our way of doing archaeology?

*Federica Foresi*

It is often difficult for archaeologists to think outside the box. We are rarely encouraged to do so and we are often hesitant to play with creativity because we perceive a risk of losing our credibility within academia. It generally seems easier, and safer, to follow paths already paved, instead of risking failure and potential ridicule.

However, it could be argued that creativity is a fundamental part of the archaeologist's role in the dissemination of information. "Creativity is not a talent, it is a way of operating", famous English actor John Cleese once said. As we move further into the twenty-first century, it should become our way of operating. We must try to find creative ways to communicate with the public, to stimulate curiosity or provoke reactions. In order to do this, we must start to look at things differently ourselves.

For instance, we could think about how people who understand concepts better when they are expressed visually could be shown information, perhaps in the form of a comic strip. Alternatively, we could consider how our perception of exhibition design would change if we had to experience the exhibition without the use of sight. In fact, I will illustrate my argument through practical examples ranging from projects involving people with disabilities to the use of comics in archaeology.

These examples will show the importance of the archaeologist's emotional awareness in taking decisions that change the course of a project's direction. The outcome of a given project will always be influenced by not only the emotional impact it is expected to have on the public, but also by the impact it has on the archaeologist who is designing it

Keywords: Public archaeology, alternative archaeology, democratic relativism, epistemological anarchism.

## **Interactive documentary as an inclusive storytelling practice to forefront migrant experiences of archaeology and heritage in the UK**

*Zulfiya Hamzaki*

Storytelling in archaeology and heritage has historically, primarily been from a white, middle-class perspective. Even though Britain has rapidly grown with migrant populations over the last few decades, these groups have been inadequately represented in the discourse around how archaeology has influenced their sense of place and personal heritage. My project, a collaboration between the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and the University of York, looks at the practice of the interactive documentary as an inclusive and creative storytelling model to forefront the voices of underrepresented individuals who are recent migrants in the UK. By developing digital stories through a co-creative film process, the project aims to reach new audiences in archaeology and facilitate conversations around inclusive storytelling practices in the sector. Through a lens of equity and justice, the interactive documentary platform is a space where migrant experiences are valued for their rich contribution to new meanings of archaeology and the ever-evolving ideas around heritage. Clips from the films will be shown during the presentation, along with a demo of the interactive platform.

## **Archaeology: The Gathering – Delving into Mana Pools, and Theoretical Schools**

*João Sequeira*

The field of archaeological theory is marked by a rich tapestry of paradigms, methods, and approaches. This presentation explores an unusual analogy between colours in the Magic: The Gathering (MTG) trade card game from Wizards of the Coast, and some of the theoretical currents in archaeology. In MTG, the five basic colours that portray the game's powers in dispute — White, Blue, Black, Red, and Green — represent distinct philosophies of power that create by themselves or between them, new game strategies. Likewise, in archaeology, different theoretical currents offer varied perspectives on the human past. For example, White (the order, the com-

munity and mass healing) can be compared to structuralism, or Red (the emotion, the liberty and destruction) can be compared to post-structuralism because of this theoretical inclination for the deconstruction of presets. This article argues that, just as the colours of an MTG strategy can be combined to create more effective and versatile strategies, theoretical currents in archaeology can be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The question of 'risk or mulligan' (game term referring to remaking the initial hand of cards when inappropriate) serves as a metaphor for the challenge faced by archaeologists when choosing and adapting theories, indicating that 'theoretical synergy' is a fruitful approach to archaeological analysis, or sometimes we must reshuffle and try again. This presentation tries to demonstrate two things: not only tries to be creative regarding the complexity of archaeological theory, but also demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary dialogue between games and the social sciences. Ok, not trying to hide the fact that we need mnemonics more than ever for complex theoretical entanglements... having lots of fun.

Keywords: Archaeological theory; Magic The Gathering; mnemonics;

## **Being creative with the Stone Age: exploring insights into research, art production, and public engagement in art and archaeology collaboration**

*Marja Ahola & Katri Lassila*

Can we ever delve into the intangible aspects of Stone Age existence? Can art and artistic exploration be used as research methods in archaeology? Can collaborative creativity create alternative ways of perceiving the deep past? How do we strike the right balance between speculation and grounded inquiry? In this paper, we discuss these questions in the light of what we have learned so far when we have been creative with the Stone Age, and where it has led us in regard to research, art production, and public involvement. To illuminate our findings, we present two case studies – The Antler Stories project and the Doing Landscape project – both centred around the Mesolithic Stone Age of northeastern Europe. In the former, we delved into the deliberate use of light and shadow in storytelling, employing a Mesolithic antler artefact to create a shadow play performance and photography and video art that have now also been presented in various museums. Meanwhile, the ongoing Doing Landscape project seeks to unravel the agency of natural landscapes during the Mesolithic by combining sensory archaeology with artistic research. This presentation critically assesses the processes, outcomes, and future implications of these projects, prompting reflection on the role of creativity in archaeological research and the visual representation of such inquiry.

## Remnant: Archaeological creativity through the lens of Fife's post-conflict landscape

*Maximiliano Wardle*

Recent years have witnessed a 'creative turn' in archaeology as scholars increasingly take up artists' tools to engage new audiences and test the limits of scientific objectivity. But what happens when artists become archaeologists? What perspectives can artists offer the field, and what challenges do they face accessing, interpreting and transforming archaeological materials creatively? How do their priorities and values clash?

In my practice as a trained immersive media artist, I use archaeological evidence and hidden historical landscapes as creative materials for emotive digital storytelling bridging past and present. I never intended to become an archaeologist. Yet I now find myself writing a PhD in Archaeology, having never picked up a trowel or dug a test pit in my entire life. In this paper, I re-appraise my project Remnant, a narrative VR experience that combines archives, photogrammetry, film, oral histories and immersive 3D, examining WW2 concrete structures as lenses that refract past and present experiences of young people in Fife, Scotland.

The project led me to libraries, archives and museums, but also through caravan parks, pine forests and sand dunes. Starting with the pillbox my friends and I would hang out in as teenagers, I unravelled human experiences woven into the post-conflict landscape that surrounds us. Talking to experts, locals and friends, I found hidden stories of an invasion that never came, of creativity and coming-of-age, of loss and rehabilitation, and of home and belonging. I conceived, designed and curated a virtual commemorative space that leverages the embodiment and empathy VR affords to engage 'visitors' as active explorers of the past, agents in remembrance and forgetting.

I will map my research-creation journey with Remnant, how it has shaped my trajectory from art into archaeology, and what this suggests about the place of artistic creativity in the future of the discipline.

## Unveiling Layers of Meaning: Archaeological Excavation of "Cannery Row" by John Steinbeck Through AI-Generated Imagery

*Susana Pacheco*

This research delves into the multidimensional exploration of John Steinbeck's "Cannery Row", employing innovative artificial intelligence (AI) techniques to generate vivid visual representations. The study aims to create archaeological contexts for the text by excavating layers of narrative, historical, and cultural significance embedded within the novel. Harnessing the power of AI, we employ image generation algorithms to produce a series of visual artifacts reflective of the nuanced themes and intricate characters found in "Cannery Row." These generated images serve as archaeological tools, allowing us to uncover hidden connections, unearth subtexts, and visually map the intricate web of relationships that define the novel's landscape. The archaeological excavation of "Cannery Row" through AI-generated imagery unfolds a dynamic interplay between text and image, providing a fresh perspective on Steinbeck's work. By translating literary elements into visual representations, we endeavour to uncover buried layers of meaning, cultural commentary, and social critique present in the narrative. Through this interdisciplinary approach, we seek to bridge the gap between literature, visual art and archaeology, offering a novel methodology for excavating the depths of a literary work. As we navigate the digital landscape, we anticipate unearthing new insights into the timeless themes of community, isolation, and the human condition as portrayed in "Cannery Row." This research contributes to the evolving field of digital humanities and challenges traditional methods of literary analysis by introducing a visually immersive dimension to the archaeological exploration of literature.

## Making archaeological heritage visible in the city of Vantaa

*Andreas Koivisto*

Vantaa is a young city founded in 1974. A lot of the inhabitants of Vantaa have moved to the town from elsewhere and Vantaa is often considered a young city without any roots. But the roots of Vantaa are in fact very deep, dating almost 10 000 years back in time. Major excavations have been conducted in Vantaa before the city has emerged in the 1960s and 1970s.

Prehistoric sites, however, are mostly buried under ground and are not visible to people. The question is how to make them known for the inhabitants. To visualize the history of Vantaa info-signs of ancient sites have been set up and stone pillars marking ancient shorelines have been erected. A stone age themed mural has been painted and a piece of art depicting enlarged stone age vessels in the public area is being planned.



The latest way to visualize the past of the city is a children's book and an exhibition about the history, beginning from ice age mammoths and ending with modern society. The story of the town is told by a rock who has seen all the historic eras go by. It is visualized with photorealistic paintings of the past by artist Tom Björklund. The great pictures by Tom can also be used to give lectures of the history of Vantaa to school children. That way the children discover that there have been very cool and interesting stuff going on in their own neighbourhoods.

To be able to get funding for archaeological projects in the future you first need to let people know that such a thing as archaeology exists and that it is damn interesting. By being creative in different ways you can draw attention to archaeology and prehistorical sites and make people aware of them.

## **Creative archaeology in the digital university: From Orkney to the world!**

*Antonia Thomas*

Over the past fifteen years the UHI Archaeology Institute has established an interdisciplinary research and teaching model, with Art and Archaeology emerging as a key theme. A unique suite of academic and professional training courses has been developed which link contemporary art practice with creative approaches to archaeological research, and which have a strong emphasis on applied learning and experimentation. Courses range from standalone CPD modules aimed at creative practitioners, to a full MA in Contemporary Art and Archaeology - the only course of its kind in the world. Students are encouraged to take a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to research-led creative practice, informed by critical engagements with archaeology. Uniquely however, the teaching is – and always has been - delivered largely online. In this presentation I will briefly discuss some of the overlaps between methods and practice in contemporary art and contemporary archaeology and how these have influenced creative research-led teaching at the UHI. I will then use the MA in Contemporary Art and Archaeology as a case study for examining the wider challenges and possibilities of integrating creativity with archaeology, in teaching, research, and practice.

## Entangled Worlds, Entangled Methods: Archaeologies of Nature

Anatolijs Venovcevs – University of Oulu  
Marjo Juola – University of Oulu  
Vesa-Pekka Herva – University of Oulu

### Humanities in nature: a preliminary study in rethinking the approach to nature in archaeological fieldwork

*Ida Lolk Toghøj*

In many places around the world, nature is in a critical state due to human activities. In Denmark, only 2% of wild nature remains. This suggests that we perceive and think of the natural world in varying degrees. The distinction between more or less wild, and consequently more or less natural, often appears subjective, shaped more by personal opinions rather than clear definitions. At the same time, things we have always thought of as natural, such as the Amazonas, has recently been proved to be conditioned by early human farmers. In short, we are overlooking our entanglement with the natural world and tend to put ourselves as humans beside nature instead of seeing us as inherently natural creatures.

Drawing on my own experience I see similar approaches to nature in the field archaeology. We are working outside and encounter and engage with nature all the time both inside and outside the archaeological contexts. We are in a continuous process of deciding what is natural – when is it relevant to register, and when it's "just" nature to be left behind or toss. The question is whether we are being conscious about these decisions and on which basis.

As a highly interdisciplinary discipline, our field has emphasized natural science disciplines, potentially overshadowing the importance of humanities in our considerations of nature. This paper aims to explore the opportunities that arise when we engage with nature more conscious-

ly. I will argue that incorporating our awareness of nature and applying our own engagement with it enhances our understanding of prehistory. By recognizing the emotions elicited in our encounters with nature and deliberately integrating the concept of nature into our work, we can gain insights that illuminate prehistoric lines of thought, construction processes, and even individual lives.

## **Living among sacred trees**

*Tiina Äikäs*

This paper discusses the human-environmental relationships related to sacred trees and forests. In my previous studies, I have shown the interconnectedness of Saami livelihood and sacred nature. Saami sacred places, e.g., sieidi stones, sacred lakes and mountains are part of a lived landscape and network of human activities. Sacred tree – either one standing alone or as a part of a forest – is harder to interpret archaeologically than the more permanent sacred places mentioned above. There are, nevertheless, some examples of sacred trees in the register of archaeological sites as well as in written records. I have conducted a web survey in which I asked how people use sacred places in nature. The answers reveal the various ritual connections people still have with trees and forest. In some cases, these are emphasized by a perceived historical continuity. In this paper I ask how can these ritual and historical connections that people have with trees be studied and how they affect broader ideas of human-environmental relationships.

## **Exhibiting lively heritage**

*Monika Stobiecka*

Adopting the theory of new materialism in, broadly understood, archaeology and heritage studies has contributed to viewing heritage as dynamic, vibrant, relational and lively. While these new lenses have undoubtedly opened up new possibilities for theory and inaugurated new research fields, the practical consequences of the new understanding of heritage are still under-investigated (but see DeSilvey 2017).

Drawing on the methodologies of art/archaeology (Bailey 2018), in my talk, I will discuss some of the consequences of the new understanding of heritage in the museum context. I will analyze two artistic projects from Poland: Karolina Grzywnowicz's *Weeds* (2016) and Diana Lelonek's *Center for the Living Things* (2016).

The first project began with the identification of plants found at the former Lemkos' settlements in the southeastern Poland. While highlighting the absence of Lemkos' heritage in the public

discourse, the artist decided to exhibit some of the plants in Warsaw. The second project, created by Diana Lelonek, involved collecting objects taken over by plants and mosses from forests and installing them in the center for the living things established under the auspices of a university. Some of the found objects were exhibited in various art galleries. Art critics emphasized that both projects were violent attacks on the lively entities: they ended up in annihilating the vibrant matter of objects instead of nurturing their character as entities that transcend binary of culture and nature.

During my presentation, I will delve into this criticism and investigate whether it is even possible to capture lively heritage in a museum setting.

## **From museum to mushroom basket: reflections on researching more-than-human boreal forest heritage**

*Katja Garson*

How is boreal forest more-than-human heritage done? What might boreal forest more-than-human heritage even mean, and how, in practical terms, can it be researched? These are, I believe, important questions, for humans are implicated and entangled with countless other beings in biodiversity and climate crises, and the forest faces multiple pressures. I am an anthropologically-inspired human geographer based in a political science department. Via my interdisciplinary positioning, I engage with and develop on thinking from heritage and futures studies to explore the questions above. In this paper, I discuss how communities and cultural institutions in Finland have previously done and continue to 'do' the heritage of the forest, collaborating with non-humans and blurring the boundaries of past, present and future as they do so. My fieldwork engages with heritage professionals and forest history experts in the museum on the one hand, and with a community of mushroom enthusiasts and foragers on the other hand. At the museum, histories and possible futures of industrial forestry are beginning to rub shoulders with histories and possible futures of non-human life and death. In the foraging community, fungal histories get mixed up with human histories, practices, and hopes for the future, such that it seems that heritage could even be located in a jar of preserved fungi. Rather than focussing only on my findings and what they could mean for the conceptualisation of heritage and heritage studies, I also reflect on how I went about doing this research. The challenges and lessons learned from stepping across disciplinary and professional boundaries and trying to attend to non-human ways of being should not be underestimated.

## What Does the Fungus Say? Exploring Ruins with Mycological Citizen Scientists

*Anatolijs Venovcevs*

It has been nearly a decade since Anna Tsing highlighted that paying attention mushroom picking “will not save us – but it might open our imaginations” in her *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015). Since then, there has been a growing “fungal turn” within social sciences, humanities, arts, and the general public interest. What has been less explored, however, is how one actually listens to fungi in what they are saying. Communicating with the microscopic has often been a challenge – especially when that microscopic spends most of its time within multispecies and multi-variable subterranean ecologies. Yet, this task is necessary if we are to mindfully and responsibly access the underground worlds that, for a long time, were seen as one of the purviews of archaeology. To start addressing this challenge, I will discuss my ongoing work with Miraculix, Sør-Varanger Sopp- og Nyttevekstforening (“Sør-Varanger Mushroom and Useful Plant Society”), a citizen science group in Norway’s northeastern-most municipality. Over the 2023 mushroom season myself and members of Miraculix recorded over a thousand observations of fungi growing in German World War II ruins in the area. The goal was to identify ruderal fungal species that thrive in post-conflict disturbance and find unique species that may have been introduced with the occupation. The exercise challenges the long-held relationship within both archaeology and the broader academic world by levelling the hierarchy between the researcher and the citizen scientists. In mutual collaboration, the members of Miraculix and myself become co-learners and co-investigators of the fungal ecologies that grow within war remains as we try to understand and decipher what the mushrooms are saying. Through these interdisciplinary collaborations and mutual attunements to the voices of fungi, we go beyond Tsing’s opening of the imagination to gaining valuable perspectives on how difficult heritage manifests itself in the present.

## Remembrance in the Red Zone: Finding the future in the more-than-human-worlds of modern conflict

*Matt Leonard*

This paper discusses the First World War more-than-human conflict landscape of Vimy Ridge in Northern France. The battle fought there in 1917 is memorialised across 100 hectares, a place of monuments, cemeteries and sacred ground visited by tens of thousands each year. Adjacent to the publicly accessible area is a 17-hectare forest, a place fenced off since 1918, part of the 'Zone Rouge', devoid of human habitation and deemed too damaged by the war to be useable again.

This is a more-than-human world of conflict. A post-conflict ecology that blossoms and grows despite its legacy of (ongoing) violence, while across the security fence the memorial site appears indelibly tied to the past, a place constructed from stone and concrete, sanitised of danger and unable to move on from the war. The two are part of the same whole, yet apparently in opposition to each other, one of stone, death and despair, the other of wood, life and hope.

This paper builds on Nixon's (2009) notion of slow violence and theories of negative (Meskell 2002) and difficult (MacDonald 2009) heritage to propose that the Vimy forest and other areas of 'Zone Rouge' can act in conjunction with traditional conflict places of memory, creating living memorials, more-than-human sites of remembrance, hybrid landscapes of war that embody modern conflict's inherent cycle of life, death and rebirth. In doing so it asks three main questions; what can the more-than-human worlds of conflict contribute to the memorialisation of warfare? What new approaches are required to negotiate this entangled post-conflict world? And why have we overlooked the agency of non-human actors in the aftermath of conflict for so long?

## Sounding Archaeology: Field Improvisation as an Archaeological Field Method

*Andreas Kühne*

In my practice as a sound artist and researcher I apply field improvisation as a form of field recording that explores the potential for objects to tell a story in sound – what I call objectal narratives. In dialogue with the present soundscape, objects can be sounded through interaction. Similar to instruments, objects are capable of producing sounds that have certain textures, timbres, pitch and speak of its materiality.

Engaging through field improvisation signifies a diluted acknowledgement of the relationships between places, materiality and mediators. With the development of modern architecture and consumer culture, organised spaces such as homes, concert halls, produced things, and even our own bodies, have the tendency of being regarded as separate entities from the natural environment, neither situated nor part of the field. Emerging from these constructs, field improvisation is an expanded listening to material that helps us to reflect on our entanglement in the multitude

of relational affects between our bodies and more-than-human beings. The sounded materials transcend objective documentation and become a reflection, world building, architecture or sculpture.

I will present my artistic research proposing field improvisation as a methodology for field work, site-specific interaction and transdisciplinary gatherings in the fields of acoustic ecology, contemporary archaeology, sound art and visual art within numerous field sites across Sápmi.

## **Songs of the Water: citizen sensing more-than-human waterway heritage ecologies in urban contexts**

*Kaajal Modi*

'Song of the water' is a collaborative audio project with women from Global Majority migrant communities in the UK that invites them to explore waterway biodiversity through an embodied practice of bio-acoustic sensing. The project combines artistic practice, oral histories, and citizen sensing as a way to explore alternative perspectives on how humans live with waterway heritages in urban environments. By listening to, recording and responding to urban river/lake/reservoir ecologies, communities are invited to creatively explore multispecies entanglements of differently polluted and remediated waterways in ways that invite their own knowledge making practices. In inviting migrant communities to engage with and respond to these ecosystems through making, storytelling and song, the project invites reflections on alternative multispecies cosmologies as a way to gather insights into how we might live more reciprocally with other organisms (human, microbial and otherwise) with whom we share landscapes, vital resources, and even our homes and bodies. Astrida Neimanis notes water is not simply an ecosystem, it is "a conduit and mode of connection... a planetary archive of meaning and matter" to which we return our medical and more commonplace excretions (Neimanis, 2012). This project looks to contend with the meanings that permeate these materialities: not only those of disposable culture, medicalised problem-solving, and ecological disconnect, but also those that frame issues of land and water justice, environmental racism and climate displacement.

This project brings together concerns about ecosystems and community heritages in a novel way, by furnishing diaspora communities with the knowledge, facilities and equipment they need to listen to and record waterway soundscapes using DIY audio techniques. In so doing, the project not only develops an important archive of watery ecosystems for naturalists and scientists to learn from, it also encourages deeper relationships between the humans and nonhumans who inhabit them.

## **In the midst of rich meadows / it was perfectly clear / I walked with company: creative archaeology, in and for the Anthropocene (a film and paper)**

*Lara Band*

It's 9.30am: dopey from a night interrupted by barking foxes and the August heat, I'm cycling along the Greenway, a cycleway and nature corridor formalised in the 1990s. On cold days steam wraiths rise from vents along the way: the Greenway tops Balzalgette's Northern Outfall Sewer, built in the 1860s to manage London's wastewater following the cholera outbreak of 1853-4. I'm just crossing over the Channelsea River when a rat rockets out of undergrowth. I swerve, heart racing at the sudden movement. Tiny paws scabbling on flagstones, the rat scuds 360 and hurtles back into the buddleia and brambles. Righting myself I reflect on the appropriateness of our encounter on my first day of fieldwork and cycle thoughtfully onwards.

In the midst of rich meadows [...] is a short film: the main output of two days fieldwork carried out upstream at Middlesex Filterbeds Nature Reserve, originally constructed in the mid-19th century to provide clean water to east London. Adding to research advocating more ecological approaches to archaeology and heritage and drawing also on ecological posthumanism and creative practice as research I turned to time-based media to respond to these calls for new ways of paying attention to vibrant human and fellow being entanglements. For this paper I will show my film, then contextualise it within this transdisciplinary framework. Through this I will explore just one way of working collaboratively with landscapes and all that inhabit them for a deeper appreciation of our messy, interconnected and changing worlds.

## **Precarity and connection in the waterscape: multispecies approaches to fishing heritage**

*Melissa Thomas*

As an island nation, Britain has utilised the sea as a resource throughout its history. From the nineteenth century onwards an industrial fishing industry developed which led to the growth of coastal communities, provided employment and created a distinct way of life; yet, simultaneously, it cost the lives of fishers, depleted marine species, and altered ecosystems. Taking Britain's fishing heritage as its focus, this presentation will unfold around three lines of inquiry. First, it will explore the potential for approaches to fishing heritage which centre water and its potential as a theory vessel. To do so, it will draw on the concept of 'waterscapes' (Karpouzoglou and Vij 2017) from political ecology, which recognises the interconnectedness of society and nature, and rejects the idea that water is a neutral space without social or cultural meaning. Using this idea of waterscapes forces confrontation with the complexities and conflicting facets of human impacts on ecological processes and environments, particularly in the context of the Anthropocene. My



second line of inquiry draws from the fact that modern fisheries are mutually shaped by fishers and the agency of creatures and technologies; catch quotas are set based on estimates of quantities of fish, which in turn are impacted by climate, water conditions and human action. As such, I will use this presentation to ask: how can we include fish in fishing heritage? How can we ensure that this heritage recognises the histories of precarity experienced by the species in this maritime assemblage? Finally, I will demonstrate the potential for archival oral history, policy, and contemporary case studies to enrich our understanding of interactions between humans and non-humans and the heritages that these relationships create.

## **Beyond the Bite: Unveiling Reindeer Castration as Hormonal Mediation in Multiconceptual Human-Animal Becoming**

*Mathilde van den Berg*

The traditional practice of reindeer castration is an integral component of all known past and present reindeer herding cultures around the globe. It is a key aspect in reindeer training, taming, control, herd management, resilience, and food production. This presentation explores human-reindeer relations through the Traditional Knowledge of reindeer castration and proposes osteological methods to detect castration in the archaeological record based on the castration's effects on bone and antler growth. The focus of this presentation lies in the integration of Traditional Knowledge with domestication theory and argues that castration has been an antecedent to and a key element in domestication and human-reindeer relationships beyond the wild. I reject the idea of castration as a hormonal intervention (in nature), and instead propose that castration signifies a form of mediation which is used in cultivation of a naturecultural multilateral interdependency. Neither characterized by only utilitarian or altruistic ideology, hormonal mediation is an expression of holistic care: a resolution that brings into agreement the needs and nature of the human community and the needs and nature of the individual reindeer, the herd, and in context of the rest of the environment in a way that enables resilience and flourishing. This hormonal mediation to transform reindeer behavior and physique has probably been a prerequisite to control over and care for the herd and the individual and is furthermore characterized by other mutually reinforcing relations like domination, subjugation, mediation, growth, respect, and partnership. Castration is a perpetuated biosocial factor in human-animal becoming that stresses domestication's multiconceptuality and ongoingness in negotiation and renegotiation. Though studies have criticized the sole focus on morphological changes to study domestication, this study shows that morphological approaches can reach beyond taxonomic and cladistic methods and beyond traditional notions of domestication such as controlled breeding or other human-induced selection pressures.

## **Sallyhamna, Svalbard: rethinking the human place in nature an eco-biography of place**

*Dina Brode Roger*

During this workshop, I would like to discuss my new project which takes a specific place in NW Svalbard called Sallyhamna as its starting point. The project builds on the identity of place approach I developed for my PhD work in Longyearbyen which de-centered the human and brought in a non-binary, multi-perspective approach to understanding through the use of a range of methods and practices.

I have been given the extraordinary opportunity to work at Sallyhamna, the world's northernmost privately owned cabin, a site which is legally protected by Norwegian law as cultural heritage. The trapper's cabin was built in 1937 and is named after its previous owner, Sally Kraemer. The site has traces of all the periods of human presence on the archipelago, including remains of a Dutch whaling station, Russian Pomors, and Norwegian trappers. As with all such structures on Svalbard, material from previous sites was used here - and material from the various buildings at Sallyhamna was used elsewhere. In more recent times, the cabin has also been part of a struggle with Sysselmesteren's office, linking the place to the geopolitical issues shaping human presence in Svalbard today.

My project will explore the histories behind the histories of why the place was attractive for various extractive endeavours at different moments in time. This 'eco-biography of place' situates the place itself as the focal point. Through work on-site and with archival material, I hope to unpack the entangled interconnections of materiality and being that are present at Sallyhamna - including, but not centered on, human activity and presence. The eco-biography will show the multilayered, multi-scalar, and multi-temporal interconnections that intra-act at Sallyhamna. Although the research is based in cultural studies, the main output will be aimed at a non-academic audience.

## **Living with an “organically evolving monument”[1]: North Ronaldsay's Sheep Dyke as an onto-epistemological window into reckoning with transition and change in heritage**

*Margaréta H. Pintér*

The Sheep Dyke on the island of North Ronaldsay (Orkney) is a 20 km long drystone wall that has been constantly shifting both in aesthetics, form and location since its completion in 1832 due to the combination of the fragile nature of drystone walls and harsh climatic conditions. Referred to as an 'organically evolving monument' and 'living structure' by the native islanders, the Dyke transcends hegemonic understanding of authenticity related to material integrity in heritage, making it a timely onto-epistemological heuristic for encountering and making sense of heritage loss and change, especially when thinking in terms of the conceptual lens of the

Anthropocene as an era. In this presentation, I introduce the Sheep Dyke as a heritage landscape of embedded naturecultures, which blurs and reorders agencies and temporalities in a Baradian sense, where phenomena are understood as “differential patterns of ‘mattering.’” [2] What might we gain from thinking with heritage in terms of a web of intra-actions and how could this affect how we attune to- and accept experiential plurality and more-than-human entanglement in heritage? Using the Sheep Dyke as a point of departure, I bring several examples from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the community of North Ronaldsay in November 2023, which highlights the various ways in which different islanders reckon with the weirded relational ontologies that emerge on an island defined by more-than-human agencies. Specifically, ambulatory methods of inquiry are explored as an effective way to viscerally understanding these enmeshed relations on an affective and embodied manner.

[1] “SheepFest’22 Highlights,” North Ronaldsay Sheep Festival, accessed November 30, 2023, <https://www.nrsheepfestival.com/highlights2022>.

[2] Adam Kleinman and Karen Barad. ”Intra-actions.” *Mousse Magazine* 34, no 13 (2012): 77.

## Upstanding Members of Society – Entangled materials in narratives of Early Neolithic megalithic structures

*Sarah Bockmeyer*

The early Neolithic Funnel Beaker Culture groups of northern Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, southern Sweden and Poland, are usually considered the first farming communities in these areas, dating to ca. 4100 – 2800 BC. These groups also built the iconic megalithic burials that are distributed over almost the entire area of Funnel Beaker groups.

The traditional narrative of megalithic construction in Germany is very rational, with stones selected purely for their precise fit, the least effort necessary to move them and if this is not the case, i.e., the stones were too small and had to be artificially elevated to fit into the chamber construction, the reason given is usually the lack of adequate building material, and generally only human actors are considered.

In this new approach of exploring the monuments, an emphasis is placed on assemblage theory, new materialism, and new animism, looking at the entire process of construction, including, but not limited to, human beings, and in using an example from north-west Germany, figure out potential ways of discerning more-than-human beings in burial contexts and the role they have in the construction and use of the monuments.

Archaeologies must work on different scales to adequately describe the entangled, meshed up connections in the past, and assemblage theory offers the possibility to switch between scales

easily. To exemplify, megalithic burials of north-west Germany will be used to demonstrate how the different of materials and the processes of building these monuments shaped the outcome, the beings participating, and how we can identify other-than-human beings in these approaches.

## Paying attention to lichens

*Antonia Thomas*

I often find myself paying attention to lichens. When recording carvings and graffiti on stone monuments and cliff-faces, I have become increasingly fascinated by the parallel inscriptions of lichens which spread across these surfaces. Attending to lichens, as artist Laurie Palmer has noted, make you slow down, look closely, and pay attention to different forms of life and being[1]. Lichens are not only bio-indicators for assessing climate and air pollution, but also some of the oldest organisms on earth, and may even be able to survive in outer space. They offer a potent way of thinking for our current environmentally precarious existence. Donna Haraway has famously urged us to embrace the multispecies entanglement of their symbiotic co-dependence and consider that ‘we are all lichens’[2].

These examples suggest that lichens might offer crucial starting points for thinking about multitemporal, and multispecies, engagements in archaeology. But despite their long association with ancient monuments, they have been undertheorized by heritage scholars, rarely discussed beyond their surface appearance. For early conservationists such as John Ruskin, lichens epitomized the aesthetics of ‘pastness’ and the Romantic ruin. In modern heritage contexts, lichens are frequently considered in negative terms, accountable for the biodeterioration of stone surfaces and destruction of archaeological sites – highlighting ruptures between natural and cultural heritage. But there are other ways to think about lichens. In this paper I will consider how paying attention to lichens might allow different ways of doing archaeology and heritage, to consider the relationship between humans and non-humans, and to travel between the deep past, the entangled present, and the deep future.

[1] Laurie Palmer, 2023. *The Lichen Museum*. University of Minnesota Press.

[2] Donna Haraway, 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

## Who's in? Who's out? Interrogating the limits of inclusivity and exclusivity in the study of the Viking Age

Frida Espolin Norstein – University of Stockholm  
Russell Ó Riagáin – University College Dublin

### **The Age of the Vikings: Problems and potentials with periodisation**

*Frida Espolin Norstein*

The period between around 750 to 1100 CE in Scandinavia is commonly referred to as the Viking Age. Even in other areas with Scandinavian influence, the Viking Age is still a meaningful concept. This paper will consider issues surrounding the use of the term to describe a specific period of time. It will explore how the use of the “Viking Age” affects both popular and academic perceptions of the period. What connotations does it carry, and are they a problem? I will discuss how the “Viking Age” can become exclusionary, not just in terms of ethnic groups included or excluded, but also in a chronological sense, where the time period has a tendency to become separated from earlier, but especially later practices. Using burial practices as an example, I will discuss how and why the use of the term “Viking Age” can create problems of interpretation, but also why it can be hard to resist.

## Viking Age, Abbasid Age, Very Late Antiquity, or all of the above?

### A case study in the limits of periodising the past

*Russell Ó Ríagáin*

This paper will explore the limits inherent in who, what and where we exclude when we periodise the past. It will begin by setting out the semantic range covered by the term ‘Viking Age’, and how this differs over space and time. It will then set out a proposition: that the events and processes across northwest Eurasia should be reframed as part of the Abbasid Age, due to the ideological, military, economic and political changes brought about by the Abbasid Revolution and decline of Tang power in Central Asia in the second half of the eighth century. This triggered flows of silver, slaves and luxury goods between Western and Central Asia and the rest of Eurasia, including the Baltic and Northern Europe, and from there to the Atlantic, which can in part be traced by the appearance and disappearance of dirhams or darahim in archaeological contexts. Contemporary to this was the apparent decline of the Atlantic Arc trade network indicated by the presence of Frankish and Mediterranean pottery in archaeological contexts in Ireland and western Britain up until the mid-eighth century was related to either the Umayyad expansion into Iberia, and the subsequent confinement of their power base to the western Mediterranean. This will be followed by another proposition: that the Viking Age is the final phase of Late Antiquity, in that groups such as the Danes, Götar, Svear, Horðar, Þrændar, and Rus’ emerged in part due to the same set of relations secondary shaped by their relations with the Roman Empire and its successor states, through long-distance trade, raiding, settlement, and/or the provision of military units. The paper will then close by discussing what all of this means for how we periodise the past and who and what are included in our temporal terminology, and why.

## Archaeological revisionism – Shining a new light on old interpretations.

*Abd Alkareem Seek*

Our historical understanding of identity and the role it played in the formation of modern nation states cannot be overstated, however, it is common that the early accounts of groups and their identity emerge from external sources, be it contemporaneous or otherwise. One question that appears to be of importance arises, is there room for a revision of such accounts? Especially when these accounts have been authored and later publicized by external actors. Put in other words, should the historiographic accounts which were last revised over half a century ago, be re-examined by scholars of language and historiography, once again?

In this session we will question the impact of language barriers, national propaganda and national identity, amongst other facets. In addition, we will contemplate the role and perhaps the

duty of archaeology's efficacy as a tool that delineates the accuracy of literary sources through the revision of a specific historiographic account while simultaneously inspecting related archaeological evidence.

## **The Finnish Viking Age**

*Sami Raninen*

In Finland, Viking Age is a cultural signifier actively used, abused or sometimes rejected in discourses relating contemporary Finland and its various ethnic and language groups to the rest of the Nordic countries. It is also a long-established Finnish archaeological term referring to a timespan more or less coinciding with the 'Norse' Viking Age.

In my paper, I will defend the usefulness of the concept of Viking Age in Finland, at least as a scholarly term, despite its potential to mislead. At the same time, the need to recognize diversity of local and regional settings in Viking Age Finland is stressed in order to avoid essentialism associated with loosely used concepts such as 'Finno-Ugrian', 'Finnic', and so on.

## **Vikings as friends and foes in Finnish history culture – Entanglements of heritage, ethnicity, and national identities**

*Liisa Kunnas*

This presentation will explore the concept of "Vikings" especially from the viewpoint of ethnic identities and constructing heritage in different Finnish contexts: 18th century academic texts, turn of the 19th/20th centuries nationalistic depictions of the past, and today's history culture. It has often been remarked that the Late Iron Age and the threshold of Iron Age and the Medieval period have always been holding a crucial importance in the construction of Finnish national and ethnic identities and in the formation of the image of the Finnish past. 19th century and early 20th century historiography was focused on distinguishing the ethnic groups that later formed the nations of nation-states. The attitude of Fennoman historiography (advocating Finnish culture based on ethnic and linguistic homogeneity) towards anything "Swedish" or "Scandinavian" was hostile, while the Swedish-speaking Finns took Viking culture and imagery as part of their heritage and identity.

In the 21st century archaeological research, the Viking Age is studied from multifaceted interdisciplinary and intersectional viewpoints. “Being a Viking” is considered to have been related more to an occupational identity, than an ethnic one. At the same time, outside academic research, ethnic and national identities and their historical dimension have become very important, especially in connection to Far-Right ideologies. It seems, that the Fennoman idea of anything Swedish, Scandinavian, or Viking as a conceptual enemy of the Finns throughout history has been replaced with “pan-Nordicism”. Outside the Far-Right movements, where this Nordicism has racist motives, the Viking culture has also become part of the public image of the Finnish Late Iron Age through popular culture and media.

### **How to make an animal: Post-humanism, para-animals, and predatory relationships**

*Keith Ruiter & Harriet Evans Tang*

Recent theoretical work has helpfully clarified and provided new ways to consider the depth and breadth of relationships in the Viking Age. From multiple-person burial, to the animacy of objects, to post-human approaches to expanded categories of persons, the question of who and what is included in the study of this period and its peoples is increasingly open. But for all these shades of grey, lines are drawn, both in the period itself and in scholarship, over actions, persons, and animals that are seemingly unacceptable for inclusion in even expansive models of society. Wolves and bears are ‘outlawed’ in some early Scandinavian laws and the most transgressive criminals are likened to the vargr – a seemingly monstrous wolf. Drawing on medieval textual sources and material evidence, this paper takes a post-humanist approach, informed by recent studies of human-animal relationships of domestic animals, to consider these predators and their relationships with other animals from alternate perspectives, asking new questions about how far post-human approaches can and should be pushed, if regional distinctions can be detected and what they might mean, and what happens to humanity when we start thinking about animality from a theoretically-engaged position.



## The Politics of Archaeology: from outdated rallying cries to actual critique.

Artur Ribeiro – Kiel University, Germany  
Jan-Eric Schlicht – Kiel University, Germany

### Introduction to Archaeology and the Politics of Today.

*Artur Ribeiro & Jan-Eric Schlicht*

The collapse of the global financial market in 2008, the covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, are all symptoms of a global state of affairs that have affected the lives of people in a variety of ways. Yet, from a political standpoint, archaeology remains stuck in outdated ways of thinking the world, one that only knows how to critique binary forms of seeing reality, modernist enlightenment structures, and place-based forms of struggle.

As the prefix “post-“ indicates, postmodern and postcolonial theorists never tire of critiquing and seeking liberation from the past forms of rule and their legacies in the present. The world we live in today is very different than that postmodern and postcolonial thinkers critique – it is a world that has transcended nation-states, with powers operating over networks and flows at a global scale; it is a world of short-termism, which exploits workers through the gig economy; it is world of self-surveillance and self-discipline, leading to burnouts and suicides; it is a world of hyper-culture, that homogenizes all practices yet promotes hyper-individuality; and above all it is a late capitalist consumer society that confuses agency with consumerism, one where “lifestyles” are sold as commodities.

This view of the world has been critiqued since the 1930s by Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and was critiqued again by Marshall McLuhan, Jean Baudrillard, and Guy Denord, and continues being critiqued today, by Byung-Chul Han, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, to name only a few. Why has archaeology failed to address this form of political critique? The aim of this session is to correct this issue and address globalization, burnout, short-termism, accelerationism, hyperculture, hyper-individuality, among other contemporary topics, that is to say to create an archaeological politics beyond the limited scope it has today.

## Desolate frontiers: How can archaeology help with a silent epidemic plaguing of our society

*Joel Santos*

Loneliness is a global crisis that has been largely overlooked by archaeology. Despite being a subject of interest for psychologists, sociologists, and historians, archaeology has yet to give it the attention it deserves. We firmly believe that this needs to change. As Gosden pointed out, emotions are materially constituted, and material culture is emotionally constituted. Therefore, who could be better suited to study loneliness and isolation than archaeologists?

We want to show that loneliness is not a new phenomenon. By studying past materiality, we can demonstrate that our ancestors did not always reside in tightly-knit communities. This provides us a profound opportunity to appreciate and relate to those who have experienced loneliness throughout the ages. Acknowledging that loneliness has always been a part of the human experience and will persist, we can approach current challenges with a refreshed outlook and optimism.

Studying contemporary loneliness through archaeology is socially vital as it connects our current emotional landscape with historical narratives, fostering a nuanced understanding of shared human experiences. Archaeology contributes a unique perspective to societal conversations by examining material dimensions of loneliness, influencing mental health discourse, and policy interventions. This approach addresses a pressing modern issue and enriches cultural empathy, promoting a deeper appreciation for the diversity of human responses to loneliness across different times and societies. In doing so, archaeology becomes a valuable tool for societal introspection, resilience, and the cultivation of compassion.

## Ukrainian Archaeological theory over the garden wall

*Simon Radchenko & Anna Radchenko*

Since 2022, Ukraine's archaeology and cultural heritage have gotten much attention worldwide. It starts being visible, recognizable, and valued, and, above all, strives to become a part of the global European archaeological and heritage narrative. This process did not start with the full-scale invasion. However, the emphasis war puts on the discipline introduces many previously unknown artifacts, sites, and institutions to colleagues worldwide.

While overcoming the garden wall, Ukrainian archaeology found itself in a new, adventurous world of a contemporary one — with different roots, history, and attitudes. Searching for the

origin of striking differences, one encounters a peculiar nuance — the living discussions on and the intense implementation of archaeological theory in Europe compared to the absence of those in Ukraine. In fact, neither the processual nor postprocessual turns have ever brought their paradigms to Ukrainian archaeology. The intensity of theorizing for the last 30 years remains relatively low, while those narratives that the theory in Europe aims to criticize seem to be beyond the horizon of Ukrainian discipline. This is not surprising, given the efforts the Soviet regime put into replacing any philosophy and freedom of thought with ideological pressure and the long-term consequences of these actions.

Such differences in the state of archaeological theory give an additional way of discussing the actual use and practical benefits of theorizing. This talk aims to define the reason and story of the demise of Ukrainian archaeological theory. Further, it considers the consequences of its neglect and how they affect the current state of archaeological and cultural heritage studies in the country torn by the war. Could we address the current challenges in a better way? What's next? How and why does Ukrainian archaeology need to jump on the train of archaeological theory today?

## **Passionately pigeonholed: the psychopolitics of archaeological identity**

*Jan-Eric Schlicht*

Numerous recent studies demonstrate a worryingly high prevalence of mental illness among young academics. In some cases, mental distress is in fact reported to be 'the norm'. Possible contributing factors are plentiful, ranging from financial stresses, uncertainty regarding the job market, high pressure, bullying, or a lack of mentoring. While all of these are important to note, there are systemic issues that are rooted deeper, namely in the bigger picture of neoliberal psychopolitics in late capitalism.

One that is deserving of attention, particularly in the realm of a small discipline like archaeology, is that of the 'necessity of passion'. Already undergraduates are exposed to the idea that, in order to 'make it', they need to be passionate about archaeology and their studies. Early career researchers, PhDs and postdocs alike, may hear that 'the project rests on their shoulders', that, given the 'obvious' and 'inevitable' hardships, 'archaeology is a passion project', and that there is virtue to sacrificing oneself to one's own passion for the subject. Of course, being passionate about archaeology and finding joy in doing research is not a negative of its own, but the expectation of that kind of mindset is damaging. The notion of necessary passion instills the idea of absolute personal responsibility for any kind of failure or problem, detracts from actual, systemic injustices, and pigeonholes people into an identity of being a 'devoted archaeologist', selflessly toiling away under the directive of self-exploitation. This pigeonholed identity not only affects mental health, but it also potentially reflects onto the way we think about archaeological prac-

tice, theory, and narrative. In light of both aspects, this talk aims to provide grounds for discussion and will argue for a more honest engagement with expectations of self and identity among archaeologists.

## **Enduring Isolation: A Contemporary Archaeological Inquiry into Elderly Abandonment**

*Tânia Casimiro, João Sequeira & Joel Santos*

As contemporary archaeologists, our contract archaeology colleagues often call us when they enter a house in the middle or outskirts of Lisbon where they must evaluate its archaeological potential. They call us because what they find are houses that are left untouched when their old inhabitants pass away or move to a nursery home. They leave behind their homes, their memories, and their relations, with no one to preserve or reclaim that past. Most of them lived alone and we often recognize traces of that isolation while others still had some people who visited them. Considering elderly abandonment as a severe social phenomenon where the number of people living alone with reduced – if any – social networks, gets higher by the year, this paper aims to discuss the political, social, and mostly ethical roles of archaeologists engaging with narratives often forgotten. We will use four different archaeological sites, three urban and one rural: a lady who was a hoarder, a religious devoted couple, a lonely lady who collected dolls, and a rural farm to debate how archaeology cannot continue to ignore social and political debates while reconstructing forgotten lives through different households.

## **Archaeology in the end of times**

*Artur Ribeiro*

Shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama claimed that we had reached the end of history. This period marked the victory of neoliberal capitalism over its only possible contender, the communist project. Since then, we have experienced the collapse of horizons; time has become naked, devoid of a past, present, and future, which gave it meaning. The present age is one that contains everything, everywhere, all at once.

Late-stage capitalism has profaned time; it has converted the temporal dimension into numbers. In a world without narrative time, nothing begins or ends. Rites of passage disappear because everything is provisional and incomplete. Everything loses boundaries – from nations,

to cultures, and to time itself. This has led to an archaeology that ignores boundaries, both in the interpretation of the past as well as the boundaries of current neoliberal labour. The aim of this talk is precisely to address the collapse of boundaries and the creation of an eternal present. In this eternal state, work has lost finitude – it is never complete, always something in-between. This, in turn, has affected current labour – the public work life has eclipsed private life – one is always at work, whether it be at home, the airport, the café, etc. This has generated a burnout society, one built upon self- conditioning, self-discipline, and self-surveillance.

## Archaeologies of inequality - Implications for societal change

Marika Hyttinen – University of Oulu

Tuuli Matila - University of Oulu

Oula Seitsonen – University of Oulu

### Archaeology and the Politics of Identity in Postcolonial Mesoamerica

*Kathryn M. Hudson*

Archaeological categories, analyses, and priorities are frequently adopted into national historical narratives and reified as historical fact in ways that have significant impacts on postcolonial indigenous communities. These impacts – and their effects on the construction and experience of identity, indigeneity, and heritage – are unquestionably a consequence of the authority that was historically given to archaeological researchers in colonial situations. They are also a reflection of (1) the socioeconomic and political capital that is often associated with archaeological work in the countries where it occurs and (2) the politics of academia beyond the research field, though these aspects are rarely explicitly considered. This paper draws on the author's ongoing archaeological and ethnographic work in and with postcolonial indigenous communities in Mexico and Central America to explore the mechanisms and practical implications of this complicated set of entanglements. Particular attention is given to the social, economic, and political dimensions of archaeological categories such as Aztec and Maya; to the ways in which these categories reflect and intersect with local, regional, and academic power dynamics and politics; and to a consideration of their consequences for indigenous communities and their (re)constructions of identity.

## **Between Resistance and Resilience. Sámi in Central Sweden in the Age of Homogenization, a Historical Archaeological Perspective on Poverty and Self Governance**

*Jonas Monié Nordin*

This paper examines some aspects of the struggle between the Crown and some Sámi groups in central Sweden during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Based on a foundation of control and eviction instituted in earlier laws, from 1671, the 1720s saw a forceful rise in royal concern over the existence of nomadic Sámi in central Sweden. A system of indenture was created, allowing Sámi to stay in central Sweden (a region where they were rooted since at least the medieval period), tying them to the parishes as cheap, easily controlled, and specialised work force. In the paper I will present recent field work examining the situation of several indentured households in central Sweden from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, when the system was abolished due to liberalisation and democratisation. Through an intersectional perspective this paper shows that Sámi groups maintained and developed ritual practices, foodways, and language in a society parallel to the majority society and in resistance to it. Sámi traditions in the central Sweden did not vanish or surrender, but rather develop and adjust to early societal processes of homogenization.

## **A Step in the Right Direction: The Jaipur Foot, Crip Hacking, and the Disabled Expert in the Global South**

*Niamh Malone*

Disabled individuals have historically faced exclusion from the position of heritage constructors, restricting its potential to foster social change. To address this exclusion, it is necessary to critically interrogate the presentation and conceptualisation of disability, and the contribution of disabled individuals as creators of knowing. This paper will utilise a crip design approach to generate a narrative that foregrounds disabled users as experts and underscores the potential of technology, co-created with disabled users, to meet and exceed practical and cultural needs.

This paper will use the Jaipur foot as a case study to illuminate a non-western account of crip hacking and to challenge the established academic discourse stemming from this prosthetic that fails to challenge outdated normalising models of disability. This discourse criticises the quality of prosthetics manufactured locally and cites the absence of a patent as a reason for the prosthetic's failure (with failure understood as an inability to penetrate Western markets). Conversely, I will use this paper to attest that this lack of standardisation, and subsequent individual adaptations, provide compelling evidence of successful crip hacking, thereby emphasising disabled users as design experts.

I will also question why success is continually measured against expansion to Western markets, arguing this is only the case when privileging Western epistemology. Diverging from a Western perspective, the Jaipur foot exemplifies the triumph of technology co-developed with disabled users to address unique individual cultural needs, resulting in remarkable success within a local context. This case study demonstrates how the active inclusion of disabled individuals in the development of archaeology can be initiated by acknowledging them as design experts and reframing emphasis away from the Global North. By centralising disabled narratives, archaeology can stimulate social change for disabled individuals, by highlighting inequalities they face and generating a framework to tackle these inequalities academically and socially.

## **“Bones Don’t Care About Your Feelings” – Challenging Transphobic Invocations of Archaeology in (Social) Media**

*Owen J M Hurcum*

Since Panameño and Nalda asked, “Archaeology for whom?” (1979) numerous archaeologies have been put forward that focus on ensuring our discipline has a positive social and political impact. These all propose using archaeology to challenge harmful bigotries and support marginalised communities through both the production and dissemination of our research. However, archaeologists are not always in control of how our research is presented, and often twisted, in (social) media to suit ideological positions that contrast transformative archaeologies’ aims of social progress. Within ‘Transgender Archaeology’ the abuse of archaeological knowledge to attack, deride, undermine, and otherwise harm transgender individuals and the trans rights movement is clearly visible. A multitude of op-eds and articles in digital media continue to be published that use the archaeological practice of ‘sexing skeletons’ as justification for blocking equality for transgender people. Moreover, transphobia invoking archaeology is ever present on social media through harassment campaigns, violence-evoking memes, and explicit calls to action against trans individuals and the wider movement. This paper will attempt to be a redress for archaeology in the media landscape of transphobia, where we have become, however unwittingly, a primary focus. It will do so by dissecting popular media invocations of archaeology that attack trans people within news publications and social media and discussing what can be done to challenge them. Ultimately, the paper will argue that whilst archaeologists are not directly responsible for the abhorrent transphobia that people construct using our discipline, they are still doing so with our produced knowledge. If we are silent on this, then archaeology is complicit in this violence as we would have willingly surrendered our ability to challenge bigotry in favour of retreating to our ivory towers.



## **Bodies of Every Kind – Disability in the Viking Age**

*Julia Wihlborg*

The body has a prominent role in the human condition. What a body can do, perceive, and feel decides how a person interacts with the world around them. Bodies can be enabling or disabling – depending on context. Different cultures have varying expectations of bodies, and natural phenomena such as ageing, sickness, and injury are viewed differently. Some bodies are favoured, while others are discriminated against.

Despite the body's prominent role as a target for normative judgement, there is currently no vivid archaeological discussion of the perception of disability in the Viking Age. Compared to a topic like gender, which has been the target of scholarly debate for several decades, disability has mainly been a topic for osteologists and textual scholars (with some noticeable exceptions).

By adding this perspective to their repertoire, archaeologists would enable their discussions of past identities to be richer and more intersectional. It would also invite more people to feel included in the questions asked about the past. Assuming that disability was thought of in (pre)history the same way as it is today, of course, out of the question; as a cultural phenomenon, disability deserves critical consideration.

By focusing on four Swedish burials of people of short stature, this talk aims to portray what an archaeological study driven by a disability studies approach can offer to the broader knowledge of disability in the Viking Age. The case study is small and limited in scope, yet it may serve as a starting point for deliberating topics such as caregiving, social inclusion/exclusion and the overall usefulness of the term disability in past contexts.

## **Women in Mines? I doubt It... Or how Archaeologists can help Change the Narrative**

*Susana Pacheco*

The role played by women in certain areas of industry is still being ignored by many. Women have always been and are still part of the industrial workforce, nonetheless, they keep being marginalised by archaeological research. Mines are among those sectors of industry where heteronormative ideas are still perpetrated, and many still believe women's presence there was residual or completely inexistent. As a public science, archaeology should contribute to the activist debate on social inequality. Based on the example of the Portuguese mines, where women were present in a significant way, this communication intends to contribute to deconstructing the heteronormative myths and narratives, with the belief that archaeology should be public, political, and activist. By doing that, it is intended to bring those marginalized and subaltern women to the light of the day and help them achieve the voice and recognition they never had. To do so, a new type of materiality that is yet to be explored by archaeologists on a large scale – photographs – will be analysed through a gender and feminist theoretical framework.

## Gender Equality and Finnish Welfare State during the Post-war Era

*Marika Hyttinen, Tuuli Matila & Oula Seitsonen*

Finnish welfare state was created during the post-war decades in 1950-1970. One of its objectives was to recognize equal rights and opportunities for every citizen in society and in all fields of life. Gender equality was promoted, for example, by giving financial support for families with children and contributing to childcare arrangements. New policy improvements enabled mothers' employment outside the home and gave women the opportunity to achieve financial independence. This paper addresses a working-class community who lived in a neighborhood called Vaakunakylä, in the outskirts of the city of Oulu, Finland, during the founding decades of welfare state. The archaeological record found from the site illustrates concretely that women's wellbeing was improving in terms of social, physical, and economic factors. Although social welfare policies and reforms started to build greater gender equality, the material culture seen through the lens of feminist theory shows that there were still gender inequalities woven deep into the fabric of a society.

## Breaking Class-based Stereotypes with Alko Bottle Caps: The Potential of a New Superartefact in the Archaeology of the Modern Times

*Aleksi Kelloniemi*

Alcohol and its consumption have been an important aspect of Finnish culture for a long time. The top-down legislation regarding its purchase and usage has made alcohol an issue of class, as the lawmakers have mainly seen the drinking habits of the rural areas, and later the working class, as the core problem. As a heavily regulated and locally contested, sensitive matter, remains of its material culture can be used in research of class, shame, quiet resistance, and marginalization, to name a few.

Since the end of prohibition, a wide network of state-owned stores was founded to establish the monopoly of strong alcohol. This procedure also brought along a new 'superartefact' to the material record: the Alko bottle cap. From 1932 to 1995 their design included the company logo, the changes of which can be used to form a chronological dating tool with a precision of roughly a decade. In the later half of the century, the caps were also colour-coded by drink types. This allows the archaeologists researching modern age issues to analyse the times, amounts and types in a sites' alcohol usage, and to draw socioeconomical conclusions from it.

This presentation demonstrates how bottle cap data has helped to show how the residents of Vaakunakylä have broken the stereotypes of the alcohol consumption habits of a lower income community. Other future uses of the Alko bottle cap as a superartefact will also be demonstrated, since it has a potential that goes far wider than just the Vaakunakylä site.

## Intersectional Analysis of Finnish Archaeologists' Backgrounds: Examining Interview Data

*Tuuli Matila, Tiina Kuokkanen, Oula Seitsonen & Tiina Äikäs*

In this presentation we examine the data (279 answers) related to Finnish archaeologists' backgrounds that we collected with a questionnaire in 2023. We asked Finnish archaeologists' family backgrounds, their class, sexual, and religious identities, and will interpret the profession from an intersectional perspective. We mirror the data against the background of the 'general public' and see how representative the profession is. As many archaeologists discuss the inequalities and grievances of society it is important to acknowledge the archaeologists' positionality. Unlike in many other countries, the Finnish welfare state has at least this far influenced the possibility of people from different 'classes' to pursue university education and the formation of Finnish archaeology is surprisingly diverse. University education has been cost-free for students and varying economic backgrounds are represented in the people who have pursued an archaeology degree in University. The data also reveals interesting results regarding multi-generational class influences and sexual and ethnic minorities are at least somewhat represented. This is important given the current political trends in Finland where the structures of the welfare state have been dismantled from the 1990s onwards. We have to question the future of university education as we seem to move towards a new class society.

## Working Class Horizontal Unrest Early-20th Century

*Timo Ylimaunu*

The modernization of Northern end of Bothnian Gulf took place later half of the 19th century and the early-20th century. New kinds of sawmill industries were founded on the coastal mainland and the islands nearby. Environmental changes took place as well as on the rivers running into the Bothnian Gulf, because the river rapids were cleansed and cleared. These cleared waterways made the timber rafting possible to float rafts through the rapids. Growing timber industries needed vast amounts of workforce and lots of men moved to, for example, River Kemi area to work as lumberjacks during the winter and as log drivers during the early-spring and later fall at the rivers. These rootless amounts of people also caused social unrest in the areas where they worked. I will use some violent cases at the river Kemi area to discuss this darker side of the modernization process in the north.

## **For Those Who Scream at the Top of Their Lungs, but No One Hears Them. – Archaeology Fighting Elitism**

*João Sequeira*

On one of the TAG Edinburgh 2022 sessions (Absence: perspectives from archaeology and heritage with Gabriel Moshenska and Jonathan Gardner as session organizers), I made a presentation about the absence of attention and recognition on post-agents of industrial heritage sites. Because of their supposed low social ranking and displaced influence on the heritage-lead discourse, most of the Portuguese historical or archaeological studies do not consider the guards' voices of derelict industrial spaces as agents of the processes, thus inseparable of the archaeological context. This applies to their rightful non-human companions (the watchdogs). These ones do not have a voice at all, although important in narratives created by researchers. One year has passed, and a publication was produced on the subject, written in Portuguese, so these human post-agents (or neo-agents) could have the possibility to see their life, their dedication, and their stories on an academic paper. But what was achieved with this process? Their voice was highlighted, did it change anything? This paper aims to discuss the slow process of intervention in highlighting agents normally absent in contemporary industrial archaeology papers and essays, comparing it with other countries' realities. Is this happening because the academic world does not really want to know about them? Or is it our ultimate goal to publish high-ranked peer-reviewed publications to build up our curriculum, using these agents as a lever for our own purposes, and then turn our backs on them?

## **Orisberg Ironworks School (1831–1880) – An Educational Exception in Finnish Countryside**

*Tiina Kuokkanen & Noora Hemminki*

For a long time, Finland has been known as a country with good and equal education. But the current school system, that started in the beginning of the 1970s, is relatively new. To the Finnish society, the whole 19th century was time of big changes, which happened in education as well. Around mid-century, school was separated from the church and the public conversation should common people be educated started. In practice, the route towards the current situation, in which every child goes to school, was long. Before World War II, educational opportunities were strongly related to class, gender and to the place of living. For common children, school was more accessible in towns than it was in the countryside.

The main institutions that organized schools were state and church. In addition, there were many kinds of private schools, like factory schools. One of those was established in the ironworks

community of Orisberg in the Ostrobothnia countryside in 1831. Thus, children of the ironworks community, as well as other common children nearby, received much better educational opportunities than common children in the countryside usually did. By studying the documentary sources of Orisberg ironworks school, we will give an example how unequal the Finnish educational system was in the 19th century. How did especially the material culture in Orisberg ironworks school differ from a typical countryside school? Our main source material consists of school inventory from 1856 and annual examination records from 1846–1866 and 1869.

## Poverty, Heritage, and Aspirational Hope: The Positive Potential of Normalized Inclusion in Museum and Heritage Site Discourse

*Steve Smith*

This paper explores the negative social effects of exclusionary narratives within museum and heritage site discourse, focusing specifically on those experiencing poverty and subsequent social exclusion. My approach is influenced by two concepts: Lynch's (2020) idea of the 'unhelpful museum' - that heritage spaces should help create circumstances by which people can help themselves, and Townsend's (1973) and Friedmann's (1992) ideas of poverty and disenfranchisement, and their rejection of reductive economic concepts of poverty. While the social benefits of inclusive heritage are broad and well known (from constructing and reinforcing positive self-identity, to promoting social cohesion and inclusion), the negative psychological impact of exclusionist heritage models and practices has been largely unexplored. My paper addresses this research gap by exploring the potential of positive psychological interventions to improve people's lives through aspirational hope and normalized inclusive cultural narratives - potential that has not been looked at specifically within the heritage arena, despite notions of 'heritage-as-identity' playing a huge part in our everyday lives. This paper considers this effect on groups excluded from museum/heritage site narratives/practices, focusing specifically on poorer groups and individuals that research finds are frequently reluctant to challenge their situations - in large part because societal affirmations (cultural conventions) repeatedly tell them that is where 'they' should be.

My paper considers the negative elements of heritage/museum contexts which contribute to this situation, such as the employment of 'therapeutic models' that consider people who visit as somehow defective and in need of help, superficial 'community engagement' practices, elitist interpretation texts based around permissible engagement with interpreted objects, and daunting/overwhelming cognitive access practices which require vast (and elitist) cultural capital to navigate.

Finally, I appeal for an alternative approach - the normalization of plural heritages and inclusive access practices, which can promote aspirational hope, and increase people's resilience and capability.

## Displaced Objects and Absent Stories: An Examination of the Pitt River Museum's Collections

*Hadiqa Khan*

Museums in Europe have played an active role in the discussion surrounding displacement, especially in the past decade. Despite their engagement in open dialogues on Europe's refugee 'crisis,' displaced populations are frequently construed solely within the framework of crisis. The transitory nature of these discussions and exhibits exemplifies the conceptualization of refugees, their narratives, and their artifacts as impermanent, liminal, and largely invisible.

This paper employs an archaeological lens, viewing the museum as an archaeological site and its collections as assemblages, to scrutinize the Pitt River Museum's involvement with displaced individuals and objects. Through an examination of 35 years of collecting practices, recent exhibits, and community-led initiatives, this paper will discuss how the museum has approached its engagement with refugees and forcibly displaced communities and how these approaches have changed, highlighting both the strengths and shortcomings inherent in such engagements. It posits that studying objects collected from displaced individuals not only sheds light on the treatment of these individuals but also serves as a lens through which to scrutinize broader inequalities. The paper underscores the imperative for museums to transcend temporal discussions and foster sustained engagement, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of displacement, its socio-cultural implications, and the multifaceted narratives embedded in the artifacts of forcibly displaced populations.

## Heritage/Archaeology of Nuclear Power

Marko M. Marila – Linköping University  
Anna Storm – Linköping University

### Chornobyl visual lexicon: Exploring the visual framing of toxic heritage

*Veera Ojala*

Even though the Chornobyl exclusion zone (CEZ) is one of the most well-photographed and visually documented sites, little is known about the evolution of its visual representations from the point of view of participatory culture. This study is investigating how the CEZ is represented on the open photo-sharing platform Flickr, focusing on visual heritage framing from the point of view of participatory culture. Flickr, a social networking site founded in 2004, has a large portfolio of photographs that have been classified and categorised. Thus, it provides a prime container of visual information in the form of user-uploaded digital photographs with an almost 20-year time frame. Therefore, the Flickr platform allows insight into the evolving and changing representations of the CEZ from the point of view of visitors to the exclusion zone. The data of the study—participant-generated images supplemented with qualitative interviews at three different points in time (2008, 2013, and 2018)—reveals the emerging photographic activities of visitors to the CEZ. During the chosen timeframe, the exclusion zone was also transformed by the intentional marketing of the site for touristic purposes, and the exponential flow of visitors transformed its landscape into a dynamically developing touristscape. The longitudinal approach of the study elaborates on dynamically evolving entanglements of materiality, embodiment, and digital devices as captured from the participants' pictures. With this approach, the study sheds light on the visitors' practises of visual engagement with the heritage resources in CEZ and the altering affordances of materiality, sensory experiences, and digital technology devices. The analysis of visitors' visual engagements with the zone's heritage artefacts reveals visitors' evolving engagements and pictorial interests in the context of participatory digital visual culture. Moreover, this study provides insights into participatory culture as an agent that changes the way in which heritage is viewed, perceived, and experienced.



## Envisioning a traumascape within reconsidering nuclear tierratraumatic heritage: Literary dimension

*Inna Häkkinen*

Regarding ‘a traumascape’ (Tumarkin 2019:5) as imaginaries of physical places of traumatic events (in contrast to the temporal dimensions that are emphasized in trauma theories), where ‘visible and invisible, past and present, physical and metaphysical come to coexist and share a common place’ (Tumarkin 2019:14) the presentation addresses to situating a nuclear ‘traumascape’ within reconceptualizing ‘tierratrauma’ (‘a distress of environmental change’, Albrecht 2007) via the altered perception of recontextualizing the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone by challenging relationship with the environment and sense of place within the nuclear toxic legacy.

The narrative tools of envisioning a nuclear traumascape within narrating the Chernobyl post-nuclear experience of survival/hope/resilience with the focus on reconsidering ‘tierratrauma’ in fictional writings are studied here through the perspective of intermedial ecocriticism (Bruhn, 2020), emphasizing that the personalization and emotionalizing of transmitting scientific knowledge bring into the spotlight the intricate interactions of different media about a (nuclear) disaster via amalgamating fictional/factual narratives, which ‘can initiate fusions and “dialogues” between various media’ (Pethö 2011). Also the focus is made on framing a nuclear traumascape via appealing to ‘objectscape’ and its transformations (‘real objects and their visual images’, Ivakhiv 2013) in framing ‘spatiotemporal modality’ (Elleström 2020) of tierratraumatic experience within nuclear heritage, where the amalgamation of objectscaapes ‘not only mirrors and represents reality but also shadows, extends, reshapes, and transforms it’ (Ivakhiv 2013).

Such perspectives on the literary frames of envisioning a traumascape within the nuclear legacy are studied in Chernobyl fictional writings – Andrea White’s *Radiant Girl* (2008), Kateryna Mikhalistyna’s *The Flowers near the Fourth* (in origin: *Квіти біля четвертого*, 2022), Johanna Aulen’s *Chernobyl’s Dogs* (in origin: *Tšernobylin koirat*, 2022) – which intends to demonstrate how the focus on the literary imaginaries of a nuclear traumascape reveals the diffusion of cultural practices across borders, transforming the perception of the affected area from a site of nuclear disaster and a site of ecological renewal to the area of hope, resilience and inspiration, and shifting to a more nuanced and complex understanding of nuclear tierratraumatic experience.

## **New hideouts for an old fear. Military waste and nuclear reverberations in Estonia**

*Francisco Martinez*

This paper discusses how military remnants and phantasms of past aggressions raise questions of responsibility and disposal in the present. The study centers around the formerly secret town of Sillamäe, which became a closed area during the Soviet era because of a nearby uranium enrichment plant. Back then, this settlement could only be accessed with special permits, thus



pertaining to the paranoid reasoning of the Cold War. That sense of closure, along with the scars of historical battles in the area, still reverberate among the local population. Eventually, the problem with military waste is not merely its potential danger, but also that it remains in a wrong way. In the case of Eastern Estonia, the resurfacing of military waste contests optimism and forces us to notice phantasms that had become invisible. Some of the numerous military bases built in Eastern Estonia were demolished in the 1990s; some others were repurposed or simply abandoned after the Soviet collapse. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has awakened unforgotten fears. As a result, basements are being inspected by the state, exploring if they can be transformed into bunkers. Both bunkers and military waste spread feelings of anxiety because of their wrong way of dys-appearing. In their upset resurfacing, they trouble cultural categories and historical representations, claiming that there is something more to say.

### **The rocky legacies of Finnish uranium with special reference to Pessi Manner's anti-uranium rock art**

*Marko M. Marila*

When the price of uranium began to rise in the early 2000s, mining companies rushed to prospect for the commodity globally. This renewed interest in uranium also brought international prospectors to Finland. The mining companies were, however, met with fervent anti-uranium protests by local citizens. Among the activists was Finnish artist Pessi Manner whose rock carvings are among the protests' most enduring legacies. Located in remote areas, the carvings were meant – and are likely – to survive for thousands of years and can therefore transmit today's nuclear imaginaries far into the future. In this paper, I discuss the history of uranium prospecting and anti-uranium activism in Finland, analyse Manner's anti-uranium interventions as examples of atomic rock art, and argue that, in using rock as his art medium, Manner was able to elicit an affective connection between feeling bodies and a landscape in need of protection, a quality that also contributes to their capacity for future communication.

### **'Headed down to the plant': Phytoremediation in Oak Ridge, TN and beyond**

*Jeffrey L. Benjamin*

Industrial and technological workers often refer to their place of work as 'the plant.' While they are probably not literally referring to a vascular botanical life form, there remains a curious common ground – a source of origin that might be further examined – one that extends beyond metaphorical appropriation. The 'nuclear plant' is one such location. In this paper I will offer a landscape study of Oak Ridge, TN as a case study, and will discuss the role of plants in the past/present and future of nuclear research locations.

## Of ‘Spectral Landscapes’ and ‘Landscape Machines’: Art in response to the nuclear contemporary

*Erich Berger*

In my fieldwork-based artistic research practice, I carry out extensive work in landscapes with heightened natural and anthropogenic radioactivity, potential uranium mining sites and nuclear infrastructure and heritage sites in Finland and abroad. Over the years this resulted in artworks like *Inheritance* (2016), *Open Care* (2017), *Spectral Landscapes* (2021 - ongoing) and *Landscape Machines* (2023 – ongoing), which have been exhibited worldwide in museums, galleries and festivals. How to live with the nuclear in the present and what will the future inherit from us? These questions act as the central vantage point of my artistic practice concerned with the nuclear Anthropocene. They also feature in my doctoral research where I combine cultural anthropology, geology and art, to look into how artists engage with temporalities beyond human-centred time, and how those practices can be seen as a laboratory for an imagination that connects the present with the deep future. With a series of artistic case studies (by artists like Susan Schuppli, Thompson and Craighead, Cumbrian Alchemy, and the author), my paper examines artistic approaches to that which can not be seen or which is beyond the human temporal comfort zone. Human nuclear heritage is an example of anthropogenic deep future impact. It is now that we draw the temporalities that future human generations and other entities have to take on. As we humans implicate ourselves intentionally or inadvertently into processes which outlive us as individuals, we could also equip ourselves with the necessary tools and languages to understand their consequences. In my paper, I discuss how art can assist in creating encounters to familiarise ourselves with the burdensome and foster awareness about the complexities of such difficult actors that we bring into our world.

### ‘Atomic Kinship’: Material agency and intangible heritages

*Aurora Del Rio*

This paper presents the Atomic Kinship project: a speculative project with the aim of reimagining radioactivity as a deity, through artistic research.

Considering that the first facility for long-term storage of waste radioactive material is currently being completed on Olkiluoto island, Finland, the project revisits an idea, that of a cult of radioactivity, which was proposed but later abandoned in relation to the planning of a repository of this kind in Yucca Mountain, USA. The aim of such a cult was that of transmitting warning messages about the danger of encountering buried radioactive material in the deep future.

Based on a new materialistic approach, Atomic Kinship proposes to reconsider this idea by producing systematic attempts at collecting, decoding and interpreting messages from radioac-

tivity in various ways, but challenging the human- and male-centric views often dominating the discourse of radioactive heritage.

Among these attempts, the artwork *Decay Cyphers* focuses on research around organic materials affected by the Chernobyl fallout in Finland. Different cuts from game and certain fungi, that are known to accumulate fallout materials, have been cremated by the artists, and the resulting ashes measured for their radioactivity. The work presents an algorithm caught in the attempt to bring messages from the ashes, where visitors are invited to gather those messages on a notepad. The artwork plays with the space of potentiality in between 'failure' and 'miracle' in considering the expectations about finding or not finding a message, the idea of serendipitous discoveries, and all the wishes and hopes that society directs toward technologies.

The paper thus intends to explore the topic of nuclear heritage from a new materialistic perspective, speculating on the possibility of discovering, an agency of radioactivity that goes beyond human comprehension, and on the role of belief in shaping personal and collective realities.

## **Radiant resilience: Unravelling environmental and cultural narratives in Portugal's uranium mining legacy at Hotel Urgeiriça**

*Joana Rafael*

This study explores a site marked by the uranium mining industry, grappling with hazardous material accumulation and waste. Pervasive radioactivity saturates the territory, affecting water, soil, and challenging human senses and physical barriers. Despite criticism and protests, insufficient attempts at decontamination and remediation for radiological protection have been made.

Shifting from prevailing studies on environmental liabilities, this research focuses on the environmental and cultural heritage of the uranium mining industry. Exploring abandoned structures, ore tailings, and contaminated dwellings, the study reveals the spatial evolution of troubles surrounding a detached vacation space.

At the heart of this narrative is Hotel Urgeiriça, operating since 1935 as an English radium therapy spa, promoting itself with the image of a traditional Portuguese house. Despite challenges from the mining complex, media scrutiny, and spatial segregation efforts, the architectural typology of the Portuguese house has ensured the hotel's ongoing operation at the center of a tragic situation.

Supported by historical postcards, this paper examines the hotel's detailed fabric and its intertwined history with the mining landscape. These postcards highlight the utilization of sceno-

graphic forms to normalize the toxicity of the radiant territory. Reflections in this paper reveal a holiday house challenging traditional notions, emerging as a touristic destination entwined in a lively, radioactive wilderness. This prompts a reconsideration of its role in nuclear tourism.

By reimagining the cultural and natural heritage of Hotel Urgeiriça, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of nuclear landscapes. Beyond highlighting uranium mining challenges, it aims to foster a positive vision for the future – a comprehensive re-interpretation of the problematic territory and a historical narrative suggesting unexpected complicity between the industries operating the land. This endeavours to inspire a forward-looking perspective, transcending traditional narratives and inviting collective contemplation on sustainable coexistence with uranium mining's intricate legacies in Portugal.

## **Transient heritage: Decommissioning of the earliest Spanish nuclear facilities**

*Carlos Gonzalvo Salas*

The concept of “heritage” does not hold the same meaning for everyone, in every corner of the planet, nor at every moment in history. It is a perpetually evolving term, representing an unfinished cultural construct. Its essence is not only reliant on an individual’s cultural background, but also responds to the concerns of a particular era. During the 1960s and 1970s, one of the main concerns in the nuclear field was the design and implementation of colossal engineering structures located in natural areas of high landscape value. Nowadays, these concerns culminate in the imminent demolition, seeking to restore the sites to an idealized and non-existent previous state.

In the next two decades, over 400 nuclear power plants worldwide will be decommissioned. The ongoing process unveils valuable constructions that no longer generate electricity or house highly radioactive material. The remains revealed during this process draw parallels to the architecture of the ancient world, marked by the imprint of their forms, the thickness of their walls, delicate textures, and unexpected plays of light. The demolition of these plants exposes the same qualities, emerging an order that creates symbols devoid of content but not lacking in significance. These constructions are no longer conceived by architects; rather, it is the technical team that navigates the path forward, crafting visually captivating new narratives.

This research seeks to shed light, from the discipline of architecture in a speculative way, on the decommissioning process of the first three Spanish nuclear power plants, which concluded their operations in the past decades. Throughout this process, an unforeseen and thought-provoking interpretation of heritage arises, one described as ephemeral, temporal, and unplanned. In contrast to constructions of the past that transcended millennia, the beautiful episodes revealed during this process by the workers are destined to irrevocably fade in the upcoming years. Can this process contribute to enrich the contemporary understanding of the word “heritage”? Does the new conception of heritage have a transient nature?

## **‘The end of a dream’ or when the dream never ends: Governing nuclear heritage in Italy through decommissioning**

*Adna Camdzic*

The paper explores key issues arising at the intersection of nuclear decommissioning and heritagisation drawing on selected case studies from the Italian history of nuclear phase-out between the 1980s and the early 2000s. In Italy, even though electricity production through nuclear sources has been totally halted in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, nuclear decommissioning – the process whereby old nuclear power plants are dismantled to the point of reaching a “green field” state – has not been accomplished yet. This paper focuses on the evolution of decommissioning approaches and policies and explores the reasons why nuclear infrastructures were never totally dismantled and how this is linked to the way Italian nuclear deindustrialisation has been governed in the context of the energy transition. Moreover, it shows how framing decommissioning as something valuable from the environmental point of view has contributed to dismiss discourses over nuclear cultural heritage, including the histories of people who lived through this process. By incorporating oral history, the paper then demonstrates how emotional and affective elements are intertwined with the technological aspects and material constraints linked to the decommissioning processes, which require complex national and international governance structures. Personal experiences are downplayed by discourses over technological innovation and the sustainability path towards a common goal: ensuring the future of new generations. Therefore, as in other post-industrial contexts in Italy (cfr. Gilda Zazzara) there is a short circuit between industrial heritage and deindustrialization: the desires to keep nuclear power plants alive collides with the general approach to dismantling. Following Zazzara’s analysis, through this paper, I argue that so long as the experience of deindustrialization is softened and devalued, or worst, it continues to be absorbed by discourses over a future renaissance of nuclear energy production, it will not be possible to create and promote alternative visions for a post-nuclear future.

## **‘Yellowcake’: A journey into the memories of Uranium**

*Tea Andreoletti*

Tea Andreoletti will present a performative lecture exploring the aspects of collective memory, domestic uranium mining and cooking a communal meal by reflecting on her latest artistic work Yellowcake. Yellowcake is a participatory performance that premiered at the Baltic Circle Festival in Helsinki in 2022 and toured Hangö Teaterträff in Hanko and ANTI Festival in Kuopio in 2023. It draws on the collective memory of uranium mining in the mountains of the Alta Valle Seriana in Northern Italy in the 1970s–80s, intertwining past and present forms of environmental resistance and activism with the politics and economics of domestic uranium mining that have shaped both Italy and Finland. Yellowcake is structured around the preparation of polenta, the traditional dish of the Alta Valle Seriana, a corn porridge that resembles yellowcake, the radioactive powder produced by uranium mining and used as raw material for fuel in nuclear power plants.

## UK nuclear landscapes: Contest and harmony in post-war industrial aesthetics

*Morwenna Potter*

A post-war UK civil nuclear programme was established to provide a cost-effective and reliable source of energy to meet the growing consumption of the population. As the first nuclear reactor to provide energy to the national grid, the opening of Calder Hall in 1956 formed a pivotal moment in the nuclear industry, and following its success, 22 subsequent Magnox reactors were built across 10 UK sites between 1959–1971. The Magnox reactors formed the first commercial nuclear power programme in the UK, representing the peaceful uses of atomic technology.

During the wartime years appreciation of the British landscape had risen, leading to the post-war protection of rural areas through official designations, such as national parks. The criteria for siting nuclear reactors required isolated areas, access to sufficient cooling water, and appropriate geology and soil structure, which restricted potential locations. The need for rural sites evoked strong opposition from various organisations involved with the preservation of landscape, who contested the construction of large-scale, experimental industry in a highly valued environment, marking the need for further attention to be paid to the integration of industrial architecture into rural landscapes, in order to maintain positive public relations.

Several construction consortia were established to bid for commissions in order to drive competition costs and design, which resulted in a unique fleet of nuclear power stations. Each offered different solutions to the problem of integrating large-scale industry into their specific sites. This paper will present the architectural and landscaping features of Magnox power stations in relation to post-war aesthetic theories, considering their contribution to understanding aesthetic developments in the post-war landscape. Design provides new perspectives on the national and political attitudes towards nuclear power and the impact of new industry to rural areas, contributing to current appreciation of nuclear sites as heritage assets.

## 'Time after Time': A conversation between the past and the future

*Helen Grove-White*

Living in the shadow of the decommissioning nuclear power station at Wylfa, UK, I have made it my role over the past fifteen years to spark conversations about nuclear power through engagement in the local community and as a visual artist. Questions about the future of nuclear waste and the long-term heritage of the redundant buildings here are immediate and on-going and interest has been stimulated recently by plans for a replacement plant. As an artist I have helped contribute to these debates through local, national and international exhibitions, both solo and collaborative, through hosting discussions and open studios and with a residency in Japan. My

artwork in a variety of media is very accessible and my approach to nuclear controversy has been both thought provoking and non-confrontative.

In 2016 I co-curated an archive exhibition in the local history museum to mark the final shut-down of Wylfa power station and an end, as I thought at the time, to the nuclear industry in Wales. This presented archive documentation, photographs and material objects to encourage reflection and debate. At the same time, I convened a group of ten artists to explore nuclear power and create a collaborative touring exhibition, 'Power in the Land.' Touring this multimedia show gave many opportunities for gallery talks and film screenings and led to invitations to Japan, Scotland, London and Umeå, Sweden, to present work and further my research.

Engaging in an industry led archaeological dig on the site has helped nourish a particular interest in time, archaeological time past and radiological time future. My recent exhibition 'Time after Time' in the local community café was an opportunity for reflection on the impact and legacy of the industry here, an exploration of the hidden and the invisible as well as the visible remains.

## **World heritagisation of nuclear war: The inscriptions of Bikini Atoll and Hiroshima** *Suzie Thomas*

On 6th and 9th August 1945, the world changed when the USA dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in the decades following an unprecedented arms race, with the USA, the USSR and various allies of each superpower rapidly testing and stockpiling nuclear weapons, in the name of ensuring peace through the so-called MAD doctrine. Although nuclear weapons have only been used in active warfare on one occasion so far, over 2000 have been detonated in atmospheric and underground tests, having a global impact on health and well-being (physical and mental), the environment, and on intangible heritage practices and connections to 'home'. In many cases the selection of supposedly 'empty' territory for weapons testing has unequally affected Indigenous communities that have experienced displacement, negligence and even secretive experimentation through nuclear colonial practices. Two sites that have become iconic in the narrative of nuclear weapons detonation, and in the calls for non-proliferation and peace, have also been transformed into official heritage. In this investigative paper I explore the reasons why Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test Site and Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) were nominated and inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage List. What criteria were selected and why? In what is being termed the Third Nuclear Age, how can hopes for peace continue to be symbolized through these places? Presented at the beginning of a new research trajectory, this paper presents more questions than answers.



## No more lost futures; Postcapitalism and Cultural Heritage

Yorgos Paschos – University of York

### The Timeline. Applied Archaeology in Køge Nord

*Anna Beck*

The building of a new neighborhood north of the city of Køge, Denmark has led to extensive archaeological excavations in the area. In most cases, this information would go into the archive and become part of the general authorized archaeological narrative of the area. In this case though, we have explored how we can use the generated archaeological knowledge as an active ingredient in the formation process of the future neighborhood and support how its high ambitions for a better future can become reality.

In the plans for the neighborhood, both sustainability and community is high on the agenda, and as such it should make new standards for future development projects. Using both citizen science driven investigations and walking as heritage practices in combination with the local archaeology, we aim to qualify and challenge the content of these key concepts from a local perspective and create a space where new and existing inhabitants can discuss the form they want them to take in this particular context. In this way, the local past is used actively to facilitate a larger debate on what kind of future the inhabitants of the area want to be part of and hopefully secure that the beautiful visions become more than fluffy dreams.



## 'Berlin Calling' - What Heritage Management might look like in a Postcapitalist World

*John Schofield*

In this short talk, I will present a scenario from a site in Berlin, The Teufelsberg, where alternative heritage pasts, presents and futures appear to be jumbled and confusing, where the site presents both opportunities and dangers at every turn, and where its many occupiers are hard to trace. The site is protected with heritage status yet is in a constant state of becoming, into precisely what is anyone's guess. Far from being a site under control from the legislation that supposedly protects it, this site appears totally out of control, unravelling, like the DJ in the film *Berlin Calling* (2017). In this film, the narrative begins with DJ Ickarus dangerously close to the edge; by the end he has gone over it, into an entirely new realm. Whether he comes back and in what form is unclear. Either way, the music continues, its relentless techno beats echoing through abandoned buildings and continuing to transform the city's open spaces, remaking heritage as well as constructing entirely new heritage experiences. Teufelsberg's story is thus, in many ways, also the story of Berlin, some elements of which seem like a vision of what a post-Capitalist world might feel like: where values and management structures are collapsed, where sites are considered iconic only where they represent the chaos and confusion of lived experience; where meanings are reversed, overturned or completely remade. What many people will consider a dystopian vision may just represent a utopia, and The Teufelsberg could be amongst the best examples of this, representing this vital and transformative heritage realignment: a site whose trajectory continues to pound along at 150 bpm, into the post-Capitalist world, with no pause for breath.

### **The future of heritage places**

*Charlotte Jenkins*

Where conversations start with "how much do I have to keep" rather than, "how do I preserve and adapt this heritage place", one has to wonder, is heritage still valuable in our society?

In the current climate, with inflation, homelessness and climate change, there are increasing pressures to retain heritage buildings at the cost of new development and improvement. In this mind set, has heritage, and specifically heritage buildings, become a burden left to be managed rather than enjoyed? Our ties to the past are becoming less tangible,

and the increasing pressures on building alongside the desire for greater profits is changing the way we see heritage. New buildings are adopting a similar form and appearance due to capitalist agendas, where profit and affordability are the dominant drivers in design and fabric rather than a desire to create something both functional and beautiful, that is of architectural interest, and may one day warrant a heritage Control. In Australian context, where all too frequently the heritage databases are filled with mediocre examples of Victorian and Edwardian buildings, and in the current climate, the value and future of heritage buildings is in jeopardy, with heritage become something that happens as a result of age, rather than something that is planned for.

## Approaching Prefigurative Heritage Data Practices

*Isto Huvila*

The idea of archaeological (and) heritage data is deeply embedded in the contemporary imaginary of data as a natural and neutral raw resource of economic and intellectual production. Talking about heritage data, practicing with and towards it is difficult to disconnect from this predominant framing. We argue that it is possible but that it requires a taking a careful look at the nexus of heritage data and the contemporary data practices forming an assemblage of datawork as they are, and prefigurative heritage data and data practices at the present as they might be in the future. The deep temporality of heritage and heritage practices means that the past, contemporary and future of heritage and heritage data cannot be decoupled from each other but a prerequisite of any prefigurative heritage data practices is a comprehensive understanding of heritage data practices in the past and at the present. This lightning talk asks what prefiguration of future heritage data practices requires from knowing past and contemporary practices and heritage data, what figurations of the present and prefigurations of future heritage data might be necessary, and how not only data but also practicing with data could be thought anew to produce a new imaginary of data in heritage. The observations and proposals in the talk are based on on-going research on how the modes and genres of describing and framing heritage data and data practices have a profound impact on how they become figured. The foundation of prefiguration of (prefigurative) heritage data practices is in the inscriptions—visual, textual and multimodal documentation, descriptions, and narratives—of datawork at the present as it is observed and imagined, and as it is prefigured to be. In this respect, it can be argued that alternative futures for heritage data and how it is practiced upon depend on how they are inscribed and reinscribed at the present and in the future.

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