

The Construction of Knowledge in Archaeology and Art History in Southeastern Europe:
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“Local archaeologies and their interdisciplinary practices”

Host: New Europe College - Institute for Advanced Study
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WORKSHOP

on

“What can archaeologists and art historians learn from each other?”

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PARTICIPANTS AND ABSTRACTS

**Andrew Meirion Jones / Stockholm
University (Sweden)**

**Four dimensional images and multidimensional
images in archaeology and art history**

Once upon a time images were considered by archaeologists and heritage specialists as stable entities. Computational and digital imaging, alongside new analyses of archaeological images, have now forced us to question the perceived stability of images (Jones 2022). By considering new analyses of images from prehistory, including the British Neolithic and the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, I will suggest that we are better considering images as processes rather than events. I will argue that the distinction between considering images as processes rather than events hinges on the indexicality of the image. To what extent does the image relate to a particular event or moment in time (as in photography) and to what extent does the image relate to ongoing processes (as we find in computational imaging)? I will argue that these questions – highlighted by recent engagements with digital imaging techniques – also inform us about the fundamentally unstable character of images.

If we are able to consider individual images as processes, how does this alter our understanding of long-term change? How are we to understand images as historical processes? To consider this further, I will discuss three artists and scholars who occupy a leftfield position in art history and art practice. I will discuss the work of art historian/archaeologist George Kubler, in particular *The Shape of Time* (Kubler 1962). I will also discuss two incomplete works including the *Mnemosyne Atlas* of art historian Aby Warburg (Johnson 2012), and the project *10,000 years of Nordic folk art*, the unfinished, and only partially published, collaboration between Danish artist Asger Jorn and Danish archaeologist PV Glob (Pedersen 2016). Each of these projects is distinguished by their attempts to consider images in different ways as vital or living agents that unfold over time in long historical sequences.

I will argue that views of images as four-dimensional or multi-dimensional processes offer a new possibility to revitalize these disparate projects in art, art history and archaeology, potentially offering the chance for a new understanding of images and image making in archaeology and art history.

Andrew Meirion Jones has recently taken up a Professorship at Stockholm University, Sweden. Previously, from 2001-2021, he taught at the University of Southampton, UK. He has mainly worked on the visual imagery of later prehistoric Europe, and has collaborated extensively with visual artists. His most recent project involves a collaboration with artists, and members of the Blackfoot confederacy, Canada, to digitally document Blackfoot artefacts held in UK museum collections. In addition to this he is also working on a collaborative field project in the Coa valley, Portugal documenting the later prehistoric rock art of this important Palaeolithic landscape. His most recent books include *The Archaeology of Art. Materials, Practices, Affects* (2018), *Making a Mark: image and process in Neolithic Britain and Ireland* (2019), *Images in the Making: art, process, archaeology* (2020) and *Diffraction Digital Images: archaeology, art practice, cultural heritage* (2022).

Chris Gosden / University of Oxford (UK)

The History of Magic

Over the last few centuries Euro-Americans have developed a mechanistic view of the world where reality is to be understood through the sciences of physics, chemistry and biology, aided by mathematical modelling. Such a view is very technically effective, but makes it much harder to understand generally animistic views of the universe, in which all of reality might be sentient, given energies by spirits or the actions of the human dead. It is likely that many in the past held views which were some variant of animism. Our more scientific approach makes it harder to take such views seriously. Furthermore, human intellectual history has often been seen as a progressive movement from a belief in magic, to a belief in religion and now to a belief in science. I want to explore two points: first, we do not need to choose between magic, religion and science as each does different things, responding to various elements of what it means to be human; secondly, how far is it possible for us to take seriously ideas such as the universe might be sentient and if we can take these seriously will this aid us in an understanding of the past? A last question is also important – given that our present desire to extract as much energy and resources from the planet as we can and that this is not sustainable, how far do we need changed attitudes towards reality as a means of shifting our actions?

Chris Gosden has been in Oxford for the last 25 years, first as a curator-lecturer at the Pitt Rivers Museum and then as Professor of European Archaeology. Chris Gosden has carried out archaeological fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Borneo, Turkmenistan and Britain, among other places. He is currently setting up research collaborations with China and Mongolia. While at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford he worked on the history of collections and their relevance to post-colonial relations and identity, including two large projects - Relational Museum Project. More recently he has run research projects on the history of the English landscape published by OUP in 2021 as *English Landscapes and Identities*, and on Celtic art both in Britain and in Europe including Eurasian links. He has recently published a book called *The History of Magic* (Penguin, 2020). He is currently writing a book called *Humans: The First Seven Million Years*. He is a trustee of the Art Fund, Oxford Archaeology and the British Museum, and a fellow of a number of learned societies, including the British Academy.

Gheorghe Alexandru-Niculescu / "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest (Romania)

Learning from art historical research

Archaeologists who expect research benefits from the cooperation with other disciplines, especially those who believe empirical research does not need theory, tend to use what genetics, physics or chemistry might bring and to ignore art historical research, although there is much common ground, best illustrated by those classical archaeologists who are at the same time art historians. An examination of the disciplinary trajectories of art historical research can help archaeologists better understand the possibilities and limitations of what they do and a confrontation with the history and current uses of the notion of style in art history could improve archaeological research, because it relies on interpretations of how perceived similarities are structuring material worlds. Art historical theories and analytical instruments can support the extension of archaeological interest beyond antiquities, to the whole field of image and artifact making, something that could help archaeologists understand themselves as image producers and interpreters.

Gheorghe Alexandru Niculescu is a senior researcher at the Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology; educated at the University of Bucharest (1974-1978), Ph.D. in history (2000), archaeological training and research at the aforementioned institute (since 1985); teaches archaeological theory at the University of Bucharest; published research on ancient ethnic phenomena and on the impact of nationalism on archaeological research; published research on the politics of cultural heritage in Romania and its impact on the conservation and visibility of the artifacts; currently working on the global asymmetries of archaeological research and on the properties of typological thinking and its flattening consequences on the perception of the artifacts (preliminary findings presented at conferences held in 2016 and 2017).

Jakub Stejskal / Masaryk University (Czech Republic)

Monumentality between Art History and Archaeology

Monumental structures play a central role in both art history and archaeology. Their ruins have traditionally attracted the attention of archaeologists; and the artefacts art-historians study, if not themselves monumental, tend to have found their natural or adapted home in or

around monumental structures: palaces, temples, urban public spaces, not to mention modern museums and galleries. Art history and archaeology are traditionally conceived as backward-looking, oriented towards restoring and recovering the past. But the mind that stands behind the raising of monuments is anticipatory, as it aims to keep the legacy of an event, an agent, or an idea alive for posterity. In a sense, the monumental mind creates archaeological and art-historical objects for the future, as if laying out for the archaeologist and art historian their work.

Arguably, this is not the usual way art historians and archaeologists think about what determines their agenda. If anything, the respective students of past cultures worry, with good reason, that the flow of influence goes in the reverse direction – that is, they worry more about the contamination of the past by their own evaluative and classificatory instincts. The worry notwithstanding, in this presentation, I will explore the consequences of what the builder of monuments, the archaeologist, and the art historian share: an interest in how an object’s visual configuration sustains its relation to whatever source of relevance it has over time.

Jakub Stejskal is a MASH Junior researcher at the Department of Art History, Masaryk University, where he heads the research group “Remote Access: Understanding Art from the Distant Past”. Previously, he held fellowship positions at eikones (University of Basel) and Freie Universität Berlin. His recent work has appeared in *Critical Inquiry*, *World Art*, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, or *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, and he recently finished a book manuscript entitled ‘Objects of Authority: A Postformalist Aesthetics’ (under contract with Routledge). He is also an associate editor of the academic journal *Estetika*.

**Lisa Nevett / University of Michigan
(USA)**

**The Ann Arbor Campus of the University of
Michigan: a tale of two museums**

The University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor Campus is privileged to host a number of museums, most of which which originated as teaching collections to be used in the education of its students. In this presentation I focus on two of these museums: the University of Michigan Museum of Art, which has its origins in a campus gallery first established in 1856, and the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, which was founded in 1928 to support the teaching of classical languages by making available original papyrus texts together with objects evoking the cultural context from which they had come. In hosting these two different museums, the campus separates collections of objects that are often housed together in other contexts – namely artefacts from the Greek and Roman worlds (most of them excavated by University projects but some also purchased) and works of art produced more recently by other cultures (in this case comprising European art of the Renaissance to 19th century, Japanese and Chinese art from antiquity to the 19th century, African art of the 19th and 20th centuries and American art from the 19th century to the present). In this presentation I explore the implications of this division of material for how the roles of the two museums might be conceived, their respective holdings understood, and their collections interpreted.

Lisa Nevett is Professor of Classical Archaeology in the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and is also co-director of archaeological field projects at the ancient cities of Olynthos and Pella (Greece). She has a B.A. in Classics, an M.Phil. in Archaeology and a Ph.D. in Classical Archaeology, all from the University of Cambridge, U.K. Her research interests include: method and theory in classical archaeology; household archaeology in the Graeco-Roman world; ancient Greek urbanisation and urbanism. Recent and forthcoming books include *Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Ancient Greece* (edited, Ann Arbor 2017), *An Age of Experiment: Classical Archaeology Transformed, 1976-2014* (edited with J. Whitley, Cambridge, 2018) and *Ancient Greek Housing* (Cambridge, in press).

Shane McCausland / SOAS University of London (UK)

On the logics of art history and archaeology in a global Sinological framework

My response to the question, ‘What can archaeologists and art historians learn from each other?’, is necessarily shaped by my disciplinary specialism as an art historian and curator of the visual arts of dynastic China, one who also freely avails of archaeologically generated knowledge, and as a member – and currently head – of a School of Arts within which sits a ‘Department of History of Art & Archaeology’, specialising in the arts of Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

In the context of academic discourse in mainland China, both disciplines are united in their fealty to a broader ethno-linguistic nationalism shaped by the party-state in its own interest and largely in tune with other contemporary nationalist (and now imperialist) command economies for cultural knowledge. Meantime, the work in both disciplines as a global critical endeavour faces a profound challenge in the degree to which it relies upon and attaches value to localised knowledge and access frameworks, which may be situated stratigraphically on top of the corpus of material culture under scrutiny.

This paper presents thematic, interlaced reflections across four issues highlighted by the workshop organisers in the contestation between the disciplines of art history and archaeology. These are the confrontation between taxonomic approaches and classificatory practices; comparison of analytical and ekphrastic disciplinary frameworks and their relative autonomy; comparison between amateur knowledge systems in the disciplines; and comparison and contrast between the disciplines in their proprietary museum contexts.

Shane McCausland is Percival David Professor of the History of Art in the Department of History of Art & Archaeology at SOAS University of London. He also serves as Head of the School of Arts and as a member of the university's Executive Board. As an undergraduate he read Oriental Studies (Chinese) at Cambridge University and received his PhD in Art History with East Asian Studies from Princeton University in 2000. He has curated exhibitions in China, Europe and the USA and published widely on Chinese and East Asian arts. His most recent book is *The Mongol Century: Visual Cultures of Yuan China, 1271-1368* (Reaktion/Hawaii, 2015). He is currently working on an exhibition of the arts of the Mongol world across Eurasia in the long thirteenth century, to be mounted at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2024.

From a research-historical perspective, these three terms Archaeology, Ethnology and the Art of Classical Modernism are linked by their common phase of emergence and establishment in the late 19th / early 20th century. Their inner relationship arises from this and at the same time maps the process of pluralisation and modernisation that characterised first Europe's and then North America's modernity. Their results at the time, be they publications or works of art, methods and premises or even the institutions, collections or museums supporting the efforts of this process, have since become inspiring sources of history.

Through their objects and products, archaeology and ethnology illustrate peoples diversity in time and space. Archaeology gives the ethnographically described and documented diversity a temporal depth. Modern art challenges all this. But all three are united by the prestigious character of their objects or a deep knowledge of them. In contrast to classical modernism, archaeology and ethnology offer a counterweight to modernism, which is experienced as accelerating and which in turn manifests itself in the development and establishment of modern art.

Archaeology and ethnology are thus constitutive counterweights to this classical modern art, in that they fuel the hope of recovering not one but their own past. Their key and guiding concept is that of ancestry. While the two sciences are part of what is, in this case, a European process of scientification, this process and its supporting frameworks and principled assumptions are reflected through Modern Art. These are, for example, Dada, Futurism, Constructivism, Primitivism or Surrealism as well as, in Germany, the Brücke and the Blaue Reiter.

Through these environments, Modern Art also contributes to the social reception of scientific methodology or scientific knowledge. These three areas, as products of conceptual condensation processes, whether they belong to the sciences or to the creation of art, stand for the production of meaning of relevance to society as a whole during this period. Both Fromm's religions of progress and science fiction as a product of the culture industry are rooted in this overall development.

While all three stand in one way or another for social protest in the broadest sense against what has gone before and are to be seen as counterweights to the advancing, respective realities of life, they enable participation in the mass society of the time in processes of restructuring society as a whole via the science or art industry: they contribute in their own specific way to the emerging identities and mentalities by shaping ethical ideas and safeguarding the norms and values that support them.

While modern art by and large seeks to free itself from the past in an iconoclastic way, both archaeology and ethnology offer a counterweight through their content, in which they increase the dimension of the past into natural history.

With the step into the culture industry, a dramatic fusion occurs in the sense of the dialectic of enlightenment: while all three are in essence anything but suitable for entertainment, the

educational claim of the culture industry is challenged by the lure of economic value-added. If the culture business (Kulturbetrieb) may not yet be a mass product and thus suitable for carefree consumption, the culture industry (Kulturindustrie) certainly is.

Ulf Ickerodt is a state archaeologist from Schleswig-Holstein and head of a higher monument protection authority. He studied prehistoric archaeology, classical archaeology and ethnology in Bonn, Cologne and Halle. As a child of practical archaeological heritage management, he has worked for various heritage management institutions, excavation companies and universities since his studies. In the field of archaeological heritage conservation, he is developing the concept of planning-oriented heritage conservation, which includes the topics of digitalisation and participation. He is currently a member of the board of the Association of State Archaeologists in the Federal Republic of Germany (VLA), among others.

**Whitney Davis/ UC Berkley /
Archaeological Research Facility (USA)**

Superimpositions and palimpsests

Superimpositions and palimpsests

In the absence of direct means of dating prehistoric and ancient rock art, one of the most important internal means of 'relative dating' involves the analysis of superimpositions, with the common assumption that marks 'above' others are 'later'. This is true in a material sense but might not be valid in a symbolic sense; a 'later' mark could be symbolically 'early'. When superimpositions were intentionally produced to have complex internal temporalities, they can be defined as 'palimpsests'. The workshop will look at the pros and cons of 'superimposition stratigraphy' as an approach to the chronology, intentionality, meaning, and history of rock art, using examples from paleolithic Europe and neolithic northeastern Africa.

Whitney Davis is George C. and Helen Pardee Professor of History & Theory of Ancient & Modern Art at the University of California at Berkeley. Previously he taught at Northwestern University, where he was John Evans Professor of Art History and Director of the Alice Berline Kaplan Center for the Humanities. He received his PhD in Fine Arts from Harvard University, where he was a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows.

Davis's research interests include prehistoric and archaic arts; worldwide rock art; the Classical tradition and neoclassicism in Western art since the later Middle Ages, and especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain; the development of professional art history in interaction with archaeology, philosophical aesthetics, comparative anthropology, and other disciplines; art theory in visual-cultural studies, especially problems of pictorial representation; aspects of modern art history, especially its expression (or not) of nonnormative sexualities; the history and theory of sexuality; queer theory; world art studies; and environmental, evolutionary, and cognitive approaches to the global history of visual culture.

He is the author of several books: *The Canonical Tradition in Ancient Egyptian Art* (Cambridge, 1989), *Masking the Blow: The Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art* (California, 1992), *Pacing the World: Construction in the Sculpture of David Rabinowitch* (Harvard, 1996); *Drawing the Dream of the Wolves: Homosexuality, Interpretation, and Freud's "Wolf Man" Case*

(Indiana, 1996); *Replications: Archaeology, Art History, Psychoanalysis* (1996); *Queer Beauty: Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond* (Columbia, 2010); *A General Theory of Visual Culture* (Princeton, 2010); *Visuality and Virtuality: Images and Pictures from Prehistory to Perspective* (Princeton, 2017); *Space, Time, and Depiction* (forthcoming); and *Visions of Art History* (in progress). He has published over one hundred articles, essays, and book chapters.