

SIMA

2022 Symposium
Q?rius Theater, NMNH

July 7-8, 2022

Session One
Thursday, July 7, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

PRESENTERS

James Margotta (Southern Methodist University)

PIECING TOGETHER THE MIMBRES TYPOLOGY: J.W. FEWKES, OTHER EARLY MIMBRES EXPEDITIONS, AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION AND CONSEQUENCES OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION ACROSS TIME

Around 1000 years ago, the peoples of the Mimbres Valley of Southwestern New Mexico were creating painted ceramic bowls which displayed astounding geometric and figural "art" configuring into their own context. At the turn of the 20th century, Euro-American anthropologists first encountered these materials in archaeological contexts and helped to begin processes that have and continue to imbue the bowls with intense and violent negative heritage associated with monetary value much to the detriment of Indigenous descendants and the sites themselves. This SIMA project is an exploratory study examining how Fewkes and other early Smithsonian collectors have contributed to the formation of the modern heritage web these objects are suspended in, utilizing both object-based and archival research. With the explicit goal of configuring projects such as this one into larger cultural heritage-focused research design, the presenter seeks to not only contribute to the understanding of Mimbres heritage, valuation, and looting but also aid in reconfiguring the modern perspective for the betterment of all stakeholders, namely the descendants of the Mimbres people.

Kathleen Donlan (University of Colorado Boulder)

SCENES, STORIES, AND SONGS FROM THE DAWNLAND: WABANAKI WORKS ON BIRCHBARK

Strong and durable, yet lightweight and flexible, birchbark has been and continues to be a significant material for Wabanaki—the People of the Dawn—in the northeast. Beyond its use as a building material for canoes and homes, birchbark is often meticulously inscribed by Wabanaki makers with maps (*wikhikon*), motifs, stories, and songs, particularly on smaller pieces including scrolls and baskets. This project centers on the late nineteenth century Wabanaki birchbark items housed at the National Museum of Natural History, related archival and accession materials, and contemporary examples at the National Museum of the American Indian. What may first appear as discrete “scenes” inscribed on birchbark become entangled stories drawing together Wabanaki makers, curious ethnographers, and Maine’s burgeoning tourism industry. In particular, I examine the modality and materiality of inscribing stories into birchbark, considering the differing meanings of a story carved into bark, versus written down or sung. I also center the collection’s potential contemporary resonance to Wabanaki Nations, especially in consideration of ongoing cultural revitalization projects, a recently completed truth and reconciliation commission, and enduring political battles with the state of Maine.

Patricia Dawson (University of North Carolina Chapel Hill)

CHEROKEE WOMEN’S TEXTILE INNOVATION AND DIPLOMACY IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Cherokee women strategically used textile innovations as acts of identity, tools of diplomacy, and weapons of resistance against Euro-American encroachment. In the eighteenth century, the cloth/deerskin trade firmly established clothing as one of the most important factors in the relationship between Euro-Americans and Cherokees. Cherokee women began creating innovative new styles by combining luxury trade goods with old and new techniques. In the decades leading up to Removal (1838), Cherokees continued to undergo a variety of sartorial changes, and women used textiles, dress, and cloth production as a means of resisting Removal. Women led the transition away from the deerskin trade by developing a widespread cotton cloth manufacture, as well as producing wool and continuing to craft intricate beadwork. Cherokee women were the ones driving the changes, and while women were largely pushed out of official leadership roles in the National Council, they continued to play essential roles in diplomacy by creating relationships with outsiders through gifts of textiles. Cherokee women showcased their right to the land with their artistic talents and the fruits of their labor, using the cotton they had grown and the wool they had spun to demonstrate their connection to the land and their status as a “civilized” Native Nation. It is only through examining Cherokee textiles and material culture that a complete understanding of women’s essential role in diplomacy emerges.

DISCUSSANTS

JOE HORSE CAPTURE (Autry Museum of the American West, Los Angeles)

CANDACE GREENE (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION)

Session Two
Thursday, July 7, 10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

PRESENTERS

Lynn Walker (University of Alaska Fairbanks)

ALUTIIQ/SUGPIAQ AND TLINGIT BASKETS

In Alaska, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Tlingit baskets are very similar in style, form, and materials. These similarities have resulted in the two traditions being recognized as one — that of the Tlingit. Closer examination of Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Tlingit baskets in the collections of the National Museum of Natural History and National Museum of the American Indian, coupled with research at the National Anthropological Archives, shows just how closely linked the two traditions are and calls into question the feasibility of separating them into distinct traditions. Are these distinct, separate traditions? How can we tell? Or, are the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Tlingit otherwise distinct groups with clearly distinct traditions — except basketry? This presentation will seek to answer these questions.

Arina Melkozernova (Arizona State University)

SEED TO BASKET

Based on current collaboration with the MOWA Choctaw Tribal Band of Alabama and an ongoing partnership with the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the project examines the narrative of everyday use of baskets made by weavers from the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana and to complement those narratives by analyzing Koasati baskets in the Smithsonian collections. Focusing on baskets' tangible and intangible qualities, the narratives are extended by analyzing the ecological resource usage preserved through the stories of the place along with the traditional knowledge embedded in these objects.

Mililani Ganivet (University of Hawaii)

ANTHRODUCING ROBERT LEVY'S ARCHIVAL PAPERS

The National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian holds the entire archival papers of Robert Levy (1924-2003), a prominent American psychiatrist and anthropologist most known for his opus *Tahitians*, finalist of the National Book Award in 1973. *Tahitians* is the result of his fieldwork conducted between 1961 and 1964 in two localities of French Polynesia under the aegis of Prof. Douglas Oliver (1913-2009). His papers and field notes offer a denser and richer textual web of networks of knowledge and relationships that represents a seminal pool for contemporary engagements. Applying the concept of exploding objects to this archival collection, this presentation offers a historicized overview of Levy's papers and explores the potential uses in the present. In doing so, this presentation offers a broader reflection upon the use of archival materials in efforts of cultural revitalizations in an Oceanic context.

Anna Riley (Bard Graduate Center)

GLASS FROM THE ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM EXPEDITIONS

This project examines a series of glass materials—both raw substances and finished objects—collected in the 1960s-70s from Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan by Hans Wulff (1907-1967), a German historian of technology, who was trying to see in contemporary craftwork evidence of “ancient technological” practices. Wulff acquired blown-glass, beads, and bangles, as well as raw materials for glassmaking and glazing, such as quartz pebbles, glass “frit,” mineral colorants, and soda ash “flux” burned from plants. Though these artifacts were extracted from their original contexts to illustrate an otherwise intangible practice, the glass materials have not remained static, mute evidence. After decades of storage in the museum collection, many of these glass materials have altered in reaction to the atmospheric conditions. This presentation will examine the intentions of the expedition, the manner in which the materials were acquired, and the ongoing lives of the materials in museum collections.

DISCUSSANTS

IGOR KRUPNIK (CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, NMNH, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION)

CHRISTINA HODGE (STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

Session Three

Thursday, July 7, 1:35 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

2022 Faculty Fellows

Christina Hodge (Stanford University)

THE DAGGETT COLLECTION AS LENS AND INSTIGATOR

My SIMA fellowship continues a 2016 project on the ethnographic collector John R. Daggett (1833–1919) by extending comparative study of the methodologies and legacies of his 18 known institutionalized collections. Daggett was a prominent gold mine owner and politician in 1850s–1910s Northern California, where he sourced materials from Native people of the Klamath and Trinity rivers region. In 2016, I traced how Daggett constructed an anthropological fantasy of “completeness” across his three largest object collections (and cautioned against reproducing similar aspirations as we “re-assemble” collections). Through SIMA, I have engaged with different sorts of Daggett Collections: a small donation of basket-making materials at NMNH and many photographs of Indigenous people and items at NAA, including by Daggett himself. An expanded understanding of Daggett as an aspirational and experimental ethnographer is emerging through these materials. In turn, his collections reveal the ways avocational activities formed, yet were appropriated and displaced within, authoritative institutions.

A secondary project has been to develop a better understanding of the materiality of an iconic type of item Daggett—and many other collectors—acquired from people of the Klamath River region: carved elk horn spoons. Through consultation with Hupa and Yurok cultural experts about Stanford University's Daggett Collection, I learned how strongly gendered all tribal items are and how important it is to grow knowledge about men's spoon carving. As categorized and collected things, spoons readily facilitate investigation of provenance, gendering, digital materiality, and the ways legacy documentation influences what we know, and what we can do, with anthropological collections.

Beth Buggenhagen (Indiana University)

BEYOND THE ORIGINAL: THE CIRCULATION OF PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY FROM SENEGAL

Combining research on photography's pasts in Senegal with contemporary lens based artists who engage with this fraught history, Beth Buggenhagen has been researching early photographic materials in the collections at Smithsonian Natural History Museum and National Museum of African Art. This research forms the basis of her book, *The Future is in Your Hands: Portrait Photography from Senegal*. In researching these collections, rather than focus on the opposition between the original and its copies, she has focused on reproductions of early photographic materials in the form of postcards and commemorative cloth to inquire into the articulation between originals and their copies and the worldwide circulation of the latter. The circulation of early photographic materials and their copies from Senegal raises questions for these contemporary artists related to the restitution of African cultural heritage.

Session Four
Friday, July 8, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

PRESENTERS

Charlotte Williams (University of Pennsylvania)

MATCHING UP THE PAST: OBJECT CONTAINERS, CATEGORIZATION, AND THE SOCIAL LIVES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EPHEMERA

In 1940, ancient textile fragments and botanical specimens were packed into matchboxes from cave sites in Coahuila, Mexico during Walter Taylor's archaeological excavation. By the 1990s the specimens were accessioned into the Smithsonian and the archaeological notes archived, yet the matchboxes themselves never received any record. Instead, collections managers taken by the artwork and the novelty of the containers saved them as ephemera. This project treats these matchboxes as artifacts of archaeological work, and indeed as unlikely entities that were influenced by and capable of making practices of archaeological science. By tracing the labor regimes they passed through, the specimens they once contained, and the hands that used them in a multitude of ways, this project uses the matchboxes' microhistories to ask questions about how archaeological narratives get constructed, in what conditions, and by whom.

Ethan Karnes (George Washington University)

COALING COLLECTIONS

The central aim of this project is to investigate how coal, a geologic distillation of heat, pressure and time, is located within Smithsonian collections to think through how our collective and differential relations to this material have been recorded. Coal as a natural resource has facilitated travel, structured interactions between nations and individuals and became a material that itself travels. Coal is also a bodily identifier, written onto birth and death certificates, acting to structure space and the body, as it frequently comes to rest within lungs. In recognizing the role of coal as a material resource and as a cultural object, this project seeks to foreground the labor of coal passers, colliers and miners within the assemblages which the collections represent and the legacies they generate.

Aruna Kharod (University of Texas)

STRINGS ATTACHED: UNPACKING RESONANT HISTORIES OF SITARS IN THE SMITHSONIAN'S TAGORE COLLECTION

In the late 1800's, Bengali musicologist Rajah S. M. Tagore donated over a hundred Indian artifacts to the Smithsonian, ranging from clay figurines and household objects to musical instruments. In this presentation, I explore the material and labor histories embodied in a few sitars (Hindustani stringed

instruments) from the Tagore collection. What do these sitars' journeys reveal about the globalized circulation and curation of Indian culture in Western institutions? More broadly, how does the inclusion of sitars in Tagore's donation and current, silent housing in the Smithsonian's Natural History collections intersect both Eurocentric narratives of science and notions of Hindu Indian modernity? I approach these questions through lenses of postcolonial and feminist science and technology studies in the context of Hindu Indian cultural exchange, both domestically and globally in India and abroad (Prakash 1999, Cardozo and Subramaniam 2013).

Sarah Ann Knutson (University of California Berkeley)

ISLAMICATE HERITAGE, REASSEMBLED: TRACING ITINERANT COINS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

In Museum Anthropology and Archaeology, the term *assemblage* is used to describe the collection of *similar* materials which share a defining characteristic or the collection of *diverse* materials which share a defined context. Simply put, *assemblage* involves making a judgment about how to organize an active collage of materials and how to understand the relations between these materials (Knutson 2021: 796). At face value, coins from the Islamic World seem to offer a self-explaining assemblage. They share an obvious typology ("Islamic coinage"), an object category created by the Islamic Caliphates to facilitate economic exchanges, commerce, and state and religious sovereignty. But coins have never been simply mediums of finance. For as long as Islamic coins have existed, communities have taken such objects out of monetary circulation and placed these materials into other forms of circulation and meaning making. These kinds of practices continue well into the present day. The non-monetary values associated with coins has meant that these objects actively assemble and reassemble into heterogeneous assemblages, including jewelry, amulets, clothing, and other textiles. Local community stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa have claimed Islamic coins as meaningful to their cultural heritage. This project begins to untangle the complex ways that Islamicate heritage (re)assembles itself and the multifaceted meanings that such assemblages hold for people in the Middle East and North Africa as well as the wider diaspora.

DISCUSSANTS

MARY JO ARNOLDI (CURATOR EMERITUS, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, NMNH, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION)

BETH BUGGENHEIM (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON)