ARCHAEOGRAPHY – DEVELOPMENTS



A session at the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) (United States) conference 2011- Dialogs in Archaeological Photography.





Flickr galleries – [Link] [Link]

Here are some notes accompanying the fascinating and sometimes wonderful pictures.

Nostalgic, Personal, Neglected, Treasured, Rejected: The Other Photography in Archaeology

Colleen Morgan, University of California, Berkeley, clmorgan@berkeley.edu

Our record of archaeological uncertainty is becoming dazzlingly clear; professional-quality digital SLR cameras producing high-dynamic range imaging are becoming the norm on archaeological projects and our photographic archives, once highly-curated collections of “scientific,” carefully set-up shots, have exploded in size and diversified in content accordingly. Along with this extraordinary, high-tech verisimilitude runs a counter-narrative—photography on sites performed by students, workmen, professionals, and tourists using their cellphones. In a session focused on exploring the work that archaeological photography does, I will investigate the hazy, inaccurate, personal, and extra-archival qualities of the archaeological snapshot.

Tintype Portraits – Objects of Self-Imagination

Heather Law, University of California, Berkeley, heather.law@berkeley.edu

For this session I’ll be presenting an assemblage of late 19th and early 20th century tintypes in order to

initiate a discussion of the role of portraits as both objects employed in the construction of self, and as artifacts that might contribute to conversations of materiality and personhood in archaeological contexts. The tintype, as the first affordable form of portraiture available to middle class Americans, has the potential to illustrate diverse processes of self imagination made possible by the novelty of photographs as objects of self representation.

Topographic – Photographic: Dialogues with the Recent Past

Thóra Pétursdóttir, University of Tromsoe, thora.petursdottir@uit.no

Photography’s contribution to archaeology is unquestioned. However, its importance in terms of both documentation and representation notwithstanding , it largely holds a secondary value in archaeological discourses. The role of images is to be subservient to the text, to “illustrate” and support, and more active, experimental and “artistic” uses are often dismissed as subjective and unscientific. Using examples from my research on modern Icelandic ruins, I will challenge this hierarchy and show how photography enables

alternative and genuine statements about the past and provides a means to make manifest the heterogeneous and ineffable that often is left out of scientific prose.

History Making and Memory Keeping: Photographs as Artifacts of Black Family History

Annelise Morris, University of California, Berkeley, aemorris@berkeley.edu

Founded in the late 18th century by free black pioneers and occupied continuously ever since, my family's ancestral homestead is also the archaeological site I will begin excavating for my dissertation. With generations of family portraits and photographs available, I'm interested in exploring how photographs are used to create site histories and, similarly, their role in the memorialization of the black experience. For this session, I'll present a sample of these photographic artifacts discussing their unique visual access to lived experiences of an archaeological site, as well as their ability to represent changing articulations of the self and the family.

More recognition that archaeology is always of the present – because we work not upon the past, but upon *what remains*.

See also – archaeography.com and archaeographer.com