

[CHT]

CHAT
BOTXO
BILBAO



ABSTRACT BOOK



UNESCO Chair
on Cultural Landscape
and Heritage
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CHAT Botxo – Final program with abstracts

**standard presentations will last 15 minutes tops to allow for questions and discussion*

Thursday 6

15:00 – 17:30 // Block 1 (Sarriko: Zubiria Etxea, EHU)

Ana González San Martín

Em-barking Itineraries: Transhumant Labour and the Temporality of Practice in Transatlantic Mountain Landscapes

This paper explores the role of tree carving (arborglyphs) in shaping the spatial and temporal experience of transhumant workers in mountain landscapes marked by transatlantic migration and rural labour mobility. Focusing on the Basque Western Pyrenees and their diasporic extension throughout the American West, I examine how carved inscriptions (like names, initials, dates), operate as inscriptional gestures of presence, linking pastoral movement, memory, and land-based knowledge, with experiences of transnational labour, cultural hybridity and migration.

Through a comparative lens of glyph-carving traditions and seasonal rural labour, these ephemeral marks arguably materialize a plethora of alternative itineraries to those imposed by extractive, spatially defined capitalism. As repositories of human and non-human action, these glyphs archive a certain temporality of practice: slow, repetitive, embodied, and deeply relational. In the context of increasing forestry regulations and the dissolution of local policy, industrial encroachment, and the colonial mapping of territory, these inscriptions act as both archives of rural, migrant lifeways and quiet resistances to dominant spatial-political regimes.

By tracing these “em-barked” itineraries, the paper addresses one of the central “botxos” (gaps) of capitalist modernity: the erasure of transhumant political agency, non-urban labour histories, and the seasonal rhythms that connect mountainous communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Carved trees, additionally, offer an exceptional opportunity to bridge the gaps in the renowned archaeological invisibility of pastoralism. A way to rethink place-making, migration, and memory within and beyond modernity’s industrial core.

Faidon Moudopoulos

Carved landscapes? Some thoughts on the potential of the 19th century stone carvings from Epirus (NW Greece) to evoke entanglements between makers, dwellers and landscapes

While Ottoman-era stone carvings represent an exceptional product of Balkan mountainous craftsmanship, their study has often remained confined to traditional folklore. This paper seeks to recontextualize these material expressions, focusing on cases from Epirus in NW Greece.

Recent research has examined how the juxtaposition of locally made stone carvings with imported calligraphic panels during the second half of the 19th century indexes divergent socio-political alignments and modes of provincial resilience in the face of imperial reform. Furthermore, moving beyond folklore paradigms, we have employed

an interdisciplinary methodology to foreground stone carvings as multiconfessional narratives transcending the borders between Sufi Muslim and Orthodox Christian identities.

In this paper, we propose the concept of a “carved landscape” to interpret these material traces as mediators of human-landscape entanglements. By attending to the interplay between itinerant artisans, local dwellers, and their mountainous entourage, we explore how stone carvings functioned not only as adornments, but as a dynamic medium for negotiating identity, memory, and spatial belonging in Ottoman Epirus.

Joel Santos; Tania Casimiro

Carved Traces - Memory, Affect and Place Making in Lisbon's Bamboo Groves

This paper explores carved bamboo groves in Lisbon, focusing on two emblematic sites, the Gulbenkian gardens and the Parque das Nações (Expo), as living, inscribed landscapes. These groves, repeatedly inscribed with names, symbols, declarations of love, and cryptic tags by both locals and tourists, offer a case for rethinking plant life not merely as passive scenery but as active participants in the urban memoryscape.

Drawing from archaeological and posthumanist perspectives, the study examines bamboo as a non-human agent that archives affective encounters and ephemeral presences. The repeated act of carving onto bamboo transforms these plants into evolving palimpsests—simultaneously organic and cultural, ephemeral and enduring. They become vegetal repositories of memory that resist easy categorisation: neither monument nor graffiti wall, but something in between.

This paper interrogates how these living surfaces mediate relationships between people, places, and time through site-based observations, photographic documentation, and interpretive analysis. In doing so, it situates bamboo carvings within broader discussions on materiality, landscape inscription, and the agency of non-humans in shaping collective spatial meaning.

Tânia Casimiro; João Sequeira

Inked Topographies: An Archaeological Exploration of Lisbon's Tattooscap

This paper presents an archaeological investigation of Heidi's tattoo studio in Lisbon, conceptualising the notion of “tattooscap”—the relation between tattooed bodies and the urban landscape. By examining the studio's material culture, spatial organisation, and the embodied practices within, the study explores how tattooing contributes to the materialisation of personal and collective identities in contemporary Lisbon. Drawing on ethnographic observations and material analyses, the research situates the studio within the broader context of Lisbon's evolving tattoo culture. The proliferation of tattoo studios in the city reflects a shift from marginalisation to mainstream acceptance, with tattoos serving as markers of individuality and cultural expression. The concept of “tattooscap” encapsulates this transformation, highlighting how inked bodies become living canvases that narrate personal histories and societal changes. Furthermore, the study engages with theoretical frameworks on body modification and spatiality, considering how tattooed bodies navigate and redefine urban spaces. By viewing the tattoo studio as both a site of artistic production and a microcosm of cultural dynamics, the paper contributes to discussions on the intersections of body, art, and place.

Discussion



James Symonds; Pavel Vařeka; Zdeňka Vařeková

The People's Trash: A Post-Socialist Garbage Project

Pořejov/Purschau, in the district of Tachov in west Bohemia is near the Bavarian Border. All inhabitants of the village of medieval origin (mentioned for the first time in the documentary evidence in 1352) were displaced along with other Czech Germans from the so-called Sudetenland after World War II. Due to the establishment of the restricted border zone along the Iron Curtain between Czechoslovakia and West Germany, all buildings were demolished, and a large dump covered about one-third of the village area, including the remains of the former Gothic parish church. This paper explores the material remains of a Communist-era garbage dump in the former Czechoslovakia to uncover alternative narratives of modernity. Drawing on archaeological and anthropological analysis, the study investigates discarded objects, patterns of consumption, and modes of waste management under state socialism. By examining what was thrown away—and what was salvaged—the dump becomes a lens through which East and West models of modernity can be compared regarding consumer abundance and disposability. The findings challenge linear progress narratives and reveal a complex interplay between scarcity, reuse, and state control, offering a counterpoint to the capitalist logic of excess and offering a new perspective on the ideological underpinnings of waste in contrasting economic systems.

Jakub Sawicki; Jan Hasil

Archaeology of the Flea Market: Dynamics between Humans, Space, and Things within the Total Context

Flea markets (French: marché aux puces, German: Flohmarkt, Polish: pchli targ) are a global phenomenon, known in similar forms from medieval written sources, though their origins are certainly older. This presentation explores such places as dynamic archaeological sites that witness dense entanglements between people, objects, and space in real time. Drawing on the concept of the archaeology of the active site and middle-range theory, we approach the flea market as both a social and archaeological phenomenon that can be analysed under “laboratory” conditions.

By systematically surveying a flea market and mapping discarded items in relation to vendor stalls, we examine how patterns of waste reflect underlying human behaviours and spatial practices. Although correlations between finds and stall functions are partial and depend on object type, the “total context” – available to us as contemporary observers – enables interpretations rarely accessible in traditional archaeology. This provides new insights into the biographies of finds, supported by data from sources such as national statistical offices or the various media of popular culture.

This research positions the flea market as a microcosm for understanding the material traces of everyday human interaction and offers new perspectives on interpreting ephemeral and cyclical spaces.

Jamie McNeill (FILM)

Screening of 'The Concrete Seed: A New Town Fable'

A redemptive tale of counter-hegemonic planning in the shadow of a deconstructed new town. A power struggle between the abstracted archetypes of ‘Planner’ and ‘Dwellers’. An essayistic fiction exploring the utopian impulse and the haecceity of poured concrete. ‘The Concrete Seed: A New Town Fable’ draws on research into the post-war British new town project undertaken during my MA in Contemporary Art

and Archaeology at UHI. It consists of a satire and critique specifically of the Scottish new towns and of top-down spatial planning more generally.

"They envision objects given over to illegibility, cut through with desire lines and a hallucinatory organicism. Vertical and horizontal surfaces deliberately damaged to encourage rapid biofouling. Buildings that contract. Windows that sing. Occulting the cadastral gaze."

Discussion

≈17:45 Visit in transit

A "visit" of Bilbao from the venue (Zorrozaurre, the old industrial area now being gentrified) to the old town and San Francisco. We will go together (by metro) discussing the recent evolution of the city.

≈19:00 Opening and reception (Corazon de Maria archaeological site)

We will go to the archaeological site of Corazón de María for the opening. More formal presentation of the conference and a discussion with Hilary Orange (archaeologist), Iratxe Jaio and Klaas Gorkum (artists).

After the discussion we will offer a small cocktail on site.

[Open to the public]



Friday 7

9:00 – 11:00 // Block 2 (Sarriko: Zubiria Etxea, EHU)

Marianna Bucchioni; Joel Rodrigues Oliveira Dos Santos

Steel, Spikes, and Loneliness. Mapping the Emotional Cost of Hostile Architecture

Hostile architecture is a strategy, a practical tool, through which urban planning or private realities inhabiting the fabric of the city prevent a certain section of society (deemed unseemly) from freely using urban space.

The types of hostile architecture are varied in their form and purpose (a preliminary typology classification will be presented) and are built to be “hostile” to a specific target of people, in particular homeless people, people on the move and young people. Through material expedients (single-seat, sit-stand or tube-shaped benches, spikes, steep walls, barrier sharpened bars or deflectors) (Swain F. 2013, Designing the Perfect Anti-Object) and the distribution of these in concentrated hotspots in the city, hostile architecture creates a social exclusion in the physical space and a ghettoisation based on people’s income. The reason for this is the need to buffer an unpleasant feeling towards people that are kept away: this feeling is aporophobia and shapes our cities (Cortina Orts A. 2017, Aporofobia).

At the same time, people affected by the effects of hostile architecture shape an emotional space: emotions experienced include loneliness, anger, sadness (Alberti F. B. 2019, A Biography of Loneliness; Andersson L. 1998, Loneliness research and interventions). These emotions, which are the effect of material structures, are reflected in the material assemblages that those affected by hostile architecture produce (González Ruibal A. 2021, Subaltern assemblages). Comparing these assemblages with those of social groups that we already know suffer from an emotional condition of loneliness and sufferance (Santos J. 2024 Archaeology of loneliness; Cacioppo J. 2009. Alone in the Crowd), we find significant similarities that speak to us of how a political direction on the shaping of public space affects the emotional wellbeing of people who are victims of it, further hampering their path to reconnection with the rest of society.

The presented panel intends to highlight this phenomenon together with the normalisation of this kind of materiality in cities and in citizens’ perceptions. The field study was conducted in two southern European cities, Turin (Italy) and Lisbon (Portugal).

Brodhie Molloy; Joel Santos

Excavating Inwards: Archaeology and Emotions

In Talking Archaeologies, we use archaeological material to foster conversations about emotions and vulnerability. Through informal, however guided, dialogues participants explore personal and collective emotional feelings encouraging both individual reflection and shared understanding. We aim to disrupt the current *modus operandi* of our environments and lives which are often fractured by contemporary pressures that push people to individualism and to be ashamed of their own feelings. This is our response to this year’s CHAT conference “botxos” challenge. Our project introduces a different and non-traditional way of using contemporary archaeology: the role of archaeology and emotional literacy in the co-creation of self-knowledge.



Our approach arises from critically recognising the gaps between public institutions and societal needs, particularly social welfare, mental health, and collective identity. As neoliberal capitalism keeps privatising public spaces and making social problems more personal, there's a growing need for practices that restructure community ties. Archaeology, in our practice, doesn't just observe the past. It plays an important role in promoting dialogue in the present.

By attaching emotional experience to material culture, Talking Archaeologies helps to reframe how archaeological practice can participate in mending social damages. This community-based, emotionally attuned archaeology not only challenges the notion of archaeology as a distant, objective science, but also provides a practical option to the common ways of producing knowledge that take too much without giving back.

Alexander J. Smith [recorded video]

Historical Archaeology in Service of Myth-Making: Connecting Rural Stories in Upstate New York

The archaeology of the nineteenth century in New York is primarily concerned with the exploration of emergent industrial landscapes, interactions with indigenous groups and their subsequent erasure from history, as well as foregrounding what would be an early 20th century era of consumptive prosperity throughout the state. While these pursuits are important, archaeology can also create a tangible connection to folklore, to local mythology, and to community memory. By de-centering academic output and academia generally, such interventions can push back against archaeology's often extractive approach to modern community engagement, specifically resource-driven approaches to archaeological research that can alienate or ignore local community members.

Using the case study of Frost Town Archaeology in the Finger Lakes Region of New York, this paper will discuss how rural myth-making and folklore can be supported by material culture analysis and the archaeological project generally. Rather than focusing on "correcting" or "clarifying" local stories, Frost Town has approached creating an archaeological narrative that can be viewed alongside and in connection with those created by local legends or collective community memory. This paper will focus this paper on our work specifically with community-minded exhibits, symposia, and our participation in a folklore-based children's book that was developed by the local historical society in 2023. Ultimately this paper will ask if such a folklore or story-centered approach can help fill a gap that has separated community-based perceptions of heritage and academic knowledge production. Finally, it will also ask at what point archaeological data can threaten local memory and folklore, sometimes even inadvertently, considering how best to avoid such a destructive dynamic between projects and communities.

Discussion

Anena Majumdar

Authenticity as Praxis: Negotiating Heritage, Labor, and Livelihood in Rural Craft Production in West Bengal, India

Authenticity is a contentious and often ambiguous concept in heritage management, widely invoked yet rarely fixed in meaning. While international bodies such as UNESCO advocate for collaborative and community-oriented approaches to heritage preservation, implementing these ideals varies locally. This paper examines how state-led interpretations of authenticity, shaped by global heritage paradigms, are translated

into local heritage initiatives and craft economies in West Bengal, India. These initiatives are often in tension with the meanings of authenticity as experienced and enacted by artisans at the production site. Tracing the journey of terracotta objects from heritage stores in urban locales to their production site in Panchmura—a village 16 km away—this paper explores how artisans negotiate institutional and hegemonic frameworks of authenticity to create their own meaning of authenticity in contemporary craft production. Drawing on fieldwork that includes on-site documentation of crafts and interviews with craftspeople, I analyze how local artisans navigate state-sanctioned narratives of tradition while adapting to the demands of capitalist markets and global consumers. The paper argues that while state institutions rely on fixed and essentialized notions of authenticity, craft communities engage with authenticity as a flexible, lived praxis that balances notions of heritage, labor, and economic sustainability within a globalizing and capitalizing world.

Jonathan Gardner

Poking holes in a World Heritage Site

The 'Old and New Towns of Edinburgh' were inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1995, being said to possess Outstanding Universal Value for their, 'remarkable juxtaposition of two clearly articulated urban planning phenomena'. In response, this paper considers urban phenomena that are both unclear and disarticulated: the wide array of holes, gaps and absences that permeate the World Heritage Site and, indeed, make its existence possible. These include both the material and immaterial: from quarry holes and buried rivers, to incomplete maps, missing communities and cancelled planning initiatives. In some cases holes remain empty, while others are filled in, and still others come and go as they please, often with few noticing.

Taking Edinburgh as but one example of a wider phenomenon, I show how contemporary archaeology can help us reconsider World Heritage Sites in a hole new light.

Tiffany C. Fryer

Deep work/slow work: Reflections on the contours of long term community collaborative partnerships in archaeology

In this presentation, I reflect on the contours and lifecycles of community collaborative partnerships in archaeology, drawing heavily on my experiences co-facilitating a collaborative community heritage initiative in Quintana Roo, Mexico for over a decade now. I draw on insights from the recent "deep work" (Newport 2016) and "slow work" (Berg and Seeber 2016; Crabtree 2020) movements spreading across academia that resist the insistence of the so-called "education-industrial complex" to produce high volumes of scholarship to the detriment of intellectual rigor, novel contribution, and ethical commitment. Parallely, advocates of community-based research in archaeology have often conceded that its major limitation may be the amount of time that goes into both building and sustaining community-centric research relationships and agendas. But I argue that that time better positions archaeology, and heritage work more broadly, to sustain substantive, meaningful work that prosecutes benefits which reach beyond the needs and desires of the academy or of heritage industries to amplify heritage spaces and organizing already being fostered within communities.

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 // Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30 // Block 3 (Sarriko)

Antonia Thomas; Daniel Lee; Anne Bevan; Jen Harland; David Atkinson

Art, Archaeology and Energy: Understanding Marine Energy Transitions through Interdisciplinary Creative Approaches

The current transition to marine renewable energies, and particularly the growth of offshore wind-power generation, is having profound environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts for coastal communities and adjacent seas. In many areas, this is the latest chapter in the continually unfolding story of marine energy and industrial exploitation, from whaling in the 18th-19th centuries, to 20th-century oil and gas extraction. Each of these has left its own significant material and social legacy, evidenced in art and in archaeology.

This paper will present aspects of the TRANSECTS project, which focusses on marine energy transitions off the eastern and northern coasts of Britain. Through an interdisciplinary approach which draws from creative practice, contemporary archaeology, and cultural geography, are exploring these shifting resources and how the transitions between them were understood and negotiated at the time. We also consider how these lessons might inform current energy developments, and how creative methods might offer different, more sensitive and sustainable ways to conceptualise and manage marine energies and their possible futures.

Integrating cultural heritage and creative practice can help coastal communities explore their roles and responses to historical and contemporary energy transitions, helping to bridge the gaps between past and present, and build more resilient futures.

Wenna Potter

More Than Electricity Generation: The Intangible Heritage of Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station

The successful opening of Calder Hall nuclear power station in 1956 showcased the potential peaceful uses of nuclear technology and embodied hope for a cheap and plentiful source of electricity. Nine commercial Magnox reactors were subsequently built across the UK. Building on the existing grid network of hydroelectric power stations in the area, Trawsfynydd nuclear power station (Gwynedd, North Wales) became a major employer in the surrounding area during its construction (1957-1965) and operation, providing stable and skilled jobs to local residents and those who had relocated to work at the site.

This presentation will discuss data collected from interviews with former employees of Trawsfynydd nuclear power station to explore the lived experience and recollections of members of the local community and those who worked at the site.

As an industrial landscape, attention is more often given to the technical, scientific and large-scale political processes associated with nuclear energy sites. Instead, these oral histories allow focus on the community aspects of the site: the experience of female workers in a male-dominated industry, the relocation of English-speaking families to a Welsh speaking area, the fundraising for a workers and families clubhouse, the highs and lows of the rugby, football and cricket power station team. Recollections of the Miners strike and Chernobyl disaster can instead be remembered as days and memories requiring on-site responses, not just as key historical events.



In 1993 Trawsfynydd became one of the first nuclear power stations to cease operation, instead becoming one of the UK's decommissioning prototypes. Alongside the nearby Cookes powder works and Smith Corona typewriter factory, Trawsfynydd had brought a number of industrial jobs to the surrounding area. The closure of Smith Corona in the mid-1980s, of Cookes in 1992, and Trawsfynydd in 1993 left a sudden and noticeable gap in employment in a short period of time. The shift from energy generation to closure and decommissioning marked a major milestone in the mindset and aims of the site.

The complex and layered heritage of the Trawsfynydd site will be considered in relation to the years of construction operation and ongoing decommissioning, placed within the context of the surrounding area. Focus will be placed on the intangible heritage of Trawsfynydd nuclear power station, of people, stories and communities built around a complex industry and continually shifting site future.

Belén Cerezo (FILM)

Screening of "The River and the Places"

This video essay is composed of various graphic materials and photographs that explore the interrelations—both current and historical—between the water masses of the Ebro River and the territory-landscape of the area where I grew up, a place deeply intertwined with my family's history. Through the use of diverse images, such as promotional industrial photographs of the construction of a nuclear power plant from the 1970s, scientific diagrams of the hydrological cycle, and black-and-white aerial cadastral photographs, the video examines how water is linked to its spatial and temporal contexts, and how it cannot be separated from the landscape (Catalina Valdés, 2024).

At the same time, this audiovisual piece "leaks" through some previously learned ideas and reveals the limitations of the water cycle model, which fails to address the symbiotic relationships between humans and nature. *The River and the Places* highlights the importance of nurturing imagination in the context of the ecosocial crisis and shows how, as Astrida Neimanis suggests, artistic practices can "make the porosity of a body visible so that it might absorb new ideas and knowledge and forge new connections to those (the) places" (2024).

The River and the Places was created as part of the project *Paisajes Tentoculares* (2022–2024), developed in collaboration with other artist-researchers. This project emerged from a shared interest in feeling-thinking other ways of relating to, and reflecting on, the landscape and the representation of our territories in images from an ecofeminist approach. The project was structured around three thematic axes: the river, the mountain, and the night, and was funded by the Chilean Ministry of Cultures.

Discussion

Julia Perís Barro

Tra(ns)versing Barcelona's "queer" landscape

This research examines the creation and presence of queer landscapes within Western modern urban centers, challenging the dominant spatial organization shaped by the "heterosexual matrix," as defined by Judith Butler. This model frames urban space through binary oppositions—man-masculine-heterosexual and woman-feminine-heterosexual—promoting ideals of monogamy, domesticity, and reproductive heterosexuality. Such structures regulate how space is constructed, occupied, and understood through intersecting systems of gender, sexuality, race, and class.

Against this backdrop, queer communities have developed their own landscapes within cities, shaped through everyday interactions with architecture, material culture, and political dynamics. This study explores how and why queer landscapes are created and inhabited, proposing that they form outside dominant norms and often resist visibility due to stigma and marginalization. The investigation employs queer theory-first applied to archaeology and extended into geography and urbanism-as a framework to uncover how these spaces are both experienced and produced.

Methodologically, the research integrates a phenomenological approach to understand how queer individuals move through and engage with space, alongside an entangled perspective that recognizes the co-creation of place by people, objects, architecture, and political forces. Central to this is the concept of “critical queering,” as defined by Bettray, which critiques patriarchal, heteronormative, and neoliberal spatial norms. Through this lens, queering is a deconstructive practice that destabilizes fixed binaries and opens new ways of understanding space, identity, and community.

This inquiry responds to a gap in landscape theory and archaeology, where queer spatial practices remain underrepresented. While urbanism and history have addressed queer spaces-largely from the 1970s onward-this project asks whether queer landscapes have longer, traceable histories, and how their material traces might be identified. It also explores the difficulty of locating these spaces without being part of the community, due to their often ephemeral, informal, or hidden character.

Barcelona is presented as a case study to illustrate how queer spaces have been formed through three distinct yet interconnected contexts. These spaces frequently exist outside capitalist spatial norms and are marked by instability, economic precarity, and ongoing persecution. As such, they offer insight into alternative ways of living and organizing urban life.

By understanding how queer communities have historically and presently navigated and shaped urban spaces, this research seeks to inform more various approaches to urban planning and heritage. Applying queer and transfeminist theory to both archaeology and urban geography offers new tools to recognize, protect, and celebrate marginalized spatial histories.

Tania González-Cantera

The (dis)memory of industrial Bilbao: an archaeological approach

Bilbao, a city built around a topographical depression known locally as the Botxo, was for more than a century a strategic hub of industrial and port activity that drove profound social, economic, and spatial transformations. However, the process of deindustrialization that began at the end of the 20th century, along with an urban reconfiguration geared toward tourism and the service economy, has generated a narrative that tends to silence or relegate its working-class and industrial past.

This paper proposes an archaeological approach to the dynamics of (dis)memory in post-industrial Bilbao, with the aim of analyzing how material remains, urban landscapes, and absences in collective memory shape new interpretive frameworks for the recent past. Drawing on the principles of the archaeology of the contemporary past, the paper addresses the epistemological and social gaps arising from both the physical disappearance of productive infrastructure and its symbolic displacement in official heritage discourses. In this sense, archaeology is presented as a critical tool capable of interrogating historiographical silences—the botxos—and contributing to the reconstruction of alternative memories from the material, enriching the debate around identity, heritage, and urban transformation in the context of the global expansion of capitalism.

Javier Puertas Juez

The long (and worrying) shadow of the “Guggenheim effect” and its impact on the maritime, port and industrial heritage of the Bilbao Estuary

Bilbao and its metropolitan area have been one of the leading examples of large-scale urban regeneration around the world: in less than a decade, Bilbao went from being considered a typical example of a declining, old industrial city to becoming the new ‘Mecca of urban planning’.

As a result, the image of Bilbao has been reduced, in most of the cases, to ‘the new’, to ‘signature’ architecture, turning its back on the recovery and enhancement of port areas and old industrialisation, as well as cultural landscapes with a unique, specific identity of their own.

Almost 30 years after the ‘Guggenheim effect’, Bilbao and its metropolitan area are once again at a critical moment without having learned hardly any lessons from the recent past, despite the potential that the recovery and activation of industrial heritage has in the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda, the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus.

Discussion

13:45 – 15:00 // Lunch

15:00 – 17:00 // Block 4 (Sarriko)

[-]

Distributed fanzine

Dr James Lattin’s ‘A New Theory of Holes’ will draw on his historic research and set out the field of potential archaeology. Considering both the holes we excavate alongside the holes in what museums tell us about the past, it might provide some helpful ways ahead in these troubled times. He will look into various examples from the work of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, abandoned motels, and the problem of keeping things in drawers.

[-]

Guillermo Díaz de Liaño

The burden of archaeologists as ontological designers

This talk is structured around two questions. The first question is ‘What is the relationship between Archaeology and design’. The second is ‘Why does this matter’.

In general terms, archaeologists are no strangers to design, particularly the types of design directly related to their everyday practices. Our research involves different aspects of project design, from organising how a site will be excavated, what research questions will be asked, which methods will be used to gather evidence, or how the information will be disseminated. However, design also goes beyond that, as how the discipline is funded, how are our careers organised, or what is the importance of heritage is also the product of design. In this sense, this first question will be used to discuss the notions of design that sustain not only how we conduct our research, but also the role of archaeology and heritage in society.

In relation to the second question, this is, exploring why understanding the relationship between archaeology and design is important, this is relevant because design theorists have pointed out the many issues with the paradigms of design that

structure Western modernity. According to them, these paradigms embody what has been labelled as ‘ontologies of devastation’ (Escobar 2017:70), and are based in ways of conceptualising, perceiving, and engaging with reality based in never-ending growth, and are thus unsustainable in both social and ecological terms. These notions of design, which are embedded in everything, ranging from how our politicians think, how we design our cities, or how our supermarkets operate, are, then, ‘defuturising the future’ (Fry 2015) insofar they are preventing the future wellbeing of both human and non-human beings on Earth. While archaeologists often claim to oppose these dynamics, this talk will explore, through different case studies, how we are complicit in these issues, either by act or omission.

Susan Pearson

Hert-Holl – A Creative Exploration of Holes on the Island of Whalsay

Hert-holl. n (Shetland dialect) – the very centre, the heart of the whole. Heart of the hole?

I am a multidisciplinary artist from Whalsay in Shetland, currently studying for my Masters in Contemporary Art and Archaeology with UHI Orkney. I propose to present my Final Project research, focusing on one key element – the creation of holes.

I work in a wide range of media, including locally foraged clay, exploring my relationship with islandness through material connection. As I sculpt hybrid figures using the clay I gather, I think of human and non-human entanglements. I am inspired by archaeologist, Tim Ingold, and his discussions of the importance of materials, and their transformative, entangled nature. I take artistic inspiration from the feminist folkloric art of Anna Mendieta’s *Siluetas* (Silhouette) series, she used her own figure in abstracted feminine forms, shaped with and within the land. Her bodily narratives were made from a variety of materials, including flowers, tree branches, moss, gunpowder, and fire.

Hert-holl. What would I do to get to the heart of the hole? I will dig a hole in the shape of my body, leaving a human shaped hollow in the earth. The hole will be an exploration of the imperceptible experience: time and liminal spaces. The clay that is extracted will be sculpted into hybrid creatures: a perceptible, physical representation of material entanglements and the visceral bodily connection to earth and island.

I will document and present my creative explorations of the hole in relation to my Final Project, entitled ‘Embodied (is)land: Narratives for Becoming-with’. I will discuss multispecies entanglements and Donna Haraway’s concept of becoming-with. Haraway challenges the delusion of separation between human and nature. Humans become-with the multispecies entangled world.

The island creature sculptures will be available at the presentation for the participants to handle in an earthy link to the (w)hole artwork.

The physical act of gathering materials, connecting to materials, processing, and making these artworks will be fundamental to my practice-led research. Digging will be as essential in the research as making. This will be underpinned with the conceptual approaches and philosophical theory discussed above, merging thought, agency, influence and creative practice methods. Creative practice as research method in an art and archaeology collaboration offers an opportunity to generate diverse outcomes that can connect to a broader audience in both fields.

Christopher McHuge

From kitsch to ruin and beyond: using creative ceramic practice to explore the absent presence of the post-war Japanese ceramic figurine industry

Pottery has been made in Seto, Japan, since at least the Muromachi Period (c.1336-1573). Less recognised is how the city reinvented itself after the Pacific War through the production and export of a range of ceramic novelty figurines. From religious icons to depictions of Mickey Mouse and Elvis Presley, these slip-cast figurines constitute a material record of international commerce and changing tastes throughout the post-war period.

Now largely defunct, the absent presence of this industry haunts the once bustling city in the form of abandoned factories and obsolete material culture. There is a threat to this cultural heritage as these sites are steadily demolished, leaving empty lots dotted around the city. Meanwhile, the former business owners and workers are ageing, and the city is gradually being emptied of the tacit skills and embodied knowledge upon which it relied.

While dormant plaster moulds may be revisited and reanimated as stores of memory, the figurines themselves are subject to complex material trajectories, leading a multiplicity of 'lives'. They may be cherished as heirlooms or be discarded as kitsch, to languish in the doldrums of charity shops. Clay dug and shaped into commodities in Seto has been shipped around the world. This migration of material and cultural capital has resulted in a gaping hole in the city – a vast clay quarry known colloquially as 'Seto Canyon'. Focusing on a series of ceramic artworks which embody art-archaeological research undertaken at abandoned sites in Seto, this paper will explore this phenomenon of material and cultural emptying. It will be argued that a creative ceramic practice may play a role in materialising these fragile histories of human-object interaction. Although these places may no longer be loci of embodied memory, their changing materiality offers potential for alternative forms of remembering.

Discussion

Barbora Weissová; Kryštof Seleši

Too Recent for the Landscape Archaeology?

Landscape archaeology with its holistic approach became in the past two decades a common tool used for the examination and deeper understanding of complex past societies. Using an array of non-destructive methods for the study of the environmental and human aspects of a bounded area of land, the landscape archaeology seeks for possibilities to follow human interactions with the environment, identifying and contextualizing human imprints in the landscape. The deeper in the past, the more hypothetical and unverifiable become the studies.

Besides the undeniable scientific potential for this kind of examination in archaeological studies in general, the landscapes of the 20th century are for obvious reasons rather being destroyed and forgotten than examined and reconstructed. The present study, prepared in the framework of the project The Land Gone Wild. Archaeological and Transdisciplinary Research on Resilience Strategies in the 20th Century and financed by OP JAK CZ.02.01.01/00/23_025/0008705, demonstrates the potential of a research using approaches of the landscape archaeology to understand some key questions including urban dynamics, industry or trade.

The sample project was conducted in the territory of Prague, the lively capital of the Czech Republic. One of the key periods for the region was 1939–1945, when

many structures related to military operations, aerial warfare, or forced labor were established – some of which remain visible in the landscape (and memory) today. Despite their importance, these sites were poorly documented due to the context of their construction and abandonment. Our project aims to identify, interpret, and trace the development of these structures, as well as to assess their meaning and function in the present day landscape.

In general terms, the tools firmly rooted in the landscape archaeology allow us for getting new insights into the reconstruction of, despite their trivial age, rapidly disappearing and in many cases almost lost landscapes.

Claudia Sciuto; G. Gattiglia; V. Lochu [FILM]

Hypnaground: an archaeological inquiry into landscapes of the unconscious

Hypnaground is a transdisciplinary project that explores the entanglements and tensions between archaeology and contemporary art through the investigation of the mountainous landscape of the Apuan Alps (Tuscany, Italy), and its layers of memory, materiality, and resurgence. Developed as an open dialogue between a performance artist, researchers, and archaeology students, the project questions how artistic practice can offer grounded, situated, and sensorial approaches to reading and interpreting landscapes.

Framed as a video performance, Hypnaground is both an artwork and a research process, reflecting on human interaction with the material ground beneath our feet, and on the visible and invisible histories embedded within it. The project investigates how the methods of archaeology—observation, stratification, attention to traces—can interact with artistic practices to generate new ways of understanding past and present landscapes.

Hypnaground critically engages with archaeological methods, drawing inspiration from the work of Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers, and Nastassja Martin to question how we construct knowledge in the field, inviting a reflexive exploration of how landscapes not only shape our perception but also interact with our subconscious—acting as agents that resist, respond to, and co-create meaning with human experience.

The artist guided the archaeologists through an alternative mode of engaging with the landscape, using voice, sound, and bodily presence as tools to interpret and transform the research process. Participants were invited to tune into the affective and sonic dimensions of the Apuan Alps, embracing intuitive, embodied, situated and environmentally responsive modes of knowledge-making.

This resulted in a shared experience where meaning emerged through attentive listening, movement, and an openness to the landscape as an active agent.

The project took place during a fieldwork session in October 2024, involving site visits, audio recordings, and situated performance exercises. These activities formed the basis for both reflection and audiovisual output.

The resulting video performance lasts approximately 20 minutes, and can be preceded by a brief 10-minute introduction contextualising the project and its methodological approach. It is intended for archaeologists interested in experimental methodologies and exploring intersections between art and archaeology.

http://www.violainelochu.fr/?page_id=2682

Lara Band [FILM]

Diagrams of the infinite (fugitive emissions)

//

Burnham on Crouch, Essex, 1 December 2024

* It's cold and windy up on the sea wall. Cloudy, we can't see the moon: darkness wraps around us. Even though we were here just 4 hours ago listening to the marsh, writing, drawing, recording; touching, smelling, drifting it's disorienting and we can't work out where we are. How far along are we, we should be at the bend inland by now shouldn't we? Have we passed the steps down yet? The wind whips marsh mud salt air across our faces as we retrace our steps, trying to find the way down. There, there's the barrel we spotted as a marker for tonight. We slide down the bank and onto foreshore, purslane covered, springy and dense underfoot. I slip off my coat and into character and walk into the night.*

//

Methane (CH₄) accounts for a much smaller percentage of greenhouse gases (GHGs) than carbon dioxide (CO₂) and only has an atmospheric lifetime of 10-12 years compared to hundreds for CO₂. CH₄ is, however, 84 times more potent than CO₂ over a 20 year timescale and its concentration in the atmosphere has been growing faster than other GHGs. This is due partly to the rise in fugitive emissions, uncountable and uncontrollable leakages from infrastructure, and to the effect global warming is having on wetlands, catching these in a feedback loop of increasing emissions causing increasing emissions. The effect of this feedback loop is uncertain but could be catastrophic.

Diagrams of the infinite (fugitive emissions) is an 11 minute long film, an experimental archaeology for methane. Mixing archive and academic material, performance and folklore it takes a multilinear and non-narrative path through methane landscapes, not to seek resolve but to draw a flickering space for past and future imaginaries. A theoretical contemplation, it is also a methodological exploration of approaches to spaces-between: between material/immateral, tangible/intangible, and the things that slip through these binary divides.

Discussion

17:15 – 17:45 // Coffee break

17:45 – 18:45 // Round table

Round table in Leadership in Archaeology in the 21st century

With: Sara Perry; Tiffany Fryer; Emma Dwyer; Carmen A. Granell; Francisco Orlandi; Guillermo Díaz de Liaño

The relation between Archaeology and leadership remains a conceptual 'botxo', a gap in our understanding of how our own discipline operates. While archaeologists have devoted time and effort to understanding how leadership looked in past societies, discussing different models proposed by myriad paradigms, we have been less keen to critically examine leadership within our own disciplinary practices.

This discussion session aims to explore leadership in Archaeology in the 21st century, from a perspective that aims to be critical, that is, discussing what doesn't work, but also propositive and speculative, thus daring to imagine how leadership in the discipline should look, and how to get there.



We believe that this reexamination of leadership and archaeology is urgent, as the discipline faces many crises. Archaeological research is, as usual, threatened by the lack of funding, but the crises of Higher Education in many countries, such as the UK, Spain or the US constitutes a challenge to the very existence of social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, archaeological research in commercial and developer-led environments, which provides the vast majority of archaeology jobs, continues to struggle navigating between the demands of its clients and the creation of social value. All of this while the environmental collapse rapidly approaches us, genocides take place, and democracies are threatened by extreme right-wing populisms in different parts of the world. Thus, it is urgent that leadership in Archaeology is discussed, not only to address the issues of our discipline, but also to contribute with our expertise to deal with the challenges that our societies face in the 21st century.

≈19:00 – Local artist’s presentations: Ra Asensi

We will enjoy a chat with a local artist, Ra Asensi, who has at times used archaeology as context for their work.

Ra Asensi (Bilbao, 1989). Much of their work focuses on producing what they calls artifacts, or body extensions which diversify body possibilities and bonding abilities. They use irony and speculative narratives to question the cultural boundaries between the natural and artificial.

“My interdisciplinary art practice merges into a body of work which I have decided to call artifacts. They are products or consequences of social and cultural needs. I intendedly use them as a way to expand body limits and collaborate with others.

My artistic production is influenced by ceramic processes, performance art, photography and sculpture. I include irony and speculative narratives to question the cultural boundaries between natural and artificial.

I’m interested in the relations between the body, technology, and ‘nature’, which I reflect upon as socially constructed.”

She will show her last video “The deep earth arises, sighing” [La tierra fonda s’en puya, suspirando].

Saturday 8

9:00 – 10:00 // Block 5 (Museum of reproductions)

Johannes Jungfleisch

Crossing the Libyan Sea: Material Traces of Recent Migration on Crete and Gavdos

Starting in 2023, a significant shift occurred in contemporary migration routes across the Eastern Mediterranean. While the route from Turkey to Greece's Eastern Aegean islands—such as Lesbos, Samos, and Kos—had long been the most prominent, migrants increasingly began using a route from Libya to the Greek islands of Crete and Gavdos. As of mid-2025, according to recent UNHCR data, the number of dangerous crossings in the Libyan Sea has already surpassed those in both the Eastern Aegean and the Dodecanese. Ironically, the Libyan Sea—now Europe's southernmost and heavily patrolled external border—once served to connect, rather than divide, the two geographically distinct regions of the Roman province of Crete and Cyrenaica.

In sharp contrast to the extensive global media coverage of the “long summer of migration” in 2015, these more recent crossings have been largely overshadowed by a cascade of overlapping crises. Within this context, arriving migrants are often perceived as just one more unsettling factor, drowned out by the continuous stream of ‘bad news’ amid broader instability. Represented either through faceless statistics or dramatic images of overcrowded boats intercepted by military vessels, much of this migration remains beyond the scope of public attention.

Although local communities continue to offer essential assistance, public sentiment has grown increasingly negative—driven in part by the perceived impact of migrant arrivals on local livelihoods, particularly in areas reliant on tourism. At the same time, reliable information about the crossings themselves remains scarce. In this context, contemporary archaeology can play an important role in closing this knowledge gap by providing material evidence of migrant journeys and landings along Europe's southernmost shores.

In July 2025, during a visit to both Crete and the nearby island of Gavdos—located approximately 37 kilometers to the south—I conducted a pedestrian survey to identify and document the material traces left behind by migrants upon arrival. By analyzing these findings, this paper seeks to reframe current perspectives on these crossings, giving material evidence to migrants' testimonies and lived experiences.

Susie Dalton

Making the Ground Move: A Contemporary Archaeology of Dance, Absence, and Ephemeral Trace

How do we materialise movement? This paper explores social dancing—fluid, embodied, and often undocumented—as a subject of contemporary archaeological inquiry. While traditional archaeology privileges material remains, social dance operates in a register of absence: it leaves little to no trace behind, yet plays a critical role in shaping social space and cultural memory.

Bridging archaeology, human geography, and artistic practice, this research proposes dance as both method and material. Using clay floors as responsive surfaces, photogrammetry of dance environments, and LiDAR scanning of festival sites, the

study investigates how human dancing can be rendered archaeologically visible, even when its traces are ephemeral or erased. Here, the ‘gap’ becomes generative—not a void to lament, but a space to think through with material and memory.

Theoretically informed by Colin Renfrew’s ‘archaeology of mind’ (2001), Malafouris’ Material Engagement Theory (2013) and Cornelius Holtorf’s work on ‘incavation’, the project foregrounds absence as subject matter. It argues that ephemeral acts such as dance are not peripheral to the archaeological record, but key to expanding it—especially in contexts where intangible cultural heritage is under threat or overlooked.

This paper makes the case for a contemporary archaeology that embraces the incomplete: one that values process, decay, and disappearance as much as preservation. In doing so, it invites new methodologies that prioritise embodied knowledge, community participation, and creative engagement with our past(s)—not to recreate it as it was, but to reflect how it moves through us.

Through the lens of dancing bodies and marked ground, this work demonstrates how we might begin to fill in the archaeological gaps—not by restoring what is lost, but by learning to read what is fleeting.

Neda Genova

Contested Terrains: Reproducing Authenticity on the Streets of Sofia

In this presentation, I will explore the continuous attempts to ‘rearrange’ paving stones in central Sofia as a point of departure to think about the gaps and cracks in the socio-material infrastructure of the city as well as in accounts of Bulgaria’s contentious past. The central area of Sofia is covered with yellow paving bricks made of marl, a material that at the beginning of the 20th century was sourced from a working-class neighbourhood in what is today known as Budapest. While the intensive mining of clay in the past century has hollowed out the terrain of this part of Budapest, leading its ground to literally sink, the yellow paving bricks in Sofia have come to be associated with privilege and proximity to power. Today, however, the area paved with the yellow bricks is continuously shrinking, whereas the remaining bricks are often damaged. All of this is predicated on the lack of a reliable source for their renewed production despite their protected status as a ‘cultural heritage’ site. Different teams at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences are attempting to synthetically reproduce the qualities of the bricks, thus raising questions around the possibility of reproducing originality and authenticity. In the presentation, I would like to explore how the uneven surfaces paved by these mismatched and broken bricks allow us to think politically about the instrumental role of erasures and gaps in the narrating of their past, present and future.

Discussion

10:00 – 11:00 // Round table

The challenges of publishing archaeology today

With: William Caraher; Catherine Frieman; Jaime Almansa-Sánchez; Lara Band; Barbara Brayshay

“Publish or perish,” used to be said. Beyond the duty to disseminate our research, publishing archaeology has become a complex business controlled by big international groups and predatory practices. Although the DORA principles were supposed to mitigate the obsession for indexes and quantity, reality is still to adapt. This round table will explore the challenges of publishing archaeology, specially from independent publishers and fringe topics.

11:00 – 11:30 // Coffee break

11:30 – 13:15 // Block 6 (Museum of reproductions)

Alba Abad-España; Luis Berrocal-Maya; Carmen Á. Granell; Matilde Carbajo; Sandra Lozano; Sandra Montón-Subías

Struggling with colonial archives: a decolonial/depatriarchal archaeological will on Spanish colonialism in Tãno' Lâguas yan Gãni

This paper departs from the ERC archaeological project MaGMa (Material Culture, Gender and Maintenance Activities in Making and Resisting Early Colonial Globalization. A Long-Term Perspective from the Mariana Islands) to present our initial steps in implementing a Nodegoat relational database for a critical analysis of the colonial archive.

Spanish colonialism has been impacting Tãno' Lâguas yan Gãni and the Indigenous Chamoru people since 1521. The colonial project was accompanied by the production of a wide range of primary written sources mainly authored by colonial agents. We approach such writing with a depatriarchal and decolonial archaeological will, focusing on themes and information that allow us to center the everyday lives of the Indigenous CHamoru from the 16th to the 19th centuries at the core of academic inquiry.

Francesco Orlandi

Contemporary Indigenous Archaeologies: Unsettling Reactionary Populism Through Epistemic Disobedience and Heritage Cosmopolitics

This paper aims to enhance the potential for critical and undisciplined enquiry through archaeological ethnography, filling the perceived gap between Indigenous and contemporary archaeologies. I argue that these approaches share a common thread that can be traced through three intertwined dimensions – theoretical, ethical and methodological – which underpin archaeological encounters in, with and of the present. Archaeological ethnography examines how long-standing living connections between people and landscapes can help identify and challenge the modern legacies of epistemic colonialism and the exploitation of Indigenous territories and ways of life. Based on extensive fieldwork and counter-mapping of materiality, spatial memories, and oral histories, this study explores multi-temporal and more-than-human assemblages around the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tiwanaku in Bolivia and the Sacred City of Quilmes in the Calchaquí valleys, North-West Argentina. By unpacking socio-territorial relationships and offering alternatives to the dominant neoliberal multiculturalism, market-oriented conservation and development designs, the paper highlights the generative processes of negotiation and contestation that historicise and make visible the pathways to Indigenous sovereignty within and beyond the limits of modern politics and conventional aesthetics. A pluriversal approach considers the intersection of various systems of destruction, care, and recomposition, which enables us to visualise emerging, ecologically constituted subjectivities beyond the indigenous/non-indigenous divide of coloniality. This reveals a transversal reading of contested heritage landscapes and their link to the manufacture of consensus amid the ongoing global socio-environmental crisis.

Discussion

Francis Mahon

Riverine memory: the flooded archives of the Yorkshire Rivers Foss and Ouse

The English Yorkshire rivers Foss and Ouse flow through the city of York, connecting it to the Pennine Mountains in the west and the Humber Estuary and North Sea in the east. Since at least 1699 the City of York Corporation, now the City Council of York, has sought to control the rivers and their waters through subsequent locking, canalisation, and management schemes. The early modern and contemporary enclosure of the Foss and Ouse has rendered their beds, bodies, and waters into objects and tools of industry, capital and empire. The rivers are viewed as inert and lifeless things, not powerful or living beings. Through a decolonial reading of archival documents that the Foss and Ouse flooded in 1892 however, this paper attempts to fight against their colonial and capitalist objectification, and illustrate their vibrant and agential character.

I ground my research, and this paper, within both theoretical and decolonial methodologies concerned with archival gaps and holes. Drawing from both Black Feminist and Indigenous scholars, like Sadiya Hartman and Métis academic Zoe Todd, I argue that the rivers Foss and Ouse are agential, with a voice and ability to alter and transform the written record. With a methodological eye turned towards the flooded archive, instead of the traditional, controlled, and assumed sterile one, I unpack how the rivers have been rendered both invisible and explicitly present through issues of archival erasure and material degradation; both physical and metaphorical holes of history and heritage.

The paper touches upon issues of industry, trade, and modernity as it seeks to find alternative ways of viewing and reading archival holes. Through a focus on damaged and assumed 'inaccessible' archival records, it attempts to reinvigorate heritage studies and provide new ways of seeing beyond the botxos of the past.

Carmen A. Granell

The materialities of Spanish colonial schools in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni (1668 CE – 1898 CE): groping for the “kãhguan” of a “ruín(oso)” educational system

Documentary analysis of the planning, construction, and operation of Spanish colonial schools in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni (1668–1898 CE) reveals the indissoluble relationship between colonial pedagogy and the Spanish colonial education system. However, given that school materials have not yet been found in the archaeological record of the archipelago, it could be said that the history of Spanish colonial education in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni continues to grope its way through the “kãhguan” (the gap/void, in CHamoru) left by a “ruín(oso)” educational system.

With this research, far from emphasising the need to find the archaeological record of Spanish colonial schools, the documentary representations of the materialities of the Spanish colonial education system in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni are identified, analysed and interpreted. In doing so, the purpose is twofold: on the one hand, to learn how to bridge the gap in the archaeological “kãhguan” that exists in the history of Spanish colonial education and, on the other hand, to argue historically why the Spanish colonial education system in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni was both “ruín” and “ruinoso”.

The questions that structure the research and contribute to the fulfilment of its purpose are as follows: (1) Why has there been an archaeological “kãhguan” in the history of Spanish colonial education in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni?; (2) What types of school materialities contributed to the formation of a “ruín” educational system?; (3) What materialities evidence the “ruinoso” character of the Spanish colonial educational



system?; (4) What materialities participated in the CHamoru community's re-existence within the Spanish colonial educational system?; and (5) How does archaeological knowledge contribute to crossing the archaeological "kåhguan" of the history of Spanish colonial education?

Erin P. Riggs

Hegemonic Interiority: What Hung in the Halls of Union Carbide's HQ

Vast literatures exist which discuss how built forms serve as hegemonic mechanisms, legitimising colonial and corporate imperialism in various contexts. Commonly, such built forms communicate power and might to the outside world through their massive scale and external extravagance. This paper instead considers the hegemonic mechanisms at play on the inside, in the spaces where those with power live, work, and make decisions. The case study considered is that of the Union Carbide headquarters building in Danbury Connecticut. While the building itself was an emblem of corporate dominance, I describe how corporate ideologies were also emblemized interiorly, interweaving evidence from the architect's itemised list of original furnishings, auction records from Union Carbide's period of disbandment, community recollections of the space, and present day site-surveys. I argue that the items displayed in the building served as trophies, embodying the corporation's vast global footprint while centring themes of exoticization and predation.

Discussion

13:30 – 15:00 // Lunch

15:00 – 17:00 // Block 7 (Museum of reproductions)

Hwajung Kim

Memory in conflict zones: Materiality and observatories in the South Korean border area

Places associated with conflict have become popular tourist destinations over the past few decades. Desolate battlefields and destroyed buildings have gained value during post-conflict periods as places that provide moral lessons from the past and express hope for a better future. As their popularity grows, sites that have lost their original functions after conflicts are often repurposed into educational or entertainment venues to meet the expectations of tourists. However, such a process contributes to a sanitized past and fossilized memory by reducing a complex history to simple narratives and the sensitivity to traumatic events that post-conflict generations may have.

With an understanding of the negative impact that tourism can have in post-conflict areas, I will examine the influence of conflict-associated materials on memory work in an ongoing conflict situation. To address this issue, this presentation will explore how materials related to the Korean conflict influence the interpretation of the Cold War landscape at observatories in the border zone. To do so, I will focus on observatories in the South Korean border area since these places are where visitors encounter national ideology through border tours and create living memories by negotiating the meanings implied within conflict-related materials. This presentation will counter the negative view of tourism in memory work by demonstrating that materials associated with conflict can facilitate living memory in a dynamic conflict situation.

Helena Czaczenikow

Concrete Thinking: Drawing the Molotov Line

My research project investigates a system of war fortifications constructed between 1940 and 1941, today commonly referred to as the Molotov Line. I focus on a segment located in my local area in south-eastern Poland, with particular attention to decaying bunkers and their surrounding environments. As an architecture of war, these bunkers stand for horrific violence, and their sole existence is a shadow of it – an everlasting threat of future wars engraved into earth with concrete and steel rods. This quiet memory and prophecy of brutality is what makes them both relevant and extremely alienated today. Using primarily artistic methods, especially drawing, I explore the networks of connection and disruption these structures generate, challenging the perception of their static nature. I seek to understand the heritage they produce and how their ongoing association with war shapes both them and the things around.

Jan Hasil

The Archaeology of Forced Labour: „Gummi Arabicum“ for Varied Topics of (Sub) recent Past

Forced labour is an abstract term of human rights and international labour law; it has no direct material manifestation. It can be described as the involuntary removal of individuals and groups from inherent socioeconomic ties and their instrumentalization/exploitation within a system in which they have no self-interest. This results in number of contrasting situations that can be traced in (sub)recent material record and can thus be studied from the archaeological perspective.

This paper aims to conceptualise the archaeology of forced labour as space of intersecting of industrial, montane, landscape/cityscape archaeology, Dark Modernities, conflict archaeology or memory studies.

Tomáš Pancíř

Evidence and material legacy of the Air War over Czech Republic through Archaeological Record – theoretical overview and approaches

Archaeology of 20th century and the connected subdiscipline of archaeology of modern warfare are currently the scene of dynamic development in the European research perspective. The area of (archaeological) interest is a relatively typologically broad representation of diverse remains related to aviation archaeology and those, in connection with the air war over Czech lands. In addition to air crashes, the conflict led to the need to create extensive air military bases and hinterland, some of which have also been archaeologically investigated. The most of the work have been realized in South and West Bohemia regions. The Department of Archaeology at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen is considered to be the main initiator of the dynamic development. The aim of this paper is to describe the current state of research issues in relation to the subdiscipline, also to refer about the theoretical development of its full-fledged scientific establishment in scientific circles, current problems and possible future options how to develop the subdiscipline. We will also describe how multidisciplinary approaches advance existing historical knowledge and fill in previously unknown aspects. The practical application of archaeological methods will be demonstrated based on the several Czech regional research projects and rescue excavations, dedicated to the aviation remains and sites which remained functional and are used till present.

Discussion

Emma Beatriz Farina

Refugees' presence in the city. Archaeological approaches to makeshift camps along the Balkan Route.

The Balkan Route is the main overland migration corridor into Europe; stretching from the eastern Greek islands to western EU countries, each year thousands of refugees travers the route or 'try the game', as they refer to their journeys, constantly reshaping the route itself. Along the Route refugees establish makeshift camps, informal and temporary settlements where they can rest, exchange information, and make arrangement to continue their journey. The interdisciplinary ERC research project 'TheGame: Counter-mapping informal refugee mobilities along the Balkan Route' aims at theorizing makeshift camps along the route as an 'archipelago' of interconnected settlements with a unique social and political life; these are fundamental spaces to understand informal mobilities and refugees' agency, as makeshift camps are born out of refugees' appropriation and reshaping of spaces.

Makeshift camps can be found in numerous cities along the Route, often located in abandoned decaying factories, built repurposing spaces and materials, thus yielding specific architectures and material culture. Although makeshift camps undergo phases of use and abandonment due to cyclical population fluctuation, they are increasingly being vacated and destroyed under the guise urban regeneration projects; thus, documentation of the camps is a pressing issue to contrast the State-enforced obliteration. Case studies from the cities of Patras in Greece and Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina explore the refugees' presence in the urban context, investigating the creation and use of makeshift camps to understand the daily lives of the inhabitants and the strategies refugees employ to continue their journey.

Roberto Arciero; Francesca Ruzzetta; Martina Genovese

Tracing Migration Stories Through Plastic Debris: Lessons from the RESPIRE Project in Lampedusa

In 2023, in Lampedusa (Italy), a secluded Mediterranean island, a team of researchers embarked on a multidisciplinary, education-focused project named RESPIRE. The primary objective of RESPIRE's archaeological investigation was to gain insights into the island's contemporary history through the plastic debris that has now grown into a widespread issue impacting the marine ecosystem.

The data collected showed that approximately 20% of the plastic debris found in Lampedusa stemmed from forced migration, as evidenced by their provenance. Closer to North Africa, Lampedusa is a hotspot of the central Mediterranean migration route. UNHCR data (2024) showing that 2023 marked the most notable spike in immigration arrivals since 2016. Thus, in 2024, the scope of RESPIRE was widened to include this crucial aspect of life in Lampedusa, its status as 'a zone of interaction' where relationships between locals and newcomers are mediated (Geddes 2008).

Among other aspects, this project sought to understand Lampedusa's status as a borderland within 'fortress Europe' from a material culture point of view. Our investigation delved into these objects' materiality and significance, examining their physical characteristics, origins, and the contexts in which they were used or found. Together with local secondary school pupils, we selected objects with a forced migration provenance and interviewed individuals with a migration background who had arrived in Lampedusa by sea over the past decade. Through semi-structured interviews, we sought to uncover not only the tangible aspects of these objects, but also the personal and collective histories embedded within these artifacts, the emotional and symbolic



meanings they hold for individuals and communities affected by forced migration, and shed light on the journeys, struggles, and resilience of those who carried them. We aim to create an exhibition on the island showcasing the contemporary objects found on Lampedusa's shores, including those linked to forced migration.

Discussion

17:00 – 17:30 // Coffee break

17:30 – 18:15 // Performance (Museum of reproductions)

Aileen Ogilvie & Eòghann MacColl | an toll dubh

Gairm gu gnìomh | call to action

An toll dubh (literally the black hole) is a seminal Gaelic song written in the 1980's by Calum MacDonald, of Celtic rock band Runrig. The song laments the plight of the Gaelic language and urges Gaels to wake from their slumber. Like our language the song has enjoyed new interpretation and a cultural re-emergence through younger artists and musicians responding to its call to action, flying in the face of the 'nobody speaks that language here' or 'Gaelic is dead' narratives that pervade our media and news feeds.

Le èiginn ar n-èirigh às ar suain	with urgency we rise from our slumber
Le èiginn ar n-èirigh às ar suain	with urgency we rise from our slumber
An Gàidheal sa leabaidh	The Gael in bed
An Gàidheal na shuain	The Gael asleep
Le èiginn ar n-èirigh às ar suain	with urgency we rise from our slumber

Like layers of social archaeology, we are woven together by seams of history - Gaels, like Basques, are global citizens who have moved and traversed the world, sometimes for work, in the Gaels case, sometimes banished or forcibly cleared, other times flying the flag of Empire and doing the dirty work of imperialism. Heritage and culture is conflicted and messy, entangled but we also know we have an intrinsic connection to our land and our language that despite persecution has (almost) endured. There are gaps and spaces between our movement(s) geographical, social, archaeological, linguistic, often through seeking economic independence or sustainability we have moved, travelled but some of our homeland has always remained with us.

Through the lens of An toll dubh, we propose to excavate a dialogue or còmradh citing language, industry, decline and rebirth through a performative call and response conversation.

18:15 – 18:30 // Closing remarks

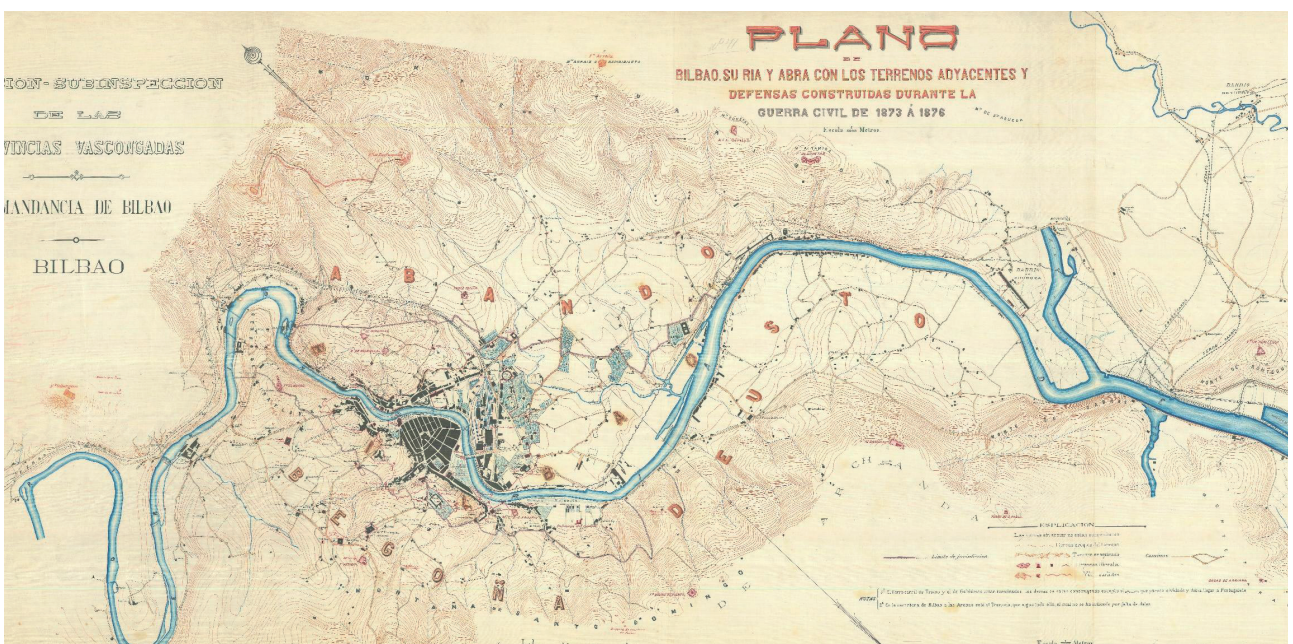
20:00 – 23:00 // Party at La Singorga (feminist space in central Bilbao)

**It will include 2 drinks and some food, but people will be free to order more.*

Sunday 9

Visits!

1. Bizkaia Bridge and Punta Begoña.
2. Archaeology Museum.
3. Contemporary Conflict in the surroundings of Bilbao



*At lunch, the SC will have its usual meeting

Organising Committee and Scientific Committee

CHAT Botxo has been organised by:

Sergio Escribano Ruiz (EHU)
Jaime Almansa Sánchez (USC)
Alexander Gaztañaga Garabieta (EHU)
Haizea Barcenilla García (EHU)

With support from:

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