



Call for Papers

Session # 1107 – “The Material Record: Current Trends and Future Directions”

Manipulating Senses and Staging the Inconceivable Discovering the Embodied Past by Phenomenological Explorations and other Methods

Despite their individual and subjective nature, human sensory experiences are always a social construct, dependent on society, culture, or ethnicity. Through all ages, senses were and are utilized, deliberately stimulated and manipulated through purposeful staging. In both sacred and mundane contexts, the impact of architecture, sound, light, smell or haptics can help to engage with a new situation. Staging manipulates the sensorium and the subconscious of the receiver in order to make something imaginary bodily experienceable and thus to appear real. Recent scholarship on perception, human behaviour, agency, and movement is being foregrounded in both ethnoarchaeological and architectural studies with a focus on the multi-sensoriality of material culture. Especially acoustics is something intangible that does not manifest itself within an object, but only in ongoing time. Of course, such fluid objects are difficult to research due to their ephemeral nature. For precisely this reason, however, we want to find new ways of thinking about senses and reconstructing the past in the archaeological practice. Once we get over the more deterministic tendencies, how can we combine phenomenological approaches with scientific data? How can we recreate sensory experiences through digital or analogue technologies? Can we conceive of an integrated methodology for experimental archaeology?

This session aims to unite diverse strands of research exploring novel avenues and directions in sensory and experimental archaeology. We invite presentations that explore different phenomenological and methodological approaches to the study of the chaîne opératoire of staging and perception, technical variability, investigations into buildings, monuments and roadways outside traditional approaches, and cutting-edge tools that contribute to the creation of new methodologies for experimental and ethnoarchaeological work. We encourage papers from a wide range of archaeological and non-archaeological discipline, which are rooted in multidisciplinary research contributing to the evolution of sensory archaeology as a discipline.

Session organisers:

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