



Session #399: Speculative archaeology: creating methodologies

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Abstract:

Archaeologists work with remains to construct accounts and narratives, to author papers and exhibitions, to build knowledge. In this, archaeology is a creative field of cultural production, of design practice and making. Acknowledging speculation as essential to this process, with this session we aim to address the potentials and constraints of an archaeology that specifically brings the speculative to the center.

Using the term speculative with reference to speculative design (Dunne and Raby 2013), we want to address speculative archaeology as experiments with alternative worldviews, presenting plausible, possible and preferable alternatives to orthodox paradigms, stretching our archaeological imaginations in cultural commentary, critique and intervention, building prototypes for future archaeologies. In this way, speculative archaeological studies can offer thought-provoking archaeological accounts that give new understandings of the past, counterposed to the reassertion of orthodox evolutionary and ethnic narratives we are currently witnessing in the discipline - and in the end, challenge the understanding of just what the past was, is and might be in the future.

We invite contributions of any kind (case studies, statements, provocations) to discuss archaeological practices in relation to a broader cluster of human and social science research methodologies that give priority to the generative, creative and constructive aspects of knowledge creation. The cluster of creative methodologies includes research through design, constructive design research, research-creation, arts-based research, practice as research, performance as research. Common to these methodologies is that they highlight the creative and generative aspects of research and give priority to 'doing'; to explorative and iterative processes of 'trying things out', as part of the production of knowledge. A shared conviction is that knowledge is created through dynamic integrations of 'making' and 'reflecting'. How will this shape modes of knowledge production, mediation and dissemination as well as temporal, spatial and material perspectives in a speculative archaeology?

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