

Southwestern Anthropological Association

Call for Papers

78th Annual Meeting

April 12-15, 2007

Holiday Inn-Capitol Plaza, Sacramento, CA

Mining Material Culture

The Southwestern Anthropological Association invites papers, posters, organized sessions and panel discussions that engage with material culture and materiality on substantive and theoretical levels, in both the research and pedagogic realms of academic and applied anthropology, and from within and across all sub-disciplines: biological, sociocultural, linguistic and archaeological. We invite the participation of professional anthropologists, graduate and undergraduate students, and individuals in allied fields whose research and work articulates with material culture and/or materiality as defined by our disciplinary kin—including art history, historic preservation, museum studies, public history, environmental studies, folklore, forensics, and cultural studies.

We particularly seek submissions that mine material culture for its epistemological limits and possibilities; for its embodiment of social and economic relations—both present and past; for its long and exceptional career as a marker of cultural identity and social distinction—generational, gendered, global, national, religious, and occupational; for its critical role in corporate branding, cultural imperialism, consumptive excess; and for its singular ability to express aesthetic and techno-scientific tradition and innovation, future and past—from iPods to IKEA and Clovis points to WMDs (however intangible and elusive). The 21st century brings new meanings and sensibilities to the very notion of materiality—encouraging us to interrogate the archive as a repository of not simply the letter, the field note, the photograph, the map—but also the corporeal remnants and reflections of the newly fleeting and ephemeral: the digital image made material through the film, print, mapping and coding technologies that organize our everyday lives, from the medical to the mundane—the ultrasound and full body scan to the instant message and hand-held GPS.

Biological anthropologists are encouraged to offer new perspectives on the received wisdom that material culture is the product and purview of uniquely human experience, to explore the bio-cultural intersection where the deceased body becomes a medical and pedagogic commodity, and to join their cultural colleagues in discussing the medical and material realities that make it possible for the living to find their organs harvested, with neither their knowledge nor their will, for sale and transplantation. The post-mortem body continues to offer an important bio-archaeological window onto prehistoric and contemporary practices, hazards, and pathologies—of the medical, occupational, and criminal variety. The impact of DNA testing and technology on everything from forensics to notions of cultural belonging continues to chart new territory and meanings of materiality.

Although language and linguistic practices are often posed in binary opposition to the corporeal presence of things, they are absolutely and irrevocably imbricated into both the social landscape of objects and the material conditions of life. Language inspires and animates cultural and political interests and actors across a wide play of fields that runs the gamut from *fashionistas* to Zapatistas. The productive relationship between the maintenance of traditional art forms and the revival of indigenous languages offers especially fertile and relevant terrain for consideration. Lexicons and formal systems of nomenclature are central to the cataloging and retrieval of collections—and to the popular classification and valuing of things—the heirloom versus the souvenir, the religious relic vs. the metatarsal, the artifact vs. the *objet d'art*.

Archaeology shares with the broader historical fabric of American anthropology a deep and abiding connection to material culture—a relationship that nonetheless suffered from periods of distancing and the holding of artifacts at theoretical arms-length. We invite papers that address this historical past, explore fresh techniques and modes of analysis, pose new questions to old data, and share recent findings about the history of humanity and the archaeological record. We particularly invite submissions from our colleagues outside the academy, including museum professionals and cultural resource managers—private, state, federal and tribal—who can speak to the poetics and politics of NAGPRA, repatriation, collections and collectors, archives and museums, heritage preservation and archaeological tourism. We also seek, with this year's theme, to encourage a dialogue about the history of mining, the Gold Rush, and the continuing impact of these activities on indigenous, settler, and new immigrant societies in Northern California, the Sierra Nevada, and beyond.

Finally, we wish to call for papers that bring to the conference fresh perspectives on topics, issues, and theoretical concerns that may fall well outside the obvious bounds of our annual meeting theme; these offer students and professionals an opportunity to meet experts in other fields and to maintain at least a modicum of currency in our increasingly specialized discipline. Instructions for submitting your work can be found in both the President's Column and on the abstract submission form included with this newsletter. Program Chair Barbra Erickson (CSU Fullerton) will be accepting your submissions, but please do not hesitate to contact me (tac@csus.edu) if you have questions or ideas you wish to discuss.

Deadline for abstracts: February 15, 2007.

To submit an abstract, visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/anthropology/swaa/index.htm>
Exhibitors, vendors and presenters should direct queries about the annual meeting to:
Terri Castaneda (SWAA President): tac@csus.edu; office phone: (916) 278-6067.

-Distinguished Speaker (Saturday Evening, April 14, 2007)-

Dr. Jonathan Skinner, Queens University-Belfast, Northern Ireland