

'Headstone to Hard Drive III. Spolia, Relic, Data'

Method, Theory and Time in Art History, Archaeology and the Visual Arts

26th June 2015

British School at Rome, via Antonio Gramsci 61, Rome 00197, Italy



Connecting the **British School at Rome's** 'Archaeology of Knowledge' research theme with **Central Saint Martins'** 'Headstone to Hard Drive' project, including contributions from the **Warburg Institute's** 'Bildfahrzeuge' project and with support from **Kingston University**, '**Spolia, Relic, Data**' will explore methodological overlaps between the visual/critical arts, archaeology and art history.

This workshop brings together archaeologists, artists and art-historians to discuss methodology, theory and their relation to time and mediation. How are the methods of these disciplines developing narratives of temporality and experience? The vocabulary of spolia, relic and data is used to consider how the employment of methodological tools both construct and determine temporality.

The workshop day is organised around four themes:

Borrowed Things – Spolia and Relic.

Spolia is the seizure and reuse of artifacts. It exists at the intersection of financial and cultural concerns. Reuse can occur for economic reasons; for example as recycling, or for cultural reasons; as in the relocation of symbols. In the visual arts, the practice of spoliation develops through the methods of collage and appropriation. This session will consider spolia as a methodological term having three consequences: firstly spolia describing the historical objects of discourse; secondly spolia as the activity of material and technical practices that support those discourses; and thirdly spolia constructing a paradigm that describes temporality, spatiality and history.

Observed Things – Data/Capta.

Peter Checkland and Sue Holwell use the term *capta* in preference to data, drawing the distinction between data as that which is 'given', an attribute of the object, and *capta* as that which is taken; the result of a 'subjective' viewpoint (1). *Capta* is constructed from partial, technologic/methodologic viewpoints, producing a series of anamorphic squints, which are taken as representations of the artefact. This co-dependency of artefact and viewpoint fragments a claim that the artefact bears witness to the past. This session will consider the incorporation of technological and cognitive approaches to the humanities.

Temporal Things – Time and History

How do method, theory and technique construct propositions around time? What qualities of time are being performed within the disciplines of visual art practice, archaeology and art-history? How are the methods, techniques and imaginaries of these disciplines developing narratives and performances of

temporality and experience? Presentations on 'time' in the work of Walter Benjamin and George Kubler, alongside reflections on time as informed by the experience of Rome, will provide anchors for a discussion on 'constructing time'.

Thingly Things – Phenomenology and Social Processes

Visual art practices of the twentieth and twenty-first century approach the question of data through various methods. For example, the *factura* of materials in early Russian futurism opposed surface to thematic functions, the influence of phenomenology on the presence of and the encounter with the artwork, post-internet art's address to the material aspect of information alongside the incorporation of new materialist philosophy. These developments have found their counterparts in historical and archaeological method. Also, and in contrast, all these fields of study have developed concerns with social processes in which the artefact plays a diminished role. This session will consider the importance and divergence of these approaches.

(1) "Data, Capta, Information and Knowledge." Checkland and Holwell, 2006.

9.30 Introduction

9.45 Session 1

Borrowing things – Spolia and Relic.

Johannes Von Muller – Blackbox in red. Porphyry and the Mediterranean.

Dr Stefania Gerevini – Byzantine relics on the move.

Mick Finch – The technical apparatus of the Warburg Haus.

Dr Paul O Kane – Spolia as speculation: (15 minutes of time-not-wasted + a question & a photograph).

11.15 Break

11.30 Session 2

Observing things – Data/Capta.

Louisa Minkin – Out of our skins.

Rebecca Darley – Pictures and objects in the digital archive: The Birmingham East Mediterranean Archive

Arthur Crucq – Ornament and the innate cognition of motives and patterns.

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Session 3

Temporal things – Time and History.

Andrew McGettigan – Walter Benjamin's 'On the concept of history'.

Jacopo Benci – 'The mixture is time': Rome according to Michel Serres.

Hans Christian Hoenes - Originality in George Kubler's 'The Shape of Time'.

3.30 Break

3.45 Session 4

Thingly things – Phenomenology and Social Processes.

Martin Westwood – Phenomenology and/or objects of exchange.

Susan Trangmar – Wandering shards: a question of imaging.

Christopher Smith – Archaeology as a social practice.

5.15 Break

5.45-6.15 Closing comments

Booking is advised but **not** essential:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/headstone-to-hard-drive-iii-spolia-relic-data-tickets-17273224680>