

What are you looking at?



Editors:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez & Elena Papagiannopoulou



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Online Journal in Public Archaeology

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POINTS OF YOU

The forum that could not wait for a year to happen

#OccupyArchaeology

Yannis HAMILAKIS

Friends asked me to elaborate on my suggestion for an Occupy movement, not only for art museums and galleries but also archaeological museums, archaeological sites/projects and other culture/heritage institutions that rely on cheap, un-insured, non-unionised labour, or on sponsorship from corrupt corporations.

We in archaeology, art and heritage domains have been for far too long, oblivious, tolerant, if not complicit to a regime of work and political economy which is not sustainable; they tell us about expansion, new markets, new wings for our museums, new museums elsewhere, mega-projects with hundreds of specialists which are going to last for a quarter of a century, and we think: great! Lots of jobs for us and others, more heritage, more culture, more archaeology, that's good all round, right?

Well, no it's not right: who is building that museum, heritage center or your university branch in the Gulf country ruled by a dictatorship? What are their conditions of work and pay, and how many have been killed in workplace accidents, and why? And once that museum or university branch has been built, how can they establish a culture of critique and open dialogue, how can they challenge power and authority, in a context where even the most basic rights of free expression are denied?

Why is beneficial for archaeology and for society to stage mega-field projects relying on the funding by corporations such as Shell, with its own dismal record of environmental destruction, and human rights abuse? And how much potential archaeological knowledge has been lost elsewhere (due to oil drilling, and the destruction of habitats), for the archaeological knowledge gained in one specific site?

Why is it great for art and archaeology to stage blockbuster exhibitions at the British Museum or the Tate (and I say this as a

member), sponsored by BP and other similar companies, with their logos prominently exhibited everywhere? Why are we allowing archaeological and art objects to act as participants in this gigantic theatre of green-washing and complicity?

Where are the new creative, life-transforming and challenging ideas going to come from, if we dance to the tune of our sponsors, and design our research questions, our discussion frames and our rhetoric according to their profile and philosophy?

How many more volumes do we need on "religion" in the Near-eastern Neolithic, all funded by the Templeton Foundation?

These are extra-ordinary times. They demand extra-ordinary actions. Hence my suggestion. Occupy Museums in the US is already making a difference. Occupy in archaeological and art museums, galleries and archaeological projects is the next step.

Francesco IACONO

The recent experiment brought about by activists at the Guggenheim Museum represents an interesting attempt and a model for future forms of activism within cultural institutions.

The action/boycott was aimed at making visitors aware of the new expansion plans fostered by the Guggenheim which included the realisation of a new museum in Abu Dhabi that, according to Hyperallergic activists, will be constructed through the use of infamous debt peonage agreements.

The initiative is beyond any doubt laudable; an excellent starting point which can be fruitfully repeated in other Museums and/or cultural institutions. Yet, at the same time, while effective for very specific aims (Guggenheim direction felt immediately the need to respond to protests and clarify the position of the institution), this kind of action falls short of addressing some basic issues that cultural workers really need to start to tackle. In my view the main point is, to put it bluntly, the amount of resources that are allocated to culture. As long as within national budgets of countries public expenditure for culture continues to stay at the current level (e.g. in European countries 0.55% is the current median value attested) infiltration of 'corporate logic', so to speak, will ineluctably (but not

without responsibility) drive policy of cultural institutions toward the kind of misbehaviour denounced by activists.

This is the real elephant in the room. Can we lobby and together push to have greater public resources for culture within modern 'democratic' states? I believe that as long as we do not address this, problems similar to those addressed by activists will cyclically emerge. With this, of course, I am not stating that we have to cease to work on the specific, but rather that along with commitment on individual issues, we need to start to deal also with the set of conditions from which these problems stem. To this extent, the first step is to create a real class-consciousness among cultural workers. Whether archaeologists on the field, curators, museum workers, gallery assistants and so on, we are all part of a broad cultural sector with many common interests, and above all, we are all too aware that the amount of resources allocated to culture is growing increasingly scarce. Such a class-consciousness, in turn, needs to be able to win a large consensus and hegemonise public opinion in broader international settings as well as, more traditionally, within each state. Cultural workers must start to address policy-making and advocate for greater resources. Or else they will perish and/or the whole sector will become increasingly the court jester of corporate power.

In short, what we need, I think, is some sort of global campaign aimed at making people aware of how much culture matters in their life and, at the same time, a transnational organism able to influence states and supra-national institutions alike about the fundamental need for more resources (a good old-fashioned syndicate?).

***Interested in a forum on this topic in our next volume?
Just send us your views.**

BLOG REVIEWS UNTIL VOL 4

Almansa-Sánchez, J. Audiences... A review of the CASPAR session at TAG-on-Sea 2013 (Bournemouth University) - 11 February

Papagiannopoulou, E. Multivocality and Technology: Review of a lecture at the Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies at Athens (IIHSA) - 14 February

Touloupa, S. A 30-year retrospect of the Greek Ministry of Culture educational programmes: an insider's insight - 25 April

Touloupa, S. When Public Archaeology is conflated with Cultural Tourism - 7 July

Ion, A. Some thoughts on the 20th European Association of Archaeologists Conference in Istanbul - 26 September

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<http://arqueologiapublica.blogspot.com/> - Reviews

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Presentation:

To follow the indications of Public Archaeology (www.maney.co.uk/journals/pua), and aiming to standardize the procedures from our side, all material should follow the MHRA Style Guide, which can be freely downloaded from:

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The quality of figures should be good enough to be clear in a PDF file. There will not be any weird rule for the submission of the files. Just submit the figures in any readable format (able to be edited in Adobe Photoshop ®). Every camera, software of scanner can make good quality images, so just submit originals. If any figure is subject to copyright it will be essential to attach a written permission from the holder of the rights. To avoid any inconvenience, we encourage the publication of self-owned images. In any case, the author will be responsible for any violation of copyright issues.

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For references use Harvard style (Author 2010: 322) followed by a final bibliography. For example: 'according to Author (2010: 123) Public Archaeology can be...' or 'it has been pointed out (Author 2010: 13) that...' etc.

Multiple citations should be in alphabetical order and separated by a semi-colon, (Author et al., 1990; Creator and Author 2003; Producer 1982).

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Journal article

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Book

Demoule, J. P. 2007. *L'archéologie préventive dans le monde. Apports de l'archéologie préventive a la connaissance du passé*. Paris, La Découverte.

Edited book

Durbin, G. (ed.) 1996. *Developing Museum Exhibitions for Lifelong Learning*. London, GEM.

Section in book

McEwan, C., Silva, M. I. and Hudson, Ch. 2006. Using the past to forge the future: the genesis of the community site museum at Aguablanca, Ecuador. In H. Silverman (ed.), *Archaeological site museums in Latin America*. Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 187-216.

Internet reference

United Nations 1992, *Agenda 21*. Retrieved on 29 January 2010 from WWW [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_00.shtml]

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Work reports and reviews will not need to pass the peer-review process, but will be commented by the editor.

We will be publishing one volume per year (first trimester) and although we are willing to receive papers the whole year, full articles for next-year's volume should be sent before October in order to complete the process with time.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the editor at: jasarqueologia@gmail.com

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AP: Online Journal in Public Archaeology

Editors:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez & Elena Papagiannopoulou
Email: almansasanchez@gmail.com

Assistant editors:

Dominic Walker
Amanda Erickson Harvey
Kaitlyn T. Goss

Reviews editor:

Alexandra Ion

Assistant production editor:

Alejandra Galmés Alba

Edited by:

JAS Arqueología S.L.U.

Website: www.jasarqueologia.es

Email: jasarqueologia@gmail.com

Address: Plaza de Mondariz, 6, 28029 - Madrid (Spain)

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