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A major discovery in Peru



Incapirqa Ushnu © The Inca Unshu project team

This Inca Ushnu project is examining how the Inca Empire (c. AD 1400 - 1532) met the challenge of appropriating and modifying the Andean landscape to enhance its productive capacity and exert the political power to create the largest native state in the Americas. In order to address the relationship between landscape, site and symbol in the Andes the project is studying a specific kind of Inca architectural construction known as the ushnu. 'Ushnu' is a Quechua term that encompasses the idea of a restricted, sanctified space reserved for use by the Inca king and Incas-by-privilege. The form of the physical ushnus range from conspicuous, stone-faced stepped pyramids and platforms located in the central plazas of regional administrative centres, to smaller constructions placed at prominent points in the landscape that command unsurpassed visibility. The project, working in collaboration with The British Museum and the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Peru, aims to understand the practical and symbolic principles underlying the construction of the Ushnu, the reasons for their placement and function within the landscape, the activities that took place on them together with their associated artefact assemblages. The study focuses on the hinterland surrounding Vilcashuáman that

once lay at the geographical centre of the Inca Empire in the Peruvian Central Highlands.

A striking discovery was made when excavating at the site of the ushnu of Incapirqa Waminan. At the base of a very narrow, deep and steep sided shaft, which penetrated through the platform fills descending further and deeper, was a circular cut, which had been carved into the underlying bedrock. Positioned here was a group of three carved conically shaped rocks, placed in a tripod configuration, with their tips resting against one another. Two were sculpted in red andesite, and the third was of a white variety.

Holes in the bedrock are known to have been thought of as eyes into the world of the ancestors, the world below. Stones were also widely seen as being charged with sacred essence, to represent embodiments of ancestors and deities. Key ethno-historic sources links stones of the size and shape found here with one of the principal functions of ushnu platforms, their role in Inca sun worship. This finding has international archaeological significance for Andean archaeology. It is believed that this is the first discovery of its kind and is a particularly inspirational outcome both for the project and for the Landscape and Environment Programme.

The project undertook a second season of fieldwork in 2008 that resulted both in important complementary findings as well as in new and unexpected results. Further rocks were discovered similar to those mentioned at more than one ushnu site. This confirms a widespread use and association of this type of conical stones with usnu platforms.



The rocks in situ © The Inca Unshu project team

As part of the dissemination of the research the Inca Ushnu project is pleased to announce the recent opening of a new section of the Americas gallery at the British Museum that is filled with project related information and items. This is open to the general public and shows how important the ushnu structures were to the indigenous people of the Inca Empire.



The excavated rocks © The Inca Unshu project team

For further information on this project please visit

www.landscape.ac.uk/research/larger/inca_ushnus.htm
or www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/Incaushnus/

Researching Environmental Change

The AHRC and the Programme invited proposals in October 2009 for a new network scheme. The call was entitled 'Arts and Humanities Approaches to Researching Environmental Change'. The aim of the call is to establish distinctive, innovative and engaging arts and humanities research perspectives on environmental change through networks of the highest quality and international significance.

The network scheme will build on research activity undertaken by both the Landscape and Environment and Science and Heritage initiatives and will contribute to the cross-council Living with Environmental Change Programme.

The deadline for proposals was in December 2009 and a commissioning panel has been put together to make the final decision on the awards later in the Spring.

Further announcements will be made in the next newsletter.



Programme Conference



Plans are currently being made for the Programme's 2010 summer conference that is to be held at Tate Britain in June. This is the final Programme conference and it promises to be an excellent event. Taking the theme of how the visual arts engage with the material environment as a starting point the conference will consider how the

making and meaning of artworks engage with various environments, in time and space, with events, processes and narratives of environmental development, including those before and beyond current framings of global climate change.

The conference will consist of panels and plenaries, made up of practitioners, curators and researchers from a variety of disciplines. Each panel will concentrate on one of five predetermined themes.

Please note that due to limited places the conference is by invitation only but a full recording will be available on the Programme website afterwards.

Programme PhD

One of the Programme's Collaborative PhD Students has just been awarded her PhD. Caroline Anderson has been working on the project 'Constructing the Military Landscape: Board of Ordnance Maps and Plans of Scotland c.1707-c.1815' at The University of Edinburgh. Working collaboratively with The National Library of Scotland, the aim of the project was to construct an archive of manuscript maps and plans of eighteenth-century Scotland, produced by the engineers and draughtsmen of the Board of Ordnance, and to analyse their role in the construction, representation, and contestation of military landscapes.

Caroline found that military maps were of enormous importance to the political and geographical worlds of eighteenth-century Britain and, for perhaps the first time since many of these unique items and their associated textual records were produced, the research has been able to establish clearly the links between different maps and holdings and has been able to connect different surveyors to certain places and moments. Caroline attended the Programme's Postgraduate Conference in early 2009 and gave an interesting presentation on her project. She also won £50 Blackwells vouchers for first prize in the poster competition. The Programme sends congratulations to Caroline on achieving her PhD.

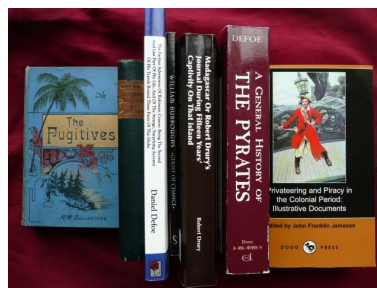


A battle map from the National Library of Scotland

Book publication news

Two books that are based on Landscape and Environment projects will be published in 2010. The first of these has been edited by the Militarized Landscapes larger project team who are based at The University of Bristol. The book is an edited collection that is based on the project conference which took place in September 2008 and will be published by Continuum in July 2010. The publication, entitled 'Militarized Landscapes—From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain' has been edited by Peter Coates (PI), Tim Cole (CI) and Chris Pearson (Project Researcher) and is the first to explore the comparative histories and geographies of militarized landscapes. The publisher writes that the book moves "beyond the narrow definition of militarized landscapes as theatres of war, it treats them as simultaneously material and cultural sites that have been partially or fully mobilized to achieve military aims. Ranging from the Korean DMZ to nuclear testing sites in the American West, and from Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain, *Militarized Landscapes* focuses on these often secretive, hidden, dangerous and invariably controversial sites that occupy huge swathes of national territories."

Narratives of the Indian Ocean



Texts that portray Indian Ocean pirates © S Jones

'The Indian Ocean—narratives in literature and law' is a larger award from the Landscape and Environment Programme based at Southampton University and managed by PI Stephanie Jones (English; The School of Humanities). The purpose of the project is to interrogate how the Ocean has been presented in various popular and institutional, creative and regulatory 'stories' over the past 500 years from the period of discovery by Europeans in 1497 to the present day. The team are also studying legal documents and propose that the relationship between the literary and legal texts have been significant in creating the modern sensitivities of the Indian Ocean and its people.

This project is an example of how research paths are altered by current affairs. In this case the current fascination with pirates of the Western Indian Ocean generated a new focus for the project from June 2008 to June 2009 on how narratives of the Somali pirates have continued and altered the 'stories' that began in the eighteenth century.

As part of the project a University public lecture was held in November 2009 by lawyer Richard Gifford. He recalled ten years of court action aimed at restoring the Chagos Islanders to their lost homeland in the Indian Ocean. The Islanders were evicted from their homes in the 1960s by the UK Government to make way for a US military base on Diego Garcia. Richard Gifford spoke about the lengthy legal battle in the British courts which ended in defeat in 2008, and his hopes that the European Court of Human Rights may now make a historic ruling that will allow the Chagos people to go home.

The full lecture and a podcast of the interview with Richard plus an excellent academic article by Mark Elliot are available for download from:

http://www.soton.ac.uk/indianoceanworkshops/17_11_chagos.html



(L-R) Dr. Oren Ben-Dor, Richard Gifford, Dr.

A critical anthology of select fictions of the Indian Ocean are due to be published in English. The extracts range from the well-known to the obscure, from works in the languages of Europe to works in the languages of the lands and islands of the Indian Ocean, and from early texts preceding European conquest to recent texts expressing the pressures of the postcolonial world. The book will be published by Hurst/Columbia University Press and the ultimate ambition of the publication is to constitute a new field of study – imaginative evocations of the Indian Ocean. The project team are open for suggestions for texts to include in the reader. Contact information can be found on the project website.

The project team have organised a workshop series at Chawton House in Hampshire. The first two events successfully took place in January and were entitled 'Abolitions in the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Worlds' and 'Law and Lawlessness in the Indian Ocean'. A further two workshops will be held in April at Chawton House and these are entitled 'Piracy in the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Worlds' and the second part of 'Law and lawlessness in the Indian Ocean'. For further details of these events please go to www.soton.ac.uk/indianocean.

The project has recently been showcased in the AHRC's Podium publication (Issue 13) and this can be found at www.landscape.ac.uk.



The Militarized Landscapes team © P Coates

The second book due to be published in 2010 is entitled "Process: Landscape and Text" and will be published by Rodopi in their Spatial Practices Series. This edited collection arises from the AHRC funded networks and workshops series on Understanding Landscape, organised by Professor Catherine Brace (Geography, University of Exeter) and Dr Adeline Johns-Putra (English, University of Exeter). This volume focuses on *process* in an attempt to learn more about the fusion of creative effort, imagination, movement, memory and material reality that makes landscapes and their

representations in text. It asks by what process does landscape become text? That is, by what process does the environment inform, shape, produce, or inspire the written word? This book responds to a pronounced new interest in various disciplines in the relationship between place and creative effort, signalled by the rapid diffusion over the last ten years or so of a new theoretical repertoire using the language of performance, dwelling, and embodiment to make sense of people's encounter with space and place. Via this theoretical apparatus, landscape is not only made through representation, but is also a practice. The theoretical eclecticism which enables everything from a post-structural reading of landscape as text to a phenomenologically-inspired interpretation of landscape as more-than-representational is to be welcomed, as it allows us to consider both process (practice) and text (material outcome) as the constituents of landscape. It also helps to promote landscape as something which exceeds narrow disciplinary and theoretical boundaries.

The Sublime Object

The larger grant project, The Sublime Object, is based at Tate Britain and led by Christine Riding, Principle Investigator. As a finale to the project there are two major installations at Tate that are currently open to the public. Firstly the project has been involved with the redisplay of gallery 9, the largest permanent collection space at Tate Britain, as a designated Sublime gallery, containing Tate collection works of art from 1735 to the WW1. Entitled 'Art and the Sublime' the gallery was opened in 2009 and will be in situ until February 2010. The second piece is an installation by artist Douglas Gordon that has been commissioned to relate to the overall aim of the project. The piece is displayed in the Octagon and 'Art and the Sublime' display in gallery 9 and entitled 'Pretty much every word written, spoken, heard, overheard from 1989...' (2010). Consisting of vinyl texts of various dimensions the work will be open to the public from 16 February to 16 May 2010. Both elements of the display are free entry.

Christine Riding, PI of the project and Tate Curator writes "Over the past decade Douglas Gordon has achieved recognition as one of the most exciting and challenging British artists, his output embracing a wide-range of media including video, photographic, audio and text-based works. He trained at the Glasgow School of Art and the Slade School of Art, University College, London. Gordon won the Turner Prize in 1996 and the following year represented Britain at the Venice Biennale. His many exhibitions, at venues around the world, include the solo exhibitions '24 Hour Psycho' (Glasgow and Berlin, 1993), 'what have I done' (London, 2002) 'Timeline' (New York, 2006) and 'Superhumanatural' (Edinburgh, 2006).

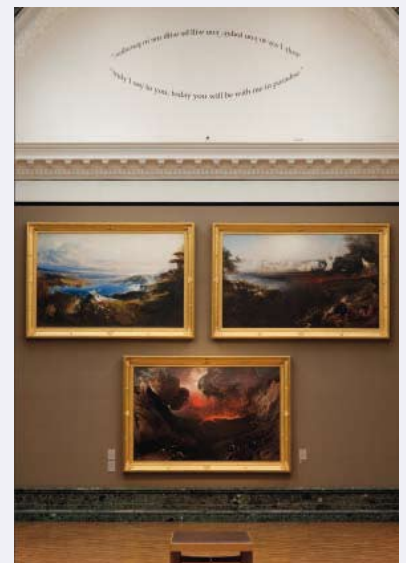
A defining feature of the work of Douglas Gordon is an acute sensitivity to the associative power, whether actual or potential, of a particular site. In 2009, Gordon was commissioned to create a site-specific work at Tate Britain, at part of the 'Sublime Object: Nature, Art and Language' research project, to be installed in the Octagon and alongside a display of historic sublime works in the adjacent gallery. These spaces are remarkable for their austere, neo-classical grandeur, with barrel-vaulted ceilings and a central dome designed to make the gallery a 'temple of art'. Gordon's response was to utilize and animate the architecture itself with a supremely complex yet cohesive installation of over eighty text-based works entitled 'Pretty much every word written, spoken, heard, overheard from 1989...' (2010), applied primarily to the stone surfaces of the



Douglas Gordon - Installation view of part of *Pretty much every word written, spoken, heard, overheard from 1989...* 2010
Various dimensions

Octagon. On one level, the effect seems to articulate Gordon's idea of art operating as 'a dialogue between artist and viewer', hence many of the texts address us directly, employing 'I', 'You' and 'We'. On another, it underlines the artist's fascination with language and its potential for ambiguity, obscurity and multiple meanings. As the title suggests, the origins and style of these texts are wide-ranging, both personal and universal. Some have a rhetorical or Biblical tone, such as the declamatory 'We Are Evil' writ large on the floor of the Octagon, or the contemplative rendering of 'Read the Word...Hear the Voice' on the ceiling above the historic painting display. The latter is positioned opposite, and thus in dialogue with, a text set as an ellipse that quotes one of the sayings of Jesus Christ, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise', spoken during his crucifixion, as related in the Gospel of St Luke (23:34) and here installed in powerful juxtaposition with Martin's Last Judgement trilogy. Others texts are from popular culture, including 'This May Be the Last Time' on the domed ceiling, a line taken from a song by The Rolling Stones. Of course, the act of looking up into the dome takes us back to the literal meaning of 'sublime', that is, something 'set or raised aloft'. Indeed the dome itself has powerful cultural and spiritual resonances, being the signature feature of Byzantine, Renaissance and Baroque architecture and of temples, churches and mosques: a symbolic expression of religious aspiration. Gordon's words certainly look appropriately vast and oratorical (shades of

Longinus?) thus chiming with the kind of authoritative inscriptions often employed in monumental interiors. But, given that it's a line from a rock song, is the artist challenging our expectations for appropriately elevated meaning?"



Douglas Gordon - Installation view of part of *Pretty much every word written, spoken, heard, overheard from 1989...* 2010
Various dimensions

Successful grant application

Dr Catherine Brace, University of Exeter and PI of a workshop grant entitled 'Understanding Landscapes through Creative Auto-Ethnographies' has been successful in her application for a Leverhulme Artist in Residence grant with a local poet Alyson Hallett. This move is following on from the work that she and Dr Adeline Johns-Putra were involved with on the Landscape and Environment project. The grant will commence from 1st September 2010 for nine months and is called 'An Artist in the Geography Department'. Capturing the theme of the residency the project looks at bringing the geographical idiom of landscape together with poetic understandings. Alyson Hallett is an acclaimed and prize winning author of a significant body of work including books of poetry, drama for BBC Radio 4 and television, fiction and public works of art. One of the key elements in her work is engagement with landscape: the dialogues that exist between people and place in dreams and memories as well as through conscious conception. She explores urban and rural geographies and is particularly interested in the responsive and intimate relationships that arise. Alyson also works with poetry in three-dimensional spaces, experimenting with ways in which light and space interact with language and how language in turn can infuse and inform place. As part of the Leverhulme grant Alyson will, among other things, be establishing a creative and critical writing group for staff and students at the campus, organising a series of lectures/readings by herself and invited poets for staff and students from across the departments represented at the University of Exeter's Cornwall Campus and University College Falmouth, run geopoetic lunches, write a body of new poetry produced in direct response to, and as a result of, the Fellowship that will be gathered into a chapbook publication. A further exciting outcome will be the installation of poetry and text on the campus in spaces such as the geography labs, staff offices, corridor walls and windows and the campus library, as well as the grounds.