

BorderLine Archaeology: a practice of contemporary archaeology – exploring aspects of creative narratives and performative cultural production

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid institutionen för arkeologi, Göteborgs universitet offentlig försvaras av Fiona Campbell och Jonna Ulin, i sal T 307, Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, fredagen den 11 juni 2004, kl. 13.00, efter godkännande av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden som även utsatt betygsnämnd, opponenter och ordföranden vid disputationen.

Abstract

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This dissertation is a joint dissertation, written by two people about the connectivity of two practices; archaeology and performance. Its contents focus upon the creation of a hybrid field of study that has only just begun to exist. We have named this dissertation 'BorderLine Archaeology' because we feel that this title reveals the relevance of its position as a field of study that is geographically situated on the border, on the line where things and people meet, at a borderline which is in a constant state of negotiation, and change. 'BorderLine Archaeology' is the site that bridges the gap between art and academia; it is the meeting place where subjective experience has a central role in the exploration of alternative ways to approach archaeological objects in the context of belonging to a process of cultural production.

The purpose of this dissertation is: to create a theoretical methodology of BorderLine Archaeology, that provides alternative strategies to use when dealing with archaeological matters; to explore the process of performative writing as an alternative approach in the re-presentation of the archaeological; to investigate archaeology's potential as a mode performative cultural production and to produce a body of knowledge, a kind of archaeology that is theoretical yet practical, that is hybrid, sensorial, inter-subjective, multilayered and performative.

The aims and objectives of this dissertation are approached through the co-authored chapters, 'Frontwords', 'Framework', 'Proposition', 'Making our Way' and 'Afterwords', where we set the context, create a theoretical methodology and sum up our work. But they are also approached through the production of two separate case-studies, where we implement the theoretical methodology of BorderLine Archaeology and use the process of performative writing in order to reveal its potential. In the case-study 'Turning 180° into the Walkscape of the Labyrinth' Fiona Campbell presents the labyrinths of Sweden and investigates how the act of moving affects the way we experience, perceive and re-present the past-present. In the case-study 'Turning into the Walkscape of the Family' Jonna Ulin deliberates the complexities of postmemory through an exploration of the family landscape as a site of the archaeological, as a site that needs to be interpreted through a process of reading onto and into. Both case-studies are connected to a co-produced website <http://arkserv.arch.gu.se/blalab>, where the source materials for the separate projects are stored. The website provides the additional perspectives to the written texts, inviting the visitor to explore further into the world of the Swedish labyrinths and the world of the family landscape.

Some outcomes of this dissertation are; that the practice of BorderLine Archaeology is an embodied, inter-subjective process of reading, writing, interpreting and witnessing archaeological matters; that it is a practice of overlapping discourse, of crossing borders whilst moving the experiences of the participants onto and into the matters of everyday, into the place of the familiar, unfamiliar, the unspeakable, the silent, the same and the other.

Keywords: BorderLine Archaeology, rhizome, border theory, contemporary archaeology, performance art, performance studies, performativity, material culture, cultural production, the archaeological, performative writing, creative narratives, mapping, parasite, eventscape, walkscape, site-seeing, site-specificity, subjectivity, otherness, excavation, repetition, re-presentation, past-present, labyrinth, movement, craft, family-landscape, postmemory, family album, home.