



Memory Work: Archaeologies of Material Practices (School for Advanced Research Advanced Seminar Series)

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Memory making is a social practice that links people and things together across time and space and ultimately has material consequences. The intersection of matter and social practice becomes archaeologically visible through the deposits created during social activities. Memories are made, not just experienced, and their material traces allow us to understand the materiality of these practices. Indeed, materiality is not just material culture repackaged. Instead, it is about the interaction of humans and materials within a set of cultural relationships. In this book the authors focus on a set of case studies that illustrate how social memories were made through repeated, patterned, and engaged social practices. “Memory work” also refers to the interpretive activities scholars perform when studying social memory. The contributors to this volume share a common goal to map out the different ways in which to study social memories in past societies programmatically and tangibly.

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Editorial Review

Review

Memory Work...joins the burgeoning literature in archaeology on memory and materiality. For the participants in this volume, memory work refers to both the interpretive work that archaeologists do and to how the people archaeologists study make memory. This volume primarily focuses on the non-discursive ways that people forget. The editors have very successfully unified eleven chapters into a coherent volume. The audience for Memory Work is archaeologists or anthropologists engaged with social theory, and concerned with topics of memory, materiality, and active objects. The book will reward the theoretically sophisticated reader. The authors present it as the next step in a larger dialogue in archaeology, about the nature and meaning of the material, and about social change and continuity. --Randall H. McGuire, Journal of Anthropological Research, vol. 66, 2010

This book makes a substantial contribution to archaeological theory and practice.... Social memory is of wide interest in the social sciences and the humanities. The approach advocated here, to focus on practice and materiality, has the potential to introduce a different twist on the subject. --Julia A. Hendon, Gettysburg College

Journal of Anthropological Research, vol. 66, 2010 --Randall H. McGuire

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