

Saturday March 9, 2024
9:00am to 4:30pm
James West Alumni Center
Collins Room at UCLA
And via Zoom



Program: Strategizing Returns of Cultural Heritage to Mexico

- 9:00 am** Meeting of review panel (open to all attendees) to discuss origins and possible cultural affiliation for objects from the Museum of the Cherokee People.
- 10:00 am** Q&A with review panelists
- 10:15 am** Coffee break
- 10:30 am** Introductory Remarks
Jason De Leon, Director, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology
Alex Stern, Dean of Humanities, UCLA
Lyssa Stapleton, Director, Waystation Initiative
- 11:00 am** *The Memory of Water: The Museum Space as a Bridge between Contemporary Indigenous Communities and the Latinx Diaspora*
Victoria Lyall, Frederick and Jan Mayer Curator, Art of the Ancient Americas, Denver Art Museum
- 11:20 am** *Materiality, Provenance and Restoration of Ancient West Mexican Ceramics and Next Steps for Museum-based Collections*
Christian de Brer, Director of Conservation, Fowler Museum at UCLA
- 11:40 am** *Learning and Sharing: The Museum of Tuxtepec, Oaxaca*
Edith Ortiz Diaz, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
- 12:00 pm** Q&A
- 12:15 pm** Lunch Break
- 1:15 pm** Screening: *La Piedra Ausente (The Absent Stone)*
Sandra Rozental, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico
Jesse Lerner, Professor of Media Studies, Pitzer College
- 2:40 pm** Q&A with film directors
- 2:50 pm** *Methods for Identifying the Origin of Archaeological or Anthropological Objects*
Blanca Maldonado, Centro de Estudios Arqueológicos, El Colegio de Michoacán, A.C.
- 3:10 pm** *The Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative: Analysis and Mobilization of the Stendahl Art Galleries Records*
Andrew Turner, Senior Research Specialist, Getty Research Institute
- 3:30 pm** Q&A
- 3:45 pm** Coffee Break
- 4:00** Panel Discussion moderated by **Lucha Martinez de Luna**, UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology:
All speakers
- 4:30 pm** End of Workshop

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Materiality, Provenance and Restoration of Ancient West Mexican Ceramics and Next Steps for Museum-based Collections

Christian de Brer

From the 1940s to 1970s, Southern California was a hub for private collecting of ancient West Mexican ceramics. Many of these clay figures and vessels were eventually donated to museums, as collectors benefitted from tax deduction regulations and institutions were eager to develop extensive collections. This presentation discusses investigations into the provenance history, methods of restoration and museum acquisition of these figurative objects. It delves into the examination and analysis of the ceramics that can distinguish clay-based materials, assist in understanding their burial context and support repatriation decision-making.

Speaker's bio

Christian "Chris" de Brer (he/his) is Head of Conservation at the Fowler Museum at UCLA. He has a MA from the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage and is a Ph.D. candidate in Conservation of Material Culture at UCLA. His dissertation focuses on the provenance and analysis of ancient West Mexican ceramics in the holdings of Mexican and Southern Californian institutions. His research reflects on source community involvement in preservation practices.

Learning and Sharing: Museum of Tuxtepec, Oaxaca (Aprender y compartir. Museo de Tuxtepec, Oaxaca)

Edith Ortiz Diaz

The northern portion of Oaxaca, Mexico, has a splendid natural biodiversity and is culturally diverse. The region is home to various Indigenous groups who speak distinct Indigenous languages. In pre-Hispanic times, Tuxtepec was one of the main tributary provinces of the Mexica. Despite its enormous cultural wealth, it was not until 1990 that a civil society organized to create the Museum of Tuxtepec board. The museum board requested donations of archaeological and historical objects representing the region. In 2022, the museum board and the municipal and federal governments inaugurated the museum. After the inauguration, the museum and the National Autonomous University of Mexico developed various strategies to receive cultural materials from northern Oaxaca as either donations or loans with the intent to emphasize that museums are not only placed to accumulate objects but also to create a space to revalue communities and identity.

El norte del estado de Oaxaca alberga una gran biodiversidad natural, así como cultural. Entre los grupos indígenas que habitan esta región encontramos hablantes de diversas lenguas indígenas. En la época prehispánica, Tuxtepec fue una de las principales provincias tributarias de los mexicas. A pesar de esta enorme riqueza, no fue sino hasta 1990 que la sociedad civil se organizó y creó un patronato para la construcción del Museo de Tuxtepec. Realiza varias convocatorias para recibir objetos arqueológicos e históricos de la región como donaciones. En 2022, el Patronato, los gobiernos municipal y federal inauguraron el edificio del museo. A partir de este momento, el Municipio de Tuxtepec y la UNAM crearon diversas estrategias para recibir materiales relevantes de la historia del norte del estado de Oaxaca como donaciones o préstamos, tratando de enfatizar que los museos no solo son lugares de acumulación de objetos, sino también espacios de revalorización social e identitaria.

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Speaker Biography

Edith Ortiz Díaz is Professor of Archeology and History, Institute of Research in Anthropology, National Autonomous University of Mexico. Her research areas are the Archaeology and history of Oaxaca, Communications routes, trade and exchange between pre-Hispanic societies of Mesoamerica during the Pre-conquest period, markets and commerce between Indians and Spanish during the Spanish colonization in southern Mexico, and analysis of ceramic and metals through Archaeometric examination. Since 2010, Dr. Ortiz Díaz works in community museums in Oaxaca.

Edith Ortiz Díaz es investigadora de tiempo completo en el Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas de la UNAM. Arqueóloga por la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia y Doctora en Historia por el Colegio de México. Desde 1996, ha trabajado en el estudio de los grupos zapotecos y chinantecos prehispánicos de la Sierra Norte de Oaxaca y de la región del Papaloapan. Sobre su investigación ha escrito varios libros y artículos, así como diversas pláticas, conferencias y presentaciones. En 2010 comenzó a colaborar con el Patronato Pro-fundación del Museo de Tuxtepec haciendo el registro y de las piezas para este recinto. Asimismo, con la Secretaría de Cultura del Estado de Oaxaca promoviendo museos comunitarios en distintos pueblos del estado.

Screening: The Absent Stone (La Piedra Ausente)

Jesse Lerner & Sandra Rozental

In 1964, the largest carved stone of the Americas was moved from the town of Coatlinchan to the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City in an impressive feat of engineering. The extraction of the monolith set off a rebellion in the town and led to the intervention of the army. Today representations of the absent stone appear everywhere in Coatlinchan, where it resonates in the memories of the inhabitants. Using animations, archival materials and contemporary encounters with the protagonists of the transport of the stone, this documentary explores the relevance of the ruins of the past in the present day.

En 1964 la piedra tallada más grande de América fue trasladada desde el pueblo de San Miguel Coatlinchan, en el municipio de Texcoco, hasta el Museo Nacional de Antropología en la Ciudad de México. La extracción del monolito, que representa una deidad prehispánica del agua, detonó una rebelión entre los habitantes del pueblo y la consecuente intervención del ejército. Hoy en día, la enorme mole se encuentra erguida como monumento urbano, transformado en uno de los principales iconos de la identidad nacional. En contraparte, los habitantes de Coatlinchan aseguran que desde que se llevaron la piedra, dejó de llover en su territorio. Recurriendo a animaciones, material de archivo de los años sesenta y filmaciones actuales con los actores principales del traslado, este documental explora la relevancia de las ruinas del pasado en el presente.

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Speaker Biography

Jesse Lerner is a filmmaker, curator, and writer. His documentaries *Frontierland/Fronterilandia* (1995), *Ruins* (1999), *The American Egypt* (2001), *Atomic Sublime* (2010), *The Absent Stone* (2013) and *The Fragmentations Only Mean* (2021) have screened at the New York's Museum of Modern Art, the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City, the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao, and the Sundance, Rotterdam, and Los Angeles Film Festivals, among many other venues. Washington's National Gallery, the Anthology Film Archives, and Mexico's Cineteca Nacional have presented mid-career surveys of his films. His books include *The Maya of Modernism*, *F is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth's Undoing*, *The Shock of Modernity*, *Ism Ism Ism*, and *The Catherwood Project*. As a curator, he has organized exhibitions for the Robert Flaherty Seminar, Mexico's National Palace of Fine Arts, the MAK Center, the Museo Carrillo Gil, and the touring series *Mexperimental Cinema*. He is a professor in the Intercollegiate Media Studies program of the Claremont Colleges.

Jesse Lerner es cineasta, escritor y curador. Sus películas han ganado premios en festivales en los Estados Unidos, América Latina y Japón, y se han presentado en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York, la Bienal de Sydney y los festivales de cine de Sundance, Rotterdam y Los Angeles, entre otros. La Cineteca Nacional de México, la Galería Nacional de Washington, D.C. y Anthology Film Archives de Nueva York han presentado muestras retrospectivas de sus documentales. Como curador ha organizado exposiciones para el Robert Flaherty Seminar, el Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, la Casa Schindler y los Museos Guggenheim de Nueva York y Bilbao. Ha publicado diversos libros como *El impacto de la modernidad*, *Los Mayas de modernismo*, *The Catherwood Project*, *Ismo Ismo Ismo* y *F is for Phony*.

The Memory of Water: The Museum Space as a Bridge between Contemporary Indigenous Communities and the Latinx Diaspora

Victoria Lyall

Stephen Weil wrote that in the 21st century the roles of museum and public will have reversed: the public will occupy the superior position and museum's role will have reversed from one of mastery to one of service. His prediction came true sooner than anticipated. Today, we consider museums as memory institutions, places where cultural memory is preserved. Curators, therefore, function as stewards. While we may be considered experts in our field, trained in a specialized field of knowledge, our responsibilities have expanded beyond the caretaking of objects. We caretake people as well.

As a curator of Ancient Americas, a collection that has always functioned as a portal to an otherwise inaccessible past, one must contend with one of the most long-lasting outcomes of colonization: the conceptual severing between living Indigenous communities and their ancient counterparts. As we embark on the decolonization of museum spaces making room for hidden histories and marginalized voices, the conceptual divide between ancient collections and their living descendants remains one of the farthest distances to cross. This paper articulates the contours of that chasm and the responsibility and challenges of bridging diasporic, Latinx communities and Indigenous groups in the Americas today.

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Speaker Biography

Victoria Isabel Lyall is the Frederick and Jan Mayer Curator, Art of the Ancient Americas at the Denver Art Museum. Her exhibitions and publications focus on themes of translation, narrativity, and the continued resonance of Ancient American art for contemporary artists. She has curated or co-curated numerous projects including most recently, *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche* and *ReVisión: Art in the Americas*. In 2021 she redesigned Denver's Ancient Americas galleries. Prior to joining the Denver Art Museum, Lyall held positions at San Francisco State University and LACMA, where she served for ten years. Her publications include *El Mar Caribe: An American Mediterranean*, *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche* (2022 ALAA Thoma Award for Exhibition Catalogue), *ReVisión: A New Look at Art in the Americas*, *Murals of the Americas*, *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl*, and the forthcoming *Collecting the Other Americas: Art of the Ancient Americas in U.S. Art Museums* with Ellen Hoobler.

Originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Lyall grew up in Miami. She holds a Ph.D. in Art History from UCLA, an M.A. from Tulane University, and a B.A. in Anthropology and History of Art from Yale University.

Methods for Identifying the Origin of Archaeological or Anthropological Objects (Methodos Ethodos para Identificar el Origen de Objetos Arqueológicos o Antropológicos)

Blanca Maldonado

Cultural artifacts are created by human societies. The examination of an artifact can therefore reveal information about its creators, technology, social practices, cultural norms, customs, and other valuable data. When the question arises: 'Where is it from?' There may be two answers to this inquiry. One is the place or location at which the object was found or discovered; and second, what is the source of the object. The latter entails a diagnosis of the origin of the materials that comprise the artifact, the location or site where it was produced or fabricated, who made it, and why and for what purposes. These questions apply as much to the composition of pottery vessels as they do to lithic tools or stone ornaments, but also to glass, metals, and textiles as other major artifact classes. One of the most reliable methods for determining the provenance or origin of artifacts is through scientific analysis. The present contribution focuses on the methods employed by scholars studying the provenance of archaeological or anthropological objects.

Los artefactos culturales son creados por sociedades humanas. El estudio de un artefacto puede entonces revelar información sobre sus creadores, tecnología, prácticas sociales, normas culturales, costumbres y otros datos relevantes. Al surgir la pregunta: '¿De dónde es?' Puede haber dos respuestas a esta interrogante. Una es el lugar o ubicación en la que se encontró o descubrió el objeto; y la segunda, cuál es la fuente del objeto. Esto último implica un diagnóstico del origen de los materiales que componen el artefacto, el lugar o sitio donde fue producido o fabricado, quién lo hizo, por qué y con qué fines. Estas preguntas se aplican tanto a la composición de las vasijas de cerámica como a las herramientas líticas o los ornamentos de piedra, pero también al vidrio, los metales y los textiles, así como a otras clases importantes de artefactos. Uno de los métodos más confiables para determinar la procedencia u origen de los artefactos es el análisis científico. La presente contribución se centra en los métodos empleados por especialistas que estudian la procedencia de objetos arqueológicos o antropológicos.

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Speaker Biography

I am an archaeologist specialized in ancient metallurgy and production processes. My specific areas of interest include pre-Columbian metallurgy and metalworking in the New World, preindustrial non-ferrous metallurgy, and the cultural dynamics of technological practices. My research has focused mainly on two geographical areas: Mesoamerica and the South-Central Andes.

I hold a Ph.D. in Anthropology, with specialization in Archaeology from the Pennsylvania State University. My doctoral studies included training in archaeological science and archaeometallurgy at Oxford University and University College London, in the U.K. I have received several research grants and awards, including a DAAD Research Grant for an Academic Stay at Bonn University, Germany, and a 2.5-year Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, also in Germany.

I am currently a tenured Professor-Researcher at the Center for Archaeological Studies at El Colegio de Michoacán, Mexico, where I also serve as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. In addition, I serve as Editor in Chief for *Ancient Mesoamerica*.

Soy arqueóloga especializada en metalurgia antigua y procesos productivos. Mis áreas de interés específicas incluyen la metalurgia precolombina y la metalurgia en el Nuevo Mundo, la metalurgia preindustrial no ferrosa y las dinámicas culturales de las prácticas tecnológicas. Mi investigación se ha centrado principalmente en dos áreas geográficas: Mesoamérica y los Andes sur centrales.

Obtuve un doctorado en Antropología con especialidad en Arqueología de The Pennsylvania State University. Mis estudios doctorales incluyeron formación en ciencia arqueológica y arqueometallurgia en la Universidad de Oxford y en University College London, en Reino Unido. He recibido varias becas y premios de investigación, incluida una beca otorgada por el DAAD para realizar una estancia académica en la Universidad de Bonn, Alemania, así como beca de investigación postdoctoral de dos años y medio de la Fundación Alexander von Humboldt en el Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, también en Alemania. Actualmente me desempeño como Profesora-Investigadora titular en el Centro de Estudios Arqueológicos de El Colegio de Michoacán, en México; además, ejerzo el cargo de Secretaria General Administrativa y Académica de dicha institución. Adicionalmente, funjo como Editora en Jefe de la revista *Ancient Mesoamerica*.

The Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative: Analysis and Mobilization of the Stendahl Art Galleries Records

Andrew Turner

The Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative (PHAPI) of the Getty Research Institute, initiated in 2019, is the first large-scale study of the formation of the art market for pre-Hispanic antiquities. At its core, the Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative analyzes the Stendahl Art Galleries Records, the most extensive extant archive of any dealer of pre-Hispanic art. This unique resource includes stock books, invoices, photographs, and correspondence of one of the most prolific dealers of the twentieth century. This talk provides background on the Stendahl Art Galleries and presents the efforts of the Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative to transform the archive into a tool for understanding the movements of pre-Hispanic objects in the twentieth century art market and the mechanisms behind it.

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Speaker Biography

Andrew D. Turner is a Senior Research Specialist at the Getty Research Institute. He is trained as a Mesoamerican archaeologist and art historian and has worked as a faculty member and curator at the University of Cambridge, and as a postdoc at the Yale University Art Gallery. At the Getty, he is project lead on the Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative, which traces the large-scale looting and sale of pre-Hispanic antiquities during the Twentieth Century. In addition to authoring numerous articles and book chapters, Turner is the editor of *Códice Maya de México: Understanding the Oldest Surviving Book of the Americas* (2022), and co-editor of *Flower Worlds: Religion, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Mesoamerica and the American Southwest* (with Michael Mathiowetz, 2021), and *Collecting Mesoamerican Art Before 1940: A New World of Latin American Antiquities* (with Megan O'Neil, 2024).