

VISUAL STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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SPRING 2022 EVENTS

Images Out of Time Seminar



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

5-6:30pm PST
DML 240

*Future Visions from the Past, or How to Salvage
Ethnological Museums for the Future*

H. GLENN PENNY

Professor of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa

Respondents:

DEBORA SILVERMAN, Distinguished Professor & University of California
Presidential Chair in Modern European History, Art and Culture at UCLA

NANCY LUTKEHAUS, Professor of Anthropology, USC

Co-sponsored by the Max Kade Institute for Austrian-German-Swiss Studies

Readings and links for Images Out of Time events will be made
available when you RSVP to vsri@usc.edu.

By the middle of the twentieth century, salvage anthropology had become a pejorative phrase. Leading ethnologists not only hurled it at contemporary collectors but also past professionals who had filled the world's largest collecting museums. In the last decade, however, a range of scholars, particularly those interested in community engaged scholarship, have set out to salvage the salvage anthropologists—recognizing the wealth of fugitive knowledge about human cultures and histories sequestered in their neglected texts. Even more fugitive knowledge, one could argue, is hidden in the millions of objects packed away in the back rooms, depots, and storage facilities of those nineteenth-century collecting museums. According to Glenn Penny, releasing that knowledge first requires freeing those objects. Yet he also contends that as we do that we could and should allow those practitioners of the past be our guides toward the future. They once set out to fashion museums that would be sites for the production of knowledge about the multiplicity of human cultures and histories, not stages for its mere articulation. If that is a vision worthy of the present, he explains, it is also one that will require reassessing how we think about and with museums in the future.

The Images Out of Time seminar considers how images travel through time from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Events include speakers, reading groups, and writing workshops that intersect art history, religious studies, history, anthropology, literature, and film, and cuts across divisions separating premodern and modern, as well as European, Atlantic, and Pacific spheres. In 2022–25, this seminar will be among the Humanities Initiatives at Colleges and Universities supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Open to all interested participants.

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