

Keynote: Kristina Douglass

Social Memory, Collective Meaning, and Community Building in Decolonial Archaeology

As we envision decolonial futures in archaeology, the significance of social memory, collective meaning-making, and community building practices becomes paramount.

A decolonial future calls for archaeologists to not only understand but to deeply experience and embody these practices in our work. In a world where climate change, rising inequality, and other global challenges act as threat multipliers, it is imperative that we rethink and reinforce the foundations of our discipline.

The possibility of a decolonial future in archaeology lies in our ability to integrate and elevate the voices and memories of communities, particularly those whose histories have been marginalized or erased. By embedding community-building practices into our bodies, minds, and methodologies, we can foster a more inclusive, resilient, and responsive archaeology—one that not only reflects the past but actively shapes a more equitable and sustainable future.

Engaging with social memory and collective meaning-making can transform the way we approach our work. It can also reveal the role of archaeologists as active participants in the communities we study, advocating for a practice that is collaborative, participatory, and deeply rooted in the lived experiences of those whose histories we seek to understand.



Envisioning Decolonial Futures through archaeology



Zoom link: <https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/events/conferences-and-workshops/envisioning-decolonial-futures>



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