

## Taxidermy - Animal Skin and Colonial Practice (London, 13 May 2011)

The Natural History Museum, London, May 13, 2011

Petra Lange-Berndt

Taxidermy—Animal Skin and Colonial Practice

AHRC-Network Cultures of Preservation. The Afterlife of Specimens between  
Art and Science since the Eighteenth Century

Workshop in collaboration with the Natural History Museum  
London, 13th May 2011

[Please also note the invitation to the opening talks of the AHRC research  
network "The Culture of Preservation" on Thursday, 12 May 2011, and on Thursday, 9 June 2011,  
below the conference program]

This workshop will focus on power relations inherent in the technique itself: A precondition of the seeming liveliness of mounted specimens is the attempt to hide the work of the taxidermist. But more importantly this event would like to investigate how the artful arrangement of skin is linked to narratives of colonial supremacy and racial anthropology, to notions of "exploration", "discovery", and classification. It is planned to discuss historical modes of making as well as institutional display or the impact of emerging evolutionary and ecological theories. In this context special attention will be payed to the role artists have been playing since the beginning of the twentieth century in calling attention to the aesthetics and politics of natural history collections. Therefore, contemporary artistic strategies that formulate alternatives to these histories and their practices as well as issues of zoological curation, display and conservation will be considered.

Friday, 13th May 2011

Venue: The Natural History Museum, London, Neil Chalmers Seminar Room, Darwin Centre, lower ground floor

9.00 Registration, coffee and tea

9.30 Welcome

Bergit Arends (Curator Contemporary Art, The Natural History Museum, London)

Introduction

Petra Lange-Berndt (Lecturer, Department of History of Art, UCL): Shapeshifting and Other Acts of Sabotage

10.15

Sam Alberti (Director, Hunterian Museum, London): Taxidermy: Materiality, History, Empire

11.00 Break

11.15 Panel Making Taxidermy

Mark Dion (Visual Artist, USA), Tessa Farmer (Artist, London), Derek Frampton (Taxidermist, Tring), Richard Sabin (Senior Curator, Department of Zoology, The Natural History Museum, London), Robert Williams (Artist, Lancaster)

12.30 Lunch

13.30

Hanna Rose Shell (Filmmaker, Historian and Media Scholar, MIT, Harvard University): Skins of Nature and Emulsion

14.15 Break

14.45

Bryndis Snæbjörnsdóttir / Mark Wilson (Artists, Bewcastle): between you, nanoq and me: reflections on the ambition and inadequacies of representation in the prepared skins of animals

15.30

Sebastian Hackenschmidt (Curator and Custodian for Wood and Furniture, Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna): Furniture as Trophy

16.15 Outlook and final group discussion

17.00 End of workshop

Please contact [p.lange-berndt@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:p.lange-berndt@ucl.ac.uk) if you are interested in participating. See our webpage for further information

[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/events/culture\\_of\\_preservation](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/events/culture_of_preservation)

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We would like to invite you to the opening talks of the AHRC research network "The Culture of Preservation"

Mark Dion (Visual Artist, USA),  
"My Taxidermy Taxonomy"

Venue: Museum of Natural History, London, Darwin Center, Attenborough Studio  
Time: Thursday, 12 May 2011, 5pm

The lecture is free and open to all - but please phone to book tickets on  
+44 (0)20 7942 5725

Nick Hopwood (Historian of Science, University of Cambridge)  
"Human Embryos: Bottled, Sliced and Frozen"

ArtHist.net

Venue: Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons

Time: Thursday, 9 June 2011, 6.30 pm

The lecture is free and open to all - but please phone or email to book tickets on 0044 (0)20 7869 6560  
museums@rcseng.ac.uk

Please see our website for further information:

[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/events/culture\\_of\\_preservation](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/events/culture_of_preservation)

AHRC Research Network "The Culture of Preservation" at the UCL Department of History of Art  
Petra Lange-Berndt (p.lange-berndt@ucl.ac.uk) and Mechthild Fend  
(m.fend@ucl.ac.uk)

Reference:

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