

Week 6: Experiencing materials in past and present

HPAH7011: Culture, Theory and Methodology for the
Study of the Ancient World

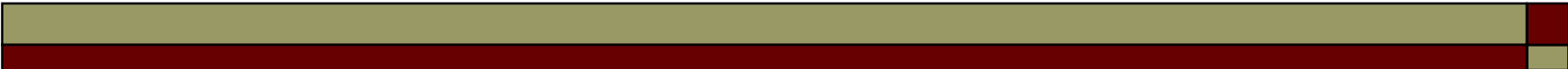


Dr Katharina Zinn

Senior Lecturer for Egyptian Archaeology
and Heritage

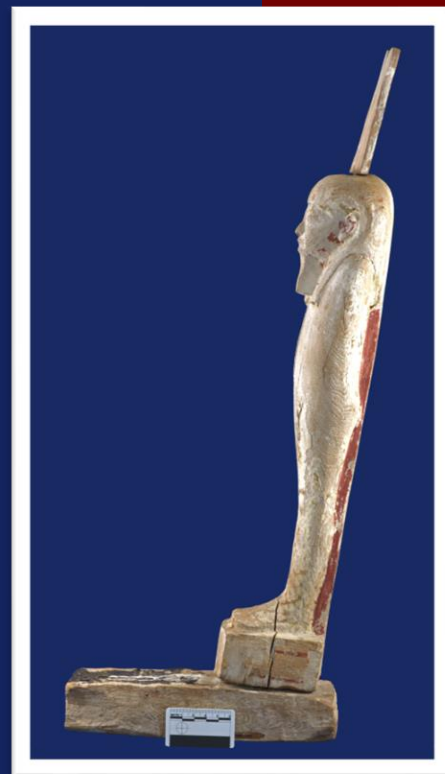
Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery Merthyr Tydfil





Cultural (re-)discovery of dormant objects

- ❑ cooperative project between Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David – Lampeter Campus
- ❑ Aim: bring these objects back to life by creating different simultaneous types of cultural representations via academic outputs, Egyptological exhibitions, story-telling, a *museum of lies*, and art exhibition (inspired by the objects)
- ❑ “unpacking the collection”, to trace the “networks of material and social agency” (Byrne *et al.* 2011)





■ Boring or what?!?



Entangled (Hodder 2012)

- ❑ Humans depend on things
- ❑ Things depend on humans
- ❑ We need to think differently about things → understand and create entanglement
- ❑ Create different experiences circling around the materiality of the objects





UCLA | ENCYCLOPEDIA EGYPTOLOGY

Open



Peer Reviewed

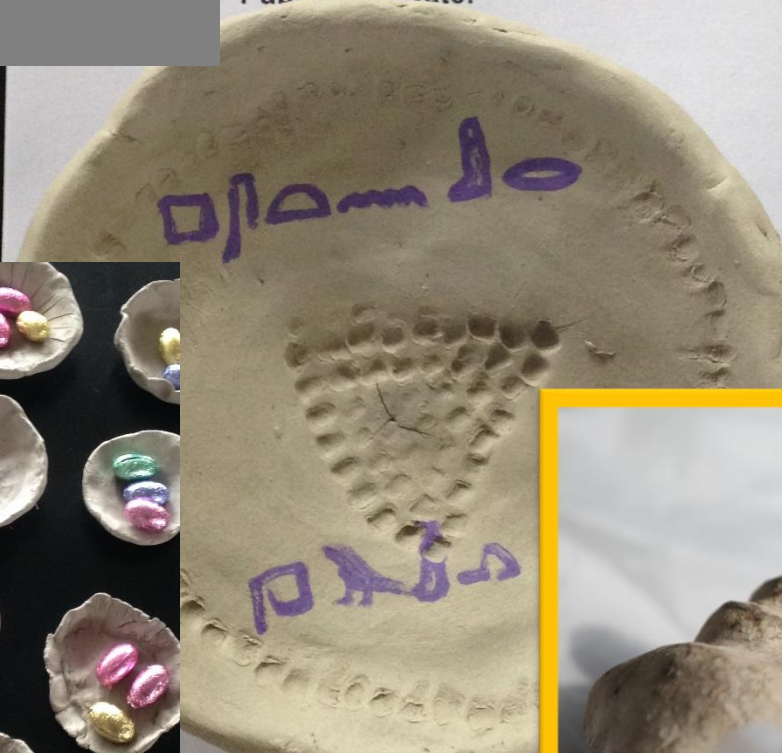
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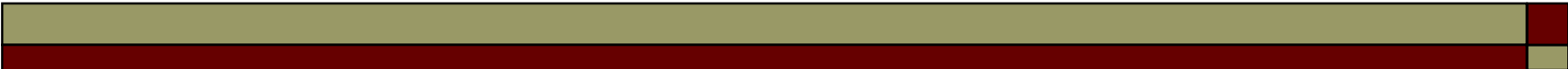
Execration Ritual

Author:

Muhlestein, Kerry, Brigham Young University

Publication Date:



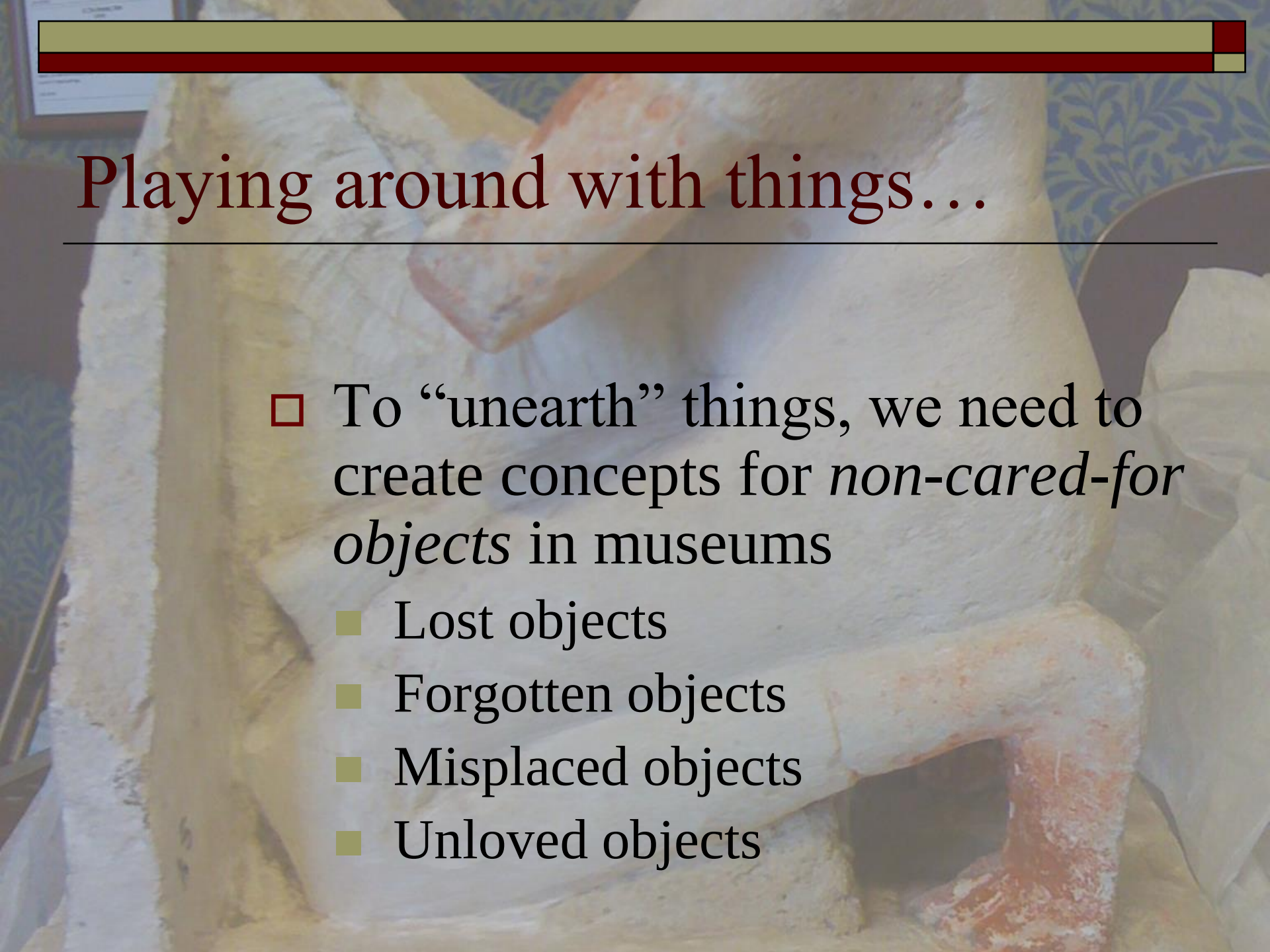


What do we do with objects?

- In the 21st century, we live in “a storied world” (Ingold 2011: 141–176):
 - Stories as a decision against fixed space and time
 - focus on place, movement, knowledge
 - Life being dependent on environments
 - → **Objects correlate with the world they inhabit**
 - Stories against classifications: integration of knowledge
 - Naming and storytelling as way to remember, research and understand objects in all their life phases

Storytelling as **engagement** to enhance experience

- Creating stories and narratives → to generate
 - *charismatic objects* (C. Wingfield 2010)
 - culture-bearing objects
 - enchanted objects
- Good storytelling creates a bond between the storyteller and their audience by engaging
- IMPORTANT: be serious about the frivolous and frivolous about the serious
 - Use academic knowledge
 - Create a new setting
 - Include non
 - New narratives / biographies to **re-focus on the object**

The background of the slide features a photograph of a sculpture, possibly a classical figure, partially covered by crumpled white paper. The sculpture is light-colored with some reddish-brown patina. In the top right corner, there is a small graphic element consisting of a red square and a yellow square. The title 'Playing around with things...' is written in a dark red serif font and is underlined.

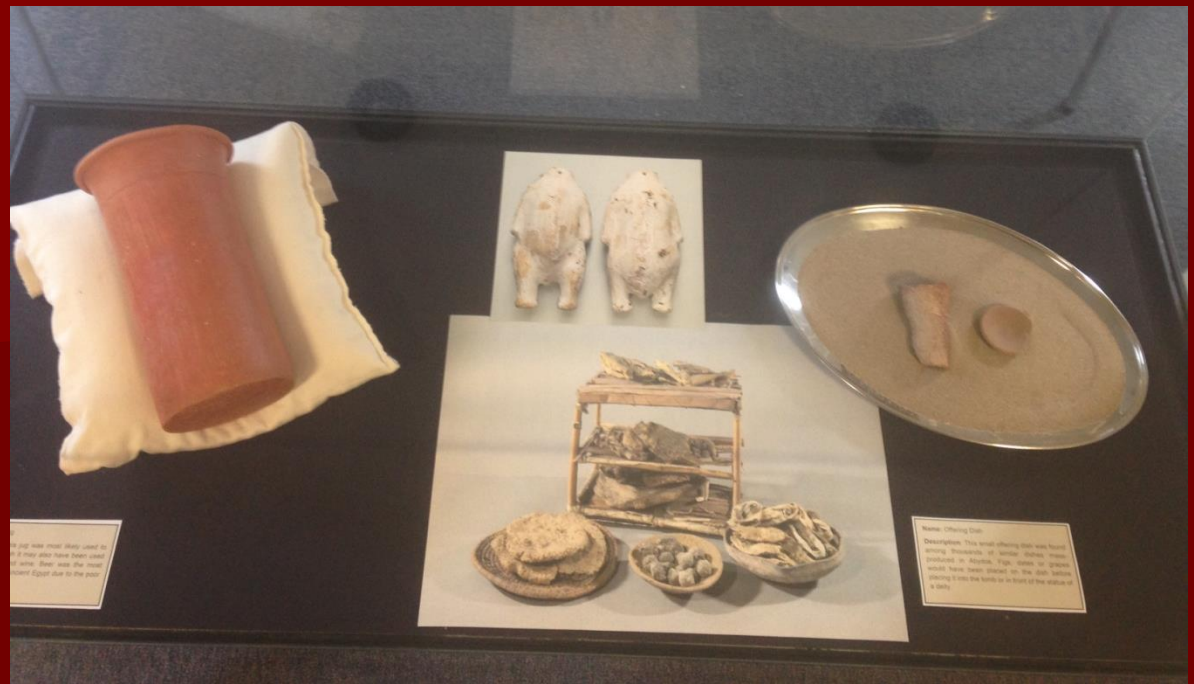
Playing around with things...

- ❑ To “unearth” things, we need to create concepts for *non-cared-for objects* in museums
 - Lost objects
 - Forgotten objects
 - Misplaced objects
 - Unloved objects





Offering Plate CCM 308.004



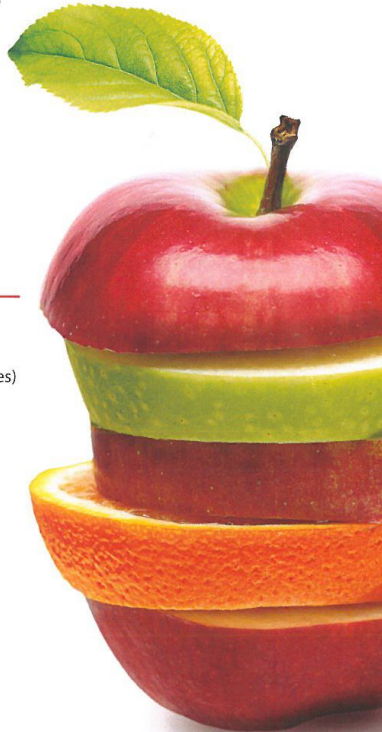


Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Rhywbeth i Gnoi Cil Drosto Food for Thought

Adeliad Caergaint, Campws Llambed
25/07/15
Canterbury Building, Lampeter Campus

- 11.00 "Maent yn bwyta i chwydu a chwydu i fwyta"
Dulliau coginio a moesau bwrdd Rhufeinig
(gyda samplau)
Matthew Cobb
- 12.00 Bwyta fel Eifftiwr
Katharina Zinn
- 13.00 Pwysigrwydd bod yn wallgof
Luci Attala
- 14.00 Bwyd a Chrefydd
Sarah Lewis



- 11.00 "They eat to vomit and vomit to eat"
Roman table manner and cuisine (with samples)
Matthew Cobb
- 12.00 Eat like an Egyptian
Katharina Zinn
- 13.00 The importance of being out of your mind
Luci Attala
- 14.00 Food and Religion
Sarah Lewis



Headrests CCM 190.996 and **CCM 189.996**



ANCIENT EGYPT COMES TO LAMPETER

EXHIBITION OF
ARTEFACTS FROM CYFARTHFA CASTLE
MUSEUM, MERTHYR TYDFIL

"I HAVE FLOWN UP IN PRIMEVAL TIME"

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERARY BELIEFS

ENTRY FREE

WHERE

Roderic Bowen Library and Archives,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

WHEN

24th May—2nd June 2018
Open Mon-Fri 10am - 4pm



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



EVENTS:

THU 24TH MAY 2018 @ 3PM – ALL WELCOME,
ENTRY FREE

PUBLIC OPENING - WITH
PRESENTATIONS GIVEN BY THE
INVOLVED STUDENTS AND RECEPTION,
ALL WELCOME

FRI, 25TH MAY

WORKSHOP DAY WITH YSGOL BRO PEDR
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AFTERLIFE
BELIEFS

TUES, 29TH MAY

PUBLIC TALK (DR. KATHARINA ZINN) –
ALL WELCOME, ENTRY FREE

DID YOU SLEEP WELL? – THE BODY,
THE SENSES AND ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN HEADRESTS FROM
CYFARTHFA CASTLE MUSEUM,
MERTHYR TYDFIL

THU, 31ST MAY

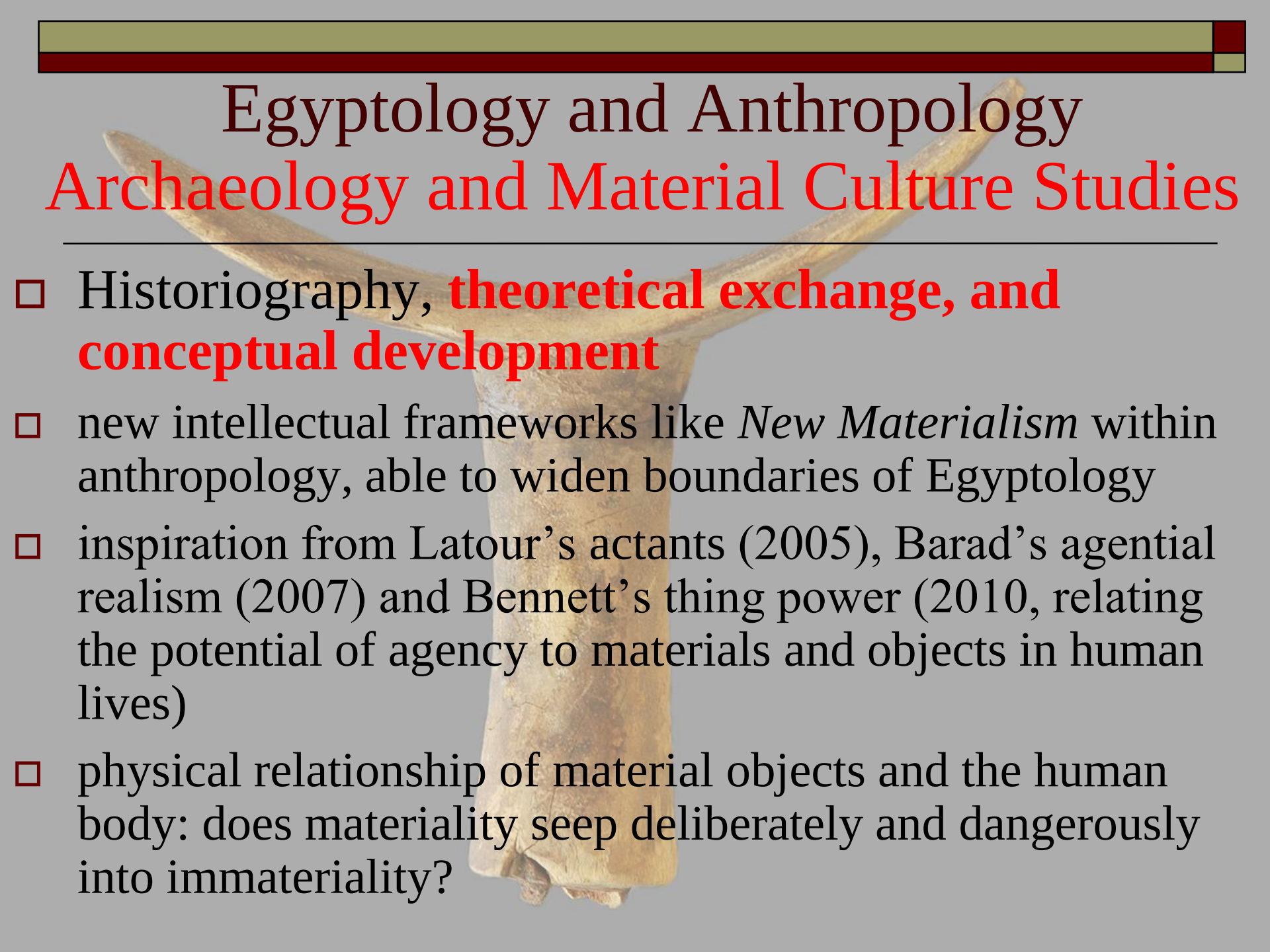
WORKSHOP FOR HOME-SCHOOLED
CHILDREN (AGE 10-16) – ENTRY FREE
BUT RESERVATION REQUIRED (RVSP
K.ZINN@UWTS.D.AC.UK)

Sleep like an ancient Egyptian – hear
about sleep in death, try to lie down on an
Egyptian headrest and make a headrest
amulet



Experimental and experiential archaeology





Egyptology and Anthropology

Archaeology and Material Culture Studies

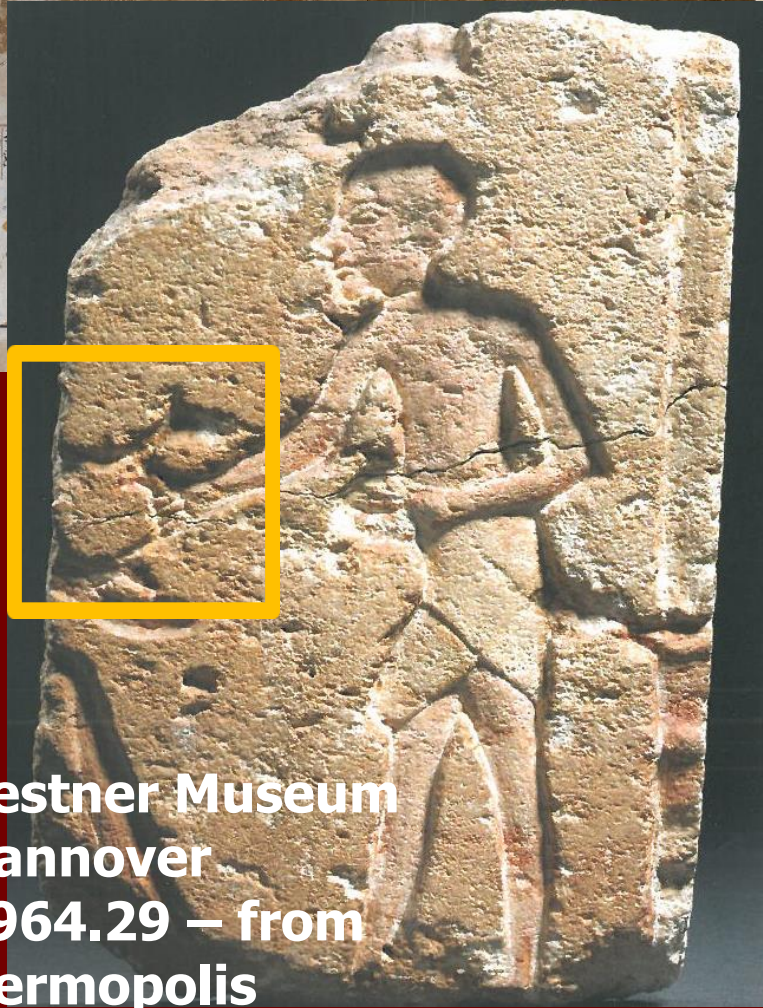
- ❑ Historiography, **theoretical exchange, and conceptual development**
- ❑ new intellectual frameworks like *New Materialism* within anthropology, able to widen boundaries of Egyptology
- ❑ inspiration from Latour's actants (2005), Barad's agential realism (2007) and Bennett's thing power (2010, relating the potential of agency to materials and objects in human lives)
- ❑ physical relationship of material objects and the human body: does materiality seep deliberately and dangerously into immateriality?

Tomb of Ramose (TT55)



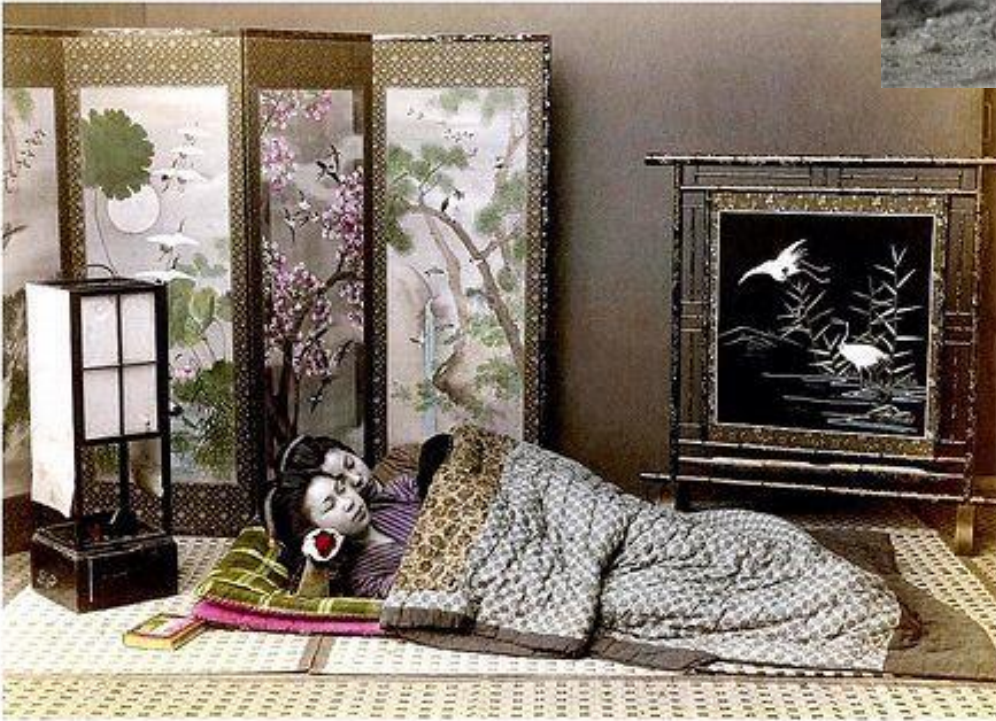
(re-)experiencing a past
experience?
How to deal with the
missing materiality and
setting?

Tomb of Ramose (TT55)



Kestner Museum
Hannover
1964.29 — from
Hermopolis

Sleeping on a headrest

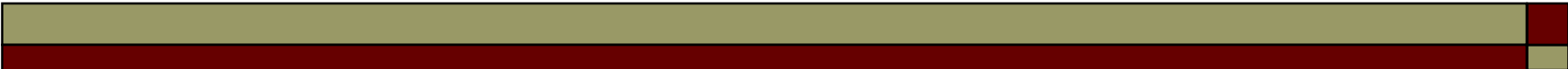


The
material
evidence

Sleeping on a headrest



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New Materialism - Facts

- Humans are inevitably part of material world
 - Always surrounded
 - AND immersed
- Composed of matter which reacts with other matter
 - Exist in relation to micro-organisms, higher species, material artefacts, stuff in environment
 - Receive and respond with bodily and cellular actions
- Matter materialises in all actions / experiences

New Materialism - perception

- Taken for granted
- Humans stand above matter ?!:

We  Matter

- Distance ourselves from environment of which we are intrinsically part → PARADOX

We  Matter

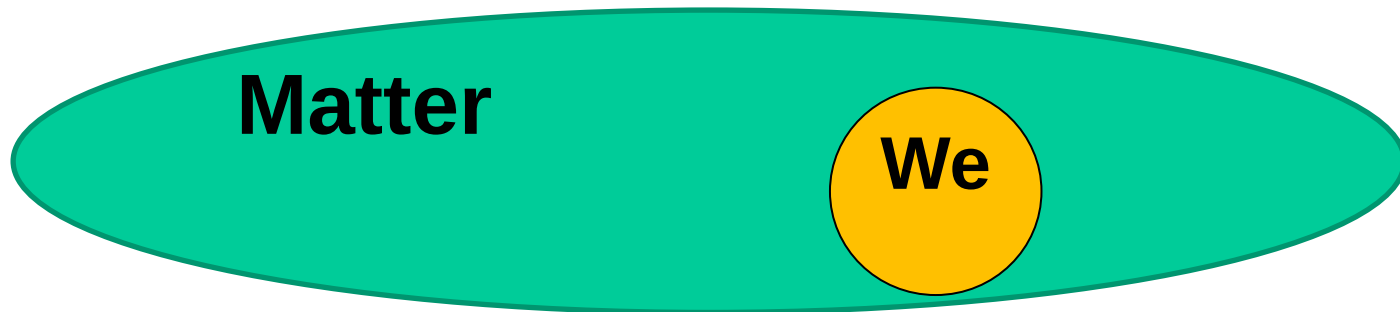
New Materialism - perception

- ❑ Taken for granted
- ❑ Humans stand above matter:

We → Matter

- ❑ Distance ourselves from environment of which we are intrinsically part → PARADOX

We ↔ Matter

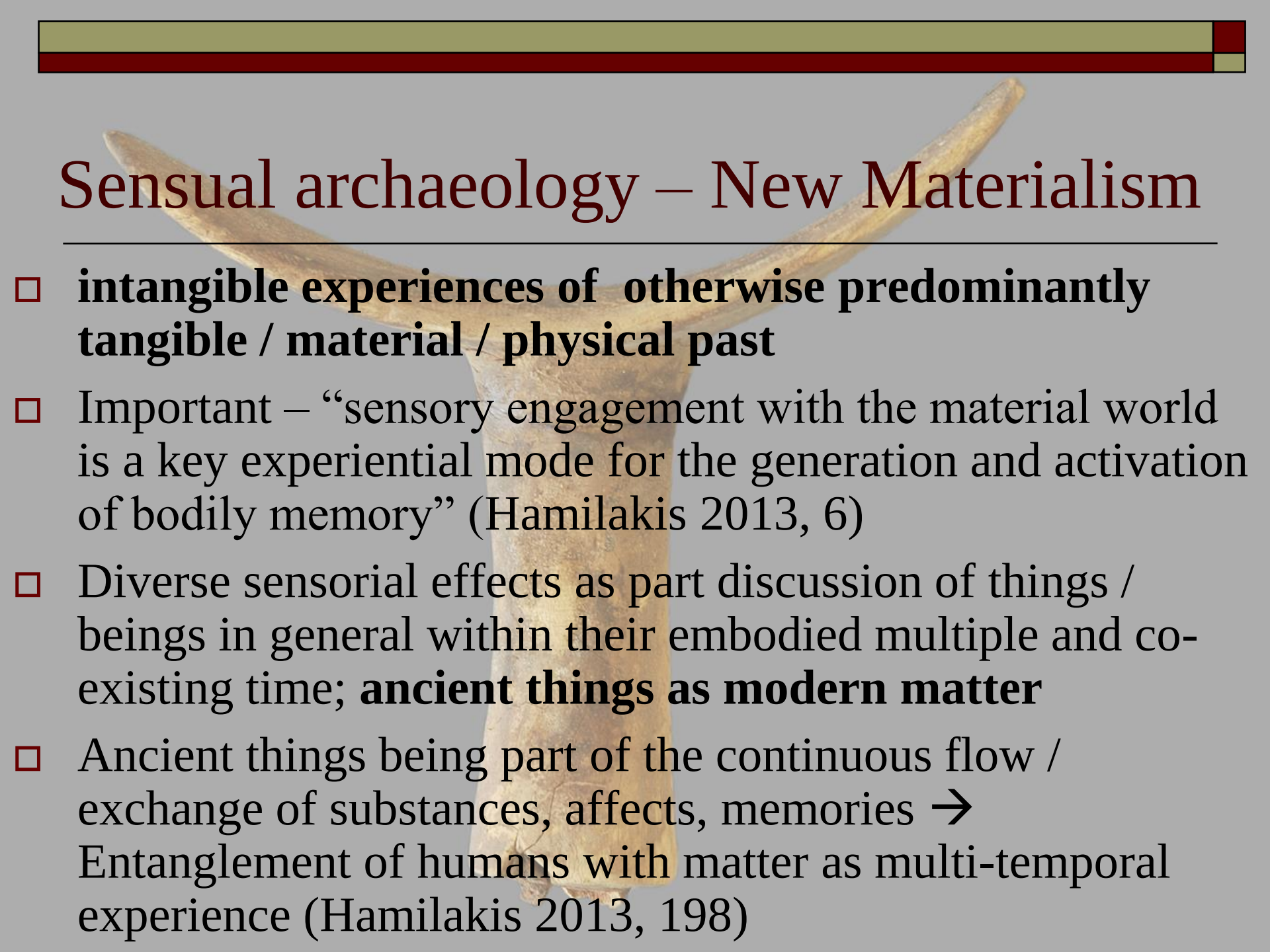


- ❑ New concept of materialisation which is not anthropocentric, but seen as social construct and dynamic



Sensual archaeology – New Materialism

- ❑ Much done: sensescapes, mnemoscapes, sensorial and affective experience
- ❑ But: Less regarding the body itself – interaction of body with matter, the body as matter by re-interpretation of corporeality
- ❑ New Age spiritualism “Getting in touch with our senses”
- ❑ extend to ancient civilisations as *anthropology of the past* “Getting in touch with their senses”, the matter of past bodies as part of the matter of this world
- ❑ In other words: let’s catch the intangible experiences of the otherwise predominantly tangible / material past



Sensual archaeology – New Materialism

- ❑ **intangible experiences of otherwise predominantly tangible / material / physical past**
- ❑ Important – “sensory engagement with the material world is a key experiential mode for the generation and activation of bodily memory” (Hamilakis 2013, 6)
- ❑ Diverse sensorial effects as part discussion of things / beings in general within their embodied multiple and co-existing time; **ancient things as modern matter**
- ❑ Ancient things being part of the continuous flow / exchange of substances, affects, memories → Entanglement of humans with matter as multi-temporal experience (Hamilakis 2013, 198)

Sleeping on a headrest



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Sleeping on a headrest



What was the linen for?

□ “Dust sheet”



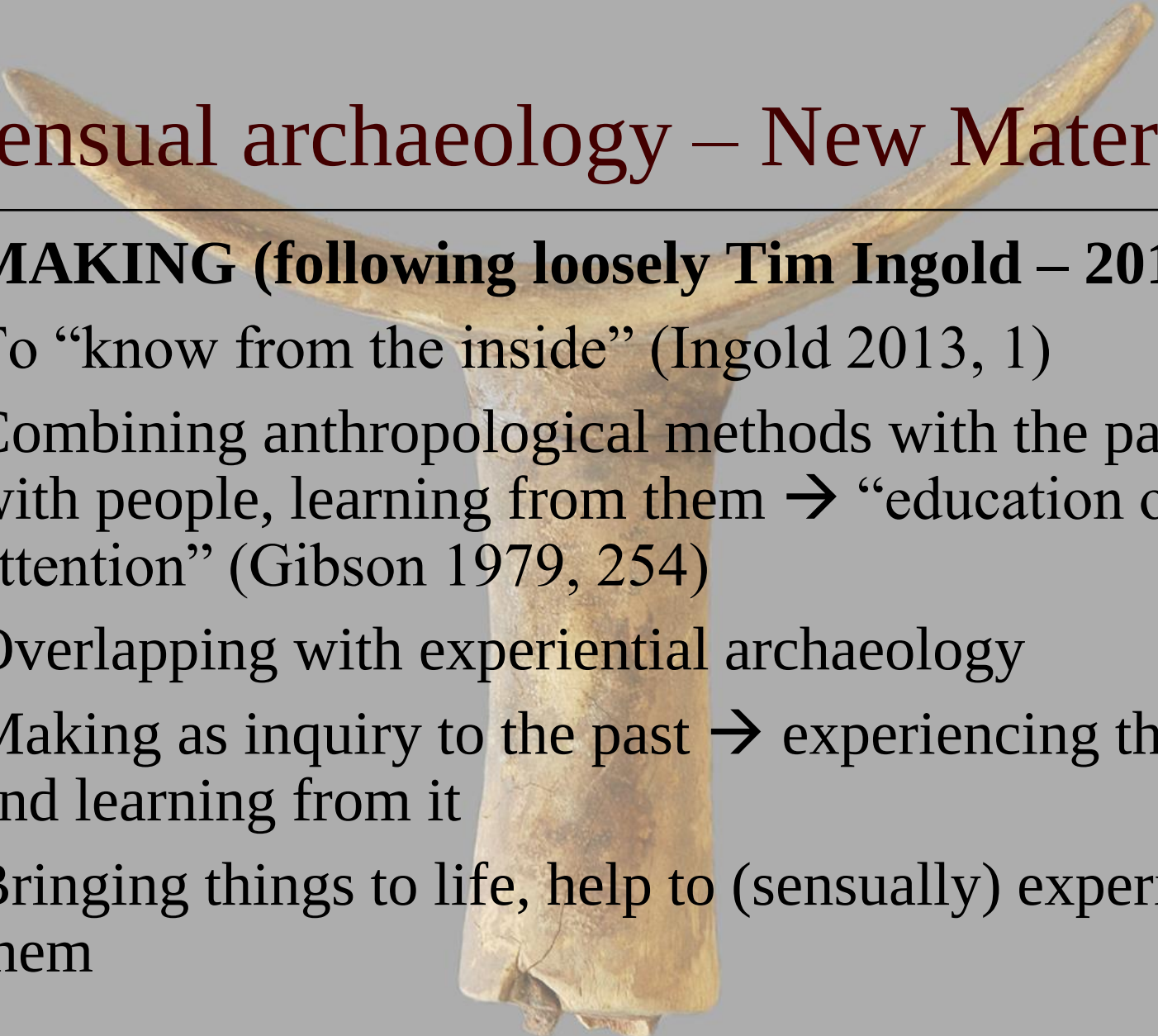
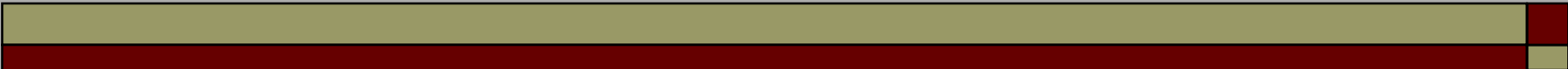
□ Padding?



TT8 Kha and Merit – Merit's bed with headrest

wooden headrest encased in two layers of cloth



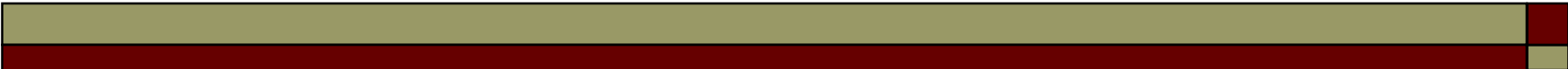


Sensual archaeology – New Materialism

- ❑ **MAKING (following loosely Tim Ingold – 2013)**
- ❑ To “know from the inside” (Ingold 2013, 1)
- ❑ Combining anthropological methods with the past: study with people, learning from them → “education of attention” (Gibson 1979, 254)
- ❑ Overlapping with experiential archaeology
- ❑ Making as inquiry to the past → experiencing the process and learning from it
- ❑ Bringing things to life, help to (sensually) experience them

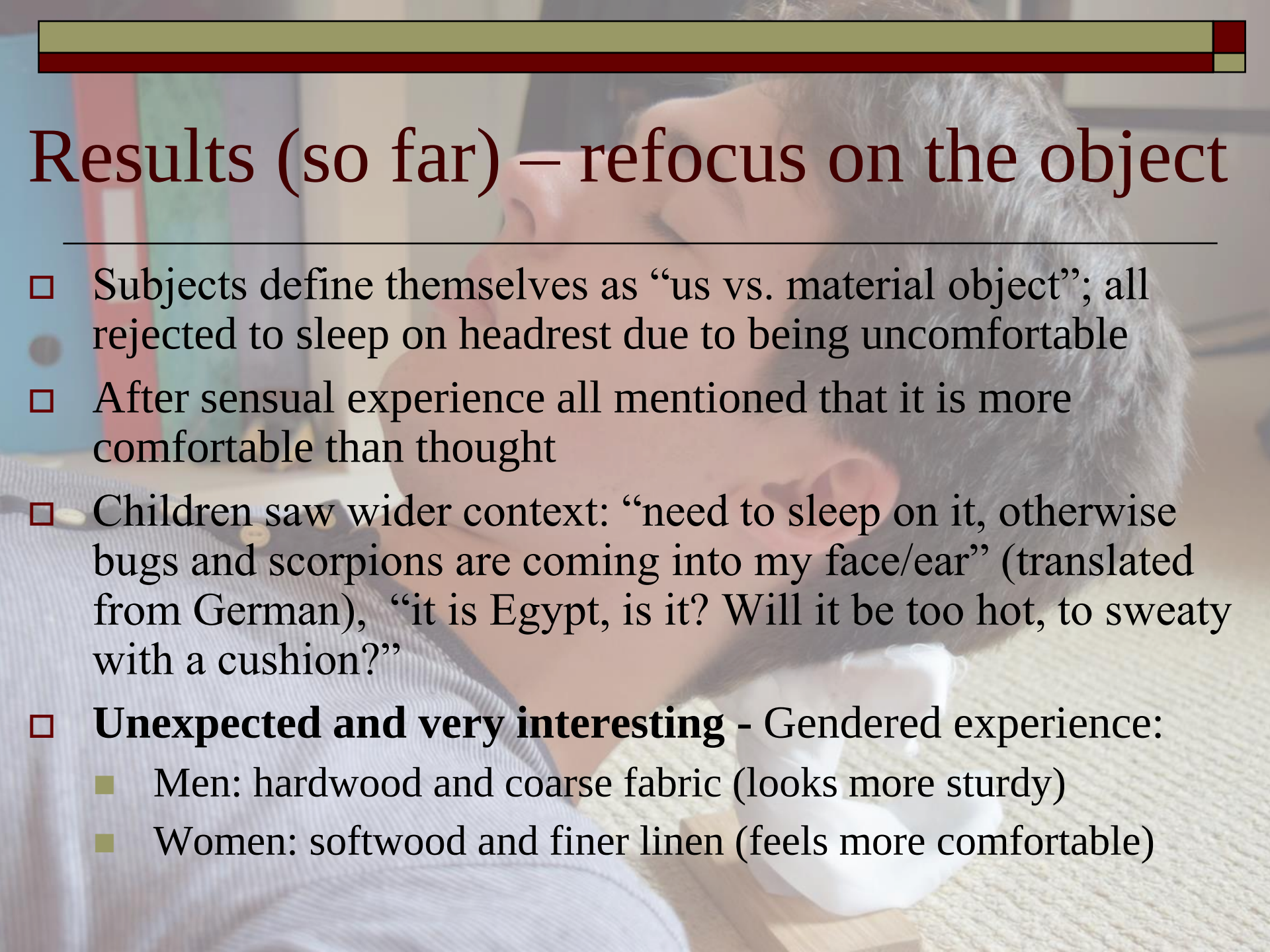
Sleeping on a headrest





Tracking experiences

- ❑ Observation, survey, questionnaire
- ❑ Experiencing to sleep on a headrest: perceptions, sensual involvement, changed knowledge / understanding
- ❑ just shy of 30 participants
 - Non-Egyptologists!
 - male, female, children (8,10) – age, gender, size specifics
 - British, German – differences in cultural background

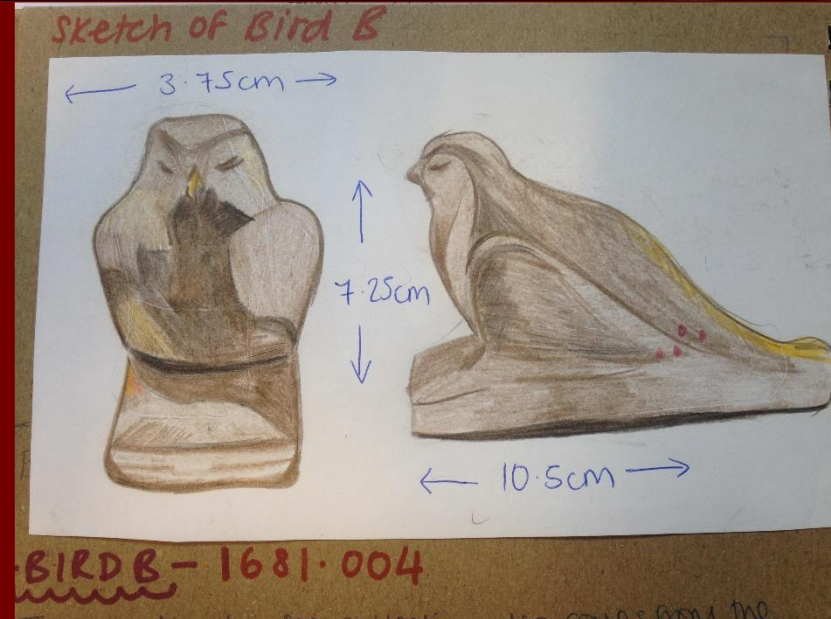
A person with grey hair is lying down, resting their head on a white, textured cushion. They are looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a bookshelf with colorful books. At the top of the slide, there is a decorative header consisting of a long horizontal bar with a light green segment on the left and a dark red segment on the right, followed by a small square icon with the same color scheme.

Results (so far) – refocus on the object

- ❑ Subjects define themselves as “us vs. material object”; all rejected to sleep on headrest due to being uncomfortable
- ❑ After sensual experience all mentioned that it is more comfortable than thought
- ❑ Children saw wider context: “need to sleep on it, otherwise bugs and scorpions are coming into my face/ear” (translated from German), “it is Egypt, is it? Will it be too hot, too sweaty with a cushion?”
- ❑ **Unexpected and very interesting** - Gendered experience:
 - Men: hardwood and coarse fabric (looks more sturdy)
 - Women: softwood and finer linen (feels more comfortable)

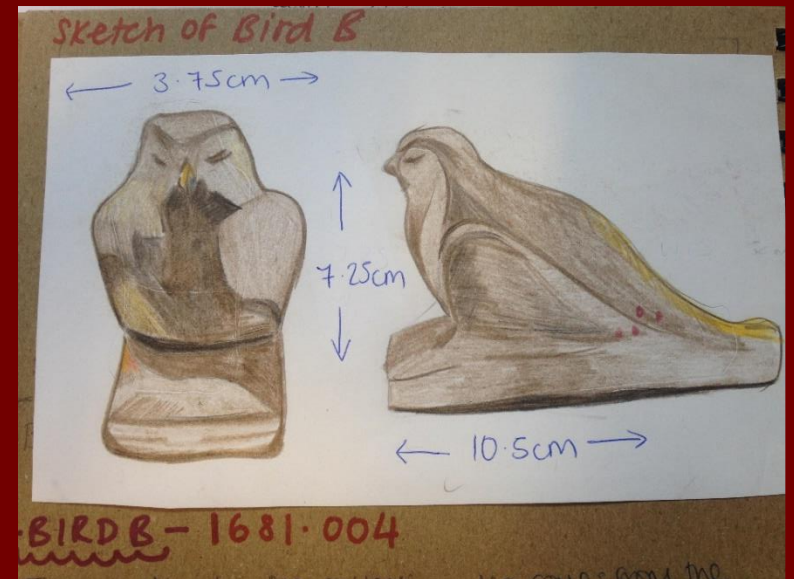
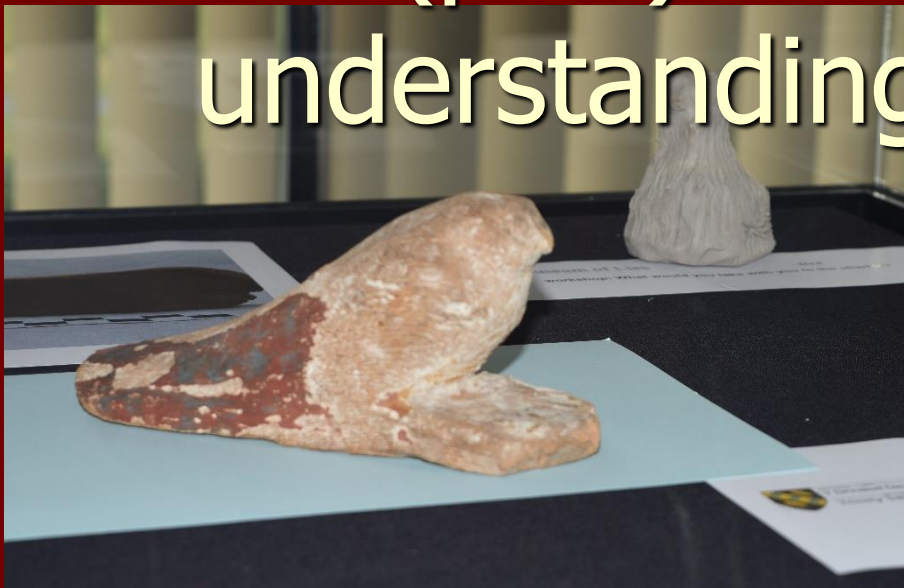


Inclusion of different narratives including art and performance in order to increase the experience of the objects





All (part) truths create the understanding of the object



The project: Bringing objects to life

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ix6168O8TjE>



Bringing objects to life

www.youtube.com

Bringing objects to life – the collaborative project between UWTSD, Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts and Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Merthyr ...