

## Call for papers: “Wrapping objects”

**Date :** August 30, 2009

### **TAG 2009, Durham 17th -19th December**

Abstracts, maximum 200 words including title of paper, name of speaker(s) and institution(s) to be sent to the session organisers by 30th September 2009. Individual papers are expected to specify the contribution they are making to archaeological theory. If you would like to discuss your idea for a paper first, please get in touch with the session organisers:

Susanna Harris, [susanna.harris@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:susanna.harris@ucl.ac.uk) or Laurence Douny [l.douny@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.douny@ucl.ac.uk)

Session Abstract: “Wrapping Objects”

Archaeologists are able to identify objects that have been wrapped, but what is the significance of wrapping? As a cultural and technical act, wrapping may be used to conceal and reveal, camouflage or highlight, transform and exhibit, conserve and preserve. Wrapping and unwrapping objects can be investigated as intentional acts that change the object in a physical, transforming and symbolic process. Existing theories in anthropology suggest ways to investigate the concept of wrapping as a means to imbue objects with powers and life (Gell 1998, 144-54) or to conceal emotion and content (Hendry 1993).

Archaeologists may explore these concepts through wrapping materials and objects that have been wrapped. Wrapping materials such as textiles, skins, fur, clay, leaves, earth, or thin metals have properties and efficacy that act on the objects and people’s perception of them. Objects that are wrapped raise questions of what is being covered or contained and why, as for example in objects wrapped in hoards and burials. We may also consider how surface patterns, architectural structures, conservation processes or writing act as forms of wrapping.

The aim of this session is to explore the theoretical and material implications of wrapping objects in specific times, places and contexts through empirical data.

#### *References*

Hendry, Joy. 1993, *Wrapping culture: politeness, presentation and power in Japan and other societies*, Oxford, Clarendon Press

Gell, Alfred. 1998, *The Distributed Person. Art and agency: an anthropological theory*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Ch.7, pp. 96-154

Further conference details can be found at the TAG website:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/tag.2009/>