

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY JOB SEARCH

Reconstructing Coastal Arctic Communities Through Relational Archaeologies of Place

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Abstract:

Inuit often describe their homeland as *nalunaqtuaq* (uncanny, ineffable) to convey how the land, water, and ice are always changing. Inuit see their identities, histories, and knowledge as inseparable from the places they inhabit, and as such their communities can also be understood as relational and emergent. In contrast, archaeological landscapes in coastal regions of the Canadian Arctic have been historically framed as static backgrounds upon which archaeological cultures or derived socio-evolutionary stage types were repeatedly inscribed. In this talk, I propose that addressing how people and places collectively participate in the production of human social worlds can permit new perspectives on the structure, scale, and character of coastal communities in earlier periods. To explore this idea, I discuss archaeological, oral historical, and palaeogeographical research that investigates how Paleo-Inuit communities (c. 4500 – 600 BP) in Amittuq, NU, emerged through reciprocal, generative relationships with persistent settlement places. In doing so, I argue for an archaeology of place that engages with Inuit epistemology and feminist posthumanism, and that interrogates community practices at multiple social and spatial scales. I then discuss the planned application of this approach to study the occupational history of the Avayalik Islands in Northern Labrador.

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