



New Frontiers in Memory Studies



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**Remembering Extinction:
Slow and Fast Memories of Biodiversity Loss**



Tuesday 23 January | 16:00 | IG 411

This lecture outlines the concept of slow memory and its operation in contemporary memorial politics, using the Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO) Project on the Isle of Portland (UK) as a case study. I will discuss the “memory culture of extinction”, which is institutionalized in museums of natural history and elsewhere, as the backdrop against which the effort to build a monument to extinct species is taking place. I will then focus in on the politics surrounding MEMO, which are caught up between arguments about the global relevance of biodiversity and the economic prerogatives of Portland as a peripheral community in an otherwise wealthy region. Portland, with its traditional stone industry, serves as a direct link between our modern cultural practice of monumentalizing that which we deem to be important, the discovery of fossils that lead to the scientific concept of extinction, and the past-life-turned-stone that connects us to deep time. And it exemplifies the kinds of power struggles that happen when memory activists endeavour to make a slow-moving process gain traction in accelerating time.

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