

ARCH/BIOANTH LUNCH TALK

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018, 12:00PM
SOC SCI 1, 261

CAROLYN SMITH

CHANCELLOR'S POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW AT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

MEMORIALIZED BELONGINGS: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH AND REPATRIATION OF KARUK BASKETRY



Carolyn Smith (Karuk) is a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Ethnic Studies, where she is continuing her research on the interconnections of the ontology of basketry, museum practice, and repatriation.

Native California basketry has been a central topic of anthropological research since the late 1800s, yet the focus of many of these studies concerns the form and function of basketry, with particular concern on basketry's place in pre-contact life. Ultimately, this type of research reproduces the notion that basketry exists in an ahistorical past, disconnected to the contemporary everyday life. Researching Native California basketry through a decolonizing framework, however, supports indigenous sovereignty and authority, thereby reducing the epistemic injustice of narratives that, at best, ignore indigenous experiences. In this vein, researchers are challenged to find methodological approaches that are not extractive; are accountable to community standards; and honor tribal worldviews. Grounded in indigenous methodologies, this presentation explores Karuk Tribe efforts of bringing baskets back home through repatriation. Focusing on historical and contemporary narratives of Karuk engagements with museums and anthropologists, Dr. Smith will illustrate how baskets are considered social beings—belongings—that “cry out” to be back where they came from. She will also describe what it means to weave pikyav (to-fix-it) and how this responsibility energizes Karuk dedication to bring baskets and other belongings back home.