

The Department of Art and AIA Toronto jointly present:

After the Destruction: Reacting to Losses of Cultural Heritage

Thursday Oct. 1, 4:00pm

University College UC140

The history of the world is under attack. Instability and conflict in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and other countries that are rich in the remains of our shared past have led to a huge rise in the looting of archaeological sites over the last few years. The damage done by looters, using everything from shovels to backhoes is incalculable, harming our knowledge of the past, tourism-based economies, and the cultural identity of regions where archaeological sites serve as reminders of diversity and tolerance. Moreover, recent revelations suggest that terrorist organizations such as ISIS are funding their activities through sales of looted antiquities, in addition to releasing propaganda videos of fighters destroying “idolatrous” antiquities and using ancient ruins as the backdrop for executions. What is to be done?

Professor Thompson’s talk will give an overview of the various legal and policing strategies currently in place to fight the looting crisis. She will also examine other less traditional, but perhaps more promising proposals, from marketing campaigns that attempt to persuade collectors not to buy, to computer scientists producing 3-D reconstructions of destroyed antiquities from crowd-sourced photographs, to the use of drones to monitor vulnerable archaeological sites.

For more details, visit art.utoronto.ca or aiatoronto.ca



Erin Thompson, J.D., Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Art Crime at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY). Her research focuses on the damage done to humanity’s shared heritage by the looting and smuggling of antiquities and other instances of the deliberate destruction of art.



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO



Archaeological Institute of America
Toronto Society



何鴻毅家族基金
THE ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION