



A presentation from Anthropology, Ethnology & Recovering Voices



Adrianna Link, Johns Hopkins University
with Introduction by Igor Krupnik, Arctic Studies Center

presents:

The Legacy of Urgent Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution 50th Anniversary of the Smithsonian 'Urgent Anthropology' Conference, April 1966

Thursday April 28, 2016 12:00pm, Rose Room (Room 337), NMNH

In April 1966, University of Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax organized a three-day workshop at the Smithsonian Institution to define the logistics and scope of a large-scale research program in "urgent anthropology." Conceived as an international salvage endeavor committed to the documentation of the world's disappearing cultures, under the creative leadership of Tax and Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley, urgent anthropology expanded into a series of projects and affiliated programs targeting a wide-range of social and scientific concerns—including environmental degradation, cultural preservation, and global industrialization. While the program was discontinued in the late-1970s, the legacy of urgent anthropology still exists as part of the Institution's archives and museums and is echoed through the mission of present-day initiatives like Recovering Voices. By retracing the program's development throughout the 1960s and '70s, this talk considers the benefits and limitations of the Institution's museum-structure in mobilizing collaborative research bridging the natural and human sciences and its unique potential for supporting similar work in the future.

Adrianna Link is a PhD candidate in the Department of History of Science and Technology at the Johns Hopkins University, where she studies the history of American anthropology and its intersection with the environmental and conservation movements of the 1960s and '70s. A former Intern and Fellow at the Smithsonian's Human Studies Film Archives, she is currently co-authoring a chapter on the history of volume 1 of the Handbook of North American Indians with Igor Krupnik and William Merrill. Publications in-progress include an ethnographic film submission to the Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences and a forthcoming chapter on the place of urgent anthropology within the global life sciences after World War II. She also serves as the News and Outreach Editor for the online relaunch of the History of Anthropology Newsletter.