

Wandering Through Other Worlds Talking with the Spirits

Centennial Retracing of the Expedition Route of
anthropologist Maria A. Czaplicka in the Siberian Arctic: A
Journey through Art, Cognitive Science and Anthropology.

Expedition Report

BY Anya Gleizer, Expedition Leader, Ruskin School of Art
University of Oxford

Jaanika Vider, University of Oxford

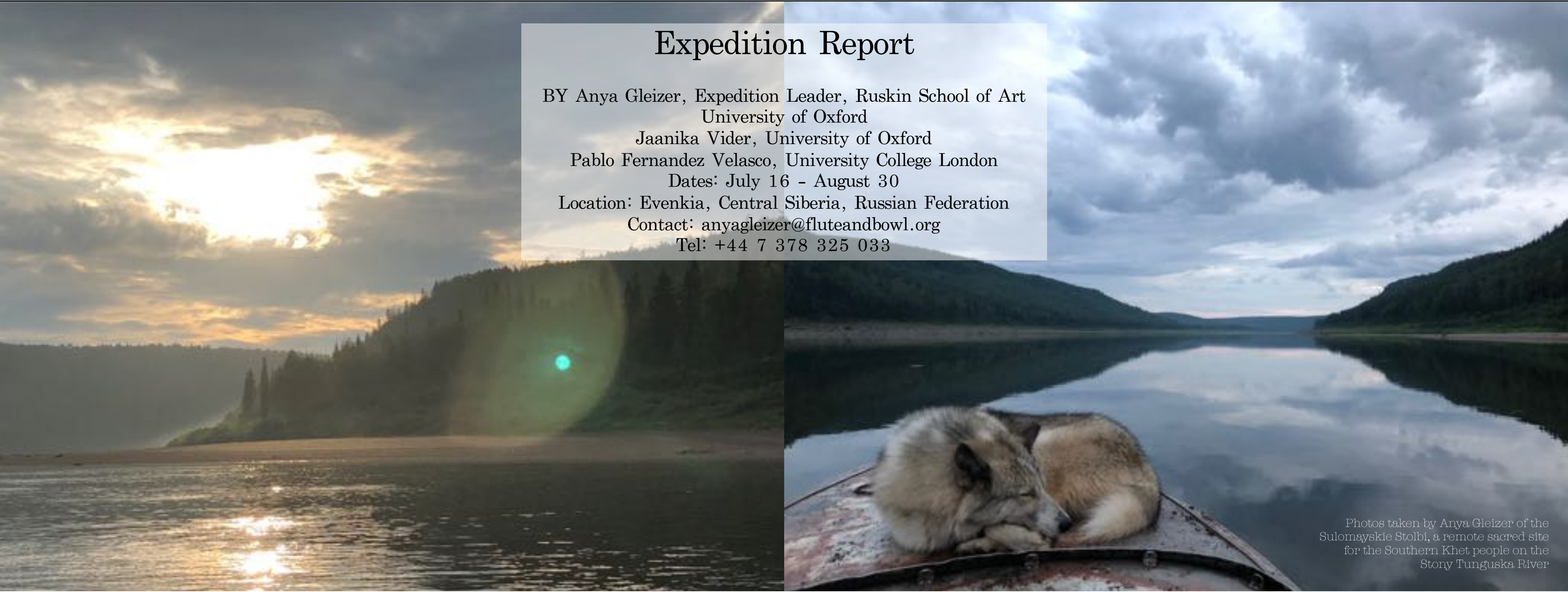
Pablo Fernandez Velasco, University College London

Dates: July 16 - August 30

Location: Evenkia, Central Siberia, Russian Federation

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Photos taken by Anya Gleizer of the
Sulomayskie Stolbi, a remote sacred site
for the Southern Khet people on the
Stony Tunguska River

Contents

Summary of Expedition	4
The Team	6
Aims	10
Historical Background	12
Itinerary and Description of Events	14
Importance to Arts and Heritage	24
Importance to Anthropology and Museum Ethnography	26
Report of the activities of each team member	28
Outcomes	31
Acknowledgements	34
Appendix: Finances	36

Summary of Expedition

The expedition “Wandering in Other Worlds” brought together an artist (Anna Gleizer; MFA student from the Ruskin School of Art and St. Edmunds Hall, University of Oxford), an anthropologist (Jaanika Vider; post-doctoral researcher in anthropology and museum ethnography from St. Cross College, University of Oxford), and a philosopher of cognitive science (Pablo F. Velasco, a doctoral researcher from UCL and École Normale Supérieure) who collaborated to recreate the famed 1914 expedition of the first female Oxford anthropology lecturer, Maria A. Czaplicka in arctic Siberia. The expedition revisited several key points of Czaplicka’s travel and interaction with Siberian native Evenki people in the Yenisei region of the Krasnoyarskiy Krai of northern Siberia (e.g. Tura and Chirinda), to examine the distance between her pre-soviet experience of these lands and peoples and the post-soviet reality of contemporary Evenkia, and to attempt a re-contextualization of the cultural artifacts on display in the Czaplicka exhibition of the Pitt Rivers museum, with an eye to the changes in anthropological practice, and the contemporary lived-experience of material culture in Native Siberia.

This project used Virtual Reality recording and visualisation technology to begin a broader social project of creating links between native Evenki institutions in remote settlements and the University of Oxford, raising awareness about the contemporary political and environmental problems these communities face, and also allowing them space to represent themselves as they would like to be seen.



Maria A. Czaplicka
Polish-born Oxford
Scholar of Anthropology
Spear-headed a majority
female, female-led
Expedition across
central Siberia, today's
Evenkia
1914-1915

The Team

Anna Gleizer

Expedition Leader - Artist - Medical Officer

Gleizer is an MFA student at the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford, who studies participatory performance and the possibilities offered by VR in the visual arts. Coming from a previous degree in Ecology at Dartmouth College, USA, Anna has extended fieldwork experience in Siberia (lake Baikal circumnavigation, Chita Vitim descent, and Chukotka Ornithology research for the WCS) and in the United States (Mt. Moosilauke, NH, Castner Glacier Alaska, and Isle Royale on Lake Superior).

Her research interests center on exploring and unpacking the nature-culture binary as it is communicated through the visual arts, the possibility of performance as an artistic embodiment of agential-realist theory and as a method of overcoming cultural barriers and facilitating new connections. Gleizer has worked previously with museums and schools, exhibiting her work in the National Gallery of Scotland, the Glasgow International Festival, the Edinburgh Fringe, WhiteSpace gallery, Sorbonne Paris 3, and Tricaud&Pigasse, Paris. She has worked with schools on educational art projects for young ages in Japan (Ashino and Kurodahara elementary schools), Scotland (Edinburgh Zoo Education Center, Imagine Productions, Dunbar Elementary school, and the George Hariot School), France (Russian Gymnasium), and the United States (Hanover Middle School, NYC Public School 3).

For more information, visit www.anyagleizer.com



The Team

Jaanika Vider

Anthropologist - Specialist in M. A. Czaplicka - Museum Ethnographer

Vider is a Postdoctoral Associate at the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography at the University of Oxford. Her DPhil thesis, completed in 2018, focused on the career of early female anthropologist, Maria Czaplicka, the expedition she led to North Central Siberia in 1914, and the museum collections born out of this expedition and their place in the history of anthropology. This research attempted to understand the dynamic between students and teachers, focusing on the first generation of academically trained fieldworkers and subsequently considering their role in propelling anthropology further. It further studied the changing relationship between museums and field anthropology, role of collections, gender issues and the tensions between anthropology's scientific endeavors and need for popularisation of anthropology.

Vider's research interests include history of science, the role of women in early academia, museum studies, philosophy of history, material and visual anthropology, and Arctic anthropology.

For more information, visit <https://oxford.academia.edu/JaanikaVider>



The Team

Pablo Fernandez Velasco

Philosopher - Cognitive Scientist

Fernandez is a doctoral student at the Department of Cognitive Science at École Normale Supérieure in Paris and a visiting researcher at University College London, where he collaborates with the Spatial Cognition Lab (Institute of Behavioural Neuroscience), the UCL Philosophy Department and the Interactive Architecture Lab (Bartlett School of Architecture).

Fernandez's research areas are distributed cognition, spatial cognition and phenomenology. Fernández has wide-ranging expedition experience, having participated in expeditions to the Scandinavian arctic, the Faroe Islands and Japan. In 2016, he received funding from the University of Edinburgh to visit a Zen monastery in a remote, mountainous area of Akita to participate in the monastic practice from the standpoint of phenomenology.

Pablo Fernandez wrote his Master's thesis on the phenomenology of Zen meditation under the supervision of Andy Clark, and went on to publish this work in 2017 in the Journal of Consciousness Studies. For this project, Pablo Fernández will be using methods of cognitive ethnography and phenomenology. His research on the aesthetics of VR technology, a line of work he explored in his collaboration with the Interactive Architecture Lab, was also an important contribution to the development of the project.





Aims

1. Explore the potential of VR technology for unveiling the hidden affordances of museum objects in collaboration with Evenki locals. Record the Czaplicka collection with VR technology and share it with locals in Siberia using a portable VR headset. This experience will also serve as a case study to reflect upon the broader possibilities that this technology can bring to knowledge exchange between ethnographic institutions.
2. Provide locals with the equipment, training and technology to represent their own stories effectively. Create an interactive VR film in collaboration with the Tura museum and Evenki locals, in order to supplement the Native Siberian collection of the Pitt Rivers (which was supplied by Czaplicka herself 100 years ago), thus providing a window into the modern conditions, practices, and lives of local inhabitants. This film will allow visitors of the museum to experience the living contemporary culture of native Evenkia, as well as some of the drastic changes it has undergone since Czaplicka visited these settlements before the Bolshevik revolution.
3. Explore the interest of locals and of local institutions to become involved in the portrayal of their culture by the Pitt Rivers Museum. Establish the adequate partnerships to open the possibility of a later-stage visit from Evenki locals to the Pitt Rivers museum.
4. Create an interactive family-friendly performance-installation, examining the contact between West and East, embodied in the interaction of Czaplicka's 'curious' anthropological gaze and the gaze of Siberian Evenki natives directed back at her. The possibility of contact and understanding between involves a journey through different worlds, a critical interrogation of anthropological practices, a glimpse into Siberian history (pre- and post-Russian Revolution) and the remarkable story of an Oxford scholar who first ventured into these remote areas and documented her experience 100 years ago.



Czaplicka's Siberian Collection, brought over in 1915 represents the most recent material representing aboriginal Siberia in the museum today.

Historical Background

The initial inspiration for this expedition came from the 1914-15 expedition that Maria A. Czaplicka undertook in the Yenisei Region of Siberia, along with her colleagues: Dora Curtis (an artist), Henry Usher Hall (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) and Maud Haviland (an ornithologist). This expedition resulted in the publication of her books, *Aboriginal Siberia* and *My Siberian Year*, the latter, a personal account written in the style of a travel-journal.

Maria Czaplicka was an exceptional woman and scholar, remarkable for her time. Born in Poland in 1884, she became the first woman to be awarded the Mianowski scholarship to study in the London School of Economics, and in 1911, joined Somerville College at Oxford University to study anthropology (Vider, 2017. p.14-15). During her 15 months of Siberian fieldwork, Czaplicka went to great lengths to procure artifacts for the Pitt Rivers collection, sometimes trekking alone for hours in challenging conditions, or else sacrificing food in order to prioritize the collections. The legacy of these efforts lives on in the museum's Siberian collection, most of which was obtained during these years. Czaplicka's research and book helped raise public awareness and interest in shamanistic cultures across Siberia, and upon her return she was awarded the prestigious Murchison Award by the Royal Geographical Society.

However, unable to secure British nationality in time, she lost her position to a man in 1921, and faced with financial debt and the marriage of her expedition partner, Hall, to another woman, Czaplicka took her own life in 1921. Czaplicka's story as a pioneering woman in a predominantly male field, an immigrant, an Oxford scholar, and an explorer is an intriguing point of departure when examining the development of the field of anthropology in Britain.

Czaplicka's expedition is interesting also in that it provides a comprehensive picture of native Siberian cultural practices before the cultural genocide brought on by the Russian Revolution, the forced collectivization of reindeer herds, and the aggregating of nomadic native populations in Soviet settlements. It therefore sheds a rare light on the lives of pre-soviet Siberian natives.



THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE.
(UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.)

TELEPHONE 6361 CENTRAL.
TELEGRAMS "POLCONICS"

CLARE MARKET,
LONDON, W.C.

17th October, 1911.

Dear Madam,

I have no hesitation in recommending Miss Czaplicka as likely to prove herself a delightful inmate of a residential college. The only hesitation I could possibly have would be in regard to her age and the fact that she has been entirely her own mistress for several years. The fact that she wishes to enter the college would lead me to expect that you would find

fully willing to conform to all its rules. Her

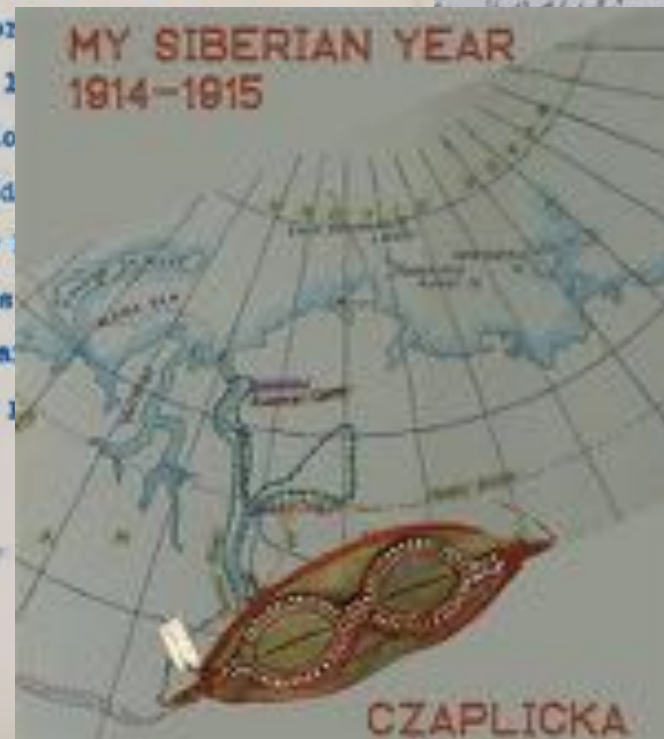
al qualifications are of a high order. She is recommended by Dr. Seligmann, the Director of the course in Anthropology, to her intelligence a considerable addition. It was not necessary for me to enroll as a student of this school of London. I happen to be acquainted with her however and know that from that point of view she is satisfactory.

Yours faithfully,

C. S. MacLaggan
Secretary.

Somerville College,
Oxford.

MY SIBERIAN YEAR
1914-1915



CZAPLICKA

Near

Miss Petrose,
just as I
isei I got my first
gland and heard
right then confu
to meet shortly
send off by them
land to England.
is to post this



ПОЧТОВАЯ КАРТОЧКА



30 Annis

Miss Petrose.

Somerville College

Oxford

England.



— 37 —

— 37 —

Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: or
The Artificial Changeling, Historically presented
in the mad and cruel Gallantry, foolish Bravery,
ridiculous Beauty, filthy Finickiness, and odious
familiarity of most Nations, fashioning and altering
their Bodies from the mould intended by Nature.
J. B. Esquimaux Cherosophus M. D. (John Bulwer)
1658

p. 112 Certain forms & strange shapes of
the nose much affected and altered



Itinerary and Description of Events

Leaving Oxford in mid July, Pablo Fernandez and Anya Gleizer travelled to Evenkia, replicating as closely as possible Czaplicka’s own methods of transportation. They travelled by train from Moscow to Krasnoyarsk, by bus to Yeniseisk and then by boat up the Yenisei river to the village of Bor, where they were met by the fisherman and Khet native Ruslan Tyganov. They then traveled up the Подкаменная Тунгуска (Stony Tunguska) River in his canoe to the tiny settlement of Sulomay, a village that is home to the last living speaker of the Southern Kheto language.

Apart from our own expedition incentives we were also helping locals with the delivery of essential goods. Because of climactic changes the rivers have been running low in Evenkia in summer 2019, inhibiting regular cargo ship-delivery of goods to remote villages. Likewise, the burning of huge areas of taiga (we later found out that a total of 14.9 million hectares had burned over the summer of 2019) caused a smog so dense that many of the summer delivery and mail flights were cancelled due to lack of visibility. As a result, villages could not access critically needed supplies such as medicines, flour, and school materials. Because we were making our way to Sulomay by canoe with a knowledgeable guide who was able to navigate the underwater stones and rapids, Anya had made pre-arrangements with our acquaintances in Sulomay to deliver several bags of needed goods, including school supplies for the kindergarten, food and medicines. A portion of the TORCH grant was set aside expressly for this purpose, so that we may help the communities we visit with their actual needs and that our presence does not become an imposition by using up scant supplies.

Anya and Pablo remained in Sulomay for two weeks (one week more than intended because of lack of transportation out, again on account of the smog). While there, Anya worked with local young people, teaching them the use of the VR camera technology and helping them to begin shooting a film from their perspective, showing everything that they wished to show to the Pitt Rivers museum. This time was also important for developing “Irgichit’kan” or Little Wolf, the character who acts a go between in both the VR film and performance, who came together from the accounts of elders in Baykit and Surinda, and the children of Sulomay. Anya also recorded an interview with the last Khet speaker, resident in the old part of the village. Pablo conducted some interviews (with Anya translating) about Khet villager orientation in the forest, in order to contrast it with that of the reindeer herding nomadic Evenki later on. Pablo and Anya also took on the additional impromptu project of building a playground for the Sulomay kindergarten, as there was little to do in our wait for the helicopter, and there was nowhere for the small kids to play. We would make small excursions out of Sulomay, with fisherman going up the river, to learn about local landmarks, observe local fishing methods and learn more about the challenges facing out hosts in the tiny settlement of 178 people. One of these excursions took us some 50km upriver from Sulomay to a Khet sacred site, the Sulomayskie Stolbi. We paid tribute to the Grandfather and Grandmother river guardian standing stones in local fashion, aided by our guides Sergey and Anastasia Tygonovi. We also learned of their fears that the opposite bank of the Podkamennaya Tunguska could soon be sold to Chinese prospectors for timber, upending the ecological balance of the area and violating the sacrality of the site.



Anya watching Sergey Tygonov
fish from the Sulomayskie Stolbi,
a sacred spot for the Khet
people. Above on the right you
can see the Grandfather and
grandmother rocks, guardians of
the Podkamennaya Tunguska
River.



Starting up the motor while navigating a shallow river in a near-total white-out because of the smog, trying to get to Sulomay on the Stony Tunguska River. Without our skilled driver and guide Ruslan Arkadievtch Maximov we would have surely hit rock.



Left: Anya working on the
playground of the
kindergarten in Sulomay.
Right: Natasha Korotkih in
the role of Irgichit'kan.

We travelled to Tura via the settlement of Baykit (where we were once again delayed due to smog) but, as a lucky chance, our delay allowed us time to witness, record and participate in the bear-skin shaking ritual, and to interview a local master of traditional Evenki beaded embroidery, Vera Inokentievna. From Vera, Anya acquired a new piece of contemporary beaded embroidery for the Pitt Rivers Collections.

Finally arriving in Tura, we were met by Jaanika who had traveled there directly. There, we established contact with the Evenki Ethnographic Museum who were to become our local partners. We then travelled together to the remote township of Chirinda, on the arctic circle – an important site on Czaplicka’s route as she had stopped there for several days for a Muchun (equivalent of modern day Suglan gathering), and had taken many photographs and recorded many encounters with locals on the site. As provisioned in our TORCH grant, Anya used the remainder of the “local supplies” fund to buy fabrics and materials for Chirinda’s house of culture, needed for the sewing of native traditional costumes for the special events and festivals they organized. In Chirinda Jaanika, Pablo and Anya did the bulk of the work for this project, sharing the photographs from the PRM archives and recording reactions, interviewing Evenki natives about their spatial orientation strategies, sharing the VR footage of the collections in Oxford, and recording much of the film on site. Anya also used her time in Chirinda to help the house of culture sew traditional native costumes from the fabric she had brought to celebrate the upcoming “День Аборигена” or day of the aboriginal. (A note on smog conditions in summer 2019: the Aboriginal Day celebrations were cancelled in Tura because smog conditions were deemed too dangerous for people to meet outside. In Chirinda however, far north from the burn areas, the skies were mostly clear).

During their time in Chirinda, Jaanika, Pablo and Anya also travelled across Lake Chirinda to visit Baba Velntina Oyëgir and her husband, the last remaining villagers living nomadically in a traditional chum, to record her stories about Evenki myths and legends and also to learn about why Chirinda no longer kept reindeer herds.

With the help of local hunters, going off of landmarks in some of Czaplicka’s historic photographs and daguerreotypes, the team was also able to locate the location of the shaman burial site from which two objects held in the PRM archives were removed (the fish and the raven). We then recorded Baba Valentina explaining what must be done in order to right the balance and mend the hurt caused by the theft of these figurines of ongon, or animal-shaped spirits. While in Chirinda we were also able to identify some of the people previously unnamed in Czaplicka’s photographs, helped by locals who recognize relatives and places. For example, the site of the photograph of 5 men (see next page) was identified as the cellar of the Chirinda Church, as it is (and was) the only building in the region made of imported pine logs (no large trees grow this far north). The construction of the Chirinda church is a local historical curiosity, with each of the heavy pine logs having been dragged into the taiga individually by reindeer team. Czaplicka recounts a funny story in which Evenki delegates voted to remove the lazy and arrogant priest that had been stationed there in 1915 and which the Evenki were being forced to supportt. The building of the church still remains and important scenes were shot within it for the VR film. It had been used as a house of culture, but has since been abandoned and is now in uninhabitable condition.

Finally, on the team’s return to Tura, an action plan was developed for a future collaboration of the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Tura Ethnographic museum. We held an open day for the public, press, and museum staff to learn more about local interests in this project and the direction Tura residents could see it taking. This occasion also allowed us to share the Czaplicka material (in the form of photos and video, and a presentation delivered by Anya and Jaanika) with a broader audience. Evenki locals were very interested in the material, especially where it related to family members, and were keen to learn more, and, in some cases, to one day see the collections for themselves in Oxford.





Left: the photo
taken by Maria
Czaplicka at the
1915 Muchiun.
Right: the
Chirinda Church
in 2019



Burial site in 1915 and today, from which the two "ongon" of the fish and the raven were taken by Maria Czaplicka and Henry Usher Hall. With the help of local hunters we were able to locate the site overlooking lake Chirinda



Left: our collaborators at the Tura Ethnographic Museum. Right: Anya gives a presentation for the public, museum staff and press at the Tura Ethnographic Museum



Upon the return of the expedition, Anya has presented about the methodologies used in this project at the Indigenous Epistemologies and the Artistic Imagination conference in the MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona) and the University of Barcelona in October 2019. Pablo is writing a paper on Evenki orientation strategies and the cognitive practice of anthropology, and Anya has been editing the footage collected during the trip.

On November 29th Anya gave a performance (Anthropometamorphosis) in Mansfield College, Oxford, based on this summer's research, in which a landmark event was achieved: with the help of new technology and local Evenki collaborators on the ground, an Evenki voice was brought to the Oxford campus, albeit virtually, for the first time since the first contact between Oxford scholarship and Evenki communities. Contemporary artist and master of traditional Evenki song, Galina Veretnova appeared live, via wireless projection and the application Whatsapp, to speak to her audience directly and sing – saying that she wanted to give voice to Evenki perspectives but in her own way, in her own time. This exchange, facilitated by Irgichit'kan, the performance character developed in Evenkia happened at the site of Anya's installed artwork in Mansfield College, which won the Mansfield Ruddock prize for cultural work in the arts in Evenkia.

Anya , Pablo and Jaanika presented this project at the Pitt Rivers Museum on December 9, to let the staff know what had already been achieved and what actions need to be undertaken to facilitate the next stages of this project – the possibility of inviting an Evenki traditional artist to a residency in the museum, the possible integration of VR into the exhibition strategy, and the eventual invitation of an Evenki delegation to Oxford.

Left: Anya and Galina presenting for the Mansfield College Lecture Series

Right: Galina's performance in Evenkia, shot in summer.





Images of the ongoing forest fires of summer 2019, shot from Krasnoyarsk (left) and from helicopter windows right. Smog caused by the fires was the greatest impediment to travel that summer, and caused Evenki natives untold amounts of distress and harm

Importance to Arts and Heritage

This project explored how museum objects can be engaged with by contemporary artists through storytelling and performance. This affords yet another meaning-making practice, placing the material artifacts within a narrative context, which attracts viewer engagement, and communicates some of the complexities of the Czaplicka exhibit and the “multiple worlds” the objects have traveled through before arriving on the exhibition shelf before the viewer.

The integration of new technologies (VR and film) into exhibition strategy will not only attract young audience members to interact with the exhibition, but it will throw a virtual bridge to the living members of the culture the exhibition represents, without disrupting the integrity of the existent display.

Finally, the importance of engagement with source communities cannot be overstated, not only out of ethical considerations (although these are paramount), but also considering the educational and community-building potentials of such interactions and the lasting benefits incurred by the hosting institution. The creation of links of exchange between museums such as the PRM with local collections within source communities promotes a dialogue that can transform collections from repositories of static, decontextualized material culture, into buzzing hubs of community engagement, story-telling, and teaching.



Left: sharing the PRM collections with local elders in Chirinda using VR. Right: sharing some of Czaplicka's photographs via iPad with Valentina Oëgir, an Evenki elder who still lives traditionally in a chum.



Importance to Anthropology and Museum Ethnography

Recent research in visual, material and museum anthropology posits that museum objects are not simply epistemic but can evoke multiple histories and ontologies through their presence (Bencard 2014, Edwards 2015). Concurrently, ethnographic museums are increasingly seen as ‘contact zones’ (Clifford 1997) or ‘catalysts’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2000) capable of fostering collaboration, contestation and enacting social change. However, despite these proclamations, there is no clear understanding of how historic ethnographic collections can be presented to harness the affective nature of material objects or provoke engagement with serious anthropological topics. This project addresses this gap by bringing together ethnographic fieldwork, collections research and museum display and interpretation practices centering on the Czaplicka collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM). The project thus investigates the role that museums can have for appreciating legacies of ethnographic research and the potential these have in creating fresh understandings of the contemporary world.

As a field site, PRM offers a distinctive set of circumstances that demand creative solutions for the collection’s presentation. Its typologically arranged displays are resistant to change and while museum collections with difficult colonial histories are increasingly afforded both scholarly and source community attention and become sites of collaboration and contestation (Peers and Brown 2003, 2009, Morton and Oteyo 2009), assemblages such as that of Maria Czaplicka remain dormant. In the museum, they generate temporally confused representations and perpetuate idealised narratives of the Arctic. This research proposed ways in which the historical display practices can be retained with added layers of interpretation and engagement to make contemporary anthropological research visible to museum audiences.

The multiple narratives arising from the objects are conceptualised as ‘hidden affordances’ (Gaver 1991) – latent potentialities, which can be made apparent through a variety of interventions. In museums, these are typically display labels, however, digital media, sound, juxtaposition of objects and performance can bring forth new narratives. Digital practices (such as VR and more traditional documentary film) can enhance and support the longevity and sustainability of connections made through the museum and offer flexibility of meaning currently difficult to convey. The Czaplicka collections offers a unique opportunity for engaging audiences with anthropological legacy and introducing them to key issues among contemporary source communities such as environmental change and extraction of natural resources in the Arctic. Unpacking and re-imagining this collection will illustrate the notion of the ‘global Arctic’ which Dodds describes as a ‘belated recognition that the Arctic was never marginal and peripheral’ and which ‘as “contact zone”, both imaginative and embodied, remains an on-going and contested affair’ (2017: 1, 3).



Documenting the PRM
Siberia Collections. Left:
Nicholas Crowe, a museum
worker helps Anya film VR
shots of artifacts of interest.
Right: Jaanika documents
the arctic clothing exhibit.

Short report of the activities of Anya Gleizer (University of Oxford)

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Tel: +44 7 378 325 033

The expedition resulted in the making of the multimedia installation *Granny's Bones*. *Granny's Bones* comprised an installation of two sculptures, or pods, into which a viewer could enter to watch one of two VR films, created as a duet, which put the sculptures in conversation with each other. The VR headsets were suspended inside each pod, the “Reindeer” and the “Pheasant,” which could be accessed by a door in the back. The work was accompanied by a performance that animated the installation and the haunting presence of “Little Wolf,” the playful spirit who also made his appearance in the VR film, darting in and out of virtual and physical reality. The piece speaks of the 1914 Czaplicka expedition and the enduring legacy of the problematic relationship between these two bodies (Oxford scholarship and Evenki native) initiated by Czaplicka herself. The piece was installed in the Ruskin School of Art, and is now in the permanent collection of Mansfield College.

The two sculptures of “pods” of the installation *Granny’s Bones* took the shape of two bizarre creatures, a “pheasant scholar” and a “reindeer hunter,” each a walking stereotype and conglomeration of material and visual culture of Oxford and Evenkia respectively. Each sculpture represents an external view: how a culture has come to be viewed by strangers. The “Reindeer” was designed by taking together all the artifacts on show at the Pitt Rivers Museum representing “Siberia,” and using the same “amassing” technique to pile them altogether into a rather nonsensical whole. The “Pheasant” was designed by children at a rural boarding school in Evenkia, collaged out of posh British magazines like *Tatler*, *Horse&Hound* and *Town&Country* after being asked: what does English culture look like? The piece questions (and humourizes) museum strategies of representation and appropriation. The two absurd characters are installed in Mansfield, facing each other in perpetual misunderstanding.



The installation Granny's Bones installed in the Mansfield College entrance hall.

Short report of the activities of Jaanika Vider (St. Cross College, University of Oxford, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography)

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Tel: +44 7 838 693828

The expedition successfully shared photographs of the Evenki objects in the Czaplicka collection as well as copies of historic photographs taken during the 1914-1915 expedition. This took place in different formats: in some cases the photographs were a basis of informal photo-elicitation interviews carried out by Jaanika Vider, at other times they were on display or left to be consulted by locals as they wished. In these later instances photographs evoked many interesting discussions between community members themselves.

Vider researched original photographs in advance of the expedition to offer some information with regards to people and places in the images, which proved extremely useful in enabling locals in Tura and Chirinda to connect with these photographs. One of the unexpected results of these interactions was the ability of local hunters to identify places according to landscape features. Where a scratched and faded image said little to us, it was readily identified as photograph looking towards lake Chirinda by its inhabitants.

Photographs of the Czaplicka collection were also of great interest locally and generated many communal discussions that at times saw grandmothers explaining the purpose of reindeer saddles to their grandchildren who have no living memory of reindeer riding. During these consultations we learnt more about the collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum and were able to see objects similar to those in the photograph. Not once did an eager collaborator in Chirinda rush back to us with their own implements or handicraft. At Tura, our collaborators from the local museum were further able to demonstrate the use of many of these objects. During the many conversations we had in Evenkia, locals were intrigued about how a piece of their cultural history has ended up in Oxford. While there was no desire to see most of the collection returned, many wanted the opportunity to visit their collection, to learn more about the people who made or owned these objects, find family members associated with the photographs and objects, and to ensure that objects forcefully removed from graves by Czaplicka were attended to and if possible, returned to their homelands.

Short report of the activities of Pablo Fernandez Velasco (University College London; École Normale Supérieure)

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During the expedition in subarctic and arctic Evenkia, Pablo Fernández ran a series of semi-structured interviews with reindeer herders, fishers and hunters to learn about their navigational practices. These interviews were complemented with the participation in different navigational activities (e.g. fishing). This cognitive ethnographic research uncovered Evenki spatial learning practices (e.g. the naming of different geographical entities, the learning of the outlines of the surrounding hills, etc.), hunting practices (e.g. trapping, following dogs, dead-reckoning) and exploration practices (e.g. setting concentric circles of fences around every new encampment as a way of learning the surrounding landscape). There was also a remarkable difference between local slavic hunters (who tended to employ map-based navigation) and native Evenki hunters (who tended to use navigation based on detailed knowledge of the landscape, familiarity cues and the following of tracks).

A central part of our Fernandez's research in Siberia explored the phenomenology of navigation for Evenki natives. Locals reported about their experience of orientation, and importantly, of disorientation (linked with a sense of diminishment, shame and an overwhelming environment). An important element in Evenki life is what has been called in the literature "Manakan", a sense of freedom of autonomy, and we found this to be an important element for Evenki spatial experience. For Evenki, spatial practices are permeated by this sense of "Manakan". While following dogs during a hunt, Evenkis don't anticipate the environment, and the surrounding landscape appears as self-determined and surprising. In contrast, traditional western practices such as the use of maps (or even cognitive maps) feel to Evenki hunters constraining and devoid and "Manakan".



Left: Gulinara Kimono and Altinay Ivanovna, our collaborators in Tura. Gulinara is the curator and guide into the Tura Ethnographic Museum and Altinay Ivanovna is the minister of culture of Evenkia.



Above, Anya Gleizer assisting in the making of native costumes for National Aboriginal Day with Emma Dmitrievna, the director of the house of culture in Chirinda. The fabric used to construct these costumes was purchased with the help of the TORCH grant.

Outcomes

1. An interactive Virtual Reality film retracing Czaplicka's route from Oxford to Moscow to the Arctic circle, revisiting key points of contact (Tura, Chirinda). The film was shot in collaboration with The Tura Ethnographic Museum, The Baykit internat and school, the Sulomay and Chirinda and Surinda houses of culture. This VR experience is being adapted to supplement the Native Siberian collection of the Pitt Rivers museum (which was supplied to the museum by Czaplicka herself, 100 years ago), thus providing a window into the modern conditions, practices, and lives of locals. We hope that this film will allow visitors of the museum to experience the living contemporary culture of native Siberia, as well as some of the drastic changes it has undergone since Czaplicka visited these settlements before the Bolshevik revolution. Excerpts of this film have already been tested on youth groups visiting the museum collections as an alternative means of story-telling that is family appropriate and engaging to great success. Excerpts were also used by Anya as a teaching aid in classes on Northern indigenous cultures in the Russian Gymnasium programme in the Chervell School, Oxford, for ages 4-8.
2. We established a working collaboration between native Evenki cultural institutions and the Pitt Rivers Museum, in order to encourage the museum to include native perspectives into its exhibition strategy. We developed a partnership with the Evenki Ethnographic Museum and with the Evenkia Ministry of Culture. Our aim is to facilitate a potential native Evenki delegation visit to the museum, a possibility of re-curating the native Siberia displays, and the opening up of the conversation about repatriating certain artifacts that were taken from shaman grave sites without permission from native people (these aims are in line with our Heritage Seed Grant funding from TORCH, Oxford). We have already begun the conversation with the museum about the first steps necessary to achieve these goals, including inviting an Evenki artist in resident to the museum in Summer 2020.
3. We explored the interest of locals to become involved in the portrayal of their culture by the Pitt Rivers Museum by sharing with them some of Czaplicka's historic photographs, currently held in the collections. We concluded that locals in Tura and Chirinda were very interested in the photographs, especially when connections could be drawn to ancestors or family members. Some of the photos were copied by the museum for their own collections and the local press took an interest as well. Two stories appeared about our presentation and the Czaplicka expedition in the main Evenki newspaper, Evenkiyskaya Zhisn' and our interviews were featured on the Evenkia wide local television programme.
4. We collected phenomenological reports from Evenki reindeer herders and hunters to understand how their unique navigational techniques affect their sense of the environment around them.
5. Anya Gleizer created a piece of interactive performance art for Mansfield college examining contact between the West and East embodied in the legacy of Czaplicka's interactions with Siberian native reindeer herders. This piece enabled an Evenki voice to be heard in Oxford for the first time, and gave a platform for Evenki artists and makers to tell their own story on their own terms. Coupled with the VR film in which we recorded instructions from elders as to how to rectify the enduring problematics of artifacts stolen from shaman graves, all this work is driving to the development of new performative anthropology methodologies, which are less extractive and appropriative and foster a dynamic bidirectional exchange, rather than a static unidirectional extraction. We hope that this work is only the beginning, paving the way for future exchanges between the Pitt Rivers and Evenki native institutions which will be of great educational, and cultural heritage value for both actors in the years to come. This piece was awarded the inaugural Mansfield-Ruddock Prize and has been exhibited in Mansfield College Oxford.



Наташа
Которких и
Лиля
Белоглазова,
Сулимай



Баба Валя
Оёгир, Чиринда

Спасибо Вам
огромное!
Thank you to
all our
collaborators!



Тамара
Курейская,
Чиринда



Анастасия
Тыгонова,
Суломай

Thank you to all who supported
this undertaking



The Ruskin School of Art



Appendix: Finances and Funding

Funding Source for Summer 2019 Expedition Only *	Funding Amount
TORCH Oxford Humanities Heritage Seed Fund	Total: £3000
Travel	£1650
Materials for local Evenki	£500
Oxford Workshop expenses	£850
Royal Geographic Society	£1500
Oxford University Expedition Council Grant	£1000
St. Edmund’s Hall Mike Pike Travel grant (for Anya’s travel)	£500
ENS Travel grant (for Pablo’s travel)	£500
TOTAL	£6500

*The Above budget does not include money received and spent on the preliminary expedition to Evenkia in March-April 2019 and the VR equipmen/expedition medical training. These costs having been covered before the beginning of the OUEC funded summer expedition. The total budget can be seen on the following page.

Funding Sources for Overall Project 2019-2020 (including spring 2019 expedition in March)	
St. Edmund’s Hall Project Grant (confirmed)	£350
Ruskin School of Art Materials Grant (confirmed)	£500
Mike Pike Travel Award, St. Edmund’s Hall (confirmed)	£500
Geographical Fieldwork Grants, Royal Geographical Society (confirmed)	£1500
Academic Travel Award, Santander (confirmed)	£1000
STEP Travel Grant, European Cultural Foundation (confirmed)	£900
St. Edmund’s Hall Masterclass Awards for WMT training of medical officer (confirmed)	£750
OUEC Expedition Grant (confirmed)	£1000
Heritage Seed Fund (confirmed)	£3000
Total	£9,500

Expenditures for Summer 2019 Expedition

Expense	Exp Amount GBP
Oxford Workshops Nov 2019 - February 2020 (projected)	850
Materials/Supplies Evenkia for Evenki natives	495.18
Vaccines	310
Travel London-Krasnoyarsk Anya	754.26
Travel London-Krasnoyarsk Pablo	524
Travel London-Krasnoyarsk Jaanika	747.25
Visa Pablo	105.6
Invitation for Visa Pablo	26
Visa Anya	0
Visa Jaanika	85
Travel Krasnoyarsk - Yeniseisk Anya	10.45
Travel Krasnoyarsk - Yeniseisk Pablo	10.45
Travel Yeniseisk-Bor Anya	63.88
Travel Yeniseisk-Bor Pablo	63.88
Travel Bor - Sulomay/stay in Sulomay Admin building Anya	60.7
Travel Bor - Sulomay/stay in Sulomay Admin building Pablo	60.7
Travel Sulomay - Baykit Anya	77
Travel Sulomay - Baykit Pablo	77

Expense (cont.)	Exp Amount GBP
Travel Baykit - Tura Anya	79
Travel Baykit - Tura Pablo	79
Travel Krasnoyarsk - Tura Jaanika	164.35
Travel Tura - Chirinda Anya	76.24
Travel Tura - Chirinda Pablo	76.24
Travel Tura - Chirinda Jaanika	76.24
Travel Chirinda - Tura Anya	76.24
Travel Chirinda - Tura Pablo	76.24
Travel Chirinda - Tura Jaanika	76.24
Travel Tura - Krasnoyarsk Anya	159
Travel Tura - Krasnoyarsk Pablo	159
Travel Tura - Krasnoyarsk Jaanika	164.35
Purchases to support local artists/makers/hunters	133.54
Subsistence Anya (Around £7.50/day for food expenses)	340
Subsistence Pablo (Around £7.50/day for food expenses)	340
Subsistence Jaanika (Around £7.50/day for food expenses)	340
Accommodation Tura	91.20
Printing Photographs	40.98
TOTAL	6,869.21

