Minnen från vår samtida
Arkeologi, materialitet och samtidshistoria

With an English summary

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Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av humanistiska fakultetens dekanus kommer att offentligen försvaras onsdagen den 4 juni 2014, kl. 13.00 i Lilla Hörsalen, Humanisten, Renströmsgatan 6, Göteborg.
Abstract
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During the last decade, the perspective of contemporary archaeology has been incorporated into the discipline of archaeology. The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to problematize contemporary archaeology as a field of research with emphasis on the development of methodology and the public potential that is inherent in this perspective. These are two central aspects that I consider to be of substantial significance, at the same time as they have not been given enough attention in previous research. The study is conducted on a theoretical framework based on the concept of materiality and on memory processes. The main questions concerns how contemporary archaeology can be conducted in practice, what results this provides and why these results are reached.

The thesis is based on the analyses of two case studies consisting of the archaeological investigations of the amusement park Ramneskärsparken and the Skatås rehabilitation camp, both of the 1940s. The study is conducted by using the method of component analysis. Four components have been identified as important and significant for a contemporary archaeological perspective; Archaeological methods, Contemporary archaeology and community archaeology, Contemporary archaeology as an interdisciplinary science and The assemblage of finds.

The methods discussed in the thesis give rise to a demand of knowledge from people outside the archaeological discipline. It also highlights the importance of both archaeological methods and interdisciplinary work including oral and written sources. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that matter sets things in motion. It is the meeting and interaction between people and material culture that activates memories connected to the sites in question, when excavated together with community groups. Contemporary archaeology works in contexts that now living people have experiences of and therefore also valuable knowledge about. Carrying out contemporary archaeological projects together with these people provides unique prospects of interpreting and working with the archaeological material. The results of the thesis show that archaeology of recent contexts partly serves other purposes and provides other values than an archaeology directed towards older contexts. The reason for this is that contemporary archaeology is an archaeology that has an overall focus on now living people, on ourselves.

Keywords: Archaeology of the recent past, Contemporary archaeology, Heritage, Conflict archaeology, Materiality, Archaeological Methods, Community archaeology, Public Archaeology, Memory, Skatås, Ramneskärsparken.