

Beyond nature and culture: Pounamu (greenstone from Aotearoa New Zealand) as a living archive

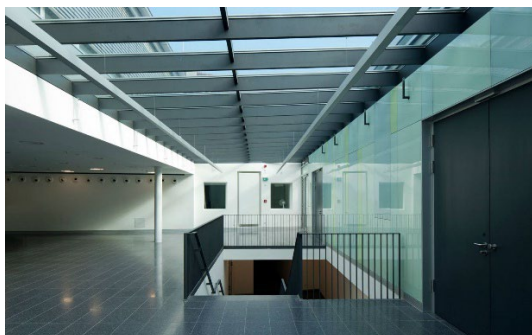
Alina Berg (LMU Munich)

Abstract

Pounamu – jade/greenstone from Aotearoa New Zealand – is a *taonga* (treasure) or more-than-human entity that has been deeply engrained in Māori cosmo-ontology, while also having been subjected to geological inquiry and (colonial) collecting and trade for centuries. Using a storytelling framework, it will be explored how pounamu ‘things’, when read as archives of combined natural-cultural knowledge, can tell stories of entangled knowledge regimes and intercontinental and -temporal encounters.

Pounamu comes alive in Māori pūrākau (legends) that highlight its deep affiliation with its land and place of origin - the West Coast (Te Tai Poutini) of Te Waipounamu (Aotearoa's South Island) - as well as through kōrero (stories) of ancestors and formative events. Geologists and provenance researchers try to retrace pounamu's particular journeys, the former creating stories of formation through tectonic temporalities and environmental changes, and the latter of exchange, acquisition and imitation across space and through time.

OBERSEMINAR



Institut für Ethnologie
Montag, 19.10.2026
16 – 18 Uhr
Raum L 155
Oettingenstraße 67