

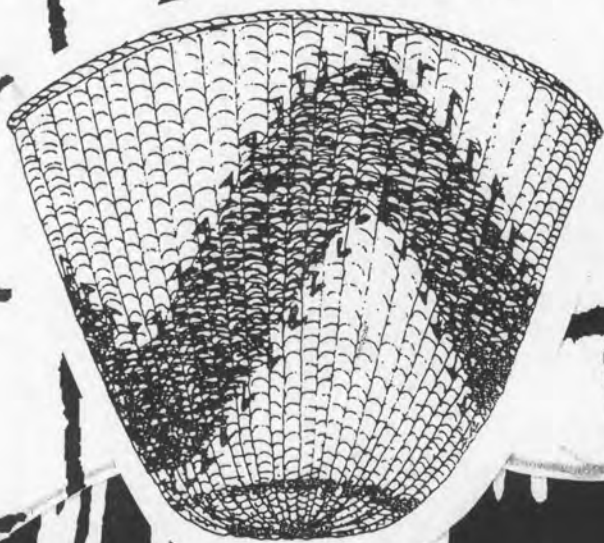
Here are the artifacts displayed: laid out against black velvet, their textures defined as if seen through the lens of a microscope. Upon closer inspection their surfaces blur. The label has been left off the vitrine. Once Context departs, Meaning is left to decide for itself which of the two it belongs to: History or Materiality.



Bombarded with text when there is no image, as if in compensation. Personal accounts clash with historical narratives; pure recollection fails to constitute an image.

She has an image of her mother described to her, which flashes up momentarily. It is a constructed image (though not false), one created to represent an event that occurred while the cameras were not looking.

Dear [redacted],
This week the Laura Marks essay I was reading as well as some other texts about post-colonial image-reclaiming/history rewriting and this video I just watched called *Memory and History*, where an artist is trying to reconstruct images/history of her parents' life in US Japanese internment camps, got me back to thinking about more personal/sappy/weird reasons why I am interested in using the imagery that I'm using ~~even though it's not actually useful to do this sort of self-analysis of blah-blah-blah~~ (your rant is spurring in me an even more rant-ish response) because the narrator in this video kept referring back to a mental image she had of her mother at the camp that she would never have actually seen, which reminded me of the only mental image I have of my father's mother (who I never met) which is a really vague memory of a polaroid that my mother found in a book in our garage of a woman standing on a bridge and said "I think that might be your grandmother but I'm not sure" -so the only image that I have of her isn't necessarily even of her, so she's a completely fictionalized and romanticized person (when I describe the picture to my mother it's not even the one she remembers finding, I say she had long hair but my mother says it was always short). But my grandmother (father's mother) plays this sort of weird mythical role in my family because most of us have never met her and because her life (and all of my dad's life) are mostly or completely undocumented, down to the fact that her adoption records have supposedly been destroyed. And part of the video, where the narrator goes to find the specific internment camp in California, reminded me of a day that I wish I had a home-movie of, when my sister and I were staying with my dad and he woke us up early one morning with the idea that we would drive to Oklahoma and find the specific reservation that my grandmother grew up on. And of course we couldn't find it (because that history is not very assessable and also because reservations aren't just places you can visit willy-nilly (it was closed for visiting hours at the time we arrived) so we ended up at some dinky 'museum' about Native American history/culture where we walked around and looked at weird statues and postcards and things. Anyway, this is my defense for using this imagery (colonial depictions of Native American artifacts), which many people find problematic, and aiming to create a false history/narrative between the artifacts and myself or the objects that I surround myself with. (Sorry this is a really long really moody really dense paragraph but I'm hoping that talking about this aspect of the project will help me to think about new/more interesting ways in which I can present it in this installation form, because currently I feel bored and unsatisfied with it, no matter how many projectors and monitors it may involve). Though after this I'm really not sure where to go so maybe you can help me.

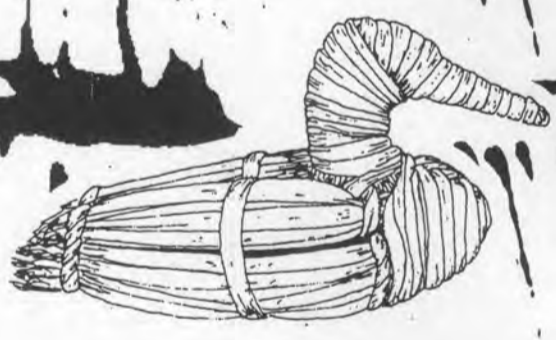


This process of discovery is like scavenging in a tide pool for the small, speaking objects that are briefly revealed there before the water rushes in again.

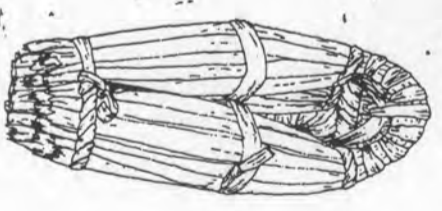
He wrote me: I will have spent my life trying to understand the function of remembering, which is not the opposite of forgetting, but rather its lining. We do not remember, we rewrite memory much as history is rewritten.



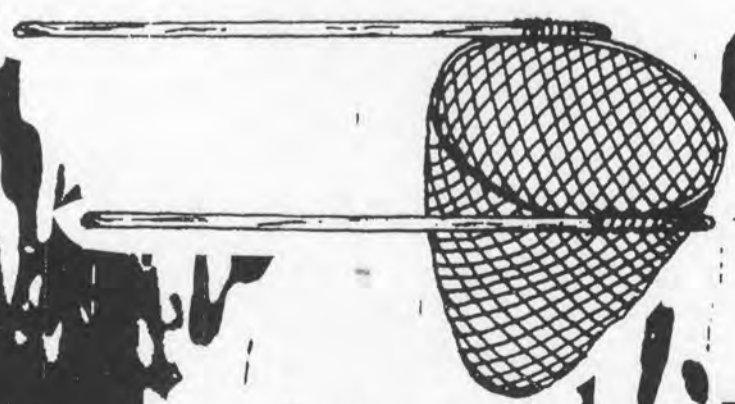
Purging is a common practice among many public library systems, where individual books—or more often entire sections or subject matters—are purged from the stacks because they are deemed irrelevant or unpopular among contemporary patrons. Between 2010 and 2012, the Chicago Public Library system withdrew books relating to particular cultures within North America, such as books about various cultures that immigrated to America as well as books about Native American cultures and Illinois-specific archeological studies. These images come from one of such books, one that wishes to inform but simultaneously fetishizes a culture through its artifacts.



repressed cultural memories return to destabilize national histories.



To read/hear the image, then, is to look/listen not for what's there but for the gaps—



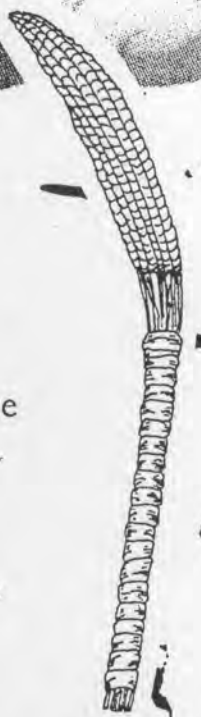
There are instances like these where personal history ends up in the Smithsonian. Once while reading a book on Texas history, I came across the story of my great-great grandfather on my mother's side, told in a fictionalized and idealized manner: a young boy who is kidnapped by Native Americans and raised until adulthood in captivity, until one day he is brought back to the village where his mother recognizes him. Once ushered back into white society, he uses his tracking skills to become a great Texas Ranger.

Legends are born out of the need to decipher the indecipherable. Memories must make due with their delirium, with their drift.

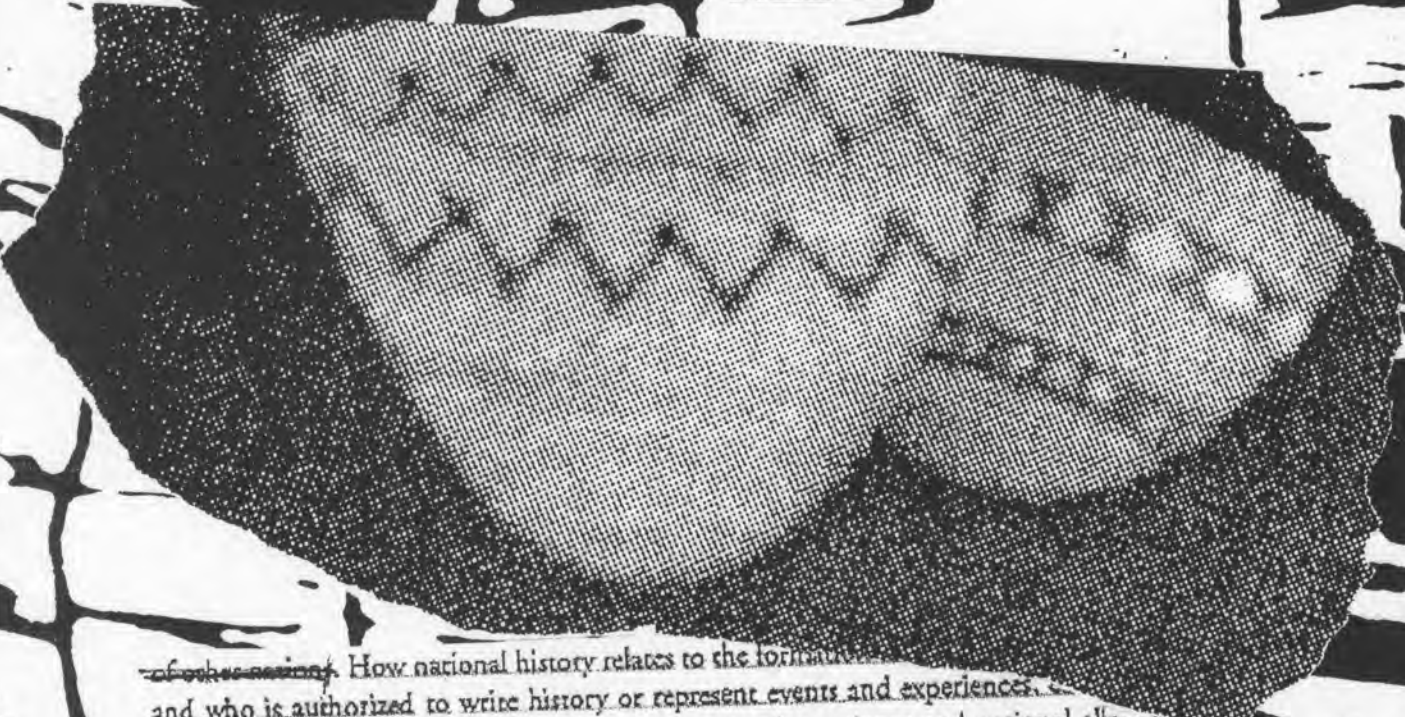


"They've got into the habit of moving about in a world of appearances"

A friend once told me of a man she met here in Chicago who controlled a warehouse of Navajo rugs and other artifacts. The objects were periodically loaned out to be used for design purposes by Ralph Lauren and other such companies. I imagined an entire warehouse filled with these artifacts, hoarded in a way that would never have occurred had they stayed within the context of their creators. Objects which in the present have accrued an overwhelming amount of cultural currency, but whose past is inevitably troubled. As with almost any situation involving colonization, the artifacts of a dominated culture can become valuable while the culture from which they originate is consistently devalued.



When remembrance fails, the story must be creatively falsified in order to reach the truth. When images cannot be made to represent, when they refuse to connect to memory, they float loose from history. Unearthed in the excavation of discursive history, these images stare up at us, like "strangely active fossils, radioactive, inexplicable in the present where they surface, and all the more harmful and autonomous. Not recollections but hallucinations" (Deleuze 1989, 113). Such images are "harmful" because they cannot be reconciled with either official history or private memory—but they are more harmful to official history, because they falsify it or reveal it to be incomplete.



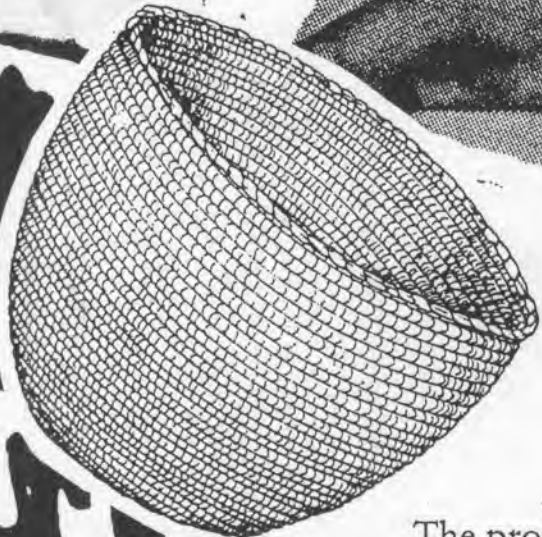
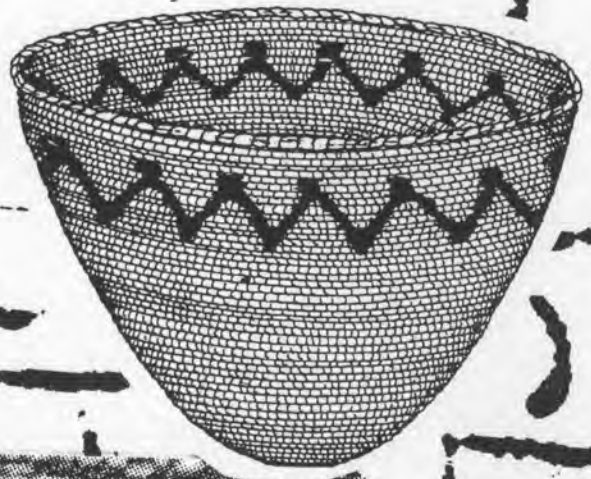
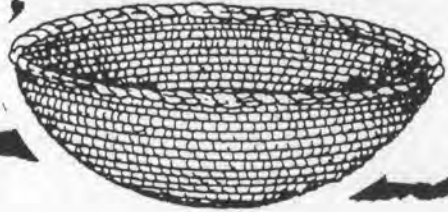
How national history relates to the formation of a nation and who is authorized to write history or represent events and experiences. no longer be based only on the preeminence of personal experience and national allegiances.

the disjunctive quality of "truth"

it is the thinness of the optical image, emptying the image of information and filling it back up with color and sound.

gentle, caressing rumination on the impossibility of recovering history from its representations.

I'm writing you all this from another world, a world of appearances. In a way the two worlds communicate with each other. Memory is to one what History is to the other: an impossibility.



The project started through a fascination with how these objects are represented, in a way that aims to be taxonomical but is inherently stylized. It is worth noting, I think (with a grimace), that in the book that these images were taken from people are illustrated in a similar style, as objects to be classified.

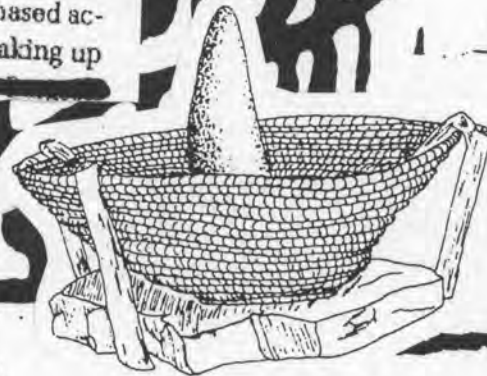
Not only is the historical archive available primarily to the victors, but also it is often those in the land of the victors who have access to a culture lost by the vanquished. Hence the paradoxical ability



inventing histories and memories in order to posit an alternative to the overwhelming erasures, silences, and lies of official histories.



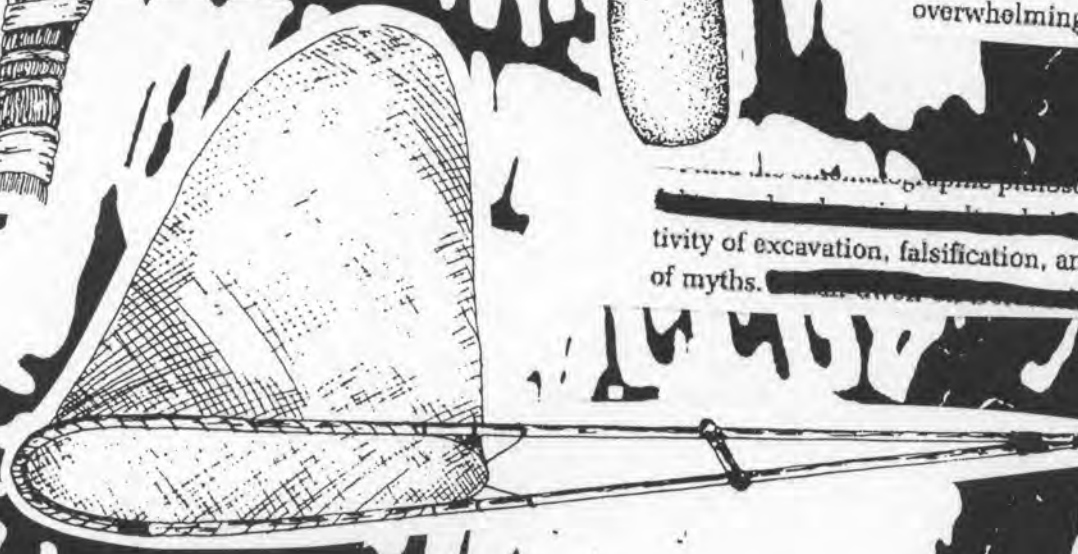
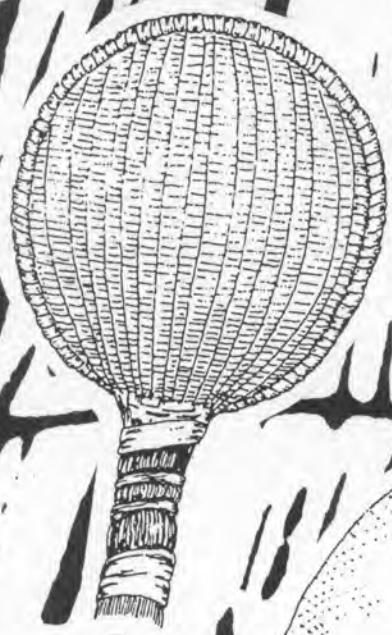
a multiphased activity of excavation, falsification, and fabrication, or the making up of myths.



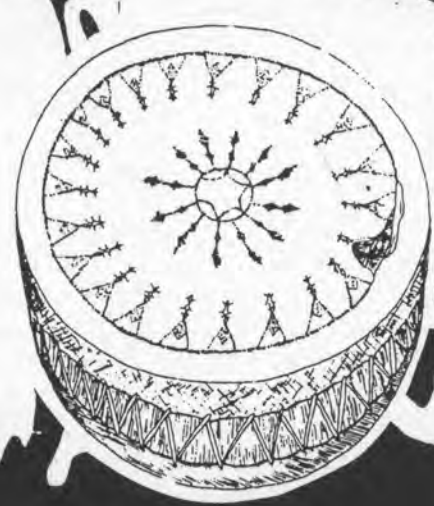
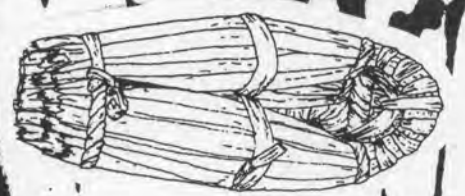
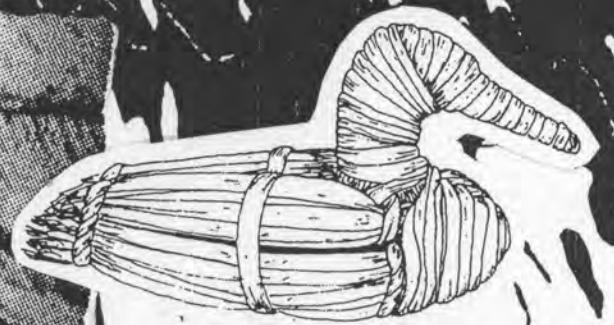
I grew up in a geographical area where artifacts of Native American cultures are ubiquitous. At my elementary school there was a display case for 'arrowheads' found on campus, a place where people were perhaps a bit more aware that everything in this country is build upon land that was once inhabited by another culture. Finding an arrowhead was at once a mundane and mythical experience. Any rock that was somewhat triangular in shape, or that was made of flint could instantly *become* an arrowhead for the discoverer, and the question of whether the object actually possessed this supposed historical testimony seemed beside the point. By inferring a historical narrative, these objects took on a mythical value completely separate from their utilitarian value (though arrowheads are valued for their relation to Native American culture, they are not valued as tools or weapons). Similarly, the treatment of these objects (and the illustrations from this book) serves to mythicize a people, one that still exists in a very real and non-mythical way.

At least they proclaim themselves to be what they are: images, not the portable and compact form of an already inaccessible reality.

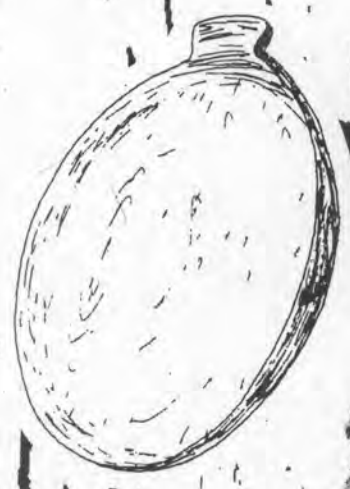
kind of "history machine" in which relationships between events, objects, institutions, and politics, as they move through time, produce assemblages of possible connections between past, present, and future.



and has brought them forth in another, giving them the possibility of a continued presence within new historical discourses.

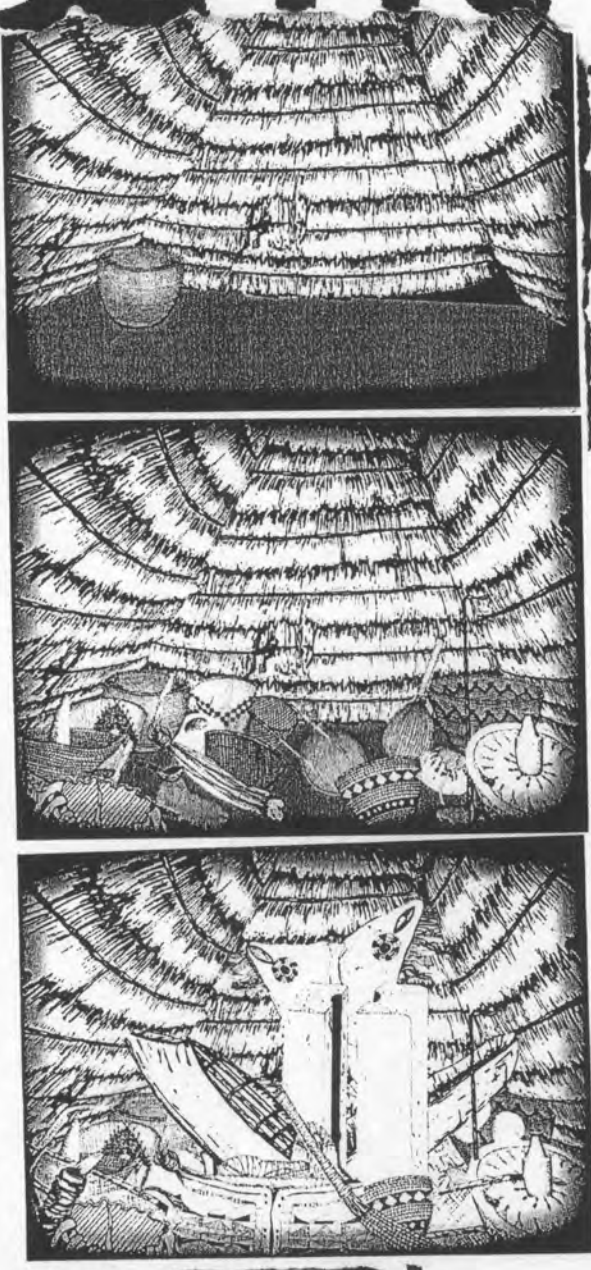


I began to imagine what these objects would do if freed from their historical context, if allowed to roam through time and place and defy their taxonomical classifications. Would they maintain their value, their mythical nature? Would they lie docile, removed from context and emptied of meaning? Or rather, would a new history and new meaning emerge?



if the images of the present don't change, then change the images of the past.

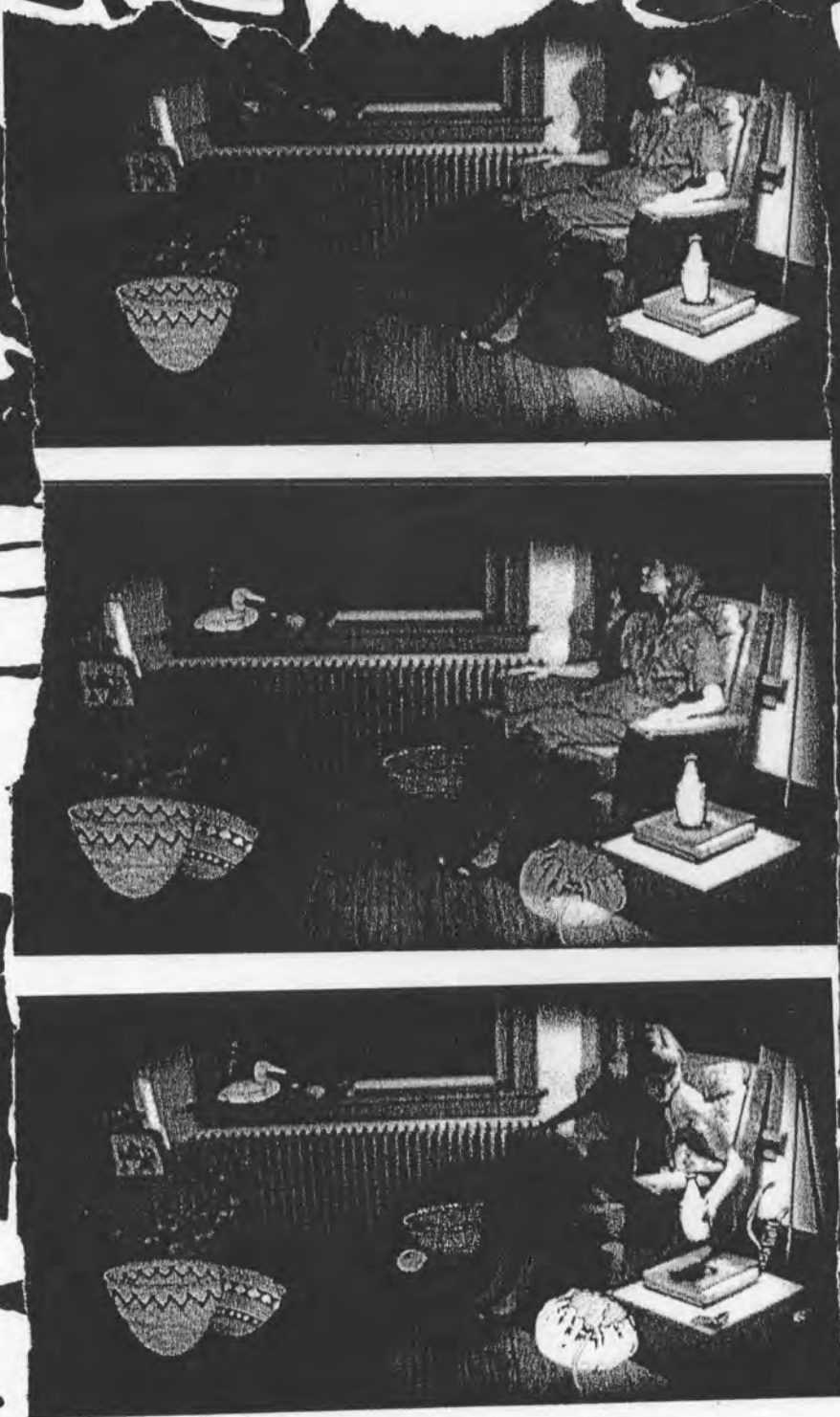
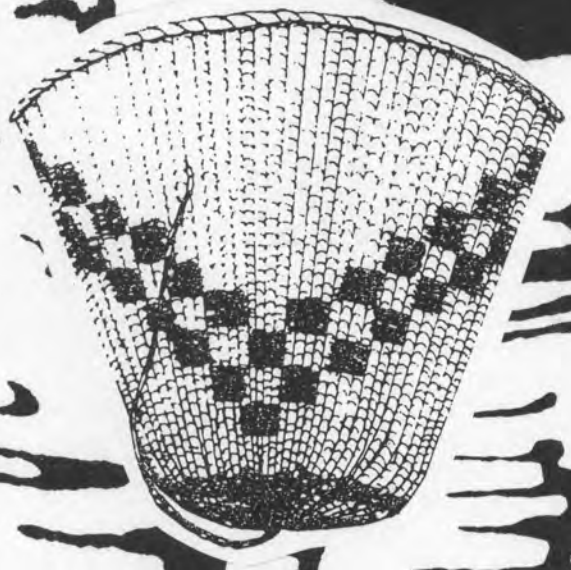
as a source of images when no others exist. When no image is available, in short, archaeology must be done in order to create images.



the voice of a minority people... And, in fact, it would simply replicate the transparent domination by which a minority is forced to speak in a minority voice.

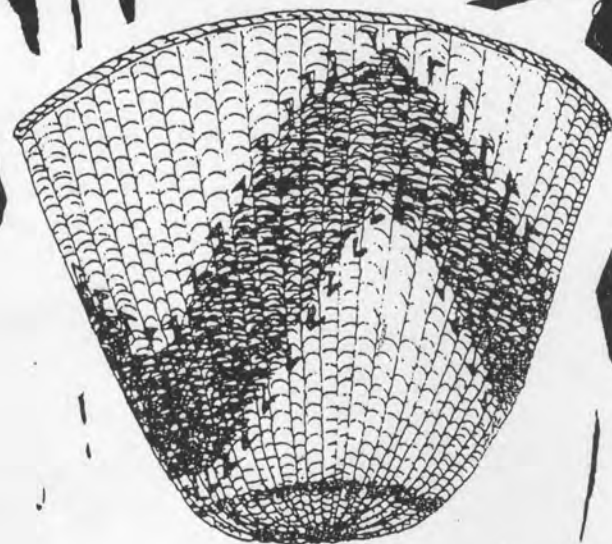
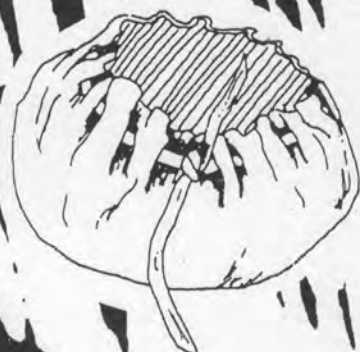
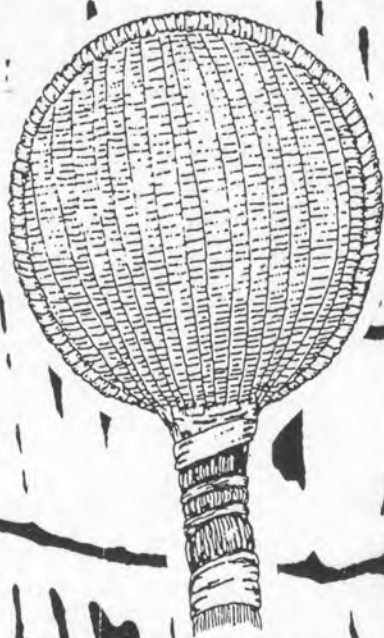
That's how history advances, plugging its memory as one plugs one's ears.

the evocation of the signs of an imagined past. As a false ruin, the monument in the film becomes a metaphor for the way objects—in their material existence—can be loosened from what they signify in the present, to become even more complex signifiers of the multiple relationships between different moments in time.



evoking the myth of culture as a necessary fiction.

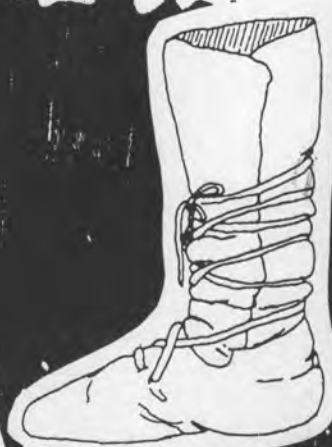
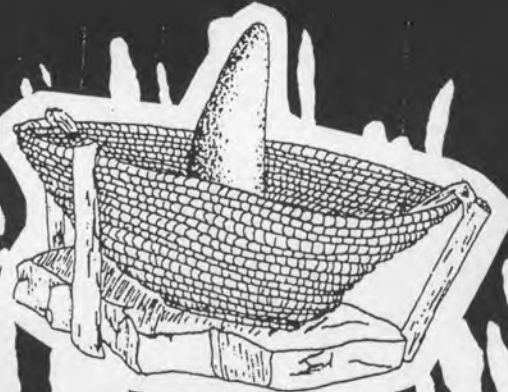
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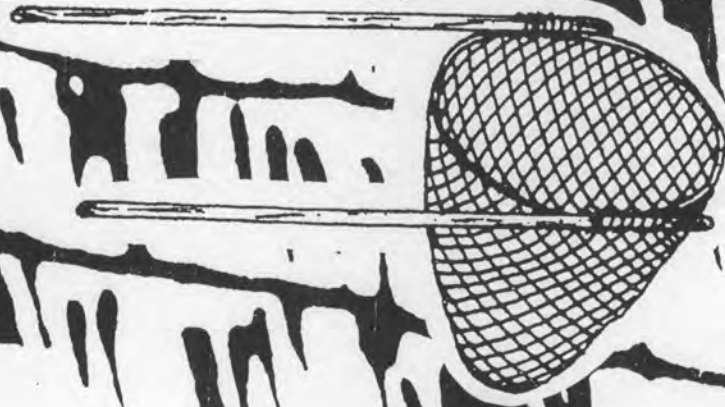
Quotes from:

Laura Marks, *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000)
Jeffery Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, and Shards* (2005)
Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil* (1983)

Reflections on:

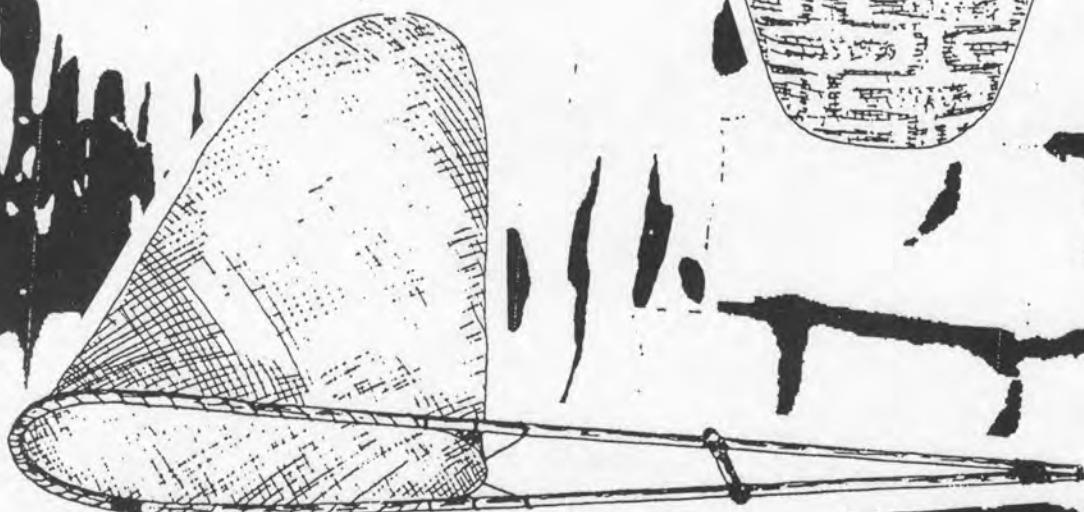
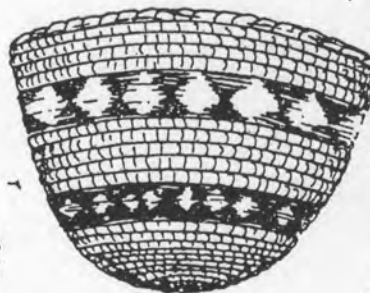
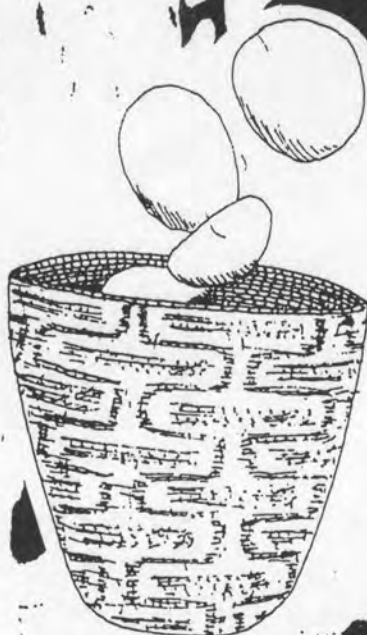


Rea Tajiri, *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (1991)



Images and writing from:

Kayla Anderson, *The Repository* (2012)



Kayla Anderson