How important to the present are people and things from the past? This lecture and discussion series invites speakers from a range of disciplines—including archaeology, cultural activism, anthropology and sociology—to discuss the role of the past in the present. Speakers will pay special attention to the ways by which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples consider and activate their cultural pasts in their contemporary lives. The Living with the Dead series will culminate in an exhibition at the Museum of Anthropology, UBC, which opens in May 2018 and will display contemporary art from across Latin America to illustrate how the past may be imagined, represented and politicized.

As a result, it is estimated that some 350 institutions across 27 countries in 5 continents received Egyptian archaeological finds through British agencies. Previous research on these distributions has tended to focus on the artefacts themselves as sources of information about the ancient past, but these Egyptian artefacts represent far more than just themselves. We interrogate the role of those who bear witness as outsiders to traditions of connecting with and honouring the dead, and consider what this means for the conflicted ethic of stewardship that so often informs our relations with the past and the ancestors of others. As philosophers, one of us (Berryman) approaches this as the co-convener of a Guatemala-based seminar on social theory who over several years has been witness to Indigenous conversations about those who have died or been disappeared in recent political violence. The other (Wylie) brings to bear the lens of a philosopher of science who has been party to debates about the politics of cultural appropriation, how conflicting interests in the past are to be mediated, and what joint or collaborative modes of stewardship might have to offer. In presenting our reflections on witnessing and stewardship our aim is to open up discussion about an archaeological ethic of stewardship that throws into especially sharp relief contentious questions about the politics of cultural appropriation, how conflicting interests in the past are to be mediated, and what joint or collaborative modes of stewardship might have to offer. In presenting our reflections on witnessing and stewardship our aim is to open up discussion about an archaeological ethic of stewardship that throws into especially sharp relief contentious questions about the politics of cultural appropriation, how conflicting interests in the past are to be mediated, and what joint or collaborative modes of stewardship might have to offer.

Wednesday,  April 4, 5:00 pm
Living with the Dead is co-sponsored and co-hosted by the UBC Museum of Anthropology (MOA)