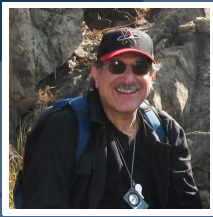


Uncovering the Past, Guiding the Future



Gary Feinman

MacArthur Curator, Anthropology Adjunct Professor, Anthropology Adjunct Professor, Anthropology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Discovering and studying sites in regions of early civilization, bringing cultural heritage to light, and refining history

We move in the present: most of us are aware of and affected by our economic and governmental concerns, but not many of us understand how we got to this point and why. We are often taught history in school through a limited perspective, and we don't look much deeper into its implications other than those suggested by the textbook. However, the past is more multifaceted than most people think. It is thus very important to have a reasoned and empirically grounded perspective on the past, because the present builds on the past, and is the foundation for the future. Dr. Gary Feinman, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, connects the past with the present through dedicated, multiscalar archaeological field research and analysis. Focusing primarily on preindustrial economies, for which many preconceived notions are not grounded in data, as well as the rise and fall of different systems of governance and inequality, Dr. Feinman studies the material residues of the past to provide new perspectives and insights regarding dynamic episodes of change across deep history. "If scholars begin with false premises regarding how past economic systems worked," Dr. Feinman believes, "then it is easy to see how models that aim to explain the transition to modernity could go wrong."

In conjunction with colleagues, representatives of the Mexican federal government, and the local community, Dr. Feinman has helped establish a small community museum in Santiago Matatlan, a town where his team excavated for a decade. In Shandong, China, their discoveries are featured in at least three local museums. Dr. Feinman's work in China, Mexico, and at the Field Museum has helped promote respect for and the...

AFFILIATION



Field Museum of Natural History

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Anthropology 1980, City University of New York-Graduate Center
- B.A. in Anthropology 1972, University of Michigan

AWARDS

- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Presidential Recognition Award

RESEARCH AREAS

Humanities, Anthropology, Archaeology, History

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will help Dr. Gary Feinman and his team continue to examine topics including human cooperation, the rise of urbanism and civilizations, preindustrial economies, and more specific issues concerning the deep history of Mexico and China. Your donations will allow him to continue his field and laboratory discoveries, train students, work with local communities to conserve their cultural heritage, and engage the public through museums and education in three countries of the world.

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