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**Museology  
in tribal  
contexts**

**VOL. 49-1 — 2021**

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## **ICOFOM STUDY SERIES, Vol. 49, Issue 1 — 2021**

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FOREWORD

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AVANT-PROPOS

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PREFACIO

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# Foreword

## Museology in tribal contexts

This new issue of the *ICOFOM Study Series* brings together the full articles presented at the ICOFOM Annual Symposium of 2020 under the theme “Museology in Tribal Contexts”, organised in virtual format by Southern New Hampshire University in the United States. This symposium was conceived by ICOFOM with the support of the International Council of Museums-US, the Association of African American Museums, and Southern New Hampshire University. It aimed to invite speakers engaged in Indigenous practices in order to inspire the critical conception of museological theory from their own tribal perspectives and indigenous understandings of cultural heritage and museums.

Though based in the United States, this online symposium made it possible to gather ICOFOM members from different contexts around the globe, registering participants from 48 different countries, and to engage museum professionals in a decolonial approach to museum theory. The assumption that Indigenous perspectives on the museum can help to open museology to other epistemologies and situated interpretations of cultural heritage was at the centre of the debates fostered by this fruitful event. The decolonisation of museology is an active and continuous exercise that ICOFOM has been addressing with the research project “Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation”, whose results have inspired a series of webinars and, certainly, the conception of this annual symposium organised during the pandemic of COVID-19. This critical moment for our societies and for museums globally has made explicit some of the structural problems of our current era and raised some fundamental questions about the participation of different groups, including minorities, in the cultural sector.

We hope that the articles selected for this issue can help shed a light on museology’s present-day challenges as it addresses some of the key problems that the theory as we know it was not able to address in the past. Thus, the articles deal with various topics, from repatriation to the relations of museums with the art market and the right of Indigenous people make themselves authors of their own representation in museums. In this sense, this issue is the first part of a debate on “decolonising museology” that was taken on as a core theme of this journal for 2021, and that will be further explored in our upcoming volume later this year.

I’m grateful to all the members of our Editorial Board and the peer reviewers who have been working hard in the past months so that the *ICOFOM Study Series*

could continue as an active publication, even in challenging times. This issue was the result of the direct editorial work of several professionals, among them the guest editors Yun Shun Susie Chung and Robert Denning from Southern New Hampshire University, our partners throughout this journey; the editorial secretaries Anna Leshchenko, Marion Bertin, Lynn Maranda, Elizabeth Weiser and Scarlet Galindo Monteagudo; and the proof-readers Katherine Sleight, Marie-Alix Molinié-Andlauer, and Sophia Tidwell, all of whom have done an outstanding job. Finally, to all the authors of the articles here presented, thank you for sharing your enriching experiences and for paving the way for new perspectives on tribal and localised museologies.

Bruno Brulon Soares

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

# Avant-propos

## La muséologie en contextes indigènes

Le nouveau numéro des *ICOFOM Study Series* réunit les présentations du symposium annuel d'ICOFOM en 2020 sur le thème « La muséologie en contextes indigènes », organisé en format virtuel par le Southern New Hampshire University (États-Unis d'Amérique). Ce symposium a été élaboré par ICOFOM avec le soutien d'ICOM-US, the Association of African American Museums et Southern New Hampshire University, dans le but d'inviter des personnes entreprenant des pratiques indigènes en tant que sources d'inspiration pour une conception critique de la théorie muséologique en prenant pour point de départ leurs propres perspectives et compréhension indigènes du patrimoine culturel et des musées.

Bien que situé aux États-Unis d'Amérique, ce symposium en ligne a permis de réunir des membres d'ICOFOM issus de différents contextes mondiaux et d'impliquer des professionnel-le-s des musées autour d'une approche décoloniale de la théorie muséologique. Des participant-e-s de 48 pays différents se sont inscrit-e-s. L'hypothèse que les perspectives « indigènes » sur le musée pourrait aider à ouvrir la muséologie à d'autres épistémologies et construire des interprétations situées du patrimoine culturel étaient au centre des débats poursuivis pendant ce riche événement. Décoloniser la muséologie est un exercice actif et continu auquel ICOFOM se confronte par le biais du projet « Musées, actions communautaires et décolonisation », dont les résultats ont inspiré une série de webinaires et la conception de notre symposium annuel organisé pendant la pandémie de Covid-19. Ce moment critique pour nos sociétés et pour les musées à l'échelle mondiale a rendu explicite certains problèmes structurels de notre époque et a soulevé des questions essentielles sur la participation de différents groupes et minorités dans le secteur culturel.

Nous souhaitons que les articles sélectionnés pour ce numéro pourront aider à apporter une lumière sur les défis actuels de la muséologie, en soulignant certains des principaux problèmes que la théorie telle que nous la connaissons n'était pas capable de dépasser par le passé. Ainsi, les articles traitent de sujets variés, des restitutions au relations des musées avec le marché de l'art et le droit des populations autochtones de s'exprimer et de devenir elles-mêmes autrices de leurs propres représentations dans les musées. En ce sens, ce numéro est la première partie du débat « Décoloniser la muséologie », devenu le thème central de ce journal en 2021 et qui sera exploré plus avant dans notre prochain volume, prévu un peu plus tard cette année.

Je remercie les membres de notre Comité de rédaction et les pairs pour les relectures, qui ont travaillé dur dans les mois derniers pour qu'*ICOFOM Study Series* puisse rester une publication active, même dans une période compliquée. Ce numéro est le résultat d'un travail éditorial direct mené par plusieurs professionnel·le·s, parmi lesquel·le·s les éditeur·rice·s invité·e·s, Yun Shun Susie Chung et Robert Denning de Southern New Hampshire University, qui furent nos partenaires tout au long de ce projet, les secrétaires éditoriales Anna Leshchenko, Marion Bertin, Lynn Maranda, Elizabeth Weiser et Scarlet Galindo Monteagudo, ainsi que les relectrices Katherine Sleight, Marie-Alix Molinié-Andlauer et Sophia Tidwell, qui ont tous et toutes accompli un travail incroyable. Un grand merci à tou·te·s les auteur·rice·s des articles publiés ici pour avoir partagé leurs expériences enrichissantes et pour avoir ouvert la voie à de nouvelles perspectives sur les muséologies indigènes et localisées.

Bruno Brulon Soares

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Traduction par Marion Bertin

# Prefacio

## **Museología en contextos tribales**

Este nuevo número del ICOFOM Study Series reúne los artículos completos presentados en el Simposio Anual 2020 del ICOFOM, bajo el lema “Museología en contextos tribales”, organizado en formato virtual por la Universidad de Sur de New Hampshire, en Estados Unidos. Este simposio fue concebido por el ICOFOM con el apoyo del Consejo Internacional de Museos de E.U.A., la Asociación de Museos Afroamericanos y la Universidad del Sur de New Hampshire con el objetivo de invitar a conferenciantes comprometidos con las prácticas indígenas para inspirar la concepción crítica de la teoría museológica de sus propias tribus, perspectivas y entendimientos indígenas del patrimonio cultural y de los museos.

A pesar de tener su sede en los Estados Unidos, este simposio en línea hizo posible reunir a miembros del ICOFOM de diferentes contextos del mundo e involucrar a los profesionales de los museos en un enfoque descolonial de la teoría de museos, registrando participantes de 48 países. Asumir que las perspectivas “tribales” sobre el museo pueden ayudar a abrir la museología a otras epistemologías e interpretaciones situadas del patrimonio cultural estuvo en el centro de los debates fomentados por este fructífero evento. La descolonización de la museología es un ejercicio activo y continuo que ha venido afrontando el ICOFOM con el proyecto de investigación “Museos, Acción Comunitaria y Descolonización”, cuyos resultados han inspirado una serie de webinars y sin duda la concepción de este simposio anual organizado durante la pandemia de COVID-19. Este momento crítico para nuestras sociedades y para los museos a nivel mundial ha explicitado algunos problemas estructurales de nuestro tiempo y ha planteado algunas cuestiones fundamentales sobre la participación de diferentes grupos y minorías en el sector cultural.

Deseamos que los artículos seleccionados para este número puedan ayudar a arrojar luz sobre los desafíos de la museología en el presente que abordan algunos de los problemas clave que la teoría, tal como la conocemos, que no se pudieron abordar en el pasado. Así, los artículos plantean diversos temas, desde la repatriación hasta las relaciones de los museos con el mercado del arte y el derecho de los indígenas a hablar y hacerse autores de su propia representación en los museos. En este sentido, este número es la primera parte de un debate sobre “Descolonización de la museología” que se asumió como tema central de esta serie para 2021, y que se profundizará en nuestro próximo volumen, a finales de este año.

Agradezco a todos los miembros de nuestro Comité Editorial y a los revisores pares que han trabajado arduamente en los últimos meses para que el ICO-FOM Study Series pueda continuar como una publicación activa, incluso en tiempos difíciles. Este número fue el resultado del trabajo editorial directo de varios profesionales, entre los que se encuentran los editores invitados Yun Shun Susie Chung y Robert Denning de la Universidad del Sur de New Hampshire, nuestros socios a lo largo de este viaje, las secretarías editoriales Anna Leshchenko, Marion Bertin, Lynn Maranda, Elizabeth Weiser y Scarlet Galindo Monteagudo, y los correctores de pruebas, Katherine Sleight, Marie-Alix Molinié-Andlauer y Sophia Tidwell, todos los cuales han hecho un trabajo sobresaliente. A todos los autores de los artículos aquí presentados, gracias por compartir sus enriquecedoras experiencias y por allanar el camino para nuevas perspectivas sobre museologías tribales y localizadas.

Bruno Brulon Soares

Río de Janeiro, Brasil.

Traducido por Scarlet Galindo Monteagudo

INTRODUCTION

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AND

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EDITORIAL

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# Introduction

**Yun Shun Susie Chung**

Southern New Hampshire University –  
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## **Theoretical Museology Stems from Naculture**

The conception of theoretical museology in North America stems from Indigenous understandings of worldview on culture and nature, which aims to eliminate the divisive concept (Chung, 2005; Mohawk, 2005). I would like to name this worldview “naculture.” The tangible and intangible are a part of the narrative and practice of life for Indigenous peoples living in harmony in naculture. The objects that are preserved are concurrently in use. This attitude is completely different from the European foundations of museology: “At the Institute of American Indian Art, elders sing to the collection, and students are taught how to nurture the spiritual needs of museum collections” (Casey, 1996).

It is a totally different philosophical understanding of naculture in that the objects are considered living, and an interaction should be made not only by elders but by those with knowledge of the intangible. For example, Indigenous names are associated with naculture such as “Nee-hee-o-ee-woo-tis (the wolf on the hill, Fig. 115)...The chief of a party of that tribe, on a friendly visit to the Sioux, and the portrait also of a woman, Tis-see-woo-na-tis (she who bathes her knees, Fig. 116)” recorded in George Catlin’s (1913, chap. 2) guidebook on *North American Indians*.

Humans are born developing forms of communication and language that reflect the theory and practice of naculture, as described below on the description of the ornaments and clothing produced and named by naculture:

*The Shiennes are a small tribe of about 3000 in numbers, living neighbours to the Sioux, on the west of them, and between the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains. There is no finer race of men than these in North America, and none superior in stature, excepting the Osages; scarcely a man in the tribe, full grown, who is less than six feet in height...The chief represented in the picture was clothed in a handsome dress of deer skins, very neatly garnished with broad*

*bands of porcupine quill work down the sleeves of his shirt and his leggings, and all the way fringed with scalp-locks. His hair was very profuse, and flowing over his shoulders; and in his hand he held a beautiful Sioux pipe, which had just been presented to him by Mr M'Kenzie, the Trader. This was one of the finest looking and most dignified men that I have met in the Indian country; and from the account given of him by the Traders, a man of honour and strictest integrity. The woman was comely, and beautifully dressed; her dress of the mountain-sheep skins, tastefully ornamented with quills and beads, and her hair plaited in large braids, that hung down on her breast. (Catlin, 1913, chap. 2)*



The Sioux tribe's *The Flame's Winter Count, 1786–1799 n.d.* Drawing shows the red feathers of the chief's headdress (Dakota Indians, 1786–1799, n.d.), which is evidence of the integration of naculture in all forms of dress, cookware, hunting gear, and housing exhibited in museums in the U.S. and tribal nations. Artifacts such as the parfleches (Unattributed Artist., c. 1900; Unattributed Artist, c. 1970), made of raw hide with natural dyes and used to carry goods, are another example of naculture.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Pub. L. 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq., 104 Stat. 3048, 1990) provided groundwork in the repatriation and restitution of Indigenous naculture, especially human remains. Funerary objects, sacred objects, and sites are what make up the museology of Indigenous peoples. The colonization of the land and peoples on the continent by the Anglo-Europeans brought museological values from their “Old World” (Fuller & Fabricius, 1992; King, 2013). This meant the exploitation of Indigenous naculture through desacralization in exhibits and destruction through harmful chemicals to preserve naculture in museums (Fuller & Fabricius, 1992; King, 2013). Many artifacts are now toxic and cannot be used in ceremonies. The craze for, and fascination with, Indigenous naculture manifested in the acculturation of the Anglo-Saxon museography and worldview. Moreover, the Indigenous objects were musealized as “nature” through institutionalization, which has now slowly been changing to respect Indigenous museology and Indigenous objects as both a cultural and natural phenomenon.

The Anglo-Saxon epistemological and phenomenological concepts of objects stem from writings by the learned gentlemen and ladies who were curious and interested in museological activities to form Temporary Museums (or what are known as temporary exhibits today) and to discuss their findings within antiquarian, literary, philosophical, and later natural history and archaeology society journals and the formation of permanent museums (Chung, 2003). It was not until after 1743, when the American Philosophical Society (APS) was established, that any scientific disciplines were branched in the colony. The

*Transactions of the APS* (1838) and the *Proceedings of the APS* (1838) first published in 1838 list the donations received for the library and the cabinet (the museum). An early publication by Hermann August Hagen (1876), entomologist and curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, examines the philosophical fundamentals of the theory behind the practice, which also shows the religious timeframe of translations of texts in regard to museological practice:

*The long space of time after Christ's death, nearly twelve centuries, is entirely devoid of interest concerning natural history. Curious enough, and perhaps explaining this lack of interest, is the fact that in the earlier centuries of the Christian era the study of natural history was believed to be in some way a proof of religious infidelity. The reason for this will probably be found in the lack of education and study of the disciples and nearly all the apostles. Discussion would have been impossible, difficult, or of doubtful result. Simple faith covered all. So it happened that the prominent works of Aristotle were nearly lost in Europe. Translations of these into the Arabian language, introduced in the 10<sup>th</sup> century through Spain, and again translated into Latin, were used, and the original text was perhaps not known until the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the west of Europe.*

(p. 83)

”

The most up-to-date publications on theoretical museology by ICOFOM members include *Key Concepts in Museology* (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010), *The History of Museology: Key Authors of Museological Theory* (Brulon Soares, 2019), “The Role of Z.Z. Stránský in Present-Day Museology” (Dolák, 2019), and *Zbynek Z. Stránský et la muséologie* (Mairesse, 2019). The earliest recognition of museology as a scientific discipline is attributed to Zbyněk Z. Stránský who established the museology department in the Philosophical Faculty of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1962, thus, elevating the status of museology at the Moravian Museum (Brulon Soares, 2019, p. 19). Brulon Soares (2019, p. 24) marks three different stages of museology – normative, theoretical, and reflexive museology. Normative museology, which focuses on the practices and publications on museography, has been prevalent in the U.S. Because there has not been a discourse on the foundations of theoretical museology in North America, skipping to reflexive museology, if that ever happened, would leave a gap; therefore, moving from normative to theoretical museology would be the process. The basis for these discussions will come from the foundations of the *ICOFOM Study Series* and the *Museological Working Papers (MuWop)*.

## Museology, a Word or Not a Word?

As questioned in the Call for Papers, “What is the basis to name the discipline ‘museology’ as opposed to ‘museum studies?’” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3) and “What is the history and philosophy of the word ‘museology,’ and where and how has this word been used in tribal and U.S. contexts?” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3). The theme “Museology, a Word or Not a Word?” will be examined from the perspective of naculture. Firstly, a few ICOFOM U.S. museologists’ views will be shared.

During the ICOFOM Symposium in 1980, Judith K. Spielbauer of Oxford, Ohio, gave an initial impression of the theoretical underpinnings on the concepts of museological data by adopting a systematic approach:

*Any of these system orientations is an attempt to order, understand and explain a class of phenomena or body of data. The perception of what constitutes data, the methodology for determining the significant units for study within the totality of this data, and the relevant relationships within and between these units is determined by the theoretical basis of the specific discipline. In our discipline, the body of data consists of a wide variety of human-made, human-influenced and human-directed phenomena, and therefore, we lack an external, independent and uninfluenced phenomenological base from which essential systems and system relationships are to be deduced...We, in doing and thinking museology, are part of the phenomena we are studying. We are at one and the same time both subject and scientist...These potential problems in the development of a formally stated theoretical base for museology will be resolved only when we begin the actual analysis of museological data from these perspectives. If, in the end, the results do not meet the hoped for scientific rigor, our efforts will have at least added insight to our field. (Spielbauer, 1981, p. 79)*

”

Spielbauer created a U.S. Working Group from 1991 to 1993, and a panel was established for the AAM conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1988 (Nash, 2019, p. 111). Other museologists include James L. Swauger who concluded his thoughts on museology as philosophy and the prospects of the field on becoming a science (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3).

Going further back in time, the initial usage in a published text dates back to 1885 in “Comment and Criticism” in the journal *Science*. The text, written by Valentine Ball, Director of the Dublin Museum in the Science and Art Department, was a report on North American museums, especially the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Museum in the U.S., and noted the high

regard for “Professor Baird’s system of interchangeable drawers and cases” (“The Executive documents,” 1880, p. CCLV) :

*THE REPORT ON THE MUSEUMS of America and Canada, recently made by Mr. Ball of the Dublin museum to the Science and art department of England, is not a very satisfactory document. Apparently designed to furnish hints to similar museums in the United Kingdom, it is nevertheless chiefly occupied with descriptions of the scope of the different establishments and of the contents, and to some extent the general arrangements of the several museums. But the account of the last is generally unsatisfactory and imperfect, while very slight or no mention is made of such devices as are characteristically American, and in which museology has been notably advanced by us. (“The Executive Documents,” 1880, p. CCLV)*

”

In this case, museology is interpreted to relate to museography in relation to the advancement of cases. Furthermore, it is during the Society of Naturalists Eastern U.S. conference held from December 29 to 30, 1886, in Boston, consisting of 130 geologists and “naturalists,” that the members discuss museum administration. Among the members, Alpheus Hyatt, paleontologist, zoologist, curator and founder of the journal *American Naturalist*, presented a talk on “Museology” (Proceedings of Scientific Societies, 1886, p. 207). The requisites of this membership were based on those scholars who had conducted “original work” (Proceedings of Scientific Societies, 1886, p. 207). Though the word “museology” has not been understood by many laypersons or even scholars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, its usage in the U.S. stems back as far as the results of this research go, to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The most contemporary usage of the word “museology” was presented in *Representing Diaspora & Diverse Blackness in Museology – Revisiting Our Black Mosaic Symposium* organized by the Anacostia Community Museum, a part of the Smithsonian Institution (cited in Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3). The most representative and foremost community museum paves the way to apply the concept of museology in the theoretical and philosophical discourse on the diversity of being black in the context and study of museums. Moreover, we witness the significance of Indigenous museology reflecting naculture through our keynote presentations and publications by Indigenous authors, such as Sadongei (2005; 2016), Lonetree (2012), and Ryker-Crawford (2017). Thus, data, science, diversity, and Indigenous are a result of naculture reflected in the usage of the word “museology.”

## Teaching Theoretical Museology

Questions are posed on “What is taught in courses that have the underpinnings of theoretical museology?” and “What are the implications of Latino, African-American, and other culturally diverse programs in museums and academia?” (Chung & Denning, 2010, p. 3). Teaching theoretical museology should be perceived through the lens of naculture. As outlined during the *Defining the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum in the U.S.* online symposium, Alyce Sadongi (2019) introduced the training program and internships that she had initiated at the Smithsonian Institution. Universities run by Indigenous peoples demonstrate the worldview of Indigenous naculture. The Institute of American Indian Arts Museum established a two-year Museum Studies Program degree in 1971. At the heart of the courses are the “tribal needs and beliefs” (Casey, 1996).

In one of the earliest ICOFOM meetings, Daniel Porter (1980, p. 32) compared museum training in the U.S. to a swallow’s nest. He claimed that academia was not providing the best training for museum work, and it was by “instinct” that museum workers learned, as would a baby swallow. His conclusions were that universities were not preparing or remained “unevolved” in theory and in practice (Porter, 1980, p. 32). However, early evidence of a “Museology Curriculum” being developed at the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts in Chickasha was published in 1972:

*Required courses in art history, anthropology, administration, and museology will be supplemented by electives in history, sociology, and public speaking, among others. The program will conclude with an internship experience in which the student becomes familiar with museum techniques through on-site training. With final consideration of the curriculum still a month away, the college is planning a two-week summer institute on the history of philosophy of museology for which two credit hours can be earned. (American Association of State and Local History, 1972, p. 137)*

”

The article also discusses the American Museology Conference and Indian Arts Festival of 1972, which was considered the first in the U.S. focusing on the problematics and prospects of public awareness of Indian intangible heritage: contemporary opera, composition, literature, and dance in addition to the emphasis on the uniqueness of the study and curriculum (American Association of State and Local History, 1972, p. 137).

The Museum Science graduate program at the Museum of Texas Tech University (Museum of TTU) was founded in 1974 and was one of two programs to have established a course specifically on theoretical museology under the aegis of “Museum Science” (Crawford, Denning, and Chung Interview, 2019). A plan to

establish a Heritage Management graduate program by Gary Edson, Director of the Museum of the TTU (1985–2009), and Eileen Johnson, Director of the Lubbock Lake Landmark, was executed in 2001 when the author was assigned to produce three Heritage Management courses including one that focused on principles and theories. Moreover, the syllabi for Museology and Material Culture, concentrating on theories, were structured and taught for the Museum Science graduate program. Museum work considered as a science stems back to the discourse on museology in ICOFOM, with Stránský (1980) who headed this argument. As of today, the only master's program in the U.S. that goes by the word "Museology," and is compatible with ICOFOM's understanding of the word, is the University of Washington's graduate program. Back in the 1960s, the University of Minnesota called its program "Museology," but this later changed to "Museum Studies."

Other usage of the word "museology" is in the texts by Robert Wilson Shufeldt (1907, 1918), an ornithologist, ethnographer, curator and surgeon at the Army Medical Museum. His views can be found in the book that he wrote on an extreme racist practice that was prominent at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: craniology. In relation to museology and museology as a science, Shufeldt uses the Army Medical Museum, now the National Museum of Health and Science, to connect collections management in 1918 with the needs of the user. In this case, the medical doctor who would come to research the collections of illustrations, models, moving images, archival documents, and other reference materials, emphasizes that the purpose of the museum is to teach:

*In short, our museologist should be – in order to properly administer the affairs under his control, and have the institution fulfill its purpose – an expert in the matter of teaching, that is, teaching through the medium of a scientific arrangement and exhibition of a series of objects, fully illustrating the acquired knowledge of the science to which they refer. As a matter of fact, such a person should not only command as complete a knowledge as possible of the science for which the museum stands; but, above all else, he should appreciate, in its entirety, what constitutes the evolution of a growing museum and the science of museology as a whole. To this end, it is not essential that he be an expert in museography; but, upon the other hand, he should most assuredly be a good museographer, in all that that word means in its modern acceptance. (Shufeldt, 1918, p. 208)*

”

Thus, the museologist as a teacher of the museum and museology as an evolving science is indicated in this passage.

As early as 1923, William Crawford, the Librarian at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, compiled the *Bibliography of Museums and Museology*, most



of which are publications in English, French, German, and Italian by American and European authors. In the 1960s and 1970s, there are developments in the museology curriculum and its practices in museums (American Association of State and Local History, 1972) and reference to curatorship training and museology discussing the role of the museum administrator as “part Madison Avenue huckster, part preacher, part pickpocket, part handyman” (Ishikawa, 1961, p. 238). Familiar textbooks that incorporate some history and theory of museums in the 1970s to the 1990s are *Museums in Motion* (Alexander, 1979) and *Introduction to Museum Work* (Burcaw, 1975; 1997) with two editions, which were both published by the American Association for State and Local History. In the '90s, *The Museum in America* focused on the “innovators and pioneers” in museum work and also included Paul Joseph Sachs who taught courses on “museum history, functions and ethics” as well as “museum problems” (Alexander, 1997, pp. 206–207). Therefore, the papers that are presented in this issue provide insights into the research findings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on what it means to teach theoretical museology in U.S. and tribal contexts with an Indigenous worldview of naculture.

## Theoretical Museology and Ethics

The question, “Is there a need for theory in museums?” (Chung & Denning, 2020), necessitates the assertion that theoretical museology and ethics should be practiced from the perspective of naculture. In order to support this assertion, “The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of the museum field calls for consideration of what we do in museums become agents and actants to influence the functions of museums” (Chung & Denning, 2020). Evidence of initial forms of ethics related to museums provide insights into the philosophy of the workplace.

Tracing back through history, one of the earliest learned societies established in the colony, the American Philosophical Society, first produced and published its own “Laws and Regulations” in 1769. The “Laws and Regulations” included the role of curator to give a bond to the Presidents and Vice-Presidents “faithful performance of their duty”:

### *VIII. Of the Curators.*

*THE business of the CURATORS shall be to take charge of, and preserve, all Specimens of natural Productions, whether of the ANIMAL, VEGETABLE or FOSSIL Kingdom; all Models of Machines and Instruments, and all other matters and things belonging to the Society, which shall be committed to them; to class and arrange them in their proper order, and keep an, exact list of them, with the names of the respective donors, in a book provided for that purpose; which book shall be laid before the Society, as often as called for.*

*THE Curators, on entering upon their office, shall give such a receipt for every thing that is committed to their charge, as the Society shall think proper; and, at the end of their term; shall deliver up the same to their successors. For the faithful performance of their duty, and of the trust reposed in them, they shall give bond to the Presidents, and Vice-Presidents, in such a sum as they, or any three of them, shall require. (American Philosophical Society, 1769, p. x)*

”

Therefore, theoretical museology of curatorial ethics was measured through an advanced monetary sum as insurance.

The AAM's Code of Ethics was produced in 1925. The Code lays out the relationships that the museum worker is bound to, defined as a “humble laborer” or “responsible trustee” in the museum that is responsible for “render[ing] the emotional and intellectual life of the people” (Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1925, p. 2). The values are in relation to the collections, other museum workers, institutions, and the public:

*His conduct rests on a three-fold ethical basis.*

1. *DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE HE SERVES.*
  2. *FAITH IN THE UNSELFISH MOTIVES OF HIS COWORKERS.*
  3. *HONOR BASED ON A HIGH SENSE OF JUSTICE AS THE CONTROLLING MOTIVE OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS.*
- (Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1925, p. 2)*

”

Museum and museological activities were linked with The Museum of Texas Tech University's Master of Arts in Museum Science and Heritage Management, ICOM, and especially the Ethics Committee. Gary Edson (1997) edited and wrote the book *Museum Ethics*, with the contributions of notable museologists in the international museum community such as Tomislav Sola (1997), an ICOFOM Senior Advisor, incorporating diverse perspectives on ethics, museums, and museology.

Though laws and regulations are not synonymous with a code of ethics, they do place curators in a position of responsibility where they are “bound” to do their duties, whereas a code of ethics embodies institutional values in theory and in practice. The connection between theoretical museology and ethics is integral. The report of the Tribal Museums accounted for 16 museums out of the 39 that implemented a code of ethics statement. Their report shows that

“of these, they were about equally divided between using the tribal statement and having their own written statement” (Abrams, 2003, p.13). These results demonstrate promising circumstances in adopting an Indigenous worldview of naculture.

## **Theoretical Museology and the Functions of Museums in the Community**

The final theme is on “Theoretical Museology and the Functions of Museums in the Community.” The core question we ask is, “What are some of the theories that have been introduced and/or forecasted by museologists that demonstrate the cause and effect between the community and museums?” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 4). This theme is linked with a community view of naculture. Like the learned societies that were created in the U.K. (Chung, 2003), in Colonial America they were the earliest forms of a museum.

The learned societies were affiliated with “philosophical” inquiry or scientific investigations and collecting artifacts and “naturfacts” (Stránský, 1974, p. 244) or together “naculturfacts.” In the following subject fields, the naculturfacts were related to the “political economy”:

### *XII. Of Committees.*

*THE Members of this Society shall be classed into one or more of the following COMMITTEES.*

- 1. Geography, Mathematics, Natural, Philosophy and Astronomy.*
  - 2. Medicine and Anatomy.*
  - 3. Natural History and Chemistry.*
  - 4. Trade and Commerce.*
  - 5. Mechanics and Architecture.*
  - 6. Husbandry and American Improvement.*
- (American Philosophical Society, 1769, p. xii)*

”

Thus, it is later in the stages of separating the fields of study that we see more and more the disparate perspective of nature versus culture.

Different cultures and ethnic communities demonstrate naculture within theoretical museology and the functions of museums in the community. Jessie Ryker-Crawford (2017) traces back the early Indigenous initiatives of private and public museums. The museums that could be considered as a part of the concept of tribal community leadership would be realized in the 1930s (Ryker-Crawford, 2017). In 1962, a contemporary American Indian and Alaskan Native art collection made up the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, funded by the federal government (Casey, 1996). It does outreach

to the Indigenous communities and tribal museums through consultations, workshops, and traveling exhibits for a low price (Casey, 1996). Asian American museology is distinctly represented within American Studies – previously U.S.–Asian relations studies – at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (2020), which now provides core courses in “Museums, Theory, History, Practice,” including “Theories and methodologies utilized by scholars associated with the ‘new museology,’” “History of Western museums,” “Contemporary issues in museums including the representation of diverse communities and multiple points of view,” “Issues pertinent to Native peoples in the U.S., Hawai’i and the Pacific,” and “Overview of museum governance and ethical concerns.” The Anacostia Museum is one of the earliest museums with the active participation of the community. It is the very concept of the heritage diagram by van Mensch (1996) in which the community is representing heritage. In this case, it is the African American community representing its own heritage, which was also one of the Smithsonian Institution’s initiatives well before the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Hispanic-American initiatives are at both national and local programming levels with the Latino Museum Studies Program with affiliated organizations and a fellowship program established in 1994. There is a need to examine the relations between the Southwest and border relations with Spanish, Mexico, U.S., and Indigenous heritage and communities. One example is Taos Pueblo, the concept of the ecomuseum and World Heritage Site, the core image of this symposium’s theme. It is a living, breathing institution and community that is preserved as it evolves at the same time managed by its inhabitants. The Puerto Rican American Museum in Chicago, IL, though it is situated in a renovated 19<sup>th</sup>-century building, the ideals of the landscape architect and the Puerto Rican community surrounding the area now demonstrate the community-envisioned function of the museum. The park in which it is situated also incorporates the diversity of the Hispanic American community. Theoretical museology is demonstrated within the practices of community and management of the museums. Thus, naculture as projected in community surroundings connects theoretical museology and the functions of museums.

## Conclusion

Preliminary research shows that the word “museology” was first published in 1885 but connoted to reflect museography of display cases. A museology curriculum with a theoretical focus began in the 1920s at Harvard University (Alexander, 1997, p. 205). Then, it was in the early 1970s that museology addressed the significance of public awareness of Indian intangible heritage from a U.S. museology and Indigenous arts conference. An early textbook that discussed theoretical museology was published in 1975 by Burcaw, though he was skeptical of ICOFOM museology. Ethics and theoretical museology are part and parcel of the tribal code of ethics in tribal museums. And theoretical museology and how it functions in the community can be studied from a

curriculum viewpoint to how museums, such as the Anacostia Museum and Taos Pueblo World Heritage Site, cater to their audience.

The epistemology of theoretical museology in the U.S. and tribal beginnings of naculture are framed within the four themes of this online symposium and publication. The objectives of this symposium were to incorporate diverse perspectives that are not only limited to the developments of ICOFOM in Europe but to understand and formulate some concepts and definitions that could contribute to the discourse on museology and specifically, theoretical museology, in U.S. and tribal contexts.

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## Introduction and editorial

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# Editorial: Theoretical Museology in Tribal Contexts

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## Introduction

On two days in August of 2020, Yun Shun Susie Chung and I hosted “Theoretical Museology in U.S. and Tribal Contexts,” a symposium held in collaboration with the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), the International Council of Museums (ICOM US), the Association of African American Museums (AAAM), and Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). We organized panels of presentation along four themes: defining “museology,” teaching theoretical museology, the ethics of museology, and applying theoretical museology to real-world museums and other institutions. This volume includes many of the presentations from that symposium and a couple of supplemental papers that expand on and provide context for those four themes.

This symposium was only my second foray into the world of museology. Two years earlier, Susie and I (along with my colleague James Fennessy) hosted a symposium that contributed to ICOFOM’s worldwide effort to redefine the word “museum” for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As I mentioned in that meeting, and in the publication that came out of it, I was new to the museology field at that point; I had never taken any coursework on, or worked in, museums, and the preparation for that symposium was a very fast but immersive introduction to the field for me. Three major themes stood out to me. First, museology is a relatively young field, with serious study of the theories and practicality

of museums becoming a concern to scholars only in recent decades. Second, museums have been undergoing a dramatic transformation in those same recent decades, to become more experimental, more community-oriented, more inclusive, more interested in narratives and themes, and more engaging for visitors. Third, museums are becoming more activist in their programming and more forcefully advocating for the interests of their local communities (Denning, 2019).

While that crash course in Museology 101 did not make me an expert in the field, it did prompt me to pay more attention to the theories and practices of museums afterward. Every time I visit a museum now, I find myself paying more attention to the lists of upcoming events, the amount of space dedicated to community gatherings, and even the number of benches scattered throughout where visitors can rest and contemplate. My interest in benches came out of a conversation with Ann Davis, who brought it up as a brief example, but it stuck with me; I always look for the number and placement of benches now (Davis, Denning, and Chung, 2018). I live in a small suburb of Columbus, Ohio, and our town museum has not embraced these trends, or benches, as much as I expect them to in the future. Thankfully, there are a lot of benches at places like the National Museum of African History and Culture in Washington, DC, as I observed in April 2019. But beyond benches, I also find myself paying more attention to museums' wayfinding systems, the placement and content of plaques for exhibits, and how well the museum tells the story of the community.

It was, and is, odd to talk about museums during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing, in September of 2021, many institutions are still closed to the public or closed completely. I hope that people around the world used the "break," if you want to call it that, to think about how various industries and organizations can work differently in the future, since they were freed from the hustle and bustle of everyday operations. I look forward to seeing how our world will change, hopefully for the better, after the pandemic has passed and we can all get back to normal operations (whatever "normal" will mean at that time). This is a chance for decision makers, curators, and other museum personnel to put into action the ideas that have been bouncing around in the heads of theoretical museologists for years. Let's hear about those ideas from the experts.

## **Decolonizing the Museum**

Perhaps the most important trend in museology today is the ongoing attempt to decolonize museums, which in the past have been used to educate mostly white Western audiences about other cultures and peoples in a comfortable – to white Westerners – context. Museums existed because colonization efforts had allowed the plunder of natural and man-made artifacts. That is changing. In his keynote address at the 2020 symposium, Bruno Brulon Soares argued that museums and museologists should not be afraid to be fierce advocates

for their communities. Museums and museum professionals should encourage discussions, debates, and dialogue in their communities and across borders and boundaries. They must not shy away from politics or hard questions. They must confront the past, present, and future of their communities. In many places in the United States and around the world, museums are centers of community because they are places where people come together to talk about the past and chart the future (Brulon Soares, 2020).

The theories and principles behind modern museology are undergoing fundamental transformations because of challenges like Bruno's, as Yun Shun Susie Chung makes clear in her contribution to this volume. Museum professionals are trying to develop new definitions for the concepts of "museum" and "museology." As ICOM, ICOFOM, and other organizations attempt to find a new definition of "museum" for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chung argues, the museum community also needs to find an accurate definition of "museology" that incorporates the decolonization effort. With the redefinition and reconceptualization of museology, museologists need to figure out how to teach those concepts, how to incorporate new systems of ethics, and how to apply those new definitions and priorities in museums. Chung proposes that her concept of "naculture" be a starting point in launching these discussions. Naculture emphasizes and incorporates indigenous understandings of culture and nature, which is essential to an accurate representation of indigenous peoples. All of this is to say that it is the ethical responsibility of researchers and museum professionals to collaborate with their subjects in developing exhibits, museums, and communities.

Chung is not alone in this quest. In this volume, Jessie Ryker-Crawford calls for new theories and practices that will replace the old colonial processes that held sway for so long in museums. These new theories and practices emphasize collaboration with indigenous communities. Ryker-Crawford explains how the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum Studies program put these new theories into practice by facilitating a gathering of tribal elders and youths to develop ideas for an exhibit. The resulting conversations uncovered and corrected numerous errors and sparked a discussion about the intersections of a changing natural environment, ecology, and government policies.

Alyce Sadongei argues that existing professional museological ethical standards are not rigorous enough to successfully and completely decolonize museums. Those institutions that contain indigenous artifacts or claim to represent indigenous peoples need to adopt the ethics of those indigenous communities. As Sadongei explains it, these indigenous ethics consist of cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs that include family, religion, language, community, and the natural and spiritual worlds. Successful efforts to bring indigenous ethics into the museum include the Makah Cultural and Research Center in Neah Bay, Washington, which provides genealogical services to help rebuild families and teaches tribal members how to balance traditional culture with the modern world; the Ak-Chin Indian Community in Arizona, which treats artifacts as

the intersection of past and present; and the Huhugam Heritage Center, which teaches language as a way of expressing knowledge and transmitting culture.

Minnie Coonishish provides a success story in the effort to decolonize museums in the Eeyou Istchee territory in Quebec. The Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute's research philosophy emphasizes inclusion and collaboration between indigenous tribes and outsiders. The Institute has built relationships with local schools, hosted workshops and training sessions, and sponsors the indigenous art community through artists-in-residence programs. Using "nothing about us, without us" as its guiding philosophy, the Institute focuses on the needs of the community when developing exhibitions, incorporates the Cree worldview into its library by using an indigenous-specific catalog classification system, and shares its work inside and outside of the Eeyou Istchee area.

Victoria Miller presents another successful application of the ideals of diversity and inclusivity in her essay on the activities of the Steelworks Center of the West in Pueblo, Colorado, which houses the abandoned records of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. As Miller describes it, museums can be successful alternatives to traditional methods of study and can foster non-conformist thinking because each visitor experiences the collections and activities differently. Although the Center focuses on one company in one industry, great care is taken to develop exhibits and programming for all of the ethnicities and cultures that call the area home, including festivals with folklore, dancing, and food.

While our symposium focused on tribal contexts in North America, Obay Al Bitar provides a valuable service by drawing our attention to the plunder and colonization of indigenous peoples in the Middle East. European scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries interpreted and represented Islamic artwork in ways that enforced racial stereotypes and encouraged racial separation. In recent decades, institutions like the British Museum have begun to instead focus on the interactions between the East and the West and explain how Islamic art was an important influence on the development of the arts in Europe. In this way, the Islamic world and representations of it have begun the decolonization process.

Decolonization has been guiding museum policies and practices in other regions as well. Leandro Guedes provides a fascinating history of museological thought in Brazil and uses the Indian Museum of Rio de Janeiro as a case study of how decolonization can occur. Beginning with an exhibition on the Wajãp people in 2002, curators at the Indian Museum sought dialogue and collaboration with indigenous peoples and even began to see the museum as a service organization with responsibilities that include building and maintaining sustainable relationships with the people and cultures being showcased.

All of the essays described so far emphasize the need for collaboration between museum professionals and the people whose cultures and artifacts are displayed in museums. While scholars may have once obeyed a *Star Trek*-like "prime directive" of non-intervention in the lives and cultures of people under obser-

vation, modern scholars have embraced interaction and collaboration with their subjects. Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido, Andréa Dias Vial, Henrique Gonçalves Entraticce, Rafael Santana Gonçalves de Andrade, and Nei Clara de Lima present a dramatic example of this in their essay on how researchers studying the *ritxoko* clay dolls of the *Iny Karajá* people developed a public health campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers came to believe that the health and safety of the *Iny Karajá* were within the scope of the project because they were the sole practitioners of *ritxoko*. Thus, they provided masks and shared information about the disease with the people they were studying.

A similar evolution of attitudes happened among the administrators of the Centre Culturel Tjibaou in New Caledonia. As Quitterie Puel and Fabien Van Geert describe it, the Centre began as an institution to help preserve and display artifacts of the Kanak culture, but it has since become an example of the importance of “cultural institutions in the nation-building process,” though there have been obstacles and resistance along the way.

Funding is a constant problem for researchers. While various government agencies provide many of the grants that keep institutions operating, recent decades have seen increases in philanthropy from corporations and private businesses. Patricia A. Banks proposes and analyzes the concept of “branding indigeneity,” where companies benefit from their public, and well-advertised, relationships with indigenous cultures. There has been a long history of racial branding in the United States, which in past decades mostly targeted white audiences. Changing demographics, anti-discrimination laws, changing racial attitudes, immigration, and the expansion of the middle class to include more ethnicities, have prompted corporations to show that they respect and value diversity. While it may feel cynical to some, such corporate patronage has paid for the creation and maintenance of institutions such as the National Museum of the American Indian, which can count Coca-Cola, Chase Bank, Merrill-Lynch, and Northrop Grumman among its patrons.

## Conclusion

The arguments and analyses presented here are going to be essential to the future study of museology. The relationship of the researcher to the subject has changed dramatically in recent decades, and will continue to change as the museum industry pursues greater inclusivity, equity, and diversity. Those pursuits will require greater collaboration between the institution and the community that it claims to study and represent. As the entries in this volume demonstrate, many museums and museologists have already embraced this development and will provide examples for other organizations going forward.

## Acknowledgements

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PAPERS

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ARTICLES

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ARTÍCULOS

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# La dynamique de pouvoir dans la représentation de l'Autre. Le cas des arts de l'Islam en Europe.

**Obay Al Bitar**

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*Je suis Narcisse et je veux lire dans les yeux de l'autre  
une image de moi qui me satisfasse.*

**Frantz Fanon**

## RÉSUMÉ

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La discipline d'étude des arts de l'Islam est fondée au tournant du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle en Occident. Née de contacts antérieurs avec les terres de l'Islam, la fascination des érudits européens pour l'Orient a provoqué une vague d'expéditions dans le but de récolter davantage d'informations utilisées pour paver le chemin des conquêtes militaires européennes et la création des colonies dans la région. Ce nouveau monde est par la suite ramené en Europe pour être exposé et redécouvert par le public européen. Les objets exotiques du monde conquis ont été soumis à des représentations qui renforcent la séparation et la domination

raciale et culturelle. L'analyse des expositions permanentes des arts de l'Islam en Europe démontre d'une volonté de créer des ponts entre les civilisations contemporaines et d'un effort d'adoucissement de la mémoire d'un passé colonial en offrant ainsi un regard sur la pratique consistant à exposer la culture de l'Autre.

Mots clés : muséographie, scénographie, orientalisme, colonialisme, Orient, Occident.

## ABSTRACT

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### **The Dynamics of Power in Representing the Other. The Case of Islamic Art in Europe.**

The discipline of the study of Islamic Art in the West was founded at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born out of previous contact with the lands of Islam, European scholars' fascination with the Orient prompted a wave of information-gathering expeditions to the Middle East that later paved the way for European military conquests and the establishment of colonies in the region. The discovered new world was then brought back to Europe to be rediscovered by the European public through permanent exhibitions. Exotic objects from the conquered world have been subjected to representations that reinforce racial and cultural separation and domination. An analysis of present-day permanent exhibitions of Islamic Art in Europe not only reveals a desire to build bridges between contemporary civilizations in an effort to soften the memory of the colonial past but also informs the practice of exhibiting the cultural heritage of the *Other*.

Key words: museography, scenography, orientalism, colonialism, Islamic art, Europe.



## **Introduction**

Le début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle marque une réévaluation importante dans le champ d'étude de l'art et de l'archéologie islamique. L'évolution scientifique dans le domaine des arts de l'Islam ou *Islamic art* ainsi que les récents changements socio-politiques notamment dans le monde de l'Islam ont inspiré une modification de notre regard sur cette discipline. Cela est notamment illustré à travers des musées qui, pour la plupart d'entre eux, ont été ou sont encore en cours de réorganisation de leurs collections des arts de l'Islam. Par exemple, le Benaki Museum à Athènes ouvre sa section d'Art Islamique en 2004, suivi par

l'ouverture du Museum of Islamic Art à Doha en 2008 et par la réouverture du David Collection Museum en 2009 suite à d'importants travaux de rénovation. En 2010, le premier musée des arts de l'Islam rouvre ses portes au Caire et le Musée d'Art Islamique du Pergamonmuseum fait l'objet de travaux de rénovation qui devront s'achever en 2024. Des petites collections sont aussi ouvertes au public dont la galerie d'Art du monde islamique au Musée du Cinquantenaire à Bruxelles ouverte depuis 2008, et les galeries *Arts of the Islamic World* ouvertes à partir de l'année 2009 au Brooklyn Museum.

Le changement et le développement du domaine se reflètent également dans le nom des nouvelles galeries des musées. Par exemple, la galerie des arts de l'Islam au Victoria & Albert Museum ouverte en 2006 est attribuée au nom de son mécène principal, *Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art*<sup>1</sup>. C'est aussi le cas au British Museum avec l'*Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world*, ouverte depuis 2018<sup>2</sup>. Cependant, le Metropolitan Museum of Art à New York a choisi d'attribuer le nom de ses galeries selon l'emplacement géographique des collections. Ses nouvelles galeries sont effectivement appelées *Arts of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia* et sont ouvertes depuis 2011. En revanche, le musée du Louvre s'est approprié l'utilisation du terme *arts de l'Islam* dans ses nouvelles salles ouvertes en 2012 et caractérisées par une intervention architecturale contemporaine afin de suggérer une ambiance orientale<sup>3</sup>. De manière similaire, les arcs en ogive et les colonnes engagées employés dans la galerie permanente des arts de l'Islam au Detroit Institute of Arts, ouvert en février 2010, font référence à la mosquée d'Ibn Tulun à Caire. En effet, l'utilisation des éléments et des motifs architecturaux tridimensionnels comme le *moucharabieh* présent dans la plupart des musées des arts de l'Islam, contribuent à une mise en contexte en attachant les objets à un espace et/ou à un lieu spécifique. L'exposition des objets des arts de l'Islam dans une ambiance romanesque jugée *authentique* d'un point de vue occidental, se caractérise par un désintéret pour l'orient actuel en faveur d'un retour au passé et une curiosité pour l'exotisme. Développé à l'époque coloniale, ce modèle de représentation se situe dans une continuité des pratiques d'exposition des arts non-occidentaux pour marquer la séparation et la domination de l'Occident sur l'Orient (Saïd, 2005).

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1. Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel s'est impliqué en 2003, dans le projet de rénovation des espaces consacrés aux arts de l'Islam au Victoria & Albert Museum (Crill & Stanley, 2006). Il a également fondé le prix Jameel pour l'art contemporain qui a pour objectif d'explorer la relation entre les pratiques des arts de l'Islam et les arts occidentaux dans l'art contemporain.

2. L'*Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world* est créée grâce à la donation de Syed Mokhtar Albukhary, président de l'*Albukhary Fondation*, ainsi qu'au soutien de Syed Mohamed Albukhary, directeur de l'Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) (Greenwood, 2019). L'intention de ces mécènes porte sur la création d'un dialogue entre le monde de l'Islam et l'Occident.

3. Le terme *oriental* désigne tout d'abord une frontière géographique, appliquée à l'Asie, et il comprend un regard sur toute sa capacité et ses caractéristiques ethniques, morales et culturelles. Il renvoie à une notion d'exotisme, du mystérieux et du profond et dénote d'une passion de tout ce qui est asiatique (Saïd, 2005).

Quel regard pouvons-nous porter sur ce changement frappant le monde muséal ? Quel est l'intérêt porté par les musées dans leurs expositions des arts de l'Islam et comment cela peut-il traduire une réflexion sur leurs propos ? Enfin, quels sont les enjeux dissimulés derrière la contextualisation scénographique évoquant une ambiance orientale à caractère essentialiste ? À travers l'analyse de trois musées européens<sup>4</sup>, à savoir le *Pergamonmuseum*, le musée du Louvre et le British Museum, nous tenterons de mettre en lumière la conception des expositions permanentes des arts de l'Islam pour nourrir une réflexion sur la conception des expositions des arts non-occidentaux en Europe et en Amérique de nord. Ce travail de recherche a pour but d'offrir un regard sur les problèmes liés aux expositions de la culture de l'Autre, et notamment celles des arts de l'Islam. Ce modèle d'exposition occidental caractérisé par l'eurocentrisme façonne la perception et la conception esthétique de la mémoire visuelle du monde de l'Islam. Afin de le déconstruire, nous allons retracer le développement historique de la relation entre l'Orient et l'Occident tout en offrant un aperçu des problèmes d'une discipline mal définie.

## Terminologie et définition

L'art produit sur les terres de l'Islam a été défini par plusieurs adjectifs qui se fondent autour des *peuples*, *religions*, et *racés* projetant ainsi une vision eurocentrique et ambiguë<sup>5</sup>. Au début du XXe siècle, l'*homo occidentalis* a créé la notion d'art et d'architecture dite *islamiques*<sup>6</sup>, afin de projeter une identité religieuse englobant le monde moderne. Ce terme sert à mettre en lumière l'unité présumée de l'art dans les régions où les populations majoritaires qui y vivent pratiquent la foi musulmane. D'un point de vue occidental, l'adjectif *islamique* aide à rattacher l'art qu'il définit à des notions normatives comme le christianisme ou le judaïsme, mais par cette simplification les variétés hétérodoxes comme le chiisme, le sunnite ou le soufisme sont négligées. Ainsi, l'unité cherchée dans les arts de l'Islam ne sert qu'à expliquer les similitudes entre différentes productions artistiques afin de simplifier les cas de parallélisme distingués dans l'histoire de l'art de l'Islam (Shalem, 2012). Dans ce sens, le style et le langage esthétique sont détachés de l'effort produit par une culture

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4. Ces trois musées diffèrent dans leur finalité. Le *Pergamonmuseum* à Berlin est un musée d'art et d'archéologie tandis que le musée du Louvre à Paris est un musée d'Histoire de l'art. Quant au British Museum à Londres, il s'agit d'un musée multidisciplinaire avec une approche basée sur la culture matérielle.

5. Edward Said (2005) parle de la notion d'*Oriental* en expliquant se référer à la race. Les termes tels qu'*art arabe*, *art turc* et *art persan* sont employés à l'exposition universelle à Paris en 1893 et mettent l'accent sur la race. Pour Sophie Makariou (Labrusse, 2007), le terme « arabe » désigne des populations arabisées.

6. Selon Nasser Rabbat (2004), les études des arts de l'Islam ont été encadrées dans les théories de l'art occidental qui trouvent ses racines à la fin du XVIIIème siècle. Pour lui, ces théories rendent ces études conditionnées à une hiérarchie prescrite de manière chronologique, géographique et même idéologique. Rabbat précise que l'intérêt pour l'architecture islamique remonte aux années 1820 suite aux campagnes militaires par Bonaparte.

dans une période et un espace spécifiques et peuvent être facilement transférés dans l'espace et le temps (Allen, 1988)<sup>7</sup>. De même, certains objets créés par des musulmans peuvent servir à la religion, mais la majorité des objets sont séculaires. D'ailleurs, le terme *Islamic* est utilisé pour renvoyer à la culture des pays dans laquelle l'islam joue un rôle dominant sans être unique dans la foi (Grabar, 1973). Dans cette interprétation, le terme *Islamic Art* sert à couvrir l'intégralité du champ des pays d'islam (Labrusse, 2007, p. 196). Blair et Bloom (2003) associent le terme à la culture visuelle d'un temps et d'un espace où l'islam en tant que système politique règne. De plus, une nouvelle terminologie est proposée afin de définir les cultures visuelles de l'islam comme *Les arts des terres de l'islam*, ce qui pourrait constituer une solution (Shalem, 2012, p. 14). Enfin, il est nécessaire de distinguer le mot *islam* qui renvoie à la religion et le mot *Islam* qui renvoie à la civilisation<sup>8</sup>. Dès lors, le terme *arts de l'islam* est le meilleur compromis concernant le problème de la terminologie.

Les *arts de l'islam* désignent donc l'ensemble du langage visuel se situant sur un vaste territoire dont le système politique dominant est l'islam<sup>9</sup>. Alors que la religion islamique est présente dans des régions d'Afrique, d'Europe de l'est, du sud de la Russie, de l'ouest de Chine, du nord de l'Inde et du sud-est de l'Asie, ses frontières géographiques actuelles couvrent l'Asie de l'ouest et s'étendent jusqu'à la côte atlantique de l'Afrique du nord ainsi que l'Afrique sub-saharienne et l'Espagne jusqu'à l'Asie centrale et l'est de l'océan Indien. Par ailleurs, les études des arts de l'islam se focalisent sur le cœur de la terre islamique entre l'Égypte et l'Asie centrale du VIIe au XVIIIe siècle, en passant occasionnellement par des incursions en Espagne, en Sicile et en Inde (Blair et Bloom, 2003). Bien que la majorité des musées et des historiens limitent les arts de l'islam à une période précise (jusqu'à la fin de l'Empire ottoman au XIXe siècle), il semble que l'intégration de l'art contemporain dans le discours de la discipline et notamment dans le discours muséal soit préférable ; isoler l'art contemporain impliquerait une date déterminée aux civilisations de l'islam privant l'histoire contemporaine de faire partie de la civilisation islamique. De plus, cette *date d'expiration* imposée par l'Occident est mise en concordance avec la création de la notion de l'Orient. Le risque de cette décision arbitraire est de tomber dans le piège de l'orientalisme<sup>10</sup>. Cette limitation dans le discours historique

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7. Sheila S. Blair et Jonathan M. Bloom (2003) trouvent que l'architecture ottomane a très peu à voir avec l'architecture iranienne et qu'il est très difficile de trouver des similitudes significatives entre l'Alhambra et le Taj Mahal.

8. D'après un entretien d'Obay Al Bitar avec Gwenaëlle Fellingier, la conservatrice en chef du département des arts de l'islam au musée du Louvre, Paris, le 28 novembre 2018.

9. Nous avons choisi d'identifier les arts de l'islam selon leurs critères visuels afin d'appuyer le rejet des normes imposées en Occident. Les arts de l'islam ne peuvent pas être comparés aux formes d'art européen et demandent un traitement éloigné des approches eurocentrées. Notre proposition ne constitue en aucune manière une solution innovante, définitive. Tout au plus ouvre-t-elle le questionnement sur une discipline qui est sans doute mal définie et nécessite encore un travail de réévaluation.

10. L'orientalisme selon Edward Said (2005, p. 141), est la discipline dans laquelle l'Orient est abordé

de la discipline des arts de l'Islam pose donc une difficulté certaine pour la compréhension de la civilisation de l'Islam en Occident. Oleg Grabar (1983) associe ce problème aux ouvrages abordant les productions artistiques et les monuments architecturaux créés jusqu'à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, notamment dans des régions comme le Levant, l'Égypte, l'Iran et l'Asie centrale. Selon lui, cette approche est problématique parce qu'elle néglige d'autres régions où réside une large communauté musulmane. Elle indique du même coup que les arts et les civilisations de l'Islam ont cessé d'exister il y a deux cents ans. Enfin, elle suggère que seul le lointain peut être appelé art de l'Islam. Les formes d'art qui ont survécu - que cela soit dans le domaine de la musique de l'architecture ou même des arts plastiques et de la calligraphie (Ali, 1997) - assurent néanmoins la continuité de la civilisation islamique.

## Les arts de l'Islam et l'Europe

Les contacts entre l'Europe occidentale et le monde de l'Islam tout au long du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle sont basés principalement sur l'impérialisme et le colonialisme. Ces doctrines politiques ont redéfini la structure du pouvoir mondial et sont motivées par un intérêt économique pour le monde non-occidental riche en matières premières et en main-d'œuvre (Çelik, 1992). Mais le monde oriental a également fait l'objet d'une fascination intellectuelle suscitée par des textes et des études, des artefacts culturels, des objets ethnographiques et des structures urbaines (Maussen, 2007). À travers les musées, nous allons élaborer ce rapport de force en évoquant le cas célèbre du South Kensington Museum, qui a été construit suite à la grande exposition industrielle de Londres de 1851.

Ce musée d'art et d'industrie, établi en 1852 et renommé en 1899 le Victoria & Albert Museum, est ouvert au public sur son site actuel en 1857 avec pour but d'augmenter les moyens de formation industrielle et d'étendre l'influence de la science et de l'art sur l'industrie productive (Robertson, 2004). À l'époque, les objets non-occidentaux servent d'exemple au design idéal pour la fabrication industrielle et une source d'inspiration pour les producteurs et les ouvriers dans le marché britannique. La collection récoltée depuis 1850 en provenance d'Inde et d'Asie du sud-est, de Chine et du Japon, représente un microcosme d'une vision moderne de monde en miniature (Conway, 1882). Dans son analyse, Tim Barringer (1998) voit dans la scénographie et la technique d'affichage dans les salles où les objets non-occidentaux sont exposés une volonté d'équilibrer le

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en tant que sujet d'étude. Elle inclut l'édition et la traduction des textes mais également les études numismatiques, anthropologiques, archéologiques, sociologiques, économiques, historiques, littéraires et culturelles dans toutes les civilisations connues de l'Asie et de l'Afrique du nord, anciennes et modernes. Ce terme est aussi utilisé pour désigner la collection de rêves, d'images et de vocabulaires employés pour parler de ce qui se trouve de l'autre côté des frontières. Pour Avinoam Shalem (2012), l'orientalisme est une approche méthodologique et critique qui sert en premier lieu à réexaminer l'influence du mode de pensée eurocentrique qui est à la base de la connaissance de l'époque sur l'Orient, afin d'en réévaluer la compréhension et d'obtenir une image plus précise des contrastes existant sur cet immense territoire.

processus d'éducation et le divertissement populaire, tout en fournissant une source d'inspiration via les décorations indiennes, islamiques et japonaises. Selon lui, cette ambiance orientale dans laquelle les objets non-occidentaux sont regroupés et isolés de ce qui était le courant dominant de l'époque sert l'objectif orientaliste. Ainsi, l'accent est mis sur l'isolement de ces objets en marquant leur différence, ce qui renforce la séparation entre l'Orient et l'Occident et affirme la domination de l'Orient par l'Occident, tout en estompant les différences au sein des catégories orientales (Said, 2005)<sup>11</sup>. Dès lors, cette stratégie d'exposition symbolise la base d'une hiérarchie coloniale et représente une idéologie de supériorité raciale et culturelle sur l'Orient. En effet, les objets sont exposés pour leur importance politique et deviennent le symbole de la victoire de l'empire britannique.

Ce mouvement de célébration des triomphes économiques et industriels occidentaux est notamment illustré à travers les expositions universelles du XIXe siècle en Europe et en Amérique du nord. En effet, les expositions universelles tentent de représenter le progrès technologique de l'Europe et de mettre en valeur les bénéfices retirés des colonies (Fulco, 2017). Elles ont cherché à recréer une ambiance authentique ancrée dans la perception d'occidentaux depuis longtemps, sur un monde monothéiste, de fantasme et d'exotisme, en bâtissant des répliques de monuments connus et en exposant l'Homme dans son environnement ethnique. En introduisant une vision du monde en microcosme, elles offrent un voyage imaginaire dans un nouveau cadre de tourisme via l'introduction d'éléments orientalistes dans la représentation des arts non-occidentaux<sup>12</sup>. Dès lors, elles déterminent une hiérarchisation qui définit la catégorisation de l'art non-occidental. De plus, des représentations authentiques des coutumes et des habitudes des cultures étrangères sont ajoutées à l'expérience offerte par l'exposition. Cela conduit à la construction de structures indigènes pour accueillir les différentes variétés ethniques au monde (Leprun, 1986). Les expositions universelles ont également eu une influence sur la politique d'acquisition, sur le mode d'affichage et la présentation des objets non-occidentaux dans les musées en Europe. Elles ont laissé un héritage d'une muséographie orientaliste fondée sur des représentations pittoresques, articulées sur la préférence d'une accumulation des objets de manière désordonnée plus que sur l'exclusivité de l'objet individuel (Roxburgh, 2000). En revanche, l'exposition *Meisterwerke muhammadanischer Kunst* à Munich en 1910, qui présente

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11. Selon Said (2005, p. 96), on peut se servir de l'Orientalisme pour renforcer l'autorité et la séparation et pour exprimer la force de l'Occident et la faiblesse de l'Orient, telles que les voit l'Occident.

12. Des répliques des monuments trouvés à l'Alhambra ont été recréées et exposées au Crystal Palace en 1851 ; les tribaux architecturaux créés au South Kensington Museum illustrant la porte de Sanchi en Inde ont été reproduits et exposés dans des expositions universelles en France et en Allemagne (Barringer, 1998) ; une version des rues du Caire a été créée aussi lors de l'Exposition universelle de 1889 à Paris ; etc. Ils ont ainsi introduit les cultures comme des artefacts exposés dans des pavillons qui étaient eux-mêmes des résumés des cultures (Çelik, 1992).



les chefs-d'œuvre dans des vitrines isolées va marquer la muséographie des arts de l'Islam jusqu'à nos jours<sup>13</sup>.

## La muséologie des arts de l'Islam aujourd'hui en Europe

Lors de nos observations et analyses des différents musées occidentaux, ces derniers ont fait l'objet d'un renouvellement de leur parcours, en allouant plus d'espace et d'importance aux expositions de collections des arts de l'Islam. Ce changement est notamment dû au désir de rétablir un pont entre les cultures occidentales et islamiques. C'est le cas à Londres et à Paris, par exemple, où les collections des arts de l'Islam ont été constituées dans un pays étranger à leurs pays d'origine. Ces collections ont été exposées auparavant comme un symbole du pouvoir colonial et impérialiste au XIX<sup>e</sup> et début XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ce temps est maintenant révolu, et l'existence de ces collections a encouragé les musées à créer de nouvelles salles d'exposition ainsi qu'à prendre la responsabilité de conserver et d'exposer les cultures non-occidentales. Giovanni Pinna (2011) affirme par ailleurs que les changements de présentation des arts de l'Islam dans les musées en Occident servent à adoucir le passé colonial et portent un intérêt politique pour le monde de l'Islam. Dans les parties qui suivent, nous focaliserons notre analyse sur l'approche de trois musées : le *Pergamonmuseum* à Berlin, le musée du Louvre à Paris et le British Museum à Londres. Le choix de ces trois villes vient de leur importance dans le développement de la discipline des arts de l'Islam. En outre, ces trois musées représentent des établissements majeurs dans la présentation des cultures et des arts non-occidentaux.

### Notion des arts de l'Islam

Le *Pergamonmuseum*, tel qu'on le visite aujourd'hui, présente les collections d'art antique classique - *Antikensammlung*, du musée d'Antiquité du Proche-Orient - *Vorderasiatisches Museum* et du Musée d'Art Islamique - *Museum für Islamische Kunst*. Il expose principalement des objets archéologiques issus des campagnes de fouilles dans les régions de la Méditerranée et du Proche-Orient effectuées à partir de 1875. L'intérêt allemand de construire un Musée d'Art Islamique date de 1904 avec la création du département d'art antique islamique au sein du *Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum* par Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1908) (Junod et al., 2012). Le département est créé grâce à l'arrivée de chefs-d'œuvre en Allemagne après les fouilles dans les territoires de l'Empire ottoman au Moyen-Orient et les Kadjar (1779-1925) en Iran. Cela témoigne des bonnes relations diploma-

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13. Les musées d'art et d'archéologie accordent une importance à l'exposition d'un objet seul sous prétexte d'un *Meisterwerk*. Les chefs-d'œuvre sont considérés comme des éléments muséographiques importants pour attirer les visiteurs et les inviter à se rendre au musée, notamment au musée du Louvre où les objets exposés renvoient à leurs matérialités et à leurs valeurs esthétiques. Le British Museum s'articule, quant à lui, dans sa présentation sur les objets de la vie de tous les jours. Son but n'est pas de présenter les objets de luxe, fabriqués pour les élites dirigeantes, mais d'exposer la réalité des sociétés du monde islamique à travers des objets réels de la vie quotidienne.

tiques entre ces deux empires et l'Allemagne. Ensuite, le département devient le *Museum für Islamische Kunst* ouvert au *Pergamonmuseum* en 2001. Le *Pergamonmuseum* fait partie d'un grand complexe muséal conçu sur l'Île des Musées. Le projet, envisagé depuis 1841 par le Roi Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795-1861) est toujours en cours de réalisation. Ce complexe muséal est destiné à devenir *une ville temple de l'art et de la culture de 6 000 ans d'histoire humaine* (Junod et al., 2012, p. 294)<sup>14</sup>. Dès lors, le *Pergamonmuseum* offre dans son ensemble un parcours reliant l'Antiquité classique et proche-orientale avec les arts de l'Islam. Le complexe muséal sur l'Île aux Musées va ensuite permettre de faire le lien entre les antiquités méditerranéennes et proche-orientales avec l'évolution de l'art en Occident. Ce parcours offre une image complète des développements des arts en Europe ainsi qu'une mise en évidence de la relation entre l'Europe et les régions de la Méditerranée et du Proche-Orient.

Le musée du Louvre à Paris est un musée universel composé de huit départements mettant en valeur l'histoire de l'art - en premier plan - et l'archéologie. Les œuvres exposées au musée du Louvre sont présentées dans un ordre chronologique, de l'Égypte pharaonique et la Grèce antique jusqu'à l'art occidental du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'exposition permanente des arts de l'Islam, ouverte en 2012, offre une continuité du discours muséographique du musée situant les arts de l'Islam entre les antiquités de la Grèce préclassique et de l'Égypte copte et romaine d'un côté, et de l'Orient méditerranéen à l'époque romaine de l'autre. La mise en place d'un département complètement dédié aux arts de l'Islam se fait en 2003. Le choix d'établir ce département est tout d'abord un choix politique fait par le président de la République Jacques Chirac (1932-2019). Jean-Loup Amselle (2016, pp. 24-25) voit dans ce choix une volonté *de faire plaisir aux pays musulmans dont certains ont financé ce projet (Maroc, pays du Golfe) ainsi qu'aux musulmans de France*. La création du département s'est accompagnée d'une autonomisation de la collection au sein du Louvre et de la réalisation d'un nouvel espace architectural en 2012. Ce département affirme également l'importance scientifique accordée par la ville de Paris au développement de la discipline des arts de l'Islam. Depuis la formation de la collection d'art *persan* en 1893, et la première salle des arts *musulmans* au musée du Louvre en 1905 suivie par une salle d'art *islamique* en 1993 (Makariou, 2012), ce changement témoigne de l'évolution d'un siècle d'études et de recherches sur la discipline. Les arts de l'Islam au Louvre sont passés d'un art *ethnique* à un art *religieux* pour ensuite désigner au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle l'art des civilisations où les élites dirigeantes pratiquent la foi musulmane.

Enfin, la naissance de la collection des arts de l'Islam au British Museum a commencé avec la construction du musée suite au legs de Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) (Duthie, 2011). Il avait dans sa collection une partie des objets

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14. « *The initial planning for refashioning the Museum Island into a "temple city of art and culture from 6,000 years of human history" commenced shortly after reunification.* » (Junod et al., 2012, p. 294).

des arts de l'Islam<sup>15</sup>. Ensuite, ces artefacts ont fait partie du département des Antiquités créé en 1807. Après l'arrivée de Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897) au musée en 1851, le département des Antiquités est divisé, en 1860, en trois départements en fonction de l'emplacement géographique et la matière de l'objet (Junod et al., 2012). Ainsi sont créés les départements d'Antiquités gréco-romaines, Monnaies et médailles et Antiquités orientales. Dès lors, il est intéressant de souligner l'intérêt de Wollaston Franks de collectionner les objets des arts de l'Islam afin de retracer le lien entre ces objets et les arts décoratifs en Europe. Il semble nécessaire de noter que le South Kensington Museum créé en 1852, est contemporain de l'époque de Wollaston Franks. En effet, la création du South Kensington Museum a mis en évidence la valeur esthétique d'ornementation dans les arts de l'Islam afin d'améliorer les reproductions et le design chez les artisans anglais et européens. Il semblerait que cette création muséale ait permis une recherche sur la connexion entre les arts de l'Islam et les arts décoratifs en Europe. Cependant, la collection des arts de l'Islam au British Museum n'était pas envisagée comme une collection à part entière *mais bien pour ce qu'elle permettait de comprendre de l'évolution historique des formes artistiques européennes* (Abdallah, 2010, p. 97). Wollaston Franks a attribué les arts de l'Islam à une zone géographique reliant l'Europe à l'Asie et à l'Afrique à la période entre l'Antiquité et la Renaissance européenne, le Moyen-Âge. La décision est prise en 1984 d'établir la galerie *John Addis of the Islamic world*, ouverte au public en 1989. Depuis 2018, *l'Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world* a succédé à la galerie *John Addis* pour l'exposition des arts de l'Islam. Ce changement a effectivement renforcé l'intégration des arts de l'Islam dans le parcours du musée et leur présentation dans les salles. Il situe les arts de l'Islam dans le parcours de l'Europe de l'an 300. De ce fait, la mise en évidence s'établit sur la relation du monde islamique avec l'Europe, de l'Antiquité à nos jours.

L'objectif de la nouvelle exposition permanente au British Museum est de refléter essentiellement la culture matérielle des sociétés originaires des régions où l'islam joue un rôle majeur, voire un rôle unique, dans la culture. La galerie concentre ainsi son approche sur l'exposition des objets qui reflètent l'activité humaine, c'est-à-dire, des objets de la vie quotidienne plutôt que des œuvres d'art. Contrairement au Louvre, où la majorité des objets présentés ont été fabriqués pour les élites dirigeantes, l'objectif du British Museum est d'éviter une telle approche qui offre une image déformée des arts de l'Islam (Akhbarnia et al., 2018). Il s'agit de mettre en évidence tout le spectre de la production allant des ateliers impériaux aux industries artisanales populaires. De plus, en intégrant l'art contemporain dans son discours à travers des œuvres mettant en valeur la calligraphie arabe, le British Museum offre un regard sur les enjeux de

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15. La collection de Sir Hans Sloane est constituée de 79 575 objets composés des plantes, fossiles, minéraux, spécimens zoologiques, anatomiques et pathologiques, antiquités et curiosités artificielles, estampes, dessins et monnaies, livres et manuscrits. Parmi ces objets, il se trouve une amulette de quartz gravée de versets du Coran (Abdallah, 2010).

la production culturelle contemporaine permettant ainsi d'ajouter une nouvelle dimension de réflexion sur les représentations contemporaines des cultures musulmanes. Dès lors, l'approche de la galerie, en mettant l'accent notamment sur l'anthropologie des sociétés musulmanes, diffère des autres musées. Cette approche aborde ensuite l'art et l'archéologie comme partie intégrante de la culture matérielle islamique.

## **L'interculturalité selon les arts de l'Islam**

Alors que l'exposition des arts de l'Islam au British Museum n'occupe que deux galeries dans un parcours plus large sur l'évolution de l'art européen, nous remarquons que l'attention du musée diffère de celle du musée du Louvre ou du *Pergamonmuseum*. Tout d'abord, tous les trois cherchent à évoquer la relation entre les arts de l'Islam et l'art en Europe, ainsi que le développement des arts de l'Islam. En effet, les trois musées situent les arts de l'Islam dans un contexte chronologique régional, continental et mondial plus vaste, en contraste avec les autres arts dans le monde, notamment l'art occidental. Il est nécessaire de noter que beaucoup d'objets des arts de l'Islam partagent des histoires qui peuvent les situer dans un discours occidental ou islamique, comme par exemple le baptistère de Saint-Louis (Syrie, 1320-1340) au musée du Louvre, ou la corne en ivoire fatimide (Sicile, XIIe-XIIIe siècle) au *Pergamonmuseum*. Ainsi, la mise en contexte des objets joue un rôle primordial dans la transmission du message. En effet, les trois musées évitent d'isoler leur présentation des arts de l'Islam de l'ensemble des collections au musée, et tous les trois cherchent à montrer la complexité et la relation interculturelle des civilisations de l'Orient et de l'Occident. Dès lors, ils proposent dans leurs approches un traitement interculturel des arts de l'Islam afin de mettre en évidence les points de rencontre entre le monde islamique et l'Europe. Cela correspond effectivement au message porté par le musée. La mise en contexte peut également ajouter une autre dimension à l'exposition. Par exemple, les objets sont souvent exposés dans une ambiance séculaire qui n'empêche cependant pas l'exposition de chercher à évoquer un environnement religieux, comme au *Pergamonmuseum* où l'une des salles comprend un *mihrab* (une niche de prière) mis à côté d'un *kursi* (un lutrin pour le Coran) en bois. Ils sont ainsi exposés à proximité de la vitrine qui parle de *madrassa* en tant que lieu d'enseignement de science religieuse sous les Seldjoukides (1071-1307). La mise en contexte dans cette partie de l'exposition évoque une aire religieuse et spirituelle et lui donne une autre dimension.

## **Scénographie décorative ou orientaliste ?**

Dans le cas du *Pergamonmuseum*, des éléments architecturaux sont mis en place pour représenter une salle soutenue par deux colonnes sur lesquelles se trouvent trois voutes en berceau. La salle est équipée d'une fenêtre munie d'une colonne qui soutient deux voutes décorées de motifs végétaux et géométriques entrelacés et abstraits, l'*arabesque*. Il convient de noter que ces éléments architecturaux sont fabriqués par le musée afin de créer une scénographie d'ambiance qui sert à la

mise en contexte du contenu de la salle. En effet, la salle comprend des objets architecturaux authentiques comme une niche en bois et un *mihrab* ainsi que des objets sensibles à la lumière du jour comme un tapis et une marionnette de théâtre d'ombres. Les interventions scénographiques peuvent servir la fonction de conservation puisqu'elles protègent les œuvres de la lumière du jour. Un autre exemple se trouve dans une salle où une reconstitution en plâtre monochrome de l'*iwan* (une salle ouverte à la voûte en berceau) de *Taq-e Kisra* sert à exposer des éléments architecturaux authentiques et offre aux visiteurs une meilleure compréhension des composants d'un *iwan*. Dès lors, la scénographie au *Pergamonmuseum* n'est pas seulement une scénographie d'ambiance mais aide également à illustrer le message porté par le musée sur le développement de l'architecture dans les arts de l'Islam. Il est cependant intéressant de se rappeler que de telles constructions ont fait partie du projet impérialiste du musée d'art décoratif, le South Kensington Museum à Londres. Contrairement à ce musée, le *Pergamonmuseum* se focalise principalement dans son approche sur l'archéologie et ses constructions scénographiques reflètent ses propos.

Le département des arts de l'Islam au musée du Louvre se caractérise quant à lui par une intervention architecturale contemporaine qui désigne un tapis volant ou dans les mots des architectes et des muséographes Bellini, Ricciotti et Pierard, *un voile lumineux* (Makariou, 2012, pp. 21-22). Sur le niveau architectural, l'idée perçue ici est de concevoir un échange de regards entre les arts de l'Islam et l'architecture environnante mais cela semble aussi évoquer une rupture avec la représentation des arts de l'Islam et le reste du musée. De plus, la description du toit de la cour en tant que *voile* peut faire référence aux coutumes des femmes musulmanes et faire appel à une identité ethnique et religieuse qui n'est pas traitée au Louvre. Si cette intervention contemporaine attire beaucoup de visiteurs et les invite à se rendre au musée, elle ne sert pas à refléter le contenu de l'exposition. Cependant, elle remplit une fonction de conservation puisqu'elle filtre la lumière du jour et protège les objets exposés. Le contraste est aussi marqué en passant au niveau du sous-sol qui désigne un espace très sombre ou *un océan noir*, contrairement à l'espace lumineux au rez-de-chaussée. Jean-Gabriel Leturcq (2012) voit dans la présentation des arts de l'Islam au musée du Louvre une conception néo-orientaliste. En effet, les muséographes ont choisi de faire une représentation de type *forêt* des vitrines transparentes dans la salle à espace ouvert au sous-sol, ce qui la différencie du reste du musée où les salles sont en majorité de petites salles fusionnées. Dès lors, la scénographie au département des arts de l'Islam contribue à la création d'un espace d'attraction des visiteurs bien que l'architecture contemporaine et les vitrines de haute technologie servent à remplir certaines fonctions de conservation donnant une identité propre au musée.

Enfin, le British Museum a choisi une approche différente de celle du musée du Louvre et du *Pergamonmuseum*. Alors que son exposition des arts de l'Islam est considérée comme la plus récente, elle ne se caractérise ni par une intervention contemporaine, ni par des reconstitutions d'éléments architecturaux créant une

scénographie d'ambiance. En effet, son exposition occupe deux galeries du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle identiques aux galeries adjacentes mettant en évidence la continuité de son parcours sur le développement de l'art européen. Cependant, il s'y trouve deux fenêtres couvertes par un élément décoratif qui pourrait faire référence à l'architecture islamique connue en tant que *moucharabieh*. Cet élément participe essentiellement à filtrer la lumière traversant la fenêtre et protège les œuvres de la lumière du jour. Alors que le message de l'exposition est illustré à travers l'exposition des artefacts réels, il ne nécessite aucune pratique de reconstitution des éléments architecturaux complémentaires. Nous pouvons remarquer que la scénographie employée dans les galeries au British Museum est conçue afin de relier l'ensemble des galeries du parcours sur l'art européen.

## Conclusion

Dans cette recherche, nous avons proposé une définition des arts de l'Islam qui pourrait refléter ainsi certains aspects des problématiques de la discipline. Les arts de l'Islam ont été influencés par le contexte politique, sociétal et économique tout au long des XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles. Au travers des représentations auxquelles ils ont été soumis, ils ont constitué des moyens d'inscrire et de diffuser les messages du pouvoir, tout en étant conditionnés par les représentations *authentiques* influencées par l'imaginaire collectif occidental. Aujourd'hui, ces représentations marquent une continuité du regard occidental sur la culture de l'Autre, et sont conçues pour la grande majorité par et pour les occidentaux. Par exemple, le Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale à Tervuren représente cette zone géographique en tant que sujet d'étude où la diversité culturelle et ethnique est mise en valeur tout comme l'évolution urbaine et la biodiversité contextualisées par une mise en scène décorative pour constituer un lieu d'attraction. Dans cette perspective, le choix et la manière de représenter l'Autre et de se représenter soi-même entrent dans une dynamique de pouvoir déséquilibrée qui joue en faveur de l'Occident, notamment en ce qui concerne le choix et la manière de se représenter dans les pays des autres comme le souligne l'exemple du musée du Louvre à Abu Dhabi.

De plus, la création de la notion d'Orient selon Edward Said (2005) sert à marquer la différence entre les civilisations islamiques et occidentales. Pourrions-nous cependant affirmer que l'ouverture culturelle sur le monde islamique à travers les nouvelles expositions des arts de l'Islam en Europe est censée construire un pont entre les civilisations contemporaines ? La réponse à cette question est effectivement illustrée dans le discours historique et muséographique des musées. L'examen de la médiation entre collections, institutions et espace public permet d'analyser les enjeux politiques de l'exposition des arts de l'Islam. Nous avons remarqué que les trois musées intègrent les arts de l'Islam dans un discours plus large sur les relations interculturelles en appuyant sur les points de rencontre entre l'Occident et l'Orient. La création de ce rapport inter-civilisationnel est nécessaire lorsque l'on expose les cultures de l'Autre en prenant en compte une scénographie adéquate qui servira à l'orientation

des visiteurs et à la médiation du contenu de l'exposition. C'est le cas de l'exposition des arts de l'Islam au British Museum où l'histoire des communautés musulmanes est racontée à travers les récits d'artefacts. En effet, le British Museum a modifié son champ d'action afin de présenter les cultures matérielles des civilisations : cette approche peut certainement constituer une réflexion nécessaire ainsi qu'une solution aux problématiques du terme et de la discipline des arts de l'Islam. *The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world* au British Museum emploie également une scénographie correspondant à la conception des galeries avoisinantes renforçant ainsi la cohésion entre les collections du musée et l'ensemble de son parcours sur le développement des arts en Europe. Elle constitue donc le modèle de référence pour les expositions des arts de l'Islam en Occident.

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# Branding Indigeneity: Corporate Patronage of the Arts

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## ABSTRACT

Although corporate giving is an important source of support for initiatives related to indigenous cultures, it is less clear how companies gain advantages from patronage. This paper develops the concept of *branding indigeneity* to describe how companies benefit from philanthropy and sponsorships related to indigenous cultures. More specifically, I argue that corporate patronage related to indigenous cultures is a practice through which companies shape perceptions that they respect and value indigenous peoples. I draw on the case of corporate patronage at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) to empirically illustrate branding indigeneity in the United States.

Key words: diversity, cultural patronage, businesses, branding

## RESUMEN

**Branding Indigeneity: patrocinio corporativo de las artes**

Aunque las donaciones corporativas son una fuente importante de apoyo para iniciativas relacionadas con las culturas indígenas, no está tan claro cómo las empresas obtienen ventajas del patrocinio. Este artículo desarrolla el concepto de indigeneidad de marca para describir cómo las empresas se benefician de la filantropía y los patrocinios relacionados con las culturas indígenas. Más específicamente, sostengo que el patrocinio empresarial relacionado con las culturas indígenas es una práctica a través de la cual las empresas dan forma a las percepciones de que respetan y valoran a los pueblos indígenas. Me baso en el caso del patrocinio corporativo en el Museo Nacional del Indio Americano (NMAI) para ilustrar empíricamente la indigeneidad de las marcas en los Estados Unidos.

Palabras clave: diversidad, mecenazgo cultural, empresas, marca

**Introduction**

When the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened in Washington, DC in 2004, among the major donors were companies such as Coca-Cola, Chase Bank, and Merrill Lynch. In the ensuing years, businesses have continued to support the NMAI. For example, in 2016 Northrop Grumman, an aerospace and defense company, made a \$250,000 donation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial (NNAVM) on the NMAI grounds. Similarly, in 2018, the railway company BNSF gave a \$500,000 donation to the memorial project. While we know that corporate support provides needed funds to indigenous cultural institutions and initiatives, it is less clear what corporations stand to gain from their patronage. Building on theory related to branding and communication, this paper argues that patronage related to indigenous cultures provides image-related benefits to companies. More specifically, I argue that corporate philanthropy and sponsorships related to indigenous cultures are a form of what I term *branding indigeneity*. Or, it is a practice through which corporations shape perceptions that they care about diversity and respect indigenous communities.

To empirically illustrate branding indigeneity via cultural patronage, I examine corporate gifts to the NMAI. I draw on an archive of texts on corporate cultural patronage and other data to demonstrate how giving to the NMAI offers image

benefits to companies.<sup>1</sup> To provide a foundation for my elaboration of branding indigeneity, I discuss the broader literature on branding and communications. Following this, I present a brief history of the NMAI. Finally, I elaborate the processes through which corporate patronage related to indigenous groups helps businesses to project a positive corporate racial image.

## Theory and Literature

### Branding and Communications

Before delving into how giving to the NMAI is a practice through which corporations communicate that they value diversity and Native Americans, it will be helpful to discuss corporate branding. While a brand is “the sum total of how someone perceives a particular organization... branding is about shaping that perception” (Ashley Friedlein, as cited in Tuten, 2020, p. 340). One of the fundamental processes through which companies shape perceptions about their overall image, as well as specific products and services, is promotional activities. Promotional activities are forms of communication intended to positively engage existing buyers, prospective customers, and other stakeholders with brands—for example, to influence customers viewing brands in a positive way and encouraging them to purchase products.

To communicate with customers and other stakeholders, companies rely on a range of communication channels. In general, these include paid media, i.e. communication channels that companies pay for, such as advertisements placed in magazines or newspapers; owned media, i.e., communication channels that are entirely controlled by companies themselves, such as corporate blogs and newsletters; earned media, which includes third-party forms of communication that are unpaid such as editorial stories in newspapers and magazines along with word-of-mouth communications; and finally, shared media, also called social media, where organizations and individuals communicate with each other through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Tuten, 2020). Partnerships, such as collaborations with museums, are a vehicle through which companies directly communicate with stakeholders. Also, messaging related to corporate partnerships is communicated via other channels, such as earned media, owned media, and media channels controlled by museums.

### Racial Branding and Branding Diversity

If branding is the process through which organizations shape perceptions of themselves, then racial branding can be understood as the process through

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1. Data for this paper was collected as part of a broader project on corporate patronage of ethnoracial minority culture. In particular, I draw on a database of corporate patronage texts that I developed including press releases, blog posts, social media posts, and other documents publicizing corporate support for cultural initiatives related to racial and ethnic minorities. I also draw on archival documents that I collected from the Smithsonian Archives and photographs that I took during visits to the NMAI.

which organizations shape racial perceptions about themselves. These racial perceptions surround various aspects of companies—for example, ideas around whether or not a company produces products and services that are appropriate for use by members of particular racial and ethnic groups, whether or not a company treats racial and ethnic minority workers and customers fairly, whether or not a company respects members of specific racial and ethnic groups, and, whether or not a company’s products and services are associated with particular racial and ethnic groups and stereotypes about them.

Historically, the racial branding of many businesses in the United States centered on shaping perceptions that products and services were intended to be consumed by whites. For example, prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it was common for establishments in the South, such as restaurants and hotels, to display signs that service was for whites only. Racial branding by mainstream companies in the United States that did include racial and ethnic minorities often focused on establishing and reinforcing brand associations with stereotypes about these groups (Banks, 2020). For example, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was common for companies to create advertising trading cards with stereotypical images of “the Indian Warrior” (O’Barr, 2013). Similarly, brands have relied on caricatured portrayals of the “American Indian Princess” to link their brands with nature and purity, which are stereotypes associated with Native Americans (O’Barr).<sup>2</sup>

While historically racial branding by businesses often communicated that products and services were for whites and/or linked company images to stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities, over the course of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, racial branding has increasingly shifted towards branding diversity (Crockett, 2008; Khamis, 2020). In diversity branding, firms aim to communicate that their products and services are intended to be used by racial and ethnic minorities, that they treat customers and workers across racial and ethnic groups equitably, and that they respect racial and ethnic minorities and care about their well-being.

The shift towards diversity branding is a function of multiple factors such as changing demographics, changing laws, and shifting racial attitudes among whites. For example, growth in the racial and ethnic minority population, due to factors such as increasing immigration from places such as Asia, Latin America, and Africa, means that companies aim to appeal to racial and ethnic minority consumers by communicating that they respect them (Banks, 2020; Dávila, 2001). New anti-discrimination laws also drive companies to communicate that they treat all workers and customers fairly (Edelman, 2016; Skrentny, 2014). In addition, shifting class dynamics, such as the growing black

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2. In a similar vein, companies in the United States have a long history of using images of African Americans to associate their brands with racial stereotypes about the group. For example, the use of a black mammy caricature in the Aunt Jemima pancake mix logo links the brand with racial stereotypes about African American women at the service of whites (Banks, 2020, pp. 69-70).

middle class, compel businesses to convey that their products are intended for use by racial and ethnic minorities and that they respect and care about these groups (Burnett & Hoffman, 2010; Lamont & Molnar, 2001). Another important factor shaping racial branding is shifting white racial attitudes. In general, white support for principles of equality, such as integrated schools, interracial marriage, and fair treatment, increased over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bobo, 2001).

### **Branding Indigeneity**

As we have seen, in some cases, corporate racial branding specifically focuses on indigenous communities, such as Native Americans. I use the term *branding indigeneity* to refer to a subcategory of diversity branding—instances where companies aim to shape perceptions that they not only respect and celebrate diversity in general but also specifically honor and care about indigenous communities. In this paper, I argue that cultural patronage related to indigenous communities is one form of branding indigeneity. I suggest that this takes place through various mechanisms. These mechanisms are related to the communicative capacities of gifts themselves, the meanings conveyed by written and verbal texts about giving, as well as the symbolic aspects of places related to giving (Banks 2022). I will elaborate each of these mechanisms in more detail and provide examples from corporate patronage at the NMAI.

### **National Museum of the American Indian: A Brief History**

The NMAI in Washington DC has its foundation in another museum—The Museum of the American Indian (MAI). The MAI was founded by George Gustav Heye, the son of a German immigrant, who was an engineer and also a collector of Native American artifacts. In 1916, Heye founded the MAI, which opened to the public four years later. By the 1980s, there were discussions to move the MAI Collection outside of New York City. One proposal was to merge the MAI with the Smithsonian American Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. Another plan was for entrepreneur Ross Perot to purchase the collection for \$70 million and move it to Dallas, Texas. Both proposals fell through. However, on May 8, 1989, an agreement was signed with the Heye Foundation to transfer the Heye Collection to the Smithsonian. A few months later on November 28, 1989, legislation to establish the NMAI was signed. In 1994, the George Gustav Heye Center, which houses a portion of the Heye collection, opened at the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in New York City. The Cultural Resources Center (CRC), which serves as a storage, conservation, and research facility for the collection, opened in Maryland in 1999. A few months after the CRC opened, the groundbreaking for the NMAI took place. The NMAI finally opened to the public on September 21, 2004.

Corporate philanthropy has played an important role throughout the history of the NMAI. When the museum was in the process of being established, large companies such as Merrill Lynch and Coca-Cola gave donations. Businesses

have also supported a project of the NMAI—the National Native American Veterans Memorial (NNAVM). In 1994, Congress passed the Native American Veterans Memorial Established Act. As a fundraising document for the memorial notes, “The National Museum of the American Indian will honor Native American servicemen and women in a very visible way: a prominent memorial on the National Mall—a place that draws nearly 24 million visitors annually to Washington, DC” (National Museum of the American Indian [NMAI], n.d., p. 7). Major fundraising for the project, which was expected to cost \$15,000,000, began in 2013. Donors who gave \$100,000 were recognized by having their name included on a donor plaque at the site (NMAI). Companies such as General Motors, Dominion Energy, and Bank of America donated to the memorial, which opened in November 2020.

Corporate funding has played an important role in the establishment and continuing operations of the NMAI. As I will illustrate in detail below, the companies that have supported the NMAI have also benefited from their gifts. More specifically, these gifts function as a form of indigenous branding for these businesses.

### Corporate Support of the NMAI

As consumer culture theory scholar Russell Belk (1977, p. 2) writes, “Perhaps the most general function which gift-giving serves is to act as a form of symbolic communication between the giver and recipient.” Gift giving conveys meaning not only when gift givers and receivers are individuals but also when they are organizations, such as corporations donating to cultural institutions. In Belk’s elaboration of gift giving as a form of communication, he builds on broader paradigms about communication whereby senders encode messages, deliver them via communication channels, and then receivers decode the messages. However, in the case of gift giving, “the gift is able to act as both message and channel” (Belk, 1977, pp. 2-3). One message that gifts convey is that givers respect and honor receivers (Belk, pp. 2-3). If gift giving remains entirely private, then givers are only communicating with receivers. However, if gift giving is public, for example if it is written about in media channels, then gift givers are communicating with a broader audience.

In the case of corporations giving to the NMAI, gift giving conveys that businesses care about diversity and respect Native Americans. This message is communicated to a large audience. Since the gifts are written about in various media channels, such as press releases and museum publications, the message is disseminated to a wide public. In the case of the fundraising campaign that took place to build the NMAI in the 1990s, one of the museum’s newsletters, *Campaign News*, often ran articles publicizing corporate gifts. For example, various issues of the newsletter had stories with headlines such as “Con Edison Is Donor of NMAI Campaign’s First Endowment Gift,” “Time Warner Supports Campaign,” “Chase Manhattan Bank Gives \$350,000 to Construction Fund,” “Proctor & Gamble Makes \$50,000 Gift,” “The Coca-Cola Foundation Makes

\$500,000 Grant to NMAI,” “Merrill Lynch Foundation Continues to Support Through \$250,000 Gift,” and “Pfizer Grant Will Benefit Museum Construction Fund.” Given that corporate gifts were publicized in the NMAI newsletter, a wide audience was exposed to the messaging encoded in the donations—that the companies value inclusion and care for Native Americans.

On one hand, the NMAI campaign newsletter supported the indigenous branding of corporate donors by simply publicizing gifts. At the same time, the newsletter further reinforced the messaging encoded in the donations via how the gifts were discussed. To explain this mechanism of indigenous branding, it is helpful to refer to cultural anthropologist Grant McCracken’s theory on the meaning of consumer goods. In his account, McCracken asserts that meaning is transferred from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods through advertisements. Meaning transfer takes place in advertisements because consumer goods are placed alongside people, places, and objects that have particular meanings in the culturally constituted world. For example, if an advertisement includes an image of a product juxtaposed with an image of a person who is a member of an indigenous group, the product becomes associated with indigenous peoples. Written text plays an important role in the meaning transfer process, as it is the text that offers a guide for interpreting the visual elements of the advertisement. As McCracken (1986) writes,

*Text . . . makes explicit what is already implicit in the image. Text provides instructions on how the visual part of the advertisement is to be read. The verbal component allows the director to direct the viewer/reader’s attention to exactly those meaningful properties that are intended for transfer. (p. 75)*

”

McCracken’s discussion of written text as a prompt directing how advertisements should be interpreted is instructive for further elaborating how corporate gifts to the NMAI help to project an image of companies as valuing diversity and Native Americans. In the case of the NMAI newsletter, discourse about the gifts provided an interpretation of their meaning. Text in the NMAI newsletter informed readers that the gifts had taken place, and reports of verbal discourse about the gifts in the newsletter offered an interpretation of the gifts. One such interpretation was that the gifts were a reflection of the “generosity” of the corporations. For example, in a story about Merrill Lynch’s donation, the NMAI’s then-director is quoted as saying, “I am most appreciative of the ongoing generosity of Merrill Lynch, which is clearly demonstrated by this recent grant” (W. Richard West as cited in Merrill Lynch, 1993, p. 3).

Discourse about the donations in the NMAI newsletter also directly reinforced messaging encoded in the gifts that the companies had a deep commitment to diversity and Native Americans. For example, a report about a gift from AT&T

to support the opening exhibition at the Heye Center includes a quotation from an AT&T Foundation executive who explains that “[t]his exhibition exemplifies AT&T’s commitment to support the works of innovative contemporary artists of diverse cultures who challenge our perceptions and understanding of the world we live in” (Foundations Support, 1994, p. 9). A story about a \$100,000 donation from Anheuser-Busch frames the NMAI donation as part of a broader pattern of championing diversity at the company, noting that the business “supports the work of the American Indian College Fund” and “has been a corporate patron of the United Negro College Fund and the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund for many years” (Anheuser-Busch, 1996, p. 3). A story about Coca-Cola’s gift also couches the NMAI donation within a broader history of diversity outreach at the company. It notes that the company foundation

*supports an array of programs that serve and provide scholarships for American Indian students nationwide, including the American Indian College Fund; the First Nations Development Institute; the Rogers College Foundation in Claremore, Oklahoma; Oklahoma City University; Futures for Children in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and the Santa Fe Opera. (Coca-Cola, 1995, p. 7)*

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Corporate gifts to support the veterans’ memorial also frame the donations as an expression of a commitment to diversity and Native Americans. For example, a press release by BNSF Railways about the company’s memorial donation not only notes the \$500,000 gift, but also contextualizes it as part of the company’s broader outreach to Native Americans. In particular, the press release discusses the company’s “Tribal Relations Team” stating that,

*The BNSF Tribal Relations team is the first in the industry and was established to build and strengthen ties with the many diverse tribal nations within the BNSF railroad network. The team also works to foster within BNSF a greater cultural understanding of these tribal nations, their rights and governance and cultural issues. In reaching out to the 86 tribal governments and leaders that BNSF touches, the Tribal Relations team has established a high standard in the industry for the future of corporate-to-tribal communication and relationship building. (BNSF Railway, 2018)*

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In a similar fashion, a press release put out by the Smithsonian about aerospace and defense company Northrop Grumman’s \$250,000 donation for the memorial couches the gift as an articulation of the company’s deep commitment to



Native Americans. For example, a passage in the press release provides specific examples of the company's programs to support Native Americans noting that,

*Since 1970, Northrop Grumman has actively worked to partner with Native and tribally owned businesses through supplier partnerships and operations in Indian Country. The company has also been a longtime supporter of Native Americans through scholarship and mentor programs, employee diversity recruitment and retention, Native American Employee Resource Groups, and participation in the Indian Incentive Program. (Maxwell, 2016, p. 3)*

”

A third factor to consider in how corporate donations to the NMAI serve as a tool for indigenous branding relates to the museum building and grounds. When a business gives a large donation to a museum, it is common for the company name to be placed on and/or in the museum. This naming dynamic is key to corporate branding. To elaborate this mechanism further, it is helpful to engage the scholarship on spaces as symbols (Monnet, 2011). In his writing about place, Thomas F. Gieryn (2000) asserts that places have the following characteristics—a geographic location, a material form, and an investment with meaning and value. Applying this perspective to museums, museums are not only material forms located in particular geographical spaces, they are also entities with particular meanings. When corporate names and logos are placed on and in museum buildings, the museums stand as places which convey the idea that these companies value not only the art and artifacts displayed and exhibited in the museum but also the people who produced and consumed those objects. Moreover, museums function as places promoting the message that companies care about the people whose culture and history are associated with the architectural design of the building and surrounding landscape.

The NMAI not only houses material culture and other objects produced and consumed by Native peoples in the Western Hemisphere but also, in the architecture of the building itself along with the surrounding landscape, articulates the cultural values, beliefs, and histories of these groups. For example, the building “evoke[s] a wind-sculpted rock formation” and the landscape “recall[s] the natural environment that existed prior to European contact” (NMAI, 2020). The grounds include elements such as traditional croplands, Grandfather Rocks, and Cardinal Direction Markers. Inside the museum, on one of the buff-colored stone walls, is a set of plaques listing names of donors. Among the dozens of names are corporations such as 3M and 3M Foundation; Accenture; The Coca-Cola Foundation; JP Morgan Chase & Co.; Merrill Lynch & Co. Foundation, Inc.; American Express; Bank of America; Con Edison; Eastman Kodak Company; Goldman Sachs; Mars Chocolate North America; MetLife Foundation; Mobil Corporation; and Starbucks Coffee Company. With the

names of these corporations written on the wall of NMAI, the museum conveys the idea that these companies value diversity and care about Native Americans.

To summarize, corporate giving to the NMAI is a form of indigenous branding whereby companies project an image of caring about diversity and Native Americans. This takes place through various mechanisms including gift giving itself serving as a medium communicating this message; media about gifts disseminating this message along with reinforcing it with textual discourse; and the museum building standing as a symbolic place that conveys this message.

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# Agents and Actors at Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute

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## ABSTRACT

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Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI) opened in 2011, but the idea had been around for many decades. Since 2011, we have been working to bring Eeyou world views and values to life within this cultural space, adapting aspects of the European tradition of museology to meet the needs of our communities. This paper presents an overview of our decolonising practice as we move into our second decade of existence as the cultural heart of Eeyou Istchee.

Key words: Eeyou Istchee, Indigenous self representation, Indigenous sovereignty, belongings

## RÉSUMÉ

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### **Agents et acteurs de l'Institut culturel cri Aanischaaukamikw**

L'Institut culturel cri Aanischaaukamikw (ACCI) a ouvert ses portes en 2011, mais on en rêvait depuis plusieurs dizaines d'années. Depuis 2011, nous travaillons à faire vivre la vision du monde et les valeurs Eeyou

au sein de cet espace culturel, adaptant divers aspects de la tradition européenne de la muséologie pour répondre aux besoins de nos communautés. Le présent document offre un survol de nos pratiques de décolonisation au moment où nous entrons dans notre deuxième décennie d'existence en tant que cœur culturel d'Eeyou Istchee.

Mots clés : Eeyou Istchee, autoreprésentation autochtone, souveraineté autochtone, possessions.



## Introduction

Located in Ouje-Bougoumou, ACCI is the regional cultural institute for Eeyou Istchee, a self-governing region in what is now known as Quebec, that has 10 Eeyou communities: Whapmagoostui (Great Whale); Chisasibi (forcibly relocated from Fort George Island); Eastmain; Wemindji (Paint Hills); Waskaganish (Rupert's House); Nemaska; Waswanipi; Ouje-Bougoumou; Mistissini (Mistassini Post) and Washaw Sibi. Activities related to the Institute include educational programming related to Eeyou culture, management of a cultural archive, library, museum collection, and a permanent exhibition. Anishinaabe architect Douglas Cardinal designed the original layout of Ouje-Bougoumou on the edge of Lake Opemiska and also designed our facility, which sits on the inner 'medicine wheel' layout of the centre of Ouje-Bougoumou along with the band office, a church, and corporate offices, including a post office. These buildings surround a shabtuani<sup>1</sup> style open building that is used in winter as an outdoor hockey rink and in summer for outdoor gatherings.

*Our mandate explains our mission, which is imbued with Eeyou values:*

*...Aanischaaukamikw flows from the knowledge that Cree culture must be captured, maintained, shared, celebrated, and practiced... it is a living, breathing symbol of our determination to preserve and share the stories and legends, the music, the pictures, and the physical objects that show our unique interaction with the land, expressed through hunting, fishing, trapping, and underscored with a reverence for the land we have walked since time immemorial.*

*(Aanischaaukamikw, 2011b)*



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1. We are not italicising this word, it is in our language, Iiyiyiumuwin, because there is no equivalent translation in English and, therefore, this word (and others) should be used in English and not be considered 'foreign.'

Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute opened in 2011 (Pashagumskum et al., 2016), after decades of planning by Eeyou Elders and community members. ACCI is based in a self-governing region in what is now known as the Eastern James Bay region of Quebec, Canada,<sup>2</sup> and as such, many of the original policies and ways of working followed the existing practices of Eeyou Cree communities and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. For example, our staff leave allowances include paid time off for traditional activities, which are usually used in the autumn and spring seasons for the moose and goose hunts.

However, many of the founding policies, procedures and practices put in place in our library, archives and museum collections were based on Euro/Western museological standards. For the past few years, we have been responding to the needs of Eeyou community members and revising our ways of working within our collection areas to centre on Eeyou values. This paper presents an overview of the ways we are decolonising our practices within our cultural institution (Lonetree, 2012).

## Our Belongings: Treasures that Keep us Alive

The importance of our belongings<sup>3</sup> and how they have kept us alive for countless generations can be illustrated by this personal anecdote, which can be directly applied to how we are preserving our culture for our future generations. Thus, I'd like to share a personal story about survival from my childhood:

*When I was 7 years old, my jimshoom<sup>4</sup> and my gookum were traveling by sled with our dog pulling the sled. As we were traveling beside a river, all of sudden the ice beneath us cracked open.*

*I froze as I watched my jimshoom holding the dog and the sleigh, the sleigh was right over the crack and he started pulling it towards the shore, to the safe area. My gookum jumped over to the other side.*

*I was alone on the other side, standing still, not knowing what to do. As I watched all this, time seemed to slow down. Then I heard my gookum yelling "Minnie, jump!" (in Cree).*

*I looked down at the dark water flowing as the crack grew wider. I looked up at my gookum's face, I saw despair and knowing she couldn't swim, I gathered all my strength into that jump and leaped*

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2. Please note that we are purposely choosing not to be defined by the colonial borders imposed on this land and consider the 'border' a theoretical colonial construct, after Simpson (2014).

3. We chose to refer to our object collections as belongings after Wilson (2016). See also Collections Stewardship (2018).

4. Jimshoom is our word for grandpa / grandfather. Gookum is our word for grandma / grandmother.

*across the large crack on the ice. I felt my gookum's grasp on my coat, then I knew I was safe!*

*Today, thinking back to what we had on that sleigh, I understand why my jimshoom fought hard to pull the sleigh. All our needs were there. Our tools, our food, etc...*

*That year they took me on the land, I remember my gookum taking care of each item, whether it was clothes, tools, my snowshoes, etc. Each time I used my snowshoes, I had to hang them outside on a tree. I had to hang up my moccasins to dry at the end of each day. I had to take care of my axe and not lose it.*

”

With a little glimpse of our history, I am honored and grateful for our Elders' and founding members' vision of Aanischaaukamikw. Today, Aanischaaukamikw continues to implement the mission and vision of our ancestors.

## **Role of Aanischaaukamikw**

Our research philosophy is 'Nothing about us, without us' (Aanischaaukamikw, 2019b), meaning that we are the authorities and experts on all aspects of our own culture, as guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007). Any cultural research projects that are done by outsiders in our region should consult with us and follow our Research Policy and Procedures. This is mandatory for any research that is undertaken on the collections at Aanischaaukamikw. Our Research Policy centres on the OCAP principles – Ownership, Control, Accession, Possession – that were developed by the First Nations Institute of Canada (First Nations Governance Centre, n.d.). Our Guiding Principles for research prioritise the needs of our communities: for example, all research must be useful for our communities; research must be done with, or by, Eeyou community members; and any publications must have Eeyou community members as co-authors (Aanischaaukamikw, 2019a).

Within Eeyou Istchee, our role is to encourage good communication and interaction with the cultural coordinators in each community. We provide assistance and support for preventative measures, including advising on proper care and protection for collections (objects, archives, libraries, digital and analogue media). We partner with many organisations, including museums and heritage organisations outside of our region, for hosting internships and work placement programs. We ensure that all of our cultural programming and teachings involve Elders and other knowledge keepers from our region.

## Programming at Aanischaaukamikw

The Programs Department is the largest department at Aanischaaukamikw and includes Collections (library, museum, archives), Archaeology, Educational Programming, Gatherings and Special Events. The Educational Programming section organises school visits for groups from inside and outside of the region. We have a partnership with a school in Chibougamau, a town in Quebec that is approximately 60 kms away from Ouje-Bougoumou, to deliver a Cree-focused history course for their secondary school students. We have worked with school groups to organise visits from as far away as Maine and Georgia. We provide outreach to schools through the creation of educational programming by creating teaching kits and lesson plans for the Cree School Board.

We host workshops and training sessions. We have hosted artist-in-residencies for Cree artists, and creative workshops linked to wider Indigenous events such as during Rock Your Mocs week, when we had Elders come in to teach younger audiences how to make moccasins. Special events are an exciting part of our programming. We produced and toured a theatrical production entitled *Mind's Eye*, which was based on traditional Eeyou knowledge shared through storytelling (Marshall & Mast, 2015). In 2018, we hosted the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for a performance of *Chaakapesh*, an opera based on our traditional stories and legends.

## Exhibitions at Aanischaaukamikw

Our inaugural exhibit, *Aa Chiiwaaschaaniwich: Reclaiming the Ways of Our Ancestors* (Aanischaaukamikw, 2011a), features contemporary themes that bring past and present together in our exhibition space: tools, childcare, crafts, transportation, sacred and ceremonial belongings, the history of our region (from ancient to modern times), clothing (mittens, moccasins, headgear, and coats), camp life, bags and accessories. Our displays are put into our cultural context using quotes from Elders and knowledge keepers, as well as by including historic and modern photographs to show how objects were used in the past and the continuation of this use, and how we have adapted our technologies for our contemporary needs. The exhibit has around 150 belongings on display, including items from our permanent collection, as well as loans from museums from outside our region, Cree community members, and Cree organisations.

Prior to becoming Executive Director in 2020, I lent Aanischaaukamikw some very special belongings: three handstitched women's fabric blouses made many years ago by my grandmother Nanny Wapachee Jolly of Mistissini, from fabric purchased at the Hudson Bay Trading Post; a fabric cap made by Nanny for my son when he was young; a niimaapaan (dragline for pulling freshly killed small animals, like beavers, back to camp) made from jute with embroidery thread tassels as well as old and new decorations, that dates to the 1980s; a handsewn fabric bag made by Nanny, used for carrying tea and sugar while we travel in the bush; a sewing kit; a fish hook made by my grandfather Billy



Jolly; a metal needle for lacing snowshoes made by Billy for his wife Nanny; a pair of small round snowshoes (usually for wearing around camps) made by Billy that I found in a shed at his camp; larger pointy snowshoes (usually used for travelling) belonging to Isaac Coonishish that were made in Mistissini at a snowshoe factory; and the most special thing is a maatahiikan (also known as ulu, but that is the Inuit term), a scraper for beaver skin that was made by William Iserhoff, in the late 1800s or early 1900s, out of bear bone and metal. This was made for his daughter Maggie before she got married. Before her passing, Maggie gave it to my grandmother Nanny before she got married, and Nanny then gave it to me.

With these sentimental gifts passed down to me from my gookum, it was an honour, but I felt I couldn't use them because they are my treasures. I had heard about the loan program by word of mouth, so I communicated with the museum. Today, I am at peace knowing they are kept at Aanischaaukamikw.

In 2015, we received a grant from Canadian Heritage's Museums Assistance Program to develop a travelling exhibit so that we could take our Eeyou culture on the road to new audiences outside of our region. This project had an all-Cree content development team that was led by two Cree curators who are also artists and crafts people. All of the texts and labels were written by one of the Cree curators, which were presented in our Cree syllabics, English and French languages. All of the designs were approved by the Cree content development team. The physical layout of the exhibit followed our Eeyou world view for clockwise wayfinding based on the movement of the sun over our Earth, with the belongings displayed in ways that maintain their ongoing connection to our community members, their makers, and their makers' ancestors both past, present, and future (Morin, 2014; Wilson, 2016).

The resulting travelling exhibit, *Footprints: A Walk Through Generations* (Aanischaaukamikw, 2017), included over 150 belongings, many of which were lent by community members and Cree entities. The exhibit took two years to develop and assemble. It opened in 2017 at Aanischaaukamikw in a multi-use performance and display space, the Billy Diamond Hall, named after an extremely influential and important Chief. The exhibit travelled to all of our 10 Cree communities (including Whapmagoostui, the fly in community), accompanied by three young people from Cree communities who set it up and acted as guides. Footprints travelled to a few host venues in Quebec including a mining site. It was on display at the Canadian Museum of History in 2019, where it was exhibited for six months. As of 2020, it is in storage so we can refurbish it for further travels. The organic nature of most of the belongings in this exhibit meant that they needed to be rotated to prevent damage from light exposure. We intend to continue to tour the exhibit from 2022 to 2025. The exhibit won some national awards, including the 2018 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Museums: History Alive! and the 2018 Canadian Museum Association's Award of Outstanding Achievement in Exhibitions – Cultural Heritage.

Another recent exhibition project was a collaboration with Dr. Frances Wilkins, an ethnomusicologist and lecturer at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Scots and Eeyou Istchee have been connected for many centuries because of the fur trade. This exhibit was looking at the transfer of music between these regions, particularly fiddle music, which is still popular in Eeyou Istchee today. We worked together on the text panels to ensure they were written from a decolonial perspective that placed our world view and historical memories on a par with those of the Scots. This exhibit opened in Aberdeen in 2018. We are planning to tour the graphic panels around Eeyou Istchee in 2021.

## **Centring the Needs of the Community in Exhibitions**

In addition to the many ways that we centre the needs of our communities that have already been mentioned, we have some specific examples of how we apply these principles in our collections work. For example, we have a successful community loans program in which our community members can lend us ceremonial belongings for safekeeping in our secure, climate-controlled storage facility (Aanischaaukamikw, 2019c). We work beyond typical Euro-centric museum loan standards to provide return access to these belongings at short notice, if they are required for a ceremony. This includes removing belongings from display, which was done recently when a lender wanted to use accessories she had lent us for our ‘baby care’ display in her second child’s walking out ceremony. This is the ceremony in which a child is introduced to the land and animals and walks on the Earth for the first time. Other ceremonial belongings may be lent to us with instructions that only a family member of the lender can handle the belonging directly, because the belonging is imbued with a special protective relationship built between the owner and the belonging. This was the case with a makaahiikan lent as part of a child’s first snowshoe walk ceremonial outfit. A makaahiikan is carved from wood and acts as a scoop for snow and ice as well as a walking stick that guides the owner safely over dangerous terrain. We provide secure, climate-controlled storage for community loans with no obligation for their display, and when we return community loans, we made custom boxes so they can be stored safely.

## **Centring our World View in our Library**

Our documentation centre includes a research library and archival collections. Our library includes material relevant to our region – mostly works of nonfiction. We have an estimated 5000 items in our library at present, and the collection continues to grow with generous donations. We have some rare books, periodicals and reference materials. The bulk of our collection was formed from personal libraries donated by retired anthropologists who worked in the region in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century: Richard Preston, Harvey Feit, Cath Oberholtzer and Pierrette Desy. Our librarian, Annie Bosum, has been part of Aanischaaukamikw since the earliest days of planning the facility; and

as a member of Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, she has been instrumental in shaping the library to represent Cree world views.

For example, when faced with choosing which library classification system we should use at Aanischaaukamikw, we realised that the systems used in most non-Indigenous libraries (Dewey, Library of Congress) did not adequately reflect the complexity of Indigenous resources. With her specialist knowledge of the Eeyou Istchee region, Annie was able to adapt the Brian Deer Classification (BDC) system for use at Aanischaaukamikw (Bosum & Dunne, 2017). BDC was originally developed by Brian Deer, a Mohawk man from Kahnawake, specifically for use in Indigenous libraries. BDC has a flexible structure that can be customised for each region that chooses to implement it.

## **Sharing our Work: Inside and Outside of Eeyou Istchee**

We disseminate our work in a variety of ways with the goal of reaching as many Eeyou community members as possible, including those who choose to live in urban centres outside of our region. Some of the ways we share our collections include our online collections page, where users can search our library, museum and non-restricted archival collections; a blog platform (<http://aanischaaukamikw.blogspot.com/>) where we share stories about events and details about our work; we have a Facebook page; we create project-specific Facebook pages for gathering community knowledge when appropriate; we contribute seasonally themed articles to the Air Creebec (our regional airline) inflight magazine; we present at conferences; and we contribute to publications.

A post on our blog page shares details of how to make paint and pigments from materials foraged from the land around Ouje-Bougoumou, by Eeyou artist Margaret Orr (2020). From 2019 to 2020, Margaret worked as a specialist researcher on a project funded by the Arts Council of Canada's 'Creating, Knowing, and Sharing' funding stream. The project was to do community-based research with Elders and knowledge keepers to investigate the meaning of the historic painted caribou coats (often called 'Naskapi' coats) that are in many museum collections internationally (Orr et al., 2021). Our research has revealed that these coats have an important tradition in our region, which has sometimes been over-written as 'Naskapi' by outsiders, because of their confusion about the connections between Eeyou and Naskapi peoples (Bishop & Brousseau, 2018; Mailhot, 1986). When Margaret had to shelter on site in Ouje-Bougoumou during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, she took advantage of the spring weather and gathered different materials to show how our ancestors used what was around them to make the paints and pigments that we see on these painted coats today.

## **Conclusion**

From the initial concept of having our own cultural institute located within the village of Ouje-Bougoumou, we have centred the needs of the communities of

Eeyou Istchee in achieving this reality. Today, almost 10 years after we opened the doors to Aanischaaukamikw in 2011, we continue to work to centre Eeyou world views and values in our day-to-day work as we transform concepts of museology to work for our communities. This article has given examples from policy, procedures and practice to demonstrate how we are both agents and actors in this museological process.

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# Social Museology and the *Iny* *Karajá* Health Campaign in Brazil

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### ABSTRACT

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Drawing on Social Museology principles, this document presents and analyses the activities carried out in 2020 as part of the *Karajá* Presence Research Project, launched in 2017, into material culture, fabric, and colonial transits. We show how the mapping and study of collections of indigenous artifacts led to a health campaign in support of the *Iny Karajá* people. This group holds the knowledge related to the production of *ritxoko*, clay dolls which are the subject of our investigation. Furthermore, we share our understanding that life is the most significant heritage. Working for the survival of biological and cultural diversity must be a non-negotiable commitment of Museology since it is a domain that looks at the fate of things and their continuity.

Keywords: Social Museology, musealisation, intangible heritage, *Iny Karajá*, Brazil, Covid-19, indigenous health

### RESUMÉE

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#### **Muséologie social et l'action de santé *Iny Karajá***

Ce document présente et analyse, à la lumière des fondements de la Muséologie sociale, des actions menées en 2020 dans le cadre du projet de recherche *Présence Karajá*: culture matérielle, trames et transits coloniaux, lancé en 2017. Nous réfléchissons ici au processus qui a conduit à une étude de cartographie et d'étude des collections d'artefacts indigènes à mener une campagne de soutien sanitaire du peuple *Iny Karajá*, groupe détenteur des savoirs liés à la production des *ritxoko*, des poupées sur lesquelles on enquêtait. Et nous partageons avec le public lecteur la compréhension que la vie est le plus grand patrimoine, et que travailler pour la survie de la diversité biologique et culturelle doit être un engagement non négociable de la Muséologie, en tant que domaine qui se penche sur le destin des choses et sur les pérennités.

Mots-clés : Muséologie social, muséalisation, patrimoine immatériel, *Iny Karajá*, Covid-19, santé indigène.



Drawing on Social Museology, in this paper we present and discuss a health campaign developed in 2020 within the *Karajá* Presence Research Project into material culture, patterns and colonial influences, started in 2017 and coordinated by Prof. Dr. Manuelina Duarte and Prof. Dr. Nei Clara de Lima. The project relies on students, professionals, researchers, and professors from institutions in Brazil and abroad,<sup>1</sup> and is run by the Faculty of Social Sciences (FCS) and the Anthropological Museum of the Federal University of Goiás (UFG).

The *Karajá* Presence Project (PPK) aims to research *ritxoko* collections in institutions, tracing their origins and distribution, the contacts among researchers, institutions and *Iny Karajá* indigenous groups, and studying the *ritxoko* body adornments and costumes. Additionally, we explore the dialogue between Anthropology and Social Museology, to contribute to the studies of heritage, museums, collections, and material culture. To date, the research has identified *ritxoko* collections in 75 museums in 16 countries.

The *Iny Karajá* women have been producing *ritxoko* since time immemorial. *Ritxoko* are figures made from raw or baked clay and wax; they are produced in *Iny Karajá* villages located in the Araguaia river valley region, which covers the states of *Goiás*, *Mato Grosso*, *Tocantins* and *Pará* (Lima, 2011; Lima, Filho & Silva, 2012; Lima & Leitão, 2016; Silva, 2015).

## The COVID-19 Pandemic and the New Challenges Faced by the *Karajá* Presence Project

With a team spread out geographically, remote working, especially for meetings, was already part of our project's methodology, but the advent of the coronavirus pandemic reinforced this aspect. The pandemic would have other significant impacts on the progress of the project: after May 2020, the possible collapse of the health system in the region of the *Karajá* villages at the *Araguaia* River Valley became a cause for concern for the group. At that time, we had no news of sick people in the region, but we knew from other sources that the indigenous communities across Brazil were at risk from the spread of Covid-19. In April 2020, a team of researchers and professionals from the Brazilian Institute

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1. The team in 2020: Labé Iny (Graduated from the UFG Indigenous Intercultural Degree Course); Dibexia *Karajá* (Student of the UFG Indigenous Intercultural Degree); Sawakaru Kawinan (young indigenous leadership in the Buridina village); Prof. Dr. Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido (FCS-UFG and Université de Liège, Belgium) - Coordinator; Prof. Dr. Nei Clara de Lima (Retired Professor at FCS-UFG) - Vice-coordinator; Prof. Dr. Ema Cláudia Ribeiro Pires (University of Évora, Portugal); Prof. Dr. Rita Morais de Andrade (FAV-UFG); Dr. Andréa Dias Vial (PhD in History from FFLCH, USP); Dr. Luciana Conrado Martins (PhD in Education from FE, USP); Indyanelle Marçal Garcia Di Calaça (PhD student FAV-UFG); Rafael Santana Gonçalves de Andrade (PhD student at the National Museum - UFRJ); Bárbara Freire Ribeiro Rocha (Master in Arts, Heritage and Museology at UFPI); Henrique Gonçalves Entraticé (PhD student in Anthropology at Universidade Nova de Lisboa); Thaís Maia de Souza (Bachelor in Museology, FCS-UFG); Markus Garscha (Photographer); Amanda Carlotti dos Santos (Student of Museology, FCS-UFG).



of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) published a report on demographic and infrastructural vulnerability in indigenous protected territories to Covid-19 (Azevedo et al., 2020). They created an index (IVDIC) classifying the degree of vulnerability of indigenous territories between 0 and 1: the closer to 0, the more moderate the degree of vulnerability, and the closer to 1, the more critical. In the indigenous territory *Parque do Araguaia*, along the borders between the states of *Tocantins* (TO), *Goiás* (GO), *Mato Grosso* (MT), and *Pará* (PA), most of the *Iny Karajá* villages display a degree of vulnerability between 0.30 and 0.39, which is considered high in the IBGE's report (Azevedo et al., 2020, p. 11).

In 2020, the IBGE commissioned the same team of researchers to develop a new index using the same methodology of the *IVDIC* with a different set of data gathered by Special Indigenous Health Districts (DSEIs). In the study presented in April 2020, the *DSEI Araguaia*, located at *São Félix do Araguaia* (MT) and responsible for most *Iny Karajá* villages, rated them with a high vulnerability level of 0.426 (Azevedo et al., 2020, p. 18). This was due to the lack of adequate healthcare equipment, the lack of staff, and other reasons related to the fact that the *DSEI Araguaia* is responsible for overseeing, in addition to the *Iny Karajá*, six other different ethnic groups in eight indigenous lands, covering a total of 40 villages.

*Karajá* villages in the *Araguaia* Valley region comprise a broad strip of territory along the *Araguaia* River, encompassing at its extreme southern limit villages in the municipality of *Aruanã* (GO), to villages in the city of *Santa Maria das Barreiras* (PA), at its northern limit. However, most villages are on “*Bananal Island*,” with a total estimated population of 4,326, according to the last IBGE census (IBGE, 2010). Thus, it is a large population, spread over a significant territory, making it more difficult to deliver emergency and complex medical care requiring intensive care units and ventilators, necessary for the treatment of the most severe Covid-19 cases.

That information, added to the daily news about the increasing numbers of cases in Brazil and the collapse of the public health system in various regions of the country, brought a new urgency to the *Karajá* Presence team's discussions on how to act. We decided to start the *Iny Karajá* indigenous health campaign to raise money for the production and delivery of reusable masks to protect the *Iny Karajá* people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Preserving the Lives of Holders of Cultural Heritage as Both a Fundamental Right and a Cultural Right**

Although the PPK aims to investigate *Karajá* dolls as cultural heritage and “musealised” (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2013/2010) cultural assets, we believe that mounting a health campaign to protect the *Iny Karajá* people was within the project's general scope because life is the most significant heritage. The research

into and “heritagisation”<sup>2</sup> (Harrison, 2013) of indigenous peoples’ cultural assets should, first and foremost, contribute to ensuring that these peoples, holders of unique cultural repositories, have access to the Fundamental Rights to live in society. As Dr Luiz Eloy Terena, a native lawyer and activist and the Head of the Legal Department of the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), has argued during a legal process, the richness of native ancestral culture is guarded and preserved by the natives’ lives.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the ethical commitment, actions based on Social Museology seek to engage local social groups in transforming heritage into an instrument of local development, including improving quality of life and acting on issues that are fundamental to these groups, even though, at first, they might seem outside the primary objectives. As a result, even if not planned *a priori*, the health campaign paved the way for the project to contact and be contacted by many indigenous people from different villages, creating new partnerships. Finally, it allowed project members to experience some of the infrastructure difficulties faced by the indigenous population regarding access to villages, the logistics of distributing goods, as well as issues of prejudice and neglect in social and health care.

Over the past four years, public policies to protect traditional communities in Brazil have been less effective in providing these communities with their fundamental rights, and different fronts of resistance have emerged. Among them, the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), together with six political parties, joined the Clinic for Fundamental Rights of the University of the State of *Rio de Janeiro* (UERJ) to use constitutional measures seeking to contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus in these territories. They proposed a legal action demanding the federal government install sanitation barriers around indigenous territories, among other specific demands. At the time of writing, this legal action, *ADPF 709*,<sup>4</sup> is awaiting judgment by the Supreme Court.

Article 215 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 says that the State is responsible for protecting the manifestations of popular, indigenous, and Afro-Brazilian cultures. It is one of the main instruments within the Brazilian legal system concerning the State’s Cultural Rights protection. In 1993, UNESCO created the Living Human Treasures program, which encouraged the Member States to grant official recognition to people with the knowledge of traditional cultural practices, thus acknowledging their importance and the need to trans-

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2. We use the word heritagisation to describe the process by which objects, places and practices are turned into cultural heritage.

3. “Lives that guard our most valuable wealth, which is the ancestral culture of our peoples,” *ADPF 709/2020* (Statement of Non-Compliance with Fundamental Precept, 2020, p. 82). The *ADPF* are actions of full control of constitutionality whose objective is to prevent any act of the Public Power that corrupts the fundamental precepts proposed by the 1988 Federal Constitution.

4. *ADPF* number 709/2020 – Statement of Non-Compliance with Fundamental Precept.

mit knowledge to new generations. The program personalised the protection of cultural goods through the holders of knowledge, especially the elders. It was discontinued in 2003, after the introduction of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, given the anthropological character of the concept of cultural heritage in the international legal system. The protection of people, their knowledge, and their right to pass on that knowledge to the next generation has been on the agenda for almost 30 years within UNESCO. Safeguarding Brazilian cultural heritage also guarantees the constitutional order of access to healthcare for native peoples so that their societies might not be so severely affected by pandemics, as has happened in the past. Furthermore, it is essential to note that older people, among them many ceramists with the know-how of *ritxoko*, are the most at-risk group of the Covid-19 disease.

At the international level, museums and collections have their role recognized as human rights activists since the promulgation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially in article 27. UNESCO published, in 2015, “Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society.” For the first time in a UNESCO text, the document incorporates the social function of museums defended in the Declaration of Santiago de Chile, 1972.

Facing the fact that the Executive Branch of the Brazilian government did not fulfill its constitutional duty to guarantee access to healthcare and protection of first peoples prompted the PPK’s team to step in to help protect *Iny Karajá* people’s health and thus their cultural heritage.

## **Expanding Concepts in the Field of Cultural Heritage and Museology to Include the Preservation of Life**

The concept of cultural heritage is continuously reframed (Choay, 2001). What thinkers of the field call “cultural heritage” or “cultural assets”, traditional communities see as their lives and daily practices of building and transmitting knowledge.

An indigenous way of thinking asks, in a perceptive way, why so-called Western epistemologies and institutions are satisfied with preserving examples or fragments of cultural and natural heritage:

*When we wanted to create a biosphere reserve in a region of Brazil, it was necessary to justify to UNESCO why it was important that the planet was not devoured by mining. For this institution, it is as if it were enough to keep only a few places as a free sample of the Earth. (Krenak, 2019, p. 8)*

”

The statement exposes “the emperor’s new clothes”: i.e., piecemeal preservation, in self-contained and unconnected categories, seems to serve to legitimise the destruction of everything else, while native thought resists this compartmentalised and utilitarian view of things. To our team, it always seemed clear that so much dedication and appreciation for *ritxoko* out of context and preserved in museums did not make sense if the people who produce them were at risk of disappearing. For this reason, musealisation, more usually associated with the material heritage housed by these institutions, should, in our view, be connected to the process of “heritagisation” of intangible (i.e., living) heritage, which we have seen since 2012. We question and test the boundaries between these processes within our project, carried out in our country under the aegis of two different institutions.<sup>5</sup> Quite often, the concern to define specificities and avoid shadowing between actions requires the construction of walls rather than interlocutions.

The *Karajá* Presence Project decided to carry out the *Iny Karajá* indigenous health campaign based on an understanding of the wider definition of cultural assets, which encompasses material and non-material production, as well as the assets’ holders, and guided by an ethical commitment to the first nations, in this case the ceramists and their families, producers of *ritxoko*. We also align ourselves with the Córdoba Declaration, XVIII International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) Conference, which states: “A Museology that is not life-oriented is not worthy.”

## Rethinking Museology in Light of the Pandemic

In this case, it is not a question of thinking about the museum’s social function, since the project was not developed only in one institution, but of seeing Museology as an area of knowledge with a broader scope. Museology does not develop itself within the limits of the museal field (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2013/2010). According to theoretical lines<sup>6</sup> that understand it as a discipline or as an applied social science that studies the relationship between humans and objects in context, it can extend its interpretation and seek to transform research into actions that can positively impact the lives of those peoples who are bound up with their local heritage (Varine, 1994; Duarte Cândido, 2003).

So, we understand the PPK as a study of Museology not carried out in a specific museum, and which is interested in the musealisation process of the pieces made by Karajá ceramists who live along the Araguaia River. Furthermore, if there are doubts about whether or not it is Museology, we have rigorously tested the boundaries between the categories of musealisation and “heritagisation.” The inclusion of *Karajá* dolls or *ritxoko* in museums in Brazil and abroad, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dramatically anticipates their later appreciation as

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5. The Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) and the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM) in Brazil.

6. The concept of “museal fact” advocated by Waldisa Rússio (1990).

non-material or intangible heritage, a category only incorporated by UNESCO in 2003 and by Brazilian legislation in 2000.

Nevertheless, preserving cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible, should not, in our opinion, take place separately from caring for and valuing people, especially the portion of the population that holds this cultural heritage. Regarding the preservation of cultural heritage, it is essential to point out that during presentations about this research, especially outside Brazil in countries where perhaps the notion of a museum object is more associated with criteria such as rarity and uniqueness, it is common to ask how old the dolls are or how rare they are. These questions do not apply to the *ritxoko* since the *Iny Karajá* women continue to produce them. Another aspect concerns the dissemination of photographs of the *ritxoko* dolls from the museums' collections that we have been studying. Throughout the negotiations to obtain rights to publish these images on a single digital platform, to enable wider access, some museums have been concerned that publicising the dolls might increase the risk of theft, especially from those museums that do not have a good security system. We have a different view. Although the *ritxoko* dolls are listed as cultural heritage, they do not constitute exceptional and valuable objects that might attract the antique market's attention, precisely because they are still being produced. They are living heritage. According to the perspective of Labé Iny, a member of the PPK team:

*The ritxoko has a very important [place] in the social and cultural function in the Iny Karajá world. Therefore, it is imperative to have access to the pictures of the oldest ritxoko dolls spread around the world. If they put together all these pictures in a single digital platform, it would facilitate access and [allow] Iny Karajá people to remember, refresh memories and update. The digital platform will help regain knowledge about these dolls. It can show the pictures to elders and wise women in the village who make these dolls. It is worth mentioning that it is essential to compare the oldest photos with the new ones. This tool will provide a resumption of dolls no longer made by Iny Karajá women and encourage the manufacture of new dolls.*

*(as cited in Duarte Cândido, Secches, Martins, & Vial, 2020)*

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As we have seen, the Córdoba Declaration calls on MINOM to take another stance, committed first and foremost to preserving life. In the context of our society's illness, of which the COVID-19 pandemic seems to be a result, repositioning our thinking according to more integrative epistemologies is seen as fundamental: “The dialogue among the Biology of Knowledge, Living Well, and Ubuntu should provide a vision of Museology that is above all respectful

and radically supportive of the communities in which we work” (Siqueira, 2019, p. 176).

The *Iny Karajá* health campaign<sup>7</sup> was based on crowdfunding. The research to choose the platform that best suited the needs of the campaign looked for those that would charge a lower percentage for their use, those that would facilitate the registration of people and donations, and finally, those that made international donations possible. The presentation text was prepared in Portuguese and English to guarantee the accessibility of information beyond Lusophone countries.

The health campaign was initiated on June 19, 2020, with a global target of R\$ 35,000. At that time, the objective was to purchase and deliver 9,000 fabric masks. The health campaign’s communication strategy was to send emails to contact networks of people involved with the Project and communicate via social networks (Facebook and Instagram). Through banners and informational videos shared on the networks, the PPK also sought partnerships with far-reaching media. Our communication partners were the “*342amazônia*” and “*Mídia Índia*” Instagram profiles, totalling 250,700 followers, and the Web portal “*Jornal GGN*,” which published a note that was read 432 times. The health campaign attracted 218 supporters who donated a gross amount of R\$19,375.66 (approximately 3,150 euros), representing more than half of the global target reached. International donations made up 16.09% of the total amount, with the remainder coming from 17 different states in Brazil. The net amount raised was R\$18,177.76, after deducting the fee charged by the platform, which was R\$1,197.90.

An important point is that during the health campaign, the PPK was sought out by different indigenous leaders (primarily young people). After hearing about the health campaign, they contacted the PPK with requests for additional supplies to deal with the spread of the virus among the *Iny Karajá* people. Thus, we reduced the deliveries of masks, which the villages began to receive from other donations. We decided to attend to their demands to include other items such as digital thermometers and oximeters, facial protectors, and waterproof boots for indigenous health workers. The *Iny Mahadu* Women’s Collective organised most of the deliveries. We were also able to purchase some of the 2,700 cloth masks produced by the *Sateré-Mawé* Indigenous Women’s Association of Manaus, using the same amount of the money to benefit another indigenous group.

## Final Considerations

The emergency health campaign to support *Iny Karajá* people during the COVID-19 pandemic led to a re-evaluation of the scope of the project, which

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7. Organised by the PPK researchers, it was also supported by the Faculty of Visual Arts at UFG through its Indumenta Research Group: dress and textiles studies in Brazil.

reinforced some theoretical premises already assumed by the team, as well as opening up the possibility of new paths for the continuity of the work yet to be developed.

Since its beginning, the PPK has been attentive to the scope of its actions and the research results. The team's work has always been concerned with the dialogue between the project's partner institutions, museums, researchers, ceramicists, and indigenous leaders. The collections mapping, in this sense, has developed from a broad space for dialogue and debate that involves different actors and areas. In this process, it is essential to stress how the fundamental work of *Iny Karajá* professionals and students in the project team has resulted in.

Coevality as a way of sharing the past to be consciously in each other's present (Fabian, 2013) has been incorporated into how the *Karajá* Presence Project team has worked on mapping the *ritxoko* collections in museums around the world. Consciously sharing the reality of the present time among the project team, institutions, ceramicists, and others, *Iny Karajá* means being aware of the historical (Pacheco de Oliveira, 2016) and political situation connecting the project's researchers and its stakeholders. Moreover, it involves ethical and political commitments to vulnerable populations in light of the advancement of neo-colonialist forms of exploitation of capital made by Brazil's current government. We understand that research does not happen apart from the adversities of daily life or the critical events that occasionally affect us, such as a pandemic that has had many unexpected and tragic consequences worldwide.

At the same time, taking emergency action in favour of *Iny Karajá's* health reinforced for the group the need to do "involved ethnology", understanding that the work done by the *Karajá* Presence Project also operates with the intention to transform certain realities, as proposed by Alban Bensa:

*What good are the social sciences if they cannot put their tools and results at the service of necessary social transformations? To be involved in the political debate, far from becoming corrupted or trivialised, ethnology seemed, while we were responding to a moral requirement, to be able to be eventually enriched by a reflection on the transitory and circumstantial nature of its proposal. Expert arguments are difficult to dissociate from political views. Elucidating a situation is independent of the will to transform it, and any observation can provide the means of overcoming it. (2006, p. 276)<sup>8</sup>*

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Thus, we try to converge objectives anchored in Anthropology and Social Museology theories, which are also committed to the transformation of reality

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8. Translated from French by the author.

and the valorisation of subjects, having the museum and heritage as instruments, and not as an end in themselves.

We also understand that the pandemic, affecting the most vulnerable in an even more overwhelming way, has been a wake-up call for the whole of humanity to the risk of discontinuity. Therefore, it should be a lesson to the so-called Western societies, blinded by their arrogance, who seem unable to read the signs from nature that are crystal-clear for indigenous peoples. According to Ailton Krenak<sup>9</sup>:

*What I have learned over the decades is that everyone needs to wake up. If for a time, we, the indigenous peoples, were those threatened with the disruption or extinction of our lives' senses, today we are all facing the imminent threat of the Earth no longer meeting our demand. (2019, p. 23)*

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Working for the survival of indigenous groups and biodiversity is a commitment, an opportunity to keep other world readings alive and, therefore, the only possible way to reverse the processes that ushered in the Anthropocene and that threaten us now. We understand Museology as an area that is interested in the fate of things<sup>10</sup> (Bruno, 2009), so it is also necessary to be sensitive to the future of the populations and more vulnerable ecosystems whose potential losses represent the disappearance of repertoires, of ways of living and opportunities for “Living Well.”<sup>11</sup> The International Movement for a New Museology has pointed to the potential of connecting reflection and museological practices with the search for a “Living Well” way of life. To this end, Luis Fernando Novoa Garzon (2016, as cited in Brayner Rangel, 2020) stated in his speech at the 17<sup>th</sup> MINOM Conference, at Nazaré, Rondônia, Brazil:

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9. Ailton Alves Lacerda Krenak is a Brazilian writer, journalist, philosopher, and indigenous movement leader of *Krenak* ethnicity.

10. We take “things” here not only as material artifacts but as in Ingold’s (2012) perspective: The object stands before us as a *fait accompli*, presenting its congealed, outer surfaces to our inspection. It is defined by its very ‘over-againstness’ in relation to the setting in which it is placed (Heidegger [1971]). The thing, by contrast, is a ‘happening,’ or rather, a place where several happenings become entwined. To observe a thing is not to be locked out but to be invited in to the gathering. (...) Thus conceived, the thing has the character not of an externally bounded entity, set over and against the world, but of a knot whose constituent threads, far from being contained within it, trail beyond, only to become caught with other threads in other knots. In a word, things leak, forever discharging through the surfaces that form temporarily around them. (p.167)

11. Living Well is a concept based on indigenous thinking that problematises notions like development, even a sustainable one, considering it a fallacy. Vânia Brayner is one of the authors who evokes this concept as a relevant theme for our field (see, for example, Brayner Rangel, 2020, p. 405), and, to this end, she puts herself decisively in an anti-capitalist position.



*We should not forget that to think about the new museology is to think about perennity. To combat this official amnesia policy, this policy of forgetting aims to cleanse from our imaginations, from our practices, any criticism that can sustain any alternative practice.*

(p. 202)

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This is the only way that Museology can position itself to preserve alternative ways of life and to meet the overwhelming challenges faced by historically subjugated peoples, such as the indigenous people. Only then will Museology be close to the populations deliberately targeted by the “official policy of amnesia” and even “ethnic cleansing,” for which even the pandemic seemed to be particularly useful. Only then will Museology be with them (in this case, the indigenous people), “*na hora do tombo do pau*,”<sup>12</sup> which means to say, “when the confrontation breaks out, and the repression grows.”

This text is dedicated to the memory of the indigenous people who died among the *Iny Karajá* people before the date of the project’s completion, 30/08/2020: Wereni Tapirapé – Village *Itxalá*, MT (20/07); Komytira Karajá – ceramicist – Village *Santa Isabel do Morro*, TO (26/07); Koaxiru Karajá – ceramicist – Village *Santa Isabel do Morro*, TO (14/08); Isarire Lukukui Karajá – Village *Santa Isabel do Morro*, TO (15/08); Kualaru Karajá – Professor Leandro Lariwana’s mother (15/08); Lorinaru Karajá – Djuassa Karajá’s mother (14/08); Hatiure Karajá – Village *Fontoura*, TO (16/08); Hawakate Karajá, Village *Santa Isabel do Morro*, TO (28/08).

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12. The expression refers to one of the epigraphs used by Brayner (2020) in her thesis. It takes up the speech of a peasant in the book *Pedagogia da esperança* [Pedagogy of hope], written by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, a great inspiration for social museology (1974; as cited in Brayner Rangel, 2020): “If you came here thinking about teaching us that we are exploited, you don’t need to do so because we already know it very well. Now what we want to know from you is whether you will be with us ‘*na hora do tombo do pau*’ [which means ‘when confrontation breaks out, and the repression grows’]” (p. 403).

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# Shifting Paradigms in Musealization: The Participation of Indigenous People in the Rio de Janeiro Indian Museum

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ABSTRACT:

This article presents a theoretical reflection on the relationship between museum and musealization processes in a contemporary perspective, examining the Indian Museum of Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1953 and currently linked to the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), as a case study. To this purpose, our argument focuses on a critical analysis of Museology, in a decolonial way, which involves the participation of indigenous people since 2001, notably in the museum's

research projects and exhibitions, with a *partnership system* between anthropologists and indigenous people. Such activities encompass indigenous people in the musealization, which is understood according to the theoretical model proposed by Zbynek Z. Stránský of selection, thesaurization, and presentation.

Key words: Indian Museum, Museology, musealization, indigenous people

## RESÚMEN:

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### **Cambiando los Paradigmas de la Musealización: La Participación de los Pueblos Indígenas en el Museo del Indio de Río de Janeiro**

Este artículo presenta una reflexión teórica sobre la relación entre museo y musealización en una perspectiva contemporánea, teniendo el Museo del Indio de Río de Janeiro, fundado en 1953, y desde entonces forma parte del organismo indigenista oficial del Estado brasileño responsable de promover protección y los derechos de los pueblos indígenas en Brasil. Nuestro argumento debe enfocarse en un análisis crítico de la museología, que involucra la participación de los pueblos indígenas desde principios de la década del 2000, y las transformaciones que se produjeron con un "sistema de participación" entre museo, antropólogos y los pueblos indígenas. Tales actividades engloban a lo indígena en los procesos de la cadena de musealización, entendido de acuerdo con el modelo teórico propuesto por Zbynek Z. Stránský de "selección", "tesaurización" y "presentación".

Palabras clave: Museo del Indio, museología, musealización, pueblos indígenas



During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the active promotion of collecting objects by ethnographic and natural-sciences-oriented museums in the west played a determinant role in shaping memories and social identities as the concept of the ethnographic "other". The newly-born Anthropology that emerged in Brazil, just like in the United States and Europe contexts, maintained a close relationship with the evolutionist and eugenic theories in its early years. Those ideas were adopted by Brazilian academics in an exchange with foreign naturalists, many of whom had come to Brazil to research and collect, mainly to add to the collections of natural history and ethnology museums in Europe. Social and scientific revolutions marked the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and museums were affected by the changes that came about. In Brazil, the foundation of its first museums,

notably the National Museum in 1818, Emílio Goeldi Museum in 1866, and the Paulista Museum in 1895, revolutionized the country's scientific field. The museum became a place known for its excellence in knowledge building.

The museums dedicated to national history and ethnology imported the scientific knowledge produced in the Global North's major centers. They implemented the same evolutionist speeches to the musealization of material culture produced by Brazilian indigenous people. Social evolutionism, as a development of Darwinian theory, worked for a long period of time to comfortably fit the development of Anthropology, especially in regard to the understanding of racial differences and its subsequent categorization of indigenous people as "exotic" and racially inferior. Thus, indigenous people were situated in the lower ranks of a hierarchy of what was understood as social and human evolution. Simultaneously, social evolutionism contributed to validate the modern European project of establishing itself as the ideal of civilization. Any model of nation that differed from the modern European ideals were considered primitive. In the "Museum's Era," a period defined by Brazilian historian Lilia Schwarcz (1993/2017), which encompasses the decades from 1870 to 1930, social evolutionism started its downfall, and Franz Boas' culturalist theories began to replace it in the Global North's main ethnographic museums. Meanwhile, in Brazil, the Boasian notion of culture would only gain ground in the 1930s, at the end of the so-called *Museum's Era*, with the first anthropologists graduating with a university degree. Up to this period, physicians, engineers, jurists, military officers, and other professionals produced Brazilian Anthropology; and, at that time, few of them had received a proper education in the discipline (Mellatti, 1984). Around the turn of the century in Europe and the United States, Museology was marked by a period of "renewed interest in the professionalization of the museological work and the exchange of good museological practices" (Aquilina, 2011, p.11). This was directly influenced by the foundation of the *Office International de Musées* (OIM) in Paris (predecessor of the International Council of Museums (ICOM)), and by the publishing of museum manuals<sup>1</sup> based on practice and observation, as well as the founding of training programs or courses about museums. Meanwhile, in Brazil, such a transition was non-existent, and there was no debate over the concept of Museology during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even the debate concerning practical and technical aspects of the museological work would only happen at the beginning of the 1930s, with the foundation of the Museum Course at the National Historic Museum in Rio de Janeiro. Gustavo Barroso conceived of this course, and Rodolfo Garcia founded it.

Only at the beginning of the 1960s would the theoretical debates related to Museology and its object of study be carried on and gain strength, mainly based

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1. Aquilina (2011) highlights the following publications: George Brown Goode's *The Principles of Museum Administration* (1895); Benjamin Ives Gilman's *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method* (1918); and Laurence Vail Coleman's *Manual for Small Museums* (1927).

on Zbynek Z. Stránský's ideas. In 1965, the Czech author dissociated the study of museums from the field of Museology, displacing the museums not as an object of study but as a founding concept of the discipline. This allowed the placement of museums under the museological researcher's scrutiny (Dolák, 2017) as a *laboratory*. There, musealization could be more frequently observed than in other environments. Thus, work and research methodologies could be tested or even have confirmations and refusals of theoretical postulates, capable to attest the musealization's dynamic processes and the values which would guide museality.

Some historical landmarks of a discipline which has dedicated itself throughout the last half-century to the theorizing of museal procedures were: the founding of the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) in 1977; the Roundtable of Santiago of Chile in 1972 and the critical discussions of Latin-Americans on Eurocentric conceptions of museums; a movement from the early 1980s called New Museology in France, with the advent of the first ecomuseums and community museums and, mainly, with the first public cultural policies. The aforementioned events contributed to the break with hegemonic narrative building and a Eurocentric perception of museums and Museology. Museums ceased to be places where objects were kept with the aim of establishing collections and reassuring national discourses to become important objects of political claim of historically silenced groups. For the last 30 years, such movements have constantly forced Museology to seek "to understand the bonds between the Museology we practice and the experiences from the inside out of subjects and groups involved in the musealization process" (Brulon, 2019, p. 199). Musealization, understood as a "social act of production of value and creation of realities" (Brulon, 2019, p. 199), together with the *Stránskýan* way of seeing the museum as a means to an end, associated with a social function (Dolák, 2017; Brulon, 2019), has led indigenous people, at least since the 1980s in Canada and the United States, to create their own museums or claim the right to participate in the musealization process on national museums, places where hegemonic narratives still stands. Marilia Cury, a Brazilian museologist, points out that these challenges and claims intensified world-wide in the 1980s. This forced museums to incorporate these claims in a reinterpretation of their collections, in the definition of public policies, and in musealization recognizing a need to assert the right to build self-narratives (Cury, 2013).

When it comes to public museums, the first experience of indigenous people in Brazil participating in these spaces, may have been the *Time and Space in Amazonas: the Wajãpi* exhibition, which opened in March 2002 at the Indian Museum in Rio de Janeiro, under the curatorship of the anthropologist Dominique Gallois. The exhibition had the participation of the Wajãpi, indigenous people from Amapá in the northern part of Brazil. On this occasion, two issues were addressed: the Wajãpi claim over the acknowledgment of their body painting, known as *kusiwa*, as Intangible Cultural Heritage both nationally and internationally, and their control over their own ritual paintings, since

some sectors in society had started to improperly appropriate these paintings for commercial use.

The practical–theoretical framework called Experimental Museology, founded before the New Museology movement, promotes, in its analysis, a “Museology committed to and open to different regimes of value” (Brulon, 2019, p. 201). It constitutes a methodology and framework of museological thinking that leads to an understanding of musealization “as a social action of value production and creation of realities as collective processes, and Museology and museums as platforms for social changes.” Seen as an empirical and interdisciplinary method resulting from Metamuseology, Experimental Museology applied in contexts of ethnographic museums can help with the process of decolonizing depictions of indigenous people in museums, transforming practices of predatory collecting, and establishing public policies aimed at the participation of indigenous people in museums.

By understanding “Museology as a science which studies not the values as they are, but their social construction” and viewing musealization in light of Experimental Museology as “the guiding principle of the museal experience” (Brulon, 2019, p. 201), this present article will analyze some important transformations in musealization processes, such as the ones formulated by Stránský (1974) regarding selection, thesaurization<sup>2</sup>, and communication, including indigenous participation in Rio de Janeiro’s Indian Museum.

## The Indian Museum – Tutelage, Discourse, and Musealization

The anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro officially founded the Indian Museum on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1953. Its first site was a building in Maracanã, a neighborhood in the northern area of Rio de Janeiro, next to the famous soccer field. Its creation came from a process initiated in the Indian Protection Service (SPI),<sup>3</sup> and it was already provided for in a decree when the Study Division (SE) was created in 1942. One of the main functions of the SE was to address the need to produce local studies about indigenous people in their own villages. SPI would be the official bureau responsible for implementing public policies, organizing

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2. Thesaurization was understood by Stránský as the process of inserting an object into the documentary system of the new reality of a collection or museum (Stránský, 1974; Brulon, 2018).

3. The Indian Protection Service (SPI) was founded in 1910 by Marshal Mariano Cândido Rondon. Its original name was Indian Protection and National Worker Localization Service (SPILT), but this was changed in 1918. The SPI project encompassed lay assistance, aiming at widening the gap between the Catholic Church and the indigenous catechism, following the republican and positivist guideline of separation between Church and State. The indigenist policy adopted would be to *civilize them*, shaping the indigenous people into national workers. In 1967, after a series of crises, the SPI gave way to the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) as the welfare organization for the Brazilian indigenous people. Information available at: <http://www.funai.gov.br/index.php/servi-co-de-protecao-aos-indios-spi>.



the State's "tutelage knowledge,"<sup>4</sup> and producing knowledge related to the Brazilian indigenous people dispersed across the entire national territory. The Indian Museum came to be, and it is still linked to the national organization of indigenous protection up to this date.

From the indigenist policies perspective, the first years of the young Brazilian Republic faced the challenge of undertaking studies concerning the indigenous people locally. Cândido Rondon, a Positivist, was the first director of the SPI (which was called SPILTIN until 1918). He was responsible for carrying out this governmental social welfare initiative, whose main objective was to care for and protect the indigenous people and to prevent them from being exterminated. The model SPI adopted in the management of indigenous people and their territories, since its foundation and under Rondon's leadership, replicated models which were first introduced during Colonial times, advanced through the Empire years, and used up to Republican times. The Jesuits had already used the same luring and pacifying techniques. These methods were updated as time went by, according to the new contact realities, and among other things, those procedures increased the value of rural properties located near the indigenous lands. These applications reflect what Pacheco de Oliveira (2014) classifies as the *paradox of tutelage*: is the tutor there to protect the indigenous people from the surrounding society or to defend broader society's interests alongside the indigenous people?

Most Brazilian ethnographic collections were assembled during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The collections comprised donations from foreign naturalists, especially to the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, with no direct connection to any Brazilian museum. The collections were also a result of direct musealization: since the objects were donated, their selection was conducted in the field without any criteria that could serve the museum's scientific needs. The documentation was also basically non-existent. However, it is safe to assume that the entrance in which these objects arrived in museums was not small (Castro Faria, 1949; Ribeiro, 1989). It was commonplace for indigenous people to be understood as "generic entities," having their pluralities and cultural differences, if not completely ignored, then arbitrarily identified. The SPI's rationale for collecting objects at the beginning of the SE did not differ from that of other museums until they hired specialists. The specialized work, which took place after the hiring of Darcy Ribeiro as ethnologist, who would become head of SE and later would create and direct the Indian Museum, Max Boudin, linguist, in 1947, and Dulce

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4. When the first government agency (SPI) for the protection of indigenous people in Brazil was created in 1910, indigenous people were understood within a legal statute that considered them as legally incapable, inspired by the positivist and evolutionist models of that period. According to Souza Lima (1995), law number 5484 sanctioned in 1928, the tutelage of the Indians by the State was guaranteed through the SPI, as a way of controlling the Indians through administrative and legal formulations. By stratifying the civil and political rights of indigenous people, the SPI and the Brazilian Government were able to maintain control over indigenous territories.

Rebello and Geraldo Pitaguary, museologists, in 1949, opened the possibility of producing specialized knowledge about indigenous people. It would aim to create public policies and adequate museological treatment of collections. The analysis of documents produced back then undoubtedly shows that the main form of object selection carried out by SPI was stimulated by some of its workers collecting indigenous objects via purchase, exchange, donation, and gifting. This led to the understanding that indigenous objects were goods. These actions took place without following any scientific criteria.

The collection of objects, conducted through the plundering of indigenous people, would also prioritize the authenticity, originality, and aesthetic categories (Couto, 2005; Ribeiro 1996/2020). Darcy Ribeiro published field notebooks regarding the collection conducted with the Ka'apor from 1949 and 1951. These notebooks are considered instructive:

*Today, I started looting the indigenous artifacts. I had left this unfortunate work to the end, but I have just finished trading some pocket knives, beads, scissors, army knives, iron parts that can be used to make arrows, and other trifles they [the Ka'apor] love for dozens of arrows, many bows, and, above everything else, a lot of feathers. ... It just consoles me to know that they are going to a museum and that other adventurers had taken much more and turned them into gifts or exotic goods to be sold, giving almost nothing in return. (Ribeiro, 1996/2020, p. 264)*

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The ethnologic practice of collecting, however criticized, would give solace to the anthropologist. After all, it would turn itself into a museum collection as an inalienable good constituting itself as a research object and “existence-proofs” of cultures that needed “saving” because they were on the brink of extinction (Stocking, 1985).

The Indian Museum was the first ethnographic museum in Brazil; its founding had some similarities with models of ethnographic museums – or with those that had ethnographic collections – and it took a proactive role in collections and indigenous matters, which had been previously centralized at the National Museum. From these similarities, we highlight the explicit adoption of social and political discourses aligned to the indigenous cause and create an *unaligned* speech from other federal museums assuming the welfare and its social-political role, although this is permeated by the salvationist views prevalent in Anthropology at that time (Chagas, 2003; Couto, 2005).

To Darcy Ribeiro, the old ethnological museums were mainly responsible for the distorted way in which the general Brazilian population saw the indigenous people: as dated, *living fossils* (Ribeiro, 1955). Nonetheless, Ribeiro's viewpoint

did not raise the slightest interest on the part of the population to see them humanized. The Indian Museum sought to promote an approximation between Indians and the rest of society. The displayed objects were the mediators of realities with the indigenous material culture perceived as art created by individuals with their own cultures and evidenced by their aesthetical value, not as *savage-made* exotic artifacts. Declared by Ribeiro as “the first museum in the world created specifically to fight against prejudice” (Ribeiro, 1997, p. 195), his anthropological approach would assert that the museum was “founded to demoralize and eradicate the idea that indigenous are violent and bloodthirsty, brutal and savage, evil and cunning” (Ribeiro, 1997).

While head of the Indian Museum, Ribeiro evidenced the aesthetical value on the exhibitions he organized:

*The Indian Museum allows aesthetic considerations to take precedence over purely scientific ones in its work of presentation to the general public, since its authorities are convinced that it is impracticable to teach ethnology to casual visitors. They therefore concentrate their efforts on dispelling the most common prejudices about Indians, such as the idea that they are incapable of producing any delicate work, that they are a lower form of life, that they are unsuited to civilization, or hopelessly lazy. The Museum attempts to demolish these false ideas which, by ceaseless blind repetition, finally take on a semblance of truth – to fight them, that is to say, without referring to them explicitly, but by emphasizing facts which reveal their falsity. (Ribeiro, 1955, p. 6)*

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It is easy to see the inspiration of Paul Rivet’s humanist speech adapted by Darcy Ribeiro, especially the idea to create a museum engaged in combating prejudice by indigenous people’s cultural representation through material culture, which is aesthetically analyzed. The relationships established with Georges Henri Rivi re, Paul Rivet, and Alfred M traux, with whom Ribeiro had been corresponding regularly since 1951 (Couto, 2009), would have greatly influenced the development of the humanitarian speech, promoting the aesthetic factor over the scientific one. The letters exchanged with Geraldo Pitaguary, a museologist at the Indian Museum during his internship under the tutelage of Rivi re, and Rivet also played a key role: Couto (2009) states that Pitaguary provided Darcy Ribeiro with information regarding museography and museological communications used by the Museum of Man in Paris. The museum’s educational proposition, in a language that could be easily understood by everyone and thus ceasing to be an “elite privilege” (Rivet, 1937, as cited in Conklin, 2013), was at the core of Paul Rivet’s Museology. It aimed at an “ethnology for the masses” (Conklin, 2013). The declared objective Rivet had in mind was, in his own

words, the creation of a “great popular education establishment as well as to scientific research” (Rivet, 1937, as cited in Conklin, 2013, p. 105). His objective did not stray far from the ones already adopted by the SE for the embryonic ethnographic museum. Brulon points out that the museographic language Rivet and Rivière adopted was “predominantly belonging to art museums” (Brulon, 2012, p. 104), rebutting the ethnographic approach because there would be some “hardships in highlighting the aesthetical aspects in the works” (Brulon, 2012, p. 104). These aspects greatly influenced Ribeiro’s museologic discourse. The alleged “museal imagination” (Chagas, 2003) of the anthropologist in the Indian Museum exhibitions discourses did not open or create anything new on the international scene. Ribeiro museological adapts, in his own fashion, the museums’ way of thinking and Museology concerning the indigenous people. He does so starting with established ideas already practiced in Europe. These ideas were aligned with the post-war mood and inside a broader project with a universalist character led by UNESCO.

### **Transforming the Museological Process: The *Time and Space in Amazonas: The Wajãpi Exhibit and the Indigenous Participation***

The Indian Museum’s historical developments illuminate many difficulties and complex processes. In 1978, the Indian Museum relocated its headquarters to a settlement in an old 19<sup>th</sup>-century manor in Botafogo, a neighborhood in the southern area of Rio de Janeiro. The building was donated by the Brazilian government, and it lacked the adequate infrastructure to house a museum. This manor, which still houses the museum, located at 55, Rua das Palmeiras, has been through a series of renovations and adaptations throughout the years to hold and exhibit over 20 thousand items. They are currently part of its collection of the material culture of Brazilian indigenous people. Apart from holding an extensive archive and image collection that reflect the story of Brazil’s indigenous people, the museum also preserves important documents related to the land demarcation of indigenous areas throughout the country.

Some of the key changes inaugurated by the Indian Museum in the early 2000s lie in the relationship change amongst the institution and indigenous people in a more direct way. That shift started to substantially affect the musealization of indigenous cultures and how they are represented. From this moment on, the indigenous people became closer and more involved in the interpretation of the exhibits and the process of the acquisition of collections. The institutional process of indigenous participation in the Indian Museum, which had been developed since the mid-1980s, happened in partnership with Claudia Menezes, the director of the museum. She invited the Indians to specific events inside the museum that focused on educational activities and, on her initiative, on photographic and audiovisual exhibits, which were used as a cultural revitalization resource and as an instrument of support for indigenous causes (Menezes, 1989). In 1990, contrary to the optimistic situation in the second

half of the 1980s, the Indian Museum would undergo its most intense crisis. The Indian Museum's resources were scarce, services were paralyzed, and buildings were in a terrible condition (Levinho, 2000). Gradually, the museum would recover through a series of reforms and, at the beginning of the 2000s, changes were made that would usher in a new curatorial practice in the Indian Museum. There were modifications in the way exhibits and collection policies were conceived, forming a partnership system. The museum would support projects with specialists that dealt directly with indigenous people, involving indigenous people in the museal processes (Abreu, 2007; Couto, 2012).

The *Time and Space in Amazônia: the Wajãpi* exhibition, under the curatorship of Dominique Gallois, opened on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002. It was the first exhibition in this new format. The Wajãpi inhabit the northern part of Amapá and French Guiana. The objects produced for the exhibition were made at a distance, following what was requested by the museum and the curator. But the Wajãpi people came to the museum, built a traditional Wajãpi house at the museum's garden and validate the exhibition assembly. This exhibition had the effective participation of 13 tribes that composed the Wajãpi Council (APINA). They produced over 300 objects (Abreu, 2007) which were purchased by the museum. This action placed the indigenous people in an object market, establishing, thus, a new relationship between the museum and the indigenous producers.

The indigenous object would then invite less predatory cultural transactions. The acknowledgment of indigenous people as agents active in the market financially benefits the tribes. It also establishes more equal mercantile relationships, which allows direct deals and negotiations in a live chain – previously invisible – of musealization (Brulon & Guedes, 2019). Before being properly stored, all items went through a cataloging stage. The objects that were produced arrived at the museum with supporting documentation provided by the Wajãpi producers. In this process, the indigenous knowledge about objects is indispensable to their musealization because all collections directly acquired from the ethnic groups involved are already authenticated. This means that every object comes with its complete information, such as raw material, techniques involved, social function, and the craftsman who produced it. The musealization ritual begins to connect shared knowledge and different experiences to the museum's object. Shared museality is linked to the value of the information preserved by those who had produced and exchanged it (Brulon & Guedes, 2019), inverting the *ethos* of power in the value and meanings attributed by anthropologists, museologists, and curators. With an active role, the indigenous people worked together with museologists and the other staff at the Indian Museum, giving their opinions, coordinating the installation of the exhibition, and establishing what was and was not allowed, according to their beliefs. The intercultural dialogue established allowed the Wajãpi to create self-narratives of their own cultures, obeying their ritual and aesthetical values. Some facts regarding the participation and decision-making of the Wajãpi during the assembly of the exhibition can be highlighted. First, they forbade the display

of images of already deceased people. They did this because it would be harmful to their spirits. On another occasion, the organization placed some long sticks to “support the sky.” The Wajãpi women then instructed the painting of a big red circle around the sticks. Without this, the sticks would do little to “hold the world above” (Abreu, 2007). Museologists and the other staff accepted the Wajãpi’s requirements.

According to João Pacheco de Oliveira,

*It is not possible to understand the presence of Indians in national and contemporary history without exercising radical criticism and contesting these narratives, highlighting their inefficiency as descriptive and analytical instruments, and deconstructing the political and ideological theories in which they find support. (2009, p. 11, as cited in Freire, 2016, p. 37)*

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Colonialism situates indigenous societies in an estranged rhetoric from the remainder of national society, and museums reflect this process in a-historical and evolutionists representations (Roca, 2008) reproducing images that favor the building of a “generic indigenous,” during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characterized as indigenous representations from the 16<sup>th</sup>-century invasions, frozen in time. It is necessary that museums, especially the ethnographic ones, critique indigenous assessment and representations and their roles in the building of alterities (Roca, 2008). They should also make an effort to revisit and update the musealization processes, starting with object selection and collection, going through the documenting stage until reaching museological communication, and avoiding predatory and colonial practices. This would guarantee indigenous people their right to self-narrative and representation control.

It is mainly this concern that has allowed the Indian Museum to establish a dialogue with the most diverse ethnic groups and to place itself as a service provider to the indigenous people when it comes to their partnerships with professionals and institutions. The Wajãpi exhibition introduced a new form to include the indigenous people in ethnographic museums and intercultural negotiations. Before 2016, the museum developed two other long-term<sup>5</sup> exhibitions and several that were short-term. The museum has also supported initiatives that came straight from the indigenous people. The aforementioned projects followed the policy of the museum “responsible for the protection of indigenous heritage, and act by providing support to projects that are developed in this way” (Couto, 2012). During the exhibition period with the Wajãpi, the

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5. *The Presence of the Invisible: Daily Life and Ritual Among the Indigenous people from Oiapoque*, curated by Lux Vidal, opened in 2008, and *On The Way To The Beads*, curated by Els Lagrou, inaugurated in 2015.

Indian Museum was also fundamental to the acknowledgment of Wajãpi graphic patterns, the *kusiwa*, which were designated as the first Intangible Cultural Heritage in Brazil: first, in Brazil, in December 2002; then, internationally, in 2003, as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The Indian Museum worked with the indigenous people through the APINA, the Ministry of Culture, and other partnering institutions, in the production of the documents necessary to UNESCO's application process.

Ames (1999) points out that the words “partnership” and “collaboration” have become popular in museums to describe the work produced with indigenous people. However, it is common for such terms to function as “museal marketing” in museums where museological models are not actually revised to achieve complete collaboration with partners whose agendas are not the same. To James Clifford (1997), the real engagement in the political agendas of exhibits planning are the means through which museums will be able to abandon paternalism and a history of exclusion and condescension. There is no instruction manual to be followed to decolonize museums and partnering establishments that guarantees the effective participation of indigenous groups in the musealization processes and their rights to control the representation of their cultures. However, institutions need to make an effort to achieve this goal. Clifford (1997) states that collaborative efforts in museums are never easily done and they start from disputes, claims, and negotiations between the social groups and the State and museums. According to Ames,

*They want out of the boxes, they want their materials back, and they want control over their own history and its interpretation, whether the vehicles of expression be museum exhibits, classroom discourses, or scholarly papers, textbooks, and monographs. (Ames, 1992, p. 140)*

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Although previously a place of colonial encounters where geographical and/or historical perspectives established unequal relationships, the museum, in this perspective, should work to reduce disparities in power relations and develop reciprocal arrangements (Ames, 1992, p. 140). Decolonizing the museum and transforming it into “contact zones,” especially ethnographic museums, involves including the indigenous people (and other historically undervalued groups) in every musealization process, and in the work mentality of professionals, followed by profound structural changes in the institutions responsible for the safekeeping and exhibition of the collections. This also involves strengthening public policies to make sure that indigenous people participate, not only the creation and maintenance of indigenous and community museums, but also in organizing exhibitions and collection acquisition. In this way, predatory practices are avoided from the beginning of the musealization process during

fieldwork. Contact zones help to avoid situations that may lead to contextualization and information gaps in the documenting stages, the creation of distorted narratives in museological communication, and in the derogatory way the market acts in the so-called “primitive arts” (Brulon & Maranda, 2017).

Museology should not come from museums, but it should produce knowledge from the processes that are part of the musealization, which then act as a theoretical base for practical work. However, without analyzing museological practices, there is no justifying or validating of theories. It does not assert the dynamic character of musealization. Without a practical-theoretical articulation, as a “reflexive museology,” proposed by Stránský (1974), that creates some sort of *feedback cycle* capable to affect both theory and practice, the musealization would be a sterile theory, abandoning its creative force identified from a social need. It is paramount, from where we stand, to think of the theory connected to practices, even if distant from museal spaces: firstly, by thinking in a Metamuseology way that does not offer a mismatch between practice and theory: secondly, to evaluate if the work methods are functional and, if not, contribute possible methodologies to Museology. In this sense, I believe that ethnographic museums position themselves as exceptional spaces in these analyses: real methodological “laboratories” of even more complex relationships between different value attributions of what comes to be the museality of the immense cultural diversity on the planet. One can assume it is through musealization, and its constitutive procedures, that museality as a document value of museum objects becomes possible (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010/2013). In the context of ethnographic museums, where there is a constant debate over the invested meanings to cultural references, these procedures produce regimes of unpredictable value inherent to the groups that started to act in their own self-musealization (Brulon, 2019). In this sense, experimental Museology would define itself as the proper methodology to these analyses, since its premise is to take into account museal arrangements that stray from the traditionally instituted forms, and to stimulate museological theories and practices that should act to bring indigenous people, and other narratives and ways of life that have been politically and historically suppressed, out of symbolic exile.

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# From Nails to Rails: A Report in the Practical Application of Theoretical Museology

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## ABSTRACT

Theoretical museology is the study of museums, including explorations of their history, role in society, and the activities they engage in for the benefit of the communities that they serve which include curating, public programming, education and preservation.

This paper will examine the theoretical foundations and a practical application of museology at the Steelworks Center of the West in Pueblo, Colorado (USA). The aim is to stimulate critical thinking on the transfer and cross-cultural application of standard, professional museum models and methods. It will also examine how the Steelworks Center provides for a study of museology within the environment, particularly regarding the ways in which people learn. These will include the role of museum education as an alternative to the tradi-

tional methods of study, and also, museum education as a trainer for non-conformist thinking.

Key words: museology, communities, programming, critical thinking, application, methods

## RESUMÉN

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### **De los clavos a los rieles: un informe sobre la aplicación práctica de la museología teórica**

La museología teórica es el estudio de museos incluyendo exploraciones de su historia, papel en la sociedad, las actividades que realizan en beneficio de sus comunidades, a las que sirven que incluyen curación, programación pública, educación y preservación.

Este trabajo examinará las bases teóricas y una aplicación práctica de la museología en el Steelworks Center of the West en Pueblo, Colorado (EE.UU.). El objetivo es estimular el pensamiento crítico sobre la transferencia y aplicación intercultural de modelos y métodos museísticos estándar y profesionales. También examinará cómo el Steelworks Center prevé un estudio de museología dentro del medio ambiente, particularmente en cuanto a las formas en que las personas aprenden. Estos incluirán el papel de la educación museística como alternativa a los métodos tradicionales de estudio, y en segundo lugar, la educación museística como formador del pensamiento inconformista.

Palabras clave: museología, comunidades, programación, pensamiento crítico, aplicación, métodos.



Museums are extraordinary places where visitors have an incredible range of educational experiences. For some people, their first exposure to a painting, piece of sculpture or drawing may be in one of the hundreds of art museums in the world. For others, a trip to the museum may be the first time a visitor sees a living history reenactment or demonstration. Yet for others, their first experience at a museum may be through participation in one of the many educational or outreach classes that many museums offer throughout the year.

This paper will report on the practical application of theoretical museological methods used at the Steelworks Center of the West, (where I am employed), and how it provides for a study of museology within the environment, particularly regarding the ways in which people learn. These will include the role of

museum education as an alternative to the traditional methods of study, and also, museum education as a trainer for non-conformist thinking.

## **Background to the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company**

Southern Colorado has a strong history of ties to generations of indigenous peoples in the United States, mainly the Ute, Arapahoe, Pawnee, Comanche, Apache, and Kiowa. Pueblo, Colorado lies at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek in southern Colorado. The city traces its roots of official incorporation to 1870. The community was an important trading and agricultural center in southern Colorado for two decades prior to incorporation. There are currently two other museums within the city that interpret this early history in their programming and exhibitions: Pueblo Heritage Museum and El Pueblo History Museum, a regional museum of the Colorado Historical Society.

What became the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) traces its roots to just two years after city development and operated as the first fully integrated steel mill west of the Mississippi River (Scamehorn, 1976). It took thousands of employees to operate such a massive company, and, for many years, it served as the state's largest private employer. Within southern Colorado and northern New Mexico's coal fields, a necessary element to the steelmaking process, were thousands of native peoples, along with newly arrived immigrant groups from Mexico and Europe. Although not entirely indigenous, generations of these people made their living as farmers and ranchers, and as miners for smaller mining agencies or independent mines. As the company grew more powerful and became the preeminent industry in the region, it acquired many of these smaller mines and purchased land and water rights from former farms and ranches.

As technology evolved, the Colorado steel plant moved from using raw materials to produce steel and began relying on recycling scrap steel to make new products. The mines were abandoned and sold to support the plant's operations in a troubled economy. The company continued to experience economic hardship and the CF&I Steel Corporation filed for bankruptcy in 1990. Oregon Steel Mills purchased the assets of CF&I in 1992 and continued to operate it into the new millennium. In 2006, the Russian steel giant EVRAZ purchased the property and continues to operate the Pueblo steel site today (Miller & Schreck, 2018).

## **Founding of the Steelworks Museum and All Its Functions**

Founded in the summer of 2000, the Steelworks Center of the West has the primary mission to provide permanent care for the archives, artifacts and historic office complex created by CF&I. The organization collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits the collections of the steel and mining industry, the surrounding Bessemer neighborhood, and the cultural contributions of those

who worked in the industry. In addition to its main mission, the organization is dedicated to the preservation of the legacy and contributions the company made to the City of Pueblo, the State of Colorado, and the United States, and to continually broaden access to this rich heritage for researchers and visitors to the project site(s) (Steelworks Center of the West, 2020).

After a successful capital campaign raised \$1.75 million, the Steelworks Center purchased the 5.7 acres of land directly to the west of the steel mill and four buildings totaling nearly 100,000 square feet with the intention of preserving Southern Colorado's steel and mining heritage. Following the purchase of the buildings, Oregon Steel Mills, at the time owners of the steel mill, formally donated the archival contents created by their predecessor to the Steelworks Center. The donation came with a clear understanding of the importance of the collection in the history of the American West and in the history of our nation.

Following the purchase and stabilization of the building, processing of the collection to make it accessible to the public immediately began. The significance of this collection was reinforced with the opening of the Steelworks Museum in January 2007. Here in our public area, guests can view exhibits comprising contents of the archive and artifacts, watch films from the collection, and participate in many hands-on learning experiences.

This is the first phase of what will be a much larger museum complex in future years. The museum includes visual exhibits based on photographs, 3-dimensional artifacts and text on the following: timeline of company history, broken down into significant time periods, interpretation of the medical examining rooms where employees received physicals, strength, hearing and other occupational-related tests, and an x-ray room. The main gallery is dedicated to the pivotal period in CF&I's history (1915–1936) and examines the administrative and social changes the company made following the mining related Colorado Coal Field strike of 1914. Multimedia exhibits examine life in the mining camps, the history of steelmaking, labor relations, diversity in the workplace, and other topics while making extensive use of materials from the archive collection. A smaller rotating gallery space changes annually and is based on themes relevant to materials available from the collection. Recent exhibits include: 'The immigrant surge to the company's payroll at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century'; 'The company's contribution to America's victory during WWI', and 'The women involved in the history of the company'. The current exhibit focuses on CF&I's relationship with water as a necessary element in the steelmaking process.

Since its opening 14 years ago, the museum has served as a popular destination for the general public, scholars, life-long learners and, particularly, school groups. Education staff provide a wide range of hands-on programs for young people in grades kindergarten-secondary school. A small number of undergraduate and graduate students also utilize the museum as a hands-on learning lab and classroom. Using materials exclusively from the archive collection

created by CF&I, the museum serves approximately 5,000 onsite visitors and thousands more online annually.

CF&I created one of the most comprehensive, publicly accessible corporate collections in America. At a little over 6,000 cubic feet with materials dating from 1856–1993, it represents a major resource for researchers exploring America’s industrial past. The archives document all aspects of CF&I’s long history and are unusual in their completeness. Many corporate archives have been heavily purged before entering into the public sphere, but the CF&I archives were simply abandoned intact when the company went out of business. Researchers of all levels are able to trace the complete life cycle of an important American corporation from its inception to its demise. The collection comprises a wide variety of media including: 100,000 photographs, 30,000 maps, 15,000 drawings, 8- and 16-millimeter film, architectural schematics and blueprints, and millions of paper documents. These include company produced newspapers, personnel files, company memoranda, sales reports and catalogs, financial statements, mining documentation and more. The collection is a microcosm of American industry; it illustrates the birth, growth and decline of a vertically integrated company. Researchers use the collection to tell the stories of the growth of industry in the West, the history of technology, western immigration, labor history, the development of industrial medicine, family history and countless other topics. Much of the documentary heritage of the Eastern United States steel mills has been lost, making the documentary sources that survive all the more important.

The archives are a microcosm of American industry, and their depth, range and completeness represent unique opportunities for researchers from numerous disciplines. Some of the specific products to come out of research projects include masters theses and PhD dissertations, scholarly journal articles, books, documentary films shown in public forums, and elementary and secondary school research papers. For our younger students in particular, the benefits of studying the contents of the CF&I collection are twofold. First, it gives them the opportunity to study historic material that was not necessarily available publicly during the life of the company: because of the competitive nature of CF&I’s business, the company kept “trade secrets” and limited the number of materials released to the public about its operations. Now that the company is no longer in existence, those records are (mainly) open for inspection and study.

Second, studying the contents of the archive gives students the opportunity to examine primary source materials created at a particular moment in time. They are able to smell the unforgettable odor of aging paper, see (and need to translate in some cases) the handwriting in some of our older documents from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and visually comprehend the enormous breadth of some of the financial ledgers, an experience that they do not necessarily receive from reading secondary sources on the same topic.



## Development of Educational Theory

Though one of the primary functions of a museum today is to educate its public, this has not always been the case. History is able to trace the earliest museums back to the Ancient world in which the Mouseion was a temple dedicated to serving as a research center only for academics and scholars of the period. Though the temple contained objects, mainly those valued for their historic, religious, or aesthetic importance, it was primarily a university and philosophical academy (Alexander, 1979).

Through the years, the idea of a museum shifted from that of an academic seat of learning to an exhibition setting where objects from near and far could be displayed, serving as a showcase of conquests (Alexander, 1979). By the time of the Enlightenment, societal views had changed from a museum being a showcase of wealth to a site whose collection “would help educate humankind and abet its steady progress toward perfection” (Alexander, 1979, p. 8). It was with this new quest that the private collections of the elite became public collections for the mass population. With the stance of public ownership, the public’s desire to learn and understand its collection became more widespread.

It was at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a time of political upheavals reflected in progressive ideas towards education, that the most significant changes relating to museum education were made. Teachers and educational theorists John Dewey (1859–1952) and John Cotton Dana (1856–1929), both of whose philosophies epitomized the progressive movement at the turn of the century, called for changes within the American education system to include more museum experiences. “A good museum attracts, entertains, arouses curiosity, leads to questioning and thus promotes learning,” Dana writes (1909, as cited in Edson & Dean, 2003, p. 185). He continues by emphasizing, “It is an educational institution that is set up and kept in motion – that it may help the members of the community to become happier, wiser, and more effective” (Dana, 1909, as cited in Edson & Dean, 2003, p. 185). Because both Dewey and Dana advocated the importance of education improving society, the primacy of experience, the use of objects for learning, and the need for a rich learning environment, museums saw an opportunity to expand their missions (Hein, 2004). Furthermore, Talboys (2000) writes, “By recognizing education as their reason for being, museums not only returned to the purpose for which they were created, but also firmly established themselves in a role that is essential to the future of society” (p. 8). The viewpoint that one of a museum’s main reasons for existence is to educate continues to this day.

So, what is it about museum education that is different from classroom education? Although both settings allow for numerous educational opportunities, it is within the confines of a museum that allows us to communicate messages, tell stories, and understand the world around us through distinct means. This is particularly important to reach the student who may otherwise not feel comfortable to communicate or participate under standard classroom cir-

cumstances. Based on original objects and making use of sensory perception, museum education is supported by sound scientific or historical research, yet in presentation is informal, voluntary, and is often enjoyable and entertaining to the visitor. Moreover, it may seek other ways of satisfying people's newly aroused curiosities.

One effective example of this at the Steelworks Center is the exhibit relating to nail manufacturing. When guests approach the exhibit's 1930s era nail-making machine, they receive a near full sensory experience. At the exhibit station, they smell the grease used to lubricate the machine, turn the crank handle to experience how difficult it was to rotate the flywheel and subsequent gears, levers and other components to the machine. Pushing a button near the machine engages a short, 15-second recording of the sound of the machine when it was working in the steel mill. A curved, oversized 1920s photograph of the room in which the nail machine was once housed before transfer to the museum simulates the experience of standing next to the machine *in situ*. Engaging four of the five senses at this exhibit gives visitors more of a sense of working in the mill in the late 1920s and early 1930s than just reading a text panel.

The education gained from this exhibit is not formal; there are no exams or questions to test visitors' knowledge retention as they move to other areas of the museum. There is, however, an element to inspire their further quest for knowledge following the visit: "Are nails manufactured on a machine similar to this one today?" "How many nails per minute could a machine produce?" "What was the size of CF&I's largest or smallest nail?" The attitudes of purposeful education and the competition of other cultural and leisure time activities led to yet another philosophical change in museums during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues today. It is perhaps within the past century that we have seen the most significant changes in the equal access of museums.

Museum professionals today understand the competition for the public's attention and time. Positive outreach experiences, well-trained and professional staff, and creative marketing enhance the reputation of the museum as a place the public wants to experience (Edson & Dean, 2003, p. 9). Today's museum leaders understand that their very existence is for the public. As the authors point out, the concept of public service is on the importance of the visitor, and exhibitions and programs are now specifically designed to fit their interests (Edson & Dean, p. 6). Such examples include programs aimed at all audiences from the youngest of children to the elderly. Family days, lectures, fundraisers, and tours, as well as the way in which the collection itself is exhibited, appeal to both established and potential audiences and their interests. Furthermore, the museum professional constantly looks for new audiences that might benefit from the institution.

At the Steelworks Center of the West, our education programming does just this. In addition to our exhibits, throughout the year, we offer programs that cater to all audiences including: adult lectures in informal situations such as

on guided tours through the museum and in our formal lecture “Steelworks Speaker” series. For younger visitors, we offer hands-on learning experiences to those in formal (within a structured school activity) and informal (school trips, youth groups and homeschool groups) learning environments. For families, we offer a monthly “Family Science Saturday” program, a hands-on learning experience in which parent and child together can participate in learning about the wonders of science and how those themes mesh with CF&I history. During our Steelibration fundraising effort, we offer bus tours through the EVRAZ steel mill with a tour guide on the bus describing the steelmaking process and explaining the different buildings and sites that the guest can see up close and personal. Other parts of the day include a heritage festival on the grounds surrounding the museum building including folkloric dancing, music, and food. For the more technically-minded, or those unable to visit the museum in person, we offer educational photographs and interpretive text daily on our social media outlets. The ethnic and cultural composition of audiences for our exhibits and programming reflect the composition of the Pueblo community, which in 2019 was estimated to include 43.2% of residents identifying as Latino, 51.7% identifying as Caucasian non-Latino, and 9.8% identifying as other races (US Census Bureau, 2020).

Audiences for our educational programs vary depending on which teaching method is used. The main exhibitions and daily social media postings, made of primarily photographs, text, 3-dimensional artifacts and ephemera from the archive collection, are designed for a general audience, although young students are able to understand and make correlations to the exhibits as well. Our hands-on programming is specifically designed for younger students depending on their age group. Archives staff are available for those researching in the collection who might need assistance in interpreting historical materials. Due to the fact that museum teaching is traditionally informal, at this time, there has been no formal study conducted on the impact our lessons and programs have had on our audiences.

What is in store for the museum of the future? As Moore (1997) points out,

*Museums have a key task to play in providing an understanding of identity and sense of belonging to a place or community. In the face of immense and often painful cultural change in many countries, museums can provide a valuable sense of connection with the past and present, and serve as a springboard for the future. (p.18)*

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Students learn in a variety of ways, and not all students can benefit from the traditional transmission-based “teacher knows all and deposits in the student’s brain” philosophy. With a museum’s method of experiential learning, students have the opportunity and freedom to learn at their own pace, discover, question,

and see for themselves aspects that they might not have had the opportunity to through the transmission teaching approach. What's more, with such an experiential mode of learning, students feel that they are part of the learning process, which allows them to have the sense that they are part of the greater whole.

Another advantage of museum learning is that museums can offer real objects—tangible examples of objects, ideas, history, and processes, whereas classroom learning is limited to books, lectures, media, and simple hands-on experiences. Indeed, learning about a particular subject may be impossible in a classroom setting because of budgetary constraints, lack of access to resources or lack of knowledge or training. Therefore, students must travel outside to a museum to make the most of the planned lesson. It is during this trip that “unexpected things happen...surprise, challenge, emotion, all these elements keep students engaged. When children sit passively in a classroom, they tend to lose interest” (Willis, 1997, p. 2). One such method of this type of pedagogy often used by museums is through object-based learning. Developed by Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), this method of learning strives to develop students’ skills by incorporating sensory perception, thinking, and language. As Smith (2013) points out, Pestalozzi held that children should learn through activity or things rather than the previously accepted pedagogy of learning through words, as was the custom of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in America. With this freedom, children could then draw their own conclusions.

Thus, object-based learning combines the inherent information provided by an object with the viewer’s experiences, feelings, and thoughts to provide a dynamic and unique learning opportunity that is accessible to a broad range of students. Furthermore, this method focuses on the senses in exploring objects; discusses meaning, associating objects with others; places objects in other contexts; and links objects to other subject areas. By utilizing object-based learning, teachers are able to identify a child’s learning style and can then direct individual attention based on this research to bring learning to life back in the classroom.

There is a small committee within the Steelworks Center of the West comprising museum staff, professional teachers (elementary and secondary) and community members who work together to develop educational curricula. Lessons are researched, confirming that they meet Colorado Education Standards, supplies are purchased, and finally lessons are tested on a small focus group of students. Commentary and feedback is collected from the focus group, and the lesson is added to the regular rotation of offerings at the museum serving a larger audience. To ensure the lessons are utilized, either in the classroom if the lesson is distributed to the teacher or in the museum if the class visit for an in-house learning experience, a short email is written to the teacher explaining the purpose of the lesson and how it meets Colorado education standards. This information is imperative to justify the disruption of the students’ normal daily routine and engagement in the lesson(s).

One example of a successful incorporation of object-based learning occurs within the Steelworks Center of the West's program, "History Detective," developed by the education department at the Steelworks Museum. In this "museum in a box," several tangible historical items are available to teachers for a two-week-long loan period or to use as the students visit the museum. The kit includes objects that the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade student of the year 2021 may not be familiar with, but were commonly used by families long ago. Some items include a buttonhook, boot hooks, flower frog, wire draw, soap saver, and a curry comb, among others. Age-appropriate worksheets accompany the kit for group work activities. No labels are provided for the students identifying the objects or their historical context. Guided questions within the provided lesson plan include utilizing all the senses to examine each object, exploring materials used to create the object, assessing the condition of the object, etc., and allow the student to make careful insights and connections based on their preliminary research of what the object might be and in what context it was originally used. Incorporating Dewey's theory that knowledge builds upon itself, with object-based learning, in a museum setting, the museum educator inspires a visitor to build on previous knowledge and to discover new information about an object or its context (Hein, 2004). After discussion and revelation of the purpose and significance of the kit's objects, the teacher is then encouraged and assisted by Steelworks Museum staff to develop cross-curriculum in other subject areas relating to science, math, and art.

Other authors point out that museum education can play another role, that of trainer for non-conformist thinking. Panzer (1976) discusses the museum educator's role not just as a lecturer, but as a conductor in allowing people to discover their own intellectual and sensory responses. With this revolutionary new way of envisioning the role of museum education, she goes on to say that a museum must be everything that a school is not: "No lectures, no memorized information, no demand for right answers, no tests. The effective docent encourages the viewers to become the directors of the content of the encounter, which is, after all, uniquely their own" (Panzer, 1976, p. 2).

Furthermore, Mann (1997) argues that some museums must have the ultimate function for posing questions, not just for supporting curriculum content. In his article, he refers to the INVESTIGATE! Science Center in Boston, whose mission is to have visitors "encounter experiences, rather than exhibits or programs" (Mann, 1997, p. 6). This gives the visitor a chance to live the life of a scientist, by predicting and testing hypotheses, not just learn about it through lecture or readings. This museum's mission is "to avoid subjects...[and to] teach principles or facts, but to offer experiences in thinking and problem solving" (Mann, 1997, p. 6).

In conclusion, effective museum education allows students to not only view the material in front of them, but also interact with that material through asking questions, handling the objects, and exploring the processes that lead to a richer understanding of the world around them (Hein, 2004). It is perhaps Alexander

(1979) who summed up museum education best by stating, “It is voluntary and dependent only on the interest of the viewer and is often enjoyable and entertaining. It may furnish one with strong motivation to read further, to visit other places, and seek other ways of satisfying one’s curiosities” (1979, p. 196). Museums are wonderful places of learning not only about historical objects but also, through studying these objects, about ourselves.

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# Le centre culturel Tjibaou ou les difficultés d'incarner une identité néocalédonienne en devenir

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## RÉSUMÉ :

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Parce qu'il participe de la création de références culturelles et d'un imaginaire collectif, le musée permet la diffusion d'un sentiment d'appartenance nationale au sein de la population. Le centre culturel Tjibaou, au moment de sa construction, avait pour mission de valoriser la culture kanak. Depuis l'Accord de Nouméa, l'identité néo-calédonienne est en pleine construction dans l'archipel et le centre a progressivement eu pour mission de soutenir ce projet de société. Cet établissement

offre donc un éclairage à la fois unique et contemporain sur le rôle des institutions culturelles dans la construction des identités nationales. Dans cet article, nous observons les stratégies mises en place par le centre pour accomplir ses missions ainsi que les obstacles qui fragilisent aujourd'hui sa légitimité en tant qu'acteur du « destin commun ».

Mots clés: Centre culturel Tjibaou, Nouvelle-Calédonie, Pacifique, identité, musées

#### ABSTRACT:

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As they participate in the creation of cultural references and collective imagination, museums reinforce the feeling of national belonging within the population. When it was built, the Centre Culturel Tjibaou's main mission was to promote Kanak culture. Since the Accord de Nouméa, Caledonian identity is under process and the Centre's missions have changed. From the promotion of Kanak culture, it is now also in charge of supporting a societal project for all the island. The Centre offers then a contemporary and unique insight on the role of cultural institutions in the nation-building process. In this paper, we consider the Centre's multiple strategies to achieve its missions as well as the impediments which undermine its legitimacy as a leading cultural institution of the *destin commun*.

Key words: Centre Culturel Tjibaou, New Caledonia, Pacific, Identity, Museums.



En politique, rien n'est possible sans références culturelles, sans la mobilisation d'un imaginaire collectif. Comme cela a été largement démontré, la conformation et la légitimation des Etats-Nations aux 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> siècles ont en effet été accompagnées par l'écriture d'un récit national, tout particulièrement grâce aux musées dont l'arrangement des collections devait permettre l'inculcation d'un sentiment national parmi la population (Kaplan, 1994; Macdonald & Fyfe, 1996). C'est le cas des « colonies de peuplement » où les différentes vagues migratoires en provenance du vieux continent ont pris le contrôle économique, politique, social et culturel de ces pays lors de leur indépendance, aux dépens des peuples autochtones. Les musées y incarnèrent dès lors l'idée d'une nouvelle nation, définie par les descendants des colons, en exposant les résultats des explorations scientifiques vers l'intérieur des territoires, ainsi que les cultures autochtones « découvertes » à la même occasion (Bergeron, 2019). Depuis les années 1970 cependant, les exigences de reconnaissance politique formulées par ces marginalisés de la construction nationale ont provoqué un renouveau



de leur représentation au sein des musées. Désormais perçus comme partie intégrante de la nation au sein des discours multiculturels, de nouvelles institutions nationales vont être créées dès la fin des années 1980 afin d'exposer de nouveaux mythes et symboles nationaux (Van Geert, 2020).

En Océanie, ce processus de transformation muséale est bien connu en Australie et en Nouvelle-Zélande (Morphy, 2017; McCarthy, 2018). Au-delà de ces deux pays, la réalité de l'immense zone océanienne est néanmoins très hétérogène, conséquente d'une décolonisation tardive et en partie finalisée, qui donne lieu à des approches muséales particulières parfois regroupées sous le concept de « muséologie du Pacifique » (Healy & Witcomb, 2006). Dans ce contexte, la Nouvelle-Calédonie, ex- « colonie de peuplement », désormais collectivité *sui generis* française située à plus de 16 000 kilomètres de la métropole apparaît comme intéressante. Ce territoire présente en effet un processus politique particulier depuis les « Événements » (1984-1988) qui ont vu s'affronter les descendants des colons européens, majoritairement favorables au maintien de l'archipel dans le giron français, et les Kanak, populations mélanésiennes spoliées de leurs terres et exclues pendant plus d'un siècle de la gouvernance de ce territoire dont ils réclamaient alors l'indépendance. Afin d'apaiser ces tensions, la signature des Accords de Matignon en 1988 entre le leader indépendantiste Jean-Marie Tjibaou et le loyaliste Jacques Lafleur, sous l'égide du gouvernement français de Michel Rocard, prévoyait la tenue d'un référendum sur le futur de l'archipel, en 1998. Cette période de dix ans devait permettre un rééquilibrage économique et politique du territoire en faveur des Kanak, accompagné d'une plus grande reconnaissance culturelle de cette population, au travers notamment de la création de l'Agence de développement de la culture kanak (ADCK) censée prolonger les efforts du festival Mélanésia 2000, tenu en 1975 sous l'égide de Tjibaou. Repoussant la tenue du référendum entre 2014 et 2018, l'Accord de Nouméa de 1998 prolongea cette dynamique en tentant de favoriser la construction d'une citoyenneté néo-calédonienne basée sur l'idée de « communauté de destin partagé » entre les différentes communautés de l'île, moyennant la création de symboles et l'écriture d'un récit national (Sand, Bolé & Ouetcho, 2003). Cette notion de « destin commun » désigne la nécessité pour le peuple d'origine, les Kanak, et les autres ethnies de l'archipel de constituer les bases d'une citoyenneté commune et ce, quel que soit l'avenir politique de la Nouvelle-Calédonie.

En tant que lieux symboliques d'une nation en devenir, les musées néo-calédoniens ont joué un rôle de premier plan dans ce processus, à l'image du centre culturel Tjibaou. Profitant du contexte de célébration de son vingtième anniversaire en 2018, cet article se propose de revenir sur son histoire, ainsi que sur la modification de ses missions, parallèlement aux mutations des débats politiques en Nouvelle-Calédonie, en se basant sur la littérature existante, des extraits de presse, mais aussi des observations et entretiens réalisés *in situ* en 2018. En souhaitant apporter un regard original sur le rôle politique des musées dans la définition des identités, ce texte s'intéresse tout particulièrement aux

manières dont les actions du centre contribuent à la création de mythes originels d'une nation en devenir. Quelles représentations y trouve-t-on des Kanak et des autres communautés de l'île ? Quelle place y est laissée au métissage entre les différentes populations de ce territoire, dont certaines réclament désormais leur place dans le débat politique après plus de vingt ans de polarisation politique entre Kanak et descendants de colons ? Comment traiter ces enjeux alors même qu'une historiographie de l'histoire coloniale de la Nouvelle-Calédonie a mis longuement à émerger (Trépied, 2013) et que la France peine elle-même à aborder son histoire coloniale ? Alors que les deux premières consultations sur l'accession à la pleine souveraineté de la Nouvelle-Calédonie en 2018 et 2020 ont donné la victoire à son maintien dans la France, ces enjeux de construction identitaire s'avèrent loin d'être réglés, en faisant de cet établissement culturel le cœur d'enjeux symboliques de premier ordre.

## **L'origine et la création du centre culturel Tjibaou**

L'élan menant à la création du centre culturel Tjibaou doit être cherché dans la volonté de rééquilibrage du territoire en faveur des Kanak à la suite de la signature des Accords de Matignon. Ces derniers prévoient en effet une meilleure reconnaissance de leur culture et de leur patrimoine en assurant « l'accès de tous à l'information et à la culture » pour « permettre l'expression et l'épanouissement sous toutes ses formes de la personnalité mélanésienne » (République française, 1988). Dans ce contexte, Jean-Marie Tjibaou fait inscrire la création d'un centre culturel kanak à Nouméa, à majorité européenne et anti-indépendantiste, en vue d'y symboliser le rééquilibrage culturel et de permettre à la population de la ville et du territoire de mieux comprendre les arts et traditions kanak. Son assassinat en 1989, perpétré par un indépendantiste radicalement opposé aux Accords, provoque une vive émotion dans le monde politique de l'époque et donne une impulsion nouvelle à la concrétisation de ce projet.

Très rapidement, dès l'automne 1990, un concours d'architecture présidé par Marie-Claude - veuve de Jean-Marie Tjibaou et présidente de l'ADCK -, et le président de la République, François Mitterrand, est lancé afin de choisir le futur architecte de ce centre devant accueillir l'ADCK. Sur les cent-soixante-dix maquettes présentées, c'est celle de l'italien Renzo Piano qui l'emporte, fruit d'une réflexion menée avec l'ethnologue français Alban Bensa, spécialiste de la culture kanak. Le projet final donne à voir une image de la culture kanak pleinement inscrite dans la modernité, notamment au travers des dix cases qui constituent la structure centrale du centre et qui ne ressemblent pas aux cases traditionnelles kanak. De forme arrondie, les cases imaginées par les deux hommes ne sont pas fermées sur le dessus mais s'élèvent au contraire vers le ciel. Opaques et fourniees vers le bas elles se dévêtissent progressivement pour ne laisser qu'apparaître leur membrure au sommet. Ce design inachevé porte en lui-même un message : Renzo Piano parlait de celles-ci comme d'un

« souvenir ouvert sur un rêve d'avenir » (cité dans Agence de développement de la culture kanak, 1998).

Son architecture novatrice est en effet interprétée par le jury comme prolongeant la pensée de Tjibaou pour qui politique et culture sont étroitement liées. Selon ce dernier, l'indépendance politique du peuple kanak passe en effet par une expression unifiée et moderne de sa culture, impliquant d'exprimer cette dernière dans sa contemporanéité (Graille, 2015). En optant pour une architecture moderne et innovante, ce bâtiment souhaite ainsi poser la culture kanak « au-delà d'elle-même » en l'authentifiant « moins au nom du passé qu'en référence à l'avenir » (Bensa, 2000).

En mars 1995, le premier arbre est planté sur le site du futur centre. Marie-Claude Tjibaou édicte alors ses missions officielles (Tjibaou, 1995) :

- Affirmer la culture kanak dans son patrimoine, son actualité et sa création ;
- Situer la culture kanak comme référence dans son pays tant pour la société kanak que pour l'ensemble des communautés de Nouvelle-Calédonie auxquelles il est proposé une passerelle ;
- Fonder sur cette base les éléments de références culturelles communes où pourra s'enraciner une création artistique contemporaine appelée à s'inscrire résolument dans le monde océanien ;
- Donner une image « moteur » du pays par la qualité de son architecture et de ses actions, il sera l'emblème de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et contribuera aussi au développement du tourisme global du pays.

Au cours des trois années qui précèdent l'ouverture du centre, des réactions d'opposition ainsi qu'une certaine inquiétude émergent cependant au sein d'autres communautés de l'archipel (Kasarhérou, 1999). Dans une lettre ouverte adressée au Haut-Commissaire de la République en Nouvelle-Calédonie, l'Association La Nouvelle dénonce ainsi une « ségrégation culturelle (...) entretenue au profit d'une infime minorité » (cité par Graille, 2015). Cette société des descendants de bagnards et des personnes issues de la colonisation pénale ajoute par ailleurs qu'un « centre culturel de 5,8 milliards de francs sera achevé à la fin de l'année 1997 à Tina sans qu'à ce jour la place des populations non kanak de la Nouvelle-Calédonie dans son fonctionnement n'ait été clairement définie » (cité par Graille, 2015). Si la communauté blanche se positionne clairement, les autres communautés se font quant à elles plus discrètes et semblent moins concernées par l'ouverture du centre. À cette époque pourtant, il existe des amicales, des associations et même des foyers culturels vietnamiens, chinois ou wallisiens où les individus se rassemblent pour parler leur langue natale et célébrer leurs traditions (Graille, 2015). A la veille de l'ouverture de l'institution, le paysage social calédonien apparaît donc comme composé de communautés qui se mélangent peu, et dont certaines voient le centre comme une menace (Kasarhérou, 1999).

L'établissement est néanmoins inauguré les 4 et 5 mai 1998, en même temps qu'est signé l'Accord de Nouméa qui, tout en reconnaissant l'identité kanak comme fondamentale, évoque la nécessité d'une « citoyenneté calédonienne ». Cette notion veut faire une large place aux colons européens, aux communautés venues d'Asie en qualité de main d'œuvre dès la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais également à celles venues du Pacifique lors du boom du nickel à la fin des années 1960 (Sand, Bolé & Ouetcho, 2003). Les attentes de cet accord se retrouvent de manière explicite dans le discours de Lionel Jospin lors de l'inauguration du centre, appelé à constituer l'un des principaux symboles de cette construction nationale. Il affirme en effet que « ce rassemblement illustre la double vocation du centre, témoigner de l'identité kanak, et offrir un lieu de dialogue et d'échange avec toutes les cultures océaniques », avant d'ajouter que « pleinement reconnue, la culture kanak peut s'ouvrir à d'autres. Le dialogue des cultures devient ainsi un moyen de construire la paix » (République Française, 1998). Lors de cette inauguration, Marie-Claude Tjibaou rappelle néanmoins que la culture kanak doit constituer le pilier central de l'Accord de Nouméa ainsi que la base pour la construction d'un destin commun. En effet, selon elle, « offrir ainsi le patrimoine kanak en héritage culturel à l'ensemble de la population de Nouvelle-Calédonie et développer la création artistique, c'est permettre aux Kanak, anciens et jeunes, de retrouver avec fierté leurs racines...<sup>1</sup> ».

De par ses objectifs, l'accord de Nouméa ouvre une brèche (Graille, 2018) dans un contexte identitaire particulier en exigeant de communautés, qui ne partagent pas la même vision du passé, qu'elles co-crèent ensemble une communauté de destin et donc une citoyenneté calédonienne (Sand, Bolé & Ouetcho, 2003). Symbole et point de départ de ces accords, l'ouverture du centre va donc catalyser les tensions et les aspirations de l'époque en restant à la fois un lieu en l'honneur des Kanak tout en devenant un acteur ainsi qu'un espace de création symbolique du destin commun. Pris entre ces deux approches, les missions du centre évoluent, ce qui rend paradoxalement son rôle et son identité plus confus.

## **De la mise à l'honneur des Kanaks à l'incarnant du destin commun**

Dans ce contexte particulier, en 2008, pour la célébration des vingt ans des Accords de Matignon, est inaugurée une grande exposition d'art contemporain intitulée « Si y'a pas toi, y'a pas moi ». Ce slogan, inventé en 2007 par l'animateur de la radio indépendantiste Radio Djido « Kiki Karé », célèbre la diversité culturelle de la Nouvelle-Calédonie. L'exposition se construit autour de cette philosophie avec comme point d'orgue, la célèbre poignée de main entre Jean-Marie Tjibaou et Jacques Lafleur. Cette dernière y est érigée comme marqueur de l'avènement de la paix dans une période jusque-là troublée par les

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1. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/partage/10140-les-chefs-coutumiers-donnent-son-nom-au-centre-culturel-tjibaou>. Page consultée le 26 mai 2021.

violences identitaires, mais aussi comme symbole d'une relation apaisée entre les différentes communautés de l'archipel. On retrouve cette même volonté lors de la célébration des dix ans de la création du centre, au cours de laquelle toutes les communautés du Pacifique sont invitées à planter des arbres sur l'aire coutumière Mwâ Kââ (Graille, 2018). L'aire coutumière est un espace situé à l'extérieur du centre où s'établit la coutume qui est, dans la tradition kanak, la condition d'un séjour réussi en terre kanak. À l'image de ces arbres, le message est clair : même si elles sont différentes, ces communautés doivent grandir ensemble sur le sol calédonien.

En 2012, dans le cadre du transfert de compétence prévu par l'Accord de Nouméa, le Haut-Commissaire de la République déplore néanmoins « l'absence du sentiment d'appartenance à une même société - ciment de la cohésion sociale » de la Nouvelle-Calédonie (cité dans Dubois, 2014). Pour endiguer ce phénomène, il préconise notamment « la réduction des inégalités, l'affirmation de repères identitaires et le partage de valeurs sociétales » (Dubois, 2014). Dans ce contexte, le centre a désormais pour missions officielles de :

- rechercher, collecter, valoriser et promouvoir le patrimoine culturel kanak ;
- mettre en œuvre et développer la création artistique kanak ;
- susciter l'émergence de pratiques et de références culturelles communes à la Nouvelle-Calédonie ;
- être un pôle de rayonnement et d'échanges régionaux et internationaux (Agence de développement de la culture kanak, 2017)

Même si la valorisation de la culture kanak constitue toujours le cœur de ses missions, le rôle du centre vis-à-vis des autres communautés est désormais explicite. La programmation du centre prend alors un tournant nouveau en accordant une place plus large à ces dernières lors de ses expositions et ses activités. En 2015, il accueille ainsi « La fête du toka à Tanna », une exposition photographique de Pierre-Alain Pantz qui rend hommage aux célébrations qui ont lieu entre les *nakamal* de Tanna au Vanuatu. La même année, « Calédon » retrace l'histoire des déportés algériens en Nouvelle-Calédonie, sous le commissariat de Christophe Sand. Entre 2018 et 2019, « Qu'avons-nous en commun » invite les spectateurs, grâce aux œuvres de six artistes océaniens, à réfléchir à ce qui les rassemble et à ce que signifie « travailler ensemble » lorsque l'on vient de cultures différentes. Enfin, la Grande Case du Sud du centre est rénovée en janvier 2021. Comme le déclare alors Emmanuel Tjibaou, directeur du centre, « renouveler la paille [de cette case] est un moyen de renouveler les alliances entre les différentes communautés du Pacifique » (Antic-Martin et al., 2021), en les invitant à déposer des objets traditionnels de leur culture d'origine à l'intérieur de cette case.

Si la programmation se diversifie le centre peine néanmoins à toucher son public. Si en 2008, il enregistre plus de 98 000 entrées (ADCK-Centre Culturel

Tjibaou, 2016), grâce notamment à l'exposition « Si y'a pas toi, y'a pas moi », seules quelques expositions vont réussir à toucher par la suite un large public. C'est le cas de « Kanak, l'art est une parole », tenue entre 2013 et 2014, qui attire plus de 32 000 visiteurs (soit plus de 10% de la population locale). Perçue comme une continuité de l'exposition emblématique « De jade et de nacre » réalisée en 1990<sup>2</sup>, cette exposition commissionnée par Emmanuel Kasarhérou et Roger Boulay, présente les résultats de « L'Inventaire du patrimoine kanak dispersé », au travers de plus de cent objets prêtés par des musées internationaux (Bertin, 2019)<sup>3</sup>. Outre cette exposition, le nombre de visiteurs du centre stagne et ne dépasse pas les 75 434 en 2016 (ADCK-Centre Culturel Tjibaou, 2016).

Cette situation s'explique en partie par les restrictions budgétaires que connaît l'institution (ainsi que l'ensemble des collectivités calédoniennes). En 2016, le budget du centre est réduit de 40 millions de francs Pacifique<sup>4</sup>, impliquant une nette diminution de sa programmation (Nollet, 2016). En 2018, ce chiffre s'aggrave encore, avec le retrait de la Province des îles qui entraîne une réduction supplémentaire de 26 millions de francs Pacifique (ADCK-Centre Culturel Tjibaou, 2016), alors même que les frais de conservation et de restauration de son bâtiment emblématique restent intacts. D'autres raisons permettent néanmoins d'expliquer la difficulté du centre à trouver son public, mais aussi à constituer un symbole de l'identité calédonienne. C'est ce que nous allons voir dans la prochaine partie.

## **Le centre culturel Tjibaou, un espace trop « passionné » pour construire la Calédonie de demain ?**

Au-delà des complexités budgétaires que nous venons d'évoquer, certaines raisons structurelles permettent d'expliquer la faible proportion du public local dans le centre, dont le nom ainsi que l'histoire demeurent, pour beaucoup de Calédoniens, synonymes de tabou, de douleur et de violence. Rappelons qu'il s'agit en effet d'un projet métropolitain partiellement financé par l'État français. Ce financement se fait via le budget alloué à la Nouvelle-Calédonie qui perçoit la dotation de transfert. Le centre, en tant qu'établissement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, est financé majoritairement par le gouvernement local à hauteur de 80%. Les provinces Nord, Sud et des îles interviennent à hauteur d'environ 8% et le centre génère environ 12% de ses recettes propres (Entretien

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2. Dans les années 1980, Roger Boulay, responsable des collections océaniques du musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie de Paris est chargé de « L'Inventaire du patrimoine Kanak dispersé », souhaité par Tjibaou, visant à répertorier les objets kanaks conservés dans les musées du monde entier. La première phase de cette enquête permit notamment de définir un ensemble de collections, souvent inédites, qui constituèrent la base de l'exposition itinérante « De Jade et de Nacre : patrimoine artistique kanak », présentée au musée territorial de Nouvelle-Calédonie à Nouméa, en 1990, puis au musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie de Paris.

3. Notons que cette exposition a été présentée auparavant, en 2012, au musée du quai Branly à Paris, dont Kasarhérou est depuis devenu le directeur.

4. L'équivalent de près de 334 000 euros.

réalisé avec Guillaume Soulard, mai 2020). Le projet a en outre été inscrit dans les Grands Travaux de la République ayant pour ambition d'œuvrer pour le rayonnement de la France dans le domaine culturel. Il est, parmi tous les Grands Travaux, le seul qui ne soit pas en France hexagonale. Aussi, en 1988, lorsque ce projet est né, il a surtout pour ambition de combler l'écart entre les aspirations contradictoires du gouvernement français et des Kanak qui revendiquent alors leur indépendance (Message, 2006). Sa réalisation est donc perçue comme « un geste » de la France envers la Nouvelle-Calédonie. Cette influence française se retrouve aussi dans l'architecture du lieu. Brown s'interroge ainsi sur l'intention de l'architecte Renzo Piano quand il propose une version moderne et « démocratique » des cases kanak traditionnelles. Vouloir les moderniser, n'est-ce pas une manière de les européaniser ? (Brown, 2002). De son côté l'ethnologue Jean Guiart fustige la configuration interne du centre qui obéit aux standards métropolitains des lieux culturels. Dans les deux cas, c'est la présence française qui est pointée du doigt et le fait que le centre impose une « conception étrangère de la culture » au peuple kanak (Guiart, 1996). L'étroitesse des relations entre le centre et le gouvernement français interroge en outre la capacité, voire la légitimité d'une telle institution à produire des symboles de la citoyenneté calédonienne. De fait, vouloir faire du centre l'un des acteurs du destin commun, n'est-ce pas une façon de perpétuer une forme de paternalisme entre la France et la Nouvelle-Calédonie ?

Au-delà de cet aspect politique, rappelons que la création du centre a suscité également des tensions parmi les Kanak. Ce projet est alors loin de faire l'unanimité : beaucoup de Kanak se sont opposés à la construction du centre à Nouméa, ville jugée trop européenne, et auraient préféré qu'il soit construit dans le Nord du territoire, fief de Tjibaou. Le nom donné au centre a lui aussi provoqué de nombreux désaccords quant à sa légitimité du fait de l'appartenance de Tjibaou à un clan particulier (Dussy, 2003). Aujourd'hui encore, le poids du passé rebute une partie de la société calédonienne qui rechigne à fréquenter ce lieu. Marguerite Martin, cheffe du service Accueil et Jeune Public au centre en 2018 résume ainsi la situation :

*« Un jeune Caldoche ne va pas vouloir aller dans un bâtiment créé pour les Kanak ou les touristes. Un jeune Kanak des îles ne va pas vouloir aller dans un bâtiment construit par les Kanak du nord (du fait du nom Tjibaou). Ce n'est pas une véritable barrière mais c'est la barrière que les gens se mettent. Les jeunes Européens n'auront aucune réticence à venir ici. Pour un jeune Caldoche, le centre a une signification bien différente de celle du Kanak ou de l'Européen. A un moment donné, il faudrait réussir à désacraliser l'outil pour que les gens viennent. Mais, en même temps, si on le désacralise, on en fait n'importe quoi. »*

*(Entretien réalisé avec Marguerite Martin, avril 2018)*



Plus largement, le centre peine depuis sa création à faire venir le public kanak, du fait de son relatif éloignement de la ville, de sa difficulté d'accès (le centre se situe à plus de sept kilomètres du centre-ville et est difficilement accessible en transports en commun), de son prix d'entrée (500 francs CFP soit un peu plus de 4 euros), mais aussi surtout de l'écart progressivement creusé entre ce dernier et l'ADCK, dont il est pourtant le siège. Nicole Waia, journaliste et militante de l'Union calédonienne, rappelle ainsi, en 2008, le rapport complexe que les Kanak entretiennent avec le centre :

*« Pour les Kanak, le CCT [centre culturel Tjibaou] c'est un grand truc alors que l'ADCK c'est l'Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak, ce qui veut dire quelque chose. Le CCT n'est que l'outil de l'ADCK et non l'inverse. Or, c'est lui que l'on met systématiquement en avant par rapport à l'ADCK et l'on fait fi d'elle. Cela explique en partie le désintérêt des Kanak vis-à-vis du CCT et leur peu d'empressement à se l'approprier. Peut-être faudrait-il dissocier l'ADCK du CCT, en tout cas leurs missions, et faire en sorte que ces deux entités se partagent les tâches [...]. Il faut que l'on laisse au CCT le rôle pour lequel il est fait, celui je le répète d'être l'outil de l'Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak, et j'insiste sur chacun des mots qui définissent cette agence. » (Waïa, 2008)*

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Au-delà de ces complexités originelles du centre, notons que d'autres institutions se restructurent également aujourd'hui afin de tenter d'incarner l'esprit de l'Accord de Nouméa. Créé en 1971, le musée de la Nouvelle-Calédonie a ainsi longtemps été consacré à l'archéologie et à l'ethnologie de l'archipel en se centrant essentiellement sur la population et les objets kanak. Cette muséologie est aujourd'hui jugée trop passéiste (Graille, 2018) et l'établissement est actuellement en cours de rénovation. Le nouveau projet vise notamment à offrir une vision plus large de la société calédonienne, au travers notamment de l'intégration des différentes communautés dans le parcours muséologique. L'ancienne architecture du musée doit être, elle aussi, modifiée, pour s'éloigner des standards européens et mieux s'ancrer dans la tradition locale. Le bâtiment d'origine, de couleur blanche et sans particularités architecturales, sera rénové dans un style plus art déco faisant appel à des matériaux produits localement (Bertin, 2020).

À l'image de la rénovation de ce musée, le paysage culturel calédonien a beaucoup changé depuis l'inauguration du centre. L'archipel s'est doté de structures modernes, moins investies symboliquement, qui attirent aujourd'hui une population plus jeune. C'est le cas du centre culturel du Mont Dore, créé en 2002, dont la programmation culturelle foisonnante (pièces de théâtre, festival de films indépendants, ciné-débats etc.) s'adresse à un public varié. En



juin 2021, s'est y ainsi tenue la pièce de théâtre « La fantastique aventure du bateau nommé Île de Lumière », qui entre en résonance avec l'exposition « L'Île de Lumière, l'engagement humanitaire d'un navire calédonien » présentée en aout 2019 au musée maritime de Nouvelle-Calédonie. « L'Île de lumière » est le nom du cargo affrété par Bernard Kouchner dans les années 1970 pour venir en aide aux vietnamiens qui fuyaient le régime communiste. Ce navire est parti du port de Nouméa « avec un équipage essentiellement constitué de calédoniens que rien ne prédestinait à une telle aventure » (Musée maritime de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, 2019). En mettant en lumière des événements passés de ce type, ces institutions participent sans aucun doute à l'écriture du nouveau récit national calédonien.

Si le centre culturel du Mont Dore peut jouir d'une telle variété au niveau de la programmation, c'est notamment parce qu'il s'agit d'une structure municipale aux coûts de fonctionnement relativement faibles. Les artistes y sont rémunérés à la recette, ce qui permet à la direction de jouer la carte de l'éclectisme et de l'audace, sans pour autant prendre trop de risques. Le fonctionnement du centre culturel du Mont Dore est en sens radicalement différent de celui du centre culturel Tjibaou comme nous l'explique Gregory Louzier, l'actuel directeur :

*« On est une petite équipe, très soudée, on est tous jeunes et on est passionnés. Ce qu'il faut savoir c'est que cet outil est chouette parce qu'il est fonctionnel, on arrive, on allume la lumière, on n'a pas de grosse contrainte. Tjibaou, ils ont des coûts énormes et ils sont embêtés. Nous n'avons pas besoin de mettre un vigile. Ce n'a pas les mêmes coûts, c'est très fonctionnel, on ouvre, on embête personne. On a une place à part dans le monde la culture parce que le monde de la culture n'est pas adapté au monde des fonctionnaires et de l'administration. » (Entretien réalisé avec Grégory Louzier, avril 2018)*

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Alors que la Nouvelle-Calédonie construit aujourd'hui un modèle culturel qui lui est propre, une structure comme celle du centre culturel Tjibaou ne serait-elle plus adaptée ? Encouragée par l'existence d'institutions comme le Mont Dore (mais aussi le Rex de Nouméa ou le Théâtre de l'Île), une nouvelle génération calédonienne, plus métissée et moins affectée par les clivages identitaires que ses prédécesseurs, crée en effet aujourd'hui les symboles du destin commun. Dans un entretien accordé à la revue *Mwa Vée*, la danseuse Diane Lise Da Ros revient sur ces nouvelles formes d'expression qui émanent de la nouvelle génération dont le rapport au passé plus décomplexé libère en quelque sorte la création artistique :

*« Une nouvelle génération a vu le jour. C'est ainsi que l'on assiste ces dernières années à l'émergence de jeunes danseurs et chorégraphes*

*décomplexés par rapport à leur créativité et à leurs créations. Certains d'entre eux font même le lien entre formes anciennes et formes nouvelles de la danse. On retrouve notamment cette attitude dans la danse urbaine, le hip-hop en particulier... » (Da Ros, 2010)*

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Le recours aux pratiques coutumières traditionnelles apparaît en effet comme un élément central dans le processus de construction de cette identité calédonienne. Paul Barri, membre de l'association indonésienne de Nouvelle-Calédonie et danseur de hip-hop détaille ce lien entre formes anciennes et formes nouvelles dans le milieu de la danse en Calédonie :

*« Le mouvement urbain existe en Calédonie et il est structuré autour d'associations. Il a une façon de faire, il a une identité qui lui est propre. Le fait de faire des temps de parole, des temps de palabre, le fait de faire la coutume (...) c'est très océanien de faire ça, on représente la case et on échange. Il faut voir le mouvement hip hop comme une case avec des poteaux, c'est important de se parler. »  
(Entretien réalisé avec Pau Barri, avril 2018)*

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Alors que ces institutions culturelles contribuent efficacement à donner un souffle nouveau à la création contemporaine en Nouvelle-Calédonie, la place du centre dans le paysage culturel calédonien semble de plus en plus floue. En 2009, le centre produisait ainsi le festival Emergence qui avait pour but « d'affirmer son ouverture vis-à-vis de la scène artistique locale et de la dynamiser<sup>5</sup> ». Ce festival cherchait à favoriser la rencontre entre les formes de danses traditionnelles et contemporaines et permettait aussi aux lauréats d'intégrer la programmation du centre. Il s'est cependant arrêté en 2011 et ces initiatives se sont aujourd'hui déplacées du côté du Rex ou du centre culturel du Mont Dore. Dans ce contexte, la question du futur du centre se pose bien entendu, ainsi que son rôle dans un pays qui pourrait bien devenir indépendant, sur le court ou le moyen terme. Cette question, voire cette incertitude est actuellement bien présente et se ressent dans certaines de ses activités, comme nous allons le voir.

## Conclusions

Les multiples difficultés que nous venons d'évoquer permettent sans aucun doute d'expliquer le peu de célébration autour du vingtième anniversaire du centre - et donc de l'Accord de Nouméa -, en 2018. Ce soir-là a en effet unique-

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5. <http://www.adck.nc/spectacles/programmation/307-les-nuits-emergence>. Page consultée le 10 juin 2021.

ment lieu le spectacle « Pilou Pilou » auquel participent six troupes océaniques. Parmi elles, quatre sont calédoniennes et proviennent de différentes parties de l'archipel. Les deux autres sont wallisienne et tahitienne. Au moment du spectacle, la majorité propose des danses traditionnelles appartenant à leurs répertoires respectifs tandis que le Saian Breaker Crew, une jeune troupe de danseurs originaires de Nouméa, propose une chorégraphie moderne inspirée notamment du hip-hop. À la fin de la cérémonie, les danseurs et spectateurs se sont réunis pour présenter la danse de la case qui clôture traditionnellement les cérémonies coutumières kanak (danse du « pilou »).

Au regard des attentes générées par cette célébration, cette cérémonie peut apparaître comme particulièrement modeste. Si cela peut être expliqué en partie par les restrictions budgétaires dont souffre le centre, la modestie de ce spectacle couplée à la diminution progressive des fréquentations ces dernières années font néanmoins émerger une série de questions. Ainsi, alors que le centre s'est ouvert aux différentes communautés depuis 2012, le résultat final du spectacle donne à voir des communautés divisées, qui ne s'influencent pas et qui demeurent ancrées dans leurs traditions. Cette situation traduit-elle son impossibilité à incarner les enjeux du destin commun, tout en affirmant son ancrage kanak ? Illustre-t-elle son incapacité à se projeter dans le futur, à l'heure où se joue l'indépendance de l'archipel ? Ou témoigne-t-elle de sa difficulté à encourager et soutenir la création d'une identité culturelle calédonienne ?

Indépendamment des réponses que l'on peut apporter à ces questions, l'histoire du centre culturel Tjibaou nous rappelle surtout la dépendance des musées aux redéfinitions constantes des intérêts sociaux, culturels et politiques de leur contexte. En effet, si cette institution a vu le jour à un moment particulier où les tensions entre les différentes communautés étaient au plus haut et l'avenir de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, incertain, le paysage culturel et social calédonien a bien changé depuis les années 1980. La sortie de l'Accord de Nouméa, l'émergence d'un nouveau cycle politique tourné vers l'horizon référendaire et enfin le retrait de la scène politique de la génération des signataires des Accords de Matignon sont autant de facteurs qui fragilisent la légitimité du centre en tant que symbole du « destin commun ». À cela s'ajoute l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération, désireuse de créer de nouveaux référents au-delà du centre culturel Tjibaou, institution trop européanisée qui porte en elle de nombreux événements du passé encore douloureux.

Malgré ces nombreuses questions, ces difficultés ainsi que les critiques qui ont pu lui être adressées, il n'en reste pas moins que cet établissement a permis à des populations de se connaître, de développer leurs pratiques culturelles mais aussi d'insuffler un véritable élan de réflexion sur les symboles culturels du destin commun. Ainsi, indépendamment de son futur, le centre culturel Tjibaou a incontestablement contribué à poser les premières pierres de « la grande case du pays de demain » (Carteron, 2012, p. 49). À la société néocalédonienne désormais de décider si elle souhaite continuer de la bâtir sous

cette forme, ou si, dans sa quête d'avenir, avec ou sans la France, elle souhaite lui donner de nouveaux sens.

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# Re-Adjusting Museum Theoretics<sup>1</sup> (and Hence, Practices) to Include Indigenous Community Needs and Values

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## ABSTRACT

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Curation and the collections of cultural material must be the result of a collaborative process; beyond being the stewards of cultural objects, we must recognize our positions as servants to the communities to

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1. Theoretics (the integral act of applying both theory and hypothesis) ultimately affects the researcher's findings on any given topic.

whom we owe our livelihoods. The visual discourses embedded in the ways that we curate tangible cultural heritage should strongly reflect the intangibles of the cultural heritage that we collect. This requires new museological theories and, hence, practices that break down previous colonial theories and practices. A case study on peach trees is presented here that highlights what can occur when collaborative models of curation are embraced.

Keywords: museological theories, museological practices, stewards, collaborative models.

## RESUMEN

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### **Re-Ajustando la Teorética de los Museos (y por ende, sus Prácticas) para Incluir las Necesidades y Valores de la Comunidad indígena**

La curaduría y las colecciones de material cultural deben ser un proceso colaborativo; más allá de ser los custodios de los objetos culturales, debemos reconocer nuestra posición como servidores de las comunidades a las que debemos nuestros medios de vida. Los discursos visuales incrustados en las formas en que curamos el patrimonio cultural tangible deben reflejar fuertemente lo intangible del patrimonio cultural que recopilamos. Esto requiere nuevas teorías museológicas y, por ende, prácticas que rompan las teorías y prácticas coloniales anteriores. Aquí se presenta un estudio de caso sobre árboles de durazno (melocotón) que destaca lo que puede ocurrir cuando se adoptan modelos colaborativos de curaduría.

Palabras Clave: *museológicas teorías, museológicas prácticas, custodios, modelos colaborativos.*



## Introduction

Boozhoo. I would first like to introduce myself, in my language, if I may.

Niin Jessie Ryker-Crawford ndizhinikaaz. Ninisa Anishinaabe, miinawah Gaa-waabaabiganikaag ishkonigan nindonjiibaa; Maang niindoodem.

Greetings. My name is Jessie Ryker-Crawford. I am Chippewa (or, Anishinaabe), and I am of the White Earth Chippewa Nation; I am of the Loon Clan.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Dr. Jessie Ryker-Crawford is Chair of the Museum Studies Department and Professor of Museum Studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. Her work has



## Land Recognition and Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples of New Hampshire: the Abenaki, the Maleseet, the Micmac, the Passamaquoddy, the Penobscot, and the Pennacook Nations. And due acknowledgement goes to those who traditionally included New Hampshire lands as a hunting and ecoagricultural region: the Akwesasne, the Kahnawake, the Mahican, the Nipmuck, the Pequot, the Schaghticoke, and the Wampanoag Nations.

If I have overlooked any tribal nations in my acknowledgement, I do beg your forgiveness.

If you are not used to Native American introductions and acknowledgements, the beginning of my presentation may seem a little long. But there is a reason that we take the time to acknowledge and honor those who have brought us to the place where we now stand. It is a way to be humble, and to remember that none of us stand alone in this space that we call “now.” Introductions and acknowledgements ground us in the fact that everything we do is a collaborative activity – and it is good to acknowledge those who we can, when we can.

## Re-Adjusting Museum Theoretics

Those of us in the museum field owe our livelihoods and the richness of our professions to others: past museum professionals, peoples of our own, and other cultures. We are much more than simply stewards of inanimate objects that are held within our collections. We are also servants of the cultures and communities from which we gather knowledge, insight, and both personal and professional enlightenment. For we are here to help share the stories that have been for so many years silenced, miscommunicated, disfigured, and misapprehended.

For, as we all know, it is a fact that we can open any publication on the tangible and intangible heritage of other peoples and find a myriad of inaccurate and derogatory descriptions. Or worse, the exposing of sacred Ceremonial knowledge that, because it is now in print, is presented far out of context from the knowledge systems from which it has emerged.

We know that it is a fact that we can, unfortunately, walk into the storage systems of our institutions and find elder-objects that should never have found their way there, and exhibit halls that are presenting material culture that was never meant to be placed on view.

These facts have a great deal to do with anthropological, archaeological, and museological theories and, hence, practices, that have been in place for hundreds of years. For theories lead to practice. And only sound, healthy, inclusionary,

and beneficial theories lead to sound, healthy, inclusionary, and beneficial practices.

However, new critical conversations *are* emerging across these disciplines of ours and others.

We cannot deny that the field of museology originated from colonial theories and practices; theories that have been skewed, grounded in presumptions that some cultures are “higher on the evolutionary scale” while others are “less than.” In the words of one of my students and colleagues within the museum field, Alison Guzmán, “Here we are today, centuries later, re-adjusting the museum model to address Indigenous community needs and values, so that [we] may self-represent [ourselves]...and manage [our] own cultural patrimony” (class discussion, April 16, 2020).

Arthur Amiotte, an Oglala Lakota artist and educator, spoke of Native American art, but his words resonate when referring to all objects of cultural value. He states:

*The American Indian has tenaciously held on to [their] arts, not in the sense of object alone, but rather as a fabric that binds and holds together many dimensions of [our] very existence. The arts are to [us] an expression of the integrated forces that tie together and unify all aspects of life . . . [The Native American artist] is therefore, the eyes, ears and voice of [their] own age. More than that, [they are a] personal record which...is the partial repository or the encyclopedia of [our] oral tradition[s]. (Amiotte, 1977, as cited in Hill, 1992, p. 10)*

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As Native American peoples, we find ourselves de-constructing colonial identities as we negotiate the cultural self in today’s world. We are attempting...no, actively undertaking, new ways of presenting identity and cultural continuity as expressed through museum institutions – the collecting of, holding of, and exhibiting of our culture through the presentations and discussions surrounding our tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Social, historical and political issues are still waiting to be articulated and analyzed incorporating critical anthropology and theoretical approaches to visual discourse and the politics of representation via our objects.

In an attempt to formulate new ways of thinking about issues of concern to the Indigenous peoples of North America, shared ethnographical approaches and inclusionary research methods are required to be utilized and embraced.

### **Collaborative Curation Case Study: The Peach Trees**

I would like to stop here and tell a story of peach trees.

For my museology students who are reading this article, I apologize. For they have heard this a number of times now...

A tribal community (who will not be named) reached out to us in the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum Studies Program,<sup>3</sup> wanting to create a number of mini exhibitions about their community.

Following the methods of collaborative curation<sup>4</sup> as we do, both faculty and students worked with tribal leaders to put in place a community gathering to discuss possible exhibition themes.

An announcement was sent out to the community, and we asked tribal members who, in their community, could be contracted to prepare a meal that included traditional foods, so that we could first sit down and have a meal together. This is an important traditional meeting methodology of Native American people since before colonial contact.

The New Mexico History Museum and the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology had given the aforementioned tribe full access to their archival collections of images – over 300 high resolution images. We prepared a slide show, in the hopes that the imagery would help to stimulate exhibition ideas.

The gathering included youth and elders, council members and language holders. We began with describing the steps that we follow when building an exhibit, from bouncing off ideas to conducting further research, to choosing objects or images, and to producing exhibit text. We showed a few examples and then began the slide show. The slide show was imperative. Slowly, discussions among the community members arose, with requests to return to certain images, and to pause the slide show at others. The discussions moved into the tribal language, and we respectfully remained silent while discussions were held.

We were very aware that when the discussions moved back into English, it was to include us, faculty and students from other tribes.

The information that came out of those discussions was invaluable.

First of all, a number of the slides were reversed. Having been made on glass plates—many from the 1800s—the photographer had written on the back of

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3. The Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) is a Native American multi-tribal college based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Begun in 1962 and accredited by the United States Higher Learning Commission in 1973, IAIA offers Indigenous-based degree programs in studio arts, creative writing, Indigenous liberal studies, cinematic arts, performance arts, and museum studies. Its museum studies program is the oldest museum degree program in the nation. Although focused upon offering Native American student curricula that is specific to Indigenous thought and philosophies, IAIA is open to all students across the world.

4. For more information on theories that pertain to collaborative curation, refer to Lonetree (2012), Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Wilson (2008) in the bibliography.

the slide, away from the emulsion. So, dancers were shown holding objects in the wrong hand, and ceremonial kivas were shown backward.

The second thing that emerged was a deep discussion of the peach trees that once surrounded the community plaza. Elders remembered these trees that were long since gone, and a discussion of why they no longer existed began between the youth and the elders. A consensus was reached that they had disappeared during the 1930s, when forced governmental housing dictated that new houses built for tribal members be constructed away from the communal plaza and traditional adobe living structures and placed instead on the surrounding reservation lands that were forcibly allotted to each family.

Elders were adamant that, at some point, a large permanent exhibit be produced about the importance of those peach trees to the community.

### **What We Learned from the Collaborative Process**

This story highlights many things, as stories often do. It helps us to realize and opens up for us the possibilities of curatorial venues that could not have been thought up by those outside of the communities themselves; further research on 1930s-era HUD housing or US Department of Housing and Urban Development housing projects and their impact on traditional lifeways; of the 1600s-era migration of Spain's peoples into the Southwest and both the stories of forced colonization, but also the resilience of Native peoples and integration of important food crops and fruit trees. Of changing times, they are remembered by the elders of a community.

It also highlights that we, as curators, collections managers and museum professionals, have a plethora of stories that we can help share, if we understand that we still hold onto decades-old theories and methodologies of "doing museology" that we may subconsciously be still following.

This story highlights what can emerge when research methodologies and curatorial theoretics are deeply ingrained with the ethics of careful and mindful methods of collaboration. That through these ethical methods, what is yet to be explored is how Native American culture is multifaceted, with internal discourses that are waiting to be shared with outside communities and other cultures as well as within, which can resonate and add to our overall celebration of humanity.

I say multifaceted, because these stories of "self" reflect comparable as well as opposing historical, political and philosophical Native backgrounds. The negotiation of Native American identity operates on many different levels and includes diverse Native perspectives and discursive voices.

What is left to be presented in museums and the stories that they help share is an ethnographical approach to curation as an Indigenous discourse on Native identity itself, reflecting an internal maneuvering and often dialectical response to colonial pressures, both historical and contemporary.

Let's not forget to include contemporary Native American artwork, which oftentimes addresses cultural, social and political issues that are of relevance and concern to Native communities today and that illustrate an inter-cultural representation of a Native American cultural identity.

For our art is a visual discourse that does not reflect a homogenous presentation of Native identity but rather speaks of unique cultural histories and experiences and pushes back against stereotypical labels generated outside of Native American communities.

For those stereotypes often force Native individuals to politically and ideologically align themselves to arbitrary categories of traditional vs. modern Native identity – a fact that many contemporary Native artists are painfully aware of. This underlying crisis of representation is woven into and throughout contemporary Native American art in various ways, exposing an internal discourse that is at times fragmented and controversial, yet rich in dialogue, which is what we are interested in, in this educational field of ours.

Through the ways in which we conduct our museological practices, which are our collecting, our exhibiting, and our presentation of Native American cultures, we can help answer the questions that we, as Native American people, are struggling with: “How does tradition play within a modern Native identity?”; “How is cultural identity currently being negotiated and re-defined?”; “What experiences have diverse Native American peoples shared throughout the post-contact period?”; and “What can we say about a collective historical experience as well as our distinctive cultural experiences?”

It is these questions that are most often explored internally (and at varying degrees) within our communities. They echo a discourse that has been in place since initial European contact and conquest, and they encompass much broader topics of social crises—assimilation, loss/retainment of culture, power relations, re-definement of self—all set within specific historical contexts and movements.

Decades-old theorems (and hence, practices) have worked to silence stories that are begging to be told. We follow those skewed theories without meaning to. For they are the way that things have always been done.

Going into a community, slowly making strong ties, and listening carefully, without dictating how long that should take or in what direction that might go, can be uncomfortable. For we are not taught methods that work. But they are out there (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006; Bench, 2014; Chilisa, 2012; LaDuke, 2005; Lambert, 2014; Lischke & McNab, 2005; Lonetree, 2012; Peers & Brown, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

Collaborative models of research. Indigenous curatorial methods and practices. Indigenous research methodologies. These are tools that are being disseminated by Indigenous professionals and knowledge holders themselves. They reflect a shift in power-play, and all lay the expertise in the hands of the communities

themselves rather than in the hands of the researcher, the collector, and the museum professional. As it should be.

Let's take our responsibility as stewards and servants to others seriously. Let's break away from the theory that *we* are the experts. Let's open up the possibilities of aiding in stories waiting to be told, which cannot possibly originate from us. In this way, our coffers of collections and exhibits that we hold for the originating communities, acting as their cultural stewards and servants, can reflect their needs, wants, and values—whatever that community is: tribal, ethnic, under-represented, or mainstream.

Miigwetch.

# Re-Ajustando la Teorética<sup>1</sup> de los Museos (y por ende, sus Prácticas) para Incluir las Necesidades y Valores de la Comunidad indígena.

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1. La teoría (el acto integral de aplicar tanto la teoría como la hipótesis) afecta en última instancia los hallazgos del investigador sobre cualquier tema dado. [All footnote citations in Spanish are applied from Google translation from English to Spanish. Todas las citas de notas a pie de página en español se aplican a partir de la traducción de Google del inglés al español.]

## INTRODUCCIÓN:

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Boozhoo. Primero me gustaría presentarme, en mi idioma si se me permite.

Niin Jessie Ryker-Crawford ndizhinikaaz. Ninisa Anishinaabe, miinawah Gaa-waabaabiganikaag ishkonigan nindonjiibaa; Maang niindoodem.

Saludos. Mi nombre es Jessie Ryker-Crawford. Soy Chippewa (o Anishinaabe), y soy de la Nación Chippewa de White Earth (Tierra Blanca); Pertenezco al Clan Loon.<sup>2</sup>

### Reconocimiento de Tierras

Me gustaría reconocer a los pueblos indígenas de Nueva Hampshire: las Naciones Abenaki, Maleseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, y Pennacook. Y aquellos que tradicionalmente incluyeron las tierras de New Hampshire como una región de caza y eco-agrícola: las Naciones Akwesasne, Kahnawake, Mahican, Nipmuck, Pequot, Schaghticoke, y Wampanoag.

Si en mi reconocimiento he pasado por alto alguna Nación tribal, les ruego me perdonen.

Si no están acostumbrados a las presentaciones y reconocimientos de los Nativos Americanos, el comienzo de mi presentación les puede parecer un poco largo. Pero hay una razón por la que nos tomamos el tiempo para reconocer y honrar a quienes nos han traído al lugar donde nos encontramos ahora. Es una manera de ser humildes y recordar que ninguno de nosotros está sólo en este espacio que llamamos “ahora.” Las presentaciones y los reconocimientos nos aterrizan en el hecho de que todo lo que hacemos es una actividad colaborativa – y es bueno reconocer a quienes podamos, cuando podamos.

### Reajustar la Teoría de los Museos

Aquellos de nosotros en el campo de los museos debemos a otros nuestro sustento y la riqueza de nuestras profesiones: a los anteriores profesionales de los museos y a los pueblos de nuestras y de otras culturas. Somos mucho más que simples administradores de los objetos inanimados que se encuentran dentro de nuestras colecciones. También somos servidores de las culturas y comunidades de las que obtenemos conocimiento, entendimiento profundo, e iluminación, tanto personal como profesional. Porque estamos aquí para ayudar a compartir las historias que durante tantos años han sido silenciadas, mal comunicadas, desfiguradas y mal comprendidas.

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2. La Dra. Jessie Ryker-Crawford es Presidenta del Departamento de Estudios de Museos y Profesora de Estudios de Museos en el Instituto de Artes Indígenas Americanas en Santa Fe, Nuevo México, EE. UU. Su trabajo se ha centrado en la indigenización y descolonización del ámbito museístico.



Porque como todos sabemos, es un hecho que podemos abrir cualquier publicación sobre el patrimonio material e inmaterial de otros pueblos, y encontrar una mirada con descripciones inexactas y despectivas. O peor aún, la exposición de conocimiento Ceremonial sagrado que, debido a que ahora está impreso, se presenta alejado del contexto de los sistemas de conocimiento de los que emerge.

Sabemos que, desafortunadamente, es un hecho que podemos entrar en los sistemas de almacenamiento de nuestras instituciones y encontrar objetos-antepasados que nunca debieron encontrarse allí, y salas de exhibición que presentan una cultura material que nunca estuvo destinada a ser puesta a la vista.

Estas realidades tienen mucho que ver con teorías y, por tanto, prácticas antropológicas, arqueológicas y museológicas que han permanecido en vigor desde hace ya cientos de años. Porque las teorías llevan a la práctica. Y teorías íntegras, sanas, inclusivas y benéficas conducen a prácticas íntegras, sanas, inclusivas y benéficas.

Sin embargo, nuevas conversaciones a partir de la crítica *sí están* emergiendo en forma transversal a nuestras disciplinas, y las de otros.

No podemos negar que el campo de la museología se originó a partir de teorías y prácticas coloniales; teorías que han estado sesgadas, basadas en presunciones de que algunas culturas están “más alto en la escala evolutiva,” mientras que otras son “menos que.” En las palabras de uno de mis estudiantes y colega en el campo de los museos, Alison Guzmán, “aquí estamos hoy, siglos después, reajustando el modelo de museo para abordar las necesidades y valores de las comunidades indígenas, para de poder representarnos a nosotros mismos ... y administrar [nuestro] propio patrimonio cultural” (la discusión de clase, 16 de abril de 2020).

Arthur Amiotte, un Oglala Lakota artista y educador, habló del arte Nativo Americano; pero sus palabras resuenan al referirse a todos los objetos de valor cultural. Él afirma que:

*El Indio Americano se ha aferrado tenazmente a [sus] artes, no en el sentido únicamente objetual, sino más bien en tanto tejido que amarra y sostiene unidas muchas dimensiones de [nuestra] propia existencia. Las artes son para [nosotros] una expresión de las fuerzas integradas que anudan y unifican todos los aspectos de la vida ... (El artista Nativo Americano) es, por lo tanto, los ojos, oídos y voz de [su] propia época. Más aún, [ellos son un] registro personal que...es el depósito parcial o la enciclopedia de [nuestras] tradición[es] oral[es].*

*(Amiotte, 1977, como se cita en Hill, 1992, p. 10).*

”

Como pueblos Nativos Americanos, nos encontramos de-construyendo identidades coloniales mientras que negociamos el yo cultural en el mundo actual. Estamos intentando...no, emprendiendo activamente, nuevas formas de presentar la identidad y continuidad cultural, como son expresadas a través de las instituciones de los museos – recopilando, sosteniendo y exhibiendo nuestra cultura a través de presentaciones y discusiones sobre nuestro patrimonio cultural tangible e intangible.

Cuestiones sociales, históricas y políticas aún esperan ser articuladas y analizadas, incorporando la antropología crítica y los enfoques teóricos, al discurso visual y las políticas de la representación a través de nuestros objetos.

En un intento por formular nuevas formas de pensar sobre los temas que conciernen a los pueblos indígenas de América del Norte, se requiere utilizar y abrazar enfoques etnográficos compartidos y métodos de investigación inclusivos.

## **Estudio de Caso de Una Curaduría Colaborativa: Árboles de Durazno**

Me gustaría detenerme aquí y contar una historia de árboles de durazno.

A mis estudiantes de museología que están escuchando, les pido disculpas. Porque han escuchado esto ya varias veces...

Una comunidad tribal se acercó a nosotros, en el Programa de Estudios de Museos del Instituto de Arte Indígena Americana<sup>3</sup> con el deseo de crear una serie de mini-exhibiciones sobre su comunidad.

Siguiendo, como lo hacemos, los métodos de curaduría colaborativa,<sup>4</sup> tanto los profesores como los estudiantes trabajaron con líderes tribales para organizar una reunión comunitaria a fin de discutir posibles temas de exhibición.

Un anuncio fue enviado a la comunidad, y les preguntamos a los miembros de la tribu quienes, en su comunidad, podrían ser contratados para preparar una merienda que incluyera comidas tradicionales, de modo que primero pudiéramos sentarnos y comer juntos. Esta es una metodología para reunirse, importante, tradicional.

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3. El Instituto de Artes Indígenas Americanas (IAIA) es una universidad multi-tribal de nativos americanos con sede en Santa Fe, Nuevo México. Iniciada en 1962 y acreditada por la Comisión de Educación Superior de los Estados Unidos en 1973, la IAIA ofrece programas de grado indígenas en estudio de las artes, escritura creativa, estudios liberales indígenas, artes cinematográficas, artes escénicas y estudios de museos. Su programa de estudios de museos es el programa de grado en museos más antiguo de la nación. Aunque se centra en ofrecer planes de estudio para estudiantes nativos americanos que son específicos del pensamiento y las filosofías indígenas, la IAIA está abierta a todos los estudiantes de todo el mundo.

4. Para obtener más información sobre las teorías que pertenecen a la curaduría colaborativa, consulte Lonetree (2012), Tuhiwai Smith (1999) y Wilson (2008) en la bibliografía.

El Museo de Historia de Nuevo México y el Museo Maxwell de Antropología habían dado a la tribu acceso completo a sus colecciones de archivos de imágenes – más de 300 imágenes de alta resolución. Preparamos una presentación de diapositivas, con la esperanza de que las imágenes ayudaran a estimular ideas para la exposición.

El encuentro incluyó a jóvenes y ancianos, miembros del consejo y cultores del idioma. Comenzamos describiendo los pasos que seguimos al construir una exhibición, desde el intercambio de ideas, a conducir más investigación, a elegir objetos o imágenes, a producir el texto de la exhibición. Mostramos algunos ejemplos y luego comenzamos la presentación de diapositivas. La presentación de diapositivas era imperativa. Poco a poco, fueron surgiendo discusiones entre los miembros de la comunidad, con solicitudes para volver a ciertas imágenes y para pausar las diapositivas en otras. Las discusiones pasaron al lenguaje tribal y nosotros respetuosamente permanecimos en silencio mientras las discusiones se llevaban a cabo.

Estábamos muy conscientes de que cuando las discusiones volvieran al inglés, sería para incluirnos a nosotros, profesores y estudiantes de otras tribus. La información que surgió de esas discusiones fue invaluable.

En primer lugar, varias de las diapositivas estaban al revés. Habiendo sido hechas en placas de vidrio—muchas de los 1800s—el fotógrafo había escrito en la parte posterior de la diapositiva, lejos de la emulsión. De esta manera, se mostraba a los bailarines sosteniendo objetos en la mano equivocada, y las kivas ceremoniales se mostraban al revés.

Lo segundo que surgió fue una profunda discusión sobre los árboles de durazno que alguna vez rodearon la plaza comunitaria. Los ancianos rememoraron estos árboles, que habían desaparecido hace mucho tiempo, y entre los jóvenes y los ancianos comenzó una discusión sobre por qué ya no existían. Se llegó a un consenso de que habían desaparecido durante la década de 1930, cuando las fuerzas gubernamentales de vivienda dictaron que las casas construidas para los miembros de la tribu se levantarán lejos de la plaza comunal y las estructuras tradicionales de adobe, colocadas en cambio en las tierras asignadas forzosamente a cada familia.

Los ancianos insistieron en que, en algún momento, se produjera una exhibición grande y permanente sobre la importancia de esos árboles de durazno para la comunidad.

## **Lo Que Aprendimos del Proceso Colaborativo**

Esta historia destaca muchas cosas, como suelen hacer las historias. Nos ayuda a darnos cuenta, y nos abren posibilidades, de espacios curatoriales que no podrían haber sido ideados por quienes están afuera de las propias comunidades; más investigación sobre los proyectos de vivienda del Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de EE.UU. de la era de 1930, y su impacto

en las formas de vida tradicionales; de la migración de gente de España hacia el suroeste en la era de los 1600, y tanto las historias de colonización forzada como de la resiliencia de los pueblos Nativos y la integración de importantes cultivos alimentarios y árboles frutales. De tiempos de cambio que recuerdan los mayores de una comunidad.

También destaca que nosotros, como curadores, administradores de colecciones y profesionales de museos, tenemos una plétora de historias que podemos ayudar a compartir, siempre que entendamos que todavía nos aferramos a teorías y metodologías de “hacer museología” de décadas atrás, a las que inconscientemente podemos estar todavía aferrándonos.

Esta historia destaca lo que puede surgir cuando las metodologías de investigación y la teoría curatorial están profundamente arraigadas a una ética de métodos de colaboración cuidadosos y conscientes. Que a través de estos métodos éticos, lo que aún está por explorarse es cuán multifacética la cultura Nativo Americana es, con discursos internos que están esperando para ser compartido con las comunidades externas y otras culturas, así como internamente, que pueden resonar y sumar a nuestra celebración general de la humanidad.

Digo multifacético, porque éstas historias del “yo” reflejan trasfondos históricos, políticos y filosóficos nativos, comparables y a la vez opuestos. La negociación de la identidad Nativo Americana opera en muchos niveles diferentes e incluye diversas perspectivas y voces discursivas nativas.

Lo que queda por ser presentado en los museos y las historias que estos ayudan a compartir es un abordaje etnográfico de la curaduría en tanto discurso indígena sobre la propia identidad nativa, que refleja una maniobra interna y, a menudo, una respuesta dialéctica a las presiones coloniales, tanto históricas como contemporáneas.

No olvidemos incluir obras de arte contemporáneas Nativo Americanas, que a menudo abordan cuestiones culturales, sociales y políticas que son de relevancia y preocupación para las comunidades nativas de hoy, que ilustran una representación inter-cultural de una identidad cultural Nativo Americana.

Porque nuestro arte es un discurso visual que refleja, no una presentación homogénea de la identidad nativa, sino que más bien, habla de historias y experiencias culturales únicas. Y rechaza las etiquetas estereotípicas generadas fuera de las comunidades Nativas Americanas.

Porque esos estereotipos a menudo fuerzan a los individuos nativos a alinearse política e ideológicamente con categorías arbitrarias de una identidad nativa tradicional versus una moderna – un hecho del que muchos artistas nativos contemporáneos son dolorosamente conscientes. Esta crisis de representación subyacente está entretejida en y a través del arte nativo americano contemporáneo de varias maneras, exponiendo un discurso interno que a veces es fragmentario y controvertido, aunque rico en diálogo. Lo cual es lo que nos interesa, en este campo educativo nuestro.

A través de las formas en que realizamos nuestras prácticas museológicas; nuestro coleccionar, nuestro exhibir y nuestra presentación de las culturas Nativas Americanas, podemos ayudar a responder las preguntas con las que nosotros, como pueblos Nativos Americanos, estamos batallando: “¿Qué rol juega la tradición dentro de una identidad nativa moderna?” “¿Cómo en la actualidad la identidad cultural se está negociando y redefiniendo?” “¿Qué experiencias han compartido los diversos pueblos Nativos Americanos durante el período posterior al contacto?” “¿Qué podemos decir sobre una experiencia histórica colectiva, así como sobre nuestras experiencias culturales distintivas?”

Son éstas preguntas las que con mayor frecuencia se exploran internamente (y en diversos grados) dentro de nuestras comunidades. Se hacen eco de un discurso que ha estado en vigor desde el contacto inicial y conquista por los europeos, y abarcan los temas mucho más amplios de las crisis sociales—asimilación, pérdida/retención de la cultura, relaciones de poder, redefinición del yo—todo ello enmarcado en contextos y movimientos históricos específicos.

Teoremas (y por tanto, prácticas) con décadas de antigüedad, han funcionado para silenciar historias que requieren ser contadas. Seguimos esas teorías sesgadas sin tener la intención de hacerlo. Porque son la forma en que siempre se han hecho las cosas.

Entrar en una comunidad, y lentamente hacer lazos fuertes, y escuchar con atención, sin dictar cuánto tiempo puede tomar o en qué dirección puede ir, puede ser incómodo. Porque no se nos enseñan métodos que funcionan. Pero éstos existen (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006; Bench, 2014; Chilisa, 2012; LaDuke, 2005; Lambert, 2014; Lischke & McNab, 2005; Lonetree, 2012; Peers & Brown, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

Modelos colaborativos de investigación. Métodos y prácticas curatoriales indígenas. Metodologías de investigación indígenas. Estas son herramientas que están siendo difundidas por los propios profesionales indígenas y poseedores de conocimientos. Reflejan un cambio en el juego de poder, y todas ponen la experticia en manos de las propias comunidades en lugar de en manos del investigador, el coleccionista, el profesional del museo. Como debería ser.

Tomemos en serio nuestra responsabilidad como custodios y servidores de los demás. Rompamos con la teoría de que *nosotros* somos los expertos. Vamos abriendo las posibilidades de ayudar a contar historias que esperan ser contadas, que no pueden de ninguna manera originarse de nosotros. De esta manera, nuestros cofres con colecciones de objetos y nuestras exhibiciones pueden reflejar las necesidades, deseos y valores de las comunidades de origen, de las que mantenemos éstos, actuando como sus custodios culturales – para quienquiera que esa comunidad sea: tribal, étnica, sub-representada, o convencional.

Miigwetch.

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# Connectedness and Relationship: Foundations of Indigenous Ethics Within the Tribal Museum Context

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## ABSTRACT

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The museum field has long been guided by professional ethics designed to articulate shared values related to the core functions of museums. Ethics provide standards for operations and define the goals and expectations of the museum professional as well as the museum institution. Indigenous ethics defy codification and are realized by lived experience informed by generational transmission of language and culture. Indigenous ethics are derived from worldview and epistemology. A foundational goal of Indigenous ethics is to become fully human, knowing one's relationship to land, family, village and self. Drawing on a career history of working tribal museums, this paper will demonstrate how Indigenous ethics are applied in a tribal museum context. By having an increased awareness of Indigenous ethics, mainstream museums can be better equipped to honor those ethical expressions when they work with tribal researchers, curators and collaborators.

Key words: Indigenous ethics, lived experience, tribal museums.

## RESUMÉN

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### **Conexión y Relación: Fundamentos de la Ética Indígena Dentro del Contexto del Museo Tribal**

El área relacionada con los museos se ha guiado desde hace mucho tiempo por una ética profesional diseñada para articular valores compartidos relacionados con las funciones básicas de los museos. Esa ética proporciona estándares para las operaciones y define las metas y expectativas de los profesionales del museo, así como de la institución misma del museo. La ética indígena desafía esa codificación y se realiza mediante la experiencia vivida, informada por la transmisión generacional de su lengua y su cultura. La ética indígena se deriva de la cosmovisión y la epistemología. Un objetivo fundamental de la ética indígena es llegar a ser plenamente humano, conociendo su relación con la tierra, la familia, el pueblo y el yo. Basándose en una historia profesional de museos tribales en funcionamiento, este documento demostrará cómo se aplica la ética indígena en un contexto de museo tribal. Al tener una mayor conciencia de la ética indígena, los museos convencionales pueden estar mejor equipados para honrar esas expresiones éticas cuando trabajan con investigadores tribales, curadores y colaboradores.

Palabras claves: ética indígena, experiencia vivida, museos tribales.



### **Introduction**

Ethics and how they are applied to museums focuses on adhering to standards for governance, programs and collections care. This is reflected in the code of ethics established by the American Alliance of Museums (2021). Tribal museums strive to provide standards in the same area. However, the ethics they follow extend beyond museum practice to include unique applications based on lived experience and Indigenous realities. Over the course of my professional museum and cultural arts career, I have observed firsthand a broad spectrum of distinct ethically informed behaviors being applied formally and informally in a variety of settings. As a Native American person, I am intimately aware of how these behaviors draw upon cultural ways of knowing and, at the same, I understand their potential to further illuminate the diversity of our deeper human experience. The museum field can benefit from being aware of Indigenous ethics particularly when entering into collaborations



with tribal communities regarding exhibition development, repatriation and program development. In this paper, I will contextualize the tribal museum regarding Indigenous ethics providing three examples that relate to collections, exhibits and museum development. I will close by describing how an awareness of Indigenous ethics can be used by mainstream museums to create a more inclusive, enriched experience for both tribal collaborators and museum visitors. Throughout this paper, I use the terms Indigenous, tribal and Native American interchangeably. These are not prescribed terms as each individual or community chooses what term is best to identify by. When I share examples of tribal museums, I use their specific tribal name. The museums and examples described are all from the United States.

## **Background**

My professional experience, now spanning over 30 years, is primarily oriented on providing training to tribes in the area of museum practice and cultural programming. My first professional museum experience was working at the Smithsonian Institution where I was charged with creating a training program specifically for Native American tribes interested in developing their own museums or cultural centers. During the course of my tenure at the Smithsonian Institution, which included working at the National Museum of the American Indian, I heard firsthand numerous accounts from tribal members describing their aspirations related to maintaining their culture and lifeways. I witnessed each of the challenges they faced, especially the difficult task of balancing and incorporating—and ultimately defining for themselves—diverse cultural knowledge systems never before formalized. My next position at the Arizona State Museum (ASM), at The University of Arizona, was highlighted by an eight-year grant I co-managed with the Arizona State Library. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the purpose of the grant was to increase Native American tribal access to library, archive and museum services. Because of this project, I became aware of tribal library and archive activity. While still at the ASM, the museum conservator, Dr. Nancy Odegaard, and I worked together to shed light on the issue of pesticide residues on objects subject to repatriation. Prior to our work, the issue and its relevance to repatriation was virtually unknown. In my current position at the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI), also at the University of Arizona, my knowledge of Indigenous language revitalization and reclamation has increased. Through these experiences with Indigenous language revitalization, tribal archives, libraries and museums, repatriation, as well as my own cultural knowledge, I have seen firsthand the application of Indigenous ethics to decision making, communication, language learning and collaboration.

## Indigenous Ethics

As a basic premise, Indigenous ethics are expressed through the cultural values, attitudes and beliefs manifested in tribal societal epistemologies that include religion, language, family, kinship and community organization, social norms and the phenomena of both the natural world (land, plants, animals, insects, natural elements) and the spiritual world. A central tenet of Indigenous ethics is that our human presence in the world requires establishing a good relationship to all the living things that we share an existence with. Within this cultural framework, individuals adhere to the notion that one must live responsibly and competently. The realization of this responsibility is dictated by intrinsic codes of conduct that are passed on from one generation to the next primarily through language and communal cultural and ritual activity.

The degree to which tribal cultural ethics are transmitted depends on the status of active cultural practice and knowledge. During the course of implementing the tribal museum training program at the Smithsonian Institution and my subsequent related work, I observed that there are some tribal nations whose intact cultural values have managed to survive the onslaught of colonialism while other tribal nations were in varying processes of re-discovery and reclamation.

Hopi scholar Dr. Sheilah Nicholas, whose area of research includes the intersection of language, culture and identity, asserts that knowing the language is key to the transmission of cultural values. In the face of language shift however, her research indicated that cultural values can be learned when using English, but this method of transmission lacks the deep understanding that only Indigenous language can convey. She points out that without language, the ability to satisfy one's obligation to become a fully realized human being cannot be manifested (Nicholas, 2010).

The need to express lived cultural values by tribal nations, even if it involves using English, is driven by an innate recognition of a consciousness unique to tribal nations. Dr. Wendy Peters, a Native Hawaiian scholar, calls this "unconscious embodied knowing" (2016, p. 34). Drawing on research related to epigenetics and memetics, she asserts that the human body is the living vessel of collective ancestral memory and knowledge. Developing a tribal museum is a vital means towards recognizing the compelling need to honor cultural lifeways, knowledge, and experience. As we are seeing, tribes have been resilient in their adaptations to a largely Western concept of what a museum represents to better reflect their world-forming aspirations.

## Tribal Museums and Indigenous Ethics

### Relationship

In my experience, I have observed that some tribes who have established a tribally controlled museum or cultural center do not necessarily view it as a

site where the actual transmission of deep cultural knowledge is made. Rather they have conceived their museum as a vessel of tangible resources (collections, exhibits, archives) that can aid in restoring and re-activating ancestral memory. It is a place where the experiential is emphasized over the expositional displays of cultural information, one where tribal members can discover, reflect, and evaluate for themselves their own unique, intangible cultural principles. Janine Ledford, director of the Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) in Neah Bay, WA, expressed it this way:

*The MCRC provides each Makah tribal member the opportunity to learn about their family history, the history of the Makah Tribe, as well as how to incorporate traditional cultural values into their contemporary lives. Some Makah people were fortunate to have knowledge passed to them in a traditional context (from one generation to the next), but some may have lost grandparents before they learned all they hoped to learn, and this is where the MCRC serves a crucial role for individuals and families. While interpreting Makah history and culture to interested visitors is important, even more important is sustaining a strong sense of Makah identity. (as cited in Sadongei & Norwood, 2016, pp. 205-206)*

”

The MCRC was the site of the first Smithsonian Institution tribal museum training program that I managed. The MCRC experience left an indelible impression on me because it was here that the experiential dimensions of ethically informed decision making became immediately apparent. The Makah worldview affected the ways in which the physical structure of the museum, the permanent exhibit, governance structure and collections management system could be directed to reflect an Indigenous knowledge system.

The role of family, its structure and systems in Makah society is an important cultural principle. During the workshop, staff shared that the MCRC was designed to resemble a house, thus honoring the right and proper context of the bulk of their collection, which was unearthed during an archaeological excavation conducted in the 1970s. Several coastal longhouses had been covered in a mudslide and their discovery includes some of the best-preserved examples of pre-contact material in the world. Since it was evident that the objects in the collection came from inhabited structures, the Makah conceptualized their exhibits to reflect the reconstructed house, and its beachfront environment as well as the attendant marine life. This same organizational Makah principle was applied to the collections data information and collections storage arrangements. It was only through this culturally organized structure that attention to gendered distinctions and gendered restrictions could also be internally applied. Museum tribal staff further shared that their museum governance

structure was redefined to include local descendant family representation, acknowledging that this cultural principle is still in practice today.

At the end of the five-day workshop, a Makah potlatch was held where gifts were given, songs were sung, a feast was shared, and speeches were delivered. The cultural protocols of potlatch behavior were observed when I had to be granted permission to speak on behalf of the workshop participants when thanking our Makah hosts. This was done by the generosity of a young Makah boy who granted me ceremonial permission “to ride in his canoe,” thereby providing me with a platform to speak. This act of generosity was in itself an ethically informed cultural behavior that conformed to Makah social norms and acknowledged my being an “outsider.” With this recognition, I was able to fully participate and engage with the living descendant population of Makah peoples.

### Ancestral Knowledge

The Ak-Chin Indian Community’s tribal museum, located in central Arizona, was established in response to the discovery and excavation of an archaeological site on their tribal lands. My work with the community began when I was still an arts administrator and has continued to the present day. I witnessed firsthand the developmental phases of their project and was privileged to report on the progression of their work at several mainstream cultural conferences. Driven by the tribal community’s concern for the welfare of the unearthed cultural objects, the Ak-Chin Indian Community applied a cultural principle that recognized the existential continuum of the objects and how this continuum extended uninterrupted into contemporary community life. In other words, the archaeological collections were not merely physical objects, but rather they were viewed as an embodied extension of themselves representing the lives of their ancestors. Thus, the rationale of care not only considered how the objects were to be treated, but, in addition, took responsibility for how such care might impact future generations. The eco-museum model, presented to the community by a consultant, resonated with their cultural values, and they embraced the eco-museum values of a museum without walls that considered the past, present and future of the community and its surrounding local environment (Sadongei & Norwood, 2016). Further, acknowledging their cultural ethic of consensus, the staff contacted each and every tribal member to seek their input on where the museum should be located, what it should be named and what its primary function should be. As a result, the museum was called the *Ak-Chin Him-Dak* which, when translated into English, means “way of life.” The Ak-Chin Him-Dak was one of the first tribal museums to use their tribal language in its name. The Ak-Chin Him-Dak chose to create a museum that was founded on a cultural principle that regarded the collective respect afforded to ancestral memory. Even though the objects and sensitive material that were excavated were many generations removed from contemporary tribal members, that did not diminish the relevance of ancestral knowledge embodied in the archaeological collections to their contemporary reality.

## Language

The Huhugam Heritage Center (HHC) located near Phoenix, Arizona, seeks “to ensure that the cultures of the Akimel O’tham and PeePosh and that of their ancestors will survive and flourish for future generations” (2021). Recognizing that language is an expression of knowledge and the foundation for the transmission of culturally ethical behavior, the HHC incorporates language teaching and learning within their mission, and, as a result, their staff includes a fluent speaker as well as a linguist. The American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) where I currently work, partnered with the HHC to offer a series of workshops on how to use traditional ecological knowledge to aid in developing language teaching materials. Because the HHC has an extensive basket collection, plant knowledge became the focal point of elicitation sessions with fluent speakers that were conducted in traditional cultural landscapes on the reservation. The sessions revealed a hierarchy of relationships between and among plants commonly used for both sustenance and utility that affirmed their living qualities were similar to the Akimel O’tham’s own social structure (Barragan, 2015). This knowledge re-awakened an appreciation for the natural world, particularly for second-language learners who did not grow up with the language. Building on their experience, the HHC staff held consultations with fluent speakers who also were basket weavers. What emerged from the sessions included terms in the language that were later used in their collections database to describe basket types, weaving techniques and materials. Further, the sessions included descriptions of attitudes ascribed to basket makers that later became valued principles to convey to the younger, non-fluent basket makers who also participated in the consultations. The HHC included the botanical information as well as the basket making terminology in their collections database, thus enriching their understanding of culturally ethical behavior particular to their community.

To summarize, the potential problem for tribal members to not use or even be aware of ethically informed methods of museum practice and development as I have described does exist. For example, random access to or handling of tribal collections by community members and outside researchers may result in varying degrees of cultural risk to the community. It has also been my ongoing observation from working with numerous tribal cultural communities that the basis for identifying this risk actually goes hand in hand with identifying ethically informed behaviors. In fact, for some tribal communities, it may be preferable to identify cultural risk(s) at the outset when ethical cultural norms are not clearly delineated due to the endangered status or loss of cultural knowledge.

In the first instance of the Makah Cultural and Research Center, the act of “riding in the canoe” of the young boy reduced the risk to the community of my being a stranger, who may not be trusted to actively engage in formal reciprocity within the cultural and ceremonial context of the potlatch. Organizing the archaeological collections by family symbolically reduces the risk of

inappropriate access to material while simultaneously reinforcing respect for Makah family structure. Restricting access to collections by gender also reduces the cultural risk of the objects being mishandled and potentially desecrated by unauthorized people.

At the Ak-Chin Him-Dak, refusing to acknowledge the grief that the archaeological excavation precipitated would have objectified the knowledge embodied in the artifacts instead of confirming the contemporary connection to their ancestors. Proceeding with the museum's development without first establishing consensus on its purpose would have contributed to isolated actions without regard for communal consequence.

If the Huhugam Heritage Center had not re-awakened plant knowledge with assistance from fluent speakers, they would have missed the opportunity to glimpse into the ancestral mind of the Akimel O'tham where reverent relationships to plants and ecology are revealed. This essential link is necessary as a life affirming respect and obligation to the plants as well as to their own social behaviors.

### Indigenous Ethics and Collaborations

Culturally responsive collaborations between museums and tribal communities can be a process of discovery. Such collaborations can reveal deeper Indigenous realities that both contribute to the formation of new knowledge and potentially lead to the formation of culturally informed museum practices. If mainstream museums were aware of how central Indigenous ethics are to the contemporary expression of tribal cultural knowledge, the active process of collaboration could be seen as a vital avenue to sharing authority, building solidarity, overcoming social injustice, and allowing communities to heal.

Dr. Amy Lonetree's book *Decolonizing Museums* provides an in-depth examination and critique of exhibit collaboration involving tribal museums. Her research and experience confirms what tribal members know intuitively, "Objects in museums are living entities" (Lonetree, 2012, p. xv). Her key conclusion is that recognition of this value statement should be at the core of all engagements between museums and tribal communities.

The challenges to collaboration, however, are how best museum policies can begin to accommodate applied Indigenous ethics when treating objects as "living entities." Naturally, mainstream museums can understand how object context, meaning and care are enhanced by tribal cultural knowledge. But the deeper aspects of meaning associated with "how" tribal community engagements with living objects have the potential to activate cultural obligations or unmet needs on an individual and/or communal level. Such engagements will require at least a greater sensitivity to Indigenous values and their social processes, the recognition of which may ultimately lead to strengthening and healing Indigenous realities and experiences. Thus, each instance of engagement

with tribal communities enacted in the museum realm presents a profoundly unique opportunity to see ethically informed beliefs and practices at work.

## Conclusion

Drawing on my work with a variety of tribal museums and communities, I have demonstrated the unique ways in which tribal museums have applied Indigenous ethics as a practice. What I refer to as Indigenous ethics is grounded in epistemology and worldview. Unlike the code of ethics for mainstream museums in the United States, Indigenous ethics extends beyond professional behavior into larger cultural realms that are premised on the notion that one can become fully human in a profoundly changing world. I am convinced that collaboration can lead to reclamation, revitalization and a re-awakening for both mainstream museums and tribal communities.

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## MUSEOLOGY IN TRIBAL CONTEXTS

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