

Dispense
Antropologia museale 2023-2024

Davide Domenici
Unibo



Advancing
Art&Design

The MoMA's Hot Mamas

Author(s): Carol Duncan

Source: *Art Journal*, Summer, 1989, Vol. 48, No. 2, Images of Rule: Issues of Interpretation (Summer, 1989), pp. 171-178

Published by: CAA

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/776968>

REFERENCES

~~Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:~~

~~https://www.jstor.org/stable/776968?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents~~

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

CAA is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Art Journal*

The MoMA's Hot Mamas

By Carol Duncan

The theme of this issue of *Art Journal* is Images of Rule. The objects that my essay discusses, well-known works of art, are not images of rule in any literal sense—they do not depict a ruling power. They are, nevertheless, effective and impressive *artifacts* of rule. Rather than directly picturing power or its symbols, they invite viewers to an experience that dramatizes and confirms the social superiority of male over female identity. This function, however, is obscured and even denied by the environments that surround the works, the physical environment of the museum and the verbal environment of art history. In what follows, I try to uncover this hidden function.

When The Museum of Modern Art opened its newly installed and much-enlarged permanent collection in 1984, critics were struck with how little things had changed. In the new installation, as in the old,¹ modern art is once again a progression of formally distinct styles. As before, certain moments in this progression are given greater importance than others: Cézanne, the first painter one sees, announces modern art's beginnings. Picasso's dramatically installed *Demiselles d'Avignon* signifies the coming of Cubism—the first giant step twentieth-century art took and the one from which much of the history of modern art proceeds. From Cubism unfolds the other notable avant-garde movements: German Expressionism, Futurism, and so on, through Dada-Surrealism. Finally come the American Abstract Expressionists. After purifying their work of a residue of Surrealist representation, they made the final breakthrough into the realm of absolute spirit, manifested as absolute formal and nonrepresentational purity. It is in reference to their achievement that, according to the MoMA (in its large, new, final gallery), all later significant art in one way or another continues to

measure its ambitions and scale.

Probably more than any other institution, the MoMA has promoted this "mainstream modernism," greatly augmenting its authority and prestige through acquisitions, exhibitions, and publications. To be sure, the MoMA's managers did not independently invent the museum's strictly linear and highly formalist art-historical narrative; but they have embraced it tenaciously, and it is no accident that one can retrace that history in its galleries better and more fully than in any other collection. For some, the museum's retrospective character is a regrettable turnaround from its original role as champion of the new. But the MoMA remains enormously important for the role it plays in maintaining in the present a particular version of the art-historical past. Indeed, for much of the academic world as for the larger art public, the kind of art history it narrates still constitutes the definitive history of modern art.

Yet, in the MoMA's permanent collection, more meets the eye than this history admits to. According to the established narrative, the history of art is made up of a progression of styles and unfolds along certain irreversible lines: from style to style, it gradually emancipates itself from the imperative to represent convincingly or coherently a natural, presumably objective world. Integral to this narrative is a model of moral action, exemplified by individual artists. As they become liberated from traditional representation, they achieve greater subjectivity and hence greater artistic freedom and autonomy of spirit. As the literature of modern art portrays it, their progressive renunciation of representation, repeatedly and minutely documented in monographs, catalogues, and critical journals, is often achieved through painful or self-sacrificing searching or courageous risk-taking. The disruption of space, the denial of

volume, the overthrow of traditional compositional schemes, the discovery of painting as an autonomous surface, the emancipation of color, line, or texture, the occasional transgressions and reaffirmations of the boundaries of art (as in the adaptation of junk or non-high art materials), and so on through the liberation of painting from frame and stretcher and thence from the wall itself—all of these advances translate into moments of moral as well as artistic choice. As a consequence of his spiritual struggle, the artist finds a new realm of energy and truth beyond the material, visible world that once preoccupied art—as in Cubism's reconstruction of the "fourth dimension," as Apollinaire called the power of thought itself; Mondrian's or Kandinsky's visual analogues of abstract, universal forces; Robert Delaunay's discovery of cosmic energy; or Miró's recreations of a limitless and potent psychic field. Ideally and to the extent to which they have assimilated this history, museum visitors reenact these artistic—and hence spiritual—struggles. In this way they ritually perform a drama of enlightenment in which freedom is won by repeatedly overcoming and moving beyond the visible, material world.

And yet, despite the meaning and value given to such transcendent realms, the history of modern art, as it is written and as it is seen in the MoMA and elsewhere, is positively crowded with images—and most of them are of women. Despite their numbers, their variety is remarkably small. Most often they are simply female bodies, or parts of bodies, with no identity beyond their female anatomy—those ever-present "Women" or "Seated Women" or "Reclining Nudes." Or, they are tarts, prostitutes, artist's models, or low-life entertainers—highly identifiable socially, but at the bottom of the social scale. In the MoMA's authoritative collection, Picas-

so's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, Léger's *Grand Déjeuner*, Kirchner's scenes of street walkers, Duchamp's *Bride*, Severini's Bal Tabarin dancer, de Kooning's *Woman I*, and many other works are often monumental in scale and conspicuously placed. Most critical and art-historical writing give them comparable importance.

To be sure, modern artists have often chosen to make "big" philosophical or artistic statements via the nude. If the MoMA exaggerates this tradition or overstates some aspects of it, it is nevertheless an exaggeration or overstatement of something pervasive in modern art history—as it is represented and illustrated in the literature. Why then has art history not accounted for this intense preoccupation with socially and sexually available female bodies? What, if anything, do nudes and whores have to do with modern art's heroic renunciation of representation? And why is this imagery accorded such prestige and authority within art history—why is it associated with the highest artistic ambition?

In theory, museums are public spaces dedicated to the spiritual enhancement of all who visit there. In practice, however, museums are prestigious and powerful engines of ideology. They are modern ritual settings in which visitors enact complex and often deep psychic dramas about identity—dramas that the museum's stated, consciously intended programs do not and cannot acknowledge overtly. Like all great museums, the MoMA's ritual transmits a complex ideological signal. My concern here is with only a portion of that signal—the portion that addresses sexual identity. I shall argue that the collection's recurrent images of sexualized female bodies actively masculinize the museum as a social environment. Silently and surreptitiously, they specify the museum's ritual of spiritual quest as a male quest, just as they mark the larger project of modern art as primarily a male endeavor.

If we understand the modern-art museum as a ritual of male transcendence, if we see it as organized around male fears, fantasies, and desires, then the quest for spiritual transcendence on the one hand and the obsession with a sexualized female body on the other, rather than appearing unrelated or contradictory, can be seen as parts of a larger, psychologically integrated whole.

How very often images of women in modern art speak of male fears. Many of the works I just mentioned feature distorted or dangerous-looking creatures,

potentially overpowering, devouring, or castrating. Indeed, the MoMA's collection of monstrous, threatening females is exceptional: Picasso's *Demoiselles* and *Seated Bather* (the latter a giant praying mantis), the frozen, metallic odalisques in Léger's *Grand Déjeuner*, several early female figures by Giacometti, sculpture by Gonzales and Lipschitz, and Baziot's *Dwarf*, a mean-looking creature with saw teeth, a single large eye, and a prominent, visible uterus—to name only some. (One could easily expand the category to include works by Kirchner, Severini, Rouault, and others who depicted decadent, corrupt—and therefore *morally* monstrous—women.) In different ways, each of these works testifies to a pervasive fear of and ambivalence about woman. Openly expressed on the plane of culture, it seems to me that this fear and ambivalence makes the central moral of modern art more intelligible—whether or not it tells us anything about the individual psyches of those who produced these works.

Even work that eschews such imagery and gives itself entirely to the drive for abstract, transcendent truth may also speak of these fears in the very act of fleeing the realm of matter (*mater*) and biological need that is woman's traditional domain. How often modern masters have sought to make their work speak of *higher* realms—of air, light, the mind, the cosmos—realms that exist above a female, biological earth. Cubism, Kandinsky, Mondrian, the Futurists, Miró, the Abstract Expressionists—all drew artistic life from some nonmaterial energy of the self or the universe. (Léger's ideal of a rational, mechanical order can also be understood as opposed to—and a defense against—the unruly world of nature that it seeks to control.) The peculiar iconoclasm of much modern art, its renunciation of representation and the material world behind it, seems at least in part based in an impulse, common among modern males, to escape not the mother in any literal sense, but a psychic image of woman and her earthly domain that seems rooted in infant or childish notions of the mother. Philip Slater noted an "unusual emphasis on mobility and flight as attributes of the hero who struggles against the menacing mother."² In the museum's ritual, the recurrent image of a menacing woman adds urgency to such flights to "higher" realms. Hence also the frequent appearance in written art history of monstrous or threatening women or, what is their obverse, powerless or vanquished women. Whether man-killer or murder victim, whether Picasso's deadly *Seated*

Bather or Giacometti's *Woman with Her Throat Cut*, their presence both in the museum ritual and in the written (and illustrated) mythology is necessary. In both contexts, they provide the reason for the spiritual and mental flight. Confrontation and escape from them constitutes the ordeal's dark center, a darkness that gives meaning and motive to the quest for enlightenment.

Since the heroes of this ordeal are generically men, the presence of women artists in this mythology can be only an anomaly. Women artists, especially if they exceed the standard token number, tend to degender the ritual ordeal. Accordingly, in the MoMA and other museums, their numbers are kept well below the point where they might effectively dilute its masculinity. The female presence is necessary only in the form of imagery. Of course, men, too, are occasionally represented. But unlike women, who are seen primarily as sexually accessible bodies, men are portrayed as physically and mentally active beings who creatively shape their world and ponder its meanings. They make music and art, they stride, work, build cities, conquer the air through flight, think, and engage in sports (Cézanne, Rodin, Picasso, Matisse, Léger, La Fresnaye, Boccioni). When male sexuality is broached, it is often presented as the experience of highly self-conscious, psychologically complex beings whose sexual feelings are leavened with poetic pain, poignant frustration, heroic fear, protective irony, or the drive to make art (Picasso, De Chirico, Duchamp, Balthus, Delvaux, Bacon, Lindner).

De Kooning's *Woman I* and Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* are two of art history's most important female images. They are also key objects in the MoMA's collection and highly effective in maintaining the museum's masculinized environment.

The museum has always hung these works with precise attention to their strategic roles in the story of modern art. Both before and after the 1984 expansion, de Kooning's *Woman I* hung at the threshold to the spaces containing the big Abstract Expressionist "breakthroughs"—the New York School's final collective leap into absolutely pure, abstract, nonreferential transcendence: Pollock's artistic and psychic free flights, Rothko's sojourns in the luminous depths of a universal self, Newman's heroic confrontations with the sublime, Still's lonely journeys into the back beyond of culture and consciousness, Reinhardt's solemn and sardonic negotiations of all that is not Art, and so on. And always seated at the doorway to



Fig. 1 Willem de Kooning, *Woman I*, 1952, oil on canvas, 76 × 58", as presently installed in The Museum of Modern Art.



Fig. 2 Willem de Kooning, *Woman II*, 1952, oil on canvas, 59 × 48", as temporarily installed in The Museum of Modern Art in 1978.



Fig. 3 De Kooning, *Woman I*.

these moments of ultimate freedom and purity and literally helping to frame them has been *Woman I* (Fig. 1). So

important is her presence just there, that when she has to go on loan, *Woman II* appears to take her place (Fig. 2). With

good reason. De Kooning's *Women* are exceptionally successful ritual artifacts and masculinize the museum's space with great efficiency.

The woman figure had been emerging gradually in de Kooning's work in the course of the 1940s. By 1951–52, it fully revealed itself in *Woman I* (Fig. 3) as a big, bad mama—vulgar, sexual, and dangerous. De Kooning imagines her facing us with iconic frontality, large, bulging eyes, open, toothy mouth, massive breasts. The suggestive pose is just a knee movement away from open-thighed display of the vagina, the self-exposing gesture of mainstream pornography.

These features are not unique in the history of art. They appear in ancient and tribal cultures as well as in modern pornography and graffiti. Together, they constitute a well-known figure type.³ The Gorgon of ancient Greek art (Fig. 4), an instance of that type, bears a striking resemblance to de Kooning's *Woman I*, and, like her, simultaneously suggests and avoids the explicit act of sexual self-display that elsewhere characterizes the type. An Etruscan example (Fig. 5) states more of its essential components as they appeared in a wide range of archaic and tribal cultures—not only the display of genitals, but also the flanking animals that point to her origins as a fertility or mother goddess.⁴ Obviously, the configuration, with or without animals, carries complex symbolic possibilities and can convey many-sided, contradictory, and layered meanings. In her guise as the Gorgon witch, however, the terrible aspect of the mother goddess, her lust for blood and her deadly gaze, is emphasized. Especially today, when the myths and rituals that may have suggested other meanings have been lost—and when modern psy-

choanalytic ideas are likely to color any interpretation—the figure appears especially intended to conjure up infantile feelings of powerlessness before the mother and the dread of castration: in the open jaw can be read the *vagina dentata*—the idea of a dangerous, devouring vagina, too horrible to depict, and hence transposed to the toothy mouth.

Feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability before mature women are common (if not always salient) phenomena in male psychic development. Such myths as the story of Perseus and such visual images as the Gorgon can play a role in mediating that development by extending and re-creating on the cultural plane its core psychic experience and accompanying defenses.⁵ Thus objectified and communally shared in imagery, myth, and ritual, such individual fears and

looked for Medusa in the mirroring shield, he must study her flat, reflected image every inch of the way.”⁷

But then again, the image type is so ubiquitous, we needn't try to assign de Kooning's *Woman I* to any particular source in ancient or primitive art. *Woman I* can call up the Medusa as easily as the other way around. Whatever he knew or sensed about the Gorgon's meanings, and however much or little he took from it, the image type is decidedly present in his work. Suffice it to say that de Kooning was aware, indeed, explicitly claimed, that his *Women* could be assimilated to the long history of goddess imagery.⁸ By choosing to place such figures at the center of his most ambitious artistic efforts, he secured for his work an aura of ancient mystery and authority.

The *Woman* is not only monumental

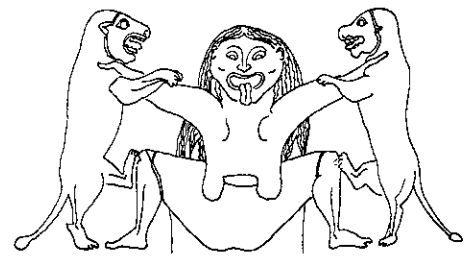


Fig. 5 Etruscan Gorgon, drawing after a bronze carriage-front. Munich, Museum antiker Kleinkunst.

her as simultaneously frightening and ludicrous.⁹ The ambiguity of the figure, its power to resemble an awesome mother goddess as well as a modern burlesque queen, provides a fine cultural, psychological, and artistic field in which to enact the modern myth of the artist-hero—the hero whose spiritual ordeal becomes the stuff of ritual in the



Fig. 4 Gorgon, clay relief. Syracuse, National Museum.

desires may achieve the status of higher, universal truth. In this sense, the presence of Gorgons on Greek temples—important houses of cult worship (they also appeared on Christian church walls)⁶—is paralleled by *Woman I*'s presence in a high-cultural house of the modern world.

The head of de Kooning's *Woman I* is so like the archaic Gorgon that the reference could well be intentional, especially since the artist and his friends placed great store in ancient myths and primitive images and likened themselves to archaic and tribal shamans. Writing about de Kooning's *Women*, Thomas Hess echoed this claim in a passage comparing de Kooning's artistic ordeal to that of Perseus, slayer of the Gorgon. Hess is arguing that de Kooning's *Women* grasp an elusive, dangerous truth “by the throat”: “And truth can be touched only by complications, ambiguities and paradox, so, like the hero who



Fig. 6 Robert Heinecken, *Invitation to Metamorphosis*, 1975, emulsion on canvas and pastel chalk, 42 × 42”.

and iconic. In high-heeled shoes and brassiere, she is also lewd, her pose indecently teasing. De Kooning acknowledged her oscillating character, claiming for her a likeness not only to serious art—ancient icons and high-art nudes—but also to pinups and girlie pictures of the vulgar present. He saw

public space of the museum. As a powerful and threatening woman, it is she who must be confronted and transcended—gotten past—on the way to enlightenment. At the same time, her vulgarity, her “girlie” side—de Kooning called it her “silliness”¹⁰—renders her harmless (or is it contemptible?) and denies the

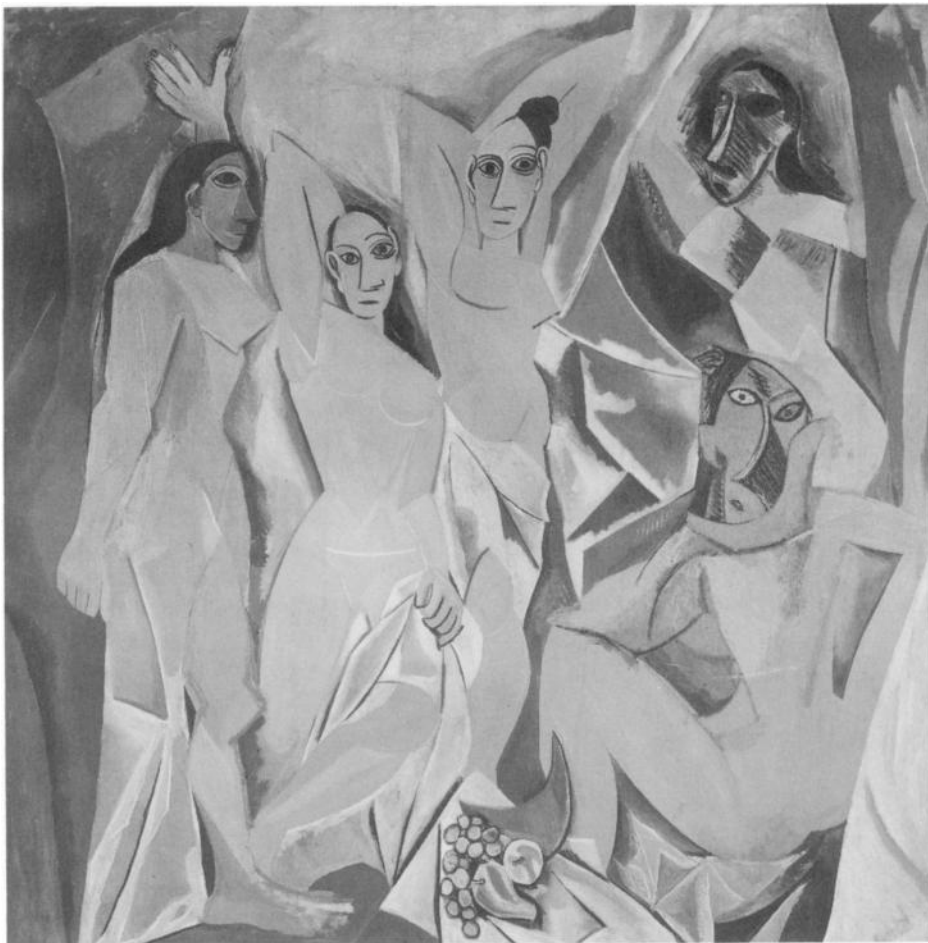


Fig. 7 Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)*, 1907, oil on canvas, 96 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 92 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The Museum of Modern Art.

terror and dread of her Medusa features. The ambiguity of the image thus gives the artist (and the viewer) both the experience of danger and a feeling of overcoming it. Meanwhile, the suggestion of pornographic self-display—more explicit in his later work but certainly present here—specifically addresses itself to the male viewer. With it, de Kooning knowingly and assertively exercises his patriarchal privilege of objectifying male sexual fantasy as high culture.

An interesting drawing-photomontage by the California artist Robert Heineken, *Invitation to Metamorphosis* (Fig. 6), similarly explores the ambiguities of a Gorgon-girlie image. Here the effect of ambiguity is achieved by the use of masks and by combining and superimposing separate negatives. Heineken's version of the self-displaying woman is a composite consisting of a conventional pornographic nude and a Hollywood movie-type monster. A well-qualified Gorgon, her attributes include an open, toothy mouth, carnivorous animal jaws, huge bulging eyes, large breasts, exposed genitals, and one very nasty-looking claw. Her body is simulta-

neously naked and draped, enticing and repulsive, and the second head, to the left of the Gorgon head—the one with the seductive smile—also wears a mask. Like the de Kooning, Heineken's *Invitation* sets up a psychologically unstable atmosphere fraught with deception, allure, danger, and wit. The image's various components continually disappear into and reappear out of one another. Behaving something like de Kooning's layered paint surfaces, they invite ever-shifting, multiple readings. In both works, what is covered becomes exposed, what is opaque becomes transparent, and what is revealed conceals something else. Both works fuse the terrible killer-witch with the willing and exhibitionist whore. Both fear and seek danger in desire, and both kid the danger.

Of course before de Kooning or Heineken created ambiguous self-displaying women, there was Picasso's *Femmes d'Alger* of 1907 (Fig. 7). The work was conceived as an extraordinarily ambitious statement—it aspires to revelation—about the meaning of Woman. In it, all women belong to a

universal category of being existing across time and place. Picasso used ancient and tribal art to reveal her universal mystery: Egyptian and Iberian sculpture on the left and African art on the right. The figure on the lower right (Fig. 8) looks as if it were directly inspired by some primitive or archaic deity. Picasso would have known such figures from his visits to the ethnographic art collections in the Trocadero. A study for the work in the Musée Picasso in Paris (Fig. 9) closely follows the type's symmetrical, self-displaying pose. Significantly, Picasso wanted her to be prominent—she is the nearest and largest of all the figures. At this stage, Picasso also planned to include a male student on the left and, in the axial center of the composition, a sailor—a figure of horniness incarnate. The self-displaying woman was to have faced him, her display of genitals turned away from the viewer.

In the finished work, the male presence has been removed from the image and relocated in the viewing space before it. What began as a depicted male-female confrontation thus became a confrontation between viewer and image. The relocation has pulled the lower right-hand figure completely around so that her stare and her sexually inciting act, although not detailed and less symmetrical than before, are now directed outward. Picasso thus isolated and monumentalized the ultimate men-only situation. As restructured, the work forcefully asserts to both men and women the privileged status of male viewers—they alone are intended to experience the full impact of this most



Fig. 8 Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)*, detail.



Fig. 9 Pablo Picasso, *Study for "Les Femmes d'Alger,"* 1907, charcoal and pastel, 18½ × 24⅝". Paris, Musée Picasso.

revelatory moment.¹¹ It also assigns women to a visitors' gallery where they may watch but not enter the central arena of high culture.

Finally, the mystery that Picasso unveils about women is also an art-historical lesson. In the finished work, the women have become stylistically differentiated so that one looks not only at present-tense whores but also back down into the ancient and primitive past, with the art of "darkest Africa" and works representing the beginnings of Western Culture (Egyptian and Iberian idols) placed on a single spectrum. Thus does Picasso use art history to argue his thesis: that the awesome goddess, the terrible witch, and the lewd whore are but



Fig. 10 Wall label, The Museum of Modern Art, with photograph of the missing *Demoiselles*, 1988.

work. Mounted on a free-standing wall in the center of the first Cubist gallery, it seizes your attention the moment you turn into the room—the placement of the doorway makes it appear suddenly and dramatically. Physically dominating this intimately scaled gallery, its installation dramatizes its role as progenitor of the surrounding Cubism and its subsequent art-historical issue. So central is the work to the structure of MoMA's program that recently, when it was on loan, the museum felt compelled to post a notice on its wall explaining its absence—but also invoking its presence. In a gesture unusual for the MoMA, the notice was illustrated by a tiny color reproduction of the missing monument (*Fig. 10*).

The works I have discussed by de Kooning and Heineken, along with similar works by many other modern artists, benefit from and reinforce the status won by the *Demoiselles*. They also develop its theme, drawing out different emphases. One of the elements they develop more explicitly than Picasso is the element of pornography. By way of exploring how that porno-



Fig. 11 Bus shelter on 57th Street, New York City, with advertisement for *Penthouse* magazine, 1988.

facets of a single many-sided creature, in turn threatening and seductive, imposing and self-abasing, dominating and powerless—and always the psychic property of a male imagination. Picasso also implies that truly great, powerful, and revelatory art has always been and must be built upon such exclusively male property.

The museum's installation amplifies the already powerful meanings of the

graphic element works in the museum context, I want to look first at how it works outside the museum.

Last year, an advertisement for *Penthouse* magazine appeared on New York City bus shelters (*Fig. 11*). New York City bus shelters are often decorated with near-naked women and sometimes men advertising everything from underwear to real estate. But this

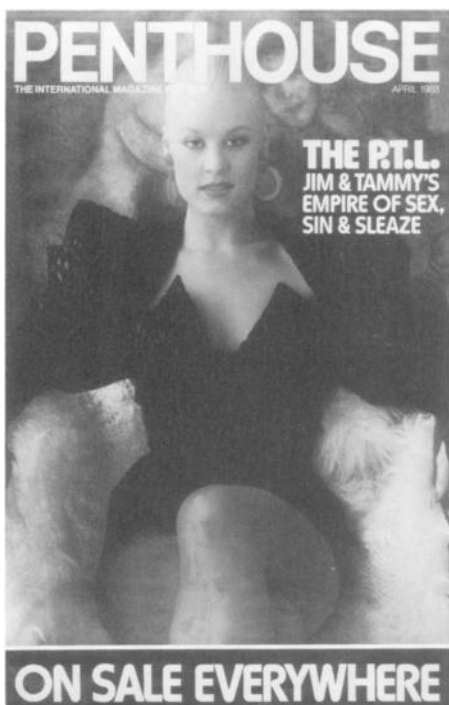


Fig. 12 Advertisement for *Penthouse*, using a photograph by Bob Guccione, April 1988.

was an ad for pornographic images as such; that is, images designed not to sell perfume or bathing suits but to stimulate erotic desire, primarily in men. Given its provocative intent, the image generates very different and—I think for almost everyone—more charged meanings than the ads for underwear. At least one passerby had already recorded in red spray-paint a terse, but coherent response: “For Pigs.”

Having a camera with me, I decided to take a shot of it. But as I set about focusing, I began to feel uncomfortable and self-conscious. As I realized only later, I was experiencing some prohibition in my own conditioning, activated not simply by the nature of the ad, but by the act of photographing such an ad in public. Even though the anonymous inscription had made it socially safer to photograph—it placed it in a conscious and critical discourse about gender—to photograph it was still to appropriate openly a kind of image that middle-class morality says I’m not supposed to look at or have. But before I could sort that out, a group of boys jumped into the frame. Plainly, they intended to intervene. Did I know what I was doing?, one asked me with an air I can only call stern, while another admonished me that I was photographing a *Penthouse* ad—as if I would not knowingly do such a thing.

Apparently, the same culture that had conditioned me to feel uneasy about what I was doing also made *them* uneasy about it. Boys this age know very well what’s in *Penthouse*. Knowing what’s in



Fig. 13 Willem de Kooning, *The Visit*, 1966–67, oil on canvas, 60 × 48". London, The Tate Gallery.

Penthouse is knowing something meant for men to know; therefore, knowing *Penthouse* is a way of knowing oneself to be a man, or at least a man-to-be, at precisely an age when one needs all the help one can get. I think these boys were trying to protect the capacity of the ad to empower them as men by preventing me from appropriating an image of it. For them, as for many men, the chief (if not the only) value and use of pornography is this power to confirm gender identity and, with that, gender superiority. Pornography affirms their manliness to themselves and to others and proclaims the greater social power of men. Like some ancient and primitive objects forbidden to the female gaze, the ability of pornography to give its users a feeling of superior male status depends on its being owned or controlled by men and forbidden to, shunned by, or hidden from women. In other words, in certain

situations a female gaze can *pollute* pornography. These boys, already imprinted with the rudimentary gender codes of the culture, knew an infringement when they saw one. (Perhaps they suspected me of defacing the ad.) Their harassment of me constituted an attempt at gender policing, something adult men routinely do to women on city streets.

Not so long ago, such magazines were sold only in sleazy porn stores. Today ads for them can decorate midtown thoroughfares. Of course, the ad, as well as the magazine cover, cannot itself be pornography and still be legal (in practice, that tends to mean it can’t show genitals), but to work as an ad it must *suggest* it. For different reasons, works of art like de Kooning’s *Woman I* or Heinecken’s *Invitation* also refer to without actually being pornography—they depend on the viewer “getting” the

reference but must stop there. Given these requirements, it shouldn't surprise us that the artists' visual strategies have parallels in the ad (**Fig. 12**). *Woman I* shares a number of features with the ad. Both present frontal, iconic, massive figures seen close up—they fill, even overflow, the picture surface. The photograph's low camera angle and the painting's scale and composition monumentalize and elevate the figures, literally or imaginatively dwarfing the viewer. Painting and photograph alike concentrate attention on head, breasts, and torso. Arms serve to frame the body, while legs are either cropped or, in the de Kooning, undersized and feeble. The figures thus appear powerful and powerless at the same time, with massive bodies made to rest on unstable, weakly rendered, tentatively placed legs. And with both, the viewer is positioned to see it all should the thighs open. And of course, on *Penthouse* pages, thighs do little else but open. But de Kooning's hot mama has a very different purpose and cultural status from a *Penthouse* "pet."

De Kooning's *Woman I* conveys much more complex and emotionally ambivalent meanings. The work acknowledges more openly the fear of and flight from as well as a quest for the woman. Moreover de Kooning's *Woman I* is always upstaged by the artist's self-display as an artist. The manifest purpose of a *Penthouse* photo is, presumably, to arouse desire. If the de Kooning awakens desire in relation to the female body it does so in order to deflate or conquer its power of attraction and escape its danger. The viewer is invited to relive a struggle in which the realm of art provides escape from the female's degraded allure. As mediated by art criticism, de Kooning's work speaks ultimately not of male fear but of the triumph of art and a self-creating spirit. In the critical literature, the *Women* figures themselves become catalysts or structural supports for the work's more significant meanings: the artist's heroic self-searching, his existentialist courage, his pursuit of a new pictorial structure or some other artistic or transcendent end.¹²

The work's pornographic moment, now subsumed to its high-cultural import, may (unlike the *Penthouse* ad) do its ideological work with unchallenged prestige and authority. In building their works on a pornographic base and triggering in both men and women deep-seated feelings about gender identity and difference, de Kooning, Heineken, and other artists (most notoriously, David Salle) exercise a privilege that our society has traditionally con-

ferred upon men only. Through their imagery, they lay claim to public space as a realm under masculine control. Transformed into art and displayed in the public space of the museum, the self-displaying poses affirm to male viewers their membership in the more powerful gender group. They also remind women that their status as members of the community, their right to its public space, their share in the common, culturally defined identity, is not quite the same—is somehow less equal—than men's. But these signals must be covert, hidden under the myth of the transcendent artist-hero. Even de Kooning's later *Women* figures, which more openly invite comparison to pornographic photography and graffiti (**Fig. 13**), qualify the reference; the closer to pornography, the more overlaid they must be with unambiguously "artistic" gestures and philosophically significant impastos.

Nevertheless, what is true in the street may not be so untrue in the museum, even though different rules of decorum may make it seem so. Inside or outside, such images wield great authority, structuring and reinforcing the psychic codes that determine and differentiate the real possibilities of women and men.

Notes

1 For an analysis of the older MoMA, see: Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual," *Marxist Perspectives*, 4 (Winter 1978), pp. 28–51.

2 Philip Slater, *The Glory of Hera*, Boston, 1968, p. 321.

3 See: Douglas Fraser, "The Heraldic Woman: A Study in Diffusion," in *The Many Faces of Primitive Art*, ed. D. Fraser, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966, pp. 36–99; Arthur Frothingham, "Medusa, Apollo, and the Great Mother," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 15 (1911), pp. 349–77; Roman Ghirshman, *Iran: From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest*, Harmondsworth, 1954, pp. 340–43; Bernard Goldman, "The Asiatic Ancestry of the Greek Gorgon," *Berytus*, 14 (1961), pp. 1–22; Clark Hopkins, "Assyrian Elements in the Perseus-Gorgon Story," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 38 (1934), pp. 341–58, and "The Sunny Side of the Greek Gorgon," *Berytus*, 14 (1961), pp. 25–32; and Philip Slater (cited n. 3), pp. 16–21, and 318 ff.

4 More ancient than the devouring Gorgon of Greece and pointing to a root meaning of the image type, a famous Louristan bronze pin in the David Weill Collection honors an older, life-giving Mother Goddess. Flanked by animals sacred to her, she is shown giving birth to a child and holding out her breasts. Objects of this kind appear to have been the votive offerings of women; see: Ghirshman (cited n. 3), pp. 102–4.

5 See: Slater (cited n. 2), pp. 308–36, on the Perseus myth, and pp. 449 ff., on the similarities between ancient Greek and middle-class American males.

6 See: Fraser (cited n. 3).

7 Thomas B. Hess, *Willem de Kooning*, New York, 1959, p. 7. See also: Hess, *Willem de Kooning: Drawings*, New York and Greenwich, Conn., 1972, p. 27, on a de Kooning drawing of Elaine de Kooning (c. 1942), in which the writer finds the features of Medusa—a "menacing" stare, intricate, animated "Medusa hair."

8 As he once said, "The *Women* had to do with the female painted through all the ages. . . . Painting the *Woman* is a thing in art that has been done over and over—the idol, Venus, the nude." Quoted in *Willem de Kooning. The North Atlantic Light, 1960–1983*, exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1983. Sally Yard, "Willem de Kooning's *Women*," *Arts*, 53 (November 1975), pp. 96–101, argues several sources for the *Women* paintings, including Cycladic idols, Sumerian votive figures, Byzantine icons, and Picasso's *Demoiselles*.

9 *North Atlantic Light* (cited n. 8), p. 77. See also: Hess, *de Kooning 1959* (cited n. 7), pp. 21 and 29.

10 *North Atlantic Light* (cited n. 8), p. 77.

11 See, for example: Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," *Art News*, September 1972, pp. 25–26. In Steinberg's ground-breaking reading, the act of looking at these female figures visually re-creates the act of sexually penetrating a woman. The implication is that women are anatomically unequipped to experience the work's full meaning.

12 Very little has been written about de Kooning that does not do this. For one of the most bombastic treatments, see: Harold Rosenberg, *De Kooning*, New York, 1974.

Carol Duncan teaches art history in the School of Contemporary Arts at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

grafici che potessero legittimamente mettere in risalto l'uno o l'altro polo o risoluzione locale. Ma era una pretesa che la tensione non potesse e non dovesse scomparire. In questo spirito, mi trovo a desiderare un «Paradise» più ambivalente. Cerco le ombre che già si stanno allungando a turbare la speranzosa storia d'ibrida autenticità. Turbare, non cancellare.

7.

Musei come zone di contatto

All'inizio del 1989 mi trovavo seduto a un tavolo nel seminterrato del Portland Museum of Art, a Portland, nell'Oregon. Si erano riunite circa venti persone a discutere sulla collezione di oggetti degli indiani della costa nordoccidentale. Il gruppo comprendeva il personale del museo, alcuni ben noti antropologi ed esperti dell'arte della costa nordoccidentale, e alcuni anziani tlingit, accompagnati da un paio di giovani traduttori tlingit. Io ero presente come «consulente» nell'ambito di un finanziamento a sostegno degli incontri.

La collezione Rasmussen del museo venne accumulata negli anni venti nell'Alaska meridionale e lungo la costa del Canada. Dopo essere stata esposta a lungo in modo monotono, piuttosto «etnografico», era più che pronta per una nuova sistemazione. Il direttore del Portland Art Institute, Dan Monroe, che aveva lavorato in Alaska con le tribù native, prese l'insolita iniziativa di invitare un gruppo rappresentativo di autorità tlingit - anziani in vista di clan importanti - per partecipare ai dibattiti per la programmazione.

Nel seminterrato del museo, gli oggetti della collezione furono tirati fuori uno per uno e presentati agli anziani per essere commentati: una maschera di corvo, un ornamento per il capo intarsiato in una conchiglia di aliotide, un sonaglio intarsiato... Ciò che emerse fu una serie di esibizioni complesse e toccanti, ora serie ora allegre.

Sembra che i conservatori del museo si aspettassero che i dibattiti si sarebbero incentrati sugli oggetti della collezione. A ogni modo, io mi aspettavo che gli anziani li avrebbero commentati in modo dettagliato, dicendoci per esempio: la maschera veniva usata così; è stata fatta dal tal dei tali; è questo il suo potere nei termini del clan, delle

nostre tradizioni e così via. In realtà, gli oggetti non erano argomento di molti commenti diretti da parte degli anziani, che per l'incontro avevano i propri punti all'ordine del giorno. Essi fecero riferimento agli oggetti cerimoniali con apprezzamento e rispetto, ma sembravano usarli solo come promemoria, occasioni per raccontare storie e cantare canzoni.

Le canzoni venivano cantate e le storie raccontate secondo precisi protocolli che disciplinano l'autorità di particolari individui e clan, regole che stabiliscono diritti di esibizione. Un anziano, rappresentante di un clan, si esibiva cantando e recitando; poi l'anziano di un altro clan ringraziava e contraccambiava. L'intero avvenimento aveva una dimensione cerimoniale, ed era sottolineato da intensa emozione, silenzi e risa. Gli oggetti della collezione Rasmussen, su cui era incentrata la consultazione, furono lasciati da parte, o così mi sembrò. Per lunghi periodi nessuno prestò loro attenzione. Le storie e le canzoni erano al centro dell'attenzione.

Amy Marvin dice, a proposito delle preghiere che canta, che esse la «cullano», «come su una barca», così che lei può raccontare storie. Amy esordisce in modo incerto, come se cercasse dei punti di riferimento in un paesaggio familiare, dei luoghi «laggiù...». Racconta la «storia della Glacier Bay», che narra di un villaggio coperto di ghiaccio e suscita una sensazione di grande perdita. Canta una canzone commemorativa. «Dov'è la mia terra?» «Non rivedrò più il mio villaggio...» Fa riferimento al giorno precedente, quando è stato tirato fuori un tamburo per l'orca, un tamburo che il clan non sapeva fosse stato conservato. Un momento molto triste, dice Amy Marvin. Jimmy George, un anziano quasi novantenne, aveva offerto la storia dell'orca, appartenente al suo clan... storia che egli una volta raccontò al San Diego Sea World. Amy lo ringrazia.

La storia della Glacier Bay riguarda la patria attuale di Amy Marvin, dalle parti di Hoonah, in Alaska. Questo diventa chiaro quando la donna collega, nella storia, la perdita delle terre tribali con la politica attuale del Forest Service, intesa a regolarne l'uso.

Viene tirato fuori un ornamento per il capo rappresentante un polpo. Allora Amy Marvin racconta la storia di un polpo, un enorme mostro che blocca tutta la baia con i suoi tentacoli e impedisce l'ingresso ai salmoni. (Tutte le storie vengono raccontate in tlingit, con traduzione e spiegazione da parte dei giovani partecipanti: elaborate esibizioni, a volte interrotte dal dialogo). L'eroe tlingit deve combattere il polpo e ucciderlo per far entrare nella baia i salmoni, che costituiscono il sostentamento del gruppo. L'eroe apre l'accesso della baia, consentendo al gruppo di vivere. E alla fine della storia il polpo si è trasformato nello Stato e nelle agenzie federali che attualmente limitano i diritti dei tlingit di pescare il salmone secondo la tradizione.

Nel modo in cui sono recitati nel seminterrato del museo, le storie e i miti «tradizionali» suggeriti dai vecchi oggetti del clan finiscono come narrazioni specifiche, con evidenti riferimenti alle lotte politiche attuali.

Un giovane tlingit dice: verrà un giorno che torneremo a pescare là. E un vecchio, Austin Hammond, parlando in nome della Raven House [Casa del Corvo] di Haines (Alaska), appoggia Amy Marvin, dicendo che poteva provare le sue emozioni mentre lei parlava. Pian-ge. La storia della Glacier Bay gli ricorda, dice, come là si usava pescare e mettere trappole. Ora lo stesso mostro sta venendo di nuovo sotto le nostre canoe. Ci stanno portando via la terra, ed ecco perché dico questo. Stiamo affilando i nostri coltelli, per così dire. Le parole sono molto forti, dice.

Lei lo ringrazia per le sue parole: parole che devono essere affermate, dice. Poi Austin Hammond racconta della coperta con il polpo fatta per il padre (non fa parte della collezione del museo), del suo potere. Vi stiamo dicendo queste cose, dice ai bianchi radunati. Speriamo che ci sosterete.

Lydia George, consigliere comunale, completa alcuni dettagli riguardando alle attuali rivendicazioni territoriali. Sottolinea il fatto che in queste lotte vengono associati differenti clan e luoghi. Evita generalizzazioni riguardo ai «tlingit».

Austin Hammond racconta una lunga storia del Corvo, con la coperta del padre stesa davanti a sé. Entra in molti dettagli circa i diversi tipi di pesce, il periodo preciso del loro ingresso nella baia e nei fiumi. Racconta come il Corvo stabilisse queste cose: tutte le specie di salmone, le loro regole di comportamento e il nostro modo di pescare. Perché sto dicendo questo? chiede. Alla nostra assemblea vennero quattro persone di Washington. Loro ci dissero che stavamo prendendo tutti i salmoni. Io raccontai loro la storia, di come il Corvo lavorasse il salmone per tutti quanti sulla nostra terra.

Sul tavolo viene messa una giacca decorata con perline. Austin

Hammond racconta una «storia della Bibbia»: una storia del Corvo che ricorda Giona e la balena. Noi non abbiamo scrittura, dice, così facciamo delle riproduzioni sulle nostre giacche, sulle nostre coperte. Ringrazia un altro anziano per il permesso di raccontare la storia. In essa il Corvo vola dentro lo sfiatatoio della balena, vi installa una stufetta e cucina i salmoni che la balena ingoia. Ma non riesce più a uscire. La storia è umoristica volge al tragico. Per i nostri fratelli bianchi qui, dice Hammond, le nostre preghiere sono come quelle del Corvo. Chi aprirà la balena, per farci uscire? Abbiamo bisogno di tutti i nostri antenati, la terra ci viene portata via. I nostri figli... Chi si prenderà cura di loro? Forse voi potete aiutarci, aiutarci ad aprire la balena. Ecco i miei sentimenti.

Mestamente, egli dice di essere solo nella casa del suo clan. Invoca i nonni e gli antenati, poi canta una canzone composta dallo zio, Joe Wright, intrecciandone una parte al suo discorso insistente. Stiamo perdendo le nostre terre, dice, così mi aggrappo a questa canzone.

Seguono altri discorsi, storie e spiegazioni: risposte formali a coloro che parlano. Dopo pranzo, l'umore è più gaio: si cantano canzoni d'amore, rese gustose da umorismo e allusioni spinti. Chiunque può cantare con loro. Un giovane tlingit spiega che alle commemorazioni e alle feste c'è una parte triste - che riguarda la perdita, gli antenati, il dare nomi - e una più allegra: umorismo e reciproche espressioni d'amore.

Questi avvenimenti proseguono per tre giorni; gli oggetti della collezione Rasmussen giacciono sui tavoli del museo o nelle scatole dove sono conservati.

Reciprocità

L'esperienza della «consultazione» lasciò gli specialisti del Portland Art Museum alle prese con difficili dilemmi. Era chiaro che, dal punto di vista degli anziani, gli oggetti raccolti non erano principalmente «arte». Gli anziani facevano loro riferimento come «testimonianze», «storia» e «legge», inseparabili dai miti e dalle storie che esprimono lezioni morali correnti e dotate di efficacia politica attuale. Il museo era chiaramente informato del fatto che le voci degli anziani dovevano essere presentate al pubblico quando gli oggetti sa-

rebbero stati esposti. Questa richiesta presupponeva un grado reale di fiducia, dal momento che molte storie e canzoni erano di proprietà. Erano necessari permessi specifici. In effetti, un accordo precedente stabiliva che qualsiasi informazione rivelata durante la consultazione sarebbe stata controllata congiuntamente dal museo e dagli anziani. In più di un'occasione, durante gli incontri, il museo venne ammonito direttamente: Stiamo correndo il rischio di confidarvi cose importanti. È importante che siano registrate per la posterità. Che cosa farete con ciò che vi diamo? Noi staremo attenti.¹

Gli specialisti del Portland Museum erano sinceramente interessati a che la loro amministrazione della collezione Rasmussen comprendesse uno scambio di comunicazioni con le comunità di cui erano in gioco arte, cultura e storia. Ma come conciliare i vari significati evocati dagli anziani tlingit con quelli imposti nel contesto di un museo d'«arte»? Quanto era possibile spostare l'attenzione degli oggetti fisici a favore della narrazione, della storia e della politica? Esistono strategie che permettono di esporre una maschera simultaneamente come una composizione formale, come un oggetto con specifiche funzioni tradizionali nella vita del clan/tribù e come un oggetto che evoca chi una storia di lotte in corso? Quali significati dovrebbero essere evidenziati? E quale comunità ha il potere di determinare gli aspetti che il museo sceglierà di sottolineare? Il museo dovrebbe forse, ora, cercare individui - kwagjuth, haida, tsimshian - che godano di autorità nel clan e che siano collegati con altri oggetti tribali della collezione? Potrebbe stabilire relazioni di fiducia con tutti i gruppi e individui interessati? Entro quali limiti l'intero processo dipendeva da contatti personali specifici? Come potevano le relazioni affrontare i conflitti all'interno delle comunità tribali contemporanee? (Gli anziani tlingit che vennero a Portland non rappresentavano tutti i clan collegati con gli oggetti). Quante discussioni e trattative ci vogliono? E quanti finanziamenti potrebbe aspettarsi di ricevere un singolo mu-

¹ Scrive Tedlock (1983, p. 292), sulla narrazione dialogica degli zuñi: «Il problema del mitografo [qui, il conservatore consulente] non è semplicemente quello di presentare e interpretare i miti zuñi come se fossero oggetti provenienti da un tempo e da un luogo lontani e come se il mitografo fosse una specie di stretta conduttura a senso unico, ma come eventi che si verificano contemporaneamente ad altri lungo una frontiera che ha una lunga storia di attraversamenti» (il corsivo è mio). Greg Sarris (1993, p. 39), riferendo l'opinione di Tedlock riguardo ai testi orali degli indiani californiani, pone l'accento sul fatto che la presenza dell'interlocutore colloca il narratore in una posizione tale che le storie sono interpretate in un contesto relazionale specifico.

seo per sostenere attività come queste? Non posso entrare nelle contingenze personali, istituzionali e finanziarie che hanno ritardato la sistemazione della collezione Rasmussen. Basti dire che le alternative poste dagli anziani non vennero sciolte, il loro dono (e sfida) rimase senza risposta.²

Man mano che l'incontro procedeva, il seminterrato del Portland Art Museum diventava qualcosa di più di un luogo di consultazione o di ricerca: diventava una *zona di contatto*. Prendo in prestito l'espressione da Mary Louise Pratt. Nel suo libro *Imperial Eyes: Travel and Transculturation* (pp. 6 sg.), essa definisce la «zona di contatto» come «lo spazio d'incontri coloniali, lo spazio in cui popoli geograficamente e storicamente separati entrano in contatto l'uno con l'altro e stabiliscono relazioni correnti, che di solito implicano condizioni di coercizione, profonda ineguaglianza e conflittualità incontrollabile». A differenza del termine «frontiera», che «ha le sue radici nella prospettiva espansionistica europea (la frontiera è una frontiera solo rispetto all'Europa)», l'espressione «zona di contatto»

è un tentativo di evocare la compressa spaziale e temporale di soggetti in precedenza separati da iati geografici e storici, e le cui traiettorie ora si intersecano. Usando il termine «contatto», miro a mettere in primo piano le dimensioni interattive, improvvisate d'incontri coloniali così facilmente ignorate o sopresse da resoconti diffusionistici di conquista e dominazione. Una prospettiva «di contatto» evidenzia come i soggetti siano definiti dalle relazioni reciproche e all'interno di queste. [Essa pone l'accento sul compressa, interazione, pratiche e intendimenti interconnessi, spesso nell'ambito di relazioni di potere radicalmente asimmetriche.

Quando i musei sono visti come zone di contatto, la loro struttura organizzativa in quanto *collezione* diventa una *relazione* storica, politica e morale in corso: una serie di scambi, spinte e strappi carichi di potere. La struttura organizzativa del «museo quale collezione» funziona come la frontiera della Pratt. Si presuppongono un centro e una periferia: il centro è un punto di raccolta, la periferia un'area di scoperta. Il museo, di solito situato in una metropoli, è la destinazione storica delle produzioni culturali che esso salva con amore e autorità, di cui si prende cura e che interpreta.³

² Per un altro incontro nel deposito di un museo tra anziani nativi e conservatori davanti a oggetti tradizionali, cfr. Jonaitis (1991, pp. 66-69).

³ Altrove, seguendo Bakhtin, ho chiamato questa struttura di tempo localizzato nello spazio «cronotopo» (Clifford, 1988, p. 236), una struttura ora sempre più messa in discussione dalle pratiche artistiche «periferiche». Nelle discussioni penetranti sull'opera dell'artista cileno Eu-

Ciò che emerse nel seminterrato del Portland Museum non era riducibile a un procedimento di *raccolta* di consigli e informazioni. E stava accadendo qualcosa che andava al di là della consultazione. Nell'ambito di una storia di contatto in corso veniva consegnato un messaggio attraverso una rappresentazione. Nel modo in cui veniva evocata nel seminterrato del museo, la storia dei tlingit non illuminava o contestualizzava in primo luogo gli oggetti della collezione Rasmussen. Piuttosto, gli oggetti facevano nascere (suscitavano, ridavano voce a) storie di lotte in corso. Dal punto di vista del museo che collezione e del conservatore consulente, si trattava di una storia dirimente che non poteva essere limitata a fornire un *contesto* tribale passato per gli oggetti. Il museo veniva richiamato a quella che è la sua responsabilità, l'amministrazione degli oggetti del clan. (Il rimpatrio non era, in quel momento, una questione esplicita). Al museo veniva richiesta una responsabilità che andava al di là della mera conservazione. Esso veniva incitato ad agire per conto delle comunità tlingit, non semplicemente a rappresentare la storia degli oggetti tribali in modo completo o accurato. Si esigeva una sorta di reciprocità, ma non uno scambio reciproco che potesse condurre a un incontro finale di menti, a un avvicinamento che cancellasse le discrepanze, gli attuali squilibri di potere delle relazioni di contatto.

Prima di esplorare questa reciprocità ineguale, è importante capire esattamente i limiti della prospettiva di contatto che sto elaborando qui. Per esempio, parte di ciò che avvenne a Portland non era certamente in primo luogo un'attività di zone di contatto. Alcune canzoni, storie, discorsi e conversazioni erano esibizioni fra tlingit; non erano rivolte al museo e alle sue macchine fotografiche (ciò che si sarebbe dovuto fare se ci si fosse dedicati agli oggetti), ma erano attività tra clan. (Nella mia collocazione marginale, questa dimensione mi era ampiamente ignota). Inoltre, sebbene non si possa separare genio Dittborn, Nelly Richard (1993, 1994) esplora i diversi passaggi e distanze che le opere d'arte devono superare nel loro tragitto verso e attraverso i centri espositivi, percorsi che allo stesso tempo registrano e destabilizzano le relazioni geopolitiche centro/periferia. Dittborn contrassegna le traiettorie delle sue opere imbustandole e spendendole a lontani musei: le pieghe e le prove di passaggi precedenti sono parte integrante delle opere, che stanno così chiaramente passando *attraverso* gli spazi dei musei. L'arte di Dittborn richiama l'attenzione sulle distanze non sincroniche, politiche di spazio e memoria (Dittborn, 1993). Cfr. anche Charlotte Townsend-Gault (1995, p. 92) per una discussione sui modi in cui la prima esposizione di artisti nativi alla National Gallery of Canada contrassegnò una distanza critica dal museo e dalla nazione nel momento stesso dell'inclusione.

una storia di perdita, dislocazione e ricongiungimento dai significati che questi tamburi, maschere e abiti mantengono per gli anziani del clan, sarebbe sbagliato ridurre i significati tradizionali degli oggetti, i profondi sentimenti che essi ancora evocano, a risposte di «contatto». Se una maschera ricorda il nonno o una vecchia storia, ciò dovrebbe comprendere sentimenti di perdita e di lotta; ma dovrebbe anche comprendere l'accesso a una continuità e a una connessione vicinose. Dire che (data un'esperienza coloniale distruttiva) tutte le memorie indigene debbano essere influenzate da storie di contatto non è come dire che tali storie determinano ed esauriscono tali memorie. Il presente «tribale» è un tessuto di cui alcuni fili si estendono prima (e dopo) dell'incontro con le società bianche: un incontro che potrebbe apparire ininterrotto ma è in realtà discontinuo e, sotto alcuni aspetti, terminabile.⁴ I vecchi oggetti certamente evocano queste altre storie (memorie, speranze, tradizioni orali, attaccamento alla terra). Ma nella zona di contatto del seminterrato del museo di Portland, i significati indirizzati agli interlocutori bianchi erano principalmente relazionali: «È questo che gli oggetti ci ispirano di dire in risposta alla nostra storia condivisa, agli obiettivi di responsabilità attuale e reciprocità che abbracciamo in modo diverso».

Benché la *reciprocità* sia una posta in gioco cruciale, non sarà compresa allo stesso modo da persone di culture diverse e in relazioni di potere asimmetriche. La reciprocità nelle richieste di aiuto dei tlingit non aveva, come nelle transazioni commerciali, lo scopo di ricevere il saldo di un pagamento. Piuttosto, l'intento era quello di sfidare e rielaborare una relazione. Gli oggetti della collezione Rasmussen, per quanto correttamente o liberamente acquistati e venduti, non potrebbero mai essere posseduti per intero dal museo. Essi erano luoghi di negoziazione storica, occasioni di un contatto in corso.

Nel capitolo 6 ho parlato di un altro tipo di ambiente e pratica museale in una prospettiva di contatto. Là, si mostrava come il Museum of Mankind di Londra fosse implicato in relazioni potenzialmente

⁴ L'affermazione della necessità di questa conclusione in questioni strategiche come la priorità della terra e il controllo dell'eredità culturale è lo scopo dei movimenti di «sovranità» contemporanei. La completa indipendenza economica e culturale non è un'opzione realistica; quello che si cerca, comunque, è una base di potere da cui esercitare un qualche controllo reale sull'interazione in corso.

complesse e asimmetriche con gruppi e individui dell'altopiano della Nuova Guinea. Il museo, anche se non necessariamente il suo etnografo/conservatore Michael O'Hanlon, voleva essere esentato dai suoi obblighi con gli wahgi, le cui cultura e storia venivano messe in mostra nelle sale del museo. Ma alcuni squarci sul punto di vista degli wahgi sulla transazione, o per lo meno sulle aspirazioni di alcuni individui, suggeriscono un tipo di comprensione delle relazioni più mutevole e diversamente politicizzato. La «reciprocità», una regola per rapporti corretti, è un termine di traduzione i cui significati dipendono dalle specifiche situazioni di contatto. Perciò occorre sempre tenere d'occhio i differenti contesti e significati del termine, le posizioni di potere dalle quali esso viene pronunciato. Erano queste le differenze di posizione e significato in discussione nel seminterrato del Portland Museum.

Nelle zone di contatto, ci dice Pratt, gruppi geograficamente e storicamente separati stabiliscono relazioni correnti. Queste non sono relazioni di eguaglianza, anche se potrebbero essere in atto processi *reciproci* di sfruttamento e appropriazione.⁵ Come si è visto, i presupposti fondamentali riguardo alla relazione stessa – nozioni di scambio, giustizia, reciprocità – possono essere argomento di lotta e trattativa. Inoltre, le zone di contatto sono costituite attraverso movimenti reciproci di persone, non solo di oggetti, messaggi, merci e denaro. La Nuova Guinea dell'altopiano è lontana da Londra, tuttavia gli wahgi che cooperarono con O'Hanlon per accumulare una collezione di «cultura materiale» per il Museum of Mankind si sentirono collegati, anzi invitati alla visita. Si aspettavano che venisse organizzato un viaggio a Londra simile a quello compiuto vari anni prima da un gruppo di vicini, una *troupe* di danzatori di Mount Hagen. Certi wahgi, almeno, erano pronti a «lavorarsi» questa zona di contatto Londra-altipiani per i propri scopi. O'Hanlon dovette spiegare che il mandato datogli dal museo non contemplava fondi per il loro viaggio. Differenze di potere, controllo e disponibilità di bilancio stabilirono chi sarebbe stato soggetto e chi oggetto della raccolta.

Anche la Stanford University in California è lontana dall'altopia-

⁵ Scrivendo sugli aborigeni australiani nella scena artistica newyorkese, Fred Meyers (1994) dimostra che la nuova «intercultura» è creata in rappresentazioni collegate alle esposizioni museali, *performances* in cui i partecipanti hanno poste in gioco piuttosto diverse nell'ambito dell'interazione.

no della Nuova Guinea. Essa è stata recentemente sede di una serie di relazioni di contatto piuttosto diverse. Una dozzina circa di scultori degli altipiani sono giunti a Palo Alto per realizzare una serie di sculture da collocare nel *campus* universitario. Il progetto fu organizzato con quattro soldi da Jim Mason, uno studente di antropologia cui vennero concessi pochi finanziamenti e contributi. Giunti a Stanford, gli scultori occuparono un angolo boscoso del *campus* centrale e si misero al lavoro. Nel corso dell'estate del 1994 essi trasferirono i tronchi portati dalla Nuova Guinea e la pietra tenera proveniente dal Nevada in figure umane intrecciate con animali e disegni fantastici. Il loro laboratorio era aperto a chiunque passasse, e il venerdì sera ospitava feste con grigliate, pitture facciali, tamburi e danze. Gli artisti della Nuova Guinea insegnarono a fare i loro disegni agli abitanti di Palo Alto interessati. Un numero crescente di persone si presentava ogni settimana per gironzolare, occuparsi d'arte e festeggiare.

Quando mi recai in visita a Stanford nell'autunno del 1994, gli artisti erano ritornati sugli altipiani, e il «New Guinea Sculpture Garden» consisteva di varie decine di tronchi e pietre scolpiti, disseminati tra gli alberi. I primi erano assicurati tramite cavi (uno era stato rubato di recente) e protetti dalla pioggia da fogli di plastica trasparente. La gente gironzolava e spostava la plastica che avvolgeva coccodrilli e uccelli dal becco lungo. Un volantino informava i visitatori che al progetto erano necessari ancora 40 000 dollari per la sistemazione definitiva del sito. I contributi richiesti andavano dai 25 dollari per le piccole spese degli artisti, ai 100 dollari per un rifletto-re, ai 250 dollari per una felce, ai 10 000 dollari per un viaggio dalla Nuova Guinea. Come questo testo, un anno dopo il giardino sta prendendo forma. I volontari hanno messo i pali nel cemento e installato le sculture di pietra. I monticelli di terra e le piante seguono gli stili paesaggistici della Nuova Guinea. I pali più alti formano una «casa degli spiriti», e nel boschetto sono disseminati pali di legno dipinti a colori brillanti o intagliati in modo elaborato e tam-tam.

Al New Guinea Sculpture Garden, il processo interattivo era altrettanto importante della produzione e collezione di «arte» o «cultura». Anche se il trasferimento d'individui esotici in musei, zoo e fiere mondiali dell'Occidente gode di una lunga tradizione, a Stanford

gli scultori non venivano offerti come esemplari in mostra. Erano presentati come «artisti» in attività, non come «nativi». Ovviamente la gente li poteva vedere come oggetti esotici, ma questo andava contro lo spirito del progetto, che invitava la gente a partecipare, finanziariamente e personalmente, alla realizzazione del giardino. Gli artisti itineranti perseguivano le proprie avventure, raccogliendo prestigio, informazioni e divertendosi, pur restando in contatto telefonico con gli altipiani. Si fecero amici nelle varie comunità dei dintorni di Stanford. Vennero portati a Disneyland e all'Esalen Institute, intrattenuti dai pompieri locali e dalla *wo'se* African Community Church di Oakland. Centinaia di persone li accompagnarono all'aeroporto per vederli partire. Venne programmata la restituzione delle visite, nei due sensi. Un visitatore abituale del boschetto del *campus*: «È come se qui, dallo spazio esterno, fosse capitato un miracolo in una comunità molto bianca, di classe elevata». Uno scultore: «Tutti quelli che vengono sono buoni. La gente è contenta di vederli, e ci porta da mangiare» (Koh, 1994, p. 2B).

Per ora, possiamo rimandare l'importante questione di come il giardino sarà infine sistemato e usato, e considerare come il processo interattivo della sua realizzazione apra una gamma di relazioni differenti rispetto a quelle che si hanno di solito nei contesti di raccolta ed esposizione. Richard Kurin (1991) descrive fenomeni simili verificatisi in due mostre/*performances* tenute al Mall di Washington in occasione del festival dell'India nel 1985. Gli eventi erano intitolati *Aditi: A Celebration of Life e Mela! An Indian Fair*. In occasione della prima vennero artigiani e attori dell'India rurale al Museum of Natural History; la seconda era una «fiera composita che presentava rituali, opere di artigianato, rappresentazioni, abitudini alimentari e tradizioni commerciali di varie regioni indiane» (p. 319). Kurin circoscrive i molti modi in cui gli artigiani e gli attori di strada davano forma ed estendevano le ambientazioni della loro «esibizione». Egli esamina anche i diversi interessi politici suscitati dall'avvenimento: quelli della Smithsonian Institution, del governo indiano e degli attori di strada indiani. Questi ultimi usarono il riconoscimento ottenuto dal viaggio a Washington per risollevarlo il loro *status* in patria, per indurre i politici a riconsiderare le severe leggi contro l'acconteraggio applicate agli artisti popolari e in alcuni casi per acquisire il diritto alla terra. Il complesso resoconto di Kurin degli *happenings* al Mall suggerisce

risce uno spazio utopico d'interazione e improvvisazione, limitato in India da caste e classi politiche, e nel mercato geopolitico dei «festival» nazionali dalla mercificazione di tradizioni e «cultura» *folk*. Gli indiani recentemente immigrati negli Stati Uniti che hanno assistito agli eventi popolari, traducendoli, si riconoscono nelle «volgari» rappresentazioni da strada che in India avrebbero evitato. Le gerarchie di casta e di classe vennero livellate, almeno per una volta, quando gli attori furono invitati a mangiare a casa. Il rispetto per la diversità delle sottoculture indiane venne stimolato. E il museo fu obbligato a modificare i suoi metodi oggettivanti di esposizione per accogliere i visitatori che consideravano l'occasione proprio come un'altra fiera, questa volta al Mall di Washington, D.C. Quale organizzatore dell'avvenimento, Kurin fu stretto tra le necessità della rappresentazione e quelle dell'ordine istituzionale. Le sue esortazioni quotidiane agli uomini scimmia di Mela a scendere dagli alberi, sotto la minaccia di un possibile arresto da parte della polizia del parco, «non furono accolte né come ammonimenti ufficiali né come direttive artistiche, ma come meri elementi da incorporare nella rappresentazione quotidiana per il divertimento del pubblico» (p. 324).⁶

Sfruttamenti

È importante mantenere le possibilità di sovversione e reciprocità (o di sfruttamento reciproco relativamente benigno) in conflitto con la lunga storia di esposizioni «esotiche» in Occidente. Questa storia fornisce il contesto di un durevole squilibrio di potere, al cui interno e contro cui avviene il lavoro di contatto del viaggio, dell'esposizione e dell'interpretazione. È una matrice ideologica in evoluzione a regolare la comprensione dei popoli «primitivi» in posti «civilizzati». Se ne resero conto Coco Fusco e Guillermo Gómez-Peña quando allestirono una scenetta, evidentemente satirica, in cui degli amerindiani «ap-

⁶ In una disposizione simile, Richard Bauman e Patricia Sawin (1991, p. 312) criticano la tendenza a vedere i partecipanti ai festival folcloristici come oggetti in mostra. Essi li ritraggono «come agenti, riflessivi, adattabili e critici, che fabbricano con destrezza le rappresentazioni in cui sono coinvolti, cercando di immaginare quello che essi dovrebbero e potrebbero fare nell'ambito di un festival folcloristico, facendosi strada attraverso le strutture di potere e autorità e offrendo una resistenza ferma, anche se di solito allegra, quando si accorgono che il proprio senso d'identità e autostima è minacciato da altri».

pena scoperti» erano chiusi in una gabbia d'oro: più di un visitatore li prese alla lettera. Fusco distingue un'«altra storia» di rappresentazione interculturale, che passa rapidamente dagli arawak rapiti da Colombo e dai «cannibali» di Montaigne ai popolati «villaggi» e «strade» delle esposizioni mondiali e a Ishi all'University of California Anthropological Museum. Essa estrapola la storia per includere tutte le rappresentazioni d'identità più o meno forzate: la spettacolarizzazione di «nativi» in film documentari o la raccolta di «autentica» arte (e artisti) del Terzo mondo per esposizioni quali «Les Magiciens de la Terre», a Parigi. Un crescente *corpus* di scritti ha cominciato a fornire dettagli di questa storia, piuttosto approfondita e continua, di contatti relativi alle esposizioni (Rydell, 1984; Bradford e Blume, 1992; Corbey, 1993; Fusco, 1995). Esso rivela il razzismo, o nel migliore dei casi la condiscendenza paternalistica, di spettacoli che davano esemplari muti e resi esotici in pasto a folle curiose e pievolmente eccitate. La degradazione era fisica quanto morale, e non di rado si concludeva con la morte prematura dei viaggiatori. Le esposizioni erano zone di contatto in cui i germi stabilivano le loro connessioni.⁷

Un'enfasi del tutto adeguata su coercizione, sfruttamento e incompiutezza non esaurisce però le complicazioni del viaggio e dell'incontro.⁸ Montaigne, per esempio, dall'incontro con dei tupinamba a Rouen ricavò qualcosa più di un *frisson* etnocentrico. Perfino quegli incontri che sono etnocentrici - e, entro certi limiti, lo sono tutti - possono produrre riflessione e critica culturale. Le riflessioni critiche

⁷ In una complessa meditazione su Fusco e Gómez-Peña, Bruce Mannheim (1995) ci ricorda la cruda realtà di rapimenti e lavoro forzato che si cela dietro a una reazione da lungo tempo consolidata: le descrizioni indigene degli europei come dissotterratori di cadaveri in America Latina (e Africa).

⁸ In realtà, l'analisi dell'egemonia occidentale nell'esposizione di «esotismi» può essa stessa diventare totalizzante, dissimulando importanti differenze. La preziosa discussione di Raymond Corbey corre questo rischio quando asserisce una forte similarità tra esposizioni coloniali e l'esposizione *Te Maori* svoltasi nel 1984 a New York, esposizione in cui i maori erano presentati (Corbey, 1993, p. 359). L'accoglienza fatta dai visitatori ai maori che cantavano e pregavano nel museo potrebbe in molti casi (benché certamente non in tutti) essere un proseguimento della vecchia tradizione. Ma le poste in gioco dei maori nella *performance*, come pure nelle complesse politiche tribali, statali e museali che circondano la mostra, riflettono importanti rotture con il passato. Coco Fusco come lo stesso rischio spostandosi senza soluzione di continuità dagli ishi del museo antropologico a «un altro esempio, meno noto»: i messicani che furono presi prigionieri dai secessionisti anglofretaxani, chiusi in gabbia sulle *plazas* pubbliche e lasciati morire di fame (Fusco, 1995, p. 41).

e l'attività dei «viaggiatori» esotici sono difficilissime da scoprire, a causa delle scarse testimonianze e della tendenza, dove esistono testi, monianze, a concedere a tali viaggiatori un *comportamento* piuttosto che un *espressione* indipendente. Dal momento che essi erano trattati generalmente come esemplari passivi (o vittime), i loro punti di vista raramente entravano nella memoria storica. Le loro «narrazioni di cattività» rimangono da scoprire o mettere insieme, da dedurre da frammenti storici.⁹ Alcuni di coloro che venivano esibiti in corti, musei, fiere e zoo europei erano stati rapiti, e il loro viaggio era tutt'altro che volontario. In molti casi, agiva una mescolanza di costrizione e scelta. Le persone si prestavano ai progetti di esploratori e imprenditori per una quantità di ragioni, tra cui timore, bisogno economico, curiosità, desiderio di avventura, ricerca di potere.

«Un mio collega - scrive Raymond Corbey - cresciuto nella Berlino postbellica, mi disse del suo stupore quando, da ragazzo, si imbarcò in un africano che, solo poche ore prima, aveva visto in abbigliamento da nativo al Panoptikum di Gastan; ora era sul tram, con abiti europei, e stava fumando una sigaretta» (Corbey, 1993, p. 344). Lo stupore, misto forse a un senso di tradimento, era una reazione adeguata per qualcuno abituato a un primitivismo messo accuratamente in scena. Ma qual era l'atteggiamento dell'africano nei confronti del passaggio da uno spettacolo razziale/etnico a un comune tram? Che cosa rappresentava per l'«africano» la parte che recitava? Un'ardua prova? Una satira? Una fonte di orgoglio? Soltanto un lavoro? O tutto questo? E qualcosa di più? Una risposta adeguata dipende dalla conoscenza di storie individuali e di specifici rapporti di potere. Nella maggior parte dei casi i particolari non sono disponibili. Però esiste la documentazione

⁹ Pauline Turner Strong (1992) porta bruscamente al centro dell'attenzione queste narrazioni mancanti. Anche se solleva questioni cruciali, la sua testimonianza delle esperienze indiane in Europa è inevitabilmente frammentaria. Il suo uso della tradizione orale, in particolare nella leggenda wampanoag dell'intruso europeo visto come un uccello cannibale, è allettante e importante. È disponibile una migliore documentazione per «viaggiatori» più recenti, sebbene le informazioni sui loro complessi punti di vista rimangono lacunose. Corbey (1993, pp. 348-52) insiste sull'importanza di occuparsi dell'esperienza indigena nelle «dimostrazioni etnografiche» europee, ma si limita a una serie di domande. La storia, narrata dal sioux Alice Nero, del suo viaggio in Europa con il *Wild West Show* di Buffalo Bill è un'eccezione (Black Elk, 1979); cfr. anche il diario di un inuit in Germania (Taylor, 1981). Il resoconto di Bradford e Blume (1992) relativo a Ora Benga, un pigmeo che fu esibito alla St. Louis World's Fair, contiene descrizioni interessanti, sebbene un po' teoriche, dei concetti pigmei di ospitalità violata e degli usi pigmei di parodia e umorismo per capovolgere la situazione a danno degli interlocutori.

ne per un'esperienza rivelatrice in cui la cultura nativa fu trasformata in spettacolo; esperienza che, sebbene per niente tipica, può aiutare a chiarire le relazioni sociali e le diverse poste in gioco.

Nel 1914 Edward Curtis, l'elegico fotografo degli indiani nord-americani, girò un lungometraggio intitolato *In the Land of Headhunters*. Nella parte settentrionale dell'isola di Vancouver, Curtis ingaggiò un gran numero di indiani kwakiutl per recitare in una ricostruzione della vita nella costa nordoccidentale prima del contatto, con tanto di storia d'amore tra un ragazzo e una ragazza, stregoni maligni, maschere, canoe di guerra e teste mozzate. Con l'aiuto delle autorità locali - in particolare George Hunt, l'assistente principale di Franz Boas - fu fatto un serio tentativo di ricreare ambientazioni, manufatti, danze e cerimonie autentici e tradizionali. T. C. McLuhan, nel suo film *The Shadow Catcher* (1975), registra i ricordi di tre anziani che parteciparono alla ricostruzione di Curtis. Essi ricordano che era stato molto bello vestirsi e a fare le cose secondo l'uso antico. Tutti si erano divertiti. Lo confermano le conversazioni tra Bill Holm e altri partecipanti ancora in vita, svoltesi nel 1967 alla proiezione del film restaurato (Holm e Quimby, 1980).

Da un importante punto di vista, i kwakiutl furono sfruttati da Curtis, che fece loro recitare lo stereotipo di se stessi a uso dei bianchi. Il titolo sensazionalistico, che pone l'accento su «cacciatori di teste», è indicativo di quello che Fusco dimostra essere l'inevitabile violenza di simili progetti. E ci si chiede: se il film avesse avuto un grande successo, quanta parte dei guadagni avrebbe ritrovato la strada della parte settentrionale dell'isola di Vancouver? Tuttavia sotto altri, importanti, punti di vista, le relazioni non furono di sfruttamento. I partecipanti a *Headhunters* guadagnarono un bel po' di soldi e si divertirono. Di buon grado, essi indossarono parrucche, si rasarono i baffi e sopportarono il solletico degli anelli di allotide per il naso. Sapevano che, per quanto spettacolare, il ritratto fatto da Curtis delle loro tradizioni era rispettoso. In fin dei conti lo spettacolo era una parte sostanziale della cultura kwakiutl, e Curtis attinse a una ricca tradizione di recitazione. Inoltre George Hunt svolse un ruolo cruciale, interpretando la tradizione, reclutando attori e raccogliendo costumi e materiale scenico. Le istantanee superstiti delle riprese mostrano Curtis dietro alla macchina da ripresa, con accanto Hunt che tiene un megafono e dirige l'azione (Holm e Quimby, 1980, pp. 57-61).

Secondo i criteri locali, nel contesto di precedenti contatti commerciali ed etnografici Curtis trattò con correttezza le comunità mobilitate. Il suo interesse per una cultura «in via di estinzione» sembra essersi sovrapposto produttivamente al loro interesse per un modo di vivere che alcuni di essi avevano conosciuto attraverso i racconti dei genitori e dei nonni e in cui vedevano un forte fattore di continuità in un periodo di cambiamenti.¹⁰

L'allestimento scenico di spettacoli culturali può quindi essere un complesso procedimento di contatto con diversi copioni che sono il frutto di trattative tra impresari, intermediari e attori. Naturalmente il film di Curtis, girato sulle terre dei nativi con l'assistenza delle autorità locali, era del tutto diverso da spettacoli e mostre itineranti, che tendevano a essere più autoritari e a sfruttare maggiormente. Il più famoso di tutti i fornitori di stereotipi, il *Wild West Show* di Buffalo Bill, si reggeva in genere su rispettosi rapporti personali con i partecipanti nativi americani. Ma le condizioni di viaggio erano difficili, e pochi restavano più di una stagione o due. Alcuni si univano allo spettacolo per i salari offerti (bassi, ma nelle nuove riserve non c'era modo di guadagnare soldi), altri volevano sfuggire all'inattività imposta dalla «pacificazione»; ogni tanto, dei «facinorosi» venivano inviati dal governo come alternativa alla prigione; altri volevano viaggiare e osservare il mondo dei bianchi (Blackstone, 1986, pp. 85-88). Alce Nero, un sioux oglala, si unì a Buffalo Bill per quest'ultima ragione, e i suoi ricordi di Chicago, New York, Londra e Parigi offrono un prezioso scorcio della critica culturale e dei viaggi dal punto di vista di un nativo (Black Elk, 1979; DeMallie, 1984; cfr. anche Standing Bear, 1928). È difficile riconoscere che le rappresentazioni culturali di simili spettacoli fossero parte di un copione scritto e che gli attori fossero spesso sfruttati. Ma è importante anche riconoscere una gamma di esperienze e non escludere la dimensione dell'attività (e dell'ironia) nella loro partecipazione. La questione cruciale del potere spesso appare diversamente a diversi livelli d'interazione, e non può essere semplicemente ricavata da collocazioni geopolitiche attribuite. Il potere e la reciprocità sono articolati tra loro in modi specifici. Chi comanda che cosa? Quando? I rapporti di potere strutturali e inter-

¹⁰ Cfr. *swpna*, cap. 5 per gli attuali usi kwakiwilt (kwagialth) delle immagini romanticizzate di Curtis: cioè il loro reimpiego come ritrattistica di famiglia.

personali si rafforzano oppure si complicano vicendevolmente? Come vengono accolte priorità diverse nello stesso progetto?

Sulla scena contemporanea, la rappresentazione di cultura e tradizione - quella che Robert Cantwell (1993) chiama «etnomimesi» - potrebbe includere la possibilità di partecipare a una più vasta sfera pubblica *come pure* la mercificazione in un gioco d'identità sempre più egemonico. Perché i popoli tribali dovrebbero essere ansiosi di danzare a New York o Londra? Perché venire a Stanford? Perché giocare al gioco dell'autorappresentazione?¹¹ Simili visitatori, i loro ospiti e gli impresari non sono esenti da retaggi coloniali di esotismo e da processi neocoloniali di mercificazione. Ma neppure sono completamente limitati da queste strutture repressive. È importante riconoscere questa complessità. Perché ciò che nelle relazioni di contatto oltrepassa l'apparato di coercizione e lo stereotipo, potrebbe forse essere reclamato per la pratica corrente in movimenti per espandere e democratizzare ciò che può accadere nei musei e simili siti di etnomimesi. Occorre confrontare le possibilità storiche di relazioni di contatto, negative e positive.

In casi in cui la coercizione non è diretta, quando gli artisti, i creatori di cultura e i conservatori non occidentali entrano in musei occidentali alle loro condizioni (negoziate), i siti di collezione d'arte e antropologia non possono più essere compresi principalmente in termini di scoperta prometeica e di perspicace selezione. Diventano luoghi di attraversamento, espliciti e non riconosciuti, occasioni per scoperte e selezioni differenti. Alcuni illuminanti esempi attuali si trovano in *Fusion: West African Artists at Venice Biennale*, interviste condotte da Thomas McEvilley (1993). Tamestr Dia, un senegalese nato nel Mali, cresciuto in Costa d'Avorio e andato poi a studiare in Francia, esprime una «prospettiva di contatto» africana. Dopo aver sottolineato la sua ammirazione per Delacroix, Cézanne e soprattutto Picasso, Dia aggiunge:

Secondo la mia percezione, ciò che sta accadendo in Europa e in America mi appartiene. Un giorno mi fu chiesto cosa pensavo di Picasso e di altri pittori europei, e io dissi: «In Francia, presi ciò che mi apparteneva. Picasso venne a casa mia e vi prese delle cose. Io andai in Francia e presi le cose che erano mie». Per me, la tradizione

¹¹ Terence Turner (1991) fornisce un'acuta analisi dell'autorappresentazione culturale fatta da un popolo tribale (i kayapo) a beneficio degli estranei, nel contesto di una mobilitazione e di una difesa etnico-politiche.

europea era un modo di ricomprendere il valore della mia stessa civiltà, perché l'Europa dopo la prima guerra mondiale stava attraversando una crisi d'immaginazione, una crisi di sviluppo in senso artistico, in senso culturale. E gli europei si rivolsero all'Africa. Comprendo anche che essi usarono il mio patrimonio culturale per sviluppare il proprio, quindi perché non dovrei prendere il loro, prendere qualunque cosa mi sia utile dal punto di vista tecnico, per esprimermi?

McEvelley ribatte: «Quando lei dice di essere andato in Francia e di aver preso ciò che le appartiene, non intende dire di aver ripreso elementi di cultura africana trafugati, ma che stava prendendo elementi di cultura europea che le appartenevano in cambio dei primi». Dia chiarisce: «Io non mi limito alla cultura africana, sarebbe assurdo; sarebbe ridicolo per qualsiasi africano, oggi, parlare di africanità o di *négritude*. Ciò che tu sei è dappertutto, è nel tuo spirito. In quanto africano, non puoi mai vivere esattamente come un europeo, almeno la gente della mia generazione» (McEvelley, 1993, p. 61).

L'Africa e l'Europa sono state avvicinate in qualche modo da storie distruttive e creative d'imperi, commerci e viaggi; ognuna usa le tradizioni dell'altra per rifare la propria. Pratt (1992, p. 6), seguendo Fernando Ortiz e Angel Rama, chiama tali processi «transculturazioni». Fino a poco tempo fa, in Occidente la transculturazione è stata intesa gerarchicamente, in modi che rendono naturale uno squilibrio di potere e la pretesa di un gruppo di definire la storia e l'autenticità. Per esempio, gli africani che usavano il patrimonio culturale europeo erano visti come imitatori che perdevano le loro tradizioni in un gioco di acculturazione a somma zero; gli europei che usavano le risorse culturali africane apparivano come creativi, progressisti, modernisti inclusivi. Punti di vista come quelli di Tamesir Dia suggeriscono una più complessa storia di traduzioni e appropriazioni.

La storia di contatto è evocata in due titoli - *Africa Explores* e *Digesting the West* - tratti dalla innovativa esposizione di Susan Vogel sull'arte africana del secolo xx e relativo catalogo (Vogel, 1991). In questo caso un museo contemporaneo, il Center for African Art di New York, raccoglie un'opera che, da più di un secolo, colleziona essa stessa l'Occidente attraverso processi transculturali che vanno dall'infatuazione e dall'ammirazione eccessiva alla satira, alla conversione sincretica e alla selezione critica. Il museo di New York opera in circuiti di viaggio e transculturazione stabilibili da tempo. Da una parte esso torna a rappresentare, sotto nuove forme, pratiche radicate di

scoperta, raccolta e valutazione di arte e cultura: l'inquietudine del curatore nell'esplorare e interpretare l'Africa. Così facendo, porta il lavoro periferico in un centro stabilito, per l'apprezzamento e la mercificazione. Dall'altra parte, il Center for African Art opera in modo crescente nella consapevolezza dell'Africa come un'entità che non è semplicemente «laggiù» (o «a quel tempo»), ma che è parte di una rete di collegamenti, di una serie di stazioni di cambio che formano una diaspora comprendente New York City. Questa diaspora ha strade e radici che affondano stabilmente e si diramano nella schiavitù, nella migrazione dai Caraibi, dal Sudamerica e dal Nordamerica rurale, nonché negli attuali circuiti di commercio e immigrazione dal continente africano. In questo contesto, l'attività di contatto del museo assume dimensioni locali, regionali, emisferiche e globali. Nella recente mostra di altari africani e afroamericani, «Face of the Gods», il centro si cimenta esplicitamente con la sfida di esporre (ne)la diaspora. Questo progetto portò degli artisti/praticanti di religioni di origine africana nell'attività del museo, tanto a New York quanto nelle successive raccolte di altari, e nei cambiamenti, lungo la strada.

Africa 95 offre un esempio più ampio di approccio di contatto. Questo straordinario complesso di mostre d'arte, spettacoli di musica e danza, film, conferenze, laboratori, spettacoli televisivi e radiofonici e iniziative per bambini era stato stimolato da una mostra progettata alla Royal Academy of Arts di Londra: «Africa: The Art of a Continent». Il progetto della Royal Academy di un'importante ed «esauriente» selezione era concepito secondo un modello classico: un singolo curatore europeo raccoglieva quella che considerava l'opera più bella e rappresentativa, pur limitando l'esposizione all'arte prodotta prima del 1900. In realtà gli organizzatori di *Africa 95* raddoppiarono questo progetto in una visione più eterogenea e orientata verso il futuro. Senza rifiutare le sue priorità storico-estetiche, essi le circoscrissero e decentrarono. Invece di portare dall'Africa l'arte, *Africa 95* portò gli artisti. Riconosceva che gli artisti africani erano stati a lungo in contatto con l'Europa e attualmente stavano lavorando sia all'interno sia al di fuori del continente africano, muovendosi dentro e fuori l'«Occidente».

La prima manifestazione di *Africa 95* fu «Teng/Articulations», un laboratorio artistico del Senegal. Seguì un «laboratorio internazionale di scultura» nello Yorkshire Sculpture Park, dove per tre mesi arti-

sti provenienti da una dozzina di paesi africani si unirono ad artisti degli Stati Uniti e del Regno Unito per creare opere sul luogo. Nel corso dell'autunno 1995, a Londra e in altre città britanniche si svolsero più di venti esposizioni di arte e fotografia contemporanea africana. Tutte le manifestazioni erano abbinata a colloqui e a vasti programmi di film, musica, danza e letteratura. Ci fu una coerente politica tesa a coinvolgere africani come pure autorità e curatori. Alla Whitechapel Art Gallery, un'esposizione che faceva da contrappunto a quella della Royal Academy venne intitolata «Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa». Cinque dei sette curatori erano importanti artisti e storici dell'arte africani, e le loro personali visioni dell'arte moderna africana effettivamente complicavano i presupposti di un'estetica continentale unificata.

Clémentine Deliss, direttrice artistica di *Africa 95*, mise l'accento sul fatto che il progetto era stato concepito come un sito non meramente di esposizioni, ma anche d'incontri tra artisti, un'occasione per sviluppare i contatti in corso (Deliss, 1995, p. 5). Che le zone di contatto di *Africa 95* non fossero spazi liberi politici o economici è segnalato dai vistosi annunci, nell'opuscolo del programma, per trovare *sponsors* tra le aziende transnazionali, soprattutto banche; e dalle ricorrenti lamentele sul fatto che l'esposizione fosse tenuta in Inghilterra e non in Africa (Riding, 1995). L'Europa godeva ancora del potere di raccogliere ed esibire l'Africa alle proprie condizioni e sul proprio terreno. Tuttavia, per molti artisti e musicisti l'Europa e l'America erano già zone d'attività, e l'avvenimento fu un'occasione per espandere il proprio pubblico e le proprie fonti d'ispirazione.

Lavorando all'esterno e all'interno di musei e gallerie, *Africa 95* aveva qualcosa in comune con l'attuale proliferazione di festival nazionali (Festival dell'India, dell'Indonesia ecc.), durante i quali le regioni del Terzo mondo espongono la loro arte in luoghi del Primo mondo allo scopo di aumentare la legittimità globale e di attrarre investitori. Ma c'erano importanti differenze. Anche se gli *sponsors* come quelli della Citibank usavano l'avvenimento per presentarsi come buoni e transnazionali cittadini «africani», *Africa 95* non rappresentava direttamente alcun importante interesse commerciale né alcuna politica nazionale, e non era facile far conoscere i suoi diversi spunti e partecipanti, il suo accento su scambi transnazionali. Naturalmente essa contribuiva effettivamente a produrre un'«Africa» moderna e

ibrida da presentare come merce sui mercati d'arte internazionali. Ma questo prodotto era, significativamente, frutto dell'attività di contatto di africani che possono trarne profitto. *Africa 95* usò, e fu usata da, circuiti transnazionali legati a relazioni coloniali e neocoloniali, e aprì spazi per contatti che oltrepassavano quelle relazioni.

Contestazioni

La nozione di una zona di contatto, formulata da Pratt in contesti di espansione e transculturazione europea, può essere estesa fino a comprendere relazioni culturali nell'ambito dello stesso Stato, regione o città; nei centri piuttosto che alle frontiere di nazioni e imperi. Qui, le distanze in questione sono più sociali che geografiche. Per la maggior parte degli abitanti di un quartiere povero, situati magari a qualche isolato di distanza soltanto o separati solo da un breve tragitto in autobus da un museo di belle arti, il museo potrebbe anche essere su un altro continente. Le prospettive di contatto riconoscono che le distanze e le segregazioni sociali «naturali» sono prodotti storico-politici: l'*apartheid* era una relazione. Inoltre, in molte città le zone di contatto risultano da un diverso tipo di «viaggio»: l'arrivo di nuove popolazioni d'immigrati. Come negli esempi coloniali citati da Pratt, i negoziati su centri e confini sono storicamente basati sul dominio. Nella misura in cui i musei vedono se stessi come enti che interagiscono con comunità specifiche attraverso tali confini, piuttosto che semplicemente come enti che istruiscono o edificano un pubblico, essi cominciano a operare - consciamente e a tratti autocriticamente - in storie di contatto.

Abbiamo visto come possono apparire diverse le pratiche museali di raccolta ed esposizione in una prospettiva di contatto. I centri diventano frontiere attraversate da oggetti e produttori. Tali attraversamenti non sono mai «liberi» e, in effetti, sono regolarmente bloccati da bilanci e controlli dei conservatori, da definizioni restrittive di arte e cultura, da ostrilità e fraintendimenti delle comunità. Gli esempi da me scelti finora suggeriscono i modi in cui questi confini possono essere democraticamente negoziati, una scelta che riflette il tono riformistico della mia analisi. Tuttavia avrei potuto cominciare non con l'attraversamento dei confini, ma con le *guerre* di frontiera.

Due recenti dispute, nel 1989 e 1990, hanno gettato lo scompiglio nel mondo dei musei canadesi e, in minor grado, di quelli statunitensi: il boicottaggio da parte dei cee lubicon dell'esposizione «The Spirit Sings», a Calgary e il conflitto, ampiamente pubblicizzato, relativo alla mostra «Into the Heart of Africa» del Royal Ontario Museum di Toronto. In entrambi i casi, le comunità di cui erano in gioco cultura e storia in mostre importanti si mobilitarono per arrecare seri disturbi al museo.

L'esposizione «The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples» era stata organizzata dal Glenbow Museum di Calgary in concomitanza con le olimpiadi invernali del 1988. Furono radunati numerosi manufatti provenienti da collezioni canadesi ed estere, con l'obiettivo di presentare un'immagine particolareggiata e diversificata delle culture dei nativi canadesi al tempo del primo contatto con gli europei. La mostra esplorava poi la distinta visione del mondo condivisa da queste culture e la loro resistenza davanti a influenze e domini esterni (Harrison, 1988). Per molti, compresi alcuni gruppi di nativi canadesi, l'esposizione fu un successo, benché venisse criticata per la sua relativa mancanza di attenzione nei confronti di manifestazioni contemporanee dei suoi temi di fondo. Ma non fu in primo luogo il contenuto di «The Spirit Sings» a provocare un boicottaggio sostenuto largamente. Per drammatizzare la loro rivendicazione territoriale in sospeso, i cee del lago Lubicon, nell'Alberta settentrionale, promossero un boicottaggio dei giochi olimpici invernali, un palcoscenico politico molto visibile. L'azione si concentrò sul Glenbow Museum, perché il principale *sponsor* della mostra, la Shell Oil (che chiede un milione e centomila dollari, su un bilancio complessivo della mostra di due milioni e seicentomila dollari), stava effettuando trivellazioni nella terra reclamata dai lubicon. Per un numero crescente di sostenitori dei lubicon, nativi e non nativi, era ipocrita da parte di «The Spirit Sings» celebrare la bellezza e continuità di culture la cui attuale sopravvivenza era minacciata dallo *sponsor* stesso dell'esposizione. I sostenitori dell'esposizione sottolinearono il fatto che nessun museo, di qualsiasi dimensione, può sopravvivere senza la sponsorizzazione di grandi aziende o del governo, le cui mani non sono mai perfettamente pulite. Il museo veniva preso di mira scorrettamente, trascinando senza preavviso nella lotta dei lubicon.

Quali che fossero le differenti percezioni di correttezza e sfruttamento, la questione sollevò interrogativi di grande importanza. Si dovrebbe consentire ai musei di allestire esposizioni di manufatti indiani (compresi prestiti di altre istituzioni) senza il permesso delle relative comunità tribali? Che cosa implica il controllo sulla «proprietà culturale»? Qual è il tipo corretto di consultazione e coinvolgimento nella progettazione? (Il Glenbow si era consultato con le tribù vicine ma non con i lubicon, che non avevano risposto a un invito collettivo. In ogni caso, l'autorità del curatore della mostra non veniva meno). Una certa attenzione alle questioni e alle lotte attuali deve forse diventare parte di tutte le esposizioni di arte, cultura o storia nativa? Possono i musei rivendicare una neutralità politica? Fino a che punto sono responsabili delle attività dei loro *sponsors*, pubblici o privati?¹² In risposta a queste domande, la Canadian Museums Association e l'Assemblea delle Prime nazioni delegarono una commissione congiunta il cui rapporto ottenne ampi consensi e stabilì i principi base di collaborazione tra i rappresentanti nativi e gli esperti del museo di Hill e Nicks, 1994). Ora una seria collaborazione è la norma nelle esposizioni canadesi di arte e cultura delle Prime nazioni.

«Into the Heart of Africa», al Royal Ontario Museum, fu in parte ispirata da recenti scritti critici sulla storia del collezionismo e dell'esposizione museale. «Studiando il museo come un manufatto, leggendo le raccolte come testi culturali e scoprendo il ciclo vitale degli oggetti», essa cercava di «comprendere in parte la complessità degli incontri transculturali» (Cannizzo, 1989, p. 92). L'approccio dell'esposizione era riflessivo, e faceva risolutamente affidamento su accostamenti e ironia. Le affermazioni di missionari e autorità imperiali erano presentate senza commento accanto ai manufatti africani. Chiaramente, la mostra non approvava le immagini e le parole talvolta raz-

¹² Ho tratto tali problematiche dal resoconto di Michael Ames sulla disputa (Ames, 1997, p. 9). Nella sua discussione di *The Spirit Sings* e *Into the Heart of Africa*, egli si preoccupa dell'ingiustizia delle proteste nei confronti delle esposizioni e del loro potenziale «effetto ragglante» sull'indipendenza dei curatori e sulla libertà di espressione. Anche se la sua discussione incentrata sulle due proteste, è una difesa degli interessi dei conservatori, le lezioni che egli ricava dai dibattiti e dagli esempi che dà delle pratiche museali emergenti sembrano sostenere la necessità di rinegoziare il controllo del curatore e della comunità: una mossa generale diretta verso una condivisione della programmazione, del potere e di un più ampio concetto delle diverse conoscenze rappresentate nei musei (pp. 13 sg.). L'ambivalenza di Ames riflette la linea sottile su cui attualmente camminano i professionisti riformisti dei musei, in un periodo di risorse ridotte e di crescenti pressioni politiche provenienti da direzioni opposte.

ziste che presentava, né manteneva una prospettiva coerentemente critica. Gli oggetti e le immagini venivano spesso lasciati «parlare da sé». Ma il tentativo di complicare gli intenti didattici del curatore fallì. Le prospettive colonialistiche erano fin troppo chiare nelle citazioni e immagini del secolo XIX; le reazioni africane restavano implicite. La gente recepi messaggi piuttosto diversi dalla presentazione. Mentre alcuni visitatori trovavano la mostra stimolante, anche se alquanto confusa nella sua presentazione, altri erano offesi da quella che scambiavano per una sospensione di giudizio che sfiorava l'indifferenza. Molti - sebbene non tutti - canadesi di origine africana che visitarono il museo restarono sconvolti dalle immagini colonialistiche esaltate e dalle affermazioni condiscendenti riguardo agli africani, presentate con ostentazione e in apparenza acriticamente. Non rimasero sedotti da un trattamento ironico della distruzione e appropriazione violenta delle culture africane. Il museo e il curatore ospite, l'antropologa Jeanne Cannizzo, avevano valutato erroneamente i diversi tipi di pubblico dell'esposizione.

Seguì un'aspra controversia giornalistica. Ci furono scontri fra i dimostranti e la polizia davanti al Royal Ontario Museum; tutti i musei che dovevano ospitare l'esposizione durante la sua fase itinerante disdussero. Non è questo il luogo (né io sono nella giusta posizione) per analizzare la controversia e definire gli eccessi dei reciproci sospetti e fraintendimenti che emersero. (Cfr., tra gli altri, Ortenberg, 1991; Cannizzo, 1991; Hutcheon, 1994; Mackey, 1995). «Intro the Heart of Africa» fu denunciata come colonizzazione razzista fatta con altri mezzi, parte di una soppressione in corso delle realizzazioni africane e delle esperienze afrocanadesi. I critici dell'esposizione furono liquidati come gretti ideologi e censori, incapaci di afferrare l'ironia o un complesso resoconto storico. La controversia si è poi allargata a macchia d'olio attraverso i contesti museali e, come confessa Enid Schildkraut, in una critica acuta: «Fece tremare molti di noi, che lavoravamo nel campo delle esposizioni etnografiche e in particolare africane, per l'impressione di "Là ci vado solo per grazia di Dio"». Come poteva una mostra aver sbagliato tanto? Come poteva aver offeso così tante persone di diverse parti dello spettro politico?» (Schildkraut, 1991, p. 16).

Il museo divenne un'inevitabile zona di contatto (conflitto). Tipi distinti di pubblico portarono in «Intro the Heart of Africa» espe-

rienze storiche diversamente sintonizzate. Su questo punto M. Nourbese Philip esprime un giudizio molto tagliente, e critica il museo per aver perso nella controversia un'occasione di affrontare i suoi obiettivi pubblicamente affermati: comprendere il «museo come manufatto» e le «complessità degli incontri transculturali». L'esposizione non si mostrava chiaramente sensibile nei confronti della partecipazione degli afrocanadesi alla storia dei canadesi bianchi e dell'impreziosa coloniale africana. La sua storia era compresa come collegata alle strutture razziste correnti in una società canadese ufficialmente «multiculturale». La storia africana non poteva essere distanziata nel tempo e nello spazio. Il museo apprese, nel modo più difficile, quali sono i rischi (e Philip insiste: le opportunità) del lavorare in relazione a una diaspora africana all'interno di una sfera pubblica canadese divisa. La mostra era un «testo culturale» che non poteva essere letto da una collocazione stabile. «Lo stesso testo risultava, in letture contraddittorie, determinato dalle differenti storie ed esperienze di vita. Secondo una lettura, questi manufatti erano come congelati nel tempo e raccontavano una storia sull'esplorazione dell'Africa da parte dei canadesi bianchi; un'altra storia inseriva attivamente nel testo il lettore - il lettore afrocanadese -, che leggeva poi questi manufatti come i dolorosi frammenti di un'esplorazione selvaggia e di un tentativo genocidio del proprio popolo» (Philip, 1992, p. 105).

Una «consultazione» più completa delle «comunità» relative (compresi i canadesi bianchi di cui erano in discussione le storie di famiglia) avrebbe evitato la polarizzazione? La narrazione più esplicita di un «aspetto» africano della storia nell'esposizione avrebbe giovato, come sostiene Schildkraut? Sicuramente. Ma Philip capisce - come capiscono alcuni professionisti dei musei riflettendo subito dopo «The Spirit Sings» e «Intro the Heart of Africa» - che fondamentalmente sono in gioco strutture di potere (Ames, 1991, pp. 12-14). Finché i musei non andranno al di là della consultazione (che spesso avviene dopo che la visione del curatore si è saldamente fissata), finché non includeranno una più vasta gamma di esperienze storiche e priorità politiche nell'attuale programmazione delle esposizioni e nel controllo delle collezioni museali, essi saranno percepiti come puramente paternalistici da persone per cui quella del contatto con i musei è stata una storia di esclusione e condiscendenza. In realtà potrebbe essere utopico immaginare i musei come spazi pubblici di collabo-

razione, controllo condiviso, traduzione complessa e onesto disaccordo. In realtà, l'attuale proliferazione di musei potrebbe riflettere il fatto che queste istituzioni, in quanto evolute storicamente, tendono a riflettere visioni comunitarie unificate piuttosto che storie discepananti e in parte sovrapposte. Ma poche comunità, perfino le più «locali», sono omogenee. In pratica, gruppi diversi potrebbero radunarsi intorno a questioni o antagonismi specifici (come fecero molti afrocanadesi rispondendo al Royal Ontario Museum), e tuttavia dividersi su altri. La risposta tribale a «The Spirit Sings» non fu uniforme. E su certe questioni, i canadesi neri le cui famiglie vivono in Canada da due secoli possono diffidare da persone strettamente legate a luoghi dei Caraibi o da africani arrivati di recente. Sulla questione generale dell'Africa e della storia coloniale, essi possono condividere un oltraggio comune. Ma quando vengono sollevati problemi pratici d'interpretazione ed enfasi, questioni di rimpatrio e compensazione, l'unanimità si può dissolvere.

In fin dei conti, chi ha maggiori qualifiche di «esperienza» (che genere di esperienza?), di profonda e ampia conoscenza (che tipo di conoscenza?) per gestire e interpretare una collezione africana? Gli afrocanadesi che non sono mai stati in Africa e che potrebbero possedere una visione idealizzata delle sue culture? Gli antropologi e curatori bianchi che hanno trascorso un periodo considerevole nel continente e ne hanno studiato la storia in profondità, ma non hanno mai visceralmente conosciuto il razzismo né la colonizzazione? Gli africani contemporanei? (Di quale etnia, nazione, regione? Viventi in Africa? O in Canada?) A volte, com'è il caso dei tlingit al Portland Museum of Art, il rapporto di membri di comunità attuali con vecchi oggetti è molto diretto. In altri casi, ciò che è in questione è la «proprietà culturale» o una più lontana relazione «storica». Dal momento che le comunità e le collezioni sono raramente unificate, ai musei potrebbe toccare di doversi rivolgere a tipi nettamente diversi di pubblico.

Chiaramente, non esistono facili soluzioni a questi problemi, nessuna formula basata su principi inoppugnabili. Né l'«esperienza» della comunità né l'«autorità» del curatore hanno automaticamente il diritto di collocare in un contesto le collezioni o di narrare storie di contatto. La soluzione è inevitabilmente contingente e politica: una questione di potere mobilitato, di negoziato, di rappresentazione obbligatoria da tipi specifici di pubblico. Sfuggire a questa realtà (resisten-

do alle pressioni «esterne» nel nome di una qualità estetica o di una neutralità scientifica, sollevando lo spettro della «censura») significa essere egoisti nonché storicamente disinformati. Le pressioni delle comunità sono sempre state parte della vita pubblica e istituzionale. I musei si adattano regolarmente ai gusti di un pubblico presunto: nei grandi musei metropolitani, per lo più si tratta di un pubblico bianco, colto, borghese. Le sensibilità nazionali vengono rispettate, le prodezze e la perizia di gruppi dominanti, celebrate. I donatori e gli amministratori fiduciari esercitano una vera e propria «sorveglianza» (termine più elegante di «censura») sui tipi di esposizione che un museo può allestire. Non si avrà difficoltà a immaginare l'esaurirsi di fondi, donazioni e lasciti in seguito alla decisione, da parte di un grande museo, di adottare una posizione coerentemente critica rispetto al mercato dell'arte o un punto di vista sulla storia americana o canadese teso a dare rilievo e spazio permanente alle prospettive di popoli oppressi dal punto di vista economico, coloniale, razziale.¹³

Ai musei non piace offendere il proprio pubblico, e tanto meno le fonti del proprio sostegno materiale. In tempi normali, «non politicizzati», questa responsabilità nei confronti di particolari interessi e gusti è semplicemente, come sempre, una questione di affari. È solo quando la prospettiva del curatore e la collocazione sociale vengono messi in discussione da un pubblico dagli interessi differenziati (come nei dibattiti relativi alla mostra «Hispanic Art» del 1987 allo Houston Museum of Fine Arts, per esempio), o quando il messaggio di una mostra offende un elettorato potente (la recente prospettiva critica della frontiera americana, effettuata dalla Smithsonian; l'esposizione Hiroshima/Enola Gay), o quando le comunità sono pubblicamente divise su una proposta (se includere o no un mercato degli schiavi nella Williamsburg coloniale), che le cose sono percepite come «politiche». Ma simili dibattiti e discussioni sono inerenti al lavoro di contatto dei musei. Ora più che mai, i curatori fanno i conti con il fatto che gli oggetti e le interpretazioni esposti «appartengono» ad altri, oltre che al museo.

La proprietà e il controllo delle collezioni non è mai stato assoluto; i singoli donatori aggiungono regolarmente delle condizioni ai loro do-

¹³ Intendo, naturalmente, qualcosa di più fondamentale che aggiungere una sala o sponsorizzare una mostra itinerante; inclusi un'esposizione di Hans Haacke o un intervento di Fred Wilson.

ni. Ma ora comunità che sono socialmente distanti dal mondo museale possono effettivamente fare pressioni sull'esposizione e sull'interpretazione di oggetti rappresentanti le loro culture. In Canada e negli Stati Uniti, per lo meno, oggi ci sono forti limiti, dichiaratamente politici, sulle modalità di esposizione e interpretazione dell'arte nativa americana, latinoamericana o afroamericana. Le nozioni emergenti di «proprietà culturale» si scontrano con presupposti astratti relativi alla libertà di proprietà. Naturalmente, i grandi musei non hanno mai poso seduto i loro oggetti di artigianato esattamente allo stesso modo di un singolo. Le loro collezioni sono tenute in amministrazione fiduciaria per una più ampia comunità, definita come città, classe, casta o *élite*, nazione o progettata comunità globale di alta cultura. Gli oggetti di un museo sono spesso trattati come patrimonio, come proprietà culturale di qualcuno. Ma di chi? Quali comunità (definite in termini di classe, nazionalità, razza) hanno in se stesse una posta in gioco? La ricerca di Carol Duncan sulla storia del Louvre, un'istituzione che serve da modello per i grandi musei in tutto il mondo, mostra come la sua transizione da palazzo a museo fosse collegata alla creazione di un «pubblico» nella Francia postrivoluzionaria, allo sviluppo di una comunità nazionale e laica (Duncan, 1991, 1995). L'omogeneità di tale pubblico è attualmente in questione nelle lotte sul multiculturalismo e l'eguaglianza di rappresentazione. I confini attraversano gli spazi dominanti nazionali o culturali e i musei che una volta formulavano chiaramente il nucleo culturale appaiono ora come siti di passaggio o contestazione.

In contrapposizione con il decentramento delle istituzioni consolidate, i «musei» alternativi fanno nuove richieste sull'attività di contatto consistente nel gestire e interpretare patrimoni, tradizioni culturali e storie. I musei tribali e i centri culturali minoritari raccolgono ed espongono produzioni comunitarie con modalità che allo stesso tempo si sovrappongono e divergono dalle pratiche di musei più convenzionali (cfr. Canadian Museums Association, 1990; Karp, Lavine e Mullen Kraemer, 1992; *supra*, cap. 5). I musei di comunità / centri culturali (la distinzione può essere vaga o irrilevante) si incentrano su diversi obiettivi, esprimendo storie parziali e contesti culturali ed estetici influenzati dalle inclinazioni locali. Il fatto che un altare o una maschera tribale possano significare cose del tutto diverse in collocazioni diverse rende inevitabile il riconoscimento e l'esposizione

di molteplici contesti per le opere d'arte o di cultura. I professionisti innovatori dei musei sono da tempo interessati a modi di collocare gli oggetti sotto una luce nuova, di rinnovarli. Ora le relazioni di contatto esplicite collocano questo tipo di ricerca in una congiuntura diversa, imponendo nuove collaborazioni e alleanze. Così la moltiplicazione di contesti diventa una questione riguardante il negoziato più che la scoperta, una questione di reagire alle attuali pressioni e richieste di rappresentanza in una società civile culturalmente complessa più che una questione di avere dei conservatori creativi che hanno buone idee, fanno ricerca e consultano esperti indigeni.

Perciò il lavoro di contatto in un museo va al di là della consultazione e della sensibilità, benché queste siano molto importanti. Diventa collaborazione attiva e condivisione di autorità. Questo sviluppo è chiaramente indicato nell'eccellente studio di Fath Davis Ruffins relativo a forme di memoria culturale, al movimento museale nero e al (parziale) ingresso di professionisti afroamericani nei musei storicamente bianchi degli Stati Uniti (Ruffins, 1991). Dal punto di vista dei professionisti museali, una cosa è chiedere l'aiuto d'«informatori nativi», ben altra è lavorare con un conservatore associato.¹⁴ In questioni di arte di minoranza o tribale, la collaborazione comporta procedimenti complessi che Charlotte Townsend-Gault ha descritto in termini di opera di traduzione limitata culturalmente e politicamente e di discussione tattica dei confini (Townsend-Gault, 1995; cfr. anche Irving e Harper, 1988; Ames, 1991; González e Tonelli, 1992).

Una delle aree di negoziazione più difficile relativamente agli oggetti tribali e alle storie coloniali riguarda il rimpatrio. In una prospettiva di contatto, lo spostamento di oggetti dai luoghi tribali ai musei metropolitani sarebbe un atteso esito di dominio coloniale. Tali spostamenti non vanno confusi con il progresso o con la conservazione (un genere d'immobilità/immortalità) in un «centro» culturale. Nelle zone di contatto, le appropriazioni culturali sono sempre politiche e contestabili, attraversate da altre appropriazioni, effettive o potenziali. I musei e il mercato gestiscono il viaggio di oggetti d'arte tra i diversi luoghi. Gli oggetti di valore passano dal mondo tribale al

¹⁴ La differenza è evocata con sensibilità da Aldona Jonaitis che, insieme a Gloria Cranmer Webster (direttore dell'U'mista Cultural Centre) e altri anziani kwakiutl, lavorò all'esposizione *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch*, presso l'American Museum of Natural History (Jonaitis, 1991, pp. 66-69).

mondo del museo come risultato di relazioni politiche, economiche e interculturali che non sono permanenti. Per esempio, una vigorosa tradizione di raccolta come forma di salvataggio è stata a lungo giustificata dall'idea che le produzioni tribali autentiche siano condannate: il loro futuro può essere solo la distruzione locale o la conservazione nelle mani di accorti collezionisti, conservatori e scienziati. Ma ora è più difficile vedere il destino di collezioni come una teleologia lineare di questo tipo (Clifford, 1987). Postulando la scomparsa dei mondi tribali, la raccolta di salvataggio presumeva (ed entro certi limiti provocava) la rarità dell'arte tribale «autentica». Alcune comunità tribali scomparvero sul serio, spesso in modo violento. Altre resistettero, contro terribili pressioni. A volte questo significò adottare dei camuffamenti, per uscire dal nascondiglio quando la situazione fosse diventata meno repressiva. Altre mutarono, trovando nuovi modi per essere diverse. Alla luce di queste diverse storie, l'assunto che gli oggetti di artigianato indigeni in qualche modo *appartengono* ai musei maggioritari (scientifici o d'arte) non è più tanto evidente. Gli oggetti dei musei possono ancora andare altrove.

Il rimpatrio di opere tribali non è la sola risposta adeguata alle storie di contatto, relazioni che non sempre possono essere ridotte all'oppressione e all'appropriazione coloniali. Ma è una strada possibile e giusta. E sebbene il ritorno degli oggetti possa essere un rientro fortunato, non è sempre ovvio quale sia la patria per gli oggetti raccolti. La situazione può essere complicata e ambigua.¹⁵ In realtà, alcuni gruppi di nativi non vogliono il possesso fisico degli oggetti tradizionali; vogliono semplicemente legame e controllo correnti. In pratica, la nozione di proprietà culturale può significare che un museo statale o metropolitano detenga collezioni in amministrazione fiduciaria per comunità specifiche. In effetti, alcuni musei potrebbero venire ad assomigliare a un deposito e a una biblioteca di prestito, facendo circolare l'arte e la cultura al di là delle proprie mura - con vincoli variabili - presso musei locali o centri comunitari e addirittura per l'uso nell'attuale vita rituale (Blundell e Grant, 1989). Ciò è relativamente facile da immaginare per i musei nazionali e quelli tribali o etnici. Ma può un museo consentire di far viaggiare arte e manufatti dentro e

¹⁵ In un gran numero di musei e agenzie governative, sono in corso accese discussioni sul rimpatrio. Per un'idea sui punti in questione, cfr. le diverse posizioni del National Museum of the American Indian (1991) e di Sturtevant (1991); nonché Blundell e Grant (1989).

fuori dal «mondo dei musei» (una rete emergente considerevolmente più vasta di quello che veniva solitamente chiamato il «mondo del museo»)? I movimenti delle raccolte all'interno e all'esterno del mondo dei musei sono ancora molto difficili da accettare per i curatori e per le commissioni direttive, date l'economia e la missione tradizionale del museo occidentale. Significherebbe rompere con forti tradizioni di conservatorismo. Per esempio, molti professionisti dei musei si saranno sicuramente sentiti rabbrivire per il recente rimpatrio di statue zuri di dei della guerra, *Ahanuatas*; statueine che ora stanno marcendo su qualche mesa isolata, a completare il loro tradizionale ciclo vitale che era stato interrotto.

Questa storia di sculture in purefazione - storia di distruzione di una cultura e di rinnovamento di un'altra - è un'altra possibile storia di viaggio per gli oggetti rimpatriati. Ce ne sono altre. Come si è visto nel capitolo 5, un'importante collezione di oggetti del *potlatch*, tornata di recente ai clan kwagwalth sull'isola di Vancouver, è finita in due *musei* tribali. Quale condizione per la rinuncia agli oggetti, il mondo dei musei, volto alla conservazione, si estese con successo al mondo tribale. Ma allo stesso tempo, il mondo tribale si appropriò del museo e ne effettuò una transculturazione, insieme alla nozione stessa della «collezione» e dei tipi di significati politico-estetico-culturali che essa può incarnare. In questo nuovo contesto ibrido il museo diventa un centro culturale e un sito di narrazione di storie, di storia indigena e di politica tribale corrente. È anche coinvolto in circuiti tribali del Quarto mondo, nel «turismo culturale» di nativi e bianchi e nel turismo commerciale a livello regionale, nazionale e internazionale.

I «musei» operano sempre più in zone di confine tra diversi mondi, storie e cosmologie. L'U'mista Cultural Centre kwagwalth, è un museo? Sì e no. La San Francisco Galeria de la Raza, è un museo? Sì e no.¹⁶ Le zone di contatto - luoghi di possibilità ibrida e negoziato politico, siti di esclusione e lotta - sono sufficientemente chiare quando prendiamo in considerazione istituzioni tribali o minoritarie, ma

¹⁶ Forse, come suggeriscono John Urry (1990, p. 134) e Chris Healy (1994, p. 35), la gamma di progetti ora coperta dal termine «museo» è troppo vasta per essere coerente. La traduzione di questo termine in una così ampia varietà di contesti può avere offuscato il suo significato rendendolo irrinconoscibile. Penso, però, che possiamo ancora parlare di un «mondo di musei» (non di un globale «mondo museale») unito da rassomiglianze che si sovrappongono in parte, se non dall'identità di struttura o funzione.

che cosa si otterrebbe (e perché importerebbe?) se si considerasse una zona di contatto, piuttosto che un centro, il Metropolitan Museum of Art di Manhattan? O il Louvre? Dare una centralità tattica a posti marginali, intermedi, significa in ultima analisi scalzare la nozione stessa di centro. Tutti i siti di raccolta cominciano ad assomigliare a posti d'incontro e passaggio. Visti in questo modo, gli oggetti attualmente nei grandi musei sono viaggiatori, attraversatori: alcuni fortemente «diasporici» con forti legami altrove, ancora molto significativi. Inoltre, i grandi musei si organizzano sempre più secondo i dettami del turismo, nazionale e internazionale. Questa riconsiderazione di collezioni ed esposizioni come processi storici incompiuti di viaggio, di attraversamento e riattraversamento, modifica le concezioni di patrimonio e pubblico. Cosa cambierebbe se i grandi musei, regionali o nazionali, allentassero il proprio senso di centralità e si vedessero come luoghi specifici di transito, confini interculturali, contesti di lotta e comunicazione tra comunità differenti? Cosa significa lavorare nell'ambito di questi grovigli piuttosto che lottare per superarli?

Tali questioni evocano alcune delle domande conflittuali attualmente percepite dai musei nelle società multiculturali e multirazziali. Considerando la loro missione come un'attività di contatto (decentrata e attraversata da negoziati culturali e politici che sono fuori dal controllo di qualsiasi comunità immaginata) i musei possono cominciare a cimentarsi con difficoltà reali di dialogo, affinità, ineguaglianza e traduzione.

Nel mondo dei musei

Il mio resoconto dei musei come zone di contatto è allo stesso tempo descrittivo e normativo. Ho dimostrato che è inadeguato rappresentare i musei come collezioni di cultura universale, come depositi di valore incontestato, come siti di progresso, scoperta e accumulazione di patrimoni umani, scientifici o nazionali. Una prospettiva di contatto vede tutte le strategie di raccolta della cultura come risposte a particolari storie di dominio, gerarchia, resistenza e mobilitazione. E ci aiuta a vedere come sia le rivendicazioni di universalismo sia quelle di specificità siano riferite a collocazioni sociali concrete. Come dimostrò Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* (1966), le for-

mulazioni borghesi ottocentesche di una cultura alta/ universale erano reazioni alla rivoluzione industriale e alla minaccia sociale. Viceversa, le formulazioni «minoritarie» e «tribali» di una cultura e una storia distinte rispondono a storie di esclusione e di riduzione al silenzio. Esse rivendicano un posto, controllato localmente, nella più ampia cultura pubblica, pur parlando entrambe all'interno di particolari comunità e a un più vasto dispiegamento di tipi di pubblico. I musei/centri culturali possono fornire siti per simili articolazioni.

Il mio resoconto parla a favore di una politica democratica che sfidi un modo gerarchico di valutare ambiti diversi di attraversamento. Parla a favore del decentramento e della circolazione di collezioni in una sfera pubblica multipla, di un'espansione della gamma di cose che possono accadere in musei e in ambientazioni simili. Esso vede come necessaria l'inclusione di una gamma più varia di arti, culture e tradizioni in grandi istituzioni consolidate, ma non come l'unico o il principale punto d'intervento. In realtà, viene messa in dubbio qualsiasi visione pluralistica di piena inclusione in siti privilegiati (come il Mall di Washington, D.C.: un museo nazionale di musei).¹⁷ Una prospettiva di contatto parla a favore della specificità locale/globale di lotte e scelte relative a inclusione, integrità, dialogo, traduzione, qualità e controllo. E parla a favore di una distribuzione di risorse (attenzione dei *media*, fondi pubblici e privati) che riconosca i diversi tipi di pubblico e le storie d'incontro molteplicemente centrate. Considerata la storia dei musei nello Stato borghese euroamericano, e in effetti in qualsiasi contesto nazionale, questo punto di vista potrebbe sembrare utopico. È utopia in tono minore, la visione di una manifestazione ineguale e di un incontro locale piuttosto che di una trasformazione globale. Dà la precedenza a iniziative forti, benché precarie, iniziative che portano a scontrarsi con eredità gerarchiche consolidate.

Queste eredità sono state di recente sottoposte a una minuziosa analisi critica e storica. Lo sviluppo di musei pubblici nell'Europa e

¹⁷ Naturalmente, i gruppi esclusi in precedenza potrebbero includere, al Mall, un obiettivo politico. Ma questa sarà una strategia, collegata ad altre, decentralizzata o diversamente centrata, non inserita nello spazio immaginato dello Stato nazionale globale. Sotto questo aspetto, sarà importante osservare come il nuovo Museum of the American Indian, situato a Washington e New York, collabura con una serie d'istituzioni tribali. Il concetto generale che qui sto formulando riecheggia il «multiculturalismo policentrico» di Shohat e Stam, da essi distinto chiaramente dal pluralismo liberale (1994, pp. 46-49).

nell'America del secolo XIX era parte di un tentativo generale di fornire e organizzare la «cultura» dall'alto. I musei accumulavano il «capitale simbolico» di élites tradizionali ed emergenti (Bourdieu, 1984). Istituzionalizzavano una distinzione, che andava rafforzandosi, tra attività «intellettuali» e «popolari» (Levine, 1988). I «pubblici» cui si rivolgevano e di cui collezionavano i «patrimoni» erano costituiti da progetti nazionalistici borghesi (Duncan, 1991). Nel secolo XIX, una serie d'importanti «riforme legislative e amministrative [...] trasformarono i musei da istituzioni semiprivatizzate, ampiamente limitate alle classi dominanti e ai professionisti, in importanti organi statali dedicati all'istruzione ed edificazione del pubblico generico» (Bennett, 1988, p. 63). Nel secolo XX, i musei hanno svolto un ruolo centrale nella produzione e fruizione di «patrimonio» in una gamma sconcerante di contesti locali, nazionali e transnazionali (Walsh, 1992), partecipi integranti d'industrie turistiche in espansione (MacCannell, 1976; Horne, 1984; Urry, 1990). In quanto istituzione emersa con lo Stato borghese e nazionale e con il capitalismo industriale e commerciale, il museo ha un destino collegato alla diffusione globale e agli adattamenti locali di questi elementi.

Il collegamento con il mercato e con la mercificazione capitalistica è stato tracciato da Neil Harris (1990) nel suo provocatorio confronto tra musei e grandi magazzini nell'America settentrionale dei secoli XIX e XX. A partire dagli anni quaranta del nostro secolo, afferma Harris, i musei sono stati ampiamente eclissati dagli empori commerciali quali siti di esposizione di arte e oggetti nonché per l'edificazione del gusto popolare. Ma recentemente molti grandi musei sono più orientati verso il consumatore, con un concomitante cambiamento d'immagine.

Se l'attrattiva e il richiamo pubblico diventano gli obiettivi del museo, in effetti come si distingue esso da una qualsiasi istituzione commerciale che esiste principalmente allo scopo di vendere? [...] Che il museo, nuovo palazzo dei divertimenti, sia diventato semplicemente un altro rifugio, un rifugio non per oggetti e arte ma per particolari tipi di bagni di memoria e rituali di visita di sale espositive, un punto d'incontro quantificato, certificato e collettivo, che possa foggare modelli di acquisto ma difficilmente migliorarli? Un tempo, i musei erano accusati di prestare troppo poca attenzione ai desideri e ai bisogni di milioni di profani. Ora, in un'altra epoca, essi sono accusati di incoraggiare al piacere della pertinenza, del dramma e della polarità. (Harris, 1990, p. 81)

Comunque questi sviluppi siano valutati, e quali che siano le possibili

lità di patrocinio politico-culturale aperte dall'abbandono, sempre più sincero, dei vecchi ideali di neutralità estetica e scientifica (p. 95), Harris conclude che le «fortune mutevoli del museo quanto a influenza pubblica suggeriscono capacità che sono grandi, crescenti e dotate di variazioni quasi infinite» (p. 81).¹⁸

Il «museo» cui Harris si riferisce è un'istituzione occidentale, ampiamente metropolitana. Ma la sua idea di una macchina dinamica e orientata al consumatore, intesa a raccogliere ed esporre oggetti di valore artistico, culturale e commerciale ha evidenti ramificazioni globali. L'«accumulazione flessibile» (Harvey, 1989) di tradizioni, identità, arte e stili associati con l'espansione capitalistica contemporanea sostiene la proliferazione di musei in quello che potrebbe essere cinicamente chiamato un grande magazzino globale di culture. Kevin Walsh (1992) allarga questa prospettiva generale in una pungente critica di «musei e patrimonio in un mondo postmoderno». Walsh allarga la visione di David Harvey di una cultura capitalistica globalizzante: un'inesorabile erosione del «luogo», di persistenti significati locali del tempo collettivo, e la sostituzione di concezioni del passato poco profonde, spettacolari e meramente nostalgiche. Il patrimonio culturale sostituisce la storia, contribuendo a un'articolazione egemonica d'interessi nazionali e di classe. Basandosi su *The Heritage Industry*, di Robert Hewison (1987), Walsh colloca la recente, rapida moltiplicazione dei musei in Inghilterra in un periodo di declino industriale/imperiale e di restrizioni Thatcheriane. Egli trova all'opera simili manifestazioni egemoniche neoliberali in qualsiasi luogo in cui delle società in mutamento, impegnate con un capitalismo in espansione, rappresentano e consumino il loro passato come patrimonio. La mercificazione di passati locali è parte di un processo di «de-differenziazione» culturale.

L'analisi di Walsh e Harvey del *marketing* «postmoderno» del patrimonio è un resoconto necessario, ma insufficiente, delle molte attività che si verificano dentro e attraverso i musei. Una prospettiva di contatto, come sostiene Pratt, complica i modelli diffusionistici, sia-

¹⁸ Gli attuali concorrenti commerciali e *alter ego* dei musei sono i parchi a tema e i centri commerciali. Nello sforzo di fornire luoghi d'incontro sicuri e divertimenti edificanti alla classe media, alcuni grandi musei urbani hanno allestito propri negozi, caffè e ristoranti di lusso. Con la diminuzione dei fondi governativi e locali, molti grandi musei stanno diventando più simili ad aziende e sempre più orientati verso il consumatore, seguendo una traiettoria simile a quella delle università. Cfr. Reading (1995) per una pungente analisi delle attuali tendenze istituzionali.

no essi celebrativi (la marcia di civilizzazione ed esplorazione occidentale) o critici (l'inesorabile diffusione dei sistemi di merce capitalistici). Walsh riconosce, a volte, che il suo approccio semplifica eccessivamente, e cita l'avvertenza di Mike Featherstone: «La logica binaria che cerca di comprendere la cultura mediante i termini reciprocamente esclusivi di omogeneità/eterogeneità, integrazione/disintegrazione, unità/diversità dev'essere scartata. Nel migliore dei casi, queste coppie concettuali operano su una faccia sola di quel complesso prisma che è la cultura» (riportato in Walsh, 1992). Tuttavia il resoconto di Walsh si incentra sui primi termini della serie.¹⁹

Con differenti valenze politiche, i musei esprimono gli interessi degli Stati nazionali, delle comunità locali e tribali e del capitale transnazionale. Ovunque il costume, la tradizione, l'arte (élite o popolare), la storia, la scienza e la tecnologia locali siano raccolti e messi in mostra - per scopi di prestigio, mobilitazione politica, commemorazione, turismo o istruzione - ci si può aspettare che sorgano musei e istituzioni similari. Gli spazi di collezione, memoria ed esposizione contrassegnati dal termine «museo» sono molteplici e trasmessi da una cultura all'altra. Storie diverse conducono in questi spazi di contatto, diversi obblighi con la modernità/postmodernità, diverse «nostalgie» (Stewart, 1988; Ivy, 1995). I «musei» tribali, per esempio, riflettono forme di accumulazione, memoria ed esposizione sia indigene sia occidentali. Proiettano una visione della storia intesa come lotta, sopravvivenza, rinnovamento e differenza. Barnaby e Hall (1990) forniscono una relazione informativa sul Dene Cultural Institute, promosso nel 1986 dai delegati della nazione dene rappresentante i popoli gwich'in, slavery, dogrib, chipewyan e cree dei territori del

¹⁹ In Inghilterra sono in corso i «dibattiti sull'eredità culturale». Il brillante *On Living in an Old Country* (1987), di Patrick Wright, fu seguito rapidamente da *The Heritage Industry* (1987) di Robert Hewison, e da molte altre critiche di un passato nazionale romanizzato, composto di signorili case di campagna, pittoreschi paesaggi, abili artigiani e industriali lavoratori. Recentemente, Raphael Samuel (1994) ha lanciato un contratto in cui rivendica una storia più democratica per i progetti di protezione della natura e accusa i critici di snobismo. La sua stessa nostalgia populista di sinistra non è passata inosservata. Finora, il dibattito si è intensamente incentrato sull'Inghilterra. Walsh, benché tenda a generalizzare eccessivamente il contesto thatcheriano, ha il merito di orientare il mercato verso l'eredità culturale intesa come fenomeno globale. Tuttavia, io rimango colpito per come i molteplici investimenti nell'«eredità culturale» sono articolati nelle diverse situazioni locali/globali. Nello spirito dell'opera di Featherstone, dobbiamo riconoscere che il dibattito stesso sull'eredità culturale è un elemento di cultura globale e non dovrebbe essere risolto in modo troppo deciso in un senso o nell'altro.

Nordovest canadese. L'istituto riflette una consapevole decisione tribale di conservare e ripristinare la cultura dene come parte di un movimento per i diritti aborigeni e il controllo dello sviluppo delle risorse. L'istituto si è occupato di storia orale, rivitalizzazione linguistica, medicina tradizionale, uso della terra, pubblica istruzione e raccolta di archivi e manufatti. È in progetto uno spazio espositivo per i materiali dene. Qui, chiaramente, la funzione del museo è parte integrante della più ampia opera di un centro culturale. È essenziale porre attenzione all'interrelazione, al peso relativo e all'impulso politico di queste funzioni in differenti articolazioni istituzionali del patrimonio.²⁰

Paragonate il resoconto di Schildkraut (1996) sull'apertura dell'Asante Manhyia Palace Museum del Ghana, una diversissima affermazione di autorità tradizionale, in questo caso regale. Concetti alternativi di tradizione e modernità possono essere espressi in musei nella misura in cui questi riflettono iniziative locali e incarnano alleanze e conversazioni reali tra membri della comunità e professionisti esterni: l'ideale dell'«ecomuseo» di George-Henri Rivière (Rivière, 1985). E, nell'ambito di contesti nazionali dominanti, si possono fare importanti distinzioni nella produzione e nel consumo di «patrimonio». Come ha notato Tony Bennett, la politica di conservazione britannica è in genere conservatrice; presupposto questo che Raphael Samuel complica (1994). Un museo quale lo Hyde Park Barracks di Sydney riflette la politica globale del «nuovo nazionalismo» laburista. Insiadandosi in edifici originariamente costruiti per alloggiare i criminali deportati, il museo annunciava la sua intenzione di rappresentare la storia australiana che era stata esclusa dalle visioni più celebrative e consensuali (Bennett, 1988, p. 80).

Perché le pratiche museali si sono dimostrate così mobili, così produttive in collocazioni diverse? Vari fattori interdipendenti sono all'opera. La capacità di articolare identità, tradizione e potere è cruciale, perché collega le origini aristocratiche dell'istituzione con le sue mo-

²⁰ Un'istituzione nativa relativamente moderna che è progettata per l'esibizione di «cultura» e che necessita di essere trattata con la stessa attenzione dedicata a funzioni, contesti e tipi di pubblico diversi è il *pow-wow*. Basati sulla danza tradizionale e sulle convenzioni sociali, affini ai movimenti panindiani del secolo xx di Stati Uniti e Canada, i *pow-wows* sono occasioni ricche d'inventiva, popolari allo stesso modo presso i turisti e i nativi, spesso per ragioni piuttosto diverse. Blundell (1989) fornisce un complesso resoconto. Cfr. anche le mie riflessioni sull'Onga Cultural Centre (altopiano della Nuova Guinea), *supra*, cap. 6.

derne derivazioni nazionalistiche e «culturalistiche». I musei fungono anche da cassa di risonanza per un'ampia gamma di attività locali di raccolta, esposizione e intrattenimento. Accumulare ed esporre oggetti di valore è, indiscutibilmente, un'attività umana molto diffusa, non limitata a nessuna classe o gruppo culturale. Entro ampi limiti, un museo può accogliere sistemi diversi di accumulazione e circolazione, di segretezza e comunicazione, di valore estetico, spirituale ed economico. Come viene definito il suo «pubblico» o «comunità», quale individuo, gruppo, idea o ideologia esso celebra, come interpreta i fenomeni che presenta, per quanto tempo rimane immutato, con quale rapidità cambia: sono tutti elementi su cui è possibile discutere. Radunare in un museo i tesori e la storia di un individuo o di un gruppo si sovrappone a pratiche quali raccogliere cose degne di memoria, riempire un album di fotografie o conservare un altare. In alcuni casi, i musei sono sostenuti da relativamente poche risorse: l'energia di un appassionato o collezionista locale e di qualche volontario. Le comunità o gli individui che tradizionalmente avrebbero potuto esprimere il loro senso d'identità e potere dando una festa o costruendo un tempio o una chiesa potrebbero ora (anche) sostenere un museo.

In un contesto globale in cui l'identità collettiva si esprime sempre più nell'aver una cultura (un modo di vita, una tradizione, una forma d'arte o di artigianato), i musei assumono un senso. Essi presuppongono un pubblico esterno (intenditori nazionali e internazionali, turisti, studiosi, conservatori, viaggiatori «colti», giornalisti e simili). Questi potrebbero non essere l'unico e nemmeno il principale tipo di pubblico per mostre e *performances* culturali, ma non sono mai del tutto assenti. Quando una comunità si mette in mostra attraverso collezioni e cerimonie spettacolari, costituisce un «interno» e un «esterno». Il messaggio d'identità è diretto in modo diverso a membri ed esterni: i primi sono invitati a prendere parte alla ricchezza simbolica, i secondi sono mantenuti come spettatori o parzialmente integrati, siano essi intenditori o turisti. Dal momento del loro sorgere come istituzioni pubbliche nell'Europa del secolo XIX, i musei si sono dimostrati utili per comunità organizzate politicamente, che radunano e valutano un «noi». Questa struttura articolata – che abbia uno scopo nazionale o regionale, etnico o tribale – raccoglie, celebra, commemora, valuta e vende (direttamente e indirettamente) un modo di vita. Nel processo di mantenimento di una comunità immaginata, esso inoltre confronta «altri»

ed esclude ciò che è «inautentico». È questa la sostanza di politiche culturali contemporanee, creative e virulente, messe in atto nei contesti culturali sovrapposti di colonizzazione/decolonizzazione, formazione nazionale/affermazioni di minoranza, espansione del mercato capitalistico/strategie di consumatori.

Il «mondo dei musei» è diverso e dinamico. In proporzioni variabili, le differenti zone di contatto che ho individuato prendono parte a un *marketing* postmoderno del patrimonio, all'esposizione dell'identità come cultura o arte. E non c'è dubbio che il museo-struttura di cultura – tradizione oggettivata, costruita come un valore morale/estetico e come una merce scambiabile – sia sempre più diffuso. Le aspirazioni tanto di popolazioni dominanti quanto di popolazioni subalterne possono essere articolate attraverso questa struttura, insieme agli interessi materiali del turismo nazionale e transnazionale. «Avere» una cultura, ha dimostrato Richard Handler (1985b, 1993a), significa essere un collezionista, coinvolto nel gioco di possedere e valutare selettivamente modi di vivere. Ma quanto completamente coinvolto? Che cos'altro accade nelle articolazioni tribali e locali in genere della cultura? Quanto è unificata la costellazione di formazioni economico-culturali che chiamiamo postmodernismo? E il sistema mondiale? E il tardo capitalismo? Non affrettiamoci a escludere. I musei, quei simboli elitari e stabilmente immobili, stanno proliferando a un ritmo notevole: dalle nuove capitali nazionali ai villaggi melanesiani, dalle miniere di carbone abbandonate della Gran Bretagna ai quartieri etnici metropolitani. Zone di contatto locale/globale, siti di formazione d'identità e transculturazione, di contenimento ed eccesso, queste istituzioni simboleggiano un futuro ambiguo di diversità «culturale».

James Clifford

DIP. STUDI LINGUISTICI E ORIENTALI
inv. 510 8948
UNIVERSITA' DI BOLOGNA

Strade

Viaggio e traduzione alla fine del secolo xx

Bollati Boringhieri

Prima edizione nella collana «Nuova Cultura» novembre 1999

© 1999 Bollati Boringhieri editore s.r.l., Torino, corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 86
I diritti di memorizzazione elettronica, di riproduzione e di adattamento totale
o parziale con qualsiasi mezzo (compresi i microfilm e le copie fotostatiche)
sono riservati

Stampato in Italia dalla Stampatre di Torino
ISBN 88-339-1148-9

Titolo originale *Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*
Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) - London 1997

© 1997 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College

Traduzione di Michele Sampaolo (capp. 1-4 e 9-12) e Giuliana Lomazzi (capp. 5-8)

Schema grafico della copertina di Pierluigi Cerri

Indice

9	<i>Prologo. In medias res</i>
<i>Parte prima Viaggi</i>	
27	1. Culture in viaggio
65	2. Uno spirito tra i melanesiani
70	3. Pratiche spaziali: il lavoro sul campo, il viaggio e la definizione dell'antropologia come disciplina
122	4. Etnicità bianca
<i>Parte seconda Contatti</i>	
139	5. Quattro musei della costa nordoccidentale: riflessioni di viaggio
185	6. Paradiso
233	7. Musei come zone di contatto
272	8. Diario di viaggio a Palenque
<i>Parte terza Futuri</i>	
295	9. L'Anno dell'Ariete. Honolulu, 2 febbraio 1991
299	10. Diaspore

343 I I. Immigrante

364 I 2. Meditazione su Fort Ross

421 Riferimenti bibliografici

453 Nota ai testi

455 Ringraziamenti

557 Indice analitico

Prologo

In medias res

Per Judith

The Imam and the Indian, un racconto autobiografico di Amitav Ghosh, è una parabola per molti problemi che cerco di affrontare in questo libro. Narra l'incontro tra un etnografo impegnato in una ricerca sul campo e alcuni sconcertanti abitanti di un villaggio egiziano.

Quando arrivai per la prima volta in quel tranquillo angolo del delta del Nilo, mi aspettavo di trovare, in quella terra di antichissimo insediamento, un popolo insediato e tranquillo. Non avrei potuto commettere un errore più grande. Gli uomini del villaggio avevano tutti l'affaccendata irrequietezza dei passeggeri in transito, in attesa tra un aereo e l'altro. Molti avevano lavorato e viaggiato negli sciccati del Golfo Persico, altri erano stati in Libia e in Giordania e in Siria, qualcuno era stato nello Yemen come soldato, qualcun altro in Arabia Saudita come pellegrino, e c'era anche chi aveva visitato l'Europa: alcuni di loro avevano passaporti così gonfi che si aprivano come organetti neri d'inchostro.

Il villaggio rurale tradizionale come sala d'aspetto di un aeroporto. È difficile immaginare una metafora migliore della condizione post-moderna, del nuovo ordine mondiale fatto di mobilità, di storie senza radici. Ma non corriamo troppo...

E niente di tutto questo era nuovo: i loro nonni e antenati e parenti avevano anch'essi viaggiato, erano anch'essi emigrati, più o meno come i miei, nel subcontinente indiano a causa delle guerre, o in cerca di soldi e di lavoro, o magari semplicemente perché si erano stancati di vivere sempre nello stesso posto. Si poteva leggere la storia di quella irrequietezza nei cognomi della gente del villaggio, derivati da città del Levante, dalla Turchia, da remote cittadine nubiane; era come se fossero approdati qui, trascinati dalla corrente, uomini provenienti da ogni angolo del Medio Oriente. La sete di vagabondaggio dei suoi fondatori si era incorporata nel stolo del villaggio: qualche volta mi sembrava che ogni singolo uomo, in quel posto, fosse un viaggiatore (Ghosh, 1986, p. 135).

Amitav Ghosh – un nativo dell'India che ha studiato in «un'antica università inglese» e ha lavorato sul campo come antropologo in Egit-

Publication: Museum Worlds Advances in Research

ISSN: 2049-6729

Publisher: Berghahn Journals

Year: 2013 (Vol. 1, Issue 1)

Author: Anthony Shelton

Pages: 7-23 (Critical Museology. A Manifesto)



ARTICLES

Critical Museology

A Manifesto

Anthony Shelton

■ **ABSTRACT:** Synthesizing work carried out by the author over the past twenty-five years, this article proposes a tentative disciplinary definition of critical museology, distinguishing its related methodological interdictions and describing its distinctiveness from what is here defined as operational museology. The article acknowledges the diverse intellectual sources that have informed the subject and calls for a reorientation and separation of critical museology from the operational museologies that form part of its area of study.

Critical museology, it is argued, is not only an essential intellectual tool for better understanding museums, related exhibitionary institutions, fields of patrimony and counter patrimonies, and the global and local flows and conditions in which they are embedded, but is also crucial for developing new exhibitionary genres, telling untold stories, rearticulating knowledge systems for public dissemination, reimagining organizational and management structures, and repurposing museums and galleries in line with multicultural and intercultural states and communities.

■ **KEYWORDS:** complexity theory, critical museology, deconstructionism, heritage, museum anthropology, museum studies, museum theory

There is not one but three museologies, critical, praxiological, and operational, each defined by a particular epistemological position, method or technique, communicative media, and practice. Critical and praxiological museologies are focused on the study and exploration of operational museology—critical museology from a narrative multidisciplinary perspective, and praxiological museology through visual and performative media.

Praxiological museology is closely related to 'institutional critique' and the work of artists like Marcel Broodthaers, Lothar Baumgarten, Andrea Fraser, Jimmie Durham, Fred Wilson, Hans Haacke, and Joseph Kosuth; it is also closely related to new realism through the work of Edward Paolozzi and Martial Raysse, as well as other artists as diverse as Peter Greenaway, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Gabriel Orozco, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Mark Dion, particularly his archaeological digs (Fribourg 1995; Umbertide 1976; Venice 1997–1998; London 1999) aimed at ques-



tioning established classificatory systems and the relation between empirical knowledge and 'amateur' fictions. Since these three museologies have been discussed in earlier publications (Shelton 1997, 2001a), I will focus for the purpose of the manifesto only on critical museology and its relationship to operational museology.

Operational museology is that body of knowledge, rules of application, procedural and ethical protocols, organizational structures and regulatory interdictions, and their products (exhibitions and programs) that constitute the field of 'practical' museology. In addition, it comprises the related professional organizations; accredited courses; systems of internship; mentorship and peer review; conference cycles; and seminars and publications by which it regulates and reproduces its institutionalized narratives and discourses. Operational museology combines, rationalizes, and essentializes different discourses derived from epistemologically distinct systems of knowledge and ethical interdictions into a seemingly discrete and coherent subject that over the past half century has been increasingly taught in universities, credited by professional associations, and applied in museums and galleries internationally. In the past twelve years operational museology has stimulated an avalanche of professional and academic conferences, books, papers, and readers in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. However, with few exceptions (Ames 1986, 1992; Macdonald and Silverstone 1991; Macdonald 1998; Hainard and Gonseth 2002; Handler and Gable 1997; Porto 2009; Guasch and Zulaika 2005), the disciplinary architecture and institutional cultures of operational museology have escaped sustained analysis or deconstruction (Hainard and Gonseth 2002: 15; Padró 2003: 51; Díaz Balerdi 2008: 15).

Critical museology has as its subject the study of operational museology. As a field of study it interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optical regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse organizational structures that taken together constitute a field of cultural and artistic production, articulated through public and private museums; heritage sites; gardens; memorials; exhibition halls; cultural centers; and art galleries (Bennett 1995; Canclini 1995). These fields are clearly related to competing subfields of power relations and economic regimes that are made partially visible through ideas and counter ideas of patrimony and social identity (Bourdieu 1993: 30; Canclini 1995: 108).

Critical museology is distinct from Peter Vergo's (1989) *The New Museology* (cf Lorente 2003: 15, 2012: 70), which never defined a distinct field or method of study, or subjected the 'old' museology to sustained critical evaluation. Given the title's promise, it is curious that the theoretical apparatus, previous critiques formulated against the 'old' museology, or organizational reorientations implemented or discussed by protagonists like Georges-Henri Rivière, Pierre Mayrand, André Desvallées, Jan Jelínek, or Vinos Sofka were largely unacknowledged (Gómez Martínez 2006: 274–275; Lorente 2012: 50–51). In Britain, it was the contributors to a different volume, Robert Lumley's *The Museum Time Machine*, which appeared the year prior to Vergo's work, who better expressed the growing disquiet about traditional museological presuppositions and operations. The volume's critical trajectory was anticipated by the conference organized by Brian Durrans, *Making Exhibitions of Ourselves: The Limits of Objectivity in the Representation of Other Cultures* (British Museum, 1986), and through the questions raised by Malcolm McLeod and Edward Paolozzi in their *Lost Magic Kingdoms* exhibition (Museum of Mankind, 1985), as well as the curatorial practices of Charles Hunt, undertaken just a little after Jacques Hainard's experiments at the Museum of Ethnography in Neuchâtel. In his useful synopsis of the international development of museological thinking, Pedro Lorente (2012: 80) rightly confirms anthropology's importance to the emergence of critical museology in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, the discipline's cross-fertilization with critical theory, sociology, history, historiography, and cultural studies, and the influence of Hainard's own work, which was openly discussed at the Museum of Mankind during this period, should not be underestimated.

Critical museology is predicated on four general epistemological positions that stand in sharp contrast to those endemic to operational museology, and seven basic methodological interdictions that might initially guide its application.

Epistemological Positions

1. History does not exist independent of human perception and cognition, and is constructed by society. It is governed neither by revelation or laws, and is neither spiritually nor materially transcendent of humanity. Furthermore, history is not unitary or unified, but is constructed in distinct ways by different societies. Neither is history necessarily linear nor cumulative. History is composed through the articulation of structures of events that orchestrate causal relations between different conditions, actions, and mentalities to create explanatory frameworks of the past. These frameworks exist as distinct event structures, which are sorted and rationalized to constitute national, minority, or universal histories, each legitimated by supposed truth criteria, which impute it conviction and ensure its reproduction and dissemination through museums, galleries, archives, print and electronic media, and the educational system. Certeau (1988) argues for the absolute incommensurability between the alterity of the past and the 'operations' of historical discourses to capture it, 'operations' that inevitably conclude by being overwhelmed themselves by the enormity of such alterity. This has led the historian Ged Martin to conclude that history is "[s]ocially necessary, but intellectually impossible" (2004: 14), a position not unlike that espoused by Michael Ames (1992: 110) for museums of anthropology.

In *The Savage Mind* (1966), Claude Lévi-Strauss, anticipating part of Certeau's later critique, had already argued that 'history' does not possess a uniform or homogeneous consistency, but is constituted through different 'densities' of events. Some historical periods have left rich documentary legacies that provide materials with which causal relations can be constructed, and the resulting interpretations compared to others assembled from like documentation to test the original causal hypothesis. Other periods, however, with a paucity of documentation and their consequent 'lighter' temporal density, are only able to support a thinner and more fragile structure of events. All such structures may be supplemented by archaeological or art historical 'evidence', but in so doing become epistemologically heterogeneous. 'History' then brings these causally inflicted event structures together in a linear projection to compose master narratives, which are appropriated and manipulated by specific interest groups or national and global communities.

History is not only internally differentiated and made up of different densities of time, which determine the conditions and possibilities for the establishment of causal relationships, but every event structure is also made up of different, often competing, structurations of time. Georges Gurvitch, in *The Social Spectrum of Time* (1964), distinguishes between distinct social groups and 'sociabilities' to which he attributes specific historical orientations. Groups experience time differently and consequently structure it in different ways. Furthermore, before the collapse and reduction of the category of time to indices of mechanical movement, and the imposition of the clock to measure such movement, time was marked in different ways, each of which imparted it with a distinctive qualitative character. The fragmentary and unevenly articulated event structures that we describe as constituting history are therefore neither uniform nor unitary; they constitute a heterogeneity of structures that obscure the multiple ways time is experienced and articulated within them.

Universal history is a 'representation' of representations, though as Belting (2003: 66) has noted in the case of art history, one that has internal limitations in its efficacy to encode and transmit a collective memory and that after all is the product of a specific civilization and his-

tory. In exhibitions and textual works, Fernando Estévez González (2004, 2010) has resolutely argued that the past is irrecoverable and can only be grasped through its relationships to a socially constructed present, which is always mediated differentially through unequal power relations. Archives, including museums, never protect or ensure authentic pasts, but, as explored in his exhibition *El Pasado en el Presente* (Tenerife, 2001), reconstitute them within the terms of the present; this process of essentialization involves a series of 'operations' not unlike those employed to create normative landscapes formulated from the freezing of time that Bender identifies with the construction of heritage sites (1998: 26). Museums have been legitimated in operational museology as embodiments of a long genealogy of institutions—the heirs of the library of Alexandria, church treasuries, cabinets of curiosities, and Enlightenment collections (Bazin 1967; Pearce 1989)—that implicitly accept an empirical, cumulative, and noncritical attitude to history fundamentally opposed to the 'archaeological' view essential to critical scholarship. The foundation and operational narratives with which museums legitimate themselves must always be subjected to skeptical scrutiny. Every history is a constructed fiction and every fiction has its own history.

2. The figure of the collector has long been prioritized to give operational museology historical continuity and impart it an objective legitimacy. Collecting, it has been argued (Cabanne 1963; Pearce 1989), has characterized every society and every period in the history of human development and, as I have argued elsewhere, has been naturalized in the work of these authors to become a fundamental psychological predisposition common to the whole of humanity (Shelton 2006: 481–482). Even our species identity (materialist, acquisitive, and competitive) has been defined by our universal propensity to collect. The justification of such activity however, in operational museology, is not attributed to its origin in history but to a transcendental psychological drive (Baudrillard 1981; Muensterberger 1994; Belk 1995). The legitimation of human materialism, acquisitiveness, and competitiveness is, in operational museology, guaranteed by supposed transcendental laws that exist and govern behavior independent of society, but whose effects can be demonstrated and 'proven' by museums asserting a 'truth effect' disseminated through the underlying presuppositions upon which exhibitions and programs are based. Museums legitimate their own 'stories' and activities by reference to transcendental criteria.

Operational museology further accepts that collecting is conditioned by well-defined and explicit ideal modalities. Susan Stewart ([1984] 1993) and Susan Pearce (1989) distinguished three modalities of collecting: fetishistic, souvenir, and systematic. Fetishistic collections are those that have been amassed through a pathological fixation that substitutes a specific type or order of objects in place of the 'normative' sexual impulse. Souvenir collecting is likewise centered on the ego. Here, following Stewart, the individual condenses personal experience of a time and space within an object that then contains his or her subjective memories. Only the systematic collection escapes the confines of the ego, they argue, by subordinating itself to the fulfillment of the rules of a transcendental objectivist taxonomic science. Here, accumulation is regulated by its focus on specific, systematically defined classes of objects, which share a supposed common ('natural') affinity. Only this latter modality, because collecting is regulated by natural taxonomy, is considered 'scientific' and therefore deemed useful for museum-based research and exhibition. In her 1989 book, Pearce used this typology to distinguish between legitimate (systematic) and illegitimate (fetishistic and souvenir) collecting to delineate the division between ethically responsible and irresponsible acquisition. By focusing collecting on the acquisition of systematically constituted object classes, museums are confirmed as scientific institutions and their work relegitimated according to what Lyotard (1984) refers to as a Humboldtian metanarrative that values science for its emancipatory propensity.

Collecting, however, does not fall so neatly into typologies, as many collectors themselves have insisted when discussing their personal or group motivations (Blom 2002; Miller 2008; Shelton 2006, 2011), and in a later work Pearce (1991) herself revises her position to acknowledge that motivations probably draw and combine together all three criteria that she and Stewart had earlier defined. Nevertheless, by reducing the motivations behind collecting to a tripartite psychologically based typology, operational museology has been able to construct and objectify a history through which museum practice was effectively legitimated (Shelton 2001b, 2006). This reduction of history to the play of psychological processes obfuscates the heterogeneous and conflicted contexts in which many collections were made (Fabian 2000; Gosden and Knowles 2001), the political and social contexts of how they were used (Coombes 1994; Levell 2000; O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000; Henare 2005; Elliott and Shambaugh 2005), and their role in defining personal identity (Bann 1994; Miller 2008: 293). Moreover, in some societies where individualism is subordinated to collective identity, psychological explanations may be entirely invalid. Álvaro Armero (2009: 27) is one of few scholars who, while suspecting that biological drives might motivate the propensity to collect nevertheless acknowledges the heterogeneous and nonessentialized directions in which collecting can develop. More fruitful still is the phenomenological approach that sees objects as inseparable from the subject perceiving them. In this formulation, objects seduce and fascinate us without ever imparting us any of their intrinsic identity—the only meaning we can know is that which we ourselves invest in them. Objects are experienced as close and comforting, but nevertheless, existentially, are always distant and alien (Schwenger 2006).

Studies of collecting should not forget what is uncollected and the relation and interpenetration between different regimes of value to better understand how systems of desire are personally mediated (cf. Miller 2008). Such foci may reveal synergies between collectors and what Leah Dilworth has called “meta museums,” museums that disrupt and lay bare established rhetoric and celebrate “epistemological dilemmas” (2003: 5), or what Jacques Hainard has called a museology of rupture. A critical museology would aim to rescue museology from both the dead hands of an objectivist history and from psychological reductionism or “cold passion” (Armero 2009), in order to restore a critical and reflexive historical approach to understanding the assemblage of collections and the development of collection-based institutions (Shelton 1997, 2006, 2007b).

3. It will by now be clear that operational museology has constructed the museum's institutional authority on an uncritical acceptance of empirical methodologies anchored in theories of objectivity. The institution of curatorship, based on the privilege it accords material or visual culture as its source of knowledge, is one of the essential guarantors of this self-same authority. Museums reproduce a teleological circle in which curatorship guarantees the knowledge-value of material culture, while the knowledge-value of material culture reciprocally guarantees the curatorial authority on which museums are based. Jacques Hainard has explored this operation extensively in a series of exhibitions at the Museum of Ethnography, Neuchâtel, that culminated in *Le musée cannaibale* (2002). In Hainard and Gonseth's view,

to feed the visitors of their exhibitions, museologists take from their reserves pieces of the world's material cultures. To prepare these objects they use recipes meant to bring to light the contrasts and similarities existing between the worlds of here and there. To do this, they have more or less agreed on a rhetoric which remains poorly analyzed and put into practice without method or system, wherein they mix juxtaposition, aestheticization, sacralization, mimesis, changes of scale and hybridization, logical relations and poetic associations, exhibiting their items either simply in showcases or in complex three-dimensional ways. (2002: 15)

Díaz Balerdi (2008: 67) reiterates the unquenchable appetite of museums for increasing their collections and transforming objects into exhibitions, publications, and programs, while at the same time concealing them in stores and warehouses to ensure their public face at least appears slim, slender and cool. For him, following the digestive metaphor, museums show all the symptoms of bulimia.

Objects, in the context of museum displays, not only act as signifiers but signifieds too. Their presence is not only a condition of their existence, but also a guarantor therefore of their meaning. They are performed as if they contain within them both form (optical evidence) and meaning (authority), which the curator traditionally had responsibility to unfold and make explicit to the wider public (Padró 2002: 54). For this reason authenticity, and the knowledges, technologies, and certifications that guarantee the object's 'purity' or 'sanitization', assume overwhelming importance in much curatorial work, while the proliferation of replicas, imitations material, and virtual copies (Estévez González 2010: 36) and the mutual 'impingements' of the authentic and the restored (Eco 1986), issues that raise fundamental questions, are only at best reluctantly acknowledged by operational museology. What is 'authentic', it needs be asked, in an increasingly hybrid world in which technology has the capacity to intervene through diverse operations to preserve, conserve, restore, and repair and reverse the effect of historical decay to mediate cultural and natural extinction? Is such obfuscation an effect of the museum's intention to always create order where none necessarily exists, not dissimilar from the operations of scientific laboratories, where the social and technical are intermingled and alternative scientific hypotheses are limited and restrained by the imposition of frameworks (Latour and Woolgar 1986: 36–37)? The application of the sciences of preservation is likewise culturally mediated (Clavir 2002: 54). The idea that objects have significance independent of their mediation through consciousness is, given the arguments of Barthes (1972, 1994), Baudrillard (1981, 1983), Certeau (1988), Appadurai (1986), and Kopytoff (1986), difficult to uphold, as is evidenced by the sustained criticism positivist material culture studies have received both by processual archaeologists and exponents of "new material culture studies" (Tilley et al. 2006). If objects and meanings are not held together by any 'naturalized' binding relationship—except that arbitrarily attributed to them—not only can an object's meaning change and differ at specific stages in its 'life history', but the nature of the simulacra through which it becomes imminent might itself change. Kopytoff (1986) and Baudrillard (1981) introduced a paradigmatic shift in material culture studies whose implications for curatorial work and the status of museum authority continue to be poorly appreciated within the profession. The move from an objectivist to a subjectivist concept of knowledge, as Jacques Hainard, Fernando Estévez González, Mary Bouquet, Bruno Latour, and Nuno Porto, among others, have repeatedly demonstrated in their curatorial strategies, retain enormous potential to generate new heterologies and explode the limited range of existing exhibition genres.

4. Related to these critiques of objectivist interpretations of the object is the precept that signifiers themselves have no common 'valency' in their relation to signifieds. Baudrillard (1983: 83) returned repeatedly to distinguish four different reality effects or simulacra that are created as a result of the distinct and irreducible relations constructed between signifiers and signifieds and among different categories of signifiers themselves. Baudrillard first isolated three simulacra as a typology that appeared to succeed each other chronologically. Later a fourth, viral simulacra, was identified which appeared to be specific to the contemporary world. Nevertheless, no such tidy chronological order exists in a society that is now nearly totally globalized and in which specific groups and ethnicities operate within and between different simulacra that coexist and sometimes overlap at the same time. Such simulacra are no longer restricted to

particular ethnicities and geographical spaces but may be specific ways of thinking that stretch between distinct cultures and geographies, as in Eco's (1986) and Baudrillard's (1989) hyper-realities. Under these conditions, increasing complexities and ambiguities within and between cultures and societies are exacerbated to the extent that any simple correspondence between object and meaning in museum displays hides, at best, a crass disequivalence that obfuscates our wider experience of existence. Operational museology develops within a field whose reality is constantly manipulated and attested through its own operations where politics are inseparably embroiled in its 'truth' (cf. Latour and Woolgar 1986: 237). Museums, however, no matter how deeply obfuscated, are fundamentally more heterotopic than the societies in which they operate and are therefore potentially disruptive of them.

Methodological Interdictions

1. Agency, while a key area of anthropological research and radical pedagogy, was almost entirely ignored by operational museology. Not only the agency of the institutions themselves, but also the agency implicit in the construction and institutionalization of collections, exhibitions, and related pedagogic work, was effectively eluded in the institution's public presentation. Critical museology needs to uncover these occulted relations, and also examine the intersections and struggles between different types of agencies represented by distinct groups and cultures (Ames 1992: 78). The museum, no more than the expression of an official patrimony, does not expend agency in a vacuum. It elicits resistance, contestation, counterprojects, and even violent reactions that seek its destruction, such as the large-scale cultural looting performed by Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin; the destruction of patrimony after the fall of the Soviet Union and its satellites; or, more recently, the looting and bombardment of Iraq and Syria and the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. The agency of patrimony and museums can be redirected into projects of reconciliation and cultural healing, as in the case of Holocaust museums, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, commemorating those executed by the Khmer Rouge, or the exhibition *Yuyanapaq: Para Recordar* (Museo de la Nacion, Lima, 2009), documenting the violence during the Peruvian state's struggle with Sendero Luminoso. Agencies and counter-agencies gain special visibility in the transfer of cultural property, such as in the repatriation of Tselxweyaqw from the Burke Museum in Seattle to the Sto:lo First Nation in British Columbia (2006), or the G'psgolox Pole from the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm to the Haisla First Nation (2006).

In 2010, the Reina Sofia hosted the exhibition *El Principio Potosi*, intended as a collaborative enterprise between German, Spanish and Bolivian museologists. The exhibition concept was intended to juxtapose seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Andean Catholic images with contemporary art works to draw parallel histories between the iconography and symbolic violence inherent to historical and current capitalist economic and ideological strategies. However, the project was severely critiqued by the Bolivian curators because of the lack of acknowledgment given to the historical and continuing role of indigenous agency in the appropriation and incorporation of these 'foreign' images into a uniquely Andean worldview.

Examples such as these emphasize the analytical importance of cross-cultural collaborative methodologies, which, even in a world characterized by increasing intercultural relations and hybrid cultures, better explicate the specificities and nuances of unique and irreducible cultural processes, epistemologies, and ontological understandings. Moreover, it is through such culturally diverse collaborations, of whose power operational museology is well aware, that critical museology can help perpetuate its own critical efficacy while ensuring that the so-called democ-

ratization and decolonization of museums, here taken as labels that denote continuous processes rather than completed conditions, remain an important goal.

2. Every theoretical intervention within museology occurs within an already constituted intellectual field made up of competing subject positions. Bourdieu defines a field as “a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy” (1993: 162). The field includes the social conditions that determine the possibilities of specific functions. It is both conditioned and conditioning and includes the mechanisms that regulate its attendant power relations and define the limits of struggle between the different subject positions within it. Museological practices should be understood in relation to the field in which they unfold. This reflexivity is a necessary precondition for establishing a theory of practice, from which a practice of theory can emerge. Only by theorizing museum practices do we become conscious of the presuppositions that we apply to our everyday work, and only through a rigorous deconstruction and reflexivity of that work can we develop fresh insights and innovations necessary to ensure the future development of museums, such as in the example that follows.

As a precondition for the major gallery projects undertaken at the Horniman Museum, London, and the Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museum, Brighton, it was thought necessary to understand the broader history of ethnographic curatorship in the United Kingdom (Shelton 1992, 2003). After comparing the chronology around the implementation and use of particular anthropological paradigms within museums and universities, it became apparent that for most of the twentieth century there had been a lag between the dismissal and adoption of each paradigm within the two institutions. This had resulted in some outdated and sometimes racist ethnographic exhibitions in the UK’s provincial museums that had outlived perspectives already discredited within the university system. This preliminary study steered the adaptation, at Brighton, in two adjoining galleries, of radically different approaches, intended to capture the tensions and contradictions implicit to intercultural communication. The first gallery used categories including exchange, worship, work, association, secret societies, gender, etc., to present a comparative perspective on Western and non-Western aspects of culture; the second gallery examined the motivations behind various collectors who had donated substantial collections to the museum. The effects, conditions, and themes derived from the tensions generated between these two gallery approaches provided the subject for a series of small temporary exhibitions curated in a third space. Such an approach was generated in response to the theorization of some of the practices disclosed by the deconstruction of the history of ethnographic exhibitions in the United Kingdom.

3. The distinction between museology and museography, as discussed by Desvallées and Mairesse (2010: 52–54), is fundamentally incompatible with the methods of critical museology. To distinguish between museology as the study of museums and museography as a configuration of scientific, technical, and managerial knowledges (architecture, environmental controls, lighting, conservation, visitor studies, management) eludes the essential and dependent relations between the two systems of knowledges and obscures their points of articulation, relations of dependency, common epistemological origins, and political linkages and functions. By distinguishing between applied and intellectual knowledge we obscure the close relations between them and the way they are mediated through social relations. This only reinforces their appearances as closed, systematic, and coherent fields devoid of social and cultural operations (Latour and Woolgar 1986: 21). As Miriam Clavir demonstrates in *Preserving What Is Valued* (2002), science, in this case conservation, is always mediated and applied following social values and ethics fundamental to the very structure of museums and the various professional bodies that

buttress them. On a different level even the presentation of science in museums has itself repeatedly been argued to be socially and ethically mediated and to take place within specific social arenas, which are usually eluded from public view (Macdonald 1998; Vackimes 2008: 17).

More obviously, management, another core component of operational museology, is also based on cultural value and social-structural models governing the distribution of resources to achieve set functions. Functions, levels and application of resources, values attributed to such institutions, and the optimal organizational structure of power and authority are 'operations' all determined by political and socioeconomic considerations (Strathern 2000: 2). By comparing management models, which represent the ideal distribution of power and authority within an institution, to their practical implementation it is possible to locate the contradictions and areas of tensions and contestations that play a fundamental role in institutional change and transformation, and that form an essential part of critical museology.

The distinction between museology and museography, in the work of some of its expounders, divides the study of the publicly visible side of museums, exhibitions and programs, from that of its largely invisible organization and support structures, reproducing a division that easily occults the source of an important determinant of public policy. It is not, I believe, possible to distinguish between technical or applied knowledges on the one hand and interpretive methods on the other without privileging the site of museography as a theoretical 'no-go zone' and eluding the political determinants and epistemological presuppositions to which public programs respond. Like the laboratory described by Latour and Woogar, museum activity is deeply complicit in "the organization of persuasion through literary inscription" (1986: 88).

4. Museums, along with museology itself, are part of wider fields of social, political, and economic relations and cannot be understood when segregated from other museums and galleries, heritage sites, monuments, and formulations and counterformulations of 'patrimony' and national or regional identities. James Clifford's groundbreaking work "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections" ([1991] 1997) effectively shifted the study of museums away from individual institutions to the field of museological operations, in which individual museums and cultural centers are compared and interpreted. Not only did he distinguish similarities and differences in the institutional poetics of their displays, but he also related their innovations to a specific experience of indigenous/settler politics in British Columbia.

In a different context, Estévez González (2006: 151–152) draws attention to the growth of networks of museums, warning of their political tutelage and their involvement in new projects related to identity formation; the 'McDonald's-ization' of museums to become part of the tourist industry and the 'New Economy'; and the homogenization of museums under the direction of a hegemonic operational museology.

Operational museology itself is not a unified or coherent field, despite, as Estévez González (*ibid.*) observes, its claim to scientific status through which it aspires to claim universality. Its fractures and differences are evidenced in the two movements that Gómez Martínez (2006: 12–13) distinguishes as dividing the Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean museum worlds. These differences, he argues, were determined by religious orientation and their associated sentiments and distinguished by their different foci on family, community, and society; the idea of service; and the love and celebration of beauty (*ibid.*: 19). Such a distinction is similar, in some regards, to Lyotard's (1984) description of what he refers to as the Humboldtian and classical paradigms, the dominant metanarratives underlying the legitimation of science and art and their respective museological institutionalizations.

It is no longer possible to distinguish between local, regional, and national museums (Shelton 2005, 2007a). Regardless of the nature of the state and its relation to the regional polities

within it, or its connections to neighboring states, there now exist multiple networks that link museums and other agencies more closely together than ever before. Critical museology must therefore distinguish between different fields that, depending on geographic proximity, political integrations, or shared subject positions, will be marked by variations in the intensity of their interactions and influences. Assuredly such fields cut across disciplines, sometimes creating repetitive but different scales of representational effects. Writing itself, as is clearly attested in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travel narratives, contains strategies to fix and naturalize the materiality of the world in ethically charged spaces and times and to organize our visual and nonvisual experience of them. Such operations reaffirm the curatorial designs implicit within related media, including international exhibitions and museums.

5. Crucial to critical museology is the proposition that in defining any aspect of the society or regional civilization of which that society is part, we implicitly define or reproduce its opposite (cf. Preziosi 2003: 98–99; Said 2002: 202, 301–302). The institutionalization by museums of, for example, collections therefore needs to be critically assessed and the analysis of its effects examined for their political implications.

It is usual for museums to elide the presence and agency of Western institutions and individuals, including themselves, in the history of assembling collections and imputing them meaning. The circulation between different cultures of ‘works’ and the construction of their specific arenas or fields of political and cultural meaning are broken and obscured by the geographical separation of collections from one part of the world from those from another (Henare 2005). Trade, exchange, collecting, and looting are seldom elaborated upon in museum displays, partly because Euro-American material culture and art are institutionalized differently from their non-Euro-American counterparts, as if there had never been any historical contact between them.

Difference is created by the imposition of a limit, which draws a boundary around one category while at the same time delineating what becomes an absence. Limits are constructed by linguistic discrimination—the differentiation of signs that intervene between the undifferentiated experience of the world and its conceptualization through language. The separation between the condition of being and the act of experience constitutes a fundamental alienation between the world and consciousness, casting all signs, even within the same language, as ‘foreign’ to each other. Either way, there is no exterior to the everyday/exotic worlds imagined by the technologies that reproduce differential equations between them.

Language articulates and sometimes assists visualization of elaborate structures of otherness. The ‘we’ and the ‘other’ has been expressed in the past through the supposition of distinct mentalities, associated with specific cognitive mechanisms, operations, and ways of experiencing the world, as well as different ensuing histories (and nonhistories) and nonlinguistic cultural forms of expression. Further limits were and are constructed to equate these differences with geographical boundaries or psychological states and dispositions. Differences have been argued to have been created by species, race, gender, age, or form. These operations underlying the construction of difference produce the normative, familiar, and self-identifiable at the same time they lay out the space and raw material for the articulation of their opposites. Moreover, these phenomenological, linguistic, and philosophical operations, once concretely expressed, receive embodiment through their institutionalization, an institutionalization that is usually legitimated by historical objectification and essentialized to endow its authority transcendental value. The ongoing reorganization of the French museum system demonstrates well the changing political effects of institutionalization and reinstitutionalization on collections.

In 1996, the Chirac government announced it would move the ethnographic collections from the Musée de l’Homme and amalgamate them with those from the Musée National des Arts

d’Afrique et d’Océanie (MNAAO) to create the much discussed Musée du quai Branly (Clifford 2007; Price 2007; Shelton 2009). Not all the collections of the Musée de l’Homme were sent to the quai Branly. One hundred and fourteen ‘masterpieces’ were taken to be exhibited in the Pavillon des Sessions in the Louvre; works representing Asian civilizations were sent to the Musée Guimet; and just as significant, European ethnographic collections were set aside to be amalgamated with others from the Musée National des Arts et Traditions to form a reserve that is intended to provide the basis for the new Musée de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée, to be opened in Marseille in 2013.

By separating European from non-European collections, France reinforced an older and much criticized binary division between Europe and the ‘other.’ This difference, it is reported, has been smudged in the Marseille project by the unavoidable acknowledgment that the growth of Europe has always been intimately connected to the development of neighboring civilizations. It would be implausible to present European knowledge systems; science, cartography, medicine, and astrology; and Christianity, Judaism, and Islam independent of discussion of the wider region. Here, therefore, at least, the essentialization and purification of European material and intellectual culture might be mitigated. The quai Branly, however, in its permanent exhibitions, is unable to avoid the essentialization of the non-European cultures that it exhibits. Although there are soft transitions from one continental area to another, objects are abstracted and exposed as indices of specific cultural essences. Detached from history, collections have been purified and essentialized within a Western-generated grammar of difference that is mute to all and any process, transformation, or intercultural relationship that might have created links between Europe and elsewhere. Here, the West has effectively edited itself out of the process of the formation of these collections, and with it, even the mention of the circulation of ideas, technologies, and people between different worlds on which our own identity as well as that of those we ‘other’ has been constructed. The French museum system has proven itself an effective technology for distilling different grades of otherness and placing them in various historical, modern, and contemporary conjunctions with the ‘we.’

The radical separation of European and non-European works institutionalized in the Musée du quai Branly is mirrored by that of people in the Cité National de l’Histoire de l’immigration. This is not a museum of immigration and emigration, which would have presented the mutual relationship between France and the world, but instead focuses only on the one-way movement of non-French people into France, a magnet with only one pole. It would appear therefore that whether intentionally or not, French museums have redoubled their efforts to maintain the separation between domestic and ‘foreign’ cultures and have thereby remained silent, in their permanent exhibition galleries at least, on the changing relations between Europe and the rest of the world. Ethnic cleansing, political and economic colonialism and dependency, Arab expansionism, colonialism and slavery, US counterhegemonic dependency and military projections, and, more recently, the effects of Asian economic development on Europe are all absent. We Euro-Americans have found it difficult to escape our own epistemologies and have articulated the ‘other’—the reconstruction of archaeological sites or the historic centers of cities—through our own imagination of an ‘other’ using a Western gaze and framework. In short: The construction of the ‘other’ follows the same syntax as the construction of the ‘we’ (Preziosi 2003: 120).

6. Critical museology is never exhausted by the act of deconstruction. “Incredulity towards metanarratives,” the skeptical attitude toward knowledge and the masquerading of information as knowledge (Lyotard 1984), is an essential attitude toward museum and gallery institutions, which must be sustained to ensure the continuity of self-critical and reflexive practices. It would be naïve not to expect that the insights derived from critical museology might be incorpo-

rated, undoubtedly for sincere reasons, into the operation, policy, or programming of museums and art galleries, rather like galleries have used artists associated with institutional critique to inform their own values, programming, and operations, though not, it needs to be acknowledged, without consequent dilution of their critical strategies (Crimp 1993: 155). The purpose of critical museology is not, however, to reform institutions or to claim a privileged position for its own practice, but to sustain an ongoing critical and dialectical dialogue that engenders a constant self-reflexive attitude toward museum practices and their wider constituencies. As theoretical knowledges move from intellectual to museum fields, they inevitably undergo a process of mediation, and reintegration within museum practices, objectives, vision, and values. Within this process, adopted perspectives become relationally and sometimes epistemologically transformed within new determinate fields. Oscar Navarro Rojas's exhortation that critical museology should aim to confront the museum visitor with "the dilemmas of contemporary society through the eyes of history and critical memory and ethics" (quoted in Lorente 2012: 81) should, like the provocative museological experiments of Hainard, equally never escape critical scrutiny. Neither should it be ignored that critical museology itself has grown in the shadow of the emergent master narrative of the 'New Economy', which predicates a major rearticulation of the arts, cultural and knowledge organizations, and their commodification within a knowledge and experience economy (Löfgren and Willim 2005: 2). Critical museology must, therefore, always maintain a sustained incredulity to itself as well as its field of application. It follows that critical museology could never be an operational tool or provide an alternative strategic mission for museums, though it needs to encourage institutions to adopt more experimental practices, champion openness and transparency, and support critical community engagement.

Such an unflinching attitude is not easy to sustain and can be expected to meet institutional as well as external resistance. Providing support for one party or another in situations of contestation over museum authority, and its ideological underpinnings, might merely result in the exchange of one static and hegemonic discourse for a counterhegemony that itself might do no more than nourish new hegemonies. Unlike operational museology, which implicitly is always politically situated, critical museology must remain politically skeptical if it is to ensure it remains reflexive, open, and critical. Failure to maintain distance between institutional and critical thought casts critical museology back into the mold of an operational subject position.

7. The epistemological critique of dominant models of museum operations, and the necessity to broaden the field of study to include adjacent institutions and national and international organizations suggests we should revise the lens through which we view museums. Since Clifford (1997) and Pratt (1992) formulated the concept of the contact zone, museums have moved beyond easily definable, geographically circumscribed arenas of interaction. Globalization, the formation of extraterritorial political and economic federations, and interterritorial organizations, together with the growth of the Internet and social networking sites, have contributed to phenomenal increases in connectivity between institutions. It is no longer adequate to define a museum solely by its physical plant and 'real' space exhibitions, programs, and projects. More now than at any time in their existence, museums perform as hubs within expansive international, national, and regional networks, and in so doing have lost more of their privileged singularity and uniqueness.

Such networks connect museums, the subject positions represented within them, professional organizations, and management structures. They also connect museums with diverse client communities, including those from where their collections originated. Geographical distance is no longer sufficient to ensure the separation of object and subject, as evidenced by the growing and rightful refusal of communities, artists, and individuals to remain silenced

on issues of institutional objectification and ownership rights. These networks, both virtual and physical, carry technical information, development campaigns, and managerial directives; they host research projects and lobbies; they project exhibitions and programs regionally and internationally; and they connect museums and communities, funding, and political sources, providing access to collections and archives and conduits for critical engagement. Networks are interactive and carry multidirectional flows of information. In short, they integrate institutions to the world, establishing a hypercomplexity that museum theory has been slow to appreciate (Cameron and Mengler 2009: 191).

It is individuals that create specific networks, even if institutional policy attempts to define their foci, a condition which results in a diffusion and broader spread of institutional authority and opens the prospect of its manipulation through network lobbying between groups within and external to museums. Critical museology needs to develop the analytical tools to enable museums to be better understood as hubs within hypercomplex, though not necessarily cohesive, networked fields. Hubs are both virtual and material, although their coexistence within or between fields does not necessarily imply similarity or correspondence between them. The epistemological foundations of the nodal institutions that make up a network can be radically separate, while at the same time intimately implicated in each other's operations. The virtual erases spatial difference—an exhibition or program on one side of the world can intervene in the subject or condition about which it is focused in places far removed from it; the instantaneousness of the moment of diffusion blinds temporal succession and denies the discreteness, even if it was only an appearance, of event structures; spatial and temporal boundaries, 'self' and 'other,' being and nothingness which all dissolve under the operational world conjured by the virtual (Virilio 1991: 13). The paradox of contemporary existence is that while the virtual suffuses material institutions and threatens their discrete existence (solid walls, mission statements, institutional values, and political and ideological fields) at the same time it depends on them for its own existence and reproduction. Estévez González compares social and mechanical time, with "instantaneous time, the time of virtual reality", noting each conception has its own mode of regulating society and nature (2004: 17), which repeatedly brings nostalgia into collision with postmodernist pastiche (ibid.: 14). The museum and archive are perhaps frozen between this binary. "The past is everywhere," writes Estévez González; "[i]t is fashionable" (ibid.: 13); an impossible condition, that never the less envelopes our existence.

Instead of conceiving museums as the latest manifestation of a long line of collection-based institutions beginning with the Library of Alexandria, or Noah's Ark, we need to understand them as part of distinctive exhibitionary complexes (Bennett 1995), situated within particular historical periods and geographical principalities or fields. We need to exchange generalities about the historical development of collecting and exhibiting institutions (they are not always the same) for particularities of their function within set geographies and histories. Instead of reducing the subject of collecting to specific typologies, we need to examine the way collections have been used in self-fashioning social and personal identities (Bann 1994; Henare 2005; Elliott and Shambaugh 2005). Museums must recognize more generally that they no longer possess a monopoly over the meaning and significance of the material or visual cultures they institutionalize, and that objects have different meanings depending on their positionality in regard to distinct ethnic groups, classes, institutions, and exhibitionary strategies, which imply mutual rights and obligations (Hainard and Gonseth 2002; Shelton 2000). Following the already well-established application of the cannibalistic trope to museums, the question that needs to be asked is whether the coexistence of virtual and material realities leads to museum's autodigesting themselves. After severing the mechanical relationship between objects and meaning previously fixed by positivist sciences and developing a genre theory that might do for exhibitions

what literary theory has done for literary criticism, we can begin to develop new practices and new types of exhibitions that can be disseminated both materially and virtually. New challenges and expectations surrounding museums, and their implications for their traditional operations, have created major ruptures within operational museology that now demand a new disciplinary response to demystify them and assist in liberating and reharnessing their full creative and explosive potentialities. Rather than reduce possible museum futures to a simple choice between them being 'temples' or 'forums,' let us reimagine them as laboratories redolent with possibilities. It is a worthy enough aspiration that a critical museology might strive to constantly help renew such quixotic and such essentially dialectical institutions as museums and galleries.

■ ANTHONY SHELTON is the director of the Museum of Anthropology and professor of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He has published extensively on critical museology, collection's history, the anthropology of art and indigenous Latin American and material culture and cosmology. His most recent work is *Luminescence: The Silver of Perú* (2012), which accompanied a major exhibition hosted both by the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto.

■ REFERENCES

- Ames, Michael. 1986. *Museums, the Public and Anthropology. A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company and Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press
- Ames, Michael. 1992. *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." Pp. 3–63 in *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Armero, Álvaro. 2009. *Por eso coleccionamos: Sensaciones de una pasión fría*. Seville: Los Cuatro Vientos/Renacimiento.
- Bann, Stephen. 1994. *Under the Sign: John Bargrave as Collector, Traveller and Witness*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Critical Essays*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1994. *The Semiotic Challenge*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean. 1981. *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. St. Louis, Telos.
- Baudrillard, Jean. 1983. *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext (e), Inc.
- Baudrillard, Jean. 1989. *America*. London and New York: Verso.
- Bazin, Germain. 1967. *The Museum Age*. Brussels: Deoer.
- Belk, Russel. W. 1995. *Collecting in a Consumer Society*. London: Routledge.
- Belting, Hans. 2003. *Art History After Modernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bender, Barbara. 1998. *Stonehenge: Making Space*. Oxford: Oxford International Publishing.
- Bennett, Tony. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Blom, Phillip. 2002. *To Have and to Hold: An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting*. London: Allen Lane.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cabanne, Pierre. 1963. *The Great Collectors*. London: Cassell.
- Canclini, Nestor Garcia. 1995. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cameron, Fiona and Mengler, Sarah. 2009. "Complexity, Transdisciplinarity and Museum Collections Documentation: Emergent Metaphors for a Complex World." *Journal of Material Culture* 14 (2): 189–219.

- Certeau, Michel de. 1988. *The Writing of History*. New York: University of Columbia Press.
- Clavir, Miriam. 2002. *Preserving What Is Valued: Museums, Conservation and First Nations*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Clifford, James. [1991] 1997. "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections." Pp. 107–146 in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, by J. Clifford. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, James. 2007. "The Quai Branly in Process." *October* 120 (Spring): 3–23.
- Coombes, Annie. 1994. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Crimp, Douglas. 1993. *On the Museum's Ruins*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Desvallées, André and Mairesse, François. 2010. *Key Concepts of Museology*. Paris: ICOM with Armand Colin.
- Díaz Balerdi, Ignacio. 2008. *La memoria fragmentada: El museo y sus paradojas*. Gijón, Spain: Ediciones Trea, S.L.
- Dilworth, Leah, ed. 2003. *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Eco, Umberto. 1986. *Travels in Hypereality*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Elliott, Jeanette S. and Shambaugh, David. 2005. *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Estévez González, Fernando. 2006. "Redes de museos: Conexiones y enredos." *Museo: Revista de la Asociación Profesional de Museólogos de España* 11: 151–157.
- Estévez González, Fernando. 2010. "Archivo y memoria en el reino de los replicantes." Pp. 31–45 in *Memorias y olvidos del archive*, ed. F. Estévez González and M. de Santa Ana. Tenerife: Museo de Historia y Antropología de Tenerife.
- Estévez González, Fernando, ed. 2004. *El pasado en el presente*. Tenerife: Museo de Antropología de Tenerife.
- Fabian, Johannes. 2000. *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hainard, Jacques and Gonseth, Marc-Olivier. 2002. *Le musée cannibal*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Musée d'Ethnographie.
- Handler, Richard and Gable, Eric. 1997. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Henare, Amiria. 2005. *Museum Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gómez Martínez, Javier. 2006. *Dos museologías: Las tradiciones anglosajona y mediterránea: diferencias y contactos*. Gijón, Spain: Ediciones Trea, S.L.
- Gosden, Christopher and Knowles, Chantal. 2001. *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change*. Oxford: Berg.
- Guasch, Ana María and Zulaika, Joseba, eds. 2005. *Learning from the Bilbao Guggenheim*. Reno: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada.
- Gurvitch, Georges. 1964. *The Spectrum of Social Time*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Reidel.
- Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." Pp. 64–94 in *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Latour, Bruno and Woolgar, Stève. 1986. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Levell, Nicola. 2000. *Oriental Visions: Exhibitions, Travel, and Collecting in the Victorian Age*. London: Horniman Museum; Coimbra, Portugal: Museu Antropológico da Universidade de Coimbra.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Löfgren, Ovar and Willim, Robert, eds. 2005. *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*. Oxford: Berg.
- Lorente, Pedro. 2003. *Museología crítica y Arte contemporáneo*. Zaragoza, Spain: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.

- Lorente, Pedro. 2012. *Manuel de historia de la museología*. Gijón, Spain: Ediciones Trea.
- Lumley, Robert. 1988. *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Macdonald, Sharon, ed. 1998. *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Macdonald, Sharon and Silverstone, Roger. 1991. "Rewriting the Museum's Fictions: Taxonomies, Stories and Readers." *Cultural Studies* 4 (2): 176–191.
- Martin, Ged. 2004. *Past Futures: The Impossible Necessity of History*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Miller, Daniel. 2008. *The Comfort of Things*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Muensterberger, Werner. 1994. *Collecting: An Unruly Passion: Psychological Perspectives*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- O'Hanlon, Michael and Welsch, Robert. 2000. *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s–1930s*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Padró, Carla. 2003. "La museología crítica como una forma de reflexionar sobre los museos como zonas de conflicto e intercambio." Pp. 51–70 in *Museología crítica y Arte contemporáneo*, ed. J. P. Lorente and D. Almazán. Zaragoza, Spain: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.
- Pearce, Susan. 1989. *Museum Studies in Material Culture*. Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press.
- Pearce, Susan. 1991. "Collecting Reconsidered." Pp. 143–151 in *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts*, ed. G. Kavanagh. Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press.
- Porto, Nuno. 2009. *Modos de objectificação da dominação colonial: O caso do Museu do Dundo, 1940–1970*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Preziosi, Donald. 2003. *Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums, and the Phantasms of Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Price, Sally. 2007. *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Said, Edward. 2002. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schwenger, Peter. 2006. *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Shelton, Anthony. 1992. "The Recontextualisation of Culture in UK Museums." *Anthropology Today* 8 (5): 11–16.
- Shelton, Anthony. 1997. "The Future of Museum Ethnography." *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 9: 33–49.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2000. "Museum Ethnography: An Imperial Science." Pp. 155–193 in *Cultural Encounters: Representing 'Otherness'*, ed. E. Hallam and B. Street. London: Routledge.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2001a. "Unsettling the Meaning: Critical Museology, Art and Anthropological Discourse." Pp. 142–161 in *Academic Anthropology and the Museum: Back to the Future*, ed. M. Bouquet. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2001b. "Museums in an Age of Cultural Hybridity." *Folk: Journal of the Danish Ethnographic Society* 43: 221–249.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2003. "Curating African Worlds." Pp. 181–193 in *Museums and Source Communities*, ed. L. Peers and A. Brown. London: Routledge.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2005. "The Imaginary Southwest: Commodity Disavowal in an American Orient." Pp. 75–96 in *Les cultures à l'ouvre Recontres en art*, ed. M. Coquet, B. Derlon, and M. Jeudy-Ballini. Paris: Biro Éditeur.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2006. "Museum and Displays." Pp. 480–499 in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. C. Tilley, W. Keane, S. Küchler, M. Rowlands and P. Spyer. London: Sage.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2007a. "Questioning Locality: UBC Museum of Anthropology and its Hinterlands." *Efnografica* 11 (2): 387–406.

- Shelton, Anthony. 2007b. "The Collectors Zeal: Towards an Anthropology of Intentionality, Instrumentality and Desire." Pp. 16–44 in *Colonial Collections Revisited*, ed. P. ter Keurs. Leiden, Netherlands: CNWS.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2009. "The Public Sphere as Wildness: Le Musée du quai Branly." *Museum Anthropology*. 23 (1): 1–16.
- Shelton, Anthony. 2011. "42, Rue Fontaine." Pp. 210–217 in *The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art*, ed. D. Ades. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery.
- Stewart, Susan. [1984] 1993. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic and the Souvenir*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Strathern, Marilyn. ed. 2000. *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*. London: Routledge.
- Tilley, Chris, Keane, Webb, Kuchler, Susanne, Rowlands, Mike, and Spyer, Patricia, eds. 2006. *Handbook of Material Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vackimes, Sophia. 2008. *Science Museums: Magic or Ideology?* Mexico City: Albedrio/Sinc, S.A. de C.V.
- Vergo, Peter., ed. 1989. *The New Museology*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Virilio, Paul. 1991. *The Lost Dimension*. New York: Semiotext(e).

1

THINKING (WITH) MUSEUMS

From Exhibitionary Complex to Governmental Assemblage

Tony Bennett

One of the reasons for the extraordinary growth of interest in museums in recent decades is that museums have proved to be “good to think with” in the opportunities they have provided for engaging with a number of more general theoretical shifts that have taken place across the humanities and social sciences. My purpose in this chapter is to review some of the ways in which the analysis of museums has both helped to shape, and been shaped by, broader developments in social and cultural theory. My approach, though, will be a selective one focused on the different angles of theoretical engagement that are implied by approaching museums as parts of what I have called “the exhibitionary complex” or as “governmental assemblages.” I do not present these as contraries. While the concept of the exhibitionary complex provided the organizing focus for my initial foray into museum theory in the late 1980s, I have more recently suggested that museum practices can be usefully conceptualized as – and as parts of – governmental assemblages.¹ I have done so primarily in order to explore the alignments that might be developed between the “veridical twist” that the Foucauldian perspective has contributed to cultural analysis and the “material turn,” particularly with a view to opening up new lines of inquiry into the forms of power that museums both exercise and are connected to. My purpose in what follows, then, is to identify how the conception of museums as parts of governmental assemblages both builds on and departs from the perspective of the exhibitionary complex. I need first, though, to review this perspective and to outline what now strike me as some of its chief limitations as well as its virtues.

The perspective of the exhibitionary complex

A common criticism of the concept of the exhibitionary complex is that it offers a top-down view of power in interpreting museums as a part of the set of relations between state and society encapsulated in Foucault's notion of the disciplinary society. The criticism is a curiously inattentive one. For, while it is true that I placed the development of the modern public museum alongside that of the penitentiary, I did so precisely in order to distinguish their historical trajectories and the forms of power that they constitute and exercise. Far from aligning museums with the institutions comprising Foucault's "carceral archipelago" (the penitentiary, the asylum, the monitorial school), I argued that they should be aligned with a quite different set of institutions or apparatuses (international exhibitions, dioramas and panoramas, arcades, department stores). If the institutions that make up the exhibitionary complex are like those of the carceral archipelago in constituting a set of custom-built settings in which particular kinds of power/knowledge relations are produced and brought to bear on those who visit or who are contained within them, the forms of power/knowledge relations involved and their *modus operandi* are quite distinct. The knowledges that are deployed within the exhibitionary complex do not have the individualizing focus of the psychological disciplines that were brought to bear on the inmates of the asylum or penitentiary, or on the luckless pupils of monitorial schooling, with a view to regulating their conduct. Rather, the exhibitionary disciplines of history, art history, archaeology, anthropology, and natural history were deployed in the new open setting of the public museum where they worked through mechanisms of pedagogy and entertainment to recruit the support of extended citizenries for the bourgeois democratic economic, social, and political order.

My chief contention, then, was not that museums should be approached as sites for the exercise of a set of disciplinary knowledge/power relations but as sites for knowledge/power relations whose field of application was that of free subjects and whose *modus operandi* was oriented toward the production of a population that would not only be governable but would freely assent to its governance. I drew, for this purpose, on Gramsci's conception of the ethical state, presenting the role this accords cultural and educative institutions in the production of consent as a counter to Foucault's account of discipline. I thus concluded the essay by conjuring up an image of the museum as an alternative to Foucault's depiction of the sealed walls of the penitentiary as the "figure, at once material and symbolic, of the power to punish" (Foucault 1977, 116) that loomed over the nineteenth-century city:

Museums were also typically located at the centre of cities where they stood as embodiments, both material and symbolic, of a power to "show and tell" which, in being deployed in a newly constituted open and public space, sought rhetorically to incorporate the people within the processes of the state. If the museum and the

penitentiary thus represented the Janus face of power, there was nonetheless – at least symbolically – an economy of effort between them. For those who failed to adopt the tutelary relation to the self promoted by popular schooling or whose hearts and minds failed to be won in the new pedagogic relations between state and people symbolised by the open doors of the museum, the closed walls of the penitentiary threatened a sterner instruction in the lessons of power. Where instruction and rhetoric failed, punishment began. (Bennett 1998, 99–100)

It is now clear that there was no need to draw on Gramsci in this way to provide a counter to Foucault owing to the respects in which Foucault's later work on liberal government – not widely available in English at that time – placed clear limits on his conception of the disciplinary society.² Foucault does not pay specific attention to the role of cultural institutions in general, or of museums in particular, in his account of liberal government. Yet it is clear that they are implicated in the historically novel set of relations between rulers and ruled that this account posits. Far from serving as its opposite, Foucault argues, freedom is, in liberal forms of government, a mechanism through which government operates. Rather than something that is pre-given to power as a limit and check on its exercise, freedom is a quality that is produced in varying forms, distributed differentially through the social body, and consumed via the very processes through which the activity of governing is organized.

The concept of liberal government, in short, provides a resource within Foucault's work through which to think about the role played by the public museum in the development of a distinctive set of power/knowledge relations, which parallel the development of the disciplinary archipelago but are informed by quite different principles. The significance of this shift of perspective for museum theory is brought into sharper focus when considered in the light of Foucault's account of the relations between sovereign, disciplinary, and governmental forms of power (Foucault 1991). While I have taken these aspects of Foucault's work into account in my discussion of the governmental logic of evolutionary museums (Bennett 2004), I draw attention to them here to highlight the two main arguments which the exhibitionary complex proposes regarding the social, cultural, and political logics that shaped public museums over the first 150 years or so of their history.

There is, first, the argument that the exhibitionary complex – particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century when both the public museum and international exhibitions became more generalized forms with a broad international currency – is governed by a distinctive set of knowledges, the exhibitionary disciplines, which had a quite different disposition from the individualizing orientation that Foucault attributes to the knowledges informing the development of the carceral archipelago. These disciplines aimed rather “at the representation of a type and its insertion in a developmental sequence for display to a public” (Bennett 1988, 88). Tracing the transition from the orders of classification that governed eighteenth-century natural history to the evolutionary ordering of the histories of the earth

6 Thinking about Museums

and of forms of life associated with mid- to late nineteenth-century developments in geology and biology, I connected these to the parallel emergence of a developmental disposition in the disciplines of art history, history, and archaeology and to the role of exhibitions of science and industry in depicting the history of industry and manufacture as “a series of progressive innovations leading up to the contemporary triumphs of industrial capitalism” (Bennett 1988, 90). The role of anthropology completed this account of the exhibitionary disciplines. By proposing a variety of frameworks for ordering the relations between peoples in evolutionary hierarchies leading from the primitive status attributed to colonized peoples to the subjects of metropolitan powers, it presented the latter as the heirs to, and as the summation of, the developmental dynamic that the exhibitionary disciplines inscribed in the entire course – natural, social, cultural, technological, scientific, and economic – of preceding history:

The space of representation constituted in the relations between the disciplinary knowledges deployed within the exhibitionary complex thus permitted the construction of a temporally organised order of things and peoples. Moreover, that order was a totalising one, metonymically encompassing all things and all peoples in their interactions through time. And an order which organised the implied public – the white citizenries of imperialist powers – into a unity, representationally effacing divisions within the body politic in constructing a “we” conceived as the realisation and therefore just beneficiaries of the processes of evolution and identified as a unity in opposition to the primitive otherness of conquered peoples. (Bennett 1988, 92)

The argument is a historical one. That is to say, it is an argument concerning the relations between the institutions and knowledges that constituted the exhibitionary complex at a particular phase in its development rather than one proposing a necessary and enduring set of such connections. I thus, in a further elaboration of the concept, argued that these connections constituted a historically specific political rationality which, like all such rationalities, generated its own internal contradictions and counterdynamics.³ Foucault argued that the prison was governed by a political rationality, which meant that it generated a demand for the reform of the offender that it could never meet, thus subjecting it to a perpetual criticism for failing to meet its objectives. Similarly, I argued, the exhibitionary complex’s evolutionary ordering of things and peoples generated a demand that it should offer a universally inclusive depiction of the history of Man as the culmination of the history of life on earth which it, too, proved unable to meet owing to the fact that the position of Man it constructed was always occupied by historically exclusive examples – usually white, bourgeois, male, and European or North American:

Similarly, demands based on the principle of representational adequacy are produced and sustained by the fact that, in purporting to tell the story of Man, the space

of representation shaped into being in association with the formation of the modern public museum embodies a principle of general human universality in relation to which, whether on the basis of the gendered, racial, class or other social patterns of its exclusions and biases, any particular museum display can be held to be inadequate and therefore in need of supplementation. (Bennett 1995, 91)

The suggestion here, then, is that the organizing rhetorics of the exhibitionary disciplines open the museum up to an insatiable discourse of reform, as it has been called on to correct the social, cultural, and political partialities that inform the particular ways in which museums instantiate the position of Man. This has generated an incessant demand that this position be deconstructed and reconstructed so as to achieve a greater degree of representational adequacy in relation to the norms of universality that the exhibitionary disciplines construct by including, on equal terms, the various histories, groups, or cultures that have been excluded from this position: the histories of women, of indigenous peoples, of racial and ethnic minorities, of subordinate classes, of non-Western religions, and so on. While these aspects of the museum's political rationality were particularly in evidence in the sociological, feminist, and indigenous critiques of the 1970s and 1980s, they have a longer history in earlier twentieth-century democratizing and reforming moments: the Musée de l'Homme's (equivocal) criticisms of racialized conceptions of cultural difference in the context of the politics of the Popular Front, for example (Conklin 2008).

There is another aspect to the political rationality of the museum which, like this first one, depends on a contrast with earlier exhibition forms. Where, as in the case of absolutist royal collections, exhibition served the purpose of making royal power manifest and where, accordingly, the pinnacle of representation governing the ordering of things was occupied by the prince or monarch, there could be no question of generating a principle of general inclusiveness from within such a representational regime. Nor, since such demonstrations of power were usually directed more to the court than to the general populace, was there any question of a democratic right of access to them. This principle, symbolized by the seizure of the Louvre, although it only achieved more generalizable and significantly modified forms in the mid-nineteenth century, generated a further contradiction between the conception of museums as instruments for the education of a democratic citizenry and the consequences of their functioning as instruments for the reform of public manners.

While the former requires that they should address an undifferentiated public made up of free and formal equals, the latter, in giving rise to the development of various technologies for regulating or screening out the forms of behaviour associated with popular assemblies, has meant that they have functioned as a powerful means for differentiating populations. (Bennett 1995, 90–91)

8 Thinking about Museums

This formulation draws on Bourdieu's arguments concerning the tension between the obligation he places on the art museum to make the heritage of universal culture universally available to all and the actual patterns of its use as a means of enacting and publicly symbolizing middle-class distinction from the working and other subordinate classes (Bourdieu 1996). My purpose in inserting these arguments within a Foucauldian framework was to make a more general point concerning the respects in which the development of the public museum has been written over by multiple scripts of power. The relations between these are brought into useful focus by the distinction Foucault proposes between sovereign, governmental, and disciplinary forms of power which, he insisted, have to be understood in accordance with a principle of historical accumulation rather than one of historical succession. Sovereign power, that is, is not eclipsed by the later development of governmental and disciplinary forms of power but continues in operation alongside them just as they coexist as different ways of operating on conduct that apply to different sections of the population in different ways in different circumstances.

I thus argued, with regard to the principle of spectacle that informed the logic of royal palaces and other demonstrations of royal power through the public enactment of the scene of punishment or the public rituals of royalty, that spectacle did not, as Foucault suggested, disappear as punishment came to be secreted behind the closed walls of the penitentiary. Rather, as collections moved from the closed and private domains of royal and aristocratic households, or of literary, scientific, and philosophical associations, to become increasingly open and public, and as, particularly after 1851, the genre of the international exhibition developed into the most significant form of public entertainment/instruction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so the principle of spectacle migrated to this developing exhibitionary complex. In doing so it was articulated to two new principles of power: to the power of the commodity and of technology as the most potent public symbols of industrial capitalism; and to the power of the people-nation as the heir to the principle of sovereignty. If the first of these was most manifest in international exhibitions, the second was most evident in the development of national museums which, in the public symbolisms of their architectures just as much as in the thematic organization of their exhibits, embodied a new democratic conception of the principle of sovereignty in making the power of the people-nation publicly manifest to itself. This was not, however, the power of an alien, external force – not the power of an absolutism resting on dynastic or imperial principles⁴ – but a power arising out of, and related back to, the citizenries of the people-nations in whose name sovereign power was now exercised in ways that remained, and remain, equally marked by what Foucault characterized as the main principle of sovereign power, its circularity: that is, that it pursues itself and its own increase as an end in itself.

At the same time, however, the public museum also became a significant cultural site for the exercise of the new form of power that Foucault called

governmental, in which the activity of governing is directed toward “the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc.” (Foucault 1991, 100). This is not, it is important to add, a form of power that springs forth from public museums as an entirely unheralded set of practices. To the contrary, it was preceded, in the British context, by the activities of a whole host of private and civic agencies, ranging from literary, philosophical, and scientific societies, through societies for the improvement of public knowledge to mechanics’ institutes, in which the practice of exhibition was connected to various projects of public education and improvement. As an instance of the process Foucault refers to as the “governmentalization of the state,” such ways of acting on the population via exhibitions of public housing and public health campaigns became early features of the exhibitionary complex. The same logic informs their current roles as significant sites for AIDS education, for lessons in tolerance and intercultural dialogue, or, more recently, for campaigns related to climate change (Cameron 2010).

There is, however, a distinction that Foucault draws between the interest that governmental power has in operating through the consciousness of individual members of the population and its more distinctive tactics and techniques in which “the population is the subject of needs, of aspirations, but it is also the object in the hands of the government, aware, *vis-à-vis* the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it” (1991, 100). I shall return to the broader considerations this passage prompts shortly. I draw attention to it here by way of briefly identifying how the public museum also instantiated a form of governmental power which – drawing on aspects of disciplinary power – operated through mechanisms that bypassed the consciousness of the museum’s visitors. These concern the respects in which the museum constituted a machinery for the transformation of public manners, one among many mechanisms for altering the dress, comportment, and behavior of the new mass publics they admitted. This was in part a matter of rules and regulations, of the operation of the museum as space for emulation in which a newly culturally enfranchised working class could observe and copy how middle-class visitors conducted themselves within the museum space, and in part a matter of the disciplinary gaze of museum guards, and the regulatory functions of tour guides and, later, of docents. But it was also, I suggested, an aspect of the architectural layout of museums and exhibitions. Museums certainly continued to be informed by the architectural principles of spectacle in their need to make publicly manifest the sovereign power of the people-nation. They also operated like the institutions of discipline, but in relation to their publics rather than to enclosed populations, providing a means of shaping conduct by so arranging the lines of sight that the museum’s public, in being made visible to itself, would also be able to monitor itself. The museum, then, as a place for the transformation of the crowd into a well-regulated public, where a citizenry watches over and regulates itself via architectural arrangements which – prior to CCTV – brought each visitor under the controlling gaze of other visitors.

Limitations of the exhibitionary complex

In summary, then, the concept of the exhibitionary complex was proposed as a means of thinking through a series of transformations in the relations between the practices of exhibition and the modalities of power that accompanied the development of the public museum. The concept has attracted a fair range of discussion (see, for example, Witcomb 2003; Hall 2006; and Henning 2006) and I have, in the foregoing, responded to some of the criticisms that have been leveled against it by trying to clarify its historical limits. It has other limits too: it cannot be applied indiscriminately or with equal force to every institution to which the term “museum” might be attached. The arguments regarding the architectural forms of the exhibitionary complex do not apply to museums, like the British Museum, that are located in pre-nineteenth-century buildings. The arguments about publicness and openness similarly do not apply to museums, like Chicago’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, designed for the private contemplation of their owners and selected guests. The principles of curiosity continued to inform many museum displays, particularly those of local museums, and often cheek by jowl with the evolutionary orientations of the exhibitionary disciplines. And so on ... There are many exceptions that might be cited; the status of the concept is more that of a Weberian ideal type which illuminates a set of interconnected tendencies albeit that no single exemplar unites these entirely.

It should also be clear that the political rationality I attributed to the museum arises from a historically particular set of its relations to the exhibitionary disciplines. These have, for example, clearly been transformed in the context of the various critiques to which the museum has been subjected in the last half century, and the revisions and additions to the exhibitionary disciplines that these have given rise to. Rather than calling the validity of the concept into question, however, this prompts an inquiry into the new forms of political rationality produced by the contemporary relations between exhibitionary disciplines and apparatuses. While I have suggested some directions that such investigations might take (Bennett 2006), Wendy Brown’s (2006) conception of tolerance as a new and distinctive form of governmentality offers a better overarching framework for such investigations. Brown’s argument depends on a distinction between two historical forms taken by Western discourses and practices of tolerance. In their original forms these constituted an aspect of the deconfessionalization of politics that accompanied the development of the modern state. As such, they subordinated religious factionalism to the sovereign power of the state by making the state (to varying degrees) indifferent to religious differences so far as the distribution of civic rights and entitlements were concerned. The post-World War II broadening of this historical discourse of tolerance beyond its application to divisions within Christianity to more generalized forms operating across racial, ethnic, sexual, and multifaith religious boundaries has, Brown argues, been accompanied by a significant shift

in the agents of tolerance. “Once limited to edicts or policies administered by church and state,” she writes, “tolerance now circulates through a multitude of sites in civil society – schools, museums, neighborhood associations, secular civic groups, and religious organizations” (Brown 2006, 37). This shift, she contends, reflects a transformation from the functioning of tolerance as “an element in the arsenal of sovereign power to a mode of governmentality” (37) in which it operates as “a complex *supplement* to liberal equality, making up for and covering over limitations in liberal practices of equality” (36) by managing the demands for recognition and difference of marginal groups in ways that leave intact the forces that marginalize them.

This, then, offers a framework within which many of the proposals for “retooling” museums – from their conception as instruments for a critical cosmopolitanism, as “differencing machines” promoting new forms of cultural hybridity, or, in James Clifford’s terms, as contact zones (1997) – might be located as variant formulations of contemporary reorderings of the relations between museums and liberal forms of governmentality. Recognition of this does not entail a departure from the analytical principles underlying the concept of the exhibitionary complex. It requires merely their redirection in order to engage with a rearticulation of the relations between a particular set of knowledges and the apparatuses of the exhibitionary complex to account for their roles as parts of a new political rationality that has accompanied a significant historical mutation in liberal forms of government.

The limitations of “the exhibitionary complex” that strike me most in retrospect are of a different order. They concern the restricted framework that the concept places on our understanding of, first, the modalities of power that museums form a part of, and, second, the different kinds of power they enact as a consequence of the different networks and circuits they are connected to.⁵ There are three main reasons why this is so:

1. The concept suggests that the forms of power exercised by museums are limited to their exhibition functions and that, consequently, the role of the exhibitionary disciplines is exhausted by the part they play in organizing museum displays. This neglects the role that museum collections play as resources for research practices and, consequently, provides no means of engaging with the ways in which museological deployments of the exhibitionary disciplines circulate beyond the museum to connect with, and form parts of, power relations that are not dependent on exhibition practices.
2. Insofar as the concept proposes that museums constitute a form of governmental power, it limits the forms of action on populations they might exercise to those that they exert on the publics who go through their doors or the wider publics they reach via the circulation of representations based on their collections and activities through the institutions of the public sphere

12 Thinking about Museums

(newspapers and broadcasting, for example). This is a crucial limitation so far as the relations between museums and colonialism are concerned, owing to the respects in which colonized peoples who may never have heard of or visited museums, or been part of the public spheres through which their activities circulate, have nonetheless been profoundly affected by their activities.

3. The concept pays insufficient attention to the different forms and sources of agency that need to be taken into account in the analysis of both the determinations and repercussions of museum practices. It privileges the agency of curators/directors, education officers, architects, and the public over the varied forms of agency that are exerted along the diverse routes through which objects reach museums and enter their collections.

This last criticism applies equally to many of the approaches to the social and cultural roles of museums that were developed in the 1980s and 1990s. The shortcomings it gives rise to have become particularly evident in the light of the now widespread concern with the distinctive kinds of agency that can be attributed to objects (Edwards, Gosden, and Philips 2006). This needs to be combined with a readier appreciation of the respects in which museum practices are shaped by the positions museums occupy in relation to varied kinds of social and material networks. The consequences of these material and relational “turns” are nicely summarized in Chris Gosden and Frances Larson’s concept of “the relational museum”:

Museums emerge through thousands of relationships ...; through the experiences of anthropological subjects, collectors, curators, lecturers, and administrators, among others, and these experiences have always been mediated and transformed by the material world, by artefacts, letters, trains, ships, furniture, computers, display labels, and so on. No one person or group of people can completely control the identity of a museum. Museums have multiple authors, who need not be aware of their role nor even necessarily of being willing contributors. But, however else each person’s involvement differs, all of their relationships cohere around *things*. It is objects that have drawn people together, helped to define their interactions, and made them relevant to the Museum. (Gosden and Larson 2007, 5)

This perspective has greatly enriched our knowledge of the processes and networks through which museum collections are assembled, just as it has brought into focus the consequential nature of varied forms of agency which escaped the attention of the “new museology” that had its roots in the social and cultural turns of the 1970s and 1980s. Sam Alberti (2009), for example, has chronicled the significance of the different ways in which museums acquire collections – by gift, purchase, fieldwork, transfer, or loan – for the ways in which their collections are arranged and how visitors are able to interact with them. Related work on “object biographies” tracing the complex routes through which objects finally reach museums, often through an extended series of intermediary stages, has similarly shown

how museum collections have been shaped by the agency of often quite distant actors. This has had particularly significant consequences in revising our understanding of how indigenous peoples shaped the collections of colonial museums in deciding what they would give, and what they would withhold, from exchanges across the colonial frontier (Jones 2007; Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013).

The more general significance of these intellectual orientations, however, is that of presenting the museum as a point of intersection between a range of dispersed networks and relations which flow into and shape its practices. One consequence of this is to approximate the “death of the author,” which characterized poststructuralist debates in literary studies, in that the traditional authors of museum displays – directors and curators – have now to be conceptualized as points within the sociomaterial networks that constitute the museum rather than as the sources of a singular and controlling vision. Another consequence is to open up questions concerning how museums act on the social to more varied forms of analysis. This has been a central concern of much of the recent literature that has brought the perspectives of the material and relational turns to bear on the concerns of museum studies. As a good deal of this literature has come from anthropologists and archaeologists, questions concerning the relations between museums and the varied sites from which their collections come have predominated. From the point of view of a concern with the relations between museums and governmentality theory, however, these perspectives equally suggest that, when considered in the context of the varied networks through which they connect with different populations, museums are implicated in practices of governance in ways that exceed their operations as exhibitionary apparatuses within public spheres.

It is with these considerations in view that I have looked to assemblage theory as a corrective to the limitations of the exhibitionary complex. I have done so particularly with a view to probing more closely the role that museums have played in the histories of colonialism. John MacKenzie has argued that, since museums in colonial settings rarely welcomed or engaged with indigenous populations as visitors in the early years of their development, indigenous peoples were not subjected to the forms of civic regulation and surveillance of the exhibitionary complex. When, much later, indigenous populations became active users of museums, he continues, they are more likely to have experienced them “as part of cultural liberation rather than suppression, an opportunity to reconnect with their own pasts” (MacKenzie 2009, 16). The early history of the relations between museums and indigenous peoples and museums is, however, more varied than MacKenzie allows.⁶ More worrying, though, is the supposition that it is only as visitors that indigenous peoples might have been affected by colonial museums. This neglects the significant impact that such museums had on indigenous peoples as a consequence of the ways in which their practices of collection were organized and the forms of interaction that these involved. It also neglects how the forms of ethnographic knowledge produced by the classification and ordering of indigenous collections within museums have been carried back to and acted on indigenous

populations via their application through the networks and apparatuses of colonial administration. It is in relation to such questions that assemblage theory offers a means of going beyond a concern with how museums connect with the social via the production and circulation of representations within public spheres to consider the roles they have played in transforming the conditions of existence of indigenous peoples through their connections to the distinctive forms of governmental power that Foucault identified as biopower.

Museums as governmental assemblages

Assemblage theory is not, of course, a single tradition but has a number of branches and affiliations. I shall, however, neglect such intricacies to focus on three attributes that are generally shared by its Deleuzeian and Latourian versions and which bear most directly on its application to contemporary forms of socio-cultural analysis.⁷ The first concerns the contingent nature of the connections between the elements that are brought together in an assemblage. When Deleuze asks “What is an assemblage?” he answers that it is “a multiplicity which is made up of heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them,” stressing that its “only unity is that of a co-functioning ... It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys” (Deleuze and Parnet 2002, 69). Manuel DeLanda, in glossing this passage, stresses the radical mobility of the relations between the elements that are brought into such alliances: “a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different” (2006, 10). The constituent elements of assemblages are bound together not through a lineage of shared descent, or through any intrinsic connection to the other elements with which they are coassembled, but solely through the contingent mechanisms of connection that characterize particular moments in what are constantly unfolding processes of disassembling and reassembling. While such assemblages may be of varying – and often extended – durations, assemblages are constitutively unstable.

I take the second attribute from Deleuze and Guattari’s characterization of an assemblage as, on the one hand, “a *machinic* assemblage” of bodies and things, and, on the other, “a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 88; emphases original). This is not, however, a distinction between two different levels or orders, between the order of words and the order of things, or the dualities that such a distinction might subtend:

An assemblage of enunciation does not speak “of” things; it speaks *on the same level* as states of things and states of content ... the independence of the two lines is distributive, such that a segment of one always forms a relay with a segment of the other, slips into, introduces itself into the other. We constantly pass from

order-words to the “silent order” of things, as Foucault puts it, and vice versa. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 87; emphasis original)

The concept of assemblage is, in this respect, a development of Foucault’s concept of the *dispositif* or apparatus as a combination of heterogeneous elements – texts, things, technologies, bodies – whose modes of interaction are, ontologically speaking, all of the same kind rather than being riven by a dualistic distinction between the real and its representations. The concept of the exhibitionary complex takes these considerations on board by interpreting museums as sites where texts, things, technologies, and bodies are brought together in complex relations with one another, and in accounting for the operation of the evolutionary space of representation produced by the exhibitionary disciplines in performative terms as an integrated set of bodily, mental, and visual effects. This is, however, a performativity that is conceived solely in relation to the museum’s exhibition practices. The formulations of assemblage theory have the decided advantage of allowing for a greater pliability of the relations between texts, things, technologies, and bodies that museums orchestrate, and a greater variability in the fields of effect to which this gives rise.

This is particularly so when viewed in the light of the third aspect of assemblage theory I want to comment on: its multiscalar qualities. What is an assemblage of varied elements at one scale of analysis is thus, at another scale, an element that is in its turn a constitutive component of other assemblages – and of many different assemblages at the same time. If the concept of the exhibitionary complex thus contends that the practices of public museums have to be considered in their relations to a wider set of exhibitionary institutions, it simultaneously closes off avenues of inquiry that are needed to explore how museums operate in relation to the other assemblages they have formed a part of. There are a range of different candidates here: their relations to the machineries of state education, and the intersections between museums and the cinematic apparatus, for example.⁸ Considered from the perspective of governmentality theory, however, museums are perhaps best considered in terms of their relations to two different kinds of governmental assemblages which operate through different mechanisms.

Let me go back to the distinction I drew attention to earlier that Foucault made in his essay on governmentality between governmental practices which work through campaigns that address the population as subjects and those which relate to population as an object that is ignorant of how it is affected by such practices. He elaborates this distinction in a couple of related lectures where he translates it into a distinction between the population as species and the population as public. He thus writes of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century development of governmental forms of power:

From the species to the public; we have here a whole field of new realities in the sense that they are the pertinent elements for mechanisms of power, the pertinent space within which and regarding which one must act. (Foucault 2007, 75)

What is the difference between these two mechanisms? In the case of the public, practices of government relate to the population via educative programs and campaigns which seek to influence conduct by acting on their beliefs, opinions, fears, prejudices, and customary ways of doing things. In the case of biopower, where population is related to as species, it is the milieu that constitutes the point to which power is applied and the mechanism through which it operates where milieu is defined as “a set of natural givens – rivers, marshes, hills – and a set of artificial givens – an agglomeration of individuals, of houses, etcetera ... [producing] a set of overall effects bearing on all who live in it” (Foucault 2007, 21). Both mechanisms relate to populations as subjects of wants and needs, but only governance via the public relates to population as subjects whose opinions, views, convictions, and so on, constitute the mechanisms through which they are to be governed.

Museums need to be considered in terms of their relations to both kinds of governmental assemblages, and less as self-contained knowledge/power apparatuses than as switch points in the circuits through which knowledges are produced and circulated through different networks. As such, they play a part in the distribution of the freedom through which liberal forms of government are organized, according a capacity for free and reflexive forms of self-government to some sections of the populations they connect with while at the same time denying such capacities to others. Chris Otter provides an example of this in relation to the Great Exhibition, which aimed at the improvement of the working classes via educative housing and sanitary displays that would bring this about as a consequence of their own activity. It was, however, also connected to other circuits for the distribution of knowledges which, premised on the working class’s intellectual and sensory incapacity to respond to such programs, aimed to transform working-class milieus through sanitation programs which treated the population as an object to be acted on (Otter 2008, 65–67). The history of the relations between museums and colonial practices provides more telling, because they are more sharply polarized, instances of the complex ways in which museums have operated as switch points in the flows between different networks for the production and circulation of knowledge.

Let me give two examples from my own work (Bennett 2004; 2009; 2010; 2013a) focused on the role played by museums in relation to the flow of knowledges out from museums to colonial sites of collection in the form of anthropological field-work expeditions; back from the field to the museum as a center of collections and calculation – a place for ordering what is collected and translating it into other forms so that it becomes capable of acting back on the world;⁹ and then out from the museum to connect with public spheres via the museum’s exhibition practices, or back onto indigenous populations via its connections with the institutions and practices of colonial administration. The Musée de l’Homme during its formative years, from 1928 to 1949, and the National Museum of Victoria during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, provide two cases in

point, and significantly contrasting ones in view of their relations to quite different rationalities of colonial governance. Viewed in terms of its relations to the Parisian and broader French public spheres, the Musée de l'Homme translated the collections from its fieldwork expeditions to France's African colonies into exhibitions and other forms of public pedagogy which tended, albeit imperfectly, to deracialize cultural differences by presenting all cultures as of equal value in ways which resonated with the democratic politics of the Popular Front. However, the Musée de l'Homme was also part of a network of scientific associations and, through these and its relations with the University of Paris, it contributed to the training of colonial administrators in the context of a political rationality of colonial rule which treated France's colonial populations as an economic resource whose capacities, given the absence of any public sphere, were to be improved by direct forms of administrative action on the colonial milieu. The fieldwork expeditions into central Australia that Baldwin Spencer organized from the National Museum of Victoria, by contrast, added a sense of an absolute and unbridgeable racial difference to earlier evolutionary conceptions of the relations between Australia's white settlers and its indigenous populations. The dissemination of such conceptions through the museum's exhibitions and the other institutions of Melbourne's and Australia's public sphere played a significant role in diminishing public support for earlier civilizing programs that had earlier sought to assimilate Aborigines into Australian society by cultural and educative means. At the same time, the connections between the museum and the emergence of new forms of administrative intervention into Aboriginal communities formed part of a new governmental rationality that characterized the first years of Australia's establishment as a (relatively) independent nation state. Informed by the logic of settler colonialism in which indigenous populations are not an economic resource to be developed but a barrier to the colonial expropriation of their land, these new forms of intervention into the milieus of Aboriginal populations aimed to disperse them to managed stations where the race was expected, eventually, to die out.

Conclusion

Steven Conn has, rightly I think, taken issue with applications of Foucauldian perspectives to museums which interpret them as institutions of discipline and confinement, as though they were parts of the carceral archipelago (Conn 2010, 5–6). While generously exempting my work from this assessment, my suggestion that we should consider the role that museums have played in orchestrating “the break between what must live and what must die” (Foucault 2003, 254) might suggest that this generosity is misplaced. But I think not. The argument is a particular one, applicable to a particular set of museums in a specific set of historical circumstances rather than to “the museum” as such. Indeed, it rests on a perspective in which the museum as such disappears as a possible object of analysis. What any

18 Thinking about Museums

particular museum is, what it does, what it is possible for it to do, who it can act on, how it can do so: these are not matters that are given by some invariant form of the museum. Rather, the questions which now need most to be attended to in both thinking about and thinking with museums concerns the respects in which museums exist and act only through their dispersal across the assemblages they are connected to.

Notes

- 1 See, on the exhibitionary complex, Bennett (1988), also published in Bennett (1995), and, on museums as governmental assemblages, Bennett (2009; also in Bennett 2010 and 2013a and in Bennett and Healy 2011).
- 2 See in particular Foucault (2008).
- 3 See Bennett (1990), also in Bennett (1995).
- 4 The relationship between museums and nations has, however, proved to be more permeable and, at times, less secure than these formulations suggest, as they have been overridden by various forms of dynastic or political imperialism.
- 5 I draw here on criticisms of the concept I have already aired in Bennett (2012; 2013b).
- 6 Conal McCarthy (2007) demonstrates a very early history of engagement with museums as important spaces for Maori self-representation.
- 7 I draw here on my more detailed discussion of these questions in Bennett (2009).
- 8 I address the former in my discussion of the American Museum of Natural History in Bennett (2004), and Haidee Wasson (2005) discusses the latter in relation to New York's Museum of Modern Art.
- 9 The conception of museums as centers of calculation is derived from Latour (1987).

References

- Alberti, S. J. M. M. 2009. *Nature and Culture: Objects, Disciplines and the Manchester Museum*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bennett, T. 1988. "The Exhibitionary Complex." *New Formations* 4: 73–102.
- Bennett, T. 1990. "The Political Rationality of the Museum." *Continuum* 3(1): 35–55.
- Bennett, T. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Bennett, T. 1998. *Culture: A Reformer's Science*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin; London: Sage.
- Bennett, T. 2004. *Pasts beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Bennett, T. 2006. "Exhibition, Difference and the Logic of Culture." In *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by I. Karp, C. A. Kratz, L. Szwaja, and T. Ybarra-Frausto, pp. 46–69. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bennett, T. 2009. "Museum, Field, Colony: Colonial Governmentality and the Circulation of Reference." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2(1–2): 99–116.
- Bennett, T. 2010. "Making and Mobilising Worlds: Assembling and Governing the Other." In *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn*, edited by T. Bennett and P. Joyce, pp. 190–208. London: Routledge.
- Bennett, T. 2012. "Machineries of Modernity." *Cultural and Social History* 9(1): 145–156.

- Bennett, T. 2013a. "The Shuffle of Things." In *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*, edited by R. Harrison, S. Byrne, and A. Clarke, pp. 39–59. Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.
- Bennett, T. 2013b. *Making Culture, Changing Society*. London: Routledge.
- Bennett, T., and C. Healy, eds. 2011. *Assembling Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. 1996. *The Rules of Art*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brown, W. 2006. *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cameron, F. R. 2010. "Liquid Governmentalities, Liquid Museums and the Climate Crisis." In *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums*, edited by F. Cameron and L. Kelly, pp. 118–135. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars.
- Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Conklin, A. L. 2008. "Skulls on Display: The Science of Race in Paris's Musée de l'Homme." In *Museums and Difference*, edited by D. J. Sherman, pp. 250–288. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Conn, S. 2010. *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- DeLanda, M. 2006. *A New Philosophy of Society*. London: Continuum.
- Deleuze, G., and F. Guattari. 1988. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Athlone.
- Deleuze, G., and C. Parnet. 2002. *Dialogues II*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Edwards, E., C. Gosden, and R. B. Philips, eds. 2006. *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. 1991. "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, pp. 87–104. Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. 2003. *Society Must Be Defended*. New York: Picador.
- Foucault, M. 2007. *Security, Population, Territory: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gosden, C., and F. Larson, with A. Petch. 2007. *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, 1884–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, M. 2006. "The Reappearance of the Authentic." In *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by I. Karp, C. A. Kratz, T. Ybarra-Frausto, and L. Szwaja, pp. 70–101. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Harrison, R., S. Byrne, and A. Clarke, eds. 2013. *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*. Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.
- Henning, M. 2006. *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Jones, P. 2007. *Ochre and Rust: Artefacts and Encounters on Australian Frontiers*. Kent Town, SA: Wakefield.
- Latour, B. 1987. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

20 Thinking about Museums

- MacKenzie, J. 2009. *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- McCarthy, C. 2007. *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*. Oxford: Berg.
- Otter, C. 2008. *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wasson, H. 2005. *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Witcomb, A. 2003. *Re-imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum*. London: Routledge.

Tony Bennett is Research Professor in Social and Cultural Theory in the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney. He is a member of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and of the Academy of the Social Sciences in the United Kingdom. His recent books include *Pasts beyond Memory: Evolution Museums, Colonialism* (Routledge, 2004), *Critical Trajectories: Culture, Society, Intellectuals* (Blackwell, 2007), *Culture, Class, Distinction* (coauthored; Routledge, 2009), *Material Powers* (coedited; Routledge, 2010), and *Making Culture, Changing Society* (Routledge, 2013).

teremo strumenti che consentano a tutti noi di articolare i nostri presupposti individuali, saremo più disposti ad accettare strategie che rafforzino ciò che *vorremmo* pensare dei nostri visitatori. Si potrebbero così produrre mostre al servizio del pubblico — non perché ci preoccupiamo di esso per una forma di necessità interna, ma perché *vogliamo* preoccuparci del pubblico adattando il nostro comportamento in modo conseguente.

Come ha scritto Stephen E. Weil, vicedirettore dello Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden:

Il vero problema, secondo me, non è tanto come liberare il museo dai valori — un compito che con ogni probabilità risulterebbe impossibile — ma come rendere questi valori manifesti, come portarli alla coscienza, nostra come dei nostri visitatori. Inganniamo noi stessi quando pensiamo al museo come a un *medium* chiaro e trasparente, attraverso il quale sono solo i nostri oggetti che trasmettono messaggi. Anche noi trasmettiamo messaggi — come *media* noi siamo anche messaggi — e mi sembra fondamentale da parte nostra capire meglio in che cosa tali messaggi appunto consistano.¹¹

¹¹ Stephen E. Weil, "The Proper Business of the Museum: Ideas or Things?", *Muse*, 12, 1, agosto 1989, p. 31.

Sempre fedeli all'oggetto, a modo nostro

Susan Vogel

Quasi nessuno degli oggetti esposti nei musei è stato fatto per essere visto all'interno di essi. I musei favoriscono un accostamento all'arte, e ai prodotti d'artigianato della maggior parte del mondo, che non ha assolutamente nulla a che vedere con le intenzioni dei produttori. Questo fatto in sé evidente è alla radice stessa del lavoro museale (che è un lavoro di mediazione) e dovrebbe essere al centro dei pensieri di ogni professionista in attività museali — e ciò anche se la maggior parte dei visitatori dei musei sembra non esserne consapevole. Una mostra d'arte può essere costruita come una collaborazione non intenzionale tra un curatore e l'artista (o gli artisti) di cui si espone l'opera; una collaborazione in cui quest'ultimo svolge il ruolo di gran lunga più attivo e determinante. Curiosamente, il nome del curatore compare raramente nell'apparato informativo disponibile in una mostra (a eccezione del catalogo) e il pubblico ha la falsa impressione di essere entrato in contatto, per fare un esempio, con "Goya", "Warhol" o l'"Arte africana". I musei, a mio avviso, hanno l'obbligo di far sapere al pubblico quale parte di una mostra sia opera dell'artista¹ e quale sia il frutto dell'interpretazione del cura-

¹ Sempre che si possa parlare di "artisti" nel caso dell'Africa. È questo uno dei presupposti di fondo e potenzialmente fuorvianti che, pur rimanendo non verificati o almeno non articolati, sono alla base di molte mostre d'arte africana.

tore. Distinguere chiaramente questi due elementi, tuttavia, può non essere tanto semplice, dal momento che almeno in qualche misura la comprensione del materiale che il curatore ha raggiunto può poggiare su alcune premesse, culturali e d'altro genere, non verificate e non vagliate.

Virtualmente, l'unica arte fatta per essere esposta nelle mostre (in quanto distinta da quella che eventualmente può fungere da decorazione nei locali delle mostre stesse) è l'arte della nostra storia recente, cioè quella occidentale a partire dagli ultimi decenni del secolo XVIII. In qualche misura, noi abbiamo attribuito all'arte o ai manufatti di tutti i tempi caratteristiche che sono proprie del nostro. Pensiamo, cioè, che lo scopo di tali oggetti sia quello di essere contemplati, e che i tratti salienti di essi possano essere colti visivamente. L'arredo di una tomba egizia e le pale d'altare del Rinascimento — per non parlare dell'arte africana — sono comunemente esposti nei musei d'arte senza che vengano prese in considerazione neppure le domande più elementari: questi oggetti possono essere guardati come "opere d'arte" nel nostro senso? Erano fatti da individui che pensavano al loro ruolo in termini che corrispondono alla nostra definizione di "artista"? Se così non è, come possiamo riconoscere questo fatto quando li esponiamo nei musei d'arte?

L'arte africana fornisce un esempio utile e particolarmente chiaro della distorsione che si produce quando si espongono nei musei oggetti fatti per tutt'altri scopi. L'arte africana è entrata nei musei d'arte da non molti anni, non tanti comunque da far sì che la sua presenza sia accettata in modo automatico. Se il pubblico sa una cosa dell'arte africana, sa che questi oggetti non sono mai stati fatti per essere visti e mostrati nelle sale di un museo. L'arte africana costituisce quindi un tema molto appropriato per esplorare gli allestimenti e le sistemazioni museali o, ed è questo probabilmente il modo più utile di considerare il problema, la ricontestualizzazione degli oggetti nei musei.

La mia esperienza in attività museali è pratica, non sono un teorico. Ho trascorso la maggior parte della mia vita profes-

sionale ad allestire mostre: un'installazione permanente e varie mostre temporanee. Si trattava di mostre d'arte di oggetti materiali situati in ambienti concreti, rivolte a utenti determinati in determinate città e in momenti determinati. Le mostre da me allestite sono state tutte di arte africana: un'arte non riconosciuta automaticamente come tale, da un punto di vista non politicamente neutrale. Lavorando a queste mostre ho avuto modo di esaminare le competenze o le credenze del pubblico sull'Africa e ho elaborato strategie per rispondere a queste aspettative. Forse le strategie si sono sviluppate diventando teorie.

La civiltà occidentale si è appropriata dell'arte africana e le ha attribuito significati che sono incontestabilmente occidentali. Ci rendiamo conto che i significati che attribuiamo agli oggetti che passano per le nostre case e i nostri musei non sono quelli che ispirarono i loro autori. Abbiamo invece qualche perplessità circa lo statuto (arte? artigianato? oggetti sacri e di culto?) e il significato che tali oggetti possono avere avuto in origine.

Molti occidentali avvertono in modo fin troppo acuto la loro ignoranza dei contesti originali dell'arte africana e sono troppo inclini a lasciare che ciò li renda ciechi di fronte agli aspetti visibili di tale arte. Sono meno intimiditi dall'impossibilità di vedere *qualiasi* opera d'arte con gli occhi del pubblico originario, e ancor meno dell'artista. Il contesto culturale di gran parte dell'arte in genere — e penso soprattutto a quell'ampio segmento di essa che è religioso quanto a ispirazione — è difficilmente afferrabile da parte del pubblico che frequenta oggi i musei. Nel migliore dei casi, l'aura di fede e reverenza con cui tale arte veniva guardata dal pubblico cui si rivolgeva in origine è perduta per molti di noi. Possiamo essere inseriti a pieno titolo solo nella nostra cultura e nel nostro tempo.

Detto questo, sono giunto alla conclusione che il modo di accostarsi alle varie civiltà (e ancor più all'arte non occidentale) da parte del museo non deve assumere i toni autoritari

che sono d'uso corrente nei musei d'arte e di scienza occidentali. Siamo troppo lontani dalle voci dei proprietari e dei produttori originari, troppo chiusi negli schemi della nostra cultura per poter pensare di essere fedeli all'oggetto in uno dei modi celebrati. Possiamo essere fedeli solo a modo nostro, e ciò spesso significa che, come l'eroina di una commedia musicale di Cole Porter, siamo fedeli fino a un certo punto, se non per nulla. E possiamo essere fedeli solo nei modi propri del nostro tempo.

Alcune recenti mostre allestite dal Center for African Art di New York hanno tentato di essere fedeli in modi diversi. Tutte hanno rinunciato ad assumere un atteggiamento autoritario; ognuna ha messo in atto una sua strategia per affrontare la drastica ricontestualizzazione dell'arte africana nei musei occidentali. Una mostra che affrontava apertamente il problema della selezione degli oggetti da esporre, *The Art of Collecting African Art*,² presentava non solo gli oggetti ritenuti migliori da me curatore, ma anche le opere che erano state scartate in quanto mediocri, alterate, restaurate o decisamente false. La mostra invitava l'osservatore a guardare attentamente e a formarsi una sua opinione prima di leggere il cartellino che riportava la mia. Le didascalie erano personali, decise e informali nel tono più che didattiche.³ La mostra

² Il catalogo, dallo stesso titolo (pubblicato nel 1988 dal Center for African Art) contiene testi sul collezionismo e illustrazioni degli oggetti nelle collezioni, ma non di quelli scelti per fungere da termini di paragone.

³ Una vetrina piena di maschere Baule era accompagnata da un'etichetta su cui si poteva leggere: "ATTENZIONE: IN QUESTA VETRINA CI SONO ALCUNI FALSI. Maschere facciali; Baule, Costa d'Avorio; legno, vernice, metallo, fibre. Queste maschere vengono indossate in danze non rituali. Si segnalano due falsi vistosi, un'onesta riproduzione, due maschere antiche straordinarie e due esemplari semplicemente autentici". A poca distanza dalla vetrina una seconda etichetta identificava le singole maschere: "Da sinistra a destra: 1. Una contraffazione, tradita dall'eccessiva delicatezza e dall'espressione insipida. Si confronti la timidezza della decorazione intorno al mento e il misero ucellino con gli altri esemplari. 2. Un falso. La superficie opaca e l'intaglio meccanico sono tipici dei falsi recenti. 3. Una maschera autentica, risalente con ogni probabilità agli anni Quaranta o Cinquanta del

tendeva a incoraggiare uno sguardo attento e non mirava a trasmettere competenze.⁴

Altre due mostre hanno tentato di fornire al visitatore gli strumenti necessari ad acquisire uno sguardo critico sulle opere di arte africana e, insieme, ad accrescere la consapevolezza della misura in cui ciò che vediamo in tale arte è un riflesso di noi stessi. La prima di esse, *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, considerava i modi in cui noi occidentali proiettiamo i nostri bisogni e le nostre fantasie sull'Africa; la seconda era *Art/artifact*. Entrambe le mostre mettevano in questione gli americani più che gli africani: il tema della prima era il pubblico, quello della seconda il museo.

*Perspectives: Angles on African Art*⁵ esplorava ciò che l'arte africana ha via via significato, invitando dieci persone, che rappresentavano punti di vista disparati, a scegliere gli oggetti da esporre e a chiarire i motivi delle loro scelte. I dieci co-

nostro secolo. L'intaglio, vivace e vigoroso (si confronti questo gagliardo uccello con gli altri), è pesante e il volto privo d'espressione. 4. Una riproduzione, intagliata con abilità, addirittura con virtuosismo, ma senza convinzione profonda. Non è stato fatto alcun tentativo di invecchiare la maschera o di falsificarne la superficie; nessun foro è stato praticato sul perimetro per attaccare un eventuale costume. 5. Un autentico capolavoro. Questa maschera, già esposta in precedenza, risale probabilmente al secolo scorso. L'espressione profondamente contemplativa, e l'efficace riduzione degli uccelli a semplici teste rivela la mano di un grande artista. La maschera ha mantenuto la superficie originale con tutte le variazioni di colore e tessitura che si trovano normalmente sulle maschere antiche".

⁴ Alcuni studiosi di formazione accademica e altri poco interessati all'influenza del gusto e della competenza amatoriale ritennero insoddisfacenti la mostra, che ebbe invece un certo successo di pubblico, attratto dall'idea di mettere alla prova la propria capacità di giudizio. Se dovessi allestire questa mostra di nuovo inserirei sui dépliant introduttivi un maggior numero di informazioni utili per giudicare gli oggetti, oppure isolerei e identificherei un buon termine di paragone.

⁵ Allestita al Center for African Art di New York, al Virginia Museum of Fine Arts di Richmond, al San Diego Museum of Art e al Birmingham Museum of Art tra il febbraio 1987 e il marzo 1988. Il catalogo, dallo stesso titolo, è stato pubblicato nel 1987 dal Center for African Art e da Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

curatori erano americani e africani legati in qualche modo all'arte africana, anche se solo due di essi avevano una formazione specialistica sull'argomento. Le didascalie consistevano di commenti firmati dai co-curatori ed erano per lo più opinioni strettamente personali e discutibili che invitavano lo spettatore al consenso o al dissenso. Il ventaglio delle prospettive interpretava l'arte africana in modi assai diversi: come un patrimonio nazionale, come un retaggio personale, come oggetti in una collezione d'arte, come un settore degli studi storico-artistici o antropologici, come uno dei fattori che esercitano la loro influenza sull'arte contemporanea, come materiale offerto alla rielaborazione degli artisti, infine come l'espressione di credenze religiose e politiche a tutt'oggi vive.⁶

Nonostante le differenze che li separavano, i co-curatori erano tutti fortemente interessati alla dicotomia tra valutazione e comprensione, forma e significato, tra quello che David Rockefeller chiama il senso artistico e il senso scientifico. Non era un problema che noi avessimo posto direttamente nelle interviste preliminari, anche se i riferimenti a esso erano stati continui. L'antropologo Ivan Karp si espresse in modo chiarissimo a questo proposito: "Sono veramente diviso tra argomenti a favore di criteri estetici universali e l'idea che noi possiamo apprezzare seriamente qualcosa solo dal punto di vista delle persone per le quali questo qualcosa è stato fatto: che cioè l'estetica abbia confini culturali precisi".⁷

Il problema che si pone a chiunque voglia accostarsi all'arte non occidentale può esprimersi più o meno in questi termini: come possiamo capire o valutare correttamente l'arte proveniente da una civiltà che non conosciamo sino in fondo? Credo che anche molti visitatori abbiano provato qualche

inquietudine in questo senso, sia pure in modo non esplicito.

Gli artisti co-curatori erano i meno preoccupati dal contesto culturale degli oggetti, cui si accostavano con disinvoltura come a pure forme scultoree. Nancy Graves dichiarò: "L'arte è per noi qualcosa da capire per intuizione. Si può raccogliere un maggior numero di informazioni su di essa, e questo forse la potenzierebbe, ma la sua forza si mostra agli occhi di chiunque la voglia vedere".⁸ Iba N'Diaye non fa alcun riferimento al significato, nei suoi interventi, e descrive gli oggetti da lui scelti nel modo in cui è stato educato a vederli.⁹ Romare Bearden pensa che l'informazione possa addirittura ostacolare la percezione: "Ho dovuto mettere da parte i libri e guardare semplicemente come mi sentivo di fare. A volte i libri sono d'impaccio".¹⁰ Per James Baldwin, l'unica via alla comprensione vera è data dall'esperienza diretta. "Vuoi scoprire qualcosa?", si chiede. "Vai ed esponiti. In ogni caso non puoi scoprire niente attraverso un mediatore." E Baldwin prosegue: "In Occidente si è affermata una curiosa dicotomia tra forma e contenuto. Ora, la forma è il contenuto".¹¹ In questo egli fa eco alle parole di Lela Kouakou, scultore e indovino africano, che non riconosce alcuna differenza tra i due termini.¹²

William Rubin sostiene che la distinzione tra forma e contenuto è teorica, dal momento che né la comprensione del nostro contesto culturale né una valutazione individuale è possibile in quanto esperienza pura. "La scelta non è tra una ricostruzione contestuale totale — obiettivo del tutto mitico — e una risposta estetica pura, a qualunque cosa ciò corrisponda. Noi non rispondiamo agli oggetti d'arte con un insieme di risposte ben delimitabili in quanto estetiche. Rispondiamo con l'intera nostra umanità."¹³ Il dottor Ekpo Eyo, un

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 148-159.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶ I co-curatori erano: Romare Bearden, Nancy Graves e Iba N'Diaye, artisti; Robert Farris Thompson, africanista e storico dell'arte; Ivan Karp, antropologo e africanista; James Baldwin, scrittore; David Rockefeller, banchiere e collezionista; Ekpo Eyo, archeologo africanista; Lela Kouakou, indovino e artista Baule; William Rubin, storico dell'arte contemporanea.

⁷ *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, cit., p. 83.

archeologo nigeriano, si spinge oltre, suggerendo che alla comprensione si giunge attraverso un intreccio di erudizione e di risposta emotiva estetica. Parlando della sua esperienza personale con gli oggetti archeologici, afferma: "Più li guardavo, più li studiavo e più ne apprezzavo la bellezza del tutto indipendentemente dalle informazioni che avevo sul loro contesto. Erano belli! Più li descrivevo e li maneggiavo, più mi legavo a essi emotivamente. È come avere un figlio: lo guardi dalla mattina alla sera e cominci a scoprire in lui tutta una serie di tratti che non avevi osservato prima. I miei occhi si aprivano".¹⁴

In *Perspectives* non abbiamo abdicato completamente al nostro ruolo di fornitori di informazione. Abbiamo preparato un foglio illustrativo che conteneva informazioni sull'uso e sul significato che gli oggetti avevano per i primi proprietari, in Africa. Se mi rendo conto che una voce autoritaria inibisce il visitatore, di certo non me la sento di raccomandare il ricorso ad associazioni libere e cieche di fronte agli oggetti africani — o di fronte a qualsiasi altro oggetto intellettualmente determinato — come modo particolarmente efficace di accostarsi a essi quando altre vie sono disponibili. Ma *Perspectives* non era una mostra sull'arte africana. Era una mostra sui diversi approcci all'arte africana.

La mostra dedicata al museo era *Art/artifact*.¹⁵ Ancora una volta non si trattava di una mostra sull'arte africana o sull'A-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵ Il catalogo dallo stesso titolo è stato pubblicato nel 1987 dal Center for African Art e dal Prestel Verlag. Contributi di Susan Vogel, Arthur Danto, R.M. Gramly, Jeanne Zeidler, Mary Lou Hultgren, Enid Schildkrout, Thomas McEviley, Kim Levin e James Farris. *Art/artifact* è stata allestita al Center for African Art di New York, al Buffalo Museum of Science, al Virginia Museum of Fine Arts di Richmond, al Dallas Museum of Art, alla Henry Art Gallery di Seattle, al Carnegie Art Museum di Pittsburgh, al Denver Museum of Natural History, alla Wight Art Gallery di Los Angeles tra il febbraio 1988 e il giugno 1990. Il fatto che la mostra sia divisa tra musei d'arte e musei scientifici è un preciso riflesso delle problematiche che solleva.

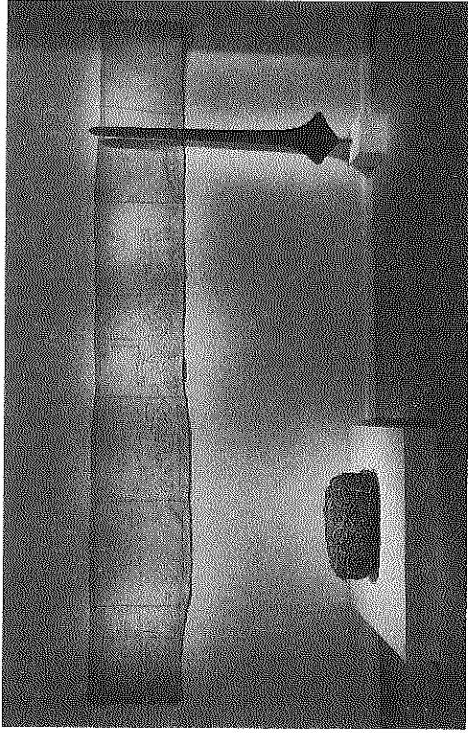


Fig. 1 — Oggetti africani presentati come pure forme, come se la loro forma fosse il significato. Nessuno degli oggetti era fatto per essere visto nel modo suggerito dall'allestimento. Nei contesti originali, il tessuto di raffia appeso al muro era la sottana di una donna Kuba, il rotolo di corda sulla piattaforma una rete da caccia Zande, avvolta per la conservazione o il trasporto, la lama di metallo sulla destra fungeva da moneta per il pagamento delle donne nel Kasai. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York.

frica, e neppure propriamente sull'arte. La mostra aveva come oggetto la percezione e l'esperienza museali, e si concentrava sui modi in cui gli occidentali hanno classificato ed esposto gli oggetti africani nello scorso secolo. Le nostre categorie, quelle in base alle quali distinguiamo gli oggetti propriamente artistici dalle produzioni artigianali o manufatti, non riflettono quelle africane e sono andate mutando nel tempo. La mostra intendeva far vedere come guardiamo gli oggetti africani (alla lettera e in senso figurato), e si fondava sull'assunto che gran parte della nostra visione dell'Africa e dell'arte africana è stata condizionata dalla nostra stessa cultura. Io credo che se non ci rendiamo conto che l'arte africana quale noi la vediamo è stata plasmata da noi almeno quanto dagli africani stessi,



Fig. 2 — Pali funebri Mijikenda mostrati come sculture. I pali, tratti da diverse tombe, sono stati accostati per creare un effetto di presenza artistica e spettrale, qualcosa di completamente estraneo ai Mijikenda. Questi pali possono o non possono essere stati guardati come oggetti estetici da produttori e utenti. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York.

non riusciamo a vedere assolutamente nulla. La mostra affrontava il problema della percezione attraverso oggetti singoli e stili di allestimento diversi. Partendo dal presupposto che la collocazione e l'ambientazione fisica di un oggetto contribuisce a fare di esso un'opera d'arte, l'allestimento mostrava oggetti d'arte e oggetti non artistici in modo da suscitare il problema nella mente dello spettatore e da rendere l'artificio evidente.

Una rete da caccia proveniente dallo Zaire, un oggetto non estetico e in sé non significativo che denunciava qualche spuria affinità con alcune opere d'arte contemporanea, era esposto con reverenza al centro di un cerchio di luce, su una bassa piattaforma. (Curiosamente, una reazione imprevista dimostrò per certi aspetti il successo dell'artificio: io e alcuni mer-



Fig. 3 — Ricostruzione del gabinetto delle curiosità dello Hampton Institute, intorno al 1905. L'accostamento di "curiosità" zoologiche ed etnografiche era tipico dell'epoca. Lo stile della presentazione suggerisce che gli oggetti africani non hanno un significato complesso e implica che ogni cosa — figure scolpite, lance, il coccodrillo, la guarnizione di perline e così via — sia di egual valore e interesse. In pratica, la stanza fungeva da strumento didattico molto avanzato e i docenti usavano la collezione per dare lezioni sul campo, del tipo di quelle che si danno correntemente oggi nei musei. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

canti d'arte africana fummo interpellati da vari collezionisti interessati all'acquisto di quella meravigliosa rete.) La situazione inversa si ebbe con l'esposizione di alcuni pezzi straordinari di arte africana, messi in mostra senza alcuna enfasi, secondo lo stile dei musei di storia naturale, in una vetrina insieme a vari altri oggetti di interesse estetico diverso, frammenti di testo e dipinti che creavano un effetto di "pannello antropologico" integrale. L'accostamento indiscriminato rendeva difficile vedere le figurine, pur perfettamente visibili, come grandi capolavori.



Fig. 4 — Ricostruzione del gabinetto di curiosità dello Hampton Institute, con un palo Mijikenda nell'angolo a sinistra, accanto a un tamburo del Camerun. La presentazione alquanto casuale e priva di protezioni suggerisce che gli oggetti non sono di grande valore e non invita il visitatore a guardarli come opere d'arte. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

La mostra considerava anche i contesti in cui gli occidentali hanno guardato l'arte africana e si apriva con una stanza completamente bianca in cui alcuni oggetti d'arte venivano mostrati insieme a manufatti (come la rete sopra citata) solo per le loro qualità formali (figg. 1 e 2). Le informazioni fornite erano ridotte al minimo assoluto: "Rete Zande, Zaire". La seconda area era piccola ma importante: qui veniva proiettato un videotape inedito e non tradotto che mostrava l'installazione di un palo funerario Mijikenda. Un cartellino avvertiva che solo il pubblico originario poteva partecipare all'esperienza originaria, mentre qualsiasi altro atteggiamento sarebbe stato in maggiore o minor misura inautentico e arbitrario. La terza area ricostruiva una "gabinetto di curiosità" del 1905, in cui l'accostamento di esemplari zoologici e di manu-



Fig. 5 — Esposizione nello stile di un museo di storia naturale. Gli oggetti vengono usati per illustrare alcuni aspetti della cultura africana (per esempio "Il ruolo del morto nel mondo dei vivi"), non per la loro qualità intrinseca. L'uniformità della presentazione indica che tutti gli oggetti devono essere guardati allo stesso modo, anche se alcuni di essi sono autentici capolavori e altri di fattura comune. In questo contesto, il palo Mijikenda non spicca in alcun modo. Veduta di una installazione della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

fatti, unitamente all'assenza di ulteriori informazioni, suggeriva trattarsi di oggetti interessanti ma quasi inconoscibili, che non denotavano alcun intento estetico (figg. 3, 4). La quarta area esponeva vari oggetti nello stile dei musei di storia naturale, e comprendeva la vetrina sopra descritta (fig. 5) oltre a un completo diorama che mostrava tre uomini intenti a installare un palo Mijikenda (fig. 6). L'ultimo spazio esponeva oggetti come in un museo d'arte, presentandoli come pregevoli tesori protetti da lastre di plexiglas e circondati da un alone di luce sacrale (figg. 7 e 8).

La mostra non intendeva seguire alcun criterio cronologico e non si disponeva secondo un ordine ascendente di legittimità. Le didascalie sottolineavano che i musei di storia naturale e i diorami non erano anacronistici e che un allestimento molto simile a quello dei musei d'arte era stato installato da

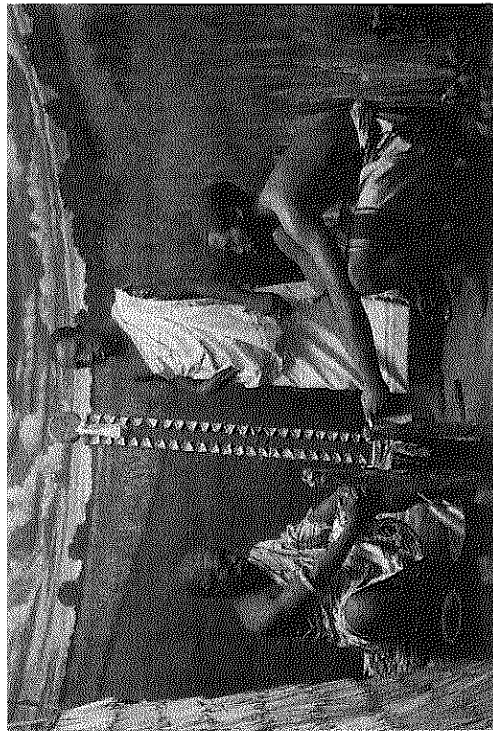


Fig. 6 — Diorama nello stile dei musei di storia naturale che mostra l'installazione di un palo Mijikenda. Il diorama consentiva al museo di illustrare vari aspetti della cultura materiale, dell'interazione sociale e, insieme, dell'ambiente. La presentazione impedisce allo spettatore di prestare particolare attenzione al palo Mijikenda e rende i confini dell'oggetto poco chiari: i due pali più piccoli fanno parte di esso? e gli abiti? il vaso e le zucche? Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

Alfred Stieglitz nel 1914, più o meno nel momento in cui gli oggetti africani cominciavano a essere visti come opere d'arte. La mostra sottolineava che questi diversi stili riflettono differenze nell'atteggiamento interpretativo, e che lo spettatore non può non risentirne l'influenza.

La mia speranza era che una volta usciti dalla mostra, di fronte ad altre esposizioni, gli spettatori sarebbero stati in grado di guardare tutte le attività museali con un occhio più critico e accorto, per divenire finalmente consapevoli delle scelte fatte in modo meno palese dai musei che influenzano la visione degli spettatori interponendo una lastra di plexiglas tra loro e l'oggetto.

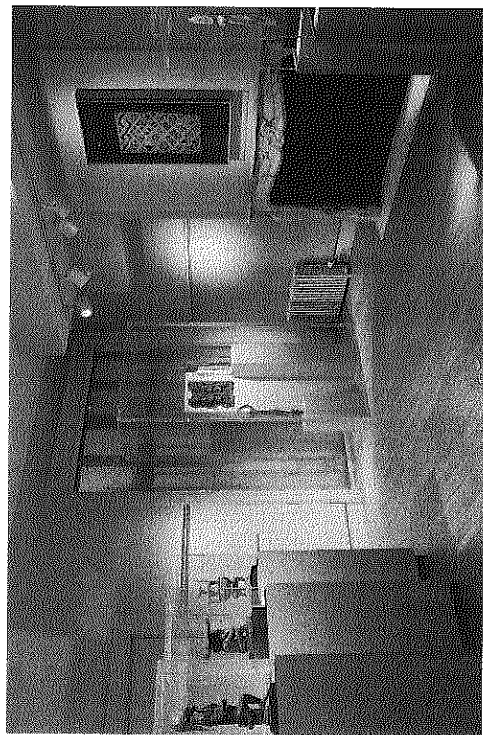


Fig. 7 — Siatuette africane e oggetti d'uso disposti come in un museo d'arte. Nella sala sono esposti oggetti figurativi e non figurativi, comprese alcune lance simili a quelle già mostrate nel gabinetto di curiosità (cfr. fig. 3). Qui, tuttavia, la presentazione le accosta a una scultura in metallo e invita l'osservatore a considerarle nei loro aspetti artistici. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Art/artifact*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

I visitatori politicizzati spesso si concentrano sul valore e sulla proprietà degli oggetti dei musei e si chiedono come le opere siano state acquisite, chi abbia finanziato la mostra e chi ne tragga profitto; ma questi sono solo alcuni tra gli interrogativi più ovvi, tra vari altri, assai più sottili. Il museo trasmette — apertamente, all'interno di un programma didattico e di un ordine del giorno articolato, ma anche in modo sottile, quasi inconscio — un sistema di valori altamente politici espressi non solo nello stile dell'allestimento ma anche nei molteplici aspetti del suo operare. Gli striscioni sulla facciata dell'edificio che ospita il museo dicono al visitatore ciò che realmente importa prima che egli sia entrato nei locali della mostra. Il museo comunica valori attraverso i tipi di programmi che sceglie di presentare e il pubblico cui si rivolge,

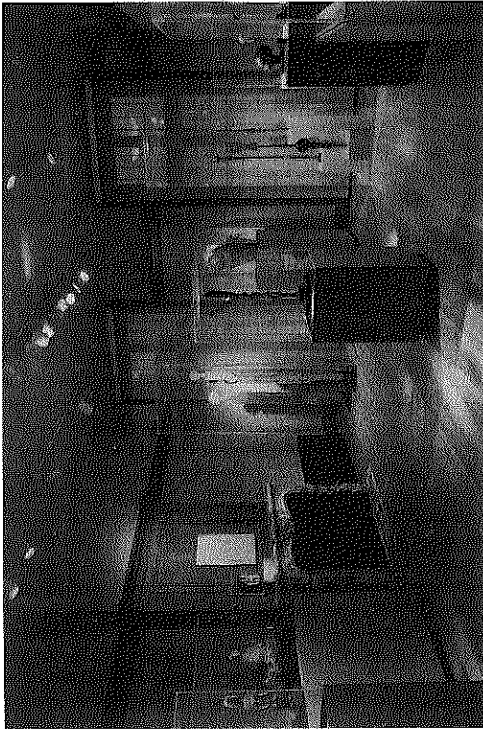


Fig. 8 — Presentazione di alcune sculture africane secondo lo stile di un museo d'arte. La presentazione sotto plexiglas suggerisce che ogni opera ha un valore unico e va quindi protetta. Anche qui ricompare il palo Mijikanda, questa volta in quanto scultura astratta. Veduta di una sala della mostra *Artifacts*, presso il Center for African Art di New York, 1988.

attraverso la composizione del personale dirigente e l'importanza che gli viene attribuita, nella selezione degli oggetti da acquisire e più concretamente nella collocazione delle esposizioni all'interno dell'edificio, nonché attraverso sfumature quali l'illuminazione e i testi di accompagnamento. Nessuna di queste cose è neutrale. Nessuna è dichiaratamente schierata. Tutte dicono al pubblico cosa deve pensare, al di là di ciò che il museo sta manifestamente insegnando.

La radicale dislocazione che investe la maggior parte degli oggetti nei musei è una tradizione solidamente ancorata in Occidente. Molti visitatori si aspettano di vedere nei musei d'arte praticamente tutto: dalle tombe e dagli altri alle scarpe e agli orologi; la relativa incompetenza dei visitatori per ciò che riguarda la collocazione di questi manufatti nei loro con-

testi originari fa sì che essi non si accorgano di quanto il museo stesso influenzi il loro modo di vedere.

Che i musei ricontestualizzino e interpretino gli oggetti è un dato di fatto, che non richiede giustificazioni. I musei dovrebbero, tuttavia, essere consapevoli dei loro limiti e riconoscere apertamente il grado di soggettività che è loro proprio, anch'esso un dato di fatto. Gli specialisti e il personale direttivo dei musei devono essere pienamente consapevoli di ciò che fanno e dei motivi che li muovono, e hanno anche il dovere di informare il pubblico mostrandogli che ciò che vede non è un materiale che "parli da solo" bensì un materiale filtrato attraverso i gusti, gli interessi, le posizioni politiche e il grado di conoscenza propri di specifici presentatori in uno specifico momento. Il museo deve permettere al pubblico di rendersi conto che il museo non è un'ampia cornice attraverso la quale l'arte e la cultura del mondo possono esporsi al nostro sguardo bensì una lente ben focalizzata che mostra al visitatore un punto di vista particolare. Non può essere diversamente.

F. LAURENCEICH 00316
A47 5132

LEXIS

Culture in mostra
Poetiche e politiche
dell'allestimento museale

a cura di
Ivan Karp e Steven D. Lavine

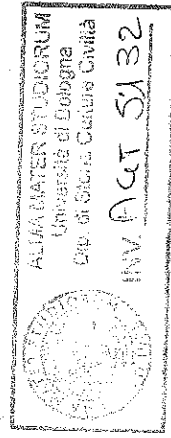
Introduzione di
Fredri Drugman

IV

MuseoPoli
Luoghi per il sapere

Collana diretta da
Fredri Drugman

1



Bibl. "Giorano Ruffani"



Titolo originale: *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*

Copyright © 1991 by Smithsonian Institution, Washington and London

Traduzioni di Maria Gregorio, Dario Moretti, Antonio Serra
Redazione a cura di Maria Gregorio

L'immagine in copertina e a p. xvi è una foto di Eckhard Supp: *Danzatori aborigeni alle cerimonie inaugurali dei Giochi del Commonwealth*, Brisbane, Australia, 1982. Riprodotta per gentile concessione dell'autore.

La presente pubblicazione è stata realizzata grazie ai fondi Murst 40% 1991: "Architettura e scienza nei musei della cultura materiale", ricerca nazionale coordinata da Fredi Drugman, cattedra di Allestimento e Museografia, facoltà di Architettura, Politecnico di Milano.

Culture in mostra : Poetiche e politiche dell'allestimento museale / a cura di Ivan Karp e Steven D. Lavine ; Introduzione di Fredi Drugman.
- Bologna : CLUEB, 1995.
xvi, 188 p. ; 21 cm.
(Lexis, 4. MuseoPoli ; 1)

SOMMARIO

	pag.
Fredi Drugman, <i>Introduzione</i>	VII
Ringraziamenti	XIII
Svetlana Alpers, <i>Il museo come modo di vedere</i>	3
Michael Baxandall, <i>Intento espositivo. Alcune precondizioni per mostre di oggetti espressamente culturali</i>	15
Stephen Greenblatt, <i>Risonanza e meraviglia</i>	27
Masao Yamaguchi, <i>La poetica dell'esposizione nella cultura giapponese</i>	47
B.N. Goswamy, <i>Altro passato, altro contesto: esporre l'arte indiana all'estero</i>	61
Spencer R. Crew, James E. Sims, <i>Situare l'autenticità: frammenti di un dialogo</i>	75
Elaine Heumann Gurian, <i>Pensieri in libertà sulle opportunità espositive</i>	99
Susan Vogel, <i>Sempre fedeli all'oggetto, a modo nostro</i>	119
James A. Boon, <i>Perché i musei mi mettono tristezza</i>	137
Steven D. Lavine, <i>Ivan Karp, Musei e culture</i>	169
<i>Gli autori</i>	181

Progetto grafico di copertina: MAIARELLI & RATHKOPF

ISBN 88-8091-045-0

© 1995
Copyright by Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice Bologna
40126 Bologna - Via Marsala 24
Tel. 051 220736 - Fax 051 237758



The future of the ethnographic museum

Author(s): Clare Harris and Michael O'Hanlon

Source: *Anthropology Today*, February 2013, Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 2013), pp. 8-12

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23486436>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Anthropology Today*

The future of the ethnographic museum

Clare Harris & Michael O'Hanlon

Clare Harris is Reader in Visual Anthropology and Curator for Asian Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum. She is also a Fellow of Magdalen College Oxford. Her most recent book is *The museum on the roof of the world: Art, politics and the representation of Tibet*, University of Chicago Press, 2012. Her email address is: clare.harris@prm.ox.ac.uk.

Michael O'Hanlon is Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum. He has published on New Guinea highland ethnography, the site of his long-term fieldwork, and on anthropology and museums. His previous post was at the British Museum. His email address is: Michael.O'Hanlon@prm.ox.ac.uk.

Ethnographic museums have experienced major changes over the last couple of decades. Here, Clare Harris and Michael O'Hanlon, convenors of the forthcoming conference 'The future of ethnographic museums', take a look at the challenges and the opportunities ethnographic museums face today. Ed.

Let us begin with a provocation: the ethnographic museum is dead. It has outlived its usefulness and has nothing more to offer in pursuance of its historic mandate as a location for the representation of 'other' cultures. Although there are some in anthropological and political circles who may well concur with this view, it seems that hundreds of thousands of others do not. For example, at the museum in Oxford where we are employed – the Pitt Rivers Museum – visitor numbers have trebled in the last two decades and the museum is a more vibrant space than it has ever been in the past.¹

And yet, in academic and public discourse during the same period, there has been an increasing level of unease about what an ethnographic museum might be for, whom it might serve, and what it should contain. These and other topics, have been the foci of international symposia held in university departments, think tanks, and museums around the world. In Europe, many of the most recent gatherings of this sort have been convened under the auspices of the 'Ethnography Museums and World Cultures' project – a collaboration between ten ethnographic museums that has been funded by the European Commission. The project's mission statement prompted ethnographic museums to 'redefine their priorities' in response to 'an ever more globalizing and multicultural world' and, over the five years of its duration (2008–2013), has driven the creation of exhibitions, publications, websites and workshops.² It culminates in a major conference to be held in Oxford in July 2013.³

At that event, a fundamental question that has underpinned discussion over the course of the project will be addressed: what is the future of ethnographic museums in Europe? In order to tackle this issue we have invited some of the leading figures in the study of museums to speak in Oxford, with James Clifford as the keynote lecturer. Of course the question we have posed them is not a simple one. In what follows, we would therefore like to briefly outline some of the additional quandaries that arise when considering the past, present, and especially the future of ethnographic museums. We believe that these issues are not just of interest to museum curators and anthropologists. (Nor are they solely of relevance to ethnographic museums, as similar questions could also be asked of academic anthropology itself.) But we hope that this short survey and especially the conference in July, will spark debate within the wider community of academics, policy makers and museum audiences.

Ethnographic museums: A very short introduction

Ethnographic museums have a long and distinguished history. As teaching establishments and the institutional homes of some of the leading figures in the early phases of anthropology – the American Museum of Natural History for Franz Boas and the Pitt Rivers Museum for Edward Tylor, among others – they can be said to have helped lay the foundations of the discipline.⁴ They have also been sites for all sorts of other kinds of pedagogy, as well as places where, in the era before television, film, mass tourism and the Internet, the general public could encounter the material evidence of anthropological research in person.

In the nineteenth century, for those who did not (or could not) read ethnographic literature, the museum provided a window onto the discipline and a space where the tangible forms of the societies studied by anthropologists could be displayed. Until at least the middle of the twentieth century, displays in ethnographic museums were therefore the product of a rather simple equation: objects stood metonymically for the distant 'others' and distant places experienced and analyzed by anthropologists. However as Johannes Fabian (1983) famously put it, one effect of such elisions was to deny agency and coequality to those who were the subject of anthropology. Along with the charge that they fixed objects within racist evolutionary hierarchies or paraded the trophies of colonial pillage, the ethnographic museum has thus frequently been accused of pickling both people and things in aspic. In fact, when the curator of North American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution, William Sturtevant, published an essay under the title 'Does anthropology need museums?' in 1969, he concluded his survey of ethnographic museums by stating that they were 'petrified institutions' with a reputation as shabby as a 'bordello'.

In the decades since that damning judgement, however, pressure from both external and internal sources has pushed ethnographic museums (as well as anthropology of course) in new directions and seems to have revived their fortunes. Along with the impact of post-colonial politics and post-structuralist reflexivity, the material turn in anthropology has been particularly influential. It has asserted that objects (like persons) can have agency and are resistant to the kind of timeless representations that museums have tended to force upon them. Ever since the publication of Appadurai's *Social life of things* in 1986, the notion that objects possess the capacity to convey 'meaning' in any controllable or singular sense (as had previously been assumed by the museum model) has rightly been abandoned in preference for conceptual schema that emphasize their mobility, multivocality and malleability. In addition, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) has argued with specific reference to the 'objects of ethnography' curated by museums, the classifications imposed upon them have increasingly been interrogated and viewed as context dependent, relational or even redundant. It is now quite clear that Sturtevant's comparison between an ossified museum and a house of ill repute can be overturned. Or at the very least, that it is the artefacts contained within ethnographic museums which can, in their many and various interpretive registers, be construed as promiscuous.

Let us now turn to a series of questions about ethnographic museums in Europe in the twenty-first century and ask what they are, where they are located (not just physically but within intellectual and discursive settings), what they should contain, and what they might do both for future generations of anthropologists and for their visitors of all descriptions.⁵

What is an 'ethnographic museum'?

There are a number of devices that frame an ethnographic museum and introduce it to its public, from the signage at its entrance to the architectural style of the building

1. The Pitt Rivers Museum now receives over 370,000 visitors annually.

2. For further information about this project see <http://www.rimenet.eu>

3. 19–21 July 2013. The future of ethnographic museums. Pitt-Rivers Museum & Keble College, Oxford. For further information about the conference see <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/PRMconference.html> or contact: conference@prm.ox.ac.uk.

4. For accounts of the relationship between academic anthropology and ethnographic museums in the nineteenth century see Stocking 1991 and Conn 2009.

5. Since the 'Ethnography Museums and World Cultures' project focuses on Europe, this article does not include ethnographic museums in other parts of the world. We are also aware that a much lengthier discussion would be required in order to do justice to the complex histories of comparable institutions in 'settler' nations such as New Zealand, Australia, the USA and Canada, not to mention the many other cultural centres, community museums and heritage projects that have been established by

Fig. 1. *The Pacific Galleries at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris.*

indigenous groups or within post-colonial nations.

6. Interestingly, ethnographic museums that take their names from their founders or donors – such as Stuttgart's Linden Museum, Prague's Náprstek Museum and Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum – have apparently felt themselves sufficiently sheltered from external currents not to need nominal adjustment.

7. See http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/ICOM_News/2004-1/ENG/p4_2004-1.pdf.

8. This museum also embraces the strange notion of the 'arts premier'. For one anthropologist's response to the Musée du Quai Branly see Price 2007.

9. It is worth noting that 'folklore' or 'folk arts' have often been included in the categories and collections of some of the oldest ethnographic museums in Europe including the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. In other places, (such as in Rome) 'folk culture' has been distinguished from the 'ethnographic' by being placed in separate institutions. Our thanks to Laura van Broekhaven for directing our attention to the museum in Antwerp.

10. In the UK, recent government initiatives to embrace philanthropy and reduce state spending equally risk driving museums in this direction.

11. See for example Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2000.

12. For some examples of such exercises see Peers & Brown 2003, Van Broekhaven et al. 2010 and Phillips 2011.

13. *The spirit sings* was held at the Glenbow Museum in Alberta, Canada in 1988. In 1989 *Into the heart of Africa* was exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum, also in Canada.

14. For discussion of the therapeutic potential of museums and their collections see, for example, Ruth Phillips 2011.

15. The terminology is disputed – some prefer 'digital-' or 'visual-' over 'virtual repatriation'.

16. The 2006 volume *Museum frictions* edited by Karp et al. was the first attempt to examine museums in the light of such theorizing, but overtly ethnographic museums were not its specific focus.

17. Our thanks to the four careful reviewers of this essay whose comments have been taken on board as far as was possible given the brevity and limited remit of it.

that houses its collections. But how are these structures to be defined and what is actually inscribed over their front doors today?

What is immediately noteworthy is the self re-classification that ethnographic museums have carried out in the last few decades. Under the influence of post-colonial studies and feminism (among other things), museums of 'mankind' (as the British Museum's ethnographic collection was called when it was located in Piccadilly) or of 'Man' (such as the 'Musée de l'Homme' in Paris) were renamed as they were transferred to new premises. More recently, while the words 'ethnographic' or 'völkerkunde' (ethnology) have been retained by some museums in Europe, others have chosen to call themselves museums of 'World Culture'.⁶ But what does this semantic shift to 'world' museum indicate: that such museums have global coverage in terms of their collections and that they seek to speak to a global constituency of visitors? Or is the term 'World Culture' flagging up a more egalitarian model that allows all 'cultures' to be accommodated within the museum?

Even if it is intended to subvert the hierarchies of the past, there remains a risk that, like 'World Art' and 'World Music', 'World Culture' actually refers to those 'cultures' that can be most readily accommodated into the long established paradigms of the West. We might also wonder about the similarities between the 'World Culture' concept and the 'universal museum'. With its roots in the Enlightenment, the principles of the latter have been revived of late by several of the most significant museums in Europe and North America including the British Museum, the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In their 2002 'Declaration on the importance and value of universal museums' representatives of those museums argued that the retention of material accumulated from other countries was of 'universal' rather than of solely national benefit.⁷ Given the chequered history of acquisition at ethnographic museums in the colonial period, the 'World Culture' concept could smack of a similar attempt at rebranding. There is undoubtedly some uncertainty at present about what to call the museums that were, or still are, associated with anthropology, underscoring the extent to which the ethnographic museum has been undergoing an identity crisis.

Where are 'ethnographic museums'?

The fact that there have been changes in vocabulary over the many decades since the creation of the first 'ethnographic' museums in the early nineteenth century is hardly surprising. In parallel with this, they have also undergone – and continue to undergo – substantial physical transformations. Across Europe 'ethnographic' museums have been abandoned or abolished, reinvented and redesigned. As noted earlier, the British Museum in London no longer has a separate outstation for the display of its ethnographic collections, since the Museum of Mankind in Piccadilly closed to the public in 1997. In continental Europe, at Vienna and Leiden (for example) the original edifices which used to house their museums of *völkerkunde* have been saved, but their interiors have been totally remodelled and new styles of display have been introduced. In fact only a few ethnographic museums in Europe remain unaltered. Even the Pitt Rivers Museum, with its apparently unchanging displays organized by type rather than region, has in fact been in a constant process of gradual mutation and has recently received the attention of architects. A new annexe has been added to its historic 'court' and an improved entrance area created to allow easier access for visitors. At the other end of the spectrum, in Paris in 2006, the collections of the former Musée de l'Homme and the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie were combined in the entirely new Musée du Quai Branly com-



CLARE HARRIS

missioned by Jacques Chirac as testimony to his embrace of the *arts primitifs*.⁸ By rehousing these collections in a statement building designed by the acclaimed modernist architect Jean Nouvel, the Musée du Quai Branly has put 'indigenous' art firmly on the tourist map of Paris and created a must-see venue in a capital already renowned for its profusion of great museums. Similarly, in 2011, a stunning building was completed in Antwerp for the Museum Aan de Stroom. This new institution brings together the collections of Antwerp's 'folklore', ethnographic and maritime museums, and has had a reviving effect on the area of the city where it is located.⁹

This points to another question for the future of ethnographic museums: how will they define themselves and carve out a distinct identity in the face of competition from other kinds of exhibitionary institutions such as art galleries, art/historical museums, heritage sites and the fairs and biennales of the art world? The question is especially acute, as all of these forums have to some extent absorbed both the ideas and objects that were previously promoted by ethnographic museums.

As Susan Vogel (1989), Sally Price (1989) and others first observed in the 1980s, ethnographic artefacts can be readily construed as 'art' according to criteria determined by people who are neither their makers nor anthropologists. But since funds generated by tourism and leisure activities are often vital for the financial health of ethnographic museums, there must be at least a theoretical risk that such museums will be driven to enhance the visual appeal of 'ethnographic' objects in order to capture the public's attention.¹⁰ Of course this raises the potential hazard that in creating a spectacle – in the selection of 'outstanding' objects, the manner in which they are displayed, and the forms of the architecture that surrounds them – ethnographic museums will then stand accused of simply reinforcing the very perceptions of exoticism and 'otherness' that academic anthropology has repeatedly sought to defuse. There is also some anxiety that they might become more susceptible to the agendas of the art market in a period when some commentators suggest that we are witnessing a return to the nineteenth century World's Fair



PITT RIVERS MUSEUM

Fig. 2. Solar powered prayer wheel collected in India and exhibited in the Made for trade exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum, 2012.

archetype in which ethnographica was viewed as an art-like commodity whose value only increased according to the degree of exoticism it evoked.¹¹

Should the ethnographic museum therefore concentrate on the more prosaic products that people consume every day rather than the rarefied pieces favoured by art connoisseurs? Even if this were a desirable ambition, it would still not obviate the need for selection and judgement. As Miller (1994: 396) has cogently argued: 'Some things, such as houses and ships, are too big, some things, such as candy floss and daisy chains, too ephemeral. ... Do we ... include every brand of car door mirrors and shampoo, and if a company proclaims a change in the product is this a new artefact or not? What about self-made artefacts, those that children have made at school, or that individuals have knitted on the bus?' Moreover, there are already a number of specialist museums that collect the evidence of contemporary consumption. In fact one example of this phenomenon, the Museum of Failed Products in Michigan, could be viewed as a reincarnation of the early ethnographic museums because, rather like the salvage ethnographers of the early twentieth century, it too collects the redundant and defunct. This brings us to the next question in our brief survey of the topic.

What is in an 'ethnographic museum'?

In the last few years a number of ethnographic museums in Europe have chosen to remove much of their historical material from display in preference for newly acquired objects and for exhibitions that focus on topics of contemporary socio-political relevance. A recent example of an establishment that has attempted a change of this sort is the Museum of World Cultures in Göteborg, Sweden. They cleared their old galleries and embarked on a series of shows that engaged with current issues, as in their 2004 exhibition *AIDS in the age of globalization*.

Meanwhile other museums have continued to capitalize on the strengths of material amassed long ago by keeping it available to the viewing public whilst also conducting research on the histories of their collections and the relationships that created them. At the Pitt Rivers Museum the Relational Museum project drew upon ideas from Actor Network Theory in order to study the sets of relationships that had contributed to the creation of the museum's collection in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Gosden & Larson 2007). This is just one case where advances in the theoretical analysis of material culture have impinged positively on the inner workings of ethnographic museums.

Lack of space precludes us from describing other research projects such as those inspired by the 'biographical' methods advanced by the likes of Kopytoff (1986) and Hoskins (1998), or the attempts made to chart the 'afterlives' of museum objects by authors such as Coombes (1997) and Davis (1999), or which investigate the 'entangled' nature of colonial relations through things as first developed by Nicholas Thomas (1991). All of these approaches have allowed ethnographic museum collections to be reconceived as major resources for the interrogation of colonialism and/or for engaging with indigenous people and other audiences.

But to return to the question of what should be in ethnographic museums: if fidelity to the contemporary requires a focus on today's material culture, but collecting its totality is plainly impossible, might acquiring contemporary artworks be an alternative way of evidencing an engagement with that problematic term 'modernity'? And if so, should the artists who create those works be integrated into the ethnographic museum project as mediators or as critics? Once again, the boundary lines are difficult to draw as the so-called ethnographic turn in contemporary art has

generated artworks that critique museums along with others that appear to celebrate them, such as artist Richard Wilson's 'Museum of Jurassic Technology' in Los Angeles which emulates the immediate precursor of ethnographic museums: the cabinet of curiosity. Classificatory boundaries are also challenged by the artworks created by artists based in the rising powerhouses of the contemporary art world (such as India, Australia, Nigeria and so on) and whether they should be exhibited in modern art galleries rather than in ethnographic museums.

Of course for many ethnographic museums, the main debating point in the last thirty years has not been about which things they should acquire, but rather what they should or should not retain. Campaigns driven by indigenous groups and activists both within and without anthropology have brought arguments about the politics of possession to their doorsteps. This has led to some cases of successful repatriation (and some unsuccessful ones), the drafting of new museum policies, and to legislation that upholds the interests of the original owners or 'source communities' from whom many of the objects in museums were derived (most notably the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in the US).

Museum anthropologists and curators have increasingly attempted to rethink the museum as a 'contact zone' (Clifford 1997), a space in which past histories and disparities of power are acknowledged, and a fresh moral relationship negotiated. By facilitating interaction between representatives of originating communities and those who work within museums, creating easier access to collections and consulting more sensitively about the histories and on-going potency of museum objects, ethnographic museums have been substantially improved and perhaps some old wounds have begun to be healed.¹²

Yet certain stubborn facts remain. Since many of the collections now held in European ethnographic museums were accumulated during the colonial period, the legacy of that time can still be said to shape their present form and, just as 'colonialism and its forms of knowledge' (Cohn 1996) varied from nation to nation in the past, so too do contemporary attitudes to that past. While some institutions have tried to erase the colonial context of their collections by abandoning the edifices that originally housed them (as in Paris) and/or re-designating them as 'World Art', the majority still prefer to exhibit objects from their historic collections as representative of other 'cultures' but with more 'modern' narratives attached to them. Usually this is done without reference to the troubled histories of their acquisition.

Perhaps the ferocious reception that greeted long-past exhibitions such as *The spirit sings* (1988) or *Into the heart of Africa* (1989), has been sufficiently enduring to disincite curators to attempt similar exercises that recall the involvement of museums with the colonial project.¹³ Or maybe there is just fatigue at the repeated suggestion that if ethnographic museums were one of the 'handmaidens of colonialism', they have still not gone far enough in critiquing themselves. However, behind the scenes in many ethnographic museums, a post-colonial intellectual refurbishment has in fact often already been conducted, even if it may not be fully apparent to the public.

But there is a sticking point in making such renovations visible, and it is an obdurate one, arising from the nature of collections. If ethnographic museums are to 'redefine their priorities' in response to 'an ever more globalizing and multicultural world' (as the rubric of the Ethnography Museums and World Cultures project suggests and as governments, local authorities and other funding bodies frequently insist) then museum objects and exhibitions will need to address multicultural audiences and reflect the material (and social) manifestations of global flows.

- Appadurai, A. (ed.) 1986. *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Basu, P. 2011. Object diasporas, resourcing communities: Sierra Leonean collections in the global museumscape. *Museum Anthropology* 34 (1): 28-42.
- Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cohn, B. 1996. *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Conn, S. 2009. *Do museums still need objects?* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Coombes, A. 1997. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, material culture and popular imagination in late Victorian and Edwardian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Davis, R. 1999. *The lives of Indian images*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fabian, J. 1983. *Time and the other: How anthropology makes its object*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Gosden, C. & F. Larson 2007. *Knowing things: Exploring the collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, C. forthcoming. Digital dilemmas: The ethnographic museum as distributive institution. In Lattanzi, V. (ed.) *Beyond Modernity*. Rome: Pigorini Museum.
- Hoskins, J. 1998. *Biographical objects: How things tell the stories of peoples' lives*. London: Routledge.

LINDEN-MUSEUM · STUTTGART



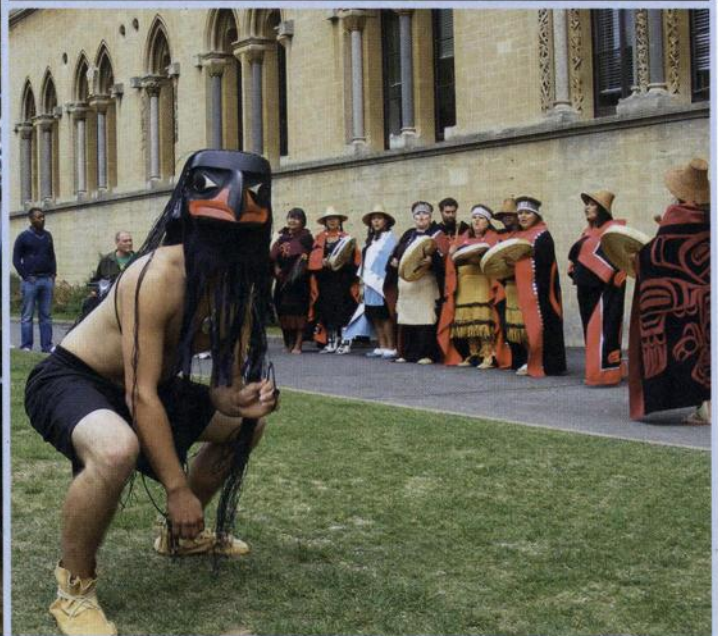
(From above to below, left to right)
Fig. 3. Young visitors in the South Asian galleries at the Linden-Museum, Stuttgart.
Fig. 4. Entrance to the Asia Galleries at the Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna.
Fig. 5. The buildings and gardens at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris.
Fig. 6. The galleries of the Pitt Rivers Museum during an event when visitors examine the cases by torch light.
Fig. 7. Raven mask performance by Haida dancers outside the Pitt Rivers Museum, 2009.

MUSEUM FÜR VÖLKERKUNDE, VIENNA



MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY, PARIS

PITT RIVERS MUSEUM



LAURA PEERS

- Karp, I. et al. (eds). 2006. *Museum frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. 1991. Objects of ethnography. In Karp, I. & S. Lavine (eds). *Exhibiting cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 2000. The museum as catalyst. Keynote address at Museums 2000, ICOM conference, Sweden. Available at: <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/vadstena.pdf>.
- Kopytoff, I. 1986. The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process. In Appadurai, A. (ed.) *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, D. 1994. Artefacts and the meaning of things. In Ingold, T. (ed.) *Companion encyclopedia of anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Peers, L. & A. Brown 2003. *Museums and source communities: A Routledge reader*. London: Routledge.
- Phillips, R. 2011. *Museum pieces: Towards the indigenization of Canadian museums*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Price, S. 1989. *Primitive art in civilized places*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 2007. *Paris primitive, Jacques Chirac's museum on the Quai Branly*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stocking, G. 1991. *Victorian anthropology*. New York: The Free Press.
- Sturtevant, W. 1969. Does anthropology need museums? *Proceedings of The Biological Society of Washington* 82: 619-649.
- Thomas, N. 1991. *Entangled objects: Exchange, material culture and colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 2010. The museum as method. *Museum Anthropology* 33 (1): 6-10.
- Van Broekhoven, L. et al. (eds). 2010. *Sharing knowledge and cultural heritage: First nations of the Americas*. Leiden: National Museum of Ethnology and Sidestone Press.
- Vogel, S. 1989. *Art/ artifact: African art in anthropology collections*. New York: Center for African Art and Prestel Verlag.

However, this is something that the museums' existing holdings cannot always readily support. Let us consider a purely hypothetical example. A contemporary European ethnographic museum might have an extremely strong collection from the Arctic, but little from – say – Afghanistan, and yet global migration patterns may mean that far more of its visitors in the future will have Asian rather than Arctic roots. In brief, the historic shape of ethnographic collections does not easily match that of the contemporary world because they usually either map the contours of colonialism or concur with the pre-established disciplinary boundaries of anthropology in their emphasis on particular regions and the construction of indigeneity.

How can this mismatch between the demographics of contemporary Europe and the collections accumulated in the past be resolved? Should the old collections be deaccessioned or just reoriented to suit the new cartographies of migration? At a point in time when bodies outside the museum are demanding a closer mirroring between the ethnicity of their audiences and the objects selected for display, one of the classic rationales behind the establishment of ethnographic museums – of displaying difference rather than confirming similarity – is potentially being undermined. Whereas in the past, curators might have confidently assumed that a show about the lives of distant 'others' could be of interest to all, some of them are now under pressure to prioritize the representation of those in their immediate vicinity. The very concept of a museum's 'community' or audience thus also needs problematizing.

Who goes to an 'ethnographic museum'?

Underlying everything we have said so far, is the assumption that museums have audiences. Those audiences are made up of actual visitors, along with growing numbers of virtual visitors (see below). On-site visitors may come from the local population or they may have travelled some distance to reach the museum. Their backgrounds are highly diverse and what they expect from the museum as tourists, researchers, members of 'source communities', students and so on, varies enormously. Ethnographic collections need to meet the needs of these constituencies, but they are also tasked with fulfilling the requirements of funders – whether national governments, universities or regional or local bodies. Here, as with repatriation issues, wider political agendas are intrinsic to the operation of ethnographic museums. They may even be required to instantiate a national (even a nationalistic) narrative and to conform to politicized directives. But how should they react, for example, to requirements from their local funding body to concentrate on the region where they are located, rather than on distant countries and different peoples? Or to the idea that ethnographic museums offer a perfect setting for the enactment of key terms in the vocabulary of liberal governments such as social inclusion, multiculturalism and diversity? This is undoubtedly what a number of museum theorists and anthropologists have recently advocated: that museums can be therapeutic institutions and places where communities that have previously been excluded can gain recognition through representation.¹⁴ At a time when Islamophobia and extreme nationalist parties are on the rise across Europe, it may also be the duty of ethnographic museums to articulate an alternative kind of politics. But if so, how effective can they be in countering prejudice and stereotyping? Will the existing contents of those museums suffice for telling the sorts of stories that contemporary communities want to relate and hear, or should ethnographic museums reorient themselves towards addressing traumatic events in European history (such as the Holocaust) or the commemoration of more positive developments such as the abolition of slavery? For a group of museums that were founded through con-

tact with communities and countries far beyond Europe, might it not be better to avoid Eurocentrism and xenophobia by privileging global interconnectedness and cosmopolitanism? Perhaps this is where the new technologies may be able to assist.

Since the turn of the millennium the development of virtual versions of museums has enabled many people to make their first 'visit' to an ethnographic museum via the Internet. In fact, online visitors now outnumber on-site visitors for many museums around the world. Rather than seeing the popularity of digital avatars of museums as a threat, a growing number of ethnographic museums have seen the potential to use the new technologies as a means for disseminating knowledge about their collections globally and improving access to them in a democratizing vein. They may even consider such activities as a type of 'virtual' repatriation.¹⁵ Although worries remain about the lack of control over digitized museum objects and the uneven availability of computers or Internet access around the world, in general the 'digitally distributed museum' has huge potential for facilitating the sharing of ethnographic museum resources (Harris forthcoming). In fact it is the Internet that may allow ethnographic museums to overcome some of the limitations we spoke of earlier. As a technology that facilitates communication across national boundaries, it allows diasporic communities to be reconnected with the artefactual diaspora that can be found in European museums (Basu 2011). In so doing, it may also help us to answer the question of how ethnographic museums should respond to globalization. Most contemporary theorists do not believe that globalization inevitably leads to homogenization, or that the impact of the 'global' corporations and their goods automatically eclipses the 'local'. As anthropologists know only too well, it is the relationship between the two – the local and the global – that generates frictions of both a positive and negative kind.¹⁶ If ethnographic museums could be reconfigured (both physically and virtually) to take account of the unprecedented movement of people and their products in the twenty-first century, and if they adopted more dynamic conceptions of the relationships between people and things than was the case in the past, then perhaps we could be confident about their future prospects.

Who needs an 'ethnographic museum'?

Although the digital may substantially augment access to ethnographic museums in the future, there is no doubt that actual visitors still delight in the somatic experience of encountering objects in person. Additionally, as Nicholas Thomas (2010) reminds us, tangible things can forge readings of history that are significantly different from those derived purely from textual sources and can generate commentaries on colonialism (such as his own) that are less hegemonic and one-sided than earlier accounts. But above all, it is the material complexity, technological creativeness, visual appeal, and sheer unfamiliarity of the contents of ethnographic museums that remain a powerful attraction for millions of people. Ethnographic museums can be places for discovery and dreaming, for memories and meetings: sites where the freedom to wonder at the variety and ingenuity of man-made things is not yet dead. We look forward to hearing whether speakers and delegates at the conference in July will agree that the ethnographic museum still has a life.¹⁷ ●

The RAI



relies on its Fellows and Members for their support. This is especially the case in these difficult times. • For information on how to join, please visit www.therai.org.uk/joining/. • If you would like to make a donation, or discuss any matter concerning membership, please email admin@therai.org. • Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT, UK

Indigenous curation, museums, and intangible cultural heritage

Christina Kreps

Fifteen to 20 years ago, few curators working in an American museum housing Native American collections would have questioned their right to open and handle the contents of a sacred medicine bundle, to put an Iroquois false face mask on display, or to mount an exhibition without consulting representatives from the source community. These were the taken-for-granted, exclusive roles and responsibilities of curators working within professional guidelines and ethics of the time. However, as museums have been making efforts to become responsive to the needs and interests of their diverse constituencies, especially minority and Indigenous communities, they have become more inclusive of diverse perspectives and sensitive to the rights of people to have a voice in how their cultures are represented and their heritage curated. Today, collaboration between museums and source communities and the co-curation of collections and exhibitions has become commonplace in many museums (see Peers and Brown 2003). These activities have also inspired the development of more culturally relative and appropriate approaches to curatorial work (see Kreps 2008).

Collaboration and co-curation has also revealed how many Indigenous communities have their own curatorial traditions, or ways of perceiving, valuing, handling, caring for, interpreting, and preserving their cultural heritage. What we have learned is that just as museums are diverse in the multiple voices, perspectives, and identities they represent so too are approaches to curation and cultural heritage preservation.

While the recognition of Indigenous or non-Western approaches to curation has become *de rigueur* in some mainstream museums, Western-based and professionally oriented museological theory and practice continues to dominate the museum world. Indigenous curatorial traditions and approaches to heritage preservation are unique cultural expressions. As such, they should be recognised and preserved in their own right as part of a people's cultural heritage. They also, however, contribute to world, cultural diversity and have much to contribute to our understanding of museological behaviour cross-culturally, in addition to the formulation of new museological paradigms.

The growing awareness of Indigenous curation coincides with increased discussion within the international museum community on the place of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in museums. The discourse has been heightened since the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003. Much of the discussion has focused on how museums can supplement their conventional tasks of curating and preserving tangible culture (objects and collections) with activities devoted to curating and preserving intangible, living cultural expressions (performing arts, skills, knowledge, and practices). If the intention is to more fully integrate ICH into museums rather than merely add it on to existing curatorial activities, greater attention needs to be given not only to what is curated, but also to how it is curated.

In this chapter, I examine how aspects of Indigenous curation are both a form of intangible cultural heritage as well as means of safeguarding it. I also discuss the suitability of the Convention for the promotion of Indigenous curation in museums. Of special interest is how recognition of Indigenous curation and the importance of ICH mark a shift in museological thinking and practice from a focus on objects and material culture to a focus on people and the sociocultural practices, processes, and interactions associated with their cultural expressions. Taken together these current museological trends and the Convention indicate how concerns over cultural and human rights are increasingly being addressed in museums and global public culture (see Galla 1997; Karp *et al.* 2006).

Indigenous curation

The term 'Indigenous curation' has entered museological discourse in recent years as a way to denote non-Western models of museums, curatorial methods, and concepts of cultural heritage preservation (see Kreps 1998, 2003a, 2007; Stanley 2007). This complex of cultural expressions can be collapsed into what I refer to as 'museological behaviour' which includes the creation of structures and spaces for the collection, storage, and display of objects as well as knowledge, methods, and technologies related to their care, treatment, interpretation and conservation. Museological behaviour also encompasses concepts of cultural heritage preservation or conceptual frameworks that support the transmission of culture through time. The recognition of Indigenous curation acknowledges that while the idea of the museum as a modern, public institution dedicated to collection, preservation, display, and interpretation may be Western in origin, museological behaviour is an ancient, cross-cultural phenomenon.

Indigenous models of museums and curatorial methods may be easily recognised in some cultures. However, in others it may be necessary to look for evidence of museological behaviour embedded in larger cultural forms

and systems, such as vernacular architecture, religious beliefs and practices; social organisation and structure (especially kinship systems and ancestor worship); artistic traditions and aesthetic systems, and knowledge related to people's relationships and adaptations to their natural environment.

Indigenous models of museums may be found in vernacular architectural structures or spaces, such as Pacific Islander meeting houses or New Guinea *haus tumbuna*, which are often used to store and display sacred and ceremonial objects. They also can serve as centres for teaching younger generations about their people's history, culture, arts, and spiritual beliefs (see Mead 1983; Dundon 2007; Haraha 2007; Welsch 2007). As Simpson has suggested, contemporary museums in the Pacific are not necessarily new or foreign concepts in the region, but extensions of older traditions (1996: 107).

Throughout the course of my research in Indonesia over the years, I have come across many examples of architectural forms designed for the storage and safekeeping of valuable goods and cultural materials. For example, while conducting research in villages in East Kalimantan in 1996, I observed how the Kenyan Dayak rice barn (*lumbung*) is not only a structure in which rice is stored, but also family heirlooms such as ceramic jars, gongs, drums and brassware. I also learned that certain measures are taken to preserve contents that can be seen as preventive conservation measures. For instance, rice barns are generally located outside the village on high ground to protect them from fires and the river's seasonal flooding. Certain architectural features, such as thatched roofing, movable awnings and vents, which control interior temperature and regulate airflow, function as a technologically and environmentally appropriate means of 'climate control'. Techniques for 'pest management' are also evident in the rice barns' architecture. An ingenious and effective means of preventing rodents from entering the rice barn is the placement of curved wooden planks or discs at the top of piles that support the structure. In the high heat and humidity of equatorial Borneo, mould and bacterial growth are a big problem. Villagers slow the growth of moulds by smoking peppers inside the rice barn and using charcoal as a dehumidifier. All of these preventive conservation measures are part of curatorial traditions that represent knowledge and skills dedicated to the care and protection of specially valued things.

The word curator is derived from the Latin word *curare*, which means 'to take care of'. If we think of curators as caretakers and guardians of culture, we can see how certain individuals in many societies, such as priests, ritual specialists, shamans, and elders, are curators. Indigenous curators may possess specialised knowledge on the care and treatment of certain types of objects, and are entrusted with keeping these objects safe on behalf of a community, family, or clan. This responsibility is often socially sanctioned and grounded in customs, traditions, and systems of social organisation (see Kreps 1998, 2003a, 2003b; Sullivan and Edwards 2004).

Indigenous curatorial methods may be intended to protect the spiritual as well as material integrity of objects. These practices reflect a particular community's religious and cultural protocols pertaining to the use, handling, and treatment of certain classes of objects. Collaboration between museums and Native American communities in the USA has illuminated how these objects are differently perceived and how they should be curated. Several museums and organisations have established guidelines and procedures for curating culturally sensitive, ceremonial and sacred objects, such as the Association of Art Museum Directors' *Report on the Stewardship and Acquisition of Sacred Objects* (2006), the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian's 'Culturally Sensitive Collections Care Program' (see Sullivan and Edwards 2004), and the Minnesota Historical Society's *Caring for American Indian Objects. A Practical Guide* (Ogden 2004). Such publications and programmes provide guidance on how to appropriately store, handle, and treat culturally sensitive and sacred items. This is because every tribe has its own methods of 'traditional care', and cultural protocol, making consultation essential to integrating Indigenous curatorial practices into museum practices. As noted in one National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) publication:

The manner in which certain objects are stored may be important to the Native community. For example, some tribes prefer certain objects to be placed according to one of the cardinal directions, others to be handled only by women or only by men, others to be fed regularly, others to be handled regularly, and so forth.

(NMAI 2004: 138)

In many museums, culturally sensitive and sacred objects are separated from general collections and stored with access restricted to certain tribal members such as elders, religious leaders, 'faith keepers', and so on. In some cases, objects have been removed from sealed containers or plastic since they are spiritual entities imbued with a life force and need to breathe. Conrad House, Navajo, was dismayed to find masks stored in plastic when he visited one museum, as described in the following passage:

At the museum, I saw a number of sacred masks covered up with plastic. In our way, this is wrong. The masks have to breathe because there's energy in them – in the Navajo way, they're alive. You can't suffocate them or they'll be angry in time to come.

(House 1994: 95)

The periodical smudging and feeding of objects has also become acceptable practice in some museums. The Cultural Resource Center of the NMAI has a room specifically designated for these ceremonies. Culturally sensitive and

sacred objects have also been removed from public display in exhibitions and publications in many museums (see Rosoff 1998; Flynn and Hull-Walski 2001; Clavir 2002; Kreps 2003a; Ogden 2004; Sullivan and Edwards 2004).

These practices illustrate how Native American interpretations of the meanings and values of objects stand in sharp contrast to how they are perceived and valued in museums. To most Indigenous people, objects are not just scientific specimens or works of art. They are also family heirlooms, symbols of rank and status, sacred materials necessary for the perpetuation of religious beliefs and practices, or documents of a community's history and heritage. Objects stand for significant traditions, ideas, customs, social relations, and it is the stories they tell, the performances they are a part of, and the relationships among people and between people and places that are more important than the objects themselves (see Clifford 1997 and Fienup-Riordan 2003). The process of creation and an object's function also may be more highly valued than the object (West 2004).

The above examples show how Indigenous models of museums and curatorial practices are tangible expressions of the intangible, or rather, ideas about what constitutes heritage, how it should be perceived, treated, passed on, and by whom. They exemplify holistic approaches to heritage preservation that are integrated into larger social structures and ongoing social practices. The concept of *pusaka*, common among many ethnic groups in Indonesia, is one such approach to cultural heritage that takes both tangible and intangible forms. Moreover, *pusaka* has worked to protect and preserve valuable cultural property and transmit cultural knowledge and traditions through the generations.

The word *pusaka* is generally translated into English as 'heirloom'. However, it takes on a wide range of meanings in the Indonesian language. Soebadio, in the book *Pusaka: Art of Indonesia* (1992) states that one Indonesian dictionary lists three separate definitions for the word *pusaka*:

- 1) something inherited from a deceased person [analogous to the English word inheritance];
- 2) something that comes down from one's ancestors [analogous to heirloom];
- 3) an inheritance of special value to a community that cannot be disposed of without specific common descent [analogous to heritage in the sense of something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth].

(1992: 15)

Tangible forms of *pusaka* include things like textiles, jewellery, ornaments, weapons, ceramics, beads, dance regalia, land, ancestor figures and houses. Intangible cultural expressions such as songs, dance dramas, stories or names can also be considered *pusaka*. Virtually anything can be regarded as *pusaka*, although not everything that is inherited is *pusaka* nor are objects created to be *pusaka*. An object or entity becomes *pusaka* in the course of its social life. As one Indonesian curator/anthropologist, Suwati Kartiwa, explains, *pusaka*

are social constructs, and it is the meaning a society gives these objects, not anything innate in the objects themselves, which makes them *pusaka* (1992: 159).

So, like cultural heritage in general, the meanings and values assigned to particular *pusaka* are socially and culturally constructed and contingent on specific contexts and circumstances. Because *pusaka* is a social construct, it is more appropriate to think of it in terms of social relationships because *pusaka* emphasises, expresses or defines relationships within a society (Martowidkrido 1992: 129).

Different cultural groups throughout Indonesia have their own categories of *pusaka* and ways of assigning value and meaning to it. Hence, they may have their own, particular notions of what constitutes their heritage and approaches to its preservation. They may also have their own protocol regarding who is responsible for looking after the *pusaka*, or its curators. In one group it may be a village headman, in another a shaman or a priest, and yet in another a member of a royal court. Curatorial work in this context is a social practice that is deeply embedded in larger social structures and processes that define relationships among people and their particular relationships to objects (Kreps 2003b).

These examples of Indonesian and Indigenous models of museums, curatorial practices and concepts of heritage demonstrate how different cultures have their own curatorial traditions and ways of preserving aspects of their culture, which, in themselves, are part of people's cultural heritage. Additionally, they illustrate how approaches to cultural heritage protection and curatorial traditions are products of specific cultural contexts, and are culturally relative and particular.

Indigenous curation is being recognised and openly embraced in some quarters, but it is still a relatively new phenomenon to many in the professional museum world. The body of literature on Indigenous curation remains relatively small given the volumes devoted to the study of Indigenous arts and artefacts. It is ironic that anthropologists, curators, art historians, and collectors have historically taken an interest in non-Western materials, but have not, until recently, turned their attention to the study of how source communities have curated these materials despite the fact that curatorial practices are also part of culture. As I have previously maintained (Kreps 2003a), this lack of attention can be attributed to an ideology that locates the invention of the museum and the development of museological practices firmly in the West. Western, scientifically based museology has been the primary context and referent for our thinking and practice. Because of the hegemony of Western museology, it is difficult for many to imagine museological behaviour expressed in alternative forms.

The hegemony of Western museology has contributed to two phenomena that have worked to undermine or erase Indigenous curatorial traditions, and paradoxically, the preservation of people's cultural heritage. The first is the

global spread and reproduction of Western-oriented museum models, the second is a reliance on expert-driven, top-down, and standardised professional museum training and development (see Kreps 2008).

Some members of the professional museum community resist the promotion and application of Indigenous curatorial methods because they believe them to be too closely tied to religious beliefs, and therefore, in conflict with the secular, scientific character of museums. Others consider Indigenous curatorial practices technologically inferior, and believe their use compromises a museum's ability to properly care for and save valuable art and artefacts. However, collaboration between Indigenous communities and museums has shown that the recognition and use of Indigenous curatorial techniques should not compromise the integrity and value of standard, professional museum practices. Instead, traditional methods can be combined with professional practices to maximise choices on how to better and most appropriately curate cultural materials. Co-curation opens channels for the exchange of information, knowledge and expertise and the development of new museological paradigms.

Indigenous curation as intangible cultural heritage

Indigenous curatorial traditions, such as Native American approaches to the care and handling of sensitive materials discussed above, fit the definition of intangible cultural heritage because they consist of practices, knowledge systems, skills and instruments that function to transmit culture and are part of people's cultural heritage. According to the Convention, intangible cultural heritage is defined as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

(Article 2.1, Definitions)

The Convention also includes in its definition of ICH objects, artefacts and cultural spaces that are associated with manifestations of ICH and goes on to state:

Intangible cultural heritage is manifested in oral traditions, including language; performing arts (traditional dance, music, and theatre); social

practices, rituals, and festive events; knowledge and practices; and traditional craftsmanship

(Article 2.2, Definitions)

As previously discussed, Indigenous curatorial traditions can be both a form of intangible cultural heritage as well as a measure for its safeguarding, for example, as seen in the Indonesian concept of *pusaka* and the Kenyan Dayak rice barn (*lumbung*). Under the Convention, 'safeguarding' means:

measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission (particularly through formal and informal education) as well as revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.

(Article 2, 3, Definitions)

One of the primary purposes of the Convention is to raise awareness and appreciation of ICH and foster the conditions under which it can survive. Consequently, the focus is on helping sustain living cultural traditions, practices, and processes instead of just collecting and preserving cultural products. The Convention also establishes a fund for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage that can be drawn on to support such efforts. Furthermore, the Convention supports international cooperation and assistance, especially in the areas of research, documentation, education, and training (Article 21). An important requirement of the Convention is that local communities and the 'culture bearers' themselves are involved in identifying their ICH and developing and implementing measures for its safeguarding, although it also institutes 'standard-setting' objectives.

The different articles under each section of the Convention outline safeguarding measures in detail, as well as the role and responsibilities of state parties or signatories to the Convention. One of the primary means for safeguarding ICH is the creation of national inventories of ICH and lists, such as the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Listing and lists are to play a major role in ensuring better visibility of ICH, increasing awareness of its significance, and encouraging dialogue that respects cultural diversity.

The 2003 Convention is the fifth legal instrument adopted by UNESCO over the past 30 years for the protection and safeguarding of world cultural heritage. The *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted in 1972, concentrated on identifying and protecting tangible cultural heritage, defined as monuments, architectural works, monumental sculpture and painting, archaeological sites, and natural features thought to be of outstanding universal value in the fields of history,

art and science. Thus, its focus is on protecting the products of human creativity and ingenuity predominantly of the past. It also favoured what can be seen as 'classical' works produced by 'great civilisations'. In contrast, the 2003 Convention shifts attention to safeguarding the knowledge, skills, and values behind tangible culture, concentrating on the people and social processes that sustain it. In addition to demonstrating a heightened concern for protecting living culture expressed in popular and folkloric traditions, it also acknowledges how these traditions are of value to local communities, and in particular, communities that can be characterised as marginal vis-à-vis dominant cultures, such as those of Indigenous peoples (see Kurin 2004).

Intangible cultural heritage and museums

Since the Convention was adopted in 2003, there has been a great deal of discussion within the international museum community on the role of museums in safeguarding ICH. The International Council of Museums (ICOM), a division of UNESCO, has been a particularly strong voice in advocating ICH. Many articles on the topic have appeared in its publications, most notably, *ICOM News*, the organisation's newsletter, as well as its journal, *Museum*. Intangible Cultural Heritage was also the theme of ICOM's 2004 tri-annual conference in South Korea. In a 2003 piece in *ICOM News*, Amar Galla states that:

ICOM strongly supports UNESCO's efforts towards the safeguarding and promotion of intangible heritage, and stresses the importance of inputs from professional bodies like ICOM ... The UNESCO Convention is a significant first step in renewing our relation to cultural heritage, by promoting integrated approaches to tangible and intangible heritage.

(2003, n.p.)

It is logical that museums should play a prominent role in promoting ICH and the aims of the Convention since museums have long been devoted to curating and preserving cultural heritage, albeit mostly in tangible forms. But the curation of ICH is not an entirely new role for museums. Many museums around the world have been doing this all along, such as community-based and Indigenous museums where language and literature programmes, dance and musical performance, festivals and ceremonial gatherings take place on a regular basis (see Simpson 1996; Stanley 2007). There are also examples of museums and cultural centres where Indigenous approaches to curation have always been integral to their purpose and functions. The Makah Cultural and Resource Centre on the Makah Indian Reservation in the state of Washington, for example, is concerned with documenting and preserving Makah etiquette associated with the objects in its possession. Staff

and tribal members see this as a way of preserving the sensibilities, memories, and emotions of Makah histories (Erikson *et al.* 2002: 177).

The Makah and other examples described above underscore how Indigenous curation cannot be isolated or detached from their larger cultural contexts. This ethos is beginning to take hold in mainstream museums as more and more curators are coming to realise that their job is not only to take care of objects, but also relationships between objects and people. As Richard Kurin of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC testifies:

Some anthropologists in the museum world are making the shift from curating collections of objects to curating the systems, and the people, that produce them. Anthropologists have long recognized a moral responsibility to the people with whom they work. And they long recognized that their study or curating of some small abstraction of the studied culture is dependent upon a much larger system. Rather than curate dead or captured specimens of a culture, are increasingly concerned with the living larger whole.

(1997: 93)

This trend represents a turn toward the social and cultural dimensions of curatorial work. It signals how museums today are being defined more in terms of their relationships and responsibilities to people than to objects, collections, and tangible culture. In this light, museums are becoming key agents and arenas for the appreciation, promotion, and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

These trends are also in keeping with the emergence of what Eileen Hooper-Greenhill calls the 'post-museum', which counters many of the premises and practices of the 'modernist' museum born in the nineteenth century (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 152). Hooper-Greenhill contends that the post-museum will 'retain some of the characteristics of its parent, but it will re-shape them to its own ends' (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 152). Regarding the place of objects and collections in museums, she asserts that the post-museum will place more emphasis on their use rather than on accumulation and that intangible heritage will also receive greater attention (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 152).

In the post-museum, curatorial authority is shared among the museum, community members, and other stakeholders whose voices and perspectives contribute to the production of knowledge and culture in the museum through partnerships that celebrate diversity. As Hooper-Greenhill states, 'Knowledge is no longer unified and monolithic; it becomes fragmented and multivocal' and 'much of the intellectual development of the post-museum will take place outside the major European centres which witnessed the birth of the modernist museum' (2000: 153).

The Convention and paradox of cultural heritage preservation

Like the post-museum, the *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* can be seen as a break from modernist paradigms of cultural heritage preservation in which concepts of heritage were lodged in material things, and heritage resources were curated and managed largely by experts. In contrast, the Convention advocates sharing curatorial authority by emphasising the central role of local communities and the 'cultural bearers' themselves in safeguarding their own cultural heritage. In this sense, it recognises the cultural right of people to have greater control over and a say in how their cultural heritage is treated. Of special significance is how the Convention celebrates the cultural expressions of people who historically have been marginalised and disenfranchised, such as Indigenous and minority peoples. While these principles and guidelines can be seen as considerable advancements, the Convention's suitability for promoting Indigenous curation in museums is debatable due to the problematic nature of the safeguarding measures it recommends.

As discussed earlier, one of the main measures for safeguarding ICH proposed in the Convention is the creation of inventories and lists, such as the Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Some question the logistics involved in creating such inventories and lists, and see their creation as a 'vast exercise in information management' (Brown 2005). Especially disconcerting is how the 'rescuing' mission behind the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding echoes the sentiments behind nineteenth-century 'salvage ethnography'. There are also some who believe this effort will divert limited resources from nurturing environments that enable traditional music, dance, artisanship, knowledge, and so forth, to survive.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) critically examines the concept of world heritage and the instruments and measures designed to protect it. She is concerned with 'how valorization, regulation, and instrumentalization alter the relationship of cultural assets to those who are identified with them, as well as others' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 162). Ultimately, such processes create a paradoxical situation in which the diversity of cultural assets and those who produce them are subsumed under the umbrella of humanity and world heritage.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett labels Conventions and lists as well as the heritage enterprise itself as 'metacultural artifacts'. Of special interest is:

how the process of safeguarding, which includes defining, identifying, documenting and presenting cultural traditions and their practitioners, produces something metacultural. What is produced includes not only an altered relationship of practitioners to their art but also distinctive artifacts such as the list ...

(Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 171)

In cases where Indigenous curatorial knowledge is in danger of being lost, documentation and archiving may be welcomed, but documentation and listing raise a number of issues and concerns. For one, this process may inadvertently undermine the integrity of Indigenous curation by isolating or detaching practices from their cultural whole and making them fit criteria outlined in the Convention. Herein lies one of the more contradictory aspects of the Convention as a mechanism for supporting Indigenous curation. One of the ultimate goals of the Convention is to protect world cultural diversity and promote diversity as a universal value, yet the methods used in the archiving and documenting process in themselves can lead to the standardisation and homogenisation of practices that are inherently varied, and governed by specific cultural protocol. The universality principle inscribed in the Convention is especially problematic because it implies that one people's cultural heritage is the heritage of humanity and is thus part of a public cultural commons. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out, 'when culture becomes the heritage of humanity, the presumption is open access' (2006: 185). This premise is unacceptable to many Indigenous communities that find the public nature of museum collections and curatorial work disturbing. For some, the concept of collecting objects to be seen, studied and cared for by outsiders is inconsistent with tribal traditions. Certain objects can only be seen, touched, or used by specific members of the community, such as men or women, elders. Parker states that 'the fact that public collections exist is a source of social problems in Indian communities' (1990: 37).

Peter Jemison, Seneca, further explicates the problem:

The concept in the white world is that everyone's culture is everyone else's. That is not really our concept. Our concept is there were certain things given to us that we have to take care of and that you are either part of it or you are not part of it.

(Jemison, quoted in Parker 1990: 37)

Given these issues, listing is not a culturally appropriate measure for safeguarding Indigenous curation, nor does this strategy represent a significant departure from previous heritage preservation tactics, such as the World Heritage List that was a product of the 1972 Convention. Perhaps, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests, the value of listing and more so the Convention, rests primarily in the symbolic realm:

The list is the most visible, least costly, and most conventional way to 'do something' – something symbolic – about neglected communities and traditions. Symbolic gestures such as the list confer value on what is listed, consistent with the principle that you cannot protect what you do not value.

(2006: 170)

Despite its limitations and contradictions, the Convention has stimulated an international dialogue on the role of ICH in museums, and thus, has opened avenues for the exploration of Indigenous curation as ICH on theoretical and practical levels. It has expanded the notion of what constitutes heritage and could similarly be used to broaden ideas of what constitutes 'safeguarding' as well as the measures for that safeguarding. The promotion of Indigenous curation in museums as both a form of ICH plus a means of safeguarding could liberate museums from their traditional role as custodians of tangible, static culture to stewards and curators of intangible, living, dynamic culture. In the words of Dr Nguyen Van Huy, former director of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology:

presenting intangible cultural heritage requires the museum to develop new skills, knowledges, and methodologies; subjects of study and for presentation are no longer simply objects and artifacts, but living people and living culture. This calls for further research and capacity-building, closer relationships with local communities, and available staff and funding for these activities.

(2003, n.p.)

On the one hand, the Convention contains elements of older heritage preservation models that were largely about documenting and making lists, but on the other hand, it represents a departure by placing emphasis on supporting conditions necessary for cultural reproduction. The museum is one arena in which Indigenous curatorial practices can be encouraged and kept alive, allowing for further research on such practices in addition to the creation of innovative museological approaches:

The museum itself has become a fieldsite – a place for cross-cultural encounter and creative dialogue. A more inclusive and multi-perspectivist approach to material in museum collections is crucial in illuminating the multiple meanings of specific objects as well as the complex processes involved in their production, collection and interpretation. Working with members of source communities provides an opportunity for developing productive relationships and collecting contemporary material for future generations.

(Herle 2003: 204–5)

Conclusion

The 2003 *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, as opposed to earlier instruments, acknowledges that our conceptualisation of heritage, like culture in general, is an ever evolving process expressed in

multitudinous forms. The work being done today in museums with source communities is clear evidence of how museums are key sites for the promotion and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. However, it is only through sustained critical analysis and reflexive practice that our concepts of heritage can be continually revised, and safeguarding measures appropriately applied:

Cultural processes (like heritage curation) are inherently particular and particularizing, so we should not expect the application of a global policy to have the same results in all situations.

(Handler 2002: 144)

Acknowledgements

Research for this essay was conducted while I was a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation funded Institute 'Theorizing Cultural Heritage' at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage during the summer of 2005. I want to thank colleagues at the center for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Institute, especially Dr Richard Kurin, Dr Peter Seitel, Dr Frank Proschan, Dr Richard Kennedy, Carla Borden and James Early. I am also grateful to Nancy Fuller of the Smithsonian Center for Museum Studies for her abiding support and guidance. This essay is a revised version of 'Indigenous Curation as Intangible Cultural Heritage: Thoughts on the Relevance of the 2003 UNESCO Convention', first published in 2005 in *Theorizing Cultural Heritage*.

References

- Association of Art Museums Directors (2006) *Report on the Stewardship and Acquisition of Sacred Objects*, New York: New York.
- Brown, M. (2005) *Safeguarding the Intangible*. Available online at: <http://www.culturalcommons.org/comment> (Accessed 26 July 2005).
- Clavir, M. (2002) *Preserving What is Valued: Conservation and First Nations*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Clifford, J. (1997) *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dundon, A. (2007) 'Moving the centre: Christianity, the longhouse, and the Gogodola Cultural Centre', in N. Stanley (ed.), *The Future of Indigenous Museums. Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*, New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books.
- Erikson, P., Ward, H. and Wachendorf, K. (2002) *Voices of a Thousand People. The Makah Cultural Research Center*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Fienup-Riordan, A. (2003) 'Yu'pik elders in museums; fieldwork turned on its head', in L. Peers and A. Brown (eds), *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, New York and London: Routledge.

- Flynn, G. and Hull-Walski, D. (2001) 'Merging traditional Indigenous curation methods with modern museum standards of care', *Museum Anthropology*, 25(1): 31–40.
- Galla, A. (1997) 'Indigenous peoples, museums, and ethics', in G. Edson (ed.), *Museum Ethics*, New York and London: Routledge.
- (2003) 'Frequently asked questions about intangible heritage', *ICOM News* (4): n.p.
- Handler, R. (2002) 'Comments on Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Culture', *Current Anthropology*, 43(1): 144.
- Haraha, S. (2007) 'The Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery as a modern *haus tumbuna*', in N. Stanley (ed.), *The Future of Indigenous Museums. Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Herle, A. (2003) 'Objects, agency and museums: continuing dialogues between the Torres Strait and Cambridge', in L. Peers and A. Brown (eds), *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2000) *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, New York and London: Routledge.
- House, C. (1994) 'The art of balance', in R. West (ed.), *All roads are Good. Native Voices on Life and Culture*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.
- Karp, I., Kratz, C.A., Szwaja, L., Ybarra-Frausto, T., Buntinx, G., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett B. and Rassool, C. (eds) (2006) *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Kartiwa, S. (1992) 'Pusaka and the palaces of Java', in H. Soebadio (ed.), *Pusaka: Art of Indonesia*. Singapore: Archipelago Press.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (2006) 'World heritage and cultural economics', in I. Karp, C.A. Kratz, L. Szwaja, T. Ybarra-Frausto, G. Buntinx, B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and C. Rassool (eds), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Kreps, C. (1998) 'Museum-making and Indigenous curation in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia', *Museum Anthropology*, 22(1): 5–17.
- (2003a) *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Cultural Heritage Preservation*, New York and London: Routledge.
- (2003b) 'Curatorship as social practice', *Curator*, 46(3): 311–23.
- (2007) 'The theoretical future of Indigenous museums', in Stanley, N. (ed.), *The Future of Indigenous Museums. Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- (2008) 'Appropriate museology in theory and practice', *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, 23(1): 23–41.
- Kurin, R. (1997) *Reflections of a Culture Broker. A View from the Smithsonian*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- (2004) 'Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: a critical appraisal', *Museum*, 56(1–2): 66–77.
- Martowidkrido, W. (1992) 'Heirlooms of the outer islands', in H. Soebadio (ed.), *Pusaka: Art of Indonesia*, Singapore: Archipelago Press.
- Mead, S. (1983) 'Indigenous models of museums in Oceania', *Museum*, 35(3): 98–101.
- National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) (2004) 'National Museum of the American Indian: culturally sensitive collections care program and repatriation procedures', in L. Sullivan and A. Edwards (eds), *Stewards of the Sacred*, Washington, DC: American Association of Museums in cooperation with the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University.

- Nguyen, Van Huy (2003) 'Intangible cultural heritage at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology', *ICOM News* (4): n.p.
- Ogden, S. (ed.) (2004) *Caring for American Indian Objects. A Practical and Cultural Guide*, St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society.
- Parker, P. (1990) *Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands*, Washington, DC: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.
- Peers, L. and Brown, A. (2003) *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Rosoff, N. (1998) 'Integrating Native views into museum procedures: hope and practice at the National Museum of the American Indian', *Museum Anthropology*, 22(1): 33–42.
- Simpson, M. (1996) *Making Representation: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, New York: Routledge.
- Soebadio, H. (1992) 'Introduction', in H. Soebadio (ed.), *Pusaka: art of Indonesia*, Singapore: Archipelago Press.
- Stanley, N. (ed.) (2007) *The Future of Indigenous Museums. Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*, New York: Berghahn Books.
- Sullivan, L. and Edwards, A. (eds) (2004) *Stewards of the Sacred*, Washington, DC: American Association of Museums in cooperation with the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University.
- UNESCO (2003) *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*.
- Welsch, R. (2007) 'The transformation of cultural centres in Papua New Guinea', in N. Stanley (ed.), *The Future of Indigenous Museums: Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*, New York: Berghahn Books.
- West, R. (2004) 'The National Museum of the American Indian. Stewards of the sacred', in L. Sullivan and A. Edwards (eds), *Stewards of the Sacred*, Washington, DC: American Association of Museums in cooperation with the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University.

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE



KEY ISSUES IN
CULTURAL
HERITAGE

edited by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa

Intangible Heritage

The development and ratification of the UNESCO *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) has seen a significant increase in international debate about not only the nature and value of intangible heritage, but also the meaning and character of heritage more generally. Greeted with enthusiasm by many countries, the convention was also met with wariness and apprehension in much of the West, and the idea of 'intangible heritage' is a relatively unexplored concept in many Western countries.

Intangible Heritage fills a significant gap in the available heritage literature and represents an important cross-section of ideas and practices associated with intangible cultural heritage. The volume brings together authors from the USA, Europe (UK, Germany, Iceland), Africa (Morocco, Zimbabwe), Japan, Tehran and Australia to document and analyse the development of the 2003 convention and its consequences. The opening chapters identify the principles, philosophies and assumptions underlying the convention and discuss the implications these will have, not only for the development of management and conservation/preservation practices, but also for the re-examination of the dominant ideas about the role and meaning of heritage in contemporary societies.

The convention is also reviewed against community and Indigenous cultural concerns and aspirations. Case studies documenting material and cultural politics of intangible heritage are also presented, while other chapters explore the theoretical implications for existing definitions of heritage. The collection brings together a range of areas of expertise, including anthropology, law, heritage studies, archaeology, museum studies, folklore, Indigenous studies and ethnomusicology, and both academics and heritage professionals discuss the theoretical and practical implications of intangible cultural heritage, and the very idea that we can talk about 'heritage' and 'intangible heritage' is challenged.

Laurajane Smith is a Reader in Cultural Heritage Studies and Archaeology at the University of York, UK. She is author of *Uses of Heritage* (2006) and *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* (2004), and editor of *Cultural Heritage: Critical Concepts in Media Studies* (2007).

Natsuko Akagawa is at the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific, Deakin University Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests are intangible cultural heritage, cultural landscape and tourism/management issues related to heritage.

Key Issues in Cultural Heritage

Series editors: William Logan and Laurajane Smith

Also in the series:

Places of Pain and Shame, Dealing with “Difficult Heritage”

William Logan and Keir Reeves

Intangible Heritage

Edited by
Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa

First published 2009
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk”

© 2009 Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa for selection and editorial matter; individual chapters, their contributors

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Intangible heritage / edited by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa.
p. cm.

"Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada"—T.p. verso.

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) 2. Cultural property—Protection. 3. Intangible property. 4. Cultural property—Protection—International cooperation. 5. Cultural property—Protection (International law) 6. Nature conservation. 7. Nature conservation—International cooperation. I. Smith, Laurajane. II. Akagawa, Natsuko.

CC135.156 2008

930.1—dc22

2008026697

ISBN 0-203-88497-3 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-47396-5 (pbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-47397-2 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-203-88497-3 (ebk)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
<i>Series general co-editors' foreword</i>	xii
1 Introduction	1
LAURAJANE SMITH AND NATSUKO AKAGAWA	
Part 1	
<i>Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: reflections on history and concepts</i>	11
2 From the Proclamation of Masterpieces to the <i>Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage</i>	13
NORIKO AIKAWA-FAURE	
3 UNESCO's 2003 <i>Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage</i> : the implications of community involvement in 'safeguarding'	45
JANET BLAKE	
4 The authentic illusion: humanity's intangible cultural heritage, the Moroccan experience	74
AHMED SKOUNTI	
5 Intangible heritage as a list: from masterpieces to representation	93
VALDIMAR TR. HAFSTEIN	
6 Lessons learned from the ICTM (NGO) evaluation of nominations for the UNESCO <i>Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity</i> , 2001–5	112
ANTHONY SEEGER	

Part 2	
The material politics and practices of the intangible	129
7 Following the length and breadth of the roots: some dimensions of intangible heritage DAWSON MUNJERI	131
8 Deeply rooted in the present: making heritage in Brazilian quilombos MARY LORENA KENNY	151
9 The UNESCO <i>Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage</i> and the protection and maintenance of the intangible cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples HENRIETTA MARRIE	169
10 Indigenous curation, museums, and intangible cultural heritage CHRISTINA KREPS	193
11 Intangible cultural heritage: global awareness and local interest AMANDA KEARNEY	209
Part 3	
Reflecting on the intangible	227
12 A critique of unfeeling heritage DENIS BYRNE	229
13 Heritage between economy and politics: an assessment from the perspective of cultural anthropology REGINA BENDIX	253
14 Intangible heritage in the United Kingdom: the dark side of enlightenment? FRANK HASSARD	270
15 ‘The envy of the world?’: intangible heritage in England LAURAJANE SMITH AND EMMA WATERTON	289
<i>Index</i>	303

Felwine Sarr
Bénédicte Savoy

Leggere sono fino a pagina 89

**The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage.
Toward a New Relational Ethics**

November 2018

N°2018-26

Felwine Sarr
Bénédicte Savoy

**The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage.
Toward a New Relational Ethics**

November 2018

with the assistance of

Isabelle Maréchal
Inspector General
of Cultural Affairs

Vincent Négri
Jurist and researcher at the Institut des
sciences sociales du politique



MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE



UMR 7220 (CNRS – ENS Paris Saclay –
Université Paris Nanterre)

Translated by Drew S. Burk

“...We pilfer from the Africans under the pretext of teaching others how to love them and get to know their culture, that is, when all is said and done, to train even more ethnographers, so they can head off to encounter them and ‘love and pilfer’ from them as well.”

Michel Leiris, Letter to his wife, September 19, 1931 (Michel Leiris, *Miroir d’Afrique*, Edited and Annotated by Jean Jamin, Paris: Gallimard, 1996, p. 204, note)

“The conservation of culture has saved the various African peoples from the attempts at erasing the history and soul of Africa’s peoples [...] and if it [culture] binds humans together, it also impels progress. This is the reason why Africa has gone to such great lengths and taken such care in recovering its cultural heritage, in defending its personality and tending to the flourishing of new branches of its culture.”

“Manifeste culturel panafricain”, *Souffles*, 16-17, 4th trimester, 1969, January-February 1970, p.9 and p. 13

Table of Contents

Introduction: Impossible no more	1
0. A Long Duration of Losses	7
<i>Appropriation of Cultural Property and Heritage: A Crime Against Peoples</i>	7
<i>The Spoils of War and the Legality of Acquisitions</i>	9
<i>Born from an Era of Violence</i>	12
<i>A Family Affair</i>	15
<i>Political Prudence and Museum Anxiety</i>	16
<i>1960, Year Zero</i>	17
<i>A Rather Long Wait</i>	19
<i>Mission Impossible</i>	21
<i>The Mobilization of Public Opinion</i>	23
1. To Restitute	27
<i>Removing the Ambiguities</i>	28
<i>What Restitution Means</i>	29
<i>Translocations, Transformations</i>	30
<i>Memory and Amnesia of Losses</i>	31
<i>Re-socializing Objects of Cultural Heritage</i>	32
<i>Of the Life and Spirit of Objects</i>	33
<i>Putting History to Work, Reconstructing Memory</i>	35
<i>Of the Circulation of Objects and the Plasticity of Categories</i>	37
<i>A New Relational Ethics</i>	39
<i>Of Compensation and of Reparation</i>	40
<i>The Question of Archives</i>	41
2. Restitutions and Collections	43
<i>The Time of Returns</i>	43
<i>African Presence</i>	44
<i>Which Africa for which Restitutions?</i>	46
<i>What History do we want to revisit?</i>	47
<i>Historical Forms of Dispossession</i>	49
<i>Spoils</i>	50
<i>“Exploratory” Missions and Scientific “Raids”</i>	54
<i>Gifts from Private Collectors</i>	58
<i>After independence</i>	59
<i>Criteria for Restitutability</i>	61
<i>Timeline for a Program of Restitutions</i>	62
<i>First Phase (November 2018-2019)</i>	63
<i>Second Phase (Spring 2019-November 2022)</i>	66
<i>Third Phase (November 2022- Open-Ended)</i>	69

3. Accompanying the Returns	71
<i>Juridical Aspects</i>	71
<i>How to move past the current impasse?</i>	72
<i>Transactions with the rules of public ownership</i>	73
<i>The envisioned juridical apparatus</i>	77
a. The contextual elements that guided the choice of this proposition	77
b. The Procedure of Restitution Requires a Modification of the Cultural Heritage Code	78
c. The Agreement of Cooperation	80
<i>The Financing of Actions of Restitution</i>	81
<i>Who should the restitutions be directed to?</i>	82
<i>Guaranteeing the Permanence of the Restitutions and Reinforcing the Fight against Illicit Trafficking</i>	83
<i>Popular Appropriations</i>	85
Conclusion	87
Annexes	91
<i>Methods</i>	91
General Consultation	92
“Critical Friends”	92
Museums	93
Political Actors	98
The Art Market	102
Inventories	102
The Atelier de Dakar	104
The Atelier Juridique	105
<i>Documents</i>	107
Document 1. Letter of mission	107
Document 2. The juridical apparatus	111
Document 3. The “Atelier juridique”	131
Figures	137
Inventories of the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum	197

Introduction: Impossible no more

On November 28, 2017, inside a packed amphitheater at the University of Ouaga 1, Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo from the University of Ouagadougou, under the watchful eye of the president Roch Kaboré and those of several hundred Burkinabé students, the President of the French Republic verbally confirmed his decision to break with several decades of longstanding French practices and official discourses in terms of cultural heritage and museums: “Starting today, and within the next five years, I want to see the conditions put in place so as to allow for the temporary or definitive restitution of African cultural heritage to Africa.”¹ Applause and whistling ensued. On Twitter, the Élysée hammered down the nail of the proclamation in real-time, tossing out the age-old metaphor of the museum as carceral space: “African cultural heritage can no longer remain a prisoner of European Museums.”

This proclamation was all the more unexpected given that only one year earlier, France had categorically refused to return even the smallest amount of objects of cultural heritage to Benin by virtue of the inalienability of public French art collections. This proclamation was inscribed within a much more general approach toward the emancipation of memory: during a visit to Algiers several months earlier, Emmanuel Macron had declared that colonization was “a crime against humanity”. “Colonization was a significant part of French history. It was a crime, it was crime against humanity, a true example of barbarism. And it is an example of this past history that we must have the courage to confront by earnestly apologizing to those toward whom we have

¹ Speech made by the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron at the Université Ouaga 1 Professeur Joseph Ki-Zerbo, published on November 29, 2017 on the website of the Élysée.

committed these acts.” Never before had France, as a country, explicitly called colonization by its true name.

Elsewhere in Europe, it took over 100 years for the Federal Republic of Germany to accept and apologize to the Hereros, a people from the South-West of Africa (present-day Namibia) who were victims of a genocide by poisoning, deportations, enforced labor, and even death through resisting the German Colonial Law of 1904. In 2008, Italy put an end to forty years of bitter relations with Libya by finally apologizing for the “deep wounds” inflicted on the people residing in this once Italian colony during the years between 1911-1943. The United Kingdom waited 60 years before apologizing in 2013, after a long juridical battle, for the bloody repression and tortures inflicted upon the Mau-Mau of Kenya throughout the 1950s. But we are nevertheless still far from settling the rest of Europe’s colonial past: Belgium still bears a great pain and burden of its colonial past and cannot look directly at the millions of deaths the country caused through its exploitation of the Congo between 1885 and 1908; The stunning declarations made by Emmanuel Macron come after decades of denial or even at times dangerous affirmations of France’s colonial past. The (historical, psychological, and political) responsibility of this past which indeed has not yet passed, remains one of Europe’s greatest challenges for the 21st century.²

The effects and the legacy of this very sensitive history are numerous. They can be seen in a variety of ways on a global scale: economic inequality, political instability, humanitarian tragedies. Given this context, to speak of the restitution of African cultural heritage and works of art to Africa is to open merely one chapter in a much larger, and certainly much vaster, history. But perhaps this chapter can help to open up yet another one. Underneath this beauty mask, the questions around restitution also get at the crux of the problem: a system of appropriation and alienation—the colonial system—for which certain European Museums, unwillingly have become the public archives. However, thinking restitutions implies much more than a single exploration of the past: above all, it becomes a question of building bridges for future equitable relations. Guided by dialogue, polyphony, and exchange, the act or gesture of restitution should not be considered as a dangerous action of identitarian assignation or as the territorial separation or isolationism of cultural property. On the contrary, it could allow for the opening up of the signification of the objects and open a possibility for the “universal”,

² Voir Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *L’Afrique noire, de 1800 à nos jours*, avec Henri Moniot, Paris, PUF, 2005 [1974].

with whom they are so often associated in Europe, to gain a wider relevance beyond the continent.³

The following report only concerns sub-Saharan Africa. It bears witness to the specificity of the African case and situation and proposes solutions adapted precisely to this very *specific* case⁴. The report takes into account the history and the particular responsibilities of France throughout this region of the world (administrative supervision and colonial exploitation, failed attempts at decolonization, centralizing political legacies) that are much different than those left by Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, or Italy. And this report relies on the declaration that has often been reiterated by experts according to which over 90% of the material cultural legacy of sub-Saharan Africa remains preserved and housed outside of the African continent.⁵ Whereas many other regions of the world represented in Western Museum collections are still able to hold on to a significant portion of their own cultural and artistic heritage, this is not the case in sub-Saharan Africa which has been able to retain almost nothing. In this light, the project of restitution undertaken by France is inscribed within a threefold logic of reparations, a re-harmonization of a veritable global cultural geography, but also and above all, within a new point of departure.

³ For more on the distinction of the “universal” and “universalism”, see Souleymane Bachir Diagne and Jean-Loup Amselle, *En quête d’Afrique(s)*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2018.

⁴ On the African territory, the case of Algeria (which has been made the object of intensive negotiations since the 1960s and which has led to important movements of restitution or long-term deposits after independence) and the case of Egypt (which has been inscribed within a logic of multilateral exploitation of the country’s rich cultural resources by several Western nations), whose cultural heritage are both present in the public French collections, are a result of very different contexts of appropriation and therefore imply very different legislative contexts than the cases concerning sub-Saharan Africa. These cases should be the object of a more specific reflection and mission.

⁵ See Alain Godonou’s address made at the “UNESCO forum on Memory and Universality”, February 5, 2007, in: *Witness to History: A Compendium of Documents and Writings on the Return of Cultural Objects*, Ed. Lyndel V. Prott, Paris: UNESCO, 2009, p. 61. “Indeed the position of the African countries and, in particular those south of the Sahara, obviously excluding Egypt, is very different. We have sustained massive losses in quantitative and qualitative terms. I think, statistically speaking, on the basis of the inventories of the collections of all African museums, which amount, for the larger collections, to about 3,000 to 5,000 items, it is fair to say that 90 percent to 95 percent of African heritage is to be found outside the continent in the major world museums. Some African museums which get less publicity but which hold fabulous collections (l’Ecole du Patrimoine africain, the School of African Heritage, which I have the privilege to head, is one of their number) are all missionary museums like the *Torino Consolata*, and the National Lyons Museum in this country, which also hold extraordinary African collections. Thus, in comparison, the loss is huge. This is not true of Egypt. In Cairo, you have 63,000 items on show and almost 300,000 reserve objects. This is not true of Greece; there are the Parthenon sculptures, but beyond that, the Greeks know that the Great Western culture, in a manner of speaking, has its roots and broad origins in Ancient Greece, and this constitutes a source of some pride.” See as well, more recently, “Stéphane Martin : ‘L’Afrique ne peut pas être privée des témoignages de son passé’”, interview with Éric Biétry-Rivierre, *Le Figaro*, December 6, 2017 : “The proportion of cultural items taken from African soil and dispersed throughout France and throughout the rest of the world is enormous. It comprises almost the totality of its cultural heritage.”

On a continent where 60% of the population is under the age of 20 years-old, what is first and foremost of great importance is for young people to have access to their own culture, creativity, and spirituality from other eras that certainly have evolved since, but whose knowledge and recognition can no longer merely be reserved for those residing in Western countries or for those who count themselves among the African diaspora living in Europe. The youth of Africa, as much as the youth in France or Europe in general, have a right “to their artistic and cultural heritage”, to make a brief reference to a similar remark drafted in 2005 by the Faro Convention and the Council of Europe. While we should not forget to mention that this should be a *right* for all cultural heritages, we will naturally begin with those cultural and artistic resources inherited from Africa’s past itself, held and stored in museums and countries completely out of reach from the African youth who often are unaware of not only the richness and creativity of this legacy, but often are not even aware of its existence. To fall under the spell of an object, to be touched by it, moved emotionally by a piece of art in a museum, brought to tears of joy, to admire its forms of ingenuity, to like the artworks’ colors, to take a photo of it, to let oneself be transformed by it: all these experiences—which are also forms of access to knowledge—cannot simply be reserved to the inheritors of an asymmetrical history, to the benefactors of an excess of privilege and mobility.

The present report was written and edited in Dakar, Berlin, and Paris throughout the summer of 2018. It is the fruit of a vast consulting work of experts and political actors in France and throughout four Francophone African countries (Benin, Senegal, Mali, and Cameroon).⁶ This consulting work took place throughout March and July 2018. The consultations provided a way of listening, on both continents, to a variety of personalities from multiple milieus: partisans of restitutions but also skeptics; academics and researchers; museum professionals, those working in politics, in parliaments, actors within the art market, collectors, jurists, teachers, and activists. In Paris, we benefitted enormously from the constant support of the various teams at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac as well as the museum’s president, Stéphane Martin, most notably for their help in establishing inventories for the needs of the mission, determined specifically for discerning the quality, the quantity, and the exact provenance of the African collections. Two singular workshops helped to hone our

⁶ Since it was impossible, in a period of a few months, to travel through all the African countries concerned by eventual restitutions and have an opportunity to meet with all interested parties, choices had to be made. We ended up privileging countries where the debate has been underway for quite some time (The Republic of Benin), where the museographic landscape is in the midst of a radical evolution (Senegal, with the forthcoming inauguration of the Musée des Civilisations Noires expected to open in December 2018), and countries where experiences of “temporary and definitive” restitution have already been achieved (Mali) and where alternative forms of valuing Africa’s cultural legacy have been particularly fertile (Cameroon).

reflection concerning the term “restitution”: “L’Atelier de Dakar”—the Dakar Workshop—that gathered together 20 leading cultural figures representing both Africa and France at the Musée Théodore-Monod d’art africain [also known as the IFAN Museum of African Arts] on June 12, 2018; and the “Atelier Juridique”—the Juridical Workshop—held at the Collège de France in Paris on June 26, 2018, more specifically focused on the questions around the legislative framework for the project.

The following report is partitioned into three different sections, preceded by an international overview concerning the state of the question of restitution. The first part, “To retribute” strives to dispel the ambiguities linked to the use of the term restitution by placing it in relation with other general questions concerning memory work and reparations. The second section (“Restitutions and Collections”) provides the evidence, with precise statistical support of the inherent ties between colonial administration and the creation of African art collections and the presence of African cultural items within French public museums in order to deduce the proper concrete recommendations in terms of restitutions. The third and final section (“Accompanying the returns”) defines the chronological, juridical, methodological and financial framework in which the return of African cultural heritage items can be effectuated back to Africa.

0. A Long Duration of Losses

Appropriation of Cultural Property and Heritage: A Crime Against Peoples

The confiscation, or the transfer of art objects, objects of worship, or those merely used on a daily basis have accompanied the projects of empire since Antiquity. And here, we can begin to see the interrelation of two dynamics: The Intellectual and Aesthetic appropriation combined with the economic appropriation of the cultural heritage of the other, which, within the cities of the conqueror, within his houses, his circles of experts and on the art market acquire a value, another life disconnected from their origins. Intentional alienation and deculturation of subordinated populations whose psychological equilibrium has been broken, sometimes definitively, through the focal objects—objects of orientation that have been passed down from one generation to the next. Two thousand years and two centuries ago, the Greek historian Polybius proposed the foundations for a political theory of acquisitions. Having lived as a political hostage in Rome during a 15-year time period, Polybius describes the dual pain that the conqueror inflicts on the conquered by not only depriving him of his cultural heritage, but then inviting him to partake in the humiliating spectacle of passing through the various cities where his home country's objects have now become the mere spoils of plundering. Polybius warns that such spectacles arouse as much anger as hatred by the victims, who plead to the future conquerors “not to create calamities of the other into the ornaments of their nation.”

Around the year 1800, when a revolutionary and imperial France dreamed of transforming Paris into the “capital of the universe” and to centralize the artistic treasures acquired by its armies throughout all of Europe, the jurist and German philosopher, Carl Heinrich Heydenreich denounced what he called a “crime against humanity” (“Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit”). He deconstructs the rhetoric of the conqueror, who, in pretending to be guided by “the most precious values” in interesting himself in the culture of the conquered, ends up actually transforming his victim into a “thing” (“Ding”), depriving him of the spiritual nourishment that is the foundation of his humanity and addresses to him, to put it this way, his “barbarian verdict”: “In the future, may it be harder for you to learn and cultivate yourself! May we wrest away the brilliant genius and tastes of your most noble sons and remove the models that can lead them to immortality, may the most beautiful works of art that diffused the most amicable and human sentiments between the nations be henceforth subtracted from their gaze forever!”⁷ The extraction and deprivation of culture heritage and cultural property not only concerns the generation who participates in the plundering as well as those who must suffer through this extraction. It becomes inscribed throughout the long duration of societies, conditioning the flourishing of certain societies while simultaneously continuing to weaken others. In times of war, conquests or occupations are—like rape, the taking of hostages, imprisonment, or the deportation of intellectuals—instruments for the dehumanization of the enemy.

In this sense, and this is what past debates have indicated, since they effect both the individual and the group as part of the foundation of their humanity (their spirituality, creativity, transmission of knowledge) acquisitions of cultural heritage should be considered within a different category: that of transgressive acts, which no juridical, administrative, cultural, or economic apparatus would be capable of legitimizing.

In one of the largest texts dedicated to the question of the presumed consent of the victims of artistic plundering, Cicero was quick to brush aside the economic argument. No, he writes, the *purchasing* of coveted pieces by a conqueror within a conquered country is not enough to legitimize the activity of appropriation and extraction of the cultural heritage of the other: “If he had the faculty of choice at his disposal”, Cicero writes in regard to the Sicilian victim of Roman predations, “he would have never chosen to sell what resided in his sanctuary and which had been left to him by his ancestors.”⁸ And taking into account the enlightened milieus of Europe around the 1800s, the

⁷ Carl Heinrich Heydenreich, “Darf der Sieger einem überwundenen Volke Werke der Litteratur und Kunst entreißen? Eine völkerrechtliche Quästion”, *Deutsche Monatsschrift*, vol. 2, August 1798, p. 293; in Bénédicte Savoy, *Patrimoine annexé*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2003, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁸ Cicero, *L’Affaire Verrès*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015, p. 87

juridical inscription of artistic concessions in the armistices or within the peace treaties in the aftermath of “modern” wars in no way would have guaranteed and legitimized the acquisition of the cultural property of the vanquished through armed conflict: we can easily estimate, in the France of 1815, “the Muséum de Paris [...] acknowledged by treaties and conserved by capitulations, should necessarily be considered as the most un-plunderable of property”⁹; this did not however prevent the sovereign powers of Europe from exploring the question of restitution from a moral and not a legal perspective, from an ethical perspective and not a juridical one:

“The allies [...] could not do otherwise than restore [the contents of the Museum] to the countries from which, contrary to the practice of civilized warfare, they had been torn during the disastrous period of the French Revolution and the tyranny of Bonaparte”.¹⁰

The Spoils of War and the Legality of Acquisitions

From the juridical point of view all the way to the end of the 19th century, “the right to pillage and plunder what had belonged to the enemy” and “the right to appropriate for oneself what one had taken from the enemy”, to adopt the terminology used by the Dutch jurist, Hugo Grotius, were the codified and licit practices of war.¹¹ After the traumas and innumerable public debates in Europe resulting from the “artistic conquests” of the Revolution and the Empire, European nations mutually saved themselves from questioning these sorts of rather difficult affronts made on each other. However, they nevertheless were quick to export the very same practices and systematically held recourse to them throughout their wars of conquest and economic influence in Asia and Africa beginning in the middle of the 19th century.

It should be said that all over the world—and Africa is no exception—societies engage in an elaborate relation with their “material cultural heritage”, transmitted from one generation to the next, and conserved according to varying specific modalities: the safekeeping of precious manuscripts and sacred art objects (as has been the practice in Timbuktu since the 14th century at a time when an important number of libraries were

⁹ Hyppolite Mazier du Heaume, *Observations d'un Français, sur l'enlèvement des chefs-d'œuvre du Muséum de Paris*, Paris, 1815, p.14.

¹⁰ The Duke of Wellington to Lord Castlereagh, September 23, 1815.

¹¹ Hugo Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix (De jure belli ac pacis)*, Paris: Buon, 1625, Book III, chap. 5-6. See Mariana Muravyeva, “Ni pillage ni viol sans ordre préalable’. Codifier la guerre dans l’Europe moderne”, *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 39, 2014, p. 55-81.

constructed only to later amaze the European explorers who “discovered”¹² them five centuries later in the 19th century); the entire preservation of dynastic treasures within well-defined and protected spaces within a royal palace (such as in Benin City); the existence in certain cities of what could be considered as “modern” libraries, such as the one created in the middle of the 19th century by the Ethiopian emperor, Tewodros II (1818–1868), at Magdala; during times of war, methods for seeking out ways of conserving or sheltering cultural objects that would be susceptible to garnering the attention of the enemy such as the treasures of Abomey which the French army uncovered hidden in its subterranean spaces after ransacking the city.

In the 19th century, the annexation of cultural heritage becomes the natural correlate of wars and is thus absorbed both juridically and physically, by the conquering nation-states. In 1854, Sir Robert Phillimore, the most celebrated English jurist of his time, considered that “all civilized States” should recognize the maxim according to which “the acquisitions of war belong to the State”. When the acquisitions in question were considered as cultural resources, they were often publically displayed throughout 19th century European capitals and “naturally” found themselves placed at the heart of the larger national edifices dedicated to public instruction with museums and libraries being the first infrastructural sites in mind, and so one could see an increase in such acquisitions during this time period. Beginning in the 19th century, and in spite of the accepted legality of the military activities, a number of prestigious voices could be heard throughout Europe condemning such activities that so-called “civilization” inflicted upon the “barbarians”. “One day I hope that France will eventually return to China, cleaned and polished, these spoils of war”¹³, wrote Victor Hugo in the aftermath of the second Opium War.

In China (1860), in Korea (1866), in Ethiopia (1868), in the Asante Kingdom (1874), in Cameroon (1884), in the Tanganyika lake region, and the future Belgian Congo (1884), in the current region of Mali (1890), at Dahomey (1892), in the Kingdom of Benin (1897), in present-day Guinea (1898), in Indonesia (1906), in Tanzania (1907), the military raids and so-called punitive expeditions conducted by England, Belgium, Germany, Holland, and France, during the 19th century became occasions for unprecedented pillaging and acquisition of objects of cultural heritage. The type and quantity of the coveted objects, the presence of experts closely attached to certain of the armies, the close attention paid by European museums and libraries, oftentimes far in advance of the movement of the troops, with certain museums already assigned with the

¹² On the ancient history of Africa, see François-Xavier Fauvelle (ed.), *L'Afrique ancienne. De l'Acacus au Zimbabwe. 20 000 avant notre ère – XVII^e siècle*, Paris: Belin, 2018.

¹³ Victor Hugo, *Actes et Paroles. Pendant l'exil: 1852-1870*, Paris: Lévy, 1875, p. 201.

housing of specific objects immediately after their acquisition by the armies, shows to what extent the targeted and plundered locations had sometimes much more to do with the museums than military plundering *stricto sensu* (which traditionally simply had its sights set on wealth, weapons, and enemy flags). At the beginning of 1897, the director of the museum of ethnology of Berlin, rejoiced in learning of “a punitive expedition planned against the Ngolo (top secret!) in which one of his students was to participate”: “We can expect great things. M. von Arnim is well-informed on what we are in need of and will attempt to take great care in finding something for us. The costs will be minimal at best.”¹⁴

At any one of the sites, freshly seized cultural spoils were often the first objects to draw attention through the selection and internal deals made within the ranks of the army itself. Once the cultural spoils had made their way to Europe, the most spectacular of the objects were directly integrated into the national collections (the Louvre, British Museum, British Library, Bibliothèque nationale, ethnological museums or colonial museums were especially constructed for such spoils). The remaining objects were sold at auctions and massively alimented the art market that assured the transformation of the goods into capital and distribution on a European scale. Museums from a large number of European nations were then able to tap into these resources including nations whose military didn’t directly serve in their acquisition. Private collectors were also able to take advantage of the spoils whose acquisition often came by way of an inheritance before eventually ending up being donated as gifts to their country’s respective national museums. And certain pieces of artwork or cultural objects even ended up remaining in the hands of military families for generations only to eventually make their way either into the art market or as donations to museums or libraries. Within the context of the 19th century, one can indeed see that the violent acquisition and economic capitalization (through the art market) as well as symbolic capitalization (through the museum) of African and Asian objects of cultural heritage goes hand in hand with the wars of that same era.

As a result, one must wait until 1899 with the “Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land”, signed at the Hague by 24 sovereign nation-states to make the practice of pillaging and plundering of cultural artifacts during military campaigns an illicit act. Two articles from section III of the convention (Of military authority concerning the territory of a State enemy) evoke the question: article 46 stipulates that “Family honors and rights, individuals lives, and private property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.” Article 47 stipulates

¹⁴ Berlin, Archive of the Ethnologisches Museum, letter of Felix von Luschan, 1897.

that “Pillaging is formally prohibited.” The same convention, renewed in 1907, specifies in article 56 that “The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or willful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings.”

Born from an Era of Violence

And it was precisely during this same era, all over Europe and while the wars of conquest continued in various forms of occupations and colonial administration, that the nascent fields of anthropology and ethnology posited their scientific value that they intended of providing to the colonial projects of their respective governments. In 1903, the eminent British anthropologist and Henry Ling Roth, director of the Halifax Museum, writes a very thick volume on Great Benin (present-day Nigeria): “Politically, it is of the first importance that our governing officials should have thorough knowledge of the native races subject to them—and this is the knowledge that anthropology can give them—for such knowledge can teach what forms of taxation are suitable to the particular tribes, or to the stage of civilization in which we find them.”¹⁵ From the cultural devastation provoked by the European occupation Roth writes about and describes, Roth is able to sketch out an argument for legitimizing the practice of the collection and exfiltration of cultural heritage including during peacetime:

“Unlike the Tasmanians or Ancient Peruvians, the West African will never be wiped off the face of the earth, but intercourse with the white man alters his beliefs, ideas, customs, and technology, and proper records of these should be made before we destroy them. The destruction is going on apace, one of the chief contributory cause being the unsuitable European teaching given to the native races generally—unsuitable to them on the wide differences between the white and black man.”¹⁶

Several lines above this, Roth congratulates himself for the transfer of great works of art made of wood, ivory, and bronze –some of which date all the way back to the 15th century –seized at Benin City by the British expedition of 1897.

¹⁵ Henry Ling Roth, *Great Benin. Its Customs, Art and Horrors*, Halifax 1903, Appendix

¹⁶ *Id.*

We could multiply the number of examples such as this one that prove that the acquisition of cultural objects and resources and their transfer to the capitals of Europe were in fact at the heart of—and not at the margins—of the colonial enterprise. In 1904, in Berlin, the director of the Ethnographic Museum was ecstatic when noting the fact that “the colonial department of the minister of Foreign Affairs of the Reich, the marines, the governors of the protectorates and a great number of doctors, functionaries, and officers [were] made aware of the scientific and practical importance of the ethnology and were prepared to provide official support based on the efforts [of the Museum of Berlin]”¹⁷. In Belgium, the colonial museum of Tervuren, inaugurated in 1910, which grants a rather preponderant place to its section on “political economics”, became the beneficiary of a large influx of cultural artifacts coming from the Congo by way of the scientific missions and military expeditions during the continuing voyages and postings of territorial agents or through the framework of evangelical enterprises that were also underway at this time.

Throughout Europe along with these State institutions, we also see the addition of so-called missionary museums where a variety of ritual objects are gathered and displayed (talismans, masks, entire tombs) taken by Catholic and Protestant priests from the African peoples targeted by their attempts at Christian conversions. When these artifacts, that bore witness to an African obscurantism, or, to use the words of a missionary from Lyon, Théodore Chautard—these “vulgar idols [...] misshapen, soaked in palm oil and the blood of their victims”¹⁸—, when they were not immediately destroyed at the sites themselves, they were transferred on to Europe and displayed as a means for civil education: to display the courage of the Missionaries and the dangers which they exposed themselves to; as a reminder to the public of the importance of the civilizing mission of the Church on the dark African continent. In 1925, the largest missionary exhibit of the century is presented in Rome, the *l'Esposizione missionaria vaticana*, for which we see the mobilization of dozens of priests throughout the world to obtain as fast as possible (sometimes at great risk), a number of spectacular pieces. And still to this very day, in a number of European cities, missionary museums sometimes still receive a large number of museumgoers to contemplate the items they have on display. In France, these museums are not considered as part of public property: and therefore they fall outside the purview and the ascribed parameters of our present report.

¹⁷ Felix von Luschan, *Anleitung für ethnographische Beobachtungen und Sammlungen in Afrika und Oceanien*, Berlin:Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, 1904.

¹⁸ Quoted in Laurick Zerbini, “La construction du discours patrimonial : les musées missionnaires à Lyon (1860-1960)”, *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire*, 2007, 356-357, p. 127.

In France, at the beginning of the early 1930s, the law project which instituted the famous Ethnographic and Linguistic Mission of Dakar-Djibouti insists on the crucial political role of ethnology, which “provides an indispensable contribution to the methods of colonization by revealing to the legislator, the functionary, the colonist, the uses, beliefs, and laws and techniques of the indigenous populations, [thus allowing] for a more rational exploitation of the wealth of natural resources.”¹⁹ The same law project insisted on the urgency that there was for France, within the feared context of international competition, the need for systematically “gathering” up objects that were susceptible to enriching their museums before the “daily contact between the Europeans and the indigenous became more and more intimate each day” leading to the disappearance of large portions of indigenous culture. The text specifies very clearly: “methodically constitute on the spot collections that certainly have a greater value than the price paid for them and which several years down the road it will no longer be possible of enriching the museum with, even with an unlimited backing of financial resources. The exploitation of both the natural wealth as well as the cultural wealth of colonized countries is inseparable. Applied to the translocation of cultural goods, the vocabulary of “collecting” and of “harvesting” only further implies the interconnectedness of the two operations. It also suggests and undeniable cynicism: that after the harvest season, the objects will magically grow back again like fields of wheat. To follow this logic of harvesting is precisely to deny the very principle of culture itself that—in Europe as elsewhere—is generated and regenerated throughout the centuries by way of the transmission, reproduction, adaptation, study and transformation of knowledge, of forms and objects at the heart of society. Certainly, European cultures have benefitted from the input they’ve acquired from these remote objects that will soon become integrated into the Western repertoire. But their massive departure and then their rather long absence from the countries affected by this violence, has also left a legacy that is just as important, even though it is much more difficult to measure (since its effects are derived from an absence) than the spectacular cultural production that they sparked in Europe (from Picasso to the Surrealists via the German Expressionists).

In 1975, through a critical re-evaluation regarding the history of his discipline, Claude Lévi-Strauss called anthropology the “daughter born out of an era of violence”²⁰. Today, in our 21st century capitals, the ethnographic museums as part of those museums deemed to be “universal”, which have gathered up the colonial harvests, have thus taken on the role of the “responsible brothers” of this discipline. Destruction and collection are the two sides of the same coin. The great museums of Europe are at once the

¹⁹ Pierre-Étienne Flandin, Gaston Doumergue, Mario Roustan, “Mission ethnographique et linguistique Dakar-Djibouti. Projet de loi”, *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 1931, vol. 1, fascicule 2, p. 300-303.

²⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale deux*, Paris: Plon, 1973, p. 69.

conservationists of incredible human creativity and the receptacles of what often amounts to a violent dynamic of appropriation that is still largely poorly understood.

A Family Affair

To speak of restitution in the year 2018 is to thus to simultaneously reopen the old colonial machine as well as the file containing the erased memories of both the Europeans and the Africans, with the Europeans no longer having any idea how to continue to maintain their prestigious museums while the Africans find themselves struggling to recover the thread of an interrupted memory. Given this context, there is nothing surprising about why the question of restitution also occupies such a large place with both the intellectuals and the press beyond the mere Franco-African framework. From the British Museum (69,000 objects from sub-Saharan Africa) to the Weltmuseum of Vienna (37,000), to the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale in Belgium (180,000) to the Future Humboldt Forum (75,000), to the Vatican Museums and those of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (70,000): the history of the African collections is a European history that has indeed been a shared history. In 2007, Alain Godonou, a specialist of African museums, estimated that in comparison “with certain rare exceptions, the inventories of the national museums in Africa itself hardly ever exceeded 3,000 cultural heritage objects and most of them had little importance or significance.”²¹ Outside of France, the pronouncement of possible French restitution has become an object of constant media attention and numerous commentaries. Inside and outside of Africa, those who have for a long time been militant regarding the return of these displaced objects of cultural heritage to their countries of origin see the beginnings of a new era. “The post Ouagadougou period has begun,”²² wrote the Ghanaian jurist and former functionary of the United Nations Kwame Opoku in December 2017.

In Germany, the French initiative was seen as entering into the lively debate on the colonial amnesia which seemed to have befallen the creators of the future Humboldt Forum—a copy of a Prussian King's castle that is supposed to begin housing the ex-Prussian state's collection starting in 2019. In an open letter to Angela Merkel, 40 organizations from the German African diaspora joined together in asking the German chancellor for some sort of reaction or response to the “historical initiative put forth by the French president”—and they received no response. The German authorities set in

²¹ See Alain Godonou, “À propos de l'universalité et du retour des biens culturels”, in: *Réinventer les musées. Africultures*, n°70, May-June 2007, p. 114–117.

²² Kwame Opoku, “Humboldt Forum and Selective Amnesia: Research Instead of Restitution of African Artefacts”, *ModernGhana.com*, December 21, 2017.

place *Provenienzforschung*, an investigation on the initial provenance of the objects conserved in their museums, within the federal context, where the inventory verifications that are considered as one of the sacred pillars of the French cultural “system” had not been part of an ongoing systematic political discussion (as had been the case in France), meaning that the German institutions found themselves in a position of a (nevertheless relative) uncertainty concerning the exact origins of the German ethnographic collections.²³ More recently, under the pressure of public opinion, the Berlin museums have finally ended up conceding, with the documents to prove it, that there were items in the museum collections that were a result of military pillaging. Elsewhere in Europe, the directors of several large institutions had to also come out into the open and leave the safety of their collections and museum offices. In an interview granted to *Le Monde*, Guido Gryseels, who had been director for the past 17 years at the Tervuren Museum near Brussels, declared in June 2018: “Africa was a continent that has been pillaged and plundered. We cannot continue to ignore this situation and we must seek to find solutions.” In April 2018, in London, the director of the Victoria & Albert Museum was quick to reflect, from his position, that “The speediest way, if Ethiopia wanted to have these items on display, is a long-term loan...that would be the easiest way to manage it.”²⁴ And here, in regards to the restitution of pillaged cultural heritage objects, we see something that had yet dared to be mentioned at all by most of the other parties concerned: they would rather speak of cooperation, circulations, and long-term loans.

Political Prudence and Museum Anxiety

It’s still true that even today pretty much everywhere in Europe—and France is no exception—the mere word “restitution” elicits a defensive reflex and a gesture of retreat. François Mitterrand provided a great public demonstration of this sort of reflex in 1994, when, in order to thank Helmut Kohl for the restitution of 27 French paintings stolen by the Nazis during the war, he declared: “I hope that this evening, the custodians of our countries, those responsible for our grand museums, experience a bit of anxiety. Will this become generalized? I don’t think it’s much of a risk on my part, thinking that this example will remain very singular and the contagion will be squashed out rather quickly.” Restitutions and contagions; political prudence and museum dread: we are

²³ See the *Guidelines on Dealing with Collections from Colonial Contexts* published by the German Association of Museums in May 2018 (available on MuseumsBund.de), and the public debate that followed. See also: “Eine Räuberbande will Beweise”, interview by Jörg Häntzschel and Andreas Zielcke with Wolfgang Kaleck, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 11, 2018.

²⁴ Mark Brown, “Looted Ethiopian treasures in UK could be returned on loan”, *The Guardian*, April 3, 2018.

part of a generation that has only known restitutions by way of painful struggles. No one in France has forgotten the resistance in 2010 by the museum custodians of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, when Nicolas Sarkozy initiated the return of more than 300 precious manuscripts as part of commercial contract negotiations with South Korea, originating from a punitive expedition by the French army in 1866. No one in Italy will forget the half-century's worth of negotiations that it took to finally return the Axum obelisk to Ethiopia initially seized by Mussolini's troops in 1937. And no one in Berlin would like to see the largest fossil of a dinosaur skeleton in the world finally returned to its place of origin in Tanzania (under the protectorate of the Reich): the Brachiosaurus Brancai, one of the idols of the Berlin museum, brought to Germany between 1909 and 1912.

In fact, in a more general manner, in Europe alone, only the restitution of human remains seems to be progressively finding its way into the institutional consciousness: in 2002, France adopted a law authorizing the restitution of the mortal remains of Saartjie Baartman to South Africa ("Venus hottentote"); in 2002, several French museums restituted the remains of 21 Maori heads to New Zealand. In October 2017, the museums of Dresden gave back to Hawaii piles of bones and human remains that had been pillaged in the early 1900s. More recently, at the end of 2018, the remains of several victims of genocide of the Hereros and Namas, perpetrated between 1904 and 1908 by the German colonial forces, were returned from various German institutions to Namibia, one of the former German colonies.

1960, Year Zero

In Africa, certain countries or communities (Ethiopia and Nigeria, for example) have pleaded and made claims for well over 50 years for the return of their cultural objects that disappeared during the colonial period. The archives of the Belgian, German, British, and French museums, those of the ministers of foreign affairs as well as the archives of the large African and European newspapers, and a number of witnesses have held on to their memories of these reclamations but they are also witnesses to a deafening silence that has also welcomed their claims and still continues to do so until this very day.

In 1957, the Queen of England restituted a rather valuable large Asante stool to Accra during the celebrations of Ghana's independence. Since that initial restitution, Ghana has waited for a much larger portion of its Asante cultural heritage and property to be returned that had initially vanished and been distributed during the punitive expedition

of 1874 against Kumasi, most notably in the form of a spectacular golden head housed at the Wallace Foundation, which had officially been requested to be returned in 1974—all in vain. In 1960, immediately after gaining its independence, Zaire sent a request to Belgium asking for the transfer of the “Museum of the Congo” (the present-day Tervuren Museum) to Kinshasa, only to obtain 15 years later, after difficult negotiations, just 144 pieces (out of the 122,000 objects inventoried at Tervuren). In 1968, Nigeria submitted a restitution project to ICOM (the International Council of Museums) requesting Western museums to make available and return several significant pieces of cultural heritage originating from Great Benin to the national museum that had just been opened in Lagos—they never received any response whatsoever. In 1969, the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers insisted on taking “all necessary steps, including that of calling upon international institutions, so as to recuperate the works of art and archives seized by colonial powers” as well as “taking the necessary steps to stop the drain of cultural assets leaving the African continent.”

Throughout the 1960s in Europe, this subject was completely ignored and no one dared to have the courage to face the situation directly. No truly ambitious negotiations were undertaken concerning the old colonial powers. There was no structured reflection devoted to the role objects of cultural heritage could play in the emancipation of formerly colonized African countries. During the very same time period France was granting independence to a number of nation-states, it nevertheless continued to secure its economic, military, industrial, monetary and even scholarly power over the African continent, and the question concerning the thousands of cultural works that had been transferred from the colonies to French museums never even seemed to be a question worth posing.

But in reality, the question had certainly been posed—and in a much more fervent and intense manner than the voluntary discretion of the authorities would like us to believe. In fact, very early on, while the newly formed young independent African countries were still in the midst of rejoicing in their newfound freedom, the French administration took a variety of measures so as to avoid as much as possible any potential claims on the collections formed in the colonies and to assure the enjoyment and long-term holdings and proprietary rights for France alone. Already in the 1960s, both the African and Oceanic collections and the former museum of the colonies housed in the Palais de la Porte Dorée—which until then had been under the auspices of the Ministry of the Colonies (“Ministère de la France d’outre-Mer” since 1946) and which are today housed at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac—see their administrative auspices transferred over to the Direction des Musées de France and the Ministry of Culture, as a way to symbolically “absorb” them a second time (the first symbolic gesture being their

translocation) and affirm their inalienable place as part of French national assets of cultural heritage. During this same time period, within a vastly different context, Algeria cannot avoid escaping from this same French stranglehold on cultural property and heritage: in the aftermath of the 1962 Evian Accords and several months before Algeria's independence, France orders 300 paintings from the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Algiers to be transferred to Paris which would only be restituted to Algeria seven years later after very terse negotiations. In the end, following the exact same logic, a large number of cultural objects and works of art would be loaned out from African museums to French museums between the 1930s and the 1960s and would never be returned to their institutions of origin after the independence of nations takes place, as IFAN has born witness to in Dakar. As of 2018, The IFAN Museum of African Arts in Dakar (le musée de Théodore-Monod d'art africain) is still awaiting the return of pieces of cultural heritage it loaned out to France in 1935, 1957, and 1967.²⁵

A Rather Long Wait

At the end of the 1970s, confronted with the inflexibility of the old colonial powers and under pressure from its Member States, UNESCO attempted to tackle the question of restitutions head-on. On June 7, 1978, in one of the most moving and beautiful essays ever produced on the subject in the 20th century, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, who was then the director of UNESCO, pleaded in favor of a re-balancing of global cultural heritage between the global North and the global South. His call for "A Plea for the Return of an Irreplaceable Cultural Heritage to those who created it" deserves to be read and re-read, considering that it poses with fairness and with gravity the question that still continues to concern us today—as if no discussion had already taken place concerning the restitution of cultural heritage 40 years earlier:

“The peoples who have been victims of this plunder, sometimes for hundreds of years, have not only been despoiled of irreplaceable masterpieces but also robbed of a memory which would doubtless have helped them to greater self-knowledge and would certainly have helped others understand them better. [...] They know, of course, that art is for the world and are aware of the fact that this

²⁵ Several specific cases could also be mentioned here, most notably concerning a situation where objects were temporarily loaned out to French institutions but still remain in their museum holdings. Christine Lorre, head curator at the Musée d'Archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, drew our attention to such a case involving a lithic set of tools originally from Melka Kunture (Ethiopia). These pieces were removed from the site in order to create molds of them (which were in fact displayed in the hall of comparative archeology in the museum) and they are still housed in the museum, waiting for the situation to be resolved.

art work, which tells the story of their past and shows what they really are, does not speak to them alone. They are happy that men and women elsewhere can study and admire the work of their ancestors. They also realize that certain works of art have for too long played too intimate a part in the history of the country to which they were taken for the symbols linking them with that country to be denied and for the roots that have taken hold to be severed. [...] These men and women who have been deprived of their cultural heritage therefore ask for the return of at least the art treasures which best represent their culture, which they feel are the most vital and whose absence causes them the greatest anguish. This is a legitimate claim.”²⁶

At the end of the 1970s, the call and efforts made by Mbow were able to stir the emotions of both intellectuals and public opinion in France as well as abroad. At that time, restitution seemed close at hand. During the evening news hour, the famous news anchor of TF1, Roger Gicquel explained to the French that “if we want to preserve our cultural identities, then we must also preserve cultural heritage and this means that sometimes we must perform acts of restitution”, he even added, “One must even sometimes succumb to them.” A movement appeared to be launched. UNESCO printed generic forms in three languages to help restitution requests, that were largely distributed throughout the end of the 1970s (blank forms can still be found today in the archives). In April 1982, still following this same logic of an opening toward restitution, the French Minister of Foreign Relations tasked the inspector general of the Direction of French Museums at that time, Pierre Quoniam, with the mission of a reflection regarding the restitution of African cultural heritage. Surrounded by academics, ministerial functionaries, and museum curators, he formed a “working group on Africa” tasked with figuring out the means toward action, the modalities, and the objectives for the return and restitution, “in a manner that was both rigorous and expeditious”. When the report was submitted in July of 1982, his conclusions considered restitution as an “act of solidarity and equity”. In an interview he was careful to specify that “a work of intelligence is to be done. The return of cultural property, works of art, and historical documents will allow various peoples to grasp their responsibilities. We must help these peoples rediscover their past and their self confidence.” During this same time period in West Germany, the secretary of State tasked with foreign affairs in the government of Helmut Schmidt, Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, also called for the “generous” oversight of the question of restitutions.

²⁶ Speech held in Paris on June 7, 1978, available on the UNESCO website. See Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, “Pour le retour, à ceux qui l'ont créé, d'un patrimoine culturel irremplaçable”, *Museum*, vol. 31, n°1, 1979, p. 58.

Mission Impossible

Setting aside their verbal condescendence (these people that we must help), the conclusions of the Quoniam mission are not that dissimilar from the convictions expressed today by the authors of the present report. But if a generation after Quoniam we find ourselves tasked with a similar mission—a mission for which the current French administration has kept no memory or recollection of, and which required us to comb the archives so as to find its traces—it simply indicates that in France and in spite of this past potential opening for progress toward restitutions, there has been no progressive movement in this direction for the past 40 years. Unfortunately, it's been the exact opposite: Successive governments have continued to turn down any offer requesting restitutions, with the reasoning that the requested works of art have for a long time now been integrated as part of cultural heritage property of the French Nation, and in this light, they are inalienable.

In this respect, the most recent example of Benin is rather significant: in an official letter dated August 26, 2016, the Beninese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Aurélien Agbenonci, asked for the restitution of anthropomorphic statues bearing royal emblems taken by the French colonel, Alfred Dodds, during the sacking of the Abomey Palace in 1892, who then offered them to the Trocadéro Museum of Ethnography, an ancestor of the newly formed Musée du quai Branly in Paris. The messenger sent from Benin indicated that these items had both a spiritual and historical value for the Beninese nation; that what was at the heart of the request were irreplaceable pieces of cultural property and heritage—witnesses to a former time and a bygone era, certainly—but they still remained as a living support for the collective memory of Benin. The reply from the French government took four months. On December 12, 2016, the French government finally replied by stating that France was also responsible and tasked with the circulation and protection of cultural heritage; that France also was cognizant and well aware of the historical and cultural importance of these items for Benin; that France ratified in 1997 the UNESCO convention of 1970 concerning the illicit exportation of cultural property; but that this convention has no retroactive scope and in conforming to the legislature in place, cannot be applied to the treasure of Abomey whose inalienability remained intact. In 2016, France admitted the legitimacy of the request but countered it with a legal detail concerning French cultural property and heritage. Mission Impossible.

A half-century after African nations gained their independence, the question concerning cultural heritage restitutions still seems stuck within a dual temporality: on the one hand, within a temporality of those who continue to wait and are filled with resignation, and on the other hand, within a temporality of those with the confidence to think that they will finally be able to confer to others, after a great many decades, the feeling of ownership, scientific legitimacy, and the proper services rendered to the cultural heritage of humanity. Both of these temporalities seem to converge around the same point: both temporalities seemed to have generated a sense of institutional numbing. Among our interlocutors, above all in France, it has often been said that our present work around restitutions was a “mission impossible”. In April 2018, Oswald Homécky, the young minister of Culture and Sports in Benin, confided to us that from his position, at Cotonou, if one day France truly restituted Africa’s cultural heritage items back to Africa it would be akin to “the fall of the Berlin Wall or the reunification of North and South Korea.”

Can we, then, envision the happy and consented restitution, motivated by the dual interest of both peoples and objects? Can we thus think of restitutions as being something more than a mere strategic maneuver—neither merely an economic or political strategy—but rather something truly cultural in the sense of the Latin verb *colere*, to “inhabit”, “cultivate”, and “honor”? The proclamation made at Ouagadougou leads one to think this is perhaps possible. This belief perhaps comes from the force felt as a new generation comes to the fore. This proclamation suggests that a new future can be envisioned. The proclamation postulates the very specificity of the African situation. And despite all expectations to the contrary, it has not provoked a large institutional blockade to which we’ve become accustomed over the past several decades when discussing this subject. The response has been completely the opposite. Invited by several media outlets to react to the declarations made by Emmanuel Macron, the president of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Stéphane Martin was rather pleased to engage in the larger meaning of President Macron’s words, emphasizing that “we cannot allow for a continent to be so severely deprived of its past and its artistic brilliance”, that the current stand-still of the situation “has no intention of remaining as such” and “that the destiny of the cultural items would certainly lead to at least part of them being returned.”²⁷ Gathered together at the behest of the mission from the beginning of July, both the principal curators of the museums of territorial collections and the curators from the French State housing collections of African objects demonstrated a sincere openness and interest to proceed by way of restitution and the perspectives of cooperation that could be opened up by it.

²⁷ See “Stéphane Martin : ‘L’Afrique ne peut pas être privée des témoignages de son passé’”, *op. cit.*

The Mobilization of Public Opinion

We must also mention the role played by the increasing pressure exerted by public opinion felt throughout Europe. Since the early 2010s, the dossier on restitution is no longer merely constrained to the art circles of Europe or Africa. The growing interest that civil society has in these questions can be seen through the large number of novels, films, documentaries, contemporary art installations, academic conferences, tweets, and even rap songs and other types of choreography that are devoted to it. In France as well as in Germany and Great Britain, but also in Cameroon, Benin, Ethiopia, Nigeria, or in Ghana, militant non-profit organizations have begun to vigorously support reflections on restitutions over the past several years, demanding answers from the political class.

In France, the question concerning restitutions made its way onto the political agenda in 2013 thanks to the work of CRAN (The Representative Council of Black Associations) and its honorary president, Louis-Georges Tin. The campaign organized by CRAN alongside successive French presidents, as well as in Benin, largely contributed to the forward progress concerning the case of restitution. Throughout the region surrounding Paris, associations such as *Alter Natives. Héritages culturels & usages sociaux* educate the youth on the topic of restitutions in Paris and the Seine-Saint-Denis area, through conferences, trips, and workshops held in their neighborhoods concerning questions of African cultural heritage within European museums.

On the informational website, *Modern Ghana*, a former functionary of the United Nations and a militant citizen, Kwame Opoku published over 150 articles beginning in 2008, carefully and beautifully documenting a favorable case for the restitution of items of African cultural heritage to Africa. In Ethiopia, the association *Afromet (Association For the Return Of the Magdala Ethiopian Treasures)* has fought for the return of cultural items seized by the British army at Magdala in 1868. In Cameroon and in several other European cities, the foundation *AfricAvenir International*, created by the historian Kum'a Ndumbe III, has been engaged since 2013 in several awareness campaigns concerning questions of restitutions. In Benin, the Fondation Zinsou and its president, Marie-Cécile Zinsou has mobilized youth on the ground just as much as she does on social networks. And in Berlin, since 2013 as well, the association *No Humboldt 21* federates the opposition to the future ethnographic museum Humboldt Forum and is committed to fighting for the restitution of human remains and cultural items of African origin that are currently held in Germany. At the University of Cambridge, a co-ed group of students has been engaged in fighting for the restitution of art works originating from the pillaging of

Benin City by the British Army in 1897, a portion of which is conserved in the collections of the university.

In addition to these initiatives launched by associations and militants, we should also mention the numerous projects underway by (young) academic scholars: jurists, such as the *Working Group of Young International Law Scholars*, who since 2018 have run a blog dedicated to “Cultural Heritage in a Post-Colonial World”; ethnologists, like those gathered around Paul Basu at the heart of the group *Museum affordances: activating West African ethnographic archives and collections through experimental museology* at SOAS in London; art historians, such as those who have participated along with Felicity Bodenstein and Didier Houénou, in July 2018, at the Summer University of Porto-Novo in Benin around the theme of “Heritage-making Processes”²⁸. Along with these groups, we should also add a generation of young curators who, in Africa as much as in Europe and in France, (for example, in Angoulême, Nantes, or Lyon) continue to question with ever more acuity the way in which we might “re-invent the museums”, to borrow the title from the remarkable collective work directed in 2007 by El Hadji Malick Ndiaye, who is currently serving as the curator of the IFAN Museum of African Arts (Musée Théodore-Monod d’art africain) in Dakar. In a certain way, the creation by the Collège de France, in March 2016, of an international chair dedicated to the cultural history of artistic cultural heritage in Europe, and therefore also dedicated to the collections arising from out of the colonial period, bears witness to the capacity of academic institutions to attempt grasping a much larger question of a global scale.

But besides these academic milieus and those of the various associations, it’s particularly within the world of contemporary creation—from cultural knowledge to popular culture—that the question of the possible restitution of the collections formed around the colonial period has found the most significant echo over the past several years. In 2017, one of the great gatherings of the contemporary global art world, the *documenta* held in Cassel, granted a central place to the motif of restitutions. An article from *Le Monde* by Philippe Dagen claimed that “Cassel’s *documenta* brought together the remnants of colonial pillaging and that of the Nazis. From now on, artists are taking aim at these subjects that have been kept silent for decades and our placing the facts directly in front of the public, with dates and proof.”²⁹ In May 2018, under the title “Reprendre” [To take back], The Centre Pompidou presented a series of artists’ films devoted to the same subject: *The Visitor* (2007) by the Swiss artist Uriel Orlow and *Fang: An Epic*

²⁸ See also Thomas Laely, Marc Meyer and Raphael Schwere (eds.), *Museum Cooperation between Africa and Europe: A New Field for Museum Studies*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2018; Julien Bondaz, Florence Graezer Bideau, Cyril Isnart and Anaïs Leblon (eds.), *Les Vocabulaires locaux du “patrimoine”. Traductions, négociations et transformations*, Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2018.

²⁹ *Le Monde*, August 17, 2017.

Journey (2001) by the American filmmaker Susan Vogel. More recently, in September 2018, the artist Kader Attia publically questioned, during a conference organized by his hosts, whether or not it was possible to “decolonize the collection”. We could continue to multiply the number of examples in the areas of literature and especially in dance, such as the astute fable woven by Arno Betina about a fictive reclamation of a Bamileke masterpiece at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (*Des lions comme des danseuses*, 2015), the novel by Fatoumata Sissi Ngom which focuses on a curator of African origin whose life is turned upside down by the discovery of a mask in a Parisian Museum (*Le Silence du Totem*, 2018) or the performance of the dancer and choreographer Faustin Linyekula at the Metropolitan Museum of New York, *Banataba* (2017), inspired by a statue from the Lengola ethnic group housed in the American museum. As far as the film industry is concerned, it has taken hold of the subject of restitution for quite some time now, with a number of spectacular *blockbusters*: *Chinese Zodiac 12* by Jackie Chan, where the plot centers around a group of martial arts heroes attempting to recover cultural objects to take back to China that had been pillaged by the French and English during the 19th century; *Invasion 1897* (2014) by the Nigerian filmmaker Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, where a Nigerian student steals a work of art from the British Museum in London that belonged to his ancestors; the stunning *Black Panther* by Marvel Studios (2018) that grossed over a billion dollars at the box-office, and whose plot unfurled in front of the African vitrines of a fictitious African museum, during a fascinating dialogue between a young African-American and a museum curator... Today, throughout the world, the question of translocations of cultural heritage and the property of objects that were musealized in Europe during the colonial period has become a subject shared at all levels of knowledge and culture.

Last but not least, and it’s less paradoxical than it appears: within the European milieu of art dealers and art collectors, we’re beginning to see a number of discreet and efficient attempts at taking restitution into one’s own hands with the “definitive” restitutions of African works of art, without the least expectation or support from public powers. Such is the case, for example, of the Parisian gallerist, Robert Vallois, who was the initiator and sponsor of a museum exhibiting over a hundred works from the Beninese dynasty (including royal scepters) in a Cotonou Cultural Center acquired through his sponsors and those of a group of colleagues on the international art market. There is also the case of a Dutch art collector, Jan Baptist Bedaux, who engaged in important negotiations to offer his rather impressive collection of Tellem and Dogon objects back to the National Museum of Mali in Bamako (650 pieces), and the offerings of the collector Joe Mulholland and his family, in Glasgow, who envisioned offering a hundred or so precious pieces of art to the same museum. Or the case of the British citizen, Mark Walker, the inheritor of some bronze statues taken by his grandfather from Benin City during the

punitive expeditions of 1897, who simply decided to directly retribute them to the Oba of Benin in 2014, accompanying the gesture with the following commentary: “It was very humbling to be greeted with such great enthusiasm and gratitude, for nothing really. I was just returning some art objects to a place where I feel they will be properly looked after.”³⁰

³⁰ Ellen Otzen, “The Man who Returned his Grandfather’s Looted Art”, BBC.com, February 26, 2015.

1. To Restitute

“When men perish, they enter into history. When statues perish, they enter into art. This botanical garden of death is what we call Culture.”

Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, *Les statues meurent aussi*, 1953

One of the questions that we immediately had to confront from the very beginning of the mission is the meaning we should grant to the term restitution. During his speech held on November 28, 2017, in Ouagadougou, the French president Emmanuel Macron proclaimed his desire to work toward “within the next five years, [...] seeing the conditions put in place so as to allow for the temporary or definitive restitution of African cultural heritage returned to Africa.” In the preamble of the letter of the mission that organized the framework for this present work, he just as clearly outlined his desire for “launching a determined action in favor of the circulation of works of art as well as the sharing of collective knowledge regarding the contexts in which the works of art were created, but also how they were acquired, sometimes being pilfered, sometimes saved or destroyed.” This circulation, he continues, “could perhaps take on a variety of forms even including a permanent modification of national inventories and restitutions”. The object of his comments seems clear: it’s specifically about carrying out restitutions of objects of “Cultural Heritage”, and moreover, the term is mentioned three times in the letter.

Removing the Ambiguities

Nevertheless, this mission letter, since it evokes both the idea of “temporary restitutions” and “definitive restitutions” is the harbinger of an ambiguity that appears to merit immediately being removed from the equation. At first glance, the expression “temporary restitutions” seems to function as an oxymoron: it can leave one to think that the objects concerned will only be restituted for a finite period of time, that is, that their return will not have a definitive character. This formulation thereby opens the door to debates of interpretation, as could already be demonstrated by one of the exchanges we had with some of our interlocutors, who were convinced that in the end, that the project of “restitution” was actually merely about a desire for “circulating” the acquired objects of African Cultural Heritage. This double direction invites us to propose and consider an analytical reading of the various postures polarizing the debates around restitutions. One of these readings suggests that today’s museums, as depositories of objects, should become more thoroughly engaged in the circulation and movement of the objects by initiating and amplifying more partnerships and exchanges with museums across the African continent as well as with its cultural actors and institutions. Another position that is often supported in the debates by representatives from cultures who’ve been robbed of their cultural legacy is that of the transfer of ownership, where what’s really at stake is the symbolic impact and who gets to oversee the care of the objects as the primary entities responsible for the items of cultural heritage. The present report explores and defends the path toward permanent restitutions, through a series of varied arguments that will be deployed in the following pages. For those adepts who have a vision for restitutions based on the dynamics of the “circulation” of objects, this terminological substitution appears to present several advantages. It allows for the outlining of the moral responsibility that is tied to the term “restitution”, and to thereby accept a certain impasse in the oftentimes complex biographical narratives regarding the pieces in question, as well as the oftentimes problematic conditions in which the pieces came into the hands of the national French collections. By forgoing the question around the legitimacy of ownership, this position perpetuates a sort of ongoing indebtedness of the dispossessed cultures to France, which is precisely the reason why it’s an important aspect of the debate concerning the permanent restitution of cultural heritage. Moreover, a preference for the option of “circulation” avoids legal questions around a veritable restitution: what are the terms for the transfer of property, and the conditions linked to such an approach—namely the necessary modifications to the French law concerning cultural heritage and their inalienability and inaccessibility. Within the

framework of our mission, we have chosen to provide the following definition for the expression “temporary restitutions”, as it appears in the mission letter: a transitory solution, allowing for the proper time to create the juridical dispositives allowing and assuring the definitive return, without any other stipulations or conditions, of cultural heritage objects of sub-Saharan Africa back onto the African continent.

What Restitution Means

“To restitute”, literally means to return an item to its legitimate owner. This term serves to remind us that the appropriation and enjoyment of an item that one restitutes rest on a morally reprehensible act (rape, pillaging, spoliation, ruse, forced consent, etc.) In this case, *to restitute* aims to *re-institute* the cultural item to the legitimate owner for his legal use and enjoyment, as well as all the other prerogatives that the item confers (*usus, fructus, and abusus*). The implicit act of the *gesture* of restitution is very clearly the recognition of the illegitimacy of the property that one had previously claimed ownership of, no matter what the duration of time was. As a consequence, the act of restitution attempts to put things back in order, into proper harmony. To openly speak of restitutions is to speak of justice, or a re-balancing, recognition, of restoration and reparation, but above all: it’s a way to open a pathway toward establishing new cultural relations based on a newly reflected upon ethical relation.

Consequently, the questions that emerge from thinking about restitutions are thus far from being limited to only the juridical aspects and to questions of legitimate ownership. The implications tied to the method of restitution are also of a political and symbolic order, if not also of a philosophical and relational order. Restitutions open up a profound reflection on history, memories, and the colonial past, concerning the history as well as the formation and development of Western museum collections. But just as importantly the question of restitution also bears on the question of the different interpretations or conceptions of cultural heritage, of the museum, and their various modalities of the presentation of objects as well as their circulation and, in the end, the nature and quality of relations between people and nations.

Translocations, Transformations

For the societies who have waited several decades for the return of their cultural objects, and in some cases, have endured centuries of their absence, a fundamental question naturally emerges regarding their symbolic re-appropriation. Is it possible to *re-institute* cultural artifacts back into their societal milieus of origin, to see them regain their proper function and use, after such a long absence? If certain symbolic dispositives remain operational, the large majority of these originary environments have undergone profound mutations, certain geographies have even been displaced, and history has continued to carve out its unpredictable invisible paths.

What the ensemble of displaced objects constitute is in fact a “diaspora”³¹, according to the specialist of Modern African Art, John Pepper. Once they have been displaced, the objects endure a variety of processes and experiences of successive re-semanticization, and have undergone an excessive imposition of several layers of signification. The cultural theorist, Lotte Arndt, for her part, notes that besides the literal violence such as theft or embargo, one must also consider the additional violence inflicted onto the objects themselves, who often see their “accouterments” despoiled, varnished, or remodeled and in the end, their names, identities, and significations, and functions, completely destroyed or altered.”³² How are we able then to reconstitute to these objects the sense and functions that once belonged to them, without neglecting the fact that they had been captured and then reshaped by a plurality of semantic, symbolic, and epistemological dispositives for more than a century? In certain cases, the sacred items or objects of worship have become works of art worth contemplating in their own right, ethnographic objects, or mere artifacts whose value can be derived by considering them as witnesses of history. Simon Njami emphasizes that the return of objects does not mean restituting them as they once were, but re-investing them with a social function. It’s not about a return of the same, but of a “different same”.³³

And here we can see all the entanglement of questions, of the additions and subtractions of value that the question of the restitution of objects of cultural heritage brings forth within a different space-time.

So why then seek to reconstitute? Is it a question of attempting to alleviate the symbolically “cumbersome” collections so as to sell off a heavy burden of a colonial

³¹ John Pepper, “Africa’s diasporas of images”, *Third Text*, vol. 19, n. 4, July 2005, p. 339.

³² Lotte Arndt, “Réflexions sur le renversement de la charge de la preuve comme levier postcolonial”, *bs n°12. Le journal de Bétonsalon*, 2011-2012, p. 11-19.

³³ Atelier de Dakar, panel “Ce que restituer veut dire”, June 12, 2018

past, and, along with it any attempt at rendering this past intelligible? To use the symbolic space as a tool of *soft power* aiming to “revalorize” France’s image to an African generation of youth that is less and less francophile? To send a message to the African diasporas in France? Or is it to institute a new relational ethics between peoples by helping to give back to them an impeded or *blocked* memory? So as to let them set about doing the necessary work regarding their own history by accepting to debate around one of the chapters of Africa’s colonial past as well as the demand for truth which is a corollary of this chapter? For the Africans themselves, what could restitutions possibly mean?

Memory and Amnesia of Losses

The majority of objects present in European ethnographic museums were acquired within the colonial framework. For some of the African nations, in some cases it is still possible to locate the aesthetic and cultural context of the pieces [oeuvres] once they have been restituted. Certain communities have been able to keep a relation with their objects of cultural heritage alive through the perpetuation of traditions and rituals: chiefdoms in Western Cameroon, the religious communities in Benin, Senegal, or Nigeria. Within these social contexts, certain objects would have little trouble rediscovering a function, even if it is somewhat reinvented, within the cultural landscape of the communities.³⁴

For other African communities, the amnesia has already done its work and the erasure of memory has been so successful that communities have even begun to lose any remaining knowledge of this cultural heritage or recognize the depth of the loss that has been suffered. This information explains the various gaps in interest around the question of restitutions on the African continent, as we were able to discern throughout the interviews we were able to conduct on site. In countries where the loss of items of cultural heritage was linked to violent, painful, or tragic events (the end of the Abomey Kingdom, the sacking of Benin City, the battle of Adwa in Ethiopia, etc.) the memory is still very alive and the question still holds a fiery place within the collective. For other communities, the question of restitution appears to be secondary, the translocation having taken place without making much noise nor

³⁴ During the workshop held in Dakar on June 12, 2018, the Prince Kum’a Ndumbe III reminded everyone that object will not be returned into the void, and that Africa is alive and well. The objects will be re-integrated into a “family”, and will provide the occasion for an extraordinary opportunity for a “rebirth” for the continent. Their return will formulate a synthesis between “what has always already been there, and that which returns and lives again”.

in arousing much antagonism, through ethnographic missions or the release of objects into the art market. It is clear that the question of memory work, of memorialization and the work of history (the work of writing or re-writing of history) are just as important as restitutions strictly speaking.

Re-socializing Objects of Cultural Heritage

Thus, for the African countries, it's about accomplishing a twofold task of the reconstruction of their memories and one of self-reinvention, through a re-semanticization and a re-socialization of the objects of their cultural heritage, through reconnecting these objects with the current societies and the questions and problems that these contemporary societies pose. It will be up to these new African communities to define their own vision of cultural heritage, the epistemological dispositives and the ecologies in which they would like to re-insert these objects, and these ecologies are necessarily plural.

Our travels throughout several African countries led us to taking into account a variety of potential welcoming apparatuses: from ultra-modern institutions (such as the Musée des Civilisations Noires in Dakar), to the “cultural space” (the palace to the king of Bafoussam in Cameroon); from classical first rate museums (such as the National Museum of Mali in Bamako) to more traditional forms of architecture that have been re-vitalized by new architectural innovations (musée du Sultan des Bamoun in Famboun in Cameroon)—across the entire African continent, cultural heritage sites exist, and in certain countries they are numerous and have emerged from out of a variety of typologies (Fig. 1).

According to the various functions designated to them upon their return, the objects could find their place within art centers, university museums, schools, or even at the center of the communities for ritual uses, with the possibility of an oscillating use and return of the objects to local centers charged with their preservation. This is already the case in Mali where the National Museum regularly loans out certain objects to communities for ritual practices, and after these rituals have taken place, the museum will come and recuperate the objects in order to continuing preserving them in the National Museum, as the current director of the sites, Salia Malé was able to explain to us. Our fieldwork was thus also able to reveal that the distribution of objects of cultural heritage within social space could be conceived of in a variety of different ways and configurations, and that the model of a centralized museum for all objects of cultural heritage is only one possible example among many others.

This spatial explosion of cultural heritage thus allows for objects to be disseminated within social space, and to thereby fulfill a different function at each site (pedagogical, memorial, creative, spiritual, mediator, etc.).

Objects of cultural heritage can also lead to redefining and redesigning territorialities thus inscribing themselves within geographies that exceed a national framework. As a result of colonialism, certain objects produced by communities today find themselves straddling several borders. In these instances, objects of cultural heritage would serve the function of precisely abolishing the border sketched out by the conference of Berlin (1884-1885) through the mobilization of communities around material items symbolizing their unity and their fluid identity within geographies that transcend borders. For example, the Omarian family as descendants of the El Hadj Omar Tall, are spread throughout Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, and Guinea. Every year, they organize a gathering around the spiritual heritage of El Hadj Omar Tall, a portion of whose relics are currently housed in the National History Museum of the Havre, with other manuscripts being housed (517 items) in the Fond Archinard at the French National Library, and his sabre being housed at the Musée de l'Armée in Paris. Since 1994, this community has asked for the French authorities for the return of these relics along with the digitizing of the manuscripts. So far, all requests have been in vain.

This is simply one example among many others of how we can begin to think and reflect on the notion of objects of cultural heritage in a much more open and nuanced manner. At the heart of African societies, to think the relation between things and their life cycle, to think the very idea itself of conservation or shared ownership, but also the modalities of their appropriations by communities, takes on a plurality of forms. In this way, the potential return of objects should take into account the wealth and multiplicity of these alternative conceptions of cultural heritage, through releasing oneself from the lone framework of European thought. It therefore seems necessary, within the framework of reflections concerning restitutions, to *demystify* Western notions of cultural heritage and preservation.

Of the Life and Spirit of Objects

The question of a life of an object is often thought of solely from the unique perspective of their conservation. This question often plays the part of a hidden fear on the part of the professionals of Western museums and the public at large. This often leads to regular issues questioning the adequate competencies throughout

African museums in regards to the conservation of objects, without ever having a larger discussion about how these societies were able to conserve items produced there over a number of centuries within their respective climates and ecologies. If indeed the question concerning the various ways of conserving these objects is important it will only be facilitated by the project of restitution: the situation of museums in Africa varies considerably from one country to the next, and the return of objects to the museums will certainly lead, when necessary, to a reexamination of the upkeep of the pieces.³⁵ We can also add to this the fact that societies often have a poor understanding of how to maintain the life cycles of the artifacts which they themselves have created.

In a number of African societies, *statues also perish*. They have a certain lifespan and are caught within a regenerative economic cycle founded on a fluid materiality and ontological identity. Certain masks are buried for several years and then reproduced so as to then renew the energetic influxes that grant them an operative power. Within a rather particular modality of the articulation of the relations between the spirit, matter, and the living, they are the depositories of flows and energetic fields that turn them into animated objects and into active forces, thus mediating between the different orders of reality. These objects are also the bearers of a reserve of the imagination as well as the material manifestation of forms of knowledge [saviors]. Fishing nets that encode algorithms from fractals to anthropomorphic statues in passing by amulet-filled vests: the work of decoding the various forms of knowledge they conceal as well as the comprehension of the epistemes that have produced them still remains largely a work to be done. Throughout large parts of their history, African societies have produced original forms of mediation between the spirit, matter, and the living. Achille Mbembe has been very specific in indicating that these societies generated open systems of mutual resource-sharing concerning the forms of knowledge at the heart of participative ecosystems, wherein the world is a reservoir of potentials.³⁶ Furthermore, certain of these artifacts are not mere objects but active subjects. And it's by way of rituals, ceremonies, and through these

³⁵ There are at least 500 museums in sub-Saharan Africa. The state of the museums in this part of the African continent is heterogeneous. Some countries have museums of quality and the necessary expertise to immediately welcome objects that will be carefully housed and conserved (South Africa, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, etc.); others have already begun to set the necessary groundwork for constructing new museum infrastructures as well as the restoration of the already existing museum infrastructures (as is the case in Benin and Cameroon); and for still another final category of museums, work is still yet to be done so as to improve and ensure the quality of the museum infrastructure. However, the history of restitutions has shown that once works are returned, the Nation-States are quick to welcome them and prepare the adequate political infrastructures necessary.

³⁶ Achille Mbembe, *Notes sur les objets sauvages*, forthcoming.

relations of reciprocity, Mbembe clarifies, that we see the operation of an attribution of a subjectivity to a given inanimate object.

Objects are the mediators of correspondences, of metamorphoses, and passages within an ecosystem characterized by fluidity and circularity. Within a reticular universe, objects become the operators of a relational and plastic identity where the goal is to participate in the world and to basically dominate it. In African art, as philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne is quick to emphasize, the African statuary cannot only be understood as derived from a figurative or analogical art: it is the support and vector of a philosophical and symbolic discourse as well as the expression of the ontology of primary force.³⁷ All these archives, forms of knowledge, universes, and the cognitive resources they conceal remain to be explored and could lead to ambitious (academic and artistic) research programs.

Putting History to Work, Reconstructing Memory

The African continent evolves within a regime of historicity where the memories of the colonial situation influence the contemporary presence in the world of African peoples. These memories continue to structure ways of being, the relations between nations that were long ago formed through the viewpoint of the colonized and the colonizer, and this set of relations could be seen as much on the African continent as in the diasporas. Postcolonial studies, in the way in which they have developed since the 1980s, reveal the latent and diffuse coloniality within the multiple relations in which the now independent nations engage with their former (political, economic, epistemological, and cultural) metropolis. To escape from the representations and the lack of reflections about this past requires a work of history as well as the imaginaries of a relation that, as well, needs to be decolonized.

Within this framework, it seems essential here to recall that the absence of cultural heritage can render memory silent and make the essential work of history of the young nations rather difficult when faced with the delicate question of the construction of a political community and a project for the future. To envision the possible of the future requires clearing away the painful legacies of the colonial past, of doing away with a sense of indebtedness. If this can be accompanied by a return of emblematic objects, the memory work can function as an operator for the reconstruction of the identity of subjects and communities. When the collective

³⁷ Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *African Art as Philosophy*, Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2012.

considers the past as a “problem to resolve”, above all if this past has left a trail of trauma (violence, wars, genocides), a work of re-appropriation and negotiation vis-à-vis the past is necessary in order for a cure to take hold along with a process of resilience. And here, a history is inevitable: it undoes the narrative of the present and offers up an intelligibility of the contemporary dynamics, and the part of these dynamics that was determined by the past. As the historian Marc Bloch highlights, history as a “science of humanity within time” allows us to think of ourselves as a “social body” in movement.

The American historian, Lynn Hunt reminds us that historical truth, as irrefutable and proven as it may be, that is, based on archives, traces, and eyewitness accounts, is never completely sheltered from threats.³⁸ This “truth” is all the more fragile when the traces that were supposed to document it were flawed. We must understand that the context in which these objects of cultural heritage were taken, spoiled, or transferred. The archives and objects of cultural heritage contribute to this intelligibility. This work on historiography allows, among other things, to escape the idea of a single narrative and assume a plurality of perspectives.

The younger generation of Africans who have not lived through the colonial moment, but who are the inheritors of a history that has been transmitted via fragments and a memory occulted by a truncated history, remain hostages to an inadmissible history since it has yet to be worked through by way of speech and representation. In a recent work on colonial “trauma”, Karima Lazali rightfully emphasizes that “the part of History refused by politics is transmitted from generation to generation and fabricates psychic mechanisms that keep the subject within a position of shame for existing.”³⁹ The necessity for the comprehension of these effects of coloniality on contemporary African and European subjectivities is fundamental. The after-effects of colonialism in Europe and Africa will not simply be overcome through slogans stating that it’s now time to move on, but rather through a collective work concerning the ill-considered reflection on a history that we are the inheritors of, and through the clarification concerning the responsibilities each party had in the construction of this history. The question of displaced cultural legacy is one of these ill-considered reflections. Lazali is also quick to emphasize the importance of dealing with the invisible and silent remnants of colonial violence (in the clinical sense of the term: to care and examine), most notably an examination of the survivals that leave no trace. Here what we must begin to deal with is the work

³⁸ Lynn Hunt, *History Why It Matters*, Cambridge (Mass.): Polity, 2018.

³⁹ Karima Lazali, *Le trauma colonial. Une enquête sur les effets psychiques et politiques contemporains de l’oppression coloniale en Algérie*, Paris: La Découverte, 2015.

of the reconstruction and recuperation of these missing traces of history and memory—as if they were phantom limbs—above all when history has been deprived of available archives.

Of the Circulation of Objects and the Plasticity of Categories

Since the 19th century, the museum has been conceived in Europe as the site for the conservation of national and universal cultural heritage. A space for the instruction and production of forms of knowledge, a “microcosm” “in which objects, that are systematically displayed, are supposed to seduce and convince” according to the equation put forth by Phillippe Descola.⁴⁰ From its very origins, and within a logic of national affirmation, the museum allows for European powers to stage their aptitude for the absorption and classification of the world. Competition between European museums leads to a typological inventiveness. In this context, we can think of how the arts, cultures, eras, things from nature, ways of life and people are placed into a coherent system, so they can then be placed into a series and compared.

The problem arises when the museum no longer becomes the site for the affirmation of national identity, but, as Benoît de L’Estoile indicates, is seen rather as a museum of the *Others*⁴¹; when the museum conserves objects procured from somewhere else and assumes the right to speak about these *Others* (or in the name of the *Others*) and claims to declare the truth concerning them. Germain Viatte, director of the museological project of the Musée du quai Branly has been specific in stating that the Quai Branly museum’s task was devoted to “the art of non-Western cultures and civilizations”. As such, the ethnographic museums, which some have taken to labeling as “universal” where artifacts from Africa are collected under a myriad of diverse imperatives, have been and continue to remain the sites of the production of discourses and representations of African societies. However, any power is first and foremost a power of controlling the narrative, as the historian Patrick Boucheron is quick to remind us.⁴² Through these objects and the narratives placed onto these so-called ethnographic collections are ways of controlling representations of societies, often essentializing them, as well as creating a

⁴⁰ Philippe Descola, “Passages de témoins”, *Le Débat*, no. 147, 2007, p. 138.

⁴¹ Benoît de L’Estoile, *Le Goût des autres: de l’Exposition coloniale aux arts premiers*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007.

⁴² See Patrick Boucheron’s “leçon inaugurale” at the Collège de France, December 17, 2015 (*Ce que peut l’histoire*, Paris: Fayard, 2016

crystallization of categories oftentimes produced by coloniality upon the peoples and African cultures. In the past, certain documentary regimes and scientific paradigms have been applied to these objects. Today these same regimes and scientific paradigms have come under great scrutiny thereby calling their legitimacy into question if not rendering them completely devoid of meaning. Not to mention that the very duration, temporality, and meaning of these objects has been under an exclusive control and authority of Western institutional museum structures that decide how long one can have access to these objects.

Operations for placing these cultural objects on loan to African museums for a specific duration have recently been underway within a framework of international cooperation. In 2006-2007, for the occasion of the exhibit, *Béhanzin, Roi d'Abomey*, 30 objects from the royal treasure that had been integrated into the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac were presented to Benin, at Cotonou, via the Fondation Zinsou. The event—that was extended due to the success of the exhibition and the large interest on the part of the viewing public of Benin—had an important reverberating impact on the rest of the continent. Nevertheless, at the same time that this sort of promising circulation of art was happening, France was still actively refusing to reopen the debate concerning the restitution of the art objects in question. The material and cultural appropriation of objects not only leads to having control over their mobility, but also over their semantic subversion. In the relation of history/power, for the objects present within the French ethnographic collections, it thus becomes a question of a fixed monopoly concerning their significations on the part of those who had the means at their disposal to produce the narratives about these cultural art objects.

Restitution, through the transfer of propriety that it allows for, breaks up this monopoly of control concerning the mobility of objects by Western museums. These cultural objects are then free to circulate in a new manner, but within a temporality, a rhythm and a meaning, placed on them by their legitimate owners. These newly freed objects could help to re-draw trans-national territorial borders thereby re-occupying spaces of the circulation of communities, but also so as to help expand the circulation of these objects on a more continental and global scale. Furthermore, re-appropriating for *oneself*, as a culture, allows for a toppling of colonial categories, thereby helping to re-fluidify fixed geographies and to invert the colonial hegemonic relationship in place that was instituted by a fixed location of the cultural objects along with monopoly of the discourse concerning them. Restitution also allows for the recreation of the historiography of the collections through reconsidering the history of the objects as well as having access to *epistemogonies* that have

established them within a primary universe of sense. But also, it allows for the cohabitation of several regimes of forms of knowledge concerning the objects of these communities.

A New Relational Ethics

Objects, having become diasporas, are the mediators of a relation that needs to be reinvented. Their return to their communities of origin does not have as its aim to substitute one form of physical and semantic imprisonment by another, that would this time be justified by the idea of the “rightful property owner”. It is indeed a question of re-activating a concealed memory and restituting to the cultural heritage its signifying, integrative, dynamic, and mediating functions within contemporary African societies. But, through the re-appropriation of these objects, it’s also about once again becoming the guardians of the human community. These objects, while being geographically localized, are the expression of human brilliance and are a material translation of humanity’s creativity. The faces of human experience they reflect are universal. Most of the museum curators on the African continent with whom we spoke see restitution in this manner and are prepared to circulate the pieces of cultural heritage within both a continental and global geography. It is even possible to consider the creation of apparatuses to fill the void left by these objects, in the guise of the creation of replicas to be housed in the Western museums, whose energetic aura will be assured through the machinery of narrative and the possibilities that digital tools allow for as well as ICT [Internet Communications Technology]. In the Ardèche, the Pont’Arc Cave has proposed a facsimile of the Chauvet cave so as to allow visitors to continue to appreciate cultural history while also preserving the original and simultaneously losing none of the experiential and emotional effects of a visit to such a site. The objects from sub-Saharan Africa have also benefitted from the welcoming hospitality of communities, curators, researchers, and visitors, throughout centuries, without having to go seek this hospitality out, and have maintained this relation in Europe, sometimes becoming rather attached to it.

The argument according to which the act of restitution implies that cultural heritage objects only retain their legitimate life within their originary geocultural environments—and equating this with the idea that the cultural objects must therefore remain at their originary home, is not acceptable. This position only leads to an impasse in the long and rich history of museum cooperation between Europe

and Africa and the shared the circulation of art works and collections. Hamady Bocoum⁴³, the director of the Musée des Civilisations Noires [Museum of Black Civilizations] in Dakar, is even of the opinion that the cultural heritage and legacy of African museums is not merely limited to African objects. Other civilizations must also be represented in African museums.

Furthermore, as Benoît de L'Estoile has noted, the return of objects to Africa does not imply resigning them to a new form of an enslavement to a cultural identity, but rather bears the promise of a new economy of exchange⁴⁴. These cultural objects have become the products of a relational history. These objects can enjoy a new life and become what Krzysztof Pomian calls “semiophores”—objects as carriers of *new* meaning.⁴⁵

Of Compensation and of Reparation

Nevertheless, this new relational ethics cannot possibly take into account the entire work of historical truth concerning the diverse conditions in which these objects were displaced; concerning the reality and the depth of this loss that African societies have suffered through, a wound that can still be permanently felt in a variety of ways even today. The thorny question of reparations cannot be eluded. It is a question that is often evoked in the context of crimes against humanity (the genocide of the Hereros and the Namas), in the context of violent massacres linked to colonial conquests, or the predation of economic resources for which losses seem more easily quantifiable. However, when we reflect on the question of cultural heritage objects, we must understand that it's not simply objects that were taken, but reserves of energy, creative resources, reservoirs of potentials, forces engendering alternative figures and forms of the real, forces of germination; and this loss is incommensurable. Simply giving back these cultural objects won't be the proper compensation. This force arises from a relation and mode of participation in the world that has been irremediably trampled upon.

Thus, it's less a question of reclaiming financial compensation than a symbolic re-establishment through a demand for truth. Compensation here consists in offering to repair the relation. The restitution of objects (having become the nodes of a

⁴³ June 12, Dakar Workshop, Théodore-Monod d'art africain at IFAN.

⁴⁴ Conference at the Collège de France during the symposium “Du droit des objets à disposer d'eux-mêmes”, June 21, 2018, organized by Bénédicte Savoy and Yann Potin.

⁴⁵ Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise : XVI-XVIII siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque des histoires, 1987, p. 49.

relation), also implies a fair and just historiographic work and a new relational ethics; by operating a symbolic redistribution repairing the ties and renewing them around reinvented relational modalities that are qualitatively improved.

Human communities are also thought within their imaginary, as physical and sometimes mystical bodies for religious communities. The absent member founds the community. In *Reflecting memory*, Kader Attia shows that the recognition of this absent one allows for the restitution of something that, if it is not there, continues to demand to be put back in its proper place.⁴⁶ It operates like the mirror that, by reflecting the missing limb of the amputee, allows him to mourn, and to palliate the pain, which is indeed real, caused by the phantom limb. The analogy can be made between individual pain and those pains of immaterial collectives, that have become obscured through a collective denial (the refusal of recognizing and working through painful memories as a result of colonialism for example.) In these instances, the work of restitution and the production of meaning that accompanies it, repairs the absence of the objects of cultural heritage and their effect on the collective psyche.

However, the cure linked to the process of reparation, for the communities affected by the loss of their cultural heritage, can remain problematic if it is not founded on something other than on the recognition of the other as an inflicted prejudice. It can lead to a syndrome of incompleteness, if this cure doesn't take place. A hobbled resilience, since it is exclusively dependent on the recognition of the other (by the other). An auto-soteriological process, taking the form of self-reparations, through a work on one's own history should take place by endogenizing the latter and by emancipating oneself from the acts and speech of the other.

The Question of Archives

Intimately tied to the collective consciousness and to the historical processes in question regarding the restitution of objects, the archives constituted during the colonial era play a central role in the reconstruction process of memory. For quite some time, several former French colonies, Algeria being the first to come to mind, have requested access to the archives of their own history. In Africa, all of our interlocutors insisted not only on the restitution of cultural heritage objects held in French museums but also on the need for a serious reflection on the question of

⁴⁶ Kader Attia, *Reflecting Memory*, Documentary film, 2016, HD film, 40 min.

archives. In many places, these archives have become a veritable topos of *missing links*, relayed by the press, certain contemporary artists, and political personnel in Africa as well as historians on both continents.

To stick with the one French example of this: at the time of the independence of the colonies, the archives produced by the colonial authorities on the African continent were divided up into two large collections: the archives of Western French Africa remained in Dakar by way of a common accord between France and Senegal. Those of French Equatorial Africa were transferred overseas to Aix-en-Provence (to the sovereign archives) while some of them remained in Brazzaville (in the archives of management), this division of archives was not always the strictest. Other types of documents stemming from ethnographic inquiries led in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1930s were handed over to the museum archives or university institutions. For several years now, concerted efforts were made in Europe to remedy this lack of sources and resources.⁴⁷

Within the framework of our present mission concerning restitutions, only the archives that are currently conserved in public museums (or affiliated establishments) will be taken into consideration: 1. files concerning art works, inventory records, any form of surplus expertise produced during their entrance into the museum; 2. audio-visual material derived from ethnographic inquiries, sound recordings, photos, documentary films on African societies and the individuals studied by French scientists. As far as the principal questions of administrative, military, and diplomatic archives, they largely surpass the question of “the temporary or definitive restitution of African cultural heritage to Africa” requested by Emmanuel Macron. It is of our opinion that this other question is also of the utmost urgency and should be the object of another specific mission handed over to specialists on archives and also those on the history of Africa.

⁴⁷ In 2013, within a framework of a general program on African borders, France officially provided print as well as digital copies of the French archives documenting the process of the demarcation of borders in Africa beginning in the middle of the 19th century. In 2015, two historians and specialists of Africa, Jean-Pierre Bat (National Archives in France) and Vincent Hiribarren (King’s College London) along with the support and cooperation of Brice Isnove Owabira (director of the national archives of the Congo) and Raoul Ngokaba (director of administrative and financial affairs at the General direction of cultural heritage archives) created a website online offering a glimpse into the documents conserved in Brazzaville concerning not only the Republic of the Congo but also Gabon, The Central African Republic, and Chad. More recently, at the end of September 2018, Belgium began digitizing “all the archives contained in the AfricaMuseum (Musée de l’Afrique central) in Tervuren and the royal archives” and “gave them” back to Rwanda following a series of priorities laid out by a Rwandan delegation of archivists. The project will take place over two years and will have a budget of 400,000 euros.

2. Restitutions and Collections

Wanting “to reconstitute African cultural heritage to Africa”, as Emmanuel Macron proposes, requires a precise knowledge of the African collections conserved in France (Where are they located? What do they comprise?) It also requires complete clarity on the historical and scientific context regarding how the collections became conserved and housed within the current museum collections. It will also require a common group of professionals from museums and those working in cultural heritage, in France as much as in Africa, who will become the historical actors within a complex project. The temporality of the restitutions, the choice of objects whose return will be prioritized, and a common elaboration of “know-how” regarding the departures and returns of the objects are all just as important and meaningful as the acts of restitution themselves.

The Time of Returns

In France, the massive arrival and musealization of African cultural heritage didn't happen over night. It took place over a relatively long period, beginning in the latter part of the 19th century and continuing through the second half of the 20th century. Obviously, no one in France or Africa foresees the return of the entirety of these historically formed ensembles which have been progressively transformed through a symbolic, economic, and scientific usage that has taken place in France.

What's more, and we must insist on this point, at the current time, the process of restitutions can only concern a portion of the objects in question. The process must be a progressive one. It must be supported by a rigorous analysis of the historical, typological, and symbolic criteria. It must recognize the place that these displaced items of cultural heritage have occupied within the political struggles and imaginaries of their communities of origin. They must demonstrate their flexibility. And this process must keep in mind that, within the Western museum complex, individual and collective emotions as well as unexpected aesthetic pollinations and crystallizations have taken place in relation to these cultural items, which are at the very heart of the idea of culture and humanity. Culture not in the completed sense as "the sum of all forms of knowledge", but in the dynamic sense of an elaboration and a construction, of cultural mixing and hybridizations. All over the world, from one generation to the next, these objects continue to traverse temporalities and the preoccupations of mortals. These objects that traverse time contain within them a power of germination, which is a force in itself. And by interacting with them, new generations create new things, actualize new ideas and shepherd new forms into the world that until then, had not existed.

It can seem somewhat vain to want to obsessively formalize the criteria for restitutability, given the varied modes of appropriation of African cultural property and heritage by France and taking into account the spectrum of emotional responses (anger, claims, aspirations) in their countries of origin that are just as varied as a result of their absence. Certainly, these emotions should be expressed and used as a sort of navigational compass. But the "intellectual effort", to refer back again to the words of Pierre Quoniam, above all consists of positing, between different parameters, and on a case by case basis, an ethically just equation that is also juridically viable. The restitutions must therefore be negotiated by way of these two criteria and should be adapted to the delays and rhythms of every party involved.

African Presence

Currently, within the French Public Collections, there are at least 90,000 objects originating from sub-Saharan Africa (Fig. 2). 70,000 pieces alone are housed in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 20,000 more—and that's a modest estimate, there's probably a much larger number⁴⁸—are housed throughout several port cities

⁴⁸ According to the partial information we were able to gather from the Ministry of Culture within the framework of this mission, there are around 17,636 objects originating from sub-Saharan Africa currently housed in around 50 public museums in France. Due to a lack of reliable information at the time of the editing of this report, (for example, this estimate does not include those object housed in other important

(Cherbourg, Le Havre, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Nantes, Marseille), in cities along the rivers connecting these cities with the inlands of French territory (Angoulême, Rennes) as well as in Lyon, Grenoble, Toulouse, Besançon, Dijon, and several other Parisian museums such as the Musée de l'Armée or in the Cultural Heritage Collection of La Monnaie de Paris. This very particular geography is divided into a second network of libraries who have generally benefitted from the distribution of an initially coherent collection of cultural heritage items, whereby the cultural heritage items in question were more than likely directly connected to books and manuscripts housed in the libraries originating from the same places as the cultural objects. These two types of institutions (museums and libraries) along with several public archives also conserve and house collections of photography, cinematographic collections, and sound documentation created during the colonial period, which, for African countries, represents a source of memory of the first order.

In France, three dynamics explain this unequal re-distribution of African cultural heritage: First—state dynamics that, since the French revolution and following a dual logic of national affirmation and international competition, are pushing France toward a “hyper-centralization” in Paris of the collections of cultural heritage judged to be the most important. Second—a flow dynamic, which explains the presence of a number of African objects within coastal cities implicated within mercantile trade with Africa as the arrival points for mercantile boats or military vessels. Third—a dynamic of inheritance, gifts, records, and donations important examples of which can be found as part of the initial constituting pieces of the French African collections in such museums as the Musée des Confluences in Lyon or those *spotlights* on African cultural items in museums in Besançon, Toulouse, or Grenoble. In addition to these secular museums, there are also what are called Mission Museums such as the Musée Africain de Lyon (which was closed to the public in 2017) sometimes housing several thousand objects collected in Africa by religious congregations.

With the exception of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac and several regional museums (Angoulême, Lyon), the large diversity and majority of African collections are not that well known in France, not all of these collections are available for public viewing, and the cultural politics valuing these collections has not been of the same level of enthusiasm everywhere the collections are held, and the inventory is not always available. Without the existence of a single catalog detailing and containing all the collections of African cultural heritage in France, the criteria for the restitutability of

museum collections such as those in Marseille or the Havre) we can presume that the estimate presented here is much lower than the actual number of objects contained in French museums.

African cultural heritage relies mostly on the 70,000 items from sub-Saharan Africa housed in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, that one can consult on-site through the management software for the collections, TMS. In additions to these cultural objects, there are another 90,000 documents held in the *iconothèque* (photographs, graphic art, drawings, post cards, posters, stamps...) regarding the quasi-totality of African countries that are materially present in the archives (vitrines, negatives, paper prints, photographic negatives, rolls of film...). A campaign for the digitization of the archives has led to a portion of these documents being available online through the databases at the museum.

Which Africa for which Restitutions?

All the sub-Saharan African countries, as they are situated within their current national borders, are represented within the collection of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (Fig. 3-4)⁴⁹ With almost 10,000 pieces inventoried, Chad, which is located at a geographical and cultural transition point between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, arrives at the top of the list (with 9,296 objects). The second position is held by Cameroon (7,838), followed by the island of Madagascar (7,590), Mali (6,910), Ivory Coast (3,951), Benin (3,157), the Republic of the Congo (2,593), Gabon (2,448), Senegal (2,281), and Guinea (1,997). These countries at the top of the list, exclusively comprised of former French colonies, also include Ethiopia (3,081 pieces) which remained sovereign during and after Italy's occupation between 1936 and 1941. Among the former British colonies, only Ghana (1,656) and Nigeria (1,148) are significantly represented, and the same can be said for the current Democratic Republic of the Congo (1,428), once under Belgian colonial rule. Objects from Southern Africa (9,282 all together, 1,692 without Madagascar) and East Africa (5,343) are proportionally much less present throughout France whether in regard to the Parisian collections or in other French museums in general.

What can we learn from such information? That the geography of the French colonies in Africa and the African collections in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac—and more generally in France—are strictly convergent. That, as a result, the project of restitutions must consider the question of the relation between colonial law and cultural heritage extraction, and along with it, whether (or not) there was *consent* from the

⁴⁹ The figures provided here are representative of the objects (not including the "Iconothèque") conserved in the "Afrique" Unit (Unité patrimoniale "Afrique") of the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum but a small portion of the cultural heritage objects are also included in the "Mondialisation historique et contemporaine" unit.

countries of origin during the time of the acquisition and removal of the objects and their dispatch to mainland France.

These figures also indicate that among the objects from countries that weren't colonized by France, such as those from Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Ghana, comprise the most important group. These countries have been largely engaged in making their claims for the restitution of their displaced cultural heritage objects since the early days of their independence in the 1960s. By taking this into consideration, it is of our opinion that the cultural heritage objects from these countries should be given the same amount of attention and importance within the process of restitution as those objects coming from the former French colonies.

If we want to learn as much about the mechanisms that led France to acquiring the possession of these objects, we should, beyond a simple geographical approach, sketch out a chronology of acquisitions, so as to note whether or not there was a marked indication of an increase in the collections *before* and *after* colonization took place. This will allow us to discern the legitimacy of the acquisitions during each era—including the most recent era.

What History do we want to revisit?

The history of the integration of African cultural heritage objects by France into its national collections began prior to the colonial period and continued well after the independence of nations. Three major moments can be seen successively following after each other: The first moment is prior to the Berlin conference that sealed the agreement between the European powers (1884/1885) on how they planned to divide up their control of Africa. The second moment covers the colonial period up until the independence of nations (1960). The third moment began in the 1960s, and still continues to this very day to provide cultural heritage items to French collections.

When this partitioning of the acquisition into three unique periods is applied to the collections currently held at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, something becomes very clear: before 1885, the African collections housed at the museum were comprised of roughly less than a thousand objects (Fig. 4a).⁵⁰ Between 1885 and 1960,

⁵⁰ The following statistics are based on the databases of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac that were consulted using the TMS management software of the collections. Each item in the collection begins with a number referring to its institution of origin. The number "71" therefore refers to the former collections housed at the Musée de l'Homme (previously known as the musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro); the number "73" refers to the African collection held in the Musée national des arts d'Afrique

the number of cultural heritage items skyrocketed to an increase of more than 45,000 pieces, a figure that represents around 66% of the entire collection of objects from sub-Saharan Africa in the museum (Fig. 4b; Fig. 5a), equally redistributed between the phase of colonial conquest (up until 1914) and the permanent installation of colonial conquest (until 1960). This significant increase can most notably be explained by the progressive development of ethnographic missions beginning at the end of the 1920s: during the single 10-year timeframe from 1928-1938, 20,000 objects found their way into the inventory. After 1960, the collections continued to increase with the addition of another 20,000 more cultural heritage objects (Fig. 4c), until we arrive at the current figure of 70,000 pieces that are now housed in the museum, but whose original geographical location (the modes and sites of acquisition) has changed in part due to the fact that the former French colonies are no longer as directly linked to their acquisition as before.

The example of Cameroon perfectly illustrates this phenomenon: until 1885, only three pieces originating from Cameroon were recorded as part of the inventory in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (Fig. 5b). Between 1885 and 1960, 6,968 more cultural heritage items found their way into the museum's inventory in contrast to only 713 after 1960. Conversely, pieces originating from Ghana (Fig. 5c) or Nigeria (Fig. 5b)—ex-British colonies—saw their numbers increase *after* these countries gained their independence. The Parisian cultural institution thus engaged in a continuing systematic politics of a diversification of its collections: 41 objects from Nigeria are recorded as being part of the inventory of the museum before 1885, and we only see that number increase to 254 new pieces between 1885 and 1960, in contrast to the 840 pieces acquired after 1960. This same evolution can be seen in the case of Ghana as well: 5 pieces before 1885, 376 pieces between 1885 and 1960, and 1,258 pieces after 1960.

Given all the evidence, the colonial period would seem to correspond with a complete disinhibition in terms of the “procurement” of cultural heritage objects in its own colonies: a utter bulimia of cultural objects. Thus, in terms of the process of cultural heritage restitution, one must naturally think of the translocations of cultural heritage objects that took place during this period. Nevertheless, the era immediately following this time period needs to be examined just as thoroughly.

Indeed, after 1960, it was not a rare occurrence to see even more African cultural heritage objects find their way into the French museum collections. A number of objects

et d'Océanie ; the number “70” refers to the acquisitions of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac since its very beginnings. This number is followed by the year of its classification as an object into the inventory of the national collections. If these dates do not always coincide with the exact moment of the arrival of the object into the collection, it nevertheless provides a reliable idea of the time period it was acquired. Other items that need to be taken into account are objects collected throughout the 19th and 20th centuries but which only entered the inventory database much later.

that were acquired on the African continent throughout the wars leading to the colonial conquests as well as during the reign of the colonial period entered into the collections during this time. Either these cultural heritage items were often held by families of former colonial officers or administrators before then being donated to public institutions; or these objects circulated on the art market before then entering into the French collections. For example, at the Musée de l'Armée, the last recording and inventorying of cultural heritage objects from the colonial period goes back to 1994: almost 100 years separated their initial acquisition in Africa and their eventual entrance into the museum.⁵¹ Today, in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, several objects acquired from the sacking of Abomey in 1892 entered into the national collections (within the framework of gifts or donations) stretching as far back as the end of the 19th century and most recently as 2003.⁵² After 1960, the circulation of African art continued to develop in Europe as well as in Africa, resulting from professional actors on both continents who, by relying on both formal and informal local representatives, contributed to an “influx of legally commercial objects bearing an illicit origin”.⁵³ It is not uncommon for these objects to have entered the collections of French public museums through donations, legacies or purchases (see “After independence”).

Historical Forms of Dispossession

In the introduction, we considered the generalized spoils of war during the colonial conflicts and the systematic military and administrative support which the ethnological missions benefitted from that were officially responsible for the “collections” in the colonized regions. The conditions—of exchange, purchase, gifts, and symbolic or physical violence—in which the removal of these objects took place, have left their marks on the collective memory as much as the absence of the actual physically displaced objects themselves. Reflections on criteria for restitutability must therefore certainly reflect on the gestures of appropriation. In a more general fashion, leading all the way up to the independence of the former colonies, the French state encouraged the procurement of objects *in situ*. Military tradition, aesthetic and scientific curiosity, along

⁵¹ See Olivier Kodjalbaye Banguiam, *Les officiers français : constitution et devenir de leurs collections africaines issues de la conquête coloniale*, doctoral thesis done at l'université Paris Ouest-Nanterre La Défense under the direction of Didier Musiedlak, defended May 19, 2016.

⁵² For more on the “Trésor de Béhanzin”, see Gaëlle Beaujean-Baltzer, *L'Art de cour d'Abomey : le sens des objets*, doctoral thesis undertaken at l'EHESS under the direction of Jean-Paul Colleyn, submitted November 25, 2015.

⁵³ Bernard Darties, cited in the information report n° 361 (2002-2003) of M. Jacques Legendre, made in the name of the French delegation at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, filed on June 24, 2003, concerning the protection of African Cultural property.

with an acute awareness of the economic value that such objects could bring on the European market, is combined with an acute undertaking in Paris of museums capable of rivaling those of Berlin or London: all of these elements enter into the equation through the implementation of the French system of cultural extraction in Africa (and throughout the rest of the world). Starting in the 1880s, those in the military as well as civilians, colonial administrators and scientific experts are invited to gather samples of African cultural materials that had already been handed over or which were soon to be collected and to assure their transfer back to mainland France. The acquisition of cultural goods assures a form of expropriation that no single intellectual observation can obviously guarantee. Instructions begin to circulate concerning the nature of the pieces to procure and regarding the way one should handle them. While on furlough, upon returning from Africa, during their vacation time in France, the actors implicated within the colonial process become accustomed to leaving the best of their finds within museums whether in Paris or elsewhere. “You asked me to bring you some skulls from the Niger valley, I’ve brought you back two skulls of Samory warriors killed at Bamako”⁵⁴ writes one of the French officers to the museum director of ethnography of the Trocadéro in 1883. Military contributions often went hand in hand with the gathering of groups of objects in an almost fortuitous manner, oftentimes in accordance with the specific interest of the particular agent. However, eventually, as the decades past, and most notably in the 1930s, the organization of missions specifically designed for the procurement of cultural items becomes more and more generalized.

Spoils

Within collective memories, in Africa as much as anywhere else, the violence committed during war occupies a very singular position, especially when attributed to playing a role in the collapse of certain dynasties that had endured for centuries. The art objects, manuscripts, jewelry, dynastic emblems, architectural ornaments, the plundered weapons and armor: all these captured cultural items crystalize specific emotions. Concerted reflections in France around restitutions must carefully consider this evidence: among the aestheticized objects upon their arrival to France, musealized and then integrated into a chronological, stylistic, typological series (including series of manuscripts), a large number have continued to remain attached to their original cultural context and—in spite of, or actually due to their absence, in spite of, or actually due to the destruction of the kingdoms they were taken from—, have maintained a status of relic or *regalia*. In these cases, over time, the relics have become local symbols

⁵⁴ Cited by Olivier Kodjalbaye Banguiam, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

of resistance against the colonial aggressor. Even within a context where the memory attached to the objects is lost, that of the events that led to their loss is usually very alive and the connection is quickly established (including its instrumentalization for political ends). In these particular cases, the fact that current reclamations still fall on the deaf ears of the French institutions housing them, arouses a great deal of emotion.

Several different spoils of war compiled during the colonial period are housed in the French collections. They are difficult to identify as such for (at least) three reasons: a) the coherent set they formed during their capture (“treasures”) was split up once they arrived in France and redistributed into separate institutions; b) inside these other institutions, when one consults the rubric of information, these objects are inventoried as “gifts” from specific individuals; c) the military officials responsible for these “gifts” were not limited to simply acquiring enemy “treasures”, some of them, along with their troops, took to collecting a large scale of cultural items outside the battlefield, which complicates the identification of spoils *stricto sensu*. In fact, one has to change one’s perspective in order to locate these spoils within the French museum collections: don’t attempt trying to find their trace through the information that is parsimoniously provided by the French institutions themselves, but by way of the colonial military historiography, on one hand, and through the traces of memory left within the regions affected by these acts of plundering, on the other.

Ségou, 1890

The items procured by Colonel Louis Archinard register as some of the most significant cultural heritage items plundered and yet remain some of the least studied. When all the math has been done, one notes that within the French museum collections, over a thousand pieces were inventoried as “gifts” from the French general heralding from La Havre. Among these items, there is a very precious group of objects: jewels, weapons, and manuscripts taken from the sacking of the Ségou royal palace, the capital of the Toucouleur empire in present-day Mali, as well as during the bloody capture of the city of Ouossébougou in 1890 which marked the end of the Toucouleur empire and the transfer of control of the region to France, who then created the French Sudan. The precious objects and manuscripts seized at Ségou had been gathered together by the spiritual leader, El Hadj Omar (the founder of the Toucouleur empire) along with his son, Ahmadou. Upon its arrival in France, “the Ségou treasure” was partially auctioned off to draw a profit for the nation, but Archinard offered the pieces considered to be the most important to various

museums. Today, we can find these important pieces redistributed between the Musée de l'Armée, the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (129 pieces), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (518 volumes⁵⁵) and the National History Museum of the Havre. Since 1944, the descendants of El Hadj Omar have made requests for the return of these objects.⁵⁶

Abomey, 1892

The spoils of war donated by Colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds are part of a specific group of cultural items that harbor a bit more renown within the French collections. These items are related to the royal city of Abomey, which would have been located in present-day Benin, a city that was emptied of its wealth and emblems of its dynasty after a series of bloody battles terminating on November 17, 1892. The fall of Abomey and the humiliating capture of king Béhanzin as well as his subsequent deportation outside of Africa, marked the end of a multi-secular kingdom which then became integrated into the French colony of Dahomey. Between 1893 and 1895, several French officers, including Dodds, handed over to the musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro a portion of their war spoils: more specifically 27 objects. Other pieces, that were "gifted" by other officers or members of their family, are today conserved in the Périgueux and Lyon museums.⁵⁷ For a many number of years now, the items acquired during the plundering of Abomey have been requested to be returned to the Republic of Benin.

Campaign of reprisals against Samory Touré, 1898

Within post-colonial historiography, Samory Touré is considered a hero of the African resistance to colonial expansion. Alpha Blondy even wrote a song about him (Bory Samory, 1984). Founder of the Wassoulou Empire, he resisted the French penetration into West Africa for over two decades, within a territory located between present-day Guinea and Ivory Coast. In the autumn of 1898, Samory Touré becomes the object of a campaign of reprisals led by the French

⁵⁵ See Louis Brenner, Noureddine Ghali, Sidi Mohamed Mahibou, *Inventaire de la bibliothèque umarienne de Ségou*, Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1985.

⁵⁶ Concerning the history of these pieces, their inventory, as well as the theft of around 40 bracelets and necklaces in November 1937, (while they were displayed in the Musée de la France outre-mer) see the archives of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, D004164/46980.

⁵⁷ See Gaëlle Beaujean-Baltzer, *L'Art de cour d'Abomey*, *op. cit.*

general Henri Gouraud. He was arrested and deported to Gabon where he would die two years later. The “treasure of Samory”, seized during his surrender, is valued at between 200,000 or 300,000 Francs in the currency of the era and fills 12 large crates. In his journals, general Gouraud notes: “With the departure of the treasure, we will also see the partial departure of memories of Samory to the Musée de l’Armée—his saddle, sword, Almamy war-bonnet, one of his rifles [...], *dialas*, necklaces from Saranké Mory and Ahmadou Touré, strange rings, a match case, and above all, Saranké Mory’s war boubou [tunic], a very vibrant piece. We will also be sending to the general Trentinian, Samory’s battle axe, his *chasse-mouche* (fly swatter), made from a silver encrusted elephant’s tail, and another of his swords given to me by Sarankégny Mory at the moment of his surrender.” Today, these items are mostly housed at the Musée de l’Armée.⁵⁸ These objects were included on display as part of a “visit” of recognition of the Marabout Cheikh Ousmane Badji.

Along with these carefully identified “French” spoils of war, we should also add the following:

- Objects coming from the spoils of war from other foreign armies (notably the British) by way of brutal circumstances which have left profound traces in the collective memories of the countries concerned (the sacking of Benin City in 1897, for example). These objects have oftentimes circulated on the art market before being acquired by French museums.
- Hundreds of African objects (both used in military operations and not) given to French institutions by officers and military doctors implicated within diverse operations of reconnaissance, conquest, or law enforcement. Even if part of these objects were not collected from a battlefield, the military context of the spoils and the authority which the army could confer over any future donors of cultural objects through their force of arms leads one to believe that there was a complete absence of consent on the part of local populations during the extraction of these objects—except in certain cases when there is evidence indicating consent (for example, such a case of consent can be found in documents concerning the gifts made to the French museums by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (250 pieces at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac alone).

⁵⁸ Musée de l’Armée. Chasse-mouche de Samory inventory number 04739; Bonnet de guerre de Samory, inventory number 2292; Hache de Samory, inventory number 8870; War cloth of his son, inventory number 2300.

We recommend that requests for restitution concerning objects seized in the military contexts described above be favourably received, despite the special legal status of military trophies before the adoption in 1899 of the first Hague Convention codifying the law of war.

“Exploratory” Missions and Scientific “Raids”

Throughout the entirety of the colonial period, French museums were the beneficiaries of successive contributions of exploratory colonial missions (lasting until the early 20th century) as well as scientific expeditions (beginning around 1925).

In the 1890s, under the auspices of public or private institutions such as the Société de Géographie or the Comité d’Afrique française, several successive exploratory missions were launched on the continent, aiming to consolidate the zones of French influence in competition with Great Britain and Germany. Entrusted to certain rather young scientists, these hybrid missions, both political and commercial in their interests, became occasions for compiling stunning collections of cultural heritage. As can be seen by the Comité d’Afrique française entrusting the agronomist Jean Dybowski with the task of tracking down the traces of another expedition similar to his own, dispatched the previous year but which had gone missing. His “small team” as we read in a report, “is composed of 44 Senegalese [skirmishers] and 48 porters.”⁵⁹ At Bangui (the present-day capital of the Central African Republic), the naturalist exclaims, “I was able to send back 29 chests to Europe filled with items for collections. It is my wish that they remain housed in museums until my return; I will then create a general exhibit from out of them and then they can be distributed throughout other museums.”⁶⁰ The exhibit eventually did take place in 1893. All together, the number of items displayed was estimated at 7,000 pieces of natural history (most notably various killed mammals and birds) along with weapons, furs, and textiles systematically collected by Dybowski within the territory of present-day Central African Republic which were subsequently handed over to French museums. During the exhibit at the Natural History Museum in 1893, the strategically positioned vitrine 1 presents “clothing and objects found on men killed on the night of the 22 and 23rd of November 1891, [...] along with three of their skulls.”⁶¹ Today, only the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac still contains over 600 pieces

⁵⁹ *Bulletin du comité de l’Afrique française*, April, 1892, p. 3.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ See Albin Arnera, “Science et colonisation : la mission Dybowski (1891-1892)”, *Outre-mers*, t. 89, n. 336-337, 2nd Semester, 2002, “Traites et esclavages : vieux problèmes, nouvelles perspectives ?”, Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau (dir.), p. 328.

(weapons, jewelry, musical instruments, amulets) expedited from Africa within this context.

One generation later, the extraction of cultural heritage becomes professionalized. While the colonial administration locks down the territories that have already been captured, and while the territories that have been explored have already been given over to their exploitation, and while Ethnology imposes itself as a new unheralded scientific discipline, missions exclusively dedicated to the removal and collection of ethnographic information and objects are put in place. Created in 1925 and financed by the Ministère des Colonies, the Institute of Ethnology at the University of Paris will from now on play a central role. Between 1926 and 1940, the institute sponsors 40 ethnographic missions, 30 of which are in Africa. Certain of them resemble veritable “scientific raids” (in the words of Éric Jolly), combining new technologies (cinematography, photography, aerial reconnaissance), scientific performance, and adventure travel. Their principal initiator and the director of the expeditions is Marcel Griaule. Throughout this time period, “the objective of the ethnographers is to see everything, to grasp everything, and eventually to bring back, according to a complex protocol, the objects, beliefs, and details regarding the most secret of activities, carpets behind the walls of the houses or the silence of their informers.”⁶²

Hundreds of individualized information sheets accompany the objects transferred on to France. Griaule apprehends his work through a threefold military, judiciary, and medical logic. One of the exploratory campaigns held during a mission to the Sahara-Cameroon in 1936-1937 is compared to “a series of probes on the ground and as a stethoscope applied to the men living there”; the objects taken from the Africans are considered as “exhibit pieces”, whose “collection will form the most revelatory and secure archives, much more so than the written archives.” “The Black man is an ‘auxiliary assistant’ that we can ‘make talk’, which is not the ideal situation [...] but we’re doing the best we can.”⁶³ In his book, *L’Afrique fantôme* and in his correspondence, Michel Leiris describes and denounces the logic of suspicion, intimidation, and force, tied with the capturing of objects during the famous Dakar-Djibouti mission (1931-1933), for which he undertook the secretarial duties and which would greatly enrich the French museums. Since it operated simultaneously in the territories under French authority and within the independent empire of Ethiopia, and because it’s extremely well-documented, this mission is able to give off the feeling of how much the colonial framework is in favor of

⁶² Éric Jolly, “Marcel Griaule, ethnologue : La construction d’une discipline (1925-1956) », *Journal des africanistes*, 2001, vol. 71, no. 1, *Les empreintes du renard pâle*, Marc-Henri Piault and Joëlle Hauzeur (Ed.), p. 168.

⁶³ Marcel Griaule, quoted by Éric Jolly, *op. cit.*, p. 163 et p. 168.

and facilitates the massive exportation of cultural items, an exportation—outside the colonies—which met with much more resistance. In Ethiopia, three years prior to its annexation by a Fascist Italy, the French mission seeks out and secures the support of the (Fascist) Italian consul of Gondar, Raffaele di Lauro, who authorizes them to set up camp for several months on the grounds of the consulate. The objects acquired (including a 60 meters squared painted mural, removed piece by piece from a 17th century church in the town) provoked a great number of instances of resistance that were well documented. In fear of the Ethiopian authorities, certain pieces were carefully hidden before finally being exfiltrated back to Eritrea (then an Italian colony). One of the objects, a portable wooden altar, was even burned before passing through customs.⁶⁴

During the ethnographic missions of the 1930s, the large majority of the objects were actually purchased with the exact amounts paid often accounted for.⁶⁵ For a zoomorphic mask from the Ségou region, today exhibited in the halls of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (71.1931.74.1048.1) the Dakar-Djibouti mission paid 7 francs (the equivalent price for a dozen eggs at that time) whereas recent research has shown that during that same year of 1931, the average price at auction for an African mask, was around 200 francs⁶⁶. During the sale of the collection belonging to Paul Éluard and André Breton at the Hôtel Drouot during the month of July 1931, the highest price paid at auction for an African mask was 1,150 francs (Number 16, “Masque. Fétiche M’Gallé. Figure humaine stylisée dont la coiffure en forme de croissant est surmontée d’une rangée de spirales doubles. Bois recouvert de cuivre. Gabon, région de l’Ogoué, h53cm”) The very same year, the record price received at Drouot for an African mask was set at 2,300 francs (May 7, Drouot, 1931, n°27, “Masque Dan en bois sculpté patiné noir. Visage de femme aux grands yeux. Côte d’Ivoire, h24 cm”).

From the avowals made by the actors themselves on the ground, the transactions resemble “forced methods for purchases so as not to say requisition”⁶⁷ (Michel Leiris); even resembling “a kind of raid led by a troop of Europeans who, with a pencil and ruler in hand, haphazardly searched for items everywhere.”⁶⁸ (Éric Lutten) Under these conditions it is hard to interpret the actual amount of money paid, during the “scientific

⁶⁴ See Claire Bosc-Tiessé with Anais Wion, *Peintures sacrées d’Éthiopie. Collection de la Mission Dakar-Djibouti*, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés: Sépia, 2005.

⁶⁵ Jolly, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁶⁶ See the work of Léa Saint-Raymond and Élodie Vaudry on non-European objects on the French art market. See also Léa Saint-Raymond, *Le Pari des enchères : le lancement de nouveaux marchés artistiques à Paris entre les années 1830 et 1939*, doctoral thesis, université Paris-Nanterre, 2018.

⁶⁷ Lettre from Michel Leiris to his wife, September 19, 1931, in: Michel Leiris, *Miroir de l’Afrique*, Jean Jamin (Ed.), Paris: Gallimard, 1996, p. 204.

⁶⁸ Éric Lutten, “Les enfants noirs ont aussi des poupées”, *Le Monde colonial illustré*, 129, mai 1934, p. 79 (quoted by Éric Jolly, “Les collectes d’objets ethnographiques”, in: *À la naissance de l’ethnologie française. Les missions ethnographiques en Afrique subsaharienne (1928-1939)*, NaissanceEthnologie.fr, 2016).

missions” as a sign of consent on the populations targeted. Other forms of acquisition, bartering or gifts, are inscribed within the same logic or urgency and a more or less explicit constraint. Within the colonial context, the authority of the White Man, the pressure of taxes and the threat of (often fictitious) reprisals “incites or obliges” those concerned “to accept the offers made by the ethnographers for purchasing the objects”.⁶⁹

Today, the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum houses several thousand pieces of African cultural heritage originating from these civil missions (first embarked upon as hybrid missions then later exclusively as scientific).⁷⁰ 640 pieces resulted from the Dybowski mission in Central Africa (1893), 688 pieces from the mission undertaken by Robert Du Bourg de Bozas in East and Central Africa (1901-1902); 493 pieces from the missions made by Louis Desplagnes in what is now present-day Mali (1903-1904) and to Benin (1907-1909); 147 pieces from the first mission undertaken by Henri Labouret in present-day Burkina Faso (1929); 212 objects from the first mission by Émile-Georges Waterlot in present-day Mali (1930); 3,600 pieces from the Dakar-Djibouti mission (1931-1933), 395 objects come from the second mission by Henri Labouret in Senegal and Guinea (1932). 1,245 pieces were acquired from his third mission to Cameroon (1934), 161 pieces from the mission confided to Denise Paulme and Deborah Lifchitz to Mali (1934), 247 pieces arise from out of the mission confided to Charles Le Cœur to Chad (1933-1935); more than 350 pieces were collected during the “Sahara-Sudan” mission (1935), 297 during the second mission of Émile-Georges Waterlot to the Sudan, Mauritania, and Guinea (1936), about 800 more pieces were gathered during the “Sahara-Cameroon” mission (1936-1937), and more than 500 from the Niger-Iro Lake mission (1938-1939) to only cite the most important expeditions. Several hundred other pieces arising out of the same missions are still housed today in the museums of several large French cities (for example, in Toulouse, where the Collection Labouret still plays an important role).

Far from being a mere fortuitous addition of cultural items gathered from repeated missions, this large sum of items reveals the existence of a veritable rationalized *system* of exploitation, in some ways comparable to the exploitation of natural resources.

It is our recommendation to respond favorably and grant restitutions concerning objects collected in Africa during these types of “scientific expeditions”, unless

⁶⁹ Éric Jolly, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ The following statistics can vary depending on the methods used to account for them. They have been arrived at based on the available databases or, in certain cases, according to the academic work dedicated to one of the specific missions mentioned.

there is explicit evidence⁷¹ or information witnessing to the full consent on the part of the owners or initial guardians of the objects at the moment when the objects were separated from them.

Gifts from Private Collectors

For a long time now, French museums have traditionally counted on gifts and the donations of legacy collections from patrons of the arts. At the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, the rubric of “donors” includes a great number of men and women who have, although this isn’t always the case, a full name attached to their gift. It is therefore sometimes difficult to identify these donors. Furthermore, in France, certain public museums owe a large part if not the quasi-totality of their African collections to these gifts made by art patrons who, like the doctor Jules Lhomme in Angoulême or Marie and Joseph Colomb in Grenoble have chosen to hand over their collections to their hometowns. Sometimes, the actual objects gifted to the museums come years after the death of the collectors and it’s often difficult to reconstitute the conditions in which the pieces were initially acquired in Africa. Among these art donors a very unique group can be discerned which includes agents of the former colonial administration (or the diplomatic corps residing in African countries that weren’t colonized by France): according to their specific interest and their expertise, these personnel holding government posts in Africa were able to form very specific collections (ancient manuscripts, prehistoric objects) or, on the contrary, their collections were more “touristy” in nature based on what they were able to collect haphazardly at the markets or from living artists who specialized in the production of copies of African pieces corresponding to the tastes of Europeans. At the present time, the art market has applied a very rigorous distinction between these works merely created to please the tastes of Europeans (pieces whose value is judged to be rather low) and “authentic” African pieces, bearing the traces of use or the inscriptions for rituals. Gifts and donations to French museums have revealed the existence of both these categories: the gifts made by Christian Merlo in the 1930s, for example, which concerns around 100 objects with the majority bearing rather contemporary markings, acquired at Dahomey (present-day Benin) where the patron was an administrator; those objects donated by the ethnographer, François Arthur Florian de Zeltner who was named the “principal adjunct of indigenous affairs in West Africa” in 1918 (also gifted to the museum in 1930)

⁷¹ This recommendation takes into account the evolution of the international juridical debate about the the reversal of the burden of proof regarding the displaced or looted cultural goods. It widens to the colonial context a principle stated by the UNIDROIT Convention 1995, adopted by the European directive 2014/60/UE of May 15, 2014.

includes 1,213 ethnographic pieces: textiles, jewelry, containers, and several masks for ritual dances, originating from present-day Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

We recommend receiving requests for restitution that could relate to objects donated to French museums by the colonial administration or their descendants favourably, unless the consent of the seller (commission of copies, purchase at craft markets) can be ascertained. The main task for this category of objects is to determine who the donors were, beyond their first and last names (involvement in the colonial apparatus? descendants of colonial agents or military personnel?).

After independence

After the first 17 African nations obtained independence during the year of 1960, the acquisition and entrance of African cultural heritage objects into the French museum does not end. It merely changes its source of procurement. The scientifically guided missions for the accumulation of objects within the former French colonies, in the same manner as they had been practiced beforehand, disappear; new regions (such as Nigeria, formerly under British rule) become the object of a more systematic attention; purchases of cultural objects continue to multiply and the international art market affirms itself as a key actor in relation to the museums. Beginning in 1970, the rules of this market are (weakly) structured within the framework of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Ownership of Cultural Property, which was signed and ratified much later by France in 1997; more rules were also put in place in Africa by the progressive adoption, nation-state by nation-state, of legislation protecting cultural heritage including archeological items.

However, these measures could not prevent the illicit trafficking of objects on a global scale. Several interviews within the framework of our present inquiry have helped us to understand, with the supporting documents, how the organized illicit exportation of valuable cultural items from West Africa, Mali, and Nigeria was already taking place a number of years ago and still continues to this very day. The current legislations in place and the deontology of museum professionals structured within ICOM (The International Council of Museums), prevents museums from purchasing or exhibiting such objects. Their presence in Europe is oftentimes surrounded in secrecy. The cloudiness around such trafficking of cultural objects surpasses the framework attributed to our mission, which is concerned only with public collections. Nevertheless, the question of

restitutions is inseparable from that of illicit trafficking, which continues to have a large effect on the ongoing loss of African cultural heritage and property and will continue to do so if no effort is made to prevent it.

In the middle of the 1990s, with the announced opening of the Musée du quai Branly (inaugurated in 2006), the French state led a very well funded, energetic campaign for the acquisitions of pieces which involved the international art market, collectors, as well as French donors often with very close ties to political power. Between the announcement and the opening of the museum, around a thousand pieces found their way into the Parisian institution, sometimes through large purchases of cultural objects in bulk. The most spectacular example of such a purchase and acquisition is without a doubt the “collection nigériane Barbier-Mueller”: 276 pieces acquired by the French state for the estimated sum of 48 million francs.⁷² In the race for acquiring beautiful pieces, questions surrounding the exact provenance and the licit or illicit character of the objects for sale is not usually the main priority—as the Nok statuettes (Nigeria) currently exhibited in the Sessions pavilion of the Louvre attest to. Purchased in 1998 for the Musée du quai Branly from a Belgian merchant, these pieces actually fell into the category of pieces considered to be forbidden from exportation by way of the Nigerian law adopted in 1979, and were included on a list indicating objects affected by illicit trafficking identified by ICOM. These statuettes led to an international ordeal for France with the *New York Times* publishing an article with the title, “Chirac Exalts African Art, Legal and (Maybe) Illegal”.⁷³ After several delays, France finally acquiesced and recognized that these pieces were the property of Nigeria, who for its part, agreed to allow them to remain in Paris and to be loaned out within a renewable framework of 25 years. During this time, ICOM deplored the cynicism of the museums which it had asked to adopt “scrupulous rules in terms of the acquisition of objects”. In a retrospective interview with the president of the museum, Stéphane Martin described the acquisition in terms of “taking ethical risks”: “We purchased these Nok statuettes under perfectly legal circumstances with regard to the French legislation of the era. Our risk taking in this case was ethical but it was not juridical. [...] We therefore estimated that the risk was worth it in relation to the message we wanted to send. These acquisitions led to a double complaint. [...] We decided to back-pedal. We made amends and we decided to

⁷² Archives of the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, “Collection nigériane du musée Barbier-Mueller”, D004970/49349.

⁷³ Alan Riding, “Chirac Exalts African Art, Legal and (Maybe) Illegal”, *The New York Times*, November 25, 2000.

restitute them, to offer them back to Nigeria.”⁷⁴ The “ethical risk” entered into the equation throughout the 1990s concerning several other acquisitions.

We recommend the restitution of objects acquired after 1960 under proven conditions of illicit trade.

Criteria for Restitutability

The massive and continuous integration—over the past 150 years—of cultural heritage material from Africa into French collections leads us to a response in terms of the following schema in regards to the demands for restitutions coming from Africa:

1. **Restitution** in a swift and thorough manner without any supplementary research regarding their provenance or origins, of any objects taken by force or presumed to be acquired through inequitable conditions:
 - a. through military aggressions (spoils, trophies), whether these pieces went on directly to France or whether passed through the international art market before then finding their way to being integrated into collections.
 - b. by way of military personnel or active administrators on the continent during the colonial period (1885-1960) or by their descendants.
 - c. through scientific expeditions prior to 1960.
 - d. certain museums continue to house pieces of African origin which were initially loaned out to them by African institutions for exhibits or campaigns of restoration, but which were never given back. These objects should be swiftly returned to their institutions of origin.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ “Le musée du quai Branly est un outil évolutif. Interview conducted by Ayoko Mensah and Malick Ndiaye with Stéphane Martin”, *Africultures*, July 23, 2007.

⁷⁵Several specific cases could also be mentioned here, most notably concerning a situation where objects were temporarily loaned out to French institutions but still remain in their museum holdings. Christine Lorre, head curator at the Musée d’Archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, drew our attention to such a case involving a lithic set of tools originally from Melka Kunture (Ethiopia). These pieces were removed from the site in order to create molds of them (which were in fact displayed in the hall of comparative archeology in the museum) and they are still housed in the museum, waiting for the situation to be resolved.

2. **Complementary Research** for pieces that entered into the museums after 1960 and those received as gifts or donations to the museum where we have a good reason to believe the pieces left African soil before 1960 (but which remained within families for several generations). In cases where research is not able to ascertain the initial circumstances around their acquisition during the colonial period, the pieces requested can be restituted based on justification of their interest by the country making the request.

3. **Preservation within the French collections** of pieces of African art objects and cultural heritage where the following has been established:
 - a. after confirmation that a freely consented to and documented transaction took place that was agreed upon and equitable.
 - b. that the pieces acquired conformed to the necessary rigor and careful monitoring of the apparatus in place on the art market after the application of the UNESCO Convention of 1970, in other words, without “taking any ethical risks”. Gifts from foreign Heads of State to French governments remain as acquisitions for France except in cases where the heads of state concerned have been ruled against for the misuse of public funds.

Timeline for a Program of Restitutions

We recommend a process of restitutions taking place through three specific phases beginning with the submission of this present report. The translocation of cultural heritage that has affected Africa for the benefit and profit of France has taken place over a long period of time. In order for the restitutions to be considered as permanent and enduring so as not to cause any unnecessary risks to the objects in question—and to grant the proper time to all actors, on both continents, so as to establish a common “know-how” for the restitutions—the process of restitution itself must adhere and adapt to the rhythms and to the preparations of each nation-state concerned. Concerning these very sensitive cultural questions, the French State must not impose its rhythm and political agenda onto the African States. Nevertheless, it is important to provide assurances and pledges of confidence to the African countries in a timely fashion, particularly to those countries that have been engaged within a logic of reclamations for quite some time (either addressed to France or other European nations).

First Phase (November 2018-2019)

To the African states concerned, the formal submission of the inventory of pieces coming from their territory (according to their present borders) which are currently held in public French collections. The formal restitution of several largely symbolic pieces whose return has been requested for a long time by various African nations or communities, so as to show and demonstrate the true wish for restitution on the part of the French State. • The common establishment—on the part of museum experts and those of cultural heritage in Africa and in France—of a practical methodology for restitutions. • The transfer (i.e. the material return) of these pieces to their countries of origin if the countries seeking reclamations consider that the infrastructures for housing them are ready and prepared to receive them. • In parallel with these initial actions, there should be an adoption of legislative measures and rules so as to ensure that these restitutions remain irrevocable. • NB: The organization of temporary exhibits to emphasize the “return” of these pieces which will then be sent back to France while the State owners make the necessary preparations for their permanent housing, should, in our opinion, be avoided at all costs. Several past examples of similar situations have demonstrated the deleterious effects that this can have on the African public through this “second departure” of pieces they believed to be permanently returned (the exhibition “Béhanzin, Roi d’Abomey” to the Fondation Zinsou in Benin in 2006-2007; the exhibition “Ciwara, collections du musée du quai Branly” at the National Museum of Bamako in Mali in 2011).

In our eyes, this first phase could concern⁷⁶:

1. *Benin*. The statues and *regalia* resulting from the sacking of Abomey in 1892, more specifically the following inventoried pieces housed at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, which have already been for a long time the object of reclamations:
 - *Bochio* statue in the image of the king Ghezo (71.1893.45.1, Fig. 6)
 - Royal anthro-zoomorphic statue (71.1893.45.2, Fig. 7)
 - Royal anthro-zoomorphic statue (71.1893.45.3, Fig. 8)

⁷⁶ The following list is an open proposition: it does not claim to be exhaustive and primarily concerns pieces that have for a long time already been requested to be returned to their country of origin.

- Four royal doors from the Abomey palace (71.1893.45.4 — 71.1893.45.7, Fig. 9-10)
- A royal stool (71.1893.45.8, Fig. 11)
- Sculpture dedicated to Gou (71.1894.32.1, Fig. 12)
- Throne of King Glèlè (71.1895.16.7, Fig. 13)
- Throne of King Ghezo (71.1895.16.8, Fig. 14)

Other pieces with the same provenance will be restituted during a second phase. (See above)

2. *Senegal*. The following pieces derived from the spoils of war that took place at Ségou (the “treasure” of El Hadj Omar Tall/ Ahmadou) housed at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, the musée de l’Armée, and the Natural History Museum in Le Havre.

- Sabre of El Hadj Omar Tall (Musée de l’Armée, Inv. 6995, Fig. 15)
- Objects housed at the Muséum d’histoire naturelle du Havre
- Necklaces, pendants, pearls and medallions (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 75.8142, 75.8148, 75.8159.1-2, 75.8160, 75.8162, 75.8164, Fig. 16)

Others pieces with the same provenance could also be restituted or become part of an agreement concerning digitization (manuscripts from the Bibliothèque nationale de France) later on (see above), with an agreement made with the Tall Family.

3. *Nigeria*. The following pieces, originating from the sacking of Benin City by the British Army in 1897 and which have circulated in museums/ or on the European Art market before later being acquired by the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac. The restitution of objects seized during the punitive expedition of 1897 have been requested to be returned for several decades by Nigeria and occupy a large place within the public imaginary (several films have been made for the public at large on the subject, the existence of the international “Benin Dialogue Group”, etc.). The pieces below are classified by way of their priority:

- Relief plaque (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1931.49.19, Fig. 17)
- Ivory tusk (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 73.1962.7.1, Fig. 18)
- Commemorative Head (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 73.1969.3.1 bis, Fig. 19)
- Relief plaque (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 73.1997.4.1, Fig. 20)
- Commemorative Head (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 73.1997.4.3, Fig. 21)

Other pieces of similar provenance should be restituted during a second period of time (see above), in agreement with the Nigerian authorities and the royal (Oba) family.

4. *Ethiopia*. The sacred paintings of detached pieces from the walls of the Saint-Antoine Church (Abbā Antonios) of Gondar illicitly exported from Ethiopia in 1932 (during the Dakar-Djibouti Mission). Ethiopia was opposed to these exportations at the time they took place. Ethiopia has been one of the most active of African nations requesting the return of its cultural heritage for a number of decades now.

- Paintings of the Abbā Antonios Church (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1931.74.3584-71.1931.74.3595, Fig. 22)

A number of other pieces of similar provenance (including a number of manuscripts) can also be restituted, if they are requested, within the second phase of restitutions (see below).

5. *Mali*. Certain of the following pieces were “collected” during the Labouret missions (1932), Dakar-Djibouti (1931-1933), Sahara-Sudan (1935) and Niger-Lake Iro (1938-1939):

- Zoomorphic mask Ciwara kun (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1930.26.3, Fig. 23)
- Mask and bust of young girl (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1930.31.22.1-2, Fig. 24)

- Anthropomorphic mask Satimbe (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1931.74.1948, Fig. 25)
- Mother of masks Imina na (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1931.74.2002, Fig. 26)
- Composite sacred object, Boli, (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1931.74.1091.1, Fig. 27)
- Mask Sim (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1935.60.169, Fig. 28)
- Mask Sim Kalama Nāngala (Institut d'ethnologie de l'université de Strasbourg, 2002.0.241, Fig. 29)

The selection of the pieces whose return should be made a priority should be decided through a dialogue and following an established protocol with the director of the National Museum of Mali, and in agreement with the Malian authorities. Other pieces originating from the same locale could be restituted during a second phase of restitution (see below).⁷⁷

6. *Cameroon*. Throne “collected” in Cameroon within the framework of the Henri Labouret Mission in 1934.

- Throne (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, 71.1934.171.1, Fig. 30)

Other pieces of similar provenance should be restituted during a second period of time (see below), in agreement with the Cameroonian authorities.

Second Phase (Spring 2019-November 2022)

The second phase involves the process of inventorying, the sharing of digital files, and an intensive transcontinental dialogue. This phase will be supported by way of four distinct

⁷⁷ For example, at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac: 71.1930.31.22.1-2, masque et poitrine postiche de jeune fille (Labouret); 71.1931.74.1048.1, masque zoomorphe (Dakar-Djibouti); 71.1931.74.1907, masque zoomorphe Omono (Dakar-Djibouti); 71.1931.74.1948, masque anthroporphe (Dakar-Djibouti); 71.1931.74.1999, masque facial zoomorphe Dyodyomini (Dakar-Djibouti); 71.1935.60.198, masque zoomorphe (Sahara-Soudan); 71.1935.60.233, masque facial anthropo-zoomorphe Gomitogo (Sahara-Soudan); 71.1935.60.286, masque anthropo-zoomorphe Kanaga (Sahara-Soudan); 71.1935.60.325, masque anthroporphe imina na (Sahara-Soudan); 71.1935.105.27, masque zoomorphe Na; 71.1935.105.34, masque zoomorphe (Mission Paulme-Lifchitz).

components and should—between now and the next five years—either lead to setting up free online access to, or organizing the restitutions of, the iconographic, cinematographic, and sound materials concerning African societies as well as a certain number of authentic works judged to be important by the Nation-States and communities concerned.

a. Inventory

The mobilization of all the human and financial means necessary for the swift establishment of an accessible online database containing the inventory of all the cultural heritage pieces in the African collections conserved in French public museums. This inventory is still very much lacking for a large number of museums. Without inventory and an easy way to access it, the requests for restitution will only continue to remain in limbo. This inventory work must be led by museum professionals and experts in cultural heritage in France and Africa working together, hand in hand. This work will constitute, from the African perspective, the first step in re(establishing) contact with collections whose existence (due to the lack of easy access to the catalogued inventory) is often not known by the African professionals themselves, and *a fortiori*, to the public.

b. Sharing of Digital Content

A large number of photographic, cinematographic, or sound documents concerning African societies once held by former colonial administrations have recently been part of intensive campaigns for digitization projects (such as the “iconothèque” in the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac). Within the framework of the project of restitutions, these digitized objects must be made part of a radical practice of sharing, including how one rethinks the politics of image rights use. Given the large number of French institutions concerned and the difficulty that a foreign public has for navigating through these museums, we recommend the creation of a single portal providing access to this precious documentation in the form of a platform that would be *open access*. After a dialogue with the other institutions and parties involved, a plan for the systematic digitization of documents that have yet to be digitized concerning Africa should be established, including the collections of (Ethiopian, Omani, etc) manuscripts from the Bibliothèque nationale de France. It goes without saying that questions around the rights for the reproduction of images needs to

be the object of a complete revision regarding requests coming from African countries from which these works originated including any photographs, films, and recording of these societies. Free access to these materials as well as the free use of the images and documents should be the end goal.

c. Workshops

Structured and held regularly, in France as well as the other African countries concerned, bilateral or multilateral workshops allowing for the actors directly concerned by restitutions (museum curators, those in charge of cultural heritage, representatives of communities, restorers, patrons) to share and establish a common “know-how” regarding the restitutions and the accompanying of their return (and departures) from France to Africa.

d. Joint Commissions

The creation of joint commissions between France and each of one of the concerned African nation-states desiring to recover their cultural heritage. These commissions will structure and moderate the dialogue between the French institutions and the representatives of the museums and the communities concerned designated by the African nation-states.

Their missions will consist in the following:

- Examine the requests for restitutions and provide an opinion according to the procedure presented in part 3 of this present report. This will allow for each commission to oversee the shared information between all the actors and institutions concerned, in France as well as Africa, regarding the modalities of restitution and the existing support structures to put them into place.
- Advise on the areas of research necessary for establishing the lists of restitutable objects. To this end, this research will be done in concert with the institutional partnerships that will have already been put into place between the experts, researchers, or curators from the countries and museums involved so as to establish the origins of the cultural heritage objects.

- Advise, on a case by case basis, the accompanying measures requisite for assuring the successful operations for “departure” and “return”. These accompanying measures can include, among other things, actions of scholarly cooperation, the provisions of equipment for the welcoming and conservation of the restituted object, and even the necessary supplementary education for preparing the persons charged with caring for these objects’ conservation and mediation. The search for private patrons or sponsors is also included in this approach.
- The formulation for the recommendation of the presentation of African objects in museums in France. This is informed by way of exhibitions.

Third Phase (November 2022-Open-Ended)

The translocations of cultural heritage objects affecting Africa for the benefit of France took place over a long period of time. The process of restitution should not be limited in time. We should avoid giving the impression that the historical window which opened up during the speech at Ouagadougou in 2017 is at risk of shutting again anytime soon and at the same time, avoid the precipitated actions by the nation-states who, for social, political, or economic reasons (or for other reasons) don’t yet feel concerned by these restitutions or ready to engage in this process. The African states concerned should be assured that their eventual requests for restitutions can also be welcomed even after the next “five years” (to refer back to the specific agenda set by Emmanuel Macron), when, for example, the political situation or the museum landscape finally allows them to serenely envision such a return, re-installation, and/or circulation of recovered pieces of cultural heritage. With this in mind, it is especially important that the commission and the workshops put into place during the abovementioned second time period are conceived of in such a way as to endure and that their financing is assured.

3. Accompanying the Returns

Organizing the return of African objects is a task with a number of dimensions. The first dimension—and the one which will constitute the rupture with the prior situation—is to institute, through national law, a definitive path toward restitution, according to the requests, through the creation of an *ad hoc* procedure proposing the basis for a calm process toward restitution. It will also require the rationalization and the development within a bilateral framework, on a case by case basis, of the diverse actions of cooperation surrounding the decision of restitution and which will then establish a new context of cultural relations between France and each of the African countries.⁷⁸

Juridical Aspects

The ambition for re-establishing relations with African countries through cultural heritage must pass through the necessary symbolic stage of the definitive restitution of objects housed in French collections. This definitive restitution is inscribed within a more general framework of cultural cooperation, which furthermore provides one of the

⁷⁸ The reflections and recommendations that follow have been developed within the framework of Juridical Workshop held on June 26, 2018 at the Collège de France in Paris by Isabelle Maréchal and Vincent Négri (see the Annexes).

issues up for difficult debate regarding the preservation of the general principle of inalienability of the collections.

The procedure of restitution supposes a positive evolution of law, within the framework of a modification of the cultural heritage code, articulated in the principle of inalienability of public collections.

On the other hand, the restitution of cultural heritage objects shines a light on the fight against the trafficking of cultural goods; beyond the objects taken during the colonial period, African cultural objects have been a primed target of traffickers and forgers, of all nationalities, over the past several decades in the aftermath of the colonial period. The approach of restitution can only lead to questioning the current tools for fighting—or better, for the prevention—of these sorts of trafficking activities, so as to inscribe the objects restituted into a reinforced apparatus of protection (see farther down).

How to move past the current impasse?

The law presently in place, which up until now has opposed any efforts to respond to the demands for restitution, rests on an interplay of mixed dispositions regarding the cultural heritage code and the general code of the property of public personnel (CG3P). The cultural heritage code and the CG3P, adopted by rulings made in 2004 and 2006 respectively, have created a situation that is more locked down than was previously the case, where the protection of the museum collections essentially rests on jurisprudence. Current law posits a definition of public propriety that includes all cultural goods—most notably public museum collections—thereby generating a protection backed by rules of imprescriptibility and the inalienability of public ownership in this case creating an obstacle for requests of restitutions.

This blockade or freeze placed on any sort of restitutions seems to us more a result of the strict application of the texts while hardly conforming to the spirit of the laws. A number of people working in parliament have attempted on several occasions to attenuate the absolute character of the inalienability of objects in the museum collections which is the principal obstacle to restitutions.

Transactions with the rules of public ownership

The rare cases of restitution over the past 20 years have only been possible through transactions applying the rules of public ownership. Two means have been used:

a. The simplest solution was recourse to the law of exception, breaking with the texts applicable in terms of cultural heritage and public heritage. This tactic was used for the restitution of “the mortal remains of the person known by the name of Saartjie Baartman” aka. Vénus hottentote, in 2002, (loi n°2002-323, from March 6, 2002 concerning the restitution by France of the mortal remains of Saartjie Baartman to South Africa), and then again for the restitution of “Maori heads housed in the French museums” in 2010 (loi n°2010-501, May 10, 2010 authorizing the restitution by France of Maori heads back to New Zealand and their subsequent management within museum collections); It will also be used once again and applied very soon regarding the restitution of the skulls of Algerian resistance fighters taken during colonization.

Through its visibility and formality—armed with the dual principle of dignity and respect for the dead—it severely limits the possible cases of restitution.

These unique laws highlight the specific character of “human remains” and the discussion concerning their appropriation, which is elsewhere appreciated in an unequal fashion: jurisprudence has admitted that the code concerning cultural heritage, which renders the items of a public person as inalienable, thereby constituting a collection in one of the French museums, places these personal items under a rigid and unique form of protection, whereby the civil code is not an obstacle, most notably article 16-1 which places the human body (excluding any appropriation), its elements, and products, outside of commerce.⁷⁹

Beyond this jurisprudence, the respect given to the dead correlating with the importance of human remains (notably for their community of origin) has led, through a legislative path and a certain consensus, to a way of getting around the application of the normal procedures for the releasing of an object from being considered as public property which otherwise would have normally led to a refusal of the return of the body.

⁷⁹ TA Rouen, December 27, 2007, Prefect of the Seine-Maritime C/City of Rouen, n°0702737, CAA Douai, July 24, 2008, City of Rouen, n°08DA00405. The administrative judge tosses out the argumentation of the city of Rouen who tried to denote the worth of human remains, Maori heads, thereby making them insusceptible to public or private appropriation and that these objects could therefore not be a part of the museum collection, the advisory procedures indicated by the cultural heritage code could not oppose his ruling.

b. The second means for achieving a similar way of getting around this jurisprudence is to avoid applying texts regarding public property to the object in question, through its status of non-belonging to the collection.

Its non-belonging can be considered as *de facto*.

We know that works that have been stamped MNR since 1953 (Musées Nationaux Récupération) remain as outstanding objects of restitution among the 60,000 works pillaged by the Nazis during the occupation, having never been integrated into the French public collections, so as to precisely assure their restitution once the family or the rights holder has been identified or made known. To consider things from yet another perspective, the restitution of Chinese cultural property⁸⁰, which was effectuated in 2015, was made possible through the withdrawal, by way of a request to the State, of the donation of the objects made several years earlier by a private collector to the Musée Guimet. As soon as these objects became private property, they could immediately be restituted by the donor to the Chinese State.

... or this merely leads to the discovery of an original irreparable technicality tarnishing the acquisition:

As such, cultural items collected from the illicit trafficking that would have entered public collections after 1997,⁸¹ as a result of negligence in the verification of the provenance during the acquisition process, or whose illicit character is revealed through the discovery of new elements can be made an object, since the creation of the LCAP law from July 7, 2016,⁸² of a cancellation by way of the legal path to their acquisition (by sale, gift, or inheritance) on the initiative of the public person exploited.⁸³

The object thus reputed, will have never entered into public property and therefore will avoid any questions concerning releasing the object from the classification of public property, the new article L. 124-1 of the cultural heritage code prepares the way for the judge to arrange the its restitution to the original owner.

⁸⁰ Four golden plates etched with stylized images of birds left China before the ratification of the UNESCO convention and whose origins were deemed dubious after a common work of analysis done by both French and Chinese experts effectuated 20 years later.

⁸¹ The ratification by France on January 7, 1997, of the UNESCO Convention of 1970 concerning the measures to take in order to forbid and prevent the importing, exporting, and transfer of the illicit ownership of cultural items.

⁸² Law n°2016-925 from July 7, 2016 concerning the freedom of creation, architecture and cultural heritage property.

⁸³ This possibility is essentially tied with discouraging the trafficking of cultural goods and notably the financing of terrorism. The preparatory work done by the LCAP also envisioned a dispositive calling into question the initiative, on behalf of the owner, of the entrance of human remains and cultural spoils as a result of Nazism into the collections but these two cases were not kept a part of the inter-ministerial arbitration.

Resonances with the method for the restitution of African Cultural Heritage

These procedures or arrangements that have in the past led to punctual restitutions cannot respond to the method of restitution as it has been outlined in a variety of ways throughout the dialogues and discussions comprising this present mission:

Our current task is above all centered on remedying the situation of the largest expatriation of African cultural heritage ever known. The rarity of this cultural heritage in its countries of origin is not only detrimental to the preservation of national cultures and various communities, but it risks damaging, in the long-term, the perspectives for the constitution of a prestigious museum offering bearing on economic development. It is thus necessary to establish the means for a global reflection on the African collections conserved in France, the research into the provenance⁸⁴ of these objects, and to determine a procedure, integrating scholarly objectives, for a process of restitution potentially bearing on a very large number of cultural objects.

The processing of a request for restitution requires taking into account two major difficulties, besides that of the inalienability of the collections.

- a. The first difficulty is that a number of objects found in museum collections were initially acquired by way of violence or some form of deceit or within iniquitous conditions notably tied to the asymmetry of the “colonial context”, but also, in large part, during a period prior to the Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907, when the practice of acquiring the spoils of war or that of trophies was still largely acceptable. The collection of cultural objects through scientific expeditions, financed by the State, throughout the exploration and conquest of new territories was also another mode that was largely placed into effect in parallel with military operations.

The context of acquisition will therefore play a determinant role in how we handle requests for restitution, even though, as unacceptable as these acts appear to us today, they are not legally quantifiable as crimes under international law, in contrast to the Nazi spoils for which a specific juridical act was placed into effect,⁸⁵ and the plundering and destruction that happened after the UNESCO Convention of 1954 for the protection of cultural heritage items in case of armed conflict.

⁸⁴ The research done on the “provenance” concerning the geographical and cultural origin of the object, its use, and the modalities of its acquisition from its original owner(s), the circumstances of its exit from its natural territory, and its entrance into the collections of a museum in France.

⁸⁵ An inter-ally declaration from London in 1943 against the acts of dispossession committed in the territories under occupation and enemy control.

Nevertheless, given that international law would certainly propose such a law toward reparations for similar acts committed in our present times, analogous to those committed in the past, as much concerning the violence as the results of this violence, it is certainly legitimate to pose the question of a law for the restitution of objects taken under similar circumstances and acts of violence committed during the colonial period.

- b.** The second difficulty is that a large portion of the African cultural objects in the public French collections were inherited by the museums, or donated to the museums by heirs from the colonies or from members of the military engaged in operations of conquest, by administrators of the colonies or by missionaries oftentimes several decades after the death of their relative. The modalities of the initial acquisition of these objects, going back almost 150 years, certainly came under a variety of circumstances: spoils of war certainly, theft, gifts that were more or less freely consented to, but also by bartering, purchases,⁸⁶ whether equitable or not, or even by direct purchase orders from local artists and artisans.

It was most often the case that the museums that benefitted from these gifts had very little information about the conditions of the initial acquisitions of the objects, and sometimes this included a lack of knowledge about their exact provenance.

Furthermore, museum objects resulting from gifts or inheritance benefit from an explicit inalienability, following the cultural heritage code, and the material in question is controlled by the civil code which makes no distinction between whether the donor is considered as public person or private person.

Finally, the important thing to take into account concerning a new method of restitution is the willingness of a Franco-African partnership to establish a list of objects susceptible to requests for restitution so as to lead, when a given case arises and when it is necessary, the proper research on the provenance of the object in order to establish common forms of “know-how” regarding restitution and the object’s museographical accompaniment on both continents.

Under these conditions, the work of this present report and mission is oriented toward the creation of an entirely new and specific procedure for how to proceed with

⁸⁶ To clarify this a bit more: we were able to discern the appearance of fabricated counterfeits very early on during colonization so as to satisfy the demand of this new “clientele”... the oldest pieces were dated back to Spanish conquest of Mexico during the 16th century.

restitutions, resulting from the dialogues at the workshop held on June 26, 2018 (Document 3) as well as the dialogues with the museum directors held on July 4, 2018.

The envisioned juridical apparatus

The juridical apparatus will be articulated through the contours of two essential positions of the method employed: definitive restitution as the founding key-element of heightened cultural cooperation, made concrete through the signature of *a bilateral agreement, which will legitimize the new procedure of restitution* introduced into the code concerning cultural heritage. This juridical apparatus will decide a procedure for exception but which will not be limited to objects only housed in museums.

a. The contextual elements that guided the choice of this proposition

The difficulty of this exercise was to allow for the undertaking of the process of restitution, without however, calling into question the general principle of the inalienability of publicly owned cultural objects—the founding principle of the legislation of French museums.

The proposed solution rests on the indivisible link between the new procedure of restitution introduced into the Cultural Heritage Code and the bilateral agreement that establishes the exemption of the general principle of inalienability and limits it to this sole hypothesis.

This approach exists in other areas, most notably in terms of medicine, which allows for the submittal of an exception to common legislative law⁸⁷ through a bilateral agreement for the benefit of a foreign country.

This new procedure will be introduced into Book 1 of the Cultural Heritage Code devoted to “Common Legal Provisions for the Whole Sector”, in Chapter 2 of Title 1 that deals with restitutions effectuated through the application of the European directive of 1993 (revised in 2014) concerning the illicit exit of cultural goods.

The choice of Book 1 is also dictated by a concern for not wanting to limit the restitution of items to those that have only formally entered into the museum collections. Even though these museum collections are by far the richest in restitutable African cultural heritage objects, the process of restitution could certainly end up concerning other objects from the Cultural Heritage Code (archives, works from libraries).

⁸⁷ Article L.4111-1-2 of the Public Health Code

The second difficulty was reconciling the apparent voluntaristic character of the intention of restitution, when our knowledge of the provenance of the objects housed on our territory is largely unequal. However, as has been explained on several occasions earlier on in our report, the knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the initial acquisition is an essential part of our approach.

The procedural framework proposed is supple enough so as to allow for swift restitutions when questions concerning the provenance of the objects have been established and are clearly known and the defect of consent during acquisition of the objects is manifest or strongly presumed which will be emblematic of the reality and desire to break with previous impasses in regards to restitution.

But we must also make the approach to restitutions capable of adapting to a variety of situations and the state of knowledge regarding the African collections in France as well as the variety of expectations by the partnering countries. This requires leaving a necessary place for a common work of research and dialogue, either to establish the certainty for the circumstances of acquisition, or so as to gather together the elements of sufficient presumption for an acquisition done under duress. In the end, this approach aims at the timely restitution of objects whose conditions of acquisition, despite the research done, will remain unknown, but whose scientific interest for the African collections remains certain.

The final and formal decision of restitution belongs to the public owner and is formalized by a decree, taken, if it is a case of a territorial collectivity, after a vote following the competent deliberation of an assembly authorizing the mayor or the President of the collectivity to proceed toward restitution. This decision cannot be made under duress, most notably when the provenance of the objects in question remains uncertain.

b. The Procedure of Restitution Requires a Modification of the Cultural Heritage Code

This new procedure will take the place, in Book 1 of the Cultural Heritage Code devoted to “Common Legal Provisions for the Whole Sector”, in Chapter 2 of Title 1, where a section 5 will be inserted into the chapter concerning the restitution of cultural heritage items based on the foundation of a bilateral agreement of cultural cooperation with the formerly colonized countries, protectorates, or territories managed under French mandate (see the legislative proposition, presented in the form of a table, in the annex of the present report: Annex, Document 2).

The restitution is undertaken on the basis of a formal demand from the country making the request, which could swiftly receive the cultural object whose origin and conditions of acquisition are sufficiently known so that the establishment of an investigation file does not require further research. Throughout the duration of the validity of the cooperative agreement, renewable according to the desires of the Parties, other demands could bear on a (several) list(s) of objects whose interest and provenance will have to be studied and scrutinized within a framework of a partnership of research outlined by the triennial programs (see infra: b.) The agreement of cooperation).

The joint commission of experts designated by the States of the parties, whose composition and mission are defined through each agreement of cooperation, will evaluate the investigation files of the objects submitted to the list. In order to formulate its opinion, the commission will consider the elements relative to the origins of the objects and, in cases where the initial conditions of the acquisitions cannot be established, the commission will consider the objects' complementarity with other objects that have been restituted or their interest for the country or community of origin.

The commission will also verify the state of the national collections after restitution, and be informed, if the case arises, of measures envisioned for guaranteeing the continuity and presence of the art and history of the contracting country on national territory.

The commission's examination must therefore be modulated, according to the degree of knowledge concerning the origin of the object:

- It will simply be a question of the verification of the conclusions brought to light by the research work regarding the provenance of the objects, when these objects have have been presumed or deemed as having been acquired under conditions of duress.
- However, the commission will also provide its opinion in terms of restitution regarding the scholarly interest of the objects in the collection for the requesting country when the circumstances of the acquisition of the object requested, despite the research done, remain unknown.

The favorable opinion of the experts of the commission will allow for the object to depart from the museum collection in which it was housed and for its restitution, on the decision of the public owner, to the requesting country.

This schema of the procedure of restitution is detailed and made explicit in the legislative proposition, annexed within the present report.

An analysis of the cases of this procedure and its application to objects arising from donations or inheritance is also included in the annex. (Annex, Document 2).

c. The Agreement of Cooperation

The agreement of cultural cooperation, agreed upon between France and each requesting country, a model example of which, adapted on a case by case basis, will be included in the annex of this present report (Annex, Document 2) as the foundation for the objective of definitive restitution.

With this goal in mind, the agreement of cultural cooperation outlines, among other things, the establishment or completion of the inventorying of cultural objects originating from the contracting African countries, the creation of renewable triennial research partnership programs in order to determine the provenance of certain cultural objects whose initial conditions of acquisition currently remain unknown, the creation of a joint commission of experts designated by both countries in order to examine and analyze the restitution requests and the modalities of cultural and scientific cooperation over the long term as well to establish activities for the education and training of professionals and the facilitation of public awareness, and finally, the advent of a monitoring committee to oversee the ensemble of these activities.

The list (or lists) of objects established within the framework of this agreement comprises the foundation of the request for restitution. Unless it is known before the conclusion of this agreement,⁸⁸ the establishment of this list necessitates that the inventory of African objects in the museums be completed and made accessible, and that partnerships are put in place between experts, researchers, or curators from the countries and museums concerned so as to establish the provenance of these cultural objects.

The agreement outlines activities of scholarly cooperation, the programming of the accompaniment of the objects in the form of welcoming teams, and the conservation of the restituted objects, in the form of training of the personnel responsible for their conservation and their eventual necessary mediation. The agreement also outlines the modalities of financing these actions and research work.

Under the auspices of the joint committee of experts, the institutions and communities concerned, in France as well as in Africa, will be informed or associated according to the modalities defined for the methods of restitution.

⁸⁸ Which could be the case for request made much earlier or in the distant past.

The agreement also integrates an acute cooperation in terms of the fight against the trafficking of cultural goods.

Depending on the case, the ratification of the agreement will serve as a good precautionary measure for guaranteeing financial engagements, despite the delays that this procedure could generate.

The Financing of Actions of Restitution

The programs of research partnerships could include, when necessary, an inventory of the African collections, from which questions of the provenance of the cultural objects could be studied as well as the creation of the proposals for restitution.

The other actions of cooperation (support and investment in the creation or modernization of museums, the training of curators, restorers, temporary exhibits, the sharing of information on the trafficking of cultural goods) could be financed according to customary modalities, as soon as a dedicated budget is reserved for the implementation of the bilateral agreements for restitution.

In any event, the return of these pieces requires a budget devoted to the cost of transportation as well as the price of insurance that we know can fluctuate depending on the fragility of the work in question and its value on the market.⁸⁹

On the French/European side, two paths toward financing appear to be at our disposal:

- The AFD essentially finances investments, but the transportation cost and insurance necessary for the return of art objects could be a complementary component of an investment program in the creation or modernization of museums such as that already underway and under construction for a portion of the reserves and collections of the Musée National de Yaoundé. The AFD has recently increased its intervention into financing archeological research programs within the framework of construction.
- European funding from the partnership between the European Union and African Union, a mechanism of European support and development to which France

⁸⁹ As an example, the return of 96 objects from the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac sent to the musée Théodore-Monod d'art africain in Dakar cost 42,000 euros for packing them, escort fees and airfreight, before including the insurance. The insurance cost was an extra 200 euros.

contributes 17% for the period running from 2017/2020, that is 5.5 Mds €,⁹⁰ could also be approached for contributing to this method of restitution from the viewpoint of development aid.

And finally, the cost for funding the joint commission of experts shouldn't be glossed over and should be taken into account in the allocation of funds attributed to the course and methods of restitution, and should be considered independently from the necessary hirings within the core of the services of the French museums.⁹¹

Who should the restitutions be directed to?

Within the framework of these international relations, the French State must be carefully attentive to respecting the sovereignty of the various nation-states; With this in mind, the procedures of restitution will be undertaken on a state by state basis, which doesn't exclude the possibility of administrative arrangements in working toward direct collaborations with other State institutions or administrations and their homologues in other countries. The same would not apply for territorial collectivities that could develop relations of cooperation with other local collectivities or foreign institutions.⁹²

The property of the French State will thereby be granted to the requesting state, it is then this (requesting) state's responsibility, after the negotiations, to give this property back to its community or initial owner. This was how the "Maori heads" were given back to New Zealand, the New Zealand government representing juridically, within the framework of international relations, the interests of the community of origin.⁹³

⁹⁰ France is the second contributor after Germany (20%) and ahead of Great Britain and Italy.

⁹¹ We can estimate around 20,000 Euros (travel and lodging costs) for each meeting of a Franco-African commission of 12 persons (6 French experts, 6 experts designated from the African country concerned) for the duration of two days. Even in supposing that each commission only meets once a year and that the minister of culture puts in place this commission process for five different African countries every year, the provision costs will be around 100,000 Euros.

⁹² In the same vein as the Conventions de Lomé and the Cotonou Agreement, the Africa-EU partnership—the official framework of cooperation between the European Union and the African continent adopted in 2007 by the heads of state and the governments during the second official EU-Africa Summit—situates territorial collectivities as potential actors within European politics of development aid, commonly referred to within this framework as "decentralized development cooperation". Furthermore, in the 1990s, we see the emergence of new modalities for the international action of territorial collectivities, these being a means for inserting the territories into globalization.

⁹³ The restituted heads are reserved at The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington where they are housed in a specific room only accessible to authorized members of the community of origin.

The very importance itself of restitutions for certain communities and the concern of not wanting to interfere in the interior state politics of the African nations concerned leads to privileging a procedure of state to state management, which is moreover much easier to consolidate on a scholarly level and will remain to be evaluated in its realization.

The envisioned procedure necessitates that the state of origin is the lone entity authorized to present a request of restitution that will be presented to the French state and to it alone. In a case where the states concerned are not in a position to work with each other, other forms of direct cooperation could be considered (inter-museum or inter-university cooperation). If the request is informed by those more closely connected to it on the ground such as by experts within the French museums concerned in France or in Africa, its examination is centralized through the obligatory passage in front of the bilateral commission of experts as well as the registering of restitutions throughout the process of their intervention.

The objects of the territorial collectivities could be restituted by their community representative, but the remittance and delivery of the object would only be made to the representative of the requesting state.

However, the accompanying measures and research works and projects would find their place within the framework of bilateral cooperation that is decentralized and which could be coherently inscribed within an agreement of bilateral cooperation.

Guaranteeing the Permanence of the Restitutions and Reinforcing the Fight against Illicit Trafficking

Restituting African cultural heritage in Africa re-establishes a relation between European nation-states—one being France—and African nation-states, notably built through the writing of a shared past.

The political designs of the re-establishment of this relation requires, so as to guarantee the permanence of the African collections to Africa, the formulation of a common law between France and the African States concerning the future of restitutions.

This problematic of writing and adopting common rules between states so as to guarantee restitutions for cultural goods first emerged in Europe, more specifically, among the member States of the European Union. As such, these European States already have at their disposal instruments for economic, cultural, and normative

integration that have already been thoroughly developed in certain aspects, most notably regarding the restitution of cultural property; But the functioning and benefits of these mechanisms of automatic restitution for stolen or illicitly exported cultural property are at present only valid for member States of the European Union. The directive 2014/60/UE of the European Parliament and of the Council from May 2014 relative to the restitution of cultural property that have illicitly left the territory of a member State formulates this law for the restitution of cultural property.⁹⁴

The case proceeds differently when the request for restitution comes from an extra-European State. In such a scenario, the protection of the buyer of good faith and the principle of the territoriality of laws—the principle according to which the judge only pronounces in virtue of the lone law of the country where the cultural good is located at the time of the claim—will be an obstacle in the satisfaction of the request for restitution.⁹⁵ What's more, the UNESCO Convention of 1970 concerning the measures to take in order to forbid and prevent the importation, exportation, and transfer of illicit ownership of cultural property, ratified by France in 1997, contains nothing regarding what to do if the cultural goods in question are found in the hands of a private individual. Concerning this question, we should call to mind again the jurisprudence regarding the claim for the Nok statuettes by Nigeria: “The dispositions of this convention are not directly applicable within the internal juridical order of the State parties in such a way that M.X. is found to maintain that the convention only stipulates obligations to the responsibilities of the latter and in no way creates a direct obligation on behalf of the leader of their citizens...”⁹⁶

As for good faith, the French Supreme Court confirmed a decision by the Court of Appeals of Paris, recalling that “good faith is always presumed and that it is up to the one who invokes fraud to prove it”; in this affair, the judge comments that “there is a mention in the catalog under the signature of an expert indicating that a certain number

⁹⁴ This directive performs a revision of the directive 93/7/CEE of the Council from March 15, 1993 relative to the restitution of cultural property having illicitly left the territory of a State member, thereby reinforcing the principles of restitution.

⁹⁵ Concerning claims made by Iran for archeological cultural objects which are property of Iran through the application of the Iranian legislation involving archeological cultural heritage, the French judge made his ruling in the following manner: “the litigious objects being located in France, the Islamic Republic of Iran has no founding for soliciting for the application of Iranian law” (CA Paris, June 6, 1989, M. Y. c/ The Islamic Republic of Iran, aff. n°88/20267 : confirmed by Cass. Civ. 1, April 4, 1991, n°89-18020).

⁹⁶ CA Paris, April 5, 2004, The Federal Republic of Nigeria, c/ M. X., aff. 2002/09897 ; confirmed by Cass civ. 1, September 20, 2006, n°04-115599.

of objects came from clandestine digs,⁹⁷ without this claim in any way altering the good faith of the purchaser of these archeological objects.

This imbalance between applicable law within the circle of European states, on the one hand, and the principles that the judge opposes to the extra-European states on the other, affects the future of restitutions. The compensation for this imbalance and the writing of a common law of restitution between France and Africa requires that both the France and the African states concerned ratify the UNIDROIT Convention concerning stolen cultural objects adopted on June 24, 1995; This convention puts in place an automatic mechanism of restitution for any future claims.

This Convention is the lone juridical tool capable of compensating for the present imbalance and thereby establishing a common law for restitution as well as insuring the permanence of the process undertaken for the cultural objects stockpiled during the colonial period.

In other words, the ratification of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention will inscribe the restitutions within a perspective of durability.

We will note that the European states have already established such an ambition among themselves by infusing the principles of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention into the European directive of May 15, 2014, mentioned above, relative to the restitution of cultural objects. As such, the extension of these principles to extra-European states, using the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention as a springboard, shouldn't pose any difficulties.

Popular Appropriations

Accompanying restitutions also implies working to ensure that the communities concerned as well as the public at large are able to claim ownership of this practice in all its aspects. The first groups that should be prioritized in this list are the African youth, those coming from the diasporas, and the European youth who all are beginning to demonstrate the extent to which they are concerned by the question of restitution. This work should be in partnership with collectives and associations already acting on the ground, thanks to the implication of the scientific community, but also authors, artists, filmmakers and documentarians on both continents. In parallel, an important work of a polyphonic narrative will also be undertaken.

⁹⁷ CA Paris, June 6, 1989, M. Y. c/ The Islamic Republic of Iran, aff. n°88/20267 : confirmed by Cass. Civ. 1, April 4, 1991, n°89-18020).

Vital in its import, this work will allow—in a variety of forms accessible to everyone—to evoke the often tangled histories of the cultural pieces in question and through these narratives, help to initiate a thorough reflection on the very notions of memory, “cultural heritage”, and shared history. These practices could lead to the production of works, brochures and documentary films, as well as the organization of events allowing for the stimulation of cultural exchange and dialogue (conferences, public debates, concerts, installations), but also traveling exhibitions that could in the end, constitute an ideal framework for such exchange.

The creation of an online portal around the theme of the circulation of cultural objects that would contain general information about the situation and redistribution of cultural heritage from the African continent outside of Africa, while also proposing detailed narratives of the trajectories of certain pieces (with the help of accompanying texts and multimedia documents) would also be a creative and engaging way to create a pathway of discovery.

And finally, restitutions also imply continued rethinking of the modalities of the mediatization of the information originating from the core of the museums themselves. Far from merely being reducible to a list of dates, sites, and names on museum labels, these other forms of knowledge are not only requested by the younger audiences, but are positioned to accompany—by also enriching it—the intuitive or sensorial relation to the art works. The objective here is to make it so that the material and symbolic stakes provoked by the question of restitutions are not merely limited to a circle of initiates, but also can reach a larger public inside and outside the museum space.

Conclusion

The historical window that opened up in Ouagadougou on November 28, 2017, preparing the path toward the restitution of African cultural heritage objects currently held in French national collections, establishes a new era in cultural relations between France and Africa, and in a larger and more general manner, between Europe and Africa. By recognizing the legitimacy of the requests made by African countries to recover a significant part of their cultural heritage and their memory, while at the same time working toward a better understanding about this moment of colonial history, the process of restitution allows for the possibility of writing a new page of a shared and peaceful history, where each protagonist can provide his or her fair piece of the common story.

These objects which for a large part have been ripped away from their cultures of origin by way of colonial violence, but which were welcomed and cared for by generations of curators in their new places of residence, from now on bear within them an irremediable piece of Europe and Africa. Having incorporated several regimes of meaning, they become sites of the *creolization* of cultures and as a result they are equipped to serve as mediators of a new relationality.

The best approach and method for the restitution of African cultural objects is to establish another relational ethics. By working through the space of the symbolic, this space becomes tectonic and its aftershocks, and the new values it ushers in, will leave no site of exchange between European and African societies unscathed

(whether it be economic, political, or societal). The restitution of African cultural items will therefore initiate a new economy of relations whose effects will not be limited to cultural spaces or those of museographical exchange.

20 years ago, one of the greatest voices of African poetry, the Nigerian, Niyi Osundare (*1947), called out to the moon and the seasons in the poem, “Africa’s Memory”.⁹⁸ The poem is about four objects dispersed to the four corners of the world, about African kingdoms and Western cities, about the wind that carries away memory and broken spells. Within the depths of the English syntax resides the mother tongue of the poet: the Yoruba language, a few chimerical words, composed and condensed of real words, unique as proper nouns brimming with multiple meanings, far off from the generic Western names that reduce things to a list one can catalogue in a museum:

I ask for Oluyenyetuye bronze of Ife
The moon says it is in Bonn

I ask for Ogidigbonyingboyin mask of Benin
The moon says it is in London

I ask for Dinkowawa stool of Ashanti
The moon says it is in Paris

I ask for Togongorewa bust of Zimbabwe
The moon says it is in New York

I ask
I ask
I ask for the memory of Africa
The seasons say it is blowing in the wind

The hunchback cannot hide his burden

This text is a powerful witness to an absence and to a quest. It is at the heart of the subject that concerns us: the unequal distribution of African cultural heritage around the world, of its beautiful presence in Western museums, the gaps in memory as a result of its absence in Africa, and the responsibility of each and everyone of us—in staring up at the moon, the seasons, and the future—to assure the establishment of equity.

⁹⁸ Niyi Osundare, *Horses of Memory*, Ibadan 1998, p. 43.

The relation to others is often mediated by history (the past). The condition for freedom is not to be governed by the past, but to re-write it in the present (time). Through the chaotic disruption of old forms of relationality that it incites, restitutions prefigure a new cosmology where the reception of cultural heritage, values from another time, give way to a new relation with the world, based on the recognition of our mutual interdependence and the fundamental relational character of our identities. And it is only by taking care of these identities that we will be able to render this world inhabitable for everyone.

Annexes

Methods

The present report was conceived and edited between Dakar, Nantes, Paris and Berlin. It takes into account the rapid evolution of the public debate around restitutions in Europe as much as in Africa. It is founded upon:

- A vast consultation of experts and political actors in France and in four francophone African countries (Benin, Senegal, Mali, and Cameroon)
- The establishment of inventories and statistics allowing us to discern the quality, quantity, and origins of the African collections in the French museums.
- Exchanges led during two workshops with unique points of reflection: “L’Atelier de Dakar” and “L’Atelier juridique”.

ISABELLE MARECHAL, the inspector general of cultural affairs at the Ministry of Culture, carefully oversaw and ensured the proper institutional proceedings of the mission and assumed the responsibilities of the juridical side of things along with VINCENT NEGRI, jurist and researcher at the Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique (ISP / UMR 7220 : CNRS – ENS Paris Saclay – Université Paris Nanterre).

VICTOR CLAASS, art historian, PhD, coordinated the activities, contributed to the elaboration of the inventories as well as accompanied the compilation of this report.

General Consultation

“Critical Friends”

Upon reception of the letter dated March 19, 2018, we invited a circle of “critical friends” to take part in the reflection. The transcontinental and interdisciplinary composition of this circle sought to guarantee a plurality of views on the subject matter with multiple symbolic, political, and juridical implications and controversies. The group gathered together on two occasions: in the months of March and September, 2018. Throughout the entire process, several of its members were also consulted individually.

The first exchanges took place March 26, 2018 at the Collège de France in Paris. Those present included: CHRISTIANE FALGAYRETTES-LEVEAU (director of the musée Dapper, Paris), STÉPHANE MARTIN (Président of the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris), BONAVENTURE NDIKUNG (founder and artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin), VINCENT NÉGRI (jurist and researcher at the l’Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique, ISP / UMR 7720), LOUIS-GEORGES TIN (then president, now honorary president of the Conseil représentatif des associations noires de France, Paris), MARIE-CÉCILE ZINSOU (president of the Fondation Zinsou, Paris/Cotonou). Those who were also invited but who were unable to attend were the following: SOULEYMANE BACHIR DIAGNE (philosopher, Columbia University, New York), HAMADY BOCOUM (archeologist, director of the musée des Civilisations noires de Dakar), KWAME OPOKU (former juridical advisor, retired from the Bureau of the United Nations in Vienna).

The participants were reminded of their role in the debate concerning restitutions, they expressed their convictions and their doubts regarding the feasibility of the project. They helped to problematize the question so as to reveal a plurality of dimensions from each of their own singular perspectives. They assured their institutional and intellectual support to the authors of this report.

A second meeting of “critical friends” took place in Paris on September 24, 2018 at the Collège de France. Those present included: CLAIRE BOSCH-TIESSÉ (Institut national d’histoire de l’art, Paris), CHRISTIANE FALGAYRETTES-LEVEAU (director of the musée Dapper, Paris), ANNE LAFONT (Director of studies à l’EHESS, Paris), ISABELLE MARECHAL (the inspector general of cultural affairs at the Ministry of Culture, Paris), STÉPHANE MARTIN (president of the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris), VINCENT NÉGRI (jurist and researcher at the l’Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique, ISP / UMR 7720), KWAME OPOKU (former juridical advisor, retired from the Bureau of the United Nations in Vienna) LOUIS-GEORGES TIN (then president, now honorary president of the Conseil représentatif des associations noires de France, Paris), MARIE-CÉCILE ZINSOU (president of the Fondation Zinsou, Paris/Cotonou).

This second meeting allowed us to take stock on the progress of the report and discuss the final form it would take. Exchanges also took place concerning the place that should

be granted to scholarly research in the debates regarding restitutions and reaffirmed the prospective and operational dimension of the report.

Museums

Given the specificity of the relations that curators have with the collections they oversee, throughout the world and from the very beginning of each institution's existence, beyond the circle of "critical friends", we also participated in a dialogue with this specific group of museum professionals in France and in Africa, as this group would be the first ones affected by the eventual restitutions. For want of repertoires documenting the already existing scholarly cooperation between French and African museums, throughout the interview, it also became a way for establishing a cartography of the active (and the most promising) ties between institutions.

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

At the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, we held a meeting on April 26, 2018 during which were present: GAËLLE BEAUJEAN-BALTZER (curator of the African collections), SARAH FRIOUX-SALGAS (responsible for the Documentation of the collections and archives), AURÉLIEN GABORIT (curator of the African collections), HÉLÈNE JOUBERT (curator of the African collections), EMMANUEL KASARHÉROU (deputy to the director of the Département du patrimoine et des collections, responsible for the scholarly coordination of the collections), YVES LE FUR (director of the Département du patrimoine et des collections). The president of the museum, STÉPHANE MARTIN, also took part in the meeting. The meeting also helped to create a direct and fruitful collaboration with the services of the archives of the museum for the use and analysis of the inventories. Furthermore, Hélène Joubert and Gaëlle Beaujean-Baltzer lent their expertise in terms of the history of the collections and the origins of certain of the objects during the "Atelier juridique" organized on June 26, 2018 (see above).

Other Parisian museums and museums of territorial collectivities

A meeting organized on July 4, 2018 in the auditorium of the C2RMF at the Louvre helped the authors of this report to expand the horizon of their consultation to include museums and collections of territorial collectivities. Those invited to this exchange included the directors (or their colleagues) from the other public museums who, outside the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, also house important African collections in France (for the musées d'État) : CHRISTOPHE PINCEMAILLE (for the musée de l'Île d'Aix), MICHEL GUIRAUD (director of the collections au Muséum national d'histoire naturelle) and ANNE NIVARD (curator at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle), ANDRÉ DEPLUECH

(director of the département musée de l'Homme), ARIANE JAMES-SARAZIN (deputy director of the musée de l'Armée), FRÉDÉRIQUE CHAPELAY (curator at the musée de la Marine), EROL OK and JOHAN POPELAR (musée Picasso), CHRISTIAN LANDES (curator at the Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye). For the museums of the territorial collectivities: JEAN-FRANÇOIS TOURNEPICHE and ÉMILIE SALABERRY (musée d'Angoulême), CÉDRIC CRÉMIÈRE (Muséum d'histoire naturelle du Havre), MARIE PERRIER (curator at the musée des Confluences de Lyon), FLORIANE PICARD HARDY (Musée de la Vieille charité), FRANÇOIS COULON (musée des Beaux-arts de Rennes), PIERRE DALOUS (Muséum d'histoire naturelle de Toulouse). For private institutions: LAURICK ZERBINI and JEAN-PAUL KPATCHA (Société des missions africaines), AUDE LEVEAU (Fondation Dapper). To this list of names we also would like to add ISABELLE NYFFENHEGGER (Bibliothèque nationale de France), SYLVIE WATELET (C2RMF), CLAIRE CHASTANIER et BÉNÉDICTE ROLLAND-VILLEMOT (Service des musées de France), as well as those museum advisors from DRAC (Direction régionale des affaires culturelles): NICOLAS BEL and MARIE-FRANÇOISE GÉRARD (Aquitaine), BERTRAND BERGBAUER and SANDRA PASCALIS (Grand Est), FLORE COLLETTE (Occitanie), ELISE FAU (Pays de la Loire), LAURENCE ISNARD and SYLVIE MULLER (Île-de-France), EVELYNE SCHMITT (Bretagne), LIONEL BERGATTO (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes), DIANA GAY (Centre-Val de Loire).

The discussion gave way to a collective reflection on the varied typology of the African items housed in the museums (military trophies, ethnographic collections, private collections formed by merchants and traders, collections from artists). The discussion also helped us to take stock of the existence (or not), and in certain cases, the scientific quality of the inventoried objects from sub-Saharan Africa found in the museums of the territorial collectivities. The exchanges also led to a discussion on the fruitful cooperation between institutions in France and Africa that were already taking place by certain museums; notably between the Muséum d'histoire naturelle du Havre and museums in Dakar (Cédric Crémière); the initiatives of the musée d'Angoulême for sharing of knowledge and expertise and the transfer of competence with Senegal (Émilie Salaberry), or the initiative by Rhône-Alpes region and the exhibit *L'Afrique de nos reserves*, presented in 2011-2012 at the musée du Château d'Annecy (Laurick Zerbin).

Senegal

Several interviews took place in Dakar with EL HADJI MALICK NDIAYE, curator at the IFAN Museum of African Art, (the musée Théodore-Monod d'art africain), and HAMADY BOCOUM, director of the musée des Civilisations noires (whose inauguration is slated for December 6, 2018) between March and November 2018 (specifically the 2 and 3 of May 2018 as well as on the occasion of the Dakar Biennale during August 2018), but also in Paris during the International Conference on the Circulation of Cultural Property held at UNESCO, June 1, 2018. And it was by the invitation of El Hadji Malick Ndiaye that an organized workshop took place on June 12, 2018 within the framework of the mission.

The exchange with the Dakar curators confirmed the interest they have in a project of restitution and their goodwill to provide an institutional and intellectual framework for a public debate considered as indispensable concerning the question in Senegal. The pertinence of the “ethnographic” category was discussed at length. In Dakar, the specific institutional link that ties the musée Théodore-Monod to the University of Dakar (Université Cheikh Anta Diop) more specifically invited us to think of the restitutions in the terms of the future forms of cooperation between universities and museums, in particular in the area of epistemology—certain traditional objects encapsulating mathematical and astronomical forms of knowledge, for example. The question of signifiers of the term “restitution”, that of the re-socialization of objects, and the stakes of the re-appropriation of cultural heritage, as well as the question of the circulation of art pieces were discussed in depth and at length during the “Atelier de Dakar”, mentioned below.

Mali

At the Musée National de Mali in Bamako, since the beginning of June, we were able to have an exchange with SALIA MALE, the director of the museum, as well as with his predecessor and current director of the National Park of Mali, SAMUEL SIDIBE, as well as with BABA KEITA (a consultant for UNESCO). All of them are for the project of restitutions. Out of all the museums on the African continent, the Musée National de Bamako is perhaps considered to be the museum with the most connections and past cooperation with the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac. The National Park that surrounds the museum and serves as a beautiful backdrop for it was conceived of through the framework of a public-private partnership between the Malian government and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC).

Three points emerged from our discussions in Mali: the existence of negotiations that were already rather advanced with private interlocutors firstly wanting to promote the return to Mali of their collection, such as JAN BAPTIST BEDAUX. Mixed feelings in regard to the mere “circulation” of cultural property if it is separated from the act of “restitutions” still harboring the very present bittersweet memories of traveling exhibits. Consequently, SALIA MALE evoked, “Ciwara, collections du musée du quai Branly”, an exhibit that presented objects common to the culture of these regions but which, after generating a lot of enthusiasm from the public, created a great deal of despair when the works were sent back to France. And the final point concerned a discussion around the “ritual and social life” of the museum objects and the question of the “national” museum in general and the relationship with the communities from which the collections originated.

Our interlocutors bemoan a lack of personnel and funds, effects of the crisis that since 2013 directly and indirectly effects the institution (the drying up of tourism, fears linked

to terrorism...); as well as the practices of the art market which continues to grow in an illicit manner within the Malian territory.

Cameroon

The geography of the museums in Cameroon is characterized by the co-existence of prestigious State structures and extremely well engaged (dynastic) private museums. We did our best to consult both sorts of museums.

- **Musée National du Cameroun.** We had a chance to speak with the director of the Musée National du Cameroun, RAYMOND ASOMBANG NEBA'ANE, within the framework of the workshop in Dakar on June 12, 2018. We also had the chance to visit his museum in Yaoundé on July 18, 2018. We were also able to do a quick interview beforehand with SEBASTIEN ZONGHERO, who was given responsibility by the Minister of French Culture of compiling the *Rapport de mission d'évaluation du Musée national de Yaoundé* within the framework of funds granted by the ADF.

The museum of Yaoundé is a site of national affirmation. It is housed in the former presidential palace, which is itself the former palace of French governors that was transformed into a museum in 1988. Between 2009 and 2015, it was the object of a large renovation before re-opening its doors on January 16, 2015. Inside, one will discover rooms filled with the ancient history and various cultures of Cameroon juxtaposed with a private museum displaying contemporary art along with apologetic displays concerning the recent political action of the presidents Ahmadou Ahidjo (1960-1982) and Paul Biya (1982-...). The idea of restitutions is most welcomed within a logic of a centralized presentation of the various different cultures and populations comprising Cameroon.

- **Musée royal de Foumban—Musée royal de Bafoussam.** Our exchanges with the director of the royal museum of Foumban and the family of the Sultan, represented by the PRINCESS RABIATOU NJOYA, took place at Foumban, on July 17, 2018. Everyone confirmed their support for a project of restitutions and insisted on the need for cooperating with the former colonial powers. A large number of cultural objects from Foumban are currently housed in Paris and Berlin. The representatives of the Sultan have made us aware of the considerable costs invested in the construction and upkeep of the new museum whose inauguration is imminent and which bears witness to an interest in the notion of public dynastic cultural heritage. The initiative of these museums comes from the current Sultan, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, who conferred its conception to the architect, *Issoufou Mbouombou*. From the 1930s until now, the collections of the museum were displayed in the palace of the Sultan, in close proximity with the

current museum. The museum includes 12,000 art objects, trophies from war, and relics linked to the history of this dynasty founded in the 14th century.

- Other **traditional chiefdoms**, such as that of the the King FO NJITACK NGOMPE PELE of Bafoussam whom we met during our visit in July 2018, possess a vast collection of ritual objects. In Baffoussam, a museum is in the midst of being constructed in the immediate surroundings of the royal palace. There are also private museums in Cameroon. In particular, we visited the Musée ethnographique des peuples de la forêt in Yaoundé and spoke with its founder and director, Dr. THÉRÈSE FOUDA, pharmacist by profession. She deploys an important pedagogical activity in cooperation with the local neighboring schools.

Benin

In Benin, where there are three public museums under construction, the exchange with the actors of cultural heritage took place between April 19 and April 25 within the framework of a co-sponsored invitation addressed to Bénédicte Savoy by both the French and German embassies. This trip, organized before the announcement of the mission concerning restitution and organized by the Institut Français, gave way to an important series of visits and meetings at Porto Novo, Ouidah, Abomey, and Cotonou. The first part of the mission was dedicated to visiting cultural heritage sites and meetings with a variety of actors of actors implicated within the development of culture and the promotion of cultural heritage in Benin. In this way, Bénédicte Savoy was able to gain some knowledge, both material and immaterial, of the cultural heritage of Porto Novo, the memorial site of Ouidah, and the royal palaces of Abomey, and visit the Pan-African Foundation for Cultural Development (FONPADEC) and meet its founder, NOUREINI TIDJANI-SERPOS, the two locations of the Fondation Zinsou (Cotonou and Ouidah), and the Petit musée de la récade (Abomey-Calavi).

These visits alternated between meetings with representatives of Benin's civil society and professionals of the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage. These individuals include JOSÉ PLYA (Director of the Agency for the Promotion of Cultural Heritage and the Development of Tourism, Cotonou), CAROLE BORNA (deputy director of Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Culture) and ROCHARD SOGAN (advisor to the Minister of Culture) as well as GABIN DJIMASSÈ (director of the Office of Tourism of Abomey, responsible for the construction project of the Musée de l'épopée des rois in Abomey).

Fruitful discussions were also held with sculptors, in particular ROMUALD HAZOUME and DOMINIQUE ZINKPE, both in charge of cultural centers; as well as with researcher-instructors from the université d'Abomey Calavi (UAC), with students from the Institut national des métiers d'art, archeologie, et de la culture (INMAAC) and the Department of Germanic Studies of UAC as well as former students from the Masters program in

Cultural Heritage from the universit  Senghor d'Alexandrie. Within the framework of the two public conferences, B n dicte Savoy was able to elucidate the important questions raised by the translocations of cultural objects.

These moments set aside for observation and interactions helped to nourish our reflections on the wealth and current conditions of the promotion of Beninese cultural heritage, on projects overseen by Beninese authorities in terms of the promotion of culture and cultural heritage, and regarding the level of the debate concerning the restitution of cultural objects and their acceptance by a variety of categories of individuals within the population. These interactions also attest to extraordinary complexity of the effective return of cultural heritage objects to their places of origin, and have provided precious indications concerning the hierarchization of challenges for the political decision-makers to take into consideration. These rather valuable moments spent in discussions with various members from different parts of the Beninese cultural and artistic community confirm that the debate is underway and remains open, at least for certain parts of the society often split between a pessimism of reason and an optimism of action.

Political Actors

In France

The Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MAE). On June 25, 2018 a work meeting was held with the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs. Those present at the meeting included: LAURENCE AUER (director of culture, teaching, research, and networking), PATRICK COMOY (deputy sub-director of teaching and research), GAETEN BRUEL (advisor to the ministry), LUCILE BORDET (chief of the research bureau), MAELLE SERGHERAERT (chief of the pole of human and social sciences, archeology, and cultural heritage), AXEL BERENGIER (responsible for issues related to cultural heritage) ALEXIS MOCIO-MATHIEU (editor following questions concerning cultural heritage, the trafficking of cultural goods, and the restitution of cultural goods UNESCO-Cultural Heritage), as well as ST PHANE GATTA (responsible for the African mission), and ISABELLE MAR CHAL (inspector general of cultural affairs at the Ministry of Culture).

The MAE regularly receives requests for restitution from nation-states or other communities. These requests concern as much cultural goods as they do human remains. The ministry sets out the typology, but only considers requests coming from Nation-States that have been carefully researched. In taking into account the juridical framework, the ministry generally counters these requests with staunch refusals. We have already provided the overview for the lack of restitutions and the examples of the few cases that have been successful (Maori heads, Korean manuscripts, etc.) in regards to cooperation between museums and other pending questions (such as the restitution of Algerian skulls). The MAE showed themselves to be very open to accompanying us in

our mission and expressed their desire for an evolution of the juridical framework relative to French cultural heritage law, this evolution thereby allowing to consider a proper and affirmative response to certain of the specific requests of the restitution of cultural heritage goods they receive and in consideration of the fluidity of diplomatic relations with certain countries. In April 2018, at Cotonou, Bénédicte Savoy was received successively by the ambassador to France in Benin, S.E. Véronique Brumeaux, and by her German homologue, Achim Tröster. On July 18, 2018, in Yaoundé, we were received by the French Ambassador to Cameroon, S.E. Gilles Thibault. During the month of June 2018, in Dakar, we were able to have a fruitful conversation with the primary advisor of the French Embassy in Senegal, Luc Briard. We were also welcome on several occasions to the French Embassy in Berlin in order to discuss, with the ambassador S.E. Anne-Marie Descôtes and advisory minister Guillaume Ollagnier, the stakes of our cultural mission within the German context.

Ministry of Culture. On April 26, 2018, a meeting was held in Paris at the Ministry of Culture. Those present included: VINCENT BERJOT (general director of cultural heritage), BLANDINE CHAVANNE (sub-director of museum politics to the general director of cultural heritage), CLAIRE CHASTANIER (principle attaché to general director of cultural heritage), SEBASTIEN ZONGHERO (project manager for the promotion of technical expertise in cultural heritage), ISABELLE MARÉCHAL (inspector general of cultural affairs).

Questions were brought up discussing the parameters and nature of our mission, questions about cultural heritage law, in particular the clauses around the inalienability and non-transferability that prevents the restitution of cultural items. One thing that came from the meeting was that the law must be flexible and that if the politicians truly wanted it to be as such, the law could evolve. Throughout the meeting questions concerning the definitive list of the principal French collections of African cultural objects, the difficulty of discerning the exact provenance of the objects, the ongoing cooperation between French and African museums—in particular the cooperation with the Musée de Yaoundé via the ADF (the contract of debt reduction). During these discussions, other significant items mentioned included the processes involved in the restitution of Korean manuscripts, Chinese funerary plates, and the Maori heads.

The National Assembly. On July 4, 2018, in Paris, we took part in a hearing, in presence of Isabelle Maréchal, thanks to the committee studying Cultural Heritage at the National Assembly, which is comprised of a diverse cross-section of parliamentary members across the political spectrum. The debates were moderated by CONSTANCE LE GRIP and RAPAHEL GERARD, co-presidents of the committee and members of Commission on Cultural and Educational Affairs, those present at the meeting included: JACQUELINE DUBOIS, BRIGITTE KUSTER, and MAXIME MINOT, as well as the parliamentary attachés representing their deputies.

This hearing, which lasted around two hours, provided us with the occasion to remind ourselves of the objectives of our mission and to re-evaluate our methods and approach. A question-response session followed the hearing during which the parliamentary members asked us a number of questions ranging from the situation of museums in Africa to questions about cultural heritage law, the nature of the objects to be restituted, etc. The overall feeling we retained from the hearing was that we were able to clarify for the members the content of our mission, its importance, and the political and historical stakes for the relations between France and Africa.

In Africa

On May 4, 2018, outside of the Dakar Biennale, a meeting of the ministers of culture of the UEMOA Zone (West African Economic and Monetary Union) was held, to which we were invited by the Minister of Culture in Senegal, ABOU LATIF COULIBALY to speak about our work regarding restitutions. We had an opportunity to touch on a number of topics in one single place with a number of different ministers of Culture from the African continent and to make them aware of stakes regarding the question of restitution.

A meeting between Felwine Sarr and the President of the Republic of Mali, IBRAHIM BOUBACAR KEITA took place on June 3, 2018 at his residence in Bamako. This meeting provided an opportunity to get the president up to speed concerning the mission. It also provided an opportunity to reference the Malian cultural heritage objects housed in French museums as well as discuss the Musée National de Mali and the other museums of the region and reflect on the stakes of the mission, in particular for Mali, concerning questions tied to history and national construction.

Two consecutive meetings took place (Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy) in Paris with the Ambassador to Benin, S.E.M. AUGUSTE ALAVO, also attended by his advisor in cooperation with political affairs, ANGELO DAN. Throughout both of these meetings, the stakes of our mission and our approach were discussed. The request for restitution made by Benin, which had previously been the object of a stonewalling tactic by the French minister of foreign affairs, Jean-Marc Ayrault in 2016-2017, was evoked. Also mentioned were the efforts undertaken by Benin for the construction of new museums and for a new definition of political cultural heritage.

On two occasions, at Cotonou and Paris, Bénédicte Savoy had a chance to speak with OSWALD HOMEKY, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sports in Benin. Like everyone else in the Beninese government, the Minister of Culture is largely engaged in the project of restitutions. The Minister of Culture specifically emphasized the historical scope of the subject, in particular for the younger generations.

In Bamako, we met up with Mali's former Minister of Culture and Tourism (1997-2000), AMINATA DRAMANE TRAORE. Aminata Traore worked extremely hard concerning questions

of the illicit trafficking of cultural goods during the time of her mandate. She even published a key text in 2006 concerning the question of restitutions of cultural property, *Ainsi nos œuvres d'art ont droit de cité là où nous sommes, dans l'ensemble, interdits de séjour*. We very much welcomed her opinion on how things have progressed around this discussion in France. She drew our attention to the profound crisis that is spreading throughout Mali, to the effects that war is having on the civilian population, in particular on the women, and to the difficult question of visas. She provided us with a brief summary of her political work in terms of cultural heritage in the 1990s. She praised the work we were doing.

In preparation for the international conference organized by UNESCO on June 1, 2018, "Circulation des biens culturels et du patrimoine commun: quelles nouvelles perspectives?"⁹⁹ Bénédicte Savoy had a long conversation with the general director of UNESCO, AUDREY AZOULAY, and then, continued her discussion with PATRICE TALON, the President of the Republic of Benin. The opening lecture of the conference was conferred to Bénédicte Savoy and was entitled "Retour vers le futur"¹⁰⁰ The ministers of culture, tourism, and antiquities from France, Germany, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Jordan, Lebanon, Peru, Senegal, and the Republic of the Congo took part in a discussion around the question of restitutions, the representatives of countries often stripped of their goods and cultural heritage in a very clear and frank manner. The hearing was comprised of 400 ministers, academics, representatives of international organizations, museum professionals and professionals of cultural heritage from all over the world. When all was said and done, the evidence seemed to point to the fact that UNESCO, which had made considerable progress concerning the question of restitutions, aimed to continue to be a part of the redefinition of the debate sparked by the pronouncement made by Emmanuel Macron at Ouagadougou.

Communities: a meeting took place with the Omarian Family in Dakar on August 6, 2018. Present alongside the Omarian Family was M. Sy, one of their collaborators and the Khalife of the Omarian Family, THIerno MOUNTAGA TALL. The latter informed us that since 1994, the family has focused their attention on restitutions concerning the objects belonging to El Hadj Omar Foutiyou Tall (his manuscripts, sabre, golden jewelry, and other assorted objects). The family made several trips to France and paid their own travel expenses. They were able to discern the presence in the Fonds Archinard of El Hadji Omar's manuscripts at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, seized at Ségou; they also found relics belonging to him at the Havre museum as well as his sabre at the musée de l'Armée. The latter of which was loaned out and shown in Dakar on several occasions: in 1998 and 2008. The family indicated that its requests for restitutions were met with a

⁹⁹ In English, the title and program can be found on the UNESCO website "Major International Conference on circulation of cultural property and shared heritage: what new perspectives?" <https://en.unesco.org/news/major-international-conference-circulation-cultural-property-and-shared-heritage-what-new>

¹⁰⁰ In English, the title would be "Back to the Future".

staunch refusal invoking the inalienability of the French National Collections. The family also requested that his manuscripts be digitized but they were merely told that they would have to wait until the Bibliothèque nationale de France finally reached to the Fonds Archinard as the library continued efforts to digitize its various collections.

On July 16, 2018, in Douala, we met a number of traditional tribal leaders of Cameroon at the AfricAvenir foundation located in the Bonabéri neighborhood. These leaders had been called together by PRINCE KUM'A NDUMBE III for a meeting around the question of restitutions. After presenting the object of our mission, we were able to meet with them for two hours on the subject. These leaders spoke with us at length about their concerns regarding the return of objects of their cultural heritage that were currently housed in European museums and we were able to discern the importance and great interest that each of the leaders held in regard to the question of restitution, as well as their thorough reflection on the subject. In the days that followed, we traveled throughout the West of Cameroon—to Dschang, Baffousam and Foumbam, in order to meet other traditional tribal leaders (some of them had been present at the meeting in Douala) and visit their traditional residences and museums where they conserved their objects. These visits educated us as to the wealth and plurality of apparatuses of preservation already in place as well as the great interest the leaders had in preserving their cultural heritage.

The Art Market

We also, individually, made an effort to engage in a dialogue with representatives from the African art market in both France and Africa. On the European front, we shared our reflections with the gallerists ROBERT VALLOIS (Paris) and the Belgian-Congolese antiquarian, DIDIER CLAES (Brussels) by specifically inviting them to the “Atelier de Dakar” on June 12, 2018. On the African front, we sought to learn more about the problems and mechanisms of illicit trafficking in the art market by meeting with a merchant from Lomé, a bustling area where the trafficking of African art between Europe and West Africa, who provided us with a much needed awareness of the sites, places, methods, and actors involved in this market—most notably in the exfiltration of pieces from Nigeria and Mali to Europe.

Inventories

To this very day, no precise map or centralized directory exists of the totality of African cultural heritage pieces in France. Such a centralized directory would certainly have been a beneficial tool in compiling this present report. Outside of several institutions which have maintained a thorough inventory of their exact holdings, the total number, at

a national scale, of the pieces housed in museums in France would be difficult to estimate.

The museum collections housed in the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (70,000 objects of solely “African” Cultural Heritage items) are well documented and are partly accessible online through the museum’s website. The graphs and statistics included in this documentation of the inventory are based on the museum’s own databases of their collections, which one can consult on-site, via the management software of the collections, TMS. This latter software program offers more detailed information than what one can uncover through the information online and allows one to export spreadsheets, “reports”, or the compilation of CSV files which makes any work around locating meta-data of the pieces in question much easier to wade through. At the center for the Documentation and collection of Archives of the museum, we met with SARAH FRIOUX-SALGAS (in charge of the service) and were helped in our navigations of the archive by JEAN-ANDRÉ ASSIÉ and ANGÈLE MARTIN, as well as by THOMAS CONVENT (at the hub for the computerized management and inventory of the collection of objects) who helped with the compilation of “reports” for each country proposed in the annex.

The meeting held on July 4, 2018 with representatives from the museums of the collectivities were quick to clarify and emphasize that the important methods undertaken by the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac for the digitization and placement online of a thorough documentation of their collections had not necessarily sparked a similar movement elsewhere in other institutions in France. The databases for the museum objects in France that are accessible online (*Joconde*), whose indications of objects is largely inferior to what is actually housed in the museum collections, in no way provides a means for ascertaining a trustworthy account for the inventory in the collections of a cultural heritage that is spread out and shared between art museums, museums of ethnography and the natural sciences, and even university institutes. Thus the inventory numbers we were provided varied as much in their format as in the degree of precision regarding the provenance of the pieces. We have tried our best here, along with the help of VINCENT LEFEVRE (sub-director of the collections at the Services des musées de France) and Isabelle Maréchal, to compile a maximum of information on the current state of African Cultural Heritage and Cultural Property in France.

An important amount of inventory work still remains to be done, which could be supported by already existing approaches and methods. In this light, the association “MuseoArtPremier”, via an online platform, proposes an initial census of the entire extra-European collections housed in French museums (MuseoArtPremier.com) and also promotes their cultural value. The program “Vestiges, indices, paradigmes : lieux et temps des objets d’Afrique (XIVe – XIXe siècle)” recently launched at the l’institut national d’histoire de l’art under the direction of Claire Bosc-Tiesse, also has, as one of its objectives, the creation of a database of the objects housed from this period in the public collections.

Workshops

The two workshops (Ateliers) held for reflection organized within the framework of the elaboration of this report have helped us to gather together the ideas and opinions, as well as the critical experts and actors located within a variety of fields. The “Atelier de Dakar” during the month of June helped us to explore in greater detail all the problematics tied to questions of restitutions—from the most pragmatic aspects to the most symbolic. The workshop’s organization (transportation, food, and lodging) was jointly financed by the ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Culture, along with the onsite support of the French Embassy in Senegal as well as the IFAN Museum of African Arts (the musée Théodore-Monod d’art africain). As for the “Atelier juridique”—thanks to the assembly of a large panel of experts—it was focused on the question of legality and past experiences of restitution. Its organization received funding support from the Ministry of Culture.

The Atelier de Dakar

This workshop of reflection was held on June 12, 2018 at the IFAN Museum of African Arts (the musée Théodore-Monod d’art africain), in the presence of the following personalities: HAMADY BOCOUM (archeologist, director of the Musée des civilisations noires, Dakar), CAROLE BORNA (deputy director of Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of culture, Cotonou), VIYÉ DIBA (artist-painter, Dakar), GABIN DJIMASSÈ (director of the Office of tourism of Abomey, responsible for the construction of the Musée de l’épopée des rois à Abomey), PRINCE KUM’A NDUMBE III (founder of AfricAvenir International, Douala), DIDIER HOUÉNOUDÉ (art historian, director of the Institut d’histoire de l’art et d’archéologie UAC, Cotonou), SALIA MALÉ (ethnologist, director of the département de la conservation au Musée national du Mali, Bamako), EL HADJI MALICK NDIAYE (art historian and curator at the musée Théodore-Monod d’art africain, Dakar), SIMON NJAMI (art critic, exhibition curator, Paris), JOSÉ PLYA (director of the Agence pour la promotion des patrimoines et de développement du tourisme, Cotonou), ROBERT VALLOIS (gallerist, Petit musée de la récade, Paris/Cotonou), DANIÈLE WOZNY (consultant, expert in culture and Cultural Heritage. Also invited were the art historian ANNE LAFONT (director of studies à l’EHESS) and CÉDRIC CRÉMIÈRE (director of the Muséum d’histoire naturelle du Havre), both of whom *in extremis* were unable to attend.

The format of the workshop, behind closed doors for a very intensive space-time, was chosen so as to favor the emergence of a collective, transcontinental, and autonomous reflection. We devoted three sessions of three hours each to the following areas:

1. What does it mean to reconstitute: pragmatics, symbolic, temporalities

The inaugural session allowed us to consider, in a very general manner, the gesture of restitution in the multiplicity of its significations, and to posit the

terms and stakes of the debate. The existence of several conceptions of cultural heritage and various memorial regimes were also at the heart of our discussions.

2. Re-socializing Cultural Heritage: epistemological spaces and regimes of culture

This second section bore much more concretely on the potentialities of a re-integration of objects into their environment of origin, and the possibilities offered up through re-socialization and re-symbolization. The discussion bore on the variety of cultural and territorial situations, through precise examples, and on the re-definition of the function of objects whose significations had been altered by history.

3. Thinking the future and the logics of distribution: mutuality as horizon?

The final, most prospective panel of the three, explored the possibilities opened up by restitutions within the framework of a re-definition of inter-African and inter-continental relations. The circulation of art works and the museum geography of Africa was also discussed.

The discussions and exchanges of this workshop were the object of an audio-visual recording. A press conference in one of the halls of the IFAN Museum of African Arts about the exchanges helped to inform the media about the results of this day-long workshop and, more generally, about the ongoing stakes and the progress of the mission.

The Atelier Juridique

The “Atelier Juridique” [Juridical Workshop] took place at the Collège de France in Paris, on June 26, 2018. Its conception and organization was jointly assured by Isabelle Maréchal (the inspector general of cultural affairs to the Minister of Culture) and Vincent Negri (ISP / UMR 7220 : CNRS – ENS Paris Saclay – Université Paris Nanterre) in connection with the “critical friends” part of the mission for his knowledge of African Cultural Heritage Law as well as international law in terms of Cultural Heritage.

This event was conceived for an audience comprised of a select number of interlocutors including (the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Senate, ICOM, academics, jurists and historians, practicing curators) chosen for their experience in terms of restitutions. Those who chose to respond during this event included : LAURENCE AUER (director of Culture, Teaching, Research and Networking (the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs), GAËLLE BEAUJEAN-BALTZER (in charge of the collections the hub for l'Unité patrimoniale Afrique at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac), CLAIRE CHASTANIER (deputy to the sub-director of the collections, Service des musées de France), MARIE CORNU (director of research at the CNRS – Institut des Sciences sociales du politique, ISP/UMR 7220), STÉPHANE DUROY (professeur de droit public à la

Faculté Jean Monnet – Université Paris-Sud Paris Saclay), MANLIO FRIGO (professor international law at the l'université de Milan, lawyer in the firm BonelliErede Milan), HÉLÈNE JOUBERT (person in charge of l'Unité patrimoniale Afrique au musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac), EMMANUEL KASARHÉROU (deputy director in the Département du patrimoine et des collections, responsable de la coordination scientifique des collections au musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac), SÉBASTIEN MINCHIN (director of the Muséum d'histoire naturelle de Bourges), KWAME OPOKU (former juridical advisor, retired from the bureau of United Nations in Vienna), XAVIER PERROT (professor of history and law at l'université de Limoges), JULIETTE RAOUL-DUVAL (president of the French Committee of the International Council of Museums).

The program helped us to take stock of the situation concerning international law, French internal law, African law, but also to provide commentaries on the methodological documentation given to the public by the Association des musées allemands. Several cases of restitution that have already been carried out were examined. By way of a presentation about three African objects from the collections of the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac that entered into the collections according the modalities at different historical time periods, among other things, the program helped us to engage in a concrete reflection on the modalities and precautions to take in the hypothetical situation of future restitutions, and allowed for a confrontation of viewpoints concerning the different future actors concerned in this process.

Documents

Document 1. Letter of mission

LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

Paris le

Madame,

L'ambition culturelle de la France est de favoriser l'accès de tous aux œuvres de l'humanité. Si les grands musées universels contribuent à cette vocation, l'accès aux œuvres doit faire l'objet partout dans le monde d'initiatives et de partenariats concrets au profit de tous les publics, en particulier dans les régions où ces œuvres n'existent plus ou ne sont pas accessibles. J'ai donc fait de la protection et de la circulation des œuvres une priorité de notre politique culturelle internationale.

Depuis les engagements pris dans le discours de la Pnyx à Athènes à l'égard du patrimoine européen, en passant par Abou Dhabi et par Alger, jusqu'à l'Université de Ouagadougou le 28 novembre dernier, j'ai souhaité lancer une action déterminée en faveur de la circulation des œuvres et du partage de la connaissance collective des contextes dans lesquels ces œuvres ont été créées, mais aussi prises, parfois pillées, sauvées ou détruites. Cette circulation pourra prendre différentes formes, jusqu'à des modifications pérennes de nos inventaires nationaux et à des restitutions. Tout ne passe par ailleurs pas par les *musées* et par le *patrimoine*, qui sont des « intraduisibles » des langues européennes.

Pour cette raison, j'ai souhaité que cette action soit conduite dans le cadre d'une réflexion approfondie sur nos collections nationales, en lien étroit avec le Ministère de la culture, le Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères et le Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche. Trois groupes de travail sont constitués pour aborder différents aspects de cette question complexe, portant sur la circulation des œuvres et sur les restitutions.

S'agissant plus spécifiquement de l'Afrique, je me suis engagé pour que d'ici cinq ans les conditions soient réunies pour des restitutions temporaires ou définitives du patrimoine africain en Afrique. Un des trois groupes de travail sera consacré à tracer le chemin vers cet objectif. Connaissant votre travail universitaire et votre engagement, je souhaite vous confier, aux côtés de M. Felwine SARR, la direction de ce groupe.

Vous engagerez un dialogue transparent et participatif avec les différents acteurs les plus concernés par ces questions – musées, juristes, organisations internationales, marché de l'art, universitaires – tant en Europe, où vous chercherez à mobiliser nos principaux partenaires, que sur le continent africain.

Madame Bénédicte SAVOY

Vous me proposerez dans un premier temps la méthode de travail et les étapes principales de ce processus. Vous veillerez à constituer autour de vous et de M. Sarr un groupe de personnalités de bonne volonté, issues des différentes parties prenantes de cette question (musées et conservation du patrimoine, droit international, recherche, organisations internationales, milieu associatif, politique et militant, marché de l'art, etc.), qui puissent exprimer des points de vue diversifiés et ouverts sur ces questions. Vous garantirez la composition intercontinentale et paritaire de ce groupe de travail. Vous prendrez en compte les résultats des travaux parlementaires et de recherche passés ou en cours sur ces sujets. Le dialogue et la participation devront accompagner toutes les étapes de ces travaux.

A l'issue de ce processus, vous me transmettez des propositions concrètes d'actions, réalisables à court, à moyen et à long terme, sous forme d'un rapport qui sera remis en novembre 2018.

Pour mener à bien cette mission, outre l'accompagnement de mon cabinet, vous pourrez vous appuyer sur le concours des services des trois ministères et sur l'appui d'un inspecteur général des affaires culturelles qui sera désigné pour cette mission.

Je compte sur votre engagement et vous remercie très sincèrement pour votre contribution décisive à cette nouvelle approche universelle des collections.

*Merci pour votre implication,
Bonne nuit,*

Emmanuel Macron
Emmanuel MACRON

LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

Paris le

Monsieur,

L'ambition culturelle de la France est de favoriser l'accès de tous aux œuvres de l'humanité. Si les grands musées universels contribuent à cette vocation, l'accès aux œuvres doit faire l'objet partout dans le monde d'initiatives et de partenariats concrets au profit de tous les publics, en particulier dans les régions où ces œuvres n'existent plus ou ne sont pas accessibles. J'ai donc fait de la protection et de la circulation des œuvres une priorité de notre politique culturelle internationale.

Depuis les engagements pris dans le discours de la Pnyx à Athènes à l'égard du patrimoine européen, en passant par Abou Dhabi et par Alger, jusqu'à l'Université de Ouagadougou le 28 novembre dernier, j'ai souhaité lancer une action déterminée en faveur de la circulation des œuvres et du partage de la connaissance collective des contextes dans lesquels ces œuvres ont été créées, mais aussi prises, parfois pillées, sauvées ou détruites. Cette circulation pourra prendre différentes formes, jusqu'à des modifications pérennes de nos inventaires nationaux et à des restitutions. Tout ne passe par ailleurs pas par les *musées* et par le *patrimoine*, qui sont des « intraduisibles » des langues européennes.

Pour cette raison, j'ai souhaité que cette action soit conduite dans le cadre d'une réflexion approfondie sur nos collections nationales, en lien étroit avec le Ministère de la culture, le Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères et le Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche. Trois groupes de travail sont constitués pour aborder différents aspects de cette question complexe, portant sur la circulation des œuvres et sur les restitutions.

S'agissant plus spécifiquement de l'Afrique, je me suis engagé pour que d'ici cinq ans les conditions soient réunies pour des restitutions temporaires ou définitives du patrimoine africain en Afrique. Un des trois groupes de travail sera consacré à tracer le chemin vers cet objectif. Connaissant votre travail et votre engagement, je souhaite vous confier, aux côtés de Mme Bénédicte SAVOY, la direction de ce groupe.

Vous engagerez un dialogue transparent et participatif avec les différents acteurs les plus concernés par ces questions – musées, juristes, organisations internationales, marché de l'art, universitaires – tant en Europe, où vous chercherez à mobiliser nos principaux partenaires, que sur le continent africain.

Monsieur Felwine SARR

Vous me proposerez dans un premier temps la méthode de travail et les étapes principales de ce processus. Vous veillerez à constituer autour de vous et de Mme Savoy un groupe de personnalités de bonne volonté, issues des différentes parties prenantes de cette question (musées et conservation du patrimoine, droit international, recherche, organisations internationales, milieu associatif, politique et militant, marché de l'art, etc.), qui puissent exprimer des points de vue diversifiés et ouverts sur ces questions. Vous garantirez la composition intercontinentale et paritaire de ce groupe de travail. Vous prendrez en compte les résultats des travaux parlementaires et de recherche passés ou en cours sur ces sujets. Le dialogue et la participation devront accompagner toutes les étapes de ces travaux.

A l'issue de ce processus, vous me transmettez des propositions concrètes d'actions, réalisables à court, à moyen et à long terme, sous forme d'un rapport qui sera remis en novembre 2018.

Pour mener à bien cette mission, outre l'accompagnement de mon cabinet, vous pourrez vous appuyer sur le concours des services des trois ministères et sur l'appui d'un inspecteur général des affaires culturelles qui sera désigné pour cette mission.

Je compte sur votre engagement et vous remercie très sincèrement pour votre contribution décisive à cette nouvelle approche universelle des collections.

*J'ai pour le travail,
Mlle Indichien,*

Emmanuel MACRON

Emmanuel Macron

Document 2. The juridical apparatus

L'élaboration du dispositif juridique proposé, permettant de lever les obstacles actuels opposés aux demandes de restitution a été effectuée sur la base des travaux de l'atelier juridique du 26 juin et des concertations assurées en juillet et septembre avec les services juridiques de la direction générale des patrimoines et du secrétariat général du Ministère de la Culture.

La difficulté première était bien sûr de donner une sécurité juridique au processus de restitution qui concernera une partie des objets des collections conservées en France, alors que la législation sur le patrimoine est globale et s'applique indistinctement à tous les éléments des collections.

Afin de ne pas remettre en cause la législation pluriséculaire qui protège le patrimoine national tout en faisant droit à l'exigence éthique des restitutions, une issue a été trouvée dans le recours à une procédure d'exception, élaborée *ad hoc*, pour ce besoin spécifique.

Les réunions de concertation et l'atelier ont permis de mettre en lumière un consensus sur les objectifs, mais ont fait apparaître différentes approches pour résoudre les difficultés auxquelles les restitutions sont confrontées dans notre droit actuel, qu'il semble utile d'évoquer en indiquant les choix faits par la mission.

Trois sujets ont retenu l'attention de la mission et font l'objet de propositions sur leur traitement juridique :

1°) **le choix de l'insertion au code du patrimoine des dispositions législatives, ou de l'élaboration d'un texte de loi autonome**, jugée plus symbolique du caractère d'exception du dispositif de restitution. Cette suggestion d'un texte de loi autonome est apparue tardivement dans la discussion et a conduit la mission à proposer les deux versions dans le tableau ci-après ;

2°) **les modalités de sortie du domaine public, concernant les objets à restituer** ; ces modalités découlent du jeu croisé du code général de la propriété des personnes publiques (CG3P) et du code du patrimoine, d'une part, et de la future procédure, d'autre part ;

3°) **le traitement des objets restituables dont la propriété publique résulte de dons ou legs.**

Ces deux derniers sujets ont fait l'objet d'analyses et de débats, qui ont guidé les choix de la mission (voir l'analyse détaillée dans les deux fiches thématiques jointes) :

Sur la sortie du domaine public

Les objets concernés par les restitutions sont, pour ce qui concerne les collections publiques, incorporés dans le domaine public, et sauf perte d'intérêt, ces objets n'ont pas vocation à être déclassés du domaine public pour permettre leur aliénation. Face à cette donnée et à la nécessité de ne pas remettre en cause le principe général d'inaliénabilité du domaine public, **deux pistes ont été explorées :**

- **L'élaboration d'une procédure *ad hoc*, pour les besoins de la restitution des objets africains**, dans laquelle le déclassé du domaine public apparaît comme un corollaire implicite de la décision de restitution, sans signification propre. Cette

piste met en avant l'objectif de restitution et de coopération, privilégie le partenariat scientifique dans le processus de restitution et ouvre la possibilité de rendre des objets dont les conditions d'acquisition resteront incertaines malgré les recherches de provenance, afin de constituer des ensembles scientifiquement cohérents d'objets restitués.

- **L'annulation de l'entrée des objets dans les collections et donc dans le domaine public**, pour laquelle une procédure est effectivement prévue au code du patrimoine, dans des cas précis d'acquisition frauduleuse reconnue par les conventions internationales. L'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections résout d'elle-même la question de l'inaliénabilité : n'étant plus domaine public, l'objet peut être aliéné.

Bien que tentante, cette dernière option de l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections n'a pas été retenue par la mission, pour les raisons détaillées dans la fiche 1. Peu réaliste dans un contexte de restitutions concernant un nombre potentiellement important d'objets, elle ne permettrait, par sa radicalité même, que de rendre les objets dont on connaît avec certitude les conditions d'acquisition sans consentement, et fragilise le statut des objets non revendiqués qui resteront dans les collections. En outre, elle provoque un effacement de l'histoire de l'objet.

Pour toutes ces raisons, la mission a bâti le dispositif de procédure de restitution sur la première option, tel qu'il est décrit dans la partie 3 du rapport.

Sur les dons et legs :

Les dispositions du CG3P et du code civil (auquel renvoie le CG3P) ne semblent pas faire obstacle à une révision des conditions et charges des libéralités dans les conditions du droit commun, pouvant conduire à l'aliénation des biens concernés, dès lors que pour les besoins de la restitution il serait dérogé au code du patrimoine. Une des questions à traiter concerne alors la faculté de passer outre les clauses des dons et legs sans recours au juge, et sans devoir rechercher nécessairement l'accord préalable de l'auteur de la libéralité ou de ses ayants droits.

Le consensus s'est stabilisé sur l'idée que les objets initialement acquis sans consentement, de façon certaine ou fortement présumée, puis donnés ultérieurement aux collections publiques, pourraient être restitués à leur pays d'origine sur décision administrative en dépit de l'existence d'une libéralité.

Suivant ce principe, deux schémas ont été examinés :

Une piste suggérait qu'il ne pourrait être passé outre ces libéralités que s'il était avéré que le donateur avait connaissance des conditions d'acquisition éthiquement critiquables, l'essentiel des procédures du code civil restant applicables dans le cas contraire.

La mission n'a pas retenu cette piste, pour les raisons exposées en fiche 2.

La mission propose que le dispositif de restitution *ad hoc* déroge au code civil pour passer outre l'existence d'un don ou legs, quelle que soit son ancienneté et ses clauses,

pour les objets initialement acquis sans consentement (ou fortement présumés tels) et dont la restitution est demandée.

Pour les objets de la « zone grise », dont le retour au pays d'origine est demandé pour motifs scientifiques, la mission propose d'introduire un critère d'ancienneté : les conditions et charges des libéralités de plus de cinquante ans pourraient être passées outre pour les besoins de la restitution ; pour celles de moins de cinquante ans, une déclaration d'intention de restituer serait, selon les cas, notifiée ou publiée afin d'informer l'auteur de la libéralité ou ses ayants droits.

En l'absence d'opposition, la restitution pourrait être décidée, dans le cas contraire, l'objet pourrait être déposé ou prêté, en dépit des inconvénients de cette formule, mais en aucun cas une résiliation judiciaire de la libéralité ne pourrait être engagée par le donateur ou ses ayants droits pour ce motif.

Le tableau ci-après, présentant les deux versions (codifiée et loi autonome) ne concerne que le dispositif législatif permettant de rendre possible des restitutions définitives, traduisant en droit le résultat des concertations et réflexions de la mission. Les modifications de cohérence avec les autres dispositions du code du patrimoine, et s'ils s'avéraient nécessaires, du code général de la propriété des personnes publiques et du code civil seront à envisager dans le cadre du travail d'élaboration législative.

Enfin, la mission présente également à titre indicatif une trame d'accord bilatéral élaborée, parallèlement à la préparation de la proposition législative, en lien avec les services de la direction générale de la mondialisation (ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères).

PROPOSITION DE PROCEDURE DE RESTITUTION

Renvoi au descriptif du rapport	Procédure proposée	Version codifiée	Observations
<p>Cette procédure est proposée selon les orientations qui se dégagent des discussions des ateliers présentées dans le corps du rapport.</p> <p>Elle peut concerner potentiellement tout bien culturel, d'où le positionnement en livre 1, même si le sujet concernera essentiellement les musées.</p> <p>Elle se caractérise par 4 éléments.</p>	<p>Proposition de texte de loi :</p> <p>Art 1 : Afin de permettre la restitution de biens culturels, relevant de la propriété publique, dont la présence sur le territoire national est la conséquence de la colonisation de l'Afrique par la France, la présente loi vise à définir les modalités d'une procédure particulière, fondée sur un partenariat scientifique entre l'État français et les États africains concernés. Ce partenariat scientifique associe des experts français et des experts de l'État africain concerné ; il accompagne la procédure de restitution et met en place une coopération accrue entre institutions culturelles françaises et africaines.</p>	<p>Proposition de modification du code du patrimoine :</p> <p>Il est créé une section 5 au chapitre 2 livre 1 du code du patrimoine, ainsi rédigée :</p> <p>« Section 5 : Restitution de biens culturels sur le fondement d'un accord bilatéral de coopération culturelle avec des pays anciennement colonies, protectorats ou gérés sur mandat français.</p>	<p>Article introductif</p>
<p>1°) Un socle sous forme de traité bilatéral entre le France et chaque État potentiellement intéressé, qui devra prévoir les principes de la démarche de restitutions : mention de la période coloniale visée, le travail d'expertise bilatérale pour établir si besoin la liste des biens et dans tous les cas, la provenance, la composition d'une commission d'experts bilatérale et la définition d'un programme de mesures d'accompagnement</p>	<p>Article 2 : Le partenariat scientifique est conclu sous la forme d'un accord bilatéral entre l'État français et chaque État africain concerné et prévoit, par exception au code général de la propriété des personnes publiques et au code du patrimoine, la restitution de biens culturels, et notamment d'objets des collections de musées, sortis de leur territoire d'origine pendant la période coloniale. Les demandes de restitutions présentées sur le fondement de cet accord sont instruites selon la procédure définie par la présente loi.</p>	<p>Article L.112-28. – Un accord bilatéral de coopération culturelle conclu entre l'État français et un État africain peut prévoir la restitution de biens culturels, et notamment d'objets des collections de musées, transférés hors de leur territoire d'origine pendant la période coloniale française. Les demandes de restitutions présentées sur le fondement de cet accord sont instruites selon la procédure définie par la présente section.</p>	<p>Un modèle type d'accord bilatéral est proposé ci-après.</p> <p>Les biens concernés peuvent être propriété de l'État, de collectivités territoriales ou d'établissements publics (Universités, établissements hospitaliers). Pour cette raison on ne parle pas de « Musées de France », trop restrictif</p>

<p>2°) La procédure d'instruction :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - une demande d'État à État, - une instruction conjointe par les experts du pays demandeur et du musée détenteur du bien, <p>L'objectif est que la démarche de restitution permette l'établissement d'une collection scientifiquement cohérente constituée sur un partenariat scientifique, au-delà de la logique première de restitution de biens acquis sans consentement.</p>	<p>Article 3 : La demande de restitution est présentée par l'État d'origine culturelle du bien à l'État français et désigne précisément le ou les objets concernés.</p> <p>L'instruction de la demande vise à mettre en évidence, par des travaux de recherches associant les experts français et ceux de l'État africain concerné :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - les éléments de provenance du bien, notamment son origine géographique, les circonstances de sa première acquisition, les modalités de son entrée dans les collections publiques, - l'importance du bien pour le patrimoine de l'État d'origine culturelle ou pour les communautés qui le composent, - le cas échéant, la cohérence scientifique avec d'autres objets dont la restitution est demandée ou avec d'autres objets déjà restitués en application de l'accord bilatéral. <p>Le dossier d'instruction indiquera également la localisation, dans les collections françaises, des objets de nature similaire permettant d'assurer la</p>	<p>Article L.112-29. – La demande de restitution est présentée par l'État d'origine du bien et désigne précisément les objets concernés.</p> <p>L'instruction de la demande vise à mettre en évidence, par des travaux de recherches associant les experts français et ceux de l'État concerné :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - les éléments de provenance du bien, notamment son origine géographique, les circonstances de sa première acquisition, les modalités de son entrée dans les collections du musée, - l'importance du bien pour le patrimoine de l'État d'origine culturelle ou pour les communautés qui le composent, - le cas échéant, la cohérence scientifique avec d'autres objets dont la restitution est demandée ou avec d'autres objets déjà restitués en application de l'accord bilatéral. <p>Le dossier d'instruction indiquera également la localisation dans les collections françaises des objets de nature similaire permettant d'assurer la</p>	<p>La demande doit être formelle et précise. Elle supposera la plupart du temps un travail de recherche en amont, bilatéral, que le traité de coopération vise également à organiser.</p> <p>L'instruction visera à rechercher l'origine des biens, leur histoire, leur usage afin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - d'établir si l'acquisition première a été faite sans consentement ou non, - en l'absence d'information précise sur les circonstances de la première acquisition, établir son intérêt scientifique au regard des autres objets restitués. <p>Il s'agit d'organiser la présentation des collections restantes dans les meilleures conditions, et le cas échéant de susciter des prêts ou échanges entre musées africains et français.</p> <p>La commission scientifique sera constituée pays par pays. Son principe et modalités de désignation devront figurer à l'accord bilatéral.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>3°) commission scientifique pour valider le sérieux de l'instruction et la reconnaissance de la provenance du bien et de la pertinence de la restitution, elle assure également le respect de la parité franco-africaine dans l'appréciation de l'opportunité du retour du bien,</p>	<p>continuité de la présentation sur le territoire national de la culture, des arts et de l'histoire de l'Etat bénéficiaire des restitutions.</p> <p>Article 4 : La demande de restitution et les éléments de l'instruction sont soumis pour avis à une commission scientifique créée pour la durée de l'accord bilatéral, qui en fixe la composition de façon à assurer une représentation équilibrée de personnalités scientifiques du pays d'origine et des institutions françaises concernées, ainsi que de personnalités qualifiées nommées à parts égales par les deux parties.</p> <p>Cette commission appréciera les éléments de l'instruction relatifs aux conditions d'acquisition du bien. Celui-ci pourra être restitué du seul fait du défaut avéré ou fortement présumé de consentement du propriétaire lors de l'acquisition initiale, quelle que soit la date d'entrée dans les collections et nonobstant l'existence éventuelle d'un don ou legs.</p> <p>Lorsque les recherches des experts bilatéraux n'auront pu établir les circonstances d'acquisition du bien soumis à son examen, la commission scientifique bilatérale appréciera la cohérence scientifique du bien avec d'autres objets faisant l'objet de la demande de restitution ou ayant été rendus précédemment en application de la présente procédure.</p>	<p>continuité de la présentation sur le territoire national de la culture, des arts et de l'histoire de l'Etat destinataire des restitutions.</p> <p>Article L.112-30. – La demande est soumise pour avis à une commission scientifique créée pour la durée de l'accord bilatéral qui en fixe la composition de façon à assurer une représentation équilibrée de personnalités scientifiques du pays d'origine et du ou des institutions françaises concernées, ainsi que de personnalités extérieures nommées à parts égales par les deux parties.</p> <p>Cette commission appréciera les éléments de l'instruction relatifs aux conditions d'acquisition du bien. Celui-ci pourra être restitué du seul fait du défaut avéré ou fortement présumé de consentement du propriétaire lors de l'acquisition initiale, quelle que soit la date d'entrée dans les collections et nonobstant l'existence éventuelle d'un don ou legs.</p> <p>Lorsque les recherches des experts bilatéraux n'auront pu établir les circonstances d'acquisition du bien soumis à son examen, la commission scientifique bilatérale appréciera la cohérence scientifique du bien avec d'autres objets faisant l'objet de la demande de restitution ou ayant été rendus précédemment en application de la présente procédure.</p>	<p>La formalisation d'un cadre commun pour la composition de ces commissions apparait une précaution propre à rassurer toutes les parties.</p> <p>Il apparait nécessaire de préciser les compétences de la commission dans les deux situations auxquelles elle sera confrontée : bien acquis sans consentement ou bien aux origines incertaines malgré recherches.</p> <p>Son examen se limitera à la vérification des conditions d'acquisition dans le premier cas, alors que dans le deuxième cas elle se prononcera en opportunité sur des critères scientifiques.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Il convient de traiter le cas des objets entrés dans les musées par dons ou legs, qui posent une difficulté spécifique.</p> <p>Là encore la proposition est de créer un dispositif d'exception, limité au besoin précis de restitution, organisé dans le cadre des accords bilatéraux.</p>	<p>Article 5 : La restitution des objets peut être décidée par le propriétaire de la collection dont est issu le bien en cause, nonobstant les clauses éventuelles de dons et legs, s'il est établi que ces biens ont fait l'objet de vol, pillages, accaparement forcés ou acquisition inéquitable pendant la période coloniale, ou que l'instruction scientifique de la demande conclut qu'il existe une forte présomption, validée par la commission d'experts bilatérale, que leur acquisition ait été faite dans des conditions incompatibles avec le consentement libre et éclairé du propriétaire d'origine.</p> <p>En l'absence d'information suffisante sur les conditions de leur acquisition initiale, et sur avis favorable de la commission d'experts bilatérale, le retour au pays d'origine des objets issus de dons et legs de moins de cinquante ans peut être décidé par la personne publique donataire ou légataire du bien après information des donateurs et testateurs ou de leurs héritiers directs.</p> <p>Ceux-ci disposent d'un délai d'un an pour faire connaître leur position. A défaut de réponse à l'issue de ce délai, leur contentement est réputé acquis.</p> <p>Si les donateurs et testateurs ou leurs héritiers directs ne peuvent être retrouvés, l'information est diffusée par insertion d'un communiqué dans deux journaux</p>	<p>L.112-31 – La restitution des objets est peut être décidée par le propriétaire de la collection dont est issu le bien en cause, nonobstant les clauses éventuelles de dons et legs, s'il est établi que ces biens ont fait l'objet de vol, pillages, accaparement forcés ou acquisition inéquitable pendant la période coloniale, ou que l'instruction scientifique de la demande conclut qu'il existe une forte présomption, validée par la commission d'experts bilatérale, que leur acquisition ait été faite dans des conditions incompatibles avec le consentement libre et éclairé du propriétaire d'origine.</p> <p>En l'absence d'information suffisante sur les conditions de la première acquisition, et sur avis favorable de la commission d'experts bilatérale, le retour au pays d'origine des objets issus de dons et legs de moins de cinquante ans peut être décidé par la personne publique donataire ou légataire du bien après information des donateurs et testateurs ou de leurs héritiers directs.</p> <p>Ceux-ci disposent d'un délai d'un an pour faire connaître leur position. A défaut de réponse à l'issue de ce délai, leur contentement est réputé acquis.</p> <p>Si les donateurs et testateurs ou leurs héritiers directs ne peuvent être retrouvés l'information est diffusée par insertion d'un communiqué dans deux journaux</p>	<p>Cette proposition devra être soumise à l'avis de la Chancellerie.</p> <p>La proposition est de lever le don ou legs, quel que soit sa date, lorsque il est avéré que l'objet a été acquis par pillage (ou autre acte cité), ou, si après avis de la commission d'experts scientifiques, il y a une forte présomption d'une acquisition sans consentement.</p> <p>Il est proposé, pour les objets de la zone grise, de conserver le principe du code civil de la consultation de l'auteur de la libéralité ou de ses ayants droit, mais sous condition de délai : les restitutions d'objets issus de libéralités de plus de cinquante ans d'ancienneté ne seraient pas soumises à cette obligation.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>4°) décision formelle de restitution : le déclassement du bien du domaine public est de fait contenu dans la décision de restitution des biens, dont il est un effet induit, sans signification propre.</p>	<p>nationaux. Le même délai d'un an s'applique à compter de cette publication.</p> <p>L'intention de restituer n'est pas un motif de résiliation judiciaire de la libéralité.</p> <p>Un décret en Conseil d'État fixe les modalités d'application du présent article.</p> <p>Article 6 : La décision de restitution est prononcée par la personne publique propriétaire des collections dont le bien restitué est issu. La décision mentionne l'État bénéficiaire et précise les motifs de la restitution et la destination du bien.</p>	<p>nationaux. Le même délai d'un an s'applique à compter de cette publication.</p> <p>L'intention de restituer n'est pas un motif de résiliation judiciaire de la libéralité.</p> <p>Un décret en Conseil d'État fixe les modalités d'application du présent article.</p> <p>Article L.112-32. – La décision de restitution est prononcée par la personne publique propriétaire. La décision mentionne l'État bénéficiaire et précise les motifs de la restitution et la destination du bien.</p>	<p>L'intention de restituer ne pourrait ouvrir droit à une requête en résiliation de la libéralité, qui déposséderait la collection publique de l'objet légué.</p> <p>Décision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - du ministre de la culture pour les biens de l'État, - du maire de la commune ou du président de l'assemblée délibérante pour les biens des autres collectivités territoriales, après avis du conseil municipal ou de l'assemblée, - le cas échéant, du président de l'établissement public propriétaire, après avis du conseil d'administration de l'établissement. <p>Le rythme des restitutions dépendra aussi du niveau d'équipement du pays destinataire et des actions de coopération définies dans l'accord bilatéral.</p>
<p>Article 7 : La restitution à l'État bénéficiaire est assurée dans les conditions fixées par l'accord bilatéral de coopération culturelle.</p> <p>Art 8 : Un décret en Conseil d'État détermine les modalités d'enregistrement des biens restitués ainsi que les conditions de transfert de la documentation afférente aux biens restitués et de sa numérisation.</p>	<p>Article L.112-33. – La restitution à l'État bénéficiaire est assurée dans les conditions fixées par l'accord bilatéral de coopération culturelle.</p> <p>Article L.112-34. – Un décret en Conseil d'État détermine les modalités d'enregistrement des biens restitués ainsi que les conditions de transfert de la documentation afférente aux biens restitués et de sa numérisation.</p>	<p>Le rythme des restitutions dépendra aussi du niveau d'équipement du pays destinataire et des actions de coopération définies dans l'accord bilatéral.</p>	

Proposition de modèle d'accord bilatéral

ACCORD

de coopération entre la République française et l'État du
en vue du retour de biens culturels issus de l'État du
et du développement des partenariats culturels

La République française et l'État du

ci-après appelés « les parties »

Proposition de préambule

Animés par le désir d'encourager les échanges culturels entre elles,

Souhaitant accompagner la restitution et le dépôt de longue durée d'objets conservés dans les collections des musées de France, notamment du fait de la présence coloniale française du date à date

Souhaitant développer les échanges scientifiques et la coopération culturelle entre les institutions culturelles et universitaires des deux pays,

Souhaitant améliorer la connaissance réciproque des publics des deux États parties sur l'art africain et la provenance des objets présentés dans leurs musées,

Soucieux de prévenir les trafics de biens culturels et de renforcer la coopération mutuelle dans la lutte contre ce fléau,

Article 1^{er}. – Objet

Les parties conviennent de mettre en œuvre un programme pour la durée de l'accord dans les domaines suivants :

- *établissement conjointe d'une liste d'objets africains figurant à l'inventaire des collections publiques françaises dont le retour pourra être demandé par l'État du... en application des dispositions de la loi XXXX / des articles L .. à L. ... du code du Patrimoine*
 - *partage d'informations, de formation et d'expériences dans le domaine de la conservation, la restauration, la mise en valeur des collections,*
 - *expositions temporaires dans les institutions et sites patrimoniaux des deux pays,*
 - *mise en commun de leurs données sur le trafic des biens culturels*
- (à compléter, en adaptant au cas d'espèce)*

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, les parties conviennent notamment de :

- Mettre en place une commission bilatérale d'examen des demandes de retour d'objets présentées par l'État du ... composée des personnalités désignées pour leur expertise par les deux pays, selon les modalités déterminées en annexe,
- D'assurer l'instruction conjointe des demandes de restitution par des travaux communs de recherche par des experts désignés par les parties visant à établir la provenance des objets,
- De définir un programme de missions d'assistance technique, de coopération et d'expertise relevant de leurs domaines de compétences dans les domaines de la conservation, la restauration et la mise en valeur des biens culturels en fonction des objectifs du présent accord.

Article 2. – Programme

Les parties élaborent conjointement un programme d'actions pour trois ans annexé au présent accord.

Les parties établissent un bilan conjoint à l'issue des trois ans, qui servira de base à une éventuelle actualisation du programme d'actions pour une autre période de trois ans.

Article 3. – Moyens

Les parties s'efforcent de mobiliser les moyens financiers et autres nécessaires à la mise en œuvre des actions prévues par le présent accord dans le cadre et la limite de leurs ressources budgétaires.

Le budget de chaque programme d'action particulier et sa répartition entre les parties sont décidés d'un commun accord après définition de chaque programme. Ce budget et sa répartition entre les parties figure dans l'annexe définissant les programmes d'action.

Chaque partie s'engage à rechercher des aides et subventions pour le bon développement des actions du programme.

Les parties peuvent faire appel d'un commun accord à des partenaires extérieurs, publics ou privés, pour mener à bien les actions définies.

Article 4. – Suivi

Un comité de pilotage se réunit une fois par an pour suivre le bon déroulement des actions et leur correct phasage. Il rassemble des représentants du ministère chargé de la Culture du (État partie) et des ministères français chargés de la Culture et des Affaires étrangères ainsi que deux des membres du comité d'experts désignés par chaque partie.

Article 5. – Évaluation de la réalisation des actions

Les parties s'engagent à fournir un bilan des actions menées et des crédits consommés au cours d'une année 1 (2 ?) mois avant la date du Comité de pilotage. Le comité de pilotage établit le bilan des actions réalisées et définit les actions de l'année suivante.

Article 6. – Durée

Le présent accord est prévu pour une durée de 6 ans à compter de sa signature.

Il est reconductible une fois, par tacite reconduction.

Article 7. – Amendement

Le présent accord peut être amendé par accord écrit entre les Parties, après avis du comité de pilotage saisi deux mois avant la date de sa réunion.

Article 8. – Dénonciation

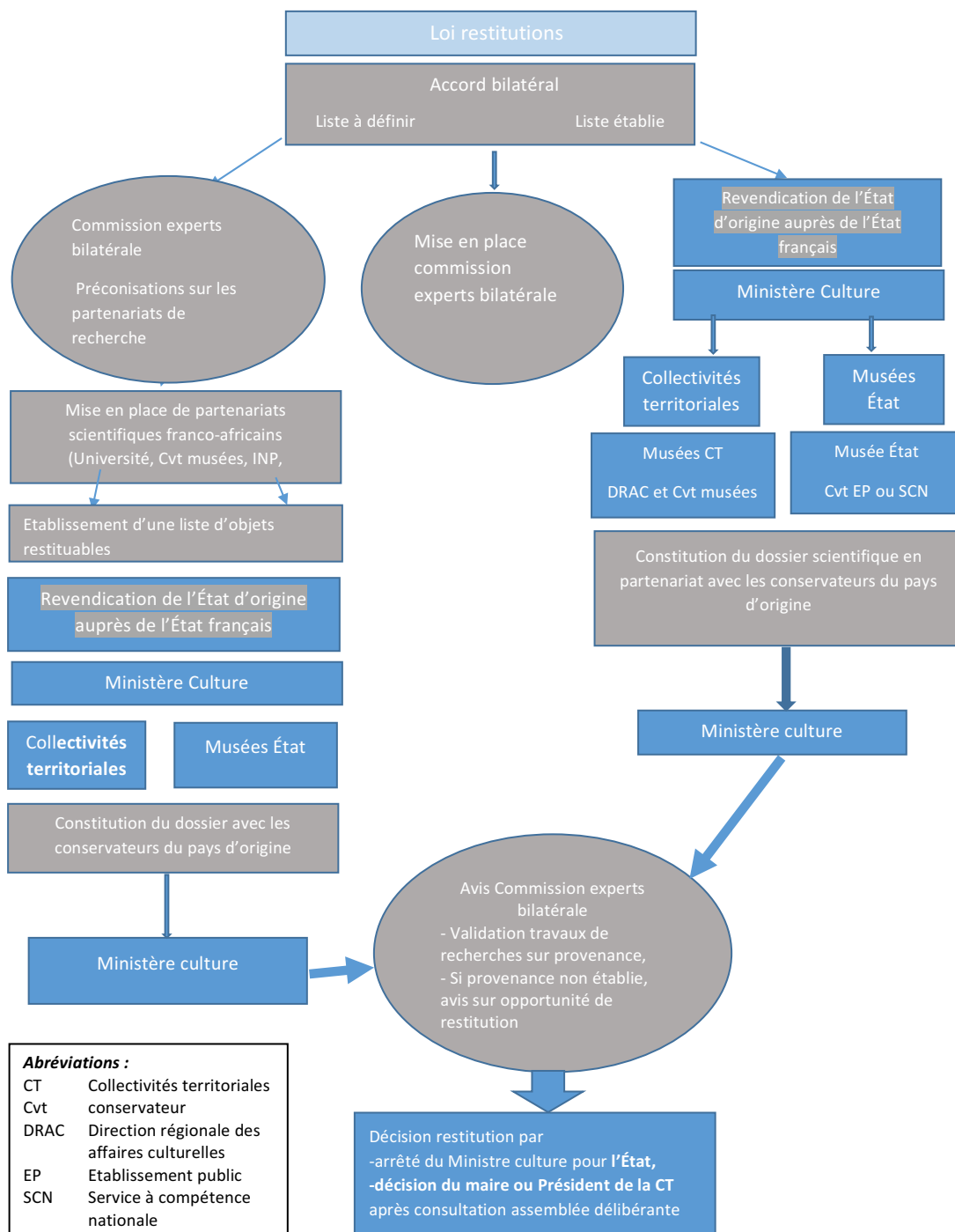
En cas de non-respect par l'une des parties des engagements prévus dans le cadre du présent arrangement, celui-ci peut être dénoncé par l'autre partie. La dénonciation prend alors effet dans un délai de deux mois.

Article 9. – Règlement des litiges

Tout différend lié à l'interprétation ou à l'application du présent accord est réglé à l'amiable, au moyen de négociations directes par voie de consultation ou de négociation entre les Parties.

Fait à ... le ... en deux exemplaires originaux.

Le schéma ci-dessous donne un aperçu visuel d'une procédure de restitution selon qu'il existe une liste d'objets revendiqués (à droite), ou que son élaboration nécessite une coopération bilatérale (à gauche). En grisé les étapes partenariales, en bleu, celles reposant sur les institutions françaises.



Fiche 1 : Comment sortir du domaine public les objets restituables ?

La solution proposée par la mission consiste à traiter la demande de restitution comme une exception réservée aux États, dont les territoires correspondent à d'anciennes colonies françaises, ayant conclu un accord bilatéral de restitution/coopération avec la France. Dans ces conditions, la restitution est un acte de relations internationales, opérée par conclusion d'un traité, et la restitution au pays d'origine fait sortir *de jure* l'objet des collections publiques et, en droit, du domaine public de la personne publique propriétaire ; la restitution actée par le traité international vaut déclassement du domaine public.

Ce déclassement, ainsi encadré, ne saurait être interprété comme une remise en cause du principe d'absolue inaliénabilité des collections des musées, principe consolidé depuis 2002 par l'élaboration croisée du CG3P, de la loi de 2010 et de la doctrine de la Commission scientifique nationale des collections.

Lors des concertations, une autre voie a été explorée : un dispositif qui aurait été inspiré de l'actuel article L.124-1 du code du patrimoine, créé par la loi LCAP du 7 juillet 2016, qui permet au propriétaire d'une collection publique d'agir par voie judiciaire en annulation d'une vente ou d'une libéralité portant sur un objet dont l'origine frauduleuse serait révélée postérieurement à l'acte d'acquisition par le musée.

L'extension de ce dispositif aux restitutions d'objets issus de l'histoire coloniale, en l'adaptant pour supprimer l'obligation de recours au juge, aurait alors permis à la personne publique propriétaire « d'annuler l'entrée dans les collections publiques » des objets reconnus comme acquis sans consentement du propriétaire initial pendant la période coloniale, à l'issue de l'instruction de la demande de restitution conforme à la procédure.

La fiction juridique de la « l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections publiques » permettrait selon ce dispositif de restituer des objets à leur pays d'origine sans recourir à un déclassement du domaine public.

Cette voie, examinée par la mission, nous a semblé devoir être écartée pour les raisons suivantes :

1°) **La plus importante est qu'elle réduit la restitution aux seuls objets dont il sera établi qu'ils auront été acquis sans le consentement du propriétaire**, et ne permet pas la restitution pour des motifs scientifiques d'objets dont, malgré des recherches, il sera impossible de connaître avec certitude les circonstances d'acquisition.

Or, compte tenu de l'ancienneté des acquisitions, des mouvements des objets avant de parvenir au musée, de l'« écran » en termes d'information sur les origines, que peut constituer l'acquisition en bloc par don ou legs de tous les objets d'une collection privée (les cabinets de curiosité notamment, pouvant être composés de divers types d'objets parmi lesquels les objets africains peuvent ne pas avoir été la dominante), à des époques où la recherche de provenance n'avait pas cours, il est à prévoir que dans un grand nombre de cas, les circonstances d'acquisition soient bien difficiles à établir avec certitude, ni même sous forme de « présomptions graves et concordantes ».

Dans le dispositif proposé par la mission, la restitution d'objets à l'origine demeurant incertaine même après recherches (la « zone grise »), sera possible dès lors qu'un intérêt scientifique, reconnu par la commission d'experts bilatérale, s'attacherait à leur

restitution en même temps que des objets acquis sous contrainte avérée ou fortement présumée.

Une logique de cohérence scientifique des objets restitués, gage du dynamisme futur de la mise en valeur des collections, de la portée du message culturel au public et de la coopération muséale à venir viendrait s'ajouter à celle de la restitution pure et simple.

Le schéma proposé de l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections, qui ne peut par nature concerner que des biens acquis sans consentement de façon certaine et, dans le cas de dons, en connaissance de cause de la part du donateur, reste en deçà de cette dynamique, et la perspective, avancée en réponse à cette objection, de multiplier les dépôts de longue durée pour les objets de la « zone grise » ne paraît pas non plus satisfaisante (v 4°).

2°) « L'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections » est une fiction juridique qui peut se justifier ponctuellement mais son extension aux objets en cause est à la fois inutile juridiquement et problématique politiquement.

Elle existe depuis la loi LCAP, pour des biens issus de trafics postérieurs à la ratification de la convention UNESCO par la France en 1997 et dont le caractère illicite se révélerait après leur acquisition par un musée français, postérieurement à 1997. Elle ne devrait en tout état de cause concerner qu'un très petit nombre d'objets compte tenu des précautions normalement prises pour les acquisitions destinées aux collections publiques. Cette possibilité, qui suppose l'intervention judiciaire, constitue avant tout une mesure dissuasive destinée aux trafiquants et receleurs.

En revanche, permettre au propriétaire public d'annuler de sa propre autorité l'entrée dans les collections publiques de tous les biens africains dont la restitution est demandée et dont l'acquisition sans consentement du propriétaire d'origine est établie, ne résout que partiellement la difficulté. En effet, selon l'interprétation constante du service des musées de France, la sortie d'un objet d'une collection de musée ne lui fait pas perdre son intérêt au regard de l'histoire, de l'art etc... qualité qui détermine son appartenance au domaine public selon la définition du CG3P.

Leur restitution nécessitera donc malgré tout un déclassement du domaine public national, à tout le moins implicite, tout comme la procédure proposée par la mission, ce qui prive quelque peu d'intérêt ce montage dont la motivation sous-jacente est d'entretenir intact le principe d'inaliénabilité des collections du domaine public.

Cette réticence est compréhensible, car ce principe, encore récemment rappelé en réponse à une QPC par le Conseil constitutionnel (QPCn°2018-743 du 26 octobre 2018) est fondateur de notre législation sur les biens culturels publics, et il n'est pas question ici de le remettre en cause.

Dans la proposition de la mission, le risque de « banalisation » est cependant écarté : la restitution ne serait possible que pendant la validité des traités de restitution et coopération, accessibles à un nombre limité de pays, pour des objets répondant à des critères précis, et sur une procédure spécifique offrant des garanties scientifiques. Le déclassement implicite du domaine public en fin de procédure qu'implique la restitution apparaît comme collatéral de cette décision, concluant un processus entrepris très en amont, et non comme une initiative *per se* du propriétaire public.

Enfin, que ces objets aient été présentés, étudiés, restaurés, mis en valeur et visités dans les musées français depuis des décennies, ou au contraire oubliés dans des réserves, il nous semble que la responsabilité des gestionnaires des musées publics à leur égard est entière et qu'une décision radicale « d'annulation de l'acquisition » serait peu respectueuse de leur travail et de l'importance de ces collections pour l'histoire des musées. Elle n'effacerait pas non plus le fait que le public et les créateurs français se sont culturellement appropriés ce patrimoine, alors qu'elle viendrait a posteriori symboliquement délégitimer en quelque sorte cette appropriation intellectuelle et nier plusieurs décennies de l'histoire de l'objet.

3°) Par ailleurs, « l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections » ne concernerait que les objets dont la restitution est officiellement demandée, et fragiliserait le statut des objets restants.

La mission estime, d'après les échanges avec les responsables des musées africains, que le processus de restitution, même organisé sur plusieurs années par les traités bilatéraux, ne concernera qu'une partie des collections africaines des musées français.

Dès lors, comment justifier le maintien dans les collections publiques des objets non réclamés mais acquis dans les mêmes conditions que les objets rendus au pays d'origine après annulation de l'entrée dans les collections ?

En bonne logique devrait être annulée l'entrée dans les collections de tous les objets acquis sans consentement pendant près de 200 ans d'histoire coloniale, mais quel serait leur sort si leur restitution n'est pas demandée ? S'ils ne font plus partie des collections, resteront ils domaine public alors que leur acquisition sera entachée de ce vice originel ? Si non, comment dissuader les propriétaires publics de les vendre et les convaincre au contraire de continuer d'assumer leur conservation et leur présentation au public ?

L'extension de l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections, jusqu'ici réservée à des objets dont l'acquisition frauduleuse est régie par les conventions internationales nous paraît également très contestable. S'il peut être envisagé de recourir au même procédé pour les objets issus de spoliations nazies, suivant la Déclaration de Londres de 1943, ou des restes humains, en raison de leur nature spécifique, le recours à un procédé identique pour des objets dont les textes internationaux en vigueur ne condamnent pas les conditions d'acquisition est difficilement défendable.

De plus, le procédé serait paradoxalement moins sécurisé que pour les biens tombant sous le coup de la convention UNESCO de 1970, puisqu'il n'y aurait pas de recours au juge, alors que les biens concernés sont potentiellement beaucoup plus nombreux et que leur origine sera plus difficile à établir du fait de l'ancienneté de leur acquisition.

4°) Enfin, la perspective de développer en complément le dépôt de longue durée pour les objets issus de la « zone grise » ne paraît pas non plus très réaliste si un grand nombre d'objets devait être concerné.

Pratiqué dans quelques cas précédents pour ne pas déroger au principe d'inaliénabilité des collections publiques, le dépôt de longue durée est contestable dans son principe parce qu'il constitue en réalité un transfert de propriété déguisé, et il est perçu (lorsqu'il s'agit d'un dépôt de la France à l'étranger) comme un « faux semblant » ou un « entre deux », une mesure transitoire en attendant une possibilité de reconnaissance d'un transfert de propriété définitif.

Il met cependant à la charge des musées dépositaires des obligations précises de conservation du bien déposé, réputé rester dans le domaine public français, qui pourraient être perçues comme une ingérence dans la gestion des musées africains si elles devaient concerner un nombre significatif d'objets. De plus, gérer de façon homogène une collection juridiquement hétérogène mêlant objets « français » déposés et objets « africains » sera source de difficultés, notamment lorsque les objets déposés seront amenés à circuler entre pays africains ou à l'extérieur pour des expositions temporaires ou pour des travaux de recherche.

Si au contraire, pour éviter cet écueil, la convention de dépôt est peu contraignante, elle placera le propriétaire public qui consent le dépôt de longue durée dans une position délicate car il restera comptable de la conservation de biens sur lesquels il n'aura plus qu'un contrôle lointain et théorique.

Fiche 2 : Comment traiter les objets acquis par dons et legs ?

Inaliénabilité des biens et révision des conditions et charges.

Le code civil régit précisément les dons et legs entre personnes, sans faire toujours de distinction entre personnes publiques et privées, sauf peut-être sur les conditions d'exécution des libéralités et sur la question de l'inaliénabilité des biens donnés ou légués.

La clause d'inaliénabilité qui peut affecter certaines donations ou legs entre personnes physiques est une clause admise, mais qui doit rester cadrée dans le temps et doit être justifiée.

L'article L.900-1 du code civil nous indique que « *les clauses d'inaliénabilité affectant un bien donné ou légué ne sont valables que si elles sont temporaires et justifiées par un intérêt sérieux et légitime. Même dans ce cas, le donataire ou légataire peut être judiciairement autorisé à disposer du bien si l'intérêt qui a justifié la clause a disparu ou qu'il advient qu'un intérêt plus important l'exige* ».

L'article poursuit par un alinéa 2 plus spécifiquement consacré aux personnes morales (pour ce qui nous concerne, publiques) : le présent article « *ne préjudicie pas aux libéralités consenties à des personnes morales ou même à des personnes physiques, à charge de constituer des personnes morales* ».

Il en ressort que les dons et legs aux personnes publiques peuvent, plus facilement qu'entre personnes physiques, être assortis d'une obligation d'inaliénabilité. La jurisprudence montre toutefois une application quasi privatiste de cette règle (CE, 8 décembre 2000, n° 205000) qui reconnaît spécifiquement à la Fondation de France que « ne constitue pas en soi, une illégalité », le fait de n'avoir accepté un legs grevé d'une telle clause sans limitation de temps qu'avec la mention d'une réserve fondée sur l'article 900-1 du code civil de la possibilité de demander l'autorisation judiciaire de disposer du bien.

La jurisprudence civile admet en outre que le juge est souverain pour apprécier l'existence d'un « intérêt plus important » pour le donataire qui exigerait que la condition d'inaliénabilité soit levée.

L'exécution des charges de la libéralité répond à la même logique. L'article 900-2 permet en effet au gratifié de demander en justice la révision des conditions ou charges lorsqu'il fait face à « *un changement de circonstances* » ayant pour conséquences de rendre « *soit extrêmement difficile soit sérieusement dommageable* » l'exécution de ces conditions.

Sur cette question de l'exécution des charges, le cas des personnes publiques est traité par le CG3P, qui renvoie largement au code civil. L'article L.2222-12 du CG3P prévoit expressément le cas où il peut être procédé à la révision des conditions ou charges ou à la restitution des libéralités, pour des raisons reprenant mot pour mot les termes du 900-2 du code civil.

En ce cas, le jeu croisé des dispositions des deux codes permet de conclure que pour ce qui concerne la révision des charges, un accord amiable avec le donateur permet de mettre en œuvre des mesures prévues par l'article 900-4 du code civil, sur autorisation de l'autorité administrative (et non du juge) allant de la « *réduction en quantité et quotité des prestations liées à la libéralité* » à « *l'aliénation de tout ou partie des biens faisant*

l'objet de la libéralité dès lors que le prix sera employé à des fins en rapport avec la volonté du disposant ».

Aucune disposition spécifique n'est prévue en ce cas pour les biens culturels entrés dans le domaine public par dons ou legs¹⁰¹.

C'est sans doute dans l'intention de pallier cette lacune que le code du patrimoine, indique à son article L.451-5 d'une part que « *les biens constituant les collections des musées de France appartenant à une personne publique font partie du domaine public et sont à ce titre inaliénables* », leur déclassement ne pouvant intervenir « *qu'après avis conforme d'une commission scientifique nationale...* » et d'autre part, à l'article L.451-7, que « *les biens incorporés dans les collections publiques par dons ou legs ou.... ne peuvent être déclassés* ».

Ce faisant, il ne déroge pas spécifiquement au code civil ni surtout au CG3P qui, s'il reconnaît aux biens culturels une appartenance quasi naturelle au domaine public mobilier « *sans préjudice des dispositions applicables en matière de protection des biens culturels* » ne prend pas du tout la même précaution quand il s'agit de traiter de l'inaliénabilité ou des révisions de dons ou legs aux personnes publiques.

Il est donc permis de conclure que les révisions des dons et legs de biens culturels suivent les règles du droit commun des dons et legs faits aux personnes publiques, et il en a d'ailleurs été fait, très ponctuellement, application.

Ainsi, restituer des biens des collections africaines des musées sur simple procédure administrative pourrait être envisagé en adoptant les principes suivants :

- la volonté politique de restituer (formalisée par une loi et une procédure nouvelle) et l'existence d'une demande de restitution formelle fondée sur cette procédure sont constitutifs d'un « *changement de circonstances* » mettant en question la poursuite du maintien dans les collections de biens issus de dons et legs comportant une telle charge dont l'exécution deviendrait de fait « *extrêmement difficile* », voire « *dommageable* » pour l'image de l'institution. On peut également invoquer l'apparition d'un « *intérêt plus important* » sur le fondement de l'article L.900-1 du code civil, autorisant l'aliénation ;

- dans ces conditions, peut être mise en œuvre l'aliénation de tout ou partie des biens de la donation ou du legs (article L.900-4 du code civil), le prix de vente devant être consacré « *à des fins en rapport avec l'intention du disposant* ».

Le propriétaire public restituant les objets demandés du fait du « *changement de circonstances* » concrétisé par la demande de restitution procède à une aliénation certes gratuite, mais qui a contrario légitime le maintien dans la collection du musée des objets non revendiqués.

En conclusion, cette aliénation gratuite présente l'avantage de consolider le fonds restant, et si toute la collection d'un musée devait être restituée, l'effet de légitimation a contrario concernerait les autres collections des musées de France.

¹⁰¹ absence d'autant plus frappante que pour la restitution au donateur il est prévu une possibilité d'exception pour certaines catégories : les objets classés et immeubles classés ou inscrits au titre des MH pourraient ne pas être restitués, mais le CG3P ne fait aucunement mention des collections de musées

La procédure de restitution telle que nous l'envisageons ne serait donc pas contraire aux principes du code civil et du CG3P régissant les dons et legs aux personnes publiques.

Toutefois, ces principes ainsi décrits supposent un accord du donateur ou testateur ou leurs héritiers, dans le cas contraire, une procédure judiciaire doit être engagée. Une dérogation à cette obligation, trop lourde pour s'appliquer aux dons et legs des objets restituables en vertu de la nouvelle procédure mise en place, doit être introduite.

Quant à ses modalités, les échanges ont fait apparaître une piste que n'a pas retenu la mission, mais qu'il est apparu utile de présenter, et qui se situait dans la continuité de la piste de « l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections » (fiche 1)

Celle-ci partiellement fondée sur le code civil, se divisait en plusieurs branches, distinguant en premier lieu deux hypothèses, fondées sur le degré d'information ou de conscience du donateur.

Dans la première, le donateur ou testateur de la libéralité avait connaissance du caractère non consenti de l'acquisition de l'objet donné. En ce cas, « l'annulation de l'entrée dans les collections » serait possible sans formalité à l'égard des auteurs de la libéralité ou de leurs héritiers). Dans le second cas, la libéralité aurait été faite de « bonne foi » par un propriétaire privé convaincu d'avoir acquis légitimement les biens qu'il cède à la personne publique (cas évidemment majoritaire), trois situations en découleraient:

- si le donateur est encore vivant, il lui est demandé de révoquer la libéralité et de rendre lui-même l'objet au pays demandeur (cas des plaques Qing) s'il refuse, et si le propriétaire public ne souhaite pas conserver l'objet, celui-ci est rendu au donateur,
- si le donateur ou testateur est décédé et aucun héritier n'est identifié : la libéralité peut être annulée par voie judiciaire, et l'objet, restitué au pays demandeur,
- si les ayants droits du donateur ou testateur décédé sont identifiés : leur accord serait requis pour permettre la restitution, en cas de refus, si la personne publique ne souhaite pas conserver l'objet, celui-ci leur serait rendu.

La mission n'a pas retenu cette proposition.

La solution doit certes tenir compte des circonstances d'acquisition de l'objet, mais le critère premier de la « bonne foi » du donateur quant aux conditions de première acquisition des biens objets du don ou legs ne nous paraît pas devoir être retenu, car il sera invérifiable en réalité, et n'a guère de sens lorsque la libéralité a été faite à une époque où les d'acquisitions non consenties n'étaient pas considérées comme répréhensibles.

Par ailleurs, les dons et legs qui ont constitué les collections africaines des musées de France sont intervenus sur plus de cent cinquante ans, ce qui rend assez irréaliste la recherche d'un consentement des héritiers à la révision des charges de ces libéralités et à l'aliénation que constitue la restitution des objets.

Enfin, en cas de refus, ces hypothèses conduisent potentiellement à des situations d'impasse, contraires aux objectifs recherchés, lorsque l'intention de restitution au pays d'origine pourrait se solder en définitive par un retour des biens en cause au donateur ou ses ayants droits.

La mission préconise donc de s'écarter de la législation applicable pour le droit commun des dons et legs et de privilégier une solution d'exception pragmatique, dont l'économie se fonde sur les circonstances d'acquisition et sur l'ancienneté de la libéralité:

La restitution d'un objet issu de dons et legs serait effectuée par voie administrative, sans recherche de l'accord des ayants droit, quelle que soit la date de cette libéralité, dès lors qu'il est établi, ou qu'il existe un faisceau de présomptions graves et concordantes, que l'objet a été acquis sans consentement du propriétaire initial.

En revanche, pour les objets de la « zone grise », dont la provenance reste incertaine, et dont la restitution serait fondée par des motifs de cohérence scientifique, la mission propose que la recherche de l'accord des ayants droits soit requise si la libéralité a été effectuée moins de cinquante ans avant la demande de restitution et qu'elle contient des clauses explicites contraires à la restitution éventuelle du bien au pays d'origine.

Ce délai glissant laisse en effet une chance de pouvoir consulter l'auteur de la libéralité s'il est encore vivant, ou du moins des ayants droits encore facilement identifiables. La décision de restitution serait précédée d'une période de publication de l'intention de restituer, permettant aux auteurs de la libéralité ou leurs ayants droits d'en être informés conformément au CG3P (article L.2222-13 du CG3P, renvoyant aux articles 900-2 à 900-8 du code civil, et article R.2222-21 et suivants du CG3P), et le cas échéant de contester la décision de restitution, sans que cette contestation ne puisse déboucher sur une annulation de la libéralité, ni sur un retour du bien entre les mains du donateur.

L'hypothèse d'une impossibilité de restituer n'est donc pas exclue dans notre proposition, toutefois, elle serait réduite aux objets de la « zone grise » ayant fait l'objet de libéralités récentes.

Diverses solutions pourraient alors s'envisager : recherche d'un autre objet de nature similaire dans une autre collection, remise d'une copie, dépôt de longue durée, (en dépit des inconvénients de cette solution).

Document 3. The “Atelier juridique”



COLLÈGE
DE FRANCE
—1530—



Atelier juridique sur le retour du patrimoine africain en Afrique

organisé par l'Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique (UMR 7220) & le Ministère de la Culture
avec le concours du Collège de France



Collège de France

26 juin 2018



Mots d'accueil, présentation de la mission et introduction (9h-9h20)

- Accueil des participants et présentation de la mission : *Bénédicte Savoy et Felwine Sarr*
- Introduction à l'atelier : *Isabelle Maréchal et Vincent Négri*

Session 1 (9h20-11h15) – L'état du droit sur le sujet des restitutions : droit international, droit comparé et sources normatives africaines

- La formation et les évolutions du droit à restitution en droit international
Xavier Perrot (Université de Limoges)
- La question des restitutions dans le droit français
Isabelle Maréchal (Ministère de la Culture)
- Commentaires du *Leitfaden Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen* [Guide sur le traitement des objets de collection provenant de contextes coloniaux], publié en Allemagne
Kwame Opoku (retraité du bureau des Nations unies à Vienne)
- Les sources normatives africaines sur les restitutions
Vincent Négri (CNRS/Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique)

Discussions

(Pause)

Session 2 (11h30-13h) – Des précédents : études de cas de biens culturels restitués

- La restitution des têtes maories à la Nouvelle-Zélande
Sébastien Minchin (Muséum d'histoire naturelle de Bourges)
- Le retour des archives coréennes, remises par la France à la Corée du Sud
Stéphane Duroy (Faculté Jean Monnet – Université Paris-Sud Paris Saclay)
- Les accords de restitution entre le ministère italien de la Culture et des musées étrangers
Manlio Frigo (Université de Milan & Cabinet BonelliErede Milan)

Discussions

Session 3 (14h30-16h00) – Etudes de cas sur la provenance à partir de trois objets africains conservés au musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

- Tête d'ancêtre royal, Edo Inv. 73.1997.4.3.
[Origine : Bénin City 1897 ; entrée au musée en 1997 par achat auprès de Jean-Paul et Monique Barbier-Mueller (ancienne collection Musée Barbier-Mueller)]
- Objet cultuel composite Inv. 71.1931.74.1091.1.
[Origine : Mali / Mission Dakar-Djibouti 1931]
- Statue de Ghezo Inv. 71.1893.45.1.
[Origine : Abomey, don du général Dodds]

Présentation des objets et de leur provenance par Hélène Joubert (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac)

Intervention de Gaëlle Beaujean (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac) et des membres du comité scientifique de l'agence nationale du patrimoine au Bénin [interventions par skype depuis le Bénin]

Discussions

(Pause)

Session 4 (16h30-18h00) – Réflexion prospective sur les modes opératoires et les modèles juridiques vers la construction d'une législation *ad hoc*

Réflexions et discussions sur les modes opératoires et les modèles juridiques vers la construction d'un ou de modèle(s) *ad hoc* pour « un objectif de restitutions temporaires ou définitives du patrimoine africain en Afrique ».

Avec :

- Laurence Auer (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
- Claire Chastanier (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
- Marie Cornu (CNRS/Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique)
- Emmanuel Kasarherou (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac)
- Kwame Opoku (retraité du bureau des Nations unies à Vienne)
- Juliette Raoul-Duval (Comité français du Conseil international des musées)

et en présence de l'ensemble des intervenants.

Discussions animées par *Isabelle Maréchal* et *Vincent Négri*.

Conclusions

Bénédicte Savoy et *Felwine Sarr*



Intervenants

Laurence Auer	Directrice de la culture, de l'enseignement, de la recherche et du réseau (ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
Gaëlle Beaujean	Responsable de collections Afrique au musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac
Claire Chastanier	Adjointe au sous-directeur des collections, Service des musées de France (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
Marie Cornu	Directrice de recherche CNRS – Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique (ISP/UMR 7220)
Stéphane Duroy	Professeur de droit public à la Faculté Jean Monnet – Université Paris-Sud Paris Saclay
Manlio Frigo	Professeur de droit international à l'Université de Milan, avocat au cabinet BonelliErede Milan
Hélène Joubert	Responsable de l'unité patrimoniale des collections d'Afrique du musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac
Emmanuel Kasarherou	Adjoint au directeur du département du patrimoine et des collections (musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac)
Isabelle Maréchal	Inspectrice générale des affaires culturelles – ministère de la Culture
Sébastien Minchin	Directeur du muséum d'histoire naturelle de Bourges
Vincent Négri	Chercheur à l'Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique (ISP/UMR 7220)
Kwame Opoku	Ancien conseiller juridique, retraité du bureau des Nations unies à Vienne
Xavier Perrot	Professeur d'histoire du droit à l'Université de Limoges
Juliette Raoul-Duval	Présidente du Comité français du Conseil international des musées
Felwine Sarr	Professeur d'économie à l'Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis (Sénégal), écrivain et essayiste
Bénédicte Savoy	Professeure d'histoire de l'art à la <i>Technische Universität</i> de Berlin, titulaire de la chaire internationale « Histoire culturelle des patrimoines artistiques en Europe, XVIIIe-XXe siècle » au Collège de France

Personnalités invitées

Aurore Bassy	Administratrice au Sénat, Commission de la culture, de l'éducation et de la communication
Lucile Bordet	Chargée de mission Patrimoine (Direction de la culture, de l'enseignement, de la recherche et du réseau – ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
Blandine Chavanne	Sous-directrice de la politique des musées, service des musées de France (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
André Delpuech	Directeur du musée de l'Homme, administrateur au Comité français du Conseil international des musées
Bruno Favel	Chef du Département des affaires européennes et internationales (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
Caroline Gaultier-Kurhan	Chargée de mission pour les musées et patrimoines africains au Département des affaires européennes et internationales (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
Geneviève Koubi	Professeur de droit public à l'Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis
François Laurent	Sous-directeur des affaires européennes et internationales (Secrétariat général du ministère de la Culture)
Vincent Lefevre	Sous-directeur des collections, service des musées de France (Direction générale des patrimoines – ministère de la Culture)
Stéphane L'host	Adjoint du sous-directeur des affaires juridiques, service des affaires juridiques et internationales (Secrétariat général du ministère de la Culture)
François Mairesse	Professeur à l'Université Paris 3 Sorbonne nouvelle, expert en muséologie
Alexis Mocio-Mathieu	Chargé de mission Patrimoine (Direction de la culture, de l'enseignement, de la recherche et du réseau – ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
Paulina Restrepo	Attachée au bureau des affaires juridiques à la Direction générale des patrimoines (ministère de la Culture)
Nathan Schlanger	Professeur d'archéologie à l'Ecole nationale des chartes
Maëlle Sergheraert	Responsable du pôle SHS, archéologie et patrimoine (Direction de la culture, de l'enseignement, de la recherche et du réseau – ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
Didier Touzelin	Chef du bureau des affaires juridiques à la Direction générale des patrimoines (ministère de la Culture)
David Zivie	Chargé de mission auprès du Secrétaire général du ministère de la Culture

Mémo pour la table-ronde de la session 4

Réflexion prospective sur les modes opératoires et les modèles juridiques vers la construction d'une législation *ad hoc*

Position liminaire

- 0) *Restitutions ou circulations ? (Bénédicte Savoy et Felwine Sarr)*

Provenance et arguments

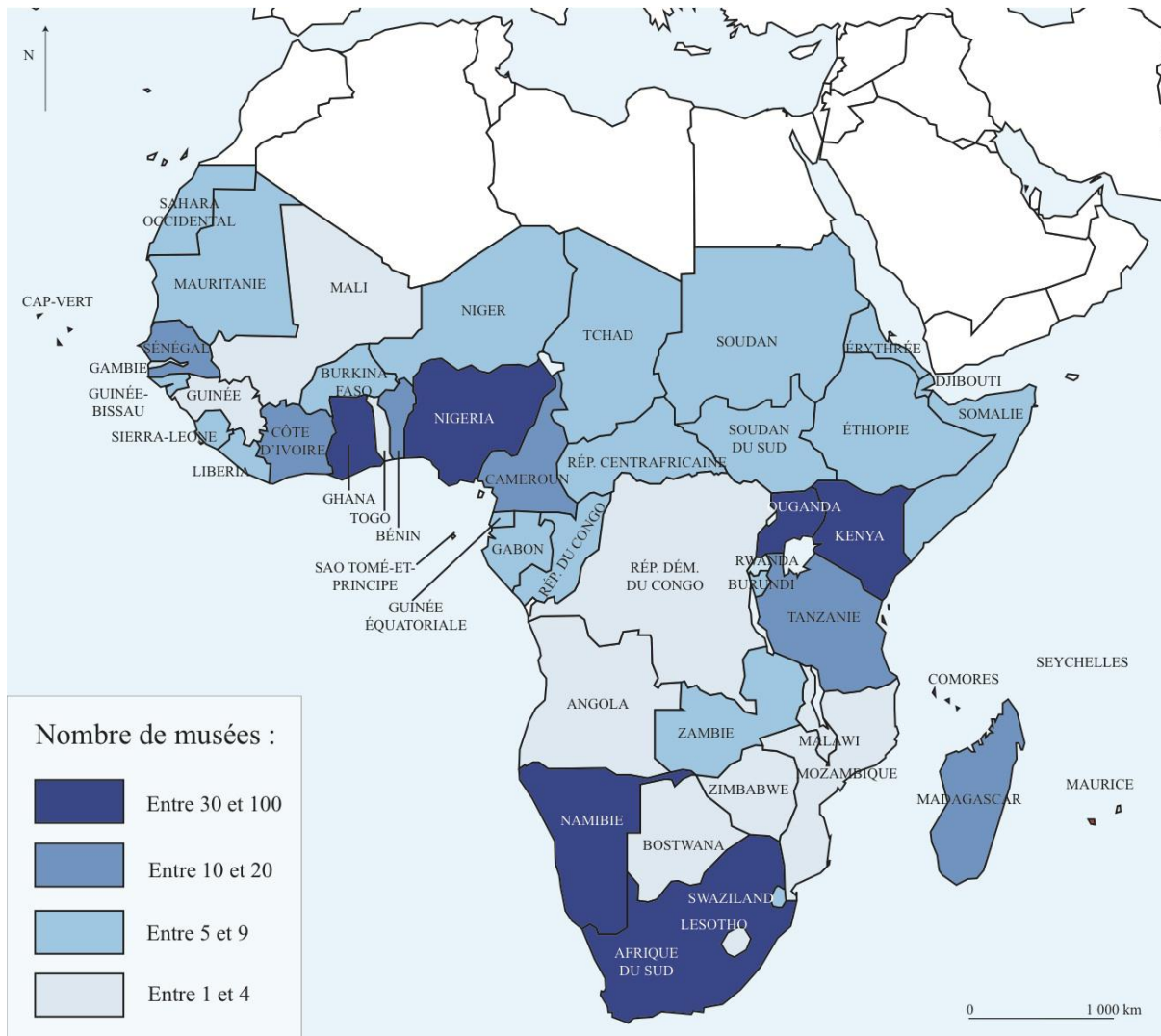
- 1°) Quelle place donner à la provenance des objets lors de l'instruction d'une demande de restitution ? Doit-on traiter différemment les objets issus de « pillages » ou de transferts non-consentis et les autres objets ?
- 2°) Quelle place donner, dans l'examen de la demande, à l'argument scientifique du musée demandeur ? Le simple fait d'être un objet « pillé » ou transféré sans consentement suffit-il à fonder la demande de restitution ?
- 3°) Quelle place donner aux actions de coopération/ formation des conservateurs des musées d'accueil ?
- 4°) L'objet peut-il être rendu à sa communauté d'origine, et donc ne pas être conservé dans un musée ?

Procédures

- 5°) Instruit-on les demandes de restitution, objet par objet, ou admet-on des demandes pour des ensembles d'objets ? Un musée '*restituant*' peut-il de sa propre initiative élargir le champ de la restitution à d'autres objets, non réclamés initialement, dont il dispose et qui forment un tout cohérent ou un ensemble complémentaire ?
- 6°) La demande de restitution s'instruit-elle de musée à musée, ou y a-t-il une commission nationale ou un service centralisant ces actions ?
- 7°) Quelles seraient l'(es) instance(s) à consulter avant déclassement pour restitution ?
- 8°) L'UNESCO, l'Union africaine, l'ICOM ou l'ICCROM doivent-ils jouer un rôle dans ce processus ? et, si oui, lequel ? (inventaire, tenue d'un registre international des restitutions, avec photos et moyens d'identifier chaque objet, ...)

Figures

Fig. 1

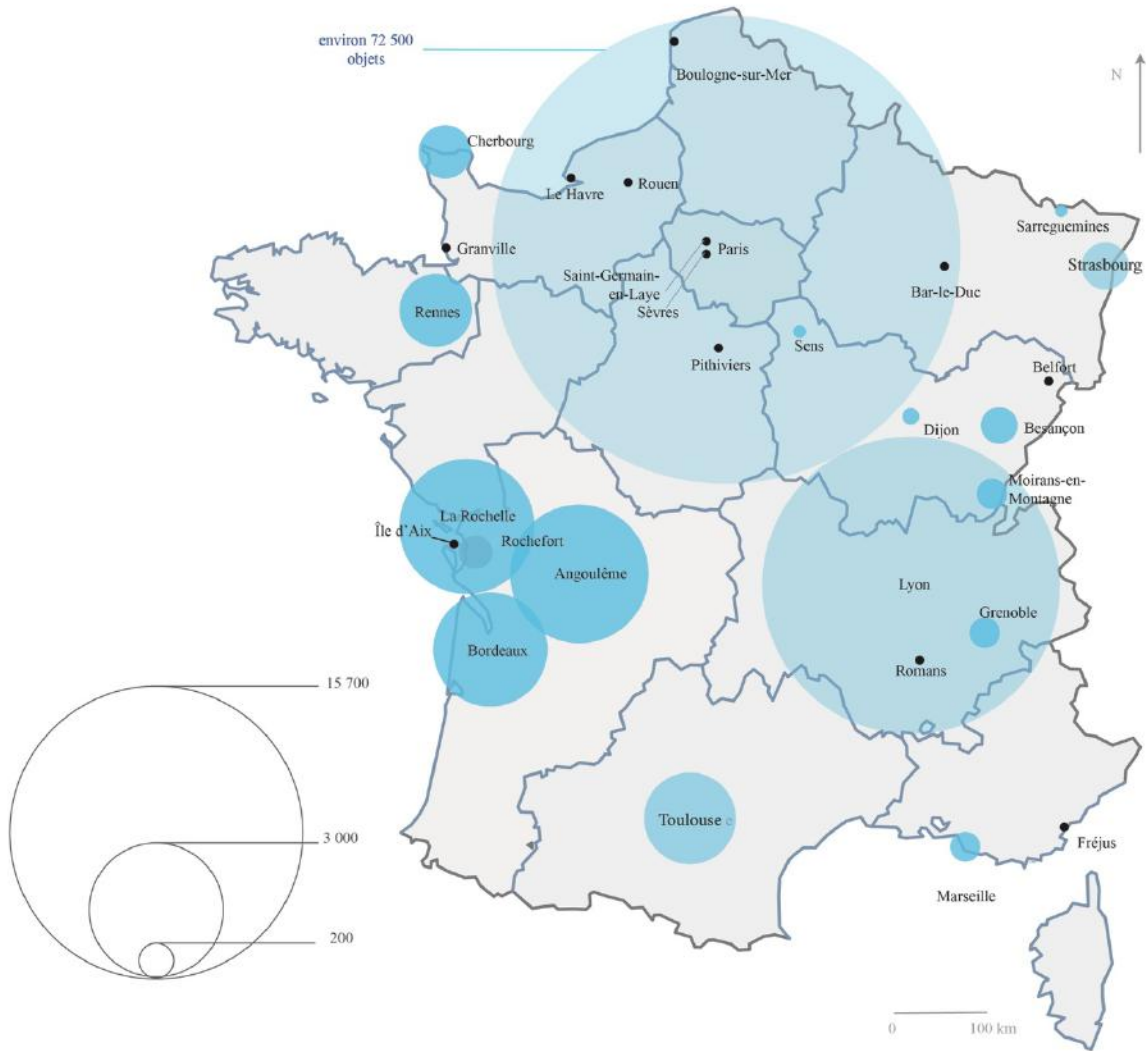


Map: Léa Saint-Raymond, 2018

Museum Institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: Répertoire of the West African Museum Program (WAMP), completed thanks to data provided by Andrea Meyer (Technische Universität Berlin)

Fig. 2



Map: Léa Saint-Raymond, 2018

An estimation of the number of objects originating from sub-Saharan Africa housed in the museum institution collections and French universities, according to the available inventory (October 2018). The sites specifically marked by a dot indicate the possible conservation of rather significant collections, but whose inventory is still for the moment, unavailable.

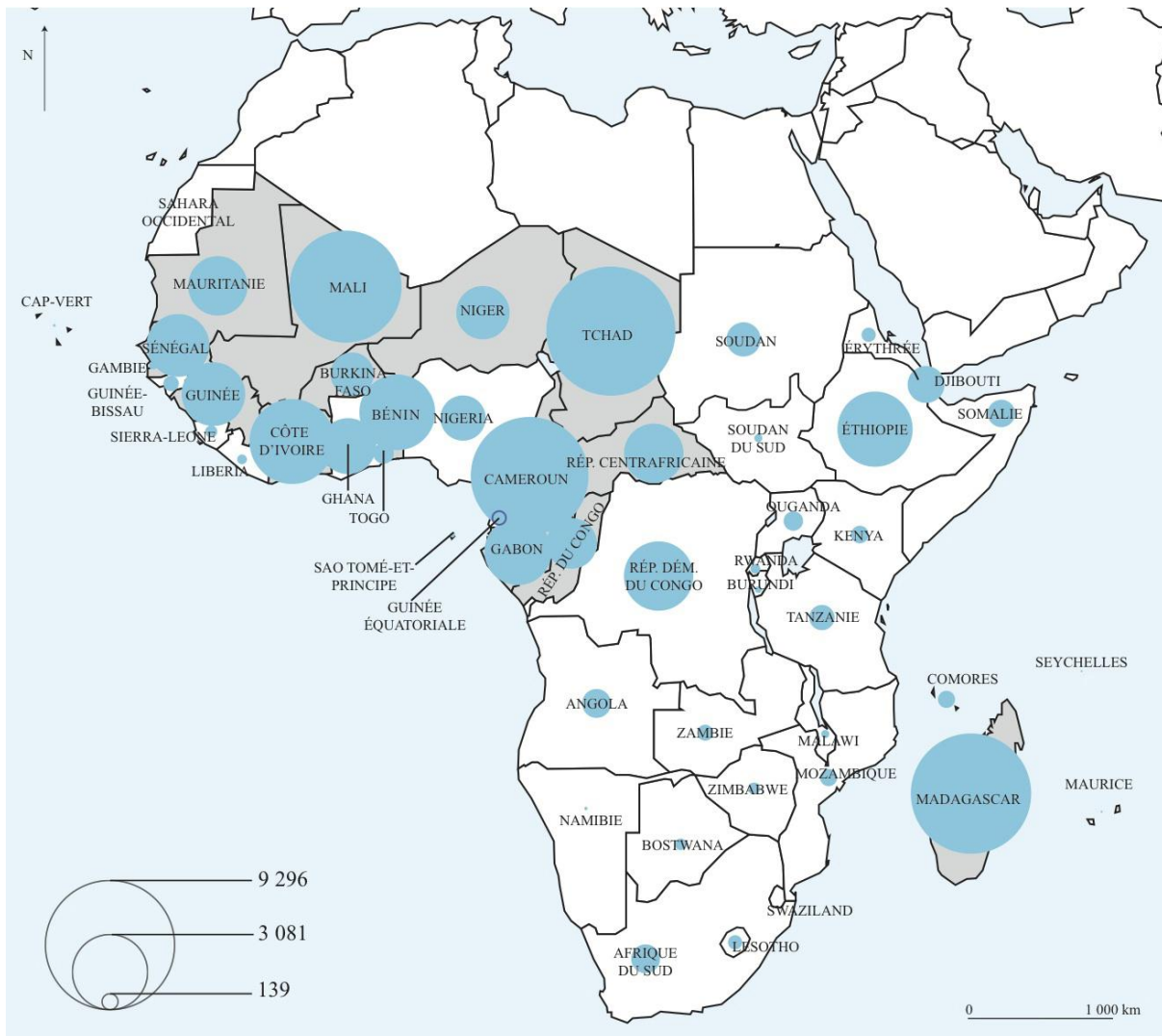
Fig. 3

Pays	...-1884	1885-1960	1961-...	Ind.	Total
Afrique du Sud	23	125	310		458
Angola		414	43		457
Bénin	14	2284	596	263	3157
Botswana	12	56			68
Burkina Faso		733	302	53	1 088
Burundi	3	11	14		28
Cameroun	3	6 968	713	154	7 838
Cap-Vert		2			2
Comores		93	78	4	175
Côte d'Ivoire		1 463	2 292	196	3 951
Djibouti	50	589	15	68	722
Érythrée		57	44	1	102
Éthiopie	29	1 691	1 329	32	3 081
Gabon	149	1 543	687	69	2 448
Gambie	15	18	2		35
Ghana	5	376	1 258	17	1 656
Guinée	21	1 861	267	61	2 210
Guinée équatoriale	2	43	49		94
Guinée-Bissau	1	46	23	55	125
Kenya		101	80		181
Lesotho		24	75		99
Libéria		25	19	2	46
Madagascar	76	3 083	4 196	426	7 781
Malawi		37	1		38
Mali	89	5 863	795	163	6 910
Maurice			2		2
Mauritanie	9	880	522	14	1 425
Mozambique		167	4		171
Namibie		7			7
Niger	9	998	592	16	1 615
Nigéria	41	257	840	10	1 148
Ouganda	5	180	24	1	210
République Centrafricaine		1 505	382	56	1 943
République démocratique du Congo	5	697	551	173	1 426
République du Congo	7	1 801	723	62	2 593
Rwanda	3	9	32	3	47
Sao Tomé-et-Principe		9			9
Sénégal	66	675	1 522	13	2 276

Seychelles			2		2
Sierra Leone	1	32	41	1	75
Somalie	53	251	62	57	423
Soudan	72	502	92	29	695
Soudan du Sud	3	31	4		38
Tanzanie	13	334	23	2	372
Tchad	1	8 557	627	111	9 296
Togo		99	138	3	240
Zambie	4	126	8	1	139
Zimbabwe	1	68	9		78
Total	785	44 691	19 388	2 379	66 980
Pays	...-1884	1885-1960	1961-...	Ind.	Total

The numbers of objects housed at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac at the core of the “Africa” Cultural Heritage Collection, according to the period of their registration into the inventory records. The column marked “undetermined” included pieces where the year of registration is not included in their inventory number.

Fig. 4



Map: Léa Saint-Raymond, 2018

The number of objects in the "Africa" Cultural Heritage Collection included in the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (Paris) recorded as part of the inventory of the national collections between 1878 and 2018, by their geographical provenance, according to the current national borders. The former French colonies (AOF, AEF, and Madagascar) are marked in grey.

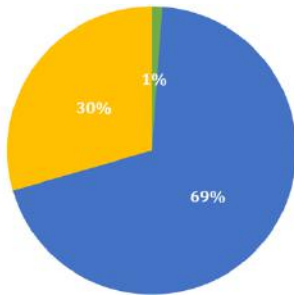


Fig. 5a. The record of the entire inventory of cultural heritage objects in the “Africa” collection at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

- in green: before 1885
- in blue: between 1885 and 1960
- in yellow: after the independence of African nations

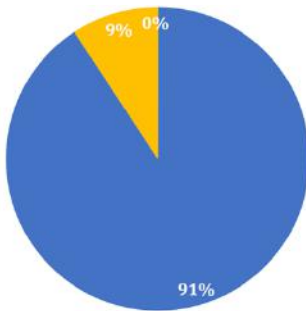


Fig. 5b. The record of the inventory of cultural heritage objects from present-day Cameroon housed in the collection at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

- in green: before 1885
- in blue: between 1885 and 1960
- in yellow: after the independence of African nations

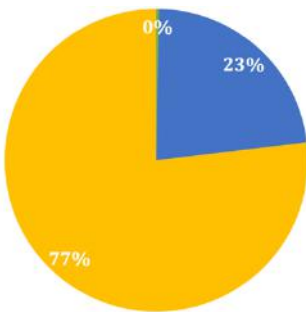


Fig. 5c. The record of the inventory of cultural heritage objects from present-day Ghana housed in the collection at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

- in green: before 1885
- in blue: between 1885 and 1960
- in yellow: after the independence of African nations

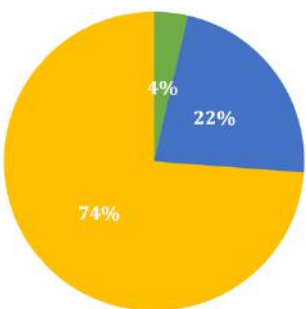


Fig. 5d. The record of the inventory of cultural heritage objects from present-day Nigeria housed in the collection at the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

- in green: before 1885
- in blue: between 1885 and 1960
- in yellow: after the independence of African nations

Fig. 6



Appellation ou titre :

Statue *bochio* à l'image du roi Ghézo

Auteurs :

Bokossa Donvide, Sossa Dede, Ekplékendo Akati (pour les lames)

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, fer, pigments

Dimensions :

214 × 82 × 45 cm, 22 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

XIX^e siècle

Description :

Statue en bois représentant un homme debout, le bras droit levé, l'avant-bras gauche plié. Ceinture en métal supportant peut-être autrefois un cache-sexe (?). Lames de fer sur les épaules et à la taille. Caleçon rayé noir et jaune. Main gauche abimée.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Prise de guerre du colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds à Abomey (actuel Bénin) en 1892.

Fig. 7



Appellation ou titre :

Statue royale anthropo-zoomorphe

Auteur :

Sossa Dede

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.2

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois polychrome, cuir

Dimensions :

179 × 77 × 110 cm, 56 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Entre 1858 et 1889

Description :

Statue évoquant le règne du roi Glélé (1858-1889) représenté sous la forme d'un personnage à tête de lion. Tête, torse et bras peints en rouge de la taille aux jarrets, cuisses jusqu'aux genoux peintes en vert (figuration d'un pantalon ?), mollets et pieds rouges. Poils et crinière indiqués par gravure sur la tête et le torse. Queue rouge. Avant bras levés, poings fermés, cache-sexe en cuir.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Prise de guerre du colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds à Abomey (actuel Bénin) en 1892

Fig. 8



Appellation ou titre :

Statue royale anthropo-zoomorphe

Auteur :

Sossa Dede

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.3

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois polychrome, métal

Dimensions :

168 × 102 × 92 cm, 55 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Entre 1889 et 1892

Description :

Statue d'homme debout dont la tête et le torse évoquent un requin. Quatre ailerons sont figurés au niveau du torse. Bras droit levé, bras gauche tendu, poings fermés, écailles indiquées sur le torse.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Prise de guerre du colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds à Abomey (actuel Bénin) en 1892.

Fig. 9



Appellation ou titre :

Portes du palais royal d'Abomey

Auteur :

Sossa Dede

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéros d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.4 – 71.1893.45.5

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois polychrome, pigments, métal

Dimensions :

173× 109 × 7 cm, 25 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Vers 1889

Description :

Décor en bas-relief organisé en deux registres. Une grenouille est représentée dans les quatre coins de chaque registre. Registre supérieur, de gauche à droite : récade, éléphant, couteau, oiseau, cheval, couteau du migan de Kpengla (cf. 71.1936.21.54)
Registre inférieur, de gauche à droite : animal assis, récade, yeux et nez humains, fusil. En dessous, antilope tachetée (joto de Glèlè).

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

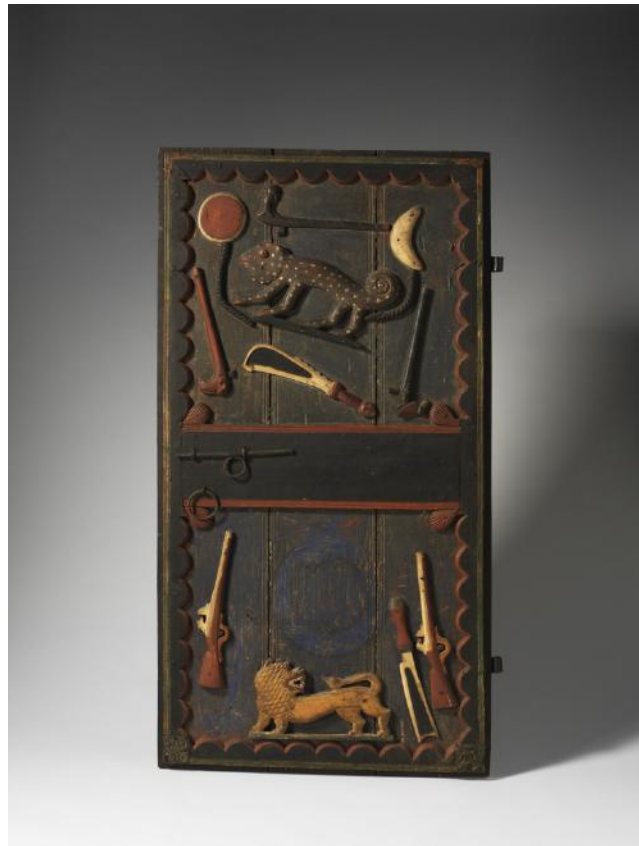
1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Portes trouvées dans des caches souterraines par la colonne expéditionnaire française à Abomey en 1892.

Fig. 10



Appellation ou titre :

Portes du palais royal d'Abomey

Auteur :

Sossa Dede

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéros d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.6 – 71.1893.45.7

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois polychrome, pigments, métal

Dimensions :

168 × 97,5 × 7 cm, 25 kg – 168,5 × 94 × 5 cm, 23 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Vers 1889

Description :

Décor en bas-relief organisé en deux registres. Registre supérieur : un caméléon marchant sur un fil entre la lune et le soleil au dessus d'un sabre et d'une récade. Le caméléon est le symbole de la divinité Lisa, dieu suprême du panthéon dahoméen, unique, tout puissant, mais lointain, ni bon, ni mauvais, inaccessible aux prières des hommes. Le culte de Mahou et Lisa fut importé à Abomey par Na Wangélé, mère du roi Tegbessou (1728-1775). Lisa, principe masculin, représente l'Orient et le soleil, Mahou, principe féminin, représente l'Occident et la lune. Lisa est représenté par le caméléon qui rappelle les diverses colorations que prend chaque matin l'horizon à l'Est. (P. Verger, 1954).

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Portes trouvées dans des caches souterraines par la colonne expéditionnaire française à Abomey en 1892.

Fig. 11



Appellation ou titre :

Siège royal

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1893.45.8

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, pigments

Dimensions :

94 × 72 × 32 cm, 26 kg

Toponyme :

Cana < Bohicon < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Avant 1893

Description :

Siège en bois, rectangulaire à quatre pieds. Deux étages de personnages sculptés et peint soutiennent le plateau incurvé formant le siège. Niveau inférieur : 11 personnages dont 2 soldats au centre coiffés d'un bonnet et tenant un fusil et 9 prisonniers entravés au niveau du cou. Niveau supérieur : 11 personnages dont au centre le roi, assis sous un parasol, entouré de 10 femmes, traitées de façon individualisée. Elles sont figurées vêtues d'un pagne, le buste nu. Ce siège prestigieux à deux étages a été collecté dans la ville de Cana, en progressant vers Abomey, par le colonel, futur général, Dodds au cours de la campagne du Danhomè.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1893**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Saisi après la prise de Cana au sud d'Abomey (actuel Bénin) en novembre 1892.

Fig. 12



Appellation ou titre :

Sculpture dédiée à Gou

Auteur :

Akati Ekplékendo

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1894.32.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Fer martelé, bois

Dimensions :

178,5 × 53 × 60 cm, entre 100 et 150 kg.

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Vers 1858

Description :

Statue entièrement fabriquée à partir de ferrailles d'origine européenne. Les pieds en fer forgé sont rivés au socle formé d'une plaque en tôle d'acier. Les jambes, barres de fer martelées, sont pourvues de prolongements s'enfonçant dans les pieds auxquels les fixent des rivets. Elles sont reliées au corps par rivetage sur un axe horizontal qui traverse le haut des cuisses. Le corps lui-même est fait d'une forte barre de fer à section rectangulaire. Au niveau des épaules une barre horizontale (percée au milieu pour le passage du cou) s'adapte au corps sur lequel elle est fixée par un énorme clou. Vers le haut, le corps devient un cylindre muni d'un boulon au sommet et destiné à recevoir le cou, tube de tôle qu'entoure un collet et qui supporte la tête. Celle-ci, boule creuse sur laquelle le visage est attaché comme un masque, est coiffée d'un chapeau surmonté par un écrou vissé sur le boulon. Les bras tubes adaptés aux épaules, enveloppent les barres de fer traités plus bas en avant-bras et en mains. Des épaules jusqu'au milieu des cuisses, le corps est revêtu d'une tunique sans manches en tôle mince dont les feuilles, découpées au ciseau, récréent l'ampleur des tuniques de guerre dahoméennes. Sous la tunique, Gou porte un pagne fait d'une épaisse barre de fer aplatie et courbée. La main gauche tenait autrefois une clochette et la main droite un grand sabre au fer ajouré.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Eugène Fonssagrives*

Précédente collection : Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1894**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Eugène-Jean-Paul-Marie Fonssagrives (1858-1937), colonel d'infanterie coloniale.

** Objet pris à Ouidah (ville côtière du royaume du Dahomey, actuel Bénin) par l'armée française à la suite d'une bataille contre les troupes danhoméennes.

Fig. 13



Appellation ou titre :

Trône du roi Glèlè

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1895.16.7

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, pigments, métal

Dimensions :

188 × 97 × 75 cm, 136 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Entre 1858 et 1889

Description :

Très haut siège rectangulaire en bois ; partie supérieure incurvée. Deux étages : étage inférieur à décor géométrique (palmes) sculpté et peint en bleu et jaune. Étage supérieur ; les quatre montants seuls soutiennent le siège. Lion sculpté et peint en jaune de chaque côté. Large trou rectangulaire, avec place pour un coussin au milieu du siège. Chaîne ajourée, sculptée sur les quatre montants. Trois éminences circulaires jaunes sous les côtés relevés du siège. « Fabriqué par assemblage de plusieurs panneaux et lamelles de bois travaillés. Différentes procédures semblent avoir été utilisées pour faire tenir les parties ensemble, sans doute des mortaises et des tenons, mais aussi, pour faire tenir la partie incurvée avec le fût des "agraffes" » (Alexandre Adandé, thèse de 3^e cycle, octobre 1984).

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1895**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Prise de guerre du colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds à Abomey (actuel Bénin) en 1892.

Fig. 14



Appellation ou titre :

Trône du roi Ghézo

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1895.16.8

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, pigments, métal

Dimensions :

199 × 122 × 88 cm, 130 kg

Toponyme :

Abomey < Zou < Bénin < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

1818-1848

Description :

Très haut siège rectangulaire, en bois, entièrement sculpté. Partie supérieure incurvée. Décor géométrique sur l'avant et l'arrière. Chaîne ajourée, sculptée, sur les quatre angles.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Alfred Amédée Dodds*

Précédente collection : Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1895**

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842, Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal-1922, Paris) est un général français, métis par ses deux parents, commandant supérieur des troupes françaises au Sénégal à partir de 1890. Entre 1892 et 1894, il mène la conquête du Dahomey (actuel Bénin) sur le roi Béhanzin.

** Prise de guerre du colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds à Abomey (actuel Bénin) en 1892.

Fig. 15



Appellation ou titre :

Sabre ayant appartenu à El Hadj Omar*

Lieu de conservation :

Musée de l'Armée, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

6995

Matériaux et techniques :

Métal, laiton, cuivre, cuir

Dimensions :

Longueur : 81 cm

Datation :

?

Description :

Lame courbe à un seul tranchant, à un évidement, et une gorge. Sur le dos on lit « Manufacture de Klingenthal... et Cie ». Sur un côté, près du talon, deux poinçons, poignée en cuivre ciselé, forte croisière, pommeau en forme de bec d'oiseau terminé par un petit anneau, fusée garnie d'un filigrane en fil de fer. Fourreau en cuir avec cordonnet de suspension, garnitures en cuivre. Le sabre a été réuni au fourreau par une tresse de cuir que le donateur a coupé.

Source : fiche d'objet de l'inventaire des collections du musée de l'Armée

* Saisi lors de la prise de Ségou (actuel Mali) par le colonel Louis Archinard (1850-1932) en 1890, donné par ce dernier au musée de l'Armée en 1909.

Fig. 16



Appellation ou titre :

Colliers, pendentifs, perles, médaillons*

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris ; déposant : musée de l'Armée, Paris

Numéros d'inventaire :

75.8142, 75.8148, 75.8159.1-2, 75.8160, 75.8162, 75.8164

Matériaux et techniques :

Or, cuir

Toponyme :

Ségou < Ségou (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

XIX^e siècle

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Déposant : musée de l'Armée

Collecte : Louis Archinard**

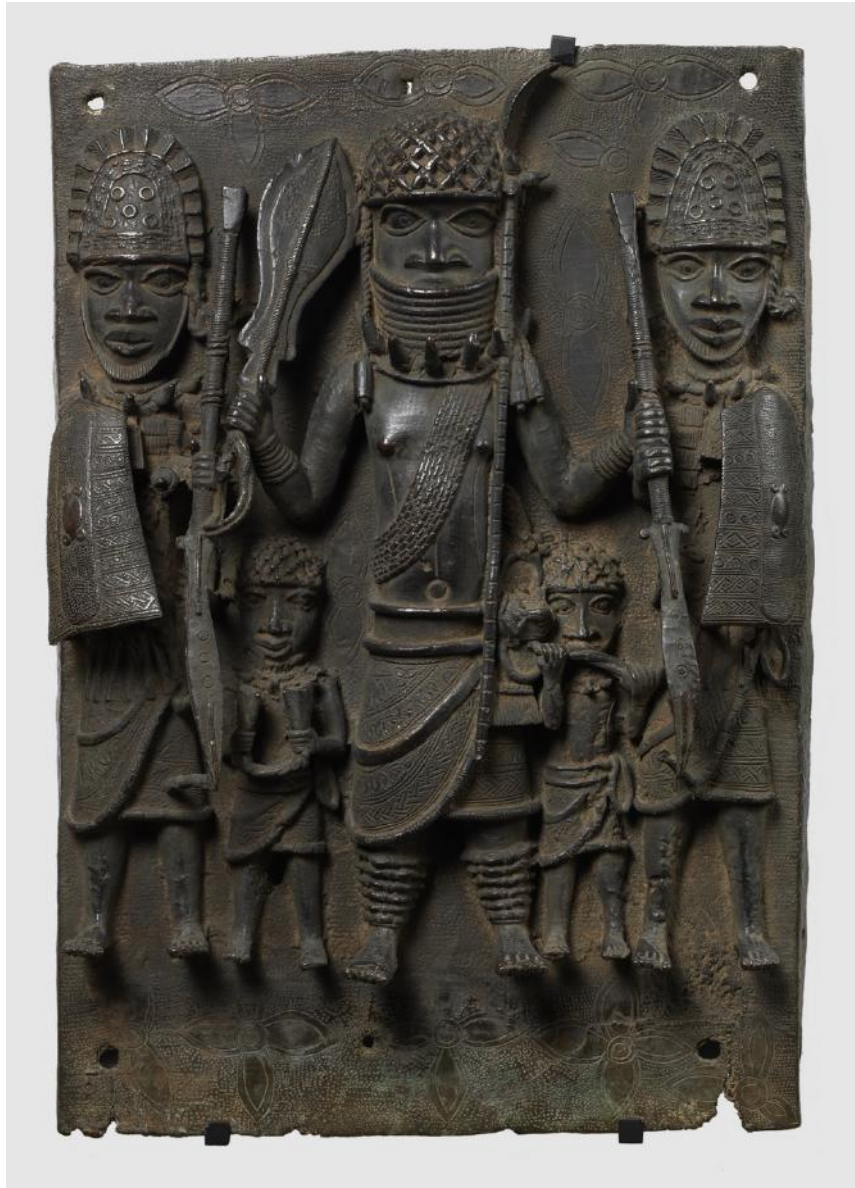
Précédente collection : Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique)

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Objets du « trésor » du palais royal de Ségou.

** Trésor saisi lors de la prise de Ségou (actuel Mali) par le colonel Louis Archinard (1850-1932) en 1890, en dépôt au musée de l'Armée dès 1910, récupéré par l'office colonial pour être déposé au musée des Colonies (où une partie a été dérobée en 1937).

Fig. 17



Appellation ou titre :

Plaque figurative

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1931.49.19

Matériaux et techniques :

Laiton, fonte à la cire perdue

Dimensions :

52× 37× 9 cm, 16,25 kg

Toponyme :

Benin City < Nigeria < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

XVI-XVII^e siècles

Description :

Cinq personnages en haut relief se détachent sur un fond gravé de feuilles d'eau. Au centre, l'Oba est entouré de deux guerriers et de deux musiciens. Il porte les attributs de sa dignité : une coiffure et des colliers en perles de corail, un baudrier composé de plusieurs rangs de perles barre le torse, un collier en dents de léopard, ainsi que des bracelets, des chevillères et des jambières. Son pagne drapé est noué sur le côté et est fixé par un masque de ceinture anthropomorphe. Il brandit l'ében, son épée cérémonielle. Les deux guerriers casqués sont armés d'une lance et d'un bouclier. Une cloche tronconique est accrochée à leur collier en dents de léopard. Les deux musiciens, un joueur de trompe traversière et un joueur de cloche double, sont figurés conventionnellement de proportion plus petite.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Georges Henri Rivière*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1931

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Georges Henri Rivière (1897-1985, alors assistant de Paul Rivet au musée d'Ethnographie au Trocadéro) fit l'acquisition de cette plaque sur le marché londonien en juillet 1931, à une période consécutive à la crise de 1929 où les ayants droits des membres de l'expédition « punitive » britannique de 1897 à Benin City vendaient les butins en leur possession. Des plaques similaires, initialement destinées à la décoration du palais royal de Benin City et saisies à la suite du sac de la ville, ont été transférées en Europe et dispersées sur le marché de l'art.

Fig. 18



Appellation ou titre :

Défense sculptée

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

73.1962.7.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Ivoire

Dimensions :

148,1 × 11,8 × 11,8 cm, 18,12 kg.

Toponyme :

Nigeria < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Premier quart du XIX^e siècle

Description :

Relief sculpté, successivement de bas en haut :

- motif d'entrelacs
- panthère debout de face entre soldats portugais avec manilles et fusils, l'un porteur d'une croix pectorale
- Oba dont les jambes se terminent en double queues de poisson, portant une tête d'ennemi à la ceinture. Il est entouré de dignitaires, dont certains sont revêtus d'une cotte de maille.
- portugais à cheval
- Oba soutenu par des dignitaires, l'un en cotte de maille, l'autre sur une panthère de profil
- au sommet homme qui tient une panthère par la queue (animal représenté la tête en bas)

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Vendeur : Charles Ratton

Ancienne collection : Jacob Epstein

Précédente collection : Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique)

Ancienne collection : Charles Ratton

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1962

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Des pièces en ivoire similaires ont été dispersées sur le marché international après le sac de Benin City par les troupes britanniques en 1897.

Fig. 19



Appellation ou titre :

Tête anthropomorphe

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

73.1969.3.1 bis

Matériaux et techniques :

Laiton

Dimensions :

40,5 × 24,5 × 26 cm, 27,52 kg.

Toponyme :

Nigeria < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Fin XVIII^e siècle

Description :

Figuration d'un collier à plusieurs rangs de perles, dans lequel le cou est engoncé, ainsi que d'une coiffure perlée à longs filets ; de scarifications frontales, et d'animaux s/la base circulaire. Trou au sommet de la tête pour fixation d'une défense sculptée, manquante ici.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue*

Ancienne affectation : Musée d'archéologie nationale

Précédente collection : Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1969

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Pièce acquise par le musée de Marine du Louvre en 1899 pour 650 francs auprès de la maison Schilling et C^{ie}, déplacée vers 1908 au Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, puis au Musée national d'arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. Voir, aux Archives nationales de Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, le dossier 20144780/13 comprenant l'arrêté d'acquisition daté du 8 août 1899.

Fig. 20



Appellation ou titre :

Plaque

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

73.1997.4.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Alliage de cuivre

Dimensions :

40 × 33,5 × 10,5 cm

Toponyme :

Nigeria < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

XVI^e-XVII^e siècles

Description :

Plaque figurant deux guerriers identiques en haut relief sur un fond décoré de fleurs quadrilobées. Les visages sont stylisés. Les deux personnages sont très parés, sous un collier en dents de léopard ils portent des clochettes carrées sur la poitrine partiellement cachées par des colliers de perles entortillés. Ils tiennent tous deux le sabre « eben » et un bouclier. Lacune dans le coin supérieur gauche et en bas de la plaque. Le pied droit du guerrier de droite a disparu.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Vendeur : Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller

Ancienne collection : Louis Carré

Ancienne collection : Musée Barbier-Mueller

Précédente collection : Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1997

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Des plaques similaires, initialement destinées à la décoration du palais royal de Benin City et saisies à la suite du sac de la ville par les troupes britanniques en 1897, ont été transférées en Europe et dispersées sur le marché de l'art.

Fig. 21



Appellation ou titre :

Tête d'autel royal

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

73.1997.4.3

Matériaux et techniques :

Alliage cuivreux

Dimensions :

52 × 34 × 34 cm

Toponyme :

Nigeria < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Première moitié du XIX^e siècle

Description :

Tête au visage stylisé. La coiffure est composée d'une calotte en résille avec deux ailettes latérale, le tout en perles de corail. Le cou est engoncé dans plusieurs colliers de perles superposés recouvrant le menton jusqu'à la lèvre inférieure. Scarifications sur le front. L'embase est décorée de motifs figuratifs (hache, bras, léopards, poisson, main, tête de vache) en haut relief symbolisant le pouvoir royal.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Précédente collection : Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique)

Vendeur : Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller

Ancienne collection : Musée Barbier-Mueller

Ancienne collection : Josef Mueller

Ancienne collection : Louis Carré

Ancienne collection : Arthur Speyer

Ancienne collection : Ethnologisches Museum (Berlin)

Ancienne collection : Eduard Schmidt

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1997

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Pièce transférée en Allemagne via Hambourg par le consul allemand à Lagos Eduard Schmidt vers 1898, vendue par l'Ethnologisches Museum de Berlin au marchand Arthur Speyer entre 1923 et 1929.

Fig. 22



Appellation ou titre :

Peintures de l'église d'Abbā Antonios

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1931.74.3584 – 71.1931.74.3595

Matériaux et techniques :

Peintures marouflées sur toiles

Dimensions :

De 70 × 49 cm à 233 × 367 cm

Toponyme :

Gondar < Gonder (région) < Amara (état) < Éthiopie < Afrique orientale < Afrique

Datation :

Fin du XVII^e siècle

Description :

Les quatre rois et les prophètes ; deux personnages de fenêtres (mur Est) ; sainte ; la Nativité ; deux Pères de l'Église ; neuf saints d'Éthiopie ; saint Antoine ; saint Filatewos ; cavalier ; cavaliers et martyrs ; Dieu le père et le Pacte de grâce

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Mission : Mission Dakar-Djibouti*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

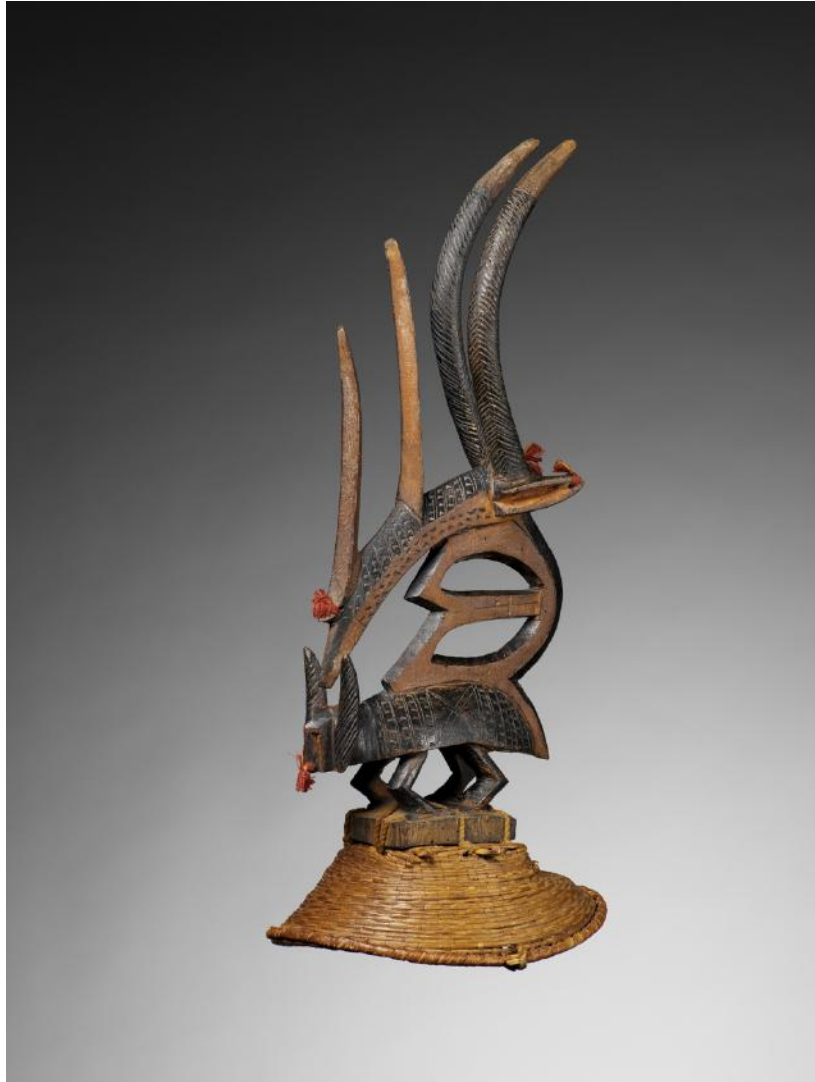
Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1931

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Peintures démarouflées de l'église d'Abbā Antonios à Gondär (Éthiopie) par Marcel Griaule et Gaston-Louis Roux lors de la mission Dakar-Djibouti.

Fig. 23



Appellation ou titre :

Masque zoomorphe

Titre vernaculaire :

Ciwara kun

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1930.26.3

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, coton, fibres végétales, ficelle

Dimensions :

50,3 × 20 × 25 cm, 503 g.

Toponyme :

Bamako < Bamako (district) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Avant 1930

Description :

Masque cimier. Calotte en vannerie à bords spiralés surmontée d'une sculpture en bois figurant schématiquement une antilope reposant sur un quadrupède.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Donateur : Henri Labouret*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1930

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Henri Labouret (1878-1959), militaire et administrateur colonial en Afrique occidentale française ; se tourne vers l'ethnologie et devient directeur de l'Institut international africain en 1927, et professeur de civilisation africaine à l'École coloniale à Paris de 1926 à 1945.

Fig. 24



Appellation ou titre :

Masque et poitrine postiche de jeune fille

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1930.31.22.1-2

Matériaux et techniques :

Fibres végétales, cauris, fruits de baobab

Dimensions :

110 × 50 × 14,5 cm, 20,44 kg.

Toponyme :

Sanga (village) < Mopti (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Début du XX^e siècle

Description :

Masque cagoule en fibres végétales dont le visage est évoqué par la présence de deux ouvertures circulaires figurant les yeux, entourés de rangées concentriques de cauris et se prolongeant à la partie inférieure par une sorte de bavette de cauris. Le visage est surmonté d'une coiffure en fibres figurant la chevelure formant un cimier central souligné de cauris. Ce masque cagoule se complète d'un "soutien-gorge" en fibres et cauris où sont attachées deux demi-coques de fruits de baobab qui figurent les seins féminins.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Henri Labouret*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1930

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

* Henri Labouret (1878-1959), militaire et administrateur colonial en Afrique occidentale française ; se tourne vers l'ethnologie et devient directeur de l'Institut international africain en 1927, et professeur de civilisation africaine à l'École coloniale à Paris de 1926 à 1945.

Fig. 25



Appellation ou titre :

Masque anthropomorphe

Nom vernaculaire :

Satimbe

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1931.74.1948

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois de kapokier, pigments, fibres végétales

Dimensions :

138× 33,5 × 21,5 cm, 31,18 kg.

Toponyme :

Sanga (village) < Mopti (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Avant 1931

Description :

Masque constitué d'un visage de bois rectangulaire surmonté de deux courtes oreilles verticales et d'une figure féminine en pied dont les bras articulés sont repliés et dressés. Le visage du masque est marqué par une arête nasale centrale qui sépare deux cavités rectangulaires à l'intérieur desquelles se situent les orbites triangulaires, pointes vers le bas, des yeux. L'ensemble est couvert de motifs géométriques polychromes (noirs et blancs) et se complète d'une coiffure de fibres rouges et d'un couvre-nuque en vannerie. Le personnage féminin porte une ceinture de fibres au niveau de la taille et des bracelets de fibres au niveau des coudes, des avant-bras et des poignets.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Mission Dakar-Djibouti

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1931

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

Fig. 26



Appellation ou titre :

Mère des masques

Nom vernaculaire :

Imina na

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1931.74.2002

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, pigments

Dimensions :

1020 × 35 × 8 cm, 38 kg.

Toponyme :

Sanga donu < Sanga (environs de) < Mopti (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Avant 1931

Description :

Visage schématique surmonté d'une longue lame de bois.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Mission Dakar-Djibouti

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1931

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

Fig. 27



Appellation ou titre :

Objet cultuel composite

Nom vernaculaire :

Boli

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1931.74.1091.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Terre mêlée à de la cire d'abeille, sang coagulé, bois

Dimensions :

44 × 59 × 24 cm, 20,25 kg.

Toponyme :

Dyabougou < Ségou (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Entre le milieu du XIX^e siècle et 1930

Description :

Cet objet était conservé dans un sanctuaire de la société initiatique dite Kono. L'animal représenté serait un hippopotame ou un cheval.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Mission Dakar-Djibouti

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1931

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

Fig. 28



Appellation ou titre :

Masque

Nom vernaculaire :

Sim

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1935.60.169

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois, fibre végétale, pigments

Dimensions :

243 × 69 × 18,5 cm

Toponyme :

Mopti (région) < Mali < Afrique occidentale < Afrique

Datation :

Entre la fin du XIX^e siècle et le début du XX^e

Description :

Tête humaine très stylisée surmontée d'une immense croix de Lorraine.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Mission Sahara-Soudan

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1935

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac

Fig. 29



Appellation :

Masque Sim Kalama Nāngala

Lieu de conservation :

Institut d'ethnologie de l'université de Strasbourg

Numéro d'inventaire :

2002.0.241

Matériaux :

Palmier, cuir, métal

Dimensions :

17,5 × 64 cm, 2,5 kg.

Lieu de provenance:

Afrique, Mali (Dogon)

Description :

Masque Sim ou Kalama Nāngala constitué essentiellement de bois de palmier rônier, sculpté et entaillé, de lanières de cuir et de fibres végétales. La tête du masque représente l'antilope. Elle est teintée de blanc et suit une forme rectangulaire avec de longues fosses oculaires, surmontées d'un front bombé triangulaire et deux petits appendices se découpant aux coins extérieurs, évoquant des petites oreilles. Cette tête est surmontée d'un haut cimier prenant la forme d'une double croix composée d'étroites planchettes verticales, toutes pointées vers le haut, partant de deux branches transversales. L'axe médian prend naissance dans un losange évidé. Des liens en cuir fixent entre eux les différents éléments. Les extrémités des planchettes verticales sont taillées en pointes et entaillées sur 2 à 3 cm. Des motifs de chevrons, alternativement blancs et noirs, parcourent ces différentes planchettes. Les surfaces d'intersection sont uniformément noires. Cette croix à double branches représente un génie d'apparence humaine. A l'arrière du masque, on découvre un cache-nuque (longueur : moins de 20 cm) en fibres végétales cordées, tressées et nouées, glissées dans des orifices du pourtour arrière de la tête du masque. Sur les flancs du masque on aperçoit deux trous servant à y glisser le mors permettant au danseur de maintenir le masque.

Collection :

Collection initiale : collection Lebaudy-Griaule

Date de collecte : 1938-1939

Mission de collecte : mission scientifique Niger-Lac Iro

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections ethnographiques de l'université de Strasbourg

Fig. 30



Appellation ou titre :

Trône

Lieu de conservation :

Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Numéro d'inventaire :

71.1934.171.1

Matériaux et techniques :

Bois sculpté

Dimensions :

180× 100 × 100 cm

Toponyme :

Foumban < Noun (département) < Ouest < Cameroun < Afrique centrale < Afrique

Datation :

Avant 1934

Description :

Deux sculptures anthropomorphes forment le dossier d'un trône de roi ou de sultan Bamoun. Représentation de l'élément masculin d'un couple. Très mauvais état. Restauré en 1987.

Personne(s) et institution(s) :

Acquisition indéterminée : Personne inconnue

Mission : Henri Labouret*

Précédente collection : musée de l'Homme (Afrique)

Année d'enregistrement à l'inventaire :

1934

Source : fiche d'objet de la base de données des collections du musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac








* Henri Labouret (1878-1959), militaire et administrateur colonial en Afrique occidentale française ; se tourne vers l'ethnologie et devient directeur de l'Institut international africain en 1927, et professeur de civilisation africaine à l'École coloniale à Paris de 1926 à 1945.

Inventories of the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum

The following pages give an overview of the inventories of the “Africa” collections Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum by country (current borders). These complete inventories are attached to this report in digital format (approximately 8,300 pages for nearly 70,000 objects).









Afrique du Sud

(page 1 sur 58, 7 objets sur 458)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.59.30	Couteau	avant 1881	2 x 20 x 2,5 cm, 38 g	Bois, métal	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Emil Holub	3	non	
71.1884.54.1	Massue	avant 1884	46 x 8,8 x 8,5 cm, 745 g	Bois grossièrement poli, métal	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1884.54.2	Massue	avant 1884	62,7 x 8,1 x 7,7 cm, 624 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1884.54.3	Massue	avant 1884	53,5 x 6,6 x 6,6 cm, 446 g	Bois lourd	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1884.54.4	Massue	avant 1884	42 x 5,8 x 5,9 cm, 387 g	Bois lourd	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1884.54.5	Massue	avant 1884	44,6 x 7,2 x 7,4 cm, 429 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1884.54.6	Massue	avant 1884	46 x 5,5 x 5,5 cm, 288 g	Bois très grossièrement poli.	Afrique > Afrique australe > Afrique du sud Zoulou	Donateur Mr Boucart Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Angola

(page 1 sur 59, 8 objets sur 457)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1887.8.4.1-2	Paire de bracelets	avant 1887	7,7 x 8,2 x 0,7 cm, 1,4 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola	Donateur R. P. Campana Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1888.17.2	Canne de chef	avant 1888	60,3 x 9 x 7,6 cm, 396 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo > Loango Tshokwe	Donateur Prince Roland Bonaparte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1888.17.3	Canne de chef	avant 1888	48,7 x 6,1 x 6,9 cm, 195 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola Tshokwe	Donateur Prince Roland Bonaparte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.52.15	Louche zoomorphe	avant 1895	43,9 x 9,8 x 9 cm, 199 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola > Cabinda Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Donateur Charles Jeannest Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.52.16	Louche	avant 1895	40,4 x 10,3 x 7,8 cm, 169 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola > Cabinda Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Donateur Charles Jeannest Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.52.17	Louche à manche anthropomorphe	avant 1895	37 x 10 x 8,5 cm, 188 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola > Cabinda Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Donateur Charles Jeannest Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.52.18	Founeau de pipe	avant 1895	6 x 7,5 cm	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola > Cabinda	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Charles Jeannest	3	non	
71.1895.52.19	Founeau de pipe	avant 1895	4,7 x 7,1 x 3,4 cm, 42 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Angola > Cabinda Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Donateur Charles Jeannest Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Bénin

(page 1 sur 398, 8 objets sur 3157)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.16.2	Coussin	c.1870	41 x 67 x 5 cm, 321 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Atlantique > Abomey-Calavi	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.3	Canne	c.1870	77,5 x 7,6 x 2,8 cm, 189 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Atlantique > Abomey-Calavi Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.4	Canne	c.1870	77,5 x 5,1 x 7,9 cm, 207 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Atlantique > Abomey-Calavi Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.5	Canne figurative	c.1870	77,5 x 7,2 x 3,9 cm, 183 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Zou > Abomey Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.6	Cartouchière	c.1870	22 x 53 x 7,8 cm, 392 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Atlantique > Abomey-Calavi Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.8	Hamac	c.1870	128,5 x 246 x 1,6 cm, 715 g	Coton	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.9	Récade Kpo	c.1870	49 x 20 x 3,3 cm, 346 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Zou > Abomey Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.16.10	Récade Kpo	c.1870	44 x 21 x 16 cm, 408 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Bénin > Zou > Abomey Fon	Donateur Louis Cavaroc Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Botswana

(page 1 sur 8, 8 objets sur 68)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.57.1	Pot	avant 1881	11 x 14,5 x 14,5 cm, 535 g	Terre cuite Modelage à la main par les femmes	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ma-Subia	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.2	Pot	avant 1881	25,5 x 25,7 x 25,7 cm, 2218 g	Terre cuite Modelage par les femmes, tracé des lignes au moyen d'un coquillage du fleuve, (sorte de moule).	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ma-Subia	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.3	Lamellophone	avant 1881	26 x 24 x 16 cm, 662 g	Métal (fer), cucurbitacée, fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ma-Subia	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.57.4	Cuiller	avant 1881	25,5 x 4,5 x 3 cm, 28 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ngwato	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.5	Cuiller	avant 1881	21,2 x 3,5 x 3 cm, 22 g	Bois, cuir	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ngwato	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.7	Calebasse dans un filet	avant 1881	19 x 22,7 x 22,7 cm, 269 g	Calebasse, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ngwato	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.12	Corne à poudre	avant 1881	15,7 x 28,6 x 8 cm, 225 g	Corne, cuir, bois	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ngwato	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.59.8	Bracelet avec spatule	avant 1881	23,8 x 4,5 x 1,2 cm, 28 g	Fer, cuir, perles et cuivre	Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Bamangwato	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	











Burkina Faso

(page 1 sur 129, 7 objets sur 1088)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1908.8.6	Flèche	avant 1908	41,8 x 2,8 x 1,7 cm, 123 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso	Donateur Mr Brot Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.8.16	Lance	avant 1908	166,5 x 3,6 x 2,2 cm, 443 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso	Donateur Mr Brot Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.11.1 Af	Masque cimier zoomorphe	avant 1908	19 x 24 x 13,2 cm, 466 g	Bois peint, graines	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Kouroumba	Donateur J. Decorse Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.11.2 Af	Masque cimier zoomorphe	avant 1908	17,5 x 22,6 x 10,8 cm, 303 g	Bois peint, graines	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Kouroumba	Donateur J. Decorse Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.11.3 Af	Masque cimier zoomorphe	avant 1908	51 x 8,8 x 28 cm, 509 g	Bois peint, graines	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Kouroumba	Donateur J. Decorse Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.11.4 Af	Masque cimier zoomorphe	avant 1908	47 x 10 x 26,6 cm, 425 g	Bois, pigments, graines	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Kouroumba	Donateur J. Decorse Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1908.11.5 Af	Masque cimier anthropomorphe (?)	avant 1908	29 x 11 x 12 cm, 315 g	Bois peint	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Burkina Faso Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Kouroumba	Donateur J. Decorse Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	







Burundi

(page 1 sur 4, 10 objets sur 28)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.9	Trompe latérale (perce conique)	avant 1881	15,6 x 55,5 x 14,5 cm, 476 g	Corne.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1881.54.45	Ecuelle	avant 1881	10 x 20 x 20 cm, 161 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.48	Carquois	avant 1881	72,5 x 5 x 5 cm, 333 g	Bois, fibres, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Ledoux	3	non	
71.1950.61.3.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1950	23,2 x 10,1 x 10,1 cm, 67 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.4.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1950	10 x 4 x 4 cm, 12 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.5	Couvercle	avant 1950	21,3 x 23 x 23 cm, 175 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.6	Corbeille	avant 1950	5,5 x 17,5 x 18,5 cm, 19 g	Vannerie double	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.7	Anneau	avant 1950	1 x 7,5 x 8 cm, 5 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.8	Anneau	avant 1950	1 x 7 x 7,5 cm, 5 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.9	Anneau	avant 1950	1 x 9 x 9 cm, 3 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	



Cameroun

(page 1 sur 1039, 7 objets sur 7838)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.19.4	Fourreau	avant 1878	31,5 x 11,5 x 1,5 cm, 153 g 11,9 x 1,3 x 1,7 cm, 24 g	Bois, laiton (?)	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Afrique > Rio Campo Fang	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Ancienne collection Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1878.19.5	Couteau	avant 1878	47 x 8,6 x 4,8 cm, 339 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Afrique > Rio Campo Fang Pahouin	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Ancienne collection Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1884.20.25	Console Proue de pirogue	avant 1884	89 x 24,5 x 3 cm, 917 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun > Littoral > Wouri (département) > Douala Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Pene	3	non	
71.1886.9.31	Lance	avant 1886	214,3 x 4,7 x 2 cm, 514 g	Bois, métal	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Bomou	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Victor Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1887.160.2 Af	Fourreau	avant 1887	16,5 x 5,2 x 2,1 cm, 22 g	Bois, peau de varan, laiton	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Fang Pahouin	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Vendeur Mr Laglaize	3	non	
71.1889.48.3.1-2	Couteau et son fourreau	avant 1889	47,5 x 10,6 x 4,4 cm, 362 g	bois + métal	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun > Sud Afrique > Rio Campo Fang Pahouin	Donateur Victor Schoelcher Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Dépositaire Musée départemental Victor Schoelcher (Pointe-à-Pitre)	2	non	
71.1889.131.106	Fouet	avant 1889	36,5 x 9,5 x 1,9 cm, 109 g	Bois, cuir, fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun > Extrême-Nord > Gaza	Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Attilio Pecile	3	non	








Cap-Vert

(page 1 sur 1, 2 objets)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1901.9.25	Plat	avant 1901	8,3 x 70 x 24 cm, 1187 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Sao Tomé-et-Principe Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Cap-Vert	Donateur António Lobo de Almada Negreiros Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1901.9.41	Coussin de selle	avant 1901	8,4 x 52 x 33,5 cm, 1083 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Cap-Vert	Donateur António Lobo de Almada Negreiros Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Comores

(page 1 sur 19, 8 objets sur 175)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1906.10.1	Portefeuille	avant 1906	1,5 x 7,5 x 7,5 cm, 20 g	Cuir jaune foncé.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar	Donateur Mr Ardouin Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	
71.1906.10.2	Portefeuille Porte-monnaie	avant 1906	1,5 x 7,5 x 7,5 cm, 25 g	Feuille de cuir teint en rouge foncé sur la face externe.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar	Donateur Mr Ardouin Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	
71.1906.21.130.1-	Sabre avec fourreau	avant 1906	105,5 x 14 x 6,3 cm, 1080 g	Fer, cuivre, bois.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Donateur Guillaume Grandidier	3	non	
71.1906.21.131.1-	Sabre avec fourreau	avant 1906	110,5 x 11,5 x 6 cm, 1175 g	Fer, cuivre, bois.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Donateur Guillaume Grandidier	3	non	
71.1931.85.27.1-3	Lampadaire	avant 1931	72 x 30,4 x 24,5 cm, 2545 g	Bois sculpté, écorce "hafotra"	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores	Collecte Commissariat de Madagascar, Exposition coloniale de 1931 Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1931.85.28	Lampadaire	avant 1931	68 x 29,7 x 23,5 cm, 2467 g	Bois sculpté, fibre de sisal (fourcroya gigantea)	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores	Collecte Commissariat de Madagascar, Exposition coloniale de 1931 Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1937.0.0 X					Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	0	non	
71.1937.17.1	Poupée	avant 1937	35 x 22 x 6 cm, 217 g	Bois, textile, perle de verre, papier	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores > Anjouan Afrique > Afrique orientale > Comores Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar	Donateur Raymond Decary Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	








Congo

(page 1 sur 326, 7 objets sur 2593)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2017.64.21	Fouet	Fin du 19e - début du 20e siècle	73X2X1 cm	Peau d'hippopotame	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Donateur Philippe Le Port Ancienne collection Georges Thomann	2	non	
71.1877.1.18	Cuiller	avant 1877	48,2 x 7,4 x 4 cm, 75 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	
71.1878.1.6.1-2 Af	Poignard, fourreau et ceinture	Première moitié du 19e siècle	51,5 x 13,2 x 4,8 cm, 242 g	Bois, fer, cuir	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo Afrique > Haute Sangha Kota	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Raphaël Bischoffsheim	3	non	
71.1878.1.7.1 Af	Couteau	avant 1878	21,7 x 5,3 x 1,1 cm, 67 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo Afrique > Haute Sangha Kota	Donateur Raphaël Bischoffsheim Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.1.7.2 Af	Etui	avant 1878	16,7 x 8,6 x 1,3 cm, 48 g	Bois, peau, cordelette	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo Afrique > Haute Sangha Kota	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Raphaël Bischoffsheim	3	non	
71.1878.1.8.1-2 Af	Couteau et son fourreau	avant 1878	26,5 x 9,1 x 3,1 cm, 179 g	Fer, bois, cuir	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo Afrique > Haute Sangha Kota	Donateur Raphaël Bischoffsheim Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1883.47.2	Flèches	avant 1883	42,5 x 2 x 2 cm, 48 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon > Haut-Ogoué Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo	Donateur Léon Guiral Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









République démocratique du Congo

(page 1 sur 187, 7 objets sur 1426)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.11	Hache	avant 1881	131 x 29,5 x 3,9 cm, 515 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique Manyanne	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.12	Hache	avant 1881	48 x 22 x 3,5 cm, 295 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.59.11	Couteau	avant 1886	20,4 x 2,4 x 1,7 cm, 24 g	métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo > Loango Bakamba Fouilla	Donateur Joseph Cholet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1886.59.13.1-2	Couteau et fourreau	avant 1886	31 x 5,2 x 2,8 cm, 55 g	métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo > Loango	Donateur Joseph Cholet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1886.79.11	Statuette magique Nkisi	avant 1886	38,5 x 17,5 x 13 cm, 1672 g	Bois, miroir, argile (kaolin, ocre rouge), résine, matières animales, végétales et minérales, pigments	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique > Bas-Congo (province) Kongo	Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Jacques Savorgnan de Brazza Donateur Attilio Pecile	2	non	
71.1886.80.9	Statuette féminine	fin 19e siècle	30 x 10,1 x 7,8 cm, 519 g	Bois, pigments, verre.	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique > Bas-Congo (province) Yombe	Donateur Joseph Cholet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1886.83.1	Lance	avant 1886	192 x 8,6 x 2,6 cm, 1077 g	Bois, métal	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique Yanzi	Donateur Mr de Chavannes Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Thollon	3	non	










Côte d'Ivoire

(page 1 sur 475, 8 objets sur 3951)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1892.72.12	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	5,6 x 1 x 0,8 cm, 14 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.13	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	5,8 x 3,3 x 0,6 cm ; 17 g	laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	non	
71.1892.72.14	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	1 x 4,1 x 5,1 cm, 27 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.15	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	1,5 x 2,7 x 1,4 cm, 27,8 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.16	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	2,5 x 4,8 x 1,1 cm, 24 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.17	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	2,8 x 2,3 x 5,8 cm, 47 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.18	Poids à peser l'or (figuratif)	avant 1892	4,5 x 5,4 x 2,9 cm, 53 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam Agni	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1892.72.20	Poids à peser l'or (anthropomorphe)	avant 1892	5,2 x 2,5 x 1,4 cm, 45 g	Laiton Fonte à cire perdue	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Côte d'Ivoire > Lagunes (région des) > Grand Bassam	Donateur Mr Bricard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Djibouti

(page 1 sur 88, 9 objets sur 722)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPR	Exposé	
71.1878.15.7.1-6	Eléments de harnachement Licou, croupière, mors avec têtière	avant 1878	57 x 220 x 11 cm, 2387 g	Cuir, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.8.1-2	Boucliers	avant 1878	33,5 x 64,5 x 12 cm, 1863 g	Cuir de rhinocéros	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.9	Bouclier	avant 1878	12 x 33 x 33 cm, 479 g	Cuir de rhinocéros	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.10	Panier	avant 1878	22 x 20 x 20 cm, 710 g	Fibres végétales, cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.11	Panier	avant 1878	20 x 18 x 17 cm, 434 g	Fibres végétales, cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.12.1	Panier	avant 1878	19,5 x 21 x 21 cm, 649 g	Fibres végétales, cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.12.2	Couvercle (du panier 71.1878.15.12.1)	avant 1878	2,3 x 19,3 x 18,7 cm, 184 g	Fibres végétales et cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte	3	non	
71.1878.15.13.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1878	24,5 x 20,4 x 20,4 cm, 340 g	Fibres végétales, cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Afar (état) Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Afar Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.14.1-2	Paire de sandales	avant 1878	26 x 21,5 x 2,7 cm, 294 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Erythrée

(page 1 sur 14, 9 objets sur 102)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1896.14.1 Af	Couteau et fourreau			Bois, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Maakel > Asmara Beni Amer	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Louis Lapique Mission La Sémiramis	0	non	
71.1903.33.93	Pièce de monnaie Thaler	1891	4 x 4 x 0,2 cm, 28 g	Argent	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée Europe > Europe méridionale > Italie	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1903.33.94	Pièce de monnaie 4/10 de thaler	avant 1903	2,7 x 2,7 x 0,2 cm, 10 g	Argent	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1903.33.95	Pièce de monnaie 2/10 de thaler	avant 1903	2,3 x 2,3 x 0,1 cm, 5 g	Argent	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1931.74.3133.1	Sandales Selot medawor sir solarki	avant 1931	28,6 x 26 x 8 cm, 715 g	Peau de boeuf pour la semelle, de veau pour la languette.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Gash-Barka > Om Hajer (ville)	Mission Mission Dakar-Djibouti Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1931.74.3134	Lance Qoonat	avant 1931	154 x 4,4 x 2,2 cm, 802 g	Lance en fer.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Gash-Barka > Om Hajer (ville) Beni Amer	Mission Mission Dakar-Djibouti Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1931.74.3135	Peigne Qalal	avant 1931	31,6 x 1,8 x 0,5 cm, 9 g	Peigne - épingle à cheveux en bois de ogam.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Gash-Barka > Om Hajer (ville) Beni Amer	Mission Mission Dakar-Djibouti Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1931.74.3136	Tasse Derif	avant 1931	7,1 x 4,7 x 4,7 cm, 18 g	Bois de kesela.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Gash-Barka > Om Hajer (ville) Beni Amer	Mission Mission Dakar-Djibouti Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1931.74.3137	Appui-tête Materes	avant 1931	38,3 x 19,5 x 6,7 cm, 195 g	Bois de keog	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Erythrée > Gash-Barka > Om Hajer (ville) Beni Amer	Mission Mission Dakar-Djibouti Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	




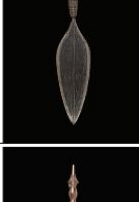


Éthiopie

(page 1 sur 387, 8 objets sur 3081)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPR	Exposé	
71.1878.15.3.2.1-4	Eléments de harnachement Yafaras mataber (am.) Tibûra, brido, iloua, meringale et crouplère	avant 1878	108 x 72 x 9,5 cm, 2465 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Adis Abeba (administration) Amhara	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.3.4	Longe	avant 1878	42 x 41 x 7 cm, 260 g	Cuir tressé rouge	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Adis Abeba (administration) Amhara	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte	3	non	
71.1878.15.4	Eventail	avant 1878	41 x 21 x 1 cm, 32 g	Bois, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Afar (état) Afar	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.6	Eventail	avant 1878	44,5 x 22 x 1,4 cm, 47 g	Bois, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Afar (état) Afar	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.13.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1878	24,5 x 20,4 x 20,4 cm, 340 g	Fibres végétales, cauris	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie > Afar (état) Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Afar Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.16	Réceptif zemsemmia	avant 1878	40 x 14 x 12,5 cm, 732 g	Cuir, ivoire	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Arabe	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.18	Selle	19e siècle	82 x 44 x 58 cm	Cuir, métal, bois, textile Métal : argent Textile : drap de laine	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.40	Lance	avant 1878	185,5 x 6 x 1,5 cm, 521 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Afar	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Égypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Gabon

(page 1 sur 305, 8 objets sur 2448)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1877.1.3.1-2	Couteau et sa gaine	avant 1877	57,5 x 17,7 x 3,4 cm, 496 g	Fer, bois, peau de varan, laiton	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	3	non	
71.1877.1.3 bis	Cuiller	avant 1877		Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	0	non	
71.1877.1.4	Couteau	avant 1877			Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	0	non	
71.1877.1.5	Couteau	avant 1877	37 x 7,5 x 3,5 cm	Fer, bois, cuivre	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Ondumbo	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	
71.1877.1.6	Couteau	avant 1877	41,7 x 6 x 3 cm, 139 g	Métal, bois, laiton	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Fang Pahouin	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	
71.1877.1.7	Couteau	avant 1877	60,5 x 12,4 x 3,9 cm, 749 g	Métal, bois, cuivre	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	
71.1877.1.8	Couteau	avant 1877	61,5 x 10,6 cm	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	
71.1877.1.9	Sabre d'abattis	avant 1877	72,58 x 6 x 6 cm, 427 g	Bois, fer, laiton, cuir	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Fang Teke	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Marche	2	non	










Gambie

(page 1 sur 5, 9 objets sur 35)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.31.3	Modèle de fusil	avant 1878	32 x 5,6 x 4,7 cm, 154 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.31	Jouet	avant 1878	44 x 6,4 x 4 cm, 225 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Albert Merle	3	non	
71.1880.70.1.1-2	Couteau et fourreau	avant 1880	44,9 x 24 x 4 cm, 490 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1880.70.2	Ornement de sabre	avant 1880	131 x 7 x 3 cm, 101 g	Laine	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1880.70.3	Sac	avant 1880	57 x 16 x 3,7 cm, 98 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1880.70.4	Sac	avant 1880	65,5 x 29 x 5,5 cm, 260 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1880.70.5	Boubou Robe d'homme			Coton	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1880.70.6	Sac Porte Coran	avant 1880	29 x 17 x 5 cm, 76 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1880.70.7	Outre Sac	avant 1880	80 x 34,2 x 4,5 cm, 647 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Gambie	Donateur Victor Barrère Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Ghana

(page 1 sur 178, 9 objets sur 1656)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2018.5.2	Pagne masculin	Début du 20e siècle	305 x 197 cm	Coton	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Éwé	Vendeur Duncan Clarke	1	non	
71.1883.11.1.1-2	Ɔ Xylophone	avant 1883	24,3 x 84 x 49,2 cm, 4456 g	Bois,alebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Ancienne collection Mme Brun Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie) Donateur Société de géographie commerciale	3	non	
71.1883.11.2.1-2	Ɔ Pipe	avant 1883	24 x 6,4 x 3,5 cm, 34 g	Terre cuite, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Ancienne collection Mme Brun Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Société de géographie commerciale	3	non	
71.1883.11.2 Em	Manchette à grelots	avant 1883	10 x 9,8 x 2,5 cm, 97,7 g	Cuir, métal	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Ancienne collection Mme Brun Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie) Donateur Société de géographie commerciale	3	non	
71.1883.11.3	Collier amulette	avant 1883	6 x 6 x 0,7 cm, 8 g	Bois, fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Ancienne collection Mme Brun Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Société de géographie commerciale	3	non	
71.1883.11.4	Fourreau de poignard	avant 1883	19 x 3 x 2,5 cm, 15 g	Peau de panthère	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Ancienne collection Mme Brun Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Société de géographie commerciale	3	non	
71.1886.145.1	Plat	avant 1886	10 x 28,5 x 28,5 cm, 1960 g	Terre cuite noire	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.2	Fourneau de pipe	avant 1886	5,3 x 4,6 x 6,3 cm, 90 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.3	Fourneau de pipe zoomorphe	avant 1886	5,7 x 11,7 x 5,9 cm, 213 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Ghana Ashanti	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	

Guinée

(page 1 sur 177, 7 objets sur 181)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2018.19.2	Monnaie guiné	19e siècle	62,5 x 11,2 x 3 cm	Fer martelé et torsadé	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée Toma	Donateur anonyme	0	non	
70.2018.19.3	Monnaies Ensemble de monnaies guiné	20e siècle			Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée Toma	Donateur anonyme	0	non	
71.1878.17.2	Modèle de pirogue	avant 1878	16 x 118 x 16 cm, 1096 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée > Boké > Rio Nunez	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1878.49.1	Siège à cariatide	1751 - 1800 ?	47,5 x 20,6 x 22,5 cm, 2109 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée Baga	Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1880.71.2	Statuette féminine	avant 1880	47,5 x 15,5 x 13,5 cm, 1314 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée Baga	Donateur Mr Goldhammer Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.97.4	Lance	avant 1881	186,5 x 5,1 x 5,4 cm, 1297 g	Métal ?	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée	Donateur Xavier Charmes Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.97.18	Lance	avant 1881	113,2 x 5,3 x 5,6 cm, 1005 g	Bois, cuir et fer	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Xavier Charmes	3	non	









Guinée équatoriale

(page 1 sur 14, 8 objets sur 94)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2017.66.16	Gardien de reliquaie eyema-byeri	19e siècle	H: 49cm; l:21 cm; P : 12 cm	Bois, laiton	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Fang	Donateur Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière	0	non	
71.1878.19.4	Fourreau	avant 1878	31,5 x 11,5 x 1,5 cm, 153 g 11,9 x 1,3 x 1,7 cm, 24 g	Bois, laiton (?)	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Afrique > Rio Campo Fang	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Ancienne collection Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1878.19.5	Couteau	avant 1878	47 x 8,6 x 4,8 cm, 339 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Afrique > Rio Campo Fang Pahouin	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Ancienne collection Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1885.124.20 D	Sac	avant 1885	91,5 x 16,8 x 16,8 cm, 130 g	Fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Dépositaire Musée d'archéologie nationale Ancienne collection Ludovic Napoléon Lepic	3	non	
71.1894.7.6	Jupe	avant 1896	30 x 37 x 2 cm, 126 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Fang	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Blaise	3	non	
71.1898.1.1.1-5	Statue de gardien de reliquaie Eyima byeri	milieu du 19e siècle	62 x 16,5 x 19 cm	Bois, perles, cire Parures : perles, fibres végétales, graines, métal	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Gabon Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale Fang	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Muséum national d'histoire naturelle Vendeur Personne inconnue	3	oui	
71.1937.0.44 X	Trompe terminale (perce conique)	avant 1937	52,5 x 23 x 8,8 cm, 645 g	Corne, fil.	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1951.73.246.1-	Couteau avec fourreau	avant 1951	61,5 x 17,6 x 4,6 cm, 1022 g	Métal, bois, peau	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Guinée équatoriale	Donateur Charles Henri Olivier Pobéguin Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	










Guinée-Bissau

(page 1 sur 16, 8 objets sur 125)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1895.47.2	Echantillon de tissu	avant 1895	12 x 163 x 0,1 cm, 67 g	Coton Armure toile quadrillée.	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.7	Cuiller double	avant 1895	38,5 x 4,7 x 2,2 cm, 26 g	Bois Gravure	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.8	Calebasse	avant 1895	9,7 x 17,7 x 20,3 cm, 47 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.9	Calebasse	avant 1895	9,5 x 9,5 x 4,5 cm, 8 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.10	Calebasse	avant 1895	10 x 20 x 20 cm, 47 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.11	Cuiller	avant 1895	34,6 x 10,4 x 2,5 cm, 91 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.12	Cuiller	avant 1895	22,8 x 4,4 x 3 cm, 17 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1895.47.13	Cuiller	avant 1895	32 x 4,3 x 2 cm, 13 g	Bois Pyrogravure	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée-Bissau > Oio (région) > Farim	Donateur Gabriel Bonalet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	










Kenya

(page 1 sur 22, 9 objets sur 181)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2007.39.1.1-2	Gourde et gobelet	début du 20e siècle	40 x 65 cm gourde 61 x 21 x 20 cm encombrent 30 cm de haut gobelet	Calebasse, bois, cuir, perles de verre, fibre végétale, polychromie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Massai	Donateur Nicole Oerthel-Blanc	2	non	
71.1896.61.1 Af	Bouclier	avant 1896	11 x 39 x 39 cm, 1388 g	Cuir de rhinocéros	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Djibouti Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Somali	Légateur Mr Servaux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1899.33.6	Bracelet	avant 1899	5,8 x 1 x 5,5 cm ; 16 g	Métal	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Afrique > région des Grands Lacs	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1899.33.7	Bracelet	avant 1899	5,4 x 1,2 x 5,3 cm ; 15 g	Métal	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Afrique > région des Grands Lacs	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1903.33.185	Lance Lance - niakura (puma) - perr (mursu)	avant 1903	74,5 x 3,5 x 1,5 cm, 425 g	Fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Hamer Puma Bukri Mursu	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1903.33.189	Tablier ou cape	avant 1903	78 x 77 x 5 cm, 806 g	Cuir, fer, coquille d'oeuf, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Turkana	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	1	non	
71.1903.33.238	Porte-bébé Porte-bébé - nakoko (tur.) - sarra (galabi) -	avant 1903	39 x 31 cm	Peau	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Turkana	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1903.33.239	Cape Cape - abua (fur.) - Niabua (galabi) - aizi (karo)	avant 1903	78 x 87 x 7,5 cm, 1297 g	Peau, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Turkana	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1903.33.243	Récipient Pot - niahutan	avant 1903	27,5 x 33,5 x 33 cm, 1069 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Kenya Turkana	Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	









Lesotho

(page 1 sur 11, 9 objets sur 99)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2016.49.2	Cape Kaross	19e siècle	126 x 140 cm	Peau de mouton, laine, perles de verre de Venise bleues et rouges à points blancs, petits anneaux en alliage cuivreux	Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho Sotho	Vendeur Alan Marcuson	0	non	
71.1910.6.1	Figurine zoomorphe	avant 1910	2,6 x 7,6 x 4,5 cm ; 66,1 g	Terre glaise	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.2	Cuiller	avant 1910	42,7 x 3,9 x 8 cm, 66 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.3	Dessous de plat	avant 1910	0,7 x 20,1 x 20,1 cm, 110 g	Fibres végétales Vannerie	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.4	Appui-tête	avant 1910	16,4 x 5,85 x 4,6 cm, 266 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.5	Statuette féminine	avant 1910	27 x 7,3 x 6,5 cm, 250 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.6	Gousse et graines	avant 1910	7 x 19 x 0,9 cm, 46 g	fruit	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1910.6.7	Bâton (élément de cordophone)	avant 1910	91 x 2 x 2 cm, 144 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1910.6.8	Brosse	avant 1910	6,2 x 22 x 7,8 cm, 124 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique australe > Lesotho	Donateur Frédéric Christol Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	




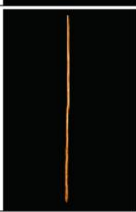




Libéria

(page 1 sur 7, 8 objets sur 46)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1886.145.7	Arc	avant 1886	152,5 x 15 x 3 cm, 563 g	Bois et cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.12	Sac	avant 1886	27 x 16,2 x 2 cm, 121 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria Mande	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.15	Calebasse	avant 1886	11 x 22,3 x 22,3 cm, 128 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.16	Calebasse	avant 1886	9,4 x 21,3 x 21,3 cm, 77 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.18	Flèche	avant 1886	80 x 0,5 x 0,5 cm, 23 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller	3	non	
71.1891.22.138	Pagaie	avant 1891	121 x 14,6 x 3,1 cm, 716 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1891.22.140	Plat	avant 1891	6,5 x 24 x 24 cm, 186 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1891.22.152	Harpe fourchue	c. 1885	45 x 50 x 22 cm, 307 g	Cucurbitacée, bois, fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Libéria	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Madagascar

(page 1 sur 910, 9 objets sur 7781)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1880.44.6.1-2	Modèle réduit de pirogue à balancier	avant 1880	62 x 22 x 8,5 cm, 244 g	Pièce de bois taillée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar > Antsiranana (province) > Nosy Bé (île) Sakalava	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Donateur Colonie de Nosy Bé	3	non	
71.1880.44.7.1-2	Modèle de pirogue à balancier	avant 1880	69 x 15 x 8 cm, 147 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar > Antsiranana (province) > Nosy Bé (île) Sakalava	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Donateur Colonie de Nosy Bé	3	non	
71.1880.44.8	Balancier de pirogue (réduction)	avant 1880	60 x 3 x 4 cm, 128 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien) Donateur Colonie de Nosy Bé	3	non	
71.1880.79.1	Fragment d'un arc musical bobu	avant 1880	153 x 2 x 2 cm, 351 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar	Donateur Musée des Colonies Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1881.54.25	Lance	avant 1881	176 x 5 x 1,5 cm, 576 g	Bois, cuivre.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar Sakalava	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	
71.1882.60.1	Chapeau	avant 1882	10 x 37 x 37 cm, 87 g	Vannerie, paille de riz croisé en marqueterie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar Mérina	Donateur Colonie de Sainte-Marie de Madagascar Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	
71.1882.60.2	Chapeau	avant 1882	10 x 31,5 x 31,5 cm, 105 g	Vannerie, paille de riz croisé en marqueterie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar Mérina	Donateur Colonie de Sainte-Marie de Madagascar Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	
71.1882.60.3	Chapeau				Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar Mérina	Donateur Colonie de Sainte-Marie de Madagascar Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	0	non	
71.1882.60.4	Cuiller	avant 1882	17,5 x 5,8 x 4,6 cm, 14 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Madagascar > Antsiranana (province) > Nosy Bé (île) Antankarana	Donateur Colonie de Sainte-Marie de Madagascar Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Madagascar - Océan Indien)	3	non	










Malawi

(page 1 sur 6, 7 objets sur 38)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2014.7.3	Ceinture	fin 19e siècle	73 x 11 cm	Perles de verre, coton	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Yao	Vendeur Alan Marcuson Ancienne collection Bernice Pethica	1	non	
71.1897.48.10 bis	Corbeille	avant 1897	10 x 22 x 22 cm, 141 g	Fibres végétales, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Edouard Foa	2	non	
71.1897.49.3	Flèche	avant 1897	101 x 2 x 2 cm, 35 g	Bambou, rotin, poison	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.49.4	Flèche	avant 1897	101 x 2 x 2 cm, 35 g	Bambou, rotin, poison	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.49.5	Flèche	avant 1897	101 x 2 x 2 cm, 35 g	Bambou, rotin, poison	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.49.6	Flèche	avant 1897	101 x 2 x 2 cm, 35 g	Bambou, rotin, poison	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.49.7	Flèche	avant 1897	101 x 2 x 2 cm, 35 g	Bambou, rotin, poison	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Malawi Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	


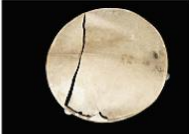
Mali

(page 1 sur 864, 9 objets sur 6910)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.31.2.2	Socque	avant 1878	5,5 x 9,5 x 28 cm, 233 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Bamana	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Albert Merle	3	non	
71.1878.31.4.1-3	Serrure, pêne et clef	avant 1878	5 x 24 x 25,5 cm	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Bamana	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.12.1-2	Arc	avant 1878	127 x 2,5 x 10 cm, 395 g	Bois, fibre végétale ?	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Bamana	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.15 Em	Trompe ou Tape-cuisse	avant 1878	82 x 16 x 8,5 cm, 167 g	Courge	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Peul	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1878.31.16	Trompe ou tape-cuisse	avant 1878	89,5 x 7 x 7 cm, 141 g	Courge	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Peul	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.17	Trompe ou tape-cuisse	avant 1878	69 x 7 x 7 cm, 109 g	Courge	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.18	Trompe ou tape-cuisse	avant 1878	64 x 7 x 6,5 cm, 97 g	Courge	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.63.1	Tambour cylindrique	avant 1878	55,5 x 34 x 34 cm, 3402 g	Bois, peau, fibres textiles	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali Malinke	Donateur Martin Dupont Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1880.69.1	Bonnet	avant 1879	19,5 x 24,5 x 1,5 cm, 23 g	Coton, teinture à l'indigo. Armure toile.	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mali > Ségou (région) > Segou	Donateur Paul Soleillet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Mission Paul Soleillet	2	non	







Maurice

(page 1 sur 1, 2 objets)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
73.2012.0.71	Tambour sur cadre Ravane	19e-20e siècle	34 x 5,3 x 35 cm ; 503 g	Bois (?), peau, métal	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Maurice	Précédente collection Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
73.2012.0.72	Tambour sur cadre	19e-20e siècle	58 x 58 x 6 cm ; 963 g	Bois, métal, peau	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Maurice	Précédente collection Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	










Mauritanie

(page 1 sur 173, 9 objets sur 1425)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.19.7 Anpx	Blague à tabac	19e siècle	22 x 6,3 x 4,4 cm, 62 g	Cuir incisé	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie > Trarza (région) Maures	Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1878.19.8	Blague à tabac	19e siècle	31,5 x 5,6 x 3 cm, 34 g	Cuir incisé	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie > Trarza (région) Maures	Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1878.34.1	Poire à poudre				Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie > Trarza (région) Maures	Donateur Mr Goldhammer Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1878.34.2	Poire à poudre				Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie Maures	Donateur Mr Goldhammer Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1880.69.22	Etui	avant 1879	20,7 x 11,5 x 4,7 cm, 81 g	Cuir, pigments	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie Maure	Donateur Paul Soleillet Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient) Mission Paul Soleillet	3	non	
71.1885.10.31	Sac de selle Tassoufra	19e siècle	126 x 48 x 7 cm, 863 g	Cuir, pigments Fabriquée par les femmes d'artisans locaux.	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie > Trarza (région) > Boutilmit Maures	Donateur Victor Schoelcher Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	
71.1885.10.32	Poignard				Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie	Donateur Victor Schoelcher Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	0	non	
71.1885.10.33	Collier	19e siècle	18,3 x 7,8 x 4,3 cm, 127 g	Ambre, argent, corail, verre	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie Peul	Donateur Victor Schoelcher Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient) Dépositaire Musée départemental Victor Schoelcher (Pointe-à-Pitre)	3	non	
71.1907.2.28 Anpx	Poignard		27,4 x 2,5 x 1,6 cm, 78 g	Bois, fer, laiton	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Mauritanie Maures	Donateur Paul-Jean de L'Orza de Mont-Orso de Reichenberg Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	






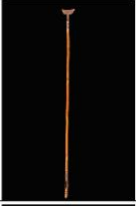

Mozambique

(page 1 sur 22, 9 objets sur 171)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1886.145.9	Appui-tête	avant 1886	14 x 14,7 x 8,1 cm, 118 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Sofala (province) > Chiloane	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.10	Appui-tête	avant 1886	13,5 x 14,7 x 6,8 cm, 121,5 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Inhambane (province)	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.14.1-	Couteau et fourreau	avant 1886	20,8 x 2,8 x 2,4 cm, 60 g	Bois, métal	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Tete (province) > Zumbo (ville)	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.17	Tabouret	avant 1886	9,3 x 9,2 x 9,2 cm, 118 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Tete (province) > Zumbo (ville)	Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1886.145.19.1-	Chaussures	avant 1950	28 x 9,3 x 12 cm, 309 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Sofala (province) > Chiloane	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Asie) Donateur Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1890.65.11	Appui-tête	fin 19e siècle	16,5 x 14,5 x 7 cm, 452 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique Tsonga	Donateur Alfred Lombard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	oui	
71.1890.65.51	Ornement phallique	avant 1890	3,4 x 5,3 x 5,3 cm, 9 g	Ficelle, feuilles et écorce palmier	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique > Inhambane (province)	Donateur Alfred Lombard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1890.65.65	Tabatière	avant 1890	4,5 x 3,7 x 20,8 cm, 33 g	Bois, perles, fil	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique Shona	Donateur Alfred Lombard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	oui	
71.1890.65.79	Lamellophone	avant 1890	17 x 13,5 x 4 cm, 226 g	Fer, bois, bambou	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Mozambique	Donateur Alfred Lombard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Namibie

(page 1 sur 1, 7 objets)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1929.14.242	Couteau	avant 1929	34,7 x 4,9 x 3,5 cm, 378 g	Os, fer	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Donateur Louis Capitan Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1929.14.248	Flèche	avant 1929	79 x 4,5 x 1 cm, 49 g	Bois, fer, plumes et fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée) Donateur Louis Capitan	3	non	
71.1929.14.250	Flèche ?	avant 1929	76 x 85 x 1 cm, 41 g	Bambou, métal	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Louis Capitan	3	non	
71.1929.14.252	Flèche ?	avant 1929	66,5 x 4,6 x 2,6 cm, 41 g	Bambou, bois, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Donateur Louis Capitan Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Océanie)	3	non	
71.1929.14.253	Flèche (?)	avant 1929	73,4 x 4,8 x 2 cm, 52 g	Bambou, fer, fibres végétales, plumes	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Asie) Donateur Louis Capitan	3	non	
71.1929.14.254	Flèche ?	avant 1929	68 x 5 x 2 cm, 38 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Louis Capitan	3	non	
71.1929.14.931	Flèche ?	avant 1929	38 x 5 x 2 cm, 42 g	Bambou, métal, cordelette de fil	Afrique > Afrique australe > Namibie > Kunene	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée) Donateur Louis Capitan	3	non	





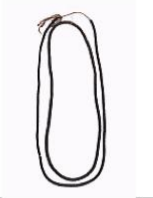

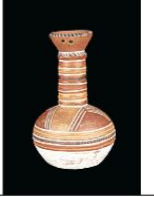
Niger

(page 1 sur 209, 8 objets sur 1615)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.20.1	Portefeuille	avant 1878	14 x 9,5 x 0,8 cm, 19 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger Touareg	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France	3	non	
71.1884.41.3	Anneau de bras lwuki (Air), ahbeg (Hoggar)	19e siècle	11,1 x 11 x 1,8 cm, 216 g	Pierre dure Fabrication en schiste, localisée en Air.	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger > Agadez (département) > Agadès Haoussa Touareg de l'Air	Donateur Henri Duveyrier Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	
71.1884.41.4	Turban	fin 19e siècle	577 x 56,5 x 0,2 cm, 248 g	Laine Armure toile barrée	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger > Agadez (département) > Air Afrique > Sahara Touareg de l'Air	Donateur Henri Duveyrier Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	
71.1884.41.5	Voile Litham	19e siècle	84 x 360 x 0,2 cm, 520 g	Coton, teinture à l'indigo Armure toile, calandrage	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger > Agadez (département) > Air Afrique > Sahara Touareg de l'Air	Donateur Henri Duveyrier Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	
71.1884.41.15	Boubou	Vers 1880	138 x 248 x 0,6 cm, 1293 g	Textile	Afrique > Sahara Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Maghreb > Algérie Haoussa Touareg	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Henri Duveyrier	3	non	
71.1886.9.8	Sac à bandoulière et a franges	avant 1886	3 x 62 x 42 cm, 126 g	Raphia	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Victor Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1886.10.1.1-2	Sandales	19e siècle	2,8 x 26,23 x 29,5 cm, 512 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria > Kano (état) Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger > Agadez (département) > Agadès Afrique > Sahara Kel Ajjer	Donateur Henri Duveyrier Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	
71.1886.33.3	Cuiller	fin 19e siècle	26,5 x 5,5 x 6 cm, 31 g	Bois Décor pyrogravé- Travail des hommes	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Niger > Agadez (département) > Agadès Afrique > Sahara Touareg	Donateur Henri Duveyrier Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique du Nord et Proche-Orient)	3	non	









Nigeria

(page 1 sur 149, 7 objets sur 1148)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1883.39.4.1-2	Paire de bracelets	avant 1883	9,3 x 9,3 x 5,2 cm, 228 g	Ivoire	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.5	Lampe	avant 1883	52,5 x 37,5 x 38 cm, 1587 g	Métal	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria > Kogi (état) > Lokoja	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.6	Cafetière	avant 1883	25 x 15,2 x 15,2 cm, 278 g	Cuivre repoussé	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria > Bida	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.7	Collier (ou ceinture ?)	avant 1883	0,6 x 10,9 x 35 cm, 20,5 g	bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.7.1-2	Colliers ou ceintures	avant 1883	41,2 x 12,5 x 0,6 cm, 54 g	bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.8	Pot	avant 1883	17 x 10,5 x 10,5 cm, 439 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria > Bida	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1883.39.9	Pot	avant 1883	19,8 x 12,3 x 12,3 cm, 504 g	Poterie, peinture	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Nigéria > Bida	Donateur Mr Mattei Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	









Ouganda

(page 1 sur 26, 8 objets sur 210)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2017.27.1.1-2	Pot rituel Ensumbi	Fin du 19e - début du 20e siècle	Hauteur : 42 cm	Terre cuite, fibres végétales, graphite	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda Ganda Nyoro	Vendeur Alan Marcuson	1	non	
71.1881.54.21	Lance	avant 1881	139,6 x 3,1 x 2,3 cm, 626 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.22	Lance	avant 1881	163,4 x 2,9 x 2,2 cm, 648 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.26.1-2	Panier avec couvercle	avant 1881	15,5 x 17 x 17 cm, 200 g	Vannerie, cuir.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.33	Bouclier	avant 1881	102,5 x 43 x 33,5 cm, 2147 g	Vannerie de rotin, bois, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda Ganda	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	oui	
71.1881.54.44.1-2	Panier	avant 1881	14,5 x 16,8 x 16,8 cm, 299 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1885.93.1	Lance	avant 1885	271 x 5 x 3 cm, 1403 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Mission Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1885.93.2	Lance	avant 1885	267,5 x 5,5 x 2,5 cm, 1393 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ouganda	Mission Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	










République centrafricaine

(page 1 sur 248, 8 objets sur 1943)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1889.106.1	Couteau de jet Bagna	avant 1889	42,5 x 32,5 x 1,5 cm, 424 g	Fer forgé	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine	Donateur Joseph Michaud Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1889.115.16	Pagne	avant 1889	30 x 65 x 47 cm, 1366 g	Fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine Bondjo	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Tholon	3	non	
71.1889.131.76.1	Foumeau de pipe	avant 1889	52,5 x 2,9 x 6,7 cm, 290 g	Cuivre, laiton	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine > Ombella-Mpoko (préfecture) > Bangui	Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Attilio Pecile	2	non	
71.1889.131.76.2	Tuyau de pipe	avant 1889	52 x 2,9 x 6,7 cm, 290 g	Bois, alliage cuivreux	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine > Ombella-Mpoko (préfecture) > Bangui	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Donateur Attilio Pecile	3	non	
71.1889.131.95	Lance	avant 1889	27 x 5,7 x 1,3 cm, 105 g	Fer	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine > Ombella-Mpoko (préfecture) > Bangui	Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Attilio Pecile	2	non	
71.1891.31.15	Appui-tête	avant 1891	15,3 x 12 x 9,8 cm, 134 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine > Ombella-Mpoko (préfecture) > Bangui	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Attilio Pecile Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza	2	non	
71.1891.31.17.1-4	Tuyaux de pipe	avant 1891	64 x 6 x 3,2 cm, 229 g 57,5 x 3 x 3 cm, 125 g	Bois, laiton ou cuivre (?)	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine Yanzi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Donateur Attilio Pecile	3	non	
71.1891.31.18.1-2	Tuyaux de pipes	avant 1891	75 x 3,3 x 2,4 cm, 55 g	Bois, cuivre	Afrique > Afrique centrale > République centrafricaine Yanzi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Attilio Pecile Donateur Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza	2	non	










Rwanda

(page 1 sur 6, 9 objets sur 47)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.7	Bois d'arc	avant 1881	141,5 x 13,5 x 2,1 cm, 319 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique centrale > Congo, république démocratique	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Ledoux	3	non	
71.1881.54.45	Ecuelle	avant 1881	10 x 20 x 20 cm, 161 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.48	Carquois	avant 1881	72,5 x 5 x 5 cm, 333 g	Bois, fibres, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Ledoux	3	non	
71.1950.61.3.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1950	23,2 x 10,1 x 10,1 cm, 67 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.4.1-2	Panier à couvercle	avant 1950	10 x 4 x 4 cm, 12 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.5	Couvercle	avant 1950	21,3 x 23 x 23 cm, 175 g	Vannerie spiralée	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.6	Corbeille	avant 1950	5,5 x 17,5 x 18,5 cm, 19 g	Vannerie double	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.7	Anneau	avant 1950	1 x 7,5 x 8 cm, 5 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	
71.1950.61.8	Anneau	avant 1950	1 x 7 x 7,5 cm, 5 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Rwanda Afrique > Afrique orientale > Burundi	Donateur University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	3	non	



Sénégal

(page 1 sur 275, 9 objets sur 2276)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.19.7 Af	Chapeau	avant 1878	11,5 x 50,5 x 51,3 cm, 382 g	Cuir, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1878.20.3.1-2	Paire de sandales	avant 1878	33 x 21,1 x 5 cm, 768 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque Nationale, cabinet des Antiques, fonds des émigrés Ancienne collection Mr Tessé	3	non	
71.1878.20.3.3	Bracelet de cheville	avant 1878	0,7 x 7,7 x 6,6 cm, 5,4 g	Cuir, fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1878.20.5	Panier	avant 1878	11,8 x 17,8 x 17,8 cm, 198 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue Ancienne collection Bibliothèque nationale de France	3	non	
71.1878.31.5	Pilon	avant 1878	89 x 6,2 x 6,2 cm, 1369 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Wolof	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.26	Calebasse	avant 1878	22,5 x 34,7 x 32 cm, 261 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Wolof	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.31.27	Calebasse	avant 1878	23,7 x 18,3 x 7,5 cm, 85 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Wolof	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Albert Merle	3	non	
71.1878.31.28	Calebasse gravée	avant 1878	14,5 x 33 x 34 cm, 264 g	Calebasse	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Wolof	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Albert Merle	3	non	
71.1878.31.29	Hache	avant 1878	44 x 22,5 x 4 cm, 184 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal	Donateur Albert Merle Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	











Seychelles

(page 1 sur 1, 2 objets)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1961.42.8	Echantillon de fruit	milieu du 20e siècle	2 x 10 x 4 cm, 58 g	Noix des Seychelles.	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Seychelles	Légateur Mme Bineau Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Asie)	3	non	
71.1979.108.1	Chapeau	avant 1979	36,5 x 35 x 22,2 cm, 121 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Seychelles	Donateur Robert Gessain Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Technologie comparée)	2	non	









Sierra Leone

(page 1 sur 10, 10 objets sur 75)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1891.22.116	Chapeau	avant 1891			Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.150 Af	Bonnet	avant 1891	14 x 18 x 18 cm, 35 g	Raphia	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1891.22.168	Plateau	avant 1891		Fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.169	Plateau	avant 1891		Paille	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.170	Plateau	avant 1891		Paille	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.171	Plateau	avant 1891		Paille	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.172	Plateau	avant 1891		Paille	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.173	Plateau	avant 1891		Paille, pigments	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1891.22.176	Plateau	c. 1885	1,5 x 19 x 18,2 cm, 70 g	Paille, pigments	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1901.53.27	Hamac	avant 1901	170 x 58 x 8 cm, 1740 g	Fibres végétales, bois	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sénégal Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Sierra Leone Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Guinée Soussou	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Robert Normand	3	non	




Somalie

(page 1 sur 52, 8 objets sur 423)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1878.15.44	Appui-tête	avant 1878	17,5 x 21,9 x 11,8 cm, 283 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.56	Cuiller	avant 1878	57,2 x 6,5 x 4,5 cm, 186 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.63.1-2	Bouteille à eau en fil d'écorce Récipient obbo	avant 1878	85 x 40 x 40 cm, 1982 g	Vannerie	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	oui	
71.1878.15.66	Récipient	avant 1878	13,2 x 35,3 x 35,3 cm, 1074 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Somali	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.67	Selle	avant 1878	34,5 x 43 x 51 cm, 2617 g	Cuir, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Ethiopie Somali	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte	3	non	
71.1878.15.70	Bâton	avant 1878	80 x 11,5 x 1,5 cm, 56 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.1	Peigne	avant 1881	22,7 x 9,4 x 0,6 cm, 67 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Somali	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.54.2	Peigne	avant 1881	22,6 x 8 x 0,9 cm, 75 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Somalie Somali	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Soudan du Sud

(page 1 sur 5, 10 objets sur 38)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1903.33.625	Coiffe	avant 1903	12 x 22 x 25 cm, 160 g	Fibres végétales crochetées, plumes	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud > Sharq al Istiwa'yah > Mongalla (environs de) Turkana	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Mission Robert Du Bourg de Bozas Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	3	non	
71.1930.54.348 D	Bouclier	avant 1930	7 x 15 x 15 cm, 145 g	Peau	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.349 D	Bouclier	avant 1930	10 x 20 x 16 cm, 133 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.360 D	Bracelet	avant 1930	6,3 x 7,4 x 1,6 cm, 35,3 g	Fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.381 D	Diadème	avant 1930	21 x 4 x 5 cm, 14 g	Ivoire	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.383 D	Bracelet	avant 1930	12,8 x 11,5 x 0,9 cm, 21,5 g	Cuir, fer	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Shilluk	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.384 D	Bracelet-amulette	avant 1930	1,5 x 12 x 7,5 cm, 112 g	Fer, ivoire	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.385 D	Bracelet-amulette	avant 1930	12,3 x 11 x 7,3 cm, 116 g	Fer, ivoire	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.389.1-	Bracelet	avant 1930	8,6 x 7,7 x 2,5 cm, 24,3 g	Fer, verre	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	
71.1930.54.424 D	Amulette	avant 1930	24,2 x 12 x 2 cm, 37 g	Ivoire, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Soudan du Sud Bari	Déposant Musée d'archéologie nationale Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Ancienne collection Musée de Marine du Louvre	3	non	








Soudan

(page 1 sur 89, 9 objets sur 695)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
70.2007.23.1	Bouclier	milieu du 19e siècle	101 x 32 x 12 cm	Cuir, bois, traces de pigments	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan Bongo	Vendeur Galerie L'impasse Saint-Jacques	1	oui	
71.1878.15.19	Plateau avec couvercle	avant 1878		Fibres végétales	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Echange sortant Musée du Bardo (Alger)	0	non	
71.1878.15.20	Couteau de jet	avant 1878	44,3 x 39 x 1,5 cm, 402 g	Fer, corde	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan Zandé	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.35	Bracelet	avant 1878	4,1 x 7,9 x 7,9 cm, 56 g	Ivoire	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan > Al Khartoum > Khartoum	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.36	Lance Javeline	avant 1878	166,5 x 1,6 x 1,6 cm, 389 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan Bongo	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte	3	non	
71.1878.15.37	Lance	avant 1878	181,8 x 2,3 x 2 cm, 425 g	Bois, fer	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan Bongo	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.38	Lance	avant 1878	167,8 x 2 x 1,9 cm, 360 g	Fer, bois	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan Niambura	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1878.15.39@	Sagaie	avant 1878			Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1878.15.45	Bracelet	avant 1878	5,8 x 9,1 x 8,6 cm, 56 g	Ivoire	Afrique > Afrique septentrionale > Soudan	Donateur Gouvernement de l'Egypte Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	








Tanzanie

(page 1 sur 48, 8 objets sur 372)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.49	Tabouret	avant 1881	24,5 x 33,5 x 33 cm, 2293 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Nyamwezi	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Mr Ledoux	3	non	
71.1882.10.21	Cithare sur cuvette Bobre	avant 1882	18,5 x 51,5 x 29 cm, 426 g	Bois, cucurbitacée, fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Pwani > Zanzibar	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie)	3	non	
71.1882.10.36	Tapis	avant 1882	218 x 92 x 1 cm, 680 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Pwani > Zanzibar	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1882.10.37	Tapis	avant 1882	235 x 88 x 1 cm, 700 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Pwani > Zanzibar	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1882.10.38	Tapis	avant 1882	235 x 87 x 2 cm, 725 g	Fibre végétale	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Pwani > Zanzibar	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1884.149.32	Lance	avant 1884	156,9 x 2,6 x 2,3 cm, 425 g	Métal, bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1885.93.3	Coiffe	avant 1885	58 x 44 x 2,7 cm, 242 g	cuir, plumes d'autruche	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Kilimanjaro Massaï	Mission Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	
71.1885.93.4	Manteau	avant 1885	156 x 60 x 6 cm, 405 g	Fournure de singe colobe, perles de verre	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Tanzanie > Kilimanjaro Massaï	Mission Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Acquisition indéterminée Personne inconnue	2	non	






Tchad

(page 1 sur 1120, 8 objets sur 9296)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1882.10.20	Lance	avant 1882			Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad Gourane	Donateur Georges Révoil Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1886.9.31	Lance	avant 1886	214,3 x 4,7 x 2 cm, 514 g	Bois, métal	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad Afrique > Afrique centrale > Cameroun Bornou	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Victor Schoelcher	3	non	
71.1893.46.1.1-2	Boîte à couvercle	avant 1893	41,5 x 19,4 x 18 cm, 933 g	Ecorce	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1893.46.2.1-2	Boîte à couvercle	avant 1893	39 x 19 x 20 cm, 836 g	Ecorce	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1893.46.3	Corne	avant 1893	17,5 x 9 x 3,5 cm, 72 g	Corne de bouc	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1893.46.4 Af	Turban	avant 1893	80 x 160 x 0,3 cm, 174 g	Etamine	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1893.46.5	Pot	avant 1893	12,5 x 21,5 x 12,5 cm ; 720 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1893.46.6.1-8 / Sac		avant 1893	31 x 20,5 x 6 cm, 201 g	Cuir	Afrique > Afrique centrale > Tchad	Donateur Jean Dybowski Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	





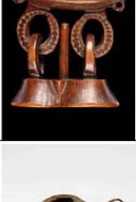



Togo

(page 1 sur 28, 5 objets sur 240)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1932.78.3	Amulette azokoliki	avant 1932	20 x 16 x 16 cm, 241 g	Calebasse recouverte d'étoffe ; cauris, pattes d'oiseaux, écaille de tortue etc . écaille de crocodile, coquille de cardium, 4 cornes de céphalaphao, mandibules de Thryonomys (grand rongeur), 1 écaille de tortue terrestre, 2 crânes de poule 1 numérus ou fémur de tortue, 1 vertèbre de poisson (lates ?), 1 patte (de poule ?)	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Togo > Maritime (région) > Lomé	Donateur Agence économique des Territoires africains sous mandat Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1932.78.3.2	Eléments d'amulette	avant 1932	6,7 x 6,5 x 2 cm, 24 g	Patte de poule et entrave en fer	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Togo > Maritime (région) > Lomé	Donateur Agence économique des Territoires africains sous mandat Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1932.78.4	Amulette	avant 1932	30 x 12,5 x 12,5 cm, 289 g	Calebasse entière, recouverte d'étoffe ; branchettes, débris de plumes, etc . lignes de cauris, fragments de peau d'animal, perles ; poudre noire dans la calebasse.	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Togo > Maritime (région) > Lomé	Donateur Agence économique des Territoires africains sous mandat Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1932.78.5	golovi-golokpe Amulette	avant 1932	38 x 15 x 4,5 cm, 155 g	Bois, herbes sèches, cauris, toile... fragments d'os. ...	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Togo > Maritime (région) > Lomé	Donateur Agence économique des Territoires africains sous mandat Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1932.78.6	Amulette gavoen	avant 1932	17,5 x 15,5 x 6 cm, 154 g	Anneau de lianes enveloppé d'étoffe. Cauris et trois pattes de poulet	Afrique > Afrique occidentale > Togo > Maritime (région) > Lomé	Donateur Agence économique des Territoires africains sous mandat Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	









Zambie

(page 1 sur 18, 8 objets sur 139)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.8	Arc	avant 1881	152 x 2,6 x 15,5 cm, 492 g	Bois, cuir.	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1881.57.1	Pot	avant 1881	11 x 14,5 x 14,5 cm, 535 g	Terre cuite Modelage à la main par les femmes	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ma-Subia	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.57.2	Pot	avant 1881	25,5 x 25,7 x 25,7 cm, 2218 g	Terre cuite Modelage par les femmes, tracé des lignes au moyen d'un coquillage du fleuve, (sorte de moule).	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Ma-Subia	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1881.59.19	Cuiller	avant 1881	34,5 x 3,8 x 5,5 cm, 25,6 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Haut Zambèze Barotse	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1890.65.152	Appui-tête	deuxième moitié du 19e siècle	12 x 13,7 x 6,4 cm, 18,5 g	Bois	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Tsonga	Donateur Alfred Lombard Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	1	oui	
71.1894.67.5.1-2	Lamellophone avec résonateur Mbira ou Kanomboyo	deuxième moitié du 19e siècle	5,2 x 25 x 24 cm, 389 g Dimensions muséo : 10 x 11 x 16,5 cm	Bois, métal, coton	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique australe > Botswana Lozi Tswana	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Ethnomusicologie) Donateur Emil Holub	1	non	
71.1894.68.1	Pot Marmite-piza (si-kololo) sikiso	avant 1894	19,2 x 25 x 25 cm, 1417 g	Argile	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Toka	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1894.68.2	Pot Vase : ndondo	avant 1894	23 x 20,2 x 20,2 cm, 1539 g	Argile	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Haut Zambèze Lozi	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	

Zimbabwe

(page 1 sur 10, 9 objets sur 278)

Numéro d'inventaire	Appellation	Date	Dimensions	Matériaux et techniques	Provenance	Personnes et institutions	PPRI	Exposé	
71.1881.54.8	Arc	avant 1881	152 x 2,6 x 15,5 cm, 492 g	Bois, cuir.	Afrique > Zambèze Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe	Donateur Mr Ledoux Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	3	non	
71.1890.65.157	Appui-tête	avant 1890	16,7 x 20,4 x 7,4 cm, 322 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Somali	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Alfred Lombard	2	non	
71.1894.67.2.1-2	Pot à couvercle	avant 1894	18,2 x 13,4 x 13,4 cm, 439 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Marutse	Donateur Emil Holub Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.48.1	Modèle de pot Piza dénomination sékololo	avant 1897	11 x 13,3 x 13,3 cm, 790 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Afrique > Haut Zambèze	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.48.2	Modèle de pot Piza (dénomination sékololo)	avant 1897	8,7 x 12 x 12 cm, 435 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Afrique > Haut Zambèze	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.48.3	Modèle de pot	avant 1897	6,7 x 10 x 10 cm, 242 g	Terre cuite	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Afrique > Haut Zambèze	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	
71.1897.48.21	Piquet			Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Atchicounda	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	0	non	
71.1897.48.38	Métier à tisser (élément)	avant 1897	3,9 x 49 x 3,9 cm, 171 g	Bois	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zambie Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Atchicounda	Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique) Donateur Edouard Foa	3	non	
71.1897.49.1	Arc	avant 1897	153 x 11 x 2,5 cm, 532 g	Bois, cuir	Afrique > Afrique orientale > Zimbabwe Agoa Azimba	Donateur Edouard Foa Précédente collection Musée de l'Homme (Afrique)	2	non	

The Cultural Biography of Objects

Author(s): Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall

Source: *World Archaeology*, Vol. 31, No. 2, The Cultural Biography of Objects (Oct., 1999), pp. 169-178

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/125055>

Accessed: 20-08-2017 06:15 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Taylor & Francis, Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *World Archaeology*

The cultural biography of objects

Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall

A crucial area of thought in all the social sciences at present is the relationship between people and things. Until recently, material objects were given little attention in disciplines such as anthropology, history or sociology, being seen mainly as functional items vital to the social process but seldom as informing it. For archaeology objects have, of course, always been central to its endeavours, but again interest has concentrated on function, dating and, to a lesser extent, style. Through analysis of these attributes archaeologists have sought to make sense of the object world.

Over the last two decades this situation has changed and material culture has come to take the burden of much broader forms of social analysis. People have realized that objects do not just provide a stage setting to human action; they are integral to it. Certainly, if we consider material culture in its different moments of production, exchange and consumption, then little is left out, especially once each of these is set within its social contexts and consequences. This new focus directs attention to the way human and object histories inform each other. One metaphor for understanding this process is explored in this issue of *World Archaeology*: that of biography. The central idea is that, as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other.

Processual archaeologists have tried to develop a more historical approach to objects using the concept of use-life (Tringham 1994: 175). Use-life approaches focus on changes to the morphological or functional characteristics of an object or artefact, following, for example, the reduction of a stone tool through successive episodes of flaking and grinding, focusing on the way its shape and use change as it becomes progressively smaller. The object here is a passive, inert material to which things happen and things are done. Such analyses do not address the way social interactions involving people and objects create meaning. In contrast, the biographical approach adopted in this volume aims to do precisely that. It is much closer to the life-history approach developed by Tringham (1994, 1995) to investigate Neolithic houses.

In such a study, the house has to be considered as an individual, as a dynamic entity whose every month of life is significant for the men and women who act in and around it. It seems to me that the concept of life-history of the house has a more historical and humanistic significance than the term *use-life*. It concerns the time aspect – the duration of the house, the continuity of its generation (its replacement), its ancestors and

World Archaeology Vol. 31(2): 169–178 *The Cultural Biography of Objects*
© Taylor & Francis Ltd 1999 0043–8243

descendants, the memories of it that are held by its actors, the ghosts that are held within its walls and under its foundations. In other words, I become interested in its biography. (Tringham 1995: 98)

Tringham's life-history, like the biographical approach taken here, seeks to understand the way objects become invested with meaning through the social interactions they are caught up in. These meanings change and are renegotiated through the life of an object. Changes in meaning need not be driven by the physical modification or use of an object, a point clearly brought out in Gillings and Pollard's paper in this volume which discusses the transforming meanings of the unmodified Stone 4 at Avebury. Meaning emerges from social action and the purpose of an artefact biography is to illuminate that process.

The notion of the biography of objects goes back to Kopytoff (1986) who felt that things could not be fully understood at just one point in their existence and processes and cycles of production, exchange and consumption had to be looked at as a whole. Not only do objects change through their existence, but they often have the capability of accumulating histories, so that the present significance of an object derives from the persons and events to which it is connected. Kula valuables in the Trobriands, for instance, often maintain links to named individuals who have owned and transacted them. The fame of objects and the renown of people are mutually creating, so that objects gain value through links to powerful people and an individual's standing is enhanced through possession of well-known objects. There is a mutual process of value creation between people and things.

Thinking biographically

Accession Number: 1940.10.54

Country: Fiji

Name: neck ornament

Material: whale tooth, coconut fibre

Field collector: The Reverend James Calvert

Other owners: King Thakombau

Pitt Rivers source: Pilot Officer James Lionel Calvert via his Aunt Miss Gladys.

The above is part of the Pitt Rivers Museum catalogue entry for a Fijian necklace made of sperm whale teeth strung on coconut fibre (Plate 1). This object, sitting in its glass case, may seem static and isolated, but this is a misapprehension of museum objects and of objects generally. Despite their apparent stasis such objects are continually picking up new significances, connections and meanings. Upon seeing the necklace, the first question a Fijian visitor to the Pitt Rivers museum might ask is: whose was it?; immediately followed by: which village did it come from? The history of ownership and use of such objects is often well known to Fijian people, especially if this history involved important chiefs, for objects touched by chiefs are thought to be both powerful and dangerous.

Of particular importance in Fiji are whole whale's teeth called *tabua*. Although strung singly on coconut fibre, *tabua* were generally cradled in the hand rather than worn around the neck. During the nineteenth century *tabua* circulated as part of a ritualized currency of exchange between gods, chiefs and people, including cannibal victims and marriageable

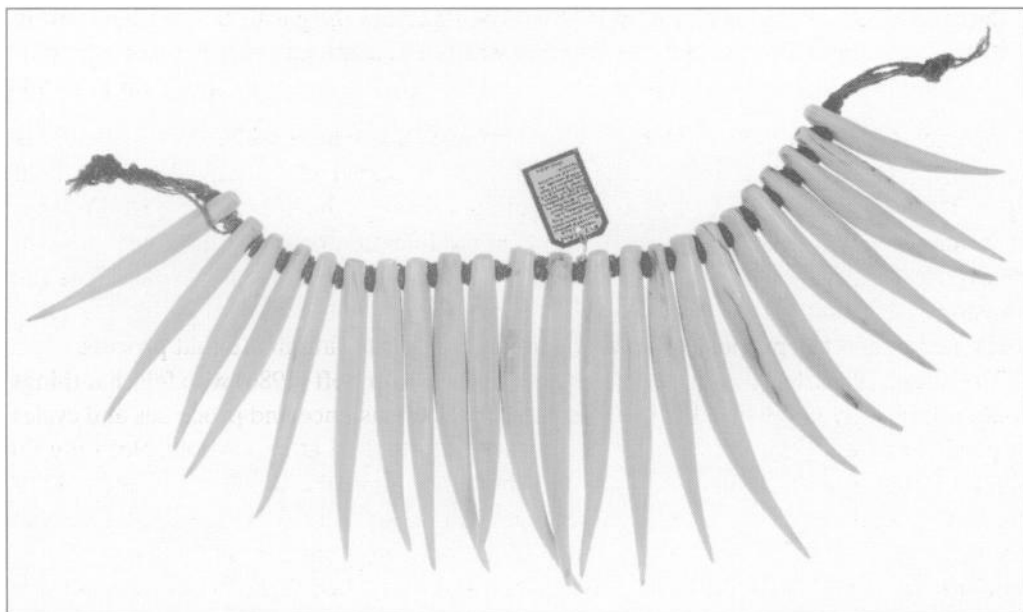


Plate 1 Fijian necklace made of sperm whale teeth strung on coconut fibre. 1940-10-54 Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

women (Sahlins 1985: 100–1; 1983). These whale's teeth still circulate today in ceremonies to gain favour, negotiate social debts and maintain social alliances. Most *tabua* have moved through many hands and this longevity of chiefly ownership and exchange is much venerated. As a whale's tooth ages it becomes darker in colour as oils from the hands of its many owners become incorporated into the ivory, and the power of successive chiefly owners accumulates within the substance of the tooth. The depth of a *tabua*'s colour, as indicator of a lengthy biography, is a primary determinant of a tooth's value. Both value and biography are in this way generalized; few *tabua* have specific remembered histories (Thomas 1991: 67).

The necklace in the Pitt Rivers Museum is very different. It is made of sawn rather than whole sperm whale teeth and was made specifically to be worn as a necklace. Sawn sperm whale teeth necklaces were first produced in the early nineteenth century (Clunie 1986: 159–60) at a time when Fijian chiefs were actively strengthening links with neighbouring Tonga and Samoa. As Kaeppler (1978: 249) notes, while Tonga, Samoa and Fiji were each culturally distinct, they also formed a larger social system in which canoes, parrot feathers, barkcloth, mats and other items were exchanged. The sawn tooth necklaces, technologically superior to *tabua*, were made by Tongan canoe makers, either living in Tonga or resident on the eastern Fijian islands, and were initially made under the control of Tongan chiefs for presentation to Fijian chiefs. Their context of production and use was from the beginning colonial in nature. They were in a sense foreign, and they were very rarely exchanged between Fijian chiefs. These necklaces were 'singular, personal, chiefly artifacts' perhaps associated 'with chiefly positions rather than individual chiefs' (Thomas 1991: 74). Unlike the generalized biographies of *tabua*, the few known examples of sawn

tooth necklaces have well-known and highly specific biographies, as is the case with the Pitt Rivers' necklace.

Around 1874 the whale's teeth necklace catalogued above was given by the chief Thakombau (Cakobau in more recent orthography) to the Rev. J. Calvert, a Wesleyan missionary who played a major role in the process of converting Cakobau to Christianity. The necklace remained in the Calvert family for over fifty years, presumably as a concrete reminder of their missionary and imperial links. It passed into the possession of Calvert's great-grandson, James Lionel Calvert, who died of his wounds on active service in France in 1939. His aunt Gladys then gave the necklace to the Pitt Rivers Museum where it is now on display in the court of the museum, and where it has been seen by many, including the novelist P. D. James, who made reference to it in her novel *The Children of Men* (p. 156).

The necklace was probably given to Calvert as a personal gift, an act in keeping with the traditional context in which these necklaces changed hands. However, it was given in the context of a significant colonial juncture, for in 1874 Fiji became a Crown Colony of Britain. In a formal ceremony Cakobau presented a series of traditional gifts to Queen Victoria which symbolized the relinquishing of ownership and authority over the people and land of Fiji. They included a war club and a large number of tabua. In the established manner the tabua, while powerful and significant, were unnamed and unremarked. The war club in contrast was named and itemized. Queen Victoria and King George V retained it at Windsor Castle until 1932 when King George returned it to Fiji as an unofficial gift and, embellished by a silverwork crown, it became the official mace of the new Legislative Council of Fiji. At the Council opening it was carried by an elderly man who had been a child at Bau at the time when Cakobau was chief there. Following this event, Governor Fletcher (1932) reflected that 'the mace with its historical associations, adds a new dignity to the proceedings'.

These gifts and ceremonies surrounding Fiji's entry into, and emergence from, the British Empire may echo the political use of objects in earlier exchanges between Tongan and Fijian chiefs. The necklace given to Calvert, unlike the mace, remains in England housed in the Pitt Rivers Museum. But like the mace it is not divorced from the complex social relations which make up its biographical history. Both objects remain contact points between Fiji past and present, between present governments and the old colonial powers, but recontextualized as objects of scholarly scrutiny.

Between objects and people

At the heart of the notion of biography are questions about the links between people and things; about the ways meanings and values are accumulated and transformed. There are many ways of understanding these links and many ways of conceptualizing the objects which lie at the heart of these links. We outline a number of theories currently being used to address these questions, but, as the diversity of papers brought together for this volume suggests, no one theory will ever be adequate to understand all circumstances.

One influential debate concerns the difference between gifts and commodities. This question has generated a vast literature which lies beyond the scope of this paper.

However, the distinction between gifts and commodities goes back to Marx's definition of commodity and Mauss's thoughts on gifts. The distinction they made has recently been recapitulated by Gregory (1982). Gregory takes inspiration from Marx's view that commodities, while apparently relations between things in the market place, are in fact congealed social relations of class pertaining to the ownership of the means of production and the objects so produced. Likewise, gifts in kin-based societies may seem, to a Western eye, to be economic transactions, but are in fact concerned with the production of sociability, through the creation and maintenance of social links. Commodities are supposed to be alienable, so that they can be transacted without leaving any lasting relationship between giver and receiver. By contrast, gifts always maintain some link to the person or people who first made them and the people who have subsequently transacted them. The movement of gifts sets up a dense skein of ties between people, which can be unravelled only by the return of gifts. The main parallels for a such a state of affairs in the Western world are Christmas presents and birthday gifts, where the quality of the objects themselves is somewhat secondary to the social links and obligations that such gifts map out and maintain. The alienability of commodities versus the continued attachments people have to gifts provides very different means of creating and maintaining biographies.

Marilyn Strathern (1988) has taken up the idea that gifts produce social relations and are active in a mutually creative relationship between people and things. She has built a scheme of Melanesian sociability that is becoming increasingly influential for those viewing other parts of the world. Strathern sees Melanesian people and objects as moving moments within networks of relations. Their identity at any moment derives from their current network of relations. If gifts maintain an unbreakable attachment to the people who made and transacted them in the past, then all gifts are multiply authored: that is, they are produced by a range of different people and a plethora of links. While Westerners understand objects to exist in and of themselves, Melanesians see objects as the detached parts of people circulating through the social body in complex ways. People are not just multiple, they are also distributed. A person is ultimately composed of all the objects they have made and transacted and these objects represent the sum total of their agency. A person's agency may then have effects at quite a considerable distance from the individual's body and may continue to have effects after they are dead. Objects are shaped by their social significances and meanings and it is the differences in the scheme of meanings attached to people and things that separate Westerners and Melanesians. In Melanesia people can be both subject and object, found in one place or spread over many, directly effective or forming a diffuse background influence depending on their changing position in a network of relations. This is not true in the same way of Westerners' conceptions of themselves and this creates the gap dividing two radically different forms of life. This has radical implications for the notion of biography. Material things are not external supports or measures of an internal life, but rather people and things have mutual biographies which unfold in culturally specific ways.

Similar ideas have been explored by Gell (1998) using a basically Strathernian framework of reference. Although this work is specifically about art objects, the ideas can be applied to material culture more generally. Gell feels that objects can be seen as social actors, in that they construct and influence the field of social action in ways which would not occur if they did not exist. Despite the wide influence of Strathern and Gell's ideas,

the Melanesian examples are only one way of conceptualizing possible links between people and things. They cannot be generalized to the world as a whole.

A stress on context is found in the work of Appadurai (1986), who is uncertain of the utility of distinctions between gifts and commodities. A watch bought in a shop as a commodity can be given as a gift with the social force of an item made and intended from the first to be a gift. For Appadurai context is all and, rather than making blanket distinctions between objects, we need to look at the political and social circumstances surrounding exchanges. Appadurai is interested in the degree of exchangeability between objects: when it is socially appropriate to exchange pigs for money or pigs for shell valuables. Thomas (1991, 1994) too stresses recontextualization, but retains the gift/commodity distinction as one of overall utility. Colonial relations in the Pacific over the past few centuries have brought about a mass of exchanges of objects between outsiders and local people, so that things originally produced as commodities can be exchanged for gifts and vice versa. Objects for Thomas have become entangled in new and evolving sets of relationships over the last five centuries in the Pacific, which cannot be glossed as the exploitation of the 'natives' by the colonialists or as cultural loss through the impact of an overwhelming and avaricious capitalism. Objects can be understood only through looking at the cultural contexts which originally produced them and the new circumstances into which they later moved. The histories of many objects are composed of shifts of context and perspective.

A slightly different approach to the issue of biography is found in the work of Hoskins (1998), who looked at how individual people's biographies were tied up in objects. She shifts the focus from the biographies that objects may accumulate to the way in which objects are used to create and sustain the meanings of people's lives. Hoskins, working in Sumba in eastern Indonesia, found that when she asked people about the story of their lives she elicited little response, but when she asked them about significant objects, she got a mass of detail about people's biographies. In her work she tries to define how objects operate as foils for self-definition and help with the organization of experience that constitutes someone's life story (Hoskins 1998: 7). Along the way she criticizes Strathern for not looking at how Melanesians might create a coherent sense of self out of their movable parts and their exchange histories which would complement their status and individual and multiple beings (Hoskins 1998: 10).

Performing meaning

Most of the theories discussed above focus on contexts of exchange. Objects are understood to accumulate biographies as they repeatedly move between people. But just as objects do not have to be physically modified to acquire new meanings, nor do they have to be exchanged. Contexts other than exchange create meanings and produce object biographies. One such context is ceremonial performances. On the Pacific Northwest coast of Canada the performance of objects is central to their meaning. In his marvellous anthology of the life and times of Willie Seaweed, a Kwakwaka'wakw artist and chief who lived from 1873 to 1967, Bill Holm (1983) draws together a corpus of work comprising masks, totem poles and small carved objects. To Western eyes this work has an intrinsic

unity born of its creation by a single hand. But this was never a Kwakwaka'wakw point of view. The meaning of Willie Seaweed's art for the Kwakwaka'wakw does not derive from its maker:

Northwest Coast artists of the past did not sign or mark their works. . . . Probably the first Kwakwaka'wakw artist to regularly sign his paintings and carvings, and then only those made for sale to non-Indians, was Charley James. . . . As far as I know, Willie Seaweed never signed a single piece.

(Holm 1983: 35)

Nor does meaning inherc in the carvings themselves. Willie Seaweed commissioned Mungo Martin to carve a Both-Sides-Face mask while he himself carved a Raising-Top mask. Both were unusual and remarkable, yet:

Willie Seaweed sold them both, along with several other objects, to Dr. Charles Newcombe, collecting for the British Columbia Provincial Museum in 1914. Selling masks, which represented noble prerogatives, to outsiders might seem to be a strange act for a conservative chief steeped in the traditions of his people. Yet it seems never to have been really troublesome for the Kwakwaka'wakw. A fine mask was and is prized, especially if it is an heirloom, but it is the right to display it, derived from ancient tradition, that is jealously guarded. Outsiders will not claim that privilege, and new masks can be made. Which is exactly what Seaweed did. The masks he made to replace those that went to the Provincial Museum he described as copies, and they were, in the sense that they represented the same creatures in similar form.

(Holm 1983: 29)

For the Kwakwaka'wakw meaning must be enacted. It must be both performed and witnessed. Masks were a vehicle through which ceremonial privileges were made material and the best available carver would be sought because the dramatic impact of a performance depended a great deal on his skill. But, it was the act of showing which was powerful and which established a mask's meaning. Possession of a mask was not in itself significant because the mask possessed meaning only in the context of its performance.

As discussed in Lisa Seip's paper in this volume, a somewhat different understanding of the relationship between people, masks and performance pertained among the Nuxalk to the north. As a result, the Nuxalk had a very different attitude to the selling of masks to outsiders. The Nuu-chah-nulth to south, however, had similar attitudes to those of their Kwakwaka'wakw neighbours. When Captain James Cook sailed into the Nuu-chah-nulth village of Yuquot in 1778 people were extremely eager to sell any carved mask or pole he or his men might desire (Beaglehole 1967: 319–20). Oddly however this eagerness to sell was matched by an equally strong reticence actually to show the carving to the foreigners: 'we also observ'd that frequently in selling us their masks, which would be coverd carefully up, they would use mysteriousness & often secrecy, bringing them sliely to us' (Beaglehole 1967: 1414). The conflict engendered by this unprecedented contact situation was not over whether it was appropriate to sell carvings but rather how they might be displayed in a non-meaningful, non-ceremonial context in order to facilitate a sale (Marshall 1999).

A much more recent event highlights the same tensions. In March 1988 the Royal

British Columbia Museum purchased a Nuu-Chah-Nulth ceremonial curtain from the estate of the late Andy Warhol. At the time of purchase the Museum already held in its collections a curtain of 'nearly identical design and imagery' (Hoover and Inglis 1990: 275) and subsequent investigations into the history of the curtain revealed the existence of further 'copies' of the same curtain. In this case, the privilege of displaying the curtain was passed to several people and copies were commissioned for each owner. It was not until much later that the original curtain was sold and came into the possession of Andy Warhol and later the museum. In 1988 the Frank family held the rights to the curtains and while they had no difficulty with the museum purchasing the Warhol curtain, the question of when and in what circumstances the curtain might be displayed was much more fraught. The agreed solution was to open the museum display of both curtains with a ceremony in which the curtains were performed and invested with meaning by their Nuu-chah-nulth 'owners' (Hoover and Inglis 1990).

Biographical variety

In the above case studies and theoretical reviews we have tried to give some sense of the great variety of ways an object might be understood to have a biography and of a range of ways a biography of objects might be approached. The Northwest coast was obviously a set of social contexts quite different from those in Fiji or western Melanesia. In the latter area it makes sense to talk of objects as social actors and of the meanings that reside in some sense in the objects themselves. On the Northwest coast an object came to life only in performance so that out of this context it held little inherent meaning. The Fijian whale's teeth seem to have taken part in both kinds of biography.

This distinction between objects which can accumulate biographies to themselves and objects which contribute to the biography of a ceremony or body of knowledge, rather than accumulating their own inherent meanings, can be helpful. Some of the objects considered here appear to be able to accumulate their own biographies: the Elgin marbles (Hamilakis), the Saxon cross (Moreland) and the S. Black bag (Peers).

But not all objects accrue meaning and biography in this straightforward sense. Examples include the Nuxalk masks (Seip), pearls in central America (Saunders), the equestrian figure in Andean rock art (Gallardo et al.) or Avebury as a monument (Gillings and Pollard). Did the physical appeal of stone balls and their lack of straightforward archaeological context make them performative objects working through the biography of meaning, rather than creating their own biography (MacGregor)? The extreme case is Rainbird's notion of the transformation of pots into tombs at Nan Madol, where one set of meanings was attached to different types of objects over time, indicating that the meaning was more important than the formal characteristics of the objects it was connected to.

In some circumstances, particularly those of colonial encounter, a sharp break may occur in a biography, a radical resetting of meaning. This happened when the Nuxalk mask (Seip) and S. Black bag (Peers) were alienated from their culture of origin and placed in a museum; it happened when the Spanish Apostle Santiago was reinvented by the indigenous Andean people (Gallardo et al.); and when Avebury was 'rediscovered' in the

twentieth century (Gillings and Pollard). But these renewals are never fully complete. They bring with them fragments of old lives, threads of earlier meanings.

The notion of biography is one that leads us to think comparatively about the accumulation of meaning in objects and the changing effects these have on people and events. This central thread of comparison, however, makes the variety of relationships between people and things in different cultural contexts even more apparent. Ultimately, the utility of the metaphor of biography will depend upon its role in revealing this variety.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Andrew Crosby for his thoughtful comments on earlier drafts and for sharing some of his extensive knowledge of whale's teeth in Fiji and of the war club that became the official mace of the Legislative Council of Fiji.

*Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford
Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton*

References

- Appadurai, A. 1986. Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (ed. A. Appadurai). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–63.
- Beaglehole, J. C. (ed.) 1967. *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776–1780. The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, Vol. 3, in 2 parts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clunic, F. 1986. *Yalo i Viti*. Suva: Fiji Museum.
- Fletcher 1932. Letter from Governor Fletcher to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Papers of the Colonial Secretaries Office, Ref F38/15, National Archives of Fiji, Suva.
- Gell, A. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gregory, C. 1982. *Gifts and Commodities*. London: Academic Press.
- Holm, B. 1983. *Smoky-Top: The Art and Times of Willie Seaweed*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Hoover A. and R. Inglis 1990. Acquiring and exhibiting a Nuu-Chah-Nulth ceremonial curtain. *Curator*, 33(4): 272–88.
- Hoskins, J. 1998. *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Story of People's Lives*. London: Routledge.
- Kaeppler, A. L. 1978. Exchange patterns in goods and spouse: Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. *Mankind*, 11: 246–52.
- Kopytoff, I. 1986. The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (ed. A. Appadurai). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–91.
- Marshall, Y. 1999. The changing art and architecture of potlatch houses at Yuquot. In *Huupakwanum: Art, History and Culture of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth People* (ed. A. Hoover). Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum.

- Sahlins, M. D. 1983. Raw women, cooked men and other 'great things' of the Fiji Islands. In *The Ethnography of Cannibalism* (eds P. Brown and D. Tuzin). Special publication, Society for Psychological Anthropology, pp. 72–93.
- Sahlins, M. D. 1985. *Islands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Strathern, M. 1988. *The Gender of the Gift*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thomas, N. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Thomas, N. 1994. *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Tringham, R. 1994. Engendered places in prehistory. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 1(2): 169–203.
- Tringham, R. 1995. Archaeological houses, households, housework and the home. In *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings, and Environments* (eds D. N. Benjamin, D. Stea and D. Saile). Aldershot: Avebury, pp. 79–107.



British Art Studies

February 2021

British Art Studies

Issue 19, published 26 February 2021

Cover image: Victor Ehikhamenor, *The King Returning from Holy Aruosa Cathedral* (detail), 2018, rosary beads, bronze statuettes, and thread on canvas, 116 x 71 in.. Digital image courtesy of Victor Ehikhamenor (all rights reserved).

PDF generated on 1 December 2021

Note: *British Art Studies* is a digital publication and intended to be experienced online and referenced digitally. PDFs are provided for ease of reading offline. Please do not reference the PDF in academic citations: we recommend the use of DOIs (digital object identifiers) provided within the online article. These unique alphanumeric strings identify content and provide a persistent link to a location on the internet. A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it to link permanently to electronic documents with confidence.

Published by:

Paul Mellon Centre
16 Bedford Square
London, WC1B 3JA
<https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk>

In partnership with:

Yale Center for British Art
1080 Chapel Street
New Haven, Connecticut
<https://britishart.yale.edu>

ISSN: 2058-5462

DOI: 10.17658/issn.2058-5462

URL: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>

Editorial team: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/editorial-team>

Advisory board: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/advisory-board>

Produced in the United Kingdom.

A joint publication by



YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

Contents

Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum, Dan Hicks

British Museum, Bloomsbury, W. C.

Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum

Dan Hicks

Museum. 1898.

Authors

Cite as

Dan Hicks, "Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum", *British Art Studies*, Issue 19, <https://dx.doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-19/conversation>

Introduction by

Dan Hicks, Curator and Professor of Contemporary Archaeology, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University

When it comes to the study of artworks as material culture, there are few more familiar idioms than that of the “life-history” of the object. From Arjun Appadurai’s formulation of “the social life of things” (1986) to Bruno Latour’s business-school model of “actor-networks” (1993), over the past generation a particular variety of materialist anthropology has taken root in those parts of historical studies that deal with things. ¹ “If humans have biographies, so should things”, some historians of science have proposed. ² In the history of art meanwhile, the reception of Alfred Gell’s influential text *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* recast artworks as “indexes”, distributing the agency of artists, as part of the “relational texture of social life”, where biography is expanded from human into the non-human realms. ³ As if anthropocentrism were in the top ten problems with art theory (a field that is perhaps more accurately not human enough).

Through this consumption of anthropological theory, the analogy of artefactual histories with human lives has come to be inculcated as a genre of historiography. In the process, I want to suggest, older, deeper, long-standing forms of object-oriented inclinations and prejudices have been refreshed and emboldened. At times the notion of object biography has served to fix the boundaries of things rather too firmly by tending to overestimate physical constancy in the face of movement between shifting human contexts, what Igor Kopytoff called “regimes of value”. ⁴ But for conservators, archaeologists, curators, and others who work with physical things, it is always clear that any object is at least as unstable as its context; that any life-history is always a life course, with ageing, decay, maintenance, death, rather than just serial recontextualisation. In other words, it is clear that any object or artwork is always to some extent a form of event and an endurance, rather than being purely reducible to some kind of subject. Contexts can also decay. Cultures, as any student of anthropology must learn, can be degraded. No contemplation lasts forever. Even theories can decompose. The world can outlive an idiom. Maybe this is what is now happening to the idea of object life-histories.

The primary institutional context that was physically and laboriously assembled and constructed by anthropologists for their theoretical studies of material culture—those Euro-American spaces, variously called the “ethnological”, “anthropological” or “world culture” museum, filled with the cultural heritage of the global south transported under colonialism—is not simply decaying. It has failed. The central role of such collections in the objectification of so-called “non-Western” human cultures was not

foregrounded in those late twentieth-century theoretical discussions of object agency—but this was doubtless the principal source of the category error through which objects came to be treated analytically as subjects.⁵

Today the role not just of objectification but also of cultural dispossession in the ongoing history of European colonialism is coming into focus in new ways.⁶ The legitimacy of institutions in the global north that oversaw and enacted the ideological hyper-concentration of “world culture” during colonialism is evaporating as calls for restitution, reparations, and justice grow. Each stolen object, insofar as it is an unfinished event, is also some form of outstanding debt. And to refuse to return what was stolen, just as Marcel Mauss famously described for the refusal to reciprocate when a gift has been given, is tantamount to “a declaration of war”.⁷

From London and Oxford to Berlin and New York, as these museums start to fail, it is clearer than ever that those anthropological theories of material culture, as they were received within art history, were never innocent metaphors, without histories of their own—or without politics in the contemporary moment. The failure of the world culture museum brings about a kind of flip, some form of figure-ground reversal. This failure is conceptual just as much as it is ethical. I mean that one emerging consequence of the failure of the world culture museum is a conceptual recalibration: with the decomposition of the idea of object life-histories comes the sudden emergence of its counterpoint (which was surely always there) into plain sight.

Take the example of the Benin Bronzes—thousands of sacred and royal artworks from the City of Benin in what is today Edo State, Nigeria, violently looted in 1897 by British naval officers and colonial administrators, now scattered across more than 160 museums around the globe as well as countless private collections (Figs 1-3). Tens of thousands were killed and the spoils of war were chaotically acquired and displayed to illustrate an ideology of cultural supremacy.⁸ In spring 2016, art historian John Boardman wrote in the pages of *Common Knowledge*, a respected Duke University Press journal that: “With the Benin bronzes, the rape proved to be a rescue”.⁹

DATE.	DRAWING AND DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT.	PRICE.	DEPOSITED AT.	REMOVED TO.
1898. Feb. 17. 54		£20	British Museum, Bloomsbury, W.C.	<p>Plaque XII 20078</p> <p>Bronze base of Human Head Nepes features: 3 tribal marks color each eye. Pupils of eyes in- laid with iron. Reticulated head- dress of coral or opule Coral. Choker, badge of rank. 12 bands of coral and a band apparently of Plaited hair hanging from head- dress on each side.</p> <p>Benin.</p> <p>Catalogue p. 32 figs 91a 91b</p>

Figure 1.

Illustration of a Brass Head of an Oba (1550-1680), with notes on its provenance, from the catalogue of the collection of the second Pitt Rivers Museum at Farnham, Dorset, 1898, ink and watercolour on paper. Collection of the University of Cambridge Libraries (Add.9455), Vol. 5, 1590. Digital image courtesy of University of Cambridge Libraries (all rights reserved).



Figure 2.

Brass Head of an Oba, currently on view in Gallery 352 of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1550-1680, metal sculpture, 27.3 x 21.3 x 21.9 cm. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller (1979.206.87). Digital image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (public domain).

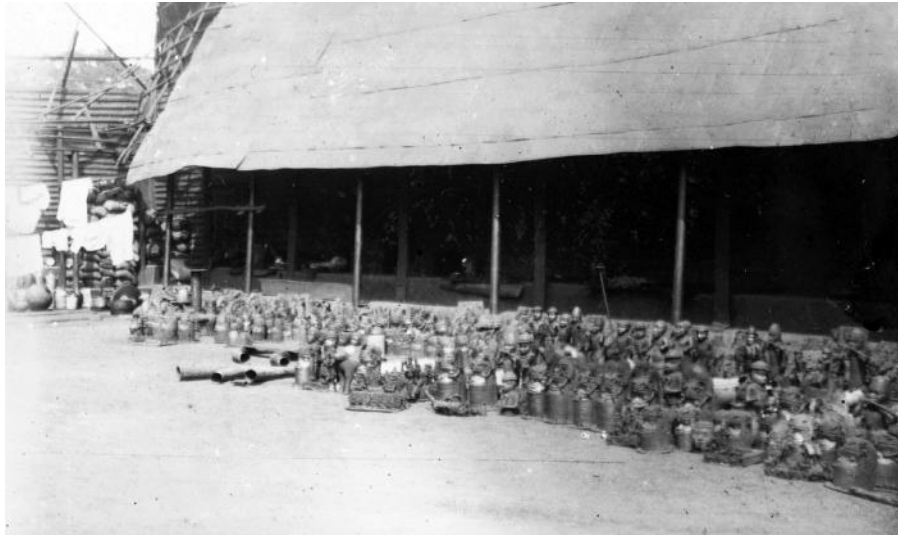


Figure 3.

Bronze Heads and other sacred and royal looted objects lined up by British troops in the aftermath of their attack on Benin City, February 1897, photograph. Collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum Photographic Collection. Digital image courtesy of Pitt Rivers Museum Photographic Collection (all rights reserved).

Or think of the so-called “Elgin Marbles”—that group of Classical Greek marble sculptures made in the fifth century BCE and brought from the Parthenon to the British Museum by Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, just over 200 years ago, in 1812, which are currently living a strange afterlife as an iconic and conventional first point of reference for British conversations about the restitution of looted cultural heritage. Speaking to the Greek magazine *Ta Nea* in Spring 2019, Hartwig Fischer, the Director of the British Museum, said: “When you move cultural heritage into a museum, you move it out of context. However, this shift is also a creative act.” ¹⁰

Such comments are not merely the antiquated views of an outgoing generation; they represent long-standing intellectual positions in art history with roots in extractivist colonialism which have been bolstered over the past two or three decades by the reception of the anthropological notion of object biography—a concept which as we have seen presents a positive, incremental model of recontextualisation, where each new setting is a new accumulated layer of life for an itinerant object, a creative phase full of new meaning, some kind of semiotic patina. The idea of the *cultural biography* of objects has thus served to stifle any discussion of enduring colonial violence and dispossession over time. What is silenced, then, in our model of life-histories are histories of loss and death.

In my new book *The Brutish Museums*, I suggest a name for the curatorial work that can excavate such inverse histories—*necrography*—and a name to the knowledge that emerges from them—*necrology*.¹¹ These neologisms take inspiration from Achille Mbembe’s inversion of Michel Foucault’s classic account of the “biopolitical”, in his idea of “necropolitics”. Foucault described a transformation that took place during the nineteenth century, through which a sovereign’s power to “take life or let live” came to be joined by the emergent power of the state to “make live and let die”; it was “the emergence of something that is no longer an anatomo-politics of the human body, but ... a ‘biopolitics’ of the human race”, Foucault suggested.¹² The potential of this Foucauldian biopolitical approach, especially as it was developed by Giorgio Agamben through his account of “bare life” has been explored in many different ways in the study of the violent displacement of people under extractive, militarist colonialism.¹³ How might it apply to the parallel case of the violent displacement of objects?

Achille Mbembe’s account of “necropolitics” provides a powerful corrective to the Eurocentrism of Foucault’s account, and to the general absence of the enduring and unfinished legacies of empire in uses of Agamben’s account of “bare life” in African Studies and beyond. Crucially, Mbembe underlines the role of colonial histories and their continued after-effects, and in doing so he expands the persistent Foucauldian focus on the living body. For example, he shows how it is the use of the bulldozer for the continual destruction of the lived environment, as much as the fighter jet used for precision strikes targeting individuals, that is central to the practice of neocolonialism in Palestine as an “infrastructural warfare”.¹⁴ We learn then from Mbembe that necropolitical conditions can be made through attacks upon the wider non-human environment as well as just the human body.

If the taking and retention of artworks represents a kind of enduring infrastructural colonial war, made to last in the galleries of museums, then perhaps some kind of forensic death-writing, or autopsy, is part of what colonial collections require of the curator. An exercise in contemporary archaeology (the excavation of the recent past and the near-present). Forensic because this is about understanding the truth at the scene of a crime. Not an object biography but a *necrography*. Central here is what we might call a “Euro-pessimism”—by which I mean that the knowledge that Europeans can make with stolen objects in the anthropology museum will be coterminous with knowledge of European colonialism, wholly dependent upon anti-Black violence and dispossession, until such a time as these enduring processes are adequately revealed, studied, understood, and until the work of restitution—the physical dismantling of the white infrastructure of every anthropology and “world culture” museum—is begun.

The question of restitution requires Euro-American museums not just to generate new top-down curatorial policies but also to collaborate on new bottom-up conceptual realignments, to share knowledge of what's in these collections with full transparency on provenance and archival detail; to listen to and to amplify long-standing demands from Africa and across the global south and First Nations. Our choice of theory is never neutral, not least when the question of returns remains unresolved. The collections of "world culture" museums are a form of colonial archive that wasn't burned or destroyed by the coloniser, in part a kind of unique melancholy index to the central role of art in the history of empire, of dispossession, and of the ideology of "race" and racism. Anthropological/ethnological museums were put to work to make these dispossessions endure. But each museum, like any object or assemblage—and like the disciplines of anthropology and art history themselves—is an unfinished event. We don't know how this ends. We've never needed something like a world culture museum more than we do today—a space in which to encounter and to celebrate art beyond a Eurocentric lens. But can we imagine anthropological museums fit for the twenty-first century—museums where nothing is stolen? Can we hope that a decade of unravelling these *necrographies* of silence and loss, a decade of returns, may lie ahead?

Yes. But for what some call the "decolonisation" of museums or history curriculums, and what others (myself included) prefer to see as the unfinished work of anti-colonialism and anti-racism in the academy, to effect any meaningful change to disciplines or institutions, we need to dismantle and also to reimagine concepts as well as physical displays. Writing histories of theft, co-producing and sharing knowledge of dispossession, involves undoing the renewal of the colonial model of the world culture museum—a renewal wrought through the reception of anthropological theories of object biography. The curatorial work of physical returns of looted objects is urgent, but there is also conceptual work to do.

Response by

Priya Basil, Writer

Writing to Life

Can the task of necrography be left to the very places—the *ethno-illogical* museums—that have long propagated racist classifications and hierarchies, turned stolen cultural artefacts into tools for enforcing white domination? How to guard against necrography becoming yet another form of self-serving inventory—something at which museums are so skilled? How to avoid necrography as a kind of in-house purgatory through which museums pass only to feel absolved? Death writing is necessary, but alone it won't suffice.

“An object is at least as unstable as its context”, Dan Hicks reminds us in his provocation for this feature. If we were to replace the term “objects” with “*belongings*”, might it help underline that instability, signal the precarious nature of possession, the ever-shifting, *living* relations between people, places, and things? *Belongings* ties up notions of (not) having, of being, of longing. *Belongings* suggests a multifariousness that requires many modes of telling.

A necrography can map the colonial landscape around a museum's collections. Yet, even as it reveals topographies of terror, its contours will repeatedly fade into blankness, terra incognita—ruptures in time, space, and story that cannot be retraced: what of those killed during looting, those who survived and lived—still remain—without their belongings? Which forms of investigation, what narration might give shape to those experiences? And the belongings themselves, imbued as many were—are—with spirit, with symbolism, with more than we can know—how to express the effects of their theft, the ways they were damaged, misused, misplaced, forgotten? Such questions leave one “straining against the limits of the archive”, as Saidiya Hartman wrote after a different, if related, search.¹⁵ Her practice of “critical fabulation”, melding history, theory, and fiction, aims “to displace the received or authorized account ... to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done”.¹⁶

Museums truly committed to investigating their collections would benefit from a similar, fabular approach. I propose that forensic dissection unite with unfettered imagination; I see necrography mixing with artistry to enable what I will call *fabulography*—a practice of projecting freely, associatively into the gaps of the past to retrieve in any form—song, dance, film, text, drawing, recipe—something of what has been lost. These attempts would create potentiality, other kinds of liveliness, around objects—a challenge to the stifling authority of traditional museums, which have for too long

promulgated their own myths and denied other narrations. Instead, the museum would now, in a sense, voluntarily de-platform itself. The museum becomes a counter-museum in the vein of what James E. Young called “‘counter-monuments’: memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of the monument”.¹⁷ Museum spaces reconfigured to disrupt the usual workings of the museum.

Whereas necrography is likely to be the prerogative of experts within institutions, fabulography can be performed by experts from without, such as artists, and also by anyone entering the museum space—indeed it may be best carried out as an ongoing, polyphonic, collective enterprise. Where necrography necessarily goes down into the deadly depths, fabulography rises in full knowledge of what’s below—with the equally necessary imperative to reanimate, through manifold perspectives and narratives, belongings that have for too long been objectified by the museum. Fabulography is not about filling in or claiming the voids exposed by necrography, but respectfully inhabiting them, imagining in-with-through them, creating from them.

Picture the museum that opens up to such a process, a kind of cultural Truth and Reconciliation Commission: inviting people and artists in communities from which belongings were taken, as well as other artists and even museum visitors, to share—through exchanges, workshops, displays—in shaping other kinds of landscapes for belonging. A landscape where collections are not cut off and fixed in time, but visibly kept in flux as what’s around them changes. A space of reparation—if it might really be possible, as Hartman proposed, “to consider stories as a form of compensation or even as reparations, perhaps the only kind we will ever receive”.¹⁸ A place in which belongings are not just something to look at, but long for-with-through on the understanding that those which are wanted back must be returned (Fig. 4).



[Watch Video](#)

Figure 4.

Priya Basil, *Locked In and Out*, 2021, film essay, 35 mins 4 secs. Digital image courtesy of Digital file courtesy of Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss (all rights reserved).

Response by

Haidy Geismar, Professor of Anthropology, University College London

In Defence of the Object Biography

As Dan Hicks argues, many museums have stuffed the unsavoury histories of their collections, not so much under the carpet, but in the museum equivalents—the storeroom, the password protected database—well out of the public eye. Hicks' recent book, *The Brutish Museums* (2020), follows his own realization, as a curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, of the lengthy (and often wilful) amnesia that has polluted so many of our cultural institutions.¹⁹ The recent publication of the National Trust's Interim Report on the "Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery" demonstrates the start, in the UK, of a more widespread institutional reckoning with these aspects of our history.²⁰ However, public response to the report, both from a portion of the Trust's membership, and from vocal segments of mainstream media and the political establishment, is evidence of an ongoing and deep-seated discomfort in the direction that this public conversation will necessarily take us—towards a discussion of restitution, repatriation, and redress.²¹ This sets us far behind other former colonizing countries, for instance, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, where debates about national accountability and repatriation of museum collections are being prominently led and supported by the state.²²

Audre Lorde famously noted that "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house".²³ Yet, here I want to push back on Hicks' assertion that the analytic toolkit of the object biography, as it has emerged across a number of academic disciplines, is rendered useless by its use as a tool in the cover-up by museums of their difficult histories. The notion of the object biography, and of the social life of things, has been an important heuristic that has entered museums from social research fields, and crucially from stakeholder communities as well as academics, enabling the surfacing of alternative narratives, counter-histories, and histories from below. Take for example the project *100 histories of 100 worlds in One Object*, launched in 2019 by Mirjam Brusius and colleagues at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, in direct response to the master narratives assumed by the British Museum's *A History of the World in 100 Objects*.²⁴ Making explicit use of the notion of the object biography, projects like *100 Histories* enable a proliferation of perspectives as a necessary corrective to the curatorial and institutional authority of national museums (and the property relations that this authority bolsters) made explicit by former British Museum director Neil MacGregor's rendition of the "encyclopaedic museum" as "the whole world in our hands".

²⁵ Object biographies, as material narratives, exemplified in visual form perhaps by the image illustrating my words—*The African Library* by Yinka Shonibare—provide opportunities to present the complexity and multiplicity of experience that surrounds the singular stories often presented by short labels in museums; they enable objects to be linked to different voices and to tell expanded histories (Fig. 5). The methodology emerged in relation to understanding the complex global values of objects as they moved from place to place; and has been used with great effect to delegitimize narratives of national superiority and imperial conquest in museums. Object biographies can empower and create space for voices from outside of the institution, and can become a crucial part of the citational refresh that is so dearly needed within the scholarship on these questions—moving us away from the voices of (in the main) white men, in positions of institutional authority.

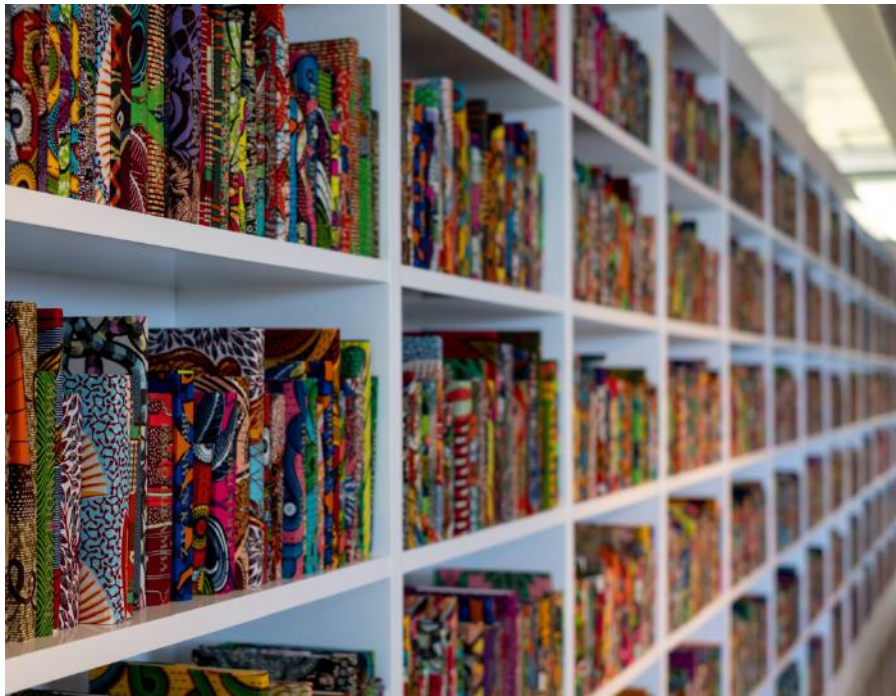


Figure 5.

Yinka Shonibare, *The African Library*, part of the *Trade Winds* exhibition, Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa, 2018, installation. Digital image courtesy of Yinka Shonibare CBE / DACS / Photo: Lois GoBe / Alamy Stock Photo (all rights reserved).

By so stringently throwing away concepts and tools such as object biography and replacing them with necrology/necrography, Hicks replaces the possibility of a polyphonous, grass-roots or bottom-up approach with yet another top-down perspective. If we must, as he writes, “dismantle and... reimagine concepts as well as physical displays” in order “to effect any meaningful change to disciplines or institutions”, surely we must start with

an approach that gives much more space to voices that have been so violently displaced and suppressed? Alongside the broader theorization and recognition of violence and yes, base criminality that Hicks explicates, we also need to include voices that, for example, are working through discourses of healing and redress. There is no space within the theorization of necrology for the voices of survival, or in the words of Gerald Vizenor “survivance”: a concept that was used to underpin the building and curation of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, DC. ²⁶ In several large museum projects, Indigenous curators have rejected the model of memorialization enshrined so well by Holocaust museums (there can be no better instantiation of Hicks' formulation of necrography or necrology). Curators at NMAI, and at other Indigenized national museums, have insisted that their narratives transcend the conceptual as well as literal colonization of genocide and cultural annihilation as the dominant framework used to represent Native peoples. Rather than the anthropomorphism that Hicks derides, the object biography is a conduit through which diverse narratives can be made visible, and material, solidifying alternative epistemologies in the museum. Dismantling the house is as much about crafting new futures as it is about learning from the past. The notion of the object biography should not be discarded as an important tool in this enterprise.

Response by

Marlene Kadar, Professor, School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, York University

Reading the Trapper Point Blanket: Coded Conquest

Of all the European goods made for the “Indian Fur Trade” probably none is more emblematic of that era of commerce than the point blanket.²⁷

Artefacts of deemed significance belong to museums and thus have institutional status. Undervalued artefacts occupy an ambiguous in-between zone—between the political and global history of taking, and the privatised history of domestic space and giving.

The Trapper Point wool blanket is one such ambiguously situated object, a beautiful textile whose legacy is shrouded in Canada’s colonial settler history and the fur trade. The blanket operates as a signifier of everyday domestic life, and simultaneously of how anti-Indigenous racism is enabled by empire-building and its markets.²⁸ Although in this case not the direct product of violent imperialist extraction, the blanket has cruelty written into its weft.

If we allow ourselves to take life-writing and the personal archive as links between a Trader Point blanket and the necropolitical, we can address the unfinished work in this conversation—wrapping domestic objects into the sphere of Hicks’ provocation.²⁹ In the case of the blanket, the trauma done by stealing skews and delays a full understanding of its history. Due to this belatedness, its past owners could not have grasped the blanket's contentious history as either a straightforward chronology or an insight about the traumatic stories out of which it evolved.³⁰ Indeed, the blanket represents both lost subjects and contested objects.³¹

Dan Hicks’ “Euro-pessimistic” view of museums is poignant in considering such troubled and traumatic histories. The blanket whose details are seen here is a wedding gift stored in a domestic archival space, my mother’s closet (Figs 6 and 7). As a white immigrant woman married in 1948, her ownership is also troubled, a kind of breach. The blanket celebrated new love and a hopeful future in the new land. The land, however, had been stolen, and the First Nations dismantled to make room for white settlers and future waves of migrants—a complicated story of the long arm of wealth and consequent poverty.



Figure 6.

Trapper Point Blanket, detail showing the original brand label stitched into the corner of the blanket, ca. 1948. The label authenticates the “genuine” Trapper Point blanket by marketing the blanket with a racist stereotype of the “Indian Chief”. The label also indicates that in spite of a market in the colonies, the blanket is “Made in England”. Collection of Marlene Kadar. Digital image courtesy of Marlene Kadar (all rights reserved).

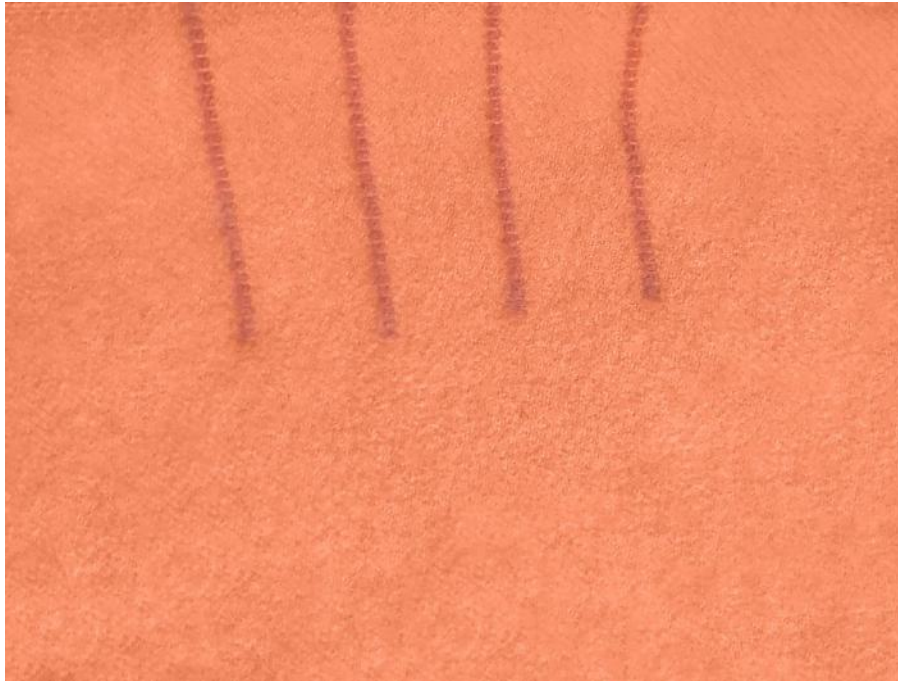


Figure 7.

Trapper Point blanket, detail showing four points, the code for a double size bed, circa 1948. The blanket was sold to Canadian shoppers by the T. Eaton Company, Ltd. Collection of Marlene Kadar. Digital image courtesy of Marlene Kadar (all rights reserved).

Hicks invokes the phrase, death-writing, in two guises: first, as a practice that chronicles the past, but does so in the present; and second, as a “forensic” activity in the present that also stretches into the political future of a just restitution, an unfinished event. In other words, as the responsible, ethical act of the anthropologist who acknowledges necrography but also intends to address it by “writing histories of theft” and dispossession.

I suggest that life-writing studies can intervene to amplify that story without adhering fully to the constraints of an artefact biography. For me, the subject of a biography is heroic and their life story, coherent. The life-writing subject is more varied.³² Leigh Gilmore explores life-writing genres that dodge the boundaries of telling regimes in order to authorize the “silenced life-histories of stolen culture”.³³ These genres are limit cases, which can broaden the literary and archival field, making a just outcome more likely. The Trapper Point blanket, for example, can be seen as a limit case genre, which encodes domesticated suffering and loss without our knowing it at the time. Against the grain of official histories, it archives a story that can be read in future.³⁴

The eponymous points served as glyphs that indicate the size of the blanket or, some say, the exchange value in “made-beaver”—the number of adult pelts for which the blanket might be traded.³⁵ The label in Figure 6

authenticates the blanket with a racist image of a Chief in headdress, thereby proving the blanket is not an imitation, but the real thing, “Made in England” and registered (“REG’d”). *Empointer* encodes a story of dimensions and value, while the label chronicles multiple cruelties: decimation of the beaver, killing off of the buffalo, the racialisation of Indigenous peoples, and genocidal intent as the Crown’s Commander-in-Chief suggested using point blankets to carry smallpox and “extirpate this execrable race”.³⁶ All this was accomplished in the name of the Crown, in aid of, as it turns out, the dispossession of traditional First Nations’ lands.

In this context, a form of limit-case “writing” is sewn into the Trapper Point blanket as death-writing. Both the points and the label cannot avoid coding the conquest of Canada’s First Nations, no matter where—like the museum’s booty—the blanket is stored, preserved, or displayed. The relationship between life-writing and death-writing is imprecise, but perhaps the latter is subsumed in the former and may be its most virulent disguise. Here is how the blanket performs limit-case qualities and calls on us to uncover its disguise in the present tense. Writing the life of this object—underpinned by reading it closely—merges with chronicling associated deaths. The encounter that difficult knowledge imparts—even in a domestic space—underscores the “urgent, overdue task of *necrography*” that Hicks proposes.

Response by

Emeka Ogboh, Artist

Vermisst in Benin: An Artistic Intervention

Vermisst in Benin (*Missing in Benin*) is an artistic intervention that seeks to accelerate and actualize the narrative around the repatriation of the Kingdom of Benin artefacts currently in possession of the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden (Figs 8–12). The reparation dialogue to date has been ineffective in returning the artefacts to their original home of Benin City, Nigeria. I created the *Vermisst in Benin* artistic intervention out of a sense of impatience and necessity, aiming to frame the stagnant and abstract discourse surrounding colonial reparations with the urgency and gravity of a public service announcement.

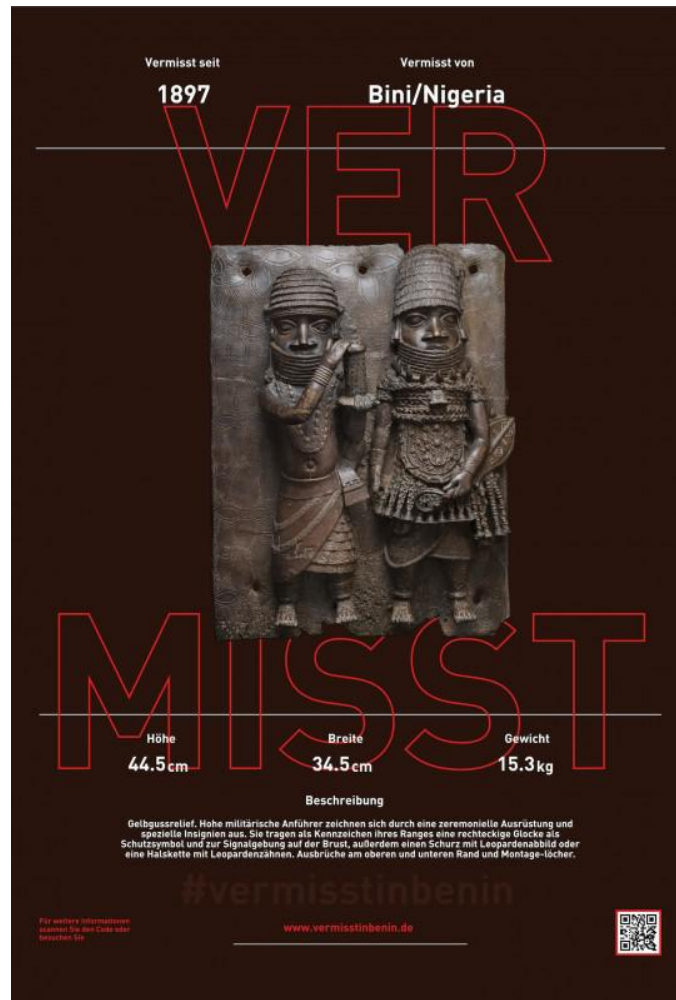


Figure 8.

Emeka Ogboh, *Vermisst in Benin*, poster, 2020. Digital image courtesy of Emeka Ogboh (all rights reserved).



Figure 9.
Emeka Ogboh, Vermisst in Benin, poster, 2020. Digital image courtesy of Emeka Ogboh (all rights reserved).



Figure 10.
Emeka Ogboh, Vermisst in Benin, poster, 2020. Digital image courtesy of Emeka Ogboh (all rights reserved).

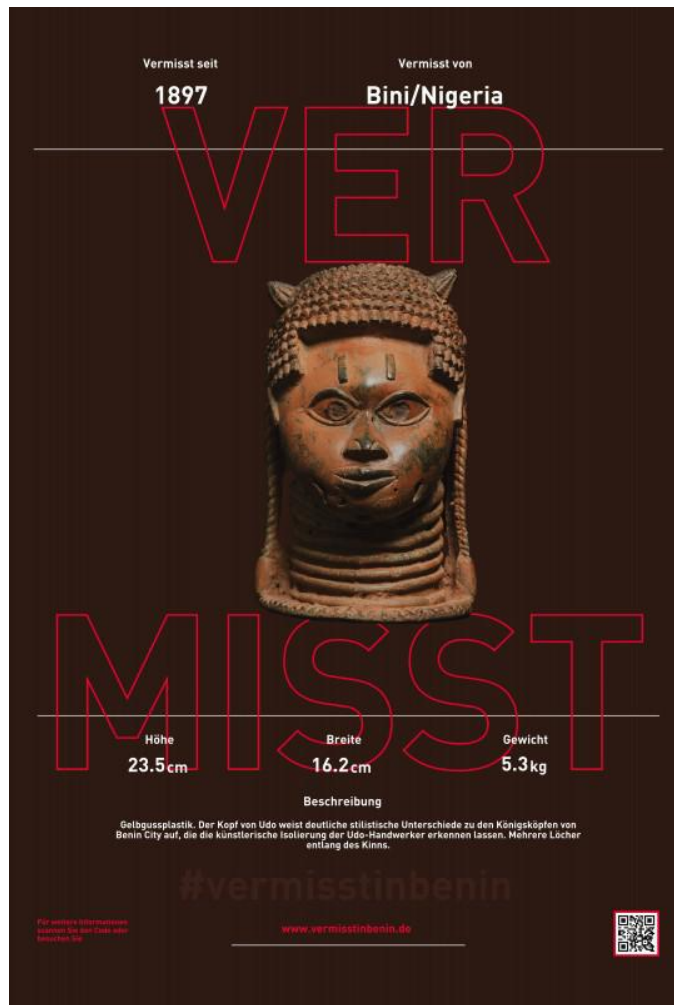


Figure 11.
Emeka Ogboh, Vermisst in Benin, poster, 2020. Digital image courtesy of Emeka Ogboh (all rights reserved).



Figure 12.

Emeka Ogboh, Vermisst in Benin, poster, 2020. Digital image courtesy of Emeka Ogboh (all rights reserved).

Taking to the streets of Dresden with posters declaring that these bronzes are “Missing in Benin”, I hope to demystify what has become an elitist dialogue confined to the museum and arts sector. In moving into the public domain with the instantly recognizable format of a missing poster, I hope to reclaim this issue as a post-colonial and societal responsibility. No one is exempt from the repercussions of colonialism and as long as issues of agency, ownership, and freedom continue to exist. Society must act as a whole to repatriate artefacts that are simply not theirs.

These posters are a call to action, a transparent and clear message that can be understood and digested by all. Missing posters rely upon an absent variable: the missing object itself or the location an object should be returned to. In many ways, this intervention highlights the absurdity of why these artefacts still remain in the museum, when their origin and current location are both public knowledge. In their cooperation with the project, the

Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden opens dialogue for a new way forward, which does not hide or shy away from the clear and damning facts. *Vermisst in Benin* is a profound approach to a conversation that has simply gone on too long and which belongs firmly in the public consciousness.

Response by

Fernando Domínguez Rubio, University of California San Diego and author of *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (2020)

Storage as a Form of Violence

Dan Hicks calls on us to rethink the museum by shifting our focus to neglected “histories of loss and death”. In this short reply, I want to argue that any such shift must involve buildings like the one pictured below.

Located in an unsuspecting corner of Long Island, this remarkably unremarkable building is one of the most important in the art world (Fig. 13). Inside its walls, you will find most of MoMA’s 200,000-object collection. There are many other buildings like this hiding in plain sight in nondescript urban and rural areas. Together, they make up a vast, and yet largely uncharted, geography that exists as an inverted image of the museums and galleries that populate modern narratives about art and culture. Interestingly, this geography is rarely part of the conversations around museums and their politics, even if it is where the vast majority of collected objects *actually* live.



Figure 13.

QNS, the Museum of Modern Art’s main storage facility, 2019, photograph. Digital image courtesy of Fernando Domínguez Rubio (all rights reserved).

I concur with Hicks when he argues that we should require museums to inform us about “what’s in the storerooms”. But I also think that our engagement with museum storages should go beyond that demand because

museum storages are not simply informative as fossilized records of past forms of colonial violence. They are powerful machines actively organizing the contemporary logics of extraction and dispossession through which colonial violence is perpetuated *and extended* today.

Contemporary storages do not rely on the “good old” forms of plundering and killing that generated them in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Instead, they operate through a more subtle, but equally pervasive and no less effective, form of infrastructural violence—one that sits at the heart of the promise of care that these storages offer.

To understand what this promise of care entails, we first need to move beyond the traditional image of the storage as an inert, cobweb-filled repository where artworks sit idly until they are retrieved. Contemporary storages are powerful and sophisticated machines designed to artificially extend the life of the objects they contain by slowing down the chemical and mechanical processes through which death itself unfolds. Slowing down death does not come easily, or cheaply. It requires a complex infrastructural apparatus involving, among other things, massive energy-intensive air-conditioning systems, costly logistics, and high-end security.³⁷

It should not come as a surprise that only the largest and wealthiest museums can afford these machines, which also means that only they can afford to uphold the promise of care. It makes perfect sense, then, that when artists, private collectors, and artists’ estates sell or donate their collections, they choose those museums that, like MoMA, have storages that can care for them. This is especially the case for those artists and collections from the south. For most of these objects, entering these storages entails a devil’s bargain: they are promised care and life, but in exchange they must accept invisibility, as most of them will be confined forever to the silence of the storage. Only a few will briefly leave their confinement when their difference serves curators seeking to “extend”, “disrupt”, “compensate”, or “punctuate” the hegemonic narratives that they endlessly weave and re-weave.

My call to attend to storages and their histories is not simply a call to complement or extend narratives about the museum with stories about what sits in their backstage. If we need to pay attention to storages, it is because they force us to fundamentally reconceptualize the museum and its role. They do so by showing us that it is not possible to separate how objects are narrated, represented, and imagined from how they are stored and cared for. Storages remind us that any form of keeping entails a form of loss as its necessary and unavoidable shadow. And, in so doing, they remind us that in a museum, forgetting is not the other of keeping, much in the same way that necrography is not the other biography. Understanding this, understanding how loss is created in the name of care in the silence of storages, is key to

revealing the uneven geographies of power and dispossession that define whose memories are being narrated today, where they are narrated, and, more importantly, by whom.

Response by

Clémentine Deliss, Associate Curator, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and Director, Metabolic Museum-University, Berlin and Lagos

MANIFESTO FOR THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO COLONIAL COLLECTIONS SEQUESTERED IN WESTERN EUROPEAN MUSEUMS

February 2021

Where are we now in 2021?

125 years since the first Venice Biennale, with its colonialist infrastructure and anachronistic golden lion, adopted and adapted, to reach today over 200 iterations worldwide.

29 years since the first edition of Dak'Art, the Biennale of visual arts in Senegal.

29 years since Alpha Oumar Konaré, former president of Mali, and president of ICOM, stated:

“that it’s about time that we questioned the fundamental basis of the situation and killed—I repeat killed—the Western model of the museum in Africa in order for new methods for the conservation and promotion of our heritage to flourish.”

Let’s think back to these colonial museums:

1863: Saint-Louis, Senegal:

the Museum of Tropical Africa, created by Louis Faidherbe in the service of the French republic;

1907: Windhoek, Namibia:

the museological structure set up by colonial Germany;

1910: Nairobi, Kenya and Lagos, Nigeria:

the museums founded by British imperialism;

British museums!

And one century later,

in the throes of post-independence:

1966: the Musée Dynamique—

the *dynamythical* museum of Léopold Sédar Senghor opens in Dakar (Rest in peace!)

All that desire for internationalism,
for festivals, gatherings, and workshops,
those manifestations in Dakar
at the Village des Arts,
the collectives of *Tenq* and *Huit Facettes*,
and the *Laboratoire Agit'Art!*
(Rest in peace!)

And slowly, but far too slowly,
the issue is raised of collections in Europe,
engendered through imperialism and the market,
and noxious colonialism with its sinister discourse
and serial kleptomania.
Vast collections locked up still today
in the ethnocolonial museums of Western Europe.
Damnatio memoriae!

Intellectual and governmental plantations,
built on notions of imperialist progress,
the monoculture of ethnology and its
disciplinary and discursive closure.
Taxonomies and scientific racism!
Metabolisms covered in blood!
"Colomentalities!"
(Rest in peace!)

What to do today?
With the mass of what are called "objects"?
Objects in collections that are named "ethnographic",
"object-witnesses", as Marcel Griaule once said,
"objects" from the market in so-called "tribal art"?
These millions of objects,
an inordinate quantity in Europe alone.

All!
Without name,
without author,
without intellectual rights,
incarcerated by ethnology and its genealogies,
which originate, more often than not,
outside the countries of origin,
identified by collecting, re-sales,
and swapping between European museums.
A provenance at home in the salons
and "secret gardens" of "patrons",
from Nelson Rockefeller

to Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière.

All these objects in inaccessible depots
under the Seine in Paris,
where sleep, in the holdings
of ships built for slavery,
these muted bodies,
these human remains.
Or otherwise, secreted in the urban periphery,
in that fridge-freezer of the soul,
confined because of their double or triple toxicity,
as carriers of microbiome,
capable of unleashing unexpected pandemics,
or so they tell us...

Necropolitics of sequestered objects!
Hyper-restrictive access!
Discursive claustrophobia!
Exerting control, control!
Control over future interpretations
because anything is possible if you omit
the artist,
the author,
the producer,
the name of the non-documented,
to replace it with ethnos.

Where are we today?
Restitution?
Yes, please!
Provenance research?
Yes, please!
Retrace the biographies of objects acquired or stolen?
Yes, please!
Find out what those object hunters and
organ poachers of the Other excluded?
Yes, please!
But where?
With whom?
With what?
Ah okay...

So, reify omission instead,
return to the source of biographic travesty,
go back to the original protagonists,
the priests of ethnological phantasmagoria.

Bring back the handmaidens of colonialism,
and encourage their hermeneutic labour once more,
restore the legitimacy of their discipline,
just as they were about to go into retirement...

Not sure?

No thanks!

That's when the European state magnanimously walks in,
hand in hand with the universal museum
of the twenty-first century!

Now, go get a visa to visit your heritage!

In Paris, London, Vienna, or Berlin!

A new building with new displays,
fashioned by interior design,
exclusive and expulsive

that only add a sentence or two...

Because that's the point:

They didn't document much on those colonial expeditions, did they?

Instead, it was collect! Collect! Collect!

Ah! The excoriation of the name of the engineer, the artist, the architect!

And the bombs of World War Two that destroyed the archives.

The fires in the reserves...

We know them all too well.

But, what a relief for biographical analysis!

What comfort for the status of the "masterpiece"!

But then, how to heal the colonial wound?

"Kill the museum!" declared Alpha Konaré.

Hold on! We insist upon restitution!

But not blindly, at the pace of a snail!

We won't wait for ethnological resuscitation

for "necrographies" and the organ trade

to restore the ghosts of the past!

We won't wait for the discourse of provenance,

with its polite politics,

step by step,

piece by piece.

We have to act now,

while restitution is underway!

And push for legislation between museums,

for the right of access

to the art histories of the worlds held in

the British Museum in London

the Quai Branly Museum in Paris

the Humboldt Forum in Berlin
the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam
the Africa Museum in Brussels
the Weltmuseum in Vienna
and so many more.
Open up those bunkers
And revise these collections,
while they are still in Europe.
Dare to radically rethink the condition of the museum,
and begin with the deepest of injuries,
where no redemption exists for the intermediary:
the curator.

Let's build museum-universities,
with an architecture made for healing.
Physical and conceptual spaces for remediation
and reinterpreting these agent-objects.
Let's face their stubborn materiality,
which has been so terribly neglected.
Let's build incongruous and problematic assemblages,
and yes, integrate digitalization...

But hold on!
Who will select what is to be digitalized?
Who will access the heart of this heritage,
knowingly hidden or forgotten,
if not the colporteurs of ethnology and the market?
And, let's not forget the parameters of conservation!
That ideology of materialist survival,
which is remarkably impenetrable,
with its longue durée of a thousand years or more.

No more monocultures!
No more intellectual plantations!
No more museum mimics!
No more aesthetic hegemonies!
No more object hierarchies!
No more museological pyramids!
That "absent air conditioning",
those "inadequate conservators",
etcetera, etcetera...

Let's change the ergonomics of museums,
these "orgone accumulators" of consumerism,
and open museum-universities!
Build spaces for inquiry

in these reservoirs of ingenuity,
with rooms for conceptual intimacy,
and disciplinary transgression
based on these anxious and contested collections.

Museum-universities!

To welcome the new generation
of students and researchers
more diasporic than ever before.

With their politics of communication
and decolonial methodologies.

So that, with patented prototypes,
based on these occluded historical collections,
we can rename the excluded authors,
and return both respect and copyright
to their ancestors!

Organs and alliances!

All of you!

Artists!

Writers!

Curators!

Filmmakers!

Lawyers!

Architects!

Ecologists!

Anthropologists!

Brothers and Sisters!

There is no time to lose!

Response by

Nicholas Mirzoeff, New York University and Mellon-ACLS Resident Fellow at the Magnum Foundation, New York City, 2020-21

The Palestine Skull: The Nakba as Crime Scene in the British Museum

In his recent book, *The Brutish Museums*, Dan Hicks describes the methodology of his transformative work as “forensic because this is about understanding the truth at the scene of a crime”—a forensic archaeology of the present.³⁸ Hicks evokes Benjamin’s famous comment about Atget’s photographs but with a difference: it is states not individuals committing the crimes. In Palestine, for example.

Consider the so-called Jericho Skull in the British Museum, a portrait skull dating from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period (8500 BCE–6000 BCE), excavated with great fanfare by the British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon in her 1952–1958 dig at Tell es-Sultan ([Fig. 14](#)). Before Kenyon’s work had even begun, a restoration drawing of her site by Alan Sorrell was shown in the Dome of Discovery at the Festival of Britain in 1951, a few years after Britain had given up its Mandate in Palestine to Israel.³⁹ This object was about post-imperial Britain before it was even dug out of the ground.



Figure 14.

The "Jericho skull": human skeletal remains, religious/ritual equipment, 8200-7500 BC (Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic B), human bone, plaster, and shell, 17 x 14.60 cm. Collection of The British Museum (127414). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Her dig became possible because of the Nakba, the expulsion of Palestinians from the state of Israel in 1948. To the north of the archaeological site was a Palestinian refugee camp, known as 'Ein as-Sultan, where 19,000 refugees had settled after 1948. Lacking services of any kind, the Palestinians dug into the slope of the tell to make bricks and uncovered intact Middle Bronze Age tombs. Approaching Kenyon, they were hired to dig for about half what a British servant would have been paid at the time. She even excavated in the camp, where she claimed people were "complaisant to the complete blocking of their streets".⁴⁰ In fact, her own photographs show Palestinians actively involved, physically and intellectually. In one striking shot, a man stands contemplating a Bronze Age skeleton at his feet.

By contrast, the photograph in the British Museum display casts the camp into dark shade, while the archaeological site was in bright sunshine. Leo Boer took detailed photographs of the camp while Kenyon was excavating, so it was not a question of availability.⁴¹ The skull was itself in a form of shade, as it was for many years displayed in a room leading into the Egyptian collections. Thousands rushed past one of the oldest existing portraits without a second glance. According to the British Museum website, the skull is no longer on display.

Even the object's name should be questioned. The refugee camp site is situated outside the Palestinian city of Jericho in Area A of the West Bank, meaning it is under Palestinian Authority (PA) control. The archaeological site is in Area B where Israel controls security and the PA notionally has control of civil matters. Before the pandemic, Jericho was permanently besieged by international tourists attending what they took to be a Biblical site, although Kenyon had shown by carbon dating that there was no settlement during the time of the Biblical account of the fall of Jericho. The "Jericho" in "Jericho skull" is the non-place of Judeo-Christianity, because to call it Palestine would be unthinkable.

Kenyon defined the site as Pre-Pottery Neolithic. Just as her trenches obscured how people lived, so does this name. She called the area of her work Palestine. Is the skull not, then, Palestinian, even if it is not the same Palestine as today? Were the first urban civilization to be called Palestinian, then Palestine might start to have a different set of values and meanings than as a crime scene.

Response by

Bonita Bennett, Research Associate, District Six Museum

A Partial Necrography of Cape Town

A luxury apartment block resplendent with a seventh-floor penthouse conceals a burial ground. Its publicity brochures draw attention to the views from above: Table Mountain, Signal Hill, and a view of Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. Keeping the gaze turned upwards directs attention away from what lies beneath: an exhumed burial ground where thousands of human bodies and their human life stories are elided from mind as well as from sight.

Less than a kilometre away, a coffee shop is emblazoned with the name "Truth". Some coffee connoisseurs describe it as the place to get the best artisanal coffee in the city. Its brand is large, proud, and self-celebratory. There is no apparent connection between these two locations and yet they are both implicated in hiding parts of Cape Town's shame-filled history embedded in its colonial past.⁴²

In 2003, human remains were uncovered when excavations took place in preparation for the apartment block—The Rockwell—to be built at the west end of the city. Archival records indicate that it had been a burial ground for "slaves and paupers" dating back to the eighteenth century. They were the wretched of this part of the earth: the violently enslaved, the displaced until death, the Indigenous labouring poor—all those governed by this colonial city's necropolitical system, which literally worked them to the bone.⁴³ It was a burial ground that had fallen off the city's maps—part of a longer neglected Cape Town story.

By 2008, as part of a compromise between activists and city authorities about the future of these remains, they were exhumed and placed in a purpose-built ossuary (Fig. 15). It was intended to be a site of remembrance, education, and pilgrimage. A local government dilemma emerged: its operational costs had not been budgeted for! In order to recover the costs that these city ancestors would incur by being housed in the facility, the rent-paying "Truth" coffee shop was installed alongside the remains. A bizarre outcome has been that they have again been made invisible, out-branded by the trendy coffee shop, with the boxed remains pushed into what has ostensibly become a storage room. They had become a liability on a balance sheet rather than an asset to the city's memory.



Figure 15.

The Prestwich Memorial and Visitors' Centre, De Waterkant, Capetown.
Digital image courtesy of Bonita Bennett (all rights reserved).

Restitution in this context has a somewhat different meaning from what Dan Hicks intends in writing about the return of looted objects from the colonisers. Addressing the legacies left in the colonies is as urgent as what was taken. Achille Mbembe reminds us that colonisation was a planetary project; decolonisation therefore needs to be a planetary project as well.⁴⁴ It requires engagements which are conducted on a coeval basis, not in a framework where “the first world has knowledge, the third world has culture”.⁴⁵ As Hicks points out in his provocation, colonialism took “knowledge, ideas, beliefs as well as physical things”. In examining what was left behind, it is evident in the colonial museum model that still lingers in the national museums of our country; it is evident in the treatment of colonised bodies as objects, of human remains stored in cardboard boxes in this ossuary—objects rather than ancestors.

Arjun Appadurai (1986) speaks of the “social life of things”.⁴⁶ Even though they have been treated as such, the human remains are not “things” but I would like to call attention to his reference to the significance of journeys. The journey that these human remains have travelled—from their exhumation to where they are being stored—is crucial to understanding their life stories. What led them to cross the road from one place to another almost three centuries after their burial? Why has any evidence of their long life in the earth beneath the surface of the Rockwell been erased? The text in the ossuary/coffee shop provides a detailed history of the area, and makes

no mention of the struggle to keep them interred where they had been buried, or what brought about their dislocation. Appadurai reminds us that journeys are integral not peripheral to stories.

This is an unfinished event, made uncomfortable because part of it took place in the rights-based new South Africa.⁴⁷ There are many chapters to be enacted in this particular necrography before a conclusion can even be written.

Response by

Ciraj Rassool, Professor of History, University of the Western Cape

Restitution as a Forensic Museology

I choose to participate in African museum settings and networks as a means of advancing social mobilisation and critical citizenship, as well as in European museum locations and gatherings, as a means of contributing to the dismantling and repurposing of the imperial edifice of the modern museum as a technology of subjugation (Fig. 16). Dan Hicks' ideas about death writing and necrography read like a breath of fresh air as a critique of the sterile, neo-colonial field of reforming the ethnographic museum through co-curatorship, dialogue, and entangled collections, and the perpetuation of its self-styled ideology of humanism and care that it has built.



Figure 16.

A ceremony of restitution, 2012, in which the skeletons of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar were returned by the Austrian Academy of Sciences to the Northern Cape in South Africa. They were reburied at Kuruman that same year. In this photograph, the Khoesan community leader and healer, Petrus Vaalbooi, explains to Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, whose remains lie in museum boxes in front of an artwork depicting the Academy, how they would be placed in coffins for their journey back home. Their corpses had been disinterred illegally by assistant of the anthropologist Rudolf Pöch and exported to Vienna in 1909. Digital image courtesy of Ciraj Rassool (all rights reserved).

Hicks' call for provenance research on collections that focuses on colonialism's originary and enduring violence is also a demand for the museum to be reconfigured through a forensic methodology of truth-telling into the deaths and disruptions that accompanied collecting. This is the work of dismantling the museum as part of white infrastructure through the efforts of anti-colonialism, and not merely decolonisation. This confrontation with violence can only effectively occur through the embrace of restitution, not just as a new museum ethics but also as a new method of making museums themselves.

While supporting these expressions of "dissent in the ranks" in Europe (as the disruptions of the white ruling bloc were referred to in the anti-apartheid struggle) are important, we also need to understand what the challenges are for museum work on the African continent. If the ethnographic museum has failed in Europe, then its existence in African cities represents a continued colonial assault on the self-image of African people, and a relic of the colonial administration of Africans as members of races and tribes. And these physical and material expressions of a colonial image cannot be reformed through being renamed as "world" museums (itself an imperial repositioning), nor through co-curatorship and temporary loans.

Restitution is emerging as monumental projects in Benin City, Dakar, and Algiers, with grand museums and architectures intended to receive and conserve returned artworks. It will require political work and diplomacy towards enabling African states and regional and continental multilateral formations to embrace restitution as part of transforming the cultural politics of African sovereignty. It is likely that an agency will be needed to work with these state and multilateral formations to build claims-making processes. While restitution must be driven by African claims (and not European gift-making), we need to build a theory of restitution that transcends monumental, preservationist, and events management frames.

Restitution has to be nurtured as an African social movement of artists, activists, and curators, who are able to work with communities as much as they are able to engage with state officials and cultural managers. The forensic methodology advocated by Dan Hicks should be more than mere truth-telling. It should take on board the origins of the forensic in the forum, and incorporate a museology of annunciation, contestation, and social criticism.

Response by

Ana Lucia Araujo, Professor, Department of History, Howard University

Afterlives of a Dahomean Throne

On 24 December 2020, France promulgated a law that will allow the repatriation of twenty-six of the many hundreds of artefacts and artworks looted from Abomey, the capital of the Fon Kingdom of Dahomey, during the Franco-Dahomean War (1892–1894), which transformed the powerful ancient West African state into a French colony (Fig. 17).⁴⁸ Today housed at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, the throne of King Gezo, who ruled Dahomey from 1818 to 1858, is among these objects (Fig. 18).

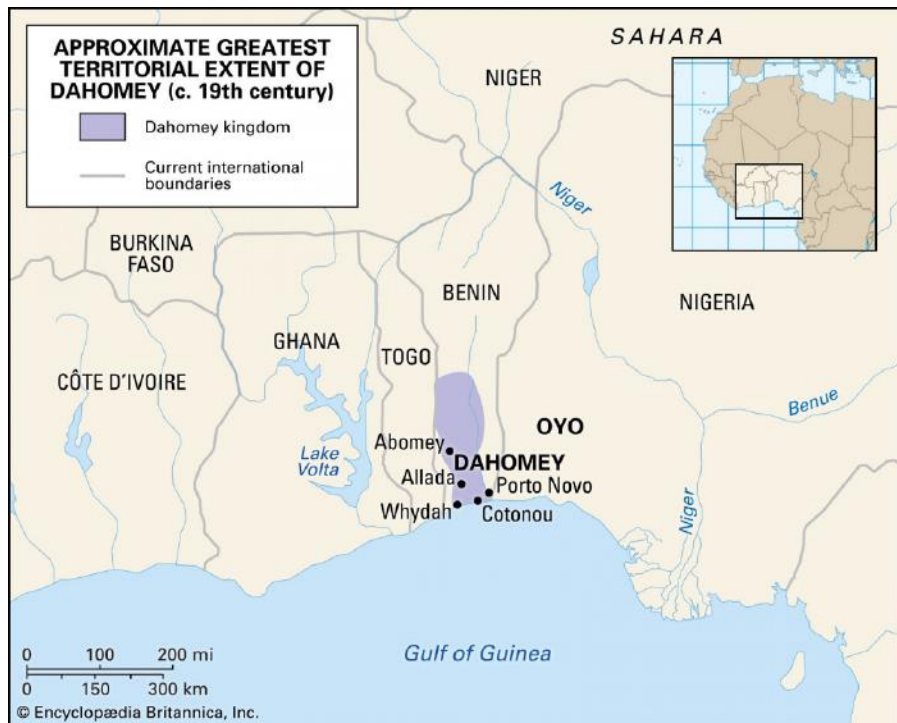


Figure 17.

Historic kingdom of Dahomey, Western Africa in Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Dahomey". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 30 May 2019. Digital image courtesy of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.



Figure 18.

Throne of King Gezo of Dahomey, Benin, nineteenth century. Collection of Quai Branly Museum, Paris. Digital image courtesy of Ana Lucia Araujo (all rights reserved).

In the early eighteenth century, the rulers of Dahomey waged wars against neighbouring polities. They sold most war prisoners into slavery to European and American slave merchants, who transported them to the Americas.⁴⁹ As the Atlantic slave trade intensified, Dahomean kings increasingly appreciated foreign luxury objects obtained through the trade in enslaved Africans.⁵⁰ Gezo's throne is part of a rich Dahomean material culture embodying these complex exchanges.⁵¹ It also symbolizes a king who waged war, killed, enslaved, and looted his defeated rivals.

Hicks reminds us that objects are not opposed to human beings, but rather are extensions of living and dead bodies. Gezo's throne is one of these sacred objects. The throne outlived the king. During the *Hwetanu* annual ceremonies, the king displayed his throne and the thrones of deceased rulers

that continued evoking their presence. European observers documented these festivities during which Dahomean agents sacrificed war captives to honour their *voduns* (deities). Their lavish parades also displayed the wealthy royal collections of luxury artefacts, performances designed to impress the king's subjects.

Representing his importance, Gezo's imposing wooden throne was particularly high, measuring nearly 38 inches. Like other thrones produced in Dahomey between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, its formal elements combine different cultural traditions. This kind of throne draws from the interactions with Akan-speaking groups established west of Dahomey, in the region of present-day Ghana. The curved seat embodies the divine powers of the king, evoking the *Dan Aido Hwedo*, the serpent deity symbolizing the kingdom.⁵² The throne's central column features a sophisticated lattice wood work comprising not only carved lozenges and squares signifying the cardinal points, but also a rich combination of geometrical forms such as circles, demi-circles, rectangles, and triangles.

The Atlantic trade is also evidenced on the throne's two lateral sections. Its formal elements are influenced by the presence of a Luso-African-Brazilian community established in the region since the end of the eighteenth century, who nurtured commercial and cultural exchanges with Brazil and Portugal. These reciprocal influences may have inspired local artisans to create a throne following a baroque-inspired style that mixes motifs derived from natural forms, such as shapes of scallop shells, cowries, and palm trees, a tree found both in Brazil and the Bight of Benin.

In 1895, French General Alfred Amédée Dodds gave part of the artefacts stolen from Abomey to the then Museum of Ethnography of Trocadero, including Gezo's throne, which remained on view after the museum was transformed into the Musée de l'Homme in 1937. In 2006, the throne was transferred to the newly created the Quai Branly Museum, where it remained displayed to this day.

Another similar throne, although more modest, is also associated with Gezo. Featured in nineteenth-century French postcards, the throne is mounted on four human skulls, very probably the remains of rulers of neighbouring kingdoms against whom Dahomey waged war. Although French agents left this throne behind, they took the human skulls to France, where they were displayed at the Nantes Museum of Natural History.

Gezo's throne complicates Hicks' proposal of a "necrography" of looted objects. Once repatriated, the government of the Republic of Benin plans to give Gezo's throne a central place in the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Épopée of the Amazons and the Kings of Dahomey expected to open in Abomey in 2023. ⁵³

Gezo was proud to display the skulls of his enemies in his palace, including the ones that literally supported one of his thrones. While exposed for more than one century in Paris, the throne represented French supremacy over African men, women, and children. Back in Abomey, the throne will acquire a new life. To the king's descendants, the throne represents their rich heritage. To the descendants of the victims of Gezo's crimes, the throne may contribute to open old scars, and perhaps to generate a new "necrography".

Footnotes

- 1 Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–63; and Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 2 Lorraine Daston, "The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects", in Lorraine Daston (ed.), *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 13.
- 3 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 26.
- 4 Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 65.
- 5 Dan Hicks, "The Material-Cultural Turn: Event and Effect", in Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 25–98.
- 6 Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto, 2020).
- 7 Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques", *L'Année Sociologique* 1 (1925), 51.
- 8 Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*.
- 9 John Boardman, Review of Astrid Swenson and Peter Mandler (eds), "Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c. 1800–1940", *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 2 (2016): 326.
- 10 Hartwig Fischer, "Η Ελλάδα δεν είναι ο νόμιμος ιδιοκτήτης των Γλυπτών του Παρθενώνα" ["Greece is not the Legal Owner of the Parthenon Sculptures"], *Ta Nea*, 26 January 2019, <https://www.tanea.gr/print/2019/01/26/greece/h-ellada-ldfen-einai-o-nomimos-ldfidioktitis-lfton-glypton-lftou-parthenona/>.
- 11 Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*.
- 12 Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975–76*, translated by David Macey (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 243.
- 13 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).
- 14 Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics", translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40; and Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, translated by Steven Corcoran. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).
- 15 Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14, DOI:10.1215/12-2-1.
- 16 Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", 11.
- 17 James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory", *Harvard Design Magazine* 9: Constructions of Memory: On Monuments Old and New (Fall 1999), www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/9/memory-and-counter-memory.
- 18 Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", 4.
- 19 Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020).
- 20 Sally-Anne Huxtable, Corinne Fowler, Christo Kefalas, and Emma Slocombe (eds), "Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties Now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery", National Trust, September 2020, <https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/documents/colonialism-and-historic-slavery-report.pdf>.

- 21 See "The Times View on Returning Artefacts: Spoils of History", *The Times*, 10 February 2020, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-returning-artefacts-spoils-of-history-pb9stpkcs>; and "Letter from Culture Secretary on HM Government Position on Contested Heritage", UK Government, 28 September 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-culture-secretary-on-hm-government-position-on-contested-heritage>.
- 22 In France, this is exemplified by Macron's commissioning of this report, Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, "Rapport sur la restitution du patrimoine culturel africain: Vers une nouvelle éthique relationnelle" ["The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Towards a New Relational Ethics"], November 2018, www.restitutionreport2018.com; in Germany, by the founding of the German Lost Art Foundation, <https://www.kulturgutverluste.de/Webs/EN/Start/Index.html>; and in the Netherlands, by the recent publication of this report by the Dutch Council of Culture "Colonial Collection: A Recognition of Injustice", The Hague, January 2021, <https://www.raadvoorcultuur.nl/english/documenten/adviezen/2021/01/22/colonial-collection-and-a-recognition-of-injustice>.
- 23 Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House", in *Your Silence Will Not Protect You* (London: Silver Press, 2017).
- 24 "Project History", *100 Histories of 100 Worlds in One Object*, <https://100histories100worlds.org/project-history/>.
- 25 Neil MacGregor, "The Whole World in Our Hands", *The Guardian*, July 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/jul/24/heritage.art>.
- 26 Gerald R. Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).
- 27 Harold Tichenor, *The Collector's Guide to Point Blankets of the Hudson's Bay Company And Other Companies Trading in North America* (Bowen Island, BC: Cinetel Film Productions, 2002), 4. The passage continues: "...they were the product of the industrializing textile manufacturing villages in England and they were a practical 'tool' ... for many of North America's First Nations cultures".
- 28 This notion is explored imaginatively in Marlene Kadar, "History, or a Blanket Marriage", in *Broken Fiction*. (unpublished manuscript), Toronto, 2021). Typescript. Just a note: the Trapper Point blanket is not a Hudson's Bay blanket, but a later relative.
- 29 Carolyn Steedman, "Archival Methods", in Gabriele Griffin (ed.), *Research Methods in English Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 17-19. See also Gabriella Giannachi, *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016). See also Mark Celinscak, "Unlikely Documents, Unexpected Places: The Limits of Archive", *Auto/Biography Studies* 33, no. 3 (2018): 593-594.
- 30 Deborah P. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), 115.
- 31 See Britzman's title above. See also Deborah P. Britzman, "If the Story Cannot End: Deferred Action, Ambivalence, and Difficult Knowledge", in Roger Simon, Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert (eds), *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 27-57.
- 32 See Eva C. Karpinski and Ricia A. Chansky (eds), *Life Writing Outside the Lines: Gender and Genre in the Americas* (London: Routledge, 2020), especially Linda Warley, "Mar and Me: Following the Traces", 34-41.
- 33 Leigh Gilmore, "Limit-Cases: Trauma, Self-Representation, and the Jurisdiction of Identity", *Biography* 24, no. 1 (2001): 128-139. See also Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), for Gilmore's examples. Another example: Elisabeth M. Raab's *Receptek* (Hungarian for "recipe book") made with trash Raab found while an inmate at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. See Elisabeth M. Raab, *And Peace Never Came* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 80-84, 88-89; and Dan Hicks, Provocation: "Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum".
- 34 Jennifer Geddes, "Banal Evil and Useless Knowledge: Hannah Arendt and Charlotte Delbo on Evil After the Holocaust", in Jennifer L. Geddes, John K. Roth, and Jules Simon (eds), *The Double Binds of Ethics after the Holocaust: Salvaging the Fragments* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 119-132.
- 35 See Harold Tichenor on pricing, who writes: "In 1800 the traditional one point to one Made-beaver was a workable convention", 46. The term Point Blanket stemmed from the French *empointer*. The Hudson's Bay Company attests: a "full point measured 4-5.5 in.; a half point measured half that length. ... Points ranged from 1 to 6, increasing by halves depending upon the size and weight of the blanket"; see "Hudson's Bay Point Blanket", Hudson's Bay Company, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/things/fashion-pop/hbc-point-blanket>. The double-bed sized blanket in Figure 7 has four dark pink equal sized points, each one is four and half inches long. For a definition of *Empointer*, see www.lalanguefrancaise.com/dictionnaire/definition/empointer#littre *Retenir les plis d'une pièce d'étoffe par quelques points d'aiguille* (1872-1877). I understand this to mean that weavers made threaded stitches on top of the wool. These stitches formed thin lines or bars.
- 36 Field Marshall Jeffery Amherst, Letter to Henry Bouquet, 1763, https://people.umass.edu/derrico/amherst/lord_jeff.html.
- 37 Fernando Domínguez Rubio, *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2020).
- 38 Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 33.
- 39 Sacha Llewellyn and Richard Sorrell, *Alan Sorrell: A Life Reconsidered* (Bristol: Sansom, 2004).
- 40 Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1957), 47-48.

- 41 Maura Sala, "The Archaeological Expeditions to Tell es-Sultan (1868–2012)", in Bart Wagemakers (ed.), *Archaeology in the "Land of Tells and Ruins": A History of Excavations in the Holy Land Inspired by the Photographs and Accounts of Leo Boer* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 117–130.
- 42 Cape Town was colonised by the Dutch in 1652, occupied by the British in 1795, relinquished to the Dutch in 1802, and re-annexed by the British in 1806. South Africa became a republic in 1961. Slave labour was central to the making of urban and rural Cape Town, with slavery being legally abolished in 1834 while under British rule.
- 43 Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).
- 44 "Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization", a webinar with Achille Mbembe, hosted by Theory from the Margins and CoFutures, 22 October 2020, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=376151030094483&ref=watch_permalink.
- 45 Walter D. Mignolo, "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom", *Theory, Culture and Society* 26, nos 7–8 (2009), 160.
- 46 Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 47 The first democratic elections took place on 27 April 1994—the date from which the "new" South Africa is measured.
- 48 "Loi du 24 décembre 2020 relative à la restitution de biens culturels à la République du Bénin et à la République du Sénégal", *Vie Publique*, 28 December 2020, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/loi/275500-loi-sur-la-restitution-de-biens-culturels-au-benin-et-du-senegal>.
- 49 See Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727–1892* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004).
- 50 Gaëlle Beaujean, *L'art de la cour d'Abomey: Le sens des objets* (Paris: Presses du Réel, 2019).
- 51 See Ana Lucia Araujo, "Dahomey, Portugal, and Bahia: King Adandozan and the Atlantic Slave Trade", *Slavery and Abolition* 3, no. 1 (2012): 1–19.
- 52 See Joseph Adandé, "Les sièges des rois d'Agbome et le siège akan: analyse d'un contexte de civilisation à partir de la culture matérielle et artistique (1625–1890)", (PhD dissertation, Université de Paris I, 1984). See also Suzanne Preston Blier, "Trône royal jandémé (gandeme) de style akan", in Purissima Benitez Johannot and Jean Paul Barbier Mueller (eds), *Sièges d'Afrique noire du Musée Barbier-Mueller* (Milan: 5 Continents and Musée Barbier Mueller, 2003), 138.
- 53 Musée de l'épopée des amazones et des rois du Danhomè et les arènes d'expression des vodun non-masqués d'Abomey, Les Crayons, <https://www.lescrayons.com/musee-de-l-epopee-des-amazones-et-des-rois-du-danhome.html>.

Bibliography

- Agamben, Giorgio (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1986) "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value". In Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3–63.
- Boardman, John (2016) Review of Astrid Swenson and Peter Mandler (eds), "Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c. 1800–1940". *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 2: 326.
- Daston, Lorraine (2000) "The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects". In Lorraine Daston (ed.), *Biographies of Scientific Objects*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1–13.
- Foucault, Michel (2003) *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975–76*, translated by David Macey. London: Allen Lane.
- Gell, Alfred (1998) *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hicks, Dan (2010) "The Material-Cultural Turn: Event and Effect". In Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 25–98.
- Hicks, Dan (2020) *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press.
- Kenyon, Kathleen. M. (1957) *Digging Up Jericho*. London: Ernest Benn Limited.
- Kopytoff, Igor (1986) "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process". In Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 64–91.
- Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Llewellyn, Sacha and Sorrell, Richard (2014) *Alan Sorrell: A Life Reconsidered*. Bristol: Sansom.
- Mauss, Marcel (1925) "Essai sur le donne: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques". *L'Année Sociologique* 1: 30–186.
- Mbembe, Achille (2003) "Necropolitics", translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, no. 1: 11–40.
- Mbembe, Achille (2019) *Necropolitics*, translated by Steven Corcoran. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sala, Maura (2014) "The Archaeological Expeditions to Tell es-Sultan (1868-2012)". In Bart Wagemakers (ed.), *Archaeology in the "Land of Tells and Ruins": A History of Excavations in the Holy Land Inspired by the Photographs and Accounts of Leo Boer*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 117-130.

Licensing

The Publishers of *British Art Studies* are committed to supporting scholarship on British art and architecture of all periods. This publication is made available free of charge at <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>. We ask users to identify the use of materials made available through this website and to provide an appropriate credit to the author and the publication, so that others may find and use our resources.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 UK: England & Wales Licence (CC BY-NC 2.0 UK). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/uk/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

The Publishers fully support the protection of intellectual property and are committed to complying with, and strictly adhering to, all applicable copyright law. In many cases, copyright or other proprietary rights may be held by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, the Publishers. If a work or a photographic image is still protected by copyright, you must cite the relevant copyright information when using the image and comply with all other terms or restrictions that may be applicable to that material.

In some cases, exceptions to copyright that permit limited use of protected works without the permission of the copyright owner may have been applied. We are confident that we have carried out due diligence in our use of copyrighted material as required, but we apologise for any inadvertent infringement of rights.

Digital copies of resources are made accessible for research for one of the following reasons:

- they are in the public domain;
- the rights are owned by the Publishers;
- we make them accessible under an exception or limitation to UK copyright law, as outlined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended);
- we have permission to make them accessible;
- or, there are no known restrictions on use.

If you believe that we have made a mistake and wish for your material to be removed from our site, please contact us at copyright@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk.

Please include the following information with your request:

- Name and contact information, including email address and phone number.
- Identification of the resource for consideration of removal. Providing URLs in your communication will help us locate content quickly.
- The reason for the request.

The Publishers respond promptly, normally within 21 business days. We may remove the resource from our site while we assess the validity of the request. Upon completion of the assessment, we will take appropriate action and communicate that action to you.

The museum as method (revisited)¹

Nicholas Thomas

The spaces of, and between, museums and anthropology today are full of paradoxes. Museums cannot escape the association of anachronism, they connote colonial dustiness. Yet in the early twenty-first century they are probably more successful than ever before – they attract more visitors, they loom larger in cultural life and they are better resourced financially, in general, than they have been at any time in the past. This is true in Britain, notably because of the allocation of a share of national lottery proceeds (through the Heritage Lottery Fund) to museum redevelopment. Virtually all major, and many smaller, institutions have had significant extensions or improvements at some time over the last twenty years. In many other countries, too, museums and art institutions have, over recent decades, been the recipients of investment on a grand scale. National cultural and historical museums have received this support, in many cases, because what they now exhibit and affirm is multiculturalism, a civic project that is resonant of an anthropological legacy.

It is a commonplace of the history of anthropology that the academic discipline was once firmly based in the ethnographic museum, but moved steadily away from it with the ascendancy of sociological questions from the 1920s onward. Though the 1980s and 1990s saw a revival of debate around art and material culture, mainstream anthropology arguably continues to drift away from the museum as a research resource or site of analysis. The paradox here is that, at the same time, the public have come to know anthropology almost exclusively through the museum. Up to and during the 1960s and 1970s, anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead, enjoyed mass audiences, and Lévi-Strauss was required reading across the humanities, but anthropology books today are read mainly by anthropologists (there are, needless to say, distinguished exceptions). Similarly, in the 1970s and 1980s, ethnographic films were widely broadcast; but that television slot is now firmly occupied by so-called ‘reality’ programming, which is cheaper and more sensational. Hence anthropology is scarcely either read or watched by a broader public, but the numbers of visitors to both specifically anthropological collections and to survey museums that include extensive anthropological displays have risen very dramatically. The British Museum,

which draws nearly six million people a year, is exceptional, but an institution such as the Pitt Rivers Museum, which thirty years ago was more a university facility than a genuinely public museum, can now attract around four hundred thousand.

Ethnographic collecting, collections and museums have been much debated, but the current 'success' of museums brings new questions into focus. Here I am not concerned with what lies behind the creation and resourcing of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), the Musée du Quai Branly or the National Museum of Australia, the ascendancy of the British Museum, or museum-friendly policies on the part of governments and local authorities – though of course there is much to be said about new conceptions of culture and governance, and the growing preoccupation with tourism as a driver for urban regeneration and economic growth. I am interested, rather, in how we (curators of ethnographic collections) conceive of what we are doing, if our institutions are embedded less in academic anthropology and more in a domain of public engagement. Does anthropology remain the discipline that informs anthropological collections, to be in turn informed by them? What kinds of knowledge underpin the interpretation of collections, what methods does that interpretation involve, and what knowledge does it generate? And – to move from theory and research to public engagement – how in the early twenty-first century should anthropological collections be displayed, what stories should they tell, what questions should they raise?

These issues are related to, but somewhat different from, those that have been conspicuous in the museum studies literature over recent years. This literature has been broadly divided between studies that might be considered technical, which range from documentation through conservation and display to public education, and a more critical, historical and theoretical discourse. The critical discourse has tracked (and often lambasted) the project of colonial collecting, diagnosed museums as disciplinary formations in Foucault's terms, interrogated primitivist representation in display and otherwise explored the politics of institutions and exhibits.

If the issues that the critical discourse identified remain present, it makes a difference now that many of the poachers have turned gamekeepers. Critics, including Indigenous activists, have become curators, and the newer generation of curators have been trained by critics. A postcolonial understanding of the ethnographic museum has entered the mindset, not of the whole of the museum profession but of most of those who deal with ethnographic material, and contemporary native art. Hence, in many institutions, though certainly not universally, it is anticipated that originating communities are consulted around exhibition or research projects, they are indeed, increasingly, full collaborators. If this has become business as usual, that is surely positive, but it's perhaps also a sign that the issue of representation is no longer the right place to start from.

At one time, it was self-evident that a museum anthropologist used anthropology to contextualise and interpret museum collections – that

anthropology was the discipline that ‘went with’ the anthropological collection. Yet the activity and method of museum work was, and is, profoundly different from that of the academic discipline. Broadly, the academic project begins with theories and questions that are brought, through research methods, to the analysis of a particular case. If, obviously, the museum worker carries conceptual baggage, the practical project tends to start from, and stop with, the object. (Objects are its ‘stoppages’, in Duchamp’s and Gell’s sense.) There is something to be gained, I argue, from reflecting on the simplest of practices, such as writing a label, that of course are not simple at all.

If the museum is not only an institution or a collection but also a method, a kind of activity, that activity has its moments. The moments we might reflect on are those of the discovery, the caption and the juxtaposition.

It goes without saying that curators choose or select objects for display (or for other purposes such as loan, publication, reproduction on a postcard or whatever) but these terms imply operations more rational than might be apt. ‘Discovery’ is more ambiguous; it often involves finding things that were not lost; identifying things that were known to others; or the disclosure of what was hidden or repressed. What needs to be considered is not the ‘selection’ of artefacts and artworks but their discovery, the encounter with arrays of objects and the destabilisation which that encounter may give rise to. For example, a search for a ‘good’ or ‘representative’ piece may put at risk one’s sense of a genre or place. One may be distracted by another work, or by some aspect of the provenance or story of an object which is not good or not typical. This is in one sense entirely unremarkable, it is the contingency of dealing with things, but in another sense it represents a method, powerful because it is unpredictable.

To assert that there might be value in looking for, at or into things, in a manner only weakly guided by theory, or literally misguided, in the sense that direction given by theory is abandoned as things are encountered along the way, sounds like the affirmation of an antiquarian curiosity, an indiscriminate and eclectic form of knowledge, one surely long superseded by rigorous disciplines and critical theories. But there are two reasons why ‘happening upon’ things might have methodological potency. The first is that a preparedness to encounter things and consider them amounts to a responsiveness to forms of material evidence beneath or at odds with canonical ethnographies, national histories, reifications of local heritage – and subaltern narratives. In other words, ‘happening upon’ brings the question of ‘what else is there?’ to the fore. That question has confronted, and should continue to confront, claims about great art, cultural traditions, historical progress and celebrated acts of resistance.

Second, the antiquarianism which this discovery licenses is not that of George Eliot’s Casaubon but of Sebald. Not the self-aggrandising accumulation of ancient citations or specimens, but a distracted meditation on larger histories of culture, empire, commerce and military enterprise, marked

by madness, violence and loss, as well as more obscure personal projects, humanitarian missions and idiosyncratic inquiries. If this is an eclectic anti-quarianism, it is one that throws wide open the questions of history – what, out of all that has happened in the past, are we to remember and consider significant? What presence, and what bearing do histories and their residues have, on our various lives?

If the moment of discovery gives us a good deal to think about, that thinking must be carefully and deliberately depleted in the act of captioning. By captioning I mean not only the literal composition of a line of text that might accompany an image or object but the business of description and the discursive contextualisation of any museum piece. There has been a great deal of circular argument about whether ethnographic artefacts should be described and presented as works of art or contextualised anthropologically (as though these were the only, and mutually exclusive, options). I am interested not in this sort of debate, but in the point that labelling or captioning, like discovery, involves a particular kind of research that turns on simple questions, such as ‘What is it?’ Is a certain object a decorated barkcloth or a painting? Is a shield a weapon? Is a toy canoe or a diminutive spirit house a model canoe or model house? Is a walking stick an orator’s staff or a souvenir? Is a certain carving a spirit figure or a copy of a spirit figure commissioned by an ethnologist? The question is asked, only incidentally to get the answer right, for the particular piece. The method is the use of the object in the exploration of what these categories and distinctions might mean, where they come from, where they mislead, where they remain useful or unavoidable.

The moment of juxtaposition arises because objects are seldom exhibited on their own. Whatever ‘it’ may be, one has to ask what it goes with, what it may be placed in a series with or what it may be opposed to. Again, it goes without saying that a chronological ordering of works by a single artist or an assemblage representing a particular culture each asks objects to speak to different conventions. My interest is not in the burden these classificatory or narrative conventions carry but in the moment in which other possibilities are present, and the scope for the ‘simple’ question to become a question of itself. Can objects that belonged to the secret, esoteric, ritual life of mature men (please not ‘of a community’) be placed with quotidian tools? Where does difference become incommensurability? When is it wrong, and when might it be right, to put incommensurable things together?

If it has been taken for granted for several generations that the locus of innovation in disciplines such as anthropology has been ‘theory’, there is now scope to think differently and to revalue practices that appeared to be, but were actually never, sub-theoretical. This comment has not tried to map out in any rigorous way what an understanding of ‘the museum as method’ might entail. My general point is simply that one can work with contingencies, with the specific qualities and histories of artefacts and works of art, in ways that challenge many everyday or scholarly understandings of what things are and what they represent.

This work has diverse products, including cataloguing data made use of mainly by museum insiders. But among the most important are displays and exhibitions that make wider statements for diverse public audiences. In this context the question of how, today, ethnographic collections are to be shown and interpreted is in practice answered. In the UK, the most general response employs the ‘world cultures’ rubric. Material from diverse parts of the world presents diverse cultures side by side, not least in order to represent and affirm the cultural heritages of immigrant, ethnic minority, communities. At some level, there is no problem with this, it is broadly desirable, and to some extent anyway unavoidable – even a lightly contextualised array of material from around the world must in effect present and offer for comparison a set of ‘world cultures’.

If, however, this is the primary paradigm, it may sell a collection short, and fail to capitalise on its most fertile associations and their salience to cultural and historical debate today. Anthropological collections are always also historical collections, they are the products of, the evidence for and maybe even the memorials to, entangled histories. In the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) in Cambridge, UK, important collections were made by explorers such as Cook and Vancouver, by the missionaries who followed them and sought actively to transform local ways of life, and by colonial administrators and travellers who, in some cases, saw themselves as part-time anthropologists.

For the most part twentieth-century additions to the collections were made by Cambridge fieldworkers. All of this material speaks to the history of empire, travel and exploration, to contacts that inaugurated colonial histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, to subsequent, enduringly contentious violence in, for example, Benin.

The collections bear witness, as well, to the formation of disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology, and to the emergence of influential ideas and arguments (such as those of Radcliffe-Brown in central Australia, Bateson in the Sepik, Fortes in Ghana and so forth), albeit through object transactions and fieldwork images often forgotten or suppressed in formal publications and at the level of theory.

Ethnographic collections may, as it were inadvertently, enable audiences to reinstate the ‘co-evalness’ that, Johannes Fabian has taught us, anthropological discourse chronically denied.

In the British context, anthropological collections speak not only of and to ‘cultures’ in various remote parts of the world, and to the ‘cultures’ of (for example) West African and South Asian immigrants, they also evoke engagements between the dominant (and itself heterogeneous) British population and the rest of the world over the last few hundred years. MAA in Cambridge is, as much as anything else, a museum of the formation of modern Britain, from a vantage point that may appear oblique, for those with a more traditional understanding of ‘English’ history, yet one that must also be considered fundamental, given the profoundly global character of British economy and society, from the seventeenth century onwards. Cook’s



1.1 Mark Adams, *Gweagal Spears*, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University, England. 2002. C type print from 10 x 8 inch C41 negative.

Botany Bay spears belong, not only in a display dedicated to Aboriginal life, but with contemporaneous artefacts such as Gainsborough's *Blue Boy* and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* – all three reflect aspects of a wealthy, experimental, dynamic and dangerous imperial society.

All good exhibitions should make material accessible at multiple levels, and it would be neither possible nor desirable to make the history of globalisation the sole or the predominant interpretative frame for anthropological displays at MAA or elsewhere. But it is worth considering how the histories of particular objects, of particular collections, and those of the institution as a whole could become lenses upon the much larger questions of



I.2 Five young Tallensi women, photograph by Sonia Fortes, Upper East Region, Ghana, January 1937. MAA N.102347.MF.

cross-cultural and colonial history. This would mean raising issues that are certainly difficult, from the point of view of the institution. Some members of the public assume that the material they encounter in ethnographic museums is essentially imperial loot. Although this is generally false, certain collections do include material seized in the aftermath of conflict, and the difficult histories of those collections, and the legacies of those histories, need to be acknowledged and explained.

Yet historically evocative displays would be provocative in other senses too. They would reveal empire, not just as dominance, not just as a one-way street, not as a set of wrongs that should or simply can be apologised for now. Objects such as gifts to missionaries, and novel, post-Christian forms such as Niue *hiapo* (tapa cloth) or Cook Islands and Tahitian *tivaevae/tivaivai* (quilt) demonstrate the complex creativity engendered by these global exchanges that have changed what was 'the West' as well as many other societies throughout the world. It is widely appreciated that museums work when they offer their audiences problems rather than

solutions. It might be added that they work best when they allow their audiences to discover things, to be drawn into their unexpected, perhaps disturbing stories. Curiosity has a fraught history, but also an interesting future.

Postscript

In the early 1990s, during one of my first research visits to Aotearoa New Zealand, I was behind the scenes at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, on my way to an appointment with one of the curators. As we ascended a staircase, I was surprised to encounter, on the broad landing, a group of Samoan women – sitting on pandanus mats, on the edges of steps, one or two on chairs, surrounded by bags and bundles of rolled and prepared leaves – engaged in conversation. A couple were actually weaving; others were drinking tea. They were there, presumably, in the context of some organised visit, and were making themselves comfortable in this improvised, interstitial way, I suppose, because there was no meeting room or workroom available. But if there was a straightforward explanation for the group's presence, I had a contrary sense that the women had somehow simply found their way into this part of the building, and were making the space their own, in an unselfconscious and unhurried way.

A few years later, I attended the 1996 meetings of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco, in the somewhat uncomfortable and alienating environment of the downtown Hilton Hotel. Among the bewildering proliferation of sessions typical of such gatherings was one on museum themes, scheduled in a smaller meeting room. It was a pleasure to hear James Clifford talk about 'the museum as contact zone'. There were a few questions. We had not met before and chatted afterwards.

In hindsight, the presentation was a low-key outing for a paper that would, deservedly, go on to be influential. I took Clifford's point to be simple: whatever else they were, museums had become places of meeting and encounter. This was already true in many ways in many places – witness the ambiguity of what I had encountered in Auckland. Contacts were inevitably heterogeneous, some enormously rewarding, others tense, troubling, frustrating. In the twenty years since Clifford's presentation, the majority of museums with collections formerly or still called ethnographic have embraced the contact zone as an identity, some more carefully, consistently and effectively than others. In 'The Museum as Method' I suggested that engagement of this sort had become, in a good sense, business as usual. I was concerned to rearticulate its consideration with the practical and conceptual activity that constituted curatorial work.

What I intended was to signal that contact, collaboration, negotiation and partnership needed to be part of any museum's ongoing work. I did not intend to suggest that debate around the contact zone and its possible

futures – imaginatively redefined by the editors and contributors to this book as ‘curatopia’ – was somehow over, neatly finished or resolved. Recent years have been marked by escalating contention around immigration, national narrative, identity, growing inequality and environmental futures. The multicultural values that museums of world cultures at least implicitly affirm are contested to an extent unprecedented in recent decades. Our ideally hushed conversations, in the company of artefacts, are sometimes drowned out by a political cacophony of categorical claims that refuse questioning, qualification or nuance, from ‘A nation without borders is not a nation at all’ (Trump) to ‘Rhodes must fall’ (student activists in Oxford and Cape Town).

There are two comments I would make on this new conjuncture, in the context of this impressive volume. The first is that curatorial authority is challenged, not only by ‘communities’. If, in the 1980s and 1990s, commentators were preoccupied with a decolonisation of knowledge, that opening up was often facilitated and mediated by curators who revalued and repositioned their expertise. By now, increasing numbers of curators and museum professionals are, anyway, of Indigenous descent. The new issue is rather that museum restructuring has in too many places downgraded research-based curatorial practice. In many institutions, there is simply less expertise about collections, and less expertise to negotiate the challenges they raise, ranging from the complexities of provenance to ethical questions of access and interpretation. Collections cannot be sensitively and effectively activated if their liminal and sometimes difficult histories are inadequately understood. Partnerships between collections staff, university-based researchers and community members are now all the more critical to sustain understandings of the present and potential significances of remarkable expressions of past human creativity. But museums cannot mobilise those collaborations without some core, in-house capacity, which has in too many institutions been hollowed out as a result of both austerity and misguided approaches to museum management.

Secondly, we need a profoundly nuanced approach to the heterogeneity of material culture and interests in it, across milieux, communities and nations. This book is inspired particularly by Pacific and Māori perspectives on *taonga* (treasures) and their inspiring potential. But it is vital that we do not, in the manner of UNESCO, universalise particular forms of attachment to ancestral artefacts. Both within Oceania and comparatively, people’s investments and disinvestments in things are manifold. Artefacts have telling capacities that both fall short of and exceed the double-edged narratives of belonging that are currently being reasserted so forcefully. We need to engage not only local perspectives but their diversity; we need to ask ‘What else is there?’ and confront uncomfortable issues about identity politics and postcolonial nations. And we cannot stop investigating Europe’s difficult histories, and the difficult histories of collections and museums – that, however, have become fertile and revelatory in ways their makers never anticipated.

Note

- 1 This comment was written in November 2009, one of several invited opinion pieces commissioned by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Stephen Nash at the time they became joint editors of *Museum Anthropology*. Citations did not seem appropriate, though I am well aware of, and indebted to, a stimulating literature to which many colleagues have contributed. It may however be helpful to some readers if I make it explicit that I refer to Alfred Gell's discussion of Duchamp in *Art and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); to novels by W.G. Sebald including *Austerlitz* (London: Penguin, 2001); and Johannes Fabian's important *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). I am grateful to Ruth Phillips, the editors of *Museum Anthropology* and their referees, and the editors of the present volume for their comments and their encouragement. Apart from the sentence at the end of the second paragraph, referring to the Pitt Rivers Museum, the text has not been updated or revised here; aspects of the argument were elaborated on in 'Global Reach', *Apollo* (April 2016), 30–4 (online version: 'We need ethnographic museums today – whatever you think of their history') and in *The Return of Curiosity: What Museums Are Good for in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Reaktion, and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

CURATOPIA

MUSEUMS AND THE FUTURE OF CURATORSHIP

EUROPE MUSEUMS
CURATING INDIGENOUS
EXHIBITIONS
METHOD ANTHROPOLOGY
INTERPRETATION
FUTURE PACIFIC CULTURE
ETHNOLOGY
INDIGENOUS

**EDITED BY
PHILIPP SCHORCH
CONAL MCCARTHY**

Curatopia

MANCHESTER
1824

Manchester University Press

Curatopia

Museums and the future of curatorship

**EDITED BY PHILIPP SCHORCH
AND CONAL McCARTHY**

Manchester University Press

Copyright © Manchester University Press 2019

While copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in Manchester University Press, copyright in individual chapters belongs to their respective authors, and no chapter may be reproduced wholly or in part without the express permission in writing of both author and publisher.

Published by Manchester University Press
Altrincham Street, Manchester M1 7JA

www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 5261 1819 6 hardback

First published 2019

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for any external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Typeset by Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	Page vii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
<i>Note on the text</i>	xviii
Introduction: conceptualising Curatopia <i>Philipp Schorch, Conal McCarthy and Eveline Dürr</i>	1
Part I: Europe	17
1 The museum as method (revisited) <i>Nicholas Thomas</i>	19
2 What not to collect? Post-connoisseurial dystopia and the profusion of things <i>Sharon Macdonald and Jennie Morgan</i>	29
3 Concerning curatorial practice in ethnological museums: an epistemology of postcolonial debate <i>Larissa Förster and Friedrich von Bose</i>	44
4 Walking the fine line: <i>From Samoa with Love?</i> at the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich <i>Hilke Thode-Arora</i>	56
5 Curating across the colonial divides <i>Jette Sandahl</i>	72
6 Thinking and working through difference: remaking the ethnographic museum in the global contemporary <i>Viv Golding and Wayne Modest</i>	90
Part II: North America	107
7 The times of the curator <i>James Clifford</i>	109

8	Baroque modernity, critique and Indigenous epistemologies in museum representations of the Andes and Amazonia <i>Anthony Alan Shelton</i>	124
9	Swings and roundabouts: pluralism and the politics of change in Canada's national museums <i>Ruth B. Phillips</i>	143
10	Community engagement, Indigenous heritage and the complex figure of the curator: foe, facilitator, friend or forsaken? <i>Bryony Onciul</i>	159
11	Joining the club: a Tongan 'akau in New England <i>Ivan Gaskell</i>	176
12	<i>časnaʔəm</i> , <i>the City before the City</i> : exhibiting pre-Indigenous belonging in Vancouver <i>Paul Tapsell</i>	191
	Part III: Pacific	209
13	The figure of the kaitiaki: learning from Māori curatorship past and present <i>Conal McCarthy, Arapata Hakiwai and Philipp Schorch</i>	211
14	Curating the uncommons: taking care of difference in museums <i>Billie Lythberg, Wayne Ngata and Amiria Salmond</i>	227
15	Collecting, curating and exhibiting cross-cultural material histories in a post-settler society <i>Bronwyn Labrum</i>	244
16	Curating relations between 'us' and 'them': the changing role of migration museums in Australia <i>Andrea Witcomb</i>	262
17	Agency and authority: the politics of co-collecting <i>Sean Mallon</i>	279
18	He alo ā he alo / kanohi ki te kanohi / face to face: curatorial bodies, encounters and relations <i>Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu, Moana Nepia and Philipp Schorch</i>	296
	Afterwords	317
19	Curating time <i>Ian Wedde</i>	319
20	Virtual museums and new directions? <i>Vilsoni Hereniko</i>	327
	<i>Index</i>	336