

The logo for ICME, featuring a stylized 'M' symbol followed by the letters 'ICME' in a bold, serif font.

ICOM
international committee
for museums and collections
of ethnography

ICME NEWS ISSUE 84 APRIL 2018

ICOM-ICME 51ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE ESTONIA 2018

Call for Papers - Keynote Presenters Announcement
- Call for ICME Fellows - Special Projects

EXHIBITIONS AND CONFERENCES
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REVIEWS /
NEWSREEL / ESSAYS / GEOGRAPHICAL
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OPENING WORDS

Jen Walklate

Welcome to our new look News! After some time working on the News in a variety of formats, we've decided that handing the layout over to a professional would help our News look up to date: fresh, focused, and contemporary, for a fresh, focused, and contemporary ICME. Let us know what you think – we think it looks amazing, and we hope it will make it more fun and worthwhile for you to read.

Alongside the new look, we're working on developing a regular structure for the News, with regular features and sections to keep you up to date with what is going on in the world of Museum Ethnography. Please contribute: the News is what you make it, after all. If you've been thinking conceptually, or working on academic and research projects, why not print your reflections in the Essay section? If you'd like to present something about your museum, try contributing to "Everyday Life". If you're announcing a new exhibition or programme, why not contact us for "Newsreel"? If you want to write about exciting developments in your region, contribute to "Geographical Spotlight". If you've uncovered a

strange and interesting artefact in your collections, send something to us for "Star Object". We'll be trialing a few things such as themes over the next few issues, and we hope this will work to make ICME News a stimulating and exciting read. We want to make sure you're excited to see it pop into your inbox every three months.

Please send your contributions and comments to the current chief editor at jenny.walklate@gmail.com. Our editorial team will be on the hunt for material for the July edition soon!

The editorial team is comprised of: **Jen Walklate**, Teaching Fellow, School of Museum Studies, Leicester (editor in chief) **Esther Chipashu**, Curator of Ethnography, National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. **Sarah Gamaire** PhD candidate, Auckland University, New Zealand and France. **Graeme Ware**, Chair in Anthropology, University of Bristol

We're aiming to provide you will carefully selected and diverse content from across the world, as well as making announcements about

ICME's activities. Please, let us know if you have any ideas – we'd appreciate it very much.

In this issue

This issue of ICME News is a bumper one. At the time of writing this, it is taking up 55 pages and contains over ten thousand words. Thank you to all those who have contributed both time and effort into making this happen: reading and editing your contributions brings me a great deal of joy. Thank you.

So, what is contained within these pages? First, you'll find a series of committee announcements – this time, predominantly focused upon the upcoming conference in Estonia. We do hope you'll be able to join ICME there! Then there's some news about current projects going on in ICME. Then we've a section for announcements and reviews of exhibitions and conferences, which this time contains a review of Foroba Yelen, by Laura Drouet and Olivier Lacrouts (otherwise known as The Offbeats). Our newsreel is populated with a variety of links to interesting things. In the essays section Winani Kgwatalala reflects on

the status of human remains and repatriation. In the Geographical Spotlight (which this time focuses on Africa) Tone Karlgard presents some notes on a poster she presented at the ICOM-ICOM Nord conference on "Difficult Issues" in Helsingborg last September. In "Everyday Life", Carole Delamour explores the events surrounding collaboration between Indigenous communities, Universities and Museums in Canada.

We hope you enjoy this 84th edition of the News. So near 100 now: I can taste the centenary...

ICOM-ICME 51ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE ESTONIA 2018

Re-imagining the Museum in the Global Contemporary



**9-12.10.2018, Estonian National Museum
Tartu, Estonia**

Conference location in Estonia

ICOM Estonia and Estonian National Museum are happy to host 2018 ICOM-ICME 51st Annual Conference 2018 titled *Re-imagining the Museum in the Global Contemporary*.

According to the statistics, Estonia is the country with the largest number of museums per capita. For example, in medieval Tallinn you can find many museums (Tallinn City Museum, Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design etc.), the Estonian Health Care Museum and the Kumu Art Museum have been awarded in EMYA, and the Seaplane Harbour has also been recognized with numerous prizes. For 2018 a number of other museums are being renovated or opened – the Estonian History Museum, the privately owned Arvo Pärt Centre and the Estonian Museum of Occupations.

Tartu

The conference will take place in the Estonian National Museum, located in Tartu, the second largest city in Estonia with 100 000 inhabitants and more than 20 000 students. Tartu is often considered the intellectual and cultural centre of Estonia, embodied in the leading research and training institution, the University of Tartu, and the strong concentration of students (more than 50 per cent of the city's population is under 30). The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research is situated in Tartu, as well as Tartu Art College and other institutions. Tartu also has a strong cultural scene that encourages the traditions of theatre, folk music and craftsmanship and museums while at the same time the city

hosts many IT companies and generates numerous start-up companies.

Estonian National Museum

Estonian National Museum is situated in Raadi area, two kilometers distant of the city centre. The museum moved to Raadi and opened its new building in October 2016, designed by the Paris-based architecture firm DGT



Architects. Raadi was the ethnographic museum historical site at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was used after WWII as the Soviet military airport, in a region where the museum is now the main reason for area redevelopment.

The new location, the new form and the new content changed the 1909-founded ethnographic museum. The museum has 6000 square meters of exhibition space. Most of the exhibition space is dedicated to the Estonian permanent exhibition *Encounters*, expanding upon Estonian cultural history and everyday life and stretching out on a timeline from the present day to the Ice Age. This exhibition is, in concept, research based, participatory and dialogical. The development of

the exhibition has been also at the center of museum change, which has adopted a user-centred approach, presenting vivid stories and engaging the audience by focusing on people and their life experiences. This approach has attracted both traditional visitors and new groups.

The second permanent exhibition is *Echo of the Urals*, providing insight into the lives of the different people speaking Finno-Ugric languages and inhabiting the northern parts of this corner of the world. The exhibition takes visitors through four different seasons, introducing people related to Estonians and is based on Finno-Ugric research tradition and collections in Estonia. The main temporary exhibitions hall will host the conference in October 2018, in the time of the Centennial Celebrations of the Republic of Estonia, the joint exhibition of museums across Estonia, looking into the changes in society in 1990s. The ENM is the largest museum field research centre with, currently, research projects related to food culture, the information society, audience studies, cultural shifts and ethnicity in the context of the Estonian people and Finno-Ugric nations, and others.

Tours

Depending on the conference schedule, the conference will make tours in Tartu museums and to Estonia-Russia border areas, with rich historical and cultural backgrounds by the lake Peipsi: Setomaa region and Peipsimaa. The post-conference tours will be taken to Tallinn and to Finland: the programs will be announced in April.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Re-imagining the Museum in the Global Contemporary ICOM-ICME 51st Annual Conference 2018 9-12.10.2018, Estonia National Museum, Tartu, Estonia Keynotes confirmed: Wayne Modest, Pille Runnel, Philipp Schorch, Andrea Witcomb

ICOM-ICME invites proposals for contributions to our 2018 annual conference, “Re-imagining the Museum in the Global Contemporary.” We invite you to join us in Estonia to reflect upon the complex context(s) in which museums exist today, and to creatively examine the range of new and future roles we might productively employ in our respective and interconnected institutions.

ICME is the international committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) devoted to ethnographic museums and collections from local, national, and/or global cultures and societies. Our annual conference brings together diverse museum scholars and practitioners from across the world.

It has now been fifteen years since Andrea Witcomb published *Re-imagining the Museum*, but her text remains relevant today. Museums are situated in a world of rapidly changing global politics, contested digital technologies, and increasing socio-economic inequal-

ities. Within this “global contemporary,” we recognize that various ideologies and ethical perspectives greatly influence and impact our work, in regard to understanding collections, designing exhibitions, and various other aspects of museum work.

As contemporary museum professionals, we may be asked to perform a range of roles that take us out of our traditional comfort zones, as we seek collaborative action across boundaries including: nation, ethnic identity, class, disability, gender and sexual preference. Museums have often ventured into difficult discussions and the engagement of diverse audiences. We might prioritize storytelling and sharing curatorial power so that myriad stories can be told in exhibition spaces, programmes and outreach to attract more diverse audiences. At the same time, such work can be seen as radical change threatening collections care, research and the place of the object in “new” museums devoted to opening dialogue.

With our conference, we present the question: Are these various positions mutually exclusive? We offer a space to consider that a “both and” rather than an “either/or” perspective may be possible, moving us beyond binary positions that put “progress” and “tradition” in unhealthy tension.

We call for papers, panels and workshops (academic, practice-based or any combination of the two) from colleagues who work on collections,

exhibitions, and programming that aims to diversify audiences and reconsider interpretive practice, as well as from colleagues who wish to maintain, implement, and respect the legacies of more traditional practices. Together we hope to find new ways to express who we are to one another and those that visit museums, the actions we might take in the future, and the contributions we might make to the contemporary world of museology.

We are interested in work that addresses a range of questions that have long concerned ICME, which include but are certainly not limited to:

- How does/can the museum problematize and/or diversify knowledge production?
- How do technology and multisensory activities raise/elevate (or curtail) new voices and participatory venues?
- How can knowledge and power be productively shared in museums?
- How have we questioned both “elite” orthodoxies and new interpretive theories in productive ways?

ICME are delighted to announce four keynote speakers: Dr Wayne Modest (Netherlands), Dr Pille Runnel (Estonia), Dr Philipp Schorch (Germany) and Dr Andrea Witcomb (Australia). Details of their research interests can be found at <http://network.icom.museum/icme/conferences/annual-conference/icme-2018-keynote-speakers/#c20732>.

The conference is hosted by Estonian National Museum, in Tartu, Estonia (<http://www.erm.ee>).

Conference websites: <http://enmconferences.ee/en>; <http://network.icom.museum/icme/conferences/annual-conference/>
#ICME2018
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1993650297567207/>

Submitting an abstract

We ask that papers (15 minutes) or panel discussion proposals would not exceed 400 words. In addition we also welcome proposals for shorter papers (10 minutes) about current work in the ethnographic museum on the main theme.

The following information should be included with the abstract:

Name(s) of Author(s); Affiliation(s) & full address(es); Title of submitted paper; Support equipment required
All submissions must include a 100-word bio for each presenter.

Please send proposals as soon as possible, but no later than 20.04.2018 as a Word Document attachment to the e-mail: icme2018@erm.ee.

The abstracts will be evaluated by at least two members of the Conference Committee.

Conference Committee:

Dr. Viv Golding (UK), ICOM ICME Chair / University of Leicester, Museum Studies
Dr. Ulf Dahre (Sweden), ICOM ICME Treasurer / Lund University, Social Anthropology
Dr. Pille Runnel (Estonia) / Estonian National Museum, Research Director
Sylvia Wackernagel (Germany), ICOM ICME Secretary / Silesian Museum

Mario Buletić (Croatia), ICOM ICME Webmaster / Ethnographic Museum of Istria
Brittany Lauren Wheeler (USA), ICOM ICME Conferences / PhD candidate, Clark University, Boston
Agnes Aljas (Estonia), ICOM ICME Board member / Estonian National Museum, Research Secretary

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS ANNOUNCEMENT

ICME is pleased to announce the four Keynote Speakers for the 2018 conference are as follows:

Dr Wayne Modest is Head of the Research Center for Material Culture, the research institute of the Tropenmuseum, Museum Volkenkunde and Africa Museum. He is also professor of Material Culture and Critical Heritage Studies in the faculty of humanities at the VU University Amsterdam. Modest's research



interests include issues of belonging and displacement; histories of (ethnographic) collecting and exhibitionary practices and difficult/contested heritage (notably slavery, colonialism and post-colonialism); European citizenship and urban life; ethnographic museums and questions of redress/repair.

Dr Pille Runnel is Research Director and Deputy Director of the Estonian National Museum. Runnel supervised the production of new research-based permanent exhibitions at the Estonian National Museum (opened 2016),



which were visited by 300,000 visitors during the first year of opening. Her research has dealt with new media and new media audiences, museum communication and participation at public cultural institutions, visual and media anthropology. She has participated in a number of international studies and research projects, including: MEDIAPPRO and EU Kids Online (2009-2015); European National Museums: Identity Politics, The Uses of the Past and the European Citizen (EuNaMus) (2010-2013); and

COST research network “Transforming audiences, transforming Societies” (2009-2015).

Dr Philipp Schorch is Head of Research at the State Ethnographic Collections Saxony, Germany, and Honorary Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Australia. Schorch's research focusses on museums, material culture/history/theory, contemporary art and (post) colonial histories, the Pacific and Europe, and collaborations with Indigenous artists/curators/scholars. He received his PhD from the Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, and held fellowships at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg – Institute of Advanced Study, Georg-August-University Göttingen, and at LMU Munich (Marie Curie, European Commission: www.assembling-the-transpacific.ethnologie.lmu.de). He is co-editor of the



volumes *Transpacific Americas: Encounters and Engagements between the Americas and the South Pacific* (Routledge, 2016) and *Curatoropia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship* (Manchester University Press, 2018)

Dr Andrea Witcomb is a Professor in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Deakin University, Australia, where she is the Deputy Director (Research) of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. Her



work engages with the ways in which museums and heritage sites interpret “difficult” histories including migration, war, colonialism, and facilitate cross-cultural encounters. Her research focus teases out the role of objects and accompanying interpretation strategies to build affective modes of interpretation aimed at supporting revisionist interpretations of the past. Most of her publications have emerged out of research projects funded by the Australian Research Council with the last three projects concerning the management and interpretation of Australia's extra-territorial war heritage in South East Asia, the collecting sector's engagement with cultural diversity and a project on the history of collecting practices in Western Australia.

CALL FOR ICME FELLOWS

(Closing date 30 April 2018)

Applications are invited for three (3) ICME Fellows, who must be individual members of ICME from developing nations or ICME youth members (under 35 years of age), to join the 2018 ICME conference and post-conference tour (see below). ICME Fellowship funding (up to 2.000 €) will be used to pay for conference registration, accommodation, airfare and reasonable daily allowance in Tartu Estonia for participation in the conference 9-12 October and the post conference tour of Estonia and Finland 13-15 October, with a view to offer opportunities for enriching the on-going research of candidates through global interaction with ICME members from different parts of the world. Candidates are expected to remain active in ICME. We also ask each fellow to deliver a paper at conference and write a report for the newsletter.

Please send your CV (including your ICOM number), a statement (around 500 words) of how the Fellowship will benefit your career and 2 letters of recommendation from your employer to the conference committee at the email addresses below. We are sorry that applications received after the closing date of 30 April 2018 cannot be considered).

Best of luck! Ralf, Tone, Laurie
ralf.ceplak@etno-muzej.si;
t.c.s.karlgard@khm.uio.no;
lauriecosmo@gmail.com;

RE-IMAGINING THE HUMAN: EXPLORING BEST PRACTICE IN OBJECT-BASED LEARNING AT THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Viv Golding

I am delighted to announce that ICOM awarded 2018 special project funding to our International Committee to conduct a workshop entitled 'Re-Imagining the Human: exploring best practice in object-based learning at the ethnographic museum'. The ICOM National Committees in Croatia, Germany, Norway, and Pakistan are our partners on the project, which features a one-day workshop on Wednesday 5 September 2018 at the Horniman Museum and Gardens in London, where I used to work.

Summary of the Project

The workshop will explore how object-based learning in the context of ethnographic collections can move beyond established notions of 'Self' and 'Other'. Horniman Museum in London is an ideal venue to examine this theme, as in June 2018 a new World Gallery of anthropology opens to the public, celebrating human creativity, imagination and adaptability, informed by a humanist anthropology. Humanist anthropology starts from the experience of human actors, addressing what it means to be human and to live a



Horniman Clocktower, Sophia Spring

human life. In ethnographic museums it supports and imagines ways of public engagement and education and it promotes activism.

Central to this workshop is object-based learning, a central concern for ICME members and which the Horniman has developed a strong programme and reputation for. Object based learning sessions at ethnographic museums can draw strongly on people's ability to employ all their available senses to enquire,

deduce and draw conclusions as to what something is and its potential meanings and significance. ICME finds that all audiences can use a huge un-tapped bank of knowledge and past experiences relating to all their senses to understand what may initially be unfamiliar objects. Through combining object handling with other techniques including questioning, mindfulness or creative responses, individuals' ideas, curiosity and evidence for understanding can be drawn out.

Objects inspire curiosity and lead people to explore what is important and interesting to them as individuals. They open up conversations and social interactions, trigger long-forgotten memories and get creative thoughts flowing.

ICME are interested in the development and sharing of object-based learning practice both within the museum sector and with diverse audiences and communities. The workshop will address among others the following questions:

How can:

- we draw on ethnographic collections to examine established notions of 'Self' and 'Other'?
- dialogical exchange and multisensory engagement triggered by objects encourage critical reflections on 'controversial' issues entangled with ethnographic collections

- (‘primitivism’, eurocentrism, colonial legacies such as racism and sexism)?
- imaginative engagement with objects (through poetry, drama, dance storytelling, music etc.) help to challenge stereotypes and to promote intercultural understanding?
- object-based learning sustain the de-

velopment of community collaboration and ownership?

We very much hope you may join us at the workshop in London. Meanwhile we will keep you informed of our progress via the website, facebook, yahoo-list and subsequent Newsletters.

HUMAN REMAINS MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Viv Golding

In 2017 ICME, ICOM Botswana, Namibia and South Africa began work on an ICOM funded project entitled 'Human Remains Management in Southern Africa'. The Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) led this project in collaboration with Iziko Museums of South Africa and ICME member Dr Jeremy Silvester was our representative and point of contact. We are very pleased to congratulate CAM on leading a successful bid for 2018 ICOM special project funds, with ICME as a partner on this important work.

Summary of the Project

The ultimate goal is to develop policy and guidelines for human remains management and repatriation in Southern Africa in collaboration with museums, universities, governments, and indigenous community members. The project incorporates collections-based research, discussion with regional and

international experts, community consultations with San, Nama and Ndonga source communities, a travelling exhibition, and virtual platform development. In colonial times many human remains were collected for 'research' purposes

to support prevalent theories of white supremacy. In the early twentieth century South African Museums collected human remains particularly from the San and Nama communities. Museums that have inherited remains acquired unethically, or indeed illegally, need to address past institutional wrongs, develop relationships with source communities, correct this situation, and support reconciliation.

In other parts of the world, extensive work has been done to heal the





above: Her Excellency Ouma Katrina Esua of the House of N//nke arrives at the Human Remains Management and Repatriation

below: Whilst human remains are no longer displayed in Namibian museums as they were in the past, there is a need for a debate that can help Namibia to develop a policy to ensure that respect is shown to the remains of ancestors that remain in storage.

wounds that such collections have caused to source communities, yet this issue has not been properly addressed in Southern Africa. Discussions with community members are essential to developing policy and guidelines for

future practice through participatory governance. The international network of ICOM is ideally structured to facilitate dialogue between South African museums and communities in neighbouring countries.

This project was initiated by the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) in collaboration with Iziko Museums of South Africa, the Museums Association of Namibia and the National Museum and Monuments of Botswana. In 2017 they were joined by ICME, ICOM Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

Phase I: Ended in March 2017:

- CAM intern and South African Department of Arts and Culture intern worked at Iziko Museums for six months and produced a report listing human remains from Botswana and Namibia;
- Iziko Museums hosted the *Human Remains Management and Repatriation Workshop*, February 13-14, 2017;
- Athabasca University intern wrote a report on *Indigenous Human Remains Management in Museum Collections and Issues of Repatriation*

Phase II: April 2017-December 2018

- Human Remains Management panel at the CAM *Heritage and Nation Building Symposium*, Calgary (June 2017)
- CAM intern at the Museums Association of Namibia (Oct 2017-March 2018)
- Consultation within the San and Ndonga communities in Namibia
- Continued research at Iziko Museums re: Namibian remains
- Development of a travelling exhibit and virtual platform
- Additional research in German language court records in Windhoek
- Placement of a CAM intern at National Museum and Monuments of Botswana (Oct 2018-March 2019 – continuing into Phase III 2019)

EXHIBITION: FOROBA YELEN. LIGHT AS COMMON GOOD, MATTEO FERRONI AND MARIA CAMILLA DE PALMA

by Laura Drouet and Olivier Lacrouts - The Offbeats*

Castello D'Albertis Museum of World Cultures,

Corso Dogali 18, 16136 Genova, Italy

Until April 8th, 2018

Encountering a sensible social design project - conceived in a western country for a so-called Third World one - is a rather rare event. Most of these ventures usually share a top-down approach that renders them arrogant and meaningless in the long-term. Especially when they do not take into account existing social and economic dynamics or when they are aimed at solving problems that do not exist. But *Foroba Yelen*, the community lighting project conceived by Italian architect and designer Matteo Ferroni, seems to be the proverbial exception that proves the rule.

Currently on show at the D'Albertis Castle MWC, in Genoa (Italy), the exhibition *Foroba Yelen, nights of light in Mali* is dedicated to the eponymous project. We visited the show and met with Ferroni to understand better how the idea originated and where it is now headed to. Thanks to his multi-faceted collabora-

tions in the fields of theatre and music, during his career, Ferroni has developed a careful and sensible approach to light - an element that he considers "highly theatrical and culturally meaningful". It was back in 2010 that the designer visited Mali for the first time. There to realize an open-air theatre in the village of Segou - few hundred kilometers northeast of Bamako - he rapidly noticed the important role of portable lights, "in a country where the sunlight can be burning hot and public lighting is scarce".

Fascinated by the "lively choreographies, almost like groups of fireflies moving in the dark landscape" generated by the intermittent use of portable lanterns - mostly kerosene or battery-operated - by the local population, Ferroni decided to set out for a deeper anthropological study of the Malian countryside and its relation to artificial light.

Over the following months, he discovered an articulated socio-economical structure, defined by the collective management of land and production facilities. A system that reminded him of the theories about self-sufficient communities that Russian anarchical philosopher Peter Kropotkin - one of Ferroni's theoretical references - expressed in his writings *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

The results of his observations were summarized one year later with the first prototype of the Foroba Yelen lamp. "An object that was to illuminate a specific action rather than a place, and that would seamlessly integrate within the existing cultural context", as the designer underlines.

Combining upcycled elements and materials largely available in rural Mali - such as bicycle wheels, water pipes, and aluminum vessels - with a 15-watt

LED module, Foroba Yelen came as a thoughtful and easily rechargeable source of light. "At first the LED module had to be bought from abroad, but with the diffusion of the internet the various parts can now be ordered online and are assembled locally", says Ferroni.

As the designer emphasizes, "the production of the light post rests on the existing skills of a network of artisans that can be found all over rural Mali. Thus making the object easily replicable and opening up the possibility for new design interpretations - something I wanted since the beginning."

A humble approach - in which the figure of the designer fades away - that unconsciously evokes the open-source movement and the words of American architect and inventor R. Buckminster Fuller, who once stated: "you have to make up your mind either to make sense or to make money, if you want to be a designer." [1]

On a social level, Foroba Yelen also reaffirms the important role of women within their communities. They are in fact responsible for the entire life-cycle of the object: generally organized in groups of eight components, they order the lamps from the local craftsmen and then manage their recharging and renting to the various users.

"What surprised me most was that little by little the lamp truly entered the everyday life of the communities and was adopted for a wide range of uses which, frankly, I had not thought of!"

laughs Ferroni. Applications range from agricultural activities - such as animal vaccinations - to more intimate happenings - such as baptisms and funerals. "And, for instance, the lamp has also proven to be the perfect companion for teachers, who use it to run open-air classes," says the designer.

Ferroni chose to work with a very specific kind of LED. The module he selected casts a sharp circle of light on the ground, "the size of which is very similar to that of the shadows of acacia trees during the day". As he underlines, "it is very interesting to observe how people interact with the illuminated area. Something I have noticed is that people tend to respect that circle and enter it only if they need to perform a required action. And that happens both in the Malian countryside and during the presentations that I organize here in Europe!"

After more than five years since the start of his venture, Ferroni has now decided to produce an open-source guidebook. "It shall enable communities everywhere in the world to freely adopt and adapt the Foroba Yelen design," suggests the designer. An undeclared homage to the socially-engaged work ethic of American designer and educator Victor Papanek, who, back in the seventies, affirmed the necessity of "work[ing] together and help[ing] each other without colonialism or neo-colonial exploitation." [2] So far approximately 100 lamps have been assembled and distributed all over Mali. Hopefully, the publication will help to spread the object and its principle even further.

Endnotes

[1] R. Buckminster Fuller, in Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, Academy Chicago Publishers, 1971, p. 73.

[2] Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, Academy Chicago Publishers, 1971, p. XXV.

*The Offbeats is a research & editorial platform about alternative initiatives that put creative collaboration and communal living at the heart of the design process. It investigates the togetherness culture - from design to architecture, from dance to photography - through interviews, reportages and reviews of present and past experiments that steer away from the mainstream design practices. The Offbeats is a research project initiated by Laura Drouet and Olivier Lacrouets of studio d-o-t-s.

Website: www.the-offbeats.com

Email: hello@the-offbeats.com

The visit:

In the moonlight, in the flash of electric torch lights or under the tree of light, the exhibition takes us to discover the richness of African nights lit with life, be it the vet yard's life, the women's vegetable gardens, the election review room or the butcher's workshop. The images of the villages where the lamppost has spread convey the appeal of a technology well balanced with culture; concepts such as cooperation, community and design are being revisited in a new perspective.

Short videos narrate the moments when the lamp takes shape in the

smithy and night scenes wrap us up in the show while enjoying big size photos that make us wander around the villages with and without light.

A Bamana Tywara headdress from Mali, belonging to the museum collections, makes its theatrical appearance surrounded by a video of the children night dances shot by Ferroni in the light of the lamppost, in front of the video of a Tywara dance performed by the villagers in the day light. Academy students of Scenic Design and Art Education were involved in the exhibition set up while the narrations of two young Malian migrant citizens contributed in giving shape to it, evoking and transmitting the activities and the atmospheres of the villages where the lamp is being used in Mali.

Apart from conferences by anthropologist Marco Aime, journalist Andrea De Georgio and astronomer Luigi Pizzimenti, conversations and narrations of African tales and myths for families and schoolchildren take place in the lamp light by National Civil Service Volunteers who worked on the Communication Plan of the exhibition, in collaboration with the Borghero African Library of Genoa. A workshop with Catalan designer Curro Claret, who will share with Academy students and the city his community lighting project with unemployed residents of Raval district in Barcelona, closes the exhibition in April.

“How Unpaid Work is Killing Off Museums”

<https://fyeahhistory.com/2018/03/26/how-demanding-unpaid-work-is-killing-off-museums/>

“Three NYC Institutions Come Together to Examine Three Intertwined Religions”:

<https://hyperallergic.com/435004/shared-sacred-sites-nypl-morgan-library-james-gallery-cuny/>

“DEAD IMAGES. Facing the history, ethics and politics of European skull collections”

<https://www.edinburghartfestival.com/whats-on/detail/dead-images>

“Indigenous owners ‘left out’ of rock art site’s world heritage listing talks”

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/mar/22/indigenous-owners-left-out-of-rock-art-sites-world-heritage-listing-talks>

“Pressure builds for a national keeping place for indigenous remains”

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2018/mar/04/pressure-builds-for-a-national-keeping-place-for-indigenous-remains>

“The Role of Museums in Unmasking Society’s Inequities”

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THE QUESTION OF DOUBLE MIGRATION: HUMAN REMAINS AND CULTURAL OBJECTS - THE HUMAN ASPECT OF ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

by Winani Kgwatalala

While the main focus of the heritage fraternity today is the illicit trafficking of cultural property, this piece of work has taken to investigate another earlier illegal trade, that of humans as done through slavery, medical investigations or anatomical explorations of the pre-colonial and colonial era. This is also to contextualize the study within the broader context of illegal movement and transfers of humans and commodities (could be drugs, minerals, cultural property, counterfeits) from one end of the world to another. A comparative analysis, which takes into cognizance causes, benefits, negative and positive effects as well as the outcomes is also a point of focus. This is with special reference to the trafficking of cultural property.

Historically, the migration of cultural objects is in very many ways intertwined with the migration of humans (the slave trade). The research seeks to establish the intimacy or the relation-

ship between the two trades as a way of demonstrating the link between the past, the present and the future. The two trades have inadvertently run parallel from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. This situation is still visible even today through the repatriation of human remains and human beings, which is tantamount to the return of cultural property. The double trade demonstrates the double tragedy that befell colonized states, particularly in Africa. Colonial specimens/objects/artefacts fed into a colonialist vision of wild people and this accounts for the dividing line between races during the colonial period. This explains why in the history of the Islandic, there is the notion of *us, them*. European nationalism and colonialism are therefore here seen as *objectifying* and *exoticising* to both cultural property and human beings [1]. The *we* or *they* aimed to social groupings during the period under discussion therefore became a shared identity [2]. There is therefore a need to ana-

lyze these discourses and to mark the new shift in anthropology which is the study of the *primitive, other* as against the *civilized self* [3]. There have also been questions raised by scholars recently, as to whether dead bodies or human remains are also cultural property and how the two are connected? Hence the need to do a proper investigation into the subject in order to provide answers to these mind boggling questions by scholars and heritage managers. This will allow for the better protection of this heritage from traffickers and engaging in dialogue for the return of such to countries of origin.

However, there are also recent cases of human migrations and trafficking as seen in the illegal human trafficking and also migration of people during political unrests. This is as evidenced in a presentation made by a Curator from the National Museum in Slovenia (at the General Conference for the International Council of Museums in Milan,

2016) about the migration of people during the recent political unrests in their countries in the Middle East and in Africa (brings in the aspect of migration of people as against migration of artefacts). According to the curator, the museum has put up a number of exhibitions on the subjects of human migrations, in collaboration with the refugees in order to teach or convey the message of acceptance, tolerance, humanity, information sharing with the local communities [4].

Of late there have also been a lot of restitution cases of human remains or dead bodies, particularly in South Africa, which explains the ensuing debate on whether dead bodies are also heritage. Using the example of the dynamism of the slave trade therefore, do we see the “wrong instigated” by the migration and illicit trafficking of cultural property being corrected more especially if return and or *sharing/universality* are the solution? How is restitution or *sharing* a solution? Do we leave the cultural property where it is and make it a heritage for all (universal, for humanity as indicated by the former British Museum Director, Neil MacGregor, during the Greek Parthenon marble case), just like the black man who remained in America, UK and France after the abolition of the slave trade? The research therefore makes note of the dynamics of history, from illegal human trafficking to object trafficking when faced with the option of *shared* heritage.

As a point of departure and in cognizance of the concern as to whether

human remains are also cultural property (a point brought about by the fact that the two have been seen to be discussed alongside one another by heritage managers and curators) the paper attempts an explanation of what human remains are. Reinnette Stander, in her deliberation on the occasion of the Human Remains Symposium by Iziko Museums in Cape Town, in February, 2017, indicated that; Human remains refers to all forms of material or remains of modern humans including osteological material (whole or part of skeletons, individual bones or fragments of bones, teeth), soft tissue including organs, skin, hair, nail, etc. (preserved or waxed or dried/mummified), which could be preserved in a museum [5].

In summary, human remains are artefacts made wholly or largely from any of the above. Human remains exclude fossils and sub-fossils and are limited to: Human remains excavated as part of an archaeological project; human remains in public collections; the remains of victims of conflict; and the remains of military veterans.

According to Reinnette, the South African Government, for example, is constantly inundated with requests to repatriate human remains of South Africans in other countries or urged by families’ and compatriot’s quests to repatriate comrades who died in exile. However, in the absence of any policy document or guidelines and principles, these requests are being dealt with on an ad hoc basis [6].

There are international conventions that deal with illicit trafficking and safeguarding of heritage in all its different forms. Countries only need to ratify and to domesticate them into their legal systems. It is important though that, even if there are a number of these international precedents and policies to guide these processes, countries have to take their own history and culture into account. They should develop domestic or local orientated policies that speak to local moral standards. This could even extend to the creation of a new precedent that will be adopted by other Sub-Saharan countries as well [7]. The proposed policies could focus on the following: repatriation of human remains within countries; repatriation of human remains located in other countries; repatriation of the remains of military veterans located outside national borders, repatriation of human remains in local museums, repatriation and/or restitution of cultural objects (funerary objects, sacred objects, grave goods, etc). This is so because most heritage legislature in many countries and certainly in Botswana, make no explicit provision for the repatriation of human remains. In the National Heritage Resources Act of South Africa, for example, human remains must be dealt with in accordance with being archaeological material, burial grounds or graves, or heritage objects. However, this is highly problematic, as human remains cannot be dealt with as heritage objects and not all human remains have necessarily been under the soil to qualify as archaeological material or part of burial grounds or graves.

In summary, Frantz Fanon tries to bring in the link between slavery, colonialism and the now (post-colonial). He talks of the black man de-alienating (de-alienating from self means freedom) himself from the assimilation and colonial stupor, because he says he is not a slave of the slavery that dehumanized his ancestors. He also talks of claiming repatriation for human remains and communities for the domestication of his ancestors [8]. 'The repatriation and restitution of human remains and objects is especially controversial and challenging. To find a balance between scientific interests, ethical considerations and interest of communities is open for a lot of controversy and it is doubtful that a solution will be found that will keep everybody happy' [9].

All the same, alongside the many different issues of repatriation of human remains and cultural property, there are also cases of repatriation of humans or communities. In the same way, Botswana has since independence witnessed the return of both communities and human remains, from places of refuge to their places of origin. The Baka-Nswazwi people were repatriated from Jecheni in Zimbabwe to Marapong in Botswana. Chief John Madau Nswazwi's remains were also repatriated in 2002 from Zimbabwe (Jecheni) to Marapong. He died in 1960 after migrating to Zimbabwe with his people in 1948 due to squabbles with the Bangwato regent, Chief Tshekedi Khama, who also had support from the colonial government. This points to the possible repatriation of human



[Fig. 1 A picture of Chief Nswazwi and his Councillor]

remains of the rest of the group from Zimbabwe in the future [10].

There is also the long-standing case of the Baherero and Ovambanderu, who are repatriating from Botswana to Namibia after being displaced by the German wars and genocide from Namibia a century ago. A report by the Botswana Daily News has indicated that they have expressed the wish to repatriate back to Namibia and that since 2013 both governments have held talks with regards the issue. The paramount Chief residing in Namibia also expressed his wish to welcome his people. Most of the Ovambanderu and Baherero are found in the Ngamiland District of Botswana and in particular from villages like Chanoga, Nokaneng, Tsau, Semboyo, Habu, Makakung, Kareng, Bothatogo, Toteng, Sehithwa, Bodibeng, Komana and Chanoga. Just like the case of the alienated and inalienable artefacts, they have stated the

need to go back to their ancestors and forefathers as the main reason for repatriation. Some Herero/Ovambanderu groups that migrated to Botswana during wars with the Germans repatriated back to Namibia between 1993 and 1994 [11]. This also does not rule out the possible repatriation of the human remains of members of the group that died in Botswana in the future.

The Nama people also migrated into Botswana during the wars with the Germans in 1909. Their chief Simon Cooper died in Botswana and was buried at Katlwe Pan in Lokgwabe in 1913. In 2011 the two groups (from Namibia and Botswana) united to erect a tombstone for him and they have since united in the celebration of their culture through an annual cultural festival. This is therefore one of the rare cases in which the communities have opted for the erection of a memorial site/monument instead of repatriation. However, this does not rule

out the fact that both groups could in the future demand repatriation of loved ones back to countries of origin or closer to other members of the family.

The Bangwato, under one of the Bangwato chiefs, Mphoeng, migrated to Mphoeng (known as Mphoeng's Reserve) in Zimbabwe in the early 1900s after being banished by the colonial government. The group later returned to Botswana, but a small splinter group remained there. They still speak Setswana and use *dikgotla* /ward names, as found in Serowe, even today. This, therefore, does not rule out the fact that the group might in the future demand repatriation of the whole community including those who died and were buried in Zimbabwe as well as the surviving community.

Another noteworthy case of successful repatriation of human remains in Botswana is that of El-Negro. This is a middle aged man of Basarwa origin who was preserved by two taxidermists, the Vereaur brothers, in the nineteenth century, and was later sold and displayed at a museum in Banyoles in Spain. Due to pressure by OAU, UNESCO e.t.c, he was repatriated to Botswana in 2000 and re-buried at Tsholofelo Park in Gaborone/Botswana. Some artefacts that were part of the display i.e. the spear, remained in the Spanish museum. Neil Parsons, who wrote a detailed article on the El Negro case, has indicated that "his display in a museum has raised questions about the re-presentation of dead human remains in museum displays". However, the South

African government has laid claims to the human remains and there may be a possibility of re-repatriation.

The subject of human remains and their repatriation therefore evokes many emotions, and is closely associated with the transformation of the international and cultural landscape. It forms part of a broader debate on reconciliation, nation-building and redress. Examples are the numerous Canadian cases of



[Fig. 2 An illustrative picture of El Negro]

repatriation of human remains for the indigenous people and the adoption of the reconciliation slogan. Also the American cases of redress to the history of blacks and their slavery as addressed by Brian Stevenson and the adoption of the notion of reconciliation. However, regardless of this, the main objective of repatriation and restitution is to restore the humanity of those communities who have been affected. It is therefore important that the processes of dealing with human remains take into account the belief systems and human dignity of the relevant communities [12].

Inside the museum, for example, human remains must always be treated with utmost respect. All matters relating to human remains must be overseen by appropriate staff and remains must only be handled by appropriate personnel. Steps must be taken proactively to bury the remains. Human remains must be isolated from the rest of the other collections, deaccessioned and stored according to best practice until reburial is possible, with no access by the public [13]. In the same way, the Repatriation and Restitution Program must be open and transparent in cases where claimants desire to see the return of human remains to communities and/or families of origin. Throughout the whole process the custodian institution should ensure that its actions are consultative and that negotiations are as equitable as possible.

Many cases of human remains and community repatriation cases and their restitution have their origins during the slave trade, the colonial period and the ensuing struggles for liberation. Moreover, given the understanding that the slave trade and the trafficking of human remains were a prelude to, or rather facilitated, the illicit trafficking of cultural property, historians such as Ciraj Rassool have argued that the first piece of legislation in South Africa, which is the Bushman and Relics Act of 1911, was basically to halt the trafficking of human remains of Bushman. Local institutions and museums in Europe were eager to acquire types of specimens of (in terms discourse of the day) a primitive form of humanity. This

was part of the scientific discoveries of the time [14]. The article, “Chief’s Head Returned to Ghana” also impresses on the subject of human remains versus cultural property migration. It discusses cases of trafficking of humans during slavery and gives the example of the return of a human head decapitated 171 years ago. The Ghanaian chief Bonsu’s head was part of the anatomical collection of the Leiden University Medical Centre in Holland [15]. The Bonsu case in this way raises issues of ethics and morality in handling of repatriations, especially those involving human remains as discussed by Reinette. This article directly addresses the discussion on human trafficking (slave trade) as against cultural heritage and the fact that the restitution aspect encompasses both the cultural, human as well as historical and ethnographic collections. It is in many ways a correction of historical mistakes and an indication that the two epochs of transfers complement each other and are intertwined. This justifies the need to study the illegal transfers of cultural property alongside human trafficking. The El Negro case in Botswana, and Saartjie Bartman in South Africa (to a lesser extent since she was migrated alive), are also good examples of this human body trafficking. However, as indicated in an exhibition on the slave trade hosted by the Iziko, Slave Lodge Museum, there was cultural diversity at the Cape during the slave trade and as reflected today through the different communities [16].

Another aspect to the migration of human remains is that, humans were

migrated into slavery by other human beings while cultural property was also transferred by human beings. During the slave trade, brothers were made to turn against one another, where the more powerful communities or leaders were used to enslave the lesser communities. This is as in cases of the “better savage” as discussed by scholars. In the same way, curators have facilitated the illegal movement of objects by instigating thefts or stealing to sell for profit. The human component therefore becomes two-fold, humans being trafficked and humans instigating the trafficking of both humans and cultural property. This leaves us with a big *why?*

Introspectively, Tiffany Jenkins has also explored the “*Crisis of Conscience*” in dealing with issues of return of human remains. This is because the migration of living humans or human remains involve both museum professionals and sometimes indigenous peoples of former colonies and governments. She gives the example of the return of Saartjie Baartman of South Africa in 2002, and indicates that the returns are at times therapeutic; they heal wounds of colonialism and other forms of discrimination [17]. It should be noted, though, that the returns can also give rise to new wounds and lead to new questions around the meaning of nationalism, unity, social cohesion and discrimination. Objects and human remains, as in Baartman’s case, when returned can also destabilize the new social cohesion, such as a national identity and stability. They can also lead a group of people or community to question their national

identity or sense of belonging. This is what brought about contemporary trends such as “truth and reconciliation” as done in South Africa after the release of Nelson Mandela and takeover of power by blacks in South Africa. This also applied in Canada following the numerous cases involving the repatriation of human remains and artefacts of the indigenous communities.

Serena Nanda has also subscribed to the argument on human trafficking as against cultural property. She discusses the Robben Island Museum as a symbol of apartheid, human trafficking and suffering and also reflects on the broader culture of trafficking of human beings into slavery [18]. In this way, her study adds to the debate on human remains during this amazing historical chapter and evolution from human trafficking to cultural trafficking. It also adds to the analyses on how the two epochs of illegal movement have impacted on African countries, communities, museums and how they have complimented each other in one way or another. Through the insight provided by the Nanda’s article, it would be in order to reconsider Michael Taussig’s concept of relations between ethnography and the colonial history. The relation between living cultures, objects and the colonial era of illicit trafficking of cultural property and slavery becomes more pronounced. Taussig’s conclusion compliments the article by enriching the thematic discussion on racism and society, slavery and illicit trafficking of cultural property [19]. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, in her book *It’s a Material*

World: History, Artefacts and Anthropology, also attempts to link the past of human trafficking to the present and future dominated by cultural trafficking.

According to Claude Levi-Strauss's analysis, the transfer of cultural property and humans from one part of the world to another is not by mistake, but a normal social phenomena in human life. Therefore, the resultant situation whether negative or positive, should not be surprising. It is an important source because it brings in a different angle to the exchange theory, which helps broaden the analyses on the cultural and human migrations. However, the challenge in Botswana is the absence of a policy to guide the repatriations, even the above illustrated successful repatriation cases were only done through the use of the general customs rules and the General Bilateral Agreements between Botswana and the concerned countries. Otherwise most of the human remains found in the Botswana National Museum collection and that of the University of Botswana were collected through the normal rescue method and excavation. The national legislation on heritage i.e. the Monument and Relics Act in Botswana is silent on the subject of human remains, it only addresses objects and monuments and this creates a problem. For normal local repatriations, this is normally negotiated and agreed with the communities before relocation and/or reburial. The subject of the repatriation and restitution of human remains and objects is a legislative issue. Lack of policy leads to dealing with the repatriation of human

remains in an ad hoc manner, with no consistency. Also, the repatriation of human remains can be controversial and challenging, therefore there is need for guiding legislature. There is also a need for a new precedent and legislation for Sub Saharan Africa (SADC) so that efforts at legislation development in dealing with human remains complement each other [20].

In summary to the above discussions on human trafficking, repatriations and restitutions, and efforts by countries to work together, it is therefore incontestable to conclude that, there is need for a SADC statement on human remains. This will allow for a concerted effort by the region on the issue of human remains. Roksana Omar has also argued that SADC countries should unite towards the development of policies on human remains and their repatriation. Each individual country would in this sense have crafted a policy for the management of human remains in order to allow for reburial, the restoration of dignity and for restitution. According to her, the ICOM Code of Ethics also deals with the issue, on section 2.5, 4.3 and it goes on to propose the use of DNA for the identification of the unknown human remains and a proposal to use mass graves for the unidentified human remains [21].

This is because the issue of human remains and community repatriation or restitution is not only about repatriation, it is about appreciation of what happened, the history and documenting it. It is also about resto-

ration, reconciliation, dialogue forgiveness and collaborating on the part of institutions, communities, and reburial. This becomes a whole vicious cycle with important historical pointers. The question that one would ask is; why has it taken so long to initiate dialogue with stakeholders on the subject of human remains and repatriation? This is because African curators took over the colonial museum and its legacies and it has taken time to decolonize and for a renaissance to take place. The urge to start dialogue now is also due to current trends in the world, main areas of focus in the world of heritage such as *illicit trafficking, repatriation/restitution, reconciliation/forgiveness, human remains* etc. This has pressurized the African curator to address this global issues of concern since it also affects African museums and countries. The exercise is also very expensive and needs a concerted effort by all stake holders in order to afford repatriation and this applies to governments, heritage institutions such as museums, universities, the local and the global community. One would also ask; what should be done with the repatriated human remains? These could be re-buried, displayed in museums, remembered through monuments i.e. the Matola Monument in Maputo, Mozambique. This is to avoid issues of inconclusive return cases as could be the case in some instances.

One of the observations at the Human Remains Symposium in Capetown, Iziko Museums, was that the issue of repatriation, consultation, claims, re-burial of human remains, is a new

museology, a new experience for the museum. This therefore calls for museum curators to be proactive and to follow the SA experience and approach. There is also a need for a proper verification and authentication process for the claims because this involves a deep form of colonialism, a complicated and distorted history. Group repatriations, repatriation of royals and those who played a significant role in society and fought for freedom, should procedurally be complemented by memorial sites/monuments. Canada is one state that has witnessed a lot of debates on issues of cultural and human migration as well as their repatriation and return. As such it has had to come up with proper and relevant legislations to deal with the issue. The research study therefore draws from the Canadian example on the different cases of repatriation of human remains and the resultant legal structures put in place to address the issue. According to Richard Benjamin, the Director of the Slave Lodge Institutional Museum in Liverpool, UK, reconciliation is a post trauma expression. In his view, the Canadians borrowed the term Truth and Reconciliation from South Africa in order to address their numerous cases of indigenous people and human remains migration. This has also affected the European scenario and as a result, there is currently, a big campaign in Europe about decolonizing the museum [22].

According to Wendy Black of Iziko Museums, Cape Town, discussions and dialogue on the repatriations of human beings should be based on respect,

mutual understanding and collaborations. The exportation and repatriation of human remains also raises important ethical questions. In this way, repatriation can also involve anger, emotions, grief, relief and happiness. As in *sharing*, this therefore calls for collaborative curatorship and museology. This also calls for the celebration and promotion of heritage as a human right [23].

In conclusion, and as an analyses of the issue of human migration, it is incontestable that human remains in museums were unethically collected, because they were collected through unacceptable methods, such as grave robberies, for anatomical reasons by scientists. These were then dehumanized and displayed in museums as objects and as curios. The drive behind the collection of human remains in this manner was the idea of studying the “*other*” as in *mimesis* and *alterity*. This was in most cases applied to the black person, who was used for comparative analyses to the white person and to some animal species so as to justify and authenticate his humanness. This therefore led to the presence of black persons’ human remains in museums, particularly cosmopolitan museums. It was indeed an age of illicit trafficking in human remains and this is the same process by which El Negro was taken from Botswana and ended up displayed in a museum in Spain. Human remains were excavated and transported to institutions of learning in African countries or in Europe. Ironically, while the earlier scientists were responsible for the dehumanization of humans into collections, it is now

the social scientists who are advocating for the re-humanization and decolonization process. Based on this discussed background, it is important that repatriation of ceremonial and spiritual objects of the indigenous people be recognized. They should also be involved in the preservation of those that still remain in museums by being hired to work in museums, particularly those holding their collections. The other proposal is that they should have their own museums and be involved in the management of their own collections. Both UNESCO and the UN recognize the rights of indigenous people, its guidelines on the welfare of indigenous people should therefore be followed [24].

In response to this alarming phenomenon, laws have been adopted, conventions ratified, ethical codes proclaimed and ethics commissions established by some countries such as Nigeria. Local initiatives to protect heritage have been set up, and the return of cultural objects and human remains committed. Yet the hope for positive benefits does not always materialize, given that the situation is more complex than expected. European countries, North America, Asia or the Near East countries and Switzerland in particular, are often criticized for providing a kind hub for illicit trade of cultural property and other forms.

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CONGO GAZE - PEOPLE, ENCOUNTERS AND ARTIFACTS

by Tone Karlgard

Poster presented at the ICOM Germany and ICOM Nord jointly organized conference in Helsingborg, Sweden, September 21–23, 2017 with the theme “Difficult issues”.

Museums play a key role in creating and representing the shared cultural heritage of various communities. What is to be said about the stories museums facilitate? Why is something remembered and something else forgotten? What is highlighted, what hidden? What restricts museums' freedom to act and/or do we restrict ourselves? What are the roles of public and local societies? Are museums prisoners of their own familiar practices and processes?

Obstacles, Trust and Mistrust: An Introduction

A cooperative collection and exhibition project between Congolese diaspora and the Museum of Cultural History, UiO, from June 2015 – January 2017. The exhibition was inaugurated in September 2016 – and maybe the time pressure to produce an exhibition was itself a source of conflict and mistrust? The project had to fit in with the overall plans for the various participants and thereby a time pressure arose. Did this reorient the focus from process to

result in this unfamiliar way of cooperation between a source community and the museum?

What part experienced the greatest problem in this project, maybe the museum?

Background

The first contact between Congolese living in Norway and the museum was established by the Nordic Exhibition *Traces of Congo* in 2007. Since then, cooperation on activities in relation to



[Fig 1 Searching for Objects in the African Storage]



[Fig 2 The exhibition in action]



the Independence Day of the Democratic Republic of Congo, June 30, have taken place each year. Based on this cooperation and relationship between interested persons from the Congolese diaspora in Norway and the museum the project *Congo Gaze* emerged.

Participants

The organization Action Paix et Pain and Ms. Riziki Maroy have been main cooperation partners. In June 2015 Ms. Riziki Maroy took on an internship in this project exploring the Congolese collections, and she was the connection between the museum and the Congolese community.

We worked through seminars and visits to explore and study the rich collection originating from DR. Congo consisting of more than 3000 objects.

Expectations

From the source community, these consisted of a classical museum exhibition, while the participants from the museums staff had expectations about a more experimental form of expression.

What themes were expected to be disseminated in the exhibition?

From the museum's perspective an expression of contemporary life and the political situation in DR Congo was expected. Participants from the source community explicitly wanted to create an exhibition about the lives of past generations in rural regions of DR. Congo. An exhibition focusing on their shared cultural heritage.



This led to an intense discussion between the source community and the museum about the use of a contemporary film documenting Commercial Street in Kinshasa.

Why are these objects here? The Colonial legacy is a European problem. Why do European museums/ disseminations of the history always tend to project this upon people with African background?



The concept of *radical trust*, according to Bernadette Lynch (2009) “is based on the idea that shared authority is more effective at creating and guiding culture than institutional control.”

The project lasted from June 2015 - January 201. A project group of 12 from the museum and one student. Activities consisted of searching the collections, making a selection, organizing 5 seminars, opening night, receiving school groups

How to design an open, yet structured process that could ensure the development of a common understanding of what it would involve to work according to the ideals underpinning the concept of “radical trust”?

The museum was convinced that it was necessary to present King Leopold's terror-regime and “Congo-freestate” in the exhibition. Although actually aware of the austerities of his rule, the Congolese did not see this as a part of their cultural heritage. Some of the stronger voices in the source community explicitly did not want to disseminate the history about King Leopold's rule in



Congo. This was much to the museums surprise, as we saw this as our obligation, because the visitors would raise this question about the origin and why the collections are kept here.

These questions provoked a complicated discussion. *Reflecting upon this challenges the idea that the museum is compelled to always tell its own collections history.*

Suggestions based on the experiences from Congo Gaze

Obstacles within the frames of the museum organization itself must be targeted. Time and resources to work and prepare internally among the museums colleagues are crucial to establish projects with source communities. Even if the museum is the keeper of the collections, the concept of *ownership* should be discussed more thoroughly (Ref. Bernice Murphy in Milan 2016). The museum's institutional structures which we work within manifest challenges.

Obstacles:

1. The complicated process to achieve access to the collections with representatives from source communities—so-called ordinary people.
2. The pressure to produce an exhibition on a certain date, regardless of the parties involved respective timetable and availability.
3. The overall lack of time from both the museums staff and other parties involved to give priority and to put effort into creating a ground for constructive dialogue and common understanding.

Lessons learned

Prioritizing such a process within the framework of a project is the only way to design a radically new way of working with museum-source community collaboration projects based on trust.
<http://www.khm.uio.no/besok-oss/historisk-museum/utstillinger/skiftende/den-rode-sone/blikk-pa-kongo/>



LIFE STORY OF NATIVE OBJECTS REDISCOVERED VIA CULTURAL HERITAGE REPOSSESSION

by Carole Delamour

I will share some aspects of a collaborative project between Indigenous communities, universities (Quebec) and museums (Canada and the United States). I will focus on the process that led to the rediscovery of the life stories of native objects.

I worked as a research agent and PhD student for the Nika-Nishk project (2012-2017), which focused on the repossession and re-appropriation of indigenous heritage. I primarily worked with the Ilnuatsh of Mashteuatsh, who collaborate with the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI, Washington, DC). We studied the collection of “Lake Saint-John”, brought together largely by the anthropologist Frank G. Speck between 1910 and 1926.

First, I retraced the life stories and knowledge associated with those objects. I consulted Speck’s archives and publications in which I found details about composition, usage, or the context of collection. Then I cross-referenced this information with an ethnographic compilation of Ilnu memory and knowledge.



Workshop with youth © Nikanishk



Sharing with elders © Delamour

I conducted interviews and activities with 82 people of different ages (April 2012 to December 2016). The meetings took place at the Mashteuiatsh Native American Museum, the cultural transmission site, or at people's homes. A folder with the pictures of the NMAI objects served as a visual base to promote the remembrance of personal stories and knowledge.

We run workshops and focus groups with elders and youth. Exchanges took place in an informal environment, during bush camps, in the community,

or during visits to the NMAI. In June 2013, seven high school students attended instructional events led by NMAI staff on different photography and video techniques used to document the objects they had previously selected.

As the documentation progressed, some objects became very significant to the Ilnuatsh. Among them are the *Nimapan*, ceremonial tumplines specifically used to thank the spirit of a hunted animal. Those objects caught our attention after a meeting with an elder whose brother

owned one of the *Nimapan*. The use and the name of those objects is also related to a ritual and to *shashish nehluen* (the *old language* from their territory), today both little practiced.

Another example is a moose skin coat identified on archival photos showing Ilnu men wearing it. Upon finding the very particular motifs depicting dragonfly larvae, we proceeded to reconstitute the familial, territorial, ecological, ontological, and social context in which it was created.



Workshop at NMAI 1 © Nikanishk

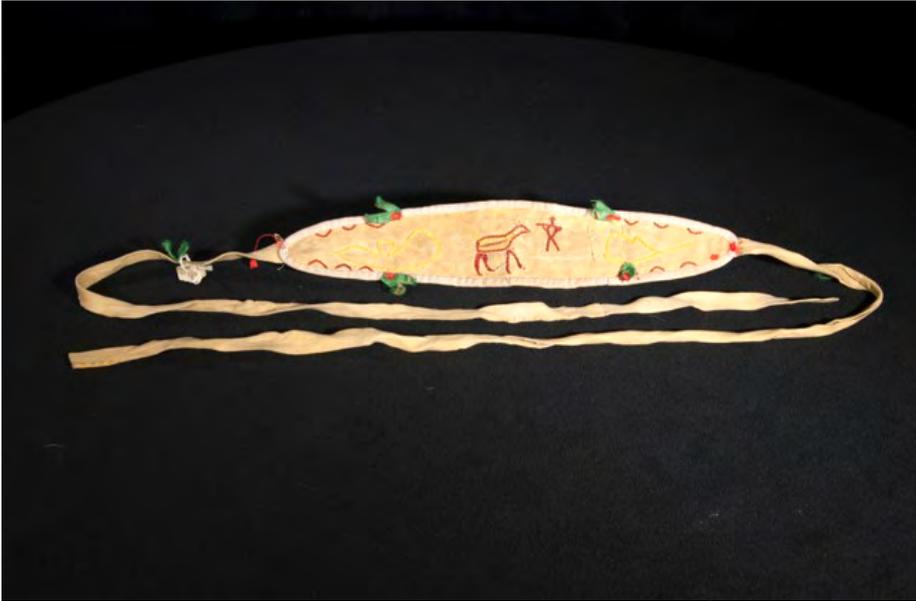


Workshop at NMAI 2 © Nikanishk

Thanks to the data collected from the archives and shared by the Ilnuatsh, we have explored the cultural biography of those objects. We took into account both exchanges with humans and nonhumans, and movements or transformations that have undergone. We have retraced the terminologies, the modes of classification, the practices, the knowledge and the know-how-to-be associated to their tangible and intangible components.

Finally, we have connected the objects with the history of their original holder and that of their current families. Today, the objects are once again part of contemporary life of the Ilnuatsh. Knowledge and practices associated with them are reinvested in the local dynamics of social exchanges and cultural re-appropriation through the activities organized by the school, the museum or in community gatherings.

More information is available at: nikanishk.ca



National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Nimapan
101477.000 © Myriam-Uapukuniss Duchesne



National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Moose skin coat
146930.000 © Gabrielle Paul



Luke Siméon, 1926. National Museum of the
American Indian Archives, Smithsonian Institution
N14801 © Frederik Johnson

CONTACT THE NEWS

We hope you enjoyed this new-style edition of ICME News. Let us know what you think by emailing jenny.walklate@gmail.com.

This newsletter is published every three months. You can contact the News with anything you think the wider ICME/Museum Ethnography community would like to hear. Please email us with anything you'd like to include.

ICME's website is <http://network.icom.museum/icme>

See you next time!

The editors.

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