

MUSEUM AS PROCESS

Translating Local and Global Knowledges

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THE INTERROGATIVE MUSEUM

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The museum is a flexible institution that changes over time. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, for instance, began as a museum of reproductions designed to elevate the taste of the working class, and the names of important donors inscribed in gold on its walls show the changing ethnicities and identities of its supporters over time.¹ Likewise, a plethora of exhibitions from 1990 onward signaled an important and widespread shift in the way some exhibits are developed and the roles communities play in the process. Some examples from the United States would include *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou* at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History (1995), *Pacific Voices* at the Burke Museum (1997), *African Voices* at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (1999), and *Our Lives* at the National Museum of the American Indian (2004) (Cosentino 1995; Kahn 2000; Kahn and Younger 2000; Kreamer 1997; Arnoldi, Kreamer and Mason 2001; Shannon 2014). Museums are labile enough to be able to change their purposes and practice in relationship to societies of which they are a part, yet they are also strong enough to be able to resist change in those societies. In other words, while museums can and do change over time, such transformations are not always easy. The wide-ranging chapters in this book examine various transformations currently under way and confirm that they involve a great deal of negotiation and hard work, as well as thorny issues.

Museum-community relations and collaborations are at the core of the case studies presented. They include exhibition projects, creation of community-based institutions, knowledge sharing projects that bring material from collections back to source communities and create new documentation and knowledge, and cross-institution and cross-community partnerships. Others are innovative database projects seeking to re-integrate objects, documents, photographs, stories, performance, and other forms of cultural and historical knowledge across far-flung collections, institutions and locations, in the process changing how collections and institutions work and providing significant community access. The collaborations span institutions of diverse types and scales as well as scholarly fields: museums of natural history, ethnography, history, and art; heritage and cultural centers; national, local, and community museums; university museums; archives; schools; and other community political and cultural

institutions. Participants include anthropologists, historians, art historians, linguists, and community artists and elders, among others, and the authors who here describe community-engaged projects themselves often combine several roles: scholar, museum and heritage professional, artist, activist, mediator (cf. Kratz and Karp 2006: 21).

Themes highlighted in the book's subtitle, translation and globalism, are intrinsic to these projects, which together traverse five continents. Translations are not just across languages but involve bridging and understanding different forms and ways of knowing as defined in varied social and historical settings. How do objects, photographs, oral narratives, and maps produce and encode different forms of knowledge? How do community and museum-based epistemologies intersect and clash around each? How did early scholars and travelers understand and shape the collections we have inherited and what community collaborations were involved? How can museums accommodate community understandings that define some objects as living beings, connected with ancestral spirits, or in need of regular propitiation or feeding?

No dictionary can provide direct one-to-one correspondences when translating cultural concepts and practices; the process proceeds crabwise through a range of analogies—this is like that, but not quite like that other, which is like a third thing. Eventually, this process can reveal the implications that different ontologies and epistemologies hold for how to treat certain objects, for instance, or the ownership and knowledge rights and limitations associated with them. Translations among institutional cultures are also involved as museums in different parts of the world work together, with other cultural organizations, and with various governmental bodies. Database projects entail further translational wrinkles, as they consider how the build and design of websites and databases can best address connections among different knowledge forms, questions about access, and appropriate categories and search protocols while maintaining flexibility and ease of use for a range of people and organizations.

In 2000, when we began the project that produced *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, we recognized that “increasing international connections and global orientations were one of the major trends in museum and heritage practice in recent decades, yet their workings and implications were still relatively unexamined” (Kratz and Karp 2006: 5). Accordingly, we made these globalizing processes and relations one of our foci. The studies in this book show that global interconnections continue to be prominent in museum and heritage worlds. More than a decade later, authors here almost take for granted that projects are likely to work internationally; global tourism and development industries may be factors to consider; transnational heritage protocols will help frame discussions; and global markets in mineral resources or art will help determine what cultural and historical resources are available to indigenous communities, as in Bell's discussion of the Purari Delta of Papua New Guinea or the Sotheby's auction purchase of a wampum belt by Garden River First Nation mentioned by Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips. The ways that global processes and connections weave through each project, and how they are managed, depend on each project's circumstances, but they are taken as facts of life. These studies also demonstrate that in other ways, “we have always been global”: from projects working with collections shaped by European, Russian, and United States colonialism to Glass's tracing of movements and interconnections among scholars, curators, and indigenous collaborators in a nineteenth-century collection.

The last 30 years have seen growing attention to museum-community relations and collaborative projects, beginning with exhibitions like those noted earlier. While exhibitions continue to incorporate community consultation and collaboration, the chapters in this book show the extent to which this orientation has been moving beyond museums' most public

face, their exhibitions, to reach into other museum components and roles. Projects like those described here have led to new ways to work with and think about both museum collections and the possibilities of web-based resources. In some cases staffing priorities have begun to change and the very architecture of long-established museums has been redesigned to accommodate greater interaction with source communities, recognition of their ongoing stake in museum collections and activities, and the different ways knowledge is produced in and through museums. For example, the Royal Ontario Museum created a specially ventilated room where objects from its collections may receive ceremonial treatments like smudging (Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips, this book). The expansion and redesign of the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver may be one of the most thorough physical transformations to date (Phillips 2005: 106–8). Similarly, when new museums, heritage or cultural centers are established, their definition, missions, design, and practices are likely to be negotiated with community stakeholders, as seen in chapters here by Crosby, Haakanson, Labrador, Nieftagodien, and Silverman.

We believe that a novel orientation and conception of the museum has been crystallizing as the collaborative turn in museum and heritage practice sediments more thoroughly into institutional projects and policies: *the interrogative museum*. Borrowing a classificatory scheme from comparative literature (Belsey 2001: 83–85), we develop the notion of the interrogative museum from one of our core principles as curators: “exhibit the problem, not the solution.”² In exhibitions this means moving away from exhibitions that seem to deliver a lecture—which (to spin out the classificatory scheme) might be seen as declarative, indicative, or even imperative in mood – to a more dialogue-based sense of asking a series of questions. It means taking museum exhibits as essentially contested, debatable, and respecting the agency and knowledgeability of audiences when we develop and design exhibits. Obviously, this operates within constraints. But one arena where such contestability emerges is in the sphere of collaboration.

The broader collaborative turn that has been taking hold leads from this approach to exhibitions to our more generalized concept of the interrogative museum. As one goal the interrogative museum strives—through exhibiting, research, and even collections management—to develop a plural sense of answers to the enduring and the changing questions that museums ask.³ Admittedly this may not be fully realized in any real world situation, but it is a goal towards which to strive. The dialogic, pluralist view of the world central to the interrogative museum must operate through the institutional structures that provide the context in which projects and daily practice take place, with their panoply of interests, resistances, and claims to authority. This means the interrogative museum is not an easy thing to do, for apart from other challenges in collaborative work, when dealing with and mediating among administrative officers, government bureaus, chiefs, local councils, and so forth, one is engaged not only in the art of translation but, simultaneously, the art of politics—which Max Weber once defined as slow boring through hard boards (1946: 128). Nonetheless, collaborative projects between museums and communities may well be a privileged arena in which more activities can take on a more interrogative cast simply because the collaborative venture itself contains the possibility of pluralizing answers and raising different questions. Greater involvement in collaborative projects and practice may lead in time to different museums on the ground—in terms of staff, policies, practice, priorities, and even architecture.⁴

Over the years, the museum has been characterized as a temple, forum, contact zone, and more (Cameron 1972; Lavine and Karp 1991; Clifford 1997).⁵ In relation to global contexts, in *Museum Frictions* we proposed a notion of the museum as social technology, “a set of

museological processes through which ... statements [about history, identity, value and place] and claims [of recognition] are represented, embodied, and debated," but in which museological processes are not always bundled together or tied to a particular institution or place (Kratz and Karp 2006: 4). All these facets of the museum continue to be present, in varying degrees, in the palimpsest through which we understand the museum, related institutions, and the uneven transformations they have undergone. The interrogative museum is a further addition to this quiver of concepts for thinking about the changing nature of museum and heritage institutions and how they work.

Museums, communities, collaborations, technologies

As Silverman observes in his introduction to this book, the varied and changing relations between museums and communities have been the subject of concerted attention for over 20 years, often including in that purview heritage organizations, cultural centers, and festivals. Starting with *Museums & Communities* (Karp, Kreamer, and Lavine 1992), and followed ten years later by *Museums and Source Communities* (Peers and Brown 2003), a series of publications have examined how museums seek to work with communities and how communities regard, use, and make claims on museums and related institutions. This book brings global perspectives to these issues and, with the passing of another decade, provides a valuable stocktaking of the ways museum-community relations have evolved and the contexts and developments now shaping them.

It's not that museums were not part of civil society or had no community relations before the 1980s, but social and political developments and questions raised then exposed the lacunae in unspoken assumptions about how museums worked and whom they were for. They challenged museums to reach new audiences, address communities once ignored, reconnect with absent source communities, transform representations in exhibitions, and change relations of power and authority that had long been in place. Watson's chapter (this book) shows how deeply those assumptions still resonated for some visitors to the Art Galleries in Great Yarmouth in 1999, when the galleries participated in an adult learning program that brought into an exhibition residents from the working class neighborhood where the galleries are located. A vocal and politically savvy minority mounted effective resistance to opening the museum to the broader community in this way, which seemed to threaten their sense of ownership and elite identity.

The environment that led to *Museums and Communities* and the other two books in our trilogy,⁶ as well as an entire scholarly industry called the new museology, arose in the United States from two contending impulses taking shape in the 1980s. On the one hand, there was the burgeoning academic work on the politics of representation, which showed that the seemingly natural attitudes we took about so many practices, beliefs, and values that are part of the cultural world that surrounds us and through which we interpret our environment, were in fact neither natural nor innocent.⁷ This was a way to think about and question what we once took as received wisdom. Similar critiques were being voiced by indigenous scholars, activists, and communities, eventually leading to calls to decolonize the museum. But academic trends do not simply begin in the academy. On the other hand, we were working in a changing world. I (IK) remember talking about this one day with Bob Adams, then secretary of the Smithsonian, as we discussed academic politics, academics and museum controversies. I said, "Bob, what has happened here?" He said, "It's very simple. You know, post Kennedy-Johnson, the world changed on us. Both the public purse and the public

sector itself shrank, and we became increasingly involuted, particularly those of us in the academy.”

Kennedy–Johnson era developments and Great Society programs were increasingly dismantled or undercut in the 1970s and as the Reagan administration came to power in the 1980s. Writing about the history of public art at this time Kester says, “The 1980s was a period of political realignment, as the ameliorative state that came to influence during the 1960s was displaced by a conservative model of the state, embodied in the rise of Reaganism”; this helped produce a “sense of crisis surrounding the contraction of public space” (2006: 260–62). The critical scholarship took hold in the aftermath of these contractions. As we questioned the received wisdom around us, we challenged ourselves for want of a place to stand to challenge others.

At the same time, perhaps one sign of the political and social shifts, the mid-1980s saw controversies about exhibitions and museums abound. Such controversies were not entirely new; they had erupted occasionally throughout the twentieth century around various issues, including the 1950s exhibition *The Family of Man* (McConnell 1998; Sandeen 1995). But in some ways these controversies were extraordinary—after all, museums are not usually places where one goes to quarrel. More commonly one goes to museums to see, to look, to feel, to hear, to learn, to understand, to enjoy, but not typically to argue. Suddenly, museums and exhibitions became places about which great contention erupted, whether it was debates about *Te Maori* (1984), *Hispanic Art in the Americas* (1987), Robert Mapplethorpe’s *The Perfect Moment* (1989), *Into the Heart of Africa* (1989), *The West as America* (1991), or the heated conflagration about exhibiting the Enola Gay (1995) (Karp and Lavine 1991: 1–6, 79–150; Butler 1999; Linenthal 1996; Harwit 1997; Kratz 2002: 175).

What was different was the proliferation of controversies, how widespread they were, and how extensive media coverage heightened political divisions. It was the time of the so-called culture wars. Debates occurred around exhibitions of art, history, ethnography, and science. No type of museum was immune and controversies took place around the world (Phillips 2005; Kratz and Karp 2006: 12–13). The far-reaching controversies created a chilling climate within museums, as curators and directors wanted to avoid becoming the next target. Scholars not in museums carried on and the controversies became grist for the critical mill within academia.

With the passage of time, we are able to revisit issues and lessons from this period that, in museum terms, perhaps ought to be named The Great Agitation. For instance, the controversies helped change the way some visitors approach exhibitions. To take one example, when we went to *The West as America* at the National Museum of American Art, we saw total strangers at the exhibition talking about whether interpretations on the labels were valid, too extreme, or offensive. The exhibition’s strong interpretations—presented as assertions, not possibilities or questions—challenged people to question themselves and question the exhibit itself. This is a different way of going to museums and ironically may have laid groundwork for a more interrogative museum.

The first book in our trilogy, *Exhibiting Cultures*, examined these developments in the politics of representation and exhibition controversies. *Museums and Communities*, the companion volume published a year later, noted and addressed the parallel trend in which museums were seeking to engage a wider, more diverse range of visitors and moving towards collaborative projects, exhibitions conceived more dialogically, and an increase in community museums. That trend was still a relatively new orientation, begun in the 1980s but still operating in a limited range in the United States before the Native American Graves Protection and

Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed into law.⁸ The conference on which the book was based took place in March 1990. NAGPRA came into effect eight months later, in November, and took some years for its provisions and broader assumptions to translate into practice. In effect, then, *Museums and Communities* marked a starting point in a trend gathering force throughout the world that was about to receive a major impetus in the United States.

At that time the standard answer to the question “what are museums?” would have been that museums are institutions designed to curate, collect, classify, conserve, preserve, and display objects, and through that work to educate visitors and preserve heritage. For the most part that would still be a standard response. But that standard answer is challenged by the notion of collaboration between communities and museums and by the very act of collaboration. Standard curatorial practice had been like a lecture, to use a verbal analogue, between the museum curator or museum institution and visitors. Collections practice had emerged from histories of exploration, connoisseurship, archival practice, and scientific classification. Collaborative projects introduce alternative and plural narratives to exhibitions and different ways of understanding and managing collections and objects.

Ten years later, *Museums and Source Communities* (2003) traced one important strand of collaborative work that had intensified during the intervening decade (Peers and Brown 2003: 13), looking at how museums around the world were working with communities that had produced material in their collections and those represented in displays.⁹ As collaborative projects became more common through the 1990s, they were implemented in more areas of museum work and more of their complexities came to light. Peers and Brown (ibid.: 10) and Kahn (2000: 58) both claim, however, that descriptions of collaborative projects until the early 2000s were utopian and rarely talked about problems, miscommunication, and disagreements that arose or whether collaboration actually improved problems of representation in exhibitions.

Marking another decade of developments in museum-community relations, *Museum as Process* focuses particularly on the collaborative processes involved in diverse projects, with all their bumps, glitches, and ongoing adjustments. Many projects described address work with source communities, but others are about creating new community institutions or developing cross-museum and cross-community networks. Still other chapters use specific cases to address general issues common to particular kinds of collaboration. The book returns to the recognition that while source communities are critical for museums to work with, they are but one of many communities that museums address and engage. Drawing attention to the wider set of stakeholders and communities reminds us that “source” communities can be defined through links and claims that may not be transparent or direct. For instance, the African American Tu-Wa-Moja Study Group in Washington DC felt kinship, ownership, and rights to the Africa Hall at the National Museum of Natural History. Their critiques of its representations helped initiate a redesign in the 1990s and they were consulted during the process, though they would not be seen as a “source community” in relation to the museum’s collections.

Each project described in *Museum as Process* is embedded in a variety of global processes and networks, carrying forward and developing the globalization theme we emphasized in *Museum Frictions*, the final book in our trilogy. But while we acknowledged the increasing importance of web-based resources, databases, and technological innovations for the work of the museum, they were not a major focus. Today it would be impossible to consider museum-community relations without giving technological resources significant attention, and the chapters here show just how central they have become in the last 10 years. Phillips (2005: 107)

notes that the applications needed for some projects described in this book had not been designed in 2000 and indeed most of the complex database and web projects connecting museums and communities probably began around 2005 or later.¹⁰

Museum as Process shows how integral collaborative work has become in forging relationships among museums and communities, whether in developing exhibitions, making and managing collections, formulating policies, or even selecting merchandise for museum shops. The chapters provide a snapshot of the contradictory tensions and transformations in the political economy of museums that institutions now must manage, all the while facing shrinking public funding and often shrinking budgets. On one hand, museums are called to justify themselves in utilitarian terms and through the rhetoric of business models—what do they do for the local economy, what functions can be outsourced, how many people come? Seeking to maximize visitor numbers may translate into catering to popular expectations and stereotypes. But on the other hand, museums' legitimacy and self-definition are increasingly bound up with the transformation of values and practice tied in with the collaborative turn, as it sediments into more areas of museum practice and a sense of the interrogative museum takes hold. These contradictory transformations have made room for projects like those described in this book. Collaborations and relations are often built on the basis of specific projects like these, where apart from databases or exhibitions, one of the key products is the very process fashioned by working together.

Structure, process, and politics: contingencies of collaboration

Even if there are some common principles that animate museum–community collaborations, there is no cookbook with recipes that would enable one to work in Ghana, New Zealand, a working class British neighborhood, Papua New Guinea, and various Native American communities. It will necessarily be different in every case because collaborative projects are built through processes that respond to particular circumstances, build specific relationships, and that will also be working both with and against the institutional structure of the museum where one might work. Furthermore, collaboration can run awry of politics of many sorts. Challenging established practice and categories that have been taken as universal or natural requires radical openness to deal with the uncertainties and unexpected twists and outcomes that are par for the course (Kratz, in press: 11). That is the spirit of the interrogative museum.

Particular individuals can play a crucial role in the way projects develop. For instance, Haakanson (this book) describes a chance meeting at a conference and coincidental staff change at the Château-Musée that paved the way for cooperative exchange with the Alutiiq Museum and Sugpiaq communities (Haakanson and Steffian 2009: 10). Bell (this book) recounts careful consultations to determine which I'ai elder would accompany him to map locations along the Purari River, while George Hunt and Franz Boas were critical in creating and documenting the extraordinary Jacobsen collection, allowing Glass to trace changing understandings of Kwakwaka'wakw material and history (this book). Like other projects discussed in this book, these chapters show that in all collaborative work, "adjustment and improvisation will be needed, though it may be hard to predict when or where" (Kratz and Witz 2007: 8).

Nonetheless, projects working in similar areas may address common issues and some chapters describe efforts to provide guidelines or models for others. The team working on the complex GRASAC Knowledge Sharing database, for example, has made available online the technical standards they developed for photography and video (Bohaker, Corbiere and

Phillips, this book), while the process and products of the iShare project were intended to provide models through which to think reflexively about collaborative practice (Shannon, this book). Nieftagodien (this book) notes that the History Workshop's experience with the Alexandra Project became a basis for community engagements in later projects. That project is one of several discussed here that incorporate training or internships for community members and students as integral to their plan (Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips, Haakanson, Labrador, Nieftagodien, Shannon, Silverman, all this book).

The chapters in this book illustrate a range of ways to structure the collaborative process, working with different levels of community organization and kinds of local institutions.¹¹ Some work with already established heritage centers or museums, while others create community cultural centers, committees or reference groups as part of the project. Still others evolve from more ad hoc relations and partnerships among individuals that periodically include wider consultation with elders or other relevant people. The Alexandra project in South Africa began as more of a top-down government initiative implemented through a heritage agency consultant, but eventually reoriented its goals and involved a local team with representatives of different constituencies (Nieftagodien, this book).

While that committee explicitly sought to cover the range of stakeholders, each project had to negotiate questions of diversity on all sides of the engagement and find ways to build it into the project's structure. To enter a collaborative process is to engage pluralities, dismantling any notion of a singular community "voice" or representation. In addition to community differences of gender, generation, status, and occupation, community participants may well differ in political orientations and alliances or their education, professional training, or familiarity with museum and heritage organizations and practices. On the museum side, these distinctions may also be pertinent in addition to different priorities both among collaborating institutions and internal to the organizations. Diversity can become division when different agendas and goals clash, for as Shannon (this book) observes "collaboration is always a fraught contact zone, no matter the positive intentions of all those involved."

As all the chapters demonstrate, collaboration takes time and all involved are likely to change in the process (cf. Fabian 1999). Likewise, collaborative processes and relations alter as a project develops, for such projects may create spaces and processes through which different ontologies come together—ontologies related to objects, forms of knowledge and ownership, modes of display, and so on (see page 000). That is part of what it means to say that the process is one key product in collaborative projects like these.

But how long do collaborations continue? "What should be the life-course and term of a project? We shouldn't assume all projects should be long-term ones, but how to determine the appropriate length, or when new transformations should branch off?" (Kratz and Witz 2007: 10). As Glass describes (this book), his collaboration with Kwakwaka'wakw artist-scholars and the U'mista Cultural Centre builds on a long history of collaborative work with museums; George Hunt was one of the earliest and most prominent Kwakwaka'wakw individuals involved. Most projects described here are multi-year endeavors, but when museums seek relations with source communities who have a stake in their collections, the project time-frame may be just a beginning. Those expectations too are part of collaborative negotiations (cf. Peers and Brown 2003: 9).

In juggling institutional priorities, museums must balance the transformative possibilities of particular collaborative projects with responsibilities to a wider range of constituencies and communities. This may involve exhibiting and explaining to a broader audience why and how collaborations are undertaken.¹² Collaborative projects can change what museums show

for everyone and shift the values conveyed (Kratz 2011), though some may not think the endeavors appropriate for the museum. In other cases, collaborations may be little more than window dressing, what Labrador calls the “fiesta approach” and Nieftagodien relates to narrowly circumscribed forms of participation in development work (both this book).

The uncertainty and openness of collaborative work can lead to dead ends, failures, and confounding obstacles at points in the larger process. Bell (this book) asks what happens when encounters around archival photographs fail? Several database projects reported hurdles in designing formats and interfaces that work for a variety of users, and Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips (this book) pose the question, what if a collaborative database is created but few use it? Do projects like the Culture Bank (Crosby, this book), the Nkwantananso cultural center (Silverman, this book), or indeed many of these projects hold the danger of creating or buttressing hierarchies of heritage or heritage knowledge? The Alexandra project’s first phase seemed doomed to irrelevance, but the second phase set up structures and processes for more successful community heritage engagement (Nieftagodien, this book). The general question raised by these examples is what constitutes failure? And more specifically, *when* are failures likely, at what point in a long-term process, and when/how do failures become opportunities or turning points from which a project revives, recalibrates, and goes on?

Silverman recounts how the well attended *durbar* held to launch Nkwantananso ended with a reassertion of the power and politics of chieftaincy when yams brought for display were taken as a chiefly prerogative, contrary to assurances that the yam sellers would keep them. The community-based initiative was still defined within the purview of chiefly political powers. Similarly Tapsell and Watson both encountered resistance to their community-oriented exhibition projects, in one case internal to the museum and, in the other, from other audience segments. Tapsell countered the opposition through assiduous observance of museum protocols, while Watson’s museum turned their attention to a different project. In each case, these setbacks were part of a longer process and commitment to collaborative work. They were moments that clarified the stakes and interests among different constituencies and the challenges to building resilient museum–community relations, but did not derail the efforts. At the same time these examples furnish a window on the unpredictable dynamics and unintended consequences that may develop. The way collaborative projects unfold may reinforce or challenge community hierarchies in sometimes contradictory ways as the museum becomes a platform for varied factions, interests, or personalities. What are the limits of the interrogative museum in relation to different sites of authority?

As these examples show, the contexts in which collaborative projects take shape help define their scope and horizons. Looking back at the environment in which museum–community relations and collaborations began to draw greater attention, described earlier, it is striking that many consultative exhibitions and projects then were initiated in the face of a grievance that a museum sought to redress. For instance, protests and criticisms might ask why a certain group of people have been represented in exhibitions in a particular way, or why are they not represented at all? Perhaps a committee is formed to do something, but in that situation the museum is answering for a problem it created. As a result, relations between the museum and some communities might begin antagonistically. Common sense social psychology would suggest that a museum engaged in addressing a grievance might try to narrow the arena of discussion and action as a defensive, self-protective tactic, whereas those with the grievance might try to broaden it. This is not likely to provide for ways to effectively explore options or recognize more fundamental underlying problems in the notions of diversity that the

museum encompasses and represents. Most projects described in this book were *not* initiated in the immediate context of redressing grievances, but rather were designed to further various ends in collaborative ways. They thus seem more open to systematic consideration of what a museum can do collaboratively and to more critical self-evaluation.

Similarly, different kinds of projects present different possibilities. As the archive and repertoire of collaborative museum-community projects continues to grow, we can begin to ask what issues are most prominent in collaborations focused on exhibitions, as compared to those most concerned with collections or knowledge sharing databases. What effects and reach does each emphasis bring, and how are they best combined? How have collaborative projects changed foci and approaches over time? As Glass (this book) notes, for instance, database projects and design raise particular questions about how to reconcile the needs and interests of community-oriented users with the need to create systems with consistency and comparability across institutions and even within a single large museum that works with different collections and communities.

Likewise, various presentational forms may hold different possibilities and limits. For instance, a symposium held in conjunction with an exhibition of Australian Aboriginal painting offered “an alternative interpretive practice” that Myers identified as a “significant site of intercultural practice” that could rearrange relations and expectations among artists, curators, and audience (2006: 513, 528, 532). More generally, events may have different capacities than exhibits for addressing certain topics or questions and building relationships. As Julie Ellison commented during a workshop, the time-limited nature and smaller number of participants in events can provide a measure of safety for institutions to try bold or adventurous things, as well as a context in which to form organizational relationships.¹³ Collaborative projects often incorporate and produce a number of presentational forms and thus carry potential to help make museum and heritage organizations known as destinations not only for exhibitions, but also as sites for events where multiple constituencies can come together to co-produce events. This could be another facet of a characterological shift towards an interrogative museum.¹⁴

Museums operate in the shadow of their own past, yet they are not totally determined by their history and social inheritance. As an interrogative mood percolates unevenly into museum and heritage practice, questions and projects may arise from different sources. Different kinds of issues may enter collaborative work on projects, collections, exhibitions, or events at many points in the process. Openness to the plural perspectives and uncertainties of collaboration is ideally coupled with shared commitment to the goals and process. These shifts in museum-community relations are taking place at a time when knowledge production in the larger society is also moving in new directions. Analysts and scholars grapple with the likely insights, problems, and management conundrums of big data, while ever greater reliance on online search queries may make our learning more question-based and produce an accumulation and layering of information without parallel capacities to analyze and synthesize it. But the interchange of collaborative projects can bring into focus other questions about forms of knowledge when those involved bring to bear different ontologies and epistemologies that may challenge taken-for-granted museum practice and assumptions.

Forms of knowledge, ontologies, and epistemologies

In working with a plurality of perspectives, collaboration relativizes the seemingly standard and stable categories through which museum and heritage organizations work and in terms of

which they present their materials: What is an object? How to treat objects? What and how can we know through different kinds of objects? What to display and how to display it? For whom? This interrogative mood combines a broad philosophical sense with pragmatic concerns: how do ontologies shape both epistemologies and museum practice? As the projects described here explore these questions, some implications of such pluralization become clearer and the very nature of the museum may be rethought.

After looking at an array of objects from First Nations communities in northeastern North America in the Liverpool Museum's collection during a research visit, Phillips (2005: 93) observed,

such juxtapositions and occasional confusions raise interesting questions about the classification systems we have inherited from an earlier era and problematise the continuing need, embedded in the deep structure of the museum system, to assign objects to mutually exclusive collections of 'History,' 'Ethnology,' 'Art,' or 'Folk Culture.'

Classificatory systems are a universal feature of human thought, but they vary significantly across societies and through history. Even as they facilitate some modes of knowledge and communication, they may simultaneously hinder or foreclose others, especially when defined through mutually exclusive categories rather than polythetic ones. Like Phillips' concern with effects of received classificatory systems in museum collections, Smith (2013) underlines their implications for exhibitions of American art. She argues that segregating the work of folk artists from academically trained artists of the same period produces "predictable and monotonous" galleries, ignores the categories' blurriness, and creates "fiction(s) of dominance." People often take their own classificatory systems for granted and see them as natural, rather than products sedimented with history. Collaborative projects provide settings in which discrepancies among classificatory systems come into relief and foster an interrogative mood.

Indeed, the database and collections projects discussed in this book raise questions not just about the broad classificatory systems for dealing with objects and collections, but also about documenting particular objects through conventions and categories that define only certain kinds of information as relevant, as well as ways of storing, managing, and conserving collections. These ways of defining knowledge and managing objects have their own changing histories. The once widespread museum practice of over-painting polychromatic designs on Maori art with red paint to cover innovations and cast them in line with a "traditionalist orthodoxy in Maori art amongst museum curators from the 1890s until the 1950s" (Sully and Cardoso 2008: 211–12) is one example that likely still horrifies and embarrasses contemporary curators and conservators, but there are many others.

One major, painstaking, and time-consuming task in database and knowledge sharing projects like those described is tracking down and weaving back together what has been long separated and scattered through the classificatory systems and institutional specializations that have characterized museum and heritage practice. At times the process of documenting heritage locally raises questions about the value and local relevance of some standard museum categories, the ways dating should be reckoned, or whole areas of locally essential aesthetic properties and values that escape standard categories (e.g. Crosby, McChesney, Haakanson this book). In other cases, the digital re-assembly of dispersed objects, information, and documents is essential to identify and reunite different forms of knowledge that belong together in a competing knowledge system. Such reintegration can have significant material consequences when different systems of knowledge and law come together, providing evidence and

building cases for indigenous rights when Maori *taonga* are connected to waterways, treaties, and other colonial documents or wampum belts are recognized as integrally associated with archival documents, indigenous records, and land claims (Tapsell, Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips, this book; Geismar 2013). Often seen as a form of digital repatriation as well, such projects bring knowledge back to source communities in ways that can prove critical even as they enliven museum collections through collaborative work that recasts classificatory divisions and produces new knowledge across collections and communities.

Glass and Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips describe the most elaborate databases here, both working across different kinds of institution and combining different kinds of objects and forms of knowledge. Of particular note, they also incorporate ways to trace the epistemological processes and histories of knowledge production involved in both the collections they work with and the database itself. Glass's project pluralizes the notion of provenance and systematically accommodates different relational contexts, while the GRASAC Knowledge Sharing project documents their collaborative work and reasoning with video clips.

Isaac (this book) draws attention to tensions and interactions among different knowledge economies at Zuni Pueblo, emphasizing that processes of collection and display that alter local relations and circulations of expertise and objects are often bound up with commodification that may challenge how rights to knowledge are understood. In looking at relations between the knowledge economy and the heritage economy at Zuni she also examines the way global debates about heritage take shape in local settings through the currently prominent categories of tangible and intangible heritage. Many of the chapters here take issue with this distinction as yet another, recent iteration of the way that Euro-American approaches that catalog the world by medium or form can tear asunder and distort the meaningful integrations among objects, stories, song, performance and other forms of knowledge and experience common in societies throughout the world—including Euro-American ones. For instance, McChesney (this book) argues for reconnecting Hopi pottery in the Peabody collection with aesthetic and moral knowledge and social relations associated with pots in Hopi communities and conveyed orally.

The development of the full set of UNESCO world heritage categories has a complicated history (Turtinen 2000). Begun after World War II, the categories started with world heritage itself, specifying different types over time: tangible heritage (movable and immovable), natural heritage, and finally intangible heritage, the most recent addition. After several decades of negotiating an appropriate formulation, the "Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage" treaty was adopted in 2003 and took force in 2006, after sufficient members ratified it. The main concerns in the world heritage initiative have been legal protection and rights as well as preservation, but there has been "increasing awareness of the arbitrariness of the categories [of tangible and intangible heritage] and their interrelatedness" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 164). While addition of the "intangible" category sought to remedy an oversight in the developing international system and extend protection to vital forms of creative cultural production, the distinction has become reified in ways that feed back into local systems of knowledge and practice, even as international legal definitions of forms of property become confounded with different kinds of knowledge forms and rights.

Bell's chapter (this book) goes further in exploring how different ways of knowing and attitudes towards knowledge can be tied to material forms, with varied topics and horizons of knowledge defined by maps, photographs, objects, archival documents, or other media. He talks about these epistemological variations in terms of the "veracity of form." People may

use these and other forms to trace histories, establish or strengthen genealogical or political relations, assert status, learn or relearn craft techniques, or constitute identities, but these forms may not carry the same authoritative stature in different realms of knowledge and practice, just as wampum belts were not always understood as legal evidence in Canadian or United States courts. Morphy (this book) notes parallel variation in the attitudes, values, and expectations that Yolngu in Australia hold about objects, human remains, and photographs and the social relationships and kinds of knowledge built through each.¹⁵

The nature of collaboration allows engagement between such different ontological conceptions. Different notions of being and becoming have to join in some kind of dialogic interchange despite the fact that there are always inequalities of power within the dialogue itself, no matter how subtle and shifting. When source communities understand objects and knowledge through radically different ontologies, received museum and heritage practice for collections and exhibition may become unsettled.

One particular set of questions is about what an object is. If you pick up a watch, you know it is an object and may have no questions about it except why someone uses a pocket watch (which we both do). But what about a *taonga*, a Maori treasure and ancestral object? For Maori people *taonga* are living objects that require sacrifice, even if held in museums, because the ancestors manifest themselves through them (Tapsell, this book). Another example is the ontology of objects for Kwakw'wakw, for whom masks and certain other objects are temporary objectifications and assertions of the right to make, possess, or display them (Glass, this book). The rights are what matter, so physical repatriation of objects is somewhat beside the point but visual repatriation may be important to maintain knowledge of style and technique. Similarly, in many places objects only live in performance or they are disposed after use (cf. Thompson 2006). The tangible indexes the intangible when they are manifestations of an unseen world.¹⁶

So what do you do when you collaborate with a community of people for whom what you regard as objects, like a watch, are for them living presences of the past? Such dialogic exchange between fundamentally different world views might well force both sides to reorganize their views of the world. This may broaden our notion of what an object is, but also broaden our notion of what we do for communities' objects when we put them in museum storage. For Maori, for instance, it may broaden the notion of who can conserve and preserve aspects of the past.

Ontologies encompass the social relations that help define objects, including varied notions of ownership and rights of access. Just as physical repatriation may not always be a priority for Kwakw'wakw, Yolngu in many cases "are happy to use museums as keeping places" when museums develop ways to "give people a strong sense of co-ownership" (Morphy, this book). For their part, Hopi potters expect to establish ongoing connections with those who have their works, though that has not been the case with most museums (McChesney, this book). The very different values and definitions of rights, ownership, and social relations recognized through collaborations with source communities may also come into conflict with the state-defined mandates of some museums for equal and open access, for instance when communities restrict use by gender. Parallel issues arise in relation to databases (Morphy, this book), and this ontological confrontation gets even more complicated when it moves to the digital realm, as ontologies of the digital are layered onto ontologies of objects. Collaborations, thus, produce a series of entanglements (Thomas 1991) between cultures and especially between so-called producing peoples and museum organization and culture.

Tapsell's chapter provides a marvelous example of how these ontological differences may be built into the very design of an exhibition. Maori have a tradition of display and preservation of

treasured objects in their *marae*, ancestor houses filled with carvings. When one enters a *marae* there are *taonga*, pictures of ancestors, and often people gathered talking. And remember that *taonga* are living objects that connect with the ancestors. On entering, Maori say, “The past is in front of us and the future behind us,” and then they *hongi*, a greeting in which people press noses together. This way of greeting and acknowledging ancestral presence carries into museums. The Auckland Museum, for example, has a fabulous collection of nineteenth-century Maori portraits by Charles Frederick Goldie and others, portraying people who are now ancestors and Maori notables. When they are displayed Maori visitors want to *hongi* the painting. This may be a conservationist’s nightmare, but the museum put glass strips in front of the paintings so that interactions to honor ancestors do not mar them.¹⁷

That example concerns modes of Maori interaction with standard museum exhibitions. The touring *Ko Tawa* exhibition that Tapsell describes sought to incorporate Maori ontologies of objects directly into the exhibition in the way they were shown—whether cases were used, how to handle explanatory information and so on, creating an exhibition that was a metaphorical *waka huiia* (treasure box). The rhetorics of value (Kratz 2011) emphasized in the design of *Ko Tawa* were the key Maori concept *whakapapa* (genealogical connections) and respect for Maori culture and ancestors. The exhibition raises questions about whether the design did actually convey this, and to whom? Tapsell mentions that Maori guides were on hand; they may have explained design decisions to visitors—Maori and non-Maori alike (see note 12).

Isaac’s chapter also refers to knowledgeable practitioners who serve as guides at the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center to explicate the central “Emergence and Migration” mural. They vary information provided according to their interlocutors in accordance with Zuni notions of knowledge rights while also maintaining Zuni modes of oral tradition and training. Though not always feasible, working with guides clearly provides a way to modulate visitor interactions and offers an example that usefully combines an event (small group interaction) and an exhibition.

If Tapsell and Isaac present ways that different ontologies of knowledge and objects are incorporated into exhibition practice,¹⁸ Watson’s chapter on Yarmouth shows the deeply resonant staying power that conventional art exhibition design has for other visitors. She unpacks the rhetorics of value it conveys, particularly elite notions of identity, education, and distinction (Bourdieu 1984). Yet there may be ways to build in a more interrogative mood here as well, or to use techniques like juxtaposition to offer openings to more pluralistic ways of knowing. For instance, the Hirshhorn Museum once did an elegant small exhibit. They put two pictures on the wall, one regarded as a classic of their collection and one which had been regarded as a classic forty years earlier but no longer had the same esteem. They provided no information about the two, but asked visitors to write down what they thought about them and why. Then in another room, they provided commentary on the exercise. In this way they sought to engage in conversation about how they make judgments and how visitors make judgments, without necessarily giving up the authority that museums hold to do so.

The Hirshhorn was not questioning the value or role of museums, but the very nature of the museum, cultural center, or heritage site may be open for debate when new institutions are created (Crosby, Labrador, Nieftagodien, Silverman, this book). As in interchanges over different notions of the object or modes of exhibition, translation and finding appropriate vocabularies that bridge ontological differences are among the challenges of collaborative explorations of the ontology of the museum itself. Perhaps there are pervasive local metaphors that capture some of the basic activities and values involved. Both the Kenyan societies

we worked with, for example, used the notion of way or path (*eroto* in Iteso, *oreet* in Okiek) to talk about particular modes of making and doing things. Path also becomes a metaphor for giving form to social relationships, for shaping and creating in general. Iteso invest a great deal of symbolic ritual activity in the notion as well. Perhaps museum-like activities are undertaken by different organizations, like the Maori *marae* or the chieftancy in Techiman, Ghana—an indispensable thing to know and understand in negotiating the politics of creating a community cultural center or museum (cf. Kreps 2003).

Collaborations that address the different ontologies, epistemologies, and forms of knowledge involved in entanglements between museum and community can be fundamental to defining implications beyond the museum itself. They might facilitate translations across generations in source communities or initiate collaborative linkages among schools or other community organizations. They may help frame political or legal interventions in the midst of pressing ecological threat (Bell, this book). Or they may be avenues to restoring knowledge that seems lost, but might suddenly re-emerge in the appropriate performative context. Sugpiaq artists are one example of this (Haakanson, this book). More broadly, the Sugpiaq case emphasizes that there is a point to materiality after all.¹⁹ We need to keep things because the tangible invokes the intangible in varied ways and aids the creative work of connecting with domains of creativity and culture which may seem to be lost or are in the act of becoming. The hybrid, postcolonial, and economically and politically differentiated nature of our globe requires this to be a collaborative task, which the chapters in this book exemplify.

Dilemmas, contradictions, entanglements, and institutional transformation

We don't want to paint an overly rosy view of the state of museum-community relations. We recognize that the projects described in this book are still part of a leading edge of institutional transformation in a very wide field. But we think they show that the last two decades have seen changes in museum expectations and practice and the extent of engagement with communities, particularly source communities, even if there is more work to be done (and there always will be). The sense of *museum as process* underlines all this. These chapters also make clear that the collaborative work of forging museum-community relations and translating knowledge can be rife with dilemmas and contradictions that cannot always be resolved. Consensus is not always possible when dealing with irreconcilable perspectives and incommensurable ontologies. "But if these ideals are incompatible, then human beings sooner or later realise that they must make do, they must make compromises" (Berlin 1999: 147).

Compromises and resolutions are worked out in relation to particular contexts and relationships and in relation to shared goals. We said earlier that collaboration often runs awry of politics, for politics of various kinds importantly shape the contexts of museum-community relations and the resolutions reached (though impasse may result in some instances). The chapters in *Museum as Process* provide a keen sense of the specific politics managed within projects and in communities. Politics within the museum involve, as we said before, working both with and against institutional structures. Compromises and resolutions lie at the intersection of these different political fields.

Institutional politics include choices made relative to resource constraints in money, time, and labor. In some ways, the case studies presented here may not be terribly expensive endeavors, if judged by the standards of the National Museum of Natural History's \$13 million Hall of

Geology, Gems and Minerals, its planned \$45 million upgrade to the dinosaur exhibit, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's refurbished Islamic or American wings, or other blockbuster projects. Yet the chapters make clear how time- and labor-intensive collaborative work can be and the financial costs involve real trade-offs. For instance, knowledge sharing database projects may require international research, work with software and technology experts, go through multiple designs, and hire and train assistants to digitize extensive collections of objects, documents, and recordings. Similarly, Arnoldi, Kreamer, and Mason comment that "embracing an Extended Team model added years and dollars" to the African Voices collaborative exhibition project (2001: 94 n. 6).

These choices are among the ways that museum and heritage institutions define and re-orient their values and priorities through day-to-day, material practice.²⁰ In some cases this includes devoting personnel and resources to independent projects as a partner, altering exhibition schedules, or renovating the physical structure and architecture of the museum. The success of collaborative projects also depends to a large degree on the remarkable dedication of the people involved, and that success reinforces and impels institutional re-orientations. Museums are labile institutions but they have different degrees of flexibility. Further, they can exercise that adaptability more readily in some areas and at certain moments than others, as they seek to balance new directions with traditional audiences and supporters. In time, however, reorientations begin to be more readily felt and seen.

An interrogative attitude is one that will challenge—not overthrow, but challenge—the claims to authority that museums make. In other chapters, we distinguished two kinds of authority associated with museums: cultural authority and exhibitionary authority (Karp and Kratz 2000: 203–10; Kratz 2011: 26). The first derives from the relationship of museums to the institutions and values of the broader society; claims to authority might be manifest in mission statements, museums' role in addressing questions about such values as beauty and truth, their often temple-like architecture, and so on. The second relates to the more tenuous way exhibitions embody claims to authority through their combination of various media of communication, as in configurations of objects, lighting, texts, and space that create a diorama or the white cube of modernist art museums. Within this framework collaborative projects that build various kinds of museum-community relationships may draw on both kinds of authority, but the pluralism of perspectives, values, ontologies, and practice at their heart contains challenges that subtly reshape and relativize museum claims to authority in other realms as well. Dealing forthrightly with relations and entanglements between museum and community—with all their potential, richness, dilemmas, and contradictions—extends and develops the attitude and approach encapsulated in the curatorial principle to exhibit the problem not the solution. In the process, institutions begin to transform and museums may become more interrogative.

Notes

- 1 Colleagues and friends who spoke with us about this chapter or commented on earlier drafts helped to clarify and develop our concepts and understandings. We are most grateful to our generous interlocutors Anne-Marie Bouttiaux, Doug Holmes, Ray Silverman, and Jessica Winegar. We also appreciated the lively discussion when a draft was presented in Cape Town at the South African and Contemporary History and Humanities Seminar at the University of the Western Cape in October 2012, and thank Leslie Witz for organizing the opportunity. This chapter was written in summer 2012, after Ivan Karp's death in September 2011. It draws on a transcription of his comments at the

- University of Michigan in March 2010. When first person singular pronouns are used (“I” or “me”), initials indicate whether they refer to Ivan Karp (IK) or Corinne Kratz (CAK).
- 2 One of the first settings where I (IK) articulated this was in planning meetings in the early 1990s for an exhibition at the Museum for African Art in New York. The principle was also quoted in its *Exhibition-ism* catalogue as “exhibit the problem, don’t exhibit the solution” (Vogel and Roberts 1994: 41). Around that time, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History also began to use “dilemma labels” to identify outdated or problematic information in its exhibitions because many had been on view for extended periods and needed revision—a slow and costly process. The labels drew visitors’ attention to questions and problems involved in museum representations, and dilemma labels became relatively widespread (Norman 1995: 38–39; Witz 2007). In this book, Shannon and Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips provide good examples of the mantra to exhibit the problem, not the solution. Shannon describes a wrapped ceremonial mask on display with labels that presented different community views on whether the mask should be shown. Bohaker, Corbiere and Phillips extend this by including the reasoning for attributions in their database, incorporating both the problem and various ways to reach solution(s) through video clips showing the collaborative process and the unknowns involved.
 - 3 Questions are often set by the genre of museum—art history, natural history, and so on. But other questions are linked to the nature of the collections or the research agenda of curators.
 - 4 We do not mean the concept of interrogative museum to serve as a discrete category of institution with a checklist of features, nor do we think “the interrogating museum”—an alternative raised by several colleagues—conveys the same receptive and transformative sense. While interrogative and interrogating are both related to asking questions, they have different meanings and associations. Interrogation suggests questioning in an aggressive or coercive manner, for example by military, police, or other authorities, seeking to extract information or confession. As with Belsey’s notion of interrogative text, the interrogative museum is intended to emphasize the potential openness associated with questions; the plurality of answers and perspectives. By analogy with its grammatical/ rhetorical sense, the interrogative here evokes that openness of approach, in the mood, attitude or spirit of collaborative engagement.
 - 5 For a fuller list of ways museums have been characterized, see Kratz and Karp (2006: 1–2).
 - 6 The others are *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Karp and Lavine 1991) and *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Karp, Kratz et al. 2006).
 - 7 Kratz (2002: 219–23) offers a more extended review of these developments.
 - 8 Kahn (2000) describes a collaborative project begun in the late 1980s and notes several others started in that decade.
 - 9 Two other volumes focused on museum–community relations a few years later. Crooke (2007) examined various notions of community, how museum–community relations were addressed in recent policy documents, and how they worked out in some specific projects. Watson’s edited reader (2007) collected articles on the topic published between 1993–2005.
 - 10 Halpern (2013: 24) also describes the extraordinary expansion of Internet use and web developments in the first five years of the new millennium.
 - 11 White (2012: 82–89) outlines different models and features of collaborative work within a larger discussion of the development of a parallel collaborative moment in anthropology.
 - 12 Joe Horse Capture’s (2012) alternative view is that there is no need to explain to others when certain objects are treated or displayed in ways that respect and accord with community understandings. For instance, when placing two masks seen as antagonistic, he covered one while the other was installed in the exhibit. In his view, these are practices and knowledge that shape an exhibit and should simply be done, not “explained” since that objectifies and exoticizes Native American practice. Myers also notes specific ways that “increasingly, respect for and accountability to Aboriginal protocols have entered into the exhibitionary practices of the Australian art world” (2006: 531).
 - 13 The workshop took place at the University of Michigan on March 31, 2010 as part of my (IK) visit for the lecture series that gave rise to this book. Ellison’s example was a concert of poets in the Global Thursday series of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, held soon after the attacks of September 11, 2001. One organizer told her, “There are questions around 9–11 that you can raise in the context of poetry specifically, and performance, and an event that we can’t raise in our exhibit practice.”
 - 14 The different presentational forms encompassed by collaborative projects and museums are bound up with questions about how learning and pleasure are related in museum and heritage experience,

- whether and how different kinds of learning occur, what draws new visitors and repeat visitors and so on. Karp and Kratz (2014) describe knowledge passed on among young visitors to the Wattis Hall of Human Cultures.
- 15 Attitudes towards visual representations may also vary by form and medium, as I (CAK) found during research with Okiek communities in Kenya. People were accustomed to my taking photographs in all kinds of settings, and some were eager to be in them. But when I rented a super-8 movie camera briefly in 1983, reactions were very different. A number of people refused to take part in *sinema* pictures, having found religious films shown there once or twice by missionary movie vans to be ridiculous.
 - 16 Yamaguchi (1991) makes this point for objects in Japan. This perspective helps to understand ideas about the aesthetics of the copy—not the fake—so important in many places.
 - 17 Aymara-speaking people of the Andes also consider the future, which one cannot see, to be behind them and the past, which is knowable and holds lessons, to be in front. We discussed the Maori portraits at the Auckland Museum with staff there in the mid-1990s, but such interactions with museum objects continue. A recent Auckland Museum blog mentions that someone had *hong'i*d the glass case holding a carved *papahou* (treasure box), available at <http://blog.aucklandmuseum.com/2012/01/safe-arrival-in-kaikohe-the-heartland-of-ngapuhi> (accessed July 25, 2012).
 - 18 Consultations with Pacific Rim communities in Seattle in 1990 also suggested that exhibition design should take account of indigenous ontologies and understandings to determine appropriate object placements (Kahn 2000: 59).
 - 19 Of course there are many points to materiality, as evident in the large literature on material culture studies and the lively Material World blog, available at www.materialworldblog.com (accessed July 25, 2012). An event during my (IK) research in Kenya shows that performative contexts can have similar effects. For several years I had been trying to get anyone to tell me the morning prayers Iteso used to say on the cusp of colonialism. I was assured they had them and no one could remember them. One day I went to a beer party with a band that was reviving various forms of music and oral performance. They said, “We’ve set the old prayers to music.” “Right,” I thought, “They’ve really made this one up.” I was sitting by an old man that I had interviewed but not found particularly informative. So he’s sitting there and he looked startled. He looked up and suddenly started saying the prayers. There is an extraordinary way in which this kind of work can spur memory, revival, and transmission.
 - 20 The priorities and values supported by funding agencies are also part of the larger institutional mix as some projects receive support from foundations or government agencies.

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