

CIMAM 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE 21ST
ART CENTURY
MUSEUM:

is CONTEXT
EVERY
THING ?

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Day 1, Friday
November 15

*Challenging the
Narrative: Indigenous
Perspectives*

Keynote 1

Wesley Enoch

Enoch, Artistic Director, Sydney Festival, Sydney, Australia

Biography — Wesley Enoch was born on Stradbroke Island (Minjeribah), Queensland, and is a proud Noonuccal Nuugi man. He is a writer and director for the stage, and joined the Sydney Festival as Artistic Director in 2015. He was creative consultant, segment director, and indigenous advisor for the opening and closing ceremonies of Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018; the Artistic Director of Queensland Theatre Company from 2010–15; Associate Artistic Director at Belvoir St Theatre from 2007–10; Australia Council Artistic Director for the Australian Delegation to the 2008 Festival of Pacific Arts; Director of Opening Ceremony, *My Skin, My Life* for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne; Artistic Director of Ilbijerri ATSI Theatre Co-op 2003–06; Resident Director at the Sydney Theatre Company 2000–01; and Artistic Director of Kooemba Jdarra Indigenous Performing Arts 1994–97. His plays include *Black Medea*, *The 7 Stages Of Grieving* and *The Story Of The Miracles At Cookie's Table*. His recent directing work includes *Mother Courage & Her Children* and *Happy Days*. He has a commitment to new work and has directed many world premieres including *Country Song*, *Headful Of Love*, *Trollop*, *Waltzing The Wilarra* and *Black Diggers*.

Why so many Walls?

Thank you. *Worimi Ngani*.

As I look out at this gathering and see the great wisdom in this room, I notice the telltale signs of the wise — the greying hair, the colored hair, and the absence of hair, these signs that tell me we are a gathering of wise, well-worn souls who gather here to add to our wisdom and pass on our experiences.

I am then enticed into an understanding of the walls that hold us, both new and old: the sandstone cladding and the more modern concrete and steel, the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries meeting in argument and conference to express a cultural ambition for the future. Of loud voices of art that ask for over attentive senses — for listening eyes and watching ears — these artistic calls and responses within that argue and confer through these walls with the memories of long-forgotten measurements and navigation, of views out to the maritime edges of the world, and telescopic eyes cast further afield to ports of imagination and hopes. For many here, your homes lay there; places where you dream. A listening building of silent reflection and ambition.

I now feel my way down the walls into the foundations and try and to feel the building's footprint. These base rocks that once groaned under the weight of stock and grain and lumber and steel. Of provisions that fed the colonial narratives and their storytellers.



Wesley Enoch

The rocks have memories they may never tell, on which all stories are formed. The stony footings on which we balance today have been here for millennia. With each turning of a sod, each stone on stone, each building on building on building — the wise people, in the listening walls sitting on the groaning stones of history. I am struck quiet as the rocks grind and groan their story to me.

I am now drawn beyond the walls to this extraordinary vista that seems clearer today than the past few days. Smoke clearing. Harbor breathing. I am excited by the blue skies and the reflective shimmer of the water. And I am caught in a memory of sorts.

The image of women balancing on their *nawis*, a child on their breast, a toddler teetering too close to the edge, as the women catch fish and cook them out on the water. The burning embers of a fire held in clay pans at the front of each canoe for warmth and cooking. Their song wafting back to shore on the waves. The waves, the flames, the song, the fish, the laughter of children, and the gentle breeze.

This is not my memory exactly but a layering of time that co-exists with now. Watkin Tench wrote about this image in his 1793 publication *Sydney's First Four Years*. A book where he laid out the dramatic and triumphant stories of this place in which we now sit close to 230 years later. Joined by other diarists they document the smallpox epidemics that wiped out huge populations, stories of early exchanges with Eora, of personalities, expansion, starvation, and failed farming. Neglected knowledges and suppressed truths.

There is a story of how, in the early days of the colony when the fish were plentiful, the over-zealous colonists netted 4,000 fish, far more than the colony could eat or preserve. A sign of fear, ill faith, and over-consumption. Four thousand fish removed from the waters because they could, not because they had a need to feed more hungry mouths. Four thousand fish that would not go on to breed, an unimaginable greed the likes of which the Eora could not fathom. The story goes that these unfortunate fishermen then preceded to offer the fish to the Eora men, hence undermining the dominance and economy of the women, their fishing, and their family. The colony faced starvation at many points in those first few years because they could not read the landscape or trust the natural rhythms of the fish and eels and wattle blooms. These nervous sunburnt childlike men and women who whipped their own and had no ears to hear the story of the stones, no way to witness the wonder of the waters, and who go on to put rock upon rock and never go home from whence they came.

I'd like to add my acknowledgement of the Gadigal people of the Eora, the men and women who are the traditional custodians of these lands and waters and pay respects to their survival. Their knowledge and unbroken connection to these unceded territories

Worimi Ngani — is hello and greetings in the Sydney languages of the people from this place.
Worimi Ngani.

Welcome to Country is an important ceremony that says to the spirits and stories of a place that these people, these visitors are welcomed and pose no threat, should move safely through the landscape to undertake their business. When a clan or group of travelers were moving through a territory that was not their own they would seek the blessing of those who had ceremonial custodianship of a place. Ownership is not an accurate description of the relationship between land and people. Uncle Bob Randall Yankunytjajara, elder and a traditional owner of Uluru, says: "We don't own the Land. The Land owns us." Which means the way we navigate the landscape is as custodians for this moment in time. We are charged with the preservation of the stories of a place, the meaning-making that explains the unfolding of history, and looking after the land for future generations. Unlike the colonists who thought of the land as a commodity to clear and fence, to call your own, and do with as you wish, the First Australians like many First Peoples across the globe found sustainable ways of living in a mutually beneficial relationship with the Land. More about this later.

Ownership is really connected to stories and familial bonds to landscape. There would be no need to wage war against another clan/tribe/language group to conquer and acquire their lands as you had no story of that place. The stories of creation, stories that bonded you into relationships with place, the story of the river, mountain range, valleys are all a way of understanding survival in that place and helps you care for it and connect deeply to it. Not that the First Australians never fought or had wars... it's just that these acts of war or violence would not be about Land. More likely there would be retribution for acts of transgression like coming onto your country without permission or a Welcome to Country.

We should be grateful for Yvonne for giving us that welcome this morning.

Introduction

I am not from here. I moved here five years ago to be the artistic director of the Sydney Festival. The story of my family is a wonderful mix of pathways. The Aboriginal side of my family comes from the Kandu

mob in the far North Queensland but on my grandfather's side I claim the Noonuccal Nuughi clans of the Quandamooka peoples of Minjerribah and its surroundings. Stradbroke Island, Moreton Island, and the collection of small islands just off the coast of Brisbane is where I call home. The story goes that at the time of creation a huge fishing net was cast out from the mouth of Maiwar/Meanjin (Brisbane River) and the islands were dragged up from the depths of the ocean to surround the mouth of the river. To protect it. And these islands were host to many visitors who would come and go. A quarantine station, a mission community, a benevolent asylum, a mining company, commercial fishermen, tourists, but always the Aboriginal presence.

This is a picture of my family. I think I am 6 or 7 in this photo. It might be 1975. My father who is 27 in this photo, holding me down as I was not always a well-behaved young man. My mother who is 26, I think, at the other end holding my brother who must be about two. I look at my father and I can see in the shape of eyes and face my great-great-grandfather, Fernando Gonzales, who was a Filipino fisherman who came to Stradbroke Island and married into the Aboriginal families there. I can also see another great-great-grandfather, Faathiacci, who came from Rotumah Island in the South Pacific in search of work and a new life. And my mother has the mixed features of my Spanish great-grandfather and my Danish great-grandmother who came to Australia after the First World War, where they met at a young age and were married. We are an amazing combination of all our histories.

This is a picture of my parents when they first met. I think this is 1967. Within twelve months of this photo they would be married and my mother pregnant with my sister. 1967 is an important year in this country: the year of the referendum that gave the First Australians full rights as Australians in the eyes of the constitution. Before 1967, Indigenous Peoples of this country were not governed by the federal government instead were administered through the state by state network of laws that saw us counted under the Flora and Fauna Acts, Aborigine Protection Acts, and Land Management legislation. No two states had exactly the same laws governing Indigenous Australians — the right to travel, gain employment, marry, buy property, vote, serve in the army, would all be at the discretion of a local policeman, mission manager, or local agent or Protector of Aborigines. This all changed in 1967 when the people of Australia voted overwhelming to change the constitution and give the federal government the right to make laws for Aborigines. It would not be until 1993 that First Peoples of this country

got their Native Title recognized. That's still 26 years later than this picture.

There has been a long history of neglect of the stories of the First Australians. From the early days of the colony in this place there was the fiction of Terra Nullius — that this continent was an empty place, unoccupied, unowned, and we have been dealing with this forgetting and denial ever sense.

My father died five years ago at the age of 65 but he would tell stories from when he was growing up. Eating fish and crab and oysters, eugaries, watching the migration of the whales up and down the coast that marked the change of seasons and the way to manage land with fire.

This is a timely reminder.

My father would tell us stories of how my grandfather would teach Dad to use fire to manage the grasses and undergrowth near their house. Dad would be entrusted with a box of matches and would walk along the winter blanketed path throwing lit matches into the grass as he walked to school. I'm not encouraging nine-year-old kids to do this today but the logic was that by burning off in a controlled way at the right time of year you did two things. The fire created a cool smoke and the animals knew to rise up the trees into the branches to seek shelter while this fire moved through the undergrowth. The flames moved slowly and at a pace that was right for animals and trees: though singed and blackened, it did not burn through the outer bark. The trees would survive but the undergrowth would be cleared. If this was not done regularly the buildup of fuel would mean that when a fire came in the dry warmer months it would burn with a hot intensity that would see gum trees and melaluca tea trees, which could be full of flammable oils and resins, literally explode, creating a devastating, fast-moving fire that ripped through the tree tops and created its own weather pattern. Literally a fire storm.

The animals move up the trees and burn there.

If you haven't had the chance to read Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* or Bill Gammage's *The Largest Estate on Earth*, reach out and take a look. Over millennia the landscape has learnt to be in sync with fire. The landscape is designed to burn. Certain eucalypts and banksias actually need fire and heat to assist in their germination; grass trees have evolved to germinate after fire.

The second purpose of the burning is to encourage this new growth that would entice animals to feed on the fresh juicy shoots of grasses and trees. Hence, it made it easier to know where the kangaroos would gather. No need to fence them in or chase them all over the place; they would be attracted to you.

Aboriginal people have been enacting farming with fire for thousands of years and this is just the tip of the knowledge that those who have recently arrived still have to understand. When I hear someone say that their family has been here for five generations and feel a deep respect for the land and its needs, I reply, "Imagine what it will feel like when your family has been here for over 1,000 generations."

Deficit Models

There is a deep need to change the narratives around Indigenous Peoples from one of disadvantage and deficit to one of knowledge and sharing wisdom.

History has created a situation across the globe where colonial privilege has led Indigenous People into disadvantage. The massive disruption brought about by the British colonial project in North America, New Zealand, and Australia, though different in structure and timing, has brought about systemic disadvantage and we can see uniform patterns of outcomes in health, poverty, and incarceration.

In New Zealand, Maori represent 50.7% of prison populations whilst only making up 15% of the overall country population. 57% of white New Zealanders own their own home, while only 28% of Maori do so, and Maori children are twice as likely to live in poverty.

In Canada, First Peoples make up 4% of the population but 25% of the prison population and 40% of the juvenile detention population. In Australia, we make up close to 3% of the population but 27% of the prison population and close to 60% of those in juvenile detention. In the child welfare system, both in Canada and Australia, roughly 50% of those involved are Aboriginal Peoples. In all three countries, life expectancy is between 8-12 years less than non-First Nations Peoples. Employment, health outcomes, suicide rates, education... you get the picture.

The overturning of traditional subsistence economies and wealth modeling and the disallowing of access for Australian First Nations People into the colonial power sharing for at least two centuries have embedded disadvantage. But this has led us to a situation where the disadvantage has been used as the dominant narrative around Indigenous Peoples. In this country we have the Closing The Gap program that has been used to monitor and address this disadvantage. Over recent years, we have not seen a uniform improvement of outcomes for Aboriginal People and in fact there has been a decrease in an allocation of funds and services.

We understand where the disadvantage comes from but I put forward that we are dealing with

symptoms rather than the root cause of the disease. Engaging with these root causes is the clearest way to change the discussion.

First Nations Peoples are the originators and prototypes for living in this landscape. The model for many of the things we are facing as a society can be found in Indigenous community structures — arts and culture as the center of a society, caring for the elderly and the young, over consumption, farming techniques, land management and land care, water care, and disaster mitigation in terms of flooding, storms, and fire.

Tom Simonite talks about the stories from First Nations Peoples of North America that mapped out the Cascadia subduction zone or fault line that runs from Vancouver into California. This traditional story was knowledge that was ignored in the building of the cities of Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, and other places.

Architect Peter Myers writes about the third city of Sydney. The first city being the natural city that was dictated to by the natural flow of seasons, animal rhythms, plants, and waterways, that was consumed and affected through the actions of the Aboriginal inhabitants to create the second city of middens, path ways, fire farming. Aboriginal people modifying behavior in response to the actions of the first city. Fishing at different places, feasting and creating middens of discarded shells and bones, carving into the stone the shapes of fish and animals that a particular site as sign of plentiful hunting. Then there is the coming of the colony and the sense that they consumed the second city by copying the pathways and tracks that would become George St., Pitt St., and Oxford St., and literally the consumption of the middens of discarded shells and bones to be burned down to create the lime mortar that bound the Sydney sandstone into the first colonial buildings. The modern city of Sydney is in the shape of the Aboriginal city in many ways because the relationship with the landscape was already mapped out. We are walking in ignorance of the 1,000 footfalls already preceding our time here.

Story — Rhoda Roberts — Middens and Sydney Opera House

The stories of cultural burning like the one my father told me. Too often the living knowledge of the land is ignored and dismissed due to the prevalence of the disadvantage narrative. A general sense that First Peoples are unsuccessful people in the modern world and our knowledges and insights are best relegated to a long dead "stone age time." This is not true. We are here and we have knowledge of how to step

forward. We can share with you so much that can help you understand the world differently and potentially save you. But it might mean letting go of a few things you hold dear.

Story — all the stories in the world being created in the time before time, laid out in the landscape and there needing to be an act of remembering rather than creation, New dreaming to explain the world around us.

Detritus

The power of storytelling is built into the landscape and the biggest set of concerns I have within the gallery and museum world when it comes to promulgating Indigenous perspectives is the search for permanence and collection over the deeper engagement of story and practice. In this world, I see the desperate need to hold on to time through objects or the awarding of status and financial reward for the permanent over the ephemeral and transitory.

By the very nature of erecting a museum, you are saying that what is inside the walls is collectable and what finds itself outside is not. What happens when you accept that art/object is the detritus of culture not the embodiment of it? That the things left behind are a cultural memory of an action, a practice, a ceremony that has been designed to be discarded and disposed of, having fulfilled its purpose, rather than collected to adorn the walls. This is an Indigenous perspective.

The walls attempt to make things solid and impermeable when a lived culture is malleable and ephemeral. The walls set out to control and protect moments in time so that the future can glimpse the past, but they can also hold us back. Museums create anchor points to tie down with a weight something that floats and these anchor points, these fragments of culture we call art/object are meaningless without the song that forged them, the dance that animated them, the story that connected them, and the place that created them.

I am reminded of the history of bark painting that was one response to the need of anthropologists and their like to find a way of permanently recording the body art and sand paintings that might be used in a ceremony. This then led to an economy of exchange and recompense for providing more and more permanent records of designs that were traditionally worn to tell particular stories and then discarded or allowed to wear away on the body or ground. This has created a huge international art market. I am not saying that this should not have happened but more a sense that there has been a transition in the purpose

of some of these works. Some are work for ceremony and others work for money. Accepting that these are not mutually exclusive. Often there is a very clear distinction in the minds of the makers of the work, but I am not so certain that the viewer can distinguish the nuanced understanding of the role the work and the processes that sit behind its making. How can we instill more of this understanding beyond the more informed and educated people within these walls? How can we counteract many of the powerful assumptions and public narratives that wish to put more stock in collections and these historical reference points rather than conceding that true authority and sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples lies with the people.

Celebrated Canadian First Nations artist Beau Dick famously retrieved almost 40 masks from an exhibition and destroyed them in a ritual burning to help create a new process of creation and remembering in a community of carvers. These masks, which are regarded as sentient beings with lives and spirit, were carved by Beau Dick and his collaborators for the purpose of keeping alive culture through dance and ceremony. Dick recounted this story to me saying he felt that the masks had lost their spirit, effectively died through too much exhibition and in fact neglect from the community. The masks had not been danced or “fed” through the cultural processes. Candice Hopkins writes: “Dick’s actions were a means to short circuit the commodification of Northwest Coast ceremonial objects, preventing them from becoming fetishes in the service not of ritual but of capital.” Keeping the culture and the processes of making alive was seen as important for Dick and his community, challenging the community to remake afresh the masks from memory rather than slavishly copying what had gone before.

Indigenous perspectives are often focused on these processes, skills development, and reclamation. Seeing the object or art piece as a transitory manifestation of spirit, not something to be collected or maintained, but rather something that has its time and can then recede into memory, to be re-manifest in a different shape if the community needs it.

The need to record, study and collect could be seen as a corruption of the intent of the work and nonacceptance of the true purpose and process of its making. Robyn Archer in her 2005 essay “The Myth of the Mainstream” outlines her detritus theory where she speaks of the end result of what artists do as the *detritus* of the creative process: we misread this detritus as the point of importance, overlooking the process that went into making it. Though Archer is talking about all artistic practice, I think it has even more relevance for Indigenous Peoples

Story — Investiture of Dr Marika 2009, Garma in Arnhemland

At times, collected objects and records can have an ossifying effect on dynamic cultures, creating reference points that go on to be used as the authority by anthropologists and the like, pointing to historical collections to judge the validity of contemporary cultural expression as more or less authentic. Making external judgements that insist Indigenous cultures remain within a tightly held frame of what was collected decades earlier using the detritus, the things we would throw away, discard, or modify for the Western gaze as the new norm. Instead of fully comprehending the making process and the room for innovation and new dreaming.

The use of these collections as the true and valid record of culture does not take into account the use of humor and sarcasm and the subtle forms of subversion that First Nations can enact instead of trusting the lived experiences of the members of that culture.

Story — Moomba Bill Onus in 1950s — let's have fun together

But in contrast, what has been seen on multiple occasions is the use of historical records to assist in the reclamation of cultural expression. Language, iconography, context, and recorded stories have been relied on by many communities to counteract the effects of colonialism and to help piece together the fragments from shattered histories but I argue we should not be seduced into ceding our cultural authority to objects and historical reference points alone. We should be keeping alive and adapting the cultural practices and exciting them to manifest in new and different ways.

Story — Jonathan Jones's Barrangal Dyara project, Garden Palace, completed in 1879. This edifice of culture burned down in 1882 and with it much of the collection of Indigenous artefacts and objects from South East Australia. The removal of these objects from the collective settler memory has does much to feed a myth that "real" Aboriginal culture was from somewhere else because of the lack of material evidence on display in museums and galleries. The walls were removed and people found it hard accept the people as evidence of their own existence. W.E. Stanner in his 1968 Boyer Lectures coined the phrase "The Great Forgetting" when referring to this country's understanding of Indigenous peoples' perspectives and history. That the country has a

vested interest in forgetting and denying our dynamism as a culture or if there is an acceptance of our history and presence there can only be a narrow range in which our authority can be recognized. From skin color, the color palette, materials, technologies, geography, education levels, and political beliefs are just a few ways in which historical collections can be used to attempt to invalid contemporary cultural practice — referencing the things that were collected to place inside the walls.

Wiradjuri artists like Jonathan Jones, Brook Andrew, Larissa Behrendt, Anita Heiss, or artists further afield like REA, Julie Gough, Megan Cope, and more have found ways of navigating the disjuncture of historical collections and records and contemporary life.

Walls And Museum Cultures

Let no one say the past is dead.
The past is all about us and within.
Haunted by tribal memories, I know
This little now, this accidental present
Is not the all of me, whose long making
Is so much of the past.

But a thousand thousand camp fires
In the forest
Are in my Blood.
Let none tell me the past is wholly gone.
Now is such a small a part of time,
so small a part
Of all the race years that have moulded me.

— Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Oodgeroo Noonuccal, who is, in fact, my great aunt, wrote this poem as a sense of the time that we need to make for ourselves to connect our past and our present on our terms.

Gregory Philips says: "First Peoples are not a cohort, we are a paradigm." To think in the ways of our expression and to give us a sense of the future, beyond the rigid walls of galleries and museums.

And to end, I'll leave you with a quote by David Suzuki: "We need to have a paradigm shift; to me the paradigm shift is that we have to see the world as indigenous people see it... It's urgent that we empower Indigenous people everywhere to look to their leadership and into the future."

Thank you very much.

Perspective 1

Wanda Nanibush

Curator of Indigenous Art, Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Toronto, Canada

Biography — Wanda Nanibush is an Anishinaabe-kwe image and word warrior, curator, and community organizer from Beausoleil First Nation. Currently Nanibush is the inaugural curator of Indigenous art and co-head of the Indigenous + Canadian Art department at Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). Her current AGO exhibition, Rebecca Belmore *Facing the Monumental* is touring internationally, as well as two independent projects *Nanabozho's sisters* (Dalhousie) and *Sovereign Acts* (JMB). Nanibush has a Masters of Visual Studies from University of Toronto where she has taught graduate courses. On top of many catalogue essays Nanibush has published widely on Indigenous art, politics, history, and feminism and sexuality.

The following edited text was a spoken talk and not an orally recited written essay. In keeping with Indigenous knowledge systems, I practice oral knowledge creation which requires us to speak only what we truly know and experience ourselves. There is much more to this way of knowledge creation that cannot be explained here.

Centering Contemporary Indigenous Art

Hello, everybody. *Aneen, bonjour*, my name is Wanda Nanibush. I am from Chimnissing, which means “big island,” in Canada, three hours north of Toronto. But I live in Toronto, which is very much like Sydney [laugh]. Except it is snowing right now. Hence all this sweat, I am a northerner. And I didn't say my clan, which is Wolf Clan. Wolves... I mean, I don't say these things just to say them, I take it very seriously, it's part of my identity in the sense that it tells me what I'm supposed to do. So, as wolves, we are very community based. We work very hard to make sure that society is functioning for the community and in particular the children of the community. And also, it talks about how I work in a strategic function. So, I come in during times of crisis or war, and I lead through them and then in peacetime somebody else leads. I'll tell you about how I operate in the institution in a minute. I want to thank the host today and I want to thank in particular Cara, who, you know, did so much work to get all us here. So just like... Give her the biggest props. And I want to acknowledge all these folks in the background who are making me sound good and look good. Make me look good on camera [laughs]. And I want to thank all of you for coming and listening to what I am about to tell you.

I come from a family that very much works with their hands and doesn't feel at home in museums. And I grew up not feeling at home in museums, so I always keep that in mind when I do my work. The primary



Wanda Nanibush

people I am thinking about are people who don't naturally feel comfortable there. And a lot of work I do involves making that place a home for more people than what it was built for. In particular, I am thinking about the Indigenous community. And, when I was young, I was

very much a very politically active human being: like chaining my neck to gates to stop uranium mining, hitting the streets to protest the Iraq war (the first one), doing solidarity actions in 1990 with the Mohawks, who were trying to protect these pines that were their burial ground and the place where they did their ceremonies.

So, these are the kind of moments that inflected who I am today. The other, I would say, is two shows in 1992, which was the first time I ever went to a museum. And these are two of the first Indigenous shows curated in Canada. One show was called *Land, Spirit, Power* by Robert Houle, also an Anishinaabe artist, curator, and critic. A very important show, it was the first of contemporary art at the National Gallery of Canada. The other show was by somebody you already know, Gerald McMaster, and also the woman who is often erased, but it is equally important, Lee-Ann Martin. They did a show at the Canadian Museum of History called *Indigena*. Those shows ran at the same time. 1992 was the 500-year anniversary of Columbus's landing in the Americas which became a conversation about 500 years of colonization through the intervention of artists. It was the first time I formed an idea of the power of art in this kind of politics, and found what was missing in politics, what was making me dissatisfied with politics: the kind of imagination that the artist has, which is very future driven, and allows for a kind of complexity that political speech does not. So, I carry that with me. Artists also build art history not just curators. We have a group called Professional Native Artist Inc. who started in the 1970s, led by a woman, Daphne Odjig, and their whole point was to push to have their works recognized in fine arts museums as opposed to ethnographic or historical or anthropological museums. They fought to be seen as artists. So, I also start from where they started. That's like your Canadian Indigenous Art History 101 in two seconds.

I am going to give you a case of study today, which is the J.S. McLean Centre for Indigenous and Canadian Art, which is a permanent collection gallery at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which is where I work, and it is the largest museum in Canada. It's also one of the largest in the world, it has some four hundred and eighty thousand square feet and it's encyclopedic in the sense that you come in the first floor and you always hit Europe first. Just kind of funny when we are talking about decolonization. So, we have to work on that. But we are on the second floor and my colleague Georgiana Uhlyarik and I... I want to start from the beginning of how my position came about, because it is new in a radical sense. So, the way I begin is always from Indigenous knowledge or philosophy in terms of how I want something to start.

And so, I talk to Georgiana about sharing power in the institution instead of starting an independent Indigenous art section. Why don't we think about the history of Canada and its foundation, which is by treaty. And those treaties are Indigenous based. We didn't start with paper treaties, we started with something called Wampum Treaties. These are treaties that we had between Indigenous nations and when the white man came, we did these treaties with them as well. These treaties outline the way of sharing power, sharing land, sharing resources... But also, they outline a value system, which is mutual responsibility, mutual respect, and this principle of honesty, integrity...

We think we work by this but, we don't necessarily in museums. That may not be our primary focus.

So, this is the example of a Wampum Treaty and this is one of the foundational wampums that's called The Two-Row Wampum. And these shells that are used to create this wampum, there are people who are responsible for reading it as a document, so it's a mnemonic device, it's also an aesthetic object. They're quite beautiful but we really bristle at them being treated as such, as an aesthetic object in a museum. This gives you an idea of what they're made from. So this was originally an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch, then it became an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the British, then it became agreement between 24 First Nations who signed it, my nation being one, which is why we chose this particular wampum to be the basis of our working together in the museum.

At the heart of the treaty is a principle of non-interference. In the two-row wampum treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch (later the British and 24 other Indigenous nations signed on) there are two rows of purple beads surrounded by three rows of white beads. The purple... One row is a ship the other row is a canoe. They're traveling down a river in the same direction. The principle of non-interference means that the ship will not place its laws on the canoe, the canoe will not place its laws on the ship, so obviously world over we've broken this treaty with Indigenous people through the process of colonization. We live under the laws of a foreign power, which breaks the fundamental treaty to which we all are committed.

So, in a sense we are doing an imaginative exercise of Indigenous sovereignty in the museum by saying this treaty exists, that we live under this treaty. How does it play out in a museum context? And I do this in everything I do. I loved what the women said for the welcome to country, how she said "I am a sovereign woman." That is precisely how I operate as well, as if sovereignty is real and then I live as if it can be lived,

whether that makes what I do illegal or uncomfortable or hard. So, Georgiana as the Canadian curator, and I as the Indigenous art curator, work in this treaty relationship way, so it plays out in the J.S. McLean Centre. Even though it's imaginative to say that we have this equal power, we had to correct for the historical imbalance where Indigenous art has been excluded, has been confined to the anthropological, to the ethnographic. To correct for that we have placed a significant centering on Indigenous contemporary art practice on purpose.

In this image that you see here, is one of the first rooms that you come into, and you will see this sculpture of a dress in the front, here. That is a work by Rebecca Belmore. We are touring a big solo exhibition of her work at the moment. She is one of the most important contemporary artists working today, and I say that without reservation. At the front you see this Victorian gown and at the back there is this beaver bustle of twigs. It's a beaver dam. And in the beaver dam there is all that kind of kitschy royal stuff that you like, like little teacups and little spoons and also crumpled newspaper articles. This piece was made in 1987 as part of a protest in Thunder Bay, Northern Ontario. Twelve women got together to protest and to make visible the kind of colonial narrative that was being built around the visit of Fergie and her husband [laughs]. I love putting it that way. So, they came. You know, they came they canoed, they went to the fort. You know, I'm sure you have this kind of thing here. So, when that happened, these twelve women got together and they did this protest called "the twelve angry crinolines" and they marched down the street. They marched to draw attention to the incarceration of a number of people because of mental illness, and to draw attention to an Indigenous community that was fighting logging on their territory. Belmore was trying to draw attention to the contemporary issues of the time through this dress. And you'll see that the braids that are hanging above are sticking straight up, and she was like "well if we're angry this is what our braids would look like, sticking straight up." (laughs) So, this is the center of the room. This is how we build the narrative and then the Canadian art comes into play. The other principle besides centering contemporary Indigenous art was the principle of no chronology. We did away with chronology. I firmly believe, and from practice, that chronology has actually favored Western narratives and they favor Canadian art history. And unless we can break chronology, we can't actually hear or understand the contexts of other art forms. That's why I don't talk about decolonization I talk about centering Indigenous art. It reframes the narrative from a totally different point of view.

The other strategy is to do a two-pronged approach to Indigenous art because we have this question of ghettoization, We do both independent Indigenous only spaces, so that art history can be told from inside Indigenous philosophies, knowledges, and points of view, and where Indigenous artists can speak to each other; and then we also do these mixed spaces.

So, here you're looking at some of the kind of media that came when we did this rehang of the permanent collection that changed the name to include Indigenous. And it was big deal to put "Indigenous first" in front of Canadian. This is very important because we had to acknowledge that the land is Indigenous. We had to acknowledge that we were here first. We had to acknowledge that the sovereignty actually is Indigenous, and Canadian sovereignty has derived from that, not the other way around.

So, a few of the other things that we did. You will see there are three languages on the wall. In the introductory text... it has the land acknowledgment right there, and a complex land acknowledgement because it's a city. Cities are often places of meeting and so lots of Indigenous nations usually claim parts of it and rather than fight with each other about whose land it is, we tried to include that complex history right on the wall. It also names our values that come out of the treaty. It was very important to be transparent about what we were trying to achieve and what we're trying to do. And then there's also texts about what the nation-to-nation agreement (treaty) is and what that means. Some of our audiences are encountering this kind of discourse for the first time.

So, we have three languages, all the texts are in Anishinaabe, which is the language of the land on which we are, French and English, which are the two colonial nations. We also translate into *inuktitut*, which is what you see here at the top, because we have one of the largest holdings of Inuit art in the world and we feel a sense of responsibility to communicate about that work in the language from which it was born. And the other part of this, as we think about this treaty relationship in the museum, it starts to impact everything, so now we're like: "Oh we can't own these things." Now we have to think about holding them in trust for the community to which they actually belong. So that is very scary for the legalities of museum collections. And also, we need to think about how we can bring the community into interpret these things, to be engaged with these belongings and to connect with those communities in a profound way, not as a consultation. I always say "engage" and "connect" as opposed to consult, which means "giving over power to."

I want to talk about Shirley Williams, who is the

translator with whom we work for the Anishinaabe texts: Anishinaabemowin. And she's an elder, so you can imagine that our processes at the museum are not used to working on an elder's timeframe, on the way elders operate, or the fact that they may not be near their phones when they are in ceremonies and you're trying to get deadlines, and they cannot be formalized in the way that we do, or pressured in the way that we are used to working by deadlines. So, our staff has learnt new ways to operate that offer the respect that an elder deserves in this relationship.

The other thing about Shirley is she has been to residential school and yet kept her language. We have a history of residential schools: 150 years of the Canadian government taking away our children and placing them in schools, which we call prisons. I'm not going to get into these awful places. You can read about it, there is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that we had, and there is a thousand-page history and report and a series of actions, museums included, what museums can do. It's a good learning tool for anyone anywhere in the world. So please read it. So, she went to a residential school. One of the primary purposes of a residential school is to take the Indian out of the Indians, to make us Canadians, to make us white, to make us British, generally. So, she was able to maintain her language through a very abusive process of trying to eradicate it. The power in which she has operated in her life to keep our language alive, to teach it to students, to build materials and tools. So that's why she's been honored here today.

So, the McLean Centre... Originally, when I started in the museum, these two blue spaces were the only places for Indigenous art. The blue space that you see, the oblong one is literally a hallway between a stairwell and a washroom, and... yeah, I won't say more because it's too personal. The other blue square was devoted to Inuit sculpture. I always think in political terms, so I thought we needed to do a land claim inside the museum. We needed to expand our real estate if we are ever going to have any sense of space or place in this building. So, you can see the expanse of the blue, those are Indigenous only spaces, but then the orange is Indigenous and Canadian, so it's actually much bigger than that. And there are other spaces on the first floor as well.

So, we'll start with one of our thematics, *Origins*, which is important in Toronto. Because people are coming from all over the world, we wanted to make sure that the *Origins* story is not a xenophobic one that shores up our sense of ourselves in our place, actually. Our *Origins* stories, from Anishinaabe culture, often deal with migration as a central kind of force, and this work is called *The Great Flood* by

Norval Morrisseau. In our contemporary situation there are so many forced migrations across this world to which we have to attend. I wanted to address that directly so more people would understand themselves in this story. There we have zone one. What we found is that when you place contemporary art next to seventeenth- or eighteenth-century art is that the older historical art gets a new face, gets a fresh look, and you start to see in it things that you wouldn't otherwise. So, some of the Victorian portraiture, you start to see women sort of taking up this masculine pose, of wanting to present themselves as "in power," and then you start to see this kind of tiny little bit of sexuality peeking through with that lift of a skirt or a little ankle or things that you wouldn't normally notice if you weren't staring at Belmore's dress first. We also have Kent Monkman's queering of the history of the AGO, so there's a woman in a white wedding dress and that is the founder of the AGO, being queered in these paintings, so we wanted to make sure that that was there.

Carl Beam is a really important artist. He was one of the first to be bought by the National Gallery in 1986 as a contemporary Indigenous artist. He felt awkward about it because he was really happy to be purchased by the National Gallery but he wasn't sure if being called "contemporary Indigenous" was going to serve his career well. There was this big internal battle in the 1980s with artists whether they should just be seen as artists or if they should take up the contemporary Indigenous space.

Then we move into Land. This room is Lauren Harris, who is one of the kings of a kind of painting in Canada that came to represent the nation. In relation is Robert Houle, who is the Anishinaabe artist I mentioned earlier. Houle's piece is called *The Pines*, a seminal moment in our history across the board, across the country, and into the United States, because the Canadian government sent the army in against the Mohawks in 1990. So, he went back after that horrific conflict to go see the pines and he painted this for himself. He said you could feel the spirituality of the place and the indignity of wanting to turn that space into a golf course.

We put them together on the question of land and nationhood. We put them together, partly because we didn't want to do a narrative of "Lauren Harris, colonizer," "Empty landscape, erasing Indigenous sovereignty." That is part of this story but it isn't how we wanted to treat an artist because we are also artist-centered, so in a way we wanted to free Harris to be a painter amongst another painter, Robert Houle. Actually, as our director Stefan Jost always says when he's in this room: "Lauren Harris needs

Robert Houle more than Robert Houle needs Lauren Harris.” So, you know, you don’t need to be afraid of putting contemporary art with historical. It really can shift the narrative. Lauren Harris desired to be an abstract painter, but he didn’t have the guts because society didn’t want that kind of work at that time, so you get a sense of the two of them together. This desire of an artist trying to bring that forward. Robert Houle obviously comes from three different traditions. He comes from the modern abstraction of Rothko and Barnett Newman, but he also comes from the oldest Indigenous art form, which is abstraction. Abstraction is the oldest art form in Canada.

In the next room is the thematic water. This is Cree artist Ruth Cuthand’s *Don’t Breathe, Don’t Drink*, which is in the center of this room. Her 94 glasses and bottles deal with the 94 Indigenous communities that don’t have access to clean drinking water. You can see the beautiful beadwork that’s been cast into these glasses. It is placed with Joyce Weiland, who is one of Canada’s top feminist artists. This is another work dealing with water but from a conservation point of view.

I’m going to point out two more things. On each landscape or waterscape we acknowledge whose land it is. So, if it’s unceded *Mi’kmaw* territory in this case we say so, that’s how we deal with the issue of these empty landscapes that produce a narrative of *terra nullius* (empty land). The other thing we do is with historical works. Where the artist is unknown, we say “Haida artist once known” and I actually got that from a museum in Melbourne and I don’t know who did it because there was no name on it but I borrowed it from them, so thank you Australia. That is to say that these people were known, they belong to a community. Colonization has erased that history and erased that lineage and if we do new research, if we go to those communities, I’m sure we can figure out who these people are. But we need to go to new places. And currently, because she’s coming up to speak in a little bit, we’ve just installed Lisa Reihana in our transformation room, the piece that was at the Venice Biennale, *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*. So, I’m going to close there. I’ve hopefully given you some ideas of

things that we’re doing at the museum to center on Indigenous art, philosophy, knowledge, and sovereignty. Thanks. [Applause]



Shelley Niro. American, born 1954. *The Shirt*. 2003. Nine duratrans transparencies in lightboxes. Lightbox (each): 12 x 110 x 138 cm (4 3/4 x 43 5/16 x 54 5/16 in.) Duratrans transparencies: 52 5/8" x 42 5/8". Purchase with assistance from the Estate of P.J. Glasser, 2016. © Shelley Niro. 2016/41.1 .9



Robert Houle. Canadian, born 1947. *The Pines* 2002-04. Oil on canvas. Panel (center): 91.4 x 121.9 cm (36 x 48 in.). Panel (side, each of two): 91.4 x 91.4 cm (36 x 36 in.). Gift of Susan Whitney, 2017. © Robert Houle. 2017/243



Robert Houle. Canadian, born 1947. *In Memoriam*. 1987. Oil, feathers, leather, ribbon on plywood. Overall (framed): 137.2 x 151.9 x 9 cm (54 x 59 13/16 x 3 9/16 in.). Gift of Vanessa, Britney, and Nelson Niedzielski, 2000. © Robert Houle. 2000/1196



Lawren S. Harris. Canadian, 1885–1970. *Algoma Country*. 1920–21. Oil on canvas. Overall: 102.9 x 127.5 cm (40 1/2 x 50 3/16 in.). Framed: 111.8 x 137.2 x 5.7 cm (44 x 54 x 2 1/4 in.). Gift from the Fund of the T. Eaton Co. Ltd. for Canadian Works of Art, 1948. © Family of Lawren S. Harris. 48/9



Ruth Cuthand. Canadian, born 1954. *Don't Breathe, Don't Drink*. 2016. 112 vessels with glass beads and resin, hand beaded blue tarpaulin tablecloth, and 10 MDF "gas board" panels. Installed dimensions variable. Purchase, with funds from Karen Schreiber and Marnie Schreiber through The American Friends of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Inc., 2017. © Ruth Cuthand. 2016/432



Joyce Wieland. Canadian, 1930–1998. *The Water Quilt*. 1970–71. Fabric, embroidery thread, thread, metal grommets, braided rope, ink on fabric. Overall: 121.9 x 121.9 cm (48 x 48 in.). Purchase with assistance from Wintario, 1977. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. 76/221



John O'Brien. Canadian, 1831–1891. *The "Ocean Bride" Leaving Halifax Harbour*. 1854. Oil on canvas. Overall: 51.1 x 76.5 cm (20 1/8 x 30 1/8 in.). Purchase, 1976. © Art Gallery of Ontario. 75/99



Tim Whiten. Canadian, born United States. *Metamorphosis*. 1978-89. Ritual vessel (completely tanned bearskin, brass bells, cotton ties), grey pillow (cotton with synthetic foam), crushed eggshells, 4 glass votive containers and candles, 4 incense tiles. Installed (completed Ritual installation): 254 x 254 cm (100 x 100 in.) Overall (egg shell Ritual bed): 1.5 x 243.8 cm (9/16 x 96 in.). Purchase with assistance from the Estate of P.J. Glasser, 2016. 2016/42



Rita Letendre. Canadian, born 1928. *Daybreak*. 1983. Acrylic on canvas 198 x 365.8 cm (77 15/16 x 144 in.). Gift of Dr. Michael J. Sole in honor of Rita Letendre and Kosso Eloul, 2006. © 2017 Rita Letendre. 2006/168



Mike MacDonald. Canadian, 1941-2006. *Seven Sisters*. 1989. 7 channel video installation. Purchased with financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance program and with the assistance of the E. Wallace Fund, 2000. 2000/145



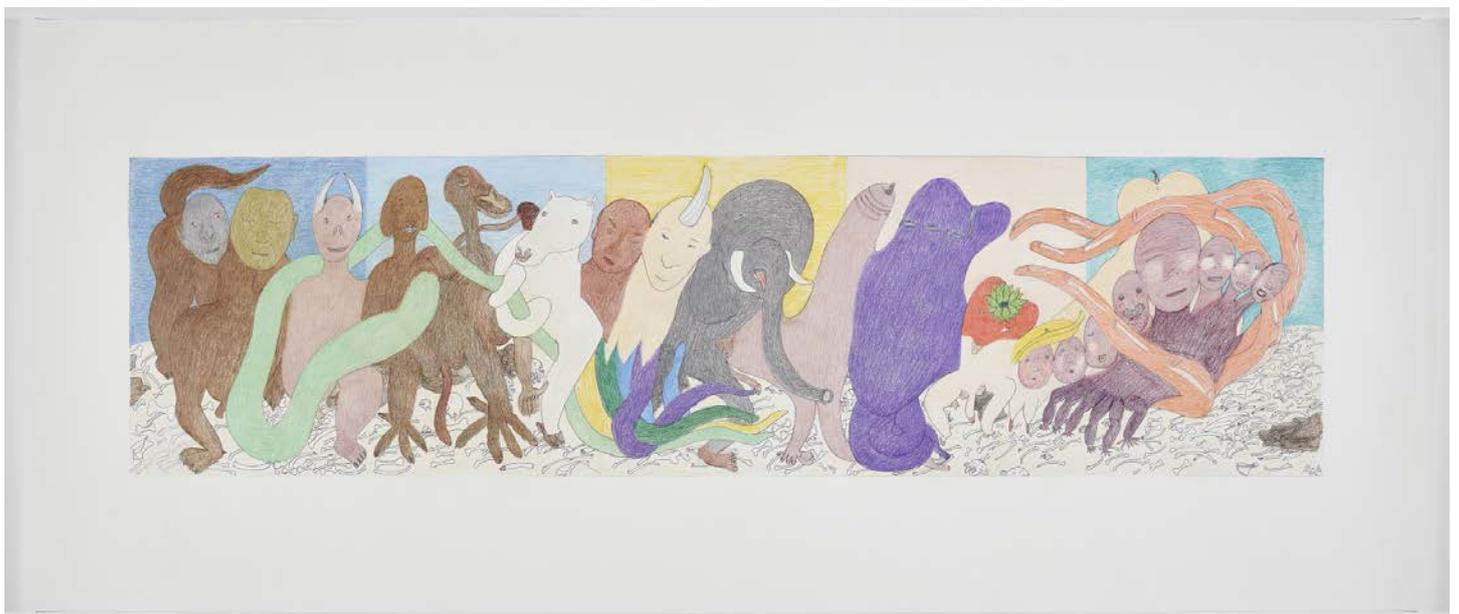
Barry Ace. Anishinaabe (Odawa), born 1958. *Trinity Suite: Bandolier for Niiibwa Ndanwendaagan (My Relatives)*. 2011–15. Mixed media (motion sensor display monitors, fabric, metal, horsehair, extension cords, mirror, plastic, capacitors and resistors). Overall: 234 × 38 × 8 cm (92 1/8 × 14 15/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Installed (McLean Centre, 2018): 207 × 95 × 53 cm (81 1/2 × 37 3/8 × 20 7/8 in.). Overall (For Charlie): 152.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (60 1/16 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (for Manitoulin Island): 158.5 × 36 × 8 cm (62 3/8 × 14 3/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (My Relatives): 156.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (61 5/8 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Purchase with support of the Max Clarkson Family Foundation and the Dennis Reid Fund, 2018. 2018/3586

Anishinaabe (Odawa), born 1958. *Trinity Suite: Bandolier for Manidoo minising (Manitoulin Island)*. 2011-15. Mixed media (motion sensor display monitors, fabric, metal, horsehair, extension cords, mirror, plastic, capacitors and resistors). Overall: 234 × 38 × 8 cm (92 1/8 × 14 15/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Installed (McLean Centre, 2018): 207 × 95 × 53 cm (81 1/2 × 37 3/8 × 20 7/8 in.). Overall (For Charlie): 152.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (60 1/16 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (for Manitoulin Island): 158.5 × 36 × 8 cm (62 3/8 × 14 3/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (My Relatives): 156.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (61 5/8 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Purchased with funds donated by the Indigenous and Canadian Committee, 2019. 2018/3634

Barry Ace. Anishinaabe (Odawa), born 1958. *Trinity Suite: Bandolier for Charlie (In Memoriam)*. 2011-15. Mixed media (motion sensor display monitors, fabric, metal, horsehair, extension cords, mirror, plastic, capacitors and resistors). Overall: 234 × 38 × 8 cm (92 1/8 × 14 15/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Installed (McLean Centre, 2018): 207 × 95 × 53 cm (81 1/2 × 37 3/8 × 20 7/8 in.). Overall (For Charlie): 152.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (60 1/16 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (for Manitoulin Island): 158.5 × 36 × 8 cm (62 3/8 × 14 3/16 × 3 1/8 in.). Overall (My Relatives): 156.5 × 36.5 × 8 cm (61 5/8 × 14 3/8 × 3 1/8 in.). Purchased with funds donated by the Indigenous and Canadian Committee, 2019. 2018/3635



Annie Pootoogook. Inuk, 1969–2016. *Composition (Licking the Plate Clean)*. 2004–05. Colored pencil, black porous point pen, graphite on paper. Sheet: 50.4 × 66.3 cm (19 13/16 × 26 1/8 in.). Mat: 71.1 × 91.4 cm (28 × 36 in.). Purchased with the assistance of the Joan Chalmers Inuit Art Purchase Fund, 2007. © Dorset Fine Arts. 2007/23



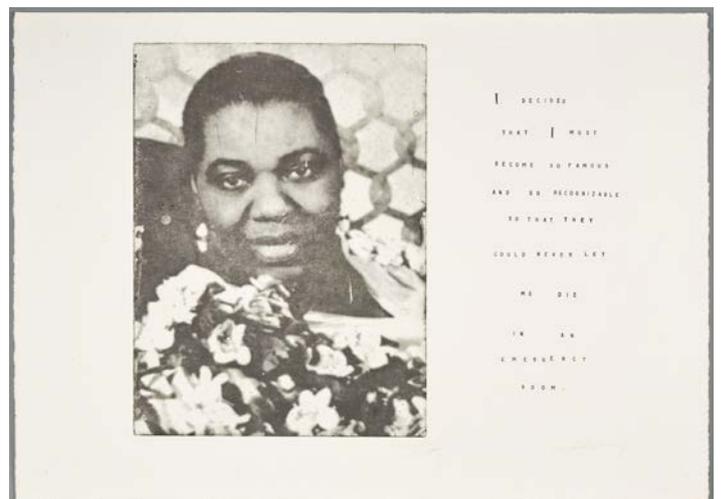
Shuinai Ashoona. Canadian, born 1961. *Untitled from The Polar World*. 2017. Colored pencil with black ink on paper. Sheet: 76.2 × 180.3 cm (30 × 71 in.). Purchase, 2017. © Dorset Fine Arts. 2017/59.7



Esmaa Mohamoud. Canadian, born 1992. *A Seat Above The Table (Warren Moon)*. 2018. Found rattan peacock chair, rattan, paint, tape, plastic, adhesive, nails. Overall: 289.6 x 66 x 66 cm (114 x 26 x 26 in.), 23.6 kg (52 lbs). Base (approximate): 172.7 x 55.9 cm (68 x 22 in.), 17.2 kg (38 lbs). Other (Chair approximate): 121.9 x 53.3 cm (48 x 21 in.), 6.4 kg (14 lbs). Purchase, with funds from Michael & Diane Hasley and Liza Mauer & Andrew Scheiner, 2019. 2019/2264



June Clark. Canadian, born United States, 1941. *Formative Triptych*. 1989. Three duratrans transparencies in lightboxes. Lightboxes (each): 111.5 x 152.2 cm (43 7/8 x 59 15/16 in.). Purchase with assistance from the Estate of P.J. Glasser, 2016. © June Clark. Photo of Bessie Smith © Carl Van Vechten Trust. 2016/43

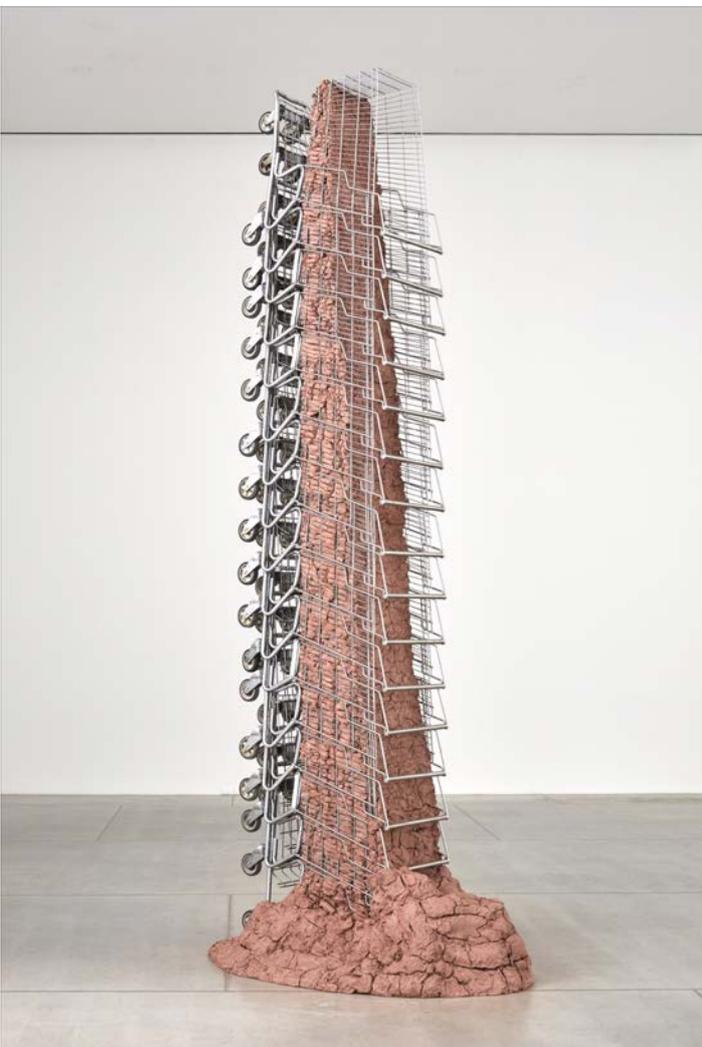


June Clark. Canadian, born United States, 1941. *Formative Triptych: Diptych 3*. 1989. Photo etching on BFK paper. Overall: 75.2 x 105.7 cm (29 5/8 x 41 5/8 in.). Gift of the artist, 2018. Photo of Bessie Smith, © Carl Van Vechten Trust. 2018/3642.3



Rebecca Belmore. Anishinaabekwe, 1960. *Fountain*. 2005. Single channel video with sound projected onto falling water. Image: 274.4 x 487.8 cm (9 x 16). Gift of Rebecca Belmore, 2018. 2018/3731

Rebecca Belmore Anishinaabekwe, 1960. *Tower*. 2018. Shopping carts, wire mesh, and clay. Overall (installed AGO 2018): 475 x 114.3 x 182.9 cm (187 x 45 x 72 in.). Purchase, with funds from the Women's Art Initiative and AGO General Acquisitions Fund, 2019. 2019/4



Haida. *Sea Captain Figure*. c. 1840. Argillite, ivory. Overall: 46.8 x 13.5 x 8 cm (18 7/16 x 5 5/16 x 3 1/8 in.). Purchased with Funds from the Estate of Mary Eileen Ash, 2008. © 2017 Art Gallery of Ontario. 2008/43

Perspective 2

Ngahiraka Mason

Independent Indigenous Curator and Visual Historian, Hira, Honolulu, Hawaii

Biography — Ngahiraka Mason is an independent curator and visual historian, with research and curatorial interests in the material culture and histories of Polynesian peoples, descendant and community relationships with museum's and collections. Mason is the former Indigenous Curator, Māori Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki, New Zealand's oldest and largest public art museum. Her exhibitions and publications focus on historical, modern, and contemporary art. Recent projects include *Dot Ī Line Ī Color* (2018), Honolulu, *Middle of Now/Here*, the inaugural Honolulu Biennial (2017) and the international touring exhibition *Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand* (2014-17). Mason lives and works in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Challenging the Narrative at Every Intersection we Meet

Ī cannot speak of how and to what extent museums in the twenty-first century recognize and incorporate the cultural leadership of First Peoples. Ī can comment on and share from direct experience where native and non-native colleagues productively intersect and discuss the places where resistance to Indigenous leadership is evident.

Two exhibition case studies Ī share today will reflect on projects Ī delivered for the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand, explaining what worked for the museum, community descendants, and tribal elders. My third case study did not progress beyond the discussion and proposal stage, and is discoursed here to show where a transformative opportunity met resistance to Indigenous community leadership.

The examples Ī share are not evaluations of right or wrong; still, they are pointers to an Aotearoa New Zealand society with shifting social and political ideologies in a presumed postcolonial and “decolonizing-the-museum” period. In bicultural Aotearoa (and globally), museums are silent about sharing power with Indigenous communities. Few are open to decolonizing and Indigenous museums; others are politically pressured or mandated to engage native peoples according to priorities, systems, and hiring policies.

My summary remarks will reflect and expand on coopted histories and storied landscapes that end up being problematic. My concluding comments will shed light on what Indigenous optimism can reveal.



Ngahiraka Mason

Case Study 1

The exhibition *Urewera Mural: Colin McCahon* (1999) was a one-painting event. The loose-canvas triptych was commissioned in 1974 to hang in a newly built Aniwanuiwa Visitor's Center and Urewera National Park headquarters in Waikaremoana, New Zealand. The region is a remote forested heartland in Tuhoē

country, the ancestral homeland of Tuhoe people, where I possess matrilineal relationships. I am Tuhoe, born in Ruatoki at the eastern gateway to Te Urewera.

On a cold, wet mid-winter night in 1997, two Tuhoe men, Te Kaha and Laurie Davies, smashed the Aniwanuiwa center's windows, setting off an alarm. The large painting *Urewera mural* was removed and driven off in a sedan before Urewera Park Ranger Geoff Mitchell arrived at the scene of the theft in time to watch car lights disappear into the dark. The artwork went underground for 15 months and resurfaced in 1998 through the agency of New Zealand Arts Patron Jennifer Gibbs and Tuhoe activist Tame Iti. The painting was returned to and received by Auckland Art Gallery.

Colin McCahon's *Urewera mural* can be contextualized in the frame of colonization and the systematic disadvantaging of Tuhoe people, as suggested by acclaimed historian Dame Judith Binney in her book *Encircled Lands: Te Urewera, 1820-1921*. Tuhoe leader Aubrey Temara described the theft as an act of choice; the activists did not hold the artwork to ransom. Before the robbery, the art world and the general public had almost forgotten *Urewera mural* existed. Nevertheless, white New Zealand was provoked by the theft of a «taonga» (national treasure) of New Zealand.

The theft produced some awareness that the commissioning process was vexed for Tuhoe elders who had recommended a Tuhoe artist be awarded the commission and were denied. I share some useful background. A post-nineteenth century result of colonization is that the Crown took for itself Te Urewera lands after "consolidating" Māori land to create European title. Between 1950 and 1980, leaders were also working to retain ownership of Te Urewera tribal lands and Lake Waikaremoana. Indeed, Te Urewera continues to be managed by the New Zealand government.

When presented with the finished commissioned painting, Tuhoe elders directed Colin McCahon to revise inappropriate text on the *Urewera mural* canvases, supplying the artist with the correct content. The artist reluctantly made changes and left some troubling words visible in the painting. The director of the Auckland Art Gallery at the time, Chris Saines, offered this insightful commentary to the New Zealand Herald newspaper in August 1998. "In the hands of a great artist such as McCahon, images like his *Urewera mural* can be meeting places even as they remain contested.»

Urewera mural was conserved by Sarah Hillary, AAG's senior painting conservator. A legal case was built against Tuhoe activists amid outcry at the theft of a 1.2 million-dollar painting. Laurie Davis was charged

with robbery and imprisoned. Te Kaha was sentenced to 200 hours of community service at the Auckland Art Gallery. The Gallery became the temporary caretaker of the artwork until a solution for the paintings future life was found.

I developed the presentation of *Urewera mural: Colin McCahon* with the support of the institution and in conversation with Tuhoe elders. I won Auckland Art Gallery's newly created Indigenous position, Kaitiaki Māori, Assistant Curator, a first in a public museum in Aotearoa. I entered the curatorial field with a highly discursive artwork, the legacy of an esteemed artist, McCahon's descendants, art museum leadership, public opinion, and my Tuhoe people, who saw I was well placed to bring their stories and voice forward.

The Tuhoe Māori Trust Board paid for the compilation of an oral (CD) archive with Tuhoe chants, sung responses to the painting, and an interview with Tuhoe artist Arnold Manaaki Wilson. The printed catalogue was supported by Patron Jennifer Gibbs. I commissioned the catalogue essays by Tuhoe leaders, the artist's son William McCahon, and historian Gordon H. Brown. *Urewera mural* went on to tour several New Zealand venues, was the topic of numerous talk shows, and the theft made national and international news. In April 2015, *Urewera mural* (now valued at 2 million dollars) was installed at Te Uru Tau Matua, the Tuhoe cultural center in Taneatua, near where I was raised.

Case Study 2

Gottfried Lindauer (1839–1926)

The international touring exhibition *Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand: The Māori Portraits* (2014–17) was my curatorial love project. Auckland Art Gallery has 63 portraits of Māori ancestors known as the Partridge Collection and painted by itinerant Bohemian artist Gottfried Lindauer. The collection also includes eight large "scenes from Māori life" pictures. A selection of these paintings with examples of Lindauer's early European portraits and depictions of Pakeha settlers were presented as a historical exhibition to acclaim at the Alte National Gallery, Museums Island, Berlin; at Pilsen, West Bohemia Gallery, the Czech Republic; Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki New Zealand; and in 2017 at the de Young Museum San Francisco.

Descendants of the artist and ancestors, community leaders, and elders were part of the group that accompanied the portraits introduction and delivery to international audiences. I worked with the artist's family and Māori descendants for the artworks to travel internationally and for reproduction permissions.

The Māori portraits are among the most requested artworks for reproduction. During my tenure at the art museum, a reproduction policy was introduced as a new museum practice to address in a small way the random appearance of the image of ancestors in souvenir outlets, on cups, plates, dish towels and the like, and also as photographic prints on canvas in museum shops. Reproduction requests now require written permission from descendants or descendant communities to reproduce images of Māori ancestors. Approval for reproduction is given or denied by the Maori curator. This is an excerpt from AAG's website.

“Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki is committed to respecting intellectual property rights, as well as expressions of Māori culture in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We ask you to do the same. You're encouraged to use images as a way of remembering and sharing your experience of our exhibitions, but the reproduction of portraits as commercial items or the use of the images in a way that would cause offence is strictly prohibited. The Gallery is grateful to all those descendants who have given permission for images of their ancestors to appear on this website.”

Case Study 3

The exhibition proposal I now discuss did not eventuate. The 1898 painting *The arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand* by British colonial painter Louis John Steel and second-generation New Zealander and portraitist Charles F. Goldie is the subject of this case study.

I presented the idea to hang the *arrivals* painting upside-down to Auckland Art Gallery management in mid-2010 as a follow-through request in April 2010, from elder Jim Nicholls from Ngāti Maru. Nicholls was an elder on the Hauraki Māori Trust Board, Hauraki on the Coromandel Coast of the North Island, and we intersected on a research trip to Wellington, where he presented this request. “We want you to hang ‘that’ painting upside-down.” He didn't name the painting, but I knew to which artwork he was referring. Nicholls explained his appeal was on behalf of Māori elders (he was part of the tribal leaders' network) and told me this was something they had discussed over the years.

I proposed to hang the painting in this way as an intervention and as part of the permanent display of the New Zealand historical collection. The timing for this presentation was the re-opening of the Gallery,

post-redevelopment in 2011. I was twice refused, wrote a discussion paper, consulted community-wide, talked with artists, historians, and university professionals, Wananga (Māori universities), and my family. This is an excerpt from my discussion paper.

“Māori elders believe the painting represents hidden prejudices and truths, and by turning the narrative/painting literally on its head, the meaning and historiography of the artwork will inspire correction and bring forward new discussions and responses to the painting. It would attract Māori visitation, which is a goal of the Gallery. There is a precedence for hanging historic artwork upside down in a museum/gallery environment. Afro-American, artist, and curator Fred Wilson (USA) introduced an alternative display method to US museum audiences twenty years ago. He did so to address how museums consciously or unconsciously reinforce racist beliefs and behaviors towards Indigenous people, their art, art history, and human history. Wilson has hung portraits of the politically powerful upside down, exhibited skeletons of ‘friendly natives’ in glass cases identified only as ‘Someone's Sister’ or ‘Someone's Father.’ He has labeled cultural artifacts ‘Removed from India to Europe, early 20th century.’ For the mixed-media installation Colonial Collection (1990), Wilson gagged and blindfolded African masks with French and British flags.”

While I did not have the influence of Fred Wilson, I do resemble the request mandated by elders and believe that the offer from the community was an act of radical leadership and a moment for museum transformation and relationship building with its Māori communities.

Summary

Case study 1. Urewera mural shows how a political setting and activist-led theft can inspire a public museum and tribal people to meet at the many points of difference, and inspire new ways of responding to misunderstanding, and inherited injustices between Tuhoe and colonizer. We can say the museum supported Māori leadership and was responsive to the aspirations of Tuhoe. They advanced an opportunity for Māori in the museum setting. The artist's reputation was enhanced, the museum's standing extended in the sector, and the painting resides with Tuhoe people who can tell their own story of *Urewera mural*.

Case study 2. The international tour and publication of Gottfried Lindauer's Māori portraits brought awareness to a museum collection, and Lindauer's prolific output of painted Māori ancestors are recognized and loved. The museum agreed to shift and pave the way forward for engaging and collaborating with descendant communities through the permission-seeking process for the paintings to travel internationally and for their image to be reproduced. We can say that Auckland Art Gallery promoted engagement and participation with Māori communities, including informed procedures that were mutually beneficial. They strengthened the relationship between Māori descendants and the museum. The museum achieved international acclaim through sharing a historical collection that had never left New Zealand's shores before this moment.

Case study 3: The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand painting was not hung upside down at the Auckland Art Gallery. The artwork entered the gallery as a winning picture for a competition to show a settler understanding of Maori, or more correctly, to historicize settler narratives as if they had witnessed the arrival of Māori in New Zealand. Information is now shared with the public about errors in the artwork, Indigenous knowledge is now part of talking about the painting. These stories are shared proactively by gallery guides as part of improving art education.

Conclusion

Against waves of colonial narratives that coopt stories of the Indigenous past, my storied presentation recognizes native optimism. I do not speak on behalf of the Māori people. However, I contend that Tuhoe people bear optimism forward, and this is demonstrated each time we/I engage and share our human histories with museums and the world. *Urewera mural* commission is an example of Tuhoe working with the circumstances of the time, and elders were as single-minded as Colin McCahon was about whose understanding of Te Urewera should prevail.

The theft of the painting, the learnings accrued by the art world, art history, Indigenous knowledge, and modern discourse would not have been possible without a positive outlook to see the best outcome for Tuhoe by Tuhoe. Museums are people-serving institutions, and a "one-truth" epistemology doesn't cut it in Tuhoe communities.

If museums are interested in context, and if decolonizing and Indigenizing museums is a real intention, it is best when it is collaborative, with transparent foundations, values, and guiding principles

that are connected to ancestral practice. As Tewa scholar Greg Cajete states in his acclaimed book *Native Science*, the community is the medium and the message! It has always been this way, and communality or collective emergence is needed if we are to coexist into the future.

Hiring Indigenous curators is also not sustainable for Indigenous communities. It takes us out of our community groups, to focus on museum priorities, with limited forays into areas that matter to us — such as the case studies I have shared today. The bottom line of the museum is to exist and serve the museum structure and establishment.

Where we intersect and how we interface with museums is a teetering and repetitive cycle of disappointment. Radical transformation and Indigeneity thrive in life-centered communities. We cannot say the same about the institutional museum framework and epistemologies affecting Indigenous peoples and objects. Simply put, the institutions do not go far enough to engage and serve native peoples. We could also say that despite the outstanding examples of work and leadership inside Indigenous society, museum leadership and the sector continue to render Indigenous leadership invisible.

My great grandmother Pihitahi Wharetuna left an *ohaki* (her dying words) as instruction and reminder for her descendants to strive for and come up with solution sets for the continuity of community. Tuhoe people hold their own status separate from the construct of "diversity" and "inclusion" in contemporary Aotearoa, New Zealand. In my experience, Tuhoe people are optimistic: we create new expectations, we improve results. Whatever is good for Indigenous people will sustain all of us going forward. It is time to see Indigenous peoples as allies who differently envisage solutions we both are seeking.

Noreira, kia ora and thank you!

Panel Discussion 1

Stephen Gilchrist

Associate Lecturer, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

Biography — Belonging to the Yamatji people of the Ìnggarda language group of northwest Western Australia, Stephen Gilchrist is Associate Lecturer of Indigenous Art at the University of Sydney. Before this, he taught at New York University, Sydney. He is a writer and curator who has worked with the Indigenous Australian collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2003–05), the British Museum, London (2008), the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2005–10) and the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College (2011–13). He was a Curatorial Attaché for the 20th Biennale of Sydney under the Artistic Directorship of Dr Stephanie Rosenthal in 2015–16. From 2012–16, Gilchrist was the Australian Studies Visiting Curator at the Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University (2012–16) where he curated *Everywhen: the eternal present in Indigenous Art from Australia*. Gilchrist has curated numerous exhibitions in Australia and the United States and has written extensively on Indigenous Art from Australia.

Panel Conclusions by Stephen Gilchrist

The panel discussed the ways in which Indigenous sovereignty is both expressed and sometimes delimited within institutions through curatorial practices. Indigenous participation has clearly reshaped art and cultural institutions to better represent Indigenous art and culture, but there is often a tension between recognizing Indigenous value in Indigenous terms within non-Indigenous institutions. The value of Indigenous art cannot be wholly determined by the institution, although the institutionalization of Indigenous art has contributed to registering its value in cross-cultural contexts. We spoke about how Indigenous curators must demonstrate differential systems of value in ways that are culturally resonant and uplifting for Indigenous people. The panel conceded that it can be important for Indigenous art to be included within institutions, but that there is also a power in the margins and being outside the institution.

The panel discussed the relevancy of theories and practices of decolonization and Indigenousization, and how they can serve Indigenous communities and museums at the same time. With the renewed urgency around how institutions engage with Indigenous art and culture, it is necessary to be attentive to Indigenous leadership and Indigenous-cantered thinking, both inside and outside the institution. It was observed that Indigenous curators are important, but they must be connected to and not taken away from communities. You can't have Indigenous art without Indigenous people.



Stephen Gilchrist

The panel dealt swiftly with the arbitrary distinction between the interpretation of Indigenous art through art history or anthropology, and signaled to the audience the problematics of such a reductive binary. We briefly discussed the recent debates around the definition of a museum but felt that the idea of a

universal museum is less important than a museum that is open and conducive to cultural specificity. We spoke about the importance of creating spaces for and not just of Indigeneity. We discussed the different configurations of Indigenous sovereignty in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, Canada, and Australia, and how this impacts our communities.

Despite these differences, relationships are our politics and there is a need for more Indigenous gatherings that do not conflate togetherness with sameness.

Day 2, Saturday
November 15

*The Future
of Collections*

Keynote 2

Franklin Sirmans

Director, Pérez Art Museum Miami, USA

Biography — Franklin Sirmans has been the Director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) from fall 2015. Since coming to PAMM, he has overseen the acquisition of more than a thousand works of art by donation or purchase. At PAMM, Sirmans has pursued his vision of PAMM as “the people’s museum,” representing a Miami lens, by strengthening existing affiliate groups such as the PAMM Fund for African American Art, the International Women’s Committee, and creating the Latin American and Latinx Art Fund. Sirmans has organized *Toba Khedoori* (2017) and he was co-curator of *The World’s Game: Fútbol and Contemporary Art* (2018). Prior to his appointment he was the Department Head and Curator of Contemporary Art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) from 2010 until 2015. At LACMA, Sirmans organized *Toba Khedoori*; *Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada*; *Variations: Conversations in and around Abstract Painting*; *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game*; and *Ends and Exits: Contemporary Art from the Collections of LACMA and The Broad Art Foundation*. From 2006 to 2010 he was Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Menil Collection in Houston where he organized several exhibitions including *NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith*; *Maurizio Cattelan: Is Their Life Before Death?*; and *Vija Celmins: Television and Disaster, 1964–1966*. From 2005 to 2006 Sirmans was a curatorial advisory committee member at MoMA/PS1. He was the Artistic Director of Prospect.3, New Orleans from 2012 until 2014. He won the 2007 David C. Driskell Prize, administered by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.



Franklin Sirmans

A View from the Center of the Americas

When considering the Future of Collections, context might not be everything but it is certainly key. I’m going to talk a little about some contexts from my experiences and observations on collecting and then look at some recent news in museum collecting.

I have been in Miami for the last four years, as director, after working as a curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for almost six years and before that at the Menil Collection, Houston. The LACMA is an encyclopedic museum, founded in 1910, with over 100,000 objects. We worked from a history that included a dearth of modern and contemporary works in comparison to its other more significant holdings in European and Asian art. The foundation of the nearby Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles came about in the mid-1980s, in part, due to LACMA’s weak commitment to contemporary art collecting. With that background, we strategically collected with a globalist position that could match the nature of the encyclopedic museum. Trying to bring the past to the present by engagement with contemporary objects and vice versa. At the Menil Collection, which opened in 1987, there was a foundation set by the founders that encouraged an eclectic approach to mixing contemporary

amongst the strengths in Byzantine, African, and Oceanic art. Strategically, we added incrementally to a 10,000-piece collection gifted by the namesake founders, favoring the treasures of the past.

Now, at the Perez Art Museum Miami, we collect voraciously in modern and contemporary art as we attempt to build a collection that will support and further define the museum's identity. In 35 years, we have had three different names and two drastically different spaces in different parts of the city.

"In 1960, the city of Miami was about 75 percent 'Anglo.' (In Dade County, if you are white but not Hispanic, you are Anglo, even if you really are Jewish, Greek, Italian, or whatever.) In 1987, the Anglo population was down to 15 percent. The other 85 percent are American blacks, Haitians, Salvadorans, Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, Nicaraguans, and others — but mostly Cubans." The city is now 70% Hispanic or Latino and 75% of us speak a language other than English at home. It is decidedly Caribbean. And, we have always had a dedicated group of board members with a passion for the arts of the African diaspora and Latinx and Latin American art. We have amplified those areas with affiliate groups and added the Caribbean as the focal points of our collection strategy. We like to think of ourselves as being at the crossroads of north and south, while representing a capital of the Americas.

As we approach a conversation on the future of collecting it is perhaps useful to note some very brief moments in our history. The desire to create and the equally humanist urge to collect and protect go back to Mesopotamia and the third millennium BC, at least.

While personal collecting is something that can be traced back over ages around the world, private collections — as we know them — started turning into public museums in the seventeenth century in Europe, such as the Ashmolean and not until the early nineteenth in the United States, with Charles Wilson Peale and family; and a decade later here in Sydney without the single patron figure, or at least one who thought their name should be on the building. All of these shared a desire to collect and preserve in the fields of art, but also science and natural history. The emphasis on art alone follows by the end of the nineteenth century with the advent of modernism, placing us only a little more than 125 years removed from a beginning of sorts. And, yet, we all feel as though we are approaching points of crisis in what we can and cannot, or should and should not, do as collecting museums in the twenty-first century.

What is the future of collections in a world that privileges an art experience as an EXPERIENTIAL part of retail? Where shopping malls have art

installations and neighborhoods are structured to accommodate the art that used to be considered unlawful. "Millennials are 73% more motivated to visit a shopping center if it has a leisure or entertainment experience. 55-73 year olds are only 46% more likely."

These two places, Aventura Mall and Wynwood, Miami, are somewhat close to home, but the idea that we, as museums, are competing with other commercial resources for potential audiences is a fact for all of us around the world. Ironically, the art espoused by Wynwood Walls is actually the art of the street: the art that has been so often disqualified from "art" spaces. At this point, would a graffiti artist even want to be in our museum collection?

Growing up in NYC and it's suburb, Westchester in the 1980s, nothing was better than the style, color, line, and form of a work of advanced graffiti art.

ICOM's recent decision to present a new definition of a "museum," to re-assess our vocational site after almost 50 years of the usage of the present definition is another important reminder that many of us are struggling to figure out who and what we are in the nascent twenty-first century, two decades since it began, 20% done.

If we ponder the fact that we are talking about a short history in the period of time since museums first became places for the public to come and think about existence and potentially each other in the late nineteenth century — in the U.S., that would be only thirty years since the abolition of slavery and not too far removed from the origins of the first wave of museums during the transatlantic slave trade and all the other atrocities around the world in that time. You can imagine that, as a brown person, I may have a conflicted view on the origins of art collecting in the sphere of the Euro-American point of view (from which I happily work), especially with its roots in the seizure of land and the colonization of humans, often in the name of another branch of supposed humanist thought — religion.

The transatlantic slave trade itself, with its tactics of registration, labeling, storage, and conserving, to say nothing of the ensuing auctioning of human beings, can be seen as another kind of collecting, with an eerily similar structure to that of the contemporary art market. To bring us forward and back to the present. Very recently, let us consider the young artist Tschabalala Self, who I'm happy to say is in our museum's collection.

In 2015, just four years ago, Self's paintings were selling for approximately \$10,000 at an art gallery in New York City. The recent sale of *Out of Body* (her appropriately titled painting and the title of



Image 1. Tschabalala Self, *Out of Body*, 2015.

the show from which it first appeared) for US\$471,000 in Christie's London summer sale (June 25, 2019) is remarkable. For her part, Self, a 29-year-old from New York, said:

"I view the auction as a tasteless spectacle, and I am shocked that the irony of such an event is lost on so many people. As an American descendant of slavery, auctions have a particular historical meaning and politics. I am disheartened that black figures I have produced and fashioned are now sold and traded within a similar context."



Glenn Ligon, *Condition Report*, 2000. Tate.

Artist Glenn Ligon poignantly and poetically makes the point in this work from 2000. The objective science of art conservation is juxtaposed with Ligon's original image, which he in turn appropriated from the signs used at a Civil Rights march in Memphis from 1968. A conceptual or theoretical body is here for the dissecting.

In a system where the *modus operandi* is *framing and hanging*, it is not hard to fathom that collecting means different things to different people, and that in the case of institutional collecting in the future, *context* will definitely be key, as we seek to add new audiences for art.

The case of Tschabalala Self also raises another crucial point for museums in the twenty-first century. As we all seek to create a place for diverse audiences it is often important to visually show, and present, your audience *inside* the museum, on the walls, to create a sense of belonging. But, before looking further at the idea of diversity and the political power of representation in the future of collecting, I'd like to point to one more object that illustrates a potentially uneasy stance that a person of color might have to *being hung and framed*.

Performance has long been a place of resistance for artists of color and women and remains a viable means of troubling the relationship, between artist and art market. The Guerilla Girls have done this via generations of female artists who take on the moniker of artist's past and don the head masks of gorillas.

*James Luna and the Coco Fusco piece.
Artists as objects of display...*

The art critic Maddie Phinney wrote for the art journal *Art Critical*, several years ago, that "David Hammons's quietly shocking *In the Hood* consists of the hood cut from a green sweatshirt, hung on the wall. The work recalls decapitation, the suspicious image of the hooded black man so often seen on facial composite sketches, and even evokes the Ku Klux Klan. If the curators were to initiate a conversation that relates the art practices of 1993 with the political landscape of today, the (vigilante) shooting of the black teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012 would have been an obvious parallel to draw with this piece. Hammons's simple poignant work is imbued with suspicion, fear, and the simultaneous concealing and exposure of identity."

Of course, beyond the nuance and complexity of one of the most important works of art ever created, in my mind; the gripes of the artist and the well-known specter of the artist as young, fresh blood ready for the proverbial hunt. And, away from the historical conversation around collecting as a project,



David Hammons, *In the Hood*, 1993. Tilton Gallery.

the meaning of such prices and the quickness with which prices may rise, contains multitudes of questions for us to consider in the landscape of today's museums. As collecting museums with Collections Strategies and Acquisitions Committees — and in some cases dedicated funds to buy modern and contemporary art — how the hell are we supposed to participate in a market where we are more than likely priced out by private collectors?



Parker Curry with Amy Sherard's painting of Michelle Obama

Although made from oil and fabric collage on canvas and measuring 6 x 5 feet or 183 x 152 centimeters, Self's work depicts black women. And, in terms of collecting in the United States, that has certainly been a focal point recently, along with the work of many other black artists and not necessarily those who paint figuratively alone.

The question of representation, both in the form of subject matter and the maker of the subject, the artist, has led to interesting debates over the course of the last few years. Artists like Self, along with Amy Sherald, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Firelei Baez, Lynette, and others have found their work to be sought after by collectors and museums alike. It is great art with great scholarship first and foremost. As museums seek to "improve" their collections for the 2020s, the calls for diversity seem to be at the necessary forefront of the conversation. Time will tell. Literally, a more colorful future — and certainly one with a more equitable gender representation — is on the way.

As we all believe, art is powerful stuff and it can be thrilling to watch it do its work on another human being. Seeing oneself contains multitudes.

Perhaps it is worth noting that the path forward for the future of collections must allow for a level of human understanding that is expansive. That even mundane issues around race, gender, and historical *underrepresentation* and *misrepresentation* should be embraced with an open mind. In the confines of our art historical circles that sounds easy. Yet, we know the numbers say we need drastic changes for survival sake.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts recently opened *Women Take the Floor*, to honestly present its dismal collecting history of women between 2008 and 2018, and prepare for a brighter future. Of all art acquired in that period, 3,788 of 90,215 works were by women: 4%. A recent study by Artnet found that the number for all American museums wasn't much different but rose to 11%.

Math and statistics researchers at Williams College in Massachusetts recently examined more than 40,000 artworks in the collections of 18 museums across the US, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Art Institute of Chicago, to analyze the gender and ethnic diversity of their holdings. They estimate that 85 percent of artists represented in these collections are white and 87 percent are men and that 76% are white men. So, in order to reflect current communities, most museums would have a good deal of work to do.

One of the great outcomes of a 2015 Mellon Study of Museums in the United States, in collaboration with the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) is that they set out to quantify what we all know with demographic data: in this case, not the objects, but *the people*, specifically, the lack of representative diversity in professional museum roles.

In line with the Williams study, the Mellon research found that the percentage of white males in curatorial positions was almost equal to the *propensity* for white male artists in museum collections. “The results revealed that people who identify as ‘non-Hispanic white’ hold 84 percent of the leadership, curatorial, conservation, and programming positions that perform the key mission-oriented educational, intellectual, and programmatic work of museums.”

After that study, the Mellon Foundation co-organized an undergraduate curatorial fellowship program at six of the country’s largest museums. That has since been augmented by a curatorial fellowship supported by the Ford Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, specifically to Diversify Art Museum Leadership (Initiative), at many more museums and art centers.

The Perez has been a beneficiary of both. We currently have a DAMLI fellow, Naiomy Guerrero, and our Ford Foundation fellow, Ade Omotosho (who was also a Mellon fellow), recently completed a two-year stint at the museum. The daily interactions with our curatorial department and wider staff have given them at the very least valuable insight into how museums go about collecting art for the future, and how they might have a hand in that future.

The Future of Collections is Editing! Or... Sell High Buy Low!

I was surprised when I heard, last year, that the Baltimore Museum of Art was going to sell the work of seven white male artists, including Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg, in order to diversify its holdings. That is certainly one answer to the question of *The Future of Collections*. Pruning and editing! Sell certain works from the collection in order to beef up other areas, if, of course, you are in a position to do that. In 2018, the Baltimore Museum of Art did exactly that “to strengthen and fill gaps within its collection,” as the announcement read. For the record, the BMA was founded in 1914, and according to its website, has 95,000 objects in the collection. So, maybe it’s a good time. Shinique Smith is a successful artist who grew up in Baltimore going to the BMA. She said:

“These men that we are talking about deaccessioning, I looked at them growing up because I had to. This move is a correction and, for the demographics in Baltimore, it makes sense. The museum should be for everybody and should reflect the diversity of Baltimore.”

For the record, Baltimore is 63% black. But, I’m at a museum founded in 1984 that didn’t begin collecting until 1994, and now has almost 3,000 objects in its collection, a collection that has doubled in the last four years. For us, “deaccessioning” is still a little bit of a dirty word.

Yet, shall we consider agreements with our donors now that will allow us to potentially rid ourselves of the piece in the future, assuming someone else actually wants it? Can I tell someone that I really love this important work they are donating but after a certain amount of time we may sell it to improve the collection? It may take bold moves such as this to confront the future of museum collecting. I’m thinking 5,000 objects is a good mark... and every time we add over that number, we should deaccession something.

This year the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art sold a painting by Mark Rothko for US\$50 million, “to address art historical gaps.” They ended up buying works by great artists such as Rebecca Belmore, Frank Bowling, Leonora Carrington, Alma Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, and Haegue Yang, among others, all women and/or people of color. Obviously, when selling a US\$50 million Rothko you can buy a pretty good amount of art if you’d like, and chances are if you are buying to address issues of diversification, then the impact on the expansion of the collection will surely be felt.

Also, in 2019, the Art Gallery of Ontario sold 17 works by A.Y. Jackson to diversify its holdings by funding the acquisition of “artists who are less represented in the institution’s encyclopedic collection.” AGO Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Julian Cox, stated clearly that “art collections are dynamic and require refinement over time.” Missions and statements tailored for the present are awesome but mean nothing without changes in personnel to greater reflect the present and the future. So, kudos to Wanda as Curator of Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, where she started in 2016.

Unsurprisingly, these moves at all three museums were all preceded by changes in personnel, that led to more women and people of color being part of the curatorial process.

The Future of Collections is New and Diverse Curatorial Talent!

Also, in Canada, more recently, the National Gallery (founded in 1880) opened *Ábadakone* (AH-bada-kwanay), the Algonquin word for continuous fire, just last week. That show is a natural extension to their deep reimagining of the Indigenous galleries at the museum a couple years prior. In the process of creating an updated, more inclusive vision, the National Gallery “established two Indigenous Advisory Committees of curators, academics, knowledge-keepers and other recognized authorities to provide expertise and guidance on interpretation, display protocols and community engagement.” This reminds us of how often we, as institutional leaders, state we are for changes to canons and diversifying collections for the future. This is tough work to do without the right personnel and expertise.

The Future of Collections is Collaborative and Passion driven!

Shared works: e.g., PAMM and LACMA acquired a major work by Stan Douglas together.

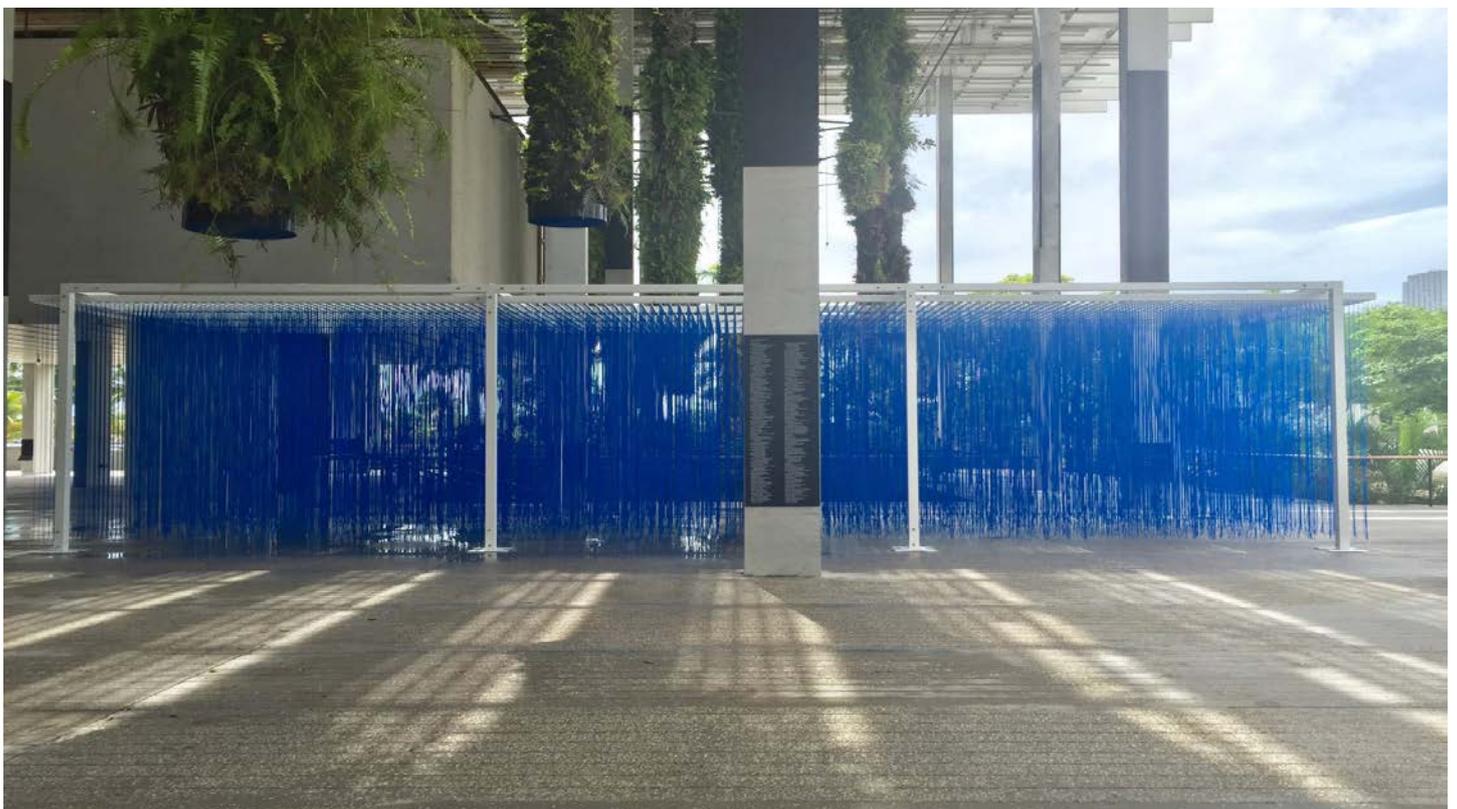
The Future of Collections growth is unsustainable, but...

If the Future of Collections involves editing and potentially selling works of art desired by the market then the chances are we are adding more objects for museum storage, insurance, and conservation in the future.

For large institutions around the world, the future of collections also means renting the collection to other institutions, which helps finance the continuous growth while also sharing the wealth of material culture they are able to accumulate.

At the Perez, where we have a crowded in-house storage unit and two rental spaces, it is hard to fathom how we will continue collecting in the future. We have loaned works of art as we all do, but we have not yet had the opportunity to loan a large segment of the collection, but that will change soon. Because of our emphasis on the art that surrounds us geographically, we have built a significant collection of Cuban art, which we are now packaging for an exhibition.

Having doubled the size of the collection in the last four years, even for us it’s a major issue as the budget line for storage, insurance, and conservation grows every year, whether or not attendance and revenues increase. That is our state of being and many of us are in the same or similar positions. As part of our acquisition meeting discussions the



Jesús Rafael Soto, *Penetrable BBL Blue 2/8*.

impact on storage is an important focal point in consideration of acquiring objects. It is a long discussion at every meeting.

Another issue with sustainability regarding the future of collections is of course climate change. I live in a city on the water, which, like so many others around the world, is going under faster than it should be. Of course, we also worry for friends at museums like the Getty, where fires are burning close by, and in Venice, which is under water again.

It is a “state of the art” building designed by Herzog & de Meuron with Christine Binswanger as the lead architect. It is informed by the vernacular architecture that grew out of necessity of the environment. Stiltsville. That simple gesture to combat high tides is the hallmark of our building in an attempt to combat climate change. We’ve weathered a couple of big storms and a hurricane and a half. And, although I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else when the next hurricane comes but still...

Sustainable or not, right now, one of the immediate futures of collections is to keep building more space for presentation and investing more of your budget in storage, while, of course, looking for innovative ways in which to make storage a more visible and essential part of the museum-going experience.

Now, we are trying urgently to document what we have in order to create a website that is viable and exploring VR and AR experiences to capture the love we share for the objects in the collection so that they may be shared for at least a sustainable future. They are nothing without the audience. And hopefully there is a meaningful experience to be had with the object or the avatar in the future.

Thank you.

Perspective 3

Lisa Reihana

Ngāpuhi artist, Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Biography — Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi) was born in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1964. She holds a Masters in Design from Unitec Institute of Technology, and Bachelor of Fine Art from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University. Reihana is at the forefront of lens-based arts, and her work investigates Indigenous and feminist issues. Her solo exhibitions include: *Cinematica*, Campbelltown Art Centre, Australia (2018); *Lisa Reihana: Emissaries* 57th Venice Biennale (2017); *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, NZ (2015); *Mai i te aroha, ko te aroha*, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, NZ (2008); and *Digital Marae*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ (2007). Her work has featured in: Sharjah Biennale 14, Al Mureijah Square, Sharjah, UAE (2019); Adelaide/International, Samstag Museum, Australia (2019); *Oceania*, Musee du Quai Branly, Paris, France (2019) and Royal Academy, London, England (2018); *APT 9QAGOMA*, Brisbane, Australia (2018); *Pacific Sisters: Fashion Activists*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, NZ (2018); 1st Honolulu Biennial, Hawaii (2017); *Tai Whetuki — House of Death*, Redux in The Walters Prize, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, NZ (2016); *Close Encounters: The Next 500 Years Plug In*, ICA, Winnipeg, Canada (2011); and *Global Feminisms*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA (2007). To acknowledge her contribution to art and culture, Reihana was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2018. She lives and works in Auckland and actively participates in the stewardship of cultural and teaching institutions.

Lady Data Wrangler and the Wild West of pixels...

1. I am a Nga Puhi woman whose tribal connections are to Pukerata te Marae, Puhanga te Maunga, Ngatokimatawhaorua taku waka, Otaua te awa...

I acknowledge the Tangata tuturu o tenei whenua, Cadigal people of the Eora Nation.

May my mountains greet your mountains, may my descendants recognize your descendants, and when our futures become entangled, may they be productive, supportive, and generous.

My sincere thanks to CIMAM, MCA, and all the staff and people who made this gathering possible.

It is a privilege to be addressing so many friends and colleagues, familiar faces. I am here to address you as an artist — and it is relationships, and the support you arts professionals, directors, and curators demonstrate that feeds the ensuing collaborations.

In this talk I will touch upon making, collections, and the commissioning process.

2. Homi Bhabha describes the third space which “gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.” In this “in-between” space, new cultural identities are formed, reformed, and are



constantly in a state of becoming, which provides a creative edge.

Perhaps Bhabha's description could also be co-opted to describe the ever-evolving technological developments that are constantly reinventing themselves.

It is this space that I operate, inspired by 1980s music videos to utilize these exciting new cinematic tools and learn about my culture, denied by state schools and disconnected by an urban upbringing.

3. Making IPOV has taken twelve years to complete and has created many firsts, opened doors, and extended research opportunities. I have been assisted by many curators along the way who have extended the work.

Rhana Devenport, provided institutional support in her previous role as Director AAG, but more importantly it was her personal support and belief in the project.

There are so many examples of how different people have supported, aided, presented, and co-opted IPOV. Here I describe just a few examples:

Michael Degastino opened the doors to enable the inclusion of Aboriginal content, to record Cadigal people, a theatre space to film in, elders to guide me, wonderful staff to ensure it happened, and in a vibrant community that is Western Sydney.

HOMA own a set of *Les sauvage de la Mer Pacifique*, the French scenic wallpaper that inspired the creation of IPOV. Captain Cook's death in Hawaii meant this presentation was going to be loaded. In fact, it was very special, a pan-tribal *powhiri* or welcome ceremony hosted by local Hawaiian's was, surprisingly a first and remains a highlight. Ngahiraka Mason helped broker this process. Many hundreds of people were in attendance. Local Hawaiians led the opening chant, with responses from Maori, Cook Islanders, and Samoans. I hope this inspirational moment is not a one-off.

For the KUMU Museum in Tallinn, IPOV offered a platform to show illustrations of Estonian peoples, as imagined through the eyes of Russians and Germans, and in turn shine a light on their colonization. Something often overlooked and misunderstood.

As an artist, my concern for IPOV is that it is being historicized; it is a contemporary work that looks at indigenous cultures and issues. So, I am thrilled that AGO are showing it at the contemporary center of the First Nations Gallery. I'd like to acknowledge the collegiality displayed by Wanda Nanibush for her hospitality in making space for the work in AGO's Indigenous gallery; the curator Julie Nagam and her connection to Jason Ryle from imagineNativ; and



Lisa Reihana Emissaries, 2018. John Curtin Gallery, Perth. Photo: Brad Coleman

Candice Hopkins whose inaugural Toronto Biennale includes another connected work, TWHODR.

4. *Emissaries*, John Curtin Gallery, Perth. In 1976, the Yamatji man Ernie Dingo and the Noongar/Yamatji musician Richard Walley performed what is claimed as Australia's first ceremonial contemporary welcome to the country. Walley performed the welcome to the country, opening *Emissaries*, alongside a Maori *kapa haka* group. This meeting of cultures and melding of protocols develops dialogue and understanding.

Chris Malcolm curated IPOV and worked with the Kerry Stokes collection to extend it and include Joseph Banks's specimen cabinets & historic illustrations. Chris has brokered many important connections to many different communities and people in Perth.



Lisa Reihana Emissaries, 2018. John Curtin Gallery, Perth. Photo: Brad Coleman

5. The accelerating rates of change in technology, along with the demand upon museums to be not only socially responsive and engaged but effective cultural and economic agents arguably intensifies the museum's necessary sensitivity to context and a culturally diverse demographic.



Lisa Reihana, *Storyteller*, 2019

What roles and responsibilities can museums play? Is it to ensure the safety of IP for artists and communities? I'm often shocked by the sheer number of audience members filming the work, ready for upload onto social media platforms. How do I feel about this? Sometimes flattered, sometimes not. But the digital cat is out of the bag.

How do museums protect their audiences? I'm thinking to a future time when a warning may be required stating that images of deceased persons may appear in the work, ensuring merchandising is culturally appropriate.

6. I am a fine arts film-maker. I straddle the art world and the film world. I know that appropriately crediting cast and crew is problematic when presenting a seamless looping video in an art gallery context where traditional end-credits signal the story's end. To recognize my collaborators I use my website to provide full credits and ensure catalogues print a full list or have URL information.

IPOV was an extremely technical work to produce, and its particularities have translated into its installation. I work with an Eidotech — a German video company who specialize in back-end design through to equipment hire and installation. It is expensive to bring in a third-party company, putting it beyond the reach of some galleries, but as an artist trying to maintain the quality of delivery, while producing new works, their input brings much relief

for me and museum staff. To accession this work is not for the faint-hearted. This lists what a collecting institution receives. IPOV 10 TB CONTENTS (Archival files) 96,000 15K .tif Ubiquitous format

IPOV 2 TB CONTENTS (Deliverable files)

1. 5x 1080P with 25% overlap — ProRes 422 (Master playable files)
2. 5x 1080P — with 25% overlap — HAP codec (GPU system)
3. 5x 1080P — with 25% overlap — h.264 in MOV container (Brightsign)
4. ProRes 422 single UHD grid with embedded 8-channel audio (4 x 1080P with 20% overlap for Blackmagic Hyperdeck)
5. 8 channel — Master audio file 17-23 meter projection
6. 2 channel — Master audio file stereo playback file.
7. 8 channel — audio channels guide file

Due to the scale and inherent future proofing of this work, it took a further two years to iron out the small faults still in the work shown at the Venice Biennale.

The Patrons of Auckland Art Gallery purchased IPOV sight unseen, and waited a further five years before I delivered these completed files to them, earlier this year. I am grateful for their faith in me.

Fine Arts Museum San Francisco (de Young) and LACMA co-purchased the work.

7. Gaining a certain level of recognition and success, the pressure is on to keep upping the ante. The question constantly asked on the first night IPOV screened was “what’s next?”

The pressure is to deliver new works, better and sooner, but what does that entail?

I’d argue that there is just as much innovation taking place in museums and galleries, as they have better funded cinema counterparts.

New-media and non-standard formats are difficult to wrangle and produce, so I fully appreciate the pain galleries face.

I always set myself technical challenges and largely underwrite my video projects.

One issue I face is the budget. Just as worrying is being unsure of delivery timelines. When asked how long a work is going to take, I often don’t know, as it is frequently driven by production costs.

Nomads of the Sea received support from the Sharjah Biennale, CNZ, Jan Warbuton Trust, Weta Group, Wheke Producers (Selina Joe and Whetu Fala).

8 + 9. Video shoot in Wellington, the first short film ever filmed in the Weta Workshops. In less than six weeks I had to operate using known cinema production methodologies, write scripts film people understand, set up a film company and production office, plus registering for PAYE to deal with a cast and crew of 50+ people. This is a 3D film shot in Te Reo Maori. I am not a native speaker, but it was incredibly important to work with appropriate language experts to make this story work.

This image shows where heavy data procurement begins, 2 x 6K cameras strapped together, with a third 6K camera recording above the stage set. We are talking about 18K image acquisition. Exciting, but an editing headache. I am also pitching this to film festivals, so that I am eligible for funding from NZFC. The problem is that 3D is no longer in favor, and requires careful oversight of the installation process.



Lisa Reihana, *Nomads of the Sea*, 2019. 4-channel 3D UHD video: multi-channel audio, steel, lighting installation with sculptural components, 19 minutes; dimensions variable. Installation view: Sharjah Biennial 14, Sharjah Art Foundation, 2019. Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation and Creative New Zealand, Nga Aho Whakaari, Te Taura Whiri Maori Language Commission and Jan Warburton Charitable Trust. Co-produced by Artprojects and Reihanamations Ltd. Courtesy of the artist and Artprojects, Auckland, New Zealand. Photo: Sharjah Art Foundation

10. *Nomads of the Sea*, presented at Sharjah Biennale earlier this year, and it will screen in the Sydney Biennale, 2020. The script and conceptual development were assisted by attending Storylab hosted by the imagineNative Film Festival.

Some indigenous organizations actively develop indigenous New Media projects: both imagineNative and The Sundance Institute run New Frontier New Media Storylabs.

11. Similar to many international competitions, Aotearoa/New Zealand utilizes a competitive process. It is quite a difficult process to go through, everyone knows everyone in New Zealand.

It is widely expected that cultural values are recognized, this is true for Auckland Council who understand best practice, working with local Maori iwi. The best experience I can share is working with Aotea Centre on a public artwork for their civic building. They engaged directly so I did not have to go through a competitive selection process.

Problems occur when there's not enough time to properly research and integrate these civic or public projects into the fabric of the building and place.

12. *Tai Whetuki — House of Death* a short film about Maori and Pacific mourning practices. It was initially commissioned by Carla von Zon as a single channel short film by Auckland Arts Festival 2015, giving me an opportunity to create a new video while making IPOV.

The video takes one scene from *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, but in this case, filming the death scene in a real, primordial landscape. It was challenging and exciting to do this. This image shows its presentation in the Bishop Museum alongside the Chief Mourner Costume during the inaugural Honolulu Biennale.

I continued to develop *Tai Whetuki* into a 2-channel work for the Walters Art Prize, at Auckland Art Gallery. Due to inclement weather during the original shoot, there were two key scenes I was unable to record. This often happens to me. High video production costs mean that sometimes it takes the support of several exhibitions before I finally complete the work I originally envisaged.

13. The accelerating rates of change in technology mean artists face similar pressures as institutions. Constantly upgrading skills, applications, video and computer equipment, purchase ever more and larger hard-drives as data requirements spiral into gigabyte territory...

Cinemia at Campbelltown Art Centre provided an opportunity to update older videos for the

exhibition. I readdressed projection ratios, turning 3:4 ratio into 16:9. Annoyingly projectors are 16:10 ratio, and my DOP loves a wide-screen format... showing long works.

Thanks to Michael Degastino for sharing the Cinemia catalog with many delegates. For those that received it, I've been working with Apple, and we have used AR to animate images in it.

14. So the question: "How can museum's collecting change as they face infinitely expanding collections? And what challenges and opportunities exist in digital strategies for collections?"

I suggest institutions look at Barbara London's ideas of interviewing artists as works enter collections, their nuanced responses to questions of updating and migrating content.

Although a nightmare to manage, I also feel video artists should be contacted every ten years to discuss content upgrade.

The retention of legacy hardware should be undertaken with appropriate organizations, such as New Zealand Film Archive in Aotearoa.

One of the biggest issues I've had in relation to the accessioning of *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]* is ensuring quality control. No one understands the work as intimately, and can provide the necessary support — apart from Eidotech.

15. *Colour of Sin — Headcase Version* are readymade sculptures drawn from a feminine space that contain solid state sound devices delivering sexy soundtracks.

I include this work because it will be shown at the Govett Brewster Gallery in New Plymouth. The 1970s Ralta hairdryers have become brittle, and unthinking audiences yank on them breaking the neck parts. Govett and I agreed that 3D printing could be used to create bionic replacements for obsolete parts, so the work lives another day.

Technology does not have to be unruly pixels and power adapters... that requires support. To reiterate, you cannot underestimate the trust you show to artists... believe in us.

Perspective 4

Hannah Mathews

Senior Curator, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, Australia.

Biography — Hannah Mathews is a Melbourne-based curator with a particular interest in contemporary art and performance. She is currently Senior Curator at Monash University. Mathews graduated with a Master of Art Curatorship from the University of Melbourne in 2002 and has worked in curatorial positions at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2008-16); Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (2005-07); Monash University Museum of Art (2005); Next Wave Festival (2003-04); The South Project (2003-04); and the Biennale of Sydney (2000-02). Mathews' key curatorial projects include *Shapes of Knowledge*, MUMA (2019); Alicia Frankovich & Lili Reynaud Dewar, MUMA (2018); *The humours*, MUMA (2017); *Ulla von Brandenburg: It has a Golden Yellow Sun and an Elderly Grey Moon*, ACCA (2016); *Derek Kreckler: Accident & Process*, PiCA, Perth and national tour (2015-ongoing); *Ryan Gander: READ ONLY*, ACCA, Melbourne (2015); *Framed Movements*, ACCA (2014); *In the Cut: Contemporary Collage*, ACCA (2013); *Power to the People: Contemporary Conceptualism and the Object in Art*, ACCA (2011); NEW11, ACCA (2011); *Johanna Billing: Tiny Movements*, ACCA (2009); *Primavera*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2008); and *Old skool (never lose that feeling)*, PiCA (2007). Mathews has completed curatorial residencies in New York, Berlin, Tokyo, and Venice, and has taught in curatorial programs at Melbourne University, Monash University, and RMIT University, Melbourne. She sits on the boards of the National Association for the Visual Arts, City of Melbourne Arts & Culture and International Art Space, Perth.

Staying with the trouble: performance and museums

First, I'd like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional owners of the land and waters upon which we gather today at the MCA. I'd also like to acknowledge the Wurrundjeri and the Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation on whose land I live and work in Naarm (Melbourne).

I've borrowed from the title of Donna Haraway's recent book *Staying with the Trouble* for my talk today, as I feel it best describes how I work with and why I am drawn to performance. Over the last 15 years, while commissioning and presenting performance works inside and outside of the white cube and black box, I have come to understand the particular anxiety that the risk of liveness brings. This type of "trouble" is familiar territory to the artist, but it is often quite confronting and uncomfortable for the museum.

Working with performance requires a different approach to that of working with objects and images. The needs of performance share much with the time-based work with which it is often categorized, however, working with live bodies — whether the artist's, the delegate's, or audience's — requires empathy, compromise, and negotiation.



Hannah Mathews

Dingo 2014

On a sheet of black plastic, have someone, preferably an artist, to mix non-toxic paint to match the colour of Tony Abbott's sweaty forehead in the following picture (The first time this was done by Susan Jacobs, who was working on the MUMA install team. The colour was Susan's approximation):



Carefully guide a dingo to walk through the paint.

When the dingo has enough paint on their paws to make a legible print, allow them to walk around the gallery, preferably at their own will, without a leash.

If at any time the Dingo is distressed, finish the work and take measures to make it comfortable. Otherwise, conclude the work when a desirable composition is achieved.

George Egerton-Warburton, *Dingo*, 2014, Non-toxic paint color-matched to Tony Abbott's sweaty face, walked through the gallery by a dingo. Monash University Collection. Purchased 2016

choreography and dance practices into the gallery. We are working, in consultation with artists, to produce a guide on policies, processes, and protocols for best practice in this area.

Louise Lawson, Manager of Conservation at Tate, recently took us through the detailed process undertaken this year to acquire, posthumously, a Tony Conrad performance that demonstrates extraordinary museological care and commitment.

It is good to know that the places who can afford to set the precedent are doing so. And that these precedents are being set at a high level. But what about the rest of us?

In Australia we have international standard museums but no performance curators or conservators.

In preparation for this talk I spoke with colleagues at some key Australian museums to get a clearer sense of what work is being done in this area:

QLD Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art (or QAGOMA) in Brisbane has a particularly strong history of commissioning and presenting performance from throughout our region through their Asia Pacific Triennale. Since 1993 they have staged significant works by artists such as the late Lee Wen, Michael

Tuffery, Amanda Heng, Stephen Page, Dadang Christanto, and Rosanna Raymond/Savage Club amongst others.

Like many museums, photographic and video documentation of performance resides in QAGOMA's archives as distinct from its collection. But to date there has been no collection of the actual performance itself — the live work. This situation is beginning to change. QAGOMA is engaged in long-term conversations with several APT artists about how best to collect their performance works. The focus of these discussions is the dialogical process. They aim to acquire works retrospectively so as to build a fuller history of performance at the APT before addressing more contemporary works.

The *Art Gallery of NSW* here in Sydney also has a long history of presenting performance, mostly through partnerships with others, such as the Biennale of Sydney and Kaldor Public Art Projects.

The Art Gallery's upcoming show of Australian artist, Pat Larter, curated by Lisa Catt and Claire Eggleston, is an interesting example of the blurry institutional status of the performance document. This is the first survey show of Larter who performed, filmed her performances, made photographs from her films, and then made these into new works, often sending them around the world as mail art. The exhibition is drawn almost exclusively from the National Art Archive at the Gallery. It demonstrates how the archive can enable us to explore practices that are iterative, performative, multidisciplinary, and unfixed in a way that most collections do not yet accommodate. In Catt's words: "You simply couldn't capture that without her archive."

The Art Gallery of NSW is currently revising its collection management policy in relation to time-based art and performance, focusing on improving language to better describe work that is ephemeral, variable, and flexible. The gallery also proposes to expand the definition of the word "collection" to include the National Art Archive. This notion of a collection that gives equivalence to both art and its archive, is already practiced at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin and M+ in Hong Kong. It works to bring about a broadening of histories, artforms, and artists, and more aptly reflects the expanded practices of artists themselves.

Performance works held in the collection of the *Museum of Old and New Art* in Hobart are also of note for the way they are embedded in the public facing activity of the museum. Christian Boltanski's ongoing *The Life of CB* is a 9-channel live stream video feed of the artist's Paris studio on permanent display in a bunker located just outside MONA. Wim

Delvoe's *Tim* consists of former tattoo-parlor manager, Tim Steiner, and his tattooed back sitting on a plinth as a live display for 6 months of the year. While this work is owned by a German collector, it is contracted to be "performed" at MONA annually. It only concludes when Tim dies and his tattooed skin is handed over to its owner for framing.

I'd like to now consider the collecting experience from the perspective of the artist. I'm going to do this through three case studies: Stuart Ringholt: Adam Linder, and A Constructed World. Each illustrates some of the challenges, hurdles, and also pleasures for museums navigating this terrain.

Stuart Ringholt

Stuart Ringholt lives in Melbourne and has exhibited extensively throughout Australia and overseas. His practice often attempts to remediate negative emotions such as shame, fear, and embarrassment by creating situations in which those emotions can be confronted and then transcended. Because of this, his works share qualities with self-help practices, group therapies, or the confessional, and often take the form of performance, collaborative workshops, and publications.

Ringholt's ongoing work from 2011, *Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8 pm (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only)* was initially performed at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane as part of a curated group show, *Let the Healing Begin*.

The work consists of that to which its title alludes — a tour, in the nude, of an art exhibition conducted outside of normal gallery hours for the privacy of the tour group. Its catalogue detail lists the medium as "gallery tour and drinks"; an edition of two, with one artist proof.

This work was acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2015, where it has been performed several times by the artist, and later by a trained member of the MCA's education staff and a Sydney artist. This acquisition, and others purchased that year, became a test case for the MCA in collecting performance works.

The work's Certificate of Sale lists a number of terms and conditions that set parameters for attendees, the tour guide, and the museum. But these are conceptual (rather than legal or administrative), leaving artist wages and intellectual property conditions relatively undefined.

The MCA received the Certificate of Sale as an AO poster, editioned and co-signed by the artist and the MCA's director. And a verbal agreement with the

Certificate of Sale

Stuart Ringholt

Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6-8pm (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.)
2011 - ongoing
gallery tour and drinks
edition of 2 with 1 artist proof

1. Only naked people 18 years and over may participate and the art institution must remain closed to the clothed. Institution staff may at their discretion be clothed or naked.
2. The tour speaker(s) can be determined by the art institution and/or the artist. The tour speaker(s) may derive from art or non-art industries such as education, medicine, entertainment, politics, fashion, sport, religion or sex.
3. The exhibits to be spoken about during the tour are determined by the institution, guest speakers and/or the artist.
4. After the tour participants are given the opportunity to gather informally over drinks. During drinks participants must remain naked.
5. Artists' expressions of interest in performing naked as an aside to the tour event can be considered and programmed.
6. Participants may be charged a nominal amount of money such as \$20. Ticket price is to include drinks (the nude has no pocket!).
7. Photography is permitted under the condition participants appearing in the subsequent photographs have given full consent.
8. The tour can only be purchased by a private or public art museum/institution.

edition #

Name:
Institution:
Date:

Signature: _____

Stuart Ringholt, *Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8 pm (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.)* 2011 – ongoing, Certificate of Sale, AO poster. Courtesy of the artist

artist that he would not sell the work to another Australian museum.

Given public interest in the work, which began to reach a level of notoriety, Ringholt continued to be approached to present naturist tours by other public institutions. Later in 2015, the National Gallery of Australia contracted him directly and this invitation produced some friction between the two museums. The MCA's exclusive rights to the work in Australia had been assumed but not confirmed as part of the acquisition.

Because they had purchased one of an edition of two, with Intellectual Property remaining with the artist, the MCA had no control over other presentations of the work. The issue was resolved through discussion to the satisfaction of both artist and museum, and the tour at the NGA proceeded.

However, after Ringholt's tour, the NGA continued to present tours led by naturists, at the gallery independent of the artist's participation. And refused to cease when he expressed his annoyance. Other public programs reminiscent of Ringholt's *Anger Workshops* have also been presented without consultation.



Stuart Ringholt, *Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8 pm (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.)* 2011 – ongoing. Artist-led naturist tour of the exhibition *James Turrell: A Retrospective* at the National Gallery of Australia, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

It may be assumed that acquisition of a performance work will protect the artist's intellectual property, but these instances suggest that this is not always the case. A different standard is in evidence here despite enhanced literacy of museum teams in this area.

While the costs of conservation, storage, and care of objects are assumed, the ongoing expense of resourcing performance acquisitions can be overlooked at the time of acquisition. The purchase price of Ringholt's tour, for example, was originally assumed to include the artist's ongoing presentation of the work. Since then, individual presentation fees for subsequent tours have been renegotiated, including a fee that covers research time to connect the tour to specific exhibitions or artworks, along with travel, per diems, and photographic documentation of the work. When the tour is led by someone other than the artist, they are also paid a presentation fee.

A further test will arise if and when the work is requested for loan; what role would artist and museum play in the negotiation of a loan agreement? Who would determine and receive any associated fees? These are the kinds of issues our Choreography and the Museum group are looking into.

Ringholt suspects that if the work had been thoroughly assessed and costed, in terms of its ongoing life at the time of acquisition, it might not have been acquired. But overall, he is extremely pleased with the negotiated outcome and praises the risk taken by the MCA in acquiring the work, saying:

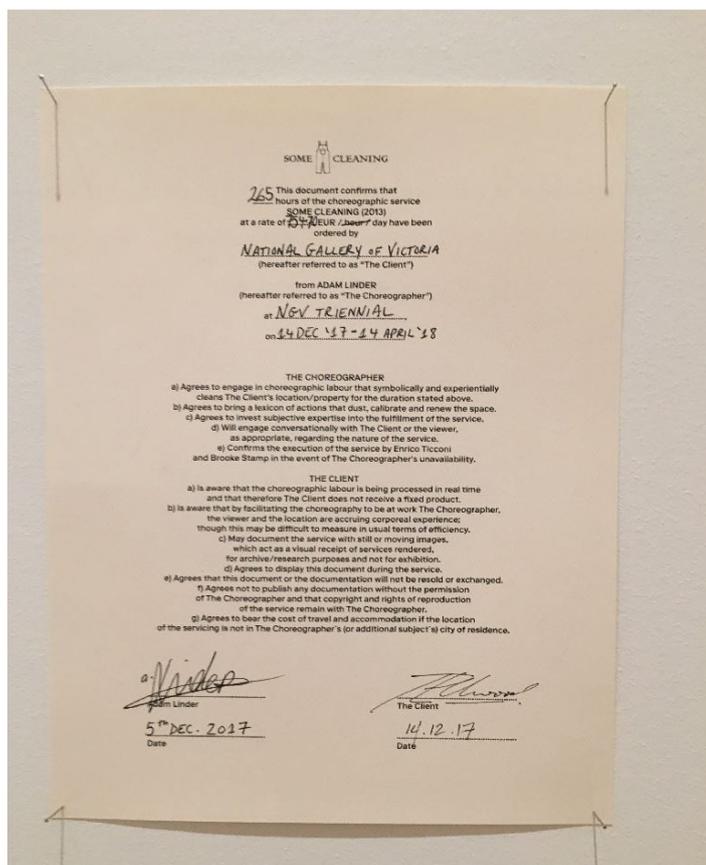
"I am very happy it's in their collection because only through the work's sale and collection can it function. I hope it continues to be shown and that serious consideration is given to my belief that a new history of art is available if we unclad audiences."

Adam Linder

Adam Linder is an Australian choreographer now based between Berlin and LA. Finding the hierarchies and traditions of classical choreography limiting, he now makes works for both the theater and the gallery that explore how each format shapes the experience of movement.



Adam Linder, *Choreographic Services: Some Cleaning* (2013), 265 hours of performance as part of the *NGV Triennale* at the National Gallery of Victoria from December 14, 2017 – April 18, 2018. Courtesy the artist.



Adam Linder, *Choreographic Services: Some Cleaning* (2013), contract co-signed by the artist and National Gallery of Victoria.

Between 2013 and 2017, Linder produced a series of six *Choreographic Services*:

1. *Some Cleaning* (2013)
2. *Some Proximity* (2014)
3. *Some Riding* (2015)
4. *Some Strands of Support* (2016)
5. *Dare to Keep Kids off Naturalism* (2017)
6. *Footnote Service: Some Trade* (2018)

In each of the works, a gallery or museum (the Client) “orders” a negotiated amount of a choreographic service, calculated in hours. The Choreographer (Linder) produces a contract to be signed by the Client, and the service is delivered by the Choreographer (or other designated “Service Providers”) in accordance with the terms of the contract. The contract itself is displayed in the gallery for the duration of the service.

Linder’s *Choreographic Services* cannot be acquired, only hired. Once the specified number of hours is serviced, the contract is finalized. Whereas acquisition to a collection suggests a work is held in perpetuity, the capped number of hours specified in its contract formalizes its ephemerality. Further, the work’s grounding in embodied expertise precludes



A Constructed World, Explaining contemporary art to live eels, 2004 – ongoing. An ongoing performative project in which guest speakers are invited to explain contemporary art to eels that are later released back into-the-wild. The work addresses issues related to transmission, diffusion, sending, receiving, and not-knowing. Courtesy of the artists.

any acquisition made in perpetuity. The contract contains additional clauses by which any photographic documentation of the service cannot be exhibited, only archived. After public display, the contract itself is archived within the museum as a legal document rather than an artwork; undifferentiated from other exhibition loan or artist agreements.

In 2016, the Biennale of Sydney ordered *Some Proximity*, in which two dancers — Linder and Justin Kennedy — translated reflections on the Biennale by the resident art critic, Holly Childs, into movement in real time. *Some Proximity* occurred at the MCA over six sessions of 150 minutes each; an order of 45 hours for three participants.

In 2018, the National Gallery of Victoria ordered the substantially larger number of 265 hours of the *Choreographic Service: Some Cleaning* for the NGV Triennale. In this *Choreographic Service*, either Linder — or dancers Brooke Stamp or Enrico Ticchoni — would “bring a lexicon of actions that dust, calibrate, and renew the space.” The cleaning that occurs is not literal — but a gestural and psychic cleaning that draws attention to the labor of the dancer and its purpose.

Linder has described his concern with the trend in galleries and museums of using performance that is often deskilled or audience-participatory to “activate” static exhibition spaces. He states:

“Action or movement become novelty or spectacle, value-added rather than valued in themselves. The Choreographic Services require the institution to both internally and publicly acknowledge the value of the performance and the performer, who is contracted specifically for their ability and expertise.”

COLLECTOR CONTRACT

This Collector Contract (“Agreement”) is made on this 20th day of December 2018 between the following parties:

- Geoffrey Lowe & Jacqueline Riva trading as **A CONSTRUCTED WORLD** of 184 Rue de Crimée, Paris 75019 FRANCE (“Artists”) and-
- MONASH UNIVERSITY** (ABN 12 377 614 012), a body politic and corporate established by the Monash University Act 1958 of Wellington Road, Clayton VIC 3800 as represented by Monash University Museum of Art (“Collector”)

Operative Provisions

In consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, the parties acknowledge and agree:

- That the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement, including Schedule 1 of this Agreement, will govern the terms of the arrangement between the parties.
- The Collector may from time to time nominate in writing persons from its staff or students as its Nominated Representatives.
- That the Collector, through its Nominated Representatives, will undertake the following “Collector Activities” [Collector to place a check against the activities Collector agrees to perform]:

Make yourself or, where you are an institution, make your Nominated Representative familiar with the Artists’ archives, publications and other relevant material.

Conduct self-motivated research into topics that pertain to the Artists’ work.

Endeavour to recognise works that are significant rather than consumable, with the view to developing a strategy that will form the basis for the collection of the Artworks.

Meet the Artists at their atelier, or their exhibitions, and engage in in-depth discussion about their work.

Participate in monthly/quarterly/semi-year* [*strike out inapplicable period] discussions with the Artists: in person, via telephone or Skype or other appropriate form of communication.

Be responsive to loaning the Artists’ works for exhibition after their acquisition.

Write a text about the Artists for publication in a journal or other printed or online media.

Participate in round-table discussions and give lectures about the Artists’ work.

Participate in a performance with the Artist

- That the “Collection Value” is between **€3,500 and €50,000**. The Minimum Collection Value is €3,500.
- That as a condition of the Agreement, the Collector agrees that: (i) within thirty (30) business days of signing this Agreement the Collector must pay the full amount of the Minimum Collection Value to the Artists; (ii) the Collection Value paid by the Collector to participate and be engaged as a Collector is non-refundable; and (iii) by no later than one (1) month prior to the anniversary of the Commencement Date, the Collector will select artworks to be acquired from the Artists falling within the Collection Value. The Nominated Representative will use reasonable efforts to obtain funding and/or approval to acquire further artworks from the Artists in addition to the initial acquisition. The parties acknowledge that, except for artworks donated by the Artists, the value of the Collection has been assigned by the Artists at their absolute discretion.
- That once the Collector has fully performed the Collector Activities, and the Artists have received, in full, payment for the artworks selected by the Collector pursuant to clause 5 above (“Artworks”), the Artists shall transfer title to the Artworks to the Collector free of encumbrances and all other adverse interests.
- All copyright and related rights subsisting in and to the Artworks and any other works donated by the Artists shall remain the exclusive property of the Artists. The Artists authorise the Collector to reproduce the Artworks and any other works donated by the Artists in their original physical form for charitable, non-profit, educational, promotional and internal communication purposes only.
- The undersigned individuals each respectively represent and warrant that they have full authority to execute this Collector Contract for and on behalf of the relevant entity or entities for whom they sign.

Execution

Executed by the Artists:

Name and date: _____

Name and date: _____

Executed for and on behalf of the Collector:

Chouh Dany
Name and date: 20/12/18

1

A Constructed World, If You Don’t Want To Work With Us We’ll Work With You, 2019. Legal contract, 4-A4 pages. Courtesy of the artists.

The display of the contract allows for institutional processes, timelines, and budgets to be made transparent. Linder’s studio specifies the rates for one dancer to perform. From the exhibited contract at the NGV, it is possible to discern the approximate total commissioning cost of the work to the NGV as being approximately €40,000. (We can anticipate that costs for future hirings of the work would be linked to currency fluctuations and inflation).

More than transactional or bureaucratic, however, Linder intends the *Choreographic Services* to be beautiful, elegant, and *strange* performances. Presenting museums need to be mindful of this when locating them amongst other works.

The contracts in Linder’s *Choreographic Services* are not a conceptual game focused on leveraging administration as an artform. They are a means by which performance can be fought for as a skilled discipline; occupying the contemporary art gallery on its own terms without being misused.

A Constructed World

A Constructed World is a collaboration between Australian artists Geoff Lowe and Jacqueline Riva, based in Paris. They work with methodologies that bring attention to diverse modes of artistic practice and are well known for their extended performances that incorporate high levels of specialization and “not-knowing” as a shared space. A Constructed World tend to work with an expanded field of collaborators that include, by their own description, “other artists, writers, art historians, philosophers, dancers, musicians, curators, doctors, and pharmacologists, among others.”

If You Don't Want To Work With Us We'll Work With You takes the form of a legal contract between a client (either a private or institutional Collector) and the Artists. It is, in part, a pragmatic solution to the difficulties of preserving multifaceted sculptural situations activated by performance, in collections. In December 2018 MUMA entered into this contract.

Through this contract a Collector agrees to pay the Artists a specified amount — between €3,500 and €50,000 — after which they have 12 months to negotiate a collection outcome commensurate with that value. The Collector and the Artists also become bound to certain obligations, and what are described in the contract as “Collector Activities.” Many of these involve the Collector familiarizing themselves with the Artists’ works, archives, and publications; conducting self-motivated research; and recognizing ACW works as significant rather than consumable. This ongoing process, in which the Collector works towards a deeper understanding of the artists’ practice, is as important to the artists as the negotiated acquisition outcome. The legal language of the contract and its adaptation of collection policies and procedures provides a means to open a dialogue between Collector and Artist.

The contract challenges acquisition protocol from two directions. Firstly, it may relate to the acquisition of a performance; although which work, what it consists of, and how it is cared for in perpetuity by the Collector is determined by *negotiation* and may not necessarily involve “live” elements. And secondly, it approaches acquisition as a *kind* of performance in itself, in that negotiating and enacting the contract becomes a live and discursive activity, capable of illuminating the conditions and mechanics of art making.

The artists describe the contract as a way to:

“...be involved with our collectors, for them to know about works at their inception, how they develop, and input to them. Rather than the collector being anonymous, we value engagement and discourse and the possibility to make contact. For us the project is not about coercing people into a place where they are dominated or transgressed. We hope they are there because they recognise in this Agreement, and working with A Constructed World, that there can be something other than exclusion, monetary investments and capital gain.”

However, the function of the document as a binding contract, capable of being litigated, opens its clauses to more than speculative interpretations. A legal department of a museum, for example, or a creative litigator, may take interest in Intellectual Property Clause 14, which allows the Artists to “incorporate, through proximity and adjacency, intellectual or other property owned by the Collector, into the Intellectual Property of the Artist.” In this way, the contract appears to be designed to quietly cannibalize the Collector and create a self-perpetuating and expansionary performance arena within the collecting institution. And in Operative Provisions Clause 6, legal title of an actual physical artwork is only transferred after the Collector fulfils the “Collector Activities,” yet several of these Activities are ongoing in structure and therefore cannot be performed to completion. This suggests a challenge to the Collector’s title to any of ACW’s artworks on an ongoing basis.

The contract upends the power dynamic of the *collector* and the *collected* by maintaining — and expanding — the artist’s dominion over the artwork. In a sense, the Collector becomes the service provider to the Artist. The contract-as-format also highlights the inescapable *transaction* fundamental to the process of acquisition.

Conclusion

The performance works I have discussed today all address the museum context, whether resisting or seeking to reside within it. We mustn’t forget that much performance is made outside this context, often purposefully so. It is in the very nature of much early performance art, and performance from cultures outside the Western canon, to outrun the institution.

Commissioning, presentation, and acquisition of performance productively troubles the conventional distinctions between collections, archives, and museum departments. Keeping pace with performance calls for expanded thinking, collaborative work, and flexibility. Each case requires a keen sense of where the work stands in relation to the museum. Is it best supported as a one-off event that can only be reconstructed in the memories of visitors or contextualized through its documentation? Is it made to be exercised by trained bodies, volunteer bodies, audiences? Can it survive the process of acquisition, no matter how evolving, that the collection demands? These are the kinds of nuanced considerations that need to instruct collection practices moving forward.

There are several factors improving the situation for those of us — artists, institutions, and audiences — who desire more performance in the museum. These include new expanded museum buildings, more knowledgeable and experienced staff, and a trend towards meeting the work on terms more akin to its practice than the slow-moving traditional systems and languages of museology.

The purpose of “staying with the trouble,” to go back to Haraway, is to “make kin” — that is, to produce new kinds of relations based on interwoven, non-hierarchical symbiosis — an idea of reciprocal exchange rather than ownership or dominion. This “trouble” is the way forward for performance in the museum.

With thanks to the artists, curators and institutions whose work is discussed within this presentation. And to Gemma Weston, Mel Ratliff, Jasmin Stephens, and Bala Starr for their consultation.

Panel Discussion 2

Suhanya Raffel

Director, M+ Museum, Hong Kong, China.

Biography — Suhanya Raffel was appointed Executive Director of M+ in November 2016. Her curatorial career began in 1984 and she has over 30 years of experience as a museum curator and leader.

A cornerstone of the ambitious West Kowloon Cultural District Project, M+ is scheduled for completion in 2020. As Hong Kong's new museum for visual culture, it will encompass twentieth- and twenty-first-century art, design, architecture, and moving image from Hong Kong, China, Asia, and beyond. The museum aims to document the past, inform the present, and contribute to the future of visual culture within an increasingly interconnected global landscape. Prior to joining M+, Raffel was Deputy Director and Director of Collections at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, and Acting Director of the Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art, Australia. She is a Trustee of the Geoffrey Bawa Trust and the Lunuganga Trust, and a member of the board of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM).

Panel Conclusions by Suhanya Raffel

The keynote to start the day was by Franklin Sirmans, Director of the Perez Art Museum in Miami followed by two-panel members: artist Lisa Reihana from Aotearoa/New Zealand and Hannah Mathews, Senior Curator from Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne. Together they presented three distinct views around the question of “The Future of Collections.”

Franklin Sirmans opened the day summarizing the context of primarily US museums, and the changes and shifts in collecting strategies taking place, as well as how funding relations have been evolving, the latter especially in relation to the expectations of a developing diversity in communities. Understood to be a part of engaging museum work, the relationship of audiences, institutions, and the collections have become more amplified and significant. The presentation included looking at the context of Miami, the role of the market through Art Basel Miami, and the mall and its intersections, or not, as audiences choose how to spend time and where. This was especially the case for millennials and how museums have been developing more dynamic engagement strategies around their collections, which seek to innovate and begin a meaningful dialogue with this generation. He also outlined how new acquisitions in his museum have been a successful strategy to address historical imbalance. The demographics of the city and the need to address the diversity that is Miami, with strong Cuban and Latin American communities, Afro-Caribbean communities, and the need to be alert



Suhanya Raffel

to the needs of multilingual audiences were also understood within the framework of collection and collection displays.

The two panelists provided specific, more in depth presentations on two particular areas. Artist Lisa Reihana spoke about working with new media and digital material, commissioning, and the museum. Her clear insight included outlining that the museum was now the most experimental space available to artists working in these media due to their ability to resource or seek partners to resource new work for artists like herself. The belief of the institution in the artist to deliver was key. The issues of sustainability were alluded to with discussion of the responsibilities resting with institutional protocol on how best to ensure visibility of the work into the future. Hannah Mathews provided a context to discuss performance and the art museum. She laid out three case studies through which ephemeral experiential experimental works were presented, and how the museum commissioned then accessioned this work. She provided examples of contracts. A fascinating presentation that included the points of tension between artist, institution, and the intention of the work as well as the role of audiences.

The importance of the question of sustainability was teased out during the Q&A, as well as the boundaries of museum work in relation to performance. That museums are very responsive institutions today was also understood and applauded as examples of this were presented by the floor as well as by the panelists during the morning sessions.

Day 3, Sunday
November 16

Beyond the Walls

Keynote 3

Sally Tallant

Director, The Queens Museum, New York, USA

Biography — Sally Tallant is the President and Executive Director of the Queens Museum, New York. She was previously the Director of Liverpool Biennial from 2011–19. From 2001–11 she was Head of Programs at the Serpentine Gallery, London, where she was responsible for the development and delivery of an integrated program of exhibitions, architecture, education and public programs. She has curated exhibitions in a wide range of contexts including galleries, museums, public spaces, and non-arts contexts. She is a regular contributor to conferences nationally and internationally. She is Vice President of the International Biennial Association and a Commissioner for the IPPR Commission on Economic Justice. In 2018 she was awarded an OBE for services to the Arts in the Queen's Birthday Honors List.

Outside In: Inside Out

I am speaking from the position of having moved from the United Kingdom to the United States and I am learning about the locally specific and sector-wide challenges of running a cultural institution in the US at this unstable, precarious moment. We are facing global, political uncertainties, a growing refugee crisis, and a deepening understanding of the impact of climate change. There is a need to develop porous institutions that are open, inclusive, and empathetic. Institutions that are both places where art and artists can find space, and that are defined and created together with their constituents and communities. We need our galleries and museums to be unwavering in their commitment to maintaining spaces where human rights, diversity of opinion, and creativity can thrive. This paper draws on the experience of working through a situated approach to curatorial practice that takes both place and context as starting points.

I will expand upon the experience of developing integrated programs of activity that reject traditional divisions and departmental ways of working at both the Serpentine Gallery, London and whilst I was Director of Liverpool Biennial. I will present models of working outside, inside, and inside out to create a wide range of connections between artists, people, and place.

What is outside?

We are suffering from Climate Grief. Collectively and individually we are experiencing what no generation of humans has ever faced, which is grieving the ongoing loss of the planet as we have known it.



This means loss of place, loss of homes, loss of jobs, income, and food security. When fisheries collapse because there are no fish in the sea, we will lose whole towns, cities, industries, and cultures that are based on the very existence of these fish. We do not really have the language for talking about this kind of grief and we don't really know what it looks like — yet.

We don't know how to think about and therefore process this grief in a way that might enable us to move forward.

Just as grief over the loss of a loved person puts into perspective what matters in our lives — we can HOPE that collective experiences of ecological grief may coalesce into a strengthened sense of love and commitment to the places, ecosystems, and species that inspire, nurture, and sustain us

We are in the midst of global protests and political uncertainty. People are being forced — to move and we are experiencing a global refugee crisis. Borders are being brutally enforced and are being closed just as we need to open them to embrace the reality and needs of migration and immigration.

We continue to experience gender inequality and intolerance for LGBTQIA communities. The impact of technology on our lives and behavior is yet to be understood — we have a generation of young people who are turning to clicktivism and activism as a way of being seen and heard. Media swarms divert our eyes and distract us from seeing the rising nationalism and inequity clearly enough.

And as we should, we are rethinking our cultural spaces — we have many protests in museums and we should be hopeful that people feel that they can be seen in our spaces and that they are places where their voices can resonate. Perhaps we can create “brave spaces” for agnostic discourse.

“If Museums can be transformed into agonistic public spaces, they can facilitate the expression of dissent, helping people to better understand the contradictions of the world in which they are living and allowing them to see things from different points of view.”

Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*

Whilst working at the Serpentine Gallery, London I developed a situated approach to both working in context and curating integrated programs. Much of the work took place beyond the constraints of the Gallery and in order to work outside in that way it was critical that we focused on building trust and respect.

When working outside we learn the importance of:

1. Negotiating with neighbors, stakeholders, and constituents
2. Understanding what we can bring to the table and can contribute
3. Listen, learn, and respond to context

If we do not take the time to consult, listen, and understand what is needed and possible we will not be able to take part. So, learning to listen and understanding what we can contribute and how we can be part of the community is a behavior we can take back inside the museum. It is important to remember that no place is neutral — people are here and we are people and part of it — not apart from it.

Whilst working at Liverpool Biennial from 2012–19 I developed a model that was underpinned by education and research and operated year round developing temporary and permanent commissions in partnership with cultural organizations and the city and region, and this embedded strategic approach offers museums and galleries a model of being rooted through partnership. Situated practice begins with understanding what is needed and fully understanding the local and political specificities of where you are working. What is needed here and now?

When we are outside, we ask WHY are we doing this and not just HOW shall we do this?

I have recently taken up the role of Director of the Queens Museum, which is located in the most diverse Borough of New York and is also the most diverse place in the United States. I will talk about the model of a community museum that we are developing in situ. The Queens Museum has long understood the need to work with our neighbors to engage critically in issues of neighborhood development in our schools, parks, streets, and in precious recreational spaces. Over the past decade, the Museum has been working to ensure that community residents are involved in the envisioning, production, programming, and maintenance of public spaces and amenities. When we work inside institutions, we are more confident in our expertise:

4. We listen to artists and try to understand their vision and aims
5. We have confidence in what we know — in our knowledge and expertise
6. Exhibitionary practice working with artists to realize ambitious projects — not compromising.

We strive to make things possible often without the means — perhaps we can take this attitude outside? What happens when we have the same conversations with artists, planners, educators, citizens, and know it will take time and that anything is possible?

When we are INSIDE we ask HOW are we doing this? And less often WHY should we do this?

Users and constituents can help us to

understand how our institutions can be relevant and they can actively define what role we can play in their daily lives. The key is to value what we all bring to the table and acknowledge that many perspectives are needed.

“Real dialogue isn’t about talking to people who believe the same things as you.”

Zygmunt Bauman



Diwali Celebration, 2019. Queens Museum, New York



Mierle Laderman Ukeles *Maintenance Art*, 2017. Queens Museum, New York
 Photo: Hai Zhang



Left to right — Frances Disley, *Blaze*, 2016; Hato with Childwall Academy, *Hello Future Me*, 2016; Ana Jotta, *Mrs. Muir*, 2016. Liverpool Biennial 2016.
 Photo: Niall Lea



Lara Favaretto, *Momentary Monument — The Stone*, 2016.
 Photo: Mark McNulty

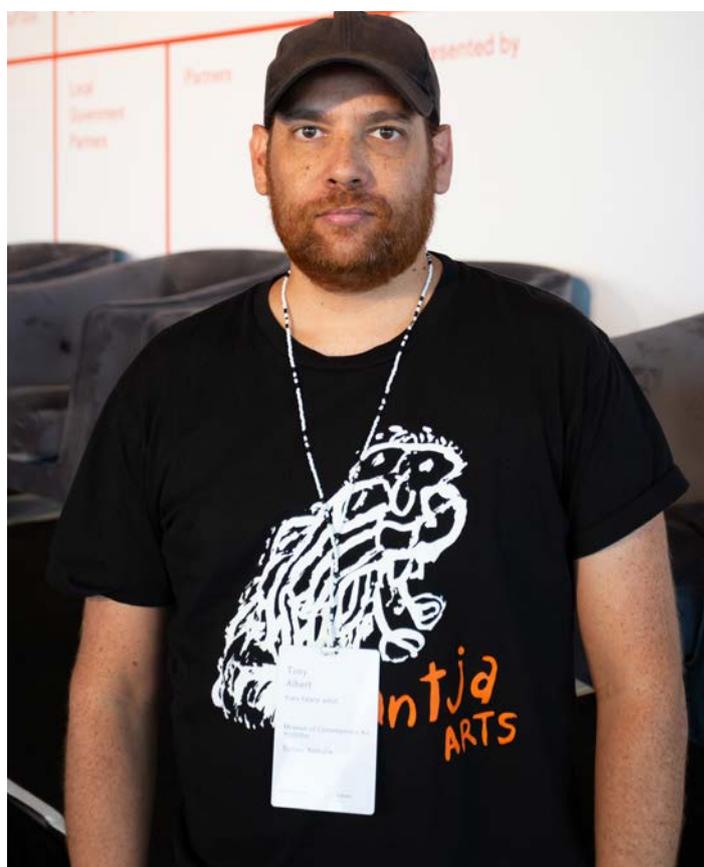
Perspective 5

Anne Loxley and Tony Albert

Anne Loxley: Senior Curator, C3West, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, Australia.
Tony Albert: Kuku Yalanji artist, Sydney, Australia.



Anne Loxley



Tony Albert

Biography — Anne Loxley is a Sydney-based curator and writer who works with contemporary artists both in and outside gallery contexts, in communities and in public spaces. As Senior Curator, C3West, for Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, she develops innovative ways for artists to work with businesses and non-arts organizations to address strategic issues and engage with communities. With Felicity Fenner, Loxley programmed the visual arts component of the 2017 and 2019 Perth Festivals. With Blair French she co-edited *Civic Actions: Artists' Practices Beyond the Museum* (MCA Australia, 2017). Previously she directed Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, the Olympic Co-ordination Authority's Public Art Program, and the National Trust's S.H. Ervin Gallery. A founding member of the City of Sydney's Public Art Advisory Panel, a member of the City's Eora Journey Working Group, and a former Sydney Morning Herald art critic, her work has attracted numerous awards. Since 2014, with the Blacktown community, artists Tony Albert, Darren Bell, Karla Dickens, Sharyn Egan, Moogahlin Performing Arts, Steven Russell, Kristine Stewart, Leanne Tobin, C3West in collaboration with Blacktown Arts has produced two multifaceted projects about the Blacktown Native Institution.

Biography — Tony Albert's practice explores contemporary legacies of colonialism in ways that prompt audiences to contemplate elements of the human condition. Mining imagery and source material from across the globe, Albert draws on both personal and collective histories to explore the ways in which optimism might be utilized to overcome adversity. His practice is concerned with identity and the ascribing of social labels; unpacking what it means to judge and be judged in the absence of recognition or understanding. Albert's technique and imagery are distinctly contemporary, displacing traditional Australian Aboriginal aesthetics with a kind of urban conceptuality. Appropriating textual references from sources as diverse as popular music, film, fiction, and art history, Albert plays with the tension arising from the visibility, and in turn, the invisibility of Aboriginal People across the news media, literature, and the visual world. Central to this way of working is Albert's expansive collection of Aboriginalia (a term the artist coined to describe kitschy objects and images that feature naive portrayals of Aboriginality). Tony Albert is well represented in major collections including the National Gallery of Australia; the Australian War Memorial, Canberra; the Art Gallery of New South Wales; the Art Gallery of Western Australia and Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art-Queensland Art Gallery.

Remembering and healing: the Blacktown Native Institution

Anne Loxley: Good morning. We meet here today on the unceded lands and waters of the Eora people of the Gadigal nation. I pay my respects to elders past present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and first nations people here today.

My name is Anne Loxley. My ancestry is English and German, I was born and raised in Forbes in central west New South Wales, born and raised on the lands of the Wiradjuri nation. I was oblivious of this until my late twenties — the traditional owners were never acknowledged by my schools, and the Australian history I learnt at university in the mid-80s never wavered from the colonizers' perspective. Like many non-Indigenous Australians of my generation and older, I was taught to understand my country through the frame of the "white blindfold." I now have what is sometimes called a "black armband" view of the dominant narratives of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Australia. Mainstream Australia tells itself narratives grounded in imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

In three decades as a curator I have consistently found that artworks and artists can make beautiful, potent articulations of important truths, truths rarely found in hegemonic discourses. Which probably explains why I have spent the better part of the last decade as curator for C3West, the MCA's social engagement program.

C3West combines idealism and instrumentalism — believing artists are uniquely skilled to positively change real world situations, we seek out such situations, and create contexts for artists to work in. Two aspects of our methodology distinguish C3West from other social engagement programs. One, we collaborate with non-arts organizations and two, with our co-commissioner we determine the issues and communities with which we would like our artists to work.



Darug Women perform a reed ceremony. Blacktown Native Institution Artist Camp #2, March 2015, Oakhurst NSW

Blacktown is a crucial place in the narrative of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Australia. Oakhurst, a suburb in Blacktown's local government area is home to one of the governmental beginnings of Australia's heinous practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families. Established in Parramatta in 1814, the Native Institution was relocated to Blacktown in 1823 where it operated for six years. After it closed in 1829, the site was farmed but since the 1980s it has remained unused, legally owned by state and local government. Until October last year, the traditional owners of this land, the Darug nation, had worked for decades for it to be returned to them so they could practice their cultural traditions without external constraints, and so they could honor the history of the Native Institution children and their families.

This year Jenny Bisset finished 14 years as Director of Blacktown Council's Cultural Services and Blacktown Arts. Under her leadership, this period placed great priority on Blacktown's Indigenous community, especially the pressing need to come together with the community and the Native Institution site. In 2013 artist and director of the 2020 Biennale of Sydney, Brook Andrew and Blacktown Arts curator



Tony Albert, *Blacktown Native Institution Project* concept book (in progress, detail), 2017-18. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist

Paul Howard presented *The Native Institute* in which Karla Dickens, re a, Jason Wing, Leanne Tobin, and Robyn Coughlan responded to the site, its residents and their legacies in an exhibition and suite of on-site temporary art works and public programs.

Jenny Bisset worked for years with Council colleagues and the State Government to prepare a Plan of Management for the BNI site. The Plan was informed by extensive consultation with Blacktown's Aboriginal community and it identified objectives widely agreed by the community. These objectives were the basis for a collaboration between artists, community, Blacktown Arts, Blacktown Council, C3West, MCA, and Landcom the State Government's development arm. Over 2014–15, we embarked on a project that honored the history of the residents of the Institution, raised awareness of that history and of the Stolen Generations, supported Aboriginal custodianship of the site, and sought firm direction on the site's future. Over 18 months we hosted three on-site "camps," with some programs for the community and some for general public. For example, at each camp Aboriginal thought leaders spoke to the community.

The iterative structure and unhurried pace enabled percolation of ideas and processing of feelings. We heard many very personal stories, shared beautiful ceremonies and healing rituals and made so much art. The third camp was a Corroboree rich with ritual and celebration. Woven eel traps by Steven Russell and Kristine Stewart paid homage to the Darug nation. Karla Dickens and Leanne Tobin made tributes to the Institution's children and Darren Bell photographed the people of the project.

In 2017 we all signed up for another eighteen-month collaboration, with substantially the same agenda. It is this second collaboration that Tony and I will concentrate on today.

We are presenting a project we worked on, but it is not ours. We are presenting a project in which we, and many others, collaborated with Darug and other Aboriginal people to address unacknowledged histories and aching truths. What kind of humility do we need to do this? The most important people in this project aren't here. I am a senior curator in a national institution standing alongside a leading contemporary artist. Thinking about C3West's role in this project, Nato Thompson's ideas about power come to mind. Thompson exhorts us to be aware of our power, and to leverage it, so people with less power come to the front. The MCA's brand, reputation, staff, advisory panels, board, adds up to a lot of power, power we carefully leveraged to highlight and extend the project's reach.

Tony Albert: I would like to acknowledge the families of the Dharug, Western Sydney people, on the fringe of the Blue Mountains, and thank them for allowing me the opportunity to be involved in such a special and significant project. Their generosity in sharing culture, history, time, and space is the essence of this project. I would also like to thank the Museum of Contemporary Art, and Blacktown Arts Centre on behalf of Blacktown City Council.

My name is Tony Albert. I am a contemporary artist and a proud Aboriginal man. My family are Girramay, Yidinji, and Kuku Yalandji, three distinct language groups from the Rainforest and East Cape region of Far North Queensland.

Over the past decade I have lived and worked in Sydney.

Like many Aboriginal people, my grandfather, Eddie Albert, was taken from his family. As Anne mentioned, we refer to this period of history as the Stolen Generation, a time when tens of thousands of Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families and culture and made to assimilate into white Christian society. A practice that was underpinned by

eugenics and the idea that Aboriginal people could be bred out over several generations. So, for this reason and many others, people like myself grew up in cities. And whilst I remain very connected to my culture and my family, it is important for me to share this personal history with you. Aboriginal people are diverse and come from over 300 distinct language groups, all with a different lores, languages, and cultural traditions. However, Australia's colonial history is where these unique difference blur. The invasion of this county did not recognize or consider these differences or even our humanity. We became one and the same with flora and fauna. So, for this reason the complex nature of Blacktown Native Institution is one mirrored across Aboriginal Australia. This experience is a shared one, however it remains unchallenged and a part of the colonial amnesia that still plagues mainstream Australia.

I want to change this scenario of remaining voiceless and give voices back to the men, women, and children who have been dispossessed and disadvantaged. In my artwork I share our stories relating to and investigating historical truth, shining light on our experiences as Aboriginal people.

Collaboration and cross-cultural communication are at the heart of my artist practice and because of this the first question that one must ask in the process like this is... "What do you want?"

This sounds like a simple question, but unfortunately and shamefully, this question is rarely ever directed at Aboriginal people. In a society that dictates our needs to us — "what is best" for our people is often prescribed without consultation. So, it was here that the journey of collaboration began.

The Dharug have a long history of artistic expression. These artistic concepts and outcomes embraced the Blacktown Native Institute site as a living community memorial for the Stolen Generations.



Tony Albert, *Gubangala Gumadanyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at *Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks)*, 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera



Tony Albert, *Gubangala Gumadanyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at *Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks)*, 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera



Tony Albert with his work, *Gubangala Gumadanyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at *Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks)*, 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera

Whilst this project has been designed to remember, contemplate, and heal the site it also serves to empower a new, younger generation of Community children in having ownership over the project and an understanding of the opportunities and lives they now have.

A series of portraits designed to wear as adornment have been created by the children, each representing an individual child who was taken to the Institute. These portraits projected the personalities, identities, likes, and dislikes. When these objects are worn, we carry the responsibility for continuing the memories of these children. We are able to embody them, sharing with them sights, smells, and sounds that we experience in the present moment.

The stories of these children are not limited to this block of land or Blacktown. They are stories that connect to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, it is the story of our shared history. It was a hope that these objects and this project could be



Tony Albert, *Gubangala Gumadangyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (*Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks*), 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera

presented in museums, galleries, and institutions all over the world, it is a story about humanity and our ability to heal our inherited histories. History serves no purpose unless we remember it, activate it, and draw lessons from it.

Take a moment to connect with this site; consider that this place has an active memory. As you stand here, you are its most recent memory and part of a contemporary ceremony, an action and process that marks the beginning of change.

The culmination of the participant's journey was to take a sheet of the provided paper and gift a positive memory to the re-imagined children in writing. This paper, now inscribed with your memory, is embedded with the seeds of local plants. In time this paper will be buried in this site and will sprout new life, reinstating endemic flora and gently healing the ecosystem.

AL: The 2017–18 project was based in engagement, with artists working iteratively with people and culminating in a public event on site. It benefited from being the third project about this place in five years. The community, the project team, and indeed the site had all come a long way.

Communities affected by deep, intergenerational injustices are well served by iterative, cultural methodologies. Prior to these projects, there had been considerable discord and volatility in gatherings associated with the Native Institution. After Brook Andrew's and Paul Howard's project, the discord and volatility were less intense and there were some feelings of catharsis, and of being heard, and these feelings grew during the projects in which C3West was involved.

The first collaboration taught us we can never do enough community consultation — we can't speak with the same people; we must reach out to as many



Tony Albert, *Gubangala Gumadangyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (*Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks*), 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera

different groups as possible. Each of our artists — Sharyn Egan, Moogahlin Performing Arts, and Tony — were advised by different traditional owners and worked with different groups.

A steering committee from the community considered all key decisions. There was pushback to our idea of working with artists from beyond the Darug nation and Blacktown. We were asked why bring in a weaver from Western Australia when there are weavers in Blacktown. We explained that Sharyn Egan is a Noongyar artist and a member of the Stolen Generations. She has a history of large hand-woven public art works, made with people as difficult experiences are shared. The Committee agreed Sharyn was a fitting artist to work with the community to realize their long-held desire for a marker.

Sharyn proposed a stand of monumental hand-woven flowers, saying “flowers are good for every occasion, happy or sad.” The committee was responsive but rejected Sharyn's suggestion of white daisies — these are a weed in the Darug's traditional Cumberland Plains ecosystem. They specified flannel flowers, so many hands wove seven monumental flannel flowers.

Moogahlin Performing Arts Co-Artistic Directors, Frederick Copperthwaite, Lily Shearer, and Liza-Mare Syron, emphatically sidestepped colonialism and its associated trauma for the resilience of the Darug and growing up Aboriginal in Western Sydney. Moogahlin collaborated with First Peoples youth in Western Sydney, choreographers, a rapper, photographer, and other knowledge holders to create a performance of dance, song, and light projections on a sand circle, or bora, in the shape of a long-neck turtle, an important Darug totem. The “legs” were four *gunyahs*, traditional shelters, and the “tail” was a car decorated in the colors of the Aboriginal flag, re-appropriating

the mission cars that signified the removal of children. More than 40 young dancers took part, dancing up a site and renewing cultural practice in a place that has held much sadness and trauma.

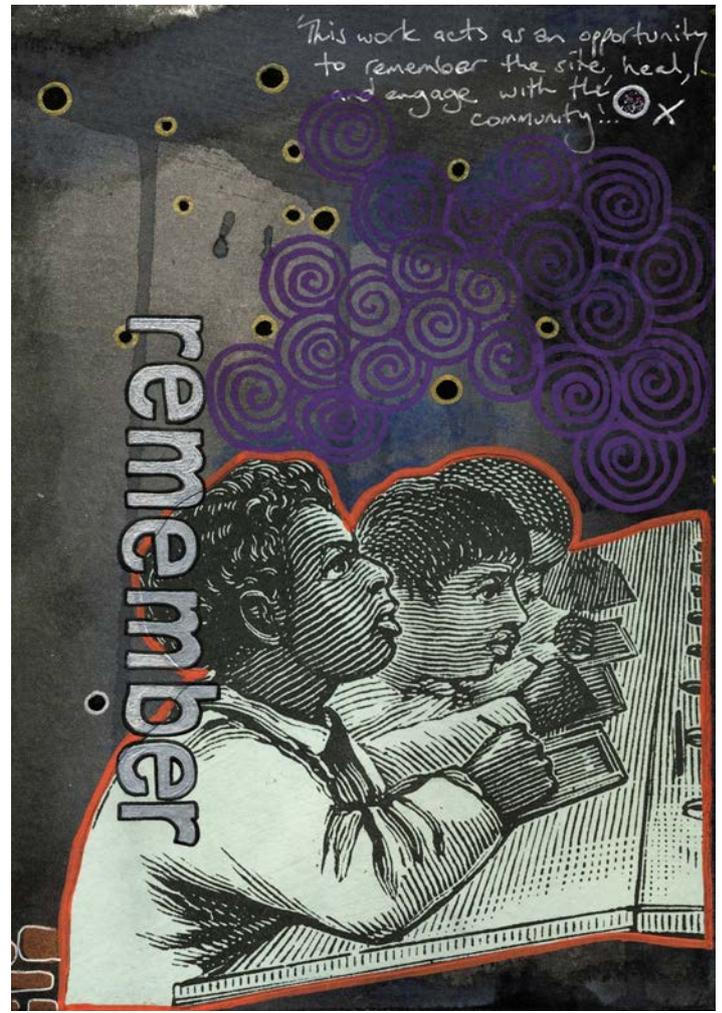
The traditional custodians also created major ceremonial performances. Julie Bukari Jones (Webb) and Corina Marino joined our second camp in March 2015. From that moment they worked with family and friends to create beautiful dance and song works addressing the site. In March 2015 they shared their version of a dragonfly and bulrush story, from the creek that ran through the site, the creek in which parents hid at night, singing lullabies to their children in the Institute, the creek in which runaway children hid. A large group of traditional owners opened *Ngara — Ngurangwa Byallara (Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks)*, our culminating event in June 2018. Singing and dancing contemporary iterations of ancient stories, this intergenerational group included a newborn baby. The significance of a Darug baby, on his mother's chest, participating in ceremony, on that site, cannot be overstated.

TA: In this last quarter of our presentation we look at outcomes, optimistic future endeavors, and changing the world we live in. As Aboriginal people, we have never forgotten and/or severed our strong spiritual and cultural links to our land and sea, our lores, values, and customs. We have always stood tall to fight for our rights as human beings.

Given the significance of this conference, I don't think it would be fair to continue or finish without also recognizing the emergent situation we as a global community currently face with climate change. This is having significant effects on our communities, our health, and the land, and unless we take immediate action these impacts will continue to intensify, grow ever more damaging, and increasingly affect us.

This reflection comes when I think of the importance of us all coming together to learn. Holistically and philosophically, what information do our indigenous people hold in caring for the earth? Aboriginals have the least involvement in climate change, yet are the first to feel its catastrophic impact.

The practices with which our past government experimented are represented by the Blacktown Native Institution, displaying the first stage of what were to become significant, long term, and controlling policies for the "management" of the Aboriginal population in a post-contact period of Australian history. The Aboriginal community has an enduring connection with the site and has a strong social significance for local groups as well as the broader Aboriginal population.



Tony Albert, *Blacktown Native Institution Project* concept book (in progress, detail), 2017–18. Image courtesy the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, © the artist

So, it is with great enthusiasm that I can reflect that Global Professional Services Company has worked with the NSW Government's land and property development organization, Landcom, to facilitate the transfer of the Native Institution site to back to its traditional custodians. An historic event to mark the handover was held on the October 13, 2018.

I strongly believe that the investment in the site through programs such as C3West with the Museum of Contemporary Art shone much visibility on this otherwise invisible sight. It is when these sites are activated and used by the community that the boarder community start to understanding and also embrace this significance.

Dharug Board Director and project collaborator Julie Webb-Jones said:

"The repatriation delivers a strong foundation on which to truly move forward in healing and understanding, and in honoring our ancestors, our history, our way."

I am also delighted to share with you that a reiteration of this work will be presented in the 22nd Biennale of Sydney: *NIRIN*, under the artistic direction of Brook



Tony Albert, *Gubangala Gumadanyiningi (Let's honor his/her spirit)*, 2018, at Ngara — *Ngurangwa Byallara (Listen, hear, think — The Place Speaks)*, 2018, Oakhurst NSW, co-commissioned by Blacktown Arts on behalf of Blacktown City Council and C3West on behalf of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Image courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, ©the artist. Photograph: Anna Kučera

Andrew. The exhibition will grow on the initial concept and be presented on an even bigger scale and an international platform and will run from March 14 to June 8, 2020.

As you may know, *NIRIN* promises an unprecedented, timely, and poignant reflection on the connectivity of Indigenous and Edge cultures from around the globe. The 22nd Biennale of Sydney is an artist- and First Nation-led endeavor that will bring together over 70 artists, makers, scientists, academics, and thinkers from around the world. These practitioners will deliver artworks, insights, ideas, and projects that challenge dominant narratives, share Indigenous knowledge, displace conventional notions of the center, and reimagine the role of the arts institution.

For my own participation, I propose to create a new gesture of “memory exchange,” which will be presented in sustainable greenhouses on Cockatoo Island.

The greenhouses will be open to all visitors to the Biennale and activated through Biennale Public and Learning programs, where audiences are invited to act as caretakers of the spaces. My hope is that the installation will become a powerful and poetic gesture of collective and active memorialization.

Visibility is key to overturning and supporting. The outcome is not only about rejuvenation of the land though planting, but healing the land through historical truth.

Perspective 6

Lara Strongman

Director, Curatorial and Digital, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney.

Biography — Lara Strongman is Director, Curatorial and Digital at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. She was previously Head Curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, where she led the curatorial team. Prior to this she was Deputy Director at City Gallery Wellington. Her current research interests include contemporary photography, issues in public art, and art's response to situations of crisis. She writes on the relationship of art to the wider culture, and reviews film and television for Radio New Zealand. Strongman's essay on the Christchurch earthquakes, *A Song from Under The Floorboards*, was included in the Auckland University Press anthology of great New Zealand nonfiction, *Tell You What: 2015*.

A gallery without walls in a city without buildings

I would first like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and waters we meet upon, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I pay my respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging, and also to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples here with us today.

Today I'm going to ask — and possibly answer — some questions. What is the role of public art in a post-disaster city? How might public art contribute to social recovery? And what does a public art museum do when it's closed to its usual audiences?

The situation

Christchurch — New Zealand's second biggest city, with a regional population of about half a million — was devastated by a series of major earthquakes in 2010 and 2011.

I don't know if any of you have had the misfortune to go through a very big earthquake, but I can tell you there's no real warning. One minute you're sitting at your desk, lying in bed, or walking down the street, and the next you're literally thrown in the air as the world disintegrates around you.

In February 2011 in Christchurch, the ground moved violently at nearly twice the acceleration of gravity. People were knocked off their feet. Buildings collapsed; the city's infrastructure came close to catastrophic failure; thousands were seriously injured, and 185 people lost their lives.

The central city was cordoned off from the public for more than two years. Nearly nine years



Lara Strongman

later, more than 75% of the buildings of central Christchurch have been demolished, yet only about 20% have been rebuilt. By contrast I've read that central London lost only 45% of its buildings during the Blitz.

Cities are repositories of memory. They're sites of great intensity, where history happens densely. But a lot of that memory resides in the physical environment. It was lost in Christchurch in about 75 seconds, when the physical fabric of the central city was largely destroyed.

After the earthquakes there was both a need, and an opportunity, to reinvent the way that things were done, drawing on the very distinctive spirit of the city — left-leaning, argumentative, with a strong public life, and suffused with a very subversive dark humor.

The projects I'm going to talk about reflect those qualities, which were there before the disaster and endure today.

Within a few minutes of the February 2011 earthquake, Christchurch Art Gallery became the national emergency headquarters and center for civil defense. Its exhibition spaces and staff offices were commandeered by the government. The army moved in. People set up their desks in front of paintings in the exhibition spaces, and got on with the job of keeping the essential infrastructure of the city running.

The building itself became a backdrop for nightly news reports on the disaster, its iconic glass facade almost miraculously remaining undamaged even through the huge aftershocks that were often played live on TV. There were more than 10,000 aftershocks overall.

Although the gallery building itself came through the upheavals with little damage, the ground underneath it settled differentially, resulting in lengthy repairs. (It's like that old dentist joke about your teeth being fine, but the gums will have to come out.)

Like many cities around the world, Christchurch was built on the site of a swamp. Much of the damage in the central city and the east was caused by underground water forcing its way to the surface and causing the land itself to liquefy.

The Gallery's Maori name, Te Puna o Waiwhetu, means *the well-spring of star-reflecting waters*: referring to an artesian spring that drains into the nearby river Avon/Otautahi.

In the end, the art gallery was shut for five years for repairs, including base isolation. The building reopened in December 2015, and people queued outside to be first through the doors. There were many tears. But what did the gallery staff do during this period that the building was closed?

As the demolition of earthquake-damaged buildings took place around them, the gallery team left the building and started programming art in the largely-depopulated transitional spaces of the inner city — in abandoned houses, in vacant lots, and on walls that were still standing.

Also during this period, the gallery hugely extended its online presence; moved its entire collection twice; opened and ran three temporary exhibition spaces, including an exhibition series devoted to the work of local artists; ran an exhibition program in the new temporary central city library; rescued works from artists' studios and from central city dealer galleries; ran an outreach program for schools; and tackled the sort of huge back-of-house project there's never usually time to do, like copyright clearance.)

This morning I want to tell you about some of the public art projects — more than 90 in total — which Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Christchurch Art Gallery, carried out in the ruined city, as well as some of the other interventions in public space that the city hosted. I joined the Gallery in 2014, so I'm paying tribute here to the work of my former colleagues — including Justin Paton, former senior curator in Christchurch, and now at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The Gallery's response to disaster

The first thing to say is that it wasn't easy to move out of the building and into the city. *Nothing* about living in a post-disaster city is easy. Gallery staff were living in damaged houses, dealing with personal and family trauma, and their workplace had been commandeered. Some Christchurch people were very profoundly affected emotionally: the rate of mental illness skyrocketed in the city among all population groups and post-traumatic stress disorder is rife in the city, including among little children who were not even born at the time of the earthquakes.

And professionally, it wasn't easy. Some of the curators had never worked in public space before — they were used to working with the collection, curating familiar works for known interior spaces.

But they quickly rose to the challenge of moving outside into public space, embracing the concept of the museum without walls.

But a museum without walls is one thing: a city without buildings was quite another. One of the biggest challenges was finding space to put public art in — which seemed ironic given that the one commodity Christchurch had more of than ever after the earthquakes and the bulldozers — was space.

It took a lot of negotiating. Landowners were wary of their insurance settlements. And they were tired. They didn't want yet another difficult thing with which to deal.

Here's one of the Gallery's major public space projects: Michael Parekowhai's *On first looking into Chapman's Homer* in 2013. It's actually on private

land — a vacant lot that had been a car rental place before the earthquakes. It was right on the very edge of the cordoned-off red zone of the central city. Half a block down the road was an army checkpoint.

Before they came to Christchurch, Michael Parekowhai's massive bronze bulls had traveled to Paris, where they were exhibited in view of the Eiffel Tower at the Musée de quai Branly.

And before that, they had been shown in Venice, where they represented New Zealand's contribution to the Venice Biennale in 2013.

From Parekowhai's studio in Henderson Auckland, to Venice, to Paris, to a post-quake wasteland, the bulls went on a Grand Tour and had a homecoming, of sorts, in central Christchurch.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer was only exhibited for four weeks in Christchurch, and it was not the kind of work you'd conceive as having social impact — but it captured public attention and imagination like I've never seen any other public work of art do in New Zealand.

It seemed to symbolize something about the resilience of local culture. The city's grace under pressure. People saw themselves in the strength and fragility of the work. In fact, a crowd-funding campaign raised enough money to buy one of the bulls and keep it in the city. We'll return to this idea of resilience later.

When the gallery was raising funds to buy the work, it showed *Chapman's Homer* in other places around the city — including the busy hardware shop Placemakers and in New Regent Street, a little central city enclave.

Here's another work by Parekowhai from the Gallery's Collection: the giant inflatable rabbit *Cosmo McMurtry*, given to the gallery by collectors Jim and Mary Barr.

This was a relatively unusual project for Christchurch in that it's installed in an empty shop. You don't quite believe it until you've seen it, but actually there are huge parts of the central city that are now just wasteland. Nothing there. Unlike other regenerating cities, the problem for Christchurch isn't empty buildings, it's no buildings at all.

The Victorian buildings in the central city that were coming to the end of their commercial lives were the ones that fell down — and they were the buildings that housed dealer galleries, artists' studios, and small startup businesses. Christchurch was always a great place for artists — and for other independent, artisanal producers — because of its abundant space, and cheap overheads. A lack of cheap work space remains one of the most serious issues besetting art and culture in Christchurch.

Demolition of our material history is no new thing for Christchurch, and more broadly for New Zealand: it seems we've always been razing our buildings to the ground and starting again. The difference, this time, is that 100 years' worth of organic growth and change is being telescoped into this period of post-quake recovery. Initially it was thought that the city would be rebuilt in five years: at this point, it looks more like 25.

Here's another of the Gallery's public art projects that dealt with the problem of space: Tony de Lautour's *Unreal Estate*, an artist's book painted on found pages from Christchurch real estate publications — concerned with the dividing of the city into colored zones, and their impact on both the property market and peoples' lives.

And here's Ronnie van Hout's *Comin Down*, a large-scale sculpture commissioned by the Gallery for the roof of the C1 building. You can get a fairly good idea of the devastation of the central city from up here. There are *some* walls left, of course: and here's a range of the Gallery's public space interventions that use them.

First, here's Wayne Youle's *I seem to temporarily have lost my sense of humour*, one of the first of the new transitional works in the central city, which the Gallery did in partnership with Gap Filler. This was the first exhibition opening that I ever went to in a vacant lot, in 2011. The gallery's curators staffed the barbeque, handing out sausages to the visitors.

And here's New York artist Kay Rosen's work *Steeple People* on the eastern side of the gallery building, facing the ruined Anglican cathedral. The artist was aware of the heated debate around the rebuild — or otherwise — of the cathedral. The work represents her hope that the "steeple of the future may be built on the foundation of the city's people."

Here's *The Inner Binding*, a work the Gallery commissioned from Richard Killeen when we were asked to "add something" to the new temporary library in Peterborough Street.

The Gallery did various things it might not have done prior to the earthquakes, and one was to put reproductions of works from the collection on a grand scale around the city. We knew that audiences missed seeing their favorite works from the collection.

And here's Tony Fomison's *NO!* from the collection, a billboard-scaled reproduction in one of the oldest and most damaged parts of town. The huge image was pasted on a surviving wall over an existing graffiti tag. And then one night the original graffiti artists reasserted ownership by repainting the original tag over the lower edge of the image. They added a succinct message: "Keep your shit 4 the Gallery." Gallery staff considered removing the tag but left it, enjoying both the humor and the critique.

The Gallery also tried to press out of the inner city a little: here's a commissioned project by Wellington artist Sian Torrington, in a vacant section in the suburb of Richmond.

The context

So, you can see from these examples something of the range and breadth of the public space inventions — and interventions — that Christchurch Art Gallery was involved in during the years immediately after the quakes. It was critical for the gallery that it find a home for art in the ruined city — and that it continued to fire people's imagination and provide support to the local art community.

One of the great challenges for public art practice in post-quake Christchurch was and is the competition afforded by the everyday surrealism of the streets. When the city looks — even now, eight or nine years on — in part like the set of a dystopian movie, then art needs to find a new accommodation with the everyday.

I'd like to tell you a little about the broader context for Christchurch Art Gallery's public art projects.

The Gallery was only one organization among several that worked in public space in post-quake Christchurch — including Gap Filler, Life in Vacant Spaces, Greening the Rubble, the Council's community arts and transitional city teams, Festa, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, and Scape Public Art, among others.

In those early post-earthquake years, there was the feeling that we were all in it together, along with our public audiences and participants — part of a wider community response to disaster and tragedy, making the ruined city a place to be sociable again — a civilized place — against the backdrop of the brutality of the earthquake and the subsequent demolitions. For the first year or so after the earthquakes, with the city cordoned off and our cultural institutions closed, we lost many of our public spaces.

Part of the initial job of public art after the earthquakes was to reclaim space for the public. Making gardens, places to sit, places to play, places to eat, places to think. The first few post-earthquake years were characterized by an explosion of public space art interventions, as people sought to renegotiate the way they approached public spaces. Which really amounts to nothing less than a renegotiation of the way we lived in the city.

Some of these public space interventions were large-scale; others more modest. Some were authored; others were anonymous, or pseudonymous. Many were participatory. Many were collaborative,

some were celebratory. Others were very, very angry. They had different reasons for existing — including political critique, the convocation of community, and mourning, both for the loss of people and for a lost way of life.

Art was under a lot of pressure to be useful, in those early years, to *do* things. Artists rose to the challenges, both commissioned and uncommissioned. But it was an extremely tough place in which to work.

Works like Mike Parekowhai's *Chapman's Homer*, as we've seen, drew power from the desolation of the city; as did local art teacher Henry Sunderland's participatory art project, which encouraged people on the first couple of anniversaries of the February quake to place flowers in the road cones which continue to punctuate the entire city. Henry got the word out through social media, and then *The Press* newspaper.

Repurposing the road cones as giant vases, or plinths — he also came up with a Christmas and an Easter project — these interventions became a form of spontaneous participatory public art, in which private commemorations became part of a greater public work. The practice also became a means of reclaiming public space.

Elsewhere around the city on quake anniversary days for several years, people came together to observe two minutes' silence and throw flowers into the city's rivers. On the first anniversary, the silence was also observed on the social media platform Twitter, with people posting a single full stop as a private moment of stillness in the public stream of words: a different kind of public space intervention.

The coming together of community collaborators — or at least, of many individuals — who are both users and makers in public space art interventions was one of the hallmarks of the rebuild, much promoted and reported upon outside Christchurch. The flowering of public and participatory art was one of the ways to understand the city's recovery as a grass-roots, bottom up, community-led endeavor — plucky old Christchurch reinventing itself — and as tangible evidence of the city's resilience in the face of adversity. Public art has been quite useful in the telling of this official story. As you can imagine, the truth of the lived experience was much tougher and more nuanced.

I don't have time today to fully deconstruct this proposition or comment on the use of the word "resilience" in the political management of post-quake Christchurch. I'd like instead to point to the research of Jack Newsinger from the University of Leicester into the British Arts Council's recent policies of resilience, which he places against the related

background of funding cuts. Newsinger points out that resilience thinking places the burden of adapting to a new environment on to organizations and individuals, and as such is strongly tied to neoliberal policies of austerity, which constantly reshape society in ways detrimental to those at the bottom. Resilience is a very good and useful quality for individuals and organizations, suggests Newsinger, but equally it doesn't provide much of a platform for questioning the normative dimensions of austerity — or the investment politics of a city struggling to rebuild itself.

The future

The challenge for Christchurch Art Gallery now — as well as for the city itself — is to take forward the best of what Christchurch people all experienced through the public space projects in the earthquake years — the new collegiality, the breaking down of hierarchies, the embracing of experiment, the flowering of grass-roots creativity, the enthusiastic participation of locals and their families, the sense of mutual ownership of the city, a belief in the importance of self-expression, and common faith in local culture.

And indeed, one of the silver linings of the earthquake has been the increasing visibility of local Ngāi Tahu Maori culture in the rebuild. The permanent public works that have been associated with government buildings are almost all by Ngāi Tahu artists. Here's a design for paving in the city based on *whariki*, Maori weaving designs, by Reihana Parata and Morehu Flutey-Henare. These are all over the central city and they're incredible. Here's a lightbox work by Nathan Pohio that places the ancestors on home ground. Christchurch, famously known as an English-looking city, is now recognizably a Maori place too — Ōtautahi.

I wouldn't wish an experience like the Christchurch earthquakes on anyone, but what it did show me was the great value of art and culture in processing traumatic shared experience. People started to write, paint, photograph, build, or compose a response to the experiences they were having from almost the day after the earthquakes. And there was a strong audience for these works, too, on- and offline.

Public space art practices beyond the walls of the museum have made a powerful contribution to the discourses of the transitional city and to the experience of people who live in Christchurch. As the new city rises painfully and *extremely slowly* from the rubble of the old, I think that art in public space *and* in public galleries will continue to play a critical role in providing alternative ways of looking at the city and relating to one another within it.

And in an essentially pragmatic, austere, brutalist, damaged, politically-charged, and action-filled environment like post-quake Christchurch, the power of the imagination to see things differently is a form of quiet resistance offered by art, as a rebuttal to all kinds of dominant paradigms — even when art is subsequently co-opted in support of those paradigms.

Any imaginative intervention in the public sphere generates new forms of imaginative response and new modes of participatory user-ship. And although art is still being shaped by a very robust environment in post-quake Christchurch, it equally offers its own kind of slow-burning resistance to the pressures of pragmatism.

Panel Discussion 3

Lee Weng Choy

Art critic, writer, president AICA Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Biography:

Lee Weng-Choy is an independent art critic and consultant based in Kuala Lumpur, where he is the president of the Singapore Section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). Previously, he was artistic co-director of The Substation in Singapore, and has taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Sotheby's Institute of Art, Singapore. He has done project work with various arts organizations, including Ilham Gallery and A+ Works of Art, both in Kuala Lumpur, and the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, and the National Gallery, Singapore. He writes on contemporary art and culture in Southeast Asia, and his essays have appeared in journals such as *Afterall*, and anthologies such as *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art*, *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture*, and *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*.

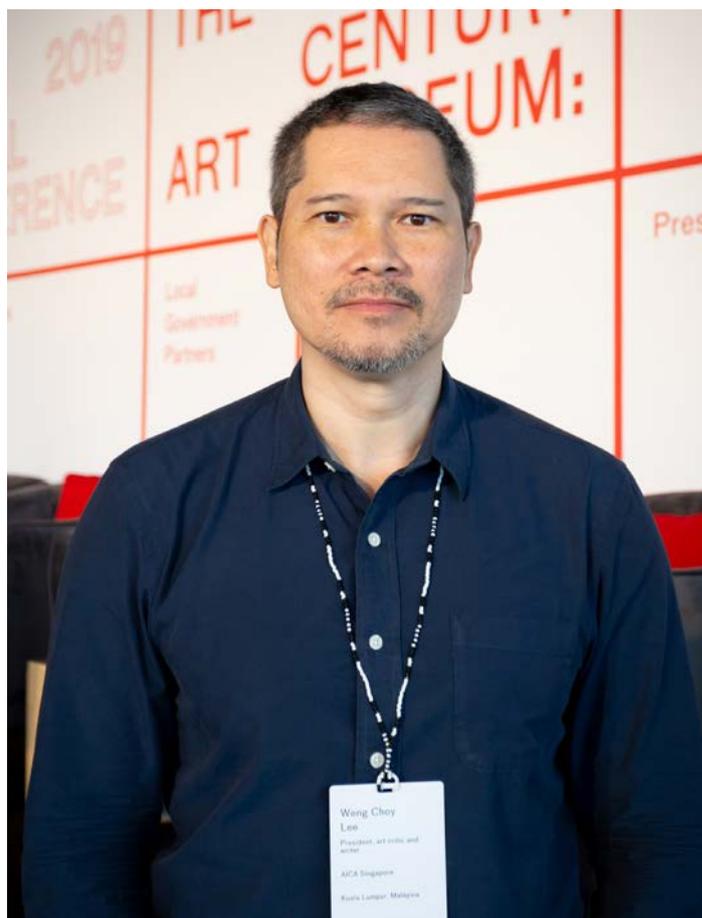
Panel Conclusions by Lee Weng Choy

Our panel discussion involved keynote presenter Sally Tallant, and the presenters of the two case studies, Anne Loxley, Tony Albert, and Lara Strongman; I served as moderator.

In her keynote, titled "Outside in, Inside Out," Tallant argued that what we need today are arts organizations and institutions that are porous, so that art and artists can inhabit spaces that are defined and created together with their communities. Her presentation drew on her experiences working at the Serpentine, the Liverpool Biennial, and her new post at the Queens Museum. She explained how she takes a situated approach to curatorial practice that emphasizes place and context as starting points.

Loxley and Albert spoke of the significance of the Native Institution, and how the traditional owners of the land on which it was sited, the Darug nation, have worked for decades for it to be returned to them. In October 2018, the Blacktown Native Institution site was handed back to the Darug people — the first such transfer of land. The *Blacktown Native Institution Project* played a key supporting role in this process, in part by creating visibility and space for the careful navigation of intergenerational trauma and cultural protocols as well as engagement with a non-Indigenous public that is frequently reluctant to acknowledge this aspect of Australia's history.

Strongman spoke about her work at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū in the aftermath of the devastating Canterbury earthquakes



Lee Weng Choy

of 2010 and 2011. She described how public art developed a prominent and increasingly participative role in the new culture of the city. As the demolition

of earthquake-damaged buildings took place around them, the Gallery team began programming art in abandoned houses, vacant lots, and on walls that were still standing.

During the break after the presentations and before the panel discussion, the speakers and I met, and we decided that given this was the last panel of the conference, and given our theme of going beyond the walls of the institutions, we should focus our discussion less on an elaboration of the presentations, than a turning outward to the audience — to get their views on some of the themes of the session, and their reflections on the conference as a whole.

One audience member asked, “is context really everything?” He was by no means wanting to diminish the importance of contextualization, but he argued for the value in thinking about the aspects of art that cannot be explained by context alone. A number of other speakers shared the difficulties that their art spaces were experiencing. An audience member from Japan spoke of a recent censorship struggle, arguing that there is always much work needed to be done after a controversy but that it often falls by the wayside. Another audience member spoke of the current struggles in running cultural spaces in Poland that are a direct result of the right-wing political climate. Another also addressed a similar situation in Brazil.

Workshop Conclusions



CIMAM 2019 General Assembly, Board Members 2017–19: Agustín Pérez Rubio, Suzanne Cotter, Bart de Baere, Mami Kataoka, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, Calin Dan, Ann-Sofi Noring, Frances Morris, Corinne Diserens and Suhanya Raffel.

Workshops were facilitated small-group conversations on topics of urgent relevance to the contemporary art museum profession. MCA artist-educators led the 90-minute sessions. Summaries of the workshop conclusions were presented by CIMAM board members at the General Assembly on Sunday November 17.

Activism

How do the growing number of large-scale protests against funding sources, initiated by politically engaged art collectives and people from around the world, impact on museum sponsorship and general practices?

Conclusions presented by Bart de Baere.

Art is an agent for change, and it's from there that this question arises.

On the one hand, there may be moments when an issue feels to be more important than the institution.

On the other, when artists raise issues, we have to deal with them. How can we do that?

From an institutional perspective, the main notion we came up with is of museums as safe place for discussion. Museums should be non-judgmental spaces, demonstrating empathy and flexibility.

Also, the fact that museums need to understand

the other side, i.e. the community, means that in the future they will need to be more flexible, experimenting with hybrid multidisciplinary collectives to achieve this end. One of the questions was how to respond to having this kind of open attitude while continuing to be passionate at the same time.

Empowering the community by collaborating with them and by sharing part of the museum's capacity with the people to whom you want to listen. In the best-case scenario, we should all receive the capacity, not only the artist and the institution.

Besides this empowering, there's also the point of finance. If we are realistic, we can say that all money, to some extent, is dirty. Clarity benefits the institution, and may comfort the artist, but it may also give comfort to funders. Fundamental to that clarity is that, in the most profound sense, nothing should be attached to the money received. We formulated it by saying: "The mandate of the museum should not be blocked by the mandate that comes with the money." Museums should adhere to their values.

On the other hand, the collective needs to come on board. The institutional tradition says we want to continue it, not only that we want to use it. The institution needs to acknowledge the risk they are taking. It's like committing to a fundamental risk and then everyone needs to come on board.

Populism & Censorship

We live in an age of social media, unabashed narcissism, and the collective consciousness of populism in the public sphere. How can we avoid this impacting or resulting in censorship of content within museums?

Conclusions presented by Calin Dan.

There was a very good definition that came out in the group: "Populism is a political strategy." This definition of populism is a political strategy dominating the moment and, even more important, that it is the arena where the ideological battles are disputed. It is a very important conclusion and I'm starting with it because it sets the tone for the whole topic.

This reality allows limited space and there is no real way of creating an open space where debates other fundamental concepts can take place for the time being.

Another important statement made in the group was that emotional narratives are very hard to compete with and are very hard to fight against with rational arguments.

At this moment, there is the danger that no matter what you do, you're part of a system that is, in a way, churning you out and not letting you step aside and define your professional, moral, ethnic, or even sexual identity in other ways.

These were some of the remarks made concerning our profession:

One is the fact that curatorship is seen as being somehow imprisoned, trying to negotiate between entertainment and seduction. Seduction per se is not a bad thing, but if you only go with seduction, you risk providing only entertainment.

The museum has to be a place of leisure. It should attract as many as layers of society as possible in order to reach a particularly noble goal: the goal of ultimately making people part of the broader cultural discourse.

Social media couldn't be avoided in this discussion, which very cleverly articulated the populist and censorship topics.

It was perceived both as potentially helpful for advancing the museum's agenda, and we all recognize that we rely heavily on social media for reaching further and further beyond the physicality of our environment. But social media can equally be harmful when irrelevant or fake issues go viral.

Censorship stimulates creativity in finding solutions for avoiding it and for furthering your agenda.

Digital Disruption

How are art organizations themselves being influenced by digital disruption, and what are we doing to manage such change?

Conclusions presented by Ann-Sofi Noring.

Four questions, pros and cons of digital disruption:

The first question was around the breach of the gap between the older and younger generations regarding technology. The plus side would be that instead of bridging the gap, we should embrace the differences and encourage the younger generation to support older generations, who may need their help. But there would still be some institutions that are conflicted over placing additional information on tech devices, while there are further problems where older

buildings pose difficulties for the presenting and exhibiting of digital artworks.

The second question was what role does artificial intelligence hold for the future? The group's feelings were generally positive. Despite some worry about AI, artworks are so specialized and complex that robots could never take over. And AI makes life easier, that's the statement.

The third question would be how do we encourage meaningful engagement beyond selfies? Artists are incorporating the technology of smartphones and their possibilities into their artworks. Smartphones are very helpful in supporting engagement with visitors at institutions and for extended information.

The question is: If making selfies prevents people from engaging with the works, by prohibiting the practice might we be censoring the behavior of the visitor?

We came to the conclusion that social media is an extension of artwork engagement and communication, and also that it can be used for art criticism, and therefore is very helpful.

The last question is how can museums keep up with the fast-moving pace of technology while avoiding passing trends? Artists and artwork request requirements can help museums and art institutions by driving the choices around the purchasing of technology devices. You don't need the newest or best technology. A standpoint was that you could shift focus onto things that are not reliant on new tech.

And archiving is particularly difficult. How do you show all the artworks that use updated tech without engaging with the nature of the work itself?

Climate Change

Museums have long served as vehicles for social and political engagement, if not outright change. What role should museums take on this topic? What are the museum's responsibilities toward this issue?

Conclusions presented by Frances Morris.

Firstly, we asked ourselves what has the arts taught us about climate emergency. The answer was we don't need art to tell us about what we're witnessing right now. Climate change is a reality and that was possibly the only thing on which we felt capable of agreeing, because in the face of crisis it is often very difficult to come to any resolution about behavior and actions.

We acknowledged how difficult it was for some institutions to make a declaration of climate emergency in countries where governments are not prepared to accept the reality. But, as a sector, we need to create a real awareness and solidarity around that.

Thinking about how we could connect as a sector, it was fantastic that our friends from ICOM were here and that, at the same time, the Bizot group was meeting, as well as the UK Museums Association. So how can we avoid working in isolation so as not to duplicate what other people are doing? How can we connect up and become a force together?

We explored what museums can do along the lines we perform at home as individuals and families. We can stop using plastic, turn our heating down, take the train, walk... But what can we do over and above that? How can we address our deep systems and conventions that are built on years, decades, centuries of a particular type of activity, which is incredibly costly in terms of impact the environment? Shipping vast quantities of art around the world, our international movements as curators, attracting vast global audiences to international museums...

What will it look like if we move towards a really radical change in the world caused by climate breakdown? What role can we play in the future? We all talk about museums being places where we reconfigure the past. We understand the present and we envisage the future. But we don't really envisage the future, and it's about time we did so.

Finally, many of us feel that we have created public spaces that have a position of trust in society. Somehow, we're more trusted than many other public spaces. Can we leverage that power, not just to address the audiences who come in, who are already part of the conversation, but those conversations we're not having and those people we not having them with?

Ultimately, if we are really going to confront climate change, we need to do two things: we need to change our leadership or at least change the way our leaders think and act, and we need to plant a lot of trees. I've got no land to plant trees, but maybe we can begin to influence our policymakers, our leaders. I believe we ended our discussion on a hopeful note at a very dark time.

Museum As Refuge

In an age of mass migration and increased border controls, how can the museum become a place of refuge? Can museums respond to the refugee crisis?

Conclusions presented by Corinne Diserens.

We took the opportunity of telling each other where we work and how we have encountered this question of the museum as a refuge. What came out of that sharing of experience is that it is precisely that we do have to share experiences with people who have lived as refugee or who find themselves part of minority narratives.

How do we do that? Our experiences tell us that we need to think about our structural configuration, our physical realities, our new relation to nature, and maybe we need to invent new protocols and new ways of structuring our approach to hiring the staff, of sharing leadership, of discussing languages in our institutions. How we can switch our capacity to have a sense of hospitality toward other narratives and therefore be able to give voices in another way to people who are arriving or are in a minority situation in relation to the main ways in which the institution is structured?

Also, how do we deal with archives, with custody of different natures, of things linked to stories? How do we propose instruments, including funding? How do we rethink the founding of our museum institutions in regard to being proactive, in regard to a refugee configuration, which self-evidently is something extremely prevalent in today's world? It can be a climate change or political refugees, but it is also about being a place of hospitality for ideas. How ideas are able to be expressed, shared, and structured, and which kind of configuration the institution must adopt.

Colophon

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