

The Task of the Curator in the Era of Reconciliation

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Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land upon which I wrote this research paper is Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the 'Treaties of Peace and Friendship' which the Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726. These treaties sought to establish the rules for an ongoing relationship between nations based on respect, not to deal in the surrender of land and resources but in fact to recognize Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) title and guarantee their right to livelihood on their land. In the ensuing and continuing years of colonial violence, oppression, and genocide, settlers have actively failed to recognize these treaties and their responsibilities to the peoples whose land they now inhabit as well as to the land itself. Acknowledging territory and Indigenous communities must take place within the larger context of genuine and ongoing work to forge real understanding and cooperation to challenge the ongoing legacies of colonialism. We are all Treaty People.

It is important to understand that I am a settler, and therefore my positionality in this research is not from an Indigenous perspective and neither is my interlocutor. While there is much to learn from a critical examination of settler movements within reconciliatory efforts, we must always ensure that we are empowering and centring Indigenous voices in these conversations.

A Note on Language

The work of reconciliation asks of us to engage our own language for vestiges of colonial ideology. Anthropology teaches us that our linguistic practices frame the ways in which we think about the world. Research and scholarship, therefore, must account for the implicit and explicit assumptions nascent in the words we use.

To begin, the term 'Indigenous' is frequently utilized to refer to the original inhabitants of colonized lands, whereby Indigenous peoples are marginalized, exploited, and/or oppressed by the politically dominant population.¹ In this article, I use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to the First Peoples living within what are now Canadian borders, who are distinguished from the settlers who arrived in the last five centuries. Although this term is slightly ambiguous and controversial, as it is an umbrella term for a large group of sovereign and unique nations, it is nonetheless useful for identifying patterns that affect the way gallery spaces treat the heritage of colonized peoples. As such, in this paper I utilize 'Indigenous' to address Indigenous groups as a collective, and wherever possible use Nation-specific terms.

My research deals with considerations of gallery practices—specifically the politics of the display of objects. Much research within museology and gallery studies utilizes the language of *artifact* when referring to those objects of display. I will not do so. Within gallery spaces, *artifact* is a term that often denotes an object observed: something that is likely found, studied, and ultimately displayed. It makes the object into the things observed by the actor of that encounter. To utilize this language—the term *artifact*—in my opinion, aligns the collected object with certain rhetorics and curation which are often at odds with the object itself. Therefore, I will be employing the term 'object' to denote their 'ontological resist[ance to] the curatorial and its apparatus'.² Although the language of objects directly objectifies, it does so in an explicit and direct manner that I appreciate. The process of objectification is present in the term itself, and so this process should be foremost in our thoughts when we speak of these displayed objects. With both reference and reverence to their resistance and the processes they have likely undergone, my research speaks of objects—though the term *artifact* will still be seen in quotations or reference to literature, though I italicize this term to emphasize the distance between the

1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008).

2 André Lepecki, 'Decolonizing the Curatorial' (2017) 47(1) Theater 102.

subject in question and the ways one intuitively finds its meaning through the language of *artifact*. My analysis and findings take up and further explore the language of artifacts and objects.

Introduction

Anthropological and art historical galleries are critical pedagogical sites. They are symbolic depositories of cultural memory: the autobiography of dominant culture. Galleries, in this way, function as societal institutions of the validation and dissemination of knowledge and human experience as it manifests in art, as well as cultural and natural history objects.³ The valuation of the gallery or museum space, its praise as one of if not the most trustworthy arbiters and sources of truth, brings urgency to the question of *what* it says and *how* it says it.⁴ The examination of gallery practices is an especially pertinent concern as galleries have entered an era of reconciliation with Indigenous communities—a time in which the gallery and those who operate within it are asked to challenge their tacit modes of encounter with objects, as well as the ideas and people from which the objects originate, in an attempt to decolonize the space. I make reference here specifically to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which calls for a review of museum policies and practices with the intention of shoring up the continued legacies of colonial violence which insulate themselves within gallery walls.⁵ In other words, anthropologist James Clifford diagnosed the gallery space as a 'contact zone' in colonial encounters—a crucial stage upon which the dialogue of reconciliation must be done.⁶ Critically, this location possesses its own social criterion: tacit modes of encounter that historically excluded and superseded both the needs and the desires of Indigenous communities. The requirement of this era, as well as the focus of my research, is to locate systems and structures which uphold colonialism or otherwise impede decolonization efforts in our institutions in particular—the gallery space in specific—and our social relations in general.

The reconciliatory effort my research examines are collaborative exhibitions, where settler curators and Indigenous knowledge keepers cohabit the gallery space and create together the exhibition and display of objects. My research investigates the hegemonic perspective within the gallery encounter, which is challenged by this new collaborative way of 'doing' within the gallery. Reconciliatory practices ask of the non-Indigenous, settler actors, who historically dominated the gallery space and the objects within, to make room for another voice to speak, and further to challenge their tacit assumptions and practices within the gallery space. In my research, I interrogate this dynamic by asking: what are the implications of tacit curatorial practices? How do non-Indigenous or settler curators change their visual practices when

handling and exhibiting Indigenous objects? Further, what are the systemic barriers that they encounter when attempting to decolonize their role in the gallery?

Through a critical discussion of a variety of collaborative exhibition case studies, and gallery didactic label analysis, in conversation with a semi-structured interview with a settler curator of a Canadian museum engaged in collaborative exhibitions with Indigenous knowledge keepers, my research seeks to investigate the dynamics of decolonization and repatriation within the gallery on the part of the hegemon, seeking to illuminate the intricacies of these interactive encounters.

Theoretical Framework, or, Get your Bearings

The Task of the Gallery

A necessary question to begin with is, of course, what was and is happening in the gallery that needs to be challenged and decolonized? What precisely are these tacit modes of encounter that are so problematic? Here, Brian O'Doherty's analysis of the gallery proves useful. In his 1976 work *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, O'Doherty analyzes the relationship between aesthetics, economy, and social context to understand what he describes to be the confrontational nature of the gallery encounter. Specifically, O'Doherty examines the influence that these spaces—or 'the white cube'—produce over both an artist's work and the viewer of said work, identifying overtones of control and patronization at the centre of the gallery encounter. He likens the gallery to a church—an institution of power that speaks with great authority—subsuming all those who enter into its grammar, or its 'way of seeing'. O'Doherty writes: '[w]e give up our humanness and become the cardboard spectator with the disembodied eye. For the sake of the intensity of the separate and autonomous activity of the Eye, we accept a reduced level of life and self.'⁷ This reduction is the crux of the gallery encounter. Indeed, to display an object is frequently to supplant its *original* context, utility, and relationality for cold, steely walls with the occasional small textual blurb or video presenting an idea of what was lost. As a sacred space, the gallery removes objects from any aesthetic or historical context. The *meaning* of the object is then primarily directed by its curation, by the autonomous eye of the gallery, in this disembodied reduction that O'Doherty speaks of. As a contact zone, it is vital that the gallery facilitate, or hold, multiple voices and perspectives instead of favouring one and silencing the other(s). Decolonization efforts within the gallery space can and should be understood, in part, as attempts to mitigate this power dynamic, or monolingual communication where the only voice heard is the curatorial and the rhetoric of power for which it stands, or speaks.

The Task of the Curator

Within the dynamic of the gallery, the responsibility of the exhibition ultimately falls to the curator. As Alexandra Sauvage contends, the role of curator is akin to that of a collector. Historically, galleries find their roots in cabinets of curiosities or wonder chambers from the Renaissance, where frequently 'a meaning [of the collection] had nothing to do with the primary functions of the objects collected. Science, nature, aesthetics and mysticism were all intertwined in a logic *dependent only on that of the collector*'.⁸ Later, taxonomic or

3 J Parker, 'Beyond Learning: Exploring Visitors' Perceptions of the Value and Benefits of Museum Experiences' (2008) 51(1) *Curator: The Museum Journal*.

4 Ray Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (Columbia University Press 2000).

5 'We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations'. TRC Call 67 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf> accessed 6 June 2022.

6 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel And Transformation In The Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press 1997) 188-219.

7 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: the Ideology of the Gallery Space* (University of California Press 1976) 10.

8 Alexandra Sauvage, 'To Be or Not to Be Colonial: Museums Facing

classificatory ordering would take hold of gallery spaces, but their collection and organization still ultimately relied on the curator's particular system of reason, or cultural, epistemic biases. As analyzed by philosopher Walter Benjamin, collecting is an inherently political action; curation is a practice of organizing the world into a coherent whole. Benjamin writes that the collector's relation to objects is one:

which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value—that is, their usefulness—but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage, of their fate. The most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed as the final thrill, the thrill of acquisition, passes over them.⁹

We can align the collecting process with rhetorical functions because the collection depends upon discursive practices; and so, we find it necessary to ideologically interrogate the curator within decolonization practices, as their positionality and role within the gallery are not only inherently political but also saturated with the politics of the one who inhabits this role. Indeed, this 'magic circle' within which acquisition affixes the object resonates with O'Doherty reduction theory of the gallery space, the boundaries of which the curator draws. André Lepecki identifies the role of the curator as 'the management of the modes of visibility, valuation, and discursive life of objects', controlling or mediating even those more meandering or diffused relations gallery attendees will have with the objects.¹⁰

Yet, let us not forget to address the history of curation in our treatment of its contemporary expression. Since the 18th century, Western curating has been a function of the creation and management of colonial collections. The gallery space was a treasure house and the curator was the guardian of colonial plunder. Indeed, galleries are a medium of colonialism:

the[ir] collections were built on conquest (the Napoleonic expeditions, the Benin Bronzes...) and on assumptions of 'salvage'—the necessity and the right (guaranteed by a linear, progressive History) to collect vanishing or endangered artifacts, as well as written and oral records. Colonial collecting, which reached something like a fever pitch in the late 19th century, conceived of museums and archives as ultimate resting places, repositories for a precious legacy, kept in trust for science, for the nation, for Civilization, or for Humanity.¹¹

Curatorial practices uphold an evolutionary sequence of history which assumed a vantage point at the end, a prized location reserved for Western colonial powers, which enforced 'a stable hierarchy of places and times'.¹² Broadly speaking, the gallery space historically operated as a tool of colonialism and imperialism.

Modern curatorial practices are attempting a kind of critical intervention, to dislodge both itself and the gallery space from its origins and their legacies. The legacy of the gallery stands as 'the collections of valuable things, and the job of the curator [is] to keep

them safe—carefully displayed for public edification, or preserved in storage for research purposes'.¹³ The curator stands as a possessor of an authoritative knowledge, which results in the arrangement of objects as vehicles for a unilateral transmission of a particular history. Contemporary curatorial work, in the times of decolonization and reconciliation, is attempting to engage with and articulate new histories and perspectives. Yet what would it mean to collaborate, or cohabit the gallery space, when the milieu and historical criterion of curation was for so long exclusionary and colonial?

The Task of Collaboration

Recent trends in galleries and gallery studies, both anthropological and art historical, are rethinking the existing theories and methodologies associated with the treatment of Indigenous collections. These spaces are attempting to open themselves up to collaborative practices, with the aim of maintaining the gallery while imbuing it with the perspectives and needs of the Indigenous communities from which the exhibited objects originate. Ostensibly, this undertaking is a heteroglossic gallery practice—an attempt to present multiple embodied and cultural perspectives, instead of the typical, unilateral directive which O'Doherty describes. Collaborative exhibitions do not ask one actant within its network to absolutely vacate their positionality to make room for the other, even if this perspective is that of the settler who historically took precedence—this would only replicate, though role reverse, the problematic, ubiquitous dynamic of domination O'Doherty identifies. Rather, the two voices and perspectives attempt to speak *to* and *with* one another. To put it simply, collaborative exhibitions are a practice against assimilation and towards equitable cohabitation.

Anthropologist Charlie Gere, reflecting on Clifford's description of the museum as a contact zone, argues that the gallery 'need not be thought of just as a storehouse of colonial plunder, nor a one-way medium, but as a place of interactive communication'.¹⁴ Gere utilizes Clifford's museal contact zone as a medium to rethink Western colonial curatorial norms, with the intention of challenging and reworking gallery relationships which he argues operate through one-sided imperialist appropriation. Here, we again understand the importance of the endeavour of collaborative exhibitions—their attempt to rethink and rework the encounter between Indigenous communities and settler curators within the gallery space. As Clifford writes: '[w]hen museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship—a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull'.¹⁵ What the gallery space communicates, through its curatorial practices, possesses a dynamic relationship to the political sphere—both influencing and being influenced by larger cultural relationships and ideologies. The decolonization of the gallery space, as this vital zone of colonial contact, then engages more urgently with broader political moves of reconciliation.

The Task of Decolonizing Translation

Collaborative exhibitions rely on encounters between Indigenous knowledge keepers and settler curators, where both groups attempt

Their Exhibitions' (2010) 6(12) *Culturales* 104.

9 Walter Benjamin, 'Unpacking my Library: A Talk about Book

Collecting' in Hannah Arendt (ed), *Illuminations* (HarperCollins 2019) 61. 10 Lepecki (n 2) 102.

11 Clifford, 'The Times of the Curator' (2011) 7(4) *Collections* 400.

12 *ibid.*

13 *ibid* 402.

14 Charlie Gere, 'Museums, Contact Zones and the Internet' in David Bearman and Jennifer Trant (eds) *Museum Interactive Multimedia 1997: Cultural Heritage Systems Design and Interfaces: selected papers from ICHIM 97, the Fourth International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums, Paris, France* (Archives & Museum Informatics 1997) 59.

15 Clifford (n 6) 192.

both to speak and be heard to create the conceptual (as much as the physical) ground upon which the exhibition will stand. Collaborative work is ostensibly a process of translation, yet it is one which challenges conventional notions of translation as the rendering of a symbol expressed in one language or media into another—faithfully preserving or conveying the *original*, or pure, essence of the symbol. Rather, the sort of translation at stake in the gallery is a temporal and open-ended practice. This can be understood with reference to works of feminist scholar Donna Haraway as an alignment towards resonance, or a fluid creation of middle ground between two perspectives instead of a concrete exchange of static symbols and signers. Haraway writes that in decolonizing our language and encounters we have the task of ‘recoding communication and intelligence to subvert command and control’—of moving away from the tacit practices and dynamics of the gallery space that O’Doherty describes.¹⁶ To construct the interactive gallery practice Gere calls for, we can utilize Haraway’s argument that we ‘dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia’—that we create such a space where the perspectives of both Indigenous knowledge keepers and settler curators can co-exist in *dynamic* relation with one another.¹⁷

Yet, this endeavour is not so simple, and often within Indigenous-settler relations we find that settler perspectives often take precedence.¹⁸ To illuminate this trouble, it is useful to turn to anthropologist Brian Noble. His work examines inter-cultural collaborative endeavours between settler and Indigenous communities, interrogating the inequity of these relations which often favour and replicate coloniality. These mechanisms of encounter ‘work by translating one socially embedded form of transaction into the terms or practices of another’.¹⁹ In a 2015 work, Noble argues that there is an inherent coloniality to the middle ground of encounter, writing that settlers in inter-cultural collaborative efforts ‘move within a typically colonial middle ground between Indigenous politics and state policies’.²⁰ There is a dominance of settler definitions and perspectives within these dialogues, and so the resolve and practices the encounters produce tend to favour and replicate colonialism.

However, that different worldviews tend to cancel each other out is a problem not of knowledge, but of certainty. Feminist scholar and political theorist Linda Zerilli argues that ‘certain epistemic commitments have come to define discussions’, which is to say that our ways of seeing overrides that which exists, or that which we

attempt to undertake.²¹ As an example, when I walk, the knowledge that I have two legs does not enter into the act of walking. In Zerilli’s account, we are often certain about things without taking them up as objects of knowledge, instead engaging with them more immediately, as a form not of thought, but of *action*. Zerilli contends that one does not experience one’s hinge propositions—those truths one takes for granted reflexivity, such as tacit gallery functions—as an object of cognition, but rather one acts them out: in daily habits and practices. It is on the level of the routine or the everyday that we uphold colonialism, and so too it must be at this level that we dismantle it.

We must not, however, confuse this task as a prelapsarian undertaking, whereby we might return to the garden of ideas, encounters, and gallery spaces unmarred by colonialism and imperialism. Indeed, Haraway asserts that there is no site of unmediated knowledge, no location free from politics, and that the task of decolonization is ‘not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility’ but rather ‘turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment’.²² For Haraway, politics is an embodied instinct; and similarly, for Zerilli, politics takes place at the register of everyday action. Zerilli takes up Haraway’s ‘specific embodiment’ as the conscious practice of *acknowledgement*—the passionate commitment to admitting another’s worldview into your own without the assimilation or subsumption of either party. She writes that principally, on the level of interpersonal translation, this posture of acknowledgement is the recognition that ‘to make a claim is to speak for someone and to someone’—that we must recognize both ourselves and the other as constituents in the political encounter.²³

In the story told by my literature, the decolonization of the gallery space emerges as a complex and relational task, whereby settlers must challenge and overcome ingrained structures of colonialism to move towards more inclusive and just practices. Within collaborative exhibitions in particular, as an enduring relationship of mutual obligation, settler curators seek to facilitate the equitable cohabitation of the gallery space through dismantling the old hierarchies of reductive and exclusionary social criterion. However, in the attempt to convert decolonial theory into praxis in the gallery space, we often find an impasse of translation between settler curators and Indigenous knowledge keepers: the terms they use, even in the same language, have discontinuities in what they mean to each—and settler, colonial definitions often invade this gap. Taking acknowledgement to be the principal motion of both revealing and dismantling the harmful structures of the gallery space, the focus of my research was to locate the barriers and aids to this endeavour within collaborative exhibitions.

Methods & Methodology

My research explored the experience and interpretations of settler curators working with Indigenous knowledge keepers within collaborative exhibitions. As my objective was to examine the condition of reconciliatory movements in the gallery space as they interact with and operate under the institutional expectations and functions of the gallery space, my research gives attention to the

16 Donna Haraway, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century’ in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge 1991) 22.

17 *ibid* 28.

18 We need look no further than the current lobster lawsuit between the Mi’kmaq and non-Indigenous fishers with centers on the questions of the definition of ‘moderate livelihood’. The Peace and Friendship treaties states that Mi’kmaq have the right to hunt, fish and gather for the purposes of earning a moderate livelihood—a term left ambiguous and without definition from the Canadian state to this day. In ensuing configurations, the settler state dominates the meaning of this term and so regulates Indigenous fishing. Cf. Katie Dangerfield, ‘Why the term ‘moderate livelihood’ is at the centre of N.S.’s fishery dispute’ (*Global News*, 23 October 2020) <<https://globalnews.ca/news/7405129/nova-scotia-fishery-dispute-moderate-livelihood>> accessed 6 June 2022.

19 Brian Noble, ‘Niitooii—The Same That Is Real’: Parallel Practice, Museums, and the Repatriation of Piikani Customary Authority’ (2007) 44(1) *Anthropologica* 338.

20 Noble, ‘Tripped up by Coloniality: Anthropologists as Instruments or Agents in Indigenous—Settler Political Relations?’ (2015) 57(2) *Anthropologica* 428.

21 Linda Zerilli, ‘Doing without Knowing: Feminism’s Politics of the Ordinary’ in Cressida Heyes (ed) *The Grammar of Politics* (Cornell University Press 2003) 131.

22 Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective’ (1998) 14(3) *Feminist Studies* 583.

23 Zerilli (n 21) 148.

shifting conceptions settler curators engaged in this work possess as they relate to their work, themselves, and the objects under their care. The qualitative method of semi-structure granted me access to the nuances of these decolonial efforts, with an emphasis on the lived and felt aspects of this work. Further, the semi-structure interview style allowed me to introduce several topics of consideration but still granted space for my interviewee to engage collaboratively in the direction of our interview—to reflect the participatory nature of my data, I henceforth refer to my interviewee as my interlocutor. Indeed, I must note that my interlocutor frequently anticipated my questions, charging into the ideological weight and history of his actions while describing his experiences as a curator working within a collaboration exhibition. The inclusion criteria for my research required my interlocutor to self-identify as a settler and to have worked or be working with Indigenous knowledge keepers in gallery spaces. I recruited via email. We conducted the interview via zoom which lasted approximately one hour, focusing on my interlocutor's participation within collaborative exhibitions. With my interlocutor's consent, our interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. His data was anonymized. All references to specific exhibitions were omitted to protect the privacy of my interlocutor and his collaborators.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and its ensuing disruption of not only the gallery but the global community, necessitated that I supplement the scarcity of available curators with case studies and examinations of gallery didactic labels. My data therefore consists of one in-depth, semi-structured, qualitative interview with a Canadian settler curator whose work currently centers on collaborative exhibitions with Indigenous knowledge keepers. I utilized our interview to illuminate and further explore the findings of the following case studies: The Portland Museum & Tlingit Elders, The Glenbow Museum & Blackfoot Elders, and The Kwagwiltz Museum. The scarcity of my data, as well as my qualitative approach, impairs my research's claim to representability. Under ideal research conditions, a series of interactive interviews in person and in gallery spaces would provide an embodied consideration into the settler curators' evolving relation to the gallery space. Further, with more time, a longitudinal study of gallery spaces throughout the process of a collaborative exhibition would shed further light on the nuances of this decolonization effort. However, the scope of an undergraduate thesis limits my ability to conduct extensive or long-term research. My research is a brief, reflective look into the particular experiences of settler curators as they attempt to decolonize the gallery space through their participation in collaborative exhibitions with Indigenous knowledge keepers.

Analysis, or, What's in a Name

My research uncovered that the tacit 'postcolonial' structure of the gallery space is frequently at odds with the task of decolonization. I found that the gallery maintains an economy of accessibility of the object, or display, where the very language proper the gallery space frequently precludes Indigenous agency and meaningful collaboration. My interlocutor often found the implications of certain terms to impede his decolonization efforts and so it became necessary for him to change the label he used to describe both himself and his work. The tacit process of curating an exhibition frequently undermined my interlocutor's practice of acknowledgement—disrupting his posture of attentiveness to the implications of his presence, language, and routine practices. In our interview, I found a puzzling maze of discrepancies which divided the role of the curator from the task of collaboration. My interlocutor attempted to

hold together these disparate modes of being in an unresolved inner dialogue. The endeavour of decolonization therefore inevitably *tripped him up* as he tried to unify these two realms.²⁴ Due to this harsh polarization, I found it best to take a dialectical approach to uncover the task of the curator in this era of reconciliation and to illuminate the corollaries between the ostensibly contrasted ways of being. The principal areas of concern of my research were the role of curator, their approach to the collection, and how they situate and showcase the collection to the public. I labeled these categories curator/keeper, artifact/object, and past/present to reflect my dialectical approach—whereby I juxtapose previous and novel conceptions to illuminate and isolate the trouble of these gallery practices.

Curator / Keeper

'I use 'keeper' sometimes. To me, it makes a little more sense. It maybe has a different nuance than curator...'

At the start of our interview, I asked my interlocutor to describe his current role. In answering this first (and ostensibly basic) question, my interlocutor revealed the bifurcated nature of collaborative practices for settler curators. He described himself as both a curator and a keeper—the former when he spoke of his official title, and its designated responsibilities, and the later when discussing decolonizing work, principally through reference to collaborative exhibitions. This is the first discrepancy—the definition of custody—and so the question became what stood on either side of this divide? And further, why was it there to begin with?

To curate is to collect, research, and study *artifacts*. My informant reflected a fidelity or obligation to the gallery space when he spoke of curating: all instances referred to a duty to preserve and uphold his institution's discourse. He spoke of collecting *artifacts* under the purview of the gallery space's facilities. This definition of curation reveals undertones of its heritage in the colonial history of the gallery space, where the curator was the guardian of imperial plunder and ideology.²⁵ As will become increasingly clearer, my interlocutor is keenly aware of the colonial traps precarious through curatorial practices. My interlocutor described traditional curating as 'bringing together a bunch of materials in a new way to tell a story in three-dimensional space'. Here, we see the gallery position curator as the authority over the collection, bringing together disparate objects to tell or maintain a story of their own choosing. Curating leaves little room for meaningful or equal collaboration. Further, the collected objects appear to belong to the gallery, affixed by the curator absolutely into this 'magic circle' of the collection which divorces the objects from their living relations.²⁶ My interlocutor noted this problematic dynamic of curation when he later remarked that the etymological history of the term curator initially referred to 'a keeper of souls'. This reflects O'Doherty's description of the gallery as a space of confrontation and not of collaboration. The primary characteristic of this role is the maintenance of ownership, putting forth an allegiance to the gallery space before the objects and cultures it houses. Within collaborative exhibitions, this dominant posture estranges the curator from the task of collaborating with Indigenous knowledge keepers.

By contrast, to *keep* is to steward, care for, and share objects. My informant spoke of keeping when he described his role within

24 Noble (n 20).

25 Clifford (n 11).

26 Benjamin (n 9).

collaborative exhibitions and his responsibility to both his collaborators and to the collection. For my interlocutor, this term denotes ‘caring for not just the objects, but the communities from which they come. You’re helping preserve things that are important to *them* that are in our storage [emphasis added]’. With this claim, my interlocutor highlights how the usage of the term keeper—and ultimately, the embodiment of this role—works to decenter the object’s placement in the gallery space and focalize its living history. This new function is not simply the keeping of souls, but the recognition of the complex political bodies from which they originate. Further, the recognition of the object’s living relations and social life reflects the temporality of keeping, against the curator’s more absolute ownership. In identifying with the role of keeper, my interlocutor sought to distance himself and delineate his practice from the colonial heritage of curation and work towards engaging the perspective and needs of his collaborators.

The most urgent reason why my interlocutor used the label keeper was to equate his work to his collaborators. He discussed intentionally utilizing this term when working in collaboration with Indigenous knowledge keepers to forge a ‘connection between both of us using that term’—to show that ‘*we are all keepers of tradition*’. In identifying with the label of keeper, my interlocutor sought to equate his position, responsibilities, and authority *with* that of his Indigenous collaborators. The process of identifying with the label of keeper works towards the dissolution of semantic distinctions and barriers between settler curators and Indigenous knowledge keepers within the gallery space.

Case Study: The Portland Museum & Tlingit Elders

In 1989, the Portland Art Museum collected a diverse group to discuss its Rasmussen Collection of Northwest Coast Native American Art. Museum staff, art historians, and Tlingit Elders accompanied by translators came together to discuss the re-installment of the collection’s exhibition. The curators presented objects from the collection to the Elders for comment one at a time, with the expectation that they disclose the objects’ histories—how each object was made, by whom, and for what purpose. The museum staff assumed the Elders would provide the origins and context of the objects. This was not the case. Instead, the Tlingit Elders ‘referred to the regalia with appreciation and respect, but they seemed only to them as *aides-memoires*, occasions for the telling of stories and the singing of songs.’²⁷ The objects in the Rasmussen Collection, the focus of the consultation, were left at the margin: ‘[f]or long periods no one paid any attention to them.’²⁸ The session brought forth voices, songs, dances, living stories and experiences. Unfortunately, no staff members at the time understood how to reconcile the ceremony they had witnessed with the gallery’s practices, and the session was archived—suspending not only the insights but the desires the Tlingit Elders articulated.

We can see the dynamics of curation play out in the structure of this meeting, and how ultimately this structure precludes Indigenous agency. At the basement meeting, *curators presented* objects from the collection *to the Elders for comment one at a time*. Immediately, we can understand that though this gathering was meant to be an act of collaboration, the curators maintained ownership over the objects—presenting them in their own order, not sharing or allowing the Tlingit Elders to come to their own objects on their own terms. The curators presented the objects with the expectation that they reveal

their histories, with the intention of up-keeping and maintaining their ownership of the objects. While collaboration was intended, the curators stood between the objects, their living relations and originating community. In this way, curating speaks of artifacts, absolutely belonging to the museal space while keeping speaks of objects, with living relationships that extend beyond the gallery walls in which they are temporarily housed.

Artifact / Object

‘I’m struggling with those terms and that’s a good thing. It’s an active thing. I don’t have it figured out. Objects and artifacts. I think I use them for reasons similar to why I use curator and keeper...’

From an anthropological standpoint, an artifact is a human-made item which discloses vital information about the culture and society of the humans from whom it originated. Within the gallery space, however, ‘artifact’ denotes a process of discovery and examination which then arrives at the eventual presentation of the object. The curator rearticulates the relations of the object, subsuming the particular to speak to the general public. My interlocutor was keenly aware of the implications of an object’s placement in the gallery space, and purposely spoke of his collection as such—as objects—over and against the language of artifacts. This is the second discrepancy: the tension of one’s approach to the collection. Throughout our interview, my interlocutor spoke of consciously utilizing the term ‘object’ to dislodge his approach from the gallery’s system of abstraction.

For my interlocutor, the term artifact reflects a process of embalming. He described it as the petrification of the object into a ‘final, unconnected thing’ that is ‘divorced and stripped of all the context processes around it which gives it a false impression of what you’d call objectivity’. The term artifact speaks of objects displaced, removed from their original context to be supplanted and suspended in the gallery space. This motion simultaneously centralizes the gallery’s presentation of the object and mystifies its construction, which enables the misappropriation of objects into false and otherwise biased histories. The term ‘artifact’ is homogenous precisely in its opposition to the heterogeneity identified as locality—the richness of an object’s particularity. My interlocutor discussed the deterritorialization of the object: the manner in which its ideological and physical location in the gallery space effectively abstracts the object from its context, utility, and relationality. What my interlocutor called the ‘false objectivity’ of the gallery, and it is precisely the control and patronization of the object O’Doherty speaks of. My interlocutor also described this as the process of ‘artifact-ification’ where the gallery suspends the object without relative time, place, or space. Instead, O’Doherty’s white cube surrounds the object with typically stark white walls and concrete floors which present the idea of objectivity and universality through its lack of specificity—presenting a view from nowhere which emboldens the object to a silence *par excellence*.

To resist this atrophy of the object or its ‘artifact-ification’, my interlocutor described consciously reconstituting his language, speaking of objects rather than artifacts. This term, for him, acknowledges the various perspectives each object contains and the multiple and on-going relationships in orbit around it. He simply stated that ‘there is something about [the term] ‘object’ which is a little more open’. It contrasts and brings to the fore the gallery’s language of *artifact* as speaking to a static notion of the past. My

²⁷ Clifford (n 6) 189.

²⁸ *ibid*.

interlocutor utilizes the term *object* to acknowledge the legacy of colonial violence and domination in the gallery space, claiming succinctly that 'it brings out some of our biases in the Western perspective that we turn objects into unconnected things'. In employing the term 'object', my interlocutor decentralizes the gallery's ideological determination on the object, as an artifact of a fixed past, and turns towards the object itself, as a living being enmeshed in multiple living histories.

The term object, however, is not without its own set of issues. My interlocutor describes continually re-evaluating his linguistic practices as he continues to work with and learn from his Indigenous partners. Indeed, the term object is often deeply problematic, as it isolates the object in its immediacy and divorces it from the rich particularity of its context. My interlocutor described an interaction he had with an Indigenous artist who resisted this term as '[their] work is a process and the actual thing [the artwork] is just part of that process'. The term object for this Indigenous artist put the focus on their piece as a final product and not as an ongoing set of relationships. My interlocutor reflected a need to be flexible with his grammar, and recognize that the language of the gallery must come from the communities from which the objects originate. His use of the term object is an active practice which reflects his effort to recognize that the gallery's way of interacting with objects is often irreconcilable with the originating communities' needs and desires.

The power of the curator as an individual, however, has real-world limitations. This 'artifact-ification' which my interlocutor described comes from many essential and inconspicuous aspects of curation—of putting together a show. The act of working in the gallery under the purview of his curatorial responsibilities often disoriented my interlocutor's attentive posture of acknowledgement towards certainty—of curatorial doing without knowing or of acting without necessarily engaging the implications of his actions. Indeed, my interlocutor identified the bureaucracy, or tacit functions of his vocation, to debase the object and convert it into an artifact. Namely, he identified the process of acquisition and the creation of exhibitions as a task which muddles his attempts at mental decolonization.

The Trouble of Acquisition

'We have to use FedEx. We have to ship it here. We have to go to the conservation; and I wonder will that practice alone reinforce things that might not really fit with the community we're working with?'

The ways in which galleries 'acquire' their collections, or have objects brought to the gallery is an act often alienated from reconciliatory efforts. My interlocutor described how these frequently unceremonious acts, which appear to be of little consequence, are in fact ideologically loaded and posture the curator towards the gallery and away from the object and its community. He cited specifically how many objects enter the gallery through FedEx and other commercial couriers, which complicates his decolonization efforts as the object's living relations and dynamic value are reduced when he fills out insurance papers. He stated that the process of FedExing an object 'reinforces things that go against what we want to do, a lot of invisible processes that we do that maybe shape our conceptions and actually might create problems'. Quantifying cultural history is a reductive and colonial act. My interlocutor described it as an 'invisible practice' or part of curation which reinforces the gallery's grammar of encounter, reconditioning him to move towards

the object as an artifact. The task of acquisition flustered my interlocutor's posture of acknowledgement, as he was torn between his curatorial duties to acquire new objects for collection and his reconciliatory responsibility to respect and acknowledge the object's living histories. To put it simply, what can it mean to receive a sacred object in much the same way one acquires a box of pens?

The Trouble of the Exhibition

'Sometimes we just need an object. On some level we know that this object is part of a community and of a knowledge system that isn't necessarily material, but at the same time, when you're working within a set of expectations of a show...'

The structure of exhibitions, as hubs of materialism, by virtue of their aesthetic structure frequently subsume the object into an ethos of indiscriminate utility. My interlocutor discussed how the very process of putting together an exhibition often distorted his relationship to the object. He instanced specifically how the aesthetic needs of a show—organizing a pleasing and dynamic space—would occasionally take precedence over the *meaning* of the object. My interlocutor ascribed this problem to the innate materialism of the gallery space, which frequently dominates the immaterial aspects of objects in service of the celebration of the visual. He contended that the current practice of exhibiting the object is frequently an issue, as it cloaks the interconnected and often intangible relations of the object with its ability to fill empty space. My interlocutor described this as 'operationalizing' the object, a process which produces immense mental strain in the bifurcation of the presence of the settler curator in the gallery—at once responsible to manufacture an exhibition and also to consider the delicate *meaning* and relations of the object. The problem, for him, is how this locality conditions him away from the object as 'just material relationships and processes' instead of as 'part of an interconnected web of knowledge' which frequently occurs during the exhibition process. Contemporary collaborative exhibition operations sever the task of collaboration from the work of curation. Indeed, equal treatment does not decolonize the gallery space *per se*—my interlocutor stressed that there must be equity, or respect for the particular meanings and relations the object possesses. To put it simply, what is left of the meaningfulness of particular objects if we can replace them on the gallery wall?

Case Study: The Glenbow Museum & Blackfoot Elders²⁹

In the 1990s, The Glenbow Museum and Blackfoot Elders came together to create the collaborative exhibition *Nitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life*. The Blackfoot Elders agreed to share their cultural knowledge and objects under the caveat that the museum staff participate in Blackfoot ceremonies. They 'reasoned that if the Blackfoot invited museum staff to ceremonies, staff members would witness firsthand the important role of bundles [of objects] in the community, and would appreciate the need for the bundles to be

²⁹ The term 'Blackfoot' was not an Indigenous term used by this group to identify themselves. They recognized themselves by their tribal names: the Peigan, which includes the Amsskaapipikani or Blackfeet in Montana and the Apatohsipikani or Pikani in Alberta; the Kainai, or Blood, in Alberta; and Siksika, also in Alberta. Each group is distinct, with its own customs and political leaders. They share cultural practices such as the *ookaan* and speak dialects of the same language. More recently, they have joined as a political body, adopting the Western term 'The Blackfoot Confederacy'. Cf. Cara Krmptich and David Anderson, 'Collaborative Exhibitions and Visitor Reactions: The Case of Nitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life' (2005) 48(4) Curator: The Museum Journal.

returned'.³⁰ The Glenbow settler curators spent significant time in Blackfoot communities at local events and ceremonies to ensure that every 'element—design, conservation, scripting of text—embodied Blackfoot perspectives and respected cultural protocol'.³¹ The settler curators participated in Blackfoot ceremonies to transfer the bundles in gift exchanges between the two parties. The Glenbow Museum repatriated the Blackfoot objects it had housed, but to my knowledge the Blackfoot community continues to loan their objects for display through ceremonial exchange.

This process of ceremony challenges the 'artifact-ification' which often plagues acquisition through sustaining the living relations of the object. The bundles persist as occasions of social exchange and not as static units of history. The middle ground of this exhibition is the radical decision on the part of the Blackfoot community to include settler curators in their ceremony. This important caveat to the ordinary economy of acquisition forces settler curators to acknowledge and reckon with the object's living relationships. The Blackfoot extension of community reterritorializes the object—proclaiming the object as a deeply rooted and connected thing. Such a cultural and political achievement decentralizes the object's placement in the gallery and highlights the transient nature of stewardship. This act of acknowledgement recreates and continues the object's connection to its community and its embodied position in the present.

Past / Present

'It's not just a repackaging of old things. It's actually the relationships, the discussions, the exchanges, the tensions, the confrontation with different worldviews that's knowledge generating. So I think in the process itself we're all learning new things...'

The disorienting pull of both the gallery curating and collaborative keeping of artifacts and objects unfolds in how a settler curator displays the collection. In the dizzying grammatical cleave of collaborative curation, what becomes of the language of the exhibition? My interlocutor outlined two principal and conflicting articulations of the collection: text-based and collections-based exhibitions. The former comes from established literature and historical narratives, operationalizing objects to present or enforce pre-existing ideas about a particular culture or period of time—the tacit curatorial way of organizing an exhibition. The latter comes from the collection itself, engaging and centering the living histories inherent to the object(s)—which is the call of collaborative exhibitions. My interlocutor described the tension within exhibition assembly as acknowledging the object's placement in historical narratives without erasing its presence in the present. This is the final discrepancy—the question of how to speak of objects, or where to locate them in time. The curator stands enmeshed in multiple, overlapping and often contradictory histories and is tasked with translating the rich life of the object to the audience. Throughout our interview, my interlocutor reflected a tension of attempting to situate objects in the present, which is to speak of them actively as a means of opening them to both the audience and his collaborators, against the gallery textual milieu.

Text-based exhibitions stand in the past—the objects firmly sealed in an untouchable history. My interlocutor described this process

of exhibition generation as 'going through old catalogues and books and then turning it into a three-dimensional [show]'. The meaning and social life of the object are then external—coming from discourses of which the object is not an active constituent. This lack of agency extends also to both the Indigenous knowledge keepers as well as the settler curators as the gallery space treats history as sacred, sealed and untouchable—the relics of which the gallery displays.³² My interlocutor succulently critiqued this type of exhibition as 'just a repacking of old things'—where both the objects, the curators, and collaborators are unable to truly touch or impact the homogenous narrative the gallery space perpetuates.

Collections-based exhibitions stand in the present—the objects themselves and their active relationships generate the content of the exhibit. The internal life of the object as it relates to its creator, the curator and collaborators, and the viewer is the principal focus of these shows. The principal actants within the gallery space—namely the curator (and their associates), the viewer, and the object—are all acknowledged within this exhibition process. Here, the gallery assumes nothing of their particular way of seeing, neither does the thesis of the exhibition subsume the idiosyncrasies of their experience, but rather illuminates and celebrates the dynamic perspectives of all involved actors. My interlocutor described collections-based exhibitions as a process rather than as a product—the work is what he described as 'knowledge-generating' through centering the present and active encounter with the object.

The introduction of collections based exhibitions calls forth the problematics of text-based exhibitions. The ability of the object to sit and speak in the present goes against the tacit functions of the gallery space which prefers to seal the object in the past. My interlocutor identified this as a major concern of contemporary curating, and the struggle he faced most often. This is a major concern of contemporary curating, and much of this battle exists in the didactic labels of the exhibition.

The Task of Labels

'[Instead of] going through an exhibit as data, this false objectivity of third-person and false neutrality of a museum voice, I think I would enjoy it if someone was just speaking to me...'

My interlocutor identified a major breakthrough in his current exhibition when one Indigenous collaborator suggested that they write the didactic labels in first person perspective—written as if someone was speaking directly to the viewer. Didactic labels in the gallery typically disclose the history of an object—how it was made, by whom, with what materials, and for what purpose (Figure 1). Curators place them alongside objects to help guide viewers through an exhibition—labels function to frame the object, focusing attention on certain aspects and histories. Historically, didactic labels deal in the materialism of the object, which aligns it with certain colonial rhetorics in the gallery space. The new first-person labels my interlocutor described sought to counteract this by utilizing active language which is descriptive to the emotional or intangible relations of the object. To illuminate this, I constructed two templates for these types of didactic labels to showcase their structure and priorities.

Figure 1 presents a static object. The abstract, or externally focused third-person or omniscient label speaks of a textual history rooted in

30 Krmptich and Anderson (n 29) 380.

31 *ibid* 381.

32 O'Doherty (n 7).

Artifact title

(Occasionally, a brief anecdote in plain language which firmly situates the object in the past, speaking only of its historical use and significance.)

Object name: *translated name or moniker given by dominant culture given priority. translated or other names might be mentioned*

Artist(s)/Maker(s): *name of individual or group to whom the artifact is attributed*

Category:

Date:

Medium:

*Exclusively written in the official language(s) of the country or region within which the gallery sits.

Fig 1. Third-person didactic labels.

materialism. Its structure is prosaic, a list of facts occasionally aided by a brief anecdote which supports this reductive reading. This method notes the artist or maker as well as the medium as matters of fact, not storied processes of labour and care. This didactic label positions itself as objective through its abstract description—it presents what my interlocutor describes as a ‘final, unconnected thing’, or an artifact. Figure 2 welcomes readers to engage a living object. The prioritization of narrative centres the object’s relationships. This welcomes readers to the social life of this object, as the evocative language and accounts bring the object to life. Further, the first person perspective highlights that the label is but one story told about the object, creating space for other accounts. First-person labels seek to speak-with and not speak-of an object’s history. My interlocutor described them as ‘authentic’ and ‘genuine’ opposed to the ‘false neutrality of a museum voice’.

The decision of what to write and how to write it informs what a viewer takes away from an exhibition and what meaning they glean from an object. For my interlocutor, the new practice of first-person labels works towards breaking down the gallery’s authorial domination, as it firmly situates the object in the present. Viewers moving the gallery no longer interact with objects as data upholding the thesis of the gallery, but rather as sites of meaningful encounter. This fundamentally stripped down the distinctions and authorial dominance.

Case Study: The Kwagiulth Museum

The Kwagiulth Museum and Cultural Centre at Cape Mudge (Wei Wai Kai Nation) opened in 1979. The collection—the Kwagiulth’s objects—were not merely to be indiscriminately seen or leered at in showcases, but to be respected and understood as ‘embod[ying] the ineffable [and] re-actualizing the ancestors’.³³ For the Kwagiulth community individual objects embodied specific names and stories, crests and privileges, which could only be transmitted and inherited through Potlatch, particularly through those ceremonies marking the institution of marriage. Kwagiulth Elders warned against dividing the collection into exhibitions, as they left it would ‘stir up the part and lead to as much resentment as the confiscation itself had done’.³⁴ The division was however unavoidable within the constraints of the gallery space, and it therefore became imperative

33 Barbara Saunders, ‘Kwakwaka’Wakw Museology’ (1995) 7(1) Cultural Dynamics 44.

34 *ibid.*

Object name(s)

Vivid quotes from individuals who are connected to the object and descriptions of the object and its historical and contemporary significance and use.

Object name(s): *various names of objects, with priority to the names given by the object’s culture and language. translations listed after if necessary*

Artist/makers: *individuals involved with the object, as well as their roles and processes*

Category:

Date:

Medium:

Label authors:

*Often these labels will present their information in multiple languages, that of the dominant dialect(s) of the region of the gallery space, as well as the language(s) of the object’s originating culture.

Fig 2. First-person didactic labels.

to articulate the object’s social life—‘account for what the objects were, to whom they belong and who their putative ‘heirs’ were to be’.³⁵ Ultimately, the gallery displayed the objects in strategies found in typical gallery exhibitions—enclosed in glass cases and mounted on walls. The Kwagiulth exhibition however, attempted to subordinate its own aesthetic as a repository of family owned properties through label text written in the present tense and bearing the names of each item’s current owners.

The visceral and direct tense of the Kwagiulth Museum triggers overlapping and often disputed histories of its objects. The personal perspective shifts our thoughts to the impact of this inequality on the lives of ordinary people. In calling attention to the present, living, and continuing relations the objects have outside of the gallery, this exhibition zeroes in on problematic assumptions typical exhibition language perpetuate. The power of situating the gallery in the present is that the object then displays an inventive process of fluid knowledge. Although, crucially, the Kwagiulth Elders were uncomfortable with the processes of exhibition as the false capitulation of objects, the use of first person language and situating the collection in the present seeks to retrieve the social life of the object.

The introduction of collections based exhibitions calls forth the problematics of text-based exhibitions. The ability of the object to sit and speak in the present goes against the tacit functions of the gallery space. It is the curator’s role is to arrange an authoritative message for the public through exhibiting objects in a manner calculated to render that message visible. The usage of first person perspective illuminates this process of construction, and reconstitutes the gallery space as one storyteller of many.

Conclusion, or, Is it Possible to Negotiate the Constitutive Limits of the Gallery Space?

At the start of our interview, my informant discussed the notion of ‘airwaves’, or the space one takes up in talking, especially in popular media and discourse. He described being attentive to the priority

35 *ibid* 45.

his voice, as a settler, often receives in discussions of collaborative exhibitions and decolonizing gallery spaces practices. It occurs to me that one may perceive my research as an attempt to discover if there was a way for settler curators, or for the gallery itself to be constructed in such a way that they could be impervious to perpetuating colonial violence. Indeed, much literature on decolonizing the gallery space participates in a discourse of ‘redemption’—attempting to salvage from the histories of violence relations of democratic, non-hierarchical exchange that are to govern contemporary gallery spaces as free and equal contact zones.³⁶

The essential take away I found from my research is that this kind of redemption is not possible—and that thinking this way, thinking there is or could be an absolute and monolithic solution, is part of the problem. We cannot construct the proper or perfect posture for this makes us artifacts of our present which will soon be the past as we continue to learn and live with others. Keeping objects in the present currently works for my interlocutor as a practice of acknowledgement which illuminates the colonial vestiges of curating artifacts in the past, but even now these ways of being do not always meet the challenges of decolonizing the gallery space and succeed. Keeping antagonizes the implications of absolute and dominant ownership nascent in curating, yet still finds itself tripped up when it performs bureaucratic tasks. To use the language of objects illuminates the embalmed nature of artifacts, but this language still falters when assembling exhibitions. The position of the present in the gallery space seeks to salvage the internal life of the object, yet its mere presence in the gallery is an abstraction.

Reconciliation in the gallery is an active process, something that we must continually work at together for there can be no personal reckoning. To shore up the violence of the inherited body or institution—of which the gallery space is but one of many—we must be in dialogue with others, specifically those communities against which these institutions continue to perpetrate harm. To reconcile, from the Latin ‘re-’ meaning back and ‘conciliare’ to bring together, expresses an ardent force towards another. This is not to dismiss the vital work and reflection that settlers, and others in privileged communities must undertake, but to recognize that the true meaning and value of our actions are found in community, in being-with and being-towards others.

If we posit that the purpose and function of the gallery space is to disseminate knowledge, entertain, and preserve objects related to the human story, then the essential question we must ask of ourselves is: who is this for? As we locate vestiges of colonialism intrinsic in the ways our galleries function, we must critically engage how current practices are in fact antithetical to their intended practice, namely of education and empowerment, and investigate the ways in which they uphold, often invisibly, structures and ideologies which continue to alienate and harm racialized and marginalized communities.

³⁶ Ben Dibley, ‘The museum’s redemption: Contact zones, government and the limits of reform’ (2005) 8(1) *International Journal of Cultural Studies*.