INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education, Museums and Art Galleries

Animating Social, Cultural and Institutional Change

Darlene E. Clover, Kathy Sanford,
Lorraine Bell and Kay Johnson (Eds.)

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Adult Education, Museums and Art Galleries

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

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Animating Social, Cultural and Institutional Change

Edited by

Darlene E. Clover
University of Victoria, Canada

Kathy Sanford
University of Victoria, Canada

Lorraine Bell
University of Victoria, Canada

and

Kay Johnson
University of Victoria, Canada

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DARLENE E. CLOVER, KATHY SANFORD,
KAY JOHNSON AND LORRAINE BELL

INTRODUCTION

> *Paradoxically, global challenges to our collective well-being are the harbinger of a new future for museums…Museums of all kinds are untapped and untested sources of ideas and knowledge…As…social institutions in civil society, museums are essential in fostering public support of decisive and immediate action to address our human predicament.* (Janes, 2014, p. 405)

This edited volume is about adult education in the sphere of public museums and art galleries. Our fundamental goal is to enrich and expand dialogue and understanding between adult educators, curators, artists, and cultural activists. This book, therefore, takes up the complex and interconnected pedagogics of subjectivity and identity, meaning making and interpretation, knowledge and authority, control and influence, prescription and innovation, creativity and convention, representation and performance, passivity and involvement, didactics and learning, exclusion and inclusion, image and story. The contributors are an amalgamation of adult education scholars, university graduate students, heritage and cultural activists, artists, curators and researchers from Canada, United States, Iceland, England, Scotland, Denmark, Portugal, Italy and Malta. These authors work within the collage of artworks and artefacts, poetry and installations, collections and exhibits, illusion and reality, curatorial practice and learning, argument and narrative, struggle and possibility that define and shape modern day arts and cultural institutions. Their chapters are set amongst the discursive politics of neoliberalism and patriarchy, racism and religious intolerance, institutional neutrality and tradition, capitalism and neo-colonialism, ecological devastation and social injustice. The works also reside within the spirit and ideals of the radical and critical traditions of adult education and their emphases on cultural participation and knowledge democracy, agency and empowerment, justice and equity, intellectual growth and transformation, critical social and self reflection, activism and risk-taking, and a fundamental belief in the power of dialogue, reflection, ideological and social critique and imaginative learning.

CONTEXTUALISING THE COLLECTION: ANIMATING CONCERNS

Animating this co-created volume are inter-related challenges and concerns we have encountered as museum and art gallery professionals and artists working as

adult educators within the circles of these art and culture institutions. The first is the problematic narrowing of museum education to school programmes and curriculum goals. A result is that much of the focus within museums and art galleries, as well as training and university programmes for museum and gallery professionals and the literature on museum education, reflects this constriction. Yet nonformal adult education (workshops, lectures, seminars, community engagement activities) and informal adult education (individual self-directed activities) have been constants both within and beyond institutional walls. Activities for adults range from formal university courses to community workshops, from seminars to popular theatre, from lectures to participative video research, from art appreciation to collective art making. Some are didactic, based around the passive absorption of information. Yet others, "affected by currents of the progressive movement in adult education" (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011, p. 26), aimed to contribute to political struggle and social change (e.g. Steedman, 2012). The growing socialist movements in Europe in the early 20th century believed in the pragmatic power of a cultural education to raise the status of the working class and thereby their wages (van Gent, 1992; Williams, 1958). The Workers Education Association (WEA) positioned access to culture as a means to challenge class conformity and empower workers "to refuse to know their place" (Highmore, 2010, p. 95). A cultural education for women was a crucial means to meet aspirations to move beyond the confines of domesticity (Panayotidis, 2004).

The second concern is that in general, education in museums is still seen as lacking in stature and status, which has led to divisions between pedagogical and curatorial work and concerns, and scholarship and audience. Pedagogical processes and intentions have been and often remain an afterthought to the development of exhibits, rather than embedded from the beginning as integral to their stories and arguments (e.g. Styles, 2011). In this volume, many of the authors draw attention to the problematic of this struggle between curating and pedagogy, and side step it to enable what Butler and Lehrer (2016, p. 9) call "a freedom of expression" and experimentation.

Thirdly, because public museums seem to be shielded behind a near impenetrable camouflage of hegemonic attitudes and practices – for example elitism, colonialism, racism, sexism, and Euro-centric art discourses/knowledges – critical and radical traditions of adult education have all but ignored public museums. In dismissing public museums and art galleries, adult educators overlook their provocative, pedagogical possibilities and the work of museum adult educators who too are trying – against these many odds – to innovate and enrich the public sphere and challenge problematic institutional conventions. What we illustrate in this book is that museums are as fraught with problems and dysfunctions as they are with creative and political potential. On one hand, museums are filled with controversial and problematic collections and exhibits that Peter Mayo (2012) argues can "appeal to one's sense of criticality" (p. 103). Collections and framings that perpetuate racism, imperialism or sexism can serve as excellent dialogic and visual platforms

to encourage critical consciousness and robust debate that can re-shape museums as well as problematic pedagogical 'disciplinary regimes', as the chapter in this volume by de Oliveira Jayme and his colleagues illustrate through the process of 'museum hacking'. On the other hand, Herbert Marcuse (1978) reminded us that within all creative practice there is resistance. Museums house 'disobedient objects' and activist arts that "critique and negate the existing social order by the power of their form" (Miles, 2012, p. 4). These aesthetic and storytelling resources provide exciting spaces for new insights into past and present conditions of the world to stimulate the 'radical imagination', the ability "to re-imagine society not as it is but as it might otherwise be" (Havien & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 3). Without "the subjective factor of human imagination (as in the imagination of another world), there is little prospect for radical political change even when objective factors (such as are provided by technology) are present" (Miles, 2012, p. 12). What we show through this volume is that although museum arts and stories do not change the world, they have "indirect agency for change [as] liminal zones of criticality…and positive dreaming" (p. 12). This was reflected in Freire's work – and is now taken up by contemporary arts-based adult educators – to heighten critical consciousness, to understand how our lives and worlds are constructed, such as by gender, the central issue of Section Two of this volume, through the power of art. Collins (1998) argues it is folly to disassociate critical pedagogical work from our aesthetic dimensions and creative urges as these "add meaning to the politics and theory of an emancipatory practice" (p. 113).

Finally, Janes (2015) argues that museums are at a "metaphorical watershed" (p. 149), the cusp of great potential to become agents of socio-ecological change. To do so, they must "re-arrange their worldviews" (p. 149), which we suggest in this volume includes rethinking their public pedagogical work and the nature of its impact on society. How do we respond actively and imaginatively to the cascade of social, cultural and environmental problems brought about by rampant capitalism, unbridled neoliberalism and what poet Patrick Lane (2016) calls the traps the current 'culture of fear' has set for us, and the traps we then set for ourselves? Marching intentionally into this fray are Indigenous peoples, artists, and other frequently marginalised community members and groups who together, have become what Janes (2015, p. 48) calls a "citizen's chorus" that works to expand the civic and pedagogical purpose and promise of these most ubiquitous, demanding, frustrating, creative and resourceful of spaces. If culture is indeed a space where we can learn new things, where our perceptions can be radically challenged and our imaginations actively engaged, as Marcuse (1978), Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (2001), Max Wyman (2004) and Raymond Williams (1958) believed, then the museums of today are significant. The more adult educators can weave themselves into and support the work of arts and cultural institutions, the greater their ability will be to shape themselves into vital cultural places of encounter that encourage intellectual growth, consciousness, justice, creativity and even activism.

MUSEUMS: ILLUSION, REALITY AND POSSIBILITY

At a talk at the University of Toronto a number of years ago, Canadian author Marlene Nourbese-Philip argued poetically that culture was not an insignificant site of struggle, but that its power resided in masking that very fact. The accuracy and poignancy of this statement is perhaps most apparent within the complex, contradictory worlds of public museums and art galleries. Equally useful to understanding the intricacy and contrary nature of these institutions is Mary Pratt's (1991) idea of the 'contact zone'. In her studies of early colonial expeditions in Latin American, Pratt conceptualised 'contact zones' as spaces where diverse cultures meet, clash and struggle, "often as highly asymmetrical relations of [domination], such as colonialism…or their aftermaths as they are [still] lived out in many parts of the world today" (p. 1). These zones were marked by differences of power, and were the sites where knowledge and other cultural attributes were appropriated to enhance the privilege, status, and wealth of the colonisers. Yet Foucault (1980) reminded us power was never located solely in one place or held by a single group. Pratt (1991) too recognised colonial encounters as complex and contradictory, knots of conflict as well as collaborative interaction. Contact zones could be spaces of exchange, actions and transactions undertaken in a spirit of reciprocity. They could be spaces of collective meaning making, with the potential for debate, knowledge co-creation, resistance, and a praxis of social and self-reflexivity.

As contact zones, public museums and art galleries can present a façade of motionlessness, passivity and indifference, yet they can also actively shape "our most basic assumptions about the past and about ourselves" (Marstine, 2006, p. 1). Museums and galleries suggest impartiality, objectivity and "detachment from real world politics" (Phillips, 2012, p. 17) when in fact politics has been a constant interruption to their "imagined sanctity" (Macdonald, 1998, p. 178). Our sense is that these establishments are places where once vibrant artworks and artefacts go to die (Flood & Grindon, 2014) but at the same time exhibitions can be seen as active storytellers, and "the telling of stories calls forth further stories" (Husbands, 1996, p. 51). Art and cultural institutions suggest an unconditional bias toward prevailing forces of social power through highly selective representational practices, but there have always been ruptures through experimentations, and a questioning of their own assumptions about "cultural production and knowledge" (Macdonald, 1998, p. 176; see also Perry & Cunningham, 1999). Just as masculinities and patriarchal power and control seem the only characterisations available to us, we are reminded that women make up the bulk of museum visitors, their paid and unpaid workforce, and thus have never merely suffered silently in subjugation (e.g. Bell, Clover, & Sanford, 2015; Deepwell, 2006; Golding, 2013; Levin, 2010). Through their extraordinary cleansing powers, art and cultural institutions seem to remove all traces of the ugly stories of social and cultural conflict and injustice, yet neither internal nor external forces have allowed them to escape fully their complicity and culpability in these vanishing acts (Gregory & Witcomb, 2007; Janes, 2015). Whilst museums and

art galleries appear "to concentrate on certainty and dogma, thereby forsaking the function of stimulating legitimate doubt and thoughtful discussion" (Casey, 2007, p. 293), exhibitions have shocked audiences out of trance-like passivity and caused intense public outrage and broad debate (e.g. Golding & Modest, 2013; Janes, 2009; Phillips, 2011). Although preservation and conservation act like primary mandates, by their own admission, museums are first and foremost pedagogical institutions, providing a plethora of adult education opportunities (Clover, Sanford, & de Oliveira Jayme, 2010; UNESCO, 1997). And when didactic, highly controlled pedagogical practices look to be cemented into place, self-reflexive interventions shake authoritative conventions to their very core (Clover, 2015; Sternfeld, 2013).

What this tells us is that since their inception, the intellectual, pedagogical, creative and storied work of museums has been anything but straightforward. These are contested sites with no singular, hegemonic reality, no actual time free from a barrage of competing mandates, visions and imaginings of their place and role in the world (Janes, 2015; Hooper-Greenhill, 2001; Perry & Cunningham, 1999). Time and again, these institutions have had to respond to the 'hard questions' about their relevance, their responsibility to local community and to society, their insistence on neutrality, the legitimacy of their omissions, and thus their potential as adult education institutions in a very 'troubled world' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001; Janes, 2009).

ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

> *The notion of "pedagogies of possibility" holds a double meaning…the first suggests a grounded and pragmatic assessment of what is feasible [to change]. The second connotation of 'possibility' refers to that which is yet to be imagined, that which might become thinkable and actionable when prevailing relations of power are made visible, when understandings shake loose from normative perspectives and generate new knowledge and possibilities for engagement.* (Linzi Manicom & Shirley Walters, 2012, p. 4)

As the theory and practice of adult education is central to this volume, it is important to clarify what it actually means in this context. When people think of adult education, the visions that come most frequently to mind include skills upgrading, vocational training, adult basic education, adult literacy classes, or night classes through continuing studies or extra-mural divisions of universities. Many are also familiar with terms such as 'adult learning' and 'lifelong learning', conceptions that recognise learning as ubiquitous and occurring throughout one's lifetime. All of these forms and ideas are important, but they are only one side of the complex field that is adult education.

What underpins this book are the more critical and radical traditions of adult education. Terms used to denote these traditions of social pedagogical praxis include feminist adult education, anti-racist education, decolonising

practice/methodologies, critical and public pedagogy, transformative and radical learning, arts-based adult education, social movement learning, environmental adult education, popular education and citizenship education to name but a few. These terms allow adult educators to pay attention at needed times to particular sites of education and learning such as social movements, to particular populations such as women, to particular creative practices such as arts and exhibitions, or to particular social issues such as colonisation.

There is no one definition of the radical and critical traditions of adult education, so these are best understood through their positioning and purposes. Adult educators who work in these critical traditions share a commitment to the social purpose of the field, with its baseline values of justice, equity, transformation and change. They use adult education practices, spaces and strategies to promote knowledge democracy, sometimes referred to as different ways of knowing, critical and imaginative thinking, critical discovery and experimentation, collectivity of purpose, and equality of being. Adult education becomes a call to action to develop an active and engaged citizenry with agency to shape their own learning, lives, communities, societies, and the world. Pedagogical processes intentionally disrupt, interrogate, challenge, deconstruct, render visible and decolonise how we understand the world and each other, in the interests of positive, radical, social, cultural, political, economic and even institutional change. Adult education is both dependent upon, but also aims to transform, institutions located in the intersections and interstices between the state and social movements such as museums and art galleries that 'perform' pedagogically and thereby have a major impact on society (e.g. Crowther, Martin, & Shaw, 1999; Mayo, 2012).

Central to these traditions of adult education are processes that stimulate dialogue and questioning, listening and embodied learning, investigation and meaning making, creativity and the radical imagination, and critical self and social reflection. The new knowledge and understandings generated through these processes, be they through conversations or art-making, aim to lead to deeper questioning about power and ideology, clearer analyses of the nature of inequality, exploitation and oppression and the often hidden practices and structures that create and maintain these inequities. Adult educational activities and strategies deliberately expose how these "ideological systems and societal structures hinder or impede the fullest development of humankind's collective potential" by limiting and circumscribing what people feel is possible to achieve or to change (Welton, 1995, p. 14).

Using Angela McRobbie's (2009) idea of 'pedagogic contact zones', adult education can be understood as a 'zone' for 'difficult conversations'. By this we mean social knowledge is co-created, defiance nurtured, imagination unleashed, risk-taking encouraged, and identity reconceptualised. Adult educators are never passive in this process, but nor are they authoritarian. They are not mere facilitators, but rather work with 'intentionality' to balance respect for existing knowledge whilst challenging problematic assumptions, to encourage speaking but equally, authentic

listening, and to introduce difficult and controversial topics yet tempering these through art or humour. Growth and change comes from the paradoxes, discomfort and disturbances but equally, from acknowledgement, respect and fun. Intentionality is critical because social, cultural, economic or gender justice and change do not simply happen by chance. "Individuals and communities can and do come to develop more critical understandings of their situations", as Marjorie Mayo (2012) reminded us, but given that the very existence of planet earth and global civilisation is in turmoil and danger, adult education in public museums and art galleries must step forward and contribute to the intelligent and caring change this troubled world requires (Janes, 2015). They must show that another world is indeed possible. And this is where our book begins.

SECTION ONE: ACTIVISM, SUBVERSION AND RADICAL PRACTICE

> *If museums can start substantive discussions with society and keep them going, by providing alternative views of complex things with frankness and integrity, museums will be able to adapt and reinvent themselves for [this] new century.* (Robert Janes, 2015, p. 299)

In Chapter One of this first section, Robin Grenier and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson take us to Iceland, amidst the debris of the storm of the 2008 global financial collapse. Framing this event as a 'disorientating dilemma', the authors introduce us to Shut up and be quiet!, an exhibit curated by the District Culture Centre in Húsavík that challenged political indifference and citizen silencing as it captured heated public discussion and debate around the impact of the economic crisis. As the authors reveal how the exhibition was received within the community, and how it was taken up through a network of exhibits regionally and nationally, they provide a strong case for museums to act as public spaces for critical dialogue, debate, reflection, and participation. The exhibitions brought the dissenting voices of Icelanders to Icelanders in a nation traditionally known for keeping 'quiet'. The authors present a powerful vision of museums' roles in constructing active citizenship, changing discourse around dissent and protest, and working pedagogically to promote social justice and transformation.

From Iceland we move to Scotland, specifically to St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow. Clare Gray argues in the chapter that it is essential for communities to have spaces to explore together controversial issues, and that museums have a duty to be these spaces. However, she also acknowledges that if museum educators are going to provoke difficult conversations amongst religious and political groupings with timeless animosities, they must have the adult education skills that will enable them to deal with these highly explosive and emotive issues. She therefore shares ideas to help educators enter the fray of radical dialogue for change. These include balancing planning with flexibility, allowing for spontaneity, looking for commonalities without dismissing differences, and dealing with silences

or monopolisations in workshop groups by using a variety of activities and objects/exhibitions that act as different kinds of entry points for dialogue and debate.

Continuing in Scotland, in Chapter Three adult educator Jean Barr examines how contemporary museums can transcend elitist and selective histories to become 'archives of the commons' and spaces of critical cultural adult education and culture studies. She presents examples of contemporary lens-based artworks from Sierra, Sikula, Biemann and Fowler, characterising these as 'archival impulses' that act as historical agents in the here and now and portals between an unfinished past and a re-opened future. For Barr, the practice of exposing different audiences to alternative archives of public culture challenges the privately funded 'design-and-display' culture of the art world and protests any idea that adult education and contemporary art should be reduced to commodified products that support capitalist economies. She argues for collaboration and blending of skills between adult educators and museums towards a project of cultural, political and educational reframing to reimagine often forgotten possible political futures.

In Chapter Four, British art gallery educator Paul Stewart presents examples of artist-led projects in and beyond galleries. He takes exception to trends that view learning as a "commodity product" and posits an alternative view – that gallery spaces can be sites of collective, critical and transformative learning. Drawing from various theorists, Stewart examines the crucial role of the artist-curator in the creation of critical-creative spaces of learning for social change. He uses examples of gallery/art education to theorise an 'emo-active turn' that includes imaginative experimentations of artists engaging politically through art practices in diverse museological contexts. The author argues as well for new learning commitments between educators and learners as he advocates for aesthetic-pedagogical practices that 'disfigure' commonly accepted ideals, expand the walls of galleries, and create shifts in both the art world and in wider society.

Avner Segall and Brenda Trofanenko of Canada and the United States suggest, in the final chapter of this section, the idea of museums as sole proprietors of knowledge needs to give way to notions of 'deliberative democracy' where the public are seen as 'civic agents'. By way of example, Segall and Trofanenko look to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London and examine how it has worked continuously to change its identity, purpose and educational aims to transform traditional hierarchical relationships with its audience. They illustrate how the V&A museum's educational imperative, expressed through its spatial arrangements, forms of display, and structured juxtapositions, works to subvert its historically determined imperial mission and shift the power relations away from established didactic authority toward active participation, co-curatorship, and co-interpretations that invite the public to play within the institution and challenge existing conceptions of knowledge and knowing.

SECTION TWO: WOMEN IN CLOTHES: (RE)GENDERING PRACTICES AND PEDAGOGIES

> *Feminist pedagogy in museums…speaks to more than any 'particular one', who is so often white and male.* (Vivian Golding, 2013, p. 92)

In the first chapter in Section Two, Darlene E. Clover and Kathy Sanford argue that if museums and art galleries can tackle other difficult social issues, then addressing sexism, one of society's most pressing problems, should be central to their work. They acknowledge, however, that obstacles exist by sketching out the problematic historical gendered terrain of public museums. Yet they note how, despite the sexism, women have contributed actively to the founding, growth and development of museums and art galleries in variety of significant areas and ways. Bringing us to the present, the authors share findings from conversations with museum adult educators, curators and community practitioners in Canada, England and Scotland, highlighting troubling misunderstandings and framings of feminism, coupled with essentialist feminised notions of 'educators' that contribute to marginalisation. But, as nothing is ever this straightforward in the museum world, they highlight examples of important feminist adult education processes that need recognition, support and further study.

In Chapter Seven, adult educators Micki Voelkel and Shelli Henehan apply a feminist lens to the 'master narrative' of the lives of the madams and prostitutes at Miss Laura's Social Club, a museum located in Fort Smith, Arkansas, United States. They highlight problematic framings that suggest an idealised Old West rather than reality. The authors challenge the positioning of Miss Laura's as a 'cathouse' of 'Cinderellas' on a path to respectability and ask difficult questions about but why women were there in the first place, and the humiliation of monthly health inspections. Equally absent from exhibits and stories are demands by customers, the repulsive smells and the drugs. In the sanctity of neoliberal tourism, the museum promotes prostitution as healthy and safe, never calls into question how it perpetuate patriarchy, and ultimately, silences the very women it claims to represent.

Next, Rachel Clarke and Rosie Lewis take us to the North East of England, to a university-museum partnership heritage project that focused on the cultural, social and political contributions of four generations, or 70 years, of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women. The authors illustrate how the project educated women in oral and material research, digital design, herstorical education, enquiry-based learning, digital media training, and archiving their 'herstories'. The authors advocate for transformational approaches to adult education that promote critical engagement and co-production to enable women's active participation and empowerment in telling their own stories and challenging heritage narratives that absented and eradicated their contributions to the region.

In Chapter Nine, Emília Ferreira of Portugal invites us into her work and struggles as a feminist art educator in Casa da Cerca. She begins by illustrating the introduction of new approaches to bringing scientific, social, historic and artistic data to broader audiences. She argues that this demonstrates Casa da Cerca can work in clear, critical, intellectual, fun and inclusive ways. She then introduces us to how she applies a feminist analysis to the interpretation of artworks, and works to ensure that women's art is not feminised and made marginal. But she acknowledges that there gender complexities still exist around contemporary art, questions the historical gendered status quo and blindness of the institution, and suggests there is much work to be done to reach gender parity and justice.

In the final chapter in this section, artist-activist-adult educator Jennifer Van de Pol uses two projects to illustrate how she is weaving together pedagogically feminist and decolonial theories and practices at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Canada. The first example, Performing Femininity, used theatre set amongst the works of exhibition entitled *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* followed by a workshop to make indigenous cornhusk dolls set in the old colonial mansion part of the gallery, and facilitated by a feminist Iroquois and Mohawk artist. The author discusses how the paradox of the settings, and the pairing of the theatre and doll-making activities gave the women opportunities to consider the multiplicity of ways they create and embody stories of self, gender and identity. The second project, Activating Emily, uses artist Emily Carr's work and notoriety as a jumping off point to again consider the larger socio-political, feminist and decolonial contexts.

SECTION THREE: RE-IMAGINING, REPRESENTING, REMAKING

> *As activist educators with an intentional perspective, we see our work in organisations as ever more urgent, given how profoundly it is shaped by the global context. We live in a world made unequal by centuries of empire and colonialism.* (Tina Lopes & Barb Thomas, 2006, p. 1)

Opening the third section of this volume, Kay Johnson reflects on a learning journey she undertook to a Musqueam First Nation collaborative exhibition in the city of Vancouver, British Columbia to illustrate how museums can be important sites for the settler education required to overcome colonialism. Acknowledging the troubled histories between museums and Indigenous peoples in Canada, she takes us on a learning journey through the *c̓əsnaʔəm, the city before the city* exhibition, illustrating how it works intentionally as a form of critical public pedagogy to disrupt and overturn traditional colonialist museological discourses and display practices, opening up opportunities for the public to critically question their own settler assumptions and understanding of the Indigenous identity of the place now called Vancouver. At the heart of Johnson's journey lie issues of identity, place, and

community, as she muses what it might mean to grasp the deep connections that Indigenous communities have to their ancestors and traditional lands.

Beginning with haunting images and stories of lynching, indifference and voyeurism, Lisa R. Merriweather, Heather Coffey and Paul G. Fitchett focus in their chapter on the value of museums that opt to be sites of counter 'narratological public pedagogy', a blending of formal and nonformal education and learning. Arguing that the horrific racist past should never be ignored or sanitised to salve America's conscience, the authors explore how they used a museum to provide history pre-service teacher education students with opportunities to confront the unfamiliar and disturbing narratives of racism in the US, to examine their own storied existences and to make connections within this context of disparate and conflicting events, identities and emotions. While they recognise that counter-narratives can contribute to a sense of 'unknowing of self' they argue that re-storying processes can lead to a deeper sense of knowing others and expand the perimeters of how history lessons can be taught.

Continuing the theme of 'dark representations', Jennifer Thivierge takes us to the sphere of war museums, and specifically the Canadian War Museum. She acknowledges a problematic tendency to rely on stories of young men and boys marching bravely off to war, and images of tanks and guns, but argues war museums are much more complex pedagogical and engagement sites. She discusses how groups of 'publics' are engaged before and after exhibitions, and the problematic and positive aspects of this. *Bomber Command*, for example, was an exhibit that saw veterans pitted against educators and curators who attempted to depict counter stories of ally bombings at the end of the Second World War. She then introduces a Peace Exhibition, which although dismissed by some as mollifying and propagandist, challenged normative representations of war by using personal items such as a beret, and stories that actively engaged the public as agents in imagining a world without conflict and violence.

In their chapter, Laura Formenti and Alessia Vitale of Italy take us from narration to poïesis. They introduce us to the *Life(St)Art* project, an innovative alliance between a university and a museum that acted as a transformative practice of poïetic pedagogy. The Lab'Os workshops begin by asking students of adult education to become researchers of their experience by engaging them in processes of self-narration/identity-making, poetry and metaphor, and active conversation. Workshops also used the works of Keifer to foster reflexivity about the complexity of life and issues of uncertainty. The authors argue that projects such as this challenge more normative cognitive practices of adult learning in universities by using the power of art to inspire new ideas for teaching adults and to take up the difficult questions of who we are in more holistic ways.

In the final chapter of this section we go another journey, this time with Sandro Debono who is in the process of imagining an intentional 'fine art' museum – MUŻA – that will respond critically and creatively to the divisive issue of migration

affecting Malta today. Arguing that Malta has always been a frontier country of immigrants and colonisers from Europe, the Middle East and Africa, he discusses how he envisions MUŻA as a site of new interpretation strategies grounded in critical pedagogical theory to promote critical visual literacy. To illustrate what this will look like in the future, Debono draws attention to use of past exhibitions that creatively interrupted negative assumptions about 'migration' by illustrating and presenting Maltese as 'migrants'. This chapter also emphasises the potential of this new type of museum experience to inform art history narratives, as the author revisits what counts as aesthetic measurement within a context of promoting social equality at individual and community levels.

SECTION FOUR: PERFORMING, INTERVENING, DECONSTRUCTING

> *When, for instance, one adopts the position of the educator one adopts a position of power that can easily be used to reproduce and strengthen existing divisions and relationships between positions in the educational setting… But to 'empower' is to give all participants – including the educator – possibilities of informed choices by exposing, discussing and trying different positionings and possibilities.* (Helene Illeris, 2006, p. 23)

Darlene E. Clover and Emily Stone of Canada and England respectively begin the final section of this book. They explore a non-formal adult learning course offered at Tate Modern in London, analysing its effectiveness in helping participants to think critically about 'slow violence', defined as the aftermath of war and violence. The six-week course included various works of art, installations, academic readings and an informal dialogue space at a local pub. The authors discuss the tensions and challenges in the course around subject knowledge, authority of knowledge, and working pedagogically with a very diverse group. They highlight the importance of the informal space as a site of active engagement and discussion, and the power of the artworks to render visible, and to stimulate questioning about the ideologies behind the complex and contentious, yet near 'invisible' effects of problems. To be more powerful, nonformal courses should be co-taught by adult educators and content/art specialists.

Alyssa Greenberg's chapter provides a different segue in to often, invisible societal power structures. Her central argument is that when developing community-engaged exhibits, community partners need to be given the same level of involvement and voice as the museum educators. She raises issues of equity when involving community members, often who are working low-paid jobs, and the need to be mindful of their particular circumstances and obligations. Through an exhibition focused on historical and contemporary domestic work, Greenberg suggests that the valuing of different types of knowledge is essential to community partnership building and popular education, but also identifies challenges to equitable engagement in

such work – as museum educators disrupt the status quo in exhibits, power inequities between partners must be considered and addressed.

‘Museum hacking’, the subject of the next chapter by Bruno de Oliveira Jayme, Kim Gough, Kathy Sanford, David Monk, Kristin Mimick and Chris O’Connor, is explored as a disruptive practice developed by a group of teacher and museum educators that provided teacher candidates with the opportunity to examine critically, museum exhibits and provide a space of response to their examinations. Over four museum visits, the teacher candidates were guided to examine hegemonic ideologies represented in museum exhibits and to challenge these ideologies through creating their own alternative exhibits. The authors planned a series of nonformal educational encounters that lead to public interventions, enabling participants to see the museum as both a site of maintenance of dominant discourses as well as offering the potential to challenge and disrupt. They position the museum hacking event as a means of civic and political sense making, to explore more deeply and creatively, issues of justice, equity and learner/audience participation in museum-making.

Helene Illeris chapter offers a discussion of adult education and learning as transformation, based in a concept of the learner and the object of knowing as inextricable elements of a practice-based ontology. She argues that what transforms is not the individual learner but the practice in which she or he takes part, where the learning signifies a potential for transformation from the known to the unknown. Illeris suggests that to provide opposition to the neoliberalisation and colonisation of our perceptions of what it means to be human, we need to begin with an awareness of the ontological foundations of our conceptions of transformation. Illeris offers Tate’s Open Studio, a series of dynamic and participative environments where people are invited to engage directly with artists’ practice and experiment as they wish, as an example of ways in which alternative conceptions of learning are being enacted for adult learners wanting to engage in spaces of social criticism and change making.

We give the final word in this volume to Bryan Smith, whose chapter provides a critical examination of technological ‘innovations’ (QR codes) intended to enable more engaged learning for museum visitors. Using a project that attempted to utilise QR codes as an example, Smith questions whether digital technologies can be seen as the best future to connect adults and museum experience and explores the obstacles to integrating technologies into educational experiences for adult learners. Smith argues that the limited success of QR codes in museums needs to be understood in light of all future implementation of new technologies, particularly consideration of the educational reasons for developing these in the first place. Although technologies are now a ubiquitous part of today’s world, and museums have a unique opportunity to lead the way in technology-supported adult education, they need to determine how these technologies can best be utilised and not just engage in technology for technology’s sake.

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SECTION 1

ACTIVISM, SUBVERSION AND RADICAL PRACTICE

ROBIN S. GRENIER AND
SIGURJÓN BALDUR HAFSTEINSSON

1. SHUT UP AND BE QUIET!

Icelandic Museums' Promotion of Critical Public Pedagogy and the 2008 Financial Crisis[1]

INTRODUCTION

Shut up and be quiet! It is a statement that, although not always expressed in those exact words, is heard by many museums—maybe from policy makers who want museums to display passively the art of centuries ago without commentary or challenge, or from the community or staff who may assume the museum is there simply to show history from traditional and dominant voices, or from visitors that expect an exhibit to provide entertainment or shallow distraction, meaning it does not challenge them to think or act. But, with courage and conviction, museums can embrace this statement and turn it into a powerful commentary that is a pedagogical force for change and social justice.

The exhibition entitled *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* (*Haltu Kjafti og Vertu Þæg*) opened at the District Culture Centre in Húsavík, North Iceland in January, 2009. The exhibition explored public discussions taking place in Iceland after October 6, 2008—the official start date of the financial crisis that plagued not only Iceland, but also the world. Through the display of blogs, documentary and photo-shopped photographs, protest artefacts, and other objects the exhibition revealed the heated opinions of the general public. In doing so this small museum sought to be relevant to the people in the region, and as the crisis affected the entire nation, to make itself relevant on a national level. This broke with the tradition that had hitherto been practised in museums outside the capital, Reykjavik, one that focused on regional issues rather than national ones. The exhibit caused great debate, dissent from people in the community, and interest that led to a similar installation at the National Museum of Iceland. By detailing the exhibition and its effect on visitors and the larger museum community, this chapter explores critical perspectives on adult learning that encourage dialogue, social justice, and the challenging of political and social norms, thus shedding light on international views of participative museum practices.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To begin examining the effect of *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* on museum visitors and on the political discourse in Iceland, we first define public pedagogy and, related to that, social movement learning.

Critical Public Pedagogy

The 1990s gave rise to the concept of public pedagogy; first through the works of feminist researchers such as Carmen Luke (1996) and later with the work of Henry Giroux (2003, 2004). Although there are numerous approaches for delineating forms of pedagogy in this context (see Burdick & Sandlin, 2013), Sandlin, Schultz, and Burdick (2010) describe public pedagogy in general as processes, types, and sites of education and learning occurring outside formal educational institutions. This includes popular culture and media, public spaces and cultural institutions, prevailing discourses such as public policy, and public intellectualism and social activism. The growing importance of public pedagogies in the study of adult education is due in part because it is, "in and through these spaces of learning that our identities are formed [as we interact] with popular and media culture as well as with cultural institutions such as museums" (Sandlin, Wright, & Clark, 2011, p. 5). With respect to museums, public pedagogy emphasises how these sites do not simply impose meaning or the 'right answer' on visitors but instead can create reflective spaces for addressing what Mezirow (1998) called shared disorienting dilemmas. Public pedagogy also understands museums as 'transitional spaces' that challenge individuals to face the ambivalences that result from encounters with diversity (Biesta, 2004; Ellsworth, 2005; Masschelein, 2010).

Social Movement Learning

Adult education has from its inception included the need to focus on, and expand democracy in, society (Edelson, 1999; Roy, 2014) by helping people to feel they are able to more fully participate and have access to information and ideas in order to make decisions (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). This practice is rooted in social justice, "the right of every individual to have civil rights and equitable treatment without class distinction" (Russo, 2014, p. 149). It calls for ideas of disrupting and subverting arrangements that promote marginalisation and exclusionary processes (Gewirtz, 1998) and is exemplified through social movement learning.

Social movements are oppositional in nature and defined as "voluntary associations of people and organisations within civil society that rise and fall in response to particular social, economic, ideological, and political changes and issues often driven by the state or the market" (Walters, 2005, p. 54). Social movements can be broken down into Old Social Movements (OSM), typified by the unjust

distribution of resources and class struggles (Buechler, 1995) and New Social Movements (NSM) centred on "direct democracy, spontaneity, non-hierarchical structures, and small-scale, decentralised organisations" (D'Anieri, Ernst, & Kier, 1990, p. 447). NSMs include movements that seek social change through alteration to lifestyle, knowledge or cultural practices, address environmental or food issues (Buechler, 1995; Flowers & Swan, 2011), or work towards simplicity (Sandlin & Walther, 2009). Whether new or old, social movements have been described as simultaneously acting as bearers and producers of knowledge (Chesters & Welsh, 2011). This knowledge is an outcome of social movement learning, which was introduced in 1980 by Paulston in relation to Scandinavian folk colleges and includes an external dimension whereby society at large learns about issues raised by social movements and an internal dimension whereby individuals in the movement learn (see Duguid, Mündel, & Schugurensky, 2007). Gorman (2007) suggests that social movement learning challenges more traditional notions of autonomous, and often competitive, learning. He calls for a move toward the collective nature of learning found in social movements that confront the status quo. This can occur informally, such as taking part in political protests or through formal training, such as education given to volunteer election monitors (Hall & Clover, 2005). Although these are well-established examples, it should be noted that the definition of social movement learning is malleable, and largely shaped by context (English & Mayo, 2012; Kapoor, 2008; Walters, 2005).

Regardless of the form it takes, a key component of social movement learning is finding ways to bring people together, frequently made more difficult by the "social and technological developments that force us further and further apart into a chaotic assemblage of fractured individual existences" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 199). One site for combating such conditions is the museum. Museums can act as sites where alternative information can be shared, and collaboration and engagement are fostered to build solidarity. These cultural institutions can also facilitate dialogues through their exhibitions and social movement learning events that require adults to engage effectively in an active and equal dialogue with those in positions of power (Russo, 2014). Lopes and Thomas (2006) call on adult educators to create pedagogical spaces that render visible privilege and its ramifications within all aspects of society, but also to take up these difficult issues with elite or what they call 'protected' classes.

Museums are one answer to such a demand. Although the adoption of such a mission and educational identity by museums is slow, pressure is growing to establish the museum as a "unique place in civil society to further the cause of social change" (Clover, 2015, p. 301). In the case that follows, a museum takes up social movement learning and provides a counter to the lack of understanding by some adult educators who many argue do not fully understand the value of museums and their exhibitions as spaces for ideology critique and critical public pedagogy (Borg & Mayo, 2010; Grek, 2009; Styles, 2011).

DISPLAYING PROTEST AS PUBLIC PEDAGOGY

Haltu Kjafti og Vertu Þæg (Shut Up and Be Quiet!)

In the early 1990s Iceland became a laboratory for neoliberal politics that aimed at restructuring Icelandic society to improve governmental roles, amplify public living standards, and partake in the global economy. The Icelandic government privatised previously state-owned institutions such as banks, deregulated laws on the financial sector and the energy system, reduced taxes, and privatised access to environmental resources (such as fishing waters). That development abruptly halted on October 6, 2008 when the Prime Minister addressed the nation on State Television, announcing that the world's banking system was facing a major economic crisis that had deeply affected Icelandic banks and society. He stated, "The Icelandic banks have not escaped this banking crisis any more than other international banks and their position is now very serious. In recent years the growth and profitability of the Icelandic banks has been like something akin to a fairy tale. Major opportunities arose when the access to capital on foreign money markets reached its peak, and the banks together with other Icelandic companies, exploited these opportunities to launch into new markets" (*Financial Crisis*, n.d., para. 3). Almost overnight, Iceland's three major private banks had collapsed and were taken over by the government (Danielsson & Zoega, 2009). In the address the Prime Minister concluded with the words, "God bless Iceland," underlining the gravity of the situation for the Icelandic economy and the uncertainty that lay ahead for the government of Iceland to resolve the situation. Not long after, unemployment rose to uprecedented levels and the public was hit hard by property foreclosure and debts incurred by devalued currency. In the course of the crisis, social and other media outlets overflowed with public outrage, condemnation, humour, irony, and paranoia about the situation. Questions arose about responsibility for the situation and led to public protests, which were directed mainly towards governmental officials, business tycoons, privatised banks, and the Central Bank. The protests were mainly confined within Reykjavík, but they were also organised in other places.

In Reykjavík, smart phones and social media, such as Facebook, became platforms for coordination and recruitment of protestors. Along with community meetings and speeches, rallies had some Icelanders holding signs and banners, while others banged on pots and pans or oil barrels with kitchen utensils (Figure 1). Bonfires were lit and other visual and acoustic signs were used on protest sites to convey the public's growing criticism and concern.

Some protesters concealed their faces at such gatherings and, at times, crowds of people breached barriers that law enforcement authorities had created around the Parliament and other venues leading to violence, arrests, and prosecution on behalf of the State. Smaller protests took place to the north in Akureyri, and in Selfoss, horse feces were thrown in the lobby of the town bank, Landsbankinn. Yet for Iceland, the protest and public upheaval was unusual. Historically, Icelanders rarely resorted to

Figure 1. Protestors by the Parliament building in Reykjavík, 20 January 2009. Photo Haukur Már Helgason

public protest and usually abided by official rules and regulations. The force of the public outcry and the wave of protests was a paradigm shift in public expression and many in power found it unsettling. In January 2008, *Fréttablaðið,* the largest free newspaper in Iceland, published the editorial headline: *Shut Up and Be Quiet*. The editorial argued that the politicians in power wanted the nation simply to shut up and be quiet while they tried to find solutions to the grave situation—a situation that, according to many, the politicians had created with their implementation of neoliberal ideals. Instead of shutting up, the people continued to apply pressure to the parliament. By January, 2009, the management of the crisis by the government and the parliamentarians, the loss of public trust, and the eventual social unrest led to the resignation of the Prime Minister and his government, and a call was given for new elections.

While the protests raged in Reykjavik and to the north in Akureyri, Húsavík, a town of about 2200 people in a largely isolated part of northern Iceland, was calm and there was limited debate on the crisis. Tinna Grétarsdóttir, an anthropologist and eventual co-curator of *Shut Up and Be Quiet!*, found herself spending a great deal of time reading news feeds, blogs and blog comments of Icelanders, and searching for

videos and photos posted online. Through this process she began collecting images of protests and analysing what was occurring in the conflict and debates. Tinna noted that at this historic time, it was becoming unpleasant to live in the oppressive silence of Husavik. She stated in our interview with her, "It was therefore important to find a way to cut this silence and open space for voices of the people." Only days before the government resignation, on January 15, 2009, the exhibition *Shut Up and Be Quiet*, curated by Tinna and her husband, and then Director of the museum, Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, opened to the public.

The exhibition focused on the state of social issues in the wake of the collapse of the Icelandic financial system with special attention directed to the Icelandic people's voice of protest. The intent of the exhibition was quite political and caused a heated response. For example, at the launch of the exhibition a flyer was sent out by email. It was a satirical and rhetorical manifesto using language and wording taken from various Icelandic blogs and media outlets that included a provocative photoshopped image of the former Prime Minister responsible for the introduction of neo-liberal politics in Iceland. It depicts him in a Nazi costume with the words underneath: "Reign of Error!" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Photoshopped image of former Prime Minister, Davið Oddson. Unknown artist

The night before the opening of the exhibition the curators, Sigurjón and Tinna, received a telephone call to their home. The angry voice on the line said, "What the hell is this?" When asked who was calling, the person identified himself as the mayor of the town. Sigurjón calmly explained the rationale behind the exhibition

and allowed the call to end on good terms. The head of the board of the museum also sent Sigurjón an email asking the following: “What is this? I’ve received several phone calls and comments about this! People have been wondering if the museum is the right venue for a one sided take on the issues that Icelandic society is going through right now. I’ll hear from you.”

Oppression of dissent and general ‘silence’ in Húsavík was not new. At the time, the town was flooded with propaganda concerning plans to construct an aluminium smelter near Húsavík. Those with environmental concerns about the impact of the planet on the ecosystem and residents had been suppressed completely. Moreover, there was a history of indifference in the region. When fishing quotas were implemented in the town and surrounding area years before, the region was heavily affected economically and socially, yet the general public did not protest or show any outrage. To counter these conditions, *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* was not only a presentation of civil protests, opinions, and photos that were circulating at this time, but also a space for people—a ‘public square’ to discuss and share views by writing opinions on the exhibition wall or on its blog (http://skodanasyning.blogspot.is/2009/01/blog-post.html). Interestingly, despite concerns from those in power, once the exhibition opened the people in the region did not take much interest. One resident explained it by saying that people in the region did not identify with the economic collapse or think it was relevant to them because the preceeding “good years” (*góðærisárin*) prior to the collapse did not affect their region. The overall aim of the exhibition was to make a small museum relevant for the people in the region as the crisis affected the whole nation. It also attempted to make the museum relevant on a national level and break out of the tradition of museums outside the capital focusing on regional issues rather than national ones, yet the curators came to understand that they made the mistake of not associating current outrage being expressed across Iceland with recent local history and concerns of the inhabitants of Húsavík.

Although there was little interest at the local level, the exhibition drew national coverage after a report from State Television. The exhibition was converted to a travelling exhibition for two other regional museums in the towns of Höfn and Seyðisfjörður. In Höfn the exhibition was situated in the town library lobby. This location also housed the high school, and saw much traffic from patrons, employees, and students, as well as customers who ate at the restaurant located in the building. The former director of the museum, Björg Erlingsdóttir, stated that the exhibit brought the issue “to people who had not had the opportunity to be direct participants in protests in the capital, but had strong views and would have liked to be participating in what went on. The exhibition was a way to reach those who believed this to be ‘fights’ of those in the capital which had little [to do] with us rural areas.” In our interview she went on to say that museum visitors soon realised, “that the battle concerned us all.” Björg said responses to the exhibition in Höfn were mixed with amusement and uncertainty about its “appropriateness,” but that changed as people took time to see its potential to present “crisis stories where [the Icelandic] national character reveal[ed] itself with all the many speculations that people have had about

the situation in recent weeks and months." She explained that although visitors were at first skeptical and apprehensive about the exhibition giving an impression of celebrating protest, they came around as they embraced the citizen's right to protest and shared their thoughts about the situation. In Seyðisfjörður the exhibit was supplemented with photos of protests in the town, and yet the museum had only a small turnout to the exhibition. Despite this, Pétur Kristjánsson, the curator in Seyðisfjörður, noted in an interview with us that the exhibition "worked very well as a catalyst for conversation, so people could talk about the events that had taken place and even get a clearer picture of what had been happening and what was going on (and become firmer in their opposition to the dominant system)."

Segja Þessir Hlutir Söguna? (Do These Things Tell a Story?)

The original *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* was also the impetus for the National Museum of Iceland and the Reykjavik Municipality Museum to start actively collecting material artefacts used in the public protests in the wake of the financial collapse. What was termed the "the pots and pans revolution" or "the kitchenware revolution" for protestors banging on pots during demonstrations became the foundation for the museum collection that included these items, as well as protest signs and banners. Prompted by the *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* exhibition and their own collection of protest artefacts, the National Museum put on a small exhibition in early 2010 titled, *Do These Things Tell a Story?* (*Segja þessir hlutir söguna?*). In addition to artefacts, the exhibit called upon visitors to express their own ideas and beliefs about the economic collapse, the protests, and how it should be preserved. As the image in Figure 3 shows, visitors could write on a large roll of paper ajacent to the artefacts.

The museum press release described the exhibition as a collection of artefacts used in protests in the aftermath of the financial collapse in 2008, including protest signs, flyers, gas containers, and more that either came from the general public or were collected in the field. The museum explained that these artefacts were exhibited in the midst of these turbulant times in order to elicit public opinions about the artefacts being collected. They wanted to understand how the museum reflected upon the current era with the artefacts? Do these things tell a story and what is that story? The museum went on in the press release to note that "We are all experts in our own time and now the museum calls out for assistance. What should be preserved for the future? What shows the events that took place in 2008–2009… Artefacts are preserved for the future so they can be researched and exhibited after 2, 50 or 350 years. Now, the museum is collecting things that show the times we live at and visitors are asked to express their opinions about the things that have been collected so far to give the best image of todays psyche."

The resulting public comments were not exactly what museum staff had in mind, with one staff member telling us it was "beyond decency." According to one of the exhibition designers and collaborators in the effort, the museum "wanted visitors to participate and we trusted that they could, and wanted to. We were ready to listen to

Figure 3. The exhibition Segja Þessir Hlutir Söguna? *at the National Museum of Iceland, 2010. Photo Ívar Brynjólfsson/National Museum of Iceland*

their views and accept what they offered us and make it part of the exhibition. We didn't expect that people would become rude." Visitors' hostility raised questions of censorship. Given the inflammatory comments, was it appropriate for the exhibition to be placed in the main entrance of the National Museum? How should the museum deal with potential slander? These were questions new to the museum, and ones for which they found no clear answers.

DISCUSSION

The economic crisis in many ways caused a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1998) for Icelanders, and of course one could easily argue the museum. All were suddenly faced with a real-life economic and social crisis that called into question their beliefs about their government, the banking system, exhibitionary practice, and/or their own voice in the political process and how it was displayed. Although Mezirow (1998, 2000) argues that disorienting dilemmas serve as catalysts for transformational learning and a trigger for critical self reflection, they are not easy. As Mälkki (2012) points out, many dilemmas are accompanied by emotional strain, which can make critical self and social reflection a difficult and painful process. We conclude this chapter by talking about some of the ways *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* served an important, albeit problematic, site for visitors and peer institutions as it stimulated dialogue and anger about the economic crisis and thereby created opportunities for reflection, debate and engagement, both positive and negative, at various levels.

As the case above demonstrates, museums can support and encourage radical thinking in action through public pedagogy and social movement learning in both the content they choose to highlight and their approaches to representation and engagement. The exhibition brought the economic crisis in Iceland to individuals who were largely insulated from the outcries heard in the capital, Reykjavik, and changed how they engaged in political discourse through its display of controversial perspectives. Indeed, the content was very controversial and out of character in Húsavík, a town of few inhabitants and that is culturally confined and rather economically stable. By shifting the view of museum audiences as merely visitors seeking distraction or entertainment to one that sees them as adult learners, museums can intentionally create opportunties for individuals to reflect on experiences that disorient, confound, or disrupt worldviews and beliefs. Again, this is not easy and it is in fact disruptive. But to counter a disruptive world, we need institutions willing to provide disruptive counter narratives and images.

The economic crisis also created new learning opportunities for Icelandic cultural institutions. Museums and their staff faced difficult choices about how to document, collect, and represent a highly charged and unprecedented event and the public response to it. Curators of *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* made a decision that led to fostering social movement and public discourse that was uncharacteristic for Icelandic museums. It modeled for other institutions a way to frame and critique the national crisis and demonstrated how visitors could engage with the exhibition and the issues it raised. The District Culture Centre in Húsavík's public pedagogy was subsequently taken up in a similar fashion by the National Museum, thus redefining and broadening the purposes of Icelandic cultural institutions. Museums seeking to take on a more critical role in facilitating adult learning and public discourse should foster networking with other institutions to create and share a larger vision for visitor engagement (Lord & Blankenberg, 2015) that builds a systemic process for public pedagogy.

The exhibition made public pedagogy a central feature in order to advance reflection, discussion, and debate at a societal level. In a paper exploring Iceland's economic crisis, Kristín Loftsdóttir (2014) described it as "not simply an event that Icelanders reacted to but… a field of engagement that can be acted upon" (p. 3). *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* and the subsequent exhibition, *Do These Things Tell a Story*?, in many ways served as the field of engagement for museum visitors. Lord and Blankenberg (2015) contend that museums help define the character of a place, in part through what they choose to promote; as such, radical exhibition choices like *Shut Up and Be Quiet!* are critical to societies. In Iceland, where there are strong nationalistic ideas (Matthíasdóttir, 2001), the museums' decision to embrace dissent and normalise the practice of questioning government challenged the traditional roles of citizens (and museum visitors), allowing Icelanders to hear others' anger and frustration, as well as sharing their own, thus bringing about reflection at a societal level. Public outcry and waves of protests were a paradigm shift in public expression in Iceland. Historically, Icelanders rarely resorted to civil protest and usually abided by official rules and regulations. Now, although Iceland has begun

its economic recovery, groups of protestors speaking out about a range of social and political issues is a common sight. So for museums, like the ones we highlighted in this chapter, there is a responsibility to not only represent the history of the past, but what is soon to be the history of the future, and to shape what is to become the 'new normal' for the societies they serve.

NOTE

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Robin S. Grenier
University of Connecticut, USA

Sigurjón B. Hafsteinsson
University of Iceland

CLARE GRAY

2. ST MUNGO MUSEUM OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ART

A Space to Speak, Discuss and be Heard

INTRODUCTION

The Necropolis sits on a hill high above Glasgow. An interdenominational graveyard, the first burial was of a Jewish man named Joseph Levi in 1932. To the south, crossing the river Clyde, lies the Gorbals, an area which grew in population from the late eighteenth century onwards and has drawn people from the Scottish highlands, Irish people escaping famine, Jewish people fleeing violence in Poland, Russia and Lithuania and, more recently, Indians and Pakistanis. Today, the Central Mosque is tucked on the south bank of the river, its dome a golden jewel on the Glasgow skyline. To the west of the Necropolis, at the foot of the hill, Glasgow Cathedral rises, a medieval Catholic church of blackened stone. This is a church which survived, almost intact, the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, led by John Knox, while others were ransacked and destroyed in an effort to rid the country of Catholicism. The spot on which the Cathedral sits was chosen, so the story goes, by St Mungo the patron saint of Glasgow, to fulfil his quest of establishing a Christian community in sixth century Scotland. It would become the centre from which Glasgow would unfurl.

ST MUNGO AND NEUTRALITY

St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art opened in Glasgow in 1992 and sits where the Bishop’s Castle for the Cathedral once did. The building was designed in medieval style to reflect its surroundings and was originally intended as a visitor centre for the Cathedral. The project ran out of funds and the building was passed to Glasgow City Council to create a museum of religion from the city’s existing collections. The museum focused on the world religions practised most prominently in Scotland such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism, as well as showing objects representing religions rooted in other parts of the world such as the Smallpox Spirit of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. O’Neill (1995), a member of the team which created the museum, was clear from the start that it was not intended to be objective, a common pretext of these institutions, but rather existed

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> to promote explicity a set of values: respect for the diversity of human beliefs. The museum opened with the intention that the work which happened there, exhibitions and public programmes alike, would be underpinned by the museum's mission statement which was to promote understanding and respect between people of different faiths and those of none. (p. 52)

The decision to explicitly promote a set of values contradicts the perception of a museum as a place that offers an objective, unbiased interpretation of subject matter. The often accepted notion of the museum as an objective or neutral place, however, is difficult to accept. A museum takes subjective decisions such as which objects to collect, the themes of exhibitions, which objects to select and omit when creating exhibitions, which groups and individuals to consult with and which interpretation methods to use. Even so, when working with a historical topic, an exhibition can appear to be objective since it will likely reflect a breadth of research on the subject.

The potential sources of information on the topic are also likely to be relatively limited and accepted historical narratives well-established. Most of the objects shown in St Mungo's galleries, however, represent contemporary religions and the most significant knowledge and experience of these objects can be found within religious communities. These objects have meaning in people's everyday lives and the information about them, shared by individuals and communities, is not only limitless but also dynamic. To describe the museum as objective, with the suggestion of authority that comes with perceived objectivity, would fail to recognise the experience and influence of religious communities and the meaning the objects hold for them. While the museum strives to be well informed and present balanced views, an emphasis is placed on consulting with religious communities when creating exhibitions and programmes.

CRITICAL, ISSUE-BASED ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Influenced by the intention to promote understanding and respect, St Mungo Museum developed a range of programmes for adults. Some of these programmes took an information sharing approach but others have been much more social issue-based and have responded to influences such as discord in local communities. Glasgow has, for instance, long acknowledged sectarian issues between Catholic and Protestant communities which are rooted in links to Northern Ireland, as well as hostilities which Catholic Irish immigrants faced on arrival in Scotland. The Church of Scotland released a report in 1923 titled *The Menace of the Irish Race to Our Scottish Nationality.* The report argued that Irish immigrants who were Orange (Protestant) were not a problem since they were of the same religion as Scots, who were predominantly Protestant due to the triumph of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was a movement in Europe during the 16th Century which challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and promoted Protestantism instead. This meant, so the report claimed, Protestant Irish immigrants

could more easily integrate into Scottish life. The focus of the report was specifically on Irish Catholics and suggested that their allegiance to the church was particularly problematic. The report goes on to offer a breakdown of the numbers of Irish people and of Catholics throughout Scotland, making it clear that any increase would be undesirable. It was not until 2002 that the Church of Scotland expressed regret at the bigotry they displayed towards Irish Catholics. Sectarianism in contemporary Glasgow may not be quite so pronounced but there remains residual prejudice. This is perhaps most noticeable between fans of Rangers and Celtic football clubs, Rangers being traditionally supported by Protestants and Celtic by Catholics. Deeply bigoted songs can still be heard in the streets when the Old Firm? play. And, notably, Catholic and Protestant children are still educated separately in Scotland.

Responding to such prejudice and discord evident in society has been the cornerstone of much of the museum's issue-based work. While the museum has also explored many of the celebratory and enlightening aspects of religion, for the purposes of exploring facilitation, it is the issue-based programmes which are the most important work the museum does and the focus of this chapter. Facilitating issue-based programmes, in whatever form they take, can be challenging for a facilitator whose experience predominantly lies in museum education and I speak to this at the conclusion of the chapter. But let me begin with what I mean by the term 'facilitator'.

I use facilitator deliberately as opposed to 'educator or 'teacher'. Paulo Freire (2003) spoke of the banking concept which he identified as a type of education where the narrative is led by the teacher and received passively by the students. Describing a teacher as narrator he argues:

> Narration leads the students to memorise mechanically the narrated account. Worse yet, it turns them into containers…to be 'filled' by the teachers. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. (pp. 72–73)

Freire is describing a particularly authoritarian, didactic approach in which the teacher espouses and seeks no engagement from the students at all. It is not an approach many adult educators would take now, at least not to the extent Freire describes. In his description both learning and knowledge are treated like property to be passed back and forth. Freire strongly rejects the banking concept, claiming it to be oppressive; he also says elsewhere that he still sees the teacher as the leader of the learning experience:

> The moment the teacher begins the dialogue, he or she knows a great deal, first in terms of knowledge and second in terms of the horizon that he or she wants to get to. The starting point is what the teacher knows about the object and where the teacher wants to go with it. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 103)

But issue-based discussions would focuse on the experiences and knowledge of the participants which are held by the group, creating a situation where the content can only belong to the group. When working with subject matter which belongs to the group, particularly in a critical context in a museum, I believe the teacher's knowledge should not be the starting point of the discussion. If real open discussion and debate is to take place, and we are to challenge the 'knowledge authority' practices typical of museums, we need to create spaces where participants can explore, or better said interrogate, their own assumptions, opinions and ideas. We need to begin with what they know and how they know it. The horizon cannot be envisaged in advance nor can the destination be predetermined. I would suggest that in the case of issue based discussion, museum staff should act more as facilitators as opposed to educators for as Kitzinger (2005) reminds us, "the forms of communication that people use in their everyday life 'may tell us as much, if not more'" (p. 58). However, this does not mean relinquishing all knowledge authority and responsibility which I will illustrate in various ways in what follows.

FLEXIBILITY AND PLANNING

It is likely that many museum facilitators will consider the main purpose of museum education/experience is to engage visitors with the collection. Their role would be to facilitate an additional layer of interpretation which allows the visitor or participant to see objects in a new way, to learn something new or further explore knowledge they already possess. In my own experience, the museum facilitator does not have a rigid set of criteria to be fulfilled or information which must be imparted. Even in the case of a fairly traditional museum tour there is often an element of flexibility which is influenced by the interaction between the guide and visitors taking part. Although I may set out on a general tour with a set of objects in mind to discuss, as the group engages in conversation and their interests emerge, my intentions may change. While this approach is flexible and responds to the influence of the visitor, I will be prepared with nuggets of information about the objects which can be used along the way to prompt conversation or, if it becomes clear the group would rather listen than discuss, can form the bones of a more traditional talk. The group may gather silently around, for example, Ahmed Moustafa's *Attributes of Divine Perfection* shown in St Mungo Museum's art gallery. The piece is a work on paper and shows a large cube which has been flipped open to reveal ninety-nine smaller white cubes. Each of the white cubes bear one of the 99 Names of God. There is Arabic calligraphy on the surfaces around the cube which includes quotes from the Qu'ran. This piece of art is likely to be quite different from anything many visitors will have seen before. A couple of probing questions to the group might discover whether anyone has knowledge of Islamic art or any observations they wish to share. I might seek out someone in the group who is aware that it would be unusual, though not completely unheard of, to find the human form in Islamic art. Moustafa has, instead, focused on geometric forms and intricate Arabic calligraphy. A group with

knowledge, curiosity or suggestions might wish to guide the discussion themselves at this point. Another group, equally well informed and interested, might prefer to listen instead. However lightly the information may be drawn upon, the facilitator almost always comes into the situation with more prepared information about the object than the participant does and uses this to guide the direction the conversation may take. When working with contemporary religious objects or political topics, such as sectarianism or racism, the participants almost always have at least as much experience of and investment in the topic as the facilitator, and very often more. The direction that the conversation may take is, in many ways, much less predictable for the facilitator.

There are two main types of discussion which, in my experience, happen in a museum like St Mungo. The first is planned discussion which is structured by the facilitator in advance and which has a clear purpose and topic. The discussion tends to be developed with community partners for closed groups but can also be marketed openly for anyone to attend, depending on the topic and purpose. As already mentioned, facilitation is often the best approach to creating the most effective discussion. Facilitation suggests that group members, utilising their experiences and knowledge, are placed at the centre of the programme or workshop. The facilitator is not in a position of authority nor imparting knowledge which they alone hold. They are, instead, putting in place structures and processes which will assist the group in communicating their own ideas. Schwartz argues

> the facilitator's main task is to help the group increase its effectiveness by improving its process and structure. Process refers to how a group works together. It includes how members talk to each other, identify and solve problems, make decisions, and handle conflict. Structure refers to stable recurring group processes, such as group membership or group roles. In contrast, content refers to what a group is working on. (1995, p. 3)

By this definition, the museum facilitator is responsible for designing sessions that encourage groups to work well together and for defining the group's purpose. The facilitator should still be well informed about the subject to be discussed in order to have some knowledge of where potential conflicts may lie, allowing the facilitator to create appropriate sessions and develop a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives. Participants and facilitators, then, enter into this planned discussion with some understanding of the core topic and an anticipation of the direction the conversation may take. When objects are explored during planned discussion, the facilitator will mostly have identified them in advance, usually with a specific issue in mind.

Spontaneous discussion, on the other hand, occurs when an object unexpectedly sparks an issue. For example, not long after St Mungo opened its doors to the public, a Christian man came into the museum and walked through the art gallery, passing an alabaster statue of Mary grieving, cradling Jesus in her arms after the crucifixion. He entered the space where Shiva stands and placed a bible in the middle of the

floor before pushing the heavy statue over, breaking Shiva's outstretched arm and cracking the halo of flames which surrounds him. The man objected to Christianity being given equal significance to the other religions shown in the museum. What I am pointing out with this example is that the probaity of unpredictable conflict in actions by visitors, but also in conversations and workshops is natural in a museum setting. The museum facilitator however, given that sessions usually have flexible learning objectives, may have greater freedom to pursue them more fully. And facilitation at St Mungo Museum, given the museum's active commitment to promoting understanding and respect, encourages pursuit of further discussion when intolerance arises.

Dealing with Sensitive Issues

When considering planned discussion around sensitive issues, it is important to consider the reason for the interaction taking place. Discussions around, for example, racism and sectarianism have the potential to be incredibly uncomfortable for people taking part and possibly even damaging if not carefully facilitated. Planned discussion and workshops in St Mungo Museum typically respond to issues relevant to Glasgow or Scotland. It might be that a local group has requested workshops around a topic such as sectarianism. The group themselves may be responding to a particular incident or situation they have experienced. Or the topic may be a national one, such as the unsupportive response of some religious leaders and communities prior to the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 which allowed same sex couples to enter into marriage, opening the possibility of religious ceremonies. It might arise from changes in the city such as Glasgow City Council's decision to sign up as a dispersal city for refugees in 1999 which saw tensions in some communities and even instances of violence. Workshops and discussion may very directly address the subject matter, as is often the case with sectarian work, or they may unpick surrounding ideas such as what offering a positive welcome to refugees might look like. Wherever the discussion springs from, the topic attempts to be clear and purposeful to all taking part, facilitators and participants alike. Clarity works towards an equality of understanding at the outset and increases the likelihood of a positive commitment to the conversation.

Setting a clear and well researched topic gives good grounding to open a discussion. The facilitator is not, however, using research to drive the conversation in a particular direction. The intention is to establish a platform where meaningful discussion can take place rather than persuade participants to a particular viewpoint; all participants should feel confident that their views will be heard. Many facilitators may have the instinct to close down discussion that becomes too raw or reveals views that are usually not socially acceptable or appear hurtful. In many ways this is a good instinct because the intention is to ensure the space is a safe one and that people feel welcome. However, if views, even quite uncomfortable ones, are

closed down it may falsely appear that consensus has been reached. If the intention of the discussion is to reach new understanding about the topic or each other, a false consensus, while it may initially feel more comfortable, doesn't meet that purpose.

Safety and Respect

The facilitator does, however, have a responsibility to create a space that is safe and respectful. This begins before the group meets by clearly defining the subject for discussion and selecting participants who have chosen to take part with this awareness. As the discussion opens there are approaches which can assist in creating a respectful forum. The facilitator might wish to open the session with an exploration of the concept of respectful discussion, encouraging participants to contribute their own definitions. In the context of St Mungo Museum, a facilitator might choose to focus this exercise on an object such as Dora Holzhandler's *The Sabbath Candles.* The painting shows a Jewish mother lighting Sabbath candles on a Friday evening, a ritual performed by Jewish women and girls to bring peace to the home. The artist says that despite a sometimes difficult relationship with her religion, this was a very happy memory for her. Looking closely at the painting, the group might notice the setting sun in the window, the family settling together for the evening with the common purpose of resting. Or that each family member has their space at the table and the group seem comfortable with each other. The candles themselves bring an illumination to the scene. With discussion around the painting as an introduction, the group might explore the elements they feel they could be put in place to help facilitate a peaceful and productive discussion. It may be that the group are in harmony with their descriptions and that informal conversation around respect is adequate. Or the facilitator or group members may feel that it is worth formalising agreed guidelines which can be written and displayed for reference. It is worth encouraging the inclusion of confidentiality, active listening, avoiding personal attacks and promoting openness. These approaches will not absolutely ensure a respectful discussion throughout the session. What they will do, though, is give the group and the facilitator a framework to return to if the discussion becomes overly heated or unfocused. If a facilitator needs to intervene during the discussion it will not be to close down the viewpoint which is being expressed. Instead it will be to return to the guidelines which the group have agreed to abide by, therefore allowing honesty and avoiding, as far as is possible, false consensus.

It can also help participants to feel secure to learn a little about the viewpoints held by others in the group before fully entering discussion. There are various planned exercises which can work well such as asking each person to introduce themselves and their current view on the subject. A slightly more structured exercise might also be used, such as taking a series of statements and exploring to what extent each person agrees or disagrees and how fixed they believe themselves to be in that opinion. This can be designed as a group exercise so that all participants visually

give their answer simultaneously, for instance by placing a dot on a chart, or standing in a particular position in a room. In this way individuals can offer their own view without feeling overly exposed while, at the same time, gathering an understanding of the breadth of views in the group. Offering an opinion which many in the group may strongly disagree with could make an individual feel vulnerable. Exercises such as the examples given, and others, allow people to quickly gather information which allows them to make informed choices about the level of risk they wish to take. It is not the intention that this information should intimidate a participant into silence, even if the opinion or belief they hold appears to be the minority. Exercises like these should, however, give the participant the opportunity to decide for themselves if they view the situation as safe at that moment in time. That assessment can change over the course of the session and facilitation with an emphasis on respect and confidentiality should begin work towards openness. The visibility of a range of opinions might also encourage openness to learning, depending on how fixed people feel about their own views. Ultimately though, the process is only productive if it a positive experience for participants and no participant should be pushed to take greater risks than they are comfortable with.

Every group is different and it can be worth taking a flexible approach when facilitating challenging subject matter. Some groups will conduct a positive discussion quite naturally without much intervention from a facilitator. Others might struggle to open up, or a discussion might begin that is dominated by a small number of individuals. Attempting a range of exercises that work well in particular situations and having them to hand enables the facilitator to be flexible in their approach. Introducing an exercise can bring a more balanced dynamic to the group or provide a springboard for conversation. From a museum adult education perspective, the exercises which will work best will also be dependent on the objects on display and are specific to each museum. While much of the follow-up discussion may happen in private, confidential space, it is probable that original objects will be viewed and considered at some point. Using an example from St Mungo's galleries, exploring the meaning of the Sikh symbol could be useful. The symbol is flanked by crossed swords, one which symbolises spirituality and other political aspects of life. A good starting point for a discussion or exercise can involve the idea of balancing spiritual beliefs with social responsibilities, possibly leading to an exploration of the types of communities people would like to live in and the kinds of actions that foster a positive environment.

SPONTANEITY

The second sort of discussion that occurs at St Mungo is unplanned and spontaneous. This sort of discussion arises most often, in my experience, when working with groups that are already established rather than individuals who have come together for the first time. The group and facilitator set out, for instance, on a general tour that

is not anticipated to generate any conflict or raise any significant misunderstandings. Yet, as the group explore the galleries, conversations begin to reveal a lack of understanding of other religions and even anger and intolerance. It can be any object that triggers this reaction. It may even be Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of great compassion. This Buddhist Bodhisattva can be male or female and has eleven heads and a thousand arms. Such is Avalokiteshvara's wish to help all sentient beings, her heads allow her to see suffering in all directions and her arms to reach many. The idea that Bodhisattvas have these deity-like attributes, yet are not gods, may contradict some people's ideas about religion. Or the unfamiliarity, to some, of the form of the Bodhisattva might make others uncomfortable when they make a comparison with the image of god they hold themselves. It has happened that the visitor then goes on to passionately express opinions which deeply lack respect and understanding not only about the object or faith in question but about individuals who practice that religion.

The freedom to fully pursue unplanned discussion might be unique to the informal learning in a museum setting. Sessions are rarely defined by fixed learning outcomes and there is no identified destination at which the group must arrive. The visitor experience and interpretation of objects is the priority. At St Mungo the mission statement 'to promote understanding and respect between people of different faiths and those of none' guides and is at the forefront of discussion. So when a group member strongly voices an opinion which is dismissive and intolerant of others, the facilitator would likely introduce some questions or statements which explore the issue a little further. The steps that have been taken for planned discussion, such as defining the subject, ensuring participants are clear and actively wish to take part, have not been put into place, so it is necessary to proceed with care. There is a certain level of instinct involved in reading a group's reaction to the potential conflict which has arisen and an experienced facilitator should respond to that reaction. If the discussion becomes more involved, it is worth asking the group if they wish to continue or to move on. It may seem surprising, but I have experienced very few groups who were hesitant to explore the issue further. And some of the most honest, unguarded and productive discussions have taken place in this spontaneous context. In this situation, the facilitator might suggest that the group, for a while at least, find a private space, in order to consider both other visitors in the gallery and the group themselves. It is possible that some of the views being expressed by the group have the potential to make other visitors feel uncomfortable and even unwelcome. And the group themselves need privacy and confidentiality if they are to continue to explore their ideas with honesty. It is entirely possible, and even helpful, in this spontaneous situation to apply many of the same facilitation techniques as with planned discussion. If the group want to enter a deeper discussion, guidelines for respect can be brought in, with the group's agreement, as can many of the exercises that have been developed for planned discussion, or the group might only require a safe space in which to hold their conversation.

Finding Commonalities

At their best, museums like St Mungo Museum encourage people to come together and find their commonality and also to accept their differences with generosity. The world seems to be increasingly polarised yet for every divisive event an accompanying tide of people seeking unity arises. There is a refugee crisis across Europe and the Middle East. Considering Syria alone, millions of people are refugees in neighbouring countries and Europe, around half of which are children. In response the UK government, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, has offered to accept 20,000 Syrian refugees over a period of five years. Meantime a 'Refugees Welcome' campaign has sprung up across UK and grassroots organisations have taken action shelter building in Calais, assisting refugees arriving in Lesbos and donating, sorting and distributing clothing and tents to camps. In November 2015 an attack on Paris by terrorists claiming links to Daesh sent a further shock through Europe. Less than a week later the Bishopbriggs Cultural Centre in Glasgow, a building which also served as a mosque, was deliberately set on fire. Yet following the Paris attacks, the Central Mosque in Glasgow had been promoting a peace vigil in the city centre to honour victims and few days later organised a multi-faith press call condemning the attacks and calling for unity. In the international context, Muslims across the world have taken part in the *Not in my Name* campaign disassociating Islam with terrorism. As perceived divisions deepen, so humanity also rises and seeks to challenge the most violent and powerful with declarations of unity and peace. Like adult education in general, museums can and must play a role in brining about positive, progressive justice and change.

FINAL THOUGHTS: TRAINING

It is essential that communities, whether local, national and international, have spaces in which to speak and be heard about difficult and controversial issues. Individuals can claim the streets to protest or create and join virtual conversations and campaigns. But museums can be an important part of these discussions, offering space and programmes relevant to communities and the issues of our times. St Mungo Museum, was involved in doing this from the outset, using its educational programming and exhibitions to provide a space for debate, dialogue and empathy. In other words, museum collections have the potential to trigger discussions which can be challenging, political and contemporary. However, I would argue that it is essential for museum staff to have the training and skills in adult education, to create and facilitate programmes which deal with such explosive and emotive issues as I have outlined in this chapter. I would argue it is critical to seek out good quality adault education training which can be offered by non-governmental organisations or degree programmes in higher education. Responding to contemporary issues and offering well researched and facilitated programmes can deepen a museum's

relevance to the community and contribute actively to social justice and change. And being relevant must be the aim that all museums works towards.

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Clare Gray
Kelvingrove Museum
Glasgow, Scotland

JEAN BARR

3. ADULT EDUCATION AND RADICAL MUSEOLOGY

The Role of the Museum as an Archive of the Commons

INTRODUCTION

In his philosophy of history Walter Benjamin (1968) distinguishes between a history spoken in the name of power, which records the victors' triumphs, and a history that names and identifies the problems of the present by scouring the past for the origins of this 'present' historical moment. Benjamin uses the word 'constellation' to describe this project of bringing events together in new ways, disrupting established disciplines, categories and mediums, thereby suggesting new connections between 'now' and 'then'.

Claire Bishop (2013) thinks this approach highly suggestive for museums, "since the constellation as a politicised rewriting of history is fundamentally curatorial" (p. 56). Thus re-framed, the task of the contemporary museum – specifically, museums of contemporary art – opens up to a dynamic reading of history that "pulls into the foreground that which has been side-lined, repressed and discarded in the eyes of the dominant classes" (p. 56). For Bishop culture becomes a primary means for visualising alternatives. Rather than thinking of the museum collection as a storehouse of treasures, it is "reimagined as an archive of the commons" (p. 56). To regard the museum in this way as an active, historical agent involved in creative questioning and dissent implies a spectator who is not solely focussed on contemplating individual works but is also aware of being presented with arguments and positions that are open to different readings and contestations. A museum therefore becomes "a time capsule of what was once considered culturally significant at previous historical periods, while more recent acquisitions anticipate the judgment of history to come" (p. 59). In the future, these objects suggest, this will have been deemed important.

Without a permanent collection, it is difficult for a museum to stake a claim to any meaningful engagement with the past or future. Yet the commonplace assumption is that the key site of contemporary art is the globalised bienniale – precisely because these international art exhibitions operate specifically to affirm the current *zeitgeist* (Bishop, 2012a). For the critic Julian Stallabrass (2004) this means that the most celebrated contemporary art furthers the interests of the neoliberal economy by breaking down barriers to trade, local solidarities and cultural attachments in a continual "process of hybridization" (p. 187).

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In this chapter I examine Bishop's proposal in relation to radical adult education traditions and in the light of contemporary developments in 'lens-based' (video and photography) art and so-called 'archival' art. I draw from examples such as Allan Sekula's photographic work, which lies on the edge between art and documentary, Ursula Biemann's materialist-feminist video essays on overlooked aspects of modern life, and Luke Fowler's films on vanguard thinkers such as radical psychiatrist R. D. Laing (1960) and historian/adult educator E. P. Thompson. Such artworks are infused with what Hal Foster (2006) speaks of as "an archival impulse at work internationally in contemporary art" in which artists are "drawn to unfulfilled beginnings or incomplete projects – that might offer points of departure again" (p. 146). As such they seem ideally suited to Bishop's reframed task for the contemporary museum as historical agent: the here and now of the work acts as a kind of 'portal' between an unfinished past and a re-opened future. The work is archival in several senses. It not only draws on informal archives but also *produces* them, often as a complex of texts and images. And it does so in a way that underscores the hybrid nature of such archival materials, "as found and constructed, factual and fictive, public and private" (Foster, 2015, p. 35).

It is part of the practice of the artists discussed in this chapter to show their work in public galleries/museums of contemporary art, at film festivals and at activist meetings (as well as at international biennials) so as to reach diverse constituencies. Exposing different audiences to alternative archives of public culture challenges the 'design-and-display' culture critiqued by Hal Foster (2002), where the vast majority of exhibition costs come from private sources, resulting in the art world's current emphasis on youth, celebrity, fashion and commodity culture.

THE ART WORLD

The character of the art world changed profoundly in the 1990s. Global events since 1989 were pivotal: the re-unification of Germany and end of the Soviet Union inaugurated a new world order of unrestrained neoliberal capitalism, releasing multi-national flows of capital, culture and information for privileged people, reinforcing local borders for many others. Consequences for the weakest nations were catastrophic, setting in motion patterns of mass migration and asylum-seeking that become more and more pressing, whilst in the advanced economies an unprecedented explosion in new museums of modern art like Tate Modern in London and Guggenheim in Bilbao has gone hand in hand with a global spread of art biennials and other festivals.

The role of business has moved from occasional sponsorship of the arts to building partnerships with museums and artists so as to inflate the value of each other's 'brand'. Corporations become involved in programmes to widen access to the arts as an image-enhancing strategy that complements governments' demands on arts to boost the economy and act as a kind of social balm. Corporatism is now *the* social project guiding internationalism in art. There may be other social projects

in different parts of the globe but the 'default' in contemporary art is clear in the 'mix and match' rhetoric of galleries such as Tate Modern whose new functions are more akin to those of a shop or bank, holding "the value warranties for the art market", than the older ones that were more akin to public education (Foster et al., 2004, p. 679).

Where Does Adult Education Fit into All of This?

I want to relate the art world's current predicaments and Bishop's reframed task for the contemporary museum to Raymond Williams' (1958) practice as an adult educator and founding father of cultural studies. Williams wrote inspiringly on adult education and culture. His starting point was that culture is ordinary and that any discussion about the relation between the arts and culture must begin with the recognition of the symbolic creativity in everyday ordinary culture. Williams saw this ordinariness as the wellspring of all art – a point of view consistent with his own experience in adult education and one that is shared by Wollen (1993) when he says, "the new corporate forms of communication and display will be constantly confronted by new vernacular forms of invention and expression. Creativity always comes from beneath…and makes use of what it can scavenge by night" (p. 1110).

Most of the learning people do is without the help of educational institutions: learning, like culture, Raymond Williams reminded us, is ordinary; it occurs throughout life in a host of affiliations, and networks, from books, television, the Internet, visits to galleries, museums, and films. Adult education ought to make *extraordinary* sense of this ordinary activity and experience, says Jane Thompson (2002). She adds it should help people examine critically what is *already* known by adding new insights and different knowledge to help them use their creativity more effectively. It should start from where people are but not leave them there. What I mean here is we need to begin with what people know, but, as adult educators – which museums are – add new knowledge through access to opportunities to critical collective reflection and/or engagement activities.

I see adult education as a cultural and intellectual project that has the democratic development of knowledge at its centre. It is in allying itself with the development of socially critical and mature cultural understandings and with the grasp and development of 'really useful knowledge' as defined by different social groups and movements (rather than experts) that adult education has earned its reputation as a democratising force (see Alexander, 1994). This way of seeing adult education – that is, in terms of its critical and creative role within the wider culture – does not fit easily within current policy and priorities. Such priorities favour formal educational institutions such as colleges, universities, and classroom-based adult education and tend to regard museums as marginal. Yet it is precisely because visiting museums and galleries is a voluntary activity, associated with pleasure – even entertainment – that their potential contribution to the expansion of informal and non-formal learning opportunities is huge. Problematically, museums still tend to provide educational

opportunities to their *existing* audiences. There are many notable exceptions of course.

For example, ‘Museums, keyworkers and lifelong learning’ was a European Union funded research project with partners from Sweden, the UK, Ireland, Portugal and Austria. Keyworkers in all cases were not employed by museums but acted as mediators between the museum and wider public. They included artists, community workers, adult educators and public employees working on the streets of the city. All were amateurs in museum terms but all brought skills, knowledge and experience to the project that museum staff may not have – such as understanding barriers to access and having credibility and contacts with different groups. The Swedish part of the project used the city of Stockholm itself as a museum and those who work on the streets – such as police, traffic wardens, street cleaners – as interpreters with the public. These ‘interpreters’ were given training courses including walking tours focused on the city’s history and cultural heritage. The project’s rationale was that the city’s workers have the intellectual and cultural know-how – and interpersonal skills – necessary to engage with visitors and residents in learning about the place they know so intimately (e.g. Barr, 2008).

Acknowledgement of the importance of the ordinary in learning should go hand in hand with recognition of the everyday context in which art and artists operate. The British conceptual artist Victor Burgin cautions that although a large number of artists working today emphasise disagreement with the neoliberal agenda and seek to contest it in their work, the art world is increasingly ‘mediatized’: “What is now fundamentally critical is the progressive colonisation of languages, beliefs and values by media contents and forms – imposing uniformity upon what may be imagined or said…I see the critical task of art today as offering an alternative to the media” (Burgin, 2010, pp. 3–5). Similarly, the American art critic Hal Foster (2001) insists that the fundamental stake in art and education is “the preservation, in an administered, affirmative culture, of spaces for critical debate and alternative vision” (p. xvii).

Over the last three decades what has been dubbed art’s ‘expanded field’ (including performance, installation, lens-based art) in many ways has imploded. Much of this expanded field of art – even that dubbed ‘critical’ – fits well into the pervasively ‘marketised, ‘design-and-display’ culture Foster (2002) critiques. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to the pattern that might create openings in the present for *new* spaces for critical debate and alternative ideas and practices. These offer creative opportunities for adult educators within and outwith museums.

DOCUMENTARY AND THE SOCIAL TURN

The kind of critical art that has come to prominence since the late 1990s has been dubbed in terms of a documentary and ‘social’ turn of various forms. As an example of the latter, Brazilian artist Santiago Sierra’s ‘actions’ since the late 1990s set up relationships between himself, participants – usually poor immigrants employed by

him as performers – and audiences. These are often based on relational antagonism rather than the 'empathy' that is usually associated with 'relational art' (see Kester, 2004; Bishop, 2005, 2012a).

Sierra's 2003 Venice Biennale installation, *Wall Enclosing a Space*, is mild compared with his most brutal video work, *Los Penetrados* (2010). Instead of a brick wall confronting visitors (a metaphor for immigrants' relationship to Europe) this later work confronts visitors with a graphic video display of anal penetration between couples of different races and genders. Foregrounding the viewer's relation to contemporary labour conditions by featuring normally invisible immigrant constituencies, Sierra's installation seems to say that everyone and everything has a price. His works unsettle our understandings, potentially freeing our imaginations to think and see differently. "Unease and contradiction can be crucial to a work's *artistic* impact," says Bishop (2012a) in her critique of the current reductive critical framework underpinned by moral indignation that reigns in the world of 'critical' contemporary art (p. 26).

A similar impulse underpins Allan Sekula's photographic work. Rooted in the history of conceptual art, Sekula seeks to revitalise the documentary tradition as a critical form that produces new ways of representing social reality (see Gelder & Baetens, 2010; Edwards, 2004). His 'critical realist' photo essays such as *Fish Story* (1989–1995) and his slide sequences like *Waiting for Tear Gas* (1999) respond primarily to the current *invisibility* of the real relations of production and power.

The emphasis of *Fish Story* is on conditions of labour and on exposing to photographic view a world that is usually overlooked or hidden from public view. Such a documentary impulse may seem to be in tension with the photographs' artistic status as highly crafted, often beautiful objects (Mitchell, 2010, p. 14). Yet, as Bertolt Brecht insists, the mere reflection of reality reveals little about reality. Walter Benjamin formulated the idea that photography preserves appearance at the cost of meaning by drawing from Brecht: "A photograph of the Krupps works tells us next to nothing about [it]…[S]omething must in fact be *built up*, something artificial, posed'" (cited in Green, 2010, p. 46).

This is exactly what Sekula's massive *Fish Story* does (see Sekula, 1995). It 'poses' the intimate link between the economies of the global North and the industrialisation of the South and East by displaying the ocean's pivotal role in the reproduction of contemporary society. By developing the theme of the sea as a forgotten space that is fundamental to the contemporary globalized economy, Sekula in effect 'stages' reality in a way that allows the viewer to see what has become virtually invisible. It is precisely this staging – through image and text – that *allows* us to see what is really going on. Part of what it allows us to see is that the widespread opinion about the disappearance of manual labour is false. Moreover, large sections of the art world of the 1980s did little to counter the concealment from common view of the world of labour and production underpinning the so-called 'weightless economy' – a practice of cultural amnesia it shared with advertising and the mass media (Roberts, 2012).

If art is indeed at the nerve centre of this historical collusion practised by visual culture, *Fish Story* asks if the visual arts might be the ideal arena in which to *confront* this repression and occlusion. With its imagery of the slow weighty transportation of goods across the seas in giant containers and of lives defined by its shifting global parameters (illustrated through the empty streets of the port of Greenock in the West of Scotland, for example) *Fish Story* is a subtle work on representation of a sort that gathered pace towards the end of the 1990s. It is an early example of a kind of photographic activism directed at disarming art's own first world ideologies of dematerialized, 'information-society' self-sufficiency.

In more recent international biennials and art fairs, a critical foregrounding of topics such as borders, migration, nation states, cultural identity, place and home is occurring in a global context of the almost total marketization of art. Thus Zurich – born Ursula Biemann's films mix image, sound and commentary to examine patterns of migration between Europe and North Africa, using montage to combine documentary footage with technological imagery of surveillance. Whilst her *Europlex* (2003) and *Performing the Border* (1999) pinpoint border posts, free trade zones and outsourced labour ghettoes, her *Sahara Chronicles* (2006) explores migration networks across Africa.

Black Sea Files (2005) maps out the construction of a pipeline from Azerbaijan via Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean, exploring how global power works in a performative way to transfer oil, thus highlighting the non-fixity of boundaries (Saybasili, 2011). Similarly, *Deep Water* (2013) connects the tar sands oil extraction sounds around Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, with the coastal areas of Bangladesh. That the toxic clouds and acid winds of the former may sink the latter is a link that she narrates in a whisper – like a "harrowed messenger from a Greek tragedy" (Sandhu, 2013, p. 69). Looking at the world through the lens of *flow* – of bodies, oil, water – she is, says Sandhu, "an avant-garde gazetteer, poet of capitalist infrastructures, mapmaker of overlooked contemporary worlds" (p. 68). Biemann's video essays' primary task is to go beyond appearances to a more complex understanding of the social world than is usually available through mainstream media.

For Biemann and Sekula, as for Sierra, art is a form of experimental activity whose imaginative reach may elicit disturbing experiences that "enlarge our capacity to imagine the world and our relations anew" (p. 284). Its purchase on the public imaginary requires some object – image, story, film – "to stand *between* the ideas of the artist and the feeling and interpretation of the spectator" (Bishop, 2012a, p. 278). In the context of adult education as envisaged by Raymond Williams and Jane Thompson, viewing and discussing such work as part of a group is ripe with possibilities for enlarged understanding and for making extraordinary sense of ordinary everyday experiences. Sekula emphasises conditions of labour and seeks to expose to the camera a world generally hidden from public view. Biemann directs her lens and words at showing how extraordinarily *poor* many women are, especially those of the great migratory movements. Both artists question the primacy

of the ‘circulation of signs’ over the circulation of bodies as the ‘true marker of late modernity’ (Dimitrikaki, 2007, p. 227; Mitchell, 2010).

Luke Fowler’s film, *All Divided Selves,* was shortlisted for the 2012 Turner Prize and screened at Tate Modern in London. Fowler consciously works to get away from John Grierson type documentaries where the emphasis is on *fixing* interpretation and meaning. His films explore the limits and conventions of documentary filmmaking. They combine new and archival footage with interviews, photography and densely layered sound to construct impressionistic, cinematic collages/portraits of vanguard thinkers and counter-cultural figures such as R. D. Laing and E. P. Thompson.

The films transform found footage into multidimensional *portraits* that retrieve forgotten or hidden histories, “questioning our relationship to the past and our memories of it” (Peyton-Jones et al., 2009, p. 19). Moving between the roles of artist, curator, historian, filmmaker and musician, Fowler uses techniques of montage to suggest that the same discontinuities, paradoxes and breakdowns in communication that are at issue in *cinema* are at work in our unmediated everyday lives: “the disjointed, biased, incomplete constructions that cinema offers reflect the real processes in operation in our own lives” (Bradley, 2009, pp. 21–25).

All Divided Selves (2011) is a ninety-minute film on the radical, ‘counter-cultural’ psychiatrist R. D. Laing. It assembles archive footage of Laing, his critics, his treatment sessions at Kingsley Hall in London and footage of the inner workings of medical establishments. This runs alongside Fowler’s own personal contemporary footage shot on 16 mm film. The archival footage is gleaned from existing celluloid and video material broadcast or shot between 1959–1991 and ‘scavenged’ (to use a term used by Walter Benjamin) from various archives.

The film is an absorbing, intricate composite of clashing points of view and incompatible filmic registers. For every clip of Laing expounding on his theories on schizophrenia and the ‘military-industrial complex’ there is a mainstream psychiatrist extolling the value of medication. If we see a clip of Laing’s patients receiving a sharp thump on the head in a group therapy session, we then witness a distressing scene of a hospitalised woman, doped to the eyeballs, wheeled in and out of a room of medical students, succumbing resignedly to her establishment psychiatrist’s exhortations: “OK I give in. I’ll take the lithium.”

The film proceeds less by linear narrative than by digression, detail, glimpses and brief dialogue, its many short scenes intercut with secondary footage of life outside, culled from 16mm rushes shot by Fowler over two summers. Largely cleaving to the natural world, these are often in close-up: sun dancing on moving water, insects struggling in algae, a child playing with his father. We see interiors of Fowler’s family house in Glasgow: his mother on the phone, the edge of a chair, light and shadow flitting over it, as does a haunting, recurring folk-song, and single refrain, ‘All that is hidden is revealed’.

The effect of these interlaid vignettes – of nature and life going on – is a vivid sense of reality *pressing in* in all its sensual immediacy. This sense builds

cumulatively as the film progresses via cinematic means rather than through any obviously documentary narrative. Whether by closing in on the fine grain of the everyday world or returning to the overlooked aspects of the recent past, Fowler's films propose a 'mode of attention' that is both contemplative and conscientious – akin to a naturalist's attentiveness – that is as appropriate for a bug on a leaf as for an educational or mental health policy. Each solicits active engagement with our environment, from the tiniest to the largest (see Herbert, 2012).

At a time of digital overload of information, whilst Fowler's interest does not lie in confronting what it means to think, see and filter feeling through 'the digital', such an aesthetic offers an *indirect* response to this modern condition. An age of digital information is said to have followed those of industrial production and mass consumption – with consequent changed status in the work of art. Yet most archival art is far more *tactile* and face-to-face than any digital interface. The archives at issue in such art are 'stubbornly material and fragmentary' and require human interpretation rather than computer processing (Foster, et al., 2004, p. 144; see Bishop, 2012b; Merewether, 2006).

For Walter Benjamin, the collector (or archival artist) is a scavenger, quoting out of context "in order to break the spell of calcified tradition, mobilising the past by bringing it blazing into the present, and keeping it mobile in order to allow its objects to be historical agents once again" (Bishop, 2013, p. 56; also see Benjamin, 1936).

By foregrounding the fabrication of their works, exposing them *as* constructions, joins visible, Luke Fowler's films, Sekula's photographic sequences and Biemann's video essays suggest that one way forward for art (and museum) *is* to appropriate and re-define. The artists involved in such archival art practices often aim to fashion distracted viewers into engaged discussants, says Hal Foster, adding that this can involve "a species of passionate pedagogy in which the lessons on offer concern love as much as knowledge" (Foster, 2015, pp. 35–36).

FINAL THOUGHTS

If 'posts' have marked the past forty years – post/war, post/colonialism, post/modernism, post/communism – then today we seem to be in a period of anticipation, Bishop (2013) suggests. Sightlines are focused on the future and "the ultimate aim is to disrupt the relative pluralism of the current moment, in which all styles and beliefs are considered equally valid, and to move towards a … politicised understanding of where we can and should be heading" (p. 62).

Over 50 years ago Raymond Williams (1993) wrote that the spirit of adult education at its best would point towards a genuinely "common culture and educated and participatory democracy" (pp. 220–221). Three decades later he pinpointed our current situation precisely:

> Yet what is now happening…is a steady pressure from a late capitalist economy and its governments to reduce education both absolutely and in kind, steadily excluding learning which offers more than a preparation for employment and an already regulated civic life. (1985, p. 151)

New efforts to work towards a reinvigorated adult education movement cannot work by old rules. New ones might be forged in collaboration with museums interested in such a project of cultural, political and educational reframing. Securing screenings of works such as those discussed above for people seeking new ways of thinking and perceiving could blend the skills of adult educators, the perceptions of artists and the resources of the museum to reimagine all but forgotten possible political futures. As Bishop (2013) insists, "the idea that artists might help us glimpse the contours of a project for rethinking our world is surely one of the reasons why contemporary art, despite its near total imbrications in the market, continues to rouse such interest and concern" (p. 23).

Issues of globalisation, asylum seeking, migration, citizenship, inequality, surveillance, mental health and so forth, are aspects of everyone's ordinary experience in one way or another. In focusing on such issues artists have opened up new areas of consideration and reflection for audiences. The artists discussed in this chapter offer complex responses to the world and how it is changing. Spectators of their work are invited to re-think their views and re-consider the role of spectators *in* events.

Museums need to enter into dialogue with various publics, create events where the viewer becomes an active questioner – or better, interlocutor – rather than a mere spectator of a work of art chosen for them. In this conception the ultimate destination of a museum devoted to an archive of the commons, available and accessible to everyone, isn't about multiple and diverse audiences *per se* but rather, about radical education. It is "the work of art mobilised as a relational object rather than perceived as a hoarded treasure" (Bishop, 2013, p. 43). The model here is Jacques Rancière's (1991) 'ignorant schoolmaster' based on a presumption of equality of intelligence between viewer and institution. This too is adult education's starting point.

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Jean Barr
Adult and Continuing Education
University of Glasgow, Scotland

PAUL STEWART

4. ART AND COMMITMENT: GALLERIES WITHOUT WALLS

Propositions

INTRODUCTION

> *Teachers and students (leadership and people) co-intent on reality, are both subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators…. Not pseudo–participation, but committed involvement.* (Paulo Freire, 1970, p. 10)

This chapter explores the role of the artist in adult education within the art gallery. I explore how artist-led learning projects in galleries are situated in terms of their commitment to art and their commitment to intentional learning. How do we approach current ideas that view adult learning environments as spaces of collective emancipation? How do we address the reality that learning has become a commodity product?

When I speak of learning environments I am referring directly to adult education. Problematically, art galleries and museums have taken up a discourse of learning, which comes directly from government discourses that position learning as 'learning for life' and 'supporting the market economy'. Instead of promoting a discourse which views learning as a market place commodity, I will talk about 'adult education'. Adult education eschews the didactic and expert-driven approaches, which used to dominate in museums, instead emphasising intentional learning toward social change. And Freire (1996) reminds us "education [is] a social action that [can] either empower or domesticate people" (p. 10).

The art gallery is a site for cultural production and knowledge exchange, but who has the right to participate? In the past it has tended to be expert-driven with exclusive ideas about who is qualified to create art. I argue here that cultural production and knowledge exchange can be inclusive, and that learning experiences can be co-created in a manner that acknowledges the institution, the artist, the artwork and the participant. In this chapter I focus on how learning in an arts context can move

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beyond normative pedagogical structures such as classrooms and didactic lecture theatres. I also explore how galleries can learn from artistic practices that focus on critical learning platforms and constructs of pedagogy and power. This exploration offers new breath to the stifled government discourses of 'lifelong learning' with and of art.

The following ideas are explorations of theoretical and practical elements of adult learning in galleries. Throughout this exploration I propose that language and learning environments can move beyond the restricted idea that learning is a product to be purchased. I present examples of practices such as the Silent University, Thomas Hirschhorn's 'Gramsci Monument', the Situation Unit Commission series at mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), the Alternative Art College and Hito Steyerl's 'How not to be Seen: A fucking Didactic Educational.mov File'. I draw from the theoretical positions of Gavin Grindon, Jaques Rancière, Boris Groys and others to argue how these practices challenge the commodification of arts education and can expand our imagination of arts based adult pedagogy. I feel our sector has hit an urgent crossroads in arts education across the UK in terms of how we define and practice adult education in galleries and museums. In the following sections I present a series of interwoven propositions, which bring out the questions we, as gallery and adult educators, should be asking in terms of art, learning, and social change.

THE EMO-ACTIVE TURN

The first proposition involves finding the moment when the learner becomes activated in the experience of learning. It highlights notions of commitment and engagement in gallery education and suggests that creative opportunities emerge when artists engage politically through art practices in learning contexts. Firstly I want to point out the difference between the commitment of an artwork and the commitment of an individual artist. As suggested by Jaques Rancière in *Politics of Aesthetics* (2004)

> an artist is committed by their writings, paintings, films, which contribute to a certain type of political struggle. An artist can be committed, but what is that to say the artwork is committed? … This does not mean art is apolitical it means aesthetics has its own politics. (p. 6)

This differentiates the politics of the artwork from the politics of the artist. There are similarities but each can be perceived through different lenses, with different preconceptions and different objectives. Here, the role of the artist is to commit to involvement and to the process of learning, rather than to a particular ideology or any particular 'end' outcomes. Awareness of this distinction can benefit a learning environment and avoid dogmatic interpretations of the notion of commitment.

This proposition is built on the idea that the learning with art in galleries is achieved through the collective of the artist, the artwork and the viewer, which becomes

innately political. Here there is movement towards an emotive turn not to express feeling or sensation for its own sake but rather to activate a stimulus for change, which I call the 'emo-active' position. This is a term I have devised to represent a moment where a collective becomes activated. It suggests the production of a strong feeling or reaction to something, but is not specifically connected to sentimental outcomes. It is also not connected to an individual, but rather is a collective 'emo-active' position that is motivated in this scenario. This has similarities to the Lil'wat First Nations term Kamúcwkalha i Kà-mú-kà-shà which Leslie Brown, Joanna Ochocka, Sylvie de Grosbois and Budd Hall have used to represent developing and maintaining communities, in the recently published chapter *Kamúcwkalha: Canadian Approaches to Community-University Research Partnerships* (2015). The term means the energy of a group attuned to its collectivity, and possibly this is what we could develop in a learning environment with the emo-active notion. In the same way Brown et al, discuss community research methodologies and the barriers that exist in an open and sustainable society we could apply such a term to the same difficulties of representation, equality and openness in our learning environments away from terms such as life long learning.

So what I want to offer with the emo-active proposition is a strategy to developing programming that fosters collective activation of a community of learners focusing on the five premises below as starting points:

1. Acknowledgement of the collective politics of the learners.
2. A learning experience that collectively commits to learning in galleries for the benefit of the learner rather than to the institution, the artist or the art work.
3. Programming developed with the learner and its direction shaped by the group rather than institutional values.
4. The learners, artists, artwork, staff and practitioners are all equal members of the experience.
5. The learning environment is set up to acknowledge each other as a community of learners each committed to their involvement and respect to one another.

In so doing, we can activate a shared experience where each individual can see something differently rather than becoming silent partners being filled with knowledge without questioning its origin.

THE PRESENCE OF CHOICE

Following the first proposition the next idea is around presence. The learning experience within a gallery offers different methods to have contact with histories and concepts by offering subjective interpretations through visual representations of society and daily life. This is not a ground breaking observation but what this proposal is looking for is what is *not* present and advocating that adult-education can encourage participants to inquire about what is 'not present' in the environment of the gallery.

Figure 1. How not to be seen. A fucking didactic educational. Mov File, Hito Steyerl, 2013

For example if I were to play a game of football but not bring a ball to the pitch it would become apparent something important was missing, as demonstrated by Monty Pythons "Philosophers Football" Sketch. In a similar way when I saw Hito Steyerl's work at the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts, London) in 2015 called *How not to be seen: A fucking didactic educational.mov file* (Figure 1) I felt the work was consciously paradoxical in the same way to the missing football. In Steyerl's attempt to become invisible the absence or silence is rendered visible. From this analogy I saw similarities to how our committed involvement in adult education works, as it uncovers what is not present by seeing the absence or silence through a pedagogy focused on committed involvement rather than learning outcomes.

This location of absence generates possibilities for social change to emerge. As Steyerl (2009) states, "Freedom consists in accepting that authority should not be questioned" (p. 15). In other words, the concept of freedom can only exist in the acceptance of an unchangeable authority. This can refer to the hierarchical power structures that currently dominate how art practice is defined, whether who is represented at the Turner Prize or what tools of practice are taught at art schools. We are only offered our freedom through the acceptance of having no choice. We are offered no position to designate a true freedom from capitalism as our illusion of choice is bound up by what the market deems suitable.

RE – LEARN

The next proposition starts by seeing artworks as interventions in a learning environment that support the learners to reconsider what is to be learned. Anton Vidolke an Artist and Founder of E-Flux (2009), in his chapter *From Exhibition to School*, discusses how the student producing artwork can move against the formative education they received. This can include a move beyond set methodologies and pre-formulated learning outcomes. This is not a revolt against the tools of the artist but against the framework in which they are developed. It is an attempt to de-habituate from one's learnt processes and to create something material that embodies and provokes critique. This insight was also shared by a book *Reversible Actions* (2010)

that emerged from a symposium at the ACIVC, Centre d'Arts Contemporanies in Spain. The symposium questions the role of art, education and territory in relation to social or political change. It presents and interrogates a number of practices that have appeared across Europe as a process of producing radical territories of arts education.

I found Vidolke and the symposium at the ACIVC a good way to enter into what I am trying to describe here as they both situate an attempt to readdress what has already been learnt. So for me un-learning is simply shifting from stating what is to be learnt to a question; what can we learn differently? Adult education should have nothing to do with developing specific or technical ability, but should foster the tools needed to look beyond the normative rules of representation (Schwabsky, 2014). But in the current commodification of learning, these spaces have been compelled to focus on professional practices that offer an economic benefit, whether the institutional staff sympathise with this or not. When discussing the unique learning environments of art-school, Shwasbsky reflects

> That blindness can lead to insight is something I was never taught as a philosophy major, and I suspect I would not have learned it if I'd studied chemistry or history or French either. In medicine, the fledgling doctor needn't learn how to be patient. In none of these fields is it normally considered necessary for students to learn by systematically pulling the rug out from under their feet. That risk is peculiar to contemporary art. (Shwasbsky, 2014)

This quotation may be specific to the art school but it also lends insight to adult education in galleries. To learn with and of art is to continuously question the foundations of what you perceived prior to the learning experience. This consistent need for foundational critique is the platform from which we enact a shift in practice, an outward perspective from within the gallery walls to permeate the social and political worlds we inhabit. An example of this is The Silent University produced by Ahmet Ögüt. Ögüt produced a space that provided a resource for asylum seekers and migrant workers who have, in the process of migration, had their skills or knowledge repressed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. The Silent University archive, welcome room, Tate Modern, Delfina Foundation, Ahmet Ögüt, 2012

Ögüt created a platform that highlighted difference and engaged the gallery in its own representation of practice. It engaged viewers, in turn, by producing a learning space that allowed flight from institutional dichotomy, if only briefly. It gives those who are normally voiceless in such institutions opportunities to share knowledge and take independence and ownership over their environment. This way of working allows the artwork to become the encompassing space for the development of a community of learners. The Silent University is an artwork, but it is also a process of sharing the tools that help us to un-learn normative social structures. It gives us the chance to ask of our adult education provision; what is it that a learner is learning rather than what is it they should have learnt.

CRITICALITY

A fourth proposition is about how we develop criticality. Adult education, as a tool for social change, needs to step out of being a cycle of critique but active in having a community of learners that embody criticality. Grindon (2010), a scholar of art and political activism, sees this institutional critique of institutionalisation as a "militant exodus from enclosure". It presents, he argues, "a new field of creative political possibilities, a new trajectory for hopes, dreams and desires to build new social institutions" (p. 12).

An example of these possibilities is represented clearly in the learning spaces of galleries that shift towards critical practice focused on the context, privilege and responsibilities of art. Ögüt's Silent University, discussed earlier, is a form of art practice that offers contextual exchange as well as the space to formulate new practices. The pedagogic shift enables the space to be both artwork and platform for other practices to emerge. Santiago (2006) states in the 'Art Education and Territory' following the AVIC symposium:

> The question is understanding that what is political in art is not just the aesthetising of social problems and conflicts, but also the capacity to provide impetus for the other practices that are inserted and deployed in the interior of the context and from this perspective observe the questions and challenges that emerge. (p. 98)

The Silent University highlights issue of social inequality, what Ögüt has produced is a site for those who are unseen to be seen. The Silent University works by using all of the tools that validate those who attend higher education. It allows those who are normally paperless to have documentation authorising their existence. This is where the *emo-active* response is most apparent as it allows a collective of individuals to activate a direct response and through a shared presence produce a community of learners who were otherwise ignored due to their migrant status. Adult education can foster such an environment as a tool for social change due to the freeing of knowledge from set parameters and developing a community of learners that embody criticality as a core value.

DISFIGUREMENT

I noticed, when working in gallery education, that artworks, in some cases, are used as tools to disfigure commonly accepted ideas. Disfigured ideas can help a community of learners to interpret worlds or ideas so formalised and intellectualised that they have become unintelligible. Art practice that focuses on disfigurement offers a different perspective. What if art practice could be used as a tool in a community of learners to locate ideas that challenge the current commodity based scenario of power relations and public policy? This question requires an answer that positions the ethical or moral as the primary and the aesthetic as secondary in a learning context. This is not to dismiss aesthetics or to claim that the ethical positions are the only space for social change. But if we develop adult learning provision that highlights the ethical through the process of disfiguring it leads directly to learning within galleries as a tool for social change. This is due to its inevitable aim to be self-reflective and reformulate pre-conceived concepts. Rancière in his book *Dissensus* (2010) discusses the Archi-Ethical paradigm where the aim of the artwork is not to represent the present but to create a sense of commonality. He argues it is "archi-ethical, because the stake here is not to improve behaviour through representation, but to have all the bodies directly embody the sense of the "common (…) community as art work" (p. 137). From here it is possible to explore the idea that art as a tool for disfiguring can attempt to envelop the learning experience to locate the community of learners as the artwork rather than the gallery's collection.

Boris Groys an art critic, media theorist, and philosopher, (2014) sees a clear delineation between work that is created for design and that, which is created for art in an article about art and activism in E-Flux. This definition of design maintains the status quo and makes it appear prettier, whereas art can be an attempt to disfigure the status quo. I see the development of a community of learners including all active partners whether artist, participant, practitioner, and so on, as the community to disfigure rather than to maintain. I believe it is in the exploration of how our gallery spaces treat art and learning as separate experiences that we are able to locate a community of learners. Art activism is not limited to a specific genre within the art world, but as a political and pedagogical concern that should permeate all institutional and arts practice, and from this juncture I see learning and art practices with a activist intent as the trans-disciplinary approach to blur the institutional definitions that are rendered unintelligible.

The shift in power relations towards a community of learners suggests that artwork is not to be hung and admired in a gallery, but is an expression that is more ideological than physical. This is the disfigurement: the artwork in this instance does not have a final product but is the space in-between. It is the middle between un-knowing and knowing between un-seeing and seeing. It is the space in which learning in galleries and museums is able to remove its own institutional cloak, and this disfigures what we already know into what we begin to see differently. This is the community of learners.

Figure 3. TWOC, Situation Unit Commission, mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), Artist: John Reardon, Curator: Paul Stewart, 2015

At mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), I curated an exhibition series called 'The Situation Unit', May–September 2015. One intervention by the artist John Reardon, called TWOC 'Taken Without Owners Consent', a police term for stolen goods, was an attempt to shift the gallery outside of its physical space. Reardon used thirty-one hats that have been acquired possibly illegally and modified with both the mima logo and a red letter from the phrase 'taken without owners consent.' Each hat was then worn consecutively by the curator the entire day and then deposited at the galley. This work looked to explore my role as a curator in relation to both the gallery's locality and the interactions I made on a daily basis. This space of interaction has become the practice as a moment of confrontation that was explored through the changing of appearance (Figure 3).

The purpose was to locate the site of mima directly in its neighbouring community by taking stolen goods into the site of the gallery. Middlesbrough, which is in the North East of England, is a riverside town that once was a pearl of iron industry. It expanded from only twenty-five inhabitants in 1801 to 165,000 in the 1960s. But in 1980 the docks closed, the population began to fall, and a void opened between the town and the river. It is now a collection of boarded-up houses, Dickensian wall fragments and roads to nowhere. In this context Reardon is attempting to represent

the formation of different industries following an abandonment of people similar to Detroit and the rust belt in the states. The intervention focused specifically on the unlearning of normative gallery displays to incorporate a wider learning experience of place, class and identification. The relationship to disfigurement is its ability to take the normative display and force the curator to be a direct instigator in the project by wearing the caps. This disfigures both the relationship of the curator to the work as well as their individual interactions on a daily basis. It forces a reconsideration into how the work functions and what it represents when taking the work to different contexts where it's not recognised as an artwork. Moreover it develops a community of learners through the process of disfiguring simple daily tasks.

The commitment here can be seen in a variety of places. Reardon is committed to produce a new transparency between the gallery and its locale. The Curator is committed to the wearing (Figure 4) and placing of the hats, which in turn produces a direct commitment of the art work through social interaction and the daily performance whether that be in the office, the pub or at home. These new interactions allow the practice to be contextualised in a wider sphere than the isolated site of the gallery through movement and travel. In the same way adult education needs to escape the invisible and physical constraints of the gallery and engage in a larger context of place and identity.

Figure 4. TWOC Commission, curator wearing hat (performance), Situation unit, mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), John Reardon and Paul Stewart 2015

DIFFERENTLY

The acknowledgment of our own criticality as institutions compels us to be critical of one's own practices. Learning in galleries and peripheral spaces offer us room to really question. How does art affect the world? The gallery is not a site to teach

something 'new', but it should present the viewer with the opportunity to think about something differently. This idea of seeing something differently rather than producing 'new' is from my experience of creating the Alternative Art College (2011-present) (Figure 5). The Alternative Art College was a refusal to participate in Higher Education. In the autumn of 2010 changes were announced to the tuition fees in the UK to rise from £3,000 to £9,000 at this juncture and I refused to continue my 'role' as an art student and swiftly turned my student accommodation and other houses into an Alternative Art College. We managed to shift three months of the programme from the institution and into the home. This was due to a collective commitment from my peers and the faculty who sympathised with the attempt to question the consumer style of education (Alternative Art College, 2011).

What the AAC produces are both art works themselves and spaces to learn with and of art. Its role as an art practice, similar to the Silent University, is to be a space that facilitates thinking differently. Its transfigurement involved shifting to a shared learning practice, and moving from the institution to a private space, a living space. This removed the presence of structures they opposed and enabled the practice, in its fragility, to exist for a brief moment before collapsing under its own form. Like bamboo, art is able to produce structures that can hold metaphorical weights

Figure 5. The Alternative Art College, education as experiment, Goldsmiths College, Paul Stewart, 2012

greater than its own mass. In the instance of this being realised it falls back in on itself to be reformed from the embers of its own demise. I would advocate for adult education to address its environment at what is possible in its format, sometimes it is not the place of the gallery to discuss or identify with certain issues, as it simply becomes a weak imitation of an other. Adult education should focus on facilitating the community of learners with the tools to question the institution as much as the topic being discussed.

WALLS

Another proposition is that we examine the walls that divide the inside and outside of adult education. It is about the artist as activist or agitator who consciously creates environments for critical discourse. The art here is not made for the gallery space but in support of a cause or collective learning experience. Sometimes artists choose to create art works or practices that re-formulate spaces within the cracks of the current structures.

An example is Thomas Hirschhorn's *Monuments series*, which locate a critical presence in public space, crossing boundaries and using art as a site to discuss Antonio Gramsci, gun crime or even art itself. His work, *Gramsci Monument* (2013), follows Hirschhorn's guidelines of being constantly present in the production of work in public space. The work itself is installation, workshop, sculpture and community centre, and for me is a representation of where we could develop programming that crosses the boundaries of learning, curating, art production and community activism. Gramsci Monument took place on the grounds of Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Morrisania neighbourhood of the Bronx, New York. It was created in collaboration with the residence of the area to develop spaces they wanted or required. Funded by Dia Arts they have developed a website that archives the various approaches (www.diaart.org/gramsci-monument/index.php). For me the importance of this work is encapsulated from a review in *Art Review*:

> When Gramsci stated that 'every human being is an intellectual,' his point was not that we are all equally gifted with intelligence, but that everyone has the capacity to harness the power of ideas. Such capacity requires effort. It requires making a decision, such as taking a train to the Bronx and walking to the Forest Houses, and having a conversation, perhaps about Weiner or Spitzer, but more likely about Gramsci, or about race, or guns, or art. (n.p.) (Neil, 2013)

This could be the connection to the first proposition as this manifesting of a community could be from an *emo-active* response. When the learner is activated in such a way, there is a shift from the individual receiving knowledge from a predefined knowledge bank and possibly move towards a reframing of what is already known in an attempt to see differently. This form of practice has a commitment that engages directly with developing a community of learners in relation to the artist's work outside of the gallery framework. In other instances the gallery and

Figure 6. Gramsci monument, South Bronx, New York, Thomas Hirschhorn, 2013

or the museum can be seen as tools that are used by groups like Silent University and The Alternative Art College to incorporate a radical topic within and against the walls of an institution. The artwork is the creation of a community of learners through creative production and the development of questioning what is defined as an artwork or a learning environment within, against and beyond the galleries walls.

Does this suggest that the 'art' has to leave the art world to make a difference? Artists, for example, might move to urban streets in search of a moral shift towards critical art. An artist's interest in critical art could reflect a need to justify aesthetic practice that in its production merely creates objects. It is the artist's search for purpose. I suggest a shift where politics and art can exist in a format that can activate a participant through learning and art practice.

SHIFT

I conclude with a short and final proposition: I feel that if we are able to harness any of the previous suggestions we need to move away from adult education being treated in anyway as commodity. The commitment of the individual to their practice is not important; it is the collective commitment to an involvement that is crucial. The development of spaces to 'think differently' can allow a community of learners to emerge from the malaise of noise that is capitalism. In their multiplicity these communities are able to locate not a 'new' space but a different one. This shift is not just an imagined utopia. It is a sincere appeal for adult education to foster tools that look beyond what has been already defined and develop different perspectives of how we live in the world through art. The current commodification of learning needs to be challenged and these propositions, I hope are possible tactics to do just that. In my career I have, at times, had to focus on programming that offers an economic benefit, and from this experience I became aware that it no longer felt like a learning experience. It became a commodity for consumers whom wanted

to buy into a lifestyle the same way I bought this Vivian Westwood Denim Jacket I am wearing as I write this chapter. But this is my point: learning, or building a community of learners, is not meant to be just a representation of wealth but an environment that allows different knowledges and ideas to be formed. It is through a collective experience that adult education is truly able to offer something that is critical and reflective and not just become a government policy focused on 'lifelong learning' to legitimise public funding. What we can be sure of is that our sector has an abundance of possibilities with which to question social change and adult education. It's just a matter of having the space and the commitment to involvement to develop a community of learners.

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Paul Stewart
Tate Modern Gallery, UK

AVNER SEGALL AND BRENDA TROFANENKO

5. THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

A Subversive, Playful Pedagogy in Action

INTRODUCTION

Whether measured by their expansive numbers worldwide, their collections and exhibitions, or their community-based mandates, public museums are familiar institutions from which the public asks much. Visitors seek pleasure and entertainment; they want access to objects and collections that provide them with knowledge in diverse areas, and an affirmation of a commitment to store and protect valued objects and stories. With an historical commitment to tangible material culture that represents the 'authentic' object, and a responsibility to provide lifelong learning through exhibition practices and programming, many museums are rethinking what they might be and what relationship they may have with their communities. In moving beyond being solely benign rooms full of objects and nostalgia for former national glories (Bennett, 1995), museums have restructured their collections, exhibition practices, and institutional mandates to increasingly invoke contemporary understandings about the contested nature of knowledge as well as addressing issues of social justice and democratic citizenship (Silverman, 2009).

The idea of a public museum meeting to present-day democratic values of equity and social justice may seem at odds with its historical beginnings an elitist, exclusionary space (MacGregor & Impey, 1985). Further, while museums have always exercised a broad purpose to educate society, they have been known to focus on the 'educated'. But their educational focus has also changed significantly since the late 19th century. As Chakrabarty (2002) argues, key to the educational imperative of 19th/early 20th centuries museums was becoming a site that dealt not only with the creation and presentation of formal knowledge situated in the collections, exhibition practices, and institutional mandates but also with the acknowledgement of personal experience, cultural values and beliefs of those in attendance.

More recently, museums have become sites for 'deliberative democracy' in which the public holds "an equal right to suggest topics of conversation, to introduce new points of view, questions, and criticism into the conversation, and to challenge the rules of the conversation insofar as these seem to exclude the voice of some and privilege that of others" (Bienkowski, 2015, p. 48). In such context, the museum is no longer able to claim its role as the sole proprietor of knowledge, but rather is an institution that offers "a range of experts and as much information as [the public]

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need[s]" (Carson, 2010, p. 1) in order to make informed decisions as engaged individuals. This movement towards supporting the public as 'civic agents' can and should encourage empathy, curiosity, tolerance, creativity, and a critical sensibility (Cameron, 1971, 2006).

Perhaps no other museum has engaged more deliberately in this movement as the Victoria and Albert Museum (henceforth referred to as the V&A) in London. Currently considered the world's leading museum of art and design, the museum—free to the public, as are most other London museums—has worked to continuously change its identity, purpose and educational ambitions as it transforms the traditional hierarchical relationship with its audience. The museum's educational imperative, expressed through its spatial arrangements, forms of display, and structured juxtapositions, works to subvert its historically determined imperial mission. In so doing, the shift in power relationships between the established authority of the museum and the visiting public, as well as between didactic and engaged learning, has engendered active participation, co-curatorship, and interpretations that invite the public to *play* within the institution and challenge existing conceptions of knowledge and knowing.

In this chapter, we highlight some ways in which the V&A breaks with tradition and works to facilitate this new mission. We explore specifically its innovative pedagogical approach and its advancement of democratic education, both of which, we suggest, empower visitors and invite them to re-orient themselves, to expect the unexpected, and be open to ways of knowing that challenge and disrupt power, convention, and the traditional order of things.

AN IMPERIAL SPECTACLE

The V&A officially opened in 1906. Prior to that, for 50 years, it had been known as the South Kensington Museum. To understand the V&A as a pedagogical site, it is worthwhile returning to these beginnings as the South Kensington. Established in 1857 as an omnibus museum of art and industry, the V&A dedicated itself as a civic institution committed to public education following the success of the Exhibition of the World of Industry of All Nations in 1851 (commonly known as the Great Exhibition of 1851). The Great Exhibition boldly asserted Britain's position not only as the first industrialized nation but also as a nation of skilled artisans, highlighting a growing relationship between government and art framed within public exhibitions designed to educate and amaze (Robertson, 2004). Cultural critic Tony Bennett regarded such a relationship an obvious effort of the state to manage a democratic population. He considered museum exhibitions pre-eminent examples of the "exhibitionary complex," with public ordering, obedience, and social solidarity serving as a manifestation of state formation and nation building (Bennett, 1988).

The focus on public education occurred simultaneously as the V&A valorised artisanal skill and hand labour. Bringing together aesthetics and the marketplace, the museum sought to advance and elevate public taste through spectacular

displays. At a time when Britain was ascending to the height of its global power, the V&A had become an imperial archive (Jasanoff, 2005) with art collections serving to highlight prowess. Improving British trade by teaching artisans how to produce better objects was the key to "national greatness" (Erickson, 1835/1960, pp. 116–117). This greatness was also aided by large-scale collections from the East India Company that served as the foundation for large exhibitions. Here, visitors could behold nothing less than a "museum of civilization" from which to advance oriental knowledge (Conway, 2013/1882, p. 61). The demise of the South Kensington Museum coincided with Queen Victoria's last public appearance on May 17, 1899 when she laid the foundation of a new building for the museum and renamed it "the Victoria and Albert Museum" (Burton, 1999). When the new building opened in 1909, the V&A was positioned as a primary avenue for providing the public the most spectacular repository of the material culture of empire.

AN EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVE

In the last decade or so, and while still very much living with (and within) the legacy of its past, the V&A, like other museums, needed to reassess its role as a place for critical adult learning (Clover, Sanford, & Jayme, 2010), addressing the epistemological tensions and challenges associated with an adult public in contemporary times. The result is a complexity precipitating dynamic engagement with contested representations of knowledge and citizenship. While the expectation of trustworthy information and authentic experiences (Heimlick & Horr, 2010) remains through the historically affirmed collection and exhibition mandates, the increasingly collaborative arrangement between the museum and its publics seeks to refute the idea that museums "often perceive their public as passive recipients who need to be told how a collection has to be interpreted" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 5).

The taxonomy of learning occurring within institutions like the V&A is characterized by a specific focus organising collections, exhibitions, and programs around particular objectives for learning. While the individual determines what he or she will learn, the museum determines the means through which this occurs. Resulting is a range of opportunities for individuals to learn which are contextually (both geographically and philosophically) determined (Heimlich & Horr, 2010). While scholars argue that it is the process of engaging in a learning experience that is most rewarding for learners (rather than solely focusing on the accomplishment of certain learning outcomes) (Grenier, 2010), merely providing opportunities to explore, question, challenge, engage and co-construct meaning cannot interrupt the easy return to the normative structures and experiences individuals hold of museums. To consider the V&A as a pedagogical site for adults realizes that visitors choose to come to a specific museum and view a particular exhibit (Falk & Dierking, 2000). The move from didactic, authoritative learning towards more open-ended, participative approaches suggests an increased interest in dialogic learning (Styles, 2011) that is critical, even confrontational.

Reconsidering museums as sites where deliberation and critique are encouraged allows us to explore their pedagogical interventions and aims to support knowledge acquisition as a means of empowerment and an act of democracy and social justice (Cervero & Wilson, 2001). As contested spaces (Grek, 2009) and sites of cultural politics of knowledge and representation (Borg & Mayo, 2010), it is important that we pay attention to how they use exhibitions today to stimulate discussion of wider issues concerning different aspects of society. And this brings us to the V&A.

THE V&A IN ACTION: PEDAGOGY THROUGH EXHIBITION

Inter-Disciplinarity and Blurring of Genres

Upon entering, the V&A wastes little time declaring to its visitors that this is not a traditional museum but rather a space that challenges and disrupts, that invites different orientations to knowledge and knowing. This 'announcement' occurs at the very outset of one's visit, in the dissonance between the building's façade and what one encounters as one enters the museum.

The building's imposing Romanesque/Gothic façade is decorated by abundant Classical detail and adorned by numerous large sculptures, including two of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria—the latter flanked by statues of St. George and St. Michael and situated below a large royal crest—above the entrance. All contribute to, and enhance, the museum's stance as a serious, authoritative place for learning, one that is embedded in the history and glory of Britain as a world power and of the enduring influence and impact of British governance and culture, informing visitors they are about to enter an important place of learning that holds superior knowledge which visitors ought to revere, submit to, and behold.

This message, however, is immediately confronted—and subverted—once one enters the museum. Hanging above the museum's Neo-Classical entrance rotunda is a dazzling, large, modern hanging glass chandelier by Dale Chihuli, a contemporary American glass sculptor. As noted on the V&A website, the swirling compilation of hundreds of blue, yellow and green glass plates, tubes, and globes, resembling a flowing sea creature or the development of thought, "elicits and inspires wonder within even the most practical, the most mature, and the most tangled-up of imaginations." The sculpture does not, however, only disrupt the message visitors encountered outside; it is equally positioned to do similar work with what stands ahead: the Hereford Cathedral Choir Screen situated on the museum's second floor. This monumental decorative High Victorian masterpiece in Gothic Revival style—as different in style, form and purpose as one can imagine from the Chihuli sculpture—is dominated by an image of Christ flanked by angels welcoming his ascension to heaven.

The presence and features of the Chihuli piece as the first 'exhibit' visitors see as well as its relation to the building façade, the Hereford Screen, and Neo-Classical rotunda in which it is housed, highlights several pedagogical stances introduced to

visitors at the very outset, ones that continue, often in different form, throughout the museum. Among them is the inclination to mix and juxtapose old and new and blur lines within chronology and geography, among materials, scales, and between classical and modern art. All, the museum attempts to convey, may coincide in proximity in ways that push against tradition, breaking norms of 'traditional' museum experience whereby too much is anticipated in advance, where those anticipations are too often simply validated, and where little new learning occurs. This, we must stress, is not meant to imply that this is the primary educational goal of the museum or that it manifests everywhere or throughout. Indeed, the V&A is, by all definitions, a 'serious' museum that has within it many important collections that are curated thematically and that, by and large, follow traditional curatorial and disciplinary conventions. It does, however, if only fleetingly and on occasion, also do much to break those traditional rules of convention by disrupting some of the very traditions upon which they have been historically based.

Like most other museums, the V&A has specific exhibition rooms dedicated to particular countries, regions, materials, and periods (e.g., the Medieval and Renaissance rooms, the China room, the Japan room, the Islamic World rooms). What is unique, however, in many of those spaces bounded by geography, time, or materiality, is that they are often visibly open to other exhibits. That is, even while exploring a particular exhibit room, one's eyes easily encounter glimpses of other, unrelated exhibit halls nearby or on other floors. While visiting the China gallery on the first floor, for example, one cannot avoid seeing glimpses of exhibits in the Japan gallery or the Medieval and Renaissance galleries nearby, the British ironworks gallery on the floor above, or artefacts from the Salisbury Cathedral and Chester Abbey. The same goes for the fashion galleries which spill into the sculpture walk or when visitors, attempting to go from the Britain exhibit on level two to the continuation of the exhibit on level three, must, on their way, encounter the museum's ironworks exhibit. Such spatial arrangement help create an interdisciplinary experience for visitors, blurring the boundaries between 'here' and 'there,' between that which belongs and that which purportedly (at least in other museums) does not, creating a multidisciplinary curriculum that invites connections, relationships, and new explorations that trouble the purity and 'neatness' of knowledge, surpassing or evading time and place, and providing a mishmash that not only evades convention but is more representative of real life than museums often afford their viewers.

This blurring of boundaries within the museum occurs not only among exhibition spaces but also in the relationship between the artistic and the commercial. Unlike other museums, where a museum shop is usually segregated from the galleries, often reserved for the end of one's visit, the main shop at the V&A, located right beyond the main entrance, not only serves as the main pathway to many of the museum's galleries but also opens up into the galleries surrounding it, diffusing traditional boundaries between 'high'' and 'low' art, between 'proper' and 'commercial' art and craft, and between the museum experience as observational and hands-off and that which is experiential and commercial. A similar diffusion of boundaries continues

in the museum's three restaurant halls, which are not only fully decorative and carry motifs displayed throughout the museum but, together with the two classical sculptures greeting visitors at each end of the corridor, convey a sense that the restaurants are not only part of the museum but integral to the museum. As such, they invite visitors to question the boundaries between the sacred and the profane, between what is a 'proper' museum experience and that which is extra curricular to it. Art and food, food as art, co-mingle in ways that help trouble and diffuse conventional demarcations.

The Cast Courts

Where the museum is probably most obvious in its diffusion of expected boundaries is in its two famous Cast Courts, containing plaster replicas of objects from Italy, Northern Europe, and Spain. While casts of significant works of art and architecture were popular in the 19th century as important educational tools, they have, since the early 20th century, been deemed inferior substitutes and have, by and large, disappeared from other museums. Not so in the V&A. The museum, which was at the forefront of cast collecting, now holds the world's largest and most impressive cast collection, including casts of Emperor Trajan's Column, five of Michelangelo's most notable statues (Moses and David, among them), Ghiberti's "The Gates of Paradise" from the Baptistery in Florence, as well as architectural elements from the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, Westminster Abbey, and Salisbury Cathedral, among others.

While the cast replicas were, when constructed, genuine things in and of themselves—serving as objects of study and bringing the 'best of the world' to those of the British public unable to partake in expensive European travel—displaying them today with such fanfare in a 'serious' museum seems odd, especially with the availability of cheap flight that allows the public to experience those objects in their original form. But more than odd, such display appears intriguing today for the messages it conveys about 'authenticity', about the relationship between the real and the unreal, between the original and the fake, especially in the age of simulacra (Baudrillard, 1995) where the boundaries between the world and its reproduction—where fake designer bags and watches can be purchased on street corners, where the fallacy of 'reality TV' has become its own reality, and where reality in general is mostly virtual—is in fact a way of life. In that regard, the V&A, in contrast to other museums who have dismantled their cast exhibits, appears to be "in the moment," a very contemporary example of a postmodern world taking place outside of the museum walls.

The British Exhibition

Throughout this exhibit, and contrary to other major museums in London or elsewhere, the V&A does not simply 'show' its objects. Located throughout the exhibit are

touch screens providing further information about objects and explanations of how they were made, how they work, and how they were used, allowing visitors to view objects not simply from the 'outside', and as 'outsider consumers', but from the inside of the very makings of such objects. Visitors are also invited to be active: to construct their own coat of arms, to write a 'mini saga' based on a provided painting, to knot thread for a tapestry, or to sit on a replica of a three legged chair from 1600 and put the chair's seat rails into a mortise to experience how the chair joints come together. In all, and while directed supposedly at the museum's younger visitors, this stance provides a hands on interaction related to objects on display and makes the visit more tactile, experiential, and thus potentially more educational.

Within the exhibit, continuous plaques discuss the idea of British taste and standards of taste, what they were, how they evolved, how they impacted different levels of society, who had the power to determine them, and why. These, as well as a plaque that explicitly asks visitors to consider "Who is British?" speak directly to contemporary discussions in Britain. And while these questions originated in a different time, their resonance today seems striking, and strikes at the very heart of an increasingly changing British identity. Though probably unintentionally, the exhibit also speaks, albeit implicitly, to another contemporary hot-button issue in Britain—its relationship with Europe—underlined by the exhibits' official title: *European Exhibits: Britain*. When Britain is on the verge of a referendum on whether to remain in the European Union, the title is somewhat intriguing, especially since elsewhere in the museum—e.g., the ceramics exhibits—Britain has its own display area, separate from those of other European countries. Is Britain, according to the museum, part of Europe or not? Is it subservient to the mass of the continent, playing its role within a larger polity, or does it stand independent? The museum provides no answer but instead, as if not making up its mind, invites visitors, in a purely democratic fashion, to consider all options and come to their own conclusions.

Exploring Democracy and Dangerous Knowledge

Beyond the ideas presented above about the museum's spatial arrangements and the use of objects to relate, contemporise, challenge, and democratise knowledge and to challenge authority and convention, the V&A has advanced those very themes/dispositions in other ways as well. A look, for example, at the museum's special exhibits since 2012 demonstrates that beyond 'traditional' exhibits such as "Masterpieces of Italian Renaissance Majolica," "Island Stories: Fifty Years of Photography in Britain," "Constable: The Making of a Master," or "Blue and White: British Printed Ceramics," many of its recent special exhibitions have focused on contemporary, hot-button societal issues. In that regard, the museum is as much a trendsetter as a respondent to what is already in the public domain, illustrating ways in which museums may not simply reflect reality but actively help to reshape it. For example, two recent retrospectives—*David Bowie Is* (2013) and *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (2015), while devoted primarily to Bowie and McQueen's

respective artistic careers, nonetheless integrated important elements regarding sexuality, gender bending, the "female gaze," body image, and queerness more generally, inserting the museum not only into on-going discussions in the fields of popular culture but also, and significantly, into on-going social, cultural, and political conversations about such issues occurring outside of the museum.

A second 2015 special exhibit entitled *What is luxury?*, interrogated how luxury was actually made and understood. Luxury, the museum suggested, is embedded in controversy, especially in light of the contemporary "increase in prominence and growth of luxury brands against the backdrop of social inequality [that] has raised new questions about what the term means to people today. Changes in culture and communication, as noted on the website, "have also stimulated interest in less tangible forms of luxury, such as the desire for space and time." Unique to this exhibit is not only titling it in the form of a question, 'What is luxury?' but at the conclusion of the exhibit one meets yet another question: 'What does luxury mean to you?' The pedagogical function of the museum exhibit is to invite enquiry and contemplation instead of the traditional museum-like approach of providing visitors with answers that supposedly tie things up nicely and stifle a further discussion—but also the very challenging of the notion of luxury, of broadening its definition beyond material objects, and ensuring that poverty—that 'Other' of luxury—is ever present when luxury is explored and re-considered. Even with an emphasis on the more apolitical aspects of luxury craft making, the exhibit nonetheless centred issues of social justice and democracy as underlying themes—not as themes that *could* be considered but as ones that *must* be incorporated anytime luxury is discussed.

Other recent exhibits have specifically, directly and quite radically, addressed issues of democracy, civic participation, and people's voices and concerns. In the months leading up to the most recent British elections (2015), the V&A had an exhibit called *All of This Belongs to You*. According to the website, the aim was to examine both "the role of public institutions in contemporary life and what it means to be responsible for a national collection" as well as "thinking about how design defines civic identity, technology, security, citizenship, democracy, the public realm and urban experience." Six installations, positioned throughout the museum, raised questions about the above both within the museum and beyond. Installations included a large phonological clock at the entrance to the museum revealing the interdependence of ecosystems and inviting visitors to better understand, re-imagine, and improve our collective relationships with, and responsibilities toward, the environment. Another display, about the ways in which our personal data is tracked, collected and sorted by governments, presented a series of objects focusing on the history and present state of surveillance and state power, including artefacts connected to former National Security Agency (NSA) worker Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks. A third installation explored ways in which architecture offers spaces that help engender particular ways to be public in public spaces—that is, form civic

engagement within a broader civic space. The remaining installations focused more inwardly on (both highlighting and questioning) the museum itself and its role as a public institution and as a curator of and for the public (and the public good). We highlight this exhibit since it attempted to raise urgent questions about the role of power and authority in monitoring the lives of citizens in order to 'protect' citizens and the ethical issues involved as we increasingly live on-line. Choosing to explore such issues is not what most museums do but the V&A, in line with its general approach to engaging the broader world and its issues, did not shy away from such an engagement.

A more prominent display exploring civic engagement came a year earlier in the form of an exhibit entitled *Disobedient Objects* (July, 2014–February, 2015). The exhibit as noted on the website, covered events since 1970 in order to highlight "the powerful role of objects in movements for social change" and "demonstrated how political activism drives a wealth of design ingenuity and collective creativity that defy standard definitions of art and design." The exhibit used images, text, and objects from protests around the world that highlighted the role and actions of grassroots movements working, through disobedience, toward political and social change. An exhibition plaque helped situate and contextualize the exhibit: "Direct action can involve strikes, civil disobedience or blockading using tools that extend the power of peoples' bodies to act on the world. Clever props can also transform the atmosphere and representation of an action, turning the tables on a powerful foe."

This exhibit displayed a variety of images and slogans from political demonstrations around the world, as well as how-to pamphlets for producing objects in the service of political and civil disobedience from around the world. There were, for example, makeshift teargas masks (used in response to police actions during the 2013 protests in Istanbul, Turkey), bucket pamphlet bombs (used by London-based volunteers of the African National Congress to distribute censored information about Apartheid in South Africa), bike blocks (used by London protestors during the climate change summit to barricade themselves), lock-on arm tubes (used in protests against deforestation in Australia), and home-made drones carrying mobile phones to record police actions (used in demonstrations against home evictions in Spain).

The exhibit invited visitors to reflect on the relationship between objects and activism and what our responsibilities may be as viewers of (and in light of viewing) this exhibition. That the museum took such an exhibit upon itself is some indication of its approach to democracy, protest, contestation, and civic engagement, as well as questioning authority and highlighting—even promoting—such ideas by providing them the museum's seal of approval though a special museum exhibit.

All of the above special exhibits demonstrate the V&A's continued commitment to critical engagements with democracy and its values—not simply displaying them as objects for unquestioned consumption but, rather, challenging visitors to re-consider democracy and its assumptions and to imagine otherwise.

CONCLUSION

What we have considered in this chapter is how museums honour their history, traditions, and collections and, at the same time, engage contemporary audiences with new ways of knowing. We have shown how a museum can be re-imagined not simply as a place of mostly passive display but as a civic space that troubles convention and touches on current public issues. We believe the V&A has found its own unique way in which to honour both its past and the needs of a contemporary audience. Whether through its unique spatial arrangements, juxtapositions of artefacts, playfulness with objects, or inserting itself into—at times even taking the lead on—hot-button public issues, the museum has placed itself at the forefront of involving the public in a manner that stretches the conventional boundaries of knowing. Through its innovative pedagogical stance of inviting visitors to think otherwise and placing them more explicitly as authors of their own museum visit, the V&A has attempted to replace the 'traditional' museum experience with a contemporary, cutting edge twist that often challenges convention and produces new forms of engagement, ones that center around questioning the taken-for-granted and promoting critical engagement with inherent dilemmas of living in a contemporary, diverse democracy. We believe such an approach not only enhances the capacity of the V&A to remain current and relevant but can also serve as a model for other museums in re-thinking the museum experience.

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Avner Segall
Michigan State University
USA

Brenda Trofanenko
Acadia University
Canada

SECTION 2

WOMEN IN CLOTHES: (RE)GENDERING PRACTICES AND PEDAGOGIES

DARLENE E. CLOVER AND KATHY SANFORD

6. KNOWING THEIR PLACE

Feminist and Gendered Understandings of Women Museum Adult Educators

> *Feminism must itself be grasped as an interruption, a mode of transformation, questioning, challenging and opening up futures not yet imagined [therefore] are feminism and the museum, as we know them compatible at any level?* (Griselda Pollock, 1988, p. 1)

Worldwide, public museums are being challenged to toss off the shackles of elitism, neutrality and "detachment from real world politics" (Phillips, 2011, p. 8), and contribute to struggles for social, cultural and ecological justice and change. Pedagogical responses range from workshops aimed to disrupt or challenge stereotyping, to 'kitchen conversations' where cultural history sheds light on a complex multi-cultural present; and from participative community videos of counter narratives to normative economic discourses to collaborative exhibitions highlighting controversial topics such as sexuality (e.g. Clover, 2015; Clover & Dogus, 2014; Gosselin, 2013; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012; Steedman, 2012). These activities illustrate a potential on the part of museums to provide "opportunities for reflection and moments of insight not only about art [or objects] on display but about ourselves and the world in which we live" (Henry, 2010, p. 5).

Problematically absent from much of this pedagogical work is specific attention to women's issues. Worldwide, "sexism is far from having been eliminated from contemporary organisation and functioning, or from social and interpersonal relationships between men and women" (Ostrouch-Kamińska & Vieira, 2014, p. 4). Stereotypes long thought debunked "are re-emerging in many spheres ranging from children's toys to popular psychology" (English & Irving, 2015, p. 6). A marked increase in sexual violence, frequently clothed under the protective anonymity of social media, has lead to discourses such as 'a culture of rape' (e.g. Kimmel, 2013). The power of rape culture, Zoratti (2014) argues, lies in its ability to silence and to perpetuate cognitive dissonance. Equally troubling are dismissals of misogynist acts, such as chants about under-age sex during initiation weeks on university campuses, as harmless bits of fun. Neoliberalism too has created its own challenge, a turning inward of women's empowerment, which has given rise to what English and Irving (2015, p. 7) call the "what I can do for me" generation that assumes equality for

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women has been reached and sees feminism as no longer required. Problematically, this distracts from substantive, systemic gender change (e.g. Taber, 2015).

We assert in this chapter that feminism and feminist adult education are very much required in our current gender-troubled world, and concur with Tuyet (2007) who argues that *all* museums "must bear responsibility and exert actions to promote gender equality" (p. 70). If these institutions can pedagogically tackle other complex and controversial social subjects, they should be able to educate for women's empowerment by responding to persistent gender discrimination. Yet assertions such as these beg important questions. What role can or do museums play in promoting gender equity and equality (Curran, 1992). What are the challenges and obstacles women museum adult educators and community outreach practitioners face in terms of taking up women's issues in contemporary museums? How do these women understand and articulate feminism and gender issues? Where lie possibility and transcendence and how did they come about?

Our aims in this chapter are twofold. Firstly, we provide a brief historical look at the gendered terrain of public museums, placing an emphasis on Canada, our own location. We illustrate some of the historical challenges women faced, and their contributions, and in doing so, draw attention to the lack of focus on adult education and community engagement work, although Steedman (2012) reminds us this is perhaps the most critical work of these museums and the women who work in them. Secondly, we share conversations we had in a four-year study of 40 women adult educators and community outreach practitioners in public museums in Canada, England and Scotland. What we found were deeply troubling (mis) understandings, reflective of a world where feminism and women's issues have been far too long off the agenda. Yet we also found some instances of critical and feminist thought and practice that, despite problematic social and institutional traditions or indifference, acted as deliberative pedagogical forces for socio-gender justice and change. We argue that women museum pedagogical staff need access to feminist adult education theory and practice if they are to acquire the consciousness and skills required to take up difficult women's issues, and put what Batliwala (2013) calls the 'power' back in empowerment.

HISTORICAL GENDERED TERRAIN OF MUSEUMS

> *When the women recognised male authority, conducted bake sales, or participated in collecting and labelling natural history specimens, they were welcomed…When the 'ladies' attempted, however, to become full members or to thwart male supervision, their position on the margins of the [museum] was reaffirmed.* (McTavish, 2008, p. 99)

When we draw attention to the historical situation of women in public museums, we are positioning them as important players in the making and life of these institutions. Whitelaw (2012) reminds us that "women have been central to the founding and

maintenance of museums" (p. 76) and Levin (2010) notes how for many today, "museums may appear to be women's world" as they make up the majority of visitors, and "attend more of the education programs (sic)" (p. 17). However, our extensive search of various databases uncovered few historical or contemporary articles, chapters or books that focussed solely on women in public museums, although there is an increase in research on women's museums (e.g. Tuyet, 2007). Glaser and Zenetou (1994) explain women's absence in public museum writing as reflective of their deeply conservative institutional nature, which has allowed them to all but ignore the feminist movement. Yet women gravitated to these culture and art institutions for various 'gendered' reasons. Firstly, these institutions were seen as 'ladylike' and therefore, acceptable public spaces for women. Secondly, museums provided opportunities for women to use their organisational skills and "passion for public service" (Levin, 2010, p. 18). Thirdly, a cultural education was seen as critical for women to find a suitable husband on the one hand, but on the other, as a way to move beyond the confines of domesticity. However, women's education in the fine arts was primarily "referred to pejoratively as the acquisition of 'ornamental skills'" (Tippet, 1990, p. 38).

Historical studies of women and museums in Canada paint a broad picture of marginalisation and discrimination. McTavish's (2008) archival work found that although women were clearly actively involved in museum business, their treatment was quite different to their male counterparts. Museum minutes frequently spoke of educational "events such as the annual *Conversazioni* to which the general public as well as dignitaries were invited to hear talks given by male members of the society", but they confined their remarks on the women's contributions to "the provision of refreshments" (p. 95). Terry (2013) argues we should not underestimate the value of activities such as cake baking, as these types of activities played a key role in funding the work of these institutions as well as providing the public face. However, as the researchers themselves acknowledged, this work was consistently recorded not as central to the workings of the museum, but rather as housekeeping.

The professionalisation of museums in North America and Europe began in the 1930's, resulting in a concurrent masculinisation of the field that frequently thwarted women's aspirations. Women were seen as suitable for museum fund-raising, working with children and women, and even on occasion interpretation, but they were seldom "seen as potential directors of institutions of any size or influence" (Whitelaw, 2012, p. 78). Levin (2010) reminds us that even today "the cadre of directors remains primarily male" (p. 13). Terry (2013) tells the story of Dundurn Castle in Ontario. When it became a national heritage site in 1967, a paid male director was voted in to relieve the leadership and curatorial duties of a Mrs Metcalfe even though she had fulfilled the role voluntarily for several years. An article in the local newspaper applauded this staff change, arguing "men were needed to supervise business-related affairs to maintain Dundurn's high standards as a museum and historical monument so that women might look after the historical research, tours, displays and other items associated with the domestic – and therefore more suitable – realm of the

house itself" (p. 56). As Malt (2006) asserts, women's presence in museums was legitimate only when they were "involved with the usual women's interests of jewellery, costume and the decorative arts" (p. 215).

But there are some stories of resistance. McTavish (2008) found that although archival reports kept by men frequently portrayed the women "as modest, hardworking, and even servile", the women's own minutes would oftentimes demonstrate a group "impatient, ambitious, and longing to pursue goals not entirely in keeping with the original aims" (p. 100). Malt's (2006) research in the Middle East shows that

> due to the large number of women in positions of authority in the museum profession, women are beginning to use their influence as instruments for change to put forward issues of women's equality in museum programmes, displays and publications and thus ultimately help shape the future image and status of women. (pp. 115–116)

Although again there is little in-depth historical study in this area, we can infer from studies that women were behind the promotion of the educational foci of museums. Tippet's (1990) studies, for example, illustrated a strong belief on the part of women that a cultural education should not be "left to chance and privilege" (p. 38) and spearheaded arts and other types of pedagogical activities for children in particular, but also the general public. Hein (2012) suggests the feminist movement did in fact have an influence on museums, at least in the United States. He notes that although museum education was and remains a women's profession, the young women who entered the museum field during the 19th and 20th centuries "were eager to channel their struggles for increased equality with men into political efforts in their profession" (p. 162). Museum educator Laura Bragg, for example, mounted an exhibition of "strong works depicting social problems" (p. 95). However, trustees strongly "objected to the political nature of the labels that criticized the government and questioned capitalist practices" (p. 95). Indeed, exhibitions and concurrent educational work were fine as long as they told dominant, 'neutral' stories that steered well clear of political messaging and any progressive stance. Tippet (1990) and Illeris (2006) also remind us that education in these institutions was frequently used as a means to civilise, to promote nationalist agendas and ultimately, therefore, to legitimise the status quo. Equally important, women involved in museums were predominantly what hooks (2000) would call "power feminists" (p. 45), women who were – and are mostly still today – white, wealthy professionals, engaged in perpetuating "an inherently hegemonic, patriarchal system" and whose identification lay "more with white men of privilege than with oppressed people" (English & Irving, 2015, p. 7). Gender was therefore frequently co-opted as an instrument to curb the disorderly behaviour associated with the working and lower classes through pedagogical processes based on refinement and elevation. Education was more frequently, therefore, aimed at social reproduction, rather than an instrument of class and gender challenge, empowerment and change.

WHAT ACADEMIC BACKGROUNDS AND KNOWLEDGE COUNT?

As there is really limited information about training and educational backgrounds of women museum workers in general, we felt this was a good place to begin our study. We found that although all the women worked as adult educators within the walls of the institution and/or beyond, the majority had no adult education or community development training or preparation, either formal (university or college) or nonformal (professional development or certificates). The women had read art history, archaeology or anthropology at university and gravitated to education departments and community work out of interest, rather than knowledge or background. This meant that the academic backgrounds of these women were the same as the curators, and yet many spoke of feeling marginalised, of being on the bottom rung of the institutional ladder.

Building on the above, it had actually never occurred to the women that obtaining some form of adult education and community engagement knowledge and skills would be valuable to them. Indeed, they informed us that this type of qualification was seldom if ever a requirement of museum job recruitment. Similar to universities, museums recognise traditional academic disciplines as the most relevant to their needs, regardless of the fact that education is promoted as critical to every institution's mission and work (e.g. Janes, 2009; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007).

Wither Feminism/Women?

Equally troubling was the little substantive focus on feminist or gender the women had received in their formal university courses or preparation. While there were a few stories of feminist instructors or mentors, and we will return to this, the following comment sums up most participants' experiences and understandings:

> If you are a woman it [gender] is going to be present in your work. But men write all I have read, anything I have read that might connect to what I am looking for is all written by men. I cannot go back and read what women wrote about post-industrial society or art because it is not there.

Although some told us that they did wonder where the women were in their textbooks, few openly or actively questioned this absence. In fact one participant actually suggested that because there was no mention of gender in her training, to raise the issue would in fact "bias the teaching of art history, wouldn't it? You would need to really make something up as the women were not there."

GENDERED TRAITS

In the 1980s in adult education, it became 'au courant' to speak of women using terms such as caring, inclusive, relational, and connected. This was seen to be a way to separate them from men who were seen to be "logical and impartial" and provided

them with a particular 'agency' as educators and learners (English & Irving, 2015, p. 129). When we asked the women in our study to identify qualities or traits they felt made the best adult educators, explanations came in these normative, taken-for-granted strengths and requirements. We heard that women had better communication and social skills, that they were more nurturing and collaborative. They took refuge in characterisations that reflected feminine images rather than pedagogically specialised experts and these corresponded directly with the audiences seen as the most important to their work, predominantly seniors and adults with developmental disabilities.

And yet when these women, who again had the same credentials as the curators, were asked to describe the qualities of good curators, we heard something very different. They never once described the curators as 'servants' or 'care-givers' but rather, used terms that suggested artistry, performance, scholarship, knowledge and so forth. In other words, the educators had 'emotion' while the curators had 'brains'.

FEMINISM MEANS BIAS

> *If we do not take a feminist stance, then we do not question the politics of power between women and men.* (Angela McRobbie, 2009)

Building on the above, when we asked each of the women if they self-identified as a feminist or if they felt they brought a feminist lens to their work, with some notable exceptions we will come to, responses ranged from naïve – "well, we focus on relations with family, and children. Is that what you mean by feminist?" – to outright negative. The majority shied away from what one referred to as an "unnecessary label." Not only the label but also feminism itself was argued to be no longer necessary and even "out of place in an institution like this." It was out of place because feminism was equated with 'bias' and by extension, the institution was seen as non-biased. Public museums have tended to portray themselves as neutral and objective spaces, and this has given them a certain credibility and status (Janes, 2014). But of course, they have been anything but. They have taken sides in terms of whose knowledge and stories count, and as feminists have noted, those have been, and continue to be, very masculine (e.g. Malt, 2006). Interestingly, one participant talked about having been a 'radical' feminist in the past, but explained that she had turned her back on that a few years ago because she was now a socialist and wanted to "treat everyone the same." Yet as the interview progressed with this woman, and the more we talked about her work in communities and the challenges she saw, she ended up suggesting she might need to go back to feminism, as perhaps it still offered explanations of the world that were needed. We found it interesting to hear one participant explain how "a stance against feminism in museums was not true in the past. Women in the 1970s and 1980s in particular had entered the field as a

feminist radical project…to take on the sexist nature of the gallery and to extend a critique to its educational processes."

Going further, to raise women's issues, focus on women or use the term feminism was seen as something that would separate learners from each other. That is, it would create animosity and/or privilege women over men. Again, there were assumptions that men did not experience privilege once inside the institution, presumably because it was free of the gender taints of society.

NON-PRACTISING FEMINISTS

In her book entitled *The Future of Feminism*, Walby (2011) suggested feminism was alive and well today, however, within institutions it had taken on characteristics that were different from normative protest/critique/movement views of the past. This provides some insight into one of our findings.

Despite what we have said above, the majority of women were aware they were discriminated against in the institution, although most put this down to the lower status of education as noted above, and that the leadership of the institutions was predominantly male. Some also suggested that women leaders tended to support education and the take-up of radical issues more, whereas men focussed on the "bricks and mortar." These women tended, therefore, to argue that they had 'feminist ideals' or 'sympathies', but would not 'label' themselves as feminists or work on women's issues. In other words, they understood that all was not equal and fair between the sexes within the institution, that all the educational staff were women but the leadership were men. But they did not 'practise feminism', that is take up women's issues, for fear of the negative impact it might have on their work and reputations. These women tended to define feminism itself, which one can only assume stands beyond its own ideals, as 'combative' or 'causing trouble'.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

There were, however, participants who expressed a deep concern about the lack of understanding about feminism in museums, suggesting it was tantamount to "an erasure of the history of feminist struggle" in the arts and cultural sector, and some sort of "weird backlash of a younger-ish generation." Important to note was that all these women had some form of training or formal education in adult education, community development, participative research or popular theatre. The majority had also worked in community or arts organisations and contexts before coming to the museum. The reason they cited for obtaining a critical pedagogical or research background was specifically about gaining the confidence needed to tackle difficult issues and contribute to meaningful social change. These women saw the museums as a critical space of encounter, a place where they could engage the public in meaningful dialogue and debate, and ask the critical questions needed to challenge

assumptions, biases and obscurities. One participant in particular spoke about how the complexity of today's social issues and populations necessitated deep and critical pedagogical preparation. Paulo Freire calls this 'knowledge authority', meaning adult educators who have an understanding of the social issues and challenges they are working with and who see themselves as more than mere 'facilitators' of a group learning process. We heard stories from Scotland about workshops that dared to bring together, for example, religious groups who shared timeless animosities. Others facilitated anti-racist theatre projects, worked with asylum seekers, waded into the fray of divisive environmental issues, or focussed on LGBT youth because "homophobia is on the rise and we need to find ways to deal with this. Our whole gallery is about identity – about how we portray ourselves and are seen by others. It makes sense we take on this issue."

FEMINISM IN MOTION

An exciting number of participants felt there was a resurgence of interest within contemporary art around feminism and that was being brought into the museum. We see this as 'feminism in motion' and there are some wonderful examples which we divide into three categories. The first is an emphasis taking up the historical past:

> Mary Wollstoncraft had her school here…schools were then radical places. The suffrage movement started here. Holloway prison is [here and it is] where many of the suffragettes ended up. The aim of the project was to show the participants these radical feminist roots. We taught them a skill – how to video and the technical things but it was around this notion of feminist radicalism – using women's suffrage. (Jean)

Approaches illuminate the victimisation and marginalisation of women historically, and made connections with our current environment. Equally, however, they focus on women's empowerment, radical acts for change as leadership and a challenge to the status quo, and the trials and necessity of 'courage' and 'risk'. A clear aim is to take back acts of political and social defiance and resistance and make what Judith Butler (1999) called "gender trouble'. Batliawa (2013) calls this "putting the power back in women's empowerment" and argues it is just what is required today of women's leadership.

The second category is taking advantage of architectural changes. For example, in the UK, a museum is slated for a complete refurbishment. Three participants spoke of how this place was ripe for new feminist framings and showed Darlene through the various exhibitions. They had spent three hours going through the collections, and had great fun with the sheer volume of statutes of virgins and the nuns. Their aim is to re-group, re-story and intervene into the dominant 'virginity' narrative. Darlene also met with the director of the education unit who is fully on board if slightly more cautious.

The final category was to work in collaboration with women's organisations, groups and artists:

> We have these two feminist film makers from Beirut and we set up a public discussion about different models for the self-representation of women's rights, what was happening in Beirut and here, so we have some interface with their artistic programme. But within that they define their own participation in the museum.
>
> We have a very important partnership with the sex worker rights organisation in the neighbourhood, who use this as their base. In that room over there is their desk, and they run language classes for and by migrant sex workers, and they also run campaigns out of here specifically around research and the self representation of sex workers.

Among other things, we can see these actions as what Pratt (1991) called auto-ethnographic processes. The aim is not just women 'being in the museum', but women 'belonging in the museum'.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Historical, cultural and social contexts have been highly instrumental in determining the ways men and women behave and conceptualise themselves. Women are products of the effects of oppression, and have been socialised in the dominant culture of patriarchy to think of themselves as the weaker sex and stereotypically caring, nurturing and gentle. While there is nothing wrong with being either caring or gentle, it is problematic how the women in our study used these descriptors to differentiate themselves from the curators to legitimise their educative role as having lesser value and to distance education from the deeply scholarly practice it can be. Having said this we are of course cognisant of how education has always lacked status in museums, branded as it has been as 'woman's profession' (Hein, 2012). But the fact that the educators have no formal background in adult or feminist education adds to the problem, as we will speak to shortly. But we must be vigilant about the dangers of stereotyping and essentialism in relation to these roles. We must call into question the benefit of this type of contrast between the museum educators and the curators. How productive, we wonder, is it to align oneself with a discourse of servitude while positioning curators as the creative intellectuals?

Building on gendered role distributions, feminist Judith Butler (1999) sees causing gender trouble as a healthy, spirited and necessary response to this inequitable world, unfortunately, most of the participants of our study did not. As English and Irving (2015) remind us, "feminism is still plagued by stereotypes of divisiveness and radical action that make some wary" (p. 6). We must keep in mind that it is in the best interests of those wishing to maintain a patriarchal society to paint its opposition as embittered, combative and even unattractive (McRobbie, 2009). The claim to

the irrelevancy of feminism, we found, is illustrative of why the history of feminist struggles is so unknown and how this is an outcome of oppressive practices that seek to both devalue feminism's real practice and history. Scott (1984) observed, "selective and partial vision will doubtless always be part of the [gender] historical enterprise", but recognising this will move us a long way in reducing and challenging its incidence (p. 8). However, we must also realise that while having 'feminist ideals' is an important starting point for change, avoiding feminist political practice is nothing more than what Batliwala (2014) calls enjoying the privileges feminists fought for without having to get one's own hands dirty. One of the problems we have highlighted in this chapter is the lack of gender awareness and feminist voice in the university education that these women educators and community practitioners received. If scholarship simply exhibits normative gendered ideological obfuscations, how can we expect these women to understand gender issues, challenge their absence in their studies, feel a sense of power over the knowledge they are receiving, or take up women's issues in their own museum practice?

Another problem, alluded to above, is the lack of preparation or training in adult education and community development, particularly from a feminist perspective. We are suggesting that inclusion of feminist perspectives is needed for all museum educators' training, and what is certain from our study is that those who had the theory and the skills in either popular theatre, participative research, community arts or other adult education and engagement processes illustrated a comfort with challenging the status quo, working with chaos, ambiguity, diversity, politics, and complexity. In other words, there was a direct correlation between educational capacity/knowledge and the courage to work with difficult, multifaceted social issues and populations. There was also a greater consciousness of feminism and women's issues, and some very creative ways of engaging with these. We therefore argue it would strengthen women's hands if they were able to have access to this type of education, but also, if museums bent on progressive change sought out those with social justice/equity sensibilities, and adult education backgrounds and preparation. We realise museums alone cannot disrupt and change the current and problematic gendered status quo. They have been, and continue to be as we have illustrated, complicit in its maintenance. However, there are women working in these institutions who are making critical gendered pedagogical contributions to the resolution of both social and women's inequity and thereby inventing new futures for museums. But work remains to be done.

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Darlene E. Clover
University of Victoria, Canada

Kathy Sanford
University of Victoria, Canada

MICKI VOELKEL AND SHELLI HENEHAN

7. DAUGHTERS OF JOY?

A Feminist Analysis of the Narratives of Miss Laura's Social Club

INTRODUCTION

Fort Smith, Arkansas, USA, celebrates and markets its heritage as an Old West town. Visitors to the city may tour a variety of historic attractions including a trolley museum, the national historic site featuring the courtroom and gallows of "hanging judge" Isaac C. Parker, and a number of restored Victorian mansions that were once the homes of prominent citizens. The most unusual attraction is Miss Laura's Social Club, a restored Victorian brothel built in 1896 that now serves as the city's official Visitor Centre. Visitors tour the rooms in which the prostitutes slept and did business, hear about the prominent citizens who visited the social club, and hear tales of how the founding madam, Laura Ziegler, held a position of power in the business community.

As a cultural institution Miss Laura's is concerned with telling the story of prostitution. It is a site that displays artefacts from, and minutiae of, the lives of women at the intersection of the southern USA and the 'Old West' from the 1890s to the 1940s. By documenting the history of these women, Miss Laura's functions as a de facto house museum. West (1999) referred to house museums as

> documents of political history, particularly of women's relationship to the public sphere. The American house museum began as a public commentary controlled by disenfranchised though politically engaged women, but … it was reoriented to reflect the interests of male politicians, museum professionals, and businessmen. (pp. 159–160)

West (1999) also noted that house museums in particular have been associated with women founders who have, sometimes inadvertently, shaped the stories these institutions tell in favour of 'creation myths' that sanitise and obscure the actual gendered incidents in the house's past. Barr (1999) argued that museums are sites of pedagogical struggle where adult educators can inspire women to critique and question dominant knowledge systems and social norms. Levin (2010) noted, however, that museums themselves are places where gender stereotypes are disseminated and enacted.

Taylor (2010) identified museums and other cultural institutions as places that foster "cognitive change" (p. 6) by providing unique narratives and both nonformal

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and informal learning contexts. But museums must also be understood as places with contested narratives, that is, places of struggles around the types, and whose, story they can and wish to tell. Problematically, these often tell simply the "master narratives of adult identity, both individual and collective" (Sandlin, Wright, & Clark, 2011, p. 5). And these master narratives frequently omit, or when included, stereotype women's experiences and stories.

Irving and English (2015) call for feminist adult educators to think about women's voices and inclusion and focus on social change. Among the tenets they identified were the ideas of fostering greater gender and social analysis, of challenging master narratives as a means to create 'cognitive change', or new understandings about the place and experiences of women. We explore in this chapter the master narrative of the lives of the madams and prostitutes at Miss Laura's Social Club, as told through museum exhibits, panels, re-enactments, and marketing materials. The question we pose is: Whose values are reflected in the narrative? Whose story (ies) does the narrative tell and whose does it not? What message does the master narrative send to modern women? To answer these questions, we use the feminist lens to create a detailed portrait of Miss Laura's Social Club. But we begin with our own stories.

OUR PERSONAL STORIES

We are natives of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and have always loved our hometown. Shelli was raised in a strict Southern Baptist home; in her family the old southern social norms of encouraging womanly submission and ladylike behaviours were emphasised as Biblical and just. In contrast, Micki grew up in a more non-traditional fashion. Widowed suddenly at age 50, Micki's mother stressed intelligence, strong mindedness, and the importance of independence and not relying on others for support. Micki's family consciously rejected religious fundamentalism.

In her teens Micki remembers dining at Miss Laura's in its incarnation as a restaurant. While out-of-town guests were charmed by the Victorian décor and her mother pointed out the names of "the girls" etched in the glass transoms over the doors, she never connected the house with prostitution. When her mother referred to the place as a "cathouse" in a near whisper, Micki visualised beautiful bosomy ladies clad in Scarlett's red dress from Gone with the Wind, a film of the 'old south'. Micki's youthful brain failed to connect these images with the actual sale of sexual favours on the premises. More than 30 years later, she encountered Miss Laura's again when she toured the place as a member of a community leadership class. Miss Laura's was no longer a restaurant and bar but the official Visitor Centre for the city. As she toured the facility she found herself both delighted and appalled. The home itself was beautifully restored—beautiful polished wood, elaborate scrollwork, and stained glass windows. Micki was amused by the double-entendres in the marketing materials and by the audaciousness of the choice of a brothel as a visitors' centre. She realised as an adult that real women were bought and used by the wealthy and

prominent male citizens of the day in that very building. Micki was conflicted. Although the tour was abbreviated, it left her feeling both intrigued and sickened. She wanted to know more about how the docents saw themselves as adult educators, if indeed they saw themselves as such. She knew the site was a rich source of learning.

Shelli grew up giving Miss Laura's little thought. She saw it as an amusing and eccentric attraction—another celebration of the Old West and Southern values. Over the years she often brought visitors to the site, even chaperoning her daughter's class field trip at the site. As a college professor, Shelli escorted a class of early childhood education students to the site, and also toured the house with the community leadership class. Shelli experienced a paradigm shift when a colleague she accompanied to the house had a strong negative reaction to the stories told by one of the volunteers. At first embarrassed and perplexed by her colleague's reaction, upon reflection Shelli began to reassess her assumptions about Miss Laura's.

Our town is the largest in western Arkansas, and was named the "#1 Top True Western Town" by True West Magazine in 2013. The Old 'Wild West' history has continually conflicted with our prominent Bible belt culture, the rough and tough cowboys versus our southern 'gentlemen'. And the greatest example of this is our Visitor Centre, strategically placed in a former brothel, which was the nation's first to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Smith is proud of its former bordello. The marketing materials for the city use many tongue-in-cheek euphemisms when describing the happenings from Miss Laura's heyday. The residents dance around the history of the brothel, adding a nice, southern culture gloss to the stories. The Visitor Centre is staffed with volunteers, many of whom are retired teachers who enjoy sharing the Old West theme of Fort Smith. The volunteers we interviewed felt that the Visitor Centre's mission focused on sharing the amenities of the town while telling a story of the house and its former inhabitants.

Visitors have a different perspective. Many people who have toured Miss Laura's are fascinated by the former brothel experience. They view this historic site as more of a museum, rather than a visitor centre. It was their viewpoints and learning in which we have been most interested. We decided to take a tour of Miss Laura's. Had viewpoints changed from earlier visits? As we had each matured and grown in our feminist perspectives, we wanted to know more. What happened after the girls left Miss Laura's? What about the girls who gained in age, while losing in looks/figures? What happened to those who had contracted sexually transmitted diseases?

OLD TOWN WEST

Fort Smith is located in Western Arkansas, bordering Indian Territory, Oklahoma, and has a rich history including the Old West, the Trail of Tears, and outlaws. Founded in 1817 and incorporated in 1842, the town's 2010 census cited a population of 86,209. However, it is the principal city of a metropolitan statistical area population of 298,592 (United States Census Bureau, 2015). The economy revolves around

manufacturing, health care and transportation, with a local university meeting economic demands via degrees geared towards the needs of the population. Arkansas, and Fort Smith in particular, has a reputation for religious fundamentalism. Indeed, "religion occupied a central place in the lives of most Arkansans, and politicians, who were almost always members of a Baptist or Methodist denomination, frequently seasoned their political speeches with religious references, evoking the gospel in order to win votes" (Whayne, Deblack, Sabo, & Arnold, 2002, p. 261). Despite being socially and politically conservative, Fort Smith capitalises on its colourful Old West history through heritage tourism; a number of Fort Smith's historical sites are popular tourist attractions.

In 1896 Laura Ziegler borrowed $3,000 to set up and furnish the house that now serves as the Fort Smith Visitor Centre. Ziegler ran a house of prostitution in the building at a time when the trade was legal and regulated under city ordinances; the enterprise was so successful she was able to pay off her debt in only seventeen months. A two-story Victorian mansion with stained glass and beautiful scrollwork, Miss Laura's exterior is painted dark green with cream trim throughout. Originally, the house was one of seven brothels located in the "Red Light District," strategically placed near the river and train tracks. According to the ordinance legalising prostitution, the houses were required to be enclosed by eight-foot fences. In 1911, Ziegler sold the property for $47,000 to one of her workers, Bertha Gayle Dean, who continued to run the house as a brothel until Fort Smith passed an ordinance outlawing prostitution in 1924. Dean continued to run the property as a boarding house until the 1940s, although a thriving clandestine prostitution enterprise continued. The house was vacant for several decades, until Donrey Media purchased the building and restored it. In the 1980s the house was operated as a restaurant and bar. In 1992, the city of Fort Smith took over the site as the Fort Smith Visitor Centre (Kujawa, 2009). In 2014 Miss Laura's served 13,273 visitors from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The same year, the site welcomed visitors from 33 countries.

BACKGROUND

The data for this chapter came from a study we undertook of the informal learning and the stories of Miss Laura's Social Club. During the course of the study, we acted as 'key instruments' (Creswell, 2009) conducting semi-structured interviews with three docents (volunteer educators), eight traditional university aged learners, and eight adult learners about their experiences visiting Miss Laura's. We visited the site together four times and toured with three different volunteers including the site director who gave us closer access to the rooms and exhibits than most visitors receive.

We use portraiture in this chapter to critically examine the master narrative of Miss Laura's. Developed by sociologist Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, portraiture is described as "a genre of inquiry and representation that seeks to join science

and art" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). Portraiture has five primary concerns: context, voice, relationships, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole. Context includes context of place—the detailed physical context, the context of the researchers' perspective, and the overall social and historical cultural context. Multiple voices are employed—the voices of the participants and the voices of the researchers serving as witnesses and interpreters as well as the researchers' voices in dialog with participants. For Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), portraitists portray their relationships with participants and communities through the images or pictures they create, by developing themes and ideas and combining them into a coherent, aesthetic whole.

PORTRAIT OF MISS LAURA'S SOCIAL CLUB

Laura Ziegler is a figure shrouded in mystery. From her earliest origins, Ziegler is presented as a powerful figure. As noted above, she appears in Fort Smith in the late 1890s, purchases land with a bank loan, and sets up a house of prostitution. This house, Miss Laura's Social Club, is no ordinary brothel but instead a luxurious accommodation for the town's most wealthy and prominent men. The brothel is known as "The Queen of the Row"—the richest and most prestigious of the row of bordellos that stand along the banks of the Arkansas River and near the railroad tracks that bring visitors into the city. There are no photos of Ziegler. No one knows where she went when she left Fort Smith in 1911 and what her ultimate fate was. The site director speculates that Ziegler went on to marry and lead a respectable life; her future activities are lost to history, perhaps, because she wished to disappear.

Throughout the exhibits in the house, wealth, prominence, and culture are emphasized both through the choice of objects displayed and through the careful descriptions given by the docents. An elderly volunteer assures visitors that this was "the high dollar house." The other houses on the row were for the common 'man' but at three dollars per encounter, Miss Laura's offered services at a price point so high that only the wealthy citizens could afford to patronise the house. Miss Laura's was special.

Although the senior citizens who serve as docents (volunteer educators) share stories about Miss Laura, most are coy about the activities that went on under the roof. "After all," one docent whispered to us, "we don't really know what went on here." The entire layout of the house suggests, however, that the designers of the exhibits know in some detail 'what went on here.' Tours begin in the formal parlour where Miss Laura greeted her guests. A cardboard photograph of the site director posing in costume as Miss Laura is positioned just inside the parlour door; in the same parlour a male mannequin in evening dress holds a three dollar token. Miss Laura apparently greeted the guests, took their money, and distributed tokens for services which the gentlemen redeemed from "the girls." Volunteers are careful never to use the word "prostitute" bur rather, use terms like "ladies", "girls", or "daughters of joy."

Miss Laura was strict with her girls. She demanded they learn social graces, dress well, and attend cultural events such as the opera. In order to keep up appearances, the girls only appeared in the balcony at the theatre where they displayed the beautiful clothing that retailers brought directly to the house for them to try on and purchase. According to one docent, 'The girls' did not appear on the streets so as not to 'offend' the sensibilities of Fort Smith ladies.

A favourite story of various docents is the "The Lingerie Parade", a night when a fire caused the row to be evacuated and citizens were treated to the sight of the ladies and their customers on the street in states of undress. One of the exhibits features a bedroom decorated demurely in white, with a gentleman's shoes and pipe left on a chair when he hurriedly left his things to evacuate the building. Another story centres on Miss Laura's penchant for keeping a pistol in the sleeve of her dress to deal with rowdy customers.

While the madams are celebrated as strong, powerful businesswomen, the portrait that emerges of 'the girls' is more passive. As one docent stated:

> A girl could leave the farm, and if she got hired in this one, the girls made $34 to $38 per week, which was much, much more than the men were making. So they could contribute to the family. A lot of the ladies would stay here until they had enough for a dowry, and then leave and marry. And then a lot of them married clients.

In one of our tours, our guide emphasised the physical and social transformation of the girls. One notable exhibit, for example, includes a number of instruments of transformation including small pottery bowls to mix cosmetics, rhinestone garter covers, and a small bottle of laudanum which is a liquid form of opium. We were most interested in the display of belladonna cigarettes. As the women were from the country and tanned from outdoor work, the belladonna cigarettes made their skin pale and their eyes dilated, giving the appearance of fair skin and large eyes. Going further, docents emphasise the training the girls received:

> But these girls were schooled in social graces so that they knew their way around and they went to the opera. Had to sit in the balcony but they would go to the opera. And they never came down in their scantily [sic] clothes. They came down dressed elegantly. And I just imagine they might have had just a little bit of the say of what went on.

What all this amounts to is a transformation of countrywomen from sturdy, suntanned farmers to elegant, pale, wide-eyed creatures in fancy dress who understood art and culture. The small luxuries of everyday life are emphasised throughout the exhibits—evening gowns, white lace dresses, hats, high button shoes, elaborate curling irons, and private bedrooms. A series of framed photos from the 1920s display various 'girls' sunbathing and smiling along the riverbanks. The luckiest of these women gained the ultimate prize—marriage and

respectability—through earning enough for a dowry or perhaps even marrying a former client. An elderly volunteer told us:

> It's a part of Fort Smith history. … We talk more about the building than we do the… unless someone asks us a specific question. … And we don't really know what took place here. We have no idea. But we do know probably that she might have screened her clientele. Because this was the elite bordello on the row.

Despite the flattering portrayal of Laura Ziegler and Bertha Gale Dean, the depiction of countrywomen transformed into elegant ladies, and the emphasis on elitism and social class, some exhibits hint at a harsher reality than the elegant furnishing and photographs suggest. For example, each worker was examined every 30 days for "tuberculosis". City ordinance required that a certificate of health be posted above each bed. The certificate of health, identified each woman as an "inmate of a house of prostitution." Gentlemen clients were required to bathe in Miss Laura's claw foot tub if they did not meet her standards of cleanliness and hygiene. The women were sometimes not cleared for work according to health logs displayed in a glass case. A vague mention from our tour guide of girls off duty after "surgery" suggests childbirth or abortion as occupational hazards.

THE MASTER NARRATIVES: MASTERFUL MADAMS

Given the context of a Southern city, politically conservative and a self-proclaimed part of the so-called "Bible Belt," the most surprising narrative element that emerges from data is the depiction of the two madams—Laura Ziegler and Bertha Gale Dean. Instead of painting these women as public enemies to the moral order, Miss Laura's Social Club celebrates Ziegler and Dean as intelligent, powerful businesswomen who took on the male political and business figures of their day and not only thrived but regularly bested the men. Since so little is known of Ziegler, the site has adopted the figure of Ziegler as a sort of role model—sharp businesswoman, fairy godmother and protector to "the girls," and fierce taskmaster who held her employees to a high standard. The depiction of Dean, while less idealised, is still that of a strong businesswoman. Much is made of her business prowess and her cleverness in keeping her business going despite a city ban on prostitution in 1924. The docents in particular are so admiring of Ziegler and Dean that they tend to skim gently past the realities of the business of prostitution.

Having created splendid strong characters, the site volunteers are quick to feminise and de-sexualise them. When the site director—a woman in her 70s—dresses as Miss Laura she wears expensive professional costumes and hats; the costumes are feminine and cheerful. The visual depictions of Dean are also interesting. Upstairs in the house Dean is pictured as a young woman with wavy flowing hair. The image is soft, young, and sensual. The photos of Dean displayed

downstairs show her tightly corseted and buttoned up with a severe hat and grim expression. These images are of a woman who is formidable and more masculine in appearance.

The volunteers supply traditional 'happy endings' for each of the site protagonists. Miss Laura moved away never to be heard from again, but it is assumed that she began a new life with the proceeds of her business and went on to have a respectable marriage and family. Dean's happy ending is based in fact, as she did marry a man who is mentioned as a former client. Apparently female business acumen and sexual freedom are rendered harmless when mitigated by a respectable marriage. While the site seemingly depicts these strong women as "feminist", it is clear that the madams did not empower their employees or treat them as equals. The madams perhaps represent the patriarchy in female form; they are complicit in exploiting the women who worked in the house.

Cathouse Cinderellas

Transfiguration is a key theme that emerges from the data. Like the fairy godmother transforming Cinderella for the ball, so Ziegler and Dean are depicted transforming "the girls". Poor country girl, shabbily dressed and work-worn, is transformed through the help of a strong maternal figure and the love of a rich man. Whereas in Cinderella, the godmother provided beautiful clothing and a reminder to stick to her curfew, the brothel's madams provided expensive clothing, drugs, and adherence to a series of strict rules and regulations. The happy ending is the hope of earning enough money for a dowry, enabling "the ladies" to marry respectably. The link between this sort of Cinderella transformation and literature can be seen in movies such as *Cinderella*, *Pretty Woman*, and even the iconic *Gone with the Wind*, a book about a southern woman during the US Civil War. These stories focus on the importance of male patronage, in which the measure of success is ultimately found in relation to a man. Personal power, purchasing power, and social power are all found, not through women's own accomplishments, but rather as sexual companions to successful males. This is a skewed viewpoint in two ways: First, it continues to emphasize male dominance in society, continuing today; and second, it looks only at the positive aspects of a lifestyle that is less-than-desirable. This provides a false comfort, considering the women as fortunate, when in truth, they were in danger of unwanted pregnancies, disease, violence, and a decline into poverty as they aged out of the "Queen of the Row." What happened to the women who did not marry their clients and live "happily ever after?" No one seems to know, or care.

Elitism and the Queen of the Row

Fort Smith is a town with roots in the segregated south, an "old money" town in which the two secondary schools are labelled "North vs. South," and at the time of this writing, a battle is ongoing to save the southern "Rebel" mascot and school

fight song, "Dixie." Therefore, when the theme of elitism emerged, we were not entirely surprised. The docents repeatedly referred to the class hierarchy among the brothels, the class distinction of the clientele served by Miss Laura's and of the high quality of the "daughters of joy." While not explicitly stated, that which is elegant, prominent, upper class, and moneyed is also very white. The story of Miss Laura's is not the story of Native Americans or African Americans who lived in Fort Smith

The story of Miss Laura's is the story of wealthy, privileged, white men who freely took their pleasures in elegant surroundings provided by remarkable businesswomen. While the madams, Ziegler and Dean, are celebrated at the site, it is clear that they were not considered respectable citizens of the town. The women who worked in the brothel, when they are considered at all, are depicted as fortunate. So intently do the volunteers emphasize the wealth, the privilege, and the prominence of the clientele, we wondered if that very class distinction somehow excuses or whitewashes the core business of the brothel—the sale of sexual favours.

CONCLUSIONS AND QUESTIONS

As natives of Fort Smith we each admit that the concept of Miss Laura's Social Club as the city Visitor Centre is fun. The marketing slogans like "Hello Bordello" or "Our Brothel Still Serves Visitors" are clever. The idea of strong businesswomen in an era where women had few rights is appealing. The site itself is beautiful and entertaining. On reflection, however, we are each troubled by the master narrative told through the site.

If Miss Laura's Social Club represents the Old West, it is a very idealised Old West of film and literature rather than reality. Laura Ziegler and Bertha Gale Dean may have been clever businesswomen who held power and wealth, but it was only through an alliance with a man that these women could be seen as respectable. The same is true of the "girls" who worked in the house. Working in a brothel may have been portrayed as a path to respectability for some of the women who worked there but we cannot help wondering how difficult life must have been for the women who took refuge in that employment. Despite physical luxuries, how humiliating were, for example, the monthly health inspections? How compliant did the women need to be to the demands of their customers? What 'voice' did they have or sense of agency? What about the smells, the discomfort, the drugs like laudanum and belladonna? Our greatest concern about the master narrative is the depiction of these women as lucky Cinderella figures when the realities of the life would have been harsh. While the volunteers at Miss Laura's see their role as marketing the city, the site is clearly a museum—the web site marketing the centre describes the location with the words Museum, Gift Shop, Tours, Local Information (Fort Smith Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2016). We would position Miss Laura's as a site that perpetuates the narratives of patriarchy and the dominant class.

Barr (1999) identified four dimensions of feminism—political, critical, praxis-oriented, and Utopian/creative. She argued that museums are sites of pedagogical struggle where adult educators can inspire women to critique and question dominant knowledge systems and social norms. Miss Laura's could be an important "site of struggle", if it were taken up as such rather than through fictionalised, patriarchal narratives that leave so totally unquestioned its own narrative and power structures. Adding to this, Barr posits that in its political orientations, feminism is concerned with the experiences of women of all races and classes. This raises a second concern. Miss Laura's ignores the larger context where it was located as it was amidst the poor, and women from other non-dominant groups such as women of colour and the sizable Native American population that inhabited the Row. In fact, The Row was the site of seven brothels that catered to lesser prestigious clientele. We are only left to wonder about the lives of the women who lived and worked in those establishments and how they might have been connected, or not to the lives of 'high dollar' women in Miss Laura's.

The experience of examining the narrative at Miss Laura's has led us now to Barr's feminist dimensions of being praxis-oriented and Utopian; now that we recognize the hegemony of the master narrative of Miss Laura's, how do we now take action to challenge the existing power structures in our community? How do we effect change to a more inclusive, if not a Utopian state? As English and Irving (2015) suggest, movement toward gender change is challenging and risky. As far as the city of Fort Smith is concerned, Miss Laura's Social Club is a success that drives the lucrative heritage tourism industry in the community. Historical accuracy will be sacrificed to the demands of a neoliberal tourism machine that requires an 'Old West' narrative that appeals to visitors who grew up with *Lonesome Dove* and *True Grit*, and are not seen to able to handle 'truth'. As a start, we can encourage our students to question critically the narratives of Miss Laura's and other cultural narratives that bombard them daily.

In an ironic parallel to Miss Laura herself, the bordello is still a successful business venture run by a strong woman. Instead of selling sexual favours, the site is selling a gendered façade within the modern amenities of the city. The site is also selling an unexamined story that does not truly represent the experiences of the women who lived and worked there. Stetz (2005) identified museums "as opportunities for feminist pedagogy and outreach, not merely as irredeemable symbols of elitism" (p. 208). Miss Laura's Social Club is certainly a "symbol of elitism" but we hope not "irredeemable". Miss Laura's misses the opportunity to tell a more challenging and inclusive story about women in the Old West. If as Taylor (2010) suggests visitors are not only affected by the narratives they experience via cultural institutions but also affect or shape those narratives, perhaps we can help shape by using a feminist adult lens, a different kind of visitor to Miss Laura's—a visitor who actively challenges and questions the story.

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Micki Voelkel
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, USA

Shelli Henehan
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, USA

ROSE M. LEWIS AND RACHEL CLARKE

8. RE-EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

Re-Envisioning Digital Civics & Participative Learning Practice in Black Women's Community-Led Heritage Projects

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION AS TRANSFORMATION

> *Heritage is all about the features of history, culture, traditions, our life, which is passed on to next generation. We keep heritage with us but in one or other way we transform it but the real soul stays there.* (Pakistani BAM! Sisterhood Participant)

This chapter discusses an innovative holistic model of adult education developed for Black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women in the North East of England, one that was able to address the invisible barriers often presented by standard universal adult education programmes. It is written from a black feminist standpoint. The authors recognise the intersecting and multiple sites of oppression that discriminate against, disempower and fail to articulate the needs and contingent barriers that black women face. Carol Boyce Davies in her ground breaking text *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (1995) discusses how terms for Black women and their representation are in a constant state of flux – with the very subjects of these shifting terms constantly reappraising their value and social currency.

The model we discuss has been developed around a community-led heritage project, led by BAMER women based at the Angelou Centre and supported by Tyne and Wear Museums and Newcastle University School of Computing Science. This model of working brings to the fore wider critical questions about the inclusivity of universal adult education programmes and what value an emancipatory pedagogy has when developed within an institutional context. In this chapter, we argue *against* the de-politicisation of adult education and *against* the exclusion of marginalised voices from systems of knowledge production and critical dialogues about that production. We also argue that unless we aim toward social transformation and simultaneous structural change at institutional, social and interpersonal levels, adult education will remain ineffectual and exclusionary.

bell hooks (1994) believes education is a process where race, gender, class and privilege can conspire towards retaining closed knowledge systems and a constructed 'universalism' that subjugates Black women's voices. The flip side of this is that

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a Black-led community-based adult education programme, in which learning is synonymous with women's empowerment, can become a learning space where personal and social transformation can take place. In this chapter we recognise – although much maligned and over-used – the tern empowerment to mean the power to address issues of oppression and injustice. In this way we concur with Susan Imel's (1999) framing of feminist adult education in *How Emancipatory is adult learning?* She argues that adult education for women, through a feminist lens, is transformative when it leads "to some kind of action. Although empowerment can take place as a part of emancipatory learning, it does so within the context of social and political transformation" (p. 2). Empowerment therefore, is political and social, rather than solely personal.

Our chapter examines this empowering and transformational approach to adult education, through an emphasis on the critical engagement of Black women in all aspects of learning, design, co-production and delivery/facilitation. We advocate that in order to invent, re-evaluate and further adapt educational tools to better serve marginalised communities, we need to be able to reflect and draw upon the life experiences of diverse BAMER communities and ultimately, in this context, Black women. Only then, we argue, can the transformational potential of adult education within this emancipatory learning model correct the neglect of narratives of exclusion in 'heritage' work. Our view of the current model of 'heritage education' is that it institutionalises a Eurocentric colonial authorial model. We advocate that adult learning should progress multiple voices, challenge authoritarian positions and encourage active participation and empowerment. In tandem with this approach, it is our view that there needs to be a critique of structural and institutional learning pathways and, in this case, 'heritage learning pathways' forged in adult and informal education that often leads to an unrecognised paradigm in education where community-led grassroots (heritage) projects have to, in effect, re-educate the institutionalised educators to value and recognise so-called non-traditional skills.

In choosing to look at a 'transformational' approach to adult education – viewing adult education as a radical tool of social and personal transformation – our chapter has two purposes. The first is to examine the impact the heritage sector's construction of knowledge has on 'learner centred' experience and, if not critiqued, promotes the reification of dominant Eurocentric heritage narratives where Black women are absent. The second aim is to promote the development of a grassroots community-led model of adult learning informed and constructed by its participants within a framework of Black-led feminist activism.

Whilst 'migration' heritage has increasingly become of interest to museums and archives, the focus has largely been on working families, influential individuals and the impact of migration on 'native' communities. Within regional archives and museums in North East England, migration heritage has focused on the industrial and post-industrial landscape and the lives of working men. Black women in industrial and post-industrial northern cities have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of business, public sector development, creative and the care

industries and yet they have rarely been recognised for this significant contribution to civic life. As the cultural and adult education sector embraces so called ‘migration heritage’ into its pantheon of public engagement and in/formal educational activities, it simultaneously subjugates multiple collective narratives that challenge the stability of institutions in favour of singular authoritative (non-representational) narratives. This paper aims to broaden adult education’s understanding of access to learning within this constructed heritage framework and to enable the sector to recognise that adult education rests within socio-political structures that largely decide who accesses adult education, and the quality and appropriateness of that education.

In the spirit of transformational learning, this chapter is a result of non-linear development, active participation and research, informed by and resulting from a black-led collective and feminist co-production. Our co-written paper both engages multiple women in its authorship (namely multi-lingual community researchers, participants and activists from the BAM! Sistahood! Project, the Angelou Centre, Newcastle University’s Open Lab and the Discovery Museum) and values interdisciplinary skills. With this in mind, any theoretical approach we take has to engage critical black feminist theory as well as broader understandings of intersectional feminism.

ARRIVALS: CONSTRUCTING THE HERITAGE OF THE NORTH EAST

> *Our heritage is partly UK now, but racism stops us from celebrating our mixed cultures.* (Congolese BAM! Sistahood! Participant)

> *If we keep the culture and religion and heritage, other people will know about it and learn from it.* (Iraqi BAM! Sistahood! Participant)

> *We used to leave our doors open to all neighbours in our street not just other Indian families, now we can’t do this … This made us strong as a community with white people and made us feel we belong.* (Indian Woman, BAM! Sistahood! Participant)

Post-war Europe endured a severe labour shortage during the aftermath of two world wars that heralded a change in the country’s political discourse; the borders of empire had been finally eroded, opening up new socio-economic opportunities to members of the commonwealth and British industry and commerce, desperate to rebuild its post-war remnants into a coherent economy. Whilst other parts of England, particularly London, Birmingham and Manchester, saw substantial numbers of migrants (both men and women) in skilled and unskilled jobs post Windrush (1948), the North East was slower than its predominently southern counterparts for its demographics to diversify. Any representations (institutional or otherwise) of modern Tyneside and the North East region at large as built on the myth of ‘racial purity’ is inaccurate and underplays intercultural relationality and the role that migrant communities and BAMER women’s communities have had on

the cultural landscape of the region. Examples of this include the bed and breakfast accommodation set up in South Shields by Yemeni and Irish mixed heritage couples for seafarers, stokers and migrant workers to the region; the Arabic and Italian families who set up cafes selling strong coffees, sweet treats and ice cream; 'black music' establishments in Newcastle set up by Geordie siblings of African descent; the first 'international' cuisine restaurants in Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and launderettes in Teeside run by Chinese female entrepreneurs that soon became community hubs. BAMER women also played a big part in the region's home textiles and industrial textiles industry, setting up market stalls and specialist clothing shops – often undersold by African door-to-door textile salesmen in the 1960s – introduced non-BAMER communities to textiles from around the world. BAMER women had an impact on the cultural aesthetics and patterns of the region at a time when many still made clothes at home with material they had selected themselves.

BAM! Sistahood! is an intergenerational heritage project based in the North East of England, led by and for black women. It challenges the sovereignty or narratives of absence: that is, heritage narratives that either mis/represent or eradicate black women's contributions to the region and the multiple voices that make up any constructed narrative or articulation of that heritage. BAM! Sistahood! is a project that focuses on adult learning as a way to promote grassroots autonomy, community archive ownership and a pedagogy of self-empowerment, and as such uses a variety of non-traditional tools and methods to engage and support what we will term a 'multi-levelled' approach to learning. This approach was developed in consultation with 124 diverse Black or BAMER women from different socio-economic backgrounds from across the North East of England between 2013 and 2014, including a small proportion of women who had recently arrived in the North East of England.

BAM! Sistahood! is a community led grassroots heritage project that focuses on the cultural, social and political heritage of four generations or 70 years of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) or women of colour in the North East of England. The project engages diverse communities, traditionally omitted from many regional heritage projects, in the unravelling, mapping, researching, archiving and promoting of North East BAMER women's unique cultural and political identities and heritage. This participative, learner-led project engages women in their own strands of unique personal and community histories at the same time as placing it within the context of a rich tapestry of BAMER women's movement and active cultural engagement. The project supports, educates and engages women in oral and material research, digital design, herstorical education, enquiry-based learning, digital media training, archiving and promoting their histories, alongside ensuring that their heritage is truly embedded in the cultural landscape through extended satellite cultural activities. By combining innovative and traditional ways of digitally capturing, interpreting and recording BAMER women's material, ephemeral and oral heritage, the BAM! Sistahood! Project promotes, socially engages, embeds and makes visible BAMER women's historical and cultural journeys in the North

East. The timeframe of the project has been deliberately chosen to represent a living heritage, or the heritage of four generations of BAMER women.

BAM! Sistahood! aims also to re-cover and re-vitalise BAMER women's heritage within a context of regional, British and global heritage. Astutely, this project recognises the intimate relationship between the personal, the political and the cultural for women who have been traditionally excluded and marginalised from the annals of history and thus have little extant evidence outlining their own self representation narrative/s. The North East has an incredibly powerful and rich history of black women's activism and creative endeavour that, to date, has been muted, negated and undocumented. The effect of actions taken by BAMER women in the North East such as Pakistani women's trade union involvement in Middlesbrough in the 1970's and the creation of Panah, one of the first black women's refuges in the country set up in Newcastle in the 1980's, have had a resounding effect on the political and social landscape, changing lives and setting precedents for the intercultural ways we live in the region today.

The BAM! Sistahood! project quite rightly focuses on participation and education, supporting individual BAMER women to engage and re-engage in their own heritage whilst facilitating them to gain the skills to sustain this engagement as a journey of life-long learning. As a women's organisation that has been supporting BAMER women into economic independence for 20 years, the project's host, the Angelou Centre is fully cognisant of what is needed to support economically excluded women in accessing cultural activities and opportunities. This support combines the provision of childcare, additional learning opportunities, specialist cultural and linguistic expertise, one-to-one support, continued mentoring, supported volunteering opportunities, and access to and knowledge of digital equipment with a familiar, trusted and welcoming environment where their cultural and social needs are met. The Angelou Centre has a track record that proves this type of intensive support works, changes lives and engages BAMER women in cultural and heritage-related projects that they would never have normally participated in.

The project is further contextualised by the rapidly changing demographic of UK and mainland Europe. There have been unprecedented changes in the racial and social diversity of the North East of England with 41% more people who were born abroad settling in the region over the last two decades. The most recent 2011 Census provides evidence that the BAMER population now constitutes one in seven of the overall UK population; the regions whose BAMER population has grown the fastest in the past decade are those that had the fewest ethnic minorities in 2001, including the North East of England. It is important to note that the women who access the project come from diverse backgrounds, mostly from the South Asian, African and Arabic diasporas. The project has so far engaged Congolese, Nigerian, Syrian, Moroccan, South American Zimbabwean, Ghanaian, Caribbean, Algerian, Iraqi, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Thai, Tamil, Iranian, Sierra Leonean, Chinese, Indonesian, and Romany women amongst many others.

As a participant-centric project that is firmly rooted in self-governance, collective ownership and self-representational narratives, the project aims to principally:

1. Engage BAMER women in their own, BAMER women's and regional heritage and to recognise and to develop ways to connect and represent this heritage
2. Educate and empower women in digital and physical archival and heritage related skills
3. Develop participant centric ways to research, recover and document BAMER women's heritage in the region creating sustainable community led archives
4. Embed BAMER women's heritage in the North East at a strategic and wider public/social level

Engaging women to define heritage themselves, to deconstruct the concept of heritage as being relevant to their own sense of identity and worldview interpretations has been a crucial part of BAM! Sistahood! It has helped to unravel some of the structural and social barriers that obstruct engagement whilst also exploring why, at an institutional and community level, this lost area of heritage in the region has not been further explored.

REWRITING THE HERITAGE EDUCATION NARRATIVE

In 2014, the BAM! Sistahood! Project adult learning programme was developed through workshops with participants within the first month of the Research and Development phase of BAM! Sistahood! This allowed a full exploration of BAMER women's self represented identities and the ways they wanted to share that heritage. We used three open ended questions to facilitate this self-reflection and sharing:

1. What does the word 'heritage mean to you, how would you define it?
2. What are the themes or understandings that make up that heritage?
3. How would you like to share that heritage with others?

The collated research data from the research and development phase has informed all aspects of learning in the BAM! Sistahood! project in order to give voice and representation to BAMER women's heritage; ensure the project remains representative of and represented by black women; more accurately reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the North East; and support full and meaningful participation.

Asking fundamental questions about what heritage means has also been a way to engage BAMER women in a process that can seem quite abstract to communities that have been excluded from heritage sector activities or services. 85% of the BAMER women the BAM! Sistahood! project consulted with had not visited a museum or heritage site in the area in the last two years, nor did they know how to access museums or where to find them, although over 50% regularly accessed local libraries, with their children and alone. Of the remaining 15%, 10% had accessed

museums and heritage sites with the Angelou Centre or while accompanying their children on school trips, rather than autonomously initiating such trips.

Participation as a Learning Tool

> *Coming to heritage (sessions) every week, brings me out of the house, helps me feel better about myself and my life, helps me forget racism and the bad things that brought me here … I like Newcastle but I don't like racism.* (Nigerian BAM! Sistahood! participant)

BAMER women are supported to participate in the BAM! Sistahood! project individually, collectively, socially and publically (see Diagram 1 below). The project supports women to participate in multiple ways, teaching and supporting women to gain the confidence and skills needed to take part in self-led learning objectives. Within the project scope, BAM! Sistahood! sets out clear learning objectives and does so with a focus on digital civics and exploratory learning tools. Alongside multi-levelled learning environments – innovative technologies allow a meaningful engagement with BAMER women's heritage without there being a dependence

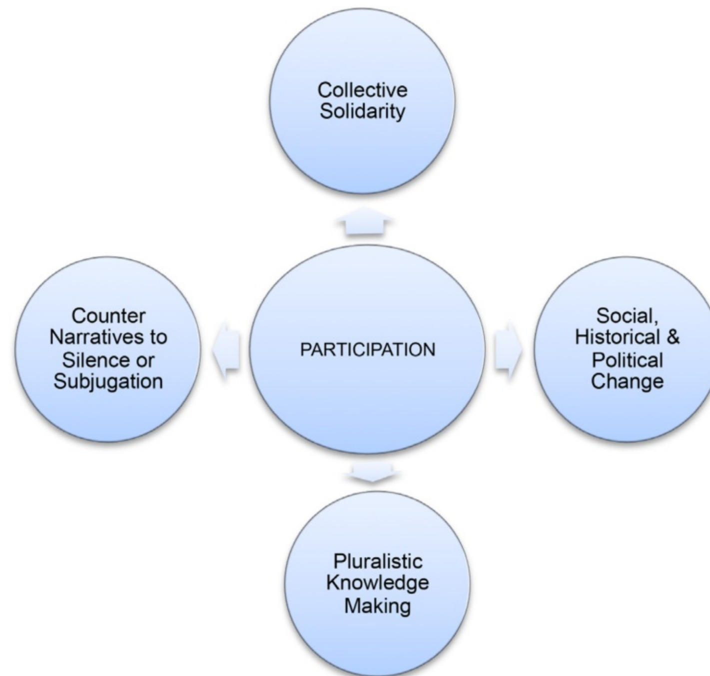

Diagram 1. The impact of supporting a participative approach in learning

upon literacy, English as a first language, technical ability or common cultural and social experiences. An example of this is the production of digital prototypes (developed and supported by researchers from Newcastle University's Open Lab) that simultaneously engages project and community participants with BAMER women's heritage in multi-sensory ways. With textiles as the underlying theme, the digital 'E-Textiles Kit' prototype further participants in learning workshops in wider community and heritage settings using a range of electronic devices such as stitched circuits, knitted stretch, LED lights, pressure & stroke sensors that are then embedded into international textiles. This use of technology to interweave the personal (the meanings/narratives associated with the selected fabrics) with the digital (the creation of exploratory digital civic platforms for that meaning) is a powerful interactive educational tool.

Participant-led learning encourages self-motivation and autonomous decision-making at the same time as increasing self-esteem, confidence and skills to increase collective ownership and self-representation of their heritage. The learning process strengthens intercultural heritage narratives in the North East, giving voice and visibility to BAMER women's heritage and histories whilst improving the heritage and cultural sectors' response to and support of BAMER women.

Transforming Learning Cultures

> *I think getting together and just talking about our own heritage as women from many cultures…the differences, the similarities, is important… at museums we talk so much about other people's heritage we forget that we are also part of the region's heritage and that people when they get together bring heritage to life.* (K. Boodhai, Tyne & Wear Museum Outreach Officer)

In order to fully promote participation, and to ensure that a wide range of BAMER women access learning, women's additional needs are met and built into the full project costs. These include: childcare, travel support costs and the delivery of training from women's centres across the North East with holistic recovery and advocacy structures in place, with the intention to further support the needs of excluded BAMER women. The research and development phase evidenced that, without access to basic provisions such as childcare and travel, women said they would be unable to access activities and training. One of the many reasons why BAMER women do not participate or get involved with many cultural and heritage projects is because of the lack of childcare provision, cultural expertise (such as women-only multilingual learning environments) and travel. An additional barrier to participation is having a learning programme that is designed to only meet the needs of learners at a certain level, is unable to support multi-lingual learners or those who lack learning stepping stones such as Basic IT skills. BAM! Sistahood! works to overcome these barriers by providing the infrastructure needed to support

multi- levelled learners, those for whom English is not the first language, and those who are learning digital and heritage skills for the first time.

The BAM! Sistahood! project's approach is to provide a consistent high-quality learning experience for all regional learners whatever their socio-economic background, access needs or learning level. The project design has incorporated a number of learning prerequisites and considerations that were designed in consultation with BAMER women during the 2013–14 research and development phase of the project. They came from across the region and advocated for the inclusion of flexible accredited learning pathways, culturally competent and multi-lingual facilitators, women-only learning environments and access to high quality facilities, including heritage sites.

For participants and volunteers the BAM! Sistahood! project opens up a number of training and skills development and wider social opportunities, the chance to not only share and learn about BAMER women's heritage but that of the North East, the chance to integrate and learn, engage in more enquiry-led opportunities, the chance to socialise, reduce isolation and celebrate their heritage within a context of wider public engagement. This offers participants a myriad of personal benefits such as improved knowledge, confidence, self-esteem, and understanding of their own and other identities. It also opens up employment and volunteering opportunities; as the modules and training are accredited, this may also increase employability within the heritage sector, bring additional cultural expertise to the sector, new ways of working with communities and the ability to understand BAMER women communities and their needs within an institutional context.

Wider Learning Impact

There is an urgent need to bridge the digital gaps between individuals, communities and institutions, in an informed, culturally intuitive way if we are to diversify our collective understanding of heritage and heritage-related experiences in an ever-expanding competitive digital age. By bridging knowledge- and skills- based heritage gaps, BAM! Sisatahood! has the potential to have a profound effect on regional cultural institutions still struggling to truly connect to a BAMER audience or include BAMER women as social actors and participants, which is currently deterring sustainable solutions toward preserving and promoting BAMER women's heritage. Through the widening of participative and interpretive adult learning and understanding in formerly neglected heritage communities, the BAM! Sistahood! project will likewise involve and negotiate interest from unexplored audiences and participants. BAMER women are often community connectors at the intersections of age, ethnicity and class, and have long been undervalued as heritage interpreters and participants, and more importantly as active heritage makers and potential archivists.

CONCLUSIONS: EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

> *Every woman's story of their heritage was nice here, real story from women about heritage rather than what is seen in the museum which is not about us… but our story is here now because of project.* (Iraqi BAM! Sistahood! Participant)

Women have often been and continue to be the connectors within communities as well as between communities and wider society. A 2011 research publication, produced by the Angelou Centre in conjunction with Oxfam, reiterated that women remain the prime carers of children, young people and vulnerable adults in BAMER communities and subsequently remain the most economically and socially deprived owing to, "The general lack of understanding of a mother's poverty in the UK coupled with an even greater lack of understanding of the experiences and needs of different groups of BME women" (Dyson in Warburton, 2011, p. 11). We want to support cultural heritage institutions to engage more fluidly with BAMER women communities, who still remain the least participative visible social sector with the most economic and cultural barriers to participation. As women remain the key supporters of the collectivist intergenerational family structures in many BAMER communities, the power of women to promote heritage within those communities that have been considered 'hard to reach' is immense.

This chapter recognises the impact of heritage narratives and how they continue to be vital ways to better understand cultural and national identity and how they seek to challenge the notion of a singular Eurocentric heritage paradigm, one now being questioned by many institutions. In challenging this understanding, adult education has a crucial role to play in reordering institutional narratives. This supports local heritage sites to potentially become locations where cultural identity can be developed and so become part of an extended community where the expertise, values and understanding of heritage retained by many migrant and multi-lingual communities has a chance to be shared.

Black women's lives in North East England have often been seen through a regionalised lens, one that seeks to 'fit' black women's lives into an already constructed narrative, where women's heritage is separated from the dominant heritage discourse. The focus on regional industrial history and the history of labour as a male sphere or set of fixed histories has marginalised black women's work, education and contribution to life in the North East. Attempting to create a cohesive picture of black women's lives has proven to be a complex task owing to the lack of extant records, documents, ephemera or knowledge about black women's lives in the heritage, cultural or public sector. There are also insufficient structures in place to support or make accessible black women's heritage because of the intersecting oppressions of gender inequalities, socio-economic exclusion and racism, where "an unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained" (hooks, 1994, p. 39).

In Becca Singh's (2005) research, she evidences the debilitating effect of social exclusion on vulnerable BAMER community members especially women with additional needs and disabilities. In her report she effectively shows how well designed projects: "were most successful where they responded from the outset to the complexity of participants identities, multiple support needs and experiences of multiple exclusion" (p. 4). Singh concludes that empowering individuals with multiple barriers to "share personal life stories in safe group settings" whilst "handing over decision-making to the participants directly" proved highly effective in "changing individuals' lives" (p. 4). In response to Singh's pertinent observation it could be argued that the BAM! Sistahood project will provide an innovative holistic approach to supporting BAMER women, many of whom have complex or additional needs, into full participation, engagement and education.

The skilling up of BAMER women in digital design and governance skills empowers BAMER women communities to actively engage in documenting their own lives, histories and heritage, and to foster a sustainability-led culture of ownership amongst traditionally disenfranchised communities, giving voice and representation to the least heard and most silenced members of society. The true impact of the BAM! Sistahood! project will be the influence that former participants have in further engaging their wider communities and other women in the preservation and interpretation of their own and other cultures, whilst having the skills and context to document and share that heritage. BAMER women who may have fallen between the digital democracy cracks will not only be digitally skilled but will also be active decision-makers and social actors able to fulfil their role in further promoting their own and other women's narratives. We give the last word to a participant from Tamil, who notes how the project volunteers understood "my thoughts and know how to help and bring out my heritage and share it … this project has made me free."

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Rosie M. Lewis
Newcastle University, UK

Rachel Clarke
Angelou Centre, UK

EMÍLIA FERREIRA

9. CONTEMPORARY ART AS PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGE

Must Gender Remain an Obstacle in Portugal?

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I make a case for a feminist adult education approach in the art museum. I do this by using my own context as an educator in Casa de Cerca in Portugal. I ground my chapter in two contexts. The first is that Case de Cerca is now taking up some of the critical principles of new museology and these are manifest in how it engages pedagogically with its adult audiences. New museology argues that we need to focus on people rather than on objects, conceiving the museum as an educational space, aiming at social development through critical thinking (Devallées & Varine apud Soares, 2014, p. 64). The second context is contemporary gender challenges. According to the 2012–2013 *UN Women Annual Report*,

> [Gender inequality] remains among the greatest challenges of our times. Fed by deeply embedded discrimination against women and girls, it is wrong and costly, whether it interrupts economic progress, undercuts peace and restricts the quality of leadership. Ending it should be foremost among global and national goals. (p. 4)

The 2014–2015 report added the fact that "gender equality remains underfunded on so many levels" (p. 3). Gender is relevant to art museums, as well as all art and cultural institutions or centres for what I see as a number of key reasons. Firstly, as these are institutions with power they tend to reflect and support the status quo, which can be problematically, gendered. Secondly, since the 1990s in particular, museums have come to be understood as places of life long education of 'all' adults (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994) and therefore, have considerable power in terms of creating new understandings and perceptions of what is important, and what is not. We know that museums have failed to give women artists their fair share of their space, and historic and aesthetic attention (e.g. Krasny, 2015).

Adult education scholars Darlene E. Clover, Shauna Butterwick and Laurel Collins (2015), and Leona English and Catherine Irving (2015) call for practices and activities that help us to re-think how women are positioned in society, and the contributions they have made which often go unacknowledged. They call for the development of a critical and creative gendered consciousness about women and

D. E. Clover et al. (Eds.), Adult Education, Museums and Art Galleries, 103–113.
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the issues that affect their/our lives. I have been a lifelong feminist and in this chapter, I share my own story as a curator and feminist adult educator in Casa da Cerca. I explore how I have been working with a team at the museum to address the gender complexities of contemporary art, questioning the historically gendered *status quo* and introducing new approaches around scientific, social, historic and artistic data that broader audiences' understandings in clear, critical and intellectual but also, fun and inclusive ways. But there are still gendered challenges in my institution and beyond, and I discuss the contributions I am trying to make, through the museum and art, to the global feminist struggle for change.

REVOLUTION STARTS… *AT HOME*?

Let me begin with a bit of context that I alluded to above in terms of the changes that have occurred in the Casa da Cerca-Contemporary Art Centre, where I work, that have enabled us to begin to make other types of changes. Case da Cerca opened to the public on 18 November 1993 as a cultural establishment of the Municipality of Almada, Portugal. It is housed in an eighteenth century recreation farm that was home to different families throughout the centuries. In 1988 the municipality acquired the house, and university professor and painter Rogério Ribeiro, was summoned to develop an artistic and museology programme. Being himself an accomplished draughtsperson, and thus aware of the importance of drawing as a formative discipline, he chose to devote the mission of the establishment to the investigation of this art.

Adaptation into a contemporary art centre from a manor had its challenges, but the space has kept many of the building's architectural characteristics and encourages a sense of belonging and inclusiveness, something it shares with other museum or exhibition spaces that adhere to the mentioned new museology—something that is also stressed by the building's characteristics. Under Ribeiro's direction, exhibitions were developed through rigorous investigation of the history of drawing, both traditional and contemporary processes and methodologies. In addition, staff focused more on research and developing ideas and contents for the exhibitions and catalogues, although the centre has always offered educational opportunities for university students. But Casa da Cerca was really without a theoretical framework for its Education Service (ES) and the academic tone came to be seen as out-dated in terms of new museology mandates. Nonetheless, staff made an effort to create a learning environment and diminish the distance between the institution and its communities.

Opportunity came when, in 2000, Rogério Ribeiro retired and a new Director, Ana Isabel Ribeiro, an art historian who had been a member of the team since 1993, took his place. She had previous experience as a librarian, had established a Documentation Centre that specialised in contemporary Portuguese drawing, and had experience with exhibitions. But her main strengthens were encouraging staff to participate in the curatorial programming so they could be developed in

collaboration with education activities – contrary to traditional museum practice to curate first and figure education out later.

MY STORY

So where do I come to all of this? Well, in March 2000, I met Rogério Ribeiro in a job interview. At that time, he explained that he was about to retire and wanted to leave behind a strong group. His questions to me were simple and straight forward: Could I develop curatorial programmes, write essays that would enlighten these programmes both on the exhibition and in catalogues and, most importantly, could I deal directly with the public and provide a service of group visits to the exhibitions?

By March 2000 my professional experience was wide-ranging. I had started working, while still in university and studying Philosophy, when I was 22, teaching Portuguese as a foreign language, something I did for nine years. This included specific training in adult education and learning. I left this work and joined the team at *Público*, a reference daily Portuguese newspaper. There, I worked as a research reporter, writing about the history of the primary Portuguese art museums. This experience put me to the test, both in terms of the stress of the job and the need to write clearly and inclusively on very complex subjects. After this project, I continued to collaborate with the newspaper for almost fourteen years, both as a literary and art critic. In the meantime, I completed my Master's degree in Contemporary Art History, and in 1997 was invited to collaborate with the Modern Art Centre (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon), where I started to work directly with the public, doing group visits to the collection and temporary exhibitions.

However, I really did not yet consider myself an art educator. I was someone who had been invited to perform a task that resembled my previous experience as a teacher. To perform this task, I summoned the same tools I had learned when starting to teach adults. I knew what they needed: respect for their own knowledge and experience mixed with a clear dosage of information, debate and empathy. Nevertheless, I never expected to make a career out of this.

In 1998, I had my first actual curatorial experience, *Circuitos d'Água* [Water Circuits], a group exhibition that established a dialogue between Portuguese and German Artists, and that took place in three venues in Lisbon. Being, by then, a total newcomer to this area of the art scene, it was somehow a "baptism of fire" to curate, produce (including fundraising) and communicate the exhibition. So (we're finally back in 2000), when Rogério Ribeiro asked me if I felt I was up to the challenge, I said yes. On April 3, 2000, I joined Casa da Cerca. For the first months I did mostly production work as well as a bit of research and writing. I was also put in charge of organising adult group visits, which came as a relief as I had no idea how to work with children. I must confess that I felt more like a researcher/producer than an adult educator. But in September 2001, Cristina Gameiro (the creator and responsible for the ES at Casa da Cerca) and I attended a meeting on Museums and Education[1]

in Lisbon. For me it was an epiphany. I was awakened to the potential of adult art education and knew that this was my calling.

With Rogério Ribeiro retiring and Ana Isabel Ribeiro taking over as the new Director, my work on the exhibitions began to change. I became one of the curators. But the newly acquired awareness of the importance of adult education – it was often referred to as 'inclusion' – had changed my views on how to conceptualise an exhibition and to use it to communicate with the public. Cristina Gameiro and I became a real team. We would discuss the purposes of the exhibitions I was curating, including the ways of displaying the objects and all the adult education activities required. Together, we began to develop adult education workshops.

A CHANGE OF PARADIGM

As I began to acknowledge that my pedagogical practice focussed on respect for visitors' knowledge and experiences, I was delighted to find it had an actual name. María Acaso and Ellen Ellsworth had in fact defined this work as "regenerative pedagogies" (Acaso, 2012, p. 4). Regenerative pedagogies are processes that are unimposing and anti-oppressive, open to dialogue, debate and information sharing. They write further:

> An approach to a generative or inventive pedagogy is the one that does not focus merely on the critical analysis of what should be changed because it is oppressive. A regenerative pedagogy is rather one that encourages and increases trends that are currently emerging such as emotional structures, semantic and social flows that create something new and different from the existing new forces in the contemporary moment. (Acaso, 2012, p. 4, my translation)

THE GARDEN

In June 2001, Casa da Cerca opened a new garden called O Chão das Artes – Jardim Botânico (Earth Arts – Botanical Garden). The plants that grew there represented a particular collection in which each one has a role to play in the arts, in the form of materials such as pigments, oils, glues, fibres or wood.

Pedagogically, O Chão das Artes has been offering an increasingly wide range of possibilities, one of which is stimulating cross-dialogue with the more scientific work of the team. The coordinator, landscape architect Sónia Francisco, who started working with us in December 2010, has extensive knowledge on architectural landscape and botany and the education experience and ability to communicate with diverse adult audiences, having also been a teacher herself. She became a major contributor to this new and more ambitious project of the ES. Her research on the history of gardens and the preparation of natural art materials (inks, papers, drawing tools—such as charcoal pencils) and the study of various techniques has helped us develop education projects such as workshops, talks and courses, with which we

desire to give an extra insight on the exhibition programme. We draw on an approach suggested by Burnham and Kai Kee (2012) which is about re-thinking the role of the educator as someone aware of her or his own experience with the art works and art history and who is able to work with visitors' experience and knowledge as the basis for dialogue and engagement. We also use a question-posing approach to enlighten the creative context and add new knowledge. Questions focus on the materials the artist uses, their techniques, and the kinds of opportunities men and women had to study and practice art. In particular, we focus on how society sees artworks in relation gender, and women artists, as well as the themes artists favoured and why. Establishing relations with the history of thought, ethics, science, literature, symbolism and technique, valuing emotions and micro history (accounts of the everyday, the traditional female domain) alongside macro history (traditionally the domain of patriarchy), we do what Butterwick (2015) argues is important: question the historical gendered *status quo* through a more feminist pedagogic approach. By using this approach, we aim to create new understandings about how scientific, artistic, social and cultural models have been constantly changing throughout history, and therefore can be open to further change.

FEMINISM AND INCLUSION AT CASA DA CERCA

My point up to now is that 'inclusion' of women's issues in creative and critical ways has been a hallmark of the pedagogy I practice in Case de Cerca. However, there is a kind of 'inclusion' which I feel still needs attention. Women have long been seen as outsiders in the cultural world, as if there had been no women interested (and working) in arts or science throughout history. This exclusion of women's work from the general cultural memory or artistic (and scientific) patrimony has contributed to two significant problems. The first is the difficulties women have had over the centuries to get access to artistic or scientific education and training – or any kind of education and training for that matter – and this has had an impact on their ability to be seen as professional artists. The second is the erasure, devaluation and exclusion of their artworks in history books, museums and their subsequent de-legitimation as members of the art world. Had it not been for the pioneering work of Linda Nochlin and Ann Harris (1971), and a succession of feminist art historians, such as Nancy G. Heller, Griselda Pollock or Frances Borzello, we would still believe that artistic creation was strictly a male achievement.

Keeping women outside the art world is no longer as easy as it once was, at least in Western countries, but that does not mean they achieved the same status as their male counterparts. In fact, women artists still have a hard time finding their way into the art market or into the art institutions and this still happens because it is not easy to dismiss prejudice when it comes to teaching, curating, exhibiting, critiquing, valuing or even talking about women's art works and creations. Having said this, it is important to keep in mind that women were not only victims of this system but, in fact, survivors of it (Borzello, 2000). Combining these two is of course, the

foundation of feminism. Feminist adult education, the employment of theories and methods that expose gender injustices and absences, in this case, in art.

As a feminist adult educator, I have made a point of integrating women's works into catalogue texts and into my research as an art historian, as well as inviting them alongside other contemporary Portuguese artists to exhibit their works at Casa da Cerca. As I do so, I am particularly aware of my choice of words to talk about their works, which might segregate them. I therefore take care to address their works using the same tools that I use when dealing with men's art works. This means, for example, paying attention to the use of technique, the value of expression, the innovation of a certain work, interests of the author, where and what she studied, any concerns or issues she raises, and so on. What this means is that as a feminist art educator, I refuse to separate works using gender as it frequently becomes an excuse to frame women artists in essentialist language – sensitive, delicate, caring and so forth – which diminishes them as artists and puts them in marked contrast to the laudatory terms used to describe male artists including genius, adventurous, expressive, and innovative.

What this means is that when I am facilitating activities with diverse groups of adults, I make it a point to make the women in the audience understand that being an artist is a laudable profession and something toward which anyone can aspire—regardless of gender. In other words, it gives women role models and new ways to think about themselves, their relationship to art and the art world. Also, when addressing a general adult audience, an art educator must keep in mind that prejudice is alive and well—quite well nourished by most generic or 'neutral' art histories (and art teachers) that continue to obliterate women artists from the global narrative. Introducing women's work using the same professional analysis that is used for men's work means opening a new way of seeing women as equal creators; it means being a new 'meaning maker'. I also believe that art can be a tool for change, and empowering women through their work represents a way of empowering them in other situations in their lives. In other words, I believe that "pedagogy is never innocent" (Bruner, 1996; apud Smith, 2012) and that we need what Clover (2013) called '*intentionality*'. By this she means the adult educator must take responsibility for the process. Since learning comes about primarily through social interaction and is shaped by political, social, cultural and economic forces, what adults learn as well as what adult education is about are at the forefront of all activities.

OBSTACLES

Of course, integrating women fully into the gallery, and my pedagogical practices, have not been easily implemented, especially considering that in our exhibitions at Casa da Cerca women artists have been so outnumbered by male artists. Indeed, amongst the numerous exhibitions that we have had since 2000 at Casa da Cerca, excluding thematic exhibitions, there have been only 22 by women artists. Only five of these were actually held at the main gallery, as opposed to 33 male artists

who had solo exhibitions in that same venue. Moreover, considering the team of Casa da Cerca is fully responsible for its programme and the fact that the team is composed primarily by women, the question we need to ask ourselves, is: What does this say about the choices we are making in terms of exhibition content and gender and what are the pedagogical and social implications of these choices? For the past six years, we have organised our yearly programme around a theme. And the responsibility for finding the most suitable artists for these themes has been ours. We invite artists to respond to our proposals. Why, then, on a mainly female team, is the presence of male artists still so significant when compared to the presence of their female counterparts? Does this mean that, in Portugal, there are more men doing the kind of work we seek? Or does this mean we are biased? Do we still believe, even perhaps unconsciously, that Portuguese men artists are a better guarantee of quality and artistry than Portuguese women artists?

Perhaps one of the problems is that we do most of our research about artists online as the Internet is a great tool when looking for the artist's most recent projects. Yet, in the Portuguese art world, at least online, we seem to find mostly men's works. Does this mean that women are not as active as men online and in promoting themselves? We know they are underrepresented in public and private art collections, but it is also clear that the amount of information circulating online about women artists is significantly less as well. The same applies to art galleries websites themselves in Portugal.

Sometimes, artists (both men and women) do contact us to show their works and present exhibition projects. But again, in this process, the majority of proposals come from men and are meant for the main gallery. Women, at least those who have contacted us, seem to prefer (or maybe pretend to) smaller spaces. Why is this? Does this reflect any bias on their part, assuming that the main gallery is off limits for them? Or are we somehow, inadvertently or through history and tradition, suggesting this is where they belong? These are not questions I can answer in this chapter, but they are ones we need to take up as a team.

TRYING TO OVERCOME

Considering the challenges and obstacles, how is that I have taken a feminist approach on ES activities at Casa da Cerca? In Casa da Cerca as well as other art centres and museums in Lisbon, I should add, a feminist point of view would be very limited if I only focused on the collections and exhibitions. But my feminist approach began with an experiment at the Modern Art Centre (CGF, Lisbon) in 2006. I actually taught a course on women artists in history. Considering that in 2006 women artists were not included in university art history programmes, I borrowed Woody Allen's movie title, *Shadows and Fog*, to refer to their unclear presence in art history and to announce the course as "An approach to women's place in Art History". From this, I went further, assimilating these artists and works into all the other Art History courses I taught. By inserting their names and works into

'mainstream' Art History, my purpose was to stress their existence and importance, but also their 'normality'—their right to be there, as I discussed above. This awareness of an erased heritage leads us in the classroom to ask further questions such as why women artists are excluded in museums and texts, and how this relates to larger questions about gender in society.

Thus far, I have talked about women artists, art history and my own practices. I turn now to women and museums, particularly their place as founders and actors in educational roles in Portugal.

GENDER AND EDUCATION IN THE MUSEUM

In 1965, Portugal was still a dictatorship, although there were efforts to follow some international tendencies in museum policies, such as the creation of ES teams. However, training in museum education in Portugal was by then exclusively provided by the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (National Museum of Ancient Art), which meant a closed circuit, destined for people already working in museums and who, somehow, had to deal with the public. It still was not considered a profession on its own.

After the revolution in 1974, Portugal experienced what could be seen as a museum boom. The new policies, with their ambition of cultural democratisation, saw museums as marvellous sites. Problematically, only a few museums had organised ES, although the Calouste Gulbenkian Foudation, one of the most important cultural foundations in Portugal, had had strong educational services since 1970. During the 1990s, organised educational services started to appear countrywide.

What is interesting, but not well acknowledged, is the fact that ES were mostly organised by women, and women were predominantly the museum educators. Today, in the majority of Portuguese art museums and art centres, women make up 90% of the educators yet a brief study I did in 2015 showed that only 10% acknowledged gender as an important issue, either in their experience, their approach to artworks or their engagement with the public. Despite all I have said above, I would say that I still belong to this 10%. And there are reasons for this.

Feminists such as English and Irving (2015) remind us that women are often educated to be caregivers. We get this with our first doll, and the cooking and kitchen toys we receive, as well as through instruction on how to be polite, gentle, and 'inclusive', even paradoxically, at the expense of our own exclusion. This makes us, women, educated educators, as opposed to 'natural born' education, which brings us to 'traits-based ideas' that often work in men's favour and against women (Clover, Butterwick & Collins, 2015). But as in any other profession, the closer one gets to the top, the rarer the presence of women. As I have fully witnessed, most directors and (mainly most) curators in their ivory towers rarely feel the need to consider the needs of others. The way they think, write and talk about art, focusing strictly on a technical speech, alienates and excludes the non-initiated. In fact, this is not merely a personal feeling or intuition of mine. In recent years, having visitor's inclusion

in mind and considering that this kind of technical and theoretical approach is harming museums and their audiences, a cultural association called *Acesso Cultura* [Access Culture] has been organizing lectures and courses on how to make museum information (including catalogue and exhibition texts) clearer (and therefore inclusive) to all audiences.

And yet at the education level in museums, where the presence of women is dominant, inclusion is the rule. Educators have to deal with the suspicion of audiences who feel excluded from the 'art club'. Art has its own history and technical vocabulary and once we learn it we tend to forget that other people may not know it at all. If one is only focused on research and curating but is never in touch with museum audiences, one may forget (or simply dismiss) this fact. The awareness that this gives visitors a sense of exclusion is clearer to educators than to curators. Educators have to deal with all kinds of people, the learned and the newcomers, the young and the old, and therefore are aware of the unease most audiences feel when entering an exhibition.

I have to say that the best stories we cherish at Casa da Cerca ES are the visitor's testimonies. Two of the most poignant cases occurred with senior visitants. The first was the happiness of a retired woman who started working during her childhood, and for whom coloured pencils were a magic discovery, since they never had the opportunity to use them before. The second was a retired woman who could neither read nor write who, at the end of a visit, thanked me, saying,

> I knew this was important, because it is in a museum. But I did not understand it and I thought this was not for me. I now understand what this place is all about and I'm glad to have realised that after all I too can come here, because this is for everybody.

FINAL WORDS

For over 20 years, our team at Casa da Cerca has been working to overcome the elitism and exclusionary tendencies of the art museum. All the programming and exhibitory activities have assumed a role toward greater public service (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). Conceiving inclusive exhibitions has also been a personal goal of mine. If one thinks about it from the start, it is easier to lead people into a complex but also enchanting forest of meanings and broaden their horizons. I have therefore begun to use some of the exhibitions to tell stories, using the works as multiple triggers to the visitor's imagination (Bedford, 2014).

The team's goals have been to make people feel welcome, to encourage them to return to the museum by making them feel they belong in a world of strange and provocative works. This sense of belonging is something I enjoy providing and I do it with the awareness that using an inclusive approach is the way forward. A feminist approach has been this means of inclusion. I firmly believe that taking a feminist approach could make a difference to how other curators and museum directors view

women and art and their absences, which I discussed in this chapter. But we need to have more engaged conversations in our museum through which we can challenge the status quo of male normativity, and even ourselves as women.

Recently, I read that people working in education in art museums do it by chance—they somehow ended up as educators but had no specific training or ideas of this as a career (e.g. Orgaz, 2011) – but mostly they came for the love of art and pedagogy allowed them to this (Burnham & Kai Kee, 2012). The acknowledgment of this situation was comforting to me: I am not alone, then. I am also well accompanied in another aspect: being a female, I am a part of a very large group of professionals that adult art education seriously. Nevertheless, as a feminist and adult educator I realise I am in the minority. Most museums and art centres develop their education programmes for children or youth. And yet the curatorial projects are aimed at adults. This separation is a problem. But so too is education for adults that is overwhelmed by theory, delivered in a top-down way, as if visitors had no right to be engaged and entertained as well as informed. The general belief is that adults' methods must be rational, and that adults seek clear, intelligible guidance, and knowledge. True. Yet, they also seek respect, visibility, acknowledgement of their presence, knowledge and identity – a right to be there, and to enjoy being there. I recognised these demands and they led me to the discovery of feminism, a word I keep in mind to guide my actions as a curator and an adult art educator. Contemporary art doesn't have to be an obstacle. Neither does gender.

NOTE

[1] *Encontro Museus e Educação*, Lisbon, Centro Cultural de Belém, September 10–11, 2001. The keynote speaker was Eileen Hooper-Greenhill.

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Emília Ferreira
Instituto de História da Arte, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

JENNIFER VAN DE POL

10. PERFORMING AND ACTIVATING

Case Studies in Feminising and Decolonising the Gallery

INTRODUCTION

My practice as an interdisciplinary artist and art educator/pedagogue in a public art gallery are rooted in exploring how engagement with art can be liberatory project with the potential to connect learners with self-actualisation and transformation aligned with the struggles social and gender justice and change. My practice is also concerned with problematising institutionalised – in this case in art galleries – methodologies of knowledge making as processes of privilege and exclusion. My aim in my work, therefore, is to offer alternative and more holistic frameworks and process for how to know and be in this world.

In this chapter I highlight two projects in which I have been involved as an educator at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) in Victoria BC, Canada which is located on the traditional/Indigenous lands of the Lekwungen speaking people. The first is *Activating Emily*, a multi-sensory interpretive and outreach project that is in the making. The second is a public programme called *Performing Femininity* that responded to an exhibition entitled *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists.* Both adult education projects utilised decolonising, and feminist frameworks. In this chapter, I describe in some detail each project and outline how they are in direct conversation with place based pedagogy and ethno botany, transnational feminism, and decolonisation, and aimed at engaging people in holistic, creative and critical learning processes toward individual and collective well-being. Questions I ask in my investigations include: How can I bring the criticality and divergent thinking of my artistic practice to bear in my work as an adult educator? What effect does this have on both? Can engagement with and through art that takes up issues of ethno-botany, mindfulness, feminism and decolonisation create more compassionate, socially and politically engaged citizens? I argue in this chapter that it can, and the projects illustrated are my ways of illuminating this.

POSITIONALITY AND ETHNOBOTANY: BEING IN RELATION TO THE LAND

As noted above the adult education projects I will discuss in this chapter utilised place based pedagogy, and ethno-botany, and it is therefore important to define

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what this means and my connection to it. The online Oxford Dictionary defines Ethno-botany as "the scientific study of the traditional knowledge and customs of a people concerning plants and their medical, religious, and other uses." I incorporate these ways of knowing into adult art education experiences by asking learners to become more aware of their positionality, or relationship to the land, as well as more mindful of traditional/Indigenous knowledge and customs practised by the region's Indigenous peoples. I do this in order to interconnect learning with the land, so that it can be more holistic and not simply cerebral. I come to this subject as a non-Indigenous woman, the daughter of settlers, and I share this at the outset in order to make clear my positionality. I sit writing these words at the one year anniversary of making home in a new (to me) place, Victoria BC on Canada's west coast. This is the land of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. My Baba (Ukrainian Grandmother) arrived on this great turtle island – the name given by Indigenous peoples to North America – by boat from the Ukraine in 1910, and my Father came from the Netherlands in 1968 at age 19. I was born in Canada, raised on lands known as Treaty Six territory which is home to a diverse range of Indigenous peoples, commonly called First Nations peoples in Canada, Treaty Six territory is known by settlers as Edmonton, Alberta. I was raised along the North Saskatchewan River surrounded by native plant species like – birch trees, wheat and mountain ash trees. When I turned 18 I travelled west to the coast, and years later continued west across the water to arrive on Vancouver Island. The Salish Sea, and salal plants, and cedar trees, native to this region, now surround me. I am learning from local Indigenous teachers that these are considered plant medicines, since each has traditionally been used for medicinal purposes and still are today. As I take up the Indigenous subjects of ethno-botany and plant medicine in this chapter, I do so with deep respect, curiosity and the desire to keep learning so that I may be a good visitor.

THE ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA: TOWARDS A FEMINISED, DECOLONISED GALLERY

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) is located on Vancouver Island, the largest island in the Pan Pacific. Both of the projects discussed in this chapter took place in the AGGV. According to the Gallery's website

> When it first opened in 1951, the … Gallery was housed in a [colonial] 1889 mansion that is now adjacent to seven modern galleries. With almost 20,000 works of art, the Art Gallery has the largest public collection in BC … and is home to one of Canada's most (extensive) Asian art collections, second only to the Royal Ontario Museum (in Toronto, Ontario). (para. 1)

The AGGV has shifted in recent years its curatorial focus to ensure an emphasis on women and First Nations artists, and away from a past emphasis on artists from dominant cultures – largely thanks to Chief Curator Michelle Jacques who

recently came from the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto. However, there remains a lot of work to be done in order for the AGGV, and most arts and cultural institutions in general in Canada, to represent and be truly accessible to a diverse range of communities and particularly women and indigenous women. The fact that the mansion part of the physical Gallery was built by a British male settler from wealth he accrued in the 1800s gold rush signals, to me, an opportunity to consider how that history and the AGGV's physical environment might have an impact on present day audience experiences, especially those of non-male, non-settler people. Knowing this history, I question continually if I need to take extra initiatives in order for visitors to feel welcome and safe in this space, and feel a sense of belonging in a space built by a coloniser who represents dominant culture. After all, galleries have historically been "traditional sites where knowledge and truth are displayed by the socially powerful and consumed by the powerless" (Golding, 2005, p. 51). In other words, these are spaces that have historically excluded the experiences, works, practices and voices of women and Indigenous peoples. It is interesting and perhaps promising to note that the vast majority of staff at the AGGV are female, four of the five people in the Education/Curatorial department I joined one year ago are female, and two of those five are women of colour. Of course, this does not automatically ensure a more inclusive or feminist approach, but is indicative of more progressive hiring practices, and the vital importance of not predominately representing dominant culture in an organization. Part of the responsibility I take up as a pedagogue in the gallery context is to continually be mindful of and expose power dynamics so that they may be explored, challenged and potentially transformed by learners. As the iconic feminist art collective the Guerilla Girls recently stated on a popular American talk show, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,* "If all the decisions are made by the same people, then the art will never look like the whole of our culture, it's not really a history of art, it's a history of power" (2016) Related to this of course is the fact that defining what constitutes 'Art' is a Western hegemonic pursuit in general, making it vital to consider what ways of knowing and epistemologies one is practising, in order to pursue this subject critically. In my case, my interest in epistemologies – or ways of knowing – that are more about integration than separation, immersion in sensorial perception rather than objectification, has led me to study ways of knowing such as Indian Philosophy (Iyengar Yoga in particular), Zen and Mahayana Buddhism, First Nations ways of knowing (for example the work of Dr. Beatrice Medecine, Black Elk and Dr. Martin Brokenleg) and phenomenology. The latter interests me because "phenomenology is the Western philosophical tradition that most forcefully called into question the modern assumption of a single, wholly determinable, objective reality" (Abram, 1996, p. 31). But all of these ways of knowing are also connected to the integrative way of being in the world that Beatrice Medecine (2001) refers to when she argues that "while the English word 'Art' represents a compartmentalisation of an aesthetic framework, Lakota world view represents an integration which is difficult to delineate into a discrete entity" (n/p). This way of

understanding the world and the concept of creativity or "Art" as integrated and interconnected is much more holistic and generative than the normalised (in this society) Euro-centric alternative.

Moreover, I have been a sexual health educator, a volunteer firefighter, a volunteer counsellor, a visiting artist and art educator in community centres, non-profit art galleries and schools, and an Iyengar Yoga teacher. As such I have practised and experienced a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning. Common threads that run through my understanding of the most generative adult education approaches is that they are experiential, learner-centred, respectful, inter- and/or multi-disciplinary, self-reflexive and socially and culturally critical, dialogic (both through conversation and exhibition practice), concerned with issues of justice and change, and authentically invested in the well-being of community/s. It is my aim as an educator to contribute to this by working to make the AGGV a critical, creative, multi-epistemological, experiential and inclusive space.

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ART EDUCATION

As alluded to above I believe adult education engagement with art and using a transnational feminist approach have great potential to inspire critical gendered and decolonial consciousness, and active citizenship. I call this approach 'transnational feminist art education'. In order to create a more healthy and sustainable world, we need to increase awareness around the power dynamics and injustices that exist, and ensure our actions are aligned with their dissolution and/or with realising the just social reality we most want to be living in. I see public art galleries in general as sites of great potential to explore this through practising progressive and feminist pedagogy, and utilising art education methodologies that truly value gender and other forms of social equality and change. Art education at it's best, to me, is a form of transformative and even liberatory pedagogy, where learners engage with making practices, aesthetics and close looking and feeling, and through these experiences develop a more sensitized and compassionate understanding and connection to the self and the world. Ensuring that feminism is combined with art education is a powerful way to disrupt long held injustices of gender, race, class – all equity categories – that have pervaded art galleries. The type of feminism I take up in the projects described in this chapter is what is known as transnational feminism. According to the Transnational Feminism website, this is defined as being

> attentive to intersections among nationhood, race, gender, sexuality and economic exploitation on a world scale, in the context of emergent global capitalism. Transnational feminists inquire into the social, political and economic conditions comprising imperialism; their connections to colonialism and nationalism; the role of gender, the state, race, class, and sexuality in the organisation of resistance to hegemonies in the making and unmaking of nation and nation-state. (para. 1–2)

All of the artists and community partners in the projects I take up shortly are women, half of whom are First Nations. This is a deliberate choice to align with my feminist view of one way we can bring about change in the AGGV. For example, if visitors see that guest artists and facilitators are not from the settler dominant culture, or male, but rather women and communities traditionally over-looked by arts and cultural institutions, does this affect people's perception of the purpose of these spaces and contribute to a sense of belonging? Moreover, it calls into question: Who is the audience? In creating *Performing Femininity*, for example, consideration of the role of gender, race, class, and sexuality in the organisation of resistance to hegemonies was key to thinking through what the educational experience would need to look like. Also, all projects were offered free of charge in an effort to make them accessible to more people. In the context of the AGGV, an institution that has long upheld patriarchal values and power dynamics similar to the majority of Canadian cultural institutions, this was a feminist practice of art education that aimed to place women, and gender and indigenous issues at the centre of more of our projects and programmes. Women co-curators, adult educators, facilitators and participants co-created these experiences and made them possible.

PERFORMING FEMININITY

Performing Femininity was a public workshop that took place in November 2015 in the AGGV in response, as noted in the introduction, to the exhibition *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists*. This group exhibition featured artwork by a number of Canadian women artists in a wide variety of mediums, including, a Hannah Maynard photographic work, a Pauline Johnson dress in which she had performed, a Maude Darling quilt, a Kenojuak Ashejak print, a video, various paintings and an unnamed Cree women's doll making/costume work. The co-curators, Alicia Boutilier and Tobi Bruce made an effort to choose work by historical Canadian women that explored the concept of self-portraiture broadly and from multiple perspectives.

When asked to think through creating an experience that would invite the public to experience *The Artist Herself* in interesting ways, I was immediately moved to explore the idea of storytelling of self, or the ways we perform and engender our individual stories in daily life, how these stories are enacted through gesture and the ways we clothe ourselves to further communicate these personas or realities. It felt important that the guest facilitators were both women, and Indigenous women, partly because most of the artists represented in *The Artist Herself* were non-Indigenous or white settler women. In order to do the work of bringing not only gender equity to bear in arts and culture institutions, but decolonial work as well, we who design and conceptualise education and engagement experiences need to think critically about how our choices either contribute to or call into question systemic institutional racism, sexism and other injustices. Setting the intention to invite non-settler women to co-facilitate this experience, when myself and the other staff facilitator, as well

as the majority of women represented in the exhibition were white settlers, aligned with my belief that unless our choices and actions are directly connected with our values of change making, change will not be possible. There is a movement afoot in Canada, amongst more progressive arts institutions, to seriously consider the impact that colonialism and dominant power structures have had on hiring and curatorial practices, and which genders and ethnicities of artists are repeatedly being featured, or not, in exhibitions due to biases and ignorance. To illustrate and quantify this, *Canadian Art Magazine* recently published an exposé which

> looked back through solo exhibitions held since the beginning of 2013 at a major art institution in each province (in addition to the National Gallery of Canada). Focusing exclusively on living artists, we averaged out the artists, looking for the gender breakdown (men and women), and racial distribution (how many artists of both genders were non-white) … According to the 2012 Waging Culture report, women constitute 63% of living artists, yet they only account for 36% of solo exhibitions at these Canadian institutions since 2013. Between institutions, exhibitions by female artists ranged greatly. At the Vancouver Art Gallery, for example, a mere 15% of contemporary solo exhibitions featured female artists. (Cooley, Luo, & Morgan-Feir, 2015, p. 2)

This report supports the work my colleagues and I are doing in our respective institutions to move towards rectifying these dismal numbers and challenge the thinking and pedagogy that underlies them. I believe that part of my responsibility is to create art engagement strategies and opportunities in adult art education that inspires questions similar to those posed by Cooley, Luo and Morgan-Feir by asking: Who is speaking for whom? What world view/s are and are not being engaged with by artists, curators, exhibitions and so forth? I find that these lines of enquiry tend to raise awareness around power dynamics and can be the beginnings of stopping their perpetuation.

Approximately twenty five people gathered for the *Performing Femininity* workshop, some self identifying as women, some not specifically so they could have been transgendered or otherwise. Part of my pedagogy is to allow space for learners to self-define and to resist the temptation to speak for others. The afternoon began with a gesture or theatre workshop led by Erin Maklem, a Métis designer and playwright, and the Artistic Associate and Outreach Coordinator for the Belfry Theatre, a small theatre located in the same neighbourhood as the AGGV. The group experimented with representing themselves or certain emotions with quick gestures and vignettes. There were swaths of fabric available with which to drape oneself and feel-through this process, and participants were invited to respond to actual artworks in the exhibition that surrounded them as they explored moving in the space. Participants commented that they noticed habitual ways of moving and dressing themselves that they were previously unaware of, and they seemed to recognise the complexity that co-curators Alicia Boutilier and Tobi Bruce refer to when they say that if we expand on the notion of self-portraiture to mean the representation of one's

own identity, we recognise that the self is embedded in a complex and diverse range of creative expressions.

In *Performing Femininity* we explored how considerations of gender influenced not only what the artists included in their self-portraits, but also how all of us represent the self in daily life. I believe that, in coming to this knowing through not only exploring artwork in an exhibition but through embodiment and theatre that responds to that artwork, learning becomes more integrated in the whole person and her/his ways of experiencing herself/himself in the world. Augusto Boal, Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician who founded a radical pedagogical model called *Theatre of the Oppressed,* in fact once argued that “theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it” (1993, p. xxxi). Using theatre in the gallery as knowledge-creation, and to explore how we perform and engender our selves in daily life, aimed to heighten participants’ awareness around what kinds of choices we make in how we construct our self-image, and what choices we want to make in order to create the kind of future self and society we most want to engage with. It aimed to help the participants think more about how they participate in certain gender stereotypes and can now take action to challenge or transform this.

This experience in the exhibition was followed by a cornhusk doll making workshop in one of the colonial mansion galleries, facilitated by Lindsay Delaronde, Iroquois and Mohawk artist and educator based in Victoria, who learned this art as a girl growing up on the Kahnawà:ke Reserve in Quebec (eastern Canada). Lindsay shared that the story of the cornhusk doll is part of many First Nations communities across the country, each nation has their own perspective on the legend, and that part of her teaching methodology is to connect with others and explore community-building through the act of making. The group was taught how to create their own cornhusk doll using materials of cornhusks and sinew. We talked about how this exercise involved only these two materials, both sourced from the land and in this way we were engaging with ethno botany. We were asked to consider where and how these materials would have been collected, where the cornhusks were grown, and where the sinew was sourced, in order to bring attention to the importance of mindful resource extraction and land use. As the dolls were being created, participants were commenting that the dolls were taking on an autobiographical quality, with the theatre workshop fresh in their minds and influencing choices around what position individual dolls would assume and how it would be dressed (and what this might communicate.) My intention in pairing the theatre and doll-making activities was to have participants consider the multiplicity of ways we are creating and embodying stories of self and gender, and how this can be transformed in order to live more truthfully, compassionately and in ways that are aligned with our values around gender and culture. The co-curators state, “self-representation offers effective parameters through which to explore larger issues associated with gender and culture” (Boutilier & Bruce, 2015, p. 18). From what I observed in the workshop, the tangible process of hands-on making following gestural explorations had the effect

of heightening participants' considerations of what it means to represent the self and the greater implications that can potentially have. By privileging somatic (having to do with the body) and non-verbal learning as much or more than cerebral ways of knowing, we challenged traditional (in Western society) notions of education, and perhaps expectations of adult education in the Gallery context.

ACTIVATING EMILY

The *Activating Emily* project I am co-designing at the AGGV will take the form of an app and print piece. Just as I am visitor to this place (Victoria BC) as a daughter of settlers, so too was renowned British Columbian artist Emily Carr (1871–1945). This project will invite visitors to experience the artist's work from multiple perspectives and consider how they themselves came to be here. Because Carr is so highly celebrated in BC and beyond, there is a dedicated permanent exhibition of her work at the Gallery, entitled *Emily Carr and the Young Generation*. As stated on the AGGV website

> Carr is famous not only for her stunning landscapes, but also for her reputation as a nomadic, solitary 'woman' artist. *Emily Carr and the Young Generation* celebrates a new vision of the iconic Victoria artist as both mentor and teacher, lending ideas and influence to a new generation of local artists. (para 1)

Activating Emily will use the artist's work and notoriety as a jumping off point for considering larger socio-political, feminist and decolonial contexts. The use of the word 'activating' points to a strategic effort to activate the Gallery spaces or enliven them, with people, movement and questions, thereby expanding notions of the museum as a site to passively view objects on display. The project will use an interdisciplinary methodology where visitors consider the artist's work and its impacts by responding to her brushstrokes and renderings with gesture, movement and/or dance in the actual Gallery space. The app portion of this project will feature videos of local dance and performance artist, Judith Price, responding by moving, gesturing, and dancing in front of two different Emily Carr paintings. The print portion of the project asks readers to explore in a similar way and to upload videos to an online 'dance gallery' created for this purpose, thereby extending the conversation beyond the physical Gallery and into social media channels. This is a way to bring somatic practices (body awareness) into the Gallery space and disrupt commonly held assumptions that one should simply stand in front of the art object and passively look. I consider this feminist art education since it involves honouring the wisdom of the body led by a female artist and inviting that type of knowing into engagement with art, so our experience is not solely visual and/or cerebral.

This process also involves learning about local Lekwungen land stewardship and ethno botany by way of audio recordings of the voice of Cheryl Bryce, a local ethno botanist, scholar and Lekwungen woman. As well, it includes learning words in this first language for local areas in which Emily Carr worked and lived. This

is an inherently feminist investigation and decolonial pedagogical process because through Bryce's sharing and storytelling, visitors come to understand various things such as how the Garry Oak (trees native to the area) Ecosystems Carr painted thrived in her time, thanks to generations of Lekwungen women, Bryce's ancestors, who stewarded these lands, regularly removing non-Indigenous, invasive plants. But this also links the past to present day gender issues and makes clear how pervasive and damaging the effects of colonialism have been. Visitors are taught that these ecosystems are now endangered as a direct result of the Indian Act of 1876, which prohibited these women from tending to the land. The value in bringing attention to this history is to create the potential for visitors to leave the experience with increased awareness, questioning these injustices and asking how they themselves might be implicated in it, which hopefully inspires critical thinking towards what reparative actions can be taken moving forward. This section of *Activating Emily* raises important questions around land/place and settlement, colonisation and sovereignty. Emily Carr's family were settlers from England, one of many who made home on Lekwungen speaking peoples' lands. By asking, 'whose lands and forests was the artist sitting on and working within as she painted? What plants surrounded her as she painted, what ecosystems and what were their meanings and place in Indigenous people's lives? What can be done to rectify the fact that these ecosystems are now threatened, to do the work of healing the land?', visitors will perhaps become curious about what underlies this line of enquiry and what is at stake. And if this project awakens curiosity in visitors as to how we answer these questions, perhaps we also, collectively, begin to wonder why settler artists' work tends to be celebrated and exhibited more than those of Indigenous artists. And that is the beginning of meaningful change.

Bringing this pedagogy into a public gallery context and asking visitors to consider politics of land that artists (like Emily Carr) are implicated within, and to question their own relationship to local places including the threatened Garry Oak ecosystem on which the Gallery stands, serves to begin these conversations. This is why *Activating Emily* will draw on the expertise of this local ethno-botanist Lekwungen scholar and storyteller to develop the viewers' understandings of local land and stewardship practices and the colonial histories and destruction that underpins the current state of things. Part of the intention with this project is to ignite an interest or curiosity in the fact that engaging with place-based learning is actually highly political and bound up in considerations around the perpetuation of violence. I see part of my responsibility as an art educator to reveal these power dynamics and to use art engagement as a vehicle to become more compassionate, active citizens.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The projects I have highlighted in this chapter are part of a new commitment to a feminist art education agenda and processes of decolonisation in the AGGV that aim toward gender justice/thinking and seek to start the process of "bringing about

the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1). Afterall, decolonisation is only truly possible when land is repatriated – given back – to Indigenous communities. With the ways that gender and race are constructed and/or understood, we as adult educators need to be thinking critically and constantly about how we can best use art and the gallery space, and how we can inspire understanding and empathy through our work. We need to think about how these kinds of education projects in the gallery can be seen as the beginnings of a consciousness-raising that leads to gender equity and justice for Indigenous peoples, and all who have been disempowered in society. Also, we need to persist in asking questions such as, how can art education methodologies in institutions continue to be progressive, self-reflective, and critical of the pedagogical lineage on which they have been constructed? It is my hope that these two projects, *Activating Emily* and *Performing Femininity,* might inspire viewers to be more sensitive to their sensory experiences and local environment and perhaps through this sensitivity develop compassion for themselves and ultimately others, igniting an interest in social justice and change for all. Perhaps these "seeds" of awareness are the beginnings of becoming more engaged citizens, together. I propose that we, particularly in Western hegemonic society, need a revolution in the way we think about and activate knowledge creation, and I believe this is possible through art education that engages feminism, decolonialism, ethnobotany and mindfulness in ways that are creative and critical. All of these things in turn develop self-awareness and compassion, which are vital first steps toward feeling compassion for others and taking action to build connection and community, and ultimately pursue social justice and well being in the world.

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Jennifer Van de Pol
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Canada

SECTION 3

RE-IMAGINING, REPRESENTING, REMAKING

KAY JOHNSON

11. DECOLONISING MUSEUM PEDAGOGIES

"Righting History" and Settler Education in the City of Vancouver

INTRODUCTION

In his short story, *Totem*, Indigenous author Thomas King (1993) tells the strange tale of a Canadian museum director's lost battle with the mysterious intrusion of noisy totem poles that refuse to allow their singing, chuckling, and other vocalising to be silenced. Yet historically, those in a dominant position have defined the space occupied by Indigenous peoples in Canadian museums. However, museums are increasingly engaged in processes of "contestation, negotiation, and reinvention" (Phillips, 2012, p. 22) and in recent decades, Indigenous struggles over narrative, representation, and authority have led to profound changes in museums.

This chapter considers the possibilities of museums as spaces for the critical education of the public about colonialism and the conversations needed to build new relationships. I start by situating myself in relation to my subject and then offer some thoughts on interconnections between colonialism, museums, and public pedagogy. I then describe three separate learning journeys that I undertook to a museum exhibition in the city of Vancouver that exposes and interrogates colonialism in museum practices and in city building, and that I feel has strong potential to educate settler Canadians.

SITUATING MYSELF

I am a settler Canadian of English, Irish, Scottish, and French descent, born and raised in Gatineau, Quebec, across the river from the nation's capital, Ottawa. In stating this, I am participating in a critical tradition that quite rightly draws attention to how writing and research are not neutral acts. At the same time, I feel it necessary to emphasise uncertainties embedded in that claim about myself. How 'Irish' am I? What does it mean that I am 'French', although I do not speak the language well? Why is it that my shorthand answer to strangers when asked where I am from is often Ottawa, and I do not feel that I am lying? I pose these questions not merely to disrupt the notion that we can easily situate our identities, but because the issue of identity is at the core of colonialism and decolonisation. The exhibition that is the focus of this chapter carries crucial messages about an Indigenous identity and sense

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of family, community, and place that has persisted over thousands of years, even when faced with colonialist assimilationist policies. At a time when our identities have been characterised in postmodern terms as fragmented, partial, floating, and shifting, an understanding of the deep connections that First Nations communities have to their ancestors adds a powerful dimension to the settler learning required for decolonisation.

I am also currently a doctoral student with the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, located on traditional Coast and Straits Salish territory. When I identified my research interest in museums to my PhD cohort, a fellow student who is from Snuneymuxw First Nation underscored for me that I was about to delve into institutions that have a contentious relationship with Indigenous peoples. I had known this on some level already, but I did not at all anticipate the extent to which my research would begin to lead me to enquiries into decolonisation and reconciliation.

COLONIALISM AND THE EDUCATION OF THE CANADIAN PUBLIC

On September 25, 2009, at the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh, then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the same man who a little over a year earlier apologised on behalf of Canadians for the harms caused by the residential school system, announced at a press conference that Canada has "no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them" (Ljunggren, 2009, para. 11). The complete disregard this statement shows for the experiences of Indigenous peoples is perhaps not all that surprising when one considers that colonialism rarely enters the dominant settler discourse. When non-Indigenous Canadians speak of Canada's 'colonial history', this typically refers to the settler experience of a period of British imperial control and ignores that which destroyed as it sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples. If colonialism is ignored or misunderstood, it will remain an insurmountable obstacle to developing a just and healthy society.

To comprehend colonialism is to understand it as history, legacy, and ongoing reality. Colonialism in Canada is rooted in the settlement and nation-building projects that cleared the lands and made way for 'progress' by dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their traditional rights, lands, waterways, and resources. It is deeply embedded in Canadian laws and institutions thereby enabling subordination and marginalisation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. In recent years, there have been formal apologies, as noted above, reparations, and other initiatives aimed at reconciliation; however, the rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples continue to be made secondary to the political and economic interests of the settler state. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), was created to gather statements from survivors and other informants about the residential school system. Established in the nineteenth century, with the last of the schools closing only in

the late 1990s, the residential school system removed Indigenous children from their families and communities to strip them of their language, culture, and identity. Many of the children were subjected to neglect and physical and sexual abuse in these federally supported, church run schools. The Commission's ninety-four calls to action include redressing the intergenerational legacy of the system and present-day inequities between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous Canadians in child welfare, education, language, culture, health, and justice (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

There is an urgent need for adult education about the colonial foundations of Canada and the persistence of colonialism. This point has been given particular resonance by Joyce Green, a decolonisation scholar who is of English, Ktunaxa, and Cree-Scots Métis descent. In a talk she gave at the University of Victoria on February 5, 2015, Dr Green noted the "amnesia" understanding of colonialism in Canada. She observed that settler Canadians are largely in the dark when it comes to understanding that colonialism creates a system of privileges that benefit them at the expense of subordinating Indigenous peoples. Critical and decolonising educational approaches are recognised as crucial for the reflection and action, relationship building, and transformations that will enable settlers, and more recent newcomers, to work with Indigenous peoples to create more hopeful futures together. Carr and Thésée (2012), for example, have looked to critical pedagogy to foster the political and media literacy—particularly capacities to question and critique inequitable power relations—needed to go beyond mainstream processes, discourses, and representations that form obstacles to decolonisation. For Donald (2012), drawing on the teachings of Kainai elders, what is most vital is the development of an "ethical relationality" that overcomes colonial assumptions of irreconcilable difference and fosters understandings of "how we are simultaneously different and related" (p. 104).

The formal education of Canadians about Indigenous histories, rights, and knowledges has been deficient to say the least (Lorenz, 2013). Canadian universities are just beginning to acknowledge the problem, with two universities—the University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University—making Indigenous studies mandatory for undergraduates as of 2016. Most non-Indigenous Canadian adults receive an informal education, courtesy of popular culture and mainstream media, in which stereotypes and misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples abound. Even when news media bring public attention to major issues affecting Indigenous peoples, what is most often missing from this education is critical understanding of how contemporary events and issues articulate with centuries of harm caused by attempts to control, civilise, and assimilate 'the Indian.' The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) highlights education of the public through cultural institutions such as museums and archives as key to reconciliation. Museums, although they have troubled histories with Indigenous peoples, hold possibilities for creating spaces for dialogue, relationship building, and the critical education and learning needed to realise alternative ways of being together in the world (Phillips, 2012).

MUSEUMS, DECOLONISATION, AND PUBLIC PEDAGOGY

As authoritative public places of memory and history, museums are filled with possibilities for oppressing or empowering. Museums have a history of legitimising and being deeply intertwined with the logic and workings of colonialism in multiple ways (Bennett, 1995, 2004). This history includes the role of museums in constructing, curating, and circulating racist narratives of evolutionary development, civilisation, and progress, and the plundering of Indigenous remains and objects for museum collections. Canadian colonialist museum discourse and representations have romanticised an 'authentic' Indigenous pre-contact past, constructed Indigenous peoples as a disappearing race, and denied Indigenous peoples the right to tell their own stories (Phillips, 2012; Richard, 2014). Tolerance for such approaches has been evaporating over the past three decades, within the context of world-wide Indigenous resistance, postcolonial and poststructuralist critiques of the museum, and new social, cultural, political, and economic pressures on museums. Museums are attempting to emerge from their colonial and elitist traditions and legacies, and many of them, although not without challenges, are re-envisioning themselves as more inclusive and social justice-oriented institutions (e.g. Clover, 2015; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012).

Controversies and debates generated by high-profile exhibitions of the material culture of colonised peoples in the late 1980s were catalysts in igniting museological reflexivity and engendering decolonising museum practices (Phillips, 2012). The protests and boycott that erupted over the Shell Oil-sponsored exhibition *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* at the Glenbow Museum for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary drew international attention to the exploitation of Indigenous peoples' traditional lands by oil companies. The spotlight on the Glenbow also revealed the cultural insensitivity of a museum presuming to speak for First Nations. A national task force, created in response to the controversial exhibition, published a report in 1992 recommending an equal partnership model for museums and First Peoples to work together, with a focus on Indigenous involvement and access, and the repatriation of remains and objects (Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1992). For Canadian museums, the process of decolonising has meant consulting and collaborating with Indigenous communities, working out new models for sharing authority, and developing more critically and ethically informed adult education mandates. It is an ongoing, complex, and often incomplete process, filled with tensions and contradictions, negotiations and compromises (Phillips, 2012). Even the Canadian Museum of History has failed to effectively communicate the history of colonialism to museum-goers (Richard, 2014), and commitments to work with Indigenous peoples risk getting lost in the rush to open a new Canadian History Hall as part of Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations in 2017 (Aronczyk & Brady, 2015).

With their authoritative roles in knowledge production and representation, and their multimodal capacity to teach through objects, art, text, images, installations,

space, design, architecture, interactive displays, and public programming, museums are powerful sites of public pedagogy. Since the 1990s, a growing number of scholars have looked to a wide range of cultural sites, such as cultural institutions, popular culture, everyday life, political discourse, and social activism, to understand the education and learning that happen outside of formal educational institutions (e.g., Giroux, 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Luke, 1996; Sandlin, Shultz, & Burdick, 2010). Giroux, a leading figure in this scholarship, has underscored how culture, "plays a central role in producing narratives, metaphors, and images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationship to others" (2004b, p. 62). His description of a critical approach to public memory contains rich possibilities for museums to re-imagine themselves as sites for historical learning in which linear narratives are eschewed in favour of "blasting history open, rupturing its silences, highlighting its detours, acknowledging the events of its transmission, and organizing its limits within an open and honest concern with human suffering, values, and the legacy of the often unrepresentable or misrepresented" (2004b, p. 68).

Museums work pedagogically in "positioning the public to know in particular ways," especially through curatorial decisions (Trofanenko & Segall, 2014, p. 1). As they privilege some voices and stories, and marginalise or exclude others, museums create stereotypes and omissions that not only miseducate the public but are hurtful and alienating to those who find themselves misrepresented. The museum makes certain discourses, representations, behaviours, and interactions available and curtails others; however, power circulates within and outside the museum. Visitors and non-visitors have agency to resist and oppose the museum, individually and collectively, with the most visible results (such as *The Spirit Sings* protests) receiving extensive media coverage. As spaces of cultural politics, museums are not merely sites for the consumption of dominant ideologies and race, class, and gender biases, but locations for struggle, debate, dialogue, transformation, critical questioning, and ideology critique—making them of vital interest to critical adult educators (e.g., Borg & Mayo, 2010; Clover, 2015). Moreover, studying the public pedagogies of museums, and of other cultural sites, opens up adult learning theories to reassessment. Sandlin, Wright and Clark (2011) have contended that public pedagogies offer possibilities for revising assumptions that critical learning requires the mediation of a critical adult educator, and for exploring how adults learn not only through rational dialogue, but through a broad range of embodied, relational, transitional, affective, and aesthetic experiences (e.g., Ellsworth, 2005).

MUSEUM POSSIBILITIES: ONE EXHBITION AND THREE LEARNING JOURNEYS

An exhibition that has captured my imagination is *c̓əsnaʔəm, the city before the city,* which opened in January 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The series of three distinct but interconnected exhibits is the outcome of collaboration between the Musqueam First Nation, the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University

of British Columbia, and the Museum of Vancouver (MOV). c̓əsnaʔəm is an ancient village and burial site upon which the city of Vancouver was built, in fact, unceded Coast Salish territory. To the Musqueam community, c̓əsnaʔəm is an ancestral site of ongoing significance that requires continued protection. Within settler society, c̓əsnaʔəm has been, over the years, an archaeological site mined by museums and local treasure hunters and an area to pave over and 'develop'.

As a settler Canadian learning about colonialism and decolonisation, I have chosen to present my reflections in the form of learning journeys. Each of the three journeys represents a trip I took to Vancouver to visit the exhibition. Together, I hope they will illuminate some of the possibilities of this exhibition as a site for the critical adult education and learning for settlers to understand and admit colonialism and to envision ways to work for decolonisation. I have focused more attention on the MOV simply because I know it better as part of my doctoral research. I do not intend my focus on settler learning to obscure the recognition that the "primary concern of First Peoples is with the importance of cultural collections to their own particular communities" (Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1992, p. 14). Rather, I look to the contributions these exhibitions can make to new knowledge and understanding needed by those who dominate and exclude.

FIRST JOURNEY: JANUARY 25, 2015

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV)

Vancouver's city museum rebranded and re-envisioned itself in 2009 with a new vision to "lead provocative conversations" about the past, present, and future of Vancouver (Museum of Vancouver, 2009, p. 8). The *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibition, which will be in place at the MOV for at least five years, represents an unprecedented collaboration between the MOV and the Musqueam First Nation whose ancestors and belongings were collected, classified, and displayed by the museum's predecessors. The exhibition provides the MOV, which holds over 1500 Musqueam belongings in its collection, with an opportunity to engage in a process of critical self-reflection. This was my first visit to the exhibition, on a quiet morning during which I had the space almost entirely to myself.

A nail projects from the wall at the entrance accompanied by explanatory text that asks visitors to "leave behind any preconceptions about Musqueam's and Vancouver's history," to hang them on the nail, and to enter "with an open mind and open heart." The nail, as a projecting material object, serves as a powerful image to mentally hook old ideas onto before entering. The different thinking that is being requested is reflected in a quotation from Musqueam curatorial collective member Leona M. Sparrow: "The city of Vancouver grew up as a part of our story." Placing the Musqueam story as central and inseparable represents a major break with the colonial logic that positions Indigenous peoples in a supporting role within the Canadian historical narrative. The use of the pronoun *our* instead of *their* here

and throughout the exhibit disrupts traditional museum-speak in which Indigenous peoples are talked about, signalling that Musqueam are telling their own stories, in their own voices.

Language plays a powerful role. The use of the language of the Musqueam, hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓, in labelling emphasises the resilience of First Nations and the importance of First Nations' naming. The area commonly known as the Marpole Midden is referred to as *c̓əsnaʔəm*. Terminology that normally goes unquestioned is thrown into doubt when the words *city*, *village*, and *cemetery* are used to refer to c̓əsnaʔəm, replacing the previous archaeological naming of the site as a *midden* – a deposit, a refuse heap, a site for digging to locate remains of human settlement.

The use of the word *city* in the exhibition title (*the city before the city*) to describe an ancient First Nations site demands a critical questioning of assumptions. Who determines what counts as a city, and what values are attached? How does thinking about c̓əsnaʔəm as a city change perceptions of First Nations? What new relationship might be imagined between the Musqueam and the city of Vancouver? The power of words does not stop there. The many human skeletal remains that the museum collected, treated as *specimen*s, and sometimes even discarded, are *ancestors*. One text panel educates visitors who might not grasp the seriousness of disrespectful museum practices: "Those people may not be here physically, but they're still here. We believe they're still here." The term a*rtefact* is abandoned in favour of *belongings*—these are personal possessions connected to the individuals who made and used them in their daily lives. The small pieces made of bone, shell, and stone—fishing technologies, tools, pendants, and other objects—that point to the sophisticated culture of c̓əsnaʔəm are not displayed as excavated archaeological finds. They are contextualised, particularly through video interviews with community members, within the Musqueam people's ongoing and deep connection to their cultural heritage.

Colonial museological discourse is overturned in a display case depicting the pseudo-scientific racial categorisation of the early inhabitants of c̓əsnaʔəm. Five craniofacial reconstructions sculpted in the 1930s for the museum's predecessor, the Vancouver City Museum, form a line with clippings from old newspapers of the time behind them. Headlines read "Canada's Past in a Dump Heap" and "Sculptors Restore Face of Early Man." Frosted glass overwritten with comments from Musqueam community members partially obscures the visitor's view of the sculpted heads. One quotation reads: "Anthropologists today don't work like this anymore. They have evolved." The installation subverts, by creating its own act of erasure and re-inscription, the colonial narratives that sought to dehumanise and erase First Nations by representing them as a vanishing people. Directly across from the installation a multimedia timeline titled "Righting History" provides a corrective to the colonial writing of a settler history of progress and victories. The timeline offers a history of land appropriation, rights infringements, and destructive museological practices as well as First Nations' persistence, activism, struggles, and successes.

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA)

After my MOV visit, I attended the Museum of Anthropology's public celebration that opened the *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibit with welcomes and traditional dancing. The MOA has a history of partnering with the Musqueam, with a number of prominent collaborative exhibitions dating back to the 1980s and 1990s (Phillips, 2012). Part of the University of British Columbia, the MOA is a teaching and research museum that also offers public programmes. An architectural delight located within a majestic West Coast setting and overflowing with collections of world arts and cultures, the MOA is also a tourist destination.

The exhibit at the MOA features stories and voices of the Musqueam community through video, audio, and text. A key contemporary event is highlighted: the 2012 vigil at c̓əsnaʔəm when the Musqueam succeeded in stopping a planned condominium development over part of c̓əsnaʔəm when ancestral remains were exposed. Community members share with the public their feelings and thoughts about c̓əsnaʔəm, the many transformations to the land now called "Vancouver," and their actions to protect their traditional land and home. As with the MOV exhibit, the Musqueam community's continuous connection to c̓əsnaʔəm as integral to Musqueam identity serves as a powerful lesson for settler learning.

The MOA is known for its Multiversity Galleries. These galleries merge high-density storage with object-rich, aesthetically pleasing visual access to material culture from around the world. The curatorial decision not to display belongings from c̓əsnaʔəm presents a striking contrast to the rest of the museum. The absence of displayed objects sends a powerful message about the importance of attending to what the Musqueam community is communicating about their history and culture.

SECOND JOURNEY: JUNE 7, 2015

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV)

I attended an informal talk and tour of the *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibit featuring Howard Grant, a Musqueam First Nation councillor and member of the exhibition advisory committee. It was an engaging, story-filled talk in which Mr. Grant shared his thoughts on the exhibition, traditional teachings, and the history of Musqueam-settler relations in Vancouver. I could guess that most of my fellow participants were Vancouverites from the common knowledge of the city that they shared with Mr. Grant. There was much curiosity expressed about the connections a contemporary Musqueam man makes between the past and the present, and about the ancient First Nations heritage that lies beneath Vancouver homes and workplaces. Video interviews with community members provide opportunities for visitors to 'meet' Musqueam people, but a talk and tour provides space to 'meet with', to engage in questions and conversation. I experienced the museum space being transformed into a meeting space between cultures.

THIRD JOURNEY: NOVEMBER 10, 2015

The Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre and Gallery

This was my first visit to the Musqueam Centre, which provides community access to cultural collections, traditional knowledge, and educational opportunities. The Centre is also a space for sharing Indigenous perspectives with the public. The building is a repurposing of the temporary 2010 Olympics Four Hosts Aboriginal Pavilion structure relocated to a permanent space in the community overlooking the foreshore lands and the Fraser River.

Through video interviews with community members, displays of traditional and contemporary belongings, and other media, the *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibit showcases Indigenous expert knowledge and skills. I looked up in the large, open gallery and saw a traditional sturgeon harpoon suspended above the displays, the first made in several generations. This continuity, resilience, and contribution is so often missing from museum narratives. The exhibit uses language to encourage a reconsideration of how Indigenous builders, and knowledge-holders are perceived. Video interviews and text panels draw attention to the different meanings that are created when we call a practice *medicine* or *science* instead of *home remedy*, or when we refer to longhouse builders as *architects* and canoe makers as *shipwrights*. Text panels point out precise work and careful engineering as they directly address visitors, asking them to "look carefully at the belongings in this case."

The exhibit teaches about colonialism and resistance in a number of ways. Text explains how colonisation removed the Musqueam from c̓əsnaʔəm and other traditional sites. A display tells how museums treated belongings and ancestors as trade goods, and it maps museums that have holdings. Video interviewees note present-day restrictions on traditional practices and discuss the community's environmental conservation role and the loss of natural resources. The 2012 vigil to stop a condominium development at c̓əsnaʔəm is celebrated with photos and banners. A mock zoning application offers a parody attempt by "Desecrator Designs Ltd" to develop condos on the site of Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery.

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA)

On this visit to the MOA, I was especially aware of the emphasis on teachings, and on what the Musqueam community wants settlers to know. The exhibit responds to what Rhiannon Bennett identifies in one text panel as a "void in Canadian consciousness about Indigenous people." I entered a small room, sat at a kitchen table, and listened to a recording of advisory committee members having a conversation. The installation recreates for visitors Musqueam ways of teaching and learning through sharing stories around the kitchen table, underscoring just how much can be learned from listening. Some teachings in the exhibit focus on belongings: "those things belonged to somebody, they didn't just appear in some pile of dirt. They belonged

to someone, and that's how it was always explained to us." Other teachings focus on land—the once vast Indigenous territory that was taken over by Europeans, and the trauma to the community of losing so much.

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV)

On this visit to the MOV, I attended especially to the juxtaposition of the *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibit with the museum's permanent history galleries that tell Vancouver's story from the 1900s to the 1970s. Because Vancouver was built on unceded Coast Salish territory, the inclusion of an exhibit about an ancestral village of the Musqueam First Nation offers an important correction to the narrative. However, I became aware of how it was not really possible to say that this addition truly transformed the museum's dominant settler narrative. Upon exiting the *c̓əsnaʔəm* space, the visitor enters a corridor chronicling Vancouver's development with displays devoted to Land, Gold, Lumber and Steel. Punctuated by a period, as though offering some finality, the heading "Land." appears prominently on a section of wall text. Below it, text explains how the dense Indigenous population that existed in the region for thousands of years declined by 90% due to contact with European diseases. There is no explanation of what happened to the remaining Indigenous people. There is just that word 'Land' and its end point, suggesting land now emptied and available for the making of the city. Further along in the exhibit, there are a few references to 'disruptions' caused by Europeans and the invasions of Indigenous lands by gold seekers. Some space is given to Indigenous material culture in terms of trade materials (a Coast Salish goat horn bracelet) and the traditional Northwest Coast longhouse with a c.1968 house post. Continuing on to the history galleries, a visitor might forget the important contributions First Nations have made to Vancouver's story, as they are eclipsed by growth, war, economic collapse, popular culture, protest, and even racial tensions, and only briefly mention "long-term pervasive discrimination" against First Nations. A text panel promises that a presentation of the story of the removal of First Nations from the site where the museum now stands is being developed collaboratively with local First Nations.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Museums have traditionally buttressed colonialism as an educative force that circulates particular identities, meanings, and relations that hinder decolonisation and reconciliation. As museums decolonise, they suggest possibilities for countering colonialism through critical public pedagogies that foster capacities to value Indigenous rights, ontologies, and epistemologies, engage in relationship building, and imagine living in a world in which there is decolonisation and Indigenous resurgence. Indigenous collaborations and partnerships are crucial to this endeavour.

Each of the *c̓əsnaʔəm* exhibits has its own focus, but together the three exhibits provide opportunities for Vancouverites, and other settlers, to critically question

assumptions about Indigenous peoples and about Vancouver as a 'young' city. The exhibits offer a generous sharing of teachings as the Musqueam First Nation make their stories, in their own voices, available to non-First Nations. While acknowledging that visitors take disparate and unexpected meanings away from museum exhibits, I see this exhibition as offering a much-needed space for the critical learning and dialogue needed to admit and overcome colonialism in Canada. A thread runs across all three sites, a different way of thinking that overturns the hegemonic archaeological and museological discourses that museum visitors have become inured to and replaces it with a discourse of home and belonging. The result is fresh, surprising, and challenging. Through my own learning journeys, I came face to face with the reality that to be told that land is unceded is quite different from learning about what that unceded land means to those who are most affected by its transformation.

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Kay Johnson
University of Victoria, Canada

LISA R. MERRIWEATHER, HEATHER COFFEY AND
PAUL G. FITCHETT

12. FORMALLY INFORMAL

Confronting Race through Public Narratological Pedagogy in a Museum Space

INTRODUCTION

> *Thousands of Indianans carrying picks, bats, axe handles, crowbars, torches, and firearms attacked the Grant County Courthouse, determined to 'get those goddamn Niggers.' A barrage of rocks shattered the jailhouse windows, sending dozens of frantic inmates in search of cover…The door was ripped from the wall, and a mob of fifty men beat Thomas Shipp senseless and dragged him into the street…The dead Shipp was dragged with a rope up to the window bars of the second victim, Abram Smith. For twenty minutes, citizens pushed and shoved for a closer look at the 'dead nigger.' By the time Abe Smith was hauled out he was equally mutilated. 'Those who were not close enough to hit him threw rocks and bricks. Somebody rammed a crowbar through his chest several times in great satisfaction.' Smith was dead by the time the mob dragged him 'like a horse' to the courthouse square and hung him from a tree. The lynchers posed for photos under the limb that held the bodies of the two dead men. Then the mob headed back for James Cameron and 'mauled him all the way to the courthouse square,' shoving and kicking him to the tree, where the lynchers put a hanging rope around his neck…. After souvenir hunters divvied up the bloodied pants of Abram Smith, his naked lower body was clothed in a Klansman's robe—not unlike the loincloth in traditional depictions of Christ on the cross. Lawrence Beitler, a studio photographer, took this photo [of Shipp and Smith hanging from the tree]. For ten days and nights he printed thousands of copies, which sold for fifty cents apiece.* (Cameron, 1994, p. 62)

This story, and its accompanying image, were ones Abel Meeropol, a White Jewish man, could not erase from his mind's eye. So moved was he by the photograph, he was compelled to capture the story of America's shame in a poem referencing Black bodies as "strange fruit" swinging from a poplar tree. In 1939, Billie Holiday sang stories about lynching in the United States of America. Her voice, strong and deep, painted the haunting image of the cruelty of White Americans, enabled through state-sanctioned racism and discrimination, inflicted upon people of African descent

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in particular, but racialised ‘others’ as well. Meeropol’s poetry and Holiday’s voice continue to seize the imagination of adult educators, artists and activists who work for social justice in the United States with a determination never to let the horrific past be ignored or sanitised to salve America’s conscience.

Humans are storied beings. The story of humanity, both its highs and lows, is captured in a variety of ways such as song, poetry, theatre, and visual art forms. Narratives of the past and present are exposed through radio, books, stage plays, and films. Museums of all genres have long assumed the roles of keepers and tellers of stories, through videos, exhibits, objects and other visual narrative devices. This chapter focuses on how museums can work as counter, ‘narratological public pedagogy’, a form of formalised nonformal learning, that can provide ways of making meaning from the chilling chapter of lynching in America’s raced history and its implications for today.

ADULT EDUCATION, MUSEUMS, AND NARRATIVES

Adult education has always embraced myriad forms of learning: formal, non-formal, informal, and incidental (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). In theory these categories are distinct and separate, but in practice they are frequently merged by adult educators to provide learners with opportunities to be self-directed and responsible for their own learning, but without leaving important critical social learning simply to chance. Often, higher education classrooms are highly teacher-directed, authoritative spaces, much like past educational practices in museums, and by definition, represent formal learning. But educators of adults in higher education, and in our case these adults are pre-service teachers, can create opportunities for informal and nonformal education and learning within those spaces. Livingstone (2001) called this intentional informal learning.

When adult educators embed such learning opportunities within curriculum, the non-formal and informal learning become part of a formal learning experience. Educators across various levels of schooling who use these types of learning experiences demonstrate an appreciation through which intentional facilitation of learning can occur through, but also “outside formal systems of education” (Taylor & Neill, 2008, p. 25), or what Sandlin, O’Malley, and Burdick (2011), drawing from Giroux (1999), refer to as “public pedagogy” (p. 338).

We believe that as sites of public pedagogy, museums are important cultural intentional informal learning and education centres (Dudzinska-Przesmitzki & Grenier, 2008). Marcus (2008) in fact recognised the potential of museums to help learners to develop new ways of understanding decades ago. He wrote “museum visits can expand students’ content knowledge, offer a more sensory learning experience, and develop their historical understanding including increased historical empathy, exposure to multiple perspectives, and an examination of how evidence is used to create historical narratives” (p. 56). For adult learners, exposure to historical narratives of various cultures is critical in promoting inclusiveness and equity. These

narratives offer vantage points different from their own cultural lenses, dispelling the myth of canonical representation of the world. The informal learning that occurs in museum spaces allows each learner an opportunity to engage in personalised and idiosyncratic meaning-making, allowing her or him to begin the journey of self-discovery from his or her own uniquely storied background.

Historical empathy, the notion of affective perspective-taking, in which an individual attempts to historically (and perhaps emotionally) place themselves within the context of past actors or actions, is one way that individuals might confront narratives of the past different from their own (Endacott, 2010). When adult pre-service education students marry in-depth knowledge of socially important topics with historical empathy, they are better poised to structure curriculum through a pedagogical lens of inclusiveness, fairness, and respect. Making this connection potentially influences the pedagogical decision-making of future teachers, encouraging them to broaden students' perspectives and challenge dominate narratives. We argue that museums, as spaces of public pedagogy, offer unique opportunities to wed socially constructed knowledge and counter-narratives with empathetic regard.

Historical empathy can be cultivated at the interstice of the non-formal (narratology of the museum experience) and the informal (narratology of the individual's historical and contemporary positionality) museum experience. The importance of these distinctions cannot be overstated. Narratology, as defined by Felluga (2011), considers how narratives shape our understandings and perceptions of culture and its artefacts as well as the societies in which they are embedded. Narratology is about a signifier or text, the signified or story, and the narration (Schmid, 2010). The text embodies the discursive element that serves as the vehicle for the narration of story. The significance of narratology is not the emphasis on story/narrative but the interrelatedness of its constitutive parts. For example, the narratology of the museum consists of its text (exhibits), constructed story, and the narrating voice that is always positioned. Similarly, an individual's narratology includes his or her discursive self, story and positioned voice resulting in a personalized reading of the museum's story that is informed by the narration of the museum's story. In short, the museum's story is filtered not only through the curator's lens but also through the autobiographical lens of the visitor.

Identities are the by-product of enacting storied selves in complex narratological ways that assume the importance of culture. For adult pre-service students their professional and personal identities are intertwined and connected to the cultures with which they identify, as well as those that with which they do not. The effectiveness of their teaching is predicated on how cultures are understood and mediated in their educational practice. Appreciating the role that they play in creating the discourses that name and evaluate culture should be part of the educational experience of such adult pre-service teachers.

Using Giroux's formulation (1999), museums are spaces where "the political becomes pedagogical; that is, how the very processes of learning constitute the

political mechanisms through which identities are shaped, desires mobilised, and experiences take on form and meaning" (p. 2). In other words, knowledge is never presented neutrally. It is produced as a result of carefully constructed narratology. As sites of public pedagogy, museums function as either historically reifying or promoting hegemony (Trofanenko, 2006), or conversely, as embracing courageous conversations, creating opportunities for patrons to acquire greater awareness and engage in reflective thinking about historical and contemporary social issues. Race is one topic that museum spaces have sought to narrate and interrogate. Given the enduring precariousness of race relations (i.e. recent incidents in Florida – Trayvon Martin, Missouri – Michael Brown, New York – Eric Garner, Texas – Sandra Bland, Ohio – Tamir Rice, North Carolina – Jonathan Ferrell), curators who delve into this topic can create, what was termed in the call for this book by Clover, Sanford, Johnson, and Bell, an 'edge effect', an essential component of critical public pedagogy.

Though not always recognised as educational, public pedagogy inhabits spaces that can be participative, political and experiential (Giroux, 2004). When integrated into formal learning, public pedagogy becomes a breeding ground for collateral learning (Dewey, 1938/1998), reaching beyond the educators' intentions and allowing for personalized meaning-making within the dogmatisms and standards-driven compliance of higher education. For highly sensitive topics such as race, public pedagogy can be a conduit for critical analysis of societal issues. In order to be effective, public pedagogy must be narratological.

Clark and Rossiter (2008) highlight the concept of learning narratively. They explain that narratives are tools for making meaning of life experiences and stories are rooted in life experiences, providing the connective tissue between seemingly disparate experiences. They involve the positioning of self within or in relation to the narrative. Clark and Rossiter refer to this as recognising stories. "Learners begin to understand the fundamental narrative character of experience…. They also begin to understand that they themselves are narratively constituted and narratively positioned; this applies to themselves personally, as well as to groups, societies, and cultures" (p. 65).

Stories are also politicised, meaning they can align with the hegemonic structure by serving as justification for the status quo. Critical race theorists call this 'majoritarian narratives' (Merriweather Hunn, Manglitz, & Guy, 2006). But stories can also act as counter-hegemonic to negate the supposed neutrality of 'majoritarian narrative' by speaking from the vantage point of the oppressed. Counter-narratives highlight how the majoritarian narrative masks privilege and hierarchical positioning based on systematic advantage and disadvantage – material, ideological, and political. It is through counter-narratives that majoritarian narratives are challenged, reinterpreted, and transformed in the minds of the hearer.

While majoritarian stories draw on the tacit knowledge among persons in the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993), they also distort and silence the experiences of the dominated. Whereas majoritarian stories speak from a standpoint

of authority and universality in which the experiences of one group (Whites) are held to be normal, standard, and universal, counter stories serve to undermine racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist narratives (Merriweather, Manglitz, & Guy, 2006, pp. 245–246).

Museums as counter-narrative spaces bring tacit knowledge to the level of awareness and encourage museum visitors to question the universality of that they "know" and to listen for silences and distortions. Counter-narratives therefore are instrumental in the narratology of human experiences (Clark & Rossiter, 2008).

THE MUSEUM VISIT

Museums that opt to facilitate difficult conversations on race and racism function as counter-narratives to dominant, negative and stereotypic discourses. The narrative space allows museum visitors to interrogate and reinterpret the majoritarian story of which they are familiar and situated within. By examining the counter-narrative constructed by the museum curator, they are given an opportunity to re-examine their own storied existence. To introduce and reflect on the use of museums as open pedagogical spaces, we took a class of adult pre-service teachers to a museum exhibit that challenged the dominate narrative history of race in the United States to see how the experience might transform their understanding of historical meaning-making, racial narratives, and the potential for museum pedagogy in their own teaching (Fitchett, Merriweather, & Coffey, 2015). We purposively taught through a process of enquiry, using an engaging, progressive-reconstructive pedagogy to ensure that the pre-service teachers acquired more than just content and skills. This approach had another advantage: it challenged students to rethink how history could be taught.

Consistent with many of the strategies offered by Marcus (2008) for the purposeful integration of art and museum space into formal curriculum, we scaffolded the experience. In addition to accompanying the students to the museum and participating in the museum experience, immediately following the museum visit we led a focus group discussion to gather reactions to the images, to explore how the *Without Sanctuary* exhibit acts as public pedagogy on racism and to determine the pre-service teachers' opinions of the potential pedagogical value the exhibit might add to their development as history educators. At the close of the semester, the students were invited to participate in an individual interview about the museum experience and how it might inform curricular choices and methods for teaching. Prior to the experience, the pre-service teachers were prepped for their visit, and participated in class discussion on the appropriateness of violent images as curricular material in middle and high school. Of particular interest to us was the role of counter-narrative as told through violent and shocking imagery in the development of pre-service teachers' (two white men, three white women, and one male student who identified as Puerto Rican) racialised identity and historical empathy. Further there was an interest in exploring how both might influence those students' approaches to the teaching of history to their middle and secondary school students.

The primary activity was a visit to Levine Museum of the New South. The historical emphasis of the southern United States post-Civil War is often referred to as the *new south,* an attempt to highlight the post-slavery, industrialization, and social progressivism of the south (Leloudis, 1996). The museum's community educators promote dialogue around prominent issues in the new south. The temporary exhibits often provide a counterpoint to dominant perspectives, offering an edgier look at the modern South. In 2012, the Levine Museum hosted the *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* exhibit. Though this exhibit had been featured in many museums such as the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio and is now permanently displayed at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia, many museums shied away from the opportunity to engage in this conversation on race and racism. The exhibit, which includes photographs and post-cards depicting the lynching of individuals (primarily African Americans), was first developed by James Allen (2001) as a public exposé to document the shamefully violent and racist past of the United States. Over the years it has become increasingly popular, been the subject of a book, and fostered dialogue (both public and private) on race relations. Yet, the exhibit was not without controversy. Critics charged that the viewing of these images, especially when presented outside the context of the south, encouraged exploitation and victimization of African-Americans, instilling more spectacle than retrospection (Alexandre, 2008; Apel, 2003). Thus, the placement of this exhibit, within the context of a southern city, provided a unique opportunity to examine the intersection of history, place, and public pedagogy.

Without Sanctuary was by all accounts a compelling exhibit. It narrated the story of lynching in America through photographs and postcards that graphically depicted the experiences of persons primarily African Americans being lynched, newspaper accounts of lynching from that time period, and a short film on lynching. The exhibit also had an interactive component at the beginning and the end. At the beginning of the museum experience, museum staff facilitated a group discussion and "post it notes" were used at the end to gather reflections on the experience. The images themselves were gruesome and disturbing. They featured across various parts of the United States women, some pregnant, men, and children burned, hanged, and mutilated. The images showed concert-sized crowds, including young children, participating as members in the normalised macabre spectacle of prejudice. Below are some descriptions found in the exhibition encountered by museum visitors:

- Bennie Simmons, alive, soaked in coal oil before being set on fire. June 13, 1913. Anadarko, Oklahoma.
- The lynching of Laura Nelson and her son, several dozen onlookers. May 25, 1911. Okemah, Oklahoma.
- The corpses of George and Ed Silsbee. A large group of spectators holding kerosene lamps, downed fence in foreground. January 20, 1900. Fort Scott, Kansas.

- The lynching of nineteen-year-old Elias Clayton, nineteen-year-old Elmer Jackson, and twenty-year-old Isaac McGhie. June 15, 1920. Duluth, Minnesota.
- The bludgeoned body of an African American male, propped in a rocking chair, blood splattered clothes, white and dark paint applied to the face and hand, shadow of man using rod to prop up the victims head. Circa 1900, location unknown.
- The lynching of Rubin Stacy. Onlookers, including four young girls. July 19, 1935. Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- The bound corpses of two Italian immigrants, Castenego Ficarrota and Angelo Albano, handcuffed together, hanging in a Florida swamp. One with note affixed to feet, the other with pipe in mouth. September 9, 1910 (Without Sanctuary, 2005).

Together and individually the images present a snapshot of society's lack of humanity. The exhibit space, in illustrating a counter-narrative to the "national as progress" narrative, humanised both victim and perpetrator, revealing fundamentally that the lynched and those responsible for the lynching were people just like the museum visitors and therefore they could not remain emotionally distanced from them. The exhibition further humanises the images by debunking myths that the perpetuators of this type of violence were limited to extremists, and that victims were fairly targeted. The inclusion of images of police and political officials also illuminates the state's role, calling into question an assumed position of neutrality, which made it exempt from responsibility. Further, the narratology of the exhibition calls into question what it took personally, institutionally, and systemically for communities to not only tolerate, but also encourage such horrific vigilante 'justice'. The counter-narrative is one of unjustified violence, abject cruelty, and the importance of multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-gendered activism in the fight for racial justice.

It was this very counter-narrative that we hoped would spark discussion and reflection on how and what should be included in history teaching. Among pre-service teachers, pedagogical experiences in higher education can both reify their understanding of race within the American narrative while also challenging their pedagogical assumptions of what should be (and could be taught) to school age children. Marcus (2008) encourages educators to expose their students to museums as a way of further contextualising course material and offering vantage points not as accessible outside of the three dimensional space of museum exhibitions. The pre-service teachers' organized exposure to this exhibit moved beyond spectacle (outward gaze) to greater self-awareness (inward gaze) and illustrated how an exhibition can function as an effective pedagogical tool, igniting the re-storying of identity. Evidence of the impact surfaced through three major themes, connection, awareness, and ownership, we uncovered in the data collected through the aforementioned focus group and individual interviews.

RESTORYING IDENTITY: CONNECTION

The theme of 'connection' demonstrated that the pre-service teachers recognised they were connected to the narrated story of lynching across time and place. This spoke to the way the images not just acted as visual stimuli but also created a story. For the students, the images were a means to an end as opposed to the end itself. The working out of the 'end' and its meaning for their respective lives was not expected by concluding the visit. Instead, as we had hoped, the students saw the conclusion of the exhibit as an invitation for further exploration as they returned to the formal classroom. Each image, newspaper clipping, and recognition of horror on the faces of others served as a foundation for a teachable moment. The pre-service teachers were able to connect to the content of the images and to others who were struggling with the intensity of the experience.

The storying experienced through the museum visit evoked emotions in ways that more traditional pedagogy did not. The holistic multi-media presentation offered repeated examples of how lynching occurred throughout history. At times the pre-service teachers felt that the totality of the stories was overwhelming, and though each story was like the next, it was clear that at the same time each was unlike the next. Each had its own unique setting, context, and attending characters. They were tasked with connecting the dots to recognise how each image was part of a larger mosaic that illustrated the infectious nature of racism and how widespread it was throughout communities. The pre-service teachers made connections with the communities depicted in the lynching photographs because they were similar to the places they, their parents, and their grandparents grew up. One of the photographs on display was taken not 20 miles from the university. The reality of these "horrible acts", as the students termed them, challenged them to think about how recent lynching is in American history.

Even though they felt comfortable talking about the Holocaust, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and other horrific events in world history, they struggled with crafting a way to tell this history in their own classrooms. The pre-service teachers were more apprehensive to introduce these images in a middle or high school history classroom than they were images from the World Wars. In fact, one student explained that while he was viewing the exhibit, he was trying, "actually not to become emotionally attached to it. I think I can get a better understanding of it if I'm not emotionally involved one way or another." This student's way of crafting a story about the exhibit was not to become emotionally involved; rather, he preferred to think of the images as historical artefacts. When asked if he might use some of these images in his own practice, he concluded not because he thought they were too graphic for students under the age of 18.

Although they saw the value of using these powerful lynching photographs as a pedagogical text or device, most of the pre-service teachers echoed their classmate above and could not imagine actually developing a lesson that included these or similar images; they could not resolve using such graphic albeit relevant photos.

Whereas, the museum acted intentionally by including images of men and women lynched in North Carolina in order to draw emotion from a local audience, the students seemed to feel more guilt than empathy. The fact that this happened in their own backyard made the stories more real and relatable. The personal connection was necessary for opening the students up for deeper learning but did not necessarily encourage inclusion for their own curriculum. The pre-service teachers' outward gazing allows for disconnection, emotional distance and a sense of comfort. Inward gazing results in seeing how the small plots come together and are related not just to each other but also to the lives of the onlooker, offering a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the narrative itself, which can challenge one's sense of identity.

AWARENESS

The connections led to awareness, an awareness of how much they did not know about lynching and about themselves. Content is an indispensable element of the learning experience. It is fodder for reflection and meaning making. In the case of the pre-service teachers, the reflection resulted in a re-examination of what they thought they knew about racism in America and an awakening to how those same processes of dehumanization are occurring in contemporary society. Awareness surfaced feelings of guilt and shame, particularly to the normalcy of hatred and cruelty. There was an acute awareness that their families could have been part of the cheering crowds. It was no longer "those people", but an appreciation that those people quite likely could have been the kindly great-grandfather they heard tales of or their hometown's revered citizen. This awareness helped the pre-service teachers to view the lynch mobs differently and to acknowledge they too may have been caught in the cycle of hatred to which so many communities fell victim. Victims, therefore, were not just hanging from the noose, but included families and communities as well because they drank from the poisoned well of prejudice and were influenced by a group ethos that justified sins against humanity in the name of self and cultural protection. The counter-narrative of the *Without Sanctuary* exhibit stoked the flames that illuminated awareness of the dangers of inflexible thinking: either/or, black/white, right/wrong. Seeing the grey led to a burgeoning of historical empathy for those who actively and passively participated in America's dark pastime.

Awareness of the role emotions played in the development of historical discourses also occurred. The pre-service teachers articulated that true understanding would be unattainable if learners were sheltered from the spectrum of behaviours and their associated emotions exhibited in the making of US history. Those behaviours evoked feelings of anger, sadness, and disappointment, not just joy and pride. Grand and deeply problematic narratives of America's so-called 'exceptionalism', such as the freedom and progress grand narrative (VanSledright, 2011), justified any behaviour in the quest of America's freedom regardless of the impact the behaviour had on marginalised people, the environment, or culture. The exhibit gave the pre-service teachers the proverbial freedom to feel negatively about America's history while yet

acknowledging the positive. The historical inquiry process required for the effective teaching of America's history would not be possible without awareness of the multitude of emotions present in her endearing narrative, especially for subjects like race and racism. Being open to experiencing the full range of emotions shattered the silence that made them deaf to the depth of human suffering resulting from America's lynching history, allowing them to rise to a higher level of historical empathy.

OWNERSHIP

The ability to make connections and have greater awareness was critical to the process of re-storying one's identity. Ownership was another theme: Ownership of flawed thinking, complacency, cultural partiality, fear of speaking one's truth, and acceptance of majoritarian narratives among others. One pre-service teacher education student simply felt that race and racism should not be raised within the discourse because it recreated negativity and anger and sowed seeds of discontent among diverse people. Others expressed that the museum space's unearthing and unsettling of preconceived ideas served as a catalyst for their ideological movement. Owning wherever one lands on that spectrum is an important aspect of owning identity. Identities are narrated by cognitive rationales that discredit the continued relevance of the history of race and racism to present-day society. This is as significant to the narratology of the self as embracing the cognitive and emotional dissonance inherent to the historical discourse of racism and prejudice. The narratives that inform identities at times contradict each other, creating even more stress on identity development. Clark and Rossiter (2008) wrote that narratives were continually evolving, and multiple narratives were being created simultaneously; hence the identities that they contribute to creating are also always evolving. Everyone is on a different page, reading at different speeds, and interpreting the narratives of life differently. Owning where one is *on this continuum* becomes a necessary precursor to the subsequent re-storying of one's identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The counter-narratological public pedagogical space of the museum experience provided history pre-service teacher education students with an opportunity to re-examine their own storied existence. This chapter highlighted how identity was impacted by the ability to make connections between disparate and conflicting events and emotions, how increased awareness functioned to raise and clarify issues of identity, and how ownership was pivotal to the formation of a re-storied identity. Clark and Rossiter posit that the process of making sense of life is complex but we continually seek to "fit together…what we do not yet understand" and identify "the gaps what still do not know" (p. 66) through narratology: the interrelatedness of text, story, and narration. The counter-narratives experienced through the critical public pedagogy of museum space, both the informal and nonformal, forced confrontation

with the unfamiliar and at times disturbing narratives of race and racism. Those counter-narratives further contributed to the unknowing of self but may, through the re-storying process, lead to a deeper sense of knowing self and others.

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Lisa R. Merriweather
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Heather Coffey
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Paul G. Fitchett
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

JENNIFER THIVIERGE

13. EXHIBITING DARK HERITAGE

Representations of Community Voice in the War Museum

INTRODUCTION

> *Looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future.* (Paulo Freire, 1978)

A leading voice in museum education, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1999) argued that historically, museums have suffered from characterisations as dull institutions that simply preserve and conserve culture and beliefs that they attract solely the privileged and cultured, or those who are holidaying and have little better to do. These institutions have, of course, been elite and exclusionary and their cultural heritage preservation mandate 'selective', as Winchester (2012, p. 143) notes of their "singular, coherent, audible, intellectual narrative."

Of all the museums, these one-dimensional, dismissive characterisations are perhaps most fitting for war museums. But I also like to posit in this chapter, and here I concur with Hooper-Greenhill (1999) that a 'singular view' will never do justice to the complexity of museums in general, and war museums in particular. Museums have always been challenged in what they do and say, and never more so than today through the discourses and practices of new museology, which favour interactive, informative exhibits that illustrate complexity, rather than uniformity and engage the public in new ways. In other words, museums are not solely places where one submissively absorbs pre-packaged information, but rather, are sites of struggle that are putting ever greater efforts into critical and diverse narratives and historical views. Museums have been tasked with telling the stories that ever broader communities of people identify with and agree have historical value which for war museums, means engaging with and through personal stories, and making new connections with people in both a local and national sense.

A war museum, as opposed to a history museum, art museum, or science museum, has its own unique set of challenges. The nature of its exhibits is bound to be controversial because war museums deal with a topic that is, in and of itself, tension-filled, complex and controversial. As Trofanenko (2014) reminds us, "war is an event that is highly emotional and one that invokes and projects various sentiments such as the sacred and the profane. War serves as a powerful link between the past, present,

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and the future" (p. 34). War exhibitions and museums have a difficult message to convey, for the most part seen through displays of violence, death and destruction. The challenge is how to convey messages in ways that do not create voyeurism or verge on the grotesque, and can demonstrate sensitivity to visitors who might have experienced such horrors. Moreover, how do they take up 'the absence of war', or peace narratives when their mandate is 'war'?

This chapter outlines examples of how the adult public is being engaged with objects and practices in war museums, both positively and problematically. It considers the educational impact of their experiences as visitors and also as actors within these exhibition spaces and their narratives. For the purposes of this chapter, I will speak about two distinct groups that can be defined as community members, dependent upon the timing of their engagement with an exhibition. The first group is engaged with the museum *before* the opening of an exhibition. This group is composed of distinct community members with similar or shared experiences of any phenomena in question. In the war museum this community is most often the veterans, who are consulted by a museum's exhibition team when developing an exhibition that specifically pertains to their experience. Golding and Modest (2013) have described this as a co-produced exhibition style, which they state has been 'troubled' by power negotiations between participants. They further contend that it can be both "beneficial and detrimental" to an exhibit and its outcome (p. 79). This 'beneficial and detrimental' relationship has been evident time and again in exhibitions such as the Enola Gay at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum and Bomber Command at the Canadian War Museum, which is discussed further. The second group are visitors who engage *during* or *with* a created exhibition. Visitors to a war museum are engaged by a tour leader, a veteran, or through an interactive component to the exhibit.

I illustrate the problematic and potential of adult education and community engagement in this chapter through two examples from the Canadian War Museum. The first is the controversial Bomber Command exhibition and the second, a Peace Exhibition. In particular, I focus on expectations, giving space for 'voices' and tensions, engagement with objects and artefacts, and experiences of encountering controversial materials and events from Canada's past. But I begin with a discussion of the overall challenges war museums face, as this sets the stage.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE WAR MUSEUM

Historically, war museums have tended to present a 'hero' narrative. During the First and Second World War, people needed heroes to justify and mourn the loss of their loved ones. This is especially true in Canada because their loved ones were fighting across the ocean in places many had never seen or heard of prior to the war. In other words, war museums historically present a unified message that boys and men march off to fight and die courageously in battle. Seldom up for debate is the bravery of these men or their sacrifice. But as we all know, there is more

to the story of war, one that is complex and that involved millions of people who all have a unique story to tell and need to be heard. As Whitmarsh (2001) argues military museums cannot simply continue to rely on out-dated male-heroics to teach about, and some might even argue support, war. He advocates for war museum education that moves beyond representations of mass graves, grand narratives, and 'safe' representations such as technology and neat military uniforms. Seixas (2004) suggests that on the whole, war museums are slowly moving away from this hero narrative and displays of tedious tactical battle sequences towards the telling of personal stories and the lives that lived through the war. War museums have altered their positive messages of heroes and villains to include stories that enhance the educational component of the museum, one that is filled with emotions that are often sensitive and raw.

In particular, however, this hero narrative appeals to the traditional sense of 'maleness' and 'masculinity.' Studies have shown that the majority of visitors to museums in North America are female, with the exception of war and space museums (Falk, 2009). War museums and exhibitions attract greater numbers of men, presumably because men have historically had a greater part and interest in studying war, with a particular fascination with war technologies and vehicles, and that the stories museums tell, are theirs. But war affected women too, and greatly, albeit sometimes, quite differently. The deficiency of female visitors to war museums, and of course the lack of their stories, contributes to a lack of female voice and experience within the museum walls and narratives. In response, the Canadian War museum launched exhibitions entitled *War Brides*, women who were brought over to Canada from mainly England and France who had met Canadian soldiers, became engaged or married and moved to Canada to begin a new life. Most recently, the museum launched an exhibition entitled *World War Women*. Unfortunately, the salute that was included on the museum's media posters was incorrect. It was the American rather than the British salute, but it was a conscious decision, albeit not unproblematic, on the part of the museum to generate discussion (Off & Douglas, 2016). Further, although an entire exhibition was dedicated to women, not simply as war brides or sweethearts, but as working women contributing the war effort and this was definitely a step in the right direction, many of these exhibits on women were 'temporary' and did not remain a part of the permanent exhibits, thus losing their voice when the exhibition ended.

ADULT EDUCATION THROUGH DIALOGIC PRACTICE

As numerous adult visitors flock to museums each year, they have their own thoughts and expectations about the time they spend in a war museum and what and how they want to learn. As difficult and raw as a message about war might be, a study by Grüninger, Specht, Lewalter and Schnotz (2014) indicated that visitors seemed to be willing to process conflicting or difficult knowledge at a deeper level. Styles (2011) noted that visitors prefer a non-formal—opposed to informal—learning style

within the museum where visitor interest guides which information they will choose to interact.

A crucial component to the new museology and to adult education discourse is dialogue. For Styles (2011) museums and exhibitions can be empowering for visitors, can be critical self-reflexive experiences that are transformative when exhibition teams develop and foster active dialogue with community members. An example of this is in the new Canadian History Hall at the Canadian Museum of History set to open during the 150th celebrations of Canadian Confederation on July 1st, 2017. The museum specifically engaged with “specialized advisory committees, community groups, and stakeholders to help inform the exhibitions development” (Canadian Museum of History, 2016, para. 7). By engaging community members in this sense the museum provided an inclusive space where community voices could be heard and taken into consideration, with indigenous voices being one among the many that have historically been ignored, their thoughts have formed a major voice in the design of the new history hall.

As an influential adult educator, strong proponent against power-power relations inherent between communities and institutions, and a positive advocate for dialogue, Paulo Freire’s teachings are now being used by adult educators in war museums to liberate from the normative didactic, lecture-style approach, to one where visitors are engaged in dialogue with the exhibitions and the educators. This works to shift the power imbalance and draws on the knowledge of the visitors (Freire, 2011). Freire advocates for this type of shift in power, or more importantly for a shifting power between educator and learner, so that those on the ‘outside’ can begin to understand how those on the ‘inside’, in this case of museums, have controlled learning and knowledge. Dialogue, Styles (2011) argues, has the capacity to “generate new possibilities for interpretations, promote criticality in visiting audiences, heighten consciousness and inspire a commitment to socially just regimes” (p. 14).

Hutchison (2013) rejects the idea that there inevitably are power negotiations and instead supports shared authority—those who contribute to historical understanding through their lived experience and knowledge. She says that the key to counteracting a hierarchical authority is to look at the individual, that a museum exhibition should be about individual, making each situation unique. Although this may be desirable, it is unclear how this can be achieved, especially in large national museums where the mandate requires large-experiences where the message is about nation-building. For visitors not familiar with how exhibitions are structured, and the people who had (or not) been consulted in terms of the design, it would be a useful and perhaps necessary exercise to demonstrate this as a power structure. Drawing from Freire, I would argue, as do Styles (2011) and Edson (1997), that in illuminating power structures we can assist visitors to recognise how and where they operate, and thus transform visitors’ into more critical ‘agents’ in the museum and of society, where they can come to better recognise what is going on and feel more free to question the interpretation of events not as a given, but as created through particular ideological lenses and understandings of curators. Edson (1997) suggests that one

way to illuminate this 'bias' is for curators to sign their exhibitions so visitors can be aware that 'someone' has put this together and therefore, it is someone's voice and interpretation. But Onciul (2013) feels things must go further than this. She argues that to "grant integrity or validity" to an exhibit, it needs to be co-created or co-produced. But she also cautions that "projects undertaken by museums and archives with source communities need to be more than attempts to satisfy ideas of political correctness" (p. 90). They must take up and illustrate ambiguities, complexities and controversies. I would argue that this is more than true when one deals with issues of either war or peace but particularly, the former.

VETERAN VOICE AND THE WAR MUSEUM

As noted earlier, engagement with community is seen to be a critical part of new museology and something that strengthens the work of museums to make them more relevant in the stories they tell (Golding & Modest, 2013). The types of community members museums often consult during the design phases of any exhibition are likely to have the most intimate knowledge, and even first-hand experience, with the subject matter. In war museums, this usually means surviving veterans who contribute artefacts, objects, historical experiences and stories. Veteran voices need to be included in the discussion on a nation's 'difficult heritage' because their voice counteracts the 'authoritarian' nature that museums have used as their primary pedagogical practice (Styles, 2011). Veterans have the potential to provide rich and unique stories to the curatorial research. This invaluable lived knowledge, teamed with vigorous academic sources, has the potential to create a well-rounded exhibit that interweaves both the personal and academic and can thus engage visitors in educational ways that cannot be explained simply by facts and figures.

However, as positive as collaboration with veterans may be in practice, in reality, it can become very challenging to implement in a way that is positive for all involved. Curators, too, have their own ideas about the aesthetic and flow of an exhibition and also, a vast historical perspective or knowledge that comes from years of study within a particular area. They also have a tendency, due to that study, to see the ambiguities and tensions in a topic. For reasons such as the power of diverse perspectives, 'teams' of people often carefully construct exhibitions. Teams are thought to create a more 'balanced' exhibition, particularly within the difficult discourse of war. However, collaboration does not always create positive interactions with community members in the museum. One example of this was controversy that occurred at the Canadian War Museum a decade ago with a particular panel (story) in the Bomber Command portion of the Second World War exhibition.

Bomber Command

The Canadian War Museum, like other museums in Ottawa, the nation's capital, has had it share of exhibitions that have gone beyond simply activating lively

debate. There have been in fact actual threats of funding cuts and other ill-conceived governmental interventions that have tried to force the museum (and others) to take particular stands that have resulted in resignations. However, this too is part of making the museum a place where history can be contested to create a public dialogue about our histories and ourselves. The fact that museums are first and foremost educators of adult visitors means that having conversations and debates about which legacies and stories deserve to be preserved for future generations is of critical pedagogical and social importance.

As stated on the website under *Canadian War Museum: About the Museum* the Canadian War Museum is "Canada's national museum of military history and one of the world's most respected museums for the study and understanding of armed conflict" (2016, para. 1). In other words, the museum has a respected authority of knowledge and has designed it's exhibition galleries and public programmes "to emphasize the *human* experience of war" (para. 3, my emphasis). The emphasis on the 'human' experience speaks to social history, to the history of people's stories and the lives lived, saved, and lost during times of war. The Canadian War Museum has been at its current location for ten years and is one of Canada's many national museums. This museum welcomes approximately 500,000 visitors per year, many of whom have very different experiences and ideas about 'war'.

A primary mandate of the Canadian War Museum is to teach the public about their nation and the difficult and often controversial processes of nation building through the 'art' of war. Therefore, the aim can be summed up as:

> To present the military history of Canada from earliest times to present day, as well as Canada's history of honouring and remembrance. Each gallery highlights defining moments in Canada's military history and the ways in which past events have shaped the nation. (para. 3)

Canada's War Museum has tended to focus primarily on commemoration and remembrance. But in 2007, it experienced conflict with the wording on a particular panel in their Bomber Command exhibition, as I noted above.

Bomber Command was a bombing campaign that began in 1943 involving the Canadian air force bombing strategic civilian areas across Germany to lower the morale of the German people. To develop the Bomber Command exhibition, veterans had been consulted on the original display, but many had requested significant changes and their requests had been granted with alterations made by the curators (e.g. Dean, 2009). However, some of the veterans continued to be dissatisfied with the exhibit and asked for further changes to be made to the exhibition.

In particular, many disagreed with the museum's decision to describe the controversy in Canada that had erupted over a bombing campaign that caused a considerable number of civilian deaths and that many saw as unnecessary revenge tactics that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people. By including different, and what the museum curators saw as equally valid and important perspectives, veterans felt the curators were accusing them of being war criminals. The curators

countered by arguing that they had structured the gallery so that visitors would be aware of the context going into the final panels that explained the controversy about Bomber Command. As a historian working with the Canadian War Museum on the panel of Bomber Command, MacMillan (2008) argued that visitors would have understood the necessity of this type of background and would have been prepared for this panel as *informed* visitors who had been through the entire Second World War exhibit and had learned about the events and decisions that led up to Bomber Command. MacMillan and the others therefore felt the visitors would be able to interpret the information with equilibrium and not simply, judgementally. Nonetheless controversy raged, as the veterans protested, challenging the curators and historians, and drawing cross-Canada attention to the subject. The trouble attracted the attention of the then conservative 'Tory' Canadian government and the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence was formed to make a decision on the wording for the panel. It was ultimately changed from the original to conciliate the veterans who had opposed the panel, with the final panel defining strategic bombing and describing solely the positive effects of the bombing campaign (Dean, 2009).

According to MacMillan (2008), the revised final panel is confusing to anyone familiar with or active around this particular activity as it does not describe the campaign accurately, and leaves visitors with misleading, unbalanced understandings. She argued the museum was not attempting to diminish the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers through its story, but rather to raise important questions, that have relevance today and will in to the future as war continues, about the morality of an activity that killed so many citizens. MacMillan felt that the original panel described the events in terms of the human result of so-called 'strategic' bombing, and called in to question the ethics of war, and human rights.

Numerous studies have been conducted that have gauged visitor reaction to controversial exhibits such as this, and the findings have been overwhelmingly in favour of giving agency to visitors to engage with controversial exhibits such as Bomber Command (e.g. Ashley, 2005; Crane, 1997; Falk, 2009; Trofanenko, 2014; Witcomb, 2013). The new panel shuts down any discussion people could have had about the civilian deaths and even, the controversy. As a result, visitors do not have the opportunity to see the big picture, and to critically engage with the views it would have presented. If museums are to be critical dialogic spaces, then it is their duty to offer visitors the opportunity to decide for themselves and to engage with materials that are controversial, but which represent Canadian history that is rich and fraught with military actions that are not always clear and justifiable.

PEACE EXHIBITION

Not all experiences in war museums are, however, as problematic as the story above. The Peace Exhibition at the Canadian War Museum perhaps exemplifies a positive experience with community engagement and museum curation. In 2013,

the Canadian War Museum presented an exhibit that had never been created in its ten-year history. After some delay with the exhibit, and the complications arising from presenting peace in a war museum, the exhibition was opened. Focusing on the Canadian experience, and pivotal moments in Canada's peace movement history, the war museum seems an odd space to inform visitors about peace since the museum's main focus is war and the artefacts from war. When the original discussions about building a war museum were presented, veterans believed that the museum should be a space reserved specifically for commemoration and peace activists wanted a museum to take on a more pacifist tone (Green, 2010). As a specialist in Canadian public history, Dean (2013) suggests that a peace exhibit may have been launched for purposes of 'mollifying' the Canadian public who had originally hoped for a museum that was about peace and not simply about war. A professor of sociology and history, Leher (2015) labelled the exhibit as 'propagandistic' and the displays as highlighting only the positive aspects of wars such as those fought by Canadians in Afghanistan. However, a peace exhibition was considered by the general public and pacifists as a step forward for a museum that generally depicts Canada's contributions to, and some would argue celebrations of, war and conflict.

The museum's typical exhibition which displayed objects relating to war, relics that have been preserved by the museum such as tanks, airplanes, war poems, and medals of honour, were changed to favour an interactive exhibit that engaged its visitors in using personal items for the exhibit such as personal clothing and objects, which include "a clock retrieved from the rubble of Hiroshima. A blue beret…" (Canadian War Museum: Peace—The Exhibition, 2016, para. 1). This shift in using personal items that are not considered to have normative 'historical' value, but rather are merely of personal value, makes them animate objects within the museum (Strauss, 2013). Clothing worn by a refugee on its own does not have historical significance for the museum, but once it is paired with a personal story, it becomes significant, much like the shoes in the Holocaust Museum. On their own, they are simply shoes, but corresponding with the museum, they become a part of a story, an important historical story represented by the object. This is in fact a major move toward social history and it is changing the way historians and curators look at history in the museum to consider the way in which they can make a connection with the everyday objects of people (Szekeres, 2011). The peace exhibition had interactive components, allowing the visitors to move images attached to a pillar, to visualise a response to the question: What does peace look like to you? As such, they were able to explore creatively, their own definitions of peace in to the exhibition for subsequent visitors to view. Dean (2013) defines this as 'active visitorship', a process whereby visitors become 'agents' in their own learning as well as in the making of museum exhibits and stories. This shift in museum curatorial and engagement practice is what Dean (2013) characterises as shared authority in the construction of meaning and knowledge. The war museum curators thus had to place their trust in the visitors to define and shape the controversial subject of peace and war, rather than maintaining control over the stories and visualisations.

But there are other examples of new practices of engagement. In 2013, I was a volunteer at the Canadian war museum during their *Witness* exhibition, offering free guided tours to further engagement with the material. *Witness* featured works of art by Canadian artists whose subject was the First World War. Volunteers were able to interact with the visitors, offering them a learning experience that went beyond the curator's information panel, engaging with visitor stories and questions. In another example of visitor engagement, the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg featured a media gallery that tackles the definition of human rights, told by the public. Its aim is to illustrate that there is no singular definition of human rights, but many perspectives. This example created a dialogue between the museum and its visitors, but also amongst the visitors.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Visitors rely on museums for their educational interest and to connect with the events of the past. During focus groups, in telephone interviews, and on feedback forms, visitors have said they are willing and able to tackle controversial issues, which should be given credit (Ashley, 2005; Crane, 1997; Falk, 2009; Trofanenko, 2014; Witcomb, 2013). As Crane (1997) says, their minds will have been "activated, nourished, challenged, and revived" (p. 21). Visitors have the opportunity to become active and not passive visitors in the museum (Dean, 2013). According to Lisle (2006), most museum exhibits provide opportunities for collaborative projects within communities to promote emotionally charged historical events such as those pertaining to tolerance and anti-racism, however, she states that war exhibitions are not open for this kind of collaboration because of the serious nature of their topics, which must prove that war is part of a lesson that needs to be told, learned, and discussed in a way that teaches a lesson to the visitor which is not open for discussion. As has been demonstrated with the peace exhibition at the Canadian War Museum, collaboration can be a positive experience, one that engages visitors on a level that is personal in nature, even in a war museum. Collaboration also has the power to eliminate some of the authoritative nature of the war museum, engaging the visitors in a way that promotes collaborative, reflexive, and critical learning.

By the nature of their exhibits, war museums are designed to evoke an emotional response. According to Falk (2009), a museum is used to enhance and change the visitor's sense of identity and thus changes their perceptions of the museum. However, having a personal connection to the artefacts can also make interpretation difficult as memories are deeply embedded, creating a need for a situation to be interpreted 'correctly' or 'truthfully' according to how one remembers a sequence of events from the past. Discussions about Bomber Command centred on legacy, and which "truth" should be told (Dean, 2009). In both of these cases, it was the hero narrative that dominated, with veterans arguing that their actions were necessary and the museum was tainting these actions with discussions about civilian grief,

controversy, and pain. Curators did not agree and the result was a discussion about 'difficult heritage' and initiated a war of a different kind, a history war.

The history wars in museums, especially war museums, will continue. Education will move in new directions, and it is with hope that curators, veterans, and visitors can engage in conversations that provide a meaningful experience for visitors, one that proves positive in telling a message that will incite visitors to question their own thoughts on historical events to create discussion on difficult heritage. Curators and veterans need to continually give visitors credit for their intelligence and their willingness to engage with material that is controversial in a way where they will construct their own knowledge to either accept or reject the information. By keeping a strong sense of educational practices in the museum, and engaging with visitors, we can look to the future for new practices and ideas that will change over time to create dynamic engaging exhibits for generations to come.

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Jennifer Thivierge
Canadian War Museum, Canada

LAURA FORMENTI AND ALESSIA VITALE

14. FROM NARRATION TO POÏESIS

The Local Museum as a Shared Space for Life-Based and Art-Based Learning

INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates an innovative alliance between university and museum, to create a space for transformative practices of adult education or what we call 'poïetic pedagogy'. Poïesis is the Ancient Greek word for 'to make', whose original meaning kept together technical production, creation, and thinking. For the Greeks, materiality was but a facet of a process where doing and thinking were parts of creative action. Poïesis is also contained in a neologism – auto-poïesis – used by the biologists and epistemologists Maturana and Varela (1980) to argue that life and cognition are recursive processes of self-construction, in co-evolution with the environment.

We implemented poïetic pedagogy in the *Life(St)Art* project,[1] based on self-narration, art, and active conversations, which challenges common frames of adult learning and offers new thoughts on the relationship of adults to art, namely by celebrating the power of art to inspire and creatively engage adults in learning. The common idea of an individual learner as a 'consumer of culture' who visits an exposition or reads a book to accumulate information and 'knowledge' is here contrasted by the image of adult learners as complex and relational human beings who strive to answer difficult and dilemmatic questions about identity and meaning: Who am I? What should I do? What is the meaning of life? These questions, embodied and enacted in art creations, illuminate a kind of learning that is not cumulative or individual and can produce a leap in awareness, mutual recognition, and deliberate action.

BEYOND SELF-NARRATION: PARTICIPATIVE PROJECTS IN MUSEUMS

I am the lonely one.
Above me the sky,
Under me, ruins.
You can climb up, at your own risk.
I emit a bluish shadow.
Your skin absorbs it.

D. E. Clover et al. (Eds.), Adult Education, Museums and Art Galleries, 165–176.
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You can climb up, at your own risk.
They tried to give me balance with cardboard foundations.
You can climb up, at your own risk.
Maybe one day I will be sick and tired and I will let myself go.
I will fall on myself making a big racket.

I am the lonely one was written by a participant in the 'Kiefer and I' workshop we will describe shortly. It sings a feeling of isolation, danger, and toil that resonates with stories frequently told by adult learners, or non-traditional students, in higher education (Finnegan, Merrill, & Thunburg, 2014; Galimberti, 2014). Such resonance of dis-empowerment, displayed in much contemporary artwork, inspired our theorising of self-narration, life design, transformation, and educational processes as ways to foster reflexivity and deliberate action in adult lives.

We draw on complexity theories (e.g. Capra, 1997; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Alhadeff-Jones, 2008) and systemic thinking (e.g. Bateson, 1972; Bateson & Bateson, 1987) to frame learning in this chapter as a non-linear co-evolutionary and constructive process, between human living beings and their environments. Learning is not only an individual matter (the micro level) but co-evolves with the meso (relational and proximal level) and the macro (social level). The body and material aspects (objects, spaces, landscapes) matter too (Fenwick & Edwards, 2013). We also draw upon critical pedagogy and feminist theory and how they work to uncover internalised structures of power and processes of exclusion unconsciously act in individual lives, reinforcing relations based on gender, race, class, age and their intersectionalities, and shaping the learning experience of adults (Davies et al., 2006). Reflexivity is then needed to de-construct the myths of society, family, and education that are given for granted by individuals when they tell their *prêt-à-porter* story.

Re-editing one's own life, highlighting its social and environmental determinants, and exploring the contexts where learning has happened, can become a practice of freedom, albeit always partial. Our practice is to use stories to challenge the individualistic paradigm and to open new possibilities. Embodied and embedded narratives (Formenti, West, & Horsdal, 2014), life-based and art-based, can 'make a difference' (Formenti & West, 2016) in the way experience is told, understood, and changed through re-telling.

In Italy, the academy is still strongly centred on passive and cumulative learning. Museums, on their side, have only recently begun to develop new relationships with their audiences and to recognise the active role of visitors, their different motives and knowledge, and the necessity to invest in new interfaces, educational facilities, and diversified opportunities for larger publics. This opens space in museums for experimentations in adult education (Nardi, 2004). What is required for this is a pedagogical imagination that seeks to involve and engage adults, to enhance co-operation and co-creation, and to foster reflexive learning based on life-experience, and emotional, cognitive, practical, and aesthetical participation. In recent years,

many Italian museums have developed projects to involve local communities and citizens who do not normally attend exhibitions and to foster social cohesion. They offer a new engaged perspective on art. However, the 'participatory museum' (Simon, 2010) is still in the making in Italy.

THE LIFE(ST)ART PROJECT

The *Life(St)Art* project involves a group of academics and professionals in career guidance and focuses on developing local actions through the critical reflexivity and engagement of younger and more mature students who intend to enroll into the university. *Life(St)Art* links the university to local museums of art, libraries, schools, municipalities, and groups of citizens in design, direction, participation, and assessment of guidance workshops, addressed to different target groups and aimed to foster transformative learning and critical thinking through art (Kokkos, 2013). It uses transformative methods of participatory research (Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007) and art-based narrative enquiry (Leavy, 2009; Barone & Eisner, 2012) to sustain change by awakening consciousness around social justice and promoting active participation (Clover, Sanford, & Butterwick, 2013; Clover & Stalker, 2007; Formenti & West, 2016).

Importantly, *Life(St)Art* uses art's imaginative capacities to open new possibilities. Through workshops, called Lab'O, we start from participants' aesthetic experiences to encourage their creativity, imagination, and cooperative understanding. Since the start of the project, in 2013, several Lab'Os have been organised in public libraries in the outskirts of Milano, a museum of contemporary photography (MUFOCO, Cinisello Balsamo) and an exhibition site (Hangar Bicocca, Milano). The installations, temporary exhibitions, literature, photographs, and the buildings themselves provided possibilities and stimulation for participants. As we connected our poïetic pedagogy to these works, using drawing, sculpture, dance, theatre, and stories, we realised this acted as a living metaphor (Formenti, 2011), an evocative practice that offered a form to complex life experiences. A piece of art represents in unique ways the relationships between the artist's biography, physical and material gestures, technical abilities, ideas and values. It has the power to connect, but equally to expose polarities, paradoxes, and conflicts. It can be subversive and contain explicit critiques to society. It can be dis/comfortable and dis/orienting, what Freud (1919) called the uncanny*,* and thereby pushing us outside familiar knowledge and perceptions.

Each workshop began as a pilot and was co-designed with staff around specific objects in the museum. As noted above, workshops were designed around the principle that learning is not solely an individual endeavour, but emerges from a network of complex and layered relationships that involves a whole subject (body, mind, feelings, values), her relationships and life contexts, objects and spaces, and broader social, cultural, political and historical contexts. We used these workshops to challenge the traditional purposes and uses of art museums that remain primarily,

at least in Italy, for conservation, classification, and exposition. We also wanted to challenge the dominant idea of education in museums as based on expert knowledge: the public is told what to know about art, and visitors are 'customers' to be satisfied through expertise. In other words, education *to* art is 'expected' in the context of a museum, while our aim was the 'unexpected', the relationship with a work of art as an evocative object (Bollas, 2009) and the meaning a group of adults could build from their experiences of and with that work. The project also used arts-based practices of drawing, writing short stories and poems, and performing. Many confessed this was their first time to 'know' this place, although they had lived nearby.

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO KNOWING, FROM ART TO TRANSFORMATION

The starting point of aesthetic experience in the workshop can be based on Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning as the capacity of an adult to reframe previous beliefs to transform perspectives of meaning. A wider notion of transformation can result from the systemic understanding of knowing as the interplay of different dimensions, beyond the cognitive and reflective processes: the unconscious, the sensitive body, the context, and the entangled interdependent relationships among different individuals. Learning thus becomes a socio-material construction (Fenwick & Edwards, 2013).

Poïetic pedagogy disrupts the dominant metaphor of individual, cumulative, and functional learning. It takes the search for identity, sense and meaning, the search for one's own voice, as a true challenge, in a world where fragmentation, uncertainty, and hidden powers are the rule. The basic idea of it is that stories, metaphors and symbols are generative (Formenti, 2011): they do not only 'present' a form, they perform or enact a world (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). Hence, art re-connects what is dis-connected in the common discourse: mind and body, past and present, dream and reality, inner and outer worlds, the individual and society.

The Workshop: A Metaphorical Dispositive

Lab'O workshops, inspired by co-operative enquiry (Heron, 1996), begin by asking the participants to become 'researchers' of their own experience. The whole process is designed as a spiral movement (Formenti, 2008, 2011), enacting and connecting four dimensions of knowing: authentic experience, aesthetic representation, intelligent understanding, and deliberate action. Following Heron's model, knowing is fourfold: experiential knowing is the process of imaging and feeling that is produced by interacting with a person, a place, an object; presentational knowing is the grasping of patterns in the ongoing dialogue between the perceiver and the perceived, expressed through aesthetical forms (drawings, performances, stories, metaphors, sounds); propositional knowing is the building of socially shared meaning and theories, formalized through sentences; practical knowing is doing something that is connected and coherent with the perceptions and theories that were

developed. Practical knowing brings to new experience, so the cycle can be repeated *ad libitum*.

The four passages are interconnected and interdependent. Aesthetic representations make experiential knowing available for communication, reflection and transformation. Stories and metaphors link bodies and concepts, the individual and her world. They also show diversity and richness within a group of people who react to the 'same' exposition. Metaphors are aesthetic representations of human experience; living by them all the time (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), we build our worlds. Bateson (1972) insists on abduction as the human way to knowing. However, adult learners do not know how they 'metaphorise' the world, until they are asked to explore it, and they are exposed to other perspectives. The only way to know how we observe the world is to know about other observers and to communicate with them (von Foerster, 1991). It is very rare, for adults, to have the opportunity to defy their way to build the world, and their position in it. This requires *reflexivity*, beyond reflection (Hunt, 2013).

The structure of the workshop can be considered as a metaphor of something else, as a path to reveal the researcher-participants' 'everyday metaphysics', as described by Lakoff and Johnson (1995), "our everyday metaphysics is not fanciful. It gets us through our everyday lives. Nonetheless that metaphysics is constituted by metaphor and other embodied conceptual structures" (p. 511). Using metaphors brings the body—*living* experience—in to the picture. We embody our feelings and perceptions in gestures, voice, position; we display, perform, enact what we see, and this conveys information about our way of knowing. We rely on 'embodied conceptual structures' all the time; they organize our 'sight'. The microcosm becomes, then, a metaphor for the macrocosm. For example, a feeling of *inner* confusion goes with the perception of *outer* chaos. What comes before? Or: clear-cut certainty is corresponding to an orderly reality 'out there'. What comes before? Aesthetic experience is the human way to understand the world, to draw distinctions and to build meaning, organizing by analogy a proto-theory of what is happening. The Self is also a metaphor, at the heart of a network of relations. The experience of 'me-myself' and the possibility of (re)presenting it is foundational of human communication, education, and orientation. We celebrate all of this when we interact with a great piece of art.

Kiefer and I

I feel upon me the weight of this wobbly structure,
it looms, preventing me from flying away with the wind.
I am paper turned into lead.
From my position I see dark all around,
as well as some light.
Far away, down there, I glimpse some known shapes.
The same that used to cover me, time ago.
Those I was created for.

Now mine are faded, cancelled by time and decadence.
Scraps of civilization, of bygone days.
Another figure dominates, down there,
the One who created me.
It is a shadow.
It is no more there.
Or maybe still is.

This text was written during the pilot workshop, which is now regularly held at Hangar Bicocca, an exhibition site near Milano Bicocca University and property of Fondazione Pirelli. Several workshops have been developed in relation to temporary exhibitions at the Hangar, featuring contemporary artists' work. The 'Kiefer and I' workshop, here described to illustrate our poïetic method, has been tailored on the permanent exhibition, 'The Seven Heavenly Palaces', an installation by Anselm Kiefer (Donaueschingen, Germany, 1945). This artwork composes materials such as concrete, lead, straw, fabric, and splintered glass, in very big and impressive pieces of art. It is a powerful metaphor of life in difficult times, of hope, of the struggle for sense and meaning, and a symbolic representation of the contrasts and conflicts that humanity has to face in the path of redemption. Ancient and more recent history, with its heritage of violence, helplessness, and destruction, is evoked in the huge exposition space, accompanied by an ominous sense of the natural and the living, as well as the transcendent. The seven palaces could be as well trees in a forest or, as a child said during a visit, "it looks like paradise". The artist explores the salvific action of time, evolution, and perspective, and the role of art, religion, myth, and philosophy, as protecting factors against the emptiness of contingency. His work shows strong affinities with Rilke and with Bateson's writings on art, dream, myth, and metaphor as correctives to anti-ecological ideas (1972).

The installation, made in 2004, was inspired by the ancient *Sefer Hechalot*, the Book of Palaces or Sanctuaries, that tells the symbolic journey of spiritual initiation of someone who seeks God. The seven towers, 90 tons weight and six floors height, made in reinforced concrete with lead insertions, each with its own name and displaying several symbols, seem to cancel time while simultaneously evoking it: the symbols of an ancient religion (Judaism), the ruins of Western countries just after Second World War (a biographic theme for Kiefer), and the image of a projected possible future are used by the artist to interrogate his and our present. Each Palace features symbolic structural elements and details bearing special meaning. Walking through the shadowy atmosphere of the hangar, in silence, immersed in a landscape of ruins, the spectator is exposed to the decaying symbols of a seemingly unavoidable defeat for humanity, in the struggle for meaning and salvation.

In September 2015, Kiefer brought his work to a further step, coherently with his vision of art as a never-ending process of understanding. He added five

huge paintings on the Hangar's walls like large windows that dialogue with the towers. They present lifeless landscapes containing symbols of sterility (desert, salt), hope and life (sunflower seeds, grass), alchemic transformation (a balance), and spirituality (a temple, a rainbow). The ambiguous role of ideas in relation to redemption is represented by the names of German philosophers, inscribed in a big painting at the far end of the hangar, homage to romanticism and to Caspar David Friedrich's *wanderer*. It represents the struggle for identity and meaning in front of the troubled waters of history.

A powerful masterpiece, then, this huge installation is poetic, provocative and deeply symbolic, imbued with strong values and enigmas. Thanks to the profusion of details, symbols, different materials, it conveys different, contrasted, and suspended feelings and meanings. What makes it interesting for a workshop is its potential for reflexivity. Kiefer works in order to understand how we behave and why we behave the way we do (Soriano, 2014). He presents dilemmas – good/evil, heaven/earth, destruction/hope, history/nature – but offers no solutions. It is the task of the visitors to find their own answers or new questions and connections.

The first 'Kiefer and I' workshop involved 12 researcher-participants, including ourselves. We were all women from 25 to 54 years old and engaged in education – two academics, one professional in social education, two high school teachers, six master students, and an art expert from the museum's staff. The absence of men was not at all surprising. The staff at the university and in the museum is predominantly female and these types of workshops appear to attract women. We cannot develop this further due to lack of space and study, but we are aware of gender and the need to think this through.

As a pilot workshop the aim was to explore the potential of Kiefer's work in fostering reflexivity about the complexity of life and uncertainty. Therefore, we based our cooperative enquiry on open research questions that were shared in the group before the activity: Is there a possibility to develop self-knowledge and reflexivity about the present moment in our lives, from this aesthetic experience? Which themes will be evoked by it, and how? The methodological spiral described above was implemented in the workshop design through the following ways.

Authentic Experience

The workshop begins with a silent solitary exploration of the installation; each researcher-participant is invited to wander around and to 'simply listen' to her senses, emotions, feelings, and ideas. To favor embodied experience, no explanation about the artwork is given at the beginning; most participants (8/12) have never been in the place before; no one has seen it after the introduction of the paintings, since it was open to the public only ten days before. So, we expect to be provoked and surprised, maybe perturbed.

Aesthetic Representation

Participants are invited to draw a detail 'calling them' in the installation. In a corner of the big hangar, paper and colors are provided. Silently, all of us find a detail and take time to draw it. After the drawing, another invitation comes: "Now, our detail tells a story. Let's write it". When all have finished their drawings and stories, a new tour of the place starts: each 'artist' shows the detail to the group, then presents her drawing and reads the story. Different kinds of aesthetic representation are here performed: drawing, written stories, and reading. The whole group, indeed, can be seen as performing within the installation, since our bodies are interacting with the artwork from the very beginning of the workshop. One of the key features of most contemporary art: the 'visitor' becomes a part of the oeuvre.

Intelligent Understanding

After the first part (90 min), the group transfers into a seminar room. The shift in space is a context marker: we are crossing a boundary between subjective experience and socially shared conversation, and between the realm of the unconscious (body, senses, imagination) and the domain of verbal language and conscious activity. In the new room, the researcher-participants begin to reflect in tentative and open ways on each drawing and text. Authors share their feelings and ideas, trying to build a satisfying understanding of both Kiefer's work and their personal experience. There is no rigid separation between the two. A sort of osmotic process, started with the aesthetic representation, transforms now in a local theory: what is this all about? Relationships are woven, little by little, detail by detail, between the challenges and struggles that each person in the group is living in her present life, expressed by the drawing and story, and the specific significance of that detail for Kiefer. A silent dialogue with the artist begins. In fact, the expert from the museum feeds in, when appropriate, information about the origins of symbols and metaphors inserted in the piece of art, details from Kiefer's biography, and her own experience with visitors of all ages. There are surprising coincidences and correspondences as well as opposing interpretations: questions are raised that touch universal themes, such as loneliness, hope, fear of the future, choice, confusion, spirituality, multiple identities, wisdom, the Other.

Deliberate Action

The final phase of the workshop brings into the conversation the objectives of the group: education and orientation. There is a shift to practical questions: how could the workshop be designed for other and diverse people? Participants are struck by the quality of drawings and stories, by the reflexive process, and by the resonances with the artist's work that brought them nearer to his inner world. They decide to

explore further possibilities with workshops addressed to students and teachers. The workshop will now become a permanent one.

POÏESIS, BEYOND COMMONSENSE AND PURPOSE

> I am Hod, a little light suspended in mid-air… actually, I was a little light. All around me, a catastrophe occurred, everything was destroyed and I was left here, hanging, droopy in mid-air but dirty, matted and most importantly turned off. The catastrophe that fell around me is inside me as well. Everything changed, and I?

The question 'Everything changed, and I?' resonated a long time in the room, like an ethical call to change, to personal evolution and co-evolution with the environment. Adult learning has to do with awareness and deliberate action. The world is not some external and lifeless landscape, but the projection of our own lives. In a troubled and troubling world, then, stories can make a difference (Formenti & West, 2016), because of their de-constructive and re-constructive power.

Kiefer and I implements this embodied process of learning and celebrates the 'corrective nature of art' (Bateson, 1972, p. 144), exposing and challenging commonplace ideas and frames of mind, by creating a 'place in common', a collective mind where feelings, stories and values can be shared. As argued by Kiefer (and Bateson), human knowing is limited. Pure rationality and individualism, guided by conscious purpose, creates 'pathologies of epistemology' that destroy life. Contemporary art features the contradictions of our world; it attracts and repulses; separates and composes. Artists question the public, even on the definition of art itself. They invite their audiences to see in a new way, to recognise their own dis/orientation, anxiety, fear, rage, confusion, and even disgust, as parts of the human experience. A museum could be a place where this would be more than celebrated, or 'exposed', if learning experience is made available for a participant public. This enhances the possibilities for art to awaken human wisdom and correct the excesses of rationality and control.

This project might also be seen as a form of diffuse research involving the public in a dialogue with the artist. The metaphorical quality of art objects evokes many possible stories, composes languages and ways of knowing, and connects past, present, and future. The aesthetic experience multiplies our possibilities to see, to think, to become; it reawakens our curiosity for the world and for ourselves. As Bateson (1972) argues

> The fact of our imperfect understanding should not be allowed to feed our anxiety and so increase the need to control. Rather, our studies could be inspired by a more ancient but today less honoured, motive: a curiosity about the world of which we are part. The rewards of such work are not power but beauty. (p. 269)

The alliance between museum and university reconnects creation with investigation. Life can be utterly dominated by disconnection and by problematic, normative truths that too easily suggest "unquestioned received ideas, uncontested stupid beliefs, triumphant absurdities, and rejections of evidence in the name of evidence" (Morin, 1999, p. 9). Learning a critical attitude, to go beyond unquestioned frames of mind, entails the involvement of adults in provocative and dialogic situations, as the *Life(St)Art* project does, offering a space where a collective process of sense-making, creative imagination and hope can be fostered.

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Laura Formenti
Department of Human Sciences for Education
Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy

Alessia Vitale
Department of Human Sciences for Education
Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy

SANDRO DEBONO

15. MUŻA

Participative Museum Experiences and Adult Education

MUŻA is a national community (public) art museum scheduled to open in Valletta, the capital city of Malta, in 2018 when the city will be designated European Capital of Culture. The chosen name MUŻA stands for a vision with clear objectives. The word MUŻA is an acronym for **MUŻ**ew Nazzjonali tal**-A**rti, the Maltese name of the island's current National Museum of Fine Arts established in the 1920s as a Fine Arts Section within the then Valletta Museum. MUŻA is also a direct reference to the nine muses, the Greek mythological figures from classical antiquity thought to inspire creativity. Further, it is the Maltese word for inspiration, hence the dot over the z (Ż), unique to the Maltese-alphabet letter.

This vision of the new museum as a site of inspiration and creativity seeks to weave the historic art collection into its new location at a larger yet equally historic building in Valletta, the once living quarters of the Italian Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem and I will return to this. This process can be compared to the study of the etymological source and roots of words in literature studies and even the term museum itself. One must first dissect the museum institution into its constituent parts, aesthetic, pedagogical and community functions and then reassemble them meaningfully into a new site. The creation of MUŻA can also be seen as a research project in its own right, as it is a process to interrogate the current museum model to provide new understandings, and thus re-think, its meaning and purpose. But returning to the issue of language and its importance, there is no word for 'Fine' Arts in Maltese and the literal translation for National Museum of Fine Arts would be *Mużew Nazzjonali tal-Arti*, the National Museum of Art, which excludes the concept of 'Fine'. This is important. The term "Fine" has connotations of restricting the arts to aesthetics, narratives from art history that have their grounding in elitism, a privileging of knowledge and thereby, participation, which by consequence, has been highly exclusive.

This chapter discusses the MUŻA project in a context of developing participative art museum interpretation strategies and the tools aimed to encourage a more critical pedagogy. I focus primarily on defining museum publics, the museum experience itself and how visual literacy practices can be understood as empowering forms of critical pedagogy, irrespective of art knowledge levels, and within the ever-changing character of our contemporary societies. I also emphasise the potential

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of the museum experience to inform grounded art history narratives, and revisit what counts as aesthetic measurement to promote what (Sandell, 2002) called social equality at individual and community levels within and through the museum experience. I argue that revisiting existing museum models and aligning them to the aspirations and ambitions of contemporary societies – creating responsive visual literacies within complex societies like Malta – requires a constant process of renewal that moves us beyond current hierarchical categorisations and definitions of the arts. My ideas around visual literacy resonates with Article 11 of the UNESCO *Hamburg Declaration of Adult Education* (1997), which speaks to people's empowerment through more comprehensive adult literacy programmes. I situate MUŻA, our Maltese participative museum model, in particular within the theorisations of Nina Simon's from *The Participatory Museum* (2010) and her declared ambition to create a new museum institution where visitors and staff members network "to co-create and to co-opt experiences and content in a designed, intentional environment" (p. 350). Her theories in fact complement ongoing research within the remit of this project concerning the MUŻA vision (Debono, 2014, 2016, Forthcoming).

LIMINALITY, FRONTIER CONTROL AND THE MUSEUM INSTITUTION

In order to fully understand the MUŻA project, it is important to frame it within the historical and contemporary contexts of the Mediterranean island of Malta. Malta stands at the centre of a series of movements, connections and exchanges that have distinctively shaped its cultural identity. We can think of this as standing on a culture rift, or frontier, between Europe and Northern Africa. Different groups of peoples from around the Mediterranean have come to Malta's shores for centuries, for reasons ranging from war to trade. They have in their own ways, all contributed to the weave of the fabric which makes up Malta's present cultural identity as unique, and connected to what Husserl, and later Said, called the 'Other'. Malta's cultural identity is therefore guided by its geographic liminality, drawing from narratives and practices from African and European cultures and even, beyond. What this means is that there has always been migration to Malta but what has changed is that now this migration is subject to intense political pressure due to the numbers of refugees and others from the Middle East and northern Africa. Rather then simply movement, this is now characterised as what Huntington (1994) called, a 'clash of civilisations'. From a European perspective, Malta's frontier status is essentially political and directly related to the European centre.

The strong European cultural links broadly correspond to the island-fortress status, another discourse that has shaped the island's history since it was granted to the aforementioned Order of St John of Jerusalem in 1530. This Order is celebrated for bringing art and architecture to the island. In 798, Malta was later taken over by the French and following a brief two-year interlude, claimed by the British as a crown colony until 1964 when Malta became an independent commonwealth nation-state. Thus, Malta's rich artistic heritage is seen as evidence of a strong Western European

culture and Euro-centric colonial legacy, connected to these culturally rich historic periods of colonisation. But it is perhaps the proximity of Malta to Italy that has had perhaps the most decisive impact upon the building of Maltese art history. Indeed, Maltese art history has been generally understood as an extension or perhaps better said, an integral part of Italian art history narratives due to the constant presence of Italian artists in Malta. Yet Malta's cultural identity is understood as peripheral and marginal to the core centre of artistic production that is Italy. Moreover, similar to the rest of the world, Malta's art historical heritage has begun to suffer from the process of 'commodification', most valuable in its ability to encourage the islands' tourism industry.

But returning to the idea of Malta's complex cultural identity is, indeed, the play between its geographic liminality and its frontier status. Its liminal character is beyond frontier politics, which more often than not seeks to erase narratives of the 'Other' in order to impose a sense of cultural nationalism or hegemony. Yet I would argue that the uniqueness of Malta's culture can be understood in its hybridity, its 'in-between space' (Rumelili, 2012; Fourny, 2013), which we can see as a liminal cultural ecology that shares inherent characteristics, values and heritage with the 'Other'. Rather than being a community on the edge, Malta stands in the centre of a rich cultural reality guided by the liminality of its regionalism within which connections and exchanges continue to happen, narratives woven and identities intertwined. Yet the historic tensions between opposing cultures who came to the island over time have fostered a dogmatic approach to its identity narratives, a concentrated form of Nietsche's (1874) 'sacredness of history', sustained by a dominant institutional framework which seeks to address in varied ways the anti-structural qualities of Malta's inherent liminality by promoting a linear culture and art historical narrative grounded within the nation-state or nationalistic paradigm.

The socio-political context for Malta's National Museum of Fine Arts is grounded within this particular cultural, historic and political context. It has been, by consequence, understood as a dogmatic institution, a regulatory one for that matter, promoting a frontier art history endorsing the dialectic with an acknowledged core centre of artistic production, which is to all intents and purposes Italo-European. The narrative of display has been consistently aligned to the European centres of artistic production and the artistic production happening on the island, or related to, recognised in accordance to European yardsticks. The museum has also been, more often than not, recognised as a tourist attraction, albeit amongst the least visited from all the tourist attractions on the island according to published statistics (*Heritage Malta Annual Report*, 2014). The strong historicity of the museum sector may be one possible reason why the museum struggles with the aesthetics of art history, also given the fact that masterpieces within the collection, particularly those recognised within the internationally recognised yardsticks of art history, are too few. Informal and non-formal education has rarely featured as relevant to the work of the museum, although, by contrast, formal education has been consistently promoted, particularly in recent years, through school visits guided by and in response to educational

curricula. Predominantly, the museum experience revolves around a traditional display of art works put together in response to a hierarchical art-historical structure of master, follower and art canons or schools. As a consequence, the museum legitimises particular forms of cultural production, creating and exhibiting official knowledge oftentimes perceived to be neutral (Mayo, 2013). Uniqueness is more often than not perceived to be elitist and exclusive, rather than reflecting Malta's liminality.

The MUŻA project is about rethinking and re-imagining a museum in Malta into a space of critical public pedagogy that can advocate for broader community engagement and promote greater inclusion through new forms of visual literacy and historical understanding (Borg & Mayo, 2000a, 2000b, 2010; Borg, Cauchi, & Mayo 2003; English & Mayo, 2012). Rather than sustain or uphold the problematic nationalistic paradigm and its dominant narrative, MUŻA aspires to become a public pedagogic site where official knowledge, highbrow culture and subaltern narratives, are continuously interrogated. It is a return to the value of Malta's liminality and its broad historical and current connections to Mediterranean regions.

A MUSEUM FOR WHOM?

Building directly on the above, a major shift for the MUŻA project, in its quest to rethink and re-imagine what a National Museum of Arts would be, is in the definition of 'nation'. Indeed, the fluidity of communities and the possibility that one can belong to more than one community at any given time, as Watson (2007) noted, represents a tangible challenge for 'national' museums that want to move away from this paradigm and do so, through the development of critical adult education programming around issues of identity. As suggested above, communities in Malta, and worldwide, are becoming more and more multi-cultural. Many people now acknowledge more than one place as 'home' and therefore, have more than one 'national' identity (Levitt, 2015). In addition, there has been more transnational cooperation and integration, particularly through diverse social networks and social media. Paradoxically, however, in so many ways this new, globalised world has lead to greater fragmentation amongst groups of people (Muqtedar Khan, 1998). For MUŻA, the trappings of a nation-state cultural institution are undoubtedly implied but for a country the size of Malta, with a population close to 420,000, the nation-state paradigm is not applicable to an imagined or virtual community, nor do we have here a neatly stratified society.

The MUŻA project understands community in terms of Graham's "melange principle" in which a variety of cosmopolitan cultures and traditions "interpenetrate, interconnect and intermingle" within territory inhabited by 'hybrid' communities (Graham cited in Rampley, Lenain, Locher, Pinotti, Schoell-Glass, & Zijlmans, 2012, p. 41). The extent to which an individual's cultural heritage is represented within the mainstream cultural arena either impedes or fosters social cohesion. The latter objective of promoting social cohesion can be done through participative or the

collective production of meaning, and the opportunity to enjoy culture, subjectively and through participative/collective experiences. Studies by John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2000) in particular promote an explicit focus on the idea of 'learning' in museums as an experiential process grounded in the understanding of the personal, embodied and social context of the learner. Museums are also defined by Smith (2015) as 'free choice learning environments', spaces of community-recognised resources structured around an identity-related exchange between object and viewer.

Central to Falk's identity-based model is the knowledge basis of the various museum publics, which he describes in terms of a museum entry luggage. This 'baggage', to extend Falk's terminology, corresponds to a set of preconceived ideas or assumptions, also described as a self-reinforcing narratives, including a framework of context based on personal views, specific content information guided by these personal views as well as experiences, memories and emotions. Falk's (2011) idea of identities is that they are in constant shift, hence liminal, and function as a highly flexible and easily adaptable model in response to cosmopolitan nationalism, globalisation, and ever-changing community demographics. The museum entry baggage is also broad, given the cosmopolitan nature of contemporary communities. This is the point of departure for museums, and specifically at MUZA, to become spaces where critical public pedagogy can effectively and consistently happen (Mayo, 2012). Falk (2011) also reminds us that museums are important public and pedagogical institutions, because the museum experience is one of the most enduring in terms of memory, which can be recalled by people much later.

PARTICIPATIVE MUSEUMS, VISUAL LITERACY AND BEYOND

Crucial to rethinking and imagining a 'national' art museum such as MUŻA into a space for critical public pedagogy is the need for new types of interpretation strategies, purposely developed in response to the needs and requirements of its new users and communities. These strategies need to be developed as responses to the complex identity-bases of museum audiences in Malta and their diverse cultures and traditions, as I argued earlier. The common denominator with the broad range of potential experiences and learning we have come to see as 'visual literacy'.

Avgerinou and Pettersson (2011) argue there is no widely accepted definition of visual literacy but for the purpose of this chapter, I define it as a mediated or facilitated relationship between images and viewers within a context of Debes' (1969) valuing sensory experiences in and of learning. Broadly speaking, visual literacy is about the legitimacy of visual messaging as a bona fide language that requires something of an established 'common grammar' for it to be truly useful in terms of identity deliberations (Brill, 2007). Thus Brill (2007, p. 55) describes visual literacy as a

> group of acquired competencies for interpreting and composing visible messages. A visually literate person is able to: (a) discriminate, and make

> sense of visible objects as part of a visual acuity, (b) create static and dynamic visible objects effectively in a defined space, (c) comprehend and appreciate the visual testament of others, and (d) conjure objects in the mind's eye.

The combination of pre-visit knowledge, defined as noted above by Falk (2011) as museum 'entry baggage', and additional knowledge acquired during the visit, is seen to result in learning outcomes that are unique to each individual situated within the context in which this learning happens but equally, can speak to human experience, that which brings us together, an intent I would argue of critical public pedagogy in a museum. Visual literacy strategies must therefore be purposely developed, and visual literacy skills seen as critical to agendas of museum programme planners and designers, such as those working on MUŻA, who want to bring about a comprehensive adult education strategy of public engagement and knowledge-making, particularly around divisive issues such as migration. Although a systematic review of museums working with visual literacy skills is beyond the scope of this chapter, two particular examples, merit a mention as they are helping us to develop the new visions and work for MUŻA.

The Art of Seeing

The first is *The Art of Seeing Ar*t, developed by the Toledo Museum of Art (Ohio, United States), a six-step process aimed to empower visitors to peruse works of art on a deeper level, and the second The Gallery One project at the Cleveland Museum of Art (United States). These two projects developed strategies for integrating technology into the visitor experience to enhance engagement by blending "art, technology, and interpretation to inspire visitors to explore the museum" (Alexander, 2014, p. 347). Both projects promoted direct engagement with objects through technology, but rather than provide exclusive curatorial interpretations and information, they sought to empower more personalised participative experiences. These two projects can, to a certain extent, be recognised as shifts from traditional to participative learning techniques characterised by Simon (2007) as a "one way information flow between institutions and users [toward a] multidirectional content experience" (p. 2). Both projects recognised objects as holding coded knowledge and empowered used specific participative adult education processes to access this knowledge and illustrate its value.

We see these more participative types of interpretation and learning initiatives as having potential in terms of developing purposely designed experiences through the exhibitions that will be integral to MUŻA. We imagine this as putting together a carefully chosen selection of images and artworks as a means to enhance visual literacy skills that could take up questions of identity. The codifications in the art thus serve the basis for a discussion of wider issues (Mayo, 2013), objects interconnected to suggest new meanings and elicit diverse responses within that context. This is the experience that MUŻA will seek to develop actively by presenting artworks as

complex narratives, stories and themes whose visual experiences are akin to text and can be read. Grouping and clustering therefore, is key and relational aesthetics, empowering connections and comparisons, can be a possible way forward. This idea is best illustrated in an exhibition that took place in Malta in 2015.

PEOPLE: DIASPORAS, IDENTITIES AND MEMORIES

The exhibition entitled *The Commonwealth and its People: Diasporas, Identities and Memories,* held on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of State Meeting in Malta in November 2015, was an opportunity to explore the potential of visual literacy in museum narrative design and curatorial practices useful for the MUŻA project.[1] This exhibition, held at the Renzo Piano Parliament Building in Valletta, the seat of Malta's House of Representatives and legislative body, showcased migration through a careful selection of objects juxtaposed to create an intentionally-created visual narrative beyond the fundamental need of traditional museum-style captions and interpretative texts. The exhibition featured four sections, purposely interconnected to narrate the various emotive states of migratory voyages starting with departure, followed by sustained states of identity moving on to the yearnings of memory and nostalgia until the eventful return to the land of origin. Objects and artworks were purposely chosen as evidence of the stories presented irrespective of their aesthetic or economic value. Rather than captions describing objects on display, carefully chosen images were used to sustain narratives, which could be easily understood by anyone, regardless of their specific visual literacy level.

(A) (B)

The two images above come from the exhibition. Image (A) is a juxtaposition of two images. The central image, by international Maltese photographer Darrin Zammit Lupi, portrays past, albeit recent, images of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea during a rescue operation. The backdrop image, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (19 January, 1948), is printed on transparent textile and shows Maltese migrants disembarking in Australia in 1948. These two images, jointly and as juxtaposed, stood for a bold political comment, an anti-xenophobic one about

migration issues with which Maltese society is well conversant. The rejection and sense of repulsion expressed by a minority of Maltese to migrants landing on the island's shores is interrupted by references to Maltese migrants to far-off lands with which many Maltese are still conversant thanks to family connections and ties with these migrants.

Image (B) above refers to an installation featuring old luggage, historic footage and visuals showing passenger ships and boarding Maltese migrants. This installation was placed at the beginning of the exhibition display and was primarily intended to set the tone and act as a metaphor for 'departure' from the knowledge 'luggage' visitors bring upon entry to the exhibition. So whilst departures are generally associated with travel and the transfer of personal belongings, this historic luggage referred to the image showing Maltese migrants disembarking in Australia in 1948, extending the narrative into the physical space of the exhibition viewer. The choice of visuals and display methods was inspired by the understanding of visual literacy proposed by The Delphi project as noted by Brill (2007). Chosen object and visuals have a presence within a defined space and connect clearly with the institutional agendas which Malta's national parliament seeks to promote, can be easily comprehended as visual testament and can also empower visual connections in the mind's eye. This would be the first access step of a knowledge ladder empowering access, improved understanding and visitor engagement.

Both groups of juxtapositions included no accompanying text, providing an opportunity for varied exhibition publics to contemplate the intended narrative and make their own meanings. How well this type of practice or display works, however, depends on a number of variables. First, the type of visual literacy and 'memory' those who see it have (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011) has a decisive bearing. In this case, it was particularly effective as the visual literacy skills and memory or experience required to 'read' the message was within reach of the varied Maltese publics who either had direct experiences or had visual memories acquired either through local media and/or to personal connections with migrant relatives. The clarity of the intended message, and the ways and means objects and artworks were placed together in this case effectively addressed publics with iconic memory retention which, more often than not, are the hardest to keep engaged over the span of time within the museum experience. The way visuals are juxtaposed to present stories and meanings is similar in many ways to aesthetic journalism, pursued in the interest of serving the highest possible number of audiences. Aesthetics concern display and choice, which, thanks to visual literacy, trigger sensibilities in motion and convert them into tangible experiences (Cramerotti, 2009). Secondly, it may be the case that visual experiences such as the one developed for the *The Commonwealth and its People: Diasporas, Identities and Memories* exhibition worked because of the specific choice of what Nina Simon defines as social objects. The ones chosen for this exhibition can, indeed, be understood as having the potential to connect the people who 'create, own, use, critique and consume' them and which in turn facilitate 'exchanges among those who encounter them' (Simon, 2007, p. 129). Not all art can

be defined as social objects although more often than not art has been conceived for a purpose which museums neutralise. Indeed, Nina Simon's classification of social objects into personal, active, provocative and relational (Simon, 2007) can help design initiatives to rethink the necessary interpretative material for art museums promoting visual literacy as the core design value.

BEYOND THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

The MUŻA participative model seeks to develop interpretation strategies and visual literacies that go beyond traditional museum practice. Rather than a passive presence at the service of the community, MUŻA seeks to become a space for critical public pedagogy where narratives from art history can be negotiated, written, endorsed and reviewed. Capitalising on the stratification of meanings in which art and heritage work can be a possible way forward to align the art museum institution and its publics. A stratified interpretation strategy, guided by Falk's identity model and Nina Simon's participative experiences, can help foster new readings and meanings in line with place-based education, which empowers a diversity of publics to become creators of knowledge rather than simply the traditional 'consumers'. Indeed, the museum visit thus becomes an act of 'heritage making', a "subjective political negotiation of identity, place and memory…understood as a discourse that frames a set of cultural practices that are concerned with utilising the past for creating cultural meaning for the present" (Smith, 2015, p. 460). Within the remit of this exchange and interface, the curatorial profession takes on a negotiating role as it seeks to foster new meanings and interpretations mediated through the museum experience and its broad interpretation tools. Curation becomes "a design tool that sculpts the spectator's experience of contributory projects" (Simon, 2007, p. 221).

For diverse cultural ecologies such as Malta, adult education strategies may be more akin to an exchange of knowledge empowered by a preference for interpretative tools that goes beyond knowledge levels and which, together with other traditional and more technological tools, creates a basic first-stage knowledge level that resonates with, and is applicable to, the needs and aspirations of the museum publics.

Participative art museums, particularly national-community art museums such as MUŻA, hold the potential to go even further. Given that they are sites of cultural politics (Mayo, 2013) they can also address the sustained review of the frontier's fabricated nature of art history, developed in relation to a core centre of artistic production, transforming it into a grounded model and recognising the liminality of national-cosmopolitan narratives and subaltern counterparts. Indeed, participative art museum models have the potential to promote new readings in art history. Discipline and subject may become liminal, in terms of the broad range of values and aesthetics grounded in cosmopolitan nationalism. This model can also be described as liminal in the ways and means it seeks to define heritage values and developed grounded art history yardsticks by acknowledging much more than aesthetics, given that art has a purpose beyond or complementary to aesthetics. Indeed, such liminal narratives

stand for a hybrid weave of identity-based values which recognise their grounded nature, completely different from the art history narrative of a core where production, aesthetics, political power and patronage combine to weave art narratives recognised as dogmatic yardsticks for alien and rather diverse cultural ecologies. This is, perhaps, the genesis of a new museum typology which is pedagogical, community and inclusive.

NOTE

[1] Dr Georgina Portelli and I jointly curated the exhibition with the support of Prof. Milena Dobreva and artist Pierre Portelli. I am indebted to Pierre Portelli for the discussion regarding exhibition concept interpretation.

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Sandro Debono
MUŻA, Malta

SECTION 4

PERFORMING, INTERVENING, DECONSTRUCTING

DARLENE E. CLOVER AND EMILY STONE

16. CASTING LIGHT AND SHADOW

Reflections on a Non-Formal Adult Learning Course

INTRODUCTION

This chapter shares our reflections on the pedagogy of a non-formal adult learning course entitled *Art and Slow Violence,* held over five-weeks in 2014 at Tate Modern, London. The course revolved around a variety of permanent and temporary multi-media exhibitions of different cultural renderings of war, conflict, violence and landscape. It took its name from a book by Rob Nixon (2011) entitled *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*, and aimed to provide participants with the opportunity to engage critically with artistic representations and imaginings, reading materials, presentations, and each other in both the class and during an optional dialogic space in a local pub following each class.

We reflect on *Art and Slow Violence* from our different positions. For many years, Darlene worked in non-governmental agencies and facilitated adult education workshops, using arts-based practices such as theatre and poetry. In 2004 she took up the position of professor at the University of Victoria, Canada. Darlene's current researches are museum adult education in relation to feminist and social issues in Canada and the United Kingdom and she teaches courses on art, cultural leadership and social change. At the time of *Art and Slow Violence* Darlene was a Visiting Fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London. She took part as a participant in the course, but also as a researcher, and some reflections in this chapter come from her interviews with other participants. Emily has worked in and studied museums for six years, focusing on social inclusion and advocating for critical, arts-based pedagogical practices. She is an Assistant Curator in Tate's Public Programmes team within the Learning Department and pitched the idea for this course during her recruitment. She conceptualised the course, identified the instructor, and worked with her on the overall design. Emily also undertook an evaluation and in this chapter we draw on participants' reflections.

We begin this chapter with a discussion of Nixon's articulations of slow violence, environmentalism, and representation, followed by contemporary demands for the greater social responsibility of museums and debates on their abilities to respond institutionally and pedagogically. We then highlight debates around the dialogic and storytelling functions of exhibitions, and the languages of education and learning. Our discussions do not pretend to be exhaustive, but rather to provide context and

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analytical lenses for our reflections. The next section describes the course design, aims and structure and we explore aspects of knowledge authority, discomfort, familiarity, as well as learning versus the right answer, and the place and role of the arts/exhibitions as critical pedagogues. We highlight the challenges, potential and contributions of this type of non-formal adult learning and education activity in a socially, ecologically and representationally troubled world, where museums are working to become intentional spaces of critical thinking, imagining, dialogue and debate. We argue a balance needs be struck between academic knowledge and content, and engagement and pedagogical skill.

CONTEXTS AND DISCOURSES

In *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor,* Nixon argues that the world needs urgently to re-think representationally, imaginatively, and theoretically, a form of "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space" (2011, p. 2). This 'slow violence', which unequally affects the poor and women, the poorest of the poor, was positioned by Nixon as a result of climate change, deforestation, the acidification of oceans, oil spills, and the calamitous after effects of war. Problematically, the author notes that slow violence is "an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (p. 3) and therefore, lacks the eye-catching and page-turning power of explosive and spectacular images of death and destruction that capture corporate media and public attention. This formidable representational obstacle "can hinder our efforts to mobilize and act decisively" (p. 2). Nixon asks how we can "convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making, disasters that are anonymous and that star nobody, disasters that are attritional and of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our image-world?" (p. 3).

Exhibiting, and learning through, images and narratives that speak to and represent the world around us is an essential function of art galleries. As such it might have seemed reasonable to find art galleries featured in book such as Nixon's. But they were totally absent from the examples he provides in terms of where representational meaning making around environmentalism, conflict, violence, poverty and gender are being taken up and re-imagined. Janes (2009) reminds us this should come as no surprise. He found art and culture institutions nearly absent in all the burgeoning literature on the perils and solutions to social or environmental problems, "making their irrelevance…as social institutions, a matter of record" (p. 26). Indeed, through a combination of sombreness, elitism, professional and scholarly authority, museums have positioned themselves as impartial, objective, trustworthy sites of knowledge acquisition and cultural stories "detached from real world politics" (Phillips, 2011, p. 8). But art galleries, like adult education, have never been neutral. They are sites of "unseen and unspoken powerful and problematic underlying assumptions" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 3). Consciously and unconsciously, these institutions have played a role in legitimising prevailing

structures of social and political power and forming understandings of reality as well as what has cultural value. Knowledge is "now a commodity that museums [includes art galleries] offer", but Hooper-Greenhill (1992) reminds us to be mindful of excessive claims such as the ability "to change one's perceptions and knowledge of the world through a visit to an art gallery" (p. 2). She questions provocatively if these institutions can be seen as "places in which we may come to know new things, and where our perceptions may radically change" (p. 2), and asks what the nature of this knowing would be, and how it would be brought about. Bringing us back to Nixon and building on Hooper-Greenhill's question, Janes (2009) queries how, given the very existence of planet earth and global civilisation is in danger, art galleries can contribute to the creation of "the intelligent and caring change that our world requires" (p. 16).

One principal pedagogical device used by art galleries is exhibitions (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). Exhibitions are also the means to what we discussed above, the instruments that carry the statements of fact that powerfully suggest what is important and how it should be understood (Oncuil, 2013). It is these stories, paintings, texts and so forth that are not neutral. They have been known to exclude, to whitewash social problems, and to disregard the complexity and messiness of the world (Janes, 2009). Going further, Styles (2011) highlights a pedagogical challenge of exhibitions. She argues they are infrequently developed through a pedagogical lens and therefore tend toward a "detached, authoritative voice" (p. 12). Critical theorists such as Freire and Macedo (1995) add that we need to move beyond the paradigm of the passive absorption of knowledge manifest in the transfer from the expert to the novice – what Kaplan (1996) once referred to as "downward spread of knowledge to the public" (p. 3) – if we want deep, social learning to occur. Both Styles and Mayo (2012) believe exhibitions can and must be used as 'dialogic spaces'. Dialogue is critical because it involves asking questions that allow one to enter the dialogic fabric of human life and engage in a world symposium. Dialogue most often takes the form of 'conversation' but cultural scholars, including Freire, suggest it can also come through visual codes such as those found in the arts. For Abbs (1997), art is a sensuous embodiment though vital interaction with a physical medium that expands normative practices of dialogue that can inadvertently inhibit voice and learning. By encouraging people to think symbolically, art attends to a person's plurality of consciousness and promotes more imaginative thinking and discussions that break the inertia of habit, recalcitrance and resistance, and gives credence to alternative realities (e.g. Clover & Stalker, 2007; Greene, 1988; Lipson-Lawrence 2005). Newman (2006) unites dialogue and creative practice when he suggests we need both rational and non-rational discourse because "we grow by engaging in instrumental, interpretive and critical learning" (p. 5).

A growing recognition of the limitations of didactic and passive pedagogical practices coupled with a belief in the power of art to teach has been a catalyst for art galleries to embrace the concept of 'learning'. Learning is understood as a conscious shift toward emphasising the learner over the educator, toward people's experiences

and open-endedness of outcome, toward meaning-making and the validity of diverse interpretations rather than rigid facts (e.g. Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011; Roberts, 1997). While on the surface this appears to be an uncomplicated and appropriate move, adult education scholars suggest caution. Lahav (2003), for example, challenges a move toward personalised learning could become individualised and fragmented. She equates learning to a trip to the supermarket, where people simply choose whichever story they fancy. While people's knowledge, experiences and choices need to be respected, not all that exists is valid. The adult population is awash with sexist, racist, xenophobic, homophobic and other problematic assumptions and ideologies (e.g. Grace, 2013; Lopes & Thomas, 2006; Nesbit, Brigham, Taber, & Gibb, 2013). Tackling these is unlikely to come about through personal choice or lassie-faire learning. It requires educational processes that are more purposeful, deliberately provocative and intentional, and that allow for the asking of "difficult and uncomfortable questions of ourselves, and others…and [generating] new perspectives through discussion, debate and dialogue" (Janes, 2009, p. 17). In a troubled world, a purposeful education of critical questioning challenges people to take risks in learning, to test their assumptions and understandings against those of a larger group, and to think about realities and their responsibilities in new ways (e.g. Crowther & Sutherland, 2008; Martin, 2003; Newman, 2006).

COURSE DESIGN, AIMS AND QUESTIONS

A primary role of Tate's Public Programmes team is to bring together adult audiences for deep, collaborative learning and reflection on art and society. The Public Programmes team believes learning through art provides important, visual ways to explore and understand the complex issues of our time. Tate wants people to enter into subjective dialogue with art and each other, and engage in processes of collective meaning and sense making about what they experience in the gallery and its broader contributions and implications to the worlds of culture, politics, and society.

Emily realised that although there were numerous aesthetic-political short-term seminars and workshops taking place at Tate, there had not been a longer-term non-formal course in some years. But the strong works in the current collection at that time, including the upcoming *Conflict Time Photography* series, created such an opportunity. *Art and Slow Violence* aimed to expose participants to various images of conflict, represented not in the moment, but rather in the aftermath, "casualties that do not fit the photographic stereotypes [shredded torsos and bloodied peasants], casualties that occur long after major combat has been concluded" (Nixon, 2011, p. 200). Although there was a minimal cost for the course, it was open to anyone interested in exploring the relationship between art and politics, and there was no requirement of prior knowledge of either subject. An overwhelming number of people wanted to attend the course, including some who tried to sneak in on the first evening.

A number of questions formed the basis of the development of the course including: How do the artists interrogate and represent violence?; What is the place of art in the realm of war?; What are the aesthetics of conflict and what can they tell us?; How can a gallery deal effectively with political subject matter?; How can art catalyse new thinking around issues of violence in society today?; and How does art enable more imaginative and open thinking about violence and related issues?

The introductory week started in the gallery space entitled *Transformed Visions* at Tate Modern, with discussions of visibility and exposure using video and photographic works by Omer Fast, Leon Golub, and Hrair Sarkissian. The course reading materials by writers such as Jacques Derrida, Ian Waites, Liam Sprod, Peter Hayes, Sigmund Freud, Rob Nixon, and Isabelle Stengers were distributed to the participants. The second session also took place in Tate Modern, in *Poetry and Dream* and the *Energy and Process* collection displays. Working in small groups, participants were asked to choose an artwork and think about it in relation to ideas such as the uncanny, by Freud. Taking place at Tate Britain, week three began with investigations around nuclear materiality using the sculptures by Henry Moore, and works by Peter Kennard, and Colin Self. Working alongside an independent curator the participants were led on an examination of British landscape paintings in connection with the ideas in the course. This included the long-term effects of land ownership and the Enclosures Act on the landscape and the differing social classes. Weeks four and five centred on the *Conflict, Time, Photography* exhibition in Tate Modern, using individual reflection time with the art and large group fora.

In contrast to normative course approaches in galleries, the participants sat in a circle, amongst the exhibitions, surrounded by the artworks. People come to the gallery for the art and therefore, educating within that milieu made sense. The course was also held out of hours, giving participants quiet time with the works, something all but prohibitive during busy daytime hours. Following each class, Emily organised a non-obligatory gathering in a local pub for the participants and it proved to be a brilliant idea for reasons we will outline.

AUTHORITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE PRACTICE OF DISCOMFORT

When aiming to provide a critical space of learning, adult educators Freire and Macedo (1995) argue that educators must have an authority of knowledge. By this they mean understandings of the particular issues being taken up. Tate's usual practice for course instruction is to bring in an outsider to the institution because they have expertise in areas beyond those of internal staff and thereby offer something additional. The *Art and Slow Violence* instructor was completely comfortable around both art and the political subject matter of the course. Walking around the gallery to develop the course, she easily identified works that could be used and expertly matched them with reading materials that included a number of challenging theoretical frameworks, such as postmodernism and psychology, as well as a chapter from Nixon's book.

It quickly surfaced that the majority of participants found the reading materials extremely difficult and many struggled with the complexity and density of the concepts and language. To include challenging educational materials in a course such as this is important. Contemporary social and environmental issues, as Nixon's book notes, are complex and demanding. Few non-formal education opportunities exist where adults can engage with difficult subject matter and be pushed to think in ways that are beyond their comfort zones and existing frames of reference and language. Newman (2006) suggests that vis-à-vis social struggle and change, we need practices of discomfort, moments of frustration which we can use as catalyst to help adults to really see ideologies at work, and uncover the underlying causes of social and ecological inequities. In other words, through comparisons with unfamiliar and contradictory perspectives, adults are able "to see those things that are hidden from view, aspects…that we may never have questioned or examined" (Pratt, 2005, p. x). To expose participants to ideas such as 'the uncanny', the discomforting, the unfamiliar, and the 'invisible' was a goal of *Art and Slow Violence* in its effort to stimulate new ways of perceiving and thinking about the implications of violence and war, long after the 'spectacle' had ended.

AUDIENCE, FAMILIARITY AND EXCLUSION

And yet there were problems. The course began with participants sharing their backgrounds and reasons for attending. Participants included a hedge fund manager, an aspiring novelist, artists, activists, master and doctoral students, a journalist, a lawyer, academics, and a museum worker. Reasons for attending ranged from wanting to explore a character for a book within the context of the course to needing a social outlet; from acquiring ideas for their own artworks, studies or academic courses, to learning to 'read' art; from understanding how the arts could be used to work with survivors of violence to simple curiosity.

The Instructor had never taught a non-formal course like this before, and was unaccustomed to this diversity. It would be understandable to feel a sense of panic about how to deal with the different levels and interests of the group. Underestimated was the vast amount of knowledge and excitement that existed in the room, and how this needed to be tapped into. Also underestimated were the expectations one could place on members of the public who attend non-formal courses. Participants are not obligated to remain if they feel dis-satisfied or dis-respected and a number did not return after the first class when the readings were handed out, or the second class when they were 'somewhat' applied. While there were various reasons for this, one participant confided she did not return because she could not comprehend the materials and felt 'stupid'. Most participants who remained in the course admitted they did not actually read the materials.

Complex reading materials need to be handled with sufficient time to unpick the ideas. Working within the gallery environment led to an over ambition to utilise more of the artworks than the duration of the course permitted – to the detriment of

proper analysis of the reading material. However, Tate, like universities, gives its tutors full autonomy and we must remember how “certain positions confer authority and the right to make decisions” (Newman, 2006, p. 6). Newman is arguing here that we need to be cognisant of power inequities between people in different positions and how this can limit interventions even when it is clear things must change.

Building on the above, a few participants were very knowledgeable about art and/or the backgrounds and intentions of the artists whose work was being exhibited in the chosen exhibitions, and constantly spoke up, providing the group with background information. Within a gallery setting, and the context of ‘learning’, this is important because people attend these activities to augment their knowledge, and therefore they expect to hear from people who are knowledgeable and can provide informed insights into areas with which they have little familiarity. The fact that it was not always the educator illustrates that knowledge exists beyond the ‘educator’ and this can be empowering to others in a group. Peer learning and sharing knowledge are important factors in Tate’s more theoretical courses. They are encouraged through group discussion, critical questioning and the post-event social spaces. Active learner engagement also means the process is one of “co-investigation between the educator and the group”, which equalises power, making learning more dynamic (Mayo, 2012, p. 105).

Learning Versus the Right Answer

Despite the potential of the above, a clash began to occur between ‘learning’, that there are no right answers and processes of open-ended perception sharing, and ‘the right answer’. At various points in the course, participants were invited to share their perceptions of particular artworks, which were often understated, complex and multifarious. As noted above, a few responded actively and constantly, but there was a silent majority. These participants were not familiar with the artists’ intentions and backgrounds, and in the face of often overwhelming ‘facts’ – the right answers – shied away from putting forward their own ideas. Some, however, did respond to questions that appeared to be aimed at how the works made them feel, what they saw or believed the photographer or painter might have been trying to convey. But on more than one occasion, their reflections were negated by ‘the right answer’. What we mean is that feelings, thoughts and reflection by participants were ‘clarified’ with what the works ‘really’ meant. Moreover, at least twice participants were told their reflections were ‘wrong’. We are not challenging the right to have knowledge about artworks and artists, the act of sharing accuracies, or that some ideas may very well need to be challenged. What we are drawing attention to is a disconnection in the process, which calls in to question the purpose of the pedagogical activity. If the purpose is to provide a space for participants to make their own meaning and connections to the artworks, and to share these, then what value is there in simply stating they are ‘wrong’ because they are not what the artist intended? If people are invited to share their views, which may very well be uninformed, what point if it is

simply to then share 'the right answer' and negate any other interpretations? How is a balance between information and artist intent maintained, with open interpretation and active reflection that can be debated and discussed, but not silenced by 'the right answer'? We will return to these questions shortly.

INFORMAL SPACE AND ART AS PEDAGOGUE

There was one overwhelmingly positive pedagogical space created during the course – the informal gathering opportunity Emily had organised at a local pub following each session. This casual space afforded participants a chance to air their frustrations about the course but more importantly to think through, debate, question and struggle with the content. As it was not mandatory, not everyone attended each informal gathering, and some could not at all due to familial responsibilities. Yet it was this free, affable and non-controlled environment where participants got to know each other's personal stories, shared the works that had affected them the most, debated meanings and interpretations, and laughed and learned from each other. For a number of participants this became the most important learning space because it enabled them to speak candidly but also to network and build relationships. It could be that the informality of this space is impossible to bring in to the course, but perhaps the freedom to speak and debate could be replicated in means such as allowing oral feedback at the end of each evening, and organising smaller group work around the reading materials and the artworks. Contrary to what is seen as vital to critical, non-formal adult education practice, there was only one small group session in the entire course, and it came at the beginning and revolved around reading materials so many had struggled with and did not understand.

Another positive element to the course was, not surprisingly, the artworks themselves. The unique quality to learning within the gallery environment is the lived experience of being surrounded by art. Canadian poet Nourbese Philip once argued culture was not an insignificant site of struggle, but that its power lay in masking that very fact. While this has many meanings, in relation to this course, it was the significant role art played in rendering visible and provoking connections and critical thinking. One particular time was at Tate Britain. This session was for many participants the moment when "the codifications hidden in art were able to "generate themes" (Mayo, 2012, p. 105) brought clarity to what Nixon had been arguing vis-à-vis representations and slow violence.

At Tate Britain, participants were introduced to two deceptively simple artworks in the permanent collection. One was a windy and chaotic landscape, a commons, where people collectively gathered food and fuel; the other, an estate mansion surrounded by an enclosed, heavily controlled and manicured garden 'devoid' of humans. Manifest in the first work was the right to land, and the health and abundance of nature to supply people with what we need. In the latter, the human ideology of privatisation, of power, of social and ecological control through the act of enclosure that had massive implications for the lives of so many both in England

and abroad. These were simple yet powerful representations of slow violence. They were not dramatic images and spectacles of death, but the stealth of privilege and power to destroy captured within the frame. The participants carried these images to the exhibition, *Conflict, Time, Photography*. Many of these photographs showed 'empty' deserts of Iraq, landscapes vacant of human activity and life. Yet these now rendered visible the presence human ideology of war based on superiority and greed, and their impact on the land, and by extension, lives. Newman (2005) calls for means to encourage true critical thinking, by which he means processes to connect ideology and reality, processes that destabilise and challenge things taken at face value, and processes that render visible the invisible hand of power and complicity. Boal (2006) argued, "only aesthetics [could] enable us to attain the truest and most profound comprehension of the world and society" (p. 29). Art, through the creative insights it almost mystically shares, fills gaps in knowledge, and completes schemas, such as slow violence, that "we had only half sensed [were] there" (Newman, 2006, p. 176). Like good critical pedagogy in and of a complex world, the artworks suggested ways of seeing but offered no right answers, leaving participants to ask themselves the necessary difficult questions.

DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Contemporary global challenges that threaten the planet are important new harbingers for change in art and culture institutions (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012; Janes, 2009). Too few spaces exist where people can actually engage in difficult conversations about these complex issues, and are exposed to theories and corrosive ideologies that take them out of their comfort zones. This course illustrated that art galleries can do this. It does not mean it is the only role they can play, but they can contribute pedagogically by offering a 'representational' space that arouses epistemological curiosity, through exhibitions and images that pose new questions about the world and challenge the taken-for-granted. How well courses such as this perform pedagogically, however, depends upon creating balance and putting pedagogy on an equal footing with knowledge expertise.

Teaching in an academic environment, and educating in a non-formal space, is very different even if the non-formal space is an art gallery, which prides itself on scholarship. We believe, therefore, that this calls for a balance of different skill sets. Most academics are not trained as adult educators; they are content specialists in their field, with important research and theoretical knowledge. Bringing this knowledge and expertise to a non-formal pedagogical space is valuable given adults attend courses in galleries to learn from those with an authority of knowledge of informed insights. But adults learn best when their knowledge and perspectives are respected and taken into account, and the instructor plays the roles of educator and learner, and all are co-constructors of knowledge. Adult educators argue this takes pedagogical knowledge, creativity and facilitation skills (Pratt, 2005). Finding this combination in a single person can be difficult. Therefore, identifying two people,

one with the remarkable theoretical background and knowledge of art, which the *Art and Slow Violence* instructor had, and another with non-formal group facilitation skills, who could create the course together would have a more powerful impact and lay to rest some of the challenges we outlined above. But this combination has other benefits.

Firstly, it would challenge normative hierarchies in art galleries by positioning the content specialist and the educator as equals. Secondly, it would respond to Styles (2002) who argues pedagogical purpose, intent and process need to be embedded from the beginning in any learning activity because this is what can respond to the diverse knowledge and expectations of a group of people. Further, this combination would create balance between moments of listening and times of conversation, between critical questioning and reflection and information sharing, and between theoretical and art knowledge and experiencing and interpreting the artworks.

Embedding an adult education process in courses would mean a greater focus on fewer paintings and exhibitions, giving more time for reflection, dialogue and debate. It would also provide the time required to make the connections with the complex reading materials that contain critical lenses to view the works. For exhibitions are not passive; they are key actors on the gallery's pedagogical stage. They can make comments and statements that are powerful to the interests of justice and change. Making better use of art and exhibitions means calling upon them in more facilitated pedagogical ways to be provocateurs for critical thinking. Exhibitions and art do not in themselves change the world, but as this course showed, they can provide a means to test, examine, and explore imaginatively the painful realities and hopeful possibilities of our world.

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Darlene E. Clover
University of Victoria
Victoria, Canada

Emily Stone
Tate Modern
London, United Kingdom

ALYSSA GREENBERG

17. THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS OF COMMUNITY DOCENT TRAINING AS ADULT LEARNING

Love and Labor at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

INTRODUCTION

> I wake up at 5:30. I leave home at 6:00 take that long ride—Lake Shore and Belmont. I get to work, Sutter's sons let me in the apartment when I walk in the door Sutter says 'Lisa is that you? I was so worried you would not come. I'm ready to eat.' These were her first words every day. She weighed 450 pounds. Her arms were as big as a 250-pound woman. Her stomach was so big that it took me, and her three sons to lift it. We put pillows under the arm… pillows under the stomach. Rolled sheets between the legs to make it easier to wash. I would use a large sponge. I would use a hospital bucket to put water in to wash her hair. First it took about an hour to wash her hair. Her hair was long and grey and it could touch her feet. I put pillows underneath her arms because they were so big one person could not lift them as I began to wash her with the sponge she would tell me, 'the hot water feels so good.' After the arms we washed her stomach. We had three pillows under her stomach. I washed it in sections. She would thank me the whole time. It took two hours to bathe her and to change the sheets. We had to pull her over to one side of the bed, me and two brothers, lifting and pulling her back. I go around and tuck the sheet up under her as far as I can. Then we do the same thing to this other side after I cover her with a sheet, because she doesn't have anything big enough to wear. After I fix her breakfast. She gets four waffles, six eggs, and seven sausages. After breakfast I clean the bedroom, the bathroom, the dining room, the kitchen. At this point, I have already been there two hours over my time. While I'm cleaning she moans. She is still hungry. She cries for more food. The doctors have her on a strict diet before I leave I would give her two hot dogs. (Lisa Thomas, domestic worker and activist, 2012)

A household sponge encased in a glass museum vitrine accompanies the above label, in the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM) in Chicago. This object is unusual for a museum collection, if not for a lavatory or kitchen. Together, the object and its label tell a unique story about the experience of a domestic worker.

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Yet this story is infinitely more compelling when narrated and expanded upon by Lisa Thomas herself. She speaks about how, upon arriving to work, she discovered that her client has passed away and had to call the police. When the police arrived, they handcuffed Thomas and interrogated her about her client's death, not releasing her until the coroner reported the client died of natural causes. When Thomas tells this story at JAHHM, she emphasises how the Chicago Coalition of Household Workers, based at the Latino Union of Chicago, a worker centre, had supported her through the continued harassment by the police.

This vignette is a snapshot of *Love and Labor,* a partnership between JAHHM and the Latino Union. *Love and Labor* was a collaboratively produced tour and facilitated dialogue in which community docents (trained, mostly volunteer guides) worked together with museum educators and museum visitors to examine historical and contemporary domestic work, and to take action by developing cross-community solidarity. The community docents were members of the Chicago Coalition of Household Workers, a coalition of low-income women of colour, and also a community partner who had previously co-curated an exhibition with JAHHM. The docent training programme, co-developed by members of both organisations, was a form of adult learning inspired to build organising, public speaking, and storytelling skills and develop coalitions and relationships. According to museum educator Paola Deguzman, "*Love and Labor* was not just about labour issues, but the people who experienced these labour issues."

Thomas' role as a community docent challenged the traditional power dynamics of museum education, replacing hierarchical and expert-driven practices with a dialogic, collaborative approach. Her role also reflected the museum's goal to engage people who had traditionally lacked museum access. The community docent programme aimed to make the museum an inclusive and empowering space where all people could find their experiences represented in exhibitions, and where museum staff, and even other visitors, could see those outside the museum profession as peers with knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and cultural value. For Thomas, museum education, like domestic labour, was framed as an act of love, hence the name.

In this chapter I explore *Love and Labor* as a critical turning point in the history of inclusive, social-justice-orientated museum education programming but also, paradoxically, as a problematic example of how such programming can perpetuate, rather than challenge, inequality. To make this case, I draw on on my own work as a co-coordinator and co-facilitator of *Love and Labor,* as a labour organiser, and from interviews with stakeholders as well as written programme evaluations. I begin with a description of the creation and implementation of *Love and Labor,* analysing it through the lens of adult and popular education principles. I illustrate how this is an important model of socio-political education and learning that can be adapted by other museums and community organisations. I then turn to the internal dynamics of privilege within the museum itself. Through low wages and a lack of benefits for workers including health care and paid sick days, *Love and Labor* perpetuated the undervaluing of labour performed by women, people of colour, and

youth. The norms of the museum's institutional culture – in particular, maintaining the museum's reputation as a leader in social justice programming – silenced the museum educators' *own* labour struggles and activism with community docents and visitors, eroding the sense of trust and solidarity that *Love and Labor* had intended to cultivate. I argue that although community partnerships are extolled within the museum community and to the public, this discourse obscures the complexities and challenges of this kind of work – namely, the presence and effects of oppression. Further, while such experiments are worth pursuing, they can have tangible social consequences that we, as social-justice-oriented museum professionals, must take into account in order to avoid repeating mistakes that re-inscribe the very hierarchies we seek to overcome.

WHAT WAS *LOVE AND LABOUR?*

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

JAHHM, located on the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) campus, honours social reformer Jane Addams, the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and her colleagues at the Hull-House Settlement who advocated for public health and education, free speech, fair labour practices, immigrants' rights, recreation and public space, arts, and philanthropy through grassroots, community-oriented activism.

Mary Keyser was the co-founder and housekeeper of the Hull-House Settlement. By running the household, she made it possible for the other reformers to engage in social reform projects outside the home. Keyser also founded and led the Labour Bureau for Women, an organisation that supported labour rights for domestic servants in middle and upper class households. She was a voice for the needs of immigrant neighbours within the Hull-House Settlement. Upon her death, her obituary ran in several newspapers and hundreds of people attended her funeral—a strong indication of her support within the community (Radke, 2013a, 2013b).

Keyser's story is only one piece of the story of the historical labour movement for domestic workers at the Hull-House Settlement and beyond. Activists advocated for labour rights for domestic servants including better treatment and working conditions, fair pay, shorter hours, and more leisure time and made efforts to unionise domestic workers. Passed in 1938, the Fair Labour Standards Act ensured a shorter workweek, a minimum wage, overtime benefits, and child labour protections—but this law excluded domestic workers. Unfortunately, this inequality persists today and many domestic workers are still denied basic labour rights.

The Latino Union of Chicago and the Chicago Coalition of Household Workers

The Latino Union is a worker centre, an organisation in which low-income immigrant and U.S. born workers collaborate to collectively improve social and

economic conditions. The Chicago Coalition of Household Workers (CCHW) is a transformative programme for women workers to create just conditions in the workplace, home, and community. The Coalition was founded in 2011 as part of the Latino Union's efforts to work with excluded or marginalised workers. The members are housekeepers, nannies, and caregivers for the elderly and people with disabilities. Together with their allies they fight for gaining social recognition and respect for 'the work that makes all work possible' and for ending the exclusion from labour rights and protections. Their collective efforts create the tools to improve their work and workplaces, and to effectively contribute to the well being of their families and communities. A main project of CCHW is to support the Illinois Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, which would ensure benefits and protections including overtime pay, paid time off, and protections against harassment and discrimination.

Unfinished Business: Twenty-First Century Home Economics

Unfinished Business: Twenty-first Century Home Economics opened on December 10, 2012, the 152nd anniversary of Jane Addams' birth. It was a collaboration between JAHHM and the CCHW to tell the story of first generation of domestic worker activists, directly connecting themes of Hull-House Settlement history to contemporary life. JAHHM invited CCHW domestic worker organisers to co-curate a display of their personal artifacts and narratives that would utilise the Museum's capacity as a public space to amplify their voices and make visible their experiences. This community co-curating approach allows the exhibition to have a dialogic rather than 'monologic' voice. Like popular education, it aims to reposition authority over knowledge production as a *shared* authority in which community and museological knowledges are interdependent, rather than positioning the museum as the sole arbiter of expertise and knowing. Relatedly, community co-curating positions members of the public who do not typically inhabit positions of authority to be storytellers. This approach aims to facilitate ownership of the history of the Hull-House Settlement by everyone, and not just the JAHHM staff. Finally, community co-curating engages the Museum as a site of public engagement and popular education, by directly supporting the CCHW's activism through raising awareness for their fight for equity.

For domestic worker Lisa Thomas the exhibition provided "the recognition we needed for the jobs we did" by making visible the "hard work and ridicule" domestic workers' experienced, and "how people looked at this as invisible work." Lisa spoke openly about domestic work as an act of love but also about the abuse, neglect, and injustice suffered by her 'sisters'. Thomas brought two of these sisters to the exhibition, and "they just couldn't believe it, domestic workers, *women*, being physically and mentally abused in the caregiver field. They asked, 'Why you never discuss these things with us?'" Thomas explained to her sisters that though abuse is not an everyday part of her job, these situations do happen regularly to herself and her fellow caregivers. Thus, this exhibition evoked meaningful conversations

amongst domestic workers who, for the most part, have little opportunity to reflect collectively upon those experiences. Domestic Workers Programme Coordinator Gabriela Marquez-Benitez felt the history of domestic work was not typically on display in museums, and how meaningful it was for domestic workers to see their work and experience recognised in this way. She described to me the "shock" and "pride" her mother, a domestic worker herself, felt upon hearing that artefacts from domestic workers would appear in a museum exhibition.

An Act of Love: Training Domestic Workers as Community Docents

Upon receiving a $5,000 Community Project Grant from the Illinois Humanities Council to support *Love and Labor,* JAHHM and Latino Union staff members met to determine shared goals. These included a focus on leadership, public speaking, and storytelling skills. Other ideas were to include organising/solidarity activities and to develop a collective evaluation process. We also developed a list of target audiences including domestic workers, legislators, labour groups, religious groups, workers and their families, students, and the general public. In this section, I describe the development of our community docent programme as a model that other practitioners can adapt.

We organised three training sessions. Highlights of the first training day included collective goal setting for the *Love and Labour* team and a tour and dialogue facilitated by JAHHM museum educators. The second training day included object and storytelling workshops and a question-and-answer session with historian Rima Lunin Schultz. The third day consisted of practice tours and dialogues facilitated by the Community Docents and a potluck celebration.

Museum educator Paola Deguzman remembered being challenged "by having to teach so much in so little time while still making sure everyone was getting something out of the training, whether it was historical information, public speaking skills, or storytelling skills."

Lisa Thomas spoke of enjoying the training sessions but admitted that she was fearful she would "not be able to pull it off." She valued the learning experience, having not known "about Mary Keyser or the Museum or that the neighbourhood was once filled with immigrants." She remembered reading research about Hull-House history on the train during her commute to work in order to get more "depth and weight, to give visitors something to think about." She felt very "proud that I'm able to be a voice for women who can't speak for themselves" and "to change the idea that domestic workers aren't important or don't deserve rights. It really helps to have us there rather than just an exhibit telling stories – you can see when visitors are really interested!"

Over the course of three training sessions, the *Love and Labor* team developed a set of curricula for the co-facilitated tours and dialogues. The curricula evolved over the course of the *Love and Labour* project, and changed depending on the particular pairing of co-facilitators and the needs of the particular audience.

Key Aspects of Love and Labor Tour Curriculum

Each tour began with introductions and a poignant question: Think back to your childhood home. Who performed the childcare, elder care, house cleaning, or other type of domestic work when you were a child? How did you engage with this person? Do you have a memory of this domestic work?

One of the tour's most memorable components was an activity known as a "privilege walk" in which participants gathered in a circle, and were asked to step forward when the facilitator read a prompt with which they identified: if you participate in cooking, cleaning, childcare, yard work, pet care, or other unwaged work for others; if you feel that the unwaged work you do corresponds with your gender identity; if when you do this work, you consider it as an act of labour; if when you do this work, you consider it as an act of love.

The tour concluded with this question: Take a moment to examine the objects/read the labels curated by members of the Chicago Coalition of Household Workers. Reflect on who did the domestic work in the home where you grew up. What artifact would you put on display to reflect that story?

The arc of the *Love and Labor* dialogue was adapted from a dialogue template from the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Some of selected questions from the *Love and Labour* dialogue included: How do you demonstrate appreciation/value for others' work? How would you like to be shown appreciation/value for your work? How do you think being a care worker today similar or dissimilar to being a care worker in the era of the Hull-House Settlement? How do the working conditions of care workers affect us all? What does it mean to be an ally for worker centres like Latino Union?

Facilitating Love and Labor

From September 2013 to February 2014, the team facilitated over 40 *Love and Labor* tours and dialogues. When asked about the challenges she experienced facilitating *Love and Labor,* Thomas described "not thinking that I would be able to get across to the people" and feeling "fearful that visitors wouldn't give two hoots about what we as caregivers and organizers go through, or wouldn't give too hoots about the bill itself." As Thomas continued to facilitate *Love and Labor,* she "got comfortable doing the tours, being relaxed made it easier, helps you give out more information." Similarly, Myrla Baldonado reported to me, "It wasn't in training that I felt a deep sense of connection—I found it for myself once I became a docent."

During a question-and-answer session led by historian and Hull-House Settlement expert Rima Lunin Schultz during the *Love and Labor* training, Gabriela Marquez-Benitez remembered feeling moved by Schultz's "experience, knowledge, and about what the museum has meant for so many years." When Schultz participated in a *Love and Labour* tour and dialogue co-facilitated by Myrla Baldonado, Marquez-Benitez remembers Schultz being moved to tears on multiple occasions "because it

was so powerful for her," and because the collaboration between Museum Educator and Community Docent felt so natural and right. At that moment, Marquez-Benitez recognised Baldonado's role as a historian as well. Baldonado remembered that particular tour and dialogue too, that that day she had been "really ready, spirited, and natural, and [Schultz] liked that." For Baldonado, facilitating *Love and Labor* "puts you in a position to have a deeper connection with people, analysis and experiences converge, in a more literal way, and in a symbolic way."

Another memorable *Love and Labor* tour and dialogue for Marquez-Benitez was for an audience of SEIU home health care workers who arrived at JAHHM right after a campus rally in support of the UIC United Faculty, the University's union for full-time faculty members. Marquez-Benitez remembered, "I was coming from a heavy day, but they were so pumped up, and that energy was very contagious." She felt very connected to the union workers during the tour and dialogue. Again, participants were moved to tears through "this very beautiful conversation," when community docents and union workers exchanged stories about their labour struggles and activism.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS ADULT LEARNING

Be Aware of and Responsive to Power Dynamics and Social Disparities

Central to community engagement and adult learning is creating an atmosphere that is conducive to collaboration. Ideal community partnership entails all partners having agency, a voice, and decision-making power. We must take steps to limit the effects of social inequity within our work. Community partnerships must be about challenging and disrupting power dynamics and are problematic if we just reinforce social inequality through our work.

Love and Labor was the product of many meetings. The planning committee consisted of JAHHM staff members (including the museum educators who would be co-facilitating the programmes), the Chicago Coalition for Household Workers members who would be co-facilitating the programmes, and Latino Union staff members. In planning the meetings, we made an intentional effort to be conscious of and anticipate the needs of participants. For example, we made an effort to alternate between meeting at JAHHM and at the Latino Union office. But even that effort did not go far enough. Because the CCHW workers were home care workers, they had to travel from a client's home to attend a meeting at either location.

It was important for us to be conscious of what kind of a day participants have had before the meeting began. We made an effort to have a nutritious, filling snack or meal prepared for everyone to enjoy. Besides enabling participants to be physically and mentally prepared for collaboration, sharing a meal together helps reinforce a sense of community. We also prioritised financial compensation for all participants for the time spent at meetings. For future community partnerships, I would suggest budgeting money for commuting expenses as well.

Other ways to be aware of and responsive to power dynamics and social disparities include maintaining meeting agendas, keeping meetings short, sending detailed notes to those who cannot be present, and being open to partners participating via conference call. All of those strategies demonstrate respect for partners' time and resources.

But how to attend to the fact that some participants work long hours doing physically and emotionally exhausting care work, and other participants have white collar office jobs? We cannot change circumstances beyond our control, but we can ensure that in our meetings, everyone is able to be an active, engaged collaborator.

Value Multiple Ways of Knowing

Valuing different kinds of knowledge is essential to popular education and to community partnership building. One of our initial goals was to disrupt the status quo of what kind of knowledge was valued in museums. We were mindful that overwhelmingly, highly educated white women did museum education work, that the knowledge privileged in museums is academic and male, western and colonial and this is manifest in the objects, displays and archival sources generations of elite museum professionals – paradoxically at times given they are women – have elected to preserve. Therefore, part of the *Unfinished Business: Twenty-first Century Home Economics* strategy was to insert new kinds of objects into museum narratives such as a sponge to challenge traditional notions of value. In addition to challenging notions of *what* belongs in a museum, *Love and Labor* challenged notions of *who* belongs in museums by positioning immigrants, women of colour, and activists as community docents. Finally, *Love and Labor* challenged JAHHM staff to re-imagine the stories we tell about the objects in the JAHHM collection.

Another intention was to shift the equilibrium of a typical museum tour and dialogue to put community docents' ways of knowing in balance with museums' way of knowing. Unfortunately, this effort was not successful. Although I would argue *Love and Labor* was successful in positioning community members in roles of expertise and collaborative programme development, its ability to shift the equilibrium was limited by the imbalance of power dynamics. The JAHHM museum educator did most of the talking and the community docent spoke only at particular moments. Therefore, although *Love and Labor* highlighted new kinds of content, I believe it was shared through a very traditional dynamic despite the co-facilitation model. Further, although the brainstorming was done collaboratively museum education team members wrote most of the curriculum. On the face of it, this division of labour might seem desirable; it incorporates the perspectives of community members while leaving curriculum development to trained professionals. However, I contend that even understanding curriculum development itself as the exclusive purview of experts actually undermines the objectives. In other words, even though community members' stories were incorporated, this division continues to position the museum as the authoritative *interpreter* of content. By including

community members as genuine equal partners in the curriculum development process, museum educators would have been challenged to confront the socio-economic and historical particularity of their own experiences and understandings of what it means to produce museological knowledge. Finally, the curriculum writing stage is when critical adult and popular education methodologies based in the analysis of oppression, and including critical social and self-reflection, would have been particularly useful.

What might curriculum writing that values multiple ways of knowing look like? In the case of *Love and Labor,* our process entailed series of conversations to share the Hull-House story with the community docents, and collectively determining moments of connection between the Hull-House story and their own stories. Other models might involve designing new kinds of activities, building in time for improvised conversation, or implementing check-ins with museum visitors during the programme itself that might result in redirecting the tour entirely. A more inclusive approach might involve the museum being willing to drop many of the narratives and shift the focus away from previous content and teaching goals. Community partnership fails when the product is not distinct from the museum's typical offerings, or appropriates partners' narratives into existing narratives rather than creating new narratives collaboratively. Rather than reinforcing the status quo and re-inscribing social hierarchy, valuing multiple ways of knowing would allow museums to become more democratic spaces, to create space for multiple kinds of learning, and to illustrate to museum visitors that the knowledge and experience they bring is valuable and belongs.

Be Attentive to the New Knowledge That Is Created

One particularly memorable audience for the *Love and Labour* team was the international participants in an *au pair* accreditation programme, who participated in *Love and Labor* several times. This audience had a special relationship to the domestic worker labour movement because they, too, are domestic workers. That said, the au pairs typically benefit from privileges along lines of race/ethnicity, class, education, English language skills, and citizenship status—as well as the theoretical enforcement of their labour rights through a contract and an agency—that are inaccessible to the members of the CCHW and their colleagues. I had facilitated a tour of *Unfinished Business: Twenty-first Century Home Economics* for the au pairs before the *Love and Labor* project, and one of the au pairs shared the shocking story of a fellow au pair who didn't even have her own bedroom but lived in a cellar accessible only by trapdoor, and she would have to call a member of her host family if she wanted to get out. Before Lisa Thomas and I co-facilitated *Love and Labor* for the au pairs, I briefed her that the au pairs might share some upsetting stories. After our tour, I was surprised and moved to see that Thomas' interpretation of the au pair experience centred not hardship but hope, as she was inspired to hear about domestic workers and their employers successfully negotiating their working

relationship through the use of a contract. Thomas would later raise the issues of the au pairs in discussions about contract enforcement.

Practice Consistency

In addition to the methodological limitations described above, JAHHM inadvertently perpetuated, through its own internal labour practices, the exclusions *Love and Labour* was trying to address. All community engagement programmes are motivated by a desire for social change and democracy. *Love and Labor* expressed this motivation through the content area of labour justice. How much harm was JAHHM causing by having unjust working conditions including paying below a living wage, and lack of benefits including health care and sick days, behind the scenes of these programmes? The message of *Love and Labour,* that all work is real work, was undermined by the museum's own labour practices. *Love and Labor* perpetuated the undervaluing of labour performed by women, people of colour, and young workers.

As a member of the *Love and Labour* team, I felt pressure to keep silent about the problematic working conditions at JAHHM and my participation in concerted activity with my fellow part-time museum staff members. As a co-facilitator, I felt strained speaking about labour and organising, knowing that my own organising within the museum had gotten me into trouble with my supervisors. I also felt uncomfortable avoiding the issue with my CCHW partners, who I know would have had shared solidarity and advice if I had mentioned it. I felt that I would get into even more trouble with our supervisors if we shared with the Community Docents that we felt we were experiencing unfair working conditions and that we had been intimidated by our supervisors for organising. As representatives of our institution, we felt pressurised to act as though we were proud and happy to work there, to maintain the museum's reputation as a social-justice-orientated organisation, and to keep silent about the problems we had experienced. Holding that secret inside prevented me from being completely open and transparent with the Community Docents and visitors. Though my silence, I failed to enact what Paulo Freire (1998, p. 69) called "living my convictions" – an essential component of collaborative knowledge production between a museum and a community. By talking the talk yet not walking the walk, *Love and Labor* for me, and I would suggest for others, fell short of reflecting the labour justice and popular education principles we claimed to uphold.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS

Community engagement is a relatively new area of study and practice for the museum field. Currently, the discourse is that community engagement in any and all forms is a good thing. But this discourse obscures the complexities and challenges inherent in this work – perhaps most importantly, the presence of oppression. It is *essential* to apply a critical lens to this work and to understand that community engagement

does not always yield positive results. As I have shared above, even well intentioned community engagement programmes in museums can reproduce problematic social hierarchies. Discourse in the museum field tends to occur in a cheerleading, uplifting mode – well illustrated by Nina Simon's letter.

Nina Simon, the Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH), built her successful career on promoting community engagement in museums. Community engagement is not about museum visitors or programme attendees, but collaboration between museum staff members and non-staff-members on museum practices including programmes, exhibitions, and projects. In her 2015 "State of the MAH" letter, she boasted that the MAH had over 2,000 community partners and how it match-makes these

> unlikely partners from across the county year-round: folkloric dancers and engineers presenting at monthly 3rd Friday Festivals. Artists and activists exhibit their work. Homeless adults and history buffs cleaning up Evergreen Cemetery. Business leaders and street performers design a new community plaza in Abbott Square. (Simon, 2015a)

The MAH's initiative to use the unwaged labour of homeless adults to clean up the Evergreen Cemetery—owned and operated by the MAH—is astonishing to me. Simon has explained that these volunteers are "fulfilling volunteer requirements as part of their residency at a local shelter" (Simon, 2015, n/p).

I mention the homeless volunteers to gesture toward what should be a field-wide concern in the United States: the power dynamics between museum staff and community partners. We as museum workers should be conscious of how our lived experiences might differ from those of our community partners, and homelessness signals this disparity in privilege. I am interested in community engagement practices built from reciprocal, equitable relationships between community partners and museum staff. That is harder to achieve when the museum staff benefit from privilege that's inaccessible to the community partners, yet only the museum staff are financially compensated for their work. Ultimately, I hope to see community engagement practices that result in action addressing systemic issues such as homelessness.

The museum field needs to take the types of failures addressed in this chapter seriously and to promote the creation of case studies that emphasise shortcomings and thus create opportunities for improvement. This would better prepare future practitioners to engage in true popular education work, be more transparent about power dynamics, and their/my own complicity of silence. This conversation is vital.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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Alyssa Greenberg
University of Illinois at Chicago, USA

BRUNO DE OLIVEIRA JAYME, KIM GOUGH, KATHY SANFORD,
DAVID MONK, KRISTIN MIMICK AND CHRIS O'CONNOR

18. MUSEUM HACKING AS ADULT EDUCATION

Teachers Creating Disturbances and Embracing Dissonances

INTRODUCTION

Preparing pre-service teachers to engage in the greater-than-school world, think broadly about alternative sites of learning and address contemporary issues in education and society is challenging, and requires connections between formal, non-formal and informal education. Museums are spaces that can provide this, as they can engage students with historical artefacts and narratives that provide a platform to develop critical understandings about the world around them. However, museums can also be sites of hegemonic oppression and exclusion that perpetuate the status quo by excluding or misrepresenting some stories whilst privileging others (Clover, 2015). Critical pedagogy in museums is about rendering visible these hidden or misrepresented stories (Borg & Mayo, 2010).

In this chapter we explore critical pedagogy in the form of "hacking a museum" and how this helped a group of students to think critically about the ways in which museums can produce and reproduce historical social injustices, and how we can provide alternative ways of sharing history in which authentic learning takes place. The terminology 'museum hacking' suggests a kind of creative and productive disturbance by breaking into the accepted norms of particular museum narratives, and modifying them (Berry, 2007). In this context, we further describe how university instructors and museum educators from the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) collaboratively designed and implemented a museum hack for teacher candidates from the University of Victoria (UVic) through a Summer Institute (SI). In addition, we describe how this collaboration enabled a meaningful and engaging learning experience for the university instructors, museum educators and teacher candidates as all participants developed understandings of their subjectivity through historical, educational, political, and societal lenses. We also discuss how this collaboration enabled dialogue across institutions between adult educators who work in formal and non-formal settings.

Teacher candidates enrolled in the four-week SI were invited to question, challenge, and embrace dissonances they might face as future educators. As part of the development of this program, instructors from the SI and educators from the RBCM discussed ways in which inquiry-focused learning can be integrated with new

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sites and 'texts' in order to support teacher candidates in their research, teaching, and learning. Participants were asked to consider: (a) how knowledge is constructed, shaped, and redesigned by the displays; (b) how culture is (re)presented and what is missing, whose voices are heard and whose are not; (c) how artefacts and displays unleash (or constrain) learning; and (d) the ways in which museums can (re)create authentic learning environments for their audiences.

Our account begins with a discussion of the importance of critical adult education theory to both teacher and museum educators. We then share our experiences in developing and implementing the museum hack built upon our perspectives from both territories (UVic and RBCM). We conclude by presenting some of the insights generated by the inter-institutional dialogue that was enabled by such collaboration.

ADULT EDUCATION AND *CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO* IN THE MUSEUM

The authors recognise major differences between traditional teacher education and adult education. The first refers to the process of formal and informal preparation that continues throughout teachers' professional life. Such preparation should "address environmental, social, and economic contexts to create locally relevant and culturally appropriate teacher pre-service and in-service teachers" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 4). Adult education, as we see it, refers to the process of achieving holistic and ethical awareness and learning about the world around us (Martínez de Morentin de Goñi, 2006). Therefore, in our view, becoming a teacher is an adult education matter. In our practice, we draw extensively from adult education theory to conceptualise, design, and apply our teacher education curriculum.

Critical pedagogic theory recognises that developing new understandings and knowledge is vital to a just and healthy society. It focuses on social responsibility, civic and political sense making, and issues of justice, equity and active participation. Martínez de Morentin de Goñi (2006) argues that as such, everybody needs "to learn by learning, to learn to be, to learn to undertake and prepare to assume challenges in each historical moment" (p. 18). In this context, Phelan (2011) suggests that adult education is crucial for teacher education, because according to Freire (1978), education should spark individuals' learning to recognise social, political, and economic constraints and contradictions and to act against them. This learning process or creation of a critical consciousness, *conscientização* in Freire's first language, Portuguese, is achieved by creating opportunities for individuals to be part of their "historical process as responsible subjects" (p. 36).

In the museum education context, Monk (2013) argues that adult educators should cooperate closely with museum educators to develop participative learning experiences. For him, museums have the potential to confront the "status quo" by bringing forth power imbalances and hidden and/or oppressed historical characters. Borg and Mayo (2010) consider museums as arenas of critical pedagogy for adults whereby the visitors' assumptions about power relations and dominant cultures

are challenged and their views changed. Drawing from the ideas of Freire, they argue that adult education in museums can be a dynamic process in which "museum exhibits can serve as instruments to arise epistemological curiosity" (Borg & Mayo, 2010, p. 41). Likewise, museum educators Nightingale and Sandell (2012) outline the potential of museums to "construct new narratives that reflect demographic, social and cultural diversity, and represent a plurality of lived experiences, histories, and identities" (p. 1).

From this perspective museums can play an important role in *conscientização* by mediating understandings about the positions people take in the world. As they question, people begin to see that history is not constructed deterministically but by multiple agencies and viewpoints, all of which are partial, subjective, and contested. That is to say, people do not merely populate stories of the past, present, and future, but they continually (re)construct them. Thus, history implies *possibility*. Such a positive way of thinking is critical to social transformation.

TWO TERRITORIES

First Territory: The University of Victoria's Summer Institute (SI)

The SI offers a month-long intensive work program in which teacher candidates, as adult learners, explore curiosities that emerged during their school practicums. This program is infused with experiential opportunities to understand their own positionality and biases, and apply this understanding to their own professional lives. The SI focuses on the teacher candidates' previous experiences, their interactions with students during practicums, and the questions that surfaced during the process.

The SI was developed in response to concerns expressed by Monk (2013) that teacher education often tacitly entrenches the status quo by valuing Eurocentric learning environments and principles. Motta and Esteves (2014) identified how this tradition can reflect some privileges while disregarding other forms of knowledge. In our view, talking about 'others' knowledge from within a traditional framework falsely implies to students that talking about difference is equivalent to addressing social inequality. The SI broke free from this hegemonic circle by suggesting alternative ways of being and learning through facilitated experiences such as the museum hacking project.

SI instructors met all day for a month with teacher candidates to explore issues of individual and collective importance, such as gender, research ethics, and food security. SI instructors, while collaborating with museum educators, kept in mind the following the three things. Firstly, adult learners need to be given opportunities take responsibility for their own learning and have control over what and how they learn. Secondly, the participants needed to have time to think through how their learning relates to their immediate professional needs but within a theoretical context that enables them position themselves as educators in today's complex world. Finally, adult learners need to be supported with explanations that build on their prior

learning and that encourage new explorations. This is about respecting existing knowledge whilst integrating new knowledge with previous experiences to deepen social learning.

SI instructors also recognised that Indigenous learning principles were essential and inherent aspects of the work with teacher candidates and how these were in fact linked to adult education. The Institute was thus committed to what Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds and Williams (2010) identified as key characteristics of 'Indigeneity' in education: respectful and welcoming learning environments; respectful and inclusive curricula; culturally responsive pedagogies to improve knowledge and understanding; pedagogic skills that could be applied to diverse learning contexts; and cultural/contextual responsiveness. SI instructors also drew on a number of Indigenous principles (Williams, 2015), which too are inherent in adult education, to design the course objectives. The first was to focus on collaborative or co-learning. This enables learning opportunities to grow exponentially and by more social and critical, than if we focus only on our own individual learning. The second was to consider how our work can benefit the next seven generations to come. In essence, our very class work will influence future generations of students and teachers. The final principle was to find our passion, and invest this in our work to energise the community, and to inspire the learning of others.

In the following section, we outline how the RBCM educators explained their goals in participating in this programme, how the museum hack was conceived and implemented, and the insights we all gained from the collaboration with UVic.

Second Territory: The Royal British Columbia Museum

The goals for the museum in collaborating to create and host the weeklong workshop were multi-fold. All across our institution there is a renewed focus on meaningful and sustainable learning partnerships. Working collaboratively allows for a greater synthesis of ideas as well as efficient use of resources. Both museum and SI instructors viewed this partnership as a professional development opportunity, so much so we also participated in the design and presentation of hacked displays. Working closely with our UVic partners deepened our exposure to current pedagogical practice and theory. Working with adult learners enabled the development of a pilot program to explore how museums could be more integral to curriculum, education, and personal/professional practice. A pivotal goal for the museum educators was to understand real or perceived tensions or barriers that might exist for teachers when they use the museum as a teaching resource.

Participants deliberately reflected on the gap between the planned curriculum of the museum narrative and the lived curriculum of the adult museum visitor, what Aoki (2005) calls the "space of generative interplay" (p. 420). The format of hacking the museum also gave participants an opportunity to look for missing narratives, and address the question posed provocatively by Corrin (2011) on museum education: "Where am I in all of this?" (p. 13).

A final goal was to gather feedback on the gaps in the modern history gallery and the missing or misrepresented narratives. In so doing, we aimed to develop new educational programmes as the museum considers renewal of these galleries in the future.

CREATING DISTUBANCES

Scholars Andreotti (2015) and hooks (2003) have highlighted the importance of moving beyond simply deconstructing social inequalities to providing active, embodied experiences of learning in teacher education. In our museum hacking project, participants were invited to go beyond the role of spectators by taking the position of museum designers and curators by altering exhibits. Their task was to create disturbances that would spark critical reflection about the displays, and foster curiosity about the ways in which the viewer could recognise herself or himself in the museum. Therefore, participants either uncovered hidden stories or created new stories. In this case, engagement with the museum became far more participative and provided a new level of active social responsibility for the teacher candidates, because they were charged with uncovering missing voices and/or those that perpetuate the "status quo". Having already viewed the museum from a critical perspective, teacher candidates began to engage with the exhibits at a different level by interacting with history in new ways. This enabled them to recognize the complexity of the world, and realise they have the ability to actively alter perceptions.

The project was a four part series. In the first part, participants came to the museum to take part in a program about primary resources. Rather than explain to teacher candidates how to teach using primary resources, they experienced these resources from the students' perspective. In this phase, participants were introduced to museum educators who drew attention to their pedagogical choices by thinking aloud and inviting questions about choices. The program toured the archives, worked with primary resources and traveled into the permanent galleries. There, participants looked closely at the museum narrative and proceeded to disrupt that narrative by adding images and stories to the existing exhibits.

The second part of the programme involved museum educators visiting the teacher candidates in their classroom to debrief the program they experienced and to have what Grumet (2009) calls "complex conversations highlighting the tensions of the museum, field trips, student behaviour, and motivation" (p. 233). In the third part of the programme, teacher candidates were invited to the museum after hours. Working in small groups, they chose a part of the museum and undertook a teacher research project (see Schubert, 2008), where they deliberately reflected on the gap between the planned curriculum of the museum narrative and lived curriculum of the museum visitor. For instance, one group of participants chose to recreate the mining display, thinking that museum visitors would not get the intensity of a miner's experience without a more immersive, dark, enclosed feeling of it. Another group recreated a classroom scenario, raising issues of gender and authority that were not

clearly articulated by the existing display. A third group created a theatre performance exploring issues of racism and power relations in the Chinese immigrant experience after visiting China Town in the 'old Victoria' gallery. These examples demonstrated the critical engagement each participant had with the museum artefacts. The museum hacking experience caused them to construct new and different meanings of these artefacts using alternative perspectives of the 'other'. Rather than passively reading from textbooks, our participants used museum artefacts as their texts, reading from diverse and more nuanced perspectives as they created 'hacked' displays (Figure 1A). Throughout the hacking experience, participants worked with the instructors, who also actively participated in this experience by co–creating their own hacked display (Figure 1B).

Figure 1. (A) A teacher student covering up a current display with craft paper to later (re)write his own story on the top of the current display. (B) SI instructors as learners creating their own disturbances in the Natural History section of the museum. They created a "meat shop" to "sell" meat from different pre-historic mammals, such as "mammoth ground beef". Their intention was to spark in the viewer curiosities about people's meat consumption and the impact of such consumption on the environment

The fourth component of the programme was opening the hacked displays for viewing in the following morning. During this time, a grade 6 class of students as well as the general public visited their hacked exhibits. In presenting the hacked displays to the public, the teacher candidates took ownership of their hacking work, thus enabling greater agency to participate actively in society. Teacher candidates, SI instructors, and museum educators then facilitated a debriefing conversation with the grade 6 students outside on the museum grounds. The intention of this final stage was for all participants to reflect on their process and come to a deeper appreciation of it by sharing their experiences in the circle. This sharing of experiences validated teacher candidates' participation, and enabled participants of different ages to perceive, reflect, and learn differently by embracing dissonances and creating alternative realities that were not previously available to museum visitors.

EMBRACING DISSONANCES

An Intersection of Territories and Learners – A Common Ground for Critical Pedagogy

Interweaving museum educators, the university instructors, and teacher candidates in the museum hacking project, we shrunk the spaces that kept these units apart (Figure 2). In so doing, a common ground where adult education mediated alternative ways of seeing was established. That is, participants were able to view teaching and learning through newer and different lenses valuing equality of knowledge and experience of and for all. Our intention, as educators from both institutions, was to mediate teacher candidates' understandings about their own realities by first helping them to position themselves within their own history and culture. This process of *"conscientização"* enabled participants to research and discover displayed stories that were (mis)represented and explore them as starting point for their hacking. Second, we helped participants to embrace the dissonances around these displays so they could later act and react upon them in their own classrooms with their students.

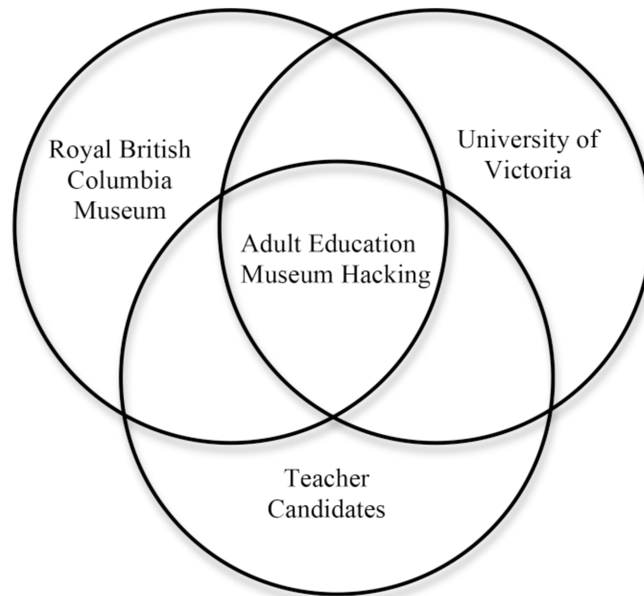

Figure 2. The intersection between the RBCM and UVic and teacher candidates. The common ground is the coming together of museum hacking and adult education and learning.

Figure 2 illustrates how a common ground was established between the RBCM educators, the UVic instructors and teacher candidates, and how this common ground was framed by contemporary theories on adult education and the museum hacking project. This synergy created a safe place in which participants were able to share their experiences and think critically about the ways in which stories are sometimes hidden or misrepresented in museum exhibits. These tools helped them to see things differently and position themselves as historical agents so that in the future they can help their own students engage in the same kind of thinking.

Throughout the collaboration between museum educators and SI instructors, these four expanded, interconnected qualities and conditions began to unfold:

a. Relationality – within a collaborative learning community comprised of educators from different backgrounds (i.e., practising teachers, teacher candidates, university instructors, museum educators) who learned and co-created with, from, and alongside each other;
b. Encouragement – participants were encouraged to take risks and engage in reflective praxis;
c. Alternative learning spaces/places – after hours explorations behind the scenes of the museum (e.g., 'staff only' spaces), outdoor green spaces, urban community spaces; and
d. Indigenous principles of learning – as the heart and soul of everything we designed and facilitated during and after the conclusion of this project.

In addition, we recognised that building relationships amongst members of our cross-institutional learning community was critical for all of us to embrace the 'uncertain' business of exploring the concept of museum hacking as critical pedagogy. Authentic, reciprocal, and mutually vulnerable relationships became the backbone of our designing, planning, implementing and debriefing processes, which further opened rich opportunities for holistic professional learning, co-teaching, and reflexive program adaptations. As one student commented:

> I really loved the collaborative nature of working with others, because I wouldn't have known who they were, to start, and I wouldn't have been very comfortable to know where to start on my own. It was good to have someone else there to bounce ideas off of and be able to support each other in our decisions.

Our collective aim was to establish a trusting collaborative professional learning community (including both practicing teachers/instructors and teacher candidates) in which together we could make sense of our ongoing learning about deconstructing conventional museum spaces and exhibits in order to see anew, challenge assumptions, and ask critical questions such as: Whose voice is not represented in this exhibit and how might our 'hack' expose these missing narratives?

Throughout the collaborative design/planning phase, we began to trust and depend on each other, collectively creating safe spaces to reveal our uncertainties as well as gathering individual and collective courage to embrace this dissonance. We all had to be willing to welcome mistakes, and receive constructive feedback from each other, and to resonate together in the place of intersection between instructor and learner and between conventional museum education and teacher education. This 'in-between space' acted as a common ground that represented both a physical and metaphorical space from which complex narratives began to emerge. In fact, these narratives continue to emerge and evolve as we write this paper together – on themes such as growth mindsets, job–embedded learning, reflexive praxis, and learning across contexts.

An authentic learning community creates safe places and spaces to support the development of each individual's stories, personal background, and expertise in a holistic manner. To create meaning and stronger understanding of how we could all learn from and with each other, we actively encouraged everyone's right to learn in ways that were relevant for them. Drawing on Indigenous principles outlined above, we were able to share our stories through oral language, semiotics, and visual representations, and to take responsibility for those stories, our own learning and the learning of others. This could be more difficult to achieve in a conventional classroom setting, or during conventional schools 'hours' of the day. Indeed, new spaces and places at unconventional times seemed to create new connections, interconnections, and uncovered misconnections while sparking curiosity and creativity in the participants. For example, our 'after hours' walk through the museum prop storage rooms (and the freedom to use many of the materials and installations we were able to dig out of dark storage corners) inspired several of the temporary 'hack exhibits' we created. Teacher candidates were encouraged to explore and express what they were questioning in a variety of different ways and contexts, as expressed in their 'live' museum hacking exhibits enactments. Some created theatre vignettes to be viewed by live museum goers, while others created unfinished displays so that visitors could contribute by 'filling the spaces in between' with their own understandings, and some created static yet provocative exhibits while mediating dialogue with viewers about their themes. All exhibits were interactive, experiential, and in some way depended on viewers to engage, act, react, and contribute.

We used outdoor green spaces at both the university and museum as places for the whole group to come together to debrief and collectively make sense of our emergent hacking experience. These moments of interaction and debriefing also helped instructors to surface for teacher candidates the concept that learning is experiential, socially constructed, and emergent. We believed these outdoor green spaces brought a fresh and energetic quality to the dynamic of our conversations.

NOW AND THEN: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Teacher Educators' Perspectives

Working collaboratively with museum educators, teacher candidates created opportunities for deep engagement, critical reflexivity, and change. It is through experiences such as museum hacking that we collectively challenged hegemonic practices and suggested alternatives – learning in cross-curricular, intergenerational and inter-institutional ways where learners' previous knowledge and experiences are not taken for granted and these knowledges and experiences are shared in respectful ways in the circle. Although collaboration and partnership development is time-intensive, the payoffs are extraordinary. Relationships have continued long past the Institute time, teacher educators have taken further risks in their teaching, and as noted earlier, museum adult educators have continued to develop hacking programmes for new groups.

As teacher educators, we have continued to foster and maintain partnerships, supporting each other with different areas of expertise, connections to the institutions, and to diverse forms of knowledge. We have collectively shaped our teaching to focus more on processes of learning, offering choice, flexible timeframes, and joint involvement in learning assessment, which is critical for museum hacking. We continue to reimagine education and learning in different ways, responding to the diversity of our communities, the inequities present in our educational and societal structures, and the opportunities afforded by new tools and technologies. No longer can education remain in the reified, stultified institutional structures of previous centuries. In order to be meaningful to today's children, youth, adults, and seniors, we need to continue to work together to reshape our educational experiences and institutions.

Museum Educators' Perspectives

Museum executives, curators and educators attended the public presentation of the teacher candidates who provided a positive feedback and suggested further applications of the museum hacking for broader participative enquiry at the museum. The museum educators have applied the principles of the SI workshop to two new school programs, one for full day middle school visits and another partner school project. In the partner school project they have a yearlong relationship with students pursing project based learning assignments that will result in bringing youth voices into the galleries.

The format of the teacher candidate workshop has been repeated with professional development workshops for adults, and it gave the museum educators the confidence and experience to pursue an afternoon "hacking" of the museum history gallery with Canadians of South Asian descent. This afternoon event was part of a larger

curatorial participative research project and was successful in building interest and garnering feedback from the participants.

In future iterations of the workshop there are some changes they are contemplating. Although they wanted the experience to be as open as possible for the teacher candidates, in the future they would want to provide more examples of interventions and possibly invite an artist to work with them in order to challenge our preconceptions and encourage further experimentations and "moments of encounters, a shifting of consciousness, an opportunity to consider other ways of knowing our world" (Irwin, 2013, p. 201).

In their personal practice, in developing this project and collaborating with a wider community of learners, the museum adult educators are interrogating the galleries for what is not present and finding ways to bring visitor narratives into museum exhibitions. Rather than seeing the galleries and their exhibitions as static environments, they became fluid spaces of active content and stories.

Finally, museum hacking could be enabled by providing tours that highlight a different way of looking at art and objects whilst creatively and collectively navigating through museum space outside of the normally programmed tours of an institution. Alternatively this could be an international, multi–institution effort where design thinking, prototyping and networking are the shared values that animate museum galleries in innovative ways that are responsive to users of that space. All of these initiatives are grounded in a practice of thinking differently about how museums can function. They value prototyping and testing ideas, and really listening to audiences in order to create a more inclusive environment. And part of the inclusivity is to create a space for active engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

In our museum hack, we established a creative and engaging space that allowed adult learners to explore hidden or misrepresented narratives in museums by disrupting existing displays. In so doing, participants created counter narratives to the hegemonic stories often reproduced by museums. By hacking the museum, one is activating the museum – and also activating participants' agency. In this way, the museum is a living laboratory of ideas and a shifting site of multiple perspectives that can provide opportunities to better locate oneself within his or her own history and culture and the larger community in this complex world. The work with the museum educators and the museum hacking project was an important element in this because it provided a core common experience in relation to their own inquiry and projects, as well as exploring participants realities, because they were able (re)create their own histories and stories. Linked adult education and Indigenous principles underpinned the structure of the teacher education throughout the Summer Institute and (re)shaped they ways in which we valued and understood learning, knowledge, and collaborative partnership building.

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Bruno de Oliveira Jayme
University of Victoria, Canada

Kim Gough
Royal British Columbia Museum, Canada

Kathy Sanford
University of Victoria, Canada

David Monk
University of Victoria, Canada

Kristin Mimick
Government of British Columbia, Canada

Chris O'Connor
Royal British Columbia Museum, Canada

HELENE ILLERIS

19. ADULT EDUCATION IN ART GALLERIES

Inhabiting Social Criticism and Change through Transformative Artistic Practices

INTRODUCTION

Since I began researching adult education in art galleries 20 years ago in Europe, I have noticed two conflicting trends. Contemporary art has become more extraverted and socially engaged, whilst lifelong learning, the discourse of neoliberalism that informs most policy, has become increasingly focused on providing learners with predefined competencies and pushed for 'measurable' results (e.g. Pedersen, 2014; Illeris, 2015). Although I believe the introduction of measurability has some positives such as clearing away some of the old dogma in the educational field, it worries me how living in neoliberal competitive states has in subtle ways changed our basic understandings of what it means to be human. Where we once had a more interdependent understanding of ourselves, we now see a tendency toward the individualisation of responsibility and an emphasis on self-identity and one's own personal goals (Pedersen, 2014). The personal liberation, which adult educators and artists had hoped would be a consequence of their critical reflections in the 1970's, has instead in the neoliberal interpretation become an individualised sense of compulsion to constantly perform in the areas of innovation and market-friendly readiness (Illeris, 2013).

In this situation many contemporary artists have chosen to use the independent status of art to try to create new types of communities in opposition to the market logic. 'Relational aesthetics', 'participative art', and, most recently, 'socially engaged art', are all terms seeking to encapsulate how a number of artists educate and engage with/in political activism. In several cases artists, often in cooperation with subcultural movements, have established parallel institutions: 'universities', 'firms', 'farms', indeed whole 'mini-communities', which challenge the establishment by pointing to ethical ways of doing things independently of processes of time, efficiency, and yield optimisation (Bishop, 2012; Thompson, 2012).

More or less in parallel with the artistic turn toward relational and participative projects, a similar – although less radical – turn toward 'the social' has occurred within art galleries. Whereas the art gallery until the eighties was mainly conceived of as an isolated space where visitors could admire exhibitions prepared and offered

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by a specialised staff in accordance with certain aesthetic and didactic preferences, the nineties witnessed an opening up of the gallery in order to encourage new forms of sociality and learning. A keyword for this process was 'social inclusion', meaning that not only should all citizens have access to public galleries, they should also feel actively welcomed and included. In the educational departments the idea of 'the constructivist museum' (Hein, 1994) gave rise to new user-oriented initiatives such as workshops and outreach programmes aimed to support the learners' capacities for reflection and meaning-making in relating to artwork and to the gallery as such (e.g. Black, 2005; Dysthe, Bernhardt, & Esbjørn, 2013).

However, after the turn of the millennium public cultural institutions have also been subjected to neoliberalism's formulaic insistence on 'provision', 'satisfaction', and 'credit attainment', leaving little room for genuine experimentation without a secured output (Rogoff, forthcoming). Consequently, many art galleries have adopted a consumer-oriented learning rhetoric, favouring economistic approaches, where participants are perceived as consumers/users whose predefined need for learning is fulfilled as a measurable product (Biesta, 2006; Illeris, 2006). By absorbing this train of thought, gallery education has, perhaps without realising it, paved the way for a perception of its aims as individual learning optimization rather than as collectively generated situations and transforming experiences involving art.

Contemporary Conceptions of Gallery Education

In a previous study I (Illeris, 2011) tried to map different conceptions in contemporary Scandinavian gallery education. The study was based on a critical curriculum-theoretical perspective inspired by Elliot Eisner and Elisabeth Vallance's book *Conflicting Conceptions of Curriculum* (1974). Through the critical analysis of eight Scandinavian and British texts on gallery education I generated four educational conceptions: *aesthetic experience*, *learning and cognition*, *curriculum and 'Bildung'*, and *social criticism and change*. I divided these understandings into a mainly individual orientation (the first two conceptions) and a mainly collaborative orientation (the last two conceptions). Furthermore, I was interested in whether these conceptions look at learning as *understanding*, recognition of prior knowledge, or if they look at learning as *transformative*, orientated toward changing individual behaviours or social structures.

Figure 1 constitutes a simplified picture of reality, and all the theories and practices described are in different ways preoccupied with capturing the complexity of educational encounters. Yet the conception 'social criticism and change' turned out to be the more convincing, orientated toward both collaborative and transformative dimensions of learning. In fact, a central characteristic of the texts analysed emphasised learning as collaboration, referring to projects where educators and learners worked together over longer periods, and learning as transformation, viewing the objective of education as a transgression of established power

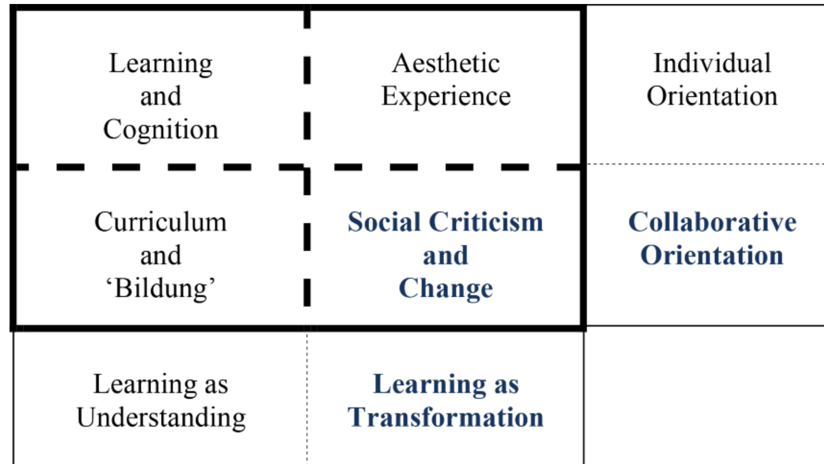

Figure 1. Conceptions in Contemporary Scandinavian Gallery Education

relationships. Thereby, the social criticism and change conception aimed at creating emancipating possibilities for new and different collective and individual forms of being in the art gallery.

The conception 'social criticism and change' can be placed within the critical/progressive paradigm in adult education (Clover, Hall, Jayme, & Follen, 2013). At the core of this understanding is the notion of *empowerment*, defined as "the increased capacity of people to engage in meaningful interactions, decision-making, civic engagement and social action" (p. 14). Clover goes further, arguing critical approaches to adult education "help participants turn away from an audience position and, through a process of transformation, help them become actors and agents of change in the shaping and re-shaping of their lives, communities, societies, and the world" (p. 14).

In this Chapter I expand the social criticism and change conception by digging deeper into some of its guiding concepts. I will do so through a process-oriented form of writing involving three consecutive steps. Firstly, I explore the ontological grounds of the concept of transformation in critical/progressive adult education. Second, I connect these considerations to the idea of inhabiting social criticism and change, using an analysis of a participative artwork. Finally, I return to gallery education in a discussion of the *Open Studio* programme at Tate Modern in London and how this connects to the idea of transformative artistic practices.

I am aware that I use large parts of the chapter to discuss and exemplify foundational approaches to adult education in general instead of approaching gallery education directly. My reason is that in order to begin to understand how adult education in art galleries can inhabit social criticism and change, I think it necessary to return to

existential questions on what it means to be human in today's society. Following educational theorist Gert Biesta (2006), I would like my research to contribute to the exploration of

> how we might understand and 'do' education if we no longer assume that we can know the essence and nature of the human being – or to put it differently, if we treat the question of what it means to be human as a radically open question, a question that can only be answered by engaging in education rather than as a question that needs to be answered before we can engage in education. (pp. 4–5)

ONTOLOGIES OF TRANSFORMATION

Ontology is a philosophical term concerning the determination of what it means to be or exist in the world. It is concerned with identifying how we can understand existence in general terms, for example by asking how we may understand 'life', 'death', or 'human being'. Ontology is therefore different from epistemology, which is concerned more specifically with how we construct knowledge. In the context of transformation one could say that while epistemology is fundamental to our understanding of how transformation happens within a system of knowledge, ontologies of transformation ask what transformation *is* according to foundational assumptions about being.

In the following I distinguish between two ontological positions: the person-bound and the practice-based. The aim of this analytical polarisation is not to dismiss the educational potentials of a person-bound ontology, but rather to lay the foundations for exploring the idea of a practice-based ontology as a different and relatively fragile 'thinking technology' in the development of transformative educational practices. I have borrowed the term 'thinking technology' from Dorte Marie Søndergaard (2012), who uses the term, originally coined by Donna Haraway (2002), to signal something more fluid than theory, as it is shaped by and shapes the field of study it sets out to examine.

The Person-Bound Ontology

Danish adult educator Buch (2002) distinguishes between two ontologies: 'the epistemological tradition', based on a dualistic understanding of the learner and the object of knowing, and the 'social ontology', based on a monistic understanding where the learner and the object of knowing are inextricable elements of a practice. For this study I have redefined these ontologies as, respectively, 'person-bound' and 'practice-based'. Consequently, what can be transformed through learning are the mental representations within the subject, who (in the critical/progressive understanding) subsequently holds the power to transform the world. In other words, following a person-bound ontology 'being human' is bound to the existence

of individuals as separate entities capable of relating to each other and the external world through various forms of mental, emotional, and practical internalisations of representations. Learning is thus understood as an individual process where 'misleading', 'wrong' or 'stereotyped' representations of the world are substituted by others more nuanced, and true. In critical education such processes have often been referred to as 'awakening consciousness'.

Generally speaking, transformation-orientated theories of learning are based in some kind of dualistic ontology. One example is the well-known theory of transformative learning introduced in 1978 by Jack Mezirow, who defined transformative learning as

> the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumption and expectation – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change. Such frames are better because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 92)

Accordingly, the theory operates with different stages of transformation: First the learner works on her frames of reference, then on beliefs and opinions, and, finally, she will be able to undertake new forms of action. Thus, transformation moves from the inner mental representations of the individual learner toward the outside world, which is considered to be the object at which the actions of the transformed learner are directed. The role of adult educators is to assist learners in bringing processes of transformation into awareness (Mezirow, 2009); that is, the educator acts as a Socratic interlocutor for the individual processes of "creating the foundation in insight and understanding essential for learning how to take effective social action in a democracy" (p. 96).

For Mezirow, the meaning perspectives involved in transformative learning, from sociolinguistic norms to aesthetic values, are connected to the individual and her self or identity. Thus, the concept of transformation is ontologically based in a dualistic, 'person-bound' separation between a human being, with personal frames of reference, and an independent surrounding world, in which the individual is more or less capable of taking action in democratically effective ways.

The Practice-Based Ontology

In contrast, a practice-based ontology dissolves the subject-object dichotomy within a concept of practice. It sees not the individual human being, but the social being, as the foundational condition. A practice-based ontology is therefore connected to philosophical positions such as phenomenology and post-structuralism, which in various ways try to dissolve the subject-object dichotomy in order to see subjectivity as unstable, constituted and de-constituted by its participation in a dynamic web of social relations.

As an example of a practice-based ontology and its consequences for adult learning, Buch (2002) refers to the theory of communities of practice by Etienne Wenger. But Buch (2002) shows how Wenger's social learning theory is built upon ontological grounds that are completely different from those of the epistemological tradition:

> 'Practice' thus becomes a key concept, which separates the new ontological perspective on knowledge and learning from traditional epistemological conceptions. Wenger changes the perspective on 'knowledge' and 'learning' and presumes that knowledge and learning are fundamental and foundational traits of human being – it is what we are and what we do! (pp. 35–36, own translation)

For Wenger (1998) practice is a *precondition* for the existence of knowledge and learning, not a *means* through which individuals can absorb or develop knowledge or change their existing individual self or identity. Thereby, learning occurs only from engaging with changing processes of human activity, and is often very difficult to point to:

> Learning is something we can assume – whether we see it or not, whether we like the way it goes or not, whether what we are learning is to repeat the past or to shake it of. Even failing to learn what is expected in a given situation usually involves learning something else instead. (p. 8)

In Wenger's theory the potential for transformation is necessarily found within our existence as social beings, our participation. At the ontological level this does not mean that we physically have to be part of some kind of community in order for learning to occur, but it does mean that learning should be understood as situated not in our heads, but in our relational being. Using the theory of communities of practice as an example, Buch (2002) shows how in a practice-based ontology what *transforms* is not the individual learner, but the practice in which she is taking part, the "changed participation within a changing social practice" (Kvale, 2003, p. 8, own translation).

'INHABITING' SOCIAL CRITICISM AND CHANGE

The outline of the two ontologies shows that relying on a practice-based ontology of social criticism and change is not something we should learn – it should be practised or *inhabited*. I borrow the expression 'to inhabit' from cultural theorist Irit Rogoff (2006) who uses it to establish her stand within a practice-based ontology. For example, in relationship to her development of the notion of criticality, Rogoff states that

> the point of any form of critical theoretical activity was never resolution but rather heightened awareness and the point of criticality is not to find an answer

> but rather to access a different mode of inhabitation. Philosophically we might say that it is a form of ontology that is being advocated, a 'living things out' which has a huge transformative power as opposed to pronouncing on them. In the duration of this activity, in the actual inhabitation, a shift might occur that we generate through the modalities of that occupation rather than through a judgment upon it. (p. 2)

Following Rogoff's practice-bound ontology of 'living things out', inhabiting social criticism and change does not presuppose pre-established knowledge on what social criticism and change signify. On the contrary, a practice-based exploration of, for example, 'meanings of criticism' or 'meanings of change' become important focal points for the practice to evolve. Hence, the possible transformation is embedded in the commitment within practice to work experimentally, trying to challenge the practices we know, for example gallery practices or art viewing practices. In line with artistic or innovative practices we might experiment with transformation 'as such', attempting to transform practice into something unknown. Consequently, we cannot know in advance the exact aim of what we do, but we can choose 'experimentation' and 'transformation' as requisites explored by our actions.

In order to distinguish between traditional dualist criticism, coming from a place outside the criticised object, and a criticism that is embedded within practice, Rogoff (2013) employs the 'mode of criticality', which she describes as

> being able to analyse a set of conditions while living out their realities – that is, an insistence on inhabiting complexity without necessarily articulating it discursively or spelling it out in a didactic manner. And, most importantly, it is a shared entity that does not have a declarative program. (p. 70)

Thus, for Rogoff a practice-bound ontology leads to a pedagogy in which the central point for transformation is to perform new, embodied, and collaborative ways of inhabiting the world. Ways that challenge individualistic, neoliberal ways, not by criticising them from without, but by experimenting with existentially orientated alternatives from within.

Participative Art

As I argued earlier, many contemporary artists choose to use the independent status of art to create social experiences that are in opposition to the neoliberal politics of individualisation. Characteristic of participative art projects is that they create some kind of framing in which social relationships may unfold, often in unpredictable ways. Central is relationships that can be read as an open or subtle critique of the limitations of social life imposed by the neoliberal competition state, trying to perform an embedded mode of criticality. In these projects 'art' is a practice to be inhabited by participants, including artists, visitors, objects, and space, not an object to be presented by an artist and experienced by an audience.

I believe that these kinds of art projects may implicitly be seen as experimental ways of inhabiting social criticism and change through practice. While my research has not yet led me to radical examples where gallery education is rethought as founded in a practice-based ontology of transformation, I have used participative art projects as such radical examples in former studies. I will therefore briefly present a project used called *The Hill*, which was created in 2006 by the Danish artist group Parfyme as part of an urban renewal project in a working-class neighbourhood in Copenhagen.

The Hill consisted of a small provisional construction site on a public square, including a mobile site shed and a pile of building materials. Every day from nine to five for a period of three weeks the four artists from Parfyme went 'to work' constructing artificial 'hills' out of planks and wooden boards covered by felt. Through their daily presence in the neighborhood the artists became a new point of reference for various forms of sociality. In fact, when expressing their curiosity about what was going on, local residents and occasional passers-by were invited to participate, both in the construction activities and in other of the artists' everyday activities, including small talk and drinking coffee.

In particular, the group established close relationships with many of the local schoolchildren hanging out in the area during the afternoon, and their participation changed the character of the project: Alongside the artists' hills, new sites began to emerge: a small soccer field with goals, a small viewing tribune, and a skating ramp. While the artists expected their audiences to participate occasionally in the construction process, the children wanted to influence what was built, how it was built, and how the constructions should be used. In this way, participation changed the project in unexpected ways.

Even if the artists had accepted working within the frames of an urban renewal project promoting community art as a path to social inclusion, the project attempted to overcome, or at least question, the artists' presupposed role of acting as midwives for social improvement, instead allowing for a potentially transformative practice. By creating an *interstice* that stood in contrast to the logic structuring everyday life (Bourriaud, 2002), the project 'lived out' contradictions, and even exposed them, without the need for solving or reconciling them. In fact, *The Hill* questions the logics of the competition state, not by directly promoting critical discourses such as social inclusion or community arts, but through its ability to "sustain contradiction that cannot be reconciled with the quantifiable imperatives of positivist economics" (Bishop, 2012, p. 16).

ADULT EDUCATION IN ART GALLERIES

In my research for this Chapter I looked more specifically at the programmes currently being offered to adults in the most prominent Scandinavian public art galleries, and found them to be surprisingly traditional: Guided tours, art historical lectures, and technique-based studio courses dominate. Other more experimental

Figure 2. 2.1. The Hill. *Beginning the process of construction.*
2.2. The artists of Parfyme having lunch inside the mobile site-shed.
2.3. Constructing soccer-goals. 2.4. Dialogue with passers-by. Photos: Parfyme

programmes, for example workshops focusing on contemporary art practices, are reserved for younger age groups. I therefore began to look for experimental projects taking place at the edges of the larger educational programmes.

I conclude this chapter by providing one example taken from an intergenerational educational programme offered by Tate Modern and Britain in London 2011–2015.[1] It is important to note here, that in my part of the world, there is a lack of good examples of adult education programmes as the focus is primarily on children. But this programme called *Open Studio* at Tate at least partly enacts some of the thoughts on adult education outlined in the previous sections.

OPEN STUDIO

> *Ideal conditions include creating a programmatic, physical and conceptual framework for a space that positions participants as the protagonists of*

> *their own engagement. Within this space it helps to intentionally interrupt preconceptions of roles, processes and experiences in order to provoke speculation, curiosity and improvisation. It is important to uphold the framework, intention and ethos of the programme in every detail of its delivery. This essential framework holds the conceptual frame we invite participants into and implicitly communicates to them that they can trust that is a space of improvisation. This enables them to take the risk of not knowing*. (Sheddan in Pringle, 2013, p. 18)

The above quotation comes from a report made by Susan Sheddan (Convenor, Early Education and Families) when she worked together with artists and colleagues on developing Open Studio at Tate Learning. The aim of the programme was to put in place "a series of dynamic and participative environments where families were invited to engage directly with artists' practice and respond and experiment according to their wishes" (p. 16). *Open Studio* took place within classroom-sized studios in Tate Modern and Tate Britain. During the opening hours groups and individuals of all ages were invited to use the spaces freely, pursuing their own ideas. The programme consisted in shifting environments, including, for example, furniture, objects, instruments, and lighting – each devised by an artist in collaboration with Tate. The installations were not supposed to function as artwork or as workshops, but rather as laboratories inspired by the artists' strategies of working in order to frame participatory practices. In a personal conversation with me, Susan Sheddan described *Open Studio* as "an immersive, installed environment that could be participatory." Far from relying on a pedagogy of 'anything goes', it included a careful arrangement of the environment that gave significance to every action happening. Participants were never directed, but invited to research the practices and strategies offered by their active or passive engagement with the environment. This open form was easy to handle for children and youth, but often challenging to adult participants, encouraging the staff to change the format:

> If the adult felt less confident we came up with some lines that the assistants could say, without telling them what to do or direct them. For example they would say 'this is like a science lab, treat it like a science lab and you would be the scientist'. Or 'an artist has devised this for you to explore'. Or they might just take them around in the room saying 'this is a plant', 'this is a chair'.

Sheddan futher explained to me that for a time, the adults would simply sit back and do nothing but watch. She argued that although she did not feel participation should be pushed or expected, it was important to

> enhance that watching. So an assistant would go up to them and say 'we often do observations for our research and we wondered if you would like to do one', and they then handed them a clipboard with a blank piece of paper, a gridded one and a lined one. Usually they would take it up and document

> something – and inevitably they would have a conversation about what they had seen. We took copies of some of them. Some were diagrams for example of movements of things and people, others drawings, and some just words. It was key to making it successful.

Sheddan often uses the word 'transformative' to describe the practices that took place in *Open Studio*. For her, learning signifies a 'potential for transformation from the known to the unknown,' and she describes the aim as 'promoting habits of mind.' Following Sheddan's descriptions and considerations, I believe that *Open Studio* can be understood as supporting a practice-based ontology for four key reasons. Firstly, it takes as its points of departure no specific artwork, but rather, artistic practices as they emerge from the participants. Secondly, neither the adult educator nor the artists presuppose having any knowledge about the participants in advance, but invite them to share and engage based on their levels of comfort. Thirdly, transformation is situated within the exploratory practices of manipulating space, improvising, experimenting, performing, or just observing, not within the individual learner. Finally, it is about empowerment, obtained through working with open-ended processes and contradictions, instead of searching for predefined objectives and solutions.

With regard to the specific question of inhabiting social criticism and change, *Open Studio* can be seen as a mode of criticality directed against the individualist and utilitarian ways in which we often engage with art. The apparent absurdness of doing nothing useful to some predefined end may be acceptable for children, but can be experienced as meaningless 'fooling around' by adults, making them unconfident (Göthlund, Illeris & Thrane 2015). By opening new and unknown territories *Open Studio* is thus challenging prevailing modes of thought in ways that are both educational and potentially political.

CONCLUSIONS

At a time when public education, within and beyond art galleries, is experiencing increasing pressure to promote individualisation of learning, we need to look to transformative artistic adult education practices that enable us to inhabit social criticism and change. In order to oppose a neoliberal colonisation of our perception of what it means to be human, a place to start is to become aware of the ontological foundations of our conceptions of transformation. Whereas a traditional person-bound approach to learning and transformation provides the necessary foundation for understanding education as individual development, our current context demands that we experiment with practice-based approaches that encourage greater collective engagement in more socially transformative ways.

Yet this type of art gallery educational programming seems to exist only at the margins of the institutions. But one could argue that existing on the margins is also strength. If you want to inhabit social criticism and change under the present

conditions you need to create new spaces and strategies, to invent new practices. You need to create the conditions for experimental processes that allow you to 'live things out'. This includes a continual quest for the interstices where alternative practices can grow and to understand these are critical alternative forms of education and learning, even if they may not look as political at a first glance. Any move beyond the neoliberal pedagogical push for individualisation must be seen as political.

If we want to really inhabit social criticism and change we have to question the conception of being we begin from, and what types of processes we require. My proposal for a useful thinking technology is to try to locate transformation in the integrated and processual being of practice rather than in the disconnected being of the learner. Art galleries may be able to inhabit social criticism and change more effectively if they take inspiration from the experimental participative practices found in contemporary art projects that reflect adult education principles.

NOTE

[1] *Open Studio* opened in 2011 and will be closed in 2016, when the funding ran out.

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Helene Illeris
University of Agder
Norway

BRYAN L. SMITH

20. QR CODES

The Canary in the Coal Mine

INTRODUCTION

Museums are at an exciting intersection of pedagogical reform, technological innovation, and new museology – the reframing of the museum as an educational tool for the betterment of the local and global community. Museums are therefore poised to be leaders in the use of educational technology to support lifelong and informal learning. For example, the 2015 *New Media Consortium Report* calls for museums to develop long-term digital strategies to guide the integration of new technologies, and studies show that a majority of museums are working to incorporate new technologies to enhance educational opportunities (Johnson, Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2015; Axiell, 2015).

Although the future is promising, many museums have had a rocky relationship with digital technology in the past. This chapter traces the trajectory of a single technology – Quick Response (QR) codes – and their implementation in museums across Canada. QR codes are two-dimensional barcodes read by smartphones. Distinctive corner markings allow scanners to read the codes horizontally or vertically. QR codes are easy and inexpensive to produce, and a variety of free QR code generators exist online (Massis, 2011). Despite being cost-effective, QR codes have suffered a loss of popularity due in part to technical drawbacks including varying app designs and reliance on Wifi or data plans.

This rise and fall of QR codes highlights that there are many lessons to be learned from past attempts at technology-integrated learning in museums. Specifically, despite technical shortcomings, some museums have used QR codes to innovatively link new approaches to adult and continuing education with new museology, however a variety of social and organizational obstacles have prevented this fusion from becoming widespread. I argue in this chapter that by identifying and mitigating the organisational, educational, and technical roadblocks that have halted effective technology-supported education in museums in the past, museums can move forward to create innovative digital strategies that engage visitors while combining adult education, innovative technology, and new museology.

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BACKGROUND

My research on this topic of digital technology began in 2012. At that time, QR codes were receiving significant attention, and some Canadian museums had begun testing QR code programmes. My intention was to assess the QR codes being tested in museums, and to make best practices suggestions based on the findings. Eight institutions were involved in interviews and were surveyed regarding their codes. But by the time I had completed the research it was clear that QR codes had lost momentum. Journalists proclaimed the death of QR codes, lauding the technology as "a meaningless time sucker" (Avrahamy, 2014, para. 3) or "more outdated than your pog collection" (Jones, 2015, para. 1). The debate regarding QR codes' relevance and survival is ongoing, but museum professionals generally seem to agree they are not the next big idea. In reflecting on the data I had gathered, I realised that the trajectory of QR codes in museums provided an opportunity to understand more about how museums approach and implement educational technologies. In this context, QR codes might just be the canary that had to die before we could understand the underlying issues at play.

A body of literature concerning QR codes in museums already exists, and most writers conclude that QR codes failed in museums for the same technical issues that caused them to fail in marketing. Internet access issues, advertisements, webpages not optimized for mobile screens, and the need to download an external app to read the codes have all been cited as technical issues that prevented the success of QR codes (Kutsishin, 2012, para. 2–4). However, none of the studies has analysed how and why QR codes were implemented by museums in the first place. I suggest that attributing the failure of QR codes to technical issues misses other factors that need to be addressed. In particular, despite opportunities for synergy between pedagogy, technology, and new museology, QR codes often ended up being implemented for reasons that were separate from or contrary to educational goals, as will be discussed. The issues that caused this misalignment need to be identified and mitigated, otherwise new technologies – no matter how technically sound – could suffer similar lacklustre responses from visitors who feel unengaged, unchallenged, and uninspired by the content delivered.

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

To assess what would make a QR code system a successful educational technology in a museum, it is important to identify a framework for success. What should educational technology look like in museums? Of course, it should work well technically. But, it should also work to fill an educational purpose. Research from the Aixell Institute, highlighted in the graph below, demonstrates how museums currently position educational opportunities as the foremost priority in their digital strategies for audience engagement.

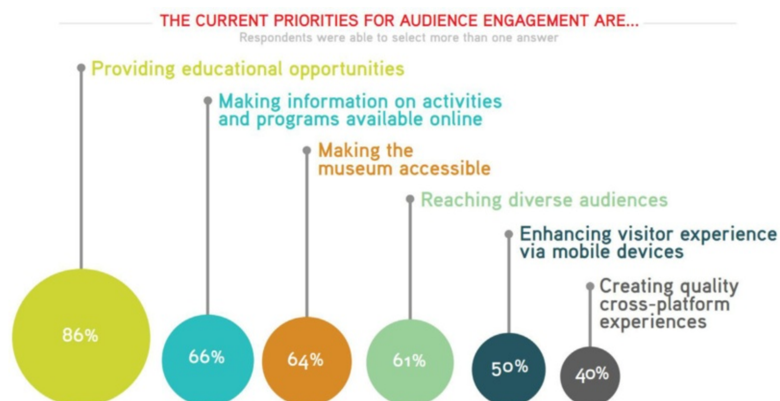

Figure 1. Aixell infographic (Aixell, 2015)

To meet this demand, a successful educational technology should address the goals shared by educators and practitioners in both formal and informal learning environments. A review of literature on adult education and museum learning reveals the following four goals that can constitute a framework for assessing educational technologies.

EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN LEARNING

Museum adult educators and professionals agree that allowing learners to contribute knowledge from their own experience enriches the learning experience for the individual and for the group. This is particularly important for adult learners, who benefit from customising their learning experience to fit with their life experience (Criu & Ceobanu, 2013). Many distance education programmes, Cahill (2014) suggests, have combined life experiences, problem-centred curriculum, and cultural knowledge in a way that specifically caters to adults' learning needs, since "adults learn differently than (sic) youth" (p. 318). Experience-driven learning allows learners to have greater control over their learning environment. It also requires creating a learning infrastructure that accommodates multiple and diverse learning styles, provides varied opportunities for expression and knowledge demonstration, or uses multiple means and media to tap into diverse learners' interests. Museums have also recognised the importance of including diverse and even dissonant viewpoints within their walls, and practitioners are working to ensure that the museum experience is physically, culturally, and socially inclusive, "connecting people across…race, age, economic background, and culture" (Simon, 2015, para. 10). New technologies can enable learners to connect diverse opinions across fields, disciplines, and create an environment where "learners construct their own personal learning environments" based on their interest, experiences, and networks (Bates, 2015, p. 58).

MOTIVATED LEARNING

Building on the above, scholars of adult learning agree that, especially in informal learning environments, adults need to be motivated to learn. They want to know the 'why' behind the 'what' they are learning, and are particularly concerned with applying knowledge to the real world (Longenecker & Abernathy, 2013). In formal educational environments this can be achieved partly through clear and well-developed outcomes and goals that enable adult learners to determine the exact skills or credentials they will develop in a course. Museums, on the other hand, must motivate visitors to learn in an informal and non-structured environment. Research by Falk (2012) has demonstrated the wide variety of potential motivations for visiting a museum, and innovative institutions are working to cater the experience to suit these different types of visitors. In some cases, exhibits and programmes are being developed specifically to cater to the community's needs and interests, working with the community to "facilitate timely dialogue and deep reflection about important issues" because, Matelic (2011) argues, people are motivated "to learn about people…their own lives, and the lives of their families, friends, neighbours, and business associates" (p. 142). Other institutions are working to motivate visitors by reducing barriers to admission, and this may range from designing for universal access to business models built on free admission (O'Hare, 2015). In some places, museums have partnered with schools and other learning institutions to offer alternative venues for study as well as credited courses or programmes (Washor, 2014). In each of these approaches, museums seek to motivate their visitors and communities to actively take part in the learning experiences offered inside and outside of the galleries; a successful technology should support this need to get adults excited about and motivated to learn.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Another key tenet in the literature is that adult learners need to shift from consumers to creators. This has resulted in a push toward active and problem-based learning that is especially important for adult learners, who generally learn best by doing (Longenecker & Abernathy, 2013). Active-learning scholars agree that the lecture is not always the most effective in promoting deep and lasting learning, and suggest that involving learners in the creation of knowledge is central to encouraging better engagement and retention. Literature shows that museums have long agreed that this shift toward participative experiences, dialogue, and shared creation is of crucial importance (Skramstad, 1999). By engaging visitors in the creation and production process, museums can create a 'bottom-up' approach that allows visitors to share authority with curators and professionals (Harrison, 2010). Active learning can also facilitate a more intimate, meaningful, and sustainable level of engagement. Successful educational technologies in museums support this engaged, active learning process.

CONNECTED LEARNING

Finally, there is agreement in the literature that it is imperative to foster the creation of learning networks. Because adult learning is an informal and ongoing process, it will not simply stop when a professional development activity ends. Instead, adult learners use networks to learn new skills, develop new competencies, and find answers (Gom, 2009). Museum professionals and educators want adult visitors to leave the museum with a sense of connection; visitors should leave equipped with the resources to learn more about a topic, to communicate with museum staff, and to connect with other visitors who share the same interests (Simon, 2015). But museum professionals themselves need networks of support, information, and resources. Partnerships between museums, community groups, and non-profits suffering similar financial constraints can enable professionals to share resources and data. New technologies offer a variety of opportunities for connected learning and data sharing, both between museum visitors and museum professionals.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

Despite the technical issues inherent in QR codes, case examples demonstrate that some QR installations had the ability to foster the learning goals described above. Whether or not the codes were technically efficient after installation is of secondary importance in this case, as my chief concern is the *intended* use of QR codes. The following case examples combine experience-driven, motivated, active, and connected learning in new and innovative ways, demonstrating that QR codes have been purposefully implemented and intended as educational technologies.

An exemplar QR code system is the QRator programme at the Grant Museum of Zoology, University College London. With QRator, "you become the curator: add your own interpretations to museum objects; share your stories; find out what people really think about museum objects; and join the conversation" (QRator, 2011, para. 1). QR codes and iPad installations allow visitors to interact with other past, present, and future visitors in response to a provocation from the museum, including questions like "Do you think people today should perform dissection as part of their learning?" and "Is ecotourism an answer to local environmental and biodiversity conservation?" (QRator, 2011, "Current Questions"). When visitors add a comment via the QR code app, their comment is automatically added to the live forum thread in response to other contribution (Gray et al., 2012). In this way, the project not only creates a flexible and asynchronous learning network where visitors can contribute during and after their visit, it also shifts visitors from consumers to meaning makers and creates a network of diverse opinions. This kind of network where "knowledge is constantly shifting and changing" and "is not controlled or created by any formal organization" is fundamental to connectivism, a new approach to understanding learning that highlights the importance of informal networks of knowledge creation (Bates, 2015). Guided by the mandate to "create new models for public engagement,

personal meaning-making and the construction of narrative" (Gray et al., 2012, para. 1), the QR platform was recognized in 2012 with a Museums and Heritage Award for Excellence in the Innovation Category (QRator, 2011).

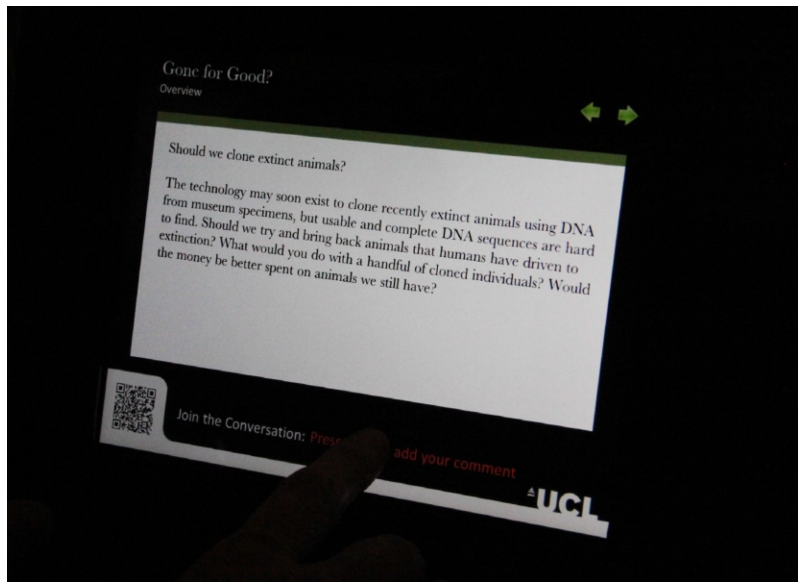

Figure 2. iPad installation at the Grant Museum

Monmouth, Wales demonstrates a different use of QR codes by taking them outside of the museum and into the community's living heritage. In partnership with Wikipedia and QRpedia, the town has implemented a network of QR codes on buildings, sites, museum exhibits, and even library books (Monmouthpedia, 2012). The codes provide a self-guided, multi-language tour to visitors of Monmouth, facilitated in part by the town-wide free Wi-Fi network. Perhaps more important is the collective process involved in the creation of these codes. Taking advantage of the wiki platform, Monmouth residents jointly create content. Residents are invited to contribute to the wiki, donate photographs and references, translate articles, and teach other residents how to use the wiki. With over a thousand new images donated to the project's commons, five hundred and fifty articles in twenty-nine languages, and approximately four hundred thousand page views per year, the project creates a significant buzz for the town (Monmouthpedia, 2012). Monmouthpedia empowers the community to become content creators, while at the same adding diverse experiences to its collective history and motivating residents to learn more about their town. While locals are motivated to continue learning about their town and sharing their own experiences, they are also connected to other locals and to new visitors through the process of active learning that is ongoing in Monmouth.

Figures 3, 4. Monmouthpedia plaques (Monmouthshire County Council, 2012)

THE REALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

The above case examples demonstrate that QR codes have been implemented as learning tools. However, despite these examples of QR code installations that purposefully create opportunities for experience-driven, motivated, and connected learning, it was surprising to find that in museums across Canada, enhancing learning was low on their list of priorities when they considered or implemented QR codes. The museums I surveyed ranged from large institutions to small and community-based organisations, which provided a range of experiences. These institutions were asked to express why they selected QR codes for their museum, what the main goals behind their QR code program were, what they felt this technology could contribute to exhibits, how the technology was being analyzed or measured, and what the intended future of the QR programme was. The following factors were commonly expressed as motivators for the inclusion of QR codes in an exhibit or gallery.

APPEARANCES

Survey respondents frequently noted that QR codes were included in their galleries to create a ‘wow-factor’ for visitors. Institutions hoped that QR code systems would help attract non-traditional museum visitors, specifically the tech-savvy crowd and young adults: “people who are super-keen about their phones.” This finding is consistent with Schultz’s (2013) study of museum QR codes, which concluded that QR codes were primarily implemented to appeal to “younger tech-minded people” (p. 212). However, even at the time of the survey most institutions recognised that this approach was largely not successful. For example, in instances where mobile technology could have generated excitement, misconceptions about proper museum etiquette often prevented this. One interviewee noted, for example, that while the museum’s QR codes appealed to approximately 6% of the museum’s visitors, most visitors expected a more traditional experience, and visitors were “still happy to have their rich experience in the museum without using their phone.” The Museum of Inuit Art (not surveyed) experienced discrepancy between

their target audience – "tech savvy" young adults – and actual users of their QR code program – middle age visitors – and quickly developed a training programme to help these visitors unfamiliar with the technology (Procida & Mausser, 2012). For most visitors, the intended 'wow-factor' did not seem to occur; this could be, one study suggests, because by the time mobile technologies were implemented in museums, they were commonplace enough that visitors were not intrigued or excited (Holdgaard & Simonsen, 2011).

ANALYTICS

Most survey respondents did not see gathering visitor data as a primary goal, but mentioned it as a secondary benefit. Codes connected to programs like Google Analytics enable museum staff to gain real-time information about their visitors. This information can include which codes are most viewed, how long information is viewed for, and what browsing system and mobile type visitors are using to view content (Gray et al., 2012). This real-time data can help museums develop a more comprehensive idea of how visitors move through the galleries. It is also important for museums seeking to demonstrate engagement statistics to funding bodies frequently seeking visitor data as part of applications or final reports. However, this statistical data does not answer the more complex question of what motivated visitors to visit the museum in the first place. Analytics from QR codes, though perhaps useful at a surface level, cannot help museums understand and cater to these complex and changing motivations. Demographic data collected to aid or satisfy a grant requirement also does not necessarily require any pedagogical innovation or rigour, as funding bodies may not mandate any learning objectives or goals.

INCREASED DISPLAY SPACE

The most common survey response from institutions was that QR codes were developed as a response to a shortage of display space. Pressed for exhibit space, institutions looked to QR codes as a way to provide more information than printed display panels could physically and aesthetically contain. As space-savers, QR codes provide an ideal solution in that they might take up approximately a square inch of wall space, but can potentially hold infinite amounts of information online. In fact, in 2012 the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) specifically suggested QR codes as a way to "provide visitors with additional information" (CHIN, 2012, para. 2). Survey respondents suggested that QR codes benefitted visitors seeking to learn more about a particular topic where in-depth information "would otherwise take too much room on display boards." However, providing more information was not necessarily linked to an innovative learning experience for visitors, but an extension of the same learning experience already available on text panels. Even if the supplemental information is interesting, this approach

does not incorporate the content creation, dialogue, and connection that, as outlined above, would typify a successful learning technology.

THE DISCONNECTS BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY

Survey results demonstrate that even if QR codes had been technically reliable, in many institutions across Canada they were not implemented to enhance learning. Why not? I suggest that there were several key obstacles that prevented this technology from being linked to innovative pedagogy, even before technical issues became a concern. As museums work to create digital strategies and implement educational technologies in the future, the following obstacles need to be addressed.

Firstly, organisational structures proved to be a challenge. These challenges existed primarily because the departments responsible for implementing QR codes – often marketing, design, or IT departments – were typically not involved in education. None of these departments necessarily lack the expertise to design a system around specifically educational goals. Nevertheless, museum scholars Holdgaard and Simonsen (2011) argue that in Denmark, conflating communicating with visitors and marketing has led some museums to "commodify and instrumentalise communication as a delimited object directed towards an audience (museum visitors as consumers)" (p. 109). In some larger institutions this problem is beginning to be mitigated by the creation of new positions specifically tasked with digital media (e.g. Royston & Delafond, 2014). Departments devoted specifically to understanding how technologies can support their institution's strategic and pedagogic goals will help ensure that digital technologies are integrated throughout the institution. In smaller institutions where this position creation may not be possible, the establishment of interdepartmental task forces or partnerships with consultants, scholars, or students from appropriate disciplines could help to ensure that technologies are being thoughtfully and strategically integrated and maintained.

Another obstacle was a suspicion and criticism of technologies and their role in learning in museums. For example, Earle (2013) argued that "the drive to 'engage' patrons with gadgets strips museums of their innate wonder" (para. 1), while Griffiths (1999) warned that many museum practitioners and visitors alike feel there is a problematic "blurring the line between the traditional public museum and the commercial theme park and retail complex" (para. 3). These are of course, valid critiques. In some cases, museum staff and volunteer educators were apprehensive about the value of the technology and therefore did not recommend it to visitors. Survey responses demonstrate that this apprehension was not unique among museum staff, as many visitors, including parents and teachers, often did not recognize that the QR codes could be an educational asset rather than a distraction. In other cases, another study shows, visitors were uninformed about what the QR codes might hold, and usually expected them to be transmitters of "more detailed info if you want it." Clearly, conceptions of how mobile technologies can supplement and enhance

learning need to change before mobile programs can successfully be part of a wide educational strategy in museums.

Conversely, some museums installed QR codes enthusiastically but without a comprehensive plan or learning strategy. As Schultz (2013) argues, in many cases museums jumped into QR codes without a formal needs assessment or strategic direction:

> A successful project involves identifying its purpose and goals in response to a particular need; however, often, due to a lack of resources or enthusiasm to "get started," the needs assessment step in the project's lifecycle is omitted or is informally based on assumptions and experience. The problem in this case is that wasted time and effort can result if the new technology implementation does not serve a need. (p. 5)

Implementing technology for technology's sake may allow museums to appear innovative, but does not encourage a departure from the traditional curatorial voice that has typified museum learning for many years. Although the medium may have changed, the pedagogical approach has not, and providing "additional information" can continue a passive rather than an active learning experience. Codes that supplement displays with links to primary sources help add information, but do not help visitors develop the complex skills required to effectively decode primary sources (Lindquist & Long, 2011). This debate mirrors the debate about video lectures in online education, where educators argue they merely replicate "the traditional and familiar pedagogical model of a university classroom," despite the fact that lectures have proven "ineffective at promoting critical thinking, fostering deep understanding, and supporting the application of knowledge" (McConachie & Schmidt, 2015, para. 6). By digitising old methods, museums run the risk of being pedagogically antiquated despite appearing innovative.

Finally, museums have a variety of other goals, expectations, and priorities beyond education. This is partly because not all visitors come to the museum specifically to learn, as Falk (2012) has demonstrated. Visitors' diverse needs mean that museums cannot always prioritise learning, especially if they want to cater to a variety of visitors. The other reality is that museums are not judged or evaluated on their educational results, at least not directly. Museums are often evaluated by visitor numbers and their bottom line by funding agencies, and are judged by visitors on a wide range of components ranging from parking to customer service, and from physical comfort to cafeteria food. In this complex web, education is only one priority for museums. As such, it is understandable that QR codes were often not implemented as educational technologies but in an effort to increase visitor numbers and enhance the visitor experience. Very often, we hear about enhancing 'experience' and 'engagement,' but it is often unclear to what extent education is a factor in this; finding ways to recognise the overlap between education and experience will thus need to be a priority if museums are going to effectively implement educational technologies in the future.

MOVING FORWARD

It is difficult to determine if QR codes might have been more widely and purposefully implemented had they not been plagued by technical problems ranging from variances in apps to connectivity issues. Would museum professionals have found new ways to innovate with the codes if more visitors had used them? This seems likely. But, would more visitors have used the codes if they were innovative, stimulating, and rewarding in the first place? Either way, if museums want to provide technology-enhanced learning experiences for their visitors, they need to carefully consider the obstacles that prevented QR codes from even being understood as educational. Continuing to debate whether or not technology can support learning is no longer productive; not only is technology-integrated learning commonly accepted in formal learning environments, there is no question that we are in the midst of a radical shift in how visitors experience museums. Museum websites receive far more visits than museums themselves, and even during their visit "74% of guests are still drawn into their little handheld screens" (Museum Hack, 2015, para. 1). The question is no longer whether visitors will use their mobile devices to experience and learn about culture, but instead how museums can harness the power of these devices?

Perhaps the most important lesson that we can learn from the rise and fall of QR codes in museums is that in order for a new technology to be pedagogically innovative and challenging, educational goals need to be built into the design and development process right from the beginning. Museums do not need to invent new approaches and systems to solve this issue, but instead can look beyond their own institutions and borrow from industries that have already had success with educational technologies. For example, the Imperial War Museums network in the UK has recently found success working with an AGILE project management framework; other frameworks borrowed from systems development and instructional design, including ADDIE and ASSURE, may allow museums to ensure that a process of strategic analysis, selection, and evaluation produces technologies that meet multiple goals (Royston & Delafond, 2014). Museums also have example frameworks to draw from within their own sector, including the *Digital Engagement Framework* developed by Visser and Richardson (2013). Whatever framework museums choose to approach new technologies, it is important that the strategic goals, audience, multi-disciplinary project team, learning outcomes, and evaluation strategies are identified first, and that the technology is selected next and in collaboration. By implementing technology first, Koven Smith concludes, we miss the need for fundamental change:

> We thought that our visitors were asking for technology, but what they really wanted was a different way of interacting with the museum altogether …we're not innovating in the way we need to be to survive. Instead, we're just making a bunch of flashy junk. (para. 5)

Museums have a unique opportunity to be leaders in the field of technology-supported adult education. They are well positioned to be labs where innovative

professionals can fuse creative pedagogy and new technologies. Taking the lead in developing, testing, and connecting mobile learning technologies is a niche that museums are uniquely equipped to fill. If museums want to be an educational resource for learners of any age, the technologies they employ need to be integrated into this mission, not separated from it.

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Bryan Smith
University of Victoria
Formerly – Maritime Museum, Victoria, Canada

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