

## SWICH Co-collecting workshop

Monday 19 October & Tuesday 20 October 2015

Research Center for Material Culture, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

This trans-disciplinary workshop - part of the *Collecting Futures* research theme of the pan-European collaborative project SWICH - will explore trajectories towards collaborative practices for collecting and documenting collections within ethnographic museums. During the workshop experts from across the world will explore best-practice examples as starting points for developing new theoretical models and practical policy suggestions for how ethnographic and world cultures museums can adopt collaborative models for rethinking their collecting practices.

The founding principles around which many ethnographic museums in Europe have historically operated have been that of collecting, studying and representing those 'others' to the so-called West. Over the last few decades there has been a growing and robust (auto)critique of such practices. This critique has taken a variety of forms and has been generated from different quarters. First, from some within originating communities, where critical questions have revolved around issues such as who owns cultural objects; who should collect them; how and under what conditions are they being preserved; and how are they interpreted and represented. Secondly, scholarly critique (including but not restricted to indigenous scholars), has addressed issues such as ethics of collecting 'other' cultures, or has questioned representational paradigms, authority, and the inclusion/exclusion of different stakeholder groups from museum practices. Criticism has also come from different groups within Europe itself, mostly from post-colonial, labor migrants and post-migrant citizens. They have been critical about what *they* see as their heritage, and how it has or has not been represented in these museums.

This workshop takes these critical discussions as starting points to explore possible methodologies for collaboratively developing new collections with different stakeholder groups. We take collections as sites of relations, as fulcrums around which different communities make different claims, sometimes competing, as they negotiate their belonging to different citizenship regimes. The workshop will be organized to focus on different national, regional and international factors that impact the ways in which collaboration is defined and practiced. In what ways do, or should, issues related to citizenship and belonging affect what, how and with whom we collect as museum? What should ethnography museums collect today and in the future?

**Monday 19 October 2015**

*Research Center for Material Culture*

9:00 **Registration**

9:30 **Welcome**

10:00 **Claiming Heritage - Co-collecting, Indigeneity, Citizenship and the Nation**

In this session we explore the national contexts for collaborative collecting. In what ways do particular regimes of citizenship (national policy frameworks or internal bureaucracies, for example) or national discussions about belonging for different groups affect co-collecting practices? What internal and external factors affect the museum's ability to conduct co-collecting practices?

Moderator **Ian Lilley**, Professor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (ATSIS) and Willem Willems Professor of Archaeological Heritage Studies, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, Leiden

Key Note **Joe Horse Capture**, Associate Curator, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

**Native American Representation in Museums: Breaking Out of the Display Case**

Many museums in the US are slowly understanding the importance of incorporating the Native voice in exhibitions, programming, and collections care. This process has been challenging, with limited success. Examples ranging from an exhibition in 1972, to the National Museum of the American Indian, to tribal museums, provide different methodologies to incorporate Native people in the presentation and care for the works created by their Ancestors. This presentation will explore several examples in this effort, and lessons that can be learned.

Case Studies presentations

10:50 **Denis Chevallier**, Scientific Co-Director, MuCEM, Marseille

11:00 **Danielle Kuiyten**, Freelance Curator and Museologist, Imagine IC, Amsterdam

11:10 **Helen Mears**, Keeper of World Art, Brighton Museum, Brighton

11:20 **Luit Mols**, Curator Middle-East and West and Central Asia, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

11:30 **Q&A**

12:00 **Lunch Break**

**13:00 Co-Collecting in international/trans-national perspective**

This session moves beyond national borders to look at how collaborative collecting practices can function within trans- or international citizenship regimes and belonging practices. In what ways can practices of co-collecting in the trans/international context help stakeholder communities to strengthen their own claims for citizenship and belonging in the national/local context? Is co-collecting part of an attempt to depoliticize claims for heritage ownership from different stakeholder communities or does it facilitate other more equitable practices? Can we see co-collecting as forms of 'diplomacy' for different groups as they participate in the representation of their own cultural heritage?

Moderator **Wonu Veys**, Curator Oceania, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

Key Note **Sean Mallon**, Senior Curator Pacific Cultures, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

**Agency and authority: the politics of co-collecting Pacific Cultures of New Zealand**

At the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, there are two positions dedicated to curating Pacific Cultures. Since 2002, the curators have been of Pacific Islands descent. One of our ongoing challenges is how to represent Pacific societies and cultures that are increasingly transnational in our exhibitions and collections. We are conscientiously developing co-collecting strategies in our approach to this milieu. However, there is actually a long history of Pacific communities in New Zealand engaging the museum in collecting processes. In this presentation, I will share some examples of co-collecting, highlighting how Pacific communities have exercised their agency and authority, influencing their representation in the national museum. I will describe our responses and examine what was at stake in these interactions, what tensions and politics were and remain at play.

## Case Studies presentations

13:50 **Nicholas Thomas**, Director, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

14:00 **Martin Petersen**, Curator, Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen

14:10 **Claudia Augustat**, Curator South America Collection, Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna and **Laura Van Broekhoven**, Chief Curator, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

14:25 Q&A

15:00 Coffee / Tea break

15:30 **Co-collecting in the Digital Age**

Digital cultures have become a focal point for contemporary research agendas. This session will examine the ways in which digital and new media technology are changing collecting practices. How might digital contact zones or digital knowledge offer new pathways to share authority and democratize knowledge about cultural heritage within a changing museological and demographic field?

Moderator **Bart Barendregt**, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Director of Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, Leiden

Key note **Maureen Matthews**, Curator of Ethnology, The Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg

***Ngodwezhaanan Mazinaatenjiganag*, Virtual Families: Digital Imagery and the Creation of Multidimensional Families**

*Ngodwezhaanan mazinaatenjiganag* means families created by imagery. The family is that of an Ojibwe medicine man, Naamiwan, one of the principal informants of A. Irving Hallowell, former president of the AAA. Hallowell's archives, including 900 photographs, reside at the American Philosophical Society (APS) Library and have become the focus of collaborative research with Naamiwan's home community of Pauingassi. Over the past three years, the collection has been augmented by contemporary photographs of people who were young in the historic photographs and are now elders in the community as well as audio recordings of those elders explaining in Ojibwe the meaning of Naamiwan's practice and the ceremonies pictured in the old photos. The historic and contemporary photos and audio have been digitized in the last three years. It is now possible to search a web-based database of the Hallowell photographs by both the Ojibwe and English names of individuals and find links to their audio recordings and English/Ojibwe transcripts as well. The APS has encouraged this digital tagging project and welcomed the way in which community data has reshaped its database and restructured relations between the library and the Anishinaabe community. The resulting digital database which now includes transcripts translations and a mapping project has played a role in supporting the communities in a World Heritage site that would see 4.3 million hectares of boreal forest become a designated cultural landscape.

The expanding web of relations between the newly digitized photos, augmented digital search tools, and Ojibwe speakers has created a 'digital extended family, *ngodwezhaanan mazinaatenjiganag*,' including the library, the community, the past, and the present. This paper looks at the implications that flow from expanding familial relationships in a digitized research environment.

Case Studies presentations

16:20 **Cunera Buijs**, Curator Artic region, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

16:30 **Wonu Veys**, Curator Oceania, National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden

16:40 **Q&A**

17:10 - 18:00 **Discussion / Conclusions**

19:00 **SWICH conference dinner**



**Tuesday 20 October**

*Research Center for Material Culture*

10:00 **SWICH Technical meeting**

11:30 **Lunch**

12:30 **Overview of Collection Policies and Practices of SWICH partner museums**

Presentations of SWICH partner museums current collection policies and practices and collection plans for the future in regard to ethnographic collections.

(SWICH Partners: Please prepare an 8 minutes presentation)

13:45 **Coffee / Tea break**

14:15 Roundtable Discussion

**Who am I – Co-Collecting and Represented Selves**

Moderator: **Lotten Gustafsson Reinius**, Museum Director Etnografiskamuseet, Stockholm and Associate Professor of Ethnology

In this round table we want to explore questions of (self)-representation.

Intrinsic to the idea of collaborative collecting are concepts about different stakeholder groups being able to represent their cultural own heritage. While we acknowledge that individuals from originating communities have always been implicit participants in ethnographic collecting (and therefore representation) practices, the notion of co-collecting demands a different kind of authority and balance of representational power. What would we gain or lose in such practices? What are the tensions, contradictions and dangers that they present? What kind of ethical issues do such practices raise?

16:00 **End of meeting**