

**University of Brighton
School of Humanities**



Japanese Gallery, National Museum of Ethnography,
Leiden, The Netherlands, <www.rmv.nl>

**Museums, Material Culture,
Representation
Year 2 Option**

**Module Document
Tutor: Dr Claire Wintle**

Museums, Material Culture, Representation:

Module Tutor: Dr Claire Wintle (c.wintle@brighton.ac.uk), Office: 404a

Introduction to this Module:

Museums are carefully constructed spaces which colour the way we view the world. Since the birth of the public museum we have been framing and representing specific versions of ourselves and others, using the arrangement of visual and material culture to create values, assumptions and messages about the status of art, the course of history and hierarchies of humanity.

This option will explore the museum as a contested space, with a particular focus on the display and interpretation of African, Asian, Oceanic and Native American objects in museums in the Global North over the last thirty years. In Part 1, we will define and think through key concepts and terms surrounding museums, material culture and representation: what are problems and opportunities involved in displaying culture? How do museums classify visual culture as 'art'? What counts as 'authentic' culture? How are stereotypes formed? In Part 2 we will examine a series of events and interventions which have had a significant impact on the display of African, Oceanic, Asian and North American visual and material cultures. We will consider different approaches to display and museum practice from around the world and explore issues of repatriation, collaboration, sacred material and artistic interventions.

Learning Aims of this Module:

During this module, you will be engaged in learning:

- 1) Common historical and contemporary features in the display of African, Asian, Oceanic and Native American objects in museums
- 2) About the ways in which museums construct values, identities and histories through collection, interpretation and display.
- 3) To understand and critically evaluate the scholarly and professional debates which have surrounded the display of non-European visual and material culture over the last thirty years.
- 4) To analyse the display of African, Asian, Oceanic and/or Native American material and visual culture in museums.

Coursework requirements for this Module:

- 1) Seminar Performance This term you will be marked on your seminar performance. You will be marked in regards to two aspects of class contribution. This includes a demonstration of reflection, interpretation and application of knowledge (that you can critically engage and apply the text), and that you show constructive participation in group discussion (that you listen to, are respectful of, and can contribute to debate). Your class tutor will run through these requirements at the beginning of the first seminar with you.
- 2) Individual Seminar Presentation (15 minutes, plus sufficient issues/questions to sustain further discussion). Together with your week-by-week seminar performance, this will make up 30% of your overall mark.

During your individual seminar presentation you will examine a contentious or revolutionary event in recent museum practice. You should introduce the event, including close description of the most relevant physical aspects of the display/event and its institutional context. Please relate your event to some of the theoretical considerations raised during the course so far, and in particular the theme

of your week. Please do not rehearse the main arguments of the group text for your week (everyone has already read that), but show how some of the key themes from the text apply and shed light on your event. The following questions might be useful, but you can also develop your own:

- Is your event progressive in relation to this theme?
- What are the problems of this event in relation to the theme?
- What is the impact of this event on how museum practitioners have approached this theme since?

3) Essay (2,500 words) due **Monday 13th 2020** before **12:00, noon**. To be submitted via Turnitin. The subject will usually be developed from one of your seminars and should take account of tutorial feedback and advice. 70% of overall mark.

In addition, in **WEEK 10 (Monday 25th November)** you will have a formative assessment in the form of a submitted essay plan. This should be submitted via Turnitin.

General Requirements and Advice for Presentations:

Seminar presentations should be to time and be supported by appropriate visual material and references. You are expected to do extensive secondary research for your presentations, and to draw on primary sources and site visits where possible. Seminar **notes** must be submitted on the day of your presentation as part of the assessment process (via Turnitin BEFORE the class in which you will be presenting) and should therefore be typed, with all summarised information and quotations **footnoted**, and a full **bibliography** provided. Assessment will be made of the organisation and communication of ideas, both in terms of your own thoughts and your ability to debate your research with your colleagues.

Seminars are designed to share ideas and information with your fellow students so that you can jointly develop your critical understanding of a topic. They will be relying on your work to inform their learning. Your presentations should therefore include:

- 1) An **introduction**, which explains what the seminar is about, what kind of research you have undertaken and highlight any key methodological or theoretical issues you have come across.
- 2) A **conclusion**, which summarises your key points.
- 3) A **handout**, of key points, selected references, and any key names, dates and quotations that may be hard to grasp at a single hearing. A properly referenced image list and list of key texts is also useful.
- 4) A **powerpoint** which allows everyone to see and engage with your images. Please reference images properly. You may want to include a few key words or a brief structure to help your audience understand your approach.

N.B. When presenting, it is important to note that, just as you would with an essay, you should be careful to identify your sources and to reference your reading in ways that are clear to your audience and your assessor (for example, by stating, “As xxx has argued...” and by introducing direct quotations explicitly).

Module Plan

Week 2: Monday 30th September **Introduction: Museums and Political Culture**

Individual presentation tutorials

Week 3: Monday 7th October **Museums and Representation**

Visit to World Stories: Young Voices, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery
Please meet outside the entrance of Brighton Museum at 9am

Key Readings:

Lidchi, Henrietta. "The Poetics and the Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures." In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Hall, et al., 2nd ed. London: Sage, 2013, pp.120-157.

Modest, Wayne. "Co-curating with Teenagers at the Horniman Museum." In *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration*. Ed. Viv Golding and Wayne Modest. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Week 4: Monday 14th October **Whose Muse? Universal Museums and Indigenous Museology**

Key readings:

Curtis, Neil. "Universal Museums, Museum Objects and Repatriation: The Tangled Stories of Things." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21 (2006): 117-27.

Kreps, Christina. "Appropriate museology and the "new museum ethics": Honoring diversity." *Nordisk Museology*. 2 (2015): 4-16

Shannon, J., S. Atalay, J. N. Collison, T. H. Herewini, E. Hollinger, M. Horwood, R. W. Preucel, A. Shelton and P. Tapsell, "Ritual Processes of Repatriation: A Discussion." *Museum Worlds, Advances in Research*, 7:1 (2017): 88–94.

Individual presentation tutorials

Week 5: Monday 21th October **Sensual Culture and Digital Curating**

Key Readings:

Classen, Constance, and David Howes. "The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts." In *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg, 2006.

Newell, Jenny. "Old Objects, New Media: Historical Collections, Digitization and Affect." *Journal of Material Culture* 17 (2012): 287-306.

Individual presentation tutorials

Week 6: Monday 28th October Trip to National Maritime Museum

We will meet Dr Claire Warrior, Senior Exhibitions Interpretation Officer for a tour of the new Pacific Encounters and Polar Worlds galleries. **Please meet in the foyer of Pavilion Parade at 9am, and note that we will be travelling by minibus to Greenwich and returning to Brighton at 4pm.**

Key Reading:

Parker, Katherine. "Coming to terms with Captain Cook: exhibiting the 250th anniversary of the Endeavour voyage." *Journal of Historical Geography*. 64 (2019): 98-103.

Week 7: Monday 4th November Reading week**Week 8: Monday 11th November Art/Artefact and Beyond****Student Presentations:**

Primitivism: 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern, Museum of Modern Art, New York, US, 1984.

Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections, Center for African Art, New York, US, 1988.

Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France, opened 2006

Group Reading:

Phillips, Ruth B. "Exhibiting Africa after Modernism: Globalization, Pluralism, and the Persistent Paradigms of Art and Artifact." In *Museums after Modernism: Strategies of Engagement*, edited by Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

Week 9: Monday 18th November Museums and Social Justice**Student Presentations:**

The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada, 1988.

Canadian Museum of Human Rights, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, opened in 2014.

Världskulturmuseet/Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, Sweden, opened 2004.

Group Reading:

Janes, Robert R. *Museums in a Troubled World: Renewal, Irrelevance or Collapse?* London: Routledge, 2009, chapter, "Museums: Stewards or spectators?"

Week 10: Monday 25th November Museums and Collaboration

(ESSAY PLAN DUE IN)

Student Presentations:

Te Māori, touring exhibition, New Zealand Museums (New York, St Louis, Chicago and San Francisco, New Zealand), 1984-6.

National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC., US, opened in 2004.

African Worlds, Horniman Museum and Gardens, UK, opened 1999, closed 2006.

Group Reading:

Lynch, Bernadette. "Collaboration, Contestation, and Creative Conflict: On the Efficacy of Museum/Community Partnerships." In *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First-Century Museum*, edited by Janet Marstine. London: Routledge, 2011.

Kassim, Sumaya. "The Museum Will Not Be Decolonised." 15 November 2017. <https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/>. Accessed: 13 August 2019.

Week 11: Monday 2nd December **Sacred Objects**

Student Presentations:

Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford, UK, loan of five Blackfoot shirts, to Glenbow Museum, Calgary and the Galt Museum, Lethbridge, Canada, 2010.

Repatriation of Sioux Ghost Dance Shirt from Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, UK, 1999.

Group Reading:

Mathur, Saloni, and Kavita Singh. "Reincarnations of the Museum: The Museum in an Age of Religious Revivalism." In Mathur, Saloni, and Kavita Singh, eds. *No Touching, No Spitting, No Praying: The Museum in South Asia*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2015.

Week 12: Monday 9th December **Tutorials to discuss essays (no class)**

Christmas Break

Week 13: Monday 6th January **Beyond Empire? Critiquing History**

Student Presentations:

Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson, The Contemporary & Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, US, 1992-3.

Into the Heart of Africa, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, 1989-1990.

Tropenmuseum, Netherlands

The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, UK, opened 2002, closed 2008.

Memory of the Congo at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium, 2005.

Group Reading:

Onciul, Bryony. "Telling Hard Truths and the Process of Decolonising Indigenous Representations in Canadian Museums." In *Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives*, edited by Jenny Kidd and et al. London: Routledge, 2014.

Week 14: Monday 13th January **Essay Deadline at 12:00 noon (No class)**

Bibliography: Specific Institutions/Exhibitions

Te Māori, touring exhibition, New Zealand Museums (New York, St Louis, Chicago and San Francisco, New Zealand), 1984-6.

Hakiwai, Arapata T. "The Search for Legitimacy: Museums in Aotearoa, New Zealand - a Maori Viewpoint." In *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, edited by Gerard Corsane. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

McCarthy, Conal. "Before 'Te Maori': A Revolution Deconstructed'." In *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, edited by S. J. Knell, S. McLeod and S. Watson. London: Routledge, 2007.

McCarthy, Conal. *Exhibiting Maori: a History of Colonial Cultures of Display*. Oxford: Berg, 2007. [745.50993/MCC]

McCarthy, Conal. *Museums and Maori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice*. London: Routledge, 2016 [On Order]

Primitivism: 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1984.

Court, E. "Africa on Display: Exhibiting Art by Africans." In *Contemporary Cultures of Display*. Ed. E. Barker. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Errington, Shelly. "What Became Authentic Primitive Art?" *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 2 (1994): 201-26.

Flam, Jack, and Miriam Deutch, eds. *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Foster, Hal. "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern." In *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Ed. James Clifford: Harvard University Press, 1985. [306/CLI]

Hiller, Susan. *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*. London: Routledge, 1991. [709.04/MYT and as eBook]

McEvelley, Thomas. "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief." In *Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity*. New York: McPherson & Company, 1992. [701.1/MCE]

Price, Sally. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Rubin, William, ed. "*Primitivism*" In *20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1984. [709.04/PR]

Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections, Center for African Art, New York, 1988.

Court, E. "Africa on Display: Exhibiting Art by Africans." In *Contemporary Cultures of Display*. Ed. E. Barker. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Faris, James C. "'ART/artifact': On the Museum and Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 29:5 (1988): 775-779.

Vogel, Susan (ed.). *Art/Artifact; African Art in Anthropology Collections*. New York: Center for African Art, 1989. Please note that the 2nd edition has a very useful supplement, which includes rich discussion on the nature of the exhibition.

Vogel, Susan. "Always True to the Object in Our Fashion." In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

Memory of the Congo at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren.

Ceuppens, Bambi. "From Colonial Subjects/Objects to Citizens: The Royal Museum for Central Africa as Contact-Zone." *Advancing Museum Practices*. Ed. Francesca Lanz and Elena Montanari. Allemandi & C. 2015. [Google this for a free download]

DeBlock, Hugo. "The Africa Museum of Tervuren, Belgium: The Reopening of 'The Last Colonial Museum in the World', Issues on Decolonization and Repatriation", *Museum & Society*. 2019;17(2):272-281

- Hoenig, Patrick. "Visualizing trauma: The Belgian Museum for Central Africa and its discontents", *Postcolonial Studies*, 14 (4) 2014.
- Gewald, Jan-Bart. "More than Red Rubber and Figures Alone: A Critical Appraisal of the Memory of the Congo Exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2006, pp. 471–486. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40034827.
- Muteba Rahier, Jean. "The ghost of Leopold II: The Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa and its dusty colonialist exhibition", *Research in African Literatures*, 34(1): 2003.
- Van Beurden, Sarah. "The Value of Culture: Congolese Art and the Promotion of Belgian Colonialism (1945–1959)", *History and Anthropology*. 24:4 (2013): 1-21.

African Worlds, Horniman Museum and Gardens (opened 1999).

- Mears, Helen and Wayne Modest. "Museums, African Collections and Social Justice." In *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*. Ed. Eithne Nightingale and Richard Sandell. London: Routledge, 2012. [069/MUS]
- Shelton, Paradigms Anthony. "Curating *African Worlds*." In *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*. Ed. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown. London: Routledge, 2003. [305.80074/MUS, also as eBook]

The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada, 1988.

- Harrison, J. D. "The Spirit Sings and the Future of Anthropology." *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 6-9. [online library]
- McManus, Greg. "The Crisis of Representation in Museums: The Exhibition 'the Spirit Sings', Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada." In *Museum Economics and the Community*. Ed. Susan Pearce: Continuum. (available from Queenswood [069/PEA], order via St Peters House Library)
- Phillips, Ruth B. *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011, "Moment of Truth: The Spirit Sings as Critical Events and the Exhibition Inside It" [chapter]
- Wrightson, Kelsey R. "The Limits of Recognition: *The Spirit Sings*, Canadian Museums and the Colonial Politics of Recognition." *Museum Anthropology* 40, no.1 (2017): 36-51.

Into the Heart of Africa, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 1989-1990.

- Butler, Shelley Ruth. *Contested Representations: Revisiting "Into the Heart of Africa"*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. [069.5/BUT]
- Forni, Silvia, "Engaging Dialogues: Re-framing Africa at the Royal Ontario Museum", *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research*, 5 (2017). [online library]
- Riegel, H. "Into the Heart of Irony: Ethnographic Exhibitions and the Politics of Difference." In *Theorizing Museums*. Ed. S. MacDonald and G. Fyfe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. [069.01/THE]
- Schildkrout, Enid. "Ambiguous Messages and Ironic Twists: *Into the Heart of Africa* and the *Other Museum*." *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1991): 16-23. In *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*. Ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. [069/MUS]

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- Karp, Ivan, and Fred Wilson. "Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums." In *Thinking About Exhibitions*. Ed. Reesa Greenberg, et al. London: Routledge, 1996. [659.152/THI]

Marstine, Janet. "Museologically speaking: an interview with Fred Wilson". In *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*. Ed. Eithne Nightingale and Richard Sandell. London: Routledge, 2012. [069/MUS]

Wilson, Fred, Lisa G. Corrin, Leslie King-Hammond and Ira Berlin. *Mining the Museum: An Installation*. New York: New Press, 1994. [709.04079/WIL]

The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, opened 2002, closed 2008.

Harris, Gareth. "The Rise and Fall of the British Empire Museum", *The Art Newspaper*, 227 (September 2011). [online library]

Letts, John. "World of Museums: The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, Bristol, Nears Completion", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 18, 3 (2000). [online library]

McAleer, John. "'That Infamous Commerce in Human Blood': Reflections on Representing Slavery and Empire in British Museums", *Museum History Journal*, 6:1 (2013). [online library]

McLeod, Corinna. "Negotiating a national memory: the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum", *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 2, 2 (2009). [online library]

Prior, Katherine. "Museum of the British Empire and Commonwealth", *History Today*, 52, 10 (2002).

Prior, Katherine. "Commemorating Slavery 2007: A Personal View from Inside the Museums", *History Workshop Journal*, 64, 1 (2007).

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Basso Peressut, Luca, Francesca Lanz and Gennaro Postiglione, *European Museums in the 21st Century: Setting the Framework*, Volume 1, MELA books [http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/cms/attach/20131205/141436483_5752.pdf]

Grinell, Klas. "When Legitimate Claims Collide: Communities, Media and Dialogue", *Museum and Society* 9, 3 (2011): 227–43. [open access:

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Lagerkvist, Cajsa. "Empowerment and Anger: Learning How to Share Ownership of the Museum," *Museum and Society*, 4, 2 (2006): 52-66. [open access: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/lagerkvist.pdf> - accessed 22/09/17]

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National Museum of the American Indian, opened 2004.

Jacknis, Ira. "A New Thing? The NMAI in Historical and Institutional Perspective", *American Indian Quarterly*, Special Issue: Decolonizing Archaeology, 30, 3/4 (2006). [online library]

King, Lisa. "Speaking Sovereignty and Communicating Change: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Inaugural Exhibits at the NMAI", *American Indian Quarterly*, 35, 1 (2011). [online library]

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Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012 (on order, see chapter on NMAI)

Message, Kylie. *Museums and Social Activism: Engaged Protest*. Routledge, 2014.

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Tropenmuseum, Netherlands

- Bouquet, Mary. "Reactivating the Colonial Collection: Exhibition-Making as Creative Process at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam." In *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, Vol 4. Museum Transformations. Eds. Annie Coombes and Ruth B. Phillips John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
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Repatriation of Sioux Ghost Dance Shirt from Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1999.

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- Bienkowski, Piotr. "A Critique of Museum Restitution and Repatriation Practices." In *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Practice* (Vol. 2). Ed. Conal McCarthy. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
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Canadian Museum of Human Rights

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Collaboration

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Models of Museology

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(<http://network.icom.museum/icme/>)

Museum Ethnographers Group (UK) (<http://www.museumethnographersgroup.org.uk/en/>)

Material Worlds blog (“an interactive, online hub for contemporary debates, discussion, thinking and research centred on material and visual culture,” associated with the University College London’s Anthropology department (<http://www.materialworldblog.com/>)

Online Supplement to *Museum Anthropology*, the Journal of the Council for Museum Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association

(<http://museumanthropology.blogspot.co.uk/>)