
Editorial

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After special issues of *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* in 2016 and 2017, Volume 6 (2018) is an open issue. In the last two years, the journal has canvassed issues to do with museum archeology, repatriation, and engaging anthropological legacies, as well as with its annual scan of books, exhibitions, conferences, and other events around the museum world, not just in the Anglophone North Atlantic but also in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific.

This year's issue has seven research articles by a mix of authors: some new voices, others major figures in museum studies, heritage studies, and history. The topics reflect the disciplinary variety that has become a hallmark of the journal, ranging from reflections on museum theory and thoughts on curiosity-driven exhibitions in science centers, through applying Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of the carnivalesque to ethnographic museums and the implications of Alexander Baumgarten's aesthetics for looking at objects, to female curators and the "making" of history in postwar New Zealand, colonial collecting in Australia, and museum education.

The first article is by Tony Bennett, who needs little introduction to our readers, as he is one of the most important scholars in the field of museum studies today and has been for the last three decades. This reprinted introduction, reproduced with the kind permission of Routledge, comes from Bennett's new volume of selected essays, *Museums, Power, Knowledge* (2018). The book as a whole is reviewed later in this issue by Dominique Poulot. Emma Waterton also reviews another recent book (*Collecting, Ordering, Governing* [2017]) co-edited by Bennett and a group of authors on museums, anthropology, and liberal government, making this volume of *Museum Worlds* something of a tribute to Bennett and his work. In "Introduction: Museums, Power, Knowledge," Bennett looks back over his work on museums that is collected in the book, which of course is made up of articles and chapters covering the span of his career, from *Birth of the Museum* (1995) and *Pasts beyond Memory* (2004) to *Assembling Culture* (2011, edited with Chris Healy) and *Making Culture, Changing Society* (2013), not to mention the two books reviewed here. This enormous productivity is even more impressive when we consider the other books produced in the disciplines of cultural sociology, cultural studies, and cultural policy (Bennett 1998; Bennett et al. 2005; Bennett and Joyce 2010; Bennett et al. 2009). For those living and working in Australia, Bennett has done a special service by turning his attention to local issues of particular importance in this former settler colony as it grapples with a dark past and a challenging present, including nation-building, tourism, and the heritage boom; multicultural diversity; and a resurgent Indigenous presence (Bennett 2018: final chapter; Bennett and Carter 2001; Bennett et al. 1999). After periods working in Queensland, and back in the United Kingdom, Bennett has now settled in New South Wales, where he has been based at Western Sydney University, teaching, supervising theses, and managing major research projects with large teams—in this professional context his leadership, mentoring, and generous service to academia have been much appreciated by university colleagues, students, and scholars.

One of Bennett's many achievements has been to strengthen and refine the critical analysis of museums, galleries, and cultural heritage by drawing on a wide range of theories and methods



from wider literatures in sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines—a process of “theorising museums” (Macdonald and Fyfe 1996) that has immeasurably enriched the field of museum studies. In doing so, he has infused academic studies of museums with analytical tools drawn from European theory, namely from the work of Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu, and, in particular, Michel Foucault to such an extent that critics have referred to it as the “Foucault effect” (McCarthy 2007). One of the fascinating processes that readers of Bennett have followed over the course of his career has been the ways in which he has moved from Foucaultian to Latourian concepts, which is reflected in the title of a recent book chapter: “From Exhibitionary Apparatus to Governmental Assemblage” (Bennett 2015). And as Bennett writes here, “museums are increasingly thought of as complex assemblages of distributed agency in which things and people derive their particular force and capacity from the mobile and plural networks into which they are provisionally ‘stitched.’” However, as his Introduction to *Museums, Power, Knowledge* demonstrates, this process has not so much been a break as it has been a transition, and we can clearly see the consistent interest in, and use of, Foucault’s notions of power, knowledge, “truth,” and governmentality throughout Bennett’s work.

The following articles in this volume of *Museum Worlds* address different aspects of museum history, theory, and practice around the world today. The first three articles subsequent to Bennett’s article reflect, in very different ways, on museum and curatorial processes and possibilities. Ken Arnold, well known for his work in the “cultural” science centers that are the Wellcome Collection in London and the Medical Museion in Copenhagen, muses on his many years of experience developing exhibitions and public programs, and proposes a curiosity-driven model of “curating between medicine, life, and art.” Jennifer Walklate then develops a Bakhtinian approach to the carnivalesque, contrasting it to the notion of heterotopia and proposing it as a way of rethinking ethnographic museums and their purposes and value in the twenty-first century. Adam Bencard draws on Baumgarten’s philosophy of aesthetics, particularly Baumgarten’s idea of sensate thinking, to develop an argument for “close sensory engagement with physical things.” Bencard goes on to examine how this approach might be useful in museum practice. And Nathaniel Prottas, who has worked as an art educator in European and US museums, critiques the overused notion of “dialogue,” drawing on recent literature and the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and John Dewey on art as “performative” to develop a “radically new argument for museums as educational institutions that bring people and art into dialogue with each another.” The final two articles take a historical turn, beginning with the work of Bronwyn Labrum, a historian who works at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. Labrum traces the history of honorary female curators in three postwar museums and reveals how they “made” colonial New Zealand history as they collected and displayed clothing, textiles, and everyday material culture. “Noting how little research has been published on women workers in museums, let alone female history curators,” Labrum concludes, “it offers an important correction to the usual story of heroic, male scientific endeavors of museum directors and managers.” Finally, Andrea Witcomb and Alistair Paterson reveal the fascinating history of a little-known private collection in Perth, Western Australia, exploring its difficult and ongoing connections to colonialism, mining, photography, and Aboriginal material culture.

In the other sections of *Museum Worlds*, we offer glimpses into current “advances in research” in the global museum sector. In the first five volumes of the journal, these pages of reviews and reports have shown the extraordinary range and diversity of global practice evident in new museums, galleries, and exhibitions, a host of adventurous research in books and reports, and accounts of seminars, workshops, and conferences. The 2018 volume is no exception. In the report section, Zofia Wóycicka and her colleagues describe their research project *Unsettling Remembering and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe*, which analyzed the memorial regimes

of museums related to the history of World War I and World War II in Slovenia, Poland, France, and Germany. In addition, Jocelyn Dodd and Sarah Plumb report on the conference *Unexpected Encounters: Museums Nurturing Living and Ageing Well*, which was held in Manchester in April 2018 as part of their *Unexpected Encounters* research project. The exhibition section contains reviews of museums and exhibitions in Italy, Sweden, Costa Rica, New York, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, with a major review essay by Sharon Ann Holt of an important new museum that opened in 2016 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., The National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Lastly, the book reviews include new titles on cultural heritage, museums and the senses, and museum practice in Asia. This section includes a review of Tony Bennett's recent edited collection published by Duke University Press and a significant review essay by Dominique Poulot on Bennett's latest book mentioned above. From a French perspective, Poulot describes Bennett as a "radical global critic", a "Caliban" in Prospero's kingdom, who has challenged accepted museological conventions through his "philosophical history of museums". Discussing Bennett's final chapter, in which he "rattles the museum" by rethinking the underlying issues behind a controversial exhibition of Aboriginal objects from the British Museum at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, Poulot writes: "Settling in Australia seems to have unsettled Tony Bennett's thinking, in a good way, and has made his writing more concrete, territorialized and present—and this is surely for the best." For museums, and museum studies, this is also surely for the best.

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