

## 'Making Fun' of the Museum: Multi-disciplinarity, Holism, and the 'Return of Curiosity'

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### Abstract

Museums are curious institutions in two senses, one arising from the eccentricities and peculiarities of their histories, and the other from their ongoing desire to display, provoke, and satisfy their visitors' curiosity about the world in which they live. As the critical literature has shown, we can think about Western museums as material deposits of the different forms curiosity has taken in the course of four centuries of European imperial expansion and colonial domination - as sites where the properties of things could be disciplined according to Western knowledge structures and deployed to create a comprehensive picture of the world. Although this consciousness has shaken the foundations of museums and dislodged the collections they hold, their value as places where colonial legacies can be negotiated and shared concerns addressed remains compelling. Responding to Nicholas Thomas's *The Return of Curiosity*, to Actor-Network Theory's insistence on connecting disciplinary knowledges, and to Indigenous reaffirmations of holistic knowledge formation, this article explores a range of recent museum projects that invoke curiosity to transgress the museum's modern disciplinary boundaries.

**Key words:** Curiosity, Wonder, Multi-disciplinary Museums

### Introduction

If such capacity as museums may have to foster cosmopolitan citizenship is of enormous value, their deeper effectivity may arise not from their particular disciplinary orientation or content, but from the very fact that we cannot predict or prescribe what visitors make of them

Nicholas Thomas (2016: 145)

I have long been intrigued by two genres that make fun of museums. The first is made up of children's books written to familiarize and attract the young; these 'make fun' of museum visits in a literal sense. The second is addressed to adults and uses parody as a mode of institutional critique. Parodic works occur as written texts, performances, art works, and fully furnished pseudo-museums. The subversive criticality of racialized and Indigenous artists Jimmie Durham, Fred Wilson, James Luna, Gerald McMaster, and others come to mind in this context [Fig. 1] as does David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles [Fig. 2].<sup>1</sup> All make fun of the museum for the most serious of purposes. They resist its basic premises by exaggerating its origins in the juxtapositions of early curiosity collections shaped by pre-modern epistemic regimes and by parodying the categorizing and objectifying practices that subsequently came into being through Enlightenment rationalism, modern science, and the racial hierarchies of colonialism.<sup>2</sup> Their installations work to estrange the modern museum's palimpsestic collections and disciplinary orderings.

Two little books illuminate the celebration of transgressive heterogeneity shared by many of these parodic projects. *Grover and The Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum* follows the beloved Sesame Street character as he visits a generic museum (Stiles and Wilcox 1974). [Fig. 3] He first enters The Things You See in the Sky Room where he looks

up to see the natural and the man-made side by side - stars, planets, and clouds along with a rocket ship, an airplane, and a balloon. In The Small Hall, Grover finds a button, a pea, a seed, a dime, and a speck of dust; and in The Tall Hall a giraffe, a flagpole, a vine, a tree and a telephone pole. [Fig. 4] These crazy-seeming mixtures delight him by grouping familiar objects in surprising ways. The savvy adult may, however, be reminded of the bizarre categories of the Chinese encyclopedia with which Foucault famously began *The Order of Things*, or, in a darker mode, the threatening mixtures that characterize the Anthropocene (Foucault, 1970; Hackett *et al.* 2018).

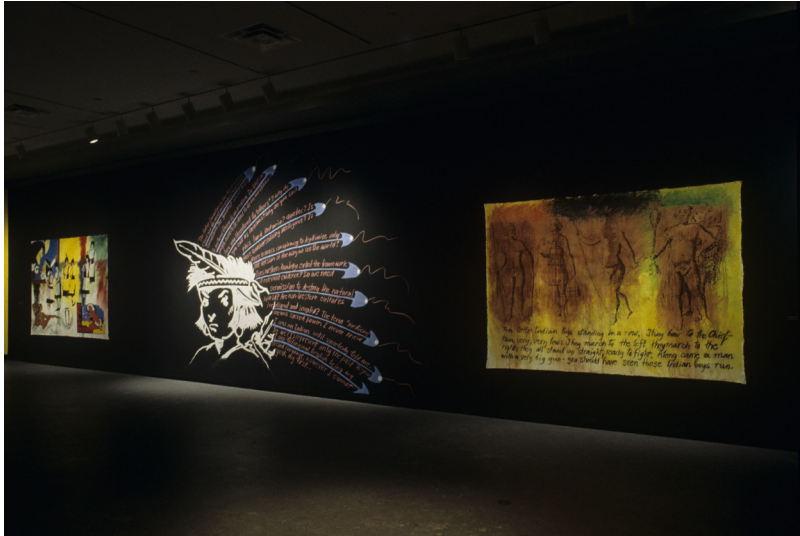


Fig 1. Gerald McMaster, *Installation view of the first room of Savage Graces, Ottawa Art Gallery, 1994.*



Fig. 2: *The Museum of Jurassic Technology, Los Angeles. Photo: Jennifer Bastian, Wikimedia Commons.*

Appropriately, I picked up the second of my examples, a little book entitled *We go to the gallery*, in the Tate Modern bookshop (Elia and Elia 2017).<sup>3</sup> [Fig 5] It takes aim at two highly recognizable targets: the narrative parodies the contemporary art museum, while the format and series title, 'Dung beetle reading scheme,' mimic the Ladybird Early Readers children's book series widely popular in Britain since the mid-twentieth century. The story line follows a mother and her children as they visit an exhibition of British contemporary art entitled 'The Death of Meaning.' [Fig. 6] In response to the children's puzzlement as they encounter conceptual art and images of sexuality and extreme angst, the mother offers lessons in alienation and jaded modernity. 'Did you enjoy the gallery, she asks as they leave?' 'I feel strange,' says Susan. 'Me too,' says John. 'It is the modern condition,' says Mummy.'

What links these two books? On the most obvious level, both position children as their audience, whether real or fictive – presumably on the assumption that they are innocent of the modern museum's conventions and ready to accept new proposals.

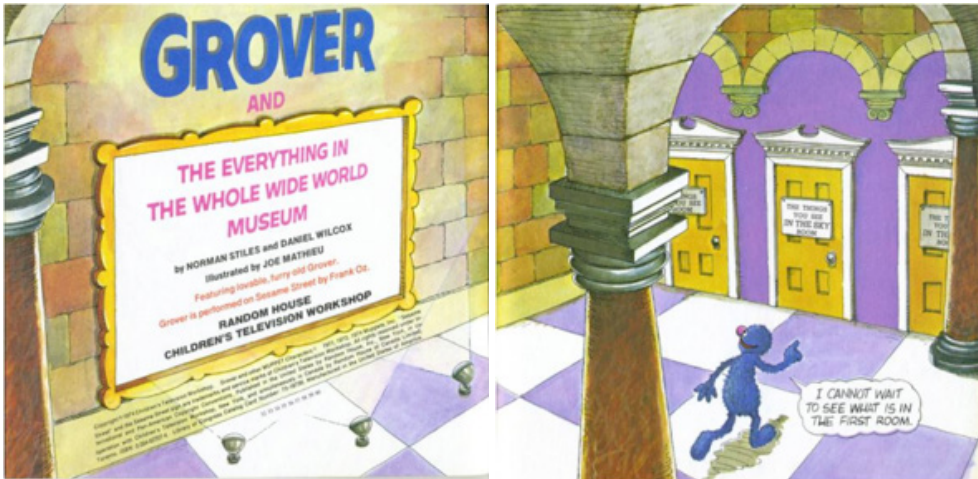


Fig 3a. Title pages of *Grover and the Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum* © Random House 1974

The wealth and diversity of things in the Whole Wide World Museum would seem to contrast with the purified spaces of the art gallery, but I would argue that the spoof of the gallery makes a similar point by showing up the emptiness of venues that exclude the impurities of the real world, segregating art from history, natural history from politics, the world from the West. In its overdetermined evacuation of meaning and things from museum space, the parodied art gallery presents the negative image of the Sesame Street museum's plenitude and diversity. Both books move us toward a celebration of the curiosity and wonder that are provoked by mixtures and phenomena that resist categorization.



Fig 4 *The Tall Hall*, from *Grover and the Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum* © Random House 1974



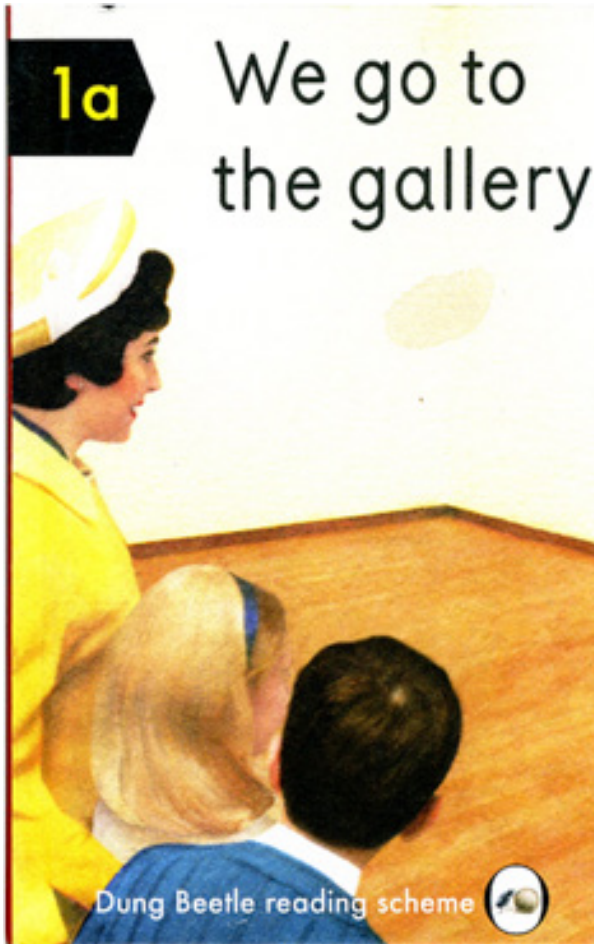


Fig 5. M. Ezra and E. Ezra, Cover, *We go to the gallery*  
© Dung Beetle Ltd 2015

paradigm of display. Rather, they work to level old hierarchies of fine and applied arts in order to enable responses and insights that are fresh and new. As the introductory text panel reads: 'Wonderkamers is designed for everyone with an imagination: Explore, discover, play, learn, and be taken by surprise. Here in the Chambers of Wonder, visitors of all ages can immerse themselves in an inspiring and unique world of fine art, photography, the decorative arts, architecture, and fashion.' In the centre of the main room a bright yellow maze leads visitors toward a darkened central chamber in which they encounter a twenty-first century wonder – an immersive digital installation where hand-held tablets allow them to 'discover' hidden images.

Across the Atlantic in Washington D.C. the hands-on discovery rooms at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History make a strikingly similar appeal to the curiosity of visitors – especially, but not exclusively, children. As in The Hague, curiosity and wonder are used to dismantle hierarchies and categorizations inherited from an earlier era. 'Q?rius: Unlock your world' reads the signage over an entryway that gives access to objects drawn from the museum's natural history and anthropology collections – specimens of nature and culture whose interlinkage is itself a 'curious' legacy of nineteenth-century evolutionary theories. [Fig. 8] As in The Hague, the invitation issued by a text panel next to the entrance positions the curiosity provoked by collected objects as a spur to the development of new knowledge: '**Connect** to your natural world in a whole new way. Come **meet** experts. **Interact** with authentic objects. Immerse yourself in **investigations**. Unleash your curiosity like **never before**.'

Appeals to curiosity and wonder seem omnipresent in the early twenty-first century museum world and they are, I will urge, intimately connected to late twentieth-century postmodern and poststructuralist critiques of the modern museum. Two museums representative of this trend interpellate their visitors through appeals to the child's openness to new ideas that recall the two little books just discussed. The Gemeentemuseum, The Hague's municipal art museum, is a mid-nineteenth century foundation now housed in a grand art deco building designed in the 1930s by H.P. Berlage. Its collections span multiple forms of visual culture and are segregated in its galleries according to medium, historic period or art movement, but the museum purposely disrupts these conventional segregations in a large visible storage area entitled the *Wonderkamers*. [Fig. 7] There, items from its collections of modern and contemporary art, decorative arts, fashion, music, photography, architectural designs, prints and drawings are reassembled in thirteen thematic groupings set out in cases that line the outer walls of a large gallery. Despite their framing reference to the early modern *wunderkammer*, these informal mini-exhibitions do not seek to replicate the early modern

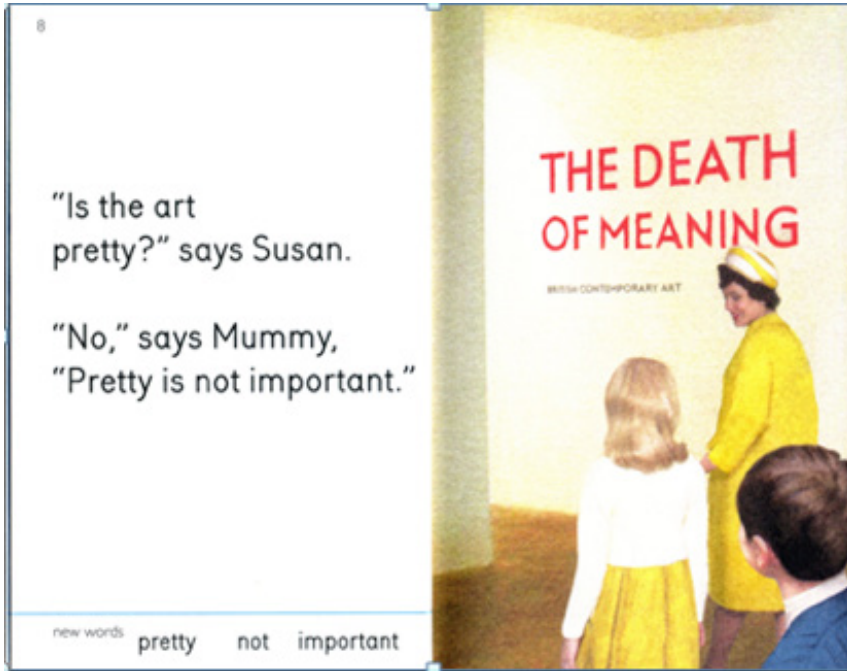


Fig 6. 'The Death of Meaning', We go to the gallery © Dung Beetle Ltd 2015



Fig 7. Entrance to Wonderkamers, Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2019. Photo: author

While children's books and adult parodies rely in varying degrees on tropes of oversimplification and mimicry, museum storages reconfigured as educational zones seek to surprise and estrange. All, however, share more than meets the eye, for all, either implicitly or explicitly, contribute to an underlying critique of the uni-disciplinary formations and hierarchies that inform the modern Western knowledge system. All also work to re-legitimize curiosity and wonder within Western museums as stimuli to the development of new formations. In the remainder of this article I will argue that the heterogeneity these texts and installations introduce, whether playful or parodic, has a serious valence because of its affinity – often, as we will see, intentional – with two current modes of intervention in the disciplinary structuring of Western knowledge. The first is the academic advocacy of multi-disciplinarity which, although it has been around for some time, has gained new urgency from the environmental crisis, the technological revolution and other contemporary developments. The second, the promotion of holistic epistemes characteristic of Indigenous and other non-Western knowledge systems, has been gaining ground more recently through campaigns for institutional decolonization. (Kovach 2009; Andersen and O'Brien 2016)

### Heterogeneity and Wonder

When twenty-first century museums foreground curiosity, heterogeneity, and multi-disciplinarity in exhibitions directed at adult audiences, their goal, I would argue, is most often the



Fig 8: Entrance to Q?rius, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., 2018. Photo: Author

undoing of key aspects of the modern museum's uni-disciplinary typology (Phillips 2011a). As already suggested, this shift manifests itself in a number of different ways. Most obvious are exhibits that revisit the museum's own historical origins in the early modern *wunderkammer*, *kunstkammer* and cabinet of curiosity. Such installations are not only a way to acknowledge the museum's own history, but also to suggest the malleability of epistemic regimes. One representative example is the recreation of the famous *kunstkammer* created by successive Hapsburg emperors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that is installed in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum.<sup>5</sup> A second, much smaller example can be found in a great early modern library, the Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève in Paris, where items from its seventeenth-century cabinet of curiosities have been arrayed in a closet-like space that opens out of the main lobby (Zehnacker and Nicolas Petit 1989). [Fig. 9]

The relationship between such early-modern European collecting and exhibiting practices and later museology was reflexively examined in two other temporary exhibitions. *Dans la chambre des merveilles*, a large temporary





Fig 9 Entrance to the re-created cabinet of curiosities, Paris Bibliotheque Ste Genevieve. Photo Ruth Phillips, 2013



Fig10. Recreated display of natural curiosities, Dans la chamber des merveilles, Musée des Confluences, Photo: Author, 2016

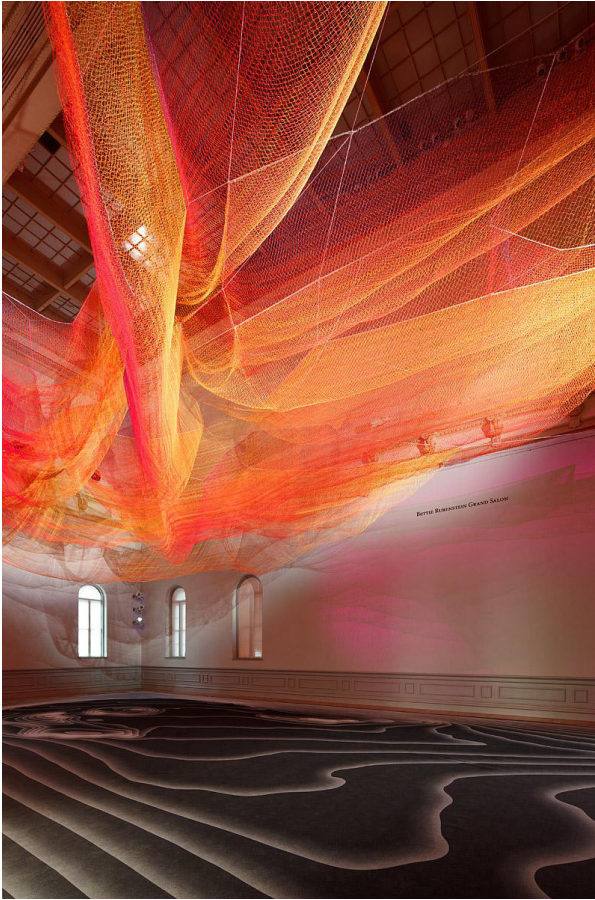


Fig 11. Janet Echelman, *1.8 Renwick*, from the exhibition *Wonder*, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase made possible by the *American Art Forum*. © 2015 Janet Echelman. Photo by Ron Blunt

exhibition shown at Lyon's Musée des Confluences between 2014 and 2016, examined the European world view that gave rise to such collecting practices and imaginatively re-created the heterogeneous displays with which they are associated. [Fig 10] In *The Philosophy Chamber*, an exhibition mounted in 2017 by the Harvard Art Museum, curators reunited parts of the collection of paintings, scientific instruments, archaeological documentation, and ethnographic items that had been assembled during the mid-eighteenth century to educate Harvard students. (Lasser 2017). [Fig. 16-17]

Still other recent exhibitions directly invoke curiosity and wonder to highlight contemporary art and scientific research. Two Smithsonian museums provide good examples. The inaugural exhibition mounted by the Renwick Gallery for its 2015 reopening was entitled, simply, *Wonder*. It featured spectacular room-sized installations by contemporary artists, each a *tour de force* that astonished visitors through its scale and technical virtuosity. Among them were installations that invoked responses of wonder produced by very different kinds of phenomena. The terrible but sublime beauties of the Anthropocene were realized in Janet Echelman's *1.8 Renwick*, a monumental woven sculpture that mapped the energy released by

the Tohoku earthquake and tsunamis [Fig 11]; the ordering imposed by curiosity cabinets on the natural world was recreated in the elaborate patterns composed of cochineal producing insects in Jennifer Angus's *In the Midnight Garden*; while Gabriel Dawe's *Plexus A1* dazzled visitors through an aesthetic impact achieved through consummate crafting.<sup>6</sup>

Toward the end of the showing of *Wonder* at the Renwick Gallery, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History opened *Objects of Wonder*, a major long-term exhibition, still on view at the time of writing, which brought out of storage some of the museum's most spectacular holdings. [Fig 12] As a kind of mash-up of art, ethnography, archaeology, history and science, *Objects of Wonder* recalled several travelling super-shows organized during the past two decades by large multi-disciplinary museums – the American Museum of Natural History, Chicago's Field Museum and Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum – on topics such as 'Chocolate,' 'Diamonds,' 'The Horse,' and 'Water.'<sup>7</sup> Each combined archaeology, natural history, history, art, and environmental science in order to highlight the research carried out by staff curators and scientists, the critical role played by collections in their research, and the interconnectedness of different disciplinary collections and investigations. In different ways, each endeavoured to



raise consciousness not only of how the diverse historical uses and cultural understandings of a shared material entity reveal the indeterminacy and richness of the properties of things, but also of the looming dangers of climate change and environmental degradation.

A third reappearance of heterogeneity is found in the proliferating borrowings and encroachments of disciplinary museums on each other's traditional terrains. For some years, ethnography, history and science museums have been commissioning contemporary artists to create works that respond to their collections. This trend has been especially notable in ethnographic museums, where the art intervention creates space for Indigenous intellectual traditions, alternative concepts of materiality, and decolonial critiques. The Canadian Museum of History's First Peoples Hall, opened in 2003, is a good example. Informed by the guidelines for Indigenous partnership with museums set down in the 1992 report of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, it made striking use of such interventions, juxtaposing sculptures and paintings by contemporary Inuit and First Nations artists grounded in traditional narrative and oral history with scientifically based archaeological and ethnological installations to illustrate Indigenous and settler origin stories and ways of knowing. In the section on Origins, for example, Indigenous accounts of creation are juxtaposed with scientific archaeological installations. One exhibit, which sets out the evidentiary authority of field excavations for Indigenous migration across the Bering Strait, is juxtaposed with a commissioned sculpture by Mohawk artist Shelley Niro that dramatically brings to life Sky Woman's descent to earth from the sky world to found the human race. [Fig. 13]



Fig 12. Introductory section, Objects of Wonder Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History,. Photo: Author



Fig 13. Shelley Niro, *Skywoman* (2001), *First Peoples Hall*, Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa

Art museums, for their part, have been encroaching on the traditional terrain of the ethnography museum in order to become more diverse and inclusive. In the 2017 reinstatement of the Canadian and Indigenous galleries at the National Gallery of Canada the curators installed a full-sized birch bark canoe in the middle of a gallery displaying oil paintings by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century settler artists. [Fig. 14] Art galleries are also increasingly addressing environmental and technological transformations traditionally presented in natural history and science museums. Perhaps the most ambitious level of engagement with heterogeneity has, however been attempted by new museums in Antwerp and Lyon that were created by merging pre-existing uni-disciplinary museums and bringing their collections together in shared exhibition spaces - a set of manifestations to which I will return shortly.

### Recuperating Curiosity

Both the willingness to abandon disciplinary purity and to reinvoke curiosity are surprising because they appear to reverse a long-standing mistrust of wonder, curiosity, and heterogeneity as organizational paradigms for museums. This distrust identifies

curiosity and wonder as competitors and threats to the museum's mandate to support modern scientific inquiry – a distrust that recalls an almost equally long-standing suspicion of the museum as a venue of 'edutainment.' Even Franz Boas had to admit that the primary desire of members of the general public was 'to admire, to be impressed by something great and wonderful', and could run counter to the museum's scientific mandate (1907: 922). Like the startle effect, wonder has been understood as an involuntary response and therefore non-rational, superficial and momentary. The Musée du quai Branly's 2011 exhibition, *Human Zoos: The Invention of the Savage* (*Exhibitions: L'invention du sauvage*), made this connection explicit by linking historical ethnographic displays with carnivalesque exhibitions such as circuses and freak shows (Pascal et al. 2011).

In his recent book *The Return of Curiosity: What Museums Are Good For in the 21st Century*, anthropologist Nicholas Thomas takes on this question directly (Thomas 2016). Distilling insights gained from his curatorial work and tenure as director of Cambridge University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, he makes a compelling case for the continuing value of curiosity in the contemporary museum. On one level, Thomas's argument – like the Smithsonian's *Objects of Wonder* exhibition – is mounted as a defense of the museum's need to retain and present real objects by affirming the unique capacities and potentials objects





Fig 14. Indigenous and Canadian Galleries, National Gallery of Canada, 2017. Canoe lent by Canadian Canoe Museum. Photo: Authorr



Fig 15: Sarah Stone, Interior of Leverian Museum, view as it appeared in the 1780s, c 1835, watercolour. The British Museum, Am2006, Drg.54. AN246366001. © Trustees of the British Museum.



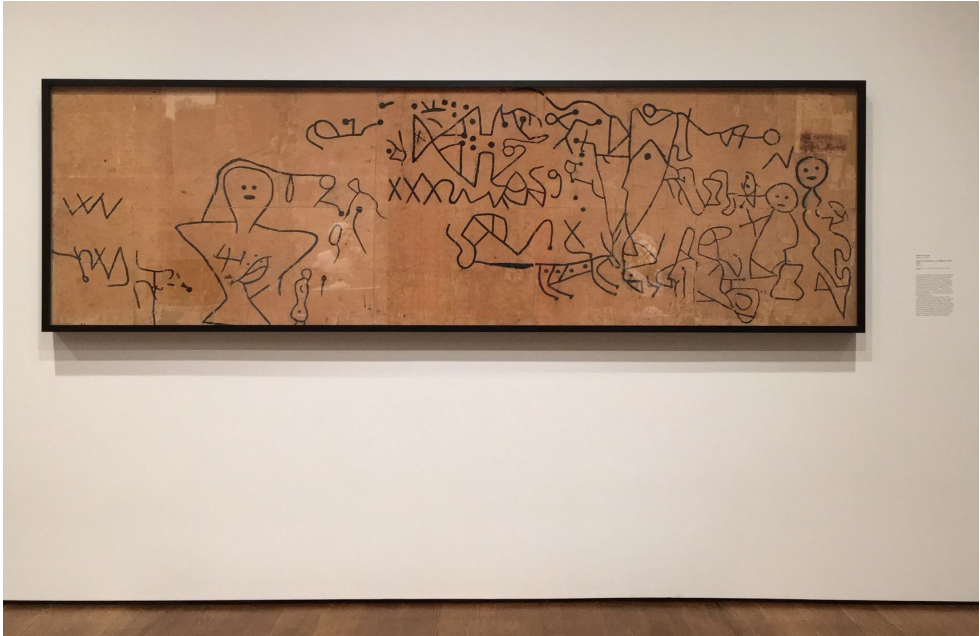


Fig 16. Drawing of the Dighton Rock petroglyphs, The Philosophy Chamber, Harvard Art Museums. Photo: Author



Fig 17. Installation view showing painted portraits, scientific instrument, natural history specimens, and a Hawaiian feather cloak (visible through the doorway), The Philosophy Chamber 2017, Harvard Art Museums. Photo: Author

provide to these institutions through their diverse properties. He argues that the museum's collections, in all the fullness of their actual material presence, are essential to its ability to support civil society through the ongoing stimulus of curiosity. Thomas recognizes that several decades of critique of anthropology museums in particular have produced a 'widespread sense that interest in cultures beyond the West was in itself improper, as if not just tainted by colonial attitudes, but inherently an appropriation' (Thomas 2016: 12). But he argues that 'although curiosity may be an unstable attitude...it is marked by an eagerness to encounter what is new or unfamiliar, an openness to difference and perhaps a willingness to suspend judgement' (Thomas 2016: 15).

Museological heterogeneity – by which I mean the mixed display of different kinds of collections – raises a further set of questions. As a construct, 'heterogeneity' summons 'diversity' in much the same way that 'wonder' summons 'curiosity'. The first question to ask, then, is whether heterogeneous approaches lead only to responses of surprise or even shock, or whether they are being deployed as a museum technology (to use Thomas's term) for encouraging more reflective engagements with diversity. The question is important because a growing number of contemporary museums view the mediation of diversity – cultural, gendered, religious, and class-based – as *the* key challenge they must take up in order to serve increasingly pluralist societies. One way to seek answers to these questions is to go more deeply into the question of how contemporary invocations of curiosity and heterogeneity in the museum differ from the mixtures of natural and artificial curiosities, paintings, automata, and *objets d'art* shown in early modern collections (Pomian 1990; Bredekamp 1995; Impey and McGregor 1985). Do curiosity and heterogeneity have different inflections and implications in the early twenty-first century than in the seventeenth and eighteenth? A second question concerns the relationships of the new approaches to academic models of interdisciplinarity such as Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) and Indigenous Studies. Does the bringing together of heterogeneous objects further public understanding of the interconnections of human, non-human, and technological entities in order to produce effective actions in the world, as ANT proposes (Latour 2001)? And do such assemblies approximate the holistic knowledge formations of the Indigenous communities with which museums are now collaborating?

### Curiosity and Education

As a first step, it will be helpful to briefly revisit the eighteenth-century debates about curiosity. During the second half of that century, the flow of curiosities into Britain was greatly increased by the thousands of items acquired by soldiers fighting in three successive North American wars. They collected archaeological and ethnographic items and taxidermied animals for display in the homes of aristocrats and intellectuals, popular London coffee houses, and early public museums such as the British Museum and the Leverian Museum. [Fig 15] With equal enthusiasm they also collected exotic plants for the improvement of European agriculture (Bickham 2005; Feest 2007; Phillips 1984 and 2011b). The interests of the philosophical historians of the French and Scottish Enlightenments in constructing universal histories that would reveal broad patterns of societal development were fed by these collections and by the reports of Indigenous societies that flowed into Europe. Their writings, in turn, informed the collecting of textual and material documentation of distant and exotic mores with a new intellectual seriousness.

Initially, the relationship between wonder and curiosity was largely viewed as natural and constructive. In his 1762 *Elements of Criticism* Lord Kames praised curiosity as propelling men to travel 'in search of things rare and new' and described it as 'a principle implanted in human nature for a purpose extremely beneficial, that of acquiring knowledge; and the emotion of wonder, raised by new and strange objects, inflames our curiosity to know more about them' (quoted in Leask 2002: 25). Nigel Leask's study of the aesthetics of curiosity in eighteenth-century British travel writing is helpful in clarifying the lively contestations around curiosity and wonder and the nature of the shift toward more scientific approaches that was in progress during the first half of the nineteenth century. 'Curiosity', he writes, 'has a long and ambivalent history in European culture as the disposition of mind which desires knowledge of the world, but one which easily oversteps the boundaries set by God in a Faustian show of

intellectual pride' (Leask 2002: 25). Although curiosity retained its appeal through the first half of the nineteenth century through the displays offered in popular venues like Bullock's museum (the 'Egyptian Hall') in London, ambivalence grew among intellectuals as scientific methods were theorized and applied to a wider range of fields of inquiry. With the growing prestige and systematization of scientific research the logic of the heterogeneous juxtapositions that had informed the curiosity cabinet – understood to reflect the wonder and amplitude of God's creation – began to be replaced by an emphasis on systematic and scientific categorization.

The same patterns can be identified in North America. The Philosophy Chamber was installed in Harvard Hall from 1766 to 1820 as an educational resource for students and professors. It displayed paintings, scientific instruments, animal specimens, ancient Greek and Roman antiquities, and ethnographic items ranging from a Hawaiian feather cloak and headdress to a large drawing made in 1768 of the nearby Dighton Rock petroglyphs. [Figs 16 and 17] After American independence, American historical and philosophical societies were additionally motivated by a need to establish local and national historical narratives that validated settler society and its displacements of Indigenous peoples. In the course of his exhibition research Ethan Lasser traced a fascinating series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century efforts to identify the originators of the Dighton Rock petroglyphs, which were variously attributed to the ancient Phoenecians and the Norse – seemingly to anyone and everyone *except* the original Wampanoag inhabitants, the traditional owners of the land and the ancestors of the Mashpee and Gay Head tribes of today (Lasser 2016: 19-21). Christine DeLucia's research on the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, founded in 1812, also illustrates this pattern. 'Collecting historical objects, texts, and other Americana', she writes, 'was critical to nascent projects of nation-building and myth-making'. She observes that although Indigenous Native American artifacts were prominent in the Society's collections, they were not categorically separated from the other antiquities and works of art. The Society's members 'believed all manner of traces from the past stood to contribute to national, regional, and local histories, a comprehensive mentality expressed by many other institutions of the era'.<sup>8</sup>

The new sciences, including anthropology, were, however, informed by evolutionist theories and they demanded segregations and purifications – typological, cultural, and geographical. As the nineteenth century progressed, local literary and philosophical societies revised their mandates and transferred to newly founded research museums collected objects that no longer 'fit' the primary focus each had defined for itself. The transformation of the eighteenth-century museum, with its heritage of curiosity collecting and heterogeneous conventions of display, into the modern scientific institution is well illustrated by the three New England museums founded in the mid-nineteenth century by the major philanthropist of the era, George Peabody – a man whose philanthropy was conducted on so vast a scale that one can think of him as the Bill Gates of his era. The museums he endowed at Harvard and Yale and in Salem, Massachusetts rapidly became magnets for older curiosity collections. 'Within thirty days after Peabody's gift', wrote his biographer Franklin Parker, 'the historical societies and associations of New England began to donate to the Peabody Museum of Harvard ethnological items long since collected but unexamined by scientifically trained men'.<sup>9</sup>

Once transferred, these objects began new lives as scientific artefacts. How did their identities change? At Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, ethnographic items from the Philosophy Chamber shed their associations with Enlightenment constructs of the noble savage, while Native American items collected by Lewis and Clark that had originally been displayed in a curiosity paradigm in Charles Wilson Peale's museum in Philadelphia and the Boston Museum of Moses Kimball and P.T. Barnum, were transformed into ethnological specimens. [Figs. 18 and 19] Similarly, as DeLucia tells us, the antiquities and relics from the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Massachusetts lost their historicity as they were detached from local settler origin stories and absorbed into an anthropological narrative of the comparative evolution of world cultures.<sup>10</sup> The sequences of Darwinian science displaced the looser and more relativistic comparative framework of the philosophical historians and, with it, the sense of co-presence in the world that had informed the displays of local historical societies through their juxtapositions of contemporaneous exotic and Western objects.



Heterogeneity/ Multi-disciplinary

**BOSTON MUSEUM,**  
**Tromont Street, Boston.**

**ALREADY OPEN HALF A CENTURY**  
**THIS MUSEUM** is the largest, most valuable, and best of the kind in the United States. It comprises the most **SEVEN DIFFERENT MUSEUMS,** in which has accumulated the greatest mass of objects daily accumulated of articles. One half of the collection **PALEAS PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM,** awarded the highest honors at the exhibition of 1876. **HALF A MILLION ARTICLES,** the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind together with the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind together.

**NEW HALL OF WAX STATUARY,**  
 One hundred feet in length, fitted to the utmost capacity with **WAX FIGURES** of the most perfect and valuable kind. It has been built in preparation for the next century. It is one of the most valuable and perfect specimens of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.

**Wax Figures.**  
 and find the exhibits in such manner that the figures do not only give an idea of the objects, but also the most perfect and the most interesting features of the objects.



**CHRIST'S LAST SUPPER**  
 with the Twelve Apostles, representing the conversation and dinner of the sacred scene at the original when he told them that he was to die for the redemption of the world.

**THE PRODIGAL SON,**  
 represented from the Bible in the most interesting and striking manner. The subject is the Prodigal Son.

**THE CRUCIFIXION,**  
 composed of more than forty figures, a correct representation of the scene according to the most reliable authorities.

**Christ Disputing with the Doctors;**  
 a characteristic group of seven figures.



**THE GAME OF LIFE,**  
 in which is shown the Christian's race through life for the mastery.

**THE SIAMESE TWINS,**  
 representing a rare specimen of the human race.

**MASKED BY PIRATES**  
 of the adventures of a merchant in the India Sea. After a description of one of the scenes.



**HORRORS OF SLAVERY,**  
 an accurate and graphic representation of the scenes of a slaveholder's life in the West Indies, and the sufferings of the negroes.

**MURDER OF MISS MCCREA,**  
 by the Indians during the Revolution, was a striking group which attracted the attention of all who saw it.

**INTEMPERANCE,**  
 and its consequences, illustrated in a striking manner, the last and most correct picture of a drunkard.



**Wife Murdered by her Husband.**  
 from a picture of a husband, illustrating the scene of a husband's life in the West Indies, and the sufferings of the negroes.

**One Hundred of Cabinet Size,**  
 the most perfect collection of Wax Figures in America.

**BIRDS, BEASTS, FISH, INSECTS & REPTILES,**  
 selected from all parts of the world, and arranged in the most interesting and valuable manner.

**Paintings, Engravings and Statuary,**  
**OIL PORTRAITS**  
 of the GREAT, GOOD, and WISE, and of the most interesting and valuable specimens of the human race.

**EGYPTIAN MUMMIES,**  
 and ancient Egyptian monuments, and other objects of interest.

**Family of POTTER'S JARREMS!**  
 the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.



**FEEJEE MERMAID,**  
 which was exhibited in great numbers at the exhibition of 1876, and is the most perfect and valuable specimen of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.

**Elephants and Orang-Outangs;**  
**ANIMALS and BIRDS** of every nation, **Sharks, Snails, and a variety of FISHES,** selected from all parts of the world, and arranged in the most interesting and valuable manner.

**SAW AND SWORD FISH,**  
 and other objects of interest, and other objects of interest.

**TWENTY-FIVE CENTS,**  
 without extra charge, for the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.

**THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS,**  
 every evening, and on Wednesday and Saturday, the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.

**Music and Sacred Performances,**  
 and other objects of interest, and other objects of interest.

**Cheapest Place of Amusement**  
 in the world, and the most perfect and valuable specimens of the kind ever seen, and is **NATURAL** and **LIFE-LIKE** in its representation.

**25 Cents to the Whole!**

The new scientific paradigm that came to govern ethnographic museums during the second half of the nineteenth century was salvage ethnography. We now reject as racist and destructive the basic premise that informed this massive collecting project, which posited that Indigenous cultures were doomed to disappear under the onslaught of modernity. Yet in so doing, we can lose sight of the multi-disciplinary of salvage anthropology and its practices. The first generations of professional anthropological collectors recorded and collected language, music, archaeology, material culture, subsistence technologies, botanical and astronomical knowledge, spiritual practices and, much else. [Fig 20] Although their eclecticism is clearly to be seen in their field notebooks, when their collections entered museums they were quickly separated into different domains defined both by disciplinary interests and conservation protocols - wax cylinder recordings of language and music into one storage, field notes, photographs, natural history specimens, and items of material culture into others. As Margaret Kovach writes, despite its comprehensiveness, salvage ethnography was an 'extractive' paradigm that fragmented the holistic principles of Indigenous knowledge and 'left those they studied disenfranchised from the knowledge they shared' (2009: 26).

The museum has thus acted like a kind of centrifuge, separating out diverse elements and media and performing the quintessential work of the modern Western knowledge system that Bruno Latour has termed 'purification' (Latour 1993). For Latour and other Actor-Network theorists this modernist project was doomed to fail because it could not account for the networks of interrelationship which comprise the workable systems that sustain all effective actions. These networks cut across the categorical divisions of modern Western thought worlds – 'nature', 'culture', machines, and technologies. From an ANT perspective, homogeneous, purified collections, while favouring certain kinds of investigations, cannot reveal the kinds of interdependencies we need to understand today more than ever, in light of multiplying racial and cultural tensions within and between nations on the one hand, and environmental degradation on the other. The adequate representation of human life on earth, in other words, *requires* a heterogeneous approach - the linking of human, animal, vegetal, mechanical, and technological actors that work together to create and sustain systems. Conversely, to ignore the heterogeneity of all functional systems and the processes of 'translation' that connect disparate entities leads to the system breakdowns that increasingly plague the modern world.

These fundamental ANT propositions, it seems to me, align closely with the holistic position advanced by the emergent field of Indigenous Studies, whose proponents also affirm the need for humans to recognize and respect their interdependent and reciprocal relationships with the other entities and beings with whom they share the universe. Such a position is argued by Dakota historian Angela Cavender Wilson:

Our task is to challenge the academy as an agent of colonialism and carve a place for our own traditions as legitimate subjects of scholarly study, but on our own terms. This means defying the disciplinary boundaries that dissect and categorize our traditions, as these boundaries simply do not exist in Indigenous ways in which the physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual are inseparable (Wilson 2009: 73).

Fig 18. Advertisement for the Boston Museum from the Barre (Vermont) Patriot, 15 September 1850, Photo: Wikipedia Commons



Fig 19: Installations of ethnographic items at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, c 1900. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM2004.1.326.80.

Unlike ANT and other Western approaches to interdisciplinarity, however, recognition of the agency of the *immaterial* dimension of spirituality is also fundamental to Indigenous Studies. As Kovach writes: 'Scholarship on Indigenous science...references the relationship with metaphysics through creation myths, philosophies of space and time, and an energy source that Indigenous people describe as the sacred' (2009: 57). The question we come back to, then, is whether contemporary museological trends toward heterogeneity and the curiosity they may stimulate in visitors constitute responses both to academic theories like ANT and Indigenous knowledge formations. Alternatively, do they - as the eighteenth-century theorists feared - provoke wonder for the sake of providing a momentary and entertaining frisson rather than useful understanding?

### The Twenty-first Century Multi-disciplinary Museum

The exhibitions I cited earlier in this essay suggest answers. Even more pertinent are two European museums in Antwerp and Lyon which attempt particularly ambitious projects of recombination and exhibition. Each brings together under one roof the collections of previously existing cabinets of curiosity and uni-disciplinary museums and has defined for itself a multi-disciplinary mandate. Both proclaim their refusal of disciplinary purity by naming themselves after geographical sites rather than any particular representational domain.

The Museum aan de Stroom, or MAS, whose name translates as 'the museum on the river', opened in 2011 and rises vertically from the banks of the Sheldt to overlook the harbour of Antwerp. (Fig. 21) It unites the collection of paintings, decorative arts and antiquities belonging to an earlier museum devoted to the city's history with those of its museum of world ethnology. It redeploys these collections, together with an important private collection of Pre-Columbian art, in the service of a new mission centred on global trade and economic and cultural exchange.



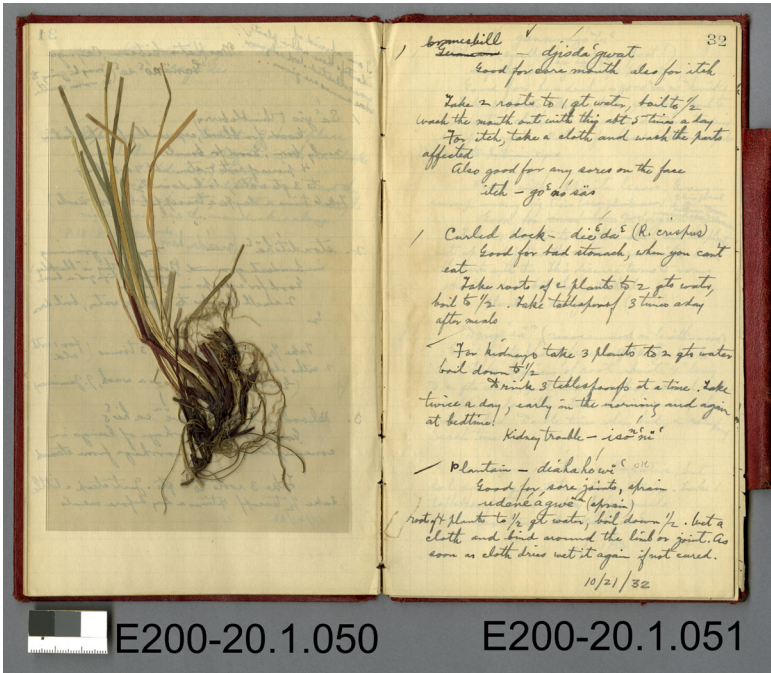


Fig 20. Pages with botanical specimen and field notes on Indigenous language and knowledge recorded by Frederick Waugh, National Museum of Canada ethnographer, during his visit to the Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario in 1911. CMH Archives E200-20.1.050 and E200-20.1.051. Photo: Canadian Museum of History



Fig 21. Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp. Photo, Zinneke, Wikipedia Commons





Fig 22. Installation from *Displays of Power* exhibition, *Museum aan de Stroom*, Antwerp, 2015. Photo: Author

The MAS website clearly states this twenty-first century focus on economic globalization and links it to Antwerp's mercantile history:

The city and the world meet in the MAS. As a city on a river, Antwerp has attracted people from all over the world for centuries. Throughout the centuries, people met exchanging ideas and goods. Traces of these encounters are collected in the MAS. The MAS guarantees surprising encounters between people, objects and stories. It is a magnet for visitors from all over the world.<sup>11</sup>

The museum's displays are vertically stacked in the internal core spaces of its striking, ten-story building, whose glass outer walls afford dramatic views of the adjacent harbour and port. On a lower floor, visitors encounter a large walk-through storage area, made partially 'visible' through walls made of metal grating. MAS director Carl Depauw, like Nicholas Thomas, has strongly affirmed the central importance of the museum's collection, terming it the museum's 'beating heart,' and he has expressed his hope that visitors will come to appreciate that 'if you don't take care of objects, who is going to tell us stories about the past?'<sup>12</sup> Its past exhibits have addressed not just financial but also human flows and sought to discover new connections among the objects now in its collections through exhibits that focus on religious and cultural diversity, diaspora, and migration.

During its first years of operation, visitors rose up through the building on escalators to visit three large thematic exhibitions on successive floors. *Display and Power*; *Prestige and Symbols* juxtaposed historical installations about power dynamics in sixteenth-century Belgium, seventeenth-century Japan, nineteenth-century Central Africa and among twenty-first century Maori as represented by a marae rendered in glass commissioned of contemporary artist George Nuku. [Fig 22] On another floor, *World Port – Trade and Shipping* narrated the maritime and mercantile history of Antwerp. Visitors moved on from arrays of paintings and ship models to a room that explored the diasporic communities of people from Turkey and Morocco who have settled in the city in recent decades. In the *Life and Death: Gods and Mankind* exhibit, visitors walked through intense darkness to encounter different concepts of

death before coming to a brilliantly lit area populated by white pods in which ethnographic objects were exhibited, starkly decontextualized against blank white walls. Adjacent to this section were colourful displays of Jewish, Christian and Islamic ritual objects and material culture. When I visited in 2019 two of these long-term exhibitions had been replaced by new umbrella themes: 'Celebration,' which explores ritual complexes in Antwerp and around the world and 'Antwerp à la carte,' a history of the city through its foods.



Fig 23. Musée des Confluences, Lyon . Google Maps ©2019 CNES/Airbus, Maxar Technologies.

Lyon's Musée des Confluences, which opened in 2014, is dramatically situated on the point of land where the Rhone and the Saône Rivers come together. Its major collection came from the city's museum of natural history and anthropology, whose origins go back to a cabinet of curiosities established in 1772. [Fig 23] Rich in palaeontology, natural history and world ethnography, this collection is now combined with those of several other smaller museums that previously focused on France's colonies and the work of pontifical missionaries.<sup>13</sup> The museum's website states its mission as presenting up-to-date research in 'all fields of science and technology, archaeology and ethnology, museography and the mediation of knowledge'; it 'invites all disciplines to arouse curiosity, questioning, the pleasure of understanding and the desire for knowledge'.<sup>14</sup> Like MAS, the Musée des Confluences presents long-term thematic exhibitions which allow it to integrate its diverse collections alongside a program of temporary exhibits. Its description of one of the long-term exhibits, *Origins, the stories of the World*, is representative of the way the museum juxtaposes science and world ethnography throughout.

All of us on the planet share the same questions on the origin of the world and our place in it. Numerous narratives from Inuit, Aboriginal and Chinese cultures and the Indianised civilizations of Asia deliver interpretations of the beginning of the Universe, life and humanity. Alongside this, science does not cease to take an interest. The exhibition invites us to go back in time to the Big Bang along a trail that suggests two approaches to explaining the world: one illustrated by natural science and scientific and technical collections and the other illustrated by ethnographical and modern collections.<sup>15</sup>

These are followed by similarly multi-disciplinary and heterogeneous exhibits on *Species, the network of life, Societies, the theatre of mankind*, and *Eternities, visions of the afterlife*. Collections of modern and contemporary Indigenous art, especially large-scale works by a wide range of Inuit and Australian Aboriginal artists, are prominently featured throughout the museum, often strikingly juxtaposed with natural history specimens and taxidermically preserved animals. [Fig 24]



*Fig 24. Musée des Confluences, Origins installation of paleontology and Australian aboriginal art, Photo: Author*

The influence of Actor Network Theory is evident in a number of text panels. One belonging to the 'Species' exhibit reads, for example:

The join between what has been called humanity and animality is a universal preoccupation. The exhibition questions the way in which human beings see the world, are integrated in it and contribute to modifying it. Living beings, human and non-human, weave into the world a network of varied links, a mesh in which everything holds together and corresponds.<sup>16</sup>

To make an adequate assessment of the successes and failures of these two museums one would need to take their individual exhibitions one by one, for they succeed to varying degrees in their projects of integration and juxtaposition. Where an exhibit does succeed in persuasively revealing networks of interconnection amongst objects or phenomena previously understood as discrete and separable, we glimpse something like true multi-disciplinarity – or holism – and a new form of understanding begins to emerge. In other cases, two different categories or cultures are placed side by side and the visitor is left to make what she can of the unresolved difference. At the Musée des Confluences, both the nature of the collections and a curatorial grounding in ANT (or something like it) render its messages of interdependency particularly compelling. At the MAS, the project of integration has not yet progressed as far in all areas; as I noted, for example, some of the ethnographic collections are integrated into what I have termed heterogeneous displays, while others remain confined within modernist paradigms of art or artifact and appear curiously isolated and sterile. Yet in other areas MAS has used its central globalization thesis to juxtapose diverse collections in order to represent diasporic and religious diversity in cogent and timely ways.



### The Return of Curiosity

A great deal more remains to be said about these two provocative and densely populated museums and about other similar initiatives in which separately housed and curated collections are today being recombined.<sup>17</sup> I hope, however, that the broad outlines I have been able to sketch make clear that the kinds of experiments underway in Antwerp and Lyon represent particularly bold examples of the trends toward multi-disciplinarity/heterogeneity and wonder/curiosity, that are evoked on a much more modest scale by the two exhibits organized by Smithsonian museums I noted earlier in this article. Each of those has taken up these new/old ideas in a different way. At the Renwick Museum of American art, wonder was inspired by the aesthetic resonance, criticality and virtuosity of room-sized works of art executed as immersive environments. They engendered responses that were profoundly embodied but which also led viewers to 'wonder' about human creativity and its ability to give form to the phenomena of the world that surrounds us. *Objects of Wonder* at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History is a project designed, I would suggest, more to provoke than to satisfy curiosity or explore complex theories of networking and interconnection. One suspects,



Fig 25. 'Everything Else', Grover and the Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum ©

rather, that it has been mounted to remind visitors of the value and uniqueness of the national collections and to defend government sponsorship of scientific research.

The experimental nature of all of these heterogeneous displays bears out Thomas's central argument about the potentials of collections in the present. It is the collection, he urges, that enables us to revisit our own histories of interpretation and misinterpretation. He argues passionately that the very indeterminacy of their meanings – their ambiguity and mutability over time – are key to the unique value of museum collections for increasingly diverse populations. It is *because* the objects themselves resist attempts to fix their identities – because the very

identification of the properties of things is contingent on time, place, and the viewer's formation – that visitors can be free to relate to them in highly individual ways, while at the same time participating in the inherently social activity of museum going. 'If such capacity as museums may have to foster cosmopolitan citizenship is of enormous value, their deeper effectivity may arise not from their particular disciplinary orientation or content, but from the very fact that we cannot predict or prescribe what visitors make of them' (Thomas 2016: 145).

As will also by now be apparent, I view all these returns to heterogeneity as intimately related to the revalidation of curiosity at the heart of Thomas's book. It is, of course, curiosity with a difference. The heterogeneity of the early modern cabinet of curiosities was a product of voyages out from Europe and America to relatively unknown lands and peoples. Although those displays seem relatively uninterpreted by today's standards, they nevertheless reflected back to their viewers European self-images as empowered travellers and observers, incipient or actualized colonial power relations, and fixed hierarchies of race, culture, gender and class. And although the bringing together of realms of nature and culture, antiquity and contemporaneity as co-present allowed a degree of interconnectedness to emerge, much more differentiates than aligns those early displays with the levelling and democratic impulses that inform the twenty-first century experiments in heterogeneous display. The drawings of skulls displayed in the Harvard Hall Philosophy Chamber, for example, bear inscriptions that evidence a precocious scientific racism that would harden and later underpin genocidal campaigns.<sup>18</sup> Today, in contrast, NAGPRA legislation and similar international protocols require the repatriation of all human remains whether collected under the sign of curiosity or salvage anthropology, and museums take great pains to frame historic documents of racism so as to avoid the reinscription of these pernicious theories.

Of equal importance are the regular collaborations with source communities organized by contemporary museums to ensure that exhibits are interpreted from their own perspectives and reflect – through display and withdrawal from display – concepts of the sacred generated by holistic world views. In many cases museums have also made conscious choices to adopt positions of advocacy for social justice, abandoning claims to impartiality or objectivity (although not to truth). In mounting the 2009 exhibition of the Lewis and Clark materials inherited by Harvard's Peabody Museum from the Peale Museum and the Boston Museum, curator Castle McLaughlin commissioned artists from the communities the explorers had encountered two centuries earlier to make new works that honour and extend into the present the museum pieces collected from their ancestors. When the Dighton rock drawing was exhibited in the 2017 Harvard Art Museums show, the curator invited Aquinnah-Wampanoag artist Elizabeth James-Perry to respond to it from her contemporary vantage point. The adjacent text panel read:

My thoughts on the Dighton Rock keep getting hijacked by an image of the living rock being moved from its home on the river's edge into jail (the building); the location, probably the orientation, and even the name are all wrong. I think about the profound isolation of the rock, separated from its oldest companions, embodied in the soft mud, the sound of flowing water and the soft paint of starlight...and from us. I am compelled to look at the old Wampanoag village names to rename and reclaim the rock for myself, to retranslate and access deeper meanings to more accurately reflect my own and my ancestors' values and life ways along the Taunton River by Grassy Island.

For many Indigenous people today, ancestral works in museums are beings, not 'objects,' always capable of reconnecting with us, of offering us new meanings. Their concepts of museum artifacts as 'beings' and 'belongings' intersect meaningfully with current theorizations that reposition material entities not as 'objects' but as 'things' (Farrell-Racette 2016). Bill Brown has succinctly characterized the shift from scientific objectivity to a notion of the 'semantic irreducibility' of material entities. 'The story of objects asserting themselves as things, he writes, 'is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation' (Brown 2001: 4). Both conceptualizations bring us back, once more, to the capacities and potentials of collections and our interactions with them. As material beings, we respond phenomenologically to other material presences in ways that defy the boundaries, names and categories with which we

attempt to tame and contain them. And as with other humans, these other material beings are ultimately unknowable in all their aspects, always capable of surprising us with glimpses of hitherto unsuspected meanings – re-configured to make sense of the world we live in now. For Thomas, the location of these engagements in the public spaces of the museum is critical because it fosters encounters that are inherently social. Museums, he writes,

are places that implicitly foster and sustain civil society, and that prompt us to be curious. Curiosity and sociality are not conventionally linked, but my tentative suggestion is that the one prepares us for the other; that an interest in what is novel, singular or different is conducive to empathy, to a readiness to encounter and acknowledge difference' (Thomas 2016: 143).

I would also argue that wonder and curiosity can move us to accept messiness. For while disciplinary rigour is undeniably productive, it also promotes tunnel vision. Curiosity, in contrast, is promiscuous – it 'wanders all over the place,' to quote Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*. Its resurgence is a sign of a willingness to recognize and accept the irreconcilable multiplicity, plurality, and hybridity of the world. Today, as we confront accelerated global flows and environmental implosion we need this more open and modest posture more than ever. Grover, when he finishes his tour of the Whole Wide World Museum, says 'You know, I have seen many things in this museum but I still have not seen everything in the whole wide world. Where did they put everything else?' [Fig 25] His 'Aha' moment comes as he exits through a door marked 'Everything else,' and, his curiosity intensified, proceeds to look harder and to see more.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Wilson, Luna, and McMaster belong to the pioneering generation working during the 1990s, while Johnson is representative of a more recent phase of critique. On Wilson see Corrin, L. ed. 1994; on Luna's Artifact Piece see Horton 2017; and on McMaster's *Savage Graces* exhibition see the special issue of *Harbour: Magazine of Art and Everyday Life* 3 no. 1 (Winter 1994). On Johnson's more recent exhibit, *Mi'kwite'tmn (Do You Remember)*, first mounted in 2014, see her website <https://ursulajohnson.ca/portfolio/2014-ongoing-mikwitetmn-do-you-remember/>, accessed 18 June 2019, and Daniel Joyce, "Ursula Johnson: Traditions and Transformations," *Canadian Art*, November 25, 2014 <https://canadianart.ca/reviews/ursula-johnson-mikwitetmn-do-you-remember/> (accessed 17 June 2019). On the Museum of Jurassic Technology see Wechsler. L. 1995
- <sup>2</sup> For a Foucauldian analysis of the epistemic regimes that inform museum history see Hooper-Greenhill E., 1992.
- <sup>3</sup> As Miriam Elia stated in an interview in *The Guardian*, as a contemporary artist she regards her book and its critique of contemporary art and museums as itself a work of contemporary art. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/22/the-flyaway-success-of-the-ladybird-art-prank>. In Laurence Wechsler's analysis, the same is true of David Wilson, the performance artist who created the Museum of Jurassic Technology.
- <sup>4</sup> The bolded words are copied from the original.
- <sup>5</sup> See the Kunstkammer Wien website: <https://www.khm.at/en/visit/collections/kunstkammer-wien/>, accessed 27 June 2019.
- <sup>6</sup> All the works are well illustrated on the exhibition website: <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/wonder>, accessed 27 June 2019.



- <sup>7</sup> *The Nature of Diamonds* was shown at the American Museum of Natural History in 1997-98, followed by *Pearls* in 2002, and *Horse* in 2008-9. Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History opened *Chocolate* in 2002, and Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum showed *Water: The Exhibition*, in 2012.
- <sup>8</sup> Christine DeLucia, "Antiquarian Collecting and the Transits of Indigenous Material Culture: Rethinking "Indian Relics" and Tribal Histories," *Common-place.org*, 17, no. 2 <http://common-place.org/book/antiquarian-collecting-and-the-transits-of-indigenous-material-culture-rethinking-indian-relics-and-tribal-histories/>
- <sup>9</sup> DeLucia, "Antiquarian Collecting"
- <sup>10</sup> DeLucia, "Antiquarian Collecting"
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.mas.be/en/page/mas-river-tales>, accessed 30 June 2019
- <sup>12</sup> 'Antwerp's new museum: Tall tales. Changing a skyline—and a map', *The Economist* 12 May 2011 [unsigned] [http://www.economist.com/node/18678981?story\\_id=18678981&fsrc=rss](http://www.economist.com/node/18678981?story_id=18678981&fsrc=rss) (accessed 2 May 2017)
- <sup>13</sup> The natural history museum had acquired the building originally built for the Musée Guimet after its collections were moved to Paris.
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.museedesconfluences.fr/fr/visit-museum> accessed April 2017.
- <sup>15</sup> Reproduced on the museum's website: <http://www.museedesconfluences.fr/fr/visit-museum>, accessed 27 June 2019.
- <sup>16</sup> Reproduced on the museum's website: <http://www.museedesconfluences.fr/fr/visit-museum> accessed 27 June 2019.
- <sup>17</sup> A third museum, which I have not had occasion to visit, is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MuCEM) in Marseilles, France <http://www.mucem.org/en>. See Sherman, D. 2017.
- <sup>18</sup> Reproduced in Lasser ed, 2016, plate 62. They were drawn by William Dandridge Peck, Massachusetts Professor of Natural History c 1810.

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