

## Editorial: Methodologies for Researching the Museum as Organization

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Notions of the distinctiveness of museums is a theme that runs, albeit often implicitly, through a wide range of professional and academic literatures.<sup>1</sup> Museums are distinctive in a number of ways. They collect and house past and present material culture, promise to safeguard it in perpetuity and continue to play a central role in processes of national identity building and other political projects through their presentation and interpretation of culture/s to their publics. And yet, museums also share attributes with other forms of modern organization that shape and govern contemporary social life: the papers in this collection identify a number of ways in which museums, in this sense, are also unexceptional. Plainly, for all of this museological activity to take place, museum professionals must turn up to work, engage in everyday organizational processes and administrative practices, and inhabit the workplace with all its complexities and contradictions. While Museum Studies has questioned the politics of the museum's representational and interpretative work, this has been to the relative neglect of museum work itself, both how it is organized and the organizational settings in which it takes place. In focusing on museums as organizations, and all that this implies, this special issue considers how methodologies concerned with everyday practices and organizational life-worlds open further possibilities for knowing museums and the practices that reproduce or alter them.

We situate our intervention within a longer (though necessarily brief here) disciplinary history, linked to a process of professionalization of museum work and marked by a number of 'revolutions' or 'turns' in the academic scholarship. Discussions of the techniques of museum practice as a professional undertaking and the publication of handbooks on museum work from the 1950s onwards were fundamental to the formation of the discipline we now know as Museum Studies. This instructional literature of the 'old' museology highlighted activities particular to the museum such as collecting, documentation and conservation. Its focus was firmly on museological techniques based on collection functions and how to perfect them, but these were treated as distinct concerns. As the work of museums underwent further professionalization, it led to further differentiation and specialization of roles and the evolution of the museum form, opening a broader field that Anthony Shelton (2013: 8) referred to as 'operational museology'. However, attention remained on 'museum practice' as technique - derived from a disciplinary body of knowledge, rules of application, ethical protocols and so forth, that constitute exhibitions and collections management, but distinct and separate from the administrative work of museum practice linked to the more mundane matters of organizational structures, processes and practices.

In what is now a key text for the field, *The New Museology* (1989), Peter Vergo effectively argued for a turn away from these questions of technique, towards an engagement with the political rationality of the museum as a cultural authority, and its organization of knowledge and power relations (see also Lumley 1988). These concerns have been key foci of scholars ever since, and this critique clearly achieved its aim of expanding the scope of the discipline. Yet, the new museology project also hinged upon an argument that the 'old' should be supplanted by the 'new'. As a result, museological techniques and practices and how these can be understood as part of how museums function, as well as part of the wider ideological and political apparatus of museums, have been relatively overlooked within the new museology. A following 'turn' can be ascribed to the 'critical museology' which Shelton (2013: 9, 17) describes in 'sharp contrast' to the operational dimensions of the field, and which he positions as a more incisively defined project than Vergo's new museology, based on the ongoing intellectual deconstruction of the

museum institution and ongoing reflexive practice. In both these moves, however, the evolving organizational form of the museum and the everyday administrative processes through which museums are made up have been given less attention as a fertile ground for significant theorizing and analysis around these questions of museum practice and its politics.

Our intention is to bring the organizational settings and techniques of museum practice back into view. We suggest that approaching the museum as organization presents significant scope to expand and enhance museological research by recovering some of the concerns of the 'old' as a necessary step to understanding contemporary museum functions. Precedents for this approach can be found in the work of authors such as Sharon Macdonald (2002), Andrea Witcomb (2003) and to some extent recent contributions under the broad banner of museum management (Sandell and Janes 2007). These authors begin to make clear the ways in which techniques and routine practices shape the presentation of knowledge in the museum, as well as structuring relationships between museums and audiences. We suggest the need to return to practice in a grounded sense, as emerging from organizational arrangements. Our aim is to ask different questions of an expanded set of museum practices, encompassing but moving beyond those traditionally associated with museum work in the old/operational museology vein. Our intention is to encourage further inquiry and debate on the finer details of practices and the varied conditions in which they take place. In doing so, we aim to bring issues of representation and museum outcomes into dialogue with a concern with the processes and practices through which museums organize and are organized.

This special issue opens up the following questions: What are the particular features of museums as organizations and how do they affect museum practice? How can we research and understand the everyday practices of museum professionals and how these make up museum work-worlds? How can researching the museum as organization open up other ways of knowing the museum and the practices that (re-)produce it? And critically, what methodologies can support these forms of investigation?

What distinguishes our approach is a concern for exploring how theoretically-informed methodologies can aide discussion of how organizational practices, behaviours and routines, professional values *and* matters of technique are all domains where the power relations inherent to museums play out, rather than a matter to be dealt with separately. To understand the dynamics of power in museums, it is impossible to ignore their organizational form. Approaching the museum as organization provides a means to expand the scope of museological research to encompass the organizational life-worlds of museums, revealing the dialogue between practice and its politics.

Organizational practices and settings are therefore the focus of this special issue, and our aim is to explore the methodological implications of this way of attending to the museum and museum work. There are several ways to define 'organizations', reflected across the papers in this collection. Together, these ways are concerned with how museums are organized and how they organize people and practices. Such a focus on the organizational forms of the museum requires that we temporarily suspend 'exceptionalist' notions of museums as distinctive, stable or static entities, viewing them instead as organizations made up of activities, rules, norms, behaviours, materials, technologies, people and interactions of a sort that can be found across all kinds of organization. Approaching the museum as organization is first about recognizing and making space for the procedural and mundane everyday inside the museum, relocating practice firmly in the contexts where it takes place, in order to develop more grounded accounts of museums to try and understand why and how they work.

The special issue also responds to the relatively limited discussion of methodology in *Museum Studies*.<sup>2</sup> As a field encompassing a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives, *Museum Studies* is yet to substantively address what a productive set of 'museum studies methodologies' might usefully include. In our discussion of methodologies, understood here as research methods *and* the theoretical frameworks and ideas that inform the scope, content, ambitions and inclusions/exclusions of research, we aim to highlight the way methodological decisions contribute to the making and depiction of some worlds and not others (Law 2004: 148), of some museums and not others. As John Law remarks 'method may be understood as the simultaneous enactment of presence and absence'<sup>3</sup> (2003: 3). Absences are not inherent to any methodology, but they are a consequence of methodological decisions,

in the sense that methodologies shape and are shaped by researchers. We do not claim that considering museums as organizations reveals them for what they truly are, or necessarily generates more 'complete' accounts; in fact, an organizational approach is a specific and conscious lens. Ours is an argument for the potential of organizational methodologies to generate detailed accounts of the lived experience of people working in museums and the detail of how that work is organized, remaining open to the possibility that this organizing is done by both people and things.

Special issues in *museum and society* are aimed at addressing a theme that requires critical intervention. We do not go so far as to indicate the need for an organizational turn in Museum Studies; rather, we are making a call for approaches and methodologies that account for organizational actors, structures and cultures of the museum. Anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin cautions against the language of the theoretical shift or turn, where the 'conceptual approaches and apparatuses' (2009: 8) turned away from are implicitly denigrated by the celebration of that which is proposed in their place, a point that calls to mind the positioning of the 'new' as supplanting the 'old' in the juncture between 'new museology' and that which preceded it. Our key intention is to broaden the dialogue on methodology as a means to illustrate the generative potential of different approaches – in our case, organizational approaches – to foreground what has been understudied and to add to what has gone before. The papers in this collection all speak to this call in distinctive ways.

The editorial provides a framework that seeks to situate as well as outline what a move to considering the museum as organization consists of and its implications for methods. The next section teases out what might be entailed in taking an organizational approach through three distinct but related lenses: museum back stages, interpretive proximity and ways of knowing museums. The subsequent section builds upon this outline by specifying two possible directions within an organizational approach: the museum as peopled organization and the museum as assembled organization. In presenting these two categories we acknowledge that they draw on allied yet distinct methodological and epistemological traditions, with the 'assembled' treating people and things in a flat ontology where materiality and meaning-making are dynamic and co-constituted (Latour 2005), whereas a 'peopled' approach emphasizes meaning making and the social construction of museums (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1994). These categories have developed in response to the papers presented in this collection, opening up a number of avenues for further research through theoretically-informed methodological frameworks.

### **Museum methodologies: back stages, interpretative proximity, and reflecting upon ways of 'knowing'**

We can consider the significance of 'organization' in three particular ways through which to shift our attention to particular museum spaces, modes of analysis and conclusions. Firstly, there has been a tendency to focus on the 'front stage' of the museum, with lesser attention given to its backrooms and back stage, with the exceptions of collection stores and archives. Following Erving Goffman ([1959] 1990) the front stage describes the polished dimension of the museum that is presented to the audience: the public spaces of the museum. Analysis here has focused on the role of museums within knowledge production and cultural reproduction, and the critical (textual) academic analysis of the politics and poetics of display. Here, we are interested in turning our attention to other, more mundane museum spaces and their associated practices, from back offices and corridors to the cleaning cupboards (Morgan 2012), meeting rooms and the other routine domains of bureaucracy. This focus takes its cue from Macdonald's (2002) *Behind the Scenes at the Science Museum* as well as a number of contributions that have focused on the inner workings of museums (Bouquet 2012; Geoghegan and Hess 2014; Turner 2016). The invitation to attend to the organizational forms of the museum is first an invitation for us to move into the other spaces of the museum, relocating the 'field' into offices and organizational actors' work-worlds.

A second shift is methodological, embracing 'up close', situated and granular accounts of museums. Helen Graham's discussion of 'interpretative distance' (Graham 2012: 568) is instructive here. Responding to the wide application of Foucauldian thinking to museums and Tony Bennett's writing on the political rationality of the museum (1995), Graham highlights

how such analytical frames encourage a disciplinary reading of museums, in which practice is always and already subsumed into the consolidation of specific governmental power relations. As Graham notes, the dispute here is not against Foucauldian readings, but to highlight the analytical and methodological tendencies such readings encourage. Recognizing the way an alignment with a particular critical reading of the museum prompts research inquiry to take place at a distance from museum practice speaks directly to our concerns: while wanting to acknowledge the analytical purchase of viewing the internal dynamics of museums as generative of their reformist ambitions (Bennett 1990), we also want to highlight the need for engagement with other approaches that enable alternative ways of knowing museums to emerge (see also McCarthy 2015).

Indeed, when museums and museum work are viewed 'close-up', other dynamics come into view. For instance, approaching the museum close-up productively disrupts the suggestion that all programmes of activity oriented towards policy trends like 'diversity' and 'social inclusion' are of 'the same type' (Bennett 1998: 212), pursue similar aims, and offer comparable potential for change. Viewed at a distance, the specificity of how particular programmes are peopled and assembled falls out of view, and the complexity that constrains or enables work is obscured. Graham therefore calls for us to look at museum work 'at the level of practicalities (how projects are conceived and organized) and practice (how projects are made up through interactions)' (2012: 569). Eschewing interpretative distance has significant critical purchase for its ability to emphasise the finer detail of how projects are organized, and the relations between bodies and things, where outcomes are generated that cannot simply be read as the further consolidation of a governmental project. In this close-up view, we can consider the specifics of museum work and the politics of practice. Foregrounding practice and technique as political concerns, and as inseparable from power relations, this approach opens up new possibilities for research, both in terms of its objects of analysis and its ability to point towards new spaces for intervention.

Through our focus on the museum as organization, we echo this call for proximity or a 'zooming in' on the study of practice to examine its accomplishments, both those fully and partially realized. Re-orientating research towards what people in museums actually do in their work, and the particular social, political, economic and professional contexts informing how they do what they do is aligned with recent developments in Museum Studies (e.g. Nisbett 2013, McCarthy 2015). The emphasis on methodologies, however, distinguishes our project. This is about developing a range of close-up and grounded methods from which to generate data: from participant observation to ethnography (including organizational ethnography – see Neyland 2007; Ybema *et al.* 2009), to a range of interpretive methods drawn from organizational studies, such as conversational and/or documentary detail (see Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, Rex, this issue), as well as opening up opportunities for participatory and action research methods.

A third implication of a focus on organization is a directive towards reflection on ways of 'knowing' the museum and how knowledge production is determined by its organizational setting. Organizational perspectives provide an opening to explore the conditions of knowledge production, questioning what factors have enabled or constrained it, alongside the different methods and methodologies utilised in attempts 'to know': both in the sense of a museum's attempts to know (for example, to know its audiences), and in our own research in attempting to know the organization. The papers in this special issue point to a recognition that different desires and pressures animate attempts to 'know' museums. In the organizational context, there is often a preference for fixed, stable, transportable and actionable knowledge, with implications for the methodologies used. Conversely, the type of knowledge sought by academic inquiry can be partial, provisional and foreground rather than downplay complexity, variation and contingency.<sup>4</sup> An organizational approach is a move towards further exploration and reflection on the epistemic tensions of knowledge production within museums, as well as into how scholarly inquiry can propose other ways forward (Richardson, this issue).

This special issue offers a series of empirically driven contributions to provoke further examination of the museum as organization. In our call for contributions we have intentionally avoided any fixed definition of 'organization', preferring to allow multiple engagements with the term across the papers. Neither do we aim to fully resolve the institutional/organizational frame. To define organization is to deploy a particular sets of assumptions (theories and

methods) that lead us to perceive organization in a particular manner. Instead, our aim is to initiate a conversation around two provisional understandings of museums as organizations: as peopled and as assembled.

### **Museums as peopled organizations**

Taken together, the collection first develops the idea of museum as 'peopled organizations'. Taking a view of the museum as a 'peopled organization' (Peck 2001: 451; Jones et al. 2004: 89) is an explicit position against an insulated view of the museum made up of faceless professionals and 'authorless policy conventions' or anonymous interpretation wall panels. Developing the idea of 'peopled organizations' and 'peopled practices', we emphasize the role of museum staff in actively producing and resisting the museum.

At one level, this draws attention to how museum 'frictions' (Karp *et al.* 2006) also play out in the back stages of the museum, and to the micro-struggles through which organizational actors manage and cope with the contradictions they encounter in their daily work. This view is also about embracing the mundane of museums as it is experienced by those who 'make' the museum. At a foundational level, the study of practice in organization and management studies focuses on 'what is actually done in the doing of work and how those doing it makes sense of their practice' (Orr 1996: 439). The concepts of practice, occupation, or profession all focus attention to the lived experiences of museum workers. In Museum Studies there has been less engagement at the level of the worker. To remedy this, we emphasize here methods that underline concrete work activities and the lived experience of workers, from their points of view and in their own terms, rather than in the language of theory and concepts driven by a research literature at a remove from these settings. It follows that concepts and theorizing should emerge from the experiences of those organizational actors, and within the social realities of work and their social and material accomplishments (see Morse, this issue). Developing a view of 'peopled organizations' therefore calls for interpretive methods (phenomenological, hermeneutic, or symbolic interactionist, etc.) that emphasize professional meaning-making as the focus of research, and situated knowledge as a way of framing conclusions (see Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006). We also emphasize a broad embrace of all kinds of workers and all manner of 'work' in museums, not only that of curators or directors.

At the same time, these experiences do not happen in a vacuum and organizational lives are shaped both through individual agency *and* wider institutional arrangements and the contexts in which they are emplaced. However, taking an organizational view through 'close-up' methodologies opens up opportunities to examine the ability of museum professionals working within institutional arrangements to accommodate, re-write or resist the broader political projects in which museums are enrolled. Significant work here has already been undertaken to understand policy attachment in museums in the ways in which UK museum professionals have revised state directives of 'social inclusion' (Newman and McLean 2004; West and Smith 2005; Tlili 2008; Gray 2014). As museums continue to advocate their social agency, and in the cases where this is expected of museums, then the commitments (or otherwise) of museum professionals to the institutions in which they work becomes a matter of concern. While museums may adopt and signal their alignment with political agendas, they are 'peopled' by individuals who bring diverse social and political commitments of their own to their work, resulting, in some cases, in a desire to rework government agendas for their own ends. This theme is addressed in Morse and Munro's (2015) study of two local council museum services operating under conditions of austerity in the North East of England and Scotland. They make similar observations regarding the agency of professionals to undertake progressive political work via their collaborations with voluntary and third sector organisations through their community engagement programmes. Taken together with previous work on social inclusion, this demonstrates the value of a view of museums as peopled organizations, rather than only being governed by structural logics. Several of the papers in this special issue (Morse, Gray and McCall, Morgan, Saaze et al.) explore the peopled dimensions of their diverse case studies.

A view of the museum as peopled is also useful in addressing the notion of change in museums. Of particular currency to the museum sector is the desire to understand – and, in some cases, the imperative to undertake – organizational change, notably around questions

of the social agency of the museum or funding changes. Within the literature there have been some important contributions from those directors who have led a process of change from the top (Janes 2007; Fleming 2012). Adding in the perspectives and experiences of a greater range of professionals can open up these discussions and complicate narratives of change, where change-agents can be seen at work across the different hierarchies of the museum, and 'change' emerges in a concrete sense, beyond abstract institutional logics involving a diverse range of actors, both people and things, as an assemblage perspective entails (Bienkowski 2016, see Morgan this issue).

### **Museums as assembled organizations**

In different ways, several articles in this issue draw on the notion of the museum as an assembly of actors, of both people and things. There is significant precedent for an assemblage approach in Museum Studies, with several authors claiming assemblage as a useful research companion (Bennett and Healy 2009; Macdonald 2009; Byrne et al. 2011; Bennett 2015; Cameron and McCarthy 2015). Given the extensive uptake of the concept of assemblage in Museum Studies, it is not surprising that the concept has been configured differently by authors who rework these ideas according to their needs. In a broad sense, however, the attraction of assemblage is in its embrace of the myriad processes, the people and things involved in museum work, as opposed to its finished products. As Anderson et al. (2012: 179) put it, 'assemblage privileges processes of formation and does not make a priori claims about the form of relational configurations or formations'. As a matter of concern for this special issue, assemblage counteracts the tendency to jump to familiar yet vague concepts such as 'organizational culture' or 'social norms' to explain why things are as they are (Macdonald 2009: 118, citing Latour 2005: 68) or why dilemmatic moments arise. Instead, it unsettles the implication that these structuring forces exist 'above the level of interaction' acting upon and shaping practice in ways which are beyond comprehension (Latour 1996: 228). The assemblage approach inquires into the production and stabilization of forms of order, pulling analysis towards the specific processes, techniques and circumstances through which an explanatory term such as 'organizational culture' is lent its ordering potential in particular settings. In this mode, it becomes more difficult to lean on 'magical notions such as, say, "society" or "ideology"' (Macdonald 2009: 118) as a substitute for more situated explanations which are attentive to the way particular 'collectivities of actors' find themselves more or less limited in their ability to advance institutional, social or political change.

Treating the museum as an assemblage has its origins in science and technology studies and actor-network theory (ANT). It is the tracing of connections, or following the actors and the ways in which they come into contact with one another (Latour 2005) that Graham identifies as the crucial inherited trait for researching the museum (2017: 80). However, the attention to connections has an important antecedent: it recasts agency as an emergent and distributed quality, and as a quality that can be attributed to particular arrangements of material, technical *and* human things. As Martin Müller observes, 'all entities - humans, animals, things and matters - have the same ontological status to start with' (2015: 28). As Rex clarifies, 'to foreground the material, and the interplay between materials, persons, texts, environments and so forth, is not to claim that entities have innate power to shape and influence action or understanding, but to attend to their capacity as an effect of the associations of which an object is part' (this issue, citing Sayes 2014). Recognition of specificity is again crucial here, as is the characteristic recognition of the diverse range of actors with a role to play in the production of knowledge and ordering of practice in the museum. Such an approach has particular purchase for Museum Studies where a focus on the object has been to the relative neglect of the 'varied cast of characters' (Callon 1998: 260) with a role to play in the museum. In adding an organizational view to this, we can account for other museum materialities such as museum standards and meeting minutes, amongst the many other materialities that are integral, not incidental, to organizational life.

Such a commitment to viewing the museum as assembled organization can be translated, we suggest, following many others who have begun this work in Museum Studies (Macdonald 2009; Harrison, Byrne and Clarke 2013), through a number of methodological

practices, including adopting ethnographic sensibilities to enable an in-depth view of situated and temporary organizational contexts, and methods to trace and follow sites and situations and their temporary stabilizations.

### **Towards critical studies of the museum as organization**

Methodologies like the two which we have outlined above are often critiqued for their lack of critical purchase on structural issues. These critiques miss that these approaches are more often than not motivated by a desire to render power relations visible in the way that they shape and mediate the finer detail of museum practice and its possibilities. If power is productive, and power relations are perpetuated through knowledge practices and institutional ways of working (Foucault 1980), then developing a view of how possibilities for action come to be delimited is a step towards intervention in the orderings or structures that maintain specific power relations, rather than a turn away from them. Although they have distinct emphases, approaching the museum as an assembled organization or as a peopled organization are further aids to developing accounts of how museums work – why particular relations, exclusions and practices persist, and where we can identify spaces for resistance, revision and change. From this perspective, the aim is to uncover the micro-struggles, the sedimentations of power and the varied actors enrolled in accommodating or resisting these contexts. This approach also opens up opportunities for research with the museum, and other organizations which constitute the museum sector, to collaborate in identifying and working within newly identified spaces for intervention (see Gellner and Hirsch 2001; Morse 2013).

### **Overview of the special issue**

The articles in this special issue each develop their own methodological frameworks to expand the types of analysis of the practices and people involved in the organizational life-worlds of museums.

The first paper by Clive Gray and Vikki McCall identifies the museum as an exemplar of the standard (Webberian) bureaucratic form, in which they focus on bureaucratic features such as the division of labour and hierarchical authority. Drawing their reflections from their collective qualitative research since 2009 across numerous museums through the UK, Gray and McCall emphasize the usefulness of an organizational approach for identifying structural commonalities and difference across museums of different types, and for increasing understanding of these commonalities and differences for the sector as a whole. Here they bring to the fore the strength of an organizational approach for comparative museum research.

The contribution by Sharon Macdonald, Christine Gerbich and Margareta von Oswald follows this thread by outlining a multi-sited, multi-linked, multi-researcher ethnography to respond to the limitation of the singular case study museum methodology. They usefully outline the recent interest in ethnography in organization studies to excavate its potential for researching the museum. The paper draws on three distinct sites as part of a wider research project concerned with exhibition-making across three venues in Berlin. In doing so they compose an argument against 'methodological containerism' which they describe succinctly as taking the museum for granted, highlighting instead what happens around and beyond an individual museum, tracing the relationships between their three fieldwork sites.

Jennie Morgan's paper continues in this ethnographic vein but returns to a single, in-depth look at the dynamics of change in the museum. As she makes clear, understanding change in the museum sector and beyond is best addressed through a variety of perspectives of those who 'people' the museum. Her contribution adds clearly another direction to studies of change management, a key current concern for the museum sector internationally. Drawing on ethnographic materials from the refurbishment of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, Scotland, the paper sheds light on the significance of mundane everyday activities of the museum such as maintenance work and tour-guiding and their role in shaping 'organizational change' in the museum.

Nuala Morse's paper draws on a long-term organizational study to research the community engagement practices of the museum. Highlighting first the often divergent and contested registers of 'community engagement' in both museum practice and research, Morse then focuses on those professionals 'doing' community engagement work to explore the often-overlooked experiences and perspectives of the people who constitute museum work-worlds. In doing so she situates community engagement in the everyday organizational workings of the museum and its registers of accountability, developing a more nuanced view than current discussions which frequently take institutional power as the focus of research have allowed, and opening up to other concepts such as accountability as a way of knowing museum practice. Based on a Collaborative Doctoral Award<sup>5</sup>, Morse's research reflects a growing environment in which museum research is currently being undertaken, which has favoured research collaboration with practitioners and a focus on 'impact' (see Owens *et al.* 2017). This is significant to the aim of the special issue as this environment has opened up the backrooms of museums in new ways, sometimes with 'researchers in residence', enabling new opportunities to view the museums' organizing processes close-up, as well as bolstering professionals' interest in using research in applied contexts.

The following paper by Bethany Rex zooms further into the mundane work-worlds of museums, tracing the role of documents and documentary infrastructures in influencing museum practice, and understandings thereof. Taking an Actor Network Theory approach Rex's paper outlines the potential afforded by treating documents as 'more-than-text'. Drawing on an empirical study of community asset transfer, Rex demonstrates the influence of Arts Council England's Accreditation Scheme on those new to museum work. Rather than treating the document as adjunct to museum work, and thus to research, Rex argues that museum work is, in fact, mediated by documents and documentary infrastructures, making their role in 'museum work' a field that is open to empirical question and deserved of close scrutiny and analysis.

The final two contributions are located in the art museum, to present another set of connected yet specific issues. Sarah Richardson's paper again draws on Actor Network Theory and assemblage perspectives, but this time to consider scale and spatiality in the practice and theorization of the art gallery. Developing Kevin Hetherington's approach to the analysis of museum space, Richardson uses three methods to analyse the space of The Hepworth Wakefield: the Euclid, the discursive and the folded or topologically complex. By questioning what is gained and what is lost in each these moves to increase the complexity of our understanding of the gallery and its practice, Richardson seeks to highlight the importance of methodological approaches which allow us to better recognize the gallery as a heterogeneous assemblage of the social, material, political, spatial and geographical.

The final paper by Vivian van Saaze, Glenn Wharton and Leah Reisman further contributes to our understating of the complexity of organisational change. Drawing on empirical research conducted at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Saaze *et al.* disrupt the dominant narrative of radical change in museums. Instead, they draw on Science and Technology Studies and a sociological perspective on institutional analysis to focus on assemblages of objects and humans. In so doing, they demonstrate that the process of change is driven by a series of adaptations between staff and the technical specificities of artworks, specifically how digital artwork is normalised and incorporated into existing MoMA systems.

Overall, this collection of papers are the start of a dialogue on methodology in Museum Studies, and together they illustrate the generative potential of organizational approaches to foreground what has been understudied about museums and their everyday work. In different ways, the papers affirm the analytical purchase of our editorial's argument: that an expanded methodological repertoire results in different ways and registers of knowing museums. By acknowledging yet departing from commonplace approaches or well-worn conclusions, and returning to the 'old museology' but repurposed through new theoretical lenses, these are close-up examinations that reveal museums as organizations, with all that this implies.

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**Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> Here and throughout we use museums to also include art galleries.
- <sup>2</sup> There are similarities here with Sørensen and Carman's edited collection *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, in which they write: 'there has been little dialogue about how heritage as a phenomenon can be investigated, and little effort has been given to clarify how our analytical procedures affects and dictate the aims and premises of research and thus shape our understanding' (2009: 4).
- <sup>3</sup> See John Law 'Making a Mess with Method. Centre for Science Studies', Lancaster University 2003, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/law-making-a-mess-with-method.pdf>, accessed 1 July 2018.
- <sup>4</sup> Although this is being increasingly challenged by the structural conditions in which academic work takes place.
- <sup>5</sup> See Arts and Humanities Research Council (2018) *A Decade of success: supporting research in UK's major culture and heritage organizations*.

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