
IV

EXHIBITIONS**EXHIBITION REVIEW ESSAY**

Exhibition without Boundaries

teamLab Borderless and the Digital Evolution of Gallery Space

As ridiculous as it might sound today, one might argue that the development of exhibitionary space began with the ancient cave paintings of the Paleolithic era. The similarities between the modern white-cube space and those first spaces exhibiting human art are undeniable when one considers the use of space, location, and architectural structures. The caves in Asturias, in northern Spain, for example, require a half-hour hike into the heart of the cave and away from all sunlight before the extraordinary paintings can be seen (Neil 2018). This architectural feature has been carried over into the modern white-cube space, which, being predominantly windowless and set apart from nature and any visible connection to the outside world, relies on artificial lighting to draw attention to the work. What happens outside of the gallery walls has little impact on the contents; the art within the confines of the white-cube space maintains a constant state of equilibrium, thus controlling the audience's visit by presenting them with a consistent, unchanging experience. Of course, as Brian O'Doherty famously asserted in his 1976 essay for *Artforum*, the implied "neutrality" of gallery space will forever be a myth; content and context are intertwined, and both are historical constructs. This is in no way intended to criticize the white-cube model, mind you, rather to place it in a wider historical context of exhibition development. And indeed, on the contrary, it is arguable that many types of art are best presented in a white-cube setting, such as that produced by the conceptual art movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which placed greater importance on the ideas behind the work and less importance on the finished outcome. In this context, an unadorned space and blank background to display the work against allowed the audience to reflect on the piece without distraction.

I do note, briefly, that the same cannot be said of the internal architecture of older institutions, however, such as the National Portrait Gallery in London or the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Almost excessive in their opulence, the forbidding entrances, grand staircases, expansive rooms, and even the rich use of color on the walls were designed to reflect the wealth and power of empires, highlighting the objects and artworks bought and plundered from across the globe. These seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and early-nineteenth-century institutions were much more of a social meeting place than they are now, however, having existed for many decades as places where people would congregate, hold picnics and social gatherings, and even teach their children to walk—a stark contrast compared to many modern spaces with their implied and explicit rules and regulations governing the way the space is used.



For years, the concept of monographic collecting and installation dominated exhibitionary practice, particularly in museums dedicated to modern and contemporary art (Schubert 2009). The Saatchi collection in London, for example, which opened in 1984, set the standard of its day for the display of contemporary art. In an old factory converted by minimalist architect Max Gordon, the gallery is thirty thousand square feet of pristine, uncluttered expansiveness where often only a handful of works are displayed at a time (Schubert 2009). Such examples fill the pages of Charlotte Klonk's *Spaces of Experience* (2009), a historically rich account of developments in gallery display over the past two centuries. Her analysis is directly concerned with changes in the relationship between viewers and art, charting evolving practices and ideas associated with display and their relationship to visitor experience. Klonk observes, for example, that in the 1930s the strategic placement of walls and use of minimal seating in New York's Museum of Modern Art meant that visitors were unable to retrace their steps through the gallery, creating a "dynamic and directed layout [that] exerted an inevitable forward thrust" (2009: 16). She demonstrates how the idea of "flow" can keep an audience moving, set a pace, and control one's movement in a particular direction through the exhibit.

Over the last three decades or so, however, we have witnessed a shift from the traditional model of a monolithic, static museum filled with cultural prototypes, to a more dynamic institution with a focus on facilitating dialogue and interaction with its audiences: "To keep a collection alive [i]s no longer just a matter of adding to it, but [becomes] a question of combining objects in forever changing and unexpected permutations in order to explore their myriad meanings" (Schubert 2009: 135). The idea of a carefully directed master narrative and universal, all-encompassing exhibitions has increasingly become an outdated notion. In 2011, Tiina Roppola referred to an approaching "revolution in museology, which no longer views museums simply as providing spaces for displaying objects but as environments for experience" (Roppola 2011: 38)—community social events, movie screenings, and even yoga classes offered in the museum's spaces. The injection of movement and interaction into the gallery transformed the white-cube space into a social arena, providing a more vibrant and unique experience for participants. The activities brought people from different communities together for a shared experience, fostering new relationships through participation.

Nevertheless, for many of us, the gallery space continues to have negative associations, with art viewed as elitist, galleries as exclusive, and the contents rendered almost incomprehensible without expert curatorial guidance. It is hard to imagine a space more closely connected to the prejudices and values—the snobbery—of the upper middle classes. Though the white-cube remains the preferred mode of presentation in most contemporary galleries, artists and curators are increasingly challenged to rethink the role of the viewer, giving them a new sense of agency. It is within this frame that teamLab's founders refer to the concept of "ultra-subjective space"—a blurring of the concept of borders, of the relationship between art, exhibition, and audience.¹ The newest challenge to exhibitions, in other words, is how to maintain a museum's relevance, how to keep visitors and funding flowing in. The exhibition concept, it seems, has been challenged to reinvent itself again.

Enter teamLab

Founded in 2001 by a group of Tokyo University graduates, teamLab has grown into an interdisciplinary group of close to five hundred "ultratechnologists," consisting of artists, scientists, engineers, mathematicians, computer graphics animators, and graphic designers. Their collaborative practice "seeks to navigate the confluence of art, science, technology, design and the

natural world,” exploring new relationships between humans and nature, and between oneself and others through art.² Initially, teamLab took their work around the world, exhibiting their installations in museums as diverse as San Francisco’s Asian Art Museum, Melbourne’s National Gallery of Victoria, Istanbul’s Borusan Contemporary, and Singapore’s National Museum. The collective has also staged many outdoor exhibitions over the last number of years, from smaller single installations, such as at the Koboke Gorge in Tokushima, to large-scale shows in Beijing and the Shibuya area of Tokyo.

Produced in collaboration with local urban landscape developer Mori Building Co. Ltd., the group’s most significant project to date, *teamLab Borderless*, is billed as the world’s first digital art museum, and was unveiled in Odaiba, Tokyo, on 21 June 2018 to much fanfare. The massive (over 10,000 square meters) immersive institution features multiple 3-D spaces that revolve around the theme of “borderless,” that point to the free-flowing nature of the boundary-free installations that transcend the various rooms, and that communicate and even blend in with other artworks. Using over five hundred computers and four hundred and fifty projectors, the exhibition uses technology to project animations onto every available surface: walls and floors, mirrors, and visitors. It is a complex feat, since the projectors, which are emitting images onto a massive area, have to be meticulously engineered and programmed to work together while computers render graphics on the spot.

The first floor of the museum is occupied by “Borderless World,” an installation area loosely divided into several subspaces. Unlike the carefully directed paths of many traditional galleries, there is no map or set course to follow, since all of the spaces are connected. Instead, visitors are encouraged to “get lost” and figure out a route for themselves. Because the animations are computer generated in real time, the artwork is fluid; the projections change and respond to human interaction, allowing visitors to become part of the installation. In “Forest of Flowers and People,” for example, animated flowers bloom around anyone who stays still for a moment, and shed their petals if someone steps on them (Figures 1 and 2). At the same time, music is used to create a sense of euphoria and adds to the multisensory experience. Elsewhere, visitors physically climb up on to a rock at the bottom of a waterfall, becoming smaller rocks themselves that change the flow of the water falling from the space above (Figure 3). Along the walls of the corridors of the museum, one may encounter a tiger made of flowers or butterflies that have escaped from the other rooms.

A key to the experience is a dedicated smartphone app that allows users to shape the environment they are standing in: “When you control the app, the artwork reacts, helping visitors create a scene that will never be repeated again,” says teamLab. “The internet connection is what makes this artwork possible.”³ By making the visitor an integral part of the world’s first digital art museum, teamLab demonstrates how technology and art can work together to bring people closer. “Crystal Universe,” for example, which was created out of over 170,000 tiny LEDs (light-emitting diodes), uses lights to create an immersive 4-D environment. Visitors interact with elements of the installation using a smartphone, which might change the color or patterns of the lights, but the installation is also influenced by the movement of every person inside it, which means that one’s experience is always unique (Figure 4). Transcending traditional static media, in other words, the visitor (and visitors together) becomes the protagonist, introducing an entirely new way of experiencing the interior domain of the exhibition.

Compared to a traditional exhibition experienced as a passive observer, in other words, “teamLab encourages people to find an increased awareness of those around them . . . the art draws attention to and influences the relationship between the people observing and interacting with it—the presence of visitors becomes part of the art itself” (Senda 2018). Even further, many of the works are able to spontaneously alter themselves, communicate with each other, and



Figures 1 and 2. In “Forest of Flowers and People,” digital flowers bloom around visitor who stand still for a moment, and then react (shed their petals or disappear) when touched. Courtesy Stokes-Rees.



Figure 3. Images react to the presence of people, flowing and moving around them like rocks obstructing a waterfall’s flow. Courtesy Stokes-Rees.



Figure 4. In “Crystal Universe,” visitors interact with the artwork via a smartphone app, changing the colors and patterns of 170,000 LEDs to create an immersive 4-D environment. Courtesy Stokes-Rees.

mutually penetrate each other, meaning that live and before visitors’ eyes more and more unique works are created seemingly out of nothing, the final form of which is unknown to anyone. Stepping out of the traditional material boundaries of canvas, paint, frame, and gallery, the entire experience is about going on a journey of discovery, much of which inevitably happens through one’s senses, rather than through being “told” what to think or know by an omnipresent narrator.

The second floor of the museum, “Athletics Forest,” is effectively a playground, with an uneven floor and 3-D shapes, where visitors are encouraged to use their bodies to engage with the artwork. Some of the spaces, such as “Boing Boing Universe,” require some significant physical effort as visitors “distort” the space by jumping or sliding to create nebulae and stars. In “Weightless Forest of Resonating Life,” large balloons become interactive objects of light, changing color upon human touch, with nearby balloons copying the behavior of each other in a chain, meaning that color traveling from balloon to balloon signals that someone else is there with you (Figure 5). It is a space that encourages you to explore the surroundings with your body, promoting creativity and spatial awareness: “Throwing one’s whole body into the art causes the border established between oneself and an artwork to become ambiguous—to melt away” (Aono 2018). Those preferring something more subdued flock to the “Sketch Aquarium,” where paper and crayons are provided for the creation of sea creatures, and visitors can then have their drawings scanned to become part of a digital aquarium—an act of experimental co-creation (Figure 6). Across the museum, Toshiyuki Inoko (one of the five founders of teamLab) and the team desire a connection between the visitors’ experience of the artwork and life outside it, where the ability to manipulate and alter the surroundings, and the knock-on effect of this for other visitors, serves to make people aware of their surroundings and the presence of others, and how the world might be changed through collective action.



Figure 5. Changing color in reaction to human touch, “Weightless Forest of Resonating Life” invites physical exploration, blurring boundaries between art/artist/visitor. Courtesy Stokes-Rees.

And indeed, in many ways it is impossible to visit the same museum twice. The museum is not called *Borderless* for nothing—the art moves freely. Walking down hallways, you might find yourself with interesting company, as a lively procession of performers joins you, only to fade as you reach your destination. The art is dynamic and constantly in motion. In just a few minutes, you can experience a change of scenery—a burst of purple flowers here, a shower of sunflowers there—even while standing in the same spot. Step back into that same flower forest a little later, and you might find that the seasons have changed. In another area, touching butterflies may cause them to scatter, and down the hall tapping a samurai on the shoulder will make him turn around, grunt, or fall asleep. One of the most popular works in the gallery is one of very few installations that actually takes place in a separate closed room, where 64 light beams dance together in a spectacular show. But, the animation sequence is only initiated when certain objects from other spaces, such as butterflies and crows, appear outside the room. In other words, the work is created out of visitors’ interactions—their presence alters the surroundings and the journey of the objects. In the words of Naoko Aono, one of the five founders of teamLab:

Normally, artworks in museums are separated by borders. In an exhibition of Van Gogh’s works, for example, a display of one of his *Sunflowers* alongside his *The Starry Night* would traditionally have the two separated by means of frames, a wall, and the like. At teamLab *Borderless*, the artworks jump out of the room in which they are originally located and move to another room, where they intermingle with the other works already there, and with the space they had previously filled being taken up by another artwork newly coming in. Through that act of intermingling and mixing with each other, communication results between the various works. By eradicating the “frame” of the display, the whole space transforms into an artwork that completely envelops all the viewers within. (Aono 2018)

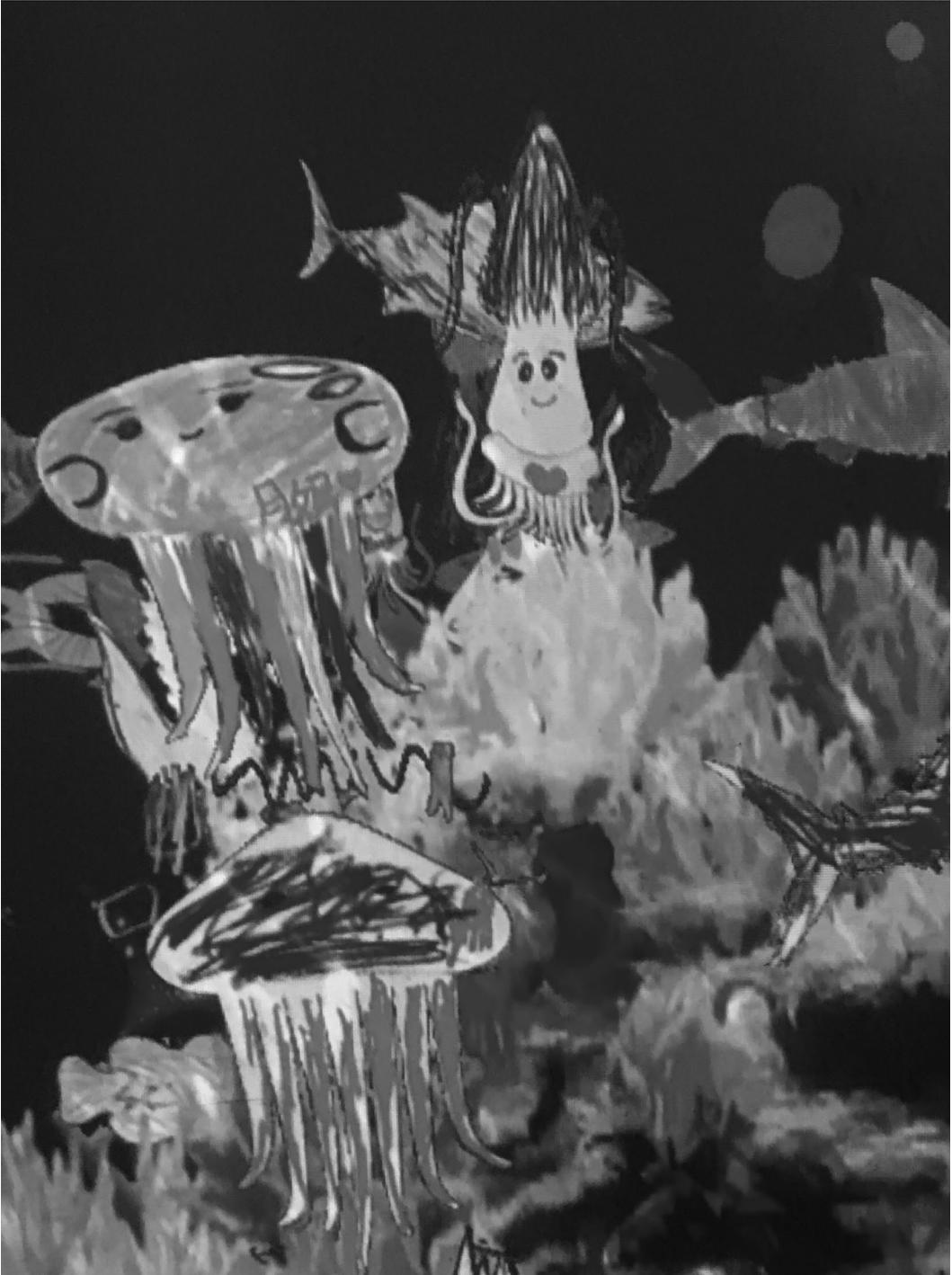


Figure 6. Visitors' drawings instantly become a co-created element of teamLab's installation. Courtesy Stokes-Rees



Figure 7. Art is in transit from space to space alongside visitors, and can be interacted with as an individual or group. Courtesy Stokes-Rees

As digital art exists outside of the constraints of materiality, in *teamLab Borderless* the building may be a significant physical structure, but somehow its presence—its walls and corridors and ceilings—melt into the background. There are no clearly defined or signposted spaces (other than the bathrooms and a small tearoom); the different worlds seamlessly blend into each other, and the function of the physical structure is rendered invisible. The effect is uncanny and stands in stark contrast to the countless iconic museum buildings of the twentieth century. One only need think of Solomon R. Guggenheim’s museum, designed in 1943 to house a collection of abstract art on a 5th Avenue corner in Manhattan, to appreciate the extent to which museum architecture in the twentieth century has frequently competed for attention with the collections on display. In a city short on outdoor spaces, moreover, teamLab blurs the boundaries between exterior and interior spaces—streetscapes are brought inside with parades of animals and musicians up and down the corridors, parks abound with butterflies and flowers—each internal space echoes the city’s traditional outdoor gathering places, opening a new perspective from which to think about the interface between interior and exterior, and how we conceive of city spaces.

The creative use of every part of the building’s interior further draws attention to one’s own movement from space to space—the act of transition—as if strolling down one of Tokyo’s busy city streets. These are also spaces where many of the artworks are also “in transit,” commuting from room to room as inhabitants move from place to place. Visitors might see parades of rabbits carrying frogs, rivers of lotuses, or cherry blossoms drifting through, or wandering animals made from golden flowers that scatter petals in their wake when touched (Figure 7). In incorporating the act of touch as so central to the exhibit, teamLab encourages seeing the actions of other people as part of the art. In an interview with *designboom*, teamLab commented that unlike in

a traditional museum where being alone is a blessing, in *Borderless* one inevitably pays more attention to the actions of other viewers—since the art is interactive—than you would looking at a traditional painting. And indeed, teamLab desires visitors to experience the art together and to interact with it both individually and as a group. They view this as an important unifying factor both of art and of the effect of people living in cities—if only there were interactive art all over the subways and crowded streets, teamLab suggests, perhaps we might all play with each other a bit more! In the words of Shuhei Senda:

In modern cities, the presence of other people around us as well as their unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior is often seen as an inconvenience to be endured. This is because the presence of each person and those in their vicinity do not have a visible effect on the city. If entire cities were to be wrapped in the type of digital art conceived of by teamLab, we believe that people would begin to see the presence of other residents in a more positive light. (Senda 2018)

Without a doubt, a key characteristic of life in Tokyo is the strict separation of one's workplace and residence, and the monotonous, repetitive, and interactionless transition between the two. This urban model results not only in long-distance commuting and consequent loss of free time for people, but also in the gradual removal of lifestyle culture and greenery from the urban environment. teamLab's desire is to play a part in the rebuilding of an urban culture that goes beyond providing a physical stage for the pursuit of economic activities, that requires citizens to make eye contact, and that points to the necessity of human interaction in the creation of cities that are more than the home–work divide and that also provide time to enjoy culture and restore nature—vitality—to the urban environment.

Conclusion

Embarking on a journey inside *teamLab Borderless*, it is hard not to get the impression that what one is experiencing is a completely new type of art and a new era of exhibitionary practice. What is static and predictable in traditional museums and exhibitions has evolved into a multi-dimensional, interactive experience stimulating the imagination and physical body in previously unknown ways. Most importantly, the artworks presented in the *Borderless* interiors are not the focus, but the people experiencing them and the world outside the exhibition's walls. The creators put visitors in the role of the “main character,” as they become the narrators and instigators of modern art and of the future of the natural and urban environments.

Centering on the concept of understanding the world through the senses and thinking of the world in 3D, *Borderless* presents us with a new genre of exhibit experience—an example of an extremely interesting change that can be observed in many kinds of cultural spaces: the transition from the role of a passive observer to participant and co-creator. teamLab's vision exemplifies a new conception of urban interiority that creates alternative spatial environments and social experiences within the exhibit realm. Blurring the boundaries between spaces, artworks, and the relationships between visitors, the art, and each other, moreover, teamLab's use of digital technology has allowed art to liberate itself from the physical and transcend boundaries. teamLab bridges the conceptual gap between humans and nature, and between oneself and the world: “One is in the other and the other in one. Everything exists in a long, fragile yet miraculous, borderless continuity of life.”⁴

*Emily Stokes-Rees,
Syracuse University*

NOTES

1. teamLab. n. d. “Ultrasubjective Space and Digital Art.” www.teamlab.art/?submit=Ultra+Subjective+Space (accessed 1 August 2019).
2. teamLab. n. d. “Biography.” www.teamlab.art/about/ (accessed 1 August 2019).
3. Creative Europe Desk. 2019. “Inside the World’s First Digital Art Museum” <https://transformwithceduk.com/2019/11/25/inside-the-worlds-first-digital-art-museum/> (Accessed 1 November 2019).
4. Paraphrased from <http://.borderless.teamlab.art> (accessed 1 August 2019).

REFERENCES

- Aono, Naoko. 2018. “The Vision of Toshiyuki Inoko, a Founder of teamLab.” *pen-online*, 29 August. <https://pen-online.com/arts/the-vision-of-toshiyuki-inoko-a-founder-of-teamlab/?scrolled=1>.
- Klonk, Charlotte. 2009. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Neil, Tim. 2018. “The Second Moment of Creation.” Episode 1 of the television series, *Civilizations*. Arlington, VA: PBS.
- O’Doherty, Brian. (1976) 1999. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Roppola, Tiina. 2011. *Designing for the Museum Visitor Experience*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Schubert, Karsten. 2009. *The Curator’s Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day*. London: Ridinghouse.
- Senda, Shuhei. 2018. “Borderless and Brilliant: teamLab’s Dreamlike Digital Art Museum Is now Open.” *designboom*, 15 July. www.designboom.com/art/teamlab-mori-building-digital-art-museum-open-interview-07-15-2018.
-

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

The Colmar Treasure: A Medieval Jewish Legacy

The Met Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

In the lower level of The Cloisters, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of medieval European ecclesiastical art and architecture, beyond the Gothic Chapel and past a tomb effigy of a Crusader, is a surprising exhibition: medieval Jewry from Colmar, France. But perhaps this juxtaposition is what makes the setting fitting after all.

Golden letters spelling "A Medieval Jewish Legacy" is welcoming for contemporary Jewish patrons who rarely see their stories told outside of dedicated museums. This is acknowledged in the catalogue's foreword: "[M]useums today face a particularly daunting challenge in giving adequate voice to the cultural heritage of the medieval Jewish population."

Introductory text explains that treasure was found in a wall and that clues point to the original owners as Jews living there when the street was called *rue des Juifs*, who must have hid their valuables when persecuted. This reflects a common history of European Jews: they were a merchant class living alongside Gentile neighbors until scapegoated and murdered.

The exhibition catalogue provides a chronology:

- 1347–1349: Jews are blamed for Black Plague; Colmar executes the community, and the Jews are forgotten
- 1863: A mortar is dislodged at Demangeont Confectionary and treasure is revealed
- 1863–1864: Dealer Meyer Dreyfus claims he acquired treasure from a goldsmith
- 1864: Dreyfus sells his treasure to Edmond Fleischhauer, prominent Colmar collector; Monsieur Demangeont (of the Confectionary) concludes that similar objects in his possession are from the same wall
- 1881: Fleischhauer records the circumstances of the sale
- 1896: Fleischhauer gives his treasure to Colmar's Musée Unterlinden; Demangeont gives treasure to his son
- 1923: Demangeont's son sells his share of the treasure to Musée de Cluny
- 1930: Musée de Cluny photographs the treasure
- Approx. 1940: Musée de Cluny identifies the treasure as Jewish

While information about specific Jews living in the house prior to 1347 is unknown, the catalogue describes the treasure as "uniquely Jewish" and notes the lack of Christian items. It lists tenuous affiliations that demonstrate how objects can be connected to medieval Jewry while simultaneously demonstrating assimilation into Christian culture: a ring with an onyx stone, which recalls a reference to a 1290 text about communicating with the dead written in Hebrew by a lapidary;¹ a star-and-crescent ring similar to a Jewish seal in Bavaria; several rings with sapphire, emerald, and turquoise—gems written about by a Jewish merchant in Venice between 1403 and 1404 and found on bishops' rings; decorative fasteners similar to those found on ecclesiastical garments; a trefoil pendant that echoes popular Gothic cathedral architectural trends;

a silver key, which is “too soft or valuable for a typical key,” understood to be a piece of jewelry and only able to open another box with objects forbidden for use on the Sabbath; and a Florin, the exact amount of the tax imposed on Jews.

The highlight of the Colmar Treasure is the “Jewish Ceremonial Wedding Ring ca. 1300–before 1348,” which is a “technically accomplished example of the goldsmith’s art” with delicate openwork and a dome-roofed building atop the bezel, whose six sides each feature Hebrew letters spelling *mazel tov*, a Hebrew phrase that expresses congratulations and wishes for good luck. The miniature building is described as mimicking the form of the lost Temple in Jerusalem and as a link to the marital home. The catalogue quotes a fourteenth-century rabbi regarding how rings were used within the marriage ceremony, but does not discuss this specific ring or design.

Establishing provenance for objects hidden by murdered peoples is difficult, and the catalogue notes that “details of the chance discovery are murky” and “intrigue, obfuscation and malfeasance followed close on the heels of discovery.” In this regard, Judaica scholars find similar rings suspicious. They say the purpose of the building-on-bezel rings is unknown, since this design is undocumented in Jewish law, literature, pictorial form, or even oral tradition, and have no link to ritual practice. Nor are similar rings in current use (Seidmann 1989), which is surprising, as Judaic rituals are usually consistent for centuries or even millennia. In that regard, Jewish law dictates that a wedding ring (a tradition beginning in the seventh century) include a continuous band without any breaks (Diamant 2001). Furthermore, the phrase *mazel tov* (found on several rings) was not used at weddings until the fifteenth century (Gutmann 2000). Perhaps these similar rings had purposes outside of the wedding ceremony. Similar rings cannot be traced to Jewish communities: no rings are associated with Jewish family names, they have no maker’s marks to localize them (an alternate explanation is that guilds forbade Jews from joining and were unable to register their marks), nor have they been passed down as heirlooms (Gutmann 2000; Seidmann 1981). These rings can only be definitively traced to sources outside of Jewish communities. While one appeared in the inventory of a (non-Jewish) Duke as early as 1598, the vast majority first appear in nineteenth-century documentation written by dealers and collectors who purchased them. These collectors and dealers knew that many of the rings on the market were fake. Dealer Octavius Morgan was quoted in the journal *Notes and Queries* (c. 1854) asking if “[these rings] are or ever were used in the Jewish marriage ceremony” after he was unable to find any information on them from the multitude of Jewish dealers and acquaintances he asked (Seidmann 1989), and a collector told cataloguer William Jones that he had “a *real* old one, as most of those now about are forgeries” (Gutmann 2000; Jones 1887). In the nineteenth century, Judaic objects became a craze for non-Jewish collectors due to their exotic yet familiar-looking European style (Seidmann 1981, 1989) and also for the growing European Jewish bourgeoisie who wanted to connect with their traditional past (Mendelsohn and Cohen 1990). Perhaps the rings were created for collectors and by the time they were acquired by dealers the truth was forgotten.²

For a people whose ancestral holidays are often about surviving destruction (Hanukkah, Purim, Tisha B’av) and displacement (Passover, Sigd) and whose more recent history follows similar themes (*pogroms*, the Holocaust), the story of a surviving buried treasure is especially compelling. Yet, as welcoming as it is to see Jewish history prominently featured, there is a less romanticized story that could also be told.

Blaire M. Moskowitz,
University of Leicester

NOTES

1. Personal communication with four conservative rabbis and scholars of Judaism who each said that this has no basis in Jewish theology; in contrast, Jews are not supposed to connect with or pray to the deceased, and there are rules even limiting visitation to a grave.
2. The catalogue mentions four other Jewish wedding rings, but omits the estimated 300 others (Gutmann 2000) found in museum collections around the world, including 15 in the collection of the Musée de Cluny (Seidmann 1981). The disputed provenances of many rings, including the one in this exhibition, are outlined in the British Museum's (n. d.) online collection page titled "Wedding-ring." One of the similar rings is also owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art yet goes unmentioned in this exhibition. This "Jewish Betrothal Ring" was included in the exhibition *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (2008–2009) and, during this time, at the urging of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, had its text amended to include "It is difficult to date and localize [the rings]," though the description remained "Venice or Eastern Europe, ca. 17th–19th century; Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917."

REFERENCES

- British Museum. n. d. "Wedding-ring." Online Collection. www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=36988&partId=1. (accessed 2 August 2019).
- Diamant, Anita. 2001. *The New Jewish Wedding*. New York: Scribner.
- Gutmann, Joseph. 2000. "With This Ring I Thee Wed": Unusual Jewish Wedding Rings." In *For Everything There Is a Season: Proceedings of the Symposium on Jewish Ritual Art*, ed. Joseph Gutmann, 133–146. Cleveland, OH: Cleveland State University.
- Jones, William. 1887. *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Finger-Ring Lore*. London: Chatto & Windus. <http://gutenberg.readingroom.ms/4/3/7/0/43707/43707-h/43707-h.htm> (accessed 6 August 2019).
- Mendelsohn, Ezra, and Richard I. Cohen, eds. 1990. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Art and Its Uses: The Visual Image and Modern Jewish Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. n. d. "Jewish Betrothal Ring." Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/193714 (accessed 2 August 2019).
- Seidmann, Gertrud. 1981. "Marriage Rings Jewish Style." *The Connoisseur* 206: 48–51.
- Seidmann, Gertrud. 1989. "Jewish Marriage Rings." In *The International Silver and Jewelry Fair and Seminar*, 29–34.
-

Shanghai Museum of Glass, Shanghai; Suzhou Museum, Suzhou; and PMQ, Hong Kong

Twenty-first century China continues to witness, and contribute to, a never-ending global museum boom. Many of its museums reflect and indicate a synthesis between tradition and modernity, which is also revealed through exhibitions displaying tremendous inclusiveness, tolerance, and diversity. Being able to participate in a four-month internship at Shanghai Museum provided me with great opportunities to explore various exhibitions in China, which are discussed in this review.

Ever since the concept of the "new museology" first began to challenge traditional museum philosophies from the late 1980s, more visitor-focused, engaging, and interactive exhibitions have encouraged two-way communication with audiences. This development is now also evident in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The "avant-garde exhibitions and space design"



Figure 1. Shanghai Museum of Glass (photograph by Moira Sun, 2019)

(Shanghai Museum of Glass n.d.) displaying glass art and design works at the Shanghai Museum of Glass (SHMOG) provides a good example of such an approach (Figure 1). Opened in 2011, the SHMOG has been transformed from the historical Shanghai Glassware Factory into a contemporary museum that retains remnants from the old factory. The permanent exhibition offers visitors, particularly young audiences, an interactive experience where knowledge can be transferred through the display of glass objects and artworks, video and lighting installations, engaging illustrations, as well as hands-on activities.¹ In addition, the Museum works in collaboration with well-known national and international glass artists and designers. By creating what might be considered nonlinear narrative spaces, the permanent exhibition enables dialogue between the past and the present regarding not only the architecture itself, but also the manufacture, development, and use, as well as the artistic creation, of glass and glassware. In addition, the showroom allows the general public to observe, or even participate in, live demonstrations of glassware-making by professionally trained staff.

Simultaneously, some exhibition concepts and formats at regional and provincial museums can be considered relatively conservative. The concept of “letting the object speak for itself” may be expressed through the core exhibition at Suzhou Museum (Figure 2). The exhibition contains four sections unified around the theme of Wu, as Suzhou City was considered the center of the Wu Region (12th century BCE–473 BCE) and one of the birthplaces of Wu culture. From excavated artifacts and ancient arts and crafts, to paintings and calligraphy from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, visitors walk through different galleries and “observe” the objects in their “protective” cases. The exhibition emphasizes the elegance and the aesthetic value of the objects.



Figure 2. Suzhou Museum (Photograph by Moira Sun, 2019)

The most popular visitor experience is through rather conventional audio guides or guided tours. Clearly, the exhibition practice here is underpinned by object-centred, education-focused, and academic-research-based approaches. It seems, however, that the architecture itself attracts much more attention than the exhibition does. Designed by the world-renowned architect I. M. Pei, the new museum, dedicated to traditional Chinese garden elegance, was completed in 2006. Described as “Chinese style with innovation and Suzhou style with creativity” (Novas, n.d.), this modern architecture not only interacts with, but also merges with, the surrounding Zhong Wang Fu palace complex, a national historic landmark. The structural design of the museum set within this entire landscape invites audiences to travel through time and visually experience the famous classical garden style of Suzhou. What is most appealing is the impression audiences get of the building being blended into a private space, while in fact they are walking inside and outside of a public museum with modern facilities. Inside the museum, we can see that Pei is a master of playing with light falling through glass and geometry, which has revitalized the tradition in which the architecture and landscape together “compete with” the collections of ancient Chinese art and artifacts (Prior 2003: 54). The landscape outside the museum undoubtedly receives great attention from the public, and indeed Suzhou has become one of the key attractions where people seek to experience the aesthetics of traditional Chinese gardens.

If museums today are cultural agents in society, then exhibitions can provide creative experiences that encompass meaning-making concepts. Located on Aberdeen Street, Hong Kong, PMQ has been known as the former Hollywood Road Police Married Quarters since the 1950s, and was originally the campus of the Central School (Figure 3). Since its transformation in 2014, the site has become an iconic creative landmark in central Hong Kong. Today, seven heritage spots have been restored and celebrated, which include the Exhibition Area. Featuring two exhibitions in the neighboring living units on the fifth floor, it interprets the transformation of PMQ through a timeline and it features a reinterpretation of the Police Married Quarters through information panels, videos, and installations. Another outstanding exhibition at PMQ is *Searching for the Spirit of Yau Ma Tei and North Point*, which is part of the Mapping My Neighbourhood Community Project. Featuring texts, video interviews, illustrations, photographs, as well as mini installations, this exhibition allows local students, creative artists, and community residents to document the two neighborhood sites Yau Ma Tei and North Point, and it invites visitors to actively “explore” the personalized interactive stories and memory-making documentation of two living units (HKICON 2019) as an alternative to seeing the latter through the eyes of curators, who often possess an “authoritative claim to knowledge” (Paddon 2016: 59). Comprising two main buildings named Staunton and Hollywood, PMQ is a revitalized heritage site, where studios, shops, workshops, and pop-up stores are set up in order to enable creative youngsters to showcase their art and design works. Members of the public can also experience how PMQ can serve as a hub where young, local, emerging designers and artists can communicate and collaborate with one another, and contribute to the neighborhood.

It has been an exceptional experience for me to discover a wide variety of exhibitions in China in 2019, from the more traditional form of presenting exhibits, through to engaging interactive exhibitions and new meaning-making practices. Within such a rich historical context, exhibitions and museums in China are expected to be constantly inspiring and can motivate the public to discover as much as they can. The juxtaposition between old and new, the past and the present, inevitably characterizes diverse exhibition practices in museums in China today, which, each in their own way, bring together tradition and modernity.

Moira Sun,
Victoria University of Wellington



Figure 3. PMQ (Photograph by Moira Sun, 2019)

NOTE

1. The permanent exhibition consists of three sections: four units (including “Unit One: What Is Glass?”; “Unit Two: Development of the Glass Technology and Craft”; “Unit Three: From Daily Lives to the Forefront of Science and Technology”; and “Unit Four: Proof of Artistic Creativity”), the Design Wing, and the Kids Museum of Glass.

REFERENCES

- HKICON (Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists). 2019. “Press Release—Searching for the Spirit of North Point and Yau Ma Tei.” www.hkicon.org/joomla/index.php/cpd-events/news/39-press-release-hkicon-exhibition (accessed 19 September 2019).
- Novas. n.d. “Suzhou Museum—A Masterpiece.” www.novas.com.au/projects/suzhou-museum (accessed 18 September 2019).
- Paddon, Hannah. 2016. “The Core Exhibition Team.” In *Redisplaying Museum Collections: Contemporary Display and Interpretation in British Museums*, 59–66. London: Routledge.
- Prior, Nick. 2003. “Having One’s Tate and Eating It: Transformations of the Museum in a Hypermodern Era.” In *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. Andrew McClellan, 51–76. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Shanghai Museum of Glass. n.d. “Permanent Exhibition: Shanghai Museum of Glass.” www.shmog.org/exhibitions/permanent-exhibitions/#kmog (accessed 13 September 2019).

The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology

Exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center Gallery in New York City (14 February–7 July 2019)
and the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, British Columbia (20 July–24 October 2019)

My Musqueam relatives stress the importance of knowing who you are and where you come from. In writing a review of the *The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology*, my close reading of this exhibition is informed by my experiences as a member of the Musqueam First Nation, a community which has also been engaging with the complex legacies of anthropology. *The Story Box* is an exhibition about the ongoing legacies of Franz Boas's *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1895), a book venerated within the discipline of anthropology partly because it took a novel approach to Indigenous material culture by placing it in a cultural context and because it promoted the notion of cultural relativism rather than social evolutionism.

The Story Box is concerned with revealing the conditions of research in the making of this book and in doing so, repositioning George Hunt as a coauthor rather than a mere “informant” of an emerging anthropological science. The exhibition aims to demonstrate how this book—along with Hunt's unpublished revisions—are being actively engaged with, drawn on, and interpreted by the contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw community. This rich and text-heavy exhibition adapted itself for two very different venues: the Bard Graduate Center Gallery (BGC), on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and the U'mista Cultural Centre in the village of Alert Bay on Cormorant Island, British Columbia.

At the BGC, visitors are greeted by an encased original copy of Boas's seminal text. The title wall features an excerpt from Boas's letter to the Kwagu'ł Chiefs:

It is good that you should have a box in which your laws and stories are kept. My friend, George Hunt, will show you a box in which some of your stories will be kept. It is a book I have written on what I saw and heard when I was with you two years ago. It is a good book, for in it are your laws and your stories. Now they will not be forgotten. (14 April 1897)

The exhibition builds on Boas's analogy of the book as a container by essentially opening this metaphorical box.

The relationship between Boas and Hunt is one of the most scrutinized (and oft-celebrated) researcher–informant relationships in the history of anthropology.¹ Hunt, the son of an English Hudson's Bay Company merchant and a Tlingit noblewoman, grew up at Fort Rupert, a Kwagu'ł village. Fluent in the Kwak'wala language, he twice married into the community.

Boas, a German Jewish immigrant to the United States, helped found professional anthropology, and, because of his vocal stance against racial inequality—particularly in regards to the poor treatment of African Americans and Jewish people—is celebrated as an early advocate of antiracism. He began studying the Kwakwaka'wakw in 1886. Boas and Hunt first met in 1888, working most closely from 1896 to 1905, and collaborating until Hunt's death in 1933. The book at the center of this exhibition was an integral part of their decades-long relationship, becoming a reference in their fieldwork and the subject of Hunt's ongoing revisions.

A tabletop display case contains Hunt's unpublished revisions, original correspondence between the pair, a sample of Boas's field notes, and his early articles on the Kwakwaka'wakw, which focused on ceremonial regalia and face-paint designs. These early articles, we learn,

form the foundation of the book. There is something special about seeing handwritten, personal copies, particularly in the case of Hunt's personal copy of the book with margin notes. Beginning in 1920, Hunt set out to correct the book's figure captions, and until his death in 1933 he substantially revised the original content with new object descriptions and histories of ownership.

We see how Hunt's research and interpretation diverged from that of Boas. For example, in one case two masks are displayed with competing interpretations. Boas classified these as Nułamał ("Fool") masks used in an associated dance, whereas Hunt argued that they were actually Sepa'xais ("Shining Down Sun Beam") masks connected to a specific mythology. Boas eventually partly accepted Hunt's revised interpretation. While the labeling only briefly demonstrates the profound challenges of classification and interpretation, this particular display foregrounds the value of Hunt's community connections that informed his own documentation practices. Within this space, Hunt is transformed from an informant into a dedicated scholar who should be credited as the coauthor of the book that he continually worked to improve.

The exhibition meticulously uncovers the conditions of the book's making, which were omitted from the book itself. For example, while some of the fieldwork took place in Kwakwaka'wakw territory, a significant portion was undertaken over three thousand kilometers away in Chicago at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition—a fact not mentioned in the book. On behalf of Boas, Hunt orchestrated a group of 20 Kwakwaka'wakw to travel to this World Fair and live in Chicago for seven months. Throughout their residency, Boas trained Hunt to transcribe Kwak'wala. Together, they documented songs, stories, and contextual information for material culture. Most of the materials brought to the Fair did not return with the delegation, instead ending up in the Field Museum's collection.

During their stay, Boas worked with a musicologist to record songs on 119 wax cylinders. In the exhibition, visitors can listen to three of these recordings along with contemporary performances of the same songs while viewing the associated excerpts from the book. This section links the work of Boas and Hunt to the recuperation and ongoing vitality of the Kwak'wala language and Kwak'wala song.

While this section of the exhibition demonstrates how heritage preservation was assisted, in others it is clear how Boas literally erased the contextual dimension of their research. By swiping across photos on a touchscreen, visitors can uncover how the images in the book were often composites or contain erased components to present what the exhibition text refers to as an "idealized view." These visual examples demonstrate that Boas sought to position the Kwakwaka'wakw in an "authentic" ethnographic present, where they are unaffected by the impacts of colonization.

This section also challenges our present-day conceptions of what was happening at World Fairs of this era—highlighting the agency of participants, rather than casting them as zoological specimens for a Western audience. At the time of the Fair, Indigenous ceremonial dances, songs, and rituals, like those being performed for Boas and Fair audiences, were illegal north of the 49th parallel. Canada's Potlatch Ban, a piece of legislation effective from 1885 to 1951, banned Indigenous ceremonial gatherings and rituals that were (and continue to be) central to Indigenous forms of governance; those breaching this law faced confiscation of their ceremonial masks and regalia, and imprisonment. As such, traveling to Chicago in part to circumvent the Potlatch Ban was an audacious form of refusal.²

The book also served as a guide to Boas and Hunt's collection building for the American Museum of Natural History. The carved backrest of a settee (Figure 1) commanded an imposing presence at the BGC³—as it would have in its context in the longhouse of its original owner, Chief Q'alaidi, representing his wealth and status. For its current display, new sides were fashioned out of glass by Corrine Hunt. Her great-grandfather George Hunt did not bother to collect the



Figure 1. Settee back, unknown Kwakwaka'wakw maker. Collected by George Hunt in 1898–1899. Wood, pigment, metal. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, 16/7964, with additional sides created by Corrine Hunt, 2019. Image courtesy of BGC. Photographer Bruce M. White.

original sides because they were made of commercially milled lumber, and thus would not meet Boas's criteria for "authenticity." The accompanying label indicates the history of its acquisition:

Hunt spent two years during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition trying to purchase the piece, which was still in active use. In the end, Hunt asked a creditor to call in the owner's debts so that he might be compelled to sell it for a much lower price than initially offered.

As Douglas Cole, a historian of museums' amassing of Northwest Coast collections, has noted, "Hunt's advantage as a collector was this insider's position" (1995: 160). An excerpt from a letter to Boas on the BGC gallery wall also demonstrates this maneuvering: "I cant get any cedar Bark yet for the Indians would not sell them yet for [they] are using them yet in [their] winter Dance. As soon as [they're] Done With the Dance and use of the cedar Bark then [they] will sell it for Half the Price." On the one hand, we can read this as Hunt being sensitive to ongoing community use. On the other, it could be interpreted as him descending on community members at the opportune moment to get what he (and Boas) wanted.

These two examples raise challenging questions about the ethics of collecting. With the settee, the original owner consented to its sale but under duress. What are we supposed to make of this rather predatory approach to acquiring this object? How do Kwakwaka'wakw community members today reconcile Hunt's aggressive collecting strategies with his scholarly achievements?

While presenting these examples, the exhibition does not probe too deeply this murky terrain. In this way, it could have benefited from more contemporary community voices. These two collecting histories provide a glimpse into another less-than-flattering behavior that is not fully examined in *The Story Box*. It is relatively well-known that Boas and Hunt both engaged in the removal of objects and ancestral remains from burials. An oft-cited quote from Boas is telling: “It is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but what is the use, someone has to do it” (quoted in Cole 1995: 308). Anthropologist Margaret Bruchac’s (2014) examination of Hunt’s correspondence with Boas reveals that, at times, his grave-collecting and collaboration with Boas jeopardized his standing within the Kwakwaka’wakw community. That Hunt is undoubtedly a complicated figure is well conveyed in *The Story Box*. And yet, it feels like a missed opportunity that this portion of Hunt and Boas’s history was not more directly addressed, especially given the intent of the exhibition to reveal the circumstances of their research and to elevate Hunt as a scholar.

The exhibition successfully lays bare what Boas sought to conceal: the sociopolitical context of his and Hunt’s fieldwork and, in particular, Canada’s forceful attempts to assimilate Indigenous people. Simultaneously, Boas is celebrated for his antiracism through his development of cultural relativism, which was informed in part by his Kwakwaka’wakw fieldwork. This feels like a contradiction of sorts, as Boas’s research and collecting was motivated by his belief in the inevitable decline and disappearance of Indigenous peoples. This presumed decline, however, was the result of the ongoing displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands at the hands of the settler state. Indeed, it is only because of such processes (including the Potlatch Ban) that his anthropological inquiries and large-scale collecting could take place.⁴ In essence, Boas’s “antiracism” took Indigenous dispossession and disappearance as a given. The base conditions of Boas and Hunt’s research, then, was settler colonialism. As such, the exhibition could have offered critical questions relating to Boas’s legacy, rather than positioning him as a champion of progressive ideals and as a savior of Kwakwaka’wakw culture. Furthermore, this prompts the question: Can the lives, history and culture of the Kwakwaka’wakw (and other Indigenous nations of the Northwest Coast) exist without being in relation to Franz Boas? What would *The Story Box* have been as an exhibition were it to have radically decentered Boas?

Restoring Hunt to the status of coauthor, rather than informant, subject, or consultant, helps counter the glorification of Boas. An important move that encourages viewers to question the conditions of not only this particular book, but of other foundational anthropological representations: Who are the other Indigenous “informants” who have been relegated to the back pages and footnotes of the discipline while institutionally affiliated anthropologists have openly received credit, professional advancement, and economic gains? It is worth questioning how often the intellectual labor of Indigenous people *still* gets relegated to “informant” status today.⁵

And yet, given the objective to give credit where it is due, Bruchac’s (2014) critical reading of the Hunt–Boas archive also unveils the exclusion of Hunt’s wives, Lucy Homikanis and Tsukwani Francine ‘Nakwaxda’xw, from the credit lines. Neither Hunt’s wives nor his mother, Mary Ebbetts (Anislaga), are represented in the exhibition, aside from a brief mention of his first wife, Lucy. This is an uncomfortable omission, as it is through his wives that he gained entry into the Kwagu’ł and other Kwakwaka’wakw communities, just as it was through Hunt that Boas gained acceptance among the Kwakwaka’wakw. As we work to correct the prejudices of past knowledge acquisition, we must also ask: where are the women, and why does their labor go unacknowledged in *The Story Box*?

An examination of replicas and reproductions of the objects documented in the book shifts away from questions of authorship and brings us to how the Kwakwaka’wakw are responding to the book today. We discover that the book’s publication inspired the manufacturing of commer-



Figure 2. Installation view of Transformation Mask by Corrine Hunt and David Mungo Knox. Image courtesy of Bard Graduate Center. Photographer Bruce M. White.

cial replicas in the early 1900s. Some of these fabrications have ended up in prominent museum collections misclassified as authentic works from other cultural groups. In contrast to this history, the exhibition presents objects from the book reproduced by community members today. These are referred to as “new iterations” to counter the category of “reproduction,” because these represent ongoing privileges and are often used in ceremonial contexts. One such iteration is a stunning transformation mask representative of a supernatural killer whale, carved by Corrine Hunt and David Mungo Knox, mounted in front of a video installation depicting the beach at Fort Rupert and providing a sense of the place from which it originates (Figure 2). The original was collected in 1881 by Johan Adrian Jacobsen for the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, with its subsequent illustration in Boas’s book providing limited provenience. Hunt’s revisions, however, divulge that the mask originally belonged to his first wife, Lucy. Through this genealogical connection, Hunt’s descendants, including Corrine, have the right to recreate this mask and dance it at an upcoming feast. At U’mista, this mask is prominently placed at the exhibition entrance, foregrounding the theme of reconnection. The presentation of this mask seems especially important in terms of conveying community reclaiming, reactivating, and recuperating knowledge and practices from colonial repositories. While a label discusses repatriation efforts led by the Kwakwaka’wakw for the return of their material heritage, this example demonstrates that returns can take on different forms through community activation.

This exhibition folds into a larger research project known as the Franz Boas / George Hunt 1897 Critical Edition Project, whose international research team, which includes Kwakwaka’wakw community members, is bringing together widely dispersed materials and

publishing Hunt's amendments almost one hundred years after he set out to correct the 1897 book. As this densely packed exhibition is a snapshot of the team's research, one can imagine that the resulting expanded book and website will be an incredibly rich and valuable resource for the Kwakwaka'wakw community.

The exhibition closes with a short documentary by Marina Dodis and Aaron Glass, *Opening the Story Box: Reflections on George Hunt and Franz Boas* (2019). This is one of the highlights of the exhibition, featuring interviews and verité footage of several of Hunt's descendants reflecting on the legacy of Hunt and Boas's work in their community. In one particularly beautiful and intimate scene, Andy Everson, an accomplished artist, applies face paint to his young son, using a figure from the book as his guide. We hear Hunt's grandsons observing that their ancestors' circumvention of the Potlatch Ban was a genius move. The video, along with a pamphlet featuring an extended informal dialogue between Glass and Corrine Hunt, left me longing for more direct community perspectives to be incorporated through the rest of the exhibition. The comments in the film and printed dialogue are readily accessible and engaging. They have a sense of *feeling*. The label text, however, is dense, detailed, and technical, often requiring repeated readings. It left me wondering about the exhibition's intended audience, given that it traveled from the academic setting of the BGC to the community context of U'mista. Would the community members implicated in this story box find the label text accessible and relevant to them?

Otherwise, the exhibition design was effective; from large-scale maps to the muted color palette that allowed projections, images, and objects to maintain adequate presence. While dense, neither the BGC nor the U'mista version felt claustrophobic. The most striking aspects are Corrine Hunt's design contributions, which really constitute artistic installations. This is especially the case with large, embellished pages hovering below the ceiling, which she describes when she says that "the dynamism of the stories come out of this box—the pages are floating again in the universe for us to grab. I see it as a book that has wings."

Because this exhibition is about anthropological research, authorship, and credit, it is important to comment on the authorship of the exhibition. To be sure, it is evident that members of the Kwakwaka'wakw community were involved in the making of this exhibition and, as stakeholders and collaborators, in the Critical Edition project. At BGC, Glass is listed as the sole curator of the exhibition; at U'mista, Glass is not credited, instead the collaboration between the two partner institutions is prioritized. Given the intent of the exhibition to establish Hunt as a coauthor, it seems an odd oversight that the curatorial process and its authorship does not fully represent the collaboration that it is seeking to highlight. This is particularly felt in the impact of the contribution of Corrine Hunt, who was not prominently credited in the gallery.

Ultimately, *The Story Box* leads to larger questions about how we grapple with the colonial legacy of anthropological and museum collecting. The exhibition is effective in demonstrating how Kwakwaka'wakw people today are recuperating materials from museums and archives, mobilizing "historical" materials for their lives today. The challenge, then, is how to recognize this important work without validating or endowing the anthropologist or collector with a type of prescience. What resonates strongly—particularly at U'mista—is that the Kwakwaka'wakw and other Indigenous peoples persist as sovereign, collective nations contrary to the narratives of cultural loss and disappearance that informed Boas's (and Hunt's) work. The U'mista Cultural Centre is living proof of this resilience.⁶ If the exhibition is any indication, there are more revelations to be had as the Critical Edition team continues to probe Hunt and Boas's research and collecting and to encourage critical dialogue.

Jordan Wilson,
New York University

NOTES

1. See Isaiah Wilner (2015).
2. For an in-depth examination of this history, see Paige Raibmon (2005).
3. This piece was only present as a photographic reproduction in the U'mista exhibition.
4. These observations are indebted to Audra Simpson's (2018) important intervention into the discourse surrounding Boas's antiracism.
5. For a salient discussion of this issue, particularly in regards to how Indigenous knowledge is often filtered through the lens of white male anthropologists, see Zoe Todd (2016).
6. According to their website, in Kwakwaka'wakw, U'mista means "the return of something important." The Centre was founded on the occasion of the repatriation of masks and ceremonial regalia that were confiscated during a raid of a 1921 Potlatch hosted by the late Dan Cranmer. This exhibition speaks to how the work to return objects and knowledge continues. See <https://www.umista.ca/> for more information.

REFERENCES

- Boas, Franz. 1895. "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians." In *Report of the United States National Museum for the Year Ending June 30, 1895*, 309–738, 215 figs, 51 pls. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006084829>.
- Bruchac, Margaret. 2014. "My Sisters Will Not Speak: Boas, Hunt, and the Ethnographic Silencing of First Nations Women." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 57 (2): 153–171. doi:10.1111/cura.12058.
- Cole, Douglas. 1995. *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Raibmon, Paige. 2005. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Simpson, Audra. 2018. "Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, The Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession," in *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas*, ed. Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Wilner, 166–181. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Todd, Zoe. 2016. "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29 (1): 4–22. doi:10.1111/johs.12124.
- Wilner, Isaiah. "Friends in This World: The Relationship of George Hunt and Franz Boas." In *The Franz Boas Papers, Volume 1: Franz Boas as Public Intellectual—Theory, Ethnography, Activism*, ed. Regna Darnell, Joshua Smith, Michelle Hamilton, and Robert Hancock, 163–190. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015.