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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## COVER IMAGE

Heather McLaren, *Self Portrait; For Remembrance*, 2016  
Oil paint on board, 1290 x 680mm

Heather's work exists as a kind of self-portraiture exploring the world of memory, existence, identity, imagination, nostalgia, inner and real landscapes, what's seen and unseen. As conveyed in images in her paintings our lives are full of memories, disparate yet connected. She draws from her own early life as a child growing up in the late 1960s. She uses personal photographs and memories that have stayed vivid in her mind to explore painting, creating a kind of 'psychological landscape'. The idea of a painted surface being a world she can unfold as she likes engages her immensely. Her work harks back to ideas behind expressionism though rendered in a more realistic manner. She fractures conventional tendencies of the natural progression of foreground, midground and background in her work, preferring ambiguous compositions. Her style often sits on the edge of drawing and painting and seeks to reveal tension and personal vulnerability. She sees her work as a foil against our fast shifting increasingly technologically dominated impersonal world. In 2016 Heather completed a BFA from the University of Canterbury.

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Nadia Gush

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# ETHICS AND PUBLIC HISTORY.

## Editorial.

The *New Zealand Journal of Public History* aspires to disseminate and facilitate discussion, as well as generate debate, surrounding the practice of public history. Following the publication of the third issue of the journal in late 2015, the editorial collective decided that this might be achieved most effectively through annual issues dedicated to themes particularly pertinent to the practice of public history in New Zealand. Reflecting the shift in focus, this issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Public History* (NZJPH4) has the theme of ethics. This speaks to the greater awareness of ethics as a facet of historical practice to the fore for many public historians as a result of the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes.<sup>1</sup>

Recent earthquakes disproportionately affecting Kaikōura and the surrounding environs similarly remind us of the tensions between ethical considerations and the practice of public history in the most tangible of ways. When Kaikōura's Elms Homestead collapsed as a result of the 14 November earthquake, heritage — but also the life of one of the owners who was inside at the time of collapse — was tragically lost. The Elms Homestead was a Category 2 Heritage New Zealand building, significant as an 'early and extensive example of mass concrete construction' and as a window into 'the social and economic relations of a nineteenth century sheep station'.<sup>2</sup> The Homestead, dating from the 1870s, was not able to withstand the 7.8 magnitude quake. Whether or not a younger building would have fared better in its place, such disasters remind us that heritage preservation is not without risk, and in turn requires ethical handling.

NZJPH4 offers a range of commentaries spotlighting the relationship between ethics and public history. Megan Hutching reflects on oral history, drawing on her experience as an oral historian to consider the risks of the interview process and the ethical ways in which we might address them. Chloe Searle considers the relationship between deaccessioning and museum ethics, drawing on her experiences working as a social history curator at the North Otago Museum in Oamaru. Searle proposes that deaccessioning is, in many contexts, the only ethical way forward for regional museums. Nadia Gush provides a commentary on the ethics of persuasion in participatory museum environments, reflecting on the significance of collaboration as a means of

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks are extended to Sarah Murray for suggesting this theme.

<sup>2</sup> Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 'The Elms Farm Complex (Former)' <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7693> [accessed 26/11/16].

## Editorial.

ensuring ethical practice. Alison Laurie considers the ethics of ‘outing’ historical subjects who may not have been open about their same-sex attraction while they were alive. Drawing on her experiences researching lesbian history, Laurie demonstrates that the only ethical option is to tell the full story. In a sense a series of case studies, these four commentaries offer insights with wider significance for the practices of public history in museums and elsewhere.

NZJPH4 also offers up our first summary of recent higher degree student research. Megan Wells discusses the research project undertaken towards her MA in Museum Studies at Massey University, ‘Collection-Based Research in Museums: Understanding, Structure, Visibility’.

In addition to this, Sara Buttsworth reviews the Auckland War Memorial Museum’s temporary exhibition *Home Front: Experiences of the First World War in New Zealand*; Dan Morrow reviews *The Lives of Colonial Objects*; Gail Adams-Hutcheson reviews *Christchurch Ruptures*, and Chloe Searle reviews *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*.

A tight turnaround for this issue of the journal means that special thanks are due to those contributors who found the time to produce a manuscript at short notice. I also wish to thank Fiona Martin for excellent assistance with copy-editing, and Heather McLaren for providing the cover image for this issue of the journal.

Nadia Gush, Editor.

## ETHICS AND ORAL HISTORY.

Megan Hutching.

When I am tutoring practical oral history workshops, I always say that it is important to remember the ‘golden rule’ when you are an interviewer: treat the people you interview the way in which you would like to be treated yourself. It is the most basic, but essential, imperative of oral history interviewing. As interviewers we use people for our own ends, and we need to continuously reflect on our own practice, maintaining a good understanding of the ethical issues involved.

When a good interviewer records personal narratives, there is an appearance of intimacy that blurs the distinctions between ‘research’ and ‘personal relations’. We are warm and engaged, we ask the people we interview to tell us intimate things about their personal lives that they would tell only to those with whom they were very familiar — if they would tell anyone at all. And yet we use that information for our research. We reproduce it publicly, or put it in an archive where others completely unrelated to the original interview process can use it for their own research. Oral history interviews seem to be a dialogue which includes both the interviewer and the person interviewed in a joint project to understand something, yet the interview is structured by the researcher’s purposes, and the final product reflects the researcher’s interpretations and is written from the researcher’s perspective. Interviewers do not usually tell the people they interview about themselves, either. The person interviewed may feel that all they have told is the story of their life, but once the interview is archived it can be used by different researchers for different purposes, to support or oppose different arguments. Taken out of the context of a long interview, the original interviewee’s authorial control of their life is completely removed.

Despite having been involved in the full interview process, even the original interviewer can stumble in their interpretation of an interview. Katherine Borland for example, recorded an interview with her grandmother that resulted in a strong disagreement between interviewer and interviewee. After the interview, Borland’s grandmother disagreed with Borland’s feminist interpretation of an anecdote about a trip to the races.<sup>1</sup> Borland’s grandmother wrote in response that Borland’s interpretation of the story as ‘a female struggle for autonomy within a hostile male environment’ was distorted and

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine Borland, ‘That’s Not What I Said’: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research’ in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 320-32.

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that, while the skeleton remained, Borland had taken her grandmother's story and made it her own.<sup>2</sup> In other words, there are power relations involved in oral history interviewing, and it is important to think about them and understand the implications.

In *A Shared Authority*, and also in his later essay 'From a Shared Authority to the Digital Kitchen and Back', Michael Frisch has written about how we might overcome these disparities.<sup>3</sup> He stresses that as users of oral history interviews, we must not only think about the answers to questions, but also about what questions were asked and who was asking them. The idea of a shared authority is a useful concept. We may congratulate ourselves on sending transcripts or abstracts (detailed contents summaries) of interviews back to the person interviewed to revise and annotate, but Borland's reflections on how we then analyse the interview and the effect that has on how the interviewee has understood their life, cannot be ignored. Borland has surmised that if she had talked to her grandmother about her ideas and given her grandmother drafts of the article, 'her sense of having been robbed of textual authority might not have been as strong as it was.'<sup>4</sup>

To help overcome some of these ethical difficulties, the National Oral History Association of New Zealand developed a Code of Ethical & Technical Practice which lays out, in a common sense way, things that interviewers and project organisers should think about when embarking upon an oral history research project.<sup>5</sup> There are two areas of particular importance. The first involves making sure that the people who are to be interviewed understand why the interviews are being recorded, and also how they will be used. The potential interviewee should be told that they do not have to answer all the questions if they do not wish, and be reminded of their responsibilities under New Zealand's privacy laws. In other words, interviewers must ensure that the proposed interviewees are giving informed consent when they agree to take part in the project. But even when great care is taken to explain how a project will work, and informed consent has been received from the participants,

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<sup>2</sup> Borland, "That's Not What I Said", p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Michael Frisch, 'From a Shared Authority to the Digital Kitchen and Back' in *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Kolowski (Philadelphia: The Kew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011), pp. 126-37.

<sup>4</sup> Borland, "That's Not What I Said", p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/index.php/ethics-and-practice/>.

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power dynamics remain and require consideration. When recording the history of an organisation, for example, can you be sure that the suggested interviewees really want to take part? Do they feel under some obligation because of their loyalty to the institution? Has their consent to be interviewed really been given voluntarily?

The second important aspect of the Code of Ethical & Technical Practice concerns the signed recording agreement form which allows the person interviewed to have some control over how and where their interview may be used and published.<sup>6</sup> Again, it is something that needs to be discussed before any recording takes place, but ensuring that interviewees truly understand the form and the consequences of putting no conditions on access and publication is not straightforward. Make it sound too complicated, and the potential interviewee may take fright and refuse to take part; be too casual and encourage them to leave their interviews open, and the possibility of them unexpectedly hearing their voices out of context on a website somewhere is increased. Thoughtful preparation and consideration of the issues involved helps to allay the concerns raised above, but even the most carefully planned and documented interview research project can come unstuck – because it is people, and their memories, that we are dealing with.

Some years ago, while working for the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, I interviewed Second World War veterans about their experiences, publishing the heavily edited interviews in thematic books. I was careful to return the chapters to each person for their comments and amendments, and to get their agreement to publish. After the publication of one of the books, I was contacted by a number of veterans who told me that it was impossible for the experiences recounted by one of the people interviewed to have occurred. Taking into account his unit and their own knowledge of the events, he simply could not have been where he said he was and experienced what he told us in the interview. It is any historian's nightmare to uncover unreliability in a source after publication. But this discrepancy also provides us with an opportunity for deeper understanding of memory, interviewing, and ethics. At the time, I told the people who contacted me that we had recorded this person's memories of this particular time and that, for him, those memories were real. I suspect that they were not convinced by this explanation.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/index.php/resources/>.

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While his memories were real, I began to wonder whether they were true, and if not, was that a problem? To begin with, there is the issue of ‘truth’. As an experienced interviewer, I knew that one person’s memories of an event can differ greatly from another who has experienced the same event, and that this has to do with personality, with emotions, with relationships with other people involved, and with age. Truth is a slippery notion when it comes to remembering the past, but as Paul Thompson has written, ‘what the informant believes is indeed a *fact* ... just as much as what “really happened”.’<sup>7</sup> Our memories are often shaped by subsequent events. I firmly believe that for this man, he did remember that he had been where he said and had experienced those events. He had suffered terrible ongoing mental anguish from his war experiences, which I believe influenced his recounting of the story. I imagine his internal narrative was something along the lines of, ‘I had to have done something worthwhile to make this subsequent anguish bearable’. In Alessandro Portelli’s words, it is the meaning for the person interviewed that is significant: ‘memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active creation of meanings’.<sup>8</sup> In other words, people try to make sense of their experiences by placing them in story lines which make them meaningful to themselves, and also to the oral historian who is interviewing them. As Anna Green explains, ‘remembering is a complex process. Our brains do not store literal snapshots of the past that we can call up upon demand. Memories are partial and fragmented, and in the process of reassembling them for others we decide what to include or exclude. We also seek to make meaningful connections between the present and the past.’<sup>9</sup>

As oral historians, we should not confuse facts and truth. Every interview we record is truthful in the sense of being a true reflection of that person, being interviewed by that interviewer, at that particular time, in the context of the topic, engagement between the two, how the interviewee and interviewer were feeling on that day, the physical surroundings, and the background events affecting both people’s lives. Interviewees might exaggerate – or they might be so modest that they do not tell you about their heroic exploits. It is our

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<sup>7</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 52, cited in Kathleen Blee, ‘Evidence, Empathy and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan’, in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 335.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Green, ‘Oral History and History’ in *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, ed. by Anna Green and Megan Hutching (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), p. 11.

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responsibility as interviewers to make sure that our research before the interview is extensive enough for us to be an informed questioner and record an interview which allows the person interviewed to tell their story in a way which reflects their experiences. At the same time, we need to be aware both that 'human memory is fallible and – when we approach the oral history document *critically* – trustworthy.'<sup>10</sup> The advantage of using oral history interviews as a research methodology is the ability they give the researcher to analyse what has and has not been said and why, and to fit that into our own interpretations.

In my experience, interviews are always a combination of facts and truth, and we should both recognise that and not let it hinder our practice. We can approach our work ethically by putting ourselves in the other person's shoes, by considering what it means to be interviewed, to have that interview archived for researchers to use, and by discussing those issues with the people we interview.

**Megan Hutching is an Auckland-based freelance historian and oral historian.**

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<sup>10</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005), p. 36.

## DEACCESSIONING AND MUSEUM ETHICS.

Chloe Searle.

Deaccessioning does not mean just throwing items away. The reason I work in museums is because I have a deep passion for collections, so my advocacy for deaccessioning is motivated by a desire to manage these collections well. In a museum context ‘deaccessioning’ refers to the formal removal of an object from the museum’s permanent collection. The removal may mean that the object is transferred to another museum, or returned to the donor, or it may be disposed of or destroyed. There are a variety of reasons why something might be deaccessioned from the collection, including duplication or damage. Sometimes an object might be removed because a museum’s collection management policy has changed, and the object no longer falls within the current policy. Because deaccessioning can look to outsiders like throwing things away, when it comes to museums and ethics, deaccessioning is sure to cause debate.

Much international scholarship around deaccessioning focuses on situations where valuable artworks are deaccessioned to generate operational funds<sup>1</sup>. In a New Zealand small museum context it is quite different. Debate is more likely to arise around deaccessioning items because they do not fit the museum’s collection management policy. For some, the whole idea of removing objects that were selected for collection in the past is inappropriate. Beyond that there may also be an anxiety from the community that important items will be deaccessioned and that the district’s history, given to the museum to safeguard, will instead be thrown away. It is on these grounds that disagreements over deaccessioning can arise.

However, in my experience it is unethical to not consider deaccessioning. A motivation behind my Museum and Heritage Studies Masters research was the realisation that museums have limited resources and that current collecting practices are unsustainable. They are unsustainable environmentally, economically, and in terms of ensuring that the collections are relevant to the museum’s community. With this in mind, in ‘Collecting for New Zealand: Examining what the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Should Collect’, I attempted to understand what makes an object worthy of retention by a museum.<sup>2</sup> I hoped that this understanding could also assist in addressing

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<sup>1</sup> In New Zealand, the Museum Aotearoa Code of Ethics 2013 advises against this practice.

<sup>2</sup> Chloe Searle, ‘Collecting for New Zealand: Examining what the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Should Collect’ (unpublished MMHS thesis: Victoria University of Wellington, 2010).

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its inverse question: what makes an object worthy of disposal by a museum? In brief I found that it is the significance of an item that makes it worth collecting, and that while significance is subjective, it can still be assessed. Ethics are central to deaccessioning in an appropriate manner. Although operating ethically is not a guarantee against controversy, it is important that each individual museum's deaccessioning project is conducted ethically. Working in an ethical manner helps other museums in the future when they decide to deaccession something, as the community will have greater trust in the process. Typically in New Zealand, deaccessioning projects are conducted away from the public eye out of a desire to avoid negative publicity. However this clandestine approach can make deaccessioning appear worse than it is. The perception can be: why else would it need to be kept quiet? I am pleased that the museum I work for, the North Otago Museum in Oamaru, has recently publicly raised the prospect of deaccessioning as part of discussions around the development of our Museum and the limited space we have for collection items. At a recent stakeholder engagement meeting, Director Jane Macknight directly raised the issue of deaccessioning some items from the Museum collection, and suggested that the Museum should not function as the community attic.

Museums Aotearoa, New Zealand's professional association for public museums and art galleries, has produced a Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. This document includes principles related to deaccessioning. The first responsibility listed for museum and gallery managers is that 'there is a strong presumption that all items, once accepted into a given collection, will be maintained in optimum conditions, protected by good record-keeping and security systems and held in trust for the public and/or on behalf of iwi'.<sup>3</sup> Given this principle, museums need to exercise caution around what they accept in the first place. However, many existing museum collections are of uneven quality. Our Museum and many others contain items that, if they were offered us today, would be declined. If an item would not be accepted by the museum today I believe it needs to be considered for potential deaccessioning. An example at our Museum is an item catalogued as 'Broken leg, metal'. This item was accessioned in 1978 and it is believed to be part of a school desk. It was broken when it was accessioned and there is no record of who gave it to the Museum or what school it came from. At the same time several other near-identical items that are not broken were also accessioned. We would not

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<sup>3</sup> Museums Aotearoa te Tari o Ngā Whare Taonga o te Motu, *Code of Ethics and Professional Practice* (Museums Aotearoa, 2013), p.9.

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accept this item today, and I believe we should consider deaccessioning it given that it will not be exhibited and it is not of research value.

The Museums Aotearoa Code of Ethics highlights the importance of each museum's collection management policy in relation to deaccessioning as well as to other collection activities. Many small museums in New Zealand focus their collecting in one of two ways. They are either a subject museum, such as aviation or rail museums, or they focus on collecting items from a particular location. At the North Otago Museum our collection management policy states that 'The Museum's primary collection objective is to encourage an appreciation and understanding of the Waitaki District's cultural and natural heritage. The Museum will assemble collections that fulfil this aim.' In practice it is not always easy to identify which items meet this objective.

The Waitaki District shares many aspects of its heritage with the wider Otago district, with New Zealand, and with the world. Mass production and globalisation mean many items are not restricted to one location. For our Museum this is particularly clear when we look at our collection of technological items such as irons, washing machines, telephones and typewriters. Without doubt they are part of our district's cultural heritage, given that they were used locally and they can be used to examine the lives of people in this district in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but how many irons do we need to hold? Do we need to hold any at all? Or can photographs, newspaper advertisements and oral histories better capture that history? Given that these were household items, museums can end up with large numbers of these objects. Our Museum has at least 68 irons. Many of them are duplicates and most do not have any information recorded about who used them. This situation is replicated across other small museums. Rather than each museum continuing to duplicate material collected by other museums, a better approach is sharing collections. This is yet to occur on a large scale in New Zealand. It would be possible for museums to work together and decide to hold certain types of items but not others. For example one might focus on telephones while another collects irons, with an agreement to make them available to each other as required. Potential barriers include the logistics of moving collection items and making decisions about who will collect the larger items such as washing machines, given that most museums have limited space. Our museum has recently commenced some discussions with the South Canterbury Museum about the possibility of shared collections.

Today most New Zealand museums have collection management policies to focus their collecting and, despite the challenges of deciding what fits those

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policies, overall collecting by small museums is more tightly focussed than it was in the past. This leaves many museums, ours included, with the legacy of salvage collecting. This salvage mode of collecting can be summed up by the approach taken by our Museum's predecessor, the North Otago Pioneer Gallery. In the 1950s the committee's approach was to accept all old pieces offered and these items are still in our collection today. The Museum Aotearoa Code of Ethics notes that 'No items are to be disposed of without careful consideration under the terms of an approved policy relating to the deaccessioning and disposal of collections ... Policies will provide clear reasons for deaccessioning, which might include irretrievably damaged collections or items of unknown origin, or of no value within or relevance to the collection'.<sup>4</sup> Some of the collection items from the Pioneer Gallery days have no value within the collection. Many of the 68 irons mentioned above would fit that definition. However, despite the guidance of the Museums Aotearoa Code of Ethics and our collection management policy, deaccessioning can still be controversial. My view and those of my co-workers on what is not relevant to the collection will differ from the views of others. I sometimes encounter this when declining items offered to the Museum. People can feel that because something is old that alone is a justification for it to be collected by a museum. Part of the ethics of collecting is communicating with people about what we do and do not collect and why. I also think part of this conversation involves explaining that even if something is given to the museum, it still has a cost in terms of storage and care so as museum staff it is our responsibility to make sure we are selective in what we collect.

For the North Otago Museum the ethics of deaccessioning come into sharp focus when looking at our collection of Temuka Pottery and other New Zealand ceramics. This collection consists of over 1200 pieces of pottery. Temuka Pottery made nearly 1000 of these pieces and the collection includes examples of their products made between the 1930s and the 1990s. The potential deaccessioning of this collection was raised in 2010 and due, in part, to adverse reaction from some members of public it was put on hold. This collection was developed by the Museum in the 1980s and 1990s using bequest funds and by building a relationship with Temuka pottery. The collection is significant and it includes many rare and interesting pieces. However Temuka Pottery is based in South Canterbury and as such it is not part of the Waitaki District's heritage (beyond the household use of pieces of Temuka pottery here). But now the collection has been established and has

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<sup>4</sup> Museums Aotearoa te Tari o Ngā Whare Taonga o te Motu, p.10.

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become a part of the Museum's own heritage. In contrast with other items that we may consider for deaccessioning, the Temuka pottery collection has a commercial value. It is important to note that this is covered by the Museum Aotearoa Code of Ethics as well. Museums must 'ensure that all funds raised in the process of an approved deaccessioning are applied solely and unequivocally to the benefit of the collection'.<sup>5</sup> This is important, as otherwise there is the risk that museums will be pressured to deaccession collection items to fund their operations, and decisions to deaccession must not be made based on possible revenue generation. I appreciate both sides of the argument concerning the Temuka pottery collection. Ultimately I feel that because it sits outside our collection management policy it would be of more relevance if it was deaccessioned to a museum in South Canterbury or to a museum with a collection focus on New Zealand ceramics. The story of its collection will always be part of our organisation's history but for me that does not mean we have to keep the objects as well.

For too long museums have shied away from deaccessioning. This is understandable. It is less controversial to keep expanding storage spaces than it is to have discussions about what museums should and should not collect. It can be easier to say yes to another iron/washing machine/typewriter than to take the time to explain the aim of the museum's collection. But I think it is really important that we look critically at collecting. Museum collections can contribute a lot to our understandings of the past but equally they currently contain too many things of too little value. This means that important items are put at risk as there is not the space or materials to care for them appropriately. Museum ethics are vital to this process as they can give us the confidence to take on challenging projects like deaccessioning with the assurance that we are acting professionally.

**Chloe Searle is currently part of the team developing new exhibitions for the planned redevelopment of the North Otago Museum, Forrester Gallery and Waitaki District Archive. The facility is due to open in spring 2019.**

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<sup>5</sup> Museums Aotearoa te Tari o Ngā Whare Taonga o te Motu, p.5.

# THE ETHICS OF PERSUASION.

Nadia Gush.

In 2011 I taught a third year digital history paper at the University of Waikato. Among other things, the paper encouraged students to reflect upon the effectiveness of digital technology as a means of facilitating participation in a museum environment. For one of the assessment tasks I asked students to both perform and critically reflect upon digital participation as a potential means of extending how we ‘do’ history. The task involved hijacking the comments section of a website dedicated to public history. The result was a small class of twenty or so students posting around 177 comments discussing aspects of the digital-history nexus on Nina Simon’s participatory museum website. The willingness and enthusiasm with which students engaged in this task indicated that I had designed it in a way that successfully facilitated participation. However, while students were free to choose not to participate (it was not compulsory) they were rewarded with a higher grade if they did so. In turn, good design encouraged them to participate more fully than they might otherwise have done, but good design had nothing to do with their desire to participate in the first place. In an instance such as this, I believe, it is ethical for a facilitator to persuade people to participate through effective project design; the more I was able to persuade students to participate, the better they were able to meet their own aspirations of securing a degree. But is persuasion ethical for historians outside of an explicit teaching and learning environment?

In ‘Trust, Proof and Persuasion in Historiography: A Litigation Analogy’, B. Everett Hendrickson presents persuasion as the heart of both legal and historiographical practices. As Hendrickson notes, ‘in history there is always an argument and an effort to persuade’.<sup>1</sup> The same claim can be extended to public history, where museums persuade us to believe in their authority, they persuade us to believe that particular objects mean particular things, and they persuade us to believe in a particular patrimony over others. Moreover, they persuade us to care about the past, through multifarious techniques including, for example, the theatricality of the museum as a performative space.<sup>2</sup> There are a set of ethical considerations that go along with each of these modes of persuasion. While we might reflect upon the ethics accompanying our historical practices in terms of informed consent and limitation of harm, we

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<sup>1</sup> B. Everett Hendrickson, ‘Trust, Proof and Persuasion in Historiography: A Litigation Analogy’ (unpublished PhD thesis: University of California, 2014), p.32.

<sup>2</sup> See Valerie Casey, ‘Staging Meaning: Performance in the Modern Museum’, *TDR*, 49, 3 (Autumn 2005), pp.78-95.

are often less likely to reflect upon such practices in terms of the ethics of persuasion. This is particularly pertinent given that we are increasingly looking to curate participatory museum environments where success is directly linked to an exhibition's ability to entice its audience to take part through clever design. No longer do museum visitors enter and exit like the wind, leaving no trace of their presence other than a dishevelled pamphlet rack. Now they must be persuaded to draw pictures, write notes, role-play, dance, talk to strangers and enhance their museum experience online. They must leave plebeian fingerprints upon as many surfaces as possible, where museum attendance is not so much about consuming communal memories as it is about creating individual ones. As Nina Simon explains in her 2010 book, *The Participatory Museum*, and through her ongoing digital presence, museum educators and curators must be far-reaching in their participatory agenda.<sup>3</sup> The passionate, chatty history buff cannot be the only one to find their historical imagination piqued; we must enable the critically-minded sceptic and the gentle enthusiast to participate too. Simon describes this as a situation in which the institution 'serves as a "platform" that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators'.<sup>4</sup>

One rationale behind the participatory museum model is the idea that participation and collaboration make for a better approach to public history than the didacticism of earlier museum environments. This is particularly the case when it comes to minority groups, whose histories are frequently untold, or mistold, in a traditional museum environment. In turn, strategies encouraging participation and collaboration purportedly allow for minority presence within the historical mainstream, where the historical mainstream is arguably defined as white and middle-class. In this regard a participatory model for museums is in many ways explicitly premised on the necessity of persuading minorities to contribute to history-making practices. In a brief chapter on advertising and persuasion ethics, Lee Wilkins explains that advertisers are under obligation to safeguard vulnerable citizens in their advertising practice.<sup>5</sup> Children and 'minorities' are in this context, perceived to

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<sup>3</sup> See Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Museum 2.0, 2010). Available digitally at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/> [accessed 09/11/2016]. See also Nina Simon, *Museum 2.0* <http://museumtwo.blogspot.co.nz/> [accessed 20/11/2016].

<sup>4</sup> Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/chapter1/> [accessed 09/11/2016].

<sup>5</sup> Lee Wilkins, 'Advertising Ethics: Applying Theory to Core Issues and Defining Practical Excellence', in *Persuasion Ethics Today*, ed. by Esther Thorson and Margaret Duffy (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp.29-43.

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be at risk from advertisers who may persuade them unfairly, or with detrimental outcome. It strikes me that a similar safeguard ought to be kept in mind when a participatory exhibition seeks to entice contributions from an otherwise heritage-inactive section of the community. This is especially poignant given that it is so tempting to judge the success of a participatory exhibition in terms of the socio-economic and cultural or ethnic diversity of its participants. Some regional council funding models, for instance, reward ethnic diversity in community heritage outputs, which by default encourages those working with a participatory model of museum exhibition and who are seeking such funding, to persuade those who are in other contexts identified as vulnerable citizens, to participate. This may serve the ends of a council seeking to demonstrate its ability to meet targets of inclusiveness, or it may fulfil a museum's agenda of demonstrably bringing new strata of a community within its sphere, but within a wider framework, focussing on vulnerable citizens is ethically questionable.

Justifications for focussing in on minority groups can be framed in terms of utilitarian ethics, where the good of the many outweighs potential harm to a few. Collectively, we are better off if minority stories are told and minorities can be persuaded to participate in museum exhibitions. As public historians, we service our communities well when our regional or national public histories result in *any given person* finding something that they can relate to in a regional or community narrative, which invariably means that minorities must be able to find themselves represented in such narratives. In turn, we might justify the persuasion of so-called vulnerable citizens on the grounds that it serves the greater good, and benefits them in the long run. But a utilitarian approach to ethics is not necessarily the best approach. Feminists have embraced an 'ethics of care' when it comes to persuasion, where caring can be described broadly, in terms of 'everything we do directly to help others to meet their basic needs, develop or sustain their basic capabilities, and alleviate or avoid pain or suffering, *in an attentive, responsive and respectful manner*'.<sup>6</sup> In turn, enticing minorities or other heritage-inactive segments of a community to participate could be justified if it were designed with this principle of care in mind, where an exhibition might develop or sustain a participant's historical knowledge, or alleviate a minority group's suffering from exclusion from the historical record. On those grounds, good exhibition design demonstrating sophisticated methods for enticement are justified. However, I still find this process ethically

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Engster, 'Rethinking Care Theory: The Practice of Caring and the Obligation to Care', *Hypatia*, 20, 3 (Summer 2005), p.55. Emphasis in original.

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dubious. There are I believe, two related points that are worth considering for public historians concerned with enticing participation via exhibition design.

The first is that if interactive, performative, participatory exhibitions and projects are to be ethical, then they must retain space for the noncompliant. This is because ethical practices require not just consent, but choice. Curators must intentionally design for the possibility of participants opting out at any moment without a loss to their museum-going experience. A project that is designed to head off the possibility of opting out through the use of peer pressure once the experience within the exhibition has begun, or one that is reliant upon a person's goodwill towards history outweighing their discomfort with the task, is, it might be argued, not ethical. When I have used digital media to facilitate participation, be it for teaching history in an academic environment or for soliciting contributions for exhibitions, I have fallen into a complacency of persuasion, relying on the power of communal attraction and playing up the visibility of contributions so that others will feel that it is desirable to contribute too. Drawing on my experiences in a higher education teaching context, I have worked on the basis that such projects will be more successful if it is perceived to be easier to participate fully than it is to opt out. In addition, in the case of curating, I have been motivated by my personal desire to see a range of people's perspectives presented in museum exhibitions. When budgets are tight, the best way to achieve that has been to procure 'buy-in' through social media, undertaking carefully orchestrated campaigns designed to make it look like a communal activity: in other words, if everyone else is doing it, you should too. Nobody was harmed in this process, but the success of this approach is measured by the effectiveness of techniques of persuasion intentionally attempting to foreclose choice; the last thing I wanted was for someone to change their mind half way through. From a utilitarian perspective this is ethical. However, from a broader understanding of ethics, foreclosure of choice is not. Critical literature on public relations suggests there is an ethics of persuasion that can, by inference, be taken into account by museum communicators and facilitators reliant on enticing visitors to participate in their exhibitions and events. The idea that ethical communication might hinge on symmetrical communication between parties applies equally to public relations as it does to planning a collaborative or participatory exhibition.<sup>7</sup> But there is little symmetry in communication when

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<sup>7</sup> On the 'boundary spanner' model in public relations and the ethics of symmetrical communication see Johanna Fawkes, 'Public Relations Models and Persuasion Ethics: A New Approach', *Journal of Communication Management*, 11, 4 (2007), p.319.

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museum visitors are persuaded to participate in a museum exhibition whose modes of communication and enticement have already been fixed.

The second point I would raise, is that the only truly ethical mode of participation is necessarily collaborative for the public historian. This is where we find symmetry in communication; this is where we find the opportunity for, to borrow from Hendrickson's litigation analogy, 'cross-examination'. The reason my carefully thought out, persuasive assessment design which intentionally directed a sometimes digitally blasé student body towards self-reflexive interaction in a digital environment was ethical, was that it was already loosely collaborative. My students told me they wanted to pass the paper, and they told me they wanted to secure a qualification. I collaborated with them by facilitating their success in a way that made the process as easy as possible. But is it fair to assume that all visitors to a museum have aspirations of securing historical knowledge, comparable to the way in which all students aspire to securing a qualification? And in turn, is a participatory exhibition already collaborative by default? If the answer is no, and I believe in many instances it is, then the only tenable position to take concerning projects designed to ethically persuade diverse participation in a museum environment, is that such projects must be explicitly collaborative from the beginning. Participants must first feature as project designers initiating and driving participation themselves. And if that process is not possible, then ethical project design intended to entice participation for the full gamut of 'types' of people, be they types of personalities or types of socio-economic strata, must be designed to preserve choice, where participants are able to opt out without it negatively impacting on their museum experience. The question however, is what a participatory exhibition designed with inclusive noncompliance in mind might look like in practice.

Nadia discusses her previous involvement with the Charlotte Museum Trust in the forthcoming edited collection *Making a Difference*, due for publication in 2017.

## CLOSETS OF THE PAST.

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The past can seem totally heterosexual. Even for those who were unmarried, or who lived with a companion of the same sex, biographers often identify a friend of the *other* sex as a great love. There seems to be a desire to ‘normalise’ everyone by fitting them into a heterosexual model. People of the past who were in same-sex relationships were often closeted. They feared discrimination, and in the case of men, possible prosecution for their activities. How should historians approach this? Is it more ethical to open the closet, or to keep the door closed? Not all biographers demonstrate the honesty of, for example, Michael King, who included references to Frank Sargeson’s homosexuality in his biography in a natural and ordinary way.<sup>1</sup> One might argue that it would have been difficult to refute Sargeson’s homosexuality given his early criminal conviction, but one might also have ignored Sargeson’s later close friendships with men in order to construct a heterosexual and thus more acceptable version of his life, which King did not do.

When the possibility was discussed of my giving a talk on Ursula Bethell’s lesbian relationships for an exhibition at the National Library in Wellington, a man remarked, ‘Calling Ursula Bethell a lesbian without any evidence is like calling her a murderer without evidence’. He did not recognise that lesbians present found this insulting, nor did he understand that such attitudes are precisely why Bethell and other women kept their lesbian relationships from public view. Discussing a subject’s love relationships is not at all like discussing violent criminal activity such as murder. His comment exposed his own bias, and as historians of the twenty-first century, we should not pander to such ideologies. We live in a time when sexual orientation is a protected category in our human rights legislation, and where same-sex marriage, adoption and inheritance rights are a matter of law. The people of the past who loved those of their own sex would marvel at these freedoms. Whether or not these people would agree to have their relationships discussed openly, we cannot know. But the lives that the dead once had have ended. If families or concerned others are to police and control what may be reported about the dead, then how are we to write history? If sexual orientation is off limits, then so too is conduct in war, as are political or religious views, or anything else that might be deemed disparaging to the deceased. Censorship could be invoked to remove any exposure of that which should remain hidden, rather

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<sup>1</sup> Michael King, *Frank Sargeson: A Life* (Auckland: Viking, 1995).

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than the preservation of that which should be revealed in order to better understand the person and the life.

Responding to what historian Judith Schwartz described as ‘the problems of censorship, definitions, and labeling’ concerning lesbians, American historian Blanche Wiesen Cook argues that, ‘the evidence is really there. One has to deny, distort, and contort a great deal to ignore it’, and she concludes that ‘fear, homophobia, DENIAL’ are the strategies used to hide lesbian history.<sup>2</sup> Lillian Faderman describes the techniques used to deny historical lesbian attractions as ‘bowdlerization, avoidance of the obvious, and *cherchez l’homme*’, giving the example of Emily Dickinson’s letters to Sue Gilbert, her sister-in-law, and the later editing by Dickinson’s niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Phrases like ‘be my own again, and kiss me as you used to’, and ‘cannot wait, feel that now I must have you’ were deleted from the letters by Bianchi.<sup>3</sup>

Relevant here is also the admission by Doris Faber that she tried to have Eleanor Roosevelt’s letters to Lorena Hickok suppressed by the National Archives in Washington, because, as ‘effusively affectionate letters’ to another woman, they could harm Roosevelt’s reputation.<sup>4</sup> The Archives ruled they could not lock up the letters, so Faber published them herself in a biography unsympathetic to Hickok.<sup>5</sup> In her biography of Eleanor Roosevelt published over ten years later, Blanche Wiesen Cook discusses Roosevelt’s relationship with Hickok, addressing the criticisms of those seeking to exclude this material by pointing out the limitations of not considering ‘the nature of passion, lust, and love in a woman’s life.’<sup>6</sup>

Emily Hamer suggests that lesbians ‘have not been written out or missed out of history; it is rather that their lesbianism has not actually been written into their lives.’<sup>7</sup> Closeted women left few written records explicit in their lesbian

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<sup>2</sup> Judith Schwartz, ‘Questionnaire on Issues in Lesbian History’, *Frontiers, A Journal of Women Studies, Lesbian History Issue*, 4, 3 (Fall 1979), p.1; p.8. Capitalisation in original.

<sup>3</sup> Lillian Faderman, ‘Who Hid Lesbian History?’, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, Lesbian History Issue*, 4, 3 (Fall 1979), pp.74-75.

<sup>4</sup> Doris Faber *The Life of Lorena Hickok: ER's Friend*. (New York: William Morrow, 1980), p.331.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume 1, 1886- 1933* (New York: Viking, 1992), p.12.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Hamer, *Britannia's Glory: A History of Twentieth-Century Lesbians* (London: Cassell, 1996), p.1.

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content. Hamer points out that earlier women, except for wealthy lesbians such as Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge, needed to be reticent and careful, as no-one could safely 'speak as a lesbian'.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as Martha Vicinus points out, 'conceptual confusion is perhaps inevitable in regard to lesbians; given the historical suppression of female sexuality in general... we need to be sensitive to nuance, masks, secrecy, and the unspoken'.<sup>9</sup> She notes that lesbian history is 'fragmentary and confusing', as it must include 'teenage crushes, romantic friendships, Boston marriages, theatrical cross-dressing, passing women, bulldykes and prostitutes', commenting 'we rarely know precisely what women of the past did with each other in bed or out' and stressing the importance of the 'wider historical context'.<sup>10</sup> Hamer similarly points out that the 'records of lesbian history are the minor details of ordinary life: whom a woman lived with, who her friends were, what books she read, the clothes she wore, the work she did and her political and moral beliefs'.<sup>11</sup> She admits 'this may seem to elide history with biography'.<sup>12</sup>

Biographer and sociologist Liz Stanley emphasises the importance of documenting social relationships, critiquing the 'spotlight' approach to historical biography and stressing the need for research on women's friendships and social context. She points out that as people cannot understand the past as those who lived it did, they must not 'impose a theoretical structure on the lives and experience of historical people', but recognise instead that 'love between women could take many shapes and meanings, one of which was an erotic genital sexual involvement'.<sup>13</sup>

In my own work, I have used letters, diaries, public records, and oral histories, as well as published material to cast light upon how New Zealand women of the past may have conducted same-sex love relationships. I do not regard it as unethical to examine this material, and to interpret it using a lesbian or gay perspective. Neither do I think that only lesbian or gay historians should do this. I believe all biographers and historians should move away from a heterosexualised framework, to examine the importance of same-sex love in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p 24, original emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> Martha Vicinus, 'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong: The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian Identity' in Martha Vicinus, *Lesbian Subjects, A Feminist Studies Reader* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p.235.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p.248.

<sup>11</sup> Hamer, *Britannia's Glory*, p.4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Liz Stanley, 'Romantic Friendship? Some Issues in Researching Lesbian History and Biography', *Women's History Review*, 1, 2 (1992), p.210.

their subjects' lives. Why is this important? Only by understanding the significant emotional impulses of a subject's life, can a biographer begin to approach an understanding of what motivated the person, identifying the structure that enabled them to succeed. This may be especially important for women not bound by husbands and familial structures in the past. Elsie Andrews, for example, was well supported by her life companion Muriel Kirton, who helped her to participate as a peace activist.<sup>14</sup> Her life loses perspective if biographers do not address the significance of Kirton's support and love, and also the strong feelings Andrews had for some other women activists. How can readers fully appreciate the poetry of Ursula Bethell, if they do not think about her great love for Effie Pollen and her tremendous sorrow when Pollen died?<sup>15</sup> Then too, how are readers to understand the many themes in the work of Katherine Mansfield, if they are oblivious to the important role of her 'wife' LM – Lesley Moore/Ida Baker? This was lifelong committed support, without which, it may be argued, Mansfield may not have been able to produce as much work.<sup>16</sup>

Some scholars believe that there is a gay sensibility that informs creative work. Jack Body, for example, in his appraisal of the musical compositions of Douglas Lilburn, suggests that there are significant themes of 'aloneness, apartness, of difference' in Lilburn's work that reflect his life as a 'closeted gay man fearful of gossip and innuendo'.<sup>17</sup> The letters of the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen also reveal strong same-sex attractions. Rictor Norton suggests that Andersen's letters to his close friend Edvard Collin on the latter's marriage share similarities to Anderson's story *The Little Mermaid*, suggesting that Andersen saw Collin as the Prince, the Princess that the Prince marries as Collin's new wife, and himself as the Mermaid.<sup>18</sup> Similarly Anderson's story *The Ugly Duckling* may well reflect the joy Andersen experienced at the age of fourteen on meeting Jonas Collin, who supported his education, and others from theatre circles who may have been men who loved men. Readers who

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<sup>14</sup> Alison J. Laurie, 'A Transnational Conference Romance; Elsie Andrews, Hildegard Kneeland, and the Pan Pacific Women's Association'. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 13, 4 (2009), pp.395-414.

<sup>15</sup> Alison J. Laurie, 'Lady Husbands and Kamp Ladies' (unpublished PhD thesis: Victoria University of Wellington, 2003), pp 212-224.

<sup>16</sup> Laurie 'Lady Husbands and Kamp Ladies', pp.229-242.

<sup>17</sup> Jack Body, 'Gay Sensibility in the Music of Douglas Lilburn', in *Outlines, Lesbian and Gay Histories of Aotearoa*; ed. by Alison J. Laurie and Linda Evans (Wellington: LAGANZ, 2005), p.52.

<sup>18</sup> Rictor Norton, *My Dear Boy: Gay Love Letters through the Centuries* (California: Leyland Publications, 1998).

Alison J. Laurie.

are unaware of Andersen's strong feelings for men may be unable to fully appreciate the complexity of his stories. There are many such examples beyond the scope of this short commentary.

Is it ethical to 'out' those who lived in the closet, those who may not have wanted their same-sex attractions to be known by other people? I think it is essential knowledge if we are to understand both the life and the work of these people. It will also help with our understanding of the past, to see that there are histories of same-sex attracted people, and how they managed their lives. Of course, such people may not have labeled or understood themselves according to modern ideas of sexual identity, but this should not mean that we deny their same-sex loves. I also believe we can justify labeling their feelings as lesbian or gay attractions. One reason for using these terms to describe lives and relationships, even for those who did not identify themselves in this way, is because discarding it, as Adrienne Rich argues, 'is to collaborate with silence and lying about our very existence; with the closet-game, the creation of the *unspeakable*.'<sup>19</sup> The 'unspeakable' gets written out of history, thus creating an incomplete, heterosexual picture of the past.

It may also be the case that choosing to leave 'incriminating' records behind indicates that many people wanted their same-sex attractions to be recognised after their death. The people themselves could have destroyed letters and diaries. We cannot simply assume that those who were closeted in life wished to be closeted in death. It is then only those people who believe that homosexuality is abhorrent, wrong, sinful, or akin to murder who have a problem with the ethics surrounding 'outing' someone as having had lesbian or gay attractions. Those who see all love as equal, and worthy of respect and admiration as the finest aspect of a life, will find this knowledge positive, and contributing to our understanding of the person. The task of the historian must always be to illuminate the past.

**Alison J. Laurie, now retired, was the former Director of the Gender and Women's Studies Programme at Victoria University of Wellington. She has published nationally and internationally, on lesbian and gay history, and on oral history. She continues to record the oral histories of older lesbians and gay men and to undertake research on early international influences on New Zealand lesbian and gay communities and political campaigns.**

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<sup>19</sup> Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence, Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), p.202, original emphasis.

# 'Collection-Based Research in Museums: Understanding, Structure, Visibility', MA Thesis, Massey University, 2012

## In summary

Megan Wells.

In 'Collection-Based Research in Museums' I argue that research in museums is misconceived.<sup>1</sup> Although there appears to be an assumption that collection-based research is in decline, I show how this concern is unjustified. Current definitions of research are overly broad or focus on academic outputs that do not reflect current practice. Research undertaken in medium-sized museums cannot be judged using ill-fitting academic frameworks. Instead, I develop a research framework that is museum-specific, and takes into account the reasons why the current misconception around collection-based research has occurred in the first place. To these ends I undertook an in-depth case study of the Nelson Provincial Museum and Nelson's Suter Art Gallery. The data I gathered during interviews showed that practitioners in the two institutions undertake wide-ranging and diverse collection-based research on a daily basis. The interviews also showed that collection-based research has varying levels of visibility, a fragmented structure, and is not always well understood. By combining the strengths and realities of current museum practice with a theoretical grounding in object research provided by material culture and museum studies, I was able to develop a greater understanding of collection-based research in medium-sized museums.

Suzanne Keene posits research as the most important and all-encompassing use of museum collections.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is widely accepted that collection-based research has slipped so far down the ladder of museum priorities that when resources become tight it is often the first casualty.<sup>3</sup> But ask any collections staff member what they do in their day-to-day work and, in a variety of guises, research constantly appears. The fear that research roles are being overlooked and prioritised out of existence has roots in a variety of areas, including new people or story-focused museum directives, redefinitions of curatorial roles, and the need to display tangible outcomes to stakeholders. Through these marked changes, which have been accelerating during the past few decades,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Collection-Based Research in Museums: Understanding, Structure, Visibility' is available in its entirety from <http://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/4237>.

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Keene, *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collections* (London: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> See Laura Gascoigne, 'Heads Together', *Museum Practice*, 36 (2006), p.50; R.G.W. Anderson, 'To Thrive or Survive? The State and Status of Research in Museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 20 (2005), p.299; K.S. Thomson, *Treasures on Earth: Museums, Collections and Paradoxes* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.61; Ann Gunn and Robert Prescott, *Lifting the Veil: Research and Scholarship in United Kingdom Museums and Galleries* (London: Museum and Galleries Commission, 1999), p.9.

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the museum has become a very different place. It is generally accepted that the nature of research into collections has changed, creating a process that is broader, more fragmented and geared towards particular outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Both Laura Gascoigne and Keene raise the question of whether this means there is actually a problem with the quantity of collection-based research being undertaken, though neither author elaborates on this further.<sup>5</sup>

This overall picture of confusion and conjecture suggested that a research definition was needed that was more broadly applicable and able to cope with changing characteristics as museums negotiate how best to proceed in the future. In turn I developed a definition which focused on processes and the nature of research, rather than just research outcomes. This is in recognition of the multipurpose approach taken by many staff members who are short of time and resources. My definition was as follows:

Collection-based research in museums includes all activities which aim to enhance or develop new knowledge or new ways of understanding museum objects. This includes, but is not limited to, examination of the physical object, development of provenance and enriching the links and relationships of the object with other objects or information sources. New research must be recorded in an accessible and accountable way so as to become a building block on which further research can stand with sure footing. Researchers must endeavour to make their research outcomes as visible as feasible to colleagues, stakeholders and the public in general.

Using this definition as a cornerstone, I looked at different ways that collection-based research can be presented and enabled. Combining the strengths and realities of current practice that I discovered in my case-study interviews, with a theoretical grounding in object research, I was able to present a set of research principles and processes based on my definition. They are designed to encourage, direct and safeguard collection-based research in a practical setting to create a prototype research framework supported by the experiences of staff in medium-sized institutions. In order to build a museum-specific epistemology of research, I explored three crucial concepts: understanding, structure, and visibility. These become a centre point from which collection-based research can be enhanced.

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<sup>4</sup> See Gascoigne, 'Heads Together'.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.50; Keene, *Fragments of the World*, p.45.

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The concepts of understanding, structure, and visibility are all interrelated. Without understanding, research is undefined, unorganised and goes somewhat unnoticed. Without structure, research is less efficient; it is less useful or accessible. Without visibility, research is not as accountable. Structure and understanding mean little if no one can see their outputs. Therefore, each element depends on the other two and together, understanding, structure and visibility are all required for effective collection-based research that advantages practitioners. Together they improve the usefulness of objects and their supporting information, the accessibility of knowledge about the collection, and the accountability of research-based projects.

For ‘Collection-Based Research in Museums’ I tested and evaluated the definition, principles and processes, by application to two object case studies – a watercolour painting by John Gully and a sample of dunite rock. I developed both the object file and exhibition research in depth. An ontological approach to researching John Gully’s *Riwaka 1888* places the object at the centre of the research and follows the leads discoverable. I started by placing the painting in the context of John Gully’s life in early provincial Nelson and following it through Bishop Suter’s acquisition and the painting’s role as part of the Bishop Suter Art Gallery Founding Donation. This painting was an interesting choice for a case study as it is one of the less assuming pieces in the Suter collection and yet its object biography shows that it remains a well-known and endeared example. It was chosen by local Nelson artist, Tim Wraith, to respond to in the 2011 exhibition *Site ReScene*. Using a stout stick as support, Wraith climbed the hills of Riwaka until he found himself standing beneath the tree depicted in the painting. He titled his own work *Sticks to aid an artist in climbing to a good vantage point* 2011 and contributed three carved walking sticks to hang alongside Gully’s work in the exhibition. My second case study was a very different object. As a sample of dunite rock it is unassuming, and possibly even boring. However, by placing it at the centre of its own narrative, it begins to touch on and tease out many different aspects of New Zealand colonial history. This approach opens possibilities of framing histories in new material culture ways. The results from both case studies are broad and informative. They reveal how using opportunities as they arise, perceiving the differences between ontological and epistemological approaches, and creating clear systems for recording data all add to improved understanding, structure, and visibility.

Megan Wells.

Although the literature suggests that collection-based research in museums is declining, my research shows that this fear relates to more traditional, academic outputs and that collection-based research remains prolific. It looks different because it is in flux and has evolved, as have museums themselves. By understanding these changes and creating greater structure in the way research is undertaken, practitioners can create a stronger body of object-based research within their day-to-day roles. This leads to my final recommendation that understanding, structure, visibility, a definition, principles and processes are all essential elements required for effective collection-based research and can benefit practitioners through increased usefulness, accessibility and accountability.

**Megan Wells is the Social History Curator at Puke Ariki in New Plymouth where she works with a diverse collection. Previously she was based at the National Army Museum and her interests focus on the material culture history of colonial New Zealand extending to World War One.**

# ***Home Front: Experiences of the First World War in New Zealand, Auckland War Memorial Museum.***

**26 February 2016 – 8 January 2017**

Sara Buttsworth.

Needles and threads, sewing and weaving, these are common in folk tales of the wonder variety, or grand chronicles of war, where the yarns of individuals are spun into the cloth of much larger events, histories and mythologies.<sup>1</sup> The everyday domestic tasks neglected in some of the grander overarching narratives are what bind home to battlefields. They knit kith and kin to kit when domestic tasks need to be performed far beyond the hearth, or everyday items are adapted for the battlefield. The minutiae of keeping things going, or the stitches in time, are just as crucial as the stories told by the giants of Te Papa's *The Scale of Our War* — possibly even more so in the context of commemorations that render non-martial experiences Lilliputian and attempt to efface the straining of the seams of societies at work during wartime.

In 2011 I had the pleasure of reviewing another temporary exhibition at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, *Mr Jones' Wives*. Depicting the experiences of war-brides through letters, newsreels and strategically placed suitcases, this exhibition was a wonderful expansion of the ways in which war-related histories have been curated alongside the permanent more traditional galleries on the Second Floor. *Mr Jones' Wives* pointed to the separations between people, families, countries and oceans through the use of letters, and the connections between movement, displacement and transplantation through suitcases. Continuing the wonderful nuances in how we tell our war stories suggested by *Mr Jones' Wives* is the 2016 temporary exhibition *Home Front: Experiences of the First World War in New Zealand*. *Home Front* unpicks the complex patterns of lives in New Zealand between 1914 and 1919, using the metaphors of knitting and crocheting to examine what happens when a popular narrative is turned over to expose the seams and dropped stitches underneath. *Home Front* runs until January 2017. One of the posters/postcards advertising this exhibition depicts a pair of hands crocheting a square containing a soldier from the NZEF, surrounded by other, smaller pieces of memorabilia. These small items simultaneously signify home and away, and loss as an eternal presence in the domestic sphere both during and in the aftermath of war. The exhibition itself is peppered with unexpected uses of the domestic arts, from crocheted figures of ANZACs, to mutated mittens — or

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<sup>1</sup> See Sara Buttsworth and Maartje Abbenhuis (Eds.), *War, Myths and Fairy Tales* (Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore, forthcoming 2016).

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‘shooting gloves’ — transformed for use when holding a rifle in freezing temperatures.

Upon entering the Auckland War Memorial Museum’s Sainsbury Horrocks Gallery you encounter a space that is painted in a dark colour and lined with studio portraits of soldiers taken prior to embarkation. The journey through the exhibition begins with a strong emphasis on the nuclear family, firmly imprinted by the first portrait of a father in uniform, accompanied by his wife, and his young daughter aged about four years old, clad in ringlets, best dress and best bangle. How proud she looks to have her photograph taken. Did he return? Did his wife and daughter survive on their own throughout the war? If he did come home was he ever able to smile at his beautiful little girl again? This image, and those on the surrounding walls beg these kinds of questions, anchored as they are by the quotation from Lauris Edmonds’ book *Women in Wartime* which adorns the space above the portraits: ‘...at the age of seven I spent six months in my grandparents’ home. In the stark, white-plastered room where I slept were the traditional uniformed photos of the lost ones. Their serious young faces haunted me, then and now.’ There is some diversity in the portraits on display although they are similarly posed and the presence of uniforms is, of course, ubiquitous. The studio portraits are proud ‘before’ images, and also, became for many, all that remained.

The mocked-up parlour is a beautifully conceived part of the exhibition, complete with crocheted-lace chair cover depicting ‘ANZAC 1915’, through to the piano in the corner and children’s games on the floor. The digital touchscreen facing the room allows a more in-depth and interactive examination of the display through individual items. For example, it details Australian Mary Card, the designer of patterns for the lace chair cover and other popular patriotic wartime designs. The details of the jingoistic board game *The Silver Bullet* on the floor in this parlour are also able to be read using the touchscreen, offering another example of domesticity as the vehicle for patriotism in this part of the exhibit. On the piano is the sheet music for *It’s a Long Way to Tipperary* which is echoed by the music played throughout the room as if through an unseen gramophone. But here too are reminders of loss. The other adornment to the piano is a commemorative postcard and photograph of Robert Swinbourne Kelly. Upon looking through the museum’s online cenotaph record, Kelly can be seen to have died of

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meningitis in February 1918, aged 22 — a reminder that disease was just as big an enemy of the NZEF as the foes of the British Empire.

Keeping the faith and remembering the faces of those far from home is also prominent in the 'Album of Mrs Mickle'. This album has been faithfully digitised, allowing a much closer perusal and a simulation of tactility that would not be possible if the album was only a part of a more traditional display. As the wife of the local doctor, Mrs Alice Mickle was prominent in her then isolated community at Birkenhead. She threw herself into providing for soldiers abroad and those who supported them, with comfort parcels sent both to individuals and to entire wards of hospitals. In return she received letters of thanks, postcards, and studio portraits which are all carefully captioned and preserved in this album. In addition to this, at the centre of the gallery is another small display of letters and keepsakes composed by and for children. The misspelled greetings of love tug at the heart strings, where letters that begin 'Dear Dady [sic]' are accompanied by simple drawings and cross-stitched samplers embroidering both home and Empire. The emphasis on children throughout the exhibition is important, as the experiences of children have been, until recently, neglected by much of the scholarship on war. On the far wall is a long photograph of assembled troops on the Auckland Domain, which reinforces the feeling of domicile within this part of the exhibition. The photograph feels like a window telescoping the connections between public and private, making it feel as if we in the twenty-first century are looking out to actually see the farewell of Auckland's volunteers.

Whereas the first room in the gallery is dark, reminiscent of remembrance and comfort, the second room in the gallery is white, with bisecting panels through the centre. The former displays soldiers and families; the latter flips the fabric of society, revealing its layers and the patches that defy the myths of coherence in wartime society. These panels depict important ruptures that are absent from illumination in more traditional exhibitions. They are brightly lit and divide the gallery, much as the issues they raised divided New Zealand communities. The first panel references the Waikato and War — 'Why Fight for a Crown that Wronged You'. This is an important issue for a population that has been schooled for a century to see the First World War as the 'birth of a nation', glossing over the long and destructive wars that ran the length and breadth of the North Island in the 1860s and 1870s, and which were still in living memory for Māori in 1914. The extension of conscription to Māori in

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1917, which was only applied to Waikato-Maniopototo, can be read as a continuation of the punishment of Māori for their resistance to the authority of the Crown from the previous century.

The bravery of soldiers and soldiers' families is everywhere in this exhibition, but another brightly lit panel describes the awful fate of those who were punished for 'Taking a Stand' against involvement in this Imperial War, whether for religious, moral, or political reasons. Conscientious Objectors were also brave, standing up as they did against the tide of popular opinion, and facing the inhumane punishments dished out by so-called civilised societies. The 'White Feather' campaigns are also referenced, laying bare the ugliness of patriotism at home. Bright lights are also shone on those who were ridiculed, marginalised or even interned for having suspiciously non-British origins. The persecution of German immigrants and the destruction of their lives and businesses are illustrated through toys – once proudly possessed, the German manufactured doll on display was put into hiding. This is an interesting juxtaposition to the Empire-infused cook books and knitting manual, and the military costumes for children in fundraising parades. And on one of the final panels appears 'Aliens in the North'; the Dalmatian gum-diggers who were punished because the complexity of European politics seemed beyond the grasp of New Zealand politicians and the public.

*Homefront* is an exhibition that deserves a much longer tenure within the frameworks of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. Carefully considered, it has broad appeal and the digital resources both within the gallery and linked to the exhibition via the AWM website are easily accessible, providing crucial connections to the other resources held by the museum. It is poignant that 100 years after conscription was introduced in 1916, this exhibition reveals a complexity of contemporary responses as intricate as the lace patterns on display.

Sara has a long-standing interest in the representations of war. *War, Myths and Fairy Tales* (co-edited with Maartje Abbenhuis), is her third edited collection seeking to expand the boundaries of war-studies and is being published by Palgrave Macmillan in December 2016.

***The Lives of Colonial Objects*, Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla eds.  
Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2015.**

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*The Lives of Colonial Objects*, edited by a trio of academics associated with the University of Otago's Centre for Research on Colonial Culture (CROCC), is the outcome of a conference held at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin in February 2013. Its fifty constituent essays result from an invitation for contributors to 'look beyond the museum' in interpreting an array of objects representing diverse phases and lived experiences concerning the 'colonial' period. As usual, the definition of the latter is somewhat nebulous. It is judged here to have ended with New Zealand's entry into the Second World War.

Although it will already be clear to literary observers, the editors concede the inspiration of their project at the outset. That *The Lives of Colonial Objects* is the product of a by now tired publishing fad need not influence assessments of the book, but deserves elaboration as a context. The last five or so years have witnessed a profusion of attempts to construct, and less frequently to interrogate, historical narratives through the prism of inanimate objects. The trend, kick-started by former Director of The British Museum Neil MacGregor's hugely popular *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, has resulted in various books, podcasts, web series, terrestrial radio and television programmes. *The Lives of Colonial Objects* represents both New Zealand's latest entry into this object interpretation mini-boom, and an attempt of sorts to bridge the gap between 'intellectual' approaches to history (embodied by the monograph and journal article) and the more practical and concise object analysis practiced in museums, galleries and online. The proposition is intriguing and not without a frisson of disciplinary transgression. Anyone who has moved between the academic and museum worlds will be familiar with residual distrust in university circles for the explanatory text, long presumed the province of attenuated and uncritical sensibilities, and the museum professional's parallel suspicion of scholarly analyses, typically laden with jargon and intertextual references.

In addition to these academic and popular contexts, *The Lives of Colonial Objects* exists in relation to two subsets of material culture collections released in recent years. Often published by museums themselves, these publications are typically devoted either to stories associated with objects in specific collections, or items of a particular type. Recent entries in the story-focused sub-genre include *Te Hao Nui/The Great Catch: Object Stories from Te Manawa* (Godwit, 2011); *100 Amazing Tales from Aotearoa* (Te Papa Press, 2012), Kate

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Hunter and Kirstie Ross'  *Holding onto Home: New Zealand Stories and Objects of the First World War* (Te Papa Press, 2015) and *Hello Boys and Girls: A New Zealand Toy Story* by David Veart (Auckland University Press, 2014). The books that focus on specific items or eras, such as  *Holding onto Home*, are blessed with a natural thematic coherence. Meanwhile the best of the museum collection books, *Te Hao Nui* being a prime example, provide a window onto unique material and cultural histories grounded in place. While rarely critical in their perspective, both types of object-focussed books are laudable for their concision (interpretation of objects rarely occupies more than a museum panel upper-limit of 300 words), specialised research and high production values, often replete with lush commissioned photography.

Perhaps as a result of its origins within an academic conference, *The Lives of Colonial Objects* promises to do something considerably more ambitious (and, arguably, more diffuse) than most of the other object-collection books released in New Zealand. The aggregated essays, its editors inform us, will 'highlight histories of colonial taste, dress and consumption, collecting practices, patterns of leisure, the breadth of colonial visual and print cultures ... as well as the evolution of medical and scientific knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> Taken together, the fifty objects examined in the book will 'illuminate the richness and variety of colonial society—its opportunities—but also its limits and constraints.'<sup>2</sup> On the face of it, this seems something of a tall order for any edited collection and one may be forgiven for approaching the pronouncement with a little scepticism.

The crucial question is this: do the assembled essays live up to the rather grandiose expectations articulated for them? It comes as a welcome surprise that the answer is an emphatic yes. Together the short pieces provide a scintillating glimpse into the many and variegated textures of life in colonial New Zealand, as well as regional and transnational networks of loyalty, affection and exchange. An early suite of essays on Māori antiquities, located both in New Zealand and overseas, makes clear the exemplary potential of object-focused histories. A highlight of this section is Kelvin Day's story of the intricately carved Kīngi Tauihi (or waka figurehead) in the heritage

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<sup>1</sup> Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla, 'Introduction, A Scheme of Things', in *The Lives of Colonial Objects* ed. by Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2015), pp.13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, Paterson and Wanhalla, 'Introduction', p.14.

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collection of New Plymouth's Puke Ariki. Its very existence tells of the Ngāti Toa Rangatira migration from Waikato to the Kapiti area in the 1830s; its design embodies unprecedented inter-iwi cooperation. The genealogy of the tauihi's institutional custody meanwhile speaks eloquently of the disconnection of Māori objects from their tribal context and heritage during the twentieth-century expansion of colonial museum collecting and display.

In a subsequent pair of entries, Waitangi Tribunal staffers Jonathan West and David Haines examine objects which evoke the transformative, yet often poorly understood effects of onshore whaling on pre-1840 southern New Zealand. Haines argues that a harpoon head found in the ruins of the Oashore Whaling station on Banks Peninsula in 2004 is an artefact of the intertwined histories of resource extraction and early European settlement. While Haines' analysis is gripping and empirically sound, there seems a degree of falseness in an implied equivalence between colonisation of the purposeful type represented by the Wakefield settlements, and the opportunistic presence of most whaling station personnel, regardless of the manifest implications for traditional Kāi Tahu networks and ways of living. While no less insightful, West's essay has greater narrative interest, largely due to the precise provenance of its animating object. West unpacks, figuratively and physically, a medical chest owned by Octavius Harwood, a clerk who became a 'makeshift' doctor for workers at the Ōtākou whaling station and surrounding Māori communities following an assault on the original doctor by an unstable station manager. While Harwood muddled through in the loosely-defined, communally-oriented identity of a putative 'health professional' prior to the advent of pathological study or modern hygienic practice, the rising tide of Māori mortality eventually put him in a precarious position. This trend manifested most personally in the death of Harwood's young wife, Tītapu, daughter of a Kāi Tahu rangitira.

Elsewhere, Lynette Townsend provides a fascinating discussion of a mid-nineteenth-century Noah's Ark toy owned by the children of a well-to-do settler family in the early Wakefield settlement of Port Nicholson (Wellington). This type of ark is not uncommon in museum collections — Waikato Museum has one of the more classical models with the signature painted dove on its upper gable end. Although much admired and regularly trotted out in exhibitions of antique toys, the arks have rarely been assessed by curators with any great degree of depth. While Townsend deliberates sensitively on the ark's

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significance to the religious and cultural worlds of colonial childhood, the most fruitful and unexpected aspect of her research involves the production history of the toys. They were mass produced, we discover, by villagers in Germany's Erzgebirge Mountains, using a system of industrialised craft production in which child labour played an integral part. It is stories like this that stand most potently for the enormous potential of objects, when dug up or dusted off and diligently interpreted, to throw light on economies and lived experiences ordinarily obscured by time and distance. *The Lives of Colonial Objects* is abundantly blessed with such illuminating and perceptive essays—they are simply too numerous and too varied to recount here.

Finally, credit must be given to the deft curation by the book's three editors. The essays are arranged both chronologically and thematically, giving credence to suggestions that its contents do indeed span the breadth of colonial New Zealand. The essays are bookended by the editors' perceptive introduction and a summative essay by Conal McCarthy and the late Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, both of which will surely prove useful for students of material culture. It is worth mentioning a few small omissions of both content and form. Few items, with the exception of the health stamps examined by Mark Stocker, speak of the incipient welfare state that would be a defining national experience of the mid-twentieth century. Although some lovely ephemera appears in the book, more of the authors might have used these as their primary object. The close-up photography possible in books and digital platforms makes small flyers, programmes and other advertising materials far more dynamic and visually appealing in these contexts than the table cases where they often languish in traditional museum displays. Some of the essays are a little long; the imposition of a uniform, slightly shorter length would have been beneficial, as would a slight decrease in the total number. While scholars will protest their utility, the endnotes may well have been excised: if academics have anything to learn from purveyors of public history it is the dreariness of show-your-work notation in popularly disseminated works. The book is particularly handsomely produced, a testament to the photographers—principally Michael Hall—and the team at Otago University Press. It seems that new life has been breathed into the press by a remarkable glut of productive and creative humanities academics at Otago and by its dynamic new publisher Rachel Scott. Overall, there is a tremendous amount to recommend *The Lives of Colonial Objects*—it will be a joy for casual followers of New Zealand history to own and dip into, and indeed for anyone with an

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interest in the possibilities of material culture as a means of encountering the past.

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# Katie Pickles, *Christchurch Ruptures* Wellington: BWB Text, 2016

Gail Adams-Hutcheson.

Katie Pickles' BWB text *Christchurch Ruptures* is an eminent assessment of a disaster. The 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes and aftershocks severely disrupted people, place, heritage and heart. Monuments, buildings and rocks fell, liquefaction seeped and lives were shattered both literally and emotionally. Christchurch people were left feeling untethered from the past by the series of violent events. Pickles' examination of *Christchurch Ruptures* includes an incorporation of history as layers of informant texts. She uses the historical layers of text to aid future thinking in the rebuilding phase of the greater Christchurch region, and of the city itself. Overall her work is deep, thought-provoking, deft and weighty. To my mind, Pickles' urgent commentary is also hopeful and challenging. As Ben Anderson argues, hope enlivens people in the context of suffering, and this is where the book is most powerful.<sup>1</sup> Pickles wants the earthquakes and aftershocks to become transformative rather than debilitating.

'Rupture', as a noun, can be defined as an instance of breaking or bursting suddenly and completely; a breach of a harmonious relationship, and this is the conceptual framing of Pickles' exposition on the importance of history and how to break from it. Her transgressive plans for the future city of Christchurch have caught the ire of some, including journalists in the *Christchurch Press*, who have described her thinking as 'a disgrace to New Zealand scholarship'.<sup>2</sup>

In *Christchurch Ruptures* Pickles remains passionate about her topic, and about the city of Christchurch. She draws on five ruptures (landscape, people, heritage, culture, and politics) to skilfully weave together both the geography and the history that has informed her scholarship. Although a historian, Pickles has affirmed her social and cultural geographical roots in this book, foregrounding the importance of place and context and their co-constitutional relationships with people. She urges readers to think about the Christchurch earthquakes as a defining moment, a 'postcolonial moment', a rupture fore-

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Anderson, 'Becoming and Being Hopeful: Towards a Theory of Affect', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24 (2006), pp. 645-59.

<sup>2</sup> Will Harvie, 'Ruptures: History Crumbled in the Christchurch Quakes and that's Good', *Press*, 5 March 2016. <<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/76902220/Ruptures-History-crumbled-in-the-Christchurch-quakes-and-thats-good>> [Retrieved 10 October 2016].

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signalling a brighter future (if residents are brave enough to take that step).<sup>3</sup> A future is asked for in this book that is unshackled from business-as-usual thinking encompassed by dominant colonial ways. To Pickles' line of argument however, to return to the colonial past or to engage the urge to look back in nostalgic longing is misguided at worst and short-sighted at best. Instead, Pickles urges readers to look back critically and learn from the past.

The first two chapters on landscape and people are strong, with a solid and interesting overview of the historical and colonial past. This offers a scaffold to the argument for reimagining Christchurch's future. What is important here is that rather than a potted and uneven rhythm of selected historical moments (and monuments) embedded in static notions of place, Pickles outlines a sense of dynamic change throughout the past which she believes should continue into the future. Pickles explains how there is a perception that Christchurch arose out of the swamp, mapping onto a clean-slate mentality of the triumph of 'man' over nature. In turn a magnificent and 'Godly' city was built to honour the settler spirit.<sup>4</sup> In these imaginings Māori and in particular Ngāi Tahu were largely forgotten. Early relationships between 'founders' and iwi could be termed as amicable, constituted as they were by mutual learning and trade, with settlers largely dependent on local iwi for survival. This view however, was not preserved. As dependency waned and numbers of settlers dramatically increased, Ngāi Tahu were marginalised to reserves.

Despite the ebbs and flows of iwi settlement, labour migration and the colonial disposition toward Māori in the region, Ngāi Tahu have become an economic powerhouse. The rupture here, though, is that only selected pasts are imagined by many in the restoration process: pre- and post-earthquake diversity has little representation. I link the thinking here to Karen Till's work on wounded cities, where art installations such as *White Lights of Hope* and work by Gap Filler evoke new visions of what Christchurch could become.<sup>5</sup> Artists

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<sup>3</sup> Katie Pickles, *Christchurch Ruptures* (Wellington: BWB Texts, 2016), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> John Robert Godley (29 May 1814 – 17 November 1861) was an Irish statesman and bureaucrat. Godley is considered to be the founder of Canterbury, New Zealand, although he lived there for only two years. While there he served as leader of the settlement, which was called Christchurch. See E.G. Wakefield and E.J. Wakefield, *The Founders of Canterbury: Being Letters from the late Edward Gibbon Wakefield to the late John Robert Godley, and to Other Well-Known Helpers in the Foundation of the Settlement of Canterbury in New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Three organisations in particular — Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble, and Life in Vacant Spaces — were instrumental in achieving creative city spaces, with some measure of success.

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and residents in wounded cities, Till explains, encourage ‘political forms of witnessing to respect those who have gone before, attend to past injustices that continue to haunt contemporary cities, and create experimental communities to imagine different urban futures’.<sup>6</sup> This is what Pickles asks residents of Christchurch to do.

Chapter three, on heritage, lingers on political thinking and the radical side of a so-termed ‘conservative’ city. I am pleased that Pickles includes the radical community at this point. As Henri Lefebvre reminds us, the discourses, practices, and the desires tied to urban pasts, presents, and futures are inherently political because they inform how individuals make and justify their decisions and actions.<sup>7</sup> From a reformist and strikingly feminist past, Christchurch has swung toward conservative politics and continues to show a more moderate streak in the post-disaster recovery. I connect this chapter to the discussion on heart and the ongoing debate over the Anglican Cathedral, once a symbol of heart, hope and rebuilding, but now a dilapidated building still largely as it fell nearly six years on and immersed in continual fierce debate.<sup>8</sup> The debate over the Christchurch Cathedral, Pickles asserts, demonstrates well the divergent future imaginings of Christchurch – clearly there are different views and no one solution. On the one hand, resistance to the colonial past and a business-as-usual approach is being voiced through debate over an iconic building. On the other hand, tradition, nostalgia and what it means to be a (white) Cantabrian, is symbolised by restoring the Cathedral.<sup>9</sup> Currently the latest restoration investigation, a working group organised by central Government in June 2016, is set to help break the ‘deadlock’ around the Cathedral, outlining how this identity-based tug-of-war continues.<sup>10</sup>

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They are a part of Christchurch’s post-earthquake placemaking projects, which have organically produced creative urban interventions. See R. Barber, ‘Making Do: Tactical Urbanism and Creative Placemaking in Transitional Christchurch, New Zealand’ (unpublished PhD thesis: Murdoch University, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Karen E. Till, ‘Wounded Cities: Memory-work and a Place-based Ethics of Care’, *Political Geography*, 31 (2012), pp. 3-14.

<sup>7</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Pickles, especially pp.132-138.

<sup>9</sup> With over 60 comments made one day after the post, see Charlie Gates, ‘Cathedral Working Group Investigating How to Restore Historic Christchurch Building’ *Press*, 9 September 2016. <<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/84081001/Cathedral-working-group-investigating-how-to-restore-historic-Christchurch-building>> [Retrieved 10 October 2016].

<sup>10</sup> Gates.

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The chapter entitled 'Gothic' did the least for me. In this chapter, Pickles examines 'crime, moral panic and the Englishness of Christchurch's social structure' and how these 'collide with the neo-Gothic landscape', drawing on the plot behind the movie *Heavenly Creatures*.<sup>11</sup> But I struggle to really see the link with a rupture here. I am unsure of how the Gothic (a dark soul of humanity?) could be overcome or ruptured. Equally, I was prompted to wonder how exactly Christchurch is different in this framing from elsewhere in New Zealand – unless we are talking exclusively about architecture? This chapter loses its surety and hold on rupture as a framing approach, and much of the discussion would be better placed elsewhere.

Overall, Katie Pickles' book is a refreshing and boldly critical look at the Christchurch earthquakes, something that has been slow to emerge from the shock thus far. There is a nod here too, to Naomi Klein's work on disaster capitalism, on the suburbanisation of the city and post-disaster winners and losers.<sup>12</sup> Pickles is asking people to take a good, long and hard look inward before committing to a future based on the relics of an often whitewashed past. Unfortunately a series of editorial blips adds a rushed tone to the text and takes some attention away from the carefully laid-out premise of ruptures. If you are considering disasters critically however, and want to delve deeper into the Christchurch context, then this book is a must.

**Gail has recently published 'Spatialising Skin: Pushing the Boundaries of Trauma Geographies' in *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2016. In this she explores the human impacts of relocation from Christchurch's 2010/2011 earthquakes and aftershocks.**

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<sup>11</sup> Pickles, especially p.106.

<sup>12</sup> Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

## ***Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage***

**Bernice L. Murphy ed.**

**New York: Routledge, 2016.**

Chloe Searle.

*Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage* aims to explore ethics and museum practice from a range of international perspectives. With a particular focus on the contributions of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the book details the evolution of museum ethics before exploring aspects of present and possible future practices. ICOM is a network comprising over 35000 members from around the world. Members are primarily museum professionals. ICOM works closely with the United Nations and is the principal forum internationally for museum ethical issues. One of ICOM's key activities is developing the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* that then informs codes of ethics and in some instances legislation, at a national level. In this volume some chapters take the form of case studies while others chronicle the broader trends in museum ethics since ICOM was founded in 1946. The contributors include academics and museum professionals, many of whom have been involved in ICOM. While the book includes several strong chapters which closely examine ethical questions, especially in parts six and seven, overall I found the volume disappointing as it favours chronicling over debate.

*Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage* is divided into seven parts. Together, the four chapters that make up Part One are intended to provide an introduction and context. Their focus is on ICOM's commitment to ethics. The last of these, written by the editor, Bernice Murphy, provides a useful introduction to ethics and museums. None of the four introductory chapters introduce the book itself. This is a weakness, as the potential to write about the connections between the different chapters is missed and overall the book lacks a clear argument.

The second part continues the book's focus on ICOM, in particular the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. 'The *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* : Background and Objectives', usefully covers the development of the current ICOM Code and then discusses each of the eight principles of the Code. The Code itself is presented as an appendix. Part Three is focused on international efforts to protect heritage, and the work of UNESCO is prominent here. UNESCO and ICOM work closely together and share an origin in post-World War Two international peace-building efforts. The fourth part aims to present heritage care and ethics from the perspective of multiple cultures and regions. These five chapters include contributions from Japan, China, Poland, Germany and

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the United States of America. This part would have benefitted from a tighter focus on the ‘why’ of ethics rather than the ‘what’. Part Five is dedicated to evolving issues and covers a range of topics, including provenance research and deaccessioning. Chapter 21, on deaccessioning, provides nuanced discussion of this issue and raises an important question about whether all museums should follow the same rules given the differences in scale and purpose between different institutions.<sup>1</sup>

For people working in public history, Parts Six and Seven of *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage* are the most relevant. Part Six is titled ‘Torn History’, Reviewing, Reshaping and Rebuilding an Integrated Heritage’. One theme that recurs throughout this book and is highlighted in Part Six, is the growing importance of museums working with the source communities that their collections have come from, and the ethical obligations that accompany this. Chapter 26, ‘Native America in the Twenty-first Century: Journeys in Cultural Governance and Museum Interpretation’, examines ‘the subject of ‘good Native cultural governance’’. In this chapter, W. Richard West, Jr. offers a sustained reflection on what working with source communities may look like in practice.<sup>2</sup> The author was the founding director of the National Museum of the American Indian and is currently the director of the Museum of the American West. West Jr. concludes with three main lessons, ‘that certain museum practices of the past’ are ‘indefensible in human, and humanistic, moral and ethical terms – that Native human remains do not belong in museum collections’, that ‘repatriation laws represented a seismic shift in museum paradigms and practice regarding ‘authority’’, and that ‘[t]he issue is not only whose stories are told in museums, but also who the storytellers are’.<sup>3</sup> These are important thoughts for New Zealand practitioners as we work together with different communities.

Clearly argued, grounded in specific practice, and covering an important area for public historians, Sharon Macdonald’s chapter on exhibiting contentious

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<sup>1</sup> François Mairesse, ‘Deaccessioning: Some Reflections’, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Bernice L. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> W. Richard West, Jr., ‘Native America in the Twenty-first Century: Journeys in Cultural Governance and Museum Interpretation’, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Bernice L. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.287.

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and difficult histories is the standout contribution to this volume. Macdonald explores the trend towards increased representations of contentious and difficult history, with a focus on the impact of these histories on those who view them and whether they can prompt people to engage in ethical reflection. Her insights into both the value of exhibiting contentious and difficult histories and potential pitfalls should be essential reading for anyone contemplating a project focused on contentious history and/or 'difficult heritage', such as 'crimes committed by one's own nation or people'.<sup>4</sup> These are histories that 'raise unsettling questions about the kind of people that we might be, as well as about continuing responsibility for the consequences of those historical actions'.<sup>5</sup> In part Macdonald draws on her visitor research undertaken at the former Nazi Party rally grounds in Nuremberg. A key finding was that for many visitors, visiting a site of difficult heritage was 'an opportunity to engage in ethical reflection'.<sup>6</sup> This reflection was broad-ranging and drew not only on the history presented but also on current events and other histories. This is contrasted with other sites such as the Nanjing Massacre Museum, where the mode of presentation 'seems to leave little opportunity for moving beyond the atrocity itself'.<sup>7</sup> This chapter also picks up on the importance of the ethical obligations to source communities. Museum collections themselves often include the spoils of contentious histories and addressing this in exhibitions is part of the ethical obligations to source communities.

Part Seven is dedicated to case studies and ethics training, especially highlighting ethical dilemmas. The final chapter, 'Ethics in Action: Situational Scenarios Turning the Keys to the Code of Ethics', is one of the more useful in the volume. The author has developed a technique using fictional scenarios to encourage all museum staff to take part in discussions about ethics and to use the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* as a resource in these discussions. The aim is to move people beyond seeing the Code as 'remedial authority' and instead realise that ethical conduct is part of the day-to-day role of all museum

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<sup>4</sup> Sharon Macdonald, 'Exhibiting Contentious and Difficult Histories: Ethics, Emotions and Reflexivity', in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Bernice L. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2016), p.267.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.270.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.274.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.270.

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staff.<sup>8</sup> While the scenarios presented are designed for ethics training in a museum context, they could readily be adapted to prompt consideration on ethical issues in relation to public history.

Overall, *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage* falls short of its goal of exploring ethics in light of museum practice; there is not enough discussion of ethics in the daily work of museum practitioners. The fictional scenarios outlined in the final chapter could easily have been expanded, with full chapters on how these types of scenarios have worked out in practice. The lack of an introduction or a conclusion to the volume itself means the chance was missed to develop some of the tensions that emerge across the different chapters. This also limits the space given to discussing potential future practices. While it succeeds in covering a broad range of topics and proving that ethics touches on all aspects of museum work, too much of the book is given over to detailing ICOM's achievements and too little to a critique of that work, or to strong case studies of museum practice. In places this book feels more like a record than a contribution to debate and discussion. Given the controversy that can surround museum activities and ethics — from contentious exhibitions, to deaccessioning, to arguments around funding and sponsorship — this book is unexpectedly devoid of debate, and is the poorer for it.

**Chloe Searle is currently part of the team developing new exhibitions for the planned redevelopment of the North Otago Museum, Forrester Gallery and Waitaki District Archive. The facility is due to open in spring 2019.**

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<sup>8</sup> Eva Maehre Lauritzen, 'Ethics in Action: Situational Scenarios Turning the Keys to the Code of Ethics', in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Bernice L. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2016), p.348.

