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Shared Inuit Culture: European Museums and Arctic Communities
La culture inuit partagée : Musées européens et communautés arctiques

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Article abstract

Since the 1980s, museum professionals have increasingly committed to sharing collections with the descendants of people and communities from whom the collected artifacts originated. As late as the 1970s, Indigenous people were not considered stakeholders in the collection and exhibition of their own cultural artifacts. Recently, however, exemplary cases of collection sharing have occurred in North American and European museums. Museums have become "contact zones" as issues of decolonization have come to the fore. This article discusses the sharing of material culture and "double" position of anthropological museums, rooted in their own (colonial) history but in possession of another's culture. Ownership issues, access, and ethics are important for local communities but not always easy for museums to negotiate. This article describes thirteen examples of collaborative partnerships between museums, for the most part large, urban, European, postcolonial institutions, and Arctic Indigenous communities. I argue that open communication, collection research, and an increasing level of co-curation are prerequisites for changes in museum practice, and these changes will benefit both the institutions and the communities involved.

Shared Inuit Culture: European Museums and Arctic Communities

Cunera Buijs[i]

ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s, museum professionals have increasingly committed to sharing collections with the descendants of people and communities from whom the collected artifacts originated. As late as the 1970s, Indigenous people were not considered stakeholders in the collection and exhibition of their own cultural artifacts. Recently, however, exemplary cases of collection sharing have occurred in North American and European museums. Museums have become "contact zones" as issues of decolonization have come to the fore. This article discusses the sharing of material culture and "double" position of anthropological museums, rooted in their own (colonial) history but in possession of another's culture. Ownership issues, access, and ethics are important for local communities but not always easy for museums to negotiate. This article describes thirteen examples of collaborative partnerships between museums, for the most part large, urban, European, postcolonial institutions, and Arctic Indigenous communities. I argue that open communication, collection research, and an increasing level of co-curation are prerequisites for changes in museum practice, and these changes will benefit both the institutions and the communities involved.

KEYWORDS

Museum collections, Arctic communities, Inuit cultural heritage, power imbalance, decolonization, cooperation, material culture

RÉSUMÉ

La culture inuit partagée : Musées européens et communautés arctiques

Depuis les vingt dernières années, les conservateurs des musées se sont de plus en plus engagés à partager les collections avec les descendants des peuples et des communautés dont elles sont originaires. L'histoire des collections et la documentation des relations avec les communautés autochtones concernées montrent qu'à la fin des années 1970, les portes de la plupart des musées étaient fermées aux Peuples autochtones. Depuis, cependant, les choses se sont bien améliorées aux États-Unis et au Canada, les musées devenant des « zones de contact » où la décolonisation constitue une priorité. Dans cet article, je discute du partage de la culture matérielle et de la « double » position particulière dans laquelle se trouvent les musées. Les questions de propriété et d'éthique sont très importantes pour les communautés locales et ne sont pas toujours évidentes pour les musées. Une comparaison entre un cas difficile des

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années 1970 (l'exigence, de la part du gouvernement groenlandais, que les Pays-Bas lui restituent des restes humains présumés inuit) et les développements récents d'une coopération accrue entre les musées et les communautés arctiques peut projeter un nouvel éclairage sur ce sujet controversé.

MOTS-CLÉS
Collections muséales, communautés arctiques, patrimoine culturel inuit, inégalité de pouvoir, décolonisation, coopération, culture matérielle

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Salvage anthropology—the collection of cultural artifacts and human remains, rather than just data and images—began in the nineteenth century and developed out of evolution theories and Darwinism. Because salvage collecting of vanishing Indigenous material culture occurred, nowadays the historical remains of many Arctic cultures can be found in museums, on display in exhibitions, or kept in storerooms and archives. Until recently, it was not a matter of course that these archives be open to the Indigenous people who were culturally, historically, or by ancestry connected to the collections. Euro-American researchers, on the other hand, could easily get permission to visit and study museum collections (Fienup-Riordan 2010, 1; see also Buijs and Van Broekhoven 2010; Chilisa 2012; Clifford 1997, 2013; Driscoll Engelstad 2010; Fienup-Riordan 2005; Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013; Karp, Kraemer, and Lavine 1992; Lonetree 2012, 9–11; Lyons 2011; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2003; Silverman 2015).

Anthropological museums find themselves in the arena of contested material culture, and these institutions have a double position, with one leg in their own society and the other in the Indigenous culture where the collections originate. American and Canadian museums are the forerunners in recognizing this double bond, and they have developed new ways of working with the collections and Indigenous communities. North American institutions' lead in this area can be explained by the human rights struggles, land claims, and repatriation issues of First Peoples in North America, which have resulted in extensive legislation on tangible and intangible heritage (Sullivan, Abraham, and Griffin 2010, 232–33). While access to and ownership of these cultural collections has been the focus of much debate, these collections predominantly continue to be held by museums on the basis of a range of arguments, varying from technical conditions to audience attractiveness. At the core of these arguments is the belief, as Linda Tuhiway Smith (2012, 92) explains, that museum collections stem from "trading practices, which are framed by the Western juridical system….The relationships involved are presumed two-way transactions." The problem, though, Smith continues, is that "from indigenous perspectives, their possessions were stolen" (92). For small local communities it is not easy to prove ownership

claims; neither is access to their cultural heritage guaranteed. Representation and misinterpretations of their cultures is another controversial issue.

In this article, I describe and analyze several collaborative projects, exhibitions, and repatriation claims initiated in Europe as examples of the complexity of the relationships between museums and Indigenous Arctic communities and the disputed cultural heritage of museum collections. I discuss issues of unequal power balances, ownership, and the extent to which Indigenous communities are deciding questions of ownership for themselves in these projects. This article examines the complexities of these source community projects, including their experimental, inspirational, and culture-building aspects.

Museums and Indigenous Communities

Ruth Phillips was one of six invited curators of an exhibition called *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, one of the major cultural events of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta. In her book *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (2011), she explains that relationships between museums and communities were and still can be tense. She did not anticipate, however, that *The Spirit Sings* would evoke as much controversy as it did. Phillips writes, "An international boycott of the exhibition was called in support of an unresolved land claim that had brought great suffering to a band of Alberta Cree" (12). An example of how Indigenous land claims were beginning to influence the distribution of power in Canadian society, the controversy around this exhibition also provoked change in the relationships between museums and Indigenous communities. A similar process was occurring in the United States as discussions of curatorial practices in relation to Indigenous Peoples focused on looting, protection of cultural heritage, and repatriation of human remains, which resulted in extensive legislation, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990). The National Museum of the American Indian, as part of the Smithsonian Institution, played a leading role in returning Indian and Indigenous Hawaiian human remains and funerary objects to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated tribes, clans, villages, or organizations. Phillips continues, "It is clearer today, that events occurring elsewhere were portents of the new role which museum representation would soon assume as a site of post-colonial critique" (11). The controversy around *The Spirit Sings* led to the establishment of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, comprised of members from non-Indigenous and Indigenous institutions in Canada. The task force reconceptualized the ways in which Canadian museums and Indigenous Peoples should work together (see Task Force on Museums and First Peoples 1994). Following the task force's central recommendation that museums and communities should work together as partners, Canadian museums began to experiment with creating more equitable relationships and collaborative curatorial practices with Indigenous Peoples (Phillips 2011, 12–14).

Nowadays, anthropological museums are much more aware of the unequal power balance and injustice done to Indigenous communities related to their material culture. According to James Clifford, museums are increasingly seen as "contact zones," a term he borrows from Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 6–7), who defines it as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relationships, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict." Clifford describes a meeting in the basement of the Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Oregon, where about twenty people of Tlingit descent discussed their cultural heritage as it was kept in the museum: "As the meeting progressed, the basement of the Portland Art Museum became something more than a place of consultation or research; it became a contact zone…A message was delivered, performed, within an ongoing contact history" (192–93). Clifford continues, "The objects of the Rasmussen Collection [of the Portland Art Museum], however fairly and freely bought and sold, could never be entirely possessed by the museum. They were sites of a historical negotiation, occasions for an ongoing contact" (194).

In the summer of 1999, Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad accompanied two Nunavut Inuit, Bernadette (Miqqusaaq) Dean and Rhoda Karetak, to the American Museum of Natural History in New York to examine an exquisite beaded parka that belonged to their ancestor Nivisanaaq. Following this visit, they organized a tour of Inuit Elders from Nunavut to museum collections in Toronto, Ottawa, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. Inuk filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk documented the Elders' trips and their reconnection to their cultural heritage in his 2009 film *Inuit Piqutingit: What Belongs to Inuit* (Isuma Productions). Driscoll Engelstad (2010, 45) describes the encounter between the group of Inuit and their cultural heritage in the museums: "Through powerful personal statements, the Elders describe the emotional impact of their journey and their renewed respect for the strength, fortitude and skill of their ancestors."

Another example of cooperation and open communication between an Indigenous Arctic community and a Western institution is *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People* (2001), a joint project of the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in Kodiak, Alaska, and the Smithsonian Institution's Arctic Studies Center in Washington, DC (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001; Clifford 2013, 229). Other collaborative exhibitions include the Canadian Museum of Civilization's *Threads of the Land: Clothing Traditions from Three Indigenous Cultures* (1995–1997), which included an exhibit called "Sanatujut, Pride in Women's Work," curated by Judy Hall, about Copper and Caribou Inuit clothing. The National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC (established 2004), is also recognized for its consultations and partnerships with Indigenous people; Indigenous groups are co-curators in

research, building exhibitions, and finding new ways of storage that reflect Indigenous points of view.[1]

Phillips (2003, 166) argues that today's museum practice includes two models related to exhibition making, which can also be applied to collaborative projects: (1) the multivocal (exhibition) model provides multiple perspectives and ensures that the voices of curators, scholars, and Indigenous people are all present; (2) in community-based projects, the curator's role is that of a facilitator at the service of community members. In this model, some of the museum's authority is transferred to the community. "Narratives, stories and performances are often the result of such processes" (Phillips 2003, 166; see also Lonetree 2012, 21).

European museums are generally behind the United States and Canada in adopting this contact zone modus operandi; until recently, this approach was not daily practice, and exhibitions in anthropological museums in Europe could be developed and displayed without Indigenous involvement. Yet I would like to mention briefly an "early" example of collaborative work between an Arctic community and curators Pierre and Bernadette Robbe of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris; in 1983 the Robbes invited a group of East Greenlanders to Paris to build an *umiak*. These French curators established a long-lasting cooperative relationship with East Greenlandic local representatives, a number of whom still travel annually to Paris to work together on a Tunumiisut dictionary. There are several other outstanding examples of collaboration. At the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England, for instance, anthropologist Alison Brown and curator of the Americans Collection, Laura Peers, have worked collaboratively for many years with members of Blackfoot Nations (Brown and Peers 2006). The Cambridge Museum of Anthropology and Archeology has a photograph project with Nenets people in Northern Siberia. And there have been creative, collaborative initiatives between museums and Indigenous Peoples outside the Arctic; for example, the British Museum worked with four builders and carvers from Sulawesi in 1987; the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden in the Netherlands works closely with Indonesia on several projects; the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, renowned for its innovative exhibitions (such as *Homme blanc, homme noir* in 2016), has projects in Africa and with Maori artists from New Zealand and Aboriginal artists from Australia. Furthermore, the Africa Museum in Tervuren in Belgium collaborates also with stakeholders of African backgrounds (see Simpson 2002, 59; Price 2007, 129–39). Recently, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam invited artists and cultural activists to have a critical dialogue about its displays, particularly those focused on slavery and the colonial past, and the National Museum of Denmark organized an exhibition on the Danish colonial ties with the West Indies.

1. For other twentieth-century exhibitions that travelled to local communities in the North, see Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988; and Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982. For an overview of American and Canadian collaborative initiatives, see Clifford 2013; Driscoll 2010; and Phillips 2003.

The *Living Arctic* in London

According to Moira Simpson (2002, 59), the most extensive collaborative work undertaken by the British Museum is probably the *Living Arctic* project, organized in 1987 and 1988. In December 1984 a small exhibition called *Inuit/Eskimo: People of the North American Arctic* opened in the Museum of Mankind in London. As Simpson explains, the exhibition "gave a very brief view of the cultures of the Inupiat Eskimo of Alaska, the Canadian Inuit and Greenlanders based upon the museum's holdings of nineteenth-century material" (59). Although there was some criticism of the historical focus the exhibition, the focus on traditional cultures appealed to the general public. The exhibition, and the fact that First Nations artists worked in London, attracted a record number of visitors. "The success of these exhibitions led to plans for *The Living Arctic*" (59). During this time, Inuit political leaders had travelled to Europe in an attempt to understand the European boycott of seal products and to sway political and public opinion through media attention. Their efforts were unsuccessful, largely because Greenpeace ran a high-profile campaign against sealing. Coincidentally, the *Living Arctic* exhibition was organized simultaneously, and then curator Jonathan King introduced what we now call multiple multivocality and paid attention to Indigenous ways of thinking. King demonstrated the negative influence of the anti-seal protests and trade boycotts among Inuit hunting communities. Simpson describes the *Living Arctic* exhibition:

> The completed exhibition focused upon Inuit, Métis and Indian cultures in urban and rural communities….[It] included quotations by people living in the Arctic region describing their lifestyles, and conveying their thoughts about whaling, fishing, cultural influences, and the changes occurring around them….The exhibition [also included] people's expressions of fear and concern for the continuation of traditional lifestyles in the face of international opposition to the fur trade and limits upon fishing quotas and areas. (60)

The museum organized an extensive activity program and employed Canadian staff, including David Serkoak, an Inuk teacher from Arviat (Eskimo Point), to develop an education program. According to Simpson, this multifaceted approach presented visitors with a diversity of perspectives, which "helps to counteract the impression that the museum is the sole voice of authority" (60; see also Brody 1987). Even though the exhibition was well funded, collaboration with faraway Arctic communities was expensive, and staff faced financial constraints in building equitable partnerships with Indigenous collaborators.

Greenlandic Human Remains in the Netherlands[2]

Although the case of a repatriation request from Greenland is not a collaborative project, this example of the neglect to share museum artifacts with Indigenous Peoples is relevant to my overall argument. In November 1998 Jonathan Motzfeldt, then prime minister of Greenland, protested strongly against the exhibition of human remains in the Netherlands. In the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, the exhibition *Botje bij botje* (Bone to bone) had opened, and the mummified skin from the head, torso, and one arm of a supposed Greenlander was displayed. Coincidentally, at the same time as the exhibition opened, the Greenlandic government had sent an official request for repatriation. The presumed Greenlander was in the possession of the Westfries Museum in Hoorn, and as a municipal museum, the council and the mayor of Hoorn were the official owners of the remains. The curator of the Westfries Museum, witnessing an increasing number of visitors when the case was broadly discussed in regional and national media, testified that he was not willing to part with the human remains because to do so would set a precedent that would result in the depositories of the Dutch museums running empty (Buijs 2010, 29). In January 2000 the Westfries Museum asked for advice from the Commission for Museological Ethical Code from the Dutch Museum Foundation. The foundation advised the museum to return the human remains to a local community only after tracing the deceased's living descendants. For the government of Greenland this recommendation was unsatisfactory and unfair to local Indigenous communities, who would have great difficulty in proving kinship ties. Furthermore, it was difficult to decide to which community to turn to, since the provenance of the remains was unclear.

On July 11, 2000, the council of the municipality of Hoorn decided to grant the Greenlandic request after DNA research would prove the scientific evidence for the supposed Greenlandic roots. The council posted a condition for the return of the human remains: the Greenland government was not allowed to put the remains on display and had to rebury them in accordance with the customs of their Indigenous inhabitants, despite the fact that there was no mention of a funeral in the request from the Greenlandic government (Buijs 2010, 28–30). In 2001 the Institute of Forensic Medicine at the University of Copenhagen reported

2. I have described this Dutch–Greenlandic case in detail elsewhere (Buijs 2010, 28–31). The information in my 2010 article is based on the original reports from the institutions involved, including the Greenlandic government. A comparison between other cases dealing with human remains and its legislation in Europe would be interesting and relevant but is beyond the scope of this article. For more information on Greenlandic mummies, see Hansen 1985; information on the UK Human Tissue Act 2004, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents; and for the US Kennewick Man, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kennewick_Man. Also worthwhile to mention is the research of Kenn Harper ([1986] 2000) and France Rivet (2014). See also "Repatriation," National Museum of the American Indian, accessed November 4, 2018, http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/repatriation.

that a radiocarbon analysis of the human remains showed that the deceased had an entirely terrestrial food intake, in contrast to the Inuit lifestyle, and so the specimen was probably not of Greenlandic origin (Lynnerup and Simonson 2001). As a consequence, the Greenlandic government renounced their repatriation request. The curators of the museum in Hoorn (pers. comm., 2014), however, doubted the integrity of the physical research, arguing that the DNA was too much damaged to be sure of the research results, and "the whole situation became too much politicized." They argued that "the Danish Institution provided the Greenland government an elegant way out." The museum in Hoorn, therefore, kept the human remains on display and refused to change the texts that describe the origins of the human remains, as the Greenland government had requested. The museum texts still identified the remains as belonging "possibly to Greenland. After all, you never know."

Projects Related to Greenland and Denmark

Longstanding colonial and postcolonial relationships between Denmark and Greenland resulted in the repatriation of about 35,000 Greenlandic objects from Denmark to Greenland between 1984 and 2001. This repatriation and collaboration, which also resulted in the co-curation of several related exhibitions, is unprecedented in size and scope. The repatriation was closely connected to the formation of a national museum in Greenland, as Aviâja Rosing Jakobsen, curator at the Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu (Greenland National Museum and Archives) in Nuuk explains:

> In 1966, as part of the nation building process in Greenland, the Greenland Provincial Museum in Nuuk was transformed into the Greenland National Museum and Archives. Negotiations were initiated with the National Museum in Denmark in order to get substantial parts of the Greenlandic collections returned….In 1979 Greenland acquired Home Rule and on January the 1st of 1981 all matters relating to museums and the protection of ancient monuments became the responsibility of the Greenland government. Immediately hereafter, Greenland Home Rule initiated the law for the formation of the Greenland National Museum. (2010, 75)

Daniel Thorleifsen (2010, 83), director of the Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu, writes, "Repatriation has been a great wish among many new independent states and Indigenous peoples who had lost essential parts of their cultural heritage during colonial times" (see also Bennett 1995; Rosing and Pentz 2004). With the establishment of self-government in 2009, the relationships between Greenland and Denmark grew more independent and more equal. The Greenland National Museum and Archives has been striving for repatriation for many years with the full cooperation of Denmark, and with outstanding results.

Denmark and Greenland have also a long-term research partnership (see Bouchenaki 2004; Gabriel and Dahl 2008; Haagen 1995; Jakobsen 2010; Rosing and Pentz 2004; Schultz-Lorentzen 1997; Thorleifsen 2010).

The repatriation of 35,000 objects from the National Museum of Denmark was carefully planned; after the registration and documentation was completed, the collection was transferred to the Greenland National Museum and Archives in 1984. The repatriation project also included archive documents, and the entire process lasted from 1982 to 2001. Now the Greenlandic museum has an outstanding collection related to the (pre)history of the people of Greenland. In 2016 the Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and the collections transferred from Denmark are still (partially) on permanent display.

The Danish Arctic Institute in Copenhagen has made significant efforts to digitize their photograph collections for open online access. On their website Arktiske billeder, more than 150,000 images can be retrieved. The museum's collections are also available online. Visitors to the website can suggest changes to texts in the institute's database via email. An editorial board judges and processes public comments.[3]

A remarkable Danish initiative was a digital repatriation project titled *KINAANA* (which, in Greenlandic, means *who is it?*). From 2004 to 2006, the Jette Bang photograph collection at the Danish Arctic Institute, which includes photos that were taken at several places in Greenland from 1936 to 1963, was scanned and made available on the Arktiske billeder and the KINAANA websites.[4] Leise Johnsen, a Danish anthropologist, took the scanned and printed photographs back to Greenland and gave presentations, organized school projects and travelling exhibitions, and collected stories and life histories of Greenlanders who were related to the people in the photographs. The KIAANA website was online between 2004 and 2010. The project was well received in Greenland and, according to Johnsen, the photo dataset of arktiskebilleder.dk was the second-most visited website in Greenland in December 2008. Johnson (2010, 58) writes, "The photographer Jette Bang wishes that her photos could bring something good to the Greenlanders and so they have."

There are two other interesting Danish–Greenlandic digital projects. The first is the SkinBase Project, which documents photographed clothing collections from three museums—the National Museum of Denmark, Nunatta Katersugaasivia

3. See Arktiske Billeder, Arctic Institute's Photography, Art and Object, and Sound Collection database, https://www.arktiskebilleder.dk/pages/home.php?login=true; National Museum of Denmark, "Digital Collections," www.natmus.dk/digital-collections; National Museum of Denmark, "The National Museum as an Organization," http://natmus.dk/footermenu/organisation/forskning-og-formidling/nyere-tid-og-verdens-kulturer/etnografisk-samling/arktisk-forskning/about-sila/.

4. There are also many Jette Bang photographs in the National Museum and Archives in Nuuk, Greenland.

Allagaateqarfialu, and Museum of Cultural History in Oslo—via the website Skin Clothing Online. The project generously shares about 2,500 garments in no less than 750,000 photographs, to be used under creative commons in an open source environment. The project intends to broaden its scope to include other museum's collections in the future. The organizers have designed a comprehensive and technical website with high quality photography in 3D. This experience with 3D photography of museum collections stimulated a new project called Ersersaaneq (Creating knowledge through images). Students from Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland, are using this educational tool in collaboration with curators from the Greenland National Museum and Archives to create 3D digital models of items from East Greenland, starting with a wooden water bucket from the Gustav Holm collection. The aim of the project is to create an online repository[5] of the Gustav Holm objects, which are scattered outside Greenland—namely, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The Smithsonian Institution and State University, both in Washington, are partners in the Ersersaaneq project in cooperation with the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, and the National Museum of Greenland in Nuuk.

The British Museum's Iñupiaq Engravings Website

In 2005 Jonathan King, the former curator and keeper of the ethnographic collections of the British Museum, assisted by Birgit Pauksztat, launched an Iñupiaq engravings website. It featured forty-four ivory tools decorated with pictorial engravings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The high quality engravings show scenes of daily activities, such as whaling and walrus hunting, and parts of other everyday scenes, including dog teams and stretched sealskins. The scenes rarely include Europeans, and there are almost no spiritual beings. The site also hosted three essays—"The Iñupiat," "History of Engraving," and "Art of Engraving"—which provide context to the engraved ivory tools. Each of the object types (e.g., drill bows) had a page with a short article and image(s). Excerpts of stories told by Elders Kivilliguk, Piquk Killigivuk, and Omnik were also available. These stories were taken from Tom Lowenstein's publications, and recorded between 1973 and 1988.[6] Despite their importance, the engravings have long been neglected by researchers. The site aimed to make the engravings more accessible to north Alaskan communities, scholars, and the public. People could respond to the objects, photographs, or information on the website via email. However, response to the website was limited (Jonathan King, pers. comm., 2015), and as of 2016 the site was no longer online.

5. See the Ersersaaneq page at https://prezi.com/rnaudcm3ai-_/ersersaaneq-project-2/ and https://core.tdar.org/document/442536/ersersaaneq-project-creating-knowledge-through-images.

6. The stories were translated by Tukummiq Carol Omnik and Tom Lowenstein.

Yu'pik in Berlin

In 1999 researcher Ann Fienup-Riordan and translator Marie Meade visited Berlin's Ethnological Museum with a group of eight Alaskan Yu'pik delegates who were searching for items related to their cultural heritage collected by Adrian Jacobsen in 1877 and 1880. The Yu'pik leaders and Elders of the local community had initiated the visit and worked closely with Fienup-Riordan and Meade to make it happen. Peter Bolz, the curator of North American ethnology at the museum, wrote, "it was a unique experience, not only for them but for the museum. Never before had a group of native people come to study our collections so intensively. Within a period of three weeks, they looked at and handled nearly 2,000 objects, telling stories about them and demonstrating their use" (quoted in Fienup-Riordan 2005, x). The project was funded by the National Science Foundation to the region's non-profit corporation, the Association of Village Council Presidents (see Fienup-Riordan 2005).

This Yu'pik consultation and cooperative project resulted in an overwhelming amount of data. The process was filmed and the results have been published in several publications, including a comprehensive catalogue called *Fieldwork Turned on Its Head* (Fienup-Riordan 2005). In the book, Fienup-Riordan names the chapters according to the consultation processes (e.g., "First Day," "Second Day," etc.), but the overall structure of the book reflects central concepts of Yu'pik society such as sharing and exchange: the sections of the catalogue are titled The Gift (the museum collection); The Gift-Givers (the Yu'pik society); and The Return Gift (the Yu'pik delegation in Berlin). The Yu'pik Elders provided information, content and context, stories, Indigenous knowledge, and joy and connectedness. The group experienced lively and intense moments: "all the Elders danced through the collection. Chopping with axes, shooting arrows, digging for mouse food, shoveling snow, mixing *ahutaq*, and making fire with a bow drill" (Fienup-Riordan 2003, 32). By reconnecting and remembering, the Yu'pik Elders in Berlin made the past present, bringing it back to life.

The Alutiiq and Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer

In his foreword to the exhibition catalogue *Giinaquq, Like a Face*: *Sugpiaq Masks of the Kodiak Archipelago*, Will Anderson (2009), chair of the Alaskan Alutiiq Heritage Foundation Board of Directors, recalls his visit to the Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in 2006, where he encountered the incredible mask collection of the Kodiak archipelago. He was struck by both the masks and this experience of the museum as a contact zone: "On one level, having the opportunity to look at these masks provided me a glimpse of the physical remnants of my heritage. But on another level, knowing these masks were used as part of dances, ceremonies, and storytelling, I couldn't help but feel that in a very real sense I was getting an opportunity to look into the faces of my ancestors" (xii).

The remarkable connection between a small French museum and Alaskan artists started in the 1980s and 1990s when a cultural revival took place in Alaska and carvers and artists were searching for good examples of their cultural heritage. Due to work of Lydia Black and her doctoral student Dominique Desson, an almost unknown collection of Kodiak masks that was stored in the municipal museum in Boulogne-sur-Mer was published in Desson's dissertation and made available to the world. Artist Perry Eaton, who grew up in Kodiak, had visited the Smithsonian Institution in Washington in 1972 to find good quality examples of masks collected by one of the earliest scientific explorers of Alaska, William Dall. The masks in France, however, turned out to be the most profound of the nineteenth-century Alutiiq masks in the world. The collection in Boulogne stems from the work of the young French explorer and ethnographer Alphonse Pinart, who decided to embark for Alaska in 1871 to conduct linguistic research. He travelled by kayak with Aleutian guides, took notes, and attended ceremonies. He was able to collect many artifacts, including masks. After his return to France in 1873, he donated the collection to the Chateau-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, where he lived (Clifford 2013, 282).

Sven Haakanson was the next to track the collection, and he began to explore the possibility of having it loaned to the Alutiiq Museum. In the beginning, the Château-Musée officials were "polite but suspicious" (Clifford 2013, 283), afraid of a repatriation claim. In 2005 the then newly appointed director, Anne-Claire Laronde, made a policy change that increased support for partnerships (284). Since then, a strong and beneficial relationship between the French museum and the Alutiiq Museum has been built. In 2007 half of the Boulogne collection of masks was loaned to the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak for an exhibition, and Alaskan artists in residence visited Boulogne and the Musée du quai Branly in Paris. Haakanson understood that without Pinart and the Boulogne-sur-Mer there would only be a handful of objects remaining from the Sugpiaq culture. In 2016 twenty-two artists from all over Alaska donated fifty contemporary Indigenous artifacts, pieces, and art to the exhibition *Alaska passé / présent* (Alaska, from past to present). Céline Ramio (email, 2016), who became director of the Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer in 2015, writes, "the museum takes this dialogue a step further by steadily expanding its collections with current work which offer a reminder that Native cultures still exist, that they are thriving and that the contemporary works they produce constitute not only an assertion of identity but far more besides: true contemporary art anchored in its time."

Oslo and Nunavut: The Return of the Amundsen Collection

The famous Norwegian polar explorer and scientist Roald Amundsen stayed in Uqsuqtuuq from 1903 to 1906. In fact, he named his ship *Gjoa Haven* after the hamlet. During the 1990s, after Nunavut was established, local Arctic museums

were built and a repatriation policy was enacted. Tom Svensson and Tone Wang of the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway, discussed the repatriation request, but, at the time, the local centre in Gjoa Haven lacked the space and the equipment to properly display and store the objects. In 2013, after the Nattilik Heritage Centre, which was well equipped to house the historical objects, had been built, the repatriation of sixteen objects was organized (see Hill 2013, 1). The two institutes also made plans in 2013 to incorporate art and writing done by Gjoa Haven artists in an exhibition in Oslo. A third museum, the Fram Museum in Oslo, which also holds artifacts from Amundsen, incorporates art from Gjoa Haven artists in a 2019 exhibition: "the museum wants to serve as an outlet for the community's artists," explained Geir Klover, the director of the Fram Museum (Boyd 2013).

The Netherlands and Digital Repatriation of Photographs from Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland)

The National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (now part of the National Museum of World Cultures after a 2015 merger), together with the Museon in The Hague, the National Museum of Greenland in Nuuk, and the Ammassalik Museum in Tasiilaq in East Greenland, started a partnership to share the East Greenlandic photo collections housed in the two above mentioned Dutch museums. The photographs were taken from 1965 to 1986 by former curator Gerti Nooter, and his wife, Noortje, in Diilerilaaq, a village in the Sermilik Fjord (East Greenland). Through the project Roots2Share, some of these photographs have been scanned and returned to the communities, where they can now be accessed locally. The project was launched after full and prior consent of representatives of the local community. It was financed by the Mondriaan Fund, a Dutch foundation that supports art and culture, and the Dutch museums.

From 2010 to the time of writing in late 2018, the Roots2Share project hosted travelling exhibitions, held community meetings, and conducted consultations in cooperation with Iivi (Tunumiit) Elders in Greenland and the Netherlands. School projects in Greenland connected generations as Iivi pupils travelled to the Netherlands, where they granted art that they made to the museum and created an exhibition with their objects in Leiden. Central to the project is its experimental digital heritage forum www.roots2share.gl, dedicated to digital transfer and digital storytelling. Four languages can be used on the website: East Greenlandic, West Greenlandic, Danish, and English. Without interference of the museum employees, East Greenlanders can write texts in their own language, and they decide what kind of knowledge they share and what information they keep in the family or hidden in secrecy (Buijs and Jakobsen 2011; Buijs 2016). There are still technical problems with the website, and 2,577 photographs have been uploaded, out of about 10,000 images that were scanned in high resolution, due to differences in

priorities and management constraints among the participating museums. Furthermore, institutions had to rely on volunteers to run the project. The Dutch National Museum of World Cultures adopted the practice of sharing collections (and visual repatriation) as part of its museum policy for the new planning period of 2017 to 2021, and the Research Center for Material Culture, connected to the museum's institution, is developing new ways of working with various communities across the globe. The Museon continues to work with communities while making exhibitions as well.

Discussion

As a reaction to cultural oppression, loss, and trauma of the colonial past, and to misrepresentations and misinterpretations of their cultures, Arctic peoples have contested the ownership of museum collections and criticized anthropological museums as symbols of inequality and oppression in their own countries and in Europe (see Chilisa 2012; Clifford 2013; Phillips 2011; Sahlins 1999). Furthermore, museum professionals and Indigenous people often misunderstand each other, as Howard Morphy (2015) discovered in discussions with both groups. An example from Australia illustrates such miscommunication: after establishing that the collections belonged to the Yolngu people and agreeing to leave the objects in the museum, the Yolgnu consultant added, "but don't put them on show." The curator asked, "Because they are secret?" "No," the Yolngu consultant responded, "because Europeans will think we are savages" (Morphy 2015, 94). When museums establish collaborations and relationships with Indigenous communities, their objectives are often vague. Sometimes it may appear that these relationships are established only for the sake of political correctness. So, why do museums increasingly strive to conduct collaborative projects with communities, and what can we learn from these projects between anthropological museums in Europe and Arctic communities? Let us take a closer look at the differences and similarities between the cases described above to shed light on the sharing of collections and to show the difficult position in which anthropological museums in Europe (and globally) find themselves.

The thirteen cases of collection sharing between European museums and Arctic communities are very different in character, scope, aim, organization, funding, impact on the local community, and results. A comparative analysis of these projects is complicated, and the results of the projects, especially their impact for Indigenous organizations and local communities, are difficult to measure. Sometimes a project is very limited in size but is nonetheless highly innovative and has a strong impact on the community, or it produced a long-term change in the museum policy and results in exhibitions about the colonial past.

Stimulated by the independence movement in Greenland, projects were initiated by the National Museum of Denmark, the Arctic Institute in Copenhagen, and Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu (Greenland National Museum and

Archives). These collaborative projects, connected to repatriation and digital sharing of collections, are the most impressive in scope, duration, and range of the output; exhibitions, publications, and websites provided access to and an extensive repatriation of more than 35,000 objects. This major achievement is an example of effective cooperation and co-curation with counterparts in Kalaallit Nunaat. The National Museum of Denmark is the only museum in Europe discussed in this article that has a (post)colonial relationship with an Arctic community, and Denmark has a decolonizing obligation, which is likely why the Danish projects are the most comprehensive of those described here. The Danish collaborations with Indigenous Greenlanders set a standard for other European museum practices.

Besides the Inupiaq engravings website from the British Museum in London, the smallest collection-sharing project is the Kalaallit students' project, Ersersaaneq, a collaboration between Ilisimatusarfik and Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu in Nuuk, in cooperation with Smithsonian Institution and Washington State University, Washington, DC. The project is an Indigenous initiative from Kalaallit Nunaat, and the organizers aim to provide a distinctly Greenlandic perspective on how a digitally reunified collection is presented to the public. However, what this exactly means is not clear. Advanced and innovative 3D technology is applied and the project provides a strong educational tool for Greenlandic students. The project reconnects historical artifacts from ancestors to youth in Greenland in a new way. The Dutch–Greenlandic Roots2Share project also has educational advantages. Although the project is limited in scope, it uses local languages on the internet, and uses exhibitions, school projects, school exchange, and community consultations to create ownership and broaden its impact in the local community. The project applies multivocality (and uses the local languages to create a niche), is community-based, and tries to "reshuffle things" and transform power relations (see Phillips 2003, 166).

The visit of Yu'pik Elders to the collections of the museum in Berlin was an Indigenous-led initiative, facilitated by researchers Ann Fienup-Riordan and Marie Meade. The other Alaskan initiative, the Alutiiq representatives visiting the Chateau-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer (and Musée du quai Branly) in France, was also organized and financed by the Indigenous community or its representatives. Fienup-Riordan (2010, 5) stresses the importance of Indigenous groups being financial independent of the museum in order to change the unequal power balance. It definitely benefits Inuit communities to have their own budgets, not only for decision making and setting the focus but also for heading towards usable results.

Unequal power relations are often evident in repatriation discourses, as the example of the presumed Kalaallit remains in the Netherlands demonstrates. The lessons learned from this example are, first, provenance research on museum collections is highly important to avoid mistakes in repatriation; and, second,

open communication is difficult to accomplish, especially when cultural values are at stake. Although the Dutch voice also had to be respected, at the Westfries Museum mistrust and a Western bias prevailed. We all know that Western dominance and cultural bias, along with the injustice of colonialism and assaults of theft of land and repression of cultures, forced Indigenous Peoples to strive for their rights (see Chilisa 2012; Clifford 2013; Lonetree 2012; Sahlins 1999). Eventually, the municipality of Hoorn changed its attitude and, if the human remains were proven to be of Kalaallit origin, they would have repatriated to Greenland.

As opposed to "real" or physical repatriation, with "virtual" repatriation, or digital transfer, the museum items or human remains stay in the European country, in the museum where they are housed. The fundamental power relations do not change in the sense that the museum retains its power as the keeper of the objects, and the objects are hard to access even as they are shared. Digital transfer is an easy solution to a complex colonial problem and, not surprisingly, of the thirteen cases discussed here only three deal with physical repatriation; another seven are digital projects, and in three cases there is no repatriation whatsoever.

How did the different Arctic communities experience their visits to European museums? In all cases, visits were powerful experiences of reconnecting with ancestors. Many moving experiences can be mentioned. For example, when Thomasine Tarkissimat saw the image of her deceased twin sister projected on the wall in a Dutch museum, she approached the image and touched it lovingly. The visit bolstered the (sub)culture of the Tunumiit, or Iivi (in their own language) in the short term. For the first time, the Iivi consultants formulated their ownership based on cultural affiliation. As they remarked in interviewers during the consultations in the Netherlands, "The objects are ours, since it is our own Tunumiit culture." This does not mean that they wanted repatriation: "It is good that the objects are in the Netherlands. They are well kept and our local museum cannot take care of them properly, and now we have a basis to cooperate." However, the museums would be naïve not to expect such claims in the future, as part of global interactions.

We also need to ask, how have these visits and the projects in general contributed to local Indigenous communities? More systematic research is needed to shed more light on this topic. We know from the well-documented repatriation of at least 35,000 objects from Denmark to Greenland that the repatriation allowed the provincial museum in Nuuk to develop into a national museum. Currently, there are about twenty local museums in Greenland as well that have a significant impact on cultural reinforcement and identity building of the Kalaalliit, Inughuit, and Iivi of Greenland. Furthermore, through photo projects such as KINAANA and Roots2Share, local teachers in several Greenland schools have implemented photo workshops in their curricula. Although the students' visits to European museums were probably a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and their artwork remains in the

institutions on the other side of the Atlantic, and the digital availability of cultural heritage has been increased. Such projects and repositories are a way to engage with the past in the present.

Several websites provide access to cultural heritage abroad and some of them facilitate the use of local languages. In a sense, this transforms the existing centre/periphery relationships. Now the periphery (the local community) can act independently from the centre (in this case, the museums in Europe) by using the website and adding information in the local language. Although the internet is generally used by Indigenous people, the impact may be limited for local communities due to financial or technical challenges. Two of the five websites of the projects discussed here are no longer accessible, after about ten years of life.

Furthermore, not all Indigenous societies value open, online access of their cultural heritage (see Bennett 2013; Bohaker, Corbiere, and Phillips 2015; Chilisa 2102; Clifford 2013; Glass 2015; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Peers and Brown 2003). Looking at powerful ritual objects might even be dangerous for non-initiated members of the community, and a different philosophy may prevail. Laws on copyright can further restrict open access of websites. Morphy (2015, 91) warns that "This may have a negative impact on the use that the material has within the [local] society." The process of globalization, with aspects of open access (versus localization and hidden knowledge to protect it from theft), leads Indigenous people to discussions of cultural appropriation. However, many Arctic communities do not want to deny outsiders access to their culture; and neither are they closing themselves off from the outside world. Instead, they are actively engaging with it, particularly through social media. This does not mean that all collections have to be open access. Access has to be carefully negotiated and established in project and museum protocols.

Acknowledging that European museum professionals and Indigenous communities can have different interpretations of the ownership of museum collections is the first step towards open communication, cooperation, and shared knowledge, which can be beneficial for all parties involved. Amy Lonetree (2012, 23), however, warns us not to overestimate the positive effects of museums as contact zones; the existing power imbalance remains. Tony Bennett (2013, 43) also points to the limits of the contact zone model, since "it neglects the broader networks that although not directly present or perceptible in such encounters nonetheless significantly affect what takes place in them." Museums relate to a variety of stakeholders and their conflicting interests place the museum in a highly complicated or "double" position, in which contrasting loyalties of the museum staff are at stake (Coombes and Phillips 2015, xxxiii; Phillips 2003, 155). "We think of the world," argues Phillips (2011, 298), "in discrete entities (such as objects)…and autonomous systems (such as governments, the art world, or museums). We actually do not see the network as functioning systems until they meet some form of resistance."

Multivocality and community-based cooperation, combined with co-curation, can lead to more inclusive, democratic anthropological museums, which would include shared responsibility for decision making and the transfer of curatorial authority to Indigenous Peoples. Collaborative relationships stimulate innovation and critical experiments within museums. To quote Lonetree (2012, 25) once more, "Through honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, challenging the stereotypical representation of Indigenous peoples in the past, [museums may serve as] sites of knowledge making and remembering … and promote healing and understanding."

It is important and necessary for Indigenous Peoples, as well as for the European public (a growing portion of which is of multicultural origin), that anthropological museums present the harsh truth of colonization, suppression, and extinction directly. European museums are increasingly aware of this, and in 2017 museums in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands opened temporary or permanent exhibitions on colonialism. The attempts to share collections with communities, no mater how difficult it may be, teach us that museums can become more inclusive. Simultaneously, they decolonize their collections and give meaning to their double position. As critically engagement zones, museums transform from "sites of [colonial] oppression to places that matter" (Onciul 2015, 94).

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