
Editorial

Conal McCarthy and Alison K. Brown

In the editorial for the last issue of *Museum Worlds* we commented on the growth of museums in every part of the world, and the allied expansion of museum studies. Both of us teach museum studies in our respective universities and are very well aware that the next generation of museum professionals is deeply committed to developing a curatorial practice that is engaged, ethically grounded, creative, and diverse. Our students regularly tell us that they are eager to learn from colleagues in all parts of the world and see this as an essential component of their professional development and their ability to critique what museums are and might be. As such, we are pleased in this issue to include reports, reviews, and articles from an enormous range of countries, and are especially pleased to publish the work of early career professionals alongside that of established colleagues. Taken together, we believe the projects, exhibitions, books, and other museum-based activities highlighted in this issue are a good indicator of the vitality of the field of museum studies, even in such challenging times.

Although we did not put out a formal call for papers for this volume, a number of themes emerged from the submissions we received that speak to the issues shaping the work of our colleagues within and alongside the sector that relate to pressing global challenges. One theme that cuts across several articles, not surprisingly given that aftershocks from the pandemic continue to be felt, involves social justice. Domenico Sergi and Serena Iervolino discuss this topic most directly in their article on museums and class, which focuses on an oral history project to record the experiences of “essential workers” in London. The responses of museums to crises, including the pandemic, are also tackled in Kylie Message’s commentary, in which she considers how museums react to contemporary events, for example through collecting programs, and invites us to think about political implications of the decisions made as part of rapid response initiatives. The topic of social justice also features in the report by Bernadette Lynch on the Solidarity in Action project, and that of Haida museum scholar and “repatriator” Lucy Bell, in her discussion of *Moved to Action: Activating UNIDRIP in Canadian Museums*, the newly released Canadian Museums Association report that responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established to bear witness to residential school experiences. The climate crisis is another theme that cuts across several contributions, from Isabelle Gapp’s review of *The Arctic: While the Ice Is Melting*, held at the Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, to David Harvey’s article on climate change and the museum. The links between colonialism and museum work is, as we might expect, a theme that is both explicit and implicit in several contributions. Sharon Macdonald, for example, examines the modes of display used at the recently opened Humboldt Forum in Berlin, focusing on the collections of the Ethnological Museum, many of which were accumulated at the height of German colonialism in the later nineteenth century. She examines the tension between providing a critique of German colonialism and its legacies and the representation of nationhood in a museum that has been the subject of extensive public debate and criticism.

In other research articles, a range of current issues are examined in different parts of the museum world. Leticia Perez examines an early community outreach experience in Mexico City, Lisheng Zhang interrogates representations of the “Red Age” in a private museum in China, and Julian Meyrick assesses the new Australian national cultural policy. The section of the journal devoted to research in other forms is also diverse, and as usual has an eclectic bunch of reports, articles, opinion pieces, conversations, and so on.



Regionally, while we routinely endeavor to include contributions that highlight examples of museum practice globally, in this issue we have included a number of contributions focusing on museum issues and projects located in several African nations. There are two articles, one on South Africa and one on Zimbabwe, a report on Namibia, another on the MuseumFutures Africa project, and a roundup of developments across Africa focusing on repatriation and new museum projects, as well as a review of Leslie Witz's new book on museums in South Africa. We are grateful to reviews editor Jesmael Mataga for helping to organize all this content and also for authoring two pieces himself.

As always, our reviews section features recent books and exhibitions of note, this year from Asia and the Pacific, North and Latin America, Europe, and the UK. Finally, we are pleased to continue our series of interviews with key thinkers in the field with a conversation with Elaine Heumann Gurian, the veteran professional, consultant, and writer who has been working in, and talking about, museums for more than fifty years. In this dialogue, Elaine reflects on her recent book *Centring the Museum*, and the ways in which museums are needed today, more than ever, as a middle ground, a space for dialogue between polarized factions.

In terms of support for the journal, this year we made some changes to our editorial board. Several of our long-term members have stepped down following many years of welcome guidance to us and our editorial predecessors. In their place we have recruited new members from a wider range of regions, and have brought in members with specializations in topics that we had identified as being of growing importance to the sector, but that were less well covered by our existing board. We are particularly pleased to welcome Sowparnika Balaswaminathan and Alison Kelly as reviews editors for South Asia and the Middle East respectively, and we look forward to including contributions from both these regions in the next issue. They join a team of reviews editors who seek out the latest books and exhibitions from around the world and commission reviews from emerging and established scholars. We are tremendously grateful to the reviews editors, and to everyone on our editorial board, for all their hard work in suggesting content, peer reviewing submissions, and raising awareness of the journal.

To the editorial team at Berghahn, and especially Janine Latham, we offer our admiration and thanks for guiding us through the publication process; to Susette Goldsmith, who provides editorial assistance; to our peer reviewers who offer such supportive feedback to our authors; and to our authors themselves. We couldn't do this without you, and we thank you all.