

The New World of the Indigenous Museum

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Abstract: Museums have long offered simplistic representations of American Indians, even as they served as repositories for Indigenous human remains and cultural patrimony. Two critical interventions – the founding of the National Museum of the American Indian (1989) and the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) – helped transform museum practice. The decades following this legislation saw an explosion of excellent tribal museums and an increase in tribal capacity in both repatriation and cultural affairs. As the National Museum of the American Indian refreshes its permanent galleries over the next five years, it will explicitly argue for Native people’s centrality in the American story, and insist not only on survival narratives, but also on Indigenous futurity.

When Indigenous visitors from across the country and the world come to Washington, D.C., they often head for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Located on the Mall, in close proximity to the Capitol, the distinctive building captures the curvilinear forms of the natural world while simultaneously evoking the elaborate perched stone cities of Southwestern cliff-dwellers. Inside, visitors find flags from a host of tribal nations surrounding a vast domed space, a gathering place for local groups, national organizations, and museum programming.

In the original configuration, put in place at the museum’s opening in 2004, three permanent exhibition galleries anchored the museum, along with a theater and film documentary, two changing exhibits, and the Mitsitam Café, which served Native foods from North and South America. Embedded within those three large galleries were a series of smaller spaces featuring tribally curated exhibits meant to explore the history and culture of individual groups, even as the museum itself sought to

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explore more general themes: Our Lives, Our Peoples, Our Universes. On opening day, some twenty-five thousand Indigenous people marched in celebration on the Mall, welcoming the museum into being. It was a joyous occasion, an assertion of Native pride, presence, and survival. What could possibly go wrong?

Same-day negative reviews appeared in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* accusing the NMAI of a lack of scholarly rigor and haphazard exhibits marked by vagueness and superficiality. Disappointment and harsh words also came from Indigenous critics, who wanted a more visibly confrontational politics. Many visitors, who could not pigeonhole the museum into a familiar category, became disoriented: Was it an art museum full of beautiful, well-lit aesthetic objects? (Not really, though the lighting was often excellent.) A history museum? (No, it presented nothing like a linear history.) An anthropological museum, full of “culture areas” and representative ethnographic pieces? (Definitely not!)¹

The NMAI was (and is) a disorienting museum. It gleefully decontextualized ethnographic artifacts, assembling arrowheads, ceramic masks, and small gold pieces into new forms, creating aesthetically oriented swirls and patterns bundled together into display cases. The small “pods” of tribal self-presentation interrupted and punctured viewers’ efforts to find a linear argument as they moved through a gallery. And those pods were themselves uneven: some focused on only a few objects, some on text-heavy recounting of tribal history and culture, some aiming to create an experience of Indigenous home space. Some were simply more compelling than others. Many visitors wanted a recounting of a painful history, around which they could organize viewing experiences of guilt, empathy, and painless redemption, before heading to the café for quasi-exotic food. (No hamburg-

ers here; only bison burgers!) The museum studiously avoided the tone of dispassionate anthropological expertise found on so many wall labels in other museums. In other words, it seemed to have willfully walked away from the capital-M authority of the Museum itself. Visitors’ confusion was the result of an assertive Indigenous museum practice – nonlinear and holistic – that doubled down on the absence of the forms and language of the classic Western museum.

The authority of the Museum had been a long time in the making. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Renaissance rulers, aristocrats, merchants, and scientists assembled eclectic collections of material – natural history, art, religious relics, and antiquities – into what we commonly refer to as “cabinets of curiosities.” These cabinets – sometimes a literal cabinet, but often a discrete room overstuffed with material – served as both the venue for scholarly study and the performative basis for claims to knowledge, authority, and power. The cabinets demonstrated the commanding reach of elites, for they often featured objects from trade routes, explorations, and conquests stretching across the globe. Native cargo from the New World and the Pacific frequently made its way to such cabinets, marking “the Indigenous” as a key element in an Enlightenment project that married power and knowledge with European imperial and colonial endeavors around the planet.

In such cabinets, one can see the germs of what would become long-standing museum practices. A collection of disparate objects required categories and cataloging; in that process, one might create knowledge. A collection required care; it became a proprietary site for new forms of archival science and storage. A collection required management of objects coming in and objects going out; the arts of accession, deaccession, and provenance were

constituted and consolidated. A collection required collecting: out of the cabinets were borne the field agent and the collecting expedition, a venture with no purpose other than the acquisition of objects. And a collection created a vast web of possibilities for recontextualization, for moving objects out of one location (a utilitarian cooking pot, for instance) and into another (as a definitive example of American Indian life). The most important recontextualization may have centered on the authority of collectors themselves, for the objects constituted them as unique figures of authority.

At the same time, the cabinets – and the more formalized museums that soon followed – also constituted and displayed the Indigenous as a category and object: non-European, defined in light of colonial encounters, and primitive – either as “natural” or as “savage” in relation to the “civilized.” Indigenous people and their things were quickly incorporated into emergent scientific discourses: natural history (they were like animals), ethnology and anthropology (they were “earlier” forms of human social organization), archeology (you found them when you started digging), and craniology (skull comparisons might reveal racial differences in intelligence and capacity). They had cultural functions as well. Indigenous objects had a trophy-like quality to them, serving as evidence of past conflict and Western military and civilizational superiority. Indigenous material culture could function as a kind of fetish or token for the claims to Indigenous lands.

In this light, it is unsurprising to find that, in the early United States, collecting and cabinets took on particularly nationalist forms as they were gradually reshaped into that thing we call the museum. Philadelphia artist Charles Willson Peale developed a museum out of a collection of portraits, placed on public display in his home. The exhibit – for we can truly name

it that and identify it as a characteristic of museums – proved popular, and when Peale realized he could charge admission, he began collecting not simply art, but also antiquities, natural history specimens, fossils, and American Indian artifacts, among other objects. His son Titian Ramsay Peale would sign on as an artist/naturalist/collector to a number of exploring expeditions in the American South and West as well as the 1838 – 1842 Wilkes Expedition, which explored the globe. In 1794, the Peale Museum moved to the American Philosophical Society, thus constituting its authority around the nation’s first scientific association, even as it revealed that the museum and its things could also serve as experiential commodities.

In New York, John Pintard’s 1791 American Museum featured more curiosities than natural history specimens, and it changed hands several times before becoming, in 1841, P. T. Barnum’s American Museum, a combination of display, freak show, amusement, theater, and zoo that proved a central venue in the development of American popular culture. In Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, likely in 1783, made the first systematic archeological investigation in the United States, trenching and carving an Indian burial mound on the Rivanna River, an effort that he recounted in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785). Philadelphia physician Samuel George Morton’s *Crania Americana* (1839) based its argument – racial differences demonstrated by cranial capacity, which indexed intelligence – on an ever-growing collection of human skulls. Many of these were of Indigenous people; most were not archeological specimens, but were procured by Army surgeons on battlefields and by robbing graves and recent burials. In 1829, British scientist James Smithson died, leaving his estate to the United States for the founding of “an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men,” thus creating the Smithsonian In-

stitution, which formalized the meeting of what we now recognize in terms of scientific research, collecting and collections management, exhibition and programming, and the imagined community of the nation.²

This potted history suggests only some of the ways that American Indian people might be incorporated into the project that was “the museum.” They were the objects of knowledge, rarely active subjects in its production; others would speak about them and occasionally for them. This dominating knowledge was matched by the accompanying devastation of Indigenous lands and peoples; museums and their collections were not neutral or innocent. They were full of Indian things. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, for example, frontier officers and doctors sent in a steady stream of human remains from battlefields and graves (to the Army Medical Museum, for example), accompanied by a vast array of material culture that dispersed across any number of American museums. Founded in 1879, the Bureau of Ethnology (later, Bureau of American Ethnology) was created to transfer records and organize the anthropological knowledge of the United States under the rubric of the Smithsonian Institution. It housed information from the great geographical surveys of the 1870s and established its own fieldwork and collecting programs. The Bureau’s first effort – the 1879 Stevenson expedition to the Zuni Pueblo – acquired thousands of items, anchoring a collection that would eventually surpass ten thousand objects, all taken from a single location!³ By the early twentieth century, as historian Douglas Cole and others have documented, the long-held belief that Indigenous cultures were “vanishing” led to a rush of collection activity and the establishment of major museum collections in New York, Chicago, Denver, and elsewhere.

Those museums established expectations for Indians: Native peoples were

vanished, racially and socially primitive, voiceless, and spoken for by knowledgeable authorities. Their material traces were commonly organized around three categories: American history, in which they made a quick appearance and then disappeared; anthropology, in which they illustrated social evolution or, at best, cultural relativism; or art, in which their objects were recontextualized around form more than function, and in which they served as a primitivist foil for American and European modernism.

Museums have exploded in number and popularity over the last century, and Indian people have sought to undo these histories, contesting the politics of museum representation and demanding the repatriation of human remains and material culture taken during the rush to build collections. In 1978, the Zuni people petitioned the Denver Art Museum for the return of the *Ahayu:da*, commonly referred to as “war gods”: that is, carved poles placed around the Zuni homeland and meant, in a sacred process, to deteriorate over time. It was the first episode in a long struggle to repatriate, from museums and collectors, scores of *Ahayu:da*, as well as other objects of cultural patrimony. Around the same time, tribal people, led by Indian veterans, began drawing parallels to the extraordinary efforts of veterans’ groups and the United States to repatriate human remains from Vietnam. They noted the large number of Indian war dead that were shamefully acquired and finding no rest in American museum collections.⁴

Repatriation – which would be formalized in the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) – was first articulated as policy a year earlier, in the 1989 act that created the National Museum of the American Indian. In other words, while NAGPRA would establish a process used by tribes and mu-

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seums to reconsider past practices of collecting that lived on in various collections across the country, the critical precedent was the creation of the NMAI, which was dedicated “exclusively to the history and art of cultures Indigenous to the Americas.”⁵ The NMAI enabling act rests on four arguments: first, that there was no national voice or clearinghouse for American Indian perspectives on the role of the Indigenous in American history and life; second, that the acquisition of the Heye Museum of the American Indian in New York City offered an opportunity to create a national museum on the basis of an already-strong collection; third, that a site was available on the National Mall, and was designated for the use of the Smithsonian; and finally, that a national museum would enable and support a program of repatriation. The act states:

(6) by order of the Surgeon General of the Army, approximately 4,000 Indian human remains from battlefields and burial sites were sent to the Army Medical Museum and were later transferred to the Smithsonian Institution;

(7) through archaeological excavations, individual donations, and museum donations, the Smithsonian Institution has acquired approximately 14,000 additional Indian human remains;

(8) the human remains referred to in paragraphs (6) and (7) have long been a matter of concern for many Indian tribes, including Alaska Native Villages, and Native Hawaiian communities which are determined to provide an appropriate resting place for their ancestors;

(9) identification of the origins of such human remains is essential to addressing that concern.⁶

The NMAI came into existence – from a Native American perspective – to repair and reconcile a long and painful history of

relations between Indian people and American museums. And that history was not only defined by grotesque practices of collecting. Representations of Indian people in American museums had long reinforced deep ideological formations about Indian disappearance, savagery, and exoticism. As Indigenous studies scholar Jean O’Brien has demonstrated, one of the most important vectors for “vanishing” (as an active verb) Indians was the local historical society.⁷ In countless small museums, the local and regional histories of Indians were framed in terms of their disappearance, which made for a harmless, curious prehistory of the White settlement of towns and counties. Sometimes, these frames included gestures toward past violence, framing historical narratives usually based on a kind of innate Indian aggression. A “defensive” victory over such Indians not infrequently rooted the local origin myth. Often such museums did not hesitate to display Indian remains. In Illinois, for example, a local chiropractor named Don Dickson began excavating mounds in the 1920s, eventually uncovering 237 Indian skeletons. Rather than removing them from the ground, however, Dickson removed the dirt and covered the site with a building, creating a kind of “dig” museum that exposed an entire Indian cemetery to visitors. Faced with substantial and ongoing Indian protest, and in the wake of NAGPRA, the state closed down the private museum in 1992, entombing the remains in limestone and building a new museum on the site.

Larger museums with bigger budgets created life displays, arranging their material culture artifacts on manikins and posing them in family groupings. The diorama proved a favorite mechanism for placing Indians in the context of precontact “lifeways” displays that linked subsistence, social life, and culture firmly in the past. At the University of Michigan museum, for example, the single most popular display

for decades was a collection of miniature dioramas, remembered by generations of locals who first saw them on school-sponsored field trips. The dioramas *were* compelling: they were beautifully made, fascinating acts of human craft. But there was also something magical about tiny, primitive people encased in small transparent boxes. And for fifth-grade boys, the “accurate” representation of bare breasts put a touch of the erotic on top of the exotic. Ann Arbor residents loved the dioramas; Native American students, faculty, and visitors did not. At Chicago’s Field Museum, the Hopi diorama contained life casts of real people who were recognizable to other Hopis as family members and friends.

These histories of display and representation bring us back to 2004 and the mixed receptions to the first iteration of the National Museum of the American Indian. Non-Native audiences came to the beautiful new building with a firm set of expectations about what they would see, all part of these long and familiar traditions of American museology: there would be sad, nostalgic regret and a little guilt; there would be cultural difference on display; and there would be something about environmentalism and spirituality. The (mostly) Indian people who consulted with Native communities and then planned, curated, crafted, and labeled the exhibits offered a very different (and utterly understandable) message: “We are still here! We have not vanished!”

This, in itself, made the NMAI unlike other museums. But the curators were also part of important questionings in the museum world itself, and their exhibits – nonlinear to the point of confusion, multivocal to the point of uncertainty – spoke to the possibilities of a postcolonial and postmodern practice. In that sense, the museum was trying not simply to repair the past, but also to shape the future. Other museums had made similar efforts to rethink represen-

tation. The University of British Columbia Museum, for example, is justly recognized for its “open storage” systems, in which visitors can see not simply a few objects in tightly organized curations, but, to a large extent, the full reach – many would say the “overkill” – of early collecting. The very form of the display revealed a different kind of history. In Paris, the Musée du Quai Branly mounted spatially disorienting galleries organized around structuralist arguments in which war clubs, canoe paddles, and money belts from Indigenous cultures around the world demonstrated meaningful affinities.

If these were some of the contexts for the NMAI, however, they were insufficiently widespread to seem familiar. The NMAI did, in fact, prove confusing to the average visitor, and attendance began a slow, though not always even, decline in the years following the opening. The nonlinear spatiality of the museum got in the way of its message – “we are still here!” – which, if it was emotionally imperative for Indian people, proved insufficient (even as it was received) to hold the affective, intellectual, and visual imagination of viewers.

At the moment of its creation, that message was – appropriately – central to the museum’s mission and its Native constituency. Equally critical to that constituency, however, was the question of repatriation. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act followed close on the heels of the creation of the NMAI, and their respective processes developed in close parallel to one another, to the point that the NMAI now runs more or less in sync with NAGPRA.

NAGPRA requires federal agencies, museums, and other entities receiving federal funding to prepare inventories of their holdings across key categories – human remains, funerary objects, cultural patrimony, and sacred objects – and to convey those inventories to interested tribes.

Holdings may be affiliated (the museum knows the provenance of an item, including tribal origin) or unaffiliated (there is no way to know origin). Many items occupy a space in between: they are not yet affiliated, but there are grounds to think that they could be through a process of investigation. Tribes are able to request consultations on the inventories. Typically, these consultations involve site visits to museums and examination of items. Following the consultation, a tribe can prepare a claim (the burden of proof is on the tribe, not the museum); if the claim meets NAGPRA criteria, the museum must deaccession and repatriate the object. An appeals board hears cases in which a tribe disputes a museum's judgment on its claims.

In the early 1990s, as NAGPRA was being implemented, museum curators and anthropologists feared that newly empowered Indian people would be backing trailers up to museum loading docks and spiriting off vast parts of collections. They needn't have worried. NAGPRA requires a deliberative process and does not empower Indian people all that much. And most Native people have complex ideas on the ways repatriation might work, particularly in relation to objects. I witnessed a consultation in the mid-1990s, for example, in which the museum laid out on tables literally hundreds of objects from its inventories. The tribal consultants – a team of elders and administrators – spent a long day examining them. A couple of things soon became apparent to all. First, these people treasured the objects in the museum's collections. They greeted them, held them, and discussed them with a kind of happy reverence. Second, they were not reflexively hostile to the museum as a custodial site; in the end, they said that they planned to proceed on a cultural patrimony claim on five or six items. Third, the museum, which recorded the discussions, gained far more from the exchange than it ended up giving to the

tribe. The consultants offered detailed descriptions of the use, meanings, and stories surrounding many of the objects, and curators told me later that they were eager to fill in their databases with this proliferation of new information. Ideally, as now happens with many museums, the actual NAGPRA claim takes shape in a collaborative and consultative setting (though that is of course not always the case). NAGPRA has forced tribes to build a new capacity around cultural affairs, which has, in turn, redounded to tribal benefit. In the best cases, museums have served as valuable partners and supporters for tribes; in the worse cases, they have been recalcitrant, obstructionist, and distrustful.

As the new flagship Smithsonian museum, the NMAI has consistently sought to take a leadership position on repatriation issues. It has long hoped – and is getting close – to repatriate all human remains from its collections, demonstrating the possibilities for a humane resolution to a difficult history. The NMAI has also insisted that repatriation claim assessments rely on the highest caliber of scholarly research; lengthy reports offer comprehensive discussions of cultural affiliation claims, collecting histories, and museum provenance. They adhere to a rigorous interpretation of guidelines. The museum has, at the same time, modeled ways in which repatriation claims can serve as partnerships that are productive for tribes. NMAI repatriation staff members have developed strong working relationships with tribal repatriation officers. These same kinds of relationships are in reach for all museums, and many have taken similar paths.

The NMAI comprises three – or perhaps four – museums. The original Heye Museum in New York City had a loyal following, and many insisted that it retain some presence in the City. The NMAI-New York museum continues that history, exchanging exhibits with the Washington, D.C., mu-

seum. Like many Smithsonian museums, the NMAI also maintains a storage and research site in a third museum in Suitland, Maryland. In its earliest incarnation, NMAI leaders also insisted on a kind of virtual “Fourth Museum,” which was to be its tangible connections to Indian Country. The NMAI would consult on exhibition topics and future collecting, train community people to help develop shows (and tribal pods within galleries), train interns in museum practice, and send traveling exhibitions across Indian Country. The aim was not simply to host a national museum on the Mall, but to help support and grow a range of tribal museums across the country.

One should not assume that the NMAI represented the first effort on the part of Indian people to intervene in museum practices. The early twentieth-century Seneca intellectual and activist Arthur C. Parker spent his entire career as a museum specialist. Native anthropologists such as J. N. B. Hewitt (Tuscarora), William Jones (Fox), and Ella Deloria (Dakota) found themselves working in or with museums, including both large institutions such as the Smithsonian and the Field Museum in Chicago as well as small ones such as the W. H. Over Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota. In 1931, Mohegan medicine woman and intellectual Gladys Tantaquidgeon, along with her father John and brother Harold, founded the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum in Uncasville, Connecticut.

Most of the credit for tribal museums goes to tribes, communities, and visionary local museum leaders. The list of innovative, beautifully designed, Indigenous museums is long and getting longer: the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute (Oregon), the Mashentucket Pequot Museum (Connecticut), the Chickasaw Nation Museum (Oklahoma), the Ziiibwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways (Michigan), the Southern Ute Cultural Center (Colorado),

the Acoma Sky City Cultural Center (New Mexico), and the Alaska Native Heritage Center (Alaska), among others. The National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers lists over sixty tribal museums on its website.⁸ Many of these, such as the Seminole Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, have state-of-the-art conservation facilities; others, such as the long-running and beautiful Tantaquidgeon Museum, function as less-formal structured sites of community memory and self-representation. Many of these institutions have staff members who have passed through the NMAI or other tribal museums.

And of course, tribal museum professionals have found many other routes into museum leadership. Roberta Conner (Cayuse) of the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute entered the field through journalism and management, for example. Hartman Lomawaima (Hopi) went to Harvard and worked his way through the museum world to become Director of the Arizona State Museum. James Nason (Comanche) earned a Ph.D. at the University of Washington, staying in Seattle as curator at the Burke Museum. Lomawaima and Nason, among others, worked hard to foster a national organization for tribal museums, libraries, and archives, planting seeds for today’s Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, incorporated in 2010.⁹

If “we are still here!” was the right note for the NMAI to strike in 2004, it is also the case that permanent exhibitions are never permanent, and audiences and tribal needs have changed since the opening. Over the last few years, the NMAI has been replacing its original galleries in an effort to look squarely to the future and to continuing its role in leading the museum world on all things Indigenous. Its *Nation to Nation* show, launched in 2014 and meant to bridge gallery renovations, demonstrates that future, which is based upon a contin-

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ual insistence that one cannot know anything significant about the American past or present without foregrounding Indian people – their treaties, in the case of *Nation to Nation* – their sovereignties, and their lands. The first permanent gallery reinstallation, “Americans” (scheduled to open in early 2018), will directly engage the history that many visitors found lacking in 2004, retelling the classic stories of the United States through an Indigenous lens.

American museums with Native American collections – including the NMAI – have also been engaged with Indigenous museum practice in an international context. The Australia National Museum’s largest gallery is dedicated to First Australians; local museums in Melbourne and Sydney have collaborated with Aboriginal people in designing exhibits that speak to their local communities. Taiwan has an equivalent of the NMAI, a dedicated Aboriginal (prehistory) museum, located in Taitung, as well as the private Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, which sits directly across from the massive Palace Museum. In Canada, the outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recent 150th Anniversary Celebrations has created particularly visible national conversations and debates concerning First Nations people and museums. In Hokkaido, Japan, the Shiraoui Ainu Museum (Porotokotan) offers both an Ainu-centered representational politics and a local anchor for Indigenous culture and institutional capacity. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, the National Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, as well as major museums in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, began with natural history and moved, like early American museums, seamlessly into Maori ethnological collecting. The 1980s U.S. tour of Maori arts, Te Maori, marked a new point of engagement for New Zealand museums and Maori people. In 2016, the Smithsonian repatriated fifty-four human remains through the Te Papa Museum,

as part of Karanga Aotearoa, an international repatriation effort that has returned over four hundred human remains to New Zealand. These kinds of global exchanges – and these are only a few examples – have been driven in part by the institutional infrastructures made possible through big museums and in part through global Indigenous networks.

Tribal museums, like all museums, not only document the past and educate the present; they also reach out toward an Indigenous future. One part of that mission surely involves technical transformations: new digital collections – management tools and web access offer the opportunity for the cultivation of new audiences; new display strategies create different kinds of museum-going experiences; and new exhibits seek to transform the old narratives surrounding Indigenous peoples. But the leadership of Indigenous museums goes beyond the technical. It returns, in the end, to the *thingness* of things themselves. Across a global range of traditions, Indigenous people have consistently located power in objects. If the institution that is the Museum makes any generalizable argument, it is that its collections are more than distant objects locked in glass cases or hidden in storage facilities. All museums aspire to be something other than, as philosopher Theodor Adorno once suggested, mausoleums, the homes of no-longer vital dead objects.¹⁰

The very nature of the Indigenous museum, engaged with Indigenous epistemologies, suggests in important ways the possibility that one might invest objects with the power to return one’s gaze. In the Indigenous museum, one is reminded – perhaps more than elsewhere – to maintain a relation of reciprocity between object and viewer, to find in the institutional setting an occasion for *musings* – the generation of living, creative knowledge. The National Museum of the American Indian was confusing to its first visitors, confounding them

through presentations that spoke with a strong Indigenous accent. That accent, like Indian people themselves, will not be going anywhere. It speaks of histories of pain and resistance, as it must. But it also speaks – to all museums – of the capacity of seemingly inanimate objects that are empowered to ask us to *muse*: to contemplate. To become

be-mused by intellectual and ethical challenges. To become *a-mused*, not in the superficial way we imagine amusement, but in a deep way that situates us as new kinds of perceivers, thinkers, and knowers, and thus as new and better actors in a world in which Indigenous people continue to struggle, survive, and prosper.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ For an excellent introduction to the controversies and critiques surrounding the NMAI, see Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press). On media coverage specifically, see Aldona Jonaitis and Janet Catherine Berlo, “‘Indian Country’ on the National Mall: The Mainstream Press versus the National Museum of the American Indian,” in *ibid.*, 208–240.
- ² David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and its Audience* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Thomas Jefferson, *Notes On the State of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Samuel George Morton and George Combe, *Crania Americana: Or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America. To Which Is Prefixed an Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species. Illustrated by Seventy-Eight Plates and a Colored Map* (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1839); Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America’s Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- ³ See, for example, Chip Colwell, *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America’s Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).
- ⁴ T. J. Ferguson, Roger Anyon, and Edmund J. Ladd, “Repatriation at the Pueblo of Zuni: Diverse Solutions to Complex Problems,” *American Indian Quarterly* 20 (2) (Spring 1996): 251–273. My understanding of the importance of American Indian veterans in the early discussions surrounding repatriation comes from conversations with Suzan Shown Harjo.
- ⁵ National Museum of the American Indian Act, Pub. L. 101-185, 103 Stat. 1336, November 28, 1989.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
- ⁸ Tribal Museums & Cultural Centers, <http://tribalmuseums.org/index.html>.
- ⁹ Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, <http://www.atalm.org/node/27>.
- ¹⁰ Adorno was purposefully misreading the etymologies of the words in order to advance his argument. Theodor Adorno, “Valéry Proust Museum,” in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Sherry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), 177. For a longer treatment of this theme, including more specific origins in the writing of Walter Benjamin, see Philip Deloria, “Wealth of Nations,” in *Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian*, ed. Cécile Ganteaume (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 13–18.