Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues

D5.1

Background research report

Co-funded by
the European Union

CONTESTED DESIRES

Co-funded by the European Union

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries

June 2024

Contributing authors:

Dr Katy Bunning

Isabel Collazos Gottret

Dr Cesare Cuzzola

Professor Suzanne MacLeod

Dr Sarah Plumb

Professor Richard Sandell

Contributing experts:

BJCEM

ECCOM

Interarts

H401

MUHNAC

Nubuke Foundation

Dr Njabulo Chipangura

Dr Subhadra Das

Dr Errol Francis

Dr Wen-ling Lin

Dr Cristina Lleras

Dr Janet Marstine

Sandra Shakespeare

Matt Smith

Contents

Introduction

This report sets out to provide background research of direct use to the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium. *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* responds creatively to the legacies of European colonisation and the politics of division evident across Europe through a deep recognition of the potential of museums and heritage to become sites where complex questions of culture and identity can be hosted, framed and explored in ways that are inclusive, accessible and productive. Contentious collections and sites are central to this endeavour as project lead ECCOM (2024) sets out: 'The most important outcome of the project will be to provide heritage professionals with methods, resources and – above all – the confidence to use contested heritage as a focus for constructive, democratic dialogue that reflects the best of European values and contributes to reconciliation across the divisions of the past'. 22 artists from 11 countries will work with heritage partners and local communities to respond to specific contentious collections and sites and generate new artworks, exhibitions, workshops and events. *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* has, at its heart, an ambition to be a driver of innovation and change, generating new interpretations and relationships and driving inclusive transformation in both the partner heritage organisations and amongst participating groups and communities. Led by discussions at the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* kick-off meeting in Rome in January 2024, the report provides background research on:

- key terminology and the conceptual framings of 'decolonising' and 'decoloniality' in European museums;
- the role of art and artists in generating meaningful dialogue amongst visitors and stakeholders related to contested collections, histories and identities;
- wide-ranging examples of arts-led and arts-centred decolonising practices focused on collections and from a range of lineages of socially engaged art;
- RCMG's work on ethical frameworks and how this method could support *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* collaborations;
- RCMG's work on evaluation and the ways that an emphasis on decoloniality and collaboration will impact what is evaluated and why.

The literature exploring the colonial origins of European museums and heritage, their role in legitimising colonial violence and policies and their ongoing role in upholding unequal social structures is well established and clearly provides essential context for this research. Museums and heritage - the focus for *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* - are acknowledged as key institutions for making empires 'visible and knowable' to the populations of colonising states (Bennett 2004: 2; see also Anderson 1983), underscoring scientific racism and white supremacy as concepts that operationalised European colonialism (Das 2024), and creating a public culture of exhibition-going 'in service of new strategies of cultural governance' (Bennett 2004: 2). We now understand how the looting of cultural treasures sat squarely alongside other violent colonising processes (Hicks 2020), and how the technology and visual regimes of the museum worked to produce regulated citizens, routines and behaviours (Bennett 1995). Objects and collections played a central role in this visual regime as 'diagnostic devices and modular measures for making sense of all possible worlds and their subjects' (Preziosi and Farago 2004: 4-5).

The social movements of the 20th Century have demanded and fostered significant shifts in the structures and roles of museums and heritage, opening up institutions, collections and interpretation to wider audiences and critical scrutiny. Indigenous rights movements, curatorial activism, and the development of new cultural spaces rooted in indigenisation and self-definition are reshaping colonial museum practices across the world (Lonetree 2012; Phillips 2011; Pitman 2021; Chipangura and Chipangura 2019; van Broekhoven 2019). While not fully devoid of governmental influence and neocolonial structures of power, Indigenous and 'non-Western' museology fundamentally challenges

the coloniality of 'Western' heritage institutions as embodiments of 'Eurocentric museum ideology', unpacking and subverting assertions of universalism and European supremacy (Kreps 2003; Cai 2020). Scholars and practitioners today are exploring these ongoing legacies of colonialism in museums, the continued marginalisation of particular groups and individuals, and the violence that continues to be enacted internally and externally through museum displays, structures, practices and processes.

This deep reflection and analysis has also generated a vast body of scholarship and research-led thinking which highlights the future significance of museums and heritage sites as key social spaces where identities and underpinning conceptions of society are shaped and where, if approached with care and from a position of deep understanding of the entangled histories that come together in specific institutions and collections, these could be remade in an ongoing process to purposefully address these pasts, challenge the systems and structures that continue to limit heritage and harness cultural spaces towards processes of understanding, redress and reconciliation. Scholars are addressing the heightened potential of decolonising practices and non-hegemonic ways of knowing at a time of epistemological and environmental crisis - Mbembe (2020), for example, frames the urgent need for decolonising as 'our capacity to repair earth' and 'attend to life futures' with museums called upon to cultivate the human connections that will support this process of change. Practitioners can now draw on a range of frameworks and toolkits designed to address coloniality in museums and support them to do this work.[1]

Despite the closeness of and relations between research and practice in our field, the translation of this future-facing research into the everyday work of European museums continues to be slow and piecemeal, a process that is hindered in part by the need for what Lehrer *et al* (2023) refer to as 'geosituated' tools and strategies. Action in European museums to repatriate collections stolen from colonised nations has been slow and museums across Europe remain highly controlled spaces. Data on who works in heritage organisations confirms that museum professionals and board members are still disproportionately white and university educated, and decades of efforts to diversify the sector have not had significant impact on this (see, for example, Art Fund 2022). This pattern is reflected across Europe, demonstrating the ongoing presence of latent racism that situates whiteness and those with higher socio-economic status as the normative forms of power and status in European cultural institutions (European Agenda for Culture 2014).

Where decolonising practices are taking root, they are progressed within a deep awareness that decolonisation is an ongoing process in museums and will always be an incomplete project in need of continual work across all museum functions, structures and processes. Artists, collectives, activists, campaigners, writers, and community-focused organisations are working in myriad ways to address the complex realities of the legacies of colonialism through creative and political work that is often less visible within the academic and museological literature. In those institutions committed to deep and ongoing work, there is an increased capacity to live with discomfort though, as Laura Van Broekhoven (2019: 4) notes, decolonising practices are only just beginning to translate into new acquisition, cataloguing, interpretation, restitution and staffing processes.

Across Europe, museums exist in dramatically different geographical, social, political and economic conditions with dramatically different experiences and understandings of, as well as attitudes towards, colonisation and decolonisation. *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* comprises partners from a range of countries with dramatically different histories and contemporary realities; as Elizabeth Buettner (2021) has shown, discussions of European Imperial agendas and colonialism need to account for the varying scales of maritime empires as well as complex and multiple 'internal

[1] See for example, the *Museums As Sites of Social Action* toolkit developed by a community of practice, the *Supporting Decolonisation in Museums* guidance developed by the Decolonisation Working Group set up by the Museums Association in the UK, and the Canadian Museums Association's *Moved to Action: Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums* guidance on ways of supporting Indigenous self-determination.

colonialisms' across Europe. Moreover, Lehrer *et al* (2023) point to the complex ways in which racial hierarchies continue to play out across Europe. This complexity increases the need for deep engagements with the specifics of particular entangled histories and legacies. In a recent commentary in *Europe Now,* the authors set out a series of steps for decolonising practices in the context of Eastern and Central Europe. Noting the way in which narratives of colonialism have been picked up by right-wing conservatives in Eastern and Central Europe to promote nationalist discourses, they encourage all of us to: 'confront not only the legacies of national glory and victimhood, but also the idea that [our] (imagined) historical communities were beneficiaries, intermediaries, even at times perpetrators of colonial domination and violence'. Understanding and taking account of these complexities within the *Contested Desires: Constructed Dialogues* project, deepens the need for practical, located and specific examples of decolonising practices as well as a shared language for talking about decolonial practices in ways that can be taken up and responded to creatively.

The differences across Europe are also reflected in the varying levels of commitment to decolonial processes at national government levels - such as the Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales, the Scottish Government's commitment to addressing colonial histories, and Macron's statements in support of the return of African cultural heritage - and demonstrate the vastly different challenges for those involved in decolonial practices and the extent to which museums across Europe can confidently champion and engage in such work. Linked to this, Lehrer *at al* (2023) point to the lack of a robust civil society and empowered minoritised communities to lead initiatives in parts of Europe, a point which further strengthens the need for the work. What this context makes clear is that there cannot be a singular body of knowledge or a recipe for excellent art-centred decolonising practices that can be enacted across Europe. Rather, this report sets out a range of concepts, perspectives, projects and ideas that can support the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium to deepen and clarify its understanding of decolonising practices. It provides reflections on the potential of art and artists in facilitating constructive dialogue and sets out a series of examples of arts-led and art-centred decolonising practices in museums that bring these strands of work to life and potentially provide some useful touchpoints for the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* partner organisations and artists. The final two sections of the report focus firmly on the work of RCMG. The first of these introduces the ethical frameworks utilised in so many RCMG projects and set forward here as a mechanism that the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium may find especially useful. In the final section of the report, we build on all of the above to reflect on the role and process of evaluation in *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*, looking in detail at RCMG's approach and practice.

The background research has been conducted by the RCMG research team (see list of contributing authors) with a significant working paper on terminology produced by Isabel Collazos Gottret, a PhD candidate in the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. The research started in February 2024 and ran for just 4 months to end May 2024, when it was written up. The research drew in perspectives from a range of experts including *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* partner organisations and a group of artists and scholars working in related fields (see list of contributing experts). The selections that have been made were influenced by the project partners and external experts and the scholarship reviewed and key concepts set forward have been selected for their perceived usefulness to the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium. Despite this range of inputs, efforts to ensure diverse perspectives and concentration on the needs of, and briefings from, *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*, it needs to be acknowledged that the contributing authors worked almost wholly with English language texts and from a very specific location and positionality. Missing from the report are many other voices, perspectives and examples of projects that represent, work with and highlight the histories of marginalised and under-represented groups.

Finally, it is important to end this introduction with a few cautionary comments. There is abundant evidence that decolonising practices and initiatives in museums, while critical and well-meaning, can

be unethical and contribute to harm. Invoking 'decolonisation' in museums and heritage sites without developing an ethical set of relations, risks obscuring the colonial logics of institutions and co-opting the radical possibilities of anti-coloniality (Gaztambide-Fernández 2012). Often, European museums engage with calls to decolonise in short-term, risk-averse ways that can occur within existing parameters (for example, of programming, projects, and training) yet such approaches fall short of creating the conditions for systemic shifts in power-sharing within institutions that decolonising - as a social and political movement - implies (Naidoo 2023; Dalal-Clayton and Puri Purini 2022; Kasmani and Wajid, 2020; Kassim 2017; Tuck and Yang 2012). Within institutions, decolonising work has often been under-funded and remains on the margins of practice, with the burden of the work placed more heavily on minoritised workers, often on temporary employment contracts (Art Fund 2022; Moore et al. 2022; Dalal-Clayton and Puri Purini 2022). Unsatisfactory remuneration, insecure contracts, experiences of tokenisation and racialisation among participants, and a lack of adequate influence within organisations have contributed to an ongoing mistrust of institutional commitment and awareness of what 'decolonisation' work requires (Wajid and Minott 2019; Kassim 2017). Many agree that institutions must build trust, accountability, and transparency with their communities, and model decolonial practices from the top, for the work to be successful (Bunning 2024). This fundamentally involves critical 'self work' in understanding what forms of power and privilege the museum will be ceding and gaining through the process of decolonising (Museums Association 2021). At the same time, decolonising work in many museums is often necessarily small-scale, experimental, and locally-focused, and requires time and iterative learning to develop, mature and be 'normalised' in practice (Goskar 2020).

For Lonetree (2012: 23), 'a decolonizing museum practice must be in the service of speaking the hard truths of colonialism'. As a process that requires engagement with colonial histories and fundamental changes within ourselves and our mindsets, decolonising can be a deeply uncomfortable process, raising questions around ethics, care and wellbeing for those involved (Museums Association 2021). Histories and legacies of colonialism can have deeply personal and painful connections to our families and lives, and can surface intergenerational trauma, significantly affecting our wellbeing (Lonetree, 2012; Culture& 2023). The process of acknowledging our relative proximities and complicities in colonial violence can be highly troubling and emotional, and strategies such as defensiveness and apathy can arise (DecolonialFutures.net 2021).

For Azoulay (2019), decolonization involves engaging with these histories, and unlearning our 'imperial rights'. For the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures collective, decolonising involves confronting our 'inherently violent modern-colonial habit of being' (DecolonialFutures.net 2021). This involves a conscious process of liberation from a structure of denials that limits our engagement with each other and the world, such as a tendency to deny our own complicity in systemic violence and other distancing strategies. Full acceptance leads to the impossibility of stasis, and moves us towards new approaches that lie outside of the mainstream (DecolonialFutures.net 2021). Scholars agree that decolonising practices must work to reimagine and transform museums - in concrete ways - so that actions in the world raise awareness, confront shared and difficult pasts, and collectively develop strategies 'for resistance to, as well as healing from, the coloniality of present conditions' (Gaztambide-Fernández 2012; see also Lonetree, 2012).

Section 1: Terminology and key concepts: surfacing, understanding and challenging coloniality

One of the key challenges for the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium is finding a common language – a way of talking about decolonising practices in museums and particularly in relation to collections, art and artists. In this section we set out some key concepts, focusing particularly on critical concepts that could help the consortium reflect on and ask questions of its work. When talking about decolonisation, different ideas – developed within diverse cultures and histories – come together. Their lineages are not always clear, and users of the term are not necessarily concerned by them, but it is useful to recognise that there is no unique and all-encompassing definition of 'decolonisation'. The theories and critical perspectives from subaltern studies, postcolonial studies and the more recent decolonial turn – each with their own specificities – aim to decentre the universality of Western thought and denounce the violence and oppression that originated in the colonial expansion of Europe from the fifteenth century and which continues today, in legacy and action.

In this sense, decolonisation can describe a liberation process as well as the actions that aim to dismantle the postcolonial structures that continue to shape both post-colonised and post-coloniser societies. Whilst some authors prioritise decolonising over decolonisation since it is an ongoing process (Smith, 2021; Tuck and Yang, 2012), others prefer the term decolonial/decoloniality as a critical perspective, claiming that to decolonise would mean to go back in time, which is not only impossible but could lead to reactionary nostalgia (Segato 2022: 40). We can think then about decolonising or decolonial practice as surfacing, understanding and challenging colonial legacies – forms of power and ways of knowing, thinking and being – and responding in imaginative and critical ways towards enacting fulfilling and just futures (Modest and Augustat 2023: 11).

Key terms and concepts

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to the administrative and historical period of colonial domination – 'a process of domination of one group (the colonizing *metropole* or *core*) over another (a colonized *other* or *periphery*)' (LaMonica 2011). European colonialism led to 'settler colonialism', a process in which Indigenous people were forcibly driven out of their homelands to make way for European and other settlers. Museums played a critical role in the processes of colonisation as a tool to legitimise and naturalise European rule as progress, while infantilizing and dehumanising Indigenous peoples and rendering them racially inferior. Museums also directly informed colonial policies. For example, the Smithsonian Institution's research into Indigenous groups in the late nineteenth century directly informed government policies of 'Indian removal' to reservations leading to significant loss of life and cultural resources (Bunning 2021). Today, museums remain violent and painful sites that are intimately tied to the colonization process and the unresolved grief and cultural loss experienced by many populations over the last century and a half (Lonetree 2012).

Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism most often refers to the continuation of colonial-era power relations and related inequalities through contemporary neoliberal and economic relations within a capitalist global system. This system has been largely sustained by Europe and by settler colonial nations which have cultural roots in Europe. No longer based primarily on the acquisition of territory, these contemporary systems nevertheless sustain ongoing wealth differentials and maintain the unequal power relations created during colonialism, for example between 'developing' and 'developed' nation states, the ongoing exploitation of Indigenous landscapes in settler colonial states, and the imposition of European cultural norms and knowledge systems, such as the ongoing global dominance of the English language (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986; Nkrumah 1970). Boast (2011) writes about museums as persistently neocolonial in their collaborative work, with the terms and modes of collaboration most often defined

solely by museums through an optimistic framing of museums as progressive, transformative spaces. The optimistic possibility for museums claimed across much of the literature is, for Boast, part of a process of reinventing museums and re-inscribing their hegemonic power in the face of calls for radical change (2011). The museum is continually championed for its possibilities for structural change, despite the sustained complicity of museums in upholding pervasive neocolonial ways of being.

While many agree that the museum cannot be decolonised (Kassim 2017), and others call for museums as harmful, unethical spaces to be dismantled (Lee 2022), the case is nevertheless made for a decolonial praxis as 'radical hope' (Van Broekhoven, n.d.), and for greater understanding of the 'transgressive opportunities' that we have within our neoliberal context (Kulundu-Bolus, McGarry and Lotz-Sisitka 2020; MacLeod 2021). Meanwhile, Azoulay (2019) claims a 'potential history' which rejects imperialist histories of colonialism as a fixed and immutable tragedy that we are distanced from, and calls for the struggles of the past to be reframed into the undefined and liberatory possibilities of making the now.

Postcolonial

Postcolonial can mean both the historical period after colonisation and the theoretical study of the legacies of European colonialism that includes the work of intellectuals like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Anibal Quijano considers that, in terms of historicity, the term postcolonial ignores the continuities of colonial power relations that shape international politics and economy (Segato 2022: 23), which he defines as coloniality. Nevertheless, the vital academic movement of postcolonialism evolved alongside social movements of the twentieth century, surfacing the presence of coloniality in former colonial nation states, and complicating hegemonic knowledge systems.

Coloniality

Unlike colonialism, 'coloniality' refers to 'long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). For Quijano (2007: 170), these traces of colonialism in contemporary society can be described as 'the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed'.

Coloniality of Power

Coloniality of power 'was conceived together with America and Western Europe, and with the social category of 'race' as the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers' (Quijano 2007: 171). Through colonisation, people were classified and assigned value as it served the colonial capitalist system of exploitation. Unpacking the African postcolonial present, Ndlovu-Gatscheni (2013: x) defines coloniality of power as 'a global neocolonial hegemonic model of power that articulates race and labor, as well as space and people in accordance with the needs of capital and to the benefit of white European people', which he powerfully sets against the simultaneous myths of decolonization and 'illusions of freedom' (Ibid.).

Coloniality of knowledge

Coloniality of knowledge describes how 'modern knowledge has been articulated with the organisation of power, specially the colonial/imperial relations that constituted the modern world' (Lander 2000).[2] Quijano (2007: 172) explains how modern knowledge is founded on an externalisation of the self from the object observed. The observed object is then defined and prescribed to the properties identified by the subject. The difference between object and subject is naturalised and universalised and serves as the basis for knowledge construction from the 'privileged position of the subject who is associated to imperial power' (Lander 2000), the result of which – classifications,

[2] Translations of Lander by Isabel Collazos Gottret.

taxonomies, knowledge disciplines historical narratives – reinforce difference and the 'externality of relations' (Quijano 2007: 172). Furthermore, the universalisation of Western knowledge as a superior form of knowing required the radical expulsion, erasure and subjugation of different forms of knowing, belief systems, imaginaries, etc. By rendering visible the colonial ties and hierarchical violence from the totality of knowledge from a Western lens, one aim is to denaturalise this universal knowledge and contextualise it as the result of a historical and political history. In doing so, the heterogenous ways of knowing being held by Indigenous, peripheric and subaltern groups can be considered as equal and valuable.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation is broadly understood as an ongoing process of deconstructing and critically examining the impacts and legacies of colonialism. As Soares and Witcomb (2023) write: 'By acknowledging coloniality in museums, we must therefore assume that decolonisation is an ongoing process that involves restitution and rehumanisation, notably through the sharing of knowledge and by encouraging mutual understanding. It is a process towards which some museums and professionals have been orienting their practices; and it is one that is set to constantly challenge the museum's colonial foundations, as well as its present-day, neocolonial effects.' Far from universal, decolonisation in museums has been shown to take varying forms in different contexts and to cover a range of decolonising practices from repatriation of stolen heritage; ceding power to groups and communities previously excluded by museums; and addressing previously silenced histories (Ibid.). Calls to decolonise institutions go back over a century, and originated in community-focused social movements focused on cultural survival, rights and processes of self-definition (Shannon 2019; Lonetree 2012; Burns 2013). Yet, as the UK Museums Association (2021) decolonisation guidance reminds us, decolonisation work goes beyond repatriation and diversity work, and involves the full range of museum activities, policies and practices. Museums and heritage, as critical institutions, are called upon to foster and grow new ways of being, knowing and fostering human connections (Mbembe 2020). They are called upon to play a part in reshaping and regenerating our world in the face of social crises, growing inequities, and environmental collapse; urgent global issues that emerge from our colonial histories and neocolonial realities (Janes 2023; Mbembe 2020; McGhie 2020).

In the UK, a key reference point would be the Culture& Black Lives Matter Charter; in the wake of the covid 19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, Culture& co-produced its BLM Charter with a group of museum trainees from under-represented backgrounds. As Errol Francis (n.d.), CEO of Culture& has stated: 'We especially wanted to stress that, if decolonisation were to be meaningful, it must necessarily entail a series of actions that aim to *redistribute power and open up the museum* – as a closed disputed space, as a territory – to a more diverse population. To decolonise is basically to *transfer power and to cede territory* and I'm very concerned about the revisionism to which the term decolonisation has been subjected: too often used to describe actions which are at best tokenistic and at worst ineffective. Therefore, the Charter proposes a series of actions that address:

- the diversification of the workforce *at all* levels
- dealing with contested provenance, restitution and repatriation
- revealing the colonial histories of objects
- opening up interpretation and education to diverse narratives
- devising public programmes that engage more inclusive audiences
- protecting the lives of those in their workforce at risk from Covid-19

Anything less than this is not decolonisation but a misuse of the term.'

Indigenous knowledge and indigenising practice

Important here is the distinction between decolonising practices and indigenising practices. If decolonising starts from the colonial experience and comprises strategies which challenge the

coloniality of knowledge, power and being, indigenising practices refer to the specific reworking of museums through Indigenous knowledge – a remaking of museums from the starting point of Indigenous knowledge by bringing Indigenous ways of being and knowing into museums, and underscored by the principle of self-definition (Phillips 2011: 8). Indigenous knowledge is, of course, not a homogenous monolith, but a complex and contemporary meaning-making process. Even though it may be founded on past and pre-colonial ways of being and knowing, it is also shaped by contemporary material contexts; relations between Indigenous peoples and the State; and the appropriation of conventional tools of knowledge production. The 'separations' that constitute Western thought do not necessarily apply in Indigenous knowledge systems, like the Kantian division of thought-feeling; the modern and capitalist classifications of nature, human, and culture; and the definitions of epistemology (what it is possible to know and how) and ontology (nature of reality or being) (Clarke and Braun 2022). For *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* the discussions and analyses that circle around the ambition of indigenising museology raise awareness of the ease with which decolonisation within the institution of museums can fall into poor, extractive practices. Reports circulate around museums of tokenistic and often temporary appointments to diversify the staff, of global majority staff being expected to take the burden of the aim of organisational transformation (Dalal-Clayton and Puri Purini 2022; Monserrat Wee and Gamaker 2020). Indigenous professionals can be expected to 'perform' their indigeneity regularly for the benefit of the museum, reinscribing violent power relations and processes of objectification (Stein 2021). Within many European museums, there is a sense of pressure and often isolation for staff tasked with, or tasking themselves to, develop decolonial ways of working (Bunning 2024). For some this may be compounded by experiences of being racialised by colleagues (Ahmed 2012; Museums Association 2016; Art Fund 2022) or may emerge from the fear of pushback from colleagues and audiences.

Many recognise the reproduction of harmful inequities when decolonising work is limited to diversity initiatives and 'conditional' forms of inclusion that centre institutional needs and self-image (Minott 2019; Monserrat, Wee and Gamaker 2020; DecolonialFutures.net 2021; Decolonize This Place 2021; Art Fund 2022). Stein *et al* (2021: 21) articulate the characteristics of what they term 'conditional forms of inclusion', where the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and knowledges are 'understood as a concession on the part of the institution'. Here, Indigenous people are expected to behave in ways that 'affirm the benevolence of those who included them', 'remain silent about continued colonial relations within the institution' and 'ongoing complicity with colonization in the wider society', 'translate indigenous knowledge in ways that are intelligible in Western frames' and 'consent to be instrumentalized'. The longitudinal nature of cultural change and personal development has also been raised as a key challenge, together with the difficulties of changing mindsets and practices, particularly where such work involves engaging with discomfort, such as a heightened consciousness of our relationship to whiteness as an unacknowledged form of power and privilege and the upholding on ongoing structural inequities and power hoarding within normative ways of working in museums (Jones and Okun in MASS Action 2017; Lynch 2011).

Decolonial aesthetics

Introduced in 2003 by Colombian artist and activist Adolfo Albán Achinte, decolonial aesthetics refers to artistic projects which respond to and de-link from 'the darker side of Western modernity' (Transnational Decolonial Institute 2011). As described by the Transnational Decolonial Institute (2011), 'decolonial aesthetics seeks to recognize and open options for liberating the senses… contesting the legacies of modernity and its re-incarnations'.

Socially-engaged art

Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues uses the language of socially engaged art – a form of art conceived as 'a mode of artistic creativity that employ[s] long-term collaboration as a means of

achieving certain forms of sociopolitical transformation' (Garrido Castellano 2021: 14). Garrido Castellano conceives of socially engaged art projects as 'a set of located, frequently transgressive actions seeking to challenge visible and not- so-visible forms of coloniality' and, within cultural institutions as a 'mode of "doing" culture, a powerful tool for despecializing, undisciplining, and unmastering cultural interactions' (Ibid.: 19).

Summary

In *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*, we might talk about the practice of decoloniality as 'a method of continually combatting the coloniality of knowledge, power and being' (Soares and Witcomb 2023). For Soares and Witcomb, this is a process that has to involve different people and perspectives and they reference Walsh and Mignolo (2018: 1) who point to decoloniality as relational as opposed to universal; 'the ways that different local histories and embodied conceptions and practices of decoloniality, including our own, can enter into conversations'. In museums and in *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*, the goals of this ongoing process of decoloniality are to ethically and collectively surface, understand, and challenge coloniality and the deep inequities associated with coloniality, and to bring alternate forms of knowing and being to the fore, in order to drive inclusive transformation and welcome and validate multiple identities and lives on their own terms.

Section 2: The role of art and artists in facilitating constructive dialogue around contested heritage

A wide range of benefits are associated with art making, art experience and arts participation. Art is widely acknowledged as having a number of individual, community and societal impacts from building more inclusive societies, reinforcing democratic principles and values and supporting social cohesion and community empowerment to enabling personal development, improved health and well-being and generating greater tolerance and respect for others (Matarasso 1997; Crossick & Kaszynska 2016; McCarthy *et al* 2004; Culture Action Europe 2018; 64 Millions Artists with Arts Council England 2018; Plumb 2019, 2021). Culture Action Europe (2018: 7) found that culture is a powerful force for democracy - mobilising citizens, stimulating civic debate, building trust and broadening minds by exposing people to 'multiple, often provocative viewpoints.' Art and culture have also been recognised as of direct use in conflict resolution, raising awareness of potential conflicts, challenging prejudice and creating the conditions for inter-group contact, collaboration, compassion and trust (Tselika 2019). Whilst we might desire a greater consistency across this research and a deeper engagement with the processes through which the benefits associated with art take place, there is nonetheless a vast body of research pointing to art's deep social significance.

In a similar vein, significant claims are made for the role of the artist. Described as 'charismatic agents' (Doherty 2015: 14) artists are recognised as being uniquely placed to comment on society, to offer important ethical insights, to agitate with and advocate on behalf of marginalised groups and to play a significant part in drawing more inclusive and complex narratives and understandings to the fore. Situated in the dual role of 'insiders/outsiders', artists are often perceived to have more freedom to take risks and to take a more openly critical stance (Marstine 2017). They are credited with interrogating and debating issues of authority, truth, authenticity and reliability, while simultaneously challenging, confusing and provoking (Pringle 2006: 7) and, by asking audiences to question established ideas, they are recognised as helping participants to reconceive knowledge as 'in a state of flux, plural and negotiable, rather than as a fixed entity' (Robins and Baxter 2012: 248). For the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* partners, artists 'possess a special ability to challenge entrenched narratives about history and identity due to their creativity, emotional impact and diverse modes of expression' (Survey 6). They have 'enormous potential as activators and facilitators of difficult conversions' (Survey 1), can 'deconstruct dominant narratives that fuel extremist and dividing propagandas' (Survey 7) and are recognised as able to 'communicate without being didactic' (Survey 2). They can 'synthesise complex issues into movement, drawings, soundscapes and other forms' (Survey 5) and generate 'mutual sharing of experience and expertise' and 'actively promote' the inclusion and representation of racialised communities (Survey 4). As one partner commented, 'In essence, artists play a vital role in opening up discussion, promoting empathy, and reshaping our understanding of the past and present' (Survey 6). Art and artists here are recognised as providing 'a privileged space for creating dialogue among different individuals, groups, and communities, serving as a platform to challenge singular perspectives and to foster plural narratives, social representations and knowledge' (Survey 1) and, in relation to colonialism and contested heritage, they can 'create spaces where contested collections and issues can be explored safely' (Survey 1), allow 'ideas of dissent and discontent to be released in a safe and welcoming space' (Survey 7) and 'develop constructive relationships to open new narratives sensitively' (Survey 1). Importantly, art is recognised as a motivating force (Survey 7) and one mechanism for enabling people to 'rediscover their sense of belonging and agency' (Survey 7).

Of central importance to any reflection on the role of art and artists in shaping constructive dialogues around contested heritage and crucial for maintaining a critical perspective, are the critiques of aesthetic discourses, processes and categories that recognise art and aesthetics as part of the colonial project. Post-structural and post-colonial art history has revealed the ways in which art, the discipline of art history and key foundational ideas such as the emancipatory value of art, for example, were bound up in European expansion. As Amelia Jones (2016: 7) writes so succinctly, '"art" as we know it

is an effect of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Art is what Europe invented out of medieval concepts of artisanship and religious imagery in order to substantiate its superiority in relation to the cultures it sought to dominate through direct and indirect colonialism.' And for Preziosi and Lamoureux (2005: 80): 'Art did not precede Art History like some phenomenon of nature discovered and then explained by science. Both are ideological formations designed to function within specifiable parameters. Art History, aesthetic philosophy, museology, and art-making itself were historically co-constructed social practices whose fundamental, conjoint mission was the production of subjects and objects commensurate with each other, and possessive of a decorum suitable for the orderly and predictable functioning of the emergent nation states.' Such critiques, deeply researched and theorised, remind us of the need to constantly question our assumptions and proceed in full awareness of the pitfalls of assuming that art is a neutral category. They remind us, as we work to shape cultural spaces welcoming to everyone and where difference is celebrated, that 'this dignity is radically incompatible with homogenizing notions of "culture" and the "universality" of artistic discourses and practices' (Transnational Decolonial Institute 2011).

Over the last decades, decolonial artists, scholars and cultural professionals have been working to surface the coloniality of art and aesthetics and highlight those artists whose work is active in the production of decolonial knowledge and ways of being and in the move towards 'transmodernity' – 'a future where coloniality will finally be eradicated, where we cease to engage in the normalized Euro-centered conceptions of human existence and socio-political dynamics' (Transnational Decolonial Institute 2011). Described as decolonial aesthetics, it refers to 'ongoing artistic projects responding and delinking from the darker side of imperial globalization' (Ibid.). Developed in recognition of the ways in which discourses and values of art and aesthetics have been constituted by and constitutive of experiences of colonialism, decolonial aesthetics 'seeks to recognize and open options for liberating the senses… contesting the legacies of modernity and its re-incarnations in postmodern and altermodern aesthetics' (Ibid.).

This approach and framing feels incredibly productive for the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium and the examples referenced in Section 3 draw attention to some of the ways in which socially-engaged art and artists are progressing this work; prioritising Indigenous, minoritised and decolonial knowledge and ways of being, challenging and de-linking from normalized Eurocentric conceptions of human experience and relations, liberating the senses and contesting ongoing inequalities as part of ongoing social movements to address the past and reimagine the future. The projects defy easy categorisation but there are a number of approaches and emphases evident in this work that offer useful ways in and which hold great significance for *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*.

For example, in a number of the selected case studies artists purposefully engage in **institutional critique** - art interventions that systematically interrogate institutions' structures, policies, practices and values based on an understanding of institutions as a set of 'protocols, procedures, habits and behaviours' (Marstine 2017: 4-6). Focused firmly on and creating the conditions for visitors and participants to 'see' the institution in new ways, institutional critique often takes the form of an artist-led work, performance or intervention (see for example Case Study 8). Still fundamental to conceptualising this approach, Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum*, 1992 at Maryland Historical Society Museum (Case Study 1) set out to highlight history as an act of interpretation and draw attention to forms of institutional racism and colonial bias, through researching, excavating, and exhibiting deliberately excluded archival material and silenced histories, alongside contemporary art pieces. Although there is some suggestion that museums commissioning institutional critique choose to do so in order to alleviate their historical guilt (González 2008: 100), as Marstine (2017: 11) notes (citing Charles Esche), 'institutional critique has spawned painful but important moments of self-reflection in museums and galleries which have led to significant shifts in policy and practice'.

Still working to drive institutional transformation but with an emphasis on collaboration and wider social inequalities, **socially-engaged practice** more broadly is playing a significant part in reworking museum and heritage spaces, experiences and organisations across Europe. As Marstine (2017: 14) clarifies:

> Socially engaged practice rejects idealised notions of the artist as lone genius and instead fosters collaborative working relationships. It draws upon feminist approaches to listening that eschew judgement and instead convey empathy to generate what art historian Grant Kester (2004: 113–116) calls 'solidarity creation, solidarity enhancement and the counter hegemonic'. As artist and museum educator Pablo Helguera (2012) notes: Social practice raises the stakes in terms of the quality of interaction. Institutional critique is uni-directional – a political statement of an artist. Social practice is not satisfied by the paradigm of the viewer being confronted but instead involves collaboration that leads to action.

Working collaboratively with artists and utilising a number of artistic methodologies, strategies and tactics - dialogue and deep collaboration, social and public engagement, creative questioning, subversion and disruption, and imagining alternatives - has enabled cultural institutions around the globe to begin to rework their relations with visitors and the wider society and harness cultural resources towards these 'counter hegemonic' activities. A number of these projects explicitly work to **decentre established identities and centre minoritized voices**. In the case of *Permissible Beauty* (Case Study 5), for example, the experiences, insights and perspectives of Black Queer Britons were placed at the heart of a process of heritage-making that set out to create a reimagining of the national story, one that celebrated historic and contemporary British diversity and the contributions of people typically marginalised in heritage spaces and overlooked in histories of Britain. Similarly, *Being Human* (Case Study 3) prioritised the lives, experiences and perspectives of disabled artists in a collaborative process of rehumanising displays at the Wellcome Collection in London. Involving and centering disabled artists in decision-making about exhibition content, object selection and display provided a direct route to a significant rewriting of the spatial and social relations of the Gallery.

Mining the Museum, Permissible Beauty and *Being Human* provide excellent examples of projects utilising collaborative and equitable methodologies to co-create **more complex and inclusive narratives** in established institutions. Also significant here is the KLA Art Festival in Kampala described below through the examples of artist Lilian Mary Nabulime's 2012 contribution to the festival and the 2014 Boda Boda project which included actions from Disability Arts Project Uganda (DAPU) (Case Study 6). The KLA Arts Festival stands in contrast to the role played by traditional art institutions that are based on the commodification of African creative practices and discourses (Garrido Castellano 2021: 150). Here, DAPU and Nabulime's work seeks to question 'the social pertinence of public artistic practice against the backdrop of increasing marketization and transnational exchanges', opening up, as Garrido Castellano describes (Ibid.: 150), critical questions 'from within' an excluded citizenry that 'would otherwise be impossible'.

Of crucial importance here has been the influence of **Indigenous activism** across the globe to address the systematic erasure of Indigenous people from heritage institutions. The example of the TARNANTHI Festival in Adelaide (Case Study 4) showcases Aboriginal cultural heritage and re-appropriates traditionally colonial spaces, acting as a testament to colonial resistance. Here crafts, collective memory and traditional performance not only aim to counteract the legacy of colonialism but exist as a form of living activist memory and resilience. As Laura Phillips argues, the perspectives of Indigenous and critical settler scholars can 'challenge non-Indigenous individuals to search for new ways of being: within ourselves, the world around us, and with respect to the colonial inheritance present in museums today' (Phillips 2022). Art, in this case, is just one way in which Indigenous resistance and activism manifests and it is intertwined with issues of political resistance, object repatriation and redistribution of wealth.

In a number of the case studies, artists are actively engaged in **supporting collective imagining, dreaming and an exploration of alternative possibilities for the future** - what Garrido Castellano (2021: 9-10) describes as 'exercises in radical imagination attempting to invent different categories of the human and of human acting and interrelating' that can be utilised 'as a testing ground for alternative social and cultural relations'. Representing the Netherlands at the Venice Biennale in 2024, Congolese artist collective CATPC created the transnational project *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred* (Case Study 2) to highlight the unseen connections between many museums and plantations, point out where museums have benefitted from plantation profits, draw comparisons with ethical questions of museums receiving sponsorship from corporations linked to extraction and exploitation and raise awareness of CATPC's ongoing work to buy back plantation land and transform it into bio-diverse habitats. A beautiful, critical, damning and future-focused project, *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred* not only imagines and tests 'alternative social and cultural relations', but takes direct action to make positive social change. In a similar vein, the long-term collaborations between Manchester Art Galleries and artist Suzanne Lacy - *Cleaning Conditions and Uncertain Futures* (Case Study 7) - provides another example of how these radical imaginings of an alternative future and collective relational testing can engender real world legal, practical, economic and policy change. Working with the context of an established cultural institution and utilising the frame of the institution to host deep conversations with older women about the gendered nature of work and care, the work resulted in real world change of direct significance to workers at the Gallery.

Across all of the case studies, art is revealed as **a particularly open form of communication** that has the capacity to both capture and express complex concepts and social conditions *and* facilitate varied meaning making processes, including dialogue. Marstine (2017: 7) notes that artists set forward ideas and, evoking the context of capitalism and the potential of art to challenge dominant social forces, that these ideas 'cannot be possessed and, at least theoretically, circulate freely in the public domain'. In this sense, artists can create the conditions for us to move beyond the day to day and expand our horizons - to engage in complex topics that may ordinarily be obscured from view or out of reach. Avoiding the didactic and with an openness that invites interpretation and questioning, art has the potential to invite dialogue and act as a bridge for debate; or, as conflict resolution expert Tselika (2019: 9) describes it, art can expand 'the avenues for exchange amongst different social groups'. Of interest here is research in the cognitive sciences. Drawing attention to the affordances for action (Gibson 1979) embedded in art, psychologists have distinguished art from the kinds of affordances we might encounter in a designed object (like the handle of a coffee cup, for example). Rather, art is characterised as 'a potent source of other kinds of affordances—aesthetic and social—which involve a communicative process and invite a search for meaning' (Dolese and Kozbelt 2020: 1). The art encounter here is recognised as akin to a conversation, with the art object inviting us to communicate. This observation is supported by fascinating research from Newman *et al* (2014) which explores the continuity of objects in human perception and undertakes empirical studies to show that artworks are perceived as extensions of their makers, a perception which means that we approach art more like we would approach an individual and with an expectation of communication and dialogue, than how we would approach a different kind of object. Shane Cullen's artwork *The Agreement* (Case Study 10), and its accompanying public programme at Millennium Court Arts Centre speaks to this unique potential of art to provide a home for debates across the political divide when facilitated from a position of understanding and care.

Much like the ethical frameworks introduced in Section 4 of this report and linked to the communicative potential of art, socially-engaged art has the capacity to **hold multiple viewpoints and possibilities in tension**, complicating our view, challenging our perspective and questioning existing entrenched and dominant structures, understandings, and practices both within the institution and society. In this way it can play a key role in drawing publics with differing viewpoints together around contentious heritage and bring forward ways to work through its controversial and sometimes painful

aspects (see TRACES 2016-19). The project *Uncovered* (Case Study 9) provides a deeply inspiring example of socially engaged art focused around the contested site of Nicosia International Airport. Working to rewrite the spatial and social relations of the Airport and its surrounding areas, the project provided a vantage point from which to surface and discuss the extreme measures of control in place on Cyprus.

As Froggett *et al* (2011: 48) captured so beautifully:

> Ethical and aesthetic issues can align when the artwork is adequate to the ethical complexity it takes as its subject matter– that is, when it can contain and make available for reflection... the conflicts it reveals.... To the extent that the art refuses to collapse the tensions and holds them symbolically in relation to one another, it performs a reparative function– compensation, perhaps, for the 'trouble' it has brought to the fore.

Section 3: Case studies

This section of the report identifies a range of case studies of relevance to *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues*. Each of the examples included below is specific to its context and emerged from differing and multiple traditions of socially engaged art. In order to broaden out the perspectives of the RCMG team and identify a wide range of examples, a survey of *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* partner organisations as well as a range of external experts was undertaken. The team looked at a range of examples, the full list of which is given in Appendix A.

1. Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum*, 1992-1993, Maryland Historical Society Museum, United States

Image credit: Courtesy of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, "Mining the Museum," a 1992-1993 installation by artist Fred Wilson at the Maryland Historical Society. MS 2008.

Description: Although over thirty years old, Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* (1992), remains relevant today as a germinal example of 'the ways in which artists, through the language and practice of institutional critique, can be powerful drivers for change in the museum' (Marstine 2012: 84). Wilson is an artist-curator who describes using 'the museum as my palette' (Karp and Wilson 2005: 181), typically collaborating with institutions for several months and engaging with a range of staff at all levels, policies, collections and archives. In this work, co-curated with Lisa Corrin at the Maryland Historical Society Museum, he highlights history as an act of interpretation and draws attention to forms of institutional racism and colonial bias, through researching, excavating, and exhibiting deliberately excluded archival material and silenced histories, alongside contemporary art pieces. His subversive methods of display include creating new audio-visuals, changing exhibition lighting and the colour of walls, placing contemporary artworks into vitrines, putting objects behind barriers or facing walls and juxtaposing the museum's 'legitimised' objects against 'hidden' objects from the stores, 'because what they [the museum] put on view says a lot about the museum, but what they don't put on view says even more' (Karp and Wilson 2005: 182). Wilson famously places 'beautiful' things next to 'horrific' things, including *Metalwork 1793-1880* where iron slave shackles were positioned next to silver pitchers, steins and goblets. He designs graphics and writes interpretative materials – including changing artefact labels to highlight where objects were made by enslaved people, as well as removing the 'owners' names (in many cases colonisers), replacing them with, for example, '*Stolen from the Zonge tribe*, 1899, Private collection' and another '*Acquired by Colonel So-and-so in 1898*' – powerfully questioning provenance, toying with ideas surrounding authority and 'truth' and, exploring 'not *what*

objects mean but how meaning is made when they are “framed” by the museum environment and museum practices’ (Corrin 1993: 306).

Evaluation: The report shares two examples of evaluation of Wilson’s work to explore the impact of his practice on the museum; firstly, visitor evaluation, analysed by Corrin, and secondly, research conducted by academic Janet Marstine.

1. A series of questions were posed to exhibition visitors in the lift before entering, which read:

What is it?
Where is it? Why?
What is it saying?
How is it used?
For whom was it created?
For whom does it exist?
Who is represented?
How are they represented?
(Ibid.: 310)

Who is doing the telling? The hearing?
What do you see?
What do you hear?
What can you touch?
What do you feel?
What do you think?
Where are you?

Additionally, visitors were asked to respond to: ‘Do you have questions about Mining the Museum?’ alongside being given a FAQ handout at the end of the exhibition.

As Corrin states: ‘Almost every evaluation received remarked on the emotional impact of the installation’ regardless of whether they were reacted positively or negatively to the work, for example one College Student shared that ‘Never have I witnessed any form of artwork that has had such an emotional effect on me’, whereas in contrast a Retired Dentist stated that: ‘Mining the Museum has the ability to promote racism and hate in young Blacks and was offensive to me’ (Ibid.: 311-312).

2. Marstine interviewed security staff, educators, docents, preparators, registrars, designers, curators and directors who worked with Wilson at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) and the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire, alongside the artist himself many years after working on projects, and used the theoretical model of the GoodWork project to explore the ways in which artistic practice can contribute to museum ethics and inclusively transform an institution (Marstine 2012: 84).

Marstine found that Wilson’s practice (working gently, compassionately and in a non-hierarchical with museum colleagues) helps to align individual, institutional and sectoral values and intentions that can lead to ethical (or ‘good’) work in addressing social exclusion (Marstine 2012: 86-87). One interviewee – Derrick Cartwright, director of the Seattle Art Museum and former director of the Hood at the time – described Wilson’s work as leaving ‘traces’ in the institution and helped to ‘change the habits of the place and make it less risk averse’ (cited in Ibid.: 92). She further found that Wilson’s work helped to ‘reshape mission and strategic planning and inform approaches to acquisitions, collections management, exhibitions, design, learning and personnel issues through a heightened concern for greater diversity and equity’ (Ibid.: 94).

2. Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC) with artist Renzo Martens and curator Hicham Khalidi, *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred*, Venice, Italy and Lusanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo

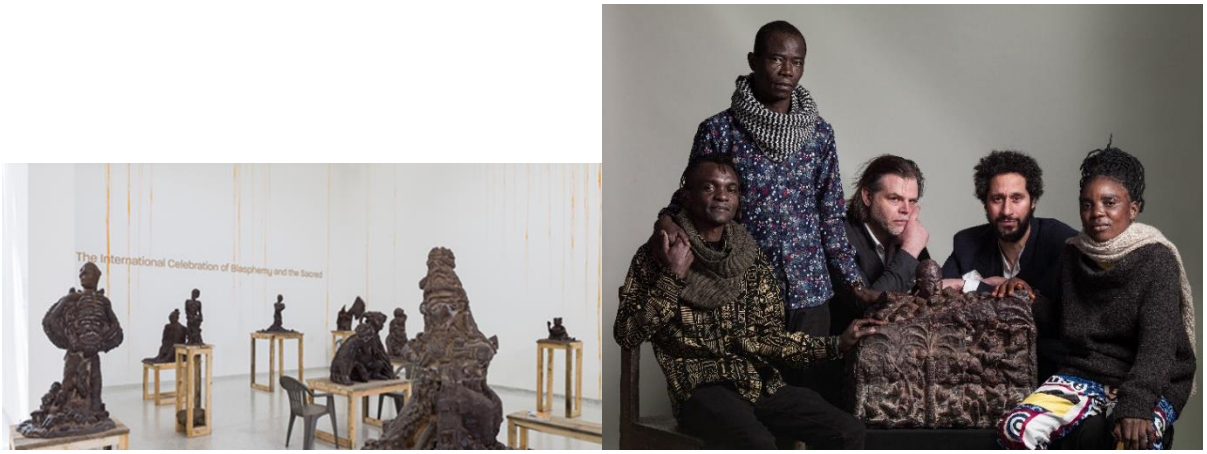

Image credits: *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred*, left, Ced'art Tamasala (CATPC), Renzo Martens, Hicham Khalidi, 2024. Photo by Peter Tijhuis**.** Ced'art Tamasala (CATPC), Matthieu Kasiama (CATPC), Renzo Martens, Hicham Khalidi, Mbuku Kimpala (CATPC), right. ©Koos_Breukel, 2023.

Description: *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred* is an exhibition of new artworks by Congolese artist collective CATPC in collaboration with artist Renzo Martens and curator Hicham Khalidi in the Dutch Pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale, twinned with the Lusanga White Cube in Democratic Republic of the Congo. A live stream video connects audiences and artworks across the two sites. The work in Venice draws attention to CATPC's work of the last ten years including a screening of their 2017 performance film piece *The Judgement of the White Cube*, where they 'convict' museums and galleries for their extractive ideology. A series of sculptures made in clay from the raw materials extracted from exhausted plantations in Lusanga, and recast in palm oil and cacao in Amsterdam, are also displayed (La Biennale di Venezia 2024a) to draw attention to CATPC's ongoing practice of reclaiming 200 hectares of once confiscated plantation land in an attempt to restore and replenish the Sacred Forest in Lusanga. Artist Ced'art Tamasala shares that 'each sculpture carries the seed that will bring back the sacred forest. Ultimately functioning as conduits, these sculptures will allow for a shared equitable future for all humans, making it possible for us to reclaim our stolen lands, to reforest them and to welcome the post-plantation and sacred forest' (La Biennale di Venezia 2024b). Through this work, they highlight the unseen connections between many museums and plantations both historically and today, pointing out where some museums have benefitted from plantation profits in the past, and drawing comparisons with ethical questions of museums' sponsorship from corporations linked to extraction and exploitation.

In the White Cube in Lusanga, CATPC have created a shrine to the sculpture of a white Belgian colonial officer, made by a Kwilu Pende artist in 1931 in Belgian Congo as a 'power figure – Balot'. The sculpture represents acts of resistance and rebellion and harnesses 'Balot's angry spirit in service of the Pende people' (La Biennale di Venezia 2024a: 5). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts temporarily loaned the work to the White Cube – the first time in 50 years that it has returned home. Live streamed to audiences in Venice, the digital image of the sculpture is on sale in the form of NFTs (non-fungible tokens), which they describe as 'digital restitution' (D'Arcy 2024). CATPC state that: 'Each purchase of one of the 306

NFTs buys and secures two and a half acres of exhausted plantation land… Every purchase helps to further unleash the powers of the sculpture, and to re-fulfil its original functions: to protect our land and our people' (Ibid.).

Evaluation: At this stage no formal evaluation of the work can be found, though there are several art reviews. However, interestingly, in a piece by the Art Newspaper, it is noted that The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) called the NFT launch 'unethical and unprofessional', but still agreed to loan the sculpture to the White Cube, Lusanga and facilitate its presence in Venice through live streaming (D'Arcy 2024).

3. 'Being Human', Wellcome Collection, London, United Kingdom

Image credits: A 'Friendship Bench', left, from a project in Zimbabwe that encouraged people to talk about mental health. An 'interactive jukebox', right, loaded with songs from around the world relating to illness and epidemics, designed by Kin with Bethan Laura Wood to include a rotating glass sculpture. © Wellcome Collection, photos by Steven Pocock.

Description: In 2018 RCMG was approached by the Wellcome Collection to establish a collaboration that would help to shape their new permanent gallery 'Being Human'. RCMG convened a steering group of disabled artists and 'disrupters' – Tony Heaton, Catherine Long and Zoe Partington – with input from additional external experts, to work through a process of co-production with the Wellcome Collection team. For some disabled people, medical museums are the last place they would ever choose to visit. Medical museums have too often portrayed difference as a deficit and presented physical differences as curiosities for the non-disabled gaze. Disabled people here are often nameless, reduced to the characteristics that mark them out as different and held up as a deviation from an idealised norm. Through a year-long process of co-production – adopting a 'Trading Zones' approach (Dodd et al. 2017) that allowed for different forms of expertise, such as medical, scientific, historical, curatorial, as well as expertise derived from or informed by lived experience of disability – the artists fed into processes of object selection and interpretation to shape a deeply anti-ableist gallery that would tell stories of medicine and science, but in ways that actively affirmed rather than negated disabled people's lives and challenge widely held negative attitudes towards difference and disability.

Evaluation: The evaluation comprised visitor surveys in the gallery conducted by visitor assistants and focus groups with disabled people. Opening in September 2019, the outcomes were more impactful than anticipated. In its first four months, Being Human attracted 267,161 visitors, 25% more visits year-on-year than its predecessor Medicine Now in 2018. 12% of the audience during this period declared themselves disabled, compared with 5% average among benchmarked organisations. The gallery received significant press attention with 82 press articles drawing attention to anti-ableist

practice, including a piece by The New York Times 'Is This The World's Most Accessible Museum?' (Marshall 2019). The research collaboration acted as a catalyst for wider organisational transformation, with RCMG and the Wellcome Collection (2018) producing *An ethical approach to interpreting disability and difference* guidance to support future work alongside informing other cultural organisations' practice. Wellcome Collection has since gone on to remove human remains from their Medicine Man display, delivered whole-staff training in anti-ableism and anti-racism, and approached temporary programming in new ways.

4. TARNANTHI Festival: *Grandmother Lore* and *Sovereign Acts: In the Wake*, 2019, Migration Museum (as part of the TARNANTHI Festival), Adelaide, South Australia

Image credits: Installation of *Grandmother Lore*, left, featuring artefacts and The Djaadjawan Dancers prepare for ceremony photo by Justine Kerrigan, courtesy Stella Stories and Australian Museum 2018. © Stella Stories. Unbound Collective, Sovereign Acts IV: OBJECT, centre and right, The National: New Australian Art 2019, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Photos by Cesare Cuzzola.

Description: TARNANTHI (meaning to 'come forth' or 'appear', from the language of the Kaurna people) is the annual Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA). Since 2015, several cultural organisations across Adelaide have been involved every year in its delivery and public programming. The Migration Museum (as part of the History Trust of South Australia) hosted two exhibitions in 2019 which are explored here.

Aboriginal artist-led temporary exhibition *Grandmother Lore* was curated by local Aboriginal artists in collaboration with the Migration Museum staff. It featured traditional textiles (sewing, weaving, stitching) traditionally made by Aboriginal women ancestors. The exhibition curators stated that 'Aboriginal women's lives are often just footnotes in mainstream Australian histories and governing policies, but [...] their lives are a powerful reminder that we cannot take the gifts of freedom, of culture, of Country, of community, for granted.' Public programming linked with this exhibition included participants and visitors sitting down together with artists to learn some of the weaving techniques displayed in the exhibition and leave behind 'a blessing or message' (Migration Museum 2019).

A second exhibition and performance piece, called *Sovereign Acts: In the Wake*, was created by the Unbound Collective, a group of curators, researchers, artists and performers based in South Australia (Flinders University 2015). This retrospective exhibition, based on the research and artistic interventions of the collective since 2015, revealed and challenged 'the containment and exclusion of Aboriginal people by institutions of knowledge, culture and power'. Paper garments for the performance were created (and then displayed in the exhibition) using archival material of colonial origin juxtaposed with new poems, songs and interpretations from the artists in order to create a

'future archive'. The site chosen for this is particularly significant, as the building currently used by the Migration Museum used to be a 'Native School Establishment' for the forced 're-education' of Aboriginal children imposed by British authorities.[3] The programme included performance pieces by artists in spoken word, song and poetry.

5. Permissible Beauty, 2023, Hampton Court Palace, London, United Kingdom

Image credits: Permissible Beauty installation at Hampton Court Palace. Photos © Robert Taylor.

Description: 'Permissible Beauty' was an innovative research and portraiture project that responded to the absence of Black Queer visibility in Britain's national story and heritage, and explored and celebrated what is unique about British Black and Queer identity (RCMG 2023). Led by RCMG in collaboration with performer, songwriter and art historian David McAlmont, photographer Robert Taylor and film director Mark Thomas of Soup Collective, the three-year project resulted in a short film and immersive installation at Hampton Court Palace (Historic Royal Palaces). Drawing inspiration from the renowned 17th century portrait paintings, known as the Windsor Beauties, and shot on location at Hampton Court Palace, the group explored how fresh ways of celebrating beauty might be revealed. They worked with six 'Contemporary Beauties' – artists, drag queens, performers, models and activists – whose portraits lie at the heart of the film and installation. The film's soundtrack was created by AFRODEUTSCHE, the British-born Ghanaian-Russian-German composer, DJ and broadcaster. By centering Black and Queer lived experience in ways seldom seen in heritage organisations, Permissible Beauty set out to create an experience that was affirming for audiences that rarely see themselves reflected in the nation's heritage and an enriching, stimulating, joyful and surprising engagement for all visitors.

Evaluation: In-depth interviews with the six 'Contemporary Beauties', interviews with 29 visitors to the exhibition, 138 self-completion visitor survey respondents, 11 self-completion staff survey respondents. Survey results offered two closed questions and an open field to expand on their answers, they were analysed by drawing on quantitative and qualitative data. The surveys and interviews were then analysed considering emerging themes.

The audience evaluation found that 96% of visitors (responding to the survey) agreed with the statement 'It is important that heritage organisations tell more inclusive stories' and 91% agreed that

[3] The Migration Museum building stands on Kaurna land. In the 1840s it became 'the site of the Native School Establishment, where British authorities attempted to "civilize and Christianize" Aboriginal children', source: https://www.sitesofconscience.org/membership/migration-museum-au/#:~:text=The%20Migration%20Museum%20also%20interprets,civilize%20and%20Christianize%E2%80%9D%20Aboriginal%20children.

'Projects like Permissible Beauty help to make heritage more engaging and relevant today'. A number of key themes also emerged, which can be understood as a form of visitor journey, they revealed three main modes of engagement and response: (1) emotional engagement; (2) conversations around contemporary issues; and (3) increased awareness, understanding and advocacy for change. Visitors tended to engage with Permissible Beauty through emotional responses, reporting strong feelings linked to their experience, as one visitor comment attests to: 'I am blown away by the concept, the affirmations, the subjects, the amazing photography and the way it's put together. It is very clever. And most important, the black beauty concept is at Hampton Court Palace, along with the expected portraits of European white beauty'. The evaluation of staff engagement broadly found that there were benefits to participating in the project, including being more relevant for underrepresented audiences, affirming for staff members of colour, more opportunities to work with a variety of community groups; and significantly the fast tracking of the approval of Hampton Court Palace's first all-gender toilet facilities, to name just a few. The project also had a range of impacts on the institution including upskilling staff and providing tools and guidance for future work.

6. KLA ART festival and Boda Boda Project, 2012-2014, Kampala, Uganda

Image credit: Lilian Mary Nabulime, (PhD Newcastle University 2007), *Male and Female*, 2003-2004. Sculptures; Male 8 x 8 x 4cm (left), Female 6.5 x 5 x 5cm (right), soap embedded with cowrie shells, beans. soap, seeds. Images courtesy of the artist.

Description: Organised by 32° East: Ugandan Arts Trust, the KLA Art Festival brings artists across Eastern Africa to engage with critical discourses around issues such as exclusion, privatisation, exploitation and economic neoliberalism (Garrido Castellano 2021: 141). In rejecting 'traditional' art contexts and audiences, and destabilising academic narratives of contemporary Ugandan art and culture, this biennial festival works experimentally and flexibly as a critical space of dialogue across urban communities, fostering long-term collaborative relationships and creative processes (Ibid.). Part of this involves bringing art into non-conventional spaces of everyday Kampala. The 2012 inaugural festival involved 12 shipping containers spread across different parts of the city, creating unprecedented opportunities to experiment, create and collaborate through art with a range of people (Ibid.: 139). The festival worked to 'challenge assumptions about art's intentions, ownership and relevance'. For example, artist Lilian Mary Nabulime used her container to engage with people on the issue of HIV/AIDS through sculptural forms, made from soap as an everyday material used for

personal hygiene. The sculptures offered a 'communication tool' and focal point for dialogue that transcended official narratives of the disease and opened up possibilities for a range of connections and non-predetermined outcomes that were fully controlled by those involved (Ibid: 142). The sculptures – *Male and Female* – are made of transparent soap embedded with shells and seeds and resemble male and female genitalia, they carry the intention of conveying various ideas about the disease that is predominantly transmitted sexually (Nabulime and McEwan 2014).

The Boda Boda project at the 2014 festival saw boda bodas (motorbike taxis) become a 'mobile artwork' to 'raise awareness on regulatory and customary issues such as urban gentrification and exclusion' and to acknowledge their role in 'configuring Kampala's urban landscape' (Garrido Castellano 2018: 141; 140). Involving 20 artists, the artwork inspired participatory and often spontaneous involvement of local people alongside boda boda drivers who engaged in the project on their own terms (Ibid.). One artist involved in the Boda Boda project was Fred Batale who developed the Disability Art Project Uganda (DAPU). DAPU 'brings together Ugandans with disabilities and explores issues of accessibility, recognition, and self-empowerment' (Garrido Castellano 2021: 145). As part of the Boda Boda project, DAPU modified a boda boda to enable use by someone with a mobility impairment 'as a way of encouraging dialogue and raising awareness about the lack of public infrastructure in the Kampala cityscape' (Ibid.: 146). Critically, DAPU, like the festival itself, does not apply a 'recipe' for participant empowerment, but instead offers up tools that can be used while amplifying 'individual and collective action' (Ibid.: 158).

Evaluation: Garrido Castellano (2021) locates both examples as part of a 'boda moment'; a palpable shift which transforms the possibilities of creative practice and challenges the traditional institutional logics of art spaces. In both the Boda Boda project and Nabulime's social soap sculptures, 'nationally sanctioned important issues' are engaged with in open-ended, self-defined, pragmatic, and informal ways (Garrido Castellano 2021: 155). Nabulime's evaluation of the soap sculptures as a tool of communication through interviews and questionnaires showed that the sculptures were an effective communication tool for both literate and illiterate audiences, despite sensitivities around the subject of sex and HIV/AIDS (Nabulime 2007). Nabulime further refined the work as part of KLA Art Festival. Speaking about their work, the artists reveal a constant questioning and refinement of the 'possibilities and limitations of artistic interventions' (Garrido Castellano 2021: 142).

7. Suzanne Lacy, *Cleaning Conditions*, 2013 and *Uncertain Futures*, 2021, Manchester Art Gallery and The Whitworth, Manchester, United Kingdom

Image credits: Suzanne Lacy, *Cleaning Conditions*, part of Do it 2013, Manchester Art Gallery.

Description: Suzanne Lacy's activist and performance practice explores social and political issues including sexual violence, poverty, incarceration, labour and ageing. The performance work *Cleaning Conditions*, a homage to artist Allan Kaprow, was staged over two weeks at Manchester Art Gallery in 2013 and made visible gender and labour relations. Beginning in front of the Pre-Raphaelite painting *Work* by Ford Madox Brown, a team of 'sweepers' recruited from labour and immigration organisations, cleaned the galleries each day and, at the same time, 'littered' printed political materials onto the floors, including leaflets from the union Unison (Lacy 2013). Public conversations were held in the gallery exploring the intersection of labour conditions, living wage, immigration and 'the role of women in the care and service industries' (Ibid.). The work also had effects on the practice of the gallery, with staff joining others in the sector to discuss their own work and its relationship to the gendering of care and service. This resulted in Manchester Art Gallery reassessing wages for many of the cleaning staff it employed and making an increase to match the Manchester living wage. In 2021, Lacy returned to the gallery with the project *Uncertain Futures,* collaborating with staff from the gallery, researchers from Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University, and an advisory group of local women aged over 50. Focused on the inequalities older women face and how 'gender, age, labour, class, migration status, disability and race impact women's paid and unpaid work' (Manchester Art Gallery 2021). Over 100 women from Manchester engaged in workshops, interviews, talks and a dinner as part of this socially engaged and activist work.

Evaluation: Researchers from the two Manchester universities conducted research on the *Uncertain Futures* project. 100 women were interviewed in the gallery as part of the art project to explore their experiences of paid and unpaid work. The interview transcripts were analysed by the group and coded using an open framework (Campbell et al. 2023). The research conducted as part of *Uncertain Futures* was not focused on evaluating the activity *per se*, rather it set out to generate a fuller understanding of the women's experiences of labour and to make a series of practical, legal and policy recommendations (Ibid.: 55-56).

8. Ansuman Biswas, *The Manchester Hermit*, 2009, Manchester Museum, Manchester, United Kingdom

Image credits: Ansuman Biswas, *The Manchester Hermit*, 2009. Manchester Museum, The University of Manchester.

Description: Ansuman Biswas' satirical performative practice in *The Manchester Hermit* was approached as a form of ethical intervention, enacting loss in order to sensitise people to environmental and ecological crises and the extinction of species and habitats on a planetary scale. The intervention also exposed and revealed institutional practices in an attempt to share authority and decision-making processes with the museum's audiences and broader public, highlighting the

public ownership of collections. Between June and August 2009, Biswas spent forty days and forty nights alone in the Gothic Tower of the Manchester Museum. His aim was to delve into the museum as a house of memory and to examine our attitudes to loss and conservation. Each day he would offer 'up in a spirit of sacrifice' (Biswas 2009) a new object from the museum's stores of over 4 million specimens and objects on social media and a dedicated blog as a stimulus for discussion and action. He declared that he would then destroy it, unless 'someone cares for the object', for example by sharing 'a poem, a video, a child's drawing, a scientific assessment etc' (Ibid.). He invited interested parties and specialist experts, alongside museum staff and the public, to put forward their views and debate the object's worth through comments on the blog, until a clear consensus was reached. Excitingly, if the object was 'cared for', the stewardship for it was transferred to the corresponding respondent who could decide whether to return it to the museum or elsewhere.

This artistic residency forms part of a wider palette of strategies at Manchester Museum that include a sustained effort in decolonising work. The Museum has made several structural changes to address coloniality in their collections and site, recently creating new roles that are rooted in social justice action, including – Curator of Indigenous Perspectives, Curator of Living Cultures, Environmental Action Manager and Social Justice Manager. They also have an ongoing commitment to the unconditional repatriation of sacred objects to originating communities (Manchester Museum 2023).

9. *UNCOVERED*, Nicosia International Airport, 2011, Nicosia, Cyprus. Initiated by Vicky Perikleous.

Image credit: Vicky Perikleous, *Neither too Far, Not too Close*, 2011. Installation, 1-Channel Video/Collage/footage from camera attached on a balloon, 2-Channel Audio, left. Installation at Nicosia International Airport, 2011, right.

Description: *Uncovered* is an art project that took place in Cyprus (2010-13) and was initiated by artist Vicky Perikleous. Focused on making disused public spaces public once again and drawing attention to the spatial logics of control in a country continuing to experience enforced division and high levels of control, the project centred around the site of Nicosia International Airport. When the island of Cyprus was divided in 1974 and a UN buffer zone was put in place, the Airport became inaccessible to residents of the island. By 2011, it had been under the control of the UN for 37 years and was used primarily as the headquarters for the UN peacekeeping force on Cyprus. Focused on raising questions about mechanisms of social control and awareness of the ongoing division and military occupation of Cyprus, the project, which ran for three years, was formally proposed to the UN as part of the peace-

keeping process. It involved the commissioning of eight art projects from Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists and an exhibition curated by Greek Cypriot Pavlina Paraskevaidou and Turkish Basak Şenova (Şenova 2012). The work also involved guided tours, a symposium and a book. As Şenova (2012) writes: 'The buffer zone was the natural location for an international (but also bi-communal) event, as it designates a 'non-place' or 'less-place', to use Marc Augé's term It is also considered to be the only place on the island that is politically/ideologically/culturally 'neutral'.'

For Uncovered's first project, artist Andreas Savva placed replica airport seats at the Ledra/Lokmaci crossing in the buffer zone as a reference to waiting and anticipating the reunification of the country; 'waiting to board their flight who seem to have been forgotten by history' (Şenova and Paraskevaidou 2011: 53). 'Waiting Lounge' (2011) reworked the spatial and social relations of the crossing - altering the function of the crossing from a space of transit to a more public space where people could spend time - the work drew attention to the ongoing division and occupation of Cyprus and provided a vantage point from which to reflect on the established ways of using the Ledra/Lokmaci crossing. The crossing would soon become a focus for Occupy Buffer Zone, the occupation of the buffer zone by protesters calling for reunification.

The exhibition of works eventually took place in an abandoned building near the crossing and included a range of artworks and media. Artworks asked questions about memory, the making of history and how we interpret the past and excavated and provided new vantage points from which to see Nicosia International Airport and the legacies and politics that comprise its present day spatial practices; responding to and challenging, as Argyro Toumazou phrased it, 'stagnant waters' (Şenova and Paraskevaidou 2011: 130).

Evaluation: 'Waiting Lounge' (2011) has been written up and reflected on in a number of publications which draw attention to the work's ability to draw attention to the ongoing situation in Cyprus through the strangeness of placing the airport seats at the crossing checkpoint. 'Waiting Lounge' (2011) provided a 'common's' – and extended an invitation to local people to dwell and talk (Şenova and Paraskevaidou 2011: 53). The exhibition itself attracted attention when an artwork by Erhan Oze exploring 'how the political conflict on the island… extends into the air space' was removed from the exhibition by the UN (Ibid.: 61) and abstracts from the symposium suggest a deep set of reflections from artists and scholars internationally on the status quo in Cyprus and the approaches to the past required to begin to move towards processes of reconciliation. Visitors were described as 'surprisingly numerous' (Ibid.: 130).

10. Shane Cullen's *The Agreement* 2002-2004 touring artwork at the Millennium Court Arts Centre, Portadown, Northern Ireland

Description: Shane Cullen's *The Agreemen*t is a large-scale sculptural work made up of 56 panels, 67 metres in length. It features the 11,500 words of the 'Good Friday' or 'Belfast Agreement' of 1998, strikingly carved into the panels. The Good Friday Agreement marked a historic breakthrough and political agreement that brought an end to most of the 30 years of violence and conflict in Northern Ireland, known as 'the Troubles'. The Agreement prioritised co-operation between communities and established a devolved new government for Northern Ireland, representing both unionists and nationalists. The text of the Agreement was delivered to every household in Ireland, who overwhelmingly voted to approve the deal in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Today it is

recognised as a powerful model for conflict resolution. Cullen's work actively encourages an engagement between politics and art and powerfully signifies this moment in history 'by transforming the language of diplomacy into a visual work of art' (Beaconsfield 2023).

The work, a cross-border partnership funded and supported by a number of agencies, toured across Ireland and Britain between 2002-2004, post-conflict. In 2004, it was exhibited at the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown, Northern Ireland – 'a historically politically tensioned town' and 'a contested site for more than 800 years… after decades of town centre bombs and decimated trade due to The Troubles' as well as being 'a region that voted in its majority against the peace process Agreement' (Arney Johnston 2019) in contrast to the mainstream. Curator at the time, Megan Arney Johnston, developed a series of experimental and innovative activities, public programmes and exhibitions rooted in research that included creating a safe space for political parties to develop and present their emerging plans for culture publicly; hosting public talks, panels, tours, workshops, and symposia to explore local issues, including 'the first public discussion about Orange Culture,' the Unionist Protestant organisation, researching 'the nuances of "orangeism" as a culture, a subculture, or a so-called imagined community' (Ibid.: 2015); and later co-curated exhibitions with local communities. She shared that: 'it was only because of Shane Cullen's exhibition that the community had enough faith in me and the team to undertake such a potentially challenging subject' (Ibid.: 2024). She further describes her work in Portadown as the starting point for her practice of 'Slow Curating' – a form of socially engaged curation and – 'a framework that enables, explores, and expands museum and exhibition experiences for more relevant audience engagement' and directly and deeply connects with the immediate context and locale, employing relational and collaborative processes to work slowly 'with local experts to learn the cultural politics, the poetics of place, and to investigate issues conscious and unconscious that affect everyday lives' (Ibid.: 2019).

Evaluation: The curatorial process is described as 'rhizomatic, organic and non-linear', activating potentialities and challenging traditional notions of expertise, asking more questions than providing answers and acting as a powerful 'parasitical practice' to contest existing power structures (Ibid.).

11. A performative poetic reading by Descolonizando around Padre António Vieira statue, 2017, Largo Trindade Coelho, Lisbon, Portugal

Image credit: Padre António Vieira statue, Largo Trindade Coelho, Lisbon. Source: Courtesy of Carlos Garrido Castellano

Description: On 5 October 2017, the republic day of Portugal, the activist and antiracist group, Descolonizando, issued a call to gather around the recently erected statue of Padre António Vieira – a Jesuit preacher and missionary (1608-1697) - 'with flowers, candles, and posters in memory of the

Amerindian and African populations that were victims of Portuguese colonialism in Brazil' (Garrido Castellano 2021: 242-243). 'Although social activism is fervent in the country and mobilises thousands of people against racism,' the narrative of Portugal as a non-racist country and 'moderate' colonial empire is pervasive, with public debates around colonialism, until recently, largely silenced (Raggi and Gianolla 2020). There have been a number of activist interventions around the statue since, with the Black Lives Matter movement sparking further debate and action. It is argued by Raggi and Gianolla (2020) that the commissioning and inauguration of this statue, and the resulting activist actions, 'constitutes a criticism of the discursive narrative brought by the statue, which continues to frame the role of memory in current politics,' a benevolent narrative of colonialism (Ibid.).

Descolonizando's call in 2017 prompted an alt-right group to surround the statue (allegedly to 'protect' it from defacement). As Garrido Castellano (2021: 243) states, 'Police forces intervened by dispersing both groups with the excuse of avoiding further riots, thus putting an end to the performance'. Similarly, Raggi and Gianolla (2020) share that an intervention in 2020 (where the word 'decolonise' was painted in red paint on the statue, alongside the face of Vieira and the hearts of the children), was vehemently condemned as vandalism by both the Portuguese President and Lisbon's Mayor. They argue that: 'These condemning postures also serve to thwart the expansion of the necessary debate about the impact of heritage discourses for social justice' and 'excludes the plurality of emerging demands from the social diversity of contemporary Portugal' (Ibid.).

These activist interventions draw attention to the idealised representation of Vieira in this statue, designed by sculptor Marco Telmo Areias Fidalgo and unveiled in Trindade Coelho square in Lisbon on 22 June 2017. For Descolonizando, this idealized and partial representation of Vieira, in celebrating his role in defending the rights of Amerindian populations: 'describes Portuguese colonialism as a benevolent project, […] a vision [that] obscures the complexity of the historical figure of Padre Vieira, who defended the systematic enslavement of Africans and the forced conversion of South American indigenous populations' (Garrido Castellano 2021: 243). The actions of Descolonizando, and the activist group SOS racismo who spotlighted the intervention through a social media campaign, were intended to draw attention to contemporary neo-colonial efforts that seek to erase uncomfortable truths about historic colonialism and hide or detract from recognising their contemporary and ongoing presence.

As Garrido Castellano (2021: 245) states: 'By pointing out the inadequacy of the iconographic and ideological project lying behind the protective and paternalist sculpture of Vieira, the group revealed the links between present-day tourist iterations of Lisbon as a global, multicultural city and nostalgic memories of Portugal's colonial past, a relationship publicly sanctioned by the participation of official entities in commemorative acts and their problematic role in the configuration of places of memory. Giving space to performative responses in relation to the Vieira statue revealed that for many Portuguese, coloniality is still a living presence conditioning the situations of exclusion and marginalization that racialized Portuguese, and particularly Afro-descendant Portuguese, still face'. For Garrido Castellano, it is precisely the public and performance-based qualities that make the work of Descolonizando so powerful because of its capacity to draw widespread public attention to the enduring legacies of colonialism. He states that: 'The gathering around Vieira's statue expresses the need felt by many racialized activists to transcend the exclusionary areas of academia and the art medium while at the same time connecting their objectives with those of broader segments of the population. The performative side of the confrontation added to the role that social networks played in disseminating the events and providing a space for exchange, evidence of the increasingly central role that debates on agency and exclusion in relation to racialized presence in public spaces are acquiring at the heart of Portuguese society' (Ibid.: 264).

Evaluation: Although the ephemeral nature of the Descolonizando performance and steps taken by authorities to close down and disperse activists means that there is no formal evaluation, it has attracted the attention of writers, notably Garrido Castellano, who highlights the importance of this case study as an example of the crucial role that art, artists and activists play in clashes between

progressive and far right groups. As Garrido Castellano states; 'I believe there is a correlation between the creation of sanitized and exclusionary monuments and sites oriented toward the selective and unproblematic public commemoration of colonialism, and the ways in which neoconservative groups appropriate and make use of the public space' (Ibid.: 251). As Decolonizando described on their social media at the time, the intervention aimed to encourage the public to 'rethink the past in the present' and create public spaces for reflection and dialogue 'promoting the construction of a critical narrative to eliminate racism and inequality' (our translation and cited in Yekenha Ernesto 2017). Sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos further argues 'that as long as statues like Vieira's defend a present that is characterised by capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy, they will continue to be contested' (cited in Raggi and Gianolla 2020), which is clearly evidenced by the subsequent and ongoing activist interventions.

12. Paula Baeza Pailamilla, *Mi cuerpo es un museo* (*My Body is a Museum*), 2019, Galería Callejera, Santiago, Chile

Image Credit: Paula B. Pailamilla, *Mi cuerpo es un museo*, 2021. The work consists of a live performance, a video performance and 4 photographs. Digital Photographs. Photos: ©Lorna Remmele.

Description: In October 2019, Chile experienced a social uprising, known as 'Estallido Social', with protesters filling the streets of Santiago demanding a fairer and more just society and an end to neoliberalism. As the mobilisations progressed demonstrations and rioting moved to all regions of Chile. Students and young people were at the centre of this revolt, 'tired of an unequal economic system that makes no sense for them and that must be changed' (Rivera-Aguilera and Jiménez 2020). Statues of the country's forefathers were toppled, whilst at the same time, indigenous visualities and languages were reclaimed (Vargas Paillahueque 2023: 224).

Contemporary Chilean artist Paula B. Pailamilla's work *Mi cuerpo es un museo* (*My Body is a Museum*), performed at Galería Callejera, Santiago in 2019, potently visualises ongoing colonial violences by the State through a critique of the representation of indigenous bodies and cultures in museums, in particular the Mapuche people (the largest Indigenous group of Chile), in what Vargas Paillahueque (2023: 231) describes as the 'imaginaries of "the Mapuche condition"'. Pailamilla problematises the normative and colonial interpretative devices and languages of the museum, for example exhibiting artefacts 'like mannequins that refer to "indigenous characteristics," often times without even showing a face' (Ibid.). Drawing on her own Mapuche identity as a starting point for her work, she powerfully declares that: 'In Chile there are museums that looted tombs and houses extracting jewelry, textiles, everyday utensils and countless sacred objects that today are exhibited on faceless

mannequins. This action tensions the appearance/disappearance of the Mapuche bodies, that we are still alive while the state institutionality tries to erase our existence' (Pailamilla 2019). The performance begins with the artist entering a display case in the gallery, wearing a küpam (traditional dress), iküllа (shawl), and pieces of Mapuche silverwork. She then proceeds to put on gloves and cover her face with black cloth, 'preventing the audience from recognizing any physiognomic trait. This act urges us to contemplate the indetermination of a non-body, of an unidentifiable non-subject, but which, literally, breaths, lives, and thinks' (Vargas Paillahueque 2023: 231). The performance attempts to reveal 'the tension between the exhibit regime and a discourse that incorporates indigenous culture,' criticising a 'hegemonic society and also different aspects of Mapuche society by inviting the audience to break free of inferiority complexes and, simultaneously question the representative order of *mapuchicidad*, or Mapuche identity' (Ibid.).

Evaluation: Academic Cristian Vargas Paillahueque draws on Pailamilla's practice, amongst others, to consider the urgent current 'political, social, and cultural reformulations' in Chile and draw attention 'to the historic debt and reparations that the Chilean State holds with these societies as subjects of collective rights' (2023: 232). Pailamilla's work enables deeper reflection on the 'relationship between artistic practices and processes of decolonization as a field from which Indigenous society, the Mapuche in this case, has constructed and will continue to construct political thought and aesthetic proposals' (Ibid.).

Section 4: An emerging ethical framework for arts-led decolonising practice

RCMG is increasingly co-creating and using ethical frameworks to support our action research with cultural partners around a range of themes and topics and we see rich potential for a framework to support *Constructive Desires: Contested Dialogues* partners to take their work forward.

Ethical frameworks don't provide all the answers but they have proved to be a powerful way to support work that draws on and adds to leading-edge ethical thinking and practice. They typically consist of a series of ethical coordinates that – taken together – can shape and guide work and help with decision-making in day-to-day practice. Frameworks can surface and make explicit issues that are sometimes tacit or overlooked. They can bring the unseen or unacknowledged into focus (and hold it in focus); they can help us to ask questions and hold sometimes competing questions or ethical concerns in productive tension; and they can support clarity of decision-making. They can prevent teams and participants from falling into ethical traps or reverting to established and familiar (but sometimes unethical) ways of working; they can challenge us to find new and creative answers or approaches. In socially-engaged projects that have a public output – an exhibition or display, an artwork or an events programme – ethical frameworks can help ensure that these are presented in ways that have a positive social impact.

Drawing on the background research, case studies and prior practice of the research centre, the tentative framework below comprises 12 ethical coordinates which we hope offers the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* Ethics Advisory Group a potential starting point - to work with and against - for thinking about how arts-led decolonising practice can be shaped and conducted to navigate the many ethical issues this work entails.

- Acknowledge your own partial knowledge and experience and work to de-centre the museum and to draw in a diversity of ideas and insights and - recognising historic and ongoing processes of marginalisation - prioritise minoritised voices, lives and experiences.

- Recognise the limitations and potential for harm of projects that are experienced as performative and reflective of an inauthentic organisational commitment to decolonising practice. Actively seek ways to embed, and make visible, organisational learning and sustain relationships developed through projects.

- Recognise and fairly remunerate expertise (lived, learned, professional, academic) and contributions from all parties.

- Develop relationships with artists that recognise the richness of their contributions to decolonising work. Foster the artists' agency in shaping projects and processes.

- Work in ways that recognise the potential for sites, collections and interpretations to exclude, discriminate and cause harm.

- Co-create safe spaces for constructive, inclusive and democratic conversations around topics that can prompt divisive and sometimes discriminatory opinions. Use non-conflictual approaches to foster shared understanding and common ground.

- Educate yourself – stay abreast of debates amongst grassroots and community activists as well as leading-edge scholarship and practice around decolonising.

- Robustly defend your organisation's commitment to decolonising practice in the face of complaints and opposition.

- Seek to create experiences that are affirming for groups who rarely see themselves represented in heritage and that also enrich understanding for all visitors.
- Shape projects in full awareness that the stories that are told in museums and heritage sites (the artworks we present, the language we use, the selections and omissions we make) have effects in the real world.
- Recognise the emotional labour bound up in decolonising work and enact an ethics of care to ensure all participants are fully supported.

Developing ethical frameworks

Ethical frameworks work best when they are firmly rooted in the specific contexts and practices they are seeking to guide and inform - when they have been developed up through the work and by the full range of participants involved in the work. In developing, reflecting upon and honing an ethical framework that is attuned to the specific context and needs of the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium, and capable of informing the approaches of partners working in a variety of settings, we propose a carefully structured process of co-creation that is:

- Bespoke to the context - that takes account of the timeframes, locations and institutional and national histories that consortium partners are working with;
- Shaped collaboratively by a wide range of perspectives/stakeholders/expertise – including expertise derived from lived experience of colonialism and its legacies (which itself generates ethical considerations) and recognising the limitations of your own expertise and the partial expertise that exists within our cultural institutions;
- Rooted in scholarship and research around museum ethics (e.g. around the agency of museums in engaging with contemporary social issues) as well as leading-edge decolonising thinking and practice.[4]

[4] The UK Museums Association's Decolonising Principles (https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/supporting-decolonisation-in-museums/decolonising-principles/) could be a helpful reference point to inform this process.

Section 5: Evaluating arts-led decolonising projects in cultural institutions

Introduction and background

Cultural organisations undertaking decolonising and other socially-engaged projects are increasingly concerned to capture, make sense of and robustly evidence the difference that this work makes. Evaluation enables organisations to understand how this relates to their stated mission and purpose; to inform their ongoing work in this area; and to demonstrate their value to funders, communities and governing bodies. Although evaluation of projects and programmes is likely to be a part of most organisations' thinking and practice, approaches and methods are diverse and there is uneven capacity and confidence across the sector in designing, undertaking and articulating the results of evaluation, not least because measuring social impact – the difference that decolonising initiatives make – is not always straightforward. As the UK Museums Association, in their *Measuring Socially Engaged Practice toolkit* (2023) states;

> Impact can be far reaching and can continue to be felt months or even years after project completion. It can be challenging to find the right approach as social impact is not simple to quantify and therefore qualitative measures such as interviews and testimonies of participants are frequently used. These present their own challenges and require ethical consideration.

For the most part, evaluations of arts-led decolonising or socially engaged practice tend to capture evidence of impact at a moment in time typically around the conclusion of the project. Evaluation that seeks to understand the longer-term impact of this work – capturing data throughout the life of projects and returning sometime later to assess its legacy – is typically more time consuming, expensive and therefore much less common. Nevertheless, these longitudinal studies are valuable in revealing the potential for arts-led decolonising projects to be catalysts for substantive, ongoing organisational change. As Janet Marstine (2012) states in her detailed analysis of the long-term impact of Fred Wilson's collaborative work with staff across the Seattle Art Museum and Hood Museum of Art in the United States:

> Whilst it is important to recognize that many other factors are at work in effecting transformation … through my research I found evidence that Wilson's process influenced staff across the spectrum of museum activity, helping reshape mission and strategic planning; and inform approaches to acquisitions, collections management, exhibitions, design, learning and personnel issues through a heightened concern for diversity and equity (2012: 94)

Ethical considerations – very often live, urgent and at the heart of projects that involve artists working with cultural institutions on decolonising or related socially engaged initiatives – have sometimes been neglected in the process of designing and undertaking their evaluation. Of the wide-ranging ethical issues that can be raised by project evaluations (for example, designing methods that are neither exploitative nor extractive; ensuring the safety, care and appropriate remuneration of participants) one of the most significant issues concerns how to ensure the views and experiences of diverse groups – especially minoritised communities and participants – are sought and given sufficient attention and weight.

Evaluations have very often failed to capture a rich, rounded and nuanced picture of their impact on different constituencies and stakeholders. This is due, at least in part, to the sensitivities and ethical issues surrounding decolonising and socially-engaged arts practice where host museums and heritage organisations – often risk averse and eager to avoid controversy – have sometimes focused on forms of feedback and data capture that are highly visible and easiest to collect. In some organisations, these data – very often negative feedback and complaints, media coverage and social media

commentaries – have been given most attention at the expense of capturing and seeking to fully understand the impact on diverse audiences and groups including those who may be less likely to come forward to share their reflections or whose experiences may be harder to capture (Plumb forthcoming; Dodd and Plumb 2018).

In this section of the report, we highlight potential approaches to evaluating projects within the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium that can support cultural organisations to build an accurate, nuanced and useful picture of the difference that arts-led decolonising projects can make for diverse groups and stakeholders. We present a brief case study – Permissible Beauty (see case study section) – to illustrate how effective and ethical evaluations can be planned and carried out.

Evaluating socially engaged practice

Over the past 25 years, RCMG has developed considerable specialist expertise in this area, bringing academic expertise and innovation in research methods to bear on the challenge of understanding how arts-led initiatives in museums, galleries and heritage sites affect different forms and scales of social, cultural and political change. Through multiple projects with wide ranging aims and objectives (for example, combating racism, ableism, trans-and homophobia; tackling social isolation and loneliness; decolonising) the Centre has devised, tested and honed approaches to capturing, evidencing and understanding impact. Our approaches to research design combine academic rigour (robust, creative and innovative methodologies with which to generate and analyse data from a range of sources) and ethically-informed approaches that are alert to the ways in which some experiences and perspectives are very often overlooked or given insufficient weight in assessing socially engaged projects.

Research design

Because evaluation can be time consuming and resource intensive, it is helpful at the outset to think through some questions that can help to identify the scale, focus and priorities of the evaluation that will be undertaken by consortium partners.

- *What* – what are our main research questions? Of the many aspects of the project we could assess, what do we really want to know, to better understand? How does this relate to our stated aims around decolonising?

- *Why* - why is it important to gather this data? (we might, for example, focus attention on capturing data that will be useful to shape future projects and practice, to report to funders and so on).

- *Who* – which stakeholders, audiences or constituencies do we want to gather data from? With which groups do we wish to understand how our project has made a difference (positive and/or negative)?

- *How* – working within our resource constraints, what methods and data sources (quantitative and qualitative) are most relevant, possible and pragmatic?

Responses to these questions can contribute towards the shaping of a research design (see table below).

Potential data sources (whose contributions are we capturing?)	**Objectives** (what do we want to know?)	**Methods** What tools/approaches are most appropriate and practicable?	**Rationale** Why are we evaluating this aspect of the work? How will we use the findings?	**Ethical implications**
Staff, volunteers, trustees in the cultural organisation				
Audiences/visitors/education groups				
Collaborators /community partners				
Artists				
Press/media				
Cultural sector peers				

Case study

Permissible Beauty was a multi-partner collaborative project that set out to address the absence of Black and Queer lives within the UK's national heritage institutions, National Trust, Historic Royal Palaces and English Heritage. Placing Black Queer perspectives and experiences at the heart of a process of collaboration, *Permissible Beauty* drew in curatorial expertise from across partner organisations to work with collections of 17th portraits, by Peter Lely and Godfrey Kneller, that defined ideals of beauty in the royal court, and to create new portraiture of contemporary Black Queer lives that would enable an examination of shifting ideas of beauty and a bold, inclusive reimagining of the national story in film, photography, song and spoken word.

The initial planned output of the project was a short film that was shot on location at Hampton Court Palace, Kenwood House and Petworth House. As the collaboration between the core project team and the Historic Royal Palaces team strengthened (and as one partner, Historic Royal Palaces, saw the potential for the project to advance their new cause and mission), the idea for a temporary installation at Hampton Court Palace unfolded. The installation and film launched in January 2023 and the installation – with accompanying community engagement activities – ran until March 2023.

Permissible Beauty set out to engage audiences around 3 key questions;

- Why are some forms of beauty more permissible than others?
- Whose lives are celebrated in our national story and whose are overlooked?
- How might we start a new chapter of British beauty?

Our approach to evaluation was shaped by the project's key objectives:

- To understand how a centering of Black Queer lives, perspectives and expertise could produce new forms of heritage narrative and experience;

- To create experiences (through an immersive installation and short film) that would be affirming for audiences very often excluded from or marginalised within heritage settings and stories, especially visitors from the global majority and, at the same time, be enriching and thought provoking for all audiences including those who are regular heritage visitors;

- To stimulate inclusive conversations about British identity (amongst visitors, media, wider publics);

- To work ethically and with an ethics of care with Black Queer participants.

We developed a mixed methods research design that could evaluate our project against these objectives, generate insights for the wider cultural sector, and meet the reporting requirements set by our funders.

Methods and Data sources

Staff at Historic Royal Palaces – we used an online survey to invite reflections on the experience of working on the project (benefits, challenges) and to gather concrete examples of how the experience had inspired new practices and projects.

Audiences – we used mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) to generate insights around how visitors/viewers engaged with and responded to the film and installation.

Quantitative methods - An online, self-completion survey, accessed via a QR code in the exhibition and shared with film viewers, generated quantitative data from 2 closed questions and a third, open question allowed participants to expand on their answers.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is important that heritage organisations tell more inclusive stories.

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Projects like Permissible Beauty help to make heritage more engaging and relevant to today.

3. Please share your responses to Permissible Beauty.

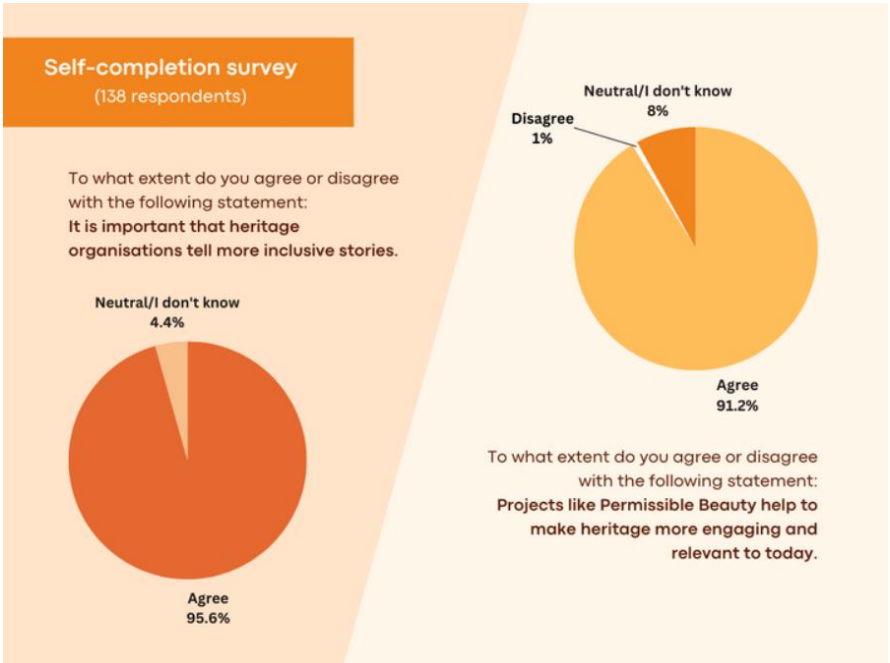

Figure 1: Findings from quantitative self-completion survey

Qualitative methods - semi-structured interviews within the Hampton Court Palace installation were used to build a nuanced understanding of visitor engagement and response (see visitor interview protocols, Appendix B).

Although, of course, visitors responded in a variety of ways, the study revealed three main modes of engagement and response that were evident across the data:

(i). **Emotional Engagement** - Visitors tended to engage with Permissible Beauty through emotional responses, reporting strong feelings linked to their experience;

(ii). **Conversations around contemporary issues** – many visitors were prompted by their experience to make connections with (and to discuss) contemporary social issues (from Brexit to racism in the royal family to unrealistic beauty standards in the media)

(iii). **Increased awareness, understanding and advocacy for change** - The data shows that, through their emotional engagement and the connections they made (between their experience of Permissible Beauty and contemporary issues), visitors showed increased understanding of the social, political and cultural issues explored in Permissible Beauty. Some were prompted to call for change related to these issues.

Artists –email interviews were conducted with the 6 participating artists towards the conclusion of the project to gain insights around their motivations for being involved and their experiences of the process (see interview questions, Appendix C). These generated rich responses, for example:

Performer, Le Gateau Chocolat stated:

> Black and Queer visibility is important today because the very act of being in a body that happens to be Black and Queer is fiercely political. The quest of parity and luxury of mundanity remains evasive. For now, through art, we may have the microphone to literally speak our lives into existence but dare we hope that our humanity may come first one day. As exhausting as it is, our audacity to dare persists and MUST persist.

Artist, activist and drag performer, Son Of A Tutu stated:

> Many heritage spaces focus primarily on White British history and slavery. Finding empowering stories of Black and Queer Britishness can sometimes seem like finding a grain of salt in the snow. Measures that specifically aim to broaden this, play a major role in true equality and social integration and harmony. No British body or identity should be left behind which sadly, has not been the case. Black and Queer visibility is important because it saves Black Queer lives, facilitates actualisation and improves mental health and wellbeing. It also helps to dispel the fear of the unknown for those who may not have daily interactions with Black Queer people.

Press/media – records of media coverage offered the team an insight into the project's reach and reception.

Cultural sector peers – the team invited a small number of thought and practice leaders in decolonising and art-led socially engaged practice (in the UK and internationally) to share reflections on the project. This helped us to build an understanding of the contribution of the project to a developing field of practice and enabled us to capture reflections with project partners, building their confidence to take this work forward in the future.

For example, Dr Errol Francis, Artistic Director of Black-led arts organisation Culture& wrote:

> The show is a subversive and delightful intervention into the way we understand British history and heritage. It is, as Stuart Hall wrote: 'the production of 'the new' and the transgressive alongside the traditional and the 'preservation of the past'.

Ben Garcia, visiting the installation from the United States where he leads the American LGBTQ Museum wrote:

> Permissible Beauty is one of the most significant museum experiences I have had. It succeeds in centering Black voices, bodies, beauty, and strength at a headwater of white supremacy. Its ethereal projections, intimate portraits, fierce performances, and poetic swagger capture your imagination, heart, and head. It is so transcendent, moving, and inspiring that you might just miss how profound a piece of restorative public history it is. It embraces “queer possibility”. It confronts and it comforts. It is a marvel.

Conclusion

This Report set out to provide background research of direct use to the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* consortium. *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* responds creatively to the legacies of European colonisation and the politics of division evident across Europe through a deep recognition of the potential of museums and heritage to become sites where complex questions of culture and identity can be hosted, framed and explored in ways that are inclusive, accessible and productive. The consortium is working with 22 artists from 11 countries who will work with heritage partners and local communities to respond to specific contentious collections and sites and generate new artworks, exhibitions, workshops and events. The consortium was looking for key concepts; a deep understanding of scholarship around decolonising practices in museums; input around the unique potential of art in creating the conditions for dialogue; and examples of art-led approaches around which it could frame its discussions and which might influence its decision-making. The background research needed to respect and enable the diverse European contexts and varying relationships to colonialism of the *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* partners and it needed to speak to the expertise of RCMG in collaboration, organisational transformation, evaluation and ethical frameworks. The resulting Report sets forward a series of sections which speak directly to this brief.

Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues is ambitious in its scope and reach and has significant potential to create a series of platforms for constructive dialogue in a Europe increasingly characterised by division and polarisation. The project will model creative decolonising practices to the cultural sector and sits alongside other decolonising projects and practices that recognise and are working to make tangible, the significance of museums and heritage sites as key social spaces where identities and underpinning conceptions of society are shaped. Here, the Report has given significant space to a large body of scholarship exploring the colonial origins of museums as well as the ways in which cultural organisations continue to be complicit in upholding the legacies of colonialism, racism and other forms of oppression. In a sector where decolonising practices are only now beginning to result in new acquisition, cataloguing, interpretation, restitution and staffing processes, and where white as the norm cultures, structures and processes still dominate, it is of vital importance that *Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues* works in full awareness of this scholarship and continues to develop its reflexive and ethical practice.

Bibliography

64 Million Artists and Arts Council England (2018) Cultural Democracy in Practice, Arts Council England.

Ahmed, S. (2012) On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Anderson, B. (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.

Arney Jonhston, M. (2015) 'Slow Curating: Re-thinking and Extending Socially Engaged Art in the Context of Northern Ireland', OnCurating Issue 24: After the turn: art education beyond the museum. Online. Available at: https://www.on-curating.org/issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Arney Jonhston, M. (2019) 'Slow Curating: Re-thinking and Extending Socially Engaged Art in the Context of Northern Ireland', Slow Curating website. Online. Available at: https://www.slowcurating.com/post/slow-curating-re-thinking-and-extending-sociallyengaged-art-in-the-context-of-northern-ireland. Accessed 6 June 2024.

Arney Jonhston, M. (2024) Personal Correspondence.

Art Fund (MuseumX and Culture&) (2022). '"It's about handing over power": The impact of ethnic diversity initiatives on curatorial roles in the UK arts & heritage sector 1998-2021'. Online. Available at: https://bibli.artfund.org/m/53e933cf196387c3/original/Art-Fund-Curatorial-Diversity-report.pdf?_ga=2.8053490.1361718295.1668002249-1705646328.1668002249. Accessed 6 June 2024.

Azoulay, A. (2019) Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism. London, New York: Verso.

Beaconsfield (2023) 'Shane Cullen The Agreement', Beaconsfield. Online. Available at: https://beaconsfield.ltd.uk/projects/shane-cullen/. Accessed 6 June 2024.

Bennett, T. (1995) The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Bennett, T. (2004) Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism, London: Routledge.

Biswas, B. (2009) The Manchester Hermit. Online. Available at: https://manchesterhermit.wordpress.com/. Accessed 1 May 2024.

Boast, R. (2011) 'Neocolonial collaboration: museum as contact zone revisited', *Museum Anthropology*, 34(1), 56-70.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022) *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, London: SAGE.

Buettner, E. (2021) "Europe and Its Entangled Colonial Pasts: Europeanizing the 'Imperial Turn,'" in Decolonizing Colonial Heritage, in Britta Timm Knudsen, John Oldfield, Elizabeth Buettner, Elvan Zabunyan (eds.). London: Routledge, pp. 25–43.

Bunning, K. (2021) Negotiating Race and Rights in the Museum. London: Routledge.

Bunning, K. (2024) Supporting Decolonial Futures: Exploring the Impact of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Confidence and Skills Programme: Final Report. Leicester: RCMG.

Burns, A. (2013) From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement. Amhurst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Cai, Y. (2020) Staging Indigenous Heritage: Instrumentalisation, Brokerage, and Representation in Malaysia. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Campbell, S., Dewhurst, E., Edson, R., Lacy, S., and Advisory Group of Uncertain Futures Project (2023) Uncertain Futures: 100 women: A research report on the inequalities facing women in Manchester around work, Manchester Art Gallery, University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. Online. Available at: https://manchesterartgallery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Uncertain-Futures-Report-2023.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Chipangura, N. and Chipangura, P. (2020) 'Community museums and rethinking the colonial frame of national museums in Zimbabwe', Museum Management and Curatorship, 35(1), pp. 36–56.

Corrin, L.G. (1993) 'Mining the Museums: An Installation Confronting History', Curator, 36(4), pp. 302–313.

Crossick, G. and Kaszynska, P. (2016) Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project, Arts and Humanities Research Council. London: Duke University Press.

Culture Action Europe (2018) The Value and Values of Culture, Culture Action Europe and Budapest Observatory. Online. Available at: https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CAE_The-Value-and-Values-of-Culture_Full_small.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024

Culture& (2023) 'Who Cares?: Understanding empathy and trauma in museums', Culture& website. Online. Available at: https://www.cultureand.org/news/who-cares-understanding-empathy-and-trauma-in-museums/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

D'Arcy, D. (2024) 'Contested Congolese sculpture returns home, temporarily', The Art Newspaper, 16 April 2024. Online. Available at: https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/04/16/contested-congolese-sculpture-returns-home-temporarily. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Dalal-Clayton, A. and Puri Purini, I. (2022) Doing the Work: Embedding Anti-racism and Decolonisation into Museum Practice. London: Contemporary Art Society and Decolonising Arts Institute, University of the Arts London. Online. Available at: https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/18511/1/FullBook_a_compressed.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Das, S. (2024) Uncivilised: Ten Lies that Made the West. London: Coronet.

DecolonialFutures.net (2021). Decolonizing HE workbook. Online. Available at: https://decolonialfuturesnet.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/decolonizing-he-workbook-draft-march2021-2.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Decolonize This Place (2021) *Decolonize This Place* website. Online. Available at: https://decolonizethisplace.org/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Dodd, J., Jones, C. and Sandell, R. (2017). 'Trading Zones: collaborative ventures in disability history' in J. Gardner and P. Hamilton (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 87–104.

Doherty, C. (2015) *Public Art (Now): out of time, out of place*, London: Arts Books Publishing Ltd and Situations.

Dolese, M. J. and Kozbelt, A. (2020) 'Communication and Meaning-Making Are Central to Understanding Aesthetic Response in Any Context', Frontiers in Psychology, 11:473. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00473

ECCOM (2024) Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues. Creative space for democratic conversations about the heritage of colonialism. Online. Available at: https://www.eccom.it/en/project/contested-desires-constructive-dialogues/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

European Agenda for Culture (2014) Report on the Role of Public Arts and Cultural Institutions in the Promotion of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. The European Union. Online. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-diversity-dialogue_en.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Flinders University (2015) 'The Unbound Collective', Flinders University website. Online. Available at: https://www.flinders.edu.au/college-humanities-arts-social-sciences/unbound. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Francis, E. (n.d.) *Reflections on Black Lives Matter, Dcolonisation and What Museums Can Do Next*. Online. Available at: https://www.cultureand.org/news/reflections-on-black-lives-matter-decolonisation-and-what-museums-can-do-next-dr-errol-francis/. Accessed on 7 June 2024.

Froggett, L., Little, R., Roy, A., Whitaker, L. (2011) New Model Visual Arts Organisations and Social Engagement, Psychosocial Research Unit, School of Social Work, University of Central Lancashire. Online. Available at: https://clok.uclan.ac.uk/3055/1/WzW-NMI%20Report%202%20with%20nav%20bar.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Garrido Castellano, C. (2018) The Boda Moment. Positioning Socially-Engaged Art in Contemporary Uganda. Online. Available at: https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/34682/1/67.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Garrido Castellano, C. (2021) Art Activism for an Anticolonial Future, State University of New York Press: Suny Press. Online. Available at: https://soar.suny.edu/handle/20.500.12648/7166. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2012) 'Decolonization and the pedagogy of solidarity', Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society, 1 (1), pp. 41-67. Online. Available at: https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18633. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Gibson, J.J. (1979) 'The Theory of Affordances' in The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gonzalez, J. A. (2008) *Subject to Display: Refraining Race in Contemporary Installation Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Goskar, T. (2020) 'Small museums should spearhead drive to decolonise museum practice', Museums Journal ('Opinion'), 14 December 2020. Online. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2020/12/small-museums-should-spearhead-drive-to-decolonise-museum-practice/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Helguera, P. (2012) Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook, New York: Jorge Pinto Books.

Hicks, D. (2020) The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution. London: Pluto Press.

Janes, R. (2023) Museums and Societal Collapse: The Museum as Lifeboat. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Jones, A. (2016) 'I write four times….': A tribute to the work and teaching of Donald Preziosi', Journal of Art Historiography, 15(1), pp. 15/AJ1

Karp, I. and Wilson, F. (2005) 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums' in B. Ferguson, R. Greenberg and S. Nairne (eds), Thinking about Exhibitions, London: Routledge, pp. 180-91.

Kasmani,s. and Wajid, S. (2020) 'Film: How Can You Decolonise Museums?', Museum Next, June. Online. Available at https://www.museumnext.com/article/decolonising-museums/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Kassim, S. (2017) 'The museum will not be decolonised', Media Diversified, 15 November 2017. Online. Available at: https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Kester, G. (2004) Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art, University of California Press.

Kreps, C. (2003) Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation. London: Routledge.

Kulundu-Bolus, I., McGarry, D. and Lotz-Sisitka, H. (2020) 'Learning, living and leading into transgression - a reflection on decolonial praxis in a neoliberal world' Southern African Journal of Environmental Education, 36, pp. 111–130.

La Biennale di Venezia (2024a) The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred Handout, La Biennale di Venezia and Mondriaan Fund. Online. Available at: https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/app/uploads/2024/03/International-Celebration-of-Blasphemy-and-the-Sacred-exhibition-handout_EN-2.pdf. Accessed 2 May 2024.

La Biennale di Venezia (2024b) The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred, La Biennale di Venezia and Mondriaan Fund. Online. Available at: https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/activities/venice-biennale/. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Lacy, S. (2013) Cleaning Conditions. Online. Available at: https://www.suzannelacy.com/cleaning-conditions. Accessed 2 May 2024.

LaMonica, C. (2011) 'Colonialism', Oxford Bibliographies. Online. Available at: https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0008.xml. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Lander, E. (2000) 'Ciencias sociales: saberes coloniales y eurocéntricos En La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales perspectivas latinoamericanas', CLACSO.

Lee, S. (2022) Decolonize Museums (Decolonize That!). New York: OR Books.

Lehrer et al (2023) 'Decolonizing European Memory Cultures: a preliminary to do list', Europe Now. Online. Available at: https://www.europenowjournal.org/2023/02/24/decolonial-museology-in-east-central-europe-a-preliminary-to-do-list/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Lonetree, A. (2012) Decolonizing Museums: Representing America in National and Tribal Museums. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Lynch, B. (2011) Whose cake is it anyway? A collaborative investigation into engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Online. Available at: https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/whose-cake-anyway/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

MacLeod, S. (2021) Museums and Design for Creative Lives. London: Routledge.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007) 'On the coloniality of being', Cultural Studies, 21 (2-3), pp. 240--270.

Manchester Art Gallery (2021) 'Suzanne Lacy Uncertain Futures', Manchester Art Gallery website. Online. Available at: https://manchesterartgallery.org/event/suzanne-lacy-uncertain-futures/. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Manchester Museum (2023) 'Future of Collections', Manchester Museum website. Online. Available at: https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/making-the-museum/futureofcollections/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Marshall, A. (2019) 'Is This The World's Most Accessible Museum?', The New York Times, 11 September 2019. Online. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/06/arts/design/disabled-access-wellcome-collection.html. Accessed 5 May 2024.

Marstine, Janet (2012) 'Fred Wilson, good work, and the phenomenon of Freud's mystic writing pad', in Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (eds.) Museums, Equality and Social Justice, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 84–102.

Marstine, J. (2017) Critical Practice: Artists, Museums, Ethics, Abingdon: Routledge.

MASS Action (2017) Toolkit. Online. Available at: https://www.museumaction.org/resources. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Matarasso, F. (1997) Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts, Stroud: Comedia.

Mbembe, A. (2020)'Question of the Archive', Decolonizing as a Verb online seminar, 25 November 2020, ICOM International Committee for Collecting. Online. Available at: https://comcol.mini.icom.museum/special-projects/decolonizing-as-a-verb/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., Zakaras, L. and Brooks, A. (2004) Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts, RAND Corporation and The Wallace Foundation. Online. Available at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

McGhie, H. (2020) 'The Sustainable Development Goals: Helping Transform Our World Through Museums' 21 January 2020. Online. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/news/the-sustainable-development-goals-helping-transform-our-world-through-museums/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Migration Museum (2019) 'Special Event: Banga Ngara (Make and Reflect)', Migration Museum website. Online. Available at: https://migration.history.sa.gov.au/events/special-event-banga-ngara-make-and-reflect/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Minott, R. (2019). The Past is Now: Confronting Museums' Complicity in Imperial Celebration. Third Text, 33 (4–5), 559–574.

Modest, W. and Augustat, C. (eds) (2023) Spaces of Care: Confronting Colonial Afterlives in European Ethnographic Museums, Bielefeld: Verlag.

Montserrat, J. Wee, C. and Williams Gamaker, M. (2020) 'We need collectivity against structural and institutional racism in the cultural sector', Arts Professional. Online. Available at: https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/we-need-collectivity-against-structural-and-institutional-racism-cultural-sector. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Moore, P., Paquet, R. and Wittman, A. (2022) Transforming Inclusion in Museums: The Power of Collaborative Inquiry. Washington D.C.: American Alliance of Museums.

Museums Association (2016). Valuing Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Museums. Online. Available at: https://ma-production.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/app/uploads/2020/06/18145318/27072016-diversity-report1.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Museums Association (2021) Supporting Decolonisation in Museums, Museums Association website. Online. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/supporting-decolonisation-in-museums/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Museums Association (2023) Measuring Socially Engaged Practice toolkit. Online. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/measuring-socially-engaged-practice/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Nabulime, L. M. (2007) The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool in Lives and Experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda. PhD thesis, Newcastle University. Online. Available at: https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/jspui/handle/10443/1000. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Nabulime, L.M. and McEwan, C. (2014) Using art and everyday objects to fight HIV/AIDS in Uganda. Development in Practice Journal, 24 (2): 272-285.

Naidoo, R. (2023) 'Let's go round again - the museum carousel and its "others"', Museums, Decolonisation and Restitution: A global conversation. Shanghai University, 20 March 2023. Online. Available at: https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Museums-decolonisation-and-restitution-Speakers-Abstracts.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Ndlovu-Gatscheni, S. J. (2013) Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa :Myths of Decolonization, Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Newman, G. E., Bartels, D. M. and Smith, R. K., 'Are Artworks More Like People Than Artifacts? Individual Concepts and Their Extensions', Topics in Cognitive Science, 2014-10, Vol.6 (4), pp.647-62.

Ngugi wa a Thiong'o (1986) Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd.

Nkrumah, K. (1970) Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism. London: Panaf.

Pailamilla, P.B. (2019) 'Mi cuerpo es un museo / My body is a museum' Paula Baeza Pailamilla website. Online. Available at: https://paulabaezapailamilla.wordpress.com/2020/10/04/mi-cuerpo-es-un-museo/. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Phillips, L. (2022). An Incomplete Glossary of Change to Activate Decolonising and Indigenising Practices in Museums. Museum International, 74 (3–4), 118–133.

Phillips, R. (2011) Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Pitman, T. (2021) Decolonising the Museum: The Curation of Indigenous Contemporary Art in Brazil. Woodbridge: Tamesis.

Plumb, S. (2019) 'The roles and responsibilities of galleries in imagining alternative futures', Terraform Journal, 3. Online. Available at: https://rmgmead.wixsite.com/terraformartjournal/post/the-roles-and-responsibilities-of-galleries-in-imagining-alternative-futures. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Plumb, S. (2021) Open House: The difference made through working together, Research Centre for Museums and Galleries and Kettle's Yard. Online. Available at: https://le.ac.uk/-/media/uol/docs/research-centres/rcmg/publications/open-house_the-difference-made-through-working-together-final.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Plumb, S. (forthcoming) Hearing Community Voice: Recognising the Rights of Collaborators in Socially Engaged Art.

Preziosi, D. and Farago, C. (2004) Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum, London: Routledge.

Preziosi, D. and Lamoureux, J. (2005) In the Aftermath of Art: Ethics, Aesthetics, London: Routledge.

Pringle, E. (2006) Learning in the Gallery: context, process, outcomes, Engage. Online. Available at: https://engage.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2006_Learning-in-the-Gallery.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Quijano, A. (2007) Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. Cultural Studies, 21(2–3), 168–178.

Raggi, G. and Gianolla, C. (2020) 'Black Lives Matter and the Historical Paradox of Father Antonio Vieira in Portugal', Key Interventions / ECHOES: European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities. Online. Available at: https://keywordsechoes.com/black-lives-matter-and-the-historical-paradox-of-the-statue-of-father-antonio-vieira-in-portugal. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries and Wellcome Collection (2018) An ethical approach to interpreting disability and difference guidance, RCMG and Wellcome Collection. Online. Available at: https://le.ac.uk/-/media/uol/docs/research-centres/rcmg/an-ethical-approach-to-interpreting-disability-and-difference.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (2023) Permissible Beauty, RCMG. Online. Available at: https://permissiblebeauty.le.ac.uk/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Rivera-Aguilera, G. and Jiménez, L. (2020) 'Resistance from the South: Some Reflections on Youth and the Chilean October', FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism, Issue 15, Winter 2020. Online. Available at: https://field-journal.com/editorial/resistance-from-the-south-some-reflections-on-youth-and-the-chilean-october. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Robins, C. and Baxter, M. (2012) 'Meaningful Encounters with Disrupted Narratives: Artist interventions with interpretive strategies', in S. MacLeod et al (eds.) Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions, London: Routledge, pp. 247-256.

Segato, R. (2022) 'Anibal Quijano and the Coloniality of Power', The Critique of Coloniality: Eight Essays. London: Routledge.

Senova, B. (2012) 'Occupying the Occupied: Perceptions of Occupation and Control in Cyprus'. Online. Available at: https://www.ibraaz.org/essays/32. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Şenova, B. and Paraskevaidou, P. (2011) Uncovered: Nicosia International Airport, Nicosia: Proteas Press.

Shannon, J. (2019) 'Trusting you will see this as we do: The Hidatsa Water Buster (Midi Badi) Clan negotiates the return of a medicine bundle from the Museum of the American Indian in 1938', Arts (Basel), 8 (4), p. 156.

Smith, L. T. (2021) Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Soares, B., & Witcomb, A. (2023) Editorial: Towards Decolonisation. Museum International, 74(3–4), iv–xi.

Stein, S., Ahenakew, C., Jimmy, E., Andreotti, V., Valley, W., Amsler, S., Calhoun, B. and the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective (2021) Developing Stamina for Decolonizing Higher Education: A Workbook for Non-Indigenous People. Online. Available at: https://decolonialfutures.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/decolonizing-he-workbook-draft-feb2021.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2024.

TRACES (2019) TRACES: Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages with the Arts. Online. Available at: https://www.heritageresearch-hub.eu/project/traces/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Transnational Decolonial Institute (2011) Decolonial Aesthetics Manifesto. Online. Available at: https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Tselika, E. (2019) Conflict Transformation Art: Cultivating coexistence through the use of socially engaged artistic practices, Oslo: Peace Research Institute.

Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang (2012) 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society, 1 (1), pp. 1–40.

Van Broekhoven, L. (n.d.) 'Radical hope: An introduction', Pitt Rivers Museum website. Online. Available at: https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/radical-hope-as-a-concept. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Van Broekhoven, L., 'On Decolonizing the Museum in Practice', Journal of Museum Ethnography, no. 32 (2019), 1–10.

Vargas Paillahueque, C. (2023) 'Contemporary Mapuche Art and the Cycle of Decolonization', in San Martin, F., Macchiavello Cornejo, C. & Solimano, P. (eds) Dismantling the Nation: Contemporary Art in Chile. Amherst College Press. Online. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12853055.22. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Walsh, C. E. and Mignolo, W. (2018) On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Practices. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Yekenha Ernesto, A. (2017) 'Extrema-direita impede manifestação contra estátua do padre António Vieira em Lisboa', Diário de Notícias, 6 October 2017. Online. Available at: https://www.dn.pt/sociedade/extrema-direita-impede-manifestacao-contra-estatuado-padre-antonio-vieira-em-lisboa-8823551.html/. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Appendix A

Full list of case studies reviewed

1	Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society Museum, United States.
2	James Luna, *Artifact Piece*, 1985-7, Museum of Man, San Diego, United States.
3	Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales, *Museum Perspective(s): Bringing Our Stories Together, 2023-2025*, Arts Council of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales.
4	Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC), together with artist Renzo Martens and curator Hicham Khalidi, *The International Celebration of Blasphemy and the Sacred*, Dutch entry at the Venice Biennale, 2024.
5	RCMG, *Being Human*, 2018, the Wellcome Collection, London, UK.
6	TARNANTHI Festival: *Grandmother Lore* and *Sovereign Acts: In the Wake*, 2019, Migration Museum (as part of the TARNANTHI Festival), Adelaide, South Australia.
7	RCMG, *Permissible Beauty*, 2023, Hampton Court Palace, London, UK.
8	Matt Smith, *Flux: Parian Unpacked*, 2018, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK.
9	*Museo delle opacità* [Museum of opacities] at Museo delle civiltà [Museum of Civilizations], 2017, Rome, Italy.
10	Suzanne Lacy, *Cleaning Conditions*, 2013 and *Uncertain Futures*, 2021, Manchester Art Gallery and The Whitworth, Manchester, UK.
11	*Our Colonial Inheritance*, 2016, Wereldmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
12	*Lhall xallona llun lliu' tuse, llunen lliu walh / Dressing is also a territory of struggle*, 2022, Museo Textil de Oaxaca (MTO), Mexico.

13	Ansuman Biswas, *The Manchester Hermit*, 2009, Manchester Museum, UK.
14	Wu Chi-yu, *The Pailang Museum of Settler Colonialism (2022-)*, BLEED Festival, Taipei, Taiwan.
15	A performative poetic reading by Descolonizando around Padre António Vieira statue, 2017, Largo Trindade Coelho, Lisbon, Portugal and Frente 3 Fevereiro Collective, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
16	*UNCOVERED*, Nicosia International Airport, 2011, Nicosia, Greece. Initiated by Vicky Perikleous.
17	Shane Cullen, *The Agreement 2004 - Curating in Contested Spaces at Millennium Court Arts Centre*, Portadown, Northern Ireland, UK.
18	*Lilian Mary Nabulime, Boda Boda Project & KLA ART festival*, 2012-14, Uganda.
19	Krzysztof Wodiczko and Jarosław Kozakiewicz, 2016, *The World Institute for the Abolition of War*, Warsaw, Poland.
20	Paula Baeza Pailamilla, *Mi cuerpo es un museo (My Body is a Museum)*, 2019, Galería Callejera, Santiago, Chile.

Appendix B

Permissible Beauty audience conversations – questions and prompts

Introduction	Permissible Beauty asks why some expressions of beauty, some lives, are more fully represented and celebrated as part of our national story than others. It aims to explore and open up new conversations for everyone around **beauty**, our **nation's heritage**, **identity** and **belonging**. [Provide *Participant Information Sheet* and guide visitor through each point] [Use *Consent Form* to gain informed consent and remind that they may also receive an online survey after their visit which asks wider questions about their day out at Hampton Court (to save confusion when they also receive the exit survey)]
Questions	Have you seen the exhibition? How long have you engaged with it? [if interviewer was not able to track visitor activity] How do you feel about Historic Royal Palaces exploring this topic? What ideas does Permissible Beauty give you about: i. beauty? ii. identity? iii. national heritage? iv. belonging? Does Permissible Beauty matter today? Why? Is it important that heritage organisations tell more inclusive stories? Why? Do projects like Permissible Beauty help to make heritage more engaging and relevant today? In what ways? Is this important to you personally? In what way? 8. Has Permissible Beauty enriched your thinking about beauty? How? (enhanced, developed, helped shape, challenged) What will you take away with you from this?

Appendix C

Email interview for participating artists

Question 1 - How would you describe your experience of the project so far – is there any aspect that surprised you? (We are interested in hearing your thoughts on any/all aspects of the project – interviews, project administration and communication, stills shoots, filming etc)

Question 2 - Why did you agree to be part of Permissible Beauty?

Question 3 - One of the aims of Permissible Beauty is to make the UK's heritage – places like Hampton Court Palace – more relevant to more people today. Why do you think this is important?

Question 4 - Permissible Beauty will result in a film – and an exhibition at Hampton Court. What do you hope viewers/visitors might take away from their experience?

Question 5 - Finally, why is Black and Queer visibility important today?