



National versus local museums

Musée des Beaux-Arts (MBA)

Chartres, France

11-12 December 2022

Monday 11 December 2023

9.00 Board Meeting

10.00 Registration opens

10.30 Welcome by director Grégoire Hallé and curator Philippe Bihoué, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres

Session 1: Missionary collections

10.45-11.45

Moderator: Magali Mélandri

10.45 The former SVD collections of the University of Fribourg – How a grass-root initiative can save a collection when the state fails to do so

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Conservator, Zürich, Switzerland

The University of Fribourg housed and displayed from 1941 onwards a large anthropological collection (mainly Papua New Guinea, Africa, India), most of which had been collected by SVD missionaries and anthropologists, such as Fathers Wilhelm Koppers (1889-1961) and Georg Höltker (1895-1976). The latter were both part of the Anthropos Institute and lectured at the university. In 1979 the entire collection was packed up and relegated to the basement of the university, as the focus of the department had moved to the social anthropology of European cultures.

When the collection was rediscovered thirty years later, its ownership and care was transferred to the association 'Pro Ethnographica', which consists of volunteers who feel that these collections deserve to be saved from oblivion. Within the last ten years the association has catalogued the collection and moved it to a temporary storage area in Bulle that allows both study and conservation of the material.

In recent years the association managed to obtain the help of some professionals, such as anthropologists, art historians and conservators. Because of a complete lack of cantonal or state support, the association has developed a close collaboration with training institutions in order to care for the collections. An important step will be putting the collections online, allowing access to researchers and source communities. Several research projects have been associated to different parts of the collection and have been published or await publication. A recent federal grant for provenance research will allow to study the collection history in detail. But to this day the collection is not part of any museum and remains in the hands of a small private association that is run by dedicated volunteers.

In this talk I will present in more detail the very diverse and interesting PNG collection and discuss how other parts of the Höltker collection became dissociated and ended up elsewhere (Museum der Kulturen Basel, St Augustin (closed now), private collections).

11.15 Rethinking Dutch missionary collections from western New Guinea to the Netherlands

Amélie Roussillon, a.roussillon@uu.nl

Postdoctoral researcher, Utrecht University, Netherlands

This paper proposes to rethink the collections acquired by Dutch Protestant missionaries of the Utrecht Missionary Society (Utrechtse Zendingsvereniging – UZV) on the northern coast of Dutch New Guinea. Besides collecting activities for their mission museum in Utrecht, this contribution will address the role that some of these missionaries played as collectors part of a broader colonial and scientific network, whose collecting activities developed during their evangelisation work at the turn of the 20th century. By focusing on their relationship with other actors (Papuan, international traders and travellers, administrators, etc.) and colonial institutions, I propose to rethink these missionaries as essential colonial collectors. The UZV collection, now held for the most part in the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam, therefore acts as the starting point from which a more complex history of Dutch missionary activities and colonial collecting in New Guinea can be unravelled. Alongside (inter)national narratives, this collection can also be framed through its entanglements with local histories of Utrecht and Rotterdam. It is hoped that these stories can in turn be re-mobilised by/for various stakeholders, between western New Guinea and the Netherlands.

**Session 2: Object histories
11.45-12.45**

Moderator: Marion Bertin

11.45 Separation and re-connection: The story of a large *gatu vakatoga* (Tongan style barkcloth) in UK collections

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Universities of Bristol and Exeter, South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership

From the late eighteenth century ethnographic material culture from Oceania was collected, displayed and exchanged within scholarly networks. Barkcloth (*tapa*) made from the inner bark of trees were made across the region, used as clothing, and circulated within the gift exchange. Collected in high numbers - particularly from Polynesia, *tapa* was brought to Britain and European museums to showcase manufacture, materials and the art of wrapping the body. It was common practice to cut up cloths to make sample books and to distribute larger samples between collectors and institutions.

This paper shall trace one extremely large *tapa* cloth which has ended up in several pieces across museum collections across Britain and one collection in the USA. I will discuss the cloth's original gift in Fiji, the donation to a National Museum and the subsequent transfer of pieces to regional British museums. The paper will explore the practice of cutting large cloths and the process of exchange and transfer. I will ask 'where are they now?' and detail how the cut *tapa* pieces have been treated by the receiving regional museums over the last 120 years. Lastly I will question how local

collections can contribute to global debates surrounding ethnographic material and repatriation.

12.15 Tiwi Islands objects: Early Dutch Entanglements and Maarten van Delft, 1705

Wonu Veys, wonu.veys@wereldmuseum.nl

Wereldmuseum, the Netherlands

The Wereldmuseum holds around twenty objects that were possibly collected during the expedition led by Maarten van Delft in June 1705. Van Delft captained a small fleet of three Dutch East India Company (VOC) ships sent from Batavia that anchored off Melville Island, in the Tiwi Islands. During this time, local Tiwi went aboard the ships, exchanged fish and crabs for clothing and ornaments and allowed the Dutch to land to obtain fresh water and reconnoitre the island's hinterland. Therefore the Dutch documented some of the earliest observations of Indigenous Australians and collected what are arguably the first known items of Australian Indigenous material culture to be obtained by Europeans through such exchange. Van Delft's expedition is emblematic of the early history of culture contact in northern Australia. I will report on the Tiwi objects held that possibly date to the early 18th century investigating the impacts of globalisation and early culture contact in the Tiwi Islands.

12.45-14.00 Lunch

Session 3: Collection Histories

14.00-15.00

Moderator: Polly Bence

14.00 Report: The '*patrimoine kanak dispersé*': perspectives on a scattered, shared and circulating heritage

Marion Bertin, marionbbertin@gmail.com

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In November 2023, I will start a one-year post-doctoral fellowship in the Centre d'histoire sociale des mondes contemporains (CHS / UMR 8058) and the LabEx Dynamite in Paris. My research will focus on the '*patrimoine kanak dispersé*' and its history. I will study the heritage process, in order to understand how and why the '*patrimoine kanak dispersé*' was built as both scattered, shared and circulating. Many objects which are part of the '*patrimoine kanak dispersé*' are now preserved in small regional museums in France. Looking at the roles played by these museums in the heritage process is at the heart of my upcoming project. One of the questions addressed by my project concerns the consequences for the objects of being part of the '*patrimoine kanak dispersé*'. How are they practically 'shared', in terms of display, preservation, restoration and documentation? What are the creative ways of re-thinking the Kanak collections from French local museums? In the context of the 2023 PAA-Europe meeting in Chartres, I would like to present a report of my upcoming research and the perspectives it will open.

14.15 Report: The collection of ni-Vanuatu objects at the Chartres Fine Arts museum

Elric Geraudie, elricfg@gmail.com
Master student, École du Louvre

This paper is the report of a master thesis carried out in 2022-2023 at the Ecole du Louvre. It examines the creation of the collection of oceanic art at the Chartres Fine Arts museum, focusing on ni-Vanuatu objects. The institutional history of the collection can be divided in two main moments: the first ni-Vanuatu objects enter the collection in 1970, after the donation of Governor Louis-Joseph Bouge's collection (1878-1960) by his widow Emma Quille. This extensive collection, including thousands of books and hundreds of objects, is the base of the collection and would then be enhanced by the active work of Claude Stefani during the 1990'. His time as an assistant is the second key moment for the constitution of the collection. During that time, the museum's purchases focused on oceanic art which allowed the acquisition of ni-Vanuatu objects from the collections of Felix-Albert Armbruster (1870-1909), Philippe François (1859-1908), Roland Grunevald and of one club supposedly collected during the "Korrigan" expedition. Other objects would be donated to the museum at the time, notably by Roger Boulay, and the museum would also become the custodian of the museum of Châteaudunthe's collection, mainly gathered by the marqueses Léonce de Tarragon (1813-1897).

14.30 National versus Local Museums: The Case of the Vanuatu Collection of the French Administrator Louis-Joseph Bouge preserved in the Fine Art Museum of Chartres and the British Museum

Laëtitia Lopes, L.Lopes@uea.ac.uk
PhD Student, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

In this paper, I will address the difference in the nature of the collections in local and national museums in the case of a colonial collection from the Pacific split and nowadays preserved in two museums. The first one of local stature, the Fine Art Museum of Chartres, and the second one of national stature, the British Museum of London. A particular emphasis will be given to the objects from Vanuatu, as my thesis exclusively looked at collections from Vanuatu collected between 1870 and 1906 and now held in museums in France and the United Kingdom. However, the statistics of the overall Pacific collection will also be discussed.

Whilst this case study cannot be generalised, it highlights some of the 19th and 20th-century donating and selling mechanisms of the Pacific collection to museums and highlight colonial history embodied in these collections. In that respect, I will complement this analysis of Bouge's collections by recontextualising and comparing them with other collections constituted approximately in the same period. Material collections and archival sources will be considered in complement of statistical data.

15.00-15.15 Coffee & tea break

Session 4: Collection visits
15.00-17.00

Visits led by Philippe Bihoué, Claude Stefani and Grégoire Hallé to see the object, photo and drawing collections and the temporary exhibition.

General Assembly
17.15-18.15

19.00 Conference dinner

Café Serpente

2 cloître Notre-Dame, Chartres

<https://leserpente.fr/fr>

Tuesday 12 December 2023

Session 5: Collection histories 9.30-10.45

Moderator: Wonu Veys

9.30 Beach and crossroad: museum, collections, and archipelagos

Marine Vallée, vallee.marine@gmail.com (online)

Assistant Curator, *Te Fare Iamanaha* – Musée de Tahiti et des Îles

As a local museum, and the sole institution of this scale in French Polynesia, *Te Fare Iamanaha* – Musée de Tahiti et des Îles offers a significant point of observation for considerations linked to representation, collaboration and the return of dispersed heritage through loans and deposits. Stemming from doctoral research concomitant with the then ongoing renovation project of *Te Fare Iamanaha* – Musée de Tahiti et des Îles, as well as first-hand observations of its reopening once reconstructed, this paper concentrates on intertwined aspects of contemporary representation and curatorial practices.

As part of a wider interest in cultural identity, museum studies, collections and creation processes associated with the region defined as French Polynesia, the paper thus considers the museum as place of negotiation and representation, informed by Greg Dening's definition of the 'beach'. It also discusses the idea of crossroad, as a point of encounters between archipelagos, knowledge sharing and revitalizing, translocations and cultural identity echoed in curatorial practices, community engagement, and responses in local contemporary visual arts and culture.

10.00 Report: D'un musée l'autre – From one museum to another – How does the shared heritage approach contribute to the awakening of knowledge and the enrichment of contemporary know-how

Hélène Guiot, helenguot@gmail.com

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Magali Mélandri, Magali.MELANDRI@quaibrantly.fr

Responsable for heritage unit Oceania-Insulinde, musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

In March 2023, *Te Fare Iamanaha*-Musée de Tahiti et des îles, in partnership with the musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, organised a research project as part of the *Rara'a - Tresser en Polynésie française* project, during which four master weavers and two students (DN MADE National Diploma in Art and Design - Fibres and Textiles course / Centre des Métiers d'art) from French Polynesia studied several heritage artifacts held at *Te Fare Iamanaha*, with a view to reappropriating ancient Polynesian weaving techniques. The study was based on a visual analysis of the objects, supplemented by detailed observation using a Hirox 3D digital microscope, and was completed by a practical experiment involving the implementation of the technical processes observed.

This short paper will report on the progress of this collaborative, multi-disciplinary study, and will highlight the sometimes tense issues involved in passing on knowledge and protecting the cultural identities specific to French Polynesia.

10.15 Re-displaying the Fonds Bouge: George Nuku’s travelling museums

Clémentine Debrosse, C.Debrosse@uea.ac.uk

PhD Student, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

In an interview in Vienna in 2022, Māori artist George Nuku declared that part of his current practice is focussed on the creation of what he calls “travelling museums” which have the “advantage of mobility, like the ancestors on the waka”. After working for the first time with lithographs in an exhibition in Aotearoa in 1993, Nuku has recently been making his own versions of the 19th century lithographs created during the several circumnavigations of the globe by Jules Dumont d’Urville. Except for a few lithographs coming from the Musée Hèbre collection in Rochefort, most of the ones George Nuku has been working with come from the Fonds Bouge in Chartres. Nuku’s reworkings of these lithographs have been exhibited both in Rochefort in 2020-21, in the exhibition *Voyage autour du monde, l’aventure maori de Dumont d’Urville*, and in Vienna in 2022-23, in the exhibition *Oceans. Collections. Reflections*. This paper intends to look at both these exhibitions as examples of “travelling museums” – at both regional and national/international level – which allow for the dissemination of the Fonds Bouge beyond the walls of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Chartres.

10.45-11.15 Coffee & tea break

Session 6: Collection histories

11.15-12.30

Moderator: Laëtitia Lopes

11.15 My Eye lands in Daniel Palacz’s private collection: a cabinet of unsuspected conceptual curiosities in French Polynesia

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Ph.D student UEA – British Museum, UK

In the archival landscape of French Polynesia, Daniel Palacz’s private collection may appear as a peculiar and uncanny entity. Known by name to some, unknown to most, it sits at the threshold between a private collection and a museum. A cursory and reductive lens would mistakenly reduce it to a mere cabinet of curiosities. Rather, it is a cabinet of unsuspected conceptual curiosities worth exploring that has much to teach us about private collection in Pacific contexts. Gathering more than 600 objects from the islands of French Polynesia and countless boxes of archival papers collected or acquired over 40 years by its owner, it is as much an ethnographic archive of

collecting practices at work in these islands as it is an untapped source of future Indigenous revitalization projects.

This presentation investigates the framework of the cabinet of curiosities, hinting at its potential limitation as an optics to grasp such collections and offer a /s/pacific mā'ohi lens to approach such a space and further community engagements.

11.45 Report: An inventory of the dispersed heritage of Wallis and Futuna islands

Hélène Guiot, helenguot@gmail.com

Associated Researcher, CREDO, Marseille ; Lecturer at Inalco (ASEP department), Paris

The Territory of Wallis and Futuna, via its Service territoriale de l'Action culturelle, has decided to implement an inventory of its heritage dispersed in public and private institutions. This program, for which I have been commissioned, officially began in 2023, and four institutions will be involved: musée des beaux-arts de Dunkerque, muséum de La Rochelle, musée de La Neylière and musée des beaux-arts de Chartres. In addition to its primary interest in the Wallisians and Futunians, this project also presents a research challenge, as objects from these islands are still poorly identified in collections. The Musée de Chartres, which holds a Wallis collection, interesting in several respects, assembled by Governor Louis-Joseph Bouge, was also the museum that hosted the first exhibition on the island of Wallis in 2000. This first phase of the inventory will make it possible to record around 200 items, pending the wider deployment of this inventory in the years to come.

12.00 Film: Ontong Java – Encounters and Observations

Kevin Conru, kevinconru@yahoo.com

Writer and collector

Imbedded deep inside a little-known travelogue film from the early 20th century was an extraordinary glimpse into the ceremonial life of a traditional Polynesian society. By chance, explorer/adventurers Osa and Martin Johnson, visited Ontong Java during the important annual Sanga ritual cycle in 1917, and by following the action taking place in front of them, inadvertently documented one of the very last events of its kind. When anthropologist Ian Hogbin came to study Ontong Java culture 10 years later, the priests had all died, the major god figures lay rotting, and the Sanga rituals had stopped, being only a memory to be shared with him by the few remaining elders.

Kevin Conru has taken this footage and along with other period photographs and musical recordings, made a short documentary explaining the month long Sanga event. The film also provides commentary on the local cemeteries, their famous stone stelae, and aspects of life about a Polynesian people on the cusp of monumental change.