

(p. 248). As of this writing in January of 2014, the museum sees its mission as extending beyond the Zambezi to all of Africa: “Museum Africa is not about revisionist African history written by biased Afrocentric writers . . . rather, it is a journey back to the glory years of the African continent’s past.”¹

Byala does an admirable job of setting this history in terms of contemporary museological theory. Following Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, “There is no Africana Museum without modern South Africa and, to a certain extent, the converse” (p. 4). As noted above, the very physical location—its placement and relocations—and the definitions of the museum at each stage of its development have mirrored the societal conflicts as to which group was dominant. One tantalizing question arises: South Africa is the richest and most powerful country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is not the most populous—Nigeria is. If the museum sees its role as presenting a vision—its vision—of this vast region, will it present a vision that is acceptable to the other countries as well? Time will tell.

This book offers museum anthropologists an analysis of the relationship between the changing mission of this museum and the changing nature of South African society itself. Byala shows in sharp detail that the nature of power redefines the nature of exhibits and their format. Originally, the mission of the museum was to portray and heal the rift between the English and the Boers. The museum recognized that blacks were important, but they were viewed as a background and “timeless” element in South Africa. The museum’s mission has changed to one where black Africans were and are now seen as historical, dynamic, urban as well as rural, and in control of a newly evolving multiracial society.

Museum anthropologists will also find in this case study descriptions of the specific relationship among exhibits both in terms of format and content and the relationships among these exhibits, staff politics, and national politics. In addition, readers will gain an understanding of how the continuing redefinition of “cultural” work has been integrated into this museum. What role, for example, should music and street art play in exhibits and how should they be formatted? Finally, as noted above, museum anthropologists, along with other sociocultural anthropologists, art historians, historians, and contemporary analysts, will find the book to be excellent back-

ground to understand how the museum and South Africa attempt to extend to itself a leadership role culturally, economically, and politically throughout the continent and the world.

NOTE

1. <http://www.museumafrica.org/>, accessed January 11, 2014.

Colonial Collecting and Display: Encounters with Material Culture from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Claire Wintle. OXFORD: BERGAHN BOOKS, 2013. 264 pp.

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In *Colonial Collecting and Display*, Claire Wintle places three late 19th- to early 20th-century collections of objects from the Andaman and Nicobar islands under a microscopic lens, tracing their biographies from their producers to the colonial officers and families who acquired and donated them to the Brighton Museum (now the Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton & Hove) and the changing conditions, meanings, and modes of display and reception they have experienced since being incorporated into the museum’s permanent collection. Wintle situates her erudite study within the larger literatures of postcolonial theory, material culture, and museum studies, arguing for the centrality of objects in constituting and expressing imperial relationships and regimes of value. She cautions scholars to avoid the simplifications of singular master narratives of empire, “the colonial collector,” or “the museum” and demonstrates the value of being attentive to the varied motivations and practices of individual producers, collectors, and institutions in the study of the histories of museums and collections and, indeed, of empire itself.

The collections discussed in the book were donated to the Brighton Museum by Edward Horace Man, Richard Carnac Temple, and Katharine Sara Tuson. Each spent extended periods in the Andaman or Nicobar islands in the late 19th century as officers of the British colonial state (or, in Tuson’s case, as the wife of an officer). Man, of

middle-class background, held a number of positions in the islands from 1871 on before retiring as deputy chief commissioner in 1901; Temple, of aristocratic descent, was chief commissioner of the islands from 1894 to 1904; and Tuson joined her husband, a close colleague of Man's, on the islands from 1889 to 1905. Like many other British colonial elites, all three retired to Brighton after their service, where they continued to closely interact with each other.

Wintle, however, begins her story not with the collectors but with the objects themselves, examining their production, materiality, indigenous meaning (s), and contexts of alienation (chapter 1). Along with providing rich descriptions of several categories of objects, Wintle focuses, to the extent possible, on the perspectives of the objects' makers, examining how Andamanese and Nicobar individuals were able to shape their interactions with colonial collectors by retaining and asserting their creativity and agency—even under the horrendous conditions of resettlement, depopulation, and forced labor that they experienced as colonial subjects. While Wintle occasionally may stretch the evidence for indigenous resistance further than it can comfortably sustain, her depiction of community members as active, creative, and resistant agents in material and economic transactions is important and valuable.

In chapter 2, Wintle recounts the stories of the three collectors: the scholarly, scientific, social evolutionist Man, who made systematic collections of "representative" material culture specifically for museums and prepared detailed catalogues of his collections; the aristocratic Temple, who viewed his collections of weapons and tools as part of his personal and family legacy; and Tuson, whose donations of figurative objects, Wintle suggests, may reflect her gendered sensibilities. The personal biographies, structural positions, and motivations of these individuals played a role in the shaping of their collections, and Wintle wisely reminds us of the effects of such diversity on subsequent representations of the colonial "other" in museum contexts.

In chapter 3, Wintle steps back from the specific objects and collectors to describe how the Nicobar and Andaman islands were perceived in early 20th-century Brighton, and Victorian and Edwardian Britain more generally. Here, she draws on recent

scholarly writings on museum visitors that remind us that museumgoers are not "blank slates" but bring their personal biographies, knowledge, and beliefs to museum encounters. While the islands were a small part of British India, they and their inhabitants were known to most Britons from representations in colonial exhibitions, illustrated periodicals, and fiction in which they were depicted as dangerous, sexualized, and living exemplars of the "lowest rung" in social evolutionary and racial hierarchies.

With the context(s) established, chapter 4 returns to a biographical approach by tracing the histories of the collections in the Brighton Museum from 1900 to 1949. Wintle reminds us that collection biographies do not stop when objects are transformed into museum specimens. Instead, their stories are ongoing, subject to changing exhibitionary paradigms, curatorial interests, conservation practices, and budgetary and logistical constraints, among others. Thus, she documents how donors and the museum's advisory committee influenced acquisitions and displays; how conservation decisions unintentionally led to the degradation of certain objects; and how overcrowding and shifting display locales limited the curator's abilities to craft legible narratives (much less determine museum visitors' ability to "read" them). We also learn how the mandated clearing of basement storage areas to create air raid shelters during WWI contributed to the destruction and loss of many of the Andaman and Nicobar objects and how the museum responded to interwar budget reductions and new curatorial priorities. The latter included a shift from evolutionary or geographically organized ethnographic collections to an aesthetic orientation of them—as ethnographic collections were transformed from artifact to art—such that by the late 1930s only a handful of Andamanese and Nicobar figurative representations (donated by Tuson) remained on permanent exhibit, and these were removed from display in 1949. The careful attention to how political, logistical, and budgetary constraints shaped museum practices and collection history in a small, regional museum is an especially valuable—and realistic—contribution of this work.

In a brief concluding chapter, Wintle looks to a future in which the complex stories of these collections can be told in new ways that collaborate with and serve contemporary Andamanese and Nicobar

Islanders and that acknowledge the larger, complex, and multidimensional colonial and postcolonial histories in which they played a part. Her book is an important contribution to doing just that.

No Deal!: Indigenous Arts and the Politics of Possession. Tressa Berman, ed. SANTA FE: SAR PRESS, 2012. 282 PP.

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No Deal! is an edited collection of essays by artists, curators, art historians, and anthropologists who draw on their research and practice in both North America and Australia. It continues the trajectory of several other major edited volumes, including *The Traffic in Culture* (Marcus and Myers 1995), *Unpacking Culture* (Phillips and Steiner 1999), and *The Empire of Things* (Myers 2001), in presenting lively case studies gleaned from different disciplines and locations that are all focused on the ways in which art and property are both productive and contested as global categories and value systems. This volume is imbued with the spirit of noted scholar of Aboriginal media, Eric Michaels, in part through the reproduction of his classic essay, *Bad Aboriginal Art*, and also in that several contributors continue to engage with his provocative critique and assertion of the limits of recognition and the commodification of indigenous culture.

The volume is divided into three sections, each of which clusters contributions from different places around common themes. Part 1, “Aesthetics and Meanings,” links Lea McChesney’s work on art writing about Native American art; Nancy Parezo’s description of the often undesired promiscuous circulation of images of Native Americans online and its impact on research and teaching; Marie Bouchard’s account of the emergence of a modern and indigenous sculptural tradition at Baker Lake, Alaska; and Jennifer Biddle’s discussion of the entanglements of Central Desert painting in diverse representational schema in Australia. All of these articles provide us with interesting accounts of the ways in which indigenous identities are coproduced, or emergent, in ten-

sion and in dialogue with broader art worlds and representational techniques and technologies.

Part 2, “Possession and Identity,” begins with Michaels’s influential essay, which resonates with the two essays that follow—Tressa Berman’s account of authorial authentication of Australian Aboriginal contemporary art and Kathy M’Closkey’s account of the ongoing appropriation of Navajo weavings in the world of consumer commodities. This section confronts the commoditization of indigenous art and the different models of property, ownership, and propriety that increasingly converge within these complex marketplaces. For instance, Berman provides an overview of the authorial complex signified through the artist signature and the competing regimes of value it instantiates in Aboriginal and contemporary art worlds.

Part 3, “Public Reception,” considers the exhibition contexts that institutionalize both appropriation and its critique. Suzanne Frick discusses public art programs at the University of New Mexico; Fred Myers looks at changing and emergent issues of censorship and sensitivity in the display of Aboriginal art in Australia; and Nancy Mithlo builds on her work on self-censorship to look at self-appropriation in the global art world for contemporary indigenous art. The volume ends with a conversation between Berman and Marco Centin, curator and designer of the exhibition *Cultural Copy*. Their conversation locates the exhibition as part of a longer trajectory of cross-cultural engagement with different contemporary indigenous artists in the context of the transnational museum and gallery environment.

The volume provides a set of dynamic, lively, and valuable accounts of the inherent tensions that lie in the production and circulation of indigenous art within the institutional frames of a global art world—ongoing tensions that Myers describes as “unsettled business” (p. 175). An invaluable series of color plates bring the discussions to material life—and I would like to note that it would have been wonderful to see an installation shot or two of the *Cultural Copy* exhibition.

Overall, the volume works best as a series of case studies rather than as a sustained singular argument or overview of debates. As a whole, the frameworks of ownership and appropriation remain underarticulated, even underanalyzed, in the book. That is, the frameworks of law, the power of the market, and the