Affirming change in participatory practice of cultural conservation[1]
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Abstract

Disciplines within the arts and heritage conservation field have been arguing for making the practice more transparent and collaborative. This chapter argues for the acknowledgement of the positionality of conservation processes. Drawing on feminist scholarship, the chapter will explore the ways in which collaborative conservation discourse has been framed and how that impacts its ethical positioning. Modes of collaboration in conservation discourse include consultation, collaboration, participation and the intended or inherent sharing of decision-making processes. We will discuss how some of those framings consolidate what the Critical Heritage Studies scholar Laurajane Smith calls 'authorised heritage discourses' (AHD). The process of thinking those conservation discourses in relation to what feminist epistemology has called *affirmative ethics*, we argue, contributes to resituating conservation practice more fairly, equally, and inclusively and help unlearn pre-conceived perspectives about knowledge-making.

Introduction

Collaboration has been at the centre of many discussions in conservation in the last thirty years. That has been particularly the case in the conservation of objects from Indigenous and local communities, built heritage, and contemporary art. Literature on collaboration in the practice of conservation involving Indigenous communities goes back to the late-1980s when *Symposium 86: Care and Conservation of Ethnographic Materials* was published by the Canadian Conservation Institute. The need for diversifying perspectives in the care of objects from Indigenous Cultures was made evident in this publication (Barclay *et al.* 1988). Discussions on the Imperialist and Western-centric notions of preservation and values and how they have shaped the professional conservation mindset of the 20th century - including that on collaboration - became prevalent from the 1990s onward (e.g., Bernstein 1992, Johnson *et al.* 2005, Odegaard 2006, Sully 2007, Dignard *et al.* 2008, Peters 2008, 2020, Fekrsanati 2010, Bloomfield 2013, Pearlstein 2016, Balachandran and McHugh 2019, Lane 2019, Clavir 2002, 2009, 2020a, 2020b).[2]

In the context of the conservation of contemporary art, most efforts have pertained to building relationships with artists, their social sphere, and their estates. Explorations on artists' participation started in the 1990s, with the emergence of the field of conservation of contemporary art and initiatives

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[1] The authors contributed equally to this chapter.
[2] Many publications in the field relate to material associated with Indigenous Cultures of The Americas, Australia and New Zealand.

such as the *Artists Documentation Program* (ADP). Many symposia - such as the renowned *Modern Art: Who Cares?* - took place during this decade, setting the challenges new artistic formulations posed to the field (e.g. Weyer and Heydenreich 2005).[3]

Recent activities in both the conservation of objects from Indigenous Cultures and contemporary art saw the field moving towards the contextualisation of collaboration within the framework of social and cultural changes (e.g., Sloggett 2009, Peters 2016, 2020, Clavir 2020b). Both fields acknowledge conservation's role in shaping objects and their stories, and conservators as co-producers of those objects and their materialities (see, e.g., Avrami 2009). Addressing participation in people-centred approaches to conservation has implied moving beyond the museum, or the artists and their network, and including the wider ecology that participates in the making of these objects and cultural manifestations, their transformation, and their care (Bloomfield 2013, Pearlstein 2016, van de Vall et al. 2011, van Saaze 2013, Stigter 2016). While this is particularly relevant for practices that intentionally intersect with the public sphere,[4] such as objects that rely on participation and performativity, ritualised behaviours, symbolic transitions, or those whose materiality is inherently attached to their interaction with communities,[5] all cultural manifestations can arguably be framed as objects in transition between contexts, temporalities, and cultures. In this case, the materiality of these cultural manifestations is intrinsically defined by the modes in which conservation decision-making takes place. In this sense, conservation needs to be concerned with who can talk and, to echo the words of the feminist scholar Sara Ahmed (1998), whose voices are heard and silenced.

This paper looks at participation as it has been addressed in the conservation field, interrogating the communicated methods of engagement, and exploring possibilities for rethinking the modes and parity of participation. We will discuss the framing of collaboration and its politics, reflecting from our experience as conservators working in museums and related institutions, and in contemporary art (Helia Marçal) and objects from Indigenous and World Cultures (Farideh Fekrsanati).[6] We seek to contextualise and critically analyse the discussions that have been enacted in conservation by reading them in relation to what the Critical Heritage Studies scholar Smith calls 'authorised heritage discourses' (AHD) (Smith, 2006). Exploring how AHD are enacted through the labour of conservation as one of the documenters and carers of cultural manifestations, we look at the challenges to participation we can identify in our field and processes of conservation that occur within an institutional framing.

We will discuss those challenges by drawing on what the feminist scholar Nancy Fraser calls *parity of participation*. Fraser defines *parity of participation* as social arrangements that "permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers" (Fraser 2003, 36). This notion, we argue, holds particular relevance when we think about decision-making in conservation, i.e. a process in which

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[3] For an overview of the development of the field of conservation of contemporary art see Marçal 2019.
[4] In the context of this paper, we will use the notion of *public sphere* drawing on Nancy Fraser's critique of the term coined by Habermas in 1962.
[5] In the context of this paper, we will use the term 'communities' referring to both the communities that provide meaning to objects of Indigenous Cultures and contemporary artworks. With this, we are not stating that those communities share characteristics beyond being called communities.
[6] This terminology builds on the terms used in the context of ICOM-CC. We are aware that this terminology can be contested, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter.

a conservator or a group of stakeholders make decisions on whether a given cultural heritage item is to be conserved, which challenges emerge from its conservation, who is to be part of the process, and, ultimately, how and by whom the material is to be conserved. Following this notion, in this paper, we are using "collaboration" as a general term for cultural conservation processes that involve interacting with people outside of the institution, and "participation" within the framework put forward by Nancy Fraser's notion of *parity of participation*. Drawing on the feminist scholar Rosi Braidotti's call for affirmative ethics (2019), we will conclude the chapter by looking at the potential that comes from addressing challenges to participation in conservation as sites for potential change. 'Affirmative ethics' is a way of recognising negative patterns in a process and affirming their existence together with a commitment to change. Or, as Braidotti puts it, affirmative ethics works as a generative force, consisting "not in denying negativity, but in reworking it outside the dialectical oppositions; (...) it is not about the avoidance of pain, but rather a different way of reworking it" (Braidotti 2019. n.p.n.). This process allows for recognising the need to change alongside the possibility to undertake said change while promoting collective acts of solidarity, vulnerability, and compassion to one another.

Decision-making and collaboration in context

Conservation has become more aware of the social nature of conservation decisions ever since the new millennium, when more and more conservators and scholars positioned conservation as a social activity (e.g., Avrami et al. 2000, Muñoz Viñas 2005). And yet, as Clavir suggests, although there is a sense that "conservation brings together people with people, not just people with objects" (2020a, 30), the social dimension of conservation "continues to be a part of the practice of a minority of conservators" (2020b, 408). Part of this, Clavir argues, is due to the contingencies of working in institutions which fail to recognise conservation as a social process, or still rely on institutional hierarchies that see conservation decision-making as being purely from the realm of the technique: "It is not only the conservation professionals who have been confining themselves to the physical objects, but also the institution's concept of what is appropriate work and knowledge for these staff" (Clavir 2020b, 408).[7]

Literature on collaborative engagement with Indigenous communities often highlights specific settings and experiences (e.g., Kaminitz 2005, Stable 2012, Fekrsanati 2014, Delgado Vieira 2017, Mildwaters 2017) describing negotiated values and ethics of preservation and care particular to the presented situation. The context-driven practice of conservation might explain the observation that despite a subjective need for formulating guidelines and methodologies, the vast body of publications is rather descriptive. The nitty-gritty details of the interaction between conservators and communities often remain invisible. This is less prevalent in the conservation of contemporary art, with a few publications being dedicated to reflecting on the process of communication with artists and their social sphere instead of the results of such endeavour (e.g. Saaze 2009, Dekker et al 2010, Stigter 2016).

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[7] Curiously enough, while the positioning of conservation within the institutional politics and power relations sometimes lacks the influence to operate within the social, it is provided with great relevance and recognised ability to act within conservation lines when institutional conservation concerns are used to hinder access to objects, restriction on use, loans and repatriation (Smith and Ngarimu 2021).

Whenever conservation is described as material-bound operation, communities providing meaning to the objects and cultural practices being conserved tend to remain absent. In a systematic literature review on the collaboration between conservators and artists and communities, Henderson and Nakamoto (2016) show that while literature reports instances of community engagement in the care of objects, consultation with those dominant stakeholders such as the owner, "experts" (as defined by Muñoz Viñas 2005), and, artists, takes prevalence over participation efforts with any community. The authors refer specifically to forms of participation in decision-making - from micro decisions that refer, for example, to the extent to which a section in an object is cleaned, to macro decisions that could entail, for example, reintegration of losses – these tend to be made by conservators and other cultural workers, particularly when they are related to the physicality of these cultural manifestations (Henderson and Nakamoto 2016). Moreover, when there is interaction with communities on the conservation of objects, details of such interaction tend to remain absent from related conservation documentation (Sloggett 2009).

At least two issues can explain such absences, one being mostly discursive, and other being mostly practical: (1) the idea that the values underpinning conservation decisions are universal among cultures of practice (cf. Kapelouzou 2012), and (2) the implementation of participation in conservation comes with several challenges that operate across the structures that underpin conservation practice.

Recent studies in Critical Heritage Studies have demonstrated that the idea of universal values tends to reflect Western views of what is cultural heritage and, by association, how it is preserved (e.g. Smith 2009).[8] According to Laurajane Smith, universal values are part of the authorised heritage discourse (AHD) - a westernised tendency to protect material culture "deemed to be of innate and inheritable value" (Smith 2009, 3.), with the heritage process functioning under a "monolithic" interpretation. Heritage then becomes a legitimation device, one that grants authority to some cultural and social values, thereby excluding all others. AHD are enacted through conservation labour - not only as this is a labour that, for the most part, and as it is described by the sociologist Fernando Dominguez Rubio (2020),[9] aims to keep things looking the same, but also because discourses on inheritance, sameness, and preservation in itself foster the maintenance of values systems that are intrinsically part of the Western canon. The vision of historical immutability that underpins the conservation discourse, despite recent theoretical advancements in the field, implies, according to Smith, that "the present is dissuaded from actively rewriting the meaning of the past and subsequently the present" (Smith 2009, 3). Accordingly, if the present time is passively echoing meanings from the past, what will we give present and future generations? As discussed by Henderson (2020), in excluding present generations from making of heritage that belongs to them, we are enacting processes of social and intergenerational injustice, impacting how objects are cared for now and in the future.

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[8] This is also the case for the widely celebrated Burra Charter and Nara Document on Authenticity, which, while important in the expansion of the understanding of authenticity within and outside the Western world, have been recognised as still upholding dominant discourses on cultural heritage and its safeguarding (Waterton et al. 2006).

[9] Dominguez Rubio's analysis is on the contemporary museum and the care of modern and contemporary art, but this characterisation of conservation work is, in our opinion, also valid for objects that are not part of this context.

In maintaining AHD in how we practice conservation and, consequently, produce cultural objects made of complex relational entanglements between meaning and matter, we are successively excluding values and voices of others. In this sense, participation can become an ethical imperative, at the forefront of the care of objects whose materiality is context-specific - which, arguably, make up all forms of cultural heritage. However, implementing fair and equal politics of participation comes with challenges that demonstrate the structures that underpin practice in themselves and contribute to the burgeoning of AHD in conservation.

Challenges in challenging the canon, or why participation is so hard to implement

In "The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage", Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton discuss why community recognition is an ethical imperative in promoting fairer heritage practices. Smith and Waterton develop their theory through Nancy Fraser's notion of *parity of participation*, which is at the core of Fraser's theory of social justice. In her analysis, Fraser demonstrates how parity of participation differs from the idea of social inclusion, which emerged in public discourse as a way to control potential disruptive individuals. For Fraser, *parity of participation* comes with two conditions: (1) a fair distribution of resources, and (2) what Fraser calls "intersubjectivity" - the requirement that "institutionalised patterns of cultural value express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem", by tackling or mitigating "institutionalised value patterns that deny some people the status of full partners in interaction — whether by burdening them with excessive ascribed "difference" or by failing to acknowledge their distinctiveness" (Fraser 2001, 29). While Smith and Waterton suggest that misrecognition is one of the critical challenges in guaranteeing full and fair access to heritage practices, we could argue here, that social injustices in representation and resource maldistribution, both highlighted by Fraser in her theory of social justice, undoubtedly contribute either directly or indirectly to issues of misrecognition. In "Reclaiming the past as a matter of social justice", for example, Linn-Tynen, develops an analysis on how the continued reiteration of 'authorised heritage discourses' has created inequalities of access and representation to heritage practices by African American communities in the United States (Linn-Tynen 2020). In the context of this paper, we will look at misrecognition, as a problem that "denies some individuals and groups the possibility of participating on a par with others in social interaction" (Fraser 2001, 27). Moreover, within the framework proposed by Fraser, our explicit goal is to frame participation in conservation as intentional and equal involvement in decision-making (Fraser 1990). As such, the challenges we will explore in this section will relate with such perspective.

<u>Definition of community and modes of engagement</u>

Decision-making in conservation involves identifying stakeholders - meaning, those who have invested interest in the conservation of an object or any cultural manifestation. However, one of the biggest challenges when working with communities and interest groups is the definition of community in the first place. According to the scholar Jennifer Barrett (2012), "community" is a fluid and contextual concept. Often related to an idea of "place" and a correlation with "sharing", Barrett concludes that there is no consensus about what this term means.

Waterton and Smith (2010) further suggest that the concept of "community" is very heterogeneous. If some of the social groupings can be easily identified due to the development of formal or informal associations, in other instances stakeholders are impossible to identify and thus cannot be involved in an effective manner. This can come with its own challenges for the conservation field. The time and resources allocated, the access available, may be influenced by structures within the institution and/or the community, contexts of communication, and the fostering of existing relationships between conservators and community/ies.

Notwithstanding the process's contingencies, approaching communities has led to an increase of forms of engagement in heritage and archaeology projects, making both notions of heritage and community somewhat "malleable" (Neal 2015, 349). Echoing Arnstein's perspective on "A ladder of citizen participation" (1969), Neal also refers to Nancy Fraser's perspective by stating that "people can only be empowered by participating if they hold real power within the process" (Neal 2015, 357). Indeed, while the malleability of notions of heritage and community is fundamental in adapting methods of engagement to the contexts where such processes take place, it can also contribute to blurring the lines between practices that are reciprocal and promote what Fraser calls *parity of participation,* and those that consolidate power structures and related knowledge systems - which we can define as AHD.

The simultaneous use of terms like engagement, collaboration, and participation in conservation literature, as well as the lack of details provided on those processes, are both symptoms and triggers of this phenomenon, raising ethical questions such as: For whom are we preserving forms of cultural heritage? Can conservation processes be successful if (1) interactions with communities are not reciprocal and meaningful, and (2) they continue to maintain knowledge systems and AHD in contexts that intentionally refuse them?

Contingencies of the institutional process

Conservator's self-definition and positioning within the institution is one of the challenges posed to participation. As discussed earlier, the profession is often contextualised within collections' physicality, rather than encompassing their complex, multiple, and values-based existence, which can create an identity crisis in which, as Saunders puts it, "to be self-conscious about one's own needs and perspectives whilst maintaining a sense of their value is a complex juxtaposition specific to conservation" (Saunders 2014, 10). Indeed, existing structures within museums promote hierarchies of knowledge - for example, between epistemic and technical disciplines - that are hardly sustained both by practice and the needs prompted by the objects and artworks that keep being collected. To challenge those hierarchies, which define not only who speaks but whose voices are heard, is, however, a difficult task and one that demands institutional commitment to change. To use the words of Saunders once again:

> To diminish hierarchical cultural communications and foster wellbeing and inclusion without losing direction and purpose is a complex, challenging task. (…) Change is inevitable – the real challenge is how to proceed with the greatest levels of ethical utility. (Saunders 2014, 10)

Conservators working with (Indigenous, artistic, local) communities engage in knowledge transfer and transmission processes. Any effective engagement and knowledge transmission process in conservation relies on a shared common ground - being vocabulary, terminology, shared aims, among others - and some form of exchange that can include the building of intimacy. These aspects bring up challenges about the limits of communication and reciprocity. A power imbalance exists when an institution invites people in to solicit information, creating an inherent hierarchy that defines who is heard and over what, particularly when those same people are not part of the decision-making process. This power imbalance is not solely caused by perceived structures of ownership, extending an invitation can imply that the communities whose cultural heritage items are held by the inviting institution remain guests in the institution. At that point, a decision needs to be made on how the institution will be able to counteract such imbalance. How can we create a process of communication where points of view are analysed in equal stakes? This can be particularly problematic whenever an institution invites people and communities to discuss the decisions that have already been made, leaving little to no space for revisions.

Another point of contention emerges during processes of documentation - although the knowledge needed to care for cultural manifestations often does not belong solely to the conservator, there are times where the boundaries of knowledge exchange are not immediately visible, leading towards a potential breach in the interpersonal contract that was established between the conservator and the community members that have collaborated in the conservation process. Equally, acknowledging that documentation is always partial, it is essential to understand what is missing when discussing stakeholders and decision-making. Where absent from the conservation decision-making process and from any conservation documentation produced, the communities that surround the work are left out of the systems of power so that other stakeholders are privileged with a stronger voice - and often one that consolidates AHD - can dominate the process (Waterton and Smith 2010). The question is raised as to how such an imbalance in participation in the decision-making process affects the preservation of artworks? Can the decision on how and what to conserve be effectively shared? And how are politics of reciprocity determined by museum structures?

The potential for a reciprocal process of participation between conservators and communities, artists, and interest groups outside of the museum is essential within the framework proposed by Fraser. Reciprocity is, however, not only about access, parity in decision-making processes, or co-production of conservation as a social activity, but it also relates to a continuous engagement and the development of consistent and meaningful relationships. Reciprocity in conservation collaboration is, at the same time, elusive. As Peters mentions,

> given the non-quantifiable – and often uncontrollable – nature of the variables involved in cross-disciplinary efforts, providing evidence for their beneficial impacts is not always very straightforward. In fact, neither the benefits nor the challenges encountered can always be tackled within well- established structures of knowledge and methodologies. (Peters 2020, 2)

Balancing effective communication, meaningful exchanges and the structure of the institution can, in this sense, be a complicated process full of blind-spots that are very hard to move past. Negotiating the boundaries of both institutions and the community or the artist and their social sphere demands a commitment to both time and change, which sometimes does not correspond to the institution's priorities.

Institutional structures, commitment, and politics

Issues arising from breaks in communication and perceived lack of reciprocity are, many times, structural. On the one hand, they relate to the institution's processes, procedures, and timings and how they differ from those experienced by communities, artists, and their social sphere. On the other hand, they are built on knowledge systems that glitch when encountering difference.

Indeed, museums and related institutions' structures were constructed around Western and white knowledge systems and, as such, were not made for artworks and objects that do not fit in certain categories or ways of seeing (Dominguez Rubio 2020), and the same can be said for participation. Partnerships take time and effort, they are oftentimes personalised and developed between two or more people throughout various encounters, moments of sharing and active communication. With budget and time restrictions and the allocation of tasks and projects in yearly financial cycles, institutions' ability to build and form long-term relationships with communities is substantially hampered. Conservators working in institutions may have time to reflect, do research and develop those relationships in the context of external-funded, fixed-term projects which are, by their very nature, time-bounded. Moreover, even when there is a strong inclination to open up the institution, little change is observed if practice is not aligned with such intentions. Swieringa discusses the nuance in those changes in her paper "A subtle shift: The care and use of Indigenous belongings after the Calls to Action," concluding that

> aligning institutional practices with the key directives of UNDRIP and the TRC's Calls to Action— that Indigenous people have the right to manage and control their material culture—has significantly enhanced the program's success. For conservation, this has involved a re-evaluation of risk in order better to enable communities to access and use their belongings– an idea that requires a shift in the traditional balance of power between the institution and the original owner. (Swieringa, 2021)

Similar dissonances between institutional intentions and practices are seen in the care of contemporary artworks that do not fit the structures of the museum and are dependent on communities of practice that reside outside of the museum. Not only do those works, such as performance art, tend to remain invisible in databases and related operative structures in the museum, but there is a continued reliance on external ecosystems, such as artists and their communities of practice, that are essential to the survival of those works without them being recognised as co-owners of such knowledge and practice (Marçal 2021).

When genuinely practised, participation changes both one's perspective and the power structures of holding knowledge and expertise. When different knowledge systems are indeed participating in discussions about the future of objects, with such exchange also comes the openness of letting go of long-accepted certainties, revising procedures, identifying biases, and accepting different weightings of values that might have been invisible until that point, and centring difference in museum processes.

However, one of the essential commodities to gather enough hindsight to understand what needs changing and to continue to foster existing relationships is time; in other words, even if willing individuals within the institution want to make sure connections are created and nurtured with time and that the institutional structures change with the needs of artworks, objects, communities, and artists, with few exceptions,[10] the time of the museum is not the time needed to make that happen. And yet, for an effective, fairer, and, therefore, sustainable conservation approach, one needs to be at a position of recognition and trust by our partners.

Conclusion - Committing to relationships, slowing down conservation processes

We explored the challenges to participation as defined by Nancy Fraser in the context of conservation of objects from Indigenous Cultures and contemporary art. We have demonstrated that, while conservation has been involved in collaboration initiatives with a wide range of stakeholders, there are conceptual and institutional challenges to active participation. While this reflection highlighted the barriers to a potential social arrangement where all stakeholders interact as peers in conservation operations, thinking about participation opens the field to affirming change.

According to Braidotti (2019), thinking through the gaps allows for identifying what is missing and what was never there. Those negative spaces are, however, also spaces of potential, that would enable affirmative ethics. Change can only occur through the transparent process of understanding the challenges to our current condition. In this chapter, affirming challenges to participation as spaces of potential, allows us to resituate the role of participation in conservation discourse.

The challenges explored pertain to a lack of meaningful positioning of the conservator within the institutional structure, time and resource constraints, and the different relations with time in the institution and that of the community/ies, causing a divergence between the aims and practice of participation. Participation demands commitment, and resources to engage with the communities that make the social sphere of our institutions in a way that is reciprocal, meaningful, and fair. Parity of participation can itself be thought as a reciprocal - from the institution and the conservator to the world and the world to the institution and the conservator. Indeed, transformation comes from transforming and being transformed through conservation processes (Peters 2020). Collections can be empowered through engagement, participation, and access when conservation links to those communities.

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[10] For example, in 2010 Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden (Netherlands), now part of the National Museum of World Cultures, made a long-   term commitment to care for 2 Waka (Maori Canoes) adhering to Maori principles of care. The partnership is conceived as a   long-term relationship between the involved Institutions (Fekrsanati et.al. 2014)

However, dismantling established knowledge systems puts demands on time and commitment, asking for openness and flexibility, that sometimes is at odds with the time of the museum. Moreover, conservators' misrecognition excludes their perspectives from discussions around participation and its relationship with care, when, in fact, conservators are the ones with the agency to redress the accumulation of AHD sustained upon the material layers of these cultural manifestations.

To affirm change, we need to do so within the institution. Participating with communities, artists, and their social sphere demands a personal commitment to maintaining reciprocal and meaningful relationships. It is essential to guarantee that people committed to parity of participation - and policies to protect them and their time - are in place to ensure equity in the process of participation and collaboration. Additionally, relationships between all of those involved are part of the embodied knowledge created as part of that ecology of practice. The ethical and practical impossibility to gather such knowledge and affects in any written form bears the question: when an institution can indeed create the conditions for fair practices of participation - what happens to those practices when the involved staff leaves?

Participation is slow, complex, laborious and resourceful. Acknowledging the need for participation processes, where all interact as peers, demands recognising that much of the knowledge being created is intrinsically linked to relationships between people and contexts and requires intergenerational transmission to enable continuity. To affirm change, and understanding that our analysis creates its own gaps, one partial solution for some of the challenges mentioned here could be sustained by aligning the time of building relationships with the institutional time. In this process of '*slow conservation' (to build on the term used by Staniforth in 2010),*[11] institutions would have to commit to investing in the process of building intimacy and partnership, committing themselves to the uncertainty of a vulnerable and relational existence. While this would allow the institution and their staff to take a step back, renegotiate their position, withdraw themselves if necessary, it would also be fundamental to decentering discourse and practices from the museum and recentering them in (Indigenous, local, artistic) communities and their distinctiveness (cf. Fraser 2001). '*Slow conservation'* opens the possibility of admitting mistakes, giving institutions time to find solutions that build on acts of sharing and yielding authority with others.

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[11] Staniforth uses the term 'slow conservation' as a possible solution to mitigate, avoid, or revert the effects of what could be called 'fast consumption or use' of conservation activities. The author particularly discusses a 'slow conservation' movement as a counterpoint to upholding preventive conservation, reducing the environmental footprint of conservation activities, and recognise traditional skills and knowledge, among other (2010).

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Short biographies [max 300 words]

Hélia Marçal is a lecturer, researcher, and conservator based in London. She was appointed Lecturer in Art, Materials, and Technology at University College London's Department of History of Art in 2020. Prior to this appointment, she worked as a Fellow in Contemporary Art Conservation and Research of the Andrew W. Mellon funded research project "Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum at Tate and a Science Manager at the Institute of Contemporary History (Universidade Nova de Lisboa). She has been the Coordinator of the Working Group on Theory, History, and Ethics of Conservation of the International Council of Museums' Committee for Conservation since 2016. She holds a European Doctorate (PhD) from Nova University of Lisbon (2018), and a MSc in Conservation and Restoration from the same University. Her primary research project proposed an epistemological framework for the exhibition and care of participatory activist performance art. She argued for a relational ontology of conservation that focused on researching the means of production of the works and engaging multiple stakeholders in the creation of historical-material narratives. She has published on conservation theory and ethics, conservation of time-based media and performance art, embodied memories and the body-archive, and participation and stewardship of cultural heritage, having been awarded the Taylor & Francis and ICON Outstanding Contribution Award in 2017. She co-edited a Special Issue on Portuguese Performance Art (Revista de Historia da Arte) in 2016 and a book on Archival Practices in the Performing Arts (Coimbra University Press) in 2020.

Farideh Fekrsanati has a MA degree in objects conservation from the State Academy of Fine Art and Design Stuttgart, Germany. She has worked as a research assistant on a 3-year multidisciplinary EU project on the application of lasers for cleaning stained glass windows, has been a J. Paul Getty Fellow with the State Historical Society in Omaha/Nebraska and an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow with the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC. From 2004 to 2019 she was a senior conservator with the Collections Management department of the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, now part of the National Museum of World Cultures in The Netherlands. Since April 2019 she is head of the conservation department at Museum am Rothenbaum, Kulturen und Künste der Welt (MARKK) in Hamburg, Germany. Her work and research interests centre around cultural material in the context of museums and are primarily in the areas of preventive conservation, collections use and exhibitions, risk management, access to collections and participatory projects with communities where the museum's collections originate from. Farideh has regularly taken part in teaching activities such as training opportunities organised by ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and as a guest lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Antwerpen Conservation Programs. She is a member of IIC and is active within ICOM-CC

(International Council of Museums-Committee for Conservation), until 2020 she served as the coordinator of the Objects from Indigenous and World Cultures Working Group and has recently joined the Editorial Panel of ICONs Journal of Conservation.