The Anthropologist as Curator

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The **Ethnographic Terminalia Collective** (est. 2009) functions as a leaderless cooperative. We make decisions on a consensus basis and share duties and obligations equally. We are held together by a mutual interest in the intersections of ethnographic epistemologies, creativity, artistic expression and exhibition. Where possible we curate, write and make things together in shared and equal authorship. While we each maintain individual research, art and curatorial programmes, we aim to operate with a collective voice.

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The curator, the anthropologist: 'presentialism' and open-ended enquiry in process

Alex Flynn

The arts seek a connection with anthropology, we are told. The introduction to this volume describes how Hal Foster coined the term 'the ethnographic turn', pointing to the growing interest of artists and arts practitioners in issues of identity and its representation in the 1990s. Foster identified a kind of mirroring, in which practitioners from historically very different fields, gazed at each other projecting an ideal type, encompassing all that they would like to see in themselves. This gaze was identified as a type of 'envy', and, bearing in mind Foster's fondness for Freud, it was perhaps a gaze associated with that which the other once possessed (Freud 2008: 57): the anthropologist lamenting how before committing to 'rigorous discipline' s/he was once 'open to chance' (Foster 1995: 304), the artist envious of the 'self-critique' implicit to anthropological practice (ibid.: 305) and his/her own lack of critical rigour.

Foster's critique of what he saw as an obliteration of the field of the other through a specious and mildly fraudulent encounter, dates from the mid-1990s, but in trying to understand why some arts practitioners became interested in anthropology, a few of these observations still have resonance today. In Brazil, the context in which this chapter is written, but also arguably more globally, art practitioners see potential in a one-to-one scale of dialogue, a concrete site-specificity that is methodologically inherent to the anthropological project. As Foster identified, the anthropological project is, at least when viewed from the outside, imbued with a reflexivity of practice that brings ethical questions to the fore in a way that is useful for some contemporary arts practitioners. Particularly for curators working in museums that house ethnographic objects, anthropology has increasingly been mobilized to respond to the ethics and practicalities of presenting non-Western art in Western contexts.

At the 2018 Royal Anthropological Institute's conference 'Art, Materiality and Representation', Emily Pringle, Head of Learning Practice and Research at Tate Modern and Tate Britain, convened a panel entitled 'Curating with an Anthropological Approach'. In her presentation, she argued for the necessity of an anthropological focus in the conception of contemporary curatorial strategies and museum practices. The panel put forward pressing questions: To what extent should non-Western objects be framed according to aesthetic criteria and how could they be 'appropriately' contextualized?

How could contemporary art practices disrupt and contribute to understandings of ethnographic objects? In what ways could an anthropological approach inform, both negatively and positively, the way museums represented people and art? Tate is just one of a number of large institutions to rethink the display, contextualization, signification and even potential restitution of their collections, many of which came about through colonial projects and expeditions. Berlin's Humboldt Forum, a hugely expensive cultural undertaking that will house ethnographic objects in a reconstructed Prussian palace, has also sought to foreground its willingness to engage with an ethics premised on horizontality. Restitution has begun even before the opening of the museum and such events make for good public relations, here, for example, in an article appearing on the museum's site entitled 'Return to Alaska':

> Suddenly, an almost reverential silence spread around the room for a good ninety seconds – interrupted only by the clicks of countless cameras: Hermann Parzinger, president of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK) handed John F. C. Johnson, vice president of the Chugach Alaska Corporation, an object from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum, part of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.[1]

Cases such as those of the Tate and the Humboldt Forum point to a growing critique and, indeed, hostility, from perspectives that have long been kept at the margins: a British Museum curator was recently obliged to defend their institution by declaring that 'a lot of our collections are not from a colonial context; not everything here was acquired by Europeans by looting'.[2] Faced with mounting doubts as to the ethical provenance of the museum collections, these curators' interest in anthropological approaches can be placed into Foster's first and fifth categories of why artists are interested in anthropology: anthropology as the science of alterity, and the self-critical dimension of the anthropological discipline premised on reflexivity.

Curatorial strategies informed by anthropological perspectives are not limited to the display and contextualization of ethnographic objects however. The important Afro-Atlantic Histories exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MASP) puts forward Brazil as a central location in the transit and diversity of Afro-Atlantic histories, with the exhibition serving to anchor a full year's programming of talks, courses, workshops, publications and screenings. Displaying 450 artworks from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries, the exhibition seeks to articulate a re-evaluation of what blackness means in Brazil, a question that one of the curators, the anthropologist Lilia Schwarcz, has made central to her scholarly research. Professor in the Anthropology Department at the University of São Paulo, Schwarcz has been a curator at MASP since 2015, and this dual role places an anthropological perspective at the heart of MASP's programming; a hybrid anthropological and curatorial tone that is latent to the exhibition's stated aim 'to encourage new debates and questions so that our Afro-Atlantic histories can be themselves reconsidered, revised and rewritten'.[3]

Ethical concerns and the mobilization of anthropological perspectives to respond emerge from the first two examples of the Tate and the Humboldt Forum, but what emerges from the third example of MASP is more the anthropological preoccupation with positionality, power and sedimentation of knowledge, or rather, a recognition of

knowledge systems as inherently skewed by those who control the site and means of knowledge production. This reflexivity shifts the focus away from the universal and towards the specific, in this case, to question canons and positionalities of speech. How can MASP acknowledge its position as an elite cultural institution? Founded through a partnership between leading São Paulo industrialists and Nelson Rockefeller, as part of wider North American Cold War cultural policy (Mantoan 2016 Faria and Costa 2006), how can MASP reconfigure its origins to serve wider publics? What kind of expographic work, or work that is specifically configured through the design of exhibits both within and without the museum, particularly on issues of Brazilian identity, can be put forward to move away from the museum's original purpose, to 'foster partial modernizing practices disguised as national culture [for] an upper and middle-class' (Lima 2010)?

Each of these locations is of course radically different, and the questions that curators at institutions like the Tate, the Humboldt Forum or MASP face surrounding institutional identity, exhibition of works, reception of publics and degrees of accessibility, to name but a few concerns, are intrinsically linked to the contexts in which they are based. Anthropological perspectives offer useful tools for curators in this sense to reflexively understand the positionalities that such institutions occupy, while also suggesting pathways forward to respond to such demands. Echoing the practice of creating unmediated dialogue with the other in a framework of one-to-one discussion, and engaging with site-specific responses to particular critiques, institutional curators have mobilized anthropological approaches to unfurl a double rejoinder to those who question the museum's role.

The potential of such an approach is its portability and sensitivity to unique and particular contexts, that is, its very anthropological-ness. In contrast, a noticeable weakness of Foster's critique is that it fails to fully take account of how artistic practice in Brazil is subject to different contexts, potentials and limitations to, for example, practice in Mexico, North America or Europe. What lies behind this omission is the question of Foster's own positionality, which can be better glimpsed in a short passage from the original version of his essay (1995), one that was not included in the version for the subsequent monograph *The Return of the Real* (1996):

> This turn to the ethnographic, it is important to see, is not only an external seduction; it is also driven by forces immanent to *advanced art*, at least in *Anglo-American* metropoles, forces which I can only sketch here. (1995: 305 my emphasis)

Foster's use of the term 'advanced art', and the notion of 'Anglo-American metropoles' articulates a type of disclaimer, suggesting that the author's knowledge of what is driving the ethnographic turn from within is limited to the larger cities of the United Kingdom and the United States. It also, deliberately or otherwise, creates a connotation in suspension, a suggestion that, first, art can be separated between that which is 'advanced' and that which is not, and, second, that this separation might be premised along geographic lines. We will return to a consequence of this seeming Eurocentrism later in the chapter, particularly with regard to how artists who identify as indigenous challenge Foster's characterization of artists engaging with alterity. For now, having

briefly sketched some current spaces of encounter, we can begin to construct a speculative nexus of interconnection, intervention and sheer mutual incomprehension that characterizes the engagement between anthropological and curatorial practice.

Meeting points

A growing number of anthropologists have an interest in and have written about both contemporary art practice and anthropology's relationship with art more widely (Flynn 2018; Foster 1995; Ingold 2013; Gell 1998; Grimshaw and Ravetz 2015; Marcus 2010; Sansi 2015; Schneider and Wright 2006, 2010, 2013; Ssorin-Chaikov 2013; Strohm 2012; Fillitz and Van der Grijp 2018). Some of these authors, a number of whom appear in this volume, have sought to extend their conceptual discussions of contemporary art practice and anthropological research by engaging in a complementary curatorial practice. Rafael Schacter and Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov in particular have organized large, complex and multifaceted exhibitions, and Ssorin-Chaikov has put forward 'ethnographic conceptualism' (2013) as a result of this process. My own curatorial practice has developed over the last four years, first working within the curatorial team of a year-long residency programme based within an occupied building in the centre of São Paulo, the *Residência Artística Cambridge*, (Flynn 2018, 2019 forthcoming) and latterly co-curating an exhibition on the phenomenon of *editoras cartoneras*, which opened in São Paulo in November 2018, before travelling to London.

While there exists a recognition of what Arnd Schneider and Chris Wright term 'border crossings' (2006: 1) or, more particularly, the porous frontier that anthropological practitioners traverse when confounding codes of expectation as to how their work is presented or developed, this porosity is not acknowledged by all. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's photographic practice, dating from his early career as a graduate student in the social sciences, and later from early periods working in the field, was recently the subject of an exhibition at the Sesc Ipiranga cultural centre in São Paulo. Perhaps mindful of confusion that could be caused by an anthropologist exhibiting visual media in an exhibition space often used for the display of contemporary art, the title of the exhibition pointedly reads, 'Variações do Corpo Selvagem: Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, fotógrafo', thus making plain a symbolic switching (and delineation) of roles. This is not the forum for an art history-style critical reading of the potential or otherwise of exhibitions that are constructed by anthropologists acting as curators. More pertinent is to construct an index of potential commonalities that stimulate such encounters.

Perhaps the first point of commonality could be conceived of through the practice of 'accompanying', or better, perhaps, 'presentialism'. In curatorial and anthropological work there may arise the possibility to 'accompany', respectively, the artists with whom the curator is working, or the interlocutors who are part of any anthropological research process. This process of accompanying can be thought of as deeply presential in both cases: anthropologists often commit to following their interlocutors' daily routines and practices and some curators work in a similar way, visiting artists in their studio, attending openings of the artist's exhibitions and being present at a variety of events

in which the artist will participate. This embodied and affective construction of a field of work facilitates the creation of bonds of trust between various actors over a substantial period of time, another important intersection of practice: curatorial work, like anthropological work, may be conducted over an extended period that creates opportunities for a deepening of initial connections or relations. One curator friend of mine, perhaps a little tired at the end of the day, commented that as a curator accompanying an artist, one might be expected to be present at the majority of the artist's events, open studios and the like, provide a sounding board for their ideas, arrange coffees to chat, catch up and gossip, discuss possible funding opportunities and offer to proofread their texts. For curators who work in this manner, the act of accompanying an artist becomes deeply processual, which suggests an intersection with how anthropology understands and conceives of long-term ethnographic field research.

The construction of a field is suggestive of a multiplicity of actors and, in mediating between different worlds, occupying an interstitial position and potentially acting to try to stitch disparate realities together, there is the hint of another sphere of practice that the anthropologist and curator may traverse, if not together, then at least on intersecting paths. A curator might be simultaneously understood as a potential gatekeeper of resources, a project manager of logistical processes, a mediating presence between different professionals and an intellectual and conceptual interlocutor for the artist. This notion of the curator as a type of open social interstice derives from the idea that putting together an exhibition often entails working in a team of people with many different roles.

Thinking about my recent exhibition *Cartoneras: Releituras Latino-Americanas*, for example, the immediate project team consisted of two curators, of whom I was one, and a head of production with an assistant. From this starting point, the expographic (the technical design of the exhibition displays and furniture) and visual identity team was four strong, installation and construction another three, and there were a further five key actors at the Casa do Povo, where the exhibition was held, ranging from the director, to the head of programming, to production and external relations. The exhibition displayed the work of two filmmakers, whose films were translated and subtitled by a specialist in this field, the educational team counted on a director and a further two pedagogues, all exhibition texts were revised and translated by a team of two and a further person was responsible for social media content and feed. Beyond this operational sphere, the research team was composed of myself, Lucy Bell and Patrick O'Hare, colleagues on an AHRC research project, and there were of course the artists whose work the exhibition put on display. Included in the programming was a symposium, which twenty-five of the artists attended. The exhibition also counted on a publication, which brought together four texts in *cartonera* form, that is, bound with a hand-painted cardboard cover, and this book was put together by an external graphic designer.

In total therefore, this medium-size exhibition placed the curators within a field of fifty-two different actors, each with a unique positionality and set of responsibilities, and this is counting solely the people with whom the curators maintained an almost daily contact. Anthropological work adapts to each circumstance in which it is conducted and won't necessarily involve work with so many people, but being essentially relational, the research process places the researcher amid many different

positionalities and often requires a certain amount of mediation. This multiplicity of actors, and the pressures that traversing often deeply stratified social contours can exert, are a point of connection between two very different practices, and therefore a productive point to consider.

Within this diverse field of actors and narratives, both the anthropologist and curator face a certain expectation to synthesize, create a discernible thread, articulate and mobilize a conceptual vocabulary, and thus compile a coherent line of thought for a wider sphere. Synthesis is common to many fields, but the expectation of a certain production of knowledge from a diverse set of starting points perhaps signals a third meeting space of practice. While the construction of knowing goes right back to the colonial roots of anthropology, on the curatorial side, this demand has certainly accelerated since the 1990s as Victoria Walsh notes: The development of formal research practices in the art museums now effectively parallels those of the university: initiating and leading research projects funded by the public and private sectors, running doctoral programs, supporting fellowships, developing research centres, hosting seminars, and organizing conferences for specialist audiences (2016: 1).

Walsh here refers to curators with an institutional position, curators who can easily traverse between the art school and the art museum, but these expectations are also pertinent to the independent curators based in São Paulo with whom I work. I have written in more detail about curatorial practice as a form of knowledge production elsewhere (Flynn 2018) and although knowledge production is a broad field, there is a productive detail about curatorial and anthropological practice that offers the possibility of encounter. The processuality to which I refer above connects with a notion of *longitudinal* knowledge production, and curators, like anthropologists, may develop their thinking and practice across a series of exhibitions, papers and talks, much in the same way that anthropologists may approach their work through departmental research seminars, conference papers, journal articles and monographs. For both practitioners, these outputs register as indexes on a trajectory, each instance connecting to another in the manner that Alfred Gell (1998: 250) argued characterizes the production of artworks. For certain curators and anthropologists, Gell's analysis of how an artist's œuvre consists of individual pieces, each an index of agency distributed through time with four differing temporal relations between each instance of the wider body of work, is useful to think through a space of mutual encounter:

Prospective orientation

1. Strong: Preparatory Sketch → Finished Work
2. Weak: Precursory (not planned as the start of a series) → Further works in a series

Retrospective orientation

1. Strong: (Past) Original ← Subsequent copy
2. Weak: Original work ← Subsequent work that is recapitulated and developed through a process of stylistic evolution

The emphasis on the mid to long term in certain anthropological and curatorial careers creates a possibility for the elaboration of this 'œuvre' and Irit Rogoff gestures towards this in her attempt to distinguish curating – the operational everyday business of exhibition-making – from 'the curatorial':

> The curatorial is an ongoing process; it doesn't think it's over when the event of knowledge has taken on some sort of tangible form and is materially sitting there. It recognizes that its existence is a way station in a process; a milestone in a process. (Rogoff 2012: 27 cited in Walsh 2016: 2)

Knowledge production for both practices can therefore, in at least certain, perhaps more institutionalized, contexts, be conceived of as being elaborated within a particular timeline; a temporality that goes beyond short-term urgency and the need to respond, instead putting forward an incremental accumulation of reflexive output, a tendency that some might interpret as a riposte to the power-laden regime of 'facticity' (Lash 2007).[4]

At this point it might be productive to summarize the interconnections discussed so far. First, the presential, processual nature of work that invites one actor to accompany the other in their day-to-day practice and the manner in which this may lead to the development of affective and embodied relations. Second, the realization of a field of work in which there are multiple actors, each with unique spheres of practice, to whom the curator or anthropologist has diverse responsibilities, while also perhaps being called upon to mediate what are diverse positionalities. And third, the emphasis of synthesizing a conceptual narrative from within (although not necessarily about) these positionalities and multiple actors, the construction of a body of work, and the temporality in which this may occur, premised upon the idea of an indexical relationship between talks, exhibitions, books, and so on, and the inherent possibility of reflection that this suggests.

At this point it is important to note the limitations to such a summary, even within a speculative framework, given the lack of a concise definition as to what a curatorial role might presuppose. Unlike the discipline of anthropology, where it is almost unquestioned that one cannot lay claim to being an anthropologist without (1) having undertaken long-term immersive field work that (2) led to the subsequent award of a doctoral degree at (3) an accredited higher institution of study, curating has fewer and less established standardized norms with which to discern those who are from those who aren't. Harald Szeemann, considered by both Jens Hoffmann and Hans-Ulrich Obrist as the father of modern curatorial practice, was an independent curator, having resigned from the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969 to found the Agentur für geistige gastarbeit, an autonomous network of collaborators who developed exhibitions for multiple institutions. Essentially freelance, Szeemann shifts rather tellingly between uneasy typologies of curatorial practice, including Graham and Cook's (2010) classification of 'freelance curators' like Szeemann, 'embedded curators', those in a permanent, fixed institutional role and thus constrained to a certain extent by that institution's logic, and 'adjunct curators', those who are more autonomous, albeit with access to institutional connections and networks, and seek to enable artists via a processual approach (2010:

150–3). Such categorizations struggle to capture more nuanced portrayals, but, with limited space, this chapter can only put forward an apology as opposed to a defence regarding the type of curatorial practice that is being set alongside anthropological practice, and move forwards to a further space of encounter, albeit one that is constructed from without as opposed to within.

Critiques

These spaces of encounter can be complemented by specific critiques that are levelled at curators and anthropologists alike, suggesting that curatorial and anthropological practice may act in similar spaces and with similar motives, thus prompting similar friction and unease. Within the wider decolonial turn presently occurring in anthropology, Ramon Grosfoguel (2016) has articulated the notion of *extractivismo epistemológico*, epistemological extractivism. Grosfoguel starts by acknowledging the important work of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, and her critique of how, beyond their mineral resources, indigenous knowledge systems are being extracted and assimilated by an ongoing colonial system of power. This perspective finds a powerful echo in the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), who identifies the need to decolonize academic research on indigenous communities by making a more meaningful attempt to deconstruct categories of otherness, particularly bearing in mind anthropology's traditional overdetermination of such dichotomies as the observer and observed, and the anthropologist and indigenous other. As Macarena Gómez-Barris notes, 'Smith's work reminds us that extraction operates through material and immaterial forms of converting indigeneity into exchange value, where intellectual and spiritual resources are taken to produce new forms of colonial currency' (2017: 10). A recent example of this process can be found in the recent controversy (among many others pertaining to the publication) surrounding the name of the anthropology journal known as *HAU*, a Maori word, but entirely decontextualized and presented purely as an anthropological concept.

Anthropologists have long commented on problematic instances of curatorial work, for example in exhibitions like *Magiciens de la Terre* (Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1989, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin), *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Modern and the Tribal* (New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), 1984, curated by William Rubin) or *Art and Artifac*t (New York, Buffalo Museum of Science, 1989, curated by Susan Vogel). These critiques stem from the idea that works, objects and, indeed, the everyday objects of life have been removed from indigenous communities, taking them out of the contexts in which they were produced to depoliticize them and re-signify them for the consumption of an occidental gaze. What has begun to occur in recent years, however, is the extension of this critique from the curators of such exhibitions, to the very anthropologists within Eurocentric academe, who formerly made such critiques of the curators. Grosfoguel notes: The extractivist mentality seeks the appropriation of traditional knowledge […] so that academics from Western universities pretend to have produced 'original' ideas as if they had the 'copyrights' of the idea (2016: 133).

The work of Bolivian social scientist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui is significant in this regard, beginning with a critique of the curatorial process of the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid, via her co-curated exhibition *The Potosí Principle. How Can We Sing the Song of the Lord in an Alien Land?* to her linked criticisms (2010) of the work of decoloniality scholar Walter Mignolo for having 'built a small empire within the empire, strategically recovering the contributions of the Indian school of subaltern studies and many Latin American instances of critical reflection on colonization and decolonization' (2010: 58). Clearly, the notion of accompanying work in fields where intellectual property is so important, but at the same time, there exists so little protection of such property beyond informal relations of trust, places both the curator and the anthropologist in a similar space. Having encountered a faint echo of Hal Foster's critique of artists seeking to articulate otherness, from his own positionality within an 'Anglo-American' metropole, we will return to the broader point implicit here in the conclusion.

The hierarchies in which the anthropologist and the curator operate also create a shared sense of friction. Not all curators work from institutions with the financial security this may or may not bring, but lines of hierarchy between artists and curators, although increasingly challenged, are still entrenched in schemes of verticality that characterize many other working environments, including the anthropological field. As Martha Rosler notes, 'artists may channel mysterious energies, but others get to make the choices. Choice trumps creation and choice is linked to all rewards, including an enlarged audience for the chosen artists' work' (2003: 1). This sense of an unequal relationship between actors, working in many cases on projects of mutual interest, finds a partial resonance with Arnd Schneider's comment on the relationship between anthropologists and their interlocutors in this field, in this case arts practitioners, when he notes that such exchanges necessarily occur within an uneven hermeneutic field (2015: 25-6).

Points of processual difference

What then might be the difference between the agencies and intentions of a curator and those of an anthropologist? What are the different questions both reflexively, and at stake, for these two practices? There may be certain similarities and potential points of encounter between the anthologist and the curator, but, following a recent provocation from curator Simon Njami regarding the articulation of identity, shouldn't the question be rather 'how' as opposed to 'what'? Is it perhaps in the how that a perception develops that, for all their similarities, these practices may in fact present differences that place them beyond any kind of equivalence?

What follows are reflections based on my own curatorial practice that point towards what emerges from a processual standpoint. As such, there can be no pretension to provide a more rigorous deconstruction: these are merely observations that relate to a particular experience within a particular context. If we start from the presupposition that both curatorial and anthropological practice overlap to a certain extent in their production of knowledge, the very notion of 'expography', or exhibition design, foregrounds an important difference in conception, planning and execution. Exhibitions, even if exclusively textual, work with a logic of the visual. Anthropology,

however, has a well-established difficulty engaging with this register, as Lucian Castaing-Tayor commented in 1995, remarking on anthropology's 'iconophobia'. Anna Grimshaw (2001) traces a history from Alfred Haddon's Torres Strait expedition, the first anthropological field-site, that seeks to understand how although the visual formed part of the expedition's data, the emphasis that the research team placed on the development of 'sophisticated scientific methods' (2001: 22) meant that the photographs became ancillary to a more powerful legitimizing mechanism: the rigour of a new discipline. Despite Haddon's own enthusiasm for the inclusion of a *cinematographe* among the expedition's kit (other items included a Galton's whistle, eye tester, *ohrmesser* and some marbles), the visual became a way to describe and illustrate the primary narrative, rather than something that could have been considered as research method in and of itself.

What Castaing-Taylor and Grimshaw point towards is the static relationship that anthropology presupposes between the viewer and the viewed. With reference to exhibition-making, James Elkins has long argued that 'seeing is metamorphosis, not mechanism' (1996: 12), calling attention to the complex intersubjectivity that is at play when one is engaged on a visual plane, and the transformative element that is implicit to this relationship. What powerful arts figures, such as Chris Dercon, speaking here in 2013, understand is the unlimited potential this transformative element possesses when it occurs within a space populated by many other people:

> The museum of the future is going to be like a university, like a campus, where the art is one thing, but the fact that you have so many different encounters and that you can test your ideas out, that you can throw your questions out about gender, identity, about the world […] This is the museum of the future.[5]

What particularly is at stake here is aesthetics, not merely as object of study, but, potentially, as tangible research practice. In an exhibition, knowledge may be constructed through not merely the aesthetics of the visual, but also through the inherent spatiality of the context. Working with a three-dimensional and inherently sculptural presentation, the curator has an opportunity to engage with the polyvalence afforded by different uses of space. What might be the significance inherent in opting to exhibit a certain object on a table, or floor, or wall? How might an exhibition seek to work within long-established traditions of research on the importance of the line? Being physically installed into a given space, how will the curator come to terms with the multiple axes of orientation that any exhibition demands, dimensions of verticality, horizontality, questions of scale, and how these modifiers act upon the relationships between a multiplicity of objects, the visitor to the exhibition and the path that the visitor might take? Each of these considerations calls into question the notion of a neutral presentation of knowledge in a textual format and the supposed divorce of form from content that is an unquestioned assumption about anthropological text. As Kiven Strohm states:

> What aesthetic experience activates, particularly in those moments of collaboration between anthropology and art, is a disruption and redistribution of roles and

> places of anthropologist and the other and, in turn, of what can be seen, heard, thought, said and done in the anthropological episteme. (2012: 117)

Exhibition-making foregrounds the inherent interdependence of content and form and also, as Lucy Bell and I argue (forthcoming 2019), the indivisibility of social and aesthetic forms more widely. Both of these factors impact on the type of knowledge that can be produced and how that knowledge is articulated in conjunction with a visitor/reader who is not static, but can view the 'text' from a variety of angles, move around it, begin at the end, and end at the beginning. Another point here is the specificity of each space in which an exhibition is created, in contrast to the supposedly neutral 'blank page | white cube' aesthetic of scholarly publishing outlets. A curator organizing a set of ethnographic images for exhibition, for example, must take into account the space in which this will occur and the connotations that this space already confers. The same exhibition within a public library, a corporate bank's private collection, a university exhibition space or a museum like São Paulo's Estação Pinacoteca, a space that was used for the torture and imprisonment of political prisoners during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), will acquire different meanings. This is a question of affordances: how will these spaces inflect upon the works, how will the dialogues between the works be intervened by silenced histories, pre-existing discussions, relations and imbalances of power?

This polyvalence of spatiality argues for the recognition of a multiplicity of publics. Impossible as it is to generalize about curatorial practice and, indeed, for this very reason, Szeeman declined to term himself a curator, but rather an *Ausstellungsmacher*, or exhibition-maker. Many curators with whom I work will envisage a professional public for their show, but also be highly aware of their obligation to a broad, undefined and unknown public. The element of a work placed tangibly into space is important here: for all the pertinent critique of museums and biennales as restricted in terms of access, it is worth noting how, especially in non-commercial spaces in which art is exhibited, people can enter; and educational programmes, although many times underinvested, are specifically tasked with creating a broader and more diverse visiting public. The 2018 São Paulo biennial, which like many biennials is accused of being an elitist institution, received 190,000 free admission visitors in the first three weeks after its official opening. Such transit, when placed into comparison with the circulation of the majority of anthropological textual output, provides a stark contrast. Anthropology's knowledge production mechanisms, far from being open (the Brazilian Scielo system is a notable exception) are captured within a cooperate model of what might be coarsely termed 'pay-to-play': individuals without a university affiliation, that is, a huge percentage of the general population, must pay a fee ranging from $20 to $50 to merely access a single article.

Not only is access hugely limited, therefore, but such limitations can mean that the publics that anthropologists address are much more homogenous than those that might casually wander into the São Paulo biennial pavilion, located as it is in the largest park of the city, a green space that tens of thousands of people visit every weekend. First, the vast majority of those who access anthropological writing will be other scholars because of the paywall. Our language of writing, our aesthetic rendering of

'rigour' is commonly and anecdotally accused of being impenetrable to non-experts and thus articulated only in the safe space of academia (see, for example, blog posts on Anthro{dendum}[6] or University College London's (UCL's) Global Social Media Impact Study blog[7]). While efforts to create a 'popular' or more 'accessible' anthropology are under way, the basic tension between legitimacy, rigour and the specificity of language remains.

This comparative homogeneity of the anthropological public perhaps suggests one of the sharpest contours of difference that exists between the two fields of practice. The curator imagines the reception of their work with a diverse variety of publics in mind and, particularly, institutional curators explicitly work to broaden these spheres. In the case of MASP's *Afro-Atlantic Histories*, for example, creating a public was underpinned by diverse resources including an online summary of the exhibition's content, programmes, aims and theoretical ambit, in both English and Portuguese, visual representations of the works on display in the space, five short-form professionally produced videos with participating artists describing the exhibition's relationship to questions of racism in Brazil (all subtitled in Portuguese), plus other links to further online sources of content via Facebook and Instagram. Engaging audiences and seeking to create circulation between the institution of the museum and the city in which it is based is not above being subject to critique, for example, of overdetermination of meaning, or a certain patronizing attitude to the cultivation of a public. However there at least exists a commitment to open a knowledge production process outwards; to communicate with those who helped create it, in a language that has a degree of accessibility.

Releituras (rereadings)

Having discussed how anthropologists and curators imagine different publics based upon a polyvalence of spatiality, I would now like to draw on an ethnographic example regarding how these differences manifested themselves in the exhibition *Cartoneras: Releituras Latino-Americanas* I co-curated with Beatriz Lemos. (See Figure 10.1.) The exhibition, which took place in the Casa do Povo cultural centre from 1 November 2018 to 9 February 2019, featured over 350 *cartonera* books from 35 different collectives. Drawing on works from Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Germany and France, we (the Grupo Inteiro, composed of Carol Tonetti, Cláudio Bueno, Ligia Nobre and Vitor Cesar and the coordination of the Casa do Povo, in discussion with the curatorial team) agreed on four different display modules: first, a staircase module with integrated seating area and storage space installed in the entrance hall of the building; second, a set of two parallel lines of shelving that echoed the staircase module; third, three iron-framed units on which to hang the curatorial texts, display three video units and foreground a collection of artists' books; and fourth, a small set of parallel shelving for a rotating special collection. The design was driven by the concept that all books on display should be fully accessible to visitors as opposed to being protected by display cases as is more common: we thought of the books as points of potential interaction, making possible a space of relations and exchanges,

Figure 10.1 The exhibition *Cartoneras: Releituras Latino-Americanas*, São Paulo, Brazil, 2018. Image credit: Filipe Berndt.

a space in which other events could take place. While the design included a certain didactic content – tutorial videos showing different methods of how *cartonera* books are created and a documentary film explaining how *cartonera* had originated – it was our intention that the space should essentially function to welcome visitors to come in and sit down, pick up a book and come to their own understanding of the *cartonera* phenomenon. We also thought of the books as enacting a type of proto-*cartonera* library, as we were creating a concentration of *cartonera* literature never before experienced in a public space. It seemed to us that just as a university library could be a starting point for many research processes, a *cartonera* library could function in the same way, although importantly, with different basic rules of access, copyright and interaction.

In this sense, a fundamental component of the exhibition was a workstation where the public programme team members were based. This was equipped with cardboard from a nearby recycling cooperative, paints, paintbrushes, box cutters, and so on – in short, a typical *cartonera* workspace – so that visitors, seeking to take home the exhibition catalogue could bind and decorate it with cardboard, thus creating their own *cartonera* book. (See Figure 10.2.) The workstation also provided a free printing facility so that visitors could bind whichever PDF text they had chosen in *cartonera* form. Over the duration of the exhibition, over 300 catalogues were created in this manner and roughly 30 scholarly and activist texts were bound, allowing us to work alongside people integrating *cartonera*, both literally and affectively, into their research

Figure 10.2 The workstation of the public programme team, *Cartoneras: Releituras Latino-Americanas*, São Paulo, Brazil, 2018. Image credit: Filipe Berndt.

process, making plain the transition of a literary work into the processual and visual sphere.

Such processes were contextualized by the affordances of the Casa do Povo itself, created in the aftermath of the Holocaust by São Paulo's Jewish diaspora as a living monument. At the time we were conceiving *Releituras*, the Casa do Povo was seeking to create a library of its own extensive archive. On many occasions, after an exhibition, expensive furniture and fittings are destroyed. *Cartonera*, however, among many other things, symbolizes and exemplifies a repurposing of so-called waste material to make multiple social interventions. In this manner therefore, it was natural that in our planning discussions we agreed that the exhibition displays should be reused for the Casa do Povo's forthcoming library, a proposal that was entirely coherent with the ethos of what was being exhibited. The localization of the Casa do Povo was also important. Located in Bom Retiro, the Casa do Povo is a focal point in a neighbourhood that has long welcomed immigrants, starting with Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s, Greek, Syrian and Lebanese communities in the 1960s, the Korean community in the 1980s and, more recently, Guarani speakers from Paraguay and Chinese immigrants. *Cartonera* is a pan-Latin American phenomenon: the exhibition included texts in Portuguese, Spanish, Guarani and Portunhol Selvagem among others in English, French and German. The Casa do Povo's connection to the street and community, its open door without security, welcoming people into a shared space, were at the forefront of our minds in designing the exhibition's public programme: a series of events and a *cartonera* symposium, with the intention to reach a broad and diverse public, sparking unexpected connections.

I would like to highlight three particular events here. First, the *cartonera* collective Dulcinéia Catadora led three workshops in the exhibition space exploring immigrant women's perspectives of São Paulo. The participating group, comprising representatives of different feminist and lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LBT) collectives, worked together to create a series of texts that spoke to their experience of living in Brazil's largest city. Over the three sessions, the participants created a *cartonera* book of these short texts, which through a complex series of folds, became an A2 placard of protest to be used in a protest march following the third session. Second, in the process of working throughout the exhibition, two members of the public programme team created their own *cartonera* publisher, Sin Fronteira Cartonera, echoing how Dulcinéia Catadora came into being during Eloísa's workshops at the 2006 São Paulo biennale. Over a series of sessions, they produced six books, including *Dialogos, reflexiones y desafios en Colombia: Hacia un feminismo popular,* a text organized by the Colombian feminist collective Red de Mujeres de La Sabana. And finally, to close the exhibition, we organized the event 'Iy mūn ku mãk pax', designed to bring into focus languages spoken in Brazil beyond those of the colonizers, Portuguese and Spanish. This event took place over two days and, inspired by the bilingual texts of the *cartonera* collective Yiyi Jambo that create a deft interplay between Portunhol Selvagem, Portuguese and Guarani, the event sought to work with themes of how colonial structures have systemically silenced indigenous languages and literature. Juanito Cusicanki and Beatriz Morales of Aymara and Quechua ethnicity respectively, were invited to present their indigenous alphabets, based on their oral knowledge. In the second workshop, representatives of Guarani, Pankararu and Baniwa peoples spoke about their experiences of state kidnapping and the following imposition of Portuguese on their communities. Contextualized by these moving accounts, the title of the event came to hold a particular significance: from the shamanic chant maxakali / tikmũ'ũn, Iy mũn ku mãk pax, meaning 'my beautiful voice'.

The notion of welcoming people into the exhibition space and allowing the different uses of space to spark interventions also informed the *encontro cartonero*, a two-day event to which we invited *cartonera* practitioners from various cities across Mexico and Brazil as well as Buenos Aires, New York and London. The *encontro* occurred within the exhibition space and sought to create an opportunity for practitioners to catch up, exchange and sell books, make connections and discuss new projects. We organized a series of roundtable discussions to stimulate conversation on *cartonera*, and the *encontro* generated an important co-edition that was subsequently integrated with the exhibition: a collection of political texts, entitled *BR*, responding directly to the recent victory of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil's 2018 presidential elections.

This forum was also an important opportunity for the wider *cartonera* community to question us as a research team and seek clarification on our motives for becoming involved with *cartonera.* At the *encontro,* a representative from Pensaré, a collective based in Chiapas, Mexico, pressed us directly on how relations between *cartonera* publishers and academics could have unwelcome consequences as they reinforced the hierarchical system of oppression already in play. These critiques were important for us as a project team to reflect on the hierarchical relations that indeed structured our interactions and the limitations that acted upon our attempts at horizontality, as

European, white researchers, with contracts at powerful British institutions of higher education. Perhaps, more than anything else, the form of the *encontro* allowed us to better appreciate the complex inequalities and hierarchical knowledge production relations that exist in the interface between *cartonera* publishing and a wider world.

My final point pertains to open-endedness and can be best illustrated through the exhibition team's reworking of my *texto de parede*, the curatorial text *displayed* within the exhibition, as opposed to the longer text *printed* in the catalogue. The careful process of constructing these differing formats revealed how, although anthropological and artistic practice might be on what James Clifford described as 'speaking terms' (1988) in their intentions, there exist important contours of difference. If the curator potentially thinks about various different languages – not just linguistic but also spatial – there is at once, perhaps, a concomitant resistance to a language characterized by overdetermination. Although the term curatorship has, in a sense, become generic (Balzer 2015), I would suggest that among the curators with whom I work, while there is a commitment to accompany, mediate, negotiate and, ultimately, synthesize, there is an equally powerful, unnamed and deep-seated commitment to leaving an exhibition open to interpretation, respecting the agency of the artist and allowing the visitor to come to their own understanding of what is being presented. My curatorial text was extensively edited and revised by members of the exhibition team. The alterations revealed to me the contested sense of how to write a text, and how I was obliged to adopt an open-endedness that I suggest may characterize curatorial practice in distinction to the golden thread model of narrative that can often be sought within anthropology, for various practical reasons. In the revisions, there was a central preoccupation that stemmed from an unease with the authorial voice: the exhibition team felt my original text sought to impose itself, that it was controlling, that it sought to direct the reader towards a narrower range of interpretation.

In one example, the team redacted my specific question, 'How did an underfunded and overlooked marginal activity practiced by three young cultural actors come to spread so far?' and its rejoinder, 'there is no simple answer to this question' and replaced this 'hook' (the result no doubt of multiple funding proposals and book synopses) with a more open-ended series of questions, ensuring that the visitor would be free to ask multiple questions of *cartonera* publishing:

> What kind of phenomenon is cartonera? What kind of 'social proposition' does it put forward? How does this gesture, which came about in a moment of crisis, appropriated in different contexts, transform itself into a tool to grasp such particular worlds?

Further edits reinforced a commitment to open-endedness. Revisions removed an explanation I sought to impose, 'What perhaps more than anything else has driven *cartonera*'s rapid growth is …' and rejected a binary opposition that anthropological training has perhaps led me to adopt, in juxtaposing *cartonera* publishing with 'more traditional teleological movements'. This may be recognizable to anthropologists as a common writing strategy within the discipline, by which we deliberately create a contrast with another phenomenon to aid the position and determination of the

subject under discussion. These details are small but significant and, contextualized by the three-dimensionality of the sociable space I have described above, create an entirely different pathway towards proposing an investigation of a given phenomenon. Indeed, I would suggest that fine-grained work in the encounter between anthropology and curatorial practice reveals practitioners with different positionalities and motivations, practising fundamentally different ways of creating and communicating knowledge.

Conclusion

What might we conclude from the similarities, critiques and differences outlined in a speculative manner above? What might be their implications for our practice as anthropologists? What does Kiven Strohm's suggestion (prediction?) that anthropology could be radically 'reordered' in a Rancière sense mean? Regarding differences, or points of mutual misapprehension, the notion of multiple publics stands as an important marker: we never know who will read our papers and, while anthropological work *does* travel in unexpected ways, transit and circulation is almost always a given for an exhibition; it is one of the central motives in conceiving of a display of works, to invite people in to see what has been created. This brings us to the spatiality at play, the accessibility of that space and the presence of a multiplicity of languages in the different formats in which artistic and anthropological work is presented. The visual plane of any exhibition, the expography that intervenes and complements displayed work, marks an important break with some, but not all, of anthropological output. It calls into question how anthropological work that derives from embedded and embodied relations can oftentimes be so efficiently emptied of the relational dimensions of affect from whence it came. Further, and perhaps most importantly, there is the concept of open-endedness. In practising a resistance to overdetermination, a refusal to didactically control how meaning can be imparted, curatorial practice exits from its conversation with much of anthropology, because it increasingly seeks to invoke affective relations to spark collaborative work.

Such a model for the production of knowledge has radical implications for anthropology. For Rancière, artistic practices are not privileged means of understanding 'reality', but '"ways of doing and making" that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility' (2014: 8). By offering alternate ways of seeing, artistic practices are capable of 'intervening' in different arrangements and distributions and Kiven Strohm and I both suggest that a deep anthropological engagement with artistic practice will necessarily create a reordering of the distribution of roles in the discipline, particularly with regard to artists who identify as indigenous, a reconfiguration that will only gain greater force as time goes on.

This brings us back to the artist as ethnographer. I have already commented on a certain Eurocentric positionality that Foster assumes, and indeed Foster erases all difference between, for example, a Brazilian artist invoking the cultural alterity of the Huni Kuin in his or her practice, and an artist from the United States doing the same. He labels both as primitivist fantasy, premised upon the idea 'that the other has access to primal psychic and social processes from which the white (petit) bourgeois

subject is blocked' (1995: 303). In this reading, all artists in 'advanced art' occupy the same positionality, which perhaps provides a timely reminder of the particularity of the anthropological approach, and why indeed, artists and curators have sought to incorporate this one-to-one potential into their practice.

There can be a tendency for critics like Foster to assume privileged access when it comes to the understanding of forms – the ways they work, the possibilities they afford and their transformative potential (Flynn and Bell 2019 forthcoming). The post-critical turn of recent years has made clear that to 'render the thoughts and actions of ordinary social actors as insufficiently self-aware or critical' (Anker and Felski 2017: 14) is a practice rooted in subject–object dualities and colonial relations. However what Foster seems to reach for in his essay is much more than reading or ascribing meaning into work that the creator cannot. Rather, there seems to be an articulation of not just an authority over the work of the (perhaps indigenous) other, but in fact, a reading and ascribing of his/her very *identity*, all from his standpoint as a white, male scholar. For such artists, and here we can think of practitioners such as Jaider Esbell or Denilson Baniwa, of Makuxi and Baniwa ethnicity respectively, Foster reserves only two lines, redacted from the later 1996 version:

> There is the assumption that if the invoked artist […] *is* perceived as other, he or she has automatic access to it [transformative alterity]. (1995: 302)

How are we meant to interpret this? His comment seems to indicate that there may be artists who exist outside of the Anglo-American metropoles, but their otherness must always be held in doubt. First, this otherness cannot be asserted by the artists themselves, because only those from within the Anglo-American sphere have the right to 'perceive'. Second, if an indigenous artist, for example, is 'perceived' (and therefore ratified) as other, then his or her access to a 'transformative alterity' – that is, their unique recourse to their own embodiment, being and sense of self – can be held in doubt, as this artist *may or may not* have 'access' to that which they claim to be.

The introduction to this collection places Foster's essay as a key part of a wider contextual framing and, since its publication, it has clearly dated in a way that in a sense prefigured the kinds of critiques of Eurocentrism and white-man-explaining-non-white-histories that art practitioners would face in the 1990s. In this sense, the essay is still relevant, but not because of the concerns that it articulates on how anthropology and art will empty each other through amateur attempts at collaboration. Instead, it highlights through its Eurocentrism that, for artists and anthropologists alike, the question of *who* discusses representation and identity is not neutral. Who occupies these roles? Who selects these narratives?

The process of restitution, of reclaiming objects looted in colonial expeditions has gathered pace since the UNESCO convention framed in November 1970, which introduced a series of obligations regarding 'the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property'.[8] Museums have been confronted with these questions for over a decade now, but for anthropologists restitution stemming from epistemological extractivism is still a relatively new phenomenon. However, a shift is occurring within the fields in which anthropologists

work, and very noticeably so in Brazil, and this shift is being realized by contemporary art practitioners who identify as indigenous. In this engagement between anthropology and contemporary art, an example of a reordering in a Rancière sense is beginning to take place, one that requires further analysis and reflection. At present, restitution is being discussed and enacted by museums and cultural institutions. But it is perhaps university-based anthropological departments that may have to grapple with these tangible questions ever increasingly in the years to come.

Notes

1   https://www.humboldtforum.com/en/stories/return-to-alaska, accessed 10 November 2018.
2   https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/oct/12/collected-histories-not-everythi ng-was-looted-british-museum-defends-collections, accessed 10 November 2018.
3   https://masp.org.br/exposicoes/historias-afro-atlanticas, accessed 10 November 2018.
4   Both of these models have been subjected to critique of course. David Balzer points instead to a system of curatorial knowledge production that fetishizes the new to the point where the claim of originality is enough to sustain the acceptance of work (2015: 10); while Sandström and van den Besselaar (2016) have researched the concern that high volume output with regard to academic publishing comes with a doubt as to the quality of the work.
5   https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf48/Dercon_Transkript.pdf, accessed 10 November 2018.
6   https://savageminds.org/2014/05/05/anthropologists-as-scholarly-hipsters-part-ii-crit iques-from-the-margins, accessed 10 November 2018.
7   http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/global-social-media/2015/11/27/why-popular-anthropology/, accessed 10 November 2018.
8   http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&U RL_SECTION=201.html, accessed 11 November 2018.

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