

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Birmingham		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 32, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Decolonizing Commemoration through Repatriation and Institutional Change		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016–December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor and Chair of Global Art History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2016–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Vast stores of non-Western material in UK museum collections are in need of repatriation back to Indigenous communities. However, this process has been unnecessarily slow, and those same communities have often been excluded from meaningful involvement with the repatriation process. Carroll's research, advocacy and artistic interventions have obliged UK museums to confront these issues, and in doing so Carroll has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Facilitated the repatriation of non-Western materials from UK museums to Māori communities in New Zealand, which also contributed to improved inclusion and wellbeing of these Indigenous communities; 2) Influenced curatorial practice at Royal Museums Greenwich and professional training of museum practitioners; 3) Informed museum [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION] strategies at Tate. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The underpinning research investigates the significance of decolonizing collections and commemorations through the restitution of intellectual and material property.</p> <p>Outputs RO1, RO2 and RO6 theorize contemporary art from the Pacific and were produced in the collaborative research project, <i>Cook's New Clothes</i> (initiated in 2016), which explored previously unacknowledged perspectives of Māori and Aboriginal peoples on the first James Cook voyage of 1768–1770. This was achieved by investigating the untold histories of Māori and Aboriginal peoples through an analysis of the collections and materials in the Royal Museums, Greenwich (RO1). In addition, the research has explored and historicized systemic racism and prejudice within European cultural institutions more widely, as a way of supporting restitution claims and processes (RO2–RO6). The Royal Museums Greenwich, Sackler Caird, TB-21 Academy, and Rangiwaho Marae supported this research with funding, and Carroll was able to approach the Captain Cook commemorations, with its obvious colonial overtones and history, with a project that instead celebrated Indigenous voices (RO1–RO6). RO1, RO3 and RO5 then established the cross-cultural definition of art, specifically regarding Indigenous people.</p>		
Key research findings are:		
<p>RF1. <i>Decolonization within cultural institutions can be enabled by the restitution of intellectual and cultural property.</i> The research (RO1 and RO2) has explored existing claims on non-Western cultural property by countries with extensive colonial histories, in particular the UK, France, Germany and Austria. The argument is that decolonization can be understood as a process in which cultural property and its value can be transferred from colonial collections in Europe to the decolonizing settler states, allowing both settler and colonized states to shift their relations via exchange and reconciliation. This involves the display of contemporary art works internationally, which in turn can enact decolonization processes within settler states' cultural institutions and discourses.</p>		
<p>RF2. <i>The restitution of intellectual and material property, and the return of cultural practices, can enable increased inclusion and wellbeing of Indigenous communities (RO1).</i> Research</p>		

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was undertaken in collaboration with partner institutions and Indigenous researchers using a method that mediates between the various political conflicts surrounding repatriation, by historicizing repatriation claims in both legal and cultural terms, whilst using artistic forms of resistance and expression to develop new or unacknowledged narratives, build shared empathy (RO3 and RO5) and foster Indigenous knowledge (RO1–RO4). Māori treasures (known as Taonga) with Cook provenance were researched in collaboration with Māori experts, and the process of their return to New Zealand from the UK is seen as a key case study for exploring the socio-political shifts around wider understandings of British public culture.

RF3. *Non-Western concepts of time, space, navigation and commemoration have the potential to expand and challenge dominant colonial histories.* The research has considered how the understanding of time and space within certain Indigenous communities (a non-linear cyclical understanding that has existed for over 60,000 years) has the potential to undermine dominant Western notions of temporal progression and contemporaneity in art (RO2 and RO5). This was achieved through an exploration of Indigenous perspectives concerning the commemoration of Captain James Cook (RO1 and RO6). A collaboration forged with Māori communities enabled research findings to detail the oral history and ongoing social and cultural impact on Māori of the first landings of Cook.

3. References to the research

- RO1.** 'Museopiracy: Redressing the Commemoration of the Endeavour's Voyage to the Pacific in *Processions for Tupaia*', *Third Text* with the British Museum, journal special issue *Exhibiting the Experience of Empire: Decolonising Objects, Images, Materials and Words*, Edited by Imma Ramos, Nikky Grout and John Giblin, 33, 4–5 (2019): 541–559. DOI: 10.1080/09528822.2019.1652424
- RO2.** 'Anachronically Archived: Time in Contemporary Art', in I. McLean and Darren Jorgenson (eds.), *Indigenous Archives: The Making and Unmaking of Aboriginal Art* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2017): pp. 342–361. ISBN: 9781742589220
- RO3.** 'Painting the Political in Oceanian Textile Cultures: Collectivity, Syncretism and Globalization', in J. Harris (ed.), *A Companion to Textile Culture* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), cover and 459–474. ISBN: 9781118768907
- RO4.** '[The Senses, Presences and Beliefs in Indigenous Art History: Towards a recognition of non-Western historiography and methodology](#)', with Damian Skinner, in *Furthering, nurturing and futuring Global Art Histories*, special issue of *Kunstlicht* (2018): pp. 73–79.
- RO5.** *The Importance of Being Anachronistic: Museum Reparation and Contemporary Aboriginal Art* (Melbourne: Discipline Journal and Third Text Publications, 2016, 2nd Ed., 2019). ISBN: 9780994538819
- RO6.** *Cook's New Clothes*, *The Restitution of Complexity*, and *Te Moana* are submitted in REF2021 for Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll as films and artist portfolio on Dr Carroll's [website](#) and the project [website](#).

4. Details of the impact

1) Facilitated the repatriation of non-Western materials from UK museums to Māori communities in New Zealand, which also contributed to improved inclusion and wellbeing of these Indigenous communities

In 2019, 32 objects (*Taonga*) of James Cook provenance, dated from 1770, were returned to their source communities in Gisborne, Aotearoa New Zealand (there are 22,000 Māori in Gisborne). **This unprecedented repatriation was directly facilitated by Carroll's research**, and the significance of this return was attested to by the chairperson of the Māori community Rangiwaho Marae, who stated that: 'The repatriation of Taonga is of great importance to communities such as ours, because these treasures are essential in connecting with our ancestors, to bring forth their stories, and to awaken their spirits [...] the Taonga are now being used within the community to create a basis for new learning and creative expression. They have connected us back to our Tahitian neighbors and relatives and opened doors to educational opportunities [...] new art works, exhibitions, tours of our sacred sites, ceremonies of

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welcome and of mourning [... and] offered us a strong counterbalance to the traumas of colonialism associated with Captain Cook' (S1; RF2).

The repatriation was enabled by Carroll's research, as her work **located and contextualized the significance to those Māori communities** of a number of carved wooden Hoe paddles, woven cloaks and other rare Taonga that were contained within a number of key UK institutions, including: the British Museum; Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; Hancock Museum, Newcastle; and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge. This new knowledge about the paddles (*Taonga*) **thereby empowered the Māori community in their subsequent negotiations** with those same museums, whilst Carroll's project (RO1 and RO6) also funded and mediated the Māori delegation visits to the UK, and at the same time provided workshops and performances for a related film (S1; RF2).

The process of repatriation also led to artists from those same **Māori communities being able to "reconnect" with their art forms and heritage** through engagement with the Taonga, for example building a new Marae (tribal meeting house) with carvings based on the UK collections. This further enables dissemination of the knowledge embodied in those artefacts, as the community representative states: 'The foundation is now set, thanks to you, with UK institutions to honor the relationships that the Taonga nurture. In progressing the intent of 'reconnection' we also seek to share knowledge and enhance the art forms [...] *Na reira ko te taonga he tuku iho, ko te taonga he tuku haa, ko te taonga he oho / a taatou* [It is our shared treasures that inspire, breathe life and awaken us all]' (S1).

There has been a **shift in discourse at the level of government in New Zealand** as a result of the return of Taonga. High ranking officials attended the Rangiwaho Marae during the repatriation. The events at the Marae (meeting houses) are seen by the Māori community as having a great power (*Mana*) that transformed relationships locally, across the Pacific and even with other countries such as the UK (S1). This is reflected in speeches given by New Zealand's Prime Minister, the Governor General and especially the British High Commissioner in September 2019 to mark the 250-year anniversary of Cook's landing in New Zealand. The High Commissioner issued an unprecedented statement of regret for the lives that were lost in the wake of Cook's landing and sought to build and strengthen political ties between Māori and the UK Government. In a subsequent article, she linked her statement of regret and its sentiments explicitly with the return of the 32 Taonga (S8). [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION].

The repatriation and Carroll's film on the subject *Te Moana*, made in collaboration with Rangiwaho (S7), influenced the reception of these seismic political shifts and **enabled the histories and perspectives of these communities to be given a new platform in leading international museums** (ZKM Karlsruhe, Manifesta Biennale Marseilles, Ocean Space Venice). Despite its international premieres in France, Germany and America taking place partly as online festivals due to COVID-19, *Te Moana* has been viewed by over 4,000 people since its release in September 2020. This wide public and political reception has **given these communities the agency and confidence** to engage in regeneration of cultural production and spaces of dissemination; for example, the Tairāwhiti Museum and Rangiwaho Marae in Gisborne have since been successful in obtaining government funding for infrastructural expansions (S1).

2) Influenced curatorial practice at Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) and professional training of museum practitioners

Carroll **influenced the formation of the RMG's HLF-funded 'Pacific Encounters' gallery**, which opened in September 2018, by ensuring the histories of Pacific communities were placed at the heart of the spaces and the narratives presented to the public (RF1 and RF2). This transformation of the gallery meant that, in the words of the Director of Research and Information, there occurred a radical break in 'emphasis away from giving primacy to colonial "heroes", towards a critical analysis of their involvement in the UK's imperial expansion [...] This is significant, not only in **realising aspects of the Museum's research strategy** but also because the gallery has **proven popular with the public, receiving 234,093 visitors in its first year**' (S3). This shift in narrative included, for instance, the key figure of the navigator

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Tupaia (who advised and travelled with Cook) being given a new level of recognition and presenting him in a more objective research-led manner (S3; RF1 and RF2).

In addition, Carroll **changed the RMG's approach to consulting external communities** and commissioning of contemporary art for the gallery, thereby enabling the institution to better address sensitive histories and current issues regarding colonial legacies (S3). Carroll's networks, expertise and leadership on the selection jury of contemporary art to be included in the new gallery resulted in the commissioning of artwork by the Māori collective, Ngāti Rangiiwaho. This was significant for the RMG not only in bringing those external communities into the museum space, but in enabling RMG staff to work and learn from people who are directly descended from the community whom Cook first invaded in 1769 (S3). In addition, Carroll's work informed the RMG's new concurrent online educational course, 'Confronting Captain Cook', (S5) for the learning platform Future Learn (4,500 users to date in 27 countries), as the RMG state: 'Carroll's work has been incorporated into the videos and teaching materials of the course, and this is important for the RMG as it is a publicly accessible resource which again seeks to instigate a change in the memorialisation of key colonial figures' (S3).

This change in institutional ethos through the inclusion of Indigenous voices in content creation has also **impacted upon the RMG's professional training**. Carroll's success in bringing in external community perspectives also resulted in the establishment of 'Pacific Sensitivity Training' within the RMG for staff, delivered to over 400 practitioners (including curators and education teams) each year (S3). This has 'contributed strongly' to the Museum realizing the strategic aim of 'community collaboration' and responding to previously side-lined 'concerns regarding colonial legacies' (S3). The importance of such an institutional shift is enhanced when considered in the context of the unique position that the RMG holds within the British Government's cultural offer. The RMG is a very popular UNESCO heritage attraction, with strong ties to British imperial history, and therefore such a change in approach to colonial history embodies a particularly important shift in the ethos of a public institution such as this (RO1 and RO6).

Carroll's related work for *The Atlantic Project* (2018), an international festival of contemporary art that took place in Plymouth, **influenced the thinking of its Director** and also **contributed to the project's overall success** in engaging the public with decolonial approaches to Cook's history and commemoration. As the Director states: 'Khadija's processional performance, video installation and two performative lectures, were key to realizing the project's strategy [...] and had a profound impact on my own thinking, and thus my professional practice' (S4; RF3; RO6). Carroll's film, *Cook's New Clothes*, was included in the Royal William Yard venue, which received 1,750 visitors, alongside staging a related procession, and performance lecture *Museo-piracy* (S6) in the Plymouth House of Commons, and featured on BBC radio 4, whilst *The Atlantic Project* was described by *Art Monthly* as a 'pioneering project' (S7).

3) Informed museum [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION] strategies at Tate

Tate Modern's **strategic development of a new collection of Australian Art [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION]**, addressed an acknowledged lack of expertise within the institution on Australian art (S2; RF1, RF3). Carroll's input **informed the shift to transnationalism [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION]**, wherein her expertise in Aboriginal conceptions of time, and her critiques of Tate's failure to adequately include "Indigenous", "non-Western" and "Oceanic" categories of art, indicated a vacuum in the institution's approach (S2; RF1 and RF3). Tate's Director of Collections attests to the importance of Carroll's collaboration, stating that 'it was incredibly useful to hear [...] I think we always knew that the picture was complex, and that a blanket, simplistic strategy could never be a solution [...] We have made most initial progress in Australia [...] and have increased our own knowledge but also have a route to seek ongoing advice' (S2).

In addition [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION], Carroll's leadership in the new field of Global Art History, which shifts the emphasis away from established Euro-American artists, has resulted in wider **effects on exhibition strategy** as part of the creation of Tate's new research

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centre, *Transnational: New Perspectives on Global Art Histories*. This was achieved via Carroll's input above into the *Collecting Indigenous Art* initiative, as this has formed the basis of an exhibition in Gallery 3 of Aboriginal Art (anticipated 5 million+ visitors; S2). Aboriginal artist Richard Bell's *Embassy*, a call to action on Indigenous rights, was due to feature centre stage in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2020, but the installation was postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis (S2).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1) Testimonial from chairperson of the Maori community Rangiwaho Marae (September 2020)

S2) Tate programs [TEXT REMOVED FOR PUBLICATION]

S3) Testimonial from Head of Research and Information, Royal Museums Greenwich (September 2019)

S4) Testimonial from Director of the Atlantic (December 2019)

S5) Future Learn, *Confronting Captain Cook* online course (2018)

S6) The Atlantic Project report (2018)

S7) Cooks New Clothes webpage

S8) Article by the British high commissioner to New Zealand in the *Guardian* (2 Jan 2020)