

The Exhibition Landscape of Human Rights in Canada:  
An Ethnographic Study into Process and Design

by

Jennifer Claire Robinson  
MA, University College London, 2011  
BA, University of British Columbia, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department of Anthropology

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University of Victoria

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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### Supervisory Committee

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Supervisor  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Ann Stahl, Departmental Member  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Jill Baird, Outside Member  
University of British Columbia

## Abstract

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Supervisor  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Ann Stahl, Departmental Member  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Jill Baird, Outside Member  
University of British Columbia

As places where multiple cultures, faiths, and artistic practices come together, museums exist as physical sites of intersection. They are at once sites of debate, dialogue, protest, and partnership. This intersection uniquely positions museums as capable of tackling challenging subject matter related to human rights and global justice. Through interviews conducted with heritage professionals from eight different institutions across Canada, this dissertation analyses the curatorial practices, methods of collections research, exhibition design strategies, educational programming, and public outreach initiatives of these institutions as they relate to Canada's three official national apologies delivered in the House of Commons for: The Japanese Canadian Internment during World War II; the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusions Laws; and Indian Residential Schools. This research considers: (1) how are human rights abuses that have occurred in Canada are presently being defined and displayed in Canadian galleries and exhibition spaces; (2) the nature of collaborations and partnerships involved when designing exhibitions of this nature; and (3) the role of both material culture and survivor testimony in processes of creating human rights exhibitions. As a multi-sited ethnographic study into the process of museological project design, the results of this research provide valuable insights into the challenges faced and the strategies deployed by heritage professionals when working with difficult subject matter. This research finds that emotional experiences play a large factor in processes of project development about challenging subject matter. Working with survivors of trauma is not just about

creating a successful exhibition; in the end, the exhibition is but one part of the museological process. Museological work of this nature typically involves working directly with survivors of trauma, with exhibitions more often driven in development by the personal narratives shared by survivors and less so by objects in collections. As such, this strain of museological work comes with the possibility for survivors to heal from past trauma through the sharing of their experiences and this healing is part of the transformative potential of museological work. Additionally, this research strongly indicates that the flexibility of smaller, community-driven institutions, where the needs of project participants are central to the curation process, stand as strong examples of human rights work produced through the space of the museum. As such, partnerships between smaller galleries and larger museums exist as valuable sites of institutional collaboration in Canada. Finally, this research indicates museums are situated as key players in the ongoing development of human rights discourses in Canada. Museums create and contribute to the public's legal understandings of rights and justice as produced through the pedagogies of museum practice, and these pedagogies come to educate the public about acts of discrimination, cultural inequality, violence, and genocide that have occurred in Canada. Such contributions position museums as public institutions as valuable to 21<sup>st</sup> century rights-based research in Canada.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to Michael Poirier, Henry Luke Rachwalski, Roberta Gill, Robert Norris, Joe Gill, and Jack Horsfall. All of you passed to the next side during the duration of my doctoral program and from this, I have learned so much more about living. I look forward to when we meet again.

And to my family – you are my rock.

## Preface

This preface is my position. With these words, I situate myself as a settler Canadian, as a thankful visitor to the unceded territories of the Coast and Strait Salish peoples on and off for the last 12 years; as a daughter, sister, friend, and student. I situate myself as a lover of arts and culture who believes exhibitions, galleries, and museums can be spaces that create change.

Every journey has a starting point. Sometimes it is hard to see where that place may be, or the importance of what that moment was until the gift of time has provided a connection between the past and the present. I grew up primarily in Calgary (Fig. 1), in Treaty Seven territory, to parents who migrated west to Alberta in the 1970s from Ontario. My mother's family can be traced back to Scotland and Ireland through both of my maternal grandparents. My father immigrated to Canada in the 1950s from England in the post-World War II Canadian immigration boom, which found many European and British families looking to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of war. I am, by definition, a settler Canadian with English, Irish, and Scottish roots. My ancestors, like many of us in Canada, have been immigrating to these lands in some capacity since the 18<sup>th</sup> century straight through to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a dissertation that is about Canada, a country that has, and continues to, privilege the rights of European settlers over Indigenous peoples as well as early Chinese and Japanese settlers, I acknowledge here the privilege my ancestry affords in Canada. I also acknowledge that the injustices suffered by Indigenous peoples, Japanese Canadians, and Chinese Canadians—these injustices that are at the heart of my research—are not stories in my own family.

I like to believe that all things happen for a reason. The first time I went to the University of British Columbia (UBC), I was drawn instantly to the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the north end of the campus. Surrounded by cedars and overlooking the ocean on Musqueam First Nation's territory, I was keenly aware in this moment that this place would significantly impact my life. I completed my

undergraduate at UBC in Anthropology and History with a focus on museum studies. During my time in Vancouver, I worked at MOA for three years and became involved in a range of projects. One of these was a student-led curatorial project. It is through this project that I first encountered a collection of drawings and artwork done by Stoney Nakoda children from Morely Residential School in Alberta (see Chapter 2, Fig. 38). This collection stayed with me during my travels to London, UK where I completed my Masters in Material and Visual Culture, working with a collection of archival photographs taken of performers at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These photographs provided a space to think through how the arts community existed as a place of acceptance and diversity in London at time when inequality was produced in novel ways through gender, class, and ethnicity. At that time, arts and performance spaces—much as they do today—made space for diversity. Through the photographs in this collection, my Masters research offers new ways to consider past cultural encounters and highlights the value of activating museum and archival collections (see Robinson 2016).

While in London, I was accepted into my doctoral program to work at the University of Victoria (UVic) with Dr. Andrea Walsh. At the time, she was seeking a PhD student to work with her, under a Social Science and Humanities Research Council grant proposal, on a large collection that was donated to UVic containing artwork produced by Indigenous children who attended residential schools across the country. This project is now known as the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Program (RIDSAR). And so, it was that we were drawn together somewhat serendipitously through children's artwork. I remain humbled and honoured that drawings done by children attending Indian Residential School in various parts of Canada brought me to Victoria and into an extremely important network of relationships with my supervisor and the most incredible research collective of Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivors, Elders, academics, heritage professionals, and students. These relationships have fundamentally shaped my research, my mind, and my soul. It has been an asset beyond

words to be a part of a project that has also served as a research “field site” and this dissertation is coloured in the best ways possible by my involvement in this work.

While this dissertation is not solely about the relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums per se, in many ways this relationship sits at the heart of rights issues and museological practice in Canada. Through my undergraduate and graduate training, as well as through the collections, archives, and public programming research work I have been so fortunate to be a part of, I have been exposed to the work of scholars and activists at the forefront of thinking through these issues in Canada. I have been inspired by, and remain deeply indebted to, the words and teachings of many Indigenous writers, scholars, and Elders. The presence of Indigenous ways of knowing are changing Canadian universities and museums and I am grateful to be on the ground where debates concerning the decolonization of public institutions such as museums and universities are actively taking place. It has been essential to be in the political atmosphere of the West Coast to do this work; to be *in* this work. My time in Victoria has allowed me to be surrounded by the serenity of the waters of the Salish Sea (Fig. 2), to be able to ride my bike out to the first Chinese Canadian cemetery to take time to think, and to write this dissertation in cafes in Canada’s first Chinatown. During my regular trips to Vancouver I walk the streets of the Eastside of the city where the heart of the Japanese Canadian community once was and where Canada’s largest Chinatown remains. It has been essential for me to be in a place where the voices and drumming of local Indigenous community members start events where we come together to discuss the legacies of colonialism in this country in a good way. This project could not have been done outside of Canada: it is a project well situated in place. Who I am as a researcher is the product of the knowledge being produced on the West Coast of this country and it is a lived knowledge: the landscape of this place flows through this work and I remain profoundly grateful for this.

Jennifer Claire Robinson

June 2017

Lekwungen and Wsáneć Territories/ Victoria, BC



**Figure 1: The Prairies, Calgary, AB by author (2015)**



**Figure 2: The Ocean, Victoria, BC by author (2015)**

## Chapter 1 Human Rights, Global Justice, and the Work of Museums: An Introduction

For since we happen to be the products of earlier generations, we are also the products of their blunders, passions, and misunderstandings, indeed, of their crimes; it is impossible to free ourselves completely from this chain... But now and then a victory does occur, and for those who struggle, for those who use critical history in the service of life, there is significant consolation in knowing that even this first nature was once a second nature, and that every victorious second nature will become a first.

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1874<sup>1</sup>

I pity the country, I pity the state  
 And the mind of a man, who thrives on hate  
 Small are the lives, of cheats and liars  
 Of bigoted news press, fascist town criers  
 Deception annoys me, deception destroys me  
 The bill of rights throws me  
 Jail they all know me  
 Frustrated are churchmen, the saving-of-soul-men  
 The tinker, the tailor, the colonial governor  
 They pull and they paw me  
 They're seeking to draw me  
 Away from the roundness of the life  
 Silly civil servants, they thrive off my body  
 Their trip is with power, back bacon, and welfare  
 Police they arrest me, materialists detest me  
 Pollution it chokes me, movies they joke me  
 Politicians exploit me, city life it jades me  
 Hudson Bay fleeces me, hunting laws freak me  
 Government is stumbling, revolution is rumbling  
 To be ruled in impunity, is tradition continuity  
 I pity the country, I pity the state  
 And the mind of a man, who thrives on hate

William Dunn, 1971<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This quote from 1874 was part of Nietzsche's essay *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* translated and quoted from *Unmodern Observations*, ed. William Arrowsmith, translation of "History in the Service and Disservice of Life" by G. Brown 1990: 103; however, it was also quoted in the Introduction to Torpey (2004:2) where I found it most influential.

<sup>2</sup> William "Willie" Dunn 1941-2013 was a Mi'kmaq singer, songwriter, and activist originally from Montreal QC. Lyrics are from song "I Pity the Country" from the 1971 album *William Dunn*. Song has been released as part of the three LP compilation *Native North America* released from Light in the Attic in 2014.

## Introduction

Rights, justice, equality—these are issues that have occupied the minds of writers, artists, and activists for centuries. From the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, writing in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the Mi'kmaq songwriter and activist William Dunn, composing songs about the rights of Indigenous people in Canada during the 1960s and 70s, the quest to find ways for humans to live together peacefully is not new. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the struggle for peace and equality remains a profound global challenge. Violence, destruction, and acts of hatred are sadly common occurrences and the awareness of the brevity of these gruesome events comes to us (for those with the means) through the flick of a button, the result of technological advancements and the proliferation of visual media. It is of no coincidence that global debates concerning the violation and protection of human rights have become very present in contemporary museological practices and within the global heritage industry more broadly. This dissertation analyses how human rights have been researched, exhibited, and programmed through museums and gallery spaces in Canada. This project was driven by my interests to better understand how cultural institutions in Canada—specifically museums—are, and should continue to be, contributing to dialogues surrounding issues of rights both locally and globally through their exhibition and programming capacities. As public institutions, museums have something valuable to offer current rights-based research in Canada. Museums can take a stance, take risks, and push an educational agenda concerning equality and justice. Museums can, and should be, spaces that create change.

In 2014, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), Canada's newest national museum, opened its doors to the public. With the opening of this institution, Canada now has a museum dedicated to the research and exhibition of human rights. However, the CMHR is not the only exhibiting institution in Canada that has taken on rights-based issues. There are multiple examples of this type of museological work occurring across

Canada. It was somewhat serendipitous for me as a researcher that the timing of the opening of the CMHR coincided with the beginning of the fieldwork phase of my doctoral project. As such, this dissertation has become a chance to put the development of the CMHR and the museological practices currently underway at this institution in conversation with the work of other galleries across Canada, many of whom have been working with challenging subject matter for quite some time, often in direct collaboration with survivors of trauma. In doing so, this research has created a better understanding of the challenges heritage professionals face when dealing with difficult subject matter as well as what strategies they develop to work with this strain of material in the space of the museum.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this dissertation explores a landscape (though by no means complete) of what a current rights-based museological practice looks like across Canada.

In setting out to complete a research project on how rights-based issues are exhibited and researched through museum and gallery spaces in Canada, I quickly discovered this research extends well beyond simply a discussion about museological practice. A project about the exhibition of rights in Canada is intricately connected to the history of how the concept of human rights has developed in Canada. Furthermore, the history of rights violations in Canada is inseparable from the development of Canada as a nation (Clément 2008, 2016; DiGiacomo 2016; Tunnicliffe 2015). Therefore, this dissertation is also an inquiry into the history of human rights in Canada and how, and in what ways, museums and other gallery spaces are, or could be, contributing to better understandings of acts of violence, discrimination, and inequality in Canada both in the past and the present. This introduction serves as an introduction to these issues and to this project.

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term heritage professionals throughout this dissertation to be inclusive of curators, exhibition designers, curators of education and public programming, museum directors, research directors, academics, conservators, archivists, community consultants, and community historians. See Appendix 1 for the complete list of research participants involved in this project.

## **The Work of Human Rights and Global Justice**

*What exactly are human rights?* In many ways, this question sits at the heart of this dissertation. “Human rights” as Levy and Sznajder remind us, “mean much to many, but also many different things” (2011:1). Human rights are at once “legal claims, moral norms, and political demands” that together form the basis for international law, individual moral ethics, and global understandings of social justice (Ignatieff 2013: v). Knowing what rights are comes in part from seeing others have their rights violated or taken away. With the present international discourse surrounding human rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has come a language with which to speak about local and global atrocities (Freeman 2011; Levy and Sznajder 2010). However, as several scholars argue, human rights as a concept is varied; human rights are culturally specific, socially constructed, and uniquely situated to the histories of place and nation-states (Clément 2008; 2016; DiGiacomo 2016; Freeman 2011; Goodale 2009; Ife 2012; Nash 2015; Smith and van der Anker 2005). As such, the study of human rights has taken on many forms.

The current international dialogue surrounding human rights was born in the atmosphere that developed post World War II. As the atrocities of Nazi Germany became unveiled to the world, a strategic effort was born from the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, which vowed through their founding charter that protection and justice would be given to those in need and that such brutalities that occurred during WWII should never happen again (see United Nation 2016a). In 1948, the UN adopted the Declaration of Human Rights, which sets forth a series of principles based on the premise that all human beings are born free and entitled to live a life of dignity and equality, free of violence and discrimination (see United Nations 2016b). The United Nations has created a number of specific committees designed with the mission to maintain peace, offer protection from conflict, promote sustainable development, and preserve cultural diversity. In 1945, the UN created the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the “intellectual” body of the UN, designed to promote peace through “humanity’s moral and intellectual solidarity”

(UNESCO 2013). The protection of cultural heritage falls under UNESCO, where issues such as the illegal trade of cultural objects, poor object provenance in museums, and the looting and destruction of archaeological or other heritage sites are all deemed global issues that should be of international concern (Alivizatou 2012; Besterman 2006). From UNESCO, the International Council on Museums (ICOM) was created in 1946, which now has over 35,000 members and serves as a global network of committees designed to serve museums and museum professionals (ICOM 2016a). In 1986, ICOM created the Code of Ethics for Museums (revised in 2004), which now sets important international standards for museum practice (Besterman 2006; see ICOM 2016b).

The creation of the UN and the its human rights Declaration developed an international moral and legal framework to anchor what constitutes the violation of rights and understandings of justice. But who defines what human rights are and for whom? And can human rights as set forth by the Declaration ever truly be global when many culturally specific ways of knowing the world exist, which include within them culturally specific understandings of rights and justice? Several scholars have drawn attention to the danger in the Declaration's universalizing assumption concerning the protection of cultural diversity developed through the UN (Freeman 2011; Meskell 2005; Silverman and Ruggles; Sharma 2006). The UN, from its very conception, was designed by Western or Euro-American nation-states. While organizations such as UNESCO and ICOM are meant to serve the "international community," most often those in power and those establishing the methods and procedures for heritage work and the protection of rights are from Euro-American nations. This raises an important critique of these international guidelines, which draws attention to the weight given to nation-states as the locus of decision making and whether input from cultural communities who are not part of the UN is considered (Meskell 2005). For example, UNESCO is composed of national governing bodies and thus according Silverman and Ruggles serves as a "valorization of national governments" (2007:18). This is potentially harmful and excludes cultural communities within a nation that are not recognized by, or choose not to be included in,

the nation-state or the national governing party.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, with respect to the Declaration and global understandings of human rights, the Declaration is, at best, a set of ideals or morals. Freeman (2011:11) highlights how these morals “are made and interpreted through a political process;” a process he stresses that is drawn from the Western philosophy of legal positivism, “which says that human rights are what human-rights law says they are” (Freeman 2011: 11). Therefore, I remain cognizant of similar sets of ideals or morals that exist in various cultures around the world that pre-date the establishment of the UN or the creation of the Declaration (Freeman 2011).

Concerns such as these have led to a growth in research that aims to broaden notions of human rights beyond the context of the UN, and the legal discourse which has developed out of UN policy, to include studies generated from various disciplinary backgrounds that highlight the culturally, socially, and nationally specific nature of human rights (e.g., Clément 2008, 2016; DiGiacomo 2016; Freeman 2011; Goodale 2009; Ife 2012; Nash 2015; Smith and van der Anker 2005). Viewed in this light, the UN is one example of an international political process or series of processes that seeks to ensure human rights; however, the existence of rights locally or nationally is established through a political process that is unique to place (Freeman 2011). A “right” develops into something in need of protection through the commitment of certain groups or communities of people fighting to gain what that right represents, or against the oppression felt due to the violation of that right (Clément 2016). As such, rights develop through socially specific movements or actions, which come to mark the history of inequality or suffering associated with that right (Clément 2016; Nash 2015). These marked moments in turn produce a rights culture that is unique to place (Clément 2008;

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<sup>4</sup> This is also the case with ICOM. ICOM provides international connections for museum professionals to consult over common, global issues present in the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage; however, these connections are for members of the ICOM community, meaning only for museums that have met the “standards” of practice set forth by ICOM and ICOM’s Code of Ethics (ICOM 2012b). Given ICOM is rooted in Euro-American standards of museum practice, the standards set by the Code of Ethics can be exclusionary towards practices of institutional care set forth by Indigenous or other cultural traditions.

2016). Though universal qualities of what human rights are or should be, as defined in the Declaration, most certainly exist based on the basic universal needs of survival for human beings there is a specific relational quality of human rights based on connections to place, culture, and local histories of power. Given this, it is more accurate to assume that the concept of *human dignity*, which is the foundation of human rights, is a universal ideal, but the concept of *human rights* is can be interpreted in culturally and socially specific ways (Freeman 2011).

I have been drawn throughout this research to think of human rights as a series of actions. I ground my position within scholarship that mobilizes human rights less as an abstract concept and more as a set of practices shaped by social actions that come together to create change (Nash 2015). I have been influenced here, by the work of sociologist Fuyuki Kurasawa, who provides a framework for thinking about global justice as being composed of “social labour” (2007: xii). Kurasawa (2007) demonstrates how acts of witnessing, forgiveness, foresight, aid, and solidarity are practices that, together, come to make up the work required for social justice to take place. In a similar vein, Susan Slyomovics (2005) draws attention to the performative nature of human rights. Public and private forms of commemoration of past events, the grieving for loved ones lost to violence, or public protest and demonstrations are all examples of the performance of human rights. It is through actions such as these that human rights become “enacted” and made meaningful (Slyomovics 2005:9).<sup>5</sup> Studies like these show

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<sup>5</sup> Performance theory is a well-developed method of social science inquiry and one that is most useful in terms of connection between people and heritage taken up more extensively in Chapters 3 and 5. For further discussion see Marvin Carlson (2004) *Performance: A Critical Introduction* for a comprehensive review of how performance has been adopted as a method of theoretical inquiry and on the complexity of performance as both an intended action (such as a staged performance or performance art) and form of patterned behaviour. See also Richard Schechner’s *Performance Theory* (2003), Elizabeth Bell (2007) *Theories of Performance*, and Frank Korom *The Anthropology of Performance: A Reader* (2013) for a more in depth look at performance studies as a disciplinary practice; Victor Turner (1974) for performance in anthropology; Erving Goffman’s seminal sociological work on performance and self-identity (1959,1974); Greg Dening (1996) for performance and the history-making process; Judith Butler

how human rights are much more than ideas rooted in European Enlightenment philosophy, Western paradigms of critical thinking, or the formation of the seemingly unattainable set of UN policies produced through UN council meetings of a select few. When human rights become a practice, or series of actions, they become what I consider throughout this dissertation, following Kurasawa (2007), the *work of human rights*. This dissertation, therefore, is an analysis of not only how the work of human rights has been conducted through museums and other cultural institutions in Canada, but also how this work is uniquely connected to the history of how rights have developed in Canada.

### **Human Rights in Canada**

Canadian human rights research has grown steadily over the last 20 years, producing a breath of scholarship that informs on the uniqueness of Canada's human rights history and the historical connection between the development of rights in Canada and the nation's development (see Clément 2008, 2016; DiGiacomo 2016; Freeman 2011; Heathorn and Goutor 2013; Henderson and Wakeham 2013; Howe and Johnson 2000; Kallen 2010; Mathur et al. 2011; Miron 2009; Tunnicliffe 2015; Younging et al. 2009). Collectively, these studies reveal how Canada developed a national consciousness towards rights, one that grew from the struggle for justice and equality by groups of people who faced extreme acts of violence and discrimination during the colonization and industrial development of Canada, particularly from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onward (Henderson and Wakeham 2013).

By the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canada had a well-established international reputation as a peaceful and peacekeeping country. Despite this reputation, Canada was slow to adopt the principles set forth in the Declaration of Human Rights into its own federal Constitution, and Canada has been implicated in several government-sponsored

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for the performance of gender (1988, 1993); and Norman Denzin (2003) for new forms of performance-based ethnography.

violations of human rights over the last century. Examples of rights violations in Canada identified by community activists and scholars include: the act of segregation and forcible internment of Ukrainians, Italians, and Japanese peoples during World War I and II; racially discriminatory immigration policies towards specific cultural groups such as Chinese; the refusal of Jewish refugees into Canada during World War II; the suppression of French language rights; and the ongoing effects of colonialism on Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada including the implementation of the Indian Residential School system (Clément 2008, 2016; Heathorn & Goutor 2013; Henderson & Wakeham 2013; Miron 2009; Tunnicliffe 2015). In the wake of violations such as these, the federal government has made several “reconciliatory gestures” including apologies, reparations, and commemorative programs towards various cultural communities across Canada (Henderson & Wakeham 2013:7). An increase in these gestures was due in part to the new global dialogue concerning human rights that developed in the post- World War II atmosphere. The language of human rights put forth by the United Nations’ Declaration created the framework for cultural grievances towards the Canadian government. Early legislation created at the federal level under the Canadian Bill of Rights of 1960 and Canadian Human Rights Act of 1977 set the stage for defining of rights and their protection. However, the 1982 adoption of the Canadian Charter for Rights and Freedoms (hereafter The Charter), known as the Constitution Act, entrenched human rights principles set forth under the UN Declaration of Rights into the Canadian Constitution (see Canadian Government 2014; also, Clément 2016; Henderson & Wakeham 2013; Miron 2009). For example, the right to vote via the Canadian democratic system, the right to equality under the law, the protection of languages and cultural heritage, and the right to move freely within, return to and remain in the country—rights that parallel the UN Declaration for Human Rights—became guaranteed rights entrenched in the Constitution (see Government of Canada 2017a). Furthermore, Section 35 of The Charter recognizes the unique cultural rights of Indigenous peoples as First Peoples of Canada, including the rights affirmed in Canadian numbered treaties (see Government of Canada 2017b). In the years that followed the

creation of The Charter, several cultural communities in Canada began to mobilize human rights claims towards both the federal and provincial Canadian governments based on cultural discrimination and the denial of citizenship during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These claims brought forward by Indigenous, Japanese, Chinese, and Ukrainian Canadians during the late 1980s into the 1990s formed the first major phase of redress movements across the country that have now come to shape contemporary rights-based debates in Canada concerning political, economic, and cultural equality (Henderson and Wakeham 2013: 5).

Though there are many examples of historical grievances that could be listed here, I have framed this research around three redress movements in Canada that have led to three official national apologies delivered by the federal government in the House of Commons.<sup>6</sup> The first of these came in September 1988, when Canada offered an apology to the National Association of Japanese Canadians for the forced internment of Japanese Canadians during the World War II. After the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Canadian Government used the power created through the War Measures Act to forcibly intern close to 22,000 Japanese Canadians—the majority born in Canada—into camps across Western Canada. This internment period resulted in the seizure of property and goods, the foreclosure of businesses and employment, and the destruction of entire Japanese Canadian communities, particularly in Vancouver’s east side where the largest immigrant community of Japanese Canadians had settled (Dooling 2012; Henderson and Wakeham 2013; Miki 2004; Miron 2009; Tunnicliffe 2015).

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<sup>6</sup> There have been several apologies offered by both the federal and provincial governments in Canada; however, these are the only three to have been offered in the official capacity of the House of Commons. This has led certain community groups to feel that apologies delivered to them outside of this context lack the official recognition which the physical location of the House of Commons delivers. For example, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to the Canadian South Asian community in 2008 for the Komagata Maru incident of May 1914 in which hundreds of Indian passengers were not allowed to disembark their ship in Vancouver’s harbor for two months, only to be turned away and sent back to India where many of the passengers were killed. However, this apology was delivered in a community park in Surrey, BC without any real consultation with the local South Asian community members. The apology has since been rejected by many South Asian people (Henderson and Wakeham 2013).

The second of these apologies was delivered in 2006 to Chinese Canadians for the mandatory Head Tax and Exclusions Laws. After the completion of Canadian Pacific Railway, a head tax was placed on Chinese immigrants in 1885. This tax was on every Chinese immigrant coming to Canada, regardless of the thousands of Chinese migrants who were actively recruited by the Canadian government during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide the labour to build the railway and despite the active immigration policies set in place during the time to encourage “white” Europeans to come and settle in the western part of Canada. In 1923, the head tax was replaced with the Chinese Immigration Act, also known as Exclusion Laws, which limited Chinese migrant labourers from bringing their families to Canada while also limiting what work and education they could do while in Canada (Dyzenhaus and Moran 2005; Li Mar 2008; 2008, Yu 2001, 2007).

The third apology came in 2008 for the Indian Residential School system, a system which forcibly removed Indigenous children into state and church-run schools across Canada.<sup>7</sup> There many children suffered from extreme forms of emotional, physical, sexual abuse, which has resulted in a legacy of intergenerational abuse, loss of culture, and systematic inequality in Indigenous families and communities across Canada (Henderson and Wakeham 2013; Miller 1996; Milloy 2011; Miron 2009; Tunnicliffe 2015).<sup>8</sup> This apology was part of a series of reconciliatory gestures in Canada that resulted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The TRC was

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I refer to these schools with the name given by the state as “Indian Residential Schools”. I stress here my use of the term Indigenous to be inclusive of peoples whom are Indigenous to the lands now known as Canada which include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. When known, I have used specific Nation or community names to identify where people are from.

<sup>8</sup> There exists a number of auto-biographical and historical accounts of the experience of IRS that speak strongly to the legacies of intergenerational trauma left in the lives of former students and their families (see Annett 2005; Chrisjohn 1997; Fontaine 2011; Fournier 1997; Furnis 1995,1999; Haig-Brown 1988; Johnston 1988; Miller 1996; Milloy 2011; Robertson 2011; Wadden 2008).

established as part of the IRS Agreement, settled on May 8, 2006, which designated \$60 million to establish the TRC of Canada to document the experiences of IRS by Survivors and their families, as well as to record and research the histories of the schools through church and state archives (Indian Residential Schools 2006; Regan 2011; TRC 2015). As the TRC moved across the country, the public face of this commission was largely the visible collection of Survivor statements collected at the many TRC regional and national events and hearings. In June 2015, the TRC released its final report to the Canadian federal government, which stated that the IRS system in Canada was an act of cultural genocide (TRC 2015). The *Final Report* includes 94 “calls to action” that factor into various facets of Canadian government and society, including responsibilities that archives and museums must continue to work on redressing the legacies of these schools in the future (TRC 2015:319).

While the TRC has been an integral part of ongoing efforts to reconcile Canada’s colonial history, the Commission’s process has not been without criticisms. A prominent one is the harsh truth that Canada’s TRC is the only Truth Commission in the world that did not publicly name the perpetrators of the many crimes enacted towards Indigenous children. Thus, the teachers, priests, nuns, and supervisors who caused harm at these schools have gone unpunished and their names do not appear as part of the official TRC record (Angel 2012; Niezen 2013). Furthermore, many scholars and activists have criticized the Canadian government’s failure to formally acknowledge issues that lie at the heart of present Indigenous cultural inequality in Canada; issues related to upholding treaty negotiations, including land rights and Indigenous sovereignty (see Angel 2012; Alfred 2009; Chrisjohn and Wasacase 2009; Corntassel and Holder 2008; Corntassel, Chaw-win-is and T’lakwadzi 2009; Coulthard 2014; Fontaine 2010; Mathur et al. 2011; Regan 2010; Simpson 2011; Turner 2006; Younging et al. 2009). Criticisms like these are essential, as they illustrate the inherent limitations that come with any government reconciliatory gestures. Ultimately, these gestures occur between cultural groups in Canada and the Canadian government. As such, concerns remain as to how

the broader Canadian public comes to understand historical wrongdoings in Canada's past. For example, the TRC, though national in scope, was limited in reaching the broader Canadian public, with many Commission hearings going relatively unnoticed in the Canadian cities in which they took place (Niezen 2013). Additionally, the original Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (see IRS 2006) did not include schools operating in Labrador and Newfoundland as they were not incorporated into the Canadian Confederation until 1949. Accordingly, those who attended schools in this part of Canada were excluded from making claims for a settlement agreement or taking part in the TRC.<sup>9</sup> As the state of Canada, individual provinces, and municipalities have chosen to publicly embrace the dialogue of reconciliation, Indigenous activists and scholars of social justice have rightly been wary of the use of this word to evoke promises for change that come without real actions (Chrisjohn and Wasacase 2009; Corntassel et al. 2009; Robinson and Martin 2016; Younging et al. 2009). As a term, reconciliation implies there once existed a previous harmonious relationship between Canada and First Peoples. Rather, as Métis scholar David Garneau (2016: 30) stresses, it is the ongoing process of seeking "conciliation" that is, "the action of bringing into harmony," which should guide Canada's efforts to build, and continuously foster, relationships between the state and Indigenous peoples.

While the TRC started the conversation about reconciliation in Canada, it is clear there is much work yet to be done. Critiques of the process help to illustrate where cultural institutions can help make these histories more public and how the space of these institutions can be used to work through issues related to historical and contemporary right-based grievances. Henderson and Wakeham (2013:7) argue the TRC, government apologies, commemoration events, and other reconciliatory gestures offered by the Canadian government form part of "the culture of redress" in Canada, which they identify as being composed of "a complex network of actors" and the relationships

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<sup>9</sup> As of fall 2016 a new settlement was reached and 50 million dollars was designated to survivors of schools running in this area of Canada (see settlement claim through Crawford and Company n.d).

these actors have with different human rights polices in Canada, as well as with various other Canadian redress movements. I am drawn to this concept of a culture of redress, for it creates a way to see how various legacies of redress movements by different cultural groups in Canada are connected through their shared experiences of fighting for equality within the nation-state of Canada (Henderson and Wakeham 2013). Canadian heritage institutions play an important role in this network of redress. Museums provide physical spaces where the public can negotiate better understandings of human rights and cultural diversity, but they also play a part in creating and implementing the politics of cultural recognition and processes of reconciliation that have been at the forefront of much of the practice of Canadian heritage work over the last 25 years (Coombes and Phillips 2015; Gordon-Walker 2016).<sup>10</sup> This is how, as Carter and Orange argue, “museums not only reflect historical and current human rights but are also participating in the prospective shaping of those rights” (2012:119). With the growth of human rights research in Canada and the presence of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, this project provides an opportunity to see how practices of rights-based work are developing through Canadian cultural institutions and how these practices are part of a larger understanding of museums as places capable of promoting social justice.

### **Human Rights Museology, Social Responsibility and the “Mindful” Museum**

As the discourse of human rights and social justice continues to expand both nationally and internationally, this growth has also been reflected within the heritage industry locally and globally (e.g., Carter 2013; Coombes and Phillips 2015; Ellison 2010; Fleming 2012a, 2012b; Jokilehto 2012; Logan 2012; MacDonald and Basu 2008; Orange and Carter 2012; Sandell 2011, 2017; Silberman 2012; Silverman and Ruggles 2012; Tai 2010). Cultural institutions and heritage sites, and particularly museums with their exhibition spaces and programming agendas, are increasingly building better capacities

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<sup>10</sup> I take up the critique of cultural recognition as Canadian government policy put forth by Yellowknives Dene First Nations Scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) in Chapter 5.

to tackle topics related to discrimination, violence, and genocide in new and meaningful ways. This has resulted in the creation of many human rights museums such as the Liberty Osaka Human Rights Museum in Tokyo, Santiago's Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute, and the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). All adopt as their institutional mandate a dedication to exhibit specific cases of human rights violations. The CMHR, for example, features exhibitions devoted to mass acts of genocide committed over the last century: The Holocaust; Holodomor; Rwanda; Armenia; and Srebrenica (Busby et al. 2015; Hankivsky and Dhamoon 2013; Moses 2012; Murray 2013). This field of heritage work has produced a specific form of museological practice currently underway in many types of museum spaces known as "human rights museology," a practice guided by the principles that sit at the heart of human rights work such as promoting diversity and social justice (see Carter 2013, 2015; Carter and Orange 2012; Orange and Carter 2012; Sandell 2017). Analyses into various practices of human rights museology highlight, as Richard Sandell (2017:7) states, how museum narratives "play a part in shaping the moral and political climate within which human rights claims and entitlements are continuously negotiated, secured and denied."

Both human rights museology and the creation of specific human rights museums have grown from the earlier concept of memorial museums and memorial sites, which began to proliferate in the global heritage landscape during the 1980s (Carter 2013). These spaces, serving as memorials to specific events and atrocities such as the Holocaust, slavery, and Apartheid, also serve as education centers about these histories (Williams 2007, 2011).<sup>11</sup> Heritage spaces such as memorial museums and memorial sites have given rise to a field of heritage studies that grown steadily since the 1990s under such terms as "dissonant heritage" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996), "dark tourism" (Lennon and Foley 2000), and "thanatourism", a term that relates specifically to tourist

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<sup>11</sup> Worth noting here is the UNESCO project created to draw together international work on slavery titled: *The Slave Route* project <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/>.

encounters with sites of death (Dann and Seaton 2001; Seaton 1996)<sup>12</sup>. Memorial sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or the former Security Prison 21, now Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia, are not only physical sites of historical memory and reflection, but heritage spaces that draw in many international visitors. These spaces raise critical questions about how to maintain what Sharon MacDonald has labeled “difficult heritage” (2009; 2013). As such, scholars working in this field of heritage studies document the challenges faced by visitors in encountering these spaces, as well as the challenges faced by heritage professionals who work in these locations where some of the most gruesome acts committed by humans in the last century have occurred. This includes scholarship addressing the difficulties that now exist in physically maintaining these sites as they degrade overtime (see Beech 2009; Bowmann and Pezzullo 2010; Bruner 1996; Butler 2010; Dann and Seaton 2001; Hartmann 2014; Lehrer 2013; Lennon and Foley 2010; Logan and Reeves 2009; MacDonald 2009, 2013; Sharpley and Stone 2009).

There is growing trend in 21<sup>st</sup> century museology to further develop the pedagogical potential of heritage institutions, particularly museums, to use exhibition spaces as forums for discussion and debate concerning acts of discrimination, violence, and genocide (Carter 2015; Sandell 2017). This scholarship focuses on the challenges of using spaces such museums, as well as historic sites and memorials, as places that can educate visitors in new and innovative ways concerning human rights while simultaneously acting in the most respectful manner to the survivors of these atrocities and to the local communities that continue to live near these spaces (see Carter 2013, 2015; Flemming 2012a, 2012b; Hooper-Greenhill 2007; Lehrer et al. 2011; Nightingale and Sandell 2012; Orange and Carter 2012; Sandell 2002, 2006, 2011, 2012, 2017; Simon 2011; 2014; Silverman and Ruggles 2007; Sherman 2008). As museums continue to create projects related to rights and justice, developing scholarship simultaneously seeks to understand how the museum serves as a physical space where work on

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<sup>12</sup> For excellent summary of this form of tourism see Hartmann (2014).

challenging histories can take place. This practice-based scholarship focuses on how “difficult knowledge” about past atrocities (Pitt and Britzman 2003) is curated in gallery exhibitions or disseminated through other forms of public exhibition spaces (see Blumer 2015; Burke 2015; Failler et al. 2015; Lehrer 2015a, 2015b; Lehrer et al 2011; Milne 2015; Pelletier 2015; Ready and Keshavjee 2015; Sharma 2015; Simon 2011; 2014). This scholarship draws attention to how public institutions such as museums become essential physical spaces to “think through” difficult and challenging histories (Lehrer 2015a:1211).

The complexities of working with challenging histories are pushing heritage professionals to continuously develop more ethical and morally accountable forms of practice. The concepts of “ethics” and “responsibility” are not new to the heritage field, but over the last 20 years these terms have begun to shift in focus from object care, or traditional methods of institutional collection-based practice, towards considerations of the social function and relevancy of museums in contemporary society (Edson 1997; Besterman 2006; Marstine 2006, 2011; Silverman 2010; Silverman and Ruggles 2007). To work “ethically” in the space of a museum has come to mean more than just following a set of institutional guidelines for how to work in the best and most respectful way. Ethical practice is now aligned with larger questions and concerns regarding the social responsibility of museums to the communities in which they are located and how particular exhibitions and programming can and should affect peoples’ lives in meaningful ways (Janes and Conaty 2005; Marstine 2011; Sandell and Nightingale 2012, Silverman 2015). This form of practice positions museums as institutional sites of learning as well as institutional sites of activism (Message 2014; Sandell and Dodd 2010). They can take a position on social issues and create debate and dialogue about how to make change; this is part of what Sandell and Dodd refer to as “activist museum practice” (2010:3). Using museological practices to address contemporary local and global concerns is part of how museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are

working to become, as Canadian museum scholar Robert Janes argues, more “mindful” institutions (2010:326).

This field of heritage work has resulted in a number international research centers and university research collectives. In 2001, The Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) was established based at Liverpool’s International Slavery Museum. Like ICOM, FIHRM provides a network of like-minded museums and individuals working on challenging subject matter specifically related to a broad spectrum of rights-based causes (see Federation of International Human Rights Museums n.d.; Fleming 2012a, 2012b). In 1999, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, based out of the School for Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, was created, which functions both as a research institution for critical museological practice and a training center for students and museum professionals (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries n.d). Scholars here have produced key research in the field concerning disabilities and discrimination (Sandell 2002, 2007, 2011, 2012; Sandell and Dodd 2010), museum education and critical museological pedagogies (see Hooper-Greenhill 1998, 2000, 2007), and museum ethics and social activism (Marstine 2011; Sandell and Dodd 2010). In Canada, examples include the Centre for Ethnographic Research and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Violence out of the History Department at Concordia University, where researchers are working with variety of historical challenging subject matter in the context of exhibitions related to post-WWII tourism in Poland (Lehrer 2013), Canadian Indian Residential School (Igloliorte 2010,2011), post-Apartheid South Africa (Patterson 2003, 2013), and Roma displacement (Blumer 2013). This has led to recently created multi-institutional research collective based out of the University of Winnipeg called *Thinking through the Museum: Difficult Knowledge in Public* that is directly connected to the Human Rights Research Centre at the University of Manitoba and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (see web source <http://thinkingthroughthemuseum.org/>). With respect to the outcome of Truth and Reconciliation Commission specifically, the research collective *Creative Conciliations* was formed to take account for the artistic

productions created that respond to residential schools, the TRC events and hearings, and the dialogue and debates concerning reconciliation currently underway across the country (Robinson and Keavy 2016; see also *Creative Conciliations* online <http://conciliations.ca/>).

## **Exhibiting Human Rights in Canada**

Given the range of existing Canadian institutions—from large national museums to smaller municipal museums, cultural centers, university museums and research collectives—there likely are many heritage professionals actively embracing the practice of human rights museology; however, at the time of designing this project, there has not been a study that draws attention to this work from a national perspective. Some recent studies have drawn connections between the discourses of multiculturalism, nationalism, and reconciliation in Canadian museums through institutional comparisons (see Gordon-Walker 2016; Pinto 2013b), but these projects have not focused on the practice of human rights museology specifically. This is not to say, however, that Canadian heritage professionals have not been engaged with issues that are fundamentally connected to human rights violations in the context of exhibition work. The very core of Canadian museum practice has been transformed over the last 30 years as the direct result of human rights-based concerns over the mistreatment and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and their material heritage by Canadian museums and galleries. Canadian museological practice as it stands today cannot be seen apart from the creation of the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples in 1992 and the influence that Indigenous ways of knowing have had on the ongoing development of heritage work in Canada. The Task Force was created in large part due to protest over the exhibition *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, which opened at the Glenbow Museum in January 1988 as part of the Calgary Olympic celebrations. The exhibition was meant to showcase the unique cultural histories of Indigenous peoples across Canada; however, Shell Oil, one of the major funders for the exhibition, was at the time drilling on the lands of the Lubicon Lake Cree

First Nation, despite mass protests. A resulting boycott of the exhibition by Indigenous peoples drew national attention to the disconnect between Canadian museum practice and contemporary Indigenous issues (see Ames 1992, 2003; Harrison and Trigger 1988; Phillips 2011).

The Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples created by the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations drew individuals with extensive experience with Indigenous cultural heritage, including Indigenous community activists and Elders, museum professionals, and scholars, together into working groups. The guidelines set forth in the Task Force call on museums to be more inclusive of Indigenous peoples and more accountable to Indigenous cultural needs and rights over cultural representation. This has seen museums, archives, and cultural institutions across Canada strategically re-evaluating and re-designing their collections management and exhibition practices, particularly as they pertain to Indigenous peoples (Ames 1992; Bell and Paterson 2009; Kreps 2003b; Phillips 2011). Many Canadian museums are now actively working with the Indigenous communities whose materials are in their collections to appropriately catalogue, care for, research and display their material heritage (see examples: Ames 1992, 2003; Baird 2011; Clavir 2002; Conaty 2003, 2006; Conaty and Carter 2005; Kramer 2006; Mayer 2009; Phillips 2000; 2011). According to Ruth Phillips (2011:298), Canadian museological practices are now marked by the need to push for Indigenous inclusivity and what she refers to as “recovery.” Phillips (2011:298) calls on museums to be put to the service of Indigenous communities as they work through the twin issues of reclaiming and healing from processes of colonialism and violence that have impacted Indigenous communities across the country. Though this work needs to continue and be expanded, changes in Canadian museological practices produced by heritage professionals and their Indigenous partners have pushed the work conducted through Canadian heritage institutions to the forefront of global community-engaged museological practices (Phillips 2011). The Task Force makes specific recommendations to build better partnerships by calling on “Museums and First

Peoples to work together to correct inequities,” to work in “equal partnership,” and to “accept the philosophy of co-management” (Task Force on Museums 1992:17). What the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples ultimately calls for is for museums to build better relationships with Indigenous peoples; building better practices cannot occur without building better relationships. As the founding principle for a working set of guidelines, this has made the Task Force a useful document across the museum sector, as the principles for working in partnership with communities can be adapted to projects involving peoples from various cultural backgrounds.

Given the variety of institutional engagement with difficult subject matter across museums in Canada, heritage professionals have faced various challenges in the development of exhibitions on rights-based issues, resulting in the creation of better working strategies to use in future projects. As experiences of survivors are incorporated into exhibitions, they create important narratives that in turn contribute to the broader discussion concerning human rights work in Canada. Exhibitions have great potential to contribute to the act of public witnessing and to public education as they provide a visual and tangible record of survivor experiences of cultural discrimination that has occurred in Canada and elsewhere, outside of the official framework of government rights and redress policies (Simon 2014). Museums also provide the space to encounter the experiences of discrimination and violence as told by the survivors or families of survivors. They also afford opportunity to engage with the material record, such as photographs, artwork, or family possessions from these events in Canada’s past. This positions Canadian exhibition spaces as key sites for developing discourse concerning human rights violations in Canada. Given these considerations, the goals of this research have been to assess the commonalities and diversity of strategies used by heritage professionals when encountering human rights issues within Canadian exhibition spaces and to explore how an assessment of this work can contribute to the growing global field of human rights museology.

## Research Design and Methods

### *Research Questions*

The primary research question that has guided this project is as follows: *how are human rights violations committed in Canada researched, curated, and programmed through Canadian museums, galleries, and research collectives?*

To answer this primary question, I explored five sub-questions:

1. If, and how, are institutions defining human rights in exhibition spaces and through associated programming?
2. What challenges are faced and strategies deployed by heritage professionals in Canada when working with dark and difficult subject matter such as material pertaining to discrimination, cultural inequalities, violence, and genocide?
3. What partnerships and collaborations are established between heritage professionals, among heritage institutions, and with various community members in Canada to create exhibitions of this type? Particularly, what forms of collaboration occur between heritage professionals and survivors of extreme forms of discrimination, abuse and trauma?
4. How are the experiences of survivors of human rights abuses in Canada incorporated into exhibitions and how do survivor narratives contribute to the broader discussion concerning human rights work in Canada?
5. How do heritage professionals view the role of material culture in processes of creating human rights exhibitions? This includes objects that were created during times of violence or oppression that now remain as part of the material record of these past events, items such as Chinese Head Tax papers, Indigenous children's artwork from Residential Schools or photographs of Japanese families forced from their homes.

### ***Research Objectives***

Rights-based issues in Canadian museological practice is a broad topic. I therefore narrowed this research to focus on institutions that are or have been dealing in the creation of exhibitions, the conducting research and/or programming related to human rights violations in Canada, which in turn have resulted in one of Canada's three official national apologies issued by the Canadian government. This includes the apologies for the Internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II (delivered in 1988), the Chinese Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Acts (delivered in 2006), and Indian Residential Schools (delivered in 2008).

The objectives of this research have been as follows:

1. To interview curators, exhibition designers, educators, public programmers, and when relevant directors, conservators, and community consultants concerning the processes involved in creating exhibitions of this nature at their respective institutions.
2. To use photography and archival photographs to visually document various curatorial practices, methods of collections research, architectural design strategies, educational programming, and public outreach initiatives that heritage professionals have and are developing to use the space of a gallery to tell difficult histories.
3. To inventory and compare strategies and procedures currently used by heritage professionals, community consultants and academic researchers who are working with emotionally-charged material associated with human rights abuses in Canada.

### ***Research Purpose and Summary***

This project is a multi-sited ethnography that took place over approximately two years between 2013-2015.<sup>13</sup> “Multi-sited research,” as George Marcus (1995:105) describes, “is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations” where I as the ethnographer draw connections amongst and between these sites. As Falzon (2009:2) further notes, multi-sited ethnography “involves a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves” and thus my results are drawn from “a spatial de-centeredness” that occurs from working with various field sites (for examples of recent multi-sited research in Canadian museum studies see Carr-Locke 2015; Gordon-Walker 2016). In total, I collected qualitative research data from seven galleries and museums, and one research project located in seven different cities across Canada. Sites included the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian War Museum; the Glenbow Museum, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre, the Chinese Canadian Military Museum, and the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Program (RIDSAR) at the University of Victoria (UVic). The purpose of this doctoral project has been to compare processes of exhibition making, public programming and educational initiatives, and collections research in these institutions and to assess what the current exhibition landscape of human rights issues looks like in Canada. The institutions I chose vary in size, structure, and design and therefore offer a wide range of perspectives on museological processes across Canada. I spent one to two weeks in total at each location, returning to each museum at least twice, and in some cases multiple times, during the two-year data collection period. Throughout this project, I refer to those interviewed as “heritage professionals,” which is a more inclusive term as not all my participants were technically employed as museum staff. I interviewed a total of 28 heritage professionals holding a variety of

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<sup>13</sup> The research was reviewed and approved through the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board with assigned case number # 14-232.

positions including: curators; exhibition designers; curators of education and public programming; museum directors; research directors; academics; conservators; archivists; community consultants; and community historians (see Appendix 1 for complete list). Many people I interviewed had previously worked in multiple museums across Canada, either as staff or in some cases, serving as consultants or collaborators with multiple institutions and projects. Some of the participants in this research (those who I officially interviewed and those with whom I spoke with informally) have personal experience with these human rights violations. Many of these participants are engaged as heritage professionals, or as community consultants who work regularly with museums, and thus bring their personal and family experience to the projects on which they work. Given this variety, my participants' breadth of knowledge about museum culture in Canada was extensive. Stemming from conversations I have had with many individuals, I remain cautious when using the term survivor to refer to all those who may have experienced forms for violence and discrimination related to these three apologies which frame this project. However, I acknowledge this is a term that many former students of residential schools identify with including the research collaborators I work with. It is for this reason that I have adopted this term throughout this dissertation when referring directly to Survivors of Indian Residential Schools, including those Survivors involved with RIDSAR (see Clements 2016 for a discussion with former IRS students about their choice to adopt term survivor).<sup>14</sup>

With regards to terminology, the terms "process" and "practice" have been useful for me throughout this research to better conceptualize what the work of human rights entails. The term practice has a well-defined history within social science research and is a social phenomenon that has been studied several different ways (Postill 2010). Theodor Schatzki defines a practice as a "nexus" of "human activity" that encompasses various actions, relations, meanings, identities, and embodied positions (2002: 59). This

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<sup>14</sup> With reference to those involved with the RIDSAR work, or other Survivors of IRS I have chosen to capitalise the term Survivor. When speaking more generally of those who have suffered from rights violations I use survivor.

nexus is both the physical body and the repeated and habitual actions that come from the body. As a descriptive term, practice allows for a kind of fluidity; it implies a sense of ongoing, repetitive actions that accompany the processes of learning and improvisation (Wetherell 2012:23-24).

With respect, then to what constitutes museological practice, I have been guided here to think of this form of practice as being composed of a series of processes that lead to ways of doing work within institutions. Museum theorist Raymond Silverman adopts the term process in the context of museological work for it implies how “fundamentally processual in nature” curatorial work can be (2015:2). Museological work is, at its roots, an experimental process, and as Silverman stresses, experiments always have the potential to “succeed and fail” (2015:2). It is important to take account of the complicated, or even failed attempts in this line of work as often as the positive and successful moments, and to take stock of the processes of knowledge that are developed during project creation. Following these ideas, this research has been concerned to take account of what has worked and what has not worked in the context of exhibition and programming development and to think of these moments as being composed of a series of processes of trying to do museological work with respect to human rights in the best way.

### ***What This Project is NOT***

It is imperative for me to set out clearly what this project is not and the limitation of what two years of collecting data can include. This project is not intended as an exhaustive account of every exhibition or institution that has worked with difficult histories in Canada, or in some cases, every institution across Canada that has taken up curatorial work on the three apologies that frame this project. I recognize and am discomfited by the fact that the parameters of this project exclude many other examples of human rights violations and heritage work that has been done in Canadian contexts. I have not, for example, included the Museum of Vancouver’s exhibition on

the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident of May 1914, which opened during my field research year. My project does not look at the segregation of Black Canadians in Halifax; the internment of Ukrainians, Italians, or Germans during World Wars I and II; or rights of women or the fight for gender equality. There are many ways a project of this nature could have taken shape and though I have not included many aspects of the fight for rights in Canada, I acknowledge the struggles in which many individuals, communities, and cultural groups have engaged to be treated equally in Canada; my awareness of these struggles has grown tenfold through the course of this project. I have also chosen not to include contemporary art galleries or to focus on exhibitions that have used artists' work to speak to these events in Canadian history, though contemporary art frequently finds its way into the institutions included in this study, which points to the sometimes-fluid divide between "museum" and "art gallery." This project is also not an examination of online exhibitions and digital program development by heritage institutions, although in some cases my field sites have built an online component to accompany an actual physical exhibition. Rights-based museological work could easily be expanded with future work in these areas. I also have been very conscious throughout this research project to not think of certain acts of violence or cases of discrimination that have occurred in Canada as being somehow more significant or noteworthy to discuss over others, despite the fact that as in all dissertation projects, I have had to make choices of focus.

### ***Data Collection & Data Analysis***

The data for this project was collected and analyzed using three separate but interrelated forms of qualitative research including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, visual, digital, and creative research methods.

#### ***1. Semi-structured Interviews***

I spoke formally with 28 heritage professionals as part of my data collection. The quotes and information presented in this dissertation are taken from semi-structured

interviews with these people (see Appendix 1 for complete list of interviews). This methodological approach was chosen because it allowed me to prepare a series of questions to direct the flow of the conversation while simultaneously leaving space for the conversation to grow organically and for questions to develop as the interviews progressed (Rubin and Rubin 2012; Wengraf 2001). I scheduled these interviews individually through email by first sending a letter of introduction to my project (Appendix 2), followed by an official letter requesting the participation of each participant (see Appendix 3; see also Letter of Consent as Appendix 4). When participants agreed, I sent them a letter of consent prior to our interview and brought a hard copy for them to sign in person. Of these 28 interviews, 26 were recorded in the semi-structured interview format, which followed a series of 15 questions (see Appendix 5) and ranged in length from 30 minutes to three hours. These questions were designed to prompt heritage professionals to think about the policies and procedures included in designing exhibitions at their institution such as: why has their institution chosen to work with difficult histories?, how have these histories been defined in the space of their institution?, the various processes that took place to create these exhibitions, and the overall aims and objectives of their exhibition and goals for their future research. Though these questions formed the backbone of the interview process, in most circumstances the interviews moved off script into informal conversations. Of the 26 interviews recorded, only one person did not give me their consent to use their name in writing. I clearly stressed to all participants that it would be impossible for me to totally guarantee anonymity given that each of the field sites/institutions (with the exception of the RIDSAR group) have staff names, positions, and contact information easily available on line. The two interviews not included in the 28 described were conducted with two staff members from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) who did not grant me permission to conduct official interviews. Therefore, their identities remain confidential in this dissertation and any material taken from these discussions is presented as my opinion on experiences they shared with me and not as the opinions of those with whom I spoke. Several informal conversations I had with museums docents,

volunteers, shop staff, restaurant employees, and security guards as well as friends and colleagues I met along the research journey have also shaped my thinking in unique ways. Again, these ideas, when incorporated, are presented as my reflections.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using the principles of narrative analysis to find personal and institutional experiences of building human rights exhibitions and how my participants and their colleagues have responded to the many challenges of working with difficult subject matter in an exhibition context (Rubin and Rubin 2012). As a research methodology, narrative analysis allowed me to analyse and code these conversations for key themes based on how frequently they appear across all my interviews (Hoek 2014; Rubin and Rubin 2012). Themes that appeared such as emotion, feelings, conflict, relationships, collaboration, partnerships, consultation, staff structure, leadership, the task force, neutrality, reconciliation, and responses to the phrase human rights, have come to shape the chapters that appear in this dissertation.

## *2. Participant Observation*

Participant observation is a tactic used in ethnographic research that includes the observing and recording of everyday occurrences in a fieldwork site (Dewalt 2002; Okely 2012; Rubin and Rubin 2012). Participant observation is a useful fieldwork method as it “makes use of non-verbal clues, social processes and cultural dynamics occurring in particular places” (Fontein 2014:78). It is useful as a method of research in that it also accounts for the participatory part of fieldwork; I can account for my own sensorial and corporeal experiences as an active participant in this research process. Given that my fieldwork sites are museum and gallery spaces, the observations I took note of primarily include the dynamics occurring inside actual exhibition spaces. For instance, are partnerships with outside community members visible in the exhibitions? Are the stories of survivors featured prominently in the exhibition? How are objects contextualized and what is their role in the gallery space? Are object histories important in gallery spaces? How are specific design or architectural features discussed in my

interviews experienced in the gallery space? And, is the issue of human rights prevalent in the exhibition space? These observations were taken both prior to my interviews, to help me become more familiar with the place, as well as after the interviews so that I was able to see certain features of exhibitions that were discussed during my interviews more clearly (Rubin and Rubin 2012). These dynamics include: how the exhibition spaces were designed (texts labels, display cases, material used, overall architecture of space); how visitors move through exhibition spaces (pausing, talking, listening); my thoughts on curatorial, collections, and exhibition practices that I witnessed during my visits; and finally, I recorded accounts of my own sensory experiences of entering and spending time in each field site. However, I extended the recording of my observations and experiences outside of the gallery spaces into the cities in which these museums reside to draw further connections between museums, exhibitions, public events occurring in the city, and markers of the urban environment such as historic cultural communities (e.g., Chinatown in Vancouver, or government buildings such as Parliament Hill in Ottawa). I discuss the findings from my observations in greater detail in Chapter 2.

### *3. Visual and Digital Documentation*

My initial purpose for visually documenting elements of exhibition design and architecture was to illustrate aspects of museological practices discussed by my research participants in the interview process. The camera provided me with the means to document specific elements of exhibitions raised by heritage professionals in the interviews. Examples include: text panels; how and where survivor narratives are incorporated in exhibitions; the use and display of particular objects; the use of visual media such as artwork and photographs; the integration of multi-media and interactive displays; and specific aspects of architectural design. I then considered these images through the lens of semiotics or content analysis, like the coding of my interviews, to see patterns and themes that indicated frequencies of practice across institutional practice (Rose 2010). Additionally, the photographs serve as a visual record that accompanies my own observations while in gallery spaces. As such, the photographs

were supplementary to my research notes and helped me remember what I had seen and experienced.

As discussed further in Chapter 2, which considers the camera as a methodological tool, the approximately 3,500 photographs I took became much more significant than merely providing a visual record to accompany my interviews and observations. During my data analysis, I was conscious that it was through the process of selecting and editing images that many of my observations for this project emerged, where theoretical connections were made, and where a visual narrative of unique to this project developed (Boudreault-Fournier 2017; Pink 2004, 2007, 2009). Photographs provided a space for me to think through the museological practices shared with me by my participants and experienced through my fieldwork. They also helped to produce a visual narrative concerning rights-based exhibition and heritage practices currently underway in Canada. It is through the images that I have been able to visually produce an account of what human rights museological work *looks like* in Canada.

In fall 2014, I created a webpage to make my research more publicly accessible where I have consistently uploaded images and texts ( <http://www.ajacketfullofstories.com/>). Though initially I had not initially thought through the benefits of this digital space as a place of creation itself, this is what this space became. The webpage became a useful place for me to draft out initial ideas about this research, play with images to create a narrative that accompanied my writing, and to share what I was experiencing as I travelled through the research collection phase of this project. I also consider this as a living creation space that I can change and add to as my research takes new shapes in the future.

## **Structure of Dissertation**

This dissertation is composed of four main chapters in addition to this introduction and the conclusion. Chapter 2 is structured as a photo essay, given the central role of visual

documentation which has been integral to outcome of this research. This documentation produced a visual narrative concerning rights-based heritage work in Canada that is best illustrated through images. This visual narrative demonstrates methodological components of this research that were outside of the semi-structured interview process, such as the process of photo documentation, my personal reflections shared through autoethnographic writings, and the practice of sensory ethnography where as a researcher, walking and being in place become important methodological tools (Culhane 2017b; de Certeau 1984; Moretti 2017; Pink 2009). This visual research-based chapter integrates many of the major findings of this project alongside the images, while providing a creative space to introduce the institutions, the reasons why they were chosen for this project, and the cities in which they are located. As a photo essay, Chapter 2 is a place for a discussion of methods while it is also an example of my creative methodological practice. The chapter is followed by three chapters with greater attention to theoretical discussion.

Chapter 3 considers the role of emotion, or the “affective practices” (Wetherell 2012) in operation as heritage professionals work with difficult subject matter, and how this may differ from the investment of care given to other curatorial projects. I was interested here to know what, if any, practice-based protocols are created when working with survivors of discrimination and violence to safeguard against triggers of traumatic experiences for survivors, as well as any practices put in place for the good health of the institutional staff. I sought to learn how culturally specific knowledges might come into play in managing emotionally charged subject matter. This chapter finds that emotional experiences factor greatly during project development with challenging subject matter. Working with survivors of trauma is not just about creating a successful exhibition; the exhibition is but one part of curatorial processes. Rather, this work comes with the belief that processes of museological work can offer healing to those that have suffered from trauma, and the possibility for healing is part of the transformative potential of curatorial work.

Chapter 4 highlights the variety of “institutional cultures” present in this study (Harrison 2005:197)—that is, the aspects of these museums that make them unique such as the history of the collections, physical design, funding, staff structure, and how institutional culture impacts the work of human rights. This chapter builds on responses shared by my participants concerning the terms “community” and “collaboration” that have dominated museological literature for the last 30 years, and the challenges that continue to exist to build fully collaborative projects through museum spaces. This chapter demonstrates how smaller Canadian institutions are well situated to build exhibitions concerning difficult subject matter given their more immediate community connections. This is not to say that larger institutions are incapable of working within this area curatorial practices; however, there is a considerable, and very important, distinction between exhibitions that cover issues related to discrimination, violence, and cultural inequality in Canada *thematically* and the collaborative museological work that situates the power of project development in the hands of community members while seeking to improve the well-being of their lives. Given the time and longevity of relationship building required to work on difficult and emotionally sensitive subject matter, I stress in this chapter how smaller museums are well positioned to assist larger institutions through institutional collaborative partnerships.

In Chapter 5 I focus more intensely on connections between human rights work in museums and developing discourses concerning human rights in Canada. I situate the findings of this chapter within literature that draws connections between the role of museums and the production of heritage, history, and collective memory. I include here a discussion on the relevance of the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples (1992) today as reflected on by my research participants as well as the curious ambivalence in the heritage industry with regards to the use of the phrase "human rights" in exhibition development. I also include here the reactions and reflections shared by my participants on the creation of the new Canadian Museum for Human

Rights, the role of museums in Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including the role of material and visual culture in museum exhibitions and the responsibility of museums to take up the “Calls to Action” put forth from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see Actions 67 and 68 in TRC 2015:252). This chapter aims to situate the Canadian cultural institutions and research collectives that I have worked with as vital contributors in Canada to public understandings of rights and justice as produced through museological practice. Given that museums can conduct the work of human rights—that is, the on the ground work required to work with survivors of trauma—they contribute greatly to better understandings of cultural diversity. This situates museums as key players in the ongoing development of human rights discourses in Canada as they continue to produce new pedagogical models for thinking through difficult histories.

In Chapter 6 I tie the main points of this dissertation together, offering final thoughts and reflections on this research including the limits of this project and what I see as future directions for further research. I stress in this final chapter that museological work on rights-issues is process that is constantly emerging as both museological practices and notions of human rights in Canada themselves evolve.

## Chapter 2 A Visual Landscape of Canadian Human Rights Exhibitions: A Photo Essay



Figure 3: Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)

### Introduction

This chapter provides a visual journey through the field work of this project. The images are organized in relation to the trajectory of my fieldwork travels. I begin with my first visit to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg in fall 2014, then on to Ottawa and Gatineau to conduct interviews at the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum. From here I travelled to Vancouver to visit the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and the Chinese Canadian Military Museum in Vancouver's Chinatown. In fall 2014, I also interviewed staff at the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Center in Vancouver and in December 2014 I visited the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. I discuss in this chapter my ongoing work with the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Program (RIDSAR). Though stationed out of the University of Victoria (UVic), the RIDSAR project took me across Vancouver Island,

to Vancouver, and to Ottawa.<sup>15</sup> I end this chapter with my second return to Winnipeg in 2015, and to the reflections that emerged out of this final phase of field work.

This chapter also serves as a place of explanation and reflection on the methodological approaches that I incorporated in this project that sit outside of my semi-structured interviews. I highlight here the importance of photography, not just as a tool to document what I saw or experienced, but also the importance of the processes of selecting and editing the images that have come to form the visual narrative presented here. Anthropology has a long and well-developed relationship with the camera. As anthropologist Christopher Pinney notes, photography and anthropology in many ways co-developed alongside each other; they have "parallel histories" (1992, see also 2011). Photographs are no longer just evidence of research data collected, they are valuable sites of visual analysis in and of themselves (Pink 2004, 2007), and increasingly so, part of a growing field of creative methodological research praxis where art, archives, and anthropology coalesce (Buckely 2016; Schneider and Wright 2010; Pink et al. 2004; Rose 2010, 2014; see as examples of influence: Baird 2011; Fletcher 2014; Pedri 2014, 2016; Robinson 2016; Smith 2007, 2010; Walsh 2002). This creative methodological field includes visual and acoustic research methods such as film, photography, soundscapes, and photo-voice; performative practices such as theatre, spoken word, music, and dance; and ethnographies that make use of personal narrative and the auto-ethnographic style of writing (see Elliott and Culhane 2017; Liamputtong and Rumbold 2008; Leavy 2015; Mannay 2015; McNiff 2013; Selfridge in press; Stanczak 2007). This photo essay is situated within this larger body of emerging scholarship that pushes ethnographic research to be imaginative, exploratory, and creative in the pursuit of new ways of creating knowledge (Culhane 2017a; see also the Centre for Imaginative Ethnography <http://imaginativeethnography.org/>).

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<sup>15</sup> As a former Research Assistant on this project throughout the duration of my doctoral program, this "field site" is difficult to place in linear time as it is ongoing.

The format of the photo essay has recently gained new recognition in anthropology as a valuable site of analytical inquiry and knowledge dissemination. As a working medium, the photo essay provides a place for experimental, creative, and self-reflexive methods of research practice while existing as a contemplative space to analyze how images work together to produce a certain form of knowledge about being and existing in place (see Brodine et al. 2011; *Cultural Anthropologist* 2016; *Ethnographic Terminalia* 2016).<sup>16</sup> I reflect throughout this essay not just on the taking of photographs to visually document the exhibitions that I discuss, but on the importance of the mediated processes of selecting and editing images that took place throughout my data analysis. This chapter also acknowledges the phenomenological and sensory aspects of spending time in my field sites and walking through the cities where they reside.

My thoughts presented along with these images are written in an auto-ethnographic style, which allows me to share my reflections on the fieldwork process while in turn analyzing these experiences. The format is one in which an image from my fieldwork is followed by autoethnographic reflection on each. Auto-ethnography speaks to the position of a researcher as being both inside and outside of the research context (Baird, 2011; Ellis 1997, 2004). Thus, this space allows me to consider my role as both a researcher and heritage professional in a place that is, as Jill Baird notes, “not in isolation but in a collaborative context” (2011: 79). This narrative, therefore, is not set apart from my own engagement in its production; this photo essay is at once a narrative of human rights heritage practices while also existing as the visual production of my research process.

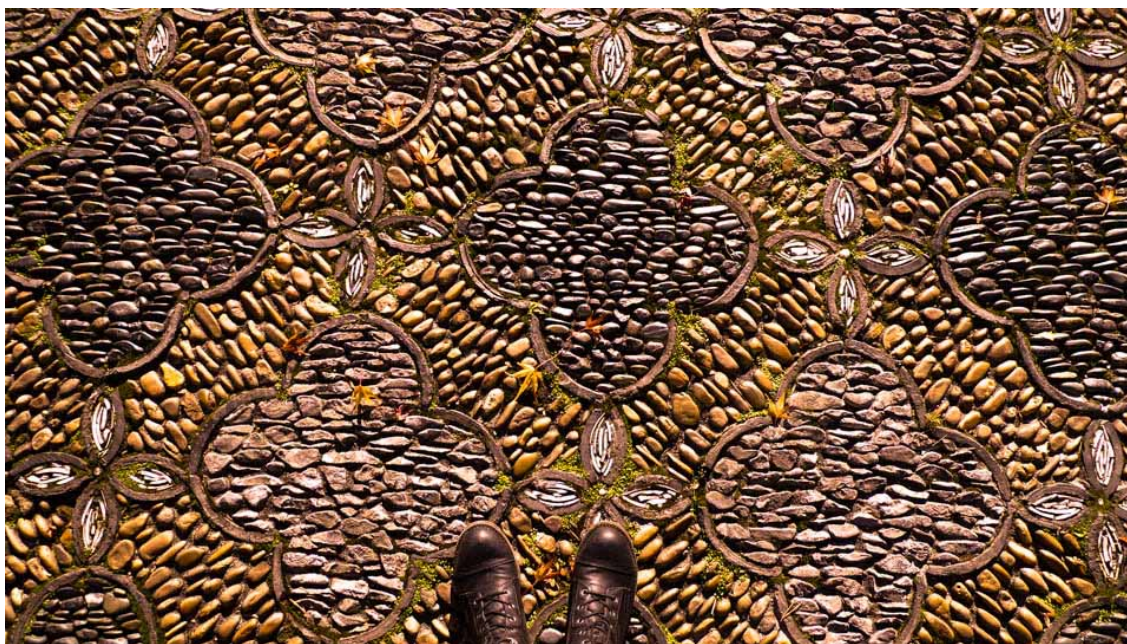
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<sup>16</sup> The American Anthropology Association included a session and workshop on the place of the photo essay in anthropological research during the 2016 annual conference, see the information on this AAA session: <http://ethnographicterminalia.org/2016-minneapolis>. Additionally, academic journals that have not been traditionally visually focused are providing new spaces for photo essays to be peer reviewed see as example the journal *Cultural Anthropologist*: <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/16-announcing-ca-photo-essays>, and the launch for “Writing With Light” between the journals *Cultural Anthropologist* and *Visual Anthropology Review*: [https://culanth.org/photo\\_essays](https://culanth.org/photo_essays).



**Figure 4: Documenting the Documenter, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

With eight fieldwork sites, much of my time for this research was spent in gallery spaces. As a recording device, the camera provided not only a tool to visually capture my experiences, but the images I took provided an analytical space for me to think through my field work experiences in new ways during the process of data analysis. Images can show us things maybe we didn't fully see in the photographic moment, helping us to both document our roles as documenters (Fig. 4) and opening new lines of inquiry and reflection. The process of editing, whether photographs, film, or sound clips, is an imaginative and active place where researchers bring media together in new and creative ways of knowledge production (Boudreault-Fournier 2017; Pink 2007). For me, the process of editing became an important place of contemplation during this research. All the images were edited for clarity, some were cropped to highlight aspects of the photo. Others have been creatively altered in Photoshop. It was while choosing images, playing with colours, cropping, adding layers, that my mind wandered into the spaces in between the images. It was in this space of wandering that new insights developed that were not part of my gallery visits or interviews. It was through spending time with my images that a narrative began to emerge out from this research and this narrative enabled me to see how my field sites are connected to each other; connected to the cities they reside in; and connected to various rights issues and heritage spaces across Canada.



**Figure 5: City Walker, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

Research is filled with unexpected moments. Something that stood out to me early on in this project was just how significant my eight field sites are within the city they reside. This connection, which I take up more fully in Chapter 5, is significant not only when thinking about the work an institution attempts to conduct, but the collection it cares for, the community of people it is attempting to reach, and the physical presence these buildings have on the urban landscape. Museums, art galleries, and historic sites are part of the arts and culture fabric of an urban environment, and together they form a network within a city based on historic and contemporary artistic and cultural practices that connects directly to specific sites of historic memory and to collective understandings of past events (Blumer 2015; Busby et al. 2015; Phillips 2006, 2015). For example, walking through Chinatown in Vancouver, and the area around Powell Street in east Vancouver where Canada's largest group of Japanese Canadians resided prior to WWII, gave me a better appreciation for how particular heritage spaces such as the Chinese Canadian Military Museum and the Nikkei Cultural Centre are intricately connected to this part of the city. In this sense heritage spaces, particularly those to do with rights-related events, form a network—or landscape—across the cities where they reside but also come together to form a larger network across Canada. A network that comes together to tell a larger story about the development of rights in Canada and the role that heritage spaces across the country play in this development. Walking is a sensory, experiential form of critical practice (Fig. 5) where reflection comes through moments being in place (de Certeau 1984; Ingold 2000; Moretti 2017; Pink 2008, 2009, 2012). And so, like a 19th century Flâneur, walking through the cities where my research sites were located has been a vital part of the field work process, which is a bonus because I love walking and getting lost in cities—both mentally and physically—as a necessary act of meditation for my mind.



**Figure 6: CMHR - From the Bridge, Winnipeg, MB, by author (2014)**

The Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) was my first fieldwork stop back in September 2014. Though I was not able to get any tickets to go inside the galleries this visit (a lottery system was set in place by the museum for the opening weekend), this turned out to be a strange blessing in disguise. In addition to spending time at the opening ceremonies and public events planned for the opening, I spent a lot of my time in Winnipeg walking around the city, talking with people, and taking in a general sense of what it means for this institution to have been built in this place.

The CMHR has very much marked the broader museum landscape with its presence and it is a presence that is felt. Given the timing of the opening of this museum coinciding with the beginning of my research year, I noticed early on, as I moved on to

other research sites after the opening of the CMHR, that thoughts from the people I interviewed and the many exhibitions I reviewed for this project were framed as part of a response to the creation of the CMHR. The question I was left with after my first visit to CMHR (Fig. 6) (and pursued during my second visit in Feb 2015) was how and if, the CMHR is conducting or ready to conduct the curatorial work required to work on human rights issues. There is a great difference between human rights displayed thematically and human rights work done *through* a cultural institution, a point I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4.



**Figure 7: The Forks, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)**

While visiting Winnipeg, I spent considerable time reflecting on the CMHR's physical presence on the landscape of the city. This museum is one of the only national institutions in Canada to be built outside of the capital city of Ottawa. The choice to build in Winnipeg and in the Forks area of the city was a very deliberate decision. I found myself fascinated with the city of Winnipeg and grateful for the opportunity to become connected to this place via my work. There are so many layers of historical depth to this city and these layers mark the landscape in many ways.

Winnipeg is a culturally diverse city that carries a municipal consciousness of social and political justice. Winnipeg was at one time the physical and commercial center of Canada: Union Station at the edge of the Forks was the center of the Canadian Railway, where commerce, goods, and people gathered (Fig. 7). The Forks at one time had immigration sheds where new comers to the Prairies were stationed during the late 1800s and early 1900s before moving on to other parts of the country (see Fig. 8). Winnipeg was also the site of Canada's first workers strike in 1919, which funneled into the downtown streets near the Forks (see Fig. 9). The CMHR today sits across from Saint Boniface, the home to the Métis Government, where the legacy of Louis Riel (Fig. 11) and the Red River Rebellion exists as a strong reminder that the province of Manitoba was created to protect the rights of the francophone and Métis communities in the newly developed country of Canada after Confederation in 1867 (Busby et al. 2015; Newman and Levine 2014).



**Figure 8: Immigration sheds, the Forks has been a staging area for immigrants heading west for more than a century Archives of Manitoba. Reproduced courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba [Elswood Bole 6, N13803]**



**Figure 9: Crowd at Portage and Main Winnipeg Strike, Winnipeg, MB (1919). Reproduced courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba [Winnipeg Strike 25, N12313]**



**Figure 10: Where the Two Rivers Meet, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)**

Winnipeg and The Forks also have a different kind of feeling—the kind where you can feel history seeping in you when you look around. This is palpable history. The Forks is the place where the Red River and the Assiniboine River meet (Fig. 10) on what is Treaty One territory. It was a place of connection and trade for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years and later for fur traders seeking to supply the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company (Busby et al. 2015). The Forks today with its crossing of the rivers is a place where people celebrate (!) the winter months by skating down the rivers, listening to music, and drinking Caribou (fortified wine). It is also the place where over the last few years several bodies have pulled to shore of the riverbanks, including many Indigenous women, some only young girls. The Forks has a different kind of feeling—the kind where you can feel history seeping in you when you look around. This is palpable history and it is a history that relates directly to current pertinent human rights issues in Canada.



**Figure 11: Resistance, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)**

While the opening of the museum may have fallen a bit flat on many fronts—the limited tickets for one—it provided a chance for other places, institutions, and galleries to join in welcoming a new cultural institution to the city. For example, the Winnipeg Art Gallery held a human rights-themed exhibition that coincided with the opening of the CMHR. The Forks market area had an exhibition of information panels discussing human rights. I even visited a chocolate shop that was celebrating the opening with CMHR-themed treats. As I spent time in the city speaking informally with those I met in galleries, stores and restaurants, I sensed that despite skepticism, there was also a lot of hope that having a new big museum—and a national museum at that—which would help to spark tourism to the city. More importantly, there was a consensus that the very presence of the museum had sparked dialogue concerning human rights amongst people, bringing to life the physical markers laid out across the city such as the statue here of Louis Riel (Fig. 11) that signify Winnipeg’s long history of rights protest and resistance.



**Figure 12: Royal Canoe, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)**

The Winnipeg group Royal Canoe performed during the CMHR opening events (Fig. 12). Though great acts were scheduled, set times for artists were very short (30 minutes) and many shows were cancelled due to heavy rain. Controversy broke out surrounding the performances after the group “A Tribe Called Red” (ATCR), who were scheduled as headliners for the opening, pulled out of the line-up stating they disagreed with the museum's decision not to call Indian Residential Schools an act of genocide against Indigenous people by the Canadian Government (see also Lett 2015). ATCR is a highly successful group of three Indigenous DJs based in Ottawa and their decision to withdraw was a big political statement. Royal Canoe still chose to play; however, they used their short set time strategically to acknowledge the substantive controversies surrounding museum; their conflicted feelings about playing; and the fact another body had just been pulled from the Red River on the day of their performance. They called out (former) Prime Minister Stephen Harper's failure to recognize the astonishing number of missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada, and for all of us present to use the new museum as a reminder of the human rights issues present in this country. This moment and the controversy surrounding the opening was a great reminder to me of the power of artists and the important role they play in society. During this weekend, it was musicians—whether in their decision not to play or to play with the use of specific words— who demonstrated the courage to take a very public stand on present day understandings of human rights in Canada. Perhaps not coincidentally, the sun broke through clouds during Royal Canoe's set.



**Figure 13: Shoal Lake, Winnipeg, MB by author (2014)**

The museum's opening was the focus of other forms of protest as well. Figure 13 shows the Shoal Lake protest camp that was set up directly opposite the CMHR. Members from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation came to protest the lack of basic resources in their community, including access to clean, running water. Located near the Manitoba/Ontario border, Shoal Lake has been an isolated community for close to a century, after it was cut from the mainland by the provincial government in order to build an aqueduct to supply water to the city of Winnipeg (Lehrer 2015a). This protest was one of many that occurred on the site of the museum grounds during this opening weekend. During my travels, I spoke with many people about their thoughts on this museum, which in almost every case turned into a discussion about human rights. During one casual Saturday night at a friend's place, a few of us were discussing rights, the museum, access to health care, social services, and adequate housing in Winnipeg. In response to this moment one person noted how lucky we were to be able to sit and have this discussion—to be able to sit back and contemplate what human rights are, or should be, about where they are lacking at the very basic level in parts of our cities across the country. I saw this moment as one of the biggest takeaway messages from the opening of this museum. On some strange level, opening a museum with a \$350-million-dollar price tag had people talking about rights; simultaneously, the physical site of the museum served as a place where rights were actively being debated and where protests were taking place (see also Lehrer 2015a). In this sense, despite the controversy surrounding the opening of the museum, the CMHR has served as a catalyst for rights-based discussions.



**Figure 14: Waterfall Welcome in Ottawa, Ottawa, ON by author (2015)**

The next stop on this journey was Ottawa (Fig. 14) for the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History (formerly Canadian Museum of Civilization). I have had several research trips to Ottawa during my doctorate. Ottawa seems a somewhat unavoidable place in a project that is, in part, an investigation into the construction and deconstruction of Canadian nationalism and identity. Ottawa is the epicenter of Canadian politics; not necessarily the center of political action in Canada, or the center of politically active people, but the epicenter of the federal government. Ottawa is the home to the Parliament of Canada and its urban landscape is composed of the legacy of material wealth and architecture that came from the growth of Canada as a nation during the late 19th century. Ottawa is also home to Library and Archives Canada; the material memory of government action—or, in some cases, inaction—in Canada. These buildings are examples of spaces that constitute the bigger network of heritage institutions and monuments across Canada that contribute to notions of nation building. Within this network these institutions speak to one another, they influence one another, and together they in part, form the physical and visual landscape of heritage memory, contested or otherwise, in Canada.



**Figure 15: Human Rights Monument, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

As Canada's capital city, I was particularly conscious of the monuments in Ottawa that have been built to reflect either moments in Canada's history or the supposed ideals of Canadian citizens that involve rights issues. Pictured here (Fig. 15) is the *Canadian Tribute to Human Rights*. The monument was designed by Marvin Charney and unveiled in 1990 to a ceremony witnessed by several dignitaries. The artwork is meant to symbolize, "the struggles and continuing efforts of the people of Canada,

and of all nations and peoples, to obtain and preserve fundamental human rights" with the premise that public art can be a departure point to raise awareness and action concerning rights (see the *Canadian Tribute to Human Rights* 2008). Physical markers such as these are designed to commemorate the ongoing rights struggles in Canada and elsewhere in addition to Canada's committed to continue to work on achieving equal human rights. And yet, I am left considering how the act of monumentalizing the struggle for rights can equally be argued to be nothing more than a process of valourizing the Canadian government's commitment to a rights agenda when, in practice, these rights have often not been honoured.



**Figure 16: Memorial within a Memorial, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

*The Response*, Canada's National War Memorial, is located in Ottawa and dedicated to fallen soldiers of World War I and II and the Korean War (Fig. 16). My fieldwork for this project began in fall 2014, which coincided with the 100th anniversary of World War I. Many museums and gallery spaces were exhibiting materials related to this anniversary. This provided an unexpectedly rich layer of exhibition material related to human-rights issues present in war and conflict. I am thankful for how this material has pushed me to consider the role of the world wars in the development of Canada as a nation, particularly considering the role of Indigenous Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and Japanese Canadians in Canada's efforts during WWI and II, despite not being recognized as full Canadian citizens. This photograph gained additional significance for me because shortly after I left Ottawa in the fall of 2014, a terrorist attack happened in this location; Cpl. Nathan Cirillo was shot to death while guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, visible in the image. As I write this several years on, I am left to reflect on the everyday violence that is currently occurring in the world. My heart is heavy daily when I hear the latest list of hate-filled cruelty acted out across the world in the name of faith, culture, and fear. I am reminded time and again by world and local events of the continued need for spaces like museums to discuss and debate these events, as well as of the power of art and education to help heal the many heads and hearts of hurt and hate that exist in Canada and elsewhere. I remain optimistic in the potential for all of us to be better human beings. A choice of optimism, in times like these, seems the only logical way to be.



**Figure 17: Victoria Memorial Building, Ottawa, ON (1912). Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History [18806]**

The founding collection of Canada's national museum dates to 1856 as part of the Geological Survey of Canada, funded by what was then the Province of Canada. While this strain of collecting began with geological (specifically mineral) specimens, surveyors also began collecting objects from Indigenous communities, and the Geological Survey of Canada held its first exhibition of Indigenous material in 1862-1863. By the late 19th century, the Geological Survey Museum was open to the public and responsible for collecting flora, fauna, and material related to human history in addition to mineral collections. To aid with this, the Royal Society of Canada was established in 1882 to collect ethnological objects and by 1910 an anthropological department was created in the Geological Survey Society. The collection officially became the National Museum of Canada from 1910 to 1968, opening in the Victoria Memorial Museum Building (Fig. 17) in 1911 in Ottawa (now Canada's National Natural History Museum).



**Figure 18: The Cardinal and the Library, Gatineau, QC by author (2014)**

In 1968, Canada's national museum became the Museum of Man. The museum would transition again in 1989 to become the Canadian Museum of Civilization when the museum moved into its current home (Fig. 18) designed by Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal across the Ottawa River from Parliament Hill (Canadian Museum of History 2016). In 2013, the Harper Conservative Government re-branded the museum as the Canadian Museum of History. This move was met with much skepticism, not only for the costs associated with such a process at a time when the federal government pulled or cut funding to many arts and culture initiatives and institutions, but also due to concerns over the political motivations behind such a move that seeks to create a version of Canadian history or Canadian identity through the space of a museum that matches a political agenda (see Aronczyk and Brady 2015; Minsky 2014). In Chapters 4 and 5 I take a closer look at the national rebranding of the CMH and the challenges that national institutions have when trying to work on certain exhibitions when their funding and collections histories are tied directly to the federal government.



**Figure 19: Your Country, Gatineau, QC by author (2014)**

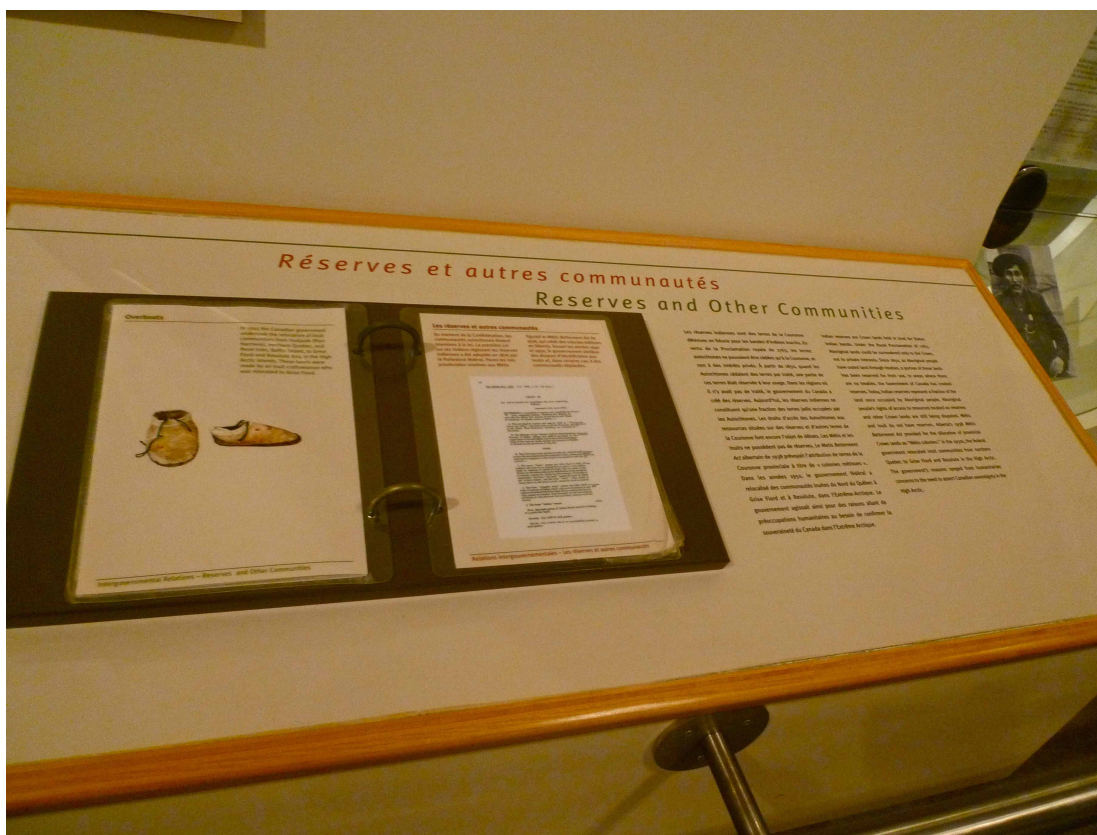
During my visit to the CMH in September 2014 (and my subsequent visit during the following June 2015) the Canada History Hall, one of the museum's major galleries and top attractions, was closed for renovations. This is a BIG undertaking by a national museum. Curating an exhibition that covers the entire country from Confederation in 1867 to 2017 (the official opening date) seems like a daunting task. With the slogan for the CMH renovation: *Your Country, Your History, Your Museum* (Fig. 19), I wonder, whose history/histories get included? What stories are told and by whom? And in the case of my project, how are the difficult moments in Canada's past portrayed in a national museum exhibition (Figs. 20 to 23) and what partnerships are being created with community organizations to do so?



Figure 20: Entrance to Canada Hall, Ottawa, ON (2010). Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History [IMG2010-0134-0001-Dm]



Figure 21: Diorama of a Chinese Canadian man working in Laundry Shop, Ottawa, ON (2010). Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History [IMG2010-0134-0014-Dm]



**Figure 22: Panel One, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau QC by author (2014)**

Like many museums built or renovated during the 1990s, the old Canada History Hall at the CMH made use of large dioramas and reproduction models of moments of Canada's past (see Fig. 20 and 21). The gallery moves visitors through a timeline that tells of the creation of Canada from the first arrivals of Europeans moving across Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and ending in the North. The message delivered through the exhibition was of a unified version of Canadian Confederation where any sense of conflict is glossed over in the celebration of a united and multicultural country. Gordon-Walker (2016) rightly highlights how government-sponsored acts of displacement, discrimination, and assimilation were presented as acts that occurred in the past and were situated in the exhibition to demonstrate how far Canada had progressed as nation to become a state characterized by equality. Though the museum has been criticized for how the gallery lacked any critical depth in the exhibition and for the use of too many models and reenactments (Dean and Rider 2005), my participants shared with me how many of the staff and visitors frequently expressed how much they have enjoyed this space. The old Canada Hall was by all accounts, a popular tourist attraction. As such my participants shared the difficulty they have had in dismantling an exhibition that has been a successful part of the museum experience for the last 20 years.



**Figure 23: Panel Two, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau QC by author (2014)**

The history of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) has appeared as a subject in many museums across Canada for quite some time, though most often as part of a larger exhibition theme devoted to a general history of Indigenous histories in Canada or settlement history of Canada. Based upon my exhibition viewing, historical photographs that depict IRS have come to dominate the presentation of this material.<sup>17</sup> One such photograph (Fig. 23) is that of a young Cree man named Thomas Moore. Images of his physical transformation from attending the Regina Indian Industrial School in the late 19th century has been widely used in museums and academic publications to illustrate the very visual effect of IRS on the Indigenous body. The picture presents a striking contrast. However, while the placement of such information is essential in positioning the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada, small exhibit panels (such as Figs 22 and 23) are not necessarily the same as a full exhibition devoted to the experiences of IRS as told through the stories of those who have lived through IRS in their families and communities.

<sup>17</sup> This is certainly the case in the exhibitions designed through the Legacy of Hope Foundation *Where are the Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools* (Fig. 80) and *100 Years of Loss: Healing the Legacy of Residential School* that are both primarily photography-based.



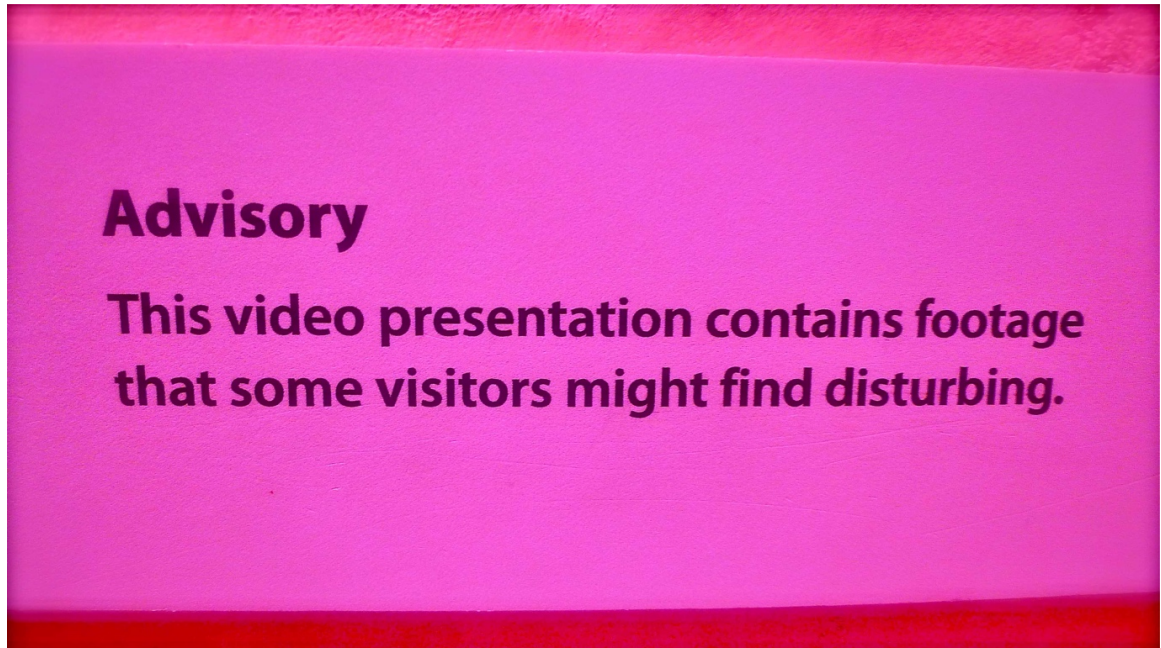
**Figure 24: Your Country, Your History, Your Museum, Gatineau QC by author (2014)**

The CMH will open the new Canada History Hall on July 1<sup>st</sup> as part of Ottawa's larger Canada 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations (Fig. 24). Thus, the timing of the completion of this dissertation coincides with the opening of the new gallery. At the time of my interviews, staff at the CMH were very careful not to disclose what themes, stories, or historical moments would be in the gallery and what would not be returning to the gallery from the previous exhibition. The three apologies that have guided this research were part of the old gallery and will all be present in the new Canada Hall after having been re-researched and re-crafted to present these apologies in new ways in the content of Canada in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I was told that several consultations had taken place with various cultural community partners to develop content for the gallery, including for the apologies. From my own conversations with David Morrison, the head of Research for the new gallery, conversations began with Andrea Walsh and the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Program (RIDSAR) at the University of Victoria about how Survivor stories from this group could help tell the stories of residential schools in the Canada Hall. In Chapter 4, I look more closely at the importance of these institutional partnerships that develop between smaller projects or museums such as RIDSAR and large, national museums with regards to working with difficult histories.



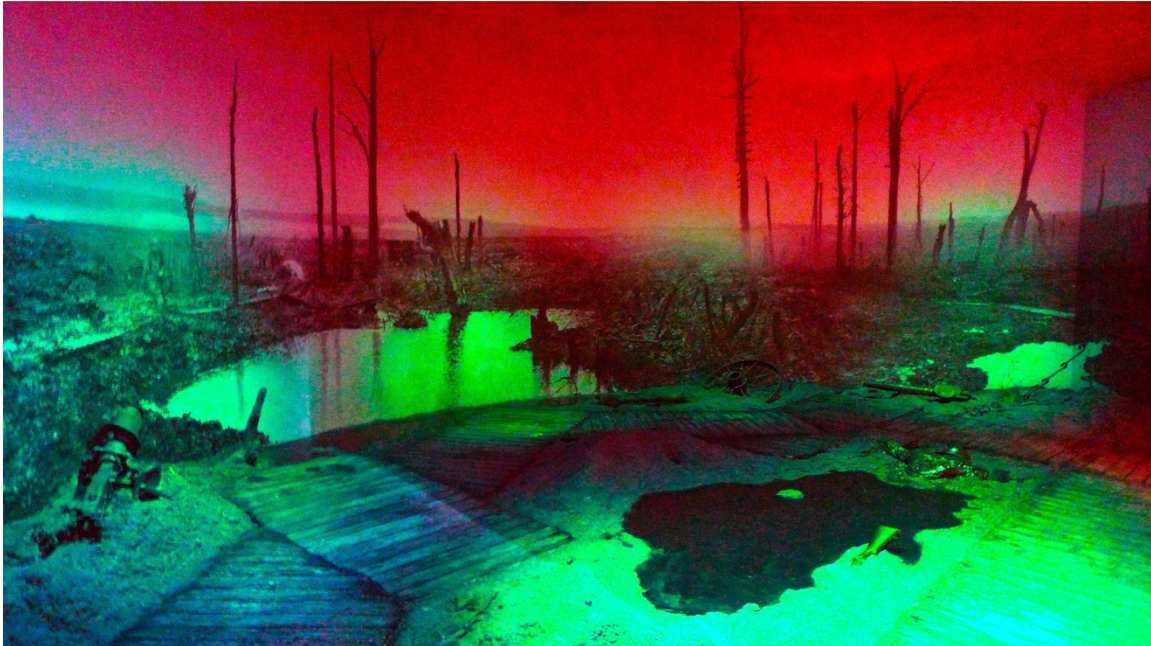
**Figure 25: THE Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2015)**

While in Ottawa I also visited the Canadian War Museum (Fig. 25). The current CWM opened in 2005 in Ottawa in the area known as LeBreton Flats. The CWM is part of the Crown Corporation made possible through Canada's Museum Act that also includes the CMH, the Canadian Postal Museum, the Canadian Children's Museum, and the Virtual Museum of New France. Like the CMH, the CWM draws its roots from the late 19th century and the start of a collection based on military items, some 3 million in number. I was not fully aware of just how much the CWM and the CMH share as institutions in terms of resources until I undertook this research project. Many of the interpretive planning, design, and curatorial teams from the CWM, including their former Director, have come on board to help create the new Canada History Hall. Since its opening, the CWM is considered one of Canada's most successful museums with a steady number of visitors every year. The building itself has also garnered much praise architecturally. The architect for the CWM, Raymond Moriyama, was interned along with his Japanese Canadian family during WWII and he acknowledges these experiences in his own process of design development (see *In Search of Soul* 2005).



**Figure 26: Might Find Disturbing, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

There are many reasons that I chose the CWM as a field site. However, the main overarching reason is the theme of the museum itself—war. Museum staff here constantly deal with difficult or troubling material as part of their museological practices (Fig. 26). Every exhibition or research project is in some way related to war, and while there are many positive stories about war efforts, home front experiences, victories, and peace projects—there are more stories of violence, hate, destruction, and death. I was curious if and how staff here processed this aspect of their work. Many members of the curatorial staff at the CWM are military historians. For some this provides a distance from the period they specialize in given time that has passed. For others, this means that there is still a community of veterans, the family, or descendants of vets, or those who have experienced conflict first hand who form part of the community that heritage professionals are responsible to consult.



**Figure 27: The Trench, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

In addition to temporary gallery spaces, the CWM has four main permanent galleries: Early Wars in Canada; The South African and First World Wars; World War II, The Second World War; and From Cold War to the Present. These galleries focus on the Canadian experience at war, both overseas and on the home front. The galleries use objects, large-scale multimedia, sound, artwork, personal narratives to take visitors through various war efforts in which Canadians have taken part. Veterans occasionally work as tour guides within certain exhibitions giving first-hand accounts of their experiences. The picture here (Fig. 27) is from the WWI gallery and is a mock version of a trench. There are several re-enactment spaces in the CWM and as I was walking through this particular one I was struck by how eerie these spaces can be. There was a strange moment where I was caught somewhere between my own historical reflection of this time and just how distant I am from this reality. This was made especially clear during one of my visits when I entered this space behind a young woman who was taking selfie photographs in the trench. This moment was somewhat of a stark reminder of how museums are somewhat of an in-between space. For me it was space that verged on the real; reminded me of how fortunate I am and yet how distant from the realities of war I live my life. For others, it is so hard to even speculate. For those who have lived a life knowing only peace in homelands, perhaps the distance is part of what we are meant to feel. To be reminded of our freedom.



**Figure 28: War and Medicine, Canadian War Museum, ON (2011). Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian War Museum [CWM2011-0072-0055-Dm]**



**Figure 29: Deadly Medicine, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON (2012). Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian War Museum [CWM2012-0018-0036-Dm]**



**Figure 30: Bullets, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

Given the difficulty of the material the staff of the CWM deal with, it is perhaps not surprising that there were a few exhibitions in my interviews that stood out as being particularly challenging in terms of content and provided a learning experience in terms of strategies that were developed to work with in the future. The two previous photos are examples of this (Figs. 28 and 29). *War and Medicine* had exceptionally graphic content in terms of visual imagery throughout the exhibition. Large photographs containing medical procedures developed during times of war were placed on the walls along with early medical tools and technological advancements. The gruesome nature of the content was a point of reflection for the staff, with many noting the difficulty of absorbing such visually disturbing images.

The second exhibition had an even more profound impact on those I interviewed: *Deadly Medicine* (Fig. 29). This was an exhibition about the eugenics movement and was identified as being one of the most difficult projects any of those I interviewed had worked on, given the sheer brutality of what this movement stood for. As discussed further in Chapter 3, it was clear from my interviews that exhibitions like these stand as influential sites for the development of new methodological practices, for the very nature of the content requires staff to build training procedures to manage how both staff and visitors engage with the material.



**Figure 31: Forced Relocation, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

Part of my interest in the CWM also had to do with how the story of the Japanese Canadian Internment during WWII fit into the larger story of Canada and Canadians at war. Though far from a prominent feature in terms of exhibition capacity within the WWII gallery space, the initial design of the section of the gallery devoted to this topic proved to be an example of how small-yet-powerful physical design decisions have very real impacts on the message being delivered in a gallery. When the gallery initially opened, several members of the larger Japanese Canadian community protested how the Japanese Canadian Internment was positioned within the larger exhibition space. All the permanent galleries in the CWM have long weaving corridors that take visitors chronologically through the start of the conflict featured in the gallery through to the end. In the case of the WWII gallery, the small exhibition space devoted to the Internment (Figs. 31 and 32) is placed directly across from a mannequin model of a fierce Hong Kong soldier and an exhibition display about the danger to North America of the invasion of the Pacific and the ruthlessness of war tactics from peoples from this area was. The experience of the layout of this part of the gallery would become the site of protest by many Japanese Canadians.



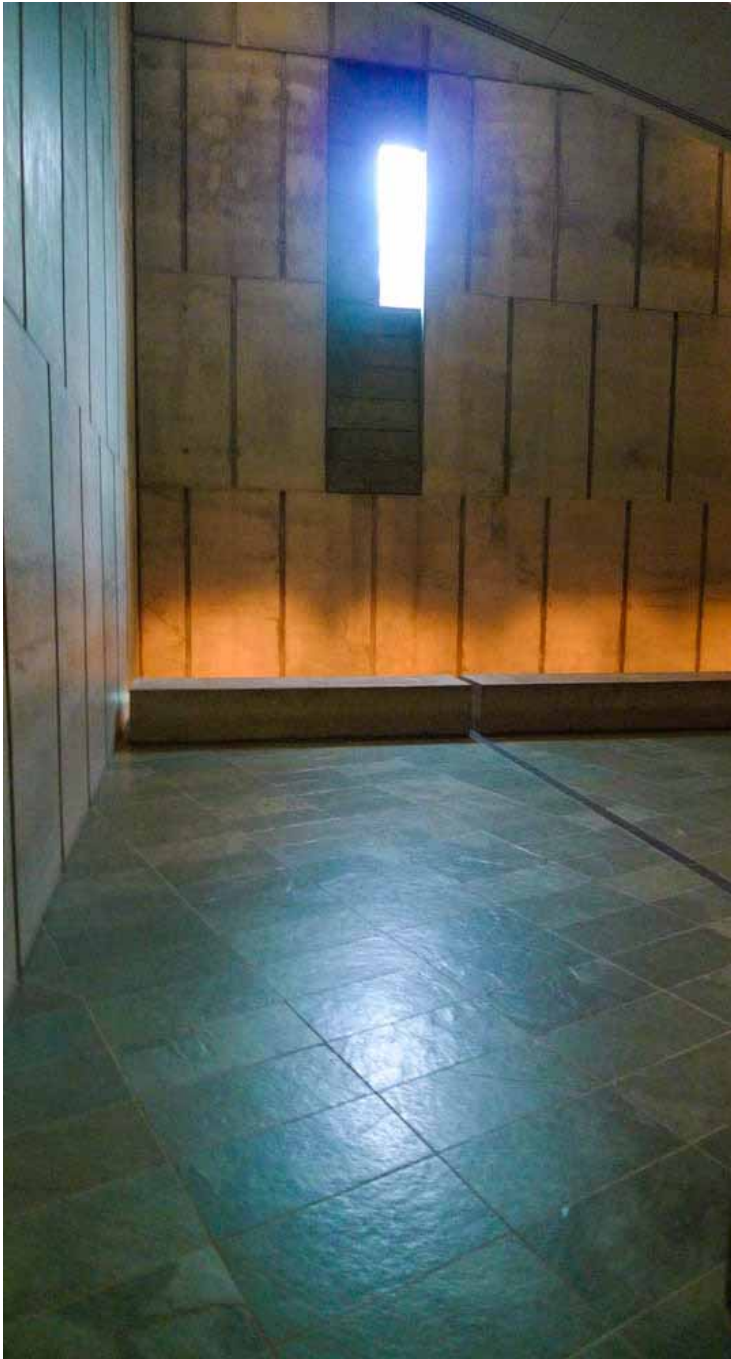
**Figure 32: Location of Relocation, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

The Japanese Internment exhibition then leads directly into the entrance of the "At Home" gallery space (seen towards end of Fig. 32). When the gallery initially opened, there was a Japanese flag projected across the floor, which physically had to be crossed by gallery visitors to proceed through this portion of the gallery into the "At Home" exhibition space. For protestors of the exhibition, this experience of walking through the space and seeing the discussion of the Internment, labeled as "Forced Relocation" rather than "Internment," was unsettling. The exhibition panels contained no discussion of the fact that there were many Japanese Canadians who fought for Canada against Japan. This omission of this fact and the placement of the story of Japanese Canadians near the Hong Kong soldier set a tone, as I was told, that excused the Internment of Japanese Canadians by the Canadian government. The protests from the community resulted in the exhibition being altered slightly. The flag was removed, proving the power of community voice and importance of community consultation during the design phase of an exhibition. This example also illustrates the power that national galleries have in creating messages about Canadian nationalism through the very structure of their exhibitions.



**Figure 33: Enemy Aliens, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

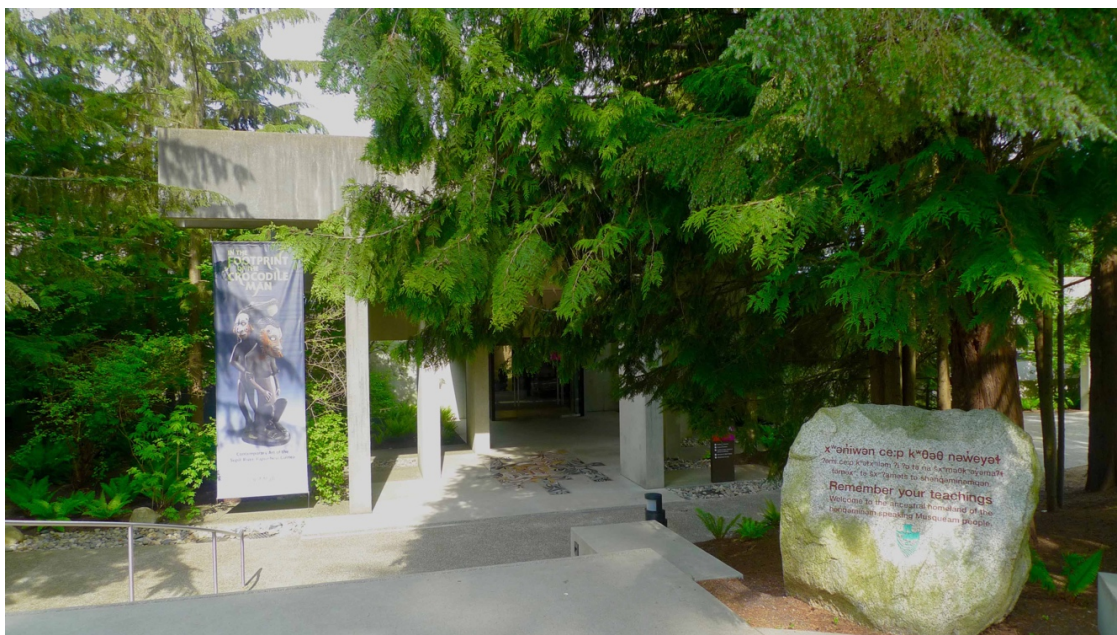
Coincidences are strange things. In addition to my research phase starting alongside the opening of the Canadian Human Rights Museum, my project also coincided with the summer that marked the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I in July 1914. Many of the museums I visited during this first portion of my field work displayed exhibitions related to this marking of time. This included not only the institutions that I officially had in my project for analysis, but also many exhibition spaces in the cities I was visiting. With this historical presence surrounding my journeys, in some cases very vividly through visually striking and at times gruesome exhibitions, the marking of this anniversary came to influence my thinking about challenging subject matter in profound ways. Through the visual medium of photography and later film, early 20<sup>th</sup> century war and conflict is brought closer to the present, even if many of the survivors are no longer present to share their experiences first hand. Archival visual material from this period has a way of drawing the viewer in and marking the imagination in profound ways. It was the advancements in visual technologies that brought World War I "home" to Canadians for the first time like no other large-scale conflict. With this anniversary came the chance for galleries to revisit, or take on for the first time, new aspects of WWI. For example, the CWM had small exhibition called *Enemy Aliens: Internment in Canada 1914-1920* (Fig. 33), referring to the over 8,000 people, primarily of Ukrainian decent, who were forcibly interned in various camps across Canada through the War Measures Act in Canada. The WWI Internment period in Canada has also resulted in federal apologies to present day descendants of Italian and Ukrainian immigrant communities in Canada (CWM n.d.).



**Figure 34:Contemplation, Canadian War Museums, Ottawa, ON by author (2014)**

The Memorial Hall at the CWM is home to a small narrow space with a single window (Fig. 34) where light shines at an angle on Remembrance Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>. In a beautiful feat of engineering, the rays illuminate the sole object in the room: the headstone of the tomb of the unknown soldier. Several people I spoke with mentioned the importance of having a physical space where visitors can sit and mentally and emotionally absorb what they have experienced in the galleries. In some circumstances this may be space with the affordance of a couch, bench, or series of chairs. Other examples include specific design features such as an outside garden. These spaces recognize the ability for visiting museums or gallery spaces to fully impact our whole senses. Processing challenging material can, and

should be, physical and emotionally exhausting. It should require a moment to step back and process how this experience affects us, and if it does, why? I take a closer look at the responses to these spaces by my participants in Chapter 3 in the context of how to decompress after viewing exhibitions with challenging subject matter.



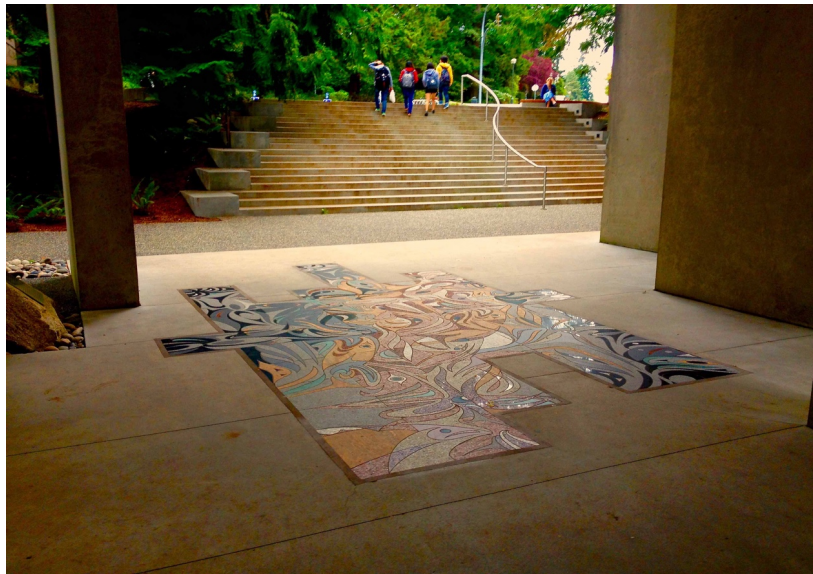
**Figure 35: UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2016)**

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (Fig. 35) was my next field site. This institution is special on a personal level as I completed my undergraduate at UBC in 2009 in Anthropology and History, with a specialization in museum studies. I also worked at MOA for three years as a student, and later an intern in the Education and Public Programming Department. With friends, mentors, and now research participants at MOA, conducting interviews here gave me more of an appreciation for collecting data at a field site that is also, in many ways, my own community. The interviews I conducted here were more intimate than those at other institutions. I know that, given my friendships and previous work relationships, my research participants shared a great deal with me, and our conversations carried a certain depth given my knowledge of the workings of the institution. As a university museum, the origins of MOA's collection dates to the early part of the 20th century when many objects collected from the across the Pacific Islands were donated to UBC by collector and explorer Frank Burnett. However, the museum itself grew out of the work of Harry and Audrey Hawthorn, who came to UBC's Anthropology department in the 1950s to begin documenting the lives of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia on behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs (Hawthorn 1993; Levell 2009). Many of the connections fostered in the 1950s between MOA staff and families or communities across BC remain today, and these long-standing relationships are at the core of MOA's history.



**Figure 36: Remember Your Teaching, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

One example of longstanding working relationships is MOA's relationship with the Musqueam First Nation. Since the 1980s, MOA has followed guidelines negotiated with Musqueam and MOA regarding the proper ways to store, handle, and design exhibitions using their material heritage (Phillips 2000, 2011). This relationship was formalized under the Directorship of Ruth Phillips (1997-2003) with the signing of a Protocol, which Phillips declares, "rebalanced" the power dynamics in the institution (Phillips 2000: 177). By establishing this Protocol MOA recognizes not only Musqueam's traditional unceded ownership over the territories where UBC and MOA reside (Fig. 36), but also this Protocol acknowledges that Musqueam territory spans a large portion of the area of what is now today Vancouver (Phillips 2000). January of 2010 marked the celebration of MOA's grand re-opening after an extensive renovation project titled "A Partnership of Peoples" made possible in large part (though other major donors also contributed) by a successful application to the Canadian federal government funding program for non-profit organizations called the Canada Foundation for Innovation in 2000 (Phillips 2011). Several major changes came from this renewal project. Highlights of the project include: the Centre for Cultural Research, complete with a library, archive and laboratories for oral history documentation and archaeological analysis; a new temporary exhibition gallery; the reconstruction of MOA's international permanent galleries formally known as Visible Storage into the Multiversity Galleries; the creation of an online collections database that can also be access through computer systems set up in the new visible storage space; and the beginning of the Reciprocal Research Network. This collaboratively constructed database links the collections of over 14 museums with Indigenous community members, cultural centres, academics, and other museum and art professionals to create digital, collaborative work spaces on collections of objects, particularly Indigenous objects from across North America.



**Figure 37: Salish Footprints 2010 Susan Point, Musqueam, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

The renewal of the museum also gave staff the opportunity to redesign the front entrance way to more explicitly acknowledge the Musqueam peoples, whose traditional and unceded territories MOA and UBC stand on today. A Musqueam welcome (Fig. 36), and a newly commissioned artwork by Musqueam artist Susan Point (Fig. 37) are just two of images which show the Musqueam presence at the Museum's entrance.



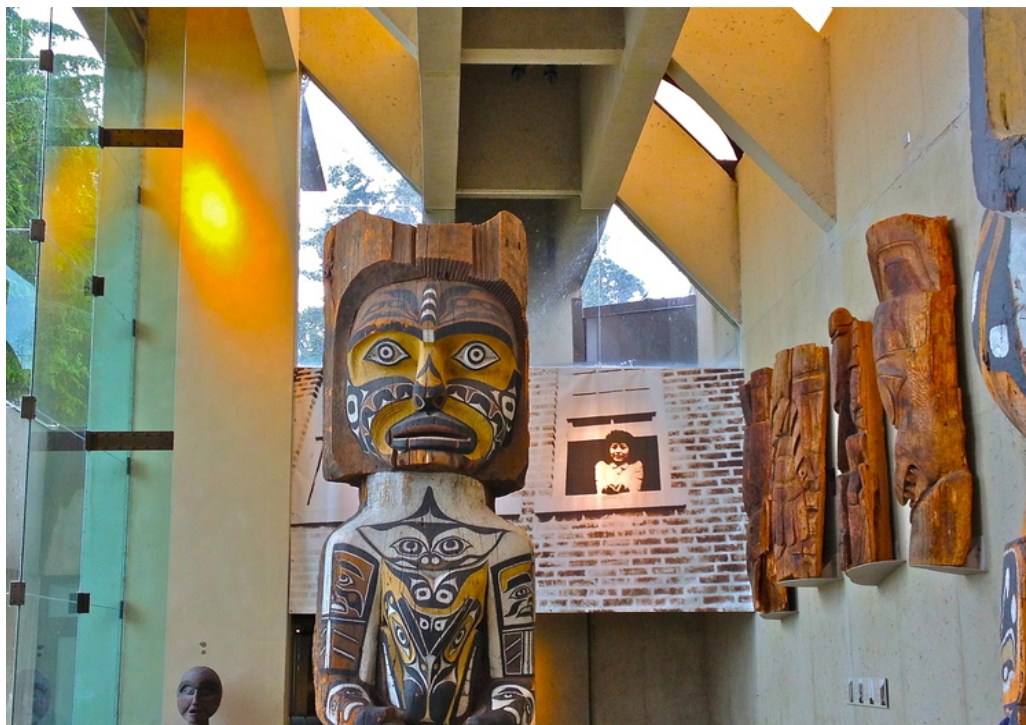
**Figure 38: IRS and the Plains Case, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

As mentioned in the preface, this exhibition case here (Fig. 38) containing residential school artwork done by children at the Morley Residential School in Alberta formed part of my own undergraduate research interests in working with collections generated from complicated and difficult histories such as those stemming from residential schools.



**Figure 39: A Moment of Reconciliation, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

This photograph is taken inside MOA's Multiversity Galleries (Fig. 39), the name given to the redesigned visible storage space where 10,000 objects from MOA's collection are visible. The history of this case began when curator Carol Mayer received a phone call from a potential donor who was the wife of one of the distant relatives of John Williams, an English Reverend murdered on the shores of Erromango, a provincial island of Vanuatu, in 1839. The donor was looking to give objects that were collected by Williams during various missionary expeditions throughout the Pacific (Mayer 2009). It would have been possible in this circumstance to simply accept the donation; however, Mayer chose to approach the situation and the history of these objects differently. This began an extensive dialogue between Mayer, the Williams family, and Ralph Regenvanu, the Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Council, about the possibility of trying to reconcile the history of this collection. There are several examples of "sorry ceremonies" occurring in various parts of the Pacific, which take place between contemporary communities to reconcile with past atrocities that occurred during the colonial period (Mayer, 2009: 7). After much discussion, all parties involved agreed to take part in a sorry ceremony to be held on the 170th-anniversary of the death of John Williams (Mayer, 2009). Mayer traveled with 17 members of the Williams family to Vanuatu to witness an emotional re-enactment of the death of Williams that resulted in new positive memories, the joining of families, and most importantly mutual forgiveness for the actions of the past. Reconciliation is at once a term, process, and series of actions. The work presented in this case is but one small example of many forms of reconciliation currently underway with regards to colonial history at MOA. It highlights the potential for museum work to help with these processes.



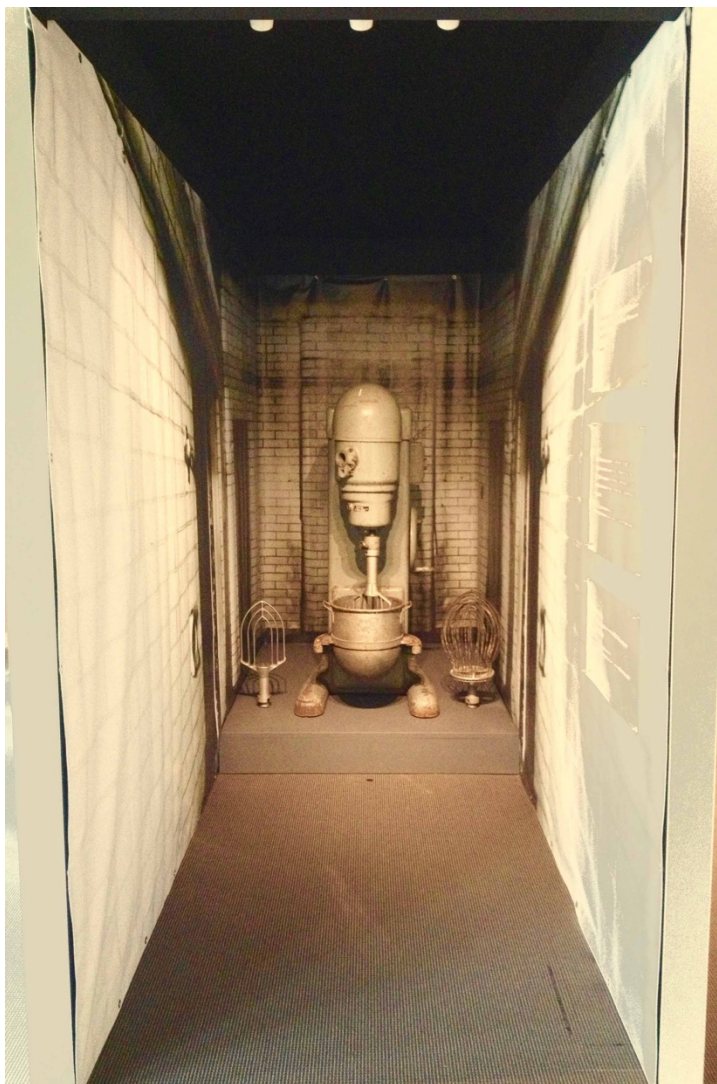
**Figure 40: Speaking to Memory and the Forgotten, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

In Canadian museological history, MOA has garnered a lot of attention for developing progressive museum practices in Canada (Fig. 40), particularly with respect to building better relationships with Indigenous peoples and implementing the guidelines of the Task Force into practice early after its development. However, two exhibitions stood out to me in terms of why I choose to include MOA in this project. The first was the 2011 exhibition *The Forgotten* that was cancelled prior to installation. This exhibition was composed of Vancouver artist Pamela Masik's very large and gruesome paintings of women, primarily Indigenous women, that had gone missing or been murdered from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside community. From early in planning stages, the exhibition fell under heavy protest by several community groups, primarily from the DTES, because the paintings were seen to be re-traumatizing to the women and families of the women who have disappeared. Though the fallout of this exhibition both was covered by the media and academic scholarship (see Moss 2012; Pinto 2013b), these reviews failed to account for any sense of what MOA had learned as an institution from this experience. As I discuss in Chapter 3, in the wake of the exhibition being cancelled, MOA had to take a step back to reconnect with various community members from the DTES who, along with MOA staff and UBC faculty members, shared a series of group discussions concerning what the issue of missing and murdered women in Canada, but also how MOA could have approached this work differently.



**Figure 41: Memory Speaks, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

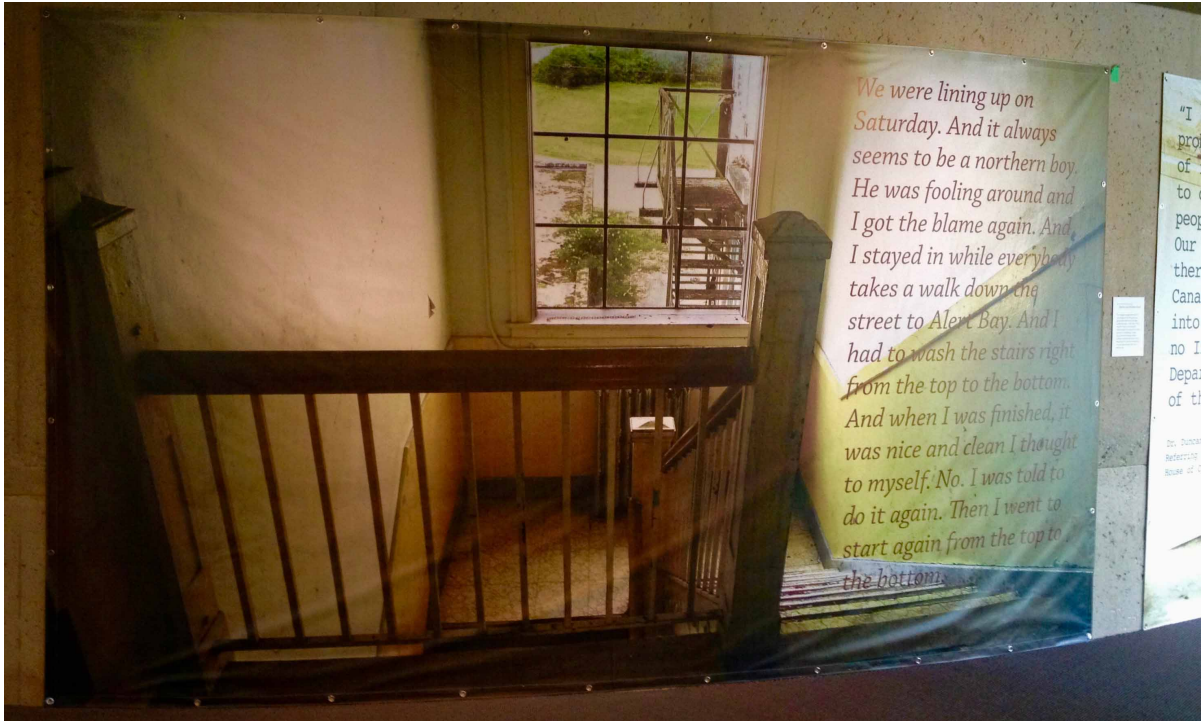
The second exhibition *Speaking to Memory, Images, and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* (Figs. 40-43) opened at MOA Sept. 18, 2013 to coincide with a visit by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Vancouver. The exhibition was based on a series of photographs recently donated to the MOA archives that were taken by a young girl who attended St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, BC during the 1940s. Curator Bill McLennan sat with many former students from this school with the collection of photos and recorded, if they were interested, Survivors' memories from their time at the school. The narratives from these interviews are part of the exhibition, with excerpts from these forming quotes on the wall and the full text in binders that were displayed on a long table in the exhibition space (Fig. 46). Excerpts from earlier interviews with Survivors that were conducted by the U'Mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay in the 1990s were also used. The photographs in the exhibition (Fig. 41) were mounted with a translucent cover so that names could be written on the photos by visitors to the exhibition who knew and recognized themselves or children in the images in an act of reclaiming their unknown presence from the archive through this act of public remembering. The daughter of the photographer worked with her mother to name as many of the children in the photographs prior to exhibiting them.



**Figure 42: The Mixer, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver BC by author (2013)**

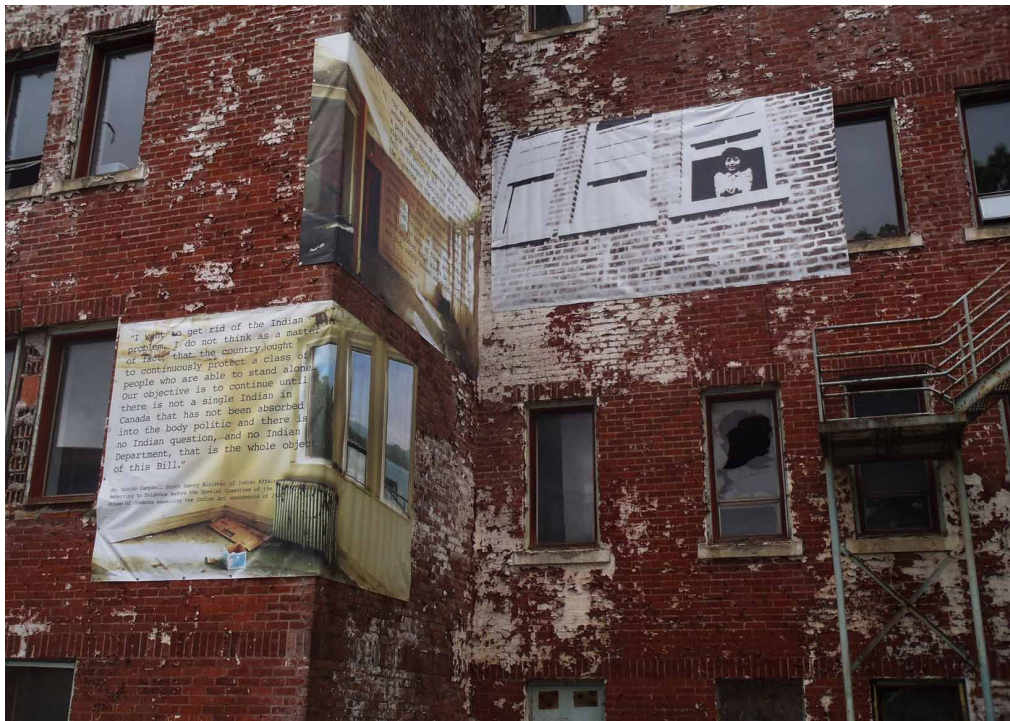
As a researcher, I am drawn to the study of material and visual culture. As a branch of anthropological investigation, research conducted under this umbrella has provided valuable ways for thinking about the connection between the material and immaterial world and the value that "things" can have in our lives (Miller 1998). I was curious throughout this project to assess the role of objects used in exhibitions that have direct histories to acts of violence and discrimination and to hear my participants' reflections on objects that were chosen to be used. The industrial mixer, from the St. Michael's school (Fig. 42) is perhaps one of the most powerful that I encountered during this study. As I take up

more fully in Chapter 3, its inclusion in the exhibition illustrates the potential for objects in exhibition spaces to evoke feelings of empathy, confusion, anger, and sadness in visitors. The baking mixer's massive size and its presence is striking in a gallery context. The mixer was operated with no protection by many young children who were forced to work at St. Michael's, as was the case at all Indian Residential Schools. Many Survivors interviewed by curator Bill McLennan reflected on the danger of the mixer; how it constantly gave out electric shocks and harmed the young girls who worked in the kitchen. The physical presence of an object such as this provides an additional layer of depth while walking through the exhibition to the experiences encounter by Indigenous people while at these schools. Placed in a small hallway within the exhibition, the space created an overwhelmingly visceral place for contemplation and reflection; once inside it became impossible not to visualize this object in use.



**Figure 43: Outside Inside, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

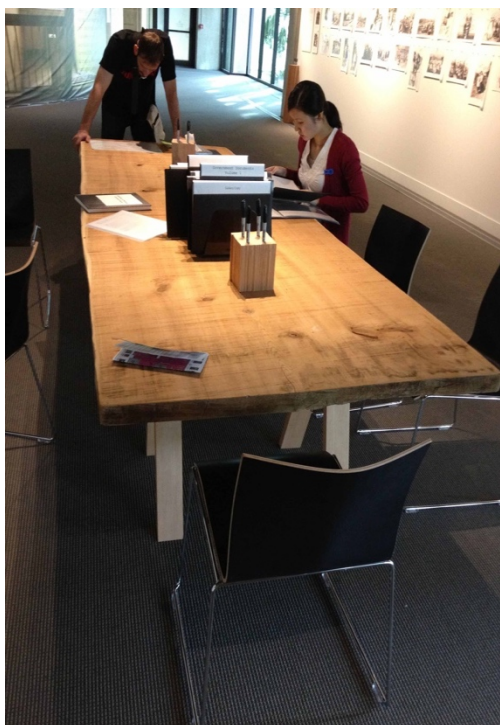
The exhibition also included large photographs taken of inside St. Michael's by McLennan after the building was no longer in use. The photographs are windows into the empty hallways and staircases that are blanketed in the green-yellowish hue of years passed (Fig. 43). The materiality of these photographs draping the walls added such an eeriness to the exhibition space. They provide, like the mixer, a layer of material and visual depth to the exhibition that takes the visitor into the space of St. Michael's in a visceral or emotive way. Quotes from Survivors or policy laid forth in the *Indian Act* were added to several of the photographs to juxtapose the words with images of the school itself. The exhibition moved up to Alert Bay and was held at the U'Mista Cultural Center in 2014. Many of the large photographs were mounted on to the walls of these school itself (Fig. 44). Here again, the photographs created a powerful haunting presence of the hallow hallways and staircases inside of the building as they were plastered on the brick walls of the school before it was demolished in February 2015.



**Figure 44: Speaking to Memory in Alert Bay, Alert Bay, BC by Bill McLennan (2013)  
Reproduced courtesy of Bill McLennan**



**Figure 45: Private Comments, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver BC by author (2013)**



**Figure 46: Writing Thoughts, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver BC by author (2013)**

In the exhibition, there was also a large table where visitors could spend time looking through photo albums and reading the full text of Survivors' stories. They could also take the time to write a comment or reflection to leave in the comment box (Fig. 45) or in a public comment books. There was also a large black board (Fig. 47) where visitor thoughts could be written down even more publicly. Education Curator Jill Baird took photos of the board, comment books and the private responses every few days. Though many of the responses acknowledged the exhibition as being a good site of education for information about residential schools, many were also negative and discriminatory, pointing to a need as discussed in Chapter 5 for spaces such as

museums to house exhibitions of the nature to continue build awareness of these histories.



**Figure 47: Public Comments, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**



**Figure 48: Chinese Canadian Military Museum, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

My next stop in Vancouver was the Chinese Canadian Military Museum (CCMM). The CCMM is the smallest museum I spent time visiting. It is located on the top floor of the Chinese Canadian Cultural Centre in Chinatown in the east side of Vancouver (Fig. 48). The Museum is run entirely by a rotating group of volunteers from the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society, founded in 1998 with funds provided in large part by private contributions from the Chinese Canadian community in Vancouver. It is a unique museum in that it specializes in Chinese Canadian contributions to the Canadian war effort, particularly to World War I and II. Given this curatorial focus, the museum works with Chinese Canadian War veterans and their families to ensure their histories are recorded and material items from this time collected (CCMM 2016).



**Figure 49: Chinatown, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

The CCMM was one of the institutions that made me think about the physical existence of cultural institutions within the city. This area of the city has held a fascination for me since first moving to Vancouver in 2005, and I have spent a lot of time walking the streets of the Downtown Eastside community where Vancouver's Chinatown is located (Fig. 49). The east side of Vancouver, located in the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, is historically where many immigrant communities settled in the 19th century, including early Chinese and Japanese settlers. Today

Chinatown carries the presence of the early Chinese immigrants who came to Canada to find a better life for themselves and for their families. For some, this was during the gold rush of the 19th century; for others, this was for employment building the Canadian Pacific Railway. After completion of the railway, a head tax was placed on Chinese immigrants in 1885, which remained in place until 1924. From 1923-1947 the Chinese Immigration Act, also known as the Exclusion Laws, was put in place, restricting immigration to Chinese possessing certain skills. These laws effectively made it impossible for families to remain together and many Chinese men who came to Canada remained separated from their wives and children until after 1947 (Li 2008, Mar 2008; Yu 2001).

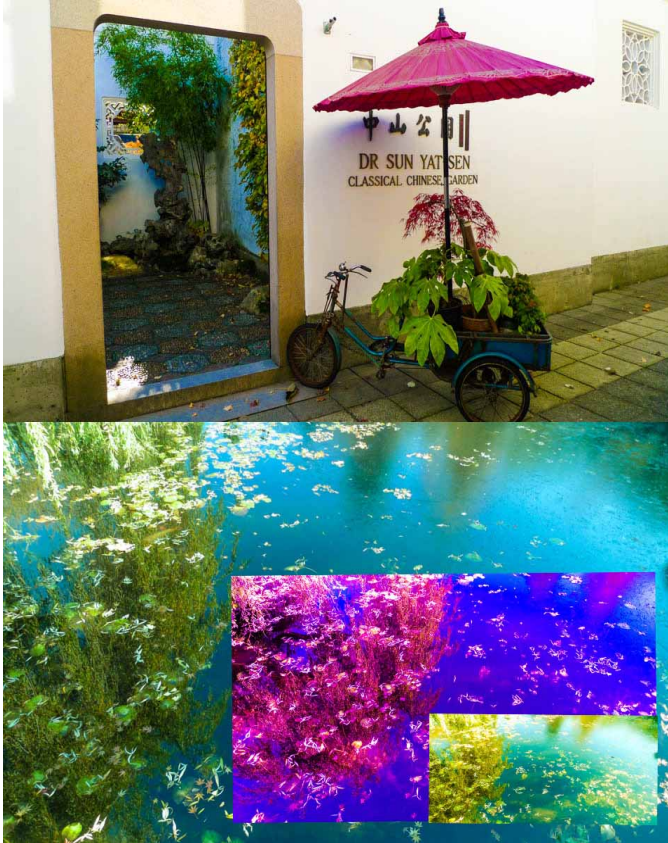


**Figure 50: Riots and Rights, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

While walking the streets of Vancouver's Chinatown, I was conscious of the connections between culturally designated spaces in many cities across Canada, a point I take up further in Chapter 5. Chinatowns across Canada grew out of policies of discrimination and segregation; in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Chinese were not welcome to live in many parts of Canadian cities and their employment and educational pursuits were restricted (Li 2008; Yee 2005). The walls of Chinatown, as one of my participants explained to me, created a place that was safe and welcoming while providing a barrier from the discriminations inflicted from the surrounding European settler communities. Discrimination that, in many cases throughout Canadian history, erupted in violence, such as the 1907 riots in Vancouver's Chinatown, where many businesses, including this building, were damaged (Fig. 51, same building seen today Fig. 50).



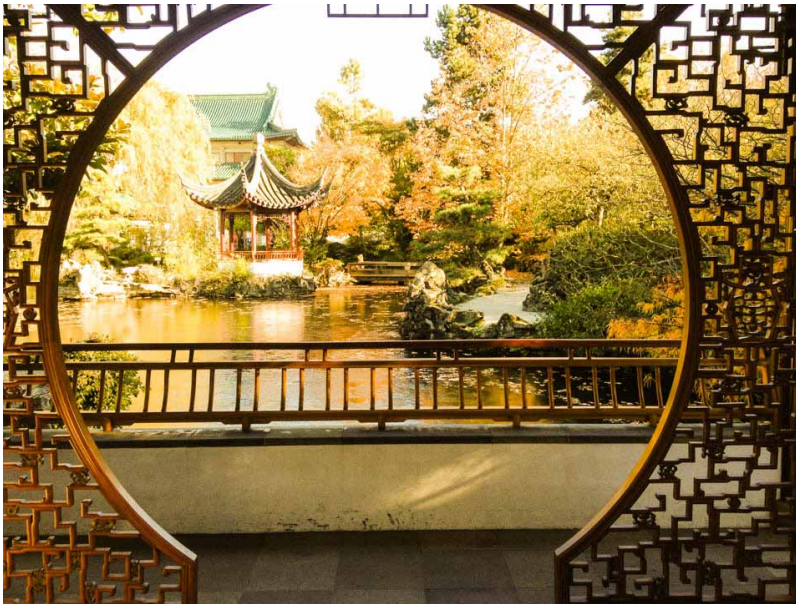
**Figure 51:  
Vancouver  
Chinatown Riots,  
Vancouver, BC  
(1907) Reproduced  
courtesy of  
Vancouver Public  
Library [940]**



**Figure 52: Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

The CCMM and the Cultural Centre are framed around the beautiful Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden (Figs. 52 and 53). The Garden, modeled after the classical garden tradition popular during the Ming Dynasty in China, was built during the mid 1980s through the efforts of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society. The creation of the Garden was an effort to build connections between Chinese and Euro-American cultures, while also serving as a part of the Chinese Canadian community in Vancouver. Like the cultural centre and the museum, the Garden is a physical marker of Chinese Canadian

presence in this part of the city (Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society of Vancouver 2015).



**Figure 53: 中山公園, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**



**Figure 54: Permanent Display, Chinese Canadian Military Museum, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

The exhibition space at the CCMM is quite small. The hallway seen here (Fig. 54) forms part of the semi-permanent exhibition area. A small room towards the end of the hall is serves as temporary exhibition space. Beside the hallway is an art gallery run by the Cultural Centre which forms a large part of the second floor and that also serves as an event space. In this sense, the CCMM collection and exhibitions are embedded into the larger context of Chinese Canadian culture within the building, and the

exhibitions are encountered by the community on a frequent basis given their location in such an active community space. The semi-permanent gallery area, which has altered since the taking of this photo, is a place for the material collection to be shown. Given the small funding available to the museum, displays are quite simple in design. Here cases of medals achieved by certain veterans are shown alongside the biography and photograph of the veteran.



**Figure 55: Exhibition Room, Chinese Canadian Military Museum, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

The CCMM has a small temporary exhibition space with exhibitions that rotate roughly every year (Fig. 55). Though the exhibition space is small, it functions as a physical place to juxtapose the experiences that Chinese Canadian vets had while at war with the experiences they encountered once they returned in Canada. When Chinese Canadians served in WWI and WWII they did so without being considered Canadian citizens. It was not until 1947 that Chinese Canadians could receive citizenship and Exclusion Acts were lifted, allowing families that had been separated through these laws to be reunited. The timeline of these events can be traced through the computer portal that is a permanent fixture in the gallery. During my visits the gallery was featuring an exhibition on Chinese Canadians who fought in WWI given the anniversary of the start of the War was in the fall of 2014.



**Figure 56: Rights to Citizenship, Chinese Canadian Military Museum, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

This large photographic reproduction of the image of three women receiving their citizenship strongly illustrates much of the intent of this museum and the focus of many of the exhibitions. When veterans returned to Canada after WWII and fought for enfranchisement, it was the Chinese Canadian war effort during the early 20th century that laid the foundation for those of Chinese ancestry to be accepted as citizens of Canada. The fight for equality is the message in this exhibition space. The stories of veterans are celebrated alongside the rights of Chinese Canadians. In early 2017, the CCMM organized a walk through the east side of Vancouver that included several veterans and Indigenous community members to celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Canadian Charter for Rights and*

*Freedoms* (see Ryan 2017). Though the museum itself is small, how the war effort was directly connected to the fight for equality in Canada is a message that is strongly delivered in the exhibitions, programming, and events that the museum takes part in.



**Figure 57: Chinese Canadian World War II Vets, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

With the museum's placement in the heart of Chinatown it is also heavily involved in community related activities. An example of this was a ceremony that I attended in November 2014 honouring the Chinese Canadian war effort and acknowledging the surviving War Veterans. This first part of the ceremony was held at the monument honouring Chinese Canadians located in Chinatown. As part of the history of rights issues in Canada, war memorials mark the heritage landscape as physical sites to gather and remember and this act of gathering creates a sense of collective memory about this time in Canadian history and the experiences of those that endure it. The second part of this ceremony took place over dim sum at a nearby restaurant, an event that I was honoured to be invited to join and, in a random moment of fieldwork fortune, to be seated at the head table of this event. This event was a wonderful moment to witness and it gave me a wonderful glimpse into the function of the CCMM—to be involved in the lives of Chinese Canadian veterans and to continue to honour their contributions to Canada.



**Figure 58: Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

The Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Center in Burnaby, BC (Fig. 58) is an interesting example in Canadian museological history as it was created directly from compensation received from the Japanese Canadian redress process that took place from the 1970s into the 1980s. In 1988, the redress movement resulted in the government's acknowledgment and apology for the Internment of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s. The museum and cultural centre were conceived as a place to have exhibitions, hold community events that focus and celebrate Japanese heritage, and exist as an archive of the Internment period. This included actively recording the oral stories of elders in the community, collecting photographs, ephemera, and objects, and serving as a research center for projects and activities related to Japanese Canadian history (Thomson et. al 2002).



**Figure 59: Building K, Men's Dormitory - (Formerly Forum), Hastings Park, Vancouver, BC (Circa 1942), Reproduced Courtesy of Nikkei National Museum [Alex Eastwood Collections 1994.69.3.18]**

I was conscious that Nikkei Centre is part of a heritage network that links the museum and cultural centre with places such as Hastings Park (Fig. 59) in east Vancouver where Japanese Canadians were first held after being forced from their homes. In this sense, the Nikkei Centre is also connected to the many Internment sites across Canada, such as New Denver, where one of my participants was working at the time of our interview. As I discuss further in Chapter 4, this network also serves to link the staff and community partners together to draw on the experience of the network to research and educate about this history in Canada's past.



Figure 60: Nikkei National Museum Exhibit-Reshaping Memory installation view 1, (ca. 2000) Reproduced Courtesy of Nikkei National Museum



Figure 61: Nikkei National Museum Exhibit-Reshaping Memory pictures 2, (ca. 2000) Reproduced Courtesy of Nikkei National Museum



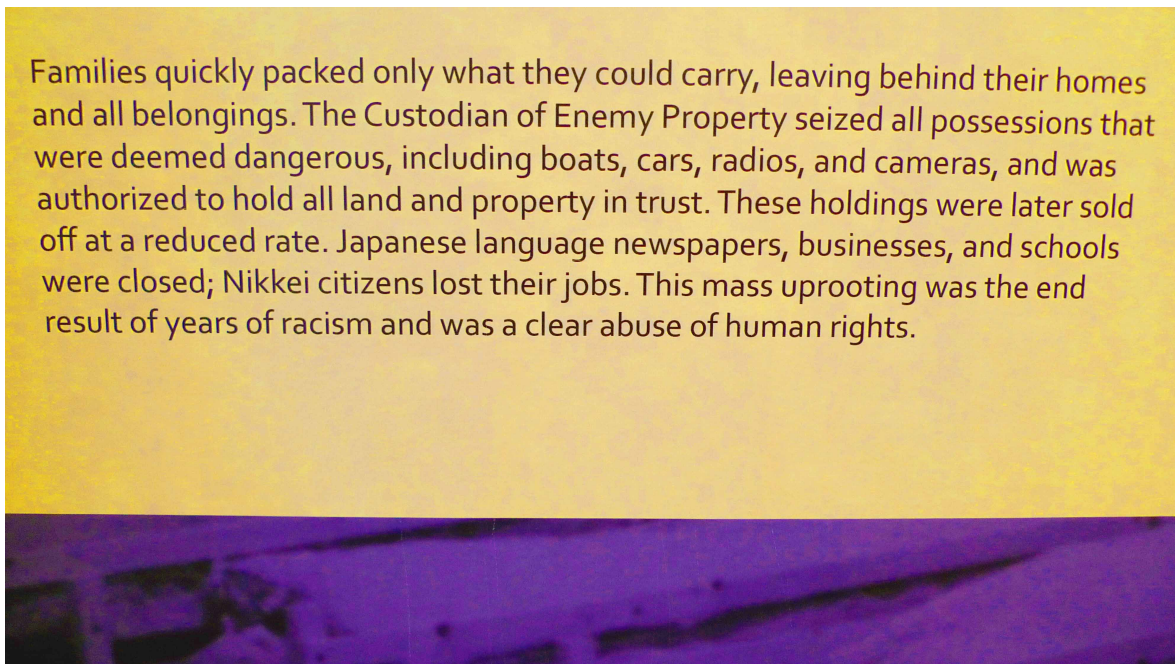
**Figure 62: Nikkei Space, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

The primary focus of the exhibitions created at the Nikkei Museum (see Figs. 60,61,63, 64, 67) is to tell of the history of Japanese Canadians and their communities in Canada. *Re-Shaping Memory Owning History: Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress*, the inaugural exhibition curated by the Nikkei Centre's first Director and Curator Grace Eiko Thomson, opened in September 2000 in what was then called the National Nikkei Heritage Centre. The exhibition focused on the experiences of the Internment and of seeking redress using a mix of narratives from survivors, poetry, photographs, newspaper clippings, and government documents (see Figs. 60 & 61; Thomson 2000). It was the first exhibition in Canada to share the Internment experience through the voices of the Japanese Canadian community. When the exhibition closed in 2001, it moved to other locations in Canada before returning to the Nikkei Centre to form part of the exhibition *TAIKEN* (see Fig. 63). The museum has since then focused their exhibition content to include exhibitions that continue to tell the story of internment through multiple perspectives. Examples include what happened in the time after the internment, how the experiences of children differed then adults, the quest to rebuild communities despite ongoing forms of discrimination, and the processes of working on redress.



**Figure 63: TAIKEN, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

*TAIKEN* is a permanent exhibition that grew from the inaugural *Reshaping Memory* exhibition. It is primarily text and photography-based (Fig. 63) with large replicas of government documents and newspaper articles. Several large black and white photographs are situated along with texts and timelines along the hallways and around the doorways of the second floor of the Nikkei building. Though simple in design *TAIKEN* tells the story of early Japanese settlement in Canada, the Internment process, and the fight for redress from the 1950's onward. It is an exhibition that tells of the experience of Japanese Canadians in Canada. The upstairs of the Centre has classrooms for teaching, meeting rooms, and offices for staff. In this sense, as children attend Japanese language classes, the story of their ancestors blankets the hallways as a reminder of what occurred in Canada's past. The exhibition wraps the upstairs of the Center somewhat poetically, in the story of redress.



**Figure 64: Clear Abuse of Human Rights, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

This photo (Fig. 64) is part of the permanent exhibition *TAIKEN*. This exhibition panel was the only time in all my travels that I saw the phrase human rights incorporated into an exhibition—aside from obvious thematic exhibition material in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. I incorporate reflections on this phrase by my participants in Chapter 5 as it was curious to me to note how little the phrase was utilized in exhibitions dealing with rights-based issues.



**Figure 65: Paueru-Gai, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

Unlike the CCMM, the Nikkei Museum is not located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. There is an area around Powell Street, known to the Japanese community as “Paueru-Gai,” where the original community of Japanese settlers was established in the late 19th century. People I spoke with offered both positive and negative reflections on this location. Given that space is limited in the inner city and parking is increasingly difficult to find, the location of the Nikkei Centre in Burnaby, with ample parking and a large building, means the centre can accommodate community events, exhibition openings, markets, and large crowds for various programming events. However, not being physically present as an institution in the Powell St. area of downtown where the Japanese community once was located (Fig. 65) means that much of the work to remember and re-establish this physical presence is done by distance. As much of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside undergoes processes of gentrification there is fear that both Chinatown and the former "Japantown" will disappear. As buildings in the area degrade, the question of what gets preserved in the name of cultural heritage and what is slated by the city for demolition are the focus of heated debates in the context of Vancouver's current real estate market.



**Figure 66: Oppenheimer Park, Vancouver, BC by author (2014)**

An example of these debates occurred just as my research began in summer 2014 around Oppenheimer Park (Fig. 66). The park sits near the centre of the former Japanese Canadian community in this part of the city. It was once the home field of the Japanese Canadian Asahi baseball team and today it is the site of the annual "Powell Street Festival" that has celebrated Japanese Canadian culture and community since it first took place in 1977. The park is also situated in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community; a community with a high number of low income residence and many people who live on, or close to the streets. For many people, this park is not only a place of connection—it is also a place to sleep. This park became a site of protest when members of the DTES community and Musqueam Band members occupied it to draw attention to the shockingly large number of people who continue to struggle in Vancouver due to the lack of low-income residences and processes of gentrification. This protest and ongoing debates in the city of Vancouver about this neighbourhood and its residences show the multiple layers of occupation and displacement that have occurred here and the struggle that various cultural groups are battling to maintain a presence in this part of this city.



**Figure 67: Right to Remain, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2015)**

A recent research project *The Right to Remain* (Fig. 67) takes up these issues of displacement, gentrification, lack of low-income housing, and the disappearing unique cultural aspects to the Vancouver Eastside. As a collaboratively designed project with community members, artists, and researchers, this project highlights the struggle many residents from this area of the city endure to be try and maintain their lives in this part of the city ( See *Right to Remain Project*: <http://www.revitalizingjapantown.ca/r2r/>; also coverage of the protest of this area CBC 2012). I take a closer look at the importance of research projects such as these in Chapter 4 and how they find a home in smaller museum institutions where it is possible to make very explicit and critical statements about rights.



**Figure 68: Suitcases, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

Nikkei does not have a large collection of objects. This is partly because objects from the period prior to the Internment are scarce. The history of the Japanese Internment in Canada is a history of forced relocation. Along with relocation came dispossession and the loss of material goods. Many families only took a small number of their personal belongings with them thinking that they would soon return home. Sadly, this was not the case and personal items, along with homes, cars, fishing boats and all that made up the livelihood of this community, were taken and sold. My interviews at the Nikkei Centre were held in the back area of the museum. I was struck at some point by the stack of

suitcases beside me (Fig. 68). Suitcases make up a substantive portion of the material collection at the Nikkei because it was one of the only things that people had. And so, as I sat interviewing members of Nikkei Museum staff, this material presence of movement—of moments of hastily packing what few items could fit, of forced removal—surrounded me. The presence of these material objects emphasized for me the significance of a place like the Nikkei Centre and Museum. It is a place that is a keeper of this history of displacement, but also of the time before and the time after. It is an archive of family and community experiences; experiences that are rooted in being both Japanese and Canadian.



**Figure 69: Nikkei Home, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, BC by author (2014)**

Nikkei Place (Fig. 69) is a place for seniors. The Senior Health Care and Housing Society offers several services ranging in degree of care for elderly JCC. The Nikkei Seniors residence is directly attached to the building with a small grocery store and restaurant. The presence of this place means that those who live here are close to the centre for events that occur; their presence is an essential part of the community that has grown around the Nikkei Centre. As I take up more extensively in Chapter 4, Nikkei Place is in part how Nikkei works to maintain tight connections within the Japanese Canadian community. Like the Chinese Canadian Military Museum, much of the work comes with maintaining connections with the elderly community, those who went through the internment, and to draw upon their knowledge in project development.

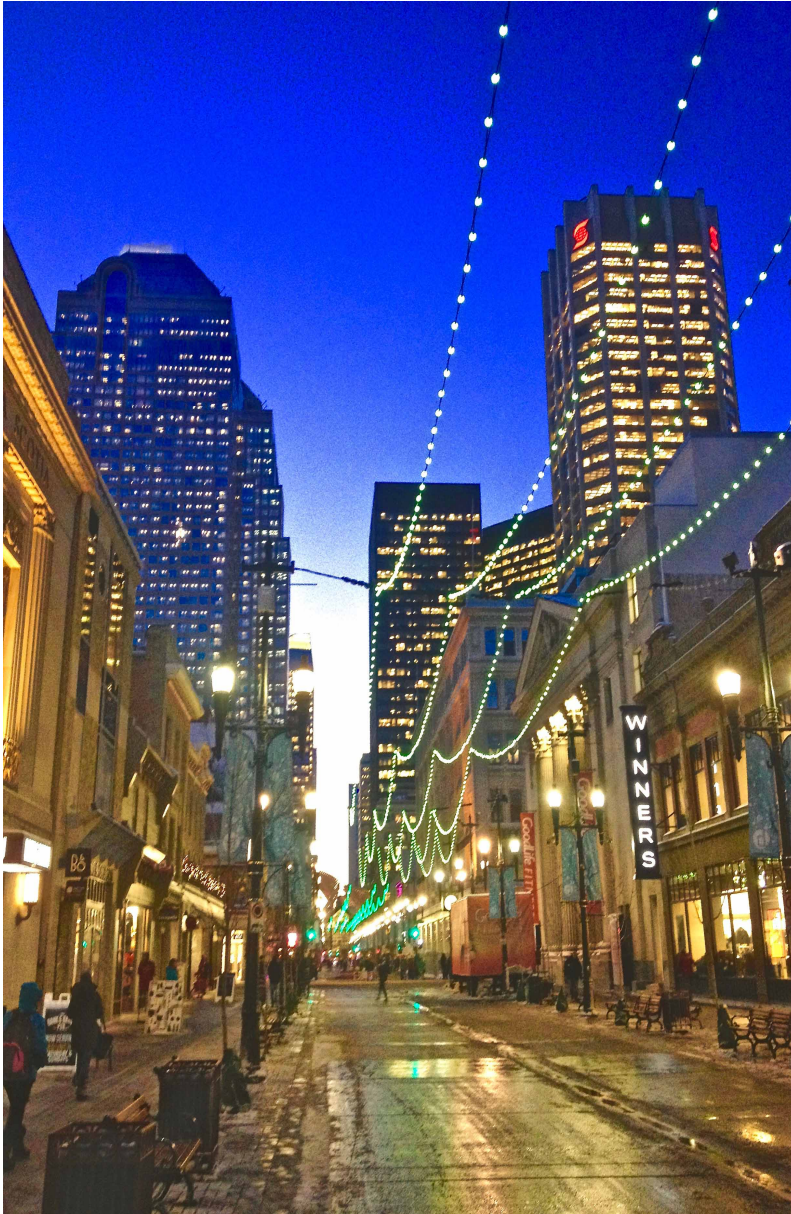


**Figure 70: The Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

Glenbow is unique in that it is a municipal museum, art gallery, archive, and library set right in the centre of downtown Calgary, located off the heavily pedestrian area of 8th avenue (Fig. 70) and surrounded by shops, pubs, restaurants, and the theatre district. As a result, the Glenbow is situated as part of the arts centre of city. The Glenbow grew from the collection of the founder Eric Harvie who began collecting objects from around the world in the 1950s after a successful career in resource extraction. Harvie's collection was initially focused on Indigenous and Canadian frontier histories, though he expanded his interests to collect objects from around the world. In 1966, he donated his collection to the Province of Alberta.

Additionally, Harvie sponsored many other arts and culture institutions in Canada including: the physical building of the

Glenbow Museum; the Banff School of Fine Arts; the Luxton Museum; the Calgary Zoo; Heritage Park; and Confederation Square and Arts Complex in Charlottetown, P.E.I. (Harrison 2005; The Glenbow 2016).



**Figure 71: 8th Avenue, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

Through the act of walking the streets with this project as my motivation, each city became somewhat of a muse as I let my thoughts wander as to the role of museum institutions vis-a-vis their host cities and where their future lies in terms of use. This was a particularly interesting exercise in the city where I primarily grew up. Given Calgary is my hometown (Fig. 71), it was an interesting exercise to come back to this city and spend time thinking about the Glenbow and its relationship to the city and communities within its surrounds. I have not lived in Calgary for quite some time and the changes were evident. The city is bigger and

busier. Over the last 10 years, I have seen how the Glenbow has become an important artistic gathering place in the city; it serves a function as a place where arts and cultural events and exhibitions are celebrated. With a large temporary gallery space, it is a museum, but also maintains a strong emphasis on contemporary artwork and frequently has exhibitions with large installations.



**Figure 72: The Spirit Sings, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

*The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Fig. 72) is an exhibition that remains transitional in Canadian museological practices. Opened in 1988 as part of Calgary's Winter Olympic celebrations, the exhibition was meant to highlight the artistic achievements of Indigenous peoples across Canada through objects from museum collections around the world. The exhibition was heavily protested during its opening for its major sponsorship by Shell Oil, which, at the time, was actively drilling on Lubicon Cree land despite mass protest. Museums have always made use of funding from various private sectors and this remains a point of contention in contemporary museum practices. Is there an ethical line that is crossed in terms of financial aid coming from funding sources which, as in this case, are actively involved in human rights disputes? *The Spirit Sings* was a pivotal point where the implications of museum practices on the lives of Indigenous communities came to a head. Part of my intent in visiting the Glenbow was to spend time speaking with current and former staff of this museum to gain a sense of what the atmosphere was like in Calgary around the time of the exhibition and how this led to the need to establish long-term relationships with Indigenous communities around Calgary. How does an institution recover from a moment like this, a moment that has become synonymous with changing museological practices in Canada?



**Figure 73: Mavericks, Glenbow, AB by author (2014)**

The *Spirit Sings* controversy forced the Glenbow, like many other museums in Canada, to drastically change their institutional practices and to rethink and reconfigure

relationships with Indigenous peoples. The Mavericks Gallery (Fig. 73) is an interesting example of an exhibition that seeks to incorporate a multi-cultural, co-developed history of the Province of Alberta told through the life story of 48 Mavericks who are of Indigenous, European, and Asian heritage. Through these stories told in themes such as "Uninvited Guests," "Ranching," "Railways" and "Oil and Gas," the exhibition highlights the spirit and challenges of life lived on the Prairies and Foothills area of Canada.



**Figure 74: First Nations Perspective, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

The exhibition also makes use of small exhibition nodes called

"First Nations Perspectives" (Fig. 74) that integrated distinct Indigenous perspectives through the various exhibition themes of "Ranching," "Railways," "Oil and Gas," etc. Though this exhibition highlights the role that people of many cultural backgrounds played in the development of Alberta, these nodes successfully provide an additional space to intervene in dominant narratives of the settlement of the west of Canada with the experiences of Indigenous peoples from this part of the country (see Mavericks Web Resource: <http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks/>).



**Figure 75: Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

*Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life* (Fig. 75) is a large permanent gallery curated by a collective of 17 Niitsitapi or Blackfoot community members and Glenbow staff. The collective included members from the Kainai, the Piikani, Amskaapiikani, Apatohsiikani, and Siksika communities. Opened in 2002, the exhibition remains a highly successful Canadian example of a project controlled by the community where the content and design of the exhibition were chosen by the collective, with a shared desire to build an exhibition that was first and foremost for Blackfoot youth (see Conaty 2003,2006,2008; Conaty and Carter 2005; Krmpotich and Anderson 2005; Phillips 2011). The exhibition also has an accompanying book authored by the Blackfoot Gallery Committee (2013) and interactive Virtual Museum Exhibition: <http://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/>. The exhibition occupies a large portion of the museum's third floor and is connected to the gallery *New Sun Gallery of Aboriginal Art and Culture*, which provides an overview to many of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the various unique landscapes and artistic traditions that exist in Indigenous cultures. This was a deliberate choice requested by the Niitsitapi committee so the gallery would help put the Niitsitapi culture in context with other Indigenous cultures from across Canada and other parts of the Prairies (Phillips 2011).



**Figure 76: Niitsitapiisinni Exhibition Entrance, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

*Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life* (Fig. 76) is an experiential exhibition. As you pass through, it is as though you are walking through the territories of the Blackfoot with the colours, sounds, and features of the landscape built into the exhibition. There are many interactive features, including a large tipi you can enter, as well as multimedia features where you can hear the Niitsitapi language being spoken and witness film clips of Elders and community members sharing their stories throughout the exhibition. There are many spots where translation sheets that discuss various aspects of Niitsitapi culture and language are offered. Visitors can take these sheets home from their visit. The voices of the community stand out when walking through the exhibition, as all the exhibition panels are written directly by Niitsitapi community members. The design installations, coupled with the use of sound, photographs, and objects, creates an experience of walking through the Niitsitapi territories of what is now southern Alberta.



**Figure 77: Blackfoot and IRS, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

The experience of walking through the territories is juxtaposed with a small home typical of those built on early reservations and a mock residential school (Fig. 77; also, discussed in Phillips 2011). This space was interesting to me as an exhibition feature designed by Survivors of IRS. Opened in 2002, the exhibit is unique given it is one of the first curatorial spaces of which I am aware of where Survivors shared their experiences of these schools through an exhibition format designed by Survivors and their communities. It was important for Niitsitapi involved to have Indian residential schools as part of the exhibition, and though small—primarily just the window seen here in the photo—it creates a space in which to speak about the intergenerational effects of these schools in Blackfoot communities by people who have direct experience (Fig. 78). This contrasts with other institutions visited as part of my project where exhibition panels that discuss residential schools are acknowledged briefly in the context of broader Canadian, provincial, or regional histories (e.g., the CMH; Figs. 22, 23).

# RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Schools were supposed to give our people the skills to live among the newcomers.

Instead, schools destroyed our family structure, our sense of belonging and our identity.

Schools tried to make us ashamed of our traditional teachings and practices.

Schools told us that our grandparents were heathens.

Schools almost destroyed us.

In both Canada and the United States, the governments contracted religious organizations to educate our people. The government and church groups believed that in order to educate us they needed to destroy our community support, discredit our traditional beliefs and eliminate our language.

To accomplish this, they confined our children to residential schools for ten or eleven months each year. Some children were sent half-way across the country for up to ten years.

Boys and girls were physically separated. They did not learn how to respect one another. Without parents and grandparents there was no opportunity to learn parenting skills, love, and respect. The lessons of Makoiyi (the wolves) were forgotten.

Physical and sexual abuse by staff and students was common. We learned how to bully the younger and weaker ones. We learned to treat each other with contempt and violence. Institutional behaviour replaced our traditional values.

This process has now been going on for five or six generations.

Even though the last residential school closed in the 1960s, the results of this process are still affecting us, many generations later.

The healing will take a long time.

Figure 78: Residential Schools, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)



**Figure 79: Community Curators, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

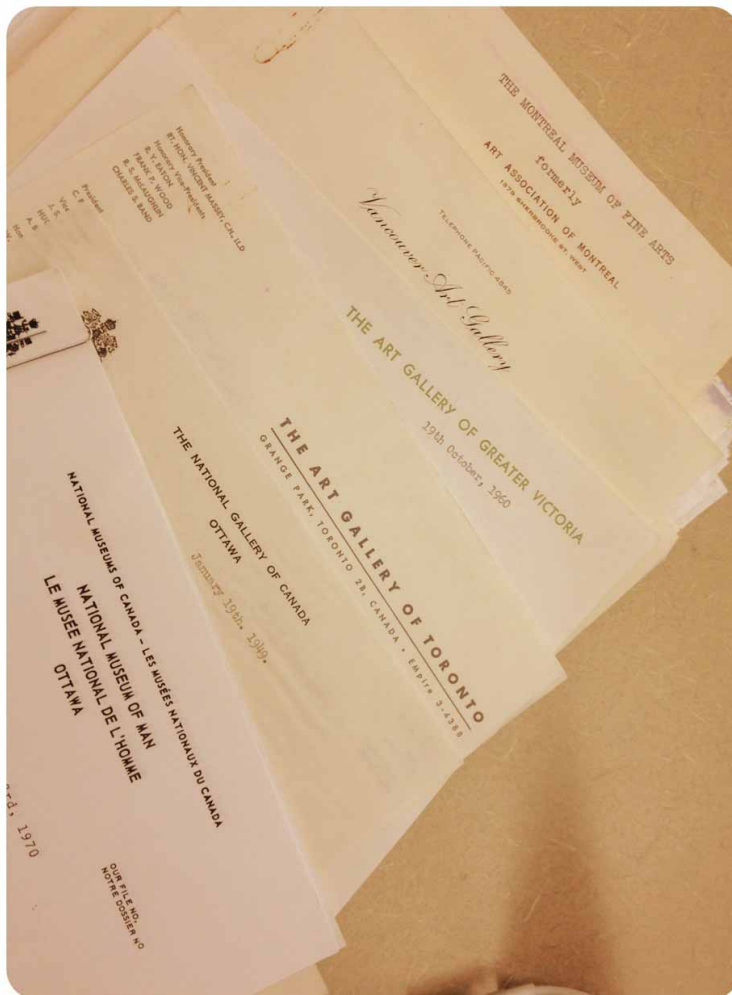
Now that many of the members of the original curatorial collective (Fig. 79) have passed on, including Glenbow Curator Gerald Conaty who worked tirelessly to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the Glenbow (see Conaty 2015), interesting questions remain as to how this space will evolve into the future. Blackfoot partners are very much involved in the gallery. For example, guides take school children through the exhibition and community members continue to work regularly with museum staff on the museum's material collection. However, when it comes to regenerating this exhibition, what changes will take place? What new stories will be integrated? These are the discussions that have begun to percolate at the Glenbow. What do the Niitsitapi want to say about their communities and culture since 2001? If, and when, these updates happen to this exhibition, what may these changes say about the continuity of working with community curators over close to a 20-year period?



**Figure 80: Where Are the Children, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB by author (2014)**

My visit to Glenbow was timely, given the travelling exhibition *Where are the Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools* (Fig. 80) curated by Iroquois artist Jeff Thomas (see the exhibition online component: <http://wherearethechildren.ca/en>). This exhibition was developed in 2001 by the Legacy of Hope Foundation, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and the Government of Canada. It has travelled across Canada as an educational tool and continues to be hosted by museums and gallery spaces to bring discussions of IRS into their institutions. A small number of items from the Glenbow collection were added to the display case seen in the centre of the photo here to personalize the exhibition to the Glenbow as the host institution, and the museum employed guides to take tours, primarily schools groups, through the exhibition. This exhibition sat in an interesting juxtaposition to the other permanent Glenbow galleries that feature Indigenous histories. Whereas *Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life* and the *New Sun Gallery of Aboriginal Art and Culture* primarily focus on the arts and culture of Indigenous peoples and the vibrancy of Indigenous peoples in the present, *Where are the Children* creates a somber and disturbing reflection on the Canadian colonial process. This exhibition successfully contextualizes the small section the Niitsitapi stress on IRS in the permanent gallery with a national perspective of the ongoing effects IRS. However, given the exhibition was set on the fourth floor, quite far apart from the other exhibitions, I wondered if, consequently, it received less visitors.





**Figure 82: Letter Head from the Aller Archive, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC by author (2013)**

Part of my contribution to this project was to spend time hunting through the written archive of Robert Aller (Fig. 82). Aller was an artist and art teacher who taught painting lessons across Canada to both adults and children, including many Indigenous children at several different Indian Residential Schools. In addition to paintings, Aller kept an extensive amount of his personal correspondence from art galleries, universities, schools, several people at the Department of Indian Affairs, other artists, and various community members. His written archive has helped us gain a better idea of where and when he was teaching,

who he worked with, and which children took part in his classes. It is quite something to read through the paperwork of one man's life; it was as though I could hear his voice in my head as I read through his letters: his thoughts on IRS schools, on the importance of artistic practice, and of all forms of art as a true form of freedom of expression.



**Figure 83: The Archive, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa ON by author (2012)**

In December 2012 Andrea Walsh and I traveled with Elder Wally Samuel to Ottawa to spend a few days in the Library Archives Canada (Fig. 83). We were looking for any information pertaining to the

Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS). The RIDSAR project focused its first major work with the AIRS Survivors because the location of the school was less than four hours' distance away from the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island. We were also looking for information on school curriculum to see if documentation of art-based practice in the schools existed in the archives.



**Figure 84: The Great Mail-out! University of Victoria, Victoria BC by author (2013)**

Another area of this project in which I was involved during 2012 and 2013 was putting together a list of other cultural institutions across Canada that may have IRS material in their collections. The list included museums, archives, heritage centres or associations, some libraries, Indigenous cultural

centres, and a few art galleries, depending on what kind of archival/collections material they have. This photo is of the final hardcopy survey letters we mailed out (Fig. 84), although most letters were sent via email. I owe a huge thanks to Devin Tepleski, a former UVic student, colleague, and friend, for helping Andrea and I get this survey put together to send electronically.



**Figure 85: Education Centre TRC Vancouver 2013, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

All TRC national events had an Education Centre (Fig. 85) which included a variety of information booths. Small exhibitions, such as Legacy of Hope's *100 Years of Loss* (set of orange panels seen in this picture) were also on display, which exhibited an illustrated timeline of Indian residential schools in Canada. Additionally, there were several artist booths and spaces where community activists and support workers shared their information. There were also church archives available so that Survivors could request photocopies of any information from their records. The RIDSAR group participated in three TRC events: Victoria 2012; Vancouver 2013; and the closing of the TRC in Ottawa in June 2015. Though the project is not officially affiliated with the TRC, the structure of the TRC and its associated events provided a unique platform on which the project grew. This was primarily due to the networks of people who attended the TRC. They helped to identify the owners of much of the artwork and provided a safe space to foster critical conversation about the artwork and the project. The platform of having caregivers and Elders around for Survivors as needed was crucial. The Education Centres also provided a place for the project to interact with various groups of people such as school groups and university students.



**Figure 86: RIDSAR Booth TRC Vancouver 2013, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

Six paintings from the Alberni Indian Residential School were on display in the RIDSAR booth at the 2013 TRC event in Vancouver (Fig. 86). These were displayed with permission of the artists along with a slide show of more paintings and photographs. A series of panels explained the project and group members from RIDSAR – both Survivors and from UVic—were present to help explain the work to visitors. I take up the importance of this booth in Chapters 4 and 5 where I emphasize the role of community partners throughout this project. The success of the booth was directly due to the participation of Survivors. One community member brought all her photographs from the Alberni Indian Residential School that she had been collecting and helped to answer questions and distribute copies of photographs to any community members who asked. Her work was integral to transforming the booth into a safe space for Survivors to gather, some reconnecting for the first time since they were school children. The booth also became a safe place for people to decompress from the experience of witnessing the hearings shared by Survivors. The stories shared were gut wrenching to hear. The booth provided a point of connection and a sense of community for all of us who were there for the duration of the TRC.



**Figure 87: Reconciliation Walk 2013, Vancouver, BC by author (2013)**

A walk for reconciliation took place in Vancouver at the end of the national event for the TRC (Fig. 87). Walks or marches like these are powerful ways to mark the streets. When people come together—in this case roughly 70,000 people gathered during a massive rainstorm—the process says something profound about the state of current affairs in Canada regarding the treatment of Indigenous peoples. Moving forward requires new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada; new relationships between the state and communities; new ways to work through historical grievances and wrong doings; and new ways of trying to build a better future. On this day, despite the rain (and it was heavy!), it felt as if those who gathered to walk together were committed to making change.



**Figure 88: RIDSAR Exhibition Posters, by author (2016)**

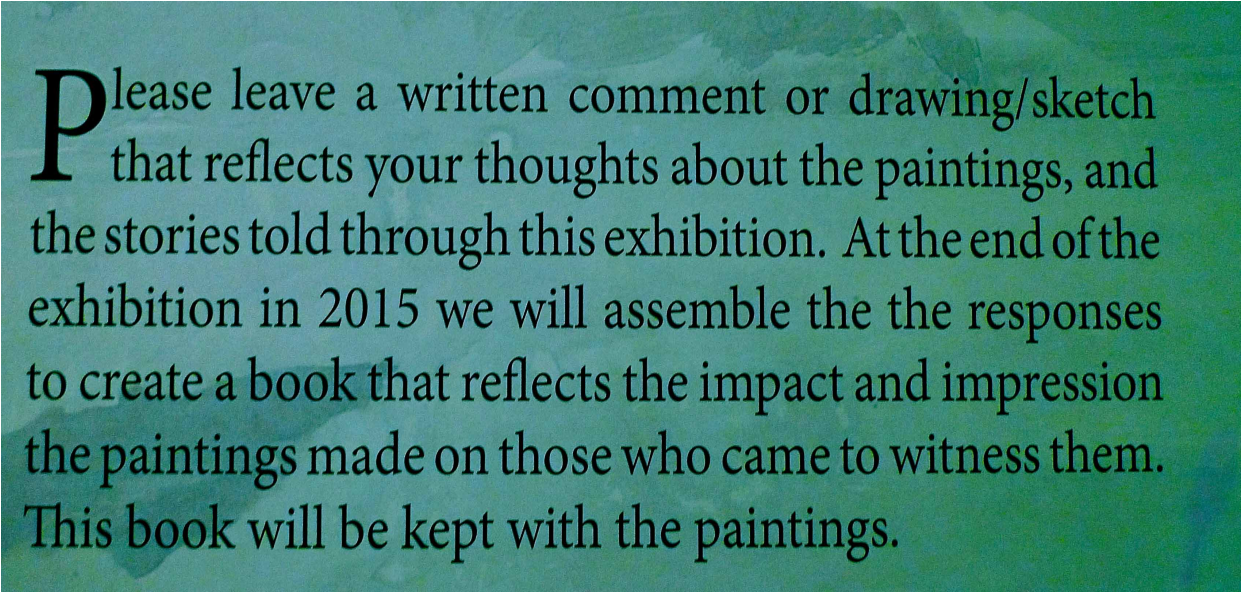
In addition to participating in two Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in the Education Centre—Victoria 2012, and Vancouver 2013—several paintings and stories shared by the Survivors and their families have been curated into two gallery exhibitions. The first was held at the Legacy Art Gallery in Victoria, and the second at the Alberni Valley Museum (Fig. 88). In the spring of 2013, the paintings were also honoured and returned in a community feast in Port Alberni. Replicas of the artwork were made and framed so that each Survivor would have their original painting in addition to a high resolution archival quality replica. The feast became an essential event that witnessed the repatriation of the paintings back to individuals and the return by many Survivors of their paintings *back* to UVic. Many Survivors chose to acknowledge the return of their painting but requested that UVic keep the painting and their story of their residential school experience attached to the painting so that the two could work together to educate others about the residential school legacy in Canada in the future. This unprecedented act of generosity has come to shape the work the project in wonderful ways. Survivors and their paintings have travelled to several community events, academic conferences, museum events, UVic lectures, and public schools to share their residential school stories, thereby highlighting the importance of these children's paintings in facilitating discussions around this difficult history.



Figure 89: Port Alberni Exhibition, Port Alberni, BC by author (2015)

A cautionary note to visitors. The paintings in this part of the exhibition depict graphically the reality of one Survivor's abuse and journey of healing. They may be unsettling to some viewers. We ask you consider this in your decision to view this part of the exhibition.

Figure 90: A Cautionary Note, Port Alberni, BC by author (2015)



Please leave a written comment or drawing/sketch that reflects your thoughts about the paintings, and the stories told through this exhibition. At the end of the exhibition in 2015 we will assemble the the responses to create a book that reflects the impact and impression the paintings made on those who came to witness them. This book will be kept with the paintings.

**Figure 91: Please Leave a Comment, Port Alberni, BC by author (2015)**

The above gallery shot (Fig. 89) and exhibition panels (Figs. 90 and 91) are from the Alberni Museum exhibition, *We Are All One*. As I discuss further in Chapter 4, the planning of the exhibit was driven by the curatorial collective of Survivors who made the decisions on everything from what order the paintings hung on the wall to what stories are told and the colours of paint in the exhibition. The paintings of one Survivor were shared in juxtaposition to paintings she completed while in art therapy for the abuse that she suffered as a child. The team also decided to include a case of some of the teacher Robert Aller's personal items as they felt his presence was such an important part of the story. For those who remembered Aller, he was a kind face in world of violent authority figures, and it was important to the curatorial collective to express this in the exhibition. I have included the two shots of exhibition panels (Figs. 90 and 91) to underscore how exhibitions of this nature require the additional thought of care. In this case, it was warning and care for triggering other Survivors visiting the exhibition, but also for all visitors that the content in the exhibition is disturbing. Part of the care offered in the exhibition also came by way of Survivors involved in the project who frequently spent time in the exhibition to help answer questions and to make the space more personal.



**Figure 92: United in Reconciliation, Ottawa, ON by author (2015)**

In June 2015, I was fortunate enough to travel to Ottawa with members of the RIDSAR collective to be in the city for the closing of the TRC. This trip coincided with a new partnership forged between the Canadian Museum of History and members of RIDSAR to incorporate Survivors' stories of Indian residential schools alongside artwork many had done as children into the new Canada History Hall. This trip was truly life changing for all involved—certainly so for me. The friendships forged during this time remain remarkable. I feel so grateful to have been a part of this project and to see how its work has impacted the lives of those involved, but also those who come to events or exhibitions witness the stories that Survivors and their families have shared. I arrived early enough to be able to join a walk for reconciliation (Fig. 92) which started prior to closing events of the TRC. Again, like Vancouver, it was a powerful experience to walk with people in the name of respect and with the hope of change. Walks or marches are acts that mark the streets with acts of solidarity. They are part of the larger network that make up the "culture of redress" at work in Canada, where various actors in this network come to influence and inform how redress is practiced and understood (Henderson and Wakeham 2013:7). I was conscious of actors in this network in Ottawa as I saw the Ottawa Japanese Canadian Association walking with signs declaring the Association's unite in the fight for reconciliation with IRS Survivors. This declaration is an act that draws the connection between the Japanese Canadian redress movement in Canada and current Indigenous struggles for rights, recognition, and resurgence.



**Figure 93: View from the Top, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, QC by author (2015)**

It was an incredible experience to tour through the CMH and to have a day spent wandering through its storerooms and back hallways accompanied by our RIDSAR team. I have always been conscious of these moments in museum work, the moments when people encounter material heritage located in collections that came from their communities—that in some cases was literally made by their ancestors. In the room pictured here with a clear view of Parliament Hill (Fig. 93), I was conscious of how members of our group may have been feeling in the presence of this wealth of material heritage from the West Coast of Canada. I was also left wondering how the final exhibition will come to fruition with the Survivor stories.



**Figure 94: Packed Up, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, QC by author (2015)**

Our days at the museum were full; many members of our group took the time to have a short video filmed of them telling their story along with their painting, or the painting of their relative. These videos will be edited for use in the new Canada Hall. I was struck how the museum staff who were involved in this part of the curatorial process were visibly changed after hearing Survivors share their experiences so openly. Emotions had clearly crept into their work in a way they had not expected, with the effects visible through their body language. As I discuss further in Chapter 3, this project has a way of turning handshakes into hugs. The RIDSAR team gave a public talk at the CMH as part of the closing of the TRC which, like every event that I have attended with this group, was powerful, honest, and humbling. These are stories that change people. With the paintings packed up (Fig. 94) and our team ready to head west after almost a week in Ottawa, it felt like good work had been done. It felt like good work because peoples' stories and experiences were honoured and respected. The RIDSAR team looks out for one another, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It is the only way that work like this can take place.



**Figure 95: CMHR Across the Bridge, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

This brings me back where I began, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg (Fig. 95). In the context of this project, there is much to be said about this institution. Popular media, academic scholarship, and community-rights activists have all produced a steady stream of criticism, which has rightly drawn attention to the complications of displaying human rights as an institutional theme, including the potential for government censorship and cultural claims over equal exhibition space (see Busby et al. 2015; Hankivsky & Dharmoon 2013; Lehrer 2015a, 2015b; Moses 2012). In addition to exhibition criticisms, the museum has been plagued by funding complications and staff resignations. In February 2015, I returned to Winnipeg to spend time in the galleries and to speak informally with staff here. I say informally because the CMHR did not grant me permission to conduct formal interviews here, though when I initially contacted representatives from the institution during the development of my proposal, I received very positive feedback about the project and was told that staff would love to participate given the parameters of my research. As my travel plans were coming to fruition for this second trip, I received word that CMHR staff would not be able to grant permission for any interviews until processes had been put in place within the institution to consolidate responses to media and research inquires. I share this research development as it indicates the level of scrutiny that the institution was under during this opening year, but also, what I believe to be the level of confusion and uncertainty under which staff were operating. I can only imagine the working environment under such conditions. During my informal conversations with staff I could sense the stress and tension. I took the chance off the record to be in some way sympathetic to these circumstances and to the enormous challenges this institution faces as it tries to establish itself as a research institution as well as museum FOR, not OF, human rights.



**Figure 96: The Building, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

The CMHR was 14 years in the making and started as the dream of prominent Winnipeg business man Israel Asper. He envisioned a Holocaust memorial museum; the museum shifted to a wider focus on human rights in 2007 with the involvement of the Canadian Federal Government. Government funds transformed the museum into Canada's newest national institution and the first outside of the capital region. The building itself is meant to be experiential; architect Antoine Predock created a space that takes the visitor from the darkness of the entrance through to the lightness of top of the building passing through four main sections: the cloud, the roots, the mountain, and the Tower of Hope (Fig. 96). Major galleries spaces include What are Human Rights?, The Indigenous Perspective, Canadian Journeys, Protecting Rights in Canada, Examining the Holocaust, Turning Points for Humanity, Breaking the Silence, Actions Count, Rights Today, and, finally, the Israel Asper Tower of Hope. There is also a contemplation garden, temporary exhibition spaces, a gift shop, and an award-winning restaurant (Newman and Levine 2014). There is no question that the architecture of the CMHR is quite outstanding. The building marks the Forks landscape in a somewhat overwhelming way; standing at the doorway of the institution, you realize just how massive the building is. I found walking through the several layers of the museum to be overwhelming and, at some points, rather exhausting.



**Figure 97: Canadian Journeys, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

Multimedia are prominent throughout the CMHR (Fig. 97). Large screens are used in all the galleries and are programmed to flash images that juxtapose with one another. Reflected light bounces off the alabaster ramps that connect the museum floors. The Canadian Journeys section seen here was of great interest to me. This is the area that features the three apologies at the core of this project, along with other moments in Canadian history that have come to shape the rights movement in Canada. Exhibits comprise large text panels, photographs, newspaper clippings and a minimal use of objects. As you walk around the semi-circular gallery space, each moment presents as a snap shot of rights struggles that have occurred in Canada (see Figs. 98-101). As I take up in Chapters 4 and 5, the space allocated for these experiences is small and the level of community consultation was minimal. Given the sheer size of the museum, working closely with community consultants was difficult and for those interviewed this lack of clear communication or involvement was a negative experience.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thomson, Grace Eiko. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]; Yu, Henry. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].



**Figure 98: Japanese Canadian Internment, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**



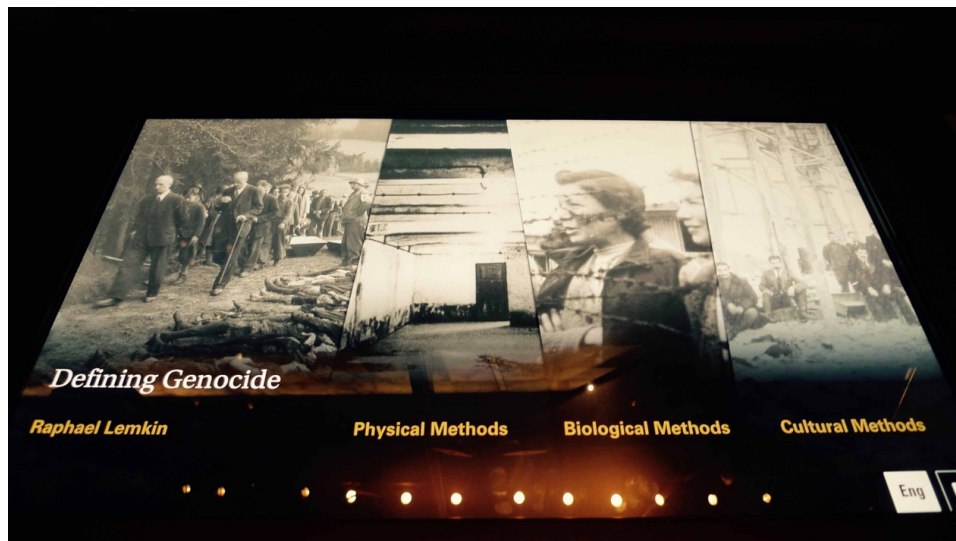
**Figure 99: Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Laws, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**



**Figure 100: Indian Residential Schools, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**



**Figure 101: Red Dress, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**



**Figure 102: Genocide at the CMHR, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

The museum came under fire for how the topic of genocide was covered (Fig. 102), with the Holocaust having a separate gallery from other global acts of genocide. I take up the controversy surrounded this gallery space in Chapter 4.



**Figure 103: Garden of Contemplation, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

Similar to the decompression space in the Canadian War Museum, this gallery at the CMHR (Fig. 103) is meant to be a place for contemplation and reflection. It is designed as an indoor resting space for visitors to sit and to absorb the material that is presented in the exhibition spaces.



**Figure 104: Izzy Asper Tower of Hope, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

The view from the Tower of Hope offers a beautiful panorama of the city of Winnipeg (Fig. 104). Such places invite moments of contemplation. The largest question remaining after my visit and my informal conversations with staff and people in Winnipeg was, what will the future of this museum be? Will this museum become a place that can both educate about human rights violations while critically engaging with current rights debates in Canada and beyond? Through partnerships with the Human Rights Research Centre at the University of Manitoba and the engagement of many scholars, artists, and activists from across Canada, many are already working to keep the CMHR accountable to what the institution's mission: to be a hub of research on global human-rights issues in addition to using exhibitions and public programming as avenues to educate visitors about these histories and events.



**Figure 105: St. Boniface Museum, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**

It was interesting to think how the CMHR fits into the heritage network of gallery spaces that I visited in

Winnipeg, including the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Manitoba Museum, the Railway Museum, and Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art. As I wandered across the bridge into Saint Boniface across the river from the CMHR, I came across the Boniface Museum located in former convent run by the Grey Nuns (Fig. 105). This place intrigued me. As a small museum, it functions with few funds and little staff, and houses exhibitions in need of updating. And yet, as a museum about the Riel Rebellion (Fig. 106), devoted to the life and death of Louis Riel, and Métis and Francophone culture in Manitoba, this museum is fundamentally about rights and rights issues specific to Canada. It reminded me of the broad scope of rights-related exhibition work that has been occurring well outside of the parameters of my research, and about the work that small institutions do daily within their communities to make a difference to those whose cultures and histories are reflected in their exhibitions.



**Figure 106: Remember Riel, St. Boniface Museum, Winnipeg, MB by author (2015)**



**Figure 107: Witness, Victoria, BC by author (2016)**

As I have travelled this journey of my research process and the duration of my degree, I am conscious of the stories and experiences that have been shared with me by my research participants, but also by many

Survivors of acts of discrimination and violence in Canada. I am grateful and humbled by all the experiences that have been shared. I remain mindful of my role in witnessing these stories (Fig. 107). I remain mindful of my responsibilities to use these stories in my own teachings to others and their role in guiding how I exist in relation to others. I remain mindful about how to be present (Fig. 108) and to be here together in a good way.



**Figure 108: Self-Portrait, Montreal, QC by author (2016)**

## Chapter 3 Coming Undone: Protocols of Emotion in Canadian Human Rights Museology<sup>19</sup>

### Introduction

Emotion is a tricky and fickle concept to pin down in scholarly research. There seems to be an inherent impossibility in any attempt to successfully try and measure or describe the many ways people may feel or react in specific circumstances, as these responses are so individualized and based entirely on the unique interconnectedness that occurs between individuals and the places, people, things, and experiences they encounter. As such, much scholarly work across the social sciences has highlighted the many ways that emotion is culturally framed and experienced (Ahmed 2014; Beatty 2005, 2013, 2014; Lutz 1986, 1988; Skoggard and Waterston 2015; Smith 2009; Stewart 2007; Wetherell 2012). During my own time working in museums or with material collections, I have witnessed and experienced how emotional this work can be. Heritage work is personal; it is connected to what people know about themselves and about others, but it is also what connects us to each other. It was clear from early on in this research that working with difficult subject matter requires a different kind of personal engagement. This chapter considers the affective practices, or emotional responses, that develop between heritage professionals and community partners during museological projects dealing with challenging subject matter. I take as a point of departure an understanding of *affect* as “embodied meaning-making” (Wetherell 2012:4), while *practice*, as defined in the introduction, is a nexus of activity that includes the physical body and the repeated and habitual actions that come from the body (Schatzki 2002). This activity is characterized by repetitive actions that accompany the processes of learning and improvisation (Wetherell 2012:23-24). Given these definitions, this chapter seeks to better understand what kinds of affective practices are produced during the

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<sup>19</sup> A version of this chapter by the same has been accepted for publication as of fall 2016 in a forthcoming Routledge Reader titled *Emotion and Affective Practices in the Past and Present* edited by Laurajane Smith, Gary Campbell and Margaret Wetherell.

development of projects pertaining to difficult histories in Canadian museums, and whether these emotional responses serve to produce better museological methods. I argue here that emotional experiences factor greatly during project development with challenging subject matter. As traumatic life stories are shared between heritage professionals and community partners, a series of affective practices develop that have the potential to create a space of emotional vulnerability. Though this space may be contentious, or at times filled with conflicting opinions, being emotionally vulnerable can also produce stronger bonds of trust and empathy, which can in turn productively shape curatorial work.

Emotion is a wide and interdisciplinary subject of study. To narrow this focus, I begin this chapter with a review of scholarly research that relates more specifically to the connections between emotions and heritage work, including how emotion is connected to the development of museum ethics. This is followed by a discussion regarding the need to build strong relationships when working with survivors of rights violations in Canada. I take into account here any practice-based protocols or guidelines that have been created to safeguard against triggering traumatic experiences for survivors, as well as practices put in place to safeguard the good health of all those involved in a project. In some cases, these protocols are culturally specific standards set to follow in the case of certain events or ceremonies. For example, in the context of many Indigenous cultures across Canada, there are very specific ways that cultural events or cultural work—say with material collections—should take place (Clavir 2002; Kovach 2009; Phillips 2000; 2011; Wilson 2008). I am interested here in how certain protocols that may be culturally specific are then adopted into museum practice as part of the guidelines for doing emotionally charged work. What this research finds, in the context of this chapter, is that working with survivors of trauma is not just about creating a successful exhibition. In the end, the exhibition is but one part of the curatorial process; a process that may include other long-term museum projects with survivors such as ongoing collections work, programming initiatives, and building educational resources.

However, this process may also involve ongoing work within the community itself. This may include projects specific to survivor needs, such as community presentations or gatherings. It is through work that is directly connected to community needs that it is possible for healing from trauma to occur; this possibility for healing is part of the transformative potential of museological work.

## **Emotion and Heritage Studies**

In the field of heritage studies, particularly with regards to museums, exhibitions, or heritage sites that deal with historically challenging or disturbing subject matter related to human rights violations, taking account of the emotional investment of heritage professionals involved in creating a curatorial project is a relatively under-researched area (Lehrer and Milton 2011; Munro 2013, 2014; Wilson 2011). Accounting for the role of emotion has usually come through analyses of visitor engagement; examining how visitors react to certain exhibitions or how they feel when spending time at heritage sites is part of how heritage spaces measure their success (Lehrer and Milton 2011). Studies have also shown that museums, exhibitions, and heritage sites have the potential to evoke both positive and negative feelings of nostalgia in visitors as they encounter aspects of history or events in these spaces (Gregory and Witcomb 2007). As such, a number of these studies have begun to unpack how visitors emotionally engage with subject matter that may confront and challenge their understanding of particular historic events (Gregory and Witcomb 2007; Melton 2013; Simon 2011,2014; Smith 2011a,2011b, 2014; Witcomb 2013, 2015a, 2015b), including how emotional reactions help visitors to engage in acts of remembering and meaning-making that come to shape new understandings of shared histories in critical ways (Campbell 2014; Smith and Campbell 2015; Witcomb 2013,2015a, 2015b). I have been drawn to the definition of “aesthetic action,” put forth by the Creative Conciliations research collective working on artistic responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as a point of departure for thinking through the complexities of working with difficult histories. Difficult histories invoke emotional, sensorial, and corporeal engagements—they are histories

that require us to feel—through art, curation, and community engagement as forms of research praxis.

As several of my participants expressed to me, all visits to a museum come with the potential for engagement; people do not go to a museum expecting to feel nothing, to not have an experience, or to leave unchanged. Visiting a museum is about engagement and feeling. As Laurajane Smith notes, museums are places where people go to engage with their emotions, they are places where people go to “feel” (2014:125). Part of this feeling comes from interacting with exhibitions; encountering the material presence of objects used to tell a story through the medium of an exhibition requires the use of bodily senses, which then provokes physical reactions (Dudley 2012). In some studies, objects themselves have even been used in therapeutic approaches to aging, healing and wellness ranging from depression to cases of dementia and Alzheimer's (Camic and Chatterjee 2013; Chatterjee and Noble 2009; Chatterjee et. al, 2009; Krmpotich et al. 2016; Message 2014; also, discussed in interview with Robert Janes). Part of the success of these studies is the ability to physically engage with objects. This physical engagement has required museums and collections managers to rethink traditional object handling methods commonly practiced in museums (Chatterjee et. al, 2009; Krmpotich et al. 2016).

A biographical model of object-focused studies promoted through the fields of visual anthropology and materiality studies provides valuable insights into the individual, collective, and culturally specific uses of material and visual culture and aids in understanding how human relationships and behaviours are affected by everyday engagements with things. From this perspective, objects or things possess biographical histories (Appadurai 1986; Hahn and Weiss 2013; Hicks and Beaudry 2010; Hoskins 1998; Kopytoff 1986; Joyce and Gillespie 2015; Miller 1998; Pinney 1997, 2004); biographies which, in the case of many museum collections, are intricately interwoven with colonial collecting and documentation (Stoler 2009; Thomas 1994, 1991; Taussig 2004, 2009). A material perspective also argues objects can possess agentic qualities,

qualities that can influence and inflict change (Edwards and Hart 2004; Gell 1998; 1999; Hicks and Beaudry 2010; Latour 2005; Robb 2015). Materiality theories connect most directly to the discussion of affective practices by stressing how an object's presence in a collection or archive can invoke sensory reactions (Edwards 2001, 2006; Edwards and Hart 2004; Glass 2009). Listening, witnessing, talking, touching, all become part of the emotional set of responses humans have with material objects (Ahmed 2014; Edwards 2001, 2005; Krmpotich et al. 2016; Langford 2001; Simon 2014).

Theories of material and visual culture align with arguments put forth by several Indigenous scholars and researchers working with Indigenous people in Canada draw explicit connections between material heritage, forms of intangible heritage practices and beliefs (e.g., the making of ceremonial regalia or the practice of song and dance), and the cultural well-being and continuity of people (see Ames 1992; Clavir 2002; Conaty 2006, 2008, 2015; Doxtator 1994; Cranmer-Webster 1992; Kreps 2003b; Krmpotich et. al, 2013; Peers and Brown 2003; Pedri 2016; Phillips 2011). The immaterial world is deeply embedded in the material world and, for Indigenous peoples, gaining access to material heritage held in museum collections is fundamentally connected to community wellbeing.

The active process of meaning-making that occurs between objects and people is a fundamental part of how cultural heritage is created. Engaging with objects is, in part, how heritage is performed (Johnson 2011; Smith 2011). While I take up this performative aspect of heritage-making in relation to the construction of history and memory more extensively in Chapter 5, this discussion demonstrates that the place of emotions in heritage studies—how individuals or groups of people feel when they encounter heritage spaces—comes to shape their ideas about the past and past events (Bagnall 2003; Smith 2006, 2014). Research has shown that museums have the potential to create personal and social connections in the aftermath of tragedy and can act to heal from traumatic public events (Melton 2013). Studies have also shown that

museums, exhibitions, and heritage sites have the potential to evoke both positive and negative feelings of nostalgia in visitors as they encounter aspects of history or events in these spaces (Gregory and Witcomb 2007). As such, several of these studies have begun to unpack how visitors emotionally engage with subject matter that may confront and challenge their understanding of historic events (Gregory and Witcomb 2007; Simon 2014; Smith 2014; Witcomb 2013). As visitors spend time in exhibitions, the act of sharing memories about events is part of how humans “learn to remember,” as Campbell (2014:2) argues, and through this process of remembering, people become more connected, not only to each other, but to shared past histories. Engaging with challenging subject matter in an exhibition space also produces a sense of meaning. As Witcomb (2013:256) argues, there is a great potential for the embodied emotional reactions that produce new senses of meaning to also produce new forms of critical thinking, which are paramount in creating an appreciation and empathy in visitors for culturally traumatic histories.

Yet, it is not just visitors who experience emotional reactions. Given the subject matter being discussed, emotional exchanges occurring between those involved in creating a project can often be deep and personal. This issue is addressed in part through scholarship documenting the rise of ethics and what it means to work ethically in museum practice. The study of what constitutes ethical research has become a distinct branch of heritage scholarship over the last 25 years (Besterman 2006; Edson 1997; Kreps 2011; Marstine 2011). This scholarship has developed in part due to a growing number of international ethical procedural guidelines for heritage work created to set standards for museum practice based on safeguarding those involved in museum work and honouring specific cultural traditions. Such international examples include the guidelines found in ICOM’s Code of Ethics (ICOM 2016b) and the procedures followed as a result of the laws set in the United States through the National American Graves

Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).<sup>20</sup> As formerly mentioned, the Canadian Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (1992) produced a number of guidelines for Canadian museums to follow in order to be more responsible to the Indigenous peoples whose material culture is represented in their collections.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the Task Force many museums in Canada have now created their own institutional guidelines for repatriation and other forms of culturally sensitive collections work (Conaty 2006, 2008; Phillips 2011).<sup>22</sup>

However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, ethics is not a single set of guidelines or a clearly defined research method. Ethics, as Linda Meskell argues, “is essentially a theory of social relations rather than a transcendent entity or body of facts” (2005:126). Ethics is fundamentally about relationships between people, and it is through these relationships that those involved in a research project learn what is meaningful, important, and culturally appropriate to one another (Marstine 2011; Meskell 2005). Michael Harkin maintains researchers must recognize “emotion seriously as a mode of experience” (2003:262). It is only through engaging one’s own emotions and being aware of the emotions of others that researchers can better understand the life experiences of those they work with. The need to building strong research relationships parallels a key dimension of Indigenous research methodologies. Many Indigenous scholars refer to this as *relational* research practice: a research method that stresses the need for researchers and research consultants to create meaningful and respectful relationships

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<sup>20</sup> NAGPRA in the United States passed in 1990. As a piece of federal legislation, NAGPRA is a legally binding document between cultural institutions including archaeological research projects, and federally-recognized Native American tribes concerning procedures for engaging with Indigenous cultural heritage, providing Indigenous peoples with access to collections, and establishing laws concerning repatriation (NAGPRA 1991; Paterson 2009).

<sup>21</sup> For a good comparative discussion of NAGPRA and the Task Force see the edited volume by Catherine Bell and Robert Paterson *Protection of First Nations Cultural Heritage: Laws, Policy, and Reform* (2009) and the book chapter *The Historical Praxis of Museum Anthropology: A Canada-US Comparison* (2006) by Cory Wilmott.

<sup>22</sup> In Canada, some of these include: Alberta’s First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act, the Blackfoot Nations Sacred Ceremonial Act (Conaty 2006, 2008).

with one another to better learn how to relate to one another (Archibald 2008; Battiste et al. 2002; Kovac 2009; Graveline 2000; Hart 2010; Kirkness and Barnhardt. 1991; Pedri 2016; Simpson 2011; Smith 1999, 2006; Thomas 2000; 2005; Wilson 2008; see also Basso 1996; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Denzin et al. 2008; Lassiter 2005). It is through building and fostering this sense of relatedness that in turn, stronger research projects are produced.

Many scholars argue part of the ethical responsibility of cultural institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to actively promote cultural diversity and cultural wellbeing, while also exhibiting and educating visitors on issues related to cultural inequality, discrimination, and violence (Flemming 2012b; Janes and Conaty 2005; Kreps 2003a, 2011; Nightingale and Sandell 2012; Sandell 2002, 2007, 2011, 2012; Sherman 2008). However, coming to terms with difficult, painful, and contested histories in the space of an institution presents challenges for heritage professionals as they navigate the emotional intensity of issues as violence and discrimination that may form the content of an exhibition or collection research project. In this context, Lehrer and Milton (2011:4) rightfully respond to these issues by asking as heritage professionals, “what is our responsibility to stories of suffering we inherit? And shadowing all of these questions is the ever-present need to ask which ‘we’ is inquiring, deciding, acting-and of whose behalf.” This question is of valid concern given how traditional models of curatorial work often stress neutrality and objectivity, leaving little room for the influence of emotional experience. Ross Wilson (2011:131) identifies this as “the curatorial complex,” where common practices and expectations can limit the ability for some curators (though I would extend this to include all heritage professionals) to cope with this type of museum practice. At times, heritage professionals find themselves as caregivers; in some cases, performing job characteristics like that of a counselor, but with very little training or institutional support for how to best cope with the intensity of these responsibilities (Wilson 2011; Munro 2013, 2014). This is not to say that hearing stories shared by survivors of trauma

is any way equal to having experienced this trauma first hand; however, the complexities of what happens when these stories are shared is worth probing.

While there is a necessity for heritage scholarship to continue to document and debate the social function of museums, what is lacking in this scholarship is a deeper understanding of the emotional connections made and required by those who create spaces that deal with traumatic history, including how those involved are affected by unsettling moments, and how the processes of doing this work differs from other curatorial projects. The emotional investment required on the part of heritage professionals working with survivors of violence and cultural discrimination should fundamentally differ from the investment of care given to other curatorial projects. When the nature of the content is so emotionally charged, the potential for complications to arise during working partnerships is greater (Smith and Fouseki 2011). The possibility of failure could mean drawing further divides between communities of people, or worse, re-traumatizing those involved in a project.

### **Emotion and Canadian Museology**

To gain a sense of the difficulty of this work, I asked my participants to reflect on the complicated, messy, and even failed attempts at project development as often as the positive or successful moments to hear how emotion factored into these outcomes. In some circumstances, exhibitions fail, do not come to fruition, or suffer from extreme community backlash and protest in addition to media and academic scrutiny. This was undoubtedly the case with the fallout from the *Spirit Sings* at the Glenbow Museum.<sup>23</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2, UBC's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) cancelled an exhibition in 2011 on missing and murdered Indigenous women from Vancouver's

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<sup>23</sup> Though the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) was not a site of research for this project, the ROM did receive extensive backlash from the Black community in Toronto for the 1989 exhibition *Into the Heart of Africa*. This exhibition was seen by protestors as discriminatory towards African peoples and glorifying 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century imperialism (see Butler 1999, 2000; Phillips 2011 for further discussion of the critiques of this exhibition).

Downtown Eastside called *The Forgotten*. Though scholarship has documented how and why this exhibition failed, primarily because the exhibition was deemed re-traumatizing to women and their families (Moss 2012; Pinto 2013a, 2013b), what has not been discussed is what happened after this failure and what has been learned by the institution. Failures can also be catalysts for change where essential learning opportunities develop out of moments of conflict. As such, I was interested in speaking with current and former staff at these two museums to gain a sense of how institutions in Canada recover from complicated and contentious moments when dealing with matters related to human rights.

By extension, project success is not just defined as the creation of exhibitions without conflict. In interviews, I heard how my participants often deemed projects to be successful using criteria founded upon how the process of building an exhibition felt, and whether those involved in a project *felt* the experience brought positive change. This was certainly the case from my discussions with those involved with the work of the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Program (RIDSAR) collective. Projects produced from this collective have become important sites for the experiences shared by IRS Survivors to be acknowledged and witnessed. I have personally seen the impact of this project's work on the lives of those involved—most importantly on the lives of the Survivors whose efforts have guided this work from the beginning, but also the various museum professionals, academics, and students (myself included) who have helped with this work. The emotional experiences shared while building these projects has been nothing short of life changing. Residential school Survivors and their families have taught me to incorporate a high degree of acceptance, patience, discretion, and above all, respect when working with survivors of trauma. This awareness has radically shaped not only my research, but my life. These experiences have been a true test of what it means to work collaboratively and I am profoundly grateful for this network of friends and colleagues and for the stories I have witnessed.

What has emerged as centrally important throughout this research is that, when working through complex and emotionally sensitive material related to rights-violations in Canada, building strong relationships helps to facilitate the creation of respectful working processes and guidelines, regardless of an institution's size, structure or exhibition mandate. Furthermore, as I stress towards the end of this chapter, time spent being comfortable in the space of being uncomfortable can lead to powerful and transformative exhibitions.

### **The Role of Relationships**

The central role of building strong relationships was a key finding in this research. Longstanding relationships in museum work are essential, not just for successful partnerships to grow, but for creation of partnerships in which people who have suffered from extreme forms of violence or discrimination feel safe and respected. It was stressed to me that building these relationships takes time. It takes time to foster a level of trust on the part of those sharing stories and it takes time to be good listener. As long time MOA Curator of Education and Public Programming Jill Baird observes:

[...] if you don't get along as people then doing an exhibition is going to be hard; it is a trying process. What MOA has had, arguably since the Hawthorns, is really long standing relationships with people from around this province, also country, and part of these relationships result in good projects. This is the behind-the-scenes stuff that never makes it to an exhibition.<sup>24</sup>

It also takes time to mend relationships. In the case of the Glenbow, the immediate changes that took place after the *Spirit Sings* were about building new and stronger ties with Indigenous communities in southern Alberta, particularly the Blackfoot Nations. Much of this was done through the efforts of former curator Gerald Conaty who, throughout his career at Glenbow, worked with various Indigenous community members from the *Niitsitapi* or Blackfoot Confederacy (Carter 2014; Janes 2014; Krmpotich and Anderson 2005; Schmidt 2014; see also Conaty & Carter 2005; Conaty

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<sup>24</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

2003, 2006, 2008, 2015). Through strategic relationship building from 1990 onward, the Glenbow has worked with various collections and curatorial projects with Niitsitapi members. These resulted in the highly successfully permanent exhibition *Niitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life*, which opened in 2001, and a unique set of repatriation laws specific between the Niitsitapi and the Alberta Provincial Government (see Conaty 2006, 2008, 2015). As former Glenbow Director, Robert Janes reflects:

[...] to me it is just an off shoot of genuine, authentic human relationships because as our relationships with the Blackfoot progressed we were given more and more of an intimate exposure to Blackfoot [culture] ... all of this peeled back the onion of truth and I think more and more comfort and ability to be honest with each other about what was going on.<sup>25</sup>

This was also the case with the failed *Forgotten* exhibition at MOA; what was required in the aftermath was to mend relationships with members of the Downtown Eastside community and to find ways to work together to move forward with potential educational opportunities.<sup>26</sup> A desire by both groups to mend relationships led to a series of discussions that took place between MOA and members of community organizations about missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada and how museums and universities can better tackle such a difficult subject in the future.<sup>27</sup> These discussions took place over dinner at MOA. Called the “Shared Bowl,” the dinners became collective spaces to work through how and why the museum did not provide the right structure to take on this exhibition and for members of the DTES community to have the chance to voice the opinions about better approaches to working with people from this community.

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<sup>25</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>26</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]; Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>27</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]

Another avenue of relationship building finds objects playing a central role in processes of remembering and attempting to reconcile with the specific histories of oppression and violence in Canada. Objects have the potential to draw people together. As MOA designer Skooker Broome describes:

Being in the presence of an object has an emotional commitment and attachment to the practitioner, especially if touch is involved. ... but that is a human condition I think. No matter how much we try to augment the space with these opportunities, whether they are new concepts of interpretation or rationalization of using words, voices, new technologies... the object just has too much power.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of past events of violence and cultural discrimination in Canadian history, objects such as Chinese Head Tax papers or photographs of Japanese Internment camps—examples of objects related to human rights violations found in museums across Canada—contribute to what Roger Simon (2014:19) refers to as the “pedagogy of witnessing” to past events of violence and cultural discrimination in Canadian history through their material presence. Former Nikkei Director and Curator Beth Carter reflects on the uniqueness of the Nikkei collection in this regard:

[...]one of the ways that we are unique and different is that we provide the three-dimensional feeling. Through objects, environments, learning, touchables - there are all sorts of ways that we are helping to share those stories and make them meaningful to people...prewar objects are rare...one or two suitcases are all they had with them...[so] objects that may take on less meaning in a non-Japanese Canadian context take on more meaning in the Japanese Canadian context.<sup>29</sup>

Collections that include objects generated through oppressive historical events or that may have very personal histories of violence attached to them can be painful for survivors of these experiences; encountering them may cause unexpected reactions. There is museological knowledge to be gained not just for how to best approach these emotionally charged encounters, but also to learn from these bodily reactions that

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<sup>28</sup> Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>29</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

result from the power objects can carry. Andrea Walsh, lead Director of the RIDSAR collective, reflects on the experience of being with one Survivor encountering her painting and witnessing the physical and emotional distress that came in this moment:

I learned more about [Survivor] relationships with the paintings through the shaking of her body than I ever could have learned through any other way. You can't teach that in a class, but somehow you endeavor to impart that teaching: that these paintings that we are working with are deeply related to trauma and oppression and so you have to think about them in a different way. You can't think about them as just objects and I don't know how you would work with this collection if you saw them just as objects; that you didn't see yourself as somehow bound up in what they are and what they do because you have brought them out the way you have.<sup>30</sup>

Walsh identified a key responsibility here that falls on the heritage professional: recognizing certain objects have the potential for harm. In this situation, the Survivor had complete control over the viewing of the painting and family, Elders, and support workers were present to help. However, the moment objects are placed in front of people with experiences of violence associated to them, there is a very real potential that people will encounter a traumatic memory or experience sparked by the objects being shared.

Some objects are so overwhelming that their presence comes with pause and reflection. This was certainly the case with the large industrial kitchen mixer that was taken from St. Michaels' Residential School and placed in the exhibition *Speaking to Memory* at MOA (Fig. 42). Encountering the mixer in the exhibition stirred vivid images of young children using this machine. Many Survivors shared stories with Curator Bill McLennan of how dangerous this mixer was to use and their memories of many children who were injured. Others shared stories of being glad the mixer came to the school as it meant they no longer had to mix by hand.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>31</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

The archival photographs of children used in *Speaking to Memory*, however, became sites of positive memories. McLennan brought a book containing copies of the photographs with him as he visited various Northwest Coast communities from which children who attended St. Michael's had come. The process of naming children in the photographs came naturally as people encountered the images. Survivors began speaking about who attended the school, where people came from, and the families to which they belong. They began speaking to relationships. As McLennan reflects:

That was the other surprising thing to me which gave me great hope, is people look at these pictures, and go "oh I know so and so" (and recognize people), this animation that comes about by looking at these pictures. Looking at those pictures did open a lot of people. And I think that is what happened, they opened-up and told some funny stories.<sup>32</sup>

In the case of RIDSAR, for some Survivors the children's paintings, which were representative of familial relationships within the community, were the only thing they have remaining from their childhood. When Walsh reflects on earlier work with Indigenous children's drawings from a previous project (see Walsh 2009; Osoyoos Museum Society et al. 2005; also, *Drawing on Identity*

<http://www.inkameepdayschool.ca/>) she notes:

I didn't have a sense (then) ... of the importance of names ... how connected people were through names ... how close to the present the drawings were. ... This project and the Aller project [RIDSAR] heighten my awareness ... even though these pieces may have been separated physically from community for decades, they remain tightly knit into those social relationships.<sup>33</sup>

The children's paintings have also played a central role in strengthening relationships between those involved in the current RIDSAR work on redressing the IRS system in Canada. With regards to collections that are bound to difficult histories, Walsh observes:

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<sup>32</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>33</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

[...] these collections are people, they are relationships. When you become a curator of these collections you sign on to those social networks and you become part of that for better or for worse. You take the heat for the institution and all its practice, but you also have the pleasure of trying to do things better.<sup>34</sup>

Maintaining good relationships means working on those relationships when the exhibition comes down. This can also mean helping community members. Such is the case at the Chinese Canadian Military Museum (CCMM), where curators often help elderly veterans with errands and work to keep them socializing with the greater Chinese Canadian community in Vancouver.<sup>35</sup> Going for coffee, making phone calls, sending emails—all are small actions that help to keep aspects of the work in process while also strengthening relationships.

### **Guidelines and Protocols: Creating a Methodology of Emotion**

Many of my participants discussed the responsibility they feel to tell stories appropriately, with their work cautiously driven by the effort not to re-traumatize those involved with a project. I was interested to hear if, and how, guidelines have been developed to safeguard from re-traumatizing. It is curious to note that not one of the institutions where I conducted interviews has begun a process of writing down any guidelines regarding how to work with challenging subject matter. Any sense of protocols or basic working guidelines, aside from institutionally specific interpretations of the Task Force, are based on what “to do” versus “what not to do,” and these come as moments of action that are often learned in situ. Commenting on this, Jill Baird from MOA, notes:

That is a real failure...we don't actually take the time. Instead we have an exhibition review process, someone externally to comment on the exhibition. It doesn't help us really; logistical things are captured...[but] we don't have a vehicle to have those kinds of conversations... next time there is an exhibition

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<sup>34</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>35</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]; Wong, Larry. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2014*. Vancouver. [Interview notes in possession of author].

with photographs of difficult subjects is there a “lessons we learned”? Maybe that would be a better approach than a protocol.<sup>36</sup>

Glenn Ogden, one of the Creative Development Specialists working on the new Canada History Hall, similarly reflects:

The realities are, once you have pulled back the curtain ...most people have moved on. Institutionally you can find challenges: you can establish best practice (but) how do we disseminate it; how do we do that? I know elsewhere in the museum there is a lot of thought and deliberation being given to that. Refreshing of “best practice,” establishing of good principles, being prescriptive about what you can do. There is a professional judgment that needs to be made about certain things...some of this is to help the museum, some of it is to help with the History Hall...it would be great to have this material to share.<sup>37</sup>

This idea of “material to share” was brought up in many interviews. Almost all of those I interviewed noted how little time is allocated to reflecting on completed work and taking account of what worked in terms of methods of practice. And yet, there is a shared understanding that many museums in Canada are producing important work that has something critical to contribute to the field of heritage studies pertaining to challenging histories. More attention to capturing methods of practice would prove valuable if shared with other professionals. I do acknowledge here that during national museum conferences, such as the annual meetings for the Canadian Museums Association and the annual meetings of its provincial counterparts, a platform for sharing museum successes and failures, including what practices heritage professionals are developing to work with certain content through their institution, does exist. However, as emphasized here, little of this work is being formally written down in a capacity where it then could be shared with other institutions, scholars, or community partners. My interviews and gallery visits made clear that when cultural protocols are being captured in more of an official capacity—that is, written down and documented as

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<sup>36</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>37</sup> Ogden, Glenn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

specific procedural mode of conduct for future use—these are most often protocols of practice shared by Indigenous partners and it is these culturally specific guidelines that are fundamentally shaping how some projects are being created.

Examples of such cultural protocols include making space for Indigenous practices of prayer, for example acts of song, drumming, and smudging, to take place before work on collections, exhibitions, or a public event can begin. Collections areas in the Canadian Museum of History (CMH), MOA and the Glenbow have specific spaces for these community protocols to take place and have provided these for some time. An example of how such as protocol has become a mode of practice occurred at Legacy Art Gallery in downtown Victoria. Prior to mounting an exhibit of artwork related to RIDSAR at the Legacy (2013), the gallery was “brushed out” by Coast Salish Elders with cedar branches to cleanse the gallery space; this was followed by prayer in the space with the curators and other gallery staff. Survivors said this act was necessary to prepare the space before hanging the artwork. This act of prayer is a way to cleanse the gallery to prepare for having such challenging images mounted on the walls. More importantly, this act of prayer was to ensure the health and well-being of those working on the exhibition, the staff working in gallery, and the visitors who would come to see the exhibition. The Legacy now embraces the need for such a protocol to take place prior to mounting exhibitions that contain material deemed by Indigenous community partners to be in need of spiritual cleansing.

The CMH has a well-developed set of Indigenous protocols that accompany processes of institutional repatriation and these protocols come as an extension of the Task Force recommendations. As forms of practice, these protocols have been formulated through various repatriation projects that have been completed with Indigenous peoples. Head of CMH repatriation committee Nadja Roby notes that the museum is gradually becoming more accustomed to Indigenous protocols, such as those regarding the care

and handling of objects, particularly since the CMH established a separate repatriation department. As she reflects:

We went through a period when we were being super restrictive because we thought better to be more cautious in terms of access than too free. We are starting to now, as everybody gets more comfortable, to be more free, to go through processes of going through all the ethnology protocols because of this shift in the organization. There are people working with collections that were not before, people who don't know if people may want to smudge. We have an area downstairs for people to smudge, we ask them if they are ready, ask them if they need to smudge before they go in to a room with sacred material. We are trying to formalize this as we are now a new bigger department.<sup>38</sup>

In many cases, guidance for how to incorporate protocols comes from Indigenous members of museum advisory boards or local communities that belong to the territory on which museums are located. As an example, current CMH Director Dean Oliver reflects on a moment of consultation during his time at the Canadian War Museum (CWM) regarding an exhibition that had particularly gruesome content:

One of our consultants was a First Nations Chief. In the discussions (we asked) what is the balance between honesty and directness of this horror but sensitivity and digressions about its graphic content...I had no sense of how innate and delicate this would be to individuals and communities... One of the things learned from this, he (the Chief) said, "I am not qualified to answer that question, what you are asking me is the wisdom of intervention in the innocence of my children and for that I need to consult the Elders." It was an exceedingly sober moment for me and some of my colleagues around the table as to the responsibility we were undertaking in telling the very difficult and challenging narrative. Also, a moment of pristine clarity of maturity and wisdom of him in giving that response... it was a learning moment.<sup>39</sup>

Though Indigenous knowledge and working methodologies related to better handling of material collections have been steadily incorporated by many museums in Canada since the Task Force, the example above is evidence of Indigenous protocols entering gallery spaces to better safeguard human experience. Local Indigenous Elders are being

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<sup>38</sup> Roby, Nadja. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>39</sup> Oliver, Dean. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

consulted to ensure the *well-being of people* in a space containing emotionally challenging subject matter. This is a unique and defining feature of human rights museological work currently being developed in Canada. The majority of protocols of emotion currently being developed and followed in museum spaces are directly linked to Indigenous knowledge.

The RIDSAR work has been guided by protocols put forth by Indigenous advisory members. As the research phase of the project began and questions arose regarding how to communicate with IRS Survivors that had paintings in the UVic collection, Walsh consulted with UVic Elders in Residence at the First Peoples House on campus. The result was protocols which provide guidance on how to enter and speak with Elders in communities, as well as how to best look after people involved in the project inclusive of those sharing stories, those hearing stories, and those entering an exhibition space, including the staff. These protocols are about looking after one another.

Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas), UVic's current Director of Indigenous Academic and Community University Engagement, also an Associate Professor of Social Work and a RIDSAR collaborator, stresses the importance of Indigenous protocols:

[...] we had our own ethical guidelines but then we had cultural guidelines and ethics ... Part of our [Coast Salish] teachings are about witnessing, when you witness significant events it is your responsibility to remember. Those of us in that project have witnessed those stories, we are now responsible for remembering those stories, those places...it is now our responsibility to remember that and carry it forward.<sup>40</sup>

I return to the importance of witnessing and remembering in Chapter 5 which focuses on museums and memory; it is worth noting, as Thomas suggests, that the interviews conducted between IRS Survivors and heritage professionals were important acts of witnessing their story. And with that witnessing comes the responsibility to take care of that story and to respectfully share it in the future.

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

Culturally specific protocols emphasizing the importance of consulting with and caring for Elders are also stressed within the Japanese and Chinese Canadian community context and followed at the Nikkei Museum and the CCMM. In many cases, Elders are important members of advisory boards, particularly in community museums or cultural centres. During my interviews at the Nikkei Centre in fall 2014 I had the opportunity to speak with Momiko Ito, a former employee of the Nikkei Museum, who at the time of our interview was receiving further training at Nikkei to help her with the seasonal operation of the former Internment site in New Denver, BC. Management of New Denver heavily involves Nikkei Japanese Canadians and requires consultation with this group for most decisions. As Ito notes:

Moving or changing anything in the museum has to go through the society. We always consult with them... many decisions that were made were not written down, just discussed...when this generation passes what do we do? Do we consult the broader Japanese community? Do we follow museum standards and protocols? Not quite there yet but these are questions that are looming and we will have to deal with them.<sup>41</sup>

Many participants emphasized the importance of meeting with people in person, especially elderly people, even if it meant driving a distance for the visit to be in their home so that the conversation was as comfortable as possible. The need to respect when someone does not want to share their experiences was also stressed, underscoring that silence is also a protocol. As Curator Paul Lee from the CCMM reflects:

We have one veteran who will not talk about his experiences ... sometimes we go out for lunch ... and he will still not talk about his experiences... Maybe something he experienced [was] so tragic he just doesn't want to talk about it.<sup>42</sup> Some of this care entails paying attention to the physical language of those involved in a project to read the body for signs of emotional distress. For example, there is a very

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<sup>41</sup> Ito, Momoko. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>42</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

keen awareness of the dangers of post-traumatic stress suffered by community partners who work with staff at the CWM. Many of these partners are themselves veterans of war or survivors of war experiences and staff maintain a hyper-awareness of the potential for PTSD. Therefore, there are many moments when work stops to look after the health of those sharing their stories. Similarly, Archivist Linda Kawamoto Reid from the Nikkei notes with regards to the recording of oral histories for the Nikkei archive:

[...] when I started interviewing people, out of nowhere, though it is actually not out of nowhere, [some] people would become emotional and not be able to continue the interview .... I am very, very respectful for their experiences and I don't push it.<sup>43</sup>

MOA Curator Bill McLennan shares a similar experience from his interviews with IRS Survivors for *Speaking to Memory*:

[...] the worst things people said to me, those people decided they didn't want to put their interviews forward. They really appreciated that they got to speak it, and appreciated the fact that I transcribed it, but they don't want to release it. They just weren't ready to do that after all that was done.

In all my interviews, subjects stressed the need to always remember the hardships that people have gone through, to remember these stories are peoples' lives. Reflecting on her time at Nikkei, Beth Carter notes:

[...] just because there has been a formal apology doesn't mean there has been healing ...For museum staff, we are talking about these things every day ... We have to always stop and realize that this is real people, and this is real emotion, and real experiences, and painful experiences that people have gone through. We have a very important role in sharing those experiences and provide one way for people to process and move through those experiences.<sup>44</sup>

In hearing these stories, some participants spoke about the need to take care of those sharing the stories but also those hearing the stories. This means recognizing that these experiences are extremely challenging for some to share but they are also sometimes

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<sup>43</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>44</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

heart-wrenching to hear. There is a need for heritage professionals to take care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As Robina Thomas shares:

My rule of thumb: always making decisions based on the relationships I create are lifelong relationships and then it makes you make decisions differently because you are making them with your heart, not always with your head. I think that this heart stuff, this emotional stuff, makes us engage differently. That being said, we always need to be really aware that we take care of this heart stuff. And you know when I teach I say to students all of the time, how are you taking care of yourself today? Go walk under that cedar tree, let it brush you off, let it take your negativity...I am always really aware that we need to do that.<sup>45</sup>

Some of these protocols or guidelines are essentially very basic but important “check-ins” to see how people are feeling. Checking-in is part of how to take care of one’s self and others during a project. Thomas notes further in terms of her own self-care when working with IRS Survivors from a previous research project prior to RIDSAR (see Thomas 2000, 2005):

And I learned that when I came back from those interviews, and it taught me a good thing about life in general, when I teach and when I do interviews, research like that, that night I will always go to the steam room. And when I am in that steam room I ask the creator to help me sweat out all the negativity and only hold what I need to. I ask the creator to help me make sense of this hard stuff – in my head, in my eyes, in my ears, nose and in my spirit.<sup>46</sup>

It is noteworthy that the toll of such work is rarely considered—that is, how emotionally draining or difficult it is for staff involved to recover from its effects. More clear guidelines have been developed for safeguarding visitors against negative emotional experiences and ensuring the wellbeing of those who enter museum spaces and exhibitions with difficult content. For example, the CWM has held visitor engagement sessions where those who participated were asked about the level of challenging subject matter in which the museum should be engaging, and at what point was certain

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul’sih’yah’maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul’sih’yah’maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

material too disturbingly graphic. With regards to the *Deadly Medicine* Eugenics exhibition, Dean Oliver reflects:

What are we saying in the exhibition? We always have something to say...and this can be difficult when we have family as an audience. So, we invited family groups, groups that had been oppressed by Nazi Germany, and we asked them what do you think is the threshold of good taste in this exhibition? We don't want to soft pedal, or reduce it to pabulum, but on the other hand you have to be sensitive to other people, to people with children, and to people who may have a lived experience of eugenics policies. And that made a critical difference.<sup>47</sup>

In some cases, safeguarding visitor experience is built in to museum design or exhibition layout. These places are necessary for visitors to pause and reflect and to emotionally process what they have just witnessed and experienced in the exhibition space. Jill Baird emphasizes this need:

Quite often when you go through exhibitions that are physically demanding, intellectually demanding, the most successful ones ...(have) a space for you to reflect... You have to question, what is your purpose in putting this stuff out if you haven't created a space where you actually engender some kind of exchange? I think curatorially and institutionally you have to ask, what is the purpose of putting it out there? What is the purpose in showing that if there is not a place for me (as in the visitor) to sit down and go, oh my god, why am I looking at this?<sup>48</sup>

Many museums have these spaces as permanent galleries, such as the Memorial Hall at the CWM (Figure 34), the gallery floor at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (dedicated as the Garden of Contemplation) (Figure 103), or the Izzy Asper Tower of Hope (Figure 104), which takes visitors to the top of the CMHR for a view of Winnipeg. These places are created as experiential galleries where visitors can absorb and reflect on what they have experienced. Ito shares the importance of the garden space at the New Denver site as a place to decompress from walking through the museum portion that is the former Internment building:

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<sup>47</sup> Oliver, Dean. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>48</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

It (the site) really has a real physical charge to it. The visitors that come to the centre, we have many that are just upset by reality at the history that took place. One of the nice things we have is this beautiful garden to offset these things as a place for quiet reflection.<sup>49</sup>

Ito also described how the garden was cared for by former Japanese Canadian internees; the process of maintaining the garden has a healing component for those who experience the war in this space.

Though documenting protocols or forms of best practice as written guidelines may not currently be common practice, it was clear from my interviews that much learning comes from the process of exhibition building; that is, exhibitions serve as sites of knowledge production and new forms of pedagogical practice pertaining to future work (stressed further in Chapter 5). As Kathryn Lyons from the CMH and formerly of the CWN interpretive planning team notes:

Part of it has been almost case-by-case based on, thinking public programmers, larger exhibitions, or smaller, temp exhibitions, has been case-by-case assessment about the difficult nature that may or may not be present in the exhibition either in how it is told or in the subject matter itself.<sup>50</sup>

Sandra O'Quinn notes how the Education Department at the CWM is seeking to build on these visitor engagements in new ways:

Something that I would like to do, that the museum has not done, is produce something that helps parents to talk to kids about war. [I] feel like it is something that is missing. Parents who come here are not always sure how to have that conversation.<sup>51</sup>

She continues:

One thing that I don't think we have done as well...or that I don't feel prepared to deal with is students who come from conflict zones. We talk about and

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<sup>49</sup> Ito, Momoko. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>50</sup> Lyons, Kathryn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>51</sup> O'Quinn, Sandra. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014*. Ottawa. [Recording in possession of author].

acknowledge it...for me I am curious about it. ...and have [this] feeling like you need to be a little bit more culturally prepared.<sup>52</sup>

Many I interviewed from the same institution referenced similar exhibitions as being sites of institutional learning with regards to safe-guarding encounters with sensitive materials. The heightened difficulties involved with specific exhibitions was particularly pronounced among many staff at the CWM, and those who were formerly at the CWM and moved to the CMH. These exhibitions included *War and Medicine* (Fig. 28), an exhibition that contained graphic content related to medical practices used and developed during war, and *Deadly Medicine* (Fig. 29) that focused on the brutality of eugenics methods. Dean Oliver, who was the former CWM Director prior to moving to the CMH, reflects on the training process for *Deadly Medicine*:

The CWM is largely a military museum, so our expertise is on military procedures home front and abroad, we weren't and had never been experts in kind of massive quasi civil catastrophe like a genocide, or actual natural disaster, or anything like that. So whether or not it has happen[ed in the] 17<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, ...part of the risk mitigation ...was to go talk to people who did have expertise in this, both other museums and in the case of the Jewish community in particular other cultural centers and community groups. [We] ended up bringing in members of the Montreal Holocaust Centre to talk us through and develop plans for things like staff training, emotional interventions on the floor of the museum; [we] ran texts and story boards by them, talked to various people including them, about our programming component, who should we have speak, who shouldn't we have speak...I thought that exhibit for us, though perhaps it did not enjoy as great a press as others... was one of our most sophisticated approaches to a difficult subject and awful subject...this is a subject that Montreal [Holocaust Centre] could do every other day and they wouldn't miss a beat, they have the capacity, collections curatorial staff—we couldn't. So, we used them, rather shamelessly and they were marvelous. We made those briefings mandatory for anybody involved in any aspect of that exhibit...we also made it, the CEO insisted on it, highly advisable for everybody else—so we front line staff did advisor lecturing to our most senior executives.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> O'Quinn, Sandra. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014*. Ottawa. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>53</sup> Oliver, Dean. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

Glenn Ogden reflects similarly on the learning that came through the process of designing *Deadly Medicine*:

[...] with the Holocaust related material, the Eugenics related material, we in a sense, generated a kind of protocol ... for that project in terms of all of the various public programming, public affairs, and communications, from training to the interpretation of galleries. So, the protocols kind of emerged as we developed them [and] a lot ...[were] borrowed from partners. Recommended ways of approaching survivors, dealing with people in this kind of context of exhibition, emotional distress - what staff needed to know about these things, for how you advise audiences about making choices about coming to exhibitions like this...In some cases they were written down because they formed part of a training package. One of the things that was critical out of that was we really have to train our front-line staff to be able to understand the content [and] engage with the audience...to be very deliberate with our front-line staff in the training to be able to respond to a range of situations that could occur in and around the exhibition.<sup>54</sup>

Much of the training for exhibitions like this comes through a mix of knowledge gained from focus groups, consultations with various partnering groups connected to the project, committees of elders and Indigenous consultants. The CWM also relied on the expertise of other institutions, an essential benefit to institutional collaboration, a point on which I build in Chapter 4. Training for front-line staff is a process that varies for every exhibition, and yet the processes for *Deadly Medicine* clearly remain unique because the exhibition was so graphic and disturbing. This exhibition produced protocols that were not culturally specific per se, but content specific. It is worth noting that exhibitions of this nature come to shape future institutional practice in important ways. The guidelines, and, in some cases, formal protocols that are being written down and adhered to, are being shaped by affective practices with a keen awareness of trying to minimize negative emotional experiences.

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<sup>54</sup> Ogden, Glenn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

### **“Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable”<sup>55</sup>**

The emotional investment required by heritage professionals working with survivors of violence and cultural discrimination should fundamentally differ from the investment of care given to other curatorial projects. Given the emotionally charged nature of the content, there is a greater potential for complication during the working partnership. The possibility of failure could mean drawing further divides between communities of people, or worse, re-traumatizing those involved in a project. This fear of failure was expressed to me on several occasions. Participants noted how certain projects have been avoided or practices not introduced for a fear of what the outcome might have been. Beth Carter reflects on her time as Curatorial Assistant at the Glenbow during the early 1990s when acts of repatriation began to take place as a result of the Task Force:

I personally feel the barriers to do with repatriation have to do with fear; fear of putting your foot wrong...I have been really fortunate to be invited into ceremonies in the tipi to see what it means to have (objects) back, when you have seen that in action you are not sacred anymore. It is so right and it is so important and it has built so much capacity within the Blackfoot community too. Since those first bundles were loaned back to today there has been a proliferation of people attending those events. It is huge and it has done a lot of good in the community.<sup>56</sup>

Robert Janes reflects on this fear and why heritage professionals are often hesitant to take risks:

As a museum worker, you are not necessarily equipped with the skills to interact with your community, so that creates a sort of hesitation or fear, you have to be vulnerable to that and to be able to be willing to go out and engage with people in other sectors, other professions... and just expose yourself and indicate that you don't necessarily have the skill but start the conversation. The other challenge (is) museums are so sort of insular, institutionally insular and have always had a very privileged place in society. So... lack of skills, lack of willingness to engage with people outside of the museum sector... call it a self-inflicted challenge that they are supposed to remain neutral, supposed to be value free,

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<sup>55</sup> This phrase from directly from my interview with Andrea Walsh. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>56</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

and not take a stance, but the point is that is really fuzzy thinking, the idea is nonsense—why not take the risk?<sup>57</sup>

Skooker Broome further reflects on the potential for failures while also accounting for the need to take risks:

I have learned... that at the very least we keep the discussion open and be prepared for failures and be prepared for challenges but in the professionalism of our positions, that we try and understand and learn what our subject matter is. Our task is not just to perform duties that we have learned from our trade or craft but to actually be engaged with why are choosing to do it.<sup>58</sup>

Taking risks is often more than a matter of trusting the judgment of fellow staff. One must trust that those who work for an institution have the skills to manage the exhibition process appropriately as well as manage the unexpected moments that can arise with any project development. Those I interviewed at MOA who were directly involved in *The Forgotten* exhibition project were keenly aware that as an institution, the right steps for working with members of the Downtown Eastside community were not taken. MOA as an institution has the skills to take on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in an exhibition context; however, all staff I interviewed acknowledged that the process of exhibition development did not take place in the right way. Jill Baird reflects:

I think MOA was ready (to take on the issue) I just think we didn't marshal ourselves in the way we should have to address the issue, not the exhibition, we ended up having to address the exhibition. I think MOA is more than ready to address the issue.<sup>59</sup>

However, in moments of failure, there comes a chance to figure out how to do things differently: to work in the space of having learned from failure. This research finds that engaging with unpredictability, or the space of uncertainty that comes when working

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<sup>57</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>58</sup> Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>59</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

with emotionally challenging subject matter in heritage work, is a fundamental place of engagement in the process of working with human rights-related museological work. Making mistakes, facing fear, facing feelings of uncertainty, learning to trust, taking risks, and adopting practices that feel uncomfortable; all have the potential to lead to the creation of stronger exhibitions. As Legacy Art Gallery Director Mary Jo Hughes remembers about first working with RIDSAR:

[...] I just remember being on a conference call or something and something cracked and I saw a light come through and I was like, it is ok, she [Curator Andrea Walsh] knows what she is doing and it is ok to have the exhibition. Just follow the needs she outlines ... It was so much easier after that. ... I just went, it is ok, we will just follow the needs and the exhibition will follow.<sup>60</sup>

Some of this unknown space means having the faith to follow the project and to let the work unfold without too much of a set agenda. Letting go of that control is a challenging task, but it can lead to important transformative experiences. As Robina Thomas (2015) stresses:

[...] we have that word in our own language '*uy shkwaluwuns* "to be of a good mind and a good heart." In order for us to be of a good mind and a good heart in this project you have got to let the project do what the project does ... we follow the project; we are not leading the project ... What I am saying is that it is really up to the artists that painted these paintings to guide us ... My role is to be as much of a support person as I can to the artists as their story unfolds.<sup>61</sup>

In summarizing the potential of transformative learning, Paulette Reagan (2005:7) notes, "transformative theory suggests that we do not learn solely or even primarily through reason or rationale, but also through our emotions, physical body, spiritual presence, and imagination." In Canada, part of this transformation comes through unsettling processes, which involves acknowledging the colonial history in Canada that continues to configure legacies of inequality and injustice (Regan 2010). I would add

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<sup>60</sup> Hughes, Mary Jo. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>61</sup> The term '*uy shkwaluwuns* is from the Hul'qumi'num dialect of the Coast Salish language. The term can mean both "being of a good mind and heart" as well as "being of a good mind and spirit" (Robina Thomas, personal communications August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016).

that in the context of museological work with challenging subject matter, part of this transformation comes from being exposed to emotionally challenging moments. Skooker Broome stresses the need for various institutional staff, not just the curator or lead research, to be part of the development process with challenging subject matter so that they hear first-hand from community partners the difficulties of their experience. Part of the first-hand experience is being placed in position of being emotional vulnerable, which Broome stresses is essential to build better exhibitions from the not just the curatorial, but also the programming and design perspective.

Some exhibitions are just a matter of putting it up on wall, adding a few elements that make it local, make it relevant but if you know going into it that it is hard subject matter and you are going to do an exhibit, you have to embed the people who are actually going to do the show so they can understand the subject matter. So, they have to be around the table crying as much as you and getting it, and finding that lump in their throat [be]cause that is going to change how they do the installation, how they do they show. You can have the lump in your throat and start talking to the designer and try and communicate that because you are representing that community... and it is going to be really hard to communicate that emotional experience. If it is going to be a success you have to include programmers, curators, designers, into some degree of the research or fieldwork so that they get it.<sup>62</sup>

In my own reflections of working in museum projects, and particularly my involvement with the RIDSAR, I have come to learn there is much to be gained from being involved in community events, dances, and feasting. But there is also so much to be learned in the moment of holding someone's hand while you cry together, in those moments when the stories that are being shared require people to be held. As reflected in Chapter 2, when the RIDSAR team came to the CMH for a few Survivors to share their stories of residential school on film for use in the new Canada History Hall, it was visibly noticeable how their stories changed the staff. The interactions between CMH staff and the RIDSAR collection after the Survivors spoke their truth were much more intimate: they were closer, different. These are stories that change people. As a participant in this work, RIDSAR has fundamentally shown me that there is something to be learned,

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<sup>62</sup> Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

experientially, from the moments of being emotional vulnerable with others, of learning to be comfortable with the possibility of becoming emotionally undone. Learning comes from spending time being uncomfortable, from the productive place of being discomfited. As Andrea Walsh states: “I love that now, I am very comfortable with being uncomfortable...This is exactly where I want to be...I like that idea of figuring out how to do things better.”<sup>63</sup>

## Chapter Conclusions

Given the intensity of the stories and experiences being shared, taking a step back to evaluate just how heritage work of this nature is being conducted seems an invaluable asset for the practices of future work; more importantly, this critical reflection on the part of heritage professionals is part of acting responsibly and ethically in a working partnership. This reflection should not just be pragmatic—that is, solely accounting for the logistics of how stories are shared in conversation or designed into an exhibition. Rather, this critical reflection should consider the relational foundation that has made the work possible. Strong relationships are essential in all forms of museological practice. However, they are fundamental when working with survivors of trauma and curating challenging subject matter in a good and respectful way. This chapter has shown examples of how this type of museum work in Canada is being guided by culturally specific protocols. Procedurally, however, very little outside of these protocols is written down to guide future work. Capturing these guidelines has the potential to help future projects not only in Canada, but in other settler societies such as New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, where processes of decolonization are actively taking place through museum spaces. Importantly, the outcome of this research also highlights how the space of uncertainty can be a fruitful place for exhibition work to grow. As this chapter stresses, the needs of those who have suffered from trauma

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<sup>63</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

should most certainly guide the work of any museological project; however, all those involved must also enter the project with an open heart and willingness to confront what may be their own position of privilege in a settler society (Regan 2010). As Robina Thomas stresses, to work respectfully with emotionally challenging subject matter, it is necessary for *'uy shkwaluwuns*, “to be of a good mind and a good heart;” for everyone involved in a project—survivors, settlers, heritage professionals—to be guided by the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of all those involved in a project.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author]

## Chapter 4 Institutional Culture and the Work of Human Rights

### Introduction

Given the variety of institutions included in this study—three federally funded national museums, municipal museums, community museums, cultural centres, as well as university museums and research collectives—this project affords a unique opportunity to evaluate how institutional culture comes to influence human rights work. I am guided here by the work of Julia Harrison (2005) and her definition of institutional culture. In her analysis of exhibitions produced in the early 2000s in Canada she describes “institutional culture” as having significant impact on the ability of museums to work successfully in full collaboration with local Indigenous communities.<sup>65</sup> Harrison likens each museum, like the communities that a museum engages with, as having its own culture—that is, a unique set of “cultural traditions, practices or simply its own way of being in the world” (2005:197). Everything, including the history of an institution, the physical size of the building, funding and donation models and the structure of staff and leadership, influences the type of work museums can do. An outcome of my research strongly indicates that smaller, community-driven institutions provide the best atmosphere for human rights work to develop in that they provide contexts in which exhibitions are developed with the needs of participants in the project central to the curation process. This successful atmosphere is created through the combination of working on small-scale exhibitions, the institution's ethos being connected directly to the needs of the community, and the degree of interdepartmental communication that can take place in smaller working environments. This is not to say that larger institutions are incapable of working within this area curatorial practices; however, there is a considerable, and very important, distinction between exhibitions that cover issues

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<sup>65</sup> I thank Robert Janes for drawing my attention to this article by Harrison and the parallels that exist between Harrison's finding and my own with regards to structural impacts on curatorial projects that seek to engage in collaboration.

related to discrimination, violence, and cultural inequality in Canada *thematically* and the collaborative museological work that situates the power of project development in the hands of community members while seeking to improve their wellbeing.

Museological projects dealing with challenging, right-based issues that situate the power of the collaborative process into the hands of community partners exist as sites of changing practice in Canadian museology.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of community and collaboration to situate this research within the broader literature pertaining to community-engaged museum practice that has dominated the heritage profession for the last 30 years. I then discuss the variety of institutions apparent in this research and the difference in institutional practices that develop given this variety. In this part of the chapter I draw out some of the limits, challenges, and benefits to working with community partners on rights-based projects through different types of museums in Canada. I highlight three smaller institutions included in this project—the Chinese Canadian Military Museum (CCMM), the Nikkei Museum and Cultural Centre, and the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research program (RIDSAR) collective—to illustrate how these institutions are well positioned to do what I refer to as the work of human rights. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the emotional connections required to work on challenging histories requires a deep commitment and connection between all project partners. Given the time and longevity of relationship building required to work on difficult and emotionally sensitive subject matter, smaller Canadian museums, and research projects such as RIDSAR that are building projects primarily through smaller museums and exhibition spaces, are well positioned to assist larger museums through institutional collaborative partnerships built through their long-term engagements pertaining to rights-based projects with community partners. This chapter emphasizes how these institutional partnerships are strengthening and shaping the network of museological practices pertaining to challenging subject matter across Canada's heritage sector.

## **Museums, Community, and Collaboration**

The principle of collaboration in the museum refers to object collections research, curatorial initiatives, exhibition design, and educational and public programming practices that are co-developed through ongoing communication between heritage professionals and various community partners (For discussion of this work see: Ames 1992, 2003; Baird 2011; Baird and Campbell 2004; Carr-Locke 2015; Clifford 1997; Crooke 2007; Golding and Modest 2013; Harrison 2005; Kreps 2003b, 2006; Kramer 2006; Krmpotich et al. 2013, Krmpotich et al. 2016; Lonetree 2012; Mayer 2003; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2003, 2011; Silverman 2015; Simpson 2006; Simon 2010). The push for more extensive collaborative working models began in the late 1980s following ongoing debate within the global museum industry on the ethics of museum practice. This period of museum deconstruction highlighted unequal power dynamics occurring within museums, particularly those with deep colonial roots, between institutional staff and the peoples whose cultural heritage is represented in the museum collections. Museums remain an integral part of European and American colonialism, which has created long histories of the cultural misrepresentation of Indigenous and other non-European peoples through both aggressive colonial collecting practices and the medium of the exhibition (Ames 1992; Bennett 1995; Coombes 1994; Greenberg et al. 1992; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Karp and Lavine 1991; Karp et al. 2007). As such, museums containing these collections remain physical manifestations on the landscape of the colonial process. To confront these overt colonial ties over the last few decades, scholarly efforts to deconstruct museums have created, at least in theory, a heightened awareness in the museum profession of the need for museums to continue to change and to push to become better engaged with people from outside the institution (Ames 1992; Kreps 2003b, 2006; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2011).

In museum practice, the term “community” has come to include everything from the peoples whose material culture is represented in institutional collections to the various social or cultural groups that engage with the institution (Carter et al. 2011; Crooke 2007;

Golding and Modest 2013; Kreps 2003b; Watson 2007). Community has also expanded to include not only those with whom cultural institutions are working, but also the types of projects being produced (Watson 2007). Museums are increasingly producing community research projects or projects that are somehow community engaged through exhibition and programming development.<sup>66</sup> These projects are meant to serve the cultural or social needs of people, which, in some cases, may stretch beyond the walls of the institution into actual communities where the work can positively affect the well-being of people outside the institution (Crooke 2007; Kreps 2003a; Phillips 2011; Simon 2010; Watson 2007). These needs may include bringing objects from a collection into a community that may have limited access to an institution or creating research projects based on the request of a group, not the institution itself (Allen and Hamby 2011; Phillips 2011; Kreps 2003; Krmpotich et al. 2013, Krmpotich et al. 2016; McCarthy 2015). Advocates for museums as places of social justice argue museums can benefit people by providing a place for their voices and concerns to be heard (Carter 2013, 2015; Carter and Orange 2012; Janes and Conaty 2005; Kreps 2003a; Message 2014; Nightingale and Sandell 2012; Sandell 2011, 2012, 2017; Sandell and Dodd 2010). For example, Richard Sandell has written extensively on the benefits to various UK community partners who have been involved with museum projects related to living with physical disabilities and projects that advocate for gender equality (Sandell 2002; 2006; 2017; Sandell et al. 2010). Museums as physical places can also foster a sense of community. As Crooke notes, through material collections a sense of “imagined community” is created where “objects are the link to people the members can never meet” (2007:11).<sup>67</sup> This is certainly the premise behind institutions such as national,

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<sup>66</sup> Community engagement as a form of practice stretches well beyond museums. Many universities have adopted this as a strategic research approach that stresses the need for universities to become more responsible in assisting with community development. For example, the University of Victoria has become leading post-secondary institution in Canada in this regard with the Office of Community University Engagement, which seeks to push all faculties to continuously find new ways to contribute to the communities around UVic and Vancouver Island while simultaneously serving as a hub for this field of scholarly research.

<sup>67</sup> Benedict Anderson (1991) notion of “imagined communities” remains an influential and debated notion within the social sciences more broadly. Anderson argues through government

provincial, or community themed museums in Canada that seek use their collections, exhibitions, and programming to make connections between visitors based on like-minded cultures, place of living, or nationality in addition to educating visitors new to area. In the context of Canadian museum practice, the dialogue concerning community involvement with respect to Indigenous peoples has grown strongly. Canadian museum practice, as discussed in previous chapters, has been fundamentally shaped by the intervention of the Task Force in 1992 that called for new methods of practice with Indigenous communities and new responsibilities to peoples' whose material heritage is in the care of an institution (The Task Force 1992; see Ames 1992; Janes and Conaty 2005; Kreps 2003b, 2006; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2011). Museums in Canada have continued to shift as Indigenous knowledges come to shape new ways of thinking about processes of museological practice in all areas from collections research, exhibition development, and public and educational programming (Ames 1992; Baird 2011; Baird and Campbell 2004; Kramer 2004, 2006; Carr-Locke 2015; Clavir 2002; Phillips 2011). As the previous chapter highlighted, Indigenous knowledges are also fundamentally shaping the relational aspect of museum practice as it pertains to challenging project development. Many Indigenous peoples in Canada have been involved in long-term research collaborations with museums. Previous chapters have drawn attention to the long-term relationships between the Musqueam First Nation and UBC's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) and various Niitsitapi members and the Glenbow. These relationships are happening internationally as well; for example, members of the Niitsitapi have also worked extensively with the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford on several collections research and digital repatriation projects (see Brown 2014; Brown et al. 2006; Peers 2013) and the Haida Repatriation Committee has been part of

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or national propaganda people of like beliefs and geographical locations come to "imagine" themselves as being part of some sort of united community. Anderson specifically addresses this in the context of nation building tactics used by governments and heads of state such as news media, national radio, sports, and celebrations to unite people across large geographical spaces. This rhetoric has in many cases successfully united people into nations; however, not without excluding those cultural communities that do not neatly fit into the national story or who chose not to identify with government definitions of nationhood.

long-term research partnerships, through networks of museum scholar-practitioners from various museums and the community back in Haida Gwaii, that are generating new forms of museums knowledge (Krpmotich and Peers 2011; Krmpotich et. al 2013; see also Glass 2015; Hennessy 2009; Hennessy et. al 2013; Lyons et al. 2016 for other examples of scholar-practitioner networks in Canada that focus on connections through digital curation).

Given that many of my participants have been working in the heritage field since the creation of the Task Force, the notion of working collaboratively has been very much at the forefront of their own practice and questions about working with community partners garnered impassioned answers. *Importantly*, while the terms community and collaboration have come to define and re-define processes of conducting museum work in Canada during the last couple of decades, these terms still mask the complexities of working in partnership with various people outside the institution, as reflected upon by my research participants. There is no doubt achieving full collaboration on a project is a real struggle. As museum scholar Ivan Karp so honestly states, “collaboration is an opportunity to fail in the most splendid way” (as quoted in Silverman 2015:1). Almost all I interviewed were honest about the reality that most, if not all, exhibitions produced through their institutions have not been fully collaborative. Very often, consultation still stands in for collaboration. It is still common for people from outside the institution to find themselves subjected to a process that Carol Mayer (2003: 101) identifies as “seduction and abandonment,” in which community members are brought in for the sake of building an exhibition and receive little by way of resources or sustained relationships from the museum once a project has completed. In the case where museums seek the expertise of Indigenous peoples pertaining to material heritage from their communities, ideas are often primarily generated by museum staff, with project outcomes more beneficial to the museum than the community. Thus, “collaborating and partnering” for some, as Christina Kreps (2011:81) notes, become “just alternative words for cultural appropriation and forms of neocolonialism.”

Where collaboration has been possible, distinctions made by Ruth Phillips are useful in drawing out the differences between projects that include community perspectives obtained through more in-depth consultation that builds community voices into exhibitions that are ultimately still designed by the museum—projects she calls “multi-vocal”—versus projects that are fully collaborative with equal power given over to community members to make decisions about project development, making them “community-based” (2011:194-195). My interviews made it clear that full collaboration, where a project can be completely community-based, is not possible on every occasion considering the time and resources allocated to project development. This was the case for institutions of all sizes and structures. Issues of power are key as well; who holds the power and whether institutions can relinquish power remain significant determinants as to whether full collaboration can take place (Ames 1992; Baird 2011; Carr-Locke 2015; Mayer 2002; Phillips 2011).

In projects dealing with difficult and painful histories, complications can arise with community partners as to whether certain projects that may have potentially damaging consequences should go forward for development. For some, there are experiences they may not want to discuss, experiences that are simply too traumatic to revisit. For others, certain topics should not be revisited in the context of curatorial work. Andrea Walsh notes that this was the case with both the RIDSAR project and her work in the early 2000s with the members of the Osoyoos Indian Band (see Osoyoos Museum Society et al. 2005; Walsh 2009). In both cases, some Survivors of the Alberni Indian Residential School and the Inkameep Day school were not interested in working on research material related to their time spent in these schools as children. The decision to go ahead with both projects was ultimately made through consultations with Elders and Chiefs and the support of those Survivors who had come forward with a keen interest to participate. Similarly, MOA’s *Speaking to Memory* project was not welcomed by all when the exhibition moved from MOA in Vancouver to Alert Bay, BC, the site of the former St. Michael’s Residential School (see Fig.44). As Curator Bill McLennan

explains, for some, dealing with the painful memories associated with the school was not a project in which they wanted to participate. Others McLennan interviewed felt they were in a place of forgiveness towards the Anglican church that ran the school, and therefore did not support an exhibition that forced people back into a chapter of their lives they had chosen to close.<sup>68</sup>

These examples illustrate the complexities of not only defining what or who constitutes a community, but also the difficulties of working on projects where people within a community are at odds over the project itself. Ultimately, who is defined as “the community” is going to be different for every project, event, or exhibition, and can even change within the lifespan of a project itself. In this sense, community is term that is constantly emerging. Furthermore, the very defining of a group of people creates the potential for others to be excluded. Even though some members of a group may be included in a research project, this does not mean that their opinion represents the whole of a group, or that their opinion comes to be seen equally by the heritage professionals with whom they are working (Rassool 2009; Smith and Fouseki 2011). For communities of disenfranchised people or those who have faced extreme forms of discrimination and violence, being defined as a community by a museum can be extra problematic, as these definitions may align with colonial collecting practices or reinforce contested nation-state cultural borders (Coombes 2003; Rassool 2009; Silverman and Ruggles 2007; Smith and Fouseki 2011). For example, in the context of the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, a museum documenting experiences from the former District Six area of the city where people were forcibly removed during Apartheid, Rassool (2009:122) notes that “community” is a term that is constantly being “redefined and reframed” through the exhibition process. As “community itself is an imagined identity of commonality and interest” Rassool argues, “its parameters are the very essence of contestation” (2009: 122). When engaging with different groups of

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<sup>68</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

people, it is imperative for any museum to keep an open and inclusive definition of what and who that community may include given cultural boundaries are constantly being defined and redefined. For example, in settler states such as Canada, the United States, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia, definitions of community are constantly changing as Indigenous peoples strengthen claims of identity, land title, rights of sovereignty, and state recognition (Phillips 2011; Rassool 2009). Under circumstances such as these, working with community partners becomes more than just gathering information for a project. As Smith and Fouseki (2011:101) argue:

Community consultation is thus not simply a matter of canvassing community opinion; it is a process of negotiating a recognition which itself has implications for social justice. The authority of museums underpins the legitimacy and representation power of the narratives that are privileged in exhibitions, and consequently consultation becomes part of the struggles for equality and social justice.

The power of an institution as a source of authority and vehicle of public knowledge production can lend itself to the struggle for rights and recognition that certain cultural or social groups may be working towards. This is a direct example of the growing practice of human museology where issues of justice and equality can move to the forefront of engaged museum practice (Carter 2013, 2015; Carter and Orange 2012; Sandell 2011, 2012, 2017). Decisions to collaborate under such circumstances become themselves political acts (Smith and Fouseki 2011). However, the ability to adopt human rights as a form of practice (Carter 2015:214), or what I refer to as doing the work of human rights through the institution, involves a level of generating access, giving over control, and developing sustained relationships that are institutionally specific, and arguably this process is more easily achieved in smaller institutions and research collectives working with small gallery spaces.

### **Institutional Culture: The Influence of Size, Structure, and Design**

There are many aspects that substantively shape institutional culture and the work that an institution undertakes. This section takes a closer look at some of the benefits

museums have, as well as challenges that museums face, based on the size, structure, and design of the institution and how these factors come to shape the ability for museums to work closely with community partners. Museums are branded with a certain identity as national, provincial, municipal, or community institutions. This identity is directly connected to the history of the institution, the collections in their care, and the various publics that an institution is ideally meant to serve. It is further shaped by museum stakeholders that include members of advisory boards, donors of collections, private and public funders, and community partners, all whom come to shape the overall operations of any institution (Janes and Sandell 2007; McCarthy 2015). Caring for these multiple responsibilities, as one of my participants reminds, can make change or the ability to take on certain projects difficult, as decisions are based on trying to maintain balanced relations with these various stakeholders while also upholding the identity of the institution.<sup>69</sup>

Museums cannot be everything to all people—and yet, some museums are very responsible to certain groups of people. In the case of those museums included in this project that curate large collections of Indigenous material culture (e.g., CMH, the Glenbow, and MOA), the identity of these museums is very tied to the founding collections held in their care, which were generated during the height of the colonial collecting period in Canada from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through to middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the objects in the care of CMH and MOA were specifically acquired through government- and university-sponsored practices intended to document Indigenous communities during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (CMH 2016; Levell 2009). Given the colonial ties of their collections, all three of these institutions maintain a strong focus on building relationships with Indigenous partners. Joanne Schmidt, acting Curator of Indigenous North America expresses her sentiments on this first and foremost function of the Glenbow Museum:

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<sup>69</sup> Hughes, Mary Jo. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

This department (Indigenous North America) would not exist without community and collaboration. So, it is not a concept, it is a working concept; every day there is some discussion or some exchange between myself and someone from the First Nations community. And really, they are the community I serve. It is not that I don't get non-First Nations contacting me because I do, but usually they are asking me about First Nations so then I have to go to my community contacts to ask them, hey is it ok to photograph a winter count (Blackfoot ceremonial calendar) or is it sacred, should I do this? So, my community is [also] the museum, my co-workers, but it is mostly First Nations people. Honestly it is what keeps the thing running, cause if we lose that interest from the First Nations community or we lose the desire for them to come in and look at their stuff, then what is the point of the department? It is the only reason I feel this department exists.<sup>70</sup>

There are many stakeholders in museums in Canada; however, when a museum has become the steward or caretaker of material objects belonging to Indigenous peoples, placing these relationships first acknowledges the implicit ties of the museum to colonial practices. Schmidt also highlights an important function that many museums in Canada still serve, that is as intermediaries between different groups of people within a city. Given their Indigenous material collections, museums are still often the point of contact for many non-Indigenous people seeking knowledge about Indigenous culture. This point of contact continues to place museums, such as those in this study, in positions of power concerning the production of knowledge about Indigenous peoples. Given the historical roots of these institutions, the question of whether there can ever truly be equal partnerships between community partners and museums that are branded with this history is one that many of my participants noted. As Bill McLennan reminds “can collaboration ever be equal, I mean the museum is still the government, right?”<sup>71</sup> These power dynamics are inherent in all aspects of the museum's work and many expressed how these power dynamics created uncomfortable and awkward moments during project development.

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<sup>70</sup> Schmidt, Joanne. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014*. Calgary. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>71</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

The national institutions included in this project (CMH, CWM, and CMHR) all form part of the Crown Corporation in Canada. Though not considered to be official departments of the federal government, they operate on behalf of the government. There is no doubt that this direct correlation shapes the culture of these institutions and consequently the work they can perform. As large institutions set to represent “the nation,” the broad thematic scope of these museums presents significant challenges. In the case of settler nations like Canada, national museums come to stress the role of multiculturalism over any specific cultural identities, and the responsibility to represent so many different groups of people under such wide conceptual brands makes it difficult to define any one community and to adequately meet that community’s needs (Gordon-Walker 2016; O’Reilly and Parish 2015). This is a real challenge in every museum; however, when dealing with tragedy or conflict, the uneasiness over whose story is told can result in debates over whose difficult experiences are more valid than others in the eyes of the museum. A number of people I interviewed from these national Canadian museums expressed the struggles they face trying to please the various groups brought into large projects in terms of people feeling their story gets equal attention. This became a very real issue during the development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights with respect to the exhibition space allotted to the Holocaust versus other acts of genocide that have occurred during recent history. The CMHR was publicly protested by local Ukrainian groups in Manitoba for the lack of fair representation given to the Holodomor genocide in terms of gallery space, with the Holocaust represented in a large gallery and other global genocides represented together in a much smaller gallery (Blumer 2015; Busby et al. 2015; Hankivsky and Dhamoon 2013; Moses 2012; 2015; see Fig.102). In this case, unequal floor space in the gallery came to hold very real consequences with local cultural communities feeling the atrocities suffered by their families held less weight in the eyes of the museum, a point stressed by a few of my participants who had been asked to consult on exhibition development for the Canadian Journeys gallery.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Thomson, Grace Eiko. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]; Yu, Henry. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on February 6<sup>th</sup>*

The three apologies that frame the parameters of this research appear in the Canadian Journeys Gallery of the CMHR (see Figures 98, 99, 100). The historical circumstances surrounding these apologies are told as small vignettes alongside other rights-based historical moments in Canada's past, such as gay marriage rights and the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women as represented by the artist Jamie Black's *Red Dress Project* (see *Red Dress Project*; Fig. 101). The massive size of the gallery notwithstanding, there is a limit to what stories are included in this space. Though computer portals allow further access to oral stories and archival images, these incidents in Canada's past are presented as brief snapshots augmented by small exhibition panels and a few images or objects. This gallery is not a place where in-depth stories can be told. With so many stories to tell, the museum has fallen under criticism for being *the Canadian Museum for Human Rights*, and yet lacking any real depth to the historical experiences of rights struggles in Canada (Busby et al. 2015). Furthermore, a few of my participants from outside the CMHR were asked by the museum to contribute information to the content of this gallery and yet, at the time of my interviews, they still had no idea how their expertise had been incorporated. Community involvement in this gallery was not a process of collaboration, but rather at best, constituted very brief consultation.

The three apologies will also be represented in the new Canada Hall gallery; however, at the time of my interviews, my CMH participants were not sure in what capacity they would appear and therefore were reluctant to discuss any initial details with me.<sup>73</sup> The opportunity to speak with members of the research and curatorial staff at this museum

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2015. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>73</sup> Lyons, Kathryn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]; Morrison, David. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]; Ogden, Glenn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Note this gallery will have opened to the public in July 2017 during the final defense of this dissertation.

early in the developmental phase of this exhibition provided valuable insight into just how difficult exhibitions of this nature are. What stories of hardship in Canada's past can be shared when there is so much to include in a gallery of Canadian history? Akin to the idea of nationalism itself, not everyone will have a place, feel they are welcome, or feel their story is told accurately. Furthermore, museums in Canada will wish to maintain their brand; now that there is a museum for human rights in Canada, at what point do certain stories fall more specifically under the mandate of the CMHR to tell? Again, like the CMHR, it is not that community-engaged work does not happen in larger institutions; however, these engagements are primarily at the consultation level to try and include as many voices and perspectives as possible. There is simply not the time or the space to do full collaboration, and this is one of the major limitations of any national gallery. I wish to emphasize this does not mean that staff aren't trying; in fact, an everyday part of the work challenge in these larger museums is in this knowing—in an awareness of this lacking, and in facing the reality that these limitations are, in a sense, unavoidable.

Museum identity tied directly to the government through its funding and collection history is a challenge, particularly in terms of project development that speaks directly to historical injustices performed by the very same governing body. Several people I interviewed who work for the Canadian Corporation were clear with me that just because these museums are mostly funded through federal money does not mean that government officials can walk in and demand change, or that current government policy can dictate the kinds of exhibitions that are developed. These comments were particularly timely, as my interviews were conducted the year prior to a Canadian federal election. Emotions had begun to run high across Canada's heritage sector with regard to the policies put in place by Steven Harper's Conservative government that resulted in large cuts to arts and culture funding as well as a general uncertainty over the federal government's involvement Canadian heritage institutions (Aronczyk and Brady 2015; Phillips 2015). As touched on in Chapter 2, scholars have questioned the

motives of the Conservative government when rebranding the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian Museum of History; motives that clearly sought to highlight Canada's military pursuits and glorify Canada's relationship to the British monarchy (see Aronczyk and Brady 2015; Minsky 2014). And, while government officials cannot simply walk in and change exhibition content, it was expressed to me by a few members of both the CWM and CMH that there is a desire to maintain a sense of neutrality in the exhibitions of federal institutions.<sup>74</sup> While I take up this issue of neutrality in more depth in the following chapter, here I will say that working to maintain a sense of neutrality is itself a major limit when developing any human rights practice. The violation of any human right is itself an act that is inherently not neutral. Taking a stance to make a statement about the outcome of this action by a governing body requires taking a position.

As a university museum, MOA is uniquely positioned as a department of the University of British Columbia. This affords MOA more intellectual freedom in terms of risk taking and an ability to draw on partnerships with other departments on campus to create innovative research initiatives. For example, the opening of *Speaking to Memory* was aligned with the TRC hearings in Vancouver in 2013 as part of a larger institutional push by UBC to create the space for students to be engaged with the Commission on multiple levels. In the early planning stages of *The Forgotten* exhibition, multiple departments as varied as Anthropology, Women and Gender Studies, Sociology, and Indigenous Studies came on board with project development to build curriculum around the exhibition. Exhibitions such as *Speaking to Memory* are examples of a specific stream of project development that is now a focus of the institution. As current Director Anthony Shelton explained, part of MOA's goal in the years after the re-opening in 2010 has been to build research and exhibitions in areas related to current critical issues, which includes rights-

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<sup>74</sup> Anonymous. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014*. Ottawa. [Recording in possession of author]; Morrison, David. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

based exhibitions, in addition to focusing on prime aspects of their collection related to local First Nations in British Columbia and Asian Pacific communities.<sup>75</sup>

As a university research collective, RIDSAR has also benefitted from the resources of the university, including staging the first gallery exhibition at UVic's Legacy Art Gallery in downtown Victoria. A further benefit of RIDSAR has been that research work has taken place around a collection, versus being museum with mandate to collect objects. As

Walsh observes:

We are not a museum; we do things so different than a museum and I thought is that a good thing or a bad thing? And one of the things that has been, and I would use the word emancipating, about this work is that we don't have a mandate to collect. The mandate for us is around research and redress and I would say probably in the reverse order—the work that we do through research is ultimately about redress...So, in that way the paintings are cared for as precious objects, they are first and foremost seen as the property of those who created them and we are in a really unique position that we can do that.<sup>76</sup>

While the identity of RIDSAR is connected to the university, the values of that drive the project are deeply attached to the work the collective is doing to repatriate the paintings to Survivors and to continue to build research and exhibition initiatives connected to the needs of the Survivors involved in the work. Institutional identity that remains tied to the needs of community also echoes in the direct purpose of the Nikkei Centre. The Nikkei elders who experienced the Internment and their families are *the* community for which the institution was built. Since the opening of the Nikkei, Japanese Canadians frequently gather at the Centre; over time, these acts of gathering come to produce an institutionally unique community. As Linda Reid reflects:

[Community] is why we exist; all our artifacts and things are donated by the community. There was a group of visionaries I would say, who envisioned this museum here, knew that it was coming, they were preparing for it, so for

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<sup>75</sup> Shelton, Anthony. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>76</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

probably 22 years before the museum open...[they] were collecting things and storing them in a rented room and doing the best that they could... So, you know that grassroots group brought all these things to the museum when it opened. They are the same people that sit on the board, who donate to the museum, [who] attend and fund events, show up to the events—they are crucial. The fun thing about this group of people is that they are on the auxiliary, so they have a small fundraising body out of the kitchen in the Centre, they produce food for our fairs—they love to do this because it is a way for them to be connected as a community. It is a social thing, they travel together, we just had our first bus tour to internment sites and they were on it. You know it is just a very rich experience with them on the bus. Some of them reminisced, some of them got emotional, some of them knew nothing about it and were there to learn.<sup>77</sup>

In small, community-driven museums like the Nikkei Centre or the Chinese Canadian Military Museum (CCMM), many individuals come to work with the institution, or choose to be involved in multiple projects, because they are part of the community for which the museum was built. They are the history of an institution and form the ethos of the institutions; they are connected to the founding collection and as such, they are in a sense, the brand of the institution. However, even within this more culturally defined group of people who frequently use these spaces, there can be issues defining a community. As former Nikkei Museum Director Beth Carter explains:

I think we have to understand that community is different in every instance, every exhibit. What it means is that you are outside of the museum, you are not taking that ivory tower approach. You have to be willing to reach out and talk to people and gather perspectives, so you have to define what community you are working with. We know that the Japanese Canadian community is very dissected...we get complaints that the Center deals too much with Japanese Canadian community and is not welcoming enough to the new Japanese community. Then we get complaints from the Japanese Canadian community that we do too much Japanese focused programming... there are a lot of different voices.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the history and identity of an institution, issues related to funding were raised by my participants on several occasions. Many of my participants were honest

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<sup>77</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>78</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

about the increasing difficulties faced by museums in Canada in securing funds, particularly for those institutions that not are primarily funded through the government. One of the great debates that has surfaced in Canada is the role of corporate funding, particularly from the resource sector. In the case of the Glenbow, Shell Oil was the major funder for the *Spirit Sings* and this sponsorship motivated protests against the exhibition as described in Chapter 2. However, should Shell not be required to financially contribute to the arts community of Calgary? Given present climate talks and the debates surrounding Canada's oil industry, these are challenging issues going forward. Funding from the resource sector, like funding from large national banks, and the government, comes with questions about the ethics of taking money from certain sponsors who may be involved in questionable projects either nationally or internationally. How often are strings attached to funding that prevent exhibitions from being more provocative? As museums choose to be more “mindful” of their role in contemporary society and rights-debates, issues related to climate change and resource extraction are a big part of the larger ethical debates occurring in Canada that publicly funded institutions find themselves drawn into through operations based on certain forms of funding (Janes 2009, 2013, 2015).<sup>79</sup>

In large institutions that seek to build large exhibitions, the question of how much funding is allocated for community engagement is one that many participants reflected on. Large projects come with large costs associated with design and object shipping, which can affect the funds allocated for collaborative community involvement. Community members are often doing the work for an exhibition without adequate compensation as there is no budget to pay for community work, though this involvement is what is most desired. MOA Curator Pam Brown reflects on this reality from her experience in building community projects with several BC First Nations, including her own Heiltsuk Nation. As she states:

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<sup>79</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

I don't really like the word collaboration, I would rather use partnership. Collaboration you would think would mean being on an even footing, but for the most part, communities give a lot of their knowledge and a lot of their time for free...It is really hard because a lot of the funding goes to design because it is so expensive, or shipping things around. Mostly the honorarium (if there is one) is given to the Elders so the others [work for free].<sup>80</sup>

Museum work is time consuming and requires a commitment from those outside the museum, and yet budgets continue to lack funds to support or compensate the involvement of community partners. In many circumstances, project funding comes as the result of a successful grant application, usually penned by a grant writer on staff; this role is paramount in smaller institutions where a large amount of funding comes through grants allocated per project from sources such as BC Arts Council or Canada Arts Council. CCMM Curator Paul Lee notes that accessing larger grants can be a real struggle for smaller institutions, as there is the need to first secure municipal grants to prove the success of the museum before one can access large pools of provincial or federal funding.<sup>81</sup> Certain research projects in Canada developed through museums gain funding through government research grants. This has been the case with RIDSAR, where Andrea Walsh secured funding as the principle grant writer through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, part of Canada's tri-council of government research funding. One of the more successful models of government funding referenced by participants from all three smaller institutions was the Community University Research Alliance (CURA) funding model, which provided funds to create partnerships between universities and smaller community organizations including museums and archives. This resulted in many successful projects generated through smaller institutions in British Columbia. A recent study on government funding conducted through UVic's Public Sector Studies highlights the success of partnership research

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<sup>80</sup> Brown, Pamela. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>81</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

models in particular for their ability to build capacity in communities, not just in the university (Hall and Tremblay 2012). Walsh notes from her work with the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), funded through a successful CURA grant, that the OIB was not in need of university knowledge; rather it was the university and the Osoyoos Museum that benefitted from community knowledge in terms of developing exhibitions and new ideas concerning community-based research.<sup>82</sup>

Additionally, all institutions included in this study have made use of the Young Canada Works (YCW) funding program available through the federal government's Canadian Heritage funds. Most museums, cultural institutions, and heritage sites across Canada rely on this source of funding; most smaller, seasonally operating heritage sites would not have summer staff without it. Though the wage for these positions is often topped up through funds provided by the institution itself, these positions are highly restrictive in many senses. The stipulation on this funding sets the positions aside for summer students, under the age of 30, who are returning to university. While YCW creates the space for young people to enter the heritage sector, the age restriction precludes adult learners returning to university who may be seeking a career change or a chance to gain practical experience working in a museum. Furthermore, as short-term employment, funding models like this do very little to allow for young professionals to grow within an institution, which was once commonplace in most Canadian museums. MOA is unique in this sense; as a teaching institution, the museum remains connected through undergraduate classes to a sense of developing museum methods through the institution. However, they are a singular example among those included in this project.

As Skooker Broome notes:

I kind of think we are a bit different because we have a teaching component, there is an opportunity to have to substantiate "why you do things" and to be challenged about why you are doing things by new people seeking rationalizations for why you do things. To stand up and talk about that, means you have to practice what you preach and own what you have. In institutions

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<sup>82</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

that don't have a teaching mandate, who is watching you? Who is asking the tough questions? Basically, you can do whatever you want.<sup>83</sup>

A small number of internship positions have been created in the museums included in this study. For example, MOA offers internship positions in design, conservation, and programming in addition to the summer Native Youth Program that has run successfully for over 35 years, though with funding secured from outside the museum itself. The CMH has run their successful Aboriginal Training program since the early 1990s as a response to the Task Force. But looking beyond front-of-house administration, gift shop, and docent positions, there are generally fewer opportunities for younger professionals to work in a capacity that allows for sustained relationship building where they are exposed to working directly with those outside the museum. There is the desire to use museums to train, and yet positions to do so are scarce, apart from graduate students who may bring a project to a museum after having secured their own funding.

The lack of funding for younger career professionals was brought up in several of my interviews. Funding, staff structure, and building sustained relationships are aspects of institutional culture that are directly interrelated. The composition of staff structure can have very real consequences for the capacity for museums to build community relationships. If museums are seeking to build long-term relationships, how is this possible if there are no positions where young professionals can absorb knowledge from senior staff and be integrated into the long-term relationships that the museum has fostered outside the institution? The sustaining of relationships is key to any successful collaboration (Baird 2011). As Beth Carter reflects in relation to her time at the Glenbow:

Collaboration to me means actively working and building relationships with people, collaboration isn't having advisors, and it isn't having a focus group—it is having a

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<sup>83</sup> Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

more sustained process. Glenbow had a sustained process with the Blackfoot (Niitsitapi) community.<sup>84</sup>

With regards to relationships built with the Niitsitapi, those I interviewed at Glenbow were quick to note that it was the long-term work of Gerald Conaty that created the platform to work on successful projects, and that after his passing it has been hard to fill his position. As Joanne Schmidt comments:

You need someone who this is their life's career, that they are willing to put in the time and that they are meeting peoples' needs all the time...you need someone is going to make this their life's focus and not treat it as a job— that is hard to come by.<sup>85</sup>

What Schmidt highlights here is how it was not just Conaty's skills in museological practice that made Niitsitapi community engagement successful. Success came from collaborative knowledge building between Conaty on behalf of the Glenbow, his knowledge of Treaty 7, and his willingness to be out of the museum in the community doing the work. As the Glenbow and their Niitsitapi advisory members search for a new Curator to fill Conaty's role, they are collectively seeking a Curator who comes ready to make this long-term commitment to local Indigenous communities.<sup>86</sup> Jill Baird draws attention to how the changing process of sustained relationship building is also changing landscapes of knowledge production being developed through museums. Regarding scholarship about the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, Baird notes:

How does MOA move through the next generation? I would move it back to the current generation: the major publications about the Northwest coast including material culture, they are not generated here—why? We need to ask ourselves that question...Because then who is going to fill these shoes? Fill the things we think are so important here (as in at MOA): community relationships, the relational, not just the conceptual but the relational thinking, if we are not

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<sup>84</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>85</sup> Schmidt, Joanne. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014*. Calgary. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>86</sup> As of early 2017 the Glenbow has not filled this permanent curatorial position and Joanne Schmidt continues to serve as acting curator.

building our own community of scholars, including Indigenous scholars—I worry about that.<sup>87</sup>

With regards to staff structure and the role of leadership, I was struck by just how present the ideals of former directors or staff members are in shaping present institutional culture. Museums in Canada are very much about the people who work in them and the relationships that are formed through those people. Even after certain people have gone or passed on, their presence continues to shape the work of an institution, which can sometimes make it difficult for institutions to move forward or evolve in their practices and mandates. Much like Conaty, the presence of Michael Ames, former Director of MOA, is notably present, particularly for those staff who worked with Ames, some even having him as a teacher during their undergraduate degrees. Ames created a particular ethos to his practice that has shaped the culture of MOA in terms of the role of museums as educational institutions, and his ideas about working with communities that were at the forefront of Canadian museum practice in the 1990s. In his role as Director of the Glenbow, Robert Janes was also influenced by the work of Ames and the institutional structure that Ames advocated.

[...] He (Ames) was a bit of mentor for me and we had a lot of things in common. We did not believe in organizational hierarchy...if you have intelligent, motivated, energetic people you give them as much authority and responsibility at the local organization where work can be done well.<sup>88</sup>

When Janes came to the Glenbow, the museum went through massive funding cuts from Ralph Klein's provincial government in Alberta; Janes describes the cuts as a "sort of blessing," as they allowed for the museum to be reorganized, removing several hierarchical departments and replacing this structure with four multitasking work-units (Janes 2007).<sup>89</sup> The structure of staff often determines who has direct contact with

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<sup>87</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>88</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>89</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

people outside of the institution. In most museums, this role still tends to fall primarily to the curator. In the cases of the interpretation design team responsible for the new Canada Hall, most of the direct conversations with community consultants will come through the curatorial staff. As Interpretive Planner at the CMH Glenn Ogden explains:

I think we take as an institution the duty to consult seriously and appropriately. I think in this case when we are looking at, say our consultation processes ... you know it is primarily vested with the curatorial team in the model that we have here. So, we will have curators communicating with the stakeholder groups, Aboriginal communities, [and] building up relationships with them. Where is the line where we are able to fully collaborate on something and co-curate something and share, rather than have really good consultation, inform content, really helping us make decisions, being with us and validating what we are doing through advice? Every experience differs.<sup>90</sup>

In larger institutions, the role of community engagement becomes filtered through the curatorial department, which often leaves other departments, such as design, programming, and collections disassociated from direct consultation with those outside the museum. Increasingly, large museums are contracting out the design of larger exhibitions to design firms, which can result in a project having very little connection to the community that it is meant to represent. Furthermore, this means the “voice of museum” is being created outside of the museum, which is in effect “causing museums to lose their intellectual capital” (Walhimer 2013:36). MOA remains unique in this regard as it maintains a design department, where projects are developed in-house and the skills of museum design are being passed on through the institution via an internship position. However, like other positions within museums, there is a question as to whether MOA will maintain the integrity of this department once the current design team has retired.

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<sup>90</sup> Ogden, Glenn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

The question of how involved those outside of an institution can be with a project is ultimately a question of how much power an institution can give over to a group or community. While collaboration, partnerships, and consultation will always differ between institutions and the institutional culture that has been established, a project is not developed in full collaboration if the power is not equally situated between all people involved. The success of *Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life* at the Glenbow is an example of this redistribution of power in a larger institution in Canada (see Figs. 75-79). Opening in 2001, the exhibition remains a successful example of a project controlled by the community. The museological work that came alongside this exhibition has also been instrumental in terms of repatriation work in Canada that has seen several sacred items being return to Niitsitapi communities (see Conaty 2003, 2006, 2008, 2015; Conaty and Carter 2005; Noble 2002; Phillips 2011). As Robert Janes notes about this project:

With respect to collaboration, to me, real collaboration is where people have equal power sharing of authority and responsibility and I think there is no better example that the Blackfoot exhibition where they actually generated the content and we facilitated in a very sort of equal partnership.<sup>91</sup>

Janes (2007, 2013, 2015) has been critical of how many museums have come to adopt a model of CEO leadership that is very top-heavy, which places most of the decisions made by the institution in the hands of very few. Not only does this create salaries that are strikingly higher than others (which tends to cut into project budgets), it creates an imbalance of power within the institution. This also creates a model where those in higher positions becomes less and less connected to the work of community engagement and sustained relationship building.

Many I interviewed were also critical of the continued importance placed on exhibitions as the main mode of museum production over things like collections-based research,

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<sup>91</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

programming development, digital curation, and repatriation projects. While I take up the growing importance of programming as the place of knowledge production and pedagogical teaching methods concerning human rights in Chapter 5, the words of Historian Henry Yu from the University of British Columbia are useful here as a point of reflection on the limitations of the exhibition model. Yu has worked as a collaborator with CMM on several projects as a leading scholar in Canada on Chinese Canadian history. Yu was also contacted as a consultant for the Canadian Journeys Gallery at the CMHR as well as for the Canada Hall, and yet at the time of our interview there had been no feedback from these institutions as to how his expertise had been used, if at all. Yu notes:

An exhibit is not static. The process of encounter is not static. We have a model that is based on an art gallery model: put the thing (exhibition) up then the curator is done. Sometimes they are not even being paid for it anymore...and they are on to their next project...so no one is there to pick up the pieces when things go wrong...or to implement a plan...Rather than a space of encounter...that done-ness is the number one largest problem with the sense of time in exhibitions. Exhibitions impose a staging of time that is actually destructive of relationships, it is not collaborative.<sup>92</sup>

Yu highlights here an important limitation of the exhibition model in terms of building sustained collaborative relationships. These relationships, as stressed in Chapter 3, require an ongoing commitment from an institution that sees continuing to engage with the needs of a community beyond the exhibition as a priority. The exhibition should be one outcome of sustained practice that can showcase the work being conducted between museums and community groups where violence and discrimination have had lasting effects, and the work is designed to help make communities stronger. It is precisely because smaller institutions and research collectives can remain connected to the ongoing needs of the community that they are, as I argue here, more capable of conducting the work of human rights through the space of the museum.

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<sup>92</sup> Yu, Henry. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

## Canadian Community Museums and the Work of Human Rights

This final section takes a closer look at the Nikkei Centre, the CCMM, and RIDSAR to show how projects developed through these institutions serve as strong examples of human rights work. The success of these smaller institutions comes in part from the emphasis they carry as institutions designed to cater to specific cultural communities, which creates the ability for staff to work at a very grassroots level with community partners. As mentioned in the introduction, part of this success comes from building exhibitions that are small in scale where the values of the project remain deeply connected to community needs and where the working methods emphasize a high degree of interdepartmental communication. Top-heavy managerial systems found in larger museums can often fail to provide the space for the on-the-ground, more experimental museological practices that help to heal people who have experienced trauma. Given the time and longevity of relationship building required to work on difficult and emotionally sensitive subject matter, a smaller Canadian heritage institution's immediate community connections mean they are well positioned to use collaborative partnerships to assist larger institutions in building exhibitions concerning difficult subject matter. As Beth Carter notes, "the nimbleness of being in a smaller organization means you are able to be way more flexible...(and) the people you are working with is way more transparent."<sup>93</sup> Given their smaller size, one clear drawback to these institutions is their limits in terms of reach in audience size; smaller gallery spaces undeniably mean less visitors to view an exhibition or take part in programming events. Regardless, a strong sense of curatorial freedom was stressed to me by those I interviewed who work in smaller museums and galleries. This freedom creates the space to make important statements about the struggle for rights in Canada that can speak truthfully to Survivor experience regardless of how this may be received from visitors. Andrea Walsh reflects on the benefits of RIDSAR's partnering with small gallery spaces such as the Legacy Art Gallery in Victoria and the Port Alberni Community Museum:

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<sup>93</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

I like that RIDSAR has been part of smaller institutions working directly with people who have a connection to the work. I dipped my toe in the water of the Royal Ontario Museum and their absolute monolithic bureaucracy. [Large museums are] still too much about the public: “do they want to see this?” rather than in smaller institutions where you can say “*you need to see this.*” This is something that is important to us locally. That ripple effect, that small agitation, I think of it in terms of sound, sometimes that big bang that is there and then it is gone is less effective than low vibrating that is there all the time so you are saying: “what is that?” It allows for this constant putting this out there. So, how does something become normal? You just keep putting it out there.<sup>94</sup>

Working closely with community partners in small numbers over a sustained period creates museological projects designed to help community members through ongoing processes of engagement that remain connected to the needs of the community. What Walsh highlights here is how there is more opportunity in smaller museum spaces to take risks during project development and with exhibition content—risks such using the curatorial space of an exhibition to make very explicit political statements about historical grievances acted out by the Canadian government against people based on their cultural ethnicity.

The Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre serves as a strong example of an institution conducting work directly on behalf of a community with the needs of Japanese Canadians being the foremost priority. This institution is unique in that both the museum and the cultural centre were built from funds allocated through the Japanese Canadian redress compensation. As mentioned previously, the museum itself was the vision of many elderly Nikkei citizens who had kept what few possessions they had during the Internment with the intent to have a museum in the future to educate about this period in Canadian history. The organization began as a grassroots movement to record the oral histories of those who had experienced the Internment. This work began in the 1980s through a committed group of volunteers and remained entirely

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<sup>94</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

volunteer-run until 1996 when a small amount of funding was secured to bring on a part time director and archivist. In 2002, the museum joined with the cultural centre in a move that has come to benefit both parties. As former Director Beth Carter notes, the museum “could not survive without the support of the cultural centre and the cultural centre realized what made them unique, and what made them rooted into the history of the community, was the museum.”<sup>95</sup> The museum continues to operate today with very little funding and a very small staff, relying heavily on volunteer support, which makes the connection with the cultural centre essential. As Linda Reid describes:

That’s what we do collaborate and rely on our community, I mean we just can’t do it by ourselves. We have, and we are lucky to have such a phenomenal amount of dedicated volunteers to keep this place running because I don’t know what’s going to happen when they go.<sup>96</sup>

The Nikkei Centre is a museum deeply connected to the community for which it was designed. The museum continues to record and archive oral histories related to the Internment, experiences of discrimination in Canada, and how Japanese Canadians worked to rebuild their communities post-Internment. They are also the national repository for Nikkei history in Canada, with a public database of archival documents and images pertaining to all the Internment sites across Canada and the communities that were rebuilt after the War. Having the physical space to tell this story of Internment through museum exhibitions and programming work is particularly relevant for a community that was, as an act of the government, forcibly pulled apart and kept separated well after the end of WWII. Part of the outreach that the Nikkei Centre does now is working with the city of Vancouver to maintain the physical presence of the Japanese Canadian community in the east end of the city, which has seen much of this presence erased over the years.

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<sup>95</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>96</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

The Nikkei has recently partnered with two university projects seeking to reclaim Japanese history. *Landscapes of Injustice* is a collaborative research collective out of the University of Victoria that is currently researching the dispossession of goods and homes suffered by the Japanese Canadian community. It has partnered with the Nikkei to create an exhibition and educational programming from this research (see Stanger-Ross 2014; Stanger-Ross et. al. 2016; also *Landscapes of Injustice* <http://www.landscapesofinjustice.com/>). *The Right to Remain* project focuses on the impact that drastic housing changes are having on the lives of people who are connected to and depend on the east end of the city. As discussed in Chapter 2, this part of the city has been the site of several protests as the existing community undergoes a process of gentrification in which high-end condominium complexes replace low income housing and destroy many of the building in the area that are connected to both Japanese and Chinese settlement histories in Vancouver. *The Right to Remain* research collective exhibited this project at the Nikkei in the fall of 2015 (Fig. 67; see *Right to Remain* " <http://www.revitalizingjapantown.ca> ) serving as an example of the politically charge exhibitions that can find a space in institutions such as these. For institutions such as the Nikkei Museum, a mandate to educate about the politics of inclusion, exclusive, segregation, and displacement is built into the ethos of the institution. To successfully do this, however, the act of forming partnerships outside the institution are fundamental for the survival of the museum. As Beth Carter puts it:

One of the things about being a small organization with few resources that has become clear to me is that we have to partner and build strong relationships with other small organizations working in related fields so that we are able to partner and build...It is the sustained collaboration that then leads to better opportunities because we have built those relationships so that it becomes not an issue to contact people...It is networks that help make a smaller organization like us help us to achieve our goals.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

In addition to partnering with universities, the Nikkei Museum has also lent its resources to larger museums. The CWM, the CHM, and the CMHR have drawn on the resources of the Nikkei for their exhibitions given the expertise of the museum. While the commitment to the Japanese Canadian community is present in all that the Nikkei Museum does, including exhibitions, research, public programming, and educational initiatives, where it is perhaps most physically represented is with the Nikkei Place—a place for seniors (figure 87). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Senior Health Care and Housing Society offers several services ranging in degree of care for elderly Japanese Canadians. The Nikkei Elders who experienced the Internment are the foundation of the institution; the work that Nikkei does strives to continue to share their stories and experiences of rights violations in Canada and the resilience of the community in the face of ongoing acts of discrimination.

Another example of this kind of grassroots work in small gallery spaces is found through the Chinese Canadian Military Museum, the only museum of its kind which celebrates the achievements of Chinese Canadian Military Veterans. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the museum is in the heart of Chinatown and is part of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver. The founder was himself a Canadian veteran who wanted the museum as a place to preserve the experiences of the vets. As Curator Paul Lee describes:

This museum is founded by a Chinese Army Officer... He talked to other vets and said if we don't have museum the legacies will slowly disappear, all your efforts and all your contributions will be forgotten without a place like this...He applied for funding in the beginning but he didn't get the funding because it was something so new the government didn't know what to do with it...so he contacted Chinese community merchants.<sup>98</sup>

In the beginning the CCMM was built entirely from funds generated from the Chinese Canadian community and it continues to run thanks to a strong contingent of volunteer

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<sup>98</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

staff. The space of the museum is intimately connected to the oral histories that have been shared by Chinese Canadian vets and their families. What was interesting to me, as I was guided through this space by then curator Paul Lee as well as community activist and historian Larry Wong, is how personal the stories are. Every object I was shown had a detailed story attached to it and hearing the experiences of the vets was the first and foremost priority during my visits, with any discussion of museum-related work coming a far second. Though the collection is small, the funding scarce, and the exhibition space limited, the purpose of the museum—to keep the voices of Chinese Canadians vets and their experiences present and alive—is acknowledged and felt. Though the small changing exhibition space focuses the content on various exhibitions related to the theme of Chinese Canadian war and veteran experience, the issues of discrimination and segregation suffered by Chinese Canadians throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century are always present (see Figs. 54-56). An example of this comes from the computer portal that sits inside the temporary exhibition space (Fig. 55). This feature, co-developed and sponsored by UBC's Asian Studies Department, serves as portal into Chinese Canadian history in Canada and a historical outline as to how citizenship was fought for and won by Chinese Canadians. The war experience of Chinese Canadians is directly connected to the fight for the rights of citizenship in Canada.

With the museum's placement right in the heart of Chinatown, the museum is also heavily involved in community related activities. An example of this was a ceremony that I attended in November 2014 honouring the Chinese Canadian war effort and acknowledging the surviving War Veterans. As mentioned, the beginning of this ceremony took place at the Chinese Canadian war memorial, which is located across the street from the museum. The second part of this ceremony took place over dim sum at a nearby restaurant, an event that I was honoured to be invited to join (Fig. 57). I was reminded during this meal of what a community the museum has created. Those I interviewed shared stories with me of checking in on vets, helping them with errands, delivering groceries or medications, and making sure they are connected to the larger

community of Chinese Canadians for events and special occasions. The CCMM, as Henry Yu reminded me, first and foremost exists for the community.<sup>99</sup> It is not heavily advertised, or easy to see from the street. It does not draw in many visitors or create exhibitions that stretch out of the focus of the institution. The exhibitions produced, material objects collected, and the oral histories recorded all come together to create an important record of Chinese Canadian experiences during the Canadian war effort in the early 20th century. This has made them an ideal partner for the Canadian War Museum to draw on, having taken smaller exhibitions generated at the CCMM into their exhibition rotation. Like Nikkei, the function of the CCMM is not just about the exhibition space; it is about the work the museum as an institution does within the community, specifically for the remaining Chinese Canadian vets, whose numbers are very limited. The small temporary gallery is very much devoted to individual stories, stories of experiences with the head tax, cultural discrimination, military victories, and achieving citizenship. The focus of this exhibition space is an example of how the CCMM is actively involved in processes of human rights work through the institution. The museum is about telling these stories, but also about helping the vets and giving them a place and a community to be connected to. This direct community connection and audience focus in turn benefits the museum in terms of the nimbleness of developing their working methods and focusing their institutional responsibilities.

The final example I share here is work being developed through the RIDSAR project. As a university research collective, this project has relied extensively on collaborations formed between IRS Survivors, Indigenous Elders, curators, researchers, and students and has included the involvement of UVIC departments as varied as the First Peoples House, Anthropology, Social Work, the Legacy Art Galleries, and the University Art Collections in addition to partnerships formed with the Port Alberni Museum, the

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<sup>99</sup> Yu, Henry. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

Penticton Museum, and, as of 2015, the Canadian Museum of History. The two smaller exhibitions generated from this work thus far have been a true test of community engagement. As project lead, Andrea Walsh notes the differences in building these two exhibitions by adopting Phillips's (2011:194-195) distinguishing terms of "multi-vocal" versus "community-based" as ways to describe the evolution of collaborative practice that developed through sustained research relationship building with the founding core group IRS Survivors from Alberni Indian Residential School. Walsh reflects:

The first exhibition (*To Reunite, To Honour, To Witness* at the Legacy Art Gallery, see Fig. 88) was "multi-vocal": we chose the paintings that would go into exhibition based on their availability and institutional parameters. No paintings were exhibited without consent of the owner...but ultimately the text was written by Robina (Thomas) and myself...This was radically different than the next show which was *We Are All One* (see figures 88-91) where the title came from (one of the Survivors). We had all these meetings leading up to the exhibition, and they (the Survivors involved) were there to choose wall colour, they said how that title came about; all the words related to that concept "we are all one", (they decided) the way that the galleries paintings were installed...they were just so much more involved.<sup>100</sup>

The second exhibition became a true example of community-based collaborative project building that provided a place for Survivors to tell their stories in a way that was under their control, in the community museum close to where many of the core group currently live and where the Alberni Indian Residential School once stood. What makes both exhibitions successful examples of partnerships between Survivors, universities, and smaller galleries were the risks that staff at both the Alberni Museum and the Legacy Art Gallery took to step away from gallery control over the exhibit planning to let the Survivors, Elders from the communities, and Walsh make decisions that were right for those whose trauma was being shared with gallery visitors. Throughout this process, the Survivors continue to maintain ownership over their paintings and the stories they had shared. This power of ownership has come to serve as a strong example of how museum practice can play a fundamental role in community restitution; that is, building

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<sup>100</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

strength in Indigenous communities through the return, not the lending, of cultural objects (Clements 2016). Robina Thomas reflects on the importance of giving power to Survivors to make decisions in this work:

It was an honour to be involved in that project because I felt that we worked with community in such a collaborative way. That we took guidance and direction from the community, that we supported the community for this to work out the way it needed to for them and speaking specifically about the community that surrounded Port Alberni Residential School but all the artists that were involved in that project. And collaborative, I think of the work we did with the Legacy Art Gallery, the work that we did with the museum in Port Alberni, it was just the most honourable and respectful way to see a project unfold. And it means everything to me because this is how I think it should be.<sup>101</sup>

Mary Jo Hughes echoes this statement in reflecting on the exhibition at the Legacy:

For me the community aspect really has come more to life, this project, and the potential... to serve that community. (There was) just as much benefit to that community as the museum. It should be equal, that has changed for me...I have witnessed and been part of things that were a little more token both in terms of the community and collaborative aspect—this was a community project.<sup>102</sup>

What these exhibitions have come to represent is a point along the path of healing for those Survivors involved; they are now marked moments in time along the research route surrounding this collection of paintings where the experiences that many Alberni Indian Residential School children suffered could be publicly acknowledged and witnessed. Chapter 3 reflected on how the decisions made by RIDSAR have been guided by Indigenous protocols to safeguard the relational aspect of people involved in the work and those who would come to visit the exhibitions, and how practices such as these are developing through exhibitions that cover such traumatic histories. In this capacity, RIDSAR is using community as a research methodology and this method of practice is fundamentally shaping rights-based museological work in Canada.

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<sup>101</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>102</sup> Hughes, Mary Jo. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

As mentioned in Chapter 2, RIDSAR has also participated in three TRC hearings: Victoria 2012, Vancouver 2013, and the closing in Ottawa 2015. During the Vancouver hearings, several community members from Port Alberni came to be a part of the event and their participation was integral to the function of the booth RIDSAR had set up in the Education Centre (Figs. 85 and 86). This booth became a place where Survivors could share their experiences of IRS with visitors—but, more importantly, the booth became a place of comfort and connection for the many Survivors who attended Alberni Residential School who were taking part in the TRC; they would gather at the RIDSAR booth and spend time with one another. This booth became a place of sharing and storytelling. As a participant in this event, it was an incredible honour to sit with our team and those that visited the booth for the four days of the TRC.

As mentioned, RIDSAR has now partnered with the CMH to use the work generated through direct community collaborations to tell the story of Indian Residential Schools in Canada as part of the new Canada History Hall. Though time will tell if the stories that Survivors shared with the CMH will be honoured as they are transformed into the exhibition, what these partnerships demonstrate is the ability for national institutions to draw on smaller institutions to exhibit true community collaborations related to human rights that have been researched and produced through smaller museum spaces. As a method of museological practice, curatorial initiatives formed with groups of Survivors of human rights violations can serve not only as important modes of apprehending knowledge about experiences of violence and discrimination in Canada, but can also provide a means of connection and healing for those that have suffered from these experiences. This is how the *work of human rights* can develop *through* museological practice and how human rights becomes an ongoing process of development and action rather than abstract concept. This connection and this sense of community is much easier to build and foster in smaller institutions that are working on projects and exhibitions smaller in scale where all members of the institution, community partners, and volunteers work with a high degree of communication and collaboration between

them. The work remains deeply rooted in community and they exist first for the community rather than for visitors. It is this deep sense of community embeddedness in the ethos of the museum that is difficult to achieve in larger institutions, thereby making partnerships between smaller museums and larger museums in Canada as fruitful places for future human rights museological work to grow.

### **Chapter Conclusions**

The very design of this project provided a unique opportunity to look at human rights as a form of practice being conducted across a wide spectrum of institutions. As discussed, the physical size and design of an institution, the history of institutional collections, the thematic museological scope of an institution, staffing structure, and funding and donor models all shape the ability of museums to work closely with people outside the institution in profound ways. The sheer size of a museum such as the CMHR on the landscape of the Forks area of Winnipeg is striking. It is massive in scale and its enormity is felt when standing at the door way. It was impossible, given this sense of enormity, not to think of the size of this institution in comparison to the smaller galleries in which I also spent time. It was difficult also not to reflect on my own experiences of working with the small collective group of researchers from the community, university, and galleries during my time with RIDSAR and to witness and experience for myself, the ability for this project to move in such flexible fashion given the scale of the projects being developed and the size of the galleries the project partnered with, at the same to wonder how the stories shared by Survivors might get swallowed in larger institutions.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, building sustained relationships is key in human rights research. However, as this chapter demonstrates, sustaining relationships through the institution can be difficult depending on the institutional culture of a museum. Successful project development pertaining to difficult histories has largely come through the ability for institutions to form strong working collaborations or partnerships with community partners who continue to work on issues that are directly beneficial to the

community itself while maintaining a high degree of interdepartmental dialogue with those working in the museum. Such collaborations with fluid communication are very challenging for larger museums to uphold. Furthermore, smaller galleries can use exhibition design and programming initiatives that make strong statements of advocacy on behalf of cultural communities in Canada. These examples show how the work of human rights can be conducted through the museum. A major finding of this research points to the benefits of partnerships built between smaller museums or research collectives and large national museums whose ties are proving to be fruitful places for collaboration to grow in Canada. These partnerships allow larger institutions to adopt the grassroots work of community involvement already in place through smaller institutions into larger museums. In this sense, smaller institutions and research projects become the mediators that work directly with the community. These institutional partnerships result in exhibitions that can better deliver the voice and perspectives of community groups while strengthening the network of practice pertaining to challenging subject matter across Canada's heritage sector.

## Chapter 5 Canadian Museums, Knowledge Production, and the Pedagogy of Human Rights

### Introduction

In a recent public history project, titled *Canadians and Their Past*, a wide range of people across Canada were surveyed to identify the importance and relevancy of arts and cultural institutions as places to learn about history and to probe participants about what they considered to be trustworthy sources for historical knowledge and teachings. Interestingly, the study found the majority of the respondents claimed museums to be the number one trusted public institution in Canada for information about the past, more so than universities, schools, and libraries (Conrad et al. 2009, 2013).<sup>103</sup> The findings of this study are limited to a certain degree, particularly in that responses given by specific cultural groups are divergent in their views towards the significance of museums. For example, several Indigenous respondents identified family oral histories as the most trusted authority for information about the past, while at the same time expressed their mistrust of museums in Canada due to the legacy of misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples through museum institutions. While these findings cannot speak for everyone living in Canada, what they do indicate is that museums continue to remain a significant part of the heritage landscape in Canada—contested or otherwise. Museums continue to produce knowledge, generate specific histories, serve as educational institutions, and influence shared memories concerning Canada's past and as such, they must remain important sites of scholarly analysis.

As this dissertation has highlighted thus far, when museological practices emotionally connect heritage professionals with the needs of community members (as established

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<sup>103</sup> This study was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Community-University Research Alliance Grant. Six universities were part of study hosted through Université Laval and the survey was run through the Institute for Social Research at York University. In total 3419 people were interviewed via a questionnaire format (see Conrad et al.2009:23, complete discussion in Conrad et al. 2013).

through strong and sustained relationships), museums can contribute in important ways to human rights work—that is, the grassroots, community-engaged work required when collaborating with survivors of trauma to improve their lives. In this final chapter I situate Canadian cultural institutions such as museums, small gallery spaces, and research collectives as vital contributors to public understandings of rights and justice. Museums are places where visitors can make connections between people, places, and events, including rights issues, which can allow for a better understanding of both cultural and national heritage. As public institutions, museums play a key pedagogical role, specializing in producing cultural knowledge and creating informal modes of education; they are experiential places where visitors can be exposed to a range of physical and emotional encounters with cultural heritage (Carter 2015; Hooper-Greenhill 2007; Witcomb 2015a, 2015b). As spaces of encounter, museums provide the opportunity for visitors to learn about the experiences of discrimination and violence, as told through the stories of survivors or families of survivors, as well as an opportunity to engage with the material record, such as photographs, artwork, or family possessions, left behind from these events in Canada's past. Exhibitions and programming created about these histories have great potential to contribute to what Roger Simon (2014) argues is the “pedagogy of witnessing” to these events; as modes of public education, they provide a visual and tangible record of survivor experiences of cultural discrimination that has occurred in Canada, outside of the official framework of government policies. This ability to produce new knowledge about past events and new pedagogical models for “thinking through” these difficult histories using museological practice (Lehrer 2015a:1211) positions museums as key players in the ongoing development of human rights discourses in Canada.

I situate the findings of this chapter within literature that draws connections between museums and the production of heritage, history, and memory. I emphasize here the performative aspects of heritage and history-making that come to shape both collective, and contested, understandings of the past, and how Canadian museums have been, and

should continue to be, contributing to these understandings. Heritage and history—like the definition of human rights brought into this dissertation—are not just abstract concepts. They are composed of series of actions, people, places, and things that come to shape how we understand ourselves, our families, and our communities. I then turn to examples of how museums are producing knowledge and experiential pedagogies about human rights issues in Canada and how this work is directly connected to the national and regional rights discourses that have been developing in Canada over the last several decades concerning cultural redress, reconciliation, and restitution. In this regard, I have been drawn to literature that defines pedagogical methods of teaching and learning in public institutions such as museums as embodied practices that require visitors and practitioners to feel through acts of listening, witnessing, and being in place (Simon 2014; Watkins et al. 2015; Witcomb 2015a, 2015b). I include here a discussion on the relevance of the Task Force document today as reflected on by my research participants as well as the curious ambivalence in the heritage industry with regards to the use of the phrase "human rights" in project development. This ambivalence highlights the need to push past essentialist definitions of human rights that remain connected to the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights and move towards a better understanding of human rights as practice and how this practice is being actively produced through Canadian museums. I conclude with reactions and reflections by my participants on the role of museums in Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including reflections on the continued use and importance of objects in museums in the age of digital technology and multimedia; the need for museums to take strong positions on social, cultural, and political issues and thus breaking with a sense of institutional neutrality; and finally, reflections on the creation of the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

### **The Performance of Heritage, History, and Memory**

Forms of cultural knowledge constructed in museum exhibitions, collections research, and programming are intricately connected to understandings of the past and ideas of

what constitutes history and heritage. As identified in Chapter 3, heritage spaces such as museums are places that people go to “feel” (Smith 2014:125); entering a museum and spending time in an exhibition creates emotional reactions, whether positive or negative. Emotional reactions to exhibitions that contain challenging subject matter can create feelings of empathy that foster connections among us (Campbell 2014; Gregory and Witcomb 2007; Simon 2014; Smith 2014; Witcomb 2013); these reactions can also produce new, critical ways to engage with the past (Bagnall 2003; Smith 2006, 2014; Witcomb 2013, 2015a, 2015b). As emphasized in Chapter 3, these active processes of meaning-making that take place in museums are a fundamental part of how cultural heritage is created; they are part of how heritage is performed (Johnson 2011; Smith 2006, 2011). Performance theories have created valuable analytical frameworks for understanding how individual and collective identities are shaped through ongoing actions and interactions between people, places, and things—including museums (see Butler 1988, 1993; Ebron 2002; Goffman 1959, 1974; Robinson 2016; Schechner 2003, Turner 1974). When applied to understandings of cultural heritage, performance transforms heritage from being a thing that simply exists into something that is continuously created through action; heritage is always in process and constantly evolving (Smith 2006, 2011). This chapter draws attention to how understandings of human rights as both part of heritage and history, whether culturally or nationally, are produced and debated through museums.

The construction of history is also performative. How the past is understood develops through the interplay between past events, the material record that remains from these events, and the personal and collective narratives told about said events (Connerton 1989; Denning 1996; Lowenthal 1985; Stahl 2001; Trouillot 1995). The past, as Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot claims, “does not exist independently from the present” (1995:15). There is a constant interchange between what happened in the past and what stories are told about what happened in the past. These are, as Trouillot claims, the two dimensions of history: “the materiality of the sociohistorical process”—

historicity I—comes to “set the stage” for the stories we come to tell about these processes or our “historical narratives”—historicity II (1995:2, 29). History is created through embodied acts that produce narratives concerning past events in the present such as archiving, collecting, recording, storytelling, and writing (Dening 1996; Trouillot 1995). As Historian Greg Dening (1996:34) notes, these “presentations” of the past, “are something crafted;” they are narratives, which we create and perform with a sense of “theatricality” (1996:34). The performative aspect of the history-making process aligns with theories put forward by Indigenous scholars in Canada who have stressed the importance of oral histories in Indigenous communities; acts of storytelling, dance, and song are fundamental sites for the production and transmission of cultural knowledge between generations and consequently, sites that shape Indigenous cultural identity (Archibald 2008; Atleo 2004; Bastien 2004; Pedri 2014, 2016; Simpson 2011; Thomas 2000, 2005). “The truth about stories,” as Cherokee writer Thomas King so eloquently states, “is that’s all we are” (2003:2). In Canada, honouring the oral traditions passed on in Indigenous communities as well as the practice of collecting oral histories from various cultural and social groups across the country is part of growing national movement to democratize history; that is as Freund et. al (2015:3) argue “for making the telling and writing of history more inclusive” (see also the *Centre for Oral History and Digital Story Telling* <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/> ).

In the case of museum, exhibitions are themselves acts of storytelling; they are crafted presentations of past events that serve both as a form of record keeping and public teaching, told in many cases through the words of those who experienced these events first hand. Material culture becomes part of the creation of these narratives in important ways. Our engagement with the material record from the past connects us to past experiences and past lives through the sensory acts of touching, looking, smelling, and talking (Edwards 2001, 2005; Edwards and Hart 2004; Glass 2009; Krmpotich et al. 2016; Langford 2001; Mills and Walker 2008). As highlighted in Chapter 3, there is a relational aspect to things; they are part of relationships between people (Appadurai

1986; Gell 1998; Hoskins 1998; Kopytoff 1986; Miller 1998; Pinney 1997, 2004). They are also part of relationships between people and the stories they tell about the past (Edwards 2001, 2005; Edwards and Hart 2004; Langford 2001; Mills and Walker 2008; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003). Objects, artifacts, books, photographs, cultural regalia, archival documents, artwork, exhibitions, historical monuments, and even physical places all become material in the telling and re-telling of past experiences and events (Connerton 1989, 2006; Denning 1996; Edwards 2005; Edwards and Hart 2004; Hawkes 2014). These acts of re-telling and re-imagining are part of “the radical potential of material culture,” argues Hooper-Greenhill (1992:215), which provides for an “endless possibility of re-reading,” for what this material can mean to people in the present and the future.

Material and visual culture play an important role in the work of memory produced through museum institutions. As defined in the early work of Paul Connerton (1989), individual memories are the thoughts and recollections that we remember of an individual past, which are essential to how we come to know ourselves; they make up the stories of history that we tell and remember. Social or collective memory is produced differently; these memories are located less in personal experience and more in past events and shared spaces (Connerton 1989, 2006). Current memory studies seek to ask questions not only about what it is we remember, but the processes by which we remember (Hawkes 2014; Mills and Walker 2008). “Memory work” as Mills and Walker (2008:4-5) define is a term inclusive of the “social practices that create memories, including recalling, reshaping, forgetting, inventing, coordinating, and transmitting” as well the “interpretive activities” scholars perform when researching the complexities of memory. Since the second half of the 20th century, many memory studies have focused on how violence, war, colonization, and displacement—all acts that violate human rights—are themselves direct attempts to erase certain people from memory (Connerton 2006; Rowlands and Tilley 2006). Memory has become a powerful tool and “mode of discourse” for disenfranchised and colonized peoples who must prove their

place in dominant versions of national or state histories (Rowlands and Tilley 2006: 501). Memory as a discourse has also been used to combat the objectiveness of history, for acts of memory highlight the contestations and tensions that play out in terms of processes of remembering (Ferdinand de Jong and Rowlands 2007; Radstone and Hodgkin 2003; Rowlands and Tilley 2006). The work of memory can help to combat, contradict, or reinforce the parts of history we wish to remember, focus on, talk about, debate, and forget.

As “sites of memory,” what Pierre Nora (1989:7) calls *les lieux de mémoire*, museums have played a fundamental role in mediating the past. Exhibitions and public performances in heritage institutions helps to produce knowledge about culture and history and thus contribute to the work of memory—that is, exhibitions and performances help to make history memorable (Crane 2000; Lowenthal 1985; Rowlands and Tilley 2006). Museums, like other heritage sites, have come to shape the historical consciousness of the past through the shared memories generated in visitors (Gosselin 2010, 2011; Smith 2006). The connection between museums and the production of knowledge has been well documented in museum literature (See Ames 1992; Bennett 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 2007; Kratz 2011). To a certain degree, the work of exhibitions has always been about making use of the material evidence of the past to construct historical narratives about what happened in the past in new and provocative ways (Ferguson 1996; Trouillot 1995). As Kratz (2011:25) argues, exhibitions create “rhetorics of value,” which are “powerful persuasions that draw on and synthesize an array of sensory and communicative resources...” that create forms of knowledge through the “interactions between aesthetic, intellectual, affective, and cognitive modes of experience, knowing and learning.” Through their exhibitions and programming, museums play an important role in shaping the content and forms of cultural histories and draw on the experiential potential of museums spaces to deliver this knowledge (Carter 2015; Hooper-Greenhill 2007).

Large national or provincial museums, such as the Canadian Museum of History or Canadian War Museum, have left a legacy of creating dominant versions of histories that privilege certain cultural experiences and past events over others, often deliberately silencing government-sponsored acts of discrimination and segregation (Ferguson 1996; Mackay 2002; Philips 2006, 2011; Trouillot 1995). However, exhibitions developed in collaboration with survivors or families of survivors of human rights issues related to experiences of assimilation, violence, and oppression have come to challenge these dominant, inadequate versions of history. In doing so, museological projects developed through these partnerships have the potential to challenge visitors to think about what they remember about certain events and the dominant version of history that informs the knowledge they have acquired about these events (Crooke 2007; Fleishman 2011; Sandell 2002, 2007; Sherman 2008; Phillips 2011). This is an example of what Deliss and Keck (2016: 388) note as the possibility for the “remediation” of museum collections. This remediating sees collections “as a dynamic and changing assemblage, and therefore as an operative field” (Deliss and Keck 2016: 388).<sup>104</sup> This again, is the productive potential of material and visual culture found in museum collections, in that it can be re-analyzed for what stories were missing, for what voices have been silenced, and for how these histories can be re-imagined. Exhibitions, if done effectively, have the potential to ask visitors to think critically about the construction of their own world (Chalfen 2011; Sherman 2008). This is part of how museums can become a space in-between time, a liminal space where history can be challenged and new memories about the past can be created through shared museological collaborations (Baird 2011).

Globally, museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are being challenged to re-imagine their purpose and pedagogies (Hooper-Greenhill 2007). Museums seeking to develop human rights as practice have the potential to contribute greatly to better understandings of cultural

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<sup>104</sup> Deliss and Keck (2016) build their ideas here off the work of Paul Rabinow and his theories of how to an anthropology of the contemporary. For further discussion see Rabinow 2008; Rabinow et al. 2008.

experience and cultural diversity and, in doing so, can actively shape the rights dialogue occurring outside of the institution; this positions museums as valuable producers of rights-based research (Carter 2015; Carter and Orange 2012; Deliss and Keck 2016; Sandell 2017). As experimental learning spaces, museums are physical sites where these rights-based pedagogies can be performed. Heritage practices created through Canadian museums contribute to ongoing human rights discourses not only by providing the physical spaces where the public can negotiate what human rights and cultural diversity mean in the context of Canadian nationalism or in terms of cultural specific community stories, but also by creating and implementing the politics of cultural recognition and processes of reconciliation that have been at the forefront of much of the practice of Canadian heritage work over the last 25 years (Day 2000; Gordon-Walker 2016; Phillips 2011). I am conscious here of Dene-Yellowknife scholar Glen Coulthard's (2014) critique of Canada's politics of recognition as a neoliberal state policy developed in response to Indigenous resistance and rejection of Canadian colonial power from the 1960s onward. Cultural recognition for Coulthard (2014:6) remains set in a "seemingly more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices" that mask the colonial foundations that structure the relationships between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. Museums sit at the centre of these debates in important ways. Museums in Canada have the potential to make the understanding of rights visible, tangible, and accessible, but they can also be sites where policies and practices concerning rights can be developed and contested. This is how human rights—and the debates about these rights—as heritage can be performed through museum spaces. That is, they are places where historical and current understandings of rights issues can be better understood and policies concerning these issues can be developed. The following sections take a closer look at examples of rights-based research directly related to rights debates in Canada that have been developed and debated through the institutions included in this project. I highlight here how this work is both shaped by rights debates occurring outside of the institution, while also influencing the current rights dialogue in Canada outward from the institution.

## Revisiting the Task Force through the Lens of Human Rights

Though not identified as a document produced through the lens of human rights per se, the Task Force committee was organized in direct response to rights violations occurring through poor museum practices towards Indigenous peoples in Canada. Significantly, the creation of the Task Force (1992) document pre-dates the national government-sponsored investigations into issues facing Indigenous communities in Canada through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which began in 1992 and completed in 1996. The latter resulted in an official statement of reconciliation offered by the Canadian government titled *Gathering Strength – Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan* (1997),<sup>105</sup> which laid the foundation for findings from the recently completed Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). The mission of the Task Force committee was to travel the country and seek the advice of Indigenous people and heritage professionals to create a new path for Canadian museum practice. This path began in 1992, with two major national exhibitions in Ottawa showcasing the work of contemporary Indigenous artists from across the country. Both exhibitions, *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives* at the Canadian Museums of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History, or CMH) and *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*, incorporated Indigenous perspectives of colonialism, including the misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures produced by non-Indigenous peoples (Nemiroff 1992; Phillips 2011, 2015). In the context of Canadian history, the creation of the Task Force and these two foundational exhibitions occurred during a period when

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<sup>105</sup> RCAP was a product of several years of research taking place with Indigenous communities across the country. Chapter 10 of the first volume of this report drew specific attention to the injustice, violence and abuse suffered by Indigenous children through the IRS system, and how these schools produced intergenerational harm to families of Survivors in various communities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples (Corntassel and Holder 2008; Regan 2011). The report also called for the government to apologize to Indigenous peoples of Canada “as a form of *acknowledgement* and a step towards compensation” (Govier 2003: 68, original emphasis). The full RCAP Report is available online at: [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071124125216/http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg1\\_e.html#0](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071124125216/http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg1_e.html#0). The statements offered through *Gathering Strength* (1997) included 350 million dollars to establish an Aboriginal Healing Fund, dedicated to helping fund community-derived healing plan.

the truths of colonial injustices towards Indigenous peoples were beginning to surface more extensively into the national consciousness, demonstrating just how integrated Canadian museum practices are within the larger scope of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships in Canada (Phillips 2011).

The time frame since the creation of the Task Force is also noteworthy in that almost all those interviewed for this project had either been involved in the Task Force committee or grown into their careers with the document as a guiding set of ethical working principles. As Beth Carter notes from her time working as a Curatorial Assistant on the *Spirit Sings* and remaining at the Glenbow in the aftermath of the exhibition protests, the Task Force set “the tone of course for much of how I think about the world and about curatorial work.”<sup>106</sup> Many of my participants came through their graduate and early museum or gallery training in areas related to curating with the Task Force shaping their method of practice in pivotal ways. As Andrea Walsh notes:

To position myself in location to the coming out of that document, it was out before I even started my MA...[so] the document played a major role in my thinking about museums and collections ...that document framed my MA research...It was hot off the presses when I was doing my fieldwork and it was THE way to think so I was kind of trained in that document so to speak... I am not old enough to know the way before...so I came into thinking about this work through the lens of that *tumultuous* time... museums were not a good place to be ...so that document shaped how I do things.<sup>107</sup>

As a younger museum scholar and practitioner, the dialogue generated through the Task Force concerning communities and collaboration that has framed much of the museological work in Canada during the early 2000s was a very significant part of my own undergraduate museum training. The rights and justice dialogue occurring now is an extension of this. There is something unique and significant to this. The Task Force, as *practice*, has evolved through lived experiences and these experiences, while

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<sup>106</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>107</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

generated through the museum, have come to reverberate outside of the museum. Though the Task Force is not a legally binding document, it is a document that is unique to cultural landscape of Canada. As a set of principles, it can be adopted to fit working models for any community-engaged project and is not limited through legislation. Of interest to me then, was to hear how, and in what ways heritage professionals still consult the document. As Nadja Roby, Head of Repatriation at the CMH notes:

We go back to the Task Force all the time, in fact we include the Task Force in every treaty report that we send out... [and] we refer to that as a guiding document in every presentation that we do. It is still very much in our minds; I know it is old but it also has created a lot of change here. We rely on it a lot to maintain that change.<sup>108</sup>

Mary Jo Hughes reflects on a recent re-reading of the document considering the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research program (RIDSAR) exhibition that took place at the Legacy Art Gallery.

[...] There are some good things in there ...there are still things that I did not see happening that I see now more recently. I was recently reading the document, [and] we should really be seeing our projects as benefitting our partners as much as ourselves...that is worth revisiting and I think that is what Andrea (Walsh) does in spades...she does a great job of that. That project was not about putting together a provocative exhibition, or publication, it is what is the benefit to the people?<sup>109</sup>

Given the Task Force report is now 25 years old and repatriation projects from museums have expanded since this time, several people expressed the need to revisit the document. Since 1992 there has been a number of significant changes that have taken place not only in museums, but also in Indigenous communities, as the fight for self-determination in Canada has resulted in many new land claims negotiations and community projects that seek to reclaim material heritage from museums. The document is also worth revisiting given new sets of collections and archival material are

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<sup>108</sup> Roby, Nadja. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>109</sup> Hughes, Mary Jo. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

currently being worked on within a curatorial context, such as collections created from children while at residential schools and these collections were not considered during the formation of the Task Force recommendations. Andrea Walsh reflects:

I think the museum document is a base, but we have moved beyond that to think through the nuances of working with community ...Why I would still say that document is ...important as a departure point is that it is not legislation and it does just provide these departure points whereby every project will be different...With Indian Residential School material every community has had its own way of doing things but it is grounded in that document ...So I would say it is very relevant...from my own internal education but that we need to revisit it.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to looking for what is missing in terms of contemporary museological practices in Canada, revisiting brings the chance to also highlight where museums are still lacking in their capacity to be more equitable and open places to not only Indigenous peoples, but other cultural and social communities across Canada. Jill Baird notes:

I think I was very lucky, when I got here (to MOA) in the late 80s early 90s. The *Task Force* was a topic of conversation all the time, not negatively at all. It was seen as a really positive force, something to check yourself against. I think it was in the late 90s Pam Brown (MOA Curator) and I did a conference presentation about looking back at the *Task Force*, and after that I started to feel a little disappointed that we don't use it as a check list anymore and we haven't really lived up to the spirit of it...There is not a lot of institutional support for sustained relationships. And that for me is one of the main things the *Task Force* asks you to do. It asks you to pay attention, not just to invite me in because it works for you, but to build relationships and to nurture relationships.<sup>111</sup>

Trying to assess how the document is being used nationally is challenging, but a challenge most participants I spoke with felt was worthy of the undertaking. The reality is that not all institutions have embraced the calls of the Task Force equally. As Robert Janes notes:

The disappointing thing is that some institutions embraced the intentions of the Task Force, but many didn't. The progress towards that end is still really uneven

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<sup>110</sup> Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>111</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

across the country. So far, the museums association has yet to revisit the Task Force to take the pulse of the country to see what is actually going on.<sup>112</sup>

When framed in the current *zeitgeist* of rights dialogue that has grown in Canada during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the premise behind the Task Force can certainly be grounded in the human rights debates in Canada concerning Indigenous peoples. However, despite this, the language of human rights remains ambiguous in museum practice. One of the questions I asked my participants to consider was what human rights means to them and if, and how, the term human rights had been used in their exhibitions. I discovered there is a reluctance to use or incorporate the term in most exhibition development, even if the theme of the exhibition is directly associated with rights-based issues. The outcome of asking this question has revealed just how abstract the term or phrase human rights is, and how working within a human rights framework is very much a product of the last ten years of right-based global dialogue. As Robert Janes asks:

Why are human rights so topical now? I have not thought of it [his museum work] being in the realm of human rights work... all the work I have done with Indigenous people... even now I wouldn't say that it is human rights work, but when I think about what you are saying, I guess it is?<sup>113</sup>

At the onset of this project I had not factored in the significance of whether this term was being used; however, asking my research participants to reflect on this phrase and its use in an exhibition resulted in some interesting and varied responses. Most I interviewed felt it seemed too obvious, too political, or too cloaked in the rhetoric of the United Nations. There was a discomfort for many of my participants in the essentialist perspective of rights as a static thing. Some had not thought or considered certain exhibition work to be, in fact, human rights work, though upon reflection most agreed this was in fact what several museological projects are. Ultimately, many feel the work being conducted remains true to what much museum work has strived to be in terms of promoting cultural diversity, so the naming of what that work is remains irrelevant.

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<sup>112</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>113</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

However, adopting the language of the rights dialogue increasingly opens potential funding through governmental grant models as projects are deemed somehow more relevant. As Beth Carter notes:

The phrase “human rights” ...is part of the work that museums have always done: access to rights, improving access to cultural rights, promoting cultural rights. Human rights and social justice are “buzz words” ...I don’t see it as changing what we have been doing...I think that human rights and social justice have been inherent in the stories of the Japanese Canadian community... Granting and funding agencies are looking for us to present more meaningful topics...through the use of these words it justifies our existence and why people should take us seriously...I don’t think it means that I am doing anything different now than I was doing 10 years ago.<sup>114</sup>

It is worth noting that, given the association of the phrase human rights with international doctrines created through the United Nations concerning what rights are, most I interviewed still feel it unnecessary or indeed are uncomfortable with labeling their work as being about human rights. As Jill Baird expresses:

I think part of the problem with the term “human rights” is that too quickly it gets associated with the bullet points, you know what are the rights of humans...it has such a strong relationship to the UN Declaration of Human Rights ...If I was to say what kind of work I do, I would say socially and politically relevant, I wouldn’t self-identify as someone who does human rights work.<sup>115</sup>

Baird further notes that perhaps there is a need to take understandings of human rights and make them more localized, more accessible, and less associated with the abstract concepts developed by the UN. For some I interviewed, it was clear that human rights as a term is also personally understood through their own cultural and family associations to events that led to these three national apologies. As mentioned in Chapter 2, apart from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), the Nikkei Museum was the only museum space to incorporate the words human rights into an exhibition panel (Fig. 64). Since her appointment as the first Director of the Nikkei Museum, Grace Eiko Thomson

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<sup>114</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>115</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

has remained a right-based activist, educator, and writer. Having been through the Internment herself, Thomson remains adamant that the language of human rights is essential to stress:

I use human rights a lot and the local Japanese Canadian Community and national organizations have a human rights committee...they work on human rights issues and other things...People used to shy away from words like this, like almost they are ashamed to be a leftwing person...For me if we don't start speaking out more...the world is moving more and more towards to conservatism...we have the obligation to speak out because of our own experiences.<sup>116</sup>

This differs from the opinions of Robina Thomas, who highlights how the concept of human rights is not an Indigenous concept; furthermore, human rights as outlined through the UN have not been practiced by the Canadian government towards Indigenous peoples. Thomas notes that human rights are:

Not something I have thought about a lot because I have never really felt as an Indigenous person that our human rights really matter, we seem to fall under the radar of human rights.... If human rights really matter, then Indigenous issues would be way further along than they are. ...Human rights are much more of a mainstream, Canadian, colonial concept, and we have just never found our place in that. They are not being lived in our communities...they are another one of those legal terms that matters more to some people than others.<sup>117</sup>

Thomas further stresses why the work of RIDSAR remains a good example of rights-based work that remained connected to culturally specific understandings of rights:

What matters to me more is my own teachings. It (RIDSAR work) was a project rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. These are our human rights that talk to us about how to be on mother earth. That talk to us about how to be with each other ... means much more than human rights; it means rights for us all. [It] means rights of us to survive together. And so, *nuts' umaat* (we are all one)<sup>118</sup> also tells us that collectively is how we survive and that everyone has their places, different specialties, but collectively we survive... it is about how do

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<sup>116</sup> Thomson, Grace Eiko. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>117</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>118</sup> *nuts' umaat* also spelt *nutsa maat* meaning "we are all one" in the Hul'qumi'num dialect of the Coast Salish language. This was also the name of the exhibition put together by RIDSAR at the Port Alberni Museum.

we figure out how to be in this universe together. And how to respect all of us. For me that is way bigger than a human right. ...it is about how I live. I think the rights discourse gets caught in ideas and actions—not about living. And what we experienced in this project was about living...It was about how we want to be together. For me this project went way beyond human rights. Way beyond an idea...to teaching us about how to be together and not just in this project, but *together*.<sup>119</sup>

I draw attention to these responses less to show a concrete answer as to why heritage professionals have such varied opinions on the idea of human rights, but rather to demonstrate that, as discussed in Chapter 1, human rights can mean many different things to many different people (Levy and Sznajder 2011). These meanings can be culturally specific, socially constructed, and situated in relation to the histories of place and nation-states (Clément 2008; 2016; DiGiacomo 2016; Freeman 2011; Goodale 2009; Ife 2012; Nash 2015; Smith and van der Anker 2005). However, what these responses also demonstrate is how human rights, as a concept, is being developed, contested, and negotiated through museological practices, which situates museums as key contributors to national human rights debates concerning cultural recognition, reconciliation, and restitution currently occurring in Canada as they are physical places where these debates can be performatively engaged with. This transforms human rights from a static thing into a series of processes of doing work on institutional projects that together form a set of museum practices connected to rights issues.

### **Performing History and Creating Memory through Canadian Museums**

As Chapter 2 helped to illustrate, museums mark the heritage landscape in Canada in many ways. Museums are part of a network of sites of public memory and collective understandings of past events within each city and across the country based on historic events, people, places, and artistic and cultural practices found across the country that together perform the work of heritage (Blumer 2015; Busby et al. 2015; Phillips 2006,

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

2015). The very material presence of museums on the landscape has political resonances and effects. For example, the CMH is located directly across the Ottawa River from the House of the Canadian Parliament; the federal government is literally in view from the windows of the Great Hall. Thus, the ties of both the CMH and the Canadian War Museum (CWM) to the government are physically manifested in their location in Canada's capital. Having the CMHR open in Winnipeg in the Forks area, a historic site of cultural trade, diversity, and the struggle for rights as discussed in Chapter 2, has the potential then to speak more critically to the struggles for rights occurring across Canada and the role that historic events that have taken place in Manitoba like the Riel Rebellion or the Winnipeg General Strike, have played in the development of rights discourses in Canada (Busby et al. 2015).

In this sense, smaller community-driven museums or cultural centres can, in their very presence, come to disrupt Canadian national narratives of multiculturalism by inserting, in a very material sense, understandings of specific cultural identities that intervene in these national narratives in important ways. Museums such as the Chinese Canadian Military Museum (CCMM) and the Nikkei are connected through the function of the museum to the physical areas in the city of Vancouver where communities of Japanese and Chinese Canadians have lived. Part of the work of the institution is to maintain that physical presence of community. These museums form part of a culturally specific network of memory to the physical places in Canada where historical acts of violence and segregation took place, such as Hastings Park (where Japanese Canadians in Vancouver were first held), the Internment camps that were built in various parts of the country, or the heritage buildings in Vancouver's Chinatown that were destroyed by violence during the Asian Riots. This network also includes monuments that served as sites of cultural performance, such as the cenotaph in Stanley Park honouring Japanese Canadian Vets or the Chinatown monument honouring Chinese Canadian Vets, both of which serve as important sites of Remembrance Day ceremonies. Staff and community partners from both these museums continue to play an important role in stressing to

Vancouver's municipal government the need to maintain culturally specific sites within the city, not just for a sense of community, but to maintain the marks of cultural diversity on the landscape of the city. Former Curator for the CCMM Paul Lee shared with me his thoughts on apologies for the Head Tax and associated laws of discrimination and segregation that were placed on Chinese Canadians, including his family, and the importance of places like the CCMM in preserving the experiences of the Chinese Canadian community over monetary reparations received by the government for these acts. He notes:

The community is divided in two camps, some [think] all we need is the apologies and we can move on...if there is any compensation we don't want it personally but a grant that can build a museum to reflect on the human rights and all that and to educate future generations so it does not happen again...The other camp is that you have to pay; you have to compensate to those that have paid the head tax and the federal government has said they will pay to those who actually survived it...[but] what good is it? After it is divided up...we may get 500\$ for nothing...it does not contribute to the preservation of these legacies and to educate the future generations that this is not something that we want to repeat.<sup>120</sup>

The museum then becomes part of a larger network committed to redress and pedagogies of witnessing (Simon 2014) the events of history that led to acts of discrimination and segregation in Canada. The Nikkei Centre was built directly from compensation delivered to the national Japanese Canadian community through redress. Their existence as an institution is the direct result of the redress process fought for by Japanese Canadians, which is directly connected to the struggle for the rights of citizenship fought for in the years after WWII. As Linda Reid notes:

Tied into Japanese Canadian history is that fight for enfranchisement because they did not have the vote from 1895 to 1949...so it is all kind of tied in together. You know the cenotaph is really a pilgrimage to everything that we do here – the fact that these Japanese Canadians would put down their lives for a country that did not want them to be citizens. To me that is the ultimate, ultimate violation of

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<sup>120</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

citizenship and what Canada supposedly stands for. Right? And a lot of those vets were very eloquent, very intelligent, and they always knew what they were doing and they fought two battles, not only for Canada, but for their right to represent Canada as a citizen, even after their internment—three years after the internment.<sup>121</sup>

These museums also function as places that provide an outlet for the community to come and find their own histories and connections to family. As Beth Carter expressed, “people are looking for links to their Japanese identity here.”<sup>122</sup> Many cultural communities come to use museums for connections to their past (Conrad et. al 2013); however, in the case of Indigenous communities the processes by which these encounters take place is often explicitly tied to the history of colonialism in Canada; many museums are the physical manifestation of colonial encounters that took place across the country. There are now, as Ruth Phillips (2006: 134) notes, important sites where the performance of post-colonial politics in Canada is taking place.

These post-colonial politics are deeply connected to the land and the struggles of Indigenous peoples across Canada for self-determination, and museums are intricately woven into these struggles. As discussed in Chapter 2, the physical location of the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) on traditional, unceded Musqueam territory has directly impacted the work MOA has developed, resulting in the adoption of very specific Indigenous cultural protocols that are deeply connected to current Musqueam struggles for rights and recognition (see Fig. 36). The creation of the formal protocol between Musqueam and MOA means that MOA now begins every event held at the museum with a Musqueam welcome. This practice emphasizes MOA’s commitment to their relationship with the community and publicly acknowledges Musqueam ways of knowing the world (Phillips 2000, 2011). This acknowledging of unceded Indigenous

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<sup>121</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>122</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

territory has come to spread out from the museum to the rest of campus, and the Greater Vancouver area. While the practice of honouring traditional First Nations hosts during events, performances, and ceremonies is increasingly more common across Canada, MOA was one of the first public institutions to implement this practice. As part of MOA's recent renewal in 2010, the entrance of the building itself was redefined so it is physically marked by Musqueam. The acknowledgment of territory is not just verbal acknowledgement said at events, but an acknowledgement that is physical and material in its presence. The welcome stone is right at the entrance of stairs and visitors physically cross over the work of Musqueam artist Susan Point in entering the museum (Fig. 37).

The performance of post-colonial politics, or how the legacies of colonialism in Canada are researched and debated through the space of Canadian museums, is perhaps most strongly demonstrated through the connections between museums and treaty negotiations. The repatriation of human remains, sacred objects, and cultural regalia from museums to Indigenous communities is part of treaty negotiations currently underway in Canada between various First Nations and the federal and provincial governments. This is a distinct feature of Canadian museological practices that is unquestionably a human rights issue. As discussed, Indigenous material heritage in Canada is deeply entwined in processes of colonialism and the settlement of Indigenous land. As the rise of treaty negotiations has taken place over the last 10 years, so has the need for museums holding Indigenous material collections to repatriate items of cultural patrimony, thereby demonstrating the direct link in Canada between rights to sovereignty, material heritage and present processes of decolonization. As Nadja Roby from the CMH Repatriation Department describes:

We are an arms-length crown corporation, but we are still the government so we are obligated to participate in all the land claim treaty negotiations...What we are negotiating is the return of parts of our collection as part of the treaty ... We usually repatriate in three ways: the treaty process by far the greatest; the sacred materials project where we invite people every year to come to the museum and go through the collection to help to identify sacred material and talk about repatriation if they want; and then we also have case by case

requests...there is the ethnology collection and the archaeology collection. We have now put them both together; they used to be very separate streams and they are now together since this year (as of 2014).<sup>123</sup>

Nadja Roby further explains how parts of the CMH collection are jointly owned between the museum and certain First Nations, and that these joint agreements that dictate any work on the collection or how objects are exhibited are part of the Treaty agreement itself.

As we go through these treaties there are obligations that we need to fulfill ...we have shared custody agreements with First Nations. We share possession of collections that are a condition of the treaty [which stipulates] that we have [to] rotate parts of our collections; some is always there (in the community), some is here, so it means now if you want to do an exhibition, if you want to loan anything, if you want to do anything with the collection that we are trying to implement... you always go back to treaty [to see] what are our obligations...We have to monitor these obligations, they affect everybody's work.<sup>124</sup>

Director Dean Oliver notes how overwhelming this process is. The work required is extensive and this why the museum needed a separate department completely devoted to repatriation to try and meet the demands of current treaty negotiations.

I have been dazzled...watching the quotient of scholarly work and also busy work: the length of time it takes to look through a stack of 19<sup>th</sup> century journals and then collections records to identify where particular items came from and where they are now before you ever have a conversation with a client about what may be theirs, or what we have and where it is. This has been quite an eye opener. Really it is ice berg-like...it is a massive epic Easter egg hunt [of] what 19<sup>th</sup> century records look like in 21<sup>st</sup> collections. There was no GPS, no Google maps, these jurisdictions are difficult and sensitive.<sup>125</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction, museums and archives in Canada have been called on by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to continue to find ways to engage with Indigenous peoples across Canada, and treaty negotiations are a massive part of this

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<sup>123</sup> Roby, Nadja. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>124</sup> Roby, Nadja. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>125</sup> Oliver, Dean. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

call. Would it not then be interesting to see museums take up the topics of treaty negotiations, repatriation, and if, and when, achieved, Indigenous restitution through the return and ownership of material heritage and turn this work into an exhibition? This would not only make the processes of the work done through museums more tangible, accessible, and visible to a greater audience, but it has the potential to make the work of the government more tangible, accessible, and visible.<sup>126</sup> This illustrates how the work of heritage is performed through the museum.

Museums have served as important sites of knowledge production and educational pedagogies being developed concerning Residential Schools and the TRC. As highlighted in this dissertation thus far, projects produced through institutions included in this research were built alongside the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as it travelled across the country. The RIDSAR collective maintained a booth in the Education Centre at two TRC hearings, in addition to the two gallery exhibitions of the paintings and Survivor stories. In this capacity, the exhibition of this material is linked with the larger purpose of the TRC to witness and remember the history of IRS and the experiences of Survivors. It serves as an example of working through the processes of reconciliation as specifically recommended by the TRC.

When the TRC came to Vancouver in 2013, MOA was asked by the university to create an exhibition that would speak to the TRC and to the legacy of Residential Schools, which serves as an example of the importance of museums as a place of public education. The resulting exhibition produced a material and oral history record of St. Michael's school that endures outside of the TRC. As Bill McLennan (2014) shared with me there was some criticism that he should have looked through "the records" to build the exhibition; however, as he stressed, there *were no records*. The photographs used in

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<sup>126</sup> An interesting possible future study in this regard is the community run Nisga'a museum which was developed through the Nisga'a treaty process which saw objects returned to the community from the Canadian Museum of History and the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, BC (see <http://www.nisgaanation.ca/museum>).

the exhibition, the narratives collected by McLennan, and the exhibition itself, now exist as a record (Trouillot 1995; Simon 2014). As McLennan recalls:

I was interviewing a guy and the TRC was doing interviews in the same area. He [and others] ...were mad because they only had 15 mins to talk, so you must edit down what you have to say. They said this is bullshit...they were really mad and weren't going to be bothered to go...They felt really offended, that there was this process, that they had to edit their memory to that timeframe...These are really elderly people.<sup>127</sup>

In this capacity, McLennan's interviews for the exhibition gave some Survivors another outlet outside of the TRC to share their story, much like through the work of RIDSAR, and in an unedited version. McLennan notes that this was very important to those with whom he met, and that many people came from further away just to speak with him: "one person was late for our interview, turns out he had driven from Prince Rupert, came off his fishing boat to do the interview, then drove back to Rupert to get his boat ready."<sup>128</sup>

Forms of public witnessing to this exhibition that occurred through the comment box and blackboard serve as another form of record concerning Residential Schools. Places within exhibitions to collect the comments of visitors are important sites of visitor experience, especially those that are written privately as many people leave thoughts they would not express in a traditional visitor experience survey. The comments collected by MOA staff ranged from personal thoughts and memories shared by IRS Survivors who spent time in the exhibition to non-Indigenous visitor thoughts of frustration and confusion for having known so little of this history in Canada. Through this work, the museum is producing new facts and making new archives concerning IRS in Canada, which will then contribute to new narratives about this time in Canada's past and the legacies left from the impact of these schools (Trouillot 1995). There was also,

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<sup>127</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>128</sup> McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

sadly, though perhaps not surprisingly, several private messages— and some left publicly on the blackboard—that were negative and discriminatory towards Indigenous peoples. Disheartening as they are, comments such as these prove how important exhibitions like this are and how much educational work there is left to do.

This notion of the need for forms of the public witnessing of past trauma as a form of pedagogy was, in part, the purpose of the failed *Forgotten* exhibition at MOA. As Director Anthony Shelton reflects, there was the:

...thought of using the museum as a stage. To me there seemed to be an outrage about how can we be relatively quiet about these issues and maybe museums can provide a platform. I mean it is limited, what we can do, but if we can work with other organizations, do other events around it, that is how we can make an impact.<sup>129</sup>

However, despite joining with other departments on campus and attempting to work with the Downtown Eastside community, as previously discussed, the exhibition was cancelled. Shelton reflects on MOA's decision to do this:

If we are going to harm people, we can't do [the exhibition]. My second thinking was if we do the exhibition, the focus of it will be on the museum's right to do these types of exhibitions and about the politics of representation, but that was not what we were interested in doing.<sup>130</sup>

In the wake of the exhibition's failure, many questions remain. Perhaps the most pressing is whether this topic should be made into an exhibition to educate about the issues surrounding missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. If so, where is the appropriate place to do the extensive community outreach and research that will be required to take on such a topic? This is of particular importance, given most museums in Canada are still staffed by primarily non-Indigenous people. I would argue that MOA is, in many ways, the ideal institution to take up this challenge given the colonial

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<sup>129</sup> Shelton, Anthony. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>130</sup> Shelton, Anthony. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

connections MOA carries to UBC's Department of Anthropology as a former research centre for the Department of Indian Affairs, which included performing the systematic documentation of Indigenous peoples around the province of British Columbia. The Department, like many university departments in Canada, was born out of documenting the land and the people of the country. Given MOA's location on unceded Indigenous territories, as part of one of the wealthiest universities in the country and situated in the city where many women went missing during the 1980s and 1990s in what has become one of the most gruesome cases of serial killing in Canadian history, there is just cause that MOA should be taking up the politics of rights current to this place. With a newly assembled Task Force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada through the present Liberal Government, this remains one the country's largest current, unresolved, human rights issues.

The final point I wish to highlight here is the performance of Canadian nationalism through museums. The politics of inclusion and exclusion—that is, what gets included in gallery exhibitions, the way that certain moments in Canada's past are framed, and whose voices are being heard—are serious considerations that play out in gallery spaces across Canada. As many scholars note, there are substantive implications to this work, particularly in the context of national galleries that help to craft the dominant narrative of what constitutes Canadian nationalism (Aronczyk and Brady 2015; Gordon-Walker 2016; Phillips 2011). July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 marks the date for the opening of the new Canada Hall at the Canadian Museum of History. When reflecting on the CMH as a curatorial space and national museum, I wonder how, and in what ways, the stories and experiences shared for the new exhibition will be honoured through the exhibition process. Curating is a process of taking care, but also a process of selecting and altering material to fit the larger scope of a project. Whose histories are told in this gallery and by whom? Where, and how, do the difficult moments in Canada's past fit in the national story of Canada? These are important questions to ask when retelling difficult histories in the context of nationalism. Furthermore, will the new version of these apologies

presented in the new exhibition hall be critical of Canada's role in policies of discrimination, exclusion, segregation, and cultural genocide? There is something almost symbolic, or metaphoric in the deconstruction of the old Canada Hall. As the old hall is knocked down, what will the new hall come represent? Will this be a chance to rewrite, through the medium of an exhibition, the lack of representation that many cultural groups in Canada received in the previous exhibition? How will this new, long-term exhibition come to inform the practice of other institutions? Will the CMH choose to take risks through the curatorial process to speak truthfully about government-sponsored acts of rights violations in Canada and the legacies of inequality these acts of left across the Canadian landscape? Or, like the old Canada Hall, will these apologies be positioned as part of Canada's past, as acts that have somehow been solved, with no contemporary connections to ongoing legacies of discrimination and inequality that exist in Canada?

### **The Future of Canadian Museums: Objects, Neutrality, and a Rights-Based Approach**

This final section reviews reflections my participants had on the future of Canadian museums. Given many museums have made a push to be more about ideas and less focused on material collections, I was curious to know how my participants perceived the role of material and visual heritage in telling stories. Does the materiality of museums still matter? A clear indication from almost all those I interviewed was that objects do still matter. Many stressed that objects are the reason that a museum exists in the first place but, more than that, objects are the main vehicle by which knowledge about culture, historical events, people, and places can be produced and transmitted to visitors. As Kathryn Lyons states:

My view of objects is that they are a medium by which we tell a story. I do accept that they do occupy a place of pride in a sense in a museum context because of the association usually between museums and material culture. Well I would not say we revere the object or artifact, there is a certain amount of value placed on the objects as story evidence. From my perspective, it is the story that is the most important and telling that story in the most effective way... So, objects in

my mind only hold power if the context in which they are presented and the story that they hold can be understood.<sup>131</sup>

Part of the function of museums, and this was expressed to me more so by those working for the Canadian Corporation, is to preserve Canada's material record. However, the material record left by certain historical acts of injustice become invaluable sites of research and learning that intercept dominant versions of nationalism and the history of Canadian settlement. For example, the objects gathered by Japanese Canadians who were interned provide a record of experience that exists outside and apart from government documents concerning the Internment. This material record is also an important site of collective memory for the families of those who were interned. As Grace Eiko Thomson stresses:

So, for me the museum is very important, but then I think how important is this for my children and my grandchildren? It is a place where their ancestral documents are saved, [and] the museum keeps up to the present to find the relevance of their collections ... the experiences of the past have to resonate in the present so they can help the present.<sup>132</sup>

In many ways, activating material collections comes through the role of programming. Museums remain important sites of education about cultural diversity and cultural discrimination in Canada and the access to material objects is a fundamental part of this. As Sandra O'Quinn from the CWM notes with respect to objects related to war:

I think what teachers want when they are thinking about coming to museums they are thinking artifacts...teachers want what they can't do in their classrooms. They can't find objects. In programs, we are working with living history pieces, we have a collection that is either reproductions or things that have been deaccessioned...so they are meant to be handled.<sup>133</sup>

Linda Reid notes that the school programs run through the Nikkei Museum always touch on the Internment, the experiences peoples suffered through discrimination and

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<sup>131</sup> Lyons, Kathryn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>132</sup> Thomson, Grace Eiko. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>133</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

segregation, and what the meaning of human rights is in the context of Japanese Canadian redress in Canada.<sup>134</sup> Paul Lee shared with me stories of going to classrooms to talk about the Head Tax and discrimination against Chinese Canadians.<sup>135</sup> These are concrete examples of museums creating pedagogies about rights-based issues through their education departments. As a museum educator, Jill Baird reflects on the importance of programming:

It is really hard to take action. It is a lot easier to talk about stuff. I think that is why I have stayed in programming and not moved to curatorial in terms of exhibitions because I think there is a lot of curatorial work in programming. To get some kind of action, to get some kind of conversation going, I think it is important. This was the approach to Bill's show (*Speaking to Memory*), instead of school programming or public programming, we worked with the Belkin Art Gallery and the First Nations House of Learning [departments at UBC] and made our focus teachers. So, we held professional development days, where we brought teachers through the *Witnesses*<sup>136</sup> exhibition and through *Speaking to Memory*, and the First Nations House of Learning so that they could sort of find something tangible to hook on to so they could teach this history because there is so little out there for educators to teach this history and the stuff that is there is not very accessible.<sup>137</sup>

If museums are to be places where justice, equality, diversity, history, and human rights can be negotiated and debated by the public, the role of programming is essential to this. The need for museums to create the space to have open dialogues about these issues was stressed to me by many I interviewed. As Robert Janes states:

I want museums to want people to aspire...they can't solve the problem but they can start the dialogue. Some are: Manitoba museum, took to heart Lake

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<sup>134</sup> Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>135</sup> Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>136</sup> *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* was an exhibition of Indigenous artists using contemporary artwork to speak about Residential Schools at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at UBC during the Vancouver TRC.

<sup>137</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

Winnipeg's pollution ... I am getting tired of exhibitions being the primary part of what museums do. Why can't it be the dialogue?<sup>138</sup>

While exhibitions themselves have the potential to start the dialogue, programming creates the opportunity to put individual reflections on exhibitions into contact with others. Programming brings the potential for action, and this action is part of the work of human rights. As Jill Baird observes, "We have to stop pretending that we are neutral. By using the word human rights, you are taking a stand... I have been speaking out more lately about the public programmer approach as being a social justice approach."<sup>139</sup> This action is part of the process of creating human rights practice in the museum.

The need for museums to no longer present themselves as neutral was stressed on several occasions, however, by those who are not part of national institutions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the brand of a national institution is, in many ways, connected to trying to maintain neutrality—to not take sides on certain historical subjects. However, as spaces where multiple cultures, faiths, and artistic practices come together, museums exist as physical sites of intersection. They are sites of debate, dialogue, protest, and partnership. It is because museums sit at this place of intersection that they are uniquely positioned to tackle challenging subject matter related to human rights and global justice. Taking on exhibitions of this nature *requires a stance*. As Anthony Shelton reflects on this role of the museum:

I think very early on I saw the possibility for museums to be radical...I always wanted to use museums to deconstruct and to provide kind of critical commentary on different aspects of culture and society. And human rights are very critical to this. And the whole point of critical museology is to raise critical questions. What museums do is we look at the same genres of exhibitions...there are certain exhibitionary genres that we repeat over and over again. We can break those genres; we can try and be more relevant to today.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>139</sup> Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

<sup>140</sup> Shelton, Anthony. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author].

The very nature of museums as intermediary places makes them perfect sites for the performance of human rights pedagogies. Museums are liminal spaces; they can be places where multiple cultural knowledges and ways of knowing the world can collide and intersect and thus create new ways of being here together (Baird 2011). As Jill Baird writes (2011:48):

A liminal state is characterized by ambiguity, openness, and indeterminacy. A liminal museology, therefore, is one that is not fully comfortable, nor fully formed, and like a threshold it is betwixt and between. It is a contingent, uncomfortable, and contested place, but a productive one.

Beth Carter also highlights the liminality of museum spaces, positioning them as “third spaces:”

I believe in the role of museums as a third space... that is, sort of a neutral gathering space, where people can come together...Museums can be places of mediation, understanding, learning, and engagement - other spaces don't work in the same way... That is why we exist...so if we are only showing pretty bobbles that is kind of a waste of our abilities. Everything we do has the potential to be an educational opportunity ...So, for whatever reason I am not afraid, I don't tend to back away from controversial exhibits, I don't see them as that controversial. I see them as part of experience of the community we are dealing with. How can we not talk about residential schools when we are talking about the Blackfoot; how can we not talk about Internment when we are talking about Japanese Canadians? We don't have to talk about it all the time, but it is part of the story. If you exclude that, you are not being true to the story.<sup>141</sup>

Museums were also described as safe places to confront historical grievances. The space of the gallery, in the case of the Legacy Art Gallery or Port Alberni Museum, becomes a safe place for the RIDSAR collective to work through the trauma associated with Residential Schools. Collections Manager Caroline Riedel from the Legacy reflects:

I think it has really been illustrated through the project, just moving it to that next level and rethinking how we interact and initiate projects, and how it does not to be this sort of top-down approach. And I also think...I *feel* a lot...I think that topics are becoming more challenging, so the potential fall outs that can happen in terms of the conversations that take place...things can go wrong and

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<sup>141</sup> Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author].

people can be offended, but at the same time I also feel like the gallery and the museum space is kind of a good place for those types of things to happen...[museums] are a good starting point for conversations that need to happen. Even though it is not always easy.<sup>142</sup>

As the heritage industry in Canada moves through the 21<sup>st</sup> century – what is the role of Canada’s new national museum for human rights? Will the museum take up a stronger research and exhibition focus about rights issues that have occurred in Canada beyond the Canadian Journeys gallery? Given that the TRC report released in June 2015 included calls to action that specifically address the need for museums and archives to work with Indigenous partners and to strategize future collections and archival practices (see TRC 2015:246-258), museums should be sites for ongoing dialogue as to how to address these calls to action. The report itself calls on the CMHR and the Canadian Museum of History to take a leadership role in making reconciliation a major theme of Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> year. Will they? The timing of this project meant that my interviews provided an opportunity for all my research participants to comment on this museum, and comment they did. Many felt frustrated at the cost when so many museums and heritage spaces suffer across the country from a lack of funding. Many were frustrated by the lack of critical commentary about rights issues occurring across Canada, and called on the museum to create more meaningful engagements with these struggles. However, a point on which almost all those I interviewed agreed is that the CMHR has raised the issue of human rights onto to a public platform. The very existence of the institution has created a new and critical opportunity to engage with rights and justice through Canadian museum practices and to use this museum, as well as others, to do so. Museums as public institutions provide a platform to work through the messiness of these complicated and contested histories. However, using the space of the museum to think through difficult histories is not only about creating knowledge about past events and pedagogies that help with witnessing past acts of violence and discrimination, but

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<sup>142</sup> Riedel, Caroline. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author].

also pedagogies that celebrate hope, resilience, strength, and cultural continuity (Failler 2015; Failler and Simon 2015; Failler et al. 2015; Simon 2006). Museums can produce knowledge about the past as well as knowledge that teaches heritage professionals, their working partners, and museum visitors about how to be together in the present.

## **Conclusions**

And so, the question remains, as museums in Canada move through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what will they become? Museums have held an instrumental and often unequal and unethical power in shaping how cultural heritage as a concept has been produced in Canada. This has positioned heritage institutions as influencing how stories about the past, however distorted they may be, have been told. They have shaped common understandings of history and collective forms of memory; they are powerful and potentially dangerous educational spaces. But, as this chapter highlights, history and memory are fluid and ever changing. It is therefore possible to re-analyze material and visual culture to discover truths about the past and past relationships. Canadian museums can provide engaging, provocative, and stimulating ways to rewrite history and produce new memorable experiences for visitors as they encounter exhibitions, attend public discussions, and to think, through these encounters, about what constitutes their own cultural heritage, histories, and memories. Canadian museums can provide spaces to imagine and create alternative futures.

This chapter has shown how human rights knowledge and pedagogies are being developed and debated through museums in Canada, and how this work is uniquely connected to both the history of rights issues in Canada and current rights-based dialogues occurring across the country. Canadian museums continue to occupy a unique place in the fabric of national, regional, and culturally specific histories and understandings of place and people, and it is precisely because museums continue to occupy this place of power over cultural knowledge production that they remain important sites of scholarly inquiry.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion: Reflections on the Landscape

### Summary of Findings

I began this dissertation by placing my project into the global context human rights research as it relates to museums. Crucial here has been a developing sub-field within museological practices which focuses on how heritage institutions are publicly engaging with human rights issues (see Carter 2015; Carter and Orange 2012; Langfield et al. 2010; Orange and Carter 2012; Sandell 2017; Silverman and Ruggles 2012). The growth of this practice is part of a trend to further develop the pedagogical and epistemological potential of such institutions to use collections research, exhibition spaces, and public programming as forums for discussion and debate concerning acts of discrimination, violence, and genocide (Carter 2013, 2015; Flemming 2012; Sandell 2002, 2007, 2017; Simon 2014; Sherman 2008). One result is a new body of practice-based scholarship focusing on how “difficult knowledge” about past atrocities (Pitt and Britzman 2003) is curated in exhibitions or disseminated through other forms of public education (Failler et al. 2015; Lehrer 2015; Lehrer et al 2011; Simon 2014). Within the global heritage industry, exhibition work focusing on human rights issues is influencing heritage professionals to develop more ethical, morally accountable exhibition practices, which in turn is making heritage institutions more socially responsible to the various publics that engage with these spaces (Janes and Conaty 2005; Marstine 2011; Sandell and Nightingale 2012; Silverman 2015). As this dissertation has shown, museums in Canada have much to offer to this field of heritage scholarship.

Framed by Canada’s three official national apologies delivered for the Japanese Internment during World War II, the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusions Laws (2006), and the Indian Residential Schools (2008), this dissertation is a study into how human rights violations related to these apologies have been processed through museological practices in Canada. This dissertation speaks to larger global issues concerning the

develop of human rights museology, but more directly, it speaks to how human rights as a form of museum practice exists in Canada today, and how this practice uniquely aligns with the history of rights, justice, and the struggle for cultural equality *in* Canada. This is a dissertation about place.

As a multi-sited ethnography that included eight different museum and gallery spaces from seven municipalities across five provinces, this project has offered a unique glimpse into the process and design of museum practice across Canada with regards to challenging subject matter related to violence and discrimination that has occurred in Canada. To introduce these eight research sites in a way that better visually captures such a wide spectrum of research sites and cities, Chapter 2 of this dissertation was created as a photo essay. Through this format, I am able insert my own reflections on my research process alongside the images that framed my experience and the work of the museums I visited. When presented together, these images are intended to form a powerful visual narrative of human rights heritage practice across Canada. This chapter also provides an important place where I insert myself in this dissertation as both a heritage practitioner involved in museological work and a scholar producing this research narrative. In this capacity, the photos and my reflections that accompany them are part of my act of witnessing the stories that were shared with me and the human rights work that has taken place at the institutions I visited and the cities in which they reside.

This research finds that emotional experiences are a big factor when developing a project with challenging subject matter. Chapter 3 outlines how the emotional investment required on the part of heritage professionals working with survivors of violence and cultural discrimination should fundamentally differ from the investment of care given to other curatorial projects. When the nature of the content is so emotionally charged, the potential for complications to arise during working partnerships is greater (Smith and Fouseki 2011). The possibility of failure could mean drawing further divides

between communities of people, or worse, re-traumatizing those involved in a project. This chapter highlights how culturally specific protocols are driving the work that institutions are doing with challenging subject matter, particularly in terms of how to take care of one another during the process of project development. I stress here how working with survivors of trauma is not just about creating a successful exhibition; in the end the exhibition is but one part of the museological process. Rather, this work comes with the belief that healing for survivors of trauma can occur through ongoing relational practices and the possibility for this healing is part of the transformative potential of museological work.

Chapter 4 strongly indicates that the flexibility of smaller, community-driven institutions where the needs of participants in the project remain central in the curation process and where interdepartmental communication is fluid stand as strong examples of human rights work being produced through the space of the museum. The success of these institutions has come, in part, from working on small-scale projects that are directly in contact with the community and remain rooted in the needs of the community. As such, I emphasize that partnerships between smaller galleries and larger museums exist as valuable sites of institutional collaboration in Canada. Large museums can benefit directly from the community collaborations that smaller institutions are better equipped to conduct. Human rights work is strongest when functioning as a network of collaborators.

Finally, this research indicates museums are situated as key players in the ongoing development of human rights discourses in Canada. Museum exists as physical places where the work of heritage can be performed. Museums create and contribute to public and legal understandings of rights and justice as produced through the pedagogies and epistemologies of museum practices, and these practices come to educate and inform the greater public about acts of discrimination, cultural inequality, violence, and genocide that have occurred *in* Canada. Museums provide physical spaces where the

public can negotiate what human rights and cultural diversity mean in the context of Canadian nationalism, but they also create and implement the politics of cultural recognition and processes of reconciliation that have been at the forefront of much of the practice of Canadian heritage work over the last 25 years. As this project developed, it became clear that, as much as this research was about museum practice, it was also about the development of an understanding of Canada. The development of rights is the development of Canada. This thread follows the history of what has happened on these lands, and heritage spaces are very much part these interactions, not just because they show or exhibit these histories, but because their very creation is intertwined with the creation of Canada as a nation and the rights that have been overlooked or violated throughout this process. It is for this reason that museums should operate as key sites for the production and dissemination of new knowledge that take account of these historical processes.

### **Significance of Research**

The outcome of this research is significant for several reasons. First, as an ethnographic study into how human rights exhibitions are designed in Canada, this research provides valuable insight into the challenges faced by heritage professionals during exhibition and programming development and how, in response to these challenges, specific strategies are being created to work with difficult subject matter. As such, this project contributes to notions of applied museological practice, for the findings presented here have the potential to be of substantive use in aiding other heritage professionals to create future projects of this nature.

Second, on a theoretical level, the results of this research contribute to the growing international field of human rights museology by demonstrating how museological work dealing with human rights violations is currently being conducted in Canada. This allows the policies and procedures presently underway in Canadian museological practices to

be put in conversation with international processes of human rights exhibition and programming development.

Third, this research provides insights into how narratives concerning human rights violations in Canada are given the space to be shared through museological practices. These narratives challenge the dominant national history of Canada by delivering a more variegated and nuanced understanding of the experience of discrimination and cultural inequality in Canada through individual and community stories. This research demonstrates how the nature of partnerships and collaborations with survivors and the families of survivors are driving Canadian institutions to create new forms of practice that take into consideration the very real implications of who benefits from the outcome of museum projects that deal with difficult subject matter. Finally, this research stresses how Canadian museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must take a stance on issues related to human rights. Human rights are not about being neutral. Human rights as practice requires an institutional position.

### **Areas for Future Research**

Given the year of the completion of this dissertation, a very clear place of future research aligns with Canada's 2017 national celebrations. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, Canada celebrates 150 years as a nation. In 2015, the Government of Canada released the "Canada 150 Fund" which has provided \$200 million worth of funding to heritage institutions and organizations seeking to hold events and exhibitions in July 2017 (Government of Canada 2015a). As I complete this dissertation at the onset of summer 2017, many museums and galleries have already showcased the agenda set by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to celebrate historical moments in Canadian history that have anniversaries between 2012 and 2017 (House of Commons Canada 2012). Examples of these "milestones" include the War of 1812, the creation of the Red River Settlement, events of World Wars I and II, and the Canadian Flag at 50 (Government of Canada 2015b). Yet despite the to highlight the contributions of

Indigenous peoples to the nation, emphasize Canada's multiculturalism, and celebrate Canada as a country welcoming to immigrant communities a call to highlight the contributions of Indigenous peoples to the nation, emphasize Canada's multiculturalism, and celebrate Canada as a country welcoming to immigrant communities in the official report authored by the Heritage Committee (House of Commons Canada 2012), the experiences of cultural minority groups are, for the most part, absent from this list of historical milestones. Furthermore, these celebrations are silent about the more unsettling moments in Canadian history; moments that may be contested or difficult to comprehend such as the marginalization of cultural groups in Canada or the systematic acts of cultural genocide conducted by the Canadian government towards Indigenous peoples (TRC 2015). A further study into Canada's commemorative events and museum exhibitions slated for July 1<sup>st</sup> including the final phase of development and opening of the new Canada History Hall at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH), would complement this research immensely. How are contested histories going to be curated into national, federally funded events and exhibitions, and what "counter" events, exhibitions, or artistic productions are being produced for 2017 that seek to highlight *alternate* stories of Canada at 150 years? Given the findings of my dissertation, I am curious to know, in particular, how community museums are going to frame this history and what new, community-generated knowledge they will produce about Canada's past.

### **Limits of this Research**

As mentioned in the introduction, there are many ways that a project of this nature could have taken place, and in creating parameters of rights research for this project, I had to exclude from the outset many stories of rights violations across Canada that could easily be taken up in a capacity that extends this work. Furthermore, as a project that speaks to the landscape of rights-based work across Canada, this project sadly excludes examples from the Maritimes, the North, and Québec, which would all add tremendous depth to the study.

As this was a project based on interviews with those involved in the heritage community, not necessarily those who may have suffered from experiences related to these three apologies themselves, I acknowledge the lack of community voice in the presentation of this material. Though many I interviewed did have direct personal and family experiences with the acts of discrimination and violence associated with these three apologies in Canada, this was not something I was seeking in my research participants, though obviously these direct experiences were of immense value to the outcome of this research. However, the community that is represented here is very much a community of heritage professionals, and in this capacity, it is a community of which I feel a part. I am, by full admission, a novice academic and aspiring museum professional. I speak here as a student, who is eager to learn but limited in my own life experiences of working in cultural institutions. I write drawing on the experiences of others, and I acknowledge here that this research is, in a sense, limited by my own experience. I am, however, an optimist. While I am critical of the work that museums undertake, as the next generation of practitioner in this industry I am passionate about the work museums can do to be spaces that create change.

### **Final Thoughts**

During one of my many walking breaks in between writing sessions on this dissertation, I ran into a young Syrian woman and her mother who were lost looking for the Vulnerable Immigrants Services building in Victoria that offers services to refugees. Neither of them spoke English, and both shivered in the cold hunting around the block for where this building might be. After helping them find the entrance, I was struck with an overwhelming moment of self-reflection concerning the privilege of my position: to be taking a break from writing about rights-based issues in museums in the safety of my home surrounded by a community that supports me. To be writing about rights without having any conception of what not having those rights would be like in context of war. To have no real conception of a life lived in fear—fear of violence, of hate, and the fight for everyday survival. I was reminded that the apologies that frame this research exist

because people in Canada have lived, and continue to live, with these fears. And so, I was reminded in this moment, to check my privilege.

I was reminded also of how we need places that actively produce knowledge and teachings about critical issues in our world. Places like museums can serve as sites of public education that offer the potential for dialogue and debate. As I write this conclusion in 2017, I cannot help but personally reflect on the year that has passed. There have been countless attacks motivated by hate and terror. This last year has been one where policies of hate, a lack of education, anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, and anti-cultural diversity have held solid ground on the platforms of international government elections. My heart, like many others, has sunk heavy, thinking of the lack of empathy that so many people carry towards others. And so, in this time of turmoil, what are we asking museums to be? What role can they play locally, nationally, and globally? How can cultural institutions step up, take a stance, and be part of a critical dialogue about how to make difference okay? How do we continue to provide spaces to have critical conversations about cultural diversity and equality? These are questions that need to be asked. To be relevant as public institutions, museums need to be pushed to continue to find their purpose.

Museum should be places of engagement where we come to feel connected to others. They are fixtures in our urban landscapes, whether large national institutions or small, community-run gallery spaces. Regardless of size or scope, as public institutions it is up to us as heritage professionals, as it is to the public, to push museums to be something more. We need to trust in the process of museum work and recognize that this work takes time. Through time, positive changes can take place, but this requires the intervention and involvement of community members, scholars, activists, and artists. It is these interventions and involvements that make public institutions accountable. And so, given the question originally posed: what is the purpose of museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Perhaps the better question should be—*what do we need museums to be*

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### Films Referenced

*In Search of Soul: Building the Canadian War Museum*. 2005. Film. Directed by Katherine Jeans.

### Web Resources

Canadian Human Rights Commission

<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/eng>

Canada's Human Rights History

<http://historyofrights.ca/>

Centre for Ethnographic Research and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Violence

<http://cerev.concordia.ca/>

Centre for Human Rights Research University of Manitoba

<http://chrr.info/>

Centre for Imaginative Ethnography

<http://www.imaginativeethnography.org>

Centre for Oral History and Digital Story Telling

<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/>

Canadian Museum of History

<http://www.historymuseum.ca/>

Canadian War Museum

<http://www.warmuseum.ca/>

Creative Conciliations

<http://conciliations.ca>

Drawing on Identity: Inkameep Day School & Art Collection

<http://www.inkameepdayschool.ca/>

Federation of International Human Rights Museums

<http://www.fihrm.org/>

Historical Dialogues, Justice, and Memory Network

<http://historicaldialogues.org/>

Human Rights Research and Education Centre University of Ottawa

<https://cdp-hrc.uottawa.ca/>

Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre UBC

<http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/indian-residential-school-centre/>

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

<http://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home/>

Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta. Online Resource.

<http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks/credits.htm>

McGill Centre for Human Rights & Legal Pluralism

<https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/mcgill-centre-human-rights-legal-pluralism>

Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Research

<http://migs.concordia.ca/>

Niitsitapiisinni Our Way of Life. Online Resource.

<http://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/>

Nisga'a Lisims Government

<http://www.nisgaanation.ca/museum>

Landscapes of Injustice

<http://www.landscapesofinjustice.com/>

Reconciliation Canada

<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg>

*"Revitalizing Japantown?"* The Right to Remain. A Unifying Exploration of Human Rights, Branding, and Place

<http://www.revitalizingjapantown.ca/>

The International Council of Museums

<http://icom.museum/>

The ReDress Project

<http://www.theredressproject.org/>

The Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre

<http://shingwauk.org/srsc/>

Thinking through the Museum: Difficult Knowledge in Public

<http://thinkingthroughthemuseum.org/>

UNESCO Slaves Routes Project

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/>

University of British Columbia: The Chinese Experience in British Columbia 1850-1950

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/index.html>

University of Victoria: Chinese Artifacts Project

<https://ccap.uvic.ca/index.php/>

We Were So Far Away | The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools

<http://weweresofaraway.ca/>.

Where Are the Children?

<http://wherearethechildren.ca/en>

100 Years of Loss

<http://100yearsofloss.ca/en>

## Appendix 1

### Research Participant Interviews

Anonymous. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014*. Ottawa. [Recording in possession of author]. Canadian War Museum.

Baird, Jill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Curator of Education and Public Programs, UBC Museum of Anthropology

Broome, Skooker. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Exhibition Designer, UBC Museum of Anthropology

Brown, Pamela. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Curator, Pacific Northwest, UBC Museum of Anthropology

Carter, Beth. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author]. Director/Curator, Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre/ Former Curatorial Assistant Native North America, Glenbow Museum

\*As of 2016 now Director of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Art, Vancouver

Cunningham, David. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Exhibition Designer, UBC Museum of Anthropology

\*Retired as of 2016

Hughes, Mary Jo. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author]. Director/Curator, Legacy Art Galley

Ito, Momoko. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author]. General Manager of Operations, Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, Village of New Denver

\*As of 2016 now Director of the Japanese Hall General Manager, Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall

Janes, Robert. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014*. Canmore. [Recording in possession of author]. Former Director of the Glenbow Museum, Founding Director of the Prince of Whales Heritage Centre, Independent Scholar, Chief Emeritus of *Museum Management and Curatorship*

- Lee, Paul. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Curator of Chinese Canada Military Museum  
\*As of 2015 Second Vice-President, Board of Directors, Chinese Canada Military Museum
- Lyons, Kathryn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Senior Interpretive Planner, Canadian War Museum
- McLennan, Bill. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Curator, Pacific Northwest, UBC Museum of Anthropology  
\*Retired as of 2016
- Morrison, David. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Director, Research & Content, Canadian History Hall, Canadian Museum of History
- Oliver, Dean. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Director of Research, Canadian Museum of History
- O'Quinn, Sandra. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014*. Ottawa. [Recording in possession of author]. Learning Specialist, Canadian War Museum
- Ogden, Glenn. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Creative Development Specialist, Canadian War Museum
- Reid, Linda Kawamoto. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Burnaby. [Recording in possession of author]. Research Archivist, Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre
- Riedel, Caroline. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author]. Curator of Collections, Legacy Art Gallery
- Roby, Nadja. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014*. Gatineau. [Recording in possession of author]. Manager, Repatriation & Indigenous Relations, Canadian War Museum
- Schmidt, Joanne. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014*. Calgary. [Recording in possession of author]. Acting Curator Native North America & World Cultures Collections/ Collections Technician, Glenbow Museum
- Shelton, Anthony. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Director, UBC Museum of Anthropology

- Thomas, Robina. (Qwul'sih'yah'maht). 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author]. Director Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement/ Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Victoria
- Thomson, Grace Eiko. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Community Activist/Former Director/Curator Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre
- Walsh, Andrea. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*. Victoria. [Recording in possession of author]. Principle Investigator, Residential and Indian Day School Research/Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria
- Wong, Larry. 2014. *Interview with J. Robinson on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2014*. Vancouver. [Interview notes in possession of author]. Community Historian/Advisor, Chinese Canadian Military Museum
- Yu, Henry. 2015. *Interview with J. Robinson on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Vancouver. [Recording in possession of author]. Associate Professor, Department of History, University of British Columbia/Advisor, Chinese Canadian Military Museum

## Appendix 2

### *Letter of Introduction and Project Intent (sent via email)*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Jennifer Robinson and I am a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria. I am writing to you to inquire whether you and other members of your museum staff would be interested in participating in my upcoming doctoral research project. Please consider this email as both an introduction to my intended research and myself.

For my project, I am looking to speak with institutions and research collectives that are or have been, exhibiting issues related to human rights abuses that have occurred in Canada. In order to narrow the focus of my project, I have chosen institutions that have created (or are in the process of creating) exhibitions that relate to human rights violations that have led to official national apologies by the Canadian government: the Chinese Head Tax and Chinese Immigration Laws, Japanese Internment during WWII, and Indian Residential Schools. My preliminary research questions are as follows:

- What variety of institutions and research collectives are contributing to this form of exhibition work in Canada and how are human rights abuses that have occurred in Canada being displayed in these Canadian galleries and exhibition spaces?
- What are the challenges faced and strategies deployed by heritage professionals when working with dark and difficult subject matter? Material pertaining to discrimination, cultural inequalities, violence, war and genocide.
- What partnerships are established between heritage professionals and various community members in order to create exhibitions of this type?
- What is the role of both material culture and survivor testimony in processes of creating human rights exhibitions?

Rather than conducting an in-depth case study of only a few chosen institutions, this project will juxtapose the processes of exhibition making currently or recently, underway in a series of museum institutions, gallery spaces, and research collectives in order to assess the exhibition landscape of human rights issues in Canada. From my understanding the \_\_\_\_\_ has a permanent display dedicated \_\_\_\_\_ and it for this reason that I have selected the CWM as one of my eight fieldwork sites.

Given this introduction to my project, I am writing to you to ask the likely hood of conducting interviews with you and other members of the curatorial, design and programming staff regarding the building this particular exhibition, but also exhibitions dealing with similar topics as I am certain the \_\_\_\_\_ confronts on a consistent basis. My interview questions are designed to ask curators, designers, programmers, and when applicable directors and collections staff, to speak about the processes involved in creating exhibitions of this nature at their respective institutions.

I have put together a list of people from the \_\_\_\_ that I would love the opportunity to interview that I am assuming would be involved in processes of exhibition and programming design. This includes: \_\_\_\_ I would be looking to conduct interviews in the fall and into the New Year, so I have quite a lot of flexibility to match everyone's schedules in terms of interview time. Ideally, I would like to come to \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_.

If you and other members of the \_\_\_\_ are interested in participating, I will have to send along an official invite to participate in my research in order to satisfy the ethics requirement of my university, but for now I am trying to gain some idea of the various institutions and various people who would actually be willing to talk with me so I can include this in the final version of my research proposal, which I am scheduled to defend in early June. I am more than happy to send along my final proposal to members of the \_\_\_\_ once my committee has approved it.

A final note, after consulting the \_\_\_\_ websites, I was not exactly clear the best approach for initiating such a research project, and so as \_\_\_\_, I have written to you first. It is my hopes that perhaps you could guide me on such matters - should I send this initial request to research to another department prior to consulting staff directly? Alternatively, I can send this email directly to your colleagues that I have listed or any others that you feel I have not included here.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks for reading such a long email and for considering participating in this project. I very much look forward to your response and to your suggestions.

Thank you,

Jennifer

## Appendix 3

### *Official Request to Participate*

#### **Request to Participate in Doctoral Research**

**UVIC Ethics # 14-232**

Dear (name of potential participant),

My name is Jennifer Robinson and I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria, working under the supervision of Dr. Andrea Walsh. As a partial fulfillment of my PhD program I am pursuing a yearlong ethnographic research project. For this project, I will be conducting interviews with a number heritage professionals at eight exhibition institutions across Canada. The purpose of this research project is to juxtapose the processes of exhibition making currently, or recently, underway in a series of museum institutions, gallery spaces, and research collectives in order to assess what the exhibition landscape of human rights issues looks like in Canada.

If you are interested in sharing your knowledge about the processes of exhibition design at your institution, I would like to schedule an interview with you that will last for one to two hours at your place of employment at a time that is convenient for you.

Your decision to participate in this project is entirely free, informed, and voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If you are able to participate in this study, please contact me by telephone at (phone number) or by e-mail at (email)

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, I would be happy to discuss these with you. In addition, if you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, telephone: (250) 472-4545 email: [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)

Sincerely,

Jennifer C. Robinson, PhD Candidate  
Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria  
Cornett Building Room B228  
3800 Finnerty Road (Ring Road)  
Victoria, BC, Canada, V8P 5C2

## Appendix 4

### Research Participant Consent Form

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#### UVIC Ethics Research # 14-232

**Project Title:** Examining the Landscape of Human Rights Exhibitions in Canada: An Ethnographic Study into Process and Design

#### **Funded by:**

Department of Anthropology Doctoral Fellowship 2011-2014

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship 2014-2016

#### **Researcher:**

Jennifer C. Robinson, PhD Candidate

Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria

Cornett Building Room B228

3800 Finnerty Road (Ring Road)

Victoria, BC, Canada, V8P 5C2

#### **Supervisor:**

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Associate Professor

Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria

Cornett Building Room B228

3800 Finnerty Road (Ring Road)

Victoria, BC, Canada, V8P 5C2

#### **Research Purpose:**

The purpose of this research project is to compare and contrast the processes of exhibition making currently, or recently, underway in a series of museum institutions, gallery spaces, and research collectives in order to assess what the exhibition landscape of human rights issues looks like in Canada.

#### **Objective(s) of the Research:**

1. To interview curators, exhibition designers, educators, public programmers, and when applicable directors and conservators, concerning the processes involved in creating exhibitions of this nature at their respective institutions
2. Through the use of photography and archival photographs, to visually document the various curatorial practices, methods of collections research, architectural design strategies, educational programming, and public outreach initiatives that these heritage professionals have and are developing in order to use the space of a gallery to tell difficult histories

3. To inventory and compare strategies and procedures currently used by Canadian heritage professionals, community consultants and academic researchers for working with emotionally-charged material associated with human rights abuses in Canada that can aid in the building of future exhibitions of this nature

**This Research is Important because:**

1. This research will provide valuable insight into the challenges heritage professionals meet during the process of exhibition developed and how, in response to these challenges, specific strategies are developed to work with difficult subject matter.
2. This research will contribute to the international heritage field of human rights museology by demonstrating how exhibition work dealing with human rights violations is currently being conducted in Canada
3. This research presents an opportunity to illuminate how ethical research practices in the space of Canadian institutions are evolving.
4. This research will provide insight into how narratives concerning human rights violations in Canada are produced through curatorial practices

**Participation:**

You have been chosen to participate in this project based on the position you hold within your research/museum institution. Your contact information was found via your research/museum institution webpage. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how you will be treated.

**Research Procedures:**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include one semi-structured interview, lasting no more than 60 minutes. The interview will take place at your place of employment in a location of your choosing such as your office or the exhibition galleries. You may also be invited to participate in a follow-up interview. If you are invited to participate in a second interview you will have the opportunity to provide consent for this interview by initialing this form. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. The researcher will also be making written notes of their observations in the galleries and taking photographs of exhibition displays. The researcher has sent a letter requesting permission to research to the head director or curator of your institution in order to do so. If photographs or videos are taken of you, your consent is requested by the researcher to use these images for research analysis and research dissemination. This information will be downloaded on to the personal computer of the researcher and saved on to the external hard drive owned by the researcher.

**Benefits:**

This research will benefit other heritage professionals seeking to create future exhibitions related to human rights issues. This research will contribute to academic

theories of material and visual culture, ethical museum and exhibition practice and human rights discourse in Canada.

**Risks:** There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research, however the material is sensitive in nature. If you feel distressed by the interview, please feel free to request breaks or to stop the interview at any time.

**Withdrawal of Participation:**

You may withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence. Should you withdraw, it is requested that the information gathered from you up to the point of your withdrawal may still be used in by the researcher. If you agree, your initials are required at the end of this form. If you do not agree, your data will be electronically deleted from the hard drive of the researcher. This will only be asked if you choose to withdraw.

**Continued or On-going Consent:**

To make sure that your continued consent is given to participate in this research, your initials are requested on a section at the end of this form. This will allow the researcher to use information gathered during this interview in future research.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:**

It is understood by the researcher that the information you share in this interview has been disclosed in a relationship of trust with the expectation that it will not be used inappropriately, out of the context of this research project, or given to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding set forth in this consent form. However, as you hold a public position at your research/museum institution and your contact information is easily available on the Internet, it will not be possible for the researcher to maintain the anonymity of your identity in this project or guarantee the confidentiality of the interview process. Therefore, an additional space has been provided for you to initial waving the confidentiality of this interview knowing you will be identified and credited by name in the results of this study.

**Research Results will [may] be Used/Disseminated in the Following Ways:** It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: published articles; doctoral dissertation; class presentations; presentations at scholarly meetings. If requested a copy of the final dissertation will be shared directly with the participants of this study.

**Questions or Concerns:**

Contact the researcher using the information at the top of page 1  
Contact the Human Research Ethics Office,  
University of Victoria, (250) 472-4545 ethics@uvic.ca

**Consent:** Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Consent to Visually Recorded Images/Data:**

Sign your initials only if you consent

Photos may be taken of me for:      Analysis \_\_\_\_\_ Dissemination \_\_\_\_\_

Videos may be taken of me or:      Analysis \_\_\_\_\_ Dissemination \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent to Wave Confidentiality:**

I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study.

I consent to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

**Consent to Future Use of Data**

I consent to the use of my data in future research: \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

I do not consent to the use of my data in future research: \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research: \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

**Consent to Follow Up Interview**

I consent to be contacted for a second interview: : \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

I do not consent to contacted for a second interview: : \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

**\*\*Consent to Future Use of Data if You Withdraw from Study: (only to initial if you withdraw from study)**

I consent to the use of my data collected before I withdrew from this project:

\_\_\_\_\_

I do not consent to the use of my data as I have withdrawn from this project:

\_\_\_\_\_

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and the researcher will take a copy***

## Appendix 5

### *Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews with Heritage Professionals*

1. What types of exhibitions would you characterize your institution/research collective as creating? Are there certain themes or issues that your institution prioritizes when choosing or designing exhibitions?
2. How are project ideas for exhibitions generated within your institution/research collective? Curators? Community initiatives? Students? What are the major policies and procedures involved in exhibition development?
3. How does your institution/research collective acquire funding for exhibitions? (Grants, donors, private funds, municipal/provincial/federal funding, fundraising)
4. Does your institution/research collective have a collection of objects? If so, what are the object selection criteria in your institution for exhibitions? Are exhibitions geared to fit objects already in the collection? Has object storage and handling practices changed in years since the Task Force Document?
5. Can you discuss the process involved in designing -----exhibition(s)? (This question references specific exhibitions that curators/museums/galleries have created that deal with specific human rights issues) Public and educational programming for said exhibition?
6. What was the impetus for this exhibition? What were/are the institutional aims or goals for creating such an exhibition?
7. Can you speak to challenges that your institution or your department has faced when building this exhibition or others like it? How has your institution responded to these challenges?
8. What visitor responses have you received over said exhibition?
9. How would define the terms “community” and “collaboration” in the context of designing exhibitions with difficult subject matter?
10. Has your institution collaborated with survivors of human rights abuses in the past?
11. Are there research protocols within your institution for working with survivors of trauma? If so, how have these been developed? Can you give examples?
12. When working with difficult subject matter, how does or has your institution create a respectful working conditions? Respectful and safe conditions for visitors?
13. How do you view the role of material and visual culture when designing exhibitions with difficult subject matter? What are the object selection criteria in your institution for such exhibitions?
14. Has, or does your institution/research collective define human rights in the context of exhibitions? Is “human rights” a term that is brought into the actual exhibition design or discussions during exhibition development?
15. What future goals does your institution/research collective have for exhibition topics?