The modification of objects includes both individual acts that physically mark, as well as sustained patterns of wear. Physical marks of use, re-use, re-decoration, and works-in-progress draw attention to the temporality of an object’s lifecycle, and its existence in a dynamic culture. In colonial contexts, modification as a form of individual or cultural ownership can be used to oppose assumptions of assimilation by revealing ways people appropriated new materials. Objects in the Smithsonian’s Ainu collection provide evidence of how “Ainu-ness” continued to be created in the face of Meiji-era internal colonialism in Japan, and how it has continued to be created in conjunction with increased tourism and cultural recognition efforts. Building on research produced for the Smithsonian’s 1999 exhibit *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, and using contemporary and historical objects, I examine endurance of Ainu design in material and motif, as well as signs of the objects’ use and modification. Presence and absence of foreign materials, the re-application of decorative elements, and changing wear-patterns on objects of the same form together mark ways the Ainu maintained, and modified, cultural ownership.

Tattooing among Indigenous peoples around the world is not uncommon, and the Arctic is no exception. Tattooing in the Arctic occurred among its people in differing, yet similar, forms. At the same time art on objects occurred, often developing into highly elaborate and sophisticated designs and motifs. Through examination of objects in conjunction with common tattoo motifs in the Arctic one can see the similarities between the motifs and designs found on tattoos and objects such as needle cases. There has been extensive, yet separate, research on objects in Alaska as well as on Indigenous tattooing in the Arctic. My research seeks to posit the two phenomenon, tattooing and engraving needle cases, and make connections (or perhaps reconnections) between them by framing the lens with which we look at one object with the lens we use to look at the other object. Perhaps new knowledge can be gained about art motifs on objects and tattoos that may have been overlooked.
Native American ethnographic objects have entered museums through a variety of collecting methods. As a result, many of these items have lost the ties that connect them to the names of their original makers and owners. This loss in documentation is reflected in the history of some of the NMNH’s collection of Apsáalooke material culture. While the loss in paper documentation could prove to be a problem, I argue that the close examination of objects can demonstrate a method of another form of documentation preserved in the object itself. In starting my research, I focus on the design and manufacture of one man’s war shirt that was collected in 1898. How then can a detailed formal analysis of beadwork enrich museum records and lead to the process of reconnecting these objects back to their source communities? By studying the techniques and characteristics of the beadwork on this war shirt, my preliminary findings have opened up possible avenues for this analysis to link objects back to their potential makers.

Basketmaking among Native communities in the Southeastern United States is a persistent and adaptive cultural practice. Produced for millennia, baskets in this region take form through a variety of materials and manufacturing techniques. Understandings of how to create these items has been passed on largely through learning networks that span generations. Here I will discuss my ongoing research into the transmission of this technical knowledge and outline my preliminary findings from an object-based analysis of the ethnographic collections at the National Museum of Natural History. Through a close examination of basketry from across the Southeast, namely items made by Alabama, Biloxi, Choctaw, Eastern Cherokee and Koasati (Coushatta) artists, I will explore the variety of methods and practices associated with the baskets of these communities and, where possible, those of individual weavers. Posing questions about the influence of social organization on material culture, these baskets offer a potential avenue for the study of cultural diversity across space, time, and social networks.

**Discussants**

**Jennifer Kramer**  
Curator, Pacific Northwest and Associate Professor, Anthropology  
University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology

**Gerald McMaster, PhD**  
Independent Curator
A model house filled with miniature agricultural tools and musical instruments whose real-sized counterparts compose the ethnology collection and a set of photographs picturing wider worlds of distant economic realities - welcome to the Smithsonian’s Puerto Rico. Tacking between ethnology objects, accession records and a photograph collection, I will explore how material selection and classification index historical episodes of museum acquisition mediated by imperialistic twentieth century practices, how photographic cultural representations evidence an obscured but not unrecoverable set of social relationships between diverse museum actors and local communities and how the dynamic role of museum objects in contemporary identity movements can enable anthropologists to productively contribute to ever-evolving, collaborative ways of knowing. I contend that only by recognizing and foregrounding the multi-faceted, historically contingent dialectic which entangles object and archival assemblages with the individuals who represent and are represented in museum contexts can we study the related, yet distinct past and present processes of identity construction, negotiation and transformation.

From 1938-1939 Ruth Landes, a Jewish American anthropologist, conducted fieldwork with Candomblé communities in Salvador, Bahia in Brazil. Her findings in City of Women (1947) were that Afro-Brazilian women were the powerful matriarchal leaders of these communities in which Yoruba deities are worshiped. Landes intended to donate 34 items she collected during her fieldwork; unfortunately only 9 un-catalogued pieces are in the ethnology collection and include 4 “Bahiana”/“black lady” dolls and 1 “black boy” doll. How did these dolls represent what she believed she had learned about Candomblé and Afro-Brazilian culture? In order to get a clearer picture of Landes’s world of objects but also to see if the dolls are as unique as Landes seemed to think they were, I looked closely at the dolls in Landes’s small collection, but also dolls/figurines within the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, Brazilian indigenous, Caribbean, and West African collections. Additionally, I examined Landes’s photographs from her fieldwork, her accession file and letters from her research partner and significant other, Edison Carneiro, an Afro-Brazilian Studies scholar.
Tourist art of the Niagara region is for many people synonymous with the gaudy, kitschy taste that permeated the Victorian era. But beneath all those layers of sequins, beads, and velvet lies a compelling narrative that can help to illuminate Anglo-American and Native American conceptions of identity. The particular breed of tourist art that I will focus on here is the Iroquois beaded Glengarry cap. This style of cap began as a part of the traditional Highlander costume in Scotland. Iroquois artists would have encountered the Glengarry style cap through either the British military stationed in Canada or among the Scottish ranks of fur traders in the Hudson’s Bay Company. Passing through many iterations across continents and contexts, we arrive at a final product that is both Scottish and Iroquois. To fully understand these caps it is necessary to think of them not as independent objects, but rather as items of costume that are meant to be worn, their narratives becoming inextricably linked with the narratives of the wearer. I will explore who was wearing these hats and what it meant to wear one.

**CORDELIA FREWEN, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – ANTHROPOLOGY**

**CRAFTING MEXICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: TLAQUEPAQUE FIGURINES IN UNIVERSAL EXPOSITIONS IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY**

In the late 19th century, botanist Edward Palmer and ethnologist Walter Hough, both affiliated with the U.S. National Museum, collected a number of ceramic figurines by Pantaleón Panduro, a self-taught indigenous artist from Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, Mexico. Panduro’s work was included in multiple universal expositions in the 1880s as part of the Mexican government exhibits. I explore two genres of Panduro’s work represented in the museum’s collection: busts of identifiable political figures and scenes of daily life of unidentified campesino figures. Both genres are highly realistic but project different narratives of Mexican national identity. I interrogate how the Mexican state deployed these figurines on the international stage of the fairs, which seemingly diverged from a broader state discourse of Mexican identity as rooted in the archaeological Aztec and Maya past. I examine who and what Panduro represented through his art; consider who his intended audience may have been; and explore the humorous elements of his scenes.

**DISCUSSANTS**

**JOSHUA BELL**
**CURATOR, GLOBALIZATION**
**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

**GERALD MCMASTER, PhD**
**INDEPENDENT CURATOR**
The Philippine collection at the Smithsonian Institution constitutes one of the largest assemblages of objects acquired in less than half a century. To make the acquaintance of this vast collection entails an engagement on two levels: from the level of the database and that of the actual physical object. Such an encounter then acquires the nature of the nonmaterial and material, which shapes the character of this person-object engagement. In navigating through this two forms of data sets, one finds the work that objects as agents perform, which opens up possibilities of inquiring into other agencies which the objects evoke. In this paper, I present a way of approaching a collection on the whole, and examine helmets listed under the category of “Moro.” As objects considered “thick” and heavy with their past, these helmets take the researcher into a journey of revelations that both illuminate and confound.

Katie Apsey, University of Wisconsin-Madison – Art History
**Entangled Narratives:** Performing, Representing, and Negotiating Indigeneity at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898

This presentation examines the competing yet interwoven narratives of Native American culture presented at the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition held in Omaha, NB in 1898. Omaha was unique in that it was the first international fair to attempt to incorporate a representative “Indian Congress” into the standard exposition offerings of static anthropological displays and mannequin “life groups,” Wild West attractions, and BIA Indian Boarding School’s demonstrations of supposed “assimilation.” Attracting 545 delegates from 23 different tribes, the Trans-Mississippi Indian Congress camp and the various intercultural performances and cultural negotiations that took place on the fairgrounds became the locus of powerful struggles over how and why Indigenous culture should be represented as part of the exposition’s nation-building agenda. By using photographic documentation of Native performers and representatives taken at the exposition and comparing them with mannequin life group displays designed by U.S. anthropologists H.H. Holmes, James Mooney, Frank Cushing, and W.J. Hoffman, this presentation aims to bring to the surface the unsettled and entangled narratives of “culture-making” and cultural survivance being embodied at the Omaha Expo.
On May 21, 1875, a group of Indian men from the Southern Plains arrived at Fort Marion in the city of St. Augustine, Florida, under Richard Henry Pratt, an officer in the United States 10th Calvary. Deemed ringleaders of raids on white settlers in the Southern Plains, they went from being warriors to becoming prisoners. While imprisoned, the men continued one tradition from their plains heritage; the drawing of their exploits. Through the examination of the Fort Marion ledger drawings in the National Anthropological Archives, the first steps in a larger study were explored: examining the presence of English language words written by the Indian artists on their drawings and its connection to the development of new literacy. Through the lines of the artists, the pen and pedagogy of the time can be brought back to life revealing components of the context that brought language and drawing together.

How can Hawaiian ethnographic collections serve as interlocutors between the discipline of anthropology and the Native Hawaiian community (Kanaka Maoli)? I explore this question through the study of the NMNH’s collections of Lei Niho Palaoa (necklaces made of human hair and ivory) and Pōhaku KuʻiʻAi (poi pounders). These two artifact sets are ubiquitously found in Hawaiian collections globally, yet lack sufficient textual documentation. Even with a lack of written records, these museum artifacts have numerous meanings for Kanaka Maoli. They are in essence tangible metaphors of the Hawaiian past. I juxtapose these objects and utilize an array of methods to reveal both underlying meanings in the objects and to reflect on how artifacts are (re)contextualized over time by Hawaiian and Western audiences. This approach is fruitful in the process of recovering indigenous terminologies and meanings that can be (re)integrated into Hawaiian cultural revitalization efforts and museum classifications.