

# **Exhibition Making in Crisis: professional identity and radical museum exhibition design in Britain after the Second World War**

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## **Summary:**

This article examines the shifting professional identities and forms of exhibition design that were activated by the post-war crisis in UK museums. Drawing on professional publications and museum archives across the UK, it focuses on museum exhibition design for 'ethnographic collections' between 1945 and 1965. It documents the sense of collections excess that occurred as objects returned from war-time storage to their bomb-damaged museums; it highlights how – as funding, materials and government attention turned to reconstruction elsewhere – museum staff faced this crisis alone.

The article identifies two key tropes in post-war museum exhibition design that relate to this crisis. Both draw upon a 'makeshift' approach and both can be aligned with a 'Do-It-Yourself' (DIY) ethic associated with a shortage of professional labour and more democratic modes of production. Firstly, some exhibition makers responded with creativity and innovation, drawing on new materials and commercial and artistic practices to design exhibitions that were radical for museums at this time. Without external support, museum technicians took a leading role in this experimental practice. Secondly, curatorial apathy towards display temporarily carved out inclusive spaces for artists, academics and local communities to design their own exhibitions in ways that remain radical in museums even today.

**Keywords:** museums, museum exhibition design, exhibition design, display design, exhibition history, professionalisation

Crisis reigned in post-war British museums, especially for curators of objects from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the indigenous Americas, or 'ethnographic collections' as they were known. In response, between 1945 and 1965, two new types of exhibition making emerged. First, although specialist museum design departments would not materialise until the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> some museums made the most of existing internal expertise, responding with creativity and experimentation. This period saw public and professional expectations of exhibitions raised through the influence of an emerging cadre of professional exhibition designers who had trained in art and architecture schools, and honed their practice during World War II. State-produced exhibitions had toured museums during the conflict, and high-profile, professionally designed exhibitions such as 'Britain Can Make It' (V&A, 1946) and the Festival of Britain (nationwide, 1951) were celebrated and well attended.<sup>2</sup> As this article will show, these propaganda and commercial exhibition practices were tentatively acknowledged in museums too. 'Modern' exhibition techniques employing colour, moving image and graphic design were of specific interest, as were materials such as Perspex that had been popularised during the war. Yet, in practice, funds and external professional design support were unavailable to museums in the immediate post-war period. For many, these new techniques were also perceived as irreconcilable with long-held ideals of sober and scholarly display in museums. Within this dual context of heightened design awareness and creative isolation (both forced and self-imposed), museum-based curators and (crucially) their technicians took a central role in the experiments and innovations in

museum display of the period. Many of these developments focused on labour-saving techniques and exploratory practices that were intended to support a more secure and well-resourced future.

In a second mode of post-war practice, coherent display and design strategies were of little concern: exhibitions emerged instead as reactive by-products linked to the pressures of finding suitable homes for extensive collections. Yet almost paradoxically, as a result of this attitude to display, museum exhibition design became more inclusive of wider ranging exhibition audiences and makers. Some museum practitioners fled their damaged sites to make exhibitions beyond the museum, reaching those who had traditionally eschewed the museum space itself. Elsewhere, artists, academics, young people and local communities were temporarily accepted into the museum as exhibition makers in ways that troubled long-established hierarchies of museum production. Collections were also loaned to off-site events that were community based and community led. International visitors and local diaspora communities who found their cultural heritage represented in museum collections were particularly active in this extended form of exhibition making.

Post-war museum exhibition design was, then, rooted in an awareness of the professional design world beyond museums, yet isolated from its capacity and resources; it also drew in exhibition makers with limited professional design experience. As such, in both museum-led exhibitions, and those produced beyond the museum, exhibition design became a makeshift, pragmatic and self-help activity, here characterised as akin to 'Do-it-Yourself' or 'DIY'. The results of these endeavours were not necessarily progressive, nor born of progressive politics. However, from both a mid-century perspective, where the 'old type of

case chockfull of a miscellaneous variety of curios' was still a norm,<sup>3</sup> and our twenty-first-century vantage point, where destabilising the museum's authorial voice and sharing authority in exhibition making are still contested practices,<sup>4</sup> we might term them radical nonetheless.

The source material for this endeavour is drawn from the archives of national, local authority and independent museums across the UK. Trustee reports, curatorial correspondence, meeting minutes, public guidebooks and archived newspaper clippings provide insight into the professional perspectives of senior museum staff during this period. Extracts from oral history interviews with curators working in the 1960s, and systematic analysis of the *Museums Journal* and professional advice manuals between 1945 and 1965 are also employed. These present a range of professional opinion, from the highly personalised assessment, conditioned by memory and the interview/interviewee relationship, to the hyper-professionalised presentation, designed to conceal failings and guide others' activities towards excellence.

Yet this type of detailed research does not necessarily reveal the perspectives of those who were *not* invited to construct the curatorial archive. While the term 'exhibition makers' is very consciously used here to include the technicians and external collaborators who were so central to post-war museum exhibition design, in the archive these actors are not encouraged or supported to articulate their thoughts.<sup>5</sup> The role of technicians and external actors has the potential to be either underplayed or overstated in the official archive, depending on the agenda of the curator-author, and on whom they are addressing. The viewpoints of professional designers and architects – mostly peripheral to this story in any

case – are found in company archives beyond the scope of this piece. While most available sources are textual, rare photographs can hint at realities beyond the formal, sanitised nature of the written report. Yet colour images are unusual, and photographs mask the three-dimensional, tactile and multisensory nature of exhibition making and exhibitions. Visitor experiences are even more difficult to ascertain.

Yet, taking these conditions into account, exploration of these sources, across a range of institutions, throws up several common patterns of practice in UK museums at this time. It has been striking to observe how crisis and pragmatism regularly led to design innovations and radical forms of participation. Focusing on documents produced by curators gives us a sense of the priorities, hopes, and the things that mattered most. Often used as a tool to bid for resources, annual reports are more honest and revealing than we might suppose. While certainly partial, the extended archive of the museum supports a valuable insight into the emergence and professionalisation of modern museum exhibition design in the post-war period.

### **Crisis in the museum**

Museums seem to be in a perpetual state of crisis, not least in our current moment of ecological and social change. Yet specific crises demand specific responses. For example, Catherine Pearson has shown how, during the Second World War, museums responded to the evacuation of their objects and staff by hosting a lively programme of externally funded, state-organised temporary exhibitions. Remaining staff built on interwar strategic planning to trial new pedagogic principles in public programming, offering adult education in social

welfare and supplementary education for child evacuees.<sup>6</sup> After 1945, however, a different crisis emerged. Museums in Liverpool, Leeds, Bristol, London and elsewhere had taken direct hits to their sites, and as staff gradually returned from war duty, there were limited resources with which to rebuild. Exhibition makers had to contend with a reverse influx of returning collections: their damaged sites were now full of objects, and the government, instead of investing in museums as educational institutions to support the war effort, was distracted with post-war regeneration efforts in housing and defence.<sup>7</sup>

Even in these difficult times, curators of 'ethnography' were especially exposed. Specialist curatorial posts would increase in the mid-1960s as funds were directed to 'non-essential' municipal services, but for the first twenty years after the war, single or small numbers of curators were often responsible for very wide-ranging collections. Museum staff were rarely ethnographic specialists, and non-British material was often cared for by archaeologists or historians, some of whom were deeply uninterested in the material or had other pressing concerns. Resource-intensive with complex storage and conservation requirements, they were often perceived as a drain on institutions seeking to articulate their relevance in a post-war order where empire had become a controversial political and cultural subject.

While not unique in his perspectives, in 1961, the archaeology curator at Bristol Museum made an extreme case for the total removal of his institution's ethnographic collections. He argued that it was 'no longer reasonable to expect that the Department of Archaeology should include responsibility for Ethnography' and neither did 'Ethnography' merit its own department: 'The collections themselves are patchy', he argued, and 'no longer have their former popular appeal'.<sup>8</sup> Suggesting disposal 'by sale, gift or otherwise',<sup>9</sup> he and other

curators instead promoted a policy of 'regionalisation' based on 'local' collections.<sup>10</sup> While Bristol never fully enacted their curator's recommendations (though there was no ethnography gallery for many years), at Leicester, Leeds, the V&A, and several other institutions besides, similar perspectives were articulated and significant collections were sold or given to other institutions.

Where anthropologists in other times might have defended the value of global collections to UK museum audiences, in the mid-century, the academy was of little support: most anthropologists had turned away from museums towards fieldwork and university departments, with theoretical frameworks which officially devalued material culture.<sup>11</sup> There were some curators of archaeology and other subjects with an interest and expertise in ethnographic collections.<sup>12</sup> Yet in sum, the structures within which they worked were often difficult, creating a crisis of resources and motivation.

### **Post-war exhibition making**

Even in this context of limitation, exhibition making continued to take place. The appointment of in-house trained designers would come later, but museums did sometimes work with the architects employed across the local government services of which they were a part, collaborating on gallery colour and lighting, or case design.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes, display materials and cases came from external companies, like diorama specialists Rowland Ward Ltd, or museum fitters A. Edmonds & Co, Ltd of Birmingham. In London, HM Ministry of Works were responsible for building and maintaining Crown property, and partly accountable for post-war civic building projects including reconstructing the national

museums. However, for British Museum staff, the Ministry was often seen as a sluggish, conservative burden on curatorial efforts towards restoration. In 1950, Department of Ethnography staff complained that the reopening of their gallery, closed since the war, was stymied by 'the absence of adequate assistance' from Ministry carpenters and painters.<sup>14</sup> Subsequent annual reports blamed the Ministry for continued slow progress.

In the 1940s and 1950s, then, the conceptualisation and labour of exhibition making was largely undertaken by staff directly employed by museums. In part, this was of necessity; elsewhere, external support was explicitly rejected. Writing for the Museums Association's 1958 *Handbook for Museum Curators*, British Museum curator Bryan Cranstone deemed the employment of 'specialist exhibition arrangers', as he termed external designers, 'undesirable'. While conceding that museum exhibitions should be 'attractive', he argued that this was only a 'means not an end'. Ultimately, he argued, 'Only the curator has the knowledge to select from a number of similar specimens, to ensure that different aspects of a culture are given the right emphasis, to indicate affiliations by grouping – in fact, to ensure that the public obtains an accurate impression of the culture' displayed.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, critically, it was not only curators who produced exhibitions at this time. Samuel Alberti has highlighted 'the "invisible technicians" who [have always] kept museums afloat'.<sup>16</sup> Most museums had technicians attached to specific departments or working across collections, and larger institutions might have a 'Works Department' leading the construction of display furniture and object preparation for display.<sup>17</sup> Then, as now, the professional responsibilities of museum technicians or 'assistants' were regulated according to hierarchies of perceived capability and intellect.<sup>18</sup> The Museums Association's post-war



policy, published in 1945 as 'Museums and Art Galleries: A National Service', outlined a clear distinction between 'professional' and 'technical' staff. On the one hand, museum directors, curators and 'keepers' were expected to be of 'high educational standing', with subject-specialist 'expert knowledge'.<sup>19</sup> They were also to advise museum trustees 'on matters of policy' before 'giving effect' to these policies.<sup>20</sup> Technical staff, in contrast, were 'craftsmen' identified by their specific technical skills (often related to display), including taxidermy, model preparation and mount making.<sup>21</sup> At the British Museum, the Department of Ethnography was supported by two department-specific Senior Museum Assistants, L. R. Langton and H. J. Gowers. Where the keepers were identified as being responsible for geographically specific collections only, the assistants' long list of responsibilities included 'Mounting and exhibition work' ('under direction of [the] appropriate officer [curator] for each section').<sup>22</sup> By this time technicians had a set of professional structures supporting their work, from informal exchanges across museums to learn new techniques,<sup>23</sup> to the Museums Association's certificate for technicians, initiated in 1954. These directed divisions of intellectual and practical expertise were likely blurred in practice, but both curators and technicians had critical roles to play in the labour of museum exhibition making, particularly where external expertise was unavailable and/or explicitly rejected.

Within this context of in-house independence, both curators and technicians displayed a keen interest in experimenting with exhibition techniques. In 1954, Adrian Oswald, Keeper of Archaeology, Ethnography and Local History at the City Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham, described his colleagues' efforts on four new galleries exhibiting 'Near Eastern archaeology, Mediterranean civilizations, British prehistory, American archaeology, Oriental antiquities and [the] ethnography of the Pacific.'<sup>24</sup> During the two-year planning process,

external support came through case manufacture (by Edmonds & Co), as well as an (unknown) outside firm of architects. Dynamic gallery colour schemes had already been championed in a 1938 report on British Museums compiled by Sir S. Frank Markham, a British Member of Parliament and former Secretary of the Museums Association,<sup>25</sup> but it was the architects who appear to have proposed a departure from ‘the cream colour which for so long had been the stock background of the Museum’.<sup>26</sup> They recommended ‘smoke-grey walls, blue pillars and [a] pink ceiling’ with yellow ceiling and laylights.<sup>27</sup> Oswald also acknowledged the museum carpenters and electricians without whom ‘all this work could never have been carried out’.<sup>28</sup> Responding specifically to a need for collections storage, the carpenters built ten new cases across recesses, storage cupboards and hidden racks with sliding doors; the electricians installed florescent case lighting to replace the previous pendant bowls. The case displays were designed by four different curatorial staff, purposely given free rein in order to ‘give each gallery, and even each case, an individual character and yet conform to a general style.’<sup>29</sup> Oswald was proud of the ‘great variety of technique’ employed by the staff ‘each working on his own lines’.<sup>30</sup>

Oswald described their specific interests in colour, and light and shade. They placed materials including sand, matting and coloured cloth behind Perspex to ‘give different shades of reflection’ and ‘differentiate cultures’.<sup>31</sup> ‘Perspex’ was one brand name for the acrylic sheeting usually made of polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) developed during the war. After 1945, museums increasingly favoured Perspex over glass for its lightweight, shatterproof characteristics, light transmission, and flexibility in shape, colour and thickness. At Birmingham, Perspex stands were used and labels were printed inhouse on a ‘hot-press machine on transparent or coloured “Perspex” according to the type of background.’<sup>32</sup>

Echoing the turn to theatricality and Surrealism used in the design of mid-twentieth-century shop window displays and propaganda and information exhibitions,<sup>33</sup> other innovations were also employed in Birmingham (fig. 1). The Mexican stone mask display was particularly experimental, using 'a fluorescent tube set at the back of the bottom of a wall-case with an insulating-board screen erected in front of it' designed to 'throw light upwards' and 'accentuate the features' of the masks.<sup>34</sup> Apertures were cut into the screen to frame objects on stands behind. In the pre-war period, cube displays had been introduced to replace the ubiquitous flat shelving routinely used in museums,<sup>35</sup> but in the Aztec display, triangular stands were used, apparently to echo 'the shape of a Mexican pyramid.'<sup>36</sup> Such was the enthusiasm for exhibition design at Birmingham, that in 1954 the four curatorial departments arranged a small display at the National Trades and Home Life Exhibition (fig. 2).<sup>37</sup> Other museum staff elsewhere also demonstrated a keenness for innovation. While the Museum Association's 1958 *Handbook* omitted mention of the moving image technologies that had long influenced exhibition designers working outside the museum sector,<sup>38</sup> beyond the *official* guidance, such design forms slowly began to influence museum practice. David Boston, for example, then a temporary 'special officer' in Ethnology at Liverpool Museum, used film projections in his exhibitions on Arctic peoples in 1958, and another exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery in October 1960.<sup>39</sup>

The specific arrangement of objects was also a site for experimentation. While Markham in his 1938 report had noted that some museums had begun to display 'fewer specimens' in 'semi-isolation',<sup>40</sup> by the 1960s the stakes had been raised: at the British Museum, Keeper of Ethnography Adrian Digby sought to develop an objective standard for the ideal number

of objects in a single display case, or the 'density of museum exhibits', as he described it.<sup>41</sup> While acknowledging the 'skill of the exhibitor', Digby argued that density could be calculated through three indexes involving floor space, number of objects, size of objects, and 'the amount of glass exhibition surface [in relation] to a given area of floor' (fig. 3).<sup>42</sup> Ironically, through his own calculations, he surmised that the Polynesian bay in his museum's Ethnographical Gallery 'must be considered grossly overcrowded by any standards.'<sup>43</sup>

While museum staff developed their approaches to exhibition making in relative isolation, they nevertheless did so in relation to the design practices they observed elsewhere.

Although the Museums Association's *Handbook* cautioned that 'the purposes of commercial and museum exhibitions are quite different',<sup>44</sup> staff at Birmingham, in their engagement with the National Trades and Home Life Exhibition, were clearly framing themselves in relation to a commercial sector concerned with the promotion, sale and display of commodities. By 1961, at Leeds Museum too, staff understood their practice as specifically adopting 'modern display techniques... borrowed from trade fairs and exhibitions and shop window displays'.<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere, curators looked to other museums for inspiration: throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the International Council of Museums organised visits for museum practitioners worldwide to examine modern methods of display. These included trips to Switzerland in 1956 and to the Netherlands in 1962, where British curators commented on the 'beautifully displayed' collections, and 'high standards' in 'modern cases and lighting'.<sup>46</sup> At Belfast Museum and Art Gallery, Keeper of Art, J. Hewitt, introduced a new display paradigm for his institution's African collections 'conditioned by the changing cultural climate' and 'developments in modern art'; he drew on the Surrealist work of Jean

Miro in the 'amoeba-like shape' and 'asymmetrical balance' employed in his object mounts (fig. 4).<sup>47</sup> A 'collective label', which identified each object through a unique letter (A, B or C) and specific geographical location, but grouped them on a single piece of card under a joint title ('Primitive African Sculpture'), was also conceived as a particular innovation and developed with careful attention to the visual relationship between text and image. Its decorative border was inspired by West African basketry, and inspired by Trevor Thomas, an ethnography curator well known for his 'boldness' and 'audacity' in exhibitions,<sup>48</sup> who had used a similar design at Liverpool Museum in the 1930s.<sup>49</sup>

In the mid-1960s, as museums began more regularly to employ professional design staff, curators from institutions which did not yet have this luxury travelled to explore the impact of such workforce shifts. At Leeds Museum, retired colonial officer and honorary curator of ethnography, W. E. Nicholson, kept a sketchbook detailing his colleagues' practices elsewhere: in his small drawings and annotations, he identified the different uses of colour, materials, case form and arrangement, lighting and graphics at Sheffield Museum, the Horniman Museum and the British Museum (fig. 5). In his visit to the British Museum in 1965, he noted his responses to the inaugural exhibition designed by the museum's first in-house professional designer, Margaret Hall. In his sketches of her display furniture for 'Henry Christy: A Pioneer of Anthropology', he noted how 'Broad white board at top is good. So is gold hessian background. I don't like white board at bottom. Exhibit distinguished by brass drawing pins with Lettraset [*sic*] letters in them – good.'<sup>50</sup> A few years later, he noted how the British Museum was 'fond of arrangements of cubes, etc',<sup>51</sup> later using them in his own 1969 exhibition of Nigerian material culture. Also employing a comparative framework based on other museums, at the British Museum in 1958, Digby reflected to his trustees on

his own South American displays: despairingly, he admitted that 'Quite small provincial museums [he had] seen can do better, and compared with continental museums, this exhibition is pathetic.'<sup>52</sup>

The commercial sector and other museums were not the only sources of inspiration and motivation for museum staff at this time. Some looked to the past – to what they perceived as a happier age of museum exhibition making, when greater numbers of objects were exhibited. Here, they imagined, commercial techniques had been shunned, and curators had full control of their collections and displays.<sup>53</sup> Susan Pearce was a Curatorial Assistant at Liverpool Museum in 1965, and in a recent oral history remembered her own and senior colleagues' hostility to what she describes as the 'modern exhibition techniques' that were emerging. She recounts how an incoming director, Tom Hume, appointed in the late 1950s, wanted photographs, coloured maps, engraved Perspex – 'all the new techniques that were just beginning to come in'. This clashed with the approach of the long-standing curator Elaine Tankard, who had been responsible for some ethnographic material at the museum since 1931 and had more collections-focused ideas. At the time, Pearce was sympathetic to Tankard's perspective and aligned herself with her curatorial colleague. She was suspicious of the new ideas that 'were beginning to be talked about in the staff room' which centred around an imagined 'Scandinavian' style ('Habitat was beginning by then. And it looked sort of like that!'). Her concern was that these new technologies and styles did not 'add anything to what we might understand about the collections and the past and all that.'<sup>54</sup> In Pearce's memories, personal, national and cultural affiliations inflect debates around the materials and approaches to audience engagement at the heart of so-called 'modern exhibitions'. Where international influences threatened classic British display paradigms, and the

disruption of war was still keenly felt, the past was a reassuring site of professional identity and comfort.<sup>55</sup>

### **Makeshift museums and DIY**

Slowly, by the 1960s, shifting display ideas in object density, interpretation and arrangement, as well as materials such as Perspex and fluorescent lighting, were beginning to reach even the most war-ravaged of British institutions. Yet amongst all this contemplation of the commercial sector, other museums, and the past, for the majority of this post-war period, as noted, most exhibition making was located in the museum. While professional designers in museums were still a scarce luxury and materials still rationed, at the hands of museum curators and technicians, exhibition design took on what we might describe as a makeshift, improvisational character.

In his history of the British Museum, David Wilson has identified in the post-war period a continuation of an earlier 'make-do and mend spirit'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, while new materials were available to some institutions, at the British Museum, staff typed labels on 'card scrounged from stationary stores',<sup>57</sup> and 'trial[ed] exhibition arrangements with improvised cardboard fittings'.<sup>58</sup> By 1950, they had developed temporary measures for 45 out of a total 166 wall cases, and designed 'numerous fittings ... for construction as soon as Technical staff is provided by the Ministry of Works.'<sup>59</sup> Exhibitions progressed only as time allowed, and ongoing building repairs led to a particular display aesthetic: scaffolding was regularly erected in publicly accessible galleries, with cases temporarily covered and revealed again as work was completed. Wall cases were stripped and repainted in a piecemeal fashion as time

allowed or as damage caused by repair works necessitated.<sup>60</sup> Labels were often updated or introduced to galleries which had been open for a number of years. In 1959, Keeper of Ethnography Adrian Digby described his staff as 'sadly lacking' in experience of 'modern exhibition techniques'.<sup>61</sup> Some time later, he characterised the department's post-war practice as 'feel[ing] our way, shifting collections and filling in odd corners as space became available, or as rooms were taken from the department for other Museum purposes.'<sup>62</sup>

Across the country, in other museums, materials were also scarce: old museum cases were regularly repurposed, including at Birmingham where bronze desk cases had been 'inverted and mounted on the walls'.<sup>63</sup> At Liverpool, in 1953, for an exhibition on Tibetan material culture, the curator used old department-store mannequins,<sup>64</sup> and at the independent Powell-Cotton Museum in Kent, the curator made his own life-size human figures using 'plumber's tow' (a coarse and broken hemp), papier-mâché and the help of his young son, who lived with him on site.<sup>65</sup> At Belfast, G. B. Thompson, the Keeper of Archaeology and Ethnology, pioneered the use of 'black-board' diagrams, where an object mounted on a dark painted board was surrounded by text and 'explanatory diagrams' drawn in chalk. This attempt to engage pre-war discourses on visual education in museums had the added advantage of saving time and labour: interpretation could 'easily be removed or altered with a damp cloth' and an 'empty case can thus be filled with a display adequately labelled and illustrated, in about two hours.'<sup>66</sup> At Leeds Museum, in the early 1950s, staff reported on the 'experimental' nature of exhibition work, 'with colours, lights, simple stands and settings' trialled 'in preparation for a time when a new museum becomes possible.'<sup>67</sup> In acknowledgement of the scant resources available, the annual report articulated that 'The materials have been such as to allow the failures to be scrapped with the minimum



waste.’<sup>68</sup> While recognising the mixed effects of these efforts (‘some successful, and some otherwise’), the report anticipated better resourced, more stable times ahead: ‘The successes are of great value in the planning of future shows.’<sup>69</sup>

For museum practitioners then, on skeleton staff structures, with limited materials and a host of collections-focused responsibilities, exhibition making often felt part-time, self-directed and amateur in its individual aesthetic and responsive practice. In some of the annual reports and curatorial correspondence written by these professionals, exhibition making comes close to what design historian Paul Atkinson has conceptualised as ‘Do-It-Yourself’ (DIY), where ‘home maintenance activities [are] carried out as an economic necessity or because of the unavailability of professional labour’.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, there are further characteristics of such practice that resonate with post-war exhibition making in museums. Atkinson points to DIY as a potentially ‘democratizing agency’ that moves beyond ‘passive consumption’, and a ‘design and production activity that is carried out more closely to the end user of the goods created’.<sup>71</sup> While clearly set apart from the domestic and everyday nature of DIY practice, in the spaces left by the post-war crisis in museums, exhibition making did provide some opportunity for a more democratic activity, that supported a variety of ‘end users’ to become involved in museums. While professionalisation has been acknowledged as ‘a system of exclusion’ that can ‘bar individuals and groups on the basis of money, class, ethnicity and gender’,<sup>72</sup> in this post-war moment of professional crisis, the museum’s long-standing ‘system of exclusion’ and hierarchy subtly softened in several ways.

## **Beyond the museum**

One way in which this softening of hierarchy occurred was through the temporary inclusion of a wider range of exhibition makers in the museum space. For example, at the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1949, members of the University of Oxford's Society of West African Students were supported by the museum's curators to conduct research, select objects and put together an 'Exhibition of West African Arts and Crafts'.<sup>73</sup> At Leeds Museum, under the directorship of Dr David Owen (1947-57), an exhibition of 'Estonian Costume and Handicrafts' was compiled by Mr H.E. Oidermaa, an Estonian man working in the Yorkshire textiles mills and keen to inform his British colleagues about 'their comrades of the loom' and to correct misinformation about this 'half-remembered Baltic state'.<sup>74</sup> In early acknowledgement of the potential that an art school education would later have for museum exhibition design, Leeds Museum also invited in students from the local College of Art to paint backgrounds and prepare models for display.<sup>75</sup> In 1952, the 'Primitive Art from the Collections of the Manchester Museum' exhibition was designed by students from the University's School of Architecture. They favoured draped fabrics, pot plants, and the use of screens in various materials and shades (fig. 6).<sup>76</sup> Similarly, at the British Museum in the early 1960s, art school designers and students provided advice to a curator of prehistory on how to erect a back-lit screen, on which a projector threw images of sites and objects to supplement an exhibition of prehistoric material.<sup>77</sup>

In a context where museum spaces were still in construction, and available gallery space was sometimes commandeered for temporary collections storage, some curators saw the potential in off-site exhibition making. Throughout the 1950s, both Glasgow and Leeds museums hosted a 'Museum Window' in their cities' cinemas. Here, museum objects were displayed in a regularly changing programme of small-scale exhibitions that allowed for a

closer relationship with those who did not visit museums, and with the political and social concerns of the day. As the local newspaper in Leeds described, in May 1949, 'With China in the news again', the 'museum window' displayed Chinese costume in order to provide 'a glimpse into her 40 centuries of culture'.<sup>78</sup> In 1950, the paper explained that 'Though the hydrogen and atom bombs cast a shadow over the world to-day, Leeds Museum Window reminds us ... that in many parts of the world the main weapons are still knives and swords'.<sup>79</sup>

Indeed, objects did not only leave the museum as part of museum-controlled exhibition making practices. A wide array of creative amateurs and professionals borrowed museum objects for expanded modes of exhibition, often with a focus on live performance rather than static display. While the curator at Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum in the 1950s, Dr Robert Churchill Blackie, is remembered by later staff as presiding over the 'dark ages' of the museum 'where absolutely nothing happened',<sup>80</sup> this inertia and apathy seems to have laid the ground for museum objects being able to escape the museum: in 1960, the museum loaned part of its African and Oceanic collections to the South Western Arts Association, who commissioned a set of display cases, collaboratively designed by Michael Canney, the Curator of Newlyn Art Gallery, and the sculptor, Brian Wall (fig. 7). The cases, made of welded steel 'utilising half-inch square steel rods' and Perspex shelves, made the units 'light and strong' and suitable for touring to some twenty centres for display across the South West of England.<sup>81</sup> During the show, in contrast to the heavy, enclosed, wooden and glass cases still in common use at the time, the structures were open and the objects secured only by wire.

Glasgow Museum had a particularly lively programme of loans to local community groups, providing objects for use to amateur theatre troupes and sports clubs, to department stores and temperance associations, and even the BBC.<sup>82</sup> Eventually, in 1960, the curator was forced to reflect on 'some rather unfortunate [recent] experiences with loans', and felt the need to limit loaned objects 'to those items which are either sturdy in themselves, or which happen to be duplicate specimens.'<sup>83</sup> Leeds Museum lent material from their ethnographic collection to a local art college, supporting a display in the college entrance hall for two months in the early 1960s,<sup>84</sup> and the Horniman Museum loaned objects to colleges and foreign embassies for display throughout the period.<sup>85</sup> Prompted by a suggestion from the Nigerian High Commission, Mr S. O. Jaiyesima secured the loan of a Yoruba talking drum from the Horniman Museum for his Social and Fellowship Evening at the Christ Church, Highbury Grove, in April 1959.<sup>86</sup> In 1954, a Ugandan student, later renowned as the legendary ethnomusicologist and composer Professor Solomon Mbabji Katana, borrowed a drum, again from the Horniman Museum, for a performance at that year's Empire Day celebrations.<sup>87</sup> In 1963, the Bristol University Drama Department put on an exhibition at the university on 'Indian Theatrical Art'.<sup>88</sup> Drawing on Bristol Museums' collections of costumes and instruments, the exhibition provided the context for a performance by the choreographer and dancer Ram Gopal and final year acting students of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, directed by Sushil K. Anand. In the context of a post-war crisis, then, there were emerging display and interpretation practices that we might recognise in some of the more innovative museum practices of current times, where engagement and outreach activities are shifting from beneficiary models in which museums deliver programmes 'to' communities, to collaborative projects in which the skills and agendas of community participants are recognised, valued and deferred to.

## Conclusion

However, anti-colonial, anti-racist and other social justice agendas rarely acted as the motivating factor for museum staff in the first two decades of the post-war period. As part of the Empire Day event that saw Mbabi Katana select and play a drum from the Horniman Museum's collection, the Horniman's curator and the white coordinator of the Empire Day event had a written exchange that infantilised the Ethiopian musician, critiquing the apparent lack of scrutiny and poor taste in his selection.<sup>89</sup> The wider context of the annual, nation-wide 'Empire Day' celebrations, which emphasised racial superiority and nationalist pride between 1904 and 1958, highlights just one set of the unequal power relations within which external exhibition makers like Mbabi Katana operated.<sup>90</sup> The sharing of objects with community groups including those whose cultural heritage was represented in the collections, and the open display of museum collections exhibited according to the agendas of groups beyond the museum, might be lauded as a potential way of 'decolonising' the museum today.<sup>91</sup> However, these actions were more commonly motivated by a sense of collections excess rather than responsibility to their stakeholders. The loaning to the public of culturally significant objects and even human remains (at Glasgow, for example),<sup>92</sup> contravenes our contemporary ethical benchmarks. While a decolonial critique of these displays is not the focus of this paper, it is clearly the case that the displays of African, Asian, Oceanic and First Nations peoples across this period – both in the museum and beyond – were almost entirely primitivist, orientalist and imperialist constructions.

Paul Atkinson has described DIY practices in the home as ‘giving people independence and self-reliance, freedom from professional help, encouraging the wider dissemination and adoption of modernist design principles, providing an opportunity to create more personal meaning in their own environments or self-identity, and opening up previously gendered or class-bound activities to all.’<sup>93</sup> In the post-war museum, a space was opened up for some to exercise independence in exhibition making, both for curators and technicians working in the shadows of government agencies, and for external communities usually subject to museum control. Strict boundaries of class and even ethnicity were tentatively ‘opened up’, if only in small ways.<sup>94</sup>

Post-war museum practice was criticised at the time, by museum practitioners themselves, who complained bitterly about their situation, and in sources ranging from public letters in *The Times* to the 1965 government White Paper which described some museums as evoking a ‘cheerless and unwelcoming air that alienates all but the specialist and the dedicated’.<sup>95</sup> More recently, museum studies scholars like Catherine Pearson have emphasised how, after a surprisingly dynamic, well-funded period of museum practice during World War II, ‘severe economic problems and a return to traditional preoccupations with collections saw museums revert to their drab pre-war state.’<sup>96</sup>

Yet within this phase of crisis, as museums were forced to draw on their own limited financial and technical resources and return to a period of collections-orientated practice, innovation was actually widespread, with radical consequences from the vantage points of the time, and of today. In other contexts, the makeshift has been identified as a creative, subversive and productive force.<sup>97</sup> The post-war period can be characterised as distinctly

makeshift and redolent of DIY, and a range of productive outcomes did indeed emerge from this moment of pragmatic and experimental exhibition design. In some institutions, curators and technicians took the lead in this creativity, drawing on war-time innovations in materials and engaging with influences from commercial display, graphic design and modern art. In other cases, a wider range of makers made use of the museum and its collections, to develop an expanded definition of exhibition design and subvert the traditional hierarchies of the museum for creative purposes.

### **Acknowledgements**

To be included (see Title Page)

### **Figure Legends:**

Figure 1: Displays of Mexican masks and figurines, and Aztec and Mixtec pottery, 'designed by E.L. Avery', City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, from A. Oswald, 'New Archaeological Galleries at Birmingham', *Museums Journal*, vol. 53, no. 11 (1954), pp. 290-92, facing p. 289, with permission of the Museums Association ([www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)).

Figure 2: Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery stand at the National Trades and Home Life Exhibition, from 'Birmingham Display at Trade Exhibition', *Museums Journal*, vol. 54, no. 3 (1954), facing p. 78, with permission of the Museums Association ([www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)).

Figure 3: From Adrian Digby, 'The Measurement of Density of Museum Exhibits',

*British Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1963), pp. 40-44. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 4: 'Display of West African sculpture', from J. Hewitt, 'Recent Developments in Gallery Display at Belfast', *Museums Journal*, vol. 52, no. 2, (1952), pp. 45-47, with permission of the Museums Association ([www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)).

Figure 5: W. E. Nicholson, 'Display' [notebook], 1965-68, with permission from Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Figure 6: 'Primitive Art from the collections of the Manchester Museum', Whitworth Art Gallery, from A. C. Sewter, 'An Experiment in Museum Co-operation', *Museums Journal*, vol. 52, no. 5 (1952), pp. 128-130, with permission of the Museums Association ([www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)).

Figure 7: 'African and Oceanic sculpture from the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter', from 'Display Portfolio – 1', *Museums Journal*, vol. 60, no. 6 (1960), pp. 152-53, with permission of the Museums Association ([www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)).

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The first museum design departments were established as part of a wider staffing boom in the 1960s; by 1970, 23 UK museums were identified as having specialist designers, with four Area Museum Councils (regional museum consortia) providing design support. However, as this paper argues, technicians have long been critical in museum exhibition making, and by the 1950s some institutions were already beginning to appoint specialist designers to these roles. In 1954, Leicester Museum and Art Gallery director Trevor Walden was apparently the first to appoint a full-time designer to his staff, with the job title 'Technical Assistant (Design)' ('The role of the designer in the museum', *Museums Journal*, p. 63. See also H. Wilkinson,



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'Negotiating Change: Curatorial Practice in UK Museums, 1960-2001', PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2014, 100).

<sup>2</sup> On these designers, and on the Festival of Britain, see H. Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), especially 34-59. On war-time exhibitions in museums see C. Pearson, *Museums in the Second World War: Curators, Culture and Change* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 75-84, 89-99.

<sup>3</sup> S. F. Markham, *The Museums and Galleries of the British Isles (Other Than the National Museums) to the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees* (Dunfermline: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1938), 84.

<sup>4</sup> R. Minott, 'The Past Is Now: Confronting Museums' Complicity in Imperial Celebration', *Third Text*, vol. 33, no. 4-5 (2019), pp. 559-74.

<sup>5</sup> S. Alberti, *Nature and Culture: Objects, Disciplines and the Manchester Museum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 124; B. Burt, *The Museum of Mankind: Man and Boy in the British Museum Ethnography Department* (London: Berghahn, 2019). In using the term 'exhibition makers', I would like to credit Kate Guy and Hajra Williams: our discussions around this descriptor and exhibitions have shaped my thinking. The early museum designer Margaret Hall used the term in *On Display: A Design Grammar for Museum Exhibitions* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Pearson, op. cit., 127-135.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 227-231.

<sup>8</sup> [L. V. Grinsell,] Notes on 'Ethnography', prepared for Staff Meeting, 4 July 1961, Archaeology and History File 7552, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. *Guide Book to the Collections and Display* (Leeds: Leeds City Museums, 1953), i.

<sup>11</sup> A. Shelton, 'Museums and Anthropologies: Practices and Narratives', in ed. S. MacDonald, *A Companion to Museum Studies* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 72.

<sup>12</sup> For example, at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, between 1948 and 1969, J.W. Lillico informally curated the ethnographic collections alongside her role as Curator of Folk Life; at Liverpool Museum, Elaine Tankard was Keeper of Archaeology and Ceramics, and her remit included the museum's Asian collections in which she was especially interested.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Memo to Advisory Committee, Horniman Museum, c. March 1962, EO/GEN/1/201, London Metropolitan Archives; "Report of work done in the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries Department during the quarter ended, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1967", Glasgow Museums.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Annual Report: Work done in the Department during 1950", British Museum, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> B. A. L. Cranstone, *Ethnography*, Handbook for Museum Curators (London: Museums Association, 1958), 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> Alberti, op. cit., 124.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries and the British Museum's Trustee's Works Office.

<sup>18</sup> Museum assistants (technicians) were distinct from assistant curators who were usually junior collections experts who could expect to rise to the role of curator overtime.

<sup>19</sup> 'Museums and Art Galleries: A National Service', *Museums Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (1945), pp. 33-45, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Report to the Sub-Committee of the Trustees on Antiquities, etc", British Museum, 1954, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, exchanges between the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Cambridge, in 1949.

<sup>24</sup> A. Oswald, 'New Archaeological Galleries at Birmingham', *Museums Journal*, vol. 53, no. 11 (1954), pp. 290-92, 290.

<sup>25</sup> Markham, 91-92.

<sup>26</sup> Oswald, op. cit., 290.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 290-91.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> L. Iarocci, 'Introduction: The Image of Visual Merchandising', in ed. L. Iarocci, *Visual Merchandising: The Image of Selling* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 8; Atkinson, op. cit., 35. In the US, MoMA's René d'Harnoncourt

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had already used Surrealist techniques in museums, starting with 'Modern Art in Your Life', MoMA, 1949 (R.J. Foster, 'Art/Artefact/Commodity: Installation Design and the Exhibition of Oceanic Things at Two New York Museums in the 1940s', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 23 (2012), pp. 129–157, p. 147).

<sup>34</sup> Oswald, op. cit., 291.

<sup>35</sup> Markham, op. cit., 92.

<sup>36</sup> Oswald, op. cit., 291.

<sup>37</sup> 'Birmingham Display at Trade Exhibition', *Museums Journal*, vol. 54, no. 3 (1954), p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Cranstone, op. cit. On exhibition innovation beyond museums, see Atkinson, op. cit., 34-60; P. Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 263-79, and M. Tymkiw, *Nazi Exhibition Design and Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> A. C. West, 'Notes on the History of the Ethnology Department', unpublished MS, Department of World Cultures archive, World Museum Liverpool, 1981, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Markham, op. cit., 91-92.

<sup>41</sup> A. Digby, 'The Measurement of Density of Museum Exhibits', *British Museum Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 1/2 (1963), pp. 40-44.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>44</sup> Cranstone, op. cit., 13.

<sup>45</sup> City of Leeds, *Annual Report of the Sub-Libraries and Arts (Museums) Committee to the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1961*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> "Report of work done in the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries Department during the quarter ended, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1962", Glasgow Museums. The Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm had been redesigned in 1930s and 40s and maintained a high reputation for modern exhibition design at this time (D. Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London: British Museum, 2002), 253).

<sup>47</sup> J. Hewitt, 'Recent Developments in Gallery Display at Belfast', *Museums Journal*, vol. 52, no. 2, (1952), pp. 45-47, 45.

<sup>48</sup> Markham, op. cit., 92.

<sup>49</sup> Hewitt, op. cit., 45.

<sup>50</sup> W. E. Nicholson, 'Display' [notebook], 1965-68, Leeds Museums and Galleries.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Report to the Subcommittee of the Trustees on Antiquities, etc.", British Museum, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> While this impression of long-standing curatorial autonomy might have dominated the memory of some curators, museums have always been porous institutions. Catherine Pearson's notes that collaborative, outward-looking practices were common in the war years (op. cit.), and throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, museum donors often influenced museum practices, including controlling the exhibition their own donations in museums (C. Wintle, 'Consultancy, Networking and Brokerage: The Legacy of the Donor in Museum Practice', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, vol. 23 (2010), pp. 72-83). Commercial techniques had also, of course, long influenced museum display practices (see K. Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 120).

<sup>54</sup> Susan Pearce (Emeritus Professor, Museum Studies, University of Leicester), Curatorial Assistant, Liverpool Museum, 1964-65, oral history interview with the author, 3 August 2017, 'A263410: Interviews on world cultures and museum practice' series, British Library.

<sup>55</sup> On the past as a site of sustenance, comfort and validation, particularly in the context of subjugation, see D. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 86-99.

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, op. cit., 252.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>58</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Annual Report: Work done in the Department", British Museum, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> For examples of these various practices see Department of Ethnography, "Annual Report: Work done in the Department during 1953", British Museum, 1953, and Department of Ethnography, "Report to the Subcommittee of the Trustees on Antiquities, etc.", British Museum, 1956.

<sup>61</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Report to the Subcommittee of the Trustees on Antiquities, etc", British Museum, 1959, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Department of Ethnography, "Report to the Subcommittee of the Trustees for Ethnography on the State of the Department", British Museum, 1966 [n.p].

<sup>63</sup> Oswald, op. cit., 291.

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- <sup>64</sup> E. Martin, 'A Feminine Touch: Elaine Tankard and the creation of National Museums Liverpool's Tibet Collection', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, vol. 23 (2010), pp. 88-114, 100.
- <sup>65</sup> David Barton (son of Lester Barton, Curator of Powell-Cotton Museum, 1945-1979), interview with the author, 23 November 2017.
- <sup>66</sup> G. B. Thompson, 'Ethnographic Display at Belfast', *Museums Journal*, vol. 51, no. 1 (1952), pp. 253-256, 255. On museums and 'visual education' see Markham, op. cit., 83-95.
- <sup>67</sup> City of Leeds, *Annual Report of the Sub-Libraries and Arts (Museums) Committee to the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1951*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> P. Atkinson, 'Do It Yourself: Democracy and Design', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2006), pp. 1-10, 3.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.
- <sup>72</sup> G. Beegan and P. Atkinson, 'Professionalism, Amateurism and the Boundaries of Design', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2008), pp. 305-13, 305.
- <sup>73</sup> T. K. Penniman, "Report of the Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum (Department of Ethnology) for the year ending 31 July 1949", <https://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/> [accessed 6 November 2020]
- <sup>74</sup> Undated untitled newspaper clipping, from 'Press Cuttings Old' file, Leeds Museums and Galleries.
- <sup>75</sup> City of Leeds, *Annual Report of the Sub-Libraries and Arts (Museums) Committee to the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1954*, 2.
- <sup>76</sup> A. C. Sewter, 'An Experiment in Museum Co-operation', *Museums Journal*, vol. 52, no. 5 (1952), pp. 128-130.
- <sup>77</sup> Wilson, op. cit., 264.
- <sup>78</sup> 'An Old Chinese Costume', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 21.5.1949, from 'Press Cuttings Old' file, Leeds Museums and Galleries.
- <sup>79</sup> 'Museum Window', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25.3.1950, from 'Press Cuttings Old' file, Leeds Museums and Galleries.
- <sup>80</sup> Pearce, op. cit. See also Patrick Boylan on Blackie, cited in Wilkinson, op. cit., 149.
- <sup>81</sup> 'Display Portfolio – 1', *Museums Journal*, vol. 60, no. 6 (1960), pp. 152-53, 152.
- <sup>82</sup> See "Reports of work done in the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries Department" for this entire period.
- <sup>83</sup> J. G. Scott, Curator of Archaeology, Ethnography and History, in correspondence with E. Queen, 13 January 1960, Ethnography Correspondence files, Glasgow Museums.
- <sup>84</sup> City of Leeds, *Annual Report of the Sub-Libraries and Arts (Museums) Committee to the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1963*, 8.
- <sup>85</sup> See, for example, to Philippa Fawcett College in 1954; to the Indonesian Embassy in 1952 and 1954; to the Nigerian High Commission in 1957; and to the Burmese Embassy in 1963 (for details, see Loans Boxes and Curator's reports for each quarter, Horniman Museum & Gardens).
- <sup>86</sup> File for S. O. Jaiyesimi, April 1959, 'Loan Files, 1946-1959, I-Q', Horniman Museum & Gardens.
- <sup>87</sup> File for 'Empire', May 1954, 'Loan Files, 1946-1959, A-H', Horniman Museum & Gardens.
- <sup>88</sup> See 'Indian Theatrical Art, February 1963', Exhibition File 5275, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.
- <sup>89</sup> S. Monk, Director, Empire Day Movement, in correspondence with O. Samson, Horniman Museum, 12 May 1954, file for 'Empire', 'Loan Files, 1946-1959, A-H', Horniman Museum & Gardens.
- <sup>90</sup> On the institution and changing fortunes of Empire Day, see J. English, 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2006), pp. 247-76.
- <sup>91</sup> See C. Kreps, 'Changing the Rules of the Road: Post-Colonialism and the New Ethics of Museum Anthropology', in ed. J. Marstine, *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twentieth-Century Museum* (London: Routledge, 2011).
- <sup>92</sup> See, for example, a 'Chippewa' skull (J. G. Scott, Curator of Archaeology, Ethnography and History, in correspondence with R. Steed Holman, 30 January 1952, Ethnography Correspondence files, Glasgow Museums), and an ancient Peruvian skull (J. G. Scott, Curator of Archaeology, Ethnography and History, in correspondence with I. Dewar [a dental student], 10 April 1959, Ethnography Correspondence files, Glasgow Museums).
- <sup>93</sup> Atkinson, 'Do It Yourself', op. cit., 4.
- <sup>94</sup> Gender has not been a focus of this article, and indeed, as Catherine Pearson points out, while the period of the Second World War itself provided opportunities for women to gain promotions and experience while their male colleagues were seconded to war-time roles, in the post-war period many women were forced to revert to their pre-war status (Pearson, op. cit., 184-85).

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<sup>95</sup> *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps* (London: HMSO, Cmnd.2601, February 1965), cited in Wilkinson, op. cit., 60.

<sup>96</sup> Pearson, op cit., 7.

<sup>97</sup> O. Sooudi, 'Making Mumbai's Emerging Art World through Makeshift Practices', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2016), pp. 149-66.