Introduction

Changing Museums, Reshaping Histories

If there is one institution that flourished in post-apartheid South Africa it is the museum. In the two decades following the official demise of apartheid in 1994, in nearly all the older museums there were renovations on the go, new displays were being installed and ongoing debates and discussions about how to re-shape policies and practices were the order of the day. Some undertook a complete overhaul of their exhibitionary strategies, others revisited and re-thought their classificatory categories and new institutional arrangements were set in place. There was a considerable expansion in the number and type of museums. At least fifty new museums were opened. The vast majority of these were constructed to display violence and suffering under apartheid. They drew attention to forced removals into racially designated spaces, the exploitation of workers, the harshness and brutality of political imprisonment and the growth of resistance movements. Others sought to establish a precolonial past, stretching history into a deep, immense time often beyond human memory.[1] Some of the largest financial, industrial and agricultural companies museumized their pasts as a celebration of achievement, sometimes (but not always) acknowledging an association with histories of repression and exploitation. A time that appeared as prior to the post-apartheid era was produced through the spatializing and representational logics of the museum.

Such a manifestation of institutional re-construction was remarkable. With material concerns such as employment, health, housing and education high on the developmental agenda of post-apartheid South Africa, securing funding for museums was hardly a priority. In addition, there was deep suspicion of the knowledge value of museums. Associations with forms and content of expertise that were infused with ideas of racial science, used categories that drew upon and supplied regimes of colonial administration and employed racialized hierarchical classificatory divisions, were all contributing to these misgivings. The African National

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Congress (ANC) which assumed power after 1994 (initially as part of a Government of National Unity) had shown little or no interest in the past for museums as a political resource for change – or in common parlance as a 'site of struggle' – during its existence as a liberation organization. This cannot only be explained by museums siting themselves as zones of exclusion, but also in relation to notions of culture expressed in forms of song, dance, visual arts, drama and poetry as forms of popular expression. Appearing as organic rather than bound to an institutional form, it was these expressions of culture as consciousness that had held the potential for mobilizing political activists in struggles against apartheid. The museum did not feature at all.[2]

Yet not only was the museum not shunned in post-apartheid South Africa, it was embraced. Government structures, business corporations, groups making community claims and sporting bodies all clamoured to participate in the construction and re-construction of museums throughout the country. Through research, display and collection, new pasts came into view in museums. Narratives of pastness were re-made and bold assertions made to disavow prior interpretations, rectify empirical errors and recover hidden and neglected pasts through the institution of the museum. Curatorial focus shifted, collections were reconstituted and displays realigned to 'attribute value' and 'mobilize representations'[3] in accord with what appeared to be a changing political scenario that, above all, proclaimed the rights and asserted freedoms of association and expression. Several museums altered their material structures while a plethora of new ones opened their doors. The key argument in this book is that this excessive production took place through a contradiction that lies at the very heart of museums: an institution that is manifestly concerned with the conservation and management of time into a space of and for the past is simultaneously the site of contesting, changing and reshaping history.

Through the displacement of objects and locating them spatially in altered temporal sequences, museums continually make a new space for history. Museums, which Bennett, drawing on Latour, characterizes as '"object institutions" *par excellence*', were ideal to inaugurate a new time claimed as being after and beyond apartheid and simultaneously a place of preservation to consign a previous past to history.[4] The interior and exterior worlds of museums, both old and new, became one of the primary settings for contesting, changing and reshaping history.[5] More than anything, the museum became the site of 'history frictions' in post-apartheid South Africa.[6]

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Museum Moments

These frictions in South Africa museums intersected with much broader trends internationally in museums as their claims of authority to conserve and represent were subjected to intensive pressure. Some of this was related to their collections where holding and ownership rights were questioned by individuals, assemblages and national states who asserted prior and rightful proprietorship.[7] In other instances the rights of museums to make depictions derived from their own knowledge authority were challenged by claimants to community and indigeneity. A new museum literature emerged with collections of essays devoted to the politics and poetics of representation, relations with community groupings, histories of collection, ways to reformulate practices and create new publics. With titles such as *Museums and Communities*, *Exhibiting Cultures*, *Museum Revolutions*, *Museums and Difference*, *The Museum Time-Machine*, *The Politics of Display* and *The New Museology*, these books reflected an unease with existing forms of knowledge production within museums and a desire to re-shape the institution.[8] Above all they sought to develop an understanding of how museums were made and re-made, the tensions amongst a multiplicity of authors, how knowledge was produced, authorized, conveyed and contested, and the different genealogies of elements that went into constructing museum expertise. These were intended to be the basis to develop what one collection called *New Museum Theory and Practice*.[9]

South African museums were occupied with similar issues, but they emerged at a time of heightened intensity as the pressures to construct altered institutional selves coincided with a post-apartheid remaking of pasts as reconstituting a nationalized citizenry through government commissions, memorial making, tourist narratives and forms of heritage production.[10] It meant that all museums, almost simultaneously, across a range of typologies and their own specific histories, were confronting questions of previous entanglements and engaging possibilities of representing pasts in ways that marked a post-apartheid difference. This was as much the case for museums which had longer institutional pasts as for those which had recently been established, those which focused on natural history as well as those which concentrated on the category of history and its affiliations with cultural, political and social trajectories, and those which framed their publics around national belonging (often intersecting with global sovereignty) and those which sought to make museum communities around the locality. It is this convergence of institutional re-formation and the possibility of fundamental political

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restructuring that offers the possibility of interrogating similarities and divergence in approach, of history frictions that surfaced in what appeared as a museum moment.

This appearance of a moment and its temporal framing brings with it an ambivalence, not merely about the specifics of whether 1994 signals an appropriate demarcation but more importantly for this book about how time itself is constructed. In *The Museum Time Machine* Robert Lumley had identified the late 1980s in Europe, Britain, the USA and Japan as a museum moment in terms of the increased number of museums and their visitors, the renewal of existing fabric and a reconceptualization of what they set out to do. This he tracked to an interest in history beyond the professional domain, with the museum's function, in his terms, being its ability 'to present ideas to a wider public in three-dimensional and accessible forms'.[11] The *Time Machine*, as he conceptualized it, was related to mechanisms of making history popular and accessible, and using its moving parts to respond to predicaments of display, collection and visitor interaction as museums were re-made. The issues he identified were those that emerged in these processes of enhancing accessibility, of heritage and nostalgia, bias in museums, public engagements, commercialization, realist constructions, and the media and its impact.[12] His *Time Machine* never appeared to make time itself.

In *Museums Times* I intend to make Lumley's *Time Machine* much more productive, enabling its mechanisms to make time, signalling the instability of moment, and the movements it makes towards setting and re-setting the changeable edges. Despite the allusion to a fleeting instance, moments contain both the solidity of fixed foundations and the elasticity that enables the frameworks to extend and contract. It is the contradictory power of a time machine that compresses, extends, fabricates, originates, finishes, arranges and forms the museum moments. Time can be reversed to a beginning, accumulated in a layering, lengthened to a deep past, shortened to associate with recent memories, straightened to achieve a progression, interrupted to secure an ending, and can reappear and return to commemorate.

The power of time in history is its appearance as natural in an ongoing linear movement, with, as Lalu points out, the idea of event used as a temporal signifier of progression and/or transition. In his work Lalu uses event as a marker of difference, between the possibilities of what could be said and what is said.[13] *Museum Times* makes use of both understandings to try and show how in the work of museum making, the event of history is brought into being. I am particularly interested in instances when a great deal of work is seemingly required to make the event of history,

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when there is little to sustain it in terms of previous appearances as evidence and/or as signifier. It follows then that much is required to fabricate the event as history for museum purposes. This is not the same as pure invention but involves locating and establishing a documentary presence, often through objects, employing contextual devices to systematically elaborate on a theme, and setting sequences in place through designing a spectacle of the past. In effect this book is a form of historiography of this process of museum making. Sometimes it is about changing relationships between academic historical texts and museum practices, at other times about the links between museums with disciplinary formations and their institutional structures of teaching and research, and most perhaps most vividly in the ways in which exhibitionary practices and methodologies in themselves become the reference points in museums, confronting, limiting and affording possibilities of change.[14] This is about histories of different genres of history as museums change, or perhaps more appropriately, and rather clumsily, a museological historiography.

Importantly, I make a key distinction between the museum and another set of knowledge appropriations which reorganizes time: the archive. The latter has been used by Sara Byala as the framework to construct a history of MuseumAfrica in Johannesburg. She asserts that through collecting, classifying and displaying, museums not only constitute a physical archive but also an intellectual one that can be thought of as a biography of shifting ideas and concepts.[15] There is a fundamental difference though between the ways in which that time is stored, accessioned and re-arranged in archival practice and in museums. This concerns the centrality of the production of objects. While Mbembe maintains that the archive may be thought of as conjuring up both the physical signs of the temple and cemetery, it is the metaphoric allusions to ritual and internment in the lives of documents, the 'procedures and regulations' of practice, which, he argues, convey status. Of course, objects do constitute archives and undergo similar exercises of 'power and authority' in the museum.[16] And, as Crooke points out, part of the museum's appeal lies in its conservationist allure, its ability to appear as if it is permanent, solid and able to withstand the vagaries of time.[17] But central to the museum are the mechanisms of re-constituting temporalities through objects, using structural forms, siting, placements, routing, classification, juxtapositions, size, colour, lighting, textual formats, volume and visibility. In the museum, according to Kratz, this 'array of sensory and communicative resources' constitutes a powerful persuasive force that she terms the 'rhetorics of value'.[18] This 'array' might be thought of collectively as the operations which 'spatialize time' through a sequential ordering.[19]

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A similar observation may be made in relation to forms and strategies of collection where classifications and placement in different storage locations may indicate temporal sequencing. As Lefebvre points out, the reconfiguration of space creates the appearance of both opaqueness and transparency. It is in the making of sequences, he maintains, that 'objects touch one another, feel, smell and hear one another. Then they contemplate one another with eye and gaze'. Altering positions in a sequence and changing the surrounds can then 'precipitate an object's passage into the light: what was covert becomes overt, what was cryptic becomes limpidly clear'.[20] Of course the converse is also the case as objects are taken out of one order and positioned in new ones. This making of objects and their space/time configuration makes museums, according to Bennett, civic laboratories which bring expertise and disciplinary knowledge together with social management, so that they are 'simultaneously epistemological and civic'.[21] The analogy with a laboratory is one of displacement, where the object is studied, and knowledge is remade in environments situated in times and spaces that are markedly different from an initial occurrence. Bennett calls the laboratory and the museum 'custom-built environments', or sites of 'fabrication', where the object, detached and manipulated and observed through the employment of epistemologies, comes to create new 'civic and social' entities.[22] It is little wonder then that the contests over history in museums are precisely around the terms of this object re-formation.

For all the museums that I present in this book, it is the object as the figure of loss and accumulation that make the event of history: an unattractive insignificant building; a phony sailing ship; a wandering hippopotamus; an escaping rabbit; and an inverted statue. In presenting these objects that I have selected as emblematic, I am situating them in two different forms of analysis identified by Dudley. I do want to think about them in what she calls an informational way, as signifying political and disciplinary meanings in relation to the changing forms of the institution. After all, my main concern throughout is about how the category of history is made and given content in museums. Simultaneously, there are moments when I consider the object in a different way through its materiality and physicality.[23] This is not as pronounced as the former evocation, yet in all the chapters space, design, visuality and the tactile are all considered to be part of history making. Some of this is presented through accounts of personal encounters with these objects as they shift and change, at other times through reports of curators, museum staff and designers on intentions and their outcomes, and then, when these are at hand, through expressions by those who come to be constituted as the

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addressed public.[24] Perhaps another way to articulate object formation is to think through Kratz's insistence that communication is always key to the politics of representation, in what is portrayed, how, when, where and the shifting constituencies of circulation. These she calls 'interrelated processes of representation, mediation, and interpretation'.[25]

Dilemmas of Change

There is one museum object that signifies the conflicts over pasts and meanings perhaps more than any other: the dilemma label. Signalling a need or intent to alter displays or that such changes are in process, they are usually hastily produced by museum curators or managers on a word processing package, manufactured on an A4 sheet, laminated and then affixed to a wall or window. Sometimes they are elaborate, providing explanation and rationale on specially constructed sign boards, at other times they are no more than a cursory notification. Sometimes they indicate a commitment to change, to new exhibitions, and at other times they are notices of regret for either what is missing from display or an interpretation that the museum is no longer at ease with. Sometimes they are bold and prominent, at other times hidden away so as not to command attention, almost as if they are on show somewhat reluctantly. Veering between the assertive and the apologetic, the dilemma label is always on show as a temporary awkward presence pointing to a future when it will no longer be required and when it will disappear and be discarded, hardly ever to be retained in the museum's collection.

I first started documenting dilemma labels in the late 1990s when I led the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) focus area Project on Public Pasts (PoPP) in the Department of History at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town, South Africa. In conceptualizing public history PoPP drew upon ideas formulated by Cohen and Odhiambo around history produced beyond the academy in a variety of domains through employing a range of distinct methodologies.[26] These sites of production included museums, monuments, memorials, television, tourist routes, interpretative centres, government commissions, comic books, festivals and so on. The proposal for PoPP, initially drawn up by my colleague Gary Minkley, and later elaborated upon by other members of the project team, asserted that these all constituted 'historical practices within different genres characterized by different sociologies and modalities of historical production'. The implication of this approach was that it subverted 'the neat hierarchies of

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knowledge formation' in which it was conventionally assumed that the academic was the bearer of expertise. Finally, and most importantly, it was necessary for researchers on the project to understand and interrogate how these different sites of history were being constituted, how they articulated with each other and the relations of power in the production of public historical practices.[27]

This shift to public history was to be one of the major impetuses behind the establishment of a teaching programme in the late 1990s to staff a growing and changing museum and heritage sector throughout Africa. The Postgraduate Diploma in Museum and Heritage Studies, initially offered jointly by the University of the Western Cape, the Robben Island Museum and the University of Cape Town, and later rebranded as the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies (APMHS), sought to develop 'critical practitioners' who would constantly challenge the underlying assumptions of heritage and museum practice.[28] In particular, the programme sought to problematize and critique a discourse of museum transformation of 'making new displays or altering old ones to mirror the political moment'. The challenge was 'to extend students' critique of apartheid into a historicized understanding of nationalism and heritage'.[29] Instead of seeing the programme as merely a site of technical training for jobs in museums, it was linked by the convenors to ideas of public scholarship with an emphasis on an 'understanding of the conceptual challenges of transformation'.[30]

In PoPP itself, the research sought to 'investigate the different ways that public representations of the past could open up debates about the nature of history by considering the different ways that pastness is framed and claimed as history in its own right'. Those who belonged to the research team, which included historians, archaeologists, architects and museum curators, were concerned to 'understand the production, representations and the makings of meanings in a range of sites, from museums to memorial sites in the Eastern and Western Cape'. It was as part of this research into some of South Africa's older museums and by questioning the extent to which they were 'introducing new histories into their displays and collections' that I began noticing these labels of incongruity.[31]

The displays in this museum are currently under renovation.
We apologise for the inconvenience.

Figure 0.1 Notice on entrance door to the McGregor Museum, Kimberley, 27 March 1999.

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This was the label (Figure 0.1) which greeted colleagues from UWC Department of History, Martin Legassick, Ciraj Rassool, Gary Minkley, Michael Abrahams and myself, when we visited the McGregor Museum in Kimberley (established in 1907) in 1999 to assist with its new exhibitions *Ancestors* and *Frontiers*. Legassick had constituted a NRF project on histories of the Northern Cape and he invited those in the Department who had an interest in public history to join him and work with the McGregor in re-conceptualizing their museological approaches. At the time of our arrival the central features of the museum were its display of the siege of Kimberley during the South African War (1899–1902), a reconstructed room showing where Cecil John Rhodes stayed during the siege, photographs and information about the building when it had been a sanatorium and hotel, a display devoted to the Kimberley army regiment and a hall with 'Kimberley Firsts' and 'Kimberley Personalities' to which an occasional portrait of a person designated as 'black' had been added. The label signalling refurbishment was pasted on the entrance door, alongside a sign about an exhibition on Sol Plaatje, one of the founders of the South African Native National Congress (which later became the ANC), a sticker with a slogan 'I care for tourists' and an advertisement for a booklet on trees and shrubs.

With the McGregor Museum under pressure since the transition to a democratic South Africa in the early 1990s to demonstrate its commitment to change, the new exhibitions which we were being asked to assist with were a response to 'an instruction' from the government of the Northern Cape province 'to transform the displays'. The intention behind the exhibition was to showpiece the McGregor, establish it as the flagship institution of the newly established province and construct a racially inclusive past as part of the process of 'Bringing Museums to the People'.[32] The short dilemma label on the front door was a hint that something was on the go, but gave little indication of what it might be. In seemingly neutral language, it spoke of change as 'renovation'. The museum, it appeared, was to make anew by keeping the old in place and giving it a fresh coat of paint. After the interregnum of the 'inconvenience', the label promised, museum normality would be restored.

A couple of years later I started conducting research in museums in the Eastern Cape province and visited the harbour city of East London. The city's museum was established in 1931 and its claim to fame is that it houses a coelacanth caught nearby in 1938. Named *Latimeria chalumnae* after the museum's then director, Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, it is proclaimed, somewhat bizarrely, to be a 'living fossil'. There is an entire hall devoted to coelacanths, which the museum asserts is 'the most famous fish

in the world'.[33] On display was the type specimen, a timeline showing the temporal location of the coelacanth in the evolution of species, a collection of coelacanth paraphernalia and a re-created living environment (together with fishing nets) that made use of the cast and model made by James Drury of the 'fossil fish'.

The East London Museum has collected and displayed much more than botanical and zoological specimens. As with many museums that contain 'natural history' collections as their central focus, they have substantial anthropological holdings consisting of artefacts relating to the indigenous people of the region. These are placed in the ethnological sections of the museum and displayed as markers of tradition, tribe and craft. Separate dioramas making use of models depict 'Xhosa Home Life', 'Three Ages of Dress', 'Initiation into Womanhood', 'Initiation into Manhood' and a 'Roadside Scene'. According to a 1970s museum guidebook, these habitat displays were 'of great interest to tourists' as they were 'able to view our Bantu in their natural settings, as they lived before the European influence affected their lives'.[34] The museum also has significant collections and exhibitions that it places in the category of 'cultural history', most of it acquired from and devoted to European settlement in the area. One example is a German settler display that emphasized rural life, the use of farming implements and 'very life-like figure groups illustrating the costume, furniture and domestic objects of the period'.[35]

Pinned to the wall opposite the entrance desk of the museum in 2001 was this label.

EAST LONDON MUSEUM

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

We are at present engaged in a process of changing what we do to accommodate and embrace the interests and needs of all South Africans.

What would you like to see featured in our displays?

We invite all interested to share your interests and concerns with us!

We are guided by the following principles:

- The Eastern Cape is our field of interest
- We want to give an understanding of the present by examining the historical forces which have shaped the past
- We want to show first how the indigenous people and later arrivals from Asia and Europe adapted and utilized the resources of the natural environment
- We would like to give the communities of the Eastern Cape a sense of pride in their unique heritage

Figure 0.2. Notice at entrance to East London Museum, 8 July 2001.

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Much more elaborate and directed than the label in Kimberley, this notice, rather than signalling that change was taking place, was claiming that the museum first needed to consult with local communities. It was to be their 'interests and concerns' that would guide the envisaged alterations in representational practices. At the same time, the interpretative framework of change was already set in place by the museum. It had to deal with the Eastern Cape, show adaptation and utilization by all communities of the province and establish a regional identity and legacy of the 'historical forces'. Community and commonality were being asked for as the foundation for a new history in the East London Museum.

Probably the longest lasting dilemma label was in the African Cultures Gallery of the South African Museum (established 1825), a component of what became the Iziko national flagship museum structure in Cape Town. Colloquially referred to as the ethno-wing, the gallery, constructed in the 1970s, comprised a series of displays of 'bounded' ethnicities, that 'reinforce an ideology of cultural difference':[36] the Zulu; the Swazi; the Southern Nguni (Xhosa); a Nama Camp; Khoisan hunter-gatherers; dancers in the Central Kalahari; the South Sotho; the Tswana; and the Lobedu. The gallery contained casts and/or sculpted 'life-like figures' in glass cases, designed according to an 'aesthetic of modernism'. Silk-screen photographs were used, colours were aligned with the content – 'red ochre was chosen for the screened panels relating to the people of the Transkei, and beige for those relating to the desert dwellers' – and the display cases were set out in an asymmetrical manner that constantly interrupted the viewer's journey through the gallery.[37] Alongside the models in the cases was a series of objects to signify ethnic meaning and identity: clay pots, snuff boxes, blanket pins, notices about the importance of beer, clothing and narcotic substances. As in East London, the displays were used to explain aspects of culture as ethnic, such as initiation rituals, bead work, dancing, hunting, dancing and music. Taken in its entirety, the gallery created the impression 'of traditional ways of life situated in the ethnographic present with no account taken of historical context or the dynamics of change'.[38]

In 1993 a series of minor alterations were made to the African Cultures Gallery. Attempting to show changes in societies, the museum's anthropological section placed photographs of people in modern, urban environments on the glass frontage of the ethnic displays. The intention was to challenge stereotypes of African people as rural, undeveloped and unchanging. In addition, an elaborate dilemma label was installed to alert visitors about the problems with the displays.

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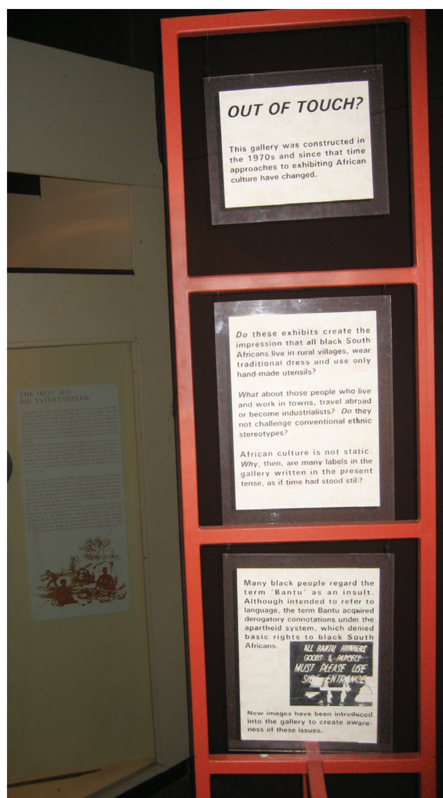

Figure 0.3. Notice at the African Cultures Gallery, Iziko South African Museum, 10 June 2007. © Leslie Witz.

The text displayed reads:

OUT OF TOUCH?
This gallery was constructed in the 1970s and since that time approaches to exhibiting African cultures have changed.

Do these exhibits create the impression that all black South Africans live in rural villages, wear traditional dress and use only hand-made utensils?

What about those people who live and work in towns and travel abroad or become industrialists? *Do* they not challenge the conventional ethnic stereotypes?

African culture is not static. *Why*, then, are many labels in the gallery written in the present tense, as if time had stood still?

Many black people regard the term 'Bantu' as an insult. Although intended to refer to language, the term Bantu acquired derogatory connotations under the apartheid system, which denied basic rights to black South Africans.

New images have been introduced in the gallery to create an awareness of these issues.

There were some modifications to the gallery after 1993 – a display of the terracotta heads from Lydenburg and a Zulu beadwork exhibit, were added, for instance – but these were relatively minor. The dilemma notice was still on display almost twenty years later but had been moved by the museum staff to a relatively hidden position in an unlit corner of the gallery. Its wording indicated a keen awareness that the portrayals were essentialized stereotypes and that they needed to be changed. Yet its presence also enabled stasis implying something needed to be done but not carrying it out. The label became a placeholder for a yet unrealized, continually postponed, future.

While there was inertia in the African Cultures Gallery at Iziko South African Museum, dramatic events had taken place in the adjacent room that displayed a diorama scene of a hunter-gatherer camp in the nineteenth

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century – more widely known as 'the bushman diorama' or even just as 'the diorama'. Like the coelacanth, farm workers and prisoners in the northern Cape, who were taken to represent a racial type of 'bushman', had been cast by the museum modeler James Drury at the beginning of the twentieth century as examples of 'living fossils'. First displayed in glass cases as specimens, they were changed in 1960 into a diorama which displayed an invented cultural world of Khoisan hunter-gatherers based on a nineteenth-century painting by Samuel Daniell. In April 2001, after much discussion and controversy surrounding its history and its depictions, the CEO of the museum instructed that the diorama be boarded up. A notice was displayed (see Figure 0.4 below).

The museum was initially insistent that this measure was only a temporary one and it did not remove the diorama. Instead, it maintained that the display was being archived, the implication being that in consigning it to

Figure 0.4. Visiting the archived diorama, 5 January 2002.
© Wendelin Schnippenkoetter.

The text reads:

THE DIORAMA IS NOW CLOSED

After many years of debate, the San diorama was closed to the public on 3 April 2001. It will be left in place while a process of consultation with affected communities takes place. We are committed to working in partnership with Khoisan people in developing new exhibitions.

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a storage category there was still the possibility of reinstatement in another form. This was a notice of action, of something that had been done and that assured a public consisting of the bearers and representatives of assumed indigenous groupings a say in a new past. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a professor of performance studies from New York University, referred to the notice that stood in front of the archived, boarded-up diorama as one of the most powerful displays in a museum setting. It incited inquisitiveness and curiosity, making visitors actively engage with what they imagined might be on display beyond the hoardings and the words provided on the notice.[39] Within two to three years a new exhibition on rock art was installed that completely modified the route through the museum. Instead of entering the museum and proceeding through an archaeological display to the diorama and then on to the African Cultures hall, the new rock art exhibition closed the door to the gallery where the diorama was archived. The dilemma label was removed and placed in storage.

Finally, in the Maritime section of the Bartolomeu Dias Museum complex in the southern Cape town of Mossel Bay there was a dilemma label in an alcove containing an exhibition with miniature dioramas containing depictions of encounters between the early travellers from Europe and the indigenous population. The exhibition employed crude physiognomic racial stereotypes to describe the indigenous population: 'The Hottentots (Khoikhoi) were walnut-coloured, comparatively small in stature and with peppercorn hair'. At the entrance to the alcove the dilemma label alerted visitors to problems with the display:

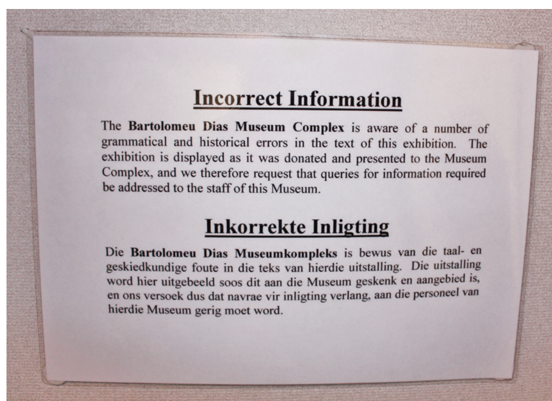

Figure 0.5. Notice of inaccuracy, Mossel Bay, Dias Museum, 12 August 2007. © Leslie Witz.

The text reads:

Incorrect Information

The **Bartolomeu Dias Museum Complex** is aware of a number of grammatical and historical errors in the text of this exhibition. The exhibition is displayed as it was donated and presented to the Museum Complex, and we therefore request that queries for information required be addressed to the staff of this Museum.

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Produced on a laminated A4 sheet, the label was affixed using removable putty. Its temporary production belied its semi-permanence, having been on display for more than ten years. Through it the museum absolved itself of responsibility for the 'errors' and shifted it to the donor. Being aware of the inaccuracy was not a compelling enough motivation for the museum to disturb the collection on display.

These dilemma labels appear somewhat different to texts that usually appear in museums as explanatory boards, contextual markers and directional signs. Setting in place an 'interpretative framework' museum labels are usually devices that provide both a focus on what is there and what is not, creating sequential links across the gaps. In these ways texts perform the spatializing function of defining 'relations among things and ideas, whether showing stylistic developments or contrasts, an evolutionary sequence, or historical connections'. It is not only the words per se, but the size and style of the font, the choice of colour and the siting of the labels that provide a means to highlight and select importance. The text is 'buttressed by the implicit imprimatur of institutional authority' of the museum as rendering knowledge.[40] The dilemma label instead gives the impression of exposing the fissures and interrupting this authority. They seem to say 'we might have got it wrong', and ask the visitor to hesitate, not to accept what they see and hear on display. In Latour's categorization they would appear as signalling a 'source of uncertainty'. At the same time as display objects they bear the promise of anticipation, agents of confidence and conviction, acting to enhance a trust in a future when the museum will be able to set the sequences in place once again.[41]

Reading these dilemma labels in some of South Africa's older museums I was struck by a growing commitment to change history, to alter displays and to shift categories. Even if some were less assertive than others, took different forms and indicated different processes of adjustment, there was an unease about their practices in and of the past. In the dilemma labels were the beginnings of an engagement with different approaches to modify history in South African museums. These included closing exhibitions, installing new ones, changing labels, making statements of culpability, declaring inaccuracies, evoking new audiences as communities, rethinking classifications and drawing upon new sets of expertise. The dilemma label signalled an intention to change history in South African museums in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Simultaneously, they reflected the contradiction of museums that is at the heart of this book. For all their explicit notification of altering the sequences of time, the dilemma labels were an assurance that the museum would maintain its role of keeping history in place. The donated

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exhibition at the Dias Museum could not be taken down even though the museum realized it contained errors, the diorama in Iziko South African Museum had to stay up as consultations took place, and despite problems of stereotyping and the depictions of timeless ethnicities that the museum acknowledged with the African Cultures Gallery, it was in no rush to change these exhibitions. Underlying the intervention of the dilemma label as a somewhat awkward display technique, that spoke as and for institutional authority, was an assumption that history as conservation would remain at the core of the museum.

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For older museums which had sizeable collections, impressive displays and well-established institutional arrangements in place, the dilemma of how to re-shape time loomed large. Although there had been several debates within South African museum circles from the 1980s about altering strategies of display, attracting new audiences and modifying policies on staffing and institutional arrangements, it was the political shifts in 1990 which pointed to the end of apartheid that spurred museums to take new directions. One way to secure pasts of preservation and indicate new temporal sequencing was to have a complete makeover by installing narratives that foregrounded histories of oppression and resistance. Johannesburg's municipal Africana Museum was one of the first of the older museums in South Africa to think about how to begin anew. Based in the public library, where it was devoted to South African cultural history and ethnology (in its official story of origin published in 1977 its Africana collection began with the discovery of the gravestone of 'the first white woman to die north of the Vaal River in the Transvaaal'),[42] it shifted to the Newtown precinct alongside the Market Theatre and re-established itself as MuseumAfrica where it initially sought to depict a social history of the city and its underclasses.[43] Opposite the Houses of Parliament, in central Cape Town, the building which housed offices of the British colonial administration, the Supreme Court and later the South African Cultural History Museum reverted in 1999 to its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century appellation as the Slave Lodge. It does not house slaves of the Dutch East India Company as it did then. Instead, it became a component of a new national consortium of museums in Cape Town known as Iziko, and its main exhibition *Remembering Slavery* signalled an intention to alter the site into a museum of slavery and human rights.[44] The Jewish Museum in Cape Town shifted from being a place that emphasized Jewishness into

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becoming an institution that represented South African Jews as a progressive, modern, post-apartheid community. Using the figure of Nelson Mandela to claim a place in struggles for non-racialism, the museum was entirely reconstructed to depict a history of Jews in South Africa as one of 'individual and organizational roles and contributions' towards making a post-apartheid nation.[45] As indicated above, others, like the McGregor Museum in Kimberley and Iziko South African Museum (where many natural history collections are sited), took a more incremental approach, displaying dilemma labels, adding elements on to their existing displays, creating new ones, while closing down others.

The formation of Iziko itself was an indicator of reconstruction through shifting institutional arrangements. Using the model of the Smithsonian Institution in the United States, national museums in Cape Town and Pretoria/Johannesburg respectively were amalgamated into two flagship structures. Iziko (hearth in isiXhosa), covering five national museums in fifteen sites and collections in Cape Town, became the southern flagship. The 'northern flagship institution' brought together eight former national museums, and in 2010 was branded as 'Ditsong', the Tswana word for a 'place of heritage'.[46] In both instances the amalgamation was meant to be much more than an administrative shift. Iziko altered its classificatory categories, did away with cultural history, and established three new divisions: art, natural history and social history collections.[47] Arguably at the forefront of this change at Iziko was the South African National Gallery, which since the early 1990s had become the site of exhibitions that experimented with using artefacts from across the collections, at times raising questions of institutional pasts, knowledge production and processes of acquisition.[48] There was much greater adherence to existing museum categories in the northern flagship, especially in maintaining the category of cultural history and recasting it as tradition and diversity. The National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria, for instance, relocated part of its holdings to the old mint and opened the African Window as a site to display 'African traditions'. The opening of the Tswaing Crater Museum in March 1996, as an open-air eco-museum that contained stories of former workers from the salt factory located on the banks of a meteorite crater between 1919 and 1956, gestured towards a much more substantial shift in approach. Yet, under the auspices of the Cultural History Museum it remained tied to collecting and displaying bounded knowledge as fixed traditions.[49]

For the vast number of new museums that opened their doors there appeared to be greater possibilities to alter methodologies, practices and content. In many cases museum making involved constituting coherent

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collections and creating display environments either by using an existing structural fabric, be it a church, prison, hostel, community hall or private residence, for museum purposes, or by designing and constructing a new building. Some of the new museums emphasized the process of becoming and establishing their communities. Others were 'architecturally driven projects' that were more concerned with the design of a new building as museum.[50] Using recollections of a recent past of violence and oppression under apartheid, depicted largely through photographs and oral testimonies, they all operated as memorial museums. This was situated as the marker of difference to a post-apartheid present.[51] There can be little doubt that if changing subject matter was an indication of temporal shifts then these new museums, which made apartheid into the site of collection and exhibition, were reshaping pasts.

In the newness of museums in South Africa after 1994 there were linkages to an earlier set of more conservative institutional practices that had been set in place under apartheid. These are elaborated upon in the following chapter but at this stage it is important to point out that the number of history museums had increased exponentially in South Africa from the 1960s, outstripping those devoted to natural history which had dominated previously. This history museum movement was based on a shortening of time, so that sequences in museums were no longer of the long durée of the earth but of the much shorter series of human memory. Memories of racialized settler pasts, collected through documents, oral testimonies and artefacts of habitation, were inscribed as empirical facts in museums under apartheid. These collections made museums in South Africa into an institutional place for history and set in place the foundations for their construction and reconstruction in the 1990s. By shortening history the path was cleared for memories of apartheid to find their ways into the museum and simultaneously established a framework of empiricism that set limits on the possibilities for change.[52]

The most obvious and arguably the most prominent of these new history museums was the Apartheid Museum that was built primarily as an experiential display environment adjacent to Gold Reef City Casino in Johannesburg. It sought to provide an all-embracing socio-political narrative of South Africa focusing on the period from 1948 to 1994.[53] Others plotted specific aspects of apartheid: the District Six Museum, the Cato Manor Heritage Centre, the Sophiatown Heritage and Cultural Centre, the Fietas Museum and the South End Museum, in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth respectively, drew attention to forced removals.[54] The Cata Museum and Heritage Trail focused on the operation of apartheid and betterment schemes in the Eastern Cape to

provide evidence that removals in apartheid's ethnic 'homelands' were as much a part of a policy of land dispossession as those that took place from 'former "white" South Africa'.[55] The Lwandle Migrant Labour, Langa and Khayelitsha museums in Cape Town, the Workers Museum in Johannesburg and the Kwa Muhle branch of the Durban Local History Museum drew on social histories to represent accounts of the lives, politics and cultures of workers in South Africa's cities.[56] The Red Location Museum in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, the Liliesleaf Legacy Project in Rivonia, Johannesburg, the Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum and the Kliptown Open Air Museum (the latter both in Soweto) emphasized anti-apartheid resistance struggles. The museum at the old Johannesburg Fort, adjacent to the Constitutional Court, highlighted the harshness and brutality of imprisonment, and new national museums like the Robben Island Museum in Cape Town and //Hapo Freedom Park Museum in Pretoria were built around narratives of repression and resistance.

A new set of characters was found by those initiating these museums to people this dichotomous narrative, with prominence given to a life-story of Nelson Mandela.[57] In addition to Robben Island Museum as the site and story of eighteen of his twenty-seven years' imprisonment, there was the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha, Qunu and Mfezo where the focus was on the early years of his life, and the family house of Nelson and his second wife Winnie in Soweto. The Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Commemoration in Houghton although not formally a museum hosts archival collections and exhibitions associated with aspects of his biography. A yard in Alexandra township, the site of his first few years in Johannesburg, was turned into a building that was supposed to contain a Nelson Mandela Yard Interpretation Centre. In an ongoing and ever-growing industry around Mandela-as-life-story it was envisaged that a temporary exhibition space at the site where he was captured near Howick in 1962 would be turned into a museum as part of making the space signify 'one of the historically important moments in the struggle against Apartheid'.[58]

Biographical emplotment often took the form of the house museum, situating an individual's life in a space of becoming.[59] Although these are generally modest establishments, and unlike many of their counterparts in the United States do not have the aura of a shrine, they are meant to be part of establishing a 'national legacy' and naming the home as a site associated with a resistance narrative. This is most evident in Groutville in Kwazulu-Natal where the home from 1929 until his death in 1967 of ANC President Albert Luthuli has been turned by the central government into a national museum as a 'landmark associated with South

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Africa's struggle for human rights and democracy'.[60] At Satyagraha House (a combination of museum and guest house) in Johannesburg, Mohandas Gandhi's close friendship with the German architect Herman Kallenbach is depicted. The website proclaims that the house where Gandhi lived in 1908–1909 is now a 'registered part of the country's historical heritage', where 'the future Mahatma created and developed his philosophy of passive resistance'.[61] At 32 Angel Street in Kimberley the house where South African Native National Congress's first General Secretary Sol Plaatje spent his last years before he died in 1932 became a provincial heritage site with a small library of African literature and a museum containing an exhibition on Plaatje's life.[62] In Ginsberg, King William's Town, the house where Steve Biko lived between 1973 and 1977, while serving his banning order, became part of a Biko heritage route. Although not named as a museum the specially designed and constructed Steve Biko Centre, under the auspices of the community foundation bearing the same name, which opened in Ginsberg in 2012 contains a photographic exhibition on Biko's life and functions as a venue for art exhibitions and cultural activities. It emphasizes that it is through learning and performance that South African history is remembered, discovered and interpreted.[63]

In these new histories it is liberation struggles against the colonial and apartheid regimes that are foregrounded in the making of new national histories and identities. Another important marker is the assertion of a cultural difference with the world of the colonizer, giving the post-colonial nation its distinctive character. Significance was accorded to a narrative of indigeneity prior to the moments of European contact and settlement.[64] As part of this new deep time of the post-apartheid nation, archaeology type displays became a major focus of several new museums. In 2001, at Wildebeest Kuil, thirty kilometres outside of Kimberley, an extensive set of rock engravings provided the impetus for an interpretive centre under the umbrella of the McGregor Museum. Five years later the South African Rock Art Museum opened at the Origins Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand, largely as a celebration of the work and analysis of the archaeologist David Lewis-Williams. At the University of Pretoria, which previously had not publicized widely the findings of its archaeologists of an ancient African kingdom in the northern part of the country, a Mapungubwe Collection section was opened in 2000 as a site of conservation and display. At the time calls were starting to be made to repatriate these artefacts from the University of Pretoria to the tenth- to twelfth-century iron-age site at Mapungubwe, some 500 kilometres to the north. An architecturally award-winning interpretation centre was constructed inside Mapungubwe National Park but its contents remained

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very sparse, consisting of a few objects lent to it on an annual basis by the University of Pretoria, replicas of golden artefacts and a series of information posters and audio-visual presentations about the archaeological site.[65] And on the Ganora farm, near Graaff-Reinet, South Africa was taken into a prehuman past in a fossil museum that was officially opened in 1998 of a time 'about 280 million years, ago, when reptiles roamed the earth before the age of dinosaurs', situating the land spatially and metaphorically in what is called 'big history'.[66]

The worlds of finance, industry, agriculture and sport embraced the museum with even greater vigour, often branding their corporate image with a post anti-apartheid identity. AngloGold, then the country's biggest mining company, opened the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town, displaying the Barbier-Mueller collection of artefacts from the Akan kingdom of West Africa, much of it originally 'taken from Akan state treasuries',[67] as the foundation of a visual and textual narrative of gold trade, mining and production in Africa. ABSA Bank's Money Museum and Archives in downtown Johannesburg represented a history of money, saving and banking in South Africa.[68] In 1995 South African Breweries (in 2002 it took over the USA based company Miller Brewing to become SABMiller), which presented Castle Lager as the beer of a new South African nation, with its marketing ditty 'one nation, one soul, one beer, one goal', opened two museums: the Centenary Centre at the Market Theatre precinct in Johannesburg and the Heritage Centre in Cape Town.[69] Three wine estates, Groot Constantia, Solms-Delta, and Vergelegen, all sought to turn away from the assertion of a European heritage that is commonly expressed through 'Cape Dutch' architecture to build museums and interpretative centres that focused on slavery and its legacies in the Western Cape. In the Cape Town docks at the reconstructed Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in the basement of the new Board of Executors building, remains of an eighteenth-century fortress discovered during construction were used as the basis of the Chavonnes Battery Museum. It drew upon an older historiography that focused on the technologies of the military installation and colonial administration.[70] Nearby at Portswood House, overlooking the Waterfront, the South African Rugby Union relocated its museum from Newlands, reconstituted it and turned it into 'The Springbok Experience'. While there was a substantial addition of 'Black and Coloured history', and 'Rugby and apartheid', the museum devoted itself to affirming a corporate image of 'The Springbok' as the force which changed South Africa from apartheid to racial reconciliation 'on the rugby field'.[71]

There are several other new museum initiatives that cover an array of pasts, have varied sponsors and are not that easy to categorize. The

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Ncome museum in Kwazulu Natal, an initiative of national government, for instance, attempted to give a version of events of the military struggles between frontier farmers and Zulu armies in the early nineteenth century from the perspective of Zulu speakers.[72] The Cape Town Holocaust Centre asserted that it was 'the first and only Holocaust centre to be established in Africa'.[73] Under the banner of the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation, it expanded to establish branches in Johannesburg in 2007 and Durban in 2009. On 3 December 2007 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the world's first heart transplant operation carried out by a team of surgeons led by Christiaan Barnard, the Heart of Cape Town Museum at Groote Schuur Hospital was opened. In 2011 the gallows at Pretoria Central Prison were turned into a national memorial site which includes an extensive exhibition. Opening the museum, then South African President Jacob Zuma referred to it as a place 'where the political prisoners who were hanged there can be honoured and the past can be buried'.[74] Although he referred to it as a museum it was not open to the general public until a way could be found to access the site without breaching prison security. And, finally, there was the stand-up comedian Pieter Dirk Uys's quirky little apartheid museum that formed part of his theatre and restaurant complex in the small town of Darling on the Cape west coast. Containing apartheid era memorabilia, signs for segregated amenities, election posters and Afrikaner nationalist cultural artefacts, the museum (or 'nauseum' as he calls it) was presented on its website as a place 'based on reality and pretty close to the truth' where 'everyone has a chance to laugh and/or cry, then remember and celebrate that we are no longer there'.[75]

A Space for History

This astonishing manifestation of a plethora of museum productions – and there are more – may be accounted for through an alignment with a developmental agenda, appearing as a favourable arena for social and economic investment. In South Africa the post-apartheid state adopted a strategy whereby it envisaged that growth would lead to development. In such a framework the objectives were defined as increasing productivity, marketing effectively and sustaining long-term growth to create jobs and alleviate poverty. Whether this was appropriate or effective has been the matter of considerable debate. But if we take it as the policy pursued, then museums were potentially one of the sites of, or as economists would say nodes of, development. This is not because they would necessarily employ

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large numbers of people, but they could potentially be at the forefront of cultural led regeneration of cities and regions through linkages and opportunities created through visitation. Culture was the potential dynamic to make a destination.[76]

It is not surprising then that the mission of the post-1994 South African government's Department of Arts and Culture (which was initially combined with the Department of Science and Technology) was defined almost entirely as 'developing the economic potential in the cultural industries'.[77] For museums the implications were two-fold. On the one hand they were explicitly instructed by the Department to ensure 'effective and efficient use of limited resources', undergo a 'systematic process of restructuring and rationalization' and subject themselves to 'performance measures'.[78] On the other hand their primary role according to the Department was to position and market themselves so that they could become 'part of a strategy of branding the Country as a sought-after tourism destination'.[79] Where a developmental discourse is paramount, the museum is primarily viewed as an institution that can generate products of commodity value through situating itself as part of an economy of tourism and visitation as the engine of employment.

Despite being urged by the Department to become commercial operations with international tourism as their core function,[80] the number of visitors to museums has remained low. Museums in South Africa are hardly able to sustain themselves and rely heavily on funding from private capital, foundations, foreign governments and, in most cases, the central, regional or local administration. This would suggest that the momentum to invest in museums is coming from alternative directions. An extraordinarily strong impetus derives from the reconstitution of notions of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa. The ANC-led government, elected on a basis of universal adult suffrage, proclaimed itself to be committed to a national state where public institutions would be much more accessible, employ a wider and more representative staff, respond to broad societal needs, and restore justice. It called upon the populace, most of whom had under apartheid been racially excluded from institutions such as museums, to participate as citizens in the newly constituted nation. Yet, in looking forward to the commonality of a post-apartheid nation, the idea of forging a collective past that would be aligned with the present and the anticipated 'never-ending' future was promoted.[81] Presented as a national inheritance and called 'heritage', this past, which emphasized cultural diversity within an identity labelled as 'African', was to be utilized by the state as 'a powerful agent for cultural identity, reconciliation and nation-building'.[82]

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Drawing upon notions of museums as domains of public education and citizenship, they presented the potential of helping to 'form a new public and inscribe it in new relations of sight and vision'.[83] When opening Robben Island as the first new national museum in South Africa in September 1997, President Nelson Mandela posed the question: 'Having excluded and marginalized most of our people, is it surprising that our museums and national monuments are often seen as alien spaces? How many have gone to see one of our monuments? In other countries such places throng with citizens'. He then went on to maintain that 'with democracy, we have the opportunity to ensure that our institutions reflect history in a way that respects the heritage of all our citizens'. The role being accorded museums by Mandela in the speech, along with 'monuments', 'sites', 'songs' and 'festivals', was primarily as mirroring institutions that would visualize a new, inclusive national society and construct a citizenry.[84] By bringing all these different spheres under the broad rubric of 'heritage' (and museums were to be a part of this), there were implications of an apparently seamless legacy being brought together with a sense of naturalness that could then constitute a commonality that would be labelled as national. Heritage was presented by Mandela as the site of recovery of lost pasts, where representations would be subject to modification and correction, and the national citizenry institutionalized.[85]

This focus on museums cannot only be located in the assumption of state power and the reimagining of a nationalized citizenry. While many museums are in some way funded (or as they consistently claim, underfunded) by different tiers of government and have their authority vested in them through organs of state, their range and extent suggest this is a far wider movement. Large international foundations, foreign governments and corporate sponsors have provided funds for independent museums. In some instances local capital has developed its own museums, seeking to project their corporate image and/or representing a specific industrial or financial niche. Groupings, constituting themselves as communities, have seized the initiative and established museum-type projects. In debates around heritage and nation, all these museum developments, together with state funded museums, could easily be grouped together and accounted for through notions of a dominant ideology. Heritage (of which museums are then taken as one component) is analysed as a malleable instrument that is used by those holding the reins of state power (or alternatively those in opposition to or resisting the state) to convey a particular political message to subordinate groupings. Much of the literature on heritage and museums in post-apartheid South Africa has taken this position, showing how dominant narratives were inscribed in memory

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through a combination of commercial interests and political imperatives of the new state.[86]

But it would be simplistic to account for these museum movements as being somehow 'moulded' as part of the process of legitimation by those who have acquired the reins of financial and government power.[87] Not only does this argument, in its crudest forms, assume a somewhat instrumentalist tone, but it also plays down the inconsistencies among the many different producers of meaning, the occasional lack of a clear distinction between the dominant producer and subordinate receiver groupings, and the ways in which the subordinate groupings may construct their own meanings. While the ANC might have wanted or demanded museums to change into mirroring institutions, the contests over meaning amongst the enormous variety of producers and their publics limited their ability to shape the forms and content over the images that appeared and disappeared.

The emphasis on the inscription of a dominant representational narrative would also limit the range and histories of museums. Museums have shifted in their approaches and forms over time from private, seemingly haphazard collections to public bodies for classifying and exhibiting knowledge. They also exist in a variety of institutional settings, typologies and possibilities. These include operating as secular shrines, commodity machines, markers of colonial collection and classification and as self-reflexive sites to experiment with new, different and contested forms of knowledge.[88] Divergences such as these suggest a much more complex operation where the establishment of museums and a reconfiguration of their representational practices may be thought of as resulting from conflicts and negotiations over determining values and ascribing meanings.

These struggles taking place in museums were in direct contrast to the dominant assessment of many academic historians about the state of history in South Africa at the time. Their contention was that despite the dramatic political changes following the formal demise of apartheid, South African history was stagnating. With reference to the secondary and tertiary educational sectors, it was pointed out by many university based historians that the numbers of student enrolments for history declined dramatically, that history as a subject was at times under threat in the school curriculum, that there were few new historians and little fresh historical writing was emerging.[89] Bald statements about history losing its appeal, history lacking any use value, history being appropriated for nationalist causes and history being undermined by post-modernism were all advanced as reasons for its apparent demise. Yet contests were emerging as claims to historical knowledge were being 'asserted, substantiated

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and articulated across an ever increasing wider-range of communities and institutions'. There were 'ongoing negotiations where different and competing narratives, claims and priorities' constantly came 'up against each other'.[90] At South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the 1990s, in claims to recover land lost through the actions of the segregationist and apartheid states, through debates over the future of existing memorials, the construction of new ones, and the invocation and rejection of commemorative pasts, histories were constantly being debated and mediated. Across disparate domains and interests, many, varied and different histories emerged. In this moment when there was a 'chaotic state of representation', museums, both old and new, became one of the primary settings for remaking and contesting histories.[91]

In emphasizing these contests or 'history frictions' there is an explicit evocation of Kratz and Karp's notion of 'museum frictions', a concept which they use to analyse the shifting and conflicting forces in the mediation of knowledge. Kratz and Karp have extended Clifford's appropriation of the concept of a 'contact zone' to examine the collecting and curatorial practices of museums. Clifford had argued that not only is dissonance nearly always evident in relationships between museums and their differing communities, but perhaps more importantly, it is ongoing. In the social setting of the museum, he insisted, 'all culture-collecting strategies [are] responses to particular histories of dominance, hierarchy, resistance, and mobilization'.[92] As those who were previously the subjects of research, collection and display assert their rights, a 'power charged set of exchanges'[93] takes place between institutional and knowledge authority and those groups claiming locality and community around issues of ownership, usage and meanings. Although framed in the language of reciprocity, these are fundamentally unequal exchanges over value and significance. It is these potentially multiple (and asymmetrical) contests and collaborations over ownership, displays and meanings that are the contact zones where representations are produced and re-produced. Clifford's concern was that of the cultural activist and he proposed a shift in the museum from an institution concerned with the acquisition of knowledge to one that acknowledges and works in the contact zones. Recognizing the operations of power and domination, he does not foreclose the possibility of museums abandoning their claims to universality and moving towards much more open-ended engagement with the bearers of different practices and knowledges.

What Kratz and Karp assert is that these contests that Clifford points to can be located beyond the specific institutional setting of the museum. They point out that in his analysis of 'contact zones', Clifford's accounts

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are within the specific institutional bounds of the museum or gallery: the performances by community groupings around the collections in Portland Museum of Art, the multiple meetings of sponsors, artists and curators in *Africa: Art of a Continent*, the installations by artists from Highland New Guinea on the campus of Stanford University in California are three of the examples he cites. What makes these contact zones is that they draw upon contexts, knowledges, institutions and authorities that are to be found beyond the immediacy of the museum. Kratz and Karp assert that it is the conjunction of 'disparate communities, interests, goals and perspectives' that 'produce debates, tensions, collaborations, conflicts of many sorts', which they term 'museum frictions'. Most prominently, these frictions occur as museums which are established as part of asserting status as a modern nation, 'institutions of knowledge, power and exhortation' that both seek to 'enlighten' and 'inculcate', become sites where differing communities and constituencies assert a range of competing ambitions, opinions and expertise.[94] This is not a return to conceiving of museums as a legitimating institution, where power ultimately resides in the workings between the state and the material relations in society, but is about how specific forms of knowledge about society come to operate within, through and beyond the museum.[95]

Despite the resurgence of museums in South African there has been little critical reflection on these processes of change. Nearly all the monographs have dealt with heritage more broadly, largely seeking to understand memorial practices in relation to what appears as a new state, the framing of a national past around a narrative of repression and resistance, and the simultaneous evocation of and distancing from colonial forms.[96] Sometimes, as in the study by Hlongwane and Ndlovu of heritage sites in and around Johannesburg, museums are included in order to convey a sense of the extent of new memorial practices and the issues they confront such as the expertise drawn upon, senses of alienation and filiation from different publics, the commodification of images and places, and contested political interests over content and form.[97] When it comes to specific museums there have been histories of three new museums, the District Six Museum, the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum and the Robben Island Museum. They have outlined the multiple origins, the varying strategies of museum making and personal memories of those processes, the ways in which museum communities have been constructed, and have insisted upon museums being processes that arise out of ongoing knowledge transactions.[98] Biographies of individuals who were associated with the founding of two of the older museums, MuseumAfrica and the Johannesburg Art Gallery, have been highlighted by Sara Byala

and Jillian Carman, respectively. In both instances, they stress how it was negotiations over the association of value to the collections that led to the establishment of these institutions.[99] Similarly, Anna Tietze uses a chronology of the individual as director to embark upon a history of shifts in direction of the South African National Gallery (SANG) between 1875 and 2017.[100] From the position of an insider, Marilyn Martin, who was director of SANG and member of the council of Iziko, gives an account of its history over a similar period by focusing on the political pressures that the institution faced as it attempted to remake the contents of what constituted a national art collection.[101] Martin Legassick and Ciraj Rassool have shown a much more explicit operation of institutional and disciplinary power in museum making. By tracking in sometimes minute detail the histories of the collection of human remains, they have argued that this disreputable past, which involved the disinterment of bodies from graves in the name of racial science, was at the heart of the development of the modern South African museum at the beginning of the twentieth century.[102] It is the question of how to deal with this legacy of racial science that they maintain is key to challenging and changing museums in South Africa.

The only substantive account of historical knowledge and museum transformation in South Africa is provided by Annie Coombes. In *History After Apartheid* she takes on contests over pasts and public memories in museums. She locates these between, on the one hand, the recovery and depiction of social lives, which was the subject of much historical research and writing in South African universities in the 1980s, and the articulation of individual lived experiences, on the other. The latter, she maintains, drew upon multiple frameworks of memory that were often outside the limitations set by narratives of national and/or material struggles. These many, different and contradictory accounts all signalled 'the compromised, complicated texture of living under and fighting under apartheid'. For her then, the post-apartheid challenge for museums was, instead of attempting to inscribe a new singular narrative as real, to pursue representational practices to convey the ironies, complexities and contradictions of life as lived. In her examples it was often through imaginative aesthetic practices of art that this was attempted and achieved.[103]

The distinction that Coombes draws between claims of history derived from research of the social and those which base their authority on genealogies of lived memory is particularly important in analysing museum changes in South Africa. This approach, while highlighting difference, can fall into an easy dichotomy between the authority of disciplinary knowledge, on the one hand, and more vernacular, seemingly less

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mediated, localized histories, on the other. What is important instead for *Museum Times* is to rethink the many, often disparate, sites of historical production in relation to their form, content and institutional vectors and, significantly, how these have shifted. This book examines the particular dilemmas and responses of museums as they sought to find forms, methodologies and content to express new and altered pasts through object formation in post-apartheid South Africa. It is the ongoing dilemmas of whether and how to incorporate new and different histories, the reverberations that arose, and the ways in which they were re-solved that are the core of this study. The book examines the different ways in which histories were invoked, mediated and negotiated in museums in post-apartheid South Africa. By highlighting the dilemmas, or to return to Latour's phrasing, the 'sources of uncertainty', by showing that the conflicts and their re-solutions as objects were set in altered temporal and spatial sequences of 'civic laboratories', one can begin to show how histories and museums changed amidst ongoing negotiations over pastness.[104]

Changing Histories

All the case studies presented in this book are located at the seam of museum change: between history as safeguarding and preservation and history as producing new sets of time. In broad brushstrokes the museums dealt with in this book are either older institutions, created in the colonial or apartheid eras, and that are now seeking to develop new audiences and histories, or those which have been established since 1994 and are laying claims to establishing foundational memories of apartheid pasts. It starts with the almost unknown Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, established in 1999 and which claims to be the Western Cape province's first township-based museum, and moves to the southern Cape town of Mossel Bay, where apartheid's last museum, the Bartolomeu Dias Museum complex, had opened ten years previously. It then journeys to one of South Africa's oldest museums, the Amathole Museum established in the late nineteenth century in King William's Town in what is today the Eastern Cape, and returns to Cape Town to the first post-apartheid new national museum on Robben Island. Finally, it goes on a journey with an exhibition that travelled between three sites from 2002 to 2004: the iconic structure of colonial rule which served as the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company, the Castle of Good Hope, a farm museum in the town of Worcester which celebrates the lifestyle of the pioneer farmer, and the library foyer of the University of the Western Cape. In asking the

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question about what to do with old memorials in new times, the exhibition epitomized the central theme of this book: about giving shape and form to a past in the interstices between conserving and changing history.

These are all instances where I, to a greater or lesser extent, was drawn into research, exhibition, administrative and general advice type relationships. This has been as board member, researcher, editor and designer of exhibitions, running educational programmes, being consulted by management and staff about the possibilities for altering the displays and being invited to give talks at museum events and conferences. The claim to partial insider knowledge is an epistemological one. If institutions of public culture are 'critical social locations where knowledge and perceptions [of the public sphere] are shaped, debated, imposed, challenged, and disseminated',[105] then the public historian enters into discussions and debates with these institutions as a series of knowledge transactions. Pasts that are produced in museums are often the result of negotiations and conflicts between opposing groups over its constituent elements, what events and personalities should be included and excluded and how they should be represented. My role as a public historian therefore involves more than imparting knowledge and skills of the profession or investigating the poetics of representation and the politics of production. It has meant being deeply involved in the difficult processes of constituting and reconstituting meanings, a 'messy in-between space'[106] where one acts both as an academically trained historian and as an active member of the museum community. One's expertise as an historian is constantly being challenged, shaped and re-shaped in negotiations over the past as different historical knowledges are articulated, and where individuals and events are produced and excised in what Premesh Lalu, in a most evocative phrase, has called the 'cut of history'.[107]

While this selection relates to another time, that of the personal and autobiographical, and is therefore not geographically or typological representative, it does point to the processes by which different types of histories are worked with in these museums. In the case of the Lwandle Museum there is the making of locality through an assertion of its role in a national past. The Dias Museum struggles with an older imperial maritime structuring which it is ambivalent about and embraces the idea of returning to the local as double manoeuvre of retention and transformation. In King William's Town the Amathole Museum takes on settler history by returning to an older form of historiography, that pertaining to the frontier of colonial expansion and conquest, but uses it to assert a move that traverses fixed boundaries of history, race and conflict. The *Y350?* exhibition, at its various locations, confronts settler pasts more

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directly by asking meta-historical questions with regard to the politics of production and representation. And Robben Island Museum is completely part of inscribing a new national history, yet at moments and in enclaves seeks to represent difference and multiplicity.

The ways in which time itself is configured and operationalized are set alongside and together with forms of history. The Amathole Museum, which started its life classified as a natural history institution, constantly deals with the processes of how it can shorten and compress time. Both the *Y350?* exhibition and the Dias Museum confront the cyclical time of anniversary and commemoration, but in vastly different ways. One consistently works to undermine its appearance of inevitability, while the latter, with some hesitation, still celebrates and sets in places a moment of founding and beginning. Both Lwandle and Robben Island, in situating themselves in national pasts, establish linear timelines. The degrees of emphasis, selections of what counts as events, the framings provided and the indications of beginnings and endings establish these museums' times.

The book starts by presenting an account of how the category of history was employed and altered in South African museums from their inception as mainly colonial institutions devoted to natural history in the nineteenth century, to becoming memorials of settlement in the second half of the twentieth century with the implementation of apartheid. It considers how museum frameworks that were put in place in the 1990s after the demise of apartheid sometimes challenged these older histories as modes of exclusion and partial interpretation, but also confirmed them, particularly when museums invoked a status as bearers of heritage. I am particularly concerned with how history in museums was shaped through a lineage of preservation that reified an empirical approach and turned artefacts into facts.

I then turn attention to specific museums and exhibitions and visit two museums that are haunted by the possibilities of 'eventless history'. In the case of the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, making event as history required an enormous amount of work and attention. Lwandle was a place that was hardly written about, and, when it was, tended to be inscribed as a problem either requiring ethnographic study and/or socio-political intervention, and had little going for it in terms of a foundational object collection. It also had almost no support for the museum idea from those living in the immediate vicinity and from government structures. To recover and establish community and history as event, the Lwandle Museum resorted to making what Mowitt appropriately calls a Con-Text, a materialist past that is created with and through constant literary engagements constituting what he refers to as a geography designating the

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space of history, or later on as the space 'between the discourse on society and the writing of that discourse'.[108] The Lwandle Museum shapes its historical geography by using a nondescript building that lacked a specific marker of significance, and placing it in historical research and writing on South African social and labour history that emerged in the 1970s that was located almost in and on the space of the Witwatersrand. This chapter examines how a new local history surrounding this hostel was framed by the museum through a national history of migrant labour based on the narratives of the mines of the Witwatersrand. To establish events in a local history, the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum metaphorically reproduced the gold mine, taking it to the seaside, and ironically almost totally ignored both the site of work in its invocation of labour and its coastal appellation in the naming *elwandle*, at the sea.

Mossel Bay, on the other hand, already had a local history on display in a small museum. It is described in the *Guide to the Museums of Southern Africa* (1969) as being of 'a miscellaneous nature' and included 'old documents, maps, photographs, utensils, etc'.[109] But in the late 1980s this collection was largely placed in storage as the museum shifted direction. Drawing upon a festival that took place in 1988, a massive new Bartolomeu Dias Museum complex was built that discarded its existing local history to make way for an extravagant display of Portuguese founding. The foundations of what in effect was apartheid's last museum were constructed from the experience of this showpiece that was produced by the late-apartheid state for the 1988 Dias festival. Its centrepiece, in a specially designed triple volume interior, was a reconstructed caravel that sailed from Lisbon to Mossel Bay in 1988 with considerable motorized assistance and was given the invented name of *Bartolomeu Dias*.[110] This pageantry of glorified European founding that worked to consistently deny, suppress and substitute events became cast into the museum structure as its sign of authenticity. Since 1994 there have been various attempts by the museum to move away from this monumental past and 'focus on local history, culture and the natural environment' and to 'represent voices from all the inhabitants of Mossel Bay'.[111] I examine how this objective, to assert what is claimed as inclusivity, has come into conflict with an existing pervasive framework of maritime history and a spectacular eventless past that celebrates founding, discovery and achievement. The museum has resorted to a series of temporary exhibitions in a human rights framework which have little to do directly with Mossel Bay or Dias but which serve to retain the maritime history of European discovery in place.

From the coast I move to the interior to consider the changes that took place in the History Hall at the Amathole Museum in King William's

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Town. Formed as a Naturalist Society in 1884, it became the Frontier Districts Museum in 1898, the Kaffrarian Museum in 1921 and then was re-named as the Amathole Museum in 1999.[112] Across these name changes, the key exhibition in this museum since the 1930s has remained that of a hippopotamus that supposedly wandered about 1,000 kilometres southwards over a three-year period, and was shot and killed on the banks of the nearby Keiskamma river. Ever since this hippopotamus was recovered, skinned and prepared for display, the museum has been known as the 'Home of Huberta'.

Along with the name change to the Amathole Museum in the late 1990s, a new exhibition was conceived of and installed in the History Hall entitled *Across the Frontier*. In this exhibition the tension was always between making use of what the museum had at hand in its collection and employing some of the newer historical research and writing on the Eastern Cape. The issue was how to give shape and form to a new history about race, conflict and cooperation on the colonial frontier of expansion and conquest, when its artefacts had been acquired in pursuance of assembling a mammal collection, or collecting and displaying a settler past as history, or as part of a separate ethnological Xhosa gallery. In this moment Huberta was remade into an object of scientific enquiry and a multicultural artefact of cooperation, securing its home for the future, even though officially the museum discarded its taxonomic designation with its hippopotamus singularity as it took history 'across the frontier'.

If for the Amathole Museum the key issue was about transforming the locality as a colonial frontier into an inclusive cooperative post-apartheid past for Huberta, then for Robben Island it was about making a place of banishment and imprisonment for over 300 years into a museum. I am particularly interested in how museum-type methodologies have sat alongside the establishment of a site for large-scale visitation and the political imperatives associated with its construction as the first new national museum of post-apartheid South Africa. From 1997, in its early years as a museum, there seemed to be little contradiction.[113] Commentators enthused over how personal experiences of ex-political prisoners were integral to the functioning as a museum through the tours of the prison which they conducted. Their performance and narration were initially seen as the foundation of a special, new type of museum, a museum without walls, a symbolic and sacred site, emphasizing lives as lived rather than the physical structures and the artefacts. As with the Tswaing Crater Museum in the north of the country, it had an affinity, it was maintained by commentators, with the ecomuseum movement that emerged in France in the 1970s.[114] Liberation from apartheid and the strictures

of the conventional museum were symbolized in the figure of a rabbit which made a brief appearance on the film played to visitors on the ferries *Makana* and *Autshumato* to Robben Island in the early 2000s. As the rabbit scampered away from the camera, the narrator, speaking in the first-person singular as the Island, heralded the coming of freedom: 'At last I was free again, free to sustain life, free to impress upon children the bonds between humans and their natural environment, free to become a place of learning and peace'.[115]

There were warnings that these apparently innovative museum methodologies might recede into the background through the prioritizing of commercial and political concerns. Shackley was worried that commercialization and the demands of mass tourism might lead to the commodification of Robben Island and the trivialization of the experience.[116] Garuba's sense was that the personal narratives of guides on the island were becoming subsumed into the 'dominant narrative of the anti-apartheid struggle', its apparently morally inevitable victory and its outcome in the 'new nation'.[117] There was a constant tension on Robben Island about its museum status as it mediated the meanings, values and roles associated with its museum claims with its status as a heritage and tourist site. And by 2008 the rabbit was no longer the symbol of liberation but was instead seen by the museum management to be responsible, together with the fallow deer, for the environmental degradation on the Island which had been praised as an ecomuseum. Both became targets of a mass culling campaign which carried on for over ten years.[118]

I turn from the extermination of the rabbits by the Robben Island Museum to reflect upon an exhibition that dealt with one of the fundamental questions about changing history: what to do with older memorials in a society that is claiming newness and change. The *Y350?: Old Memorials in New Times* exhibition that travelled from the Castle of Good Hope to the Worcester Museum at Kleinplasie, and then to the University of the Western Cape, reflected on the tensions inherent in the commemoration of the 350th anniversary of settlement in post-apartheid South Africa. The exhibition's central figure was a metal statue created by designer Jos Thorne that referred back to a poster from a meeting held on Cape Town's Grand Parade protesting against the glorification in 1952 of settlement through the iconization of the first commander of the Dutch East India Company's revictualling station, Jan van Riebeeck, some three hundred years previously. Like the poster in 1952, the unstable statue which Thorne created for the exhibition in 2002 inverted the figure. More broadly, by asking *Y350?* the exhibition used the occasion to raise questions about the presence and future of many South African

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monuments and memorials that endure as icons serving to glorify individuals and events that represent and articulate South Africa's colonial and apartheid pasts. In each venue the exhibition reflected on the anxiety inherent in the commemoration of the 350th anniversary of settlement in post-apartheid South Africa by giving it a local inflection that related issues to the specific site.

Not only did the exhibition highlight an unease with commemorating the 350th anniversary, the exhibition itself also became the site of reluctance. The various institutions where the exhibition was held all displayed some measure of hesitation in both its content and methodology. In addition, responses from those who came to view the exhibition concurred with, enhanced and also diverged from the curatorial intent. It is this 'tension between exhibition communication and the politics of representation'[119] that was central to the production and reception of an exhibition that tried to insist that the question to be asked in 2002 was whether and how to conceive of memorials beyond apartheid: should Van Riebeeck be turned on its head or discarded altogether?

Museum signage can also indicate an interruption, that a future of the institution is not assured. Rather than a dilemma label which refers to specific exhibitionary practices, there is a sign of another kind, of the rejection of the museum in its entirety indicating that the museum is unable to keep its doors open. These signs have gone up at various museums in South Africa since 2013 including some of those indicated earlier on: the Red Location Museum in New Brighton; the Springbok Experience and the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town; and uMkhumbane Cultural and Heritage Museum in Cato Manor, Durban. At the same time though some new museums have emerged, particularly in the world of contemporary art. Prominent amongst these are the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa and the Norval Foundation in Cape Town. As I write this introduction all museums in South Africa (and most internationally) are closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the conclusion I look at some of these instances of closure, opening and change and indulge in a little bit of speculation as to whether the excess of museum making that characterized the period since 1994 has come to an end, or perhaps shifted to new object formations. Here, my arguments are far less secure, but ironically the spectre of closure opens and interrogates the trajectories of the history I present and reveals my overall intention in the book. In presenting a history of histories in museums and exhibitions I am attempting to support those both inside and outside the museum sector who are constantly seeking to develop reflexive, critical institutional practices. In drawing on all these case studies one of my main objectives is to provoke, suggest and open up

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possibly fruitful areas of engagement for museums. The book is written in the hope and anticipation of changing histories in museums, that the patience which the dilemma label asks of the visitor will be rewarded with new visions, even more contests over the pasts they produce and will keep museums open and on the move.

Notes

1. This idea draws on Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*.
2. Bunn, 'The Museum Outdoors', 356.
3. Lidchi, 'The Poetics and Politics', 160.
4. Maleuvre, *Museum Memories*, 2; Bennett, *Making Culture*, 55.
5. Knell, MacLeod and Watson, *Museum Revolutions*, 1.
6. Witz and Rassool, 'Making Histories'. As elaborated upon later, this idea of 'history frictions' draws upon Kratz and Karp, 'Introduction. Museum Frictions'.
7. See Hafstein and Skrydstrup, *Patrimonialities* for a discussion on the distinction between claims to cultural property and cultural heritage.
8. Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*; Karp, Kreamer and Lavine, *Museums and Communities*; Knell, MacLeod and Watson, *Museum Revolutions*; Sherman, *Museums and Difference*; Macdonald, *The Politics of Display*; Lumley, *The Museum Time-Machine*; Vergo, *The New Museology.*
9. Marstine, *New Museum Theory*.
10. See Witz, Minkley and Rassool, 'South Africa and the Unsettling'.
11. Lumley, *The Museum Time-Machine*, 2.
12. Lumley, *The Museum Time-Machine*, 4–18.
13. Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa*, 263–69.
14. In relation to understanding how previous displays work with and against new exhibitions, see Lien and Nielssen, '"Permanent Displays"'.
15. Byala, *A Place That Matters*, 3–7.
16. Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archive', 19–20.
17. Crooke, 'Dealing with the Past', 137.
18. Kratz, 'Rhetorics of Value', 25.
19. Sherman, *Museums and Difference*, 6.
20. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 183.
21. Bennett, *Making Culture*, 49.
22. Bennett, *Making Culture*, 55, 52
23. Dudley, *Museum Materialities*, 6.
24. Here I am drawing on Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, who argues that publics are called into being through being addressed.
25. Kratz, *The Ones That Are Wanted*, 220.
26. See for example, Cohen, *The Combing*; Cohen and Odhiambo, *Siaya*; Cohen and Odhiambo, *Burying SM*.

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27. Leslie Witz, 'Proposal for extension of the NRF funded Project on Public Pasts based in the History Department at the University of the Western Cape', 31 August 2000. For an elaboration of the work of public history at UWC, see Witz, Minkley and Rassool, *Unsettled History*. The work of PoPP is also featured in Murray, Shepherd and Hall, *Desire Lines.*
28. Witz, 'Museum and Heritage Studies'; for an extensive account of the APMHS, see Morakinyo, 'A Historical and Conceptual Analysis'.
29. Witz and Cornell, 'From Robben Island', 8.
30. Rassool and Witz, 'Transforming Heritage Education', 2.
31. Witz, 'Proposal for extension of the NRF funded Project on Public Pasts'.
32. Voigt, 'A Very Special Museum', 32. For an account of interventions at the McGregor Museum and thoughts on museum transformation in the 1990s more generally, see Witz, Rassool and Minkley, 'The Castle, the Gallery'.
33. 'The most famous fish in the world', postcard, East London Museum, 2000.
34. Department of Nature Conservation, *Provincial Museums*, 4–5.
35. Notes from displays at the East London Museum, 8 July 2001; Fransen, *Guide to the Museums*, 1969, 50.
36. Davison, 'Material Culture', 128.
37. Davison, 'Material Culture', 129–30.
38. Cluver and Davison, 'The South African Museum', 280.
39. This was in her presentation 'Space of Memory/Site of Redress: Museums and the Performance of Citizenship' at the Institutions of Public Culture conference held under the auspices of Emory University's Center for the Study of Public Scholarship in Cape Town, *Museums, Local Knowledge and Performance in an Age of Globalisation*, Cape Town, 3–4 August 2001.
40. Kratz, 'Rhetorics of Value', 34–36.
41. Both these concepts, 'sources of uncertainty' and the 'agency of objects', are drawn from Latour, *Reassembling the Social.*
42. Smith, *Treasures of the Africana Museum*, 8.
43. On the intentions of MuseumAfrica see Van Tonder, 'From Mausoleum to Museum'; Bruce and Saks, 'A New Museum'; Byala, 'The Museum Becomes Archive'; Byala, *A Place That Matters*.
44. 'Iziko Museums of Cape Town: Slave Lodge Current Exhibitions', retrieved 30 August 2008 from www.iziko.org.za/slavelodge/c_ex.html.
45. 'South African Jewish Museum. History', retrieved 23 July 2008 from http://www.sajewishmuseum.co.za/about/history.asp. For a critical analysis of the exhibitions in the South African Jewish Museum, see Buthelezi, 'The South African Jewish Museum and the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum'.
46. Xingwana, speech at the launch of the new name for the Northern Flagship Institution.
47. See Davison, 'Redressing the Past', on the ways in which Iziko's collections were reorganized and reconceptualized.
48. See Tietze, *A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery*, especially chapter 5; see also Martin, *Between Dreams and Realities*, chapters 4–9.

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49. Photographs by Leslie Witz at Tswaing Crater Museum, 27 October 2004. Text on panels written by Helen van Coller. The Tswaing Crater Museum forms part of Ditsong, the Northern flagship of museums.
50. Murray and Witz, *Hostels, Homes*, 164.
51. See Williams, *Memorial Museums*. For a discussion of these new memorial museums in South Africa, see Witz, Minkley and Rassool, 'Sources and Genealogies'.
52. This point is emphasized in Witz, Minkley and Rassool, 'Sources and Genealogies'.
53. Hall and Bombardella, 'Las Vegas in Africa'.
54. There is an extensive literature on the District Six Museum. One of the best pieces that examines the different and often conflicting claims made upon the museum is Rassool, 'Community Museums'. On the South End Museum, see Kadi, 'The Group Areas Act'.
55. Photographs by L. Witz of exhibits at the Cata Museum, 10 September 2008.
56. On the Lwandle Museum, see Buthelezi, 'The South African Jewish Museum and the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum'; Mgijima and Buthelezi, 'Mapping Museum-Community'; Murray and Witz, *Hostels, Homes*.
57. Rassool has labelled this a component of a 'biographic order'. See Rassool, 'The Individual, Auto/biography'.
58. 'About the capture site', retrieved 29 January 2014 from http://www.thecapturesite.co.za/the-site/.
59. On the form of the house museum, see West, *Domesticating History*.
60. Notice boards at Luthuli Museum, 1 July 2011.
61. 'The Satyagraha House', retrieved 6 February 2015 from http://www.satyagrahahouse.com/en/Travel-Johannesburg. See Witz, 'The Arcades' Affinities' for a description and analysis of exhibitions at Satyagraha House.
62. On some of the early ideas for this museum, see Voigt, 'Sol Plaatje'.
63. 'The Steve Biko Centre: Museum', retrieved 6 February 2014 from http://sbf.org.za/museum.php.
64. Werbner, 'Smoke from the Barrel'; Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*; Wade, 'Introduction'.
65. 'Mapungubwe Museum: About Us', 20 November 2008, retrieved 11 February 2021 from https://web.archive.org/web/20081120192421/http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=5901&subid=5901&ipklookid=14; York, 'The Return of the Golden Rhino'.
66. 'About Ganora Fossil Museum Nieu Bethesda', retrieved 10 April 2015 from http://www.graaffreinet.co.za/listing/ganora_fossil_museum. The other fossil museums in this area are those at Wellwood Farm, established by Sydney Rubbidge, and the Kitching Fossil Exploration Centre in Nieu Bethesda. Together with Ganora they form part of what has been presented by Graaff-Reinet Tourism on 'The Plains of Camdeboo' as a 'paleontology route'. Retrieved on 5 December 2020 from https://www.graaffreinet.co.za/routes/palaeontology_route. 'Big history' refers to placing a universal history in a context of expansive time-scales that, taking a multidisciplinary approach,

stretches history back to the big bang and beginnings of life on earth. This type of history has received financial and strident support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. See Christian, 'The Case for "Big History"'; Christian, 'World History in Context'; Sorkin, 'So Bill Gates has this idea for a history class …'; Christian, *Big History*.

67. Silverman, 'All That's Gold', 79. In 2009, following an agreement between the Barbier-Mueller Museum and the Gold of Africa Museum, the museum was re-named 'Gold of Africa Barbier-Mueller Museum'. The intention was to establish 'a campus on the African continent through this partnership'. See Gold Africa Barbier-Mueller Museum newsletter, August 2011.
68. See 'Absa Money Museum', retrieved 31 January 2015 from http://www.absa.co.za/Absacoza/About-Absa/Absa-Bank/Attractions/Absa-Money-Museum.
69. See Mager, *Beer, Sociability and Masculinity*; Mager, 'Trafficking in Liquor'.
70. Christians, 'Step Back in Time'.
71. The quotation on rugby as effecting change in South Africa, becoming the vehicle to change racial attitudes and bringing about reconciliation comes from Danie Craven (president of the South African Rugby Board 1956–1993) and was prominently displayed on the wall at the entrance to the museum section of the Springbok Experience when I visited on 11 October 2013. This idea is also the key element of John Carlin's book *Playing the Enemy* and the film *Invictus* directed by Clint Eastwood. The museum placed a large emphasis on this narrative.
72. Dlamini, 'The Battle of Ncome Project'.
73. 'Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre: About', retrieved 23 July 2008 from http://www.ctholocaust.co.za/.
74. 'Gallows Museum Opened at C-Max', *South African News Government Agency*, 15 December 2011, retrieved 12 March 2015 from http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/gallows-museum-opened-c-max. Thanks to Angela Tuck and Madeleine Fullard for information about this museum. For an analysis of photographs used in the museum, see Van Laun, 'Bureaucratically Missing'.
75. 'Events at Evita se Perron', retrieved 12 March 2015 from http://pdu.co.za/events.html; 'The Venue: About Evita Se Perron in Darling', retrieved 22 July 2008 from http://www.evita.co.za/the_venue.htm.
76. This move is analysed by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*. See also Fraser's critique of this strategy in 'Isn't this a Wonderful Place?'.
77. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), Annual Report 2001/2002.
78. DACST, *White Paper on Arts.*
79. DACST, Annual Report 2001/2002.
80. Rassool, 'Community Museums', 307–309.
81. Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 148.
82. Arts and Culture Task Group, *Report of the Arts and Culture Task Group*, 55.
83. Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 73.
84. Mandela, 'Address on Heritage Day'; Witz, Rassool and Minkley, 'The Castle, the Gallery', 104.

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85. See the argument of Autry*, Desegregating the Past*.
86. Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*, 47–50. For South African examples, see Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting* and, albeit from a perspective of memorials, Marschall, *Landscape of Memory*.
87. Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge, 'The Uses and Abuses of Heritage', 34.
88. Marstine, *New Museum Theory*.
89. The most extensive statement of this position is Stolten, *History Making;* See also Kros and Saunders, 'Conversations with Historians'.
90. Witz and Rassool, 'Making Histories', 6–15.
91. Byala, 'Regenerating South Africa's Heritage Sector', 234.
92. Clifford, 'Museums as Contact Zones', 451.
93. Clifford, 'Museums as Contact Zones', 438.
94. Kratz and Karp, 'Introduction. Museum Frictions', 2.
95. Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 5.
96. See Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting*; Marschall, *Landscape of Memory*; Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture and Politics*; Autry, *Desegregating the Past*; Jethro, 'Aesthetics of Power'.
97. Hlongwane and Ndlovu, *Public History and Culture*.
98. Rassool and Prosalendis, *Recalling Community*; Murray and Witz, *Hostels, Homes*; Ramoupi, Solani, Odendaal and Mpumlwana, *Robben Island Rainbow Dreams*. This is in addition to a series of articles on these museums. Amongst many, see, for example, Rassool, 'Community Museums'; Layne, 'The District Six Museum'; Mgijima and Buthelezi, 'Mapping Museum-Community'; Murray and Witz, 'Camp Lwandle'; Garuba, 'A Second Life'; Solani, 'The Saint of the Struggle'.
99. Byala, *A Place That Matters*; Carman, *Uplifting the Colonial Philistine*.
100. Tietze, *A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery*.
101. Martin, *Between Dreams and Realities*.
102. Legassick and Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*.
103. Coombes, *History After Apartheid*, 10. There are two other accounts which tend to be more impressionistic. Dubin's *Mounting Queen Victoria*, rather than presenting an argument, seeks to convey a series of impressions from those working in the museums about what they see as the problems of, and aspirations for, the sector. Using a similar technique of inscribing lengthy quotations from interviewing senior employees, Goodnow, Lohman and Bredekamp in *Challenge and Transformation* draw out comparisons on changes which took place in selected museums in cities in South Africa and Australia.
104. I am here referring back to Bennett's laboratory analogy in *Making Culture* and adapting the title of Nuttall and Coetzee, *Negotiating the Past*.
105. Center for the Study of Public Scholarship, 'Institutions of Public Culture Fellowships, 2005-6', poster/brochure, Cape Town and Atlanta, Steering Committee, Institutions of Public Culture, 2005.
106. Murray, 'Working with Inconsistencies', 32.
107. Lalu, 'In the Event of History'.

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108. Mowitt, *Offering Theory*, 147.
109. Fransen, *Guide to the Museums*, 1969, 95.
110. Witz, 'Eventless History'.
111. Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, 'Transformation of the Bartolomeu Dias Museum Research Brief', Cape Town, 2007, DM.
112. Amathole Museum Annual Report, 1998/1999, Appendix 1, 'Press Release, Renaming of Kaffrarian Museum'; Appendix 2, 'Name Change: Reasoning and Explanation', AM.
113. As *Museum Times* was going into its production phase, *Robben Island Rainbow Dreams*, by Ramoupi, Solani, Odendaal and Mpumlwana, was published. It is a detailed account of the early years of the Robben Island Museum, largely related through remembrances of museum staff from 1997 to 2002, particularly from the vantage of its first director, André Odendaal. Although *Robben Island Rainbow Dreams* was published too late for *Museum Times* to engage with it, I do draw on several of the previous papers, articles and talks that are either published or re-published in this compilation on the history of the Robben Island Museum.
114. Deacon, 'Intangible Heritage'; Shearing and Kempa, 'A Museum of Hope'; Corsane, 'Using Ecomuseum Indicators'.
115. O'Keeffe, *The Story of Robben Island*.
116. Shackley, 'Potential Futures'.
117. Garuba, 'A Second Life', 143.
118. See for example, amongst many articles on the culling, 'Robben Island Culling "On Track"', *News 24.com*, 2 November 2009, retrieved 27 February 2020 from https://www.news24.com/SciTech/News/Robben-Island-culling-on-track-20091102.
119. Kratz, *The Ones That Are Wanted*, 214.

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Figure 1.1. Chameleon on display at the *Robot Zoo*, Horniman Museum, London, 2009. © Leslie Witz