Baroque Modernity, Critique and Indigenous Epistemologies in Museum Representations of the Andes and Amazonia

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The Andes and Amazonia have long undergone profound mythologisation in European and American literature, art, and, more recently, in widely circulated and proliferative museum exhibitions. This chapter sets out to identify and describe five specific genres and characteristics of exhibitions from 1980 to the present, and, by focusing on two uniquely important examples, *The Potosí Principle* (2010-2011) and *Amazonie: Le chamane et la Pensée de la Forêt* (2016-2017), to examine the strengths and shortfalls of exhibition curators adopting critical and collaborative methodologies. It is argued that the use of heterodoxy, adopted in *Amazonie*, can resolve the contradictions that inevitably arise when multiple epistemologies and different interpretive models are incorporated into exhibitions. Moreover, it is suggested that the embrace of heterodoxy may help blunt the worst effects of Western institutional hierarchies that in many cases still work against effective curatorial partnerships and Indigenous empowerment.[1]

Treasures, Spectacles, and Exoticism

During the period 1980–2016, the most widespread exhibition genres re-presented pre-Columbian Andean cultures through the constructed category of 'treasures' and depicted Amazonia through the lens of salvage ethnography and the idealization of a pristine nature. *Arte Plumária do Brazil* (1980, Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo) exemplifies this romantic genre.

In Brazil, *Arte Plumária* was awarded a national prize*,* before it travelled to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; the Museo Nacional de Antropología y Historia, Mexico City; and the Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá. After being expanded, the exhibition was re-presented in 1983 at the 17th São Paulo Biennial. Despite the different cultural contexts of its various venues, interpretation remained the same: featherwork was arranged by tribal provenance and the interpretation focused on techniques of production and social function, which emphasized its exotic value and status as 'primitive art'.

While neither solely confined nor determined by Western aesthetic principles, in London the *Hidden Peoples of the Amazon* exhibition (1985), at the Museum of Mankind[2] mobilized different exoticizing practices. The exhibition, curated by Elizabeth Carmichael, represented the tropical lowlands as insular regions, displayed through survey-like presentations, which emphasised anachronistic cultural survivals and continuities between linguistic communities over space and time.[3] It largely ignored trade and the interconnections between communities, economic and political relations with the Highlands, and only grudgingly acknowledged the impingements of Western colonization and the import of foreign goods and technologies.[4] The history of the British Museum's own collection, and the encompassing world system of which Amazonia has long been part, were notably ignored.[5]

Large scale survey exhibitions peaked in the decade leading up to the 1992 celebration of the quincentennial of what was variously described as the European 'encounter' or 'discovery' of the Americas. Deconstructivist approaches to European images of the New World were earlier explored in the 1982 exhibition, *Mythen der Neuen Welt: Zur Entdeckungsgeschichte Lateinamerikas* at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. Using an older established narrative approach, the U.S. National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. presented *Circa 1492: Art in the*

Age of Exploration (1991-1992), and enlarged the geographical framework of regional exhibitions by placing the events of the 'discoveries' in the context of fifteenth century world history. Other ambitious ventures focused not only on South America, but as in the case of *Amerika 1492-1992. Neue Welten - Neue Wirklichkeiten* (1992-1993)—also hosted at the Martin-Gropius-Bau—sought to provide a comprehensive panorama of America's Indigenous population. As in the case of these three exhibitions, museums widely adopted the survey model to encompass and display their extensive historical collections. The 1992 Belgian exhibition, *America: Bruid van de zon*, Koninklijk Museum voor Shone Kunsten, Antwerp, further strengthened this revisionist history by relinquishing the focus on military deeds and personalities in favor of the historical and cultural encounter between the two continents. Similar de-constructivist approaches also guided smaller quincentennial exhibitions like *New World of Wonders: European Images of the Americas 1492-1700* (1992),[6] and *Mapping the Americas* (1992).[7]

More ambitious, and larger still, were the exhibitions mounted by Spain's Comisión Nacional Quinto Centenario and Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario, under Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo and Almudena Cavestany. Exhibitions like *Los Indios Amazónicos* (1986-7) and *Los Incas y el Antigua Perú. 3,000 Años de Historia* (1991)[8] provided a panorama of the continent's heterogeneous cultures. Though adopting the well-orchestrated survey methodology and collaborating with South American partners, the Spanish exhibitions were nevertheless widely criticised for celebrating 'discovery' from a European perspective while omitting the political, military, and economic implications of Spanish colonization. Eduardo Subirats[9] (positioned Spain's Quinto Centenario within the politics of Hispanidad, the ideas of a shared Hispanic and mestizo heritage and Spain's re-assertion of a sphere of economic and cultural influence, an

observation that might equally be applied to the country's later exhibitions marking the two hundred years of Spanish American independence.[10] A similarly extensive exhibition program was mounted by Portugal between 1988-2002 but instead of focusing on the 'discoveries' of land and peoples like Spain, it concentrated on the 'discovery' of sea routes, the cultural encounters they engendered, and their mutual implications in shaping a new historical period.[11] While critical discourse focused on the ideological underpinnings of images of the New World from a European perspective and seldom acknowledged Indigenous agency or counter-hegemonic practices, the Portuguese exhibitions avoided much of the criticism levelled at their Spanish counterparts.

Over the last three decades, major exhibitions focused on Andean civilizations including *Inca-Perú: 3000 Ans d'Histoire* (1990);[12] *De erfenis van de Inca's: Zonen van de Zon & Dochters van de Maan* (1992);[13] *Ancestors of the Incas: The Lost Civilizations of Peru* (1998);[14] and *Art from the Chavín to the Incas* (2006)[15] have largely subordinated less known pre-Columbian societies to that of the Incas. Other Andean exhibitions prefaced their descriptive subtitles with appellations of treasure or gold, exemplified in *Sweat of the Sun: Gold of Peru* (1990);[16] *Rain of the Moon: Silver in Ancient Peru* (2000);[17] *Gold of the Incas: Treasures of an Empire* (2013);[18] and *Peruvian Gold: Ancient Treasures Unearthed* (2014).[19] Not until recently, after the media had familiarised the public with a series of spectacular pre-Inca archaeological discoveries, have mainstream institutions like the Lima Museum of Art in their exhibition *Moche and its Neighbors: Reconstructing Identities* (2016), introduced unfamiliar names of civilizations into their marketing campaigns. The genre of exhibition oriented to treasure and gold has recently been broadened by allusions to lost empires and royalty—*The Royal Tombs of Sipan* (2015),[20] and *Peru: Kingdoms of the Sun and Moon* (2013-2014).[21]

This latter treasures genre was foreshadowed by earlier survey exhibitions, many of which were curated and circulated by the Oro del Perú, Museum, Lima and the Museo del Oro, Bogotá.[22] Their exhibitions, like *El Oro de Colombia* (1983),[23] toured throughout Latin America, and, as in the case of *The Power of the Sun: The Gold of Colombia*, were circulated outside of the region, in this case in Belgium and the Netherlands (1993-1994).[24] These tours were sponsored by the Peruvian or Colombian governments and coincided with major cultural initiatives,[25] which acted as '… intricate, multilayered engines of global diplomacy'.[26] These spectacular blockbuster exhibitions, from their lender's point of view attempted to garner national prestige, project a glorious past, reassert culture as the cornerstone of national identity, and promote commercial interest, thereby making them an integral part of soft diplomacy. Conversely, for their North American or European hosts, exhibitions like these, by bringing culture and trade together, although implicitly recalling colonial history, also re-expressed the supposed cultural rewards of neo-liberal political and economic cooperation.

State-sponsored exhibitions re-define and dramatize national images and amplify cultural differences while supressing or excluding other images and relationships.[27] Early treasure and exotic exhibition genres, which converted archaeological objects into national icons, often emphasised technology, metallurgy and feather-working techniques over political, religious or cultural interpretations. These foci limit serious consideration of pre-Columbian history and deflected issues of European colonization to provide sanitised platforms to celebrate and reproduce the economic and political ties that bound international elites together. Members of this privileged class, as well as the economic and political alignments they express, are obtusely rendered visible in the lists of named patrons, members of honorary committees and the financial credits acknowledged in exhibition texts and catalogues.

Although Andean exhibitions continued to use the treasure genre alluding to gold, riches and wherever possible royalty, beginning in the late twentieth century, museums began to re-embed their narratives in more nuanced, historically and geographically specific, cultural interpretations. The growth of Andean archaeological and anthropological studies and the expansion of national schools in Latin America in the 1970s, increased focus on iconographic analysis, linguistics, ethnographic models and the excavation of burial sites which considerably expanded knowledge of pre-Columbian religions, state formation, economies and government. At the same time, ethnographic and art historical interests in Bolivia and Peru shifted to a new focus on Indigenous interpretations of land, mining, the body, and sickness, which led to new political readings of colonial paintings, and Indigenous exegeses of local political and economic conditions. These new conditions contributed to the development of emerging methodologies and knowledges that disrupted old paradigms, and introduced previously ignored foci on marginalisation and exploitation. These studies in turn prompted widespread revision of Andean history, culture, and art that inevitably impacted museum exhibitions.[28] The treasure genre remained effective in promoting national economic and cultural interests, but instead of technology and the glitter of gold providing the public stimuli, this was provided by the exotic, the reconstruction of ancient lost civilizations, sometimes with subtle allusions to the neo-romantic cinematographic world of Indiana Jones.

Christopher Donnan's *Moche Art of Peru: Pre-Columbian Symbolic Communication* (1978-1979),[29] was one of the first examples of this new exhibition genre. Based on intensive iconographic analysis, reinforced by archaeological, historical, and ethnographic studies, this impressive exhibition presented Moche cosmology through the pictures and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms of ancient burial vessels. Similarly, *Amazonie Précolombienne* (2002)[30]

assembled a remarkable collection of historical Marajó ceramics from the mouth of the Amazon. Through comparing ancient and contemporary painted motifs, the exhibition opened new exotic frontiers to public view, without unfortunately, providing convincing historical or Indigenous exegesis of their significance.

Less scholarly than Donnan's Moche exhibition, but likewise based on new archaeological discoveries, was a later series of exhibitions curated and toured by Peruvian governmental agencies. Notably, these were circulated after the defeat of the Maoist Sendero Luminosa movement (1980-2000), a struggle that had threatened Peru's nation-state and brought widespread terror and economic hardship. Exhibitions particularly after the millennium attempted to recalibrate the public image of Peru and, like those before them, through soft diplomacy, they functioned as a vehicle to encourage renewed foreign investment and tourism. Exhibitions and cultural festivals presented the nation as a work of art,[31] spectacularising national myths, cementing relations between different international power elites and attempting to control the global cultural and aesthetic deployment of heritage and the system of identity formation. Despite this encroaching hegemony, and the frequent oscillation between different versions of the romantic genre discussed in this section, curators and museums surprisingly have embraced counter-hegemonic projects as exemplified by the Potosí Principle and Amazonie discussed at length below.

Baroque Modernities: The Potosí Principle

Looking back on the 1980s, when I began my curatorial career at the Museum of Mankind in London at the height of the controversy over *Hidden Peoples of the Amazon*, I find it hard to reconcile the then undeveloped level of theoretical and critical perspectives on museum

exhibitions with the post-colonial and critical theory that had at the time so completely penetrated British anthropology. Despite early conferences on the politics and poetics of exhibitions sponsored by major museums in London, Berlin, and Washington, which drew attention to the problems of public representation, ethnographic curatorship remained largely insulated from self-reflexivity, until the angry responses provoked by the American quincentennery exhibitions challenged the museum's avowed political neutrality.[32] Supposedly apolitical scholarship also dominated art historical curatorship.[33] This could be seen in exhibitions like *Peruvian Colonial Painting* (1971-1972)[34] and *The Cuzco Circle* (1976),[35] which avoided political issues by focusing on technique and connoisseurship. Before the exhibition *Cambios: The Spirit of Transformation in Spanish Colonial Art* (1992),[36] George Kubler's influential view that Latin American colonial art only reflected European influence was seldom challenged. *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America* (1996-1997)[37] broke with Kubler's view and continued the revisionist trajectory by presenting colonial art and material cultural as the products of deep cultural entanglements between Spanish and Indigenous sensibilities.

In contrast to the revisionist narrative-based exhibitions in the USA, *The Potosí Principle: Colonial Image Production in the Global Economy* (2010-2011)[38] used installation-based techniques to question the fundamental structure and format of exhibitions, and the categories and art historical assumptions on which they were based. Instead of subordinating images to narrative interpretations, the *Potosí Principle* juxtaposed them to generate new forms of relational knowledge intending to escape established deterministic narratives.

The Potosí Principle, a collaborative project begun in 2008 between three museums in Berlin, Madrid, and La Paz, sought to develop a framework to compare the relationship between

two periods and distinct modes of art production: sixteenth and seventeenth century Andean painting and European contemporary art, with two coeval stages of capitalist development: early capitalist accumulation from which the world system that locked Latin America into the European economy emerged, and the current period of capitalist consolidation. The curators linked the two periods together by comparing current conditions of environmental destruction, pestilence, and the exploitation of Asian migrant workers with earlier patterns of abuse meted out to Andean forebears. The exhibition consisted of colonial paintings, prints, and books juxtaposed with film, photographs, new media, installations, Xerox copies, and recorded performances by artists including Ines Doujak, Matthijs de Bruijne, Sonia Abián, Elvira Espejo, Maria Galindo, Konstanze Schmitt, and Zhao Liang. The works were arranged in the gallery at different levels and multiple angles in a space structured out of scaffolding, stairs, and platforms. The exhibition was designed along three critical pathways that offered alternative journeys to specific junctions where subsets of the two series of images were juxtaposed.

[INSERT FIGURES 1 & 2 HERE].

The exhibition design was intended to subvert the linear concept of history with its implicit temporal/geographic and stylistic correlations which served to undermine basic categorisations fundamental to modernism's instrumental vision of the world. It thereby attempted to transform the perception of 'the colonial past, together with its mechanisms of power and legitimization (to) become part of our conscious world'.[39] Alice Creischer, Max Jorge Hinderer, and Andreas Siekmann, the European curators of the project, rejected historiography predicated on the nation-state in favour of a global purview. The resulting space/time

compression with its proliferation of images was intended to reconstitute a radical *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total artwork. Like the arbitrary pre-modernist spaces, predicated on baroque aesthetics, that these curators equated with early curiosity cabinets, the exhibition and its catalogues sought to reject the rules of classical composition, aesthetics, serial classification and writing, and the knowledges that flow from such preconceptions, in order to generate new understandings of the 'global world from the perspective of Potosí'.[40] The interpretation of art was reduced to its educational and political function where portraiture reinforced personal prestige and the authority of the Spanish grandees, while fearful counter-reformation images of hell and mortal torment expressed an Indigenous destiny which the Spanish claimed was inevitable without the redemptive power of work.

Despite concerted proselytization, the pre-Hispanic world of Potosí did not vanish. Regardless of systematic slavery, torture, and the resulting trauma, this world continued to subsist particularly among women to become recast into a specifically Andean counter-reading of Christianity. Although politically manipulated, the baroque's allegorical quality and excess limited its controlled mobilization. For Manuel Borja-Villel, the director of the Reina Sofía in Madrid, the exhibition's radical intention would emerge from his museum creating a similar transgressive effect. 'By creating tensions between the colonial works and surroundings that are alien to them,' he announced, 'the museum *becomes Baroque* and behaves like the forms of Indigenous resistance to the colonial project'.[41] Berndt Scherer, his German counterpart, agreed with this interpretation, describing the project as an 'interesting experiment' which brought out new insights and ultimately helps us to 'learn to see the world anew from a fresh perspective.'[42] The *Potosí Principle* rejected not only art's avowed neutrality, but all essentialized correlations between it and cultural identity. For the exhibition's sponsors, therefore, art acted not only as a

political representation but as power itself; '… culture is not the independent and privileged site of ideas; it not only reflects a power structure but is the very power that is fought over'.[43]

Despite the interpretive audacity of the exhibition, disagreement emerged between the German and Bolivian curatorial teams. The German curators' Marxist deterministic perspective was rejected by their Bolivian counterparts who, organized under the banner El Colectivo, fractured the attempt at a unitary interpretation of colonial history. The first problems emerged early on in the project over the Reina Sofía's loan negotiations with communities and its complaints of excessive transportation and insurance costs associated with loans from Bolivian museums.[44] However, some members of El Colectivo had already been offended by Berlin's Ethnologisches Museum's refusal to extend loans from its collections to the Bolivian venue. Distrust and accusations of coercion from communities reluctant to lend their paintings led to complaints about the revival of old asymmetrical power relations that had historically divided the two countries;[45] claims confirmed by the anecdotal stories reported in the exhibition catalogues. Mistrust may have been exacerbated by the confusion caused by the curatorial methodology which disavowed established strategies in favour of an experimental methodology that called for the suspension of the usual division of labour between museum professionals and a prolongation of research time. Loan negotiations became so difficult that Borja-Villel appealed directly to many of the communities and museums. Subsequently, he recorded his surprise at the open democratic process through which community members engaged in loan discussions, a process far removed from the top down exercise of authority in Spain. If the process of decision making caused consternation among its European organizers, local concerns in Bolivia about the loss of paintings from the community, fear of their removal causing disequilibrium of spiritual forces which might provoke catastrophic consequences for example,[46] must have seemed equally

inexplicable to the representatives of these Western bureaucratic rationalist institutions. When the loans of certain works from Bolivia were declined, the exhibition at the Reina Sofía substituted print copies with accompanying explanations attributing difficulties to the persistence of unequal power relations that still undermined trust between the two continents.

The most serious rupture between the German and Bolivian curators resulted from Creischer, Hinderer, and Siekmann's rejection of Indigenous interpretations of history, which they dismissed as the product of cultural essentialism that privileged Native exegesis above others. For the German curatorial team, equating culture with ethnic identity obscured the global interdependence of politics and economics and, among other negative consequences, obfuscated alliances between local and foreign classes that cut across culture. In opposition, El Colectivo argued for the incorporation of video presentations and first voices to express the Indigenous historical perspectives of how Andean communities had appropriated Spanish colonial imagery which they had ritually re-articulated and transmuted into an efficacious source of power to fortify resistance against external aggressors and to strengthen local values and network villages. El Colectivo further questioned the relevance of the comparison between Andean peoples and the position of contemporary Chinese and Indian migrant workers who, unlike themselves, had not resisted domination through their appropriation and redeployment of the images and ideologies pitted against them. Their German counterparts were accused of monopolising control over interpretation, unilaterally defining the exhibition's core themes, choosing most of the invited artists and also deciding upon its design, and in so doing relegating their Bolivian colleagues to the role of advisors or informants.[47]

By late 2009, divergencies of interpretation between El Colectivo and their German colleagues had become so acute that they declared their intention to publish a dissident

catalogue.[48] At the centre of the Indigenous view was the land that they conceptualised as animate, divided into communities, each protected by divine powers, but woven together through ritual and commercial networks. Despite reorganization under Spanish rule, Indigenous peoples had conserved their worldview by having endowed the saints, Christs, and Virgins of their conquerors, now zealously guarded in their parish churches, with older pre-Hispanic significances and powers, linked together through rituals and pilgrimages in a similar fluid order to that of their forebears.[49]

These differences between two world-views and interpretations were starkly reflected in their respective publications. The European catalogue was arranged into three standard sections; the first described and mapped the routes through the exhibition and was interleaved with interviews, essays, and descriptions of the significance of each of its junctures. The second presented coloured photographs of the exhibition; and the third reproduced full interviews and documents in their original language to corroborate the interpretive view given in section one. The catalogue produced for the exhibition's European venues appeared in Spanish and English editions, while the circulation of its dissident Bolivian counterpart, printed only in Spanish, was much more limited. The Bolivian catalogue, entitled *El Principio Potosí Reverso*, edited by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and El Colectivo, is organized according to an Indigenous literary structure designed to be read from the centre page to the back, followed by reading backwards from the centre to the book's front. The first half of the book, printed in black ink on white paper, represents the book's white masculine face, contains critical essays on the process and differences between the German and Andean views of the interpretation of the images and the history of looting and art theft from communities. The pages in the second half, which for the most part have white print on black paper, constitute the book's feminine lived face and focuses

on historical studies of specific images, ritual prescriptions, the relationships between images and ceremonies, and the histories of the communities in which paintings are located.[50] Despite good intentions, the politics of *The Potosí Principle* aptly confirms Ziauddin Sardar's assertion that 'Columbus did not 'discover' America: he globalized a world view', moving the focus of visual interpretation from the factual to the hermeneutic.[51] *The Potosí Principle* presented a Marxist worldview in place of common place narrative descriptions, subsumed Indigenous exergeis and local knowledge under its interpretive embrace.

The exhibition, its two accompanying catalogues, and reviews provide fascinating documentation of an attempt at a thoroughly reflexive museum project, focused on the difficulties of intercultural collaborations and the challenges of negotiating distinct epistemological positions. For these reasons the project marks a watershed in exhibition history and curatorial practice, which warrants wider discussion.

Nature and Agency − *Amazonie: Le chamane et la pensée de la forêt*

Seven recent exhibitions illustrate the current diversity of exhibitions on Amazonia. The British Museum's *Unknown Amazon* (2001), curated by Colin McEwan, dissolved the fallacy of the insularity and pristine nature of the region, reversing the vision the museum had promoted sixteen years earlier in its *Hidden Peoples* exhibition. *Unknown Amazon* presented new archaeological data to demonstrate the existence of large pre-Hispanic settlements and trade networks that once integrated the area. *Os Índios Nos* (2000, Museu Nacional de Etnologia, Lisbon), curated by Joaquim Pais de Brito, adopted a post-colonial reflexive approach that focused on the process of frontier construction and the represention of Amazonian peoples by Portuguese colonizers. The exhibition incorporated Indigenous perspectives and described the

dissemination of Western scientific views of the area through the collections the Portuguese amassed.[52] This protracted project included field research and systematic collecting among the Wauja, undertaken by Aristóteles Barcelo Neto, which resulted in a second exhibition and publication that contrasted the 'double world' of artifacts embedded in their culture of origin and their multiple networks including those which connect them to museums.[53] Less critical exhibitions have approached the Amazon through historical expeditions and their collected materials.[54] Two large scale Amazonian exhibitions, *Brèzil Indien: Les arts des Amérindiens du Brèsil* (2005),[55] a homage to Claude Lévi-Strauss, and *Orinoco – Parima: Indian Societies in Venezuela – The Cisneros Collection* (1999-2000),[56] both mobilized considerable academic expertise in conveying increased understanding of different ecological and cultural subjects, including aesthetic categories, epistemologies and pre-Columbian settlement and economic integration. Although these exhibitions reflected greater sensibility towards Amazonian history and better appreciation of the cultural uniqueness of the region, they gave little consideration to Indigenous perspectives.

Not until the late twentieth century were Indigenous community museums established like the Museu dos Povos Indígenas do Oiapoque, Brasil. In Peru, the Inter-Ethnic Association for the Peruvian Amazon Region (AIDESEP), an Indigenous association of activists, curated *Serpiente de Agua: La Vida Indígena en la Amazonía* (2003),[57] which marked the beginning of Indigenous exhibition curation. Concepts of an animate nature, which Native Amazonians acknowledge has intrinsic rights of its own, were imported into art history through T. J. Demos' writings and exhibition *The Rights of Nature: Art and Ecology in the Americas* (2015),[58] and later reiterated in Nuno Porto's *Amazonia: The Rights of Nature* (2017).[59]

Amazonie: Le chamane et la pensée de la forêt (2016-2017, Musée d'Ethnographie de Geneve [MEG]) aimed to provide another broad purview of a museum collection, but also positioned Amazonian history as intrinsically bound-up with colonialism and its violent, conflicted legacy, entangled with foreign and domestic governments, multinational corporations, land conflicts, and its disjunctured epistemological mediations. The introduction to the exhibition is uncompromising: the text panel reads: 'Since the European conquest in the 16th century, the Indigenous people of Amazonia have seen their culture attacked from all sides, their territory invaded and their environment destroyed in the names of kings, Christianity, civilization and economic progress'. Instead of reiterating simplistic interpretations like 'tradition' versus 'modernity', Boris Wastiau, the museum's director and exhibition curator, emphasises in the same text the Indigenous perspective on the importance of mediation between species in which 'All living beings and forest spirits share with humans the power to reason and interact with the environment' to safeguard and reiterate their essential symbiotic relationships. The introductory text panel is followed by another political text on the conquest, to the side of which three large photographs of Amazonian leaders, with whom the museum worked, carry their own messages.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE].

A second text on the power of shamans by Davi Kopenawa is opened by informing visitors that a bounty of 100,000 USD had been placed on his life by gold diggers. Another leader, Raoni Metuktire, gives a provocative explanation of the symbolism that links lip plugs to a person's commitment to defend the land. The remainder of this first section of the exhibition switches to European engagements which particularly focus on Geneva's relationship with the

Amazon. This section exhibits early maps of the Amazon and the travelogue journals and maps of the churchman sent to Brazil by John Calvin, Jean de Léeiry (1536-1613), including a video of Claude Lévi-Strauss talking of his intellectual debt to Léeiry, and the works of the collectors who donated their holdings to the museum between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[60] as well as the twentieth century scientists and curators,[61] who continued their work through systematic field collecting. A section on 'Rubber and the Crucifix' brings together European commercial and religious interests in the Amazon with plant specimens, boots, and machetes carried by rubber planters, photo albums, photographs, boxes of glass negatives, manuscripts of travel from 1903, and expedition equipment. The first part of the exhibition ends with a large format film projection on the far wall of the forest.

Section two of *Amazonie* refocuses attention on shamanism and Indigenous epistemology. Cases exhibit shaman's instruments and psychotropic plants, while text panels discuss trance, the practices and powers of shamans, 'perspectivism' (the ability of Indians to project themselves into animal beings to see the forest from multiple perspectives) and the sensory dominance of sound above sight. A text panel explains: 'All the creatures of the forest think and interact in a complex system. The forest is alive, it has a soul, it thinks, and acts on every being that dwells in it'. The link between material culture and text is made through three large photos by the photojournalist Claudia Andujar, '*Rêves Yanomami*' evoking different dream states. The material culture and text is further spliced together by another large AV installation, *Amoahiki* (2008) by Gisela Motta and Leandro Lima. The work is projected onto a black wall covered with strips of white cloth which enhance the images of luscious green leaves gently moving in the breeze. Across this shimmering verdant forest curtain, faint images of spirits take momentary form before fading into the canopy.

The exhibition's third section displays the collections divided into fifteen cultural areas, with objects contained in cases arranged along dark labyrinthine paths with a green forest-like canopy made of gauze and green and brown fabrics resembling leaves and fronds streaming down from the ceiling that cast shadows throughout the area. This is the ubiquitous collection survey, but a survey dividing up groups according to distinctive language families, with text panels that not only describe the objects but compare the decline of each population over time and give information on current economic activities and conditions, and their histories of resistance. The juxtaposition of these grim statistics with the exotic splendour of feather and bark-cloth masks, costumes, and personal decoration powerfully evokes human and cultural loss, which parallels the Native inhabitant's persistent adherence to practices and actions endemic to their epistemologies and values. This section is overlaid by sixteen diverse 'sound stories', soft and loud recordings drawn from hunting and fishing expeditions, birdsong, the scuttling of animals, rain, thunder, chain saws and the loud crash of felled trees.

[INSERT FIGURES 4 & 5 HERE].

The exhibition's final section, entitled 'The People of Amazonia in the 21st Century'—while acknowledging that the dispossession of land and the loss of traditional knowledge leads everywhere to poverty and marginalisation—focuses on how technologies are being used, in accordance with traditional values, to organize, record, and disseminate actions aimed to preserve the natural environment and gain governmental recognition of territorial rights. These stories are told through small video presentations by Amazonian peoples on screens scattered throughout the section, but the strongest message is presented in the final installation, a large

circular maloca, a wooden structure divided into two halves; the first displaying a set of photographs by Auréliean Fontanet, *The Future of Forest Peoples* (2016), and the second housing a concentric bench with three touch screens through which visitors can access twenty-three statements recorded on film by Amazonians who wanted to address visitors ‘personally and directly’. To accomplish this, the MEG collaborated with two activists, Délio Firmo Alves and Jaelson Felix, who, equipped with just two smartphones, recorded these messages and brought them to Geneva. The MEG also worked with the Federation of the Indigenous Communities of the Upper Tigre (FECONAT); an organisation of ten Indigenous observers who ‘keep track of contaminated sites. Equipped with smartphones, the observers take geo-referenced photographs, which they up-load to on-line data bases. This material is used for anti-pollution campaigns aimed at the State, the mining and oil companies involved and public opinion’ (exhibition text). Having been successful, the watchers’ programme has been implemented in other parts of the Peruvian Amazon. The terminal in the gallery accesses photographs of polluted landscapes, evidence of companies transgressing the law and the mobilization of people to expel illegal miners from their territories. The final AV presentation at the end of the gallery consists of four projections, each in shades of red and orange that attempt to capture the trance images of the Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa. The work, *Xapiri* (2013) by Gisela Motta and Leandro Lima, leaves visitors to experience the final image of the exhibition as one coming from the deepest world of Amazonian peoples.

[INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE].

Final Remarks

Late twentieth and early twenty-first century curatorial practices disclose five distinct exhibition genres through which Amazonian and Andean peoples have commonly been presented in majority museums. The widespread romantic genre has been variously instantiated through the tropes of treasure, relics, and the exotic exquisite. A second genre adopted a more historical but Inca-centric interpretation, while the third is characterised by more specific and scholarly approaches. These three genres, distributed across a broad spectrum stretching from aesthetic to empirical presentations, all adopted survey methodologies as a way of dealing with large collections in Western repositories and, politically, have often been mobilized in support of soft diplomacy. What is unusual in the case of Amazonia, is the number of counter-hegemonic, experimental and alternative methodologies that the encounters between Western and non-Western intellectual cultures have stimulated. This fourth genre includes reflexive and deconstructivist exhibitions, while a fifth genre is made-up of Indigenous approaches.

Amazonie is itself a multi-media, multi-sensory immersive experience that switches between different knowledge paradigms and different professional and cultural communities to provide a deep, complex, and politically relevant picture of the history and contemporary conditions and issues facing Amazonian peoples today. The exhibition clearly acknowledges critical theory but ingests it as a method that guides the exhibit's production, instead of reiterating methodological polemics. Rather than construct an opposition between epistemologies or privilege one over the other, the exhibition's curator Boris Wastiau shifts back and forth using multiple perspectives to provide different lenses on a complex situation.[62] *Amazonie* demonstrates the advantages of applying different knowledges rather than dispensing one in preference for another.

Critical Museology needs to develop a genre theory of exhibition history to better understand the limitations and politics of established practice and guide new and innovative responses such as those discussed in this chapter.[63] *Amazonie* may not constitute an Indigenisation of the museum, which is sometimes too quickly celebrated without examining the socio-political organization or the ethnic composition of curatorial departments, but it does represent one of the most accomplished visions of the museum as a globalized multicultural, dialogical meeting place a space that is needed even more in the age of resurgent English and US American nationalism.

Endnotes

[1] On the notions of utopia and heterotopia in relation to museums, see the introduction to this volume.

[2] The Ethnography Department of the British Museum.

[3] E. Carmichael, *Hidden Peoples of the Amazon* (London, British Museum Press, 1985).

[4] O. Harris and P. Gow, 'The British Museum's representation of Amazonian Indians', *Anthropology Today*, 1:5 1985, 2.

[5] The public demonstrations, radio, and television coverage of the controversy surrounding the exhibition was discussed in G. Houtman, 'Survival International: Going Public on Amazonian Indians', *Anthropology Today* 1:5 (1985), 2-4. And the museum director's response in G. Houtman, 'Interview with Malcom McLeod', *Anthropology Today*, 3:3 (1987), 4-8.

[6] The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.

[7] University of Essex Gallery, Colchester, UK.

[8] Centro Cultural de la Villa, Madrid.

[9] E. Subirats, ‘The Vacuous Quincentenary’, *Third Text*, 21 (1992), 58.

[10] E. Subirats, ‘The Vacuous Quincentenary’, *Third Text*, 21 (1992), 57-66. 58.

[11] A. A. Shelton, *Heaven, Hell and Somewhere In Between: Portuguese Popular Art* (Vancouver and Berkeley: Museum of Anthropology and Figure 1 Publishing, 2015), 228.

[12] Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels.

[13] Museum voor Volkenkunde, Rotterdam.

[14] The Pyramid, Memphis, and Florida International Museum, Saint Petersburg.

[15] Petit Palais, Paris.

[16] City Art Centre, Edinburgh.

[17] Metropolitan Museum, New York.

[18] National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

[19] National Geographic Museum, Washington DC, and the Irving Arts Centre.

[20] Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

[21] Musée des Beaux Arts, Montreal, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, and the Seattle Art Museum.

[22] These included the *Gold of Ancient America* (1968-1969, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Art Institute of Chicago, Virginia Museum), followed ten years later by *El Dorado Colombian Gold* (1978, The Art Gallery of South Australia and other Australian venues). The exhibition was later hosted by the Royal Academy, London (1978-9) under the title *The Gold of El Dorado*.

[23] Museo Nacional de Antropología y Historia, Mexico City and the Museo Regional Michoacano, Morelia.

[24] Ethnographic Museum, Antwerp and Museum Paleis Lange Voorhout, The Hague.

[25] The celebration of the European 'discovery' or 'encounter'; Latin American Independence, the commemoration of historical relationships as part of municipal festivals or the celebration of European cultural capitals.

[26] B. Wallis, 'Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy', in D. Sherman and I. Rogoff (eds), *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 267.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 271.

[28] J. Nash, *We Eat The Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), and M. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fitishism in South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) were highly influencial in incorporating an economic interpretation into my 1987 exhibition *Bolivian Worlds* (Museum of Mankind, London.) See A. A. Shelton, 'Bolivian Carnival', *British Museum Society Bulletin*, 55:18 (1987). In a subsequent exhibition, *Luminescence. The Silver of Peru* (2012, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver), Nash and Taussig's discussions of religious ideology provided the interpretive framework for the exhibition, see A. A. Shelton (ed), *Luminescence: The Silver of Peru* (Lima and Vancouver: Patronato Plato del Perú, 2012).

[29] Frederick S. Wright Gallery, Los Angeles, the Heard Museum, Phoenix and the Denver Art Museum.

[30] Museo Barbier-Muller de Arte Precolombino, Barcelona.

[31] Wallis, 'Selling Nations', p. 265.

[32] See for example: T. Platt, 'What are Museums For? Museums, Objects and Representation', *Anthropology Today*, 3:4, (1987), 13-16; I. Karp and S. D. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); H.

Lidchi, 'The politics and poetics of exhibiting other cultures', in S. Hall (ed), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (London: Sage/Open University, 1997), 153-208. On the reaction to the quincentennery exhibitions, see A. A. Shelton, 'The Future of Museum Ethnography', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 9 (2009), 33-48. 38-9.

[33] See for example: B. Ferguson, S. Nairne and R. Greenburg (eds), *Thinking about exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[34] Brooklyn Museum.

[35] Centre for Inter-American Relations, New York.

[36] Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

[37] Brooklyn Museum, Phoenix Art Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

[38] Museo Nacional Centro del Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Museo Nacional de Arte and Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore, La Paz. Because of copyright, the Museo Nacional Centro del Arte Reina Sofía is unable to release photographs of the exhibition for publication.

[39] B. Scherer, 'Words of Welcome', in A. Creischer, M. J. Hinderer and A. Siekmann (eds), *The Potosí Principle: Colonial Image Production in the Global Economy* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2010), p. 4.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 4.

[41] M. Borja-Villel, 'Words of Welcome', in A. Creischer, M. J. Hinderer and A. Siekmann (eds), *The Potosi Principle. Colonial Image Production in the Global Economy* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2010), p. 3.

[42] Scherer, 'Words of Welcome', p. 5.

[43] Borja-Villel, 'Words of Welcome', p. 2.

[44] A. Creischer. M. J. Hindere and A. Siekmann (eds), *The Potosí Principle: Colonial Image Production in the Global Economy* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2010), p. 18.

[45] E. Schwartzberg Arteaga, 'Principio Postosi Reverso', in S. Rivera Cusicanque and El Colectivo (eds), *Principio Potosí Reverso* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), p. 49.

[46] Arteaga, 'Principio Postosi Reverso', pp. 50-52.

[47] M. Geidel, 'Una Mirada desde Afuera: Explicando el Fracaso de una Colaboracion con Principio Potosi', in S. R. Cusicanqui and El Colectivo (eds), *Principio Potosí Reverso* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), p. 56.

[48] Arteaga, 'Principio Postosi Reverso', p. 52.

[49] S. Rivera Cusicanqui and El Colectivo (eds), *Principio Potosí Reverso* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010), p. 6.

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

[51] S. Ziauddin, 'Lies, Damn Lies and Columbus: The dynamics of Constructed Ignorance', *Third Text,* 21 (1992), 47.

[52] Shelton, *Heaven, Hell and Somewhere In Between*, pp. 231-2.

[53] After the exhibition's closure, the museum opened its stored Amazonian collections to the public in an impressive new visible storage gallery.

[54] 1991, Memória da Amazónia: Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira e a Viagem Philosophica, Lisbon, and 2012, Plumes Amérindiennes Guyane. Don Dr. Marcel Heckenroth, Musée d'Arts Africains, Océaniens et Amérindiens, Marseille, France.

[55] Grand Palais, Paris, France.

[56] Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublic Deutschland, Bonn, Germany.

[57] Desamparados Centro Cultural, Lima, Peru.

[58] Nottingham Contemporary, UK.

[59] UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada.

[60] Césaer Hippolyte Bacle, Ami Butini and Oscar Dusendschön.

[61] Jean-Luis Christinat, René Fuerst, Gustaaf Verswiyer and Daniel Schoepf.

[62] B. Wastiau, *Amazonie: Le chamane et la pensée de la forêt* Paris, Somogy éditions d'art (Genève: Musée d'ethnographie, 2016).

[63] On critical museology, see: A. Shelton, 'Critical museology: A manifesto', *Museum Worlds*, 1 (2013), 7-23.