GLOBAL HUMANITIES INITIATIVE

2021 Global Humanities Symposium

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Edited by Trevor Merrion and William Bradford Smith

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FOREWORD

On July 16, 2021, the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy (Meridian) in Washington, DC, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) hosted the inaugural Global Humanities Symposium, "Observing Cultural Diplomacy." The Global Humanities Symposium is part of the Global Humanities Initiative, a slate of programming carried out by Meridian with support from the NEH that seeks to amplify contemporary scholarship focusing on cultural diplomacy.

Cultural diplomacy harnesses the power of visual art, music, literature, film, material culture, and more, resulting in individuals and communities finding common ground, forging more stable relationships, and fostering mutual respect. For the inaugural Global Humanities Symposium, the theme was "Observe," often one of the first, crucial steps in building bridges across cultures. Eleven scholars and three moderators presented their findings, spanning a variety of topics relating to the broad field of international cultural diplomacy studies. These presentations were organized into three virtual panels—cultural exchange, the role of museums in cultural diplomacy, and digital public humanities—to address different aspects of the symposium's theme and to foster engaging conversations among the participating experts. The following papers selected for this publication were presented during the 2021 symposium and stood out as innovative perspectives in this ever-timely field within the humanities.

Assistant Chair for Programs and Acting Chairman of the NEH Adam Wolfson opened the program before former U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Glyn Davies delivered a keynote address that asked, "How can we touch people so they understand who we, as Americans, are? How can we break down stereotypes and convey positive messages of friendship and cooperation?" Ambassador Davies explained that throughout his career as a foreign service officer, culture was the answer to this question, serving as a way to ensure peace and elevate diplomacy to the personal level.

The first panel on cultural exchange was moderated by Dr. Richard Kurin, the Smithsonian Institution's distinguished scholar and ambassador-at-large. Madison Leeson, a historian and Ph.D. candidate in cultural heritage management at Koç University in Istanbul, presented her paper, titled "UNESCO-UNDP Programming and the Iraqi Response, 1972-1979," which considers the history and strategies of the Regional Training Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in Arab Countries, administered in Baghdad during the 1970s by UNESCO with funds from the United Nations Development Programme. Her research contributes a close analysis of previously unpublished archival material, examining how Western claims to authority, particularly in the field of archaeology and heritage management, were mediated and received by Iraqi and Arab heritage specialists during a period of rising Arab nationalism.

The second panel was dedicated to the role museums play in cultural diplomacy and was moderated by Dr. Christine Sylvester, professor of political science at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Antonio C. Cuyler and Khamal Patterson, Esq. co-authored "France and the Restitution of African Cultural Property: A Critical Race Theoretical View," which reflects on France's restitution policies with regards to African cultural property in French museums and questions how critical race theory can advance and inform policies that promote and preserve African cultural property for future generations. Cuyler is the director of the master's program and associate professor of arts administration at Florida State University and a visiting associate professor of theatre and drama at the University of Michigan, while Patterson currently serves as a cultural heritage law analyst for ARTIVE, a cultural heritage database and startup concerned with promoting due diligence in the art market and antiquities trade.

Brett Bobley, chief information officer for the NEH, moderated the closing panel, which explored the intersection of cultural diplomacy and the digital humanities. Kacey Hadick presented his paper, titled "Online Training in 3-D Documentation and Storytelling: Presenting the 'One Place, Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan' Project," which reflects on a 2020 collaboration between CyArk, StoryCenter, the English Language Program at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, and the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project that provided online workshops to stakeholders in the local heritage tourism industry in Madaba, Jordan. The workshops exposed participants to

hard and soft skills, including digital photography, photogrammetry, 3-D data management, project planning, storytelling, and English language communication, and led to the production of 3-D models of heritage sites in Madaba that can be viewed online. Hadick is an archaeologist with a master's degree in world heritage and international projects for development from the University of Turin who is currently the director of conservation programs at CyArk, a nonprofit organization dedicated to digitally preserving cultural heritage. Dr. Natalia Grincheva, who is an internationally recognized expert in innovative forms of and global trends in contemporary museology, digital diplomacy, and international cultural relations, presented her paper, titled "Reviving Cultural Relations in the Post-Pandemic World: Employing Geo-visualization and Artificial Intelligence to Leverage and Augment the Cultural Appeal of Museums," which explores the potential of two cutting-edge digital approaches—geo-visualization and artificial intelligence—for mapping, assessing, and augmenting the digital soft power of museums in the post-pandemic reality.

Henna Wang, who made this inaugural sympo-
sium a success; Ambassador Glyn Davies for his
inspiring keynote address; and the moderators, Dr.
Richard Kurin, Dr. Christine Sylvester, and Brett
Bobley, who expertly guided and mediated the
day's conversations.

UNESCO-UNDP PROGRAMMING AND THE IRAQI RESPONSE, 1972–1979

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Abstract

This article considers UNESCO's Regional Training Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in Arab Countries ("the Centre"), launched in Baghdad in 1972 and funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In so doing, it considers how Western claims to authority – particularly in the field of conservation and heritage management – were mediated by Iraqis and trainees from across the Arab world. Although the Centre, intended to promote a sort of Pan-Arab unity for the purposes of heritage conservation, was originally supported by UNESCO, UNDP, and all Arab Member States, complications soon arose that limited the Centre's efficacy. Ultimately, an international vision for Iraqi heritage conservation was undermined by several factors, including UNESCO's disillusionment with Arab competency and Iraqis' disenfranchisement from the development of their country's heritage management. This study draws on previously unpublished archival documentation from UNESCO's Iraq program records to offer insights on how the organization's training centre in Baghdad represented a critical opportunity for its engagement with the Middle East.

Keywords

Baghdad, ICCROM, Adil Naji, heritage management, conservation, intelligentsia, training centre

INTRODUCTION

On January 1st, 1973, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a contract between the University of Baghdad and the General Directorate of Antiquities in Iraq to establish the Regional Training Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in Arab Countries ("the Centre").[1] The objectives of the Centre were to train conservationists and museum specialists in the Arab world on techniques of preservation, provide guidance to Arab Member States, assist in the preparation of antiquities protection legislation, and run practical workshops on conservation.[2] The Centre was modelled closely after a similar institution in Rome: the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM or "the Rome Centre").[3] Founded in 1959, the Rome Centre

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1 "Regional Training Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in Arab countries, BAGHDAD (Iraq)", January 1, 1973. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973, file reference SHC/2I00/II08.

2 "The Regional Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab Countries", undated, UNESCO Archives. (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978.

3 Howard Brabyn, "Protection of the World Heritage". Parks 1, no. 1 (1976): 11.

was UNESCO's pioneering training centre for the conservation of cultural property. The lessons they learned from Rome, however, would not be as relevant to the new centre in Baghdad.

From the beginning of the period studied, UNESCO's relationship with the Iraq government, Arab Member States, and trainees was strained. UNESCO's archival material reveals initial concerns about funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), followed by a certain amount of disillusionment with the competence of Iraqi and Arab specialists. This led to the disenfranchisement of local stakeholders, with consequences for the administration of the Centre. These trends, along with UNESCO's increasing tendency to accept credit for the Centre's successes and refuse blame for its weaknesses, deteriorated the organization's relationships with its regional partners. This article demonstrates how an internationalist vision for the Centre in Baghdad had by the 1980s devolved into the bare minimum required to maintain operations. This research is based on previously unpublished archival material of UNESCO's operations in Iraq and contributes to our understanding of the organization's programming in the Middle East.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRE

By the early 1970s, the UNDP (established in November 1965) had already financed a litany of development projects in dozens of countries around the world.[4] The initial UNDP contribution for UNESCO's training centre in Baghdad was $185,600, the first $65,000 to be allocated in 1973, then $40,000 annually for the years 1974, 1975, and 1976. This budget underwent multiple rounds of revisions and was subject to internal pushback from both UNDP and UNESCO officers. Then, strikingly, an internal memo dated March 6, 1973, reported an "extreme shortage of UNDP funds, particularly at the regional level."[5] Despite this "extreme shortage" of funds, the Centre was UNESCO's main project for Iraq during this period, dominating their archives of the 1970s and early 1980s and demonstrating its importance to the interests of UNESCO and, consequently, the United Nations.

To promote the Centre's course, UNESCO contacted Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa to inquire whether they intended to send specialists for training. Recipient countries were informed that there was no cost for the program as it was "instituted under United Nations Technical Assistance," but that the trainees' countries-of-origin must pay for their transportation to and from Baghdad.[6] The course was scheduled to last from

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4   "List of UNDP (Special Fund) Projects Approved by the Governing Council" in "United Nations Development Programme, Report of the Governing Council, Fifth Session", 9–29 January 1968. Economic and Social Council, Official Records: Forty-Fifth Session, Supplement No. 6. (New York: United Nations).

5   Giorgio Torraca, "The Baghdad Regional Centre, February 1973", March 6, 1973, UNESCO Archives (Paris, France), CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973.

6   Letter from Richard Hoggart to Yacoub Al-Ghunain, December 7, 1971. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1971–1973. File reference ADG/SHC/3.4/126/328/1480.

September 1, 1973, until April 30, 1974. In an internal note, UNESCO established the priority for applicants; Jordanian applicants were the most desirable, followed by trainees from Yemen (both the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic), Sudan, Algeria, and Morocco.[7] Unfortunately, there are no clues as to why these countries' applicants were prioritized. However, following the application period few of the priority countries had responded, so UNESCO accepted all applicants and provided fellowships for two trainees from Kuwait and one each from Sudan, Syria, Algeria, and Libya.[8]

The earliest list of consultants recruited by UNESCO and UNDP noticeably lacks American and British specialists; instead, we see Europeans from the Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, and Belgium, as well as lecturers from Egypt, Turkey, and India.[9] Whether the decision to omit instructors from the United States and United Kingdom was intentional (or even whether this was decided by UNESCO, UNDP, or the Centre's administration) remains to be seen. It is possible that UNESCO simply prioritized equipment over experts, even suggesting to UNDP that funds earmarked for instructors could instead be used to purchase additional laboratory equipment.[10]

What is clear, however, is the integral role played by Italian experts and lecturers. As early as 1973, we see the interest of the Rome Centre (later ICCROM), whose Director, Giorgio Torraca, visited Baghdad later that year. Dr. Adil Naji, the Director of the Centre in Baghdad, wrote to Torraca in anticipation of his visit, "we would like to offer our far from perfect services in arranging the schedule of visits and meetings throughout your stay in Baghdad. We hope it will be fruitful and play an active role in preserving mankind's heritage."[11]

The Rome Centre, as an established and successful institution of the same type, served as a model for the Baghdad Centre, and communications between the two directors more often convey a mentor-mentee relationship than one of peers. Following Torraca's visit, Naji proudly reported to him that "Mr. Jacob Usiss, the Director-General of Antiquities in Jordan, has paid a visit to the Regional Centre in the course of his visit to some museums and archaeological establishments in

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7   Letter from A. Kh. Kinany to Gerard Bolla, December 15, 1971. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1971–1973. File reference EDV/FE/4000/MP/js.

8   The same period saw the first UNESCO course for Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage of African Countries South of the Sahara, held in Jos, Nigeria. Reflecting a broad-brushed categorization of the Middle Eastern and African Other, UNESCO channeled North African students towards the "Arab" Centre while African trainees living "south of the Sahara" constituted a separate group. Lectures given in the Nigerian course were similar to those at the training centre in Baghdad, though the former had more emphasis on ethnography and anthropology. Although this is of tangential importance, it reflects a common criticism of European approaches to African art and antiquities: that European cultural heritage is viewed as art or antiquities while their African counterparts are seen as ethnographic artifacts (see Brodie 2018). The Nigerian and Iraqi centres are often referred to in the UNESCO archives along with a third in Churubusco, Mexico, though less could be found on this institution. "First Course Organized by the Regional Training Centre for Preservation of the Cultural and Natural Heritage, Jos, Nigeria – 1 September 1973 – 30 May 1974," undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1973–1974.

9   Mr. Johan Lodewijks (Netherlands), Dr. P. H. Pott (Netherlands), Giorgio Gullini (Italy), Laszlo Gero (Hungary), and Jean-Baptiste Cuypers (Belgium); Mr Z. Iskander (Egypt), Prof. C. Erder (Turkey), and Mr. O. P. Agrawal (India), respectively.

10   Letter from S. Abdul Hak to A. Naji, February 28, 1973. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973, file reference CLP.12/328/838.

11   Letter from Dr. A. Naji to Mr. Torraca, undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973.

Iraq," and that he had "pleasantly" promised to invite Torraca and Naji for a follow-up visit to Jordan.[12]

THE TRAINEES AS NEGLECTED INTELLIGENTSIA

The Middle East and North Africa were seen by UNESCO as a strategic area that might benefit from a training centre in Baghdad the same way Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa had from similar training centres in Churubusco, Mexico, and Jos, Nigeria. The 1970s saw the rapid growth of a technologically-inclined intelligentsia in Iraq, with many of its members seeking training for their positions in the country's public sector.[13] Across the Arab world, cultural agents "politicize[d] culture in the service of decolonization,"[14] a campaign that was often reflected in the management of heritage and archaeological assets.[15] In Iraq, in addition to the Iraqi Department of Antiquities, a number of specialized institutions were established in Baghdad and other urban centers, focusing on training and development for in-country heritage management.

The country's growing class of post-secondary-educated specialists was both attracted to and, unfortunately, neglected by UNESCO in Baghdad. Applicants to the Centre's training programs were expected to have certain qualifications: proficiency in English, a post-secondary degree, practical experience, and a government position. At the same time, as we will see, the Centre failed to provide the students with such amenities as livable stipends, temperature-appropriate clothing, adequate housing, and practical workshops.

Stakeholders of the Centre estimated they would train 80 people from 1973 to 1976, and an additional 100 from 1977 to 1980.[16] The first training course, like the four that followed it, was held in Arabic and English, depending mainly on the language competencies of the instructors. The students of the first course were (ranked in order of their academic performance, strongest first): Hisham Hilmi, Abdulrahmen Muhamed Ali, Yasin Rashed, Ahmad Al Bayate, Mohamed Saeed Saloomi, Ikram Fatah Mohamed, Hussein Quandil, Khalid Suwed al Dura, Mrs Nedhal Fadhel, Ala Aldin, and Ghalib Bijeili. Only the first

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12   Corrected for grammar. Letter from A. Naji to G. Torraca, June 23, 1973. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973, file reference 29/6/73 No 6722.

13   See Marion–Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship (London: I.B. Taurus, 2001); Phebe Marr, The Modern History of Iraq (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), among many others; much contemporary scholarship on Iraq in the 1960s and 1970s has also been influenced by Hanna Batatu's (1978) landmark study of Iraq's social classes, subordinating the role of the state in sociocultural movements to the country's social and military classes and intelligentsia. See Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers (Princeton University Press, 1978).

14   Yoav Di–Capua, "Changing the Arab Intellectual Guard," in Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss (eds.) Arabic Thought against the Authoritarian Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Present (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 42.

15   For instance, when the Egyptian Department of Antiquities came under the authority of Egyptian rather than French administrators following the coup of 1952, the new dynamic fundamentally affected the management of heritage assets by both foreign and domestic archaeologists; see William Carruthers, "Credibility, Civility, and the Archaeological Dig House in Mid–1950s Egypt," Journal of Social Archaeology 19, no. 2 (2019): 255–276. Further, the gradual nationalization of archaeology in Syria (from 1948 until the 1980s) was a deliberate response to the French maintenance of a client–patron relationship with their former Mandate territory; see Laurence Gillot, "Towards a Socio–Political History of Archaeology in the Middle East: The Development of Archaeological Practice and Its Impacts on Local Communities in Syria," Bulletin of the History of Archaeology 20, no. 1 (2010): 4–16.

16   "Regional Training Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in Arab Countries, BAGHDAD (Iraq)", January 1, 1973. Contract between the University of Baghdad and the General Directorate of Antiquities, Iraq with UNESCO. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973.

three students scored at a high level, and the lecturer Dr. J. B. Cuypers wrote, "both medium and lower level … are weak, poor or even seem to have no knowledge whatsoever of English."[17] The significance of this comment is that it was passed on to UNESCO; although the course was conducted in a predominantly Arab country, for Arab trainees, with the majority of classes in Arabic, the students' competence in English was still considered a key indicator of their success in the program. It is worth noting that English-speaking consultants did not feel the same pressure to learn Arabic.

Following the first course, the trainees were asked to write brief reports on their experience and provide recommendations on how future programs could be improved. Although every trainee thanked UNESCO for the opportunity and reflected on how the training will benefit them in their work, there was a wide range of complaints and criticisms about virtually every aspect of the course. The trainees lamented that the class schedule and site visits were disorganized, lecturers were regularly late, the housing was far from the Centre and there was inadequate transportation, the library was ill-equipped for their studies, and the course content was too theoretical without enough practical exercises. They also reached out to UNDP directly to ask for a clothing allowance as the weather was unpredictable, and one student fell ill as a result of being unprepared. Embarrassed, Director Naji

quickly contacted UNDP to report that the trainees' request was made without the permission of the Centre, asking UNDP to ignore it.[18] Generally, the Centre appears to have been pulled in separate directions, torn between its obligations to UNESCO-UNDP on the one hand and the trainees on the other. Unfortunately, despite the experiences and success of trainees like Hisham Hilmi and Abdulrahmen Muhamed Ali, the administration in this case took the side of their financiers.

There were also many snags with fellowship funding, complicating the matter. For instance, a student from a later course, Abdullah Saud Abdulaziz Mesameh from Bahrain, received 80 Iraqi dinar as a monthly stipend, but this amount was subsequently deducted from the monthly salary provided to him by the Bahraini government, on which his family lived. He asked UNESCO to contact the Bahraini government to resolve the issue, but it is unclear whether any solution was ever reached.[19]

Despite these many grievances, the trainees' reports always concluded on a positive note. Bushra Ahmed Ismail of the Sudan National Museum wrote, "As a whole I honestly say the program was so interesting and very nice, it covered all about museums and their cultural activities . . . I am glad to say I really know the very correct way of treating our cultural properties and what measures I should take in each case, besides I know what

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17   "Report on the Course "Administration of Museums, Constitution and Display of Collections, Protection of Objects on Display"", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.1 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 111 1971–1973, file reference MID/70/04--1/56.

18   Letter from A. Naji to Omar A. H. Adeel, January 16, 1974. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1973–1974.

19   Telegram from Omar A. H. Adeel to UNDEVPRO Baghdad, November 26, 1973. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1973–1974. File reference REM/70/504/30/13.

should a museum do as an educational institution."[20] Awad Abdulla Aljaidi from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen gushed that he was "actually putting whatever grasped at the Centre of Baghdad into practice and in a good position to do and carry out great projects for [illegible] the Dept of our Museums in standard that of advanced world".[21] Aljaidi's reference to the "advanced world" is not unusual for a meta-reflection of this period. UNESCO's internal letters often refer to "developed" or "scientifically advanced" Europe in contrast to the Middle East and North Africa, which were, in their eyes, in need of expert assistance and training centres. Thus, the trainees' reports tell us not only of the poor conditions of the training centre, but also of the trainees' tolerance for these conditions with the expectation of learning the practices of the "advanced world".

The third training course, originally scheduled to last from September 15, 1975, to March 15, 1976, focused again on Training in Conservation and Preservation of Cultural Property.[22] Participants of the course were: Ahmed Nesbah Nashad (Libya), Baseem Swailim Rehani (Jordan), Ibrahim Al Haj Hassan (Jordan), Omar Abi Bakir Al Aydarousi (Yemen), Houda Issa (Syria), Faraj Salih Al Masouri (Libya), Mustafa Hassan Busheha (Libya), Hassan Mohamed Saeed Musaraj (PDR Yemen), Jameel Ali Ghanim (PDR Yemen), Sabah Mohamed Hashim (Iraq), and Salah Salman Al Joubori (Iraq). The first four students received UNESCO fellowships to fund their travel to Baghdad.

Houda Issa, along with Bushra Ahmed Ismail and Nedhal Fadhel from the earlier courses, were the first documented female trainees of the Centre. At the time of the course's start (which was postponed until November 1), Issa was 28 years old with a bachelor's degree in Architecture from the Damascus University Faculty of Arts. She wrote in her application that she would "be responsible for the restoration of Old Damascus," a project in which she hoped to use the training gained from the course.[23] Unfortunately, Issa later withdrew from the course "for personal reasons." An internal report, however, reveals "the Centre was not aware about her participation and arrival date, to be able to prepare a suitable lodging for her. Thus, she was forced to lodge at hotels [that] cost her ID. 10; and it seems that that was the main reason behind her decision to leave the course,"[24] It is both remarkable and disappointing that such a basic concern as "suitable lodging" was the difference between Issa receiving the training she needed to restore Old Damascus and her unceremoniously withdrawing from the program.

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20   Letter from Mrs. Bushra Ahmed Ismail to Mr. Bulenzi, August 13, 1974. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1973–1974.

21   Letter from Awad Abdulla Aljaidi to Mr. Bulenzi, September 15, 1974. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1973–1974.

22   Adil Naji. "Report on the Third Training Course", June 27, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 D 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA A 187 1976. File reference 10/1/402.

23   "Application for Fellowship, Houda Issa", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975.

24   Issa would have been in Baghdad in November and possibly part of December 1975; at the time, 1 Iraqi dinar was equivalent to 3.399 US dollars; "Treasury Reporting Rates of Exchange as of September 30, 1975." United States Department of the Treasury, Fiscal Service, Bureau of Government Financial Operations; Adil Naji, "Report on the Third Training Course", June 27, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 D 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA A 187 1976. File reference 10/1/402.

In addition to the six-month training program, there was also to be a short refresher course from September 15 until November 15, 1975. However, like the six-month program, the refresher course was later rescheduled for unspecified reasons. In one trainee's post-course report, the refresher course (shortened and rescheduled to last from October 1 to 30) was heavily criticized, given that "one month for this training was not enough to obtain any benefit."[25] The longer training course, rescheduled to last from November 1, 1975, to April 20, 1976, was also disparaged for many of the same reasons as in previous seasons. Although the course consisted of lectures, practical exercises, and trips to museums and archaeological sites, "the outcome of the whole result was not equal to the ambitions which the Centre wishes to achieve."[26]

The course dates were changed multiple times, complicating the arrival dates of the students; the Centre struggled to find convenient accommodations for the trainees; UNESCO provided only four fellowships when they had initially promised ten; the late arrival of some experts affected the lecture schedule; lectures often missed important subjects such as the conservation of metal; some lectures "were short and inadequate;" and the stipends were perceived as inadequate and were regularly distributed late.[27] In fact, all of the trainees signed a petition to request a higher monthly allowance from UNESCO, owing in large part to the fact that their salaries in their home countries had the amount of the stipend deducted.[28]

In response to the various complaints, Patrick Bulenzi, Senior Programme Officer at UNESCO, wrote a largely defensive letter that shifted blame for everything away from the organization. The refresher course overlapped with Ramadan, but "on the religious festivities, this was beyond our control;" although the coursework may have been too theoretical, "I cannot see how we could have done anything from here;" and on the trainees' late arrivals in Baghdad, "the Egyptian trainee['s] Ministry would not release him" and "the Algerian Delegation never gave us the personal address of the[ir] candidate."[29] Going forward, it is not uncommon to see UNESCO accepting credit for the successes of the Centre while shifting blame for all of its faults onto the Iraqi government and the Arab Member States.

THE CENTRE'S LOCATION IN BAGHDAD

The decision to establish the Centre in Baghdad dates to at least 1958, when Iraq broached the subject at a UNESCO meeting in Rome. Later, and "in view of the Iraqi Government's offer to

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25   Letter from Hamed Alli Bader to Mr. Bulenzi, November 12, 1975. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975.

26   Adil Naji. "Report on the Third Training Course", June 27, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 D 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA A 187 1976. File reference 10/1/402.

27   Adil Naji. "Report on the Third Training Course", June 27, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 D 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA A 187 1976. File reference 10/1/402.

28   "Petition to UNESCO", December 3, 1973. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975.

29   Letter from P. Y. Bulenzi to Y. Turchenko, December 31, 1975. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975, file reference SHCMS/300.1/670.

contribute one million Dinars ($1.6 million) towards the construction of permanent premises for the Centre, it [was] agreed that it be located in Baghdad."[30] However, the decision was not based solely on budgetary concerns. There were cultural factors that influenced the decision as well: "from the most ancient civilizations, treasures of antiquity survive in Iraq. Baghdad is one of the most famous centres of the cultural heritage in the Arab world. In Baghdad exists a well equipped and spacious new building … [and] an Archaeology section in the University of Baghdad."[31] American archaeologists in the country also remarked that, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, Iraq was "currently the most solid of the Arab countries economically."[32] Formally launched in 1970, "All Arab member-states … supported and encouraged the Centre's establishment in Baghdad."[33] However, these optimistic blanket statements and broad pronouncements clashed with the lived experiences of the Centre's trainees, lecturers, and administrative staff.

Trainees regularly commented on the poor infrastructure and inadequate housing and transportation in the Baghdad area. The most critical comments lamented the placement of the Centre itself, both in Iraq specifically and in the Arab world more generally. One trainee suggested the Centre be moved to a country in North Africa instead, recommending Tunisia or Algeria as more suitable locations.[34] Moreover, an internal report on the Centre's operations describes the "unavailability of specialised know-hows in the field of conservation and restoration of cultural property in Iraq at the required level, also unavailability of a complete information about the Arab knowhow in this field."[35] Where specialized knowledge did exist, it seems it was antithetical to what UNESCO wished to teach. In 1977, consultant Said Zulficar reported:

> It would seem that the location of the Centre in Iraq is not the best choice insofar as the practical examples of archaeological and historical conservation and restoration which the trainees have before their eyes in the country are somewhat unhappy and certainly do not warrant their initiation elsewhere. The Iraqi Department of Antiquities is not so much intent on conserving and restoring as in renovating and indeed in reconstructing. I visited several archaeological sites, such as Akarkouf and Babylon which were being totally reconstructed following the imagination of present day architects. I witnessed (to my great dismay and horror) that the world famous Mosques of Hussein and Ali in Kerbela and Najaf and the Mosque in Kufa had been totally renovated: the beautiful wooden mosaic ceilings and pillars had been removed and replaced by glass, crystal, and concrete. As there is no shortage of funds, it is feared that the disfiguration of Iraq's architectural past will proceed with a quickening

30   Said Zulficar, "Mission to the Regional Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab States, Baghdad, Iraq. 19–24 April 1977", May 9, 1977. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 A 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 02 1975–1985. File reference CC/CH/02/3/300/G/66.

31   "The Regional Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab Countries", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978. See Mayor (1992) for the ambitions UNESCO had in the 20th century for the achievement of peace and the role of culture therein.

32   Carl H. Kraeling, "Newsletter from Jordan", 27 March 1958. The Oriental Institute Archaeological Newsletters Oct 15, 1950 – Mar 11, 1973: 298.

33   "The Regional Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab Countries", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978.

34   Letter from A. Rahman S. A. Mesameh to Mr. Bulensi, August 8, 1974. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975.

35   Adil Naji. "Report on the Third Training Course", June 27, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 D 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA A 187 1976. File reference 10/1/402.

pace and this is hardly the example we should wish to see the trainees follow when they return home.[36]

Supporting this observation, the Director of UNESCO's Cultural Heritage division reported on his visit to Baghdad in 1978:

> I took the opportunity to discuss with the Director-General of the Antiquity Services a few fundamental problems of restoration principles and its philosophy.It is obvious, as has already been pointed out by other staff members and consultants, that there is a certain tendency to "over-restoration" or even more of reconstruction instead of preservation and conservation. The holding of the foreseen symposium [on principles of preservation and presentation of Islamic historic monuments] may hopefully contribute to a more appropriate approach to this problem.[37]

Evidently, there was some discontinuity between UNESCO's stated objectives and its actions. Reports from trainees, lecturers, and UNESCO consultants criticized not only the physical building and amenities of the Centre, but also its location in the Arab world and the methodological weaknesses of its host country. At this point, however, UNESCO and UNDP had few available options for reform. Excessive intervention would have undermined the provisions "of the General Conference (of UNESCO) and the Executive Board which deplored imperialism, aggression and racial discrimination," provisions which Iraq's Baathist government had thanked Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow for respecting.

For the 1975-1976 training course, lecturers included one Indian, one Frenchman, one Turk, one Italian, and seven Iraqis. We have seen that by this point, the administration of UNESCO is aware of the Centre's problems (made clear by the trainees' reports) and have an extremely critical view of Iraqi conservationists. Why, then, would UNESCO recruit so many Iraqis to lecture, while believing so strongly that they are ill-equipped for the task? One possible explanation is that, as "Iraqi teachers do not qualify for any Unesco payment",[38] UNESCO was willing to sacrifice quality of education (in their eyes) if it meant that they could unload some of the financial burden on the Iraqi government. Another explanation is that UNESCO simply had no input in the recruitment of lecturers and that the Centre hired Iraqis of their own volition. However, considering the great number of resumes and corresponding letters of interest from lecturers in the archives, it seems highly unlikely that UNESCO was not involved in the recruitment process.

COMPETING INTERESTS AND INFLUENCES

The functions of the Baghdad Centre for the region's specialists were, by this point, exceedingly clear. In a 1976 document reiterating and expanding their earlier objectives, the Centre was "to provide theoretical and practical programmes for

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36   Said Zulficar, "Mission to the Regional Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab States, Baghdad, Iraq. 19–24 April 1977", May 9, 1977. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 A 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 02 1975–1985. File reference CC/CH/02/3/300/G/66.

37   Amadou–Mahtar M'Bow, "Report of my mission to Iraq and Syria (4–10 March 1978)", June 28, 1978. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978. File reference CC/CH/DIR/57.

38   Letter from P. Y. Bulenzi to Y. Turchenko, April 17, 1975. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328.2 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA A 135 1974–1975. File reference CLP.01/4/300/T/417.

the training of technicians in conservation;" conduct scientific research on damage, deterioration, and treatment of sites and monuments; carry out archaeological excavation, collection, and identification of ethnological material; develop museums "whose activities are directed towards the goal of development;" and give advice on conservation to Arab Member States.[39] It is worth noting that, although the Centre provided training on conservation, its staff were not engaged in any practical conservation projects themselves.

In 1975, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with UNDP and Iraq promising to contribute $185,460 to the Centre over the next following five years.[40] Subsequently, in 1977, "Arab States [were] requested to increase their contributions to the Centre from 500 Iraqi Dinars yearly to $5,000 yearly."[41] Attention must be drawn to the fact that financial contributions received in Iraqi dinars were now being converted to American dollars. Additionally, although Arabic was still the official language of instruction at the Centre, UNESCO's letters sent to Arab countries informing them of the course were only in English and French. Internal documents to UNESCO, exclusively in English at the beginning of the decade, also begin to appear more frequently in French until, by the 1980s, the two languages appear equally. Although Arabic was adopted as an official language of the United Nations

and UNESCO in 1973, no Arabic correspondence in UNESCO's archives pertaining to the Centre was located.

Further, although the use of Arabic in the training program would have fostered a sense of Arab empowerment (and make the course content more accessible for the students), it would also make it more difficult for UNESCO to monitor the quality of the training. The Iraqi Government "expressed its appreciation for the efforts to extend the use of Arabic in Unesco hoping again that such a trend will be reinforced," and in the first half of the 1970s, Arabic was the primary language of instruction at the Centre. However, by 1980, more and more lectures were only offered in English or French. Pursuing a different path for cooperative development, Director-General M'Bow wrote, "it was underlined that the new international economic order expresses in concrete form the necessity for collective responsibility and equal partnership of all nations in building a world of justice, progress and peace," simultaneously implying the "necessity" of intervening in the Centre's affairs while also stressing the need for justice and autonomy. Two years earlier, in 1978, "it was also stated by the [Iraqi] Government that the cooperation among Arab countries in the fields of education, science, culture and communication is an ideal looked to by the Arab nation and an inevitable development

39   Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, "Letter to all Arab Member States of UNESCO except Iraq and Saudi Arabia [DRAFT]", November 30, 1976. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 A 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 02 1975–1985.

40   Y. Turchenko, "Proposed assistance to the Baghdad Centre by the Government of Saudi Arabia", October 20, 1975. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978. File reference SHC/MS/4/300/Z/601.

41   Said Zulficar, "Mission to the Regional Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab States, Baghdad, Iraq. 19–24 April 1977", May 9, 1977. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 A 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 02 1975–1985. File reference CC/CH/02/3/300/G/66.

resulting from their long history and their cultural unity, and represents their hopes for the present and the future."[42] UNESCO was thus awkwardly positioned between assurances of institutional autonomy and a stubborn desire to ensure the success of their largest project in Iraq.

By the end of 1977, the Centre had trained more than 40 students from 14 Arab countries and had scheduled the fourth training course to begin on January 1 and run until June 30, 1978.[43] In addition, a short refresher course was held from September 1 until November 30 the same year. There is no document confirming the final program register, but applicants for the course were: Ali Khelassi (Algeria), Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim Mohamed (Egypt), Ali Abdel R. Abdel Aziz (Egypt), Mourad Tawfik (Egypt), Marcelle Lutfy Habib (Egypt), Nadia Ibrahim Lokma (Egypt), Saad Madidi (Jordan), Hussni Abu Shawimeh (Jordan), Hashimi Ahmad Naas (Libya), Juma Almabruk Mohamed (Libya), Mansour Abusalam Hema (Libya), Fathi Altayeb Badr (Libya), and Hassan Becarabi (Morocco).[44] Habib and Lokma - the first female trainees since Houda Issa in 1975 – both confirmed their participation, but there is no record of them continuing in the course or reporting on their experiences.

As mentioned, despite her impressive resume, Issa was overlooked by the Centre and, as a result of having to shoulder the costs of her own accommodations, was forced to leave Iraq and return to Damascus. Furthermore, this is not the only instance in which we see the Centre neglect a female participant. In 1978, the Centre contacted ICCROM's Professor Lena Wikstrom to lecture in an upcoming training course. However, a number of complaints were made about her by Hisham Hilmi, a trainee of the first course and a prior student of Wikstrom's who had since become an assistant at the Centre. After investigating the case, ICCROM's Bernard Feilden determined that the complaints were due to "a personal grudge" and "d[id] not exist at a political level" given that Wikstrom had reported Hilmi for cheating on the final exam of her previous course.[45]

Wikstrom was confirmed as a lecturer and began to plan her trip to Baghdad. The Centre called her to inform her that she was still welcome, that her flight and hotel were booked, and that she would be met at the airport on arrival. Later that same day, "a man (not identified) telephone[d] from [the] Baghdad Centre saying that LW must not go because the Ministry does not approve of her."[46] ICCROM's Torraca immediately called Adil Naji at the Centre to resolve the issue, but it was Hilmi who answered the Centre's phone. He told Torraca

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42   "Memorandum of Understanding of the Discussions of the Director-General of UNESCO during his visit to the Republic of IRAQ", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CC CH 01 4 300 A 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 02 1975–1985.

43   "The Regional Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property in the Arab Countries", undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978.

44   Letter from S. Le Quang Trieu to P. Stulz, August 1, 1978. UNESCO Archives (Paris France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1975–1978.

45   "Baghdad Regional Centre – Lena Wikstrom", November 24, 1978. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1978–1982, file reference 14144/78/BMF/EA.

46   "Memorandum on Lena Wikstrom", November 20, 1978. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 031 (567) TA 1978–1982, file reference 20.11.1978/JJ.

that ICCROM did not confirm Wikstrom's arrival in time, so the Centre had already booked a professor from Baghdad University. It seems likely that Hilmi made the original phone call to Wikstrom to convince her not to come to the Centre, then double-booked a second lecturer in order to justify cancelling her trip.

This anecdote reveals more about the Centre than its neglect of female participants; it also exposes the importance of ICCROM in the Centre's operations. In 1979, ICCROM received a contract with UNESCO for $17,400. Based on the timing of this contract, the payment was presumably intended as funding for the fifth training course. With this contract, ICCROM appears to have usurped UNDP's role with the Centre. Did Naji, of his own volition, create such a strong relationship with Torraca and Feilden at the Rome Centre that he was able to orchestrate an agreement with UNESCO that would cut out UNDP and assure assistance from a stakeholder more closely related to the Centre's aims? This would have also assuaged UNESCO's concerns about the dire financial situation in which UNDP had found itself earlier. Later documents refer to "UNESCO/ICCROM" as one unit and omit mention of UNDP entirely. As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, UNDP contributions were only scheduled until 1976. Could it therefore be that 1979 is the point where the Baghdad Centre pulled away

from the backing of UNDP and assumed greater financial autonomy?

The UNESCO archives on the Baghdad Centre continue until 1982, although it appears the Centre continued operating, at least in part, until 1986. Unfortunately, later archives are extremely sparse. In 1982, UNESCO, ICCROM, and the Iraqi government renewed the 1976 agreement on the Centre's operations (notably without the UNDP). This agreement assured the signatories that the role of UNESCO was to "encourage support of the Regional Centre in Baghdad by other Arab States," recruit stakeholders, and foster unity through the Centre's programming. Amendments to the agreement reflected the UNESCO/ICCROM decision to offer new courses on the conservation of easel paintings and the preservation of historical monuments and sites.[47] At the end of March 1982, Iraq's ambassador to the UN, Nizar Hamdun, received a UNESCO delegation that conveyed the updated agreement. Hamdun "was informed of all the items discussed and gave his approval. He expressed the importance of the role of cultural heritage and history in Iraq which is under the leadership of President Saddam Hussein and the Baath party."[48] The Centre continued operating until 1986, at the juncture of various interests and influences.

47   Minutes of the meeting held on 28th, 29th, and 30th March 1982, undated. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA 1982–1985.

48   Letter from A. Hassen Ali, U. A. Al Mallah, T. Madhloom, E. Said Abdulqadir, Gael de Guichen, and M. A. Mouchenaki to Conrad Wise, March 28–30, 1982. UNESCO Archives (Paris, France). CLT 12 328 069 7 (927) A 021 (567) TA 1982–1985.

CONCLUSION

As this article has demonstrated, UNESCO's training centre in Baghdad ultimately fell short in a number of ways. UNESCO's internationalist vision for the Centre was undermined by tedious bureaucracy and a failure to engage meaningfully with Iraqi and Arab specialists. Thus, the top-down strategy of UNESCO's training centre, which sought to establish higher standards for heritage management and conservation in Iraq, was so disconnected from the Iraqi people and established Iraqi institutions that it is challenging to identify any long-term benefits for the country or its trainees. Additionally, UNESCO's aversion to Iraqi standards and skepticism of Arab competence led to the disenfranchisement of many Iraqi stakeholders and the perpetuation of an asymmetrical relationship between the West and the Middle East.[49] However, as Lynn Meskell articulates, these are not new facets of UNESCO's relationship with the developing world. She has surveyed the organization's policies from its earliest days of "utopianism," in which,

> Fearing an international revolution in political practices, the Member States demanded that UNESCO censor its more universalist and civilizational objectives and instead direct its energies toward purely technical matters. Within just a few years an American-inspired program of technical assistance edged out the particularly British imperial vision for UNESCO, with its mantle of educational advancement, social progress, and an international civilizing mission. Like the League of Nations before it, the largely European ideal of world government and civilizational uplift masterminded by classicists and scientists would be replaced by the post-Second World War technocrats, economists, and engineers who were setting the development agenda.[50]

By examining unpublished archival documentation, this article furthers our understanding of the evolution of UNESCO's policies since its founding. More than this, however, this study considers the interpretation, negotiation, and mediation of UNESCO programs by the very people whose development they were intended to foster. Although more research is required on this topic, the present study attests to the fact that UNESCO's programs in the second half of the twentieth century were not simply imposed upon passive inhabitants of the developing world. Rather, they were received, considered, and criticized as they unfolded and their faults and shortcomings were realized. In the end, the training centre was deemed unsustainable. As an institution jointly implemented by UNESCO, UNDP, ICCROM, *and* the Iraqi government, and that was ideologically aligned with the Pan-Arab ambitions of the Baathist state, it failed not due to lack of effort, but rather because it did not achieve meaningful engagement with Arab intelligentsia

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49   Additionally, it appears that the designation of the Centre "for Arab countries" worked to the exclusion of Kurds, Persians, Assyrians, Druze, and other non-Arab groups in the Middle East and North Africa. This is outside the scope of this article, but will be addressed at length in my forthcoming PhD dissertation (2022). Likewise, a separate issue that could not be addressed in this article is the competing visions for nationalism in Iraq at the time as either a civic, Iraqi nationalism (wataniyya) or participation in the broader, [Pan-Arab] Arab nationalist movement (qawmiyya). It appears that the UNDP's earliest funding for a research centre in Baghdad (dating to 1968, if not earlier) referred to it simply as "Research Centre, Baghdad", without mention of "Arab" or other ethnic designation. Between 1968 and 1972, the decision was made to designate the Centre "for Arab countries" and this, of course, has greater implications for UNESCO–UNDP programming in the Cold War Middle East; see also Mehiyar Kathem and Dhiaa Kareem Ali, "Decolonising Babylon," International Journal of Heritage Studies (2020): 2; Sara Pursley, Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq (Stanford, CA: Standford University Press, 2019; and Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (eds.), The Cold War and the Middle East (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

50   Meskell, A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace, 24.

and the existing infrastructure for cultural develop-
ment in Iraq.

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FRANCE AND THE RESTITUTION OF AFRICAN CULTURAL PROPERTY: A CRITICAL RACE THEORETICAL VIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Whether crystallized in pop culture through the 1979 Nigerian action film, *The Mask*, Mike Phillips's literary thriller, *The Dancing Face*, or Marvel Entertainment's record-breaking film, *Black Panther*, the definitive restitution of African cultural property remains a contentious discourse warranting serious scholarly attention. Indeed, while speaking to students at Burkina Faso's University of Ouagadougou, President Emmanuel Macron of France stated that "starting today, and within the next five years, I want to see the conditions put in place to allow for the temporary or definitive restitution of African cultural heritage to Africa." As a follow up to his proclamation in 2018, Macron commissioned a report on the subject, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage Toward a New Relational Ethics*.[1] However, France's debate about the restitution of African cultural property dates back more than 40 years.

In 2020, French senators unanimously voted to return 27 cultural heritage objects to Benin and Senegal. When speaking to the French press, Roselyne Bachelot, the French Minister of Culture, said, "the bill is not an act of repentance, but an act of friendship and trust."[2] However, is colonialism not an iniquity for which France should seek repentance? Furthermore, Bachelot's statement supports Savoy's assertion that France has double amnesia.[3] Amnesia of its colonial past and of the debate on the restitution of African cultural objects. Without repentance, how can France hope to build friendship and trust, hallmarks of cultural diplomacy, with the people of African descent whose ancestors they colonized and enslaved? Given that France had only returned one object by late 2021, statements about "friendship and trust" ring disingenuous.[4]

Furthermore, too often discourse about the restitution of African cultural property excludes the perspectives of the formerly colonized and enslaved, especially if they are of African descent.[5] In 2020, the Congolese political activist Mwazulu Diyabanza amplified requests for the restitution of African cultural objects through his protests of

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1   Sarr and Savoy, "The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage."

2   Selvin, "France Will Return Objects to Benin and Senegal."

3   Bénédicte, "Amnesia."

4   Brown, "France Has Taken a Major Step"; Greenberger, "Landmark Repatriation."

5   Ehikhamenor, "What Our Ancestors Made"; Gbadamosi, "Repatriate Africa's Looted Art?"; Marshall, "This Art Was Looted"; Rea, "European Museums."

colonialism.[6] In the *Guardian*, he described himself as a "pan-African activist," campaigning for reparations for the crimes committed against African people during colonialism.[7] In June 2020, he visited the Quai Branly Museum in Paris.[8] During his visit, "Diyabanza denounced colonial-era cultural theft while a member of his group, Unité, Dignité, Courage, an organization that fights for the liberation and transformation of Africa, filmed and livestreamed the speech via Facebook. With another group member's help, he then removed a slender 19th-century wooden funerary post, from a region that is now known as Chad or Sudan and headed for the museum's exit."[9] According to Farah Nayeri of *The New York Times*, "guards stopped him before he could leave."[10] Diyabanza repeated this act at the Museum of African, Oceanic, and Native American Arts in Marseille, the Afrika Museum in Berg en Dal in the Netherlands, and the Louvre in Paris.[11]

In France, Diyabanza and his associates faced charges of attempted theft.[12] Although they did not receive the maximum sentence of ten years in prison and a €150,000 fine, the judge still fined Diyabanza €1,000 for aggravated theft because he wanted to discourage such "stunts."[13] Diyabanza plans to appeal the fine, because, as he stated, "I don't think it is for me to pay this: it is for the Quai Branly and the French state."[14] In the Netherlands, Diyabanza received a €250 fine and a two-month suspended prison sentence with two years' probation.[15] The Afrika Museum also banned him and his associates for three years, but allowed him to meet with its directors.[16]

In these incidents, Diyabanza and his associates paid admissions to enter the museums. He stated, "the fact that I had to pay my own money to see what had been taken by force, this heritage that belonged back home where I come from — that's when the decision was made to take action."[17] Diyabanza made a good point. Why should people of African descent have to pay to experience their ancestors' creative brilliance in a part of the world where they did not originate? In addition to costly

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6   Brown, "Mwazulu Diyabanza"; Diyabanza, "Experience"; Nayeri, "To Protest."

7   Diyabanza, "Experience."

8   Nayeri, "To Protest."

9   Nayeri, "To Protest."

10   Nayeri, "To Protest."

11   Nayeri, "To Protest."

12   Nayeri, "To Protest."

13   Diyabanza, "Experience."

14   Diyabanza, "Experience."

15   Brown, "Mwazulu Diyabanza."

16   Brown, "Mwazulu Diyabanza."

17   Nayeri, "To Protest."

museum admissions, the travel required to view cultural products that rightfully belong to them is a luxury that many Africans do not have.

While awaiting trial, Diyabanza stated, "whatever the country, I will continue. These artifacts belong to me because I am African and Congolese. I am a descendant of Ntumba Mvemba, one of the royal families that founded the Kingdom of Kongo in 1390."[18] He also told the Dutch press, "European governments didn't just want to steal our possessions but to break our identities to assimilate us and colonize us. We are determined to get back what has been taken from us."[19] While he currently has no pending trials, Diyabanza expressed his intentions to continue to fight for the restitution of African cultural property taken as a result of colonialism.[20]

Though extant literature provides insights into how France might realize Macron's vision,[21] Jonathan Paquette, professor in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa, for example, has remained sympathetic to French resistance to the restitution of African cultural property while it continues to cause creative, cultural, psychological, and spiritual harm to people of African descent.[22] Furthermore, much of the literature has not explicitly considered the role that anti-Black racism plays in France's resistance to the definitive restitution of African cultural property. Therefore, we investigated the research question: in what ways might Critical Race Theory (CRT) inform policies on the restitution of African cultural property from France and other European colonial powers back to African nations?

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

According to Delgado and Stefancic (1998), Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a scholarly movement that Derrick Bell, a civil rights lawyer and the first Black law faculty member at Harvard University, inspired with his early writings in the 1970s. Aware that the gains made during the civil rights movement had begun to stall, and that traditional methods such as exhortation, litigation, and marching had yielded fewer gains, the racially marginalized and oppressed needed new approaches to cope with the public's growing indifference to the plight of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States. In 1995, Bell explained that the approach "is often disruptive because its commitment to anti-racism goes well beyond affirmative action, civil rights, integration, and other liberal measures."[23] Indeed, CRT's proponents argue that the nation's sordid history of

18   Diyabanza, "Experience."

19   Brown, "Mwazulu Diyabanza."

20   Brown, "Mwazulu Diyabanza."

21   Curtis, "Universal Museums"; DeBlock, "The Africa Museum"; Hicks, The Brutish; Maaba, "Challenges to Repatriation"; Maples, "African Restitution"; Munjeri, "The Reunification"; Nevadomsky, "The Vigango"; Roberts, "Is Repatriation Inevitable?"; Savoy, "Amnesia"; Shyllon, "Repatriation of Antiquities"; Shyllon, "Restitution of Antiquities"; Thompson, "A Propos Macron."

22   Paquette, "France and the Restitution"; Sarr, Afrotopia.

23   As quoted in Harris, "The GOP."

discrimination, segregation, and slavery is embedded in its laws and continues to play a central role in preventing BIPOC from living lives untouched by racism.[24]

Bridges (2018) outlined four principles of CRT in practice.[25] However, for the purposes of this paper, we focus on her second principal, which acknowledges that racism remains a normalized feature of Western societies embedded within systems and institutions, such as the legal system or, in this paper's case, the global creative economy, which replicates racial injustice. The assertion is that racist incidents are not aberrations, but instead manifestations of structural and systemic racism. CRT recognizes that racism is codified in law, embedded in structures, and woven into public policy. It rejects claims of meritocracy or "colorblindness" and recognizes that it is the systemic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial injustice.

Thus, CRT acknowledges that because of the ways in which race is built into the fabric of the United States and other Western societies, BIPOC cannot have non-racialized interactions among themselves or with non-BIPOC.[26] Although developed in the United States, CRT holds implications for people of African descent globally and for how they rationalize their lived experiences in European countries, including France.

While many examples exist that support our position of anti-Black racism existing in France, we will focus on one particular case. According to Cascone,[27] French authorities in Belgium seized a massive haul of more than 27,000 Roman artifacts believed to have been illegally excavated throughout eastern France. Officials valued the treasures at €772,685 (US$946,670). France sought the restitution of works that it lost during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 through the Treaty of Versailles.[28] Is it not hypocritical for France to seek the return of its looted cultural heritage while refusing to definitively restitute that belonging to people of African descent? Following this same logic, as of 2018, the IFAN Museum of African Arts in Dakar (le musée de Théodore-Monod d'art africain) continues to seek the return of cultural heritage it loaned to France in 1935, 1957, and 1967.[29] Given these examples, instead of asking if anti-Black racism informs discourses about France's restitution of African cultural property, CRT compels us to ask in *what ways does anti-Black racism inform discourses about France's restitution of African cultural property?*

24   Harris, "The GOP."

25   Bridges, Critical Race Theory: A Primer.

26   Delgado and Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory," 471.

27   Cascone, "French Authorities Seized."

28   Rhoads, "Legal Issues."

29   Sarr and Savoy, "The Restitution," 19.

Today, CRT has come under criticism from the radical right around the globe in Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[30] In the United States, Republicans have introduced bills prohibiting schools, as well as organizations that have entered into a contract or subcontract with the state, from endorsing "divisive concepts." Specifically, the measures forbid "race or sex scapegoating," questioning the value of meritocracy, and suggesting that the U. S. is "fundamentally racist."[31] Critics of this legislation argue it will prevent discussions about racism's existence in societies with majorities of European descent, as well as undermine access, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and encroach upon citizens' free speech, of which willful ignorance of CRT emboldens the erosion of free speech.

Goldberg[32] contended that Republicans criticize any talk, discussion, mention, analysis, or intimation of race, with the exception of saying "we" should not talk about it. Fear of an assault on their worldview motivates the radical right's attacks on CRT. However, they have not offered an alternative for critical analysis of the racism that reproduces the undeniable inequity, violence, and trauma that BIPOC experience in Western-descended countries, such as France and the United States. As Goldberg stated, "if we are to learn one thing from this highly orchestrated assault on CRT, it is that this alternative narrative is not a sincere expression of hope: it is a cynical ploy to keep power and privilege in the hands of those who have always held it." France and its overtures toward the restitution of African cultural objects are no different. Thus, assessing criticism of CRT allows us to unearth and articulate the ways in which anti-Black racism has emboldened France's refusal to definitively restitute all African cultural property in its largesse.

RACE AND THE TRANSATLANTIC FOUNDATION OF THE MUSEUM AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CRT interrogates how the perception of the biological construct of race has created a false reality with real legal implications for Black intellectual, artistic, and physical freedom. These constraints transferred African and African diasporic cultural property, capital, and knowledge to museums in racist republican systems that excluded African participation or representation in governmental or quasi-governmental bodies responsible for the acquisition and curation of cultural property.

For the public back in the Metropole, colonizers took African works as spoils. To the press, coverage of looted works illustrated the erasure of barbarity and the progress of civilization. In museums, these looted works served as a form of public education that supplemented pro-empire textbooks and journalists. The exhibition of these works, sometimes taken to satisfy heavy colonial taxes on Africans

30   Goldberg, "The War."

31   Harris, "The GOP."

32   Goldberg, "The War."

subjects, could justify the expenditure of public funds on empire. French cultural policy and law then and now represents the interests of the dominant group stakeholders in the Republic.

The Louvre, with its initial collection of loot confiscated during the French Revolution,[33] opened as a public museum in 1793, a decade before U.S. President Thomas Jefferson opened his private vestibule Indian Hall and Museum at Monticello.[34] Similar to the Louvre, the Indian Hall and Museum served as a testament to the Enlightenment.[35] For Jefferson, the Indian Hall and Museum would acknowledge France's role in the Enlightenment, shaping U.S.-republican thought.[36] As a small repository of Enlightenment-era achievements in Jefferson's vestibule, it contained busts of French Enlightenment philosophers and Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, with "several printed facsimiles of the Declaration (as well as his own rough draft) in his home. Jefferson used these pieces to relate his first-hand experiences in crafting U.S. democracy."[37]

Jefferson acquired many artifacts both natural and man-made, including "works of art from eastern Indians" and "Indian objects."[38] While President of the United States, Jefferson commissioned and sponsored the Lewis and Clark Expedition[39] that went through much of what was French America. It is from the Expedition that he acquired these Native American objects.[40] Jefferson viewed French association as a civilization model for the Native Americans that he hoped to improve upon through American cultural and legal domination and assimilation.[41] Jefferson considered "Anglo-Saxons" to be the founding stock of the American Republic and the only "race" worthy to lead it.[42] Jefferson was a proponent of the dubious racialized Anglo-Saxon myth as the foundation for America's "superior" law and culture.[43] This myth has a long pedigree, but was particularly appealing to Jefferson and other American colonists of English descent.[44]

Undoubtedly, the Indian Hall and the Louvre are connected in principle and personality. The Revolutionaries and Jefferson[45] shared a belief

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33   Prieur, "Napoleon's Appropriation."

34   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "Indian Hall."

35   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "Indian Hall."

36   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "Indian Hall."

37   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "Indian Hall."

38   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "Indian Hall."

39   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet," 49.

40   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet," 49.

41   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet,",46,56–58.

42   Kaufmann, "American Exceptionalism," 448, 455, 456.

43   Kaufmann, "American Exceptionalism," 447, 448, 453, 455.

44   Sayer, "Ten Skeletons."

45   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet," 43

in the power of museums as educational and as a monument to the shaping and integration of republican society through laws drafted at the expense of certain peoples. The founders of both institutions would use museums to transform republican society by taking cultural heritage from "savages" who were largely believed incapable of fully becoming a part of society by law or custom.[46] Indigenous and African works would not enter the Louvre until the late 1990s and the early twenty-first century.[47] CRT scholars illustrate the legal and social harm of assimilation policies to minority cultural property claims.[48]

Jefferson visited the Louvre and observed the 1787 Salon of artworks there.[49] He would not call for the return of confiscated property from the Louvre to its persecuted original owners, despite serving as an early drafter of the humanitarian 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.[50] Jefferson would also bequeath his Native object collections to institutions rather than return them to Native peoples once they were "assimilated."[51] Jefferson would see his Indian Hall and Museum as a testament to the power of assimilation and association,

which are similar to Enlightenment ideals also shared by the French and forced upon African peoples in French colonies.[52]

The French and American Revolutions established an intellectual connection between the United States and France through shared values and figures. A connection that legitimized oppression based on race. Institutions in France and America recognized the value of ideas of race and society being cultivated in the other as both societies developed into republics. For example, Jefferson was awarded an associate position with the Institute National de France in 1801.[53] Gifts and correspondence from Jefferson to his French counterparts illustrate various ideas, such as the biological basis for human culture and political achievement.[54]

Therefore, one can use CRT to examine both French and U.S. systems of forcible expropriation and racist assimilation policies. For example, Jefferson wrote the racist Notes on the State of Virginia in 1782 and it was translated and printed in France by at least 1785.[55] In his Notes, Jefferson claimed, "although black slaves lived in

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46   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet,"56–58.

47   Monroe, "The Louvre."

48   Delgado and Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory," 479.

49   The Thomas Jefferson Monticello, "The Louvre (Engraving)."

50   "Draft of Declaration of the Rights of Man," Thomas Jefferson: A Revolutionary World, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffworld.html

51   "Indian Hall and Museum." The Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia.

52   Judge, "French as a Tool."

53   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet,"49.

54   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet,"49.

55   Medlin, "Thomas Jefferson."

an environment in which the arts and sciences were cultivated, they nonetheless produced little of aesthetic value."[56] This inability to produce "art" compelled Jefferson to believe enslaving Africans was justified.[57]

Jefferson believed that slavery among the Greeks or Romans was cruel because one could enslave a philosopher or painter, and they could articulate their condition and perhaps free themself from slavery.[58] Africans, in Jefferson's opinion, had no such awareness nor ability to express a human experience nor possessed a desire for knowledge.[59]

In contrast, Jefferson saw Native American art, looted or otherwise, as evidence of capacity for civilization, a capacity lacked by Blacks. Thomas Jefferson articulated these racist beliefs further. He said that Natives Americans "will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation."[60]

Jefferson did not see Blacks as worthy participants in the American body politic because they were not nor could ever become Anglo-Saxons culturally.[61] With these views, Jefferson's draft of

the 1789 Declaration did not consider Africans as potential candidates for membership in the body politic of what would become revolutionary France. Nevertheless, Africans were important for the extraction of wealth necessary for revolutionary France to flourish. The existence of Africans in Senegal's nineteenth century French communes who enjoyed limited political rights would surprise Jefferson. Senegal had renowned Native artisan societies and guilds that interacted with important institutions of French settler society and commerce.[62]

Nevertheless, if Jefferson's views on the relative worthlessness of Black art and artisanship influenced French republicans and colonial officials, then French cultural expropriation from Senegal and other African possessions makes sense. Colonizers could harvest the cultural work of Africans and send them to French museums for their taxonomical and educational value to the French public.[63] Colonial beliefs in the lack of Black genius or artisanal skill could theoretically justify only limited rights or privileges for certain African subjects in French possessions. Teets (2018) argued that giving even these rights to Blacks would have gone far beyond what Jefferson

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56   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet," 56.

57   Teets, "Classical Slavery."

58   Teets, "Classical Slavery."

59   Teets, "Classical Slavery."

60   Jefferson and Robinson, "An American Cabinet," 56.

61   Kaufmann, "American Exceptionalism," 448.

62   Sylla, "Social Beliefs."

63   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 14.

would have considered wise for peoples whom he considered suited only for servitude.

RACE, CITIZENSHIP, AND THE CONFISCATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY UNDER THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

France abolished the slave trade in 1848. In the same year,[64] it granted some citizens in communes (towns) in what is now Senegal, which it had possessed since the seventeenth century, limited rights of representation and citizenship.[65] However, these seemingly liberal rights for the peoples of Senegal's communes did not extend to the entire colonial possession. These rights did not stop French expropriation of cultural property from communities and societies in Senegal. Instead, thousands of Senegalese cultural objects would end up in French public museums.

Approximately 2,281 objects in these museums are from Senegal,[66] gained as France extended its imperial control over the interior.[67] France would not return Senegalese cultural property en masse, unlike the European property France looted during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.[68]

The French loss of European territory during the Franco-Prussian War brought about France's Third Republic.[69] After losing the Franco-Prussian War, France would bureaucratize the expropriation of African material culture. However, France would not incorporate most of this loot into the Louvre until hundreds of years later[70] after an appeal to the Declaration of the Rights of Man.[71] France's forced transfer of cultural wealth devastated African colonies.[72]

To draw public attention, France first exhibited looted African works in Paris at the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, parallel to the International Exposition of 1878.[73] It would later house a plurality of France's African works, apparently without much care or conservation. Picasso initially encountered African art in the "notoriously shabby galleries of the Musee de Trocadero"[74]

64   Bawa, "From Imperialism," 2.

65   Bawa, "From Imperialism," 2, 5

66   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 24.

67   Carr, "Franco–Senegalese," 5

68   Evans, "Looted Art."

69   Rhoads, "Legal Issues," 64.

70   Wilmotte and Associes, "Louvre Museum–Department of Tribal and Aboriginal Arts."

71   Monroe, "The Louvre."

72   Bawa, "From Imperialism," 3.

73   Rhoads, "Legal Isssues," 70.

74   Jones, "Cultural Appropriation."

around 1905.[75] Picasso's encounters influenced "[h] is collection of African masks, and his love of the romantic notion of the "primitive" African, were strongly influenced by his anarchist outrage at French and Belgian colonial policies in West and Central Africa."[76]

Today, the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac and the Musée de l'Armée[77] display the vast majority of African artifacts in French public museums.[78] Original ownership or provenance is important, though "[t]erritorial reconfigurations gave way to untracked commerce, which will only complicate future restitution ambitions."[79] Sarr and Savoy base their criteria for the repatriation of stolen or otherwise forcibly removed heritage on whether evidence of consent to the transaction exists.[80] Africans have difficulty proving consent because of the disorganized and widespread nature of colonial provenance records.81 Furthermore, French archives containing provenance records are not well-centralized.[82]

France stole artifacts important to African scholarly cultures, polities, communities, and families and spirited them to its public museums. Demonstrating provenance of African objects in France based on archival evidence is frustrating because France only has an archival agreement with one former African colony, Senegal.

Nevertheless, the descendants of El Hadj Omar, one of the local rulers of Senegal resisting French rule in the mid-nineteenth century, had to go to France and not Senegal to find documentary and physical evidence of cultural patrimony that the French looted from Omar[83] and Omar's son,[84] evidence which they found in tranches.[85] France distributed manuscripts and other important objects belonging to El Hadj Omar, the founder of the Toucouleur Empire, "between the Musée de l'Armée, the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac (129 pieces), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (518 volumes) and the National History Museum of the Havre."[86]

75   Rhoads, "Legal Isssues," 70.

76   Ibid, 30.

77   Sarr & Savoy, The Restitution, 49.

78   Sarr & Savoy, The Restitution, 3.

79   Cassan, "The Sarr–Savoy."

80   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 46–47, 53.

81   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 2, 11, 17, 21, 33, 62–66, 75–77.

82   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 36, 41–42.

83   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 52.

84   Naomi Rea, "France Returns to Senegal a 19th Century Saber It Looted During the Colonial Era," Art Net News, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/france-restitutes-senegal-saber-1707042).

85   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 33, 50, 51, 64, 109, 110.

86   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 52.

One could potentially find more of Omar's personal effects at the Musée de l'Armée. This is because at "the Musée de l'Armée, the last recording and inventorying of cultural heritage objects from the colonial period goes back to 1994: almost 100 years separated their initial acquisition in Africa and their eventual entrance into the museum."[87] El Hadj's family found[88] evidence that corroborated a lack of consent to the transfer of these articles from El Hadj and his family to France.

Along with showing evidence of consent, as suggested and supported by scholars, questions of repatriation from France to Africa should also consider whether the transaction would have been considered dignified to the transferor. When French colonial officials took sacred objects, such as Omar El Hadj's Islamic tomes[89] or Dahomey's courtly iron figures,[90] one should question whether there was dignity present in the transaction. An indisputable loss of dignity exists when peoples are deprived of sacred objects, whether these objects are connected to personal devotion and study or represent divinely inspired leadership. Assessing the presence of dignity in a colonial transaction is

humane and should be considered when rescinding or negating a transaction through repatriation. French colonial officials used gifts[91] or plunder from the colonized to demonstrate a material culture or a lack thereof. France would use material culture to sort peoples they encountered into groups of civilized or uncivilized. Material culture of commercial goods showed something useful to France,[92] which France could exploit as the republican curator of civilization with an eye toward cultural tourism of conquered loot as a "New Rome."[93] Because of this ambition, France wanted to preserve these objects for posterity and in perpetuity.

FRENCH CULTURAL PROPERTY LAW: A REPUBLICAN RESPONSE TO RACIAL EMPIRE

In 1887, at the height of the imperial French Third Republic, the French National Assembly passed a law that "classified cultural properties belonging to the state, the departments, and the communes This classification completed the legal protection of public cultural property granted by the civil

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87   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 49.

88   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 33, 109.

89   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 33, 51, 64, 109, 110.

90   Monroe, "The Louvre."

91   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 11, 45, 49.

92   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 9–10.

93   Prieur, "Napoleon's Appropriation."

code."[94] The 1887 law supplemented the 1791 decree that governed cultural property.[95]

The 1887 law also supplemented the 1556 Edict of Moulins. The Edict of Moulins made property taken by or transferred to the French Crown inalienable and part of the public domain.[96] After a brief suspension during the Revolution, the law of inalienability returned in the nineteenth century.[97] The 1887 law would transfer cultural heritage to the successor of the French Crown: the French Third Republic. The 1887 law would apply to property taken from African protectorates such as Cote' D' Ivoire, removed from the communes of Senegal,[98] or "gifted" from local rulers via questionable treaties.[99]

Even today, France undermines African restitution claims using bureaucracy.[100] The Minster of the Colonies controlled general African collections and the collections of the defunct museum dedicated to the colonies since 1946.[101] However, in the 1960s, France restructured its colonial artifact collections to protect them from repatriation. To ensure continuous French sovereignty over the collections, the French government transferred administration of these collections to the Ministry of Culture and the Direction des Musées de France.[102] After these African works were removed from their places of origin, the procedures of the Direction symbolically "absorbed" these objects and affirmed their inalienable place as part of French national assets of cultural heritage."[103] CRT would permit African claimants to show racial animus and condescension as a primary factor to placing African objects in bureaucratic amber.

With the establishment of the French Ministry of Culture in the 1950s, the government would further strengthen French law in the following decades to protect "gifts" or bequests of loot to French public institutions. Thus, "museum objects resulting from gifts or inheritance benefit from an explicit inalienability, following the cultural heritage code, and the material in question is controlled by the civil code"[104] The French civil code does not distinguish between private and

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94   Niec, "Legislative," 1093.

95   Niec, "Legislative," 1093.

96   Delistraty, "The Dubious Politics."

97   Cassan, "The Sarr-Savoy."

98   Bawa, "From Imperialism," 2.

99   Oba, "The Outline."

100   Herman, "Macron, Restitution."

101   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 18.

102   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 18.

103   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 18.

104   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 76.

public persons.[105] Finally, French law allows for the Minister of Culture to declare a work as cultural property and register it as such.[106] Once this process occurs, the title vests completely in the French state.[107] No one can ever gain title to registered property, not even by adverse possession.[108]

The use of adverse possession to expropriate African culture property encounters problems because of issues with provenance. African claimants lack documents showing their individual, communal, or subnational ownership. French claims to African works, whether claiming those works as military occupiers, colonial tax collectors, or gift recipients, stand with such a paucity of African proof regarding provenance. Even for loot taken by the French during the mid- twentieth century, "documents stemming from ethnographic inquiries led in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1930s were handed over to the museum archives or university institutions. For several years now, concerted efforts were made in Europe to remedy this lack of sources and resources."[109]

TREASURES, THE TRICOLOR, AND THE AFRICAN TRIAL BY FIRE: CRT'S ROLE

France's legal system is not well-equipped for cultural property claims from tribes or the developing world. When the law fails to recognize claims stemming from harm to a groups' identity, CRT promotes storytelling.[110] Because of the lack of seriousness with which Western nations treat Black oral history,[111] African claimants struggle to adequately resolve issues of provenance.

Nevertheless, oral narratives informed by storytelling may raise points of contention that challenge the adverse possession applied to looted property. Because colonizers hid vast amounts of looted African cultural property in boxes or archives, one could argue that France never intended for the public to view the African patrimony that had become a part of public domain or property. The display of these works has not been open and publicized in many instances. Moreover, thousands of objects may not have received a proper exhibition because of the neglectful way in which African collections were conserved or exhibited at the Musee du Trocadero, where thousands of African works were housed until the Musee du Quai Branly was established in 2006 for "non-Western collections."

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105   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 76.

106   Niec, "Legislative," 1094.

107   Niec, "Legislative," 1094.

108   Niec, "Legislative," 1094.

109   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 42.

110   Delgado and Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory," 475.

111   Wells, "10 Ways Historic." 13–15, 29.

This concealment and poor conservation indicate that these pieces were not a priority to curators and French art professionals. However, most of these pieces have not lost their power and importance to those seeking their return home. Repatriation is an urgent matter. Stories told by descendants of the dispossessed can attest to when the object went missing, and archivists and curators can attest to if and when museums displayed the objects in question. The difference in time between dispossession and display may not establish a public presence of an African work such as the temporal requirement to satisfy adverse possession. By changing the rule of law, France enabled attempts by French public museums to claim adverse possession in the work without satisfying the temporal requirement. CRT would condemn a manipulation of the adverse possession statute as a racialized scheme to disadvantage African claimants, such as Congolese activist Mwazulu Diyabanza and the descendants of Omar El Hadj.

Storytelling has borne fruit for restitution from France to Africa recently. It has been successful despite French insistence that Africans must defer to the mechanisms of the French legal system legitimizing African loot. In 2016, Beninese officials wrote an official letter to their French counterparts requesting the repatriation of the looted treasures of Abomey and detailing accounts of the treasures' cultural and national significance.[112] French officials responded after four months acknowledging the importance of the cultural patrimony.[113] Nevertheless, they stated that, while France has an obligation under the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, they could not retroactively apply the Convention to return the patrimony in question.[114] Most importantly, such a return would run afoul of the French law of inalienability of cultural heritage within state institutions.[115]

This defeat did not deter the Beninese. Beninese social organizations engaged youth on social media to great effect,[116] and on November 10, 2021, Beninese President Patrice Talon returned triumphantly from Paris with twenty-six treasures that French soldiers looted from the Great Benin royal capital at Abomey in 1892.[117] French military officers gifted many of these pieces to French museums not long after Abomey had been sacked,[118] and the last Abomey treasure was accessioned into a French public collection in 2003.[119] Benin has

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112   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 21.

113   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 21.

114   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 21.

115   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 21.

116   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 23.

117   France 24, "An Emotional Moment."

118   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 49.

119   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 49.

been diligently building a museum to house them and is excited to exhibit them across the country in the meantime.[120] African art and museum professionals see a future for development and jobs through cultural tourism because they see the economic engines that museums provide the United States and the European Union.[121] However, it is impossible to offset the economic devastation caused by French and other European cultural looting legitimized by colonial cultural policy for hundreds of years.

The fight to return the Abomey treasures had ramped up over the past 20 years as France passed more obstructionist cultural heritage laws. By the early 2000s, French cultural heritage law used to justify colonial loot entered its final phase as more African cultural patrimony trickled into French public institutions. The government passed the French Code of Heritage in 2004,[122] just a year after French public museums received their final piece of Abomey loot.

Gransard Desmond (2013) concluded that the Code clarified the concept of archeological finds in France.[123] Although archaeological and anthropological finds outside of France itself would

fall outside of the scope of the Code, the French government used it craftily to quash colonial restitution requests.[124] A legitimate interpretation of the Code would apply to the looted Roman artifacts from eastern France found by authorities in Belgium (Cascone, 2020), but would not apply to pre-colonial or colonial-era African artifacts taken from French colonial possessions.

Sarr and Savoy (2018) would acknowledge Christopher Steiner's (1995) proposal[125] that extra-territorial "discovery" within French colonial possessions was illegitimate and also conclude that the French Code of Heritage is inappropriate for retaining African cultural heritage. The duo asserts that the French Code of Heritage "solely protected national property and notes that the African objects in question never belonged to France and, thus, were never a part of its national heritage."[126]

CONCLUSIONS

Extant literature[127] remains remiss in its lack of awareness of anti-Black racism's impact on the restitution of African cultural property. This compelled the authors to explore the research question: in what ways might Critical Race Theory (CRT)

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120   France 24, "An Emotional Moment."

121   Hickmon, "The Long Fight."

122   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 72; Gransard–Desmond, "Can We."

123   Gransard–Desmond, "Can We."

124   Gransard–Desmond, "Can We."

125   Christopher Steiner, "The Art of Trade.

126   Cassan (2019), "The Sarr–Savoy."

127   Curtis, "Universal Museums," 117– 127; DeBlock, "The Africa Museum," 272–281.

inform policies on the restitution of African cultural property from France and other European colonial powers back to African nations? Using CRT provided the theoretical lens to discuss the proverbial "elephant in the room" of anti-Black racism in France's resistance to the repatriation of African cultural property. We explicitly and unequivocally support the definitive restitution of all ill-acquired African cultural property from France and former European colonial powers back to its region or former colony. We also believe that U. S. museums having acquired looted African cultural property and proclaimed, "Black Lives Matter," over the last two years do the same.[128] Notably, the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art has removed its Benin Bronzes and begun exploration of how to repatriate them back to their rightful owners.

In addition, the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) should develop a policy position on the restitution of African and all ill-acquired cultural property. Furthermore, as reparations, European colonial powers who have expressed concern about whether Africans can care for their culture should provide the financial resources to build museums that can house restituted cultural objects and provide the curatorial and managerial education that will support preservation of museums and collections. Without these measures of friendship and trust

between African countries, France will remain challenged by the historically inequitable relationship that exists between the colonized and their colonizers.

If France genuinely wanted to engage with the restitution issue as part of a diplomatic reset with Africa to build trust, then France would engage and sign treaties or bilateral agreements with African nations concerning heritage as recommended by Braman[129] and Sarr and Savoy.[130] Sarr and Savoy also call for direct engagement with families. They ask France to formally agree to restitute objects to the descendants of El Hadj Omar.[131] El Hadj Omar's descendants can be found in several African countries once a part of their ancestors' Toucouleur Empire.

Future research on the restitution of African cultural property should explore the ways in which anti-Black racism challenges and informs this discourse in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In closing, what France and other European colonial powers cause people of African descent to endure by not returning their cultural property does not testify to their superiority, but to their inhumanity.[132] Until France and all former European colonial powers definitively return looted cultural property, the United Nations and the rest of the

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128   Attiah, "Opinion: If U. S. Museums."

129   Braman, "International Treaties," 320.

130   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 71–81.

131   Sarr and Savoy, The Restitution, 64.

132   Baldwin, The Fire Next Time.

world should cast them as colonizers and treat
them as such.

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ONLINE TRAINING IN 3-D DOCUMENTATION AND STORYTELLING: PRESENTING THE "ONE PLACE, MANY STORIES: MADABA, JORDAN" PROJECT

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Abstract

Amidst the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, CyArk, StoryCenter, and the English Language Program at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, in partnership with the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project, provided online workshops to local stakeholders in Madaba, Jordan. The virtual workshops exposed participants to a number of hard and soft skills, including digital photography, photogrammetry, 3-D data management, project planning, storytelling, and English language communication. Following the virtual instruction, participants were able to immediately apply what they learned by documenting three sites in historic downtown Madaba and developing companion video and audio stories, the results of which were combined to produce online, community-developed tours, available in English and Arabic. The tours feature multiple voices from the community and are freely available to the public, providing virtual access to homebound travelers and others who may never have the chance to visit Madaba in person. The 3-D data used to construct the virtual tours also serves as an inventory of the documented resources, available for research and education via the open-access repository OpenHeritage3D. This project demonstrated the ability of virtual instruction to empower communities with new skills, support the conservation of cultural heritage, and provide a platform for community members to share their perspectives through interactive web-based experiences. This paper will first introduce the project and its objectives before further examining the different stages involved in its successful implementation. Work occurred in the following five stages: site and participant identification, virtual instruction via online workshops, 3-D data collection and multimedia recording, content creation and review, and, finally, release and promotion.

Keywords

Virtual Access; Remote Workshop; 3-D; Cultural Heritage; Madaba; Jordan; Photogrammetry

Author Biography

Kacey Hadick is the Director of Programs and Development at CyArk, a nonprofit organization in the San Francisco Bay Area that works globally to leverage 3-D recording technologies to preserve and amplify diverse histories that foster connection and build empathy. In his role at the organization, he works collaboratively with site managers to develop digital documentation projects that promote conservation or serve to educate the public through immersive place-based experiences. Kacey has collaborated with the U.S. Department of State and various embassies to provide training in 3-D documentation to produce digital storytelling experiences centered on cultural heritage preservation and public diplomacy. He has led workshops on 3-D documentation techniques in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Oceania and works to ensure that digital products promoting conservation can be used to facilitate decision-making by local stakeholders. Kacey holds a

master's degree in world heritage and international projects for development from the University of Turin and a bachelor's degree in anthropology and geography from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper introduces the "One Place, Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan" project, a six-month collaboration between the U.S. Department of State's Cultural Antiquities Task Force, the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project, CyArk, Story Center, the U.S. Embassy in Amman and its English Language Program, and the American University of Madaba. The project's goal aimed to foster greater appreciation and protection for the cultural heritage of Jordan by showcasing the connection between members of the community and Madaba's historic sites. The paper will provide an overview of the project's aims and objectives before outlining its methodology and results. The paper will conclude with a discussion on the lessons learned from the project and on how elements of this project could be utilized in similar initiatives in the future.

Providing Virtual Access to Cultural Heritage

The value of 3-D recording technologies to support heritage conservation activities and provide virtual access to cultural heritage has been repeatedly demonstrated over the past ten to twenty years. The 3-D digitization of cultural resources may be accomplished through techniques such as laser scanning, which employs a light detection and ranging (LiDAR) instrument to record an object or space's features, or through photogrammetry, which uses software that aligns photographs with shared features to create 3-D models. For a photogrammetry project to be successful, datasets need a minimum amount of overlap between images, so

the photographer must consider the distance from the surface of the feature and the focal length of the lens to determine the proper spacing between each photo. Images for photogrammetry should be completely in focus, properly exposed, and show no motion blur. Recent advances in photogrammetric software that support numerous image types and resolutions have made the technology highly accessible to many users.

The 3-D models generated from the sites in Jordan were collected through thousands of images collected for the purpose of photogrammetry by faculty and students from the American University of Madaba. These images were processed together using Capturing Reality software (available free for educators) to create a 3-D model that serves as the foundation for the virtual experience produced for the program. This documentation similarly serves as the basis of the web experience, while also acting as a comprehensive inventory of the current state of the documented resources.

Cultural Heritage and the COVID–19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has created a significant health crisis and caused major disruptions in the lives of people around the world. Global travel restrictions have affected over ninety percent of the world population and have caused tourism activities to become severely reduced.

Many cultural institutions and destinations responded to the pandemic and resulting restrictions by developing or deploying digital resources that

provided virtual access to these locations.

As a leader in the digitization of cultural heritage sites, CyArk was well-positioned to respond to the challenges posed by the global pandemic by drawing on the long record of digital solutions that it has successfully implemented. At the start of the pandemic, CyArk invested heavily in developing an embeddable online 3-D guided tour platform, which would provide virtual access to historic places that were difficult to access due to travel restrictions. The platform permitted the public to traverse through an accurate 3-D model of a heritage site, guided by audio and video recordings and supplemental images and text. At CyArk, we recognized that due to technological improvements and overall greater familiarity with digital content among the public, 3-D models of historic locations were more accessible than ever.

When the 3-D models are combined with narration from experts and local community members the resulting experiences can provide a powerful canvas for visualizing and learning about the history of a place. The virtual tour platform runs with Sketchfab, a free 3-D viewer platform, and is designed to be easily embedded on multiple partner websites and to be mobile-friendly. As of February 2022, CyArk has successfully implemented the guided tour platform to provide virtual access to over thirty sites around the world, including the three locations in Madaba, Jordan. As travel to Madaba by CyArk staff was impossible due to the pandemic, the "One Place, Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan" project demonstrated how both remote training and 3-D documentation by local partners

can support the creation of interactive, place-based experiences that enhance community storytelling.

Introducing Madaba and the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project

Madaba is an ancient town located southwest of Amman. Famous for the incredible concentration of Byzantine-period mosaics, including the famous Madaba Map, the oldest known map of the Holy Land, the city today is home to a vibrant community, which lives alongside this rich and storied cultural heritage. The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) is an Italian-American-Jordanian collaboration that was formed to establish the new Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum in the city of Madaba. The objectives of MRAMP and its museum are to build local capacity, promote the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, and support sustainable tourism in the city and region of Madaba. In 2020, an inventory and storage upgrade project supported by the U.S. Department of State at the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum was put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With travel to Jordan severely limited, the local tourism industry collapsed and MRAMP partners embarked on the "One Place, Many Stories" project as a way to offer training and professional development to local partners, as well as to produce virtual tours showcasing the heritage of Madaba.

METHODOLOGY

The "One Place, Many Stories" project involved five stages: (i) local participant and site selection,

(ii) virtual workshops, (iii) story recording and 3-D data collection, (iv) data processing and content creation review, and (v) release and promotion.

1. Local Participant and Site Selection

The "One Place Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan" project was made possible through the contributions of twelve local participants, including six community storytellers, three local tour guides, and three 3-D documentation team members. Due to intermittent lockdowns and travel restrictions in Jordan, all participants were recruited through email and WhatsApp messages exchanged between project partners and contacts on the ground. The community storytellers were all residents of Madaba who had a connection with the cultural heritage of the city. Similarly, the three tour guides selected to serve as the narrators of the experience were also Madaba locals who specialized in giving tours of key locations within the city that have biblical and/or classical significance. The 3-D documentation team was composed of two faculty members and one student from the Faculty of Architecture and Design at the American University of Madaba (AUM).

Due to time constraints, project partners selected three recognizable locations within Madaba to serve as the focus of the 3-D documentation effort: the Church of St. George, the Burnt Palace, and the Virgin Mary Church and Hippolytus Hall (Figure 1). The Church of St. George in historic downtown Madaba, also known as the Map Church, was constructed in the late nineteenth century on the site of a sixth-century Byzantine

church, thus protecting much of its original, very detailed mosaic floor. Preserved in the mosaic was the earliest known map of the Holy Land, most likely designed to guide Christian pilgrims as they visited sacred sites throughout the region. The Burnt Palace, so named by archaeologists because of a layer of ash discovered over parts of the sixth-century structure, is believed to be the remains of a palatial home of an elite family. The structure boasts two palace wings (east and west), separated by a stone-paved courtyard. Mosaics in the palace wings capture vivid scenes from daily life in the region. The palace is located along what was at one time a long Roman paved roadway or *cardo*, across the street from one of several contemporary Byzantine churches. The Virgin Mary Church, originally constructed in the late sixth century, contains an exquisite mosaic with inscriptions detailing the name of the church. Hippolytus Hall immediately to the west of the church was an early sixth-century Byzantine villa that houses some of the most spectacular mosaics to be found, incorporating classical motifs of Phaedra and Hippolytus, as well as those of Aphrodite and the Three Graces (the daughters of Zeus, Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia, representing joy, charm, and beauty).

Figure 1: Sites selected for 3-D documentation in Madaba.

2. Virtual Workshops

Three workshops, one for each of the local participant groups (community storytellers, tour guides, and the 3-D documentation team), were conducted remotely via Zoom. The six community storytellers were brought together in an online storytelling workshop facilitated by StoryCenter, a nonprofit based in Berkeley, California. Working with StoryCenter staff, the community storytellers developed written accounts of their personal memories of growing up in Madaba and their relationship to the city and its cultural heritage. Each community storyteller also received virtual English language coaching from Lindsay Durston, an English language fellow who was previously stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Amman.

The three tour guides selected as narrators of the project worked with CyArk staff and the U.S. Embassy English language fellow to develop a compelling narrative for each of the three selected sites. This narrative was designed to provide important historical context and explanations that would accompany the 3-D model. The tour guides were also coached on how to produce a virtual guided tour for the web. Each tour guide selected eight to fifteen points of interest to discuss at each site and also developed an introduction and conclusion to bookend the tours at each location.

For the 3-D documentation workshop, CyArk provided virtual instruction to the participants from AUM. In advance of the course, trainees were shipped a 3-D documentation kit that matches the equipment used by CyArk staff (Figure 2). This relatively inexpensive kit, which retails for less than US$1,700, allows for the rapid photogrammetric documentation of cultural heritage sites. The kit consists of several off-the-shelf items that can be quickly shipped to project partners around the world. The workshop on the 3-D documentation of cultural heritage took place over one week and exposed participants to a number of hard and soft skills, including digital photography, photogrammetry, 3-D data management, and project planning. Instruction was conducted through an online presentation presented via Zoom (Figure 3), with the final day of the workshop dedicated to reviewing a detailed action plan for each of the sites in Madaba (Figure 4).

3. Story Recording and 3-D Data Collection

Following the workshops, audio of each of the six community members and video of the tour guides explaining each of their identified points of interest was recorded via Zoom. The community storytellers and tour guides were recorded in both Arabic and English to ensure that the stories and video narration accompanying the final experience would be available in both languages. These stories were later transcribed to support closed captioning.

The 3-D documentation team from AUM was able to immediately apply what they learned during the workshop by digitally documenting the three selected sites over four days. AUM staff and students used the donated DSLR camera mounted on a tripod to photograph all visible surfaces at the three sites (Figure 5), resulting in the collection of over 5,000 images. At the end of each field day,

data would be transferred back to CyArk for review and analysis. If overlap was considered insufficient in a certain area of the site, CyArk would inform AUM staff that they needed to collect additional images before proceeding to the next site. Due to the time difference between Madaba and Oakland, all feedback could be provided to the participants before the following day's work. In addition to the photographs collected by AUM, project partners also contracted with a local drone operator to capture additional images of the roofs of each historic structure, as well as images of the surrounding environs that may not have been visible from the ground (Figure 6).

4. Data Processing and Content Creation Review

The "One Place, Many Stories" project resulted in the creation of a number of multimedia products, including a multimedia exhibit released on the Google Arts and Culture platform (Figure 7), a 3-D interactive guided tour, and a YouTube video that summarizes the project. The audio stories from the community storytellers, along with 360-degree panoramas and other imagery, were uploaded to the Google Arts and Culture platform. The mission of the Google Arts and Culture platform, which is used by cultural institutions around the world, is to preserve and bring the world's art and culture online, so its content is accessible to anyone, anywhere, via the web or a mobile application.

In order to produce the 3-D models used in the 3-D interactive guided tour, CyArk processed and aligned all of the AUM-collected photographs with the additional drone imagery to produce three high-resolution 3-D models. All images were first color corrected and then uploaded into the Capturing Reality software to run the photogrammetry alignment. The aligned images were then
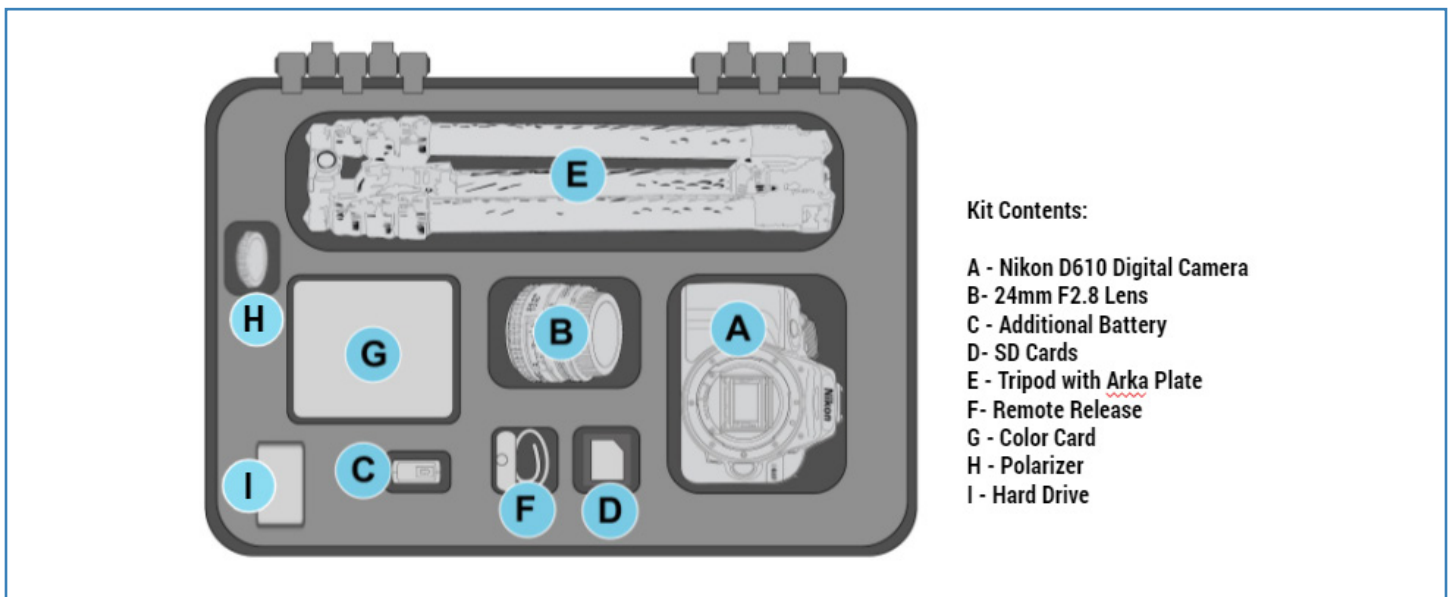

Kit Contents:

A - Nikon D610 Digital Camera
B- 24mm F2.8 Lens
C - Additional Battery
D- SD Cards
E - Tripod with Arka Plate
F- Remote Release
G - Color Card
H - Polarizer
I - Hard Drive

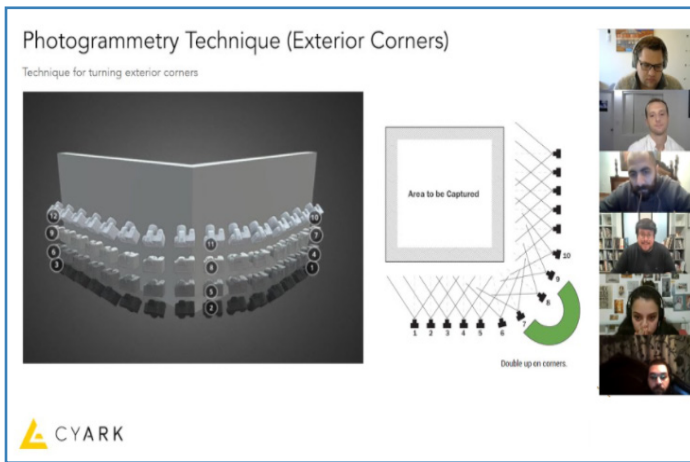*Figure 2: Photogrammetry kit contents.*

Figure 3: Screenshot from the photogrammetry workshop and photogrammetry action plan.
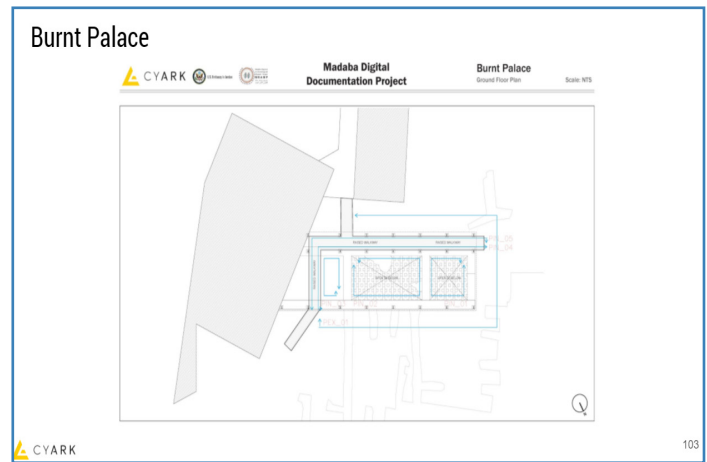

Figure 4: A photogrammetry action plan for the Burnt Palace.

processed into a high-resolution 3-D model, which was subsequently downsampled for display on the web. The models were uploaded to Sketchfab and then brought into CyArk's guided-tour platform, which paired the 3-D model with the video and audio interviews, as well as supplemental media and closed captions. The "One Place, Many Stories" project resulted in English and Arabic virtual tours of the three sites documented (Figure 8). The tours are customizable and can be easily embedded on partner websites or accessed via mobile or desktop. Virtual visitors have the option to either freely explore the models or follow a designated path narrated by the tour guides. In the mobile version of the tours, the video interviews are shared as an audio-only version due to screen size limitations.

A short video was also produced that shares the project's components and summarizes its achievements.[1] All content underwent several rounds of review by CyArk, project partners, and Arabic language reviewers to ensure accuracy and quality.

5. Release and Promotion

The "One Place, Many Stories" project was launched on May 18, 2021, and the content was highlighted by project partners via social media and several longform project announcements. The 3-D guided tours, community story exhibits, and project video components are embedded permanently on the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project website and the CyArk home page (Figure 10). The project was also promoted by the Cultural Antiquities Task Force via "Madaba Mondays," a recurring interview series published by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on YouTube

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1 CyArk, "One Place, Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan," posted on May 18, 2021, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrzDOxF63_g.
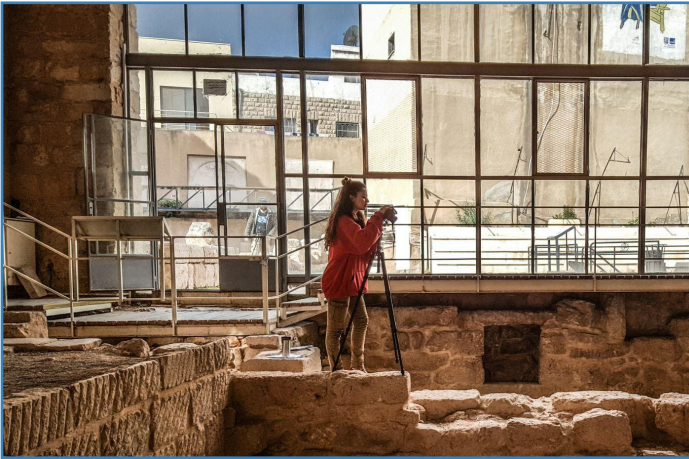
Figure 5: AUM student Jude Twal collects overlapping photographs of the Hippolytus Hall for photogrammetry.
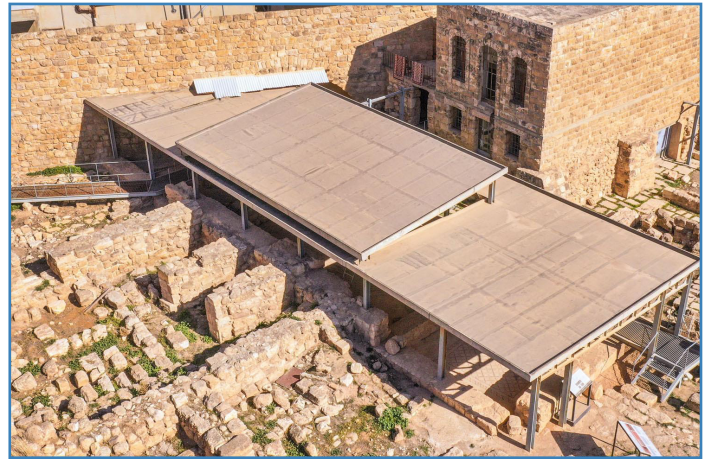
Figure 6: Aerial image of the Burnt Palace collected by a local contractor.

(Figure 11). The YouTube series features hour-long interviews with project partners and local participants to continue to raise awareness about the project and stimulate discussion about the results.

RESULTS

The global COVID-19 pandemic guided and contributed to the ultimate design of the "One Place, Many Stories" project above all other factors. Due to travel restrictions, much of the work occurred remotely, which was possible through video conferencing and email communication. Project outputs, including the Google Arts and Culture exhibit, the 3-D guided interactive tours, and the YouTube video, were designed to work on all device types and can be easily embedded on partner websites, ensuring their broad reach.

Local Impacts and Experiences

CyArk, StoryCenter, and the English Language Program at the U.S. Embassy in Amman were the main implementing partners on this project and their unique skills and expertise allowed for a meaningful exchange with a diverse cohort of local participants. The project methodology was primarily focused on recording and curating community stories and collecting and processing 3-D data to develop a virtual experience, but the project was also designed to benefit the local community through awareness building, skills development, and the completion of a 3-D inventory of cultural resources in Madaba. The community storytellers gained experience with storytelling and also received significant English language instruction through the U.S. Embassy's English language program. The tour guides selected as participants of the workshop had all experienced a significant loss of income as a result of the collapse of the tourism economy in Madaba and saw participation in this project as an opportunity to raise awareness of their work and improve business when restrictions ease and tourists begin to return to the city. Work is ongoing to determine the viability of adding a virtual tipping mechanism within the guided-tour
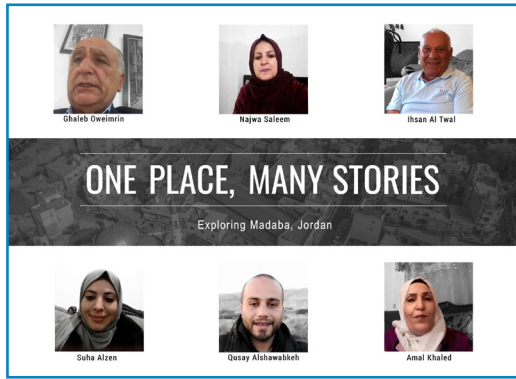
Figure 7: Slide from Google Arts and Culture exhibit featuring community stories.
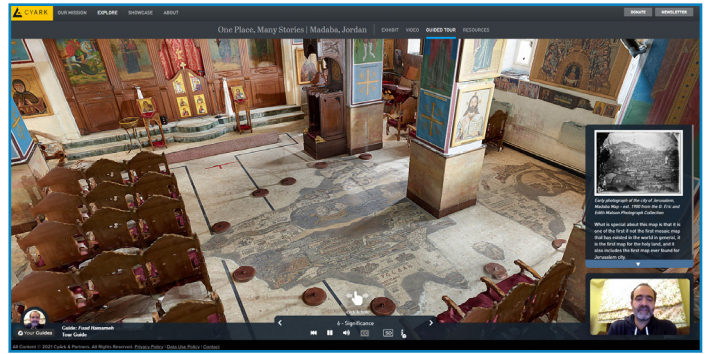
Figure 8: View of the guided tour experience of the Church of St. George, narrated by Fuad Hamarneh.
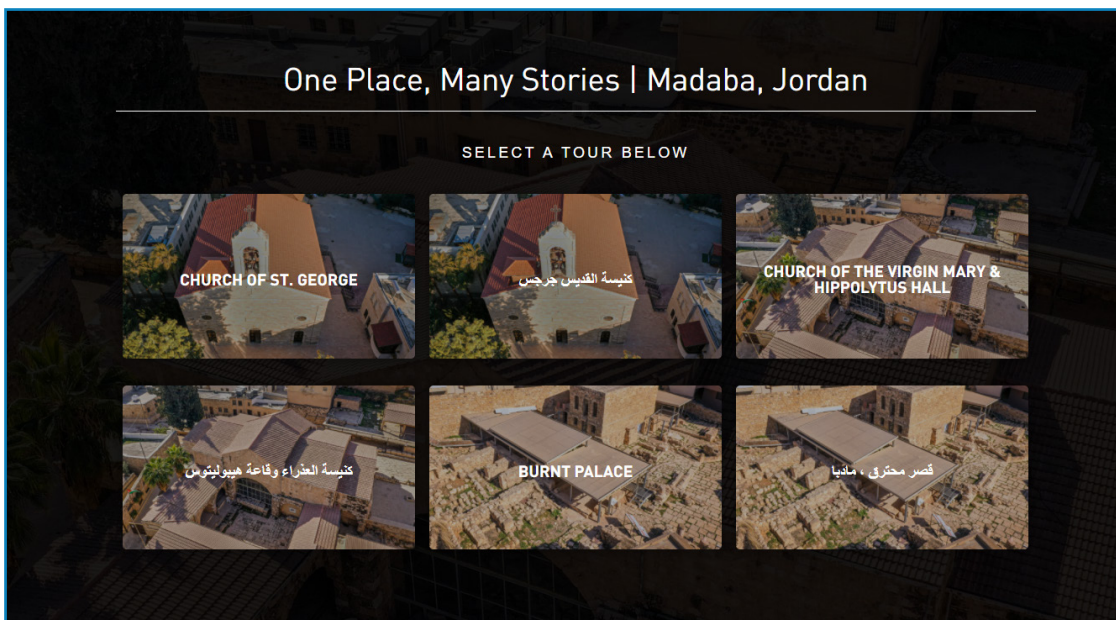
Figure 9: View of available virtual tours in English and Arabic.
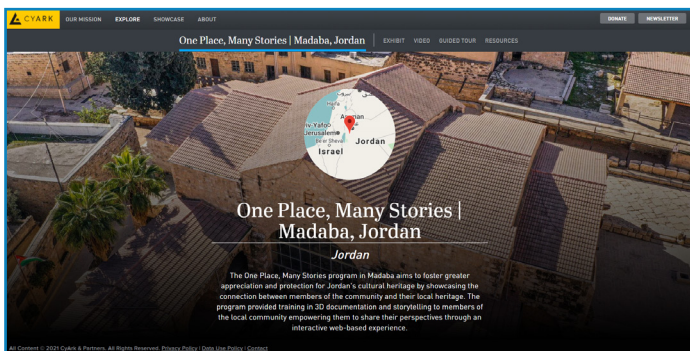
Figure 10: Project launch homepage on CyArk.org
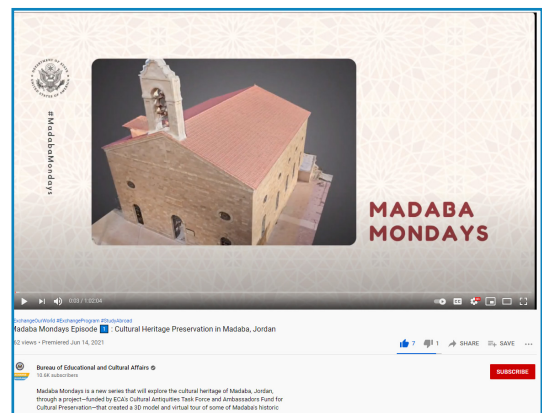
Figure 11: Screenshot from episode 1 of "Madaba Mondays," presented by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

experience or providing the contact information of tour guides to facilitate in-person tours at a later date. The 3-D documentation workshop with AUM faculty and students provided participants with new skills and methodologies related to the documentation and protection of cultural heritage. The skills covered in the workshop, including project planning, digital photography, data processing and organization, and photogrammetry,

will have broad applicability in their future architectural initiatives.

Digital Inventory

As well as serving as the basis of the place-based virtual experience of historic downtown Madaba, the 3-D data collected as part of the project also acts as a comprehensive point-in-time record of the monuments and their condition. In total, over 170 gigabytes of photogrammetric data was

Site	Total Size - Terrestrial Photogrammetry (GB)	Total Size - Aerial Photogrammetry (GB)
Church of St. George	30.54 GB	4.22 GB
Burnt Palace	49.02 GB	3.36 GB
Virgin Mary Church and Hippolytus Hall	75.98 GB	13.25 GB

Table 1. Data size summary for 3-D data collection.

Figure 12: Screenshot of the OpenHeritage3D.org entry for the Burnt Palace in Madaba.

collected from the three sites (Table 1). The raw data from each historic site was published on OpenHeritage3D.org, an open access repository for 3-D cultural heritage data. Each dataset is assigned a DOI, or digital object identifier, with metadata that describes the extents, data type, capture methodology, and collector, among other details, to facilitate the use of the data by the academic community and the public (Figure 12).

CONCLUSION

The "One Place, Many Stories: Madaba, Jordan" project advanced an innovative approach that demonstrated how remote training in storytelling and 3-D documentation could provide virtual access to historic sites, promote the protection of cultural heritage, and strengthen local communities with new skills. The resulting heritage site-based experience showcases the connection between members of the community and Madaba's histori sites and provides a platform for community members to celebrate their cultural heritage. This project was completed over six months during some of the most difficult periods of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this paper provides an overview of the project and multimedia products employed by local partners. Additional work is needed to solicit stakeholder feedback and analyze web traffic to the project's various online components to assess the long-term success of the project.

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REVIVING CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD: EMPLOYING GEO-VISUALIZATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO LEVERAGE AND AUGMENT THE CULTURAL APPEAL OF MUSEUMS

Dr. Natalia Grincheva

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating to the cultural sector, with many museums shutting their doors to onsite visitors and suspending their local and international activities and programs. The pandemic has also disrupted the long-term strategic plans of many museums, including their traveling exhibitions, objects loans, international art residencies, and commissioned work from artists abroad. As the consequences of the pandemic and country lockdowns become more apparent, museums have been forced to face some harsh questions about their plans for the future. How can they sustain their important activities in the area of international cultural relations given the abrupt decline in revenue? How can they retain or recover their global visibility, audiences, and communities while they are limited, at least in the short term, to digital projects and programming? To what extent do they turn to their digital resources, collections, exhibitions, virtual tours, and distant educational programs to compensate for their loss of income and social influence?

Due to financial instabilities caused by the economic crisis, institutional resources are scarce. Museums, especially those operating internationally, require new methodological approaches for allocating and investing their resources so that they can deliver outcomes and maximize their impact in response to local challenges and opportunities in different geographic areas. This paper addresses these issues and argues that a strategic deployment of new technologies and data-driven methodologies can help museums develop innovative approaches for measuring and predicting the soft power impact of their international activities. Specifically, geo-visualization, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled solutions can assist cultural institutions in their efforts to accurately assess the return value of their activities, make better use of their institutional resources, and pursue more effective strategies for maximizing their cultural appeal and soft power reach both during and after the pandemic. To support and illustrate these propositions, this paper offers important insights from the practice-based research project, "Deep Mapping:

Creating a Dynamic Web Application Museum Soft Power Map."[1]

The "Deep Mapping" project was developed in 2018 at the Digital Studio, a research hub hosted by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne, in collaboration with the Australian Center for the Moving Image (ACMI). ACMI is a state museum housing Australia's largest collection of moving image documents, ranging from films to digital artworks and installations. The project aimed to contribute to the growing field of digital humanities, which has recently incorporated new approaches to working with large corpora of data. These approaches are primarily based on the utilization of computational data visualization tools to not only aggregate data, but also to analyze data in order to generate new understandings of various social, cultural, and political phenomena. The project led to a pilot program of a single-museum dynamic web application entitled, "Museum Soft Power Map" (MSPM),[2] which tested a new deep mapping framework to visualize the museum's capacity to exert global influence.

The pilot application advanced the current soft power measurement framework by combining traditional approaches to evaluating public diplomacy and other soft power activities with computational methodologies. Employing geo-visualization, the digital platform revealed correlations in geographical layers of ACMI data, with implications at several stages of the program development process

in which museums convert their resources into soft power outcomes. This multilayered mapping not only identified measurable indicators of museum soft power, but, most importantly, also revealed how museum soft power activities are affected by local factors and how social-demographic contexts shape museum influence across countries. The application offered new research tools to explore the ACMI film collection's potential appeal in different countries around the world, highlighting its global audiences and international networks of institutional connections and partnerships, as well as the local impact of its recent traveling exhibitions, DreamWorks Animation and Game Masters.

The paper proceeds in the following way: first, it explains the meaning of "soft power" and how assessments of its efficacy were advanced through focused data visualization, mining, and storytelling employed in the development of the dynamic web application, MSPM. Second, it guides readers through a multilayered mapping of ACMI soft power, exposing and explaining the research potential of MSPM as an inductive exploratory tool that can not only demonstrate the results of soft power evaluations but also help pose important questions leading to new discoveries. Finally, the article discusses ways in which the pilot research project may inform the field of international museum management in the post-pandemic world, while highlighting the project's recent research advancements and its projections for the future.

1   "Deep Mapping: Creating a Dynamic Web Application Museum 'Soft Power' Map," https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/research/digital-studio/projects/deep-mapping.

2   "Museum Soft Power Map," http://victoriasoftware.com/demo/.

WHAT IS SOFT POWER AND HOW CAN IT BE MEASURED?

Coined by Joseph Nye, the term "soft power" refers to intangible forms of power, such as culture, ideology, and institutions, that allow countries to achieve their foreign policy objectives.[3] In the context of the knowledge-based global economy, soft power is a more sophisticated tool to influence international politics, in contrast to military or economic coercion. Nye argues that a country possesses soft power if it is capable of exploiting information and culture to shape and inhabit the "mind space" of another country, leveraging the persuasive powers of attraction to appeal to and promote common cultural values and principles.[4] In the past decades, the concept of soft power has gained credence among politicians, academics, and practitioners in the field of international policy making and diplomacy.[5]

Furthermore, the extent of a nation's soft power is increasingly subject to data-driven measurements, with many ranking systems produced by both national governments and private actors providing convincing evidence of this trend. The most powerful among them, in terms of global recognition, is the Soft Power 30 Index. It was developed by Portland, a strategic communications consultancy working with governments and non-governmental organizations "to shape their stories and communicate them effectively to global audiences."[6] Following Nye's view of soft power resources as assets that produce attraction, the Portland index measures the soft power of selected countries by using over seventy-five metrics across six sub-indices of data. The index aims to compare the relative strength of countries' soft power resources, "assessing the quality of a country's political institutions, the extent of their cultural appeal, the strength of their diplomatic network, the global reputation of their higher education system, the attractiveness of their economic model, and a country's digital engagement with the world."[7] The system also uses eight indicators polled from 11,000 participants representing twenty-five countries and covering each region of the globe.[8] The indicators include country favorability; perceptions of tech products, luxury goods, cuisine, and friendliness to tourists; contributions to global culture; desire to work and study; and trust in foreign policy.[9]

Despite its global recognition, the Soft Power 30 Index instigated criticism in academic literature for its considerable knowledge gaps and inconsistencies

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3   Nye, Soft Power.

4   Nye.

5   Melissen, The New Public Diplomacy.

6   Portland, "What is Soft Power? Methodology."

7   Portland.

8   Portland.

9   McClory, The Soft Power 30.

in conceptualizing and assessing soft power.[10] It is important to mention that most of the scholarship investigating the Soft Power 30 Index does not go beyond mere criticism. Addressing these gaps, the "Deep Mapping" project took a more constructive approach. With the objective to overcome fundamental problems existing in previously developed ranking systems, "Deep Mapping" project partners embarked on a creative practice research journey that resulted in the pilot web application MSPM. Unlike other soft power measurement dashboards, "Deep Mapping" project partners did not aim to build an ideal ranking tool to assess soft power. Rather they intended to establish a scholarly platform for an inductive exploration of soft power, paying particular attention to specific variables overlooked in previous research and exposing them through geo-visualization.

First, the "Deep Mapping" project employed geo-visualization as an "integrated approach."[11] This allowed scholars to meaningfully combine different methods of examining soft power, including (1) assessments of soft power capacities or resources, (2) evaluations of outputs, (3) network analysis, and (4) measurements of audiences' perceptions.[12] Interestingly, these methods have been utilized in isolation before to explore certain components of soft power, reducing the conceptualization of soft power to that of a conversion process from resources to outputs and, finally, to outcomes. The conversion model represents a two-directional process of soft power transmission from an agent of power to its subjects.[13] To generate soft power, agents need to activate their resources through specific outputs or targeted activities to reach subjects, build networks, and affect their perceptions. The dynamic web application MSPM provided an inductive platform to explore soft power as a process, enabling an investigation of data sets, both in isolation and in correlation to each other, at different stages of the soft power conversion process.[14] This "integrated approach" was enabled by using geo-visualization as a key methodological framework.

Second, the project drew on mapping powered by a Geographic Mapping System (GIS) that allowed different types of data to be integrated through a multilayered cartographic display. Multilayered mapping is used in research to visualize and evaluate interrelationships, coexistence, and processes of complex phenomena, predominantly by exposing and comparing different data across layers. In the project, GIS mapping provided an effective tool for more accurately aggregating different sets of research data across museum resources, outputs, and impacts, exposing correlations on different levels of the soft power conversion process and analysis.[15]

10   Buhmann and Ingenhoff, "The 4D Model"; Seong-Hun, "Look at Soft Power"; Lai, "Soft Power Determinants."

11   Grincheva, "Mapping Museum 'Soft Power.'"

12   Pamment, "Articulating Influence"; Chitty et al., Handbook of Soft Power.

13   Nye, Soft Power.

14   Grincheva, "Mapping Museum 'Soft Power.'"

15   Grincheva, "Mapping Museum 'Soft Power.'"

This methodology introduced a new, essential geographic variable to the study of soft power, which seemed to be neglected in the previous research. Various soft power dashboards represent soft power as an omnipresent force, equally affecting people living in different social, economic, political, and cultural milieus. The Soft Power 30 Index, for instance, does not account for countries' soft power reach and strength in different geographic areas. A country's annually calculated soft power score implies that it generates the same image and perceptions among people living in various regions around the world. For example, the index erroneously suggests that people living in South Africa, Colombia, the United States, China, or even different parts of China, such as Hong Kong, like or dislike Russia to the same degree or extent.

Third, the MSPM applied finer grained data to represent institutional players who generate power of attractiveness on the global stage. Focusing on museums as institutions of soft power, the project revealed that measuring the soft power quotient of a whole country is misleading. National or local evaluations do not consider the multifaceted and complex nature of different, and very often competing, actors within a specific national or regional community. Drawing from international relations scholarship examining the role of non-state actors in global governance,[16] the project deconstructed soft power as it has been used in recent years in relation to contemporary museums.[17] The

MSPM application was particularly helpful in demonstrating the important role museums play in wielding soft power, exposing the highly complex nature of their institutional engagements in diplomatic networks.[18]

MAPPING MUSEUM SOFT POWER: EXPOSING GLOBAL REACH AND IMPACT

This section provides more details on the MSPM application's framework, describing how its multilayered process progresses from merely mapping global online audiences to employing AI to forecast the local impact of traveling museum exhibitions.

This multilayered mapping allows for the identification of measurable sources of museum soft power and reveals how exactly these sources relate to the local factors that shape the social and economic contexts of museum influence. Each of the layers of the geo-visualization system not only maps a certain dimension of the institution's soft power, but also quantifies this power in different countries around the globe by calculating a power index. The index for each country ranges from 0 to 100 and is a weighted sum of several key normalized indicators that are based on specific collection, visitation, or revenue data taken in correlation to social demographic variables for each country or city.

16   Melissen, The New Public Diplomacy; Kelley, Agency Change.

17   Brianso, "Valorization of World Cultural Heritage"; Lord and Blankenberg, Museums, Cities and Soft Power; Grincheva, Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy.

18   Grincheva, "Mapping Museum 'Soft Power'"; Grincheva, "The Form and Content of 'Digital Spatiality.'"
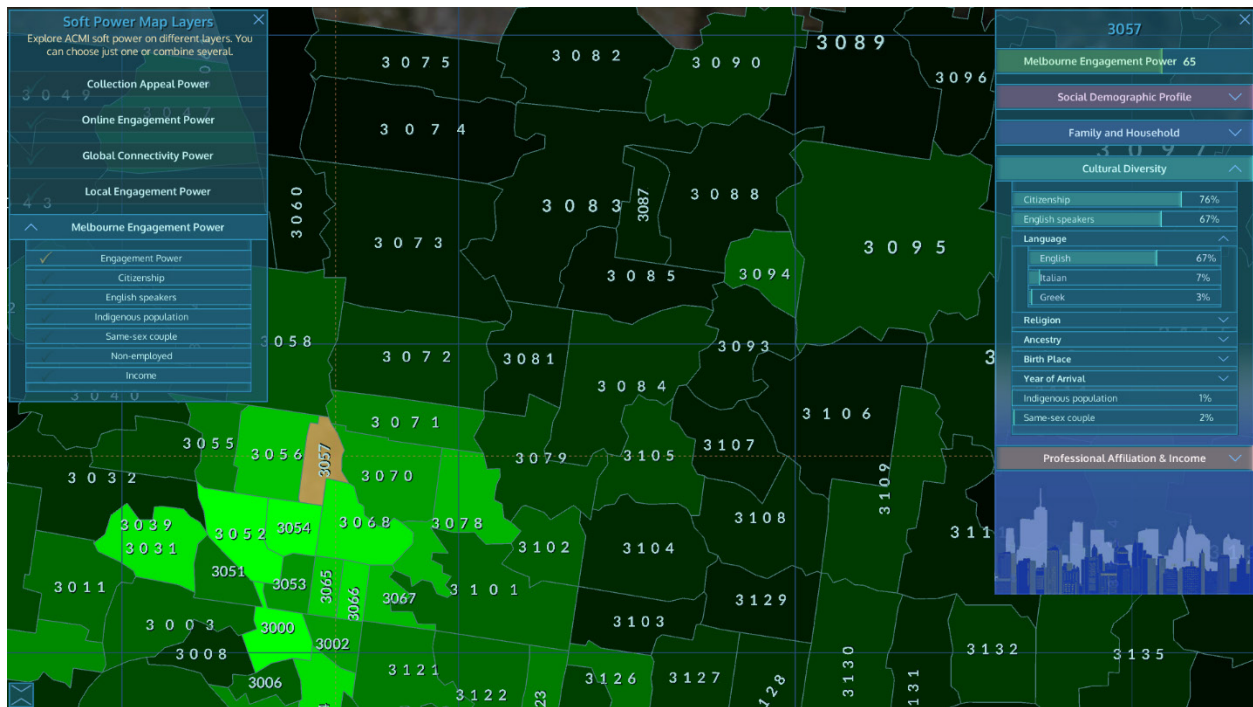
Figure 1. Melbourne Engagement Power Layer. The legend on the right details the Melbourne Engagement Power Index for the Italian Precinct.

One of the key layers of the soft power mapping system is the Melbourne Engagement Power Layer (See Figure 1). This layer allows users to explore ACMI's power to attract local audiences in Melbourne. It draws on ticket sales data provided by ACMI from 2011 through 2017. This data combines quantitative information on ticket sales with geospatial data collected from ACMI visitors who provided postcodes of their home locations. The layer then geo-visualizes social demographic and cultural analytics data of urban neighborhoods across two hundred postcodes in Melbourne. Not only does this overlaying of data help identify where the majority of ACMI audiences or ticket purchasers come from, it also illuminates who these people are, what languages they speak, or what religion they practice, among other characteristics.

To explore a profile for each of the local communities of ACMI visitors, the web application aggregates and geo-visualizes multiple sets of Australian Census data. This data includes social demographic and immigration statistics; cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity data; family and household information; professional affiliations; and income data, among other data sets. For the example seen in Figure 1, one of the most "involved" ACMI neighborhoods, with a Local Engagement Power Index score up to 65, is Little Italy or the "Italian Precinct," located along the famous Lygon Street in Melbourne and historically known as a community of Italian immigrants. The neighborhood is situated in the suburb of Carlton with a postcode of 3057. According to the 2016 census data, apart from English, Italian is the most commonly spoken language in the neighborhood, while the local population is eleven percent families with Italian

Figure 2. Collection Appeal Power Layer. The legend on the right shows and explains the Collection Appeal Power Index in France.

ancestry and four percent first-generation Italians, many of whom arrived in Melbourne between 2006-2015. According to its social demographic profile, the neighborhood is home to a wealthy younger population (up to thirty-nine years of age) with residents attaining higher numbers of educational degrees and professional affiliations.

These demographic insights partially explain why ACMI received so many Little Italy residents through its doors in the past decade. The museum is known for its dynamic programming oriented toward young audiences, while visitors pay up to thirty-five dollars for entry to events ranging from film screenings to special exhibits. Additionally, the application convincingly demonstrates how the dedicated programming implemented by ACMI

in the past several years to celebrate Italian culture and heritage proved to be quite productive in terms of increasing tickets sales from the neighborhood. For instance, in 2016, ACMI co-organized the Melbourne International Film Festival, during which the museum featured works from its vast collection of Italian feature films to celebrate Italian screen culture. The same year, ACMI convened a special event, "An Italian Voyage through Melbourne," which brought together famous writers, politicians, and cultural practitioners of Italian ancestry living in Melbourne to discuss the history of Italian migration and its cultural impacts in Australia.[19] As a result, these events brought more visitors to ACMI from the Italian Precinct leading to larger ticket sales. This example provides a good illustration of how the correlation

19   Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Annual Report 2018/2019.

Figure 3. Online Engagement Power Layer. The legend to the right compares the Online Engagement Power Indices of China and Taiwan.

between institutional information and urban context data reveals meaningful insights that can help museums explain and understand their audience development patterns.

The Collection Appeal Power Layer is visualized on the MSPM by the intensity of the color green (See Figure 2). The layer exposes the global, cultural, and linguistic diversity and scope of ACMI collections, highlighting the geographic areas from which they originate. ACMI has around two hundred thousand original items in its collection, seventy percent of which are produced outside Australia, and not only in the United States or the United Kingdom, but also in France, Germany, Japan, China, New Zealand, and many other countries around the world. Furthermore, ACMI collections are quite linguistically diverse; there are movies in around forty-nine different languages

that are spoken in more than 230 countries across the globe. The Collection Appeal Power Index for each country demonstrates the ACMI collection's potential to attract and engage national audiences. The index is calculated by combining two types of key variables. On the one hand, these variables include such basic parameters of films as the country of production, language, and cultural content that can be associated with a specific country. On the other hand, they draw on important social demographic indicators such as Melbourne immigration and tourism statistics from a given country, which suggest the potential for people from this country to be exposed to the collection. These indicators are taken in correlation with a country's total population numbers, as well as its internet penetration rate, to generate a measurable level of collection discoverability and access.

For example, the ACMI Collection Appeal Power Index in France reaches a level of 84, surpassing many other countries in Europe and around the world (See Figure 2). Such a high index could be explained by the unique history of ACMI's French film collection, which contains 1,441 fictional works and documentaries. In 2002, the Ambassador of France to Australia, Pierre Viaux, granted ACMI custodianship of the French Embassy's collection, which includes several rare holdings, such as Lumiere productions dating back to 1895. The majority of these films are in French, which significantly increases the probability that someone from France will discover the collection and access its content.

Translating soft power resources into meaningful outcomes, ACMI's programming in past decades included important activities honoring French culture and the museum's friendly relationship with the country. For example, in 2017, ACMI hosted a season of films in collaboration with Alliance Françoise entitled, "Jean-Pierre Melville: The Outsider," to engage with French immigrant communities in Melbourne and establish the institution as a primary outpost of national cultural diplomacy.

The program showcased the most essential and iconic work of the French director, such as Army of Shadows (1969), celebrating classic French film culture, while directly contributing to Australian efforts to enhance the bilateral relationship with France. On March 3, 2017, both countries signed the Joint Statement of Enhanced Strategic Partnership, encouraging them to strengthen
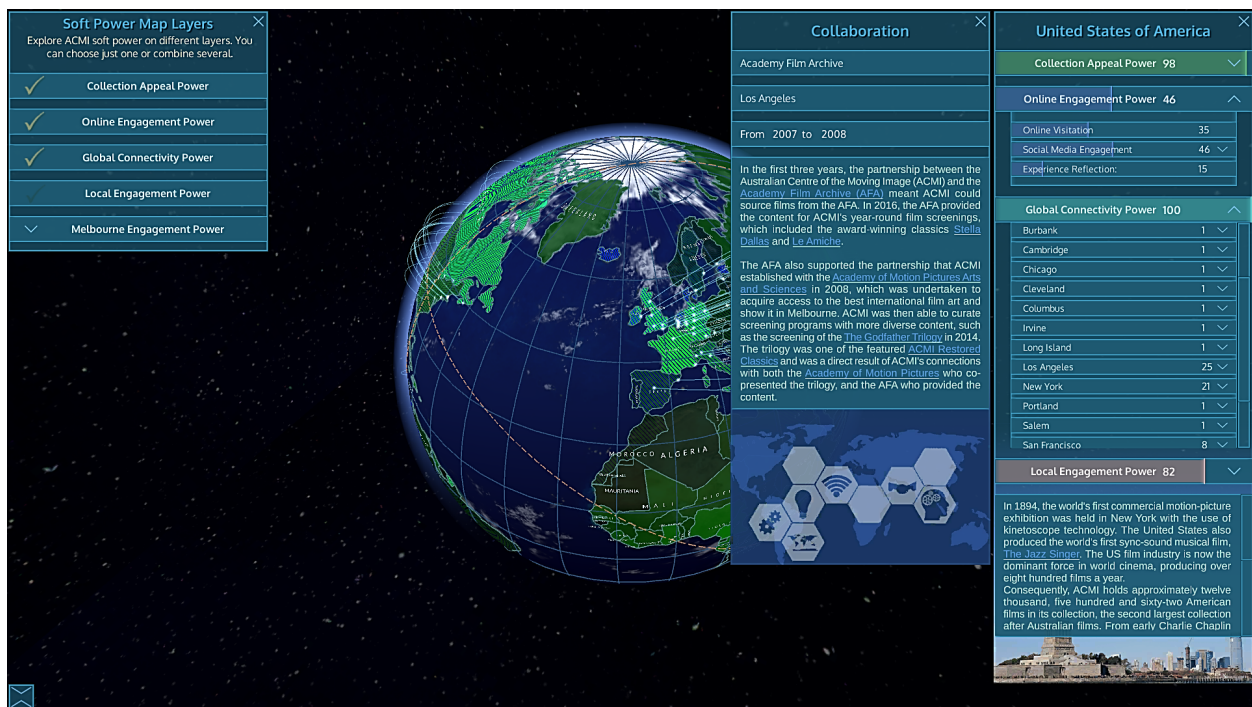

Figure 4. Global Connectivity Power Layer. The legend to the right details the Global Connectivity Power Index of the United States.
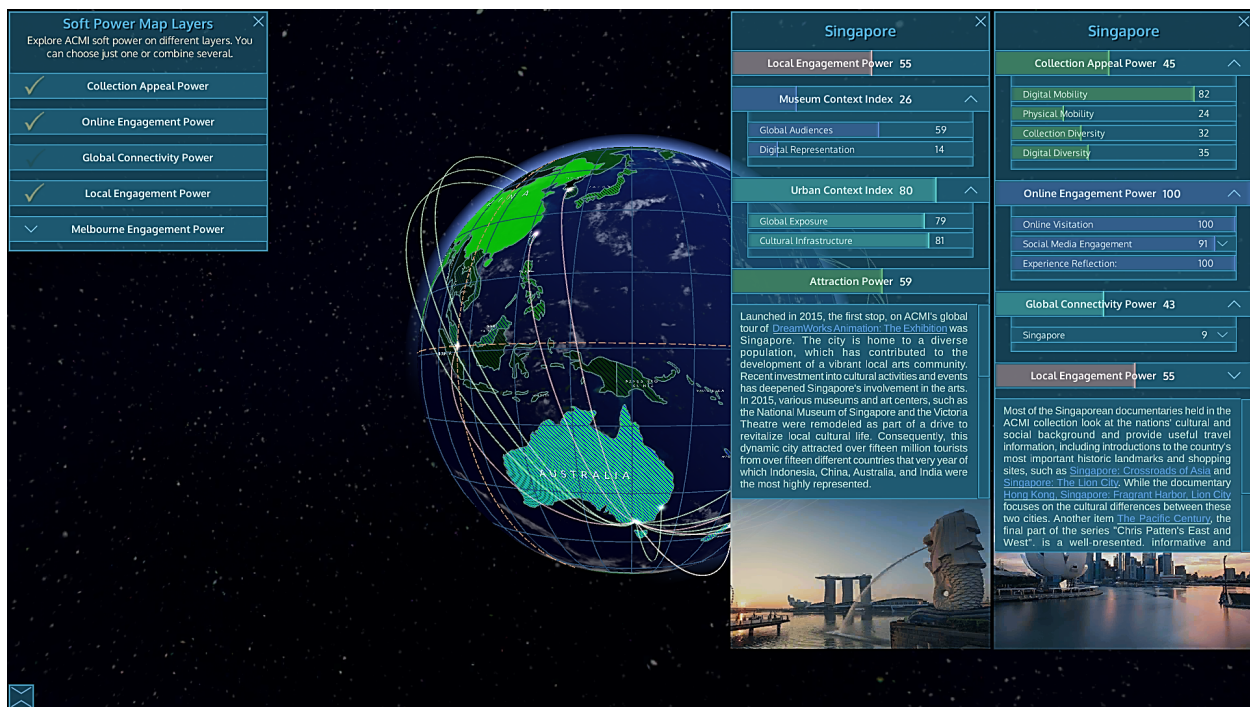
Figure 5. Local Engagement Power Layer. The legend to the right shows and explains the Local Engagement Power Index of the DreamWorks Animation exhibition in Singapore.

mutual engagements and promote two-way visits and cooperation in multiple priority areas, including education, science, technology, and culture.[20] Direct engagements initiated by non-state actors, such as ACMI's film program, are observed to produce stronger soft power impacts, generating more public trust and overcoming the controversy sometimes associated with state-funded activities.[21]

The Online Engagement Power Layer maps the geographic diversity of ACMI's global online audiences and is visualized on the map by the intensity of the color blue (See Figure 3). Such a mapping exposes the number and density of online participants, followers, and subscribers of ACMI social networking spaces in various geographic areas. The layer draws on the museum's website visitation records and social media statistics collected from Facebook and YouTube. As a premier national museum in Australia of the digital arts and cinematography, ACMI is especially active on YouTube and engages its global audiences on two channels, "ACMI" and "ACMI Collection." The latter channel is specifically devoted to disseminating global access to its rich and unique online collections. The mapping of ACMI YouTube audiences is based on an analysis of the geographic distribution statistics for each of the approximately 1,500 YouTube videos posted on the two channels. Furthermore, the Online Engagement Power Index draws on data collected from TripAdvisor, the website and global media space where international

20   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Public Diplomacy Strategy 2014–2016.

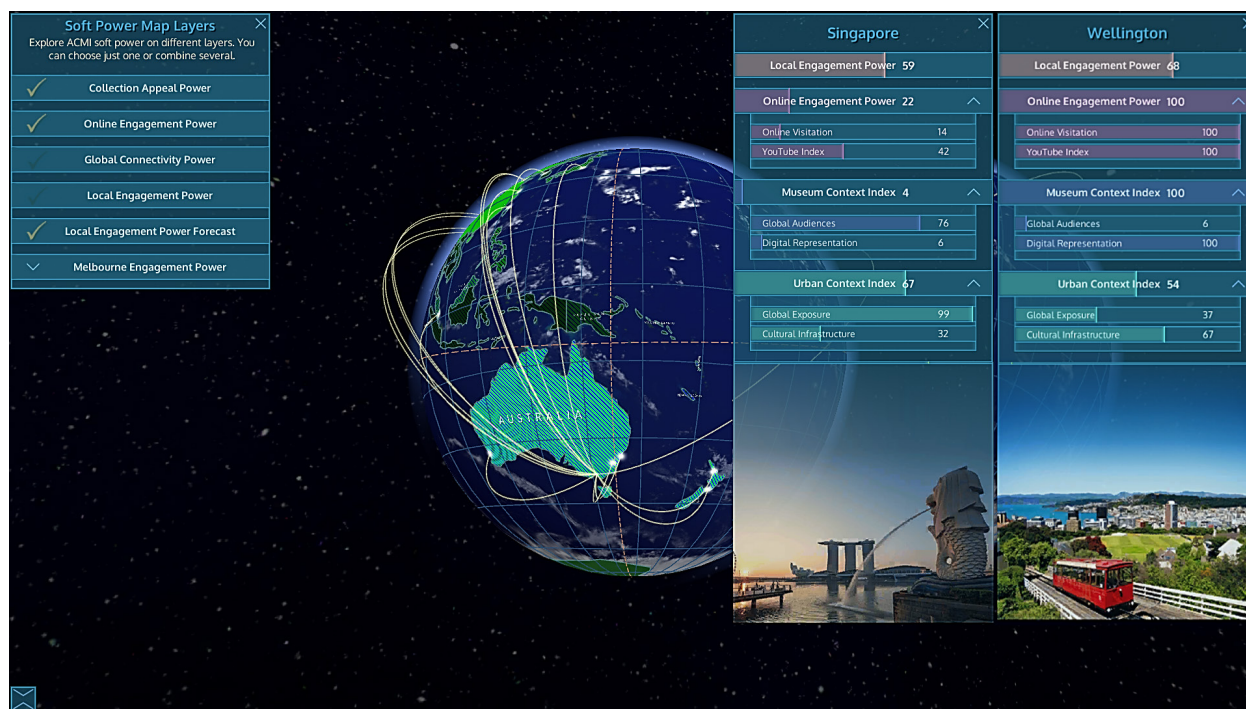21   Grincheva, Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy.

Figure 6. Local Engagement Power Forecast Layer. The legend to the right compares the Local Engagement Power Forecast indices for the Wonderland exhibition in Singapore and Wellington.

tourists rate cultural institutions according to their experiences.

Taiwan, for example, reaches a level of 33 in the Online Engagement Power Index. Even though this level is considerably low in comparison with the United Kingdom (52) or New Zealand (100), it is extremely high when compared to China (0) (See Figure 3). Taking into account that the majority of Chinese internet users do not have access to most of the global social media sites, like Facebook or YouTube, that ACMI uses to engage its local and international audiences explains why the Taiwanese seem to enjoy much stronger connectivity through online channels. While geo-visualization is not required to expose or to explain this phenomenon, the web application MSPM is useful in revealing that the potential to engage Chinese audience

online could be quite high. In this case, it suggests a hypothesis that Chinese digital users, similarly to Taiwanese users, could become a meaningful segment of ACMI's online audience if the museum communicated through China's national social media channels, like WeChat.

The Global Connectivity Power Layer maps ACMI's international network of partners, collaborators, and contacts, which facilitates the museum's cross-cultural projects, curatorial and artistic exchanges, and many other activities transcending cultural and geographic boundaries (See Figure 4). ACMI has developed an extensive network of more than 300 institutional partners in around eighty cities around the world. The layer visualizes the links between ACMI and its network while highlighting geographic areas around the globe where

the museum has dedicated constituencies, exposing the quantity, durability, and strength of institutional connections in specific geographic locations (See Figure 4).

For example, one can observe an impressive level of international cooperation between ACMI and almost eighty cultural organizations across twenty-five cities in the United States. This is not surprising considering that the Collection Appeal Power Index in the country reaches 98, demonstrating that the ACMI film archives possess a high percentage of items originating from the United States (See Figure 4). However, this layer is particularly helpful in exposing multiple opportunities that ACMI missed in developing its international engagements and building its global network. As the MSPM demonstrates, the majority of ACMI's institutional links have been established with cultural organizations and museums in Europe and North America. The Asia-Pacific region is strategically important for Australia, but still remains a comparatively untapped area for building long-term bilateral relationships.

In 2012, the Australian Government released Australia in the Asian Century: White Paper, in which it urged the country to embrace "transformation of the Asian region into the economic powerhouse of the world."[22] The white paper invited civil society and cultural organizations to create deeper connections with Asia to broaden the flow of ideas and exchange of knowledge and

capabilities.[23] Though Australia can no longer afford to see Asia as its faraway and alien backyard, mapping ACMI's collection's potential appeal in correlation to other engagement data explicitly reveals that many countries in Asia, including China and India, are still regarded as a work in progress. Despite their strategic geopolitical and economic value for Australia, and even despite extensive Chinese and Indian diaspora communities in Melbourne, ACMI still needs to invest more time and effort to build meaningful and strong links with cultural organizations and communities in the region.

The Local Engagement Power Layer maps ACMI's traveling international exhibitions at different host museums and cities around the world (See Figure 5). Since 2012, two of ACMI's blockbuster exhibitions, Game Masters and DreamWorks Animation, were hosted by sixteen museums in a dozen countries around the world. Mapping these exhibitions aims to identify crucial factors that affect the capacity of ACMI to attract international audiences in different places. The Local Engagement Power Index demonstrates how local environments in different cities shape recognition of ACMI's global brand. This mapping draws on a large amount of data describing local urban environments, including three types of key indicators: urban context, museum context, and attraction power.

Urban context data includes multiple variables that reflect the level of a city's global exposure

22   Australian Government, Australia in the Asian Century, ii.

23   Australian Government.

and cultural infrastructure, which are correlated with its total urban population and migration and tourist visitation rates. Museum context data shows quantitative characteristics of a host institution, demonstrating its international visibility and online presence. Attraction power data mostly consists of statistics on visitors to an exhibition during the hosting period (usually around twelve to sixteen weeks).

The Local Engagement Power Layer was instrumental to mapping and explaining the success of the DreamsWorks Animation exhibition in Asia. This exhibition toured across the Asia-Pacific region in 2015-2017 and was hosted by a number of museums, such as the ArtScience Museum in Singapore, the Te Papa Museum in New Zealand, the Seoul Museum of Art in South Korea, and the National Taiwan Science and Education Centre in Taiwan. Comparing the exhibition's performance in Singapore, Seoul, and Taipei revealed that this traveling exhibition was received exceptionally well in Singapore, as it generated the highest Local Engagement Power Index score (55) (See Figure 5).

Singapore was the leading host city of the DreamWorks Animation exhibition in Asia in terms of its attraction power. The city enjoys stronger global connectivity and exposure (Global Exposure Index score of 79) and benefits from larger and more diverse onsite and online audiences at the ArtScience Museum (Global Audiences Index score of 59), one of the most important

city landmarks. In comparison to South Korea and Taiwan, Singapore has much higher indicators for ACMI Collection Appeal Power (45), Online Engagement Power (100), and Global Connectivity Power (43) (See Figure 5). In terms of the Collection Appeal Power Index, the fact that Singapore recognizes English, Chinese, Tamil, and Malay as official languages significantly increases the level of access and potential interest in the diverse multicultural collections at ACMI. As a high Online Engagement Power Index suggests, the multilingual and highly multicultural residents of Singapore, as well as the country's high internet penetration rate, prime Singapore to establish multidirectional digital links with ACMI through numerous online communication activities. In terms of the Global Connectivity Power Index, ACMI indeed established numerous connections with key cultural institutions in Singapore, including local museums and international festivals.

The favorable environment in Singapore, where ACMI had already established durable organizational affiliations and developed strong brand recognition among cultural institutions, provided a foundation upon which the DreamWorks Animation exhibition could engage and attract local audiences. As co-presidents of DreamWorks Animation, Bonnie Arnold and Mireille Soria, emphasized, "ArtScience Museum in Singapore is the perfect venue to celebrate the incredible artistry of DreamWorks Animation's films and we are thrilled to have them serve as the first host on our exhibition's world tour."[24] Indeed, the DreamWorks

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24   Zhen, "Two Decades of DreamWorks."

Animation exhibition generated twice as many visitors at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore as compared to the Seoul Museum of Art and the National Taiwan Science and Education Centre. The most recently developed layer is the Local Engagement Power Forecast (See Figure 6). This layer predicts the soft power impact of the most recent ACMI blockbuster exhibition, Wonderland, which was exceptionally well received in Melbourne in 2018, inviting almost 200,000 onsite visitors,[25] by forecasting the attraction power of this traveling exhibition in potential host cities across continents. Employing algorithmic modelling that draws on the results of measuring the soft power impact of previous traveling exhibitions in different places, the mapping system calculates potential local impacts, taking multiple factors into account, including urban context and museum context variables.

The Local Engagement Power Forecast is based on the prediction model of linear regression that combines a specific set of numeric input values to predict outputs. The forecast index draws on the supervised machine learning algorithm as a subset of AI. This algorithm is closely related to computational statistics, which makes predictions employing computing. It builds a mathematical model from a set of data that contains both the inputs and forecasted outputs. They consist of training examples that are refined and upgraded each time the actual outputs are received.[26] In this way, the machine learning algorithm trains a model that

dynamically processes new available data to make more accurate predictions.

For example, among seventeen potential cities where the Wonderland exhibition might travel in the next decade, from Los Angeles to Taipei, the prediction model of linear regression forecasted Singapore and Wellington, New Zealand, to be among the cities in the Asia-Pacific where the exhibition would be best received, with Local Engagement Power Forecast scores reaching 59 and 68, respectively (See Figure 6). This forecast is based on the first iteration of input data collected from the DreamWorks Animation exhibition, which proved to be very successful in both cities. The exhibition started its global tour in April 2019 at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore, where it ran until September before appearing at the Te Papa Museum in Wellington from December 2019 to March 2020. Wonderland's actual visitation numbers, recently collected from the ArtScience and Te Papa museums, proved the forecast calculations to be quite accurate.

As the forecast model predicted, both museums generated robust visitation, demonstrating the success of the exhibition in both New Zealand and Singapore. The second iteration of input information provided valuable data to feed the local attraction forecast machine learning algorithm, which will obtain an even higher degree of precision once Wonderland and other future ACMI exhibitions travel to other cities across the globe and more

25   Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Annual Report 2018/2019.

26   Russell and Norvig, Artificial Intelligence.

attraction power input data is collected. In the case of Wellington and Singapore, the first results of the forecast algorithm, it was convincingly proved that urban context and museum context data, as well as online engagement factors, are important and useful variables that affect traveling exhibitions' visitation and attraction power, making the forecast algorithmic modeling possible. This model of soft power prediction not only significantly enhances the ability to navigate international exchange opportunities and manage contemporary traveling museum exhibitions, but also offers opportunities through digital humanities research to reveal important patterns of cultural consumption across countries, exposing new insights about different societies and cultures.

IN CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS AND IMPLICATIONS

The pilot project presented in the previous section attempted to offer innovative digital tools for museums to use to measure and map their local and global contributions to the creative economy and urban development. By focusing on museums, key players in creative urban economies and modern soft power initiatives, the project developed innovative digital solutions to measure soft power. Historically, museums have been important vehicles of soft power, building cultural bridges across borders whether by developing cultural tourism or by organizing traveling exhibitions and

international programming overseas.[27] In recent decades, museums have advanced their place in urban creative economies. They have proven to work well to accelerate tourism, generate economic activity in urban neighborhoods, and attract international investments.[28] Museums have transformed into key centers of soft power because they elevate the global visibility of cities, shaping and even defining their urban identities. They do this by hosting international cultural festivals and other mega-events, facilitating urban regeneration, and developing diplomatic connections with cultural institutions abroad.[29]

Despite the growing importance of museums in local economies and international affairs, there remains a continuing need in the sector to identify measurable indicators that can demonstrate museums' impacts at home and abroad. The MSPM directly addressed several major challenges that contemporary museums and cultural or heritage institutions face in the age of growing datafication and digitalization. Not only did it provide a new platform for museums to systematize, organize, analyze, and use their data to develop more sustainable and strategic institutional strategies, it also offered a new tool for evaluating and demonstrating impact to help museum leaders convince stakeholders to increase funding and development opportunities. In the last decade, government policies in various countries reinforced the instrumental value of culture as a tool for local community

27   Krenn, Fall-out Shelters; Sylvester, Art/Museums; Grincheva, Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy.

28   Pearce, Museum Economics; Guasch and Zulaika, Learning from the Bilbao.

29   Lord and Blakenberg, Museums, Cities and Soft Power.

development. They urged cultural organizations and museums to look for comprehensive and reliable means to prove that they are worthy of public support.[30] In a time of reduced public funding and increased competition for existing resources, museums must offer convincing arguments in support of their case.[31]

The importance and urgency of these tasks has been further amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted priorities and focus from international collaborations, while challenging cross-cultural communication in the global context. The cultural sector and particularly artistic exchanges have been heavily affected by the new reality of travel restrictions and other protective measures. A global survey of 737 respondents from forty-five countries across five continents revealed that sixty-two percent of all international events in the performing arts sector in 2020 were cancelled, while thirty-eight percent were postponed.[32]

UNESCO reported that due to COVID-19, ninety-five percent of all museums worldwide, or about a hundred thousand museums, were closed in May 2020 and did not reopen throughout the year.[33] These conditions disrupted international programs, cancelled traveling shows and exhibitions, postponed international art residencies, and eventually diminished funding for commissioned work from artists abroad, which made cultural diplomacy activities very difficult, if not impossible, to implement. This interrupted exchange of people, arts, and cultures across borders has been especially devastating for cultural diplomacy, which has always depended on the two-way flow of information providing opportunities for people-to-people connections and engagements.[34] With the mobility of the world's population decreased by seventy-three percent,[35] museums have been forced to communicate with their global and local audiences online.

As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted museums and galleries worldwide to innovate as never before. Despite mass closures and a tremendous loss of revenue, many museums have increased their digital services, reaching in certain cases up to 150 percent of their regular online attendance.[36] For example, social media livestreams of educational events, curator's lectures, and special events augmented the scope and reach of museums during the pandemic, offering new channels for museum diplomacy. New digital platforms empowered museum collections to travel wider and reach larger international audiences, establishing new virtual avenues for international outreach and

30   Lee and Gilmore, "Mapping Cultural Assets."

31   Scott, "Museums: Impact and Value."

32   CINARS, International Survey.

33   UNESCO, Museums Around the World.

34   Melissen, The New Public Diplomacy; Parkinson, The Philosophy of International Relations.

35   Nouvellet et al., "COVID-19 Transmission."

36   Network of European Museum Organizations, COVID-19 Situation on Museums.

diplomacy. All these developments require more nuanced and advanced evaluation tools that can assess the digital soft power of museums, which increasingly operate as hybrid institutions that exist across the physical and virtual worlds.

In this regard, the MSPM pilot project provided a foundational basis for the development of "GLAM and Digital Soft Power in the Post-pandemic World,"[37] a new collaboration with the Digital Diplomacy Research Group[38] at the University of Oxford that was funded in October 2021 by the Major Research Fund at Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore. This project draws on previously established research partnerships with major museums in Singapore, London, and Melbourne to develop a robust international platform for the productive exchange of knowledge, data, resources, and expertise. The network of academics and professionals explores and discusses current digital practices, opportunities, and challenges museums face in their navigation of the highly saturated global media environment and the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. In January 2022, for instance, the research webinar GLAM Collections and Exhibitions in Immersive Environments[39] brought together 250 registered participants to explore new opportunities provided by mixed realities for wider global museum outreach and collections sharing, focusing on the capabilities

and limitations of virtual reality, augmented reality, and livestreaming in shaping new international communication practices in museums. The project also employs critical digital practice to experiment with data collected from participating museums to build Data to Power Prototype,[40] a new mapping solution for assessing and predicting the soft power impact of museums, including harnessing the power of AI to identify and predict patterns of digital cultural engagement. The first datathon in 2022, Mapping Potential Appeal of Heritage Collections: From API to Geo-visualization,[41] presented the Collection Reach Power Layer of the experimental prototype, designed by aggregating collections' API data from the V&A Museum and the National Museum of Australia. The datathon opened a discussion space with around 200 registered museum professionals from different parts of the world to explore the potentials of mapping and data visualization technologies to translate museum collections metadata into meaningful narratives and insights. This research further develops a dynamic geo-visualization model for assessing the digital soft power of cultural institutions. It will offer a new data analysis tool for universal use in museums to demonstrate their impact in different geolocations and to provide an inductive research platform for strategic development and growth.

37   "GLAM and Digital Soft Power in the Post–pandemic World" Project, https://www.datatopower.net/.

38   Oxford Department of International Development, "Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group," https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/content/oxford-digital-diplomacy-research-group/.

39   "Research Webinar: GLAM Collections and Exhibitions in Immersive Environments," https://www.datatopower.net/webinar1/.

40   "Data to Power: New Mapping Prototype," https://www.datatopower.net/prototype/.

41   "Research Datathon: Mapping Potential Appeal of Heritage Collections: From API to Geo–visualization," https://www.datatopower.net/datathon1/.

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