

2011 WAC Inter-Congress

“Indigenous People and Museums: Unraveling the Tensions”

Indianapolis (IN), June 22-25, 2011.

Session Title:

Museum-Community Partnerships in the Age of Mass Reproduction

Organizer:

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Abstract:

The collaborative model has increasingly been embraced by museums in the last few decades, in particular when working with the materials of Indigenous peoples. Specific attitudes, processes and values tend to be associated with the idea of “collaboration” – respect, dialogue, openness, reciprocity, ethics... Yet with a variety of institutions and groups engaging each other for a variety of reasons and projects, there is no one model for establishing these relationships and developing those partnerships. On the ground, these can entail as many hard-fought negotiations as consensuses, as much confusion as mutual understanding, as many conflicts of interest as reciprocity.

This session examines a specific dimension of this issue by focusing on what museum-community partnerships look like in the age of mass reproduction. What are the various kinds of relationships – conciliatory or not – that have been and can be established between museums and community members around the reproduction of museum objects? From photography, digital images and drawings, to replicas, casts, and giftware - what does collaborative museology teach us about what is at stake in the reproduction of museum objects? How are community members (artists, descendants of artists, elders, youth, political

representatives, cultural leaders...) involved – or not – in decisions regarding reproductions of their objects in museums? How are the types of objects being reproduced (contemporary art, sacred objects, archeological artifacts, technical items...) taken into consideration in these decisions? How do the purposes for reproduction (publication, digital databases, exhibition, education, marketing, sale in gift shops...) affect the kinds of discussions taking place? How are different and potentially divergent conceptions of property rights (individual, collective, relational...) being called upon or ignored in the drafting of reproduction agreements?

Participants of the 2011 WAC Intercongress interested in contributing papers to this session are invited to submit abstracts of under 250 words by March 11, 2011 by email to Solen Roth: roths@interchange.ubc.ca

Potential themes to be addressed *in relationship to museum-community partnerships* include but are not limited to:

- Cultural sensitivity and limitations placed on the reproduction of museum objects
- Profit-sharing agreements between museums and their community partners
- Interactions of museum and Indigenous protocols in object reproduction processes
- Effects of museum object commoditization
- Reproductions as an instrument of publicity and promotion
- Reproductions as teaching tools
- Authorized and non-authorized museum object reproductions