

GSI Week 2023

International Symposium

Indigenous People and Museums

~ Crafting voices of Indigenous peoples ~

Sunday, 3 December 2023

Hokkaido University Conference Hall & Zoom

· ❖ · — · ❖ · — · ❖ · **PROGRAM** · ❖ · — · ❖ · — · ❖ ·

- 09:40 Doors Open
- 10:00-10:05 Opening Remarks | **Prof Hirofumi Kato**, Director of GSI, Hokkaido University
- 10:05-10:10 Message from **the Australian Embassy Tokyo**
- 10:10-10:15 Greetings | **Dr Kanako Uzawa**, Ainu representative, Hokkaido University & the University of Oslo
- 10:15-10:45 yukar (Ainu oral literature) & Response | **Ms Haruna Yazaki** & members of **the Australian delegation**
- 10:45-11:05 Presentation 1 'The National Ainu Museum's approach to the Ainu Language'
Ms Haruna Yazaki, the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)
- 11:05-11:25 Presentation 2 'My Grandfather, My Father, and I – A Role of Each of Us'
Mr Kenyu Yamamaru (Keni), the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)
- 11:25-11:45 Presentation 3 'Dancing with museum objects – Exploring Ainu Indigeneity in a museum space through Ainu collections-'
Dr Kanako Uzawa, Hokkaido University & the University of Oslo
- 11:45-12:15 Discussion | **Ms Haruna Yazaki**, **Mr Kenyu Yamamaru (Keni)**, & **Dr Kanako Uzawa**
- 12:15-13:45 ❖ Lunch (90 mins) ❖
- 13:45-14:05 Presentation 4 'Museums as interfaces of authority and knowledge – an Australian experience'
Dr Michael Pickering, Hokkaido University & Australian National University
- 14:05-14:25 Presentation 5 'Mapping the collection store and making it a place for people'
Dr Vanessa Russ, the University of Melbourne
- 14:25-14:45 Presentation 6 'Museums and ancestral futures – new modes of cultural work'
Dr Jilda Andrews, Australian National University
- 14:45-15:15 ❖ Tea break (30 mins) ❖
- 15:15-16:00 Conversation 'The changing Indigenous art centre model: reclaiming processes of cultural expression outside of western needs'
Ms Mayatili Marika, the University of Melbourne & **Mr Kade McDonald**, Agency, moderated by Dr Jilda Andrews, Australian National University
- 16:00-17:30 Panel Discussion and Q & A session | All Contributors
- 17:30-17:45 Closing Remarks | **Prof Hirofumi Kato**, Hokkaido University
- 17:45-18:00 Closing Ceremony

※Simultaneous interpretation
in both English and Japanese
is available.



北海道大学
HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Ms Haruna Yazaki



Haruna was born in 1987 in Tomakomai, Hokkaido. She is a Research and Curatorial Fellow (Curator) at Collection Management Division, Research & Curatorial Department of the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture). Haruna's areas of specialization are the Oral Literature of the Ainu People and the Ainu Language. In 2019, she completed course credits for the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University before withdrawal. She worked at the former Ainu Museum (Porotokotan) since 2011, which was located on the bank of Lake Poroto in Shiraoi. In 2018 she joined the Foundation for Ainu Culture to work for the Preparatory Office for the Establishment of the National Museum. She started her current position in 2020 together with the opening of the Museum.

Title 'The National Ainu Museum's approach to the Ainu Language'

Abstract Ainu is the language of the Ainu people and has been spoken in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago and surrounding areas. However, since the Meiji era (1868-1912), the Ainu language has been gradually cut off from daily life due to Japanese assimilation policies. In 2009, UNESCO designated it as an "Endangered Language" and recognized it as "Critically Endangered".

Under these circumstances, as a center for the revival and development of Ainu culture, Upopoy: National Ainu Museum and Park has positioned the Ainu language as its first language. Ainu appears first on all information displays, including the names of facilities and rooms at the National Museum and the National Park. The Museum also uses Ainu for major information panels in the Permanent Exhibition Room.

Various issues need to be considered such as dialects and notation methods, not to mention how to express new words such as the names of facilities and some words in guide signs. To meet these challenges, various groups of people participate in the consideration and decision-making process: the Ainu-language expert staff in Upopoy, external Ainu language researchers, Ainu language learners and practitioners, including many Ainu themselves. In this presentation, I will discuss some of these efforts, especially those related to information displays and exhibition texts.

Mr Kenyu Yamamaru (Keni)



Management Office of the National Ainu Museum and Park, The Foundation for Ainu Culture

Keni was born in Shiraoi and is now 29 years old. When Keni was 20 years old, he participated in a three-year training program for Ainu to become a traditional cultural inheritor where he studied Ainu culture comprehensively. Through this program, Keni became interested in the Ainu language and began to deepen the knowledge, and later became an instructor for STV Ainu language radio program and for introductory Ainu language courses for town residents. Currently, Keni works at Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park, develops and implements Ainu language programs for visitors. Aside from the language, Keni has been developing a career as an illustrator. His designs are currently used for vending machines within Upopoy.

Title 'My Grandfather, My Father, and I — A Role of Each of Us'

Abstract In this presentation, I will report on the importance of museums as a cultural institution to the local Ainu community, referring to my own family history as an example, and discuss how we can connect to the next generation in the future. Three generations of my family: me, my father and my grandfather, have all worked at the Ainu Museum which was in our community. It sounds like, on the surface, that we had inherited a great deal of Ainu culture within the family, but that was not the case. My grandfather, who was a member of the town council, came to work at the Ainu Museum to contribute to the tourism sector, while my father came to work at the museum to support his family. Though reasons may vary, the existence of the museum allowed my grandfather, father, and I some time and occasion to face our identity and Ainu culture. Reflecting on my own story, I will share my thoughts on what role the museum -- now known as Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park-- can play for the local Ainu community and for the coming generations to face their culture and roots.

Dr Kanako Uzawa



Assistant Professor, GSI, Hokkaido University
Associated Researcher, The Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo

Dr. Kanako Uzawa is an Ainu scholar, artist, and rights advocate. She is the founder of AinuToday, a global online platform that delivers living Ainu culture and people. She is an Assistant Professor for the Global Station for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity at Hokkaido University (GSI) in Japan. Her most recent work engages with Ainu art exhibitions, as a guest curator in collaboration with the University of Michigan Museum of Art in the United States. In 2023, Italian artist Laura Liverani and Dr. Uzawa have produced the video art called “Ainupuri: Liberating histories from European Ainu museum collections”, where she is also affiliated as an associated researcher at the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo in Norway. She is also an editorial board member of *AlterNative: an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples in New Zealand, Aotearoa*.

During her youth, she encountered negative representations and discrimination towards the Ainu and discovered a stark contrast between the general public view and her people. She began to wonder what does it mean to be Ainu in the twenty-first century? This gave her motivation to explore a way to express the contemporary livelihood of the Ainu. She obtained her master in Indigenous Studies in 2008 and doctorate degree in Community Planning and Cultural Understanding from the UiT Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø in 2020. She’s held an internship in the Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (PRO 169) at the International Labour Organisation, Geneva Switzerland. She contributes to collaborative research and Ainu performing art on the multifaceted articulations of Indigenous knowledge through museums and theaters as artist.

Title ‘Dancing with museum objects – Exploring Ainu Indigeneity in a museum space through Ainu collections-’

Abstract This presentation will explore a new way of understanding the term Ainu Indigeneity by opening up space for further discussion on how we can find our narratives and new expressions in museum space with focus on the Ainu collection. The presentation will make a reference to the most recent projects: 1) Ainu art exhibition project in collaboration with the University of Michigan Museum of Art in the United States and 2) The video art project on the Ainu collection in the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo in Norway. By this, Uzawa will share a new way of giving our own narratives to the historical Ainu collections in museums, and furthermore discussing how we can transfer Ainu Indigeneity to the next generation.

Dr Michael Pickering



Associate Professor, GSI, Hokkaido University, Japan
Honorary Associate Professor, Department of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University
Partner, Centre for Australian Studies, Cologne University, Germany

Since mid-2022, Dr Michael Pickering has been an independent researcher with a focus on First Nations Heritage. He has worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations, State and Territory heritage agencies, and museums across Australia over 45 years. Dr Pickering moved to the National Museum of Australia as the Director of the Repatriation Program in 2001, later holding different positions. From 2018 to 2022 he was the Senior Repatriation Advisor at the National Museum of Australia.

He has a wide range of research interests and has published articles on topics ranging from material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, museum exhibitions, museum ethics, workplace health and safety, and repatriation.

Title ‘Museums as interfaces of authority and knowledge – an Australian experience’

Abstract Every museum, art gallery, or university has its own internal culture. They have systems of governance and project implementation that are guided by that internal culture. Like all cultures, they reproduce themselves, generally promulgating a conservative approach to certain issues over time.

One outcome of this is that the concerns and contributions of Indigenous people, both as staff and as external interest groups, are often explicitly under-represented. Indigenous input is managed, mediated, and moderated, often to the point of sterilization of content. Indigenous driven change is rejected, while trends to conservative 'traditional' and inoffensive representations of culture prevail.

This paper will look at some of the issues that have arisen in the author's experience as a curator, researcher, and corporate manager.

Dr Vanessa Russ



Director of Indigenous Collections of the University of Melbourne

Dr Vanessa Russ is the Director of Indigenous Collection, Museums & Collections. A former Research Fellow in Indigenous Studies at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health; and Associate Director of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia.

Dedicated to providing visionary leadership within the arts and culture sector, with a particular interest in the visual arts. Focusing on cross-disciplinary practices that enhance the rematriation of Aboriginal Australian cultural knowledge to people from communities of origin for future generations; whilst celebrating the benefits of understanding the world's oldest living cultures for all Australians.

Russ is a Ngarinyin-Gija women from the Kimberley Region, Western Australia. Her recent publication *A History of Aboriginal Art in the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2021)* accords with her wider interest in reframing art and history from an Aboriginal Australian worldview. She is also a 2014 Churchill Fellow, inaugural Asialink Leaders Indigenous Fellow (Asialink) and Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Oversight Committee, University of Melbourne.

Title 'Mapping the collection store and making it a place for people'

Abstract Museums are designed with exhibition spaces and cafes, and collection stores that no one gets to visit. Any museum with Aboriginal cultural material in it today also includes visits to the collection store. It's a privilege to visit with an Elder who might as they pass sing to the objects they see having remembered the song of their creator or the country from which that object comes from. On their departure, it can feel like the object was just as happy to see them too. As the University of Melbourne works towards a new home for its Indigenous Collections, the strategy for the Place for Indigenous Art and Culture started with the principle that objects have feelings too. This paper unpacks this work and presents on the new museum model that is best for Australian Aboriginal people in a time of deep divide.

Dr Jilda Andrews



Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Australian National University Yuwaalaraay/Euahlayi Nation

Dr Jilda Andrews is a First Nations Yuwaalaraay woman, cultural practitioner and researcher based in Canberra, Australia. Jilda draws from her heritage to investigate the connectedness of land, story and culture to objects in museum collections. Her focus on material culture and their associated stories continue to push the definition of custodianship, from one which is focused on the preservation of objects, to one which strives to maintain connections between objects and the systems which produce them.

Title 'Museums and ancestral futures – new modes of cultural work-'

Abstract This presentation will demonstrate a new method of museum collections research, developed in line with an Indigenous land management tool known as 'cool burning'. Here I will explore ways that regenerative cultural land management practices can be extended and applied to the tangled and overgrown environment of museum archives and collections. By considering collections research as 'regenerative', it is possible to productively reframe cultural material as a contemporary tool and active in producing new knowledges. Such an approach gives historical collections an important role in the making of strong, continuing cultural futures.

Ms Mayatili Marika



The University of Melbourne

Mayatili Marika (she/her) is a Rirratjingu Traditional Owner and Yolŋu woman based in north-east Arnhem Land.

Mayatili currently works in Indigenous strategy in the Chancellery at the University of Melbourne. She has worked in community, grassroots and government entities across health, justice and education. Mayatili believes in creating a tangible education pipeline for Yolŋu to ensure that culture, identity and land rights endure for future generations to come.

Mayatili has been the Production Manager at Garma for over a decade. She oversees all of the event logistics for this large scale First Nations festival and works across the diverse stakeholders to ensure that cultural protocols are upheld.

Mayatili belongs to one of the great artistic and political dynasties of Australia: her father is Wandjuk Marika OBE and her grandfather is Mawalan Marika. Her father was instrumental in the international recognition of Aboriginal art, traveling around the world to promote Indigenous culture. As chair of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council he played an important role in advocating for the founding of the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre. The Marika family is strongly represented in the Madayin exhibition, as well as museum collections around the world.

Mr Kade McDonald



CEO, Agency

Kade McDonald is the CEO and founder of Agency - a not-for-profit organisation which he established in response to an identified need, with the full support and permission of Indigenous cultural leaders and members of the Agency Board.

Prior to starting Agency, Kade was the Executive Director of Durumu Arts Aboriginal Corporation for three years and the Coordinator for Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Arts and Cultural Centre for six years. He has been engaged as a cultural consultant for several years implementing cultural maintenance and repatriation projects in collaboration with Community leaders, having worked across Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and the Tiwi Islands.

Kade has been appointed to the Visual Arts Grants selection committee for the Ministry for the Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria and Arts NT Visual Arts Board for his knowledge on Indigenous Contemporary Arts, and is currently an appointed Expert Examiner of Indigenous Cultural Objects for the Moveable cultural Heritage Act on behalf of the Federal Government and the Department of Communications and the Arts. He holds a Diploma of Business Governance through the Institute of Company Directors and is a Honorary Research Fellow at the Melbourne University's Centre of Visual Art (CoVA).

Theme 'The changing Indigenous art centre model: reclaiming processes of cultural expression outside of western needs'

Abstract For too long, Indigenous Australian art centres have been valued principally as a foundation of art making and sales. This has in part arisen from the flourishing Australian art industry and the increasing global demand on Indigenous art and craft production.

Today, art centres as Indigenous-led enterprises have evolved to support a range of important cultural activities that generate dynamic cultural outputs – only some of which are made to meet market-demands. Other outputs include comprehensive archives of Indigenous knowledge, libraries, and repositories for collections of significant cultural material, some of which are still used in ceremony and cultural practice today.

As art centres increasingly play this role of archive, issues around institutional power and control over museum collections arise, including their ongoing management, access, conservation, preservation and repatriation. Innovative and collaborative solutions are today being initiated and embraced by cultural leaders rather than museums, but discussions are still limited by western constraints around concepts of property, ownership and resourcing.

This moderated discussion will explore some contemporary examples and the new modes of collaboration required to support Indigenous self-determination in the continuously evolving art-centre model.