

**In the Halls of History: The Making and Unmaking of the Life-casts at the Ethnography
Galleries of the Iziko South African Museum**

by

**Student: Robyn-Leigh Cedras
CDRROB001**

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Supervisor: Nick Shepherd

Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town

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Abstract

This mini-dissertation is a study of the phenomenon of life-casting and the display of these in the museum space. It looks specifically at the practice as it came into use at the turn of the twentieth century at the South African Museum in the Western Cape. The research aims to place the practice in context with the historical triggers and larger perspectives of the subject of indigenous races. A focus on particular life-casts and its display in designed productions allows the reader insight into knowledge production.

I point to this to unpack a loaded history informing deeply seated identity constructs and prejudices. A trajectory of the use of the life-casts is supported by visual records included in this text. The museum's archive also affords a plethora of correspondence and research giving context and insight. A close analysis of the archive exposes the museum's processes and the exchange in consumption and production by museum visitors and related institutions both private and state supported. The making and unmaking of the life-casts acts as proxy for peoples brutally subjugated.

Acknowledgements

I had desired to integrate my acquired knowledge and experience from both the realms fine art and social history. My chosen subject accessed through my sources was rich in archive and imagery, and for the most part quite primary and unprocessed. The research spanned across archaeology, anthropology and ethnography while in conversation with projects by visual artists as well. I would like to thank the following people at the Iziko Museums of South Africa: Lailah Hisham, Registrar and Collections Manager of Social History, Baheya Hardy, Librarian at the Social History Centre, Patricia Davison, former Director of Core Functions and Gerald Klinghardt Curator of Anthropology.

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Professionally photographed by Andrew Barker: Figures 66–74.

In the Halls of History: The Making and Unmaking of the Life-casts at the Ethnography Galleries of the Iziko South African Museum by Robyn-Leigh Cedras

Introduction

The Iziko South African Museum's ethnographic display titled *Ethnography Gallery* (previously *Peoples of Southern Africa*) was preceded by such projects as *The Hall of Man* exhibition on human evolution, and comes from a long tradition of seeing black people as "primitive" and the San or Bushmen in particular as living fossils of a vanishing race.¹ These displays echo ruptures in the discourses of anthropology, archaeology and human sciences over the past century and sound out the difficulty, trepidation and fumbling associated with such sensitive terrain. According to the museum's visitor numbers and comments books, the ethnographic galleries – and particularly the *Bushman Diorama*, in all its incarnations – were the most popular exhibit for most of the twentieth century.² A stop at the exhibit was an essential part of any visit to Cape Town. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, criticisms of the exhibit began being levelled by many – most notably, the press – who found it to be idealised, ahistorical, dehumanising and offensive (see **Figure 1**).³

This research frames a set of questions centred on the trajectory of the life-casts at the ethnographic galleries and the experience of visitors to the museum. What was the original purpose of the life-casts, and was it fulfilled? How much of the project was based on science? What role did the life-casts play in the exhibits at the ethnographic galleries and what do they contribute today to the museum's collection? Most importantly, via the museum's archive, I want to explain the displays spatially and in this way recreate the visitors' experience of the ethnographic galleries and the curators' intentions behind them. In order to do so, I trace the making of the life-casts and their uses through to their eventual unmaking and censorship. By using the floor-plan diagrams, exhibition labels/texts, curators' notes, and images available in the museum's archives, I hope to understand the museum workers' and visitors' experiences of both projecting and imbibing the representations of culture at the ethnographic galleries. This research also explores the climate that shaped the legacy of the famed *Bushman Diorama* exhibit and its use of life-casts. The use of terms applied in the general sense, such as Bush races, Bushman/Bushmen, San, Khoi, Bantu, Hottentot and Khoisan, or in the specific sense, such as /Xam, Ju/'hoansi, #Khomani San

¹ Dubow, S. (1995) *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. University of Cambridge: Press Syndicate: 13. Also note that I use the terms San and Bushmen here without marking the terms as derogatory and outdated terminology. The use of these terms denotes the context of the period under discussion. Khoisan is a more generally accepted term.

² Davison, P. (2001) *Typecast: Representation of the Bushmen at the South African Museum*. Public Archaeology. Ed. Ascherson, N. 2(1): 4.

³ Witz, Leslie. (2006) *Museums on Post-Apartheid Tourist Routes*. In Karp, Ivan. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press. 120.

and several others, more often than not reflects the academic notions and time period within which they operate. I have used these terms throughout this paper, at certain points interchangeably, to describe the academic and informal plethora of names and labels in circulation. It is important to note that many of these terms are highly derogatory and by now out of use, but they are used in this research paper to gain an understanding of the context of the period under discussion. I have made extensive use of the museum's Social History Centre Archive on Church Square. This archive is where most of the ethnographic material is held; however, the life-casts are held at the physical anthropology stores within the Archaeology Department at the South African Museum. The Social History Centre Archive includes a photographic archive, extensive correspondence in the form of letter books, and a library holding *Annals of the South African Museum*, *Journals of the South African Museum* and several other articles, books and journals relating to the collections housed and displayed at the museum from its inception in 1825. I also made use of material at the National Library, such as the *Cape of Good Hope Government Gazettes*, and at the University of Cape Town's libraries. In making sense of the archived material at the Social History Centre, I was assisted by Lailah Hisham (Collections Manager and Registrar), Gerald Klinghardt (Collections Manager), Patricia Davison (ex-Director of Social History) and Wendy Blackman (Physical Anthropologist). I have referenced the work of academics in the fields of museology, anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, social history, and the visual arts.



Figure 1. The South African Museum's (SAM) *Bushman Diorama* display, photographed in 1989 by Aubrey Byron.

Figure 1 shows the *Bushman Diorama* after a few alterations had been made in the way of clothing. The female figures in particular had been unclothed until the mid-eighties.

Chapter One sets out the historical context of this thesis. In order to better understand how the displays at the ethnographic galleries prompted the responses that they did, an analysis of the early development of the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology and ethnology in relation to the study of black races at the South African Museum was initiated. Adjacent to this analysis was my concern with how methods of display were devised and how they supported the theory of these disciplines. The aim of the analysis was to understand how early collecting practices at the museum led to the intensive study of physical anthropology for the purpose of racial science – a crucial development that affected the collecting practice and display of Bushmen or San histories in particular. This background serves to contextualise the extensive work started by the director of the South African Museum Louis Péringuey and taxidermist and museum modeller James Drury on the life-casts in 1905, which included the collection of human remains, whole skeletons and skulls for cranial research. Regrettably, I do not have space in this document to fully explore the ethics of human remains in museum collections, including the question of repatriation.⁴ The life-casts, as objects that peopled the ethnographic galleries, were central to my research, which included the referencing details of those who modelled for the casts. These are people whose names I found on occasion, if at all, reticently pencilled inside brackets on the archive's old card system. The life-casts were originally made for research purposes only, but they were later interpreted in typological displays as clear representatives of racial types. This interpretation occurred as early as 1915, in spite of Péringuey's statement to the contrary in the 1911 *Annals of the South African Museum*: "It is well-nigh impossible to distinguish now from outer appearance a so-called Colonial Bushman from a native of Hottentot origin. Personally I have given up the attempt."⁵ Although the museum's research into racial purity fell quiet, the casts continued to enthrall visitors.

Chapter Two analyses the use of the life-casts from the 1930s to the 1960s, a period that hardened the ideological underpinnings of the representation of black, indigenous southern Africans, and birthed the *Bushman Diorama* display, which remained in place until the turn of the twenty-first century. With the inclusion of ethnologists Margaret Shaw and Nicolaas

⁴ The life-casts had been reclassified as human remains in 2015. The motion for reclassification began in 2012 and was under way during my research for this project. For all intents and purposes, the casts were already treated as such while the matter was under consideration. The issue of human remains and the ethics of repatriation will not be discussed in this research project.

⁵ Péringuey, L. (1911) The Stone Ages of South Africa as represented in the collection of the South African Museum. *Annals of the South African Museum* 8: 195. This was after Péringuey published results of the craniological study of 167 skulls by Dr F. C. Shrubbsall who found no clear difference between the "San" and "Khoikhoi".

Jacobus van Warmelo in the 1930s, the Ethnography Department was revived with a greater focus on material culture. The life-casts were initially on display as examples of the “native bush races” of southern Africa, with the context of the displays shifting in the 1930s. This chapter makes use of correspondence between the South African Museum, members of the Bushman Preservation Committee, and Donald Bain, an organiser of live Bushmen shows in the early twentieth century. The letters are used to describe how the Bushmen were objectified, and run parallel to the study of physical anthropology in the South African Museum’s public display of the life-casts.

Chapter Three looks closely at the inception of the *Bushman Diorama* and the changes made to the displays at the Ethnography Gallery over the decades. The gallery was reinterpreted in the 1970s to display the activities of “primitive” life and other distinguishing points of the cultural practice of indigenous southern Africans. Displays included both figures and an increasing number of objects of material culture, centred on themes such as the household, initiation, music, weaving and so on. However, the *Bushman Diorama* continued to pointedly describe a racial type and represent the Bushmen as an ancient people. This chapter also looks at how the specific political climate of the dawn of apartheid brought about changes in the South African Museum’s approach to its collection of what was then termed “ethnology”. This collection had been separated from what became the “cultural history collection”, with the latter referring to the history of white South Africans and including foreign antiquities, and the former relating to the history of black South Africans. The umbrella organisation Iziko Museums of Cape Town, which changed to Iziko Museums of South Africa in 2012, was initially called The Southern Flagship Institution, and was founded in 1999. It hoped to give national collections such as those housed at the South African Museum scope for redress. The South African Museum, with its “ethnology” collections, and the South African Museum of Cultural History (at the Slave Lodge or Old Supreme Court), with its “cultural history” collections, were given an opportunity to address the divides embedded in their collections through colonial collecting practices and the influence of apartheid. Cultural history was renamed “social history”, and the collection now covers areas of pre-colonial and historical archaeology, anthropology, colonial and pre-colonial history, and contemporary cultural studies. The term “social history” was chosen as an alternative to “cultural history”, in order to emphasise that museum objects are not ends in themselves.⁶ The confusion across the fields of ethnology, anthropology and archaeology in the annals of the museum is a testament to the struggle over the divides or parameters of the collections. The museum’s record keepers fell prey to the trap of rewriting histories, with collections

⁶ Davison, P. (2004) Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, May 2005, (31): 101. This paper was also presented at the SAMA Conference, Cape Town, June 2004.

suffering from a legacy of poor or haphazard collecting practices, artefacts with unknown producers, generalised areas of origin, and dates using the term “circa” rather than being specific. These divides were present not only in the discourse and theory surrounding the artefacts, but also in their physical housing, management and care. The terminology expressed in this discourse became a matter of utmost importance, especially during the 1960s, when these collections – including the life-casts – became puppets in a play to nationalist political ends.

Chapter Four focuses on the reactionary events that led to the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* in 2001. Referenced here are the Bushman tourist camps at the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, San land claims, some very publically posited academic forums on the representation of Bushmen identity, with the notion of the Bushmen contested by the Kalahari Debate, and academically produced exhibitions and interventions by researchers both inside and outside the South African Museum. These developments had taken place just prior to the Museum becoming one of the Iziko museums. I endeavour in this chapter to understand the histories of misrepresentation that created a manipulated environment of history writing – what George Stoking calls “Whiggish” history, from Herbert Butterfield’s critique entitled *The Whig Interpretation of History*.⁷ This glib description is of a style of history writing which ignores the complexity of historical particularity. Historians sought a logical system of progress, in relation to their own socio-political context, that would fit the act of historicising.⁸ This notion, although tongue-in-cheek, speaks to the manipulation of history by the museum curator in search of an interpretation that satisfies his or her theory of progress. In this chapter, I strive to illustrate and analyse the changes in the displays and the debates surrounding the *Bushman Diorama*.

Chapter Five outlines the project with which I had approached the Social History Department, based on an intervention in the Ethnography Gallery in 2012. The project was not realised in the space it was originally intended for, but eventually became part of my research and resulted in a questionnaire and an exhibition held at the African Studies Gallery at the University of Cape Town in 2013. This chapter looks at the dismantling of

⁷ Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3. “...the tendency of many historians to write on the side of Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions, provided they were successful, to emphasize certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present.”

⁸ He or she was to “fall victim to the historian’s pathetic fallacy” abstracting things from their historical context and judging them apart from their context, estimating them and organising the historical study by a system of direct reference to the present... by tracing lineages up to the present in a simple sequential movement. When this abridging procedure is charged with a normative commitment to the phenomena whose origins are sought, the linear movement is “progress” and those who seem to abet it “progressive”, the result is a “whiggish” history.” Found in: Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 4.

particular areas of the display at the Ethnography Gallery, and the eventual replacement of the life-casts with wire sculptures. New text boards were installed to once again recontextualise the figures' meaning. The chapter provides photographic evidence of the changes made from mid-2013 to the end of 2014 with an overview of popular academic opinion regarding repatriation and the fundamental shift in the approach to the. During this period, with the likely and imminent reclassification of the life-casts as human remains, and their movement to the Physical Anthropology Department for storage, the future of the life-casts was largely silenced and censored.

Iziko Museums of South Africa is an institution that functions in support of several museums in the Western Cape. I was in its employ for nearly seven years.⁹ Although I had not worked with the collections at the South African Museum or with the displays at the Ethnography Gallery, I was aware of the difficulties that the museum staff faced.¹⁰ In November 2012, I participated in a student exhibition in which I interrogated the *Bushman Diorama*, its long closure and its possible future. The exhibition included a questionnaire for assessing visitors' opinions. This experience led me to pursue the *Bushman Diorama* as the topic of a minor thesis project. Director of the Social History Collections Lalou Meltzer, who had seen my exhibition, asked about my findings. We began a dialogue about the possibility of a sculptural-installation-based intervention in the Ethnography Gallery. The project was never realised, however.¹¹ The life-casts were removed and placed in storage, where they were censored from view and handled ethically as human remains while the decision was taken as to whether they should be classified as such. This research exposes the rationale and impetus that brought the life-casts into being and plotted their course to their current state of censorship. The intention in interrogating the life-casts' purpose, scientific value and role as exhibitionary constructs, along with their recategorisation as human remains, is to provide a catalogue of their different uses over time. This exercise serves as a case study for the efficacy of change in the museum context, and for the development and attempted deconstruction of racist ideologies within the institution of the museum.

⁹ It includes the South African Museum, South African National Gallery, Slave Lodge and Social History Centre to name a few. I started working with the paintings in the Social History Collection housed at the old South African Cultural History Museum near Church Square in 2005 when the collection was being packed and stored for the upcoming renovations to the building. I began working with their art collection, but assisted with their other collections as well. In 2006 I became an educator at the South African National Gallery. From 2007 to 2013 I worked as the Collections Manager at South African National Gallery.

¹⁰ They were considering re-interpreting the *Ethnography Gallery* and finding a solution to the closing of the *Bushman Diorama*. However apart from a new inclusion of an exhibition on Zulu earplugs there were no changes to the gallery space in the time I worked there.

¹¹ The Director was receptive to the idea and I supplied a proposal in March 2013. This intervention was later furtively suspended until a future date and in October of 2013 the remaining life-casts were surreptitiously replaced with life-size wire sculptures.

Chapter 1 – Early display of ethnographic life-casts and figures of indigenous or “primitive” peoples

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the early development of human sciences is examined in relation to racial studies in order to explore the *raison d’être* for the ethnographic galleries and the life-casts at the South African Museum. I begin by addressing the context of the early museum, and follow with samples of the work of Otis Mason, Frans Boas, George W Stoking and Tim Ingold on human and social science. Each scholar also refers to his predecessors and contemporaries in the mid-nineteenth century texts I have sampled. This early context is considered in relation to the research and display of the life-casts across the fields of archaeology, anthropology and ethnography, and to the work of the museum staff at the South African Museum. For this purpose, I refer to the letter books that contain archived correspondence.

The voyageur-philosophe who sails towards the extremities of the earth traverses in effect the sequence of the ages; he travels in the past; each step he makes is a century over which he leaps.¹²

This quote by Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1772–1842), known as Citizen Degérando, philosopher, publicist, philanthropist and Observateur de l’Homme, sets the tone for early collectors of artefacts. Yet more importantly, it establishes a particular ideological positioning of non-Europeans as fixed in the past, to degrees that relate to a Eurocentric whole. This was a philosophy not unlike the one that the South African Museum subscribed to, effecting the anthropologically based practice of life-casting and the resulting ethnographic galleries in which it displayed racial types. To better understand this phenomenon, I have examined the South African Museum’s early collecting practice and the roots of museology on the subject of African material culture, which informed the institution’s ideology. Some of the earliest manifestations of collecting practices were the *wunderkammern*, (“cabinets of curiosities” or “closets of rarities”) often found in the private collections of the elite – spaces where many “ethnic curiosities” from as early as the fifteenth century were stored.¹³ Already the early language surrounding the vessels that housed these artefacts took the form of “quaint” descriptions with “an endearing whimsical ring to them”.¹⁴ The earliest artefacts of African origin in a European collection were recorded by Duke Charles the Bold in 1470; of these, some were from Congo and were later presented to the King of Portugal in 1489.¹⁵ Many

¹² Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 27.

¹³ Impey, O. & Mac Gregor, A. (1985) *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinets of Curiosities in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. xvii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 337-338.

“exotic” artefacts were collected in this fashion and eventually found their way to early museums such as the Munich Kunstkammer in 1598, Museo Pigorini in Rome, and the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen.¹⁶ The broader notion of museums as “cabinets” or “vessels” for valuable objects and their histories quickly gained traction.¹⁷ Through trade and colonial exploits, these disembodied collections multiplied, and many became founding collections in the early museums established in the colonies, which created great difficulty in the practical task of categorisation. Items were typically categorised by what appears to be a method of non-categorisation – as if bringing them into the realm of the known, only to retain their aura of the unknown. Early items of African material culture were referred to as “artefacta”, “arteficialia”, “artificial curiosities” or “artificial rarities”.¹⁸ Various types of artefacts were lumped together, supposedly under the premise of their becoming valuable tools of knowledge – a questionable venture, given that the method of collection had denied the object virtually any link to its origins (except a very tailored and limited link). It seems a contradiction, particularly in the West, where there was such a strong desire for empirical knowledge.

The South African Museum, founded in the nineteenth century, followed the model of colonial institutions of the time, many of which had their intellectual roots in the Enlightenment period.¹⁹ The notion that knowledge of the world should be advanced through science and reason to reach universal truths is linked to nineteenth-century preoccupations with progress and expansion. The foundation of the British Museum of Natural History is regarded as one of the “potent acts of the Enlightenment”.²⁰ As with the British Museum’s mandate to cover all branches of knowledge in a systemic manner, it was the South African Museum’s original mandate to cover natural history and the indigenous cultures of South Africa²¹, thereby bringing the European institution of the museum into Africa, where it was to function in gestalt as a branch of the mother institution. This institution’s understanding,

¹⁶ Impey, O. & Mac Gregor, A. (1985) *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinets of Curiosities in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe*. Oxford: Clarendon Press., 340-342.

¹⁷ Although it appeared the histories of many “exotic” objects were lost along the way or fabricated for effect.

¹⁸ Davison, P. (2004) Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, May 2005. (31): 102. This paper was also presented at the SAMA Conference, Cape Town, June 2004 by Patricia Davison.

¹⁹ Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 27.

²⁰ Sloan, K. (2003) Aimed at universality and belonging to the nation: the Enlightenment and the British Museum. In Sloan, K. Ed. *Enlightenment. Discovering the world in the eighteenth century*. London: The British Museum Press. 13 and in Davison, P. (2004) Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, May 2005. (31). 101

²¹ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825-1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 15 and in Davison, P. (2004). Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, May 2005. (31). 101. This paper was also presented at the SAMA Conference, Cape Town, June 2004 by Patricia Davison.

knowing or demystifying of the objects it acquired was encased within its own prejudices and preconceptions. This situation reflects Depelchin's notion of "intellectual cannibalism": "[D]ivide and rule was not only a political and military motto: it became the recipe for how to scholarly digest alien societies ... to facilitate the most important objective: imperial hegemony."²² This chapter will demonstrate the struggles and clashes of classification in its understanding of temporality and its rhetoric, which was fraught with a language inherited from archaeological and anthropological discourse. I endeavour to wade through a field of study that has suffered multiple displacements, in order to get at the role of the life-casts on display and their effects on the museum's visitors.

The discipline of anthropology, along with its concern with ethnology, appears to have arisen from the popular study of race classification, as an answer to the development of Western Europe's "modern man". An exhibit in London in 1847 at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, presented by the infamous Scottish-born anatomist Robert Knox, had a notable influence on the public's perception of Bushmen.²³ The exhibition poster, which advertised a lecture on "the great question of race", followed with "Bosjemans ... The most singular specimen of that decreasing race of human beings ... that from their wild habits could never before be induced to visit a place of civilization", and further claimed to "gratify the Man of Science and the Student of Zoology".²⁴ Such notions held European society superior to the "uncivilised". In South Africa, these perceptions about the "bush races" served a further purpose – that of abdicating colonisers of any reason to treat Bushmen humanely. In a paper first presented at the Berlin Geological Society on 15 October 1904, Siegfried Passarge imparted observations and insights on colonisation.²⁵ He described European colonisation by the Germans, the Portuguese and the English, of which the latter controlled the most areas: "[T]he best relations between black and white exists in the English colonies ... the English colonies restrict themselves to indirect rule through native leaders."²⁶ He went on to say that European colonisation would increase warring with, and decimation of, aboriginal people, and, "as a result, the aboriginal culture will disappear, dress, customs and habits be forgotten, and tribes and peoples begin to blend into each other".²⁷ Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century clashes between colonisers and the Bushmen left their numbers significantly lowered by the mid-nineteenth century. A R Wilmot, as quoted by Magubane,

²² Magubane, B.M. (2007) *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*. Pretoria: The University of South Africa Press. 5.

²³ Knox strongly advocated the polygenist theory that suggests human origins to have developed from different races as opposed to a single origin of humanity.

²⁴ Skotnes, P. (1996) *Miscast: Negotiating the presence of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 42.

²⁵ Passarge, S. & Wilmsen, E. N. (ed.) (1997) *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1886-1898) of Siegfried Passarge: nineteenth century Khoisan- and Bantu-speaking peoples*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

describes the Boer commandos of 1775 under Commandant van Jaarsveld who, in one such excursion, killed 122 Bushmen.²⁸ Wilmot writes, “In orders for destruction of this hated race ... it is recorded that between the years 1786 and 1795 no fewer than 2480 of these people were killed.”²⁹ Those living as hunter-gatherers were greatly affected, particularly in the Cape Colony. Many who survived became servants, labourers or squatters on farms. However, Passarge notes (in the same paper presented in 1904)³⁰ that Bushmen in competition or conflict for resources with the Bantu or Khoi would have “always been slaves of the latter”.³¹ With the later acquisition of firearms by the Khoi and Bantu, the competition was further destroyed: the surviving Bushmen “fell into poverty ... [A]s a result, social structure, which earlier had been well founded, was severely ruptured, and there, too, Bushmen have sunk into slavery and have no rights”.³² This quote represents a poignant point in time. Indeed, my research shows that interest in racial science on the part of ethnologists, who were trying to find differences between Hottentots and Bushmen, peaked during this period. The role of the South African Museum’s staff and the life-casting project is intrinsic in this regard, since they sought to convert an ideology into empirical knowledge.

The ideology of the South African Museum is laid bare in the language of the institution, captured in official documents. Edgar Layard of the board of trustees, who later became curator in 1855, referred to the ethnographic exhibits as “wonderful specimens of savage ingenuity” in his report to the trustees.³³ In 1861, these were referred to as “objects of curiosity”, and by a later curator, Roland Trimen, as “articles of existing barbarous races”.³⁴ These artefacts were categorised as anthropological, while the material culture of European and other foreign collections was categorised as antiquities.³⁵ Contemporary researchers and museum professionals struggle to recontextualise collections, particularly under the weight of Iziko Museums of South Africa’s mandate to merge collections and reclassify objects. The ideology of the institution is central to collecting practice, research, and curating

²⁸ Magubane, B.M. (2007) *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*. Pretoria: The University of South Africa Press. 182.

²⁹ Ibid., 183. Wilmot describes how “the Landrost of Graaff-Reinet (Maynier) tells us in 1792 that every year large commandos of 200 or 300 Boers were sent out against the Bushmen”.

³⁰ Passarge, S. & Wilmsen, E. N. (ed.) (1997). *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1886-1898) of Siegfried Passarge: nineteenth century Khoisan- and Bantu-speaking peoples*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 60.

³¹ Ibid., 88. Also note the use of the terms Bantu and Khoi; these are used in the same context as San and Bushmen, noted on page 2.

³² Ibid., 88-89.

³³ Coombes, A. 2003. *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press. 214. Also in Edgar Layard’s 1856 and 1870 report to the trustees and Roland Trimen’s 1874 report.

³⁴ Edgar Layard’s 1856 and 1870 report to the trustees and Roland Trimen’s 1874 report. In Davison, P. (1990) *Rethinking the Practice of Ethnography and Cultural History in Southern Africa*. *African Studies Journal*. 49(1): 152-153.

³⁵ Davison, P. (1990) *Rethinking the Practice of Ethnography and Cultural History in Southern Africa*. *African Studies Journal*. 49(1): 152-153.

at the museum. If one considers that the “practical information of the mercantile community” was a motivating factor for the founders of the museum, then the intended audience was certainly not an African one.³⁶

Racial studies at the South African Museum required a comprehensive referencing of examples and, because the Bushmen were believed to be a dying race, an urgency developed around procuring this “archive” of the species before time ran out. Museum staff members underwent the costly ordeal of travelling to the Bushmen in Prieska, Ovambo, and other places in the Northern Cape.³⁷ Social and physical anthropology became an intrinsic aspect of their research; human remains – in particular, skulls – were also collected, since racial science was centred on cranial study. Advocates of the polygenist theory that arose in the 1730s across Europe promoted the idea that three distinct races – Caucasian, Mongolian and Ethiopian – had developed independently. Robert Knox identified many more distinct races, which he believed had developed entirely separately.³⁸ A very early polygenist, John Atkins (1685–1757), speculated that “the black race could breed with monkeys and give birth to sterile hybrids, similar to mules”.³⁹ “I am persuaded the black and white race have, ab origine, sprung from different-coloured first parents”, he wrote – a notion later supported by François-Marie Arouet Voltaire.⁴⁰ More than a century later, and after his service in the South African military, Knox wrote a key text in the contribution to biological racism: *The Races of Men* (1850). Biological racism provided the grounds for racism and racist exploits where religion failed to do so. In Knox’s ideology, “the racism of empire, scientific racism, helped to free Christianity from the inhibitions of the eighteenth century, so that in the nineteenth century it could blaze for imperial expansion”.⁴¹ It follows that racist ideologies bled into the fields of anthropology and ethnology. Magubane argues that ethnology, first popularised as a field of study in 1843, also grew out of the amateur contributions of naturalists and travel writers.⁴² Travelogues were happy to paint the San and

³⁶ *Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette*. 5 October 1855: 3. Also in Spillman, D. S. S. (2012) *British Colonial Realism in Africa: Inalienable objects, contested domains*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 126-127.

³⁷ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825-1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 105.

³⁸ Knox, R. (1850) *The Races of Men: A Fragment*. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard. 66.

³⁹ Magubane, B.M. (2007) *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*. Pretoria: The University of South Africa Press. 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Alexander, P. (1987) *Racism, resistance and revolution*. London: Bookmarks Publishing Company. 15.

⁴² Magubane, B.M. (2007) *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*. Pretoria: The University of South Africa Press. 111.

Khoi as the “missing link” in the “Great Chain of Being”.⁴³ François Le Vaillant (1753–1824) regarded the Khoi as “grand enfants” in the “innocents of humanity’s state of infancy”.⁴⁴

In order to understand how and why the first life-casts were made at the South African Museum under the directorship of Louis Péringuey and his team – most notably, taxidermist and museum modeller James Drury – at the turn of the twentieth century, it is necessary to analyse the South African Museum’s relationship to human sciences and the influence of institutions, government and science in southern Africa and abroad. Institutions intrinsic to the founding, development and funding of the South African Museum, such as the British Association of the Advancement of Science (BAAS) and later the South African Archaeological Society (SAAS), advocated racial science by looking at black races that they deemed “primitive”, as part of a quest to answer questions of human species development and evolution. This discussion is taken into account only insofar as it informs an analysis of the life-casts. This analysis also encompasses the work of museologists: their collecting practices and their methods of interpreting the collection in the form of museum displays. The overall aim is to plot developments through the twentieth century and into recent years.

1.2 Early ethnographic displays of life-casts and figures of indigenous or “primitive” peoples

The earlier quote by Joseph-Marie de Gérando describes a trajectory of human history, represented in stages by various societies, and “historicised” or captured by the “voyageur-philosophe”. As a result, societies living at varying degrees of “civilisation” serve as living markers of social development, which eventually gives way to the theory of social evolution. Stoking interprets Degérando’s description of the broad outlines of social change as follows: “Human nature was fundamentally the same in all times and places, with development governed by natural laws: man developed from his earliest state in a slow, unilinear evolutionary progress ... whose highest present manifestation was western European society.”⁴⁵ These assertions are rooted in the classical tradition and were widespread in late eighteenth-century social thought. Certainly, they were intrinsic to the theory and practice of Victorian ethnologists, whose most prized analytical tool was the “comparative method”.⁴⁶ This method was also part and parcel of French philosopher Auguste Comte’s positivist

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 183. Le Vaillant travelled in Southern Africa from 1781 to 1784 and produced many illustrations of particularly birds, but also plants and other wildlife. He also produced a great map of southern Africa for King Louis XVI. The map and other works by Le Vaillant were shown in the exhibition, *The King’s Map* at the *South African Museum* as part of an exchange with France during the French Season in 2012.

⁴⁵ Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. New York: Free Press, a division of Macmillan Publishing. 26. Stoking’s writing on *idéologues* and French Anthropology in 1800.

⁴⁶ Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. New York: Free Press, a division of Macmillan Publishing. 27.

theory. Emerging in the early eighteenth century, positivism proposed the “law of three stages”: the “theological stage”, the “metaphysical stage”, and the “scientific stage”.⁴⁷ Although different applications of the laws were possible, the essential character of these laws assumes a conjectural history of man constructed in the “comparative method”. A benefit of this method was the idea that not all humans have progressed at the same rate. Moreover, the method provided “an exact scale of the various degrees of civilisation and [assigned] to each [society] the properties that characterise it,” allowing for the reconstruction of “the first epochs of our own history”.⁴⁸

The attempt to understand the development of society and civilisation in terms of a kind of social Darwinism is expressed here by Tim Ingold (born 1948). Ingold describes two ways in which biological evolution, as presented by Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution in *The Origin of Species*, “can be applied to humanity and culture: by extension and by analogy”.⁴⁹ The “extension” application would argue that cultural ideas and practice are the result of “the brain that produced them”, and that human races considered less civilised were innately “primitive” and therefore lower on the evolutionary scale, although all human races had the potential to “evolve”. The “analogy” application considers culture to evolve along its own scale, as affected by the external environment. An argument for extension rather than analogy was continued and complemented by Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), who argued that “corresponding improvement in the innate faculties of mind [was] brought about through natural selection” – in other words, development through evolution by particular innate and superior qualities replicated in each new generation. The connection between “cultural differences” and “variations in mental organisation” became the central point of Franz Boas’s (1858–1942) criticism of the Darwinian legacy.⁵⁰

Darwin “rejected all notions of predetermined, orthogenetic advance in the world of nature” in *The Origin of Species*, describing “no law of necessary development, no pursuit of perfection”. Yet in *The Descent of Man*, “he accepts quite uncritically the principle supposition of the comparative method” – namely, that existing “savage” and “barbarous” tribes represent the successive steps of a gradual and uniform ascent already trodden by the ancestors of “civilised” nations. The comparative method – already widespread in zoology and botanical studies – sought, in anthropology, to arrange and rank societies in terms of their levels of civilisation. Societies were assessed according to their inventions and cultural

⁴⁷ The theological stage of human development is governed by religion; metaphysical development is marked by abstract thought and the scientific stage, where empirical knowledge and reasoning prevails.

⁴⁸ Stoking, G.W. (1968) *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. New York: Free Press, a division of Macmillan Publishing. 26.

⁴⁹ Ingold, T. (1986) *Evolution and social life*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate Press. 30.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

practices. A correlation between archaeology's "ancient man", Paleolithic and Neolithic societies, and other non-European societies was made to determine degrees of resemblance, which in turn gave way to the notion that all societies might eventually achieve civilisation as Europeans had. By adopting this method, nineteenth-century theorists hoped to fill the fissures and build a complete narrative for the development of European civilisation. Eugenics was one of the tools used to substantiate this narrative. It fuelled the conviction that eugenics might improve future generations – through the selection of desired traits for reproduction in people – categories of society turned into categories of race, with hardened boundaries between these quickly developing. Boas pioneered the attack on nineteenth-century doctrines on racial formalism: as early as 1894, he concluded that "the average faculty of the white race is found to do the same degree in a large proportion of individuals of all other races".⁵¹ He considered there to be no grounds for placing races in separate grades in an overall hierarchy in terms of intellect; moreover, he argued that any innate differences in mental function from one race to another could be judged only in relation to the specific conditions of their environment.⁵² Regarding the notion that the aptitude of the European was the highest, Boas said that this "unproved assumption underlies our judgements of races, [and] appears from the fact, that, other conditions being equal, a race is commonly described as the lower, the more fundamentally it differs from the white race".⁵³ His statement calls into question the qualitative reasoning used to define "superior" versus "lower" races.

Although the comparative method was the dominant tool of analysis at the time, Boas suggested developing knowledge about "tribal" peoples according to geographical placement or groupings. Subsequently, as the "doctrine of inheritance of acquired characteristics came to be discredited, the concept of culture was precisely substituted for that of racial temperament in Boas's argument."⁵⁴ This approach, working by analogy, substitutes the cultural for the natural, and heritage for heredity; working by extension, it treats the cultural as a complement of the natural, or as the acquired instrument of an innate reason.⁵⁵ Boas's argument against comparative theory was one he had begun as a fledgling museologist, against the consensus of his more established contemporaries, such as Otis Mason and John Wesley Powell. Boas pointed to "the occurrence of similar inventions in

⁵¹ Ingold, T. (1986) *Evolution and social life*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate 53, reference to Stoking, G.W. (1974) *A Frans Boas reader: The shaping of American anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 252.

⁵² Ingold, T. (1986) *Evolution and social life*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate. 54.

⁵³ Boas, F. (1911) *The Mind of primitive man*. New York: The Macmillan Company. 3.

⁵⁴ Stoking, G. W. (1974) *A Frans Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3.

⁵⁵ Boas, F. (1911) *The Mind of primitive man*. New York: The Macmillan Company. 57.

areas widely apart”.⁵⁶ Mason argues that anthropologists have considered similar inventions to arise from three causes: the migration of a race that has made a certain invention; the migration of ideas taught and learnt far removed in time and place; and, lastly, the fact that in “human culture, as in nature elsewhere, like causes produce like effects – under the same stress and resources, the same inventions will arise”.⁵⁷ Boas argued that if one cause is omitted it “overthrows the whole system: unlike causes produce like effects”.⁵⁸ Although Boas connected knowledge about people with tribal affiliations and geographical placement, he wanted to approach their characteristics as separable units, stating that “the object of our study is the individual, not abstractions from the individual under observation”.⁵⁹ This point is noted here not to enter into a philosophical argument, but rather to highlight a certain trend of thought that was gradually applied to the practical matters of museum display and the classification of objects. The term “objects” includes not only material culture but also human remains and life-casts, as “museum objects”.

The South African Museum used the typological technique of classification and display at the turn of the nineteenth century. Remarkably, Frans Boas’s first major theoretical statement on anthropology was made in a discussion of museum typological classification.⁶⁰ This discussion occurred during an exchange of letters between Boas, on the one hand, and Mason of the US National Museum and John Wesley Powell of the Bureau of American Ethnology, on the other, at the time when Boas had barely a year’s worth of experience as a museum staff member. Boas expressed his disappointment at finding that the objects from the Northwest Coast had been “scattered in different parts of the building and exhibited among those from other tribes”. The exhibitions had been arranged according to “universal inventions”, such as fire-making, transportation, and crafts of pottery and basketry, so that specimens from diverse cultures had been placed together according to the putative evolution of a technological type.⁶¹ By contrast, Boas’s views on classification were more *Geisteswissenschaftliche*; his approach was humanities- or arts-based in its methodology.⁶² The decision to classify ethnological phenomena as “biological specimens” that could be “divided into families, genre and species” was based on an assumption that there was “a

⁵⁶ Stoking, G.W. (1974) *A Frans Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 61.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Boas, F. (1887) *The Occurrence of similar inventions in areas widely apart*. *Science* 9. 485.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Stoking, G.W. (1985) *Objects and Others*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press. 77.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Referring to the distinction in German thought between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the former being science dealing with physical nature and the latter dealing with human spiritual activity (Stoking, G.W. (1974) *A Frans Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 11).

connection of some type with people widely apart”.⁶³ Instead, Boas described the human act of invention as a product of complex historical development, referring again to the “unlike cause” that could “produce like effects”.⁶⁴ Typological classification in this sense could produce deceptive results. To such a challenge, Mason began arranging exhibits according to ethnic similarity, guided by locality. This exercise too became troublesome, with many objects or “specimens” carrying “false location and insufficient data”.



Figure 2. Exhibit titled *Hamats'a coming out of secret room*, c 1895.

The image above, from the National Anthropology Archives, represents a ceremony of a secret society of the Kwakwaka'wakw tribe studied by Boas during the 1880s. This early example of a life-group display is unlike the previous single-figure typological displays of the 1870s. These figures were not cast from life, but modelled. Boas himself modelled to ensure that stance and anatomy were rendered with natural effect.⁶⁵ This shift moved the museum towards the trend of life-group display. The Smithsonian Institution had used single-mannequin displays since 1876 but began using life-groups to display daily life and ritual in

⁶³ Stoking, G.W. (1974) *A Frans Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 63.

⁶⁴ Stoking, G.W. (1985) *Objects and Others*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press. 77.

⁶⁵ The image of this life group was also used on the cover of *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, by Boas.

1893. European museums, on the other hand, had adopted the use of life-groups in their museum displays many decades earlier. It had developed from a long tradition of waxworks, initially used for commercial exhibits such as the Chinese Collection and the Oriental and Turkish display, opening in London in 1842 and in 1854 respectively.⁶⁶ One of the earliest shows of life-groups in tableaux in a museum was at the Museum of Scandinavian Ethnography, opened in Stockholm in 1873. This display was the work of curator-director Artur Hazelius, who became well known for his life-group exhibits after showing at the Paris World Fair of 1878.⁶⁷



Figure 3. Franz Boas posing for a US Natural History Museum exhibit entitled *Hamats'a coming out of secret room*, c 1895.

Although uncontextualised, the above image appears comical and quite pre-Dadaist.⁶⁸ It shows one of the techniques used by Boas to create the figures that featured in his life-groups.

The techniques employed by Western museologists to create the figures of ethnic peoples for display were weighted to an interest in physical or cultural type. Boas, Stoking and Ingold's connection of human development with cultural development is complicated by their understanding of a link between culture and race. This is the point at which these early ethnographic displays mark a difference in approach, with displays weighted to either physical or cultural type. A case in point would be the much earlier display of Saartjie

⁶⁶ Altick, R.D. (1978). *The Shows of London: A Panoramic History of Exhibitions 1600-1862*. Cambridge MA and London: Belknap Press. 292-93

⁶⁷ Alexander, E.P. (1983) Artur Hazelius and Skansen: The open air museum. In *Museum masters: Their Museums and their influence*. Nashville: American Association for State and Natural History. 243.

⁶⁸ Dadaism was a European avant-garde art movement. It began around 1914 and focused on the incongruous and unconventional while defying the cultural and aesthetic precepts.

Baartman, whose physical traits were of particular interest to Georges Cuvier, French naturalist, zoologist and surgeon general to Napoleon Bonaparte. Cuvier acquired the body of Baartman in 1815, at which point he made a life-cast and dissected the body. The life-cast shown at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris was purposed to show the peculiarities of racial type and gender (see **Figure 4**).



Figure 4. The exhibit *La Vénus Hottentote*, Musée de l'Homme.

Above is an image of the catalogue archive card of the life-cast of Saartjie Baartman. Her body was cast after her death and shown at the museum until 1974. Her reconstructed skeleton can also be seen in the image, alongside the life-cast – evidence that the life-cast and skeletal remains were treated as specimens for the museum's purposes. The card lists Baartman as “La Vénus Hottentote” with her vitrine number under the subject head of anthropology. Codes for files holding further information are referenced in the column of the right.


3886		♀	Cape Bushman
1/1 whole figure			Prieska
1 Bust			C. P.
	resting on stick		
		Model	Drury
		Cast	Drury
		D' ... 1915	

Figure 5. Accession card for figure 3886 from the Iziko Social History Centre archive.

This figure outlines the details of two life-casts made of a woman from Prieska. A full figure cast and bust were completed by Drury, with reference to the accession number of the full cast at the top left and of the bust at the bottom right. The race, sex, area of origin and a short description are provided, with reference at the bottom middle to the display titled *Karoo Diorama*, at which cast 3886 had been on display in 1915.

The life-cast in the image in **Figure 4**, although created a century earlier than Drury's life-casts, is strikingly similar to the displays of life-casts at the South African Museum. Included above is an image of one of the South African Museum's accession cards (see **Figure 5**). Both cards (in **Figures 4** and **5**) make no reference to the models' names nor to any other personal details surrounding the two women. The cards are fully compliant, with the necessary information pertaining to specimens of physical anthropology only. The full-body life-cast of the woman from Prieska was shown in Room 7 at the South African Museum (see layout in **Figure 6**). The following images are evidence of the muddling in terms of display across social and physical anthropology. **Figure 6** shows the earliest floor plan of the ground and upper floors of the South African Museum, as it was from 1897 to the early 1930s. Changes were made from that point up until the Museum's reopening in June 1932.

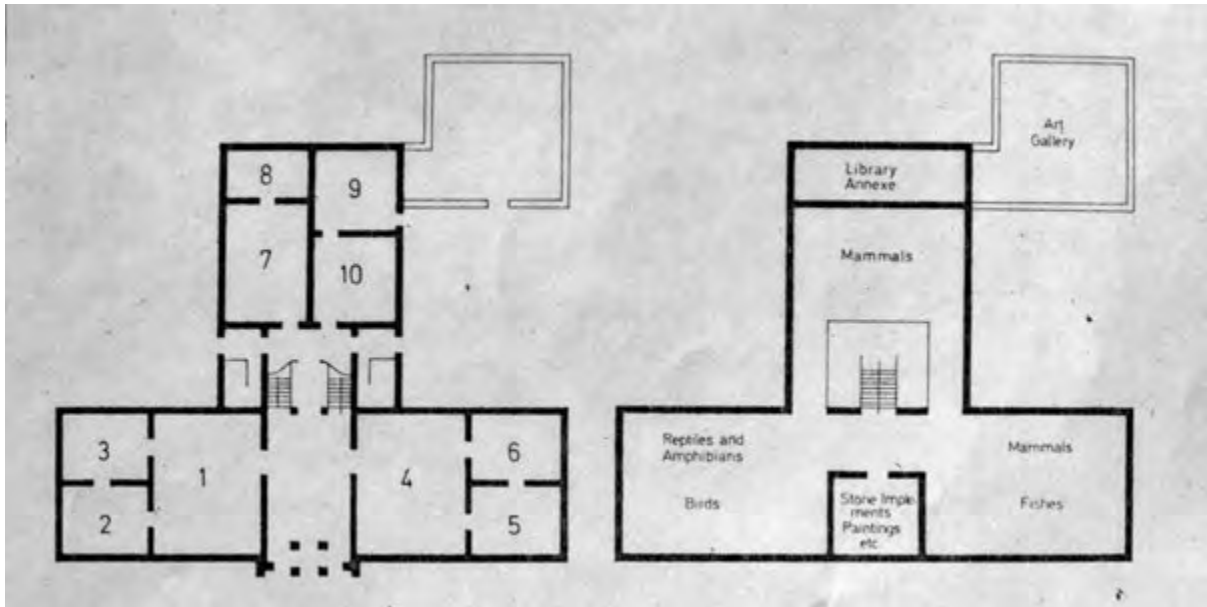


Figure 6. SAM: diagram of upper and ground floor before June 1932.

This is an early floor plan showing the ground floor on the left and the first floor on the right.⁶⁹ Rooms 1, 2 and 3, on the ground floor, showed various displays of cultural artefacts of African and European origin, from rock art and the Great Zimbabwe Ruins to Greek vases. From circa 1915 to 1931, Room 7 displayed the life-casts as examples of racial types. The map on the right of the first floor shows that the exhibition of stone implements was situated at the top of the stairs. An image of the display is shown in **Figure 7**. These exhibits, along with the art gallery indicated on the first floor, suggest that the museum had indeed originally shown a mixture of natural and social history, art and culture, a point later contested by the public, who felt that the museum should include natural history as its only concern. Furthermore, the life-casts and human remains of black peoples, displayed under the pretext of anthropology and archaeology, expressed the early museum style of the “cabinet of curiosities”, often reserved for the “exotic”. The groundfloor room marked as Room 1 in **Figure 6** had a display of rock-art reproductions.⁷⁰ Room 2 housed items from what was referred to as the “antiquities collection”. It included oriental art and Greek vases. Room 3 had a display about the Great Zimbabwe Ruins. At this point, the Ethnology Gallery was not yet built; it would later lead off Room 3. Instead, the life-casts were displayed in Room 7.⁷¹ Furthermore, an area marked on the upper level as “Stone Implements Paintings etc.” showed a mixture of items of cultural and historical value (see **Figure 7**). The images in

⁶⁹ The plan dates from 1899 at which point the only items of material culture were the antiquities in room 2 and the African items in the room at the top of the staircase. Summers, R. F. H. (1975). *A history of the South African Museum 1825-1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 69.

⁷⁰ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko Social History Centre, personal interview, 2014 March 4.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Figures 7 and 8 are of the same room at the top of the staircase, also referred to as the anthropology room.



Figure 7. SAM: “Display of stone implements, paintings etc.” at the top of the stairs, 1897.

This image is of the display on the first floor (indicated in **Figure 6**). The foreground shows an archaeological display of the Coldstream burial stone, with human remains at the bottom of the case. The background shows various items of material culture, including masks, spears and household items of various African cultural groups. The archive’s official date, which is listed above as 1897, is, in fact, incorrect, because the Coldstream stone was only discovered in 1911. On further investigation, I discovered that the rest of the display had opened in 1897, but the case in the immediate foreground was a later inclusion. The burial stone and human remains, found near the Lottering River in 1911, were included only in the 1920s.⁷² The Coldstream stone, a coup for the archaeology department, was placed amid contemporary and historical items of material culture, spanning the departments of anthropology and archaeology. The label on the case behind it, at the top left of the image, reads, “FIGURES, MASKS AND DRESSES USED IN CERTAIN CEREMONIAL DANCES BY NATIVES IN BAROTSELAND”.

⁷² The Coldstream stone is the only known polychrome painted stone from archaeological deposits in South Africa. It features three figures with white faces and elongated bodies.



Figure 8. SAM: Anthropology room, 1920s (photograph by Elliott; National Archives 1).

Above is an image of the other side of the room located at the top of the stairs in **Figure 7** and on the right in **Figure 6**. In this case, the room is referred to as the “anthropology room” and shows a mixture of items of adornment, spears, rock art, and utilitarian objects from various African cultural groups. **Figure 8** shows an example of the typological displays of material culture at the South African Museum in the 1920s. Necklaces were arranged with other necklaces, spears with spears, and so on. There are no deductions visible in the accompanying texts; instead, like the early *wunderkammern* or “cabinets of curiosity”, there appears to be little connecting the objects, except, perhaps, their function and their existence within the general realm of “native” material culture. The collection is an archetype of the curiosity cabinet. Here, the linear movement of time, which could be considered (in the public eye) to be fundamental to the modus operandi of museums, is breached. Furthermore, time is twisted and compressed to give a sense of empirical knowledge, despite the room’s trophy-like display, with human remains shown as “museum objects” in support of a historical find. The “cabinet of curiosities”, with its mysteries both shaded and revealed, finds expression in these typological displays.

The first life-groups at the South African Museum were displayed only in 1959, although typological displays were already being phased out by that stage.⁷³ Life-casting came about as part of the project to find an accurate physical record and “pure” race examples of Bushmen and Hottentots. A second, but not secondary, aspect of obtaining these records was the acquisition of human remains for study. The skull was of particular importance, but complete skeletons of “true” or “pure Bush People” were the ultimate goal. References to other physical attributes included records of hair colour and texture, as well as skin tone, and were used to discern differences in racial types.⁷⁴

1.3 Identifying and collecting data – What the letter books reveal


Louis Péringuey wrote several letters to ascertain where the best areas were to find “pure-bred” or “Colonial Bush People”. The status of the land ownership of burial grounds and the cost for the procurement of the human remains, which he referred to as “relics”, were an intricate component of negotiations. The Iziko Social History Centre has the correspondence surrounding these negotiations archived in letter books. It is clear that Péringuey did extensive research work, gleaning information from many in the field, including Dorothea Bleek, Wilhelm Bleek, W M Borchers, Rudolph Pöch and the infamous George St Leger Lennox (known as Scotty Smith), as well as from various officials, for the required permissions and permits. In fact, the venture was espoused by the Colonial Office and aid was “duly requested from the Secretary for Native Affairs, as well as Convict Stations and Magistrates in the northern districts of the Colony and in the Bechuanaland Protectorate”.⁷⁵ Although the letters were faithfully copied and filed by date, the handwriting and the deterioration of the originals and copies made them difficult to read. I have included images of the letters for reference; however, since they are not easy to decipher, I have transcribed the parts that are clearly legible. Regrettably, though, there are words missing (see **Appendices A–M**). The purpose of including the letters here is to understand how and why the life-casts were made, as well as to explore the context that informed this particular physical anthropological study. At this point, capturing the imprint of the live “specimen” (with all its data) in the form of the life-cast and gathering “relics” or human remains were inextricably linked processes; they formed part of the same project. The accession cards, made after the fact and dating from the 1930s, are also referenced here to demonstrate how

⁷³ By using the term “life-groups”, I refer to the display of the casts in a particular scenario and not simply a collective display of life-casts.

⁷⁴ Dubow, S. (1995) *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate. 25.

⁷⁵ Davison, P. (1993) Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of “Bushman” and “Hottentots”, 1907-1924. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5). 169.

the data captured by Drury was interpreted by later museologists for the practical use and management of the life-casts.⁷⁶

3894		♂	Cape Bushman
1 whole figure			Upington
		Klaas Zepor	
	Boy, playing gorah		
	Sentenced in 1908 to detention in our reformatory for stock theft		
		Mold: Drury	
		Cast: Drury	
		ND' bust by Cast at Tokai Reformatory 1908	

Plaster of Paris piece mould made by Drury. Badly damaged, discarded (except head to shoulders) in Jan. 1993

Figure 9. Accession card for the life-casts for figure 3894.

The first life-cast that Drury made was of a staged boy playing the instrument known as the gorah. His name was Klaas Zepor, from a reformatory in Tokai in Cape Town, and he was listed as a Cape Bushman. The card lists the boy as having been sentenced in 1908 to detention in the reformatory for stock theft. The cast was also included in the Bushmen display. These details were pencilled in in a different hand to the darker bolder hand, which would have appeared in the original document, suggesting that these details were included later.⁷⁷ The original information includes the accession number and the caster's name, as well as the usual details of the model's sex, race, and area of origin. The most recent

⁷⁶ The accession cards were made by Margaret Shaw in the 1930s and were appended by later curatorial staff at the South African Museum.

⁷⁷ The original cards were drawn up by Margaret Shaw in the 1930s. Klinghardt, G, curator at the Iziko South History Centre, personal interview, 2014 March 4.

addition was a paperclipped strip of paper stating that the original cast had mostly been discarded in 1983, except for the head and shoulders, as a result of damage.⁷⁸

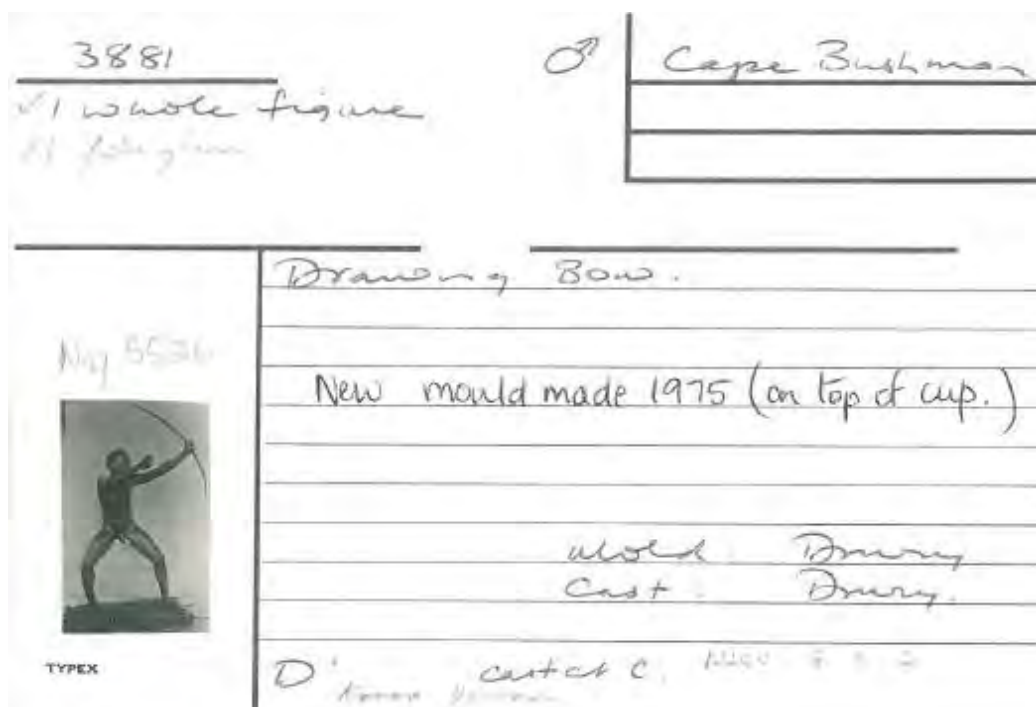


Figure 10. Accession card for the life-casts for figure 3881.

This life-cast was included in at least two other exhibitions besides the infamous *Bushman Diorama*. **Figure 11** is an image of the accession card for the life-casts of figure 3885. The model is Lys Achterdam (related to Janikie Achterdam, who was also cast). Achterdam was an informant of Dorothea Bleek for many years prior.⁷⁹ Figures of both women were included in the *Bushman Diorama*.

⁷⁸ Some of the other casts also had notes regarding repairs made and sometimes life-casts that had been written off and de-accessioned.

⁷⁹ Davison, P. (1993) Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of "Bushman" and "Hottentots", 1907–1924. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5) 175.

3885	♀	Cape Bushman
✓ 1 whole figure	♂	Prieska
✓ 1 photograph		C.P.


3885	Lys. Dikl. ...
	with hands on hips
	New mould made 1975 (on top of cup.)
	D' ...

Figure 11. Accession card for the life-casts of figure 3885.

The cards included in **Figures 9–11** are of those identified as Cape Bushmen, and whose life-casts were later used in the *Bushman Diorama* and preceding exhibits. In this category, the cards list the other life-casts on record as being Masarwa, Basarwa, Hottentot, and so on. These listings become particularly interesting when they are compared to some of the correspondence in the letters. The letter written by Péringuey to Rudolph Pöch in 1909 (see **Appendices A and B**), for example, corresponds with the timeline of both Pöch and Péringuey’s inquiries into the identification of Bushmen types. Pöch was an Austrian anthropologist and ethnologist who led an expedition in South Africa from 1907 to 1909.⁸⁰

I am afraid ... [in] your letter you are taking me to be an authority on the Bushman question, to which I do most certainly not lay a claim. My love is more on the antiquarian part of the question but, I am greatly intimated in it.

And now you ask me which field of the Colony I would recommend for your studies of the “Colonial Bushman”. I am not sure that there is a Colonial Bushman, nor that there ever was a race claiming a right to be called as such, residing in the old Cape Colony.

If there was such a race then it has completely disappeared, as a pure blooded one. People ... are being dubbed Bushman that have no claim to be other than more or less distinctive Hottentots, mostly the produce of Koranna and another more distinctive branch of the same Hottentot stock.

⁸⁰ Rudolph Pöch (born 1870, died 1921) was a founding member of the Institute for Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of Vienna and is well known for his ethnological studies at prisoner of war camps during World War 1.

You know, I suppose the controversy between Passarge and Fritsch regarding the Bushman of the latter. Passarge argues of course on the Basarwa bush people, Fritsch on what was then called Bushman in the Orange River Colony.

But whatever side one may take, no Colonial Bushman of pure blood is to be found. Pure Hottentots are also getting very scarce. I am on the search for the two and have had great difficulty in finding a few isolated cases for authenticity of which I cannot absolutely vouch. I am not sure however that a visit to all the mission stations along the Orange and Vaal River ought not to be the most promising field of research. Hence if you did not find pure blooded remnants the visits are sure to prove of interest. Kuruman is a Bechuana locality. At Upington you will find a very strong mixture of Hottentot (Nama, Korana) and Basarwa, that may not improve your results of the Kalahari Bushman. (Basarwa). Yet I have heard there of two or three families of "Bushman", but they seldom stay at one place and the distances to cover in that arid district make it very costly to travel in. On the other hand these people may have been the links between the Kalahari Bush and the Bush ... of Great Namaqua land. I regret that my information is of so meagre a kind but I could not give you more. You will still find in the Mission Stations some traditions about the Bushman that may be of interest and if there are any natives dubbed Bushman there, it would be most likely that they have Bush blood in their veins – of course on the mother's side.

I had the visit this morning of ..., the Consul General of your country who came to inquire if I had received your letter. I showed him some of our models of natives. From him I understand that you will come to Cape Town when I shall then have the pleasure of meeting you ...⁸¹

Péringuey appears in this text to be throwing Pöch off the scent of the search for examples of racial purity in Bushmen, although the sentiments he expresses could very well be an indication of his own findings. Péringuey plainly repudiates any claim that "pure"-blooded Colonial Bushmen can be found and further displays doubts that they even exist in the Cape Colony – an interesting point, in light of Péringuey's published statement that there was no real difference between the Hottentot and the Bushman.⁸² A study was conducted in London in 1905 by Frank Charles Shrubbsall on a collection of skulls sent by Péringuey.⁸³ Shrubbsall had done a substantive prior report on the Bantu skulls and crania housed in various British collections in 1899.⁸⁴ His craniometrical analyses of the skeletal material concluded that there was a separate race of Strandlopers that was distinct from the Hottentots and Bushmen, which he argued to be a "purer" group.⁸⁵ However, Péringuey then claimed the skeletal material involved "had not been classified with sufficient accuracy", and in 1907 he sent Shrubbsall 62 skulls, which he believed had been more accurately catalogued.⁸⁶ In 1911,

⁸¹ Louis Péringuey to Dr Rudolf Pöch, 22 April 1909, Kimberley Club, Kimberley, transcribed from letter number 203 and 204, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

⁸² A statement earlier referenced by Péringuey's to in the museum annals in 1911. Péringuey, L. (1911) The Stone Ages of South Africa as represented in the collection of the South African Museum. *Annals of the South African Museum*. (8). 195.

⁸³ Péringuey, L. (1911) The Stone Ages of South Africa as represented in the collection of the South African Museum. *Annals of the South African Museum*. (8). 197.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

however, after studying these skulls, Shrubbsall concluded that he was “unable to distinguish between Hottentots and Bushmen although he maintained that the Strandloopers [*sic*] were purer” and “the most primitive race of South Africa”.⁸⁷

The Frankfurt Agreement on craniological procedure, a sophisticated method of study that emerged out of a conference of German anthropologists in 1882, would have been used to examine the skulls.⁸⁸ It was most likely not the cause of the skewed results. Robert Broom pointed out that many farmers, when digging and coming across skulls, assumed them to be of Bushman origin, owing to the idea that “the Bushman skull is distinguished by having no sutures down the middle of the frontal bone”.⁸⁹ This label would very often stay with the skull once it was in the collection. Broom was known for his discovery of hominids at Sterkfontein and of *Paranthropus robustus* – discoveries that reinforced the findings of his contemporary Raymond Dart, in his work on the *Australopithecus africanus*.⁹⁰ Broom based his methodology on the existence of essential racial types, arguing that inconclusive results and difficulties in classifying the cranial distinctions among the “Bush” races were purely the result of the incorrect labelling of skulls in the first instance.⁹¹ He further asserted that he could always tell the difference, given “pure” types and a chance for closer inspection. It is important to note that the discrepancies in identifying racial types contradict the records on the accession cards and the exhibition labels that accompanied the life-casts while on display. Visitors to the museum were presented with contextual information that appeared conclusive in its representation of racial types.

Another point of interest is the debate that occurred between Siegfried Passarge and Gustav Fritsch. Passarge, a German geographer, travelled through the central and northern Kalahari (what is now northern Botswana) in the 1890s and studied the people of the area.⁹² Fritsch wrote extensively on the ethnography and anatomy of the peoples of southern Africa. He travelled along the fringe of the desert in the 1860s through what it now known as Namibia.⁹³ Passarge and Fritsch stood at opposite ends of the Kalahari Debate, also dubbed the “First”

⁸⁷ Ibid., 197.

⁸⁸ De Villiers, H. (1968) *Skull of the South African Negro: A Biometrical and morphological study*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. 12.

⁸⁹ Štrkalj, G. (2000) Inventing races: Robert Broom’s research on the Khoisan. *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*. (37). 117.

⁹⁰ *Australopithecus africanus* was popularly known as the Taung Child and discovered in Taung, South Africa in 1924. It was initially not accepted as an ancestor of man.

⁹¹ Broom, R. (1923) A Contribution to the Craniology of the Yellow-skinned Races of South Africa. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. (53). 135.

⁹² Passarge, S. & Wilmsen, E. N. (ed.) (1997) *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1896–1898) of Siegfried Passarge: nineteenth century Khoisan and Bantu speaking peoples*, translations from German. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 44.

⁹³ Ibid.

Kalahari Debate.⁹⁴ Fritsch viewed Bushmen as a racial type in isolation from other races. He denounced the notion of Bushmen as a “primal race”, since this would have meant that they were relatives of Europeans.⁹⁵ His opinion of the Bushman race can be summed up in the following statement: “The Bushman is the most unfortunate childish creature, capable of living only for the moment.” Passarge used this statement to “set[] his opposition not only to Fritsch’s ‘Bushman’ ethnology but also to his theoretical position”.⁹⁶ Fritsch set the “Bushman” apart from the European. Conversely, Passarge argued that “Bushmen” and “Pygmies” were “the original African race ... representing all the original character of humankind”.⁹⁷ Furthermore, his account of the 1890s Bushmen describes differentiation among the Bushmen tribes, with certain groups being nomadic and others not, and still others having regular contact with Bantu-speaking tribes.⁹⁸ Passarge’s view could be termed revisionist for its time, while Fritsch’s view, by comparison, was traditionalist. However, with references in the letter to the “Basarwa bush people” and the “Bushmen in the Orange River Colony”, it appears that Péringuey considered the locality of the tribes in question to be a possible flaw in the argument. This view, in conjunction with the rinderpest epidemic that ran rampant during Passarge’s expedition, as well as the time difference between the two expeditions, could account for some of the discrepancies in the two scholars’ findings. Péringuey maintained that no “Colonial Bushman of pure blood is to be found”, and yet he fervently continued collecting for the South African Museum. Although he refers specifically to the “old Cape Colony”, he also makes no effort to recommend any other areas for this type of research.

The letters (see **Appendices C–E**) reveal that Péringuey approached “Scotty Smith”, or Mr Lennox, for the procurement of skeletons in 1910 and 1911. Lennox was a regular source for “Bushman relics”, as is evidenced by several of the archived letters. To this end, Péringuey would often have to extend grants and permissions for Lennox to act as his deputy.

You have by this time received my letter enclosing [a] cheque for £. 10. I am sending another for £.5.10. ... is the same I sent before. I can really afford no more ... I hope that you will be satisfied, if we can make up the difference another time. Now please give me the following information. Are the last lot sent the Colonial Bush of the Upington district ... Am I right in taking the first lot not as Korana Bushman and they’re not pure Bush people. I know that you will not mislead.⁹⁹

[...]

⁹⁴ In reference to the “Second” Kalahari Debate of the late twentieth century.

⁹⁵ Barnard, A. (2007) *Anthropology and the Bushman*. Oxford: Berg. 101.

⁹⁶ Passarge, S. & Wilmsen, E. N. (ed.) (1997) *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1886–1898) of Siegfried Passarge: nineteenth century Khoisan and Bantu speaking peoples*, translations from German. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 127.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

⁹⁹ Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 1 December 1910, Upington, transcribed from letter number 681, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

To your last letter you asked me to obtain permission from the Govt. to unearth skeletons of Bush people from the crown lands in Bechuanaland, especially in the Kalahari. I have now this permission and can issue the same to my deputy. But to be quite frank on the matter if I issue you this permission, I would have to be satisfied that the skeletons thus obtained would come to this museum only and also that the exhumed skeletons would not be those of very much mixed cross breed, but of those true Bush people you told me of in your letter. For certain reasons a great deal of information has been obtained here on the mercantile side of the search for skeletons of would be, or said to be Bush people obtaining at Upington and how or where they are disposed of. I would therefore, before asking you to procure more for me. – mind I know that the price we pay is not or cannot be a very remunerative one and ask you to give me your word. – it is quite sufficient for me – that the skeletons would come to us and to nobody else and that they would be those of which you spoke, from the interior. As I understand that heavy rains have fallen and the ... will prove plentiful therefore procuring these relics will now prove easier.¹⁰⁰

[...]

Press of work has prevented me writing at once to you re skeletons. ... I had to get the requested authority and mention my deputy. You mention that we shall have to go a good deal higher than ... for the skeletons. This is not very promising. If I can, I will ... But to pay the price called for in Europe, and most museums have also made inquiries from me, is out of the question. Moreover the exportation is closed. A Bill is being passed and things will, in all likelihood, be stopped and eventually confiscated. Now, do not think that I am mentioning these things to get an advantage and obtain the skeletons cheaper. It is not so! I have trusted to your honour and I prove it again in sending the authorization required.¹⁰¹

These excerpts detail their partnership and the collection of human remains as a broader practice – one in which the South African Museum struggled to compete, as procurement was made with minimal funding. Péringuey's reference to the "Colonial Bush" that he expects to have received from Lennox is a contradiction of his advice to Pöch, which predates the above excerpt by more than a year. One could also understand Péringuey's desire to keep others such as Pöch at arm's length, since he hoped to acquire material for the museum collection. The letters to Lennox expose Péringuey's dependence on Lennox's first-hand experience with collecting to provide source information that gave context and relevance to these "relics". Below is an excerpt from a letter (see **Appendix F**) detailing this point.

I would be glad indeed if you could tell me a little more about the skeletons. Are they those of Basarwa or mixed Hottentot Bush, or of what is called here (Colonial) Bush. Then also, how were they buried? Laying on the side or in the sitting attitude? But they were I presume with tucked up legs towards the chins, etc. Are the bodies wrapped in [sac] or lambs cloth? Any information relating to their burials would be greatly appreciated.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 8 February 1911, Upington, transcribed from letter number 877, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁰¹ Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 1 March 1911, Upington, transcribed from letter number 934, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁰² Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 15 August 1910, Upington, transcribed from letter number 366, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

Knowing, as Lennox probably did, what Péringuey was hoping to hear, it is possible that he would have satisfied Péringuey's expectations, in order to further authenticate his own findings in Péringuey's eyes. The below excerpt (see **APPENDIX G**) includes two small illustrations sketched on the letter in Péringuey's hand. The confirmation of previous queries and payment indicates Péringuey's reliance on, and trust in, the opinion of Lennox with regard to "Bush" types.

Many thanks for your information regarding the Korana Bushman, and the acknowledgment of our cheque. I trust you will give us a chance to have some of the ... Nama ... skeletons when you obtain them. Can you tell me if these people make pots and if so what the shape is ... conical or round and if they make these could any be obtained?¹⁰³

It is clear that Péringuey was highly confident in Lennox's ability to distinguish "Bush" types, his ability to obtain examples as required, and his trustworthiness with regard to his method of collecting and the nature of the items procured. Péringuey held this position despite public knowledge of the reproachable character of the infamous "Scotty Smith".¹⁰⁴ Lennox was also known as a convicted diamond smuggler in the publicised "trial of notorious highwaymen" of 1887.¹⁰⁵ Péringuey also relied on various government officials to keep him abreast of the whereabouts of these "relics", and even assist him in acquiring them. The below excerpt was from a letter marked "confidential" (see **Appendices H–I**), from Péringuey to Harry Drew, the Assistant Resident Magistrate in Rietfontein in 1911.

It is really very kind of you to procure the two skeletons of Bush people which you announce in your letter. Of course I shall refund any expense incurred procuring them and also in forwarding, and be very thankful. I shall drop a line to Le Roche. He had probably no opportunity to get at Lieflik's victims. But he promised me to do so, and I doubt not that he will keep his word. I do not remember if I told you that I deputed Mr Lennox to procure for us some Bushpeople skeletons. I understand that he was going to procure these in the Kalahari, I presume he is to be trusted in such matters.

It would hardly be right to collect under my permit for other people. As you probably know the Bill for preservation of Bushman relics has passed both ... and Bush skeletons are scheduled in the Bill and it is our law. Any attempt to send to England, or Austria or Germany is punishable now. And I thus hope, that my permit will cause good specimens to come to me. I need not give more explanation at present. If skeletons went to Austria, I cannot find out how many went to Germany, [and] 8 intended for Austria went – quite lately to England. I only got the dregs, women and

¹⁰³ Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 30 August 1910, Uppington, transcribed from letter number 394, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁰⁴ Legassick, M. & Rassool, C. (1999) *Skeletons in the Cupboard: Museums and the incipient trade in human remains, 1907–1917*. Bellville, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape. 31.

¹⁰⁵ Mathews, J. W., Rosenthal, E. & Cloete, E. (1887) *Incwadi Yami/ Twenty Years personal Experience in South Africa*. New York: Rogers and Sherwood. 203-204. Among his exploits was the theft of diamonds to the value of £ 4000 from the Free State which he had planned to take to Cape Town with the help of three others. The four were arrested and sentenced in March of 1885 by Chief Justice Reitz in what became a "celebrated" event known as the "trial of notorious highwaymen".

youths. But this is of course confidential. Fortunately the 8 that went to England fell, for study, in the hands of the very expert to whom all our material is sent for examination and report, and thus it is a gain, whereas if they had gone to their intended destinations, it would have been a loss to English Science. Anyway, when the Bill is promulgated, you will, Shaw says, receive clearer instructions as to the removal of these relics.

Since you did me the pleasure of calling at the museum and inspecting our models, we have added three excellent specimens. The females with a posterior developed more than well pronounced and a Bushman drawing the bow which, I am sure, you will admire when you come to visit to Cape Town.¹⁰⁶

Péringuey refers in the letter to the Bushman Relics Protection Act 22 of 1911. This was the first act designed to protect cultural heritage; it came into being soon after the Union of South Africa was established in 1910.¹⁰⁷ The Act stated that “anthropological contents of graves, caves, rock shelters, middens or shell mounds of such Bushmen or other aboriginals” should be protected. Skeletons, as “Bushman relics”, would fall into this category. However, what was most important about this law was its ability to ban the export of relics, which was reflected in the hostile relationship between anthropologists in South Africa and those abroad, with the former realising their loss in the export of these relics.¹⁰⁸ Péringuey also confirms in the letter his close relationship with England and the single-minded advancement of English science. The expert he referred to was very likely Shruballs, as later correspondence seems to suggest.¹⁰⁹ This reference is further confirmed by the museum’s own annals on studies completed by Shruballs in 1905 and 1907.¹¹⁰ The three “specimens” Péringuey refers to line up with the records found on the life-casts numbered 3881, 3885, and 3886. All three models were from Prieska, cast in 1911, and classified as Cape Bushman (see **Figures 5, 10 and 11**). A clamouring for “Bushman relics” is further expressed in the letter from Péringuey to Drew, dated earlier (see **Appendices J–K**).

I have written a note to Le Roche as you suggested. I believe I met him before long ago. I asked him to favour me with a call. I am the more desirous of obtaining the relics of the departed Bush, that through some underhand work, all similar ones are surreptitiously removed from this country, and this is not as it should be... I cannot cope with price offered by some of these body snatchers – some of them political (military) spies, using their position as a cloak [and] fully ... as well as for the scientific material they have though obtained. I doubt not that you understand to what people I am referring to.

¹⁰⁶ Louis Péringuey to Harry Drew, 30 April 1911, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, transcribed from letter numbered 131 and 132, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁰⁷ Nafziger, J. A. R. & Paterson, R. K. (eds.) (2014) *Handbook on the Law of Cultural Heritage and International Trade*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. 354.

¹⁰⁸ This serves as a clear indication that “Bushman relics” were in demand and rapidly escaping South African borders.

¹⁰⁹ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko South History Centre, personal interview, 4 March 2014.

¹¹⁰ Péringuey, L. (1911) The Stone Ages of South Africa as represented in the collection of the South African Museum. *Annals of the South African Museum*. (8). 197.

The man (Bush) Lieflik has been sentenced to death, but he has not been executed as yet. I am in correspondence with Mr Garcia regarding him if his sentence is not commuted to penal servitude.

You may perhaps like to hear that we have procured the models of two Hottentot women wonderfully developed aft [and] fore. I hope to show these to you when you come back for a spell to Cape Town ... We are trying at present to obtain by gift a series of live wild animals of [the] Cape Colony for presentation to the Prince of Wales, at the time of his visit. The other Colonies are doing the same, but I fear that our presentation will not be the best. Kindly inquire from your people if there is any chance or possibility of getting anything – as gifts – for we shall be here clearly taxed to provide accommodation and keep until March, because owing to the charming English climate, the animals cannot be sent there before.

I saw here, the other day, Dr Borchers – from Uppington. He told me he would try to help. ... I believe that they have never been seen in Europe of course, the Prince is going to make his presentations to the Zoological Gardens as he did with those he received in India and Australia; and as his father, the Present King did with his Indian collection.

Now, if it is not asking too much I would like you to involve yourself in the concern and perhaps let me have you news on the same.¹¹¹

It is interesting that Péringuey refers to the “political (military) spies” as “body snatches”, when he later mentions a man who may well be executed if his sentence is not commuted. Curiously, the inclusion of the word “Bush” in brackets after “man” suggests that he is hoping to acquire the remains of Lieflik as “Bushman relics” after he is executed. He also mentions Le Roche in connection with obtaining Lieflik’s remains, as he does in the letter dated 30 April 1911, where he talks about gaining access to Lieflik’s victims and to Mr Garcia. The letter describes the procurement of the models of two Hottentot women and of live animal specimens for presentation to the Prince of Wales in a similar vein. It reveals a colonial and Eurocentric attitude that is intended to view the Bushmen as little more than a resource for scientific study. The ethically unstable terrain here is not surprising when one considers the following example, taken from a letter written by Péringuey to government official A R Wilmot on 28 September 1909 (see **Appendices L–M**):

[T]he relics should be simply dug out ... and if well besprinkled with paraffin... and left to the action of the sun in the veld – of course in a box – for a few days, it would not prove offensive and could be sent by rail – contents of the package of course not divulged but termed specimen of natural history.¹¹²

This chapter has attempted to expose the impetus and ideological network behind the life-casts, as well as the methods of data collection regarding “Bush” types.

¹¹¹ Louis Péringuey to Harry Drew, 25 April 1910, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, transcribed from letters numbered 110 and 111, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹¹² Louis Péringuey to AR Wilmot, 28 September 1909, transcribed from letters numbered 632 and 633, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa. Also in Legassick, M. & Rassool, C. (1999) *Skeletons in the Cupboard: Museums and the incipient trade in human remains, 1907–1917*. Bellville, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape 41.

Chapter 2 – The “Other” on display

2.1 Introduction

The life-casts that had originally been viewed as specimens in the faunal collection, and had been made available for viewing only by researchers on request, became objects of display in the most popular exhibits at the South African Museum for several decades. The reception of the life-casts by the public and by academics did not occur in isolation from the political and practical governmental debates circulating at the time. The debates regarding the purity of existing “Bush” races are referenced in this chapter because they influenced academic and public opinion of the Bushmen and therefore their representation in the life-casts. Drury’s casting project was intertwined with the acquisition of skeletal material.¹¹³ As is evidenced by the images of the accession-records cards, the most important details noted were the area of origin, racial type, and gender. This chapter looks at how these “specimens” were used to support and perpetuate racist ideologies from the 1930s to 1950s.

The notion of the objectification of the “Other” is central to this chapter and is described with examples on two levels – firstly, the physical objectification of the bodies of the models through physical anthropology and live Bushmen displays, and secondly, their representation in the South African Museum’s exhibits for public consumption from the 1930s to the 1950s. The last part of the chapter explains how the objectification of the “Bush” races and the divide between social and physical anthropology contributed to, and coexisted with, the ideologies of apartheid, Volkekunde and Afrikaner nationalism. These ideologies changed the structure of the study of anthropology, and repurposed the life-casts for a particular agenda. This chapter also references correspondence found in the Iziko Social History Archives. The letters in this correspondence are between E L Gill, director of the South African Museum from 1925 to 1942, Sir William Clark, a British representative on the Bushman Preservation Committee, General J C Smuts, Mathew Robertson Drennan of the Medical School at the University of Cape Town, Raymond Dart of the University of Witwatersrand, Senator T Boydell of the Bushman Preservation Committee, Isaac Scapera of the School of African Studies at the University of Cape Town, ethnologist Dorothea Bleek, philologist Louis Maingard, and Donald Bain, organiser of live Bushmen shows and the Bushman Reservation.

¹¹³ The casts from living models were included as specimens in the physical anthropology collection and disassociated from social aspects such as the personal details of the models.

2.2 Objectification: an attitude manifested

The information revealed in the letter books raises questions about the ethical and scientific parameters employed in early South African anthropology, ethnology and archaeology. The letters clearly indicate the objectification of indigenous people, even before their conversion into “specimens” and “objects” within the museum-display context. The guidelines for the life-casting project are key to understanding how objectification shaped the South African Museum’s later representation of Bushmen in its displays. In this section, I analyse the communication between, on the one hand, museum workers Péringuey and Drury and, on the other, the external organisations and figures that helped support their project by outlining their objectives for the life-casting. As if echoing Robert Knox’s ideas about the Bushmen, discussed in Chapter One, this project (which was primarily an anthropological and ethnological exercise) aimed to examine the Bushmen of the twentieth century not as modern beings but instead as the “children of the desert”.¹¹⁴ Geologist and ethnologist George William Stow (1822–1882) and genealogist George McCall Theal (1837–1919) claimed in *The Native Races of South Africa* that the migration areas of the Bushmen had been infringed upon by the Hottentots and Bantu, a point corroborated by Passarge in *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1896–1898) of Siegfried Passarge*.¹¹⁵ The pair argued that this shift was happening long before European agricultural and colonial endeavours further reduced the hunter-gatherers’ migration areas and numbers. In 1905, prior to Péringuey’s life-casting project, the British Association for the Advancement of Science and its newly formed South African counterpart held a meeting in South Africa. A total of 380 British delegates and many other foreign scientists were present, including George Darwin, son of Charles Darwin.¹¹⁶ Also included were important figures in anthropology such as Alfred C Haddon, president of the anthropological section of the British Association, and Felix von Luschan, director of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. The “importance of investigating the Bushmen and Hottentots” was stressed by Haddon.¹¹⁷ He repeated the notions set out by his predecessors Stow and Theal, which registered a sense of urgency about preserving the Bushmen; he

¹¹⁴ Barnard, A. (2007) *Anthropology and the Bushmen*. Oxford: Berg. 20.

¹¹⁵ Passarge, S. & Wilmsen, E. N. (eds.) (1997) *The Kalahari Ethnographies (1886-1898) of Siegfried Passarge: nineteenth-century Khoisan and Bantu-speaking peoples*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 88.

¹¹⁶ Morris, A. G. (2002) The British Association meeting of 1905 and the rise of physical anthropology in South Africa, *South African Journal of Science*. July/August 2002. (98). 337.

¹¹⁷ Haddon, A. C. (1906) [Presidential address to Section H.- Anthropology] *Report of the seventy-fifth meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, South Africa, August and September 1905*. 525. Also in Davison, P. (1993) Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of “Bushman” and “Hottentots”, 1907-1924. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5) 168 also in Morris, A. G. (2002) The British Association meeting of 1905 and the rise of physical anthropology in South Africa, *South African Journal of Science*. July/August 2002. (98). 337.

further “mentioned the need for reliable anthropometrical data”, and particularly for “comparative physiology”.¹¹⁸

In 1908, Péringuey arranged for museum taxidermist James Drury to travel to Kanye (in present-day Botswana) to retrieve anthropometrical data. Péringuey had a very particular idea of what qualified as good examples of “pure-bred Bushmen”, and he drew up a memorandum with specific instructions for Drury’s expedition. A copy of the letter can be found in **Appendices N–P**.

For Drury – Memorandum about the Modelling. I would like to have first a group of five or six, men, woman and children photographed in the position they naturally assume, ... the man carrying his few arms and chattels; the woman carrying what they generally carry, the youngsters probably carry nothing.

... make them assume positions that will not make the models appear too stiff, you may have to take single people somewhat like the figures we do have... Do not chose [*sic*] the too decrepit specimens. But I would far prefer however to have those with all the wrinkles of the body, especially the belly, than to have them as well fed as our previous specimens.

Pay special attention to the hairs in your note of the specimens, of the colour or expression of the eye, of the shape of the ear, and above all copy the colour of the skin, and verify your slab a couple of days after you have painted it in order to make quite sure of the genuine colour ... Men are of course desirable, women still more so. You will be very careful to take all their peculiarities, including the “apron”. A special moulding of the same to be added to the statue is very much wanted... Could you take a woman with her little one on her back, wraps and all, it would indeed look very natural... As to the remuneration to the Chief you are authorised to give him from 5 to 10 pounds provided he gives you all facility for taking the casts. You would however not make him the present until you have ascertained from some person in authority or the Missionary whether you should give him the full sum or the other.

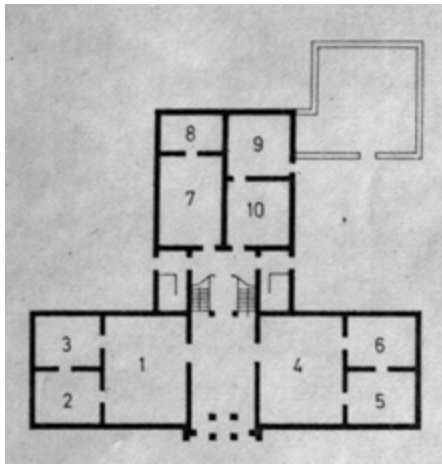
As to the Bush people you will probably get at the stores the shirts and petticoats suitable for them. The knives you have ... Endeavour to buy the garments of the Bush people in order to clothe the reproductions with if you can, provided that their garments or arms are not Manchester or [?Birmingham] goods...¹¹⁹

Péringuey requested that Drury not choose “specimens” that were sickly or starved, overweight or non-athletic, and he described what he deemed to be ideally shaped representations of the Bushmen or San. The exclusion of the sickly also meant ignoring the poverty-stricken and starved Bushmen who were living as squatters on farms, and, in so doing, avoiding a very real dimension of the Bushmen’s existence. This trend is repeated further along in the instructions when Péringuey requests the inclusion of a woman with a

¹¹⁸ Dubow, S. 1995. *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate. 35 and also in, Morris, AG. 2002. The British Association meeting of 1905 and the rise of physical anthropology in South Africa, *South African Journal of Science*. July/August 2002. (98). 337

¹¹⁹ Louis Péringuey to James Drury, November 1908, letter at numbers 718-720, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa. Also referenced by Davison, P. 1993. Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of ‘Bushmen’ and ‘Hottentots’, 1907-1924. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5). 173

child on her back, which he thought “would indeed look very natural”.¹²⁰ He asks for the models’ clothes to be bought from them, “provided that their garments are not Manchester or Birmingham goods” – a qualification that suggests a desire to avoid the reality of Western influence. He also asks for the peculiarities in the men and particularly the “apron” of the women to be cast and added to the finished figure. The sexual organs of the women were of particular interest; examples with elongated labia were a sought-after curiosity.¹²¹



While Drury focused his attention on the life-casting project, which began only in 1908, there were displays in what was called the Archaeology-Ethnology Room, marked Room 1 in the floor plan. In 1906, this space underwent changes. It was described to have been “entirely rearranged during the year, and a display on more systematic and scientific lines has resulted thereby ... aboriginal stone-engravings which is probably unique ... a series of photographs of our native races, copies of tracings of Bushman paintings, etc. The skeleton of the

‘Strand Looper’ aboriginal has been exhibited in one case by itself.”¹²² This display stayed in place (with the exhibition around it modified) until the 1980s, when it was finally removed.¹²³

The 1906 report mentions the possible inclusion of a “model of a Bushman” and that there would be “no vacant space left in the Anthropological-Ethnological Room, which should be four times the size of the present one”.¹²⁴ A cast was added in 1907, made under the direction of Felix von Luschan, director of the Museum für Völkerkunde of Berlin.¹²⁵ The completed cast was described as a “natural size figure of the Bushman ‘Knorhaan’” and was “placed in a case by itself”.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Louis Péringuey to James Drury, November 1908, letter at numbers 718-720, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹²¹ Drury, J. (1926) *The Pudendal Parts of the South African Bush Race. The Medical Journal of South Africa*, November 1926. (22). 114.

¹²² Péringuey, L. (1906) Department of Anthropology. *Report of the South African Museum*. 33. Also found in: Legassick, M. & Rassool, C. (1999) *Skeletons in the Cupboard: Museums and the incipient trade in human remains, 1907-1917*. Bellville, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape. 5 and corroborated in an interview with Gerald Klinghardt.

¹²³ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko Social History Centre, personal interview, 4 March 2014.

¹²⁴ Péringuey, L. (1906) Department of Anthropology. *Report of the South African Museum*. 33.

¹²⁵ He was present on invitation from the *British Association for the Advancement of Science* and arrived with his wife in 1905.

¹²⁶ Ibid: 26. Also found in: Legassick, M. & Rassool, C. (1999). *Skeletons in the Cupboard: Museums and the incipient trade in human remains, 1907-1917*. Bellville, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape. 5. Also in a correspondence from Péringuey to Von Luschan in letters 80 and 194 of 18 April 1906 and 2 February 1907 respectively. Social History Centre Archives, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

Circa 1915, several of Drury's life-casts from the casting done on the group in Prieska were displayed together in Room 7 on the floor plan, the Anthropology-Ethnology Room (see **Figure 12**). The image shown in **Figure 12** is believed to be the earliest photograph of the casts, taken before more casts were made available.¹²⁷ The life-casts in the image were the first examples of Drury's casting work to be displayed. After comparing this image to several others in the archive, and with the help of Gerald Klinghardt and Patricia Davison, I was able to estimate that the photographed display would have appeared in this form from around 1915 to around 1931, and that it is the earliest known display of these specific casts. Klinghardt was able to infer this information not only from the style of display but also from architecture and fittings of the surrounding room.¹²⁸ The display was placed centrally in Room 7 on the floor plan.

¹²⁷ This image is titled; Neg 2943, in the Iziko Social History Centre Archive and is undated.

¹²⁸ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko Social History Centre, personal interview, 4 March 2014. It was also dated c1915 in Patricia Davison's "Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentots', 1907-1924". *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5). 179.



Figure 122. Neg 2943.

In this image, the two female figures in the foreground, referred to in **Figures 5** and **11** respectively, were identified as Cape Bushmen, as was the pointing figure of a boy with an arrow case on his back. The figures were placed on a naturalised faux earth floor rather than on the white, glass-covered cases of the later display. Although placed in a group, the

figures still appear to be standalone pieces. This arrangement represents the earliest style of display of the life-casts made by Drury, dated to circa 1915. The original image was damaged by someone who wanted to expose the silhouette of the female figure in the foreground.

The female figure with her hands on her hips in the foreground, accessioned as figure 3885, is listed on the old system as Lys Achterdam, a Cape Bushman. The female figure behind her (3886) and the boy pointing his finger (3890) are also listed as Cape Bushmen. The cards have a name listed for the boy figure: Domtes Camboo. He had been cast by Drury in Prieska in 1911, as were most of the figures in the exhibit. The text accompanying the display in **Figure 12** read:

CAPE BUSHMEN: The Bushman of the Cape appear to have been the purest-blooded representatives of the Bushman stock, much purer than those of the Kalahari and other more northerly districts. They are now practically extinct. They were light in colour and small or medium height; the prominent posterior development (steatopygy) of the women was a characteristic feature of the race. To anthropologists the Bushmen are one of the most interesting races in the world. There are strong grounds for suspecting that they are of the same stock as the remote Upper Palaeolithic period. This cannot yet be definitely asserted but recent discoveries in North and East Africa have tended to strengthen the probability considerably.

The above passage shows that the South African Museum applied the very same concept of typological display as its northern counterparts, employing comparative theory to support its findings and interpret its displays during this period. The following chapter explores how this process of objectification brought about the racialism and “Othering” that was perpetuated for decades to follow.

2.3 The specimen interpreted as artefact

Péringuey and Drury’s life-casting project, aimed at building a species archive and fully representing the morphology of what they deemed “pure-bred Bushmen”, was shown in the previous chapter to have produced inconclusive results. The larger purpose of the project was to develop scientific knowledge of human origins and find modern man’s primitive forebears. Yet its consumption by academics, public officials and, later, the general public – through the displays at the South African Museum – sought to define the Khoisan as a racial and physical type by objectification. This chapter analyses this consumption by detailing the actions recorded in letter correspondence at the Iziko Social History Archive. The project pursued “pure-bred” examples cast by Drury from Kanye in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Lake Chrissie, Grootfontein, Sandfontein, Carnarvon, and Prieska, as well as from convicts held in Kimberley, Gaborone, Windhoek and Cape Town. Drury continued to cast and measure, painstakingly collecting data for 17 years, with many models subjected to intimate

examination, photography, measurement and casting.¹²⁹ Those who objected to the scrutiny and the invasive procedures were often coerced into cooperation by white officials – for example, the local constable or magistrate – or sometimes even by a trusted local leader or chief who would be bargained with for access to models, as Péringuey’s instructions to Drury confirm.¹³⁰

Drury began his project by casting busts and perfecting the technique before he moved on to full body casting. He stated that he had learnt by trial and error and that others could learn the same way.¹³¹ Reinhold Rau, in “How James Drury Cast the Bushmen”, displayed in the South African Museum, outlined the process of life-casting followed by Drury (detailed in **Appendix Q**).¹³² The slow casting process could lead to severe discomfort for the model, with muscle spasms and skin ailments both common symptoms. Drury’s method paid particular attention to detail in order to record the sexual organs and sexual peculiarities of the “Bush” races.¹³³ The association with a “savage” or “brutal” sexuality was one of the characteristics that placed the “Bush” races squarely in the realm of the primitive in the eyes of those who studied them. This association manifested in a prolonged obsession with the study of the pudendal parts of both men and women and of the steatopygia that occurred in many of the “Bush” races. The famous example of this pattern, as mentioned, was Saartjie Baartman.¹³⁴ Baartman’s remains were returned to South Africa in April 2002 as part of a repatriation project strongly advocated by Henry Bredenkamp, who became the chief executive officer of Iziko Museums of Cape Town in November of the same year.¹³⁵ The inhumane treatment of Baartman, as a live specimen and also after her death, was predicated on a clear definition of the “primitive” body as an object – a rationalisation that could be extended to the display of Drury’s casts, unclothed for public scrutiny.

¹²⁹ Those who were already incarcerated would give little resistance to this further infringement on their person as resistance would likely be futile.

¹³⁰ Louis Péringuey to James Drury, 8 February 1908, letter at numbers 718-720, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹³¹ Du Pisani, E. (1980) James Drury: Man who made the Bushman figures. *National Museum News*. (18) and in Van Zyl, J. A. F. (1981) Lifestyles of the Bushmen. *South African Digest*, 3 July. (18). 6.

¹³² Rau, R. (1964) How James Drury cast the Bushmen displayed at the South African Museum. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Wetenskap*. August 1964. (60). 242.

¹³³ Letter from Louis Péringuey to James Drury, November 1908, letter at numbers 718-720, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹³⁴ The woman dubbed, “Hottentot Venus”, who was put on display for the public in Paris in 1810 and after her death, was further studied and dissected in 1925 by Georges Cuvier at the Musée de l’Homme. *Returning the remains: a Khoe story 2*. Williams, W. Cape Town: Shamanic Organic Productions. 2013. DVD

¹³⁵ Bredenkamp later became the CEO of the Iziko Museums of South Africa (then the Iziko Museums of Cape Town), an umbrella organisation that has the South African Museum under its charge. There was no change to the Ethnography Gallery while he was CEO or any further engagement with the issue of the *Bushman Diorama*.



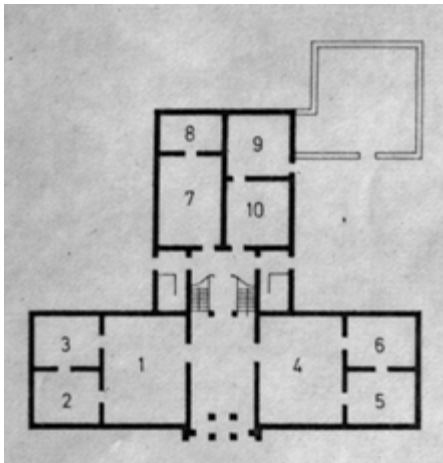
Figure 13. Cast modelled by Janikie Achterdam.

This image shows how the figure was first displayed at the South African Museum. The cast was included in various displays, either unclothed or semi-clothed, from 1911 to 2001.



Figure 14. Janikie Achterdam, where she lived in Prieska (1911).

This image lays bare the living conditions of the people at Prieska during Drury's casting project and stands in stark contrast to the various scenarios in which the life-cast of Achterdam's body was placed at the South African Museum. The museum displays stripped the inhabitants of Prieska of their social and economic context. In doing so, their contemporaneity was removed, and the displays could create the effect (or the illusion) of timelessness.



The New Ethnology Gallery opened in June 1932 and included a whole new room built off Room 3 in the earlier floor plan. The cast of Janikie Achterdam (see **Figure 13**), relative of Lys Achterdam who modelled for cast 3885, was displayed entirely unclothed when it was first shown at the South African Museum in 1912. The life-cast would have been first displayed in Room 7. This representation of Janikie Achterdam denied the personal or social aspects of her life and simply aimed to describe a racial type. Both Lys and Janikie

Achterdam were cast at Prieska in 1911. They were part of a group of 13 people identified as /Xam, and considered excellent examples of the Cape Bushmen.¹³⁶ This figure was placed in one of three large glass display cases in 1932 in the New Ethnology Gallery: “with one or two exceptions the figures are not dressed as they are considered to be mainly of anthropological rather than ethnographical importance”.¹³⁷ Yet even when the figures were clothed, which Péringuey’s memorandum to Drury suggests they sometimes were, the figures had to be dressed as “naturally” as possible, despite the models having been stripped of their own shirts, skirts, petticoats and trousers for the casting process. The differentiation in treatment here points to a division between cultural representation and the racialised scientific representation of the “Bush” types. Many of these figures were used in the infamous *Bushman Diorama*, closed in 2001. The 1930s, however, were marked by the arrival of new energy in the displays at the Ethnology Gallery.

Employed first part-time and then full-time in 1933, ethnologist Margaret Shaw oversaw the process of categorising and registering ethnographic material at the Museum.¹³⁸ Part of the Ethnology Gallery was closed off by a divider while the sorting and cataloguing took place. From 1936 to 1942, the galleries along the New Ethnology Gallery were opened up and the collection was set out for display, while the excess not on display was kept at the new ethnology store, built in 1939. Shaw looked to contemporary practice for guidance, such as that of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, a specialist museum of anthropology. She also

¹³⁶ Dorothea Bleek identified the group as good examples of the “Cape Bushman” and supported this with linguistic evidence to racial purity. Also found in, *Documentation Re The San Diorama* provided for 2007 workshop. Iziko Social History Archives.

¹³⁷ Shaw, E. M. (1941) The New Ethnology Gallery at the South African Museum. *South African Museum Association Bulletin*. (2). 161.

¹³⁸ She also liberated the ethnological material from the Long Shed, an adjacent storage shack which Péringuey had built some years before.

sought advice from government ethnologist Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo (1904–1989).¹³⁹ Government anthropologists and ethnologists were particularly important for Bantu administration; they fulfilled the role of the law in processing the Bantu people and effecting control, as mandated by the Department of Native Affairs, while also enforcing segregation as a precursor to the apartheid ideology.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Davison, P. (2004) Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, 2005. (31). 102. This paper was also presented at the SAMA Conference, Cape Town, June 2004 by Patricia Davison.

¹⁴⁰ Evans, Ivan. (1997) *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 47.

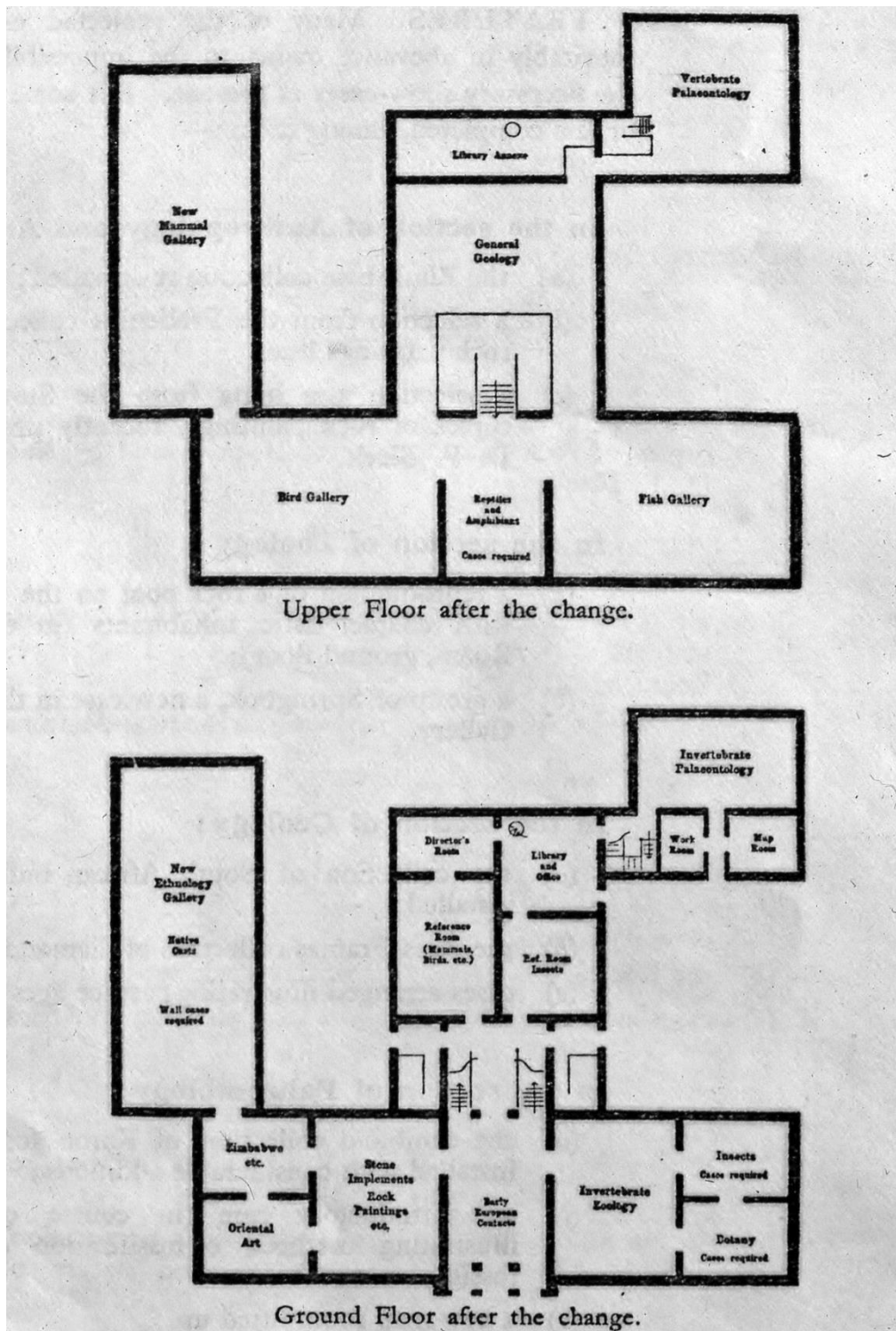


Figure 15. SAM: Re-opening, 1 June 1932 additions+re-arrangements ground +upper floor.

Shown here is a diagram of the layout of the groundfloor and upper levels of the South African Museum, dated 1 June 1932.¹⁴¹ The title suggests that there had been changes to the New Ethnology Gallery, which is depicted on the left-hand side of the diagram. There are

¹⁴¹ The given title is as the image file name appears in the archives.

two other inscriptions for that space: “Native Casts” and “Wall cases required”. The diagram shows this space leading onto three other spaces: “Zimbabwe etc.”, “Oriental Art”, and “Stone Implements, Rock Paintings, etc.” The precursor to this layout is shown in **Figure 6**. **Figure 16** shows the figures in some of the new white display cases. In conversation with the curator, I dated the image to the 1930s, after the new room was built.¹⁴²

Shaw divided the display, focusing on two themes. The first included the crafts of the various native races, and featured hut-building techniques, basket weaving and pottery. The second part, and the main display, included beadwork, aprons, cloaks, shields and domestic utensils set to specific tribal groups, a feature that has remained in place, even to this day. The life-casts were placed in groups in the three central cases, and new cases were installed to accommodate more figures.¹⁴³ The image in **Figure 16** clearly shows these three cases placed along the length of the room.



Figure 16. Archived as “untitled”, the New Ethnology Gallery in the 1930s.

This image views the room from the perspective of someone entering the new gallery from Room 3. The large cases on the left displayed the life-casts, while the narrow cases along the wall on the right displayed objects such as beadwork, domestic utensils, pottery, shields, and spears. The image in **Figure 17** shows a similar view from the second and third central

¹⁴² It represents what was referred to as the “additions and re-arrangements” made for the reopening on 1 June 1932.

¹⁴³ This is indicated as new cases required on the 1932 layout in **Figure 15**.

cases, towards the far end of the room. It also shows Margaret Shaw at the end of the gallery, viewing one of the displays.



Figure 17. The New Ethnology Gallery in the 1930s, with Margaret Shaw at the far end of the room.



Figure 18. The central display of life-casts in the 1930s, grouped together with the Frobenius collection on the wall behind it.

This image again shows the room labelled New Ethnology Gallery, presenting the Frobenius collection of rock painting copies, which links the room thematically to the one labelled

“Stone Implements, rock paintings, etc.”. This arrangement effectively likens the Khoisan way of life to that of ancient man.¹⁴⁴ Frobenius and his team copied their versions accurately in paint on paper, and the paper was treated to give a sense of the colouration of the original rock surface.¹⁴⁵ Unlike the George W Stow and Helen Tongue collections of copies of “Bushman” paintings already in the collection, these were not traced drawings. The figures were labelled with numbers, beginning with 1 (the figure of a man drawing the bow) and 2 (the figure of a man crouching and leaning to one side). This was the first of the three display cases that one encountered upon entering the New Ethnology Gallery.



Figure 19. An untitled image of the Frobenius collection of painted copies of rock paintings in the 1930s.

Figures 18 and 19 show two sides of the first of the three large display cases, visible on entering from Room 3. It is also partially visible on the left in **Figure 16**. However, here the case is edged in black and the legs are clearly visible. Furthermore, the Frobenius collection

¹⁴⁴ The Frobenius collection, named after German anthropologist Leo Frobenius, was the product of his work with a team of German ethnologists brought to South Africa in 1928 to copy rock paintings and engravings. Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 140.

¹⁴⁵ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 140.

extends behind it, seemingly closing off that section of the room. The top of the second central case is visible.¹⁴⁶



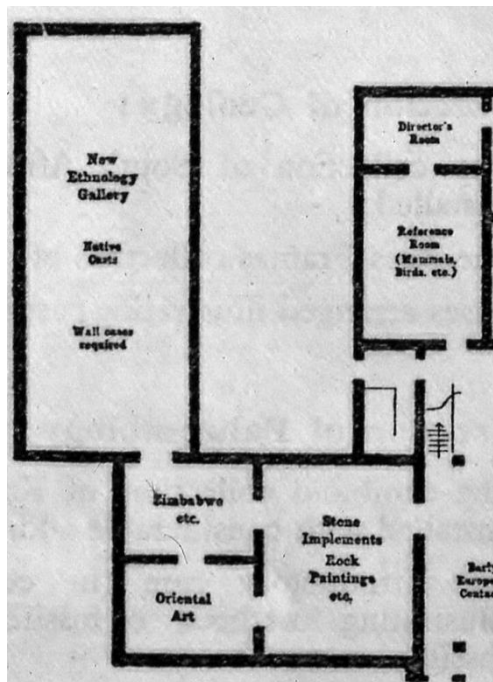
Figure 20. In Bushman Room.

This image, with its archived title, shows the life-casts represented systematically by racial type, in a relatively clinical layout, and is dated circa 1915. The bases of the busts, also cast from live models, can be seen on the top shelf in the image. This display was probably an interim display of the figures. Several of the figures here, including some shown in **Figure 12** (circa 1915), are also featured in images of the New Ethnology Gallery of 1932. The figure on the left was used in the *Bushman Diorama* and is described as Cape Bushman in the records. The model was part of the Prieska group moulded and cast by Drury in 1911. There is also a note at the bottom of the card, “D’ Karoo Diorama”, signalling the later inclusion of this figure in the display.¹⁴⁷ This figure, along with the others in the image, were repeatedly used in different types of display from this point onward. Both male figures were included in the famed *Bushman Diorama*, which opened in 1959. The second life-cast in **Figure 20**, “Mosarwa Boy”, is accessioned as 3391, and is listed as Masarwa Bushman, Kanye of

¹⁴⁶ This could have been taken earlier than 1932 before the whole room was completely installed, probably while Shaw and her colleagues prepared the rest of the space.

¹⁴⁷ This note refers to the *Bushman Diorama* and is found on several other cards.

Bechuanaland Protect, moulded and cast by Drury. The female life-cast with the baby, listed as Mosarwa and accessioned as 3396, is described as Masarwa Bushman, Kanye, also moulded and cast by Drury. A note on the card says “cloak and apron added”, which refers to the clothing seen in later displays of the figure.¹⁴⁸ The life-cast on the far right, a seated female figure, accessioned as number 3397, is listed as Masarwa Bushman, Kanye, and was also moulded and cast by Drury. Here the typological display serves to describe ethnic and racial types, echoing the other displays surveyed thus far.



In the New Ethnology Gallery, Shaw had life-casts on display alongside material-culture items, some of which were still in use with hunter-gatherers at the time. Leading off this room were the Zimbabwe Ruins and oriental art displays. In the room indicated as “Stone Implements, Rock Paintings, etc.”, some of the archaeological material that had previously been displayed on the first floor at the top of the stairs was shown, as well as the case containing the skeletal remains of the “Strand Looper”, copies of rock paintings, and stone tools. The exhibits remained in this arrangement until the 1960s, with small modifications made along the way. Both exhibitions deliberately represent the

Khoisan as a people unmoved by time and modernity. The construction of the objects on display, the copied cave paintings, and the manipulated life-casts all demonstrate a deliberate attempt to close off the Khoisan as a people, both in time and in space.

2.4 Bain and the Bushman Preservation Committee

The Bushman Preservation Committee, founded in 1937, was made up of Senator Thomas Boydell, Willem Steenkamp, a senior member of parliament and pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church, E Leonard Gill, director of the South African Museum from 1925 to 1942, Raymond Dart, and Cecil James Sibbett, a Rhodes devotee and active public figure, all of whom sought to naturalise the remnants of the “Bush” races. It is not surprising that the staff members at the South African Museum and many of their correspondents advocated the exhibition and segregation of “pure-bred Bushmen” in camps and in live displays. “Bain’s Bushmen” became a source of study for a series of other interested parties as well. James van Buskirk used them to further his research on Bushman pudenda, building on work done

¹⁴⁸ The cards and the exhibit labels differ in their spelling of “Masarwa” in the former and “Mosarwa” in the latter.

by Drury and Drennan. Drennan produced a paper on finger mutilation in Bushman culture. Photographer Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin produced an extensive series of ethnographic portraits of the group. This section frames the drive to “preserve” the Bushmen as an exploitative exercise couched in politics, pseudo-science, and commercial interests. The exhibition of live Bushmen by Donald Bain aimed to do more than frame them as a primitive race; he worked to establish a reserve where Bushmen would be free to live as hunter-gatherers, in keeping with their ancient traditions, and removed from the influence of modern society. In 1936, Bain staged a show called *The Bushman of the Kalahari* or *Kalahari Bushmen*, a British Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg. Bain offered to set aside 50% of any income he might derive from the show as the nucleus of a fund for the preservation of these “aboriginal denizens of the Kalahari Desert”.¹⁴⁹ “Bain’s Bushmen” lived on land that was proclaimed as part of the Kalahari Gemsbok Park in 1931. He wanted their land to be protected by government policy, with no “economic development” permitted on it, and for it to be reserved for the “sole use of the Bushmen”, with no persons except administrators, authorised officers or Bushmen allowed access. He wanted, in short, to restrict any further “degeneration” of their genetic strain.¹⁵⁰

In a report on Bain’s Bushmen, Maingard writes that the group he saw were “undoubtedly Bushman in the true sense of the word ... when we examine a native or primitive race ... the examination must be conducted from three points of view: 1. the physical, 2. the linguistic and 3. the cultural”.¹⁵¹ In 1937, just a year later, critical remarks were levelled at Bain’s Bushmen by Police Commissioner Colonel de Villiers. Bain wrote directly to General J C Smuts regarding the Commissioner’s claims. Colonel de Villiers wrote “in an official report” that “Bain’s Bushmen are a collection of Bastards who speak Afrikaans” – they are “Hottentot ... and are unacquainted with the Bushmen language. Furthermore ... there are no true Bushmen in the Union.”¹⁵² Bain states in the same letter that he had “at very considerable personal sacrifice ... endeavoured to segregate and maintain the ‘Bain’s Bushmen’ as a group”, impressing upon Smuts that they are “an exceedingly interesting group, closely allied with the original Cape Bushmen and found nowhere else in South Africa”. He points out that the “treatment meted out to the Bushman servant by the Kalahari

¹⁴⁹ Bain, D. (1936) *The Kalahari Bushmen: A British Empire Exhibition*. Johannesburg: Tillet & Sons. 3.

¹⁵⁰ In a move to see them stay on the reserve and even help their numbers grow and gain more reserves for this purpose, Bain set out to draw attention to the issue. Bain, D. (1936) *The Kalahari Bushmen: A British Empire Exhibition*. Johannesburg: Tillet & Sons. 3.

¹⁵¹ Maingard, L. F. Unpublished *Report by Professor L.F. Maingard*. 9 September 1937. Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁵² Donald Bain to J. C. Smuts, 27 September 1937. Correspondence on Bushmen Preservation, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

farmer is nothing short of criminal and a disgrace”, painting himself as a humanitarian speaking in the interests of the Bushmen.

Others confirmed the authenticity of Bain’s Bushmen. Gill, the director of the South African Museum, wrote that the group’s “racial composition was not in doubt. It included a few acknowledged half-breeds ... but the majority of the adults were as good a sample of the Bushmen as could have been got together anywhere in the last twenty years or so ... the nearest surviving representatives of the Southern Bushmen of the Cape – now on the very verge of extinction”.¹⁵³ Dart, in outrage at the Police Commissioner’s remarks, wrote, “If they are Hottentots or Bastards then the combined intelligence, knowledge and skill of all the aforementioned investigators [Professors Maingard, Doke, Kirby, MacCrone and Messrs] as well as that of the other competent South African scientists such as Dorothea Bleek, Dr. Goodwin, Prof. de Villiers and yourself, who have devoted so much of their lives to understanding what Bushmen and Hottentots and their language and customs really are unreliable and untrustworthy”.¹⁵⁴ In 1937, Bain and his Bushmen group marched on parliament in Cape Town, demanding a reserve and the right to be displayed at the Rosebank showground.¹⁵⁵ In April 1938, at a meeting of the Inter-University Committee for African Studies, a “competent and comprehensive investigation into the welfare of the Bushmen” was taken up by a sub-committee, presided over by Sir William Clark, who represented the British government. Scapera, having previously volunteered to be a committee member, was also included. Interestingly, he stated in a letter to Drennan that he “would like to be assured that both science and the Bushmen would really benefit” from the scheme – the only committee member who put forward such a view, according to the correspondence surveyed for this thesis.¹⁵⁶

All other arguments, including those made by Bain, positioned the Bushmen as objects that should be removed from society and isolated for study. It is no accident that Bain’s project echoes Péringuey and Drury’s project of casting and claiming the remains of Bushmen or Khoisan people. While Drennan of the Medical School at the University of Cape Town studied the 53 Bushmen under Bain’s care, Raymond Dart sought his own version of the

¹⁵³ A Note on the Bushmen of Donald Bain’s Camp by Dr. E. L. Gill, 14 September 1937. Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁵⁴ Raymond Dart to Matthew Drennan, 21 September 1937. Correspondence on Bushmen Preservation, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

¹⁵⁵ Rassool, C. & Hayes, P. (2002). Science and the Spectacle: /Khanako’s South Africa, 1936-1937. In Woodward, W., Hayes, P. & Minkley, G. *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in southern Africa*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 125.

¹⁵⁶ He inquired as to “whether the interests of the Bushmen themselves would best be served by segregating them as a group... some of them, I understand, come from farms; and it may not be too easy for them to return to a traditional Bushman life, whereas on farms they would at least be assured a livelihood”.

Hottentot Venus in a woman named /Khanako.¹⁵⁷ /Khanako was studied by Dart and other scientists from the University of Witwatersrand in the 1930s while she lived at the Frankenwald Farm.¹⁵⁸ In their 2002 book *Deep Histories*, Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes followed /Khanako's journey from Namibia through to Cape Town and Johannesburg, marking the scientists' objectification of her body. /Khanako was Dart's interpreter and, under his instruction, Drury cast her body parts, including her head, finger and genitalia, for research purposes.¹⁵⁹

Despite Senator Boydell's influence, after the Empire Exhibition the Bain's Bushmen group returned to the Kalahari Gemsbok Park in 1937 to find that their dwellings had been burnt and that they were scheduled to be removed from the land.¹⁶⁰

2.5 Trapped in typology

It was here in this remote corner of the world, isolated and unchanged, the ancient Bushman remained, roaming over his broad hunting fields ... here he, the associate of the rhinoceros and giraffe, sculpted the rocks over with primitive designs of art, and covered the walls of his cave dwelling, with paintings, many so closely copied from nature that he would seem to prove that he himself, before his isolation, must have formed the first rippling wave of the advancing tide of civilization which was thrown off from the grand centre of its birth, and of which he, after his enforced separation, became the stereotyped representative.¹⁶¹

The period from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s shaped a very particular understanding of the Khoisan that remained in place for decades to come – one dominated by racial stereotypes and racial typology. This understanding lent the Khoisan a quality of the degenerate, yet it also endowed them with profound scientific importance for human species development. Racial typology sought to classify all human races and was used as a tool for the oppression of the Khoisan people and their descendants in the establishment of apartheid in South Africa.¹⁶² It was rooted in the Afrikaner nationalists' "separate development" ethos, which had a religious as well as a scientific underpinning, and it was also rooted in the efforts of physical anthropologists to produce a ranking system of race.

¹⁵⁷ Rassool, C. & Hayes, P. (2002) Science and the Spectacle: /Khanako's South Africa, 1936-1937. In Woodward, W., Hayes, P. & Minkley, G. *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in southern Africa*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 117-118.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 118.

¹⁵⁹ Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 31.

¹⁶⁰ Rassool, C. & Hayes, P. (2002) Science and the Spectacle: /Khanako's South Africa, 1936-1937. In Woodward, W., Hayes, P. & Minkley, G. *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in southern Africa*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 154.

¹⁶¹ This quote was taken from a manuscript by Stow that was purchased by Lucy Lloyd from his widow after 1882 and edited for publishing by George McCall Theal. Stow, G. W. & Theal G. M. (eds.) (1905) *The Native Races of South Africa: A History of the Intrusion of the Hottentots and Bantu into the Hunting Grounds of the Bushmen, the Aborigines of the Country*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. 231.

¹⁶² Racial typology, stemming from the polygenist (of separate origin) rather than the monogenist (of single origin).

Interestingly, there was very little physical anthropology studied at Afrikaans-medium universities; the interest in this field came mainly from their English-medium counterparts.¹⁶³ The ideologies of these various political and academic movements manifested in the displays at the South African Museum. The following images act as examples of the effects of racial typology during the rise of anthropology and the change in the political climate of South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century.


3396		♀	Masarwa Bushman
1 whole figure			Kanye
1 Head			
	Standing, holding baby.		
	Cloak 2000		
	Apron 4030		
			Mold - Drury
		Cast - Drury	
C ²	Head 2400	Field no 1	

Figure 13. Accession card for the life-cast numbered 3396.

This card features a standing female figure holding a baby, seen also in **Figure 20**.¹⁶⁴ The figure was used in several displays, both semi-nude and clothed. Amendments made over time – including the cloak and apron later displayed on the figure – are inscribed on the card.

¹⁶³ Morris, A. G. (2012) Biological anthropology at the southern tip of Africa: Carrying European baggage in an African context. *Current Anthropology*. 53(5): 153.

¹⁶⁴ The cards were produced by Margaret Shaw in the 1930s.



Figure 22. In Bushman Room 2.

This image shows a closer view of a different side of the second large central display case in the New Ethnology Gallery, seen on the left in **Figure 17**. It shows the later use of the two life-casts of “Mosarwa” women seen in **Figure 20**. Although the figures are clothed and naturalised as part of a group display, the figures are made to stand out singly, with white cards placed at the bottom to identify them by race, sex and origin.¹⁶⁵ The image is dated to the 1950s. It features some of the changes made after 25 years of display, when it was felt that the display had become “outmoded”.¹⁶⁶ Here the cloak and apron referred to on the card in **Figure 21** have been added to the central figure. The seated woman has also been clothed and the whole display is generally less clinical than the first. However, the style of display still treats the life-casts individually and is poised to represent racial types.

¹⁶⁵ This would have been and still is today, typical in its mode of classification of an anthropological or archaeological specimen.

¹⁶⁶ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825-1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 186.



Figure 23. SAM: Photo 237. Issued by State Information Office, Pretoria.

The display in **Figure 23** shows a typological exhibit of Bushmen and “Bechuana”, presented as racially “pure” types. The State Information Office used the exhibit as racialised propaganda, portraying black people as “primitive”, indigenous peoples, and presenting them as they would any other natural attraction in South Africa. Interestingly, the photograph of the exhibit used by the State Information Office shows that the photographer had used a flash and captured his own image in the photograph as well. This accident self-insertion marks this later use of the display as again heavily interpreted and internalised – this time directly by the South African government.

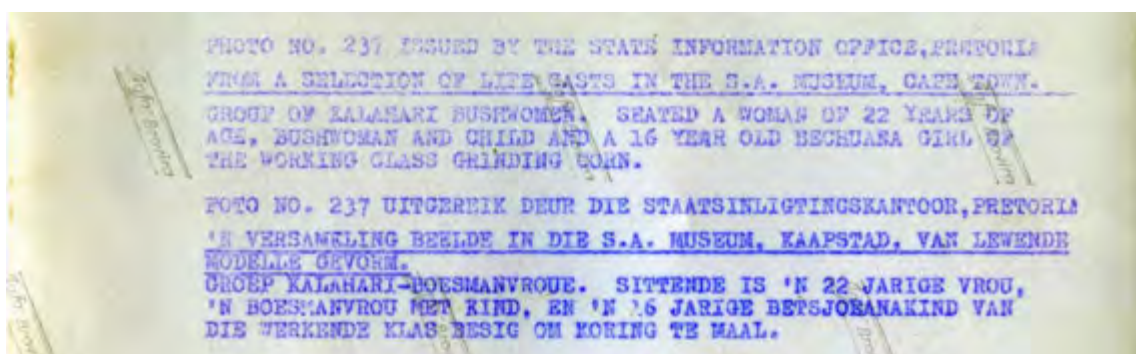


Figure 24. Archived as SAM_Photo 237_Issued by State info...reverse.

In **Figures 23** and **24**, we see the display shown in **Figure 22**, repurposed by the State Information Office in the form of a card for distribution, dated with the assistance of the curator at the Iziko Social History Archives to around the 1960s.¹⁶⁷ This photograph of the exhibit was distributed with the caption in **Figure 24** on the reverse. The information was drawn from the text provided on the display labels and was part of a series of other such informational cards.¹⁶⁸



Figure 25. Belgian refugees from Congo visit SAM, 1960 1.

Figure 25 features the same display, viewed from the side. The seated figures at the front of the image and the Naro dancers in the top right corner correspond with the figures in the background in **Figure 22**, confirming, along with the State Information image, that the 1930s exhibit – upgraded in the 1950s – was intact through to the 1960s. Furthermore, the photograph in **Figure 25** was taken at the time of the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo, when white Belgians were made to flee the country as a result of violent attacks, looting and pillaging on the part of mutineers of the Congolese army. For the many visitors to the museum, who were often tourists and schoolchildren, the ethnographic exhibits were used as teaching aids about racial types. The expressions on the children's

¹⁶⁷ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko Social History Centre, personal interview, 15 July 2014.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

faces range from fearful concern, possibly due to being exposed to life-like, semi-nude, non-white figures, to a voyeuristic interest, to bland dismissal and a preoccupation with the photographer. There is even what could be the stifle of a smirk in some members of the group, including one adult on the far left. However, these are all garden-variety reactions of young people to a museum display, reinforcing the idea that these ethnographic displays of life-casts were normalised to a large degree, which normalisation could only have been achieved by the positioning of the Khoisan or Bushman as “Other” and as racially inferior.

This idea was supported by the popular notion that the Bushmen were racially divergent, a “primitive” race with an arrested evolutionary path. In a series of talks by Raymond Dart that were broadcast on South African Radio in 1931, he described Africa as a “source of scientific wonder ... and a continent... with mystery, adventure and romance”, further describing the “Bushman-Hottentot types of mankind and culture” as “living survivals of humanity’s infancy”.¹⁶⁹ Dart’s argument for racial divergence pivoted on the understanding that the Bushmen were “primitive” racial types, “living fossils” and part of a “missing link” in the Great Chain of Being. Drennan, described as “dourly contemptuous of the Bushmen he studied, regarding them as anatomical curiosities or living fossils”, used the same rationalisation and further racialised the theory.¹⁷⁰ These “scientific” assumptions laid the groundwork for the racialised ideologies of apartheid, already budding in the early twentieth century.

The rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s, culminating in the National Party victory led by J C Smuts in 1948, provided a particular pedagogic role for Drury’s life-casts at the South African Museum, as evidenced by the examples in **Figures 23–25**.¹⁷¹ Both Drennan and Dart, along with Robert Broom, supported racial typology and human variation.¹⁷² South African physical anthropology of the 1930s, affected by the discovery of the remains of early humans, was preoccupied with mapping a connection to indigenous people. This process was led by Broom’s research, such as his 1923 treatise *A Contribution to Craniology of the Yellow-Skinned Races of South Africa*, referenced earlier. Broom, in turn, was influenced by

¹⁶⁹ Dubow, S. (1995) *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge: University Press. 46. Quote from Raymond Dart Papers, Aug, *The Wonderland of Africa*, text of broadcast talk, 27 April 1931. Quoted also in Magubane, B.M. (2007) *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*. Pretoria, The University of South Africa Press, p 183 by Magubane of Francois Le Vaillant.

¹⁷⁰ In his anatomy class he went on to describe the Bushmen as such, “the majority of the physical characteristics of the Bushman tend to lie towards the simian end of the human scale, and to this extent the Bushman is undoubtedly a member of one of the lowest of the human races”. As referenced by Dubow from M. R. Drennan, *A Short Course on Physical Anthropology* (University of Cape Town [1930]). 3. Dubow, S. (1995) *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge: University Press. 47.

¹⁷¹ The life-casts described racial types, integral to racial typology which dominated physical anthropology at the time.

¹⁷² Štrkalj, G. (2000) Inventing races: Robert Broom’s research on the Khoisan. *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*. (37). 114.

works such as Stow's *The Native Races of South Africa* (1905), also referenced earlier.¹⁷³ It is important to note here that physical anthropology was separated from social anthropology and developed along a separate path. Furthermore, social anthropology was split between the development of Volkekunde, on the one hand, and a more liberal British tradition, on the other.¹⁷⁴ Volkekunde understood culture in terms of racial type, framing particular cultural, psychological and physical traits as inherent or essential to particular racial types.¹⁷⁵ According to the biological-evolutionist logic so prevalent at the time, these types also represented different stages of development, as assessed by such markers as the technologies a group used, its societal structure, and its creative production. In short, the study of material culture was intrinsic to the assessment of racial groups, providing a place for them on the scale of development.¹⁷⁶ This logic became the backbone of the apartheid ideology of separate development, which used "scientific proof" of the racial inferiority of primitive races.¹⁷⁷

Science, religion, and a national ideology converged in the writing of Abraham Kuyper and strongly influenced apartheid ideology. Kuyper, Prime Minister of the Netherlands until 1905 and a Calvinist theologian, believed in racial pluralism. In order to achieve racial pluralism, he believed in putting power not in the hands of the individual or the state, but in the hands of the sovereign spheres instead.¹⁷⁸ These were represented by institutions of economics, health, education, and so on, which would provide the platforms for separate development. His brand of political theology was adopted conceptually by the architects of apartheid, who even borrowed his terminology.¹⁷⁹ Kuyper's Calvinistic approach denied the theory of natural selection, proposing instead that certain species were pre-ordained by God to be superior.¹⁸⁰ In Kuyper's words: "[T]o put it concretely, if you were a plant, you would rather be a rose than mushroom; if insect, butterfly rather than spider... being man... the Aryan race rather than the Hottentot or Kaffir."¹⁸¹ The Volkekunde ideology categorically placed the Bushmen

¹⁷³ Ibid., 121.

¹⁷⁴ Morris, A.G. (2012) Biological anthropology at the southern tip of Africa: Carrying European baggage in an African context. *Current Anthropology*. 53(5, April 2012): 152.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 153.

¹⁷⁷ Extensive scientific support regarding the disadvantages of miscegenation was foregrounded, and considered a great threat to racial purity – this would have been fed by contemporary notions of racial divergence.

¹⁷⁸ Evans, I. T. (1997) *Race and Bureaucracy: Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 271.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Conradie, E. M. (ed.) (2011) *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. 20.

¹⁸¹ Evans, I. T. (1997) *Race and Bureaucracy: Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley, University of California Press. 272. The quote was referenced by Evans and formed part of the Six Lectures on Calvinism from the Stone Foundation Lectures delivered at Princeton University in 1898.

at a lower rank within the hierarchy, either as a barbaric race to be controlled and isolated, or as children or nature in need of protection by the government.

Separatist development was celebrated as the perfect answer to an ideal government policy, and encouraged what H F Verwoerd termed “goeie buurskap” (neighbourliness), or good neighbourly relations between the races.¹⁸² In an analysis of the correspondence between Australian prime minister Robert Menzies and Verwoerd regarding the political philosophy of separatist development and the representation of Coloured people in Parliament in 1960, Verwoerd wrote: “It is against all sense of justice and would be a form of bloodless conquest if the white man should now have to give away the political control to those at present in his midst as a result of his humane and Christian treatment”.¹⁸³ Volkekunde, described by Morris as a “descriptive anthropology based on the German ‘ethnos theory’”, was used as the “cultural analogue of biological typology”, providing a racist framework in which to govern black citizens¹⁸⁴ – although racial typology began to fall out of favour with works such as “The Boskop ‘race’ problem”, a 1958 paper by Ronald Singer that pointed to the possible invention of racial types and sub-categories as an inherent failing or trap in the system of typological classification employed by Broom and his contemporaries. Yet as far as the public was concerned, and in line with information provided by such authoritative sources as the South African Museum and the State Information Office, defining the black population according to clear racial types was an uncomplicated and straightforward process.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Treurnicht, A. P. (1975) *Credo van 'n Afrikaner*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 3.

¹⁸³ Treurnicht, A. P. (1975) *Credo van 'n Afrikaner*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Morris, A. G. (2012) Biological anthropology at the southern tip of Africa: Carrying European baggage in an African context. *Current Anthropology*. 53(5): 153.

¹⁸⁵ Acceptance of such a premise was integral in the political environment and made concrete South African law, such as the Population Registration Act and the like.

Chapter 3 – The phenomenon of the diorama and the display of the life-casts

3.1 Introduction

The *Bushman Diorama* was planned by Margaret Shaw, a museum ethnologist, under the directorship of Alfred Crompton (South African Museum director from 1956 to 1964).¹⁸⁶ The models were identified by Dorothea Bleek, the daughter of Wilhelm Bleek, a Prussian linguist.¹⁸⁷ Dorothea Bleek identified the group at Prieska as “pure Cape Bushmen” on the basis of their language and physical features.¹⁸⁸ The rest of the ethnographic displays, featuring life-casts of peoples of southern Africa, continued to grow into the 1970s, with the inclusion of *Peer’s Cave* formalised thematically along the same lines as the *Bushman Diorama*. These later displays were made to represent cultural groups and included several new figures that were cast in 1973 by Reinhold Rau. The models were uncoerced, participated of their own free will, and were remunerated for their cooperation. Some of the models included the museum’s taxidermist George Esau (for the Southern Nguni initiation display) and, in the same year, a chef at a local hotel, Archie Khusa (for the South Sotho display). The Iziko Social History Centre’s image archive was very valuable in recreating a timeline that would help provide a sense of the visitor experience and of the staff’s curatorial choices for the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. That timeline is laid out in this chapter.

From 1975 to 1981, several copies of the life-casts made by Drury for display travelled internationally, and then around South Africa. The project involved reworking contextual information, a project undertaken by Shaw and her team, and marked the 150-year celebration of the founding of the South African Museum. The Iziko Social History Centre had archived material on the formalisation of the project; logistical information and the reactions of international museums and the public were all filed away. This material, a previously untapped resource, provided extensive detail and is referenced in this chapter. The chapter also compares the phenomenon of the cultural construct in the museum environment to contemporary examples from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, the Musée de l’Homme in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, making reference to the work of Michel Foucault, Johannes Fabian, Ivan Karp, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Tony Bennett, and Mieke Bal.

¹⁸⁶ The *Bushman Diorama* was constructed in 1959 and completed in 1960 with the life-casts made by Drury from residents at Prieska in 1911 and 1912.

¹⁸⁷ She sought to continue her father’s work in studying the language of the /Xam people.

¹⁸⁸ *Documentation Re The San Diorama* provided for 2007 workshop. Iziko Social History Archives.

3.2 The Bushman Diorama and the “new” cultural history

State ideology of the 1960s, centred on Volkekunde, had a direct effect on the separation of the life-casts and the material culture of the anthropology and ethnology collections from other forms of cultural history at the South African Museum. The museum sought to reclassify what was considered “cultural history” and “ethnology” in order to elevate the concept of cultural history, which, by their definition, was history centred on the culture of white South Africans and, in particular, on Afrikaner culture. Although “ethnology” was an accepted term in America and Europe, in South Africa it became synonymous with the apartheid government’s separatist ideology. The term was later changed to “ethnography” to move away from this association. As Jan van der Meulen, who was appointed director of the new South African Cultural History Museum in 1964, stated,

The museum would not be filled simply with so called Africana. The field would be much wider and embrace not only the culture of the European countries which had contributed to South African culture – Holland, Germany, England and France – but also classical antiquity and Eastern cultures. (Cape Argus, 12 November 1963)¹⁸⁹

An article in *Die Burger* newspaper two days later headlined the new museum as being devoted to the study of “ons materiale kultuur” (our material culture), and commented on the relative neglect of colonial-settler cultural studies, noting that more research had been carried out on “Bantukultuur” (Bantu culture) than on “Boerekultuur” (Afrikaner culture).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Davison, P. (2004) Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko. *South African Museums Bulletin*, May 2005. (31). 103. This paper was also presented at the SAMA Conference, Cape Town, June 2004 by Patricia Davison.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

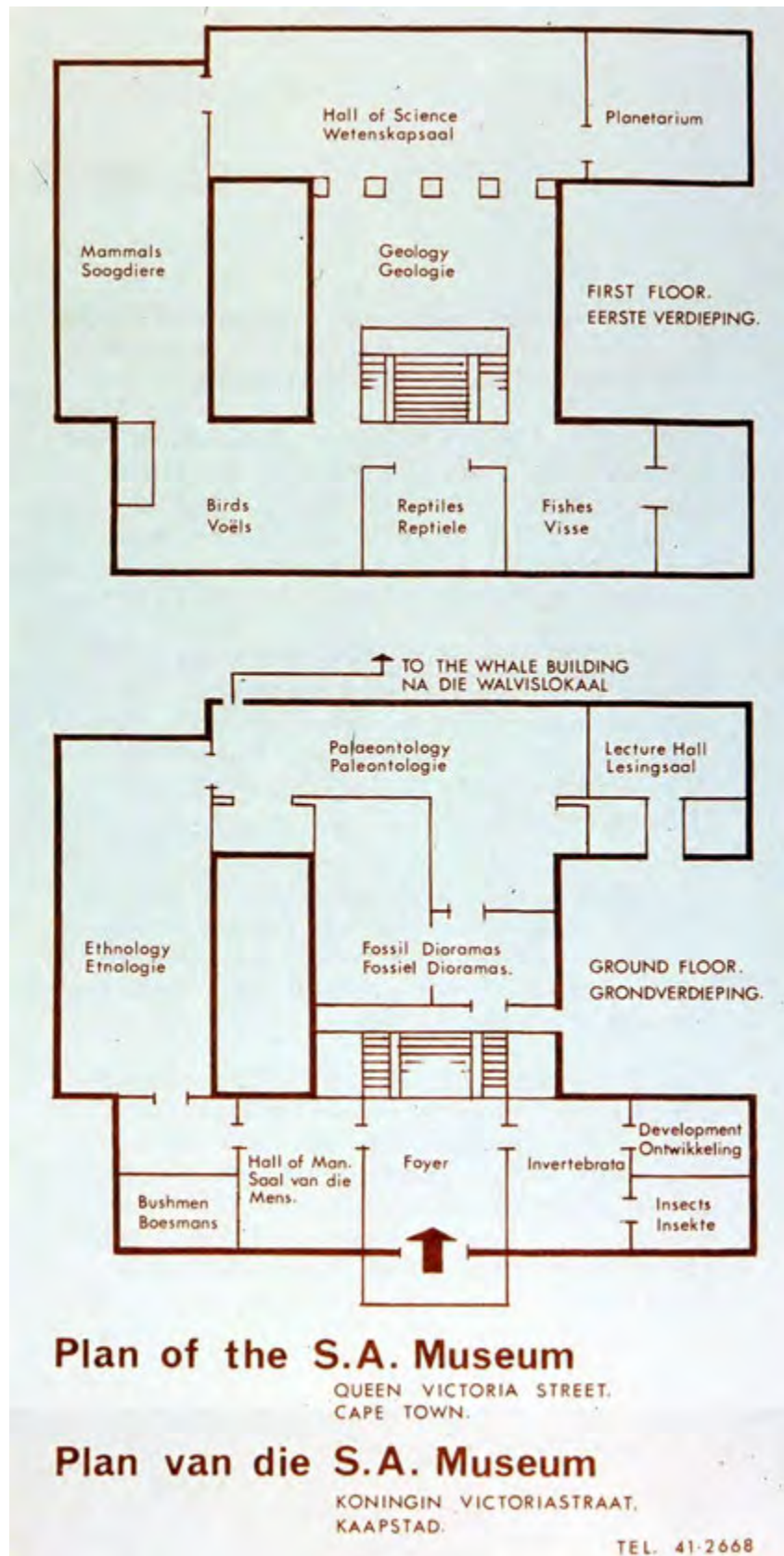


Figure 26. Plan of the South African Museum from a 1960s pamphlet.

The diagram above shows the exhibit titled “Bushmen/Boesmans” on the bottom left. It refers to the *Bushman Diorama*. Life-casts would also have been shown in the space

labelled “Ethnology/Etnologie”. At this point, the “Hall of Man/Saal van die Mens” would still have had the Strandlooper display of human remains in the centre of the room.

By 1969, the South African Cultural History Museum became an autonomous institution¹⁹¹ and became associated mainly with natural history and anthropology. It dictated what would be “cultural history”. African material culture remained defined by physical anthropology and racial studies, left to become part of what was perceived to be the “natural history” museum. The 1960s floor diagram on the visitors’ pamphlet (see **Figure 26**) shows the Bushman exhibit, which refers to the new diorama situated between the Hall of Man and Ethnology, again linking the life-casts, African material culture, and ancient man. The life-casts would have been displayed in the Bushmen and Ethnology exhibits. The exhibit entitled “Bushmen” in the diagram (**Figure 26**), was actually the famed *Bushman Diorama*, installed in 1959. The exhibit was loosely based on the aquatint titled *Bosjemans frying locusts* (see **Figure 27**).¹⁹²

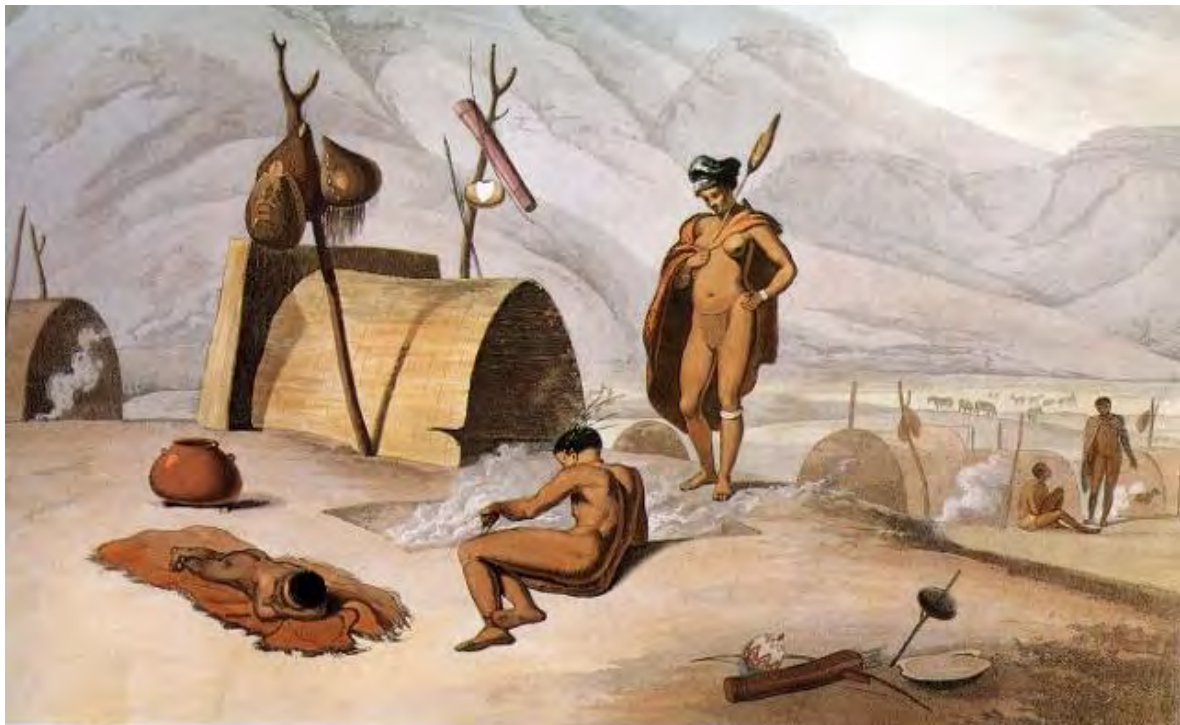


Figure 147. *Bosjemans frying locusts* by Samuel Daniel, from the book *African Scenery and Animals*, 1804–5.

The exhibit originally showed 14 life-casts: seven men and seven women. The scene depicts a camp of hunter-gatherers in the Karoo at the turn of the nineteenth century, going about

¹⁹¹ Davison, P. (1990) *Rethinking the Practice of Ethnography and Cultural History in Southern Africa*. *African Studies Journal*, 49 (1): 152-153

¹⁹² *Bosjemans frying locusts* by Samuel Daniel from the book *African Scenery and Animals*, 1804-5. Davison, P. (2001) *Typecast: Representation of the Bushmen at the South African Museum*. *Public Archaeology*. (ed.) Ascherson, N. 2(1): 4.

their daily activities while a flock of birds fly overhead (see **Figures 28–31**). One male figure stands ready with a bow and arrow to take a shot, while another readies himself to do the same. The figure of a young boy points towards the imagined bird overhead; although this pointing figure is not visible in the early images of the display, it is clearly visible in later images and must have been introduced fairly quickly. The cast of Janikie Achterdam, displayed in a centrally placed case on its own since 1911 (see **Figure 13**), was also included in the *Bushman Diorama*. Once again, the figure was placed centrally, this time reclining under a shelter, and remained unclothed while the rest of the female figures wore only a small frontal apron. This was to show off the figure’s physical features, particularly the steatopygia. Most of the figures were clothed in the mid-eighties.



Figure 28. Kalahari Bushmen_Sept 1981.

The display was viewed through three glass panels, like windows onto the scene. The newer form of display, referred to as a “human habitat group”, was used in several exhibits in the Hall of Man and Ethnology Gallery.

In Summers’ 1975 book, *The History of the South African Museum*, he notes that the Hall of Man, “which is really a physical and cultural introduction to the Bushman and Bantu way of life”, lays the foundation for the rest of the displays in the Ethnology Gallery.¹⁹³ This notion was confirmed in an interview with curator Gerald Klinghardt, who mentioned that the Hall of

¹⁹³ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 186.

Man display was designed to “set the tone” for Rooms 2 and 3.¹⁹⁴ Shaw guided the process of creating and installing the items in the *Bushman Diorama* with the help of Anne Schweizer (who painted the backdrop), Charlie Thorne (exhibition installation) and Clive Booth (museum modeller and taxidermist).¹⁹⁵ The background was painted to resemble a Karoo landscape near Beaufort West in 1800 AD.¹⁹⁶ The display was designed to give the illusion of space while the floor covering was made up of gravel and plant matter to enhance the facade of a real landscape. The lighting, too, was instrumental: besides the simulation of bleached sunlight, the viewer would experience a darkened room on entering, and be drawn to view the diorama through glass windows. The windows acted as portals, reminding viewers that the exhibit was non-threatening, contained, and removed from their own space and time, while drawing them in to enjoy a closer inspection of the “specimens”. The label displayed along with the diorama read as follows:

A CAPE BUSHMAN CAMP IN THE KAROO: This diorama shows some activities of hunter-gatherers. The viewer should imagine that a flock of birds has flown overhead and attracted the attention of the group. With the exception of a few in *Gordonia*, there are no Bushmen living in the Cape. The figures shown here are PLASTER CASTS of living people aged between 18 and 60 excepting the man making fire who was alleged to have been about 100. They were nearly all living in Prieska and Carnarvon districts. The casts were made by Mr James Drury, modeller at the museum from 1902 to 1942.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Klinghardt, G. curator at the Iziko Social History Centre, personal interview, 15 July 2014.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Davison, P. (1993) *Human Subjects as Museum Objects. A Project to make Life-casts of Bushmen and Hottentots, 1907–1924*. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 102(5). 178-179.



Figure 29. Untitled, *Bushman Diorama*, when the window-styled glass panels were still in place.

Here the figure of Janikie Achterdam is under the shelter, which is how the cast was displayed in 1959.



Figure 30. Neg 8087, *Bushman Diorama* in 1959.

This part of the scene would have been visible from the first of the three windows, and represents the far-left end of the display.

Three points of contention emerge from the informational text, based on inaccuracies regarding temporality, the social context of the depicted people, and the emphasis on physical attributes. Together, these inaccuracies speak to the exhibit's status as the work of political constructs and ideologies rather than historical facts. First, the label confuses temporality: although research shows that the backdrop was derived from a scene in Beaufort West in 1800 AD, this detail was not referred to in the label. Only Drury's casting period is mentioned (1902–1942), which places the scene in relatively recent past for museum visitors in 1959. Compounding the issue of time, the surrounding archaeological exhibits provided the context of early man. Visitors to the museum were left to assume that this scene represented the only way the Bushmen people – or, more specifically, the /Xam group (who were cast in 1911 and resided at Prieska) – would have lived, and furthermore

that they were extinct. Second, both the display and the accompanying text divorce history from the actual people who modelled for the casts, except to mention them within the context of being anthropological specimens. Their living conditions and personal details were wholly ignored, and the romantic notion of “Bushmen” was foregrounded instead. Third, accuracy with regard to the dress of the female figures was also ignored, in order to emphasise physical attributes such as steatopygia. This decision serves only to further the constructed divide between the ethnographic versus the cultural historical, which divide was represented by the removal of selected items to the new South African Cultural History Museum. Despite these issues, a survey that was conducted by the South African Museum in January 1962 with the intention of revealing “demographic data on visitors, their motivation for visiting and their preferred displays” showed that the *Bushman Diorama* was by far the most popular display.¹⁹⁸

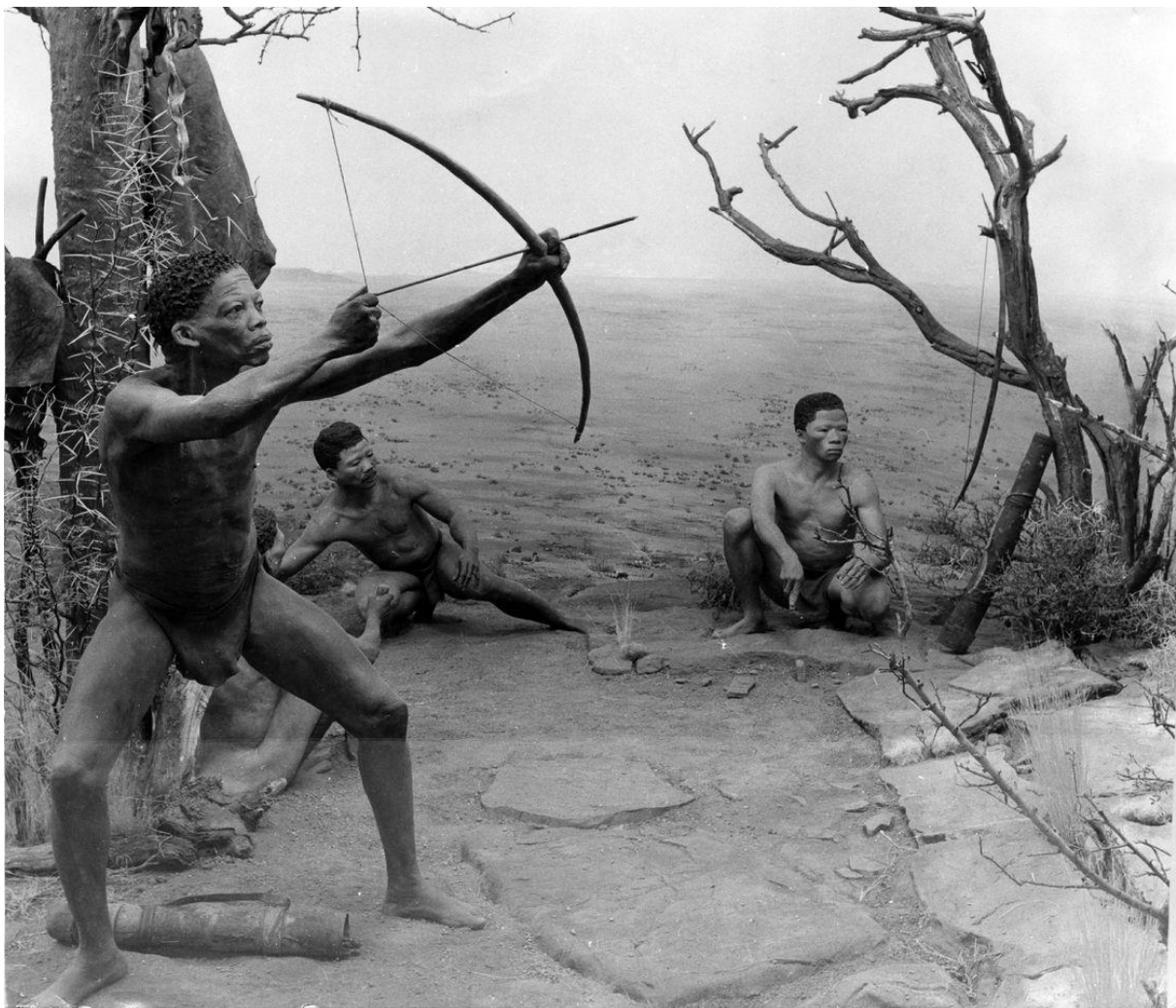


Figure 31. Neg 2932A, *Bushman Diorama*, Jan 1960.

¹⁹⁸ Davison, P. (1991) *Material Culture Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice*. Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town. 170.

This image was taken soon after the *Bushman Diorama* opened to the public and is shown close up to exclude the glass panel frame that was present.

3.3 Placing the diorama into historical context at the South African Museum

Here I endeavour to describe the displays shown mainly in Rooms 1, 2 and 3 on the floor diagram from the 1960s to the 1980s. Using a combination of Summers' book *A History of the South African Museum (1825–1975)*, the Iziko Social History Archive of notes and images, and interviews with museum staff and research, including surveys done by Patricia Davison, I attempted to lace together a timeline and provide a visual record of the space and the use of the life-casts. This exercise helps provide a clearer understanding of the layout and exhibition design that museum visitors would have viewed, as well as of the context within which they would have seen the displayed life-casts – Drury's in particular. The archaeological display that was installed in Room 1 by Goodwin in 1926 was upgraded over the years and, by the 1950s, was known as the Hall of Man display. This display featured the stone tools of primitive man, a rock art display, and what was referred to as a "Strand Looper grave", placed in centre of the room. Owing to "progress in prehistoric studies",¹⁹⁹ certain changes were made in 1961 and 1963. The room was then redesigned and upgraded again in the 1970s (see **Figure 32**).



Figure 32. Stone Age Man in Africa display_SAM_1977.

This image shows the so-called "Strand Looper grave", seen here in a glass case in the foreground. The surrounding display along the walls features two hollowed-out rocks. Each rock held a miniature cave diorama with figurines of Stone Age people. The exhibition design

¹⁹⁹ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 186.

had changed from the earlier 1926 and 1950s exhibitions, but the content and “Strand Looper grave” stayed intact until the mid-1980s, when the human remains were removed from display.

A display of life-casts, simply called the *Kalahari Bushman Habitat* (see **Figure 33**) marked in blue in the diagram, was placed alongside the *Bushman Diorama* in Room 2. The room in **Figure 32** is marked in red.

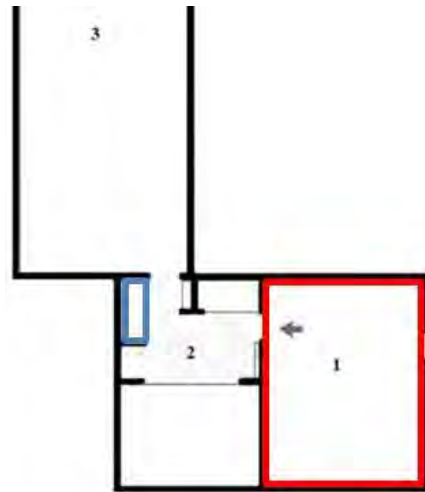


Figure 33. Kalahari Bushman Habitat

This image shows a display of life-casts arranged by exhibition designer John Kramer, and dated to the early 1970s. Here the casts of the two women, the seated figure on the far left and the standing figure of a woman with a baby, are featured together yet again. The casts were previously seen in **Figure 20**, in the 1930s display, and again in the 1950s display in **Figure 22**. This time the figures are part of the new “habitat group” style of display. Still in Room 2, but in the display case opposite the *Bushman Diorama*, was the *Peer’s Cave* exhibit (see **Figures 33** and **34**).



Figure 34. Peer's Cave exhibit.

The *Peer's Cave* display (marked in red on the diagram alongside) was designed to show a different way of life from the Beaufort West scene (*Bushman Diorama*), and the life-casts represented Hottentots instead. Here the life-casts, made by Drury, are placed at the mouth of the Peer's Cave in Fish Hoek. The Beaufort West and Fish Hoek scenes are described by Summers as "showing Bushmen and Hottentots as physical types",²⁰⁰ which suggests that the intention behind these scenes was different to the display in the



Ethnology Gallery. The painted backdrop is of particular interest, since it shows the Fish Hoek–Noordhoek valley as it may have looked "over a thousand years ago, before any alien vegetation or interference or drainage had altered its appearance".²⁰¹ Subsequently, the highly detailed scene required the work of several specialist members of staff at the museum.

²⁰⁰ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825-1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 206.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

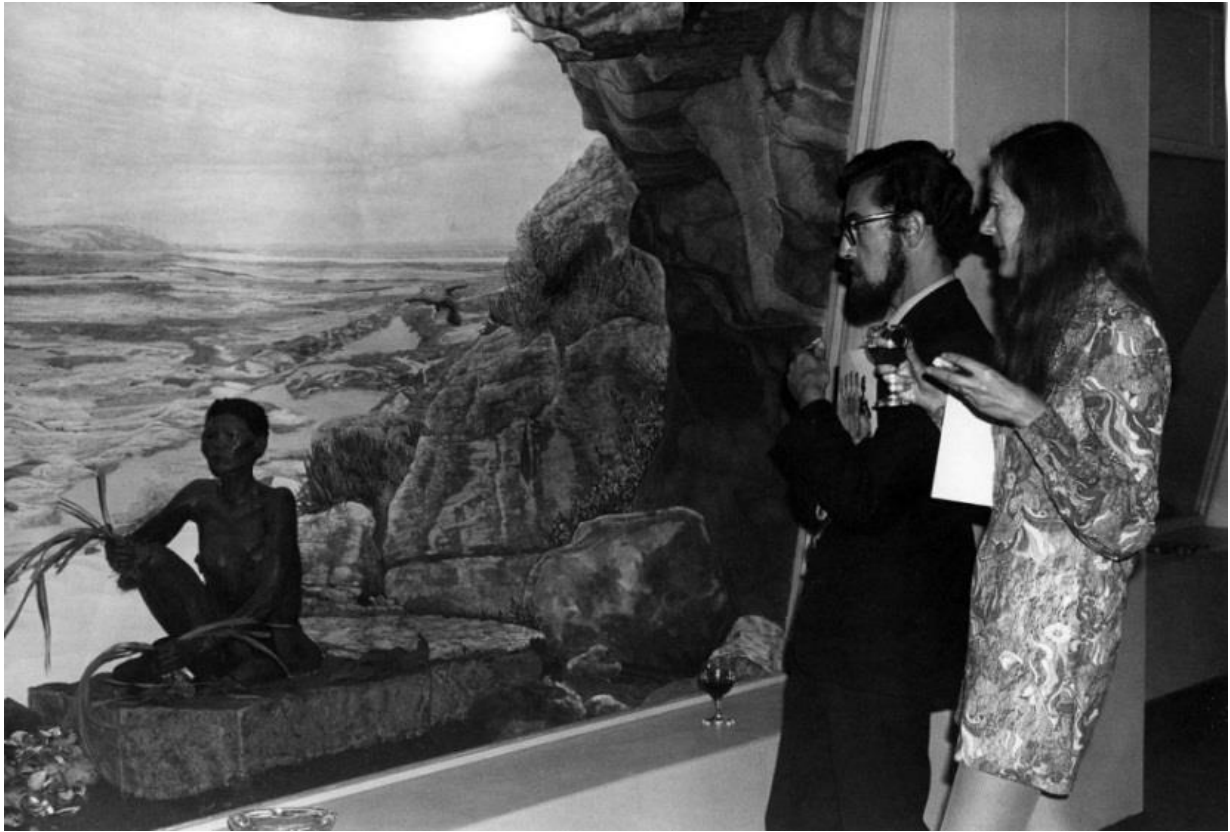
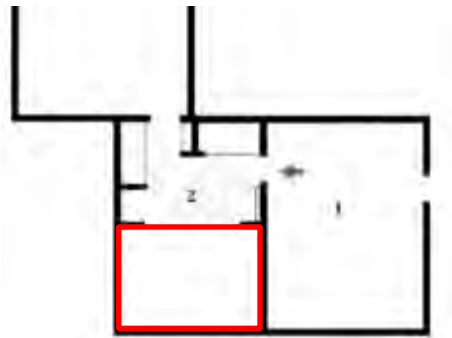


Figure 35. Peer's Cave display on the opening night in 1971.

The woman seen on the right of this image, Jacqueline Truman-Baker, was part of the team involved in designing the backdrop.²⁰² The display was painted by Mrs H E Lückhoff.²⁰³ At this point, the *Bushman Diorama* (marked in red in the diagram below) was still on display, with a few minor adjustments made since 1959.



²⁰² Davison, P. Social history and art historian, personal interview, 10 July 2014.

²⁰³ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema.190.

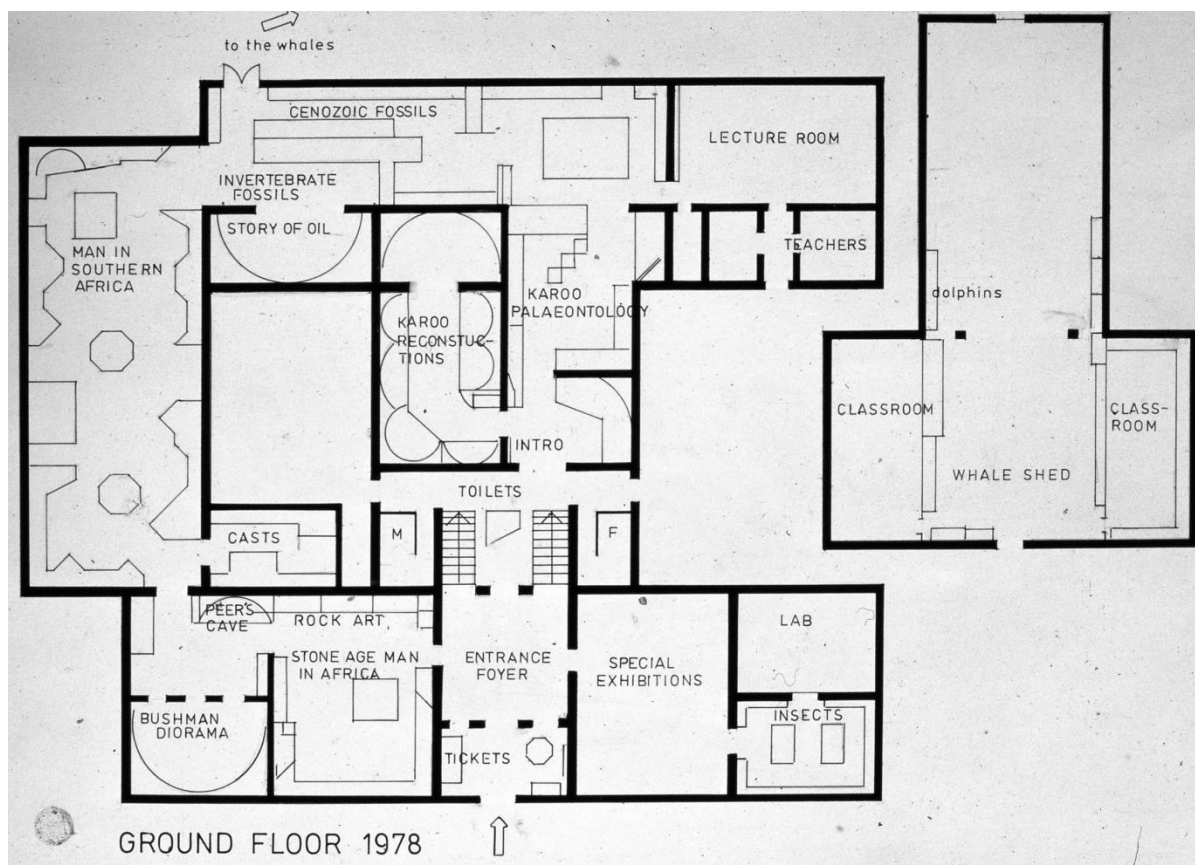


Figure 36. The South African Museum as it was arranged in the 1970s.

The ground-floor plan above features the extra room built for life-casts and the upgraded configuration of the Ethnology Gallery or Room 3, labelled here with the new title of the exhibit, *Man in Southern Africa*. The format of this display, including exhibition design and labels, is similar today. The research was done by ethnologists Margaret Shaw, Hester Steyn and Patricia Davison. The room was intended to show the “different ways of life of the indigenous peoples of southern Africa through their material culture”.²⁰⁴ New casts were made of models chosen by Shaw and Davison. These displays did not overtly describe physical types in race, as was clearly the case in Room 2. However, museum guides were known to use the casts in Room 3 to describe the physical characteristics of those in Room 2. The installation of new cases commenced in 1972 and in 1973, and with the completion of the Cape Nguni tribes display the *Man in Southern Africa* exhibit was finished.

²⁰⁴ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 206.



Figure 37. The first full body life-cast made by Drury.

The boy who was cast for the above display was sentenced in 1903 for stock theft and held at Tokai Reformatory. The display was modelled on the theme of Bushman music and had an audio component. Visitors were required to insert a coin in the slot and pick up the telephone receiver if they wished to hear the music.

The image in **Figure 38** shows the part of the New Ethnology Gallery closest to Room 2. The foreground features one of two hexagonal cases on show in the 1970s, with the life-casts of the three Naro women dancers. The figure of a boy in the music display is visible in the background. Here the coin slots and telephone receivers were done away with in favour of “modern display methods, which endeavour to integrate all aspects of life into a single presentation”.²⁰⁵ The music was included and played constantly to integrate the visitor’s audio and visual experiences.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Summers, R. F. H. (1975) *A history of the South African Museum 1825–1975*. Cape Town: Balkema. 206.

²⁰⁶ The new display methods reduced the number of figures shown in the Ethnology Gallery, it was decided a new room would be built as an extension off this gallery space (see **Figure 39**).



Figure 38. Part of the New Ethnology Gallery closest to Room 2.

The exhibition in Room 3 was referred to as *Man in Southern Africa*. The Naro dancers were shown together in a separate case as a trio of figures, close to the music display of the boy figure playing the gorah in the back, on the left of the image above. The hexagonal case is one of two represented on the diagram in **Figure 36** (although the diagram depicts these cases as octagonal).



Figure 39. Life-casts.

Above is an untitled image of the life-casts displayed in the new room leading off the Ethnology Gallery, as it appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s. The image shows the display just before it was dismantled in 1983. The room is simply described as “casts” in the 1978 floor plan in **Figure 36**.

Apart from the inclusion of the displays in Rooms 1, 2 and 3, very little changed during this time, despite the growing criticism in academic circles. Patricia Davison (who, as mentioned earlier, worked with Shaw and Steyn on the *Man in Southern Africa* exhibition, which included the casting of new subjects for display) performed a survey on 72 visitors to the museum to discern public perception of the ethnographic displays. She noticed that visitors associated the casts “with taxidermy”,²⁰⁷ no doubt believing that the figures were preserved and stuffed for display like the animals in the rest of the museum. Only half of the visitors realised the displays were intended to depict the early nineteenth century; 25% believed they were placed in “no specific time”; 16% believed them to portray the early twentieth century; and the remaining 9% thought they depicted the present.²⁰⁸ The absence of labelling on many of the cases, apart from titles, allowed for the visitors to make unwarranted assumptions and connections between the exhibits. After the casts in the new room (off Room 3) were removed and the *Kalahari Bushman Habitat* was dismantled, the *Bushman Diorama* display underwent upgrades (see **Figures 40** and **41**). In the late 1980s, the three

²⁰⁷ Davison, P. (1991) *Material Culture Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice*. Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town. 162.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

glass panels were replaced with one long glass interface, and in 1988 a new label was provided. It read as follows:

In the Early nineteenth century /Xam hunter-gatherers lived in the semi-arid Karoo. From hill-top camps they could watch the movement of game on the plains and spot the approach of enemies. Their way of life was shaped by the seasonal availability of edible plants, water and movements of game. To avoid overusing food and water supplies /Xam bands ranged widely within hunting territories which were defined by recognized landmarks. By the mid-nineteenth century most hunter-gatherers in the Karoo had been killed in fighting with advancing colonists and displaced khoikhoi. The survivors were drawn into colonial society as labourers and servants.²⁰⁹



Figure 40. The *Bushman Diorama* after the separate glass panels were removed and the solid single glass installed.

²⁰⁹ Davison, P. (1991) *Material Culture Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice*. Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town. 163.



Figure 41. Bushman Diorama.

Soon after this, a title was included above the diorama (partially visible at the top right of the image) in English and Afrikaans. The label provided a temporal context for the display, which marked the beginning of the museum engaging critically with this problematic display, some 30 years after it first opened to the public. The historical context of the life-cast models and their representation in this display were still not addressed; the exhibit's status as a cultural construct, and the museum's hand in this process, was also not mentioned.

3.4 Bushman exhibit European and South African tour, 1976–1981

The year 1975 marked the 150th anniversary of the South African Museum's founding. To celebrate, museum staff decided to take on tour its most renowned exhibit.²¹⁰ The *Bushman Diorama* was noted as “the most important exhibition produced by the Museum” for the years 1976 and 1977.²¹¹ Incidentally, parallel to this project, the Bushmen were described in a local newspaper as “the only people who are not going through a crisis of some sort”. The writer of the article explained, “They don't know it of course, but the Arabs have done them a favour by producing an oil shortage and thus reducing the numbers of amateur and professional anthropologists who used to swarm into the Kalahari every year measuring

²¹⁰ Archived report, “Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976-1978, The Bushmen”, Iziko Social History Centre's archive file on “Bushman European Tour”, file no. 2/3.

²¹¹ *Report of the South African Museum*. 1976/77. Under section on “Display”: 22.

Bushmen's heads and rumps and cross examining them about their protein intake, dental hygiene and attitudes to premarital sex." He goes on to write: "Fieldwork by anthropologists is cut drastically by a fuel shortage and primitive tribes have a chance to recover. They return to the Stone Age and enjoy a little privacy for a change. Bushmen are lucky in another respect, too. As far as I know they have not yet been required to vote for or against separate development."²¹² The article identifies the people as residing in "Bushmen camps" where they lived a "primitive" life. This tongue-in-cheek account is no doubt intended as a frivolous piece of writing, as evidenced by its inclusion in the *Just in Passing* commentary section of the newspaper. However, the attitude regarding Bushmen people, referred to as the "Bushmen of Botswana and South West Africa", is a telling reflection of the dominant mindset at the time.²¹³ It is therefore no surprise that, in the correspondence, outside experts assisting Margaret Shaw with her research described their contributions as "thoughts about your little people exhibit".²¹⁴

The international-tour project was led by the senior artist at the museum, John Kramer. It received funding from the Department of National Education, because the museum "for at least half of its existence made a special study of Bushmen", and because the "big attraction would not only publicize the museum but the Republic as well".²¹⁵ Of the ten figures chosen, nine were recasts of the Bushman figures on display and a new figure was included from a mould that Drury had not previously cast.²¹⁶ A shortage of accoutrements from the museum's study collection drove the project leader to source more. Shaw, Kramer and museum technical assistant June Hosford spent "ten days with the Kung Bushmen in Bushmanland". This was described as a rewarding period that gave them "personal acquaintance with living Bushmen and their way of life and modern problems."²¹⁷

²¹² Hughes, A. B. (1975) Britain faces the Crisis. *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 January. Newspaper article in a section headed, "Just in Passing".

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Letter dated 17 March 1975 and signed only Roger from Kommetjie, an area in the Western Cape.

²¹⁵ Archived report, "Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976–1978, The Bushmen", Iziko Social History Centre's archive file on "Bushman European Tour", file no. 2/3: 1.

²¹⁶ Archived report, "Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976–1978, The Bushmen", Iziko Social History Centre's archive file on "Bushman European Tour", file no. 2/3: 2.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

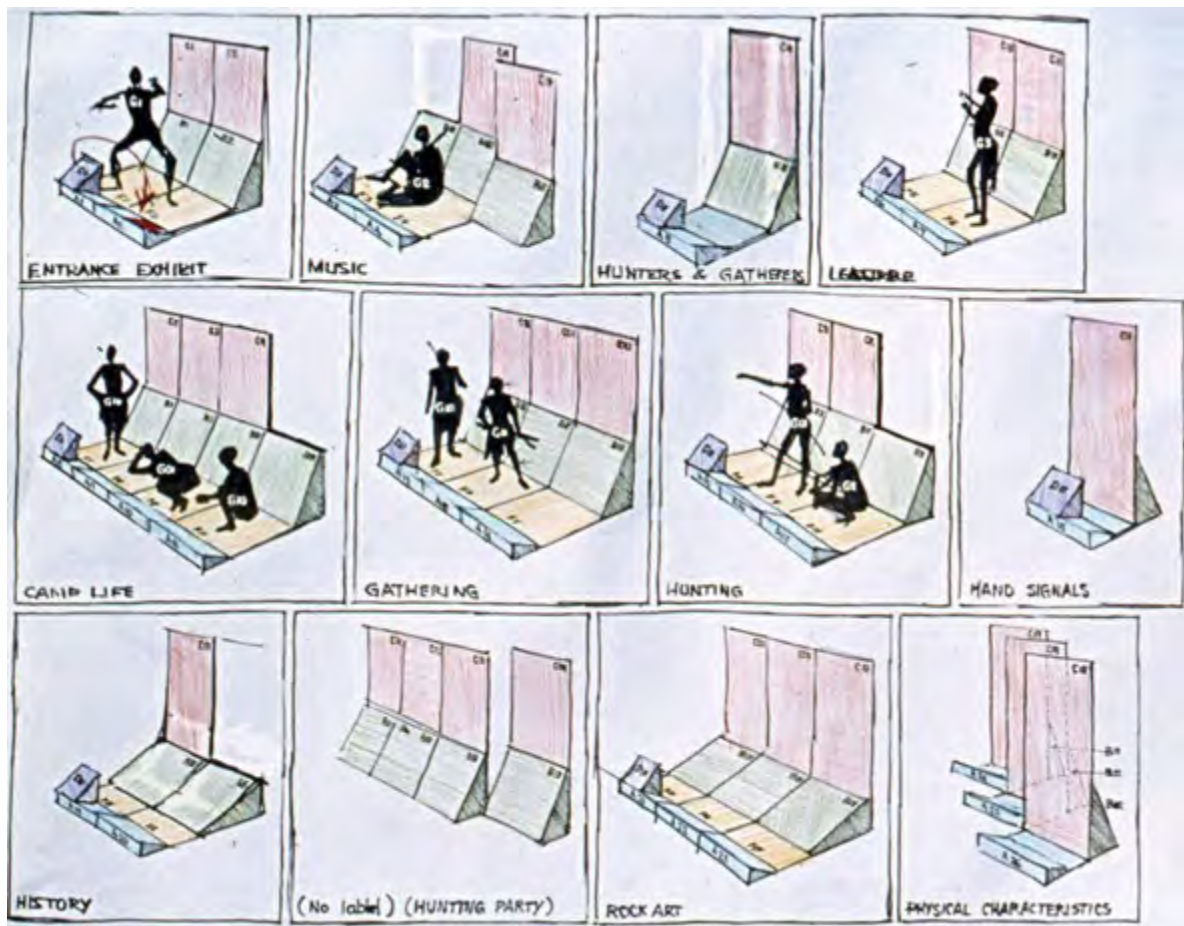


Figure 42. One of many drawings and plans completed in preparation for the travelling of the life-casts.

The 10 chosen full-figure casts in the image above are easily identifiable by the drawn silhouettes and are further coded in white as C1 through C10. Each window indicates the theme around which the panels were designed.

The “knock down” exhibition was arranged in several freestanding modules illustrating “prehistory, recent history, physical characteristics, food-gathering, hunting, camp life, recreation, music and rock art”.²¹⁸ Labels and pamphlets were produced in Afrikaans, English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish. The displays travelled to Basel and Solothurn in Switzerland, Stuttgart, Munich and Cologne in Germany, Tervuren in Belgium, Vienna in Austria, Edinburgh in Scotland and Manchester in England. The last panel on the bottom in **Figure 42** refers to “physical characteristics”, and the label text provided a general description of the Bushmen:

Bushmen are generally short and of light build, they are lithe and agile. Their yellowish-brown skin wrinkles early in life with exposure to the sun. Women of child-bearing age accumulate reserves of fat on their hips and buttocks. The facial profile

²¹⁸ Archived report, “Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976–1978, The Bushmen”, Iziko Social History Centre’s archive file on “Bushman European Tour”, file no. 2/3: 3.

is almost flat; hair grows in tightly curled tufts on the head and a fold on the eyelid makes their eyes appear slanted.

The *Bushman Exhibition* was shown for a month in Cape Town, opening in July 1976, before it travelled to Basel. The opening speech, compiled by Shaw and her colleagues, estimated that 55 000 Bushmen were still living (identified as such by physical, cultural and linguistic criteria), with only a fraction still practising their “traditional way of life”. The speech pointed out that the “traditional Bushmen culture is disappearing, not the people themselves”, although this point was lost on the press and international experts who used the travelling exhibition to deliver their own insight on the Bushmen.²¹⁹ Shaw mentioned that “it is fortunate that for some years now the Bushmen have been the subject of detailed scientific investigation – social anthropologists, biologists, linguists and demographers have added to our knowledge of their way of life”.²²⁰ The speech stated that the “primary purpose of this exhibition is to give the overseas public an overall view of Bushmen life”, and further to “communicate ... a knowledge of the yellow-skinned peoples of southern Africa.”



Figure 43. Camp Life.

²¹⁹ Shaw, E. M. (1976) Opening Speech: Bushmen Exhibition, delivered in Cape Town at the South African Museum.

²²⁰ Ibid.

Each display was reassembled while on tour. The figures were partially clothed, more so than in the earlier 1960s display at the South African Museum, and some of these accoutrements were included on return to the museum. More covering was included in the mid-1980s, as noted by Davison.²²¹



Figure 44. *Bushmen Boesmans.*

This image shows the entrance to the configuration of displays, with the title *Bushmen Boesmans*. Separate labels for a total of six languages and display combinations were used for the display while on tour in Europe.

The museum report mentioned that “only one invitation was withdrawn for political reasons”, not mentioning which one in particular.²²² It stated further that “only one newspaper noted that reserves had been set aside for the Bushmen in South West Africa and in Botswana”. This point was noted with no further detail or commentary provided. Archived correspondence shows that two museums rejected the exhibit for political reasons. A certain T A Walden of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow wrote to refuse the

²²¹ Davison, P. (1991) *Material Culture Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice*. Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town. 170.

²²² Archived report, “Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976–1978, The Bushmen”, Iziko Social History Centre’s archive file on ‘Bushman European Tour’, file no. 2/3: 5.

exhibition, stating that the “Bushmen Exhibition has run into political trouble at this end”, further stating, “[W]e do not at present wish to be included in your tour.”²²³ Walden goes on to posit “hopes that the political climate may change”, suggesting the exhibition might still be able to be taken at the end of its scheduled tour. However, this prospect did not come to pass. The second rejection came from Jean Guiart, a professor of ethnology who wrote on behalf of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris.²²⁴ The exhibition was refused on the grounds of South Africa’s apartheid policy and a concern for the museum’s own black researchers.²²⁵ This position is interesting, considering that Saartjie Baartman’s remains and life-cast were in the museum’s collection and on display at the time. Several other museums refused the invitation, owing to a lack of space in their museum or programme. It is possible that some of these refusals could have been politically motivated as well, and that the museums in question preferred not to point to South Africa’s political regime or to problems with the nature of the exhibition proposed. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt general newspaper) featured an article by Clara Menck on the show in Stuttgart. Menck describes visiting the show and having a “shocked reaction”; she was “depressed by the thought of an age-old way of life that has just grown stiff”, of “modern Bushmen” absorbed into a civilisation that “had previously decimated them” and pushed them into “barren areas”.²²⁶ Menck refers to the “helplessness” of the modern Bushmen and raises the question of Bushmen reserves verses “adaptation” as a “particularly acute” issue, finishing the article with that statement that “the stiff, oppressive museum casts of these congenial people best illustrate this oppressive question.”²²⁷ It is not clear whether she refers to the oppression of Bushmen as a whole or to the difficult question of Bushman reserves. On the whole, though, the article elaborates on the negative reactions evoked by the exhibition in a much more tangible way than the South African Museum’s report, which only includes “only one negative comment” – namely, that the casts were “too lifelike”.²²⁸ In a letter from the ambassador in Bavaria to the South African Consulate General, it is noted that Hans-Jörg Kellner, director of the Prähistorische Staatssammlung (prehistoric state collection), mentioned “only one negative letter, received from a leftist group”, while the show was on in

²²³ Walden, T. A. to Barry, T. H. Letter dated 9 November 1976. Their reference: ETH/EX/SAM.

²²⁴ Guiart, J. to Barry, T. H. Letter dated 9 August 1976. Their reference: 76.JG.766.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Menck, C. 7 March 1977. Our Contemporaries from the Stone Age: African Bushman in a Stuttgart Exhibition. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Archived report, “Travelling Exhibition in Europe: 1976–1978, The Bushmen”, Iziko Social History Centre’s archive file on “Bushman European Tour”, file no. 2/3: 5.

Munich.²²⁹ It provides no further detail of the name of the group or of any particulars regarding their reservations about the exhibit.

After the European tour, the exhibit travelled to museums in South Africa. Shaw accompanied the exhibit to several of the venues, where she gave lectures on the Bushmen. Both Shaw's lecture and the exhibit were favourably reviewed by *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, *Rand Daily Mail*, *South African Digest* and magazines such as *National Museum News*. Yet, in contrast to some of the points made by Shaw in her lectures, press articles referred to the "casts of the Cape Bushmen, who are now virtually extinct"²³⁰ and whose way of life "has not been markedly changed by contacts with other races".²³¹ *Diamond Fields Advertiser* stated that "the people from whom the original casts were taken and the other various objects on display belonged to different Bushman groups."²³² The exhibition shows, however, that in spite of various groupings, their lifestyle was generally the same." This observation negates many of the points that Shaw covered in her lectures. The themes featured in the display included rock art, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, hand signals, and music, on the whole, a glib and generalised idea of the "Bushman way of life". In the description of this idealised and disembodied group, Drury's casts again acted as the constructs they were first created to be. The use of the casts as representations of physical type was perpetuated in the travelling show, in the *Bushman Diorama*, in *Kalahari Bushman Habitat* and in *Peer's Cave*.

3.5 Theorising the "Other": an exhibitionary construct

This section analyses the life-cast phenomenon within a broader context, using evidence from the second half of the twentieth century. Crucially, within the context of international trends for museum displays, dioramas depicting life-sized figures were not unusual, and framing African peoples as timeless and primitive was also commonplace. The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History endeavoured to renovate its African ethnology display, which had remained mostly unchanged for 60 years. The first gestures towards change began in the 1950s, and the new exhibit, *Cultures of Africa*, was finally opened in 1967.²³³ The exhibit was dismantled 25 years later, remaining virtually unchanged during that time. It featured three dioramas titled *Lunda Initiation Dance*, *Herero and Himba*, and *The Bushman*. Mary Jo Arnoldi, ethnologist at the Smithsonian Institution, observed that nearly 60% of the display featured "geo-ethnic organisation", beginning with northern Africa

²²⁹ Von Schirnding, K. R. S. to Du Plessis, I. D. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria. Ref. 8/71 – *Bushman Exhibition* – 23 Jan. 1978.

²³⁰ Du Pisani, E. (1980) James Drury: Man who made the Bushman figures. *National Museum News*.(18). 6.

²³¹ Van Zyl, J. A. F. (1981) Lifestyles of the Bushmen. *South African Digest*, 3 July. 18.

²³² No Author. 1981. Exhibition depicts Bushman's lifestyle. *Diamond Fields Advertiser*. 18 June: 3.

²³³ Arnoldi, MJ. 1999. From the Diorama to the Dialogic: A Century of Exhibiting Africa at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. In *Cahiers d'études africaines*. France: Éditions EHESS. 39(155): 711

and ending with southern Africa.²³⁴ Many of the objects of material culture were “not dated and no attempt was made to distinguish between those objects no longer in use and those in current usage”.²³⁵ Gordon Gibson, an associate curator of ethnology and an African specialist, joined the Smithsonian staff in 1958, and was noted in the 1961 Annual Report as having spent most of the year doing research on the Herero people of South-West Africa and Bechuanaland.²³⁶ The culmination of his and his colleagues’ work, however, was disappointingly limited. Arnoldi states that the museum brochure pointed to an exhibit that would reflect a complex and diverse contemporary Africa, yet the exhibition itself focused on “rural” or “traditional” Africa, and the labels supported a romantic and mysterious Africa, reading, for example, as follows:

There is however, another Africa – where the visitor will find little to remind him of home. This is rural Africa, traditional Africa, most of Africa. Here, where outside influence is only beginning to penetrate, most Africans still follow their traditional cultures or ways of life, which are little known or understood by the rest of the world.

The dramatic political changes taking place in the 1960s, with many African countries decolonising and gaining their independence, saw the continent reshaping its identities, cultures and customs – crucial processes in any take on anthropology or ethnology. Yet this political context is entirely neglected by the museum. The fantasy reflected in the 1967 display embodies Stoking’s idea, appropriated from Herbert Butterfield, of “Whiggish history”. But, more importantly, it shows the continued desire of Western museums to represent African people as frozen in time, in a cultural and developmental space outside of their own.

The Musée de l’Homme in Paris, under the directorship of Marcel Evrard, had Saartjie Baartman’s remains and full body cast on display until the 1970s. Unlike the diorama previously described, which depicted a natural setting, the Musée de l’Homme placed the life-cast next to the rigid, reconstructed skeleton, facing away from the visitor and set in profile (see **Figure 45**). The two images below, side by side, show the front and back view of the display case and are the same pictures used for the Musée de l’Homme’s record-keeping (see **Figure 4**). This arrangement would most likely have drawn immediate attention to the steatopygia. Not seen in **Figure 45**, but included close to the display, were images of a man and a woman of Khoisan descent.²³⁷ The image of the man was anthropological, presented in lateral and profile poses, and unclothed.²³⁸ These contemporary examples place into context the general attitudes towards the peoples considered Bushmen, Khoikhoi

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., 711-2.

²³⁶ United States National Museum. 1961. Annual Report 1 July 1960–30 June 1961. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institute.72

²³⁷ Ruthford, A. (ed.) (1980) *Hottentot Venus by Gray*, S. Kunapipi, Dangaroo Press. 2(1): 28.

²³⁸ Ibid.

or San by museum professionals, anthropologists and ethnologists, thereby locating the South African Museum's ethnographic galleries and particularly the *Bushman Diorama* in a reflexive paradigm. The local curators sought to offer a historical construct that would be accepted internationally.

Based on the evidence provided in this chapter, I argue that the 1960s changes in the display at the Ethnology Gallery of the South African Museum and the separation of African cultural objects from the rest of the collection served to perpetuate colonialist ideologies under a reworked banner of nationalism and *Volkekunde*. This argument draws on academic theory that describes the specific techniques employed to create the "Other" in a museum environment, and is supported by an analysis of work by Michel Foucault, Johannes Fabian, Ivan Karp, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Tony Bennett. I explain how the display at the Ethnology Gallery, and its particular history, was directed by the creators to objectify the Bushmen people through a language of "Othering". This language speaks with a Eurocentric voice. The effective narrator in this museum construct embodies three components: temporal distance from the subject of study; a single perspective; and authority derived from the homogeneity of an overarching narrative.

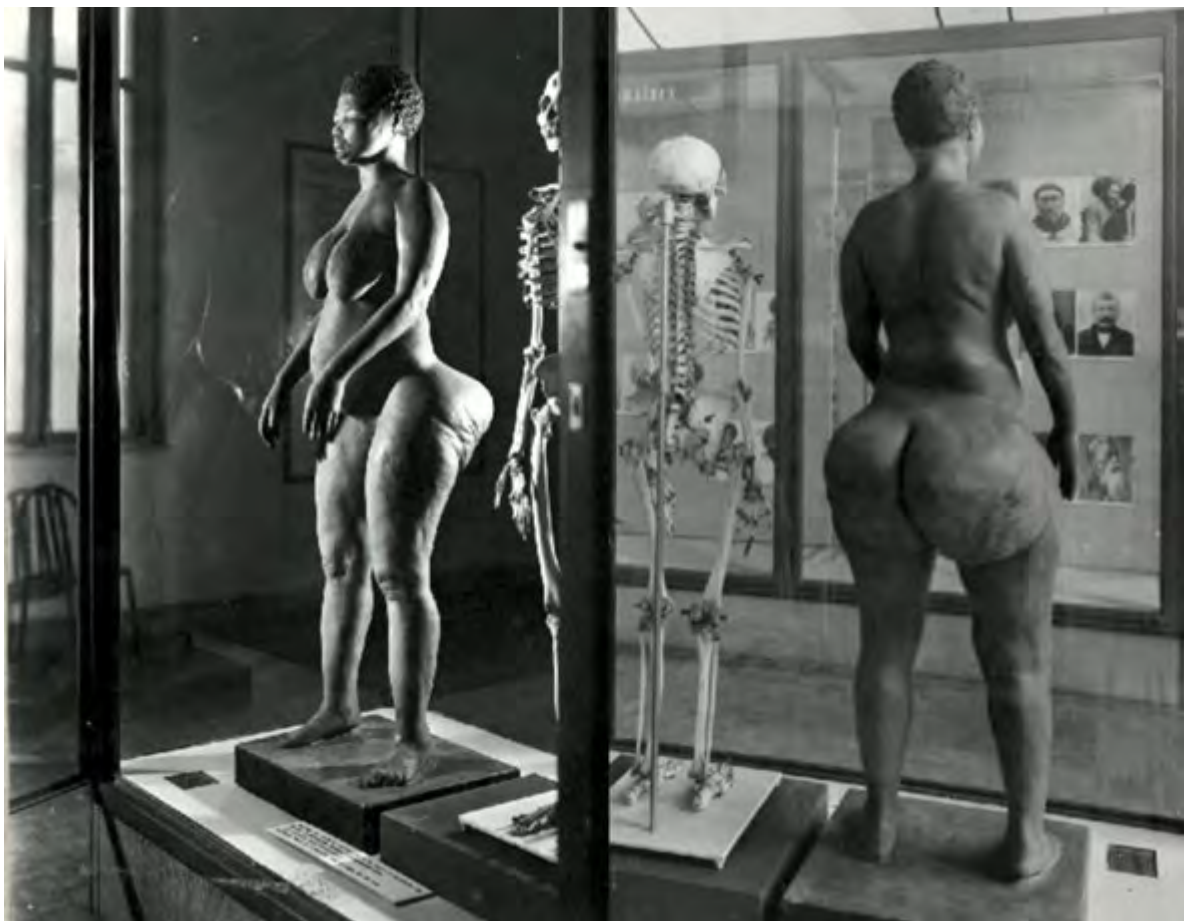


Figure 45. The Saartjie Baartman display at Musée de l'Homme.

This narrative voice represents a thread that runs through many ethnographic displays of the period. It persists in rendering the history of mankind as linear, moving from its own description of “primitive” to “evolved”, or from “barbaric” to “civilised”. Through studying, collecting, photographing, recording and exhibiting, a linear narrative is constructed to create an imposed order, and as a result of the museum visitor’s act of looking, the particular stereotype is cemented.

Fabian’s idea of “visualisation and spatialisation” emphasises the effects of visualism as a cognitive style employed by curators to place the “Other” in a time and space that are displaced from contemporaneity. The concept of a “contemporary ancestor” is legitimised by the creation of this temporal gap. By design, there is a “denial of coevalness”, a concept that Fabian uses to explain temporal distance in anthropological writing, defined by the construction of distance to manipulate the idea of temporal coexistence. Through the process of ethnographical or anthropological research, the museum worker creates the illusion that he or she is objectively collecting facts. Yet the displays at the Smithsonian, the Musée de l’Homme and the South African Museum demonstrate how these “facts” were skewed and even fabricated to fit an overarching story. The curator stands outside the history described, looking on with panoptic vision. The panopticon, as envisioned by Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault, illustrates a circular or semi-circular prison with a central point of surveillance that reports onto the object. In Foucault’s 1975 book, *Discipline and Punish*, he explains the role of panopticism as a technology or instrument with which the surveyor can employ the “unequal gaze” and create “docile bodies”. This design also creates a single seat of power with one voice. The panoptic gaze in the museum environment therefore captures and encompasses a total view with one voice. By transference, the museum visitor is fed the same view of history. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes this “panoptic mode” as a view of

the whole world conceptually in a Linnaean classification or evolutionary scheme ... [like] the eidophusikon, theatrical panorama, and diorama. Offered a supreme vantage point, the surveyor is the master of all he or she surveys. The view is comprehensive, extensive, commanding, aggrandizing.²³⁹

The museum environment serves to legitimise this view as “fact”, speaking from a point of authority, control and power.

Tony Bennett, in a reading of Douglas Crimp’s work, suggests that Foucault’s articulation of power and knowledge in relation to the prison as an institution could be related to the museum as an institution in the creation of culture.²⁴⁰ With his concept of the “exhibitionary

²³⁹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. (1991) “Objects of Ethnography”, In *Exhibiting Cultures, The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. 415.

²⁴⁰ Bennett, T. (1988) The Exhibitionary Complex. *New Formations* 4(Spring): 73.

complex”, Bennett describes the relationship between power and the development of knowledge in the context of nineteenth-century exhibitions of world fairs, museums, art galleries, and even shopping centres in British society.²⁴¹ The exhibitionary complex was expressed in a threefold way. First, it provided a spectacle, and through this public display rendered the exhibit knowable, providing the viewer with “specular dominance”.²⁴² Second, the state sought more involvement with these shows and spectacles; the “sphere of culture fell increasingly under governmental regulation”, which in turn became a “preferred form of administration for museums, art galleries and exhibitions”.²⁴³ This involvement gave the state power over policy and the direction of museums, galleries and exhibitions. Third, and finally, the “exhibitionary complex provided a context for the permanent display of power/knowledge”; the spectacle was thus “recharged in the ritual of display” by the spectator’s gaze. This pattern can be seen in the South African context in the 1960s, when many monuments and heritage sites were identified and received national heritage status, which assisted the development of nationalism – the South African Cultural History Museum was but a part of this process. The deliberate separation of “cultural history” from the “ethnographic”, on the one hand, and the establishment of new South African Cultural History Museum, of the new displays at the Ethnology Gallery and of racial typology at the South African Museum, on the other hand, function in the same capacity: they help develop nationalism and *Volkekunde*, and display a power and knowledge development relationship much like the one described by Bennett’s “exhibitionary complex”.

The “Other” therefore exists within the realm of the known, representing a particular aspect of Eurocentric knowledge. Ivan Karp’s distinction between assimilating and exoticising helps clarify the process by which displays such as those in Rooms 1, 2 and 3 at the South African Museum communicated their message to museum visitors. “In exoticising, the differences of the ‘Other’ are portrayed as an absence of qualities of the dominant”, writes Karp.²⁴⁴ This process can also be inverted, with the same result. Focused on the Other’s “absent” and negative qualities, the dominant culture can also assign them a positive meaning: the “primitive” and “barbaric” become romanticised as the children of nature. This approach echoes the eighteenth-century notion of the “noble savage” in a state of nature, popularised by Jean-Jaques Rousseau.²⁴⁵ These renderings of the Other function to exoticise by assigning difference and employing paternalistic overtones. The 1960s *Bushman Diorama* speaks to this trend within European thought. Karp describes assimilating as an approach that serves to emphasise similarities and divorce context and meaning, thereby absorbing

²⁴¹ Bennett, T. (1988) The Exhibitionary Complex. *New Formations* 4(Spring): 78.

²⁴² *Specular dominance* describes the power of the gaze over the viewed.

²⁴³ Bennett, T. (1988) The Exhibitionary Complex. *New Formations* 4(Spring): 79.

²⁴⁴ Karp, I. (1991) How Museums Define Other Cultures. *American Art* 5 (1-2): 10.

²⁴⁵ The *state of nature* refers to mankind’s natural state, uncorrupted and innately good.

the Other by superimposing one's own cultural attitudes. Karp uses the example of the exhibition *Primitivism in the 20th Century: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, which opened at Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1984. In this instance, MoMA curator William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe of the New York University's Institute of Fine Arts displayed various sculptural examples of what was considered tribal art from Africa, Oceania and North America alongside the work of modern artists such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, and others.²⁴⁶ This system of display, despite its cherry-picking and manipulating of examples to show similarities, still marks the "Other" as temporally far removed, generalised and stagnant in comparison to the progress and development represented here by the "modern" white artists. The representation as a whole is in line with James Clifford's art-culture system,²⁴⁷ and it could be compared to Mieke Bal's reading of the American Museum of Natural History's juxtaposition of Asian, African, Oceanic and Native American people's cultures with displays of animals, which relegates these culture's artistic production to the status of relics and artefacts.²⁴⁸

The physical acts of measuring, photographing, recording and cast-making, as methods of data collection, subjected the physical bodies of the Khoisan peoples to objectification. The evidence surveyed in this chapter suggests that the study and then exhibition of the objectified body was a process hardly any different to the world fair exhibitions that displayed "primitive" races in Europe in the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. Projects such as Bain's Bushmen proved to be precursors to this protracted museum practice in the second half of the twentieth century. The objectification of the Bushman people, institutionalised by the work of Jacobus van Warmelo, Margaret Shaw and their colleagues under the directorship of Leonard Gill at the South African Museum from 1925 to 1942, continued the work of Louis Péringuey and James Drury. The later exhibition of Khoisan material culture and life-casts in proximity to the Frobenius collection of rock-painting copies, stone implements and the "Strand Looper grave" in the *Hall of Man* exhibition did not veer from the earlier design set. The analysis of these displays reveals how the museologists worked to naturalise the Khoisan and impose a linear history. The museum's use of racial typology provided the "scientific" framework for their racialised propaganda, as can be seen from the example of the card distributed by the state of the exhibit in **Figures 23** and **24**, representing the Khoisan as living fossils during the rise of Volkekunde and Afrikaner nationalism. The

²⁴⁶ Kruisberg, L. (Director MoMA) 1984. *New Exhibition Opening September 27 at Museum of Modern Art Examines "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*. Press release, MoMA, New York, August 1984.

²⁴⁷ Clifford, J. (1988) On Collecting Art and Culture, in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 215. James Clifford contextualises meaning and value attributed to non-Western objects of artistic production shown in Western museums. He problematises these displays as redemptive, metahistorical and full of presupposition.

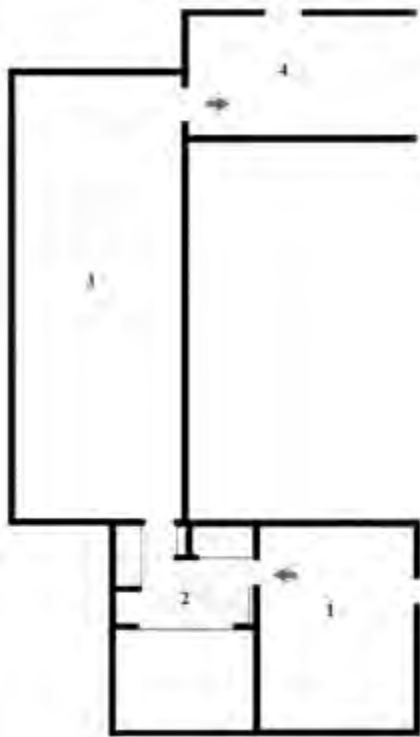
²⁴⁸ Bal, M. (1996) *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis*. New York: Routledge. 15-16.

revision of the museum's collection, which effectively separated black history from cultural history, played into apartheid ideologies and served to temporally and racially separate different races from one another.

Chapter 4 – Re-contextualisation: representation of the life-casts at the turn of the twenty-first century

4.1 Introduction

In a Heritage Day speech in 1997, then-president Nelson Mandela criticised South African museums for depicting African people as “lesser human beings, in natural history museums usually reserved for the depiction of animals”.²⁴⁹ He did not specifically refer to the South African Museum but the parallel was nonetheless implicit, and was drawn by the press in particular, who made reference to the Ethnography Gallery’s life-casts and to the infamous *Bushman Diorama*. The South African Museum was never exclusively a natural history museum; how, then, does the criticism levelled in Mandela’s quote stand? Paul Landau describes this link in his essay “With camera and gun in Southern Africa: Inventing the image of the Bushmen, c.1880 to 1935”. Landau compares the process of the image making of the Bushmen with the trophy hunting of exotic or rare animal species.²⁵⁰ He writes, “If colonialism thus racialised an impoverished status, photography played an important role in



creating it. After all, it is photographed Bushmen, far more than any coherent group of real men and women, that have been popularly granted the homogenous ethnic status of ‘bushman’.²⁵¹ This chapter analyses how the life-casts in the ethnographic displays were read as the question of representation came under fire before the turn of the twenty-first century. It analyses the development of what was, and still is, referred to as the Ethnography Gallery in Room 3 and the *Bushman Diorama* in Room 2 (see diagram, left).

Two interventions are detailed: one in 1989 by South African Museum staff members Patricia Davison and Gerald Klinghardt, and another in 1993 by Bryan Krafchik, a student researcher. This investigation is informed by archival material, including meeting minutes and project proposals, at the Iziko Social History Centre Archive, as well as Patricia Davison’s doctoral thesis, *Material Culture, Context and Meaning* (1991). I have further

²⁴⁹ Witz, L. (2006) Transforming museums on post-apartheid tourist routes. In Karp, I., Kratz, C.A., Szwaya, L. & Ybarra-Frausto, T. (eds.) *Museum frictions: public cultures/ global transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press. 115.

²⁵⁰ Landau, P.S. (1996) With camera and gun in southern Africa: inventing the image of the Bushmen, c.1880 to 1935. In Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 141.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

drawn on the writings of Paul Landau, Edwin Wilmsen, Leslie Witz, Ciraj Rassool, Alan Barnard, Steven Robins and, in particular, Pippa Skotnes's *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen*, her catalogue for the exhibition *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Khoisan*.²⁵² Although the space constraints of this project do not allow for a deep exploration of Bushman or Khoisan identity, I reference specific debates to contextualise the display of the life-casts and its reception by museum visitors – some of whom would have been exposed to the Kalahari Debate in academia and the issue of Bushman or Khoisan authenticity in relation to the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve scandal, as well as land claims at the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. These developments would have been perceived with certain popular-culture references as their backdrop – including the 1993 movie *A Far Off Place*, based on work by Laurens van der Post, and the 1980 comedy *The Gods Must be Crazy* by Jamie Uys, to name a few. The ethnographic galleries will continue to be problematised here. The *Bushman Diorama*, although also ethnographic, was treated differently to the galleries. It became a point of strong contention, and its use of an overtly controversial racial construct eventually resulted in its closure. The rest of the life-casts in the Ethnography Gallery remained on display for 12 more years, however. My argument shows that the tendencies of ethnographic representation are just as evident, and just as problematic, in the galleries.

This chapter examines the use of the life-casts from the late 1950s to the turn of the twenty-first century, and the debates and issues surrounding the changes and lack of changes. I refer to the art of Tracey Rose in the performance piece *Graft* in 1997, as well as to a student intervention by Bryan Krafchik in the Ethnography Gallery in 1993. These interventions are reflected on in conjunction with conferences and workshops, such as the National Khoisan Consultative Conference of March 2001, the South African Museum's "Public: Negotiating Partnerships" workshop of November 1993, and the "Future of the San Diorama" workshop, held in June 2007 at the Rock Art Gallery in the South African Museum. The latter also issued a report of the workshop's contributions by its participants, who included representatives from the !Khwa ttu Centre, the Western Cape Education Department, the Department of Culture, the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, and archaeologists and historians from the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town.

²⁵² The exhibition was held at the South African National Gallery and they would not accept Skotnes's original title, which included the word 'Bushmen'. They would only accept the exhibit if she used the word 'Khoisan' instead.

4.2 A representational quagmire: how the life-casts were displayed and recontextualised

The Ethnography Gallery showed a practically identical exhibit to the 1978 diagram titled *The Man of Southern Africa* exhibit, also referred to as the African Cultures Gallery. The exhibit was situated alongside the *Bushman Diorama* and *Peer's Cave* displays, although the content was not as specifically racialised. The displays indicated seven cultural groups, identified as Nama, San, South Sotho, Tswana, Lobedu, Southern Nguni or Xhosa, and Zulu. The life-casts, clad in traditional dress and adornments, were captured in the acts of weaving, beading, dancing or playing musical instruments. The items in the displays were signalled as objects of traditional ethnic use. The accompanying text explained initiation rituals, and the roles of men and women in brewing beer, hunting, beadwork and so on. The text often referred to “the dark-skinned people” who “live in rural areas and are located in timeless places as tribes”.²⁵³

The Kalahari Debate, the second major debate after the first one between Passarge and Fritsch, argued respectively for the “Bushman” race as either the origin of mankind or as a primitive race of separate origins (the view held by polygenist thinkers). The second debate was prompted by such sensational work as *Land Filled with Flies: The Evolution of Illusion* by Edwin Wilmsen, as a result of which Wilmsen was marked as a revisionist. Wilmsen provided historical evidence to support the idea that the Ju/'hoansi and other groups living in the Kalahari, whom he referred to as “San-speaking peoples”, were not an isolated ethnic unit.²⁵⁴ Even earlier, Shula Marks (1972) had proposed that the Bushmen moved between herding and hunting as circumstances dictated. It could then be deduced that the foraging lifestyle of the Bushmen was not an ancient tradition of an isolated people, but a symptom of disenfranchisement for an “underclass in contact with and subjugated by a host of outsiders”.²⁵⁵ Wilmsen posited that the “Bushmen” were a figment of the colonial imagination, crafted into existence by travel writers, photographers, anthropologists and ethnologists who wanted to see the Bushmen as an example of early human cultural and physical traits – a point evinced by Drennan’s characterisation of the Bushmen as “a ‘foetalised’ people, forever stuck in a racial immaturity”.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the Restitution of Land Act (no. 22 of

²⁵³ Witz, L., Minkley, G. & Rassool, C. (1999) *Who speaks for South African pasts?* Bellville: University of the Western Cape. 14. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, University of the Western Cape, 11–14 July 1999.

²⁵⁴ Wilmsen, E. N. (2010) *Land filled with flies: the evolution of illusion*. In Grinker, R.R., Lubkemann, S.C. & Steiner, C. (eds.) *Perspectives on Africa: a reader in culture. History and representation*. United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons. 202.

²⁵⁵ Barnard, A. (1996) Laurens van der Post and the Kalahari debate. In Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 244.

²⁵⁶ Landau, P.S. (1996) “With camera and gun in southern Africa: inventing the image of the Bushmen, c.1880 to 1935.” In Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 136.

1994) gave way to the land-restitution agreement of 1999, which allowed the return of #Khomani San claimants to a 25 000 hectare portion of the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park.²⁵⁷ The publicity around the signing of the agreement by then-deputy president Thabo Mbeki on Human Rights Day is a testament to the profile of the event. The event was followed by the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve scandal, in which Bushmen tourist villages were reported to have been employing “fake Bushmen”, “passing off non-bushmen as the ‘genuine article’ for the gratification of tourists.”²⁵⁸ The *Cape Times* newspaper published comments such as “be honest with the tourists and tell them that the people are coloured”.²⁵⁹ Although bordering on the ridiculous, the authenticity question came into effect again, this time also to discern who could be considered “pure” enough to lay claim to land.

The debates that simmered in the 1980s and erupted in the 1990s did not go unnoticed by the staff at the South African Museum, and two interventions were put in play to counteract these developments. Davison and Klinghardt made their proposal in May 1989; it was approved by the director and launched later that same year. The project focused on the Bushmen life-casts made by Drury at Prieska in 1911 on show in the *Bushman Diorama*. The proposal described the display as “an interpretation based on historical records but has no precise historical prototype – it is a composite construct dating to the late 1950s ... and is a reflection of anthropological and museological ideas at the time”. It further stated that the display was “open to misinterpretation” and showed a “paternalistic view of idealised hunter-gatherers and therefore lacks historical validity”. An appeal was also made regarding the problematic aesthetic of the display – specifically, its “perceived natural history approach”, wherein “casts are seen as the equivalent of mounted animals”, a comment that referred to the taxidermied animals in adjacent rooms. The final product was a series of five panels, titled *About the Diorama*. The first panel described the exhibit, made in 1959, as “one of the major attractions of the South African Museum”, featuring casts made in 1911, “when it was thought that the Bushmen were becoming extinct”. The second panel provided information and photographs of the people who modelled for the casts. The third panel showed how the casts were displayed in earlier exhibits at the museum. It featured the image in **Figure 46**, which shows Péringuey and Drury with the life-casts.

²⁵⁷ Steven, R. (2002) NGO's, “*Bushmen*” and double vision: the #Khomani San land claim and the cultural politics of “community” and “development” in the Kalahari. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. London, Routledge, 27(4): 839.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. Also reported in *Cape Times*, July 1999.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.



Figure 46. “James Drury (left) working on the casts in the Museum studio. Dr Péringuey is seated in the centre.”

This image was included in the display *About the Diorama*, with the caption reading as above. The person on the right is not named.

The fourth panel explained how writers “created the Bushmen” from travellers’ reports in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through to the 1970s, as well as how Bushmen were “commoditised in ethnographic writing”. The fifth and last panel provided an opportunity for visitors to respond to the *Bushman Diorama* and featured some critical and controversial published responses. One of the greatest problems with this display was its inability to command attention; the *Bushman Diorama* still visually dominated the space and overpowered the small text-heavy installation.

A second intervention, this time for the Ethnography Gallery, was produced a few years later. It consisted of a tall red metal construction framing three Perspex plaques, and included photographic images of contemporary people on the glass of the ethnographic displays. By the time I photographed it in 2013 (see **Figure 47**), it stood in a dimly lit corner at the end of the display area next to the fire extinguisher and fire safety signage. *Dilemma*

Labels was designed by Bryan Krafchik, a student who had approached Patricia Davison, the museum's head of African Studies and Anthropology at the time.²⁶⁰ The project was approved and began in May 1993.²⁶¹



Figure 47. *Dilemma Labels* by Bryan Krafchik.

Above is an image of *Dilemma Labels*, placed at the entrance to Room 3 from Room 2. Krafchik's intervention in the Ethnography Gallery was introduced in late 1993 and was meant to be a temporary intervention spanning a maximum six months. It remained in the same place for 20 years, however – until 2013. Amid the barely unchanged exhibition rooms, Krafchik's *Dilemma Labels* was intended to contextualise and raise questions about the debates and long-standing issues surrounding the ethnographic displays. In a staff forum initiated by Davison and Krafchik in July 1993, it was reported that a “rethinking” of the existing ethnographic displays was necessary, in part as a result of increasing criticism from the University of Cape Town's Department of African Studies. The crux of the criticism,

²⁶⁰ Unpublished letters (May 1993) from the Social History Library Collection, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

²⁶¹ Revision of Permanent Exhibition Hall: Proposal to employ Mr B. Krafchik on a six month Contract. Dated May 1993. Iziko Social History Archives.

which had been mounting since the 1980s, was that the South African Museum was representing black people with a “Eurocentric distortion of their culture and history”.²⁶² It was decided that it was imperative for the Museum to work with the wider community as the “concerns of the museum do not adequately reflect the diverse concerns of the communities they serve”.²⁶³ In his findings, Krafchik noted that “although most organisations I approached are enthusiastic ... the process of involvement has raised some critical points ... there is concern among some organisations that this process amounts to little more than tokenism”.

After the six-month intervention, *Dilemma Labels* was followed with a public panel discussion and a presentation of the results of a visitors’ survey questionnaire.²⁶⁴ The questions in this survey were aimed mainly at figuring out visitor demographics and visitor responses to the ethnographic display. The panellists were the director of the South African Museum at the time Michael Cluver; political activist Albie Sachs (who in 1994 became Justice of the Constitutional Court); Gordon Metz of the Mayibuye Archives at the University of the Western Cape; director of the South African National Gallery Marilyn Martin; Ciraj Rassool from the history department at the University of the Western Cape; Lucien Le Grange from the District Six Museum; and Paula Gumede from One City Tours.²⁶⁵

Dilemma Labels was headed with a question, “OUT OF TOUCH?”, which followed by the comment, “This gallery was constructed in the 1970s and since then approaches to exhibiting African culture have changed”.²⁶⁶ This statement frames the exhibition as outmoded, rather than inherently problematic. The museum’s own colonial museological practices are not contextualised and its history of collecting is not addressed. The display continues on the second panel with:

Do these exhibits create the impression that all black South Africans live in rural villages, wear traditional dress and use only hand-made utensils? What about those people who live and work in towns and travel abroad or become industrialists? Do they not challenge the conventional ethnic stereotypes? African culture is not static. Why, then, are many labels in the gallery written in the present tense, as if time had stood still?

The subtly patronising and defensive tone continues with the third and last panel, which reads, “Many black people regard the term Bantu as an insult, although [it is] intended to refer to language. The term Bantu acquired derogatory connotations under the apartheid

²⁶² Staff Forum meeting notes, 22 July 1993 by Bryan Krafchik. Iziko Social History Museum Archives.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Employment contract and installation proposal (May 1993) from the Social History Library Collection, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

²⁶⁵ Unpublished programme schedules (May – November 1993) from the Social History Library Collection, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

²⁶⁶ Visit to exhibition, 7 August 2012 – first panel

system”.²⁶⁷ Regarding the term “Bantu” as an insult is framed as a linguistic misunderstanding, a question of semantics that was perpetuated and exacerbated by Afrikaner nationalist government rule. By this logic, the term was originally innocently assigned by ethnographers and linguists to denote language and social group only.

The questions approached in the second panel begin to critique of the display, and include the contemporary images that formed part of the intervention. These images were displayed on the glass of the panels. It was seemingly random photographs of mostly black and unknown people going about their daily business. It included one image of the Pope. These were sourced from *The Argus* newspaper, often without captions, and included one image by well-known photographer Paul Weinberg. Many of Weinberg’s images are also included in displays at the District Six Museum, but to completely different effect. Some visitors claimed that the intervention successfully refocused an otherwise static view of South Africa’s “indigenous peoples”.²⁶⁸ Leslie Witz quotes Rankin and Hamilton who observed that the “overlays served not so much to disaggregate the ethnic identities as to qualify previous notions of cultural stasis by acknowledging urbanisation and other changes”. The text on the second panel begins to approach the concept of Fabian’s notion of temporality, which emphasises the effect of the distance between anthropology and its subject as a “necessary assumption ... involved in the constitution of the ‘Other’”.²⁶⁹ The result of this distancing is a timeless “Other” that “plac[es] the ‘Other’ outside of the flow of history”.²⁷⁰ This distance, then, also existed for the museum visitor or researcher. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s view of the display as an excision by the curator is supported here. The continual linking back to an ancient culture, while simultaneously describing a living one, tricks the viewer into a very particular reading of black culture in southern Africa. The impression created by the gallery is one “of traditional ways of life situated in the ethnographic present with no account taken of historical context or the dynamics of change”.²⁷¹ The emphasis on the role of men in the community is slanted towards an ideal that embraces the traditional. The fact that many men migrated to the cities in search of work, often living in a hostel-type environment away from their families for most of the year, is not considered.

²⁶⁷ Visit to exhibition, 7 August 2012 – last panel.

²⁶⁸ Witz, L. (2006) Transforming museums on post-apartheid tourist routes. In Karp, I., Kratz, C.A., Szwaya, L. & Ybarra-Frausto, T. (eds.) *Museum frictions: public cultures/ global transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press. 118.

²⁶⁹ Birth, K. (2008) The creation of coevalness and the danger of homochronism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. New York: 14(1): 6.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷¹ Cluver, M. & Davison, P. (1999) The South African Museum and the Challenges of Change. *Archiv fur Volkerkunde*. (50): 280.



Figure 48. Display on the topic of Margaret Shaw's career.

This image above shows South African Museum collections staff members Mzi Cele and Stanley Fatyela standing in front of a display that was put up shortly after the death of Margaret Shaw, the ethnologist who designed the Ethnology Gallery, which later became the Ethnography Gallery. The display, or rather tribute, to Margaret Shaw stood in stark contrast to the rest of the Ethnography Gallery and was installed in close proximity to *Dilemma Labels*. These two inclusions in the ethnographic galleries speak to the importance and influence of the curator. The display appeared as an ode to Margaret Shaw, marking the role of the white ethnologist, as if standing for the voice of the contemporary self, outside of the historical "Other". It was placed at the entrance of Room 2 leading into Room 3, and was removed in 2013 along with the remainder of the life-casts. The above image was taken during that process.

Although didactic in its 1970s museum style, the spatial arrangements and available text made sense of displays that could otherwise have been a pile of potentially inaccessible objects; these elements helped create relationships or tension. Oleg Grabar, twentieth-century French historian and archaeologist, explained that "artefacts are documents with meaning in series and large numbers ... [they] must not stand alone but must be

contingent.²⁷² He suggested that the artefact not be considered individually, as a completed document. By this logic, the curator has the admirable role of contextualising the artefact into completion. George Brown Goode, director of the United States National Museum (at the end of the nineteenth century), stated that “the label is more important than the specimen” and “the most important thing about an exhibition”.²⁷³ It is the curator’s time, effort and expertise, and the “performed long label” that create value, not the artefact.²⁷⁴ The examples described by Grabar and Goode, as interpreted by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, place the curator in a place of enormous power, as an exponent of the academic context to which they subscribe. **Figure 48** shows another “long label” produced by Krafchik, which “performed” another slice in time and context. The solution presented here was to add onto the existing displays with a three-panel presentation. This solution mirrored a trend in museum practice in the nineties, referred to by Witz, Minkley and Rassool as the “add-on approach”.²⁷⁵

4.3 Events that led to the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* and the continued stasis of the Ethnography Gallery

In 1996, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Khoisan* exhibit opened to both negative and positive reactions from the public, academics and the press. The exhibition created its aesthetic from the archive, using filing cabinets, archival storage boxes and newspaper clippings. It included resin casts of body parts, anthropometric photographs detailing physical types, and instruments for measuring height, cranium size and so forth (see **Figures 49** and **50**). Unlike previous projects for which Skotnes curated and produced work, this project focused purely on curating the archival material. As Marilyn Martin, director of the South African National Gallery at the time, commented, “Skotnes confirms ... that knowledge resides in the visual exploration of things”.²⁷⁶ This pertinent remark gets to the heart of the role assumed by the curator in the development of the relationship between the object on display and the viewer. The exhibition “drew attention to the Khoisan genocide” and to “the role of physical anthropologists and anatomists who measured photographed and classified Khoisan bodies”.

²⁷² Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. (1991) “Objects of Ethnography”, In *Exhibiting Cultures, The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. 397.

²⁷³ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. (1991) “Objects of Ethnography”, In *Exhibiting Cultures, The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. 396.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Witz, L., Minkley, G. & Rassool, C. (1999) *Who speaks for South African pasts?* Bellville: University of the Western Cape. 12. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, University of the Western Cape, 11–14 July 1999.

²⁷⁶ Martin, M. (1996) Foreword in Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 10.



Figure 49. One of the exhibition rooms at the South African National Gallery, featuring the *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Khoisan* exhibit.

It “questioned European representations of colonial subjects” and the inference that “physical characteristics of the body denoted social dispositions and cultural personality traits”.²⁷⁷ The term “Bushman” is addressed as a crude amalgamate of diverse peoples – geographically, culturally and linguistically distinct – belonging to groups such as the /Xam, the //Xegwi, the A//uni ≠Khomani, the !Xo, the Zu”hoasi or Ju”hoasi, the Hai//om, the Nharo, the Hietshware and the G/wi, to name a few.²⁷⁸ The invention of the “Bushmen” included several myths also addressed by the exhibition, such as the notion of the “harmless people”. Robins refers to R Gordon’s 1992 book *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass*, in which Gordon refers to the South African Defence Force’s (SADF) use of Bushmen soldiers for their “natural” tracking skills, superior night vision, ability to “navigate in the bush without a compass” and ability to “survive long periods on minimal food and

²⁷⁷ Robins, S. (1998) Khoisan in the new South Africa: anthropology, museums and “Bushman”. *African Anthropology*, 5(1): 81.

²⁷⁸ Barnard, A. (1996) Laurens van der Post and the Kalahari debate. In Skotnes, P. (ed.) *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 244.

water”.²⁷⁹ Skotnes found that these myths were perpetuated by South African Museum tour guides at the *Bushman Diorama*.²⁸⁰ Yet these myths also had a very real effect: the SADF, believing the Bushmen were “innately good soldiers”, went through some trouble to maintain the “racial purity” of the Bushmen – in particular, the Khwe.²⁸¹



Figure 50. Lit body casts in the *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Khoisan* exhibit at the South African National Gallery.

The opening of the exhibition came at a poignant time for the Kruiper family. Dawid Kruiper was the traditional leader of the #Khomani San. The group was referred to in the press as being from the “Bushman tourist camp” at the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, which was established in the late 1980s. The last of the Kalahari Gemsbok residents had been evicted in 1972,²⁸² and the Kruipers were among these people.²⁸³ Their televised petition for land restitution gained media coverage in 1994 and their arrival at the opening of the exhibition was met with a flurry of cameras and journalists.²⁸⁴ Robins referred to this representation of

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 84.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Skotnes, P. (1996). *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 15.

²⁸² Rassool, C. & Hayes, P. (2002) Science and the Spectacle: /Khanako's South Africa, 1936-1937. In Woodward, W., Hayes, P. & Minkley, G. *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in southern Africa*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 154.

²⁸³ Robins, S. (1998) Khoisan in the new South Africa: anthropology, museums and “Bushman”. *African Anthropology*, 5(1): 84.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.,85.

the “Kagga Kamma’s tourist bushmen” in the eyes of the media as pandering to the “marketable” and “competitive sound bite trade in exotic tele-visual commodities”.²⁸⁵ Although Skotnes “focused on the objectifying discourses of Western science and European colonialism, she discovered that many Griqua KWB (Kleurling Weerstandsbeweging) and Khoisan activists chose to use the exhibit and public forum to align themselves with essentialist identity politics as a means of forcing into the open previously suppressed identities and histories”.²⁸⁶ For Skotnes, “strictly speaking [the exhibit] is not about Bushmen”, but it is instead a “critical and visual exploration of the term ‘Bushman’ and the various relationships that gave rise to it”.²⁸⁷ The exhibition, in short, should tell us more about European colonists and researchers than about “Bushmen”.²⁸⁸ Skotnes’s previous exhibition, *Sounds from the Thinking Strings*, juxtaposed archival, ethnographic and archaeological San material with her own elucidations of San oral history, communicated through etchings and poetry on paper. She elaborated on the project: “[I]t was explicitly designed as artwork with the primary focus on the visual experience”.²⁸⁹ In using a museum instead of an art gallery, the viewer was allowed to reassess the boundaries between “art” and “museum object”.

Interestingly, *Miscast* endeavoured to “expose the concerning European claims to know the Bushmen”, yet this is precisely where criticism of Skotnes’s exhibition was aimed.²⁹⁰ The voice of this described “Other” was still mute, and still represented by a white voice.²⁹¹ The question of one race representing another has been a contentious issue, particularly on the point of the Khoisan communities. The work of Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek was thoroughly acknowledged in the exhibit, which included a special section with a large portrait of Lucy Lloyd,²⁹² who appeared not unlike Margaret Shaw did at the South African Museum – “the voice of humanity whose work sought to preserve the memories of cultures and traditions which are faithfully threatened”.²⁹³ The exhibition also could not clearly reflect that it spoke to the *Bushman Diorama*, since this explicit reference was disallowed by the South

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Robins, S. (1998) Khoisan in the new South Africa: anthropology, museums and “Bushmen”. *African Anthropology*, 5(1): 107.

²⁸⁷ Skotnes, P. (ed.) (1996). *Miscast: Negotiating the Present of the Bushmen*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 18.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Skotnes, P & Payne, M. (1995) The Art of the Curator: Exhibiting art in Contemporary South Africa. *Social Dynamics*, 21(1) Winter 1995: 3.

²⁹⁰ Lane, Paul. (1996) Breaking the Mould? Exhibiting Khoisan in South African museums. *Anthropology Today*. 12: 5

²⁹¹ Schrire C., Kozain R. & Abrahams, Y. (1996) *Miscast: Three Views on the Exhibition curated by Pippa Skotnes with Jos Thorne in the South African National Gallery (14 April – 14 September 1996)*. (44), July–August 1996.

²⁹² Witz, Leslie. (2006) *Museums on Post-Apartheid Tourist Routes*. In Karp, Ivan. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/ Global Transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press, 121.

²⁹³ Ibid.

African Museum and the South African National Gallery. Skotnes had originally envisioned the word “Bushmen” in the title of the exhibition and accompanying catalogue. This addition was also disallowed for the purpose of the exhibition by the South African National Gallery, which condoned only the use of the term “Khoisan”.

In a performance by artist Tracy Rose for *Graft* in 1997 (see **Figure 51**), Rose compared herself to a classical nude of European art history.²⁹⁴ She sat naked on a sideways television with the detail of a painting of a white reclining female shown as a still. She was plaiting bits of hair as a comment on racial purity and notions of identity.²⁹⁵ Hair was a major checkpoint in race classification during apartheid in South Africa. However, Rose was also commenting on the diorama as a style of display in the museum context. Rose attempted to respond to the *Bushman Diorama* at the South African Museum and the possession of the physical body of the Bushman by a colonial past.



Figure 51. Artist Tracey Rose in her performance piece for *Graft* in 1997 in Johannesburg.

The installation and performance represented the horrors of the capturing, measuring and re-contextualising of one cultural group by another. The prospect of viewing a live woman on

²⁹⁴ Sue Williamson. Tracey Rose- A feature on an artist in the public eye. *Arttrob, Archive*. (43), March 2001.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

display drew on visitors' voyeuristic tendencies. Rose's performance showed how viewing brown bodies in the context of the museum display was naturalised; it aimed to put this practice under scrutiny.

With rising concerns from the public, politicians, and political activists, and through forums, exhibitions and the museum's own interventions, the issue of representation became embattled. With mounting pressure to act, the Iziko Museums of Cape Town's Chief Executive Officer Jack Lohman released a press statement on 3 April 2001 that announced the closing of the *Bushman Diorama* after 42 years, reasoning that "newspapers have routinely reported the agonising debate over the famous tableau".²⁹⁶ "The [primary] argument centred on the fact that the Bushmen were treated like natural history specimens," Lohman wrote. He mentioned that the diorama would remain "untouched and archived until we have consulted on the best route forward". He further stated that the Museum would be "consulting with stakeholders such as the Khoisan community". He acknowledged the disgruntled tour guides, but maintained that the diorama contained the "voyeuristic appeal of an old-fashioned romantic display". In June 2007, at a workshop entitled "The Future of the San Diorama", held in the museum's T H Barry Lecture Theatre, further criticisms were levelled. The "racial stereotyping" and portrayal of the static and romanticised diorama failed to represent the history of the hunter-gatherers of southern Africa.²⁹⁷ In the report emerging out of the workshop, the Rock Art Gallery, adjacent to the Ethnography Gallery, was commended for representing the "complexity of San belief systems" and was noted to have been produced with the "participation of San groups", although the level of participation is not expounded upon.²⁹⁸ At the forum, suggestions by Rassool drew attention to two main points: "the significance of the diorama as part of the intellectual history of the Iziko South African Museum" and the "problems associated with the erasure of institutional histories".²⁹⁹ He suggested the history of the diorama, including the casting project, be displayed and contextualised in an exhibition on the history of anthropology in the museum, "focusing on anthropological processes of interpretation in colonial institutions".³⁰⁰ Nigel Crawhall of the Indigenous Peoples' Action Campaign Committee focused on the relevance of representation and his experiences with the reactions of San peoples to museum exhibitions, maintaining that the "process of dialogue be pursued with existing San communities, so that the voices of those whose culture and history were being represented

²⁹⁶ Lohman, J. (2001) *Closure of Bushman Diorama*, 3 April 2001. The full statement was available at the Social History Centre Archive.

²⁹⁷ Taken from the "Introductory Document for the Workshop on the Future of the San Diorama" held in June 2007. Compiled by Patricia Davison on 7 May 2007. Iziko Social History Archive.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Taken from the "Report on the Iziko Forum on the Future of the San Diorama" by Gerald Klinghardt, 3 October 2007. Iziko Social History Archive.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

could be heard directly, rather than being interpreted”.³⁰¹ Sandra Prosalendis proposed on behalf of Pippa Skotnes that the memory of the /Xam people be celebrated by creating a dialogue with the powerful existing image of the diorama and by highlighting “individuals whose life stories and knowledge had been recorded and preserved”.³⁰² Henry Bredenkamp, Iziko Museums of South Africa’s Chief Executive Officer at the time, “assured participants that the debate ... would continue with further engagement with stakeholders ... proceedings of the forum would be published, and it was to be hoped that there would be clarity on a decision within a year”.³⁰³ Here, again, the process halted, and there was no change to the Ethnography Gallery until 2013, and no resurfacing of the infamous *Bushman Diorama*, other than the announcement that it was potentially being reclassified as human remains.

³⁰¹ Taken from the “Report on the Iziko Forum on the Future of the San Diorama” by Gerald Klinghardt, 3 October 2007. Iziko Social History Archive.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

Chapter 5 – A way to intervene: the unmaking

5.1 Introduction

As part of this project, I proposed an intervention involving text and three-dimensional objects, aimed to dislodge the comfortable frame and pretext that couched the *Bushman Diorama* display and framed it as commonplace or natural. The project was initially discussed with the director of the Social History Department at the museum in January 2012, and this meeting was followed up by a written proposal submitted in March of that year. Despite the initially warm reception from the director, it became a surprisingly difficult project. Parallel to this endeavour, the Human Remains Repatriation Committee was established, and discussions with the Iziko council raised the issue of unethically collected objects – in particular, the human remains in Iziko's collections. Motivation was made for the life-casts to be categorised as human remains as well, which led to a more urgent re-evaluation of the problems with the ethnographic displays.

The director of the Social History Collections suggested that I could have a slot for the installation after April 2013, and then I had to wait until some members of staff were available to assist me. Finally, I was offered an opportunity to work on an intervention jointly with the curatorial staff of the Social History Department, but again no one was available to assist me. I regularly visited the display throughout the year and, curiously, on 22 July 2013 I discovered that some of the figures and artefacts had been removed (see **Figure 52**). The director claimed, and rightfully so, that the objects had been on display for too long and that some of the items were deteriorating. Slowly, but surely, more of the figures began to disappear. Eventually, I was told that they would be happy to work on a project with me in 2014, but that their own team would be making some adjustments to the display in the meantime.

At this point, I began to look at other avenues for the exhibition-installation component of the project. I visited the Ethnography Gallery again on 25 October 2013 to discover that not only had all the life-casts been removed but they also had been replaced with life-sized wire figures (see **Figure 53**). The figures were styled like typical wire sculptures seen locally in street art. This method of sculpture has also become a very popular medium for commercially produced art for tourist consumption. The latest inclusion of wire figures was accompanied by a few new text boards explaining the context of the original 1970s display. The boy at the music display and the three Kalahari dancers had been removed entirely.



Figure 52. After certain life-casts had been removed.

This photograph was taken on 22 July 2013.



Figure 53. Ethnography Gallery with life-casts removed, 30 October 2013.

A new wire figure is visible on the far left with the entrance to Room 2 just behind it on the right. The area where the *Bushman Diorama* was is still closed off.

5.2 Climate at the South African Museum

The Department of Arts and Culture was tasked by the National Heritage Council to establish a team of experts who could advise the minister on claims for possible repatriation.³⁰⁴ The Human Remains Repatriation Committee was established and consulted with the Iziko Council regarding human remains in the museum's collection. The Iziko Council's 2011–2012 Annual Report showed that unethical collecting practices were finally being taken to task by the South African Museum, in order to "grow the collections in line with strategic priorities".³⁰⁵ The Council was to address these "unethical collecting practices",

³⁰⁴ Position paper on a proposed policy framework on the repatriation of heritage resources January 2011. National Heritage Council South Africa, p 26.

³⁰⁵ Iziko Museums of South African Annual Report. Cape Town: Tandym Print. 23.

and its achievements at this point included a list of “24 and 6 unethically collected human remains” that was forwarded to the Department of Arts and Culture. This list made particular reference to Klaas and Trooi Pienaar and the repatriation of their remains from Austria to Kuruman.³⁰⁶ The 2012–2013 annual report proudly mentions that the South African Museum is the first South African museum with “a formal policy on the dignified care and return of human remains”, highlighting the impactful presence of Ciraj Rassool as Iziko Council member and member of the Human Remains Repatriation Committee. The annual reports in the following years continue to pledge Iziko’s desire to address unethical collecting practices and produce an updated version of the progress made with regard to human remains in particular. No mention is made of the life-casts, although from 2011 Rassool motivated for those casts made from Drury’s moulds to be re-classified as human remains. By 2013, the motivation was tentatively accepted and the life-casts began being treated as human remains. The decision had to be formally ratified by the newly formed Iziko Council and Human Remains Repatriation Committee, which put it into effect in 2015.³⁰⁷ Although many of the life-casts were considered to have been ethically collected, a decision was taken by the Social History Collections Department to revamp the Ethnography Gallery and remove all the life-casts in the process. Each cast was carefully undressed and disassembled, then removed to the care of the Physical Anthropology Collection in the archaeology storage areas.

³⁰⁶ Department of Presidency. *Speech by President Jacob Zuma on the occasion of the reburial of Mr and Mrs Klaas and Trooi Pienaar at Kuruman, Northern Cape Province*, 12 August 2012.

In 1909 Rudolph Pösch, a scientist of Austria had the Pienaaers removed from their burial sites to further racial studies on indigenous South Africans.

³⁰⁷ Confirmed in interviews with both Gerald Klinghardt and Lailah Hisham, 2–3 September 2015.



Figure 54. IMG_4208, southern Nguni beadwork display during dismantling.

Janine van Wyk, collections assistant, carefully removed clothing and other items from the life-casts.



Figure 55. IMG_5745, Nama hut display with a life-cast, now removed.



Figure 156. IMG_5761, back of the Nama hut display with one of the life-casts made by Drury, now also removed.



Figure 57. The clothing and ornament display featuring two more casts by Drury, now removed.

The figures show how ostrich shells were used and threaded to make ornaments. The display now has no figures.



Figure 58. IMG_4246, the southern Nguni initiation dress on a life-cast that was modelled on George Esau.

George Esau was a taxidermist at the museum for many years and this cast of him was made in 1973, when Esau was in his twenties. Janine van Wyk and Thando Ngcangisa carefully removed items from the display.



Figure 59. Picture 2045_2, the southern Nguni initiation display during wire figure installation.

Museum staff and interns dress the new wire figure that has replaced the life-cast of Esau, under the supervision of collections manager Ntombovuyo Tywakadi (pictured in the white coat above).



Figure 60. Picture 2321, an image of the music display during de-installation with the first full body life-cast that Drury made of Klaas Zepor.

Janine van Wyk takes a moment to assess how to remove the cast at the next join, and perhaps also to take in the historicity of the event.



Figure 61. Picture 2331: Janine van Wyk and Stanley Fatyela remove the last of the cast of Klaas Zepor.



Figure 62. The Ethnography Gallery as it is now without the life-casts, but with the rest of the displays intact.

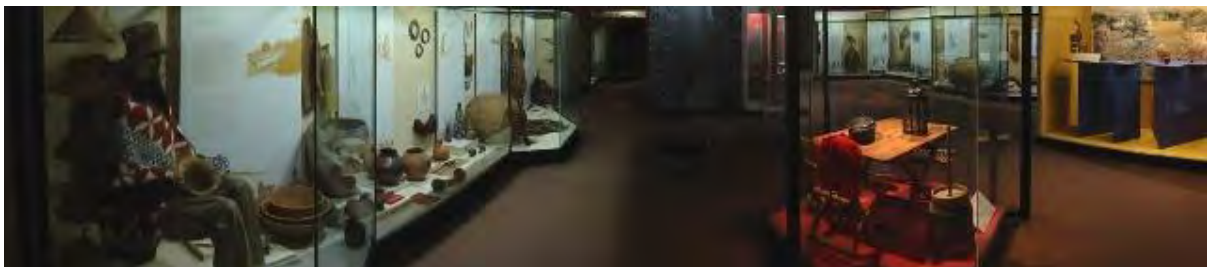


Figure 63. An image of Ethnography Gallery as it is now, with a wire sculpture replacement of the life-cast of Archie Khusa in the Southern Sotho display and a newly inserted display of the Afrikaner culture with table and chair to the right of the image.



Figure 64. The Ethnography Gallery with new wire figures in Room 3, with the entrance to Room 2 on the right.

The dressed wire figure which replaced the removed cast in **Figure 54** is seen in the seated position in the centre of the display.

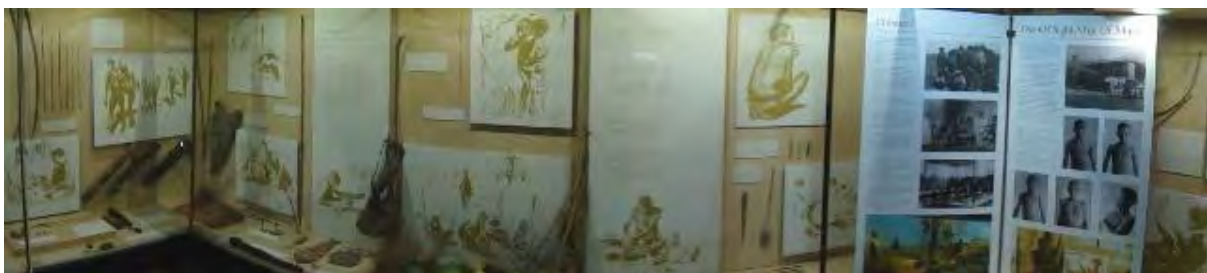


Figure 65. The Ethnography Gallery with new text and images on the right.

The new boards are titled “Erasure?” and “Out of sight, Out of mind. Erasure?” They show images of the Prieska inhabitants that Drury had used as models for his casts, as well as Drury’s studio, an early display of the casts and an image of the *Bushman Diorama*. “Out of sight, Out of mind” shows photographs of the Tokai Reformatory, Klaas Zepor, and the cast made by Drury used for the music display.

5.3 Proposed Intervention at the Ethnography Gallery

Not having had the opportunity to use the Ethnography Gallery as I had intended in the original proposal, I found an alternative venue in the Centre for African Studies Gallery at the University of Cape Town, and began to look at ways of using the new space to create similar effects. My original intervention was to include my own sculptures, text and a peephole to view the closed display area where the *Bushman Diorama* had been for many years. The display, although boarded up, was still mostly intact at the time. The smaller ethnographical objects had been removed, while the life-casts stayed in place, shrouded in dust covers.

My objective in including my own figures was to put museum visitors in the space as viewable objects, to place a contemporary spin on this voyeuristic practice – one that remains pervasive in art, science and, in particular, the entertainment industry. The idea was aligned with the type of performance enacted by Rose in *Graft* (**Figure 51**). My proposal did not include a live performance, but instead static figures that momentarily fooled the eye. My

intention was to play on the quiet and disturbing presence of these humanoid figures. As the figures would not have been made by life-casting, there would be no traces of human DNA that could give them the status of human remains. It would have appeared to the visitor as if a plain-clothed visitor like themselves was interacting with the museum displays. Some of the figures were to act inappropriately in the context of the museum space and be placed both inside and outside the display cases. The figures would have been onlookers and part of the display simultaneously. Sculptural figures have always intrigued viewers and evoke a desire to engage – ideas such as these were referenced and relayed in the new space at the Centre for African Studies Gallery.



Figure 66. *Wat Kyk Jy?! exhibition, with *Hou My Vas* in the foreground.*

Above is an image of the *Wat Kyk Jy?! exhibition*, held at the Centre for African Studies Gallery in November 2013. *Hou My Vas* is in the foreground, *The African Studies Student* is in the middle and *Curator's Process Diagram*, *Wooden Cabinet with Artefacts* and "*Relics*" (with fibreglass skulls and ethnographic material culture) and *Boxes* (for storage of ethnographic material culture) are in the background.

Hou My Vas had a patterned fabric for skin to achieve the effect of camouflage (see **Figure 66**). The sculpture thereby forced and manipulated the viewer to consider it as “different” or “Other”. The stasis of the figures mimicked the aesthetic of the life-casts. The highly figurative sculptures were of contemporary South African society and framed people as “suits”, representing parts of society. In a sense, these sculptures tested notions of “Othering” and temporality by adding a third dimension to the gaze and bringing to the fore the discomfort of public participation in a display. The figures were existing sculptures I had made as works of art, and have “performed” in a sense as characters that engaged with space and the public. The only new figures created for this particular installation were *Hou My Vas* and *The African Studies Student*.

I opted to use these two figures as the central figures in the display (see **Figure 66**). *Hou My Vas*, an Afrikaans title that means “hold me tightly”, sat in a proud, defiant pose. The camouflaged skin made her appear as one solid shape, like a silhouette. The figure created a hole in the picture for the viewer, but one that drew the viewer in more closely to inspect it. Although clothed in the camouflage fabric, the figure was quite naked and sexualised in its female form. Yet it appeared aware and proud of this, and comfortable with its appearance. To create the sense of being on display, this figure was placed on a low, flat plinth. *The African Studies Student*, dressed as a plain-clothed young woman, was set opposite *Hou My Vas* and appeared to be looking at it quizzically. The student had come to learn, possibly about her own culture, but found an unrecognisable construct in its place. The conversation moved out from this central one throughout the room.



Figure 67. *Poephol in die lug* (“buttocks to the sky”).



Figure 68. Homeless Man (original title: *Just as Useless as the Box It Came In*).

The three figures representing men were in various reactionary states to the construct of culture and the role of the museum. The man “burying his head in the sand” (when, in fact, he had no head – see **Figure 67**); the homeless man sleeping, unhindered by the movement of research, culture or history, was as he would be in Government Avenue (outside the South African Museum; see **Figure 68**); and finally, the “young man” with the best vantage point in the whole display had his eyes closed (see **Figure 69**). The wooden cabinet with skulls and other items labelled as artefacts helped to contextualise the installation in relation to the museum (**Figure 70**). The artefacts had handwritten labels identifying them, while the maker of the objects was listed as “unknown”, and the period was listed as “circa”. The skulls were identified only by race. This installation talked to the difficulties now faced by museum practitioners of unethical and recklessly collected artefacts.



Figure 69. Young Man.



Figure 70. *Wooden Cabinet with Artefacts and "Relics".*

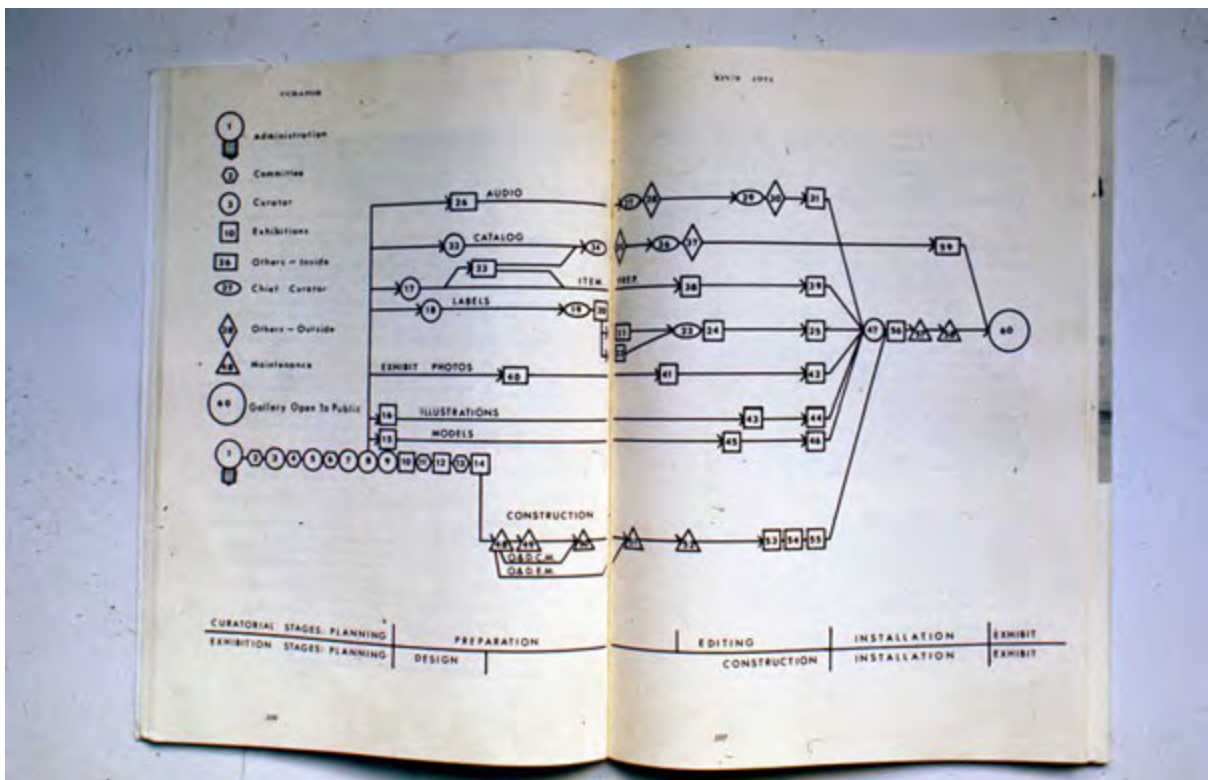


Figure 71. *Exhibition Planning Diagram.*

The image of the open journal above was referenced by staff at the South African Museum during the planning of the *Bushman Diorama* European tour³⁰⁸ and was included in the image archive folder with the rest of the planning sketches and diagrams for the project.

A similar function was played by the boxes stacked next to it, seen to the right of the wooden cabinet in the background in **Figure 66**. However, here the recontextualising of the collections by the museum staff was represented by the changes to the identifying museum numbers, which were written and crossed out on the boxes. A diagram was displayed on the same wall, paired with the white gloves typically worn by the museum curator; another pair was placed in the wooden cabinet (see **Figure 70**). The diagram in **Figure 71** is from *Curator: The Museum Journal*, a 1971 American publication that isolates the steps a curator should follow to complete an exhibition installation. It is so codified, however, that it seems to have been made more complex than necessary.³⁰⁹ These displays related to the ones facing them on the opposite wall: the copies of letters from Iziko Social History Centre's archived correspondence between *Péringuey* and George St Leger Lennox, aka "Scotty Smith", who was infamous for trading in human remains and smuggling, as discussed earlier. I had copies made of two letters and had them on display with an accompanying magnifying glass because the handwriting was not easily legible on its own. The letter referred to earlier, in **Appendices D** and **E**, describes *Péringuey*'s dependence on Lennox for the acquisition of "Bushman" remains. It also mentions the intention of the first heritage protection act to hold "Bushman relics" within South African borders.

Next to the letter was a light-box displaying a backlit A3-sized sheet of thumbnail images from the Social History Image Archive (**Figure 72**). The images were numbered, along with a list of captions and a magnifying glass to aid viewing. They provided the viewer with a timeline of the ethnography galleries and their use of the life-casts, as well the South African Museum as an institution. The use of thumbnail images provided the viewer with an experience similar to my own – that of going through the slides with a magnifying glass in the archive.

³⁰⁸ Howell, D.B. (1971) A Network System for Planning, Designing, Construction and Installation of Exhibits. *Curator: The Museum Journal, California Academy of Sciences*. 14 (2): 106-107. Howell was an exhibit preparer at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

³⁰⁹ It is interesting that step 1, represented by a light-bulb icon, is actually administration instead of an idea.



Figure 72. Timeline and thumbnail images from the Iziko Social History Archive.

The second part of the original proposal was to consider different “language” registers – formal, informal, authoritative and academic – and how these related to power and control. The word “Bantu” as used in the ethnographic display at the South African Museum is perceived as derogatory to some, but is a term of linguistic classification for academics. Those with an academic background are, in a sense, empowered and able to see past the “unfortunate associations”; the implication is that such people are able to see with greater perspective. It is as if the word has different interpretations, but its “true” meaning is the one defined by the ethnologist and not the cultural group being described. As with *Miscast*, the quagmire of representation is broached here, exposing a long history of the powerful, the powerless, the vocal and the silenced. To open up this dialogue, I chose certain phrases. In these phrases the use of language was paramount, whether because they included different languages or because they included different types of language – i.e., academic speciality jargon or informal colloquialisms. This line of questioning led me to consider the titles again: “San”, “Bushman/Boesman”, “Khoisan”, and so on.



Figure 73. Neg 802 Ethnology Prieska, used for *Wat Kyk Jy?!* exhibition.

This image was used in the invitation and the questionnaire for the intervention-turned-exhibition. It shows something of the exchange between white people and those they termed “Bushmen”. The original image was accompanied by the text in **Figure 74**.

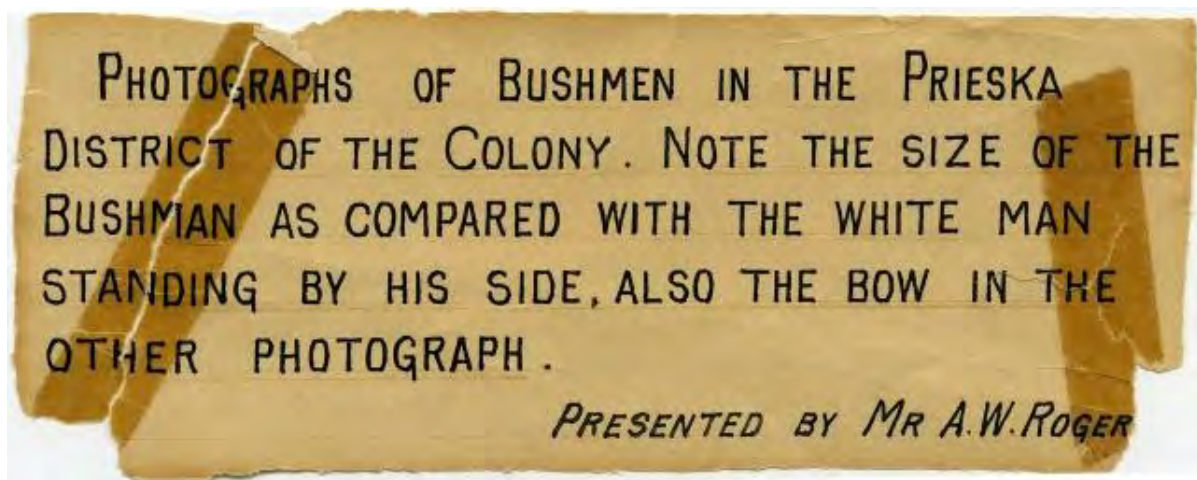


Figure 74. A slip of paper was found with the image.

The names, labels and titles are evocative and can also exist outside “normal” or formal language, yet their use is common and, sometimes, has reactionary or painful effects. *Koek-’n-loer*, which means to sneak a peek at or ogle something or someone, and *Wat kyk jy?*

("What are you looking at?") are often used in a confrontational tone to question in a challenging way; these are both Afrikaans phrases that exist in an informal space. They were to be posted in vinyl lettering at the entrance to the display, to beckon viewers and introduce the disrupted space for the original intervention. Words such as "boesman" and "hotnot" evoke pain and shame among many South Africans and are associated with negative traits such as laziness, stupidity and bastardisation. These words or labels would have been addressed in the accompanying text and would have included information about the history of the display and the intention of the intervention. Together with the questionnaire, they would have given viewers the opportunity to communicate their impressions. The information was to be collated and reflected in the final version of this research paper.

Instead of presenting the emotive words and labels on the walls, I opted for a more subtle approach and allowed visitors to rate their sensitivity to the words. For the opening night, I invited visual and performing artist Selvin November to open the show and discuss some of the problematic phrases and labels.³¹⁰ November began by deconstructing the title of the exhibition, *Wat Kyk Jy?!*. He then requested that we each turn to the person next to us and repeat the phrase – one often used by hardened gangsters lurking in alleyways. The exercise engendered uncomfortable laughter. November explained the phrase as being a violent and confrontational one that usually resulted in the recipient averting their gaze and moving along to avoid trouble. He paralleled the unwanted gaze and defensive reaction with the violence of looking, and continued with a deconstruction of the notion of the gaze in the Ethnography Gallery context as an act of possessing and controlling the peoples represented. To situate the project within the Ethnography Gallery, which had by that stage been updated with new figures and informational texts, a video of the space was included in the exhibition.

I collected information that related to the viewers' demographics to contextualise my findings in the form of a questionnaire (see **Appendix R**). Most of the forms were completed on opening night, 28 November 2013, and some were completed at the walkabout in the following week. The sample group consisted of 56 people in total. Viewers were current and ex-staff from Iziko Museums of South Africa, in the social history, education and art departments, as well as freelance artists, friends and family. Staff and students from the University of Cape Town's Centre for African Studies and Engineering Mall and Summer School attendees also visited the exhibition. This audience lent a specific slant to my

³¹⁰ We had previously worked together on such projects as *Ingekleur: Between the lines*, a visual art exhibition by a group of artists including Igshaan Adams, Craig Masters, Roderick Sauls, Vivien Kohler, Donovan Ward, Ayesha Price, Sophie Peters and veteran photographer George Hallett.

findings, because there were no general members of the public. The audience make-up would have differed quite markedly from visitors to the South African Museum. Access within the Centre for African Studies is limited and visitors had to make prior arrangements in order to view the exhibition. A full report on my findings is detailed in **Appendix S**.

5.4 Conclusion

The impetus of the life-casts and their relation to the collection of human remains, part of a bid to racially and culturally classify and construct the Bushmen, has been investigated in this project, through an analysis of the museum's archive and the broader historical context behind it. The production of this thesis leaned on an archive, at times fastidiously organised and at other times grossly lacking and inaccessible, but this investigation provides infrastructure for further engagement and analysis. The production and absorption of museum displays of ethnographic material, and the nature of the relationship between the museum worker, the museum object and the museum visitor, has always been of personal interest to me.

The life-casts became a valuable opportunity to explore this relationship and the production of and weight assigned to "meaning", as it is lived out in the museum space. Unable to give adequate attention to the issues of Khoisan identity, unethical collecting practices, repatriation and the untold stories of the models, this research honed in on the life-casts themselves. I have argued that the collection and interpretation of material culture and human remains informs the production of the life-casts. This process was described in relation to the early ethnographic displays at the turn of the twentieth century. The use of the letter books helped build an understanding of the museum's motivations and its relation to the public and to experts in the field. The Bain's Bushmen project is another phenomenon that informed the museum's interactions and motives – particularly its interpretation of the ethnographic displays and its creation of the *Bushman Diorama*. These interactions serve as a pretext for the split between the "cultural history" and "ethnographic" collections, since the life-casts were moulded for a different purpose during apartheid in South Africa.

A photographic timeline was constructed to map the visual experience of the ethnographic galleries for museum visitors from the early twentieth century onwards. This timeline relied heavily on my engagement with existing and former staff members, who helped me capture information not yet absorbed into the archive. The reconstruction of the visitor experience shows evidence of staff interaction with the theoretical constructs of the life-casts. Similarly, my project hopes to allow the reader to engage with the history as it unfolds and to note how theoretical constructs, created or imbibed by the museum, are realised when interpreted by the public. This analysis allows one to gauge the level of agency granted to the public by the

curator and provides a case study of different approaches, from didacticism to attempts at inclusivity. The issue of the instructive mode of the museum's engagement with its visitors has not been addressed since the closure of the *Bushman Diorama*.

The image archive is particularly haphazard, and minutes of the 1970s meetings are scant. It is clear that reassigning the care of collections to different departments, and changing museum staff, contributes to the haphazard nature of the archive, yet it is also clear that this situation is quite common in the context of museums. This research is a reflection of the archive, as it stands. The privileged position of the curator or museum worker allows him or her to hold the power and weight of the institution and thereby become an authority who shapes the nation's collections and their interpretation. This problematic power relationship can still be addressed in the Ethnography Gallery, because the space holds potential for an unravelling of the issues of restitution, repatriation, museum collecting practices and a colonial past that has created racial stereotypes. The happenings at the museum before and since the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* were filled with interesting and relevant stops, starts and hesitations, and the gallery reflects the fact that it is still a site of contestation. As Davison wrote, "[M]useums in themselves are composite artefacts ... they tend to be chronically prone to historical inertia or paradigm lag".³¹¹ In this case, though, there is an opportunity to engage with the past and the present that it has created or enabled. Public engagement with cultural material and museums is promisingly multi-levelled and complex now, by comparison with any other age. With technology making access to information fluid, and people engaging with collections both inside and outside museum walls, the curatorial challenge has entered a new playing field. The same issues of heritage and culture persist in matters of representation, repatriation, and the power struggles that go along with them, and, as a result, the role of the museum is constantly being redefined. Public park, mall or virtual space – these sites are all possibilities for the involvement of communities and for dialogue with heritage and museums. The next step for this research would be a more active engagement with Iziko Museums of South Africa regarding its ethnographic displays. This case study of the making and unmaking of the life-casts at the South African Museum provides an initial historical account and overview, outlining what could be more vigorously investigated given a broader research context.

³¹¹ Davison, P. (1991) *Material Culture Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice*. Submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town. 88.

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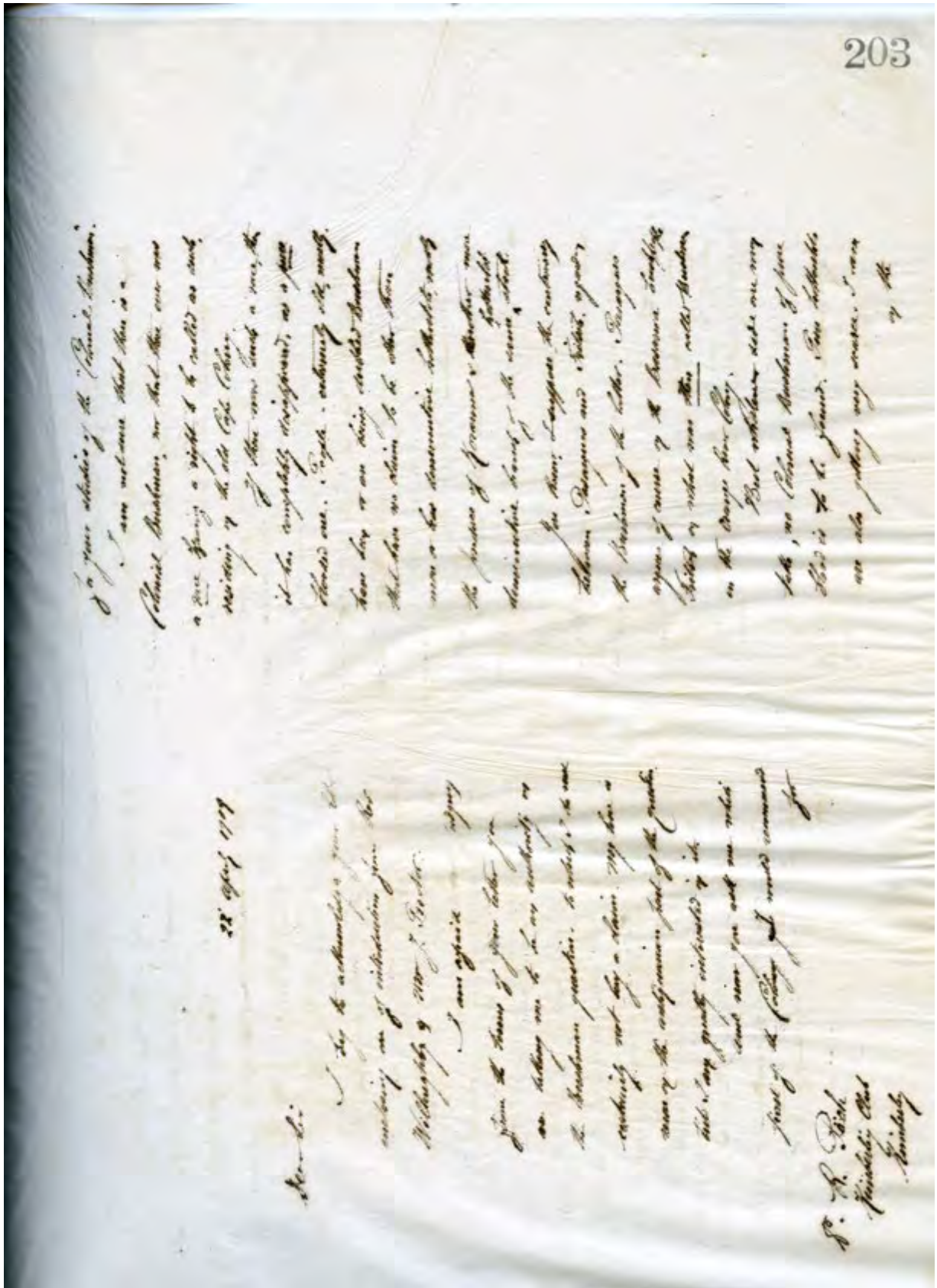
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Appendices

Letters and transcribed notes

APPENDIX A



I to your studies of the "Political Bunker".

I am not sure that there is a
Colonel Bunker; nor that there ever was
a man being a right to be called as such,
residing in the old City of Boston.

I have never heard a name, the
it is, possibly (disregard), as a name
should be. I hope, certainly it is wrong,
how long it is in being called Bunker
that has no claim to be other than

was a true American. I should not say
the names of Johnson & Bunker were
democratic, terms of the same, that

you then; I suppose the country
between Johnson and Bunker, you
the Bunker, of the latter, I suppose

again, of course, of the Bunker, I suppose
that is what was the name, Bunker
in the days of the latter.

But whether there are any
left, no Colonel Bunker, I suppose
that is to be found. I am not sure
are also getting very scarce. I am
y the

22nd April 1777

Dear Sir:

I beg to acknowledge your letter
concerning me of introduction from the
Wilmington of 1777. I am not

I am again in reply
from the terms of your letter you
are taking me to be an authority on
the American question. I wish to see

nothing but by a claim. My own
name of the only name, part of the people,
and I am greatly indebted to the
and am sure you will see what

Part of the Policy of the world command
for

S. R. B. B. B.
Wilmington, Mass
Kindly

and distinct words it was really to
 travel in. By the bye, I have this people
 very true say, the birds believe the
 Nalchian speak a the sound notes of the
 Mungyan bird.

I regret that I was unpleasantly
 ill of so long a time, but I read out
 for you now. You will still find of the
 Mungyan birds some specimens about the
 bushman. That way to of natural. If the
 one was rather better than the other. It
 will be good to find that the two birds
 that is the case - of course in the authorities.

I had to wait the morning of
 the 15th of the 11th. The General had
 for your country, and came to inquire
 of the name of your birds. I showed him
 some of our maps of the birds. Some he
 understood that you will see to the birds
 who will help to the pleasure of every one.

James very sincerely
 L. J. Young
 Yours

and you to the two - have the great
 difficulty in finding - you would have
 for the authorities of which I cannot
 absolutely say.

I was not sure however that a
 visit of all the various stations along the
 coast. That their weight out to be the
 usual specimens of the coast. They
 if you did not find few. Better to send
 the birds in case to prove of interest.

For many is a bushman, but I hope at
 length you will find a way along
 the coast of the Mungyan (Mungyan, Mungyan)

and the coast. That way out of the
 your search of the Nalchian bushman.
 (Mungyan). I had to have said this of
 two or three families of "bushman".
 but they believe they are the same.
 The bushman to cover is that type.

APPENDICES A-B (transcribed)

[Page 1/4]

22 April 1909

Dr R Pöch, Kimberley Club, Kimberley

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge your letter enclosing one of introduction from Rev Willoughby and Mr J Proctor.

I am afraid ... judging from the ... your letter you are taking me to be an authority on the Bushman question, to which I do most certainly not lay a claim. My love is more on the antiquarian part of the question but I am greatly intimated in it.

And now you ask me which field of the Colony I would recommend for

[Page 2/4]

for your studies of the "Colonial Bushman". I am not sure that there is a Colonial Bushman, nor that there ever was a race claiming a right to be called as such, residing in the old Cape Colony.

If there was such a race then it has completely disappeared, as a pure blooded one. People extremely old, merely have been or are being dubbed Bushman that have no claim to be other than more or less distinctive Hottentots, mostly the produce of Koranna and another more distinctive branch of the same Hottentot stock.

You know, I suppose the controversy between Passarge and Fritsch regarding the Bushman of the latter. Passarge argues of course on the Basarwa bush people, Fritsch on what was then called Bushman in the Orange River Colony.

But whatever side one may take, no Colonial Bushman of pure blood is to be found. Pure Hottentots are also getting very scarce. I am on the

[Page 3/4]

search for the two and have had great difficulty in finding a few isolated cases for authenticity of which I cannot absolutely vouch.

I am not sure however that a visit to all the mission stations along the Orange and Vaal River ought not to be the most promising field of research. Hence if you did not find pure blooded remnants the visits are sure to prove of interest.

Kuruman is a Bechuana locality. At Upington you will find a very strong mixture of Hottentot (Nama, Korana) and Basarwa, that may not improve your results of the Kalahari Bushman. (Basarwa). Yet I have heard there of two or three families of "Bushman", but they seldom stay at one place and the distances to cover in that large arid

[Page 4/4]

-arid and district make it very costly to travel in. On the other hand these people may have been the links between the Kalahari Bush and the Bush ... of Great Namaqua land.

I regret that my information is of so meagre a kind but I could not give you more. You will still find in the Mission Stations some traditions about the Bushman that may be of interest and if there are any natives dubbed Bushman there, it would be most likely that they have Bush blood in their veins – of course on the mother's side.

I have the visit this morning of ..., the Consul General for your country who came to inquire if I had received your letter. I showed him some of our models of natives. From him I understand that you will come to Cape Town when I shall then have the pleasure of meeting you, ...

Yours very sincerely L Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to Dr Rudolf Pöch, 22 April 1909, Kimberley Club, Kimberley, transcribed from letter number 203 and 204, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

following information
 the the last to visit the
 Clinic Book of the Springfield
 exhibit. and are they then the
 name.
 the I wish to be by the first
 that visit as please themselves
 a they're not from South people.
 I hope that you will
 not mind.

Yours sincerely
 L. P. Thompson

2 November 1900

Dear Mr. Lawrence

You have to this time
 received my letter enclosing my
 Jan 5. 1900. I am sending another
 Jan 10. 5. 1900. with the
 amount of paid to themselves is
 the same I want to say
 I was very sorry to
 know of the great amount that there is
 some 2000 type that you will be
 satisfied, I am not sure of the difference
 another time

You have just me the
 following

S. W. Lawrence, Esq.
 Springfield
 C. S.

APPENDIX C (transcribed)

[Page 1/2]

1 December 1910

G. S. L. Lennox Esq., Upington C. C.

Dear Mr Lennox

You have by this time received my letter enclosing [a] cheque for £. 10. I am sending another for £.5.10. Which with the amount I paid to ... is the same I sent before.

I can really afford no more, for the good reason that I have no more and I hope that you will be satisfied, if we can make up the difference another time.

Now please give me the following

[Page 2/2]

following information. Are the last lot sent the Colonial Bush of the Upington district and are they then the

... Am I right in taking the first lot not as Korana Bushman and they're not pure Bush people.

I know that you will not mislead.

Yours Sincerely L Péringuey

[Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 1 December 1910, Upington, transcribed from letter number 681, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

The returned application must not
 be that of any new student
 now dead, but of those who had
 perhaps been killed out of your letter.

The existing account, a great
 deal of information has long obtained
 in the immediate view of the most
 go to institution of most to, or not to
 do that by the returning of the
 or there, or there, or there, or there,
 & how they are disposed of.

I would therefore, before
 asking you to pursue any of the
 -said, I know that the paper on
 paper is not so common as a very
 numerous one, and you to give an
 your word, - it is great expense to
 me. But the education must be
 to me, to be worthy of it, and that by
 must be the best of what you get,
 from the institution, the instruction
 that they seem to have given, & I
 must make out from the paper,
 perhaps

Assuring that you will have from me
 fully obliged with an early answer
 Yours truly
 Henry

1st February 1790

Dear Mr. Linnæus

In your last letter you
 asked me to obtain permission from the
 Gov^t to accept students of that high
 from the same kind of studies taken
 -and, especially in the sciences.

I have now this permission
 very scarce to my hands, the same
 But, to be quite frank in the
 matter, if I send you the same
 -said, I must have to be satisfied
 that the students thus obtained must
 come to this opportunity, and also that

APPENDIX D (transcribed)

[Page 1/2]

8 February 1911

Dear Mr Lennox

To your last letter you asked me to obtain permission from the Govt. to unearth skeletons of Bush people from the crown lands in Bechuanaland, especially in the Kalahari.

I have now this permission and can issue the same to my deputy. But to be quite frank on the matter if I issue you this permission, I would have to be satisfied that the skeletons thus obtained would come to this museum only and also that

[Page 2/2]

the exhumed skeletons would not be those of very much mixed cross breed, but of those true Bush people you told me of in your letter.

For certain reasons a great deal of information has been obtained here on the mercantile side of the search for skeletons of would be, or said to be Bush people obtaining at Upington and how or where they are disposed of. I would therefore, before asking you to procure more for me. –mind I know that the price we pay is not or cannot be a very remunerative one and ask you to give me your word. – it is quite sufficient for me- that the skeletons would come to us and to nobody else and that they would be those of which you spoke, from the interior. As I understand that heavy rains have fallen and the ... will prove plentiful therefore

[Written in passage between text]

procuring these relics will now prove easier. Kindly oblige with an early answer.

Yours sincerely, L Péringuey

[Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 8 February 1911, Upington, transcribed from letter number 877, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

Spencer the agitator is dead
But is being feared, & things
will in all likelihood be stopped &
completely repressed.

You do not think that
we are mentioning the things to get
my advantage, & allow the children
to suffer. It is not so!

I have looked to your house,
& I fear it again is coming to
an untimely end.

Yours sincerely
L. P. Lovejoy
Lover

1 May 1840

Dear Mrs. Turner

I was glad to find that you
nothing at all to you. - as children.

Mr. Lovejoy to get the evidence
readily & under my eye.

I am sure that we shall
have to go a good deal together. The
part of the children. This is not
my purpose. If I can, I will, but
this is not an order or threat. I would
try to meet a parallel to what you

But to pay the price with the
is large, & must increase here
the same expenses, & not of the people.

APPENDIX E (transcribed)

[Page 1/2]

1 March 1911

Dear Mr Lennox

Press of work has provided me writing at once to you re skeletons.

Then, I had to get the requested authority and mention my deputy.

You mention that we shall have to go a good deal higher than ... for the skeletons. This is not very promising. If I can, I will, but this is not an order in ... I would try as much as possible to meet you. But to pay the price called for in Europe, and most museums have also made inquiries from me, is out of the question.

[Page 2/2]

Moreover the exportation is closed. A Bill is being passed and things will, in all likelihood, be stopped and eventually confiscated.

Now, do not think that I am mentioning these things to get an advantage and obtain the skeletons cheaper. It is not so!

I have trusted to your honour and I prove it again in sending the authorization required.

Yours sincerely L. Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 1 March 1911, Upington, transcribed from letter number 934, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

APPENDIX F (transcribed)

[Page 1/2]

15 August 1910

G. S. L. Lennox Esq., Upington C. C.

Dear Mr Lennox

I have received your skeletons two days ago. I have not gone through these, but I take it for granted that you have seen that they are complete.

I am sending herewith a cheque on the Standard Banks for £. 17.10. at £. 3.10. a specimen. Which is the most we can afford to give. The boy will not be very useful for measurements as adults are required, but of course this makes no difference. I am glad and thankful that you have given us the opportunity to add

[Page 2/2]

Add these examples to the collection. They go tomorrow to Leiden with the other skulls to be carefully measured there.

I would be glad indeed if you could tell me a little more about the skeletons. Are they those of Basarwa or mixed Hottentot Bush, or of what is called here (Colonial) Bush.

Then also, how were they buried? Laying on the side or in the sitting attitude? But they were I presume with tucked up legs towards the chins, etc. Are the bodies wrapped in [sac] or lambs cloth? Any information relating to their burials would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely L. Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 15 August 1910, Upington, transcribed from letter number 366, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

20th August 1770

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your information
concerning the Stone structure, and
the acknowledgement of our oblige.

I trust you will give us
a chance to have some of the Stone,
Yours, and Gales collection, when
you obtain them.

Can you tell me if the people
make pots, and if so what the shape
is: either round or round & of the
make them, could
any be obtained



Respectfully
Yours, Sir
Wm. L. ...
O.C.

Richardson

Your obedient
servant
L. ...
Dorchester

APPENDIX G (transcribed)

[Page 1/1]

30 August 1910

G. S. L. Lennox Esq., Upington C. C.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your information regarding the Korana Bushman, and the acknowledgment of our cheque.

I trust you will give us a chance to have some of the Nama, and ... skeletons when you obtain them.

Can you tell me if these people make pots and if so what the shape is ... conical or round and if they make these could any be obtained.

Yours sincerely L. Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to George St. Leger Lennox, 30 August 1910, Upington, transcribed from letter number 394, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

but I should like to know to
 know for me, even Brough
 children. I understood that to
 you to know that in the children
 I presume it is to be understood
 and mother.

I would have to write to
 will under my parent for the
 people.

As you probably know, the Act
 for promotion of business which has
 been set forth, and that children
 are included in the Bill, and it is
 true, they attempt to send to England
 Russia or Germany is, Remondelle
 and I then hope that my parent
 will receive good pleasure to come to
 me, and not give more explanation
 of them. It is better to send to
 I cannot find out how many and
 to Germany, I understand for another
 sent, this being to England.
 and for the other, some and good

30 April 1911

Croydon

Dear Mr. Dow

I'm really very kind of you
 to have known the two children of
 But I hope that you remember in your
 letter.

If you shall extend any
 scheme in your favour, and
 also in forwarding, and to my thought.
 I shall hope a line to the
 It has probably no opportunity to
 get at the child's wishes. But he
 promised me to do so, and I don't
 that he will keep his word.

I do not remember if I told
 you

Yours truly
 as Mr. Dow's
 W. Dow

But this is, I think, a very important
 fact, for study, in the hands of the very
 best men, all our materials is sent
 for examination and report, and how it
 is a ruin, unless of the best you be
 that intended distinction, it must be
 long a time to be had science.

Very very, when the full is
 promulgated, you will, show says,
 means that instruction is to be
 removal of these which

some you do not see the science
 of nature at the museum, and especially
 our objects are then what I recollect
 of science. The facts, with a perfect
 knowledge more than we possess,
 and a business among the law,
 which I am sure, after much advice, you
 you come to a great deal of a long

With warm regards, I remain

Your sincere

W. Thompson

APPENDICES H-I (transcribed)

[Page 1/3]

Confidential

30 April 1911

*H. Drew Esq. Ass' Reg. Magistrate,
Rietfontein*

Dear Mr Drew

It is really very kind of you to procure the two skeletons of Bush people which you announce in your letter.

Of course I shall refund any expense incurred procuring them and also in forwarding, and be very thankful.

I shall drop a line to Le Roche. He had probably no opportunity to get at Lieflik's victims. But he promised me to do so, and I doubt not that he will keep his word.

I do not remember if I told you

[Page 2/3]

that I deputed Mr Lennox to procure for us some Bushpeople skeletons. I understand that he was going to procure these in the Kalahari, I presume he is to be trusted in such matters.

It would hardly be right to collect under my permit for other people.

As you probably know the Bill for preservation of Bushman relics has passed both ... and Bush skeletons are scheduled in the Bill and it is our law. Any attempt to send to England, or Austria or Germany is punishable now. And I thus hope, that my permit will cause good specimens to come to me. I need not give more explanation at present. If skeletons went to Austria, I cannot find out how many went to Germany, [and] 8 intended for Austria went – quite lately to England. I only got the dregs, women and youths.

[Page 3/3]

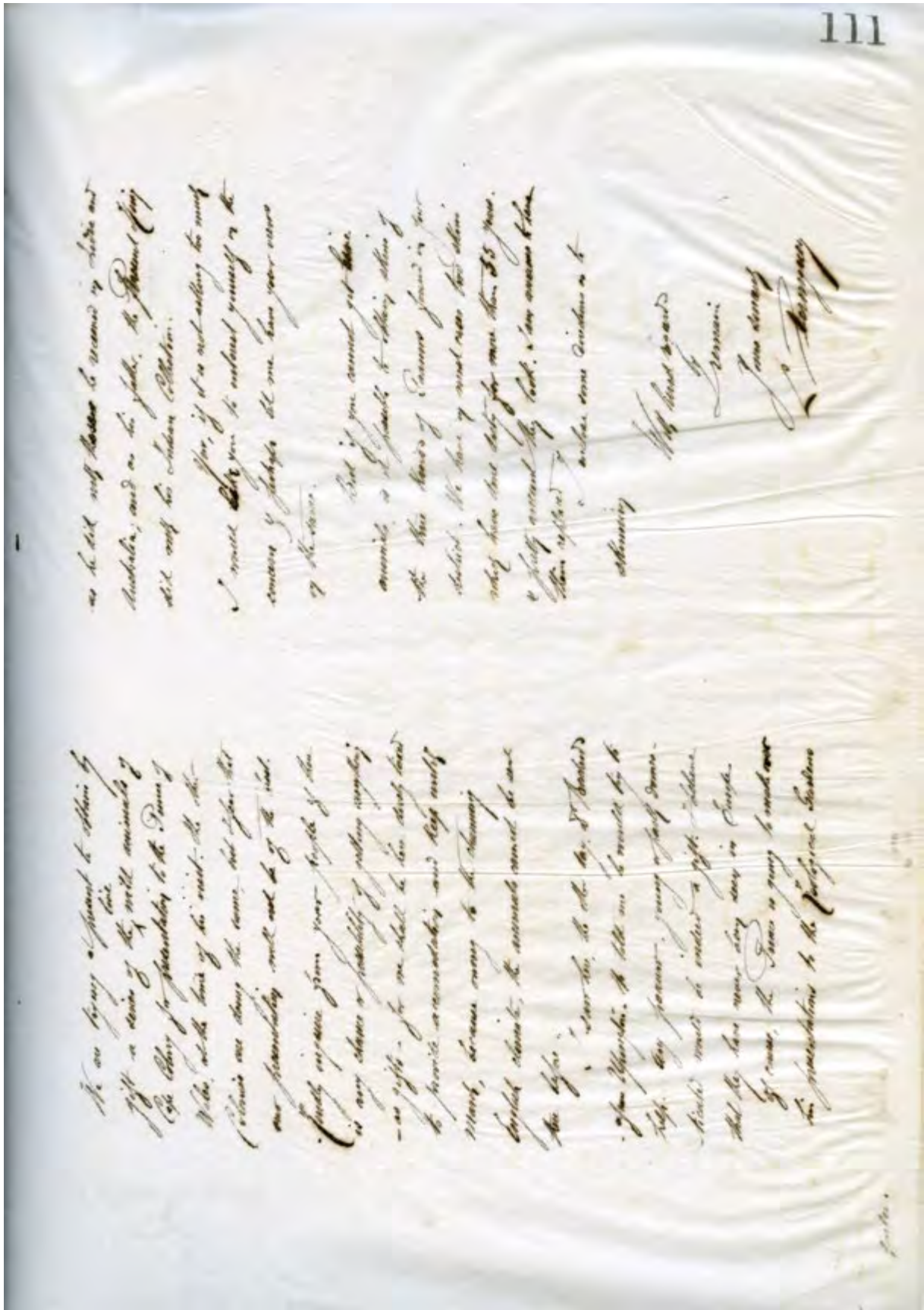
But this is of course confidential. Fortunately the 8 that went to England fell, for study, in the hands of the very expert to whom all our material is sent for examination and report, and thus it is a gain, whereas if they had gone to their intended destinations, it would have been a loss to English Science.

Any way, when the Bill is promulgated, you will, Shaw says, receive clearer instructions as to the removal of these relics.

Since you did me the pleasure of calling at the museum and inspecting our models, we have added three excellent specimens. The females with a posterior developed more than well pronounced and a Bushman drawing the bow which, I am sure, you will admire when you come to visit to Cape Town.

With ... thanks... Yours sincerely L Péringuey

[Louis Péringuey to Harry Drew, 30 April 1911, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, transcribed from letter numbered 131 and 132, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]



We are trying to present to obtain by gift a series of the well known of Cape Colony for presentation to the Prince of Wales, at the time of his visit. The proceeds are being the same, but before that our presentation will not be of the kind. I shall express your people of the is any chance a possibility of making something - as gifts - for me shall be the study hard to provide a memorandum and keep until March, because every to the following English should be the amount would be sent the before.

I saw the, at the, by, I should of the, I should, I shall be to make by the help, they present, young of just some. I shall want to make a gift. I shall that they have never any day in Europe. I mean, the Prince is going to visit our for presentation to the Portuguese Emperor.

111

as he did not know to receive in India and Australia, and on the whole, the present of gift will only be a small addition.

I would like you to understand yourself in the reviews of perhaps all the time, have your views of the same.

But if you cannot get them, I would like to speak to the King about it. The three kinds of presents found in your school, the time of your visit, the school, they have that duty for more than 35 years. I fully intend to get them, I am anxious to have them before.

I shall send you a list of the same.

Yours truly,
 J. P. Thompson

APPENDICES J-K (transcribed)

[Page 1/4]

25 April 1910

Harry Drew Esq. Ass' Reg. Magistrate, Rietfontein

Dear Mr Drew

Many thanks for your letter. I fully expected to enlist your sympathy because I remember quite well our meeting here, only I was not sure that you were still at Rietfontein, hence my addressing the Assistant Resident Magistrate.

I have written a note to Le Roche as you suggested. I believe I met him before long ago. I asked him to favour me with a call.

I am the more desirous of obtaining the relics of the departed Bush, that through some underhand work, all similar ones are surreptitiously removed

[Page 2/4]

removed from this country, and this is not as it should be.

Unfortunately with the ... retrenchment this ... has had to bear with – one third of the grant. I cannot cope with price offered by some of these body snatchers – some of them political (military) spies, using their position as a cloak [and] fully ... I doubt not, for their indication ..., as well as for the scientific material they have though obtained. I doubt not that you understand to what people I am referring to.

The man (Bush) Lieflik has been sentenced to death, but he has not been executed as yet. I am in correspondence with Mr. Garcia regarding him if his sentence is not commuted to penal servitude.

You may perhaps like to hear that we have procured the models of two Hottentot women wonderfully developed aft [and] fore. I hope to show these to you when you come back for a spell to Cape Town [and] to this ... of interest called the Museum!

[Page 3/4]

We are trying at present to obtain by gift a series of live wild animals of [the] Cape Colony for presentation to the Prince of Wales, at the time of his visit. The other Colonies are doing the same, but I fear that our presentation will not be the best. Kindly inquire from your people if there is any chance or possibility of getting anything – as gifts – for we shall be here clearly taxed to provide accommodation and keep until March, because owing to the charming English climate, the animals cannot be sent there before.

I saw here, the other day, Dr Borchers – from Upington. He told me he would try to help. Any ... young or fully domesticated would be indeed a gift. I believe that they have never

been seen in Europe of course, the Prince is going to make his presentations to the Zoological Gardens

[Page 4/4]

as he did with those he received in India and Australia; and as his father, the Present King did with his Indian collection.

Now, if it is not asking too much I would like you to involve yourself in the concern and perhaps let me have you news on the same.

But if you cannot get some animals is it possible to obtain skins of three kinds of ... found in your district. We have in ... two skins which have done duty for more than 5 years and pretty ancient they look. I am ... to have them replaced.

With kind regards I remain yours sincerely L. Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to Harry Drew, 25 April 1910, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, transcribed from letter numbered 110 and 111, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

At body. But I fear I cannot
 make head to my obligations
 & all possible to express our
 kindest wishes. I am, the
 only child to my dear mother
 with a mother now who is not so
 strong, it is not desirable with
 respect to her health ever out long.
 as left to the nature of the case is
 the matter of course is the de-
 sires, it would not seem appropriate
 to be sent to any - instead of
 the package of some out things,
 that should show of nature ability.
 & the matter is the execution of
 the end, and with our own the way
 is shown, if you wish it is possible
 it is your things to the Col. Sec. office
 as you will find.

18 September 1867

It is necessary that if you to
 substitute your mother's to help
 me in carrying the body of
 the things, and to help to that
 you do it.
 I want of carrying the same
 to by the way of yourself when
 already it has let me that of an
 great good of yourself protection
 for me. With you going to entrance
 to get some family to help bearing
 the necessary matters for you to
 mine

W. R. McLeod, Sr.
 Acting Comd. Camp
 Cameron

The 10th of Oct I and some
 were introduced to the young
 houses of American ladies and
 their mothers. The school is well attended
 with those of the young and old in the
 number.

I will be very much
 and anxious to be particularly
 kind to those who have been
 and I shall not be sorry to
 enjoy it in the future.

Yours for ever
 L. King

L. King
 1810

APPENDICES L-M (transcribed)

[Page 1/3]

28 September 1909

A. R. Wilmot Esq

Dear Sir

It is extremely kind of you to intimate your willingness to help us in securing the body of Jan Stryp, and I beg to thank you for it.

The cost of securing the same is – in these days of fearful... I have not one third of our yearly grant, somewhat prohibitive for us, but I am going to endeavour to get Mr Janiek to help providing the necessary authority for you to incur

[Page 2/3]

... of the body. But I fear I must rather trust to my dilapidated ...

In all probability the corpse was buried without coffin. If so, the relics should be simply dug out and fitted into a packing case which need not be large, and if well besprinkled with paraffin in case ... were not handy and left to the action of the sun in the veld – of course in a box for a few days, it would not prove offensive and could be sent by rail – contents of the package of course not divulged but termed specimen of natural history.

We would in the meantime ... the cost and either send you the money in advance, if you so wish it or ... it and pay through the Col. Sec. Office as you will ...

[Page 3/3]

I take the liberty to send you some directions I have regarding graves of Bushman ... and ... to return with those. Could you also help in the matter?

[Last paragraph indecipherable]

I remain yours very sincerely L. Péringuey Director

[Louis Péringuey to AR Wilmot, 28 September 1909, transcribed from letters numbered 632 and 633, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa.]

Memorandum about the Moulding.

for Study

Not knowing the number of French people to mould, it is impossible for me to give you detached instructions. You must take care your own discretion, and I think I know you sufficiently well to expect it to prove a successful venture.

I would like to have just a group of four or six, men, women and children photographed in the position they naturally assume. when in sitting down, or as if they were in the mould. the man carrying his gun across - should; the woman carrying, what they generally carry. the youngsters probably carry nothing.

But regard your three two groups, and I think that Mr. Henry will be from his knowledge of stationary quite able to make them assume ^{positions} poses that will not make the moulds appear too stiff, you may have to take single people somewhat like the figures we have. try also to place them in such a position but must not spare too judiciously, in order to avoid also stiffness in the representation.

Do not choose the two best specimens. but I would far prefer however to have them with all the wrinkles of the body, especially the belly, than to have them as well set - as our previous specimens.

Pay special attention to the hair in your sets of the specimens, of the colour or expression of the eye, of the shape of the ear, and above all copy the colour of the skin. and remind you that a couple of days after you have painted it in order to make greater use of the genuine colour.

Of course photographs of the full face, two thirds and side views will be taken of each. If you can
short

should either send for more of Hopton, or reduce
the three wives of five to two.

You must not forget however that we are not
likely for some time to come to have such an opportunity
of any photograph, provided it is a good one well
known of great value to us.

If you are of course desirable, money shall come so.
You will be very careful to take all these possibilities,
including the "spare". A special consulting of the same
to be added to the statue is very much wanted.
You will endeavour to find out more or less the eye
of the young ones. Could you take a woman with
her little one of the best, weight & all, it would rather
look very natural.

But to ensure avoid any stiffness of the
statue you will take the model in.

If for reasons unavoidable you were leaving
Hawaii without finishing the model in hand, it is
understood that Henry will remain a few days
longer. You would then take down with you and post
us here already to better. Henry being very busy the rest.

As to the recommendation to the Chief, you are authorized to
give him from 5 to 10 L. provided he gives you all
facility for taking the casts. You would however not
make him the present unless you have ascertained with
your own personal authority or the Missionary whether
you should give him the great sum or the other.

As to the best people you will probably get at
the stores the choice of specimens suitable for them. The
figures you have. If need be you might get more
of the spot.

as to the Traphophace. Read carefully the instructions
If you have no time to attend to that part of the
correspondence, ask the Warrington man to be kind enough
to do so, while you are proceeding with the marketing. It
would be a great service were you to do so.

Endeavour to buy the garments of these
Bosch people or order to clothe the representatives with
if you can, procure their garments or order an old
remnant of Warrington goods.

If any matter arises other than that now proposed
you may say if not dear.

You will let me know of your arrival and
how you are getting on. It may be that I take a
run up that way, but I am afraid that América
will not permit.

I should not like you to lose some useful
opportunities for the sake of a few shillings, but
am compelled to recommend a careful scrutiny of
the fifty pounds you take to cover expenses.

I am enclosing all correspondence with the British
Chambers's office. If any of you would apply to him

L. Sturges
Esq.

Try to fix the point of the identity of these Bosch people
They should belong to 5 tribes, the Bakhti; Bosse,
Boskora, Boskora, & Boskora. It may be that the names
under which they are known: Masora and Bakhtakhti are
not their true names. - How this is the Warrington, if he shows
some interest, which I hope, in the matter.

APPENDICES N-P (transcribed)

[Page 1/3]

For Drury – Memorandum about the Modelling

Not knowing the remainder of Bush people ... it is impossible for me to give you detailed instructions. You must then use your own discretion and I think I know you sufficiently well to expect it to prove a successful venture.

I would like to have first a group of five or six, men, woman and children photographed in the position they naturally assume, either in sitting down or as if they were on the march: the man carrying his few arms and chattels; the woman carrying what they generally carry, the youngsters probably carry nothing.

But apart from these two groups, and I think that Mr Harvey will be from his knowledge of statuary quite able to make them assume positions that will not make the models appear too stiff, you may have to take single people somewhat like the figures we do have. Try also to place them in such a position that would not prove too fatiguing, in order to avoid stiffness in the reproduction.

Do not chose [sic] the too decrepit specimens. But I would far prefer however to have those with all the wrinkles of the body, especially the belly, than to have them as well fed as our previous specimens.

Pay special attention to the hairs in your note of the specimens, of the colour or expression of the eye, of the shape of the ear, and above all copy the colour of the skin, and verify your slab a couple of days after you have painted it in order to make quite sure of the genuine colour.

Of course photographs of the full face, the quarter and side views will be taken of each. If you run short

[Page 2/3]

either send for more at Mafeking, or reduce the three views of the face to two.

You must not forget however that we are not likely for some time to come to have such an opportunity and any photograph, provided it is a good one will prove of great value to us.

Men are of course desirable, women still more so. You will be very careful to take all their peculiarities, including the "apron". A special moulding of the same to be added to the statue is very much wanted. You will endeavour to find out more or less the ages of the young ones. Could you take a woman with her little one on her back, wraps and all, it would indeed look very natural.

But to resume avoid any stiffness in attitude you will take the models in.

If for reasons unavoidable you were leaving Kanye without finishing the models in hand, it is understood that Harvey will remain a few days longer. You would then take down with you such parts as have already been taken, Harvey bringing down the rest.

As to the remuneration to the Chief you are authorized to give him from 5 to 10 pounds provided he gives you all facility for taking the casts. You would however not make him the present as you have ascertained from some person in authority or the Missionary whether you should give him the full sum or the other.

As to the Bush people you will probably get at the stores the shirts and petticoats suitable for them. The knives you have. If need be you might get more on the spot.

[Page 3/3]

As to the Graphophone. Read carefully the instructions. If you have no time to attend to that part of the undertaking, ask the Missionary there to be kind enough to do so, while you are proceeding with the modelling. If need be I could send more cylinders.

Endeavour to buy the garments of the Bush people in order to clothe the reproductions with if you can, provided that their garments or arms are not Manchester or [?Birmingham] goods. If any native curio other than Bush was procurable you may buy if not dear.

You will let me know of your arrival and how you are getting on. It may be that I take a run up that way, but I'm afraid that Finances will not permit.

I should not like you to lose some useful opportunities for the sake of a few shillings, but I am compelled to recommend a careful handling of the fifty pounds you take to cover expenses.

I am enclosing all correspondence with the Resident Commissioner's office. In case of need you should apply to him.

L. Péringuey Director

Try to get the ... of the identity of these Bush people. They should belong to 5 tribes, the Bakuti, Basara, Bakora, Batophe and Bakadikwa. It may be that the names under which they are known: Masarwa and Bakhalahadi are not their true name – Show this to the Missionary, if he shows interest, which I hope, in the matter.

[Louis Péringuey to James Drury, November 1908, letter at numbers 718–720, Iziko Social History Centre Archive, Iziko Museums of South Africa]

How James Drury cast the Bushmen

APPENDIX Q

Reinhold Rau in "How James Drury cast the Bushmen" displayed in the South African Museum, outlines the process of life-casting as followed by Drury.

The moulds were made of plaster and hessian. The model was positioned and a coating of soft soap applied over any body hair. Two half moulds were cast for each section of the body; here Drury would decide where the sections of the mould should join. The section lines were marked on the skin with a water soluble pigment; this was transferrable onto the wet plaster. When the first half was set, the edge was given a coating of soft soap. A key, by means of carved shapes would also be placed at intervals along this edge. The second half of each section was then cast by the same method to match the first half. The torso provided a challenge as the movement of breathing disrupted the casting process. To overcome this problem the torso was cast in two sections joining at the last line of the short ribs. The head was cast in two halves joining at the top edges of the ears. The eyes remained closed and the pathway for the nostrils left open. The casting included many sections that took several minutes to set to a satisfactory level. It was therefore necessary that the model rest between sessions to avoid muscle cramps, twitching and discomfort. That said the model would have had to have an ability to settle into a posture and apply their mind to overcome the bodies involuntary reactions. Once the mould was completed the eye area had to be cast, with the model on their back with their eyes open the plaster was moved as closely as possible to the eyelids.

Once soaked, cleaned, and markings reinforced the negative moulds were ready for casting the positive forms to create the life-casts. Once the pieces were joined to create the whole form, Drury would cut the life-cast at convenient intervals and strengthen these separate parts with keys to allow an interlocking fit. This was done to facilitate transportation, dressing of the cast and storage. The eyes were fitted into the orbital area afterwards and lids built onto this area. The negative moulds of the original model were often damaged or destroyed in the process of making the positive. In the case where a copy had to be made, the positive figure would be recast by piece-mould. Casting had become far easier later on with the use of fibreglass and resin, particularly with the reproductions. The original negative moulds taken directly from the live model would still be done in plaster of Paris.

Wat Kyk Jy?! Questionnaire

APPENDIX R

Wat Kyk Jy?! Questionnaire

1. Where do you live?
 2. How old are you?
 3. What is your sex?
 4. What is your race?
 5. What is your home language?
 6. What is your occupation?

 7. Did you see the *Bushman Diorama* at the South African Museum?
 8. If you answered 'yes' to the question above, do you remember its closure in 2001?
 9. Have you seen the current *Ethnographic Gallery* at the Iziko South African Museum?
 10. Did you see the *Ethnographic Gallery* before the life-casts were removed in July this year?
 11. What message did the use of the life-casts convey to you about the people it represented?
 12. How would you describe the experience of viewing the figures (i.e. informative, embarrassing, invasive, disturbing, intriguing, etc.)?
 13. Are the figures on display in this exhibit different to the ones in the *Ethnographic Gallery*?
 14. How would you describe the experience of viewing these figures?
 15. Are any of the figures disturbing and what makes it seem that way?
 16. Is your culture displayed or interpreted in a museum context?
 17. If so, do you feel it represents your culture and why?
 18. What name would you use to describe your culture?
 19. Do you feel cultural institutions are important and do they represent your culture?

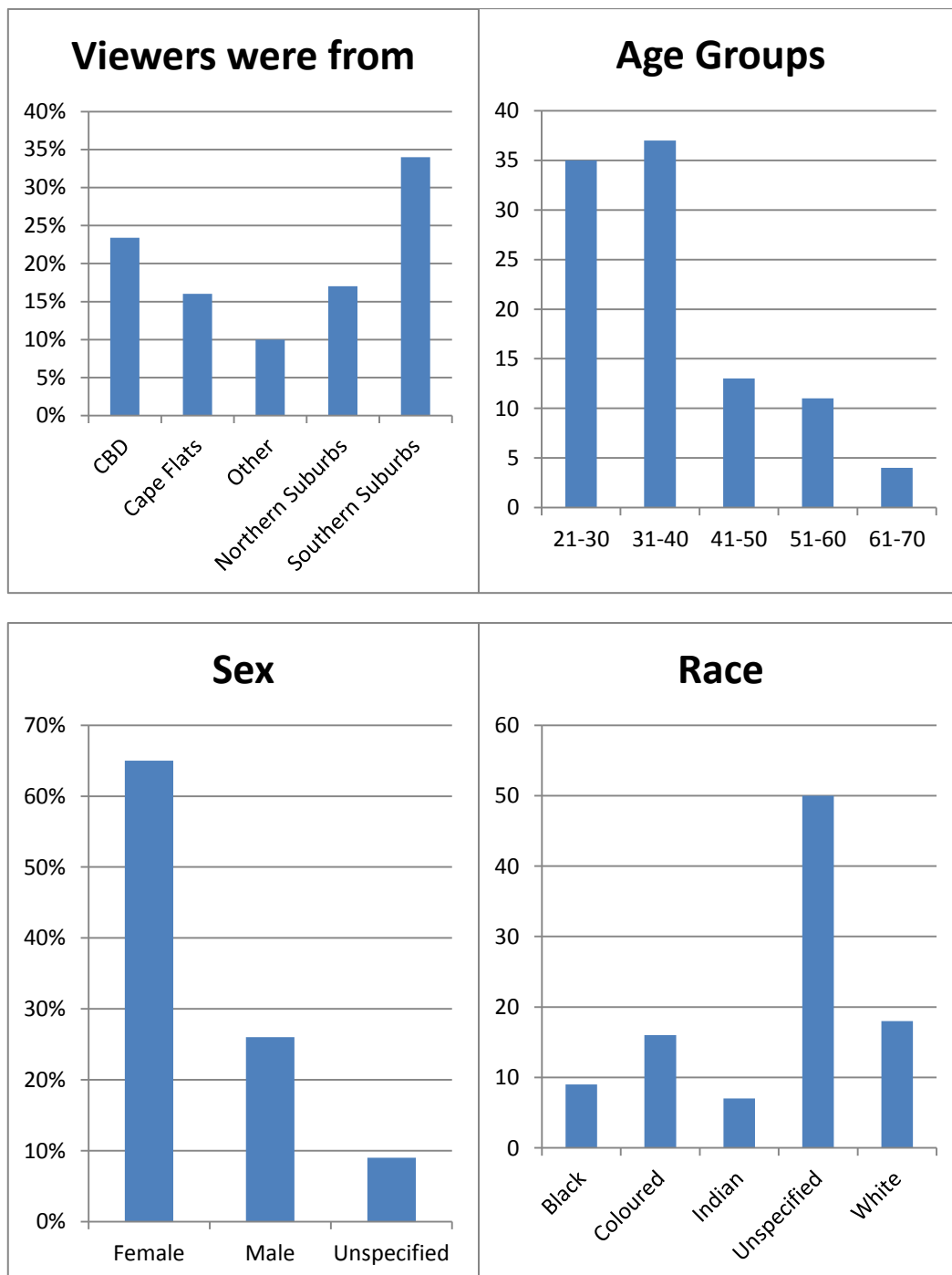
 - Would you...
 20. Reinststate the *Bushman Diorama* as it was yes/no
 21. Show contemporary 'Bushmen' yes/no
 22. Keep it but add contextual information about the contestation yes/no
 23. Move the exhibit to a site for social history yes/no
 24. Retain the new wire sculptures and the gallery as it is yes/no
 25. Get rid of the life-casts yes/no
 26. Censor it and keep it in storage yes/no
 27. Put it on display again in a different context yes/no

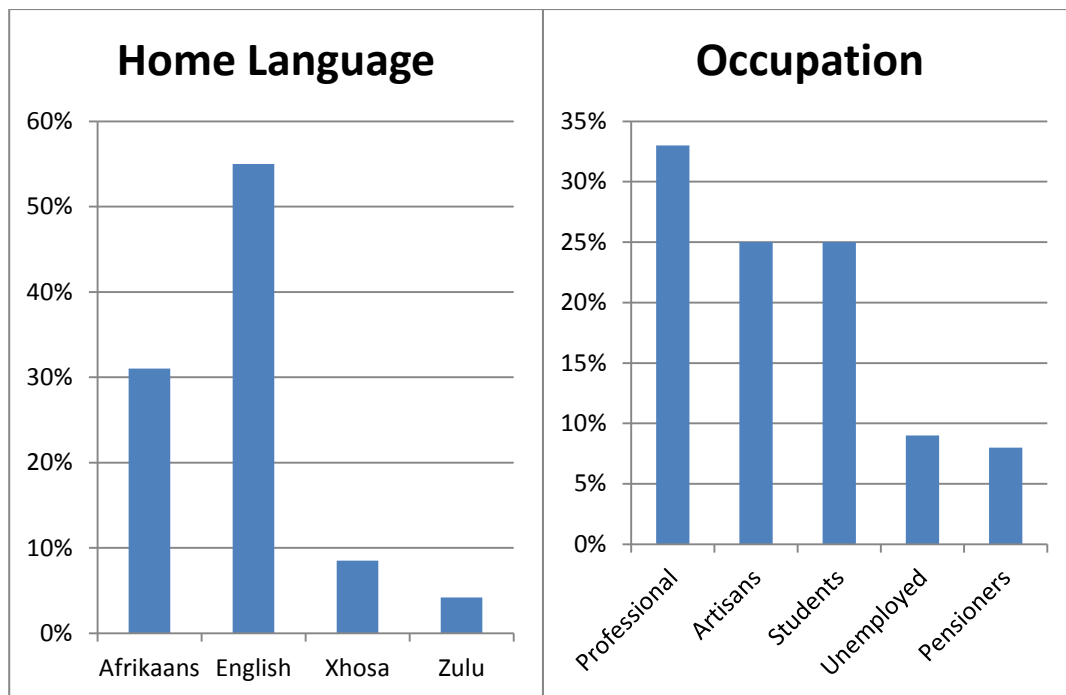
 28. Any other comments?
-

Questionnaire Findings Collated

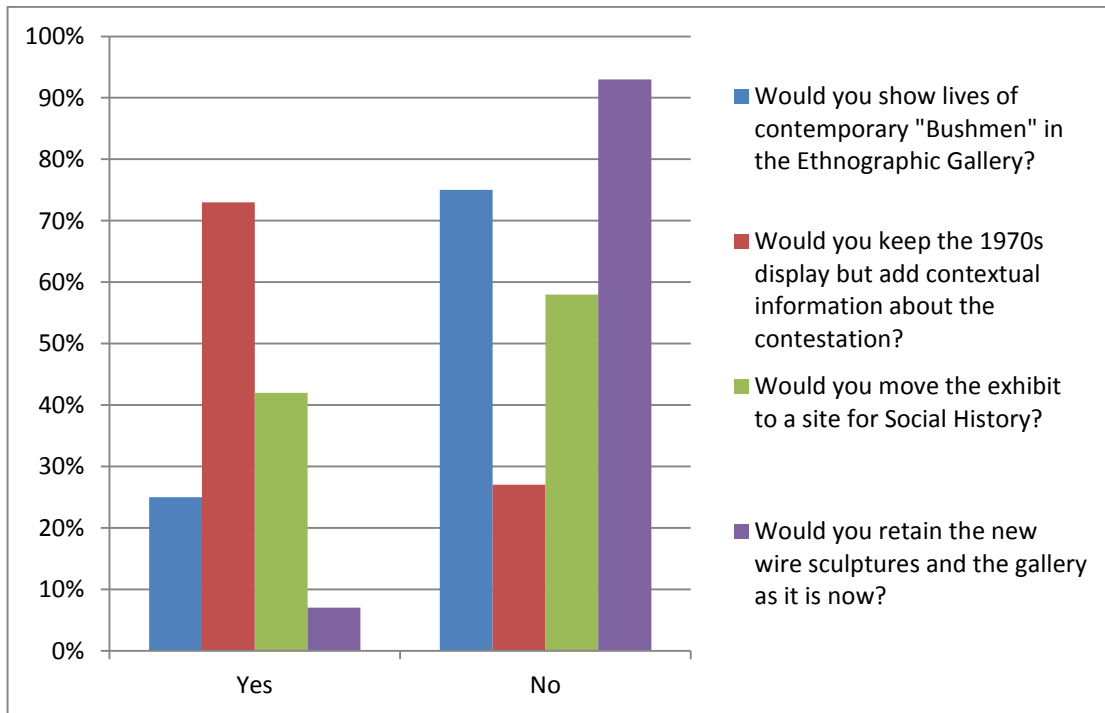
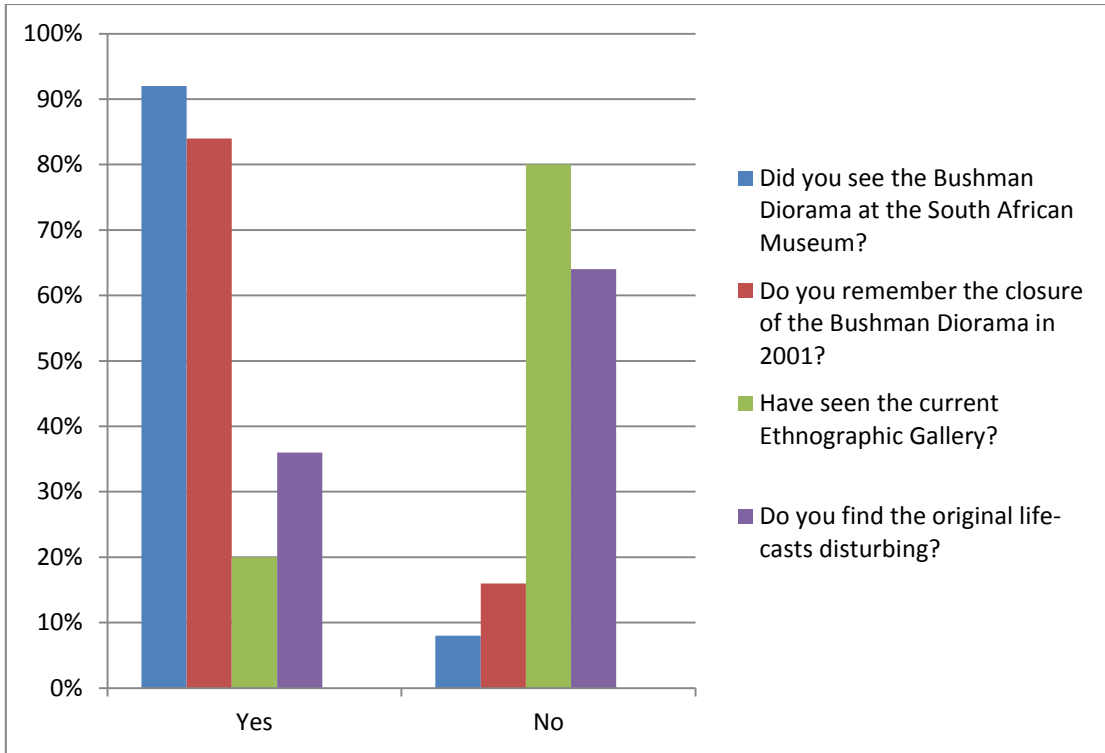
APPENDIX S

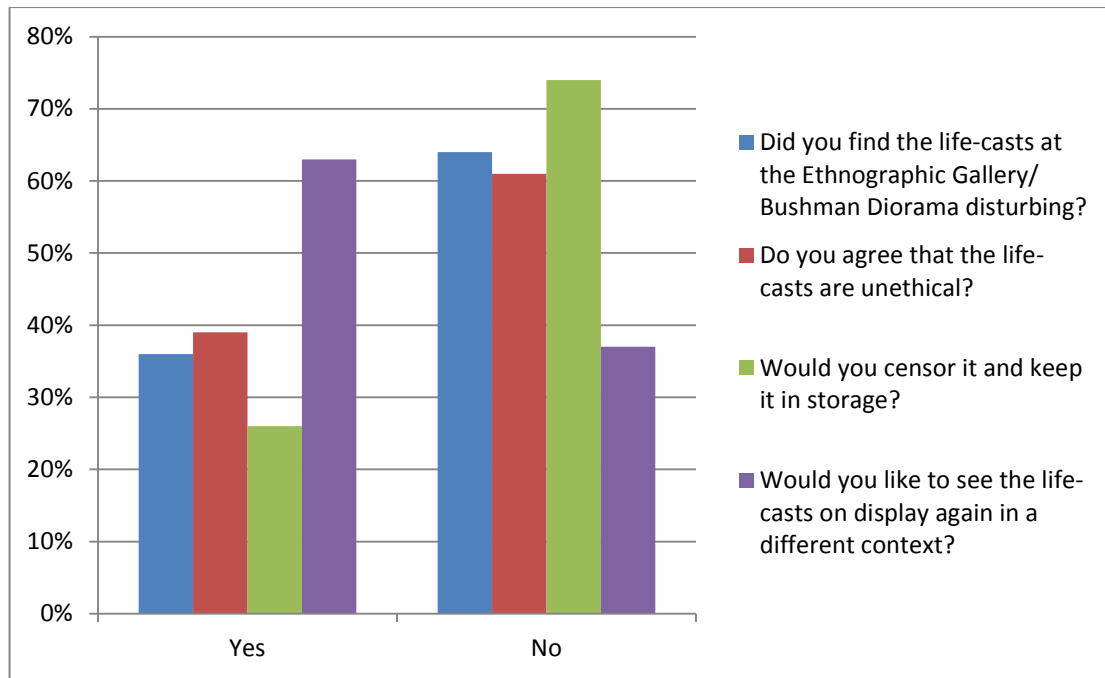
Viewers were mostly from the southern suburbs as seen in the graph below (top, left). They represented 34%, 23% from the CBD, 17% from the northern suburbs, 16% from the Cape Flats and 10% were from out of Cape Town. The graphs below also specify the ages, sexes and other details of the viewers.





Most people remembered the dioramas, in particular the *Bushman Diorama*, even though it was displayed such a long time ago. As can be seen from the graphs above, most viewers did not specify their race. Interestingly, many of the viewers who had specified themselves as white had remembered the dioramas with fondness. Those who had perceived the 1970s *Bushman Diorama* negatively listed themselves as non-white and unspecified categories. One comment read that the displays felt “stuck in time through such representations”, as if people of other races would view them as, “primitive and with a history closer to the animal kingdom than with human history”. Most had seen the Ethnography Gallery before the removal of the life-casts, however very few of the viewers remembered the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* in 2001, apart from those who had perceived it negatively. Although most had not seen the current display, a video was included in the exhibition showing its present state, with the wire sculptures in place of the life-casts. Of the viewers, 36% had found the original life-casts disturbing in some way, using words such as “creepy”, “feeling exposed”, and “confrontational”, and some felt “guilty for looking”. Most did not want to see the lives of contemporary Bushmen on display in the gallery as had been done previously through the inclusion of images from *The Argus* and photographs by Paul Weinberg. Curiously, 25% did want to see this display, while 73% wanted to see the 1970s display of the *Bushman Diorama* and the rest as it was, with contextual information about the contestation and current debates. Only 7% wanted to retain the most recent changes to the exhibition, namely the wire sculptures and contextual information. One of the points where opinion was torn was on moving the exhibition to a social history site; on this issue, 42% were in agreement with the idea and 58% were not.





Another contentious point related to the ethical debates around the life-casts. The life-casts are currently identified as physical anthropological artefacts and treated as human remains, although they have not yet officially been classified as such. As a result, the staff at the Iziko Museums is unclear as to the jurisdiction and responsibility of the life-casts' care and interpretation to the public. The newly formed Social History Department is responsible for the displays at the Ethnography Gallery and this particular team of staff has been interpreting the collection so far. However, care of the life-casts falls under the Archaeology Department's responsibilities. The viewer's survey shows that 39% agree that the life-casts are unethical and 61% do not agree.

The figures on display at the *Wat Kyk Jy?! Exhibition* had a different effect on viewers. Although some had commented that it was disturbing, viewers generally wanted to touch or engage with the figures in some way. The disturbed comments were mostly about the homeless man figure, which took viewers by surprise as they entered the exhibition, and the "naked" central figure, *Hou My Vas*. Most viewers expressed that their cultures were represented at museums, but that what they had seen was static and purist. Many felt the dynamism of what they perceived to be their culture was not expressed. Many felt that current representations of their respective cultures and races limits or narrows other people's perceptions of them. Viewers described their culture as Xhosa, Afrikaner, Hindu, Muslim, European, Zulu, and South African, and 17% described their culture as Coloured. One person referred to themselves as Bushmen, which reflects as 1.8%. No-one described themselves as Cape Malay, Khoisan or San, although this could be incidental, considering that the pool of participants was not large.

Many felt that cultural institutions were important and, despite negative comments about the life-casts and feelings of discomfort expressed at viewing them, it appeared that most people would have liked to see the life-casts in some form or another. Only 26% would prefer them censored and kept in storage, while 74% would not. Also, 63% of the viewers said they would like to see the life-casts on display again in a different context. There is a discrepancy of 11% who would not censor it, however, these viewers might prefer to see the life-casts in the same context. Either way, the viewers' survey showed that the public wanted to see the life-casts again. Ethically, the life-casts are now being treated as human remains – a development that holds non-Iziko researchers outside the museum and the general public at arm's length from further engagement with these debates.

Interviewee's Consent Forms

APPENDIX T

INTERVIEWEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT FORM

This form serves to acknowledge your contribution in the form of the interview(s) conducted at the below stated date(s). Furthermore it provides evidence of consent to use the material supplied in the interview(s) for my research.

The information you provided will only be used for this research project, entitled, *In the Halls of History: The making and unmaking of the Life-casts at the Ethnographic Galleries of the Iziko South African Museum*. The research of which was sourced from the archives of several Iziko Museums, namely the South African Museum, the Social History Centre and the South African National Gallery.

I am completing a Master's degree by coursework and dissertation with a specialisation in Heritage and Public Culture under the supervisor, Professor Nick Shepherd of the African Studies Department at the University of Cape Town.

The purpose of the interview(s) ranged from assistance with plotting timelines of exhibitions at the South African Museum, accessing archived material including meeting minutes, letter books, image files, layout diagrams and plans, as well as with queries regarding institutional knowledge and the interviewee's particular field of specialisation at the museum.

Interviewer

Researcher: Robyn-Leigh Cedras

Student Number: CDPROB001

Signature:

Signed

Date: 06/02/2016

Interviewee

Name: Dr Wendy Black

Field of Specialisation: Curator: Pre-Colonial Archaeology

Interview date(s): 27 February, 2014

Signature:

Signed

Date: 5 February, 2016

APPENDIX U

INTERVIEWEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT FORM

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Interviewer

Researcher: Robyn Leigh Cedras

Student Number: CDRROB001

Signature:

Signed

Date:

8 Feb 2016

Interviewee

Name:

Patricia Dawson

Field of Specialisation:

Museum practice

Interview date(s):

10 July 2014

Signature:

Signed

Date:

8 Feb 2016

APPENDIX V

INTERVIEWEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT FORM

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Interviewer

Researcher: Robyn-Leigh Cedras

Student Number: CURR08001

Signature:

Signed

Date:

10.02.2016

Interviewee

Name: Lailah Hisham

Field of Specialisation: Iziko Social History Collections Manager, for collections related records and photographs / institutional archive rerecords particularly pertaining to the South African Museum, Cultural History Museum and Iziko Social History Collections department.

Interview date(s): July- August 2013 , 2,3 February 2014, 4 March, 15 July 2014 and 2,3 September 2015, 4 November 2015

Signature:

Signed

Date:

8-02-2016

APPENDIX W

INTERVIEWEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT FORM

This form serves to acknowledge your contribution in the form of the interview(s) conducted at the below stated date(s). Furthermore it provides evidence of consent to use the material supplied in the interview(s) for my research.

The information you provided will only be used for this research project, entitled, *In the Halls of History: The making and unmaking of the Life-casts at the Ethnographic Galleries of the Iziko South African Museum*. The research of which was sourced from the archives of several Iziko Museums, namely the South African Museum, the Social History Centre and the South African National Gallery.

I am completing a Master's degree by coursework and dissertation with a specialisation in Heritage and Public Culture under the supervisor, Professor Nick Shepherd of the African Studies Department at the University of Cape Town.

The purpose of the interview(s) ranged from assistance with plotting timelines of exhibitions at the South African Museum, accessing archived material including meeting minutes, letter books, image files, layout diagrams and plans, as well as with queries regarding institutional knowledge and the interviewee's particular field of specialisation at the museum.

Interviewer

Researcher: Robyn-Leigh Cedras

Student Number: CDRROB001

Signature:

Signed

Date: 11 Feb 2016

Interviewee

Name: DR GERALD P KLINGHARDT

Field of Specialisation: ANTHROPOLOGY

Interview date(s): 4 MARCH 2014, 15 JULY 2014
2 SEPTEMBER 2015, 3 SEPTEMBER 2015

Signature:

Signed

Date: 10/2/2016