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国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

Demonstrational Lecture of the Collections Review Research.

メタデータ	言語: English 出版者: 国立民族学博物館 公開日: 2020-03-25 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 伊藤, 敦規, Chavez Lamar, Cynthia, Enote, Jim メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00009510

Demonstrational Lecture of the Collections Review Research

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(Film directed by Atsunori Ito)

https://trajectoria.minpaku.ac.jp/articles/2020/vol01/01_2.html



Transcription of Film 1



Film 1

Demonstrational Lecture of the Collections Review Research (Ito 2020)

Jim:

Later we will talk about the museum's responsibilities and also the source community's responsibilities, and our experience of doing reviews. And that will prepare you (Hopi reviewers) for we are going to do now.

Cynthia:

Let's pretend this is collection record for this item. This is how we did it where we were at the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC of the School for Advanced Research (SAR)). We had each record for each object.

Jim:

There are so many things that go before this. We would often have many objects on the table. We'll talk about this later, but if we had 5 days or 2 days we would prioritize what we want to see first. Or sometimes we say, today let's see pottery in the morning and jewelry in the afternoon. Or textiles or other things, because you can get tired looking at the same things, for 5 days only looking at pottery, 5 days or 4 days only looking at something. It's good to change.

Cynthia:

And we would also have a lot of tools available for the examination of the items, so magnifying lenses, tweezers, lights, penlights, and mirrors with long handles to see inside pots.

Jim:

UV lights. Many things.

Cynthia:

We also have audio recording going on. We didn't do video just because of our limited staff capacity. We didn't have someone for video sessions.

Jim:

Sometimes, I think like.... I don't like video sometimes.

Cynthia:

We used video in very limited cases to highlight certain aspects of reviewing an item, for example a pot. The first pot we collected for the institution, we did the video of the designs, the specific designs on the pot. And that was one instance for video recording.

Jim:

Yes, for one special item, we did it. We also did a video to make a point about the difference between fetish and the carving. There were stone fetish, just ceremonial fetish and a carving made for sale. And we did video to show examples of that. There are many things we go before this. We worked together on language of agreements, about how many days, compensation, about many things, all to be ready before we started. We already agreed, this morning we are going to look at *kokkos*. So we decided that this morning, or this afternoon we're going to look at this *kokkos* and we wanted to... not just one at a time but a group of that because this one might relate to another. Cynthia starts with recording something.

Cynthia:

So, I said: "It's October 6th, 2014, collection review session number 4 with Jim Enote at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan. This is item number 2418 [H0075679]. It's identified as a *katsina*, culture: Zuni." And usually that's about all I say. But there maybe be more information on the record and that's just here.



"H0075679" of Minpaku.

(July 8, 2009, photo by Atsunori Ito)

Jim:

So, Cynthia has the record, the catalog description. So, we start, and maybe first say I would say is, "Well, it should be standing up." It's important to give space to people that are reviewing, literally space. Not like this. That's not good because the reviewer and maybe another person, first we're just looking, taking it in, written it maybe. The reviewers, we may talk among ourselves. It's good for the staff to not speak, actually be quiet, to give space.

Cynthia:

So, as he began to talk about the item, the way that we did it, this is just for the institution (IARC) I worked for and it can be different for your institution. We wrote on the record the notes as they spoke and we had 2 people recording in addition to audio recording, so another person writes as they were speaking.

Jim:

Just emphasizing, space and not speaking because it can be distracting when the reviewers are looking and talking among themselves, if the staff says, "So is this this thing, what's that?" then we get distracted. For this, I'll start... maybe... this is just an exercise, not real one, test, not real review, but I say "Oh, it's *Salimobia*." Then she is writing, other staff writing.

Cynthia:

And then I ask: "How do you spell *Salimobia*?" And we did phonetic description for our review.

Jim:

So I would say, "*Salimobia, kokko.*" And I'd say "In Zuni we call *kokkos*. Hopi is *katsina*. Acoma, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, they call it something different. But Zuni, we'd say this is what we call it." Phonetically, spelling is k-o-k-k-o. For example, I'll start from the top and go down. "*Salimobia...* it's on the top, there is wooden stick. It's broken. The wooden stick has cotton." And here I really need the magnifying glass and light please. We all look at it and maybe we say, "Yes, cotton string. It's hand-made, hand-woven, hand-span cotton string. Not store-bought. The stick is cottonwood. It's attached with a small nail."

Cynthia:

For our original records, we had very brief descriptions of each item, so we actually valued the description of the item that Jim and Octavius Seowtewa provided. Like Robert Breunig (Museum of Northern Arizona) mentioned earlier that they already have a lot of information in its record. It's part of the registration process, the description of the item. So, we spent a lot of time describing what the piece as with the different elements of the object. But in addition to that we also obtained lot of cultural and textual information.

Jim:

Again, just as the example, magnifying glass, some light, standard magnifying glass and then maybe a more strong one and even more stronger. So, looking, "Oh, there are 2 feathers attached, one is a blue bird feather, the other is dyed chicken feather." Here also is important for reviewers, if you want to say the head, the face, the mask, it's up to you to decide what you want to call it. You think about those kinds of things, too. "The head is multicolored, blue, yellow, orange, red. Colors in checker board design on the head with... on the left and right side of the head are flower design, like a blossom design." "The paints, some of the paints look to be store-bought paint, maybe like a poster paint. I'm just making this right now, but the black lines appeared to be from vegetable hand-made paint." This is also where you can say what you want to say or you don't want to say about what's on top. Because when there is something sensitive if you worry about be up in the world, then don't say it.

Cynthia:

You have to be aware of the fact that over time you'll probably develop a good relationship and a trusting relationship and sometimes, in the course of these reviews, the reviewer might say something, share something that they normally would not share if they weren't so comfortable. As the museum person, I have to be aware of that and sometimes maybe ask, "What do you want to be put in the record?"

Jim:

I think, that's really important point that the staff that work with Cynthia, they're always asking, "Do you want it to be part of the record?" Always asking. That's really important. Some of reviewers may be more conservative or more liberal about giving information. Sometimes, in a group we may have somebody who will really be talking about something. And we say, "Hey, you don't have to tell them all that." Things get sensitive when you talk in your language. What I like to do when we

are doing to I try to think, in 5 years or 10, or 30 years, another Zuni might look at what I said. So, you want to be clear about what you say. We're going to give more details about that later. So, again, example. The colors, then I'll say, again, this is up to you to decide if you want to. We may say: "These colors aren't really the ceremonial colors. The yellow, the blue, the white, the red, the black. These don't really correspond to the real one would be." And you can say that or don't have to say that. So, for example, we may have discussion, we might have discussion among ourselves that these aren't the right colors, but maybe the artist was saying: "Well, this is close to... this is the closest to I could find to red was orange today. So that's all right." So we had that conversation. One reviewer might say, "Well, that's not the right color so it must be fake." The other would say, "Well, the artist just maybe didn't find the right colors."

So, moving down. Two eyes that are carved in, they're bored or drilled in. Blue line connecting the eyes. The eyes are surrounded by yellow. The mouth is attached. It looks to be glued on and the mouth is also hollow. And painted orange. And moving down, there is a turkey feather ruff. This is when you guys decide what you want call this. Do you want to call this "ruff" or do you want to call this in Hopi name. Do you want to keep Hopi name for turkey feathers. All this sort of things will be up to you. You can do like I'm doing just literally giving physical description, this, this, this, this. Or you can go deeper. It's up to you. "The body, the torso is painted multicolor blue, yellow, purple, orange, white, similar to the head. Both front and back off to the body. The colors are separated by black lines. The arms are connected with a nail, really old ones are connected by a dowel. Handmade dowel. Forearms... the right forearm is painted yellow. The left forearm is unpainted." You can just literally describe what is there. Or you can say, "It should be holding a yucca whip. It should have a bow guard." Or you can say, "It's missing this or missing that." You can say that if you want to. "There is a sash... white sash that is connected by a nail. The sash is made of..." Then I take the magnifying glass and look at it. I say, "It looks like white canvas." Other person, "Let me see. That's missing. I get the stronger magnifying glass." "No, it's something different." "No, it's white buckskin," or something. And you can say, "It should be this or it should be that." There is a kilt. The kilt is white cotton with cloud, arrow designs with black border with dragonfly designs. Like this kind of stuff. Describe the designs.

Cynthia:

So, as he is describing things, referencing specific designs and I'm not sure and I'm asking "Is this a dragonfly? Is this what you are referring to?" to get clarification on that.

Jim:

And then the other reviewer says, "No, it's a butterfly." And he talk, talk, talk, and "Yep, we'd call it dragonfly." The legs are... I'm going back. "Looks to be one piece, except for the arms. The legs are also painted in a certain way. I'm not going to go on to more details." But you get the idea. The parts of the feet are broken. And you can say if that particular *kokko* should be wearing shoes or not wearing shoes, things like that. You can decide. If you want to add that kind of information. Really, really important is if you're not really sure about something, just you're not sure. We sometimes said, "I don't know. This is... It could be Acoma, it could be Hopi. I can't say it's Zuni." That's really important. Because we've seen some collections where somebody within, and called

everything that it was Pueblo and called them Hopi. But it was made by Acoma artist or Zuni. Or something like Tlingit on Northwest, but somebody would call everything Haida. But there are actually other tribes. For us, to gain authority we have to be very careful about what we say is Zuni, or Acoma, or Hopi, or Tewa, or things like that.

Cynthia:

I'm Pueblo. Jim is Pueblo. One of the advantages we have in this kind of process is that there are things that we assume because we have similar cultural background. So, one of the assumptions I made is that I don't ask a lot of questions about meaning of things. In other situations you may have museum people that ask, "Ok. What does that color mean? What is the placement of the feathers mean?" They're asking very detailed questions about symbolism or meanings or things like that. I think we should all feel empowered to say, "It's just for us. We can't share that."

Jim:

That's important also. And we'll talk later about power dynamics between the museums and the communities.

Cynthia:

I think, it's very important to think about what your goal is and your intentions in doing a review that sort of helps you to determine how much you're going to share or how much you're not going to share. Because in Zuni, as Jim mentioned earlier, Jim talked a lot about setting the record straight. So, for example if that *kokko* is missing the ruff, they would probably tell us that it's missing the ruff because they want that as part of the record. When somebody looks at it, they understand that this *kokko* will not look like it does... say, it was missing the ruff and would not be the right representation. So let's add another thing. Jim is handling this particular item in way that might make a museum person uncomfortable. But museum person should... sort of... allow some latitude for the handling of collections.

Jim:

This is also your opportunity to say that it shouldn't be lying flat because... look what happened.

Cynthia:

And that's when the museum person steps in because we have access to specialists, like conservators and we can ask, "Would you like this ruff to be restored in some way so that's a whole ruff?" Those kinds of questions become involved in caring for the collection items.

Jim:

Or you may say, "This should be positioned this way." Or "This was this way but it should be this way." That's just briefly. For us, we would usually talk down. And as I said, you can describe just literally what's there or you can go into some other detail about why is that color, if you want to. Just remember that it becomes record. I like to think that it's talking to future Zunis or young Zunis. Quite honestly, we're not doing it for the museum. We're doing it for our people.

Cynthia:

So, at some point in this process the reviewers might have questions about what's in the record, like how was this collected, where did it come from. You can look to the record and share the information with them. And then that's also time when we look at this record and we say, "Well, we really want you to look at and read that and tell us what may be wrong in that." And then, another step, we have specific questions regarding access to collection items, such as storage and handling. So we would ask, "Can this be accessed by anyone? Can it be published as an image, as a reference? Does it have to be stored in particular way? Are there any specific handling or specifications that's only male handle?" And those kinds of things. So we would ask those questions for every single item and that will become a part of our record.

Jim:

We'll talk about that later, but we were very fortunate that we come back and look at the same one again. Sometimes 2 times. When we come back, look at it again and say, "You know what? That was Merriam's wild turkey feathers or they were Eastern wild turkey something." We may say it's... Rocky Mountain wild turkey, something that. We may decide if we want to add other things. We might decide, we've had some conversation and we may say that this *Salimobia* is for the above colors. It's one of 6. It's my group. It's *UTSUNAMI*, our *Salimobia*. We may decide, "Well, that's ok," because it's for Zuni in the future. That's totally up to you. We may decide others talking that's too much. We don't have to say all that. Just describe what's there. We don't have to go into it anymore. Because in the past our people gave way too much.

Gerald Lomaventema (Hopi artist):

I was looking at the picture or the paperwork. He (Atsunori Ito) showed me one. But I saw another one before. Some of them weren't really *katsinas*. The other supposed to be categorize as *katsinas*. So that part how we should categorize those dolls. As there are not *katsinas* in our (recognition) and most of the time not supposed to be made.

Jim:

You'll find that you'll go deeper and deeper into the discourse, discussion about what these are. One example is the... fetishes. We saw lots of Zuni fetishes. But the once made for sale. There's a macaw fetish, or maybe raccoon fetish, or something. And we say, "Those aren't fetishes really. Those are carvings." The real fetish is... yes set those aside. And even in some cases, literally in the collection, all the real fetishes would be here, and all the carving would be separated. That's just the example. You guys are in the position to make recommendations.

Cynthia:

Jim says that you're in the position to make those recommendations, but the institution may or may not want to accommodate the recommendations in reality. But more often than not if you create a dialogue with those museum professionals and explain the reasoning behind, say, something to be restricted or stored in a certain way from other items, I think that it's worth having those discussions because it's part of our educational process for institutions, for museums.

Henrietta Lidchi (then, Keeper of World Cultures, National Museums Scotland):

May I ask a question? Working with the collections that we have, we often have multilayered, anterior documentation. So we may have our current collection record, the previous collection record, someone else's opinion and if we are really lucky, we'll actually have the primary material that came with it, a diary let us say. And so my inclination would be to always provide all of that to the reviewers, in terms of (documentation). And my hope is, that if something is wrong, even if they don't want to tell me what the right interpretation is, they might tell me, they might describe better what is wrong. Because in the past what I have is someone saying 'that is not right. But 'that is not right' 20 years on, is not very helpful, but 'that is not right, for the following reasons' would be much more helpful, to correct our records, so we can take whatever is useful out of them.

Jim:

One of our mantra is "setting the record straight."

Cynthia:

We have fun, too. You're developing a relationship with one another. We talk all the time and have little breaks.

Ramson Lomatewama (Hopi artist):

Well, if I can make a couple of quick comments? In my experience I've helped to go through this kind of process but not to this detail. Two things particularly brought some ideas to my mind in that. Every so often, even the reviewers who come from the same culture may not agree on something. And there was an occasion when we're going over some *katsina* doll collection where people would say... well, this is like the example of "the dragonfly" and "No, that's a butterfly." And then someone would give in and say, "Okay, it's a butterfly." To me, it's better to leave it with, "We didn't agree with this." It's better to say that for the record, rather than just take the chance of not being accurate.

Jim:

Because another person is going to come 5 years, 10 years later, and say, "Why did Ramson say this?"

Ramson:

And the other thing is that this only happened to me pretty much one time that I was helping doing projects like this and that. There was one museum staff who asked us questions we thought really intrusive. That's something that I try to make a museum staff aware of... curators and... whoever is helping us with this. If we are allowed to say what we need to say without trying to draw more information that we may be uncomfortable or not willing to or not be able to provide. And that causes tension between the two groups. So, I just want to make people aware of that.

Jim:

Space and quiet. Let us do our work.

Film

Film 1

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- 2020 *Demonstrational Lecture of the Collections Review Research*. Filmed on October 6, 2014 by ESPA at the Minpaku International Workshop "Collection Review: Methodology and Effective Utilization for the Museum and the Source Community," National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, 31:51. <https://vimeo.com/394389579/2ace8ba9d8/> (Retrieved March 11, 2020)