Exhibiting Respect: Investigating Ethical Practice for the Display of Human Remains in Museums

by

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the
Department of Archaeology
Faculty of Environment

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2020

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Abstract

Museums have long displayed human remains from archaeological and other contexts to educate the public about human health, spiritual beliefs, and customs, and to encourage reflection about death and dying. However, since the 1950s, repatriation movements and decolonizing dialogues have inspired global discussions about who has the right to retain and display human remains. Subsequent changes in attitude are now reflected in international ethical guidelines and accords that emphasize “respect” for human remains and for originating communities.

Most museums will no longer display Indigenous Ancestors, but whether and how to display other human remains presents an unresolved ethical dilemma. Should other archaeological human remains be exhibited without consent? If so, how can they be displayed respectfully? Do visitors wish to see human remains in museums? This dissertation is a pilot study that examined three dimensions of these ethical challenges: 1) how has the display of human remains changed over time—particularly in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?; 2) how does the public in North America feel about the display of human remains?; and 3) how can human remains be displayed “with respect”? I focused on Anglo-North America and Western Europe as instrumental case studies to illuminate these emerging issues due to their accessibility, recent ethical dialogue, and changing museum practices in these regions.

My research explored these questions using the principles of New Museology and radical transparency: i.e., proactively engaging the public and encouraging them to participate in ethical decision-making. In this work, I: 1) explore ethical changes and challenges for museums in relation to the display of human remains; 2) facilitate public engagement with ethical discourse about the display of human remains; 3) explore the concept of “respectful display” of human remains; and 4) make recommendations for museum professionals deciding whether to display of human remains. These issues are particularly important as museums strive to decolonize and become more inclusive.

Keywords: Ethics; museums; human remains; archaeology; display; exhibition

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents: Nancy and Terry Tarle, and to my brother Josh—who have always been my biggest cheerleaders and support system in everything I do.
Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I first must thank my committee. I am forever grateful to Dr. George Nicholas for agreeing to supervise my Ph.D. His thoughtful mentorship improved the quality of my work and built my confidence as an independent researcher. I appreciate his academic support and advice, the research and work opportunities he provided me, his tireless dedication to his students, moral support, reminders to relax and take time off, and humorous emails. I am also grateful to Dr. Hugo Cardoso for his commitment to sound scientific research and for reminding me to consider my cultural perspective. My dissertation is stronger because of his feedback, and I enjoyed working with him.

I am immensely thankful to my internal examiner and museum mentor Dr. Barbara Winter. She has been my biggest advocate in the museum world, and I greatly appreciate her advice and guidance, as well as the opportunities she has given me to build my skill set and network. She is an irreplaceable force to be reckoned with. I also thank my external examiner, Prof. Jack Lohman, whose work inspired me to pursue this research. I thoroughly enjoyed discussing these complex issues with him, and am grateful for his thoughtful feedback.

My hosts Drs. Gwyneira Isaac and Sue Giles at the Smithonian's National Museum of Natural History and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, respectively, made this work possible. I am grateful for their encouragement, time, and efforts to facilitate my research. For their insights and other support, I thank Drs. Neil Curtis, Robert Ehrenreich, David Hurst Thomas, Chip Colwell, Patricia Alonso, Laura Peers, Eeva-Kristiina Harlin, Douglas Ubelaker, Cressida Fforde, Silvério Figueiredo, Sarah Carr-Locke, Marta Lourenço, Susana Garcia, Susan Rowley, David A. Morrison, Maria Ordoñez Alvarez, and Campbell Price, as well as Hedley Swain, Katharina Hersel, Janet MacDonald, Erika Stenson, Laura Phillips, and Ian Bercovitz. I also appreciate the dedicated work of the Archaeology Department staff throughout my Ph.D.

For their encouragement, moral support, shared laughs and tears, I thank my friends for life: my Ph.D. O.G. Ladies and Sandwiches: Antonia Rodrigues, Chelsea Meloche, Megan Wong, and Drs. Erin Hogg, Laure Spake, Sara Rhodes, and Beth Velliky. I couldn't ask for better Ph.D. comrades.

I am immensely grateful for the funding I received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Award # 755-2011-0406), Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage project, The Simons Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, and the Alexia Sepideh Kiaii Endowment Fund.

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List of Acronyms

AAM	American Alliance of Museums
APABE	Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England
CMA	Canadian Museums Association
CAMA	Council of Australian Museum Associations
CAMD	Council of Australasian Museum Directors
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (United Kingdom)
ICOM	International Council of Museums
MINOM	International Movement for New Museology
MNZTTA	*Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act*
NAGPRA	*Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*
NMAIA	*National Museum of the American Indian Act*
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WAC	World Archaeological Congress

Glossary

Term	Definition
Anglo-North America	English-speaking North America; namely, Canada and the United States.
Contested	Ancestral remains, sacred materials, and/or cultural materials that originating communities do not wish museums to hold or display.
Deist	The belief in one god who created but does not influence events in the universe.
Grey literature	Grey literature in this study included museum websites, blogs, and institutional policy documents, as well as popular news publications that address the display of human remains in museums.
New Museology	A theoretical model for museum work that arose in the 1970s and 1980s, New Museology advocates that the museums should focus on *people* rather than *things*, engage the public, and serve as a venue for current issues.
Other	A group that is considered and treated as intrinsically "different" from one's own group (i.e., Westerners).
Radical transparency	An active, self-reflective museum process that shares not only information, but also the framing of information and agendas of museum professionals with the public.
Tsantsas	Shrunken enemy heads made by Jívaroan groups from the Amazon.
Uncontested	Remains of individuals whose descendants are difficult to identify, and/or whose descendant community does not oppose their retention/display in museums.

A Note Regarding Images of Human Remains

Chapters 2 and 4 of this dissertation contain images of human remains, which may be sensitive for some readers. Given the nature of my dissertation, I struggled with whether to include these images, but decided they were necessary to document the past and present state of affairs regarding the display of human remains. With some human remains being actively removed from display even at the time of writing this note, these images will provide a record of historical displays, and help document the progression of ethical practices relating to human remains in museums for posterity. The dissertation does not, however, include images of remains that are known to be contested by originating communities.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Human remains are generally displayed in museums to portray information about cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, and health, and sometimes to encourage reflection about death and dying. However, since the 1960s, museums' roles and guiding ethical principles have been shifting. Political movements have, particularly in the last sixty years, brought up concerns about who has the right to collect and display human remains and cultural materials from Indigenous and colonized groups (e.g., Curtis 2003; Fforde et al. 2004; Kreps 2011). Concerns about the treatment of Indigenous ancestral remains and other colonized peoples brought up a pressing ethical challenge for archaeologists and museum professionals: How can human remains be used for educational and scientific needs, while also respecting the wishes of descendant communities and demonstrating respect for the deceased?

These developments encouraged ethical discourse (e.g., Alberti et al. 2009; Curtis 2003; Gazi 2014; Kreps 2011) and the publication of professional guidelines for the treatment of human remains (e.g., International Council of Museums (ICOM) 2004; World Archaeological Congress (WAC) 1989; WAC 2006[1]). Such guidelines commonly emphasize "respect" for human remains and for originating communities, but few make specific stipulations about what constitutes "respectful display".

Museum professionals and scholars have discussed the ambiguity of the notion of respect for human remains (e.g., Alberti et al. 2009; Giesen and White 2013), and some, particularly in England, have experimented with novel methods of displaying uncontested[2] human remains "with respect" (e.g., Bryan 2004:15; James 2008: 774; Joy

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[1] See also, in Canada: Canadian Museums Association (CMA) 2006; Hill and Nicks 1992; Royal BC Museum 2012; in the United States: American Alliance of Museums (AAM) 1991; *National Museum of the American Indian Act* (NMAIA) (United States Congress 1989); *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA) (United States Congress 1990); Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History 2015; in Western Europe: Department for Culture, Media, and Sport 2003; 2005; German Museums Association 2013; Historic Scotland 2006; Museum Ethnographers Group 1994; Manchester Museum 2007; Museum of London Human Remains Working Group 2011; Netherlands Museums Association 2011; Groupe de Travail sur la Problematique des Restes Humains dans les Collections Publiques 2018.

[2] In this work, "contested" refers to ancestral remains that originating communities do not wish museums to hold or display. "Uncontested" refers to remains of individuals whose descendants are

2014:10; Manchester Museum 2008a; Sitch 2009:52; Vaswani 2001:34). These new display methods have been evaluated anecdotally (e.g., Brown 2011:132; Burney 2005; Curtis 2003:26; Joy 2014:19; Manchester Museum 2008b), but few formal evaluations have been performed. Published surveys in England have asked the public whether human remains should be exhibited, resulting in overwhelming support (79-91%) for display (Carroll 2005:13; English Heritage 2010:7; Kilmister 2009:62). However, specific methods used to display human remains "with respect" in England have yet to be evaluated based on visitor opinions.

Also lacking are comprehensive surveys that solicit opinions from an unbiased sample of the North American public about the ethical display of human remains[3]. This is despite the fact that public concerns about the display of non-Indigenous archaeological human remains in Canada have been reported anecdotally. Heather Gill-Robinson (2004:112) reported that there may be more public sensitivity to the display of human remains in North America vs. Europe because Indigenous peoples in North America have raised the issue publicly through repatriation movements.

Some scholars have argued that ethical concerns about the display of human remains vary based on (a) the remains' form (e.g., cremated, mummified, skeletal) (Historic England 2005:9, Sellevold 2012:145; Swain 2002:99), (b) chronology (ancient vs. recent remains) (Historic England 2005:9; Sellevold 2012:145), (c) identification (known vs. unknown) (Historic England 2005:9, Sellevold 2012:145; Swain 2002:99), (d) manner of death (e.g., violent death) (Giles 2009:90), (e) circumstances of acquisition (e.g., rescue excavation vs. research) (Gross 2016: R546; Sellevold 2012: 145), and (f) affiliation (e.g., biological, religious, or cultural relationship to the respondent; remains affiliated with groups that believe display is harmful) (Alberti et al. 2009:137-138; Bienkowski 2006; Historic England 2005:9; Sellevold 2012: 144-145). However, these arguments have yet to be comprehensively evaluated.

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difficult to identify, and/or whose descendant community does not oppose their retention/display in museums.

[3] Barbian and Berndt 1999 consulted with visitors to the National Museum of Health and Medicine in the United States about the display of human remains. However, the study took place in the context of a medical museum that displays anatomical collections, and the sample of visitors was self-selecting (i.e., comprised of people who chose to visit a museum that displays such remains).

New Museology[4] standards emphasize public engagement and consultation about exhibitions and critical issues. However, despite these new standards, there has yet to be a comprehensive examination of ethical challenges and practices in museums relating to the display of human remains that incorporates public engagement. My Ph.D. research addresses this deficiency by engaging the public with ethical issues for museums relating to the display of human remains, addressing the question: how can human remains be displayed for public education, while also respecting the wishes of descendant communities and demonstrating respect for the deceased?

Research Questions & Objectives

My dissertation is a pilot study that examined three dimensions of this larger ethical challenge: 1) How has the display of human remains changed over time—particularly in Anglo-North America[5] and Western Europe?; 2) How does the public in North America feel about the display of human remains?; and 3) How can human remains be displayed "with respect"? I focused on Anglo-North America and Western Europe as instrumental case studies to illuminate these emerging issues due to their accessibility, recent ethical dialogue, and changing museum practices in these regions.

My research explored these questions using the principles of New Museology and radical transparency—i.e., proactively engaging the public and encouraging them to participate in ethical decision-making (e.g., Hauenschild 1998:1-3; Marstine 2011a:14; 2013:13; Weil 1990:81-82). Accordingly, the four primary objectives of the work were to: 1) explore ethical changes and challenges for museums in relation to the display of human remains; 2) facilitate public engagement with ethical discourse about the display of human remains; 3) explore the concept of "respectful display" of human remains; and 4) make recommendations for the display of human remains.

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[4] A theoretical model for museum work that arose in the 1970s and 1980s, New Museology advocates that museums focus on *people* rather than *things*, engage the public, and serve as venues for current issues (Hauenschild 1998; Weil 1990).

[5] "Anglo-North America" is used to refer to Canada and the United States. Mexico was excluded due to significant cultural differences.

Theoretical Framework

New Museology arose in the 1970s and 1980s, when critics began to question the traditional form and purpose of the museum (Hauenschild 1998; Weil 1990:81-82). At the 9th General Conference of the International Council of Museums in 1971, Beninese philosopher/author Stanislas Adovéti argued that museums must either change radically or lose their right to exist (Hauenschild 1998:1). Proponents of what later became known as New Museology argued that museums should function as educational tools in the service of societal development (de Varine-Bohan 1976). Rather than remaining isolated institutions that focus on *things*, museums should open themselves outward to society and focus on *people* in order to impact the public, achieve social meaning, and make concrete contributions to everyday life (de Varine-Bohan 1976:131-132; Hauenschild 1998:1; Weil 1990:81-82).

In the 1980s, museum workers formed the International Movement for New Museology (MINOM) in an effort to advance established museum practice. MINOM's purpose was to explore concepts of the museum as a democratic, educational institution in the service of social development (Hauenschild 1998:2). The group challenged museums' traditional status quo as omnipotent and omniscient institutions, dominated by aesthetic pleasure, and valuing objects over life (Hauenschild 1998:5). It defined the objectives of New Museology as promoting a global view of reality, research that satisfies social requirements, adaptation to local community needs, and individual and social development (Hauenschild 1998:6).

A central tenet of New Museology is the active, participatory role of the public in shaping the museum. Advocates proposed that the "new" museum's structure should facilitate the greatest possible degree of community inclusion and participation (Hauenschild 1998:5). Of relevance to the present study, New Museology scholars argued that the museum should serve as a venue for current issues, engage the public through consultation, and empower visitors with knowledge about the past to provide them with the means and inspiration to make well-informed decisions for the future (e.g., Hauenschild 1998:3; Marstine 2013:1; Skramstad 1999:128; Weil 1990:84).

Building on New Museology's participatory and democratic framework, Janet Marstine (2011a:14; 2013:13) advocates the notion of "radical transparency" in museums: moving

beyond passive disclosure toward an active, self-reflective process that shares not only information, but also the framing of information and the agendas of the “expert” museum professionals doing the framing (Marstine 2013:3). Marstine (2013:3,5) argues that radical transparency is instrumental to the new museum’s mission of engaging communities. New museum ethics concern the capacity for museums to create social change, and according to Marstine (2011b:xxiii), radical transparency is an opportunity for growth and civic discourse. Rather than simply complying with ethical guidelines, radical transparency shares the process of value-based decision-making with the public, empowering participants to make informed choices (Marstine 2013:13). It provides a means for all stakeholders to think critically about museums and to engage in ethical discourse, leading to greater self-reflexivity (Marstine 2011a:14; Marstine 2013:13). Nick Merriman, former Director of the Manchester Museum, has cautioned that not all citizens are equally interested in critical engagement with museums (Nick Merriman pers. comm. 2012, cited in Marstine 2013:13). However, radical transparency provides visitors with information that allows them to decide how much or how little they wish to participate (Marstine 2013:13).

In relation to the exhibition of human remains, a radically transparent approach would share background information regarding the ethically sensitive nature of a display, and ask visitors to make a conscious choice of whether or not to view them. This dissertation adheres to the principles of New Museology and radical transparency by engaging the public with ethical issues relating to the display of human remains, and documenting public reactions to a radically transparent exhibit (Chapter 5). In this way, my work turns the museum into a venue for current ethical and social issues, and empowers the public to make informed choices.

Methods

My research began with the larger ethical challenge of how to show respect for human remains that are displayed in museums. To reiterate, I addressed three central questions: 1) How has the display of human remains changed over time—particularly in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?; 2) How does the public in North America feel about the display of uncontested human remains?; and 3) How can uncontested human remains be displayed with respect?

I approached these questions through a comprehensive review of historical and contemporary displays of human remains in Anglo-North America and Western Europe, and surveys of the public and of museum visitors. The review focused on historical and contemporary trends in museum ethics, and display policies and practices. The first survey engaged the North American public with ethical issues surrounding human remains in museums. The second survey asked museum visitors in England to evaluate exhibits that use innovative, experimental methods of displaying human remains "with respect." The surveys were designed to encourage public engagement with ethical discourse about human remains in museums, and to explore the concept of "respectful display" of human remains.

Data Collection

I performed a review of display methods to summarize the historical and current state of affairs for exhibiting human remains in Anglo-North American and Western European museums. In addition to promoting public engagement with museum ethics, the two surveys served as instrumental case studies—using public opinions from the sample groups in Anglo-North America and England to exemplify emerging issues and identify future avenues for study (Liamputtong 2009:192). These investigative methods as they relate to each research question are summarized in Table 1, and discussed in depth below.

Table 1. Operational Matrix.

Question	Method	Sources of Data
1. How has the display of human remains changed over time in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?	Review/summary	Literature review (including "grey literature"[6]) Museum visits Personal communications with museum professionals
2. How does the North American public feel about the display of uncontested human remains?	Public surveys (online)	North American public (minimum responses = 100)
3. How can uncontested human remains be displayed with respect?	Museum visitor surveys	Visitors to an experimental exhibition in England (minimum responses = 100)

Question 1. How Has the Display of Human Remains Changed Over Time in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?

To identify how displays of human remains have changed over time, I employed a literature review, personal communications with museum professionals, and personal visits to museums in Anglo-North America and Western Europe. I included grey literature, personal communications, and museum visits in the review because peer-reviewed publications focusing on display methods for human remains are uncommon.

I used the literature review to summarize trends in historical displays of human remains, and how social and political movements have impacted display practices over time. I then reviewed museum policy documents, and compiled data from the personal communications and museum visits to identify contemporary ethical trends relating to the display of human remains. The museum visits and professional outreach focused on archaeological, anthropological, and natural history museums in Canada, the United States, England, Scotland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Italy, and Spain. This decision was made to limit the study to museums with similar mandates (i.e., focusing on human history vs. medicine/anatomy), and to provide an international and cross-cultural overview of beliefs about the ethical display of human remains from museum

[6] Grey literature in this study included museum websites, blogs, and institutional policy documents, as well as popular news publications that address the display of human remains in museums.

professionals in Anglo-North America and Western Europe. These results are reported in Chapter 2.

Question 2. How Does the North American Public Feel about the Display of Uncontested Human Remains?

To identify contemporary ethical beliefs about the display of uncontested human remains in the North American sample group, I surveyed members of the public online. I recruited participants by placing flyers with the survey link in public places such as telephone poles, coffee shops, community/recreation centres, and university campuses. I posted the flyers opportunistically, in various cities and neighbourhoods in North America, but concentrated in British Columbia, Canada. The survey link was distributed in a variety of public spaces and neighbourhoods (urban, suburban, rural) in an attempt to solicit a broad demographic range of participants. It was also sent to the Royal BC Museum's mailing list of 35,000 people.

I solicited a minimum sample size of 100 responses. A sample of five to ten individuals is considered the minimum requirement for exploratory, qualitative studies (Diamond 1999:41), while a sample size of 96 is required to make generalizations about a population of one million to 100 million with a 10-percent sampling error (Salant and Dillman 1994:55). Sampling a minimum of 100 participants is thus not an adequate sample size to give an accurate sense of the views of *all* North Americans (nor is there likely to be one single set of beliefs that represents all North Americans). However, the sample serves as an instrumental case study for the purposes of this exploratory work—allowing for the identification of trends that merit further, large-scale evaluation.

The online surveys used a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions facilitated rapid quantitative analysis, while the open-ended questions allowed visitors to clarify and explain their answers—which was important in order to capture the potentially wide range of responses that could come about from this exploratory study. The surveys asked the public if they believe human remains should be displayed in museums in general, and if their concerns varied relative to the "type" of human remains. Participants were also asked if they believe it is important to display human remains respectfully, and if so, what constitutes respectful display. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A, and results are reported in Chapter 3.

Question 3. How Can Uncontested Human Remains Be Displayed with Respect?

I addressed this question in two ways: 1) through a literature review; and 2) by engaging museum visitors in evaluating the effectiveness of recent, experimental display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased. A number of museums—particularly in England—have experimented with ways of showing respect to human remains in museum exhibits, using methods that both adhere to and go beyond the recommendations of published guidelines. These methods are categorized and described in Chapter 4, based on the results of a literature review (again, including grey literature).

In Chapter 5, I performed visitor surveys at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery to evaluate some of these experimental display methods in practice. This museum was chosen as an instrumental case study because Bristol staff designed displays of human remains in the Egypt Gallery to utilize all of the display methods outlined in Chapter 4. Specifically, the displays were designed to: 1) create an "atmosphere of respect" for the remains on display; 2) emphasize their humanity; and 3) encourage introspection about the ethical display of human remains. One of the exhibits also uses radical transparency through interpretation that communicates ethical challenges relating to the exhibition of archaeological human remains, and asks visitors to make a conscious choice whether or not to view the remains.

I used an online survey platform to record responses, but the surveys were conversational, and took place in-person. The surveys again consisted of a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to facilitate rapid responses and quantitative analysis, while still allowing visitors to clarify and explain their answers. The sample size was again a minimum of 100 responses, to enable the identification of general themes in opinions and beliefs. The survey first asked visitors if they believe it is important to display human remains respectfully. Next it asked if they believe the display methods used in Bristol's Egypt Gallery effectively convey respect for the human remains, and why/why not. Finally, the survey asked visitors what they believe constitutes respectful display of human remains, using the same questions as in the North American public surveys. These survey questions are listed in Appendix B.

Additional Data Collection

Both surveys also collected (optional) demographic data relating to participants' cultural affiliation, gender, age, spiritual beliefs, education level, and familiarity with issues surrounding Indigenous ancestral remains in museums. These questions were included to better understand the potential influences of demographic variables on beliefs about the ethical display of human remains in museums. Identifying direct causal relationships between these variables and ethical beliefs is beyond the scope of this study due to logistical constraints involved in obtaining a sufficient representative sample from each demographic of interest. However, these data may be used to identify themes that can serve as a baseline for further investigation.

Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. Quantitative methods were required to identify frequencies of responses. Qualitative methods were necessary to avoid limiting the broad range of potential information that could come about from this exploratory study of a complex topic (Diamond 1999:88; Liamputtong 2009:6). This combined approach provides a deeper understanding of ethical opinions than a strictly quantitative analysis would.

Quantitative analyses consisted of reporting the frequencies of multiple-choice responses in the survey data. The primary qualitative analytical method I employed was content analysis. I used content analysis because it allows for the identification of central themes, patterns, and trends in the qualitative data (Diamond 1999:151-152). These analytical methods as they relate to each research question are provided below.

Question 1. How Has the Display of Human Remains Changed Over Time?

To address this question, I identified themes emerging from the literature review of historical displays of human remains, and summarized literature regarding social and political movements that have influenced museum ethics. In relation to contemporary display policies and practices, I reported examples identified in the literature review (including grey literature), personal communications with museum professionals, and personal museum visits. I then identified trends in contemporary ethical practices, and ongoing ethical challenges. These results are reported in Chapter 2.

Question 2. How Does the North American Public Feel about the Display of Uncontested Human Remains?

To address the second question, I identified patterns in data collected in the online public surveys. I grouped the data into four sub-categories: 1) when (if ever) is it acceptable for museums to display human remains?; 2) are respectful display methods important?; 3) how can human remains be displayed respectfully?; and 4) open comments about the display of human remains. I reported multiple-choice responses quantitatively, and used content analysis to identify trends in open-ended responses. These results are relayed in Chapter 3.

Question 3. How Can Uncontested Human Remains Be Displayed with Respect?

The third research question focuses on innovative display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased. This question was addressed in two ways: 1) by identifying trends in "respectful" display methods, and 2) by engaging visitors in the evaluation of respectful display methods at a case study museum: the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. I summarized trends in display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased based on a literature review, and identified three "categories" of respectful display. These results are reported in Chapter 4.

In surveys at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, visitors were asked general questions about respectful display, as well as what they thought of the innovative/experimental methods they experienced in the museum. I identified trends in the survey data regarding whether/why participants believe museums should (or should not) aim to display human remains with respect, and how human remains can be displayed respectfully. I also reported visitor evaluations of the display methods used at Bristol. I again recounted multiple-choice responses quantitatively, and used content analysis to interpret open-ended responses. These results can be found in Chapter 5.

Subjective Variables

In Chapters 3 and 5 as well as the Discussion/Conclusions chapter, I discuss how demographic variables may influence ethical opinions. Specifically, I identify potential connections between demographic variables and beliefs about the ethical treatment of human remains by identifying polarizing survey questions, and comparing the demographic data of respondents with the most extreme (opposing) views. These

connections are not conclusive, but may be used as a basis for further evaluations using large-scale, quantitative survey data.

Dissertation Structure

In this chapter, I introduced my research questions and objectives, and the methods I used to address each question. I provided an overview of and justifications for my data collection methods, sample sizes, study locations, and analytical methods.

In Chapter 2 I address my first research question: how has the display of human remains changed over time—particularly in Anglo-North America and Western Europe? The chapter begins with a discussion of the historical collection and display of human remains in Western Europe and Anglo-North America, including religious and reverential displays, and the collection and display of human remains for science and public education. Next, it outlines political changes in the twentieth century that led to new museum practices, and the development of professional guidelines and accords for the treatment of human remains. The chapter concludes by reviewing contemporary policies and practices regarding the display of human remains in Anglo-North America and Western Europe, and identifying areas of ethical uncertainty that are currently under consideration.

Chapter 3 focuses on my second research question: how does the North American public feel about the display of human remains? Here I communicate the results of the North American public survey, which asked participants if they believe human remains should be displayed in museums, whether their ethical concerns vary based on the "type" of remains (e.g., cultural/spiritual affiliation, antiquity), and what constitutes "respectful display."

In Chapter 4 I provide context for my third research question: how can uncontested human remains be displayed with respect? Specifically, I summarize published ethical discourse and guidelines pertaining to the display of human remains in museums in the United Kingdom. I then detail how some museum professionals—particularly in England—have responded to changing ethical standards by implementing innovative, experimental exhibition methods aimed at respecting human remains. I categorize and

describe these display methods, and summarize public and professional responses to them, making note of where more data is needed.

Chapter 5 consists of an evaluation of the display methods introduced in Chapter 4, again relating to my third research question: how can uncontested human remains be respectfully displayed? Here I present the results of my visitor study at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery in Bristol, England, where Egyptian remains are displayed in innovative, experimental ways that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased. I report trends in visitor responses regarding the respectful display of human remains, and whether display methods used at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery were successful in conveying respect for the deceased according to the museum visitors.

The final chapter comprises the Discussion and Conclusions. Here I bring the results of each chapter together to discuss how they address my broader research questions and goals. I identify potential explanations for popular ethical beliefs in my sample groups, and make recommendations for good practice based on my findings. I conclude by identifying the significance of the study, and where more work is needed.

Chapter 2. Changes in the Display of Human Remains Over Time

How have human remains been displayed over time, and what political and social events and movements have led to changes in display practices? In this chapter I address both of these questions. I also review contemporary policies and practices relating to the display of human remains in Anglo-North America and Western Europe. My purpose is to summarize the historical and current state of affairs for the display of human remains, to address my first research question: How has the display of human remains changed over time in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?

I begin by summarizing the historical collection and display of human remains in the West. This includes religious and reverential displays, and the collection and display of human remains for science and public education. I then detail how political changes in the twentieth century led to new ethical practices for museums and the development of professional guidelines and accords for the treatment of human remains. Finally, I review contemporary policies and practices relating to the display of human remains, and identify areas of ethical uncertainty that are still under consideration. Since peer-reviewed publications about the ethical display of human remains are uncommon outside of the United Kingdom, this summary is based on a literature review that includes grey literature, personal museum visits, and personal communications with museum professionals in Anglo-North America and Western Europe.

Historical Displays of Human Remains

Museums originated from private collections in ancient and Medieval times. They took on their current form in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when Renaissance scholars began to study and classify the natural world (Abt 2011:119). European studies first focused on local specimens, but quickly expanded to include exotic New World "curiosities" that were collected by explorers (Abt 2011:119). These sometimes included human remains, in the form of skeletons, bones, and preserved embryos and organs (German Museums Association 2013:12).

Religious and Reverential Displays

Human remains have been displayed in Europe as Christian relics since the Middle Ages, beginning in the fourth century A.D., to physically embody the essence of the departed person (de Jong and Van Raders 2015:119; German Museums Association 2013:12; Walsham 2010:11). Such relics can include non-corporeal possessions or materials that came in contact with purported saints, or corporeal elements—such as skulls, skeletons, hair, fingernails, blood, and/or ashes (German Museums Association 2013:12; Walsham 2010:11).

Human remains have historically been collected in catacombs, ossuaries, and charnel houses. Catacombs are enormous subterranean cemeteries that emerged in Europe as early as the first century A.D., with famous European examples coming from Rome and Paris (Howatson 2011:62; Rutgers et al. 2009:1128; Zimmerman 2018:21). In Rome these were dug outside the city walls, and likely consisted primarily of the bodies of people from the poorer parts of society—since most burials were anonymous, undecorated, and without inscriptions (Zimmerman 2018:21).

Ossuaries and charnel houses are vaults and/or buildings that house human remains. They gained popularity in Europe in the Medieval period (Koudounaris 2015:49). The purpose of ossuaries and charnels was to keep Christian remains on consecrated ground when demand for burial space exceeded supply, as well as when burials were excavated during construction works (German Museums Association 2013:12; Green and Murray 2009:370; Koudounaris 2015:21). From the thirteenth century onward, ossuaries and charnels became ubiquitous in Europe.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Catholics began to search the Roman catacombs for body parts of so-called “martyrs” for use as corporeal relics—to celebrate the material remains of the early Christian past (Huskinson 2018:374). Catholics began to decorate the skeletons they found—which likely belonged to poor people—calling them “catacomb saints,” and exporting them to Catholic churches across Europe (Figure 1) (Koudounaris 2015:203; Nuwer 2013). The catacomb saints served as public reminders of the honours bestowed on supposed Catholic “martyrs,” to reinvigorate Catholic faith in the battle against Protestantism (Huskinson 2018:374; Koudounaris 2015:203; Nuwer 2013).

Figure 1. Roman Catacomb Saint. Photo: Paul Koudounaris, 2015. Reproduced with permission.

Around the same time, Catholics began to decorate ossuaries and charnel houses using human bones. Decorated ossuaries served as *memento mori* for Catholics: with the bones acting as bridges to the past, reminders of death and the need to redeem oneself, and a means of establishing bonds with past generations (German Museums Association 2013:12; Koudounaris 2015:23). Some decorated ossuaries are still open to the public, such as those in Kutná Hora, Czech Republic (Figure 2) and in Évora, Portugal.

Figure 2. Sedlec Ossuary in Kutná Hora, Czech Republic. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.

In the nineteenth century, many people were driven by the Industrial Revolution to move from rural to urban areas, which led to overcrowded housing, poor hygiene, diseases such as tuberculosis, and high maternal and child mortality rates (Curl 2000:xviii-xix). As a result, exposure to death became a common part of everyday life. High mortality rates combined with growing wealth among the middle classes led to increasingly elaborate public displays of death in the Victorian era—in order to avoid a “pauper’s funeral” (Walvin 1982:354-355). This phenomenon has been termed the “Victorian Celebration of Death”.

Previously, commemoration of the deceased was limited to the rich and powerful. However, in the Victorian age, the families of ordinary people began to elaborately and publicly commemorate their loved ones as well (Zielke 2003:53). Rituals surrounding death intensified because the middle classes sought to emulate the upper classes and to display their wealth (Curl 2000:195). The celebration of death involved mementos made from hair, paintings, death masks, post-mortem photography, and the preserved body

parts of the deceased (Bell 2016; Lutz 2015; Tobias 2002:108; Zielke 2003:61). Deborah Lutz (2014:5, 2015) argues that Victorians celebrated death because they saw it both as a natural phase of life and as a triumph—in that the believer was called to God.

Early religious displays of human remains celebrated martyrdom and faith in the church. They bestowed honour on the deceased (whether the deceased was truly a martyr or not), and imbued in the viewer a sense of connection with past generations. Commemorative displays of death, such as mementos of loved ones made in the Victorian era, were likewise socially accepted because of their reverential intent, and because public exposure to and familiarity with death meant that it was not macabre to keep body parts of the deceased as mementos (Lovejoy 2014:2). Rather, death was seen as a transition to the afterlife—something to be celebrated rather than feared (Lutz 2014:5). However, beginning in the nineteenth century, churches began to remove the dead from public view, and to place them in non-denominational cemeteries away from urban centers (Koudounaris 2015:25). As Westerners became increasingly secular and belief in the afterlife waned, death became feared rather than celebrated (Lutz 2014:5).

Body Collection and Display for Science

A second reason for the collection and display of human remains is for scientific education. Here I review the collection and display of bodies in the name of public education. I also discuss implicit outcomes of scientific displays: namely, that they punish social and biological deviance, commodify human bodies, and reinforce colonialism and scientific racism.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, concurrent with the Scientific Revolution and the rise of modern medicine, bodies were collected to facilitate the scientific study of human remains through dissection and comparative anatomy (Hubert and Fforde 2004:4). Body collection generally took place without consent, and became a profitable industry due to the difficulty of procuring cadavers. The Western public feared body collection and dissection not only because it was considered undignified, but also because it was perceived as preventing Christian burial and redemption through corporeal resurrection (Humphrey 1973:819; O'Sullivan 2001:124). As such, this practice became representative of power relations, in that bodies generally came from marginalized groups who lacked the resources and/or power to protect their dead from body-

snatchers and grave-robbers (Buklijas 2008:571). Early anatomists and surgeons largely relied on “donations” from prisons, workhouses, hospitals, and grave-robbers (Buklijas 2008:571; Humphrey 1973:819).

“White” bodies (belonging to people of European and/or south Asian descent [Zimmerman 2004:96]) were collected in the West for anatomical dissection, for medical studies, and for display in anatomical theatres: places for research, teaching, and public education about anatomy and pathology (German Museums Association 2013:13). White bodies often came from prisoners sentenced to death, the poor and/or socially deviant, and people with unusual or pathological anatomy. Until the mid-nineteenth century, many Western nations restricted legal body collection to executed criminals (Buklijas 2008: 573; Humphrey 1973:819). Because of public fears of body collection and dissection, dissection could be used as a form of post-mortem punishment for criminal activity (Humphrey 1973:819; O’Sullivan 2001:124; Richardson 1987:xv).

When there was a shortage of criminal bodies, bodies of the poor and other marginalized people were collected. These groups were targeted because they lacked the resources to defend their dead (Hubert and Fforde 2004:3; Richardson 1987:121). The rich were able protect their dead using mortsafes (Figure 3), mausoleums, and paid watchmen (Humphrey 1973:821; Knott 1985:4; Mimnagh 2017:7), but grave robbers routinely dug up the shallow graves of people whose families could not afford a proper burial or protection, and sold the bodies to anatomists (Hubert and Fforde 2004:3; Humphrey 1973:819; Richardson 1987:121). Bodies of the poor were also commonly collected from workhouses. When these people died, if their families could not afford to pay for a proper burial, their bodies were considered “unclaimed” and sold to anatomists for dissection—for the profit of the workhouses (Knott 1985:2).

Figure 3. [Mortsafes] in Cluny Kirkyard, Scotland. Photo: [Martyn Gorman], 2006. Licenced under [CC BY-SA 2.0].

Some body collectors even resorted to “burking”: that is, murdering people to sell their bodies (Knott 1985:6). This term derives from the name of William Burke, who, along with William Hare, committed at least 16 murders in Edinburgh, Scotland, in order to sell corpses for profit to anatomists (Knott 1985:6).

In what is now Germany, body collection included numerous other categories of marginalized and disempowered individuals, such as unwed mothers, illegitimate children, and suicide victims (Buklijas 2008:571-573; Richardson 1987:121). Nineteenth-century scientists sought these bodies in order to identify correlations between social deviance and physical characteristics such as ear size in criminals and sexual anatomy in prostitutes—believing that such information could be used to police social deviance (Terry and Urla 1995:1).

Anatomically atypical individuals were also targeted for body collection. Anomalous individuals often exhibited themselves in public to earn a living, and some of these individuals were also exhibited after death—generally without their consent (Durbach 2014:39). For example, after her death in 1862, the corpse of Julia Pastrana—a hirstute

Indigenous woman from Mexico who was exhibited during life as “the Gorilla Woman” and the “Ugliest Woman in the World” during life—was sold, embalmed and displayed to fascinated publics worldwide (Figure 4) (Durbach 2014:39; Garland-Thomson 2017:37). Her body was advertised as extremely life-like, and was exhibited without controversy until as late as the 1970s (Durbach 2014:39; Garland-Thomson 2017:37).

Figure 4. Julia Pastrana, a Bearded Lady. Reproduction of a Photo by George Wick, 1860. Licensed under CC-BY-4.0.

Another example is Charles Byrne, an eighteenth-century Irish man with pituitary gigantism who displayed himself as “the Irish Giant” during life. After his death he was included in an anatomical collection against his explicit wishes (Bergland 1964:265; de Herder 2012:312; Doyal and Muinzer 2011:2). While living, Byrne requested that his

body be buried at sea. However, when he died in 1783 his body was stolen from its coffin by anatomist John Hunter (Doyal and Muinzer 2011:2). Hunter dissected Byrne's body in secret and waited four years to display it due to fear of public reprisal—and even then failed to disclose the body's identity (Doyal and Muinzer 2011:2). Byrne's skeleton was displayed prominently at the entrance to the Hunterian Museum at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in London (Figure 5) for some 200 years, despite calls to honour his wishes (Devlin 2018; Muinzer 2013:4). The museum closed for renovations in 2018 and is set to reopen in 2021. During this time, Hunterian board members are reportedly considering honouring Byrne's wishes (Devlin 2018).

Figure 5. The Skeleton of Charles Byrne (1761-1783), the "Irish Giant" from the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, London. Photo: Emőke Dénes, 2017. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Exhibitions of reproduced human body parts were also very popular at World Fairs (Redman 2016). The 1933 World Fair in Chicago and 1939 World Fair in San Francisco, among others, featured transparent models of human anatomy made from skin-coloured plastic and silk projection screens (Figure 6) (Wakeling et al. 1939:56). The same models were used in the 1960s for popular education and in science museums (Redman 2016). Despite their popularity, it is unclear how effective these models were for public education (Redman 2016).

Figure 6. Transparent Man at the Mayo Medical Museum in 1964, Originally Exhibited at the 1933 Chicago World Fair. Photo: © Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 1964. Reproduced with permission.

Beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the bodies of “non-White” people were collected to satisfy European fascination with Other[7] races (German Museums Association 2013:13). The study and display of “non-White” colonized peoples became increasingly popular in Europe and North America between the eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries (German Museums Association 2013:13). Remains of colonized peoples were often taken from burials, morgues, university dissecting rooms, and battle grounds, or purchased from trading posts—sometimes without the performance of proper funerary protocols (Colwell-Chataphonh 2010:4; Fforde 2004:26).

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[7] A group that is considered and treated as intrinsically “different” than one’s own group (i.e., Westerners) (Liebmann 2008:6; Said 1978).

Eighteenth-century scientists like Carl Linnaeus and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach were eager to study Indigenous and Other colonized peoples, to categorize them by race (based on hair colour, skin colour, and skeletal and soft tissue morphology), and to assign them behavioural predispositions (Biondi and Rickards 2002:363; Blumenbach 1865; German Museums Association 2013:14; Linnaeus 1806; Marks 2007:28). By the end of the nineteenth century, most scientific institutions considered it necessary to collect human remains from all races and from all parts of the world in order to describe, quantify, and classify humankind into "racial hierarchies" (Fforde 2004:25-26). As a result, the bodies of many Indigenous and colonized people were added to the collections of museums and scientific institutions without their consent (e.g., Colwell-Chataphonh 2010, Fforde 2004; Redman 2012:13; Sadongei and Cash 2007). These so-called "race collections" were used in attempts to demonstrate biological differences between colonized peoples and Europeans, and to establish the supposed progression of human races: from "primitive" and "savage" to "civilized"—with Europeans at the top (Fforde 2004:25; German Museums Association 2013:13-14; Redman 2012:13).

Examples of individuals who were dissected and displayed after their death include Angelo Soliman, Sarah Baartman, and Ishi. Soliman was a man of Nigerian origin who was enslaved as a child, purchased by the Austrian governor of Sicily, and brought to what is now Austria in the late eighteenth century (Dickey 2009:20). Baartman (also known by the pejorative name "the Hottentot Venus") was a Khoisan woman from South Africa who was enticed to exhibit her supposedly extraordinary ("steatypogiac") sexual anatomy in London and Paris in the early 1800s (Tobias 2002:107). Ishi was a Native American man from northern California who, in the early twentieth century, was exhibited at the Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco as the last "uncontaminated" Indian in America (Hurst Thomas 2000:84). Despite their popularity and social integration, all three were dissected, added to museum collections, and—in Soliman and Baartman's cases—exhibited as exotic curiosities after their deaths (Dickey 2009:21; German Museums Association 2013:13; Hurst Thomas 2000:88).

Members of so-called "primitive races" were also exhibited in human zoos. For example, the Paris Exposition in 1889 and Chicago World's Fair in 1893 exhibited living Indigenous peoples, in what became popular attractions (Raibmon 2003:72). Those on display performed scripted songs and dances, and re-enacted their so-called "daily life" (Raibmon 2003:72). The Chicago World Fair featured the Great Aboriginal Encampment,

a six-month exhibition that consisted of Inuit, Penobscot, Navajo, Menominee, Winnebago, Chippewa, Iroquois, and Kwakwaka'wakw groups acting out their "exotic" lifestyles, by living in supposedly "authentic" conditions (Raibmon 2003:72). Some Indigenous people participated in displays willingly, while others felt obligated to perform if they could not afford to turn down the remuneration—whether direct, in the form of wages, or indirect, in the form of the sales of souvenirs to visitors (Raibmon 2003:71).

Body collection and display without consent was enabled by Western worldviews: namely, by the ideas that the human mind is separate from the body (dualism), and that scientists are objective observers who may perform empirical studies on the body in search of verifiable truths (Bienkowski 2006:3; Highet 2005:417; van der Maas 2014:140). Such beliefs allowed scientists to dehumanize and objectify dead bodies (Sharp 2000; Highet 2005:417). Dissection and public display were rationalized by their supposed educational value, and the desire to satisfy public fascination with biology and science. However, body collection focused on marginalized groups, and individuals who were considered "deviant" and/or Other. In this way, body collection was implicitly used to punish individuals for social and biological deviance, and to reinforce colonialism and scientific racism.

Michel Foucault (1977:17) writes that citizens are judged and punished not only for their crimes, but also for their anomalies, infirmities, maladjustments, and the effects of environment and heredity. Using Foucault's ideas, it can be argued that scientific body collection without consent was socially accepted because it was enacted on "maladjusted," "deviant," or marginalized individuals—such as criminals, the poor, social deviants, and members of non-White "races". These groups fascinated the European public, and were considered sufficiently Other and/or expendable by those in power as to be commodified and objectified (Highet 2005:417; Hubert and Fforde 2004:3; Sharp 2000:296). In contrast, when so-called "respectable" white bodies were disturbed in nineteenth century United States, popular anger erupted into riots at Columbia and Yale (Humphrey 1973:821; Mimnagh 2017:7). In England and Scotland there were similar riots when it was discovered that anatomists were dissecting bodies from local graveyards (Knott 1985:4).

Displays of non-White peoples promoted scientific racism by ascribing inferior cultural, physical, and intellectual traits to Other races. They also promoted colonialism by

implying that colonized peoples required domination in order to advance towards (Western) civilization (Fforde 2004:25, 29; Liebmann 2008:6; Raibmon 2003:72-73). World Fairs were particularly demonstrative of colonial agendas. Organized around the central theme of "progress," World Fair exhibitions of Indigenous peoples living in so-called "primitive" dwellings in the middle of Western cities reinforced harmful colonial ideas that colonized peoples were living in an early stage of human history, through which Western societies had already progressed (Raibmon 2003:72-73).

Toward Modern Museum Practice

In the twentieth century, a number of factors began to influence popular perceptions about death and the treatment of human remains in museums. At the beginning of the century, Western comfort with human remains began to decline, as beliefs about death as a natural phase of life and triumphant return to God waned. Along with increasing secularism, public exposure to the mass, horrific deaths of the First World War likely drove these changes (Lutz 2014:158). In addition, advances in medical understandings of bacteria and disease changed how death was conceptualized. Rather than a natural return to God, death became an indication of the failure of science and medicine (Lutz 2014:168). Death became a taboo topic, and public displays of death were viewed as grotesque (Kosonen 2014:1; Koudounaris 2015:25).

By the mid-twentieth century, morphological and genetics studies led scientists to conclude that there was no biological basis for the concept of "race" (Boas 1916; Fforde 2013:714; Schanche 2004:53). Franz Boas' (1916) research on the inheritance of head form disputed ideas about the inter-generational stability of cranial shape, which in turn cast doubt on the use of cranial form to define race (Fforde 2013:714). In addition, genetic studies showed that there is more variation *within* groups from the same continent than *between* groups from different continents, and that there are no abrupt genetic changes between members of different "races" that align with the physical features historically used to distinguish race (Jorde and Wooding 2004:S28). These advances negated scientific justifications for the display of race collections.

In addition, after the Second World War—in response to atrocities and dispossession committed by the Nazis in the name of "race"—Westerners began to favour a liberal democratic worldview (Barkan 2000:xxvii). This worldview accepts historical guilt and

advocates restitution for past injustices (Barkan 2000:xxvii, 160; O'Sullivan 2001:124). Under the liberal democratic worldview, apologies for past injustices (such as racism, dispossession, genocide, and colonialism), and the concept of restitution for historical guilt emerged as signs of political strength and stability (Barkan 2000:xxix).

Beginning in the 1940s, former colonies in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America started to gain independence from European rule, and former colonial subjects began migrating to Europe. At the same time, writers who were later termed "postcolonial scholars"—such as Edmundo O'Gorman (1949), Fritz Fanon (1952; 1963), and, later, Edward Said (1978)—revealed the racist and detrimental effects of European colonialism on colonized groups (Benjamin 2007:920-921; Betts 1998:111; Liebmann 2008:2; Williamson 2011:90). They criticized the linguistic, economic, social, gender, and cultural domination of the West over neglected and repressed, "subaltern" groups (Benjamin 2007:921). They also advocated for and gave voice to the alternative and fragmented histories of subaltern and Other peoples, whose stories were often left out of grand imperial narratives (Benjamin 2007:921; Williamson 2011:90). As a result of these developments, scholars, museum professionals, and the general public were made increasingly aware of the negative effects of colonialism (Kreps 2011:73-74).

Citizens and immigrants to Europe from former colonies began to criticize museums for their role as tools of colonialism, and to pressure museums to "decolonize" their exhibits and practice. Decolonizing museums means acknowledging the historical and colonial contexts of their collections, and the museum's role in perpetuating the legacy of colonial power and nation-building (Kreps 2011:72-73). Postcolonial scholars criticized the way Western colonial museums collected and represented the Other. They advocated self-representation, the inclusion of multiple perspectives, and the portrayal of Indigenous peoples and their cultures as living and changing, rather than as static artefacts from the past (Kreps 2011:72; Liebmann 2008:3; Williamson 2011).

In the 1950s, civil rights and Indigenous rights movements were gaining traction. A central and symbolic part of Indigenous rights movements was the repatriation of ancestral remains—with the end goal often being reburial (Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997:3; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Cooper 2008:40-46, 87; Deloria 1969:94,99; Fforde et al. 2004; Hubert and Fforde 2004:1; Kreps 2011; Redman 2012:180-181; Zimmerman 1997:92). Descendant communities worldwide demanded repatriation in

order to observe proper funerary rituals, to re-assert control over their ancestors and cultural heritage, and/or to repair damage to the group's psychological wellbeing and identity (Hubert 1989:152; Hubert and Fforde 2004:1-2; Thornton 2004).

As a result of these changing political climates, museums were forced to re-evaluate their practices. Some European museums began to update their exhibitions to reflect a more realistic portrayal of formerly-colonized peoples as early as the 1950s (Kreps 2011:73). The process of decolonizing museums began later in North America, in the 1970s and 1980s (Cooper 2008:40-46; Kreps 2011:72).

Examples of decolonized museum practice in the present day include the 1939 "Old New York" diorama at the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Figure 7). The diorama depicts a scene between the colonial Dutch and the Lenape people. New interpretation on the glass in front of scene includes missing context for the encounter, and highlights inaccuracies and clichés in the depiction of the Lenape (American Museum of Natural History N.d.).

Figure 7. "Old New York" Diorama, American Museum of Natural History, New York. Photo: R. Mickens/© American Museum of Natural History, N.d. Reproduced with permission.

In Canada, the Royal Ontario Museum's "Sovereign Allies/Living Cultures" gallery is dedicated to breaking down stereotypes about First Peoples in Canada (Royal Ontario Museum N.d). The exhibition was designed in collaboration with First Nations advisors,

and stresses the modernity of First Nations from the Great Lakes. For example, a diorama depicting Mohawk people has been updated to include elements of their modern life (Figure 8). The diorama is accompanied by interpretation that explains that Indigenous cultures are not static relics of the past. Though they have been influenced by centuries of European contact, Indigenous cultures still retain their core values, beliefs, and practices. Other museums, such as the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, have hosted delegations from originating communities to correct errors and exercise control over their representation (e.g., Koshy 2018).

Figure 8. Living Cultures Diorama, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.

Professional Guidelines and Accords

As discussion about Indigenous rights and decolonization grew, the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) in 1986 became one prominent venue for debate between archaeologists and Indigenous peoples about the repatriation of Indigenous ancestral remains (Hubert and Fforde 2004:6). The ensuing discourse resulted in the development of The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains (WAC 1989), the organization's position statement. The Vermillion Accord emphasizes respect and dialogue in relation to human remains, regardless of their origins, but makes no specific mention of display.

This and subsequent international accords (International Council of Museums [ICOM] 2004; WAC 2006) have a common emphasis on respect for human remains, and consultation with and/or permission from originating communities for the collection and display of ancestral remains and sacred materials. ICOM's (2004) code of ethics emphasizes following cultural beliefs, and displaying all human remains with tact and respect, in accordance with "professional standards". The Tamaki Makau-rau Accord (WAC 2006) emphasizes consultation, permission for the display of human remains, and culturally appropriate display. The WAC and ICOM initiatives are not enforceable laws, but some museums have voluntarily adopted ICOM'S (2004) code of ethics as minimum standards for its 35,000 members, from 136 countries and territories, to abide by (ICOM 2016).

Another international accord relating to ancestral remains is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP; United Nations 2007). This international human rights instrument defines minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and wellbeing of all Indigenous peoples. Included are Indigenous peoples' rights to control their cultural and intellectual property, and to repatriate their ancestral remains. A number of settler nations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) initially voted against its adoption, but all have since reversed their positions[8]. Recently, the government of British Columbia, Canada passed its *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*—which mandates that the provincial government align its laws

[8] Australia adopted UNDRIP in 2009; New Zealand in 2010; the United States in 2011; and Canada in 2016.

with UNDRIP (*British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* 2019).

In the United States, the *National Museum of the American Indian Act* (NMAIA) and the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA) require museums to document human remains, funerary objects, and sacred items in their collections, and to communicate that information to Native American and Native Hawaiian groups in order to facilitate repatriation requests (United States Congress 1989, 1990). NAGPRA is considered by many to have been a turning point in debate about the treatment of human remains—not just in the United States, but internationally (e.g., Zimmerman 2004:93). Since NAGPRA's passage in 1990, a number of American professional associations have developed ethical guidelines to address the treatment of human remains in museums. For example, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)'s Code of Ethics for Museums (AAM 1991) addresses the "unique and special" nature of human remains and sacred objects, which, it argues, should guide decision-making.

A 1991 workshop in Ottawa, Canada that was sponsored and co-hosted by the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations led to the publication of the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples (Hill and Nicks 1992)—a guidance document for ethical museum practice in Canada. The Task Force considered recommending legislation similar to NAGPRA, but instead provided guiding principles: asking museums to develop a co-operative model based on equality, and governed by moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities rather than legislative obligations. The Task Force Report and the Canadian Museums Association's (2006) ethical guidelines discuss the treatment of ancestral remains in relation to repatriation, but not display (likely because display is considered unacceptable by most groups). Recently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015:8) recommended that the Task Force Report be updated—work that is currently in progress. In addition, repatriation legislation has recently been tabled in Canada (Bill C-391 2019).

In Australia and New Zealand, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) in 1983 and the Council of Australian Museum Associations (CAMA) in 1993 formally agreed not to display Aboriginal human remains or sacred items (CAMD 2009; Griffin 1996:46). The Indigenous Repatriation Program in Australia provides federal funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations and to major Australian museums to

facilitate the return of ancestral remains (ICOM 2018). New Zealand's 1992 *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act* (MNZTTA) created a national institution to protect and honor the heritage of the nation's Indigenous cultures (MNZTTA 1992; ICOM 2018). For remains that cannot be returned to originating communities, museums in New Zealand and Australia sometimes utilize sacred keeping places as culturally appropriate repositories (McCarthy 2011).

Thus, in settler nations such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, increasing involvement of Indigenous peoples in the management of their cultural heritage has curtailed the display of their Ancestors in museums (Griffin 1996; McCarthy 2011; McManamon 2006). In these nations, ethical guidelines for museums generally focus on the repatriation of Indigenous ancestors and cultural patrimony.

The situation is different in Europe, where archaeological human remains are treated legally in the same way as archaeological or historic artifacts, and the display of European human remains is usually not contested (Márquez-Grant et al. 2016; but see Maughfling 2009 and Restall Orr 2008 regarding contested European remains). Collections of human remains in Europe usually fall under the protection of various cultural heritage legislation, which direct archaeological materials to national museums or universities (Márquez-Grant et al. 2011:425). In France, funerary legislation adopted in 2008 extended respect and dignity to cadavers that was previously only afforded to living bodies, and prohibited their commercialization in contexts such as Gunther von Hagens' controversial "Body Worlds" exhibition of plastinated corpses (Charlier et al. 2014:143; Groupe de Travail sur la Problematique des Restes Humains dans les Collections Publiques 2018).

The national museum associations of a few countries—namely, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and France—have developed their own guidelines in relation to the display of human remains that are similar to ICOM's recommendations (Department for Culture, Media, and Sport [DCMS] 2005 [United Kingdom]; Edson 2005; German Museums Association 2013; Netherlands Museums Association 2011; Groupe de Travail sur la Problematique des Restes Humains dans les Collections Publiques 2018 [France]). These guidelines relate to all human remains—not strictly to Indigenous Ancestors. In Spain, Italy, and Norway, scholars have called for ethical guidelines for the display of human remains in museums (Márquez-Grant et al. 2011:1082; Monza et al.

2019; Sellevold 2011:160-161). In the United Kingdom, conversations about the ethical display of human remains have been particularly prominent, and have led to the development of both guidelines and legislation pertaining to the treatment and display of human remains in museums. Details of United Kingdom guidelines and legislation are provided in Chapter 4.

Contemporary Display Practices

In this section I describe principles that commonly guide contemporary decision-making about the display of human remains in Anglo-North America and Western Europe, as identified through a literature review and personal communications with museum professionals. These trends are summarized in Table 2 (which includes personal communication sources) and described in-text. None of the museum professionals claimed to speak for their nation as a whole. However, the broad geographic range of museum professionals who were consulted allowed for the identification of common trends in contemporary ethical decision-making.

Table 2. Summary of Trends in Ethical Decision-Making for the Display of Human Remains.

Practice	Nation(s) Represented In North America	Sources (Pers. Comm. 2018-2019)
Ancestral remains from local Indigenous groups generally not considered for display		Literature review (absence of examples of contemporary displays of Indigenous Ancestors)
Decisions for uncontested remains on a case-by-case basis	United States	David Hurst Thomas; Douglas Ubelaker; Anonymous museum professional 1
Take into account the wishes of: 1. the individual (if known) 2. kin/community 3. national representatives	United States	Chip Colwell; Anonymous museum professional 1; Anonymous museum professional 2
Respect originating community/cultural protocols (incl. consultation)	Canada United States	Jack Lohman Douglas Ubelaker; Robert Ehrenreich; David Hurst Thomas; Anonymous museum professional 1; Anonymous museum professional 2
Respect visitors' cultural beliefs/sensitivities		Douglas Ubelaker; Robert Ehrenreich
Practice	**Nation(s) Represented in Western Europe**	**Sources (Pers. Comm. 2018-2019)**
Respect originating community/cultural protocols (incl. consultation, consent)	England Scotland Germany Finland Spain	Sue Giles; Laura Peers; Hedley Swain Neil Curtis Anonymous museum professional 3 Eeva-Kristiina Harlin Patricia Alonso
Decisions for uncontested remains on a case-by-case basis	England Scotland Spain Denmark Italy	Sue Giles Neil Curtis Patricia Alonso Anonymous museum professional 4 Anonymous museum professional 5
Display remains only if there is a clear (educational) purpose	England Spain Italy	Sue Giles; Laura Peers Patricia Alonso Anonymous museum professional 5
Respect visitors' cultural beliefs/sensitivities	England Italy (South Tyrol)	Laura Peers Katharina Hersel
Other considerations: - cultural context - identity of remains - antiquity of remains - violent/traumatic death	Spain Germany Italy (South Tyrol) Finland Italy	Patricia Alonso Anonymous museum professional 3 Katharina Hersel Eeva-Kristina Harlin Anonymous museum professional 5

Many Western museums have now revised their practices to align with new ethical standards (e.g., ICOM 2004; WAC 1989, 2006). With regard to human remains, these standards emphasize respect for the deceased and for originating communities, collaborative decision-making about the display of human remains (i.e., consent), and culturally-appropriate display—if display is permitted (ICOM 2004; WAC 1989, 2006).

As previously discussed, the ethical policies of most museums in the United States and Canada focus on Indigenous Ancestors and contested materials. Few museums have formal ethical policies that relate to uncontested human remains. Museum professionals in these nations will generally not even consider displaying the Ancestors of local Indigenous communities, since these communities have made it abundantly clear that display is inappropriate, harmful, and disrespectful.

For uncontested remains, North American museum professionals often informally follow the principles of international ethical guidelines and accords (e.g., ICOM 2004; WAC 1989, 2006). Decisions to display (or not display) human remains are commonly made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the wishes of the individual (if known), their kin (if known), originating community/descendants (if identifiable), or (lastly) the individual's nation of origin. Visitor sensitivities may also be considered.

In Europe, many museums follow ICOM's (2004) code of ethics and, as already noted, some nations have additional guidelines for the treatment of human remains (DCMS 2005 [United Kingdom]; German Museums Association 2013; Netherlands Museums Association 2011; Groupe de Travail sur la Problematique des Restes Humains dans les Collections Publiques 2018 [France]). Western European museum professionals have noted the importance of consultation with originating communities and respecting cultural protocols. However, some note that geographical distance from originating communities can make consultation difficult.

As in North America, many Western European museum professionals noted that decisions to display (or not display) human remains are usually made on a case-by-case basis. They also emphasized that remains should only be displayed if there is a clear (usually educational) purpose. A few informants noted that it is also important to respect the beliefs and cultural sensitivities of visitors. Additional factors that European museum professionals may take into account when making decisions about the display of human

remains include: 1) whether the display will include adequate context; 2) the identity of the remains; 3) the antiquity of the remains; and 4) whether the individual suffered a violent/traumatic death.

The context of Anglo-North American and Western European museums differ in several ways. First, as a result of European colonialism, World Culture museums are common in Europe, while North American museums tend to focus on local history and culture. European museums and museum professionals thus tend to be more geographically distant from the international/colonized cultures they portray. In North America, there are fewer geographical barriers for members of originating communities wishing to exercise control over their heritage. For example, Indigenous originating community members may be unaware of cultural materials and ancestral remains that are held and/or displayed in European museums because they are not able to visit the museum.

Another difference is that, in settler nations, the effects of colonialism on Indigenous people are apparent and ongoing. Canada is attempting to acknowledge and address its colonial history (e.g, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015), but much work still remains. It is thus unsurprising that ethical discussions in settler nations like Canada tend to concentrate on ethical issues that impact contemporary Indigenous communities, who are often the focus of their collections, rather than the treatment of human remains more broadly.

Displaying Uncontested Remains

As noted above, most Western museum professionals now acknowledge that it is unethical to display human remains against the wishes of originating communities. However, uncontested human remains are still displayed in many museums, for various purposes. These include religious, anatomical, World Culture, archaeological, and ancient/evolutionary displays. A list of examples of such displays in Anglo-North America and Western Europe is provided in Table 3. This list was compiled primarily through personal museum visits, and is not exhaustive.

Table 3. Contemporary Displays of Human Remains in Anglo-North America and Western Europe.

Type of Display	Examples of Contemporary or Recent Display(s)
Religious	**International:** Relic world tours **Europe:** Catholic churches (e.g., catacomb saints, bone churches)
Anatomical	**North America:** National Museum of Health and Medicine (Silver Spring, Maryland) Mütter Museum (Philadelphia) Maude Abbott Medical Museum (Montreal) San Diego Museum of Man (San Diego) * San Jose Tech Museum (San Jose) *** **Europe:** Hunterian Museum (London) Wellcome Collection (London) National Museum of Natural History and Science (University of Lisbon) National Anthropology Museum (Madrid)
World Cultures (*tsantsas*[9] unless otherwise noted)	**North America:** American Museum of Natural History (New York) Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto) San Diego Museum of Man (San Diego) * **Europe:** Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford) – *tsantsas,* and skulls from: Naga (India), Dayak (Borneo), Andaman Islands, and Munduruco (Brazil) peoples ** Wellcome Collection (London) King's Museum (Aberdeen) *** National Anthropology Museum (Madrid) – *tsantsas*; also cabinet of skulls National Archaeological Museum (Madrid) – mummy from Tenerife (Canary Islands)
Archaeological	**European/Asian Skeletal Remains (European unless otherwise noted)** **North America:** Royal BC Museum (Victoria) – Vikings *** Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto) Canadian Museum of History (Ottawa) *** Denver Museum of Nature & Science (Denver) – Asia American Museum of Natural History (New York) – China **Europe:** Ashmolean Museum (Oxford) Ulmer Museum (Ulm, Germany) Geological Museum of Portugal (Lisbon) National Archaeological Museum (Madrid) Stonehenge (Amesbury, UK)

[9] The term *tsantsa* refers to shrunken enemy heads made by Jívaroan groups from the Amazon.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (Bristol)

Mummified European Remains (e.g., bog/frozen bodies)

North America:
Museum of Civilization (Gatineau, Canada) ***

Europe:
South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology (Bolzano)
British Museum (London)
National Museum of Ireland (Dublin)
National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen)
Pompeii Archaeological Park (Pompeii)

Egyptian Mummies

North America:
Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto) **
Field Museum (Chicago)
Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (Washington, DC)
Carnegie Museum of Natural History (Pittsburgh)
Royal BC Museum (Victoria) *, ***
San Diego Museum of Man (San Diego) *
Museum of Civilization (Gatineau) ***
Denver Museum of Nature & Science (Denver)

Europe:
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (Bristol)
National Archaeological Museum (Madrid)
Carmo Archaeological Museum (Lisbon)
British Museum (London)

Mummies from Peru, Chile, and Mexico

North America:
San Diego Museum of Man (San Diego) *
American Museum of Natural History (New York)
Field Museum (Chicago) ***
Denver Museum of Nature & Science (Denver) ***
American Museum of Natural History (New York) – skeletal, Peru

Europe:
Carmo Archaeological Museum (Lisbon)

Ancient/Evolutionary Exhibits

North America:
Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (Washington, DC)
Canadian Museum of History (Gatineau) ***

Europe:
Wellcome Collection (London)
Natural History Museum (London)
Oxford University Museum of Natural History (Oxford)
National Museum of Prehistory (Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, France)

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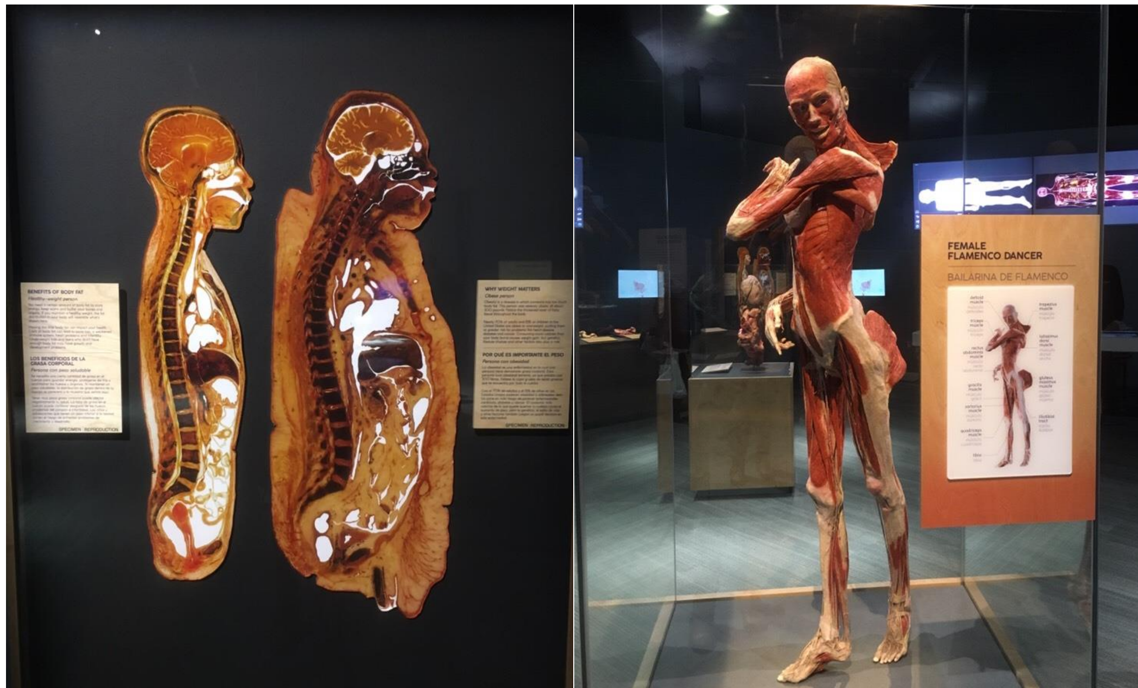
* No longer displayed for ethical reasons
** Museum staff rethinking whether display is ethical
*** Temporary/touring exhibition

A number of religious displays of human remains are still in use. For example, religious relics (e.g., body parts of saints) regularly tour the world (e.g., Lazaruk 2018), catacomb saints are still displayed in European churches (Koudounaris 2015), and decorated Catholic "bone churches" are major tourist attractions in Kutná Hora, Czech Republic, and Évora, Portugal. These are generally accepted because they are displayed for reverential and/or spiritual purposes, and presumably in accordance with the spiritual beliefs of the deceased. However, it is unclear if the majority of contemporary visitors view such exhibits reverentially or as macabre curiosities—particularly in the cases of catacomb saints and decorated churches, which today attract tourists from many cultures and religious backgrounds.

Examples of human remains displayed for educational purposes include individuals held in anatomical and World Culture collections, historical figures, archaeological remains, and ancient/evolutionary remains. Scientific and anatomical displays of human remains can be found in museums such as the National Museum of Health & Medicine in Silver Spring, Maryland, the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia, the Maude Abbott Medical Museum in Montreal, the Hunterian Museum and the Wellcome Collection in London, the National Museum of Natural History and Science in Lisbon, the National Anthropology Museum in Madrid (Figure 9), and various touring "Body Worlds" exhibitions. In the United States, the San Jose Tech Museum's temporary 2018 "Body Worlds: Decoded" exhibition displayed anatomical remains while communicating potential ethical issues to the public (Figures 10a-10b). Specifically, it included signage at the entrance of the exhibition warning visitors of the presence of human remains. The signage also disclosed that the bodies were collected with full consent and were displayed for educational purposes (Figure 11).

Figure 9. Remains of "Giant" Augustin Luengo y Capilla at the National Anthropology Museum, Madrid. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.



*Figures 10*a & b. *"Body Worlds: Decoded" Exhibition at the San Jose Tech Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.*

Figure 11. "Body Worlds: Decoded" signage at the San Jose Tech Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.

World Culture collections often hold *tsantsas*—shrunken enemy heads made by Jívaroan groups from Ecuador and Peru—and these are a star attraction for many museums, including the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the Wellcome Collection in London, King's Museum in Aberdeen, and the National Anthropology Museum in Madrid. Until recently, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford displayed *tsantsas* (Figures 12a & b) and other human remains from so-called "World Cultures" in its famous "Treatment of Dead Enemies" exhibit. To avoid exoticizing the cultures it depicted, the exhibit contained interpretation reminding visitors that many cultures, including the English, have a history of taking and displaying the heads of dead enemies. Other human remains displayed in the exhibit until recently include skulls from the Naga people of India (Figure 13), the Dayak of Borneo, the Munduruco of Brazil (Figure 14), and Andaman Islanders.

Figures 12a & b. Tsantsa (left) from the "Treatment of Dead Enemies" Exhibit, and Interpretation (right), Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.

Figure 13. Naga Skull from the "Treatment of Dead Enemies" Exhibit, Pitt Rivers Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.

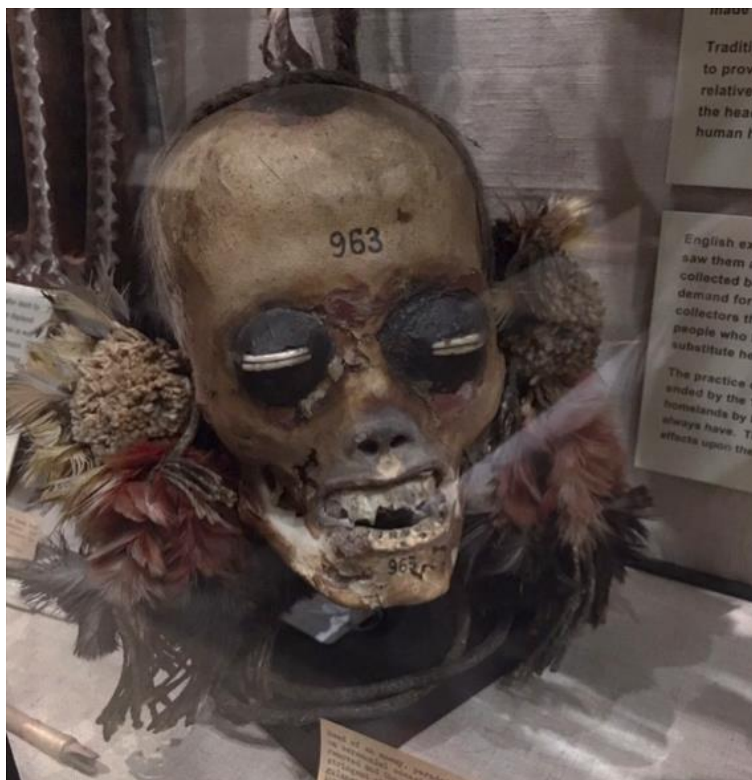


Figure 14. Munduruco Skull from the "Treatment of Dead Enemies" Exhibit, Pitt Rivers Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2018.

In Madrid, the National Archaeological Museum exhibits a mummy from Tenerife (Canary Islands), and the National Anthropology Museum displays a cabinet of skulls that is intentionally reminiscent of early "curiosity" cabinets and "race collections" (Figure 16). This is in the "Room of the Origins of the Museum," a gallery that seeks to re-create the appearance of the museum and style of exhibits that would have been present in 1875, when it was inaugurated.

Figure 15. Skull Cabinet in the "Room of the Origins of the Museum," National Anthropology Museum, Madrid. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.

The aforementioned bodies of individuals held in World Culture collections are displayed because there have not been calls from originating communities to repatriate them. However, it is possible that members of originating communities are not aware of these displays. It is difficult to consult with originating communities on the opposite side of the world, who often have more pressing concerns impacting their survival and livelihoods.

In some cases, members of Jívaroan groups have explicitly stated that they do not object to the display of *tsantsas* (Alonso Pajuelo 2016:132; Gross 2016: R546;

Rubenstein 2004:15; Simpson 2001:187). Despite this, some museum professionals question whether their display is ethical (e.g., Neil Curtis pers. comm. 2018; Pitt Rivers Museum n.d.). Western demand for *tsantsas* in the nineteenth century led to an increase in their production, and to meet this demand people were murdered, bodies were stolen from morgues, and animals such as sloths and monkeys were used to produce fakes (Gross 2016: R546). Another ethical challenge is that, if not adequately contextualized, the display of *tsantsas* runs the risk exoticizing Jívaroan peoples. The Pitt Rivers Museum is planning a comprehensive consultation with the Shuar about the *tsantsas* in their famed "Treatment of Dead Enemies" exhibit (Bailey 2019). However, this consultation was postponed due to more urgent issues in the community—such as resource extraction in the Amazon, civil unrest in Ecuador, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

On September 22, 2020, the Pitt Rivers Museum reopened from the COVID-19 lockdown with its "The Treatment of Dead Enemies" exhibit removed from display. In its place is a radically transparent exhibit, consisting of text panels that pose ethical questions to visitors about the display of human remains (Figure 16). The museum explained the removal as an effort to decolonize and avoid perpetuating racist stereotypes to visitors about so-called "savage" head-hunters (BBC News 2020).

Figure 16. Text Panels Replacing the "Treatment of Dead Enemies" Exhibit, Pitt Rivers Museum. Photo: © Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 2020. Reproduced with permission.

Archaeological human remains continue to be displayed in North American and European museums. Touring exhibitions that include Viking remains, Egyptian mummies, and bog bodies from Europe are common. An exhibition about Genghis Khan that included human remains has also toured the world. Local archaeological remains are not generally displayed in Anglo-North American museums since, as previously mentioned, Indigenous ancestral remains must be treated according to the spiritual beliefs and wishes of descendant communities. In Europe it is common to display local (European) archaeological human remains, such as Neolithic skeletal remains at the Ulmer Museum, Germany, and ancient skeletons from Stonehenge at the Stonehenge interpretation centre.

Archaeological remains from Europe are treated with reverence, and are sometimes even seen as a source of national pride—likely due to the fact that they are seen as ancestral to and representing the history of the dominant culture. Such is the case with Lindow Man, a bog body from Lindow Moss in northern England, and Ötzi, the "Ice Man" from the Tyrolean Alps in Italy. In both cases, there was more debate over who deserved

the privilege of holding and displaying the bodies than about whether or not to display them. Likewise, Egyptian mummies are commonly displayed worldwide—including in Egypt, as a source of national pride.

It is not uncommon for archaeological human remains from Latin America to be displayed—particularly mummies from Chile, Peru, and Mexico. Currently, the American Museum of Natural History in New York displays a mummy from Chile and skeletal remains from Peru. At the time of writing, Peruvian mummies were displayed in the Chicago Field Museum's temporary/touring "Mummies" exhibition—a decision that was made in consultation with Peruvian government representatives. Chancay mummies from Peru are also displayed at the Carmo Archaeological Museum in Lisbon, Portugal.

Public Controversy and Ongoing Dilemmas

Exhibiting the above-noted archaeological human remains has not so far proven controversial. Previous surveys in England suggest that the public there largely expects to see human remains in museums (79-91%), though some were uncomfortable with the display of recent and/or named individuals (Carroll 2005:13; English Heritage 2010:7; Kilmister 2003:61). Few public surveys have been published outside of England. However, there have been anecdotal accounts of public discomfort with the display of European bog bodies and archaeological remains. Specifically, Neo-Pagan groups have criticized the display of bog bodies and ancient skeletal remains from England (Maughfling 2009; Restall Orr 2008). In Canada, a 2002 temporary exhibition of European bog bodies at the Museum of Civilization caused controversy, particularly relating to its merchandise—some of which depicted the mummified body of a young girl on souvenir t-shirts (Gill-Robinson 2004:113).

Despite relatively little controversy over the display of archaeological human remains, some museum professionals have begun to proactively rethink their display due to a lack of consent, and the desire for consistency in the treatment of human remains. For example, the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, Canada now has a policy that does not allow for the display *any* human remains. This decision was made to ensure equal treatment of all human remains (Jack Lohman, pers. comm. 2018). In its 2018 temporary exhibition titled "Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs," the museum chose not to display any Egyptian mummies for ethical reasons (Jack Lohman, pers. comm. 2018).

The San Diego Museum of Man previously displayed the remains of modern Indian individuals, ancient Egyptians, and Pre-Columbian mummies from Mexico, Central, and South America. However, staff at the museum removed these remains from display due to concerns about a lack of consultation and consent from originating communities (Anonymous museum professional [United States], pers. comm. 2018). The museum has now ceased all research and use of the remains unless/until explicit consent can be obtained from the communities of origin.

At the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, there are plans to mount an exhibit that would raise ethical issues with the public about the display of Egyptian mummies (Taylor 2019). In addition, a number of museums—particularly in England—are experimenting with new, "respectful" ways of displaying archaeological human remains. These are most commonly used in exhibits of Egyptian mummies and European bog bodies, and are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Ancient human and fossil hominin remains are often displayed in evolutionary contexts without controversy. In North America, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History presents a comparative exhibit of hominin skulls. In addition, the Canadian Museum of History (formerly the Museum of Civilization) in Gatineau recently hosted "Neanderthal"—a temporary exhibition focused on our ancient relatives (Canadian Museum of History 2019). Displays of ancient human ancestors are even more common in European museums, which often portray global human history. However, even museums that focus on local history in Europe often include evolutionary displays, since some of our hominin ancestors and relatives (e.g., Neanderthals, *Homo erectus*) were found in Europe. Examples of the many European museums with evolutionary exhibits include the Natural History Museum in London and the National Museum of Prehistory in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, France.

The exhibition of human remains seems to be less problematic when displays serve scientific, spiritual, reverential, or educational purposes. Sensationalistic and/or macabre exhibits are more controversial and ethically questionable. Examples include so-called "museums" and curiosity shops that present human remains to attract customers, with little to no regard for context or education. Some curiosity shops exhibit and even sell deaccessioned human bones from teaching collections as home décor (e.g., Global News 2017; The Bone Room 2019). In Seattle, Ye Olde Curiosity Shop has exhibited a

human mummy of mysterious provenance since the 1950s (Orenstein 2015). In New Orleans and Los Angeles, the Museum of Death venerates serial killers, and exhibits human remains in sensationalistic ways, with little to no educational content. In London, the Viktor Wynd Museum of Curiosities, Fine Arts, and Natural History initiated an extremely controversial crowd-funding campaign to purchase a Peruvian mummy—with prizes for donors including mummy dust, human bones, and the chance to drink a cocktail out of a human skull or take a mummified head home for an evening (Killgrove 2016).

Chapter Summary

Early displays of human remains in Europe served religious and commemorative purposes. Displaying the dead was particularly common among Catholics, in celebration of so-called "martyrs" and in memory of deceased loved ones. In the twentieth century, a number of factors resulted in reduced societal comfort with public displays of dead bodies. These are: increasing secularity, mass deaths during the First and Second World Wars, and the rise of modern medicine. These events resulted in shifting views of death: rather than a triumphant return to God, death was seen as a failure of modern medicine. Also in the twentieth century, postcolonial, decolonization, Indigenous rights, and repatriation movements forced museum professionals and archaeologists to question their assumptions about who has the right to study and display human remains. New professional guidelines and legislation encouraged respect for human remains and for originating communities.

Many museum professionals now acknowledge ethical issues with the historical collection and display of Indigenous and colonized peoples, and people added to so-called "race collections". As such, most Western museums will no longer display contested remains. However, uncontested human remains are still commonly exhibited. These include religious/reverential displays, anatomical displays, remains of people held in World Culture collections, archaeological remains, and ancient/evolutionary remains. These are generally not controversial when they serve religious or educational purposes. The display of uncontested archaeological human remains is not usually controversial, but discussion of the ethical treatment of the remains of Indigenous Ancestors and colonized peoples have led some museum professionals to reconsider the display of even uncontested remains. Some museums have discontinued the display of any human

remains for ethical reasons, to treat all human remains consistently. Others have removed popular exhibits of human remains, pending community consultation. Still other museums are displaying human remains in new, more “respectful” ways—which are described and evaluated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 3. North American Public Perceptions about Human Remains in Museums

In this chapter, I present unresolved ethical challenges relating to the exhibition of human remains to the public, to address my second research question: how does the public in North America feel about the display of human remains? I take a New Museology approach, proactively encouraging the public to take part in ethical decision-making. Specifically, I collected public surveys from a sample group in North America, aimed at identifying trends in ethical beliefs about the exhibition of human remains. Public opinions are particularly important when there is no identifiable descendant community to speak to what is appropriate or respectful.

I begin by reviewing my materials, study locations, and sampling strategy. Next, I describe the survey questions. I report the survey results by grouping questions relating to three themes: 1) when (if ever) is it acceptable for museums to display human remains?; 2) are respectful display methods important?; and 3) how can human remains be respectfully displayed? I identify potential connections between demographic information and survey responses, and conclude the chapter with a summary of major trends in the results.

Materials & Methods

To identify beliefs about the ethical display of human remains in Anglo-North America, I surveyed members of the public online between July 2018 and May 2019. A total of 122 surveys were collected. Since the population of Canada and the United States combined exceeds 300 million, and the surveys were not limited to strictly Canadians and Americans, this sample is likely not representative of *all* North American beliefs. Realistically, there is likely no single set of beliefs held by North Americans as a whole. However, the surveys were intended as an exploratory case study, aimed at identifying general trends that may serve as a baseline for future, large-scale quantitative studies. The results are probably most representative of public opinions in British Columbia, Canada, where the majority of the surveys were collected.

Survey Locations

Surveys were collected using *SFU Web Survey*, an online survey platform hosted in Canada. The goal of the sampling strategy was to obtain a diverse demographic sample of respondents, and to avoid a self-selecting sample of museum visitors who are accepting of the display of human remains (e.g., individuals who chose to visit a museum knowing it displays human remains). The survey link was distributed using flyers posted in public places, and via the Royal BC Museum's Fall 2018 newsletter. Although the Royal BC Museum's mailing list is composed of museum enthusiasts, the mailing list was deemed an acceptable addition to the sample because the Royal BC Museum does not display any human remains. The flyer was distributed opportunistically in urban, suburban, and rural areas around the Lower Mainland, Kelowna, and Victoria, British Columbia, and in Chillicothe and Columbus, Ohio. It was posted in public spaces such as on telephone poles, and in coffee shops and community/recreation centres. Diverse locations and neighbourhoods were chosen for the survey distribution to maximize the likelihood of obtaining a diverse demographic sample of respondents.

Survey Data

I collected 122 survey responses between July 2018 and May 2019. The survey used simple, accessible language. It asked ten (multiple choice and open-ended) ethical questions focusing on if/how human remains should be displayed in museums, and whether participants' concerns varied based on the "type" of remains (e.g., cultural affiliation, form, antiquity). The survey also included demographic questions to better understand subjective factors that may influence beliefs about displaying the dead. The full survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Results

I analyzed the survey data both quantitatively and qualitatively—by reporting frequencies of responses, and identifying common themes in open-ended responses using content analysis. Here, I report the results by grouping questions relating to three major themes. Participant demography is reported at the end of the chapter, and discussed in relation to its potential influence on ethical beliefs. The three central themes of the survey are:

A. When (if ever) is it acceptable for museums to display human remains?
B. Are respectful display methods important?
C. How can human remains be displayed respectfully?

A. When is it Acceptable for Museums to Display Human Remains?

The first five survey questions focused on when it is acceptable for museums to exhibit human remains, and whether there are differences in what is appropriate based on the "type" of remains. Question 1 asked if museums should display human remains in general. For Question 2, visitors were asked which types of human remains are acceptable to exhibit. Question 3 (open-ended) provided an opportunity to clarify responses to Questions 1 and 2. Question 4 inquired for which reason(s) it is acceptable to display human remains. Question 5 (open-ended) provided an opportunity for respondents to list an alternative response to Question 4 that was not included in the multiple-choice response options.

Question 1. Do you think museums should display human remains?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, never
- ☐ Depends on… (please specify in Questions 2-3)

Question 2. Are the following human remains acceptable to display?

- Human bones
- Mummified human remains
- Cremated human remains
- Human remains dating from less than 100 years ago
- Human remains dating to more than 100 years ago
- Remains of known/named individuals
- Remains of unknown individuals
- Remains of individuals who died in a violent way
- Remains of historical/famous figures
- Archaeological human remains that would be destroyed if they were not dug up (e.g., due to construction)
- Archaeological human remains dug up for research/study
- Remains of someone closely related to you
- Remains of a distantly-related individual (e.g., a distant ancestor)
- Remains of someone unrelated to you
- Remains of individuals who gave consent for display
- Remains of individuals whose descendants gave consent for their display
- None of the above

Question 3. Comments/clarifications (optional): ________________________

Question 4. For which reason(s) is it acceptable to display human remains?

- For educational purposes
- For any reason
- Human remains should *not* be displayed for any reason
- Other (please specify in Question 5)

Question 5. If other, please specify (optional):

Comment: ____

Question 1 Results

For Question 1 (multiple-choice), the majority (n=60; 49%) of participants responded that human remains *should* be displayed in museums (Table 4; Figure 17). Fifty-seven (47%) answered "it depends," and five (4%) believed that museums should never display human remains.

Table 4. Question 1: "Should Museums Display Human Remains?"

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=122)
Yes	60	49%
Depends on…	57	47%
No, never	5	4%
Total	**122**	**100%**

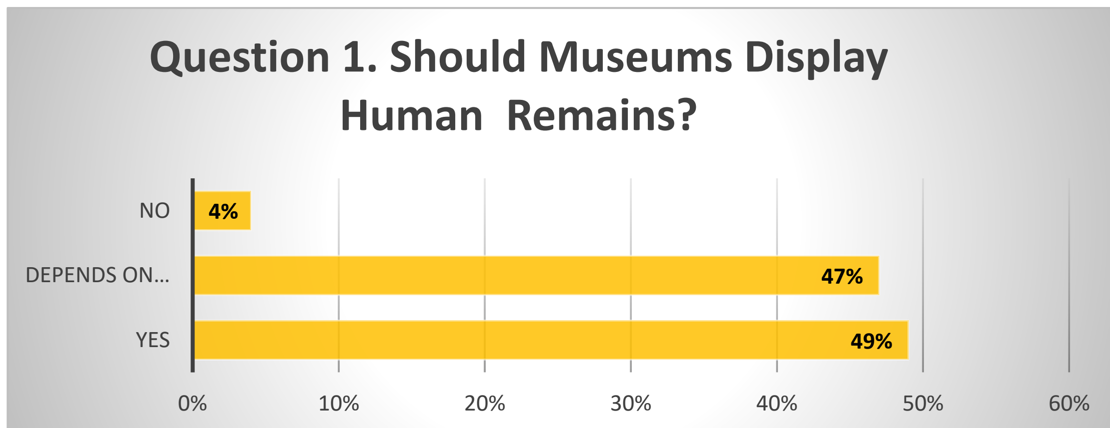


Figure 17. Responses to Question 1: "Should Museums Display Human Remains?"

Question 2 Results

Question 2 (multiple-choice) asked if certain variables relating to human remains affect whether they are appropriate to display. Respondents were asked to mark all "types" of human remains that they considered acceptable for display. They were able to choose as many options as they wished, so responses were not mutually exclusive. The responses are ranked in descending order, from most to least acceptable for display (Table 5; Figure 18).

Table 5. Question 2: "Are the Following Remains Acceptable to Display?"

Category of Remains	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=122)
Individual consent	107	88%
Mummified	95	78%
Bones	90	74%
Salvage excavation	89	73%
>100 yrs old	86	70%
Descendant consent	86	70%
Research excavation	83	68%
Unknown	78	64%
Known/named individual	71	58%
Historical/famous individual	70	57%
Cremated	68	56%
Unrelated to self	63	52%
Distant relation	61	50%
Violent death	57	47%
<100 yrs old	55	45%
Close relation	50	41%
None of the above	2	2%
Total	**122**	**N/A**

Note: Percent of Total column does not equal 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

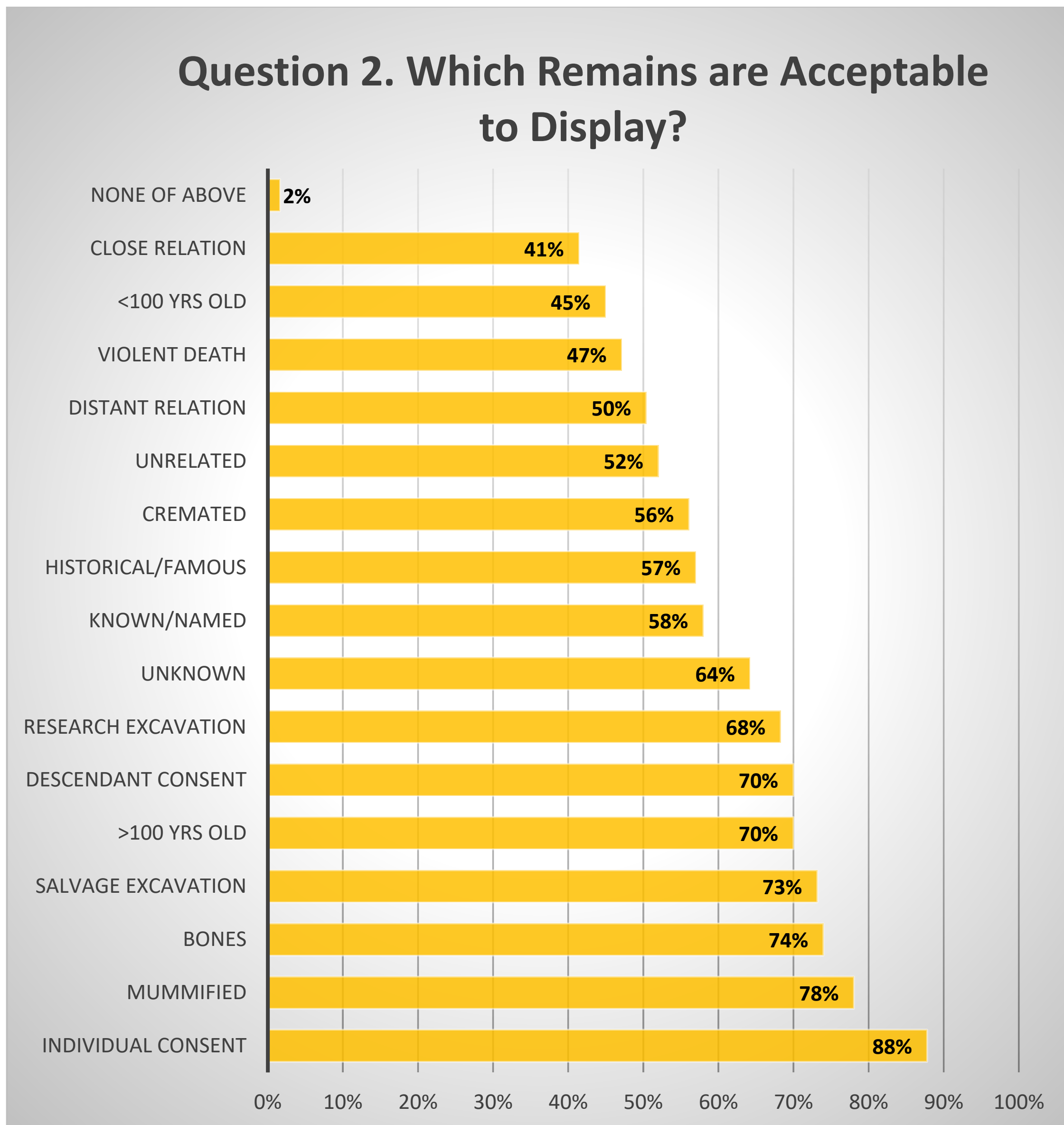


Figure 18. Question 2: "Are the Following Remains Acceptable to Display?"

The majority of the 122 responses were favorable to display. Almost all participants (n=107; 88%) answered that it is acceptable to display remains of individuals who consented to display. Ninety-five (78%) stated that mummified remains are acceptable to display, and 90 (74%) had no issue with displaying human bones. Eighty-nine (73%) agreed with the exhibition of archaeological human remains that would have been destroyed if they were not excavated. Remains of individuals who died over 100 years ago, and whose descendants gave consent for display were each identified as appropriate for display by 86 respondents (70%). Archaeological remains that were

excavated for research purposes were deemed acceptable for display by 83 participants (68%), and remains of unknown/anonymous individuals by 78 (64%). Known/named individuals and historical/famous figures were considered slightly less acceptable, with 71 (58%) and 70 (57%) respondents, respectively, agreeing with their display. Sixty-eight participants (56%) identified cremated remains, and 63 (52%) identified remains of individuals who were unrelated to themselves as acceptable for display. Distant relations were deemed acceptable for display by 61 respondents (50%). Fewer than half of the respondents agreed with the exhibition of people who suffered a violent death (n=57; 47%), individuals who died less than 100 years ago (n=55; 45%), or a close relative (n=50; 41%). Only two responses (2%) indicated that none of the above human remains should be displayed in museums.

Question 3 Results

For Question 3 (optional), participants were given an open-ended opportunity to clarify their answers to Question 2, regarding whether it is acceptable to display various "types" of human remains. A total of 67 comments were collected from 54 participants, and were categorized into themes. Some comments were applicable to more than one of the survey themes; thus, responses are not mutually exclusive.

Just under half of the respondents (n=25; 46%) used the open-ended question as another opportunity to stress the importance of consent for the display of human remains—whether individual consent, or from descendants (Table 6; Figure 19). Ten (19%) identified that ethical display depends on the purpose of the exhibit (e.g., educational). Six (11%) stated that they do not believe human remains merit special treatment. Five respondents (9%) identified respectful display as a governing principle, and another five (9%) believed that consent should be required to display recent human remains. Very ancient remains (e.g., human ancestors) were deemed acceptable to display without consent by three respondents (6%). Two participants (4%) stated that whether it is ethical to display human remains depends on the circumstances of their collection. Another two comments (4%) identified replicas as an acceptable alternative to displaying real human remains, and two more (4%) listed photographs as an alternative.

Table 6. Question 3: "Open Comments Regarding Acceptable Display."

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=54)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Consent (individual or descendants)	25	46%	20%
Depends on purpose	10	19%	8%
Does not matter	6	11%	5%
Recent, with consent	5	9%	4%
Respectful display	5	9%	4%
Human ancestors acceptable	3	6%	2%
Ethical procurement	2	4%	2%
Photos acceptable	2	4%	2%
Replicas acceptable	2	4%	2%
Distant relatives acceptable	1	2%	1%
Close relative, with consent	1	2%	1%
Never degrading	1	2%	1%
Never violent death	1	2%	1%
Scientific, with consent	1	2%	1%
Unidentified, with consent	1	2%	1%
Display not useful	1	2%	1%
Total	**67**	**N/A**	**44%**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% since responses were not mutually exclusive.

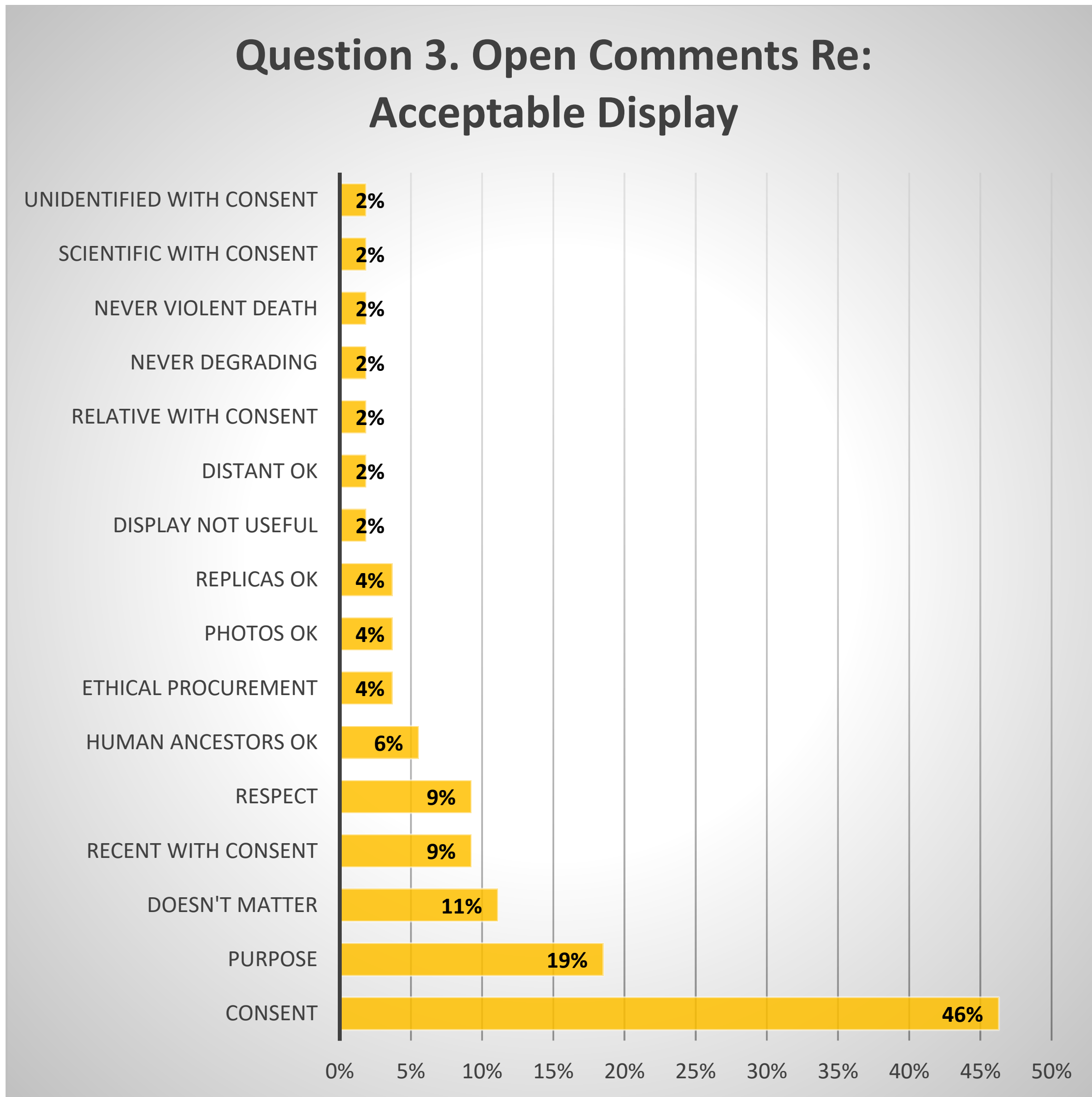


Figure 19. Question 3: "Open Comments Regarding Acceptable Display."

One participant (2%) made each of the following statements: 1) distant relatives are acceptable for display; 2) close relatives are acceptable to exhibit if they provided consent; 3) display should never be sensational or degrading; 4) exhibits should never include bodies of people who suffered a violent death; 5) scientific displays are acceptable with consent; and 6) unidentified remains may be exhibited with local stakeholders' consent. Finally, one individual (2%) did not believe it is ever useful to display human remains.

Question 4 Results

Question 4 was mandatory, asking for which reason(s) it is acceptable to display human remains. Participants were permitted to choose more than one response, but none did, so results are mutually exclusive. Ninety-seven participants (80%) responded that it is ethical to display human remains for educational purposes (Table 7; Figure 20). Ten (8%) stated that exhibition of human remains is justifiable for any reason. Two (2%) believed it is never ethical to display human remains, and thirteen (11%) identified "other" display purposes as acceptable.

Table 7. Question 4: "For What Reason(s) Is Display Acceptable?"

Reason(s) for Display	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=122)
Education	97	80%
Any reason	10	8%
Never display	2	2%
Other	13	11%
Total	**122**	**101%**

Note: Percent of Total column does not equal 100% due to rounding error.

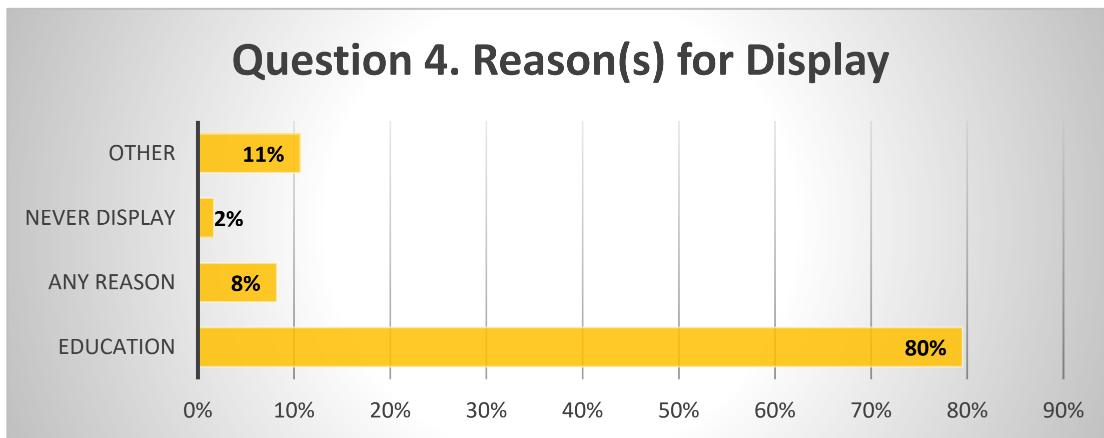


Figure 20. Question 4: "For What Reason(s) Is Display Acceptable?"

Question 5 Results

Question 5 (optional) asked participants to identify "other" reasons it is acceptable to exhibit human remains, and/or to expand on their response to Question 4. Seventeen participants provided comments. Three of these (18%) noted that medical displays are

acceptable (Table 8; Figure 21). Another three (18%) identified exhibition for religious purposes as acceptable. Three participants (18%) noted that human remains should never be displayed for entertainment or sensationalism. Two (12%) clarified that displays for educational purposes are acceptable if the individual gave consent, and another two (12%) stated that display for any purpose is acceptable with consent. One participant each (6%) identified the following as acceptable: 1) display for artistic purposes; 2) display that reinforces a narrative; and 3) displays that recall unpleasant events. One individual (6%) stated that it is never acceptable to display human remains for any purpose.

Table 8. Question 5: "Other Reason(s) for Display."

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=17)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Medical displays	3	18%	2%
Religious displays	3	18%	2%
Never for entertainment	3	18%	2%
Education, with consent	2	12%	2%
Any, with consent	2	12%	2%
Artistic	1	6%	1%
Reinforce narrative	1	6%	1%
Remember unpleasant events	1	6%	1%
Never display	1	6%	1%
Total	**17**	**100%**	**14%**

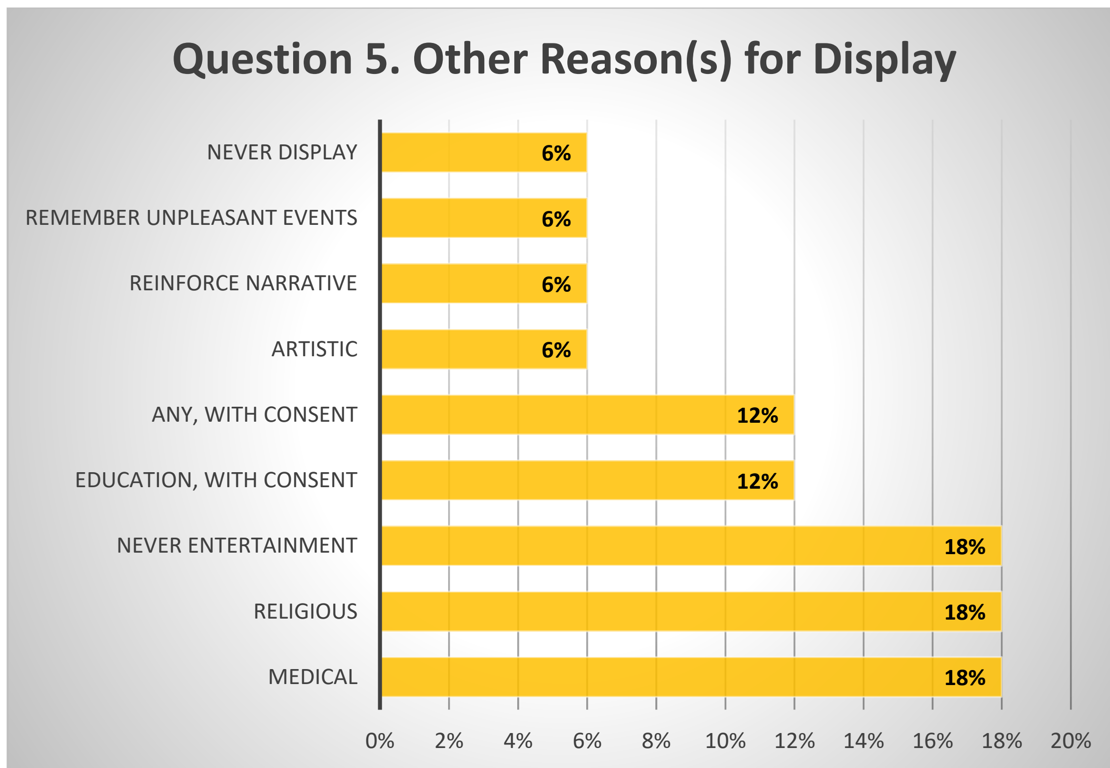


Figure 21. Question 5: "Other Reason(s) for Display."

B. Are Respectful Display Methods Important?

Questions 6 and 7 focused on whether it is important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums. For Question 6, participants were asked directly if it is important to make efforts to exhibit human remains in a respectful way. The choice to add sub-text to Question 6 "remains were/are people" was made based on preliminary surveys, in which respondents exclusively provided this justification for their answers. Question 7 gave the opportunity to clarify responses to Question 6.

Question 6. Is it important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums?

- ☐ Yes – remains were/are people
- ☐ Yes – other reason
- ☐ No – remains are objects we can learn from
- ☐ No – other reason

Question 7. If “other”, please specify: ______________________________

Question 6 Results

Question 6 was required; thus, percentages are reported relative to all 122 survey participants. The majority (n=107; 88%) answered that it is important to display human remains in a respectful way because they were/are people (Table 9; Figure 22). Seven (6%) stated that it is not important to display human remains respectfully because they are scientific objects that we may learn from. Six (5%) stated that it is important to display human remains respectfully for “other” reasons. Two participants (2%) did not believe it is important to display human remains with respect, for “other” reasons.

Table 9. Question 6: “Is Respectful Display Important?”

Is Respectful Display Important?	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=122)
Yes: remains were/are people	107	88%
No: remains are objects	7	6%
Yes: other reason	6	5%
No: other reason	2	2%
Total	**122**	**100%**

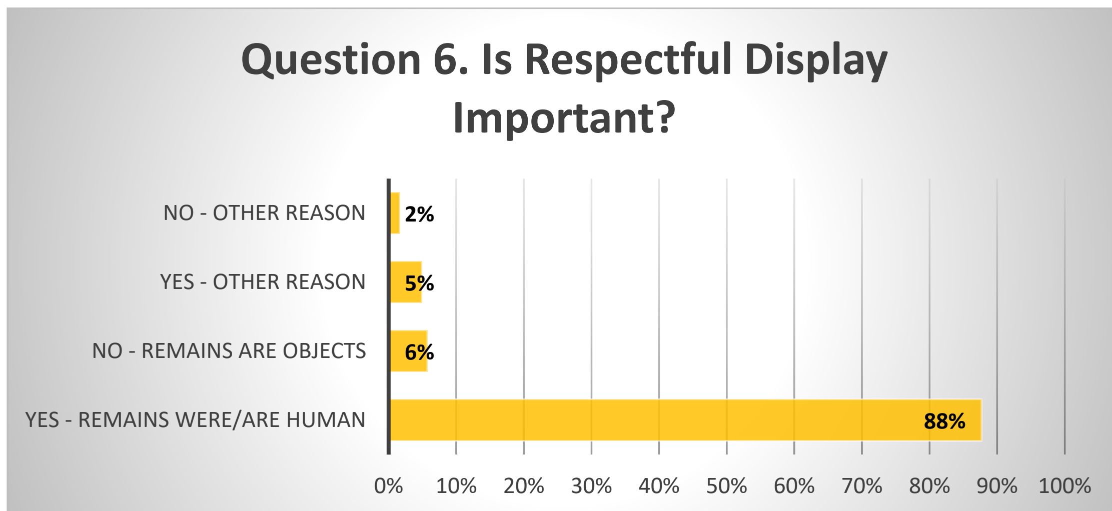


Figure 22. Question 6: “Is Respectful Display Important?”

Question 7 Results

For Question 7 (optional, open-ended), respondents were given the opportunity to clarify their answers about why human remains should or should not be displayed in a respectful way, and/or to provide further reasons for respectful display. Nine participants provided answers for this question. Four (44%) identified that respectful display is important to show respect for family members or the cultural group of the deceased (Table 10; Figure 23). Two (22%) stated that it is important to respect the wishes of the deceased or their cultural group. One respondent (11%) believed it is important that displays demonstrate proper/respectful handling of scientific objects, and two (22%) argued that it is never acceptable to display human remains.

Table 10. Question 7: "Other Reason for/against Respectful Display.

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=9)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Respect for family/culture	4	44%	3%
Respect wishes of individual/ cultural group	2	22%	2%
Demonstrate proper handling of scientific objects	1	11%	1%
N/A – Display not acceptable	2	22%	2%
Total	**9**	**100%**	**7%**

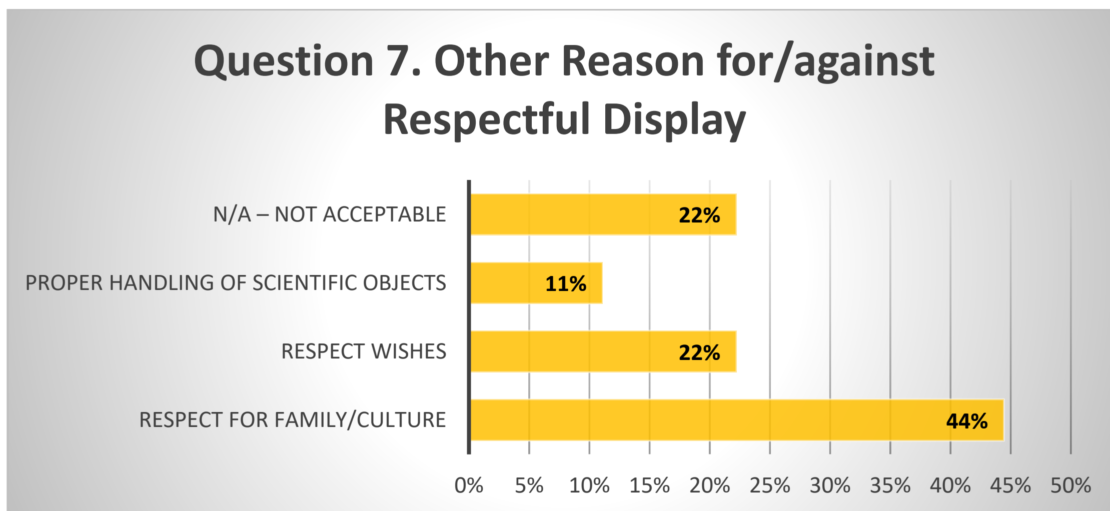


Figure 23. Question 7: "Other Reason for/against Respectful Display."

C. How Can Human Remains be Displayed Respectfully?

Questions 8 through 10 focused on identifying respectful display methods. For these questions, respondents were given a list of exhibition methods that are intended to demonstrate respect. Question 8 asked them to identify which methods they believed to be respectful. Question 9 (optional) gave participants an opportunity to identify additional methods of respectfully displaying human remains that were not included in the list. Question 10 asked which of the respectful display methods noted in Questions 8-9 is/are the *most* important.

Question 8. What are respectful ways to display human remains? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Dark/quiet space
- ☐ Given privacy/partly covered
- ☐ Covering remains with the option to view them fully
- ☐ Humanized (with personal details/pronouns)
- ☐ Reminding visitors they are viewing a person
- ☐ Mimicking burial/discovery context
- ☐ Following cultural protocols of the deceased
- ☐ Scientific/clinical displays
- ☐ N/A – it is not important to display human remains in any particular way
- ☐ Other

Question 9. If other, please specify: ___________________________________

Question 10. Which method(s) is/are most important?: __________________

Question 8 Results

Question 8 was mandatory, so percentages are reported relative to all 122 respondents. However, results are not mutually exclusive since participants were asked to mark as many options as they agreed with. Ninety-nine respondents (81%) identified following the cultural protocols of the deceased as respectful (Table 11; Figure 24). Other popular methods were reminding visitors of the humanity of the remains (n=91; 75%), scientific/clinical displays (n=79; 65%), humanizing the remains (n=70; 57%), and

mimicking the burial or discovery context (n=52; 43%). Covering remains but allowing visitors the option to view them fully was identified as respectful by 38 participants (31%), while displaying remains in a dark/quiet space was chosen by 35 respondents (29%). Fifteen participants (12%) chose "other" method of respectful display (see Question 9), while six (5%) stated that respectful display is not important.

Table 11. Question 8: "What are Respectful Ways to Display Human Remains?"

Display Methods	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=122)
Cultural protocols	99	81%
Remind of humanity	91	75%
Scientific/clinical	79	65%
Humanized	70	57%
Mimic burial/discovery	52	43%
Hidden/option to view	38	31%
Dark/quiet	35	29%
Privacy	27	22%
Other	15	12%
Not important	6	5%
Total	**512**	**N/A**

Note: Percent of Total column does not equal 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

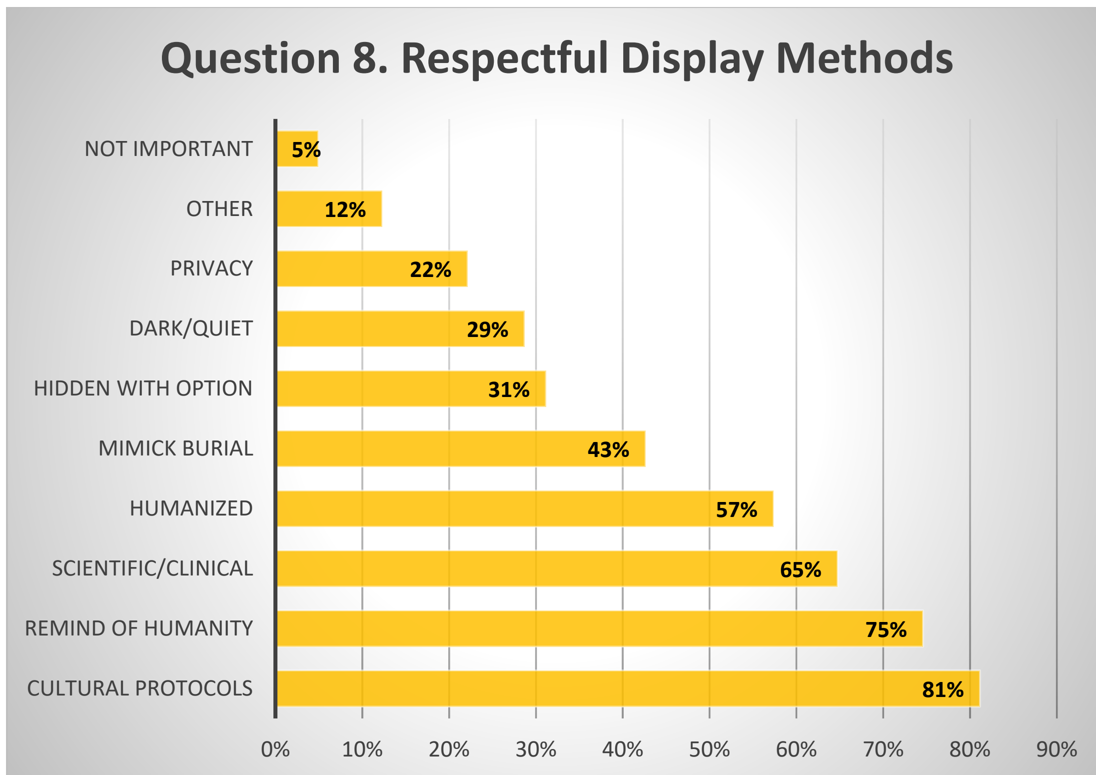


Figure 24. Question 8: "What are Respectful Ways to Display Human Remains?"

Question 9 Results

Question 9 (optional) gave visitors an open-ended opportunity to identify additional methods of respectfully displaying human remains that were not included in Question 8. Twenty-two responses were collected from 21 participants (responses were not mutually exclusive). Themes identified in the comments are listed in Table 11 and Figure 25. The most common answer was to warn visitors of the presence of remains (n=5; 24%). Three respondents (14%) noted that displays should respect the values and wishes of the deceased, when known. Two (10%) noted that selfies and other forms of photography should be forbidden out of respect. One participant (5%) each identified of the following methods: 1) displaying remains close to their recovery location (i.e., in their home country or territory); 2) displaying replicas rather than real remains; 3) including grave goods in displays; 4) ensuring remains are properly articulated; 5) displaying remains in a "peaceful area"; and 6) respecting remains as scientific objects.

Table 12. Question 9: "Other Respectful Display Methods."

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=21)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Warning / signage	5	24%	4%
Follow individual's values / wishes (if known)	3	14%	2%
Prohibit photography / selfies	2	10%	2%
Close to recovery location	1	5%	1%
Depends on cultural context (deceased and audience)	1	5%	1%
Depends on purpose of display	1	5%	1%
Use replicas instead	1	5%	1%
Include grave goods	1	5%	1%
Properly articulated	1	5%	1%
Peaceful area	1	5%	1%
Respected as objects	1	5%	1%
Scientific display respectful if scientific purpose	1	5%	1%
Scientific only with consent	1	5%	1%
Only display at funeral	1	5%	1%
N/A - Not acceptable to display	1	5%	1%
Total	**22**	**N/A**	**17%**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

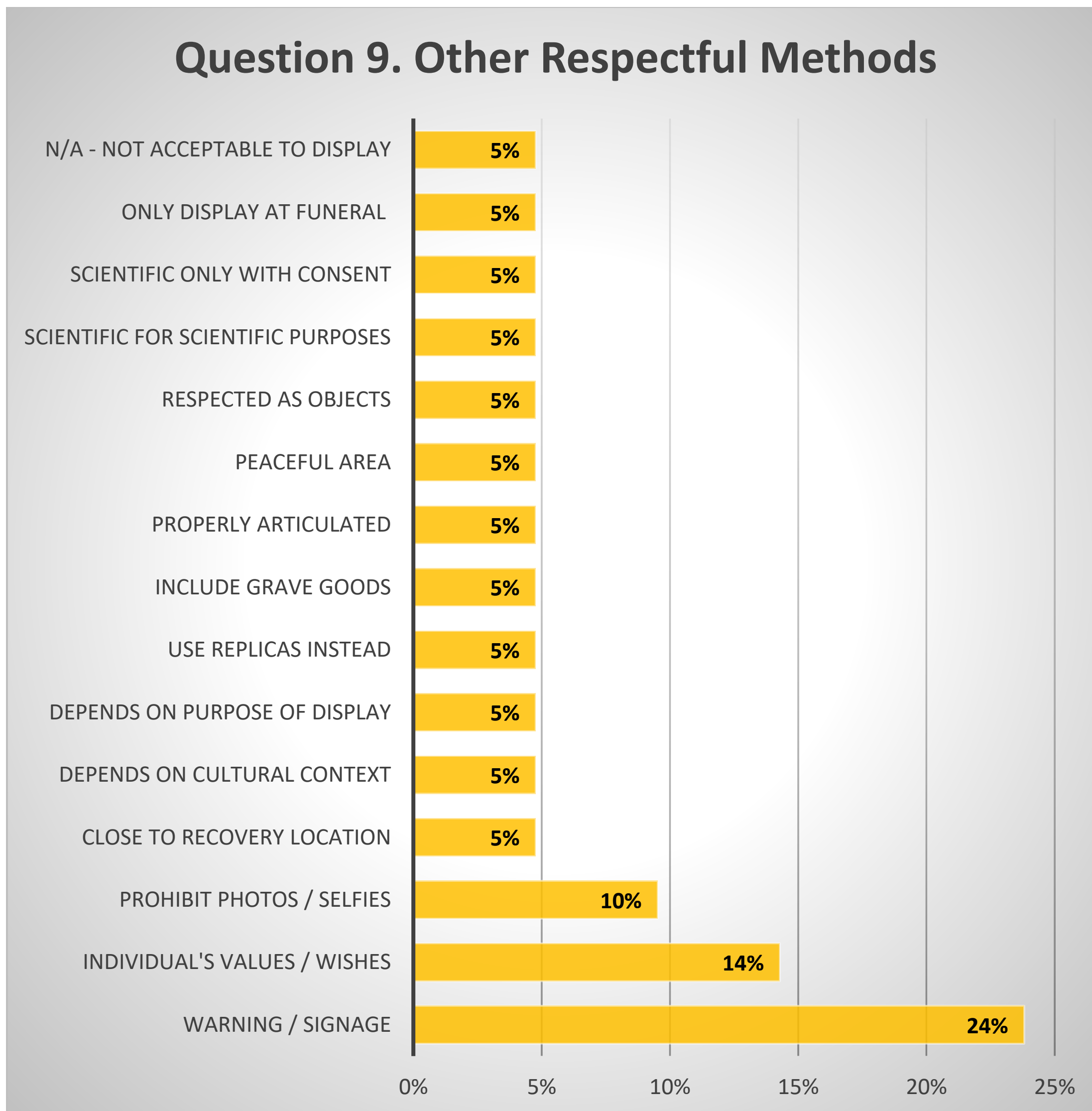


Figure 25. Question 9: "Other Respectful Display Methods."

In addition, one respondent (5%) each identified the following provisions for respectful display: 1) respectful display depends on the culture of both the deceased and the audience; 2) what is respectful depends on the purpose of the display; 3) scientific display is respectful only if the purpose of the display is scientific; and 4) scientific display is respectful only with consent from the deceased. One participant (5%) noted that it is only respectful to display human remains in funerary contexts, and another (5%) that it is never acceptable to display human remains.

Question 10 Results

Question 10 (optional) gave participants an open-ended opportunity to identify which of the display methods listed in Question 8 (and 9) is/are *most* important. A total of 111 participants provided 181 responses to the question. Respondents were able to list multiple answers; thus, responses were not mutually exclusive. The display method that was identified as most important by the highest number of respondents (n=53; 48%) was following cultural protocols of the deceased, when known (Table 13; Figure 26). Humanizing methods were particularly popular: using personal pronouns was chosen as the most important by 42 participants (38%), and explicitly reminding visitors of the remains' humanity by 31 (28%).

Table 13. Question 10: "Most Respectful Display Method(s)."

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=111)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Cultural protocols	53	48%	43%
Humanizing pronouns	42	38%	34%
Reminding of humanity	31	28%	25%
Scientific	19	17%	16%
Option to view	12	11%	10%
Privacy	9	8%	7%
Mimicking burial/ discovery context	7	6%	6%
Dark quiet	5	5%	4%
NA - Display not acceptable	2	2%	2%
Replicas instead	1	1%	1%
Total	**181**	**N/A**	**91%**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

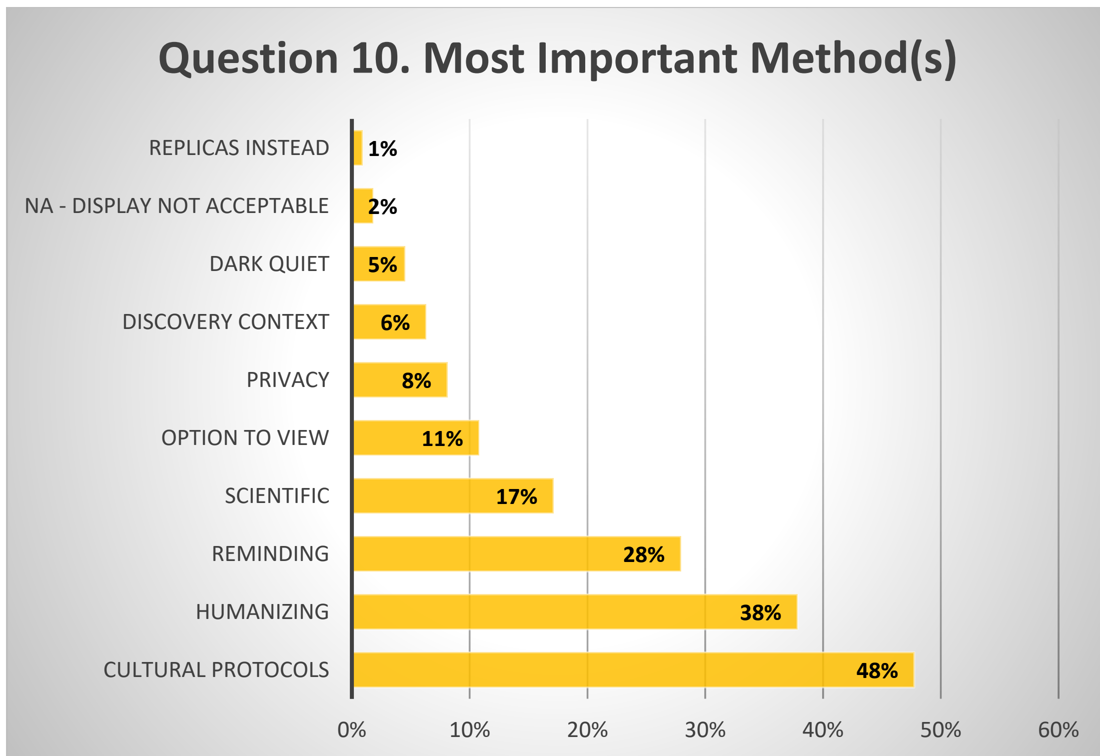


Figure 26. *Question 10: "Most Respectful Display Method(s)."*

Nineteen respondents (17%) identified scientific or clinical displays as respectful, while 12 (11%) believed giving visitors the option to view remains is important. Providing privacy for remains was identified as important by nine participants (8%). Seven (6%) noted that recreating the burial or discovery context is an important way to show respect, and five (5%) identified dark/quiet spaces as important. One respondent (1%) added that the most important way of exhibiting respect is to display replicas rather than real human remains. Finally, two respondents (2%) stated that display is never acceptable.

D. Open Comments

Question 11 gave participants the opportunity to make final comments about the display of human remains in museums. This question was optional, and visitors could provide more than one answer; thus, responses were not mutually exclusive. A total of 58 responses were collected from 45 participants. These were coded into three general categories relating to: 1) display methods; 2) criteria for appropriate display; and 3) general comments.

Question 11. Do you have further comments about if/how human remains should be displayed?

Comment: ____

Question 11 Results

Of the 58 responses to Question 11, the majority (n=34; 76%) related to display methods (Table 14). The second most popular category (n=13; 29%) focused on criteria that determine whether display is acceptable. Finally, eleven participants (24%) chose to provide general thoughts about the ethical display of human remains.

Table 14. Question 11: Open Comments.

Comment Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=45)	Percent of Total (n=122)
Display Methods			
Respect	16	36%	13%
Warning	5	11%	4%
Not sensationalized	4	9%	3%
Humanizing	2	4%	2%
Reminding of humanity	2	4%	2%
Censor for children	1	2%	1%
Replicas	1	2%	1%
Transparency	1	2%	1%
Do no harm	1	2%	1%
Be thoughtful, but body is empty shell	1	2%	1%
Total	**34**	**76%**	**28%**
Display Criteria			
Consent	5	11%	4%
Educational	2	4%	2%
Ancient more acceptable	2	4%	2%
Soft tissue more disturbing	1	2%	1%
Unsure about close relations	1	2%	1%
Display to confront mortality	1	2%	1%
Violent death unacceptable	1	2%	1%
Total	**13**	**29%**	**11%**
General Comments			
Balancing act	7	16%	6%
Thinking about this now	3	7%	2%
Trust museum	1	2%	1%
Total	**11**	**24%**	**9%**
Total Responses	**58**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

Respectful Display Methods

The majority of responses (n=34; 76%) related to appropriate display methods. Of these, 16 (36%) reinforced the importance of showing respect for human remains—both in general and when they are displayed. For example:

> Participant 76: "With respect and acknowledgement that the remains were once a human person, no matter how old, anonymous, or deteriorated. People in history lived and struggled and fought and died much in the same way we do today. In most cases it is unlikely the deceased ever imagined their remains would end up on display, and display and research need not be necessarily linked in the museum setting. Remains that have been moved or stolen from their native cultures ought to be returned in most cases ([excepting] places where art and cultural remains are being actively destroyed)."

Five participants (11%) reiterated that visitors should be warned before encountering human remains. Four (9%) spoke against sensationalistic and/or "graphic" displays of human remains:

> Participant 28: "I've seen the Body Worlds touring exhibition in person and it's pretty vulgar. There's a thin veneer of educational material and a lot of PT Barnum style freak show."

> Participant 96: "Graphic quality of the remains should be minimized, again, respectful."

The importance of humanizing remains, and explicitly reminding visitors of the humanity of remains on display were each emphasized by two participants (4%):

> Participant 45: "To me, humanizing the remains is the most important part. It's a reminder that history isn't made by things and places, it's made by people."

> Participant 23: "I think consent is one of the most important parts of using a body posthumously. I don't have an issue with shows like Body Works [sic], however I do have issues with display of remains from archaeological contexts. Despite my disapproval I know that such displays are going to happen regardless so I think it's important to remind people that they are viewing an actual human and not just another artifact."

One participant (2%) each stated that displays should: 1) be censored for children; 2) use replicas rather than real remains; 3) be transparent (re: consent, or inability to obtain consent); and 4) do no harm. One respondent (2%) noted that displays should be

thoughtful, but that ultimately it does not matter what happens to bodies after death, as they are empty shells.

Display Criteria

The second open comment category relates to criteria for appropriate display. Five comments (11%) stressed the importance of consent for display. Two (4%) reiterated that display is acceptable for educational purposes, and another two (4%) stated that display is more acceptable for ancient human remains than recent remains.

A number of comments focused on visitor discomfort. One individual (2%) noted that soft tissue is more disturbing than other forms of human remains, and another (2%) stated that displaying individuals who died violently is unacceptable:

> Participant 34: "Clearly warn visitors (especially children or sensitive individuals) that the museum / exhibit / room / case contains human remains, in particular if those human remains are not in mummified conditions but embalmed / preserved in ways that make the human [remains] appear still fresh / bloody (ex. medical exhibits, under Formaldehyde etc.)"

> Participant 32: "… if it's a violent death, I [am] really not interested in it... natural death [is] so much easier to digest."

One respondent (2%) noted that the display of human remains can encourage visitors to confront their own mortality. Another was unsure about the display of close relatives:

> Participant 113: "Interesting, I fully believed that it would be okay to display human remains, but I stumbled on the 'Remains of someone closely related to you.'"

General Comments

The third category of comments was general. Seven participants (16%) remarked on the ethical dilemma museum professionals face in balancing their responsibility to share information with the public with their ethical obligations to the remains in their care. These respondents noted the importance of respecting the wishes of originating cultures, when known. However, for uncontested remains, one individual remarked:

> Participant 112: "[Displaying remains] in a respectful manner to the deceased['s] culture is probably the best way to learn about the deceased['s] person/biology and culture at the same time."

Three participants (7%) stated that the survey inspired them to think more deeply about these issues:

> Participant 3: "This is something I haven't thought much about before now. Since remains in museum[s] [have] been something I have always known, I have never thought anything of it but thinking about it more critically now poses some issues for me. Particularly with culturally significant burial practices and sites. And the impact that disturbing these sites has."

> Participant 32: "I have such mixed feelings about the questioned asked! I had to go over and over the list to answer what I felt was correct for me."

Finally, one respondent (2%) stated that they have faith in museums to always be respectful.

Demographic Data

Participants were asked six demographic questions. Specifically, they were asked to identify their: 1) cultural affiliation, 2) gender, 3) age, 4) spiritual beliefs, 5) education level, and 6) familiarity with Indigenous repatriation movements. The full list of demographic questions can be found in Appendix A. Results are summarized below, in Table 15.

Table 15. Demographic Summary.

Broad Culture	Percent (n=122)	Gender	Percent (n=122)	Age Group	Percent (n=122)
N. American	74%	Woman	57%	70+	3%
European	43%	Man	37%	60-69	11%
Asian	14%	Other	5%	50-59	10%
Indigenous	5%	**Total**	**99%**	40-49	20%
African	2%			30-39	30%
S. American	2%			20-29	24%
Other	4%			10-19	3%
Total	**N/A**			**Total**	**101%**

Spiritual Affiliation	Percent (n=122)	Education Level	Percent (n=122)	Familiar with Repatriation?	Percent (n=122)
Atheist	34%	Bachelor's	43%	Yes, very	25%
Agnostic	23%	Graduate	25%	Somewhat	52%
None	8%	Other post-secondary	25%	No	23%
Spiritual	7%	Secondary	7%	**Total**	**100%**
Catholic	5%	Elementary	0%		
Protestant	5%	**Total**	**100%**		
Christian	4%				
Buddhist	2%				
Humanist	2%				
Science	2%				
Neo-Pagan	1%				
Jewish	1%				
Animist	1%				
Deist	1%				
Total	**N/A**				

Note: Percent columns do not always total 100% due to rounding error and non-mutually exclusive response options.

The majority of survey respondents were North American (n=90; 74%). Most of the North Americans (n=82; 70%) self-identified as Canadian, many of whom also identified European ancestry. Indigenous groups represented included Haida, Squamish, and Mi'kmaq. Respondents were mostly women (n=70; 57%), and 74% (n=89) were aged 20-49 (54% were 20-39). The majority (n=41; 34%) identified as Atheist, followed by Agnostic (n=28; 23%), and "no spiritual beliefs" (n=10; 8%). Almost all respondents (n=113; 93%) had some post-secondary education, including 43% (n=52) with a Bachelor's degree and 25% (n=31) with a graduate (Master's or Ph.D.) degree. Participants were generally familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements. Twenty-five percent (n=31) were "very" familiar, and another 52% (n=63) were "somewhat" familiar.

Demographic Trends in Ethical Beliefs

To assess potential connections between the above demographic variables and opinions about the ethical display of human remains, I looked to the demographic information of participants with the most extreme opposing beliefs. These are: Group A) five participants who responded in Question 1 that human remains should *never* be displayed; and Group B) seven who stated in Question 6 that showing respect for human remains is not important because human remains are objects. In Question 3: Comments/Clarifications, participants from Group A made it clear that they attach meaning to human remains after death, noting that they should be treated with respect, and that it is unethical/immoral to display them. Respondents from Group B did not attach meaning to what happens to the body after death.

As Table 16 shows, the most notable commonalities among participants from Group A were that they identified as: 1) Canadian/Euro-Canadian (n=4; 80%), 2) women (n=4; 80%), 3) at least somewhat familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements (n=4; 80%), and 4) religious/spiritual (n=3; 60%). All five participants in this group had post-secondary education, and a relatively high percentage also held graduate degrees (n=2; 40%). One (20%) noted that he studied Cultural Anthropology—a field known for critiquing colonialism and the Western concept of "objective science"—which museums have historically been linked to. Although not all participants held the *same* spiritual beliefs—one identified as Deist[10], one as a mix of Protestant and spiritual, and the third

[10] The belief in one god who created but does not influence events in the universe (Garner 2016: 904).

as spiritual/energy-based—the high degree of spirituality among these participants is remarkable since 65% (n=79) of the total participants surveyed were non-spiritual. There were no notable trends in age within this group.

Table 16. Demographic Information re: Participants with Opposing Views.

Broad Culture	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**	**Gender**	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**	**Age Group**	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**
Canada	80%	86%	Woman	80%	29%	70+	0%	0%
Europe	60%	71%	Man	20%	71%	60-69	20%	14%
Total	**N/A**	**N/A**	**Total**	**100%**	**100%**	50-59	40%	0%
						40-49	20%	57%
						30-39	0%	14%
						20-29	20%	0%
						10-19	0%	14%
						Total	**100%**	**99%**

Spiritual Affiliation	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**	**Education**	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**	**Familiar with Repatriation?**	**A (n=5)**	**B (n=7)**
None/ Atheist	20%	100%	Graduate	40%	14%	Yes, very	20%	14%
Agnostic	20%	0%	Other post-secondary	40%	14%	Somewhat	60%	57%
Spiritual	40%	0%	Bachelor	20%	57%	No	20%	29%
Protestant	20%	0%	Secondary	0%	14%	**Total**	**100%**	**100%**
Deist	20%	0%	Elementary					
Total	**N/A**	**100%**	**Total**	**100%**	**99%**			

Note: Percent columns do not always total 100% due to rounding error and non-mutually exclusive response options.

In Group B, who viewed human remains as objects, the most notable demographic similarity was that all seven participants (100%) were either Atheist or held no spiritual beliefs. Most were Canadian/Euro-Canadian (n=6; 86%) men (n=5; 71%), and aged 40-49 (n=4; 57%). Seventy-one percent (n=5) were at least somewhat familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements. Most (n=6; 86%) had some post-secondary education, one of whom held a Bachelor’s degree in Emergency Medicine—a field that likely requires a high degree of comfort with human remains. One (14%) held a graduate degree.

In this sample group, highly educated, Canadian women, and those who believe in some form of spirituality, were more likely than others to value the respectful treatment of human remains in museums. Men aged 40-49 were more likely to view human remains as objects, and to place little importance on their special treatment. The strongest relationship was between spirituality and ethical beliefs.

Chapter Summary

Overall, the North American surveys have shown that exhibiting human remains is valued by the public. The results also indicate that many are aware of ethical issues relating to consent. Respondents identified the importance of consent from either the deceased individual or their descendants/culturally affiliated groups. Display methods that follow the cultural protocols of the deceased and humanize remains were identified as particularly important and respectful.

Sources of discomfort with human remains primarily related to visitor sensitivities. Proximity of remains to the respondent in relatedness and in time were sources of concern, and some respondents advocated for signage warning visitors of the presence of human remains. Signage not only allows visitors to prepare themselves to view remains respectfully, but it may also be used as a mechanism of choice for visitors who wish to avoid viewing human remains.

The majority of participants were Canadian women, of European descent, aged 20-49 (with most belonging to the 20-39 age group). Most identified as Atheist, Agnostic, or non-spiritual, and almost all had post-secondary education. The survey respondents were generally at least somewhat knowledgeable about Indigenous repatriation movements. Preliminary analyses of demographic information relative to survey responses suggest that women, highly educated individuals, and those who believe in some form of spirituality may be more likely than others to be concerned with the respectful treatment of human remains in museums—the strongest relationship being between spirituality and ethical beliefs.

Chapter 4. New Methods of Respectfully Displaying Human Remains

This chapter focuses on innovative, experimental methods of displaying human remains that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased. Its purpose is to provide context for my third research question: how can uncontested human remains be displayed “with respect”?

I begin by reviewing events in the United Kingdom in the early 2000s that led to a flurry of both public and professional/academic conversations about the ethical display of human remains. I then discuss how, as a result of this discourse, some museum professionals—particularly in England—began to experiment with new, more “respectful” methods of exhibiting uncontested archaeological human remains. I define three general approaches: 1) creating “respectful encounters” with the remains; 2) emphasizing the remains’ humanity; and 3) generating dialogue and introspection about their display. I then summarize public and professional responses to such displays, where available, and discuss what may be learned from the case studies. I also identify where more information is needed about visitor/public opinions—which was used to inform my research design in Chapter 5.

I focus on events and publications from the United Kingdom since, globally, ethical debate has been most prominent there. The majority of this chapter’s case studies come from England, where experimental display approaches have been most popular. However, these practices have also been used elsewhere in Western Europe and Anglo-North America, so non-English examples are also included.

Ethical Discourse in the United Kingdom

A number of significant events in the United Kingdom led to both professional and public conversations about the ethical display of human remains in museums. These events, and resulting legislation and guidelines, are outlined below.

The first event was then-Prime Minister Tony Blair’s 1996 commitment to assist in the repatriation of Aboriginal ancestral remains from the United Kingdom to Australia (Swain 2013:26). This was followed by the “Alder Hey scandal” in 2001, when a report revealed

that the organs of hundreds of deceased children had been removed and kept by hospitals without their families' knowledge or consent—causing public outrage (Royal Liverpool Children's Inquiry 2001). These two events, combined with academics' increasing exposure to repatriation movements, and public encounters with "Body Worlds" and copycat exhibitions, popularized discussion of the ethics of holding and displaying institutionalized human remains in the United Kingdom (Swain 2013:26).

Ensuing discourse in both public and professional spheres led to new legislation and the publication of a series of reports and ethical guidelines pertaining to the treatment and display of human remains. These are: the *Human Tissue Act* (Human Tissue Authority 2004); "The Palmer Report" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS] 2003), "Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums" (DCMS 2005); and "Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England" (Historic England 2005; Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England [APABE] 2017).

The *Human Tissue Act* (Human Tissue Authority 2004) allowed nine national museums to de-accession human remains less than 1,000 years old (other museums were already allowed to do so). The *Act* also required a license for the storage and display of human remains less than 100 years old from the Human Tissue Authority: a government body that regulates organizations that remove, retain, use, and display human tissues. However, the *Human Tissue Act* did not include provisions for the display of human remains.

The Palmer Report (DCMS 2003) recognized the importance of displaying human remains to educate, encourage reflection, and sometimes even to shock—if remains are displayed with the intention of expressing grief, violence, or suffering. However, it also stressed that displays of human remains must have a clear interpretive purpose, and adhere to the outcomes of formative evaluations involving consultation with the public and with originating communities. In addition, it cautioned against displays intended as "gratuitous attractions" for the "morbidly curious" (DCMS 2003:Article 10.4). It advised museums to warn visitors who may not wish to see human remains, and/or to prepare those who do wish to see remains to confront them "with respect" (DCMS 2003:Article 10.5).

Following up on the recommendations of the Palmer Report, the "Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums" (DCMS 2005:13) recommended consultation and consent in dealing with human remains, but noted that the views of one group should not take priority over others. The guidelines advocated that museums should display human remains only if: 1) they make a material contribution to a particular interpretation that could not be made effectively in another way; 2) they are accompanied by sufficient explanatory material; 3) visitors are alerted and prepared to view human remains respectfully or to avoid viewing them, by placing them in a partitioned area or alcove of a gallery; and 4) the remains are properly conserved (DCMS 2005:20). The guidelines further specified that photographs for research, education, and museum use are generally acceptable, but that consultation with known descendants should be considered whenever possible (DCMS 2005:20).

The "Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England" (Historic England 2005; APABE 2017), like other guidelines, emphasized respect for human remains. However, it argued that Christian beliefs place no special importance on the body after death. Therefore, the guidelines supported the retention and display of human remains, provided that they are used for educational purposes (Historic England 2005:15).

The various guidelines introduced above are a good starting point for the consideration of the respectful treatment of human remains in museums. However, they tend to focus on visitor comfort rather than ethical obligations to the deceased. In addition, the DCMS (2005) guidelines do not give the views of originating communities more weight than the views of the general public. The failure to prioritize originating communities' views does not align with new museum ethics and decolonizing principles—which promote respect for originating communities, and acknowledge their right to speak to what is appropriate treatment of their Ancestors and cultural heritage. It is unclear if this provision was intended to allow museum professionals to exercise their own discretion when addressing the voices and claims of Indigenous descendant communities, or when addressing the claims of groups such as Neo-Pagans from England who occasionally contest the display of ancient European remains. Finally, none of the existing guidelines define what constitutes "respect." For this reason, a number of museum professionals have been inspired to experiment with new methods of displaying human remains "with respect."

Innovative Display Methods

As a result of the above discourse and publications relating to the ethical treatment of human remains in museums, some museum staff—particularly in England—have been inspired to re-evaluate their displays. In some institutions, displays of European and Egyptian human remains have been decommissioned due to their lack of compliance with new ethical guidelines. For example, the British Museum removed a skull and a child's arm bones from an exhibit in the Iron Age Gallery since an internal review judged that the remains essentially served as props to hold a priestly crown and bracelets (Joy 2014:12-13). As such, the remains did not make a "material contribution" to a particular interpretation, as advised in the DCMS (2005) guidelines.

When uncontested archaeological remains are displayed, a number of curators have experimented with methods of displaying them in new ways that are intended to demonstrate respect. These efforts may be categorized in three ways: 1) creating "respectful encounters" with the remains; 2) emphasizing the humanity of the remains; and 3) generating dialogue and introspection about the display of human remains. I describe each of these methods, and responses to them, below.

Creating Respectful Encounters

One of the most popular ways that museum professionals have sought to display human remains ethically is to create respectful encounters with the remains. This approach includes displaying remains in a separate room or alcove, behind curtains or coverings, creating darkened, quiet, "sepulchral" environments, and notifying/warning visitors of their presence. Exhibiting human remains in secluded alcoves or separate rooms has been argued to give the remains privacy by limiting the number of visitors that may view them at once (DCMS 2005:20; Museum of London Human Remains Working Group 2011:11). Likewise, covering remains with curtains or other materials has been used to provide privacy in that the remains are not on "open display" (Giles n.d.; James 2008:774; Manchester Museum 2008a,b). Notifying visitors of the presence of human remains can also create respectful encounters, in that visitors may prepare themselves to view the remains respectfully (James 2008:774; Lohman 2006:23).

A number of museums internationally have sought to provide human remains privacy and respectful environments. Notable examples include displays of Egyptian remains at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo (Kilmister 2003:65), the Egyptian Museum of Turin, Italy (Romaldi 2006), and the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. European bog bodies that are provided such an atmosphere include "Lindow Man" at the British Museum (Joy 2014), Irish examples at the National Museum of Ireland (O'Sullivan 2001), "Grauballe Man" at the Moesgaard Museum in Denmark (Brothwell 2008:227; Moesgaard Museum 2016), and Ötzi, the "Ice Man" at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy.

Emphasizing Humanity

Museum professionals have attempted to humanize remains on display in multiple ways—some as simple as including cultural context and/or personal belongings alongside the deceased (e.g., Joy 2014:13; Vaswani 2001:35). Innovative methods of humanizing remains have been used in England, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. These include: a) portraying reconstructions of the faces of the deceased (Day 2006:167; Joy 2014:10-11); b) emphasizing intimate or endearing details[11] (Burney 2005; Giles 2009:91); c) encouraging visitors to recite culturally appropriate death prayers of the deceased (Bryan 2004:15; Vaswani 2001); d) expressing time in a human vs. chronological scale (e.g., "80 generations ago" vs. "2000 years ago") (Curtis 2003:28); e) explicitly reminding visitors that the remains were once a living human being (Sue Giles, pers. comm. 2016); f) intentionally separating remains from interpretation/labels to avoid objectifying them (Brown 2011:133; Sitch 2009:52); and g) providing names and biographies of the deceased in interpretive text (Vaswani 2001:1).

Generating Public Dialogue and Encouraging Introspection

A third, less-common method of exhibiting human remains with respect is to promote introspection and reflection, by encouraging the public to engage with the ethical dilemma of whether to display human remains. Museums in Germany and England have done this by collecting visitor comments about the display of bog bodies (e.g., "Windeby

[11] Such details may include stitching, wear, and repairs in clothing, which prompt the visitor to imagine the individual's life (Giles 2009:91), and carefully prepared offerings the deceased made to the gods—which may have been more than they could afford (Burney 2005).

Girl," "Rendswühren Man," and "Österby Man" at the Archäologisches Landesmuseum, Germany [Sanders 2009:184-187], and "Lindow Man" [temporary exhibition] at the Manchester Museum [Sitch 2009:52-53]). In England, a temporary exhibition at Croydon Clocktower collected visitor feedback about the display of Egyptian mummies (Vaswani 2001:34), and Manchester Museum (2008a,b) covered Egyptian mummies in an effort to generate dialogue about the display of human remains. The Bristol Museum & Art Gallery poses ethical questions outright in interpretation accompanying Egyptian remains (Sue Giles, pers. comm. 2016).

All of these methods have been used primarily in displays of Egyptian mummies and European bog bodies. It is likely that these "types" of human remains are treated differently because they retain their soft tissues—which makes their humanity more apparent. The three approaches are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17. Respectful Display Methods.

Creating Respectful Encounters	Emphasizing Humanity	Generating Dialogue & Introspection
Privacy, e.g., - Dark/quiet area - Private room/alcove - Partially covering remains Warning visitors so they may prepare to show respect	Cultural context Facial reconstructions Intimate/personalizing details Names/biographical info Death prayers Time expressed in human generations vs. years Reminding of humanity Divorcing remains from object labels/interpretation	Encouraging engagement with ethical dilemmas through: - Visitor comments - Covering up remains - Posing ethical questions outright in interpretation

Examples of New Methods in Practice

To demonstrate these practices and public/professional responses to them, I have selected four case study exhibitions from England and Ireland that employed one or more of the above methods and generated significant discourse. These are: 1) "Lindow

Man's" permanent exhibit in the Iron Age Gallery of the British Museum; 2) the "Kingship and Sacrifice" exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland; 3) the covered Egyptian mummies at Manchester Museum; and 4) the "Ancient Egypt: Digging for Dreams" exhibition at Croydon Clocktower.

Lindow Man at the British Museum

Lindow Man's permanent exhibit in the Iron Age Gallery of the British Museum provides an early example of giving remains privacy. Lindow Man lived shortly before or after the Roman conquest what is now England, in the early AD 60s (Joy 2014:11). After his death, his body was naturally preserved in Lindow Moss, a peat bog near Wilmslow, England (Joy 2014:11). He has been on display in the Iron Age Gallery of the British Museum since 1997—before the DCMS (2005) guidelines were introduced (Joy 2014:10, 15-17). Nevertheless, Lindow Man's display already incorporated a number of the aforementioned methods of showing respect in museum displays. Specifically, his display provides privacy, contextual information about his life and death, and humanization.

Lindow Man is given privacy in that his display is in a dimly-lit alcove, in a private corner of the museum's Iron Age Gallery. He is displayed in a square case at hip-level, with two sides of the square backed by walls (Figure 27). The walls support a canopy, creating an alcove, and one of the walls portrays a photo of Lindow Moss. He is humanized through information panels that refer to him as a person ("he") rather than a body ("it") (Figure 28). His body lays in a bed of specially treated, dark bark chippings intended to replicate the dark peat of a bog (Joy 2014:17). This aspect of his display, along with surrounding images of Lindow Moss, give the visitor a sense of the context of his discovery.

Figure 27. Lindow Man's Display Case (Foreground), British Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.

Figure 28. Close-up View of Lindow Man's Display, British Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.

The display of Lindow Man at the British Museum follows the DCMS (2005) recommendations in that he is given privacy and provided cultural context. However, some museum professionals have argued that his display is still not ideal. University of York archaeologist Donald Brothwell (2008:227), for one, stated that Lindow Man's display is "limp", and not sufficiently sensitive and engaging. British Museum curator Jody Joy wrote (2014:17) that Lindow Man's display would be improved by reducing the number of visitors that may approach at once. This, he contends, could be achieved by exhibiting Lindow Man in a small pod or separate viewing area, rather than simply in an alcove of a larger gallery (Joy 2014:17). Nonetheless, Lindow Man's display does provide more privacy than other displays of human remains at the British Museum—such as its Egyptian mummies, which are presented in open glass cases at the centre of overcrowded galleries (Figure 29). Public surveys about Lindow Man's display have not been conducted/published.

Figure 29. Egyptian Mummy Displays at the British Museum. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2016.

"Kingship and Sacrifice" at the National Museum of Ireland

Another example of giving "privacy" to bog bodies in Europe comes from Ireland. The National Museum of Ireland's "Kingship and Sacrifice" exhibition displays the remains of five adult Iron Age men (National Museum of Ireland 2016). These are "Oldcroghan Man," from County Offaly; "Cloneycavan Man," from County Meath; "Gallagh Man," from County Galway; "Baronstown Man," from County Kildare, and "Cashel Man," from County Laois (National Museum of Ireland 2016).

The exhibition creates privacy and an “intimate encounter” between visitors and the bodies, in that each occupies its own cylindrical pod that visitors may enter—set apart from the main exhibition (O’Sullivan 2006:20). If they wish, visitors may choose to enter a pod to view the remains, and each pod is small enough that only a few people may enter at once (Figure 30; O’Sullivan 2006:20). Jerry O’Sullivan (2006:20) suggest that the lack of crowding combined with dimmed lighting inside the pods creates a sepulchral environment that encourages quiet, respectful encounters, reflection, and introspection.

Figure 30. “Clonycavan Man” Display Pod, Kingship and Sacrifice Exhibition, National Museum of Ireland. Photo: © National Museum of Ireland, 2007. Reproduced with permission.

Responses to the “Kingship and Sacrifice” exhibition have been broadly favourable, with some professionals citing the use of display pods as exemplary practice (e.g., Giles 2009; Joy 2014). However, Melanie Giles (2009:89-90) writes that the exhibition’s interpretive approach could be improved by making efforts to humanize the remains. She points out that bog bodies are often especially emotive for viewers due to the high

degree of preservation[12] of such humanizing details as fingerprints and other soft tissues, and the seemingly brutal nature of their deaths (Giles 2009:89-90). Jody Joy (2014:14) labels the presentation of the men's bodies, in clear glass cases within the display pods "neutral" and "forensic." Despite this, he argues that since their bodies are used to make a scientific argument about the purpose of their deposition in the bogs—as protective boundary markers—a neutral/forensic approach is justifiable (Joy 2014:14).

According to Jerry O'Sullivan (2006:18), public reactions to the "Kingship and Sacrifice" bog body displays were generally positive. However, one visitor wrote to *The Irish Times* that she found the exhibition "inappropriate" and "upsetting". Liveline, an Irish radio show, picked up the story, and the exhibition became the subject of controversy and public debate, with members of the public calling into the program to express widely diverging opinions (O'Sullivan 2006:18). However, there is a lack of published data documenting the controversy, and visitor feedback was not collected by the museum (Isabella Mulhall, pers. comm. 2016). More research is thus needed to identify the factors that influence public opinions about the ethical display of human remains.

Covered Mummies at Manchester Museum

Perhaps the most passionate public reactions to the display of archaeological human remains in an English museum were elicited by experimental practices at the Manchester Museum (Brown 2011; Curtis 2003; Manchester Museum 2008a; James 2008). In 2008, the museum covered three of eleven mummies in its main gallery with white sheets: Khary, Asru, and an unnamed mummy of a child that was on loan to the museum (Figure 31) (Manchester Museum 2008b). This action was taken in accord with the museum's new policy of only displaying human remains in ways that are "appropriate, sensitive, and informative" (Manchester Museum 2007). Staff felt that covering the mummies was called for because these three mummies were wrapped when they were discovered, and were only unwrapped by early collectors (Manchester Museum 2008b). The action was also intended to be part of a public consultation process: covering the mummies was intended to generate dialogue about the display of human remains (Manchester Museum 2008b). The public consultation involved a text panel in the gallery stating, "To see these bodies is an exceptional privilege – Tell us

[12] This is most notable for "Tollund Man", who appears to be sleeping.

what you think," coupled with the opportunity to provide online feedback (James 2008:774; Manchester Museum 2008b).

Figure 31. Covered Mummy, Manchester Museum. Photo: © Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, 2008. Reproduced with permission.

In response to the covered mummy displays, Nicholas James (2008:774), a University of Cambridge archaeologist, notes that many older visitors reacted negatively, potentially due to prior assumptions about what they *should* see in a museum. Examples of feedback from older visitors include, "It is very crucial that museums display the dead. It is both of interest to people as well as helping to break down the barriers ... separating the dead from the living," and "Please, please uncover the mummy!!! This is a museum!!! For goodness sake!!" (James 2008:774). On the other hand, many children reacted positively, and did not note a change in display techniques (James 2008:774). This, James suggests, indicates that public opinions about display may be influenced by prior expectations and experiences.

In the popular media, the Manchester Museum's covering of mummies resulted in a largely negative and misinformed media frenzy, with many major national news outlets running stories portraying the cover up as political correctness gone too far, and/or catering to religious minorities. Headlines included "The Great Mummy Cover-Up" (Kennedy 2008), "Hide your Mummies! Museum Displays of Human Remains are Covered up for Fear of Offending Pagans" (Harris 2010), and "'Naked' Mummies Covered after Complaints" (*The Telegraph* 2008). The museum's Wordpress site, which discussed the alteration, was also bombarded with negative comments (Manchester Museum 2008a). Of the more constructive criticisms, most commenters were surprised that the mummies were covered prior to, rather than following, the public consultation—if covering was deemed necessary at all (Manchester Museum 2008a). In addition, some commenters pointed out the hypocrisy of covering mummies, when Lindow Man was displayed "openly" in a temporary exhibition at the same museum (Manchester Museum 2008a).

Professional reactions to the covered mummies were mixed. Jasmine Day, a cultural anthropologist from the University of Western Australia, commented that covering mummies may actually de-humanize them (Manchester Museum 2008a). She argued that many cultural anthropologists and Egyptologists treat museums as "sites of pilgrimage, shrines we visit in order to meet the ancient Egyptians whom we love and revere. Taking them away from us denies us our only chance to commune with them, and it is this communion which humanizes mummies more than hiding them away can ever do" (Manchester Museum 2008a). However, Caroline Graves-Brown, curator of the Egypt Centre at Swansea University, believed covering the mummies was an admirable effort at respect (Manchester Museum 2008a).

In the face of intense scrutiny, the museum issued an official statement in which it clarified that the covering of (only some of) the museum's mummies was intended as a form of public engagement, to provoke debate and encourage feedback about the display of human remains (Manchester Museum 2008b, 2010). In addition, the museum explained that the mummies were covered to honour the presumed wishes of ancient Egyptians—since the mummies were likely not laid to rest with the expectation of being unwrapped and laid bare to satisfy the curiosities of nineteenth- and twentieth-century museum professionals and visitors (Manchester Museum 2008b).

The results of Manchester Museum's public consultations (Exell and Lord 2008; Manchester Museum 2009) indicated that the majority of participants agreed with the display of human remains—particularly in the case of Egyptian remains. In addition, most (~85%) believed that the mummies should be uncovered (Manchester Museum 2009). Criticism of the exhibition of Egyptian remains centered on lighting (too dim), crowding, lack of visibility of displays from all sides, and the need to update interpretive information to include more introductory context (Exell and Lord 2008:23-25).

Participants believed that: 1) they should have a choice of whether or not to view human remains; 2) displays must be "respectful"; 3) there is a difference between displaying the recent dead and the ancient dead; and 4) displays should provide contextual information about current research, and personal details about the deceased (Exell and Lord 2008). Another suggestion from the public was to allow the bodies to "retain their dignity" by covering all but the face, hands, and feet—as is done in some Egyptian museums (Exell and Lord 2008; Manchester Museum 2009).

Arguments in favour of displaying Egyptian remains emphasized the importance of museums in their role of educating the public, and counteracting the "freak show" and/or macabre aspect of mummies portrayed in popular culture (Manchester Museum 2009) and by certain regressive "museums" (see Killgrove 2016). In addition, some members of the public and museum professionals have argued that covering mummies is comparable to Victorian prudery—akin to removing or covering genitalia on Classical Greek and Egyptian statues (Curtis 2003:26; Manchester Museum 2008b).

This case study proves that museum audiences wish to be included in decisions about controversial displays, including those of human remains. Manchester Museum's efforts to generate dialogue by covering mummies were successful. However, feedback demonstrates that the museum would have done well to consult with the public *prior* to implementing the new display techniques, and/or to clearly communicate the intentions of the experimental displays at the entrance of the exhibition. In response to public feedback, the museum uncovered the mummy Khary, and the face and feet of Asru. The child mummy was removed from display and returned to its home institution (Manchester Museum 2009).

“Ancient Egypt: Digging for Dreams” at Croydon Clocktower

Another exhibition involving innovative means of presenting Egyptian remains was titled “Ancient Egypt: Digging for Dreams.” The exhibition was curated by the Petrie Museum, and traveled to Croyden Clocktower in London. The human remains exhibit, titled “Bodies on Show,” was designed to provide some degree of privacy, to emphasize the humanity of the remains, and to encourage visitors to consider ethical issues relating to the display of human remains. The deceased were given privacy through their placement behind a curtain, which visitors could choose to pull back, revealing the bodies (Bryan 2004:15; Vaswani 2001:34). According to Cathie Bryan (2004:15), the choice of covering the mummies was made to encourage respect.

The curator at Croydon Clocktower, Egyptologist Dominic Montserrat, notes that efforts were made to humanize the exhibits by including the names and biographical information about the people on display (Vaswani 2001:34). The remains were further humanized and contextualized by acknowledging the beliefs of ancient Egyptians (Vaswani 2001:35). For example, female remains were covered in a culturally appropriate mock shroud, with an image meant to protect the body and help it to be reborn (Vaswani 2001:34). In addition, the bodies were displayed alongside signs encouraging visitors to recite an Egyptian prayer for the souls of the mummies on display, equivalent to the Christian Lord’s Prayer or the Jewish Kaddish prayer for the deceased (Bryan 2004:15; Vaswani 2001:34). Culturally appropriate prayers were identified using ancient Egyptian texts.

The exhibition also engaged visitors with ethical issues through provocative interpretation. Display text asked visitors to question the validity of “educational” justifications for viewing human remains, and whether such justifications were actually masking voyeurism (Vaswani 2001:34). Visitor comment boards were installed in the exhibition to capture the responses.

Visitor comments praised the exhibition’s “thoughtful” and “provocative” approach of displaying human remains (Bryan 2004:15). However, some visitors—even children—questioned the ethics of displaying Egyptian bodies (Vaswani 2001:34). For example, one child wrote, “I don’t think the Egytions [sic] would like their faro’s bodys [sic] shown” (Vaswani 2001:34). Professional criticism came from Neil Curtis, Head of Museums at

the University of Aberdeen, who argued that the covering of mummies in the “Digging for Dreams” exhibition resembled a Victorian peep show. He further pointed out that asking visitors about the ethics of displaying remains in such a context seems paradoxical (Curtis 2003:26).

Dominic Montserrat also questioned the ethical justification for the display of Egyptian mummies, noting that he “didn’t particularly want to include the remains in the show … but the feedback … from focus groups indicated that ‘mummies’ immediately sprang to most people’s minds when prompted for a response as to how they perceived ancient Egypt” (Vaswani 2001:34). Montserrat also noted that ancient Egyptians would have been aware of tomb raiding and resigned to the knowledge that the afterlife may not be completely undisturbed. The Croydon Clocktower exhibits, he argued, thus represented a fair compromise (Vaswani 2001:34).

The Croydon Clocktower exhibition was innovative in its utilization of all three of the aforementioned display strategies: providing the remains privacy, humanizing them, and encouraging public engagement. The most criticized component of the “Digging for Dreams” exhibition was its method of covering the mummies.

Reactions to Experimental Display Methods

Public and professional responses to the case studies above provide valuable information to contextualize my third research question: how can uncontested human remains be displayed “with respect”? Creating respectful encounters, emphasizing the humanity of remains on display, and encouraging introspection and dialogue are experimental exhibition practices that are intended to show respect for archaeological human remains. Below, I summarize reactions to these approaches to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each, and where further information is needed.

Creating Respectful Encounters

Public and professional reactions to showing respect through “respectful encounters” have been mixed. Displaying human remains using dimmed lighting may create a sepulchral atmosphere, and allow visitors a moment to prepare themselves to view remains respectfully (James 2008:774). However, some members of the public have

complained about the poor visibility of exhibits of human remains that use dim lighting (Manchester Museum 2009).

Providing privacy using covers or shrouds has likewise had mixed responses. Some museum professionals believe that coverings show respect and provide human remains with dignity—especially in the case of Egyptian mummies that were unwrapped by early collectors/museum staff, and/or whose remains are covered when displayed in their originating country (Exell and Lord 2008; Manchester Museum 2009; Vaswani 2001:34). An important lesson may be learned from Manchester Museum's insufficient communication of their intentions in their covered mummy exhibits, which resulted in widespread misinformation and public complaints of censorship and political correctness gone wrong.

Displaying human remains in separate pods that provide privacy and prevent overcrowding may be a preferable way to create respectful encounters with human remains (Joy 2014:19). The use of display pods at the National Museum of Ireland has been praised as an exemplary means of providing privacy to human remains on display, but formal visitor studies are required to assess this claim.

Emphasizing Humanity

Perhaps the most common method of emphasizing the humanity of uncontested archaeological remains is to provide context alongside or within the exhibit. Providing cultural context, intimate/endearing details about the deceased, and/or humanizing stories about their lives and beliefs are particularly important according to museum scholars and Pagan activists (Burney 2005; Giles 2009; van Dooren 2008).

Following cultural norms of the deceased as a means of humanizing the dead—such as supplying culturally appropriate prayers for the deceased and encouraging visitors to recite them—has likewise been well received by museum professionals (Bryan 2004:15; Vaswani 2001:34). Emphasizing the humanity of remains on display appears to be universally well received by museum professionals, but public feedback was not systematically collected until the present study.

Generating Dialogue and Introspection

The public has been most outspoken in response to Manchester Museum's efforts to generate public dialogue by covering Egyptian mummies. Perhaps the most important lesson learned from this case study is that museums should clearly communicate their approaches and intentions to the public when experimenting with innovative display methods. The museum's public consultations (Exell and Lord 2008) and website comments (Manchester Museum 2008a) revealed that visitors felt it was important to be involved in ethical decision-making *in advance* of implementing changes.

Most museums that have collected visitor feedback about the ethical display of human remains have not systematically analyzed or published the responses they received. Apart from Manchester Museum's consultation—which resulted in widespread public controversy and criticism due to misunderstandings of intent—visitors' thoughts about efforts to generate reflection about the ethical display of human remains were largely unknown prior to the present study (see Chapter 5). Table 18 highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, based on existing professional evaluations and anecdotal reporting of visitor feedback.

Table 18. Strengths and Weaknesses of Experimental Display Methods.

Respectful Encounters	Humanizing Displays	Encouraging Introspection
Dimmed lighting creates respectful atmosphere, but visitors complain of poor visibility Covering human remains is well received by museum professionals when culturally appropriate, but giving visitors the option to uncover them may be considered distasteful Display pods widely praised professionally; no visitor evaluations	Providing cultural context, personal details, following cultural protocols of the deceased, and otherwise humanizing remains is universally well-received by museum professionals; no formal visitor evaluations	Generating dialogue and introspection is appreciated by museum professionals No systematic reporting of public feedback apart from covering mummies—which indicates the importance of sufficiently communicating intentions in advance

Chapter Summary

The innovative approaches to the display of human remains presented in this chapter illustrate the impacts that social and political events in the United Kingdom have had on conceptions of the ethical treatment of human remains in museums. These events have led many museum professionals to accept that it is unethical to exhibit contested human remains (i.e., against the wishes of originating communities). When uncontested archaeological remains are displayed, there is an increasing tendency—particularly in England—to do so in more thoughtful, sensitive, and respectful ways.

Recent methods of respectfully presenting uncontested archaeological human remains include creating respectful atmospheres, emphasizing the humanity of remains on display, and generating introspection and ethical dialogue among the museum-going public. Museum professionals have praised all three methods, though some have been critical of certain means of providing privacy. These scholars have noted that efforts to provide privacy for human remains on display may be seen as prudery and/or sensationalistic (when visitors are given the option to uncover remains). In addition, anecdotal reports suggest that visitors may miss the point of displays of human remains that provide privacy. In all cases, formal reporting and systematic analyses of visitor feedback were lacking until now (see Chapter 5). These are needed to evaluate if innovative display methods are conveying their intended message of respect for human remains on display.

Chapter 5. Evaluating Respectful Display Methods

In this chapter, I evaluate the display methods introduced in Chapter 4 from a practical perspective, relating to my third research question: how can uncontested human remains be displayed "with respect"? I addressed this question using the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery in England as an instrumental case study, asking visitors to evaluate the museum's innovative, experimental display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect for the deceased.

I begin by describing my study location and the display methods that were the focus of the evaluation. Next, I describe my visitor survey methods. Results of the surveys are reported by grouping survey questions into three major themes: 1) are respectful display methods important?; 2) how can human remains be displayed respectfully?; and 3) are the methods used at Bristol successful in conveying respect? I discuss how demographic variables may relate to survey responses, and conclude the chapter by summarizing key outcomes that emerged in the surveys.

Materials and Methods

To evaluate the practical implementation of display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect, I surveyed visitors to the Egypt Gallery of the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery in Bristol, England between December 2017 and January 2018. A total of 121 surveys were collected in order to maximize the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample. A sample size of 96 is required to make generalizations about a population of one million to 100 million with a ten-percent sampling error (Diamond 1999:42). Sampling a minimum of 96 visitors thus allowed me to identify common trends in the opinions of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery visitors.

Study Location

The Bristol Museum & Art Gallery was chosen as an instrumental case study because it utilizes all three of the innovative respectful display approaches that were described in Chapter 4. These are: 1) creating "respectful encounters" with the remains on display; 2) emphasizing the remains' humanity; and 3) generating dialogue and introspection about the ethical display of human remains. In the Egypt Gallery, Bristol staff have

implemented these methods in their exhibits of two mummies resting in sarcophagi, and in their "box burial"—a large black display case that rests on the floor, containing the body of a naturally mummified man in a crouched position. The specific ways these methods are implemented are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Implementation of Innovative Display Methods at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

	Creating Respectful Encounters	Emphasizing Humanity	Generating Dialogue & introspection
Box Burial	Privacy: - Dark/quiet area	Biographical information included Explicit reminder that the remains were once a living human Subject vs. object pronouns ("he" vs. "it")	Visitors choose whether to view the remains after reflecting on ethical question posed in display text (radical transparency)
Mummies	Privacy: - Dark/quiet area - Sarcophagus lids only slightly open		

The box burial was previously displayed in a wooden box with plaster on all sides, intended to simulate a rock-cut shaft, with red sand and shingle attached to the plaster surface (Sue Giles, pers. comm. 2016). It was originally part of the Antiquities Gallery from approximately 1910 until the 1960s, with little contextual information provided (Sue Giles, pers. comm. 2016). The two mummies were previously displayed in open coffins—one of which was upright, and the other in a pit with a glass cover (Giles n.d.). Bristol Curator Sue Giles likens the previous displays to morbid peep shows, attracting visitors with horrified fascination.

In 2008, when the gallery was updated, staff made efforts to implement new, more respectful exhibition practices. The new box burial exbibit creates a respectful atmosphere, in a dark, quiet corner of the gallery. The individual is humanized through interpretation that uses subject pronouns ("he" vs. "it"), provides biographical information about the deceased, and explicitly reminds viewers that the man in the case used to be a living human being. The interpretation also promotes introspection and reflection about

whether the individual should be exhibited. After reading humanizing information about the deceased, the visitor is asked if they believe the individual should be displayed. The visitor must then make a conscious choice of whether or not to view the remains by lighting up the display case—in a prime example of radical transparency (Figure 32). When a visitor approaches the exhibit, the motion-activated interpretation appears on a screen one letter at a time, reading:

> 4,600 years ago a man died in Egypt. We do not know who he was or how he died. His body was wrapped in cloth soaked with resin, placed in a wooden coffin and buried in a rock-cut tomb-shaft at Maidum. His body is in the case below. You can choose whether or not to look at him. Remember that all bodies were once living people, like us. They are not just objects or scientific specimens. Do you think his body should be on display in the gallery?
>
> If you want to see his body, touch the two glowing circles to light up the case.

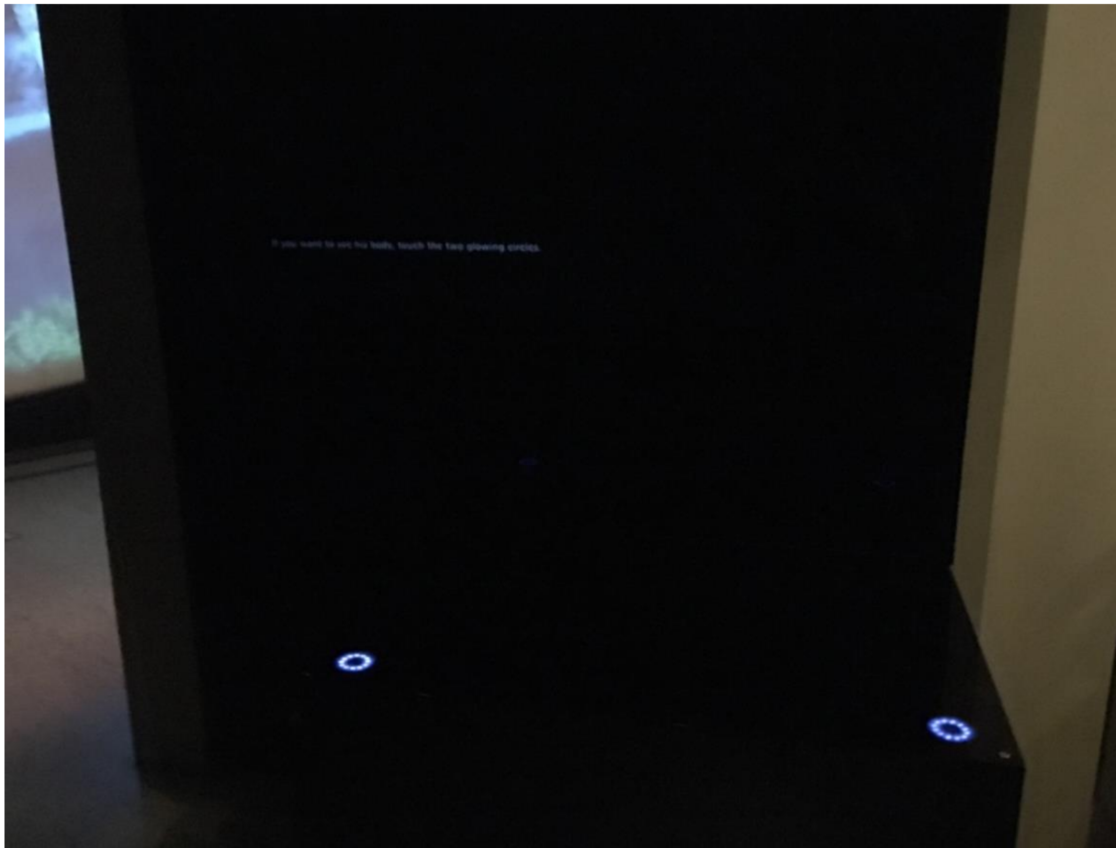


Figure 32. Darkened Box Burial Display Case and Screen, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2017.

The two Egyptian mummies that were previously displayed “openly” in their sarcophagi, are now given more privacy, in a dark hall. The sarcophagus lids are open just enough for visitors to see the mummies (Figure 33).

Figure 33. Mummy Display with Lid Partially Open at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Photo: Lia Tarle, 2017.

Survey Data

Between December 2017 and January 2018, I collected 121 surveys from visitors to the Egypt Gallery of the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery to evaluate these innovative, respectful exhibition methods. The surveys asked visitors nine questions (multiple choice and open-ended) relating to the respectful display of human remains. They also included demographic questions to better understand subjective factors that may influence visitors’ beliefs about the ethical treatment of the deceased. The full survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Survey Results

Here I present the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey data—by reporting frequencies of responses, and identifying common themes in open-ended responses using content analysis. I organize the reporting relative to three major themes. Demographic results are summarized at the end of the chapter, and discussed in relation to their potential influence on ethical beliefs. The themes of the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery surveys are:

A. Are respectful display methods important?

B. How can human remains be displayed respectfully?

C. Are the methods used at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery successful in conveying respect?

A. Are Respectful Display Methods Important?

In the first two survey questions, visitors were asked if it is important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums, and why. The first question was required, with four mutually exclusive multiple-choice response options. The choice to add the sub-text “remains were/are people” to Question 1 was made based on preliminary surveys in which visitors exclusively provided this justification for their answers. For Question 2 (optional), visitors were given the opportunity to clarify their answers through open-ended responses if the multiple choice options did not represent their beliefs.

Question 1. Is it important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums?

- ☐ Yes – remains were/are people
- ☐ Yes – other reason
- ☐ No – remains are objects we can learn from
- ☐ No – other reason

Question 2. If other, please specify: ________________________________

Question 1 Results

Question 1 was mandatory; thus, results are reported as a percentage of the total 121 visitors surveyed. The majority of respondents (n=113; 93%) answered that yes, it is important to display human remains in a respectful way (Table 20; Figure 34). Of those, 92 (76%) indicated that respect is important because the individual on display is/was human. Twenty-one visitors (17%) believed respectful displays are important for reasons other than the humanity of the deceased. Eight respondents (7%) stated they do not believe it is important to display human remains with respect because human remains are objects that we may learn from. None of the visitors answered that it is not important to display human remains in a respectful way for “other” reasons.

Table 20. Question 1: “Is Respectful Display Important?”

Is Respectful Display Important?	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=121)
Yes: remains were/are people	92	76%
Yes: other reason	21	17%
No: remains are objects	8	7%
No: other reason	0	0%
Total	**121**	**100%**

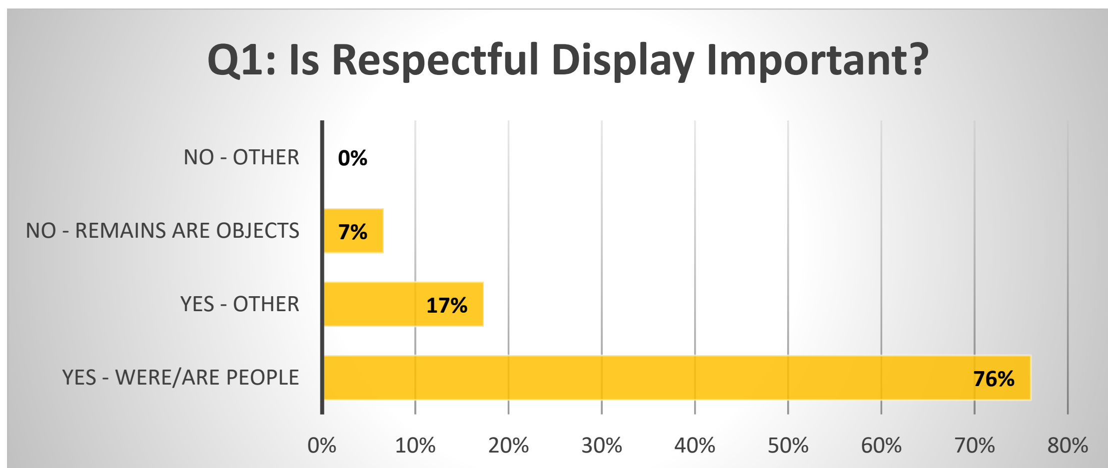


Figure 34. Question 1: “Is Respectful Display Important?”

Question 2 Results

Thirty-four visitors gave open-ended responses to Question 2, specifying “other” reasons for the importance of respectful displays. Some visitors identified more than one reason for respectful display: respect for humanity as well as an open-ended response.

Of the 34 responses, ten (29%) identified that it is important to show respect for life (Table 21; Figure 35). Six (18%) noted that it is important to respect the culture, customs, family, and/or originating community of the deceased. Five respondents (15%) identified spiritual reasons for displaying human remains with respect. Four (12%) mentioned respect for and/or preservation of history. Three respondents (9%) indicated that it is important to respect death. Two (6%) stated that we should not display human remains at all. Two (6%) believed respectful display is important because there is an expectation of respect in museums. Finally, one visitor (3%) noted that respect is important to dignify the deceased, and another (3%) that respectful display is important for visitors’ sensitivities.

Table 21. Question 2: “Other Reason” Respectful Display is Important.

“Other” Category	Number of Responses	Percentage (n= 34)	Percent of Total (n= 121)
Respect for life	10	29%	8%
Respect culture/customs/ descendants	6	18%	5%
Spiritual reasons	5	15%	4%
Protect/respect history	4	12%	3%
Respect death	3	9%	2%
Should not display	2	6%	2%
Expect respect in museums	2	6%	2%
Dignity for the deceased	1	3%	1%
Visitor sensitivity	1	3%	1%
Total	**34**	**101%**	**28%**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% due to rounding error.

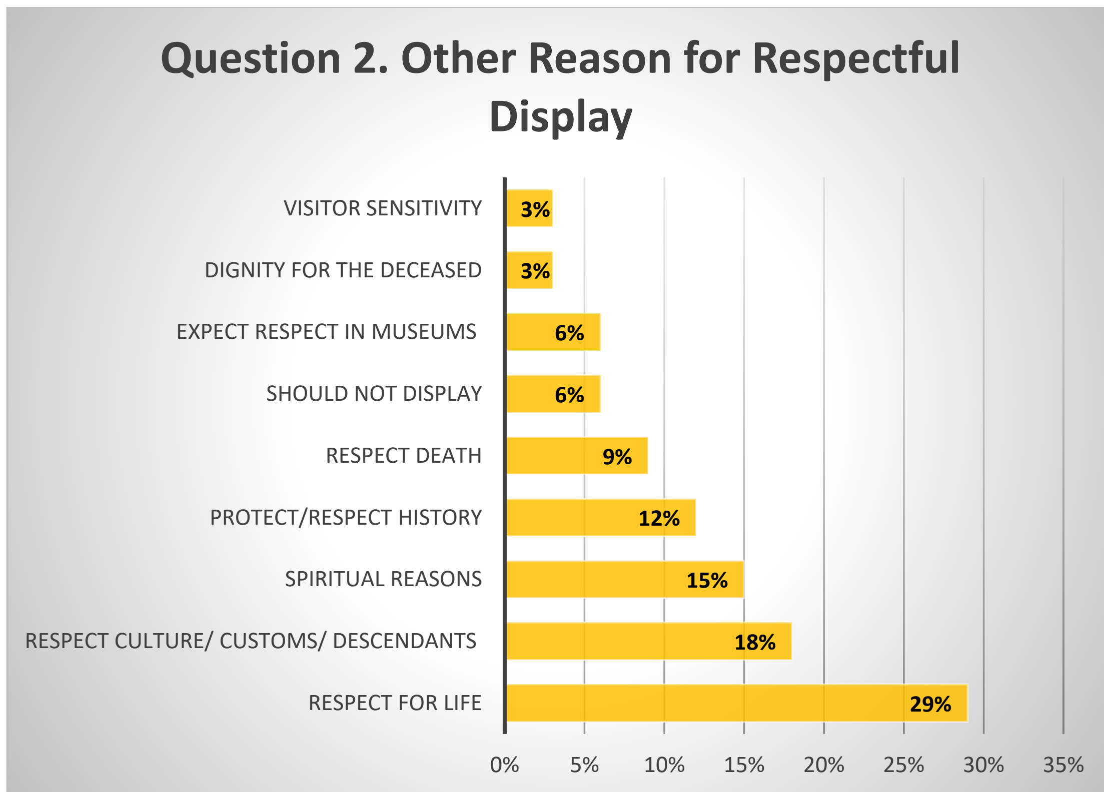


Figure 35. Question 2: "Other Reason" Respectful Display is Important.

B. How Can Human Remains Be Displayed Respectfully?

Questions 3 through 6 focused on how human remains can be displayed in a respectful way. For Question 3, visitors were given a list of existing display methods that are intended to demonstrate respect, and asked to choose which they believe are important/respectful. This question was mandatory, and visitors were allowed to mark as many options as they wished. Question 4 (optional) gave visitors an open-ended opportunity to identify additional methods of displaying human remains with respect. Question 5 (optional) was open-ended, and asked which of the respectful display methods listed in Questions 3 and 4 is/are *most* important.

Question 3. What are respectful ways to display human remains? (Check all that apply)

- Dark/quiet space
- Given privacy/partly covered
- Covering remains with the option to view them fully
- Humanized (with personal details/pronouns)
- Reminding visitors they are viewing a person
- Mimicking burial/discovery context
- Following cultural protocols of the deceased
- Scientific/clinical displays
- N/A – it is not important to display human remains in any particular way
- Other

Question 4. If other, please specify: ________________________________

Question 5. Which method(s) is/are most important? ___________________

Question 3 Results

Question 3 was mandatory; thus, results are reported as a percentage of the total 121 visitors surveyed. However, responses were not mutually exclusive since visitors were permitted to choose as many options as they agreed with. Four methods were identified as respectful by at least 50% of visitors surveyed (Table 22; Figure 36). These are: 1) following the cultural protocols of the deceased (n=80, 66%); 2) reminding visitors that the remains they are viewing were once a person (n=75, 62%); 3) displaying remains in a dark/quiet space (n=61, 50%); and 4) humanizing remains through personal details and pronouns (n=60, 50%).

Table 22. Question 3: “What are Respectful Ways to Display Human Remains?”

Respectful Methods	Number of Responses	Percent of Total (n=121)
Cultural protocols	80	66%
Reminding of humanity	75	62%
Dark/quiet	61	50%
Humanized (personal details/pronouns)	60	50%
Hidden with option to view	40	33%
Privacy	37	31%
Clinical	34	28%
Mimicking burial	28	23%
Not important	5	4%
Other	32	26%
Total	**452**	**N/A**

Note: Total Number of Responses exceeds number of visitors surveyed, and Percent of Total column does equal 100% because responses were not mutually exclusive.

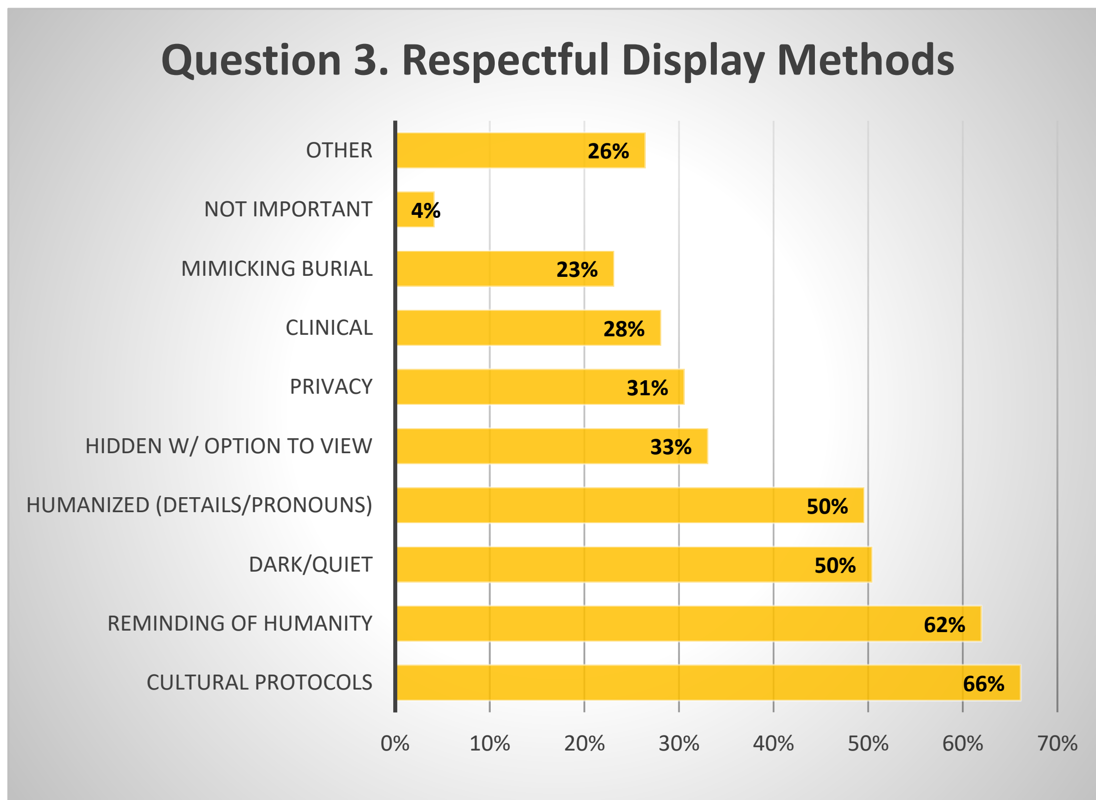


Figure 36. Question 3: “What are Respectful Ways to Display Human Remains?”

Approaches that were identified as respectful by fewer than 50% of respondents are: 1) covering remains but giving the option to view them fully (n=40, 33%); 2) giving privacy/partly covering remains (n=37, 31%); 3) clinical/scientific displays (n=34, 28%); and 4) mimicking burial/discovery context (n=28, 23%). Five visitors did not identify any respectful display methods due to their stated belief that it is not important to display human remains in any particular way, and 32 respondents (26%) identified other methods of respectful display (see Question 4).

Question 4 Results

For Question 4, visitors identified 18 alternative means of respectfully exhibiting human remains. Some provided multiple responses; therefore, answers are not mutually exclusive. A total of 47 suggestions were collected and tabulated (Table 23; Figure 37). Fourteen (30%) of the 47 comments about "other" respectful methods indicated that providing cultural context and/or keeping the burial context intact is important. Eight visitors (17%) noted that there must be consent for display to be respectful. Four (9%) advocated warning visitors of human remains to avoid offending or making them uncomfortable. Three (6%) noted that respectful displays of human remains must have a clear, stated purpose.

Table 23. Question 4: "Other" Respectful Display Methods.

"Other" Category	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=47)	Percent of Total (n=121)
Maintain cultural/burial context	14	30%	12%
Display only with consent	8	17%	7%
Warn visitors of remains	4	9%	3%
Stated purpose for display	3	6%	2%
Introspection and Dialogue			
Include acquisition context	1	2%	1%
Live interpreter speaks to visitors	1	2%	1%
Remind visitors they will die too	1	2%	1%
Privacy			
Minimally invasive (e.g., CT scans)	1	2%	1%
No bright lights	1	2%	1%
No selfies	1	2%	1%
No open display	1	2%	1%
Give remains space	1	2%	1%
Other			
Avoid sensationalism	1	2%	1%
Temporary scientific displays	1	2%	1%
Display only one individual	1	2%	1%
Embalm the body	1	2%	1%
Make display resemble holy place	1	2%	1%
Confidentiality	1	2%	1%
N/A - Should not display	4	9%	3%
Total	**47**	**99%**	**N/A**

Note: Percentage column does not total 100% due to rounding error.

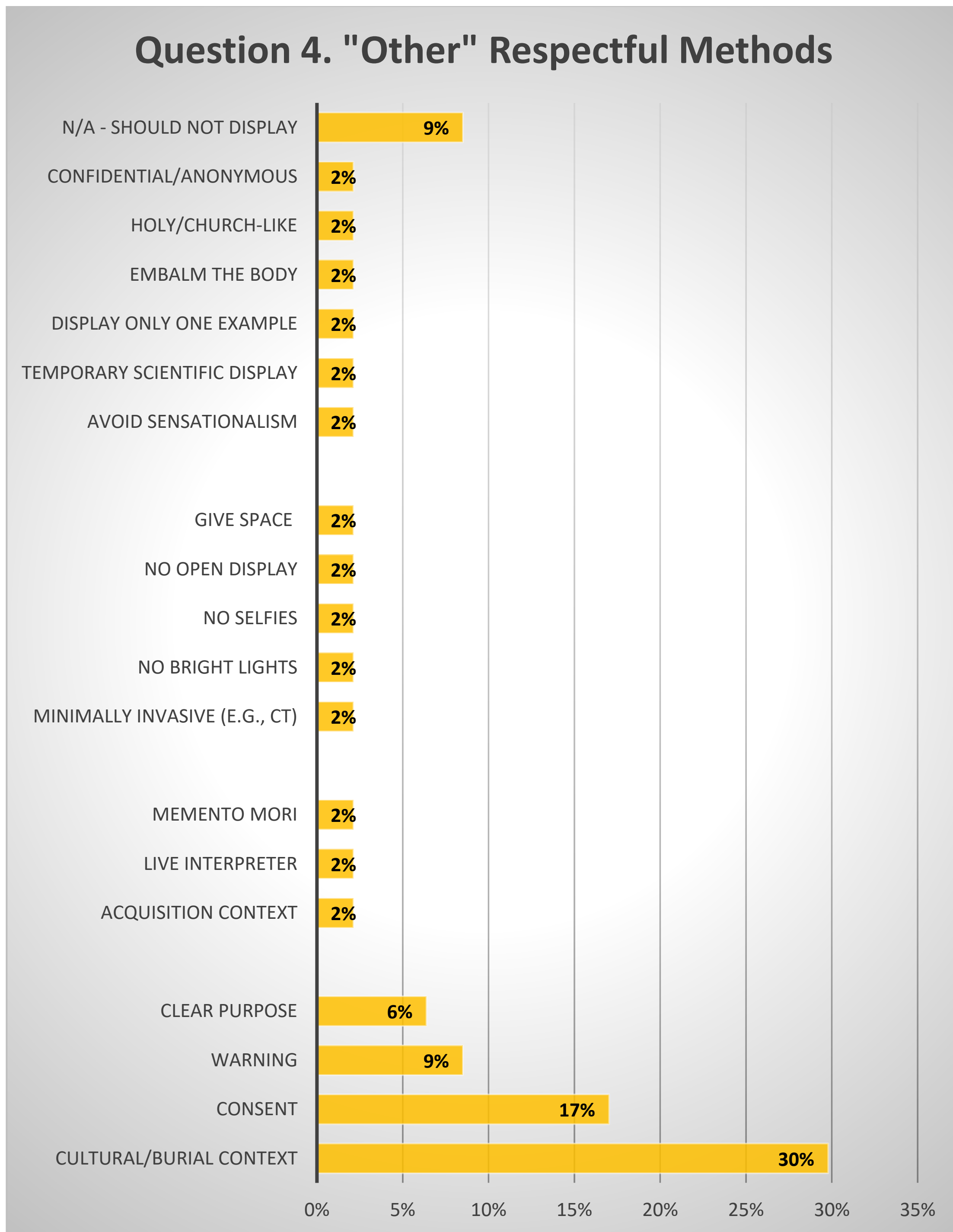


Figure 37. Question 4: “Other” Respectful Display Methods.

The remaining methods of respectful display were proposed by a single individual each (2%). Three suggestions related to the theme of generating introspection and dialogue about the display of human remains. These were: 1) providing acquisition context; 2)

having a live interpreter speak with visitors; and 3) reminding visitors in display text that the body once belonged to a living person, and that they (the visitor) too will die one day. Five suggestions related to providing remains with privacy: 1) using minimally invasive display methods (e.g., CT scans); 2) avoiding bright lights; 3) prohibiting visitors from taking "selfies" with remains; 4) not displaying remains "openly"; and 5) giving the remains space (i.e., not providing space for crowds to gather).

Six suggestions, again proposed by a single visitor each, did not fit into the above categories: 1) avoiding sensationalism; 2) displaying remains in a scientific way for a limited time before giving them a "break"; 3) displaying only one individual, as an example; 4) embalming bodies (i.e., funerary treatment); 5) making displays resemble a holy place/church (e.g., with candles); and 6) ensuring confidentiality/anonymity for the recently deceased, as in anatomical exhibits. Finally, four individuals (9%) stated that they could not comment on respectful display methods because they do not believe human remains should be displayed at all.

Question 5 Results

For Question 5, visitors were asked to identify the *most* important/respectful of the display method(s) listed in Question 3. This question was optional and allowed visitors to choose more than one answer. A total of 98 responses were collected from 77 visitors.

The most popular three answers related to the theme of humanizing remains. "Following the cultural protocols of the deceased" (when known) was listed by twenty-nine visitors (38%) as the most important/respectful practice (Table 24; Figure 38). Seventeen visitors (22%) chose "reminding visitors of the humanity/personhood of the deceased" as the most important. "Humanizing remains through personal details/pronouns" was chosen by 15 visitors (19%) as most important/respectful.

Table 24. Question 5: "Which Method(s) Is/Are Most Important?"

Display Method	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=77)	Percent of Total (n=121)
Cultural protocols	29	38%	24%
Reminding of humanity	17	22%	14%
All equally important	16	21%	13%
Humanized	15	19%	12%
Option to view	11	14%	9%
Privacy	4	5%	3%
Dark / quiet	2	3%	2%
Depends	2	3%	2%
Introspection	1	1%	1%
Scientific	1	1%	1%
Total	**98**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Note: Percentage and Percent of Total columns do not equal 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

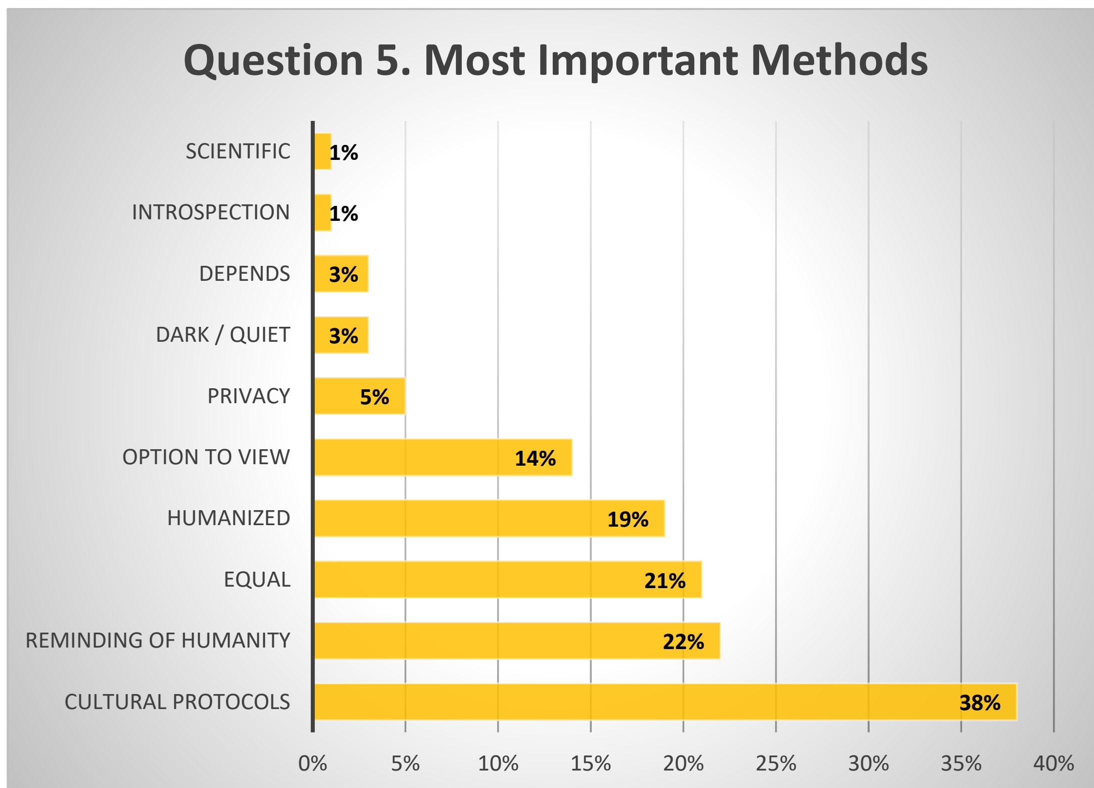


Figure 38. Question 5: "Which Method(s) Is/Are Most Important?"

Eleven visitors (14%) chose providing the option to view as the most important/respectful way of presenting human remains. Four respondents (5%) identified providing privacy as the most important/respectful method. Two visitors (3%) stated that displaying remains in a dark/quiet space is most important. Another two (3%) identified that the display method should depend on the remains being displayed. One visitor (1%) stated that scientific/clinical displays are most respectful, and another (1%) that generating introspection/dialogue is most respectful. Sixteen visitors (21%) stated that all of the display methods listed in Question 3 are all equally important/respectful.

C. Are the Methods Used at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery Successful in Conveying Respect?

Questions 6 through 8 focused on evaluating whether the three innovative display techniques introduced in Chapter 4 effectively communicate respect in practice at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. To reiterate, the Egypt Gallery at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery contains two exhibits that utilize the three approaches. The box burial: 1) provides privacy and a respectful atmosphere for the remains by keeping them in a dark, quiet corner; 2) emphasizes the individual's humanity through display text; and 3) encourages ethical engagement and reflection—asking visitors to consider the ethical dilemma of whether the deceased should be displayed, and to make the choice of whether or not to view the body. The two mummies are also provided privacy, in that they are exhibited in a dark hallway, with their sarcophagus lids only partially open—just enough to see them.

Questions 6 and 7 asked visitors if the exhibition approaches are appropriate/worthwhile. Question 6 focused on the box burial, while Question 7 asked about the mummy displays. Each approach was explained to visitors conversationally, emphasizing the privacy of the two mummy exhibits, and the box burial's humanizing display text and provision of a choice to view the body. For Question 8, visitors were asked if they saw any downsides to the approaches.

Question 6. Is the Egyptian box burial display appropriate/worthwhile?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

Question 7. Are the mummy displays appropriate/worthwhile?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

Question 8. Do you see any downsides to these methods? / Do you still get as much out of them?

Comment: ____

Question 6 and 7 Results

In response to Questions 6 and 7, the majority of the 121 respondents answered that both exhibits are appropriate/worthwhile. Specifically, 107 (88%) looked favourably upon the box burial, and 100 (83%) identified the mummy displays as appropriate/worthwhile (Table 25; Figure 39).

Table 25. Questions 6-7: "Are the Box Burial and Mummy Displays Appropriate/Worthwhile?"

Display Method	Number of "Yes" Responses	Percent of "Yes" Responses (n=121)
Box Burial	107	88%
Mummies	100	83%

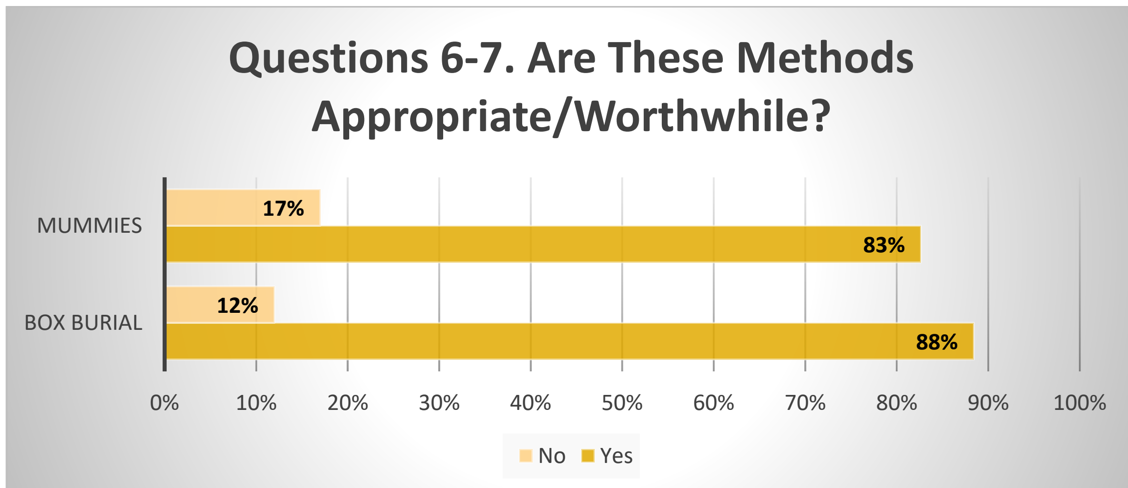


Figure 39. Questions 6-7: "Are the Box Burial and Mummy Displays Appropriate/Worthwhile?"

Question 8 Results

Question 8 (optional) asked visitors if there were any downsides of Bristol's display methods. For this open-ended question, visitors could provide more than one answer if they wished. Thus, results were not mutually exclusive: 118 responses were collected from 89 visitors.

Most comments (n=52; 58%) related to providing privacy (Table 26). Twenty-eight (31%) complained they could not see the mummies well due to the darkness and partially closed sarcophagus lids. However, six of the 28 who complained about visibility (7%) noted that it is still worthwhile to give remains privacy. Ten visitors (11%) noted that they did not understand the importance of providing privacy for human remains, but nine others (10%) noted that it is not necessary to view remains fully if visitors can get the same information by other means (e.g., reading). Three (3%) called dark/quiet methods of providing privacy "morbid" and/or "creepy", and two (2%) noted that darkened displays are easy to miss.

Table 26. Question 8: Downsides of Respectful Display Methods.

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=89)	Percent of Total (n=121)
Privacy Critiques			
Poor visibility	28	31%	23%
(But still worthwhile)	6 (of 28)	7%	5%
Privacy not necessary	10	11%	8%
Worthwhile if visitors can read same info	9	10%	7%
Creepy/mysterious	3	3%	2%
Easy to miss	2	2%	2%
Total	**52**	**58%**	**43%**
Box Burial Critiques			
Easy to miss	11	12%	9%
Sensational	7	8%	6%
Text appears too slowly	6	7%	5%
Accidental interactive	6	7%	5%
Scary/surprising	3	3%	2%
Not sensational	1	1%	1%
Total	**34**	**38%**	**28%**
Humanizing Critiques			
Humanizing with personal details makes too many assumptions	2	2%	2%
Cultural protocols unsettling to visitors	1	1%	1%
Visitors may not understand cultural protocols	1	1%	1%
Total	**4**	**4%**	**3%**
General Critiques			
Hypocritical	14	16%	12%
Should not be displayed at all	5	6%	4%
Unsettling to see dead bodies	4	4%	3%
Consent	2	2%	2%
General comments	3	3%	2%
Total	**28**	**31%**	**23%**
Total Critiques	**118**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Note: Percentage and Percent of Total columns do not equal 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive.

The second highest number of comments (n=34; 38%) related to the box burial display. Eleven visitors (12%) noted that it was easy to miss due to its location in a dark corner of the gallery, in an unlit black display case. The box burial's interpretive text is motion-activated, and many visitors walked past without realizing that text was beginning to appear on the screen. Related to this, six comments (7%) noted that the text appears too slowly—two of which indicated that this is particularly a problem for parents and children with short attention spans.

A third issue identified in the box burial comments pertains to sensationalism. Seven visitors (8%) noted that the option to light up the display case is voyeuristic, a spectacle, or sensational. One of those who identified the exhibit as sensational compared it to a "freak show". Another three participants (3%) perceived the box burial as scary/surprising. One of these commenters was afraid that a bright flash would illuminate the body. Paradoxically, one visitor (1%) explicitly noted that the box burial is *not* sensational.

Another practical issue with the box burial is that it could be mistakenly interpreted as an interactive. Six visitors (7%) noted that curiosity and/or the human desire to press buttons drove their choice to light up the display—despite the moral dilemma introduced in the interpretation. One of these visitors complimented the box burial's interactive element for its appeal to children, demonstrating a complete misinterpretation of the exhibit's intentions.

Four comments and critiques (4%) related to humanizing the remains. Of these, two (2%) stated that attempts to humanize remains make too many assumptions (e.g., including personal details about the deceased). One (1%) noted that humanizing remains by following cultural protocols may be unsettling for visitors, and another (1%) that some visitors may not understand the cultural protocols of the deceased.

Twenty-eight responses (31%) were general comments/critiques generated by visitors' experiences in the gallery. Fourteen (11%) noted that if remains were already excavated and exhibited in a gallery, it is hypocritical for museums to make efforts to show respect. Nine of the 14 remarked that visitors may as well be allowed to see human remains if the choice has been made to display them, and one of the 14 noted that efforts to display

the mummies respectfully is still disrespectful since their graves were originally robbed for profit rather than for education.

Five visitors (6%) argued that human remains should not be displayed at all. Another four (4%) stated that it is unsettling for visitors to see human remains—particularly for children and members of certain cultures. Two (2%) were unsure if the Egyptian remains should be displayed without consent. Three visitors (3%) made general comments about the displays. One noted that the display methods used at Bristol are good provided that they are not sensationalistic, while another noted that they are no more respectful than other methods of display. The third general comment was mixed:

> Participant 25: "[They should not be displayed] in glass cases, it is voyeuristic to display [them] at all. [Visitors] could learn without bodies, we can't really see [them] anyways. [The museum has] already broken cultural protocols... but [these methods are] better than nothing. The box burial is like a freak show."

D. Open Comments

For Question 9, visitors were given the opportunity to make final comments about the display of human remains in museums. This question was optional and visitors could provide more than one answer if they wished. Thus, results are not mutually exclusive: a total of 146 comments were received from 91 visitors. Results are described relative to number of visitors who provided a response (n=91). Percentages are also provided relative to the number of visitors who chose to comment on each of three themes: 1) should human remains be displayed at all?; 2) what factors determine whether remains should be displayed?; and 3) comments about specific display methods.

Question 9. Do you have further comments about if/how human remains should be displayed?

Comment: ____

Question 9 Results

Of the 91 visitors who provided a comment for Question 9, the majority (n=59; 65%) relate to whether or not human remains should be displayed (Table 27). Fifty-five (60%) specified that ethical display depends on factors such as the method or purpose of the

exhibit, affiliation/antiquity of the remains, whether there was consent for display, and/or visitor sensitivities. Thirty-two comments (35%) pertained to specific display methods.

Table 27. Question 9: Open Comments about Display of Human Remains.

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage (n=91)	Percentage per Category	Percent of Total (n=121)
1. Should We Display?			**(n=59)**	
Yes	36	40%	61%	30%
Unsure / Conflicted	14	15%	24%	12%
No	9	10%	15%	7%
Total	**59**	**65%**	**100%**	**49%**
2. Depends On…			**(n=55)**	
Respect	22	24%	40%	18%
Purpose (education)	10	11%	18%	8%
Affiliation of remains	8	9%	15%	7%
Consent	5	5%	9%	4%
Antiquity (ancient vs. recent)	3	3%	5%	2%
Humanizing	3	3%	5%	2%
Privacy	3	3%	5%	2%
Visitor sensitivity	1	1%	2%	1%
Total	**55**	**60%**	**99%**	**45%**
3. Display Method			**(n=32)**	
Box burial praise	21	23%	66%	17%
Bristol praise	6	7%	19%	5%
Scientific display comment	3	3%	9%	2%
Privacy praise	1	1%	3%	1%
Cultural protocol comment	1	1%	3%	1%
Total	**32**	**35%**	**100%**	**26%**
Total Comments	**146**	**N/A**		**N/A**

Note: Percentage and Percent of Total Visitors columns do not equal 100% as responses were not mutually exclusive. Percentage per Category columns do not always total 100% due to rounding error.

1. Should We Display?

Of the 59 comments relating to whether human remains should be displayed, 36 (61%) were in favour (Table 26; Figure 40). These visitors noted in particular the importance of displaying human remains for education. Fourteen (24%) stated that they were unsure and/or conflicted about whether human remains should be displayed. Some of these visitors explicitly stated that their confliction was a result of their experience in the gallery:

> Participant 70: "I don't know if human remains should be here. I'll be thinking about it now."

> Participant 109: "The box burial is playing on your emotions. It's thought-provoking. I'm unsure if it's right now and I won't look. I always assumed human remains in museums were replicas... I'm unsure if human remains should be in museums. I'd say don't do it unless it's really necessary (e.g., medical museums)."

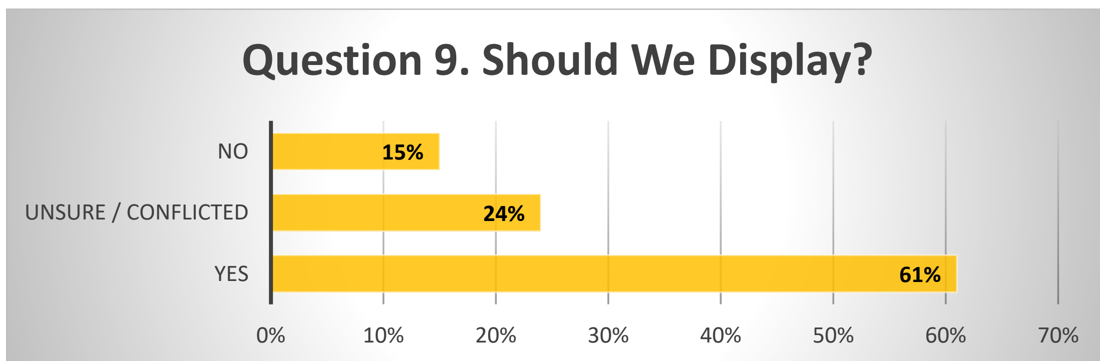


Figure 40. Question 9: Open Comments Regarding Whether to Display Human Remains.

Nine visitors (15%) stated that they do not believe human remains should be displayed in museums. They provided a number of reasons for their opposition to display (and some provided more than one reason): three remarked that the thought of their own bodies or the bodies of family members on display made them uncomfortable; another three argued that other information (e.g., photos, signage) could be just as educational as real bodies; two noted that it is uncomfortable for children to see dead bodies; and three mentioned disrespect, dehumanization, and sensationalism inherent in displaying human remains. For example:

> Participant 98: "I'm unsure if human remains should be displayed. Initially I think no, as I would not want my own family displayed, but researchers should have access. Maybe it's not necessary or appropriate for public viewing, as it's disrespectful to have them on display with kids passing by with lollies, etc…"

2. Depends on…

Fifty-five comments (60%) identified factors that determine whether it is appropriate to display human remains (Table 26; Figure 41). Percentages are expressed relative to these 55 comments. Factors that were identified as influencing ethical display are: whether the display is respectful (n=22; 40%); the purpose(s) of the display (i.e., educational; n=10; 18%), affiliation of the remains (n=8; 15%), whether consent was provided (n=5; 9%), the antiquity of the remains (n=3; 5%), whether the remains were humanized and/or provided privacy (n=3 each; 3%), and visitor sensitivities (n=1; 2%).

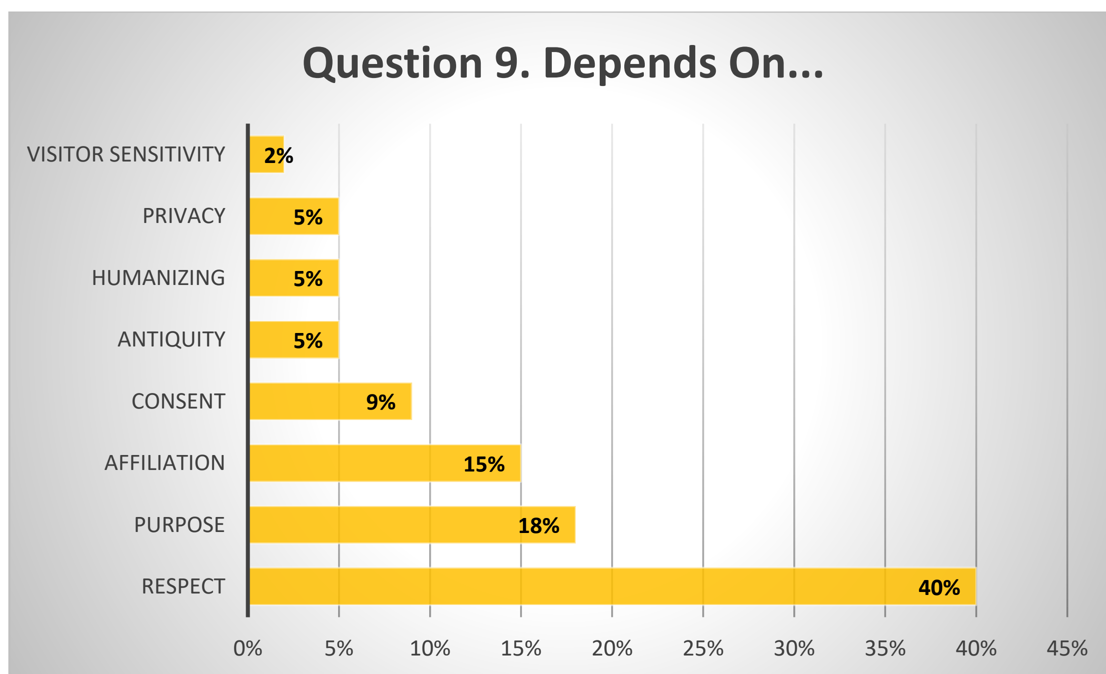


Figure 41. Question 9: Factors Influencing Visitor Beliefs about Whether Remains Should Be Displayed.

3. Display Methods

Thirty-two comments (35%) pertained to specific display methods. Of the 32, 21 (66%) praised the box burial for its engaging interpretation and for providing visitors with the option to view the remains or not (Table 26; Figure 42). Two visitors described it as "perfect". Six (19%) indicated their appreciation for the gallery's display methods in general. Three (9%) noted that scientific displays are not necessarily "respectful," but are appropriate in certain contexts. One visitor noted that darkened displays are particularly respectful, and another noted that reciting culturally appropriate prayers is respectful (while acknowledging that this is not authentic cultural participation).

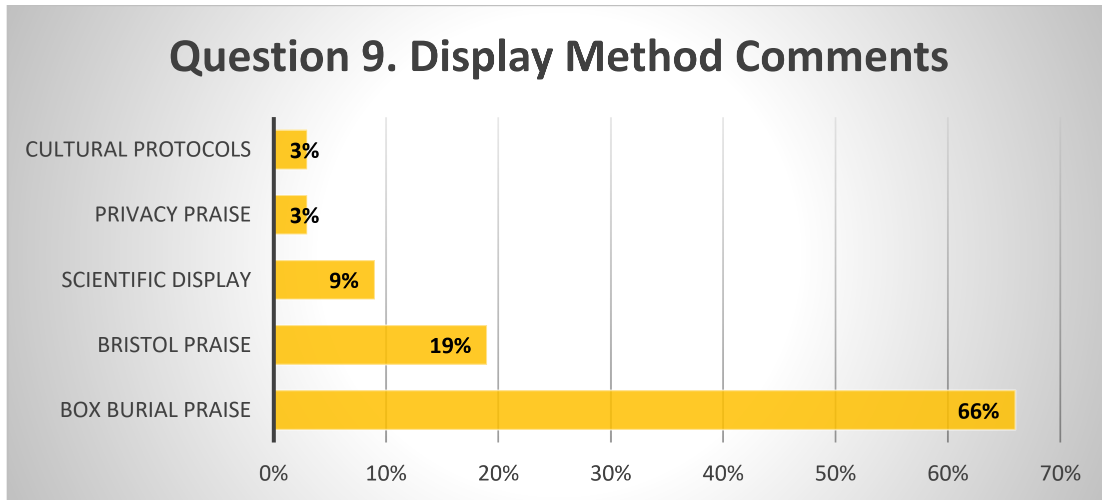


Figure 42. Question 9: Visitor Comments Regarding Display Methods.

Demographic Data

As in Chapter 3, the demographic questions related to: 1) cultural affiliation, 2) gender, 3) age, 4) spiritual beliefs, 5) education level, and 6) familiarity with Indigenous repatriation movements. Demographic questions are provided in full in Appendix B, and the results are summarized in Table 28, below.

Table 28. Demographic Summary.

Broad Culture	Percent (n=121)	Gender	Percent (n=121)	Age Group	Percent (n=121)
European	74%	Woman	52%	70+	5%
Asian	11%	Man	47%	60-69	4%
N. American	8%	Other	1%	50-59	12%
African	5%	**Total**	**100%**	40-49	10%
S. American	1%			30-39	12%
Other group	7%			20-29	48%
Total	**N/A**			10-19	12%
				Total	**101%**

Spiritual Affiliation	Percent (n=109)	Education Level	Percent (n=121)	Familiar with Repatriation?	Percent (n=121)
None	36%	Bachelor's	48%	Yes, very	7%
Atheist	17%	Secondary	22%	Somewhat	30%
Protestant	11%	Graduate	17%	No	63%
Spiritual	7%	Other post-secondary	10%	**Total**	**100%**
Agnostic	7%	Elementary	2%		
Christian	4%	**Total**	**100%**		
Catholic	4%				
Buddhist	3%				
Hindu	2%				
Muslim	2%				
Pagan	2%				
Total	**N/A**				

Note: Percent columns do not always total 100% due to rounding error and non-mutually exclusive response options.

The majority of the sample of Bristol museum visitors self-identified as European (n=90; 74%). Of the European visitors, most (n=77; 64%) were British or English. Nine (7%) identified as coming from a culture that was not part of the predetermined list—e.g., Caribbean, Australian. Participants included a mix of genders, and the majority were young adults, aged 20-39 (n=72; 60%). Of the 109 visitors who provided their religious/spiritual beliefs, 44 (36%) stated that they held no spiritual beliefs. Another 20 (17%) identified as Atheist. The next largest group represented was Christians (including Catholics, Protestants, and undefined Christians). Twenty-three (19%) in total identified

with one of these Christian groups, most of whom (n=13; 11%) were Protestant. Fourty-eight percent (n=58) held a Bachelor's degree, and 22% (n=22) had a high school (secondary) education. Twenty-one (17%) held a graduate (Master's or Ph.D.) degree. The majority of Bristol visitors (n=76; 63%) were unfamiliar with Indigenous repatriation movements. Only thirty-six (30%) stated that they were somewhat familiar, and nine (7%) were very familiar.

Demographic Trends in Ethical Beliefs

As in Chapter 3, I evaluated potential links between demographic variables and ethical beliefs by comparing the demographic information of visitors with the most polarized responses to the survey questions. The participants of interest were: Group A) eight individuals who responded in Question 9 that human remains should *never* be displayed, and Group B) eight who stated in Question 1 that it is not important to display human remains respectfully, since human remains are objects. Individuals from Group A noted in open comments that display is unethical, dehumanizing, sensational, and that they would not want members of their own family to be displayed. Some also mentioned that human remains are inappropriate for children to see, and that photos would suffice for display rather than real human bodies. Participants from Group B did not seem to place importance on the treatment of the body after death.

As can be seen in Table 29, both groups were largely European (A: n=6; 75%; B: n=7; 88%), most of whom were also British (A: n=4; 50%; B: n=5; 63%). Group A, who believed human remains should not be displayed in museums, demonstrated no major trends in gender or age. Most (n=3; 38%) were aged 20-29, which is unremarkable given that the majority (48%) of the total sample belonged to this age group. Notably, 63% of Group A identified with some form of religion/spirituality, and only 38% (n=3) were Atheist or non-spiritual—compared with 53% Atheist/non-spiritual visitors in the larger sample. A high percentage of Group A (38%; n=3) held a graduate degree (Master's or Ph.D.), compared with 17% of the larger sample. Those who held graduate degrees were in STEM fields: Math, Engineering, and Physics. Most (n=6; 75%) were unfamiliar with Indigenous repatriation movements. One individual referred multiple times to recent deaths in his immediate family and his wishes for his loved ones' bodies, which may have influenced his responses.

Table 29. Demographic Information re: Visitors with Opposing Views.

Broad Culture	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
Europe	75%	88%
Asia	13%	13%
China	13%	0%
Canada	13%	0%
Australia	13%	0%
Total	**N/A**	**N/A**

Gender	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
Woman	50%	25%
Man	50%	75%
Other	0%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Age Group	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
70+	25%	0%
60-69	13%	0%
50-59	0%	0%
40-49	13%	25%
30-39	0%	0%
20-29	38%	75%
10-19	13%	0%
Total	**102%**	**100%**

Spiritual Affiliation	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
None/ Atheist	38%	75%
Protestant	13%	13%
Buddhist	0%	13%
Spiritual	13%	0%
Christian	13%	0%
Catholic	13%	0%
Muslim	13%	0%
Total	**N/A**	**N/A**

Education	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
Bachelor	13%	50%
Secondary	25%	25%
Graduate	38%	0%
Other post-secondary	13%	25%
Elementary	13%	0%
Total	**102%**	**100%**

Familiar with Repatriation?	A (n=8)	B (n=8)
Yes, very	0%	0%
Somewhat	25%	38%
No	75%	63%
Total	**100%**	**101%**

Note: Percent columns do not always total 100% due to rounding error and non-mutually exclusive response options.

Notable commonalities in Group B, who viewed human remains as objects, can be seen in gender, age, and spiritual beliefs. This group consisted of 75% (n=6) men, compared with 47% men in the total visitor sample. Another 75% (n=6) were aged 20-29, compared with 48% in the overall sample. Perhaps the strongest trend is that 75% (n=6) of Group B identified as Atheist or non-spiritual. There were no major trends in education level, but two individuals were teachers, and two worked in the health field. Given that human remains are typically displayed for educational purposes and to learn about health, it is perhaps unsurprising that people in these fields viewed human remains as educational tools. Like Group A, Group B was also largely (63%; n=5) unfamiliar with Indigenous repatriation movements.

These results echoed the main demographic connection identified in Chapter 3: that people who hold spiritual beliefs, regardless of their affiliation with any particular religion, are more concerned with the respectful treatment of human remains than Atheists or people with no spiritual beliefs. Likewise, in the Bristol sample, highly educated individuals (with a graduate degree) were concerned with the respectful treatment of human remains, and men were more likely than women to view human remains as objects and/or educational tools.

Chapter Summary

Taken together, results of the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery visitor surveys reinforce the importance of the respectful display of human remains. The vast majority of visitors identified respectful display as important—both when asked explicitly, and without prompting in open comments. The mummy and box burial exhibits were also considered appropriate and respectful by the majority of visitors. In particular, the box burial, which used a radically transparent approach to humanize the remains and engage visitors with the ethical dilemma of whether they should be displayed, was highly praised. Many appreciated having the choice to view the box burial (or not). However, its light-up element was perceived as sensationalistic to some.

Humanizing approaches were identified as the *most* important and effective way of displaying human remains "with respect". These include: 1) following the cultural protocols of the deceased, when known; 2) explicitly reminding visitors of the humanity of the remains; and 3) using personal pronouns and details regarding the deceased. A lesser number of visitors identified providing privacy as an important way of respectfully displaying human remains.

The majority of the visitors surveyed were European, and, unsurprisingly given the museum's location, British. Most were aged 20-39, Atheist or non-spiritual, with some post-secondary education. The Bristol visitors were generally unfamiliar with Indigenous repatriation movements, and included a mix of genders. A comparison between demographic information and survey responses suggested that people who hold spiritual beliefs are the most concerned with respecting human remains. Highly educated individuals were also concerned with respectful treatment, while men were more likely to consider human remains objects and/or educational tools.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Conclusions

In this dissertation I have explored a broad ethical challenge faced by museum professionals: How can archaeological human remains be used for educational and scientific needs, while also showing respect for descendant communities and for the deceased? I addressed three questions relating to this challenge: 1) How has the display of human remains changed over time—particularly in Anglo-North America and Western Europe?; 2) How does the public in North America feel about the display of human remains?; and 3) How can human remains be respectfully displayed?

The objectives of the study were: 1) to explore ethical challenges for museums in relation to the display of human remains; 2) to facilitate public engagement with ethical discourse about the display of human remains; 3) to explore the concept of "respectful display"; and, if possible, 4) to make recommendations for respectful display of human remains. These questions and objectives were addressed using the principles of New Museology and radical transparency, namely by presenting ethical challenges to the public and museum visitors, and proactively encouraging them to engage with ethical decision-making by way of participation in surveys.

In this concluding chapter I bring together the results of my dissertation to address my research questions and objectives. I begin by answering each of my research questions: 1) How has the display of human remains has changed over time?; 2) How does the public in (Anglo-) North America feel about the exhibition of human remains?; and 3) How can human remains be respectfully displayed? Next, I identify the potential influence of various demographic factors on the survey responses, summarize my findings, and discuss how my research met its objectives. I finish the chapter with recommendations for museum professionals considering the exhibition of human remains, and concluding thoughts on the significance and future of this line of inquiry.

How Has the Display of Human Remains Changed Over Time?

Human remains have been exhibited in various contexts over time. Early displays in Europe served religious and commemorative purposes. Christian relics, catacomb saints, and *memento mori* were seen as connections to saints, reminders of the honours

bestowed on so-called martyrs, bridges to the past, and reminders of death and the need for redemption. During the Victorian era, commemorative displays of death increased due to high mortality rates, increasing wealth among the middle class, and the belief that death should be celebrated as a return to God.

In the twentieth century, as Westerners became increasingly secular and were exposed to the mass, horrific deaths of the World Wars, belief in the afterlife waned and death became feared rather than celebrated. In addition, postcolonial, decolonization, Indigenous rights, and repatriation movements forced museum professionals to rethink their practices and to question who has the right to study and display the dead. Professional guidelines and legislation that resulted from these discussions encouraged respect for human remains and for originating communities.

Many museum professionals now acknowledge ethical issues with the historical collection of human remains—particularly relating to Indigenous and colonized peoples, and people who were added to "race collections". However, uncontested remains are still commonly displayed in museums. These include religious/reverential displays, anatomical displays, remains of people held in World Culture collections (though this situation seems to be changing even at the time of writing), archaeological remains, and ancient/evolutionary remains. Such exhibits generally do not generate controversy when they are displayed for religious or educational purposes. However, discussion of the ethical treatment of the remains of Indigenous Ancestors, colonized peoples, and non-White "races" have led some museum professionals to proactively reconsider the display of even uncontested remains.

This study is the first to document informal decision-making practices for the display of human remains. In Anglo-North America, ethical guidelines and legislation focus on repatriation and the ethical treatment of Indigenous Ancestors (e.g., Canadian Museums Association 2006; Hill and Nicks 1992; United States Congress 1989, 1990). Personal communications with North American museum professionals revealed that the default assumption is that Indigenous ancestral remains should not be displayed. For uncontested archaeological remains, many museum professionals make decisions on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the wishes of: 1) the individual (if known); 2) kin/community (if known); and 3) state representatives. Another common theme identified among North American museum professionals was that the cultural protocols

of the deceased should be respected when they are known. However, cultural protocols can be difficult to identify for ancient remains, particularly when the lifeways of their descendants have changed over time due to external forces like colonialism.

In Western Europe, ethical policies cover the treatment of *all* human remains (e.g., Department for Culture, Media, and Sport [DCMS] 2005 [United Kingdom]; Edson 2005; German Museums Association 2013; Netherlands Museums Association 2011; Groupe de Travail sur la Problematique des Restes Humains dans les Collections Publiques 2018 [France]). Personal communications with European museum professionals identified consultation and respecting cultural protocols as common guiding principles for decision-making about display of culturally affiliated human remains. For uncontested remains, trends included case-by-case decision-making, display for educational purposes only, and the inclusion of adequate contextual information. Some European professionals noted that when deciding whether to display human remains they take into account visitor sensitivities, the deceased's identity and antiquity, and whether the individual suffered a violent death.

Guiding principles identified by both Anglo-North American and Western European museum professionals when deciding whether to display human remains included the importance of: 1) consultation and consent from originating or descendant communities; 2) following the cultural protocols of the deceased, when known; and 3) only displaying human remains for clear, educational purposes. Some museum professionals have additionally begun to experiment with innovative, "respectful" approaches when displaying uncontested remains.

How Does the Public in North America Feel About The Display of Human Remains?

The intent of this question was to identify factors that influence public opinions about whether the display of human remains is ethical. This study does not claim to speak for *all* North American beliefs. However, a number of interesting trends were identified in this North American sample group. Most participants believed that human remains should be displayed for educational purposes, depending on a number of factors. Consent from the deceased or their descendants was consistently identified as highly important. Concerns about display centered around proximity to the respondent in

relationship and time: many were uncomfortable with the display of close relatives and people who died less than 100 years ago. Others indicated that it is inappropriate to display individuals who suffered a violent death.

When asked *how* human remains should be displayed, the North American respondents overwhelmingly identified humanizing display methods as the most important way of showing respect. These include: following the cultural protocols of the deceased, explicitly reminding visitors of the remains' humanity, and humanizing them through the use of personal pronouns or personal details. Some participants also suggested employing signage alerting visitors to the presence of remains, so that they may either prepare themselves to view the remains respectfully, or avoid viewing them.

In open comments, respondents reiterated the importance of the respectful treatment of human remains in museums, and noted that the survey encouraged them to continue to reflect on the issues at hand, and to question their assumptions and expectations about museums. These comments demonstrate that the surveys achieved their goal of proactively encouraging the public to take part in and engage with critical issues and ethical decision-making for museums.

How Can Human Remains Be Displayed Respectfully?

A number of experimental approaches have been employed in efforts to respect human remains in museum exhibits. Broadly, these consist of: 1) creating respectful encounters; 2) humanizing the remains; and 3) encouraging ethical reflection. In the past, these methods were evaluated primarily by museum professionals, many of whom praised all three ways of showing respect. The majority of professional and public criticism focused on creating respectful encounters by providing privacy. Museum scholars and visitors compared exhibits in English museums that covered human remains to Victorian censorship of genitalia in Classical art, while the popular media complained that covering remains was political correctness gone too far.

This study demonstrated that the majority of visitors to the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery appreciated the museum's provision of privacy for mummies in the Egypt Gallery. However, when asked to identify which experimental method(s) of showing respect is/are *most* important, providing privacy was consistently not as popular as humanizing

approaches. The North American public likewise did not identify providing privacy as an important way to show respect when exhibiting human remains. It may be that Bristol visitors were accepting of this practice when its intentions were explained conversationally during the survey, but that other techniques are preferred.

Some of the North American participants suggested an alternative means of creating a respectful encounter with human remains: signage alerting visitors to the presence of the remains. As has been previously noted, signage allows visitors the chance to either prepare themselves to view human remains respectfully, or to avoid viewing them. If the signage also employed radical transparency by communicating ethical issues, visitors could make an informed choice of whether to view the remains.

Emphasizing the humanity of the deceased has been universally well-received by museum professionals, the Bristol visitor sample, and the North American sample group. Both the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery visitors and the North American sample overwhelmingly identified humanizing display methods as the most important way of showing respect when exhibiting human remains. Popular humanizing techniques included following the cultural protocols of the deceased, including personal details in exhibits (e.g., biographical information, items that remind viewers of the deceased's everyday life), using personal vs. object pronouns (e.g., "she" vs. "it"), and explicitly reminding visitors that the remains once belonged to a living person.

Providing visitors the option to view human remains was highly appreciated by museum professionals and visitors alike. Generating introspection by posing an ethical dilemma and asking visitors to choose whether or not to view human remains was not evaluated in the online North American surveys since this approach requires more than a cursory explanation. However, generating introspection *was* evaluated in practice, in the form of the box burial exhibit at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Bristol visitors who experienced the exhibit highly regarded it. A number of visitors commended the box burial in open-ended comments, noting that they appreciated the museum's efforts, and would continue to consider these issues going forward.

Critiques of the box burial focused on its easy-to-miss implementation and accidental sensationalism. An alternative means of providing visitors the option to view human remains might entail keeping them in a separate room or alcove and indicating their

presence at the entrance. Such an approach may be preferable to providing the option to illuminate or uncover remains, in that it may be viewed as less sensationalistic.

Demographic Considerations

Demographic data were collected from the North American sample group and from visitors to the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery to better understand factors that may influence beliefs about the ethical display of human remains. Specifically, participants' self-identified cultural affiliation, gender, age, spiritual beliefs, education level, and knowledge of Indigenous repatriation movements were collected.

The North American survey respondents were mostly Canadian women, of European descent, aged 20-49 (most of whom were in the 20-39 age category), with post-secondary education. The majority identified as Atheist, Agnostic, or non-spiritual, and were at least somewhat knowledgeable about Indigenous repatriation movements. Participants who believed it is unethical to display any human remains in museums were generally Euro-Canadian women who held some form of spiritual beliefs. A relatively high proportion of this group also held graduate degrees (Master's or Ph.D.). Notably, all of those who identified human remains as objects that do not require special treatment were Atheists or non-spiritual individuals. Most were men, aged 40-49. Based on these results, it is likely that spirituality influences beliefs about the ethical treatment of human remains in museums. It is also possible that gender and education level impact public opinions.

The overall sample of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery visitors was largely British, with post-secondary education and a mix of genders. Most were young adults, aged 20-39, and were Atheist or non-spiritual. In contrast with the North American group, most Bristol visitors were not familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements. Visitors who disagreed with the display of human remains in museums were largely individuals who held spiritual beliefs of some sort, and a relatively high percentage also held graduate (Master's or Ph.D.) degrees. The majority of those who viewed human remains as educational tools were men, and Atheist or non-spiritual. The Bristol visitor survey results thus reinforce the tentative demographic hypothesis put forth in Chapter 3: that spirituality (or lack thereof) influences ethical beliefs about the treatment of human

remains in museums. The findings from these sample groups also suggest gender and education-based differences in beliefs.

Other variables that may influence public opinions about the ethical treatment of human remains include field of study/work and personal circumstances. For example, those who study or work in medical or educational fields may be more likely to view human remains as educational tools, whereas those who have studied Anthropology or similarly critical social science fields may be more attuned to and critical of unethical museum collecting in the past, performed in the name of Western science and colonialism. Personal circumstances such as a recent death in the family may influence opinions about the treatment of human remains in that it may cause the visitor to picture their recently departed loved one on display in a museum.

When overall demographic information was compared across the two groups, a number of similarities and differences emerged. There were no significant differences in age, education level, or spiritual beliefs: the majority of both groups consisted of primarily young adults with post-secondary education, who held Atheistic or no spiritual beliefs. In contrast, the majority of the North American sample comprised Euro-Canadian women, while the Bristol sample was mostly British, with an even mix of genders. The North American public was generally somewhat or very familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements, while most of the Bristol visitors were unfamiliar with repatriation issues in museums. It is not surprising that the North American participants were more familiar with repatriation concerns than the British group due to their geographical proximity to Indigenous communities—many of whom are outspoken and politically powerful in North America.

Until now, knowledge of Indigenous repatriation movements has not been evaluated in relation to its potential influence on beliefs about the ethical treatment of human remains in museums. This is because there were not obvious differences in knowledge of repatriation *within* each group. However, if knowledge of Indigenous repatriation movements leads to increased sensitivity toward the display of *any* human remains, the North American group as a whole should be less accepting of the display of human remains than the Bristol group, given their self-identified familiarity with repatriation issues. Table 30 summarizes the opinions of the North American group and the Bristol

museum visitors in response to Questions 1 and 9 from Chapters 3 and 5, respectively: Should human remains be displayed in museums?

Table 30. Summary of North American and Bristol Visitor Opinions: Should Human Remains be Displayed in Museums?

Should Human Remains Be Displayed in Museums?	North American Public (n=122)	Bristol Visitors (n=59)
Yes	49%	61%
Depends/conflicted…	47%	24%
No, never	4%	15%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Compared with the Bristol visitors (n=36; 61%), a lower proportion of the North American group (n=60; 49%) agreed with the display of human remains. Almost half (n=57; 47%) of the North American group identified nuance in whether human remains should be displayed ("it depends"), versus 24% (n=14) of the Bristol visitors—some of whom stated that they were conflicted about whether remains should be displayed after visiting the Egypt Gallery. A higher proportion of Bristol visitors (n=9; 15%) stated that human remains should never be displayed in museums.

It seems that the North American public, who are generally more aware of issues surrounding the retention of Indigenous Ancestors, was more likely than the Bristol group to identify nuance in whether display is ethical. North American respondents also consistently identified the importance of consent for the display of human remains—whether from the individual or their descendants. These results suggest that popular discourse about repatriation and decolonization in North America may have not only shaped professional practice, but also influenced public sentiments about ethical museum practice.

Although Bristol visitors were generally more accepting of the display of human remains than the North American public, they were less accepting than members of the English public in past surveys. In addition, a higher proportion of the Bristol visitors were opposed to the display of *any* human remains in museums. As noted in Chapter 1, past public and visitor surveys in England showed overwhelming (73-91%) support for the display of human remains in museums. In contrast, in the present study only 61% of

Bristol visitors agreed with the display of human remains. Twenty-four percent were conflicted about whether display is ethical, and 15% believed displaying human remains to be unethical. It is likely that this difference is a result of the Bristol visitors' experiences in the gallery, where radically transparent interpretation and engagement in a conversational survey encouraged them to meaningfully consider ethical issues relating to human remains in museums. Some visitors even explicitly identified their experience in the gallery as the reason for their newfound uncertainty about whether it is right to display human remains.

Interestingly, some visitors to the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery who were unfamiliar with Indigenous repatriation movements asked for an explanation. After I briefly described historical collecting practices, including the theft of ancestral remains, many visitors were wholly supportive of repatriation. The Bristol survey results thus suggest that museums have the capacity to encourage social change through public engagement and radical transparency, in accordance with the principles of New Museology—even when pre-existing knowledge of critical issues is lacking.

My hypothesized connections between demographic variables and ethical beliefs should be interpreted cautiously, since they cannot be comprehensively examined in this small-scale, pilot study. In addition, ethical beliefs about the treatment of human remains are complex, and may be impacted by a combination of variables, specific cultural practices, and/or personal experiences that are not readily apparent in a brief museum survey. Nevertheless, the potential links between spirituality, gender, education level, and beliefs about the ethical treatment of human remains in museums are intriguing and merit further investigation using samples from other populations and/or large-scale quantitative analyses.

Summary and Discussion

To reiterate, the four objectives of this study were: 1) to explore ethical challenges for museums in relation to the display of human remains; 2) to facilitate public engagement with ethical discourse about the display of human remains; 3) to explore the concept of "respectful display"; and, if possible, 4) to make recommendations for respectful display of human remains. The first objective was met in Chapter 2, which documented historical body collection and display, and contemporary trends in display ethics. Many museums

now refrain from displaying contested human remains, but uncontested remains are still commonly displayed in religious, educational, and anatomical contexts. In addition, World Culture exhibits sometimes include uncontested human remains such as *tsantsas*—though this practice may be in decline. Ancient archaeological remains from Europe and Egypt are also still commonly displayed.

Factors that influence museum professionals' decisions about whether it is ethical to exhibit human remains include: the purpose of the display (i.e., whether the display is educational), and whether there was consultation and consent when remains are affiliated with a known descendant or originating community. Principles for ethical and respectful display that were identified by museum professionals included providing adequate cultural and educational context to situate the remains, and following the cultural protocols of the deceased when possible/known. When deciding whether display is ethical, museum professionals considered the cultural affiliation of the departed, whether they suffered a violent death, and visitor sensitivities. However, the museum professionals cited in this study noted that ethical obligations toward the deceased take priority over visitor sensitivities.

In relation to the second objective, this work succeeded in engaging the public with ethical discourse relating to the display of human remains. The North American and Bristol surveys encouraged participants to think more deeply about critical ethical issues for museums. A number of North American respondents identified ethical dilemmas that were the inspiration for this study, and both North American and Bristol participants noted that they would continue to reflect on these issues going forward.

Common themes in public opinions from both groups are: 1) displays should be respectful, and 2) proximity to the viewer in relationship and time influences sensitivity to display. Members of the public were less comfortable with the exhibition of individuals closely related to them, and those who died less than 100 years ago. This finding may be a result of modern discomfort with death, owing to advances in modern medicine and rising secularism in the twentieth century. It is also possible that people are comfortable with viewing the dead in theory—without acknowledging the reality that every deceased individual was someone's family or loved one.

At the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, visitors were engaged with ethical issues relating to the display of human remains through experimental exhibits, and through their experience in completing a conversational survey about the ethical and respectful display of human remains. A number of visitors were particularly appreciative of the box burial's radically transparent approach, and some stated that they would continue to consider these critical ethical issues going forward. Most Bristol participants were not aware of repatriation movements and ethical issues relating to the historical theft or otherwise unethical collection of the remains of people from historically marginalized groups. However, those who asked for an explanation were supportive of repatriation. In addition, the opinions of Bristol visitors differed remarkably from those of the English public in past surveys—demonstrating that radical transparency, public engagement, and thought-provoking exhibition techniques have the potential to influence social change.

The third objective—to explore the concept of respectful display—was addressed through a literature review (Chapter 4), public surveys (Chapter 3), and visitor surveys (Chapter 5). The literature review summarized past evaluations of respectful display methods written by museum scholars. These researchers noted that dimmed lighting and covering human remains generated complaints of poor visibility, sensationalism (when the option is given to uncover the remains), and political correctness gone too far. Display pods, as used at the National Museum of Ireland, were praised by museum scholars for providing privacy and the option to view remains. Emphasizing the humanity of exhibited remains and generating introspection and dialogue have been praised by museum professionals. However, the Manchester Museum's attempts to generate dialogue by covering Egyptian mummies demonstrates that museums should clearly communicate the intentions of experimental techniques.

The North American and Bristol surveys illuminated *public* opinions about how to respectfully display human remains. The North American surveys asked about respectful display in theory, while the Bristol surveys focused on evaluating innovative, respectful techniques in practice. Humanizing techniques were particularly popular, along with exhibits that generated ethical reflection. Central themes that emerged from both surveys were the importance of: 1) following the cultural protocols of the deceased; 2) including personal and/or humanizing details when exhibiting human remains; 3)

transparency about ethical issues and the intentions of innovative practices; and 4) including visitors in dialogue about critical ethical issues.

It is notable that, without prompting, visitors chose following cultural protocols of the deceased as the most respectful display method. Consultation with and consent from originating communities is considered best practice in the museum profession, but this was not communicated in the surveys. The surveys thus confirm that respecting originating communities is not only important to originating communities themselves and their relationships with museums, but it is also important to museum visitors, and is an effective way of conveying respect through museum exhibits.

Providing privacy through dimmed lighting and/or covering remains was not as popular with visitors. Preferable methods of providing privacy may involve warning visitors of the presence of human remains using signage, and offering them the option to enter a secluded viewing area. This would not only provide privacy for the remains, but also offer visitors who choose to view them the chance to prepare themselves for a respectful encounter.

Recommendations for the Ethical Display of Human Remains

Considering this information together, I offer two sets of recommendations for ethical decision-making about the display of human remains in museums:

Affiliated Remains

A. Contested remains should not be displayed (i.e., against the wishes of originating/descendant communities).

B. If there is an identifiable originating/descendant community, consult with them about whether repatriation, retention, or display is appropriate.

C. If display is deemed appropriate, remains should be exhibited in accordance with the community's wishes, in a culturally appropriate manner.

Uncontested Remains

A. When remains are not affiliated with an identifiable modern descendant community, consider:

   i. Whether the deceased's spiritual or cultural affiliation suggests that display would be inappropriate or harmful.

   ii. Whether display is justified by a clear, educational purpose.

B. If display is deemed appropriate, do so with respect:

   i. Follow the cultural protocols of the deceased, if known.

   ii. If culturally appropriate methods are unknown, consider approaches that convey respect, such as:

      i. Humanizing the remains.

      ii. Providing visitors the option to view remains or not, and alerting them to approach with respect (e.g., signage and secluded displays).

      iii. Radically transparent exhibits that inform and engage visitors with ethical issues.

Conclusions

This research makes both theoretical and practical contributions to museological and archaeological scholarship. Specifically, this study has generated and documented novel ethical discourse by proactively engaging both museum professionals and the public: illuminating trends in ethical beliefs, and identifying cultural factors that may influence such beliefs. Practical contributions come in the form of recommendations for museum professionals, which may be applied informally or used to inform ethical policies and guidelines. Museum scholars may also use this work as a baseline for international discourse about the respectful treatment of human remains—using representative samples of participants from other demographic groups.

By suggesting a link between knowledge of repatriation movements and beliefs about the ethical display of human remains, this study sheds light on the ongoing legacies of Indigenous rights movements. Decolonization, Indigenous rights, and repatriation

movements influenced many museum professionals and academics to reconsider the authority of museums and their ethical practices. This study has illuminated the impacts of these movements not only on museum professionals, but also on public consciousness in settler nations. In addition, it has shown the potential of museums as effective venues to engage the public with critical social issues.

Many museums in North America and Europe are now moving toward more sensitive practices, and away from the "science-*uber-alles*" mentality that characterized early colonial museums. In addition, museums that adhere to the principles of New Museology are increasingly looking outward—to originating communities and the public—to inform their practices.

Unresolved issues for the ethical display of human remains relate to uncontested remains without identifiable descendant communities to speak for them. Body collection has historically taken place without consent—not only from Indigenous, colonized, and non-White "races", but also from other marginalized groups such as the poor, criminals, and socially and biologically "deviant" individuals (e.g., unwed mothers and people with atypical anatomy). Though many of these people did not experience colonialism or scientific racism—which many museum professionals now acknowledge is unethical—they were still marginalized, mistreated, and added to museum collections without their consent. In addition, many archaeological remains are not affiliated with a single, cohesive descendant community. In such cases, it is not possible to ask for consent to display human remains, nor what is culturally appropriate. These challenges merit further investigation. In the meantime we may look to public opinions for guidance as to their respectful treatment.

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Appendix A.

North American Public Survey Questionnaire

Question 1. Do you think museums should display human remains?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, never
- ☐ Depends on... (please specify in Questions 2-3)

Question 2. Are the following human remains acceptable to display? Check boxes for yes, leave blank for no:

- ☐ Human bones
- ☐ Mummified human remains
- ☐ Cremated human remains
- ☐ Human remains dating from less than 100 years ago
- ☐ Human remains dating to more than 100 years ago
- ☐ Remains of known/named individuals
- ☐ Remains of unknown individuals
- ☐ Remains of individuals who died in a violent way
- ☐ Remains of historical/famous figures
- ☐ Archaeological human remains that would be destroyed if they were not dug up (e.g., due to construction)
- ☐ Archaeological human remains dug up for research/study
- ☐ Remains of someone closely related to you
- ☐ Remains of a distantly-related individual (e.g., a distant ancestor)
- ☐ Remains of someone unrelated to you
- ☐ Remains of individuals who gave consent for display
- ☐ Remains of individuals whose descendants gave consent for their display
- ☐ None of the above

Question 3. Comments/clarifications (optional):

____

Question 4. For what reason(s) is it acceptable to display human remains?

- ☐ For educational purposes (move on to Question 6)
- ☐ For any reason (move on to Question 6)
- ☐ Human remains should NOT be displayed for any reason (move on to Question 6)
- ☐ Other (please specify in Question 5)

Question 5. “Other” reason(s):

____

Question 6. Is it important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums?

- ☐ Yes - remains were/are people (move on to Question 8)
- ☐ Yes - other reason (please specify in Question 7)
- ☐ No - remains are objects we can learn from (move on to Question 8)
- ☐ No - other reason (please specify in Question 7)

Question 7. “Other reason”:

____

Question 8. What are respectful ways to display human remains? Check all that are relevant:

- ☐ Dark, quiet space
- ☐ Given privacy/partly hidden
- ☐ Hidden with the option to view fully
- ☐ Humanized (with personal details/pronouns)
- ☐ Reminding visitors they are viewing a person
- ☐ Mimicking burial/discovery context
- ☐ Following cultural protocols of the deceased
- ☐ Scientific/clinical displays
- ☐ N/A - it is not important to display human remains in any particular way
- ☐ Other (please specify in Question 9)

Question 9. “Other” display method:

____

Question 10 . Which of the above methods is/are *most* important way of showing respect? List most important first (optional):

____

Question 11. Do you have any other comments about if/how human remains should be displayed? (Optional):

____

Question 12 . How do you identify your culture(s)? Option to provide more specific culture:

- ☐ North American: ______________________________
- ☐ European: ______________________________
- ☐ Asian: ______________________________
- ☐ South American: ______________________________
- ☐ African: ______________________________
- ☐ Indigenous: ______________________________
- ☐ Other: ______________________________

Question 13. How do you identify your gender? (Optional):

- ☐ Other: ______________________________
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Question 14. In which decade were you born?

- ☐ 2000–2005
- ☐ 1990–1999
- ☐ 1980–1989
- ☐ 1970–1979
- ☐ 1960–1969
- ☐ 1950–1959
- ☐ 1940s or earlier

Question 15. How would you define your spiritual beliefs (e.g., Agnostic, Animist, Atheist, Catholic, Muslim, Pagan, Protestant)? (Optional):

____

Question 16. What is your highest level of education (completed or in progress)?

- Elementary/primary school
- Secondary/high school
- Other post-secondary education
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's or Ph.D.

Option to provide field of study/work:

____

Question 17. Are you familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements (e.g., returning ancestral remains from museums to their communities)?

- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- No

Appendix B.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery Visitor Survey Questionnaire

Question 1. Is it important for human remains to be displayed in a "respectful" way in museums?

- ☐ Yes - remains were/are people
- ☐ Yes - other reason
- ☐ No - remains are objects we can learn from
- ☐ No - other reason

Question 2. "Other reason" (optional):

____

Question 3. What are respectful ways to display human remains? Check all that are relevant:

- ☐ Dark, quiet space
- ☐ Given privacy/partly hidden
- ☐ Hidden with the option to view fully
- ☐ Humanized (with personal details/pronouns)
- ☐ Reminding visitors they are viewing a person
- ☐ Mimicking burial/discovery context
- ☐ Following cultural protocols of the deceased
- ☐ Scientific/clinical displays
- ☐ N/A - it is not important to display human remains in any particular way
- ☐ Other

Question 4. "Other" display method(s) (optional):

____

Question 5. Which of these is/are *most* important way of showing respect? List most important first (optional):

____

Question 6 . Do you see any downsides of these methods? Do you still get as much out of them?

____

Question 7 . Is the Egyptian box burial display (in the light-up case) appropriate/worthwhile?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Question 8. Are the mummy displays (dark with lids partly open) appropriate/worthwhile?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Question 9. Do you have any other comments about if/how human remains should be displayed? (Optional):

____

Question 10 . How do you identify your culture(s)? Option to provide more specific culture:

- ☐ North American: ______________________________
- ☐ European: ______________________________
- ☐ Asian: ______________________________
- ☐ South American: ______________________________
- ☐ African: ______________________________
- ☐ Indigenous: ______________________________
- ☐ Other: ______________________________

Question 11. How do you identify your gender? (Optional):

- ☐ Other: ______________________________
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Question 12. In which decade were you born?

- ☐ 2000–2005
- ☐ 1990–1999
- ☐ 1980–1989
- ☐ 1970–1979
- ☐ 1960–1969
- ☐ 1950–1959
- ☐ 1940s or earlier

Question 13. How would you define your spiritual beliefs (e.g., Agnostic, Animist, Atheist, Catholic, Muslim, Pagan, Protestant)? (Optional):

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Question 14. What is your highest level of education (completed or in progress)?

- ☐ Elementary/primary school
- ☐ Secondary/high school
- ☐ Other post-secondary education
- ☐ Bachelor’s degree
- ☐ Master’s or Ph.D.

Option to provide field of study/work:

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Question 15. Are you familiar with Indigenous repatriation movements (e.g., returning ancestral remains from museums to their communities)?

- ☐ Yes, very
- ☐ Yes, somewhat
- ☐ No