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## MUSEUMS IN THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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### Introduction

The effects of climate change currently include not only extreme weather events, sea-level rise, melting glaciers, floods, and droughts, but also refugee crises, public health emergencies, military conflict, eco-cities for the super-rich, and reckless experiments in geo-engineering. As sociologist Christian Parenti (2011) reminds us, the social and natural impacts of climate change are not distributed evenly but are felt most severely by communities already impacted by histories of racism, colonialism, and poverty—the communities least responsible for producing greenhouse gases. The global inequalities deepened by climate change are altering the very makeup of the communities that museums are entrusted to serve.

In the face of climate emergency, many in the museum sector are asking what it means to be relevant to these communities today. Some museum workers are calling for greater inclusivity and accessibility, and for more sustained engagement with marginalized communities. Museums are diversifying their understanding of audience and expanding their tactics for political advocacy. Too often, however, the concepts of relevance, inclusivity, diversity, and participation lead museums to reinforce their claims to authoritative neutrality (Janes 2009: 59), diverting those of us working in museums from the deeper existential question that we ought to be asking: *What is the role and responsibility of the museum in a time of climate crisis?* The problem is not whether or not our institutions are relevant, but for whom and to what end.

This chapter argues that, in order for museums to matter in a time of climate crisis, they must first reject the claim to political neutrality that structures and limits their transformative social power. After briefly unpacking the discourse on relevance in museums and examining the dominant assumptions and justifications that lead to passivity and inaction, we will offer a divergent perspective on museum relevance, turning to recent initiatives organized by The Natural History Museum (of which we are representatives) to make our case. The Natural History Museum was founded by the activist art collective Not An Alternative in 2014 as both a mobile museum and an activist organization. Working with artists, scientists, environmental justice advocates, Native Nations,<sup>1</sup> and museum professionals, The Natural History Museum organizes exhibitions and public programs that re-interpret nature from

the perspective of environmental justice, connecting grassroots social movements to historical and contemporary political conflicts that are buried in many museums. These projects connect movements to museums and museums to movements, fostering a growing coalition of museum workers, activist scientists, and front-line communities in order to lay the foundation for what we term the *museum for the commons*.

Museums, like libraries and universities, are protectors of the knowledge commons, the vast resource of shared knowledge that is collectively created and sustained for the benefit of all. As social resources, museums can, and should, play an important role in educating the public about the unpredictable and overlapping effects of climate change on the earth's ecological and social systems. The Natural History Museum demonstrates how they can also function as infrastructural supports for grassroots activist mobilization, champions of science for the common good, and advocates for an equitable, sustainable, and just future. In the climate emergency, museum relevance should be linked to the struggle to secure the common good.

### The limits of neutrality

Museums have always adapted themselves to the volatile social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental conditions in which they are enmeshed. Since the late 1960s, social unrest galvanized by the growing civil rights and Red Power movements have impelled many US museums to address the racist assumptions underpinning their curatorial and collecting practices (Cahan 2016). More recently, the climate crisis has provoked science and natural history museums to challenge their close relations to corporate funding from the fossil fuel industry. In 2016, both Tate Galleries in London and the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York parted ways with longstanding fossil fuel industry partners in the face of massive grassroots pressure. The AMNH joined the California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco, California), Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), the Field Museum (Chicago, Illinois), and the Australian Academy of Science (Canberra, Australia), among others, by announcing its commitment to divest from fossil fuels. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) has dedicated its first major in-house exhibition in four decades to the topic of the Anthropocene, the new geologic epoch that marks the global reach and geologic extent of anthropogenic impacts on earth systems.

Emergencies put into question the relevance of museums that are already locked into five or ten-year plans. They also provide openings for political engagement and opportunities to repurpose museums as activist institutions—as politicized agents in struggle. Emergencies do not merely force museums to take stands on important social and political issues. They also undo the innocence of political neutrality as it is claimed by most museums.

As Robert Janes notes, contemporary museums widely adhere to 'authoritative neutrality': they identify themselves as ideologically neutral spaces for balanced representation and reasoned debate, maintaining that they must preserve their neutrality 'lest they fall prey to bias, trendiness and special interest groups' (Janes 2009: 59). They locate themselves on the sidelines of crisis, often justifying their passivity by claiming that they do not have the resources or knowledge to address new or controversial issues. This argument, or rather excuse, becomes increasingly tenuous as we face the globally-threatening emergency represented by runaway climate change. Historian Howard Zinn's famous argument that 'You can't be neutral on

a moving train' (Zinn 1994) is apropos. As the extraction economy drives species toward mass extinction and endangers human and non-human communities alike, the passivity of many contemporary museums toward the world's biggest polluters is equivalent to consent. The question of the climate emergency forces us to consider the shifting backdrop for museum practice. What new demands does the climate emergency place on institutions? How can museums rise to the challenge of this emergency, and whose interests should they serve?

### Relevance—to what end?

Today, many in the museum sector feel an overarching imperative to be relevant. Although museums continue to be as popular and trusted as ever (American Alliance of Museums 2015), curators, exhibition designers, programming staff, and marketers wish to ensure that they provoke fascination and excitement, not boredom or distrust. In her popular book *The Art of Relevance*, Nina Simon (2016) argues that museums must create relevance rather than simply assuming that it already exists. Simon contends that by considering how, and to whom, museums can become relevant, museum professionals can create exhibitions that are meaningful to different, new, and changing audiences. Centralizing the question of relevance in museum practice can help institutions facilitate new relationships with people of color and other communities that remain underserved and underrepresented, consequently increasing the diversity of museum audiences and broadening their bases of popular support (ibid.).

Finally, Simon argues that a strategy based on relevance promises to help demonstrate the success of exhibitions to donors, sponsors, and other potential funders. By promoting increasingly inclusive, responsive, and participatory museum practices, the emerging discourse on relevance promises to modernize museums—to push them beyond the authoritative neutrality and passivity underlying traditional museum practices. Relevance has become one of the dominant frameworks for understanding the transformative potential of museums today.

It is undeniable that museums should strive to be relevant to the constituencies they are entrusted to serve. However, when limited to the aims of broadening audiences and producing participatory points of entry for all people, the idea of relevance can become problematic and disempowering for institutions, particularly in the polarized political climate of the US. In the wake of the election of President Donald Trump, some advocates felt that museums needed to become more relevant to 'politically diverse' audiences. Noting the overwhelming prevalence of Democrats and liberals working in US museums, the Center for the Future of Museum's post-election blog entry explored the extent of the museum sector's claims to inclusivity:

If museums have a mandate for our staff to reflect our communities, shouldn't that encompass political outlook as well? And if we don't encompass political diversity, with all the perspectives about values, priorities and policy that go with that very important form of self-identification, doesn't that leave us vulnerable to being out of step with a huge segment of the public we, as nonprofits, have pledged to serve?

*(Merritt 2016)*

The visitor-centered approach to relevance invoked above can lead to damaging consequences for museums. Case in point: One of the primary arguments made by the Houston

Museum of Natural Sciences (HMNS, Houston, Texas) for not addressing the issue of anthropogenic climate change was that the institution's relationship with its visitors could be jeopardized if it even implicitly criticized the fossil fuel industry. As Carolyn Summers, Director of Astronomy and the Physical Sciences at HMNS stated, 'We don't need people to come in here and reject us' (Kuchment 2014).

The HMNS made the choice to react to its visitors; to format its exhibitions based on the pre-existing values and beliefs presumed to be shared by its audience. The institution's decision does not account for the truth that for many Houston residents, the fossil fuel industry is a perpetrator of environmental racism. In this instance, the motivation to be inclusive and visitor-focused has come at the cost of the museum's relevance and leadership as an institution for popular science education, as well as its relevance to the working-class communities of Houston—largely composed of people of color who live near fossil fuel refineries and bear the brunt of their health impacts. The demand for museums to be relevant to the greatest number of people can ultimately reinforce the widely-held position that they must extract themselves from political debate.

Contrary to the thesis that taking positions on contested social and political issues will turn visitors away and destroy public trust in museums, evidence suggests that museum visitors prefer museums that take official positions on pressing contemporary issues. According to a November 2016 *MuseumNext* survey of 1000 museumgoers, those who visit museums most often think that museums should take positions on social issues. More revealing, 33% of respondents felt that addressing social issues would make museums *more* relevant to their lives and that they would be *more* likely to visit such museums. Respondents under the age of 30 felt even more strongly that political advocacy would increase the relevance of museums to their lives (MuseumNext 2017).

Discussions about museum relevance tend to focus on how museums can be deemed relevant to their visitors, but not how museums can be relevant participants in the world. We argue that, faced with the catastrophic impacts of climate change, the relevance of a museum should be gauged by its ability to participate in the processes of social change necessary for planetary survival. In this sense, relevance may, and in many cases should, involve participation and co-production by communities on the frontlines of the climate emergency. But participation or co-production is only relevant when it leaves participants in a better position to protect their communities, defend habitats, or collectively mobilize for environmental justice.

Many museums clearly value our common resources. They engage in sustainability initiatives, educate patrons about the natural world and, as noted above, some have even divested from fossil fuel sponsors. These actions present tangible first steps that any endowed institution can take. They are most important not only for their potential impacts on the fossil fuel economy, but also for their symbolic value: they demonstrate the museum's official commitment to working toward a future beyond fossil fuels. Initiatives to 'green the museum' allow institutions to draw a line between themselves and the fossil fuel industry, suggesting concrete ways that museums can take the side of the commons.

By the commons, we mean the various aspects of planetary nature that we rely on in order to survive, such as air, water, and a habitable earth. But the commons also includes the wealth of knowledge institutionalized in public places like museums. The commons does not belong to any individual or corporation, but to all of us. Within our political economy, the commons has been enclosed. Nature is rendered as a resource to be extracted for profit and its death is

memorialized as a foregone conclusion, as natural history. Taking the side of the commons means taking a stand against the system which enables this plunder. It also means being clear that the roots of the ongoing climate emergency lie in the privatization of the commons.

An abundance of research confirms that climate change impacts such as weather-related disasters, water- and mosquito-borne disease, and long-term drought are disproportionately affecting the global poor. Both historically and in the present, wealthy consumers and corporations in the Global North bear the vast portion of responsibility for producing greenhouse gases and sustaining structural inequality (IPCC 2014: 6). However, when the topic of climate change is taken up by museums of science and natural history, many struggle to articulate this dynamic of inequality and responsibility, either by locating the cause and solution of global environmental problems in individual consumer choice and habit, or by choosing to focus on the correlation between climate change and global population growth. Such frameworks obscure the political and economic forces that contribute to environmental destruction, consequently smoothing out the massive inequalities in both responsibility and impact (Peña 2012). By suggesting that ‘the roots of this crisis are linked to overpopulation and, by extension, the Global South,’ museums indirectly blame the poor for global environmental degradation (Rutherford 2011: 32).

Museums should acknowledge that the products of a mere 100 companies are responsible for 71% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions (CDP Worldwide 2016) and that these same companies have an overwhelming influence on the environmental choices available to us all. Museums that take the side of the commons express this inconvenient truth. By shedding light on the precise political stakes of the current crisis, museums can empower visitors to move beyond the politically disabling feelings of guilt and helplessness, and toward the challenge of mobilizing resistance. By siding *with* the commons, museums also show themselves to be *part* of the commons—as simultaneously belonging to, and advocating for, the commons.

### **The Natural History Museum: a museum for the commons**

All museums can be vital resources for communities around the world that are seeking environmental and climate justice—healthy environments for all people and ecosystems regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, or class position. Not only do museums, and especially science and natural history museums, define the history and meaning of the natural world, but, they are also tasked with ‘foster[ing] an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse world we have inherited . . . [and] preserv[ing] that inheritance for posterity’ (American Alliance of Museums 1991). Some interpret this to mean that the museum is a mausoleum, a repository for bygone and disappearing objects, cultures, and peoples. By contrast, The Natural History Museum was founded on the hypothesis that museums of science and natural history can shape history in the present by revitalizing their public mandate, but only if they reject the claim of authoritative neutrality that constrains their ability to work in the interest of the commons.

As we have argued elsewhere, the claim to authoritative neutrality shields museums from the implications of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics, which includes investigating, exploring, and documenting the natural world and the impacts that particular social systems make on it (Lyons and Economopoulos 2015). Neutrality prevents museums from seeing (let alone acting upon) their transformative social power. In the face of the climate emergency, the claim to neutrality made by many large-scale science

institutions should be regarded only as an alibi for inaction. As the overwhelming majority of climate science predicts, without bold and immediate action from all sectors of society, there will be no livable future, let alone a future for museums. The only museum of the future will be one that champions the common good. The Natural History Museum was designed to model such a museum—a museum that functions both as an advocate and as infrastructure for environmental struggle.

Our experiment in the museum sector began as an earnest attempt to put the idea of authoritative neutrality into crisis, to make it appear as untenable as it actually is by exposing the entanglement of some of the largest natural history museums in the US with powerful representatives of the fossil fuel industry. What did it mean for David H. Koch—co-owner of Koch Industries, among the leading polluters in the US and a major funder of climate science disinformation to the tune of US\$79 million (Greenpeace 2015)—to occupy a board position at the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, two of the country's leading and most treasured science institutions? Our earliest work forced this question into the popular media to open up a broader set of issues about the role and responsibility of museums at a time of climate crisis.

Arguing that climate change deniers and fossil fuel industry executives had no business occupying leadership positions at science institutions, The Natural History Museum joined forces with top scientists and museum visitors to call on museums to cut all ties to fossil fuel interests. Our gamble was that there were activists already working within museums fighting for such changes, and that by applying pressure from the outside we could supply evidence of popular support for these unknown allies.

Following an open letter signed by dozens of the world's top scientists, a petition signed by more than 500,000 members of the public, countless press articles, and an exhibition at the 2015 American Alliance of Museum Convention in Atlanta (Plate 9), David Koch quietly walked away from the board of trustees at the AMNH, where he had been a member for the previous twenty-three years. This was a partial and largely symbolic victory; it told us that there was support for our campaigns inside the museum sector. Since that time, at least eight major science or natural history museums have publicly cut ties to fossil fuel interests by divesting their financial portfolios from fossil fuel investments, removing a sponsor, or by implementing ethical funding policies (Bagley 2015). The restructuring or reform of museum governance will not magically and immediately transform museums into activist institutions. It can, however, remove a barrier to action, producing necessary conditions from which to model a positive alternative.

The more we investigated the US museum sector, the more we found allies working in museums who wanted to do more than police their boards of trustees. Indeed, many museum workers saw the potential of their institutions to participate in, and add value to, the burgeoning climate and environmental justice movements. This became particularly acute during the 2016 movement to block construction of the final section of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which became the focal point for climate justice and Native sovereignty struggles in North America. Among the injustices produced in the name of securing a petroleum pipeline was the desecration of sacred burial grounds and cultural features by DAPL construction crews on 3 September 2016. This was only one expression of the pervasive disregard for the health, culture, and history of Native Nations by both Energy Transfer Partners, the company responsible for constructing DAPL, and the North Dakota Historic Preservation Office, which denied any wrongdoing on the part of Energy

Transfer Partners. This was despite the outcry of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers working on the ground at Standing Rock.

Having discovered the efficacy of the open letter as an activist tactic, The Natural History Museum organized a public letter addressed to President Obama, the US Department of Justice, Department of the Interior, and the Army Corps of Engineers, denouncing the destruction of ancient burial sites, places of prayer, and other cultural artifacts sacred to the Lakota and Dakota people (The Natural History Museum 2016). Signed by 1281 archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and museum workers, including fifty executive directors of museums and institutions of archaeology or anthropology (including the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., the Field Museum, and the AMNH), the letter represented an unprecedented act of collective advocacy from the museum community.

This was recognized as an ‘amazing act of solidarity’ by Sacred Stone Camp (2016), a cultural camp on the frontline of the blockade, as well as referenced as an important element of building alliances and unity behind Native historic preservation and consultation rights by Jon Eagle, Sr., Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe (Eagle 2016). The letter also indicated a cultural shift for museum leaders. Many of them recognized the urgency of leveraging their influence and expertise to support those working hardest to fight the corporations most responsible for anthropogenic climate change.

In a statement issued in response to the desecration of cultural resources by Energy Transfer Partners, AAM President and CEO, Laura Lott, declared:

These actions are an affront to the beliefs outlined in the Alliance’s strategic plan and an offense against the shared cultural heritage of the Lakota Nations and all people. The American museum community is committed to working openly and productively with Indigenous people for the protection, preservation, and repatriation of culturally sensitive items and property.

*(Lott 2016)*

Museum leaders are increasingly recognizing that their codes of ethics and mission statements indicate a moral responsibility to not simply represent history and artifacts from Native Nations, but also to stand against the offensive destruction of sacred cultural sites.

The Koch campaign and the solidarity letter point toward one prospect for the activist museum: the museum-as-advocate, standing in solidarity with frontline communities and leveraging cultural legitimacy to hold political representatives accountable for both their actions and inaction. If the Koch campaign was understood as a strike *against* the petro-capitalist interests that embed themselves within our museums, the Standing Rock solidarity letter envisions a museum that is *for* environmental justice. Museums can fortify themselves from the immediate impacts of climate change, but they also can, and should, use their privileged position and their resources to amplify and legitimize the struggles of frontline groups.

## **Beyond advocacy**

Museums of science and natural history already have the resources they need to be powerful and influential advocates for grassroots activism. They have communications departments, massive email lists, popular social media accounts, and loyal audiences. Many museums have physical resources, including exhibition spaces, auditoriums, and atriums, as well as dedicated

education, exhibitions, and development departments that can be coordinated and leveraged to support ongoing movements and campaigns in sustained and substantial ways. Museums also have objects and collections whose meaning can be activated by placing them in the context of the truth of climate change.

These resources can provide infrastructure for the commons. Museums can sign open letters, endorse movements and campaigns, and form broad coalitions within and beyond the museum sector. They can host community meetings and operate as meeting spaces for activists, organize training sessions and consultations, stage prop-building workshops before demonstrations, and host panel discussions and film screenings on pressing contemporary issues with thought-leaders in environmental justice and science for the common good. Activist museums can also dedicate space for collaborative, rapid-response exhibitions on contemporary environmental issues, offering movement organizers and activists platforms to not only represent, but also to legitimize their struggles for broad and diverse publics.

Such gestures of solidarity would require museums to cede some control over how their resources are used. At a bare minimum, each of the above-mentioned initiatives would require museum staff to facilitate open channels of communication between the museum and social movement organizers, which demands a level of committed outreach that many museums are already seeking in the interest of improving community engagement. Exhibitions and public programs need not be passive forms of activism or static monuments to social movements. They can be understood as opportunities for trust-building and co-production that, once released into the world, catalyze more committed and effective engagement.

Over the past two years, The Natural History Museum has built an infrastructure for collaboration with scientists, environmental justice groups, and museum workers on exhibitions and public programs, with the aim of instigating collective action on pressing concerns for both museums and the communities they serve. Working in collaboration with Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (T.E.J.A.S.), a Houston-based environmental justice organization dedicated to promoting environmental protection in the state of Texas, The Natural History Museum co-produced *Mining the HMNS* (2016), a multifaceted project investigating Houston's fossil fuel ecosystem (Figure 15.1). We produced an exhibition at Project Row Houses (an experimental cultural institution in the city's Third Ward), co-hosted monthly 'Toxic Tours' of East Houston's petrochemical plants and refineries, built an exhibition amplifying the voices and stories of the low-income, predominantly Latinx and African-American fence-line communities situated along the Houston Ship Channel, and conducted air quality monitoring tests at sites across the city.

This project was designed to draw public and media attention to environmental injustices that T.E.J.A.S. has been exposing for the past decade. We used our resources and growing media infrastructure to both amplify T.E.J.A.S.'s struggles and communicate them to the public in novel and engaging ways. The precondition of this project was that our interests were aligned with, and supportive of, our collaborator's needs and, that through our collaboration, we could leave T.E.J.A.S. in a stronger position than when we initiated the project.

In 2017, The Natural History Museum began developing a sustained collaboration with the Lummi Nation, whose ancestral homelands are near Bellingham, Washington. Our collaboration grew out of the recognition that our Standing Rock solidarity letter required deeper engagement with both the efforts of Native Nations to defend the land and water and the





**FIGURE 15.1** The Natural History Museum, *Mining the HMNS: An Investigation by The Natural History Museum*, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX, 2016. The eponymous exhibition interrogated the symbiotic relationship between the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences and its corporate sponsors. The exhibition analyzed key narratives and displays in the Houston museum, highlighting the voices and stories that were excluded—those of the low-income Latinx fence-line communities along the Houston Ship Channel.

Photograph courtesy of Not An Alternative/The Natural History Museum.

historical role played by museums in representing objects (including human remains) often taken without permission from Indigenous peoples from around the planet. After weeks spent learning from the Lummi Nation in the Pacific Northwest, we began to develop a collaborative exhibition and programming project related to the Lummi Nation's Totem Pole Journey.

*Kwel Hoy': We Draw the Line* is a multi-year initiative centered on a series of totem poles carved by Jewell James and the Lummi Nation House of Tears Carvers, which have traveled to communities threatened by fossil fuel expansion projects throughout North America since 2013. The Natural History Museum and the Lummi Nation are now traveling one of these totem poles to natural history museums around the country, linking them in a chain of solidarity with Native Nations and other frontline communities. The accompanying exhibition introduces visitors to the values and concerns guiding the Lummi and other Native Nations that are taking a leading role in grassroots movements to protect our water and earth for future generations. As we wrote in our exhibition pamphlet:

Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Northwest can be viewed in dioramas at our nation's major natural history museums, their daily life depicted through such artifacts

as carved spoons and boxes and hunting and fishing tools. But they are also living tribes that today are fighting fossil fuel expansion projects and preparing for rising sea levels. Imagine if museums were providing the context, research-based visionary narratives, immersive experiences, and opportunities for audience identification and engagement with the struggles of communities on the front lines of ecological crisis?

By facilitating a relationship between the Lummi Nation's innovative campaign and museums around the country, our goal is to deepen the historical significance of the Lummi Nation's fight for sovereignty and to provide financial and organizational assistance for the Totem Pole Journey—goals that bring the museum outside of its traditional borders and into contact with social and political movements. We want to challenge other museums to gain further relevance to the growing, Native-led movement for climate and environmental justice. In these recent and ongoing projects, we are deploying the resources and skills developed by The Natural History Museum—both its physical and media infrastructure—to test new modes of community engagement that can help mobilize collective action in response to the challenge of the climate emergency.

### **Moral propaganda**

The Natural History Museum enacts a version of what Don Hughes, Vice President of Exhibitions at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, has called 'moral propaganda': it seeks to 'design space, and to present content, that moves people in a specific social/political direction' (Oakland Museum of California 2014: 21). Increasingly, we believe that museums can rise to this challenge by developing the vision of a world where the topic of climate change does not only invoke images of death and destruction, but also the courage of environmental justice communities working to protect the commons we all rely upon.

The natural history museum of the future will be both an advocate and an infrastructure for the commons. It will provide a lever for supporting environmental justice for all, as well as an institutional foundation for activism. It will draw lessons from the past and underscore the relevance of these lessons for the unfolding histories of the present. It will connect its collections to events happening beyond the museum's walls. It will not simply represent communities, but it will engage them and their concerns. Only then will the museum be relevant to the wider world. When museums stand with communities fighting fossil fuel expansion, host migrants displaced by sea level rise, or provide sanctuary for the politically marginalized, they demonstrate the necessity of responding to what science tells us, aligning themselves with truth.

We envision a future where museums can join with other institutions of the commons—libraries, national parks, hospitals, public spaces, and so on—in order to generate the collective power necessary to struggle against the interests of the fossil fuel industry in the name of the commons. Their exhibitions will present positions on natural *and* social issues representing the positions of the communities bearing the brunt of the impact of climate change. The public trust in the museum will be based not on its supposed neutrality, but on its responsibility to the commons.

Some aspects of global climate change are already written into the future. We are now confronting sea level rise, species migration, and changing temperature and precipitation averages, with cascading effects on social and ecological systems. How we respond to

these events is as open as ever. Museums help to shape the values, knowledge, and capacities of people to do so. Along with other institutions of the commons, museums have the opportunity and responsibility to join together in solidarity to ensure a livable and survivable world.

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## Note

- 1 Throughout this chapter, we use the language of Native Nations rather than Indigenous peoples, First Nations, Native peoples, Native Americans, Tribes, or American Indians. While each of these terms is complicated by its specific political and governmental context, our collaborations with specific individuals and groups has led us to believe that when it is not possible to refer to specific names, 'Native Nations' is the most appropriate broad concept for referring to the multiple, overlapping, and variously recognized sovereign nations that exist within the territorial borders of the United States and Canada. We use 'Indigenous peoples' sparingly and only to refer to a broader, global position.

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