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THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF IVORY COLLECTING AND DISPLAY AT THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

by

Arianna Murphy

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

in Anthropology

at

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ABSTRACT

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF IVORY COLLECTING AND DISPLAY AT THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

by
Arianna Murphy

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012
Under the Supervision of Professor W. Warner Wood

The museum paradigm shift, first identified by Weil (1990), is evident in the transformations of the poetics and politics of ivory collecting and display over the past 25 years. Based upon Igor Kopytoff's (1986) "biographical" approach to material culture, this thesis demonstrates how ivory in museums has accumulated substantial and diverse cultural meaning, priming it for fluctuation according to modern-day culture shifts. Evidence of fluctuations in the social understanding of ivory is based on a new political ecology, which recognizes that a socially constructed nature underpins wildlife conservation efforts and cultural responses to extinction, both biological and cultural. The interpretation of ivory as a symbol of extinction may reflect Western global conservation ideologies. A visitor study (47 respondents) at the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) and an online survey of museum professionals (88 respondents), four artifact biographical sketches from the African and Inuit collections, and examples of ivory on permanent exhibit at the MPM are used to demonstrate shifts in museum practice and attitude. This thesis documents the changing meaning of ivory among visitors to the MPM yet finds a limited dialogue of modern interpretation by museum professionals throughout the United States. In the midst of these debates, ivory is one of the principal forms of material culture in the modern construction of nature.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Daniel Murphy,
For his eternal love and support
You've helped me push the boundaries of who I can become.

And to my family for teaching me that no project is too large if you take it one step at a time.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis examines how a "museum paradigm shift" first identified by Weil (1990) has influenced the poetics and politics of collecting and display in museums in the United States over the past 25 years using the ivory collections of the Anthropology Department at the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) as a case study. Weil argues that a fundamental shift in museums is occurring in three ways: (1) from the authority of the curator as the expert to the multi-vocal authority of the people being represented, (2) from the museum as an elite institution to the museum of full access (physical and intellectual) to all visitors, and finally (3) from a collections-oriented mission to a visitor-oriented mission (Weil 1990 [2004]).

The implications of this paradigm shift have been of central importance to museum professionals and those disciplines most closely linked with museum work including sociology, anthropology, ecology, psychology, art history, history, and more peripherally economics, business, and political science. As platforms of cultural expression, museums have become embroiled in debates about public expressions of cultural identity and representations of shifting identities (Bennett 1998; Duncan 1995; Macdonald 1996; Marstine 2006; Prösler 1996). Newly reoriented toward the values of its visitors, museums have become participatory agents in enacting institutional change, so that they may foster visitor engagement without completely overturning the traditional museum model (Simon 2010). In older museums like the MPM, this begins with acknowledging its colonial and elitist history. Moreover, as repositories of the past, museums store vast collections, whose original rationales for acquisition are neither

relevant to a modern audience, nor match the museums' shifting function from that of imparting systematic knowledge and research to fostering empowerment, access, and museum literacy (Graburn 2012:58-59).

These disparate philosophies are apparent in how curators use collections today. For example, some of these changes include delimited collecting policies (*ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums,* paragraphs 2.2-2.10), wider interpretation of exhibits, and limited focus and funding for collections research (Merritt 2008:44-45; Keene 2005). Specifically regarding the interpretation of exhibits, "museums clearly play paradoxical roles, sometimes reflecting popular opinion and other times guiding it, sometimes reaffirming dominant ideas and at other times opposing them" (Ames 1992). The interpretation of exhibits is further complicated by the distinction between artistic and ethnographic representation (Clifford 1988) and how these modes of display reflect museum poetics and politics. In a natural history museum like the MPM, curators make conscientious decisions of whether to portray artifacts in an ethnographic context (i.e. a life-group display), which would fit with the taxidermy animal dioramas (Jacknis 1985), or in an aesthetic display, which takes an art historical approach and separates the artifact (culture) from nature (MacKenzie 2009).

Historically, museums have come to collect, store, and display objects as a naturalized process, though today, much of this practice has been called into question and changed accordingly (Marstine 2006). For example, today many museums only collect passively, such as through donations, rather actively collecting such as through purchases or field collecting. Encyclopedic museums, like the MPM, aim to represent the history of nature and humanity in totality, keeping artifacts and specimens as an archive of material

culture and natural history. Such an idea has many associations with scientific ambition and with totalizing aspirations on the part of Western scholarly disciplines (Were and King, 2012:2). This could also be said to be the ideal of many private collectors, whose legacy donations comprise a significant portion of museum collections. Indeed, the history of museums and their relationships with private collectors has led to a theoretical "chicken and the egg" conundrum over who constructed whom (Duncan 1995).

For example, the most prominent donor of ivory to the MPM, Norbert J. Beihoff, amassed his own enormous private collection of ivories, which he not only gifted to the museum throughout the 1960s, but also used as the basis of a book, *Ivory Sculpture Through the Ages,* published in 1961 through the MPM. Having his collection at the MPM granted it status and higher value simply because it is in a museum, and eventually, through these extensive donations and the publication of his book (now out of print), Mr. Beihoff's was awarded the position of honorary curator by the museum. This situation is not unique between Mr. Beihoff and the MPM, but it does speak to the relationship between powerful donors and the honor and prestige that museum affiliation brings to them and their "museum quality" collections (ibid.). In this position, he was given the authority, albeit amateur status, to determine his own collection's significance as authentic or valuable by having total access to the MPM decorative arts collections, the power of authorship in his publication, and the opportunity to edit labels for his collection (personal correspondence: George Ulrich and Albert Muchka, MPM curators).

This thesis is grounded in the core tenet of the material culture studies (MCS) approach, which states that objects have the ability to signify things—or establish social meanings—on behalf of people (Woodward 2007:4). According to Woodward (2007) the

primary characteristics of the MCS approach views objects as "cultural" by understanding them as, (1) social markers of value, (2) social markers of identity, and (3) encapsulations of networks of cultural and political power. Furthermore, for this study, the interdisciplinary approach, advocated by Woodward, also necessitates the incorporation of current scholarship on political ecology and environmentalist concerns for ivory-animals' conservation.

Ivory, as material culture in the museum context, even today, signals (sub)cultural affinity, occupation, participation in leisure activity, social status, etc. in the museum context. This research frames the multiple meanings of ivory at the MPM through brief "biographical" sketches of the social lives of four artifacts (Kopytoff 1986), to highlight ivory as a unique form of material culture, which museums reify through exhibits. This biographical approach tracks both the physical movement of ivory, but more importantly, its cultural movement within exchange spheres of the work to "singularize" and "commodify" material culture. Kopytoff describes these concepts as a balancing between the heterogeneity of too much splitting, which makes object singularized and wholly unique, and the homogeneity of too much lumping, which commoditizes objects based upon a common denominator of monetary value as compared to other objects (ibid: 68-70).

I suggest that ivory makes the dissolution of conceptual boundaries between the human/artifact and non-human/natural world readily apparent because ivory as a material has become increasingly embedded in discourses of threats to nature, particularly within the shifting paradigm of new political ecology concerning the social construction of nature in wildlife management. Furthermore, it has been well established (Miller 1987;

Woodward 2007) that renewed interest in consumption of objects is tied up with broader developments in social theory. Particularly, the "cultural turn" at the core of the MCS approach (ibid.), posits that although social scientists have historically had an enduring concern for the material constituents of culture (Goffman 1951; Mauss 1967[1954]; Simmel 1904[1957]; Veblen 1899[1934]), the more recent interest in objects is based upon consumption processes, and the cultural meanings that colonize such objects as they move through social landscapes (Appadurai 1986; Douglas and Isherwood [1996]1979; Miller 1987; Riggins 1994). I argue here that ivory can be taken a step further toward material agency, owing in part to its deeply historical, colonialized and commoditized status in conjunction with its transforming meaning in a modern social (and natural) landscapes. Here objects exist within networks of relations that serve to define, mediate and order them, and in turn are "acted upon" by such objects and human subjects, affording them purpose and meaning within a system of social relations (Law 2002:91-92). The clearest example with regards to ivory is the moral stance that the commodification of ivory is unethical or bad because there are less environmentally harmful replacements like plastic.

As a highly workable material, ivory has been used for millennia for carving and sculpting objects ranging from decorative and symbolic to functional and utilitarian uses. Ivory has been highly valued in many cultures from prehistoric times (Conrad 2009) to the present as both an economic as well as a symbolic object. The importance of ivory cross culturally can be attributed to what Bourdieu (1984) has described in his writing on 'taste', where ideas of objects like ivory can act as markers of aesthetic/cultural value. Ivory has a long and cross-cultural history of association as culturally valuable by

dominant social groups (Ross 1992). Examples of symbolism associated with ivory are its historic and present-day association with royalty and high status in numerous African ethnic groups, its prominent use in religious iconography (predominantly Christian and Buddhist), and its historical associations with 'highbrow' culture in Europe and America, which implies a 'lowbrow' culture, thus devaluing working class modes of judgment as 'unaesthetic' (Woodward 2007). The last example is especially relevant to this research, where museums were historically for the elite, whereas today they are attempting to move toward inclusiveness. Additionally, it should be stressed that the perspective of this thesis is from a Western audience and their particular opinion of ivory from its historic to present day meaning in American museums.

With the advent of consumer societies, ivory becomes a highly visible marker of taste in terms of structuring social position and status. Moreover, "aesthetic choice is so thoroughly learned and ingrained that class markers are expressed in the body, self-presentation and performance" (ibid.: 6). For example, ivory in one form or another fits easily into many of the categories of "curio" objects that early collectors sought, including those belonging to natural history, ethnology, archaeology, religious or historical relics, works of art, and antiquities. Generally, ivory producing animals are large mammals (hence their teeth are large enough to be carved), making the animals themselves highly desirable for such collections, especially narwhals (Shackelford 1999). The cross-cultural use of ivory as a highly symbolic and functional material has resulted in museums of all kinds (art, history, natural history, etc.) that have readily collected and exhibited ivory since the earliest cabinets of curiosity were first assembled (Impey and MacGregor 1985).

Because of the great time depth of ivory use in addition to its appreciation as both art and ethnographic artifact and its representation of nature and animals, its interpretation within the museum is extremely complex, owing in part to visitor's preconceptions and its varied historical meaning between peoples. Moreover, the passing of laws to protect Asian (1975) and African (1990) elephants through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and laws governing cultural property, both international, such as those founded during the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1972, and nationally, by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (FWS), have made not only private collecting highly restricted, but also the interpretation of ivory in museums far more contested.

This study provides emergent data on the current collecting and exhibition trends at the MPM and other Western museums as evidence of how a shift toward a democratized institution is occurring by applying current scholarship on museum theory and specifically focusing upon the diverse historical and cultural uses of ivory using a material culture studies approach. Original research was conducted that includes surveying museum professionals from a variety of institutions, and MPM visitors to better understand museum policies and public opinions regarding ivory collecting and display.

Additionally following Kopytoff's (1986) "biographical" approach to material culture studies, I developed four biographical sketches of ivory artifacts most frequently displayed, which go beyond merely discussing ivory as an idea and use concrete examples from the collection in order to (1) demonstrate the historical collecting and exhibition trends of the MPM, (2) provide relevant art historical background for each

piece, and (3) suggest how these "old" collections can be made relevant through a revamped interpretation of ivory in museums, namely by looking at the "natural" or "environmental" parts of these biographies as well. The sample size was decided based upon access to the MPM's ivory collections, which was limited to the Anthropology Department containing African and Arctic ivories. Two biographical sketches are of artifacts from the African collection, one utilitarian and the other artistic, and the other two are from the Arctic collection, again, one utilitarian and the other artistic.

The outcome of this research demonstrates the above-mentioned shift in Western museums as seen through changing attitudes toward ivory collections at the MPM. At a more general level, this thesis tracks where changes are occurring in museum practice, particularly in interpretive strategies of ivory. To do so, the study focused on whether or not visitors are aware of such changes, and if visitors are participants in this change through active engagement in narrative construction during museum visits and through ongoing donations to museums.

Theoretical Background

In essence, ivory is a material that fully exists in both the realms of Nature (coming from a powerful animal) and Humanity (being carvable and subdued to human desire) (Ross 1992), and it is this ability to belong to each world that makes it captivating to so many cultures. It is the unique intersection of Nature and Culture in ivory that provides the framework of this thesis; these are theories of critical museology, material culture studies, and political ecology. With regard to museum theory and practice, the primary focus is on the evolution of anthropology within museums (Jacknis 1985; Parezo

1986), and more recently, the conceptualization of museums as both social technologies (Clifford 1991; Haraway 1984) and as performative spaces (Duncan 1995; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991).

Theories of Critical Museology

The perceived disappearance of native groups throughout the world provided one of the primary motivations for the development of American anthropology (Parezo 1986; Stocking 1988). In the late 19th century, anthropology, as practiced by anthropologists in the United States, became a humanistic pursuit devoted to collecting all possible information about native peoples before they were destroyed by contact with Western Civilization. Objects of material culture were among the most important items to be collected:

> Now is the time to record. An infinitude has been irrevocably lost, a very great deal is now rapidly disappearing; thanks to colonization, trade, and missionary enterprise… The most interesting material for study are becoming lost to us, not only by their disappearance, but by the apathy of those who should delight in recording them before they have become lost to sight and memory (Haddon 1898).

It was therefore the rationale of museums to collect and preserve cultural artifacts from destruction by geological events, wars, human development, etc. because these artifacts and sites were seen as irreplaceable and non-renewable resources that future generations had the right to appreciate as well (Holtorf 2001). The early researchers and anthropologists who set out on expeditions to record and gather objects of material culture established the collecting patterns, which were the initial mode of collections growth; though when field collecting slowed, this mentality of collecting a vanishing culture was carried through into other museum collecting methods, such as through

donations and purchases. Only recently, perhaps in the past 25 years, have museums made significant changes in collecting and display practices, toward concept or story-driven collecting and exhibiting practices (Serrell 1996). For example, the MPM now seeks temporary exhibits, which explore topics like mummies or pirates as opposed to funerary objects or weapons.

It is worthwhile to address the role that museum collecting played in the transformation of native material culture into marketable ethnic art. This happened in two ways: **(**1) through the creation of a market for the crafts displayed in museums, and (2) by broadening the awareness of the rest of the nation about native arts (Parezo 1986: 207). The desirability of artifacts was readily accepted among educated people who were beginning to question the aesthetic value of mass-produced goods in the late 19th century. These early collectors sought a variety of material types, or 'taste cultures' (Lee 1999), and had different desires and motivations for collecting, as well as different levels of access to the material culture they sought; these collectors were inspired by exhibitions, books, and lectures stressing the originality, authenticity, and aesthetic creativity of "primitive" native arts. In the wake of Manifest Destiny, the colonialist mentality of the justified and inevitable expansion of the U.S. across the continent relapsed into nostalgia among bourgeois collectors, and the fetishization of native material culture flourished out of a notion that "all was to be modernized, apart from the past, which needed to be preserved as it once had been" (Holtorf 2001: 294). Thus, the notion of private collecting as world making, where the collector is god-like, imposing an imaginary order on systems of objects (Baudrillard 1944; Duncan 1995), strengthened the cyclical relationship between museums and collectors, who would be future donors to the

museums enterprise. Prominent donors including, Rudolph Nunnemacher, Norbert J. Beihoff, and Belle & Samuel Bernstein are a few of the many who gave ivory artifacts to the MPM as part of legacy donations. Duncan has argued that such donations are a ritual of self-aggrandizing immortalization where the donor becomes as a kind of "guardian and high representative of civilization itself" (ibid.: 95). Accordingly, the types of ivory artifacts these donors gave are of high quality, extreme aesthetic beauty, and are thought to represent authentic or traditional modes of 'serial' production (Steiner 1999).

Even today, a foundational assumption of cultural heritage management is the notion that artifacts are authentic and have a distinctive aura, which fakes and copies do not possess (Holtorf 2001; Benjamin 1969), although more recently, museums will display fakes and copies with labeling addressing these issues instead of avoiding the material altogether. The establishment of authenticity is a key topic in museum theory and the art of historically labeled "primitive" cultures. For example, African art is plagued by seemingly contradictory principles that result from the intersection of collectors' attitudes toward mass production, serialization, and innovation (Steiner 1999). Steiner's definition of "seriality" states that at one end of the continuum, mass produced objects are seen as undesirable because they are not produced in the context of original indigenous use and are regarded as tourist art. Interestingly though, at the other end of the spectrum, objects that express innovation with unique qualities are equally undesirable to the collector since these are seen as *avant-garde* art and thus lack a reference, as it were, to a traditional or iconic ethnic group or culture. In the middle of the spectrum are those desirable artifacts that are serially produced by recognized artisans or members of the appropriate ethnic group. In these objects, authenticity is measured through redundancy

(like an icon) rather than through its complete originality, and artifacts that deviate too far from the accepted canons of a particular ethnic style are deemed inauthentic (ibid.).

Theories of Material Culture Studies (MCS)

The theories of ivory as a material culture and as a natural specimen are founded upon Kopytoff's (1986) essay on the cultural biography of things that emphasized the process and meaning of commodification. Ivory has a highly complex life, moving in and out of commoditized spheres. This is due in part to its unique materiality (Miller 2005), that is, its origin as part of the elephant, a scarce animal coupled with its long and diverse history of human interaction and use. The placement of ivory as a material within the larger framework of the species it represents is embedded in the conservation debate, where species are the fundamental building blocks of nature and ecology (Leader-William and Dublin 2000) because elephants are killed precisely for their ivory. Yet, what is the origin and meaning of this universal ivory 'taste culture'?

The abundance of ivory in museum collections is owed in part to its near ubiquity throughout time and across cultures. In fact, the underlying cultural association with ivory as material culture is profound given its economic value as a trade resource as well as its symbolic and aesthetic value as a ritual object and status symbol. But to begin, one needs to go back a step further to the origin of ivory's cultural ubiquity. This requires an examination of ivory's unique materiality, which many human groups seem to have found highly attractive. Although true ivory comes only from elephant species (both living and extinct), there are many other animals that provide ivory-like material, including the hippopotamus, boar, narwhal, and walrus (See Chapter 2: Ivory and Related

Substances as Material Culture). From a Western perspective, animals are seen as a part of nature, where nature is something over which every culture tries to assert some level of control. This conceptualization of nature as a resource is based on Sherry Ortner's (1974) assertion that the human ability to act upon and regulate the environment and its resources defines Western cultures:

> Thus, we may broadly equate culture with the notion of human consciousness, or with the products of human consciousness (i.e., systems of thought and technology or material culture more broadly), the means by which humanity attempts to assert control over nature (ibid.: 72).

The way in which humans use and interpret ivory informs its role in directing and reflecting social action. To apply the Woodward's (2007) MCS approach to Western culture, ivory is a social marker of value given its long and enduring association with things like wealth, affluence, and patriarchy (big-game hunting), in addition to its association with religious symbolism. Ivory is also a social marker of identity given its use in personal adornment, for example fans and cane handles, objects which themselves are identity markers of refined femininity and masculinity. Lastly, ivory acts as the material encapsulation of networks of cultural and political power as a symbol of imperialism by demonstrating Western control over nature and resources through trade and access to foreign land and labor. The cultural construct of nature as a resource is the focus of this study because the MPM and other museums in study share this Western (colonial to industrial to postmodern) history, which will be reflected in their use and interpretation of ivory in exhibits and educational programming.

Theories of Political Ecology

The unique quality of ivory as a cultural *and* natural (animal) resource opens a bridge between several theories of museology, material culture studies, and political ecology. Theories of political ecology center around a paradigm shift toward a newly defined Social Nature, which calls for a reflexive ecology to recognize the historical, political, and technological context of globalized wildlife and heritage management (Castree 2001; Demeritt 2001; Escobar 1996). Re-approached are ideas of scarcity and the role of preservation, both wildlife (Barbier et al. 1991; Igoe 2004; Thompson 2002) and cultural heritage (Lee 1999; Holtorf 2001; Steiner 1995). Additionally, the historical (and perhaps modern) Western notion of being "the keepers" of a globalized nature is more so a reflection of who have enough political and economic power as well as the backing of "Science" to bring certain ideologies to fruition (Marstine 2006) rather than objective truth. In the midst of these debates, ivory is one of the principal forms of material culture in the modern construction of nature.

In the United States, the first legal writing to address nature as a scarce resource needing government regulation began in the 1900s with the passing of the Lacy Act (1900 with other amendments). This was later narrowed to focus specifically on those species recognized as threatened, called the Endangered Species Act of 1966 (with later amendments). As wildlife management further developed, many countries recognized the need to protect species internationally. This led to the first amendment of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1975). Not long after, the African Elephant Conservation Act (1988) further recognized elephants as a seriously threatened species. These and other related conservation laws and

policies have attempted to enforce top-down systems of regulation to block and carefully regulate trade. These laws outline regulations that ban the import and export of ivory in any form, and are enforced by the local governments where ivory smuggling (import and export) is occurring. At the very least, penalties consist of confiscating ivory material but can also include heavy fines and other civil and criminal penalties.

In recent years, theories of a post-structural political ecology have begun reflecting on the discourses of nature from the vantage point of recent theories of the nature of discourse (Escobar 1996). Here, the definition of discourse is the "articulation of knowledge and power, of statements and visibilities; that through this process social reality inevitably comes into being" (ibid.: 46). By shifting to a new paradigm, political ecology will address how Nature is capitalized, and a dialogue of hybrid narratives will exist that can account for the historical and cultural basis within systems of practice and epistemologies of Nature (ibid.). Museums are one area where this dialogue is occurring (Luke 2002). In reinventing the nature-society nexus, theorists of political ecology call for a reflexive geography, one that engages nature and its management from a relativist perspective focused on the social construction of nature within the Western psyche (Castree 1999; Demeritt 1999; Escobar 1996).

The social construction of nature translates very well to theories and methodologies of animal conservation and the use of animals by humans (especially when those animals are considered "threatened" by humans), though the idea of the appropriate use of animals is highly culturally subjective. Castree (1999) describes three approaches to nature: external nature, intrinsic nature, and universal nature; all of these concepts easily translate to ivory producing animals like elephants, and even to concepts

of "primitive cultures" that might produce ivory artifacts. As described by Haraway (1984) in "Teddy bear Patriarchy", Western concepts of nature included both the physical wilderness as well as the animals of the wild, which were seen as *external* to man and *intrinsic,* making their conservation and preservation paramount as taxidermy specimens. The ethical interpretation of elephant conservation and post-ban ivory artifacts, formerly as contentious may change greatly as geographers engage nature and its management in a more relativistic sense.

Literature Review

In just over two decades of scholarship, museum theorists have sought a total shift in the definition and practice of museums, becoming critical of the two prior centuries of museological functions. This shift in definition is evident in models of museum collecting and exhibiting practices, which have become an important component of cultural identity and a cornerstone of Western social technology (Marstine 2006). Much of the published literature on museum theory has focused on the shift in museums from the temple/shrine for a limited elite audience with imperialistic and colonial rhetoric of mission, to a forum for engagement in hybrid narratives that serve all people, foster museum literacy, and seek a post-museum stance that rejects historical trends of suppression and subjugation (Dana 1917; Cameron 1971; Weil 1990; Ames 1992).

The background literature that supports this thesis relies upon a diverse collection of work on topics ranging from museum history and practice and anthropology in museums, to highly specific writings on material culture studies and zooarcheology, and even explorations of the realms of economics and commodification, political ecology,

animal rights, environmentalism, and sustainability. These seemingly disparate topics all contribute to an understanding of what ivory means in contemporary museum practice and how that meaning is beginning to inform a new museum paradigm.

The Biographical Approach to the Social Life of Things

The organization of this section is guided specifically by Igor Kopytoff's (1986) biographical approach to material culture. The shifting meaning of ivory is here situated in terms of Kopytoff's characterization of "commodity" status as being one end of a spectrum of possible meanings generated by the singularization/commoditization process through which an object passes, rather than the commodity as conceived to be an absolute, inherent quality of the object's nature. Such a perspective emphasizes that when and whether a thing is a commodity reveals a moral economy that exists behind the objective economy of visible transactions. How this works for ivory will be described below and will simultaneously serve to introduce the relevant literature on ivory as a natural substance and as material culture in museum collections and exhibitions.

In general according to Kopytoff, objects become commoditized into economic salability by entering an exchange sphere where a culturally shared classification of "worth" is generated. He concludes by emending the Durkheimian notion that society orders the world of things on the pattern of the structure that currently prevails, suggesting that societies also constrain these worlds and thus construct objects in the same way they construct not only people, but nature as well (ibid.: 90).

This literature review is organized around the "biography" of a representative piece of ivory (Fig. 1.1) in order to simplify the logic of why certain topics are being

discussed and to emphasize the changing meaning of ivory and the role of these literatures in constructing that meaning. Discussion will follow the "three lives" of that object from animal to exhibit display. Within each of the three lives of ivory there are two stages, the second which marks a transformation of the material in preparation for its next life shift. These are as follows: Life 1: Stage 1— the first-life of ivory as part of an animal, Life 1: Stage 2— ivory in human hands (generally as an object of poaching), Life 2: Stage 1— the second-life of ivory as part of a localized culture, Life 2: Stage 2— ivory for trade or as a collected souvenir, Life 3: Stage 1— the third-life of ivory as authentic or "museum quality", and finally Life 3: Stage 3— ivory as an object of museum collection and exhibition.

Life 1: Stage 1	**Part of an animal**	S
Life 1: Stage 2	**Human Resource**	C
Life 2: Stage 1	**Cultural Symbol/ Use**	S
Life 2: Stage 2	**Trade or souvenir item**	C
Life 3: Stage 1	**"Museum Quality"**	S/C
Life 3: Stage 2	**Part of museum collection**	S

S=Singularized **C=Commoditized**

Table 1.1 Biographical Life of Ivory

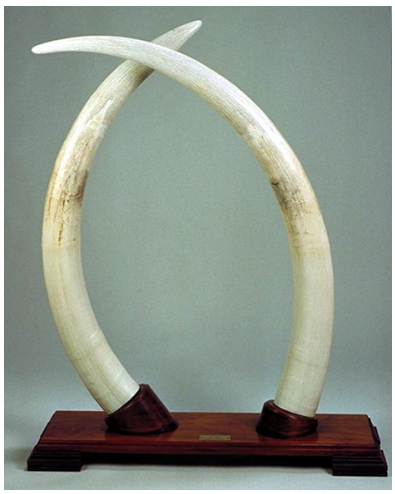

Fig. 1.1 N19519 Mounted Tusk Set, 132 cm high
Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

Life 1:Stage 1

The first-life of ivory always begins with an animal. Elephant tusks have been the most widely regarded type of ivory. Literature surrounding ivory in its first-life as part of an animal extend to guide books and monographs for ivory sourcing and identification, philosophical work surrounding elephant conservation models and the role of mega fauna

like elephants as keystone species, and the role of nature in a new paradigm of political ecology.

The foundational book by T.K. Penniman (1952), *Pictures of Ivory and Other Animal Teeth, Bone and Antler*, remains indispensable for the visual study of ivory and related material most especially for its detailed photographs and descriptive explorations into ivory. The book grew from his work at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, specifically from his decision to display polished sections of raw ivory and the like alongside artifacts made from such material (Krzyszkowska 1990). Equally valuable is the book *Ivory and Related Material: An Illustrated Guide* by Olga Krzyszkowska which compliments the work of Penniman and offers practical advice to non-experts in distinguishing ivory, bone, boar's tusk and antler which have been fashioned into artifacts (ibid.: 1). In the seminal work of Edgar Espinoza and Mary-Jacque Mann (1991), *Identification Guide for Ivory and Ivory Substitutes*, the authors discuss and compare ivory types and go beyond animal material in describing common substitutes like vegetable ivory and plastics—in order to assist the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services in the accurate identification of ivory during search and seizure operations.

The elephant has been a significant resource to humans, especially for its tusks, and as a result, the species is now highly endangered. The fervent response of animal conservation activists provides key insights into cultural conceptions of elephants. In the essay "Charismatic megafauna as 'flagship species'", authors Nigel Leader-Williams and Holly Dublin (2000) determine that flagship species, large charismatic mammals like elephants in particular, have had a strategic role in raising public awareness of

conservation efforts. Ecologists agree that elephants need human protection; however, the method for achieving that protection is disputed.

In the essay "When elephants stand for competing philosophies of nature: Amboseli National Park, Kenya", Charis Thompson (2002) compares two Western conservation models with opposing views on elephant management during a workshop in Amboseli Kenya. For conservation groups in African National Parks, elephants tag competing philosophies of nature management on different orders and scales of things like science, politics, law, economics, culture, and the issue of biodiversity, nations, parks, and the global environmental community. One group focused on the overall biodiversity of the area, which required a balance of the elephant population (not too many, not too few), while the other focused on elephant conservation for their complex social behavior and scientific value, "whether the elephant was a keystone species or a complex creature with intrinsic rights went with such things as whether elephants should be a stakeholder or should be spoken for, whether it should sometimes or never be a commodity" (ibid.: 185).

Life 1: Stage 2

Ivory, once removed from the animal, now enters into a commoditized sphere (Kopytoff 1986), being no longer singular to that animal but as part of an economically homogenized exchange material. Today, the life of ivory in its transition status as part of an animal to a raw material in human hands is generally viewed in the context of poaching. Although this is not always the case, this step is significant within the literature surrounding ivory in material culture, and when poaching is the cause of ivory

acquisition. In general, literature that is centrally concerned with elephant poaching for ivory includes works such as Western models of conservation (i.e. fortress conservation), understanding conservation globally, considerations of both animal and human rights within ecology, the ivory trade in general and modes of ivory trafficking, and how elephants are imagined today within the context of black market ivory trade.

One area where the intersection of wilderness and elephant conservation is occurring is in the National Parks of Africa that have adopted the model of "fortress conservation" (Brockington 2002). In this model, Western conservation and development has transformed/suppressed local (in this case African) resource management models to reflect colonial mentalities of wilderness management, specifically preservation of a "pure Nature" through the exclusion of people from endangered nature and animals (ibid.; Igoe 2004). The enforcement of these models is based upon *power* and who has the resources and credibility (through Science) to make their construction/ideology of nature the one that sticks and is enforced. For example, very few people are in a position to profit from wildlife tourism (a practice caused and encouraged by fortress conservation), yet Western conservation groups rarely address the adverse socioeconomic conditions for local communities caused by their model of wilderness management (ibid.). This notion of a "pristine wilderness" isolates human communities from living within nature and views natural resources and animals as needing management. This conceptualization has been brought to the general public in museum exhibits of nature; for example, the "Rain Forest" exhibit at the MPM does not show any indigenous human groups living in the rainforest, and moreover shows man as the destroyer of such habitats by displays only animals, plants, and natural resources within the exhibit, with Western

scientists shown on the periphery studying nature under the microscope and packaging it for medicines and commercial products.

Extensive research has been done regarding elephant conservation efforts in Africa and economic projections about the success of the CITES ban on effectively eliminating trade in ivory materials despite continued black market trade (Barbier et al. 1991; Wenzel 1991; Hakansson 2004; van Kooten 2008). When laws were first passed to ban the trade of ivory, there was a plummet in ivory demand as initial publicity surrounding the issue turned public sentiment against the ivory trade (Alpers 1992). This publicity nearly eliminated the demand for ivory worldwide and most poaching stopped abruptly in response (Wasser 2009). However, black market trade has increasingly picked up once more and continues to this day.

The amount of publicity ivory poaching receives in the popular media has increased significantly this year. The most recent issue of National Geographic (October 2012) featured the headline story, "Ivory Worship", which investigates how the religious art market is fueling record high ivory smuggling into Asia. The cover features a dramatic juxtaposition between a bloody tusk held by two Kenyans and a Chinese artist carefully carving a glowing white tusk. Another recent media story was aired on NPR's *All Things Considered* on October 25, 2012, entitled "In A Tanzanian Village, Elephant Poachers Thrive", written and reported by John Burnett from Nairobi. The report opens:

> A tragic change in Tanzania's ecosystem is now underway, and there is no doubt that it is manmade. An insatiable market for ivory in Asia is fueling an epic slaughter of the country's elephants. Tanzania has the world's second largest population of elephants, after Botswana. Poachers there are invading protected areas and gunning down elephant families for their tusks (Burnett 2012)

Unlike the National Geographic article, the NPR report focuses on the incentives of poachers to hunt elephants, “Local sources say prices paid at the village level for tusks are $60 a kilo. That's $12,000 for a 200 kilogram consignment of ivory in a country where the per capita income is $125 a month” (ibid.). Public perceptions of ivory are deeply entrenched in where the material is in its life history, and outcry against poaching is most heavily centralized around the end of its first-life stage of its biography and the beginning of its second-life in the hands of a localized culture. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the different perspectives of those with limited resources to the opinions of museum goers whose notion of poaching an animal is far removed from the everyday socioeconomic realities those living in countries like Botswana.

Life 2: Stage 1

As ivory enters fully into its second-life, it is once again singularized and assigned specific meaning within a localized community. Its meaning and power vary greatly from culture to culture, contingent on what type of ivory it is as well. Undoubtedly, this is the most complex stage in the social life of ivory, where its cultural affiliation and alteration of physical form strongly regulate its power and meaning to people. Literature focusing on ivory in its localized culture includes topics within anthropology and art history of Native Alaskans, African cultures, and the historical popularity and use of ivory in Europe.

The material culture of Native Americans of Alaska and Canada is most commonly addressed through the use of walrus ivory among these native peoples. The extensive work of anthropologist Dorothy Jean Ray centers on the art and culture of

Native Alaskans. In her book *Artists of the Tundra and Sea*, Ray (1961 [1980]) provides historical and cultural context for the development and progression of art production in Alaska, with particular attention to the tradition of ivory carving. Although ivory carving among Native Alaskans developed in the context of 'tourist art' (Graburn 1976), Ray maintains that the indigenous perspective on the value of ivory, meaning and power it has as material culture among the carvers, is paramount.

Elephant ivory in Africa has been extensively described in Doran Ross's (1992) edited volume, *Elephant: The Animal and its Ivory in African Culture.* This volume, which focuses on the cultural significance of the elephant in African culture, devotes the vast majority of its discussion to the use of ivory within these cultures, "ivory, admired for its hardness, color, and luster, and for its obvious identification with the elephant, has been the prerogative of chieftaincy or leadership in many parts of Africa" (ibid.: 23). Although the book focuses upon ivory and the elephant in African culture, one chapter, "The Material Culture of Ivory Outside of Africa" by David Shayt, follows the trajectory of ivory in the cultures of Europe and America. The precise ascription of value within the western psyche is key to its potential to take on a final third-life.

Life 2: Stage 2

Once ivory is fully established in its localized culture, there is the possibility of it once again shifting into a commoditized sphere of exchange. However, this stage is unlike ivory's commodity status in its first-life, for it is has accumulated not just a physical history, but also a cultural history. Literature pertaining to this stage in the life of ivory includes artifacts fashioned and used indigenously (that is not produced for the

intention of selling) as well as tourist art and souvenirs. In general, "authentically" cultural ivory can potentially skip this stage and move directly into its third-life, and the exact distinction between these stages is specific to each ivory artifact. African and Arctic tourist art production is the subject of an extensive body of literature, and more recently, the topic of "primitive" art also connects to the power and symbolism of ivory, primitivism, and feminism within the mind of the tourist.

The work of Chris Steiner and his discussion of authenticity in art, centering on African art as described by Western academics, dealers, and collectors, is pivotal to understanding the material culture of ivory. In his essay "The quest for authenticity and the invention of African art", Steiner (1994) focuses on the Western tourist's/collector's fascination with artifact age, aesthetics of traditional (serially produced) forms, and the familiar made exotic through trade. This has resulted in African art merchants interpreting this Western notion, and subsequently 'tailoring' this concept to fit with their own understanding and marketing of their cultural art (ibid.), much in the same way that the Oriental rug has been epitomized as the Other in the Western perception of "elite" interior décor, despite its mass production today (Spooner 1986). This is apparent in many of the artifacts collected and exhibited in museums that aspire to represent cultures in their material form and adhere closely to Western prescriptions of "primitive" art, such as drums, masks, and ivory carved artifacts like trumpets, and carved tusks. Interestingly, the most commonly produced ivory artifacts in Africa are side-blown trumpets, although these types of artifacts represent ceremonial and not daily life. Yet the Western collectors fascinations with the mysticism of African culture has led to the generalized notion that ritual pervades all things African (Errington 1998).

The material culture of the Circumpolar North, most especially that of the Inuit of Alaska, has received a great deal of literary attention, most extensively explored by anthropologist Nelson Graburn. The epitome of Graburn's work in tourist art extends beyond Inuit art to encompass the whole of what he calls Fourth World art in *Ethnic and Tourist Arts* (1976). However, the topic of tourist art was first addressed in an earlier article from 1967 titled, "The Eskimos and 'Airport Art'" in which Graburn places Eskimo art firmly in the context of contemporary tourist art production (only within the last 20 years-that is the 1940s), and importantly gives affirmation to the socioeconomic conditions of the modern Inuit artists while acknowledging their stylistic achievements. Graburn then challenges art critics who idealized the exotica of ethnic art for its ancientness, and who therefore commonly disavow Native soapstone carving as 'inauthentic'.

Historic interest in the art production of cultural Others in Western ideology was the central focus of the edited volume *Unpacking Culture.* In the introduction, Ruth Philips and Chris Steiner (1999) introduce the topic of objects of cultural Others commonly interpreted as either ethnographic specimen or works of art (though this is on a continuum along with 'commodity') (Clifford 1988). The repeating patterns of the book's essays are of the imperialist encounter and capitalist exchange that have shaped many Fourth World material cultural forms today, as described by Graburn.

Tourism is of particular interest to the creation of commodities and the role that museums play in perpetuating the value of objects. The essay "Tourism and Taste Cultures: Collecting Native Art in Alaska at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" by Molly Lee (1999) takes a profoundly different look at art history and material culture studies by

exploring not the material itself but the people who collected it, and their motivations for doing so. It specifically focuses on the collecting of Native artifacts in Alaska at the turn of the 20th c. by three types of middle-class collectors (tourist collectors, basket collectors, and special access collectors) that she characterizes as representing different 'taste cultures' (Gans 1966[1974]). This term is defined as a distinct consumer subgroup within complex societies for their differing aesthetic preferences. By focusing on each type of collector, Lee reveals how each collector choses what to collect, what these artifacts meant to them, and ultimately what this said about their own socioeconomic and cultural identities. Moreover, the extreme wealth of some particular taste collectors has resulted in the donor memorial phenomena, for example at the Getty Museum where, "one man, single-handedly, was able to dictate, pay for, and carry out the creation of so potent a symbol of the nation's spiritual and material wealth" (Duncan 1995: 101).

The imagery of tourist art from "primitive" cultures centers on Nature and the Other, most commonly as animals and women. These qualities are further emulated in the use of animal products, like ivory, as a medium for carving images of animals (most commonly elephants) and women. The essay by Bennetta Jules-Rosette (1990), "Images of women in African tourist art: a case study in continuity and change", explores the role of tourist art in generating tension between old and new, past and present and the modern dilemma of choice (ibid.: 159). Tourist art objects are visual signs, which combine the artists' and consumers' views. Moreover, tourist art is not a sign system of unified cultural meanings, and therefore does not imply the holistic sign system that Levi-Strauss asserts to characterize the "art of primitive societies" (Charbonnier 1969). For Jules-Rosette, the image of women presented in African tourist art outlines three parts of the

problem of continuity and change (1) nostalgia, (2) attractions of modernity, (3) losses accompanying change (1990:159).

Life 3: Stage 1

Not every piece of ivory has a third-life. This life is marked by an artifact's potential to transcend into a new symbolic function. In this life, ivory transitions further to the "splitting" stage as a singular form; and although it moves slightly closer to commodity in its final stage-shift, it is more or less fully removed from commodity status. This is because museums take items out of circulation through collections policies that discourage the sale of collections items and of attributing monetary worth to collections items. It has now reached the life of "museum quality". In this life, ivory stands for cultures, status, and affluence. This symbolism is fully ascribed to the artifact's physical form/condition, and its familiarity and level of cultural relevance (as determined by the collector/connoisseur).

In perhaps one of the most highly read essays in the field of museum studies, Donna Haraway's (1984) "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936" provides an insightful analysis of the institutional history of museums by making several observations linking white male dominated history and museums (namely the American Museum of Natural History) that commissioned white males to go to Africa and collect Nature for its exhibition and conservation by the museum. Such practices perpetuated of a type of "socially constructed knowledge" that supported patriarchy. This knowledge centered on fostering exhibition (through public education and scientific collecting), eugenics (to preserve hereditary stock) and

conservation (to preserve resources of industry and moral formation). These were thought to alleviate the social ignorance of newly arriving immigrants mostly from Southern Europe through "nature's lessons" about correct social order. In the same way that museums have historically appropriated and subjugated people of color, museum exhibits have done the same to nature. Haraway demonstrates how, by exhibiting the apparent unified truth of nature and science, the curator and taxidermist construct a narrative that is little more that the "tale of the commerce of power and knowledge in white and male supremacist monopoly capitalism, fondly named Teddy Bear Patriarchy" (ibid.: 21).

The literature on ivory focuses on historic and recent trends in museum collecting and exhibiting methods. Additionally, there are several published museum catalogues of ivory collections (Milwaukee Public Museum 2000; John Kohler Art Center 1983; National Gallery of Art, Collins et al. 1973), The art catalogue *The Far North: 2000 Years of American Eskimo and Indian Art* written in 1973 by the Henry Collins of the National Gallery of Art was for a traveling exhibit of Eskimo art, and is said to have contributed directly to the creation of a new market for Eskimo art, which has intensified subsistence digging into archaeological sites on St. Lawrence Island by locals (Hollowell 2006). Another important reading was Norbert Beihoff's (1961) volume *Ivory Sculpture through the Ages*, primarily because Beihoff was a significant donor of ivory material held by the MPM, and many photographs of the museum's ivory pieces that are published and discussed in this volume. Further literature that has contributed to notions of ivory as "museum quality" concerns the perception that cultural heritage as a non-renewable resource, and the possible role of museums in the construction of affluent desires in private collectors and future donors (Holtorf 2001).

Related to the published work on ivory as a material, this literature has focused primarily on sourcing and identifying types of ivory to establish value for collectors or to enhance appreciation from an art historical context (Beihoff 1961; Woodhouse 1976; Burack 1984). Additionally, there is a great deal of material about the historic use of ivory and often the corresponding touting of the artistic value of various pieces or collections that are most useful to the amateur collector. Importantly, collecting is only the last step in long history of viewing ivory as a valuable commodity. Thus, its value today arises partly because it was valued in ancient worlds like Mesopotamia and ancient China, for example (Woodhouse 1976). Though now out of print, Benjamin Burack's (1984) book *Ivory and Its Uses* provides and extensive overview of ivory from its sourcing, historic use, and artistic value, and includes an encyclopedic review of artifacts made from ivory, and even the world's museums with significant ivory collections, as well as Charles Woodhouse's (1976) book *Ivories: A History and* Guide, which provides a similar art historical perspective most appealing to the private collector.

As we shift to discussion of the third-life of ivory, it is important to note that museums today must maintain strict collection policies to restrict overcrowding. Additionally, new accessions must be clearly viable and relevant to the museum's mission statement. New laws in animal protection and conservation mean that ivory collecting is no longer possible in many respects.

Life 3: Stage 2

The final life and stage of ivory is in the museum collection and on display in exhibits. In this final transition, ivory is fully dissolved from the economic sphere and

enters a state of supreme singularity. The attainment of this status requires the idea and acceptance of expert connoisseurship to ensure the object is singular. This concludes the normalized life of ivory, and it is assumed that once it is part of a museum collection it will remain there. Although it is possible for ivory to be deaccessioned, circumstances for the removal of ivory from collections are highly restricted by its "non-renewable" status (*ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums,* paragraph 2.13). Additionally, museums are discouraged from viewing their collections as assets in deaccession (ibid.: paragraph 2.16) further prohibiting the possibility of ivory shifting back into a commoditized sphere.

In her book *Primitive Art in Civilized Places,* Sally Price (1989) explores the development of the basic and unquestioned cultural assumption—our "received wisdom"—about the boundaries between primitive art (the Other) and its unique situation in museums. She draws upon the mystique of connoisseurship in delineating these boundaries, as well as the universality principle as a form of validation accorded to non-Westerners, though Price emphasizes this is not a natural reflection of human equivalence, but rather the result of Western benevolence (ibid.: 25; see also Clifford 1988).

The authority of not only the curator but also the museum as an institution has also been described in much museum and anthropology literature. But importantly, not all museums share a common history, nor speak to a similar audience. James Clifford's (1991) essay "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections" situates four Vancouver museums within the postcolonial world (The University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, the Kwagiulth Museum and Cultural Center, the Royal British

Columbia Museum, and the U'mista Cultural Center): "shifting power relations and competing articulations of local and global meaning" (ibid.: 248). Most apparently, the distinction between large metropolitan museums and local tribal museums ("minority" and "majority" museums according to Clifford) are that Majority Museums seek: (1) the "best" art or most "authentic" cultural forms; (2) exemplary or representative objects; (3) the sense of owning a collection for national patrimony, and for humanity; and (4) to separate (fine) art from (ethnographic) culture. In contrast, Minority Museums seek: (1) to take a stance that is somewhat oppositional, with exhibits reflecting excluded experiences, colonial pasts, and current struggles; (2) to make the art/culture distinction irrelevant, or even to subvert it; (3) to discredit the notion of a unified or linear History and challenge it with local, community histories; and (4) to make a collection that is inscribed within different traditions and practices rather than reflect a national or cosmopolitan patrimony. The power of curatorial interpretation goes deeper than just the broader museum mission and includes even the details of display techniques.

In his 1985 essay "Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitation of the Museum Method of Anthropology", Ira Jacknis recounts the role that Franz Boas has had on contemporary museum practice, and describes the struggles that Boas faced when trying to merge ethnographic field methodologies with museum exhibits. In so doing, Jacknis highlights both the theoretical as well as pragmatic limitations of museum anthropology, as seen through the lens of early 19th century notions of human evolution, which favored an object typological system of display, and which ethnographers like Boas adamantly resisted in favor of cultural uniqueness through diorama-style "life group" exhibits. This is closely linked to what renowned sociologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has

described as struggling between an *in situ* vs. in-context mode of display. *In situ* display entails metonymy and mimesis wherein the object is a part (fragment) that stands in a contiguous relation to an absent whole (1990: 388-389); while in-context display impose modes of classification and arrangement in order to situate them within a particular form of meaning, which moreover implies that "there are as many contexts for an object as there are interpretive strategies" (ibid.: 390).

Ethnographers like Boas sought the *in situ* mode and tried to recreate the tribes as he had recorded them— with period rooms, villages, and even live performances. But at the same time, he was always pursing the scientific interest of the artifacts, and struggled against the tendency for *in situ* displays to "drown out" the artifacts by attempting to represent a whole. Moreover, the *in situ* mode is extremely difficult to effectively produce, because they necessitate little or no labels, so that when the artifacts or scenes are not used or viewed within a context that makes their normal function easily interpretable, novel viewers misunderstand them. That is to say, visitors often lack the required metonymic process to fully understand what they are seeing.

Other anthropologists, like Otis Mason, were seemingly aware that such a disconnect would occur, and therefore grounded their display mode in an *in-context* mode of ethnological displays of material culture, which sought to find commonality among widely desperate and diverse collections. Moreover, this approach was grounded theoretically in the perspective that all human cultures followed the same evolutionary trajectory, much like the biological tree of life. For Mason, though, he stated specifically that his reason for displaying collection typologically was because it best served the museum's audience. His justification was that "people with all sorts of interests desire to

see, in juxtaposition, the specimens, which they would study" (Mason 1887: 534). So, for example, musicians might visit the museum to see instruments, blacksmiths to see tools, or potters to see ceramics. This display mode is similar to what Steiner (1999) describes in his essay in *Unpacking Culture* as seriality or simply iconography, and the comfort and satisfaction that people feel toward the familiar. This can be taken further, in how Kirshenblatt-Gimblett demonstrates, through several case examples of ethnographic objects, especially on humans (living and dead), the "Museum Effect", which not only makes ordinary things become special when placed in museum settings, but also the museum experience itself becomes a model for experiencing life outside its walls (1991: 410; see also David Mamet's 1990 *Five Television Plays: The Museum of Science and Industry*). Moreover, this effect particularly demonstrates the power of curatorial interpretation in contextualizing alien objects that ultimately makes museum displays reflect our cultures back on ourselves rather than illuminate something completely new (Dominguez and Basker 1984).

As visual technologies, museums create very specific meanings. The notion of museums as culturally reflexive can also be applied to institutions of moral socialization, well described in Carol Duncan's iconic essay (1995) "Art Museums as Ritual", which explores the similarities between museums (specifically art museums) and ritual spaces. Such similarities include not only spatial features (architecture, scale, floor plan), but also similarities in how they structure behavior and thought toward a state of "liminality" as a mode of consciousness with purpose as transformative (through Visual Experience) that is moral, social, or political (Turner 1967). Duncan also recognizes the power of museums to change the meaning of objects by redefining them as asocial aesthetic

objects. In fact, an important criterion of reaching a transformative liminal state is that the object must become an archetype of the self, and therefore must be fully culturally recognizable, or rendered asocial by the curator and then newly framed to become accessible to the museum public.

In this literature review, I have attempted to bridge several disparate fields of study according to how they inform an understanding of the unique social life of ivory in material culture as well as during its first-life in nature where is it a part of biological organisms. This unique social life is highly significant in understanding numerous aspects of ivory materiality, its transition between spheres of commodification, its value and authenticity, its role in modern concepts of "primitive" and tourist art, its role in a new political ecology, and the growing public animation regarding animal conservation. Each of these topics informs the meaning of ivory in museums today, and articulates a precise reasoning for why and how museums utilize old ivory collections in new ways in light of dramatic changes in museums and the world at large.

Methodology

The methods for this thesis included extensive research of published and archival materials on ivory including collecting, display, animal sources, carving, symbolism, value, and ethics. This included material kept in the non-circulating library at the Milwaukee Public Museum, and also the artifact documentation kept in the Anthropology and History Departments of the MPM. Based upon background research, I developed four biographical sketches, two from African ethnology, a side-blown trumpet and a carved elephant bridge, and two from Inuit ethnology, a scrimshaw walrus tusk and an

ivory cribbage board. These four artifacts were chosen based upon how frequently the artifact type is exhibited at the MPM and how prominent the artifact type is in the literature on carved ivory, primitive art, and tourist art. These biographical sketches exemplify the culturally rich interpretation that ivory as a material affords in museum collections and exhibits. In this way, the biographical sketches demonstrate the unique qualities of ivory in museum exhibits, which are based upon its material history.

In order to gauge contemporary opinions toward ivory collecting and display in museums I conducted original research (with IRB #13.096 and #13.097 Exempt Approval) that incorporates the perspectives of both museum professionals at several museums as well as the general public in the MPM. To gather information from the general public, I prepared a survey and interviewed 47 adult museum visitors at the MPM. The interview instrument (Appendix A) was conducted in-person and included asking questions to determine visitors' general opinions of ivory, including its aesthetic and narrative qualities, preferred display techniques of two ivory artifacts, didactic information visitors prefer, and ethical opinions of ivory collecting and display in museums. The purpose of this visitor study was to obtain qualitative data from visitors to the MPM about their perceptions and opinions surrounding the museum's responsibilities and role in collecting and displaying ivory. The three central issues which the survey addressed were: (1) visitors' **interest** and **familiarity** with ivory and ivory-producing cultures in exhibits; (2) visitors' opinions about **how to engage and learn** about ivory, for example in an ethnographic/scientific or an art historical interpretation; and (3) visitors' **awareness** and **opinion** regarding ivory-producing animal conservation and Native group rights.

In order to gather information from museum professionals, I prepared a survey using 'Campus Survey Instrument' a web-based survey instrument through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (powered by Qualtrics) to generate a questionnaire (Appendix B). The purpose of this survey was to acquire qualitative data from approximately 70 museum curators, collections managers, registrars, and all other staff who work with collections in some fashion. These professionals are responsible for collections care through drafting and upholding institutional policies, both legal and ethical. The survey posed questions to determine the variability of policy and professional opinion about ivory artifacts: general collection sizes, what cultures ivory material is gathered from, collecting policies, exhibit trends, interpretive/educational uses, ethical values toward ivory commodification, and authenticity in the museum world (e.g. fakes or alternative material). The three primary topics that this survey addresses were: (1) museum collections policies or recent (since 1970s) changes (legal and ethical) in collecting, holding, researching, and exhibiting ivory; (2) size of collections and what cultures are commonly collected from that represent ivory working cultures; and (3) the institution's history of exhibiting ivory, and the extent/examples of labels written and any educational uses of ivory and how they were interpreted (ethnographic, art historical; diorama, typological, etc.). Additionally, there are a few questions that focus on the personal values of museum professionals rather than simply museum policies and institutional history in order to explore what, if any, motivations those working in museum might have that could promote changes in museum practice based upon any shifting concepts of animals and nature.

I posted a link to the survey on the Museum Discussion listserv (Museum-L), which is a general purpose, cross-disciplinary electronic discussion list for museum professionals, students, and all others interested in museum related issues. Museum-L (accessible via http://home.ease.lsoft.com/) is open to anyone with e-mail service and has approximately 5000 subscribers. I also posted a link to the survey on the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries open listserv (AAMG-L) for Museum Registrars and Collections Managers. Finally, the survey link was sent directly to approximately 30 museum professionals based upon known collections and exhibits deemed highly relevant to the study.

Chapter 2

Ivory and Related Substances as Material Culture

In exploring the relationship between society and ivory as material culture, it is informative to examine the physicality of ivory in the variety of animals from which it comes. This chapter will address the specific nature of ivory as a form of cultural expression, which belies the advent of mass-produced goods (Miller 1987), most specifically plastics.

Moreover, in keeping with the Material Culture Studies approach outlined in Chapter One, this chapter will explore what curators commonly refer to as the "lives of the artifact" (Kopytoff 1986). For a majority of museum artifacts, this is limited to two lives: the first being their original cultural use, and the second being its use and interpretation within the museum context. However, ivory and other animal parts used in artifact production have a preceding third-life when they were first a part of a living animal. This undoubtedly influences the meaning and value of the material, its use, historic commodification, and ultimately, its meaning to society today; "Ivory is now and always has been a precious resource. It is scarce and when it enters market exchange systems it is costly, and, therefore, its history of use has been confined generally to objects which signify wealth and power…" (John Kohler Art Center 1987). Ascribing unique status and value to ivory is its most universal themes across cultures, throughout history, and even within types of ivory and related substances (Alpers 1992).

In order to accurately identify ivory and related material, it is important to recognize the distinguishing features and unique properties of a variety of animal teeth used in the fashioning of artifacts. The diagnostic features of ivory types are most easily

recognized in its raw state in cross section. However, since museums commonly collect and display carved ivory, which may remove or make invisible diagnostic features, other aspects of the artifact such as age, provenience, form, and even condition are also highly informative. The information provided below has been synthesized from the work of several authors including T.K. Penniman (1952), Olga Krzyszkowska (1990), Charles Scammon (1968); and most helpfully Edgar Espinoza and Mary-Jacque Mann (1991).

Ivory

The term ivory can be misleading since several animal teeth and tusks have been used and traded throughout history and are all called ivory. True ivory only comes from elephant species both extant and extinct (Espinoza and Mann 1991). Other animals whose teeth and tusks are commonly called ivory are walrus, sperm whale, killer whale, narwhal, hippopotamus and wart hog. For the purpose of this thesis, the term ivory will be used to describe any mammalian tooth or tusk that is of commercial interest and is large enough to be carved or incised (ibid.). Other animal materials, such as bone, horn, and shell, are also commonly used for carving and fashioning tools and ornaments. By the mid-1800s, non-animal substitutes were developed such as vegetable ivory, semi-synthetic plastics like celluloid.

Ivory is made of dentine, a calcified tissue that along with enamel, cementum, and pulp are the four major components of teeth (ibid.). By weight, seventy percent of dentin consists of the mineral hydroxylapatite, $Ca_{10}(PO_4)_6(OH)_2$, twenty percent is an organic matrix of collagenous proteins, and ten percent is water (ibid.). Dentine contains a microscopic structure called dentinal tubules, which are micro-canals that radiate outward

through the dentine from the pulp cavity to the exterior cementum border. These canals have different configurations in different ivories, and their diameter ranges between 0.8 and 2.2 microns.

The process of dentine formation and its configuration differ with each type of ivory, so that careful analysis of an artifact based upon known characteristics of each type will aid in the accurate identification of the ivory type or substitute used. These characteristics are: morphological and surface features (when an unworked surface is exposed), structure, effects of deposition, color, and mineralization.

Elephant and Mammoth *(Laxodonta africana, Elephas maximus, Mammuthus)*

Elephant ivory comes from the modified upper incisors (also called tusks) of both extant and extinct members of the order Proboscidea. The two extant species of elephants are the African and the Asian elephant. Though there is a wide range of extinct species, mammoths (*Mammuthus primigenus)*, extinct for roughly 10,000 years, held a geographic range in Alaska and Siberia that has allowed their tusks to be well preserved. Other species tusks have become fossilized or mineralized, but the mammoth is the only extinct proboscidean, which consistently provides high quality, carvable ivory today.

An elephant's tusks are permanent, having replaced the tushes of juveniles at six months of age, and grow continuously throughout their life, although they are gradually worn through use. There is a great deal of variability among elephant tusks in length, weight, and density that is the result of sex, age, species, and nutrition. On average, an African elephant tusk can grow to 3.5 meters in length. The proximal end of the tusk contains the tapering pulp cavity, so that the raw tusk is hollow and becomes solid at the

distal end of the pointed tip. Enamel is only present at the tip of the tusk and even this is usually worn off before the animal has reached adulthood. All areas of the tusk are used for carving, including the whole tusk in its original shape, the hollow end for bracelets and armbands, and the solid end for a wide range of items, such as figurines and tools. In fact ivory figurines are among some of the earliest portable art forms from the Upper Paleolithic (Conrad 2009). More historically, elephant ivory has been used in a wide variety of European artifacts, most prominently for piano keys and billiard balls.

Fig. 2.1 Ivory Figurine (E58268)

Fig. 2.2 Ivory Bracelet with characteristic cross-hatching (E56763)

Fig. 2.3 Ivory Maskette (E58264)

Walrus *(Odobenus rosmarus)*

Walrus ivory comes from two modified upper canines and can reach a length of one meter. Like elephants, walrus tusks are permanent, and the animal wears off the enamel coating at the tip of the tusk through use. The dentine of walrus ivory comes in two types: primary dentine (described above) and secondary dentine, also called osteodentine. While primary dentine is the type associated with typical ivory, secondary dentine is marbled or oatmeal-like in appearance and is a diagnostic feature of walrus ivory. Walrus tusks are made mainly of primary dentine with the secondary dentine being contained within the core of the tusk. Most carvers try to avoid using this part of the tusk,

so the absence of the core secondary dentine does not rule out that an artifact is made from walrus ivory. A cross section of a walrus tooth will show concentric rings as a result of hypercementosis, which is the buildup of cementum on the root of the teeth. Finally, longitudinal cracks, which appear as radial cracks in cross-section, originate in the cementum and penetrate the dentine. These cracks can be seen throughout the length of the tusk, but might be minimal in heavily worked ivory pieces.

Walrus ivory engraving and carving for both decoration and tool production has been practiced since prehistoric times up to the present by indigenous groups living at far northern latitudes, including the Inuit, Inupiaq and Yupik of Greenland and North America and the Chukchi and Koryak of Russia (Ray 1961). Prehistoric artifacts recovered through archaeological excavation are heavily decorated tools like harpoon and lance heads, bag handles, needle cases, and a great deal of items of unknown use. In addition to decorated tools, at a site on St. Lawrence archaeologists have discovered a large number of dolls, often without arms or legs, but with very detailed carved faces, which have come to be known as Okvik figurines named after the Okvik time period (approximately 500 B.C. to 100 A.D.) and meaning “where walrus haul up” (ibid.). In historic to present times, ivory carving has provided an important monetary income to these groups, and items carved include animal figurines, necklaces, bracelets, billikens, carved and scrimshawed whole tusks, and cribbage boards (see: Artifact Biographical Sketches for more information about walrus ivory cribbage boards, and scrimshawed walrus tusks).

Fig. 2.4 Ivory Effigy Whale Bead (E469)

Fig. 2.5 Ivory Effigy Bear Figurine (E473)

Fig. 2.6 A needle case with glass beads inlayed (E3386)

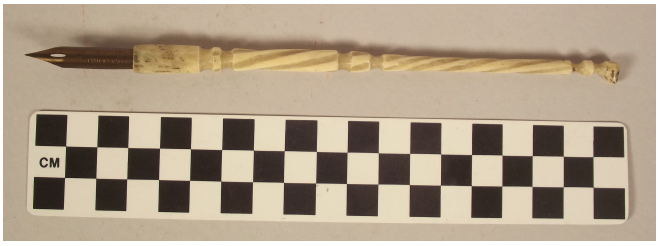

Fig. 2.7 Ivory-handled pen with metal tip (E28789)

Sperm Whale and Killer Whale *(Physter catodon* and *Orcinus orca)*

Sperm whale and killer whale are members of *Odontoceti*, a suborder of Cetaceans that are characterized by the presence of teeth rather than baleen. Sperm whales have between 36 to 52 teeth on only the lower jaw, which fit into sockets in the upper jaw (Scammon 1968). The teeth are cone-shaped with an average height of approximately twenty centimeters and can weigh up to 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs.). Teeth have a small amount of enamel on the tip and the rest of the tooth is covered by cementum. Killer whale teeth have similar characteristics to sperm whale teeth, but are smaller and found on both the top and bottom jaw. The dentine of both species is deposited in a progressive laminar fashion that results in prominent concentric rings in cross-section.

Since these whale teeth have an enamel layer, they are very difficult to carve unless the enamel is removed through grinding. As a result, the teeth are most commonly

used for two-dimensional artwork through a type of etching and engraving known as scrimshaw. Scrimshaw refers to incising an image or design on the surface of teeth, bones, and baleen of marine mammals. This practice was common among whalers starting around the 1750s on the Pacific Ocean, and survived until the ban on commercial whaling. Although scrimshaw is still a popular hobby, the material is too scarce to make a living as an artist.

Fig. 2.8 Sperm whale tooth with incised image of the animal (E56968)

Narwhal (*Monodon monoceros)*

The narwhal is a medium-sized toothed whale that lives year round in cold arctic waters. The most distinctive feature of these animals is the single tusk that is a modified left upper incisor. Both males and females have this tusk, although it is shorter and straighter in females. The tusk is spirally twisted, usually in a counter-clockwise direction, and can grow between two and seven meters long. Despite its length, this tusk is almost completely hollow and weighs only about 10kg (22lbs.); this hollow interior along with characteristic spiral outside makes narwhal ivory very easy to identify (ibid.). Like walrus tusks, the cementum of a narwhal tusk frequently displays longitudinal cracks following the spiral pattern. The cementum is separated from the dentine by a

clearly defined transition ring and, like killer and sperm whales, the dentine can display prominent concentric rings.

The indigenous communities of Greenland have used narwhals for subsistence since prehistory, and the entire animal was used for food, fuel, and raw material for tool making. In other communities, among the Inuit for example, narwhals had important mythological associations; while in other communities, they were seen as an omen of bad fortune (Bastian 2008). Among European traders, narwhal ivory was thought to have magical and medicinal purposes, resulting in the excessive killing to near extinction of these animals for trade. Narwhals have been heavily hunted for their mythical association with unicorns among European explorers to the Arctic, and perhaps owe their extant status only to their elusive existence. Because people appreciate the unique spiral shape of the narwhal tusk, it is not usually heavily worked, making it easy to identify.

Fig. 2.9 & Fig. 2.10 Unworked narwhal tusk showing characteristic spiral shape.

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius)*

Artifacts made from hippopotamus ivory most commonly come from the upper and lower canines since these teeth are the largest. Hippo tusks have a distinct morphology in their unworked state. Close examination of a cross-section of a tooth with the aid of a 10X hand lens reveals a series of tightly packed fine regularly and irregularly spaced concentric lines, which follow the overall shape of the tooth (Espinoza and Mann 1991).

In its unworked state, the upper canines have a broad longitudinal band of enamel that covers approximately two-thirds of the surface area of the tooth, though this is commonly removed during carving. Also any enamel and cementum is usually removed during processing. The lower canines are the largest teeth and are strongly curved. As with upper canines, a thin layer of cementum exists in the areas not covered with enamel, and these surface characteristics are frequently removed during processing. Hippo incisors can be described as peg shaped with enamel only on the tooth crown. The center of the tooth in cross-section shows a small dot or the long and curving interstitial zone.

Fig. 2.11 A fetish charm carved from a hippo tooth (E57886)

Fig. 2.12 Detail, longitudinal lines along the tooth (E57886)

Warthog *(Phacochoerus aethiopicus)*

Wart hog ivory comes from the animal's upper and lower canine teeth. These tusks are strongly curved and are somewhat square in cross-sections. Warthog ivory appears similar to hippopotamus teeth though smaller and tend to have a mottled appearance (ibid.). Ivory carving in warthog teeth is done in a similar fashion to elephant tusks, albeit on a much smaller scale. Such ivory carving has become popular for use in the tourist trade in East and Southern Africa, not only to replace costly and restricted elephant ivory, but also because carvings for tourist art tend to be smaller and thus more portable.

Fig. 2.13 Warthog tusk in raw state

Ivory Related Substances

Bone is a mineralized connective tissue consisting of dahllite, proteins and lipids. Compact bone, which is most often used as an ivory substitute, is extensively permeated by a series of canals, called the Haversian System, through which fluid flows. Upon close examination these canals appear as pits or irregularities along the surface of the bone. Additionally, there is often discoloration along the interior of the pits caused by the discolored organic material. Bone, along with antler and horn and ivory, are some of the oldest substances used by *Homo sapiens* for fashioning tools (Krzyszkowska 1990). Although bone as a raw material has had very important symbolic meaning in its own

right, bone, antler, and horn are much more common than ivory. Thus, from a material culture perspective, when such material is used as a substitution for ivory, it is seen as a poor imitation, a poor reproduction of the authentic ivory form. These are primarily based on functional issues related to its structure, hardness, inherent shape and size that affect its carvability and rate of deterioration.

Fig. 2.14 Bone armband, easily mistaken for ivory to the untrained eye (N13397)

Many species of hornbills (*Bucerotidae*) have a distinct growth on the upper mandible of the bill, known as a casque, which in most species is a spongy network of keritin. However, the now endangered helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) of Borneo has a unique casque of solid keratin, which can be carved and polished in a similar fashion to ivory. Hornbill ivory is softer than true ivory and is distinctive by virtue of its size (up to approximately 8 x 5 x 2.5 cm) and its golden color with peripheral streaks of bright red. Native peoples in the helmeted hornbill's range of habitat, such as the Kenyah and Kelabit, have long carved the casques and traded the raw material with foreign cultures. In Malaysia, hornbill-ivory rings were said to change color when near poisonous food (Harrisson 1999). Hornbill ivory has become extremely rare as the birds were hunted to near extinction when it became extremely popular among the Chinese during the Ming

dynasty (ibid.). Hornbill ivory is therefore not generally considered a substitute for ivory, but rather a valuable carvable material in its own right. The associated qualities of color, texture, workability, and subsequent rarity of the material of the threatened animal give hornbill ivory many of the same material culture associations as elephant ivory; and perhaps the status of the elephant as a large charismatic species is the primary factor in the material expression of its ivory being more widespread and globally conceptualized.

Vegetable "ivory" is made from the nuts of the *Phytelephas* genus, containing six species of palms. The tree most commonly used for its ivory nuts is the Tagua palm tree *(Phytelephas macrocarpa),* which is native to South America. The bright white nut of the Tagua is extremely hard, with a rating of 2.5 on the scale of mineral harness. The husk of the nut is a deep brown and is frequently incorporated into the carving. Although the nut has a limited size of 5cm long, it is an ideal substitute for ivory for the carving of buttons, beads, and small figurines. Its material culture significance, however, is quite separate from the associations of elephant and walrus ivory among the people living along side these animals. Vegetable ivory was the ideal substitute for ivory in the 1880s when real ivory was far too expensive for the everyday articles of its prior use (e.g. buttons, combs, etc.), but before the invention of later substitutions like Bakelite, celluloid, and plastic.

The material culture of vegetable ivory is contingent upon its carved form. A carved figurine for example might be seen as an artifact of indigenous use, especially if it is a carving of a native scene (plant, animal, or person). However, vegetable ivory carved into European articles of daily use represents the advent of mass production, while still holding on to the ideal of a distinctive material and has close associations with a specific time frame in history—after the cessation of widespread use of ivory (approximately

1850s), yet before the manufacturing cheap plastics (Parkesine and Bakelite) in the early 1900s.

Plastic, as the central material of mass production, is also the primary material of substitution. The advent of commercial plastic coincides with the decline of a great number of materials leading to a "resource scare" including not only ivory, but also tortoiseshell, and even cattle horn (Freinkel 2011: 15). Additionally, there was already a growing fascination with natural plastics like rubber and shellac during the Victorian era, where "in an era already being rapidly transformed by industrialization, plastic provided an alluring combination of qualities—one hearkening to both the solid past and the tantalizingly fluid future" (ibid.: 16).

As material culture, plastic is perhaps the most expansive and multifaceted of all materials. In keeping with the discussion of plastic as an ivory substitute, there were three manufactured types: (1) composites of an organic resin and an inorganic material, (2) composites of casein and a resin material and, (3) composites of ivory sawdust with a binder or resin (Espinoza and Mann 1991). The use of plastic as a replacement for ivory has two primary interpretations from a material culture perspective. The first is as a valid and revolutionary substance to replace scarce resources, and which represents the progress of human ingenuity overcoming a resource-limited world (Freinkel 2011). In this case, plastic was a material of equality, making it possible for all people to enjoy the aesthetic qualities of ivory in everyday Western personal adornment and tools such as buttons, hairpins, combs, pocket notebook, cane handles, and even scientific equipment. The second view of plastic as an ivory substitute is in regard to its movement in the "opposite direction"—back into cultures that originally used ivory, such as in African and

Asian art as well as other art forms which had fully adopted ivory, such as the widespread use of ivory in European religious artwork (ibid.). In this case, plastic was a material of degradation that marked a decline in pure authentic art and culture, especially as ivory became increasingly difficult and expensive to obtain. This conception of "poisoning" traditional forms of art and culture is also a primary sentiment motivating the collection of material culture by early museums and collectors.

Ivory as Cross Cultural

The alteration of ivory from its natural state whether carved or incised, painted or stained, is a key aspect of its meaning as a form of cultural expression. Most important of these is the artifact's provenance and age, its size, weight and overall form (e.g. tusk-shaped), and its quality and condition (both real and artificially imitated).

The material significance of ivory is strongly based on the artifact's provenance and age, making this a key factor in understanding ivory artifacts. Moreover, these features provide clues to identifying the source of ivory in museum artifacts, thus aiding in its use and interpretation by curators and researchers. For example, there was no African or Asian elephant ivory in North and South America prior to the establishment of international trade routes in the mid 16th century, as these species are not indigenous to these regions, however, mammoth ivory may be present. Obviously artifacts coming from Africa and Asia are most commonly elephant ivory, although hippopotamus and boar tusk have also been popular during certain time periods, especially in Egypt and North Africa (Krzyszkowska 1990). From the northern most regions of Europe, Asia, and North America, the material is as likely to be walrus ivory as elephant ivory, especially ancient

mammoth tusks. Finally, after the mid-19th century it became possible to fabricate ivory-like material from vegetable ivory and plastics. The meaning of ivory in each of the geographic regions informs a very specific material culture, and this meaning both directs and reflects cultural knowledge and value. For example, ivory directs social action in the development of trade and culture contact into Africa, and ivory also reflects culture, for example, as a status or identity marker in both African and European cultures (Woodward 2007).

Size, weight, and feel are another important factor in the interpretation of ivory as material culture. Elephant tusks are much longer than other mammal ivories; however, in worked artifacts, this often cannot be determined. In items where some aspect of the original tusks are still discernable, like in armbands that are a transverse section of the tusk, the size of the tusk can aid in its recognition as ivory. In general, an artifact with a long uninterrupted section has a strong possibility of being elephant ivory, while items made from palm nuts (vegetable ivory) cannot exceed a maximum size of 5cm. In addition to an artifact's size, its weight can also provide clues to distinguish it from ivory, bone, or plastic. Ivory and bone are heavier than shell, horn, and composite materials, and ivory can be surprisingly heavy in spite of its size (Espinoza and Mann 1991).

Fig. 2.15 A small tusk, approx. 35cm long, carved to imitate the larger more intricate forms of Benin ivory carving. (E58268)

Fig. 2.16 A medium-sized tusk with a natural yellow patina is easily carved with a deep relief, approx. 43cm long. The chief is at the tip, with the story of his life depicted in the spiraling motif below. (N2912)

Fig. 2.17 A larger whole tusk from Loango, approx. 70cm long. The traditional scenes of African life mixed with a new stylized form suggest contact with new cultures. (E57884)

The feeling and texture of ivory is another pivotal feature of its materiality. Its use in scientific instruments, most especially those of measurement and navigation, is attributed to its resilience to wear under constant handling, and the bright white color in contrast to the scribing and dying of lines (Shayt 1992). But perhaps its most legendary attribute is its smooth and cool feel in the human hand, as attested to in its favored use in a host of professions including dentistry, hair cutting tools, the culinary arts, and in musical instruments (ibid.).

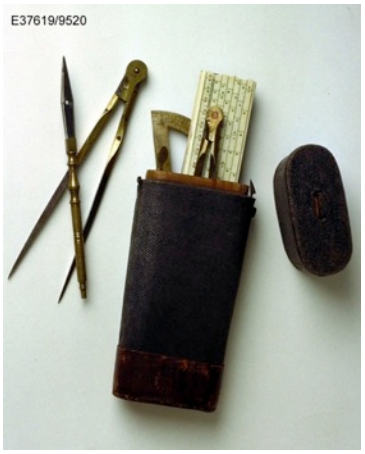

Fig. 2.18 Drafting instrument set with ivory ruler (E37619) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

Fig. 2.19 Octant with ivory numeric scales (N33520) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

Fig. 2.20 Cane with carved ivory handle (H10460) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Public Museum

Fig. 2.21 Ivory grooming set, Tiffany & Co. (N35958) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

Fig. 2.22 Dance card notebook with filigree with ivory leaves (N27884)
Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

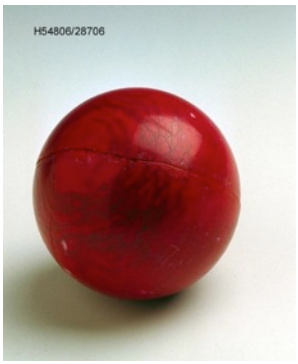

Fig. 2.23 Machine worked and painted ivory billiard ball (H54806)
Courtesy of the Milwaukee Pubic Museum

During the rise of the industrial age, machined ivory was a material expression of democratic order, a material of luxury made available to the masses (Plimmer and Plimmer 1951). To the engineer, the elephant was thoroughly abstracted from the ivory, now with a self-sufficient economic life of its own, much like stone or timber (Owen 1856). The quality of ivory in terms of its handling was most enduring in its use in ivory-handled knives in the United States, which saw some of the most elegant forms of ivory handle forms seen outside the Baroque and Art Noveau periods, up until its ban in 1989 (Burdette 1989; Shackleford 1989). With the banning of ivory for commercial and export use and its subsequent departure from the utilitarian world in the wake of plastics, it returned to the realm of fine art where it has endured to the present day (Shayt 1992).

The ways that ivory deteriorates is also an important aspect of its materiality. The most common form of deterioration in ivory and related material is desiccation (drying out) of the once living tissue. Most immediately, this results in a loss of some surface luster; although historically, it was common to polish ivory or to treat it with oils or patinas to give it an appearance of antiquity and to limit its drying out. This desiccation makes ivory especially sensitive to fluctuations in relative humidity. A humidity level below 35% will begin to cause separation or delamination of the layers of dentine, which

can be seen in the cross sections of elephant ivory as a cone-within-a-cone pattern. In ivory with preexisting longitudinal cracks, like walrus and narwhal tusks, these cracks can become more pronounced. These appear as radial cracks similar to the way wood splits along the grain. Ivory and related materials are also all quite porous, making them susceptible to staining, both intentional and unintentional, with colorants like coffee, tea, wood stains; and additionally, ivory can be stained by dirt and oils from handling. These forms of deterioration can make visual identification more difficult, and in fact, ivory can even come to resemble bone or wood (See: Fig. 2.24).

Interestingly, the alteration of ivory from its natural state is viewed in two opposing ways, that is, the *deterioration* of ivory is bad, but the *deposition* is good. Deposition refers to any changes in the physical quality of ivory as a result of its use or placement within its natural environment. It may seem contradictory, but this relates closely to its associated meaning within different historical and cultural contexts. In general, ivory artifacts that are understood and valued as art forms are most valuable in a pristine state, and in these cases, the conservation of the piece is paramount. However, in ivory artifacts that are understood and valued as a part of the past, it is necessary that the piece have some material aspect that represents this past, through changes in coloration, wear patterns, or damage. The artificial alteration of new ivory to appear old is most common in African ivory artifacts, which strangely must exhibit evidence of use to be seen as "authentic" before they are given the status of "Art" in the Western art consciousness; although, more recently the same is true of Asian ivory and any number of antiques, which are made more valuable when they show some degree of deposition from time or use.

Fig. 2.24 Walrus ivory worn giving the appearance of wood (N1905)

Fig. 2.25 Elephant ivory trumpet, with large crack and original repair (E17245)

Ivory as a material is highly cross-cultural with perhaps one of the broadest uses of any material historically. It has blurred the line between art and science, industry and depravity (ibid.). Indeed, "the incremental upset of many native African views of the elephant as an embodiment of supreme strength and authority, as ivory markets grew in depth and breadth overseas, is not easily disentangled from the colonial mercantilism that has redirected so much of African life" (Alpers 1992: 381). Interestingly the use of ivory outside of indigenous communities mirrored its original use, as both art, personal adornment, and symbol of power and status, "in all cultures, the fidelity of ivory workers to their material, regardless of who receives the work, has been the most salient theme" (ibid.: 381). This common theme then, provides a basis for teasing apart the meaning of specific artifacts within a historical and geographic context, and their interpretation as material culture is highly significant in their display in museum exhibitions.

Artifact Biographical Sketches: African and Inuit Ivory

Following Kopytoff's (1986) "biographical" approach to material culture studies, four biographical sketches of artifacts typical of the museum's exhibits are presented

here, which go beyond merely discussing ivory as an idea and use concrete examples from the collection in order to (1) demonstrate the historical collecting and exhibiting trends of the MPM, (2) provide relevant art historical background for each piece, and (3) suggest how these "old" collections can be made relevant through a revamped interpretation of ivory in museums.

The exhibition galleries that most frequently display ivory are the African Hall and the Circumpolar North Hall. The African exhibits contain both elephant and hippopotamus ivory from the Congo and Nigeria, while the Circumpolar North exhibits contain walrus ivory from the Inuit and Yupik cultures. The rationale for the four artifacts chosen was based upon how frequently the artifact type is exhibited at the museum and how prominent the artifact type is in the literature on carved ivory, primitive art, and tourist art. Below I provide first a broad understanding of the ivories of each region, followed by some background on the "type" of artifact before taking a close look at a specific artifact from the MPM's permanent collection.

African Ivories

As a mode of cultural expression among African tribes, the use of ivory, though far less frequent than the use of other materials such as wood, gains its symbolic importance from the material itself rather than its final form. Ivory often bears symbolic implications of power among several African tribes: the power of wealth, the power of political authority…and the power of sorcery (John Kohler Art Center 1987: 2). The origin of ivory as a symbol of power is directly related to its origin as part of the elephant. The African landscape, its forests and savanna, are a dangerous environment in

which elephants, as the worlds largest land mammal, directly contribute to the danger of the landscape. Ivory then, works metonymically to represent the essence of the elephant, is a substance of power only obtained through the danger of a hunt, and is therefore reserved for the use of leaders and royalty (Ross 1992). To further strengthen its symbolism of power, ivory carvings depict leopards, kings, and elephants themselves. More recently the Western fixation with images of Africa have driven a demand for new imagery, including elephant bridges, African women, and other animals unique to the bush (rhinos, giraffes, etc.) (ibid.). Most of the ivory on exhibit at the MPM is from Western and Central Africa. These artifacts are approximately three trumpets, three maskettes, two figurines, three whole carved tusks, four armbands, and four elephant bridges. The collection also contains four pestles, one carved busts, and several pieces of jewelry that are not on exhibit.

Side-blown Trumpets

The side-blown trumpet is an instrument used in many African tribes, such as the Akan of Ghana and the Kuba people of Zaire (ibid.), to praise the chief during rituals. These instruments are among the most widespread worked ivory objects in Africa (ibid.: 24). Most trumpets retain the shape of the original tusk and can be relatively undecorated, or elaborately carved and shaped with added material like metal bands or beads. The mouth of the instrument is typically on the concave side of the tusk toward the tip, and a tone hole is carved on the very tip, which can be covered by the hand or thumb. Trumpets come in a wide range of sizes, as small as fifteen to thirty centimeters, to as large as the immense *siwa* trumpets of the Swahili coast, which use the entire length of the tusk (as

much as 2.5m) (ibid.: 24). In fact a wide range of trumpet sizes was desirable to produce a harmony of sounds when played in concert. The sound produced by medium sized trumpets is remarkably similar to the actual sound of trumpeting elephants, a feature which ascribes great status to the ruler, who is praised in the voice of the elephant as well as through an instrument made from its body. In addition to instruments of accolade, trumpets were also used for a variety of events from dances and weddings to funerals and rite of passage ceremonies (ibid.: 24-26).

The MPM collected and displays several ivory side-blown trumpets. Two ivory trumpets are on exhibit on the first floor of the museum in the "Sense of Wonder" gallery (Fig. 20). These two trumpets are on display along with a horn trumpet, metal weapons, arrows, pottery, raffia textiles, woven baskets, and metal armbands (Fig. 21 & Fig. 22). On the bottom left shelf of the case toward the front is a single large placard, which reads:

> The Lower Congo River was once home to the vast Kingdom of Kongo. The Rev. C.B. Antisdel, a native of Afton, Wisconsin, lived among the BaKongo people of Angola from 1892 to 1903. Recognizing that his presence would likely change many traditional practices, Antisdel collected objects of both daily and ceremonial use while they were still common. By selling such collections to museums, missionaries like Antisdel ironically helped document the native cultures whose transformation they in fact were hastening.

There are no artifact labels, so visitors must decide for themselves which items are for daily use and which are for ceremonial use. The label reinforces the notion of a vanishing primitive culture and the important task undertaken by museums and collectors in recording that period of time as it was in material form.

Fig. 2.26 "Sense of Wonder" gallery

Fig. 2.27 African display case

Fig. 2.28 Detail of ivory trumpets (E6379 & E6380)

There is another ivory trumpet on exhibit in the African Gallery on the third floor of the museum. It is mounted on the back wall of the "Kings and Warfare" display case (Fig. 2.29). This case discusses the role of kingship among the Central African tribes and displays a variety of artifacts including masks, weapons, rugs, stools, drums and decorative figurines. The trumpet is directly above the case title, and below this is an image of a king in full regalia. The angle of the trumpet and its placement suggest such trumpets were used in war; however, this is not directly stated (Fig. 2.30).

Fig. 2.29 "Kings and Warfare" display case

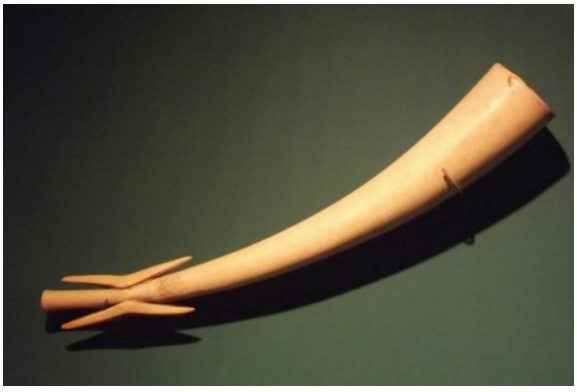

Fig. 2.30 Ivory trumpet, "Kings and Warfare" (E6378)

Artifact #1: E17245/2563 Documentation

Artifact E17245/2563, an ivory side-blown trumpet from the Congo, is the focus of this biography. It was donated by Mr. William Lange on August 26th, 1915 and has never been exhibited. The horn is approximately 40cm long and undecorated beyond a slight flaring of the mouthpiece. The walls of the instrument were thinned considerably, most likely to make it lighter and improve its resonance, but this has resulted in substantial damage to the bell of the instrument, including long cracks and some loss on the edge. There is an original repair job with stiff grass along the longest crack and several accretions have formed around the damaged area (Fig. 2.32; see also Fig. 2.25). The natural patina of the horn is a golden brown especially on areas of contact with oils from handling on the mouthpiece, tonal hole and body where it was held.

Fig. 2.31 Ivory Trumpet (E17245)

Fig. 2.32 Ivory trumpet showing damage to bell (E17245)

An instrument such as this, though undecorated, has a rich golden color, a feature often artificially produced by traders hoping to increase an artifact's value. Historically, this kind of instrument would have been appealing because the features that enhance its "aura of authenticity", its patina, the wear patterns, and even the damage and original repair, would have been highly appealing to a collector or tourist. Documentation of this artifact indicates that the museum director, Henry Ward, wrote to Mr. Lange on January 12th, 1911 requesting he consider selling individual pieces of his "African curiosities" to the museum. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Lange's "Congo Collection" comprising approximately one hundred ethnological objects and five natural history specimens were sold to the museum for the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars on January 23rd, 1911.

Biographical Sketch

In Africa, even today, the most commonly produced ivory artifact for indigenous use is the side-blown trumpet (ibid.). By the 1880s, a new museum *doxa* was established to "make a collection auto-intelligible through a combination of transparent principals of display and clear labeling" (Bennett 1998: 28). In what Bennett has described as 'speaking to the eyes' this artifact is the material expression of social hierarchy, which is recognized by a wide audience. This is what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) has described as an analytic system for describing how artifacts stand metonymically for the culture or person from which they have come. That is, ivory trumpets are immediately familiar with a clear function to a wide audience. The trumpet therefore serves a dual function within the museum context: first, as an iconic and serially produced form, this trumpet is a

cultural expression of leadership and power; and second, as an archetypal form of musical instrument, the trumpet is also a cultural expression of accolade.

Elephant Bridges

The full appreciation by "Westerners" of African Art for its purely aesthetic qualities did not come about until the late 19th century, when "the enthusiasm then generated by avant-garde European artists was passed on to avid collectors and millions of museum goers" (Graburn 1976: 299). Colonialism brought a demand for souvenirs and with it the destruction of many traditional African art forms and creation of new ones, "tourism has accentuated the trend of collecting souvenirs and has brought with it new rules imposed by needs of instant recognition and portability" (ibid.: 299). In catering to tourist tastes, one new genre of art that drew immediate recognition was the naturalistic carving of both humans and animals into ivory, with the most prominent image being the elephant itself. The desire to preserve the overall shape of the tusk, so as to retain its recognition as ivory, coupled with the desire for a naturalistic form of the elephant has resulted perhaps one of the most frequently carved form of African tourist art, the elephant bridge.

An elephant bridge is a particular motif of elephants carved into ivory and more recently into ivory replacement materials (e.g. wood, plastic). Bridges follow the natural curve of the elephant tusk and depict a single file line of elephant, often times touching each other in some fashion, such as with the trunks laid over the back of the animal ahead of them or holding the tail of the animal ahead of them with their trunks, so that the figures are seamlessly carved from a single tusk. The largest elephant is at the front of the

line and the elephants gradually become smaller with the tapering of the tusk. Although the origin of the elephant bridge is unknown, its popularity has far reaches in both African and Asian art, and has even expanded beyond the limits of ivory and has been carved in many other mediums, most commonly wood. Whatever its origins, the elephant bridge and other forms of 'airport art' flourished rapidly among African carvers who realized the high salability of such souvenirs (Bascom 1976).

The MPM collected and displays several elephant bridges. Two ivory elephant bridges are on exhibit on the third floor of the museum, one in the "Japanese Ivory" display case and another in the "African Art Today" display case (Fig. 3.23 and Fig. 2.33). Additionally, two more elephant bridges are depicted in the MPM Ivory Catalog; a Japanese elephant bridge and an elephant bridge motif carved in relief on a hippo tooth from Cameroon. (Fig. 2.34 and 2.35) (Ivory Catalogue 2000: 69,107).

Fig. 2.33 "African Art Today display case

Fig. 2.34 Japanese Elephant bridge from catalogue (N2275) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Public Museum

Fig. 2.35 Hippo tooth elephant bridge (N13408) Courtesy of the Milwaukee Public Museum

This prevalence of elephant bridges is still high today, and it is commonly confiscated when tourists attempt to bring them into the United States from Africa and Asia. The display of an elephant bridge in the "African Art Today" exhibition case is unlabeled placing it in a contextual vacuum being simply labeled "modern-day".

The MPM displays some forms of modern African art and recognizes the category of tourist art as having a place in museum exhibits. The appeal of such objects was that *both* the material (ivory) and the image (elephant) are strong symbols of, not only Africa, but 'Otherness', which easy extends to Asia (Said 1977). Other stark instances of Otherness and exoticism that are commonly carved in ivory are female busts and figures. Much of the tourist market for African and Asian ivory carving centered around figurative sculptures for display in the house, making the elephant bridge or the exotic African woman the perfect embodiment of a far-off journey full of exoticism, all of which also symbolizes "getting back to nature" (Ortner 1974).

Fig. 2.36 An ivory bust of a Maasai woman with the base and ring above her hair left unworked to indicate the material is ivory. (N34004) Courtesy Milwaukee Public Museum

Artifact #2: N11084/19057

The MPM Artifact # N11084/19057 is an ivory elephant bridge made for the tourist trade. This biographic sketch begins with Mr. Norbert J. Beihoff who donated this artifact to the MPM in May 1960 in a large accession of ivory consisting of mostly Asian decorative pieces. The artifact has been on permanent display since the 1970s in the exhibit case "African Art Today". The MPM holds very little catalog information, although the artifact is published in Mr. Beihoffs 1961 publication. The label written in the books states,

> Primitive style from the Cameroons, Africa. Carved by Boulous whose style handed down from father to son, remains the same for hundreds of years. Partially fossilized. Found buried, apparently for a long time. Identified by Renie Sherman, Douala, as from circa 1750. Beihoff Collection now Milwaukee Public Museum. Arthur M. Ulhmann photo (Beihoff 1961:77).

Although this may be highly informative, the date of this publication and know factual errors throughout the book should be kept in mind regarding the information provided above. The bridge is carved from a single tusk with seven elephants in a line with their trunks touching the back of the animal ahead of them. The three elephants at the front are the largest and while subsequent elephants quickly decrease in size with the smallest one being only half the size of the largest. They appear quite naturalistic with the exception of their oversized almond-shaped eyes.

Fig. 2.37 Elephant bridge on exhibit in "African Art Today" (N11084)

Biographical Sketch

The origin of the elephant bridge was as a tourist object with no indigenous use. In fact, the surge of ivory "knick-knacks" or curios created for the tourist market were entirely alien to African sensibilities (Ross 1992) beyond their capacity to turn a profit. Whether or not the origin of the elephant bridge was in Africa, its use among African carvers has been as an export symbol of Africa, and I would suggest the elephant stands metonymically for the continent and its abundant nature. As a material form of cultural expression, the elephant bridge represents culture contact/interchange centered on the Western conception of exoticism and Nature. The majority of literature that considers the tastes of foreign consumers of African art culture are confined to Afro-Portuguese ivories of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and the Loango ivories of the nineteenth century (ibid.: 385), while such kitsch tourist art like elephant bridges has been altogether avoided. Tourists tend to view ivory as unique and especially authentic part of Africa

(since it was an actual part of an elephant), with the added allure of luxury. This is carried over into the exceedingly popular genre of bare-breasted African "princesses" and "Madonna's", which emphasized the material was ivory by leaving a portion of the tusk unworked, usually the tip (ibid.: 386) (Fig. 2.36). In this case, both the ivory and the choice of subject matter reference metonymically an exoticised "Other" and other space that holds special associations with unbridled nature. Tourist artifacts like elephant bridges and African princesses serves as a valuable signal of how Western colonizers perceived the art of "primitive" cultures and the consumer taste culture of the time. Furthermore, because museums have historically have avoided tourist artifacts, their presence in exhibits tells a unique and self-reflexive story of changing modes and tastes regarding appropriate objects of display.

Circumpolar North Ivories

Ivory use among the peoples of the circumpolar north is perhaps one of their most significant modes of cultural expression in material form. The recurrent use of ivory in fashioning tools and as a medium of artistic production for Artic and Sub-Arctic peoples made it ubiquitous in a material context, like plastic in American culture today. The primary source of ivory in the far North is from walrus and secondarily from toothed whales (sperm whale, killer whale, narwhal). Ivory carving by Native Alaskans and Canadians was seen in the museum context as a vital material in an extremely resource-scarce environment. Indeed, many early conceptions of the Inuit and Yupik cultures were that in such a harsh landscape, the production of art was a luxury they could not afford (Collins et al. 1978).

Ivory among these groups is a symbol of subsistence, as both food and raw materials. As with African ivory, this symbolism is directly related to its origin as part of the walrus. Perhaps more so than the African landscape, however, the tundra, having fewer materials of subsistence, makes the animals of the environment a key source of survival. Ivory, though it may stand metonymically for the animal, goes further as a material of human use that is more quickly disassociated with the animal. Among such groups ivory is associated with the necessary functions of everyday survival, making it widely available to everyone in the community.

Geometric patterns and motifs, incised into the ivory artifacts of prehistoric cultures, are most commonly found on weapons (Ray 1961:14-17). During the gold rush, especially along the Pacific coast, an explosion of culture contact between American explorers and Inuit people resulted in a reinventing of the associations these people had with ivory as material culture. Still used as a material of survival, ivory carving shifted from tool production for indigenous uses (i.e. subsistence activities like hunting), to art production for export and a new source of economic subsistence, that is, as monetary income. This was further advanced by the "discovery" of Eskimo art by American curators and art connoisseurs, in the 18th century and later chronicled in exhibition catalogues as, "a demonstration of the high artistic achievements of the native peoples of our northernmost state, providing further evidence of why Alaska must be recognized as one of the major world centers of primitive art," (Collins et al. 1973: 1). Today, Inuit ivory, while serving a different function as material culture than African ivory, holds many similarities as a material of tourist culture.

The MPM collection of Inuit ivory includes numerous ivory carved tools, such as harpoons, fishing lures, needle cases, and bag handles. The collection also contains many scrimshaw tusks, carved miniature figurines, effigy beads, penknives, billikens (a troll-like figurine), and cribbage boards. The exhibits containing Inuit ivory are divided between two ethnographic display cases (Figs. 3.15 to 3.18) and one artistic display case (Figs. 3.19 to 3.21). The ethnographic displays depict dioramas of Inuit hunters using ivory carved tools, and the artistic display includes scrimshawed tusks and carved animal figurines, carved soapstone and alabaster figures, as well as two-dimensional graphic prints. As a consequence of the import of tourism and its impact on the development of ivory carving in the Arctic, the focus of the following two biographical sketches (a scrimshaw walrus tusk and a cribbage board) is on the use of walrus ivory in the historic production of art for the tourist trade.

Overview of Scrimshaw Ivory Tusks

The production of scrimshaw on walrus ivory by Inuit artists is a combination of two distinct artistic traditions. The first is the ancient practice of incising walrus ivory with geometric patterns and small black shapes of humans and animals on objects like harpoon heads, spears, and bow drills. The second is the art of scrimshaw practiced by whalers and sailors of the arctic on whale teeth where the incised images were highly realistic. The mixing of these two forms of two dimensional artwork were first explored by the famous ivory carver Angokwazhuk and became widespread among Inuit artists, although ivory and soapstone carving of figurines are much more popular and better represented in the museum literature (Ray 1961; Graburn 1976).

Fig. 2.38 Walrus ivory tusks and pipe incised images of humans and animals, "Eskimo Art" (pipe: E13191)

The Milwaukee Public Museum holds several highly incised walrus tusks in its permanent collection. One tusk in particular, is highly realistic and detailed, a feature common among the scrimshaw art of sailors on whaling ships at the time, but was not produced/carved by Inuit people. In fact, the style and quality of the piece was completely unique during its time, leading to its creation being credited to the world famous ivory carved Angokwazhuk, also called 'Happy Jack' who spent a great deal of time on whaling ships during a trip he took to San Francisco in 1892 (Ray 1961).

Artifact #3 (E500/1637)

The artifact E500/1637 is half of an incised walrus tusk and is attributed to the famous ivory carver 'Happy Jack' from Nome, Alaska c. 1890. Dr. Robert Newton Hawley donated this artifact as a gift on November 12th, 1900. The surface has been incised and additionally red and blue pigment has been added to the surface. The artifact is exactly half of a walrus tusk cut in a longitudinal cross section with a hole drilled in the tip. The imagery shown on the surface is diverse including a seal, fisherman, fish, bear, a

man, a mother and child, an eccentric face, and an Inuit man (perhaps Happy Jack himself) with a dog, and the man is trading an incised ivory tusk for supplies with a white man (perhaps this exact tusk). The scrimshawed design is extremely detailed and the colors that have been added enhance the images even further. The tusk is approximately 40.5cm long and slightly curved. This artifact is illustrated in the catalogue "Ivory: Ideals of Beauty, Ideas of Power" (2000: 69). It is also one of the few artifacts in the catalogue printed in color to highlight its unique qualities.

The attribution of this artifact to 'Happy Jack' is in part due to the history of the donor of the artifact. Dr. Robert Newton Hawley was born in Milwaukee, WI on July 4th, 1856. Formally trained as a physician, Dr. Hawley was also extremely fond of travel and made trips to Central America and later became a surgeon for the U.S. Revenue Cutter "Bear" and made several trips to the Arctic and Bering Sea. He traveled to Nome during the peak of the artist Happy Jack's career as a carver, and was known to collect pieces by the artist. A caption to the illustrated cribbage board in Dorothy Rays book *Artists of the Tundra and Sea* (1961) reads, 'Walrus tusk cribbage board made in 1903 by Happy Jack. This is one of the first cribbage boards made in Nome, and one of the finest of its kind. Collection of Ralph Hawley, Bothell, Wash.," (1961: 65, Fig. 54).

Fig. 2.39 Scrimshaw walrus tusk with realistic imagery (E500)

Fig. 2.40 Detail of monkey face (E500)

Fig. 2.41 Detail of ivory trade (E500)

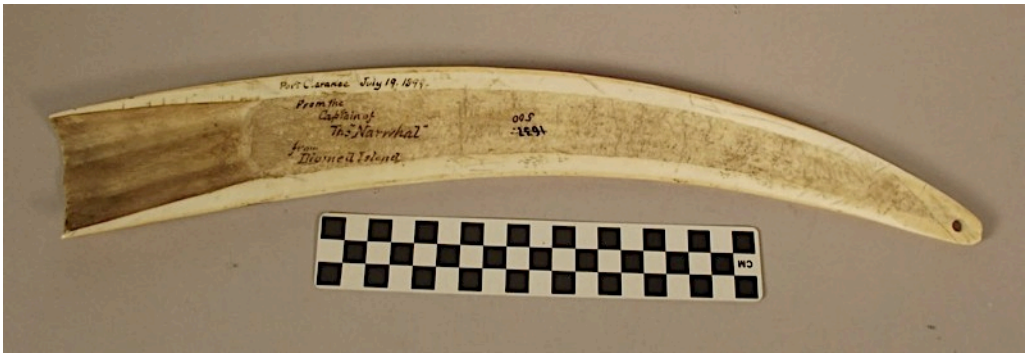

Fig. 2.42 Anterior side of tusk reads "Port Clarance [sic] July 19, 1889. From the Captain of The "Narwhal" from Diomede Island (E500)

Biographical Sketch

The role of art has only recently become central to the lives of Arctic and Subarctic cultures (Carpenter, Varley, and Flaherty 1959; Carpenter 1973) and in fact archaeologists (Taylor and Swinton 1967; Melgaard 1960) have indicated that the artistic output from the Thule period (approximately 700-800 years BP) to the present has been far less than that of their Dorset and pre-Dorset ancestors. As argued by Nelson Graburn (2004) modern Inuit commercial arts grew out of the desires of multiple non-Inuit agencies and persons; yet, interestingly this imposed category of "Eskimo Art" has been appropriated by the Inuit who were eager to develop their category of art to make possible their dual occupation in traditional hunting life, as well as a new Western economic life. The sudden innovations in ivory carving, like the realistic scrimshaw

pieces made by Angokwazhuk, lies in the intensified requests of souvenir seekers for a new category of art. As a material form of cultural expression, the scrimshaw walrus tusk bears witness to the colonial context of its creation as well as to and the imposition of a new economic system on the traditional carving practices of Arctic people. Like the elephant bridge, the modern Inuit art tells a unique story in the museum exhibit, of Western taste culture and the shifting conceptualizations of the categories of art.

Ivory Cribbage Boards

The cribbage board carved out of ivory was the first definite departure from traditional carving among the Inuit, in both form and design. The large surface of the tusk as the board-game surface provided ample space for incising all forms of design, most commonly seals, whales, dog-teams, and humans in various occupational trades. Few forms of carving have remained popular for so long, and the early decades of contact with souvenir seekers resulted in an explosion of new ideas and creative techniques to meet the demand for objects the carvers had never heard of, such as cane handles, gavels, and of course cribbage boards themselves (Ray 1961). As the period of rapid innovation ended the resulting ivory carving had achieved in a short period of time a general sophistication of craftsmanship and heterogeneity of products (ibid.)

The MPM currently has one walrus ivory cribbage board on exhibit in ‘Native Games’ on the second floor of the museum. The cribbage board is displayed in a stand-alone case with ivory dominoes from Labrador, Canada and playing cards made by the Apache in Arizona.

The group label of the display case reads:

> European Influence, Native Adaptation: Native Americans adopted many things from the Europeans after contact, often reinterpreting these new objects or concepts for their own purposes…

The interpretive object label of the cribbage board reads:

> This cribbage board is carved from a walrus tusk. While walrus ivory is a traditional raw material, it was not carved whole until after European contact. The pictorial style carving seen here, reminiscent of traditional drill bow engravings, actually emerged around the turn of the 20th century to appeal to Europeans. Cribbage boards were especially popular in the 1880s and 1890s among European gold miners.

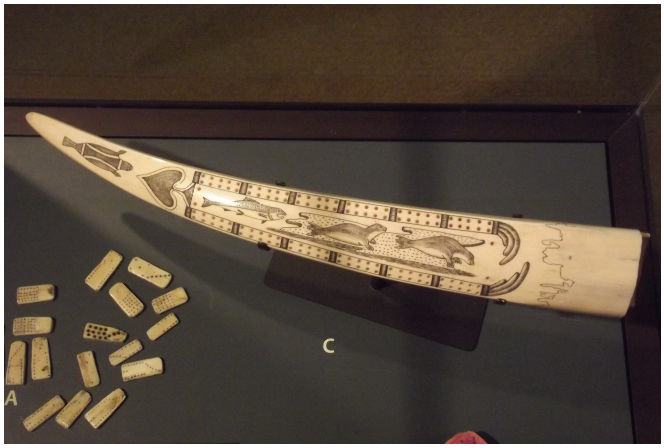

Fig. 2.43 Ivory cribbage board on exhibit in "Native Games" (E49040)

The label definitively places the cribbage board and other native games in the context of post-contact games, although it does not mention that such games were predominantly made for export. In fact, it imitates from the headline for the group exhibit that these were games adapted by indigenous peoples.

Artifact #4 (E58265/6808)

The artifact E58265/6808 is an ivory cribbage board. Mr. Norbert J. Beihoff donated it on January 21st 1964. It is a whole tusk with three seals affixed to the playing surface and two decorative bands all made from ivory. There are four pegs that are stored in the base of the tusk with a small sliding sheet to open and close the compartment.

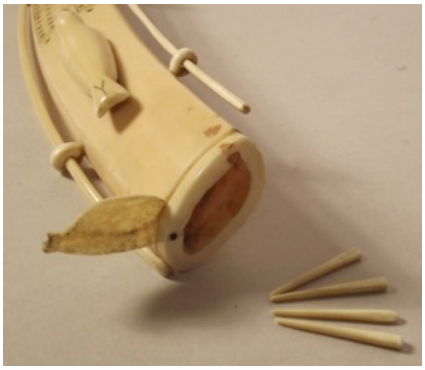

Fig. 2.44 Walrus tusk cribbage board with four pegs (E58265) **Fig. 2.45** Compartment for pegs (E58265)

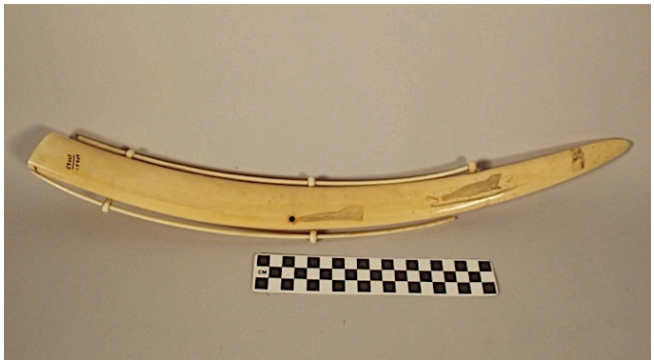

Fig. 2.46 Anterior side of cribbage board with two incised marine mammals (E58265)

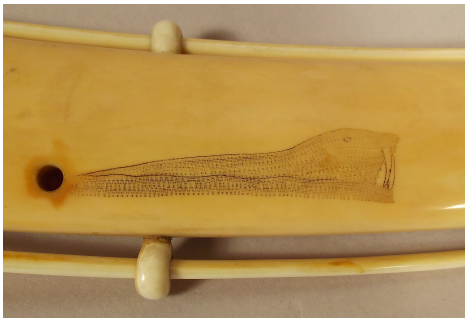

Fig. 2.47 An incised walrus swimming (E58265)

Fig. 2.48 An incised seal on an iceberg (E58265)

Biographical Sketch

What a carver decides to make from a walrus tusk is based upon several criteria, such as the availability of ivory, which fluctuates throughout the year and may also affect the size and quality tusks. Additionally, what is popular at the time can also dictate what the ivory carver will make. A cribbage board is what a carver makes for "quick money"

since to the artist it is considered the lowest priced commodity for the amount of ivory used, but has the shortest production time (ibid.). This type of carving is of continuous popularity among collectors, who perhaps more than seeking Inuit art are collectors of the cribbage board itself. Like the scrimshaw tusk the carving of ivory cribbage boards was not for indigenous use or even artistic inspiration, although the carvings and incised images that were added are of the artist's imagination. The game of cribbage is known for its visually distinctive board game. Thus, as a material form of cultural expression this artifact represents the pastime of Western whalers and their influence on what has become a fourth world culture (Graburn 1976); that is, a cultural group that exists within a first world culture, but still exists separate from it in an art context (ibid.: 1).

An artifact like this provides a visual representation of explorers bringing their culture and pastime to the far reaches of the Arctic (the gold rush, whaling industry). Moreover, ivory cribbage board carving was at its peak right around the outbreak of the influenza pandemic of 1918, which reached even the Alaskan frontier. As a result many skilled ivory carvers lost their lives to the disease, and subsequent ivory carvings were not viewed as being of the same quality. Cribbage boards as material culture function very differently than African carved ivory in terms of what they represent. That is, they are not metonymic stand-ins for Arctic nature and primitive "otherness", but rather are artifacts which represent culture contact and assimilation. In a museum context such ivory artifacts provide an opportunity for both artistic and historical interpretations of culture change as seen in the use of ivory by Arctic peoples.

The Ivory Trade From Demand to Regulation

Ivory, horn, bone, and related materials have been used and traded by people all around the world for millennia, ranging from simple utilitarian objects to elaborate ritual and artistic forms (Ross 1992). Like many animal byproducts, the use of ivory from prehistory up until the 19th century did not greatly affect the population numbers of such animals (ibid.). The shift to unsustainable hunting of ivory producing animals is the result of growing human populations, increased migration and trade, and ultimately higher demand for the products, predominantly for artistic purposes as a result of Western colonialism (ibid.). The problem of scarcity first led to an increased demand for ivory and eventually to its strict regulation. This regulation applies to animal conservation (most notably elephants). The ongoing international demand for ivory has dangerously diminished elephant populations in Africa, and this is the predominant discourse surrounding ivory in popular culture (e.g. *National Geographic*, Oct. 2012). It is noteworthy that while ivory has historically been prized by cultures within Africa (perhaps most famously by the ancient Egyptians and the Benin kingdom), internal consumption was limited—often restricted to royalty—and did not put elephant populations at risk (Ross 1992). A similar case can be made for Artic and Subarctic populations who utilized ivory for ceremonial and artistic projects, but ultimately use walruses, narwhals, and whales for subsistence, consuming the entire animal, not just their ivory (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2007).

Long distance trade in African elephant ivory was first established in Egypt; in fact, one of the motivating factors for Egyptian expansion south into Nubia (c. 2040–1640 BC) was to control the natural wealth of interior Africa (Sheriff 1971: 248-256).

The second period of increased ivory demand came during the Roman Empire, and the trade routes flowing up the eastern coast of Africa, through Egypt and across the Mediterranean Sea. With the collapse of the Roman Empire, ivory traders established new markets in India and China (Ross 1992). Although India had remained self-sufficient in procuring ivory from its own elephant populations, by the beginning of the 10th century the demand for ivory bridal ornaments (which had to be destroyed at the death of either marriage partner) began to outstrip local supplies (ibid.).

Importantly, throughout the history of the ivory trade, shifts in the market did not cause significant changes in the quantity of ivory, but rather "diversified the market without diverting ivory producing economies, and they relied on the exchange of a few raw materials for manufactured luxuries" (ibid.: 566). The above mentioned coastal trade ports were points of entry into a well developed system of interlocking inland trade routes allowing for the eventual surge in supply to meet the demand of foreign markets (Hakansson 2004).

The widening of the ivory trade to incorporate Western Africa corresponds to the Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa, beginning in 1420. This was a turning point in the ivory trade because, although the established routes along the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean continued to provide ivory to the Asian markets, European expansion led to new west coast trade with significant effects on the lower continent. Perhaps even more significantly,

> The inexorable development of a Euro-American capitalist world system progressively heightened the extractive quality of Africa's overseas trade—particularly with respect to the removal of labor, minerals and primary agricultural products from Africa—without the corollary development of productive forces, especially industrialization on the continent itself (Alpers 1992: 353).

The 19th century surge in the demand for ivory was the result of demand by both Indian and European markets established as part of the Industrial Revolution and the creation of mass produced items such as piano keys, billiard balls, and combs made from ivory (Ross 1992). Demand for ivory in the 20th century has resulted in the greatest decimation of African elephants yet seen, continent-wide. In 1831, the demand for ivory in Britain alone led to the deaths of an estimated 4,000 elephants, while during the decade of the 1980s, roughly 70,000 African elephants a year were killed for their tusks (Alpers 1992).

On the other side of the world, in the Arctic, trade and consumption of ivory was following a different path. Ivory carving in the circumpolar north was nothing new. For almost two thousand years ancestors of the Bering Strait Inuit, Yupik, and Aleut had designed beautiful things from ivory (Ray 1961). Walrus ivory and whalebone was first used for utilitarian purposes in Native Alaskan culture and sometimes decorated with intricately incised geometric patterns (ibid.). Before the Alaskan gold rush, Natives of the far north had little contact with foreign white people, essentially just the few whalers and adventurers who sailed the Bering Sea (ibid.). As a result ivory carving as a hobby and art form was extremely limited (ibid.). In 1892, Captain Hartson Bodfish commanded a whaling ship that stopped at Little Diomede Island where he first met the famous ivory carver Angokwazhuk, later known as 'Happy Jack'. Happy Jack's carvings and the tradition of ivory carving that followed demonstrate an artistic ability to capture images from both Eskimo and white American culture. These are best captured in the carvings of walrus tusks, which combine portraits of Eskimos and villages with cribbage boards, and for incising classic scenes of life and ocean trade on walrus tusks and whales teeth. From the beginning, the consumption of walrus ivory by collectors has been in its worked form

as tourist art, so that although demand may fluctuate, the supply has always been limited by what carvers can produce.

Interest in the Northwest Coast and Alaska as a tourist and collector destination was only later established when travel brochures and museum exhibitions and catalogue publications established popular interest in Alaska and the Far North (Jonaitis 1999; Lee 1992). As a case study of this market creation, archaeologist Julie Hollowell (2006) argues that the display of Inuit art in the exhibition *Far North: 2000 Years of American Eskimo and Inuit Art* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and subsequent catalogue, led to the creation of an Inuit art market, and established a lucrative business among natives to dig up their own archaeological sites in search of ivory artifacts. Other, perhaps less direct types of market creation have been explored by a number of scholars particularly regarding Native American handicrafts and curios of the Southwest (Batkin 1992; Errington 1998; Dilworth 1997; Lidchi 2012).

The intersection of increasing ivory consumption, historically by Britain and the United States, and today by China with animal extinction and threats to archaeological conservation has resulted in an international consensus for strict ivory regulation such as the CITES law of 1989. A number of acts and laws instituted over the past 35 years strictly regulate the legal trade of ivory. Regulation here applies to both the banning of ivory trade as illegal, as well as the policing of legal ivory trade through documentation, identification, and customs regulations. These legislative maneuvers have broad application and greatly affect ivory producing and ivory consuming countries, as well as museums and individual collectors. The ban on ivory does not restrict the trade of pre-ban material, so that most of the ivory held in museums has no legal restrictions.

Smugglers as well have developed ways of making new ivory appear old by fabricating paperwork and staining ivory to appear aged. In many ways, museums, as publically owned institutions, have been granted the authority to collect and display sensitive material that would normally be outside the realm of the private collector.

Ivory worked by indigenous groups in Africa for export, although it has not directly contributed to decline in elephants, has indirectly supported the luxury appeal for the material (Ross 1992). This is also the type of material culture, which museums actively seek to collect. For this reason, as well as its assumed production before the ivory ban, many museums generally view their ivory collections as not contentious and not contributing to illegal trade today (see pg. 111); although, even pre-ban ivory may indirectly support the luxury appeal among collectors today.

Ivory worked by indigenous groups for export, also known as tourist or 'airport' art has contributed more directly to the promotion of an ivory market. In Africa, as in many regions opened to tourism, the demand for souvenirs provided a new market for local artists—and ivory more so than brass castings or woodcarvings. For tourists, ivory is viewed as especially unique and an "authentic" part of Africa, since it comes from the animal itself, adding considerably to its allure of luxury (Errington 1998; Price 1989; Graburn 1976; Ross 1992). Although large cosmopolitan museums and serious collectors have historically avoided this type of tourist art, it has more recently been appropriated along similar lines of iconic or "serial" identification as described by Steiner (1999), and has found its way into a great many museum collections, including the MPM.

It is the export of raw ivory to foreign markets; mostly Asia where it is later carved that has had the largest impact on declining elephant populations in Africa (Alpers

1992). A number of ivory-consuming countries have passed laws such as the United States' African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988, listing the elephant as an endangered species in CITES to strengthen international efforts to stop poaching. Additionally, conservation organizations have made use of strong media campaigns to ivory products unfashionable if not outright offensive. For example, the World Wildlife Fund has put out a bumper sticker that reads "Save Elephants. Don't Buy Ivory!" (Ross, 1992: 388). Such moral outlooks have been applied to some areas of animal conservation in North America, most notably the killing of seals for their fur, and in general the killing of 'charismatic' megafauna like elephants, rhinos, tigers, and panda bears (Leader-Williams and Dublin 2000).

In a historical event, the Kenyan government set fire to twelve tons of ivory on July 18, 1989, and again in early 1992. That act of burning ivory has become a widely publicized symbolic icon for international efforts to destroy the market in ivory. As the Director of Kenya Wildlife Service put it:

> We could hardly say to people in affluent countries, 'Don't buy ivory,' while we were still selling ivory. We felt such a double standard would be inappropriate. So we burned our ivory, and the world noticed. A few months later the CITES ban on ivory trade was passed. (Ross 1992: 387-388).

Discussion of the meaning of ivory regulation in consumer countries, requires reviewing the conceptualization of 'charismatic species' like elephants and the notion of animal conservation in general. The protection of elephants has a different role in countries like the United States, where these animals do not live, and this has led to a dissonance between assigning value to elephants and understanding what it means to live with elephants in daily life (Leader-William and Dublin 2000). It is worth noting that conservation efforts have arisen from countries like the United States, which has

experienced a marked decline in the majority of its megafauna, including wolves (*Canis lupus*), bison (*Bison bison*) and cougars (*Puma concolor*) to name a few (ibid.). Additionally, the consumption patterns and introduction of new species by industrialized countries has contributed greatly to habitat loss in developing countries effectively leading to either the threatened or outright extinction of many animal species since the 1600s that allowed definition of the 'evil quartet' (Diamond 1984). Yet it is Western nations that assign conservation agendas around the world such as in Latin America, Africa, and tropical Asia. Hence there is considerable dissonance in what is perceived as 'charismatic' by different people, depending on their background and socio-economic grouping (Dublin 1994, 1996).

Today, a majority of Americans live in isolation from wild animals and yet attribute high aesthetic and moral value to wild species and the wilderness, and while their commitment to conservation of species may be high, their actual experience of conservation is low (Leader-William and Dublin 2000). The affluent lifestyle of many Americans and Europeans who spend their disposable income on vacations like an African Safari ought to be contrasted with groups of people who live daily amongst wild animals and who, subsisting for the basic necessities of life, must compete with these animals for resources where animals pose both competition as well as danger to them (ibid.).

Today museums generally restrict ivory collecting without thorough documentation and relevance to the museum mission statement and collecting policy on both ethical and pragmatic grounds. In the MPM Ivory Catalogue published in 2000, there is a clear statement about the museum's position on ivory in collections stating,

> In most recent times the Milwaukee Public Museum has curtailed the collecting of ivory carvings and objects. From our standpoint, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, ivory engenders controversy…Modern bans on ivory are part of a global sensitivity to the needless destruction of our natural world (5).

Museums may inadvertently perpetuate a market for the material they exhibit, by either displaying artifacts in a vacuum from their multiple cultural contexts, or even by displaying them as part of a static past that is separate from collecting practices in the present. Both of these display practices leave the visitor to fetishize the artifact to their own aesthetic tastes and desire to "own the past" and this can make ivory highly desirable; however, recent changes in Western conceptualizations of ivory producing animals like elephants and even walruses, may discourage visitors from viewing ivory as a material suited for personal ownership.

Ivory taken as a trophy of the hunt is another important consideration in addressing the aesthetic and moral attitudes towards elephants. Although the act of "sport hunting" as practiced by many notable historical figures would be considered inappropriate today, these types of trophies have institutional counterparts as stuffed specimens of complete elephants in many museums (Haraway 1984). These include the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C., the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and of course the local Milwaukee Public Museum, which is world-renowned for its use of taxidermy in its dioramas. These specimens were gathered during the Cudahy-Massee Expedition of 1928-1929, which was sponsored by local entrepreneurs. There was a later African Expedition in the 1990s and early 2000s as a photography expedition and there was no hunting of African wildlife.

In the following chapter, the analysis of both the online survey of museum professionals and the visitor study at the MPM provide a qualitative exploration of current opinions, familiarity, and conceptions of ivory in museums today. The analysis of these surveys (Chapter 4) gives particular attention to modern conceptions of "charismatic animals" and "noble savages", which even today promote Western models of fortress conservation and socially constructed visions of a pristine wilderness wherein traditional people live sustainably with nature and its bounty.

Chapter 3

Visitor Perspective: Analysis of the MPM Visitor Study

The results of a visitor study at the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) provides a qualitative analysis of visitor perceptions of ivory in several ways. It was conducted over a period of three days at the MPM, Monday, October 8th, Tuesday October 9th, and Friday October 19th, 2012, on the third floor of the museum during normal business hours. Twenty males and 27 females, totaling 47 individuals were surveyed. Respondents were over the age of 18 and otherwise spanned all age ranges including college students, young mothers, homeschooling parents, retired individuals, military veterans, and elderly visitors. Although I only recorded the responses of one visitor at a time, some were accompanied by children, or were with other adult friends; still, others were visiting the museum alone. The majority of the visitors were not museum members (13 were members), but the majority had been to the museum many times even if it had been several years; a few were visiting for the first time (11 people). Nearly everyone was visiting for personal enjoyment; one group was homeschooled (educational), another couple was visiting for a lecture, some were on jury duty. Many had the day off for Columbus Day on Monday the 8th. In presenting these findings, I will recount verbatim how I phrased my questions to visitors, which differ only slightly from how they appear on the survey itself (see Appendix A: Ivory at the MPM: A Visitor Study).

The first question of the survey was, "Which exhibits here at the museum do you enjoy most: exhibits about natural science and animals, or exhibits about human history and cultures?" The majority of respondents said that they enjoyed exhibits about history and cultures/people in the museum (66%). Three respondents independently offered that

they chose human history/culture over nature because if they wanted to see nature [animals] they would go to the zoo instead of the MPM. Interestingly, several people insisted they liked *both* and enjoyed the intersection or blending of the two (11%); however, respondents had not been given the option of choosing both, since it is likely that most respondents would have chosen this option. The remainder of respondents (23%) said they liked exhibits about nature. One visitor specified that the living butterflies exhibit was her favorite, but that otherwise she liked exhibits about culture, and another said that other than the dinosaurs exhibit she would be interested in exhibits about cultures. Yet, there were also visitors (3) who said that other than the "Streets of Old Milwaukee" they enjoyed the natural science exhibits best. Conclusively, visitors found the separation between nature and culture inconsequential unless the division was stark (i.e. living exhibits, dinosaurs, or local history). This is further supported by the fact that five visitors resisted the structure of the survey itself, insisting that they enjoyed both types of exhibits.

- Nature: 11/47 (23%)
- Culture: 31/47 (66%)
- Both: 5/47 (11%)

The second question asked visitors to rank three artifacts from most interesting to least interesting. For the purpose of avoiding any bias in this response, I did not inform visitors that the survey was exploring ivory in the museum specifically. Respondents generally liked either the carved ivory tusk or the wooden mask, and the drum was most often chosen as a third choice.

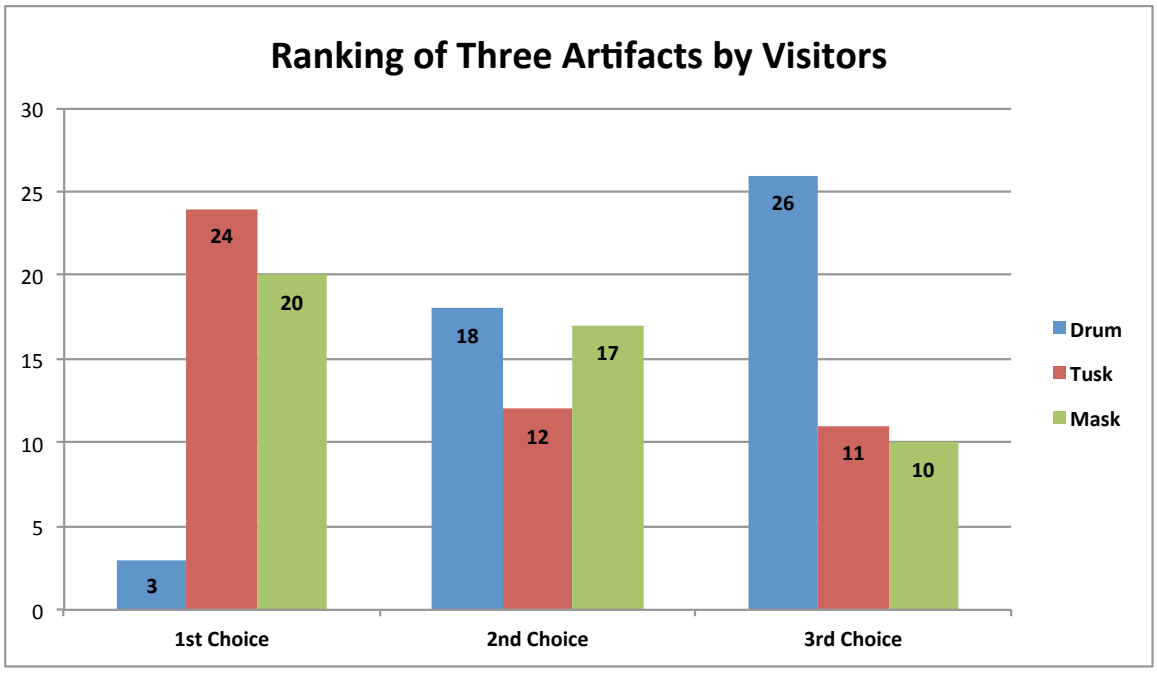

Fig. 3.1 Ranking of Three Artifacts by Visitors

As a follow up, I also asked why they ranked the artifacts as they did; for example, did they like the material it is made from, its use within the culture, or its visual appearance. I describe the reactions to each artifact below:

Drum

The drum was the first artifact that visitors were shown and the label, which I summarized verbally for them reads, "This is a Congolese DRUM, made by the Luba People in the late 19th-early 20th century. It is made of wood and snakeskin. It was used during ceremonies and celebrations along with other drums and various instruments." Only three respondents (6%) listed the drum as the most interesting of the three artifacts. The drum was ranked as somewhat interesting by 18 visitors (38%), and most commonly ranked least interesting by 26 visitors (56%).

Responses by visitors who found the drum most interesting said, (1) "I like it because it's familiar, and functional so I can relate to it", (2) "I like wood carving, I think

I could make something like that", and (3) "I like it because I am a musician". All three responses, whether explicit, or implicit indicate that the drum's attraction lies it is familiarity to the visitor and the sense of personalization with the object.

Responses by visitors who found the drum least interesting, when asked why they ranked the drum third gave responses such as, "I've seen drums before" [denoting this made it less interesting], "It's use is obvious" [denoting this made it less interesting], "It's similar to us and very familiar" [denoting this made it less interesting]", "Snake skin is cool, but I might not have noticed", and "It's not very flashy". These responses indicate that a majority of museum visitors are seeking "exotic" histories or cultures in museum exhibits, and although the drum is somewhat exotic, being made with snakeskin, it also needed to be visually stunning to peak a visitors' interest.

Carved Tusk

The tusk was the second artifact that visitors were shown and the label, which I summarized verbally, reads, "This is a Nigerian TUSK, made by the Edo people between 1850 and 1888. It is made of a carved whole elephant tusk. Tusks like this decorated altars and thrones of Oba (chiefs) and the carvings tell the story of the ruler's life and good deeds." Visitors were very interested in the carved ivory tusk and 24 visitors (51%) ranked it as their first choice. The tusk was chosen a nearly equal number of times as visitor's second and third choice, 12 times (26%) and 11 times (23%), respectively.

Visitors who ranked the tusk as their first choice gave a wide range of reasons why they found this artifact most interesting, but by far the most common reason was, "I like that it tells a story," which was the response of 18 visitors, including three people who had chosen the tusk as their second choice. Other responses were, "I like carving,

it's intricate", "it has a story, a lineage in pictographs", "It shows the life of a person and what the society values"; "It looks like it would take a long time to make" [the time invested in production and hence value], "There is a lot to look at and figure out the symbolism", and "I like carving and the story telling by deciphering pictures". Two responses were particularly interesting:

- A male respondent stated, "I like the tusk and the mask best because they tell the story of the individual, whereas, the drum is about the culture in general. I think the story of the individual is more important."
  Participant #32 10/19/12 10:15am

- A female respondent stated, "#1 the tusk." *(What do you like about the tusk?)* "It's carved… It looks like what it was. And so it has a duel history, because you can't get it [ivory] now. It tells about the human animal relationship."
  Participant #45 10/19/12 1:07pm

Visitors who ranked the tusk as their third choice (11) stated that it didn't have as clear a use as the other two artifacts, and that they like the visual appearance of the mask and drum better. Yet, two responses stood out in particular:

- A female respondent stated: "I'd rank the tusk #3 because I'm an elephant-lover, and it's difficult to see a tusk on exhibit."
  Survey Participant #38 10/19/12 11:40am

- A female respondent stated: "Something like this should be part of a larger thing. *(Thinks)* When I see it like this, it is just a fragment, and I don't know what it means: *(looks at picture)* yea, it's just a fragment."
  Survey Participant #43 10/19/12 12:44pm

Based on the responses of the survey overall, and the tusk in particular, it is clear that visitors to the MPM are interested in seeing stories and find the concept of a visual narrative extremely appealing. Visitors also enjoyed the intricacy and concept of production time for both the tusk and mask, which suggests that visitors enjoy admiring human artistic accomplishments that appear especially difficult or time consuming. Visitors who ranked the tusk third were critical of ivory in the exhibit because they

recognized its unique materiality and stated that the ivory either did not belong on exhibit, or that it needed well developed contextualization to justify its presence.

Mask

The mask was the third artifact that visitors were shown and the label, which I summarized verbally for them, reads, "This is a Congolese MASK, made by the Kuba People in the late 19th to mid 20th century. It is made of wood, glass beads, cowrie shells, feathers, raffia, leopard fur, and bells. Mukenga masks like this one are worn at the funerals of important leaders, and the materials used signify wealth and status." The mask was very popular with visitors, and although it was ranked as 1st choice 20 times (43%), which is less than the tusk, it was reliably ranked as visitors 2nd choice just as often, another 17 responses (36%). This meant that visitors rarely chose the mask as the least interesting artifact, a rating given by 10 visitors (21%). The visual appeal of the mask was the most commonly praised quality with responses like, "It's cool" [referring to the material it is made from]; "I like the pattern and design"; "I like the craftsmanship"; "This is visually appealing"; "It looks interesting"; "It pops out"; "Looks cool: material is mixed medium"; "Colorful"; "Ornate"; and "Nice detail". Other high ratings were given, for example, some visitors state, "I like it because it explains about funerals", and "It shows how their end of life is different than us". Visitors who ranked the mask as their third choice found it "scary", "weird", or just said, "I'm not really into that".

Although the mask was very visually appealing to visitors for its colors, pattern, and mixture of materials, it also appeared very strange to visitors, to which only a few people responded positively, while others did not like such an unfamiliar artifact that was also closely related to death rituals.

For the third question, visitors were asked to imagine that they worked in the museum building exhibits, and they had to choose whether to display two artifacts being used (like in a diorama), or as art piece (up close and well lit). The two artifacts they were shown were an ivory side-blown trumpet and a walrus ivory cribbage board.

A majority of visitors, 35 people (74%) preferred that the trumpet be shown in a diorama being played saying, "Otherwise, I wouldn't know what it was used for"; "I can see what it is with people"; "It's different [unfamiliar] so I can see what it is now"; "I can see it's side-blown"; "Its not very decorated anyway", and "I'd like to see how its played". For the 12 visitors (26%) who responded that they preferred the trumpet alone in a case, they responded that, "I wouldn't see it in a diorama [too busy with visual cues]"; "If there were not enough space, then up close with a photo would be good"; and "I might walk right by otherwise".

The walrus tusk cribbage board received more mixed responses with 19 respondents (40%) preferring to display the artifact being used, and 28 respondents (60%) saying they would prefer the artifact alone in a case so they could see it closely.

For those who preferred the diorama display, they said, "I like to see people playing"; I think they should *both* be on exhibit being played"; "If it's not an art gallery, I wouldn't show it like an art piece". Those who preferred to display the cribbage board in an art display style, they stated, "You can still see its use, even as art [meaning the visitor can recognize it is a game]"; "I would show it up close and then with a photograph to show its use"; "This is more familiar [than the trumpet]"; "Up close is better or you couldn't notice it"; "Well, I wouldn't kill a walrus for a board game"; "People around here know cribbage, so art is OK"; and "People from Wisconsin know cribbage!"

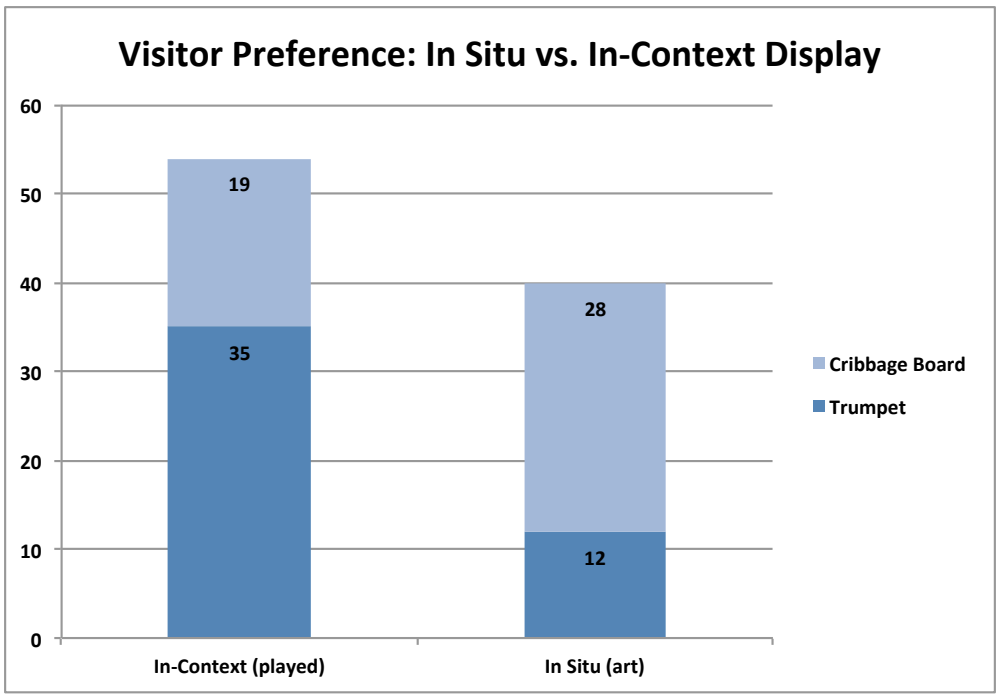

Fig. 3.2 Visitor Preference: *In Situ* vs. In-Context Display

In following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's breakdown of the difference between in-context and *in situ* display modes, thirty-five visitors preferred the African trumpet in-context compared to the 12 visitors preferring it displayed as art. When the artifact is familiar, like the cribbage board, visitors have a more mixed response or prefer the *in situ* display mode: 19 responses would prefer to see the cribbage board in use verses 28 preferring display as art. Respondents overall preferred in-context display over *in situ* display.

For the fourth survey question, visitors imagined that they worked in the museum and had to approve one of two labels written for a wooden staff with ivory inlay that was going to be exhibited along with a photograph. The two labels were:

> Label 1: Even today, leaders of the Ashanti people use staffs like this one to show their rank, carrying them to important diplomatic meetings and events. You can see the rifle carved on the ivory stool, and this Western image stands for the power of the person carrying it.

Label 2: Leaders of the Ashanti people use staffs like this to show their rank, and they are made of wood with gold foil overlay, not ivory. This staff was made for the tourist trade in Africa, was shipped to China, and then sold to a Western buyer. In 2011, when he tried to bring the staff to the U.S. it was confiscated by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Services and was later donated to the museum.

A greater number of visitors, 27 (57%) chose Label 2, most often saying they liked the detail of the label, it was specific to that piece, and it followed the history of the object. Others said that it had a dramatic story because it was confiscated. Visitors who chose Label 1, 20 (43%) said that it was more introductory and general, which they prefer in a label, and some said that the information in Label 2 should be provided elsewhere for those interested in such specifics.

Visitors who chose Label 1 answered that they liked this label because it brings the object up to today, and that it is more general and informs a cultural practice. Several respondents mentioned that this label would be the most appropriate for the object in display, and the information in Label 2 should be provided as an addendum for those who are really interested.

Visitors who chose Label 2 answered that they like this label because it describes the details, shows movement through time and is specific. Visitors liked the historical progression and sense of story narrative, which was specific to that staff. A few visitors acknowledged they would like a label that mentions the staff was confiscated because it is important to teach people about the black market ivory trade.

The fifth and final survey question is by far the most complex and ethically challenging. It asked if visitors believed that native groups should be allowed to kill elephants (in Africa) and walruses (in Canada and Alaska) in order to use their ivory to make art to sell to museums and serious collectors. Possible responses to this question were (1)'Yes, native groups have special privileges', (2) Yes, but they can only use ivory indigenously, cannot sell it, (3) No, native groups are not exempt from the law, (4) African, but not Canadian/Alaskan groups can kill elephants, and (5) Canadian/Alaskan groups, but not African groups can kill walruses. The responses are listed and described below in the order in which they were stated.

Twelve visitors (26%) responded saying 'Yes, native groups have special privileges to kill and use ivory from animals for profit. These visitors recognized the special status of native groups saying, "It's a part of their culture and beliefs". Still, many said they would only approve the killing of an animal if the people were required to use the whole animal, or said that there should be quantity limits on how many animals they can kill for ivory. In general, these visitors do not find the killing of an animal objectionable in its own right, so long as it has purposeful, symbolic use and is done sustainably. These respondents seemed to have a generally optimistic outlook on the noble ambitions of native people in living harmoniously with nature while benefiting from economic contact with the industrialized world (i.e. museums and Western collectors).

Sixteen respondents (34%), the majority, said yes, native groups can kill these animals, but only for indigenous use and cannot sell it for a profit. Responses included: "Not for *art*"; "They should keep it in their own group, not in the public"; "I know they

have their spiritual values, but I don't like the idea of commerce"; "They should use [it] amongst themselves and use the whole animal. You know, I saw an exhibit with mini houses carved from ivory, and I thought, OK, that's weird. Why did they do that?"; "I think it can blur the line between cultural use and pure profit, so they shouldn't sell it"; "How endangered are the animals? They shouldn't kill them just for their tusks"; "You don't want to stop peoples' way of life, but you don't want a black market for the ivory…Wow, I never thought about it. It's tricky"; "They can use it for art. It should be up to Westerners not to buy it".

Twelve respondents (26%) said native groups are not excepted from laws protecting these animals and should not be allowed to kill animals under any circumstance to use their ivory (regardless of current legal conditions of either elephants or walruses). Responses were: "It would be hard to make them use the animal and not sell ivory, so just don't kill them"; "*No***,** you cannot kill animals for their ivory, no one"; "If they were good stewards which they [Native groups] usually are…but Man is inherently greedy, and if they can make money, there will be a black market. So, no they shouldn't be able to hunt animals for their ivory".

No respondents answered that they felt it was acceptable for African groups to kill elephants, but that Native Alaskans and Canadians could not kill walruses for ivory.

Seven respondents (15%) said that they felt that Native Alaskans and Canadians had special privileges to kill walruses for their ivory for profit, but felt that African groups should not have the same right to kill elephants, usually because elephants as a species are more highly threatened. Some respondents even felt that African groups should be able to utilize other resources for subsistence, but felt that Native groups living

in Artic and Subarctic regions had very limited access to resources, making walruses a key to their livelihoods. Responses included: “If the animal is gone, what’s the point? I’ve been to the zoo and they have markers of how endangered they are, and they are *all* endangered or threatened”; “Well, its different because elephants are very social, but its not so with walruses”; “It is up to the local government [to decide] what to do…I can’t really speak to elephants, but I understand they have traditions and special privileges; governments should try to keep ivory in their own State”; “I think Native Alaskans are in a more desperate situation. I mean they shouldn’t be killing walruses, one, two, three, but they have less resources than people in Africa, so they need the animal to live and use the whole thing”; “It depends on the status of the animal population”; “No, not elephants but walruses were ok. I know in the past it was ok. *[Thinks]* No. Well, once the walrus is endangered then you can’t hunt it.”

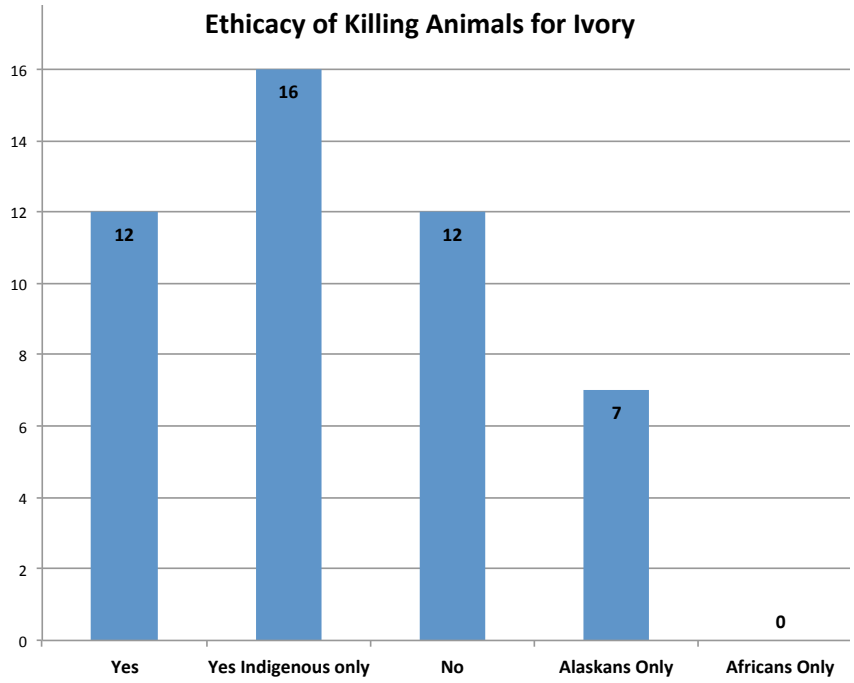

Fig. 3.3 Ethicacy of Killing Animals for Ivory

The results of my visitor study at the MPM indicate that museum visitors are most interested in exhibits about human history and cultures. In general, visitors like to see intricate, visually stunning artifacts, but which also have a story or narrative; and visitors slightly prefer in-context displays (54 responses) over *in situ* displays (49 responses), but especially if the artifact is unfamiliar (side-blown trumpet). Visitors do not feel strongly one way or the other about the labeling of artifacts and preference for detailed vs. general introductory labels is based on personal preference. Visitors are aware of issues surrounding ivory trade and conservation of animals, as well as the rights of indigenous people and many visitors spent some time conversing with me to help me fully understand their feeling about the issue. In general, regardless of what visitors ultimately chose, they all recognized the need to contextualize the situation of animal conservation with indigenous human groups' rights. Of the 35 visitors who approved the killing of animals by native groups for art, eight (23%) specifically stated these groups should use the whole animal (not only the ivory), and three went further saying that native groups should not be allowed to kill the animal if it is highly endangered. No visitors support the killing of elephants, while discouraging the killing of walruses, because visitors' ethical position was based upon how highly endangered a species is, and the elephant are more highly threatened with extinction than the walrus. The findings of this survey provide the perspectives and opinion of Western museum visitors within the United States who were applying their moral ideologies to access to resources of distant groups of people. The findings of a similar study in a different country with a different museum audience may find substantially different results.

Museum Perspective: Analysis of the Online Survey

Museum professionals responded to the online survey "Ivory Collecting and Display: A Museum Professionals Survey" by following an anonymous link to a Qualtrics software generated questionnaire. This link was posted on the museum listserv MUSEUM-L (4013 recipients) two times; first, on Friday October 5th at 4:16pm with subject "Re: brief survey on ivory objects in museums" and second on Friday October 19th at 7:00 pm. The survey was also distributed to the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries listserv (AAMG-L) on Friday October 5th at 4:20pm, and also sent to approximately 30 individual museum professionals based upon knowledge that the institution contains ivory collections. The first posting of the survey yielded 56 responses and the second posting, to MUSEUM-L only, yielded another 30 responses with a total of 86 response. Reporting of survey responses is shown below.

(1) Responses to the survey question "What is your museum job title?"

Museum Position	Frequency	Percentage
Registrar	13	20%
Collections Manager	11	17%
Curator	20	31%
Director/Administration	8	13%
Curator & Director	3	5%
Collections Assistant	2	3%
Repatriation Compliance Coordinator	1	2%
Museum Specialist	1	2%
Other	1	2%
Intern	1	2%
Archivist	1	2%
Research Associate	1	2%
Registrar & Collections Manager	1	2%
Total	64	

Table 3.1 Museum Position

Respondents to this survey were restricted to museum professionals by posting the survey in museum professional forums; and additionally, introduction to the survey emphasized that participants should be those who work closely with museum collections, thus most of the respondents were curators, registrars, and collections managers, with the rest of the respondents being admin/directors, researchers, archivists, interns, and assistants who, although may not work directly with artifacts, have a role in directing the museum's interpretation of exhibits and collections policies.

(2) Responses to the survey question "How long have you worked in this position?"

Time in Current Positon	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	4	7%
1-5 years	19	31%
5-10 years	20	33%
10-20 years	11	18%
More than 20 years	7	11%
Total	61	

Table 3.2 Time in Current Position

The average respondent has worked at their current position for 5-10 years. The length of time that the majority of respondents have worked in their position indicates that they can accurately provide factual information about their institution and have likely formed a feeling of workplace identity regarding institutional policies and exhibition histories, etc. (Washburn 1985).

(3) Responses to the survey question "How long have you worked in the museum field?"

Time in Museum Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	0	0%
1-5 years	10	16%
5-10 years	18	28%
10-20 years	19	30%
More than 20 years	17	27%
Total	64	

Table 3.3 Time in Museum Profession

The average respondent has worked in the museum field for 10-20 years. Those working in the museum field for greater than 20 years have encountered museum policies prior to 1992, when laws concerning ivory trade (CITES) and The African Elephant Conservation Acts (1988) were enacted.

(4) Responses to the survey question "What is the location of your museum?"

Museum Location		
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Northeast	18	29%
Connecticut	1	
Washington, D.C.	3	
Massachusetts	1	
Maryland	1	
Maine	1	
New York	6	
Pennsylvania	5	
Southeast	9	14%
Georgia	1	
Kentucky	2	
North Carolina	4	
Tennessee	2	
Midwest	21	33%
Illinois	5	
Indiana	2	
Iowa	3	
Michigan	2	
Missouri	1	
Ohio	2	
Wisconsin	6	
South	7	11%
Alabama	1	
Arizona	1	
Oklahoma	4	
Texas	1	
West	6	10%
California	2	
Colorado	1	
Utah	1	
Washington	2	
Outside US	2	3%
Alberta, Canada	1	
York & London England	1	
Total	63	

Table 3.4 Museum Location

A majority of the respondents work in museums in the Midwest and Northeast of the United States, especially Wisconsin (6), Illinois (5), and New York (6).

(5) Responses to the survey question "Select the type of museum in which you work"

Museum Type	Frequency	Percentage
Art museum	22	37%
History museum	14	23%
Anthropology museum	6	10%
Natural History museum	12	20%
Discovery/Children's Museum	2	3%
House/Site Museum	4	7%
Total	60	

Table 3.5 Museum Type

The majority of museum types represented are art and history museums, followed by natural history and anthropology museums. These types of museums in general collect and exhibit ivory artifacts, both worked and unworked, making respondents working in these museums more likely to take the survey.

(6) Responses to the two survey questions "Today, does your museum passively collect ivory, including composite artifacts (e.g. donations)?" and (7) "Today, does your museum actively collect ivory, including composite artifacts (e.g. purchases)?"

Ivory Collection Policy	Frequency	Percentage
Only Passively	41	68%
Passively and Actively	6	10%
Neither Passively nor Actively	13	22%
Total	60	

Table 3.6 Ivory Collection Policy

Museum professionals interpret the terms "passive" to mean objects that are acquired without the museums direct effort such as through donations, whereas "active" collecting involves the museum's direct effort, such as when purchasing objects at auctions. While the majority of museums today only passively collect ivory (68%), in fact, most do not

actively collect any material in an effort to limit collections growth (Ambrose and Paine 2006). Those that both actively and passively collect today (10%) are three art museums and three history museums (two of which are historic site/house museums).

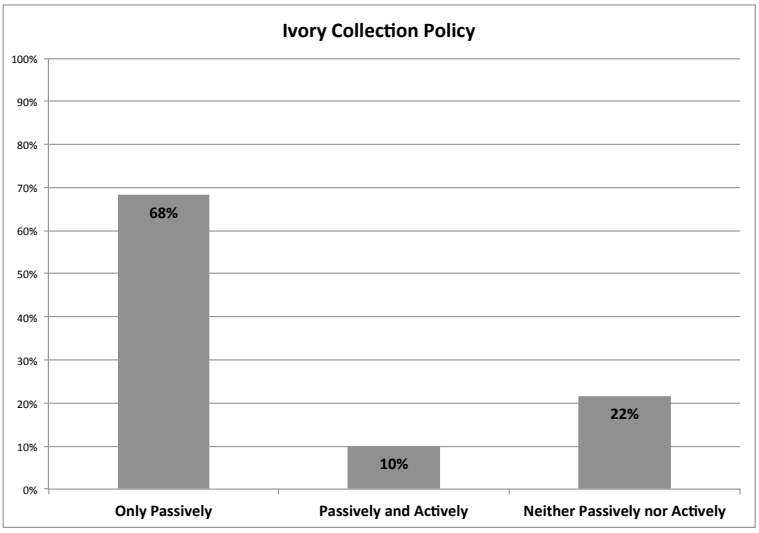

Fig. 3.4 Ivory Collection Policy

(8) Responses to the survey question "When was the majority of your museum's ivory collected?"

Date of Ivory Collection	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-1900	5	8%
1900-1950s	37	63%
1960s	2	3%
1970s	3	5%
1980s	5	8%
1990-Present	7	12%
Total	59	

Table 3.7 Date of Ivory Collection

The majority of ivory held in museums today was collected between 1900-1950, prior to laws regulating ivory trade. Interestingly, there is an average increase (3%) in ivory collecting between 1960 and the present.

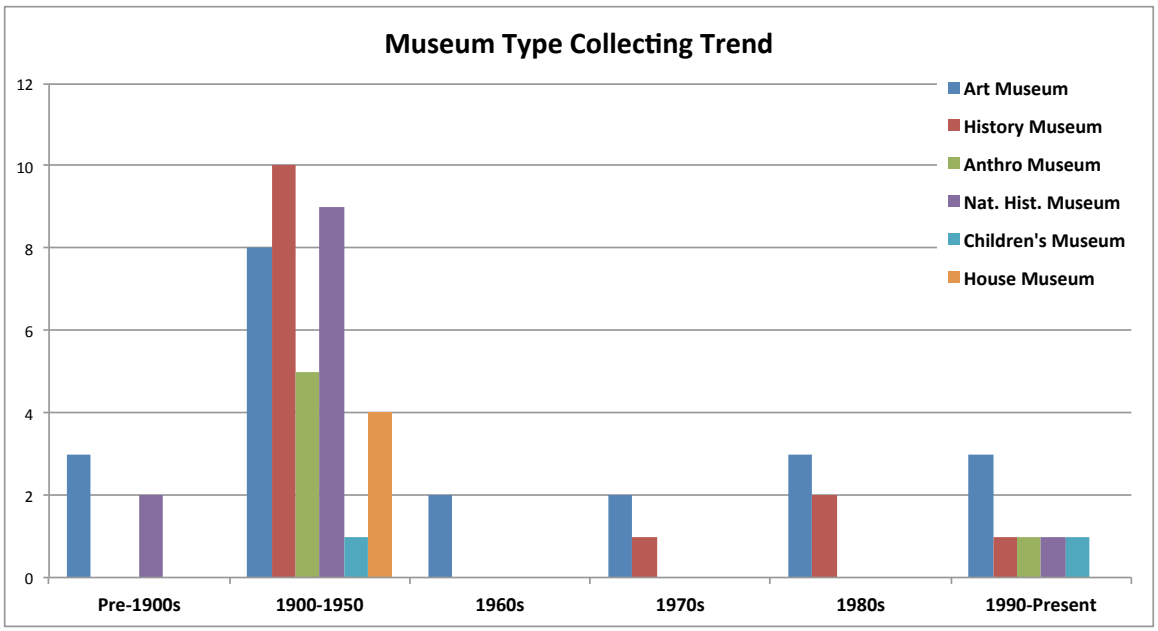

Fig. 3.5 Museum Type Collecting Trend

Post-1950 shows a marked decline in the collection of ivory in museums; however, art museums continued to collect ivory throughout the time periods surveyed, with all types of museums having collected ivory from 1990 to today. Perhaps museums are acquiring ivory with an intention for modern-day interpretation rather than avoidance of the artifact and subject, or perhaps the initial impact of CITES is letting up in the museum context just as it is letting up in the world of conservation.

(9) Responses to the survey question "How did these objects come into the museum? (check all that apply) *Please provide the approximate percentage of the collection to the right if the box is selected.*"

Ivory Collection Mode		
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Donation	35	51%
1%	3	
2%	1	
20%	3	
23%	1	
50%	2	
70%	1	
75%	1	
80%	2	
90%	3	
92%	1	
95%	1	
98%	1	
99%	2	
100%	13	
Field Collection	11	16%
1%	1	
5%	1	
10%	1	
33%	1	
50%	1	
80%	1	
90%	1	
95%	1	
100%	3	
Purchase	14	21%
1%	2	
5%	1	
8%	1	
9%	1	
10%	2	
20%	3	
25%	2	
50%	1	
80%	1	
Exchange	2	3%
1%	1	
2%	1	
Loan	3	4%
1%	1	
2%	1	
50%	1	
Other	3	4%
Abandoned	1	
Transfer	1	
US FWS Deposit	1	
Total	68	

Table 3.8 Ivory Collection Mode

The ivory was mostly donated to museums, followed by purchases and field collections. Of the museums surveyed, 13 reported that all of their ivory collection came from donations.

(10) Responses to the survey question "From what geographic region does your museum's ivory collection come? *(rank in order; 1 being the region most collected, and 5 being the region least collected)*"

Geographic Regions Collected						
	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Geographic Region	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Responses
Africa	9	6	9	4	7	35
North America	20	5	2	5	2	34
Asia	14	16	2	4	3	39
Oceania	1	1	7	7	6	22
Europe	8	7	4	2	12	33
Total	52	35	24	22	30	

Table 3.9 Geographic Regions Collected (Count)

Geographic Regions Collected						
	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Geographic Region	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Responses
Africa	26%	17%	26%	11%	20%	35
North America	59%	15%	6%	15%	6%	34
Asia	36%	41%	5%	10%	8%	39
Oceania	5%	5%	32%	32%	27%	22
Europe	24%	21%	12%	6%	36%	33
Total	52	35	24	22	30	

Table 3.10 Geographic Regions Collected (Percentage)

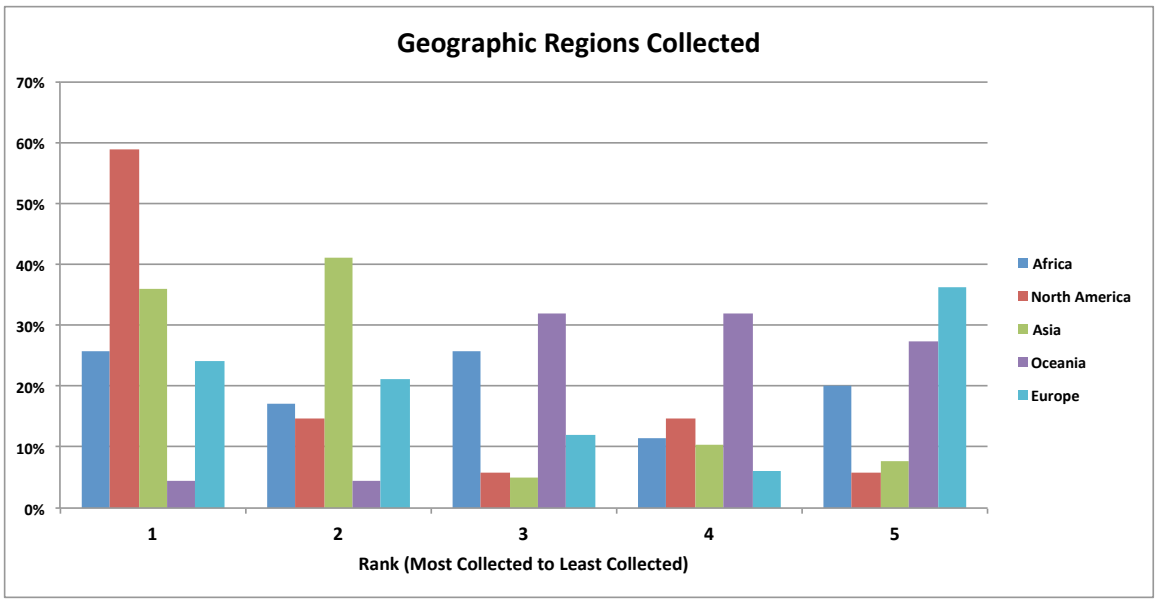

Fig. 3.6 Geographic Regions Collected

Of the respondents indicating their most collected geographic region, North America was most collected, followed by Asia, Africa, Europe, and Oceania. This is likely a result of museums being located in the United States, focusing their collections on American art and art history. Europe, Oceania, and Africa ranked highest as the least collected regions. Oceania seems to be consistently underrepresented in museum collections surveyed, having a low frequency of ranking as the most collected, and a high frequency of ranking from mid to least collected geographic region. This might be due to Oceania not producing as much ivory as the other regions surveyed. The percentages in this graph have been normalized to the account for the number of responses for each region.

(11) Responses to the survey question "What is the approximate number of ivory objects/artifacts in the museum's collection?"

Size of Collection	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 100 artifacts	41	73%
100-500 artifacts	10	18%
500-1000 artifacts	1	2%
More than 1000 artifacts	4	7%
Total	56	

Table 3.11 Size of Collection

The majority of museums surveyed have less than 100 ivory artifacts in their collection.

(12) Responses to the survey question "Does your museum currently exhibit ivory artifacts?"

Ivory Exibited	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	71%
No	17	29%
Total	58	

Table 3.12 Ivory Exhibited

The majority of museums exhibit ivory artifacts.

(13) Responses to the survey question "What continent's ivory artifacts are most displayed?'*(rank in order; 1 being most exhibited, and 5 being least exhibited) Then, please list the cultures or ethic groups in the boxes provided to the right*"

Geographic Regions Exhibited						
	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Geographic Region	1	2	3	4	5	Responses
Africa	41%	18%	18%	12%	12%	17
North America	63%	11%	16%	5%	5%	19
Asia	35%	50%	10%	5%	0%	20
Europe	41%	18%	24%	0%	18%	17
Oceania	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%	8

Table 3.13 Geographic Regions Exhibited

Region Exhibited						
	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Region	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Responses
Africa	7	3	3	2	2	17
Congo	1		1			
Nigeria		3	1			
South Africa		1				
East Africa			1			
Egypt	1		1			
North America	12	2	3	1	1	19
American	3	1				
Native Alaskan & Canadian	8	2				
Native Greenland	1					
Asia	7	10	2	1	0	20
China	4	2	2			
Japan	5	2	1			
India	1	3				
Sri Lanka		1				
Burma	1					
Near East	1					
Europe	7	3	4	0	3	17
Belgium	1					
France	2	2				
Germany	2					
Italy	1					
England	1	2	1			
European	2		1			
Oceania	0	2	0	4	2	8
Hawaii				1		
Polynesia		1		1		
South Seas		1				
Total	33	20	12	8	8	

Table 3.14 Regions Exhibited (breakdown)

Table 3.13 shows the normalized percentages of ivory displayed by region, followed by Table 3.14 indicating the breakdown by culture within each region when reported, ranked from most to least collected.

(14) Response to the survey question "Are exhibits containing ivory artifacts permanent or temporary exhibits? *(check all that apply)*"

Exhibition Type	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	18	38%
Temporary	18	38%
Both	12	25%
Total	48	

Table 3.15 Exhibit Type

A permanent exhibit has an indefinite length, and this significantly influences the interpretation and display techniques, and moreover what types of artifacts can be on exhibit permanently without significant damage. In contrast, temporary exhibits have a fixed length (usually less than one year), and because of this they often use interpretive techniques that are usually more modern and can be culturally topical (Dean 2007). An equal number of museums exhibit ivory in permanent or temporary exhibits, while 25% exhibit ivory in both types of exhibition.

(15) Responses to the survey question "Has the museum removed ivory artifacts from exhibits?" and (16) "Why is the ivory no longer on exhibit?"

Removed From Exhibit	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	18%
Security	2	
Conservation	2	
Animal Protection	1	
No	45	82%
Total	55	

Table 3.16 Ivory Removed From Exhibit

In general, museums keep ivory artifacts on exhibit, and when ivory is removed from exhibits, the reasons given are security concerns, conservation of artifacts, and animal protection.

(17) Responses to the survey question "Do you believe that exhibiting ivory in museums and catalogs supports a market for ivory artifacts?"

Museum Support Ivory Market	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	5	10%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	30	58%
Disagree	13	25%
Strongly Disagree	4	8%
Total	52	

Table 3.17 Museum Support Ivory Market

The majority of respondents were neutral with regards to the role of museums in supporting a market for ivory by exhibiting and advertising ivory. No respondents strongly agreed, with only 10% of respondents agreeing. The unique circumstances of ivory objects in museum collections may explain why a majority of respondents (58%) neither agree nor disagree. The comparative responses of museum visitors will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

(18) Responses to the survey question "In your opinion, should museums collect and display worked ivory? (e.g. carved)"

Collect and Display Worked Ivory	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	98%
With Legal Stipulations	13	
With Cultural Context	9	
With Modern Interpretation	11	
Unspecified	7	
No	1	2%
Total	41	

Table 3.18 Collect and Display Worked Ivory

A large majority of respondents feel that worked ivory should be collected and displayed by museums. Respondents stated caveats for the collection and display of worked ivory, such as artifact collection methods adhering to legal stipulations, artifacts needing appropriate cultural/historical context with legal stipulations, or artifacts receiving modern interpretation (acknowledging animal conservation concerns) along with cultural context and legal requirements (with the latter assuming the former in every case).

> Example Response #1: "I do not think museums should collect worked ivory of threatened and endangered species. However, if the object helps to tell a narrative in an exhibit, I do not think there is a problem displaying ivory, especially if it's noted that worked ivory is no longer collected by the museum." (Collections Manager, Natural History Museum)
>
> Example Response #2: "Significant collections could be displayed with information on time collected and value of era when ivory was popular. Info on animal protection should be a part of the exhibit." (Administrator, History Museum)
>
> Example Response #3: "I think it is a case by case basis and depends upon too many variables to be able to make a blanket statement, i.e. the nature of the artifact itself, the manner in which it would be displayed, etc." (Registrar, Art and History Museum)
>
> Example Response #4: "Yes, medieval and African ivories are important artifacts in our collection, as are the Asian works. Ideally, it would be helpful to have an explanatory text highlighting the peril that elephants are in because of rampant poaching. I work in an art museum and it is unlikely that such a text would appear in most fine arts museums." (Curator, Art Museum)

(19) Responses to the survey question "In your opinion, should museums collect and display raw ivory (e.g. taxidermy)"

Collect and Display Raw Ivory	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	92%
With Legal Stipulations	11	
With Cultural Context	7	
With Modern Interpretation	11	
Unspecified	4	
No	3	8%
Total	36	

Table 3.19 Collect and Display Raw Ivory

Responses were similar to those of question 18.

> Example Response #1: "This has a two-part answer. Yes, museums should display it for the purpose of interpretation but they should not actively collect raw ivory as it encourages poaching." (Registrar, Anthropology Museum)
>
> Example Response #2: "When was the animal collected? Prior to international agreements and restrictions? You better hope so. Don't put anything on exhibit that is in violation of laws and treaties unless it is to support the reason those laws/treaties are in place (e.g. Fish and Wildlife exhibitions on confiscated natural history specimens and artifacts)." (Assistant Director, Art Museum)
>
> Example Response #3: "If it is clear that the ivory did not come from a black market source and if the ivory serves an educational purpose, I think it is acceptable to collect raw ivory." (Collections Manager, Historic House)

(20) Responses to the survey question "In your opinion, should museums collect and display unprovenienced ivory?"

Collect and Display Unprovenience Ivory	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	31%
With Legal Stipulations	6	
With Cultural Context	4	
With Modern Interpretation	1	
Unspecified	2	
No	29	69%
Total	42	

Table 3.20 Collect and Display Unprovenienced Ivory

Museum professionals understand unprovenienced to mean any object whose origin is unknown, both in terms of its original maker/physical origin, and its history of ownership. The majority of respondents do not think that museums should collect and display unprovenienced ivory. Respondents who answered yes provided caveats such as adhering to strict legal stipulations where ethical standards cannot be met, or ensuring that strong or important cultural context is the reason for collecting or exhibiting the ivory.

> Example Response #1: "That's a tough one, ideally you shouldn't collect unprovenienced anything, but we all know that's the ideal and not realistic, given the socio-cultural nature of ivory and the controversy it invites, museums should probably be less willing to collect unprovenienced ivory over unprovenienced other artifacts" (Curator, History Museum)
>
> Example Response #2: "No. Argument could be made for pre-CITES, or if it is "old enough", but these issues should be addressed on a case-by-case basis." (Collections Assistant, Art Museum)

(21) Responses to the survey question "Does your museum address (in labels, display techniques, docent tours, etc.) any legal or ethical issues surrounding ivory in its exhibits?"

Address Legal/Ethical Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	43%
Not Usually	3	8%
Would Where Appropriate	3	8%
No	17	43%
Total	40	

Table 3.21 Address Legal/Ethical Issues

An equal number of respondents indicated their museum either does or does not address any legal or ethical issues surrounding ivory in the interpretation of their exhibits. There were also three respondents of each indicating that they do not usually address such issues or that were they to exhibit ivory, in that they currently do not exhibit ivory, they

expressed a need to address such legal and ethical issues. If the two middle-range groups are categorized as "Yes," then the percentage of respondents addressing ethical issues becomes 59%, a slight majority over those museums not addressing such issues. This may reflect a shifting trend in museums toward providing modern interpretation of culturally historic ivory in museums.

(22) Responses to the survey question "What are the most common display techniques used when exhibiting ivory in your museum? *(rank in order; 1 being the most commonly used technique, and 5 being the least commonly used technique)*"

Most Common Display Technique

	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Display Technique	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Responses
Aesthetic Display	10	3	9	4	2	28
Factual/Typological Display	6	9	7	6	0	28
Ethnographic Display	18	5	2	0	3	28
Conceptual Display	9	11	3	2	1	26
Open Storage Display	1	3	1	4	8	17
Total	44	31	22	16	14	

Table 3.22 Most Common Display Technique (Count)

Most Common Display Technique

	Rank (From Most to Least)					
Display Technique	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Responses
Aesthetic Display	36%	11%	32%	14%	7%	28
Factual/Typological Display	21%	32%	25%	21%	0%	28
Ethnographic Display	64%	18%	7%	0%	11%	28
Conceptual Display	35%	42%	12%	8%	4%	26
Open Storage Display	6%	18%	6%	24%	47%	17
Total	44	31	22	16	14	

Table 3.23 Most Common Display Technique (Percentage)

Descriptions and examples of each display mode are shown in Appendix B.

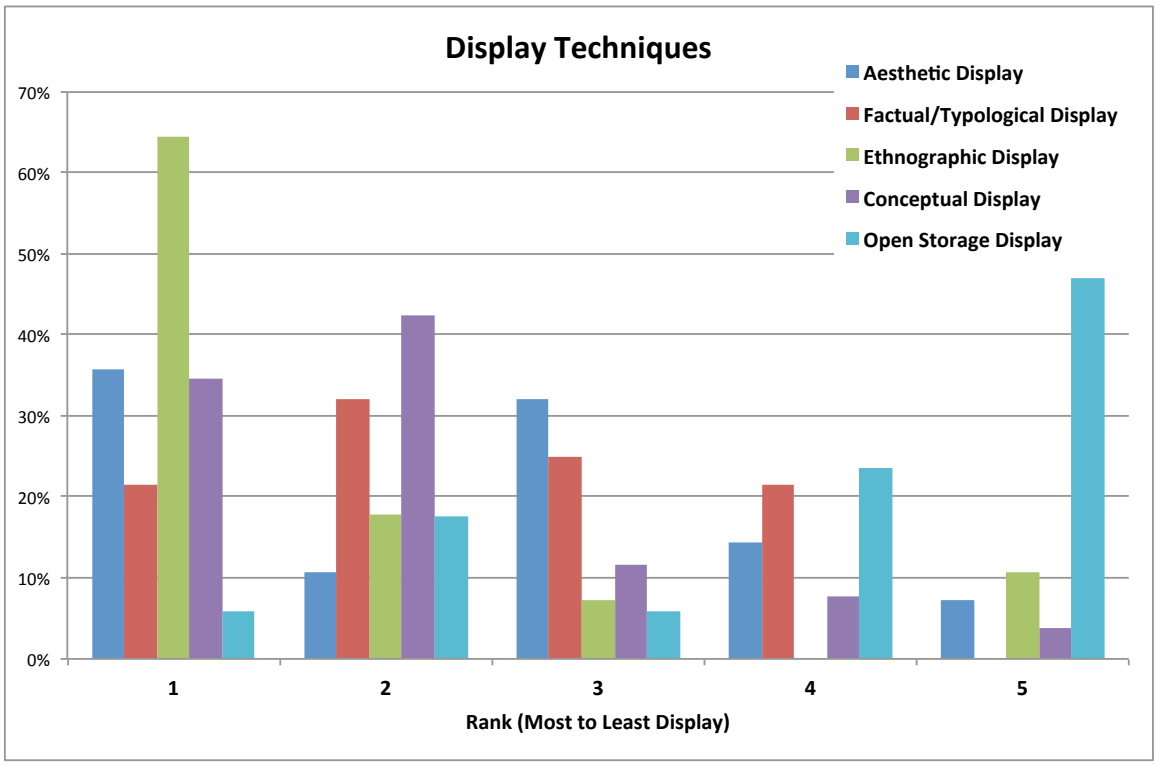

Fig. 3.7 Display Techniques

Respondents reported that the majority of exhibits containing ivory rank as follows (from most to least common): Ethnographic, Conceptual, Aesthetic, Factual/Typological and Open Storage display.

(23) Responses to the survey question "Does your museum have any published material discussing and/or with photographs of ivory artifacts? *(check all that apply)*"

1. Ivory Sculpture Through the Ages (1961); Ivory: Ideals of Beauty, Ideas of Power
2. Notable Acquisitions (1979)
3. Explorations in the Far North, by Frank Russell, 1898 (expedition report)
4. Rising of a New Moon (Tabawa exhibition), ca. 1985

5. Kurt Weitzmann, Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; vol. 3, ivories and Steatites, Washington DC 1972

(24) Responses to the survey question "Does your museum have a Collections Policy; if yes, what date was this policy developed or revised?"

Collections Policy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	98%
1986	1	
1990	1	
1991	1	
1997	1	
1998	1	
2001	1	
2002	1	
2004	2	
2005	2	
2006	2	
2007	7	
2008	3	
2009	1	
2010	7	
2011	7	
2012	6	
No	1	2%
Total	47	

Table 3.24 Collections Policy

The majority or respondents have a collections policy, which has been revised in the past five years.

(25) Responses to the survey question "Are there any legal or ethical stipulations in the policy for incoming donations or purchases containing ivory material?"

Legal Stipulations	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	23%
In General	14	36%
No	16	41%
Total	39	

Table 3.25 Legal Stipulations

The respondents are split with regard to legal or ethical stipulations in their policy for incoming donations or purchases containing ivory material, and noted that their policies address ivory in general with all necessary legal stipulations and ethical considerations with contested material or culturally sensitive artifacts. With 41% of the respondents not having addressed these issues in their policy, the rest of the respondents acknowledge a need for museums to become ethically bound institutions.

(26) Responses to the survey question "In your opinion, does the museum adhere to the Collections Policy, specifically in regards to ivory material?"

- All respondents answered that their museum adheres to its collections policy.

(27) Survey responses to the question "Does your museum have a Deaccession Policy; if yes, what date was this policy developed or revised?"

Deaccession Policy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	85%
1990	1	
1997	1	
1998	1	
2004	2	
2005	2	
2006	2	
2007	6	
2008	3	
2009	2	
2010	7	
2011	3	
2012	7	
No	7	15%
Total	46	

Table 3.26 Deaccession Policy

In museums, deaccession means the permanent removal of an object from the collections. A majority of respondents indicated their museums have a deaccession policy. Their deaccession policies have been revised in the last five years, following the trend similar to the revisions to collections policies.

(28) Responses to the survey question "Does the Deaccession Policy (re)evaluate collecting practices based on legal and ethical changes in general, or ivory in particular?"

Deaccession Policy Ethically Reevaluated	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	18%
In General	11	32%
No	17	50%
Total	34	

Table 3.27 Deaccession Policy Ethically Reevaluated

Seventeen respondents reported that their deaccession policy does not reevaluate collecting practices, while another seventeen respondents reported that their deaccession

policy does address ethical changes, though eleven specified that their policy changes reflect general trends in ethics and are not specific to ivory.

(29) Responses to the survey question "Has your museum deaccessioned ivory from its collection?" and (30) "Why were ivory artifacts chosen for deaccession, and what happened to these items?"

Ivory Deaccessioned	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	14%
Sold, Large Deaccession	1	
Sold, Better Example Available	1	
Not Appropriate for Permanent Collection	1	
Unknown	1	
Poor Condition, Didn't Fit Collecting/Exhibiting Plan, Donated, Sold	1	
No	38	86%
Total	44	

Table 3.28 Ivory Deaccessioned

(31) Responses to the survey question "Has your museum considered deaccessioning ivory from its collections, but decided to keep it?" and (31) "Why did the museum decide to keep the ivory?"

Considered for Deaccessioned but Kept	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, the museum decided to keep the material due to poor provienience	1	2%
No, material under consideration has always been removed from the collection	4	9%
No, ivory artifacts have not been considered for deaccession	38	88%
Total	43	

Table 3.29 Ivory Considered for Deaccession but Kept

(32) Responses to the survey question "Why has the museum not considered ivory for deaccession?"

Reasons for Not Deaccessioning	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Do Deaccessions	8	27%
No Need	11	37%
Valuable to Collection	5	17%
Not Endangered Source	2	7%
Related to Insitutional History	2	7%
Legal/Ethical Issues with Disposition of Ivory	2	7%
Ethnographic Origin	1	3%
Ivory Not Yet Addressed	1	3%
Conflict with University Policy	1	3%
Historical	1	3%
From Scientific Collecting Expeditions	1	3%
Unknown	1	3%
Total	30	

Table 3.30 Reasons for Not Deaccessioning

Most respondents reported that the museum does not deaccession items (60%). Respondents indicated that they do not deaccession or that there is no need to deaccession. Museums do not deaccession as part of their normal functioning (Ambrose and Paine 2006). Only recently have museums begun to decaccession; most commonly by transferring or trading objects with other museums. Given the complexity of ivory, it is not surprising that despite recent changes in wildlife management and attitudes toward ivory, ivory artifacts remain in museum collections and on exhibits. Ivory is both fully natural and fully cultural, separating it from other forms of contested material that have been repatriated.

(33) Responses given under "Please add any additional comments here."

> Example Response #1: "All of the ivory to which I refer in the survey is marine mammal ivory--from sperm whales, narwhals, and walrus." (Curator, History Museum)

This response situates the museum's collection within the spectrum of ethicacy regarding ivory, specifically by eliminating elephant ivory from consideration.

> Example Response #2: “Ivory is such a small part of our collection, and since we only have two staff member(s) that unless it becomes and issue, or if at some point someone offered ivory as part of a donation, we do/probably will not focus on issues that relate to only ivory beyond making sure we stay within laws/regulation.” (Collections Manager, Art and History Museum)

This response points to the struggle of finding balance between competing issues, including: limited museum resources, capacity to address ethical issues, and capacity to develop modern interpretation about cultural context.

> Example Response #3: “We don't usually think about the implications of ivory objects because we see them in a historical and artistic context, and they are often composite pieces with many elements. Perhaps we should think more closely about them?” (Collections Manager, Historic House)

This response acknowledges that museums tend to place their interpretation of artifacts within a past context and limit the possibility of modern interpretation.

> Example Response #4: “This survey signals a strong bias against ivory, and many museums with ivory objects may not be as aware of the issues related to the material or have works that are very old and with competing values in their collections. There may be other nuances that need to be developed in exploring this subject. Do we all need to get rid of all ivory-keyed pianos? 18th century artifacts? If we deaccession them and they go into private hands, is that better for the ivory trade? It would seem that it would further commercialize the practice, etc.” (Director, Art Museum)

This response places ivory in the same category as other contested material in museums such as human remains, looted artifacts, etc., and rightly points out that deaccession is not necessarily a viable option for correcting ethical issues since the ivory can never revert back to its original first-life, nor should it necessarily have to. That is to say, ivory as material culture is just as important in the human production of social action as it is in animal conservation.

> Example Response #5: “Most of our ivory objects are miniatures painted on ivory.” (Curator, Art Museum)

This response distinguish between types of ivory, generally those that still maintain the natural shape of the tusk or surface appearance of ivory, and those that are composite (e.g. inlay) artifacts or those where the ivory as a medium is not readily apparent.

> Example Response #6: "The majority of our ivory pieces, which are few, are clothing adornments (buttons, clasps, etc.) on Civil War or Victorian era costumes, with two scrimshaw pieces from the same eras." (Registrar, Art and History Museum)
>
> Example Reponses #7: "Our museum is a all-volunteer, non-profit that tells the story of healthcare…the only ivory objects we have in our collection are ivory handled dental and surgical equipment from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We also have bone, wood, and metal handled equipment. We primarily use these materials to discuss the importance of sterilization after the advent of the germ theory of disease." (Curator, History Museum)

These two responses demonstrate the compelling story ivory has to tell other than as a subject of animal conservation. Its human/cultural and historical use is a valid story that exemplifies the importance of allowing ivory to remain materially complex and culturally embedded.

Situating Ivory at the Milwaukee Public Museum

The ivory collection of the MPM represents a broad cross section of culture, art, and natural specimens. The collection, numbering over 1500 pieces, is divided between the History and Anthropology Departments with a small amount of ivory specimens held in the Vertebrate Zoology collections as well. The History collection comprises artifacts made by European and American craftsmen as well as those made by Asian artisans for home and export markets. The Anthropology collection includes ivories created by the indigenous cultures of Africa, Oceania, and North America. More recently, the MPM has curtailed the collecting of ivory carving and objects,

> The museum policy today is that since the dawn of the 21st century, ivory has engendered controversy. Modern bans on ivory are part of a global sensitivity to the needless destruction of the natural world, which the MPM recognizes and affirms. The main goal in holding collections in trust, and in exhibiting these pieces through permanent exhibits, is not only to show the beauty of ivory and the artistry involved in its production and use, but also to underscore the importance and power imbued in ivory by a variety of cultures through many centuries. (MPM Ivory Catalog, 2000: 4-5).

Several permanent exhibits on the third floor of the MPM display ivory, including exhibits in the African Wing: Central Africa, Nigeria, and African Art Today; the Circumpolar North Wing: Hunting on Land and Sea, and Eskimo Art; the India Wing; the Asian Wing (note: the Chinese exhibit is closed for construction during my research), and in the temporary exhibit space on the second floor which currently displays the Native Games exhibit. The exhibits focused on for this discussion are Africa and the Circumpolar North as well as one ivory artifact on display in the India exhibits, and a display of four artifacts in a Japanese exhibit case.

Fig. 3.8 Elephant in African Hall

Fig. 3.9 Walruses in Circumpolar North Hall

Africa

Plans for the African Wing of the museum were drawn up in 1971, though the MPM had already amassed an enormous collection of African specimens and artifacts through both donors as well as through field expeditions like the Cudahy-Massee

Milwaukee Public Museum African Expedition of 1928-1929. In the article, "The Realization of a Long-time Dream: The African Wing" (1972), Barry Singer describes how the goal of the exhibits was to instill present Africa as "ageless and timeless, mysterious and fascinating, wild and primeval…where all levels of life and culture exist side by side."

The exhibit case devoted to Central Africa is artifact-heavy with a lot of masks and carved figures mostly made of wood. The labels discuss religion, masquerades, warfare, and music of the people of central Africa. There are three small ivory artifacts on display in the case: a side-blown trumpet, a small charm, and a small, carved mask. The side-blown horn is the most prominent placed directly above the main label of the case entitled "Kings & Warfare" (See: Chapter 2: Artifact Biographical Sketches #1). The case presents ethnographic interpretation of artifacts by describing their cultural significance as well as showing graphics of tribes performing various rituals and wearing regalia.

Fig 3.10 Detail, "Kings & Warfare"

Fig. 3.11 Hippo Tooth Charm (E57885)

Fig. 3.12 Ivory Maskette (E57174)

Another exhibit displays a carved ivory tusk made by the Yoruba people in Nigeria. The exhibit displays the artwork of the five most prominent groups living in Nigerian. The first sentence of main label reads: “Nigeria has contributed perhaps more in the way of visual art than all of the West Coast of African countries combined…” which presents Nigeria as a microcosm of art coming out of West Africa. Artifacts on display are masks, bracelets, instrument, and one carved tusk. The carved tusk is the only ivory piece in the case with an object label behind it. The labels in the case only discuss the masks, so that the carved tusk is somewhat out of place in terms of have a described purpose.

Fig. 3.13 “Nigerian Art” Display Case

Fig. 3.14 Carved ivory tusk, miniature of Benin style (E6378)

The last exhibit that displays ivory in the African wing is “African Art Today”. As with the other two cases it displays one ivory artifact amidst masks, jewelry, figurines, and instruments with no interpretation. Although the topic is African Art today, the

display style and types of artifacts are visually indistinct from the other historic African exhibits. Moreover, the label "Today" is misleading, since the exhibit was made over 30 years ago in 1979. The artifact on display is an elephant bridge tusk, a very popular piece made as tourists or 'airport art' (See: Chapter 2: Artifact Biographical Sketches #2).

Circumpolar North

The exhibits that address the natural history and cultures of the circumpolar north are all done in a diorama style that shows scenes from Eskimo life with supporting artifacts and labels mounted on the walls. The exhibit case "Hunting on Land and Sea" and "From Icy Waters" shows a hunters spear and line fishing through the ice and the labels address hunting techniques and how tools are manufactured and used. In this case, the walrus ivories are shown as utilitarian artifacts utilized by an innovative culture with scarce resources.

Fig. 3.15 "Hunting on land and sea" Display Case

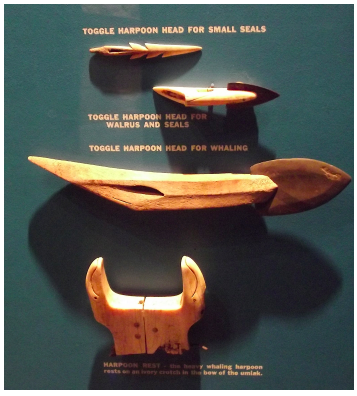

Fig. 3.16 Detail, ivory hunting spear (N1934)

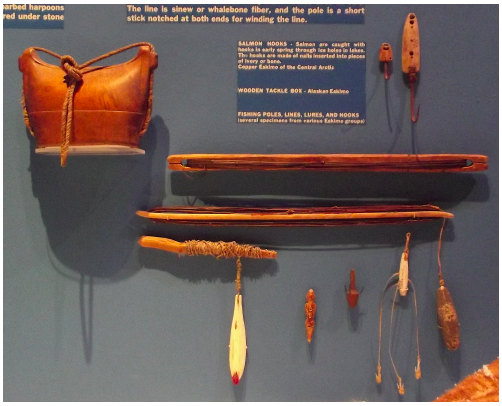

Fig. 3.17 Detail "From Icy Waters", ivory hooks and sinkers (E33670)

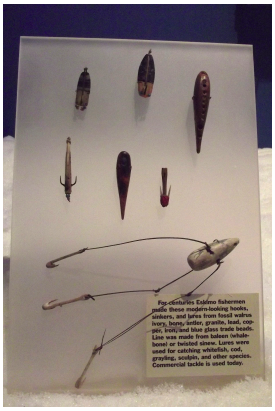

Fig. 3.18 Detail, mounted ivory fishing lure (N1884)

Just across from this case is a display called "Eskimo Art", with prints and carved artifacts in ivory and soapstone, and scrimshawed walrus tusks. The topic is contemporary and tourist Eskimo art (See Chapter 2: Artifact Biographical Sketches #3). The ivory is shown in an aesthetic context, and the case emphasizes the importance of animal motifs in Eskimo art. This case is quite visually distinct from the other cases because it is not a diorama.

Fig. 3.19 "Eskimo Art" Display Case

Fig. 3.20 Detail, Ivory Effigy Figurines (fox: E28819)

Fig. 3.21 Detail, incised ivory buttons (E54806a,c)

Other Ivories on Exhibit

There are a few other exhibits in the museum that display ivory, which directly address ivory as the material of construction. One is a figurine of an elephant that was carved from a single block of ivory in the Indian gallery (Fig.3.23). This piece is very prominently displayed with a long label detailing is appearance, "…The howdah, or carved seat, is crowned with a large diamond. Other trappings are made of pure tooled gold and are ornamented with 427 precious stones including sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, diamonds, topazes, aquamarines, garnets, cat's eye, and amethysts." Most importantly though, this label is the only one in the museum that addresses the concern of illegal ivory trade, "The United States government now restricts ivory imports as part of the global commitment to protecting the African elephant from extinction." This label was written between 2002-2004 (personal correspondence: Al Muchka, MPM Curator).

The Asian Wing of the museum also displays ivory, however, the Chinese exhibits are currently closed because they are being updated. There is one case in the Japanese exhibits that displays four ivory artifacts and also provides an extensive label about ivory and its use as an art medium by the Japanese. Although the label addresses Western demand for Asian artwork that led to a surge in the production of *okimono* ('placed object') there is no mention of how this surge in demand still threatens elephant species today.

Fig. 3.22 "Japanese Ivory" display case

Fig. 3.23 Indian Jeweled Elephant (N12950) Courtesy Milwaukee Public Museum

Ivory Catalogue and Recent Acquisitions

Although the permanent exhibits on the third floor display ivory artifacts from many of the cultures which have utilized it (Africa, Circumpolar North, Japan, India), these displays are generally rudimentary and in some cases lack interpretation or adequate representation altogether. Moreover, the museum holds a very large collection of ivory artifacts in storage, most of which was brought in by the former Curator of Decorative Arts, John Luedtke and Norbert Beihoff, a prominent donor. In fact, the collection is so substantial that it is mentioned in the appendix of museums holding significant collections, in Benjamin Burack's book *Ivory and Its Uses*, which provides one of the most extensive and encyclopedic reviews of artifacts made from ivory. In 2000, the museum published a catalogue highlighting approximately 10% of the collection, which focuses primarily on aesthetic pieces from Europe, and Asia with a small representation from Africa, the Middle East, and the Arctic.

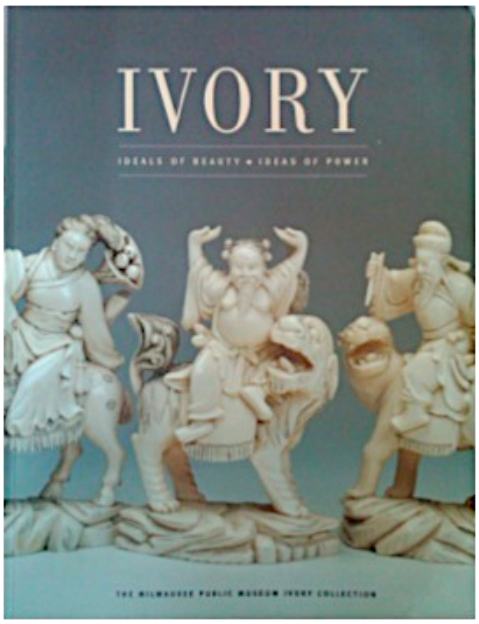

Fig. 3.24 "Ivory Ideals of Beauty, Ideas of Power" Catalogue

This catalogue was important for the MPM because it is a way for the museum to present their collections to the public when they are unable to place them on exhibit or online.

Although as a policy the museum does not collect modern ivory carving, there was a recent instance of the accession of an artifact comprised partly of ivory. The staff at the MPM know and work with an agent in the Fish and Wildlife Services in Chicago, IL and are occasionally contacted by the agency regarding confiscated material (personal correspondence: Dawn Scher Thomae, MPM curator). This is because, although the agency confiscates illegally imported and traded material, it is not a repository. Because they do not want to return the material to its country of origin where it will likely end up in the black market trade again, they often look to museums to accept the pieces into their collections.

In May of 2011, the FWS contacted staff at the MPM regarding several pieces of Peruvian feather-work. After examining several images curators decided to take the items

and sent museum curator Carter Lupton, along with one custodial employee in a truck to Chicago to pick up the material. Upon returning, the Mr. Lupton had also accepted an African wooden staff with an ivory portion at the top, as well as inlayed into the shaft and on the base. The staff had been confiscated because of the ivory portion and was listed as coming from China. Curators knew immediately, however, that the staff was African and not Chinese. The FWS was not inaccurate to list the piece as Chinese, however, since China is often the "middle man" for material coming from Africa to the U.S. because of how the laws regulate the movement of ivory.

The piece is contemporary, but made for tourists and is clearly of African origin; more specifically it is an Ewe counselor's staff (often called a "linguist's staff") from the Volta Region of Southeast Ghana. The Ewe have used the ivory Akan/Asante stool form at the top of the staff for at least three hundred years, though this form is usually done in wood with gold foil and not in ivory.

In this case the artifact was "dropped in the lap" of the curators, so to speak. If freely offered the piece, however, the curators would be much more hesitant. When asked if the museum would accept this piece if it were freely offered Dawn Scher Thomae, curator of anthropology replied,

> "I would have to think about it… I'm not an expert in this sort of material, so I would talk to George [retired curator of African and Pacific collections]. If it were being offered by a donor I would definitely say no, but it's different when it is a government agency. I guess I would say yes if it had the appropriate documentation, even though it was illegally imported. But if it were put up on exhibit, it would be with its story. Not the one about being a piece of contemporary art, or about it's historic function as a traditional material in Ghana, but its story about how it was confiscated."

The piece is highly unusual because it contains ivory, so the opportunity to discuss the illegal trade of the substance is apparent. The linguist's staff is an usual piece and came

into the museum in an unusual way. However, it is important to stress that there is no normalized way for post-ban ivory to come into the museum today. The changes in both the poetics and politics of ivory collection and display in museums now restrict this material. Although ivory is still legally acceptable from the FWS it is strictly policed (Tompkins 1998).

The permanent exhibits at the MPM display very little of the ivory collection held in storage, and for the most part do not label the artifacts or address concerns of ivory trade. However, it is important to recognize that the exhibits that were designed and installed in the 1970s and 1980s and are in need of updating. To speak optimistically, the museum is already well positioned to address this topic since it already exhibits diorama scenes of animals that produce ivory. The effort would be minimal to enact significant change and would involve, at the very least, adding key labels or, at the most, the addition of an exhibit case that displays and addresses concerns of ivory trade and elephant conservation. Though the exhibits do not currently represent museum trends, it is clear from the ivory catalogue published in 2000, as well as from recent ivory acquisition at the museum that there have been significant changes in ivory collecting and interpretation by museum professionals.

Chapter 4

Discussion

This thesis explores the role of ivory in constructing and upholding a variety of cultural universes through its biographical transformation in three lives. Because of the unique social (and "natural") life of ivory as a biographically complex form of material culture, it is highly sensitive to changing cultural interpretation. Given this sensitivity, ivory is one of the first forms of material culture to be reconsidered within the dialogue of museum interpretation. That is, having accumulated substantial and diverse cultural meaning, ivory in museums (its third-life) is primed to fluctuate according to modern-day culture change. In this way, ivory acts as a proxy of measuring the museum paradigm shift.

In order to test this hypothesis, a visitor study of 47 individuals was conducted at the MPM in person and an online survey of 78 museum professionals was conducted through an anonymous link posted to two listserv forums (Museum-L and AAMG-L). Additionally, biographical sketches of four ivory artifacts from the MPM collection were developed to underscore the complexity of ivory within cultures and demonstrate its universal recognition as a sign symbol with a global audience.

Visitor Study

The results of this research indicate that museum visitors to the MPM do not strongly distinguish between exhibits about nature and culture, unless there is a feature of one or the other that is distinct or highly personalized (for example, living exhibits like "Butterflies", or localized history like "Streets of Old Milwaukee"). Additionally visitors

are familiar with and interested in ivory in the museum (Fig. 3.1). In particular, visitors responded positively to ivory's ability to tell a story, its visual appearance, the time required for its production (e.g. the time to carve it), its cultural use, and also that it is an exotic material from everyday life (See Chapter 3: Visitor Perspective: Analysis of the MPM Visitor Study).

Overall, 57% of visitors enjoy seeing ivory in exhibits with ample context, especially when the artifact is unfamiliar, like the side-blown trumpet (Fig. 3.2). A majority of visitors (75%) preferred the trumpet in-context vs. visitors (25%) who prefer seeing the trumpet as art, that is, with little visual/written interpretation such as in an *in situ* display. However, even when artifacts were familiar some visitors still wanted artifacts displayed with context (19 responses, 40%). The preference for diorama-style, in-context exhibits may suggest that visitors seek out and appreciate the wider gaze afforded in museum spaces. This could be in contrast to the rapid spread of modern personal technology devices (cellphones, tablets, etc.), which may leave people feeling overly visually saturated (i.e. looking closely at a screen and high-resolution zoom). Thus, the museum experience affords a newly imaged wider gaze that is also slightly immersive. For visitors who enjoy seeing the artifacts up close (42%), this is an opportunity to get close to authentic artifacts, where proximity to the artifacts further enhances the authenticity of the museum experience. Although it has been proposed that the search for the authentic is part of a "modernist anxiety that [the world] is becoming fake, plastic, a kitschy imitation" (Gable and Handler 1996: 568), I would argue that it is no longer modernist *anxiety*, but rather a sort of modernist ennui wherein plastic and kitsch are the normalized goods of a mass produced way of life (i.e. big-box stores, chain

restaurants, etc.). In this way, museum artifacts, especially ivory (as the purified/singularized form of plastic) is a relief from the mundane reproduction of everyday material life to the modern Western visitor.

Visitors are aware of issues surrounding ivory conservation, but do not necessarily expect this issue to be a part of written interpretation. That is, there was a divide between visitors who would approve a label that addresses an artifact broadly (20 responses), and those who would approve a label that is descriptive and further indicates that the artifact was part of illegal ivory seizure (27 responses) with visitors slightly preferring label 2 because it is specific. Furthermore within each grouping of visitors who chose label 1 or label 2, there was an equal divide between visitors choosing the label because it showed negative controversy *or* showed dramatic exciting controversy.

Rationale of Label Choice	Count	Sum
Label 1: General	12	20
Label 1: Uncontroversial	8	
Label 2: Specific	19	27
Label 2: Controversial	8	
		Total 47

Table 4.1 Visitor's Rationale for Label Choice

The broad number of choices and reasons indicates that this question is under very little social selection, and is based primarily on personal feelings. Indeed, some visitors who said they were strong proponents of animal conservation still chose Label 1 because it was broader. As Beverly Serrell (1996) has pointed out, museum visitors usually read short labels instead of longer labels, yet visitors also love a good story, which may help explain the across-the-board responses that this question produced.

The visitor study also indicates that the museum public can compare and contrast animal and human rights and recognize the complexity of such an interface (Fig. 3.3).

Overwhelmingly, visitors endorse Native peoples' special right to utilize the environment and ivory-producing animals; 35 people (74%) responded that native people could in some capacity kill animals for their ivory (always, only for indigenous use, or only Native Americans). Twelve visitors stated that native people may have distinct religious or cosmology beliefs that require a sense of cultural relativism regarding the killing of animals for ivory. In general visitors place Native Arctic peoples and Native African peoples in the same category of Native, and the rights to access of ivory are based more so on the status of the animal as endangered and also the animal's charisma.

- "I don't like the idea of commerce. But it does have spiritual value for them."
  Survey Respondent #7 10/8/12 12:00pm

- "It is about what is prioritized. [People need to] partake in culture. To ensure cultural survival."
  Survey Respondent #20 10/8/12 3:00pm

Still, most visitors endorsed the use of animals by native people employing concepts of sustainability wherein the people use the whole animal, not just its ivory, implying that this practice would also limit total number of animals killed.

- "They should use the whole animal, not kill it just for ivory."
  Survey Respondent #17 10/8/12 2:40pm

Finally, others brought up the notion of the "noble savage" regarding native people.

- "Yes, but not *just* for art. I mean [not] for one part of the animal [ivory]. But it is more justifiable; sustainable. Because they are native people."
  Survey Respondent #31 10:06 10/19/12

The appearance of the phrase "noble savage" in English first appeared in John Dryden's heroic drama "The Conquest of Granada" in 1671 (Zwicker and Bywaters 2001: 90),

> I am as free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

Despite much writing, both positive and negative, on humans' true state of nature the concept of the noble savage is still prevalent in modern-day conceptualizations of native people, take for example the popular films Tarzan (1912), Dances with Wolves (1990), and Avatar (2009). Museum visitors clearly ascribe the notion of living harmoniously with nature; one visitor even responded overtly, referring to Native Alaskans, "[they can kill ivory-producing animals] if they are good stewards, which they [Native groups] usually are…" Without my input the same visitor then went on to describe how, "still, Man is inherently greedy and if they can make money there will be a black market" [Survey Participant #25 10/9/12 11:30am]. He ultimately adopted the Hobbesian notion of Man's true state of nature and decided that Native groups should not be allowed to kill animals for ivory.

Other visitors brought up how the media and Western cultures view and respond to ivory use by native people and used this to situate their response.

- "Yes, we should meet them [native people] halfway and bring back [sustain] their culture. As long as it is sustainable. … You don't see it, it's not prevalent in the media today. *"Actually, the National Geographic October Headline Story is about Black Market in Ivory"* "Oh really? Well, I don't know what I'm talking about!" (laughs) *"Well, it <u>just</u> came out."* "But it does go up and down in the media" *"Yeah, it does."* Survey Respondent #42 10/19/12 12:30pm

- "Yes, they can use it how they want to. It's Westerners who shouldn't buy it. That way other nations will stop the demand. Do I need it on my wall? No. We can use recreations [ivory substitutes]."
  Survey Participant #37 10/19/12 11:35am

The visitor study indicates that museum visitors are aware and interested in ivory in museums, desire context in exhibits, and are highly aware and versed in the current rhetoric of culture and animal conservation issues. In response, museums should provide rich story-like narratives to visitors that also address ethical and modern interpretations of

ivory. Lastly, it is visitors' understanding of how highly endangered animals like elephants vs. walruses are that dictates their ethical opinion surrounding the use of the animal for their ivory, rather than a difference of classification of Native to African or Arctic peoples. Generally, visitors are seeking a sustainable use of nature, which can be tied into broader applications of sustainability rhetoric in general (McAfee 1999).

Online Survey

The results of the online museum professional survey indicate that a wide range of museum types collect and exhibit ivory, including among others, art, history, anthropology, and natural history museums (Table 3.5). The collections and deaccession policies of a majority of institutions have been revised in the last 7 years (Table 3.24 & Table 3.26), and reflect legal and ethical changes in museum practice (Merritt 2008). The results of the two questions "Does your museum address legal and ethical issues in [collections] and [deaccession] policies" received mixed responses; however, the questions were specific to ivory collection, and many respondents indicated that the museum addressed this issue generally (Table 3.25 & 3.27). Such legal and ethical changes reflect the general trend in museums toward greater accountability to the public and an increase in American Association of Museums (AAM) accreditation (Boyd 1991). The geographic and cultural groups most commonly collected and exhibited are Africa: Nigeria, the Congo, and Egypt; North America: Inuit and American; Asia: Japan, China, and India; Europe: France, Germany, England, and General European (Table 3.14). The material culture of these regions has had a long history in museum exhibits and continues to the present.

The majority of museums only collect ivory passively, that is, through donations rather than purchases or field collecting. Also, museums that actively collect ivory also collect it passively. The majority of ivory was collected between 1900-1950 (Table 3.10). Interestingly, with the exception of art museums, all other museums ceased collecting ivory between 1950-1990. In the past two decades (1990-present), all types of museums have begun collecting ivory with the stipulation that it meet, at minimum, legal standards; however, a wide range of ethical standards are also applied (Fig. 3.6). Most importantly, museums will not collect objects that are not fully relevant to their mission and interpretive strategies.

A majority of museums' ivory collections are quite small (less than 100 objects), but a high percentage of those collections are on exhibit, 71% of respondents exhibit ivory (Table 3.11 & 3.12). Also interesting to note, two respondents from natural history museums stated that ivory has been removed from exhibits for security reasons, "some [ivory has been] replaced with cast replicas where exhibit security was an issue" (Curator, Natural History Museum). Moreover, personal correspondence with the MPM staff about security concerns of ivory indicates a preoccupation in Natural History museums with the threat of ivory theft in museums. Indeed, as described in The Lawyers Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation (LCCHP) website, there were a rash of thefts in several types of museums in Europe in 2011 for rhino horn, which is experiencing a demand spike from Asian buyers.

Display techniques and interpretation are changing dramatically since the Museum Age (late 19th-early 20th c.) from factual/typological and aesthetic display modes, to the now more common ethnographic and conceptual display modes (Table 3.23

& Fig. 3.7). The most apparent change in museum curation and exhibition based on responses from the online survey is that museum professionals are increasingly aware of ethical issues surrounding numerous types of material like ivory. Although these issues are not clearly addressed in collections policies, which have already been revised to reflect broad shifts in ethical policies, museums in the U.S. are beginning to address and provide modern interpretations of ivory in exhibits through labeling, docent tours, programming, etc. (Table 3.25).

The key to understanding how and why ivory can help measure museum change lies in new museum interpretive strategies to construct narrative interpretations that can connect with a modern visitor, rather than simply being informative (Serrell 1996). Do people want to know about ivory in the past or today? The results of the museum survey indicate that visitors responded positively to both labels in their capacity to bring the artifact up to the present. Museums are beginning to validate these desires for modern interpretation through labeling; but the most common way is through docent-led tours and programming, which 6 respondents stated were the primary of providing this type of interpretation.

Modern museum practices reflect a shift in ethical interpretations of ivory that are connected to a broader and globalized emphasis on the future out of the notion of sustainability and conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, and cultures. In Arjun Appadurai's book *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition* (forthcoming), he proposes an anthropology where humans are future-makers and of futures as cultural facts. He describes the ways in which locality always takes surprising new forms, similar to his stance in *Modernity at Large* (1996), where he stated the case

for looking at the imagination as a collective practice, which played a vital role in the production of locality.

> The production of locality is bound up with, rather than separate from, process of globalization as it continues to generate complex new crises of circulation. Here the function of the imagination must be seen as a vital resource in all social processes and projects, and needs to be seen as a quotidian energy, not visible only in dreams, fantasies, and in sequestered moments of euphoria and creativity, as Durkheim, for example, made famous in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), or as Victor Turner has described as "liminal moments" (ibid.: 407).

In his previous work, Appadurai (1996) has shown that, especially in the lives of ordinary people, the personal archive of memories, both material and cognitive, is not only or primarily about the past but is about providing a map for negotiating and shaping new futures. In this sense, the opinions of visitors to the MPM about ivory the museums, as well as the shifting focus in modern interpretation of ivory in museums across the country, demonstrates a newly forming conceptualization of the future and the role of reusable material and animal conservation ethics as "habitus" (Bourdieu 1976). Habitus refers to the social values or sensible ways of thinking and behaving within a cultural group (ibid.). The pursuit of "the good life" is a picture in which "cultural systems shape specific images from here to there and from now to then, as part of the ethics of everyday life" (Appadurai *forthcoming:* 415*).* Based upon the biographical life of ivory, which I developed for this thesis, the unique life of ivory which directs its shifting between different spheres of meaning and value the shaping of ethics is strongly based upon aspirations for the future and the conceptualization of "others" by Western museum-goers. Importantly, this transformation can only be understood if we concede to objects some of the same forms of agency, energy and biographical vicissitude that we attribute to ourselves (ibid.). Thus modern interpretations of ivory artifacts in museums like the

MPM, which primarily serve a Western audience, help to both direct and reflect cultural understandings of appropriate social action concerning historical interpretations, animal conservations efforts, politics of resource management, native peoples rights, and the future.

In developing a narrative of the future as cultural fact, this thesis has paid particular attention to the relationships between the extinction of organic beings and the extinction of cultural formations (ritual practices, traditional livelihoods, etc.), and how these extinction events have compelled Western people to conceptualize their place in the world and their role in these events (Sodikoff 2011). This "accumulation of absence" relates easily to historical theories of museum practices, and thus translates easily to pre-structured modes of display and interpretation. People are becoming increasingly aware of environmental concerns especially for endangered animals and resource scarcity.

Museum collections and exhibits today show a collecting practice that is distinct from the collecting habits of individuals. That is, although historically museum and department stores have shared a common origin in world's fairs, in the last century there has been a distinct separation of art and science from commerce (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992). Today, collective vs. individual collecting practices are structured around concepts of what are "good" and "bad" objects to collect and display; moreover, when juxtaposed, museum and individual object types are nearly opposite. Based upon these differences, I have developed a table distinguishing between individual and museum collecting practices.

During the advent of museum collecting, as curio collections or those of the elite and royal, a distinction between individual and collective did not exist. These collections

reflected personal tastes and were generally geared toward the accumulation of the bizarre and unfamiliar artifact. The first split in collective collecting practices developed as museum missions shifted toward the scientific accumulation of the natural and cultural world (Duncan 1995). In this collecting mentality, the goal was not the bizarre, in fact that which was strange was often of little interest if did not fit into a prescribed category of typology/nomenclature. This shift was the first semi divide between individual and museum collecting behavior.

Today, individuals are encouraged to collect souvenirs and objects of personal heritage (i.e. heirlooms) to reflect highly personalized experiences (Lee 1999). Moreover, these objects, while personal to the owner, are not wholly unique in form, or in their material of construction. This is the primary distinction in individual collecting and museum "collective" collecting. Museums, in contrast to the individual, seek authentic, unique, and singularized objects and often reflect great human achievements (art, science, engineering etc.) By contrast, museums are discouraged from culturally "irrelevant" artifacts like those that are mass-produced, souvenirs, or too personalized (i.e. diplomas, family photo albums). Although there may be exceptions based upon the collecting institution and who the individual was, generally the institution may seek personal objects that also fit into wider categories of social value. Finally, for both collecting practices it is equally bad to not collect "good" objects (Table 4.2).

	Good	Bad
Individuals	Souvenirs; collectables	"Authentic" Artifacts
	Local/Personal Art	Objects that are pinnacle Human achievements
	Personal heritage	Non renewable objects
	Renewable objects	←Lack of "good" objects
Museums	"Authentic" Artifacts	Unprovenienced "culturally irrelevant" artifacts
	Objects that are pinnacle Human achievements*	Reproductions, Fakes
		←Lack of "good" objects

*Contested Material—Enola gay, Elgin Marbles

Table 4.2 Ideas of "Good" and "Bad" Objects of Ownership

Conclusion

Cultural institutions frequently serve as playing fields upon which the major social, political, and moral issues of the day are contested. Not only are the definitions of truth and beauty subject to debate, but so are other thorny issues, such as what constitutes public taste and who has the right to determine it, what kind of knowledge is deemed to be useful, and who has the right to control its production and dissemination (Ames 2004: 81). In the past 25 years, museums' collecting practices have changed to adhere to laws surrounding animal conservation and professional ethics regarding unprovenienced material. This study has found, however, that museum exhibits and interpretive strategies generally do not address a shift toward the multi-vocal narratives of the cultures and animals on exhibit. Museum professionals indicate that only during in-person interactions in exhibits, like docent tours, are issues of animal conservation and the ivory trade addressed explicitly. However, in-person interactions necessitate modern interpretation,

and do not reflect institutional discourse toward ivory interruption (docents for example, are nearly always volunteers and consequently cannot speak nearly so well as proxies for the museum as an institution). A paradigm shift will be evident only when museums provide new interpretations in written labels, display techniques, and even larger administrative decisions such as what to place on exhibit, where the visitors play a strictly passive role.

Museum policies and exhibit histories can demonstrate the actualization of shifts in cultural attitude because museums are highly influential and participatory agents in the process of representing cultural attitudes. More specifically, the artifacts on exhibit themselves can serve as a variable for measuring this change. The social life of the artifact results in the accumulation of complex multicultural meanings, which increase as the artifact moves in and out of commodity spheres of exchange (Kopytoff 1986), as it moves between hands. By the time ivory artifacts have arrived in museums, they are instilled with strong and complex meaning and value. Significant changes in legal and ethical barriers toward ivory trade and acquisition mean that the ivory currently held in museum collections is likely the only examples of ivory they will have into the future.

According to theories of material culture studies (Woodward 2007; Kopytoff 1986; Appadurai 1996; Miller 1987) objects are social agents that direct *and* reflect culture change. Ivory acts directly on culture by making people feel morally compelled to protect animals and the environment because of the artifacts ability to metonymically stand as proxies for the animal itself (and the impending absence, or extinction, of the animal). Ivory also reflects culture, especially in tourist art, because museum visitors ascribe value to ivory as a status marker, yet more recently, its value as singularized has

restricted it from movement into future commodity spheres because it has been replaced by plastic and other substitutes. Thus, ivory still holds some, though limited, potential for coming into museums because it is moving into a form of utmost singularization. The role of museums in leading social change to further conservation efforts and ethics of cultural property has a strong potential of being drawn out for several reasons including, conservation considerations (both in storage and on exhibit), acknowledgement of native-voices, heightened accountability to the public, and an overall shift from collections-based missions to visitor-based missions.

Ivory provides an opportunity to examine the effect of scarcity on public perceptions of morality toward collecting and display in museums. Debates surrounding ivory extend to both the animals that produce it as well as the people producing ivory artifacts from Africa and the Arctic, historically deemed "primitive" art because artifacts can stand as proxies for the cultures from which they come. Today, as museum professionals work to keep museums relevant, they are becoming more aware that their institution's policies and exhibitions may run counter to the moral standards of the multicultural public, many of whom were once historically the subject of colonial subjugation. Moreover, in conjunction with Appadurai's discussion of the future as cultural fact (forthcoming), museums provide a unique stage wherein visitors are confronted with the past, yet simultaneously given the opportunity to apply their own cultural interpretation and meaning to ivory. Based upon theories of political ecology, which recognize that even nature is socially constructed, ivory, as a scarce resource, clearly generates feelings of a potentially extinct future if people to not behave accordingly in the present.

The shift in ivory as a symbol is embedded in wildlife conservation efforts and cultural responses to extinction, both biological and cultural. Museum visitors seek stories and interpretations that they can relate to, and this necessarily incorporates modern perceptions of ivory's meaning and value as a symbolically and ethically loaded form of material culture. Likewise, museum professionals now approach collections with holistic ethical standards in collecting and deaccessioning that account for changes in legal and ethical practices in museums (in this way museums are under the legal regulation of the State as well as ethical self-regulation through professional standards).

Limited display techniques and interpretive strategies demonstrate how museums provide some ethical interpretations of ivory in their exhibits today, though not nearly as much as visitors would like to see. Museums like the MPM may benefit from amending their approach to ivory interpretation in order to meet the visitors' desires to participate in narrative construction. It is only through didactic (labels, exhibits) *and* narrative (docent tours, programming) techniques that museums will see changes in practice that reflect the paradigm shift, which has long been the subject of critical museum literature. As many animal populations continue to decline and visitors demand greater participation in museum narratives, future changes in museum practice will serves as a proxy for elucidating changes in museum authority, efficacy in promoting social dialogue, and enacting culture change.

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Appendix A:

Ivory at the MPM: A Visitor Survey

"Hi, my name is Arianna Murphy, and I'm a graduate student from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I'm doing a brief 5-minute survey of museum visitors asking about ivory in the museum, and I'd like to ask you a few questions. Okay?"

If yes: "Great! I will be using this data from the survey for my Master's thesis.

If no: "That's no problem. Have a great day at the museum!" ☺

Demographic info:

Male _____ Female _____ Children in group _____(#)

Are you a:

Museum Member _____ First-time visitor _____ First-time visiting the 3rd floor _____

Primary reason(s) for museum visit: *(check all that apply)*

_____ Educational

_____ Self-enrichment; Feel Good

_____ See (a) particular exhibit(s):

_____

_____ Meet/See new people

_____ See an IMAX/Planetarium show

_____ Other: _____

Q1) Which exhibits here at the museum do you enjoy the most: *(check one)*

_____ Exhibits about natural science/animals (e.g. Rainforest)

_____ Exhibits about history and cultures/people (e.g. Tribute to Survival)

Q2) Rank the following three artifacts you would be most interested in seeing in the museum: *(1 most interesting-3 least interesting)* **[see images (1), (2), and (3)]**

_____ A **drum** made of wood and snake skin from the Congo, Africa

_____ A carved ivory **tusk** for a chief from Nigeria, Africa

_____ A wooden **mask** with fur, shells, and beads from the Congo, Africa

Q2a) Why is this artifact most interesting to you?

_____ The material its made from

_____ Its use within the culture

_____ Its visual appearance on display

_____ Other: _____

Q3) If you worked in the museum building exhibits, would you display this side-blown trumpet being used as it was historically, or on display by itself, close up and well lit like an art piece? What about this cribbage board? **[see images (4) and (5)**

_____ _____

Q4) Which label would you use for this wooden staff? *(circle one)* **[see image (6)]**

Label #1 Label #2

Q5) Do you believe that native groups should be allowed to kill elephants (in Africa) and walruses (in Canada and Alaska) in order to use their ivory to make art and sell to museums and serious collectors?

_____ Yes, native groups have special privileges to kill these animals for profit

_____ Yes, but they cannot sell it (it can only be used indigenously)

_____ No, native groups should not be exempt from laws protecting elephants and walruses

_____ African groups can kill elephants to make ivory art, but Alaskan and Canadian Natives cannot kill walruses to make ivory art.

_____ Alaskan and Canadian Natives can kill walruses to make ivory art, but African groups cannot kill elephants to make ivory art

"That's it! Thank you so much for your time. Have a great day at the museum!" ☺

>>>

(1)

Congolese, Luba People
Drum
late 19th-early 20th century
Wood and snake skin
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Gift of Jeremiah H. Fogelson, 2000.9.1
Photo courtesy of the Chazen Museum of Art

"This is a Congolese **DRUM**, made by the Luba People in the late 19th-early 20th century. It is made of wood and snakeskin. It was used during ceremonies and celebrations along with other drums and various instruments."

(2)

Edo, Court of Benin, Nigeria, Oba's Altar Tusk, 1850/1888, Ivory, 150.5 x 195.6 x 12.7 cm (59 1/4 x 77 x 5 in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hokin, 1976.523, The Art Institute of Chicago
Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago.

"This is a Nigerian **TUSK,** made by the Edo people between 1850 and 1888. It is made of a carved whole elephant tusk. Tusks like this decorated alters and thrones of Oba (chiefs) and the carvings tell the story of the ruler's life and good deeds."

(3)

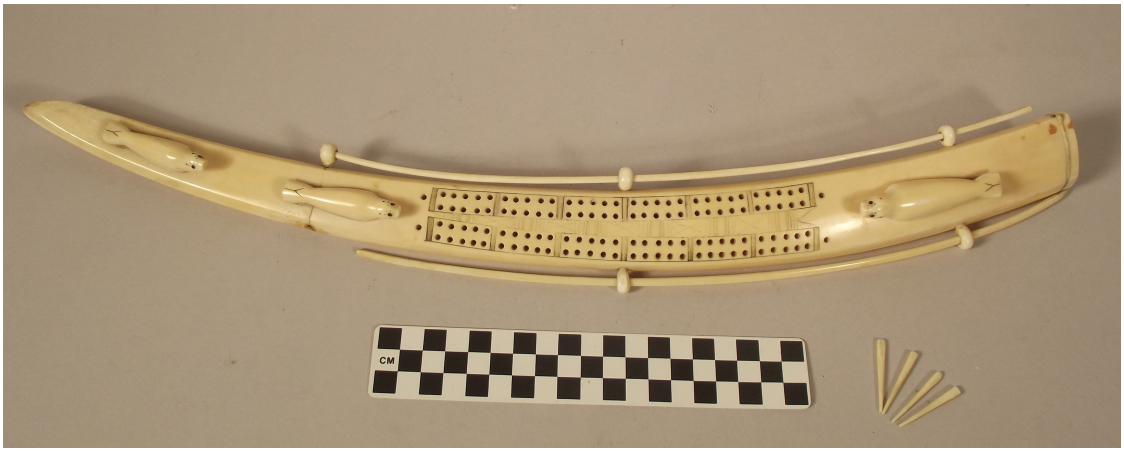
Kuba, Western Kasai region, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mask (Mukenga), Late 19th/mid-20th century, Wood, glass beads, cowrie shells, feathers, raffia, fur, fabric, thread, and bells, 57.5 x 24.1 x 20.3 cm (22 5/8 x 9 1/2 x 8 in.), Laura T. Magnuson Fund, 1982.1504, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago.

"This is a Congolese **MASK**, made by the Kuba People in the late 19th to mid 20th century. It is made of wood, glass beads, cowrie shells, feathers, raffia, fur, fabric, thread, and bells. Mukenga masks like this one are worn at the funerals of important leaders, and the materials used signify wealth and status."

(4)

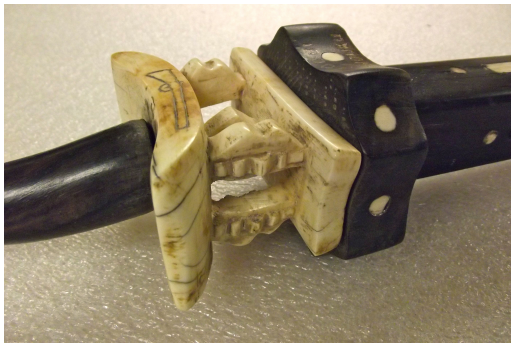
Elephant Ivory Side-blown trumpet

(5)



Walrus Ivory Cribbage Board

(6)



LABEL #1: Even today leaders of the Ashanti people use staffs like this one to show their rank, carrying them to important diplomatic meetings and events. You can see the rifle carved on the ivory stool, and this Western image stands for the power of the person carrying it.

LABEL #2: Leaders of the Ashanti people use staffs like this to show their rank and are made of wood with gold foil overlay, not ivory. This staff was made for the tourist trade in Africa, was shipped to China, and then sold to a Western buyer. In 2011, when he tried to bring the staff into the U.S. it was confiscated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and later donated the museum.

Appendix B:

Ivory Collecting & Display: A Museum Professional Survey

Dear wise and helpful museum professionals,

I am a graduate student from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. As part of my thesis, I am conducting research on current trends in collecting and display of ivory in museums. This survey is meant for those whose museums collect and display ivory artifacts, and individuals who work closely with collections such as curators and collections managers.

Please be as candid and descriptive as possible in your responses. Be aware that the format of this survey will not record any personal information about respondents. The survey consists of 30 questions and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your time. Arianna Murphy (freema46@uwm.edu)

Q1) What is your museum job title?

- Registrar
- Collections Manager
- Curator
- Other _____

Q2) How long have you worked in this position?

- less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years

- 10-20 years
- more than 20 years

Q3) How long have you worked in the museum field?

- less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- more than 20 years

Q4) What is the location of your museum?

City, State of Museum: _____

Country (if outside of the U.S.): _____

Q5) Select the type of museum in which you work:

- Art museum
- History museum
- Anthropology museum
- Natural History museum
- Science/Discovery Museum
- Zoo/Botanical Garden
- Other _____

Q6) Today, does your museum passively collect ivory, including composite artifacts (e.g. donations)?

- Yes
- No

Q7) Today, does your museum actively collect ivory, including composite artifacts (e.g. purchases, exchanges)?

- Yes
- No

Q8) When was the majority of your museum's ivory collected?

- pre-1900
- 1900-1950s
- 1960s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990-present

Q9) How did these objects come into the museum? (check all that apply)

Please provide the approximate percentage of the collection to the right if the box is selected.

- Donation _____
- Field Collection _____
- Purchase _____
- Exchange _____
- Other _____

Q10) From what geographic region does your museum's ivory collection come?

(rank in order; 1 being the region most collected, and 5 being the region least collected)

- Africa

- North America
- Asia
- Oceania
- Europe

Q11) What is the approximate number of ivory objects/artifacts in the museum's collection?

- <100 artifacts
- 100-500 artifacts
- 500-1000 artifacts
- >1000 artifacts

Q12) Does your museum currently exhibit ivory artifacts?

- Yes
- No

Q13) What continent's ivory artifacts are most displayed?

(rank in order; 1 being most exhibited, and 5 being least exhibited)

- ***Then, please list the cultures or ethic groups in the boxes provided to the right***

- Africa _____
- North America _____
- Asia _____
- Oceania _____
- Europe _____

Q14) Are exhibits containing ivory artifacts permanent or temporary exhibits?

(check all that apply)

- Permanent Exhibits
- Temporary Exhibits (e.g. on loan, traveling exhibit, in-house temporary exhibit)
- Other _____

Q15) Has the museum removed ivory artifacts from exhibits?

- Yes
- No

Q16) Why is the ivory no longer on exhibit?

_____

Q17) Do you believe that exhibiting ivory in museums and catalogs supports a market for ivory artifacts?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q18) In your opinion, should museums collect and display worked ivory? (e.g. carved)

_____

Q19) In your opinion, should museums collect and display raw ivory (e.g. taxidermy)

_____

Q20) In your opinion, should museums collect and display unprovenienced ivory?

_____

Q21) Does your museum address (in labels, display techniques, docent tours, etc.) any legal or ethical issues surrounding ivory in its exhibits?

_____

Q22) What are the most common display techniques used when exhibiting ivory in your museum? ***(rank in order; 1 being the most commonly used technique, and 5 being the least commonly used technique)***

- Aesthetic Display: object displayed as a singular item, to enhance its visual appeal; label discusses its appearance
- Factual/Typological Display: object displayed with several of the same item (e.g. 3 ivory bracelets); label is factual
- Ethnographic Display: object displayed with other artifacts from the same culture; label is factual or ethnographic
- Conceptual Display: object displayed in order to support a story or concept; labeling follows a story or concept
- Open Storage Display: object is displayed with many others, both ivory and non-ivory material; little or no labeling

Q23) Does your museum have any published material discussing and/or with photographs of ivory artifacts? ***(check all that apply)***

- Title and year of publication _____
- Traveling exhibit _____
- No, the museum has not published about ivory in its collection

Q24) Does your museum have a Collections Policy; if yes, what date was this policy developed or revised?

- Yes _____
- No

Q25) Are there any legal or ethical stipulations in the policy for incoming donations or purchases containing ivory material?

Q26) In your opinion, does the museum adhere to the Collections Policy, specifically in regards to ivory material?

Q27) Does your museum have a Deaccession Policy; if yes, what date was this policy developed or revised?

- Yes _____
- No

Q28) Does the Deaccession Policy (re)evaluate collecting practices based on legal and ethical changes in general, or ivory in particular?

Q29) Has your museum deaccessioned ivory from its collection?

- Yes
- No

Q30) Why were ivory artifacts chosen for deaccession, and what happened to these items?

Q31) Has your museum considered deaccessioning ivory from its collections, but decided to keep it?

- Yes, the museum decided to keep the material
- No, material under consideration has always been removed from the collection
- No, ivory artifacts have not been considered for deaccession

Q31) Why did the museum decide to keep the ivory?

_____

Q32) Why has the museum not considered ivory for deaccession?

_____

Please add any additional comments here:

_____

Please provide your email address If you are willing to offer clarification to any of your survey responses. (OPTIONAL) _____