

TRACES CCP4 Spring Workshop, ECA (Main Boardroom),

Discussion of ethics and stakeholder engagement, Wednesday 12th of April, 2017

9.00 – 10.00 Welcome and overview/summary of the plans for the “Dead Images” exhibition emerging from discussion of the previous few days.

10.00 – 10.15 Break

10.00 – 12.30 Discussion of the ethical issues raised by, and related to, the “Dead Images” exhibition and the work related to creating that exhibition.

Questions to be addressed may include: **a)** In what sense is this an ethical project (in other words what is the good of this project and how are we trying to achieve this good)? **b)** In what ways does this project intersect with and contribute to contemporary debates concerning what best to do with historic collections of human remains? **c)** To what extent is (or should) this project advocate and facilitate the work of repatriation and reburial? **d)** In working with human remains and displaying images (particularly photographic images) of human remains, do we risk reproducing the very forms of institutional and historic violence that we may be seeking to critique and how do we mitigate or manage that risk? **e)** What forms of ethical reflection and engagement are we hoping to engender into those attending the exhibition and how is this exhibition (and associated educational programme) designed to invite this reflection and engagement? **f)** To what degree and in what way do we wish to implicate (or interpolate) those attending the exhibition (and associated education programme) in the complex and contested history we are addressing? **g)** What is the role of the scholarly study of human remains (anatomy, physical anthropology, forensics, osteoarchaeology etc.) in our arts-based project (and associated educational programme) and can we imagine hybrid forms of arts-science practice? If so, what are the ethical implications of constituting these forms of enquiry? **h)** In what ways do we wish to invite and incorporate a plurality of “voices” in the exhibition (and associated educational programme) whilst maintaining a degree of interpretive openness and ethical unsettlement (in other words without “telling” those attending the exhibition and educational programme what is the “right” thing to do or think, but inviting a process of ethical attunement)?

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch (but discussions may continue informally). Maybe time to get outside for a bit of air?

13.30 – 15.00 Forms of stakeholder engagement and thinking towards the viability of more collaborative or participatory approaches to designing the Dead Images exhibition (and associated educational programme).

15.00 – 15.30 Break (to set up for roundtable discussion)

A roundtable discussion of the ethics of artistic work with historic collections of human remains

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TRACES (transmitting contentious cultural heritage with the arts) is an exploration of the role of the arts in interrogating, bringing to light, and inviting a multi-layered and critical engagement with, the material legacy of difficult and contentious histories. Such an undertaking requires a critical reflection on arts practice and as a form of ethical engagement (see: <http://www.traces.polimi.it/>).

Our particular concern is with collections of human remains deposited in the museums, Universities and other public institutions in Europe. These are now usually (although not invariably) held away from the public gaze, access being reserved for those who are deemed to possess a legitimate interest. The questions which those attending this roundtable will be asked to consider is:

1. What is the role of the arts in facilitating a public engagement with historic collections of human remains and, in particular an engagement with the difficult histories of violence and appropriation that is disclosed in these collections?
2. In engaging with this material, in what ways does artistic practice risk being implicated within, and reproducing, the histories of violence that it is seeking to critique, and how do we mitigate this risk?
3. What ethical considerations should direct and inform the artistic engagement with historic collections of human remains?
4. What should be the role of source communities in these processes of artistic engagement and public awareness?

17:00 – 18:30 Reception in the ECA board room.

19.00 – whenever. Dinner. Checkpoint. Bristo Place. (See: <http://checkpointedinburgh.com/>)