

- Deborah Thomas: [00:00](#) Hello, my name is Deborah Thomas, editor-in-chief of American anthropologist, and this is Anthropological Airwaves.
- Deborah Thomas: [00:16](#) Welcome to this two part special feature on decolonizing museums, which was recorded at the museum ethnographers group Conference April 12th and 13th at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, United Kingdom. In this first episode, "Legacies and Futures", we will hear about the challenges of decolonizing museums from the viewpoint of practitioners. Faye Belsey, assistant curator at the Pitt rivers and Laura Van Broekhoven, director of the Pitt rivers speak from their perspectives about what practitioner-focused decolonization initiatives might look like and about the anxieties, ambivalences, and dissonances of decolonizing work. We will also hear from Rachael Minott, a former research assistant at the Birmingham Museums Trust and curator of the exhibit "The Past Is Now: Birmingham and the British Empire". Minott discusses the power imbalances among and between museum staff and other collaborators and stakeholders.
- News Clip 1: [01:19](#) A museum in New York is facing backlash after a white candidate who is appointed as curator of it's an African art exhibits, even though the woman has a PhD in African African Art History and previously had experience in similar projects, many of questioned why the Brooklyn Museum didn't hire a person of color for the job. The museum has defended its choice saying it is continuing to work on equality issues and will take all concerns into account.
- "Now This": [02:00](#) You may have heard about the recent controversial hiring a white woman as the curator of the African art collection at the Brooklyn Museum. Many pointed to the problems of diversity within the museum, but what you probably haven't heard about is the call for the Brooklyn Museum to form a decolonization commission. Will the museum listened to the communities it claims to serve? Or will it continue business as usual summed up in the banners drop that last week's action: they want the art but not the people.
- Chris Green: [02:37](#) I am Chris Green with Anthropological Airwaves and I'm sitting here with Faye Belsey, the deputy head of collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum. She is the organizer for the Museum Ethnographers Group'ss annual meeting, which we are currently at. I wanted to start by having you introduce the Museum Ethnographers Group.
- Faye Belsey: [02:55](#) Okay. So the Museum Ethnographers Group, was established a rather long time ago, really for people who work in museum

ethnography in the UK, and so curators primarily, I think, initially, but also educators, conservators, anyone who works in a museum that had a collection of ethnographic material and so it was really a subject specialists' network. So the museum ethnographers could meet, talk about issues that, what shared and shared concerns, shared knowledge.

Chris Green: [03:32](#)

So could you talk a little bit about this conference and the history of this conference. How long have they been meeting and what is the theme of this year's conference?

Faye Belsey: [03:41](#)

So the MEG, which is much less of a mouthful than the Museum Ethnographers Group, so I use the acronym for now, but to my knowledge that from the very early establishment that has been an annual meeting which has formed this kind of conference each year. The theme of the conference varies on whatever the host -- it's hosted by different museums in the UK, whatever the host museum might suggest as a theme that they think is relevant, pertinent that they can kind of contribute to you. So, um, about a year ago we got a new director at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Laura Van Broekhoven, and she is really keen to look critically at the Pitt Rivers, our practices and try and make some changes to our approach, our outlook, our displays. So we felt like now it's apt to talk about decolonizing. I'm still really reluctant to use this term because I think the term itself is quite problematic and has become somewhat of a buzzword recently. You know, the idea is that you would decolonize, and that's it. Job Done. But it's quite a long process. And I've been to a few conferences recently which have discussed the theme or the idea of more of a moral and ethical plane, plane and theoretical plane. But I'm a museum practitioner so I want to know, what does it mean to decolonize and how do we do that? So we really wanted the conference that would focus on practice and that that's really MEG's ethos is really to share practice, good, bad, and learn from each other.

Chris Green: [05:36](#)

We're sitting here with Laura Van Broekhoven, the director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, and you had a really interesting talk this morning that addressed a lot of the decolonizing issues with the Pitt Rivers Museum. One of the things that I think I'd like to have you start with is, sort of talk to us about types of challenges that you face in this position in decolonizing the museum, just kind of broadly.

LVB: [06:04](#)

Yeah. Well I think there's, there's a, there's a huge amount of challenges, um, and let's say that they come down to several elements once you. So there's different challenges when one is in a position of power as in being the director of a place

compared to when I was formerly two years ago as the head of the curatorial team of three museums and there's different power balances there. And then, or virtually when I came in as a one day week curator into the museum was a very different power balance. Again, m and m being outside of the museum is a different power balance again, so I think that's where we have to be always very conscious and I think it's good when you're conscious of those sorts of structures yourselves, knowing why certain people are so at times desperate for change to happen at times, cannot understand why things go so slowly.

LVB: [07:03](#)

And at times people are sort of, one thing also now being at the top of an institution, seeing how many people, how many different aspects both sideways and upwards you still have to challenge and then also trying to see how do you align the staff that's very diverse in their interests and in their agendas. And I think, I don't know if I can reference the conference, but Rachel Minott spoke about, you know, the past is now, the co-curation and sort of how are those all those agendas kind of fighting each other. We have very similar things happening when we have the hashtag "Decolonizing Museums", a project which was a project that stretched out to 2011 till 2016 in the Netherlands where you could see how some of these decolonization is really for some people is this cognitive dissonance. They've always believed that they were doing their thing.

LVB: [07:59](#)

Now they are the ones who have the authority and they are and I think that sort of is, in project we sat together with forty very critical feminist thinkers, many of them, most of them are people of color as I think they say in the US and for a lot of the curators it was really like being slapped in the face. And we needed it. So there's a kind of work that needs to be done and a willingness to do the work and at times, and I think in the Netherlands, it can be more confrontational, whereas its maybe easier than in the UK where things tend to be more, I don't know, people are kinder here, but at the same time also at times very difficult topics -- people will sort of manage around them, so it's a very different way of addressing things.

LVB: [08:46](#)

So that to me was a learning process, so therefore it's a consistency of -- and I think that's why I referenced the anxious times because it's also an anxious time for yourself where you're kind of grappling with your own whiteness and the fact that there's a lot that you're just, you're just blind to. You're oblivious to it happening and people being subject to it. The fact that a lot of my friends who were very involved in this sort of work really do suffer from our inaptitude... I think, so those are some of the challenges that are sort of usually not addressed in

your early experience once you're through many, many decades of doing this sort of work. And then, I suppose coming into the rivers museum, I think some of the challenges are very different from, from the Netherlands because there is, each museum has to do it on process because they are localized.

LVB: [09:46](#)

And the Pitt Rivers museum is one of these museums that everybody discusses in museum studies or any kind of anthropology, archaeology. It's the place that gets discussed, as a sort of museum of the museum. There's the challenges of great listed buildings. There's challenges or finances. I mean everything here is done on a shoe-string budget compared to the Netherlands where we have a lot of money. I didn't realize it at the time. That's the investment from national investment was really big. And then here in the UK we're actually the University of Oxford actually seen as a very elite, posh, and rich institution and it is in essence, but so that's where you think, okay, so how do I take those budgets, which for the museum is very small and then there's small parts where you really kind of say, okay, how do I find a different donor base?

LVB: [10:43](#)

How do I find institutions and foundations that are willing to work with us? How do I find the places where we can get the funding to do the work that we need to? And I think that we're not there yet, but we are working on it and I think, I've kind of, so I came in, you're always coming for, a kind of change and then I had to step back and say, okay, these aren't the same challenges as in the Netherlands and it's, and there's not the same agenda as here, and there's not the same problems here. So you first need to kind of really look, observe, and, and the good thing is when you're an anthropologist or ethnographer, you sort of do some of that anyway, listen closely, drill down on things. I think that was part of what my trajectory at least was and at the same time to go look at what are the structures that are going to make it impossible for me to do any change in those need to change first.

LVB: [11:41](#)

I think that our management structure was problematic, in my view. I think there was a lot of vocabulary that was missing, people just didn't really know about. So in Dutch we call it, we have a plate in front of your face, so you're just not seeing it. And so when I have, when I started to have one-to-ones, and I could see that some people were very conscious. I mean the younger generation has been taught in a post-colonial paradigm, and at least is quite well versed in this, but there's others who aren't. Those are usually the people who are in power positions. So it's about finding that balance and at the same time understanding that this kindness and these ways of

kind of getting people to see where you're coming from, not by you telling them this is what you're going to do, but actually by showing that there's, there is that problem, and listening to what they've done and many people here. And that's, I think the lucky part would be more than in the Netherlands. People were already committed to a lot of this sort of work and that's where the Pitt Rivers is this sort of schizophrenic institution almost, where on the one hand on the back-end side, there's a huge amount of really exciting stuff and postcolonial teaching happening in writing and projects that up really kind of very early on, contemporary art is being brought into the museum and then beginning of the nineties, you know, so for, for a British institution that was really early and at the same time saying, but why is it still so that what you're seeing, why is it that what we're seeing on the front-end side of the museum has not... has been changed but not in such a way that it influences the kind of meanings that people find in a museum.

LVB:

[13:29](#)

The other thing that I think, I noticed is that started to notice that in the Netherlands, and I must say I was completely oblivious to it until hashtag Decolonizing Museum. That there were a lot of people, it was really uncomfortable to come into the Pitt Rivers museum. And those were not the people who have benefited from empire, but it was the people who haven't benefited from it, who were at the receiving end of the violence in the perpetuation of colonial systems of systemic racism and systemic classism, which is very present in the UK. So I think that's where we needed to somehow make sure that staff could hear that. And how do you enable people to hear about these things that are really difficult to hear. I think that was one of the big challenges.

Chris Green:

[14:21](#)

My next question, you mentioned the anxieties that I think are central to the way that you're trying to frame things and also a motivation for why we're even doing decolonized work in the first place. I think there's another flip-side of that though, where even with the projects that we've seen with the projects that have been discussed within this conference, you can see that there's a certain level of anxiety in terms of evaluating the projects themselves. I'm curious what your thoughts are on how it is that we can even evaluate these decolonized projects, these decolonized exhibits or the decolonization broadly in a museum.

LVB:

[15:01](#)

That's very good question. I think that this sort of understanding of what we're, what the effect is of what we're doing is extremely important. That's why when we, because it was a bit of hesitance when we said we're going to install contemporary

art on the floor balcony, which is our learning balcony, which was quite critical contemporary art, Cushing Thompson's work, "The Museum of Others". And so what we decided is to say this has become sort of a way of, I think working, that works quite well in the UK saying we're going to trial it. You're going to see does it work, does it not work? What does it require? So we said we will do some research before audience research before we installed and changed the Installation and then do work after we changed the installation and then kind of see what sort of other interpretations does it need?

LVB:

[15:56](#)

How is it, yes or no, doing what we hoped it would do? And so I think that was sort of a good example of where we were doing kind of some research on, okay, decolonizing it. And this is sort of the most visible decolonization that we've done so far. Apart from art, contemporary art installations that were all kind of temporary. So, and what came out, we had a quite extensive report done, a lot came out, is that actually there was a huge change, both in people understanding what we were trying to do, but also people stay longer with the exhibit. At the same time, our commercial kind of marketing and film hire of the museum therefore changes too, because when endeavor, which is the sequel to Morrissey Spectrum worse, I didn't know if you guys get that reference. So there's Louis [indistinct], Endeavor which was filmed in the museum, but obviously they want to place themselves in the fifties. So oh, we'll have to film around! That new kind of intervention, which kind of proved it does make a change. And I think that's where for a museum like ours, that is sort of limited in its capabilities in many ways -- on the one hand, we don't have a big special exhibition space. We need to work with our, what is drawing in the audiences, is our permanent galleries, which is different from any other museum, most museums drawing and they market the special exhibitions and that's what drives their audiences. We have nearly half a million visitors which is really a lot for an ethnographic museum. And they come for the permanent displays mainly, plus our programming. So I suppose that's sort of where, um, one example is the Cushing Thompson, the other one is very want to have more information about what is it that people are finding in our permanent space and displays right now from this place right now.

LVB:

[18:12](#)

I think it's very multiple. So I've only done a very kind of superficial -- and that's what I showed in the, in the presentation -- I'm kind of, I constantly look at TripAdvisor and kind of the comments online and the comments in our visitor books. And those are the ones where I get to kind of, you know, the percentages are easy to get from TripAdvisor because they

just tell you how many people are saying shrunken heads or totem poles or Indiana Jones or treasure troves, etc. But it would be really interesting to have much more data. And um, knowing how neuroscience is really kind of bringing more and more information to us on how people construct their ideas around things, but also how we can disrupt those ideas and how visual literacies are kind of formed by yes or no continuing similar sorts of stereotypes.

LVB: [19:16](#) I think there's, there's a huge possibility there. One of the things that we are going to be experimenting with is augmented reality. We're also going to be experimenting with sound and with our projections just to sort of on the one hand disruptive space, but also so it's been proven, for example, in literacy that this might be a bit too much, but that the brain, depending on what it reads, will build more empathy. The same goes for music, listening to music. And so if you, by reading a lot of historical literature, it actually, there is some empathy being built by reading historical fiction. There's a huge amount of empathy being built. so what if we wouldn't be, you know, that's why the diversifying the curriculum is so important that it's not just equity for whiteness, but it's actually a broader empathy that is being built in our brains.

LVB: [20:15](#) And so what if we could do the same to the multiple perspectives on objects, what if we could make those readable for many different perspectives? Would that also influence the brain? And I'd be very interested to do it! As part of a university, we can actually go and reach out and see if some of the neuro-scientists would want to work with us on those sorts of examples. And so I understand that augmented realities are, and also the indie gaming industry are also one of those that, some of the things that they're questioning. So we're going to be hopefully inviting a proposal with some of our IT people and neurologists to do some research.

Chris Green: [20:55](#) That's fascinating. Lastly, I was interested in your talk, you situated the Pitt Rivers Museum within this monmal, movement?

LVB: [21:11](#) So in Germany, in German we have monmals and denkmals and monmals are sort of almost monuments of shame, warnings for the holocaust. For example, is a monmal in Berlin, and you have denkmals which are really kind of commemorating and aggrandizing the moments that were something that you can be proud of. And so there's a difference between those two concepts.

- Chris Green: [21:35](#) Could you characterize the Pitt Rivers in this monmal movement?
- LVB: [21:39](#) So why I started thinking about this is because a journalist asked me this question, from the student paper actually, and so she wrote to me and said the Pitt Rivers Museum, could it be a monmal? And so I just started pondering it over the last couple of weeks and thinking, well, I don't think it's a monmal because it's also much more, so it's a monmal and a denkmal, all in one. And I think that's where we're not doing enough effort to disentangle the parts that are really of about celebrating human creativity with many ways of being the many many ways of knowing, of coping of people because those are all in those galleries too.
- LVB: [22:18](#) And I think that's where people really get excited about the Pitt Rivers and the fact that we're not regionally, you know, bounding, but actually typologically kind of saying there's lots of ways to solve problems, many different problems. And that's great because that's humanity. It's, you know, it's very kind of resourceful way of being, but there's so many issues, interwoven in this place that are not being said, you know, this is problematic. So, and that's when I was thinking, okay, so all the Benin Bronzes I think is one of the cases. I don't know how much you guys know about the Benin Bronzes -- in 1897 there was a party of British officials who wanted to go to talk to the Oba. There was lots of conflicts lying underneath. And the British were waiting for a moment to sort of go and this kind of solved the situation for them.
- LVB: [23:09](#) And, they were told multiple times not to go because there was an important ceremony happening. They went anyway, and they were killed, they have been told, so in that sense it wasn't - - but the British, you know, then organized a punitive campaign, went, and ransacked to hell and looted the whole kingdom, killed lots of women and children, and just brought all of the loot to the British Museum who then sold it to other European museums to pay for a punitive campaign so it doesn't get much worse than that. So, but all of that is right now on display as the "Art from the Royal Court of Benin." And I think the Black Panther movie references that, in the way that they've kind of portrayed, um, the sort of spoilages of empire being in museums, and not being talked about as what [indistinct].
- LVB: [24:05](#) I think that's where, there's, there's lots of conversation, I didn't have the time to go into that, but there's, there's conversations going on in Europe called the Benin dialogue, for many years already. But they're now coming to a moment. Thanks to

Macron, it was the French president kind of saying, we really are going to make a lot of work and I want to see big changes in the next five years -- and that's how France works. There's a kind of thick coloration of the president and then things happen. And so, these conversations are coming to a moment where it last march in Cambridge we had the Benin dialogue where people from, the Prince, Akenzua from the royal court was there, people from the ministry were there and lots of directors and curators from museums who have big Benin collections were there, and we kind of said we need to change this.

- LVB: [24:56](#) And we came up with a sort of intermediate possible solution. So next October we're having another meeting in Leiden, where hopefully kind of the coalition of the willing, as the Dutch are calling it, are sort of saying, okay, let's really move forward and make a change here. The Pitt Rivers is a particular case with the Benin Bronzes, because we have them on loan from a trust. So we would need to go into conversations with the trust. But whatever happens, I suppose we need to say: "maybe that case should be empty," or only one or two objects and then that could become a monmal, where you actually talk about empire and how you know, this exploration went hand in hand with exploitation, where millions of people are enslaved and killed, where just all those things which are starting to very tiny little bits becoming part of the British curriculum, also for schools It was the same in the Netherlands. There's hardly a lot being said about empire and the problems of colonialism.
- AntiColumbus Day: [26:09](#) Shot down, stuffed and hauled to the museum for display. Teese species made their way here through the circuits of empire.
- AntiColumbus Day: [26:18](#) These people were being exhibited as examples of a long extinct primitive phase of humanity are actually living on the land today. Why are they stranded in prehistory?
- Chris Green: [26:52](#) I'm here with Rachael Minott, a freelance researcher, curator and artist here at the Museum Ethnographers Group. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about your talk -- you had a really interesting talk about the exhibition done at the Birmingham Art Museum, a kind of new approach on looking at colonial issues in contemporary settings, which I found really, really interesting. One of the things that we wanted to chat with you about is your work with activists and other people who are interested in really pushing some sort of a political or social agenda for a group of people, which has oftentimes been very difficult for academics and museum folks just broadly. So could

you talk a little bit about your experience with that and how it's worked?

Rachael Minott: [27:35](#)

Yeah. So the exhibition, "The Past Is Now: Birmingham and the British Empire," as you say, focuses on the idea of the contemporary relevance of the British Empire to people's lived experiences today in a particularly Birmingham context. We worked with six co-curators who were activists but it was done collaboratively. So, the team in general, as I said in my presentation made up of 15 of us, so 15 of us, six of us activists by name and then two freelancers to work with the museum permanently. The thing is when you have an activist agenda, but it's people who have been brought together for project. It wasn't a unified activist agenda, so it was an activist energy more than it was a specific thing that was being pushed. The only unifying idea was this idea that we would de-colonize the process of doing this co-creation.

Rachael Minott: [28:29](#)

I'd say one of the main problems we face is that decolonizing is really nuanced term. It means something quite differently to different people and actually the way that you act out, it's very specific. And at the start of our project, we did not define the version of decolonizing that we were all working towards, and that actually ended up creating problems because for some people it meant centralizing the person of color narrative and having individual stories being told quite richly, but with kind of the British Empire as a background context. Whereas for the museum, and then very specifically looking at our role in perpetuating the empire today and empire legacies and colonial mindsets. So, from that in the museum's perspective, that actually puts the museum at the heart of the story, and as a colonial institution and both very kind of self-reflexive on the legacy we ignore, very different to the other version of decolonizing.

Rachael Minott: [29:33](#)

So with that being the activist impetus and we were working from different perspectives, I think that was something I would advise people to do in the future is to kind of say: this is what we're coming together, these are our terms of engagement, these are the definitions of the words that we're going to use. So in that last presentation I was also talking about nationalism and having to define that, because that's not the thing that's been proving to me to be quite interesting because for some people nationalism means making things available to everybody and for others it means showing the best of the nation. And those are very different versions of nationalism and national institutions.

Chris Green: [30:13](#) Absolutely. Another really interesting aspect that came up after your talk was the role of people of color in museum roles. Kind of broadly, whether it's kind of in a collaborative capacity or I think especially in actually getting people into positions where they can have some sort of agency or say within the institution, rather than having the institution have to come to them. So could you talk a little bit more about this question of how to incorporate more people of color into the museum profession?

Rachael Minott: [30:47](#) Yeah, so generally I have the feeling that if you are going to try and approach a person of color to be within your institution that you never create a scenario where they the only person of color in that institution. So if you find that you haven't absolutely on diverse group of people, they all have the same lived experience, and you want to diversify that, in whichever way that would mean to you, I would recommend at least three posts. One at the ground level because at the ground level is where a lot of the dirty specific work goes on that actually creates all the change -- the person who does the research, goes into the objects, looks at the archives -- the thing that takes a lot of time but are super important, so that's the person who is in a junior position. You need someone who can manage them or not necessarily manage them directly, but being in a managerial position above them so that if they are facing institutional racism, they don't have to complain to a white person about that -- they can find someone that they feel safer to do so with. And then someone in the senior position, above, to support that person as well and someone who's at all the meetings, to have the strategic change and decisions and create a strategic voice.

Rachael Minott: [31:52](#) I think if you don't have that particular scenario, you create an environment that seems extremely precarious to enter into, if you're asking someone who's going to be marginalized to effect institutional change because it's affecting institutional change, you have to be disruptive and you have to be. You won't play by the rules because they're not the rules that you want to keep perpetuating. And to do that kind of work, you need to feel safe. You need to feel security in your position. Otherwise, you're asking people to put themselves in situations that nobody really puts themselves into and so it is never appealing. So that's my general feelings.

Chris Green: [32:29](#) Yeah, and we had this recent controversy with the Brooklyn Museum with hiring two positions, I think it was two positions, hiring white curators to curate African art, which I think in the context of the Black Panther movie, and it's a lot of the Black Lives Matter movement and a lot of the social movements that

are going on now, a lot of people are keyed into this in a way that they really haven't been, I think at most other times in history. Can you speak a little bit to what are your thoughts are on that particular controversy?

Faye Belsey:

[33:02](#)

Yeah. So, um, I would say that the thing that Black Panther has done particularly is that it's given a shorthand to reference that problem in a way that is globally known, but it's something that people have been aware of for a very long time, about the fact that museums don't represent people of color in a way that makes them feel good, right? You don't go to a place to see yourself othered, and it's not until you yourself experienced a feeling of being othered that you know, that that's the level of discomfort that is there. And the Brooklyn Museum controversy, it's within a series of events occurring at the moment in potentially in the legacy of Black Panther because of its global impact because it's able to reach more audiences in which museums aren't getting away with any of this anymore.

Rachael Minott:

[33:51](#)

Like following the Brooklyn Museum, it was the VNA loaning the Ethiopian objects that they had stolen back to Ethiopia for longterm loan and their celebration of this aspect, when actually it was something to be highly critiqued. And this, this thing has happened awhile ago and has happened for a long time, and actually it probably about two years ago, this has been extremely celebrated because the longterm loan gets away from the British Museum's general line that they can't think about repatriation because they need an active government to repatriate objects. So what is a big move for museums because they're moving really slowly, social media, pop culture has actually made a very impatient voice louder, but that voice is impatient because this conversation has been going on for years as seen in the presentation to make conference has been talking about this since the seventies.

Rachael Minott:

[34:49](#)

Um, and that's before a lot of us have been alive and now we're working in institutions in dealing with problems that predate us, it is kind of ridiculous. I was at a conference, at the British Museum, and one of the women was presenting -- she was a Haitian and American artists, Gina Ulysses, maybe. And she was basically saying that she was patient. She was like, I'm ready, I'm patient. She said, the people younger than me aren't patient. You're going to be now coming against those people who are no longer willing to wait for it. Slow change at museums make. So I think that's what's kind of catching up to this discipline now is that impatience with a platform and now with a language that allows the conversation to be had in a shorthand way to, to the sophisticated meat of the issue without having to explain like,

oh, you know, museums are often not really representing cultures properly, like, "Black Panther movie, watch the scene!" and then let's get back to me with the conversation at a different level.

Chris Green: [35:48](#) So you see this as a legitimate sea-change then, a generational sea-change.

Rachael Minott: [35:54](#) Yeah, I think so. I think that, museums are at a make-or-break point. I think everybody's got good intentions. I don't really think that I've met a museum person that I don't think has good intentions. It's an ideological profession. People go into it because they love it. They will work for free. They believe fundamentally in sharing history and they're passionate about representation and it's generally like the nicest environment you will ever come to, but it's also full of privilege and on acknowledge privilege. Um, and actually whenever I have these conversations with people who haven't really had these conversations before, it's not really about resistance to the conversation I'm having. It's kind of like watching them have an awakening or an "awakening", as I like to call it. And that's quite interesting because it's, there's a lot of reception people want to do it, but they don't feel equipped to take it on.

Rachael Minott: [36:50](#) And it does lead to undue pressure on members of staff who are people of color, because it is seen as, they're equipped to do it because they have life experience that tells them what the story is, and an internal sense of authenticity, about whether or not you're approaching a conversation or a topic with the right level of sensitivity. If you don't know the topic or the right level of knowledge, if you do know the topic, but those people, those people, people of color are unsupported, and in really, really precarious positions in workforce. So while they might be the most equipped, they're also the least equipped.

Chris Green: [37:29](#) That's a really important message. Thank you so much for joining us. This is really fantastic and yeah, best of luck in the future. Thank you very much.

Deborah Thomas: [37:49](#) Thank you for listening to this first of a two part special feature on Decolonizing Museums and I hope you'll tune-in to our next episode, which will focus on the stories and objects that are at the core of decolonizing initiatives.