Repairing Canadian art museum collections with equity, diversity and inclusion

Nada Guzin Lukic

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ABSTRACT:

In Canada, museums play an important role in recognizing cultural pluralism through the implementation of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles. How does the recent development and impact of EDI on museum approaches contribute to redressing inequality and exclusion? Issues of identity and social representation challenge collection development policies, acquisition, documentation, discourse, and exhibition practices. The study reveals shifts and ruptures in museum perspectives on diversity, as well as new practices related to collections. This article highlights policies over the past decade and museum practices of EDI in the context of crisis and the reparative turn.

In Canada, i musei svolgono un ruolo importante nel riconoscere il pluralismo culturale attraverso l'applicazione dei principi di equità, diversità e inclusione (EDI). In che modo lo sviluppo recente e l'impatto degli EDI sugli approcci museali contribuiscono a correggere le disuguaglianze e l'esclusione? Le questioni legate all'identità e alla rappresentazione sociale mettono in discussione le politiche di sviluppo delle collezioni, l'acquisizione, la documentazione, il discorso e le pratiche espositive. Lo studio rivela cambiamenti e rotture nelle prospettive museali sulla diversità, oltre a nuove pratiche legate alle collezioni. Questo articolo mette in evidenza le politiche adottate nell'ultimo decennio e le pratiche museali degli EDI nel contesto della crisi e della svolta riparativa.

Nada Guzin Lukic

Nada Guzin Lukic is a professor of museology at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. She is interested in the museology of reconciliation, museums in times of crisis and their potential for social inclusion and intercultural mediation. Her research focuses on the social role of the museum, issues of identity and diversity and the ethical aspects of the museum. She has published on the history of national and immigration museums, the exhibition narratives and the transnational circulation of ideas in museology. Her current work focuses on the engaged collection and postmigration.

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Museums are called upon to use their resources and collections to repair the injustices of the past and the inequalities of the present. The inclusion of those forgotten by museums, the repairing of hurtful terms, and the adoption of new collection practices to remedy contemporary exclusions and injustices are fundamental aspects of the museum's commitment. There have been a number of developments in the promotion of diversity and equity in Canadian museums, the most recent coinciding with the health crisis and a heightened awareness of the social and environmental issues arising from it. The evolution of museums is currently marked, on the one hand, by challenges related to diversity and, on the other, by those related to the environment. In Canada, these challenges are accentuated by growing public and museum awareness of justice and inequality following the various social issues: Black Lives Matter[1] (2013 and 2020) and Me Too (2017) movements, and by the discovery of unidentified graves at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia in 2021 and the COVID-19 health crisis (2020 and 2022).

The relationship between the crisis and the museums' engagement has been explored by several authors,[2] the new social role of reparation in the face of violence[3] and the resilience of museums in the face of crisis[4] are among the most recent studies. The reparative turn in museology refers to a set of activities and approaches that illustrate the aspiration to repair and restore through the museum.

> *"The reparative turn as we understand it here loosely gathers together a series of interlocking themes and questions in current museological theory and practice, including restorative justice, healing and wellbeing, restitution and repatriation, decolonization in its many forms, and the demand for more caring institutions."*[5]

In Canada, the museum plays an essential role in the symbolic recognition and representation of cultural pluralism. Diversity policies have evolved significantly since the adoption of multiculturalism[6] in 1972 and through the 1990s, 2000s, and 2020s. The principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in museums are consistent with values such as accessibility, justice, decolonization, and eco-responsibility. This leads to transformation within collections and the emergence of a new vocabulary manifested in the way objects are approached, acquired, and described. This raises the following question: how do the EDI approaches and practices adopted by Canadian museums reflect the new social ambitions of these cultural institutions? How do these practices fit in with the museums' reparative turn?

The social role of the museum are reaffirmed, as evidenced by the recent definition adopted by ICOM in 2022, which incorporates the notion of inclusion, diversity and sustainability[7] and, consequently, that of repair. If we follow this logic, the idea of the repairing museum would stem from a global point of view

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of a state of the world in crisis that requires commitment and concrete action. This situation contributes in part to the acceptance of the idea that the museum can play a role in repairing society. Although this notion is not new—claims for a museum committed to the development of society date back to the 1970s—it now seems to enjoy a broader consensus.

From this perspective, this study examines the impact of the EDI principles, which aim to compensate for inequalities of an ideological, physical, or cultural nature. Social representativeness, according to EDI criteria, challenges collection development policies as well as acquisition and documentation methods. To remedy the lack of minority representation in their collections, museums engage in societal acquisitions. The new terminology associated with EDI is influencing museum discourse as well as reparative description within collections.[8] The analysis of policies allows us to understand the orientations and values of museums, as well as their alignment with cultural and governmental policies. This article highlights EDI museum policies and activities over the past decade for understanding current museum practices and emerging trends of reparative turn.[9]

The first part of this article presents our perspective on the reparative turn in relation to the crisis. One of the engagements of museums is to guarantee accessibility and promote the inclusion of the diversity of the citizens they are there to serve. How do museum EDI policies affect museums, particularly art museums? A brief literature review on this topic, as well as on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (EDI), is followed by an analysis of museum policies between 2018-2024, focusing on acquisition, recognition policies and representation of diversity. Examples of repair strategies for reverses, the underrepresentation of minority groups through social acquisition, and the repair of descriptions, catalogues, or labels illustrate the actual actions museums undertake on EDI issues in Canada.

Museum mobilization in times of crisis

The crisis is described as systemic, simultaneous, permanent, as well as a polycrisis[10] based on its interactions. Janes[11] examines the phenomenon of societal collapse and considers the potential role of museums in reimagining a new society. The crisis calls for action, reflection, and engagement.[12] In this context, the museum appears to be a restorative space, both materially and symbolically. The global polycrisis is prompting a search for solutions, particularly within cultural institutions. According to a report by the Canadian Museums Association, “Recent socio-political, economic, public health, and environmental crises worldwide have exposed systemic shortcomings in government and private-sector efforts to foster a representative, just, and equitable society”.[13] Historically, mobilization is more important in times of crisis. Thus, after the Second World War, the search for solutions led to the introduction of heritage preservation policies, the creation of ICOM in 1946 to support the museum sector, and initiatives aimed not only at restoring destroyed or damaged

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heritage but also at contributing to the creation of a better society. In addition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, was subsequently enriched by the right to education and culture. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* was adopted in 1977. Human rights give rise to constant debate, as well as institutions dedicated to their study and promotion. Since its creation in 2014, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg has generated criticism and controversy, particularly with regard to its location, the representation of Indigenous Peoples[14] and the way it deals with the Holocaust. Since then, it has continued to evolve according to its guiding principles: "be sustainable, relevant and engage". [15] Like many institutions in Canada since the 2020s, the museum created a new position in 2021: Director of Equity and Strategic Initiatives.

Social, cultural, and environmental issues are increasingly interdependent. Sustainable development, as defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report[16], aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is based on the principles of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Social sustainability aims to promote equity, inclusion, and justice in order to contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities. The inclusion of the cultural dimension of sustainable development in 2010 underlines the importance of culture in the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly with regard to education, heritage preservation, and cultural creation and diversity. The most recent ICOM definition, dating from 2022, encompasses identical principles: inclusion, diversity, and sustainability. The Société des musées du Québec (SMQ) advocates the expression *ecological transition*, which implies rethinking our ways of consuming, producing, working, and living together.[17] This new approach, which integrates social and environmental issues, aims at transforming society and has recently manifested itself in museum discourse. Indeed, the new sustainable development policies for the 2022-2024 period integrate dimensions of social and cultural responsibility, social equity, and solidarity, including diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization within several museum institutions, such as the McCord Stewart Museum, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and the Musée national des beaux-arts de Québec (MNBAQ).[18] The MNBAQ, for example, states: "We see this enhancement as cross-cutting and integrated across our various sectors of activity". It remains to be seen how these new policies will be implemented through specific measures aimed at ensuring the representativeness of diversity within collections and exhibitions.

Evolution of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues in Canadian art museums

Diversity policies in Canada were inspired by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the multiculturalism policy implemented in the 1970s. In the 1990s, a number of initiatives were put in place to support marginalized groups. However, EDI policies have gained in importance in recent years, particularly through public sector research

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initiatives. According to the Guide for Best Practices in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Practice and Design, which has spread to universities and museum institutions:

> *"Equity is defined as the removal of systemic barriers (e.g., unconscious bias, discrimination, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, etc.), enabling all individuals to have equitable opportunity to access and benefit from the program; diversity is about the variety of unique dimensions, identities, qualities and characteristics individuals possess along with other identity factors; and inclusion is defined as the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are supported equitably in a culturally safe environment."*[19]

Several pieces of legislation, such as the *Employment Equity Act*,[20] support these policies, which have had an impact on recent hirings of people from diverse and Indigenous communities within museums and on the creation of new EDI positions. These general policies Museums interpret them according to their context, using a varied vocabulary and targeting individuals or groups according to equally heterogeneous criteria are gradually being incorporated into cultural institutions and museum policies.

Studies on EDI in cultural institutions, approached from different angles, examine organizational dynamics[21] as well as their evolution and limitations, especially the "persistent lack of diversity in museums".[22] The critical examination of these practices evokes a sometimes meaningless discourse that is not accompanied by concrete changes[23]. The term tokenism refers to superficial diversity in the absence of systemic change within an institutional culture.[24] The issue of symbolic inclusion of individuals within institutions without real inclusion or recognition, particularly in relation to women and ethnic minorities reinforces exclusion.

The requirement to represent minorities and diversity is based on the principles of social justice, initially founded on the postulates of human and cultural rights. In this context, representation is a form of recognition of marginalized or oppressed groups. According to Nancy Fraser, "collective identity replaces class interests as the locus of political mobilisation, and the fundamental injustice is no longer exploitation but cultural domination".[25] Museums have contributed to cultural domination, particularly in terms of misrepresentation and the invisibilization of certain individuals or groups.

Our research into the vocabulary of EDI in the museum policies of Canadian art museums has revealed a rapid evolution in its use, as well as an expansion into other concepts such as accessibility and indigenisation. The analysis of the collection management policies and strategic plans of a sample of ten Canadian art museums revealed a great diversity in the use of terms and highlighted the inequities that need to

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be corrected. The diversity of terminology revealed the values, priorities, and causes that each museum chooses to defend. In addition to the concepts of EDI that are commonly invoked, accessibility is also widely recognised. Four museums include themes of anti-racism and visible minorities, while only three out of ten museums address gender diversity and related approaches, such as intersectionality[26] and the systemic approach. The representation of diversity appears to be the aim of these policies. However, the notion of diversity is generally not clearly defined. What identity can be recognised? What criteria should be used to make this determination? Which underrepresented groups or individuals should museums prioritise in their initiatives?

Examining the politics of recognition within a single state forms the basis of the critique of multiculturalism and its limits.[27] The notion of complexity, which stems from multidimensional and dynamic diversity, particularly that resulting from migration, clashes with the rigid categories of identity. According to Steven Vertovec,[28] the notion of superdiversity is not limited to a single identity. These plural identities go beyond the classification categories of art museums, particularly when it comes to artists of immigrant origin. The intersectional perspective adopted by some museums in Canada and the United States seeks to transcend and interconnect various dimensions of social identity, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, citizenship, and religion. In its literal sense, this term refers to the intersection of identities and is used in the social sciences. However, the concept developed by Kimberly Crenshaw as part of feminist research in the 1990s establishes a link between the elements that influence the construction of identities and the mechanisms of discrimination and domination faced by minorities. Conceived as a tool for the critical analysis of power dynamics within a society, it is concerned with challenging traditional conceptions of the neutral and universal museum, which tends to obscure the plural narratives relating to objects, their provenance, their use, and the individuals who created them. This term has recently appeared in the discourse of museum associations and in museum policies. In 2023, the Canadian Museum Association (CMA) published a report on workplace diversity in museums.[29] This quantitative study was inspired by a similar study carried out in the United States by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Mellon Foundation, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The report aimed to assess the 'representativeness and inclusion' within the collections and the people who work in them. The survey was conducted from an intersectional perspective: "By transcending frameworks based on race or gender, an intersectional lens enables museums to develop policies that take into account the relative power of the people who work within these heritage sector institutions in all aspects of their identity". It aims to highlight the fluidity and social construction and intersectionality of identity categories such as race, gender, and class, with other dimensions such as "indigenousness, ability, sexuality, gender expression, immigration status and religion. This will enable the sector

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to develop policies that will undermine or even eliminate systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, ableism and heterosexism".[30]

The representation of diversity is a complex challenge for museums, which are obliged to adapt their policies and practices to take account of these underrepresented categories. EDI approaches are transforming museums by encompassing the entire process, from acquisition, description, and documentation in databases to interpretation and exhibition. The transformations involve revising the discourse on objects, modifying the criteria for acquiring works to reflect diversity within art museums, and changing terminology to represent plural identities.

Repairing the discourse on objects and artists

Canadian museums have undertaken the most important change in the way they preserve and interpret the objects and heritage of Indigenous Peoples. This shift in thinking began in the late 1980s in the context of the struggles for Indigenous rights and manifested itself notably in the media coverage of the boycott of the exhibition *Spirit Sings: Artistic Tradition of Canada's First Peoples*, which was presented at the Glenbow Museum by the Lubicon Lake Cree First Nation. Nevertheless, the transformation of museums accelerated significantly after 2015, following the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and Call to Action 67 on museums.[31] The CMA responded to this call by undertaking a national review of museum policies in relation to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007 and ratified by Canada in 2021. The CMA report, published in 2022, makes a number of recommendations. For example, in order to support the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples: "Ensure the proper use of terminology, including names for nations, communities, clans, families, and place names, throughout museum spaces, as well as archives and collections, as discussed in the Repatriation and Collections section. Use appropriate orthography or syllabics".[32]

Museums are currently working to remedy a considerable backlog in the management of Indigenous collections and objects. However, it is clear that the relationship between museums and Indigenous communities has undergone a significant transformation since reconciliation and decolonisation approaches. The Winnipeg Art Gallery was the first to implement the "Artworks Renaming Initiative". The project began in 2019 with the identification of colonial titles or *culturally inappropriate*[33] with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and language keepers who renamed a work. Indigenous self-determination and self-representation and renaming initiatives are now commonplace in Canadian museums, whereas 15 years ago the situation in art museums was fundamentally different.[34] One of the first museum exhibitions to tackle this issue of self-representation is *Steeling the Gaze: Portraits by Aboriginal Artists*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, October 31, 2008 - March 22, 2009. A collaborative project, curated by Steven Loft, a Mohawk curator, and Andrea Kunard, a non-native curator. The exhibition presents

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portraits by twelve First Nation and Métis artists. '... Steeling the Gaze is about using portraiture—a European convention that controls the subject—to explode Aboriginal stereotypes and clichés".[35] That colonial representation has been so radically challenged at the National Gallery of Canada. The self-determination of Indigenous artists was presented notably in the labels. The curators asked the artists how they wanted to be presented.[36] This exhibition is an indicator of the changes to come in this field. In fact, Several important exhibitions at this institution have marked the evolution of Indigenous Art in Canadian museums: the first major exhibition, entitled *Land, Spirit, Power: The First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* in 1992, Sakahàn International Indigenous Art, presented in 2013 followed by Àbadakone in 2019. [37] *Steeling the Gaze*, on the other hand, illustrates the shift on identity discourse, highlighting the importance of self-definition and the need to repair labels. The appropriate use of terms to identify artists and works, as well as a reparative vocabulary and the inclusion of indigenous languages in the exhibition titles (Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art, 2013 and Àbadakone, 2019-20), testify to the ongoing evolution of reparative practices. Today, attention is being placed on identifying the names and origins, as well as revising the titles and descriptions of objects in museum collections and archives. Institutional criticism has emerged from the analysis of colonial discourse and exhibition texts that use outdated, inappropriate, or offensive language. Questions about labels, titles, and descriptions of objects are of interest to many museums particularly in North America, Australia and Europe.

Classification and naming of collection objects

Our study conducted between 2023-24 focused on the influence of EDI policies on acquisition and documentation processes within art museums. The analysis covers the ten-year period of collection management policies (2018-2024), strategic plans and annual reports, as well as searches of online collection databases. "A collection management policy serves as a guide and reference for museum staff and is, in a way, the commitment the museum makes to the citizens and bodies that provide funding for the heritage for which the institution is responsible".[38] The majority of the policies date from 2017 or 2018 and need to be renewed. Policy renewal is linked to government funding. In 2022–23, Heritage Canada conducted an extensive consultation on the renewal of the national museum policy. The results of this consultation confirm the concerns reflected in recent museum policy and documentation analysed.

> *"Since the 1990 policy there have been important societal shifts, including the need to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, addressing issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, and the ongoing digital transformation of the heritage sector. Several policy considerations have emerged from the consultations, over 3,000*

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> *participants across Canada which, through the following key areas, can help inform a new national museum policy. Sustainability, Preservation, access and collections management, Reconciliation, Equity, diversity and inclusion."*[39]

The results of this consultation corroborate the concerns that had previously been articulated by the museums in question. Sustainability, collections preservation and management, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and EDI were among the issues raised. Museums are also conducting research within their collections to better address these issues, sometimes under pressure from funders and citizens' groups. In recent years, Canadian art museums have been reviewing their collections in light of representation and inclusion.

Bridging the diversity representation gaps: acquisition policies

Inclusion practices have been diversified and refined around participatory approaches, particularly in acquisitions whose committees include people from minority backgrounds, as is the case in Canada and Australia. The question of how to represent diversity raises issues for ethnological museums first and foremost: the postcolonial critique of their collections and the documentation, classification, and description of cultural objects. Ethnological collections bear witness to diverse cultures, encompassing issues of identity, otherness, and cultural plurality. On the other hand, art museums that acquire works identified by their creator have recently begun to address the issue of diversity and inclusion within their collections. Underrepresented artists are still largely invisible in collection databases, despite increasing efforts by museums to acquire their works.

The institutional critique formulated by artists also raises questions about social inequalities and identity-related issues. In 2018, Stanly Février highlighted ethnocultural inequalities within the collection of national museums, notably the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal (MAC) as part of his Master's degree[40] and installation entitled *Invisible community*, Artexte, January 2018. The analysis of the MAC's collection highlighted the presence of a single work by an Afro-Quebec artist, illustrating the prevailing inequalities. Since then, the issue of the invisibilization of culturally diverse artists has been pursued in other works, notably at the Musée d'art actuel/Département des invisibles (MAADI) from June 15 to August 28, 2022, presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Février acquires works from artists of diverse origins to exhibit in his museum. He sees his approach as a tool for social change. The *MAC-Invisible*[41] takes the form of an online museum or collection, showcasing artists from diverse backgrounds who are often invisible in traditional museum collections.

Acquiring to represent cultural diversity

The integration of artists from underrepresented groups is a recent phenomenon in art museums. The

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collection and acquisition policies developed in 2017-18 incorporate the postulates of EDI in a very limited way. In contrast, these principles are clearly present in more recent documents, such as strategic plans and annual reports, published after 2020. Curators are implementing a variety of strategies to reach these lesser-known artists, who lie outside the traditional art circuits. As part of acquisitions aimed at remedying the lack of representation of cultural diversity, selection is based on the demographic profile of the population, taking into account quantitative criteria such as the size of the most represented community or that of a visible minority, as demonstrated by practices at the MAC. In 2022, the museum added to its contemporary Quebec art collection Stanley Février's 2018 work *An Invisible Minority*. At the time of the pandemic in 2020, this museum decided to dedicate its entire acquisition budget to acquiring works by artists who are active and established in Quebec, wishing to support the artistic ecosystem affected by the crisis. Marie-Ève Beaupré, curator of the MAC, explains the institution's intentions: "The face of the collection had to better represent the cultural diversity of practitioners in Quebec. What is obvious in 2021 was already deeply felt in 2017. It wasn't just good intentions; it had to be put on paper, in the form of a policy".[42]

The *MAC Répertoire* database launched in 2022 features the category: nationality/nationalities (plural), which allows multiple nationalities to be added to identify artists from immigrant backgrounds in particular. In addition, the 2022 acquisition summary table, an internal document, includes several other criteria, such as the distribution of artists according to gender, cultural origin, year of birth, and regional distribution. This example demonstrates the kind of transformations in collection practices brought about by the integration of EDI principles.

Other museums, such as the National Gallery of Canada, have integrated EDI concerns in recent years. Acquisition policies (2018) were adopted before the pandemic period of the 2020s, during which the Gallery developed *Transforming Together. A Guide to the National Gallery of Canada's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan*[43], in which it presents the values upheld by the institution and a statement concerning the principle of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (JEDI & A) without however providing a precise definition or detailing the methods of implementation. In point 3. 5 of the Gallery's Acquisitions Policy (2018), it is stated that, with regard to contemporary Canadian art, post 1985, "A great strength and an organizational priority, acquisitions of new Canadian art should encompass the finest contemporary work in all media by major Canadian artists active today" [44] and that " Diversity in every aspect of the term remains a significant priority in the development of the national collection". And in the same section on international contemporary art, it is stated that the Gallery "We will also make a special effort to acquire works by major artists from the regions of origin for new Canadians, such as Asia, the Middle East and Africa".[45]

In the Annual Report 2022-2023 on JEDI&A initiatives, "A collections

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gap analysis was initiated to examine areas of underrepresentation in the collection of art that we steward. A new acquisitions policy is being developed to ensure a JEDI&A lens is applied when the Gallery adds to its collection".[46]

Acquiring works representative of a community in an art museum is a complex and delicate task. Complex because of the plurality of identities and their intersections, and delicate because of the symbolic and political impact. The majority of the collection management policies analyzed date between 2016 and 2018. According to an analysis of the most recent post-2020 museum annual reports and several curators, these policies no longer reflect the current reality of art museum acquisitions. The representativeness of minorities or underrepresented groups is a current concern. After the pandemic, museums acquired more works by artists from diverse backgrounds. This challenges evaluation criteria and categories, notably the criteria of excellence (the quality of the work), as well as acquisition strategies for marginalized groups. This is a recent process, and there is currently little data available to explain these ongoing transformations. The terminology of EDI is evolving rapidly. However, it is clear that art museums are integrating this responsibility.

Still, it should be noted that overall, a minority of institutions actually apply equitable or inclusive acquisition practices, as indicated by the study based on The Art Newspaper's list of the 100 most frequented art museums in 2022[47]. Twenty-nine of the 100 museums were selected on the basis of the existence of acquisition policies or EDI policies, which have led to the development of specific acquisition protocols designed to strengthen the representation of artists from underrepresented groups within their collections. On the other hand, inclusion practices have been diversified and perfected, notably through participatory approaches, especially in acquisition processes where committees include individuals from minority backgrounds, as is the case in Canada or Australia. For some museums, the artist's identity has become the overriding criterion for remedying gaps in the diversity of their collections. The study of international societal acquisitions identified several examples of this type. For example, the Stedelijk Museum's inclusive acquisition policy, introduced in 2021, aims to redress imbalances within the collection by devoting over 50% of the purchase budget for the period 2021-2024 to artists and creators of color as well as those of non-Western origin.[48]

In reality, there is a contradiction between policies aimed at establishing a national collection that is supposed to reflect the country's identity and the fragmentation of this identity, as manifested in political demands for the inclusion of underrepresented groups, identified by their country of origin. The objective of comprehensively including artists from diverse backgrounds in accordance with the terms of the policies analyzed, appears to be a complex and ambitious task. It is an ongoing, long-term effort within museums.

Respectful terminology: evolving nomenclature

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The inclusion of underrepresented individuals and groups within museums is fraught with difficulties relating to classification and naming. Museum classification systems help institutions to manage their collections in a standardized way. The epistemology of classification is regularly examined, primarily in relation to ethnological collections and the lexicon associated with material culture. According to Hannah Turner, 'classification can be used to discriminate'.[49] The rejection of colonial vocabulary implies a revision of the categories and lexicon used in collections management. To address these issues, classification systems such as the Nomenclature for Museum Cataloguing are being updated.

> *"Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging is a structured and controlled list of object terms used for indexing and cataloging collections of human-made objects in North American history and culture. It is the most extensively used museum classification and controlled vocabulary for historical and ethnological collections. The American Association for State and Local History and the Canadian Heritage Information Network seek to update Nomenclature with respectful terminology."*[50]

On the organization's website, an invitation is issued to contribute to improving the vocabulary. The reparation associated with EDI includes the integration of respectful terminology to ensure a more balanced representation.

Research on the representation of immigration in museums focuses mainly on history, society, or immigration museums that collect immigrant heritage memories and objects.[51] Few studies have examined migration in relation to art collecting. Immigrant artists blend into cultural diversity. On the other hand, art museums are increasingly taking an interest in the theme of migration in order to interpret their collections or include artists from this migratory phenomenon. The search for immigrant artists in art collection databases has revealed gaps in existing documentation. It also raises the question of the social and cultural hybridizations implicit in the migratory condition. Categories not included in the classification are grouped together in the databases under "Other". Doesn't the debate about otherness and difference constitute an aporia, an impasse? For it addresses often paradoxical questions about the nature of the Other and the notion of difference. Plurality and hybrid identities remain invisible in classification systems. Art museums have begun to incorporate cultural categories, striving to segment identities in the same way that databases of cultural objects do. The integration of cultural categories, as well as the use of plurals to denote nationality, helps to enrich information. Despite criticism of these practices, museums reflect the complex issues brought by the hybridization of societies, which coexists with phenomena of crispation and identity closure.

According to Umberto Eco, "The list

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is the origin of culture. It is part of the history of art and literature. What does culture want? To make the infinite comprehensible. It also wants to create order. Not always, but often. And how do we, as human beings, face the infinite? How do we try to grasp the incomprehensible? With lists, files, museum collections…".[52] Inventory and documentation in museums are the basis of collection management. It is precisely this order of things and Western classifications, especially those of colonial ethnology, that are being questioned. An updating and, in some cases, reparation of injustices is underway, and their intersection opens up new possibilities for management and interpretation. On the other hand, this process of reparation, even if it preserves the old inventories that testify to the history of the collections and the treatment of the objects, remains a delicate operation. The EDI vocabulary and the concepts associated with it are likely to evolve, as are societal values. Classifications are under constant review, and revisions aim to fill gaps in documentation, such as identifying missing or misclassified objects, and to create new categories that better meet the contemporary needs of the museum.

Conclusion

Reparation is discussed in the context of polycrisis or global crisis, which raises the question of its impact and the museum's commitment to addressing it. This questioning is partly provoked by the recent transformation of museum discourse within art museums, which sets out to improve societies marked by inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. The EDI approach has been integrated into Canadian art museums to address these issues in the political context of multiculturalism and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Over the past ten years, and particularly in the wake of the health crisis, art museums have affirmed their social commitment by integrating these concerns into the way they think about collections and their management.

Museums committed to repairing their collections and practices are also looking to the future. Strategic plans display ambitions such as "helping to shape the future", while museum associations adopt similar approaches: "our quest for a more equitable, just, and inclusive museum sector is therefore not just about rectifying the present but about shaping the future – a future where every voice is heard, every story is told, and every experience is valued".[53] This posture reflects the revalorization or logic of the long term, after the presenteeism that focused on events and increasing the number of visitors. Is it a symptom of a new emancipation for this institution, which is moving away from the colonial museum and the Western model as the sole model of the museum to an institution that is taking its place to repair through the perspective of both cultural and social sustainability? This emancipation, expected or desired since the new museology of the 1970s, has since been reinforced by crises that have raised awareness in favor of a revision of the role of the art museum and its social commitment. The emergence of a *reparativ turn*, notably within collections, is manifested by the gestures of societal acquisition or the reparation of injustices

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in the way we name, categorize, or describe objects in collections and a concern for the exact names and plural identities of their creators or producers.

Analysis of museum policies, annual reports, and strategic plans allowed us to understand how the inclusion of underrepresented groups has evolved over the past decade. Museum association documents aimed at museum professionals were also used to identify recommendations for museums. This method works well for researching the framing of practices and the transformation of vocabulary in museums. However, museum professionals don't necessarily wait for guidelines to be updated, as they take longer to change. They adapt practices, experiment, and create their own ways of doing things, as demonstrated by the diversity of current approaches. A real transformation is underway: we could call this process repairing the gaps or blind spots in the representativeness or visibility of artists from underrepresented groups. On the other hand, we should also mention other practices, such as tokenism or the EDI issue without any real commitment to changing practices.

Finally, the issue of EDI and sustainability constitutes a major challenge within Canadian museums, a concern also shared by the international museum community. The reparation of diversity representation within museums constitutes a continuous process, rooted in the sociopolitical and cultural context specific to each institution. On the other hand, it is worth questioning the possibility that the current importance of these issues within museums may be called into question in light of political and societal developments that do not support EDI perspectives.

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Endnotes

1 Anderson 2020.

2 Janes, Sandell 2019; Mairesse, 2023.

3 Triquet 2023.

4 Kübler, Arezki, Soldo 2021.

5 Sterling, Larkin 2021, p. 1.

6 Unlike Canadian multiculturalism, the Quebec model of interculturalism has no legal status. However, several authors believe that Quebec interculturalism responds to the specific context and needs of Quebec (Emongo and White, 2014, Bouchard, 2012). Interculturalism in Quebec encourages interaction between different cultural communities and members of the host society, while respecting the values of Quebec society and the creation of a common culture.

7 "Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability". International council of museums (ICOM) https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/.

8 Luke, Mizota 2024.

9 This study is part of the New Uses for Collections in Art Museums Partnership funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. https://cieco.co/en. Research assistants: Michel Cheff and Anne-Laure Pin, doctoral students at Université du Québec en Outaouais.

10 Morin, Kern 1993, Tooze 2022.

11 Janes 2020; 2024.

12 Arendt 1972.

13 Kamat 2023, p. 4.

14 "Indigenous peoples is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognized 3 groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuits, and Métis. These are 3 distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs", https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303.

15 https://humanrights.ca/about/toward-greater-inclusion-and-equity#section_2.

16 Brundtland 1987.

17 SMQ 2024.

18 McCord Stewart Museum 2022; Montreal Museum of fine arts 2024; MNBAQ 2023.

19 https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx#3

20 https://www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/index.html.

21 Bérubé, Dioh, Cuyler 2024.

22 Cole, Lott 2019.

23 Dymond 2019.

24 Bennett *et al.* 2009.

25 Fraser 2011, p. 13.

26 Bilge, Hill Collins 2023.

27 Taylor 1999.

28 Vertovec 2007.

29 https://museums.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/docs/Documents/CMA-Work-

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place-Diversity-Survey.pdf.

30 Kamat 2023, p. 1.

31 https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf.

32 Recommendation 22, https://museums.ca/uploaded/web/New_Website_docs/MTA-Standards_Poster-EN.pdf.

33 See the example of artwork whose title has been changed with the Indigenous community. WAG, Decolonizing the collection, https://www.wag.ca/decolonizing-the-collection/#:~:text=The%20Artworks%20Renaming%20Initiative%20addresses,Knowledge%20Keepers%20and%20language%20keepers.

34 Regarding Indigenous Art at the NGC see Phillips 2011.

35 https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/your-collection/steeling-the-gaze-portraits-by-aboriginal-artists.

36 Kunard, Loft 2008.

37 Hill, Hopkins, Lalonde 2013.

38 Bergeron 2022, p. 297.

39 https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/renewal-museum-policy.html.

40 Février 2018.

41 https://mac-i.com/musee.php.

42 Marcil 2021, translation by author.

43 https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/mbac-ngc/NG21-3-2021-eng.pdf.

44 https://www.gallery.ca/sites/default/files/upload/acquisitions_policy-eng.pdf.

45 https://www.gallery.ca/sites/default/files/upload/acquisitions_policy-eng.pdf.

46 https://www.gallery.ca/sites/default/files/upload/ngc_annual_report_2022-23_en.pdf, p. 41.

47 Lee, De Silva 2023.

48 https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/museum/inclusive-programming/diversity-inclusion-policy.

49 Turner 2020.

50 https://page.nomenclature.info/apropos-about.app.

51 Johansson, Bevelander 2017; Sergi 2021.

52 Eco 2010.

53 CMA 2023, p. 10.

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