

## COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY URBAN CULTURE: An Emerging Framework for the Field Museum

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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses a process and protocol for adding contemporary urban material culture to the Field Museum. The Field Museum is a natural history museum with significant anthropology collections that has experimented with exhibiting contemporary cultural themes but lacks a significant collection in this area. I argue that urban lifeways are an important area for collecting work and that building such a collection should be done within the parameters of anthropological theorizing on social life, material culture, and the urban context. [collections protocols, urban material culture, Field Museum]

It is a daunting task to begin a new collection at a natural history museum that has been in existence for over a century. Museum practice has undergone deep transformations over the past several decades, but the act of collecting itself is undertheorized. Although there is a re-florescence of material culture studies (cf. Tilley et al. 2006), the focus is on the understanding of materiality “in the real world,” not necessarily inside the museum’s walls. Scholarly commentary on museums tends to focus on representation and display rather than on the act of collecting (Shelton 2006). Yet, for the future of museum practice, we must pay attention to how to judiciously continue to add to collections. Although a wealth of research and curation potential lies in existing collections, failure to add to these collections will put at risk the ability of the institution to further contextualize these collections—for without contemporary material, the capacity of curators, researchers, and visitors to do comparative analysis is limited. The Field Museum has the resources to add to its collections, and the anthropology department has instituted protocols and processes for collections growth.<sup>1</sup> Adding new collections, however, should be strategic and carefully thought out to avoid the appearance of incoherence or lack of a system-

atic approach. For this reason, we convened the symposium that is the theme of this special section (see Introduction, this issue).

In this article, I attempt to “ground-truth” the theorizing about urban materiality presented in other articles in this special issue by suggesting how it might guide the construction of a new contemporary urban collection at the Field Museum. The framework is suggested as a means of opening a dialogue with readers about the task. As Rhys (2011) points out, curators are experimenting with a variety of strategies to build contemporary collections for their museums, and no single approach can be deemed “right.”<sup>2</sup> What guides the Field Museum collecting may not be appropriate for an institution with a different history and mission. Nevertheless, I hope to address some general concerns particularly relevant to anthropology museums. Before discussing in more detail a proposed framework for the new collection, I will review our past efforts to bring contemporary urban culture to the Field Museum’s publics. The review demonstrates how the museum has struggled to represent contemporary culture in the absence of a significant collection.

### REPRESENTING CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

There has been no systematic strategy to the Field’s contemporary culture exhibitions. Until the mid-1990s, the bulk of the contemporary culture exhibits presented non-Western subject matter such as contemporary Maori art from New Zealand and modern Japanese ceramics. In 1997, under the direction of a new president, John McCarter, the museum began to import exhibits from a wider range of museums and with a broad thematic palette, illustrating specifically Western, mainly urban culture. Major exhibits included those devoted to sports, such as basketball (a photography exhibit about street basketball) and baseball (organized by the National Baseball Hall of Fame); some that were focused on the design of contemporary objects (an exhibit on motorcycles organized by the Guggenheim Museum in New York); some that were more historical (the work of Varian Fry and the International Rescue Committee, and the dresses of Jacqueline Kennedy); and still others about popular culture (the costumes and set designs of Julie Taymor, best known for her work on the Broadway musical *The Lion King*, and an exhibit about the tech-

nology of the *Star Wars* movies). These exhibits had no specific anthropological content nor did they broadly address questions of cultural pattern or social process.

The exhibits were highly controversial within the museum, and, in some cases, they were installed over the objections of the curators and scientific staff. The presence of these exhibits also appeared to jar the visitors who were not sure how to accommodate, for example, the display of motorcycles adjacent to the Hall of Peoples of the Pacific. Many of these exhibits were installed in anticipation of their being major revenue generators, but they failed to become “blockbusters.” Exhibits that were more in line with the museum’s traditional offerings, like dinosaurs and ancient cultures, for example, drew higher audiences.

At the same time, on a smaller scale, a small group of cultural anthropologists, including myself, began to experiment with more “mission-focused” contemporary exhibits that were designed and built by the Field Museum staff. We operated under the rubric of the Center for Cultural Understanding and Change from 1995 to 2010. The center’s work largely focused on building collaborative research and programs with community-based organizations in Chicago and with nongovernmental organizations in the Amazon regions of Peru. In the permanent exhibition titled *Living Together: Common Concerns, Different Responses*, we incorporated material and documentation from contemporary Western life, mostly using Chicago examples, to provide a comparative perspective on the construction of culture (cf. Wali 2006 for explanation of the exhibit).<sup>3</sup> In addition, a series of small exhibits showcased findings from our participatory action research in Chicago.<sup>4</sup> All of these were photographic exhibits, as we did not have a relevant collection in-house and did not have financial resources to do more. These exhibits documented forms of organizing in Chicago, social assets (such as patterns of social organization, networks, and voluntary organizations), and local artistic expression. However, they were installed in a small gallery at the back of the museum and rarely publicized (cf. Tudor 2002). In addition, a major portion of the *Living Together* exhibit was de-installed after just six years to make way for another temporary exhibition gallery, although *Living Together* was conceived as a permanent display, which usually would have a lifespan of

25 years. Thus, these more research-driven exhibits on contemporary culture failed as well to create a coherent narrative about urban social and cultural processes.

Clearly, although the intention of attending to contemporary culture has been manifest in the Field Museum’s exhibit selection, the actual program of representation has not functioned to inform visitors about the “place” of contemporary culture. In any case, since around 2005, the museum has largely returned to more conventional fare, including a series of exhibits imported from the American Museum of Natural History that present interdisciplinary perspectives on such things as “Gold,” “Diamonds,” “Water,” and “The Horse.”<sup>5</sup> Although these exhibits include some discussion of contemporary concerns around these commodities, they are largely marginal to the main message of the exhibits.

The lack of an actual collection program for urban material culture, I would argue, will always constrain the museum’s capacity to treat this subject matter because it hampers the staff’s capacity to curate urban culture with judgment informed by our own research experience and interaction with urban materiality. Creating the collection, however, requires attention to theoretical and practical understandings of the intersections of material culture and urban lifeways.

### URBANITY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Anthropology’s engagement with urban life began in the 1940s and 1950s when British social anthropologists began to follow people in Africa as they migrated from their “tribal” homelands to rapidly growing urban centers (Epstein 1967; Gluckman 1971; for a general overview of urban anthropology, see Rúa and Torres 2012). Over the decades, the field of urban anthropology has flourished and grown to encompass transnational or global processes of social change. Cities themselves have become the dominant feature on the global landscape, with over half the world’s population now living in metropolitan regions. Urban life has been transformed and has reshaped the flow of information, commodities, and the attendant social relationships (Glaeser 2011). Yet, the definition of what constitutes a city is vague. Most scholars use population density as the most convenient marker, intuitively characterizing cities as the densest form of human settlement (creating a gradient from “rural”

to “urban”). Although not entirely satisfactory, the use of population density permits a “baseline” to visualize urban settlements and describe their social characteristics.

As urban anthropology has grown more theoretically sophisticated, it has expanded to not just examine “microcosms” of life within cities but to link these to wider social and economic processes (Leeds 1973), and eventually to encompass globalization or transnationalism and so move beyond the strictly urban. As Mullings has stated, “In the United States, as in Europe, concepts of urbanism have been bound with images of industrial capitalism” (1987:1). A central trend in urban anthropological theory has been the investigation of the social construction of place (Lawrence-Zúñiga 1999; Low 1999; Rotenberg 1993), which has foregrounded the intersection of social, geographical, and psychological dimensions in the construction of urban life. Currently, new investigations are also focusing on social transactions in virtual reality or cyberspace and how these are impacting urbanity (Wesch n.d.).

The examination of the materiality of urban life has connected to all of these diverse theoretical and methodological strands. Material culture studies have illuminated the intersections between signification and location, and among the agency of objects, their commodification, and their capacity to interject themselves into social relationships, as discussed elsewhere in this special issue. Indeed, currently, material culture studies seem overwhelmingly focused on urban or interurban (national and transnational) contexts. In part, this derives from the types of objects investigated—those that are already part of economic transactional systems and already commodified. These objects are very different from the ones that currently comprise the museum collection, which are objects that, although they may have had some exchange value, were primarily collected for their significance as use value in the cultures from which they came. Urban objects, in contrast, derive their agency from a different set of social relations into which they enter—those determined by patterns of mass production, acquisition, and consumption (Rotenberg, this volume). However, the sheer number and variety of goods or commodities that has resulted from industrialization makes it difficult to determine what is worth preserving in the museum setting. Thus,

although theorizing material culture in urban settings is a necessary step, it is not sufficient to define criteria for collecting objects.

Other factors also need to be taken into account. For example, we need to consider the fact that different types of museums collect contemporary material culture for very different reasons. Most museums that collect contemporary culture appear to be either history museums devoted to the history of a specific place, museums specifically devoted to illuminating one aspect of contemporary culture such as the Robert Opie Museum of Brands and Advertising, or art museums that collect works that manifest contemporary design (Belk 2006; Rhys 2011). Few natural history museums have considered collecting contemporary culture outside of the traditional non-Western geographies. What follows is an attempt to delineate elements of an approach that considers these factors.

#### **AN EMERGING FRAMEWORK FOR AN URBAN COLLECTION AT A NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

The creation of the Anthropology Acquisitions Fund (see Note 1) stimulated the anthropology department to rethink collections strategies and protocols to provide systematic guidance for the anticipated increase in collections size. The department understood that to ensure collections were acquired in an orderly fashion with consideration of space and staff time constraints, curators would have to develop more formally articulated collections plans and visions. In 2011, the curators, together with the collections staff, developed five-year collecting plans for each regional area.

In this context, I proposed a framework for the new contemporary urban collection. I suggested three criteria for determining if objects should be accessioned: (1) the “fit” between the collection and the natural history/anthropology mission, (2) the link between the new collection and the existing collections, and (3) the salience of the assemblage for revealing emerging qualities of urban social life. I elaborate on each of these below.

Museum-based anthropologists are largely concerned with understanding human ecology (the interrelationships between people and their environments) and cultural change, and how these factors shape human diversity.<sup>6</sup> To make a contemporary collection for a natural history museum, then, entails

tailoring it to the examination of these themes. The anthropological perspective directs a collection that is comparative and grounded in materialist approaches to the understanding of social life (political ecology and political economy), with attention to the semiotic attributes of the objects collected. John Comaroff (2010:524–538) outlined a set of “epistemes” that distinguish anthropological Method (his emphasis) from other social sciences, cultural studies, and even qualitative journalism. Although he was discussing ethnographic inquiry, his approach also works for guiding the building of contemporary collections in an anthropology museum. His suggested epistemic operations are: (1) “critical estrangement from the lived world”; (2) “being and becoming—the mapping of those processes by which social realities are realized, objects objectified”; (3) “the deployment of the contradiction, the counter-intuitive, the paradox, the rupture as a source of anthropological revelation”; (4) “spatiotemporalization”; and (5) “grounded theory, or an imaginative counterpoint between ... the epic and the everyday, the meaningful and the material” (Comaroff 2010:525–526). Following these operations puts collecting for a natural history museum with significant anthropology collections on a very different track from collecting for other museums.

Following the first epistemic operation, for example, entails a different approach to engaging urban communities in *participatory* processes of collecting. The conventional wisdom in museum practice today calls for the inclusion of “first voice” in museum representation and collection. The general process through which this happens has been the convening of community advisory groups to help shape exhibits and collections of objects that represent their communities as they see them. However, the complexities of defining “first voice,” and selecting among the polyphonic discourses that comprise “community,” require the “critical estrangement” that can structure participation as a dialogue between community and anthropologist. The anthropological approach to this type of participatory process would be to recognize the complexities of inclusion and to understand the need for also maintaining the “outsider voice” and the value of “critical estrangement” such that “first voice” is tempered with anthropological perspective (cf. Kahn 2000:57–74). Thus, with a commitment to

dialogue, the anthropologist inserts a distinct perspective that can provide new insights for community members as much as they provide new insights for the anthropologist.

A second criterion for selection should be the link between the new collection and the existing collections. The existing collections already demonstrate Comaroff’s third epistemic operation, on the deployment of contradiction or rupture. For example, there are numerous objects of “everyday” use—spoons, work utensils, baskets, fish weirs, and clothing, among others—that already illustrate the above epistemic operations. The spoons from diverse Northwest Coast peoples “rupture” our notion of the relationship between utility and aesthetics. We know that thousands of such wooden, hand-carved spoons were made, in effect, through a type of “mass production.” Yet, although similar in functional design, the spoons are distinct in decorative motifs and form. Similarly, as we select urban materials, we can choose from among the mass-produced commodities those that are of “every day” utility but that have been modified to reflect meaningful practice—see, for example, Miller and Woodward (2012) on blue jeans that are used to mark “ordinariness” in North London—and that therefore “rupture” the relationship between mass production and variance in meaning. Other types of objects that resonate with the existing collections would be objects of ritual or ceremonial significance and objects that speak to societal stratification such as markers of prestige, power, reputation, and so on

Following an epistemic operation that reflects “ruptures” in social processes should also lead us to collect objects that illustrate the hybrid nature of urban interactions and reflect on changing patterns of ethnic, racial, and class interaction. We should also collect more than material objects, such as visual and aural materials that document the kinds of disruptions and displacements that are occurring.

Although mass-produced objects predominate in urban locales, the production of “handcrafts,” or homemade or manually made objects, persists. These objects reflect urban “vernacular culture.” Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states that

tacit, often small in scale and informal, vernacular culture production can reveal how people

escape bureaucratic control; create zones of autonomy and choice; resist, oppose, or subvert dominant cultural values and practices; and replace and renew what is appropriated from them by the culture industry. [1996:548–549]

Collections of urban vernacular culture can provide researchers with opportunities to compare these social processes with similar processes that underlie cultural production in the societies reflected in the existing collections, in a sense following a number of Comaroff's epistemic operations.

A third criterion for collection will be the determination of how useful the objects are in creating appropriate assemblages that reveal emergent qualities of urban social life, as Rotenberg (this volume) suggests. The identification of an assemblage entails assigning meaning to the manner of use of the objects, their associated and emergent social properties, and their relationship to each other. The device of collecting assemblages permits curtailing the quantity of objects to be acquired through investigation of the context in which the assemblage is defined or constructed. There would be no point in collecting "a thousand blue jeans" straight out of a factory because the repetition of objects per se would not shed light on the qualities of social life they encode. Rather, one can envision a collection of a limited number of blue jeans of residents of a particular neighborhood (the three streets studied by Miller and Woodward (2012), for example) in conjunction with other clothing from their closets.

In addition to these criteria, the protocol for collection should include the stipulation that the acquisition of urban collections should incorporate better contextual material than is currently available for the existing ethnographic collection. Although some of the curators who made the bulk of the collections in the first half of the 20th century kept meticulous field notes and photographic documentation, the records are uneven. In addition, the documentation is scattered in different places—some is in the accession record, other pieces are in the museum archives, and photographs are in a separate archive. All of this makes it difficult to research the collection.

Current technology facilitates a more coherent documentation, permitting linkage between multimedia formats. We can reconceptualize the accession

records as a more comprehensive, single database, including field notes, visual elements, and audio accounts. Through time-consuming retrospective work, the museum is doing this for the existing collections. For new collections, part of our collecting practice is to provide this form of seamless linkage between the object assemblage and its contextual documentation. Obviously, the provision of "context" for the objects will continue to be partial, in the sense that inquiry about the objects will continue far into the future, providing more insight into the social processes that inform interpretation. Difficult challenges remain in determining the depth of documentation required and in defining the boundary between the amount of research needed prior to the acquisition of objects and ongoing research that enriches the collection. In theory, any collection should have the capacity to provoke research questions for many years into the future yet be sufficiently documented to create a baseline of information.

The protocol also needs to provide guidelines on when and how multimedia material should be included as a "collection" and when these constitute the accompanying documentation. For example, as Rhys (2011) points out, photographs or other visual material can legitimately be considered objects for collection (see also Pinney 1997). The multisited placement of "visual culture" (Pinney 2002) both as accompanying documentation and as material culture is not contradictory but provides a creative tension that can enrich the collection process. The determination of what can be included and how, just as with any anthropological research project, will depend on the questions being asked and the component of social life that will be revealed. Ultimately, the way we currently conceptualize an object and its documentation will have to be rethought.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE COLLECTION

The symposium articles included in this volume and the fruitful discussions they generated among the participating scholars helped us to shape a protocol that could guide the collection of urban material culture. Specifically, the suggestions to pay careful attention to context, to theorize the agency of material culture, and to include the "mundane" helped us to develop a focus for our collecting effort. To further determine the contours of this protocol, we felt that we needed

to start experimenting with the act of collection to understand in practice what challenges we might face and how to address them. To that end, we selected specific research topics around which we are beginning to build the collection. The topics all relate to research and programmatic work that we are doing in Chicago under the broad umbrella of identifying the material basis of “placemaking.” For over a decade, we have been conducting research throughout the metropolitan region on residents’ perceptions of and interactions with the built and natural environment. The research has given us a foundation from which to explore variations in the construction of place and the role of material culture. Within this broad theme, we have three specific subthemes we plan to address: (1) urban residents’ efforts to ameliorate their own well-being, (2) the relationship between cultural heritage practices and perceptions of “home-place” (domestic and in the wider social field), and (3) the manifestations of cultural identity among urban Native North Americans.

### *Well-Being*

The study of what constitutes well-being is a fast-growing trend in the social sciences. Economists are seeking alternatives to the gross domestic product as the standard measure of well-being (cf. Stiglitz et al. 2009), and psychologists are studying social behaviors linked to perceptions of happiness (cf. Seligman 2002). Scholars are paying attention to the intersections between physiological, psychological, and social components. All of this is occurring in a politico-economic context of rising inequality and numbers of vulnerable people. Medical researchers have noted a significant rise in self-medication through the use of widely available herbal remedies (Cupp 1999; Eisenberg et al. 1993). Also on the rise is the turn to a broad range of “physio-spiritual” practices like yoga, Santeria, and acupuncture. Over the past decade, our urban research program has investigated the range of social and cultural practices through which Chicago residents are creating pathways to well-being. For example, research with Mexican immigrants revealed the construction of social networks centered on art making that enabled more access to critical social services.<sup>7</sup> To enrich this research and build a collection that begins to reflect related social behavior, we have begun a project in Chicago to document healing and

wellness practices in distinct sites. Our focus is on a variety of “pharmacies,” some located in specifically immigrant communities (Chinatowns, Latino neighborhoods, older European neighborhoods), and some chain stores, such as the General Nutrition Centers. The collection we are building encompasses both handcrafted herbal remedies and packaged remedies that appear to be mass produced.

This collection, therefore, enables understanding commodity flow and documenting vernacular culture—along the lines indicated by Clarke and Mullins in this volume. Research to date has uncovered interesting convergences and divergences between Latino, Chinese, and Eastern European apothecaries and herbal practitioners, and those who use their products. We acquired 71 objects for the collection with visual and ethnographic documentation. We have noted that in each case, herbal practitioners are commodifying remedies, claimed to be derived from “traditional” knowledge, through branding, marketing to clients outside of the ethnic base, and other strategies.

Over the next several years, we would like to continue to explore these emerging themes with some of the same herbal practitioners, and perhaps expand to other sites, including examining the “branding” of ethnic-based herbal remedies to urban residents at such venues as the General Nutrition Center stores and other chain pharmacies. We are also planning to take a closer look at who uses which remedies and how “folk knowledge” of remedies is informed by perceptions of which ethnic groups hold which type of knowledge. For example, preliminary data indicate that Chinese practitioners are more likely to be recognized by non-Chinese as authoritative, whereas Latino practitioners are consulted primarily within their own community.

### *Home-Place and Placemaking*

The structuring of kin relations and the social relations of domesticity have long concerned urban anthropologists. In addition, as mentioned above, attention to place-making (an intersection with cultural geography) has yielded rich theoretical and ethnographic insight. Our research in Chicago has explored these themes in a variety of sites. For example, applied research in a new mixed-income housing development demonstrated the growing

tenuousness of familial networks—in part, as residents found themselves increasingly geographically distant from kin—and how place attachment was developing at the new locale.<sup>8</sup> In nine other neighborhoods, we examined how residents had drawn on cultural heritage to creatively address the need to minimize energy use and share resources. This research is providing potential pathways into the materiality of home and placemaking.<sup>9</sup>

The collection we plan to build centered on these themes will be a collaborative project that engages long-time collaborators with whom we have conducted participatory action research and programmatic work to promote understanding of cultural diversity. One such collaborator is the Chicago Cultural Alliance, a coalition of over twenty-five heritage-based museums and cultural organizations. The alliance is planning a major, multisited exhibit on “the family” for 2015. The exhibit will present diverse concerns affecting families and how these are being addressed in the different ethnic communities that constitute the alliance’s core members. In the style of the *Living Together* exhibit, the different venues will focus on a common concern (e.g., intergenerational dynamics, homemaking, education, et cetera) and showcase the diverse responses across Chicago’s ethnic communities. The objects and visual documentation collected for the exhibit can potentially become a powerful assemblage that captures the current state of social organization and domestic formations.

Similarly, a collaborative project with a loose partnership of environmental, community-based, and municipal organizations will focus on the industrial and environmental heritage of the Calumet region, from southeast Chicago to the Indiana Dunes. This region, once the heartland of the steel manufacturing industry that fueled economic growth, is now reinventing itself through community and civic activism centered on privileging ecologically valuable fragments of wilderness and historic structures of the industrial era. The Calumet Heritage Partnership plans to organize the effort to create a heritage “trail,” modeled to some degree on similar efforts in Europe. This project may entail more visual documentation of landscape features rather than the collection of artifacts per se.

### *Urban Native Americans*

The final theme we intend to pursue concerns the lifeways and artistic practices of urban Native American groups. We have had a longstanding collaboration with the American Indian Center (AIC), the oldest community and social service center for urban Indians in the country. The center is a leader in an emerging national movement to address the unique concerns of urban Native Americans. The AIC also cocurated an exhibit with the Field Museum titled *50 Years of Pow Wow in Chicago*. The urban powwow is an important site of identity formation and social organization, and there is a vital craft home industry associated with making powwow regalia as well as other Native American handcrafts. We plan to conduct more detailed interviews with selected urban artisans in collaboration with the AIC. We are also working with Trickster Gallery, an offshoot of the AIC and the only Native-owned art gallery in Illinois. It is in the northwest suburbs, and we believe this collections program has the potential to provide a mutually beneficial relationship with the Trickster Gallery via loans and joint programs. In addition, we hope to similarly investigate themes of the commodification of Native American art, its role in urban life, and the ways in which it connects urban residents to homeplace reservations. For example, a well-known Pawnee artist, Bunky Echo Hawk, was commissioned by the Nike Corporation to create a line of shoes that reflect “Native American Heritage.” His shoes are showcased in the AIC’s wellness programs, an effort to address high rates of obesity in Native American communities. This collection program is also being conducted in collaboration with the AIC and other Indian organizations in Chicago.

### CONCLUSION

The anthropology collections at the Field Museum challenge the discipline’s imagination to apply theory in new ways and bring new possibilities to the understanding of materiality. As the experimental beginnings for the urban collection described above illustrate, there is no particularly singular way to think about the collection, and there is a need for continued conversations on how to frame the collecting effort. Although some have argued (Conn 2010) that natural history museums may no longer need objects, I have tried to counter this by suggesting that both

new exhibition and new research requires the existence of a solid collection. I have also argued that the objects cannot be separated from the contexts in which they manifest their agency. We strive to rethink the relationship between the object and its “accession record” such that the documentation that informs the assemblage will be immediately present. As discussed in the case of the proposed collection of the Calumet Heritage Corridor, the objects may only be a minor part of the collection while the visual elements might predominate. In other instances, such as the “well-being” collection, objects may be accessioned but contextualization will continue for years afterward. Ongoing research into the contours of urban lifeways will necessarily affect the collection trajectory. The task is daunting but not impossible.

#### NOTES

1. In 2005, the museum deaccessioned its significant collection of George Catlin paintings, creating an endowed fund for the acquisition of new collections. This provided a generous resource for the anthropology department to again add to the collections in strategic ways based on research rather than depending solely on donated collections.
2. Throughout the article, “contemporary collection,” “contemporary urban collection,” and “urban collection” are used somewhat interchangeably. Obviously there is much to contemporary life that is not urban, but, as I argue, even the non-urban regions are impacted more and more by events and processes emanating from urban centers.
3. See the following website for more information: [http://archive.fieldmuseum.org/research\\_collections/ccuc/ccuc\\_sites/culturalconnections/explaining.asp](http://archive.fieldmuseum.org/research_collections/ccuc/ccuc_sites/culturalconnections/explaining.asp).
4. Participatory action research (PAR) is a research strategy that engages the collaboration of the research subjects in the design and execution of the study with the objective of making the research useful to the subjects. Please see Ostergaard et.al. (2006) for our approach to PAR.
5. See <http://fieldmuseum.org/happening/exhibits/browse/past> for information on these exhibits.
6. What I mean to imply here is that the general focus on materiality of culture in a museum setting leads scholars to contextualize cultural practices within the broad frame of human ecology. At the Field Museum, there has been an embrace of this perspective as reflected in staff hires and research foci.
7. See [www.fieldmuseum.org/creativenetworks](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/creativenetworks) for more information.
8. See [www.fieldmuseum.org/lakeparkcrescent](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/lakeparkcrescent) for more information on this project.
9. See [www.fieldmuseum.org/climateaction](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/climateaction) for more on this project.

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