HSGC Programming Workshops

December 10-11, 2009 Australian Museum Sydney

In December 2009 we hosted a 2-day programming workshop to discuss progress on the project and develop a dialogue between researchers and partners. Below is a summary of the event.

STRAND 1 PRESENTATIONS:

Fiona Cameron: Overview of the ARC Linkage project, Hot Science Global Citizens: the agency of the museum sector in climate change interventions

An Introduction to the Research Project and a progress report

Carolyn Meehan: Climate Change – the personal perspective

What is the level of awareness, concern and knowledge of the consequences of climate change in the general populations in the United States and Australia. Where do people think the responsibility for the effects and the solutions lie? A summary of the online surveys conducted during 2009

Fiona Cameron: Positioning museums and science centres in climate change interventions

A presentation of empirical research on audiences and institutional perceptions of the roles of museums and science centres in climate change debates and decisions

Ben Dibley: A Climate for Cosmopolitanism? Climate change and everyday perceptions of global citizenship

Brett Neilson: Inside the Tent, Outside the Tent: Subjects of Climate Change in Copenhagen

Professor Neilson's contribution to the workshop explores the challenges posed by the system of "global democratic governance" at Copenhagen. Neilson proposes to interpret the UN Conference of Parties (COP-15) itself as an instrument of global governance and brings to bear the resources of Foucauldian governmentality theory and legal positivism in analysing the structure of the UN conference, its parties, and its opposition. He draws a detailed contrast between the hierarchical structure of the UN conference body and the diffuse network of protest movements opposing the UN conference. Protest movements 'outside the tent' such as the anti-capitalist group "Never trust a COP" are explored as are dissenting movements 'inside the tent' such as the international indigenous peoples' forum on climate change, convened during the COP-14 in Poznan, Poland in 2008. Museums as public institutions sit between the governmental parties to the UN convention and the protest movements. What role can museums play in representing and moderating this global policy debate? Professor Neilson suggests that museums might serve as 'spaces of conflict' where the conflicts of disputing parties can be represented and discussed. As an example, Neilson considers the recent exhibit "Rethink: Contemporary Art & Climate Change" which was part of the cultural program presented by four museums and cultural institutes in Copenhagen 2009, including the Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center. Among the artistic groups initially contracted to exhibit at the Nikolaj was the UK Bristol based "Laboratory of the Insurrectionary Imagination". The Nikolaj museum was put into a difficult position by this artists' group's commitment to political protest and disruption of the Conference of Parties summit, eventually resulting in a breakdown of working relations between the Bristol group and the Nikolaj museum. Neilson's contribution will enable us to reflect critically on this event to ascertain its significance for future museum engagement on politically sensitive issues.

STRAND 2 PRESENTATIONS:

Bob Hodge: Communication and action: Communicating the messages of climate change in a way that engages with a broad populace and leads to action

Scott East: Surviving Change: Resilience, Science and the Museum. A provocation to consider the important capacity of emotions and feelings in museum displays

STRAND 3 PRESENTATIONS:

Juan Salazar: The Voices of Climate Change: Listening, Dialogue, Action

Climate change debates and interventions are intrinsically about voice and listening. A cognitive justice approach might be useful to better understand the cultural underpinnings of climate change and the critical role that museums and science centres play within the politics of climate change communication and action

David Karoly and Ben Parr: Information and Misinformation: recent trends in communicating climate change in newspapers and the implications for museums

A content analysis of letters to the editor and contributed OpEds published in major Australian newspapers during 2006-2009 has been used to reflect community attitudes and understanding of climate change.

Day 2 - Programming ideas

Organisational / Institutional Issues

Group discussion on programming ideas and Institutional issues, facilitated by Marco Federici

* Present summary of implications for institutional programmers from all   strands.

* Discus potential pilot programs that take advantage of HSGC research to date.

* Explore opportunities for institutions and researchers to collaborate.

* Open forum for institutions to discuss practical research options.