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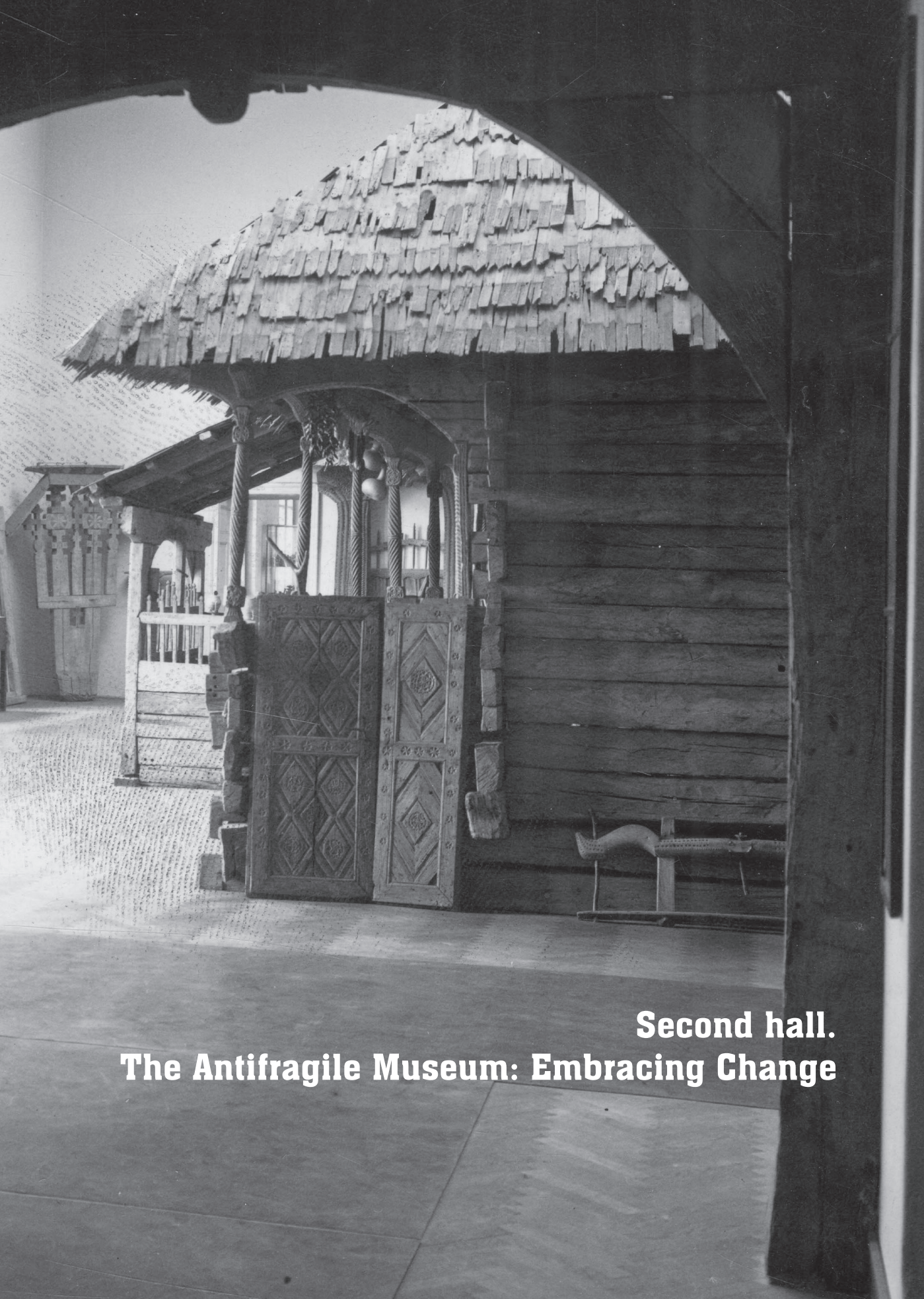

Second hall.
The Antifragile Museum: Embracing Change

Towards a Typology of an Emergent Museum Form

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ABSTRACT

Personal museums created by enthusiastic individual makers are becoming more visible on the cultural landscape. Recent scholarship studying examples of this emergent institutional form in Colombia, Estonia, Finland, Romania and Spain refer to these museums using a variety of terms, including: *amateur, author, do-it-yourself, family, grassroots, local, naïve, personal, unofficial, vernacular* and *wild*. Having studied this phenomenon since 2011, one challenging problem for me as a researcher has been: what do we call this kind of museum? Adding to the list of descriptors emergent museums, I employ Greg Lakoff and Mark Johnson's (2003) work on metaphor theory to present an analysis of how these terms reflect different aspects of this phenomenon. Understood as knowledge institutions, these experimental spaces foster ways of knowing that contrast with more traditional museum epistemologies, foregrounding knowledge-from-within; knowledge-making; and the individual-as-locus-of-knowledge. I share my experience visiting Cleo's Ferry Museum and Nature Trail, a self-made, self-described museum in Melba, Idaho as a comparative analysis that connects notable experiential moments (captured in photographs) I have had in Romanian emergent museums to notable moments at Cleo's. Connecting patterns of experiences across these spaces using personal examples illustrates the different ways of knowing emergent museums foster. In conclusion, I consider emergent museums as a new model of museum-making that are not simply anomalies or novelties; they provide an example of what all museums *could be*.

KEYWORDS

Emergent museums, knowledge-making, metaphor theory, museum-making models, notable moments, patterns of experience, embodied knowledge.

Introduction

Personal museums created by enthusiastic individual makers are becoming more visible on the cultural landscape. I first noticed examples of this emergent institutional form on a trip to Romania[1] in 2007 and discovered many others on subsequent visits over the past decade. I have also come across these unique, experiential spaces in my travels in Iceland and across the American West. The scholarly corpus (mainly in English[2]) investigating this phenomenon is also growing, studying examples from Spain and Colombia (Moncunill-Piñas 2017); Finland (Mikula 2015); and Estonia (Taimre 2013). This is in addition to articles in English that investigate this phenomenon in Romania (Mateescu 2009; Mihalache 2009a; Mihăilescu 2009; Pănoiu 2017).

A growing list of terms used to describe these spaces emanates from this body of work: *personal museums* (Mateescu 2009); *author museums* (Mihalache 2009a); *local, grassroots* and *could-be museums* (Mihăilescu 2009); as a product of *naïve museology* (Pănoiu 2017); *Wilde Museen* (wild museums) (Jannelli 2012); *do-it-yourself museums* (Taimre 2013); *family museums* and *unofficial museums*

1) Since 2011, my research has focused mainly on the two dozen institutions that are members of RECOMESPAR (recomespar.ro), a national professional association created to recognize, connect and support individual collectors and museum makers within Romania. RECOMESPAR was one outcome of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant's Colecţii Săteşti din România (Village Collections of Romania) 2008-2013, a cultural program whose goal was to bringing visibility and legitimacy to these new institutions (Mihalache 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2011, 2012).

2) Most absent from this study is an in-depth reading of Jannelli's (2012) work on wild museums because it is in German. References included here are taken from Mikula (2017).

(Klimaszewski and Nyce 2014); *vernacular museums* (Mikula 2015) and *amateur museums* (Moncunill-Piñas 2017). Having studied this phenomenon actively since 2011, I have found that the question of what to call this kind of museum regularly arises. Here I will consider this problem by contemplating what this list of descriptors metaphorically reflects about our experiences of these unique spaces as a new type of knowledge institution.

To do this, I will add to this list an additional term, referring to the phenomenon as *emergent museums* throughout. This term reflects my impressions, informed by personal experience as much as by my readings of the scholarly works, of the ontological in-between-ness of these museums: to visit them is to feel as if they are continually in some state of becoming. They are often described as a kind of borderland, liminal or interstitial, existing between private/public; memory/materiality; individual/community; past/future; display/explanation; history/tradition (see especially Mateescu 2009; Mihăilescu 2009; Mikula 2015; Pănoiu 2017; Taimre 2013). Further, emergent museums, as will be shown, captures something about the way knowledge exists and operates through these creations.

Greg Lakoff and Mark Johnson's (2003) work on metaphor theory will shape this analysis of terms used by scholars to describe emergent museums. Metaphor is essentially "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 5). In the context of museums as knowledge institutions, these descriptors are taken as evidence of experience. First, a brief introduction to the theoretical framework considers the metaphorical implications of how knowledge in the museum has been portrayed historically as being imposed upon visitors as a kind of knowledge-from-without. In contrast, the descriptor analysis considers how emergent museums foreground knowledge-from-within and encourage knowledge-making within the individual-as-locus. I will then share my experience visiting Cleo's Ferry Museum (Cleo's), a self-made, self-described museum in Melba, Idaho. This comparative analysis will connect notable experiential moments (captured in photographs) I have had in Romanian emergent museums to notable moments at Cleo's. My goal is to connect patterns of experiences across these spaces in order to provide a very personal example of the kinds of knowledge-making emergent museums can foster. In conclusion, I consider emergent museums as a new model of museum-making that are not simply anomalies or novelties; they provide an example of what museums *could be* (Mihăilescu 2009).

Theorizing emergent museums as knowledge institutions: a framework

Central to this metaphorical analysis of the terms and concepts used to describe emergent museums are Greg Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work on metaphor theory (2003) and its relationship to Johnson's (1990, 2008) work on the embodied theory of meaning. The chief premise here is that these new museums are steeped not just in their geospatial localities; but also in a locality of knowledge as it emerges through processes of making within individual bodies. I use these theories to explain how metaphor can be understood as an expression of embodied knowledge, described here as knowledge-from-within, that verbally/conceptually expresses the non-verbal and felt patterns and qualities of experience that emerge through the body as a locus of knowledge. In order to understand how knowledge becomes externally real and shared through knowledge institutions, it is important to consider how knowledge originates through and because of individual bodies.

Johnson's (1990, 2008) embodied theory of meaning locates knowledge within

individuals. This theory is grounded in the notion that meaning emerges through deeply personal, embodied, spatially-situated interactions through which each individual comes to know. In other words, for each person, meanings both literally and figuratively begin with "me:" because of my unique bodily experiences as an engaged being moving through space and time. Meanings arise through deeply contextualized experiential moments and I relate these meanings to those I have had in other moments, working to incorporate these new meanings into the way I "have a world" (Johnson 1990). I organize my world in relation to past, future and even imagined or possible experiences. My way of having a world encompasses my framework for knowing, allowing me to understand and incorporate additional knowledge into my world over time. In this way, meaning, and by extension knowledge, are relational: I understand a particular embodied, experiential moment in relation to the other moments that cohere into my world (Johnson 1990).

Having a world entails both pre-conceptual/pre-verbal and conceptual/verbal raw materials that become the stuff of knowledge. Johnson (1990) describes the felt patterns of experience that operate continually at pre-conscious, pre-verbal levels as *image schemata*. Image schemata "are structures that relate us to energies and forces that we encounter in the ongoing interactive process that constitutes our understanding, our having of a world" (Johnson 1990: 205). Metaphor provides a means to connect kinesthetic image schematic modes of experience to the conceptual realm. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) describe metaphorical language as being "in large measure, the ability to bend your worldview and adjust the way you categorize your experience" (231). In other words, metaphors are the means through which we navigate by connecting aspects of new or different felt experiences to familiar facets of experiences that we understand. As Johnson (1990) describes it, "Metaphor reaches down below the level of propositions into this massive embodied dimension of our being" (105) with conceptual metaphors "grounded in *correlations* within our experience" (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 154-55, emphasis in original).

The theories of knowledge at work here posit knowledge as relational and embodied, emerging both by and through individuals. In this context, metaphors, as correlations within experience, act as evidence of knowledge understood as both felt qualities as well as concepts and propositions. In the next section, I apply this theoretical framework first to conceptualizations of knowledge in more traditional museums as a contrast to the kinds of embodied knowledge-making happening in emergent museums.

Knowledge in museums: from container/transmission to activity of meaning-making

One aspect of museums portrayed within the scholarly literature is their historical development as exclusive, elitist institutions mainly concerned with high culture and disinterested in and disengaged from their visitors (Hudson 1975; Stocking, Jr. 1985; Whitcomb 2003). For a long period of history, the museum experience was (and in some ways still is) decidedly rule-driven: no touching; quiet contemplation only; look with reverence; read the labels; learn; walk slowly along a pathway through static, unmoving objects encased within glass vitrines; no food, no running, no photographs. Beginning in the 1980s, developments around "new museology" (Heijnen 2010; Vergo 1989) have worked to overcome these less desirable portrayals and move the museum-as-institution in new directions. The notion "new" sets this kind of museology apart from that which

came before: the standard, accepted and assumed museological processes that carried with them a certain set of assumed and predictable knowledge outcomes. *New* demarcates a line or boundary has been laid down, separating experience in the museum now from the way it has been historically. I will briefly consider the metaphorical implications of some scholarly conceptualizations of museums in the context of new museology to discern how these changes have made room for the inclusion of emergent museums as a new type of knowledge institution.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006a) has described a shift in understanding the museum as a *container* of curated objects that is the realm of experts to one of seeing it as an *activity* in which objects are made available for different kinds of uses by different types of people. The container metaphor invokes a sense of static space or a holding cell, bound historically by a focus on knowledge as it relates to elite understandings and interpretations. The museum-as-container works to safely store and keep these selected objects as external representations of knowledge. As a warehouse, museums work to shelter these objects from time and change through, for example, the application careful climate controls, the use of inert archival storage materials and the application of controlled intellectual interpretations. These practices have helped to define a distinct inside and outside of what defines the museum, turning the museum into a protective barrier that stands between its precious objects and an external world full of unpredictable publics and potential environmental disasters. This also assumes knowledge exists externally from human beings, residing in objects that can be sheltered inside the museum from the ravages of time. But the museum-as-container has also compartmentalized knowledge, keeping it highly controlled under the auspices of the few.

This kind of tight control can also be observed in how knowledge has historically moved within the museum conceptualized according to a transmission model, particularly for visitors (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 2000; Silverman 2010). Under the transmission model, knowledge is received passively, from without, with visitors acting as receptacles for discrete messages conveyed by exhibits of objects selected from the repository by a curator and arranged to fulfill specific, predictable knowledge outcomes. The transmission model carries with it the Foucauldian sense of museums as sites of power that attempt to control how knowledge is presented and received in the museum (Bennett 1995, 2004; Stocking, Jr. 1985). Tony Bennett (2006) describes museums as operating under the logic of culture: "understood as an historically distinctive, and complexly articulated, set of means for shaping and transforming people through their own self-activity" (67). Such self-activity seems to impose a kind of externally located knowledge-from-without. Bennett's (2006) logic of culture implies that once inside the museum, visitor "participation" is somehow carefully prescribed by and through the museum's design that dictates how she will move through and interact with objects and exhibitions in the museum space and, ultimately, what she will know. According to this model, cultural knowledge is transmitted isomorphically as a "right" way of knowing implicit in the objects that should emerge through the museum visit. Considered as metaphoric constructions, these old museological approaches bound up in transmission models and the logic of culture suggests that perhaps there has been some visceral truth to these imposing visitor experiences which has paved the way for new museology.

Visitors to museum spaces in the 21st century are now understood as engaging in acts of meaning-making within museums through dialogues versus a one-way, top-down model (Falk and Dierking 2000; Pearce 1994; Silverman 2010). These shifts from transmission to meaning-making, from museum-as-storehouse to

museum-as-activity, in some ways work to disembody the museum, decoupling it from its institutional presence as a physical space primarily concerned with material objects. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992) has conceptualized the museum as an "apparatus" for the production of knowledge whose metaprocesses (the practices of classification inherent in collecting, storing, exhibiting) create "structures of knowledge and rules for the production of truth" (191) through the accumulation, classification and interpretation of material objects. Metaphorically, the apparatus metaphor can refer to the museum as a piece of technical equipment (i.e. as a physical thing), but this term also refers to a complex structure or standardized activity. Such a structure, Hooper-Greenhill (1992) points out, does not produce knowledge towards the end as some "essential" museum because there is no one essential way of knowing. Separating museum-as-place and museum-as-process frees museum practices to consider and create different ways of knowing. And this is the thread I want to draw on as I connect back to the realm of metaphors at work in emergent museums: how the shift from place to process has also freed museum practices to be adopted and adapted by those outside the museum community.

Internalizing the museum

That regular, everyday people set out to organize and present their collections as their own conception of a formalized exhibition is evidence itself of the image schematic and metaphorical structuring power of the museum concept. The emergent museums under discussion here have all been self-named as museums by their owners/makers (Mihalache 2009a; Mikula 2015; Moncunill-Piñas 2017; Taimre 2013). These makers have chosen to label their creations as such despite the fact that they may not exactly fit official definitions of what constitutes a museum provided in legislative documents or by professional museum associations (Mateescu 2009; Mihalache 2009a; Taimre 2013). Nevertheless, it has been noted that *museum* is chosen to imbibe these creations with social capital that the museum as a known entity provides (Mateescu 2009; Moncunill-Piñas 2017). But this also suggests that there is something about the museum as a pattern or kind of experience that resonates with the maker's goals and purposes.

The museum as a concept has been naturalized, a reflection of what Susan Crane (1997) describes as *Musealisierung* or the "internal awareness of the museum function" (57). This internalization of what a museum should do, personal to individual past experiences with museums, shapes expectations about how museums are supposed to work. This internalized awareness is likely at work for emergent museum makers as they construct their museums based on their own understandings and experiences of visiting museums (or not). However, what these creative expressions show is how the internalization of the museum concept happens in different ways for different people. This is perhaps how emergent museums can be alike in their uniqueness (Mihalache 2009a); it is another way of saying they share some basic commonalities but with different outcomes that can be attributed to the different ways of knowing embodied by museum-makers and their visitors. That the shared conceptions of this institutional form are so widely recognized, selecting the name "museum" legitimates emergent museums by making them more easily accessible for a variety of potential publics because "everyone knows" what a museum is. In this way, museum proprietors insert their individual voices into the realm of heritage by self-categorizing their creations as museums.

As they are portrayed in the literature, museum makers all seem to have borrowed in their own way certain standardized

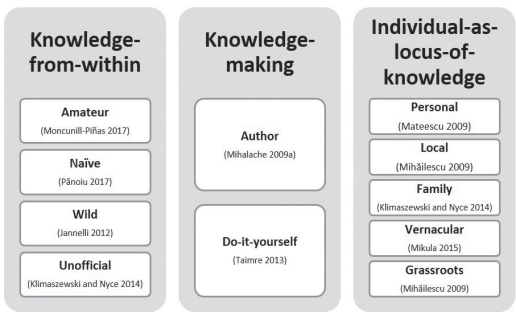
practices that have created expectations for what counts as "the museum experience" enacted through collecting, exhibiting, displaying, and interpreting. In this way, emergent museums act as expressions of their maker's understandings of tradition, history and the past; but they are also expressions of how their makers have internalized the notion of what counts as a museum. Taimre (2013) describes these do-it-yourself (DIY) makers as "following modern tendencies of democratisation in the museum world" (34), further suggesting that museum concepts and practices are intuited by more general publics. But as Moncunil-Piñas (2017) observes, by copying these legitimated practices, these makers "are performing microscopic modifications in the historical functioning of the institutionalized practice. They are, often unintentionally, hinting at and timidly revealing its inequalities, struggles and the arbitrariness of museological conventions" (15). In other words, such modification-through-use suggests that *Musealisierung* is not merely internalization; this internalization has the potential to critique and change the form through individual creativity and adaptive reuse. However, it is worth noting that museum creators are not always able to articulate why they chose to create a museum and to name it as such (Taimre 2013). This emphasizes the need to look beyond verbal explanations as evidence of the power and potential of these emergent museums.

Though museum makers are borrowing legitimacy-via-institutional-form, only particular aspects of the museum model are adopted and the form is often remade by the creators according to their own rules and for their own purposes (Moncunill-Piñas 2017; Taimre 2013). Naming their creations a "museum" legitimates both the museum maker's worldview as it is expressed through their museological adaptations and the different ways the museum form functions as a knowledge-making context. This is the spirit in which the subsequent analysis has been conducted: by connecting to the metaphorical implications of the descriptors for emergent museums, I am working towards understanding this new form in relation to the museum as a process of knowledge-making, one that is amplifying types of participation and inclusivity still less foregrounded within new museology.

Metaphorical analysis of emergent museum descriptors

I have so far tried to show how the metaphoric implications of various museum descriptors in scholarly works reflect different aspects of the museum as an activity of knowledge-making. In order to connect this work to emergent museums, this analysis looks at a particular grouping of the key terms used by scholars in a selection of the literature that studies emergent museums (Jannelli 2012; Klimaszewski and Nyce 2014; Mateescu 2009; Mihalache 2009a; Mihăilescu 2009; Mikula 2015; Moncunill-Piñas 2017; Pănoiu 2017; Taimre 2013; Mihăilescu 2009). Grounded in the theoretical framework described above and in the conceptions of museums as knowledge institutions, this analysis focuses on how these terms describe: knowledge (amateur, naïve, wild, unofficial); as locality (personal, local, vernacular, grassroots); and knowledge-making (author, hybrid, do-it-yourself). These groupings are shown in Figure A.

Fig. A: Terms from a selection of the scholarly literature describing emergent museums organized according to their analytic groupings.



A thick description of these groupings and their metaphorical implications, presented next, will show how emergent museums cultivate the production of knowledge-from-within by foregrounding the kinds of knowledge that is deeply personal and seemingly "outside" of established, expert or elite knowledge realms more traditionally foregrounded in museums. This is the kind of highly personal knowledge that originates within individuals and emanates from and between individuals as entwining localities. As will be discussed, this has implications for the emergent museum experience for both makers and visitors.

Emergent museums as knowledge: amateur, naïve, unofficial, wild

Interested in the museum as a knowledge endeavor as conceptualized in the theoretical framework, the investigation into the metaphoric use of these terms considers them in relation to knowledge. Amateur, naïve, wild and unofficial stood out as relating to how knowledge in these museums was emerging in contrast to established, official or expert knowledge that usually fall within the museum purview. For instance Păniou (2017) has chosen naïve "not to indicate absence of value but rather to give a name to a form of artistic expression that does not keep step either with the time period in which it is produced or with artistic tradition or with expectation of elites" (150). In this way, museum-making is not necessarily concerned with somehow pleasing or even dialoguing with more dominant ways of knowing; it does its own thing. This sense of being apart from and asynchronous with elite expectations about what constitutes a proper museum is key. The kind of expertise foregrounded within these museums more often relates to the intense and focused passion of how these makers interact with and showcase their collections (Mihăilescu 2009; Mikula 2015; Mihalache 2009a).

In this way, these museums are wild, as Jannelli (in Mikula 2015) uses the term in relation to Levi Strauss's notion of the noble savage, whose knowledge must "keep step" only with itself and its own internal rationality; its own way of having a world. Such knowledge is not focused on outside measures or confirmations, but feels correct and makes sense on a small scale and in relation to more immediate surroundings. These museums and the knowledge they generate are enjoyable to experience precisely because they feel untethered, unexpected and free. The rules imposed are only those of the maker, and as a guest experiencing a unique creation, I am ready to conform to these rules to experience for a time another's way of having a world.

This is a kind of knowledge made within unofficial realms, by amateurs, that is not completely unprofessional but can be seen as a kind of serious leisure (Moncunill-Piñas 2017). Her use of this theoretical frame locates this creative activity of museum-making within the realm of avocation, of a qualified serious—not serious enough to be what is more generally regarded as professional or expert, but more serious than other free-time pursuits (which is another way emergent museum-making exists in a kind of in-between state). Amateur most directly contrasts with the notion of expert or institutionalized knowledge—again setting these makers outside and apart from established realms. They are unofficial, outside and, again, in-between. As a knowledge form, these museums become an extension of the kinds of knowledge and expertise their makers are thought to have in part because they operate outside of the institutionalized museum realm.

Amateur, naïve, unofficial and wild describe what I will refer to here as knowledge-from-within. This suggests small knowledge, itself emergent, in-formation and in process, whose internal locus is

similarly small in scale: corresponding to an individual, a family, a small museum; and perhaps only tangentially corresponding to some external or objective shared knowledge (e.g. of a community, a region, a nation). Such knowledge might be only of relatively limited application (limited to the individual's way of having a world, for instance) and may feel small because it is not immediately applicable to other realms. It can seem incongruous with knowledge-from-without, which describes the kind of knowledge stored in museums that can feel big, imposing, omnipresent because it has been thoroughly vetted and can be accepted without question. Knowledge-from-without is the kind of knowledge we seek when we want answers and formal guidance. It feels big and imposing and important and can be at times intimidating, particularly when we are not so familiar with it. This contrasts to knowledge-from-within that has a feeling of being expressive and creative, original and unique and maintains a sense of being "outside" of more generally accepted knowledge realms and, in this way, can feel less imposing and more approachable. Though the fact that these museums generally work to present their maker's own worldview, it is worth noting, has been described as both a major strength and weakness of these museums (Mihăilescu 2009; Mikula 2015; Taimre 2013).

Knowledge-from-within conveys how knowledge is experienced in emergent museums as outside or separate from institutionalized, established realms and closer to and emanating from individuals. It has its own internal validity that creates opportunities for different kinds of small-scale relationality with other knowledge that may feel peripheral, tangential or nascent. The next section that focuses on the knowledge-making processes encouraged within emergent museums can help us to consider how knowledge-from-within relates to those processes through which knowledge is created and related into different ways of having a world.

Emergent museums and knowledge-making: author, do-it-yourself

Author and *do-it-yourself* are the terms that metaphorically describe processes of how knowledge-making happens in emergent museums, though within the existing literature is has focused mainly on the roles and activities of makers. These are museums that are expressed through an embodied individual and his or her interactions with objects, with tangible, material culture and heritage as knowledge about the past (Mihalache 2009a; Mihăilescu 2009; Mikula 2015). Where authorship invokes a sense of inscribing, of maintaining a certain level of creative integrity, do-it-yourself connects to the sense of a body, of individual hands working to craft a knowable world through the hands-on arrangement of objects. This characterizes the felt nature of the craft of emergent museum-making.

Author further connects to the storytelling aspects inherent within this museum form, particularly as it relates to the life-story of the museum-maker as the main constructor, the cause or source of a story that only he or she can tell. Again, the story is highly individualized, with these makers being as integral to their creations as their collections objects (Mateescu 2009). As such, these museums "bear the mark of a single man's personality and thinking" (Mihalache 2009a: 123). Writing with objects through the immediacy of material culture weaves the intangible through the tangible. This entwines with the maker aesthetic of the do-it-yourself movement. It also invokes Levi-Strauss' (1966) notion of the bricoleur as one who makes do with what is at hand. These makers craft their museums by using what they have found in the world around them, which has inspired them to begin collecting, arranging and maintaining their objects, ordering and reordering, like an endless editing project. These tendencies of making are inherent in other realms of crafting, as a sense of

the hand-made connection to traditional ways of knowing and doing that happened in the past. Such creations are self-evident, telling a story that shows how internalized knowledge emanates outward through an individual body, as examples of how logics of culture operate on personal levels, encouraging more open-ended outcomes for such self-activity.

Knowledge-making helps to connect how those senses of knowledge (amateur, naïve, wild, unofficial) play out through these makers as bricoleurs who orchestrate their stories with their own skills, ingenuity and know-how. This is one way to show how the internal rationality of these worlds is related to the wider whole, providing a context in which these museums stand holistically outside of the museum mainstream and also apart from other emergent museums. It is in this sense that amateur museums become highly localized and individualized, containing one authorial voice telling a personal story that stands apart, with the makers capitalizing on a do-it-yourself aesthetic. This shapes the potential for what happens for both visitors and makers within these highly localized spaces—which is local not only in terms of place but in terms of individual bodies.

Individual-as-locus-of-knowledge: personal, local, family, vernacular, grassroots

The small scale of emergent museums inherent in *personal*, *local*, *family*, *vernacular* and *grassroots* can be considered in how these museums connect to different kinds of localities. Because they are personal, local both to a place and to a person, these **s**mall museums contained within a home and bound by a sense of family feel rooted to the earth. In this way they become a locus of activity, places that afford (Gibson 1979/2014) different possibilities for visitors both in the knowledge contexts of *who* made them as much as *how* they were made. This is another way of describing small-scale knowledge that feels relatable or manageable in a way different from that warehoused in institutionalized realms. I have found that interactions within these small, intimate museum spaces carry with them a kind of intimacy that feels more like visiting a long-lost family member than it does a formal museum space.

Particularly when they are tied to villages or neighborhoods, these kinds of museums can feel as if they contain all the specificities of place related to geography, history, tradition and ways of life (Mateescu 2009; Mikula 2015). But this personal knowledge is rooted to an individual body as much as it is tied to a particular spot on the earth, in both cases as if rooted (as in the sense of grassroots) to a ground and emanating upward or outward from it. These museum-makers are authors in the sense that they create their own biographies that are deeply informed by elements of place. These local elements become embodied as felt patterns of experience that come to define a sense of everyday life. In this way, place and individuals root these museums in a kind of mutual grounding. The museum-maker-as-storyteller, through his or her interactions with other individuals, then allows them to become the carriers that move this knowledge through the world, acting as locus of experience active in relational embodied knowledge-making.[3]

Emergent museums, through their authorial voices and handmade constructions, are often ensconced within the personal space of a home, a vernacular space that "encapsulat[es] the 'domesticity' of the practice" (Mikula 2015: 758). But these private spaces become public as visitors are welcomed inside. This creates a productive tension at the intersections between public/private and personal/communal (Mateescu 2009; Mikula 2015; Taimre 2013) which creates possibilities for different kinds of meaning-making between museum-

3) Though I have not done so here, it would be interesting to consider these ideas through Greg Urban's (2001) work on metaculture, for there are many correspondences.

makers and visitors. These different ways of connecting create different outcomes for visitors, including and sometimes even "contaminating" the visitor with something of the museum-maker that she takes away (Mihalache 2009a: 124). Indeed, I have felt this sense of "catching" a museum-maker's enthusiasm about his creation[4] that inspires me, for instance, to take a photograph because I want to keep a particular moment. This suggesting something about the nature of the knowledge exchange that will be conveyed in my impending discussion of Cleo's Ferry Museum and Nature Trail.

4) How else does one explain the decision to pursue an advanced degree on this subject?

Analysis summary

So far, I have considered the relationship between emergent museums and knowledge as expressed metaphorically through terms describing these creations in the scholarly literature. I have categorized these terms to reflect embodied dimensions of knowledge-from-within, as knowledge-making and through the individual-as-locus-of-knowledge. Focusing on how knowledge "happens" through individual bodies and experiences within these museums provides an example of the image schematic and metaphoric ways language works to express different elements of these experiences which may be backgrounded in more traditional museums. As such, emergent museums and the terms we used to describe them provide evidence of the different kinds of knowledge processes at work that relate the small-scale, seemingly peripheral or tangential ways each of us comes to have a world. Connecting knowledge to embodied modes of meaning-making and the felt qualities of experience helps us to reconsider how individual acts of museum-making rely on internalized understandings of the museum as place and as process. In support of this analysis, I next provide some examples of how my own localized, individualized experiences of knowledge-making visiting museums in Idaho, United States and in several Romanian villages to connect these developments to the potential for visitor experiences in emergent museums.

Knowledge in emergent museums: Connecting moments from Cleo's Ferry Museum and Romania

The goal of this section is to detail examples of knowledge-from-within, knowledge-making and individual-as-locus-of-knowledge that surfaced for me during a visit to Cleo's Ferry Museum and Nature Trail in Melba, Idaho. I relate these moments to resonant experiences I have had visiting three different Romanian emergent museums to provide a sense of these spaces from one visitor's perspective. I want to illustrate the nature of relationality at play in my way of having a world as a reflection of the theoretical framework. After briefly introducing these museums, I focus on describing and connecting moments of knowledge-making expressed as photographs I took at each site. This personal approach is required to understand experiences of other visitors to these museum sites because I need first to understand the intricacies of my own knowledge-making processes.

The museums

This analysis conveys experiences that happened across four different emergent museum sites listed in Table 1.

Though each of these museums is remarkable because of the specificity it offers, I want to focus here on enumerating those relational elements that linked these museums as similar within my mind. These

Museum	Location / Website
Cleo's Ferry Museum and Nature Trail	Melba, Idaho, USA/ https://www.facebook.com/Cleos-Ferry-Museum-233675496834208/
Muzeul Interetnic al Văii Hârtibaciului (Interethnic Museum of Hârtibaciului Valley)	Alţâna, Sibiu County, Romania/ http://recomespar.ro/hartibaciului.html
Muzeul PASTORAL Jina (Pastoral Museum of Jina)	Jina, Sibiu County, Romania/ http://recomespar.ro/pastoral.html
Colecţia Etnografică George Nechiti (Ethnographic collection of George Nechiti)	Feldru, Bistriţa-Năsăud County, Romania/ http://recomespar.ro/george_nechiti.html

Table 1:Emergent museum sites, locations and URLs included in this study.

were mainly visible correlations, including the rural locations of each, characteristics that appeared obvious to me at first sight upon arrival. There was a felt sense to these visual qualities that impressed me, again enhanced by their "out of the way" locales, which can best be described as a sense of being handmade, rough and rustic, and "old" or historical; each one of these eclectic spaces appeared to me to innovate in its own way through the repurposing and rearranging of old or unusual things.

But when I arrive at these sites, I also know (because I have read about them in advance), that these spaces are tied intimately to the lives of their makers. This is the one key difference between my experiences at the US versus Romanian sites. At Cleo's, the original makers have passed, but the family has committed to keeping the museum open and ongoing, though when I was there no one from the family was present at the site. It is run as a public space with regular opening hours, with donations accepted on the honor system: visitors are expected to respect the space and to donate an entry fee as they see fit. This contrasts with the Romanian examples featured here whose makers were all living and who graciously welcomed me as I arrived at each site. Further, the Romanian museums were in private homes and as such required a fully-guided tour through the home and collections. This might explain another felt difference between Cleo's and its Romanian counterparts: the Romanian museums did not rely on signage to describe its objects and displays; the museum-makers provided this narrative to me directly in English or through a translator. At Cleo's, signage was essential and integral to the museum experience. However, as will be shown, it did not come in the form of extensive museum labels but through informal, rustic signs with bold block letters. In this way, the museum maker's tour through Cleo's was more metaphysical than absent.

Each museum, whether in Romania or Idaho, expresses its aesthetic distinctness based on its locality: Cleo's architecture was more stereotypically "American," correlating, for instance, to depictions of the US commonly featured in old Western movies, while the Romanian museums present aspects of peasantness that as a group "look" distinctly Romanian but individually also showcase regionally specificity, particularly in the design and form of handicrafts on display. Further, the main "focus" of each Romanian museum could be generally described as connecting to some sense of heritage at national, regional, local or family levels. This is different from Cleo's, which calls itself a museum, but is often featured in the tourist literature that classifies it more often alongside folk or outsider art and roadside attractions[5] as a kind of Americana. Elements of this are evidenced in a comparison of the following descriptions:

Cleo's is described by the website Atlas Obscura[6] as:

> Spread throughout the winding nature trail and its preserved 1860's ferry service buildings are thousands of bird houses, ceramic lawn decorations, signs espousing random religious philosophies, bronze statues, a graveyard, and even a flock of live peacocks. Combined, the effect of all the totally non-related elements is dizzying and absolutely unique. (Atlas Obscura 2018)

5) For instance, listed in *Roadside America*: https://www.roadsideamerica.com/tip/34014.

6) https://www.atlasobscura.com/

Romanian emergent museums are described as:

> Retrieved testimonies, old objects, historical documents, archive photos, local manufacturer products gathered from the villagers and arranged in different ways and tonalities help them give a meaning to some spaces where local culture, which bears the mark of a single man's personality and thinking, acquires original, strong or ingenuous forms and interpretations. (Mihalache 2009a: 123)

What stands out as most resonant to me from within these descriptions is that each includes a listing of what one can see: there is so much at each site, it requires enumeration to capture the expansiveness of the visual lists (Eco 2009) these sites present as kind of a feast for the eyes (and other senses). These descriptions further capture the sense of do-it-yourself and author qualities described previously in connection to the kinds of knowledge-making they employ. They are not linear and direct; one "winds" through them, through different "ways and tonalities" of "dizzying" uniqueness and ingenuity. These descriptions are featured here because they encapsulate those experiential qualities I have come to desire from this kind of museum. Being immersed within these museums and visually devouring their offerings engenders a relatedness between these so-called "non-related elements" that develops through an intimacy created as another's internal logic entwines with my own. These quotes exemplify the senses of knowledge at work in these museums, tied as they are to uniqueness and ingenuity.

As a visitor to Cleo's, I was ready to be open to this new world, further prepared for my visit by the sign that welcomed me, as shown in Figure B.

Fig. B: Showing the sign that encapsulates museum-maker's intentions and visitor responsibilities at Cleo's Ferry Museum. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

The sign in the photograph that greets all visitors to Cleo's reads:

> *This Place was Built*
> *As a Vibrant Faith*
> *Adventure*
> *You are My Special*
> *Friend and Visitor Today*
> *Please Keep it Free From Harm.*

It helps the visitor to prepare for their visit by instructing them on what the site might ask of them: a vibrant faith adventure requires more than mere blind acceptance or a misplaced love of adrenaline, it means being open and ready to trust. This concept of a *vibrant faith adventure* signaled to me that if I could pay attention and be engaged at this place, perhaps I could also even be a little bit changed through my visit—which is in some ways what I have come to expect from my time spent at emergent museums. Cleo's sign acts as a personalized welcome, even though the original creators of this place, Cleo and Samuel Swayne, were no longer alive. Further, while Cleo and Samuel were not present physically, all that stood around me was a product of their embodied

intentions and experiences that had gained a materiality that was able to outlive them, enmeshed with and carrying forward their own particular aesthetics of visuality and faith—their ways of having a world. From the outset, this invoked in me a sense wonder about life and the great beyond that put me in the perfect mindset to contemplate all this nature trail had to offer.

It is perhaps also worth noting that I did not come to Cleo's as a "researcher;" this visit happened in the context of a vacation. This is unlike my Romanian research visits, which took place under the guise of "fieldwork." The main notable difference is that at Cleo's there was no spoken tour narrative to audio record; though photographs were taken extensively Cleo's in the same way I would approach photographing at the Romanian sites: responding to what felt like "notable moments" (Klimaszewski 2016) that I wanted to record and remember. However, it must also be pointed out that the moments I have connected to in my Romanian museum visits do not represent what were arguably the more central stories those museums work to tell about heritage, peasant ways of life and the past. The moments from both museums depicted here were those that were more peripheral to the "main themes" that could be identified as exemplary of these museum visits. This is another way of saying that I am not trying to suggest any essentiality about these museums through the examples I present; quite the opposite, I am trying to illustrate the value of considering deeply seemingly nascent or tangential moments that resonate as patterns of felt experience and what these mean within the expanding contexts of museum experience. The photographic pairings featured here present a selection of visual moments that illustrate knowledge-making and its relation to locality of knowledge and knowledge-from-within, in an effort to capture something of the felt modes of experience that create relationality between physically and temporally distant museum experiences. Here, the focus of my imagined connections is to consider possibilities for visitors within emergent museums.

Fig. C: A birdhouse and instructional signage along the path of the nature trail at Cleo's Ferry Museum. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

Imagination is important

The nature trail at Cleo's begins (or ends, depending on which way you decide to move through the property) with a series of homemade birdhouses mounted on fence posts lining a paved trail. Each birdhouse/sign pairing presents its own bit of folk wisdom or food for thought. I find myself wondering, as I wander along this inviting pathway, are these signs interpretive, instructive, factual? And I have to stop myself from taking a photograph of every last birdhouse. But I could not keep myself from photographing this one (Figure C).

The aesthetic feel is rustic and handmade, the creator(s) of these birdhouses compulsive and prolific. There are several dozen and, I will find, more to be found throughout the property. As I walk and look, I work to balance immersive moments of contemplation with the excitement that moves me to want to go through the trail too quickly, eager to see what else there is, to discover more. But this message: *Imagination is important*—stops me.

In the context of the birdhouse path, this sign encouraged me to wonder: who or what lives in these birdhouses? Are they just birds—or perhaps ideas, or maybe even imaginary beings, like fairies, elves or gnomes? This sense of subtle, spiritual instruction caught me, for reading the signs at Cleo's did not feel like an imposition or a command but an invitation. This was advice for enjoying the museum, but it was also advice for life: I could carry this instruction with me and rely on it in times of stunted creativity or boredom and remind myself: imagination is important! Mostly I consider, what is implied by all of this? My mind wanders again to the imagined birds who inhabit these homes (because I prefer birds over the other creatures). What a wonderful place to live. If I am reincarnated as a bird, I want to live at Cleo's. It also reminds me of something I saw at the museum in Alțâna (Figure D).

This photograph of animal footprints in the homemade bricks on the porch of the Interethnic Museum of Hârtibaciului Valley in Alțâna, Romania came to mind. I remembered this museum visit with the museum-maker who was young and so enthusiastic in sharing his collection. The visit lasted for several hours and he talked with me and my translator first in his office, sharing with us parts of his collection that were not housed in the museum building (a private home located nearby in the village). After enjoying herbal tea and admiring some of his favorite objects, we moved on to tour the formal museum space. But as we entered, we stopped for a moment to survey our surroundings, the yard, the surrounding fields and the late-day sun, and he pointed out this small detail: footprints in the bricks left by animals (birds, cats, others?) as they were drying. This is that sense of small knowledge—not small because it is insignificant, but detailed, focused, seemingly minor, but full of possibilities if one actually stops to consider it. Thinking about these implied animals as sentient beings moving through the world, building homes, impressing themselves upon these handmade bricks was fun and unexpected. It allowed me to see the world through the eyes of the makers, considering different details that I might not notice without them.

Fig. D: Animal footprints in the handmade bricks lining the porch of the museum in Altana. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

Don't be afraid

Wandering through Cleo's, happily immersed in my experience, enjoying the discoveries happening around every corner, I came across this imaginary being shown in Figure E.

Created from a log that resembles an antlered creature, this do-it-yourself creation is pure folly. I wonder whether the sign is suggesting that the creature should not be afraid of me or if the creature is communicating that I should not be afraid of it. Because I feel open, having been encouraged to imagine, I appreciate how a dead tree has been brought back to life with

Fig. E: A creature fashioned from an old tree branch emerges from a tangle of roots and trees to encourage visitors walking along the nature path. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

yellow flower-shaped eyes and a painted red tongue. Except for the eyes, the other parts of the creature are all integral to the basic form, delineated through different colors of paint. S/he emerges (curious, it seems, welcoming me) from a tangle of tree trunks and branches as a glorious example of transformation and reuse of natural materials—turning the tragedy of a dead tree into a new being with a new life and purpose. I find this encounter comforting, as if I have made a friend in a new world.

This reminds me of my visit to the museum at the Ethnographic collection of George Nechiti in Feldru, Romania. It contained, in addition to the more traditional handicrafts and objects of daily life, many examples of this kind of natural art, shellacked tree roots and taxidermied creatures, at that point more so than in other Romanian museums I had visited. Upon walking up the stairs inside this museum that is deeply entwined with the proprietors' living spaces, I encountered this waterfowl presenting a collection of knotted, twisted tree roots (Figure F). This small space tucked in felt like a playground for these natural objects-turned-museum-pieces, as if I had invaded their privacy. Nevertheless, it felt as if the duck was inviting me to look more closely

Fig. F: A taxidermied waterfowl introduces a collection of roots displayed in a small nook at the top of the stairs at the museum in Feldru, Romania. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

at his collection of transformational root creations.

This sense of visual metaphor, of seeing and experiencing one thing as another (roots as a collection of art objects; a fallen tree transformed into a creature), shows a kind of play with relationality. It invited me to look differently, to imagine how one thing can become something else; that not every object is only as it seems. Imagining in this way, bending the way of being of an object particularly through a context of folly, influences the flexibility of my own worldview. This is perhaps an example of how ingenuity, as a way of knowing new things, arises through creativity, particularly with organic objects. This illustrates also the sense of livelihood that I have found to be present in emergent museums more generally, where individual creativity acts as a reminder of fun, of folly, of laughing with versus laughing at. In its own way, this kind of creative visualization provides an exercise in how to encounter difference.

Window on the water

Window on the water provides a play on words that, at this point in my visit to Cleo's, has become normalized (Figure G). Literally right next to the river, this old architectural window sits along the bank of the Snake River with the lovely landscape as a background. A bench (providing the perspective from which this photograph was taken) invites one to sit and take in the view,

Fig. G: Window on the water, one of the many plays on words found at Cleo's Ferry Museum. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

to really be in this place in a larger sense, to take some time to attempt to truly see it. As a place of contemplation, I join the figurines perched on the window's edge and playful birds-in-flight for the view, noting again the presence of yet another birdhouse. This is arguably my favorite part of the trail—getting to really be near this river that has structured so much of the life of this place (in its history as an old ferry crossing).

I wonder about where the window came from, what views has it offered throughout its existence. Is it happy to not have been relegated to the trash heap? What did Cleo and her family see through this window? Did she often contemplate this view? In this way, I feel connected to this point in space in Melba, Idaho, but I also feel connected to Cleo and her family who have made this place. I now carry with me not just a sense of their fun, folly and spirituality, I am steeped in the sense that my body has now moved along this pathway and now embodies this view. And I remember visiting the museum at the Pastoral Museum in Jina, Romania.

In Jina, the drive up into the hills to get to the museum was stunning. Arriving at the museum, and moving through this long, narrow property, through multiple rooms filled with traditional objects, it felt like the museum tour would never end. Eventually it did, however, with our small group of four people being led through to enjoy the view from the rear of the property (Figure H). Connecting to this memory allows me to think about how, at Jina, I was immersed in different dimensions of locality: within the private home; within the collections as objects of daily lives long ago lived. But this movement through the propety in its entirety, to see this view, more fully located these experiences within a landscape of how this place looked and felt, that defined the lives lived there and shaped the purposes of everyday objects.

This sense of immersion in the locality—a deep sense of connecting not just with facts and information but with the viscerality of being there, of feeling the sun

Fig. H: The tour of the musem in Jina, Romania ends with a walk to the back of the property to survey the landscape. Photo credits: Cheryl Klimaszewski.

and the breeze and that sense of really not wanting to leave . . . to want to take it all in and take it with me. For me this sense of embodying the figural, of internalizing what it felt like to be in this place, describes something about my role in the overall relationality of knowledge through which I attempt to connect these experiences. It is perhaps what I am attempting to capture through the terminology of *emergent museums*. These places are sites of multiple emergences: individual ways of having a world that intermingle and entwine on a small, manageable scale; feelings creating opportunities for connecting to other ways of knowing through people, places and things. Within emergent museums, as I hope I have shown through these three examples, having a world connects viscerally to what it means to be in the world, moving away from the sometimes rarified experience of visiting more traditional museums.

Conclusion and ways forward: Emergent museums as could-be museums

Using the example of emergent museums, which has been growing within the scholarly literature, I have tried to show,

in the spirit of Lakoff and Johnson (2003), how the metaphorical language used to describe these unique creations is not merely descriptive; it actually reveals modes of experiential understanding and reflects the relational knowledge-making processes at work in how each of us comes to have a world (Johnson 1990). In the context of new museology that focuses on meaning-making (as opposed to transmission) models of knowledge-making, knowledge becomes less entwined with the museum-as-place. Reconceptualizing the museum as an apparatus for knowledge-making (Hooper-Greenhill 1992) decouples the notion of museum from place and facilitates different ways for these processes to be put into practice in other realms. Emergent museum-makers have (re)interpreted the role and function of museums according to their own rules, creating unique, interactive spaces outside the museum mainstream that provide different opportunities for knowledge-making because of their do-it-yourself and authorial approaches to crafting museums.

Where amateur, naïve, wild and unofficial describe knowledge-from-within, these become variations on "outsider" knowledge (that which stands outside of established knowledge) through which future connections can perhaps be drawn between emergent museums as form of creative expression akin to outsider art (Cardinal 1972), that kind of art being made outside of the traditional, established cultural boundaries and in strong contrast to that which is accepted as "high art" or "high culture." This kind of knowledge is not transmitted from on high but originates within and emanates outward from and between individuals. This sense of the individual-as-locus-of-knowledge is expressed through the senses of personal, local, family, vernacular and grassroots, tying knowledge to a sense of place through individual bodies. To illustrate these concepts, I have presented a selection of my own moments of knowledge-making that surfaced across emergent museum visits in the United States and Romania. This has hopefully illustrated opportunities for the depth and creativity of knowledge about people, places and things (present and absent; real and imagined) emergent museums provide.

One of my favorite descriptions of emergent museums is "could-be" museums (Mihăilescu 2009). On the one hand, this suggests that emergent museums are only aspiring to become museums; on the other, it proposes that these unique, ingenious spaces open possibilities for the museum form more broadly. Emergent museums are metacultural (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006b; Urban 2001) with their makers acting as entrepreneurs who facilitate the movement of the old into the new (Urban 2001) providing us with new ideas about what museums could be in the future. In this way, emergent museums fit within the new museological approaches that embrace visitor-centric, experience-based, grassroots approaches to the museum (Heijnen 2010). But there is something more. They can also challenge the museum mainstream and encourage "the experts" to reconceptualize the nature and purpose of their museums to incorporate more individualized, localized knowledges. Emergent museums are experimental spaces, modifying the rules of museology for their own needs and ends, with unexpected results for makers and visitors alike. They are spaces where seemingly peripheral or tangential, highly individualized knowledge can find its place through the personalization of institutionalized museum practices. These are just some of the ways that contemplating the metaphorical nature of how we describe emergent museums as knowledge institutions has implications for what they can mean within the wider cultural landscape in the 21st century.

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