Museums as Material: Experiential Landscapes and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

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Few would argue that "public memory places" like contemporary museums do not perform rhetorical work, in that they represent object-event-discourse-practices that are "meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential" (Blair, Dickinson, and Ott 2). There is currently a range of work that focuses on museum sites as material-rhetorical spaces, spaces which construct aesthetic experiences (Clark); denote subject positions and "materialized narratives" (Aoki, Dickinson, and Ott 241) that are produced through "directed movement and simulated environments" (239); entwine "history, memory, and heritage" (Taylor 57), and construct and destroy remembrance (Armada). Too, there have been recent forays into cultural studies' examinations of curatorial practices of museums that invoke rhetorical concepts of audiences, texts, spaces, objects, and contexts (see Edwards and Mead; Gaudelli and Munger; McLeod; Segall). However, given the global range of sites and spaces of museums that scholars have chosen with which to do this work (from the Buffalo Bill Museum to the National Museum of the American Indian, the United States Holocaust Museum to the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum), methodological considerations of exactly *how* to analyze these spaces is only beginning to be developed. In what follows, I map a material-rhetorical approach to analyzing contemporary museum sites, drawing on Vicki Tolar Burton's notion of *rhetorical accretion* (547) and the heuristic work of Carole Blair with memorial sites. By bringing the work of these scholars together, I demonstrate that "reading" museum sites with material methodology in mind

results in tactics for invention which emphasize networks over discrete discursive elements. In examining the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) through this methodological lens, I demonstrate both the breadth of knowledge generated about what is often taken to be a singular text ("a museum"), and the depth of textual circulation one material site has on its surrounding contexts and generated texts—that is to say, I articulate the network of accretions that material sites construct as they emerge as what Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki term "experiential landscapes" (30).

Museums and Materialist Rhetorics

Although it has been noted that texts associated with traditional rhetorical study, such as public speeches, tend to have "clear boundaries in time and space" (Brummett 80), the field itself has shifted to encompass what Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, borrowing from LeFebvre, term "diffuse texts," those who have "perimeter[s]…mixed up with other signs" ("Memory" 29). This is notably taken up by rhetoric and composition studies in visual rhetoric, new media, virtual realities, ambient rhetoric, ecocomposition, and choric invention (see Dickinson and Maugh; Halbritter; Kimme Hea et al.; Rutz; Staley; Dobrin and Morey; Rice and O'Gorman; Rickert; Hawk; Brooke; Rice; Ulmer, *Internet*; Santos and Browning). This move toward diffuse texts as objects of rhetorical study has paved the way for studies of material rhetoric that move in, among, and between a variety of texts. Material rhetoric, taken up by specialists in rhetoric and composition studies in particular, may be defined, as Barbara Dickson elegantly puts it, as "a mode of interpretation that takes as its object of study the significations of material things and corporeal entities—objects that signify not through language but through their spatial organization, mobility, mass, utility, orality, and tactility" (297).

Increasingly, rhetorical scholars turn to theories of material rhetoric—which look to upset, to some degree, the object-idea distinction—to change a vocabulary for meaning-making from one that "places itself as an ideal in

opposition to matter" to one that reflects a relationship *to* matter (Condit 336; see also McGee). Thus, material rhetoric is taken up in rhetorical scholarship that examines corporeality and bodies (Hollis; Forbes), archives as material and historical sites (Sharer; Gaillet; Clary-Lemon), places and space (Reynolds; De Vinne; Marback; Wright; Edbauer; see also Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki "Memory"), space-time (Jack), emotion and affect (Davis; Hawhee, "Rhetoric's Sensorium"; Micciche; Gross), movement (Aoki, Dickenson, and Ott), "autotopography" or "museums of the self" (Gonzalez 82), and three-dimensional objects (see Sheridan; Rohan; Smith).

Notably, cultural studies scholars have examined museums as textual sites, and although they invoke both the complexity of museum spaces as texts and pedagogical spaces, they focus overtly on the objects that museums contain, with "what interpretations spring from them, and how their extraction [from original locations] fundamentally alters their meanings" (Gaudelli and Munger 41). Yet if we incorporate the idea of museums as historical, affective, and cultural sites "as part of the texture of larger landscapes" (Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, "Spaces" 29), then we cannot effectively separate interior museum objects from the geographic, emotional, and pedagogical imprints inherent in the creation and appearance of a museum on a particular external local landscape. As well, given the increasing move of contemporary museums away from object displays (Conn 57), considering only object-knowledge framing will increasingly represent a limitation in critical examinations of museum sites. Dickinson et al. ("Spaces") suggest as a guiding framework for thinking about the material impacts of museum memory places, "that spaces of memory are better thought of as constitutive elements of landscapes than as discrete texts, that landscapes entail both physical and cognitive dimensions, and that such landscapes offer fully embodied subject positions, which literally shape visitors' practices of looking" (30).

Because museum sites are diffuse in nature, we have long lacked ways to analyze, categorize, or describe them as "rhetorical formations" (Blair 19). Similarly, given the diffuse nature of material rhetorics and their attendance

to both meaning and matter, material methodologies—that is, ways to consider "how research does or should proceed" (Kirsch and Sullivan 2)—have been slow in developing. One of the few to articulate a case for material methodology has been Vicki Tolar Burton, whose notion of *rhetorical accretion*—"the process of layering additional texts over and around the original text" (547)—was used to examine material-rhetorical changes to published texts in circulation over time. As a methodology, Burton suggests that "the task of material rhetoric…is to penetrate and examine the layers of rhetorical accretion, reading each one closely not only for the nature of its own rhetoric but for how it colors the ethos of the core text and what it, along with the modes of production and distribution, indicates about cultural formation in the larger discourse community" (548). For Burton, accounting for rhetorical accretions (each as a "layer" of text) allow us to consider the aesthetic, physical, temporal, ideological, paratextual, historical, and linguistic together to investigate "systems of discourse" (569).

Although I have found the notion of rhetorical accretion a key concept for approaching material sites (see Clary-Lemon), it bears some consideration that Burton's original use of the concept was to examine bibliographic materials relating to *The Account of Hester Ann Rogers*. In extending her work to museum sites, I've found it useful to think through the ways in which Carole Blair's work on American memorial sites may help organize and structure the layers of accretion found within a range of experiential landscapes, inclusive of museums. By viewing Blair's heuristic and its attendant questions of material existence, durability, reproduction and preservation, textual interaction, and physical/corporeal participation (30) in terms of layers of rhetorical accretion, I argue for an approach to material sites that engages each layer as connected to the next in a *network of accretions* which can help researchers form an attendant whole from seemingly disparate markers of diffuse texts. This may be particularly useful for museum sites, which mitigate circulations of housed objects as well as existing as buildings on the landscape. In their discussion of the ways that museum objects are limited in their ability to make others "present," Gaudelli

and Mungur suggest that there is "slippage that always exists in representational efforts, be it in the object itself, in the interpretations that arise from such objects and in the extraction of such objects from their origins" (41). Thus an ordering of the material layers of texts as diffuse as museum spaces may help to mediate the limitations of slippage, i.e., the assumption that once a visitor "sees" an object, she or he may "know" the singular narrative of difficulty (such as genocide or war) contained within it. It is my hope, then, that considering museum interiors and landscapes as both *housing* and *being* different "core texts" that can be seen through a lens of material rhetoric can encourage complex understandings of the layers that are formed from objects, spaces, architecture, and affect from a range of different subject positions, and disturb the bifurcation of inside/outside that emerges from considering museums as object repositories—instead opening these landscapes to see inside and outside as connected in a network of place. In other words, I engage here in some degree of chorography (see Walter; Ulmer *Heuretics*), situating invention of *place* between a region-governed *topos* and being-governed *ch?ra* (Ulmer, *Heuretics* 70).

Although heuristics themselves to do not dictate organizational principles, here I've chosen Blair's questions as a nodal frameworking for this piece to demonstrate how such questions may be used to construct layers of accretions that may be read alongside/within/connected to one another to attend to rhetorical networks as both "place[s] and frame[s] of action" (Swarts 121). Blair suggests that viewing sites themselves as rhetorical texts invite us to consider the following:

- What is the significance of the text's material existence?
- What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the text?
- What are the text's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation?
- What does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts?
- How does the text act on people? (30).

Using Blair's heuristic questions, I intend to show how they lead researchers to viewing their answers as networked accreted layers of rhetorical data. Moving through choric positionings of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, in what follows I examine a few of many possible accretions generated by the contemporary and ongoing development of the museum, using known "texts"—materials, forces, bodies, relationships, affects— in and around the museum's experiential landscape as examples. Such exemplification is always and necessarily partial, given that the CMHR continues to produce (and is thusly produced by) texts; however, the sample range used here suggests a foundation of a material-rhetorical approach that may be used as a contemporary but time-bound snapshot of the CMHR prior to its opening in September of 2014.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: Examining Networks of Accretions

The CMHR is located at a known historic "meeting place" of the Red and Assiniboine rivers (known as "the Forks") in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and its location is famous not only for its role as a historical site of trade and indigenous gatherings, but also as the site of the Métis rebellion led by Louis Riel, a founder of the province of Manitoba. An ongoing site of textual production, the CMHR was newly opened in the fall of 2014, and its exigence for existence was established by Canadian Parliament through amendments to the Museums Act in 2008 ("About the Museum"). One of the only national museums to be built outside of Ottawa, the Canadian capital, the museum's mandate is "to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, [and] to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue" ("Museums Act"). Such a mandate has promised that it will indeed be a site where experience, memory, history, and notions of injustice and rights work together to encourage an examination of the representation of artifacts and sites in the present that works against the relegation of the notion of human rights and their violations to collective

notions of the past; indeed, its mandate is overseen by Parliament through reporting structures through the Minister of Canadian Heritage. As such, the museum promises to attend to preservation, heritage, collective memory, Canadian identity, and "research, learning, and entertainment" (CMHR "About"). A unique case study in material rhetoric, the CMHR is a new emergence on the Winnipeg landscape, having taken five years to build, from the point of groundbreaking in April 2009 to opening in September 2014. The CMHR marked a huge capital investment in Winnipeg of over 350 million dollars by the federal government, the provincial government, the city of Winnipeg, and private donors, most notably by Israel "Izzy" Asper, who donated 20 million dollars to the CMHR and was controversially noted as saying "that he would build a museum that would tell the story of the Holocaust" (Basen). In what follows, I've selected key accretions leading up to the museum's opening (rather than an examination of museum artifacts and exhibits) to add to the considerations of museums as *choric* material spaces which construct and negotiate "memory, networks, technologies, intuitions, and environments" (Rickert 67) as they arrive on, and change, landscapes. In part, then, this analysis is meant to demonstrate both the breadth of knowledge generated about what is often taken to be a singular text (a museum), and the depth of textual circulation one material site has on its surrounding contexts and generated texts.

What is the Significance of the Text's Material Existence?

Among others, Blair (35-6) suggests that the existence, emergence, or introduction of a material text onto a landscape—like a building, memorial, or public site—has an "agenda setting" function in the public imagination. By virtue of its very appearance on the landscape, a material text focuses our attention in particular ways. Although architectural theorists have long seen architecture as rhetorical (see Jencks "Rhetoric", *Language*; Broadbent, Bunt, and Jencks; Hattenhauer), rhetorical and cultural studies scholars are only just beginning to note the *folding in* (Latour 239) of objects, texts, landscapes and human relationships. Latour suggests that objects (in this

case, museum buildings) both "hold steady a certain frame such that a discrete interaction can take place" and "mediate and aggregate events—to relocate them—in a network of events" (qtd. in Brandt and Clinton 1328). In this case, the CMHR materially holds steady to direct our attention and action in particular ways (as museum-goers, for example), as well as acts as a foil for conversations about rights and difficult knowledge, and frames a range of encounters both in and around the museum site. The accretive content generated by this question of the significance of the material, then, can only be considered in relation to subsequent layers that speak to material durability, preservation, multiple texts, and human relationships.

Thus the museum building itself may be read as a rhetorical accretion both on the artifacts it houses and on the existing landscape surrounding it, while creating a framework of attention-worthiness of the subject of human rights in both national and local contexts. Narratives of progress located in the design and construction of the building itself are most notably revealed in New Mexican architect Antoine Predock's assertion of the design as a "journey from darkness to light" (Adams). Located on Treaty One land,1 from the museum's "Roots" through the "Garden of Contemplation," through the "Cloud" toward the "Tower of Hope," the built site shapes particular codes and shifts of meaning. As Blair suggests, the "existence of a [material] text may generate other kinds of consequences as well" (36); this is perhaps made clearest in considering the CMHR's 150-square-metre block excavation which resulted in the discovery of over 400,000 ancient archeological artifacts (Fitzhenry). Although steps were taken to minimize the impact of the museum on the surrounding land, these, too, have had affective and material consequences; as media relations have indicated, within the drill holes needed for piles and caissons for the CMHR's footing, "traditional Aboriginal medicine bundle[s were] deposited under supervision of an Elder" (CMHR, "CMHR Releases") in a bid to replace, to some degree, what was displaced in the excavation.

The material of the museum site itself has propagated a range of other texts—

newsmedia accounts of the archeological dig site (see, for example, CBC, "Ancient Farming"), as well as public letters of protest authored by the Association of Manitoba Archaeologists suggesting "accelerated destruction of First Nations heritage beneath the Canadian Museum of Human Rights" (Syms). These criticisms have been taken up by the Director of Communications and Public Engagement for the CMHR (Cassie, "Letter"), among others. Emergent conversations like these, made possible by the materiality of the museum's built existence, cannot be ignored in considering their effects in creating what Gaudelli and Munger term "presence" (40)—what I would argue indeed functions "double-presently"—to both add to the interpretation of any objects housed in the museum, as well as add to how the museum itself has contributed materially to the extraction of the 400,000 artifacts. The CMHR's built existence at once covers up, both literally and figuratively, the knowledge of archeological ethics and realities behind the site's built emergence. The CMHR as a material-rhetorical object will fundamentally alter the meanings of both sets of texts, that is to say, the entry of the CMHR-as-text within the particular context of the convergence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, is a move on that context that changes it in some way (Blair 34), and those changes are represented in networks of accretions that may be read alongside one another for their pedagogical, curatorial, and rhetorical implications.

What are the Apparatuses and Degrees of Durability Displayed by the Text?

Blair acknowledges that "materiality varies in both degree and kind," and that this variance is significant, particularly when it invokes sign systems of durability and vulnerability (37). Suggestions of the CMHR's building materials themselves as significant go beyond the initial excavation of the site; most notable is the reoccurring mention of the use of over 3,000 tons of locally quarried Tyndall stone (see Weedon), which is "synonymous with Manitoba architecture" and whose "visible presence of fossilized nautiluses, coral, and other ancient animal life…make even its most contemporary uses distinctly rooted in the past" (Thorsteinson 2). Thus the durability of stone

may not only be read for its use as a building material, but also its connection to landscape, locality, and history. The CMHR's cornerstone was chosen, inscribed, and unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II in a visit to Winnipeg in 2010, in which she revealed the stone's provenance from Runnymede (established to be the location of the signing of the Magna Carta), as well as its encasement in Tyndall stone. Despite the nature of material durability considered here, however, we may be reminded that bricks and mortar (or limestone and glass) are only as durable as natural elements allow. Santee illustrates this in her consideration of materiality on the contemporary museum site of the Czech and Slovak museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 2008, the museum was devastated by a flood in which the high water mark reached eight feet inside the museum building. The collections themselves, along with those in the African American Museum of Iowa, suffered extensive damage, which thus changed not only how the museum presented future collections with fewer artifacts, but also resulted in temporary museum locations in malls, and in its most dramatic case resulted in a full-scale move of the 1,500-ton Czech and Slovak Museum building to a new location 480 feet away and three feet higher than the 2008 flood's high water mark ("Museum History").

Although considerations of building materials give rise to layers of accretion on, say, choices of stone material, preservation of local memory on museum artifacts, and defining a particular version of the past, the CMHR's built durability has other degrees of permanence that mark it in particular ways, and give rise to a variety of other textual and pedagogical considerations that connect this layer to a network of others. Emerging out of the built existence of the CMHR, for instance, have been ongoing discussions of paid naming rights of museum spaces; as of 2013, the CMHR had sold naming rights to "15 areas of the museum, and have another 34 available, from $1 million for various facilities up to $7.5 million for naming the main exhibit gallery" (Martin, "Teachers'" B1). The main reason for such fundraising efforts were ongoing costs associated with CMHR construction that delayed both its completion and opening dates. Paying attention to the material durability of

the CMHR's built environment here leads not only to a consideration of naming rights and capital investment, but also of its built internal pedagogical spaces. Located in the Tyndall stone-covered "roots" of the CMHR building are permanent classrooms, meant to "serve many purposes ranging from a quiet space in which to conduct hands-on multi-sensory activities that complement tours, to discussions with other schools in Canada via videoconference, summer day camps, teacher's workshops and much more" (Olson). Although Segall notes that museums often act as "informal classrooms" (55), the CMHR, like other museums of its type, has made itself materially and formally an overt pedagogical space. Yet its creation of these spaces has also commodified them as *nameable*, in which various stakeholders might jostle for a prominent position of being identified with particular classroom environments.

The activity of commodified naming of CMHR spaces generated a variety of discursive media, from news articles to tweets, but it is perhaps most significantly taken up by the February 2013 public member appeal by the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) union President, Paul Olson. In a bid for 1.5 million dollar naming rights of one of the CMHR's classrooms by the Teachers' Society (or a member fee of $1.52 a month per member for five years), Olson appeals to membership not only by an embedded online video, but also positions MTS as a primary stakeholder, and positions pedagogy as a notable primary endeavor of the museum. Olson fronts the materiality of the CMHR as a tacit rationalization for the cost and involvement of MTS membership in the museum, stating, "The very first room in the Museum to actually be 'a room,' to have walls, to take form, was its classroom. The entire Museum will be a place of learning, to be sure, but the beating heart, and the raison d'être of it, is education." Olson writes that the Museum gave MTS "the right of first refusal to purchase 'naming rights'" for classroom space, thus solidifying the honor in naming museum space on the same page as he alludes to the prominence of pedagogy and the involvement of local and national schools in learning content areas of "Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, Citizenship, Leadership, and Teacher's Institutes." A move such as the

MTS case on naming rights suggests a shift in what Blair means by "durability." Here, naming extends museum spaces beyond the immediate physical and material place into a connection with schools, businesses, and communities, impacting the rhetorical nature of museum spaces as being seen as primarily curatorial. Classrooms are invoked as the "roots" of the CMHR, are built into the museum as a physical site, are surrounded by locally-quarried stone, and are arguably positioned as the "heart" of the museum space which will give rise to programming centered on human rights.

However, the shift to naming suggests a different kind of material-discursive durability, one that has clear cash value, and one which is overtly connected to human rights. As Olson writes further:

Every day, we welcome children and families into our schools from every corner of the province and of the world. They have known and lived poverty, war, disease, famine, and exploitation in their most heinous forms. Despite great progress having been made, we still—today—have students who fear entering our schools because of the colour of their skin, their gender identity or orientation, their sex, or their creed. We teach many subjects—but first, we teach people.

Thus the costs associated with constructing and opening the museum, its ongoing fundraising efforts, and the CMHR as a pedagogical space cannot be separated from the discourse of human rights that are part and parcel of both the interior artifacts of the museum and its built "raison d'être." The discussion over naming rights has prioritized pedagogical functions overtly in the museum's spaces, visitors, and audiences. Olson's appeal hints, too, that prioritizing pedagogy will overtly reveal difficult knowledge embedded in subjects like war, poverty, and exploitation (when pedagogy can just as easily avoid difficulty by promoting a less challenging version of events; see Segall 57). Accretions such as these, the use of Tyndall stone and Olson's appeal, may be added as additional layers to be read on the museum building and on

the artifacts it houses. As is evident here, names and words travel in ways that rooms and buildings cannot; these movements, and their force in helping foster a network of accretions, is next taken up in considering the CMHR's modes and possibilities for reproduction and preservation.

What are the Text's Modes or Possibilities of Reproduction or Preservation?

Blair suggests that textual "reproduction is an intervention in the materiality of the text," and that scholars and critics "must acknowledge and even work with (instead of struggle against or ignore) the facts of textual reproduction" (38). That is to say, a critical lens and consideration of material rhetoric of the CMHR on one hand clearly recognizes the role of the museum's built environment, but on the other takes careful note of the way the museum materially travels, is reproduced, and is preserved in other forms and formats. This presents a range of rhetorical layers of accretion that act and are acted on by the museum: its two-dimensional signification in graphic representations, iconography, and images, and the ways in which its virtual presence on websites, brochures, and fundraising sites construct a purposive and constraining effort to "freeze an experience" (38) of a destination without the fullness of movement, touch, sight, sound, and affective interpersonal experience.

I offer two such examples of material reproduction of the CMHR that may be read as layers of rhetorical accretion alongside the texts and contexts inhabited by the museum. The first involves a traveling three-dimensional architectural model of the CMHR, along with an accompanying "10 foot, 3 dimensional architectural mural" (Cassie, "Canadian") of the museum that travelled from Manitoba to downtown Vancouver's "Georgia and Cambie Live Site" as a part of the CentrePlace Manitoba pavilion during the 2010 Winter Olympics as a component of the museum's fundraising efforts (Hainsworth). During the museum display, attendees of the Olympic games were invited to complete the sentence "Everyone has a right to…" on a protest sign, and, for a donation to the museum, have their picture taken in front of the 10-foot

mural of the museum as a take home "souvenir photo of their visit to the Museum display" (Cassie, "Canadian"). This traveling exhibit of the museum as a fundraiser represents layers of rhetorical significance that bear critical reflection on a network of events and experiences. In 2010, the museum had only broken ground and was one year into its construction; the two- and three-dimensional versions of the museum were, in fact, representations of the text not-yet-built, perhaps the text of desire rather than actuality. In addition to what looked like a successful fundraising and media-rich effort at raising the profile of both the museum and of the notion of "human rights" during the traveling exhibit to Vancouver, the museum display must be seen as altering both human experiences of the CMHR, as well as a futuristic promise. As Blair points out, "Sometimes what appears to be the rhetorical text is not *the* rhetorical text, but an altogether different one" (39).

What Blair calls a *practiced distinction* (38) between the original and copy is a confusing one here; in fact, the architectural model was far more original—that is, it existed prior to the built environs of the museum—than the CMHR itself, though it was not the "real" thing (as "real" museums cannot travel). Yet the material reality of the display suggested to visitors to Vancouver a completely different contextual setup—a different way of being in relation to the museum (as benefactors rather than museum visitors), and a different mode of interacting with the CMHR-as-text—particularly given the focus on fundraising in 2010—than in any effort since. It certainly cannot be replicated in the museum's home-place of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The financial impact of such reproduction on the CMHR's construction is noteworthy, as the "real" museum itself was delayed in completion because of underfunding, which then provided the exigence for the Olympic display. Nor should scholars ignore the production of the travelling notion of "rights," with its construction of paper signs that represent rights, in this case, as objects. Examples such as "Everyone has the right to spiritual sanctuary," "Everyone has the right to love," and "Everyone has the right to freedom" (CMHR, "Champion") tend to offer smoothing rights-narratives of progress and truth (i.e., something that everyone already *has*) rather than a more difficult kind of knowledge that

recognizes that we are very much bound up in, and are historically tied to, human genocide, colonial violence, forced emigration—at the heart of Treaty One land claims, for instance—and prohibitive social policies that negate "rights" such as love, freedom, and spiritual sanctuary. Further, the translation of ideas (such as "freedom") into containable objects (posters) trouble the notion that CMHR has cultivated of itself as an "ideas" museum (Boese). To some degree, as is shown here, ideas need material objects to carry and house them. Yet scholars should be attuned to the ways in which those material objects represent knowledge, as in this case, by obscuring the often violent and tumultuous narratives that undergird them. Here, the CMHR reveals a delicate balancing act between the notion of *rights* and fundraising efforts. Visitors to the display are not asked to engage with the difficulty of defining rights and acknowledging who has or doesn't have them; this is represented by the flippancy of posters that read, for example "Everyone has the right to visit Manitoba" (CMHR, "Champion").

Similarly, the museum has produced iconographical representations of itself that travel through space and time as a product of both its fundraising initiatives and global audience. Prior to opening, the CMHR launched awareness-raising attempts to control its own image by the production of both architectural iconography and a museum logo that have become ubiquitous in their association with the CMHR. This is to say, its iconography has become the way that the museum is most visible in the public eye. This virtual establishment of the CMHR's presence is, of course, not new in the age in which all museums, businesses, and persons may be branded with a particular website image or even signified by a noteworthy web presence; indeed, some museums depend heavily on virtual content and the preservation of oral histories and interactive timelines available only through web content (see, for example, Kim). Yet it is, perhaps, the most interesting possibility for examining preservation and reproduction, as the new iconography instantiated by the CMHR (see Figures 1 and 2) depends so heavily upon the recognition of the museum's architecture.

Figure 1: Canadian Museum for Human Rights Building and Icon

Figure 2: Canadian Museum for Human Rights Icon

The CMHR's architectural iconography is significant for two reasons. First, it allows for a range of material instantiations and reminders of the museum's built site within a range of discursive landscapes. That is to say, it offers a relatively uncomplicated denotative meaning of the museum. However, both the image of the museum and its icon are taken up in a range of places—for example, on posters advertising the museum's sponsorship of the 2014 International Conference on Investigative Journalism, Democracy, and Human Rights, and the 2015 Conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism—with the thematic "Romanticism and Rights" ("NASSR 2015"). As these images get taken up in these ways, they undergo both a material shift (representation from virtuality to paper) and a connotative one: the icon not only represents the museum, but also has undergone a shift to represent human rights. Advertising depends on visual shifts like these; as Scott suggests, such imagery, represented as visual rhetoric, can be used to "pose arguments, raise questions, create fictions, [and] present metaphors" (260). The CMHR icon has then come full circle in both a mode of reproduction of the museum, as well as the preservation and circulation of the notion of "human rights" in the public imaginary. It is not such an imaginative stretch to envisage this iconography in ways that both simplify and brand human rights in problematic and commodified ways onto a variety of other sites—as, for example, the use of the CMHR's architectural photos by the Mere Hotel advertising the September 2014 "RightsFest" (Mere Hotel). Here, *rights* as connoted by the use of the museum's image are easily conflated both with advertising other products (a hotel stay) and events (a two-day festival) that "explore and celebrate the rights and responsibilities Canadians share" (CMHR, "Canadian Concert"). Such trading on the architectural image of the CMHR can serve to illustrate the uneasy balance between the museum's mandate "to explore the subject of human rights"

(CMHR "Mandate") and its public face of that exploration, which, in the case of RightsFest, is a *celebration* of rights, emphasizing comfort over difficulty. Here, the text is preserved, reproduced, and travels in ways that no doubt will complicate the relationship between the museum, its "explorations of rights," and its various constituencies well into the future.

What Does the Text Do to (or With, or Against) Other Texts?

Although both examples of textual preservation and reproduction described above invoke the "readership" of wider publics, differing material-rhetorical accretions invite other networked relationships, calling other texts into being that are enabled and constrained by the CMHR as material site. Blair's work specifically examines memorial sites, and thus only addresses relationships among memorial sites as a point of immediate and illustrative detail in critically examining material rhetoric. She does this because, as she notes, "linkages among texts can be so varied and numerous" (39). Indeed, this one heuristic alone could generate anthologies of criticism in examining, for instance, how the CMHR acts within and against other federal and local museum spaces, or how the CMHR continues to work in generative and restrictive ways with and against virtual, pedagogical, and political texts and spaces. Blair identifies eight "linkages" between memorials and other texts that serve the following rhetorical functions: "enabling, appropriating, contextualizing, supplementing, correcting, challenging, competing, and silencing" (39). In the following discussion, I focus in on the *enabling* function of the CMHR to materially invite curatorial actors, processes, and texts into being, in part in an effort to shed light on some of the "slippage" of museum objects once extracted from their sites of origin (indeed to complicate the notion of *extraction* of objects); to separate out museums as particular kinds of material-rhetorical places distinct from memorials; to connect textual linkages with other layers of accretion; and to link again museum interiors and exteriors.

The CMHR named eleven themed galleries in February 2014; however, given

the museum's focus on the idea of human rights, many galleries are intended to be conceptual, focusing on virtual and multimedia experiences that focus on "human rights concepts" (Kirbyson). The CMHR thus straddles the object-idea distinction by having to negotiate the display of an idea—human rights—by turning it into something with *thingness* (see McGuire 202), as in the prior discussion of posters and RightsFest events. One of the ways we might highlight museums' material impacts on texts—what they do to, with, or against other texts—is to examine their enabling function on the objects they house. It's true that any museum structure invites a housing of objects, artifacts, and experiences and therefore enables particular types of texts to come into being and to be read in specific ways. This gets especially complicated when museums commission object-texts into being, as in the CMHR-commissioned *Trace* project that I next discuss. Unlike traditional artifact-separation from originary source, as in an archeological "find" or an object of provenance removed from its context and displayed in a museum (as in Mrs. Lincoln's blood-stained fan; see Gaudelli and Mungur 44), commissioned museum works only materially come into being because museums have asked them to, and, in the process of being commissioned, call new materials, affect, and relationships into existence.

This is no more clearly demonstrated than in the case of the *Trace* project, a work by Winnipeg-based Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore commissioned by the CMHR as a permanent feature to be housed on a 74-square-metre wall in its Indigenous Perspectives gallery (See Figure 3). In commissioning the work, the CMHR invited proposals for projects for this specific gallery, and it was Lee-Ann Martin, an independent curator of Canadian Aboriginal art, who proposed Belmore's work as a potential commissioned project for the CMHR (Belmore).

Figure 3: The *Trace* Project ("A Visitor's View")

Trace, a large ceramic blanket in the shape of a cloth draped on a hook, is a materially significant project in a variety of ways. The first is in terms of

materials used in the project itself. *Trace* is made of Winnipeg-dug clay, in homage and reference to the excavation of earth during the CMHR's construction, as well to the archeological material that was removed from the building site (Belmore). Thus the physical nature of the CMHR's built site quite literally enabled Belmore's project to come into being. The clay used in *Trace*, once processed into malleable material, was then shaped into 14,000 hand-pressed, palm-sized "beads" (which were left with impressions of human hands on them), pierced, fired, and strung on iron rebar to make the sculpture. Significantly, the majority of bead-making took place in Winnipeg-based workshops facilitated by Belmore, which invited citizens of and visitors to Winnipeg (specifically to a workshop space housed in the North End of Winnipeg, a location of the city with a high Aboriginal population), to create the beads used in the project. Thus the creation of *Trace*, thusly named to represent the "human trace" left on artifacts and on the land, has created a bridge of inside-outside space, movement, force, and action as workshops moved through different parts of the city, including public schools. As Belmore said of both her impetus and rationale for the work, "if you put fire, earth, and clay together, you get ceramics . . . revisiting this idea of human beings that have always used the earth to make objects that were functional to them, to us . . . therefore this work is . . . about our human relationship to the land" (Charleyboy). Given both the material used for *Trace* and the invitation of new relationships between art-object, peoples of Winnipeg, clay, artist, and process, the commissioned work has both *been done to*, that is, been enabled by the CMHR, as well as been *done with* the CMHR, in terms of how beadmaking has been taken up by local materials, Winnipeg-based bodies and networks, space-based consultations, and curator-artist-museum relationships.

The CMHR undoubtedly has had an effect on *Trace* by calling it into being; that is, it is a contextual move on *Trace* that has changed it in some way. But *Trace*, too, is working in tension *with/against* the CMHR. In July of 2013, the CMHR controversially took a position not to describe the Canadian government's treatment of Aboriginal people as a "genocide," suggesting that

the museum is “not in a position to determine what constitutes a genocide” (CBC, “Human”), yet using the term to describe other events, such as the Holocaust. Despite the museum’s stance on this debate, commissioning Belmore’s work—an artifact they suggest will “help connect visitors with human rights” (Fitzhenry) and noted as “a commemorative testament to those who have gone before” (Martin, “Rebecca”)—is a critical risk. In commissioning Belmore’s work, the CMHR may be seen as encouraging a connection between visitors and difficult knowledge; however, in commissioning an *artifact* like *Trace*, the artifact itself might “propel . . . [or] restrict a learner’s inclination to want to know” (Segall 56). That is to say, visitors likely will have the option to engage with the museum’s description of *Trace*, which we can imagine will not take a position on Aboriginal genocide, or have the option to walk by *Trace* as a more simplistic commissioned object-artifact; in this way, visitors will likely be given the option of confronting (or not) difficult knowledge represented by *Trace*. Curator Martin and artist Belmore have worked together on a number of projects since 1991, and Belmore herself is known for public performances, video installations, and multimedia art pieces that have emerged in response to the “traumatic history and ongoing violence against Aboriginal people” (Martin, “Rebecca”) and that are critical of Canada’s colonial past (Belmore).2 Although Belmore, a renowned Canadian artist, was selected because of her impact on the national and international art community, her history and prior works leave little doubt on how *Trace* also works against CMHR’s refusal to claim or name Aboriginal genocide and Canadian colonial legacy. In this way, *Trace* works to compete with the CMHR’s public position on colonialism as well as contextualize histories of Aboriginal genocide materially in ways the CMHR cannot actively resist, having commissioned the work. As *Trace* fills the 13x8 meter space in the museum’s interior, there is little doubt that *Trace* similarly acts as a contextual move on the CMHR that will forever alter it.

How Does the Text Act on People?

A critical consideration of how objects and displays are called into being materially within museum spaces also calls into question the notion of *slippage* in that we may see absences and presences as rhetorical accretions on a variety of texts—inducing a "self-reflexive criticality" called for by Gaudelli and Mungur that "gesture[es] toward. . . social contexts and . . . intellectual heritage" (48)—rather than merely casting aside this information as acontextual data or unimportant object-history. A curatorial example such as *Trace* hints at the wide and deep range of ways that the CMHR acts on people. Although clearly the *Trace* project has involved thousands of Winnipeg people in its creation, a material-rhetorical approach to the CMHR that considers networks of accretion binds more than the co-construction of museum displays when considering how the museum-as-text acts on the people around it. Like memorials, museums summon people to act in particular ways: they direct vision, act as destinations on landscapes, prescribe pathways of movement for people to navigate, and create communal gathering spaces (Blair 46-8). Unlike memorials, however, as places of public memories, museums summon a range of different and particular subjectivities; visitors, curators, and scholars are all brought into being as they navigate museum spaces to connect with particular versions and visions of past events. As Dickinson et al. remind us, "museums engage visitors not only on a symbolic level through the practices of collection, exhibition, and display, but also on a material level by locating visitors' bodies in particular spaces" (29). I would add here, too, that in the consideration of "ideas museums" in particular, in which the museum itself has to do harder "presencing work" (Gaudelli and Mungur 42), the role of affect, memory, and engagement with knowledge play distinct and felt roles in producing meanings between object, "image, viewers, and context" (45). The CMHR as a material text acts on people in some of the following ways: its existence has produced a range of critical scholars in human rights and cultural studies; it has constructed a "rights presence" on the Winnipeg cityscape; and it has produced a range of "affect-thought relations" (Simon and Failler 3) as suggested by my personal engagement with the museum. Each of these

affective series of relations may be seen in networked connection to the museum's materiality, its durability, its reproduction, and its constitutive force on other texts and objects.

As Kirsch and Ritchie among others argue, locating the personal within one's research methods and methodology not only represents sound research, but has "wider implications" in that "it can become a location for reconsidering what counts as knowledge" (7-8). The call to locate researchers within their work has been taken up notably by feminist scholars in a range of fields, and has been used as a site of rhetorical analysis by a number of rhetoricians and compositionists (see, for example, Jack; Bizzell; Hawhee, "Rhetoric, Bodies"), adding "words, images, and bodies as part of the rhetorical enterprise" (Hawhee, "Rhetoric, Bodies" 155). The shaping of this article is no doubt an outcome of the material ways the CMHR has acted on me as a scholar: I not only belong to a research group engaging the museum as a project site (see next section); I have participated in *Trace* bead-making workshops and thus to some degree am implicated by its rationale and am shaped in my relation to the project by my own position as a white, highly educated woman; I have attended talks given by Belmore in her discussion of her creation of *Trace*; as a member of the University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group (CSRG), I have toured both the construction site of the CMHR as well as its interior before it was open to the public. In these ways, the CMHR has acted to create a presence as a *material subject* on me in ways not as available as to members of the general public, and in differently-available ways than, say, a curator or staff member of the CMHR. Personally, too, the CMHR has made a material impact on my own subjectivity: its 328-foot high "tower of hope" can easily be seen from my back yard on the Red River, and as a downtown resident, its architecture is a daily presence in my commute, neighborhood walks, and frequent outings to the Forks (a 10-minute walk from home). As a Winnipeg resident, and as a woman, I have a complicated relationship to the tower. It is as visible from my back yard as it is a few miles away at the Alexander Docks on the Red, where a memorial lies for Tina Fontaine, a murdered Aboriginal teen whose body was dragged from the river one month

before the CMHR opened to the public, and one of over 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. The museum is a testament, and sometimes an irony, to rights and to hope in a city torn and wounded from racialized and gendered violence.

Yet I am a scholar, too, and the museum is a site of inquiry for me and for my peers. The CMHR has acted on a range of interdisciplinary scholars, bringing research groups into being, and focusing local academic programs by its presence. Although not directly affiliated with the CMHR, the University of Manitoba's Centre for Human Rights Research (CHRR), launched in 2012, sits as a locus for over 40 interdisciplinary researchers from 11 faculties (8). Although the center takes human rights, broadly conceived, as its locus of research, there can be little doubt that since the group's inception, the CMHR has acted in specific ways on its membership. In "The Museum as Muse," the University of Manitoba highlights the way in which the CMHR has acted on a range of scholars; it details the Empathy Project, in which sociologists have created a prototype for a "virtual 'storyworld'" (Fallding11) of residential school environments like those on display at the CMHR; it features relationships between university professors who are also acting as curators of the CMHR, such as Sherry Farrell Racette; and it specifies the ways in which the university community is being shaped by the museum—such as the CHRR-member launching of *The Canadian Journal of Human Rights* in 2012, the preparing of research packages to help museum curators, the giving of seminars, hosting of conferences and summer institutes, influencing of masters theses, and co-publishing of books with former CMHR staff (11-14). Fallding speaks to the creation of Winnipeg as a "human rights city" (13), and hints of an upcoming interdisciplinary Master's degree in human rights. Similarly, the University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group (CSRG) has detailed the use of the CMHR in a range of projects, and has used the museum as impetus to host interdisciplinary workshops and focus graduate work in their Master's in Cultural Studies program. In keeping with the theme of the "human rights city," the University of Winnipeg has recently launched an undergraduate major in Human Rights and Global Studies. In

these ways, the CMHR is acting rhetorically, pedagogically, and curatorially on members of the scholarly community of Winnipeg Manitoba, and organizing the impacts of such scholarly activity on meaning-making about human rights education nationally and internationally.

Finally, the CMHR has acted and is acting in constructing the idea of a "human rights city,"—what might be conceived of as a *rights presence*—by its materiality. Although talks on this topic have been ongoing (see Vaugeois, Derksen, Spillett, and Harris), and the media reflective about how the existence of the CMHR has resulted in claims that "Winnipeg *is* a different city" (MacGregor), the current ways in which the CMHR is organizing people around a variety of rights-based events is significant, and certainly seems to point to the ways in which the museum's appearance on Winnipeg's cityscape serves an agenda-setting function (even as Winnipeg has been noted in *MacLean's* as Canada's "most racist city" in 2015; see MacDonald). From the construction site tours up to the museum's opening, the CMHR has organized locals and visitors along particular lines. Tours have engaged guides and visitors in telling a rich history of Manitoba's rights' legacies—Louis Riel and the Métis people, the Winnipeg general strike of 1919, the fight for bilingualism—while the CMHR has recently asked of 250 Winnipeggers to donate time and person-hours as volunteers as a way to create "inspiring encounters with human rights" (CMHR, "CMHR Needs"). Further, the site itself has been used as a gathering place for public protests (for example, Idle No More in 2011; a public Rally for Gaza in July 2014; and Shoal Lake First Nation's rally for water rights at the museum opening in September 2014, among others). Thus, in public, critical, curatorial, and pedagogical ways, the CMHR has acted on a variety of people to create knowledge, to negotiate territory, to acknowledge racialized tensions, and to conceptualize a cityscape.

Experiential Landscapes: Sites as Place, Sites as Frame

Using Blair's heuristic to do the connective work of rhetorical accretion on the

experiential landscapes of the CMHR here—from the mingling of Tyndall stone with the signing of the Magna Carta with holding clay in my hands and contributing to *Trace*; to examining traveling posters and combining them with images and hosted protests, to considering 350 million dollar investments in rights when thousands of Indigenous women go missing and unsearched—we catch a glimpse of how built sites that work to mix memory, ideas, and objects do significant rhetorical work. Layers of durability connect with reproduction, with human relationships. Affect and force interconnect with layers of preservation and enabling functions of the museum-as-text on other texts. A material-rhetorical networked approach to invention in museum sites which layers and connects gathered moments, materials, places, emotions, texts, and technologies offers more than heuristical knowledge; instead, it opens up possibilities for analysis that "depend greatly on the principle of response" within diffuse distributed textual and spatial frames (Swarts 122). Considering the richness of these networked layers of affect, geography, virtuality, and embodiment taken together, it is my hope that analyses like this will help generate a "self-reflexive criticality about what is being viewed" (Gaudelli and Munger 48) in museum sites, as visitors themselves add their own layers of experience to ones such as those detailed here. This is perhaps the most hopeful of the generative work emerging from a material-rhetorical analysis in the specific case of the CMHR in terms of engaging with knowledge: in encouraging a range of ways for people to organize around the notion of human rights, we might imagine that such subjectivities are at least creating investments (or the potential investment) to not only encounter difficulty, but to offer alternate narratives, produce new knowledge, and reconfigure existing narratives of comfortable *rights* discourse.

In considering the CMHR as a material-rhetorical artifact and detailing exemplary ways that its material existence constructs networked meaning out of materials, durability, reproduction, and effects on text and peoples, it is my hope that the notion of museum sites specifically as fundamentally rhetorical has created a clear connection to the ways in which scholars might usefully

orient or consider their work methodologically. The examples used here represent the generative nature of Blair's heuristic and Burton's work when taken together, as well as point to the ways in which we can chart an ongoing and nuanced map of museums as material-rhetorical spaces. From an archeological dig site at the Forks, to the use of materials such as Tyndall stone and Winnipeg clay in *Trace*, to commodified naming and travelling 3D architectural models, to posters, icons, and scholarly and community networks, the CMHR viewed as a site of networked rhetorical accretion offers a stratous model that adds complexity to our notion of experiential landscapes as static entities. Too, this analysis reveals a partial look at the ways in which museum texts work within material contexts as they come into being; that is to say, to read other texts, relationships, and artifacts as arising *out of* and *in conjunction with* the materiality of museums disrupts, to some degree, the notion of originary orderliness that museums often unintentionally curate. In moving the *topos*—"place as empty container"—to the *ch?ra*—place as a seat of "dream reasoning" (Walter 68)—examining networked accretions of built sites offers another attempt at Ulmer's (*Heuretics*) notion of chorography, and gives scholars a rich place to invent, explore, find, and qualify wholes out of seemingly disparate parts. Certainly these accretions might be said to illuminate some of the complex relationships brought forward by the nature of museums on the landscape itself, while allowing that museums work to "hold steady" particular frames of knowing and wayfinding in larger networks of objects, architecture, discourse, geography, scene, and affect.

1. Treaty One, established in 1871, is known as a comprehensive land claim settlement between the British Crown and Indigenous peoples of Canada, in this case applying to Manitoba.
2. For background on the history of Canada's race and treaty relations with Aboriginal peoples, see Dickason; Peterson and Brown; Denis; Woolford; Stanley. Note that in Manitoba, seventeen percent of the population is Aboriginal/Indigenous, which is the highest proportion in Canada and four times the national average (MacDonald).

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