Seeking Common Ground: How Digital Museums Might Play a Role in Promoting Peace

Laura Kate Gibson

The ETHER Initiative

"Negative Peace":

- an absence of direct violence & a short-term aim in peace negotiations

"Positive Peace":

- encompasses many situations that guarantee positive human conditions e.g. equality, and social and legal rights

- Ho-Won Jeong, *Peace & Conflict Studies* (2001)

The history of museums might be written as a series of utopian projects intent on exploiting a museum's world-making capacity to imagine a better future...

- Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

(2004)

"Contraexistence":
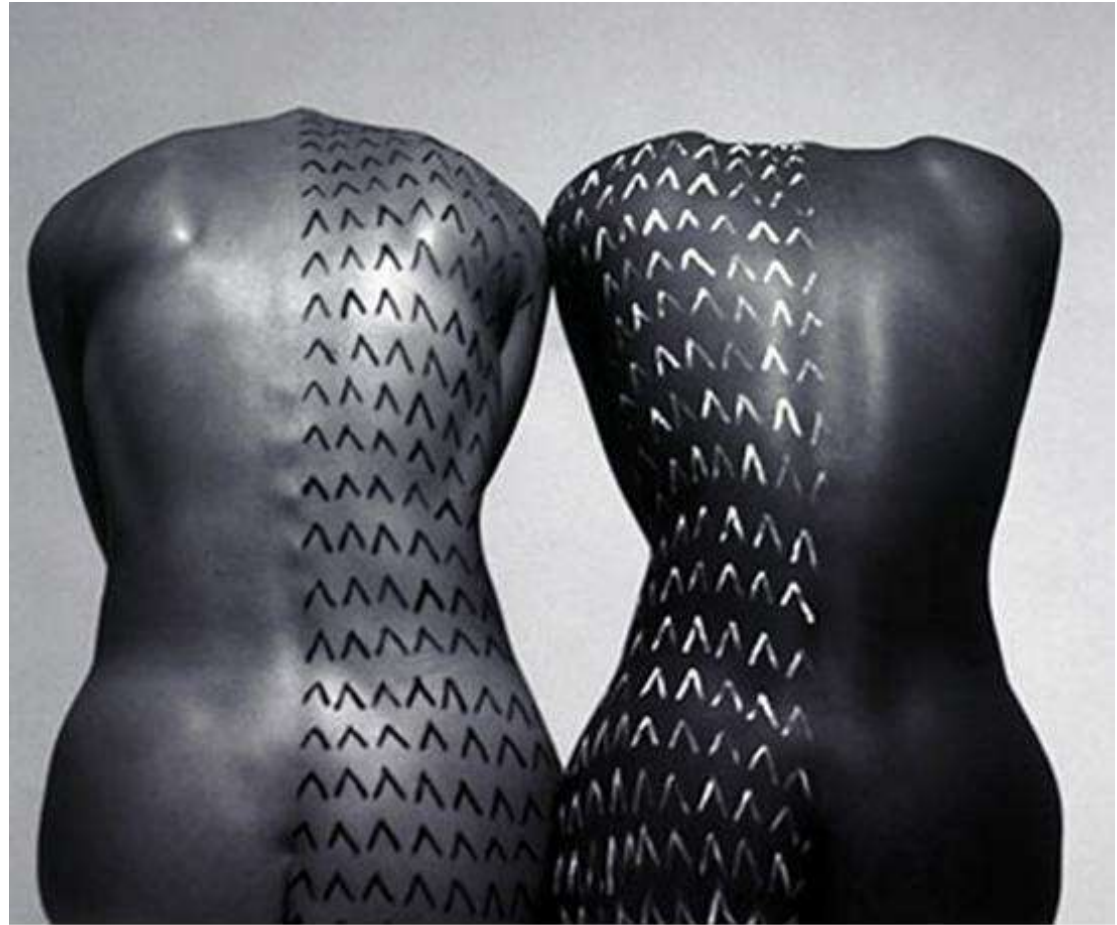- *turned againstness*

"Coexistence":
- *turned towardsness*

- Jannie Malan

Being similar, different and coexistent (2011)

Inscribing Meaning: unsettling binaries

Memory Board (*Lukasa*),
19th–20th century
Democratic Republic of Congo; Luba

Untitled #16
Iké Udé born ca. 1966, Nigeria 1997

A "new" digital utopia?

"The end of distance in cyberspace and immediate access to this free for all information will facilitate an end to international misunderstandings and even war..."

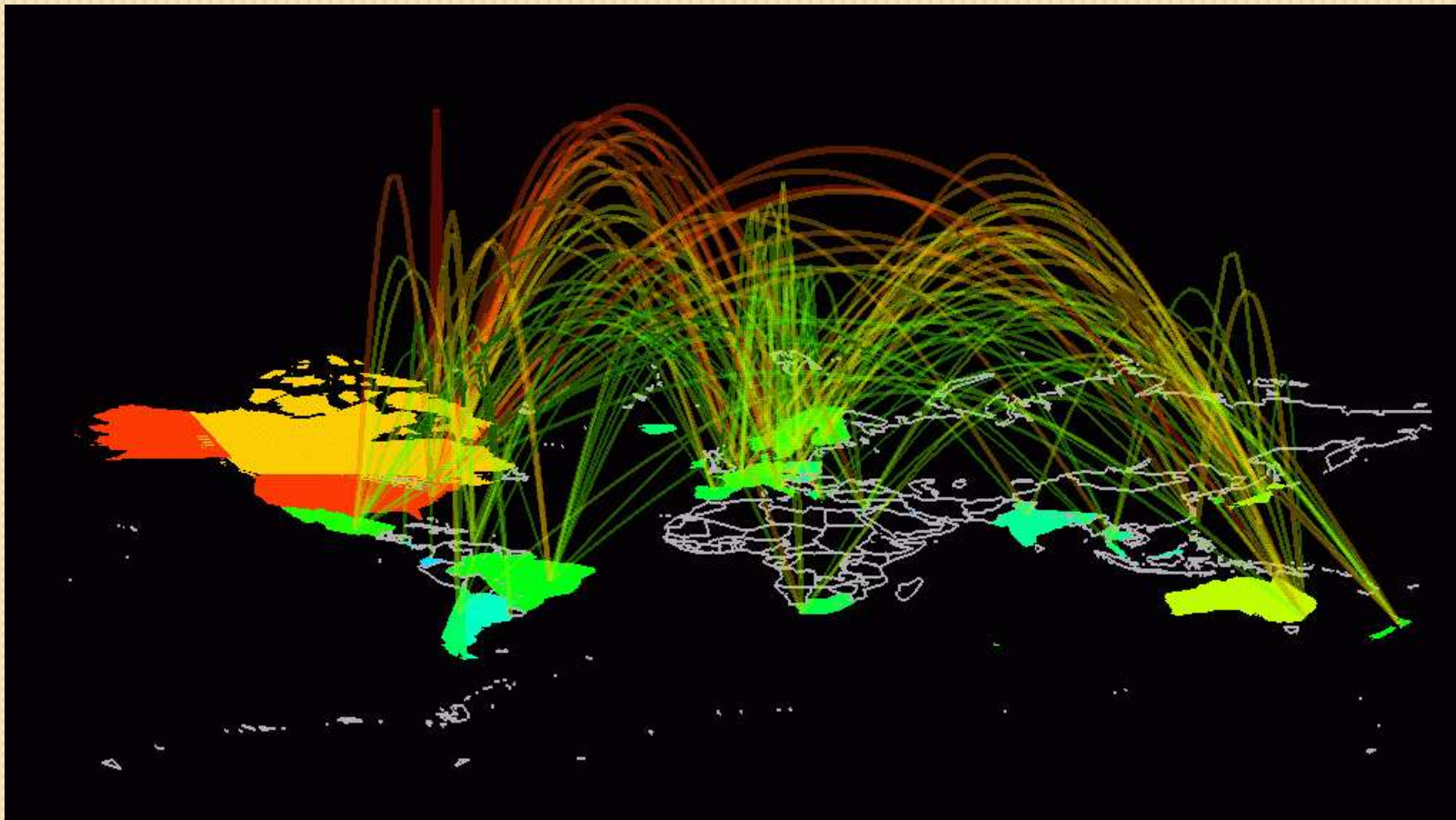- Francis Cairncross

The Economist

In the digital world "*many and sometimes contradictory, perspectives*" **coexist.**

- Ramesh Srinivasan, Robin Boast, Jonathan Furner and Katherine Becvar

GLOBAL DIALOGUE?

Facilitating access

> In **South Africa:**

> **90** % of the population has access to a cell phone

> **57%** of mobile web users **never or infrequently use a computer** to access the internet.

> In 2011, Vodacom estimated that **92%** of its users have a **web enabled 'phone**

Accessible technologies

Ulwazi project, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Reciprocal Research Network, University of British Columbia and Museum of Anthropology, Canada

Community involvement:

Quantity: **1**

Ask a question
Let the RRN community answer your questions

Post a Question   Message a User Privately

Shared Knowledge
🔓 Public

Share your knowlege of this item with the RRN community

Share Knowledge   Contact us Privately   ❓ Help ▾

Shared Knowledge
Hide Tip

Submitting information about items on the RRN is a great way to add missing information to a record or to notify the institution that holds the item of inaccuracies. You can even attach photos or documents to your submission.

Summary

➢ Conflict often arises from *contra*existential mindsets where perceived insurmountable differences drive us apart

➢ Through sophisticated engagement with collections, museums *can* challenge assumptions about differences & collapse fixed notions about 'us' and 'them'

➢ The digital world is not a new utopia but, used carefully, offers spaces for dialogue, multiple perspectives & deeper understanding

➢ More nuanced understandings of apparent difference are more likely to promote tolerance, mutual respect & a desire to find common ground

➢ This shift towards a *co*existential attitude makes peaceful cooperation and positive peace more possible