



Irit Narkiss and Helena Tomlin, Manchester Museum,
University of Manchester, UK

Making Connections: Children, Objects, Meanings and Museums

Keywords: museum, education, children, touch, object, The Museum of Me

The paper describes work undertaken by the Authors between 2007–2009 at the Manchester Museum. It involved conservators and education curators collaborating to ensure that young learners had access to the whole range of the Museum's collections. The Authors developed and piloted a project aimed to find out how ten-year-old school children could develop their understanding of archaeology and the processes of the museum itself — making visible the usually invisible structures that underpin selection, display and interpretation of artefacts. The project that this paper explores in further detail was called 'The Museum of Me' and was linked directly to the year long exhibition at the Museum, *Lindow Man a Bog Body Mystery*.

Lindow Man is a well-preserved 2000 year old bog body found in Lindow Moss near Manchester in 1984. The body resides at the British Museum. In 2008 it was loaned to the Manchester Museum for the third time, previous exhibitions having taken place in 1987 and 1991. The Museum decided to approach the display differently this time by exploring the different meanings that the body has for different people. Seven individuals contributed their perspectives; they included archaeologists, the peat diggers who found the body, a Druid priestess and a woman who was a schoolgirl in Lindow Moss at the time of the discovery. The Museum relinquished its narrative authority in favour of a more poly-vocal and relativist approach, which acknowledges difference and questions 'received wisdom'.¹

The project 'The Museum of Me' was premised on a constructivist approach to learning and followed the approach developed by the Exhibitions Team at the Manchester Museum. Pete Brown, then Head of Learning and Interpretation at the Museum explains this ethos:

In terms of the educational benefit, there are strong arguments for a more constructivist approach to exhibition making: the "Idealist Alternative", as Black calls it.²

Constructivism is based on the premise that knowledge does not exist independently of the learner: it is formulated in the mind. It might come as a shock to people used to the 'transmission' approach: indeed some visitors to the *Lindow Man* exhibition were disturbed by what they interpreted as lack of focus and direction.³

The 'Museum of Me' was developed with a primary school in Rusholme, south Manchester, two miles from the University. An ethnically rich community, the school had previously worked with the Museum's Learning Team. In the project discussed here, the *Lindow Man* exhibition was used as the starting point for the two artists commissioned

to work with the Authors, Daksha Patel and Paul Pickford, to explore in depth notions of time and identity. They developed their ideas in keeping with the Museum Learning Team's 'principles of learning'. These principles include working collaboratively, encouraging freedom of choice and developing a multi-sensory, imaginative approach to engage children in their learning. The multi-sensory aspect of this project was of particular importance and the activities focused on privileging often underused senses such as smell and touch.

Touch: philosophy, politics and practicalities

The loss of physical contact in western society has led to a more passive experience of the world, where touch is secondary to vision.⁴ Historically the senses have been ranked in relation to their degree of intimacy — taste and touch, in direct contact with the world, are lowest, followed by smell and hearing, with vision as the most detached and superior; vision has dominance over the other senses, particularly in the museum setting. Michalski comments, 'If use of the object involves hearing, smell, or touch, i.e. any sense beside sight, it tends to the pejorative functional. If use of the object involves sight alone, the object is of a "higher" function'.⁵ The implication being that touch is associated with childish and unsophisticated behaviour.⁶

The French philosopher Luce Irigaray examined how Western reason is premised on the suppression of sexual difference. She writes specifically about looking:

Investment in the look is not as privileged in women as men. More than any other sense, the eye objectifies and it masters. It sets a distance, and maintains a distance. In our culture the predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch and hearing has brought about an impoverishment in bodily relations.⁷

This mastering gaze, where women have been excluded from looking, has been shown by Irigaray to have been detrimental to both sexes. It has certainly had a negative impact on the way young children (often regarded in the feminine) have been considered in our culture. The word 'impoverishment' sums up too the traditional experience of many young children inside a museum (or anyone else who is unfamiliar with the Western cultural taboos of museum behaviour or unable to comply with them).⁸

Another dimension of the development of this 'ocularcentric tendency' is explored by Candlin.⁹ She demonstrates that it is the modern age that has brought us the physical distance encountered in museums; cultural rather than individual maturity. This goes hand in hand with museums becoming more broadly accessible, particularly to the working classes. But she also notes that paradoxically, connoisseurs and museum professionals have always relied on touch in their work. However, their touch is embedded in professional practice and is therefore acceptable. At the end of her paper, Candlin suggests that we apply the museum professional model of touch to all visitors, especially in a learning context; extending the skills museum staff take for granted to the public, 'to inform the critical, contextualised interpretation of objects'.¹⁰ The Manchester Museum has, in fact, already been working in this way for several years within its

learning programmes; giving children opportunities to handle and investigate objects directly. There was also a flurry of workshops, research and publications on the topic of touch and object handling in museums around the time of this project.¹¹



Fig. 1. Pressing objects into clay. The Manchester Museum, 2007.

Physical touch on its own and for its own sake is not enough; it may in fact devalue the museum learning experience and make it routine, less special. Although the ‘wow factor’ for visitors given the opportunity to touch ‘real’ museum objects can be a good starting point, handling must come within a context: what can we learn about the object from touch? How does it inform our ideas about its history, manufacture and significance? Importantly, this is not about a ‘touchy-feely’ experience for its own sake; experiencing artefacts holistically will lead to a fuller understanding and appreciation. As Hein describes it, not merely ‘hands on’ but ‘minds on’.¹² We require some information and interpretation to do this. We also need to be taught how to interact with these objects to get the maximum out of them (and keep them intact). On the other hand, we do not necessarily have to physically take hold of objects to attain meaningful access. Close proximity, an opportunity to examine closely and discuss objects, can provide insights and create an intimacy that is more informing than casual touch. So when we talk of touch and handling, we are not referring only to physically picking up an artefact, but to the broader sense of intimacy that comes from a meaningful close encounter with objects.

Modern museums often ‘at once evoke the dream of possession and evacuate it’.¹³ This frustration is often at the heart of the complaints that teachers make when working within museums, on their own, without recourse to an education programme that includes hands-on activity. In a recent research project, special needs teachers in Manchester voiced the need for more handling and less reading and listening.¹⁴

The Authors would argue, however, that it is not only special needs children, but also most children and most adults who experience this dream of possession frustrated. Whatever the politics of touch, the thread running through these arguments is that touch is central to our understanding of the world. Opening up opportunities for children to experience objects through a tactile approach encourages them to see the museum space as a sensual space where questioning can take place. In our fast moving, rapidly changing world, touch slows down the almost instant acquisition of knowledge to a process of investigation and the act of touching allows us to understand an object more fully. Tactile sensations can reach us 'indirectly through the eyes', according to Yi-Fu Tuan, the Chinese-American geographer. Seeing and tactile sensation are so closely wedded to each other that even when we are looking at a painting it is not clear that we are attending just to its visual qualities.¹⁵

So the intimate encounter in the museum requires a multi-sensory approach, where the tactile is of equal importance to the other senses. To achieve this holistic experience a team of individuals committed to this 'active touching'¹⁶ is an essential requirement.

Working with artists

In 'The Museum of Me' project the question of 'active touch' was considered collaboratively with children, artists, education and collection curators, conservators and teachers in school. Working with artists in the context of making visible the process of the museum enabled the children to experience through different senses their understanding of archaeology. Each element of the project involved direct physical contact with objects. A constructivist approach to learning allows old enquiries to be raised in new ways. 'Within museums the stage is set for anything to happen — to experience things anew.'¹⁷

The first element of the project developed around 'A Storyboard of Life'. Animation artist Paul Pickford worked with each child, investigating certain moments in the child's life that was of particular significance. Birthdays (the day of their birth itself), holidays and house moves all featured large. These special moments were then collated into storyboards, where children experimented with narrative images. The conversations around each storyboard enabled children to create images that focused on emotionally complex areas and allowed the concept of time to be explored in a way that was both reflective and engaging. Each child's storyboard was treated with equal respect and the poly-vocal approach that underpinned the Lindow Man exhibition was mirrored in this first stage of the project.

Pickford commented on the storyboard process, 'As adults we weren't dictating or controlling the process. We didn't have all the answers. However we were co-operating and contributing to reach solutions. Pupil voice was demonstrated to be as important as adult.'¹⁸

Working with printmaker and photographer Daksha Patel, 'time' was considered through the investigation of the changing activities and objects encountered through each child's day. Toothbrushes, cornflake packets, lunch boxes, toys, wrappers, soft toys, gloves and other ephemera were collected together to form the material for discussing the traces left over a 12 hour period. Thinking about the loss of these objects (as things left behind, often in cupboards, in bins, in landfill) would become the starting point for thinking through the collections of archaeological objects at the Museum. The objects were recorded in journals and each small collection discussed in detail: what they represented, when and why they were used. At the first stage the chosen objects were pressed carefully into rolled out plaques of clay, the impressions forming a trace of each object and its relationship to other objects (Fig. 1). The pressing and lifting of each object was discussed by the children in detail — the first stage of thinking through the way objects can disintegrate but leave a trace. Deeply immersed in their activity the working area was named by the children 'the clay artist's table'. Lynch sums up the importance of this type of work:

Constructivist approaches to learning have long understood that passive touching is limited in that it can yield only a flow of stimuli which are difficult to identify. In order to learn we actively need to 'do' things with objects, as Winnicot¹⁹ reminds us; to use what is available to us in exploring our world – to 'play', in much the same way as an artist does with available materials.²⁰

Label writing then began, with these elements forming a unique interpretation system. The previous week they had discussed the function of a label, both within the context of a shop and a museum, and reflected upon who the label was written for (writing for audience). Each label was designed to present information about their plaque to family members and other children within the school. In 'Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities' Elaine Gurian discusses the importance of inclusive label writing,

Even for the writing of label copy there are techniques that can promote inclusion or exclusion. If the label writer believes the audience is composed of receptive students, and the information he or she wants to pass on is genuinely good for them, then the label writer will assume the role of a teacher transmitting information. The audience will be viewed as a passive but obedient recipient. The audience's only choice then is to read or not read, to be willing or recalcitrant. [...] The role of teacher is not the label writer's only possible stance. He or she can choose instead to be co-conspirator, colleague, preacher or even gossip columnist. Altering the label writer's role might cause the audience to change its behaviour as well. For example, if the writer sees the audience as partner, then perhaps the audience might participate like a partner.²¹

This 'partner' approach is reflected in the texts the children created for their exhibition of plaques. The labels contained memories triggered by the objects the children pressed into each thin layer of clay. A plaque of shell imprints was tagged with, 'we go to the seaside and my nana asks us to get her some shells. Me and my brother made sandcastles together. For decorating we scatter some shells on the sandcastle'. Twigs and flower petals embedded in another clay plaque decorated with zigzags (staircase image) was labelled, 'When I woke up me and my mum can smell lovely flowers. Then we go downstairs and my mum drops me at school [...]'. All the plaques recorded in visual terms the connection between objects and memory, and took into account the passage of time within a day.

Within the classroom we tried to nurture an atmosphere of open discussion and trust between the artists, children and teachers that would allow stories about the objects to flow. This was in keeping with the constructivist ethos that was at the heart of our original plan. Hilde Hein develops this idea:

Objects are like comets — clouds of dust with a tale. Most have many; it is impossible to collect a story-less object. The event of an object's being collected interrupts one narrative and initiates another. Without their stories we could not recognise objects at all and would lack words to refer to them.²²

Patel concluded that the clay pieces that preceded the making of the labels were related directly to pupils' own life memories and experiences and this gave them a particular power. She reflected on how they began by choosing objects and talking about their choices and how this 'thinking time' had enabled them to move easily towards making the clay pieces. This in turn involved further informal discussions; 'a different kind of dialogue happens when you are making and talking'. The narratives behind each piece 'were given time and different contexts' in which to develop and this, she felt, allowed the group to have ownership of their label.²³ In the introduction to this paper the importance of Hein's 'minds on' concept was also discussed. The label making activity had involved a grappling with the complex and numerous 'stories' that had emerged during the workshop process and had required the children to develop their narratives in what Patel describes above as their 'thinking time'.

In the original discussions with teaching staff at the school the Authors considered a focus on 'lost' objects and reflected on the importance of tracking the movement of people across time and space through the location of objects. For collections curators, and archaeologists in particular, these evidence based procedures form a key part of professional practice. The preparatory art making with Patel and Pickford gave children a 'way in' to understanding the time consuming work of archaeologists and conservators. It was used to introduce the children to the Museum's collecting process, encouraging them to question where objects come from and how they are cared for once at the museum.

Exploring in the museum

The second part of the project was based within The Manchester Museum. It became an intense collaborative process where children and museum staff were invited to share and exchange ideas. Beginning with the Lindow Man exhibition each child was invited to make a layered drawing of how the objects might look in 100 years. This resulted in a series of unusual drawings in the children's journals that focussed on details of objects that would become further corroded or worn. Images created of the bog body in particular showed this further deterioration.

After making their drawings children were taken through the stores and goods lift up into the Conservation Laboratory where a minute's silence was invoked in order to focus attention on the sights, sounds and smells of this particular space. Comments from the children in their journals included,

'The smell smells like an experiment room!!'
'I can't hear anything apart from a buzz'
'I can see bison and lots of bones'

At this stage teachers, children and artists were introduced to the Museum's conservation team and the Curator of Archaeology, Bryan Sitch. The group spent an intensive morning investigating a stone Roman altar that had recently arrived at the Museum from a rescue excavation in the Castlefield area of the city and became intrigued by how the object had arrived in the laboratory and its material qualities (Fig. 2). Questions included,

'Could we lift it up?
How far in the ground would it have been?
Where would it have been kept?
Is the orange mark blood?
Why is there a hole in the top?'²⁴



Fig. 2. In the conservation laboratory, examining Roman altar with Curator of Archaeology, Bryan Sitch (right) and artist Paul Pickford. The Manchester Museum, 2007.

The particular interest in the material qualities of the objects in the laboratory stimulated an intense debate about the history of the objects. The process of making meaning had begun. Crew and Sims argue in their essay 'Locating Authenticity', 'Authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority. People do. It is people on the exhibition team who must make a judgement about how to tell about the past. Authenticity-authority enforces the social contract between the audience and the museum [...].'²⁵

Previous research with groups of children from the same primary school a year earlier had highlighted the importance of touch in the encounter of the young learner with the object. Handling objects allowed for a deeper understanding of the history and journey of each individual object. There is certainly a renewed interest in the politics of touch, as discussed earlier but some scholars, according to Howes are still suspicious of sensual

culture; observing a slide into ‘a morass of emotion and desire’.²⁶ Our work in the Conservation Laboratory for the ‘Museum of Me’ allowed children to experience the thrill of sensing ‘what it would be like to be an artefact’s original owner’²⁷, since they were able to pick up and examine a number of objects in the process of being examined or cleaned by the conservation team. Written and visual records in the children’s journals highlighted a particular interest in the processes of conservation and underlined how this exposure could help children to understand the effects of time on artefacts. Referring to a Roman mortar bowl (*mortarium*), one of the children wrote, ‘It has a stamp on to show who made it! They [the conservators] have to wear gloves to protect [it]....because they have oil [in their hands] which will damage it.’ Another wrote, ‘100 years later it will turn to dust and will blend into mud’ [this description was accompanied by a scattering of dots representing dust]. Some children were ready to pass opinion on conservation materials and their qualities, ‘Some foams are stronger than others...but that isn’t strong enough [to support the object].’

As have been indicated at the beginning of this paper the ‘intimate encounter’ in the museum requires a multi-sensory approach, where the tactile is of equal importance to the other senses. In the Conservation Laboratory this ‘active touching’, so key to a constructivist approach to learning, was fully embraced by both the children and their teachers.

The Museum’s Herbarium provided children with a different perspective on the ageing process. They spent time with Leander Wolstenholme, then Curator of Botany, examining plants that had a connection to those used during the Iron Age for medicinal purposes. The herbarium sheets were taken out of the solander boxes so that they could be examined close up and smelt. Back in the Museum’s Discovery Centre children made herbal remedies using similar fresh plants — mint, thyme, garlic and basil, creating their own potions after spending time smelling and chopping them. They used basic instructions from Roman recipes researched by the Curator of Archaeology. A week later, when the children returned to their potions, they found them smelling and looking rather different. The experiences both in the Herbarium and in the Discovery Centre allowed children to make what Classen describes as an ‘imaginative link with storied ancient peoples.’²⁸ This experience allowed the children to understand how museum objects ‘lose’ qualities over time and are transformed by the way they are kept and presented.

The exhibition at school — ‘The Museum of Me’

Artists, teachers, children and learning curators worked collaboratively to reflect upon their experiences together in the exhibition they created, ‘The Museum of Me’. The exhibition which took place in the hall and classroom at the school looked at how objects from their own lives would become the archaeological material of the future. They used the design of the *Lindow Man* exhibition as a model on which to base their own ideas and critiqued the way the show had been put together, making numerous notes on the interpretation and design. The issue of ‘touch’ was high on their list of questions, and when designing their own displays were concerned that a ‘touch’ area

was at the centre of the room. However, their experiences of working in the Conservation Laboratory also informed their thinking and their fragile clay plaques were laid out with an explanatory label indicating the fragility of the material to parents and other children. In this area the visitors were asked not to handle the objects on display. The result of their in depth experiences working alongside museum conservators and curators allowed them to differentiate between artefacts and the risk factors that are attached to their safe display. Two children remarked, 'We don't want visitors to touch [our clay pieces]. The clay pieces could fall over if they did and they are too valuable' (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Some of the clay plaques on display at school in 'The Museum of Me', 2007.

An analysis of the startling range objects created for the exhibition (clay plaques, sculptures of everyday things in mod roc plaster, representing the children's understanding of the slow addition of accretions, and storyboards, all highlighted their engagement in the process of understanding the ageing process. Nicholas Addison, arts educator at the Institute of Education, University of London, argues the case for a 'truly liberating pedagogy' that would provide an opportunity for children to examine 'the relationships between their own lives and the dominant order' and suggests that children need to have a sense of themselves in history, a process that would develop their analytical and interpretive faculties as well as the potential for agency.²⁹ It is this development of interpretive skills that marked out 'The Museum of Me' and allowed the children to take ownership of the project.

During the design process of the 'Museum of Me' problem solving was abundantly in evidence and there was a great deal of discussion about the complex display of the *Lindow Man* exhibition. The interactive excavation box in the exhibition space provoked attention and comments, with one child reflecting on the need for people to be *doing* things in exhibitions, 'You can use all your senses [...] instead of being caged up'. This

recalls Lynch's description of artists working in museums, and confirms our original hypothesis that children can learn more effectively through a multi-sensory approach to museum collections:

[...] artists working in museums having much in common with diaspora communities, with children, and with all those with whom the touch taboo is unfamiliar — an obstacle to creativity to learning and communication about the world and about the self in the world. It is active touching that is integral to the emotional, creative exploration of objects and therefore, of 'learning' itself. It involves, for the most part, the actual 'holding' of objects.³⁰

Children worked collaboratively to create an installation that included poems about the potions they had made (the original museum mixtures had lost their smell), a 'feely tub' (containing their mod roc objects), a large central display of their clay plaques and a slide show of their own digital photographs documenting the process. Patel recorded the making of the exhibition in her journal,

The children were given the basic ingredients for designing an exhibition (shoe boxes and brown paper) and this was a great example of children using their imagination to construct their own learning. As a facilitator I simply stood back and watched as the exhibition was arranged and rearranged by the children according to their own systems and sense of order. [...] The teacher commented that the children had taken charge of the exhibition design, she had simply helped with some practicalities. The process of taking ownership of learning and constructing their own learning had continued after the project — a valuable outcome.³¹

By taking ownership of their project and creating stories for their objects, and for those at the Manchester Museum, the children had explored the complex area of interpretation in modern museums. Elaine Gurian discussing the important concerns facing museums in the twenty first century suggests,

The larger issues revolve around the stories museums tell and the way you tell them. Objects, one finds, have in their tangibility, provided a variety of stakeholders with an opportunity to fight over the meaning and control of their memories. It is the ownership of the story, rather than the object itself, that the fight has all been about.³²

The children had revealed what Gurian describes as the 'intrinsically motivating aspects of objects'.³³ They worked in a framework that put a real-world problem (creating an exhibition of their own) at the heart of their project. The posing of 'real-life questions' motivated learning and this aspect of the work, linked to social collaboration (working in teams and in equal partnership with the artists) resulted in many instances of children helping each other to solve problems. Other key factors in the project's success included the privileging of choice about topic and method and the modelling strategic thinking rather than providing definitive answers.

Conclusion

'The Museum of Me' project allowed children to make strong connections between the production process of a large archaeological exhibition in a museum and the design and production of their own exhibition at school. Such an intensive experience — working in

a collaborative group on equal terms with museum specialists and artists — engaged children with the everyday concerns of professionals working with material culture. During the run of the project they were able to make links between the deterioration of objects they encountered in museum display cases and the conservation laboratory and their own collections of objects, whether a bunch of herbs or a much loved toy from early childhood. Importantly, their investigations gave them new insights into the power of the curatorial voice and the way meanings are made and enable them to understand how authority is played out within the interpretive texts of the museum. Working alongside artists and learning curators they were able to experiment with a series of texts (label making and poetry) that interpreted their own collections through acknowledging their own responses. Seeing these processes in action was an empowering experience, giving children the confidence to develop their stories and validating their feelings about their own identity. They also immersed themselves in investigating the material qualities of the objects in front of them. Unlike the current trend in archaeology and anthropology that emphasises *theorising* about materiality and material culture³⁴, these children showed a genuine interest in the real and material world.

As we have discussed, the children's critique of the museum had at its centre an analysis of how touch and inspection inform that process; traditionally, the domain of curator and so important to learning. 'The Museum of Me' provides evidence that by making the processes of the museum visible, an understanding of the curator's role can be gained, allowing children to understand that the selection of objects and the texts that accompany them impact on the meanings made by displays and exhibitions. The Manchester Museum's insistence on a multi-sensory approach to learning highlights the prohibition of touching in many museums, which is only true for visitors. The real issue, as Candlin suggests, is extending the privilege of touch to benefit visitors, not just curators.³⁵ In this discussion the Authors have advocated for increased access to the real thing, connecting children directly to objects. The physical, sensual encounter is the launch-pad to intellectual and emotional access.

November 2009

CHArt editorial note

This paper has been reviewed by Anastasia Filippopoliti and by David Prytherch in September 2011, and was subsequently revised by the Authors. CHArt wishes to thank both reviewers for their insightful comments.

References

¹ Sitch B. (2009), 'Lindow Man at the Manchester Museum: a postmodern perspective' paper given at the Centre for Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) 5th Annual Conference: *Objects – What Matters? Technology, Value and Social Change* 1–4 September 2009, University of Manchester.

² Black, G. (2005), *The Engaging Museum: Developing museums for visitor involvement*, London: Routledge, p. 140

³ Brown, P. (2009), *Us and Them: who benefits from experimental exhibition making?* Unpublished MA, Interpretive Studies, University of Leicester, p. 16.

⁴ Issues surrounding touch in museums and the politics of touch are explored in more depth in Narkiss, I. and Tomlin, H. (2008), 'Close encounters: enabling access to museum collections', *Access and Conservation*, Saunders, D., Townsend, J. H. and Woodcock, S. (eds), Preprints of the Contributions to the London Congress, 15–19 September 2008, London: The International Institute for Conservation, pp. 166–169.

⁵ Michalski, S. (1994), 'Sharing responsibility for conservation decisions', *Durability and Change: The Science, Responsibility, and Cost of Sustaining Cultural Heritage*, Kumbain, W.E., Brimblecombe, P., Cosgrove, D.E. and Staniforth, S. (eds.), Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, p. 251.

⁶ Pye, E. (2007), 'Introduction: the power of touch', *The Power of Touch*, Pye, E. (ed.), Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, pp. 14–15.

⁷ Vasseleu, C. (1998), *Textures of light: Visions of touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*, London: Routledge, p. 15.

⁸ Lynch, B. (2008), 'The Amenable Object: Working with Diaspora Communities through a Psychoanalysis of Touch', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 269; Candlin, F. (2007), 'Don't Touch! Hands Off! Art, Blindness and the Conservation of Expertise', *The Power of Touch*, Pye, E. (ed.), Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, pp. 89–106.

⁹ Candlin, F. (2008), 'Museums, Modernity and the class Politics Touching objects', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed), Oxford: Berg, p. 9.

¹⁰ Candlin, F. (2008), 'Museums, Modernity and the class Politics Touching objects', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed), Oxford: Berg, p. 19.

¹¹ In 2006 University College London (UCL) held a series of workshops exploring *Touch and the Value of Object Handling*, which culminated in a volume of papers: Chatterjee, H. (ed.) (2008), *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Oxford: Berg. Another volume was published around the same time with the involvement of some of the same people: Pye, E. (ed.), *The Power of Touch*, Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. The 2008 Congress of the International Institute for Conservation, held between 15–19 September, dealt with access: *Access and Conservation*, Preprints of the Contributions to the London Congress, Saunders, D., Townsend, J. H. and Woodcock, S. (eds.), London: The International Institute for Conservation. In 2009 a research cluster at UCL, funded by the Science and Heritage Programme, entitled *Conservation's 'Catch 22'* also dealt with the implications of access and handling on object preservation: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/conservation-c-22/> (20 March 2012).

¹² Hein, H. S. (2007), 'The authority of objects; from regime change to paradigm shift', *Curator*, 50/51, p. 79.

¹³ Greenblatt, S. (1991), 'Resonance and wonder', *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Karp, I. and Lavine, S.D. (eds.), Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, p.52.

¹⁴ Kavanagh, J. (2007), *Enhancing Child Learning Through Interactivity*, MA dissertation, Art Gallery and Museums Studies, University of Manchester (unpublished), p. 27.

¹⁵ Tuan, Y. (2006), 'The Pleasures of Touch', *The Book of Touch*, ed. C. Classen, Oxford: Berg, p.6.

¹⁶ Lynch, B. (2008), 'The Amenable Object: Working with Diaspora Communities through a Psychoanalysis of Touch', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, pp. 261-272.

¹⁷ Lynch, B. (2008), 'The Amenable Object: Working with Diaspora Communities through a Psychoanalysis of Touch', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 267

¹⁸ Pickford, P. (2009), *'Museum of Me'. Evaluation Report*, unpublished.

¹⁹ Winnicott, D. W. (1971), *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock Publications.

²⁰ Lynch, B. (2008), 'The Amenable Object: Working with Diaspora Communities through a Psychoanalysis of Touch', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 268–269.

²¹ Gurian, E.H. (2006), 'Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities: examining the process that influences them', *Civilizing the Museum: Collected Writings*, Part iv, London: Routledge, pp. 150–161, p.157.

²² Hein, H. S. (2007), 'The authority of objects; from regime change to paradigm shift', *Curator*, 50/51, p. 77.

²³ Patel, D. (2009), *'Museum of Me'. Evaluation Report*, unpublished.

²⁴ Tomlin, H. (2009), *Evaluation St James' CE Primary Museum of Me Project* (unpublished). All quotes of children's comments throughout this paper appear in this report.

²⁵ Crew, S.R. and Sims, J.E. (1991), 'Locating Authenticity', *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Karp, I. and Lavine, S.D. (eds.), Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, p. 163.

²⁶ Howes, D. (2005), 'Introduction', *Empire of the senses: the sensual culture reader*, Howes, D. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 6.

²⁷ Classen, C. (2006), 'Touch in the Museum', *The book of touch*, C. Classen (ed.), Oxford: Berg, pp. 275–284.

²⁸ Classen, C. (2006), 'Touch in the Museum', *The book of touch*, C. Classen (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 278.

²⁹ Addison, N. (2003), 'Iconcepticism: the value of images in education', *Issues in Art and Design Teaching*, Addison, N. and Burgess, L. (eds.), London: Routledge/Falmer, p. 124.

³⁰ Lynch, B. (2008), 'The Amenable Object: Working with Diaspora Communities through a Psychoanalysis of Touch', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed.), Oxford: Berg, p. 269.

³¹ Patel, D. (2009), *'Museum of Me'. Evaluation Report*, unpublished.

³² Gurian, E. H. (1999), 'What's the Meaning of the Exercise?', *Reinventing Museums for the 21st Century*, University of Michigan Colloquium, March 1999, p. 2.

³³ Gurian, E. H. (1999), 'What's the Meaning of the Exercise?', *Reinventing Museums for the 21st Century*, University of Michigan Colloquium, March 1999, p. 2.

³⁴ Ingold, T. (2007), 'Materials against materiality', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14:1, p. 1, available at <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=987120> (6 October 2009).

³⁵ Candlin, F. (2008), 'Museums, Modernity and the class Politics Touching objects', *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*, Chatterjee, H. (ed), Oxford: Berg, pp. 9-20.