Inclusive Conservation: Heart-Based Science

Julia M. Brennan

> *What's so powerful about integrating head and heart: It's where scientific rigor and moral clarity, analysis and empathy, strategy and imagination meet.*
>
> —Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, *All We Can Save*

The work to preserve the remaining clothing and textiles from the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides in the late twentieth century is, at its core, humanitarian work. Caring for and repairing them is work of both the hand and spirit—to repair the object and to help mend a society ripped apart, sharing the truth as a hedge against future horrors. As remnants of death and unimaginable trauma, these items are memory made tangible, imbued with untold stories and the spirit, the who, of those who wore them.

The conservation strategy for genocide artifacts demands a rethinking and redesign of the conservator's role. Textile conservators are trained to clean, repair, preserve, and extend the life of artifacts through clinical and reversible methods. Preserving the materials of mass atrocities necessitates becoming more inclusive and emotionally engaged. Even the simple act of removing dirt places evidence and human remains at risk. Such textiles are living histories of genocide. They provide a bridge across time to the victims. They humble us and remind us to remember. Their condition and treatment are part of a path to make amends.

There are no blueprints in established conservation literature or teachings for the preservation of objects of mass atrocities. Fundamentally, the work must be driven by empathy and respect for those that we work with—the victims both living and dead as well as the history, land, object, and site. The strategies and tools are adapted from mainstream conservation, archaeology, forensics, anthropology, Indigenous knowledge, community organizing, and spiritual faith. This work has reaffirmed that a diverse and flexible model of conservation is indispensable and vital for effective and sustainable preservation efforts, especially when the artifacts themselves bear witness.

The community of purpose requires faith in our goals as well as knowledge that begins with inclusion. It is framed by basic questions of equity and history: Who gets to help define the conservation path? What is the appropriate technology? What is our role in keeping these stories alive? Curators, survivors, and conservators must work in collaboration to shape the path for preservation.

This *inclusive conservation* work is what I call the *middle path*: a balanced approach based on equality, mutual cooperation, and compromise. This approach is characterized by listening—listening really carefully—to each other. I strive to learn from the community as a visitor, as a student of their culture, as someone who is not the all-

Julia M. Brennan, "Inclusive Conservation: Heart-Based Science," *Conserving Active Matter* (2022), Bard Graduate Center, https://exhibitions.bgc.bard.edu/cam/.

knowing expert. The middle path integrates the community's needs, its physical and spiritual health, and its cultural heritage and environment. The human condition and cultural heritage are inexorably intertwined. Our work as conservators is to try and care for this immeasurable wealth of knowledge even when the path to do so is hard.

Evolution/Passages

Textiles are vehicles for telling the stories of people, whether through outright readable symbols or intangible and obscure measures. In the growth of my conservation practice, the past has informed the present. I grew up in rural Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, attending local schools and speaking Indigenous languages. I was steeped in different cultures and traditions different from my own. At a young age, I learned the distinctive regional patterns of handmade clothing and could identify through such garments if someone was Tai Lue or Akha (Thailand and Laos), Balinese (Indonesia), or Gurung, Rai, or Tamang (Nepal). My life has since followed a course that focuses on deciphering, feeling, making, and reading about textiles.

Those early experiences inspired my interest in preserving the items that I innately understand and love. Conservation represented an exciting and diverse professional platform, blending art, anthropology, history, folklore, spiritual beliefs, handwork and craft, science, and analysis. I have come to feel a special responsibility for textiles that are steeped in human history, viewing the work as *heart-based science*.

Conservators are changed by what and who we work and live with. These dynamics have influenced my working philosophy while traveling to places like Algeria, Bhutan, Madagascar, and the mountains of Kentucky to support the preservation of our global heritage's tangible elements. The model I value is that of *community conservation*: an exchange of ideas, knowledge, and goals that establish the context and cultural signposts for the work that we undertake. It prioritizes respectful work together in an equitable, kind, supportive, creative, and accountable manner.

All textile objects are human and universal. They are mundane, necessary, protective, beautifying, comforting, stylish, identifying, and so forth. Everyday garments generally lack value in Western monetary terms and are rarely viewed as art. But they are deeply important to people, possessing the power to instantly connect us to a place, time, or person. When I hold the soft plaid blouse of my late mother, I can hear her whisper, "I am with you."

Textiles can be transformative, alive, sharing their stories by context, memory, and touch. A baseball cap might be just a baseball cap until your hero signs it. Then the item contains a connective power. You now hold what the other person once held. A fundamental principle of preserving textiles is the recognition that they are expressions of life, touchstones of memory, and reminders of our common heritage—both good and bad.

When I was invited to the Buddhist monasteries of Bhutan, a single sacred textile reframed the practice of conservation for me. A beautiful seventeenth-century silk brocade encrusted with pearls called the *Moti Chhoego* had a presence, a cultural and spiritual power, which spoke to me in the same way that rivers and mountains and deities do. Its story altered my sense of linear time into a circle—everything that once was alive is also now present. The cloth was seen in the vision of an important *Truelku* (a reincarnated holy one). In the vision, this Truelku sent his close attendant to the Paro market with a sealed pouch filled with silver coins and instructions to find a person selling brick tea. As soon as the attendant met the person with the brick tea, he handed over the pouch of coins in trade. The Truelku and his retinue of monks received the returning attendant in a grand traditional *erdang* musical ceremony. When opened, the tea had miraculously transformed into the sacred Moti Chhoego of the eight-century guru *Rinpoche* (precious teacher), also known as *Padmasambhava*, a revered historical and religious figure in Bhutan.[1] Due to the unseen intervention of powerful protective deities, it is believed that this textile will protect those who see and touch it.

I had imagined that we would use methods and materials that are fairly standard in Western textile conservation, following a series of steps that I would undertake with any other historical piece. What I did not know was that the textile itself would guide the entire conservation process. There was no sense that the conservation was disconnected from the community of Moti Chhoego. The National Textile Museum spaces and conservation lab were cleansed with copious bundles of burning incense. The celebrated cloth, measuring 5 by 12 feet (1.5 by 3.7 meters), was laid out on our cotton-covered work tables. High lamas arrived to examine it and hold blessing ceremonies, and hundreds of devotees came to honor and receive blessings from the textile. Children and mothers touched their heads to the edge of the cloth and laid wads of paper money on it as offerings. It was also the feature of a local documentary film.

After many days of discussions, a simple and reversible treatment protocol was selected. We encapsulated the entire surface of the textile with an overlay of similarly colored, sheer, polyester Stabiltex, carefully stitched by hand to hold it in place. A wooden box with triple locks and imported Marvelseal lining was lovingly made for long-term storage. Before it was returned to its home, the Je Khenpo, the monastic leader of Bhutan, reconsecrated the textile, as its journey to the Textile Museum and my direct handwork (a non-Bhutanese and non-Buddhist) had deconsecrated it.

This was the living embodiment of conservation on the community's terms—listening to all stakeholders, lamas, and the Queen Mother Sangay Choden Wangchuck, our patron, and sharing ideas and philosophies, respectful of all compromises. Our approach was like that of the custodian monk who brings his body, mind, and soul to care for the physical and spiritual aspects and materials of a monastery. This tenet of conservation is collaborative and compassionate work of the soul.

Julia M. Brennan, "Inclusive Conservation: Heart-Based Science," *Conserving Active Matter* (2022), Bard Graduate Center, https://exhibitions.bgc.bard.edu/cam/.

Too often, the conservation field seems characterized by a lack of human connectivity. And yet, people are connected and intrinsically tied to things. Our belongings are touchstones of our lives and memories.

The belief in textiles as animate has always been a pillar of my conservation practice. It is how I move through my work, whether I am preparing a 1910 suffragist banner for display, creating a mannequin for Mohammad Ali's boxing coat, or approaching the windbreaker of an unidentified Black Lives Matter protestor. This belief underpins the cleaning of the yellowed lace of a christening gown or the repair of an ancestor's tattered quilt.

Each item tells its own story through the remaining cloth, structure, soilage, and evidence of wear and tear. In each case, conversations with the owner or custodian enhance the conservation process, defining both context and intended use and needs. Do stains tell the veteran's history in battle? Does a christening gown need to be repaired for display or repeated family use? Does an image of a deity or holy one provide protection or blessings? How do you, the owner, want to live with it? How do you, the custodian of history, want to frame the story?

My world shifted again when I learned about the intricate autobiographic weavings of refugees and survivors of the American War in Vietnam and Secret War in Laos (both overlapping with my time growing up in the region and echoing my own war time memories). Cloths were animated with the imagery of war such as bombs, helicopters, fighter jets, parachutes, and other forms of death and destruction raining down from the heavens. These textiles are a potent affirmation that textiles have power, spiritual meaning, hope, and grief woven into them. The discovery of these textiles of war opened my eyes and my heart for what came later: my work with Cambodian and Rwandan textiles that bear witness to global genocides.

Reimagining Conservation in Cambodia and Rwanda

People and their past stories, their lives now, and their textiles are at the center of protecting collective memory. This background is what I carried with me as I arrived in Cambodia and Rwanda to help local museums assess and preserve the grim collections of textile artifacts from the darkest periods of their national histories. The goal of preservation was to take these artifacts—easily recognizable emblems of the people who wore them and their daily lives—and ensure that their everyday familiarity would help connect the visitor to the past events, with the hope that such history will never be repeated. Nothing conventional could have prepared me for this work and, yet, so much of my life and practice prepared me as much as it could.

Clothing speaks to us in detail about our history. As one colleague said, "through textiles I feel compassion beyond compassion that is difficult to speak."[2] The most immediate

and sage advice came at the start of the project in Cambodia from a friend, filmmaker, and humanist: "I don't know anything about textiles or how to care for them. But anything [that] you do, just make sure it is with the utmost respect."[3] This became the heart of the work: respect for the deceased, for the living, for the survivors, for the garment, for the site, for the history.

At Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the former S-21 prison and torture site of the Khmer Rouge (1975–79), where approximately eighteen thousand people died, there was a room full of garbage bags containing the only known remaining clothes of victims. There, the artifacts and DNA of S-21 inmates were haphazardly left to rot for decades in a tropical climate. The museum director wanted to rescue and preserve the artifacts with dignity for future generations.

Rwanda's Nyamata Genocide Memorial is a 1950s deconsecrated Catholic church, where five to ten thousand Tutsi fled for protection in April 1994, only to be massacred in the sanctuary and its grounds. The victims were left where they lay and others were added over time. Mass graves contain the human remains and artifacts left behind, all of which were affected by the ravages of a tropical climate—humidity, pests, rodents, and other elements of a conservator's worst nightmare. Piled on pews and the floor of the open-air church, the sheer volume of clothing and related items was staggering: 2,118.9 cubic feet (60 cubic meters), enough to fill a 40-foot (12.2-meter) shipping container. The minister of the Rwandan National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide requested that all surviving textiles be preserved in perpetuity, on view in the tropical climate of the open church in their current "authentic" manner of display.[4]

While I did not have exact answers and blueprints for meeting the caretakers' goals, I could draw on my own experiences with people who care for their own cultural heritage. I knew how to build these circles of trust and knowledge sharing, forging new protocols that are locally devised and thus those that can be locally maintained.

Genocide-related work redefines conservation as a form of optimistic activism—our attempts to save these textiles are part of a larger effort to prevent further atrocities. The conservation actions taken at these two sites are physical manifestations of empathy, empowerment, and community engagement. Collectively, we realized that our work was simply a series of small acts toward healing and reconciliation.

Circles of Trust

These are deeply saddening and dehumanizing sites, man's potential inhumanity made all too real. The work, therefore, had to be done in both spiritual and physical community. What emerged was *collective conservation*—where our humanity is at the core of everything that we do. Because we are saving the story of genocide and recovery, in fact saving the essential evidence of it, we had to trust the fabric of our human community. As stated by the artist and social justice activist Favianna Rodriguez,

"The power of culture lies in the power of story. Stories change and activate us, and together the narratives can effect change. . . . The powerful shine in one story can inspire others."[5]

This is slow work. And, for these two examples, the sites were hot and humid. The smell was overwhelming. The sudden emergence of rodents or insects was startling. The discovery of human bones was shocking. As an outside conservator, I had to be open yet serene, allowing those with lived experience to teach me while I taught them. We observed and listened to the textile's stories. The simple details are familiar: T-shirts with popular logos or the ubiquitous Adidas track pants. The hard details are the evidence—the human remains still housed in their clothing. One set bore witness to the last moments of a man's life with his sleeves tightly tied, arms pinned behind his back, unarmed when killed.

Stepping away from the physical place of work, in a discussion with colleagues at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence about the broad meanings of repair, I realized that "our strongest feelings linger in our tactile surroundings. Our work literally breathes life into something that died. Each stain, wrinkle, tear triggers a memory, visualizing the passage of time, telling the details of that person. Healing our own sorrow providing hope, stories, a humanness."[6]

On one occasion, a high-level official visited Nyamata. He slowly picked up a flower-patterned cloth that was surface cleaned, separated, and recognizable. No longer detached, he said that his mother had a similar blouse. The room was quiet. This textile, in its conserved state, was brought to life, re-individualized and rehumanized. We learned to see these textiles as the living and we were saving and restoring them to allow them to continue to tell their stories.

Our team spent a lot of time together. One survivor reconciled the brutal past with extreme tenderness, gingerly placing each piece of clothing, once surface cleaned and photographed, back on the pew. Familiar pieces made us pause and picture the missing. We connected with them in unexpected moments, as when a colleague, all suited up in personal protective equipment, found a tiny set of knit pajamas. Her goggles fogged. Two decades of internalized trauma and grief were preserved in that baby's garment. The intimacy of scale, which enabled us to explore these personal materials with our eyes and fingers, was juxtaposed with the enormity of the atrocity itself. The items were no longer mute. No longer simply objects, they became echoes of life.

Thoughtful Processes

In the process of our caring there is a rebirth and reimagining though memory. Cambodians believe that a human spirit is present in clothes. Because these garments remain alone, untended, with no proper Buddhist cremation for the bearer, the clothing continues to hold the wandering spirit. So when work began each day, the conservation

workroom was filled with incense and, while holding joss sticks to our foreheads, we prayed for these souls and asked permission to touch and work with them. We articulated our similarities through prayer, devotion, language, food, family, birthdays, and love of textiles.

The standard hierarchies of teacher/expert and student/untrained dissolved. My Cambodian and Rwandan colleagues have lifeways and knowledge, to which I listened and learned. The prevailing hierarchies were and continue to be no longer relevant because colleagues and survivors know and inherently feel the power of the materials in distinctive ways; because they are so experienced working with human remains that they lead and guide the methods of handling and examining the clothing; because religions and cultural norms guide their approach to the materials and their own emotional expressions; because there is a generosity of spirit to share their knowledge and build a community around solutions.

The actual handwork, the contemplative craft of conservation—surface cleaning with brushes or gentle vacuum, sorting, detangling, pulling, unknotting—unified us, building trust. The repetitive actions, the sheer physical strength and cooperation required to hoist and move the textiles, were shared without words, often without looking up. This handwork created a quiet space. Fingers digging, exploring, sifting, disentangling, culling; it is like a form of archeology, and I observed an inherent kind of craft knowledge, a form of muscle memory, in my colleagues. Our work is like a conversation, with each other and the object. Our busy hands lead the heart.

Each decision was carefully discussed. How much should be cleaned away? Should a stain remain? How shall the "sacred dirt" extracted from the clothing be treated? Is wet cleaning appropriate? How can the clothing be displayed in a manner that honors and protects it at the same time?

Artifacts of the Now

The collection is animate—a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. The definition of conservation is placed in context, guided by the living objects and their caregivers. The object is both subject and teacher. The conservators' mind and spirit are open to all associations. It is a metaphysical approach to conservation.

How can a piece of clothing so enthrall us? We feel and follow the thread of life within it. There comes the realization that conservation has to be more than clinical actions, bigger than what science determines. We don't actually need to know the details of conservation science to be part of the solution. Art and science—these are related by threads that hold our vision together.

Within this more spiritual approach to conservation science is the acceptance that we as caretakers cannot arrest the changes in, or transformation of, the object. Already

degraded and fragile, we acknowledge that this is part of the object's life cycle. There is no measurable target to clean and remove all the stains or effort to make it "whole" again. Its condition is part of its history.

At the core of this humanist approach is the acceptance that we gained through our shared learning that change is inherent and beautiful. These materials are dynamic, and impermanent, and our touch is just one of many along the way. We did agree however, that some removal of soiled areas and surface dirt was desired, so that the object may be more recognizable, more relatable. The residual dirt and scars serve a function to honor and remember. The object is a talisman of justice and reconciliation.

Continuing the Conversation

When we enter places where the social fabric is torn, from history of pain, loss, and hopelessness, any tear in this human fabric will continue to grow unless we recognize it in both the physical object and the people who care for it, and then, together, try to mend them. This is work of hands and heart, a craft uniting us. *This is humanitarian work*—in the case of the textiles of mass atrocities—transforming trauma into love.

Traditional technologies can provide locally sourced alternatives for preservation practices. However, these resources, plant-based cleaners, and preservation and Indigenous knowledge are scarcely used in the mainstream conservation field, which favors chemical-based products in treatments and collections care. In my work, I have witnessed science and humanities converge with new motivations, both visually and through language, all manifested as heart-based science.

One example of this synergy between humanities and science was a Southeast Asian research project from 2014 to 2018, which was developed across eleven countries by the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Archeology and Fine Arts, Asian Ministers of Education of the Southeast, and the Queen Sirikit Textile Museum, Bangkok, in collaboration with the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography, Mexico City. The main objective was to collect and disseminate traditional methods and materials in textile conservation through a collaborative forum, where selected plant-based materials and recipes were tested, analyzed, and compared with mainstream chemical examples. Being able to scientifically test and quantify the results allowed for a strong platform for the continued research and use of traditional methods for conservation.[7]

The pilot started as a way to directly connect local conservation and museum colleagues to their own traditional and historic ways of caring for cloth, often working with elders in rural villages. The hope was to blend "East and West," incorporating local sustainable practices into the predominantly Western canon. The project focused on collecting recipes, stories, spiritual beliefs, and plant samples used in traditional methods of cleaning, stain removal, and storage. It was the first time that many had even

considered local conservation traditions to be valid parts of textile conservation practices. The original research group continues to share findings, give talks, and explore more traditional knowledge. Some of the surfactants, stain removers and insect repellents that were tested are now being used to care for textile collections in Asia and Mexico. Several colleagues have gravitated toward chemistry as a way of further studying Indigenous materials for use in mainstream conservation. I would classify this project as heart-based science in action.

When Conservation Is Externally Redefined

As noted earlier, conservation is about humanity. It is an approach that honors our collective and individual heritages. I define this conservation education as *soul forming*. It is tolerant, open to new ideas, accepting other perspectives, and embracing commonality. This is the beauty of the middle path, an inclusive path with many participants, because it is about building community and balance, and it is not born of hierarchy. Soul-forming conservation is not structured in the prevailing frameworks of the science, nor is it accountable to those who would set those standards. Soul-forming conservation argues that the science serves the community's need for conservation and preservation, which is not static.

How can we learn from others? Recently, social activists and guardians of justice have broken barriers in their independent efforts to preserve and honor the tens of thousands of banners, stuffed animals, letters, and memorial gifts honoring George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, and the thousands of Native American child victims of American Indian Residential Schools.[8] These donations or offerings are alive and purposeful. They are intended to be seen, to bear witness, and to provide social unity and healing.

The focus and value of such conservation is to preserve the narrative of the people, the emotional events that exposed core weaknesses in our human fabric in this country. These are offerings in a sacred space, full of conversations that have been had and that still need to be had. Therefore, the physical space is a place of *re-memory*. As stated by Jeannelle Austin, founder of the Minneapolis-based Racial Agency Initiative, "The work and display space is not a sterile lab environment. The rules you learned in school, toss 95%. Because this is about people and lives. People come first."[9]

Here, preservation is predicated on continued access, repurposed and ultimately impermanent, rotting in the winds. Conservation is not perfect. The offerings are not rarified or lifeless even when damaged by continuous outdoor display. They are present, mended, cared for, and redisplayed as part of the collective soul of the community. This is their conservation story. Their actively degrading state is not considered loss but triumph of human spirit. Their care is shaped by context. These individual objects are both part of and emblematic of a greater movement for social justice—community conservation at its heart.

The model for community conservation exemplifies more equitable forms of knowledge sharing. It offers conservation as racial justice work, preserving the objects of protest and remembrance. It is done in a nonmonetary exchange of services, knowledge, and personal stories, in reciprocity, similar to mutual aid.

Conventional object-based conservation narrowly defines and guides the profession. Science divides and categorizes, temporally, geographically, even monoculturally. As technicians and evidence-based observers, we are taught that science is objective, dispassionate, and thus truth. Even the language is distant, technical, tight, uniform. It does not tell the story of living textiles of horror, redolent with human suffering, both conceptually and actually. What we cannot prove is unnamed. What we feel or intuit is unprovable and thus not proper.

Yet, more and more, traditional conservation is evolving. The discussion is growing richer with more contributions from Indigenous peoples and other caretakers of cultural heritage from regions in Africa, Asia, and South America. They are helping the field discover that it is possible to blend the empirical with the traditional, the scientific with the humanistic, and create new sets of intentions and parameters, along with an expanding and accessible vocabulary. Prioritizing flexibility of mind and deeper concern for the animate nature of objects will complement the groundwork of collaborative community exchanges.

The formal field of conservation can learn from those whose lived experience is the care of cultural touchstones. The model of engaging sustainable Indigenous knowledge places a value in community-based decisions, traditions, and actions. It values respect, reciprocity, and relationships manifested in interdependence and mutual understanding.[10] The protocols, methods, and materials for care and nurture can be based on holistic knowledge, generations of quantifiable practices and results, and respect.

Ultimately, the lesson learned when working with textiles and objects from mass atrocities is that conservation needs to be compassionate and caring, even when the artifacts appear to be more benign aspects of our shared human experience. The future model of *conservation as community* is part of the fundamental human experience, tapping into a myriad of disciplines, ways of knowing, and skill sets from many fields and communities. What would the practices of conservation become if trainings and apprenticeships widened into social justice, climate crisis, public health, food security and farming, dance, and poetry?

Imagine what *we*, collectively and collaboratively, will become if we use these principles rooted in gratitude, human exchange, and respect. Enriching the work through the inclusion of people who are not officially part of the conservation field, and adopting a

broad view that conservation serves to repair, heal, nurture, restore, and reimagine both object and owner. The communal actions of care can serve to protect each other from harm and pain, to display those talismans that remind us of the dark and light, encouraging the light. This is the work of prevention and protection on a very different level.

Bibliography

Austin, Jeanelle. "A Sankofa Moment: Heritage Conservation and Racial Justice at the George Floyd Global Memorial." UCLA/Getty Conservation Distinguished Lecture, June 4, 2021.

———. "Telling Our Own Story: The Threat of Whiteness in Conservation." Washington Conservation Guild, April 1, 2021.

Berry, Wendell. *The Hidden Wound*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2010.

Brennan, Julia M., and Randall Mason. "Global Dialogues: Preserving Memories." Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, March 20, 2019.

Brennan, Julia M., and Linh Anh Moreau, eds. *Our Ancestors Knew Best: Traditional Southeast Asian Textile Treatments and Their Place in Modern Conservation.* Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts and the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles, Bangkok, 2020. https://publications.spafajournal.org/index.php/spafapub/catalog/book/35.

Brennan, Julia M., and Lilian García-Alonso. *Before They Are Gone* Expanded*: Capturing Traditional Textile Preservation Knowledge in Southeast Asia and Latin America.* ICOM-CC, 18th Triennial, Copenhagen, 2017. https://www.academia.edu/34598981/Before_they_are_gone_expanded_Capturing_traditional_textile_preservation_knowledge_in_Southeast_Asia_and_Latin_America.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.

Displaced: Contemporary Artists Confront the Global Refugee Crisis. SITE Santa Fe, 2020–21. https://sitesantafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GallerGuide_Displaced_v.3_pages-compressed.pdf.

Hoaglund, Linda. *Things Left Behind: Ishiuchi Miyako*, 2013. http://lhoaglund.com/behind-things-left-behind-ishiuchi-miyako.

Ishiuchi, Miyako. *Hiroshima*. Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 2014.

———. *Postwar Shadows*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2015.

Johnson, Ayana Elizabeth, and Katherine K. Wilkinson, eds. *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*. New York: One World Penguin Random House, 2020.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013.

Levitt, Laura. *The Objects That Remain*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2020

National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, Rwanda. https://cnlg.gov.rw/index.php?id=118.

Rodriguez, Sandy. *You Will Not be Forgotten*. Los Angeles: Charlie James Gallery, 2020. https://www.cjamesgallery.com/show-detail/you-will-not-be-forgotten.

The Warmth of Other Suns: Stories of Global Displacement. Washington, DC: Phillips Gallery, 2019.

Watt, Marie, and Cannupa Hanksa Luger. *Each/Other*. Denver Art Museum, 2021. https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/exhibitions/each-other.

Notes

[1] Dasho Penden Wangchuk, *Story of the Moti Chhoego*, as told in the vision of the first Tshamdra Truelku, Ngawang Druba, 1594–1651, of Tshamdra Goemba, a contemporary of the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594–1651), who is considered the "George Washington" unifier of Bhutan. Email to the author, April 2021.

[2] Sokpenh Chheang, correspondence with the author, 2021.

[3] Sopheap Chea, correspondence with the author, 2017.

[4] National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, Rwanda.

[5] Favianna Rodriguez, "Harnessing Cultural Power," in *All We Can Save*, ed. Johnson and Wilkinson, 123.

[6] Brennan and Mason, "Global Dialogues."

[7] For documentation of the project and its findings, see Brennan and Moreau, eds., *Our Ancestors Knew Best*.

[8] Austin, "Telling Our Own Story."

[9] Austin, “A Sankofa Moment.”
[10] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.