Who Put the Folk in Art?

A Study of Folk Art Collecting through the Native American Folk Art Collection of Elisabeth Houtzager at the National Museum of Ethnology

Margaret Brisker

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Chapter One: Introduction

Location: Utrecht, Netherlands, apartment of Elisabeth Houtzager
Year: 1993
Opening Scene: North American curator Pieter Hovens, of the National Museum of Ethnology, in Leiden, Netherlands, is invited by art collector, Elisabeth Houtzager to visit her apartment in Utrecht. Pieter is stunned and pleasantly surprised by her two apartment spaces that are bursting at the seams with folk art from around the world. The two commence an afternoon of conversations of culture and collections.
When Pieter first met Ms. Houtzager on that momentous day, he did not expect her to make an offer that would significantly affect the collections at the National Museum of Ethnology.

This opening scene describes the beginning of the story of the National Museum of Ethnology's acquisition of Elisabeth Houtzager's *circa* 4,000-object folk art collection in 1993. It was one of the largest individual acquisitions ever made in the museum's 178 years of existence. It is on the basis of this story that I was invited to fulfil an internship at the National Museum of Ethnology (NME) under the supervision of curator Pieter Hovens. Hovens desired that more documentation be completed regarding the portion of Houtzager's folk art collection from North America, which would ultimately be recorded in the museum's collections digital database, The Museum System (TMS). While most data regarding the objects was already available in TMS, Hovens requested that research be conducted in order to contribute additional descriptive, contextual information of Houtzager's collection in the database, namely, biographies of the makers of the various pieces of Native American folk art, and also biographies of the places where Houtzager collected the objects. The goal of my internship was to enrich and make available further contextual information regarding the North American portion of the Houtzager collection.

During my research at the NME, it became apparent that folk art is a relatively complex matter. Modern archaeological discourse pertaining to decolonization and studies in post-colonialism represents a new archaeology than that of the mid-20th century. In very broad terms, many archaeologists now argue along multi-disciplinary lines to reassess past views and colonial attitudes,

emphasizing plurality and a postprocessual analysis (Gosden 2012, 253). A similar approach can be seen in the study of folk art. Archaic epistemologies that regarded folk art as a far inferior product of a non-Western cultural 'Other', have been reconsidered in the past century. The research of Franz Boas at the turn of the 19th century on the subject of primitive art can be seen as one of the first major studies to have had an enormous impact on the status of primitive, folk, or non-Western art in Western society. By giving voice to native or indigenous peoples, he promoted the idea that arts from native societies were capable of possessing many of the same qualities that are valued within the canons of Western 'civilised' or 'high' art (Jonaitis 1995, xi). Previously mostly collected as curiosities, these types of objects are now more frequently valued on the basis of aesthetics (Graburn 1976, 2). These shifts caused folk art to become more appreciated in the West, and also created a surge in its popularity for collectors.

Elisabeth Houtzager's collection of approximately 4,000 objects of folk art represent many different regions of the world. The folk art objects of focus in this study are examples of contemporary Native American Pueblo pottery from North America, predominantly with origins in the states of New Mexico and Arizona, located in the Southwest region of the United States *(Figure 1.1).* The materials and technical processes used by the makers to create the pottery demonstrate a degree of cultural continuity, by maintaining certain techniques and designs utilised by their ancestors. In addition to this continuance is a degree of change and innovation. For example, the early 20th century brought about outside influences by traders, dealers, and archaeologists to encourage native communities to create new pieces while also reviving ancient pre-contact forms based on archaeological finds such as potsherds discovered in the Southwest United States (Bernstein and Brody 2001, 13).

Figure 1.1. *Map of the United States highlighting Arizona and New Mexico, the states of origin of the Pueblo pottery in the study (after Google Maps, 2015, https://www.google.com).*

By using the initial research undertaken for the internship as a foundation, an aim of this thesis is to further explore the concept of folk art and folk art making and collecting through Elisabeth Houtzager's North America collection. This study is relevant to archaeology as it demonstrates the folk art makers' manipulation of material culture in order to express cultural traditions rooted in a rich archaeological past, while at the same time creating new objects that represent contemporary Native American ways of life. Extending beyond the physical material of the objects in Houtzager's collection, the study aims to bring into focus the context, therefore emphasizing the agency of the makers. An agent, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, can be identified as "a being or thing that acts to produce a particular effect or result" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015, http://www.oed.com). Sociologist Anthony Giddens, in his theories of human agency, refers to agency as 'doing'. Giddens attests that acts demonstrating agency can be intentional, which he defines as "an act which its perpetrator knows, or believes, will have a particular quality or outcome and where such knowledge is utilised by the author of the act to achieve this quality

or outcome" (Giddens 1984, 8). However, he also indicates that actions performed by agents may be unintentional (Giddens 1984, 8). Agency, used in this study in reference to the makers of folk art, refers to their ability to act in the world, autonomously making rational choices regarding their folk art and therefore, their livelihoods. As a result, the research will provide a more dynamic view of the lives and histories of the indigenous peoples of the United States. Concomitantly, this study is significant for the field of archaeology as it highlights the subject of folk art, of which can be seen to constitute a somewhat ambiguous genre of material culture in Western society. This case study involving folk art and the collecting practices of the NME and Eisabeth Houtzager, exemplifies how values, either institutional or personal, are reflected through collecting.

Folk art is a genre of material culture that eludes any one definition and that possesses various competing characterizations in Western culture. Generally speaking, many have labeled it as a non-western form of primitive art, and on a lower level than European, or Western art. For example, Sally Price offers a plethora of possible definitions of primitive art that describe some of the commonly shared perceptions of this type of object. To list a couple:

> "Any tradition of visual art produced by mentally balanced adult humans that is regularly analysed in the comparative context of drawings by apes, children, and the insane" (Price 2001, 2).

> "Any art made by persons who, in Westerners' metaphorical imagery of the Family of Man, are regarded with affection as baby brothers, genetically related and genealogically equal but not yet trained to repress their natural urges in conformance with the riles of civilised behavior" (Price 2001, 2).

Others, however, attribute much merit to the makers and their work, and place them nearer to the work of European fine artists. For instance, Australian aboriginal art entered the Western sphere of modern fine art in the late 20th century. It became widely accepted and highly valued in the 1990s as it entered the international fine art market through prestigious auction houses such as Sotheby's (Fisher 2012, 254). In the West, paintings by Rembrandt or Degas possess inherent value, which is recognizable by most people in western society. The value of folk art, however, may not be as apparent to everyone. Bearing this in mind, several key research questions may be asked: What motivated Elisabeth Houtzager to collect this type of object so extensively? Additionally, why did the

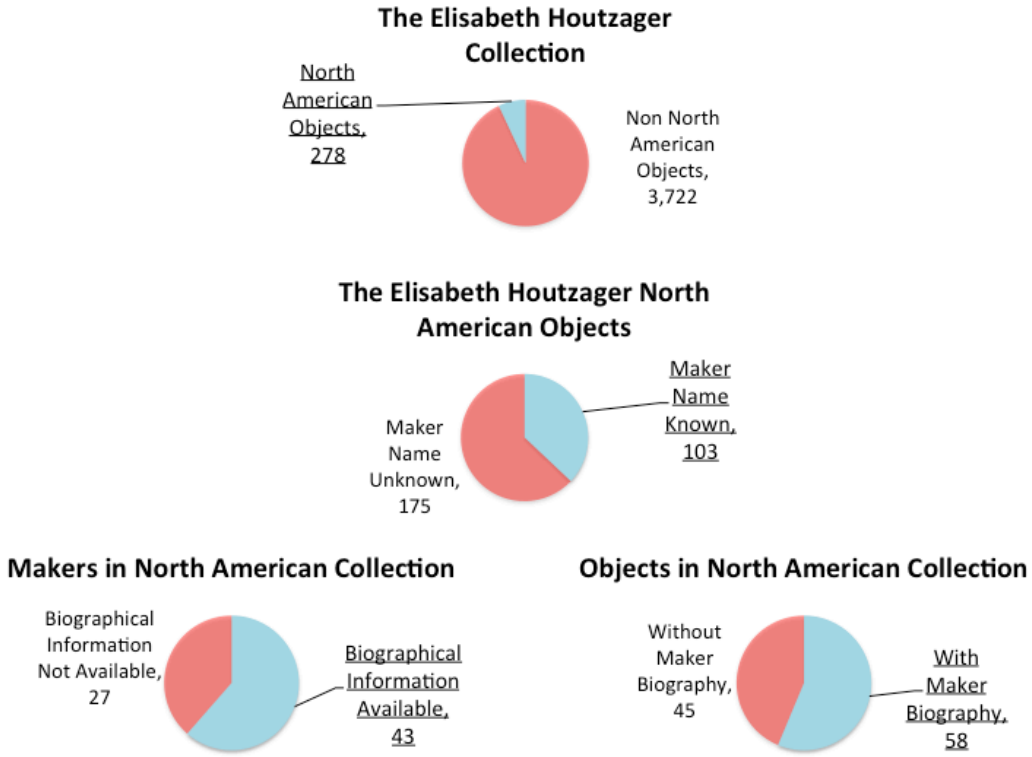
NME accept Houtzager's large collection of folk art? In order to approach these inquiries, one must also explore the concept of folk art. What is folk art, and how does it relate to material culture artefacts and art? What were the intentions of the makers?

1.1 Methods

In order to broach the research questions above, several methods have been employed. Initial research of Houtzager's collection was conducted for the internship position with the aim of contributing to the NME's database (TMS) in order to further enrich the museum's knowledge of the origin and context of the objects, by producing descriptive information in the form of biographies of: (a.) the makers of the objects, and (b.) the places—*i.e.* markets, galleries, trading posts, *et cetera*—from which Houtzager purchased the objects. Having held a career in the museum field, Houtzager exemplified her museum-minded nature by maintaining a handwritten, detailed card catalogue documenting her collections. The catalogue includes photographs of the objects, as well as details such as a physical description of the object. In some cases she also listed the maker of the object and shop or market where it was purchased, the year it was purchased, and how much she paid. Additionally, she sometimes included mementoes such as business cards from galleries and trading posts, advertisements, price tags, pamphlets, and magazine clippings. This documentary assemblage not only contains an intimate glimpse into the personal collecting practices of Houtzager, but also provides much useful data with which to study her sample of Native American folk art. Houtzager's card catalogue was utilized together with TMS, in addition to publications and internet resources in order to gain insight into the lives and work of the folk art makers, and the market within which they and collectors like Houtzager, were situated in the 1950s-1970s United States.

Houtzager's collection of folk art from North America consists of a total of 278 objects—the majority of which are from the United States, with several also from Canada. This sample was pared down based on the information provided by Houtzager in her card catalogue, and whether or not she listed the maker and/or the place of purchase *(Table 1.1)*

***Table 1.1**. Chart displaying sample size used in the internship and as a basis for the thesis.*



Of the original 278 objects, Houtzager identified the names of the makers of 103 of the objects. Biographical information was obtainable for 43 makers that pertain to 58 of the 103 objects. Therefore, only the 58 remaining objects and their 43 makers were of concern in the project, and a total of 43 maker biographies were composed for the purposes of the internship. In addition, in her card catalogue, Houtzager mentioned the specific names of 33 fairs, markets, galleries, trading posts, or museum gift shops, where she purchased various objects in her collection. Of the 33 listed place names, information was found for 27 places, and biographies were written to be entered into the NME's TMS database.

The internship served as a point of departure from which to expand my research and to engage in a more in-depth analysis of Native American folk art makers in the 20th century, the art market in the Southwest US, and the collection of these types of objects by individuals and institutions, in this case, Houtzager and the NME. Of the objects and makers of Houtzager's collection initially studied

in the smaller sample of 43 makers and their respective 58 objects, 53 of the objects are categorized as pueblo pottery (containers or figures), while only the remaining 5 objects are non-pottery pieces (two carved kachina dolls, one woven basket, and two leather bags). Therefore, further research of the collection and its makers that was conducted for the purpose of this thesis focus solely on the makers of Pueblo pottery *(See Appendix 1 for list of pottery makers)*. Studying the lives, careers, and artistic styles of the makers has offered insight into their intentions of design, and also their role within the art market, ultimately shedding light on what might attract collectors to these folk art pieces. Furthermore, research of the markets, fairs, and galleries where the objects were purchased or acquired by Houtzager has allowed the role of the art market to be contextualised within lives of the makers and the consumers.

The other segment of the data was obtained through interviews. Modern archaeology as well as museological studies today have become more interdisciplinary (MacDonald 2011, 1). The concept of folk art and its collection can be best investigated by consulting multiple fields of study. Interviews were conducted with three curators at the NME. The curators were selected partially on the basis that they each represent a different discipline. Pieter Hovens, curator of North America and supervisor of my internship project, has a background in anthropology. In addition to his expertise of the material culture and art of native North America, he knew Elisabeth Houtzager personally, and was deeply involved in the acquisition of her collection in the NME. Laura van Broekhoven, head of the curatorial department, and curator of Central and South America, can provide an archaeological perspective. Curator of Japan, Matthi Forrer, was selected for his training in art history. I believed that dialogues from these three different fields of expertise would afford multivalent perspectives on folk art and Houtzager's collection, as well as the collecting practices of the museum regarding folk art.

There are several noteworthy limitations to the research involved in this thesis. Since the study is being conducted in The Netherlands, a limitation exists in the portion of available subject matter for study that pertains to Native Americans. While a fair amount of literature on the topic is accessible in the Netherlands, many pieces of desired literature were unobtainable. Moreover, research of other studies pertaining to Elisabeth Houtzager would have proven valuable to this study. There are only a small number of publications available,

and they are only printed in the Dutch language. As a native English speaker with extremely limited knowledge of Dutch, I was only able to utilise information regarding Houtzager from one key source—my supervisor, Pieter Hovens, and one publication that he authored. While seemingly satisfactory information has been attained on the life and collections of Houtzager, additional literature would undoubtedly lend other valuable outlooks to consider. On the other hand, however, this apparent inadequacy in literature also offers an opportunity for this thesis to contribute to the existing body of Dutch sources by producing an English text that features Houtzager and her collection. Another possible limitation is the decision to interview just three people. Although I believe the sample to be sufficient on one hand because of the diversity of disciplines of the interviewees, a larger sample could of course lend a greater, even more varied, and richer range of perspectives with which to work.

1.2 Review of Literature and Terminology

In addition to the methods outlined above, clarification of terminology is required, as well as a theoretical framework. This is provided by various pieces of literature, which will also enable this study to be placed in a historical and comparative perspective. The term folk art, which is used throughout this paper to describe the collection of Houtzager, is discussed in this section, including its relation to other terms such as primitive art, ethnography and art, and tourist art, in an attempt to comprehend the various intricacies involved in defining and understanding folk art. Furthermore, clarification of terminology that is used throughout the thesis in relation to the objects in the collection and their makers, is also elucidated.

The producers of folk art may be referred to by many labels, including artists, makers, craftsmen, or artisans, to name a few. In order to provide a neutral analysis, the term maker will be used throughout the thesis. Additionally, the terms ethnology and ethnography in relation to objects and museums will recur in the thesis. According to the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (2002), ethnology is defined in very broad terms as “a synonym for social or cultural anthropology” and may also be described as the “study of culture, history, and relationships” (Barnard and Spencer 2002, 903). Ethnography is explained both as a process—through anthropological

observation and fieldwork—and also as a product, as in a written account resulting from fieldwork that "focuses on a particular population, place and time with the deliberate goal of describing it to others" (Sanjek 2002, 296). Both terms can be applied in the context of objects of material culture, and they are frequently used by museums and scholars interchangeably in reference to museums and objects. The terms of ethnology and ethnography will therefore be used interchangeably in this thesis.

Literature on the subject of collecting practices is also a main focus of the research. A basic understanding of why individuals as well as institutions collect certain objects, may provide a clue as to what motivated Houtzager to collect folk art, and also why the NME accepted the collection into the museum. A review of this topic can be found in Chapter Three. Research has also been conducted regarding museums and their collections in order to provide a context in which to examine the Houtzager's collection within the setting of the NME. An examination of this associated literature is located in Chapter Four.

What is Folk Art?

In Western society, humans use definitions and classifications in order to organize and understand various aspects of life. Academic disciplines are no exception. Within the studies of art, archaeology, and anthropology, the category of folk art has been attributed numerous, and sometimes conflicting definitive terms and associations. Primitive art, ethnic art, outsider art, tourist art, folklore, airport art, self-taught art, naïve art, and tribal art, are just a few terms that have been used to define or have been used interchangeably with folk art. The concept of folk art also frequently appears in relation to ethnography and art, or fine art. While the term folk art defies any one absolute definition, consideration of several diverse meanings together can contribute to progression toward a more comprehensive understanding of the term.

The term primitive art has been discussed in relation to folk art in much literature. Franz Boas, sometimes referred to as the Father of American Anthropology, is known for his significant anthropological literature that began with fieldwork among the Kwakiutl peoples of the North Pacific region of native North America in the late 19th century and early 20th century, and culminated in his publication of *Primitive Art* (1955, reprinted edition) in 1926. Boas despised

the popular theory of social evolutionism which permeated primitive arts studies during the 19th century. By using the 'comparative method' within the anthropological theory of evolution in relation to primitive arts, it was alleged that living primitive societies could be compared to prehistoric peoples, and located on a much lower rung of a human growth and development ladder (Jonaitis 1995, 4). Thus, objects created by these 'primitive' peoples were believed to be childlike, and much less civilized than advanced Western, European culture. Through his intensive studies of the art of the Native Americans, Boas revolutionized the field of anthropology and art history by not only disproving past theories such as evolutionism, but by also offering alternative rationalizations (Jonaitis 1995, 4). Throughout his studies and writing, he strove to prove that primitive, or indigenous peoples were capable of creating things with many of the same intentions as well-known Western artists. In *Primitive Art*, Boas analyses in great detail the specific technical art processes utilized by the indigenous peoples he studied. Ultimately, he attests to the universality of artistic expression, and suggests the idea that the creation of most any object or art form is driven by technical perfection and aesthetics (Boas 1955, 356).

> "When the technical treatment has attained a certain standard of excellence, when the control of the processes involved is such that certain typical forms are produced, we call the process an art, and however simple the forms may be, they may be judged from the point of view of formal perfection; industrial pursuits such as cutting, carving, molding, weaving; as well as singing, dancing and cooking are capable of attaining technical excellence and fixed forms. The judgment of perfection of technical form is essentially an aesthetic judgment" (Boas 1955, 10).

And he continues, confirming the universality of this principle,

> "Such types exist among mankind the world over, and we must assume that if an unstandardized form should prove to possess an esthetic appeal for a community it would be readily adopted. Fixity of form seems to be most intimately connected with our ideas of beauty" (Boas 1955, 10).

Boas preached that objects created by 'primitives' should be considered by similar standards as western art. He focuses much attention to the technical production and aesthetics of the objects.

In *The Spirit of Folk Art: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art,* Folklorist Henry Glassie also considers folk art in relation to primitive art. While he claims that the two terms are deeply interconnected, primitive art is a product of colonialism and folk art is a result of progress. Generally, however, he believes that it is impossible to arrive at any one definition of folk art, and contends that a comprehensive analysis of the meanings of the individual words of 'folk' and 'art', as well as a contrast of folk art to other forms of art, can all lend to a variety of ways to interpret the concept, and he encourages us to choose from his many options to select which one we like best. To summarize, Glassie claims that folk is the offspring of the term folklore, and we can understand folk or folklore in terms of three different categories: nationalistic, radical, or existential. The nationalistic category deals with 'folk' in terms of a balance between personal creativity or style and collective order (Glassie 1989, 26). The radical category refers to the converse of modernity—tradition, and the third category of existential refers to folklore and folk art as reality, as a kind of communication or action (Glassie 1989, 34). He then defines art similarly, by means of three separate categories: medium, functional, and processual. Art characterised by its medium is the most basic way to identify and categorize what is art and what is not art. While a painting is considered art, wood carvings are not, and so on (Glassie 1989, 36). The 'functional' classification of art defines art as purely decoration, and his third category of processual concerns the process—an attempt to understand the makers of things (Glassie 1989, 87). Glassie then unites the previously mentioned categories of 'folk' and 'art' to arrive at several definitions of 'folk art'. If one were to combine the two most primitive terms, folk as nationalistic and art by medium, folk art "would consist of the most important expressive forms of a group bound by a sense of identity" (Glassie 1989, 88). If the next two terms associated with folk and art—radical and functional—are added together, it may produce a definition of folk art as "the totality of objects that vary at the pleasure of their creators while holding steady over time to preserve and express a culture's deepest ideas" (Glassie 1989, 92). To combine the final two terms that Glassie attributes to folk and art, would produce what is, according to Glassie, the most contemporary definition of folk art. The existential definition of folk plus the processual definition art equals the collective definition of "the unification of the individual and the collective through a communication that enlivens the feelings while urging the mind toward truth" (Glassie 1989, 88).

Glassie's hefty volume that aims to define and to comprehend the seemingly endless variations in Western rhetoric of art, fine art, primitive art, and folk art, concludes with the idea that it is key to recognize the values as well as prejudices of our culture and other cultures to understand the folk art. There is no inherent difference between the abilities of a self-taught weaver from the southwest United States and a painter trained in a prestigious European academy. In the end, Glassie reduces his argument to the idea that everything is simply an art.

> "Knowing the world, knowing its superiority to our schemes, we will come to know art as mixed, as a message about the wonders of impurity, as real. Not fine, nor folk, nor primitive, nor sensual nor conceptual, useless nor useful, traditional nor original, art is. Art is the joy we find in work, surely; it is the record of our bodies bumping through the world, our wits at war with the unknowable. It is the story of our fumbling toward collaboration and our union with the power that moves the universe. Art is the best that can be done" (Glassie 1989, 258).

His testament ultimately attests to the to the impossibility of defining folk art, offering valid points on which to reflect. Like Boas, Glassie suggests the universal quality of art and creative expression. This contributes to a tangible framework for comprehending folk art for the purpose of this discussion.

Also using the term primitive art, Nelson Graburn, places 'folk art' in a separate category from 'primitive art'. Graburn postulates that primitive art was unintentionally created as art, and was typically made by newly colonized groups of people, whereas folk art was a term invented by European elites in the late 19th and early 20th century to refer to the art of those of 'lower classes' in multicultural societies (Graburn 1976, 3). He claims, however, that folk art has evolved somewhat since its more strict association with the lower classes, and now defines folk art as a term "used for those remnants of local traditions that have broad appeal, that represent the continuing traditions of handmade things, and that are not officially part of the art establishment or the avant-garde" (Graburn 1976, 4). Additionally Graburn utilizes the concept of the Fourth World, as opposed to the First, Second, and Third Worlds, to describe the context in which folk art is created. Fourth World arts are arts that have undergone major change, or acculturation. They are created by indigenous peoples who are no longer autonomous, and have ceased to create arts and crafts for their own utilisation, now producing art for outside consumers (Graburn 1976, 3-4). This

indicates one of Graburn's arguments that correlates folk art to commercial art and tourist art. Here, preferences of the consumer and intentions of the maker interact, and as a result greatly influence the choices made by the maker. The consumer typically has in mind what he or she perceives as ideal objects, perhaps those that may allow one to "get 'close to the native' spirit by having 'genuine,' 'authentic' artifacts to show" (Graburn 1976, 14). The influence of authenticity can evidently be a factor. According to Regina Bendix, in this instance, authenticity in the tourist art market differs from the authenticity in the typical classical art market where value can be attributed to objects with appropriate documentation that verifies a certain artist's creation of an object. In the tourist art market, authenticity can extend beyond the physical object, to pertain to the origin of a certain person from a different culture, a representation of a particular tradition, or memories of a certain experience or place (Bendix 1994, 69). Sociologist Erik Cohen identifies tourist arts as a multifaceted and complex concept. He uses the term 'ethnic artists' to describe the makers of tourist art, and attests that makers may either alter forms or designs to something completely unrelated to the local culture in order to appeal to consumers, or on the other hand many focus on their own historic, traditional, or authentic pasts (Cohen 1993, 5). Simplification of style or motif and miniaturization of objects are also indicated by Cohen as common traits of tourist arts, and may be employed in an effort to conserve time and finances, or to make the objects more portable for tourists. Also, when authenticity is perceived as a desire of collectors, makers may capitalize on this by using natural or traditional materials in their arts or crafts (Cohen 1993, 5).

Western society tends to emphasise a dichotomous relationship between ethnographic artefacts and objects of art. According to James Clifford, ethnographic objects are typically described as 'interesting', while objects of art are 'original' or 'beautiful' (Clifford 1988, 227). Ethnology or ethnography has been most commonly characterised by objects, or artefacts that are not seen to represent the creativity of an individual maker, but instead characterize an entire group of people or culture. Fisher mentions that an 'ethnographic framework' can be applied to objects and states that this is,

> "the way cultural traditions are encoded in an object, which means that objects are presented as authentic exemplars of a generalized community practice, and tradition is regarded as having strictly determined the character of community members' creative output" (Fisher 2012, 255).

Art, at the opposite pole is usually described as a highly stylised expression of individual creativity. Further, ethnography is frequently described as having been created for utilitarian purposes, while art is considered to have been made for non-utilitarian purposes, perhaps aiming more toward aesthetics. Art assigns "a heroically personal, subjective, and non-utilitarian expression of creativity" (Ames 1991 in Fisher 2012, 255). These general distinctions are frequently embodied in and communicated through museums. The dichotomy is also illustrated through Sally Price's comparison of museum display of Western art, and ethnographic artefact, in *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (2001). Typically art museums display art objects with labels that provide little to no contextual information. A concept of value can be recognised within this frame. In Western society, we tend to associate a 'perceived worth', which is linked to fame and financial value, to objects that are displayed in this manner (Price 2001, 84). At the other end of the spectrum, in anthropology or ethnographic museums, artefacts are usually displayed in overly crowded cases and are explained through "extensive prose, initiating viewers into the esoterica of its manufacture, use, role in society, and religious meaning" (Price 2001, 84). Price argues that primitive art should be located somewhere between art and artefact, and attests to a need to provide a middle ground for primitive art, as it can possess both aesthetics and contextual value.

Another characteristic of folk art identified by both Graburn and Price is anonymity. Traditionally, unsigned primitive, tribal, or folk art, is thought to represent overall traditions of a group of people or a society from a geographical region, rather than the creativity of individuals. Folk art from the 19th century and into the 20th century was for the most part anonymous. Although others within the source community of the maker may have probably been able to recognize the work of a particular maker, these origins tended to remain unknown to the outsider (Graburn 1976, 21).

A principle aim of this thesis is to gain insight into the motivations behind Elisabeth Houtzager's collecting of folk art, as well as the motives that lay in the

NME's acquisition of her collection. Collectively, the reviewed literature demonstrates the indefinite character of folk art. Applied together, the concepts contribute to a structure on which to identify with Houtzager and her collection.

1.3 Thesis Structure and Outline

The thesis is structured in a manner that correlates to the organic development of the study. Beginning with the crux of the research subject, Chapter Two introduces the case of Elisabeth Houtzager and her collection. In order to contextualise the study, a history of the rise of the Native American folk art market in the United States in the late 19th and 20th centuries is presented. The chapter also details her collection of Pueblo pottery at the NME through its makers and the art market, along with results and an analysis. Chapter Three examines theories and practices of individual collecting, revealing various reasons why people collect objects. Alexander Girard and Florence D. Bartlett, are two other collectors that can be related to Houtzager, and are also discussed in the third chapter. Chapter Four addresses museum collecting and folk art within a museum context. Interviews with three curators at the NME, Pieter Hovens, Laura van Broekhoven, and Matthi Forrer are examined and analysed in the chapter as well. The fifth, concluding chapter reviews the study and findings, and answers the research questions presented in this Introduction chapter.

Chapter Two: Elisabeth Houtzager's Folk Art Collection at the National Museum of Ethnology

> "Against those who reduce art to something that brings pleasure, to a savory soup or hot bath, against those who reduce art to self-expression, to something no nobler than a belch of a drunk, scholars of folk art stress the useful and intellectual dimensions of art. Folk art is a critical weapon; it is a corrective concept, balancing the personal with the social, the progressive with the traditional, the novel with the perfect, the material with the spiritual. Folk art calls goodness and reason, the smell of the earth and the glory of God, back into art" (Glassie 1989, 254).

This chapter explores Elisabeth Houtzager's collection of Native American folk art. The first section looks at the emergence of Native American folk art in the United States at the turn of the 20th century largely through the 1970s, which is applicable to the time period in which Houtzager traveled there collecting folk art. The second section contains a short biography of Houzager, which is followed by an introduction of Southwest Pueblo pottery and its makers. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 are an analysis of some of the pottery in her collection and the art market in which she participated.

2.1 The rise of Native American folk art in the United States

Collecting trends change over time—affecting value, and what is deemed as valuable by collectors. Something that at one time may be considered as junk, may in later years be deemed valuable, either aesthetically or monetarily (Graburn 1976, 14). In order to gain a more complete understanding of the area in which Houtzager was collecting, an examination of the rise in popularity of Native American folk art in the United States in the 20th century will be considered.

An interest in collecting Native American folk art in North America originated in the late 19th century, and it was collected primarily as curiosities.

The introduction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1880s brought about immense change to the folk art market of the Southwest. Although trading posts used for selling Native American wares had already existed on some of the reservations prior to the railroad, the new connection to the other half of the country created an influx of tourists and traders. Many tourists from other parts of the country were eager to buy souvenirs from their travels. This can be seen to coincide with a rise in what Graburn terms commercial arts or tourist arts (Graburn 1976, 14). Influence of a market economy and tourism would have acted as a powerful force in the creativity involved in the production of folk art objects by Native American makers. Innovations and modifications may have been used in order to satisfy traders, as the middlemen, and ultimately the tourists. According to Graburn, souvenirs must be cheap, understandable, and portable (Graburn 1976, 15). Bearing in mind that many tourists would be unaware of the omission of certain details that may have been present on more traditional forms, simplification of design may have been utilized by makers in order to produce more objects in less time (Graburn 1976, 16). Additionally, miniaturization of objects may have been a technique used by makers to appeal to tourists who would need to fit the object into a suitcase before traveling home.

There was a significant rise in the nationwide collection of Native American folk art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which has been referred to by some as the "Indian craze". According to Elizabeth Hutchinson, the term refers to a 'widespread passion' for collecting Native American goods, not only in smaller towns nearer to Indian reservations, but also in large cities across the country (Hutchinson 2009, 3). Driven by the Arts and Crafts movements, one manner in which the collections would manifest, was in the collector's display in the decorative fashion of an 'Indian Corner'. An Indian Corner, considered a fad at the time, would be a section of one's home in which one would display all things related to Native American art, craft, or culture. The collector might display many of one or two types of object, for example, woven rugs and basketry, or the collector may create a diverse conglomeration of objects, producing an atmosphere that contrasts with the rest of the home *(Figure 2.1).*

Figure 2.1. *Photo of an Indian Room, from The Papoose, March 2003 (Hutchinson 2009, 13).*

The Indian corner, along with other modes of aesthetic display of handmade Native American folk art in a decorative manner, were a means by which to ameliorate the stresses of the modernization occurring outside of the home (Hutchinson 2009, 19). The collecting craze was also stimulated by the fear that the 'traditional' ways of life of the Native Americans would soon disappear, along with their handmade objects (Drooker 1998, 7). Thus the urge to collect these objects was deemed almost crucial at the time.

Native American Art Patronage and Santa Fe Indian Market

Beginning in the early 20th century, and persisting through the next several decades was a growth in patronage for the folk art of Native Americans. Patrons of the arts within charitable organizations and museums began to promote Native American arts and crafts as 'art not ethnology' (Bernstein 2012, 8). Demonstrations by master folk art craftsmen, exhibitions, and fairs were all utilised as an attempt to revitalise and spread Native American culture and their

arts. One goal of creating these events was to counteract the influence that the traders and the tourist art market had on the folk arts of the Native Americans. They were urged by the patrons to return to making the traditional arts of their authentic pasts, and to no longer focus on satisfying only traders and tourists. For example, potters were urged by Santa Fe's Museum of New Mexico, to begin using historic pieces of pottery and archaeological finds as archetypes for their newer forms of pottery (Bernstein 2012, 8). Pottery that the museum felt satisfied this endorsement of authenticity and a quality representation of the past was accepted into the museum's collection. This was the foundation for today's Santa Fe Indian Market. The Museum of New Mexico and then director, Edgar L. Hewett established the Indian Fair in 1922. During the Fair's first several years of existence, the pottery created by contemporary Native Americans was displayed alongside historical pieces in order to "illustrate the continuity of tradition, to reinforce the authenticity of newly made objects, to inspire the potters, and to teach buyers and potters what well-made Indian pottery should look like" (Bernstein 2012, 10). The Museum of New Mexico then judged the new pottery, and awarded cash prizes to the makers of the best pieces. The pottery would then be offered for sale by the museum on behalf of the makers, in an additional effort to support the arts of the Native Americans and assist in their involvement in the economy. In the Fair's early years, several changes occurred, including transferals of ownership of the Fair from the Museum of New Mexico, to the Indian Fair Committee, and then to the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs (NMAIA) (Bernstein 2012, 10).

In 1936, the fair became the Indian Market, as it is known today. This change also marked a shift in control of the pottery by the institution to the autonomy of the makers over the display and sale of their artwork. Various fluctuations in attendance and success occurred throughout the mid century, with major increases in visitors in from the 1960s and 1970s to the present day. Today, the Santa Fe Indian Market is an annual event sponsored by the Southwestern Association on Indian Affairs (SWAIA), and is much more than a venue for Native Americans and tourists to peruse, buy, and sell arts and crafts. Approximately 160 Native American tribes or nations are represented and participate in the Market, and the event attracts thousands of native and non-native visitors from all over the world (Bernstein 2012, 7). Due to its long history and iconic status, Indian Market functions as a leading authority on contemporary Native American arts and crafts. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century and

still today, Indian Market provides opportunities for Native Americans to sell their wares and to compete for prizes and recognition. For the participants as well as the visitors, the Market is also a key educational and social event. Elisabeth Houtzager attended Indian Market several times, and many of the makers in Houtzager's collection achieved awards from the Market.

Continued Popularity

In addition to the rise in the success of the Santa Fe Indian Market, the late 1960s and early 1970s generally marked a great collecting period for Native American folk art. Houtzager collected most of her objects between the mid 1960s and the late 1970s, placing her squarely in this frame. Several key reasons for this collecting surge have been speculated by scholars, with one being the post-World War II counterculture of the 1960s. In a time of hippies and alternative approaches to life and thought, Native American religions, and ways of life seemed appealing to many (Bernstein 1999, 59). Also part of postwar society was a decline in European influence on art in America, spurring a new appreciation for arts created in America (Bernstein 1999, 59). Additionally influenced by the postwar period was the appeal of Native American folk art as nationalistic—a symbol of national identity. 'Primitive' or folk art from around the world was also popular at the time. Native American folk art was comparable, and more readily available and affordable than something from Oceania or Africa (Bernstein 1999, 60). In light of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in the United States, a greater awareness of minorities, including Native Americans was prevalent (Drooker 1998, 14). This could also be a factor in the growing popularity of Native American folk art collectibles.

Another event that influenced the folk art scene of native America was the establishment of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in 1962 in Santa Fe. Founded on a principle of creating and promoting Native American folk arts, the school offered training in the arts provided by a talented faculty with an aim to "retain cultural pride while preparing students for college and bettering their academic performance" (Bernstein 1999, 66). In addition to the other organizations of this time, the IAIA further added to the proliferation of contemporary Native American arts in the latter half of the 20th century.

Various museum exhibitions throughout the United States were also instrumental in these decades in the advancement and display of Native American folk art. One purpose of some of the exhibitions was to further reduce the public's view of Native American folk art as ethnographic artifact, or a curiosity, and to promote it more as art. "American Indian Art: Form and Tradition," an exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1972 is an example. Said of the exhibition:

> "At last it's the Indian's turn! After 70 years of fascination with the powerful art of the far away cultures of black Africa and the South Pacific, today's art public has also become aware of the depth and expressiveness of the original American's aesthetic legacy…The spiritual content of Indian objects eludes the white man, and the specialist's interest in them has been primarily historical and ethnographic."
> (Friedman 1972 in Bernstein 1999, 61)

Other examples include "Two Hundred Years of American Indian Art" at the Whitney Museum, in New York, New York (1971), the "Sacred Circles" exhibition at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Kansas (1976), and "One Space/Three Visions" exhibition (1979) at the Albuquerque Museum, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Museum exhibitions such as these served to introduce contemporary Native American arts and crafts to a wide audience, increasing knowledge of this type of folk art, as well as of the Native American cultures from whence it came.

The popularity of Native American folk art in the United States rose and fell over the course of the last century. Many attest to a shift in terminology—from ethnographic curiosity to art, claiming that tourist art is cheap, while authentic Native American art is more expensive. As we have seen, opinions and the value attributed to all forms of art or folk art vary widely. This is the environment and time period in which Houtzager was visiting the United States, frequenting the various trading posts, galleries, makers' homes, and the annual Santa Fe Indian Market.

2.2 Elisabeth Houtzager: Avid Folk Art Collector

Houtzager was born in Watergraafsmeer, Netherlands on 20 June 1907. Raised by her Catholic, affluent family, she was afforded the opportunity for an

active social life as well as higher education. Having received her first M.A. in 1931, a Ph.D. in 1933, and a second M.A. in 1942, her areas of study included literature, English, Swedish, and Italian language, history, art history, and archaeology (Hovens 2015, 56). Between degrees she spent time traveling Europe and teaching English. It was during the pursuit of her second M.A. that she studied under the professor of art history, Willem Vogelsang. A thoughtful Christmas gift one year of a nativity scene passed from Professor Vogelsang to Houtzager functioned as a seed that shortly grew into her deep passion for collecting. Over the years, she amassed approximately 800 nativity scenes from different folk traditions from around the globe (Hovens 2015, 56). Houtzager became involved in the museum field, and was appointed as the Dutch representative of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and also served as the director of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht from 1951 until 1972. Over the years, through travels for work and pleasure, she collected nativity scenes and many other forms of folk art. Having traveled to the American Southwest several times, she fell in love with Native American folk art, particularly Pueblo pottery *(Figure 2.2).* Traveling to the Southwest around the time that the Museum of International Folk Art was opened in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Houtzager was influenced and inspired by Florence D. Bartlett, who founded the museum based on her folk art collection, and also Alexander Girard, whose collection is also very well represented in that museum (Hovens 2015, 57). Her large collection of nativity scenes was donated to the Biblical Living History Museum, near Nijmegen in 1987, and a majority of the remainder of her folk art collection arrived to the NME in 1993.

Figure 2.2. *Elisabeth Houtazager in the Southwest United States, circa 1960 (National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden in Hovens 2015, 57).*

2.3 Southwest Native American Pottery

The portion of Houtzager's collection relevant to this study is her Pueblo pottery. The makers and their pottery that was of focus in this study represent twelve different pueblos or regions *(Figure 2.3) (Also see table in Appendix 1 for list of pueblos with corresponding makers and objects).*

Pueblo Key

1. Taos	5. Tesuque	9. Santa Ana
2. San Juan	6. Jemez	10. Santo Domingo
3. Santa Clara	7. Cochiti	11. Acoma
4. San Ildefonso	8. Zia	12. Hopi

Figure 2.3. *Map displaying Native American pueblos represented by the makers in the study (after Google Maps, 2015, https://www.google.com).*

The pottery of the Southwestern United States has a history rooted in tradition. Pottery production in the Southwest began approximately 1,500 years ago. With the advent of an identifiable Pueblo culture about 1,000 years ago, pottery became an integral part of pueblo life, and community pottery traditions emerged

(Capone 1998, 36). Still today, the pottery styles established in one pueblo can frequently be distinguished from those of other regions. Disparities may be characterized by the overall forms, designs, colors, and techniques used by the makers in each pueblo. As a result, the pottery of a certain pueblo serves to define the identity of that pueblo or geographic area, depending on the techniques, motifs, and styles used. This feature is recognizable in the pottery from the different pueblos represented in Houtzager's collection. For example, the pottery of Acoma Pueblo, which is located atop a tall mesa approximately 80 kilometres west of Albuquerque, New Mexico, typically possesses features that differ from other nearby pueblos. Due to its isolation, Acoma has retained many of its old pottery traditions. Characteristic of Acoma pottery is polychrome painted, thin walls, and geometric designs. Polychrome, a term that is frequently used in association with Pueblo pottery, can be defined as a "use of three or more colors" (Brody and Eaton 1993, 158) *(Figure 2.4)*.

Figure 2.4. *Polychrome pot by Lita Garcia, 1970, 12.8 x 17.2 cm, RMV-5715-2531 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

This pot in Houtzager's collection, was created by Lita Garcia and represents an excellent example of Acoma polychrome with a geometric design.

Zia Pueblo, located about 60 kilometres southwest of Santa Fe, is known for their polychrome designs that feature black or red arches over bird or rain motifs. Beginning in the late 19th century, the roadrunner bird became widely depicted on Zia pots (Schaaf 2002, 6). A pot by Candelaria Gachupin in Houtzager's collection represents a characteristic Zia globular bowl with a roadrunner motif *(Figure 2.5)*.

Figure 2.5. *Polychrome pot by Candelaria Gachupin, 1970, 6.5 x 8 cm, RMV-5715-2506 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Santa Clara Pueblo, which is located about 40 kilometres north of Santa Fe, is recognized for its polished blackware. These pieces collected by Houtzager *(Figures 2.6 and 2.7),* exemplify the traditional blackware of Santa Clara. The wedding jar form *(Figure 2.7)* can also be found in some other pueblos, and would be used during wedding ceremonies, with the bride and groom sharing water from the separate drinking spouts. This ritual signifies the unity of the two separate lives, which is materially represented by the handle that connects the two spouts (Blom and Hayes 1996, 14). These examples from different pueblos all illuminate a few distinctive variations in form and style that can be found from one community to the next.

Figure 2.6. *Polished blackware pot by Faustina Gutierrez, 1965, 8.5 cm, RMV-5715-2476 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Figure 2.7. *Polished blackware wedding jar by Dolorita Gutierrez, 1965, 12 cm, RV-5715-2475 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Many makers today, including those represented in Houtzager's collection, continue to use the basic, traditional methods of pottery creation and design. The clay to be formed is prospected from local sources. Forming of the pottery is executed through a coiling process, where the clay is rolled into coils and stacked together to form the body of the piece. After the coils are smoothed together, the piece is usually coated with a slip, or a thin layer of liquid clay, which provides a smooth surface for painting and decoration (Brody and Eaton 1993, 29). Various decorations may then be applied using mineral paints. Throughout the history of Pueblo pottery-making, general rules were created pertaining to the structure of the painting, or design surface. For example, thick or thin bands of paint may be applied to a clay vessel in a certain manner to define the specific areas in which it would be appropriate to then fill with detailed decorations or motifs (Bernstein and Brody 2001, 14). Besides painting, many examples of Pueblo pottery show additional techniques of decoration such as patterns or motifs that have been carved into the clay, or simple pottery that achieves beauty through an unadorned, but smooth and glossy appearance. Some fixed, general rules and methods may still be used, but many variations are made today. Traditionally, pottery would then be fired in a natural manner using a fire and animal dung with a cover (Blom and Hayes 1996, 18). While many of the makers in Houtzager's collection utilised traditional methods, it is not uncommon for potters today to use commercial paints, or to fire their pottery in electric kilns.

Evidence of tradition combined with innovation is one of the defining features of Pueblo pottery. Many contemporary forms are based on functional pieces from the past. For example the olla, a large clay pot that was being formed for hundreds of years and could be used to store water or grain, was still being made in the 20th century, and probably still is today *(Figure 2.8)*.

Figure 2.8. *Large historic polychrome olla made by Martina Vigil (1856-1916) and Florentino Montoya (1858-1918) of San Ildefonso Pueblo around the turn of the 20th century, 21.7 x 27 cm (Adobe Gallery, 2015a http://www.adobegallery.com).*

However, innovations take place. The construction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1880s that brought with it a new influx of traders and tourists, as well as the various movements and promotions that took place throughout the 20th century, have created a host of dynamics that have influenced the lives and careers of the makers. Makers no longer only create objects for themselves, but are also concerned with appeasing the outside market. Popularity and the collection of Pueblo pottery rose and fell throughout the 20th century, with the 1960s and 70s sparking the greatest surge that has persisted still today. One of the key events occurred in the 1970s, and perhaps influenced the Pueblo pottery market that Houtzager was drawn to. In 1974, the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology in Santa Fe opened a monumental exhibition called “Seven Families in Pueblo Pottery”. The exhibition featured several of today’s biggest

names in pottery—the Lewis and Chino families of Acoma Pueblo, the Hopi Nampeyo family, the Tafoya and Gutierrez families of Santa Clara, and the San Ildefonso families of Martinez and Gonzalez (Bernstien 1999, 65). Several of the makers included in Houtzager's collection participated in the exhibition, including Lucy Lewis, Margaret and Luther Gutierrez, Petra Gutierrez, Rose Gonzalez, and Maria Martinez. The exhibition expressed the intergenerational artistic practices that connected the individual potters to long family legacies of pottery-making. The catalogue that was published by the University of New Mexico for the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology to accompany the exhibition, that was also entitled *Seven Families in Pueblo Pottery* (Maxwell Museum of Anthropology 1974*),* became a recognized and influential guide to collecting Pueblo pottery (Dillingham 1994, x). The exhibition and the catalogue succeeded in providing personal connections to the individual makers while also emphasizing the connection to family and community, ultimately shedding a new light on contemporary Pueblo potters, creating a more widespread identity for the featured makers (Bernstein 1999, 65).

2.4 Houtzager's Pottery Collection

Houtzager's card catalogue was a valuable resource utilised in the study *(see table in Appendix 1 for general data regarding maker, pueblo of origin, and object number).* Her inclusion of handwritten details of the objects in the catalogue frequently surpass generalized information pertaining to the objects in her collection such as origin, and physical description. For numerous objects, she also included details about the maker beyond the name, such as birth date, mention of family members of the makers, or other details. She sometimes also attached the business card of a certain maker. These personal elements that are attributed to Houtzager's collection served as an aid and inspiration in the further research of the makers. From the study of the makers of the pottery in her collection, several themes emerged that reflect the context in which the potters were making: family practice, innovation, individuality, and competition.

Family Practice

As demonstrated by the "Seven Families In Pueblo Pottery" exhibition, a very apparent feature of Southwest pottery is its intergenerational practice. Most

makers included in Houtzager's collection were taught to work clay by their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, aunts, or other family members. Though nearly every maker studied showed familial ties with other great potters, there are famous potters whose matrilineal legacies are most well known, for example the descendants of the famous Hopi Tewa potter, Nampeyo, Maria Poveka Martinez, of San Ildefonso Pueblo, and Lucy Lewis of Acoma Pueblo. Elva Tewaguna Nampeyo has said of her grandmother, Nampeyo,

> "I am thankful and appreciative to Nampeyo for handing down the pottery making. I paint my designs without a pencil. Sometimes I have to erase the design and start over. I use my pottery for a living and I am helping my daughters, Adelle and Miriam, pick it up. I will paint the designs on my daughters' pottery until they are good enough to paint their own; maybe this summer" (Elva Tewaguna Nampeyo, in Maxwell Museum of Anthropology 1974, 25)

Additionally, collaborative work within families is very common. For instance, having adopted polychrome designs that were used by their parents, Margaret and Luther Gutierrez of Santa Clara Pueblo were siblings who started making pottery together in the 1960s. Also of Santa Clara, Flora Naranjo, who was a member of a large family of talented potters, would sometimes work collaboratively to create pottery with her daughter, Glenda. Helen Shupla created collaborative pieces with her husband and talented potter and Hopi kachina carver, Kenneth Shupla. The famed Maria Poveka Martinez is also well known for her cooperative work with her husband, Julian, and later with her son, Popovi Da.

Innovation

Many of the makers of pottery of this era are known for the use of traditional methods. Clay would be prospected and collected on local land around the pueblo. The traditional method of coiling the clay to form the pot would be utilized, then, paints made with natural minerals would be used for decoration. The process would be completed with traditional firing methods. Most of the makers of the objects in Houtzager's collection used these traditional procedures. However, there is an interesting interplay between the old and traditional, and the new and innovative. While traditions in pottery are valued by both the Native American societies of makers as well as the outside market, several of the potters in the collection earned their fame for newer, innovative techniques they introduced.

One notable innovation belongs to Helen Cordero, of Cochiti Pueblo (*Figure 2.9*). Cordero had previously learned to make pottery in the form of jars and bowls, but was unsatisfied with her skills, claiming that they "never looked right. They just kept coming out all crooked and I was ready to quit. I didn't think I would ever get it right" (Babcock *et al*. 1986, 21). Once she decided to try making figures, everything changed. A long history of figurative pottery already existed in Cochiti, however, Cordero majorly influenced the entire southwest region with her invention of the storyteller in 1964 (Babcock *et al*. 1986, 3). The original storyteller figure was modeled on Cordero's grandfather, who was known as a good storyteller. The clay figure is seated with mouth open, telling a story to grandchildren figures, who are attached (*Figure 2.10*). She won many awards at fairs, and took home first place at Indian Market, Santa Fe in 1965 (Babcock *et al*. 1986, 23). The storyteller figure spread and was adopted by hundreds of potters in various other pueblos.

Figure 2.9. *Helen Cordero with storyteller figures (Schaaf 2002, 101).*

Figure 2.10. *Storyteller figure by Helen Cordero, 15 x 27 cm. (Adobe Gallery 2015b, www.adobegallery.com)*

Rose Gonzales, of San Ildefonso Pueblo is recognized as the first potter in the pueblo to begin carving pottery. She was inspired by an ancient carved potsherd that her husband brought home to her from a hunting trip. Her innovative renewal of this technique became popular and was adopted by many in San Ildefonso (Schaaf 2000, 153). Rose's son, Tse Pe, in whom Rose instilled her pottery skills has said,

> "I learned so much from my mother and really began to work on my own in 1972. I began experimenting with the two-tone style that Mr. Popovi Da invented. Then I began to do the incised carving and setting turquoise stones. My wife and I work together and we're always working on new experiments. We're striving to hold on to tradition, but still experiment with new ideas. We have been teaching our four daughters; Irene, Jennifer, Candace, and Gail, and hope they will continue to make pottery. We have taken on my Indian name Tse-Pe (Eagle-Cane) as our professional and legal name. The designs we use most of the time are the Avanyu

(thanksgiving for rain and water) and the bear" (Tse Pe, in Maxwell Museum of Anthropology 1974, 79).

Here, Tse Pe signifies the intergenerational, collaborative, and innovational practices that are characteristic in the careers of various Pueblo potters.

Helen Shupla (1928-1985) of Santa Clara Pueblo was known for her inventive technique used in the creation of melon jars. Rather than scraping clay away from the outside of pots, as most other potters did to create similar designs, Helen would push the clay from the inside to create the ribs of the melon or other designs (Adobe Gallery 2015c, http://www.adobegallery.com) *(Figure 2.11)*

Figure 2.11. *Black melon pot by Helen Shupla, 15 x 22 cm. (Adobe Gallery 2015d, www.adobegallery.com)*

Another innovation that profoundly influenced the pottery of San Ildefonso Pueblo, was created by the famed Maria Martinez and her husband, Julian. Together, they invented the black-on-black pottery style. By using a certain slip with a particular firing method that produced a heavy black smoke, the result was shiny black pots with contrasting matte black designs (Schaaf 2000, 153) *(Figure 2.12).*

Figure 2.12. *Black-on-black pot by Maria Martinez, ca. 1955, 10 x 15 cm, RMV-5715-2459 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Revivals could also be classified as a form of innovation on tradition. According to Graburn, a primitive or folk art revival refers to "the attempted re-creation of an art form that has fallen into disuse; it may involve slight modification of the form and probably does not re-create the context of the original manufacture" (Graburn 1976, 20). In pottery revivals, makers would receive inspiration from ancient or antiquated pots, for example through archaeological finds such as ancient potsherds discovered in or near the pueblo, known to be linked to that region. Lucy Lewis gained worldwide acclaim for her revival of the ancient Mimbres and Anasazi black-on-white pottery styles, and is most well known for her fineline hatching patters *(Figure 2.13 and 2.14).*

Figure 2.13. *Painted clay pot by Lucy Lewis, Acoma Pueblo, ca. 1970, 7.5 x 9 cm, RV-5715-2529 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Figure 2.14. *Painted clay pot by Lucy Lewis, Acoma Pueblo, ca. 1960-1965, 9 x 13.8 cm, RMV-5715-2528 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

Hopi potter Nampeyo, revered for her revival of the prehistoric Sikyatki design polychrome wares, was inspired by the archaeologist J. Walter Fewkes (Brody 1976, 74). He encouraged her to use prehistoric pottery samples unearthed in the region, in the creation of her own pots. Houtzager's collection does not contain any pieces by Nampeyo, but the work of Nampeyo's granddaughters, Elva Tewaguna Nampeyo, Rachel Nampeyo, and Tonita Nampeyo, are each represented in the collection. They followed in their grandmother's footsteps by persisting in the designs of the Sikyatki tradition *(Figure 2.15).*

Figure 2.15. *Painted clay bowl by Elva Tewaguna Nampeyo, ca. 1970, 8 x 18 cm, RMV-5715-2555 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

As shown, the relationship between the traditional and the innovative are apparent through many of the makers and their pottery in Houtzager's collection.

Individuality

Further stemming from the recognition and individuality afforded by the use of innovative techniques, is the desire of some makers of this time period to sign their work. As mentioned by Price (2001) and Graburn (1976), in the past, individual creativity of primitive, or folk art makers has been quelled by lack of individuality expressed through their anonymity. In the first half of the 20th century, Pueblo potters did not sign their work. This is why the NME could not simply refer to Houtzager's objects in order to identify all of the makers, but has to also rely on her documentation of the pieces and their makers. However, some makers started signing their work in the mid to late 20th century. San Ildefonso Pueblo potter Maria Martinez is credited as the first to sign her work, and began doing so in 1923 (Bernstein and Brody 2001, 13). It was not until the 1980s that adding signatures became a routine habit for Pueblo potters (Capone 1998, 38). According to Graburn, this is a reflection of Western culture. In Western culture, value is often attributed to creative works attached to named individuals (Graburn 1976:22). During the research of various makers in Houtzager's collection, details of some of the makers' personal signatures were available. For example, the aforementioned Flora Naranjo, who created collaborative pieces with her daughter Glenda, would frequenly add a signature to the bottom either as "Flora T. Naranjo", or "Flora & Glenda Naranjo" (Schaaf 2000, 63). Many of the Hopi potters of the Nampeyo family are members of the Corn Clan. As a result, many sign their pottery with some form of their name, followed by a small ear of corn symbol (Schaaf 1998). This signature not only signifies the identity of the individual maker, but also his or her identity as part of a community or lineage. The signing of pottery by some makers may have been an attempt to gain better access to a Western audience, thus making their pieces more marketable to collectors, dealers, and tourists.

Competition

The era during which Houtzager made visits to the southwestern United States purchasing folk art, was a significant period for pueblo potters. The pottery of a majority of the makers studied in Houtzager's collection was featured in

publications, gallery and museum exhibitions, and museum collections. Many of today's most widely known and admired makers achieved their fame during this time. Makers such as Lucy Lewis and Maria Martinez were even featured in full-length biographical publications. Martinez, along with her husband Julian won various awards at State Fairs and World's Fairs. Sponsored by the University of Oklahoma, a European tour of her pottery from 1955-1961 served to spread her family name and work abroad (Schaaf 2000, 199). The potter known as Blue Corn, who is recognized as one of the key leaders in the polychrome revival of the 1960s, won one of New Mexico's highest honors for makers, the annual Governor's Award, in 1981. She was also referred to as "one of the outstanding ceramic artists of our time" (Schaaf 2000, 161). Her pottery can be found on display in the United States' capital, in the White House and the Smithsonian Institute, as well as in many other prominent museums in the United States and Europe.

Whether deemed as an intentional motivation or more by chance, one effect of the innovations and individual craftsmanship afforded by makers undoubtedly sometimes resulted in rivalry or competition. Notable was the competition for awards at Indian art events such at the annual Santa Fe Indian Market. A large number of the makers in Houtzager's collection were involved in the renowned Indian Market, and many achieved awards there. Eva Histia of Acoma Pueblo, for example, won a second place prize at Indian Market in 1979. More recently, in 2000, Cochiti Pueblo potter Seferina Ortiz received first place for her storytellers and received a second place prize in the category of figures at Indian Market (Schaaf 2000, 224). While the monetary prizes awarded for the best arts and crafts at the Market are coveted by the participants, the longer term value of producing a prize-winning piece far outweighs the cash (Bernstein 2012, 114). Given the prestige of the Indian Market, many collectors purchase art based on awards won at the Indian Market. Winning awards there can therefore greatly advance and fortify the status of the maker, as well as ensure a financially successful career (Bernstein 2012, 114).

2.5 The Art Market

The portion of research conducted regarding the places where Houtzager purchased her objects of folk art provided much insight into the market scene in which Houtzager was involved. Of the 278 objects in her North America collection, she recorded specific names of trading posts, galleries, fairs, or Indian arts and crafts guilds for 107 of the objects. The remaining 171 objects were noted as having been received as a gift, from a general pueblo, city, or geographic area, purchased from the maker, or did not have an identified place of purchase. The most frequently mentioned places of purchase include the Santa Fe Indian Market, Packard's Chaparral Trading Post in Santa Fe, the Covered Wagon in Albuquerque, Tom Bahti's Indian Arts in Tucson, Arizona, the Museum of the American Indian in New York, and the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff *(Table 2.1)*.

***Table 2.1**. Top Six places where Houtzager purchased objects in North America collection (Data from Houtzager card catalogue, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden).*

Top Six Places of Purchase

Place Name	Number of Objects
Indian Market – Santa Fe, NM	17
Packard's Chaparral Trading Post – Santa Fe, NM	17
The Covered Wagon – Albuquerque, NM	9
Tom Bahti Indian Arts – Tucson, AZ	8
Museum of Northern Arizona – Flagstaff, AZ	8
Museum of the American Indian – New York, NY	7

Packard's Chaparral Trading Post was opened by Al Packard in 1944 and held a prime position on Santa Fe's Plaza. To the dismay of collectors and tourists, the shop was closed in 2013. The original owner, Al, as well as his successors, were known and trusted for their genuine relationships with the Native American communities who provided the pieces to be sold in the shop (Krasnow 2013, http://www.santafenewmexican.com). Another famous shop in which to buy Native American folk art was the Covered Wagon. Owned for many years by Manny Goodman, the Covered Wagon could be described as a tourist

mecca, and was located in the centre of the Old Town Plaza in Albuquerque, New Mexico. These examples represent two very significant, well-known Native American shops, or trading posts frequented by collectors and tourists in the 20th century Southwest. Houtzager also purchased many objects from the Santa Fe Indian Market. As detailed in section 2.1, the Indian Market is an annual event that not only brings together Native American folk art makers from various regions of the country, but also attracts tourists and collectors from all over the world. Indian market is not only profitable for the Native Americans who sell their goods, but also incredibly successful for the economies of Santa Fe and the state of New Mexico. It has been estimated that visitors spend $18 million US Dollars on art, and $122 million US Dollars on local businesses including hotels and restaurants, benefiting the larger economy each year during the week-long event (Bernstein 2012 115). One of the secrets to the immense success of the Indian Market is the fact that the makers sell their own work. In Houtzager's details of the objects purchased at Indian Market, she nearly always indicated that she purchased the object from the maker herself, or from a family member of the maker *(Figure 2.16).* This personal context demonstrates Houtzager's link with the makers of the native community. Houtzager's connection with the makers is further illustrated outside of the context of Indian Market, as 19 objects that are documented in her catalogue were noted as having been purchased from the maker either in a certain pueblo, another market, or even from the maker's home.

Figure 2.16. *Maker Seferina Ortiz selling her pottery at Indian Market, Santa Fe, NM, 1978 (Houzager, 1978, from Houtzager card catalogue, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden).*

In her card catalogue, Houtzager also frequently listed the price that she paid for the objects in US Dollars. She would sometimes additionally include a receipt from the place of purchase, or a price tag that had been attached to an object. The prices she paid for objects demonstrate a wide range *(Table 2.2).* According to her documented prices, the smallest amount she paid for an object was $0.65. The most she paid for an object was $175.00. This object is a small pot by Blue Corn of San Ildefonso *(Figure 2.17).*

***Table 2.2**. Graph displaying prices documented by Houtzager, grouped to show general spending (data from Houtzager card catalogue, National Museum of Ethnology).*

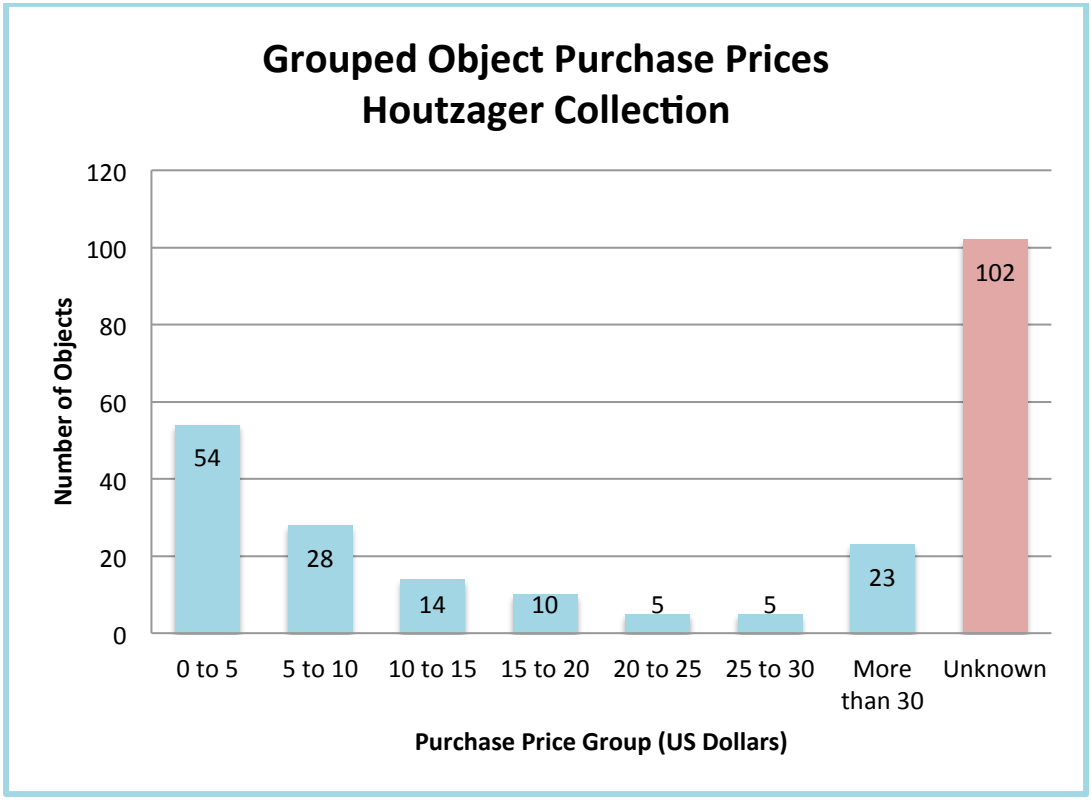


Figure 2.17. *Painted clay pot by Blue Corn, ca. 1978, 3 x 5.5 cm, RMV-5715-2468 (RMV-TMS 2015).*

A majority of the documented prices for objects were between 0 and 5 US Dollars. *Table 2.2* demonstrates a general decrease in number of objects in correlation to an increase in price. The documented prices illustrate that while a majority of the objects were inexpensive, Houtzager also paid fairly high prices for some pieces. Houtzager was perhaps willing to pay a larger sum for such a small pot based on the idea that the maker, Blue Corn, is a renowned potter. However, the large number of more inexpensive objects, as well as the amount of objects produced by less well-known makers may indicate that Houtzager also found value in qualities other than those associated with financial worth and famous potters.

2.6 Conclusion

The examination of the makers associated with Houtzager's collection has provided a window through which to view some of the cultural dynamics at play around the time of their production in the native southwest. The 20th century

saw major fluctuations in the careers of southwest Pueblo potters, as a result of patronage movements, museum exhibitions, and the conception of various Native American galleries and arts and craft fairs, including Indian Market. Through the study of Houtzager's pottery collection it is possible to see beyond the physical makeup of the objects, and to observe the choices made by the makers to carry on the pottery-making tradition, express individual creativity, to innovate, to revive, and to take the necessary steps to secure a lucrative career as a potter. The agency of the maker and the context of the creation of the objects are integral to their existence. Glassie attests to the importance of context in approaches to folk art, and states that "context is the source of interpretation, the environment of significance. Outside context there is no understanding" (Glassie 1989, 17). By realising these subtleties, it is easier to speculate why Houtzager found such a passion in collecting folk art of this type. The personal relations Houtzager established with makers and their families during her visits to the Southwest, may have been equally, if not more valuable and fulfilling to Houtzager than the objects themselves.

Chapter Three: Folk Art Collecting

> "With me it was really pretty simple: love of the objects came first, and there was absolutely no other criterion for collecting. What concerns me is an object's intrinsic value. And collecting for that reason is very different from acquiring things as if they were currency."
> (Alexander Girard in Larsen 1995: 40)

This chapter focuses on individual collectors and the practice of collecting. In the first section, collecting will be conceptualised in terms of definitions and classifications ascribed by scholars in the 20th century. The other section introduces two other prominent collectors who can be compared to Houtzager—Alexander Girard and Florence D. Bartlett.

3.1 Cultures of Collecting

Similar to the concept of folk art, the practice of collecting eludes any one definitive process. However, examining various definitions and taxonomies of collecting modes may provide clues as to why individuals, such as Houtzager, and institutions such as the NME, collect.

Early Modern Collecting

There has been evidence of collecting practices since ancient times, for example, in accumulation traditions of Prehistoric Europeans and in Greek and Roman temples and treasuries (Pearce 1992, 91). However, it is the collections of the early modern and Renaissance eras that are connected most directly to our modern day collecting and museum practices. The methods of collecting in the Western sense largely arose in 16th and 17th century Europe. During this time period, collecting was predominantly a male-dominated, private, scholarly pursuit (Findlen 1989, 69). The early modern language of collecting, included terms such as museum, studio, theatre, curiosity cabinet, cornucopia, encyclopedia, galleria, and microcosm, which were associated with the processes of collecting objects from many spheres, both natural and manmade, in order to organize the arts and

nature in the publication of encyclopedic tomes and in private galleries, ultimately contributing to a greater knowledge of the world. *Historia Naturalis*, a 36-volume encyclopedia published by Pliny the Elder circa AD 77-79, described the place of man in nature and also included directions for collecting. This served as a foundation for later scholars such as the German Samuel Quiccheberg, and the Italian Ulisse Aldrovandi, who collected objects and published various encyclopedias documenting proper collecting practices and ideal object classification systems in the 16th century (Schulz 1990, 206). Johann Daniel Major from Germany, also wrote about collecting methods in his 17th century publications, and believed that "collecting is an inborn human urge which is to be found in young and old alike, in believers and non-believers" (Schulz 1990, 210). Not only was the physical process of collecting essential, but the research and classification of collections of natural and manmade objects, paintings, and texts were equally critical. Ultimately, these earlier, methods of collecting were partly based on a desire to understand and communicate information about the world. The early modern cultures of collecting can be a point of departure from which to identify the development of other modern day collection methods.

Collecting Modes

Scholar Susan Pearce has discussed collecting in terms of three different modes: systematic, souvenir, and fetishistic. The systematic mode is based in the development of the natural sciences such as geology and biology (Pearce 1992, 84). The scientific term 'systematics' refers to the "practice of taxonomy, the ability to compare and contrast collected specimens in order to distinguish the fine detail which divides one species from another, and so carry out identifications" (Pearce 1992, 84). Specimens are collected as examples that are a 'departure from the norm', or out of the ordinary, and organized and classified, in order to typify nature, create an organized, complete set, and highlight sequential relationships to demonstrate a point (Pearce 1992, 87). In accordance with Pearce's 'systematic' mode of collection, the previously mentioned early modern type of collecting could be termed systematic.

In the second category, souvenirs are described as objects usually linked with the personal and emotional—memorabilia that represents past experiences, and that may invoke nostalgia. From children's toys to wild animals that were hunted and turned into trophies, souvenirs are "samples of events which can be

remembered, but not relived. Their tone is intimate and bittersweet, with roots in nostalgic longing for a past which is seen as better and fuller than the difficult present" (Pearce 1992, 72). Souvenirs are also highly romantic. As representations of the past in the present, they evoke memories while also situating the collector in the present. Souvenirs have the power to foreground the personal self, and illustrate our life stories (Pearce 1992, 73). As the objects of Houtzager's collection were purchased on trips to the United States, they could possibly be seen as souvenirs. The different pieces of pottery may have represented certain memories of her travels and experiences at the Indian Market or relationships and conversations with the makers that she may have had.

The third mode, fetishistic collecting, is most generally associated with an obsessive quality. This type could refer to historic figures known for their mass collections of classical antiquities, art, and curiosities, which served as the foundations of 18th and 19th century museums, such as Sir Hans Sloane, of the British Museum in London, or Pieter Teyler van Hulst, of Teylers Museum in Haarlem, Netherlands. Also, this category could be associated with a general 'collecting mania', that refers to a 20th century surge in the possession of 'collectibles', which are typically inexpensive modern manufactures (Pearce 1992, 75). These collectors of antiquities and collectors of collectibles are linked by the obsessive nature of the collecting practice. Fetish has been discussed in psychology by Freud as an object that becomes the subject of sexual gratification. In anthropology, fetishes often refer to charms that are material objects that may possess magical powers. Economically speaking, Karl Marx has described fetish objects in relation to commodities to which are attributed a life of their own and devoid of a real relationship to humans (Pearce 1992, 83). All three of these varied associations of fetish can illustrate why people may be attracted to certain objects and desire to collect in a compulsive manner. When the large size of Houtzager's collection is taken into account, it could be speculated that Houtzager possessed qualities of a fetishistic collector.

The Collecting Impulse

Similar to Johann Major of the 17th century, Pearce also believes that collecting is an innate characteristic possessed by all humans. Drawing on Melanie Klein's 'object relations' theory, Pearce mentions that humans'

connections with objects are internalized in infancy (Pearce 1992, 47). Collecting motivations can then be discussed in terms of 'play'. Taken from the theories of Susan Stewart and J. Huizenga, several characteristics of 'play' in relation to the practice of collecting have been discussed by Pearce (1992), as well as Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel (1994). Play, and therefore collecting, can be described as a leisure activity contrasting to work. It is voluntary—a quality that distances this recreational attitude associated with individual collecting from the collecting of museums (Danet and Katriel 1994, 222). Another element of play and collecting is imagination and fantasy. For instance, through make-believe, these collections may have the power to transport one back to childhood through the collection of something like teddy bears, or other toys (Danet and Katriel 1994, 222). An alternative example could be that by collecting objects that represent a distant land, an individual may be capable of mentally traveling to that place by simply observing the collection in his or her home. This example of fantasy, that could also be related to the 'souvenirs' described by Pearce, might be applied to Houtzager. By observing objects in her apartment that were collected from various places she had traveled, she may have been able to relive memories of those trips, and in a sense, to be psychologically transported back to her experiences in those places.

Contest, or competition is also a feature of play that can be considered in collecting practices. Efforts to gain access to the best and most valuable objects may result in competition with other collectors. Additionally, in the thrill of the competition, collectors may be seeking recognition and prestige through their collections in relation to other collectors and also non-collectors (Pearce 1992, 51). Ownership and control could be related to competition and also play a part through the ability of the collector to do what he pleases with his collection, as well as to touch, handle, and play with the objects.

Collecting has also been described by many as an extension of self, in which possessions contribute to one's self-definition, and often reflect one's taste (Belk 1994, 321). The acquisition of objects as important in relation to selfhood has been described by Pearce through an example of a purchase of a parlor organ in the 19th century:

> "Buying a prominent object like a parlor organ might initiate a new chapter in a set of lives, not only be providing a new way to use time but also a new tool to measure time. In later years the object would serve to remind its owners of the day it first entered their home and of the time that had passed since then. It would not only structure their present but also their perceptions of their own past...a major purchase would transform them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. They would become worth more…and acquire greater status. By so doing they would receive more respect and deference from others which would, in turn, make them feel better about themselves. Buying a parlor organ would make them something they were not before" (Ames 1984 in Pearce 1992, 56).

This testament of self-identity through object acquisition highlights not only unplanned changes, such as an additional way to measure time and life changes, but also possibly a recognisable desire to gain status and prestige. Just as object acquisition serves to define the self, the loss of objects of a collection can diminish self-identity. If part of a collection is taken away or stolen, deep feelings of loss may occur. On a larger scale, Belk relates this to the idea of national collections *(i.e.* through national museums and other institutions) as representative of national identity and pride. Here, loss of collections results in a loss of national heritage. Repatriations may be one way to restore these objects of cultural heritage (Belk 1994, 322). Additionally, collections as expressions of identity may manifest itself in very apparent ways. For example, a woman by the name of Minnie might collect objects and memorabilia that depict or represent Minnie Mouse. A musician might possess a collection of antique musical instruments. In the case of Houtzager, as a museum professional who was able to travel the world for her career as well as for pleasure, she perhaps desired to create a museum of her own through collecting, thus illustrating her identity in the museum world.

A final motivation for collecting to be discussed is a desire for immortality. By keeping one's collection intact post-mortem, a sense of immortality may be achieved by the collector (Belk 1994, 323). This may be attained by two primary means. One key is for the collector to locate an interested heir for the collection, perhaps a younger family member. In an example provided by Belk, a collector of elephant replicas began an attempt to instill his love of elephants in his granddaughter by giving her gifts of elephant-related material from a very young age. As he plans to leave his collection to her after his death, he hopes that she will value his collection as much as he does (Belk 1994, 323). Immortality many

also be accomplished through the donation of a collection to museums, or even to found a museum based on a certain collection. Sometimes museum galleries may be named after the collector, thus forever functioning as a memorial to the collector (Pearce 1992, 65). Either way, many collectors want the assurance that their years of collecting do not go unnoticed or forgotten, and hope that others will appreciate their collections in the future. This example of immortality may also be applicable to the case of Houtzager. As she donated her collections to museums before she passed away, she has achieved immortality in a sense, whether or not it was intended.

The previously outlined conceptualisations of individual collecting behaviors, might also be related to a set of values, which are ultimately either consciously or subconsciously discerned by the collectors. Rare and authentic objects may be pursued for either a raised status they might afford their collector, as well as for their economic value. Also a common value present in collecting is that of the old and representative of the past. As stated by James Clifford on the value of antiques, “Old objects are endowed with a sense of ‘depth’ by their historically minded collectors. Temporality is reified and salvaged as origin, beauty, and knowledge” (Clifford 1988, 222). Graburn, in reference to commercial fine arts and tourist arts, believes that value of the traditional, authentic, and aesthetic are what drive the collectors of these objects (Graburn 1976, 14). These types of objects may also be valued for the nostalgia they produce and a desire for purer, more simple times. Value may also be instilled in objects that retain a previous connection to prominent people. Whether the object was created by a famous painter or potter, or had been formerly owned or used by a well-known, important individual or family, famous histories tend to equate to value (Belk 1994, 321). As shown in the previous chapter, many of the objects purchased by Houtzager were inexpensive. In these objects, for example, Houtzager perhaps found value in the fact that she bought something directly from Al Packard of Packard’s Chaparral Trading Post in Santa Fe, well-known by many collectors as a premier trading post in which to buy Native American arts and crafts in New Mexico. She might have also valued the interactions with the makers that she experienced at the Indian Market when she purchased certain objects. These examples demonstrate that Houtzager may have valued these objects less for their monetary value, and more for a general aesthetic appeal or their connection with people and cultures. Alternately, Houtzager did occasionally pay larger sums of money for pottery, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Her most

expensive piece, as indicated in her catalogue was the very small pot made by well-known potter Blue Corn *(see Chapter Two, Figure 2.17).* It is possible that Houtzager recognised value, and decided the object was worth the high price due to its connection to the renowned maker.

3.2 Other Collectors

The emergence of folk art in 20th century United States can be largely illustrated through the collections of others such as Alexander Girard and Florence D. Bartlett. According to Pieter Hovens, curator at NME, Houtzager was inspired by Girard and his collection (Hovens 2015, 57). Like Houtzager, these two collectors are connected with the Native American folk art market of the cultural and artistic centre of Southwest USA, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Both Girard and Bartlett were also instrumental in the Museum of International Folk Art located there, which may be considered a chief centre of Native American, as well as global folk art. Bartlett founded the museum, and the Girard collection holds prominence in a major wing of the museum. An exploration of these collectors in the United States that were active during the same era as Houtzager may provide further insight into the collecting culture of the time period.

Alexander Girard

Born in New York City in 1907, Alexander Girard was raised in Florence, Italy. After studying architecture in London at the Architectural Association, he practiced architecture, interior design, and textile design both in Europe and in several cities in the United States, before moving with his wife, Susan, to Santa Fe in 1953 (Glassie 1989, 8) Ironically, like Houtzager, his folk art collecting passion was sparked by an attraction to nativity scenes. International travel involved with his career provided ample opportunity to purchase folk art from around the world (Glassie 1989, 8). As a maker himself, he used folk art as inspiration for many of his interior and textile designs (Glassie 1989, 13) *(Figure 3.1).* Perhaps it his creative background in design that facilitated his connection with not only objects of folk art, but also to their makers.

Figure 3.1. *Screen print textiles designed by Girard in the 1950s. (Photo by Charles Eames in Larsen 1995, 26)*

> "Part of my passion has always been to see objects in context. As a collector who was often able to visit the workshop of the artist and see the actual environment in which a piece was made, I've often felt that objects lost half their lives when they are taken out of their natural settings…I believe that if you put objects into a world which is ostensibly their own, the whole thing begins to breathe" (Alexander Girard in Larsen 1995, 53).

Though he collected thousands of objects of global folk art, Girard was exceptionally enamored with Pueblo pottery. As a resident in the area of much of its production, he became involved in the growing pottery scene of the mid 20th century. He could even be credited as the inspiration of Helen Cordero's invention of her famous storyteller. After seeing some of her first figurative pieces, including her 'singing mothers' (a comparable precursor to the storyteller), Girard asked her to make a similar figure to the 'singing mother,' but with a larger seated figure with children attached (Babcock *et al.* 1986, 21). It was

supposedly from this suggestion by Girard that Cordero created her famous storyteller, which would soon influence the rest of the figurative pottery world. His collecting career culminated in the donation of his circa 100,000 object collection of folk art to the Museum of International Folk Art in 1978 (Glassie, 1989, 8).

Florence D. Bartlett

Florence Dibell Bartlett was born in a wealthy family in Chicago, Illinois, 1881, and was the daughter of Adolphus Clay Bartlett, partner of the very successful hardware company, Hibbard, Spencer, Barlett & Co. She and her siblings grew to be active, influential patrons of the arts. Rather than being labeled as a philanthropist, however, Bartlett preferred to be called a 'civic worker', which attests to her devotion to assisting the lives and learning of citizens through the institutions that she supported (Mobley and Seth 2003, 14). According to the librarian of the Museum of International Folk Art in 1979, Judith Sellars, despite Bartlett's privileged upbringing, "throughout her life she was credited with great interest and sympathy toward "common" people; one friend recalled that Florence exhibited real delight when opportunities arose to share everyday labors—even dishwashing!" (Sellars 1979, 11). Having possessed a love for adventure, she traveled the world and spent summers away from Chicago, collecting thousands of pieces of folk art through the years. In the 1920s, Bartlett became attached to Santa Fe after she acquired a ranch just north of the city, in the village of Alcalde, at which she would spend many summers.

Two possible motivations have been attributed to Bartlett's folk art collecting. The first lies in the idea of preservation of traditions as a response to changes wrought by the World Wars, as well as concepts of an increase in commercialisation and globalisation. Secondly, her belief that folk art could be used as a universal language by which to communicate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (Sellars 1979, 11-12). This second motivation may be seen as key in her desire to create a museum that would serve to display her folk art collection and also function as an arena for cultural understanding through experiences with folk art. She originally wished to create an outdoor museum out of her ranch house in Alcalde, inspired by Scandinavian open air folk art museums that she had visited during her travels. Due to various factors,

however, she instead funded the construction of a brand new museum facility in Santa Fe, the Museum of International Folk Art, which opened in 1953.

3.3 Conclusion

The above discussion outlines various possible motives behind individuals' urges to collect objects—in this case, folk art—and also several clues as to why Houtzager may have collected folk art so extensively. Though Houtzager participated in the systematic practice of reasonably thorough documentation of her collections by recording details of many of the objects, their origin, the makers, how much she paid for them, as well as other particulars, the examination of her group of objects does not lend itself to the other characteristics of the systematic type of collecting. However, as the objects of Houtzager's collection were purchased on trips to the United States, they could possibly be seen as souvenirs. The different pieces of pottery may have represented certain memories of her travels and experiences at the Indian Market or relationships and conversations with the makers that she may have had. Houtzager's collecting may also possess characteristics of the other collecting mode posed by Pearce, the 'fetishistic'. Due to the large number of *circa* 4,000 folk art objects donated to the NME, not to mention other collections that were donated to other museums, her collecting tendencies could be said to error on the side of fetishistic. Additionally, as an extension of herself, she may have found pleasure in creating, documenting, and storing her own personal museum, contributing to her identity as a museum professional.

Like both Girard and Bartlett, whose names and legacies live on through their collections at the Museum of International Folk Art, the donation of Houtzager's collection to the NME does contribute, in a sense, to her immortality. However, it cannot be said whether or not that was a conscious motive of hers. Similar to these other collectors, Houtzager's passion for collecting Native American folk art seems to have existed in the context more than the aesthetics. The relationships formed with the citizens and makers in New Mexico during her visits there, and the representation of this through the pieces of pottery and other objects seemed more significant than the physical material of the objects.

Chapter Four: Folk Art in Museums

> "How we create, use, and modify objects to enrich, protect, beautify, inspire, communicate, warn, amuse, resist, provoke, surprise, decorate, and remember are innately human characteristics. As material culture, folk art speaks to cultural identity—who we are as members of specific groups and communities, religions, and ethnicities—as well as to our occupational and gender identities. Rooted in tradition, it alludes to where we have been, sometimes in homage and sometimes in resistance, but always, if it is authentic, stretching the bounds of possibility. By exploring artistic forms that express shared cultural identity among various peoples, even those whose differences might seem insurmountable or threatening, it is possible to find common ground for communication" (Joyce Ice, Director of MOIFA in Mobley and Seth 2003, 8).

This chapter considers museum collecting practices and also examines folk art and Houtzager's collection in the institutional setting of museums. These sections provide a foundation on which to investigate the case of the acquisition of Houtzager's collection at the NME, ultimately attempting to determine why museums, in this this case, the NME, might collect some objects but not others, and most specifically, Houtzager's collection.

4.1 Museum Collecting

The early modern private collecting practices briefly discussed in the previous chapter, in which numerous objects were collected and organized in order to gain knowledge about the world, exist as the foundation of the modern museum. Also influential on today's contemporary museums are the national museums that emerged in the late 18th century and 19th centuries. Many of these first public museums existed as emblems of national identity at the time of newly formed nation-states (MacDonald 2011, 85). Whether established on large, extravagant private collections of wealthy collectors, or on the objects accumulated by colonial states from the colonized, the museums acted as a means by which to exercise power to the rest of the world (MacDonald 2011, 85). These nationally symbolic museums still hold an important place in Western society today.

Since the advent of the large national museums, museum collecting practices have grown and transformed. Through the years, museums have been confronted with collection selection difficulties. Frequently complete collections were desired, but a need to weed out the unnecessary was also recognized (MacDonald 2011, 87). Museums today, whether national, regional, or local, have developed their own criteria for purchasing objects or collections, or accepting gifts or donations. While some of the individual collecting modes mentioned in Chapter Two, such as systematic methods may be also applied to museum collecting practices, the museum as an institution is comprised of many more complexities, which must be taken into consideration. Museums typically must consider whether or not the collection falls inside or outside of their collecting area (Swain 2007, 113). Several key factors that may be studied in terms of a museum's collecting area might be whether or not a collection can be managed properly once it has been purchased by or donated to the museum, and if it fits in with the museum's mission, the rest of the collections, and the museum's audience.

'Museum meanings', as termed by Susan Pearce, can be shaped from the interactions formed within collection management policies. Pearce outlines the fundamentals of typical museum practice by expounding on the relationship between the museum and "its collections, museum authorities and staff, and the outside world" (Pearce 1992, 135). These three actors are in a constant state of communication and interaction. Past, present, and future relationships between the three must be taken into account when making decisions in the museum. Although collections policies may be established in order to standardise procedures at the present time and in future practice, there will always be influences from the past, as well as the different 'curatorial inheritances' that come into play regarding the varied backgrounds and previous research of the curatorial staff (Pearce 1992, 135). In museums, these dynamics have an impact on how various practices should be carried out, such as collections display, research, and classification. These factors are also considered in decision-making involving the acquisition of new objects or collections.

4.2 Art versus Artefact - What about Folk Art?

As discussed in Chapter One, defining folk art is difficult and it is virtually impossible to arrive at one definitive classification. With this in mind, where does folk art fit within a museum setting? Can folk art belong in an ethnographical museum, in a history museum, in an art museum, or does it only belong in a folk art museum? As a museum of ethnology, questions such as these were surely considered at the NME in 1993 when they were offered Houtzager's collection of folk art.

Within the national, regional, or local context mentioned above, public museums and their collections today are typically classified under general labels such as art, natural history, ethnology, modern art, local history, and numerous others. Museum collections grow through the acquisition of objects. As described in the preceding chapters, the variable nature of folk art and its frequent associations made with primitive art, ethnology, fine art, tourist art, *et cetera,* might cause uncertainties of its position within museums. Museums and their collections are subject to the opinions and decisions of museum directors and curators. These subjectivities are based on their beliefs and backgrounds in relation to the mission of the museum, and how they wish their institution to be portrayed to the public.

The ethnological museum of focus in this study, the NME, is considered one of the oldest public ethnology museums in Europe. It was established in 1837 on the private collections of Japanese objects amassed by the Dutch Philip Franz Siebold, during his practices of Western medicine in Nagasaki, Japan. In an 1837 letter to the King of the Netherlands, Willem I, Siebold proposed his idea for the museum:

> "An ethnographic museum is a scientifically arranged collection of objects from different lands—mainly outside Europe—which both in their own right and in relation to other objects further acquaint us with the people to whom they belong. Placing before our eyes their religion, manners, and customs, the museum provides us with a clear idea of the state of their arts and sciences, their rural economy, handicrafts, industry and trade" (Siebold 1837 in Bouquet 2012, 64).

The museum was established and organized by Siebold upon a division of the objects by geographic region, which was one of the popular methods of ethnographical museum classification during the era. The founding of the NME was part of a new trend of public ethnology museums in mid 19th century Europe. Other comparable museums that were established around the same time as the NME include the Royal Danish Museum in Copenhagen, Pitt Rivers Museum, in Oxford, and Musee du Trocadero, in Paris (Bouquet 2012, 65). Traditionally, according to scholar Mary Bouquet, one of the intentions behind these first public ethnology museums in Europe, in addition to educating and amusing the public, was to display objects of non-Western peoples in such a manner as to emphasise a contrast to those of Western culture. Techniques were frequently utilised in museums such as a juxtaposition of 'civilised' Western objects of advanced technological quality alongside the ethnographic objects of the 'Other', that had been collected from colonized peoples or other faraway regions (Bouquet 2012, 73). This served to augment beliefs of superiority among Westerners.

Folk art can be correlated to the dichotomy of ethnographic artefacts *versus* objects of art, as discussed in Chapter One. In simple terms, scholars have described ethnography as objects, probably utilitarian, that can serve to represent a generalized, comprehensive group of people or geographic region. Art objects, on the other hand, might be presented as a celebration of individual innovation of creativity and aesthetics. Museums such as art museums and ethnographic museums might serve to further promulgate the objects of art in opposition to ethnographical artefacts.

The representation of ethnography *versus* art is further illustrated by Price in her discourse on the display of objects of art and ethnographic artefacts within museums. A distinction is made between the exhibition of Western art and Primitive artefacts. She states that Western objects are presented as "having been made by named individuals at specific points in an evolving history of artistic syles, philosophies, and media," whereas for Primitive objects, or ethnology displays, details of "technical, social, and religious functions is elaborated, thus erasing the notion that the aesthetic quality is able to 'speak for itself'—or rather, erasing the entire notion that the object possesses any aesthetic quality worthy of transmission" (Price 2001, 83). According to Price, museums usually cling to one of the extremes, and decide to either consider an

object as ethnology or as art. Price, however, places Primitive art somewhere in between—worthy of recognition of aesthetics, but also enhanced by the context and intentions of the makers (Price 2001, 93). Given these distinctions, the case of Houtzager's pottery collection seems as though it could fit aptly somewhere in the middle. For example, a clay pot from Acoma Pueblo could be revered for its aesthetic beauty and design created by a specific, named potter, and placed on display in a contemporary art museum. The same pot might also be displayed in an ethnology museum as a fine example of pottery from Acoma Pueblo in the southwest region of the United States. Price illustrates this same point with the example of the American Museum of Natural History and the Center for African Art in New York, claiming that it is possible to find the same types of objects in each museum. The museum's choices of display, lighting, and labeling can sometimes be the primary factors that enforce the identity of objects as either artistic 'masterpieces' or exotic artifacts of savage peoples (Price 2001, 85).

It could be argued that at present in the NME, the display case containing several of Houtzager's pieces of pottery defy the ethnography *versus* art dichotomy. The NME is a museum of ethnology, and it still retains the original classification system established by Siebold in 1873, that divides the museum's exhibits by geographical region. However, the NME displays many of the objects in its exhibits in such a manner that could possibly be compared to display methods found in classical art museums (Bouquet 2012, 65). The cases are not overly crowded, and there are no labels placed immediately next to the objects. In the display case that exhibits a few pieces of Houtzager's pottery, along with several other Native American objects, there are no labels. This allows the visitor to view the aesthetic qualities of the pieces *(Figure 4.1).* However, there are also interactive screens located next to the cases where the museum visitor may select depictions of the objects that are on display in the nearby case, and then read text on the screen that describes the object in a very detailed manner According to Price's distinctions, this mode of display could be seen to demonstrate characteristics of both art museums and ethnography museums.

Figure 4.1. *Exhibit case displaying several of Houtzager's pottery objects in addition to other objects from North America, in the permanent North American gallery, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden. (National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden in Hovens 2015, 53).*

Similar to the flexible nature of museum objects based on context and display, classifications of objects may also change over time, as exemplified in Chapter Two in the example of the rise in popularity of Native American folk art. Native American objects that were at one time seen as curiosities or valued as ethnographic representations of the entire southwest Pueblo culture began to be promoted more as art. Shifts like these have been discussed by James Clifford. Clifford argues that objects in categories such as fine art, ethnographic artefacts and folk art, fakes and technological objects, and tourist art and commodities move between the categories over time depending on cultural or historical circumstances (Clifford 1988, 244). For example, evidence of these shifts can be seen in museums in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Around this time, New York City's American Museum of Natural History, renowned for its vast collection of specimens of human cultural artefacts, and plant, fossil, and animal specimens, began to experiment by holding art exhibitions. Display of a combination of primitive art alongside modern art became more common during this era. In Europe, the art museum of Folkwang Museum in Essen, Germany,

displayed the two types of object together as early as 1911. These styles of display had the power to "transform everyday objects into artworks," and to emphasise similarities in perspective and form in the art works (Bouquet 2012, 134). Around this same time, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), in New York City, experimented with ethnographic exhibitions. MoMA, known as an institution that displays primarily Western modern and contemporary art, the museum tried also exhibiting 'primitive art' (Bouquet 2012, 133). MoMA proceeded to hold various exhibitions of this kind throughout the 20th century.

Given this discussion of folk art, primitive art, ethnography, or fine art within the museum, it is evident that folk art can be collected and displayed in various different types of museums. It is also apparent that folk art occupies a unique, perhaps liminal position in contemporary museums. Some museums, however, possess distinct folk art collections or departments. The Smithsonian American Art Museum, in Washington, D.C., for example, prides itself for recognizing and displaying folk art, and characterizes the collections as "works that were overlooked by many collectors, museums, and art historians" (Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2015, http://www.americanart.si.edu.) The San Antonio Museum of Art, in San Antonio, Texas, created a separate Department of Folk Art within its museum in the mid 1980s with collections including folk art from Mexico and Texas (Oettinger, 1988, 5). Additionally, there do exist special museums whose sole purpose is to display folk art.

International and National Folk Art Museums

The opening quote to this chapter is by Joyce Ice, the former director of the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and expresses some of the ideas that are at the heart of the museum. Although other international folk art museums exist, such as the Craft and Folk Art Museum, in Los Angeles, MOIFA is considered a folk art museum par excellence. First opened on September 5, 1953, it was the first international folk art museum of its kind, founded by Florence Bartlett, as cited in the previous chapter. Carefully planned by Bartlett with the architect, John Gaw Meem, the museum's construction was funded by the former to exist not only as a structure to house and display her *circa* 5,000 object core folk art collection, but also to connect people of all cultures through the arts. One of the main purposes behind the

MOIFA was to celebrate cultural difference through the preservation and display of folk art (Mobley and Seth 2003, 8). Since its establishment, the museum and library have expanded to include other collections such as that of Alexander Girard, as mentioned in Chapter Three.

In addition to museums of international folk art like MOIFA, there are folk art museums located in various countries around the world that are made up of objects in a national context. One example is the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, founded in 1961 by Joseph Martinson and Adele Earnst. The museum possesses folk art objects from the 18th century to the present, and refers to the makers of the objects in its collection as 'self-taught' artists (American Folk Art Museum, 2015, http://folkartmuseum.org). The Museum of Greek Folk Art, in Athens, was established in 1918. The institution was originally named the Museum of Greek Handicrafts. In 1923, the name was changed to the National Museum of Decorative Arts. The present title, the Museum of Greek Folk Art, was chosen in 1959 (Museum of Greek Folk Art, 2015, http://www.melt.gr/en). In Dresden, Germany, the Saxon Folk Art Museum with Puppet Theatre Collection collects textiles, carved objects, costumes, ceramics, furniture, and toys. The museum claims that it seeks to "bring alive a wealth of old tradition" and "introduces the more recent and contemporary works that form the threshold between everyday life and art" (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2015, http://m.skd.museum). The terms or phrases 'self-taught' artists, 'handicrafts', 'decorative arts', 'old tradition', 'contemporary works', everyday life', and 'art' used by these museums demonstrate the mutable, diverse character of folk art and its manipulation in museums.

4.3 Current Folk Art Trends in Museums

Whether as a desire to celebrate multiculturalism or to express national identity through folk art, some art museums as well as ethnology and history museums today are featuring folk art exhibitions in their institutions. For example, a recent temporary folk art exhibition is on display at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, in Los Angeles, California. In a museum whose collections focus primarily on natural history specimens, the exhibition "Grandes Maestros: Great Masters of Iberoamerican Folk Art, Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex" displays folk art of the "highest aesthetic and technical caliber

by the foremost artisans of the region to promote international awareness and appreciation of these exceptional works" (Great Masters of Folk Art of Iberoamerica, 2012, http://www.fomentoculturalbanamex.org). An interesting, and perhaps unexpected case is a temporary exhibition that is recently on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City. The exhibition, entitled "Plains Indians Masterworks" displays objects from European and American collections ranging from pre-contact to contemporary pieces (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015, http://www.metmuseum.org). Known as a national, or even internationally iconic museum of fine art, the display of Native American objects of ethnographic significance as well as folk art seems like a slight departure from exhibitions typically associated with this type of museum. With the already discussed indefinable aspect of folk art in mind, these current movements in museums of all types to collect or display folk art contributes to the story of folk art as an issue in the contemporary museum world.

4.4 Folk Art and Houtzager's collection at NME

As considered in the discussion of museum collecting practices in section 4.1, new donation proposals and acquisition processes in museums call for decisions to be made. The offer by Elisabeth Houtzager to donate her large collection of *circa* 4,000 objects of folk art to the NME in 1993 is no exception. Judgments were made by the museum director, Pieter Hovens, and staff, based on whether or not her collection belonged in an institution like the NME. Unfortunately, there is no documentation regarding the acquisition in 1993. According to Hovens, the acquisition occurred before a more strict acquisition policy was instituted at the NME (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2). However, Hovens, who was instrumental in the acquisition of the collection, disclosed that some staff members saw great value in her collection and were excited at the prospect of its acquisition, while at the opposite end of the spectrum, other staff at the NME viewed the collection of folk art as 'trash' and not worthy of a place in the museum's collections (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2). With mixed feelings by museum staff, the collection was nonetheless accepted by the museum. Why did certain staff feel so positively about its acquisition, while others rejected it? What factors may have been involved with the positive and negative feelings toward the collection? Why did the NME ultimately accept the collection?

Methods

In order to seek answers to these questions, interviews are employed in addition to the literature explored in this thesis. Individual, informal, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three curators at the NME—Pieter Hovens, Laura van Broekhoven, and Matthi Forrer. The interviews held were generally on the topic of the concept of folk art, the position of folk art within the NME, and Houtzager's folk art collection. The academic disciplinary diversity within the curatorial department at the NME offers richness in the variety of histories, outlooks, and rationales. Concomitantly, the dynamics due to the multiplicity of intellectual reasoning produces differences in opinion regarding the museum and its collections. The chosen interview participants represent three different disciplines: anthropology, archaeology, and art history. The expected diversity in views benefit the study by foregrounding the complexities involved in museum practices at the NME.

As a youth, Pieter Hovens dabbled in astronomy, paleontology, archaeology, and ethnology. He received his BA in cultural anthropology at Radboud University, in Nijmegen, Netherlands. He subsequently attended the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada, earning his MA in cultural anthropology back in Nijmegen. His PhD dissertation was on the Dutch anthropologist and physician Herman ten Kate who traveled and conducted fieldwork among the Native Americans in the 1880s. Hovens worked for many years for the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport in The Hague as a policy officer for ethnic minorities, coordinating various integration projects for gypsies in The Netherlands, and facilitating voluntary work, notably in the health care sector. He has held the position of half-time curator of North America at the NME since 1991. His expertise includes the history of anthropology, tourism, and museology. Hovens' knowledge of the material culture of native North America is an invaluable resource in this study on Houtzager's collection. Additionally, he knew Houtzager personally, and was instrumental in the NME's acquisition of her collection in 1993 (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2) (Museum Volkenkunde 2015a, http://volkenkunde.nl).

Laura van Broekhoven received her degree from the University of Leiden in Amerindian Archaeology and Cultural History. Research for her MA and PhD,

as well as many recent projects, were conducted in Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Caribbean. She has been employed at the NME since 2001, and serves as the Chief Curator and curator of Central and South America. In addition, Broekhoven teaches at the University of Leiden in the faculty of Archaeology (Broekhoven, interviewed 2015, Appendix 3) (Museum Volkenkunde, 2015b, http://volkenkunde.nl).

Matthi Forrer has been employed at the NME since 1984. Influenced by his passion for Japanese prints and landscapes, Forrer obtained his degree from Leiden University in Japanese Language and Culture. He also studied the Art of East Asia at the University of Amsterdam. He has been a freelance art historian and Japanologist for art galleries, auction houses, private collectors, and international art dealers. Forrer currently holds the titles of Senior Researcher of Japan and Curator of Japan and Korea, at the National Museum of Ethnology. Additionally, he teaches Material Culture of Pre-Modern Japan at Leiden University (Forrer, interviewed 2015, Appendix 4) (Museum Volkenkunde, 2015c, http://volkenkunde.nl).

Analysis

In order to speculate why museums might collect folk art and why the NME accepted the Houtzager collection, interview questions generally broached the following main topics: How each participant defines folk art, if there are many examples of folk art in the NME's collections, what defines the NME's new acquisition protocol, if they recall when Houtzager's collection was acquired and if they agree with its acquisition, if they think that Houtzager's collection belongs with the rest of the collections in the museum, and finally, why they think that Houtzager as well as other collectors are interested in folk art.

Opinions on Folk Art

A general understanding or opinion of folk art is necessary in order for museum staff accept or reject a collection like Houtzager's in the ethnological collections of the NME. Though the multifarious concept of folk art is hard to define, discussion of its complexities with the three curators have provided a foundation on which to then discuss Houtzager's collection and folk art in the NME.

In agreement with Nelson Graburn's relation of folk art to the commercial and tourist arts, all three curators expressed a belief that the production of folk art directly relates to the commercial market. Through her experience working on a project with merchants in Nicaragua, Laura van Broekhoven recognizes the individual agency of the makers that is visible in the creation of folk art. By keeping in mind what they believe the tourist wants, makers make a conscious choice to accede to the expected desires of consumers. This, according to Broekhoven, demonstrates a personal "agency, individuality, and choice" (Broekhoven, interviewed 2015, Appendix 3). Pieter Hovens considers Houtzager's collection to be folk art, that also became tourist art when the outside market entered the picture, and makers began creating objects to cater to the tastes of that external market. Matthi Forrer on the other hand, views folk art and tourist art as two separate things, and compares folk art to the *Mingei* movement in Japan, which he defines as a Japanese folk art movement that is based on traditions with rural roots, and is a form of craft-making (Forrer, interviewed 2015, Appendix 4). He believes this category of object to be artificial, or unnatural. Scholar Susan Pearce asserts that when museums research the form and style of objects in order to classify them, historians and art historians have a tendency to primarily rely on studies of the development of material culture through time in order to derive meaning (Pearce 1992, 132). In a similar manner, Forrer as an art historian, acknowledged his interest in studying artistic traditions in Japan through the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, stating that "For me as an art historian who believes in sort of development that I can trace and reconstruct, reconstruct basically the history of art in a very wide sense, it doesn't fit in there" (Forrer, interviewed 2015, Appendix 4). With the demands that were created for certain products through the historical and economic changes in Japan through the centuries, he believes that the *Mingei*, or Japanese folk art movement, did not belong, as many of the objects created during this movement were reinvented objects that didn't have a clear purpose in society. Here, his art history training clearly influences his conception of folk art.

Opinions on Individual Collecting of Folk Art

Forrer supposed that Houtzager's motives to collect folk art lay in an inherent passion for collecting, claiming that this desire is sometimes just in your 'DNA' (Forrer, interviewed 2015, Appendix 4). As mentioned in chapter three, this is a general philosophy shared by many collectors and collections studies scholars. Both Broekhoven and Hovens suspect that nostalgia plays a role in collecting folk art. This concept could be similar to the nostalgia that may be attributed to the Native American folk art boom in the United states in the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the 1960s and 1970s, when a desire to return to nature, and nostalgia for simpler, more traditional ways of life was sought. According to Hovens, folk arts come from "a way of life that has been virtually lost in the contemporary world. So people fighting alienation, fighting mass culture, fighting globalisation, they are very much attracted to finding the 'paradise lost' of their youth, of an earlier lifestyle when things were so much simpler, and people were in touch with each other" (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2).

Hovens also mentions another collecting characteristic of Houtzager. According to Hovens, she was a competitive collector. He recalled paying another visit to her apartment after her collection had already been donated to the NME, and her apartment was completely full again, not with folk art, but with her collections of Dutch glass, Dutch ceramics, and cast iron clothing irons. Apparently she collected the last very extensively partly in an effort to compete with one of her friends who also collected irons. This characteristic of competitive collecting illustrates Danet and Katriel's (1994) and Pearce's (1992) concept of competition in collecting and its relation to play, mentioned in Chapter Three.

Additionally Broekhoven, on one hand, believes that individuals may collect folk art because makers appeal to consumers by producing objects that they think the consumers desire—thus illustrating the influence of the agency of the makers. But on the other hand she points to the effect created by the impact of organisations and governments with political interests on folk art makers. According to Broekhoven, these government agendas have pushed the folk art industry in an effort to save indigenous peoples or citizens of low socioeconomic status by pressing them to become involved in a folk art, or tourist art industry. In this case, collectors might be attracted to the objects of folk art not as a result of the agency of the makers, but because of the influence that political agendas had

on the makers and what they are making (Broekhoven, interviewed 2015, Appendix 3).

Opinions on Collecting and Folk Art in the NME

Today, according to the interview participants, the NME must adhere to formal acquisition policies and selection protocol before they can acquire new collections. In line with the standard procedure of many modern museums is the necessity for sufficient provenance of collections, including identification, origins, and condition of the objects, as well as associated documentation and confirmation of legal histories of the objects. Additionally, the NME's collecting area is considered, and prospective collections are assessed based on their expected contribution of value to the museum's existing collections (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2). Though Houtzager made fairly thorough efforts to document various details of the objects in her collection, Hovens noted that in 1993, when her collection was acquired by the museum, less strict new acquisition procedures were in place. At the time, since Houtzager's collection was so large and well documented, and because she was friends with the NME's deputy director, Ted Leyenaar, the collection was accepted (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2).

When asked if they would classify many of the objects in the NME as folk art, Hovens and Forrer said no. While Hovens considers Houtzager's collection to be comprised of folk art, he considers the majority of the NME's collections to be ethnography— as objects collected in a traditional context, that were made for personal use, not for a commercial market. (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2). Forrer believes this as well, classifying 95% of the museum's collections as utilitarian objects, indicating that objects might begin an existence as folk art when people consciously begin to collect them. Mentioning a current valorisation project, or revaluation of the museum's collections in her department, a major part of which is a reconsideration of the museum's object classifications, Broekhoven finds it very difficult to label things as ethnography, folk art, art, *et cetera* at the present time.

As predicted, the varied backgrounds of the interview participants was reflected in their opinions of folk art and Houtzager's collection in the NME. Pieter Hovens, the anthropologist, was completely in favor of Houtzager's folk art

collection. Art historian Matthi Forrer, does not have much appreciation for folk art, and does not see value in Houtzager's collection. He claimed to be fairly unfamiliar with specific objects in her collection, but believes that anything made for a tourist market, as many of the objects in Houtzager's collection could have been, is not of interest within the rest of the NME's collections. He believes that tourist art "doesn't say much about any culture that we are dealing with in our museum" (Forrer, interviewed 2015, Appendix 4). Laura van Broekhoven, with her background in archaeology, was initially opposed, and later more accepting. What is noteworthy is how after initially feeling disappointment toward objects in the NME's collections such as those of Houtzager's, and unsure of its significance, Broekhoven admits to a change of heart as her career developed. Her focus on the agency of the makers that is illustrated through their decisions to innovate or modify their wares in order to appeal to the desires of the tourist market, creates meaning. She believes that a relationship is formed between the maker and the consumer, consisting of a degree of 'joint decision-making' played out on the basis of the wants and needs of both parties (Broekhoven, interviewed 2015, Appendix 3). This interplay and the resulting stories, in addition to the agency of the makers, attribute significance to the objects. As a result, she has grown to be more appreciative of the NME's collections and Houtzager's collection, at least the portion with which she is most familiar—the objects from Latin and South America. Likewise, this same appreciation for the makers' agency may have been felt by Houtzager, during the time that she was collecting. She may have found meaning in her direct connections with the makers, adding substantially to the overall value of the objects she purchased. This speculation is enforced when Pieter Hovens, who knew Houtzager personally, mentioned that the Pueblo pottery was one Houtzager's favorite elements of her entire folk art collection. Hovens' hypothesis lends to the evidence of the known context in which she purchased the pottery. According to Hovens, she established relationships with many of the people she had met in the Southwest during the time that she collected, including the notable makers such as Lucy Lewis, Maria Martinez, and her talented son, Papovi Da (Hovens, interviewed 2015, Appendix 2). Her affection for the collection was probably for more than just the material objects, but also linked to her social experiences at the time.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter's examination of museum collecting and museum examples that contain folk art have provided a context in which to consider the case of Houtzager's collection within the NME. Folk art museums and other museums with special folk art collections or departments clearly recognize a category of folk art objects as significant and meaningful for society. However, the presence of folk art in other types of museums can produce an interesting dynamic. In classificatory terms, as a museum of ethnology, folk art may be seen by some to fit within the NME's collecting area, while some believe it does not. The knowledge and opinions shared by the curators in the interviews have offered further insight into the concept of folk art, Houtzager's collection, and specific collecting practices at the NME.

Hovens' interview proved exceptionally useful, as he knew Houtzager personally and could share memories and provide interesting insights into several aspects of her life. Having held conversations with her, and having observed her entire folk art collection as well as other collections first hand in her apartment, he was able to discern clues about her collecting habits, such as her competitiveness with other friends displayed through collecting irons. Although Laura van Broekhovern had not been employed at the NME at the time of the acquisition, she has had contact and experience with parts of Houtzager's collection in the time since her beginning at the NME. Expressing initial disapproval of objects of folk and tourist art in the collections of the NME, Broekhoven communicated a new appreciation for the objects given the stories behind their production, as her career developed. Matthi Forrer has been employed at the NME since 1984, and was therefore present during the time of the acquisition of Houtzager's collection. Through his comparisons of folk art with the Japanese folk art counterpart of *mingei*, he conveyed little appreciation for folk art and Houtzager's collection. This could also possibly reflect his background in art history.

In the examples discussed throughout this chapter as well as the case of the NME, the malleability of the concept of folk art has been further demonstrated. It can be concluded that the interview participants' personal comprehensions of folk art play a role in their opinions of Houtzager's collection

at the NME. Concurrently, their beliefs about folk art appear to be shaped by their educational and professional backgrounds. All three participants mentioned intentionality and commercial or tourist arts in relation to folk art. Shared opinions identify Houtzager's collection as a type of folk art or tourist art, where the makers were influenced by the outside market to create certain pieces.

The connection of the physical objects of the collection with their makers is identified by Hovens and Broehoven to be a valuable aspect. This link to the people behind the objects may not only have been valued by Houtzager, but also creates a suitable place for the collection in the museum. Hovens and Forrer characterised the general collections of the NME as ethnology—predominantly as objects originally created for utilitarian purposes or without influences from an outside market. Perhaps, however, it is the connection to the folk art makers and the visibility of their agency through the objects, that creates a place for the collection in the NME.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Folk Art, Collecting, and Museums

This study expands on the results of an internship project involving research of Elisabeth Houtzager's collection of Native American folk art at the NME. As an outcome of the NME's and Pieter Hovens' desire to further develop the contextual documentation of Houtzager's collection in the museum's digital collections database, I was asked to study the makers and art market pertaining to the objects in the North American portion of the collection. This research of the collection of Native American folk art spurred further inquiries into the concept of folk art such as: What is folk art, how does it relate to material culture artefacts and art, and how are the intentions of the makers incorporated in this type of object? Ultimately, what motivated Elisabeth Houtzager to collect this type of object so extensively, and why did the NME accept Houtzager's large collection of folk art?

The initial research conducted for the internship at the NME provided data to be used in the continuation of the study. Within Houtzager's North American collection at NME, Pueblo pottery of southwestern United States was the focus of research. Through the use of resources including the NME's digital collections database (TMS), Houtzager's handmade card catalogue, and literature, detailed information of Houtzager's collection was obtained. The literature employed in the continuation of the study generally pertained to folk art, Native American folk art movements, collecting practices, and museum collections. Further, interviews were conducted and focused mainly on the curators' views of folk art, collecting, and Houtzager's collection within the context of the NME.

5.2 Conclusions

The research aims for the study were established after the initial research of Houtzager's collections had begun at the NME. Resulting from the internship that was fulfilled regarding further documentation of contextual data related to

Houtzager's North America collection, numerous queries arose pertaining to folk art and folk art collecting. The following four main conclusions have emerged from the research methods and related literature.

First, it was essential to investigate the concept of folk art, and thus how it relates to other forms of material culture. As a result of the study of pertinent literature and the interviews concerning folk art, primitive art, tourist art, and the many other terms mentioned throughout this paper it can be confirmed that the concept of folk art is exceptionally varied, and the numerous terms that are used can all be considered valid. Much literature that discusses folk art associates it with primitive art. Moreover, many scholars, including the curators interviewed at the NME tend to connect folk art with tourist art, which has a correlation to consumerism and a commercial market. Given the time period that Houtzager was collecting her Native American folk art in the United States, the term tourist art, as a form of folk art, may be aptly applied to some of her collection. Many of the Southwest Native Americans at the time were innovating, establishing individuality and recognition in a commercially driven art market scene. Ultimately, however, folk art is a concept that cannot be satisfactorily defined. Instead, it is more effective to seek several interpretations of its complex nature in order to understand the concept of the term. Additionally, a recognition of the complexities of folk art contribute to a shift away from colonial epistemologies that emphasized the 'Other' by degrading the makers, and deeming their created objects as far inferior to those of the more 'civilised' West.

Secondly, through the study of the makers of the Pueblo pottery in Elisabeth Houtzager's collection, several themes emerged contributing to a deeper understanding of folk art and its creators as well clues as to why Houtzager may have been attracted to the objects in the collection. The themes encompassing the intergenerational aspects of pottery making, as well as the innovations, individuality, and competition recurred in many of cases of the different makers of the pottery collection, and suggest the significance of context in the existence of the material objects and of folk art. These intentions of the makers involved in the pottery community were highlighted through the art market of the American Southwest. The dynamics implicated in the careers of the makers along with the mechanisms of the art market created the setting in which Houtzager traveled, socialized, and collected, thus influencing her purchases of folk art during the 1960s and 1970s.

Thirdly, upon the basis of the literature concerning folk art and collecting, the interviews, and the consideration of the time period and environment in which she was collecting, several factors may be involved in Houtzager's motives to collect folk art, and more specifically in this case, Native American folk art. One typical motive of collecting tourist art, souvenirs, or folk art may be the nostalgia attached to the objects. On one hand, this could relate to a desire to return to simpler times now passed, as in the example of Pueblo pottery. Much of the pottery Houtzager purchased was made using traditional methods that the Native Americans have been using for hundreds of years, metaphorically transporting Houtzager back to a time prior to modernization and industrialization. Alternately, according to evidence revealed in the interview with Pieter Hovens, as well as by the fact that she purchased many of the objects directly from the makers or their family members in their pueblos, homes, or at fairs, Houtzager established relationships with the makers and other collectors adding a personal dimension to the objects. This factor might also contribute feelings of nostalgia that would be connected to the objects, reminding her of her travels or of conversations she experienced. This focus on the context of the objects, and not merely the aesthetics or materiality, correlate to many of the conceptualizations of folk art mentioned throughout this paper.

Lastly, the acquisition of such a sizeable collection of Houtzager's folk art—*circa* 4,000 objects—undoubtedly made an impact on the collections and curatorial staff at the NME in 1993. By examining museum collecting practices and folk art within a museum context, along with the data obtained from interviews with curatorial staff at the NME, it is possible to identify several of the factors involved in the museum's acquisition of Houtzager's collection. However, it is also important to note that at the time of the acceptance of the collection, a strict acquisition policy was not yet established at the NME, and Houtzager was also friends with the museum's deputy director. The investigation of the position of folk art within various types of museums reflects the complex nature of folk art and proves that folk art occupies a unique, liminal position in contemporary museums. As a museum of ethnology, collecting primarily what most would term as ethnographic artefacts, the folk art collection in the NME was welcomed by some staff, but dreaded by others, according to curator Pieter Hovens. Some of the same motives possessed by Houtzager to amass her individual collection, may also be applicable to the museum's motives in the acceptance of the folk art

collection. Similar to ethnographical objects, of which a contextual framework of cultural significance is typically vital to the museum—for example, the role that an African mask played in the society from which it came—objects of folk art, though also frequently aesthetically pleasing, depend on the context in which it was made in order to deduce the most meaning and worth. As mentioned by Laura van Broekhoven, objects of folk art and tourist art can be valued because of the visibility of the agency of the makers. Folk art moves beyond the materiality of physical object, and derives added significance from its context. As a result, folk art may be seen as a window through which to view indigenous societies. In this way, the NME and other museums may perceive genuine value in folk art collections, like that of Houtzager.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

While the speculations made about the lives and careers of folk art makers through the study of Native American folk art, collecting, and Southwest pottery-making practices may be fruitful and academically sound, a more personal connection with Native American folk art makers would undoubtedly lend deeper understanding of the makers and the context in which they operate. The study of the makers in Houtzager's collection could be extended and enhanced by conducting interviews with the relatives of the makers of the objects in the collection, current Southwest Native American makers, or with other folk art makers to learn more about the factors involved in the process and lifestyle. Also, in order to better understand the possible motives behind Houtzager's collecting habits, interviews with other folk art collectors could prove effective. There have not been many concentrated studies of folk art in museums. Other museums holding folk art collections could be focused upon, and a comparative study could be conducted in order to identify more of the issues involved in the collection and display of folk art in museums. In retrospect, interview questions aimed at more practices within the NME may have provided added useful information about how the museum operates as an ethnological museum, further contributing to the data concerning folk art in museums. Moreover, interviews with additional members of curatorial staff may provide added useful information. Nevertheless, the information yielded during the interviews has proven an invaluable resource in the study.

5.4 Closing Remarks

As for a response to the question in the title of this thesis—*Who Put the Folk in Art?*—there is no easy answer. As demonstrated throughout this paper, folk art is created by a wide variety of people, all with different intentions and agendas. How folk art is interpreted by collectors and museum visitors is also reflective of its subjective nature. Some people value the context and the makers of folk ark objects, while others regard it as inauthentic tourist trash. Either way, this thesis has served to highlight one example of a folk art collection, and its possible role within the life of its original proprietor, Elisabeth Houtzager, as well as in its newer home in the NME.

The acquisition of the Elisabeth Houtzager collection by the NME in 1993 was a monumental event for both the collector and the museum. For Houtzager, she was letting go of years of collecting efforts, and placing faith in the NME, that they would preserve and handle her collection with care and respect for many years to come. The NME, on one hand, was suddenly faced with the daunting task of accessioning, documenting, and storing the enormous collection, while at the same time gaining a valuable body of culturally rich objects. This study has provided a deeper look into concept of folk art and the collecting life of Houtzager. Whether or not she intended to achieve immortality by entrusting her collection to the hands of the NME, I would say that she has achieved it.

Abstract

This study explores folk art through Elisabeth Houtzager's collection of Native American folk art at the National Museum of Ethnology (NME) in Leiden, Netherlands. The Houtzager collection at the NME is comprised of *circa* 4,000 objects of folk art from around the world, and was acquired from Houtzager by the NME in 1993. Research began as part of an internship project held at the NME. The objects of focus comprise a sample of Native American Pueblo pottery and its makers from the Southwestern United States. During initial research of the collection, it became apparent that folk art is a relatively complex matter and occupies a unique position in the world of material culture. This thesis expands on the results of the internship, and seeks to answer questions primarily including: What motivated Houtzager to collect folk art so extensively? Why did the NME accept Houtzager's large collection of folk art in 1993? In order to broach these questions, one must investigate: What is folk art, and how does it relate to other objects such as ethnographic artefacts and art? The concept of folk art eludes a concrete definition, and can be best understood by recognizing a conglomeration of interpretations. An examination of the Native American art market in 20th century Southwest United States reveals a host of dynamics that may have influenced individuals and institutions to collect objects like folk art. Changes in the lives and careers of the makers of the Pueblo pottery in Houtzager's collection led to innovations, individuality, and competition in the folk art community in the American Southwest, and created the setting in which Houtzager was traveling, socialising, and thus influencing her purchases of folk art. Individuals collect objects for various reasons, whether as an obsession, a pursuit for a complete collection, an expression of identity, or a memento from events or souvenir from travels. Given the environment in which Houtzager collected, it may be speculated that her travels and personal connections with the pottery makers represented in her collection lent to feelings of nostalgia through the objects. On an institutional level, museums of all types including ethnology, art, folk art, natural history, serve a certain purpose to the collections, staff, and public. Choices in museum collecting are influenced by the interplay between these actors. Today, folk art can be found in many different types of museums. In this study, interviews with three curators from the NME with varied disciplinary backgrounds, reflected a variety of opinions of folk art, and its situation within the institutional setting of museums. With the already discussed indefinable aspect of folk art in mind, these current movements in museums of all types to collect or display folk art contributes to the story of folk art as an issue in the contemporary museum world.

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Appendix 1

Table representing the makers of Pueblo pottery in Elisabeth Houtzager's collection for which biographical information was obtainable. The Pueblo of origin, maker name, and corresponding object number are provided.

Origin	Maker	Object Number
Acoma	Lupe Aragon	RV-5715-2535
	Lita Garcia	RV-5715-2531
	E. Histia	RV-5715-2530
	Lucy Lewis	RV-5715-2528
	Lucy Lewis	RV-5715-2529
	Rose Histia Torivio	RV-5715-2537
Cochiti	Damasia Cordero	RV-5715-2447
	Damasia Cordero	RV-5715-2448
	Helen Cordero	RV-5715-2445
	Seferina Oritz	RV-5715-2450
	Terecita Romero	RV-5715-2439
	Filipa Trujillo	RV-5715-2438
Hopi	Elva Tewaguna Nampeyo	RV-5715-2555
	Rachel Nampeyo	RV-5715-2558
	Rachel Nampeyo	RV-5715-2559
	Tonia Nampeyo	RV-5715-2556
Jemez	Juanita Fragua	RV-5715-2502
	Mary Gonzalez	RV-5715-2501
Taos	Crucita Romero	RV-5715-2511
	Virginia Romero	RV-5715-2519
Tesuque	Helen Herrera	RV-5715-2524
	Helen Herrera	RV-5715-2525
	Helen Herrera	RV-5715-2526
	Priscilla Vigil	RV-5715-2523
San Ildefonso	Blue Corn	RV-5715-2468
	Rose C. Gonzales	RV-5715-2463
	Rose C. Gonzales	RV-5715-2464
	Rose C. Gonzales	RV-5715-2465
	Alice Martinez	RV-5715-2462
	Maria Montoya Martinez	RV-5715-2459
	Maria Montoya Martinez	RV-5715-2460
	Maria Montoya Martinez	RV-5715-2461
	'Tse-U-Win' Russell Sanchez	RV-5715-2467
San Juan	Rosita de Herrera	RV-5715-2492

	Rosita de Herrera	RV-5715-2493
Santa Ana	Lena Garcia	RV-5715-2498
	Clara Paquin	RV-5715-2499
Santa Clara	Dolorita Gutierrez	RV-5715-2473
	Dolorita Gutierrez	RV-5715-2475
	Faustina Gutierrez	RV-5715-2471
	Faustina Gutierrez	RV-5715-2472
	Faustina Gutierrez	RV-5715-2476
	Margaret and Luther Gutierrez	RV-5715-2481
	Petra Gutierrez	RV-5715-2482
	Flora Naranjo	RV-5715-2480
	Nicolasa Naranjo	RV-5715-2483
	Helen Shupla	RV-5715-2484
	Cresencia Tafoya	RV-5715-2479
	Severa Tafoya	RV-5715-2478
Santo Domingo	Monica Silva	RV-5715-2456
Zia	Candelaria Gachupin	RV-5715-2506
	Juanita Pino	RV-5715-2505

Appendix 2

Interview with Pieter Hovens
Thursday, April 16, 2015
National Ethnology Museum
Steenstraat 1
2312 BS, Leiden

* *The voice of the researcher is italicized.*

* *We'll start with some basic questions. What is your background?*

Professionally, or personally?

I guess professionally, or personally, just what brought you here to your current role.

Ok. I came from a small rural community in the southeastern part of the country, and I went to…well we have two sections of high school: lower high school and higher high school. And I started at lower high school and we had only small class of twelve people, twelve pupils only. And in the final year before our exams, only the people who went on to become teachers, so went into teach college, had to do a geography and history in their exam class. And the other ones who went on to the higher level of high school or went their ways into society, didn't have to do that. They could do their homework. But they got atlases on their tests anyway. And I was already involved in paleontology, astronomy, expeditions, travel literature, underwater archaeology, that was an early interest of mine, local history. And well going through an atlas I saw on a North American map, the small pink areas, and looked it up. Indian reservations. Hey, I thought, they're still around apparently. So, there was a big reservation in the middle of Wyoming and the Wind River went through it. So I wrote a letter to the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, and after about two months it came back with a big parcel of information and material about that reservation, plus a map of all of the reservations in North America, and an address list of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on all those reservations. So I continued to, those last two years of high school, and wrote to all of those reservations, and by the end of it I had a wonderful

system of documentation about Native Americans in contemporary society—contemporary being the 1960s. And of course there was historical material, there were pamphlets with photography, government programs, educational programs, *et cetera et cetera*. Then I had to decide what to do next, but in the course of time I already decided I wanted to go to university. And it's easy what I would study, that's cultural anthropology. So there were no doubts about that. Only North America is the only region that was not assigned to any of the universities to the anthropology departments when the government decided on funding all kinds of specializations. But the university that was closest by had a lecturer, not a professor, and that lecturer had a very broad duty, and that was cultures, history, and languages of the Americas. But he was a Caribbean specialist. But I was really in luck. He was a very far-sighted man, very open to anything he stood for or saw forward to him, and from there he supported me in everything I wanted to do. So if I wanted to gain credits by doing a literature exam, the literature I could choose myself, no problem. If I wanted to write papers on Native American subjects, no problem. And then I got my BA. At the time I had decided I wanted to go to Canada or the United States for at least a year, to an Indian Studies department at one of the American or Canadian universities. There was an exchange program between Canada and The Netherlands, and each year ten students from each country were enabled to cross the Atlantic and all expenses paid. And I applied and was lucky enough to get that grant. So for a year, '73-'74 I studied at the University of British Columbia in the department of anthropology. And of course there were a number of First Nations (that's what you call them in Canada) specialists, notably Northwest Coast specialists, but also people who know about the interior plateau, about archaeology, and Native American religions. Those were the main specializations. Did some fieldwork among urban Indians—what were the problems they encountered when they moved from reservations to the cities. That's what I wrote my MA thesis on, which I delivered to the University of British Columbia one year after I returned to Holland, but it was refused, on the grounds that I had to make up my mind whether I wanted to be an anthropologist or a social worker. At Nijmegan at my original university I graduated Summa Cum Laude on that same thesis. So it had nothing to do with academic quality, but more with the mentality, they didn't like a foreigner criticizing Canadian policy or Canadian conditions. But yeah, then I got my MA, or got unemployed because it was economic crisis in 1976. No jobs at all. And after, so I wrote a number of articles for a new edition of an encyclopedia, a general encyclopedia, but I wrote pieces on Native Americans North and South.

And I used my course material, I had been teaching a course on native North Americans for two years that I was graduating here. I transferred that into a little book, introduction, historical anthropology introduction of North America, and I finally landed a job with the government in the Department of Cultural Recreation and Social Work to coordinate a number of integration projects for foreign gypsies from Roma, which were placed in ten Dutch communities, and we organized integration projects, they call it. So then I started out on my government job, and after that died down a bit because it was, came only back home to sleep, then that quieted down a bit, I thought about, well, PhD dissertation subject. It had to be something I could do next to a full time job, because I couldn't stay very long away, couldn't do fieldwork or something like that. And so I found that wonderful book by Ten Kate from 1885 *(states the title in Dutch) (inaudible)* in which he writes about his explorations, adventures, and researches on Indian reservations in the American West in 1882, 1883. And I found also part of a journal of when he was a little bit later of 1887 1888 at an archaeological expedition in Arizona and New Mexico. So I used that as the basis for a biography and a focus on native North American studies which were the main thrust of his work, although he did fieldwork all around the world. He was really a wonderful man. Um, got my PhD. Got involved in minority policy, advising a minority policy, various aspects of that, and then I was already came here this museum to look at the Ten Kate collection because his collection that had fallen to pieces had ended up here. And I knew the director, who was transferring to the government department because culture included the national museums and he said that it had been decided that the curator that was outgoing, curator for the Arctic areas and North America, that was one department, he had become chronically sick and had to take early retirement. They would split that position into two to an Arctic department, half-time position, and North America department, half-time position. So his daughter-in-law who had been going with him to Greenland to do fieldwork, his son too. So that's how they all knew each other, they were all Inuit specialists got the half-time curatorship, Cunera for the Arctic region and I was offered the half-time for the North American department because I was the only one in Holland qualified to fill that position. So I was able to, within my own organization, the government department, to switch half-time. That was easy enough. About a year later all of the national museums were privatized, became foundations, still with 90% government funding, but we became more independent. Not that it wouldn't have been possible in that situation to switch half-time. That was no problem—at all. If a large organization

with two or three thousand employees loses one half-time, that's no problem of course. So that's how I ended up here.

And what year was it?

In 1991

1991. Great. I guess let's talk about Houtzager a little bit. When did you meet Elisabeth Houtzager?

The head of the curatorial department was at the same time deputy director of the museum when I transferred, was a good friend of Houtzager's. About the same age. No, no, Houtzager was older than him. But they had known each other for many years. They shared an interest in South American folk art.

South American?

South American.

Ok.

Yeah. He was also the curator for the Latin American department. And he was head of the research department, and he was deputy director of the museum. And Elisabeth Houtzager has always complained to him "Ah there's nobody I can talk to about my main interest, and that is my Pueblo ceramic collection, and the Pueblo peoples, and the Indians of the Southwest." "Well that's it, Elisabeth you are in luck. We got a new young colleague. You should meet him." So that's how it happened. So she invited me to her flat, which was a very large apartment in Utrecht. And when I came in I was overwhelmed. The flat was filled from floor to bottom, in all nooks and crannies, including the shower room, the toilet, the kitchen, and the balcony she had screened off with extra windows with stuff. And stuff being the things that she collected. At that time, mainly her folk art collection was on display, about 4,000 pieces. Previously she had also collected folk art nativity scenes from around the world, which she had become interested in, as you know, from the story. And she had about 800 or 900 groups. She had donated those to the Bible Museum, exactly the name you find in the text. And a lot of people thought, well Elisabeth, now your apartment must seem empty. No.

She had a number of cellars rented, and there was a general folk art collection and that came up not into one apartment, but the next apartment she had also purchased and made a breakthrough in one or two rooms. And they were completely filled. I was overwhelmed. Especially when she showed me her room with the North American collection. She had a large closet, antique closet, with two big doors which she opened in which she had displayed all of those Pueblo ceramics. I was quite impressed that somebody in Holland would have that interest and had collected that stuff. Of course I immediately saw that there were some very good pieces by good makers in that collection, there was a lot of middle range stuff, and there was a lot of, well, let's call it tourist souvenirs.

Sorry, what was the first one you said?

The first one? Artistic pieces by major potters. There were a number of middle range pieces.

Middle range yeah.

And the third category was, well, what they call tourist trash, tourist souvenirs, things like that, that you pick up for a few dollars. Being the museum person that she was, she was a director, not at the time, she was already retired, director of Centraal Museum, she had developed her own card file, where she had noted all the information about purchase from whom, from where, where she purchased the things, how much she paid for it was often recorded. Sometimes she had a little story going with that. And, well, I was enthusiastic about it, we had a great talk about it. And then at the end of the conversation, uh I think I described that also in the piece, yeah she felt so good that she asked me, "well Mr. Hovens, I'm puzzled at what I should do with my collection because my end is nearing." She was an elderly lady. And I said to her, "Well Mrs. Houtzager, I…"(with sweaty hands—it was the first time I came across something like this!) "well of course the best place of course would be in our museum where it will be carefully stored, carefully looked after, where it will be displayed and used for research and exhibits. That would be wonderful that that will be the future of your collection." And then she smiled at me and she said "Ok I'll talk to my solicitor. So a couple of weeks later we got a call, and she had written up her testament, her will, I don't know whether you call it a will in America.

Mhmm

It was a testament, but this was an arrangement in which she donated her collection before she passed away.

Right.

Well actually it wasn't a gift, it was a donation, but it was a tax-free donation. So it needed to be valued so she can detract that from her income tax. It's the arrangement with which the government wants to promote donations by collectors to Dutch museums. Whether it's a Rembrandt painting, or whether it's tourist art, doesn't matter. Well then I presented it to my colleagues, that 4,000 pieces, the largest acquisition ever would come to our museum. Some were not very pleased because some considered it as trash, especially the art historians of course. The archaeologists didn't know what to make of it. But some of the anthropologists saw the value. Not all of them, but some of them saw the value of this kind of collection. We also got all her diaries from all her trips. All her photographs and slides from all her trips. It was massive and ephemeral material regarding her collection. So brochures, picture postcards, little maps, advertisements she had cut out from magazines, things like that. It was tremendous. So that's how it ended up here. We made a large exhibition about it, "Volkskunst van Verre"—you have the booklet—and it really looked wonderful. She was very pleased with that.

Great

And then a couple of years later she passed away. And then still when she gave all those collections to us, her friends said "Oh Elisabeth, your apartment is going to be so empty." But I was there only a couple weeks after all this was transferred, and both apartments were again *crammed* full to the rafters.

With what?

With cast iron irons, to iron clothes. She had collected those because a lady-friend of hers also collected them, she wanted to show her, "well I can collect those better than you can." She was very competitive, she was very competitive.

Oh my gosh, ok.

She collected modern Dutch glass, which is post-war, she had collected for a long time Dutch ceramics, and well those were her main three sub-collections she still had at that time. And those also eventually by testament ended up at different museums. So she was a very, she only did collecting. She was never married, she had no children, so she had only that one interest, collecting 'things I like' or 'I appreciate'. She was, as a director of the Centraal Museum, she handled million-dollar pieces of art: statues, classical statues, medieval…Golden Age paintings, Carvaggio, you name it. She was used to that. But on the other hand, she appreciated the common people and their arts. And as she was elected to be the Dutch representative to ICOM, the International Council of Museums, of UNESCO, she attended the annual conferences all around the world, so she got her trips funded. And then she added time to those trips to travel through those countries and to collect folk art. And when that period ended, she went out on her own and visited the United States again a couple times, and that's how her collection came together.

Great. So it's interesting how she mostly collected folk art, but then worked at a museum of fine art.

Yeah religious art. Fine religious art.

It was fine religious art. Do you know if she also collected that herself previously?

No, no no. That was out of her price bracket. She was relatively affluent. But she was not rich. She had of course a good income as the director of such a major museum of course. And her father had left her some money. She also had a brother. And she was financially more or less independent. So I sometimes wish that she had spent more money on her Pueblo ceramics. But, I'm satisfied with what it is now. So, I appreciate her collection.

And did you mention that her collection of Pueblo ceramics was one of her favorite parts of her collection?

Yeah, that was one of her favorite parts of her whole folk art collection. Yeah she had probably the best memories from the people she had met collecting those pieces. And that includes the makers she met in the field, Maria Martinez and her son, Popovi Da, Lucy Lewis, to name the two most important. I guess some members of the Nampeyo family. But also other people who went with her on trips to the reservations into the pueblos. And yeah she really had a wonderful time in the Southwest. And that also contributed to her affection for that part of her collection, I think

Right. So it wasn't just affection for the object itself necessarily, it was kind of a…

Both. It was both I think. A combination of both.

Interesting. Also, I'm a little unclear…I guess I could refer to the database, but…how many regions did she collect folk art from, do you know off the top of your head?

No idea.

Ok, I'll check the database.

Yeah, she was almost all over the world at those conferences. Not so much in Africa, but there were conferences all across Asia, Latin America, North America, Europe of course. Africa probably not so much, maybe only two or three times. She had African pieces in there, but a small number. Must have been in Australia I guess, New Zealand. You can ask…Sebrand for that information. He knows—select Houtzager collection, select the regions, and do the count.

Right, OK. And what do you think motivated her to offer her entire collection?

Well she wanted a good destination for her collection. She wanted to hear somebody say that. And Ted was her friend and was here in his later days, and he was retiring, and she wanted a young person to take care of that collection. And when I said that, well she was assured that I would talk care of it well. And we did. The whole museum did. The collections department was really tremendous when they went over there and packed it, and she was really very much impressed by the friendliness of the people. And then at the end she said "I

am satisfied that I've made the best decision for my collection for the future." So that was good, that was good to hear.

Yeah, definitely. And I know it was a while ago, 1993, but what…what's generally the museum's protocol, or the curatorial protocol in the selection process of a new collection? So what happened exactly after she offered her collection? What process did the curatorial department go through in order to decide whether or not to accept.

At that time, there were hardly any procedures. Everything was very informal. At that time the fact that she was director from a museum, the collection was very well documented, she was a personal friend of the deputy director here, it was the largest donation ever done to this museum, and my curator at least said, well, from my area said, it's really wonderful, was sufficient to make that arrangement. And actually, this deal with the Houtzager donation, with that solicitor's document, with a tax deduction, was one...I'm not sure whether it was the first time that this was done in The Netherlands. I knew that there was a conversation with the department of finance, with the treasury, about that arrangement, because that was not standard. This was one of the first, or one of the earliest cases in the Dutch museum world that that was done. Then that set precedence for other cases after that. In the meantime, that procedure financially regarding the tax route has been formalized, and it's now common practice. However, now if a collection would be offered like that, apart from the finances, the proposal would be sent by the most appropriate curator. In this case, because it was a worldwide collection, the proposal would have been written by the curators who had the most objects in that collection. They would send a proposal to the commission collection quality, and argue why it should be adopted by the museum. And criteria are, do we know where the collection is from? Do we know what it is? Who made it? How well is it documented? Et cetera. Was it legally acquired? Was it legally exported? What's the material condition? Does it have surplus value for our current collection? Are there comparable collections in other Dutch museums? Has it potential for research and exhibit? And if most of these answers were positive than the commission of collections quality gives a positive advice to the director, first to the management layer between that, that's all the department heads, and then the director makes the final decision. That's the procedure how it has now developed. So it's much more stringent.

So why did you ask me to do research of Houtzager's North America collection, here at RMV?

Well actually, its only small collection in total, the North American collection, 3,000 pieces. It consists of a number of sub collections, and Houtzager's collection was one of those sub collections. One of the things that had not been done yet was to look at the makers of the pieces in the Houtzager collection regarding North America, and where she bought it, and on what occasions. So that was an open question, that still needed to be researched. So I defined that as something good for a *(Dutch term for intern),* for an intern. We had a similar collection from a Dutch lady, but that was not folk art, but photographs, she took a lot of photographs during her five year stay in the United States, and just before you came I had a Dutch student who was studying in Italy who did that collection that was still undocumented. So you are probably my two last interns. As far as the *(inaudible)* collection goes.

Great. So for example, for her North American collection, you have a desire to have more than just the maker's name, where it was purchased. The context, the history, the story is important to the collection.

Yeah that is why I cut those pieces from her diaries relative to a number of objects that we know of, so we get all of the documentation that's available together, and then add to that documentation by delving into the literature about the makers and the places where she bought it. So we get the whole story. That's complete documentation. And of course documentation is never totally complete, it's always a work in progress. But we've done the best that we could, and we have used all of the sources available. That's important.

Ok. Let's talk a little bit about folk art in general. How would you personally define folk art?

I've never delved into the theoretical background of definitions of art, primitive art, tribal art, folk art, or whatever. But, put this way—this question—I consider a look at folk art as the art of the common people. Of the common people and for the common people. Folk art traditions always originated from traditions of manufacturing things by many non-specialists. For instance, in many societies, all women were engaged in making pottery and making basketry, *et cetera*. So

those crafts…there were many specialists of those crafts. Of course in the course of time, the craftsmanship of some of those people were recognized as rather remarkable, because those people made especially beautiful things. So in that whole field of folk art, there is a general folk art, which has a general quantity, and there are a number of artistically gifted craftspeople who can produce something that is also aesthetically very pleasing. And of course collectors have always focused on those makers, especially in the course of time when collecting and tourism developed in the United States but also in other areas of the world. It was usually those pieces that ended up first in museums and in private collections. And only later they started to collect the more general folk art.

So what exactly do you mean by more general folk art? Like more utilitarian?

No, the things that everybody was making. Those could be utilitarian. Simply painted bowls for instance. But it could also be toys, miniatures of daily life—of people, of buildings, of whatever. Because much folk art, you find wooden or ceramic replicas of daily life, as you see in the Houtzager collection all over the place. And on the other hand, there are the utilitarian items. Sometimes very utilitarian, and other times utilitarian but very nicely decorated. And also more expensive, within the society that produced it but also on the outside market of course. Because everybody appreciates something nice. Something that has been artistically done.

And all of that you would say could be folk art?

Yeah.

Ok. So do you think of folk art more as ethnology or as art.

Well as ethnology, because I think art is part of ethnology. I don't see art as a superimposed category. I'll give you an example: Everybody regards Rembrandt paintings as art. I don't. Because what it is, he was painting status objects for wealthy citizens, wealthy entrepreneurs, for wealthy politicians, for wealthy guilds, who commissioned those portraits. It was interior decoration and status objects. Had nothing to do with art. That he was an artist in copying images from real life on canvas, that he did that in an artistically grand way, that's true, but that's a quality judgment. I try to organize this discussion with my art historian

friends through this kind of discourse. To try then to get away from absolutising art as an exquisite utmost category that overrides and overrules all.

And why do you think that people, including Elisabeth Houtzager, but also people in general, might be attracted to folk art?

Yeah. I think it has a lot to do with nostalgia. Bringing back the old times. It reminds them of toys, miniaturization of the world, well, toys are often miniatures of the real world. The simple lifestyles. Folk arts come from rural communities, from peasants, farmers, small artisans, from a way of life that has been virtually lost in the contemporary world. So people fighting alienation, fighting mass culture, fighting globalization, they are very much attracted to finding the 'paradise lost' of their youth, of an earlier lifestyle when things were so much simpler, and people who were in touch with each other. I think it has a lot to do with that.

This is kind of generalization of the collections of Volkenkunde, would you classify many of the objects in the museum's collections as folk art?

No no. Most of the collections are just ethnography, they were collected within traditional contexts where people were making things for themselves, for daily use in all kinds of spheres: in the household, trying to get food so hunting, fishing, and horticulture and whatever, in dressing themselves, in having their festivals, in religious ceremonies and rituals. No, in that context most of the things were collected. Folk art was something that was a result of, I think, globalization. And an outside market expressed an interest in things aboriginal, tribal. And people catered to those interests. And of course that outside market already selected certain things, types of objects, and also they executed the type of objects and style of objects, large versus small, decorated versus undecorated, monochrome versus polychrome, *et cetera, et cetera*, complex versus simple, as having their preference. And of course makers who had now to earn their income in a cash economy because barter had almost ended, except among themselves, and in the early periods of recent colonization you could barter for foodstuffs, for *(inaudible)* and clothing, things like that. But that ended with the introduction of the cash economy. They catered to those ones of that new outside market. Travelers being the first one, people who occasionally traveled for business or whatever through those regions. But them came those transcontinental railroads,

and that brought many visitors to different areas. And that meant a new market. And the crafts people, well certainly knew their market and catered to those tastes. So on the one hand, the Uma Indians were reproducing Victorian porcelain in their own traditionally painted pottery. So imitating recent culture, because they thought that's what people like. And people like that because of, they recognized the type, the form, but the execution, the style was completely different from, of course, white, painted porcelain from European factories. On the other hand, they also made their traditional things. For instance, ceramic dolls in traditional dress, they made for kids to play with. But tourists also got interested in that. It proves "'we were there'. Let's take a replica of the people we met and of whom we bought some pottery, even a replica of the people themselves, and put that in our 'Indian corner' or 'souvenir corner' showing where we were on our travels."

Yes. But you said that folk art is made by common people, for the common people, so this kind of rise in the creation of folk art you just mentioned a lot of the makers were making to be purchased by outside people, so does that mean…

Later. But previous aboriginal examples models, because they already made their world in miniature, in toys, for their children. But that was already made. Ceramics were made in a great variety, mostly utilitarian, but of course little girls learned to make small ceramic pieces which were miniatures in themselves, for instance, and that grew from there. So when the tourists came and said "Ok, I want to buy a pot by an accomplished potter, but I don't want the regular size because it doesn't fit in my suitcase, but I want a small one like those little kids are making. But I want the best quality." Then the people catered to that taste. But that's still folk art. It has its origins in folk art, and we still call it folk art.

So you wouldn't call it tourist art then?

It became tourist art essentially.

Ok. But when they first decided to cater to the tourists, you'd still call it folk art.

Yeah.

Then when exactly did the shift happen, would you say? Is it when it became more mass produced maybe?

It's ethnography, it's folk art as long as it was produced by a lot of people in a lot of households by nonspecialists and being used for a variety of purposes in daily life. It became folk art. For instance, the term folk is something not the people use themselves. So only a global market enabled that material expression to develop into folk art. The manufacture is by primitive, tribal peoples. So I think that when the global market reached into those communities, that is when that transfer took place.

Ok.

So that means by 1880 in the Southwest, there was no ceramic folk art, because there was no market for that. There was ceramic manufacture reaching back centuries into Anasazi times, but essentially, nothing like folk art, because that is a Western label

So the pottery in Houtzager's collection…

Is folk art.

Is folk art.

It's all folk art. Was all produced for the Western market.

Ok. But not tourist art.

Yeah, also tourist art.

Also tourist art.

Also tourist art.

Ok. The same time.

Yeah.

Ok.

Yeah folk art produced for the mass market, most of it is tourist art.

Right. But it's based on tradition.

Yes.

Got it. And do you think that Houtzager's collection of folk art fits in well with the rest of the collections of this museum?

Yes I think so because if you look at all the regional collections also from outside North America, in all collections you'll find this kind of stuff. Because other people have donated stuff, and we have quite similar collections from other parts of the world in smaller numbers by all other curators at some points in time. And so some of that material was already there and we're talking about when the start of international travel, Thomas Cook 1880s, 1870s even, maybe a little earlier than that, *(inaudible)* 1880s here in Holland was already offering trips around the world almost. That is when that market started. So also early travelers have bought things that were in those earlier days already adapting to that new outside market. We have that in different regions in our collection. And since we have the Houtzager collection, we had the idea to develop a large research and exhibition project on tourism. For a variety of reasons, nothing came of that. But it's a serious subject of study, and as you know, at the conference we had in May last year, a special workshop on tourism. And we are publishing now a volume of studies on tourism in Native North America, and a number of them focusing on material culture, including folk art.

Great. So you would say that most of the collections of the museum are ethnography, but there are some, there are examples of folk art throughout.

Yes.

Great.

Yeah the curator friend of Houtzager, who was the deputy director and curator of South America department, when he was in South America he was collecting folk art.

Great

Sometimes people, yeah Ted was an archaeologist, but he had a great interest in the common people, and that is why he was interested in folk art. Other archaeologists aren't interested at all in the common people of today, and they neglect that area as an area of folk collecting.

I guess that's all that I have. Oh, one more, oh actually, no that's all I have. Do you have any final things to say?

Famous last words.

Exactly.

If I think of something, I'll put it in the mail.

Sounds good.

You've inspired me, so allow me to chew on that.

All right. Thank you very much

END OF INTERVIEW.

Appendix 3

Interview with Laura van Broekhoven
Friday, April 17, 2015
The National Museum of Ethnology
Steenstraat 1
2312 BS, Leiden

* *The voice of the researcher is italicized.*

** We'll start with a few basic questions. What is your background?*

My background. I'm trained as an archaeologist here in Leiden. So I was trained here, I always had a very keen interest in storytelling and what I really liked about the Leiden program. I'm originally from Belgium, I'm from Antwerp. So I'm originally from Belgium. I decided to not study in Belgium because I would have to go through either classical studies or art history which is really not the discipline I had found an interest in already since I was very small, since I was like eight years old I decided I wanted to be an archaeologist. So I had this keen interest in storytelling and what I really liked about the program on the Americas is that it offered the possibility, it actually is very much on cultural continuity, so it goes up until today, it works a lot with indigenous peoples. So in that sense, I'm not a typical archaeologist who would be in the field, often if you would look at a more narrow interpretation of archaeology, but I really went much more into the *(inaudible),* into studies of cultural continuity and transformation, then did my M.A. thesis in Mexico, in Maya area. I lived in a Maya village for a year to do research on storytelling and how we might maybe interpret some of the imagery on Maya faces and in codices through stories that are told today. And so I went to the *(inaudible)* area, which is in Tabasco, in the Gulf of Mexico, where I also did a lot of recording of stories on the one hand, and oral history they'd say in the broader sense also jokes and life histories, so all kinds of, it's not only stories. About seventy stories, or something like that, I recorded, and then looked at how those could say something about archaeological things you see in *(inaudible),* especially iconography I guess. And then I did some research on *(tecathuatl - sp?)* with Marin Jansen as a teaching assistant, and they invited us to go to

Nicaragua so I've been kind of just go to, if stuff appears, I'll venture into different kinds of projects. And the Nicaragua project actually was looking for someone to work in the museum so I worked in the community, small community museum there, the one Alex was talking about last week. The Museo *(inaudible),* which is an archaeological museum, it's actually the cabinet of rarities, you could say. So a very universal kind of museum, it just tells all kinds of stories but it was at that time, it was really just in a kind of problematic situation because they had not done any collection management. There were really birds living in the showcases, and so what we did is actually cleaning—a lot of cleaning. Cleaning of the showcases, making a storyline out of the way the exhibit had been made. We kind of did museological projects, you could say. And I received a grant to do my PhD research which was much more on the migratory movements from central Mexico to Nicaragua. We were going to do excavations in Nicaragua but because of all kinds of political agendas which weren't matching, not our agenda necessarily had nothing to do with it really, but stuff happened and we couldn't do the archaeological fieldwork so in the end I decided to focus on ethnohistory and historical documents. I went kind of like museum-hopping from one place to another in Central America and also archive-hopping, you could say, and I kind of discussed a way that, the documents which never had been discussed on central Nicaraguan ethnohistory and it's mainly on who are living in the area that the museum is also located in, so it's not *(inaudible),* it had nothing to do with the *(inaudible). (inaudible)* means peoples who don't speak well, so it's a name that Aztec speakers give to people who according to them don't speak well. It's kind of a derogatory term. Anyway, so I ended up in Nicaragua did ethnohistorical research, also did some linguistic research, on linguistic documents. I had done the same thing in the Maya area also made a vocabulary of the area that I was working in, the Yucatan language. And then I ventured, after finishing the PhD, as well as, I started here before finishing the PhD, and while I was doing a postdoc on Mixtec archaeology. So I did a little fieldwork in Mixteca together with Alex and we did a lot of mapping archaeological sites together with indigenous peoples, that are the Mixteca peoples who were living in that area. And then one of the focus points in my research actually usually has become agency of indigenous peoples. So it's really about agency in ethnohistorical documents where is much more agency than is given credit for. Same goes for collection histories lots of times, you know, people are, they talk about the collectors but very little of the indigenous peoples who were, maybe it's about…it doesn't need to be the indigenous peoples, but the people who were actually making and

forging the objects and actually deciding how they want them to be, in collections also and *(inaudible)* it's very badly recorded. And then in the Mixteca we start mapping and doing much more participatory archaeology, and then I wanted with the archaeological projects, it's not what my, you know, my focus is not on archaeology, it's much more on people. And its on people's stories, and storytelling. So we started integrating the two of them much more. So for the Mixteca project in the end I decided to do a project on the markets of the Mixteca, and collected also for the museum and we did a book that just came out last, called *(inaudible)* Mixteca, on the life histories. I interviewed about 50 merchants on their life histories and why they chose to be a merchant and how they came to be a merchant, which they're are interesting stories, life histories. We also documented life histories of objects of the merchants, and the life histories of the markets themselves. So it was lots of…it always comes back to the storytelling. And then here in the museum I decided to do a project that would actually bring indigenous peoples to the museum and it's not because I decided that actually it's just these studies can kind of organically grow, because there was a need from these sort of communities that they wanted to work with the collections there was this need for us to have more kind of, let's say, multiple subjectivities represented in our stories. And so this is how these kinds of projects both on Surinam and Brazil and on you know, different *(inaudible)* all kind of come together and agency storytelling and giving voice, or ensuring that there's a multiplicity of voices represented, and that there's many different stories represented in objects but also in collections, and also in places.

And those projects that you did since you've been here at Volkenkunde?

Yeah

Great.

My projects with the collections have been since I've been here.

And when did you begin, what year was it that you started here?

I started here in 2001. And one day a week and four days for the university at that time, and now it's reverse. And then in 2000…I think it was 2003 or 4 I started half-time here, and in 2009 they asked me to be chief curator and then I

did four days a week here and one day at the university. I tried to keep teaching because I really like teaching. I like to be among students and actually you get a lot of new ideas and feedback.

Great. So your position here is…you're the chief curator?

I'm the chief curator

But also aren't you Central and South America?

Yeah I'm also the curator for Central and South America. Yeah. So what I did when I became chief curator, I asked for someone to be assistant curator because there's no way you can have a team of twenty people and be very involved in management and at the same time be able to give, you know, a decent amount of attention to research, all the collections and making *(inaudible).* And so that's why Martin *(inaudible)* does a lot of the work on Central and South America. He's a PhD student also at Leiden. So he's finishing his PhD on Mesoamerican ballgame. A Mixteca, also, ballgame. We have very good collections of the Mixteca and of their ballgame in general, of Mexico.

Great. Ok, well let's talk a bit about folk art. How would you personally define folk art?

How would I define folk art… That's a difficult question because we are actually in the whole, at this time we are making a new collection management plan, and part of that is to do a valorisation of our collections. And part of that is trying to find the right resolution to look at our collections. And so folk art collections, for Mexico, are important. But what are they part of? Are they part of art? Are they art collections? And so we had three days of discussions on not only folk art, but actually discussions on how are we going to look at, what's the right resolution for us to look at our collections. And so we decided to indeed look at, and we're still in figuring out what's the best way to see if folk art could just be within our art collections where there's contemporary art, where there's modern art, there's, and really try to see how we can *(inaudible)* also. Because it's part of how art history is being defined by it, so what's the history of art, how is it different in different places, and what is part of it and what isn't. And so I think with folk art, some of it I guess is tourist art, what is especially in the Houtzager collection,

some of it is popular art, and popular culture, and some of it is, what in Mexico they call arte popular. And arte popular is really a handicraft you could say. It's from the crafts industry. So I don't really have a good definition yet. We're really thinking about how do we define, well I can send you a definition of what it is, how we've…well it's in Dutch…how we've described our folk art collection, our *arte popluar* collection, from Mexico. So that I could send to you. But I won't be able to offer to you the definition now. And the person who's actually trying to pull all of this together is Dan von Darto *(?)*, and she's working on our, she's our popular culture and fashion curator. But yeah, it's a difficult… How are you using it now, or what are you using as a definition?

My main point right now in my paper is that you can't really define it.

Yeah so I think it's very similar to what we're also finding that it's difficult to define it. But we have just like a working definition and I can send it to you. But I really don't know it by heart. But I do know that to me why, so when I started here maybe, yeah this is what your first question was. I tend to talk a lot, so I'll let you first ask your questions.

So what do you personally, like when you hear it, what would you…

Right. When I started here as an archaeologist, I really felt when I went to the collection, I went to the storages, and I just said "what is all this crap?!" "Who's been collecting this, and why??" I was not really, I didn't come from museum perspective except for, you know, the Nicaraguan perspective which really also in the beginning to me like "this cabinet of rarities, what are we going to do with it?" And I've luckily grown since then. And I remember Martin coming into the collection and that's also, going like "Laura, this is all crap! Half of it we can just throw out!" And I said, "well Martin, let's wait a little bit before we do that" and "let's, try to find out what is the reason behind these, how we've, why are these things here." And I think that once we start, you know, because that's what my experience was. Once I started not looking in an archaeology style but trying to look more as an ethnographer and as an anthropologist, and suddenly you can, what I like about it—and especially about these kind of collections—what I like about it is actually through my experiences partly with working with the merchants project is that what I like about folk art collections is that more than in any, and especially tourist art, more than in any kind of collections I guess you

can see very well the agency of the person, the maker, on how he thinks he wants, how he wants to represent, and he thinks that people are wanting them to represent themselves. So there's this, you know, this circle of defining self representation, and at the same time there's this commercial aspect in it where they think that that's what you want, you as a tourist. This tourist thinks he knows that I am like this. So I'll make this image for him, in this way. Which is a very conscious choice of people, that they're actually fabricating stuff which they think the tourists will like. And that's, you know, that tells stories on how you want to market yourself. How you want to make sure that people are going to want to buy what you make. And often it has nothing to do with what the tourist wants. So there's this whole very interesting relationship that's going on there, which also represents a multiplicity of meaning-giving. I'd say there's a palimpsest of meaning-giving, which is, you know, many of them are intended. I remember buying some objects from this tricky lady in the Mixteca on the market, and she knew that I was buying objects, she knew I was buying textiles. So she came to me with these textiles which were white and purple. And that's what she told me, she said you're going to love this. I said this is nothing to do with the textiles which are made in your area, and it's not what you're wearing, it's not what your daughter is wearing. So how come that you want me to buy this piece? And she said "yeah it's because you guys like white and purple, you know, you tourists, that's what you like." So maybe, I only started thinking about it later on, so I didn't ask enough questions actually. I was just, so what she said is that she had had people come to her and ask for, "Ah yeah but you only have red. I want white and purple." So either these were tourists who just didn't want to buy and just said, chose a color that they knew were not going to be in a tricky area, or it might've been somebody who wanted a white and purple dress, or somebody who wanted from a different region. So they start making, that's the thing that merchants obviously, they look at what's the market, what is it that there's a need for, and I'm going to produce those things. So those kinds of stories I think are fabulous. And I think should be, and it tells these stories of agency, of personal agency, individuality, and choice. And I think that's really, it's stories that you can tell very well from those kinds of folk art collections, or arte popluar. On the other, so this is just from the merchandising aspect, commercial aspect, I'd say. On the other side, you also have the arte popular, which is really for, to win awards and grants, and there's beautiful museums, community museums in many different places around Oaxaca where they really make spectacular arte popular. Beautiful objects which really tell these stories of cultural continuity, transformation,

integrating elements which are really very contemporary in traditions which are very long-lasting, family, there's this knowledge transfer which is really intergenerational. And it's really a family business of making these kinds of objects. So there's also stories behind all those kinds of materials. The other aspects that we also have in our collection which were collected, which were collected kind of eclectically it looks like are some aspects that have to do, and especially in the Tropenmuseum collections you'll see them. They collected them for decorative purposes and trying to kind of like, make these theatre-like representations. So it's really objects from cantinas, or objects from… So are you also looking at, you're only looking at the Houtzager, right? You're not looking at the Tropenmuseum?

Just Houtzager's, mostly Native American pottery.

Because what we have at Tropenmuseum also in our collections are much more popular art, popular culture, I'd say. So it's really, you know, beer bottles, and Mezcal bottles, and all kinds of stuff which really you can get into one of these immersive kind of representations which really brings you to the Mexico of, let's say, the 90s or the 80s. And you can be in the cantina and really feel… So all that kind of stuff is also in the collections. So there's this broad spectrum of materials which have been classified as folk art, or tourist art. So, I think we should kind of try to look at all the different histories that these things are telling. And I think that's what we're here for, right? To kind of like…it's a bit like bundle theory, where you say that there's all these aspects of these, all of these different stories are bundled within those objects and those collections. And I think it's up to us to bring out those stories, which can be stories of empowerment also. Because for a long time we've just looked at objects, then we started looking at their pedigrees, and all their collection histories, let's say, but it was usually looked at from the collector's perspective. Not so much from the people who were the maker perspective, except for Marcel Mauss, for example, where it's different where they did actually really look at his perspective and kind of… And many of these things, what I notice when I collect, is that many times it's like this joint decision-making. You're actually, you have a relationship with this person that you're buying from. So they also decide on what they want to sell you, they decide on what it is that you should be buying. And you decide on what it is that you want. So there's just this constant, there's just a going back and forth of wants and needs that's…

And so you, though, for the most part, separate folk art as intent behind it? It's not utilitarian, so…A big pot that would be used to store water, that maybe they still make in Southwest United States, or wherever. If it's made for use that would not considered folk art? It's more of a…

No not necessarily. I think folk art, there's always intent behind it. So there's…

Oh yeah, I guess, yeah there's always intention. But an intent to sell it to…make profit…

To sell it is usually what, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. I think it really is about the makers, and who is, what is it they want do with it. I wouldn't include it as, or exclude it as folk art because people are using it in the everyday of their lives, let's say.

So that could still be folk art to you.

Yeah so folk art would probably be, to me would maybe have to do with craftsmanship, I guess yeah. So I think that's an important factor in… I really don't have my opinion. I don't have a set opinion on this. So it's really something that I'm not a specialist on it and it's not my, you know for certain things you want to define what is my take on this. For this, I don't have a view or take on it.

I understand.

Because a lot of the materials which are being produced which would be classified under folk art, which in our collections would be folk art are being produced both for sales on markets and you don't know who's buying it, what they're going to do with it. So they usually will give it a kind of, it always has a certain kind of functionality. But the functions are very diverse. So much of the stuff that we have in our collections, like the miniatures for example, they are on the one hand, tourists will buy them, but they're not the biggest, let's say, buyers for those kinds of products. The biggest buyers are local hotels, local people who are actually doing all kinds of celebrations of weddings for example. So it's the *(inaudible)* that people will be taking home. That's where the biggest market is. So I think that if we only look at the perspective from here, it's very limiting. And I

think it's actually not going to be doing justice to what the reality is of the places where these objects came from.

Yeah I understand. Just one more quick question about your definition. Would you, very generally, think of it more as ethnology or as art?

Yeah so that's why we, it falls under ethnographic collections, and the ethnological collections. We've now defined objects of the everyday, kind of art. So to me, art encompasses a broad spectrum, and we're really thinking about should we be, like world art and global art studies are doing. They're rewriting histories, so rewriting how art history has been very much for a very long time was actually looked at from the perspective of Europe, in general, you could say. And maybe some ancient art history, but if we would be writing the art histories of different places in the world, there are different art histories that can be written, which is what world art studies and global art studies actually is looking at right? They're kind of like rewriting, trying to rewrite, and we think that from our collections you could very well do that. It's very complicated and intricate stories that you need to rewrite. So to say is it ethnology or is it art? Ethnological collections encompass all these things. So in that sense, yes it's ethnology, but that doesn't mean its not art, because we think that art right now is just too narrowly defined. And so within this narrow definition of art, it probably would, there's probably people who would define it, you know, art as an, there's people who define art, and I actually can find a very workable definition if you say: art is things where questions are being asked, where there is a problem being posed. People have actually asked to think about certain problems then folk art and tourists would probably not fall within that category. Design would then be a solution for a problem. So you know, art is different from design, and if you would look at handicrafts, it's much more, it's a craftsmanship, it's selling buying, it's those kinds of aspects, and putting to use, all kinds of uses. So it could be just to decorate your house, or it can be a storage of water might be a different category. In those categories yes, so we need to find again this resolution where it's useful. So you could say, ok let's put all of that together. But we might say that why don't we just describe the uses which they are given and the stories that are tied into those. What kind of stories are bundled in folk art. It's not about problem solving, except for trying to sell as much as you can. So it's there's a commercial problem maybe, but it's not about a deeper, ontological problem of trying to understand our ways of being, and ways of knowing. That's not what

most folk art is about. That's different from contemporary art, big art pieces, where they're trying to make you question things. Where you find is within the beauty of that artwork you can actually find these answers to, or start questioning more. It's really questions on essence. I don't think that's something you're going to be finding in folk art. So there's different aspects to them. So I find your question too *(inaudible)* for me to answer them with a yes or no.

That's ok. That's part of the experience here. Why do you think that people are attracted to folk art?

Yeah so I think that that goes back to what I said earlier, that it's actually, there's this interplay between what people think you're going to find attractive and what you do find attractive, I think there's a craftsmanship which actually draws attention easier than, but that there's this interplay between. There's no accounting for tastes. I mean some people will buy stuff I'd never ever buy. And I probably buy stuff that people would never ever buy. So in that sense there's, I think the appeal is in that there's a great variety of offer, that there's this offer demand also going on, let's say, where people are looking for certain things, and people are making certain things. What you could see for example, in Bolivia and in Peru, very much is that all of the merchants and tourist merchants were making the same kinds of objects, even, so you could see that there's this one or two persons who would bring innovation. They would start making something else, people would start buying it because it was different from all the other stuff which was being offered and then everybody would start copying that again. So it really depends on certain areas have this great ability to actually be very innovative in their folk art and arte popular. For example, in Mexico, same goes for different areas, Nicaragua. But there's also a tendency for less innovation to take place once it's especially about tourist art because they assume that tourists are a certain way. So there's all these kinds of assumptions which are made both by the tourists. So it's really, there's this individuality in offer and in demand and*…(inaudible Dutch).*

Supply?

Supply. Yeah supply and demand. So the supplies will be, and both of them kind of work together with, and many times in the tourist market, tourist settings, they don't. And then there's these groups of kind of, there's a way that there's a

collectiveness in the way that certain things are being offered, which is really not going outside of this supply and demand cycle, which should be much more of an innovative cycle. And some of it was probably created through some of the programs, folk art programs which have to do with *(inaudible).* So there was this whole movement where they wanted to try to find how they bring people both in rural areas but also within lower social classes. The poor people stimulate them to start making handicrafts, and actually make sure, and that was especially done in the Americas, that is this whole field of programs which went into folk art, mainly as an alternative for people to their agricultural activities. So there's this whole political want, to try get people to be part of the 20th century—this was mainly 20th century I think—and actually try to escape from all kinds of social classes where they were being kept in, and try to mobilize them, to start going into these chains of supply and demand which did not allow, as it was done from a perspective that people needed to be mobilized, people needed to be. So it wasn't really coming up from grassroots movements. These were movements which were done by political interests of governments, and they were governmental programs. And I really think that lots of the stuff that we collected was, comes from that origin. So you'll see that there's certain families who have this creativity—great creativity to innovate and make new products *et cetera.* That's the stuff you'll see in some of the arte popular. Some of the tourist art might also come, lots of it comes from, I think, it's not just people having individual agency. There's also this political agenda which is behind pushing forward the whole folk arts industry, trying to get people to go from, to get out of their poverty situation, which was created mainly because of lots of people going to more urban environments, agricultural scenes having changed. So there's this bigger picture, which actually influences how folk art has developed I think. You must've found that in your research. Especially in the Americas, I think, and probably in other places too. But the indigenous movement was part, part of that was this folk art, pushing forward folk art.

Ok. Would you classify many of the objects here in the museum as folk art?

Well but that's what we're looking into right? How are we going to classify them, what makes sense. So yeah, we have folk art collections, depending on whether we want to use that term, whether we think it's a sensible term to use and actually going to bring us to better understanding of those collections. I mean, right now we're actually going to, it's really, there's all kinds of literature on this

right? But there's a difference between how the French classify and how it's classified in Europe, how it's classified in the Americas, how it's classified in Mexico. So I like arte popular for lots of the Mexican material. But it's not the same as popular art. So that's the thing that you have to look at it from the context where it was created, it has a certain nationalist context because of these political programs. It has a local context, a regional context. So there's all these contexts that you should try to take into account. Obviously when you're putting thousands of objects in databases, you have to find this overglossing, or terms which might overgloss all of those complex situations, or situate the contexts. And we have to really be looking at "how can we actually be sure to on the one hand find the categories that are big enough for us to actually be able to work with, you know, the 400,000 objects that we have, and at the same time they aren't too big so that everything will fall under it. If you say art, maybe everything should be under it, but that's not useful. It's not useful if you're going to go toward two big overglossing categories. It's also not useful if you're only zoning into all of the localized histories, let's say. So we have to find a way to go beyond saying yeah but everything's more complex than what you're saying, or yeah but it's all, you know, these general patterns which are governing the homo economicals, or the homo *(inaudible),* or the homo *(inaudible),* it won't bring us further to understanding, and I think what we're actually trying to do is trying to understand the interplay of the agencies which are taking place.

While also being able to put kind of labels on.

Yeah well I think museums, museofacting objects means that you're going to be labeling them and that you're going to try to shoebox them into certain contexts. But why do we do that is why have people started categorizing is because they're trying to understand. I mean what you really want also by categorizing is understanding. And I think that that's, and we want to understand to be able to, I guess, you know, build a certain atmosphere, feel more comfortable, you feel more comfortable when you understand things. But also because you're intrigued by these stories, and you have a certain interest in understanding a topic. That's a nice thing about ethnographic collections, that they're about the world and about archives of the everyday, you could say. And archives of art and artistic expressions. So those kinds of things if we can kind of like see how both the popular and the everyday, the artistic and the aesthetic, you know, they're kind of all part of humanity's creativity. And I think that that's kind of where we want to

go. But it's too broad without also zooming in, and at least if you want to do it from a scientific point of view, then you try to categorize. That's the way that we've tried to understand the world. And I think these ontologies are from our world and trying to see and both ontologies and epistemologies are kind of how we try, or we are actually trying to understand our ways of being, ways of knowing, and ways of, and I guess in these objects is the ways of coping. And also categorizing is a way of coping with the complexity to try and get to what we want as understanding. But the process of categorizing is one of the processes where things have actually started to also, let's say the glasses we're looking through, they also limit us in understanding. And what we should look at now is these categories, are they being a limitation to understanding what it is that we really, to our understanding? Are they a limitation to our understanding or are they enabling better understanding? And I think that that's where, especially with folk art, there's a need to start reimagining how we could go towards better understanding, and really see all the complexities of it, and not just the supply and demand, or the political programs which are behind it, because I think there's more than that. There's a multiple subjectivity also with these objects. But for example I was, I was thinking about yesterday that some of the objects of the everyday, and some of the objects of the secret and the sacred, and some of the objects of art, if you look at emotional subjectivity, they will from right now, with indigenous people for example, they will bring forward different kinds of emotional reactions than folk art, which at times will probably be more of a nostalgic feeling, which is also an emotional reaction. But it's not necessarily a reaction of the sacred, for example. It's not a religious reaction necessarily. I mean, if you want make that separation, let's say the reaction to certain objects which are more from sacred contexts is a different one than I've seen so far from more folk art, kind of, or tourist art, let's say, kind of objects. So that would be an interesting way of looking at what kind of subjectivities are represented in it, what kind of agencies are represented in it, and what kind of reactions do they give us? So how can you make them work? And what was the intentionality of the buyer, and what was the intentionality of the maker? And what is the intentionality of us as a museum with these objects. So some of the stuff for example which *(inaudible)...*have you looked at *(inaudible)* arte popular collections?

No.

They're phenomenal collections. Reallllly wonderful collections. And they've done a couple of exhibits both in Europe and in the States, and Mexico obviously. And so many of these things, I guess they're also kind of situated. You need to have some kind of relationship to Mexico, because it brings you to villages, it brings you to these homes of the makers, it brings you to… They talk about the master, the master makers, which are really the people who have this gift of craftsmanship, and they collect from those people, from those families and they also document their stories, and they're phenomenal pieces, beautiful pieces. But they're not necessarily problematizing. So in that sense, to me that's where I think might be the difference between art, design, and more of a folk art, kind of. But I don't have a thought really, it's not my field, I'm just looking at it from the side, trying to form my own opinion.

Yes, I want your opinion, that's all. That's great. Let's talk a bit about Houtzager's collection. Are you familiar with much of her collection?

Not enough to really comment on it. I've gone through it obviously when I started here, and I looked at some of her materials, but I never really ventured into the Houtzager. So that would probably be something that Martin, if you really want topics, Martin has actually looked into Houtzager. He has also, you're actually working with Martin, no, you're working with Pieter.

Yeah.

Right, yeah. Because there have been a couple of students who have actually gone into describing some of Houtzager's materials, for the Central American and Latin American part. I never knew her, I only know about stories of her. I know there's very different opinions on whether we should or should not keep the Houtzager collection, not that we are actually going to deaccession it, but I know that there's some of the curators thought "what is this coming into our collections?" While others, like Pieter, saw the value of these tourist art collections and actually, and I think that there is a great value. So I think yeah, from what I've seen when I started here, was it thirteen years ago, fourteen years ago, I would've probably said "What??" But now that I am, you know, further along in my career and I understand, you know, that there's so many things at play, and so many stories that are at play, and so many agendas, nationalists agendas also, partly at play, and poverty and development aid agendas, this is

really something which tells about that. And also tourism is a whole field of expertise obviously. So I think those are interesting questions to be asked about the Houtzager collection, about her as a person, obviously, which you are looking into right now. And the nice thing I think is the fact that it's so well documented. So that there's this whole story of her as a collector also behind it. Yeah. Did she document a lot on the individual people that she buys from?

Yeah. I'm just looking at the North America, and there's 278, and less than half of that…well she did document, take photos, list descriptions of where, the year she purchased, all of these things for all of those. But then only a little less than half of those did she actually put the name of the artist, where, you know, which gallery, market, fair she purchased them. But yeah, she'll include personal notes on things, business cards, and pamphlets. So it's pretty cool to get the personal…

Perspective also. Yeah you could actually try to see how you could find more informaion, especially now with the world being all connected and all, it facilitates a lot of, going a little bit deeper into those collections.

Yeah and for my internship, I'm writing biographies on the makers, and also biographies on the places.

So have you been able to find enough information on the makers?

Yeah, some of them. Some of them are very well-known, and then some of them no.

It's too difficult.

Yeah.

Yeah. That's interesting to see how do people become either famous and well-known and others just…and is that because of the intricately part of their artwork? Which is of their craftsmanship which is of less quality, or is it just all kinds of reasons which are more of a personal, historical reasons, questions of taste? Yeah that's interesting to see how.

Well actually, a few of the ones that are most well-known are because they were innovators. They came up with new techniques.

Exactly. Yeah I think craftsmanship is really an important, and innovation of their craftsmanship is a driver for, can you make it or not, or are you just going to follow and produce stuff that you think that people want from you.

Yeah. Do you think that her collection fits in well with the other collections here at the museum?

Well, for the Americas, yes. Yeah, I don't know of her other regions. But I think it's important that we have her collection. Because it's an important aspect of ethnographic or an ethnologic collections. I think that's why it's important that we do have it, yeah. It might be that we don't have the best collections though, especially on tourist art, I'm sure there must be better collections in Europe or elsewhere. For example in Mexico there's great collections at Museo del Arte Popular. Really phenomenal collections. So yeah, sometimes when we're really going to at a certain part of time have all the world interconnected, I mean, there will still be the personal story of Houtzager obviously, which is interesting. But I don't know if it's a problem that different museums have overlapping collections or not. Or, you know, the quality of one collection is higher or lower than the quality of other collections. Because I have been rewriting collection profiles and new acquisition plans, which, yeah, we have to start…*(inaudible).* But it's always interesting to see should you do this at the Dutch level? Should you do it at a European level? Or should you do it at a world level? See that we're not all collecting the same stuff, and not collecting the same… Many of our collections are really part of the, the pedigrees of these collections are so diverse, and it goes for Houtzager's too, right? I mean she had to see the individual item really represents this typical individuality of the collector also, which is an interesting story, for scientific purposes. Any more questions?

Actually I think that that does it. Do you have any final things that you would like to add?

No. I think I've talked enough.

Thank you!

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix 4

Interview with Matthi Forrer
Thursday, April 16, 2015
National Museum of Ethnology
Steenstraat 1
2312 BS Leiden

* *The voice of the researcher is italicized.*

** What is your background?*

I'm a Japanologist, and I studied in addition art history of East Asia, that is China, Korea, and Japan. And my special area is Japan, basically sort of the late Edo period, that is sort of Japan 1700s to 1850.

How did you become interested in that?

Oh it was very easy. At some point I was convinced that Chinese painting, ink, brush painting, of landscapes, of *(Tang suo yung?)* dynasties were just the most gorgeous thing in this world, until probably at age 12. I saw an exhibition of prints, the sort of *(Inaudible)* of Mt. Fuji, by *(inaudible Japanese name),* and then I knew for sure that Japanese prints and Japanese scenery is much much more imaginative than Chinese landscape painting. So, and it's been Japan ever since.

That's great. When did you begin working at Volkenkunde?

1984. When I was sort of, I was 34, or 35, roughly. Before, I'd been working mostly as a freelance Japanologist/art historian for galleries, private collectors, auction houses, *et cetera.*

Ok, so an art historian background.

Yeah.

And what is your position here at the museum? What is your title?

At the moment my title is Senior Researcher of Japan Collections. So I mean, they are trying to find a successor to my post as the curator of Japan and Korea, and in advance I decided, I will not be in the way, but still a curator so call me senior researcher. So, and I'm retired already, but I still have a contract with the museum because of the Geisha exhibition. But my official position ends June 1st. And then I have for another two years, still access to the collection and the database as if I were the curator for Japan. So I can still sort of, well I know I can input in the database, because it's quite important of course.

That's great to still be involved a little bit. Ok, let's talk a little bit about folk art. How would you personally define folk art?

I find that a very, very difficult concept. I mean, I would sort of…also because my background. I mean Japan, where there's always been a difference between, let's say, art with a capital 'A' and art with a small 'a'. And most of what I deal with is not really sort of art with a capital 'A'. I mean the paintings that I deal with in our collection, yeah the majority of that. Plus sort of the 9,000 plus Japanese prints that we have, they have been dubbed as plebian art, so that is art for the common people, but it's not art, obviously, because art is something… But for Japanese art historians art is something like, it has to do with the official painting schools traditions, like the Kano and the Tosa schools, and it has to do with religious art, which I think is by definition, cannot be art. But some people also distinguish master potters, like *(inaudible Japanese name)* can be sort of a national treasure right? That basically explains also the Japanese approach toward art. It is not an art historical tradition of scientific research. It's basically based on the tradition of tea masters are masters of good taste. They know what is good taste, what is bad taste, what is good, what is fine, what is refined, because they feel it. They sense it. I mean, it has nothing to do with sort of any sort of reasoning, whatever. That's one problem. Ok, so I deal with sort of basically the cultural products that play a role in circles of the common people of the big cities in Edo period Japan, 18th century/19th century. Then when that is basically, that is called *geijutsu*. So that is crafts, rather than *bijutsu*, which is art. And still even now in Japan you have a difference really art is *(Hapubuiscam?),* which is a museum with sort of a wide collection. Also there's a *(bijutsuscam?),* and that is a museum that holds *bijutsu* and, that is art objects. So that's a museum of art. Until recently, you would probably call the museum, *(inaudible)* museum in Amsterdam a (bijutsuscam?) but it's not, of course. Now certainly

now that they have this combination of objects and paintings, it is no longer a *(bijutsuscam?),* it's really a *(Hapubitscam?).* But in Japan, that distinction is very, very strict actually. And then when the word *bijutsu* found its place in Japanese lingo late 19th century and they want to sort of pretend that even though they were long considered maybe primitive people, although not so primitive because they had a script which distinguished them from, let's say, the people in Africa. And Oceania. Then they introduced a word *bijutsu* art, and they put that in retrospect on many sort of products from Japan. Then there developed a *Mingei* movement, which is a folk art movement, which is basically again, based on the tradition like William Morris in England and going to the sort of, the countryside roots of sort of folk craft. But that's *mingei*, and the funny thing is that *mingei* in Japan which is sort of developed like, I would say 19, 8, 9, 10 roughly *(inaudible Japanese name),* defining, well it becomes a movement in sculpture, in pottery, in woodcraft, in furniture design, in ceramics, painting, and printing. It is very, very interesting. But that is folk art in my Japanese world. Which again is very different because we were recently discussing with some of my colleagues form the Tropenmuseum, who are now my colleagues because we are one museum. And they have a totally different notion of what folk art is. And probably…what you're working on the Houtzager collection is probably to be dubbed folk art, but yeah, very different form my concept of Japanese folk art.

So if we were to put what you just talked about on a line, there's the peasant craft kind of, which is different from this folk art that began in the 1920s or whatever, with this movement. And then separate from those there's still the fine art?

Well there is in Japan, we have like three levels probably. We have sort of the basic local crafts, which were never meant to be sort of art of course, but they're crafts and that is, that's really down to earth, natural materials, natural treatment and handling of material, natural manufacture, very very simple and not very very accomplished. Then of course there is a towns culture that flourished in the 18th and 19th century, which is considered like art, so-called maybe, for the common people but not art with a capital 'A'. And then there is art like painting in the official painting traditions, and sculptures made for temples. And some of the tea utensils made by the famous tea masters which are considered art with a capital 'A' in Japan. So it's a very complicated world.

So are you kind of saying that folk art might be art with the lowercase 'a'?

Yeah absolutely yes yes.

Ok I see three parts. Got you. So would you consider folk art more as ethnology or as art? I guess we kind of just talked about that.

Well I find ethnology or ethnography very very difficult subjects, or words. Because for me it means nothing. It is I would say also art history, for me that is a scientific discipline of how to look at sort of, the products that define any sort of given culture, in my case, like Japanese culture, that I'm dealing with. I cannot really see how the answers to my questions to that material I work with would be doing my work as an art historian, how they would be different from the result or the outcome of the questions that someone would pose to the collection, the objects, and trying to develop an answer using sort of ethnology as a scientific discipline. Basically we should essentially I hope come to the same conclusions in the end, although at the beginning maybe there's a different question which I pose as an art historian and there's a different question to the same material that an ethnologist would pose to it. But in the end we should sort of, I hope, come to a similar conclusion about what is important for any culture and what defines a culture and what distinguishes some culture from another one. Is that understandable?

Yeah. That's great. And why do think that people are attracted to folk art?

And what is folk art? Your folk art? Or is it my folk art? Japanese folk art?

Your folk art.

Oh so my *mingei* folk art.

Yeah I guess since that's what we've talked about so far, and that's you see as folk art. Why do you think that people are attracted to it?

Actually I'm not attracted to it. I mean, and then I'm talking really exclusively about the folk art, *mingei* tradition in Japan. I find it highly artificial. But that has to do with the notion and the work of the people on it. I mean there's a…I don't know so much what one of the leaders of the movement like *(inaudible name),*

what he made. One of my favorite people working in that folk art tradition is *(inaudible)* Anjelo. He has a house, I mean, he died already of course, because I mean, that's someone from the early 20th century. But there is a house in Kyoto that sort of, that's the *(inaudible)* house. And that is just stuffed with the furniture that he made and that he surrounded himself with and I've seen some of the pottery he made. And I think it's beautiful. It's very, it's in a farmer-like wise. It's very much a very sturdy, very robust. There's nothing elegant about it but it's just, I mean, it's so basic and it's so pure, honest, direct, whatever. But then, I must say, it's all sort of an interpretation of what these people sort of saw, and noticed in their natural sort of farmland countryside surroundings. And then I must say that some of the products that these people made, I mean, you would never find in farmhouses because they kept sort of imagining, imagining, and then we make this. So basically what they developed was a new set of rules of sort of very much reminiscent of the old 17th century traditions defined in various tea schools. I mean, where *(inaudible)* or whatever, *(inaudible)*, they find ok this is *wabi*, and this is *sabi* and that sort of natural aspects of any object that you see a naturalness in it. And so basically what we end up with in this *Mengei* movement is a new interpretation of reinvented *wabi/sabi* contexts in the theory that when a tea ceremony is already left and that, and, sort of, it's also based on some notions that were defined by people and then there's different schools, and traditions, so it becomes like a new religion. Then I say 'gosh yeah…', it's ok yeah. When I see that sort of objects well ok, but then otherwise they don't fit in in sort of a natural tradition that I know. I'm very much interested in sort of a development like that from 17th, 18th, and 19th century, in various periods. And in those centuries, we're dealing with a very very clear and very clearly defined Japanese society where we have the class of the samurai, the *(inaudible),* the noble people, and you're noble by birth. And then we have the peasants as a settled class of people, then we have the craftsmen, and then at the bottom of the society we have the merchants, because they make nothing, they just make money. But the craftsmen, they make something, and they just sell. And, I mean, that is a natural society that sort of creates a demand and when there's a flowering like an economy like, there's a fantastic problem in the 1780s and in the 1790s, it's climbing up, but then there's another problem, and then from about 1804 you see that economy, it goes, well until 1836 then there's a fantastic economic drama in Japan. Several years of missed harvest and everything declines. And then they grow up again. And then in 1950s they, I mean 1850s there's cholera epidemic that kills like maybe 10% of the people in Japan, which

is a big problem and then the country just opened to the foreigners, so they've done it easy. Easy does it. Yeah that's fascinating because there is history, economy, and a society of, and that creates various kinds of demands and, sort of, yeah, creates a demand for certain products that sort of always adjust to where the demand is and what the economy allows people to do. And then what happens in the early 20th century is the *Mingei* movement. It doesn't fit in that tradition. It is sort of a completely created thing, and not natural. And the biggest success is actually, in England and America, not so much in Japan. So it's, for me as an art historian who believes in sort of a development that I can trace and reconstruct, reconstruct basically the history of art in a very wide sense, it doesn't fit in there.

So are you kind of saying that the products and things that they're creating, this folk art movement, Mingei?...

Yeah *Mingue*.

…It came from traditions maybe for, they'd make things that they'd actually use. But now they don't use them anymore, and it's kind of been some type of…

They were not even used in those days. They were sort of made as art not to be used, which is really strange of course.

But they were still based on old traditions?

An interpretation of some rural traditions. It was a very very deficient knowledge of what rural traditions were.

Ok, so it's kind of in between these rural traditions and utilitarian things and fine art here, it's just somewhere in the middle, but can't really be defined as a thing?

No, that's right. Yeah.

Ok, I can see that. So looking at the collections in general here in Volkenkunde, would you classify…it's a very big generalization I'm asking for I suppose, but do you define many of the objects in this museum as folk art? Or is it a combination of many?

No I would certainly not. No I think that sort of, I hope at least that sort of probably 95% of the collection that we have classifies as sort of utilitarian objects. I mean even sort of masks from Africa or Oceania that serve some role in a, just an occasional ceremony. They are, I believe, utilitarian. They serve a practical purpose. And this time it is for sort of preparing for a battle with a tribe which is on the other side of the forest, or and the next time it's a ritual for getting a good harvest or a bigger catch of pigs or fish whatever. But basically that's utilitarian. I mean all the objects, all the spears and arrows we have are essentially, they were made for warfare or hunting, whatever, and that's utilitarian. And even like in my Japan collection, there is many children's toys also from the 19th century, which is just fabulous. But that is utilitarian. I would say that folk art is at some point it comes in, I would say, and that is when people more consciously begin to collect. Then I don't know where, but I think, I once heard a story. There's a type of sort of spoon that we have in our collection, and I think it's made from the horn of a buffalo kind of animal, water buffalo maybe, with…So here's the spoon, the part that you use to eat, and here's the handle, some here there is some decoration in that horn, I mean there's a figure sort of carved or sawn out. That sort of objects. And we have similar objects also from Japan—spoons. And here at the end beautiful in gold lacquer there's various insects—a butterfly or a bug or a dragonfly. Beautiful. But Japanese don't eat with that kind of spoon. And the people from Indonesia that made these spoons from the horn of a water buffalo, they would eat with their hands. And so they don't use the spoon. It's really not like, that I would call, sort of, folk art. That is something made, and probably sort of maybe in anticipation of what characterizes a sort of stylistically a specific culture, and collectors are like, 'ok that's beautiful. Great. You make beautiful things. Can I come back next year, can I have some more?' I think that is basically what folk art is. It's basically, I would say, objects that sort of pretend to be something but don't really play necessarily a direct utilitarian role in any specific culture or society. Is that, yeah?

Yeah, that's good. But they're still not, they're not created for utilitarian purposes, they're created for maybe aesthetic purposes…

Because there is, if you look in TMS, and you start, and you ask for everything. Basically I mean, everything, which means all the world, and then you skip, sort of, in our museum's collection, that's Leiden then, if you skip the first 360 series,

then you are in 1883. And if you then go on from 1883 to see what is added to our collection, you see that ok, if you have seen what's there before. It all sort of basically, it comes from somewhere and it is something, and there's a lot of weapons—arrows, spears, whatever. There's a lot of shoes, amazing. Amazing what you find in shoes. And hats. And then all of the sudden like in the 1880s you get to see some things like puppets displaying a local dress, and you find them from various places in Indonesia, you find them from India, you find them from Persia, you find them from the Middle East, North Africa, and I mean, these are objects that, they were made for people. But they were not never ever ever used. In those days they were made in that society. Then in the, probably the 1950s, we get to a situation where the majority is made in Czechoslovakia, and now the majority is made in Thailand and China. About 2 or 3 years ago I was in Oshima, which is an island like, on 2 days walk from Tokyo. And also in my days, I mean that's 18th and 19th century, people went there very often. They made this walk, and they, because there was a very very beautiful and large shrine devoted to the goddess Benton. So you would go there, and then at low tide, you would cross the sea to that rocky island, and climb and pray to Benton, and try to make it back it time before the tide would come. And there was a local craft of making folding screens, but basically 2-fold screens that go like this, and you can open them and then made of shells there is like, a wisteria flower or a cherry blossom made of shells. When I was young I could also buy that in *(inaudible)* or *(inaudible),* I mean, these small villages in the north of Holland on the seaside, where they would make a fishing boat made of, composed of various shells and glued together. I mean, that sort of thing. And I was two years ago in Oshima. I visited some shops and I got to talk with one of the merchants and dealers and I asked him, I saw the picture of these old things. He said "oh no, we don't make that. Yeah I've seen these pictures but they are really from the past. What we now have is this and this and this and this." And so I asked, "Is it local people who made that?" He says, "To be honest, they're all made in Thailand." That's it. That's it. And so we have a very interesting example also of what I would almost dub folk art is, we have a collection of Indian musical instruments. Musical instruments from India. They were donated to the museum by a certain guy, Tagura, who is in some way related to the famous philosopher, like *(inaudible)* Tagura, who was convinced that he should sort of create some appreciation for Indian music. And he donated these sets of musical instruments from India to various museums in the world, with a large pamphlet explaining what it was and all the *(inaudible).* And some of these instruments are totally inventions by Mr.

Tagura. They play no role in Indian music, traditional music. Nobody can play the instruments probably. And there is no music ever written for that instrument or composed for it. It's just imaginary musical instruments that he devised. I think it's great. But that is also what you find in the 1880s, 1890s, and early 20th century. That is, when people begin to sort of, discover and explore various parts of the world, and especially of course, if you look at the early history of ethnographical museums, the museums in Hamburg and Bremen, they were fabulous. They were like, major auction houses. What they trade is, and they had people that set out in the world and making large collections, which they again offered for sale to all kinds of museums. In lots of Europe. A fabulous business. And that also of course created very much that the demand for folk art, because there is so much demand for sort of, whatever.

Interesting. Ok, let's now…

We're already halfway, almost.

Yeah. Pretty much

Ok. You see I'm very opinionated.

Yeah that's great. That's what I was hoping for. Let's now talk about Houtzager a little bit. Are you familiar Elisabeth Houtzager's collection of folk art that the museum acquired in 1993?

Not very much. I've seen the, and I've seen that exhibition that was devoted to what she collected. There was once an exhibition. But otherwise I must say that the Japanese part in her collection is very small. I'm glad. And then, yeah. And when I compare, I mean, what she was, like Japanese sort of, airport, like souvenirs. That is, the quality is so bad.

Some of her pieces are what you consider airport art?

Yeah. We have a number of, although I don't know whether we still have them. We did have at least a number of, let's say, puppets representing something. Some sort of, let's say *opshi (inaudible),* or a *Fuji Musume*, which is wisteria maiden, which is a classical character in Japanse culture. And those are sort of

puppets made in the 1960s, 1970s in Japan and they come with a beautiful showcase, so a glass case over the puppets, so you can display. And these cost quite a lot in Japan also. I mean, they cost like, I would say like, in between 150 and 300, 400, or even more euros. They can cost up to 1,000 euros. And that is a quality, I mean which is, even though it's another trick that all, for that kind of object, because it's made for nowadays display in your living room. Here's the television, and on top of that *(inaudible)* there's that would be a puppet of a wisteria maiden. Which I find horrible, quite kitsch. But ok, there is a market for that in Japan. That is a quality that Elisabeth Houtzager never acquired. She bought small objects, of rather cheap manufacturing, and sort of, if she would have traveled more in Japan and would have bought something like, local, really local souvenirs, her collection could already have been more interesting. I mean, local souvenirs, I would say, are very very interesting. But what she bought, we don't know where she bought it, and she may have bought some in Tokyo, she may have bought some at Narita airport, she may have bought some at Kyoto in shops, in souvenir shops. But, there's many many sort of, still local souvenirs being made. I mean, even tops, spinning tops. You can buy them in various cities in Japan, and they're made in the traditional way, and they're decorated also in the traditional way, and they are like this is a *(inaudible)* top, and this is a whatever, *(inaudible)* top. I mean, but she didn't buy that. And so, because we have a total lack of appropriate documentation, where she bought it, it doesn't help me. I'm not very impressed. I mean, because it's a gift to the museum, I cannot throw it away. But I mean, it has no value, because only what we can use in our museum, I would say ideally is objects that we acquire and we know when they were acquired, what it is, what the original function is, and preferably what is the original, local name for an object. So, if we know all that, then we can use that object for our understanding a culture, because we know what we're talking about. That's my example of this *oshiroi* and that face power to make your face white that was bought in March 1826 in Osaka. And it says it *oshiroi*, and made by this and this guy. I mean, that has a value and a meaning for our collection. But items collected sometime during the life of Elisabeth Houtzager probably in Japan, but maybe in the Leidsestraat in Amsterdam. I don't know. Who knows?

So they lack provenance?

Yeah. And that is so essential of course for a museum. Basically I would say everything where we don't know what it is, and when it was collected, where.

Ideally, we should throw away, right? Because, I mean, we are a museum. And we must realize that, why do we preserve objects? Of course our basic function is to preserve objects. But also, we must know what we preserve and why we preserve it. And then we need to know what is it, where was it collected, and when. And for a lot of that Houtzager collection, I mean, it doesn't meet the standard.

What is the museum's general protocol, or the curatorial protocol for the selection process of new acquisitions?

I mean, following that protocol, we would never have acquired the Houtzager collection, because now we must know what it is, where it was collected, and where it came from. And any sort of item with an insufficient pedigree doesn't make it.

How do you at this museum, how do you go about doing that? What's the general process if somebody comes to the museum with their collection wanting to donate it, what are the steps that the curatorial department goes through actually?

I mean, yeah. There's the *(inaudible Dutch words),* which is a group of people, it's like 4 or 5 people I think. And anything we want to acquire, be it a gift, something we buy, or a loan, must be submitted to that committee. They meet once per month, basically the last Thursday every month, unless we have a speed procedure because it's coming up at auction or whatever. And basically we have to sort of write down what it is. I mean, it's offered by this and this person, on behalf of him or herself, or on behalf of someone else. And basically we have to write down, ok, it's this, it was collected then and then, and we can buy it for this and this price, or it's a gift, whatever. And basically if there is insufficient information about what it is and where it comes from, it doesn't make it. So if someone comes with something and says well I want to give this to the museum, and yeah it must be very old because I have… a majority of people know for sure that they have seen items as long as they live, always in the house of their grandparents. So it must be old. Essentially it can be as old as they are, or it can be much younger, whatever. But basically because it comes from the house of their grandparents, it must be antique. And then I sometimes ask, "and when was your grandfather then born?" Then he says "yeah I don't know." Well I

mean, let me say “something like 50 to 60 years ago, right?” He says “no no no no.” Well ok. And then “yeah yeah yeah, I never saw it that way.” But then, and they know at some point probably him and this guy, the grandfather, went to New Guinea. And so it must be from there. I can say ok yes probably it’s likely it comes from there. But then…

That doesn’t cut it.

I mean, we were in New Guinea probably from the 1920s to the early 1960s or so before we hardly cared so much, or very very little. That doesn’t give me any clue about what we are talking about. What are we looking at? And so something like that I would say doesn’t make it. I get so many, as a reaction to the Geisha exhibition, so many people who have also, “oh I have a kimono at home, it’s very beautiful.” I said, “No, I don’t want to have it. When did you get it?” “Oh yeah yeah, it was in the house of my mother.” I mean, “My husband once got it.” “Fine. I don’t want it.” I mean, what can I do with that sort of nonsense. And that’s nonsense. I don’t want to bother. I mean, I have a collection, I mean, which is so much more, I mean, better documented than this. Fabulous. That is the basis. And more stuff, I don’t know where it fits. It doesn’t help me. So that is the protocol.

Did you participate in any examinations of Houtzager’s collection back in 1993.

No.

So you weren’t involved in the decision-making process.

No.

Ok. Do you think that, I guess we kind of already talked about this, but do you think that any part of her collection fits in with the other collections here at the museum?

I cannot really gauge, I mean, because I don’t know, I’m insufficiently familiar with the total image of… In so far as part of that collection, would be sort of products that at some point would have played a role in any specific culture, I mean, that may be a reason to keep these objects. Like even if we have something that we

know, ok we have in our collection or we don't have in our collection, but we know that in sort of, in this culture, this kind of object did play a role, I mean, in the 19th century or the early 20th century, whatever. But we have that or we don't have that. But now we get something that is made to look like that, then I would say that would be sort of, the exceptional pretext for accepting that in our collection. Everything which is sort of made, maybe by people, but basically for a tourist market, is not of interest. Certainly in the modern world, I would say tourist art, as you might call it, I mean, doesn't say much about any culture that we are dealing with in our museum.

Back to the terminology with folk art, tourist art, do you think that folk art can be tourist art? Or tourist art can be folk art? Or do you think they're separate things?

No I think that they are different things. For example, if you go to Sweden…have you ever been to Sweden?

I have.

Did you see the *dalahast*?

What is that?

It's a very sort of stylized figure of a horse.

I don't remember that, no.

Ok. And they're sometimes painted blue, I mean the blue of the Swedish flag, or sometimes are yellow, sometimes are even orange, sometimes they're with dots, which is ridiculous of course. But basically, that is a tradition that comes from Dalarna. Dalarna is a province in the north of Sweden. And that is, that's the *dalahast*, and it's a *dala horse*, *hast* is horse, that comes from that area. I mean, if you don't go there, because it's crowded with mosquitos over there, so it's not very nice. Plus, there's nothing to be done, it's just woods. It's a horrible place. So if you go to Copenhagen, and you cross that, now they have a bridge, and if you go to Malmo, you can also in a shop already buy a *dalahast*. I mean, that is tourist art, right? If you go to Dalarna itself, and there's a local shop where there

is a craftsman who makes these things, and he's done so like all of his life, I mean, that is, like I would say, rather, folk art.

Ok, I see.

So it's all very important, of course, where things are bought, and who made them. I mean, and maybe nowadays there's a robot-like machine that you put a tree in the machine, and then it chops it down until you get like 600 *dalas*. And then it goes in separate ways, and this one is painted blue, and that one is painted yellow, and that's painted orange or whatever. That's possible. And then of course that's rubbish.

Ok. I kind of know your opinions on folk art now, that you are not the hugest fan, but why do you think that people like Houtzager, or whoever, might be interested in collecting something like that?

I can easily imagine that if there's something like a, I don't know what it is, but there's something like a passion for collecting. If that is in your DNA, it doesn't matter. It can be anything. I mean, I have a passion for collecting, and in the past it was very wide. Now I still collect stones. My wife doesn't like it. But sometimes I find a stone that is really beautifully shaped that has this very funny pattern, a very very funny shape, and I cannot resist, I have to. I did of course, I mean, as soon as I discovered that Japanese art was very very interesting, I started making my own collection of Japanese wood book prints that I bought from my book money that I received that then saving it up. And I bought my first sort of, book plates by *(inaudible)* when I started working with the collection at that museum. I had to stop collecting Japanese art basically, but then I thought ok, I can sometimes, in Japan I can buy things that maybe, I mean, the museum would never never. And so I have this here which is a *netsuke*. I use it…

What's it called again?

Netsuke

Netsuke?

So that is basically something that serves to hold your tobacco pouch or your pipe, sort of, container, or sometimes also your medicine case. Asians are fond of all kinds of medicine. And I mean, this is walrus tusk. And that I find very interesting because you see that this part is typical of walrus teeth. That's what I collect, otherwise I'm more serious to collect city plans of Amsterdam, but in 16th 17th 18th century. And basically not really 18th century, because I was born in Amsterdam, and ok, I want to collect something. So I can image that someone like Mrs. Houtzager, when she has some drive of collection, that she thinks, "oh this is fun, yeah." And she starts doing it. Yeah sure, I can very well understand how people do it.

Ok I think that does it. Do you have anything else you would like to say? Final thoughts?

No.

END OF INTERVIEW