

INTRODUCTION

Even as a young boy, Sir Hans Sloane was always fascinated by science.¹ He grew up to study medicine and, in 1687, at the age of twenty-seven, had just been accepted into the Royal College of Physicians when an intriguing career offer came his way. Christopher Monck, the second Duke of Albemarle and the recently appointed governor of Jamaica, needed a personal physician to accompany him to his new post. Sloane accepted, not only out of a sense of duty to his country, but also “to see what I can meet withal that is extraordinary in nature in those places.” Colleagues and friends who had traveled abroad were bringing back new medicines and unknown species, and he didn’t want to miss out on the fun. Over the next fifteen months, Sloane enthusiastically studied Jamaica’s geography and climate, carefully documenting its plants and animals. His research came to an abrupt end, however, with his employer’s death. Sir Hans’s last duty was to embalm the duke’s body so it could be shipped back to England, along with the more than eight hundred specimens his erstwhile physician had acquired.

Sloane returned to England to enjoy a distinguished career. He married well and thrived as a doctor and surgeon, made a fortune by introducing Britain to the wonders of milk chocolate, and even became Queen Ann’s “physician extraordinaire” in 1712. He figures so prominently in these opening pages not because of his diagnostic or entrepreneurial abilities but because of his talents as a collector. In addition to the materials he gathered in Jamaica, Sir Hans amassed plants, rocks, and shells from China, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as treasure troves of personal papers and manuscripts written by the historians and scientists who studied them. To accommodate his massive holdings,

Sir Hans acquired the property adjacent to his London home at 4 Bloomsbury Place. He was always ready, given proper notice, to “admit the curious” and, recognizing its intrinsic public value, to make his collection available to the scholarly community. It would become one of three used to establish the British Museum.

Director Neil MacGregor told James Cuno, who was then president and director of the Art Institute of Chicago, in a 2009 interview that the British Museum was, as a result, “never a national collection.” It was always, he explained, a collection of the whole world meant to be studied by people across the globe, so they could understand not the nation better but the world.² Sir Hans wanted visitors to recognize that people around the globe had a lot in common.³ In a way, said Mr. MacGregor, “what the British Museum is about is an attempt to create a new kind of citizen, a citizen who would be a citizen of the whole world and able to compare what happens in one part of the world to what happens in another, and above all to see how connected the world is.” Had the British Parliament rejected his bequest, Sir Hans would have gladly donated it to Saint Petersburg, Berlin, Paris, or Madrid, in that order.⁴

Ever since France’s new leaders opened the doors of the Louvre to the public in 1793, however, museums have also played a starring role in producing and representing the nation. They helped create unified “teams” out of millions of people who would never meet, by showcasing the knowledge and customs they share. Even now, in museums on every continent, guests feast on paintings, furniture, and other decorative objects they are told represent the nation. So, in today’s global world, what kinds of citizens are museums creating? Can they inspire an openness to difference, whether it be next door or across the world? How does the globalization of the museum world affect local institutions, and how does the local talk back? What is it about particular cities and nations that helps explain the answers?

I take on these questions by visiting museums in Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East. I talked with museum directors, curators, and policy makers about current and future exhibitions and collected their stories about the paintings, iconic objects, and sometimes quirky benefactors that define their collections. In the United States, I compare museums in allegedly parochial Boston with their counterparts in the so-called center of the national cultural universe, New York. In Europe, I focus on Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and Stockholm, former bastions of tolerance that have become, to varying degrees, hotbeds of anti-immigrant sentiment. I then ask if museums in Singapore and Doha create Asian and Arab global citizens. How does the tension between globalism and nationalism play out outside the West? Taken together, these accounts tell a fascinating story of the sea change under way in the museum world at large and of how nationalism and cosmopolitanism come together under museum roofs in different cities and nations.

How curators, educators, and museum directors think about these issues, rather than how museums are organized and run, is the focus of my story, although objects and exhibitions play strong supporting roles. I discuss what museum professionals think they are doing, not how well they are doing it. I profile art museums, ethnographic muse-

ums, constituency museums (institutions that focus on particular groups), and cultural history museums chosen selectively to highlight different stances along the nationalism-globalism spectrum. Each type of museum plays some role—whether purposefully or by default—in citizenship creation and showcases the nation from a slightly different angle. “National” collections of paintings, decorative objects, and material culture, along with cultural history museums, tell us something about how nations represent themselves to insiders and outsiders. The ethnographic objects that collectors, colonizers, and explorers acquired tell us what these individuals wanted people to know about the world beyond the nation. Constituency museums showcase the experiences of particular groups but also reveal something about where they stand in relation to the nation as a whole.

No museum I visited told an entirely national or global story.⁵ Instead, the nation always reared its head in depictions of the cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitanism always came with something of the national. Rather than seeing these as competing, I think of cultural institutions as falling along a continuum of cosmopolitan nationalism whose two constantly changing parts mutually inform and transform each other. In fact, in some cases, it is by recognizing and representing the nation’s internal diversity, and thereby redefining the national, that some institutions connect to the cosmopolitan. Where a museum ultimately lands is determined by the intersection between national and urban cultural politics and the globalization of culture, an encounter that transforms museums and to which they are important contributors.

The variations I discovered in where institutions fall on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum have to do with their histories, funding, collections, and curatorial expertise. They have to do with whether museums are public or private—with whether they are tools governments use to pursue social goals or whether they are mostly beholden to a changing cast of donors and visitors. Museums’ contrasting practices are partly explained by their scope—whether they were founded as museums of art, created to preserve and display humanity’s greatest treasures, or as museums of artifacts collected and showcased to safeguard national traditions and teach visitors about worlds beyond their own.

These differences also arise from a city’s *cultural armature*—its social and cultural policies, history, and institutions. This armature reflects deep cultural structures—the traces of old ways of thinking and doing that are left in the bricks and mortar of today.⁶ Long-standing ideas about community, equality, or the collective good do not disappear but continuously echo in the ways things get done. A particularly important piece of this armature is a city’s diversity-management regime—how diversity is regulated, and distributed, through a combination of immigration, socioeconomic, and political policies, and the strategies, labels, and power relations underlying how difference gets talked about, measured, and negotiated. How cities manage difference contributes to but is not always the same as how difference gets managed nationally.⁷

Finally, museum practices vary because cities and nations understand their historical position on the global stage differently and have different aspirations for the future. Where a country is in the arc of its nation-building and global claims-staking projects,

and the kinds of citizens it believes it needs in order to reach its goals, also influence what museums put on display.

A WORLD ON THE MOVE

You just have to walk down the street in any immigrant neighborhood—Washington Heights in New York City, Kreuzberg in Berlin, or the Bijlmer in Amsterdam—to realize that big changes are under way. No doubt many of the businesses you will pass will have to do with migrants' homelands, be they travel agencies; ethnic grocery stores selling fruits, vegetables, phone cards, and videos; or stores that wire money to relatives back home. This is because more and more people continue to vote, pray, and invest in businesses in the places they come from at the same time that they buy homes, open stores, and join the PTA in the countries where they settle.⁸ Putting down roots in the location you move to, while continuing to remain active in the economics and politics of your homeland, isn't just for poor and working-class migrants. Think of the many highly educated, highly skilled professionals who populate the boardrooms and bedrooms of the world's cities and suburbs. More and more, they too buy homes, raise children, invest, and cast ballots across borders.

As a matter of fact, more people than ever are on the move. In 2013, 232 million people, or 3.2 percent of the world's population, were international migrants, compared with 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990.⁹ These individuals send a lot of money back home.¹⁰ According to the World Bank, international migrants from developing countries were expected to remit nearly \$416 billion dollars in 2014.¹¹ In countries like Mexico and Morocco, these contributions are among the principal sources of foreign currency, and governments—now dependent on them—want to make sure the money keeps flowing. Migrants are also a tremendous source of ideas, know-how, and skills, and some governments try to systematically harvest these social remittances as well.¹²

At the same time, we live in a world of heightened diversity. Because people from a wider range of countries—with different legal statuses and levels of access to benefits—travel to a greater variety of places, new patterns of inequality and discrimination are emerging. This new complexity layers onto existing patterns of socioeconomic difference, residential segregation, and social exclusion.¹³ In 2005, for example, people from more than 179 countries lived in London.¹⁴ How they answer the question "Who are you?" gets complicated. They might respond that they are Dominican and American or Indian and British at the same time that they are New Yorkers or Londoners. An individual may also say that she is Muslim, a professor, or an environmentalist, thereby claiming a place through her membership in a religious, professional, or activist tribe.

For some, living across borders comes easily. Like many of the museum professionals in this story, they have the education, skills, and social contacts to take advantage of opportunities anywhere. Many more, like the construction workers who build the buildings in which these professionals work, are forced into transnational lives because they

cannot provide adequately for their families in the places where they come from or where they move. Either way, today's migrants are moving in a world of economic crisis, neo-liberal restructuring, precarious jobs, and major cutbacks in social welfare. And while more and more people live transnational lives, they are still served by legal and social service systems that are stubbornly nationally bounded. The social contract between state and citizen is national, but people's lives are not.

These dynamics challenge basic assumptions about how and where class and race are produced, family life gets lived, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship get fulfilled. They raise questions about the new kinds of social policies and institutions needed by people who work, raise children, and retire in different places. To be able to respond, we need a different vocabulary that allows us to talk about nations that do not necessarily end at their geographic borders. We need new ways of conceptualizing identity that take into account that many people belong to several groups at once and that these multiple allegiances can coexist, if not complement each other. We need new strategies that help instill the willingness and skills to engage with difference across the world and across the street.

That is where museums come in. As MacGregor suggests, they are among the many messy arenas where countries might diversify their self-portraits and re-create themselves as more cosmopolitan nations.¹⁵ Museum displays influence how the nation and its place in the world get imagined, even among people who never step inside their doors.

CREATING COSMOPOLITAN INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS, AND NATIONS

Dreams of world citizenship underlay Kant's vision of a "perpetual peace," Goethe's vision of a world society, and Marx's call to workers to unite and free themselves from capitalism's chains.¹⁶ Religious thinkers also had something to say about global citizenship. Implicit in Saint Augustine's idea of the City of God was that people could belong to several communities at once. Luther spoke of "two kingdoms"—the kingdom of Christ, inhabited by true believers who were "subject to Christ," and the kingdom of the world, where non-Christians lived under the rule of the law. Though clearly one was better than the other, you could belong to both at the same time.¹⁷

This is the story of cosmopolitanism told from the West, which is, in fact, quite unc cosmopolitan.¹⁸ We limit the possibility of cosmopolitanism when we ignore how history, culture, and power influence what "openness" means and how much it is valued.¹⁹ The Muslim *umma*—that crisscrossing network of travelers that was always more inclusive and polycentric than the capitals and outposts of Western empires—is inherently cosmopolitan, a "global civil society" before the age of globalization.²⁰ Circulating traders, intellectuals, religious professionals, and adventurers created a Sanskrit cosmopolis. While Rome tried to contain or destroy "the other," in the Sanskrit world he or she was invited in.²¹

Many critics still see self-described cosmopolitans as belonging everywhere and contributing nowhere.²² Others, redefining the term, argue that people who care about global issues like human rights and climate change can care about particular cultures and groups too.²³ What's more, the Euro-American cosmopolitans of yesteryear do not have a monopoly on these experiences. The new networks of economic power emerging from China, India, and the Gulf are leaving global footprints that bring people together, producing friction and conflict as well as creating cosmopolitan sensibilities.

In fact, some argue, and I agree, that in today's global world, cosmopolitanism is a necessity rather than a luxury. Because we are so well connected, risks and opportunities regularly cross borders.²⁴ Inequality is defined globally and requires a global response. I find it helpful to think of cosmopolitanism as a broad umbrella with various parts. It is an ethos, idea, or value; a set of practices or competencies; and a political project—although these parts do not always come together.²⁵ Endorsing cosmopolitanism does not mean that everyone can or would want to join in, or that we would all call the same set of values “universal.” It does mean not stopping at ideas or philosophy but trying to figure out how and where people become competent and committed enough to engage with others who are different, both near and far away. It means finding out what allows us to move from idea to practice to cosmopolitics.²⁶

So where do we learn about what we all have in common or learn to feel a sense of responsibility for groups and problems other than our own? How do we learn to live in increasingly diverse neighborhoods and to connect that experience to people living on the other side of the world? How and where do museums help?

MUSEUMS AND NATION BUILDING

Some of the world's greatest museums, and what have been some of its most powerful nations, were born, more or less, under the same sign. Although Mr. MacGregor would probably disagree, many believe that while universal survey museums put the world on display, they also display their countries' most revered beliefs and values.²⁷ To grow strong, a new nation needed to perform itself well enough that complete strangers would claim the knowledge and rituals on view as their own.²⁸ What got included in the collection and who created it sent clear messages about which groups belonged and what the country stood for. But connection and belonging generally stopped at the border.²⁹ Because the nation was defined in opposition to other nations and ethnic groups, people who were out of place—such as immigrants and people of minority faiths—were not likely to see themselves represented, or, if they were, not without serious biases.³⁰

What's more, not everything on display was “of the nation.” By displaying artifacts from other lands, countries demonstrated their ability to collect and control the world beyond their borders. In fact, many works of national patrimony became more highly valued because they were also valued as the cultural heritage of humankind.³¹ As new ways of understanding and classifying took hold in the late nineteenth century, driven

by the emerging disciplines of anthropology and sociology, curators rearranged what had been taxonomical displays into evolutionary sequences ordered by geology and history. Most of the time, the nation occupied the highest rung of the ladder, which gave it license to colonize, civilize, and Christianize others.³² Museums not only created nations but also justified their imperialist projects.

They were, therefore, never egalitarian. Museums exposed visitors to certain kinds of knowledge based on a certain set of values. The ordering and reordering of objects and how they were positioned in relation to each other legitimized particular social and political hierarchies, privileging some ways of knowing while excluding others.³³ Culture and identity could be represented as simple, factual, and real. The trained visitor arrived ready to exercise a particular kind of gaze and be exposed to a specific kind of objective truth, communicated through “rhetorics of value” or exhibition designs, texts, and lighting that focused visitors’ attention and appreciation in specific ways.³⁴ This “museum effect” made the objects inside seem more special and provided visitors with a model for interacting with the world outside. The understandings about truth and knowledge expressed, and the model of museums that was used to express them, were then exported around the world.³⁵

These hierarchies stubbornly persist. They are reflected today in the distribution of what museum curators jokingly refer to as “real estate.” How the square footage in a museum gets carved up sends clear signals about what its priorities are. As Kim Benzel, an associate curator in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, told me, “If you come here [into the Met] just cold, there is now a fabulously grand spread of Greek and Roman to your left and an enormous spread of vast and grand Egyptian to your right and then up the stairs is European paintings. Since time immemorial that has been the ‘holy of holies’ of many western institutions. You have to really look if you want to find Africa or Latin America.”

Even museum architecture reflects these assumptions. Think of the grand staircases we ascend to enter some of the world’s great museums (before laws requiring accessibility for the disabled forced their redesign). The polished stone makes visitors feel they are entering a temple of wisdom. Think of museums’ elegant, high-ceilinged entrance halls. The symbolic messages of Western superiority and triumphant progress are embedded in the blueprints. Most visitors are so well socialized into these values that they barely notice they are being expressed.

As a result, some critics see museums as beyond salvation.³⁶ They are simply too flawed to right their historical wrongs. It would be impossible to overcome their Western-centric, colonialist genealogies. Because museums are elite institutions, the critique continues, only the upper class feels welcome. Rather than being a catalyst for change, they reproduce social boundaries and privilege.³⁷

A second view dismisses these critiques. Writing in response to people who see museum installations as always “ideologically motivated and strategically determined,” James Cuno, now president and CEO of the J. P Getty Trust, asks readers if they really

experience museums in this manner. “Do you walk through the galleries of your local museum and feel controlled in any significant way? Do you feel manipulated by a higher power?”³⁸ He believes that museums still matter, and that “enlightenment principles still apply.” For people like Cuno, museums do not create citizens, either national or global. They collect, classify, and present facts, calling into question unverified truths and opposing prejudice and superstition for the betterment of humankind.³⁹ Similarly, former Metropolitan Museum director Philippe de Montebello declares museums unsuitable places for social activism. Museum visitors are looking not for more of what they encounter in their daily lives, he says, but for “something different, conceivably uplifting.”⁴⁰

But a third view, held by many of the museum professionals profiled here, is that museums can and must reinvent themselves as socially relevant institutions for the twenty-first century. They know they are still primarily the stomping grounds of people with money in their wallets and degrees on their walls. But they also recognize the tremendous power museums wield in shaping public views, even influencing people who never cross their thresholds.⁴¹ They believe that museums can and should encourage empathy, curiosity, tolerance, creativity, and critical thinking—in essence, cosmopolitan values and competencies. Whether or not museums willingly accept this role, they necessarily star in the national performance.

What’s more, these tensions are shaped by factors extending far beyond national borders. James Clifford describes museums as contact zones, places of “an ongoing, historical, political and moral *relationship*—a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.”⁴² In museums today, the contact is not simply between unequal cultural producers and consumers. To varying degrees, museums operate within transnational social fields—multilayered, unequal networks created by individuals, institutions, and governance structures. More and more, the things on display, the museum professionals who put them there, the financial and administrative arrangements that make it all possible, and the visitors who enjoy the fruits of these labors are connected to people, objects, and politics all over the world. Museums, therefore, are increasingly sites of encounter where global approaches bump into regional and national history, culture, and demography.⁴³

Assemblages are contingent clusters of people, technology, objects, and knowledge, which circulate through the social fields that museums inhabit, coming together in different constellations depending on where they land.⁴⁴ Multiple assemblages inform and are informed by my story. One key cluster is constituted by what I call global museum assemblages—changing repertoires of ways to display, look at, and organize objects and educate others about them that get vernacularized selectively each time they come to ground.⁴⁵ The programs awarding master’s degrees in fine arts, the museum education programs, and the curatorial studies programs offered around the world form part of this assemblage. It inheres in the gift shops, gourmet restaurants, and blockbuster exhibitions museum visitors now expect. It seeps into the stone of iconic museum buildings, designed by a select group of “starchitects” whose work features prominently on many continents. It is regulated by institutions of global governance, like the International

Committee on Museums. The biennales mounted throughout the global north and south, and the cadre of artists they anoint, inform it.

A transnational class of museum directors, administrators, curators, and educators, some of whom circulate regionally if not globally, form part of these assemblages but also carry pieces of it with them in their laptops, suitcases, and portfolios when they move from post to post.⁴⁶ These professionals, like their peripatetic corporate, religious, and professional counterparts, connect with varying degrees of intensity to the places where they work. Some “parachute” in during a crisis, find out what they need to know, fix the problem, and move on. While “spiralists” stay longer, they also move on within a few years, in contrast to “long-timers” who settle semipermanently.⁴⁷ Regardless of how long these transnational professionals stay, an overarching backdrop or regional story line shapes their work as their work reshapes it. They operate in the context of two simultaneous frames that speak to but are in tension with one another—cultural globalization of increasing breadth and depth and changing urban and national cultural politics.

THE ROLE OF PLACE

The city, writes Robert Park, is “a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and of the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these customs and are transmitted with this tradition.”⁴⁸ These customs and traditions materialize in physical spaces and buildings. They manifest themselves in norms and values that guide and are spread by cultural institutions. Therefore, the answer to whether and how museums see themselves as creating citizens has a lot to do with place. A city’s cultural armature, and how it echoes over time, strongly influences what museums do and the kinds of ideologies and commitments they shape.

In fact, the story of every city, says Lewis Mumford, “can be read through a succession of deposits: the sedimentary strata of history. While certain forms and phases of development are successive in time, they become, through the very agency of the civic process, cumulative in space.”⁴⁹ Some even go so far as to say that cities have distinct personalities.⁵⁰ Those familiar with the East Coast of the United States will recognize how true certain old sayings still are. Mark Twain recalled what had become a popular joke in the United States: “In Boston they ask, ‘How much does he know?’ In New York, ‘How much is he worth?’ In Philadelphia, ‘Who were his parents?’”⁵¹ Another version had Boston as the city of bests, New York as the city of the latests, and Philadelphia the city of firsts.⁵² This is because, as Twain put it, history does not so much repeat itself as it rhymes. Since we focus so often on explaining change, we miss the relationship between change and continuity—how long-standing patterns of doing and thinking grow and evolve in ways that are somehow consistent with their roots.

How these constant overlays, like the successive deposits of sediment from a continuously erupting volcano, become part of a city’s cultural armature is an important part of my story. The resilient cultural structures they lay down—such as patterns of social

hierarchy, how the needs of individuals stack up against the needs of the group, the appropriate role of the state in caring for and managing its citizens, and how social difference gets talked about and managed—appear and reappear throughout history.⁵³ As these attitudes become more deeply rooted, they affect the kinds of institutions a city creates, the policies it embraces, and the values that undergird them: they affect, in essence, its current cultural armature and how the city sees itself in relation to the rest of the world. Take the example of Salem, Massachusetts, where the Peabody Essex Museum, one of the institutions profiled in these pages, is located. The maritime industry prospered there in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until advances in technology created commercial ships too large for its relatively shallow harbor. But because, according to the museum's director and CEO, Dan Monroe, travel and international trade were the twinned vocations of the museum's founders, global issues have always been part of that museum's portfolio.

But cities are located in nations. And national history, culture, institutions, and demography shape the urban experience in the same way that what happens in cities influences the nation. Indeed, it is often difficult to separate the two, particularly in city-states like Qatar and Singapore, where *Doha* and *Singapore* interchangeably refer to the city and the nation, and in Sweden and Denmark, where what happens in Stockholm and Copenhagen disproportionately affects what happens in the nation as a whole. The cases I profile reflect this spillage. They reveal how national and urban cultural politics interdependently shape the warp and woof of museum practice in countries of different sizes, populations, and degrees of cultural centralization, and how the globalization of the museum sector weaves itself between the threads.

THE METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

Between 2009 and 2013, I spoke with nearly 185 curators, policy makers, academics, museum directors, and educators in seven cities around the world.⁵⁴ My respondents work at a variety of museums, not simply official “national” institutions, because all are sites where the global, national, and local, and the relationship between them, get worked out. While I could not visit all the museums in each city (Stockholm alone boasts more than eighty museums), I explore how much museums see themselves as part of a larger ecology within which each institution plays a unique role.

To get at how museums create diverse communities both within and beyond their borders, I selected three pairs of cases with several goals in mind. The first was to compare how the different stages in the arc of nation building and world claiming affect museums' position on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum. Denmark and Sweden are postempire and, despite limited colonial forays in the past, have long since abandoned pretensions of superpower status. As it turns out, they use museums to make sense of their place in the world, not to claim to be its leader. In Copenhagen, museums used the global to reassert the national, while in Stockholm and Gothenburg they put the country's inherent cosmopolitanism on display, as a good thing in and of itself that also

strengthens the nation. The United States, depending upon where you sit, is still at the height of its power or is on the decline. As we will see, using museums to create citizens who engage actively and effectively in the world is less of a priority in a country where many residents still believe they live in the world's preeminent superpower. In many of the museums in Boston and New York that I look at, the national gets cosmopolitanized through its internal diversity, which gets linked, only occasionally, to the world at large. In contrast, the city-states of Singapore and Qatar are both small, centralized, aspiring global players that use museums to display nations created from the start in conversation with carefully chosen aspects of cosmopolitanism.

Each site is also going through (or has already undergone) major demographic shifts that are strongly shaped by the diversity management regimes in place. Boston and New York have always been diverse cities, though in different ways, located in a country that understands itself as such. Museums do their work in a context where the starting point is difference and newcomers are allowed and expected to become part of the whole. Because "the market provides," the government does not use social institutions actively or explicitly to bring about the society it deems fit.

While, in this book, I touch briefly on the Smithsonian Institution as the country's national museum, I quickly return to the regional cultural landscapes of Boston and New York. This is because the United States is so much bigger, with respect to size and population, than the other sites I explore. How the nation is imagined and understood varies dramatically by region. Many of the country's former industrial cities are home to outstanding encyclopedic museums that easily hold their own against Washington, D.C. These institutions, in cities like Chicago, Houston, Kansas City, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, as well as Boston and New York, ensure that no one city is the preeminent cultural center.

While Swedish and Danish narratives have long been about being tolerant though homogenous, both nations now struggle with their heightened diversity caused by recent immigration. They have vacillated between periods of extreme generosity and extremely strict immigration and naturalization policies. These battles play out against the backdrop of dramatic reductions in welfare benefits and the urgent need, felt in some corners, to define the nation more clearly in the face of European Union membership.⁵⁵ In this context, cultural institutions represent difference from a starting point of similarity, where social policies are important tools for pursuing social goals.

In Singapore and Doha, both relatively young countries, ethnic and racial diversity is strongly managed by the state, which actively determines who is in and who is out. Citizens are generously provided for, while noncitizens, who are permanently impermanent, have almost no rights. Recent influxes of long-term and temporary migrants layered onto these already diverse settings only complicate the difficult task of figuring out who the nation is and what its place in the world will be.

The museums I studied are also located in places that form natural pairs frequently compared with each other. The cultural worlds of New York and Boston often develop in

conversation (or at least Boston would have it that way). Sweden and Denmark frequently define themselves, or are defined by the world, in relation to each other. Many times, analysts speak of Doha and Singapore in the same breath. Both are entrepôts, city-states, and seen as “punching above their weight” in their efforts to achieve greater global prominence.

Finally, I was attracted by what certain institutions seemed to be saying about themselves with their names. What did an institution called the Museum of World Culture or the Asian Civilizations Museum think it was doing? What would the Museum of Islamic Art or Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art actually put on display?

I hope to contribute novel insights into old debates about cosmopolitanism, migration, and museums by asking new questions about old settings and asking old questions in new ones. I have tried to add nuance to studies of cosmopolitanism by listening closely to how it has been expressed, has materialized, and has been displayed in different parts of the world. My goal, however, was not to produce a grand theory about museums and globalization. Rather, I wanted to understand how the people, ideas, and tangible and intangible cultural forms that are the stock and trade of museums, and that circulate across and through the global, national, and urban levels of my analyses, land on the continuum of cosmopolitan nationalism in particular places, and why. I have tried to tell my story so that museum professionals, colleagues, students, and my ninety-five-year-old father will all want to read it. There is a book in the text and a second, more theoretical book in the footnotes. This is the only way to produce serious scholarship that reaches beyond academic borders.

I join a small but growing number of observers devising new ways to study global processes. Researchers who follow ideas, things, or groups across different sites, and the connections between them, have taken an important step forward.⁵⁶ Others who look at how people and objects are integrated into different types of networks that span spaces and scales have too.⁵⁷ What I do here is describe and explain various sites of encounter—how and why global museum assemblages come to ground in specific places. I then turn this question on its head and ask why particular histories and culture, institutions, and demography combine to produce different versions of cosmopolitan nationalism. In each chapter, a different part of the puzzle features more prominently in my account because, in that place, at that moment, it was the engine that naturally drove my story forward.

Analyses produced by experts who study countries and regions for long periods of time are very important. We need people with deep linguistic, cultural, and historical fluency. But in today’s world, we also need deep analyses of several different places that illuminate the broad social patterns they share, or what Richard Wilk called their “structures of common difference.”⁵⁸ Tony Judt, in an homage to Isaiah Berlin,⁵⁹ described himself in one of his last books as “decidedly not a hedgehog. I have no big theory of contemporary European history to propose in these pages,” he wrote, “no single, all embracing story to tell.” It doesn’t mean, he goes on to say, that European history has no thematic shape. Rather, “fox-like Europe knows many things.”⁶⁰ For me, Judt makes an

important methodological point. We also need accounts that are more foxlike, that do not pretend to capture every detail of the places they describe, but that produce valuable insights precisely because they see the forest *and* the trees—and the patterns that unite them.

This approach, not surprisingly, is imperfect. To do it right, you have to be clear about what you can and cannot claim based on your findings, to own up to what you know and cannot know. You have to do your homework, depending on the hedgehogs in a particular field and trying to read in languages you might not speak. You cannot be a cowboy ethnographer, who gallops in on a high horse, believing it is possible to see everything quickly and easily from your saddle. But most important, you must proceed with great humility, asking colleagues to guide and accompany you along the way. “In music,” write Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz, “to accompany other players entails more than simply adding new sounds to the mix. Accompaniment requires attention, communication, and cooperation. It means augmenting, accenting, or countering one music voice with another.”⁶¹ Many generous museum professionals, scholars, and friends have accompanied me during this project. For that, I am very grateful.