

Post-life Performances

A study of enactments of subject- and objecthood of the human remains called “Maren i Myra” at the National Museum of Science and Technology



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Summary:

Because human remains challenge the distinction of subjects and objects, it remains an ethical dilemma as well as a curatorial conundrum, how and if, human remains should partake in museums' production of knowledge. While museological literature attentive to this relation tends to focus on how museums enact this within the framework of the exhibition, fewer accounts assess how human remains can enact subject- and objecthood in different strands of museological practice, often behind the scenes. By applying a relational and performative approach to museology, this thesis examines how museum workers' embodied and sensorially involved practices allow for distinctly different insights from that of the curated museum display, thus challenging ideas of how museums generate and mediate knowledge about their objects. Ultimately, the thesis argues that corporally attuned human remains exhibitions, that facilitate amplification of subjecthood through recognition of shared materiality, could advance efforts on ethically sensitive displays of human remains.

The focal point of the study is the human remains known as Maren i Myra, and the museum professionals at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology where Maren is currently exhibited.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION – Why am I doing this?	1
1.1 Human as Object	1
1.2 Aim of the Thesis	1
2.0 OPERATIONALIZATION – What am I investigating?	4
2.1 Maren	4
2.1 Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology	6
3.0 BACKGROUND – How has “This” been understood?	7
3.1 Bodies in the Museum	7
3.2 Collecting Human Remains	8
3.3 Anthropological Collections	9
3.4 Medical Collections	11
3.5 Changes in Museum Policy	12
3.6 Human Remains in Norway	14
4.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION – How can I understand “this” now?	15
4.1 Introduction	15
4.2 Relational Museology	16
4.3 Museums and Performance	17
4.4 Emotions	18
4.5 An Ethics of Human Remains	19
4.6 Subject/Object Encounters	20
4.7 Touch and Ethics	21
4.8 Re-thinking Vision	21
4.9 Museum as Meeting	22
5.0 METHODOLOGY - With what means?	23
5.1 Introduction	23
5.2 The Methodologies	24
5.3 Epistemological Positioning	25
5.4 Reflexivity and Voice	25
5.5 Interest and Background	26
5.6 Self-Reflexivity	26
5.7 Consent	27
5.8 Informants	28
5.9 The Interviews	29
6.0 DIRECT OBSERVATION – What insights does it give? (I)	31

6.1 The Case Study – Investigating Maren	31
6.2 Maren on Display	32
6.3 At Oslo University Hospital	32
6.4 At the Museum	34
7.0 ANALYSIS – What insights does it give? (II)	36
7.1 The Logic of the Chapter	36
7.2 Backstage Performance	37
7.4 Frontstage Performance	41
7.6 Summary of the Analysis	46
8.0 DISCUSSION – What are the implications of these insights?	48
8.1 Recognition of Subjecthood Through Performance	48
8.2 Reconsidering Ethical Display Grounded in Performance	49
8.3 Performance and Museum Epistemologies	52
9.0 CONCLUSION - What are the findings of the thesis?	52
9.1 Summary of the Findings	53
9.2 Moving Forwards	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56
Interviews	64
ATTACHMENTS	65
Translated material	65
Situational Map	71

1.0 INTRODUCTION – Why am I doing this?

1.1 Human as Object

Museums generate discourses on the significance and implications of *things*. This thesis examines the implications of collecting and displaying a very particular type of museum object: human remains. The plethora of different things in a museum demand a way for humans to classify and systemize both the things and their various interpretations. But what happens when the human material itself enters the display? In a recent publication, the British Museum states that human remains “*should never be treated or referred to as objects*”¹ (italics added). But if they are not objects – what are they? And if they should not be treated as objects - how should they be treated? The ICOM Code of Ethics § 2.5 states: “Collections of human remains and material of sacred significance should be acquired only if they can be housed securely and cared for respectfully”². How respect can and should be constructed within the museum setting, however, is far from evident.

In most societies there are strong conventions that regulate how to deal with the dead, resulting in, limited settings where human remains are encountered. A funeral service is one, a museum is another. Now, there are more than a few things that distinguish a skeleton in an anatomical museum from being in the presence of the lifeless body of a friend or a loved one, but perhaps less than one would think. The way the British Museum publication.³, addresses human remains, with an emphasis on dignity and respect, seems more closely related to a funerary setting, than that of a collection of, for instance, Egyptian pottery. So, isn't it strange that human remains are found in the company of pottery, jewelry, fabrics, tools and very many other things, - things that people by and large have less mixed feelings towards? This conundrum puts museums in a peculiar position, and lately there has been a growing sense of discomfort regarding the display of human remains in museums.

1.2 Aim of the Thesis

With this backdrop, the thesis sets out to explore how human remains are enacted in museums – how they act and are acted upon. I will argue that human remains take on different

¹ Antoine, “Curating Human remains” 3

² ICOM, “Code of Ethics”, 10

³ Fletcher et. al., “Regarding the Dead”, 3

meanings and roles in different contexts, where object and subject status are constantly negotiated.

The focal point of the study is the body of a woman called “Maren I Myra”, currently exhibited at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology. How does aspects of “object-ness” and “human-ness” play out in the museum practice, the reflections on, and the interactions with and around Maren? To investigate this, the study employs direct observation and participant observation at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology and in other relevant sites, as well as in-depth interviews with museum staff. As I will discuss in the background chapter, an overwhelming body of museological literature deals with the care of and the repatriation of human remains. Comparatively, few accounts assess the philosophical and ethical implications of human remains entering a sphere primarily dedicated to human design – objects, and the transformations that arise in this shift. I believe this discussion is relevant to the study of human remains in museums, and to museology in general, as it is of great importance that museological research engage in the vital inquiry that revolves around questions such as, “How can museum objects perform subjecthood?” and “How do museums infer knowledge about human remains as museum objects?”

My research aim is therefore: To investigate what happens to a human body once it enters a museum collection. I will study this through the case study of Maren, with a particular focus on negotiations concerning the ontological dichotomy of objects/ subjects that surround Maren. I believe this perspective to be of central museological concern, as it touches upon a fundamental consideration: How to understand the entities on display and their relation to the observers as human beings.

The attention towards the object/subject dichotomy is not so much a search for the «true nature» of Maren, but rather takes Maren as case study since 1) Maren was once a living human being, and 2) Maren is today in an institution that stores and cares for objects. As a result of this, I argue that human-ness and object-ness are both latently embedded in Maren and are continually activated by external intervention. But how does this play out in museum practice? This is what the thesis attempts to answer.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Having introduced the aim of the thesis, chapter nr. 2 “OPERATIONALIZATION” presents the case study and the museum around which the thesis revolves around. Chapter nr 3. “BACKGROUND” investigates how questions regarding human remains have been answered in the past, while chapter 4. “THEORETICAL FOUNDATION” considers perspectives that can be useful for answering these questions in relation to the specific operationalization, as presented in chapter 2. Chapter nr. 5. “METHODOLOGY” introduces the methods of inquiry, while chapter nr. 6. “DIRECT OBSERVATION” looks at the insights gained through observation. Chapter 7. “ANALYSIS”, presents the analysis findings. Chapter 8. “DISCUSSION”, expand on the analysis findings and explore the implications of them. The final chapter, “CONCLUSION” presents the core findings of the study.

2.0 OPERATIONALIZATION – What am I investigating?

2.1 Maren

The body of a woman whose real name and identity are unknown, is currently on display at the Norwegian Museums of Science and Technology (NMST) under the name “Maren I Myra”. Maren is thought to have lived in Oslo and died between the years 1830s and 1880s.⁴ The body of Maren is saponified, a chemical process where the fatty tissues are transformed to adipocere, or “corpse wax”.⁵ After being excavated around 1900, Maren was stored at Oslo University Hospital, whereby she at one point was hanging vertically inside a wooden closet.⁶ In a master’s thesis written by Anissa Leerberg in 2017⁷, Eivind Bagle, who was employed at NMST at the this time, recalls that Maren had been used as a practical joke aimed at people who came to visit Rettsmedisinsk Institutt.⁸ The reason behind Maren’s transferal was at the initiation of the National Medical Museum, which was incorporated into the already existing NMST. Maren has since been on continuous display, exhibited from 2003 to date, in the medical exhibition “Sunn sjel i et sunt legeme” (a healthy mind in a healthy body) in a context that represent Maren as a victim of cholera. Examinations from 2019 have increased the medical knowledge on Maren, but no tests have yet been conducted to verify if Maren had cholera, although this is a possibility. This is one of many reasons that NMST are now planning a new exhibition on medicine, where Maren will have a central role. The exhibition has the working title “Kropp – I behandling” (The body – In process) and is to be opened early 2021.⁹

Maren is particularly interesting as a case study in this context because of several *transgressive aspects* that challenge the way one thinks about objects in a museum setting. The chemical process that has transformed Maren’s physicality is substantial compared to the decomposition human bodies typically undergo. Maren’s transformation is truly a hybrid of natural and social construction. The materiality is already challenging the liminality of subjects and objects when turning into a wax-like substance; a familiar material, utilized in the daily life of most humans. Yet this is given more gravity as Maren enters the museum

⁴ Lefkadiou and Skogstad, «Rapport om Maren i Myra».

⁵ Hanganu, “Saponification Processes”, 2949

⁶ Lefkadiou and Skogstad, «Rapport om Maren i Myra».

⁷ Leerberg, “Behind the Glass Case”

⁸ Leerberg, “Behind the Glass Case”, xv, xxiv

⁹ Teknisk Museum, “Medisinske Rom. Bakgrunn”

sphere. Museums have the ability, and the power, to transform subjects into objects, in a process of *musealization*. Moreover, Valerie Casey has stated that “Museums do not just gather valuable objects but make objects valuable by gathering them.”¹⁰ This entails that the musealization classifies Maren as a museum object, while at the same time bestows a value to Maren-as-object.

These institutionalized views of the museum coincide with the material and ideological products of institutionalized medical practices, given that Maren is exhibited in a medical exhibition. Problematizations of medical perspectives on the body or “medical gaze(s)” have increased at least since Foucault’s perspectives in “The Birth of the Clinic” that problematize a what he identifies as a reductionist and fragmented view on bodies.¹¹ While this is a contested and complex issue, it could be suggested medical perspectives can also bestow meaning to Maren-as-object. In summary, Maren has long historical ties to both museological and medical “social worlds” and is today presented in a framework that merges the two at the National Medical Museum, which is a part of NMST.

Another reason for Maren being an interesting case study is the relatively recent changes in museum practices, particularly in terms of exhibiting human remains. For instance, two saponified bodies were excavated in Philadelphia, USA, in 1874, one man and one woman. “Soap Man” was on display at the The Smithsonian Museum until 1991.¹² Physical Anthropologist David Hunt has stated that parts of the reason that Soap Man was removed from the exhibition, was because of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), this despite the fact that the body was not of native American, but of German descent.¹³ The “Soap Lady”, however, is still on display at the Mütter Museum, which is part of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia. From my research it appears that there are no other saponified bodies on display in the Western museum world, (Europe and the US) – this makes Maren a unique case.

As with the case of the Smithsonian, when museums move towards restrictive approaches because of NAGPRA and similar legislation, the consequences also affect other remains on display, where some museums limit access to the collections.¹⁴ Despite this, NMST appears to be choosing an approach that seems to go against the trends of the time, advocating for the

¹⁰ Casey, “The museum effect”, 2

¹¹ Foucault, “The Birth”

¹² Smithsonian, “Soap Man”

¹³ Baskas, Hidden Treasures, 150

¹⁴ The Huntarian, “Anatomy Museum”

display of Maren, despite reasons that would typically weigh heavily in this regard, such as the relatively short time passed since death, the lack of consent, as well as it being a more or less complete body, rather than body parts or fragments, - which also tends to be of importance when deciding whether to display or not. Yet – this is a contested issue, so too at NMST. These considerations highlight the complexities of human remains and make both Maren an interesting case, and make the staff at NMST very interesting informants, because we have the chance to observe the staff being faced with these reflections and dilemmas.

2.1 Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology

The NMST is a “national museum in Oslo, Norway, for technology industry, natural sciences and medicine.”¹⁵ A mission for the museum is to communicate “the connection between technology, medicine and culture through time”¹⁶ Both “medicine” and “culture through time” are currently important aspects of the contextualization of Maren being exhibited in a medical exhibition that displays the efforts to cure diseases during the last 150 years (since 2003).¹⁷ The NMST has since 2002, held responsibility for the National Medical Museum (NMM), which was established as a result of the history of medicine collection at OUS (Oslo University Hospital) being transferred to NMST¹⁸. As the webpage for NMM states, they “collect, research and communicate contemporary and past medical history in a way that is open, interdisciplinary and relevant to societal debate.”¹⁹ Having indeed led to societal debate, Maren’s presence in the museum gives rise to discussions in various media, having activated a community of researchers and stimulated the writing of several master thesis’ preceding this current one.²⁰

While it would perhaps seem obligatory to include photos of Maren or other human remains, it is consciously decided to not reproduce any representations of human remains in the thesis. Here, I agree with the sentiment of philosopher Hilde Hein who warns that reproductions can have an “eroding effect upon aesthetic sensibility that comes from

¹⁵ Teknisk Museum, «Om Museet»

¹⁶ Teknisk Museum, «Om Museet»

¹⁷ Teknisk Museum, «Historien om Nasjonalt Medisinsk Museum»

¹⁸ Teknisk Museum, «Historien om Nasjonalt Medisinsk Museum»

¹⁹ Teknisk Museum, «Nasjonalt Medisinsk Museum»

²⁰ In addition to Leerberg, “Behind the Glass Case“, see Matland, ”Retention and display“; Straume, ”Exhibiting the dead body“. NMST employee and informant Kjersti Lind has also written a master thesis on human remains at the museum, see ”Fosterpreparater på utstilling”.

substituting a replicated object for an authentic one.”²¹ The importance of this kind of sensitivity is precisely what I wish to discuss.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, I will briefly discuss my decision to write this thesis in English. During my fieldwork, that is to say, participation in discussion and workshops at NMST, the working language between the museum workers was English. Thus, in seeking to investigate the way the museum workers communally talk about Maren, it evolved organically from the fieldwork into notes and memos, in the ambition to remain in proximity of the spoken realities I experienced. Some of the interviews were held in English, but here the majority were held in Norwegian. The majority of these are translated, but some quotes are purposefully quoted in Norwegian to offer both a Norwegian and English paraphrasing together in the text. This was decided in close contact with and with respect to the wishes of the informants. To ensure the transferability of the translated quotes, the original quotes are attached under “Attachments” alongside my translation.

3.0 BACKGROUND – How has “This” been understood?

This chapter investigates both the historical background of human remains in museums, and significant museological debates in the treatment of them. The investigation explores the histories and development of the major disciplines involved with human remains, and how they have formed the museum collections currently on display. The chapter will elaborate upon different museological practices, the impact of new museology, and its effects on issues surrounding human remains. The chapter will ultimately focus on discussions of human remains specifically relevant to Norway

3.1 Bodies in the Museum

What is a body? Human bodies are not only natural, but also cultural constructs. Bodies are personhood: The body is the face, the laughter, the walk your friends recognize as you. The weight of your arm, the sensation of stepping on hot sand. Bodies are the instrument with which we perceive the world, and that through which we are perceived. Yet bodies are also matter, skin, tissue, organs, bones and fragments. In the world of museums, bodies are body

²¹ Hein, “Museum in Transition”, 11

parts, artifacts, specimens, materials, corpses - bodies are constructions; normalcy, pathology, singularity, and they can be *other*. They can be something in between the real and imagined.

Reflecting on the body in the museum context requires careful consideration of these different terminologies, because it underlines presumptions about how both terminology and the perspectives on the entities in question, have come into being within different realms of knowledge. When this thesis employs the terms “object” and “subject”, and similarly, objecthood and subjecthood, it stems both from the notion of “the museum object”, and object as a direction for research. While the term “subject” could be considered as a more distanced than “person” it will be used here as it relates to specific academic efforts that have evolved within the pairing of object and subject.

I will also use the term “human remains”, as a descriptive and classificatory term. Yet, while referring to an array of varying materials, it is also a matter of considerable debate what are to be regarded as human remains. In addition to whole or partial skeletons, the term can also refer to bodies that have been preserved with formaldehyde or through plastination, cremated materials or materials that have changed due to chemical or environmental factors, such as saponification. But what about fossilized remains, or human remains incorporated into artifacts made from other substances? These are regarded as human remains in some legal systems, but not in others, and is a testament to the inherent complexities in grappling with these matters.²² The ambiguity in the subject/object relation is a testament to this, and is partly also why these terminologies are difficult to assess, because the entities themselves are in a constant state of metamorphosis in advance of musealization. Human remains are organic in structure and will, if left untreated after entropy, decompose. But this transformatory nature also surrounds human remains also after conservatory measures have been taken. And moreover, if the materiality were to be frozen in time, its interpretations seems to stay in flux.

3.2 Collecting Human Remains

Human remains serve and have served a multitude of different purposes in museum collections. Among the differing rationales for collecting human remains, scientific development and curiosity have historically been leading motivations.²³ As individual scientific disciplines evolved by the end of the 18th and during the 19th century, collecting practices evolved

²² Giesen and White, “Introduction”, 13

²³ Tracy, “Repatriating Human remains”, 90

accordingly. By the late 19th century, archeology, anthropology and medicine were established into systematic disciplines, similarly *disciplining* their specimens according to the needs and ideals of the prevailing scientific views.

The largest quantities of human remains found in museums today were collected during the 18th and 19th centuries.²⁴ A familiar sight in many museums, the collecting of Egyptian mummies began during the 1800s, and intensified towards the end of the century.²⁵ The aftermath of the Civil War, was a starting point for collecting human remains in North America according to American historian Samuel Redman, who points out that this was a “Common intellectual, cultural and social pursuit, “not only for professional collectors.”²⁶ Thus, as a widely legitimated practice, natural history and anthropology museums would soon seek to build up collections deemed for research, made to support what we today reject as pseudoscientific theories about race.²⁷ Upheld by the anthropological influence of Social Darwinist theory, these theories placed humanity in a hierarchical system based on the assumptions of race as the prime indicator of human development.²⁸ Anthropomorphic examinations of physiological aspects of the human body functioned as its empirical underpinning. Indigenous remains were especially sought-after.²⁹ An effort to obtain consent from communities was rarely in question, and a “systematic desecration and violation of grave sites”³⁰ as Tracey Ireland, notes, was not uncommon.

Knowing that the collection of human remains was a significant accelerator for racist ideologies legitimizing and supporting colonialist ideology, displaying human remains in museums today continues to evoke similar feelings of indignity and suppression, and can be experienced as a continuation, or worse, a justification of the injustices of the past towards indigenous peoples.³¹

3.3 Anthropological Collections

Many of the excavated remains would end up on display in public anthropological, ethnographic, or natural history collections. Yet as Wiltschke-Schrotta notes, the collecting of human remains was primarily a practice of systemizing human bodies for research, where display was often a secondary aim.³² Even so, as Tony Bennett has observed, "It was with

²⁴ Ireland, “Ethics of Cultural Heritage”, 90

²⁵ Historisk Museum, “The Mummy Lives”, 53

²⁶ Redman, “Bone Rooms”, 17

²⁷ Ireland, “Ethics of Cultural Heritage”, 91

²⁸ Ireland, “Ethics of human remains”, 91

²⁹ Redman, “Bone Rooms”, 8 (prologue)

³⁰ Ireland, “Ethics of Human Remains”, 91

³¹ Ireland, “Ethics of human remains”, 91; Atkinson, “Meanings and Values”,

³² Brooks and Rumsey, “The body in the Museum”, 17

regard to the display of human remains that the consequences of these principles of classification were most dramatically manifested.”³³ By the 19th century the display of human remains would often depict a version of a constructed evolutionary chronology where contemporary indigenous remains would be placed as the early stage of development.³⁴ Thus, the remains would act as the “physical proof“ of this theoretization. As these practices blatantly illustrate, the display of human remains today has deep ties to the previous ideologies accepted by the museums, the various scientific communities, and by society at large.

A problematization of this colonialist heritage that ties museums and indigenous communities together, is actualized in the exhibition "The dead as far as [] can remember", arranged at the Tieranatomisches Theater in Berlin in autumn 2018³⁵. In one part of the exhibition entitled “Mangi Meli Remains” the execution of Chief Mangi Meli in 1900 is explained. Meli was the leader of the Chagga community at Old Moshi outside Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Tanzania was a German colony, and as someone who refused to comply with the Germans, Chief Meli was hanged and later beheaded, after which Meli's skull was transported to Germany with the intention of being included in racial ideological research. Here it was also acquired by the Ethnologisches Museum, where it is still located today. Over a hundred years later, the story of Chief Meli's skull has been illuminated through this museum exhibit, with the intention of shedding light on the process of returning Meli's skull back to the Old Moshi community. Despite the initiative of the locals, activists and other political figures, this has not yet resulted in it's extradition from the museum.³⁶

The story of Chief Meli's skull bears witness to the violence and dehumanization that characterized the colonialism of the European powers early in the last century. Yet, exhibitions such as ”Mangi Meli remains” are powerful illustrations of how we today can today problematize this history of collecting within the museum itself, and through the museum's prime medium, the exhibition. The legacy of colonialist collecting practices can still be found in museums throughout the Western world today, such as Maori heads (Toi Moko), two of which were kept at the Medical Faculty at University of Oslo, and at the Museum of Cultural History, respectively, until 2011 when they were returned to Te Papa Tongarewa³⁷. Although Chief Meli's skull has still not been returned (as of spring 2020), the

³³ Bennett, “The Birth”, 79

³⁴ Bennett, “The Birth”, 79

³⁵ Hermann von Helmholtz-Zentrum für Kulturtechnik, «The dead as far as [] can remember”

³⁶ Hermann von Helmholtz-Zentrum für Kulturtechnik, «The dead as far as [] can remember”

³⁷ De Nasjonale Forskningsetiske komiteene, «Maorilevninger tilbake til New Zealand”

general development suggests that the Chagga community could be successful in having it returned in the future.

While anthropological collections feature the majority of the collected human remains, medical collections make up the other central domain for the retention and collection of human materials, which will be explored in the following.

3.4 Medical Collections

Human materials have a long history of usage in the medicinal and anatomical disciplines. Ever since the beginning of dissections as a tool for learning, there have been efforts to preserve and display human remains in ways that avoid disintegration and facilitate observation.³⁸ Collections of human remains typically formed around educational institutions and research centers, some addressing the specific needs of medical students, others open to the curious gaze of the general public.

Medical or anatomy museums' rationale for collecting appears to be more easily legitimized, often justified through the connection of human remains for the development of medicinal knowledge for future advancements. Furthermore, the racially motivated practices that were symptomatic of the collecting practices of physical anthropology, were less frequent in medical collecting.³⁹ But the issue of consent is still troubling; many of the bodies used as anatomical specimens in the medical collections belonged to the impoverished, or criminal offenders that could not afford the luxury to decide what would happen to their body after death.⁴⁰ Not only is this problematic in terms of the dignity of current human remains on display, but it can also reinforce attitudes in the present, reproducing past narratives through current displays.

The question of consent is not exclusively a matter that belongs to the past. A much-discussed legislation specific to the collecting of medical specimens was established in the UK in 2004 as a direct consequence of the what is known as the Alder Hay scandal, where systematic retention of tissue, - children's hearts, specifically – was conducted post-mortem, despite the lack of informed consent from the parents.⁴¹ Therefore, when the Human Tissue Act was enacted, the fundamental principle of the legislation was the requirement of consent.⁴² This is

³⁸ Redman, “Bone Rooms”, 127

³⁹ Redman, “Bone Rooms”, 129

⁴⁰ Lock, “Human Body Parts”, 224

⁴¹ Herring, “Sharing Bodies”, 43; Brooks and Rumsey, “The Body in the Museum”, 282

⁴² Human Tissue Authority, “Human Tissue Act 2004”

relevant to UK museums in a number of ways, for one thing it requires museums to hold a license in order to retain and display human remains.⁴³

The question of who medical collections are necessary for, is vital. Are there reasons to believe that it can advance knowledge and scientific achievement in the future, or it is for entertainment or more general educational purposes? All have traditionally been ideals the museums have catered to, but in the matter of human remains, it is debatable whether they should both be catered to equally. Today, medical collections in museums are to a lesser degree involved the education of medical professionals,⁴⁴ and some medical museums are known to have made restrictions to the access and display of human remains, such as the Hunterian collection in Glasgow, which generally limit visits to qualified visitors by appointment.⁴⁵ Thus, changes are taking place in both visitors and museum practice, which will be explored in the following.

3.5 Changes in Museum Policy

When did museums begin to express concerns towards displaying human remains in their collections? When the unwrapping of mummies was a popular event to attract visitors in Western museums, the British Museum would still preserve most of the mummies in their original wrappings.⁴⁶ The trustees of the museums allegedly refused any unwrapping, as it would “destroy the integrity of the collection”.⁴⁷ Other early efforts at ethical considerations began around the 1960s, coinciding with activism from both inside and outside of the museums⁴⁸. At this time, extensive efforts from indigenous groups materialized in demands for repatriation.⁴⁹ A wave of criticism stemming from the 1960s would also have attributed to change within the field of archeology, taking what Tracy Ireland has called a “socially conscious” turn.⁵⁰

It is some of these objectives that re-emerge in a movement known as “New Museology” in the 1980s. The museums’ mandate and corresponding ability to present a true and authentic view of the world is challenged by this paradigm shift in museological discourse⁵¹.

Manifested in the volume with the same name, edited by Peter Vergo,⁵² it placed new

⁴³ Antoine, “Curating Human remains”, 5

⁴⁴ Redman, “Bone Rooms”, 127

⁴⁵ The Hunterian “Anatomy Museum”

⁴⁶ Wills et al., “Remains from Archeological Contexts”, 57

⁴⁷ Wills et. al., “Remains from Archeological Contexts”, 57

⁴⁸ McCall and Gray, “Museums and New Museology”, 22

⁴⁹ Ireland, “Ethics of human remains”, 92

⁵⁰ Ireland, “Ethics of human remains”, 92

⁵¹ Gorman, “Universalism”, 150

⁵² Vergo, *New Museology*

demands on museums, challenging the previously unquestioned knowledge production within museum establishments⁵³ Directly relevant to human remains debates, new museology also advocated a shift towards the inclusion of alternative narratives, challenging museum institutions hegemony, where the “how” and “why” behind the collecting practices of the past, became pressing issues in the present.⁵⁴

Consequentially, human remains could no longer be viewed as neutral remnants that passively confirmed a particular narrative. Legislative actions that ensued from this were taken in the US in 1990, where NAGPRA that would seek to transfer all Native American human remains to their indigenous ancestor communities.⁵⁵ The law would spur reactions in the museum world and contribute to similar initiatives towards the repatriation of indigenous remains in Australia and New Zealand⁵⁶. Addressing these issues, either because of protesters and activists, or an initiative of museum staff, many museums would attempt to right past wrongs, either by initiatives of repatriation, outreach or other ways of involvement from affected communities.⁵⁷ This led to human remains taking part in a plurality of narratives, many reaching far outside of the museum sphere and connecting to stories of national and political identity, where their journeys would often lead to ceremonial burial.

One example that gained considerable media attention was the repatriation and reburial of Sara Baartman, also known under the stage name “Hottentot Venus”.⁵⁸ Baartman was brought to England as a slave from the Cape of Good Hope in 1810 by Alexander Dunlop, a naval surgeon who exported museum specimens and traded them to other collectors.⁵⁹ Baartman was presented as a curiosity and Londoners were allowed by the showmen to look at, and even touch Baartman’s body, for the price of two shillings.⁶⁰ As an “object of knowledge” for anthropologists and other scientists, it claimed Baartman to be what Tony Bennett has described as “the missing link necessary to account for the transition between animal and human history.”⁶¹ This objectification continued after her death, Baartmans skeleton and a cast that was made of her body were exhibited in Musée de l’Homme in Paris, until the 1970s when the museum faced scrutiny, particularly from feminists who opposed the display.⁶² In

⁵³ McCall and Grey, “Museums and New Museology”, 20

⁵⁴ Gorman, *Universalism*, 150

⁵⁵ Hutt and Riddle, “Law of Human Remains”, 236

⁵⁶ Hutt and Riddle, “Law of Human Remains”, 228-229

⁵⁷ Jenkins, “Contesting Human remains”, 1

⁵⁸ Qureshi, “Peoples on Parade”, 2

⁵⁹ Qureshi, “Peoples on Parade”, 108-109

⁶⁰ Qureshi, “Peoples on Parade”, 146-147

⁶¹ Bennett, “The Birth”, 78

⁶² Bennett, “The Birth”, 78

2002 Baartmans remains were repatriated, and a ceremonial burial was held the same year, at which South African President Thabo Mbeki announced that the story of Sara Baartman was not simply a story of an individual, and spoke of what he expressed as “our reduction to the state of objects who could be owned, used and discarded by others.”⁶³

Back in the museums, skeptics of repatriation initiatives worried empty glass cases would be the new *modus operandi*, but as of now there are still large quantities of human remains in Western museums; museums in the UK holding about 61 000 alone.⁶⁴ However, a large portion of the them are stored in cabinets and boxes, rather than exhibited on display. But as for the promises of changed attitudes - some changes are slow to implement: As late as in 2019, the Natural History Museum in London offered the descendants the Torres Strait remains shared custody, to which one of the affected commented:

“They sent one of their guys to talk to us... he asked a couple of questions around the idea of shared rights, and I said: “I can't see how you would think that I would even entertain that – I mean...Which human being on this planet would want to share one of their family members? This is not some kind of object or property.”⁶⁵

3.6 Human Remains in Norway

Discussions surrounding human remains in Norway have only recently (i.e. in the last 10-15 years) been starting to take place. Human remains collections in Norway are today divided between the five archeological museums (Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, Oslo and Tromsø) and the Schreiner Collections, at UiO, where about half of the total number are stored.⁶⁶ The remains at these institutions have been collected over the past 150 years. Historically, there was a significant upsurge in excavations during the time of Kristian Emil Schreiner, anatomy professor and leader of the anthropological collection between 1908 and until his death in 1945.⁶⁷ At this time Schreiner and the Anatomical Institute were also responsible for excavating a large number of Sami burial grounds, with the intention of conducting anthropomorphic research.⁶⁸

To a large extent, the main discussions surrounding human remains in Norway arise from reactions on the retainment of Sami remains by the Anatomical Institute. In 1985 Niilas Somby, a descendant of Mons Aslaksen Somby, one of the leaders of the Sami uprising in

⁶³ Zilwa, “Sold as a slave”, 12; Qureshi, “Peoples on Parade”, 282.

⁶⁴ Jenkins, “Contesting Human Remains”, 3

⁶⁵ Shariatmadari, «They're not property»

⁶⁶ Sellevold, «Etikk og gamle skjeletter»

⁶⁷ Sellevold, “Norway”, 317

⁶⁸ Kyllingstad, “Norwegian Physical Anthropology”

1852, asked to have the remains handed over for reburial. In 1997, a similar request was made by Aslak Jakobsen Hætta, for his grandfather's remains, also a fellow Sami leader.⁶⁹

After intense discussions in Stortinget, at the University of Oslo, and in several governmental bodies, the request was met, and the remains were buried in 1997. The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains was founded in 2008 as a direct consequence of this.⁷⁰ The committee offers advice on ethical issues regarding human remains and accommodate inquiries from the research communities, museums and cultural heritage institutions.⁷¹ The members of the committee represent different professional backgrounds such as archeology, medicine, ethics, and the field of cultural heritage.⁷² The emergence of this institutional body serves as an indication of changes in values in the scientific communities and museums. While the advice from the committee is not binding, recommendations can still carry considerable symbolic weight.

As this chapter has explored, human remains have taken part in museum collections for various reasons and in many different contexts. These different histories have brought about changes that impact upon how human remains are treated and reflected on in museums today. In the following chapter I will look more closely at different ways to understand the dynamics of display and what it does to the human remains exhibited.

4.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION – How can I understand “this” now?

4.1 Introduction

Building on the insights from the background chapter, I will designate this chapter to expand on specific theoretical tools and perspectives relevant for the discussion of Maren, namely relational museology, museums and performance, emotions, ethics of human remains, subject/object encounters, as well as perspectives on touch, vision and meetings in the museum. Whilst a considerable part of human remains scholarship from the US and UK addresses issues of a juridical and repatriative nature,⁷³ a growing body of literature focuses on the display of human remains specifically, and museological representations of bodies in general. This ranges from, (but is not limited to); discussions on the ethical implications of display,⁷⁴ display and

⁶⁹ Sellevold, «Etikk og gamle skjeletter»

⁷⁰ Sellevold, «Etikk og gamle skjeletter»

⁷¹ De Nasjonale Forskningsetiske komiteene, «Skjelettutvalget»

⁷² De Nasjonale Forskningsetiske komiteene, «Medlemmer»

⁷³ Alberti, “Display the Dead”, 133

⁷⁴ See: Alberti, “Display the dead”; Linke, “Touching the Corpse”; Glesen, “Curating Human remains”

scientific ideals,⁷⁵ and embodied representations of cultural and ethnic minorities,⁷⁶ to the use of technological advancements in reconstructive visualization of human materials.⁷⁷ The thesis puts forwards that Maren is understood to have latent properties of both subject and objecthood. Explorations of this relation have attracted notable efforts within museological research,⁷⁸ although to a larger extent from the fields of Science and Technology-Studies, Anthropology and Philosophy, some of which I will investigate in this chapter. I will pay particular attention to exploring the subject/object dimension with regards to ethical treatment. However, to begin, I present the central museological approach that the thesis draws on, namely relational museology.

4.2 Relational Museology

Employing a relational perspective towards museology,⁷⁹ can be described as an effort to “re-imagine the contemporary museum as connected, plural, distributed, multi-vocal, affective, material, embodied, experiential, political, performative and participatory,”⁸⁰ As noted by researcher on material culture, Torgeir Bangstad, the critical museology that arose at the beginning of the 21st century, which postulated distance to the museums as a premise for criticism, risked separating the museology practiced at universities and research centers from the reality of museum professionals.⁸¹ Relational museology, then, can be seen as various attempts at bridging the role of the critic with a situated and material-sensitive perspective from within the museum. Applying a relational perspective to the investigation of Maren, entails a view of knowledge production where data can build on affective, situational and performative experiences. This theoretical perspective guides the methodological approach, as I will return to in chapter 5. In the following I will highlight some core relational aspects employed in the study of Maren, starting with the notion of performance.

⁷⁵ For examples, see Jenkins “Contesting Human remains” and “Keeping their Marbles”; Fforde, “Collecting the Dead”

⁷⁶ For examples, see Henningsen, “Subversion”; Mathiesen, “Still Standing”; Varutti, “Materializing the Past”

⁷⁷ See Hjemdahl, “Facing Skeletons”;

⁷⁸ Such as Dudley, “Museum Objects: Experiencing Properties”; Gladstone and Berlo “The body”; Brooks and Rumsey “The Body in the Museum”;

⁷⁹ For examples, see Dudley, “Museum Materialities”; Damsholt and Simonsen, “Materialiseringer”; Witcomb, “Re-imagining”; Leahy, “Museum Bodies”;

⁸⁰ Grewcock, “Doing Museology Differently”, 5

⁸¹ Bangstad, “Verdens speil”, 63

4.3 Museums and Performance

Museums are often likened to theaters, a comparison that reaches back to the early museums and the representational universes of the curiosity cabinets, or “*theatrum mundi*”⁸². Museum studies scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett have suggested, that “Exhibitions are fundamentally theatrical, for they are how museums perform the knowledge they create”⁸³ Recent museological studies have re-established this connection to the theatre by identifying *actors in performance*. This entails a shift where the museums visitors experience museum exhibitions through immersion with their bodily selves, what British professor of Museology Helen Rees Leahy view as museums moving from “an informing to a performing museology”.⁸⁴ An agentic view of objects has in various ways been implemented in the study of museums since Alfred Gell’s classic volume “Art and Agency”⁸⁵ This has been applied to studies of museums to explore how museum objects mediate agency through social connections. While this thesis is not employing an ANT-approach, there are commonalities between ANT and relational museology; one being a vocabulary to address the social action of both human and non-human entities, (which in Maren’s case, is not easily distinguished). Thus, this thesis employs a perspective where visitors and objects are co-constructive of performance. As a term encountered in many different situations, I will here understand performance as *forms of presentation*, that often accompanies an element of “coming together”, (quite like a theatrical production). One way of articulating this is through what Dutch philosopher and ethnographer Annemarie Mol’s concept of *enactment*.⁸⁶ To illustrate this term, Mol proposes an approach where a body is seen, not as a singular entity, but as “The body multiple”. Imagine the co-existence of different narratives from patient, doctor, medical x-rays, etc., on the state of a phenomenon, an illness. In Mol’s understanding these are not different reports on the same illness, but several parallel “illnesses”, that all relate to a common denominator bound together by the same name.⁸⁷ What I find attractive about this perspective is the way authority is not concentrated in one dominant narrative, or interpretation. The crux in Mol’s reasoning, however, is how the different narratives are brought together again to emulate synchrony: “Since enactments come in plural, the crucial question to ask about them is how they are

⁸² Greenhill, “Shaping of Knowledge”, 80; Van Holst, “Connoisseurs”, 103

⁸³ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Destination Culture” 3,

⁸⁴ Leahy, “Museum Bodies”, 2

⁸⁵ Gell, “Art and Agency”, 7,

⁸⁶ Mol, “The Body Multiple”

⁸⁷ Mol, “The Body Multiple”, 3

coordinated”.⁸⁸ The interplay and tensions between the narratives can all exist in parallel ontologies, or different parameters of knowledge – but are somehow anchored to the body.

A related articulation on the topic of coordinating performances is presented by Canadian social scientist Erving Goffman, who in an important study re-purposed the theatrical metaphors of “backstage” and “frontstage” to refer to human interactions, thus identifying individuals varying performances as relative to their audiences.⁸⁹ By identifying the museum as a social actor, I will extend this performative concepts into the analysis, where I will expand on this application, in section 7.1.

4.4 Emotions

Hand in hand with the pluralities of performance is the embodied, affective resonance of performance.⁹⁰ In the context of curating human remains, an awareness towards emotions seems particularly valuable. Firstly, because visitors to exhibitions containing human remains report on experiencing them intensely.⁹¹ Organizational researcher Sherene Suchy finds that years after their visit “Visitors remember who they were with at an exhibition and the quality of the socioemotional connection but very little about the actual exhibition”⁹² rather than objects, - also called “the curatorial turn”.⁹³ If Suchy’s words are taken to heart, it can point towards the exhibition of human remains as particularly impactful because they are the most emotionally charged, and therefore become memorable.

If the museum displays can evoke emotional reactions, what about the tolerance for display of emotions in the museum space? American art historian James Elkins reminds us in a study of people moved to tears in art museums, that a display of emotions can be “muted by collective disapproval”⁹⁴, as the scripted space of the museum can, paradoxically, limit display of emotions, even if the curatorial ambition is to create emotionally impactful content. Yet the consequence of emotional impact can be significant: Cassman et.al., suggests that “the care and

⁸⁸ Mol “The Body Multiple”, 7-8 (preface)

⁸⁹ Goffman, “Presentation”

⁹⁰ For recent insights on the emotive capacities of museum exhibitions, see Clough and Halley (ed.) “The affective turn”. For perspectives on emotions in a museum context, see Dudley “Museum Materialities”, and “Dreams and Wishes”.

⁹¹ Brooks and Rumsey, “The Body in the Museum”

⁹² Suchy, “Connection”, 48

⁹³ O’Neill, ”The Curatorial Turn”

⁹⁴ Elkins, “Pictures and tears”, xi

management of human remains seems to depend on the degree of distancing or connection that one *feels* toward them.”⁹⁵ (My italics).

I will suggest then, that in order to capture these feelings, it is necessary to view the presence of bodies as instruments of knowledge creation. This not only encompasses the bodies or remains on display, but also the corporal apparatus of museums workers and visitors, that experienced them. This performative approach can be particularly important in the case of Maren, as it could entail that Maren’s impact on the workers emotionally, is relevant in terms of the ethical treatment that is practiced.

4.5 An Ethics of Human Remains

Ethics are normative and primed to guide action, in a way that ensures rightness and justice, and (within the sphere of scientific inquiry, one can add,) to search for the ever-so-fleeting “truth.” But an ethics on human remains, one will find, can both be vague and conflicting in its aims, reflecting the contradicting obligations the museum worker has to their various recipients. Within any one museum setting there are likely to exist several codes of ethics, formulated by the museum institution itself, organizational bodies such as ICOM, other national ethics standards for museums, as well as the ethics regulated by national law. In addition, the museum workers have obligations to display integrity towards the scientific community, the museum visitors, their co-workers, and finally, towards their museum objects.⁹⁶

As such, museums oblige (at least minimally, through ICOM) to treat human remains that are museum objects, ethically. But what aspects of human remains invokes ethical treatment? Perhaps an obvious question, given that Western philosophical tradition, typically reserves moral significance to living humans, alternatively *sentient* beings⁹⁷, thus, suggesting the human origin is what makes human remains ethically relevant. But the possibility for an ethics that includes things has been discussed by several scholars.⁹⁸ Italian scholar Magnani Lorenzo notes that in terms of cultural heritage, non-human entities are sometimes held to a higher ethical standard than humans.⁹⁹ For example, in the wake of the 2019 Notre Dame fire, France’s financial elite quickly promised several hundred million Euros in aid, to the disapproval of some critics who questioned the morality of rescuing materialities.¹⁰⁰ In these situations, ethics reaches far beyond the moral status of humans alone. Thus, when inspecting musealization as

⁹⁵ Cassman et. al. “Introduction”, 1

⁹⁶ Alfonso, “Ethics of Flesh”, 8

⁹⁷ Singer, “Animal Liberation”

⁹⁸ See Latour, “Morality and Technology; Intra, Speaking of Things”; Olsen, “In Defense of Things”

⁹⁹ Lorenzo, “Respecting Things as People” in Adam, “Ethics for Things”, 153

¹⁰⁰ Williams, “Notre Dame Donations”

a process that actively *brings about* value in objects, it does not necessarily deduce that it is Maren *qua* lived human being, that qualifies for treatment by ethical standards. As such, ethical considerations need not be reserved for humans, independently of how this relation is understood in Maren. In the following I will expand on this relation by inspecting different encounters between ambiguous museum objects and observing subjects, and how they can interact.

4.6 Subject/Object Encounters

In the museum, experiences arise through the observers embodied understanding of exhibitions and their museum objects. Thus, when experiencing an object in the museum, one's own involvement as an observer is a constant perceiving and *becoming through the body*. This rooted constitution in materiality is shared between observer and Maren, although I would suggest the museum hinders the possibility for the senses to fully realize this, albeit necessarily so. So what can be encountered?

The shared materiality of visitors, exhibition space and museum objects, is challenged by the very process of musealization: Institutionally, in Foucauldian terms,¹⁰¹ the museum is a space of social, (and quite possibly, moral) sanctioning, prescribing to its observers the acceptable behaviors in the museum. This includes the very notion of the museum object, as an entity to predominantly be studied visually and reflected upon by means of thought. While the turn towards performative museology has impacted upon this, explicit physical boundaries limit access and proximity, such as glass cases and ropes demarcating the exhibition space, are still the norm in many museums.

For instance, at NMST the glass case effectively hinders both touch and conceals Maren's smell, - which is very distinctive, making the observer heavily reliant on visual perception. Yet, the visual performance is constantly mediated, by means of display techniques, texts, lighting and other narrative and spatial elements. Here it might be useful to look to Lacan's concept of the Gaze, which Valerie Casey has formulated as partaking in a "culturally constructed, visual discourse where there is no unmediated, pure relationship between a subject and the object of its view."¹⁰² This presence of "disruptions" between observer and museum object, is what Lacan terms the "screen", as it obstructs the possibility of the observer to establish knowledge independent of that which is mediated. As such, there is a fundamental uncertainty about "what

¹⁰¹ Foucault, "Discipline and Punish"

¹⁰² Casey, "The Museum Effect", 3

the object is and what the object *does*”; that is to say, what Maren can be understood as, and what Maren performs through means of curation in the specific context of a medical exhibition.

4.7 Touch and Ethics

From the above, it follows that the curatorial performance of Maren can affect the observer’s perspective on Maren’s relative subject and objecthood. Yet, what would happen if proximity replaces mediation? Would it even be possible? STS scholar Lucas Introna looks to philosopher Silvia Benso when he suggests that “the site for the ethical encounter is through touch and being touched.”¹⁰³ Introna notes how contact, necessarily involves *tact*, because of the sensitivity of exposure. Whilst you can inspect something visually, without the same inspection directed back at you, you cannot possibly touch, either someone or something, and not be *touched back*.¹⁰⁴ This implies, according to Introna, a sense of “listening in”, where one departs from the distanced observer role in order to attune to the existence of the other.¹⁰⁵ This is a radical shift because the vulnerability of touch is a way to allow the other to affect you, the other’s *world* to affect you, and thus through touch you can recognize the reality and existence of the other. Historically, touch was not estranged from museum practice. Cultural historian Constance Classen has in an insightful article, investigated the history of corporal practices in early museums.¹⁰⁶ Some museum exhibitions in the 17th and 18th century was indeed “hands on”.¹⁰⁷ Classen explains that: “whereas today sight would be considered a more serious way of comprehending museum pieces than touch or smell, in the seventeenth century sight might have been deemed the more superficial or frivolous form of apprehension.”¹⁰⁸ Consequentially, which sense offers the most accurate mediation of a museum object to an observer, is far from self-explanatory.

4.8 Re-thinking Vision

Importantly, a connection between vision and objectification was symptomatic to the displays of human remains in the past, what has been criticized as a “culture of dissection” [which] “presents vision as an incising, objectifying, and ordering activity aimed to seize and appropriate the other.”¹⁰⁹ How can this be avoided with human remains today and with Maren, specifically?

¹⁰³ Introna, “Ethics of Flesh”, 54 and Benso, “The Face of things”

¹⁰⁴ Introna, “Ethics of Flesh”, 54

¹⁰⁵ Introna, “Ethics of Flesh”, 54

¹⁰⁶ Classen, “Museum Manners”

¹⁰⁷ Classen, “Museum Manners”, 897

¹⁰⁸ Classen, “Museum manners”, 906

¹⁰⁹ Belova, “The Event”, 1

Scholar Olga Belova proposes a re-imagining of the act of seeing by referencing Merleau-Ponty's concept of *flesh*. Despite the alarming ring to this term, Belova sees flesh as “sharing a continuous bond, a fabric of experience in which *body and thing interconnect* in the event of living-in-the-world.”¹¹⁰ (my italics) While visitor's possibilities for touch are often difficult to combine with conservatory requirements, the experience of interconnection can be reached through the museums turn towards performance, where curatorial and artistic efforts attempt to subvert physical and ideological separation of the displayed object and observer.¹¹¹

One such effort is artist duo Elmgren and Dragset's installation “Please be quiet!”, at the National Gallery of Denmark, (Statens Museum for Kunst) Copenhagen.¹¹² The installation occupies an enclosed room apart from the main exhibition, separated by a pair of swing doors. As you enter the room and the doors close behind you, you are faced with something that bears a striking similarity to a hospital ward, namely four beds, medical paraphernalia, and three wax figures under white duvets, and one empty bed. While made up of individual objects, it is their unification in this “museum object”, held together ultimately by their label text by the installations entrance doors. Thus, when experiencing the installation, the visitor is indeed embedded inside the object itself. Elsewhere in the museum, the white walls reflect a negotiative space that allows for transitions between artworks. Here, even the white walls are in complete subjugation to the premise of the encompassing object. Therefore, it enforces performance onto the visitor, transforming them to the materialized and conceptualized fleshy substance of the installation, thus making the observing subject and the collective museum object, inseparable. Moreover, the uncanny similarity of the installation pulls you out of the socio-materiality of the museum and into the world of the hospital, positioning the visitor ultimately, albeit metaphorically, in the empty hospital bed.

4.9 Museum as Meeting

Museological practices can facilitate these “meetings of flesh” through such artistic disruptions that subvert the traditional museum's codes. As John Berger reminds us; “We never look just at one thing, we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.”¹¹³ This is particularly effectful, because, as senior research curator at the museum Marianne Torp points out, [in the installation] “We are confronted with our biological mortality right in the middle of the art institution, a place that normally concerns itself with the transcendent immortality of

¹¹⁰ Belova, “The Event”, 97

¹¹¹ Marstine and Berlo, “The Body”, 353

¹¹² Elmgren and Dragset, “Please be Quiet!”

¹¹³ Berger, “Ways of Seeing”, 9

art.”¹¹⁴ Thus, the installation reminds us how we, as visitors, are not only enclosed in the performative space of the installation, but ultimately, in our own material bodies, destined for entropy. Elmgreen and Dragset’s installation show just how temporary constituted bodies are; all the while museum objects can give the impression of existing independently, or perhaps beyond, the ordinary trajectory of time. Despite this, they meet in the shared materiality.

I will suggest that the perspectives presented here that highlight this common material constitution of objects and visitors, are relevant perspectives in discussing the subjecthood and objecthood of Maren, because they have the potential of counteracting the roles of observer and observed, visitor and museum object. Moreover, importantly, they consider subjecthood, as something that is not opposite to, or despite of, a material grounding, but because of it. Similarly, this perspective is inherently relational in the sense that it sees the critic as someone who is herself present in their physicality in the site of research. This is something I will expand on in the following chapter, where I look closer at the different methodologies and, as well as expand on the concerns and reflections that followed.

5.0 METHODOLOGY - With what means?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the research methods I used as part of my inquiry and research. The interdisciplinary nature of the field of museology offers numerous methods and approaches for seeking, collecting and analyzing relevant data to further academic knowledge on museums. Connections to academic fields such as anthropology, archaeology, media studies, art and cultural history, to mention but a few, continue to intertwine the study of museums with a broader academic field.¹¹⁵

The data the research builds on is brought about by qualitative research. Centered around the uniqueness of human experience, it brings detailed insights together to further knowledge and understanding.¹¹⁶ From the diverse repertoire of qualitative research approaches, I utilized a combination of methods including direct observation, participant observation and interviews with museum employees, in addition to the examination of primary sources, primarily internal documents and meeting notes at the NMST, Maren’s CT-scans, and analysis of relevant

¹¹⁴ Torp, “Please be Quiet”

¹¹⁵ Sigfúsdóttir, “Blind Spots”, 200

¹¹⁶ Corbin and Strauss, “Basics of qualitative research”, 1

literature. In preparation I visited the Royal Mausoleum in Oslo, Medicinsk Museion in Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, as well as Surgeons Hall Museum in Edinburgh.

The chapter elaborates on how the research progressed as different courses of action were taken. It also considers the potentials and limitations of the methods employed.

5.2 The Methodologies

Interpretive Methodology (hereafter, IM), Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (hereafter, IPA) and Situated Analysis (hereafter, SA), are three interlinked yet distinctive approaches to research. Since the focus of the research was to investigate Maren's complexity as a museum object, I entered the research without a pre-made hypothesis. IM, IPA and SA, are all approaches that emerge from Grounded Theory – an empirical design that provides strategies for transforming data into theory, through observation and interpretation.¹¹⁷

IM bases the scientific explanation on “studying the lifeworld of research site members”¹¹⁸ through “an intentional embracing of the other's meaning”.¹¹⁹ This basis of meaning-making is also at the core of IPA but it is more specifically utilized in research where the informants make sense of the same phenomenon and where the informants share similar experiences.¹²⁰

While not a methodology in itself, Situated Analysis (SA) is an approach that assesses webs of entanglement in research situations.¹²¹ Drawing on Donna Haraway's “situated knowledges”,¹²² it postulates that knowledge is shaped by the specific circumstances in which it has been formed. SA offers tools for connecting situated, local epistemologies, with what Haraway calls “shared conversations in epistemology”,¹²³ and was a method I employed in attempting to understand the many processes involved in the enactment of Maren. Combining the situatedness of IPA, SA allows for the possibility of tracing links from the informants at NMST, to other fields, conversations and forms of knowledge. My motivation for using SA as an extension of the analysis, is to attempt to preserve the complexities of the situation of inquiry, while still staying focused on Maren. A situational map, that lay out the most relevant social processes, is added under “Attachments”.

¹¹⁷ Corbin and Strauss, “Basics of qualitative research”, 1

¹¹⁸ Yanow, “Interpretation and Method”, 23

¹¹⁹ Yanow, “Interpretation and Method”, 23

¹²⁰ Clarke, “Situational Analysis”, 36

¹²¹ Clarke, “Situational Analysis”, 2

¹²² Haraway, “Situational Knowledges”, 575-599

¹²³ Haraway, “Situational Knowledges”, 584

5.3 Epistemological Positioning

These methodological approaches are commonly used in many different disciplines, and across different epistemological paradigms. Consequently, a comment on the epistemological positioning of this thesis, is in order. In its classic form, Grounded Theory aims to preserve the objectivity of the researcher, in order to ensure that the data collected is “the participants own story”.¹²⁴ IM, IPA and SA reject this understanding of objectivity, and align with the constructivist approach that asserts that “There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of – and in between – the observer and the observed.”¹²⁵ Following this, data does not been formed through a clear window into the inner life of an individual, that exists regardless of situational circumstance, or regardless of the intervention of a researcher. As a result, this thesis operates with a perspective on data, the analysis and the analysis’ findings, as knowledge ultimately constructed through the collaboration of researcher and informant. Crucial for the validity of this approach is performing self-reflexivity throughout all stages of the process.

5.4 Reflexivity and Voice

Feminist approaches to the theory of science stress the importance of not disconnecting the role of the researcher from who you are as a person.¹²⁶ But there are important considerations that does favor a distancing, such as the ideal of neutrality and to avoid inherent biases. While it is tempting to position oneself at a comfortable distance to the object of study or inspect it from some imagined ubiquitous viewpoint, there are well-founded reasons for bringing oneself into the research and being transparent on how it is done.

Exhibiting self-reflexivity, then, is to identify the effect of conducting research “from inside an interpretive community”,¹²⁷ such as a scientific field where terms and concepts lend themselves to you from within a discipline that has emerged from a specific historical context, the same discipline that you direct your writing towards. Whilst a self-reflexivity towards ones cultural, social, religious, ethnic and class identities, might seem relevant,¹²⁸ I side here with Haraway who recognize the difficulties of critical positioning within these roles; “One cannot “be” either a cell or a molecule – or a woman, [...] if one intends to see and see from these positions

¹²⁴ Olsson, “Ethical Issues”, 488

¹²⁵ Denzin and Lincoln, “Introduction”, 12

¹²⁶ Corbin and Strauss, “Basics of qualitative research”, 11

¹²⁷ Denzin and Lincoln, “Introduction”, 11

¹²⁸ Sword, “Presence of Self”, 270

critically.”¹²⁹ Thus, when I am actively involved in the co-construction of data and the construction of knowledge, at various stages, it is through critical positioning, not as a function of my many different identities. What I will do, however, is expand on the motivations for this particular research topic.

5.5 Interest and Background

So why write about human remains in museums? And more specifically, why am *I* writing about Maren? Although I would position my academic background in the field of cultural history and museology, I also have a vocational degree in contemporary dance and consider myself to be a dance artist. Thus, thinking about the human body in a performative setting, often happened through *being the body* in a performative setting. But even if I acknowledge the importance and fruitfulness of convergences, I still somehow have experienced my performative side and academic side as somewhat distanced.

I considered this “overlap” in relation to my thesis while I was dancing at this studio which functions as a teaching hall for physiotherapy students. Adorned on the walls there are intricately illustrated pictures of the human body, its muscles and nervous system, and in the corner, there are several dismantled teaching skeletons, objects really – on display. (Oh, the flick of a switch!) My interest in the meanings of human bodies did not just appear out of nowhere, as I realized in that moment, that the distance between my own human body and the theoretizations of bodies around me was not much of a distance at all.

5.6 Self-Reflexivity

I will continue this reflexive line of thought by considering some of my experiences of doing research at the NMST and share some examples of how the object of study influenced me, and how I influenced it in return. An object of study is something to direct method towards in order to further one’s knowledge and learn about a chosen subject. While the case study the thesis presents is Maren, the “object of study” is also a wider socio-cultural context: the museum workers, other beings, objects and practices surrounding Maren, in which the analysis investigates the relations between.

From August 2019 and up until June 2020, I have been contemplating on how I can come to understand this object of study. As thoughts, attitudes and reflections have formed, I have not always been able to explain how or why certain beliefs have occurred. I have found that working

¹²⁹ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges”, 585

with human remains, it is challenging to express oneself in a distanced and analytical manner, perhaps because so many reflections on human remains inflict emotional or bodily responses. This corporal understanding of the research was at times notoriously difficult to translate into words, or to rationalize. Eventually, “gut reactions” became something I learned to inspect with curiosity, while attempting to problem solve with “the whole of myself”. Not only was it challenging to interpret my own understandings and reactions, interpreting other’s understandings provided challenging in the same way, but even more so, because it also depended on my ability for interpretation, including a concern for how I managed to reconstruct others’ lived realities.

From this, it follows that the research process affected me in a number of ways. A specific episode that exemplifies me affecting the research, was during the workshop at NMST on October 17, 2019. In a break between discussions, I took note of about how people used different terms and names to describe Maren. This induced the participants to reflect around terminology and causing a silent wave of people engaging in self-reflection as the discussions started again, correcting themselves and “catching themselves in the act” calling Maren “object”, “her” or other names, depending on context or personal preference. Thus, the participants were negotiating Maren’s status in real time, while actually making an argument for something else, but intimately related, i.e. if and how Maren should be exhibited. Situations like these illustrate how my presence caused changes to the situation I was studying. The more fundamental way I was involved, was through the interviews with museum workers and in discussing the foundation for the interviews.

5.7 Consent

Lynn Butler-Kisber sees consent not as one definite a moment in time, but rather as a negotiation that lasts throughout the research process.¹³⁰ There are ethical concerns related with the issue of consent, and Karin Olson notes it is “not possible to know ahead of time what direction the study will take, and so it is not possible to ensure that participants are fully informed about the nature of the study when the consent is first signed”¹³¹. This was something I reflected on throughout the research and found particularly important because of the ethical nature of the topics discussed. After meeting the selected informants who had agreed to participate, they were given a document which stated the purpose of the research, as

¹³⁰ Butler-Kisber, “Qualitative Inquiry”, 16

¹³¹ Olson, “Issues in Grounded Theory”, 486

well as a letter of consent, which they were invited to read and if they agreed to the statements, signed ahead of the interview. Concurrently, they were informed on their right to withdraw consent at any time and be removed completely from the research, without having to state a reason for this. In preparing for the interviews, I conferred with the guidelines of the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committee¹³², where I also registered the research project. The project received approval from NSD, and I agreed to follow the guidelines. I re-connected with the informants towards the end of the research process to ask about the material I wished to include in the thesis. A weakness to this strategy could be that the informants after the interviews can feel obliged to participate. To make an effort at counteracting this I made sure to explicitly inform every informant that they could withdraw their consent, at any point still, especially since now they had a better understanding of the study.

5.8 Informants

Situated within the museum organization the informants are museum professionals from the different fields of communications, curation and conservation, - generously sharing their knowledge, reflections and insights on Maren, human remains and their experience of working at the museum. The informants were object conservators Hilde Skogstad and Marianne Sjølie, museum educator Kjersti Lind, curator and project leader Ellen Lange, exhibition architect and scenographer Anne Schnettler and senior curator Ageliki Lefkaditou. I was so fortunate to have Ageliki Lefkaditou agree to be my secondary supervisor for the thesis. This allowed for a natural anchoring point, enabling the process to move forward, both in terms of getting acquainted with staff, work practices, etc., as well as making the information flow easy. In addition, the fact that Ageliki both factored as supervisor and informant, can be seen as an implementation of the situated and embedded approach, and avoiding an attempt at remaining distant towards the object of study, in the name of objectivity. In this methodological understanding, objectivity does not imply to “avoid being affected by the research”. Not only is this unproductive, it is also not how research typically is conducted in practice.¹³³

¹³² NSD, “Data Protection”

¹³³ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges”, 576

5.9 The Interviews

The interviews made up the larger part of the data collection. They were primarily held (except for the first interview) after the participatory observation at OUH and the discussions at NMST. This ensured that the interviews were informed by a process of constant analysis. Each interview was transcribed shortly thereafter and was actively used to re-assess and focus the following interview. This re-assessment was also used to address questions or ideas touched upon by previous interviewees.

The interviews were primarily conducted in person although some were performed over Skype (due to the distance involved or due to Covid-19) Most of the interviews were in Norwegian, apart from one, which was held in English. I centered the interviews around how museums staff experience the construction of human- and object-ness surrounding Maren under different circumstances, such as the everyday handling of Maren, and current display, in certain out-of-the-ordinary events, such as moving Maren out of the glass case, investigating Maren at NMST, examinations at OUH, and in interactions with audiences.

The First interview was conducted on December 10, 2019, with Anne, who is the designer for the upcoming exhibition. The interview was conducted by Skype, as they were staying overseas. The approach for this interview can be regarded as theory-led. It was semi-structured and revolved around problematizations of human remains, more generally. Whilst valuable for the research process as a whole, as the research progressed, my focus moved towards the experiences of direct handling of Maren in and around the museum, thus making the NMST employees accounts more relevant for this purpose. The following interviews were semi-structured, yet the questions changed throughout the whole research process and were deliberately adapted to each interviewee. My aim was to provide an open framework for reflecting on experience that was nonetheless situated in place and time. I sought out questions that related specifically to their professional disciplines and tasks at the museum, and only to a lesser degree to theoretical concepts and ideas. Yet, the interviewees often drew on and related their experiences to theoretical concepts, either way.

The second interview was with the Ellen, the project leader, conducted on January 22, 2020 in their office at the museum. In this interview I employed a more open-ended, experience-based approach. However, in this interview I also combined it with slightly more interrogative style of questioning, because of an awareness of the power structures that arise in positions of leadership. The third interview took place on February 3, this time with the two conservators,

Hilde and Marianne, in their office space. The interview lasted approximately one hour. Both of the informants had been at OUH on August 26, 2019. As an approach for this interview, this was used as a shared experience and place of entry for the discussions. For similar reasons it contributed to the research that they could feed off each other and build on their shared experiences. The fourth interview was with Kjersti, the museum pedagogue. This interview was held on February 5, 2020 and lasted for about one and a half hours. This interview closely followed the experiences they had with audiences. The fifth interview was with Ageliki on March 16, 2020. This was held over Skype due to the coronavirus lockdown. The interview lasted approximately one hour and forty-five minutes and explored both situated experiences around Maren, but to a larger extent, wide-ranging implications of human remains policies, both at NMST, and more besides.

A helpful way to make meaningful material come about, I found, was to center the questions around specific events in the past when the interviewee had been in a concrete situation that involved Maren. This provided a chance for both me and them to move in and out of different situational perspectives at different points in time. Galvin and Todres call this mode of thinking “rhizomatic”¹³⁴, imagining a horizontal root system that connects events (nodes) together. The approach also gave room for the comparison of how they interacted with their previous experiences in real time, as they took form during the course of the interview. More importantly, as this approach is situated in a previous experience, it took into account all the other actors present, rather than entertaining ideas of Maren’s object-ness and human-ness in an idealized, timeless vacuum.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. An integral part of theory development,¹³⁵ transcribing provided an overview of the material and it made it possible to detect common themes running through the various interviews. These common themes would later be re-organized, structuring the data, based on how relevant it was to what I thought of as a tentative, thematic core.¹³⁶ I returned to the material in between each interview, to re-assess and look for connections between the data. Analyzing the material involved not only translating parts of it to English, it also involved translating it and interpreting it to meaningful content, taking form with the intention of producing new insights about them, simultaneously risking that the

¹³⁴ Galvin and Todres, “Unspecialization”, 111. See also Deleuze and Guattari, “A Thousand Plateaus”

¹³⁵ Charmaz, “Constructing Grounded Theory”, 136

¹³⁶ Glaser, “Remodeling Grounded Theory”, 15

interpretations departed from lived experiences. To balance this out, I consulted the informants beforehand with selected parts of the analysis that included them, to get feedback and learn about how they viewed the situation described. This connects back to the methodological approach of the thesis that sees both data and interpretations as co-constructive, and the research process as reciprocal. Interactions with the data took place across several stages: in the interviews, in the transcription, in the selection process, in the analysis as well as in the discussion. In the following, I will expand on the first stages of this process.

6.0 DIRECT OBSERVATION – What insights does it give? (I)

6.1 The Case Study – Investigating Maren

As I began the research, an initial objective was to orient myself in the vast and complex literary cornucopia relating to human remains. These include articles and books written on the subject of human remains in museums, the repatriation of human remains, ethics on human remains, the display of human remains, as well as perspectives on legal procedures and guidelines. Literatures from various fields on the human body, texts on material culture as well as philosophical accounts regarding the museums and their objects, formed a part of the material consulted. At the same time, I started orienting my research more closely around Maren. This included investigating news articles, web pages and previously published master thesis', as well as other published texts and research.

Finding the right tone to talk about Maren was challenging. When talking to people unfamiliar with the topic of my thesis, I was often prudent regarding how and what information I presented to them. I wished to give insight and be thorough so that I could ensure that people would get a “good” impression, and perhaps even have their approval or confirmation that I was not doing anything ethically speculative when I was in fact making the body of a dead human being the center of my master thesis. This turned out to be challenging, especially in situations that did not afford going into detail, in which cases I would often try to keep a light tone, as a way of handle any tension, for my own sake, but also to not inflict the unprecedented seriousness of the topic onto someone else. But a light tone would sometimes feel out of place depending on the situation and the person asking, and a comment could instead go overboard, increasing the tension instead of easing it, perhaps making the topic sound stranger, and indeed my interest in it.

My primary reason for expanding on these experiences is mainly to shed light on the balancing act that occurs in so many dimensions of the work on human remains, particularly as

institutionalized knowledges travels into the outside world, where discussions that may seem commonplace from within the institution, do not “travel along” something I reflected on, through the fieldwork.¹³⁷

In the following paragraphs, I expand on these experiences, divided into sections that correspond to each “field day”. The observations are based on Geertz’s “thick description”, a participatory method that employs interpretive descriptions of what is happening in the situation, seen from the viewpoint of the researcher.¹³⁸ Yet to begin, I will assess the display of Maren the way she is currently exhibited in the museum.

6.2 Maren on Display

In the following I will briefly illustrate for the reader the display of Maren at NMST. Maren is displayed in a rectangular glass case built partially into a wall in the exhibition space. Lying on top of a dark-green cotton fabric, her face is turned out towards the observer, clearly showing the shape of the skull, with eye sockets, nasal cavity jaw and teeth. Maren’s bodily materiality is substantial compared to a so-called “unfleshed” skeleton, and clearly shows a torso, with arms and hands resting on her lower abdomen. Maren’s legs are shortened, and her feet are missing. Under dimmed lighting Maren’s body ranges from fields of white, to beige to darker brown. An overall impression on her body is that of a markedly flat yet voluminous structure with a considerable imprint on her body, particularly the right side, possibly due to the coffin having been forced onto her after burial and having made her body mold to the structure.

6.3 At Oslo University Hospital

My first meeting with staff members (that would later become informants) as well as with Maren herself, was on August 26, 2019. The plan for this day was to take Maren to OUS (Oslo University Hospital) to perform CT-scans and MRI on Maren to learn more about her physical condition.

The day at OUH became pivotal in the research process. I had received the information by email from the senior curator. We met very early, at OUH at around 7 am. The out-of-place feeling of waking up so early, not having landed completely in my own body for the day, was intensified upon entering the hospital, being confronted with a dizzying atmosphere, a strange smell of cleanliness, and a bustling traffic of white coats, stretchers and patients.

¹³⁷ Clarke, “Situational Analysis”, 37

¹³⁸ Geertz, “The Interpretation”, 5-6

The first person I met on arriving at the hospital, however, was neither from the museum nor the hospital, but a journalist from *Aftenposten*, who was writing a news article for *(A-magasinet)* about Maren.¹³⁹ In a way we were both on a similar mission, seeking to convey an investigatory narrative with Maren at the center. However, being into a way bracketed in the same category as a journalist, I thought, also made me feel slightly uneasy, as I worried my research mission could be seen as intrusive, and I felt the need to reassure myself why I was there.

A large van that belonged to the museum appeared at the main entrance of the hospital. On the back of the truck a strangely fitting slogan that read “Opplevelse for generasjoner!”/ “Experience for generations!”, which made people laugh. Out came a wooden box containing Maren, that closely resembled a coffin, immediately bringing to mind my associations to funerary transport. My uneasiness was at this point conflicting with a wish to be present and stay focused to meet the six museum workers, who I was already hoping would take part in my study, perhaps depending on how I reacted to this experience. There was something at stake, perhaps an initiation rite of sorts, both for social and emotional reasons as well as for the thesis itself.

We spent the whole day at the radiology department. The emotional tension that was experienced would sometimes intertwine with more mundane emotions, like being bored or sleepy while waiting around for the examinations to start. But this was broken abruptly by overwhelming waves of emotion expressed by me or people in the group, as visibly very sick patients, often children, were transported by our waiting room.

Several sessions of talks with medical professionals took place, before, during and after the CT and MRI-examinations of Maren. The activities of the group included some logistics, moving Maren around and in and out of the wooden box, with me following along in the group of seven people, observing, taking notes or talking a little to the museum staff in between. Some of them experienced the whole operation as strange or exciting, others were busy thinking about the practicalities, and yet others again were taking time to document and save video material for later use.

While in the CT-scan room, several of the other nurses and medical staff were curious to see what was going on. Perhaps there was a feeling that it was something that was worth

¹³⁹ The article was published in *A-Magasinet*, both in print and online about two months after the OUH visit, See Riseng, “Maren - Hvem Var du?”

participating in, like some sort of social event. I did not necessarily experience the curiosity as problematic, perhaps because I too was curious, after all.

Moving away from the group, going to the cafeteria for a cup of coffee, I met with the empathetic looks from the receptionists as I left the radiology department, feeling somewhat guilty that they had wasted their empathy when I was not there as someone's next of kin, and wondered if they would have given the same looks if they knew I was here with Maren. But with what was probably a worried or confused expression on my face, perhaps I did need it, nevertheless.

6.4 At the Museum

On October 17, 2019, I was invited to join a two-hour meeting at NMST, in a room called LAB (as in laboratory),¹⁴⁰ which, according to the NMST website is designated to “promote research and develop the educational activities”.¹⁴¹ In this space for thought experiments, museum staff across the different departments (department of communications, department of museum learning and department of collection and exhibition) met to discuss the recent developments and new findings about Maren. Upon joining the first roundtable discussion, I started out by briefly introducing myself and my research project shortly, so that the staff that had not been present at OUH would know who I was and the purpose of my attendance for the group of approximately 15 people, curators, conservators, museum educators as well as communications professionals. I took the role of a listener, albeit a curious one, as the discussion started to take form around the new medical exhibition “Kropp - I behandling” (The Body - In process) to open early 2021, and Maren's role in it. Topics that were discussed, included insights from the OUH examinations, as well as discussions on different narratives, and possibilities for display. The meeting started to take shape in a re-collection of old and new narratives that intermingled. Stories or theories about who Maren was would blend with discussions on the state of Maren's body, and the properties that it displayed in the examinations. After discussing around the table for some time, the whole group continued the discussion in the medical exhibition where Maren was displayed, now with brainstorming around exhibition ideas and possible design solutions.

On the October 30, 2019 a new seminar was held that I attended, with approximately two hours of discussions. This meeting was attended by a group of around 15 staff members in addition to four of my classmates that had their “praksis” at the museum. The debates and dilemmas that

¹⁴⁰ The Museum/laboratory comparison have been explored in museum literature. See Bennett, «Civic Laboratories», 522 and Alpers, The Studio”

¹⁴¹ Teknisk Museum, «Forskningsprosjekter”

I had read about in the literature on human remains would echo in these discussions, including how Maren could be displayed considering different ethical and curatorial aims. Importantly, questions on how to avoid disrespectful display, and discussions on what this entailed, was something they circled back to throughout the discussions. Others suggested not imposing a respectfulness that enforces religious connotations. The discussions existed on many levels at once, ideas on respect and ways to curate it, and more pragmatic and practical ideas.

After this meeting I got into contact with some of the staff members that I considered to have particularly relevant insights relating to the case study, with the ambition of conducting interviews. Thus, participating in the discussions gave an insight into the different professional backgrounds and as well as attitudes and suggestions on how Maren could be curated, making it clearer what different points of view could be valuable to for the research.

On January 20, 2020., there was another meeting, at NMST, with the presence of 8 people. In this meeting the employees continue to discuss the curation of Maren, and to lay out plans for the implementation of ideas, as well as the progression of the work, aiming to include different perspectives grounded in the various museum professions, with an aim to uncover in Mol's terms "the body multiple" in Maren, and the different knowledges that is rooted to her.

To summarize I will share some reflections on what contribution the attendance at the hospital and my involvement in these three meetings, had to the research. I will suggest that they were crucial in terms of my understanding of the complexity that surround Maren. They showed how Maren concern people from many different disciplines and professions, which is made evident in the range of topics and considerations expressed. The chance to witness these negotiations, intimately linked to a discussion of ethics, and to see the struggle in making them unite in the form of an conceptual, curatorial product, was instrumental both in understanding Maren's ambiguity as a museum object, and in witnessing the curatorial suggestions and ideas, intended to handle a number of conflicting and contradictory aims and concerns. This is something I reflected upon and brought into the interview situation. As with the hospital event, these were important shared, and often emotionally complex experiences, that allowed for common points of reference, and in developing a shared understanding as a basis for communication with the informants, and for the research as a whole. Some of these aspects of Maren's performance will be revisited in the following chapter, along with new situations and enactments, where an analysis of the performance of Maren in various constellations will be in focus.

7.0 ANALYSIS – What insights does it give? (II)

7.1 The Logic of the Chapter

This chapter presents an analysis of the interview findings. The structure of the chapter emerges from the theoretical starting point that sees performative museology as a form of knowledge creation. The findings presented here are assessed based on whether a particular situation takes place in the context of the museum exhibition, or in the context of museum workers everyday practice, besides this. More specifically, whether it is part of the museums curated and mediated knowledge, directed at and with audiences, or if is part of museological practice not directed to audiences specifically, involving museum workers reflecting on Maren, handling and management, as well as research on Maren. These will be divided in “backstage” and “frontstage” knowledge creation, respectively, separating between the performance of Maren that arise in the presence of audiences, and in the context of knowledge creation not directly in contact with audiences. (but still might come about as insights intended for audiences at a later point.)

The analysis will show that even if performance of Maren’s subject/object dimension is being negotiated throughout the situations described, these different realms of knowledge production enact subjecthood in different ways.

For the sake of clarity, I will expand a little on how I treat the performance of subject- and objecthood, in the following analysis. As previously noted, it makes little sense to attempt capturing what Maren ultimately “is” in the context of the museum, as it changes from one moment to the next, and is relative to the performance of Maren - that is, how Maren is presented and made to act with her environment; with museum workers, audiences, objects, and other elements. What is investigated is how two often-occurring perspectives, that of objecthood and subjecthood, arise in different situations. How does it come about and how is it identified as such? In this aspect, I understand the relative object and subjecthood, not as ideal types that take form independently of the other,¹⁴² but rather as a sliding scale, where either aspect emerge to the surface and is amplified. In the following analysis, the performance of subject and objecthood, I suggest, takes on varying forms. Sometimes, the museum workers explicitly state that in one particular moment, they “saw her more as a human”, which I interpret as a form of recognizing a performance of subjecthood. In other situations, this can only be implied, perhaps by initiating bodily constituted actions or impacting an emotional response. In

¹⁴² Olejaz, “When the Dead Teach”, 8

these situations, I discuss if and how it is possible to consider them as expressions of object and subjecthood, in communication with the theoretical insights that focus on bodily and sensorial experiences with materialities in a performative context, in line with the overall framework of relational museology.

7.2 Backstage Performance

We begin by investigating how some of the informants interpret Maren's subject/object dimension. Here, they compare Maren with other human remains, questioning what makes Maren appear more human. This dialogue gives a perspective on how Maren is perceived as somewhat different from other human remains, due to what the informants experience as a "complete-ness".

H: We have quite a few skeletons at the National Medical Museum. Just because this exact skeleton consists of wax and organs, I notice that it's talked about in an entirely different way; there's a lot more emotions involved. Looks more bodily. But I also think it's fascinating, because it's just not that many who feel so much around our skeletons. Since they are just bones. It's just, something completely different.

M: It is a very constructed separation. Which is unnatural, really

H: Yes, a little. We had a skeleton in a closet that we called "skeletons in the closet", and that is also a complete skeleton.

M: So, it is a complete human, as well.

H: It is a complete human. But it kind of doesn't create all these conversations and emotions and considerations in the same way. That's what's so special with Maren in so many ways. Both how she looks, and how she was found.

M: But I also think that those babies on glass, the whole babies, that is kind of okay, because they have never lived, kind of. But they are also very strong. Like, I kind of think that...

H: Yes, it is similar.

M: Yes, because they have the same intactness.

One aspect this dialogue illuminates is how the ideas and emotions that Hilde's experience around Maren is in part what Marianne calls a "constructed separation" between Maren and complete skeletons. Why does not skeletons provoke a similar response, they ask, when "*it's a complete human, as well*". If Maren is seen in the context of NMST's human remains collection, Maren is the most "complete" in terms of the sheer amount of the body that is preserved, in comparison with other human remains. Among all the different partial human remains, Maren could be more human-like, simply by being *more*.

Thinking of the body in terms of parts of a whole, echoes a view on bodies presented in a study by Dawn Goodwin et. al., centered on medical student's reactions on post-mortem

examinations.¹⁴³ The study suggests, that when students focus on a body part and not the whole body, it takes the attention away from the presence of a human-like structure mirroring your own¹⁴⁴. This view resonates in Marianne: “*You compare it to yourself in a different way, I think. Or, at least I do that. I mirror who I am in her, and that it’s a human with feelings and wishes and dreams*”. Similarly, the skin can be envisioned as protecting “*Intactness*” by both displaying the surface as an individualized projection, and as a container for the vital organs, it preserves personhood doubly. Thus, the sheer materialized presence of Maren’s body, can itself be seen as enhancing the performance of subjecthood in the situation.

When looking closer at narratives where the informants are situated with Maren, their evaluations stem from specific contexts that are re-visited through reflection. These narratives open up for a more detailed and nuanced descriptions, as they are referring to a set of events that took place on a certain timeline, paying attention to particularly revealing moments when the informants gain new or conflicting insights, such as preparations to take Maren to OUH.

H: It felt very strange when we were packing her for transport, and we were kind of swathing her in, really, in the textile that she was lying on. (in the exhibition). We were covering her, and then it was as if we

M: We became “andektige”¹⁴⁵

H: Yes, we did actually. Because then it was as if I suddenly saw her more as a human because, it looked as if we had just wrapped a body. And she is, in a way, but it just felt a lot more, even more human. Like, as if we were really swathing someone for a funeral. At that moment I felt that I saw her in a somewhat different way. And then it was the handling at the hospital, which was also very peculiar because it is in a context that is very different from the museum. Again, she became even more, like “not a museum object” It was more like; “this is a human being that we will investigate through machinery that examines illness in living human beings.”

Here Hilde explicitly state how they “*suddenly saw her more as a human*” at one particular moment, while they were wrapping Maren in the cotton textile, the same that she is figuring on in the display case, as preparation for going to OUH. The word “andaktighet” is a challenging one to translate but is often used to describe situations where one enter a dignified and thoughtful emotional state of performed respectfulness. The word is for instance in the setting of a funeral. Perhaps “andektighet” in this situation can be understood as a performed recognition of subjecthood, because of the seriousness and reflection that arise from one

¹⁴³Goodwin et. al., “The social life of the Dead”, 101.

¹⁴⁴ Goodwin et. al., “The social life of the Dead”, 101

¹⁴⁵ I have chosen not to translate the word “andektig”, but instead discuss it’s meaning in the text, in lack of a fitting equivalent in English.

moment to the next, that leads to the experience of suddenly seeing her as more human. Here we can explore some different factors as to how this can have contributed to the experience of Maren's performance. Firstly, that textile in everyday usage functions as a protective layer to shield the body. Secondly, textiles are expressions of identity and have metaphorical and narrational capacities on their own and when co-enacting with a body. The enactment described places Maren in an interesting position as regards the textile wrapped around her - she is clearly distinguishable from the textile, but so obviously is it accompanying her, serving her, that she is performing an act of possessing. As Hilde Hein have noted "objects, perceived as not-self [...] are outside ones control yet subject to possible dominion."¹⁴⁶ As Maren is gaining the status of something capable of having possessions, and being the possessor of something else, that is to say, being agentive, it then increases her status as a person, relative to the textile.

The act of concealing can also bring associations to ideas of shame, modesty and respect, and these are all deeply rooted in the way human beings use textiles in society today. Currently, a set of human remains exhibited in Medical Museion, Copenhagen, has its own way of using textile to produce a certain visual impression. The remains of Siamese twins have had their organs and skeleton removed. They are very light, not leaving an imprint with their weight on a cushioned surface. A curatorial decision was made to cut out the shape from underneath so it would appear as if the textile is pushed down with the weight of their body, giving an impression of the constructed imprint as presence.¹⁴⁷ This example points to how textiles are used curatorially to magnify subjecthood in displays.

Even if the motivation behind wrapping Maren was simply to avoid structural damages during transport, the act of wrapping transfers meaning symbolically onto the situation and reconfigures both the conservator's perception of themselves and Maren. As a site of construction, what in fact is being constructed is a scene where Maren is now being made to act as someone recently deceased; being swathed or prepared for a funeral. This association affects the conservators emotionally, feeding back into a performance of "andaktighet". If the textile is an object in Maren's possession, the museums workers, applying it to her body, are similarly acting in the service of Maren. The enactment mirrors how social and material components of performance intertwine, to return to Mol¹⁴⁸. It also illustrates how emotional resonance arise as an unintentional by-product of performing their tasks, which as noted on earlier in the interview

¹⁴⁶ Hein, "Museum in Transition", 54

¹⁴⁷ Tybjerg, "Between Medicine and Culture", 47

¹⁴⁸ Mol, "The Body Multiple"

they typically experience as pragmatic, centered on object preservation. This were to change as they take Maren to the hospital:

M: I thought it was a bit strange that there were people who were sick, sitting in the hallways there and we are, rolling down, sort of for fun. I felt that it was a bit uncomfortable. Here we come, with this dead old thing.

H: It is in a way not important, people are standing in line for the MRI and the CT-scan, because, it's a matter of life and death, and we are just..

M. Playing.

H: And spending time on something that isn't important in that way. Human bones.

M: It should be said that they (at the hospital) used their research time, so it would have been dedicated to treating patients anyhow.

H: No, we didn't take anyone's place in the line. This was time that they wouldn't have treated patients in, anyways. So, in that sense, it's a bit-

M It did help a bit. But it was a bit like. "Here we come", kind of.

H: Yes.

M: With our flat corpse...

H: Yes, it was a bit like that...

M: With journalists running along, and...

H: Many people that wanted to look.

M: It was a bit strange.

H Yeah.

In this snippet of dialogue, Marianne and Hilde discuss the experience of bringing Maren to the hospital. Remembering the "andaktighet" that arose in preparation, they report on changes in the perception of Maren, as they enter OUH. Here, the relative humanness of Maren is considered against the subjecthood of the patients at OUH as Maren is now in performance as a patient, on the stretcher ready for examinations. But this makes for an uncomfortable likelihood for the conservators because the context suggests "*it is about life and death, and we are just...*" "*playing*". In these reflections, they see Maren in the context of patients in need of care at a hospital, thus Maren's status is reduced to "*our flat corpse*", limiting the agency previously expressed from the preparations. In comparison to living patients battling illness, the latent object-ness of Maren becomes pressing. Though strangely, the hospital's auxiliary objects surrounding Maren in this procedure, humanize her. For example, the stretcher is still

elevating Maren's humanlike qualities, as it is something that serves her, and offering agency at the same time.

Likewise, the CT and MR examinations themselves are performative. The CT machine, an object whose value relies solely on its ability to deconstruct the human body into images, has no intrinsic value, in contrast to the status (however shifting) Maren holds both as both a museum object and as a human being. The scans reach a clarity of Maren's internal contents, that is much clearer than for any living person, producing a wealth of materials, pieces of paper and files and models on a computer, connecting Maren to a landscape of digitally and visually configured residue, objects where Maren herself is an "original", being the source of a series of reproductions, even if the reproductions offers insight into details of Maren's lived life as a human. The reproductions are interwoven and inseparable, they are enactments that come together, by being produced and coming apart as individually manifested objects. "The body multiple" of Maren is in this moment materialized in a literal sense. Thus, this research activity around Maren create a wealth of different enactments through performative processes, that might be initiated by museum workers interest in object research, but appears almost to leave the control of humans, while ironically perhaps, bringing about detailed information about Maren's physiological state as a human being.

Furthermore, this dialogue between the museum workers does not simply illustrate Maren's performance in relation to patients at the hospital, it also reflects the implications of this performance. In fact, the consequence of Maren's situational performance of that closer to object-ness is so critical, it leads to the necessity to question not just the role of Maren, but also the legitimacy of the entire operation; "*At least they didn't take any patient's spot, as the doctors were using time meant for research*". Still, knowing it would not take precious time away from treating patients, they expressed discomfort with the situation, calling the examinations *play* "*we are playing*", questioning the motivation of the intended task, which was doing examinations for the purpose of investigating professionally on behalf of the museum.

7.4 Frontstage Performance

Having explored various aspects of the museums backstage handling of Maren, we now turn to the informant's reflections on Maren while enacting for and with museum visitors, to inspect how subjecthood can be enacted in these situations. Here, the informants reflect on how the body of Maren is mediated to young audiences, and even how the reactions and responses can

create a need for both the museum workers and the visitors to intervene in or manipulate the display, in order to bring out certain aspects of Maren that relate to performance of object- and subjecthood. Asking how the staff experienced the visitor's reactions on the present display of Maren, this was particularly relevant to the project leader and museum pedagogue, Ellen and Kjersti. Here Ellen reflects on the mediation of Maren to audiences¹⁴⁹:

E: Det som ofte er en fare ved museum, som jeg mener man undervurderer, det er taushet. Maren har først og fremst blitt møtt med likegyldighet. Folk må liksom røskes litt i, men så må det ikke bli show. De må ikke røskes i på en «bad taste»-måte. Så man må være veldig bevisst på det man gjør.

I: Er det et mål å skape reaksjoner?

E: På en måte, men bare fordi jeg tenker at «hallo, det er et dødt menneske på museum!» Det er en stor ting. Så det er ikke det at alle trenger å reagere eller skrive om det i avisene eller sånn. Men jeg bekymrer meg mye mer for at folk ikke noen bryr seg om noen ting, enn for at de skal mene noe annet enn oss. Jeg har vist rundt mye nedi utstillingen med Maren, med skoleklasser. Når vi kommer bort til henne, da er de fortsatt litt på mobilen og sånn, også sier jeg sånn, «Hallo!? Hva har vi her, tror dere?» Også; «Ja, det er et lik» [...] eller, «det er et dødt menneske» eller noe sånn. Og da, «Oi!» da, er de våkne. Da legger de bort mobiltelefonene.

The situation illustrates a moment when Ellen is by chance in the exhibition room, not guiding the group, and chooses to intervene. The quote exemplifies how disengaged visitors are approached with the question “*What do we have here?*” which provokes the response “*It’s a dead human being*”. This dynamic shows how the recognition that Maren has been a living human being, in this situation, is reached through conscious investigation, or through external warning from the staff, and not as an immediate reaction upon being in Maren’s presence. When engaged, it simultaneously evokes an emotional response, as they “wake up”, and put away their phones. To sum it up, Ellen directs them onto a cognitive detour to change their perspective. It also shows what Ellen experiences as a need to provoke a response, and that indifference can be seen as an emotion that is unwelcome, even intolerable or “wrong”, and that leads to the policing of an acceptable response. There are several processes that can obscure the performance of subjecthood in this situation. For instance, an observation by Kjersti describes how she views Maren as «becoming one» with the glass case in the situation.

¹⁴⁹ For the sake of preserving of the nuances of this particular text, the original is presented. For a fully translated version, see “Attachments”.

K: When I think about that object, - it is an object in a glass case – then in a way the glass case and the object is one, I think. [...] It is a part of an object, and at least a part of what one sees.

The musealization process turns the body of a human into a complex museum object, and Kjersti is here pointing out how she thinks of Maren and the glass case becoming one. Brita Brenna notes on the nature of the glass case as; “made to be looked through, transparency is precisely their point.”¹⁵⁰ But where Kjersti sees the glass case merging with the object surrounding her by being one with what one visually sees, it may seem Ellen in meeting with audiences encourages to “think” Maren apart from the very same structure. This balancing act seem to direct the emotional reactions of the audience. Museum educator Kjersti explains how the performance of Maren is modulated for and with a young audience.

K: The children are seated either on the floor or on foldable stools[...] In that way I make sure that they don't come too close to me or the mummified body.[...] Talking about relating themes first and then showing the “object” (*translated from* “gjenstand”) prepare them for looking. [...] Everybody gets the chance to see and talk about the theme. If they are not that many, or if someone wants to, they can eventually come a bit closer.

In this quote, Kjersti explains how the audience is thoughtfully placed in the exhibition space, and in relation to Maren. Seated at a slight distance, the audience is positioned so as to avoid strong emotional reactions. Meanwhile Kjersti is partly covering Maren with her body, obstructing a clear view. Then Kjersti introduces the themes of health and illness and directs the gaze towards the opposing diorama where mannequins are placed. The gradual familiarization introduces different ways of seeing Maren. They approach Maren thematically, and by getting acquainted with the historical time of Maren through the mannequins in the opposing scene. Only after this, are the children invited to approach Maren in the space.

When directing attention towards life- sized dolls in an opposing diorama, emotional reactions can be eased. By juxtaposing Maren with simulacra, literal human-looking objects, the idea of the authentically lived-in human body is obscured. As Marzia Varutti notes on the use of mannequins in museum exhibitions “The mannequin resists variation, uniqueness and individuality [...] in order to enable the generalization of the representation.”¹⁵¹ As the

¹⁵⁰ Brenna, “Nature and Texts”, 48

¹⁵¹ Varutti, “Miniatures”, 5

mannequins are wearing clothes from a time period around the 1850s, which is quite likely the time when Maren lived, it connects Maren and the dolls together, thus equating them as inauthentic objects, *and* placing them in a distant historical time. As such, this visual juxtaposition indicates the power NMST have to construct representations that estrange human remains from ideas of the real, lived-in body. As a performative strategy its success is understandable in that the children get to explore Maren at a safe distance, both spatially and conceptually, where physical proximity and narrative strategies introduce Maren gradually. Kjersti expands on the concealment of Maren

K: I have spoken to other museum educators on how they do it, and we have agreed that the best thing to do is to have the back against Maren, and sort of sit or lean on the glass case and talk to the children with her (Maren) behind me.

Kjersti is standing in front of and leaning on the glass case, adds an element of concealment. This can be connected to Lacan's understanding of the "screen".¹⁵² While the glass case and the mannequins affect the gaze of the visitor, so does the museum worker. As Kjersti's "screening" aims to censor Maren's body by obstructing their gaze, the enactment does not only bring out the materiality of Maren, but also to some extent reveals the materiality of the museum worker. Engaging with Maren in this way, then, - is also to be faced the materiality of oneself. Moreover, the leaning on the glass case with Maren inside can be seen as a strategy to modulate the emotional response from the audience. As the glass case is leaned on, the material properties of the glass case are made evident, in comparison to when it is "looked through". Kjersti is transferring some weight to the glass case, not on Maren's body, but according to her response, she sometimes thinks of Maren and the glass case as becoming one. It suggests that this unit consisting of Maren and the glass case together, display object-like properties that can be utilized, thus playing into and enhancing a relative performance of objecthood in the situation. This has one other dimension as well, as previously explored, museums still, despite the turn towards performance, limit the ability for touch (even if this is often contrasted with elements of interactivity). By not just touching and leaning on the glass case, it can remove some of the "mystical aura" of untouchable, fragile things, in the museum setting.

¹⁵² Casey, "The museum effect"

To summarize, in a situation when museum workers are enacting with an audience, Maren's body is approached gradually for the sake of protecting the audience's emotions. This plays out as the audience follow directions in the exhibition space, and through narrative construction by Kjersti. Maren is positioned opposite of mannequins, and the narrative purposefully introduces them first. However, in similar situations, museum worker Ellen expresses concern when visitors do not respond in a satisfactory way to Maren, causing the need to intervene. Here, the audience's indifference is seen as inappropriate, but perhaps what calls for investigation is how certain practices contribute to deliberately downplay aspects of Maren's subjecthood. By directing emotional responses that acknowledge Maren's subjecthood and maneuver the performance of and with Maren, an attempt is made to steer potential emotional reactions that can come out of hand (such as people fainting), and understandably so.

In order to engage an indifferent audience, on the other hand, attempts to enhance Maren's humanness are activated. Yet, to moderate the same engagement, the attention is similarly directed towards Maren's object-like qualities. To return to Mol; "Since enactments come in plural, the crucial question to ask about them is how they are coordinated"¹⁵³. This coordination is a balancing act that makes the museum workers actively interact with performance of object- and subjecthood through their own situated performance that is both played out corporally, as well as narratively constructed. The effort of balancing these aspects is mirrored in the quote by Ellen: "*People needs to be shaken up a little, but it shouldn't turn into "show" or in a "bad taste" way. So, one needs to be very conscious of what one does.*"

Surely, in the situation described above, there are many different narrative elements in terms of scenography that interact with each other that are not mentioned here. However, I have chosen to highlight these aspects specifically, because they are consciously implemented and have been discussed as strategies in the museum educator work group, as tools to educate young audiences about Maren. As the following paragraphs will show, the performance of Maren can sometimes be understood as provoking, encouraging audiences to take matters into their own hands; which in this next situation took form through an intervention in the exhibition display.

¹⁵³ Mol, "The Body Multiple", Viii

In the interviews, both Ellen and Kjersti describes this situation of audience intervention in the exhibition of Maren, where one of the museum educators find Maren covered by a blanket and a written message on a piece of paper stating, “*It could have been your grandmother*”.¹⁵⁴

E: En dag oppdaget en av formidlerne at det var lagt et teppe over monteret der Maren ligger. Oppå lå det en lapp der det stod, «det kunne vært din bestemor. La teppet ligge» Så det finnes eksempler på at noen har reagert. Vi har tatt vare på den lappen.

I: Hva tenker du om det da?

E: Det synes jeg er veldig fint. Det skulle jeg gjerne ha sagt fra om. Om jeg hadde truffet den personen som la på teppet, ville jeg takket, og sagt noe å la: «Dette er veldig interessant, jeg er veldig glad for at du sier ifra, og jeg vil gjerne høre om hvorfor du tenker sånn, for jeg er uenig med deg, og jeg tror jeg kommer til å fortsette å være uenig.» Det kan jo hende jeg ville endret mening, men jeg tror ikke det. Jeg har jo tenkt nøye på dette.

Considered as a recognition of subject status, the person who wrote the note somehow compares Maren directly to “your grandmother”, and makes Maren personal and relational, suggesting that the persons who wrote the note experienced a performance of subjecthood, which again resulted in a performative acting-on, based on this subjecthood. This situation is also mentioned by Kjersti, and both informants express positive reactions to the audience intervention. This is in line seeking emotional responses, and encouraging audience reactions, even if it means overstepping certain boundaries originally meant to protect from such actions. Thus, it could be questioned, if not the museum could to a larger extent facilitate for the possibilities for embodied engagement.

What the situation also depicts is how the engagement with the audience’s bodily selves can be a way to mediate attitudes and thoughts, not otherwise visible in the framework of the museum exhibition, or during guided tours. This performative act of covering Maren with a blanket could thus be a testament to how the possibilities for enactment through a bodily apparatus, can be used as a means of expressing something about the situation one perceives.

7.6 Summary of the Analysis

To summarize, the analysis finds Maren to be enacted in various ways depending on the purpose of the situation, whether it is in order to mediate knowledge of Maren for an audience, or for the purpose of reflection, handling, management and research, happening behind the

¹⁵⁴ For the sake of preserving of the nuances of this particular text, the original is presented. For a fully translated version, see “Attachments”.

scenes. Whereas Maren's performance is understood as volatile in the different situations described, the analysis points to the different ways of interacting with Maren "backstage", and "frontstage".

In backstage interactions with Maren, the possible effects of handling and managing Maren that happens outside the context of the exhibition, and the outside the glass case, give rise to a range of different realizations, thoughts and emotive states, emerging from a "hands on" approach. Firstly, the informants see Maren's amount of preserved materiality, or "intactness" as evoking feelings and thoughts of comparisons to the informant selves, which they see mirrored. This could suggest a recognition of subjecthood through juxtaposition and mirroring to their own subjective status. Furthermore, performing what could be viewed as otherwise mundane tasks, such as wrapping Maren in textile, is given considerable symbolic weight, which re-position and negotiate the museum workers relation to, and understanding of Maren in this moment. They become moved or, "andektig", based on the insights that come about as a result of their wrapping, that is, bodily engagement with Maren. Perhaps does this also come about through a recognition of subjecthood based on a performance of Maren as having the capability of *possessing* the textile, the museum workers wrap her in.

When enacting "frontstage" with the visitors, the subjecthood of Maren becomes apparent in a different way, and becomes something to direct, through strategies to managing the impact of experiencing Maren. In other words, the museum workers moderate and amplify the performance of subjecthood depending on the need of the situation, to either calm or engage an audience. This can be understood as a method the staff actively use to "bring the person forwards"¹⁵⁵ as needed, so as to adapt the performance and emotional dynamic of the visitors. As such, the performance of Maren frontstage, is evident of the museums capacity to implement specific gazes and perspectives onto their object and refocus them as suited. Ultimately, it is an expression of the power of the museum to construct "truths" about objects, including the possibility to bestow subject or subjecthood. Comparatively, the "truths" gathered backstage about Maren, explore and allow for various interactions and meeting between materialities, leading to the museum to construct and deduce distinctly different knowledges. In the following chapter, I will investigate possibilities of interaction between these ways of knowledge creation,

¹⁵⁵ This phrase is inspired by Maria Olejaz, See Olejaz, "When the dead teach", 8

by investigating if a transfer of the proximity and hands-on approach from behind the scenes, can be introduced to the museums frontstage performances.

8.0 DISCUSSION – What are the implications of these insights?

8.1 Recognition of Subjecthood Through Performance

The analysis findings illustrate how negotiations of Maren's subjecthood surface as museum workers engage and co-enact with Maren. In this chapter, I will investigate the wide-ranging implications of this by exploring if the museum worker's insights on experiencing Maren's subjecthood, can be applied to the way museums develop knowledge with and for their audiences.

Museums generate knowledge by acquiring museum objects, and by suggesting and directing how visitors *can get to know* the same objects.¹⁵⁶ Yet, the recent turn towards the museum as curating experiences also positions the visitor as someone who actively creates knowledge with their bodily, sensorial selves in the context of the exhibition, as presented earlier in the text as performative museology. However, critics of the experience-oriented museum have problematized what can be seen as limiting the salience of the objects themselves, relative to the meaning-making possibilities of the encompassing exhibition.¹⁵⁷ Especially since, in parallel with the knowledge-creating possibilities of museum exhibitions, museums also generate knowledge through specifically motivated object research, conducted by museum professionals. Karin Tybjerg notes how the turn towards experience-based museums can give rise to a dissonance between the knowledge museum workers engage in behind the scenes, and the possibilities for knowledge which is presented and offered to the visiting public.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps in this light, it is necessary to talk about two different epistemological perspectives on museum objects.¹⁵⁹

In the context of Maren, specific experiences from the analysis, such as the wrapping of Maren in textile, and the examinations at the hospital, took place as part of the research, and in the managing of Maren in transitions between research and exhibition display, such as opening and moving Maren out of the glass case. If these realms of understanding could intersect at NMST,

¹⁵⁶ Gorman, "Universalism", 2

¹⁵⁷ Dudley, "Museum objects"

¹⁵⁸ Tybjerg, "Epistemic Objects", 270

¹⁵⁹ Tybjerg, "Epistemic Objects", 270

perhaps the audiences to Maren can also be exposed to the aspects of perceived subjecthood that the museum workers experience? As senior curator Ageliki stated when reflecting on the impact of this process:

A: I think that the direct connection with Maren, from the way she smells to the way she feels, to researching historical records of other people's stories – to find out something about her - I think that the whole process made me very sensitive and made other people also very sensitive, to the complexity of the museum. And I think that those who didn't have that experience, they have become less affected.

From the quote above, it could be suggested that it is not solely the insights created about Maren through, for instance, the medical examinations themselves, leading to scientifically grounded “facts”, that produce insightful knowledge about Maren: Engaging in the research has the side effect of producing a bodily knowledge through encompassing experiences that involve the museum workers sensorial selves, resulting in a type of experience that museums often aim to recreate to their audience. Yet, there are reasons to be wary of the voyeuristic and spectacle-inducing dangers of sensorial and corporally affective human remains displays. Looking to *Body Worlds*, an exhibition that is famous for displaying full-body plastinates that can even be touched, serves as an example. Popularity aside, it is evidently very controversial, and the assessment from the field of museology have been particularly disapproving, regarding ethical, legal and aesthetic aspects of the exhibit, to mention but a few.¹⁶⁰ Anthropologist Uli Linke observes; “The corpses are presented in such a way that they appear un-dead”¹⁶¹ The source of this provocation could be how the *Body Worlds*' bodies not only refuse to look dead, they somehow seem to refuse the realm of the dead, taking on the actions of the living, manipulated into performing different potentials of human capacity; painting, playing basket etc. Again, when the displays in *Body Worlds* are surprisingly life-like, perhaps this is why, paradoxically, they also appear to have properties closer to that of an object, bringing the associations to simulacra and dolls who imitate reality.

8.2 Reconsidering Ethical Display Grounded in Performance

From the above it follows that how sensorial and embedded experiences come about, is an important consideration. Whilst it is generally agreed that science museums to a large extent

¹⁶⁰ Brooks and Rumsey, “The Body in the Museum”, 276-278.

¹⁶¹ Linke, “Touching the Corpse”, 18

already encourage interaction as means of mediation,¹⁶² it might not be the element of interaction in itself, that can challenge the performance of subjecthood in human remains, but the manner in which the displayed body can be approached. A prominent theory to how humans act within embedded environments is experimental psychologist James Gibson's concept of *affordances*, understood as the range of possibilities for action that an entity, be it object or an environment, afford to you as an agent.¹⁶³ Thus, a cup might afford pouring, or holding, based on the physical capabilities the agent can perform. In the museum, an interactive science exhibition might offer many affordances; buttons to push, screens to manipulate, and scenography to move within, which can bring about discoveries and revelations to the visitor. Whereas this indeed depicts the visitor as engaging in a performative approach to knowledge, it still somehow positions the object as something for the agent to take dominion over and manipulate for and by the motivation of the observer. Rather, by recollecting the potentials of Merleau-Ponty's "indivisibility of seer and seen",¹⁶⁴ the body on display need not be engaged in the performance for the sake of manufacturing experiences for the observer, but to challenge and displace the observer's viewpoint.

This can be exemplified by the impactful display, not of human remains, but of performance artist James Luna, who in 1987 positioned himself in the role of a museum object at the San Diego Museum of Man, lying on an open display facility on a sanded surface with an accompanying text label, that described scars, or "damage" to Lunas condition.¹⁶⁵ Luna's "Artifact Piece" was directed at criticizing the reduction of aboriginal remains to the state of objects, while challenging the politics of the objectifying gaze.¹⁶⁶ However as Luna intently directs the observers gaze to his body, and simultaneously to his sociopolitical statement, it is necessary to consider the possibilities for human remains to perform a similarly empowered enactment, and if museums could facilitate it.

French sociologist Marcel Mauss has pointed to how a corporal practice is culturally situated and changes with time and across various sociocultural identities.¹⁶⁷ Importantly, according to Mauss, individuals mimic what "he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he

¹⁶² Hein, "Public Art", 5; Howes, "Sensory Museology", 265

¹⁶³ Gibson, "The Ecological Approach", 119

¹⁶⁴ Belova, "The Event", 121

¹⁶⁵ Gladstone and Berlo, "Body in the Box", 354

¹⁶⁶ Gladstone and Berlo, "Body in the Box", 354-355

¹⁶⁷ Mauss, "Techniques"; Leahy, "Museum Bodies", 6

has confidence and who have authority over him.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, Mauss draws attention to both how authorities have the power to affect the specific manners of others, and that these are relative to change. What this could entail, is that as the museum institution not only is installed with the capacity to affect how visitors engage in their surroundings, but also that the museum can communicate new ways of interacting. In this manner, it is possible to move from a performative museology that is grounded in affordances, and towards a performative museology that intently does not comply in its entirety, to the will of the observer. Through this, meetings of shared materiality could arise, and though it, a not only instrumental but ethical re-distribution of agency.

In comparison, aesthetics that imitate mortuary rituals are often considered more ethically sensitive as they appear to ease the impact of bodies through a dignified yet often generic “performance of death”. Interestingly, as American Philosopher Susan Buck-Morss has noted, the etymological meaning of the word “aesthetics”, traces back to ancient Greek, “*Aisthitikos*”, and refers to that which is “perceptive by feeling”¹⁶⁹ Thus, Buck-Morss suggest that “The original field of aesthetics is not art, but reality – corporal, material, nature.” By re-connecting to an idea of aesthetics as the palpable reality, one can be exposed to the radical subjectivity of the other.

Moreover, through the possibility of the shared bond of being-in-the-world, ethical considerations are placed at the forefront, because it introduces the possibility for the visitor to be moved, change perception of, and “listen-in”¹⁷⁰ to the very presence of the other. Based on the various performances of subjecthood that can arise through such performative practices in the museum, I will suggest the possibility to *link performance directly to ethics*. And thus position the possibility for ethical display not in the singularity of the remains, or their particular usefulness or importance as part of a display, to its observers.¹⁷¹ Instead, this entails a shift that sees the premise for whether or not specific human remains ought to be displayed, as based on *the efforts of the museum to facilitate the performance of, and*

¹⁶⁸ Mauss, “Techniques”, 73, in Leahy, “Museum bodies”, 6

¹⁶⁹ Buck-Morss, “Aesthetics”, 6

¹⁷⁰ Introna, “Ethics of Flesh”, 54

¹⁷¹ In the absence of specific guidelines for display in Norway, I look here to The DCMS (British Department of Culture Media and Sports), who considers human remains to be displayed only if “*it makes a material contribution that could not be made equally effectively in another way*”. This is also an aspect emphasized in a recent advisory statement from The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, regarding display of Human remains in a museum. See; De Nasjonale Forskningsetiske Komiteene, “Henvendelse (2019/59)”

negotiation of, relative subjecthood of the remains. Do they allow for a conceptual or sensorial meetings between materialities? Do they attempt at subverting the imbalance between the visitor over the remains? This could ultimately place the responsibility with the curatorial efforts of the museum, where curation is understood not solely as different modes of display, but as a tool for museums to communicate to their visitors what knowledge can come about by engaging with these modes of display.

8.3 Performance and Museum Epistemologies

Art Historian Peter Cannon-Brooks notes “Museums are storehouses of knowledge as well as storehouses of objects.”¹⁷² Displays that aim to bring out and amplify the subjecthood of human remains could not solely facilitate more ethically sensitive encounters; it could also investigate museums as knowledge-creating institutions. Bruno Latour has famously stated that “When a machine runs efficiently when a matter of fact is settled, one need to focus only on its inputs and outputs and not on its internal complexity”¹⁷³ Thus, experiences that recognize subjecthood need to be brought to the frontstage. The surprise and discomfort of Maren’s smell as the glass case is removed, and how it would still linger after performing research or handling Maren,¹⁷⁴ yet through its occurrence, manifest the undeniable presence of a previously living human being. This kind of knowledge could recognize and give agency and meaning to that which Maren *makes happen* in the context of the museum.

Similarly, it proposes a step towards the integration of the knowledge that stems from curators, conservators, and historians’ museological practices, with the possibilities for knowledge creation the visitor engages in, in the museum. Here I side with Mark O’Neill who stresses the importance of museums to “develop a specific epistemology which integrates all the forms of knowledge which museums acquire, produce, deploy and disseminate.”¹⁷⁵ Consequentially, this can allow for museums as knowledge-creating institutions to be transparent and reflexive in the way knowledge is produced about their objects.

9.0 CONCLUSION - What are the findings of the thesis?

¹⁷² Cannon-Brookes, “The Nature” ,116

¹⁷³ Latour, “Pandora’s Hope”, 304

¹⁷⁴ Sjølie, personal communication to author, June 12, 2020.

¹⁷⁵ O’Neill, “Essentialism”, 99

9.1 Summary of the Findings

I started this thesis by asking how the dual aspects of Maren play out in museum practice. I have investigated how Maren is understood as a complex museum object, through an analysis of informant's reflections on enacting with Maren in different constellations. The findings reinforced my belief in the objective of the thesis, that it made little sense to capture the fundamental quality of Maren *as is*, because the choreography of actors and objects interacting with Maren alters this so profoundly from one situation to the next, or from one perspective to the next, that Maren, as a result, is in a constant state of 'becoming'. Therefore, the thesis applied theoretical tools for understanding how the object- and subjecthood of Maren can become visible through museological practice, namely the situations of and in between reflecting on, managing and conducting research around Maren.

While the performance around Maren is volatile, the consequences are that the museum institution, ultimately, has the power to sway these enactments of Maren: Through the manipulation of elements (glass case, texts, etc.) through the application of a certain gaze, or realms of understanding, through directing research and discourses, and through its institutionalized practices of knowledge production. This entails that despite movements questioning the power of museums, the museum institution still encompasses the power to direct how and in what way their museum objects are to be bestowed meaning, including to what degree they should be regarded as subjects or objects. As such, the findings identify museological practices as productive of subjecthood – and conversely as denying it, to adapt to the situational needs of staff and audiences. This is an aspect of the power of the museum that has not been much discussed in museological literature and would be valuable for further research.

In order to challenge what I argue is different approaches to knowledge creation in the museum, I discussed possibilities where the audience is exposed to Maren in a similar way as the museum workers were during their managing of and research on Maren at the museum. This is based on the findings that suggested that the museum workers perceive Maren differently when they experience Maren through their corporal apparatuses, where touch, smell, different ranges of proximity, and different contexts bring about something that is otherwise not perceived in Maren. By facilitating similar meetings, the potential of

recognizing subjecthood can be an approach to the display of human remains that ensures a more ethically sensitive treatment and understanding of human remains.

Following this, I argue that an evaluation of ethical sensitivity of the curation of human remains should be based on an assessment of how the curation affords possibilities for encounters with ambiguous museum objects, that dare to displace and move the audience from the spectator role that has often been affiliated with a disengaged or objectifying gaze. Rather, an approach to interaction that engages sensorial selves and recognition of material same-ness of the visitors, is proposed.

Ultimately, this can motivate museums to engage in self-reflection on how they produce knowledge about their museum objects, in different strands of museological practice. This aligns with New Museology's call for a greater focus on the political aspects of museums. As Andrea Witcomb suggests, ideally, "It will be possible to overcome the role of museums as hegemonic institutions, [where] the curator becomes a facilitator rather than a figure of authority."¹⁷⁶ This is, however, something that calls for further study. Especially will closer insights into visitor behaviors, as well as comparative studies of other human remains displays, be valuable and complementary to the insights presented here.

9.2 Moving Forwards

Finally, I will finish with a little thought experiment, inspired by a talk by Bruno Latour. In 2016 Latour held a speech concerning challenges of sovereignty in a time of global crisis at Harvard University. Latour explained to the crowd an experiment they did at the Sciences Po, where Latour was tenured at the time. The experiment was something close to a "mock COP" (United Nations Climate Change conference). But instead of the conventional way of representing the countries and their respective interests through national delegates, they also had one delegate from each country represent the natural sources; ocean, soil, and oil, thus giving the very talked about things, the topics of discussion, - a voice. In other words, the silent actors were represented. As an exercise of the imagination, undoubtedly. But is compassion not also based on the very imagination of the world of the other? As, quite fittingly if I might add, an unknown individual has said:

¹⁷⁶ Witcomb, "Re-imagining", 79

“As every person sees the world differently, when a person dies, it is in a way, the disappearance of a whole world.”

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Interviews

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Skogstad, Hilde og Marianne Sjølie «Interview, February 3, 2020," NMST.

ATTACHMENTS

Translated material

HILDE AND MARIANNE, SITAT 1 ORIGINAL

H: Vi har ganske mye skjeletter på nasjonalt medisinsk museum. Fordi akkurat dette skjelettet også består av voks og organer, så bare, merker jeg hvertfall at det snakkes om på en helt annen måte, det er mye mer følelser rundt det, da. Ser så mye mer kroppslig ut. Men jeg synes også at det er litt fascinerende, fordi, det er liksom ikke like mange som føler like mye rundt skjelettene våre da. Ettersom de bare er bein. Det blir sånn, det blir noe helt annet.

M: det blir et veldig skapt skille, da. Som egentlig er unaturlig.

H: Ja, littegrann. Vi hadde et skjelett i et skap som vi kalte «skjelettet is skapet» og det er jo også, det er jo et helt skjelett.

M: så det er et helt menneske det og

H: Det er et helt menneske. Men der er det jo, det er liksom ikke, skaper ikke alle disse samtalene og følelsene og vurderingene på samme måte. Det er jo spesielt med Maren på så mange måter, både hvordan hun ser ut, hvordan hun ble funnet og det ene og det andre.

M: Men jeg synes jo også de babyene på glass, som er hele babyer, altså det er liksom greit fordi de har jo aldri, de har jo ikke levd på en måte, altså som, mange av de, men de er også veldig sånn sterke, da. Altså sånn, jeg tenker man kan...

H: ja det er litt det samme.

M: Ja, fordi de har den intaktheten over seg.

HILDE AND MARIANNE, QUOTE 1, ENGLISH TRANSLATION

H: We have quite a few skeletons at the National Medical Museum. Just because this exact skeleton consists of wax and organs, I notice that it's talked about in an entirely different way; there's a lot more emotions involved. Looks more bodily. But I also think it's fascinating, because it's just not that many who feel so much around our skeletons. Since they are just bones. It's just, something completely different.

M: It is a very constructed separation. Which is unnatural, really

H: Yes, a little. We had a skeleton in a closet that we called "skeletons in the closet", and that is also a complete skeleton.

M: So, it is a complete human, as well.

H: It is a complete human. But it kind of doesn't create all these conversations and emotions and considerations in the same way. That's what's so special with Maren in so many ways. Both how she looks, and how she was found.

M: But I also think that those babies on glass, the whole babies, that is kind of okay, because they have never lived, kind of. But they are also very strong. Like, I kind of think that...

H: Yes, it is similar.

M: Yes, because they have the same intactness.

HILDE OG MARIANNE, 2 ORIGINAL

H: Det følte veldig spesielt når vi skulle pakke henne for transport, også liksom svøpte vi henne inn i, ja egentlig det tekstilet hun lå på da. At vi dekket henne til. Og da var det som at

H: It felt very strange when we were packing her for transport, and we were kind of swathing her in, really, in the textile that she was lying on. (in the exhibition). We were covering her, and then it was as if we

M: da ble vi andektige

H: Ja, da ble vi andektige, faktisk. For da var det som om at plutselig så jeg henne ennå mer som et menneske fordi da så det bare ut som at vi hadde pakket inn en, et lik, altså, og det er hun jo, på en måte, men det følte bare sånn, ennå mer menneskelig. Som at vi liksom virkelig sånn svøpte noen til en begravelse. [...] Da følte jeg at jeg så henne litt på en annen måte. Så var det liksom håndteringen på rikshospitalet, ble jo også veldig spesiell fordi det liksom er i en kontekst som er veldig annerledes enn museet, hvor det mere er sånn. Igjen så ble hun kanskje enda mer sånn «ikke en museumsgjenstand», da. Hun ble sånn; dette er et menneske som vi skal undersøke, gjennom [...] maskiner som undersøker sykdommer på levende mennesker.

HILDE AND MARIANNE, 2 ENGLISH TRANSLATION

H: It felt very strange when we were packing her for transport, and we were kind of swathing her in, really, in the textile that she was lying on. (in the exhibition). We were covering her, and then it was as if we

M: We became "andektige"

H: Yes, we did actually. Because then it was as if I suddenly saw her more as a human because, it looked as if we had just wrapped a body. And she is, in a way, but it just felt a lot more, even more human. Like, as if we were really swathing someone for a funeral. At that moment I felt that I saw her in a somewhat different way. And then it

was the handling at the hospital, which was also very peculiar because it is in a context that is very different from the museum. Again, she became even more, like “not a museum object” It was more like; “this is a human being that we will investigate through machinery that examines illness in living human beings.”

HILDE OG MARIANNE, SITAT 3, ORIGINAL

Jeg synes det var litt rart at det satt mennesker som var syke som satt i gangene der også kommer vi trillende her, for moro skyld, det følte jeg var litt ekkelt, liksom. Her har vi jo en død gammel sak, også kommer vi bare og...

H: det er på en måte ikke viktig, altså folk står i kø for MR-maskin og CT- scanning fordi det er snakk om liv og død, og det er alvorlige sykdommer. Så kommer vi og..

M: leker

H: og bruker tid på noe egentlig ikke haster og ikke er viktig på den måten, da. Menneskebein.

M: det skal sies at de brukte av forskningstid da, så det hadde ikke vært til pasienter uansett,

H: Nei, vi stjal ikke noe plass i køen, eller. Dette var tid som de ikke ville ha behandlet pasienter uansett. Så sånn sett så er det jo ikke sånn.

M: det hjalp jo litt. Men det var jo litt sånn. «Her kommer vi», liksom.

M: den derre flate liket vårt og,

H: ja det ble litt sånn

M: med journalister på slep, og

H: mange som ville se på og

M: det var litt rart.

H: ja

HILDE AND MARIANNE, QUOTE 3, ENGLISH TRANSLATION

M: I thought it was a bit strange that there were people who were sick, sitting in the hallways there and we are, rolling down, sort of for fun. I felt that it was a bit uncomfortable. Here we come, with this dead old thing.

H: It is in a way not important, people are standing in line for the MRI and the CT-scan, because, it's a matter of life and death, and we are just..

M. Playing.

H: And spending time on something that isn't important in that way. Human bones.

M: It should be said that they (at the hospital) used their research time, so it would have been dedicated to treating patients anyhow.

H: No, we didn't take anyone's place in the line. This was time that they wouldn't have treated patients in, anyways. So, in that sense, it's a bit-

M It did help a bit. But it was a bit like. "Here we come", kind of.

H: Yes.

M: With our flat corpse...

H: Yes, it was a bit like that...

M: With journalists running along, and...

H: Many people that wanted to look.

M: It was a bit strange.

H Yeah.

MARIANNE, SITAT 1, ORIGINAL

M: Man går ut fra seg selv da, på en annen måte, tenker jeg. Eller, hvertfall jeg gjør det. Speiler litt sånn den hun er. Meg i henne, eller at det er et menneske med følelser og ønsker og drømmer og alt mulig.

MARIANNE, QUOTE 1, ENGLISH TRANSLATION

M: You compare it to yourself in a different way, I think. Or, at least I do that. I mirror who I am in her, and that it's a human with feelings and wishes and dreams.

ELLEN, SITAT 1, ORIGINAL

E: Det som ofte er en fare ved museum, som jeg mener man undervurderer, det er taushet. Maren har først og fremst blitt møtt med likegyldighet. Folk må liksom røskes litt i, men så må det ikke bli show. De må ikke røskes i på en «bad taste»-måte. Så man må være veldig bevisst på det man gjør.

I: Er det et mål å skape reaksjoner?

På en måte, men bare fordi jeg tenker at «hallo, det er et dødt menneske på museum!» Det er en stor ting. Så det er ikke det at alle trenger å reagere eller skrive om det i avisene

eller sånn. Men jeg bekymrer meg mye mer for at folk ikke noen bryr seg om noen ting, enn for at de skal mene noe annet enn oss. Jeg har vist rundt mye nedi utstillingen med Maren, med skoleklasser. Når vi kommer bort til henne, da er de fortsatt litt på mobilen og sånn, også sier jeg sånn, «Hallo!? Hva har vi her, tror dere?» Også; «Ja, det er et lik» [...] eller, «det er et dødt menneske» eller noe sånn. Og da, «Oi!» da, er de våkne. Da legger de bort mobiltelefonene.

ELLEN, QUOTE 1, ENGLISH TRANSLATION

E: What I think often is a danger with museums, which I think one underestimates, is silence. Maren has first and foremost been met with indifference. People needs to be stirred a little, but it shouldn't turn into "show" or in a "bad taste" way. So, one needs to be very conscious of what one does.

I: Is it an aim to cause reactions?

E: In a sense, but only because I think that "Hello! It is a dead human in the museum! But it's not as if everyone needs to react or write about it in the papers, and stuff. But I worry much more about no one caring about anything. It's a bit like, I have shown around a lot down there [in the exhibition] with Maren, with school classes, and then I walk over and they are still on their cell phones, and I say "Hello! What do we have here, you think?" And then; "Its a corpse", or "Its a dead human being", or something like that. And then; "Oy!" Then, they're awake. And they put away the cell phones.

ELLEN, SITAT 2, ORIGINAL

E: En dag oppdaget en av formidlerne at det var lagt et teppe over monteret der Maren ligger. Oppå lå det en lapp der det stod, «det kunne vært din bestemor. La teppet ligge» Så det finnes eksempler på at noen har reagert. Vi har tatt vare på den lappen.

I: Hva tenker du om det da?

E: Det synes jeg er veldig fint. Det skulle jeg gjerne ha sagt fra om. Om jeg hadde truffet den personen som la på teppet, ville jeg takket, og sagt noe å la: «Dette er veldig interessant, jeg er veldig glad for at du sier ifra, og jeg vil gjerne høre om hvorfor du tenker sånn, for jeg er uenig med deg, og jeg tror jeg kommer til å fortsette å være uenig.» Det kan jo hende jeg ville endret mening, men jeg tror ikke det. Jeg har jo tenkt nøye på dette.

ELLEN, QUOTE 2, ENGLISH TRANSLATION

E: One time, one of the museum educators discovered that it was placed a blanket over the glass case where Maren is displayed. On top of the blanket was a note that read "It could have been your grandmother. Keep the blanket on". So there are examples of people reacting.

I: What do you think about that?

E: I think that is really nice, and I wish I could tell that person that I think that is nice. [...] So to the person that put the blanket down, I would say that it is very interesting, and I am very pleased that you say what you think, and I would like to hear why you think like that, because I disagree with you, and I will continue to disagree. That is, unless, I'm convinced otherwise. But I don't think I would be, as I have given this a lot of thought.

Situational Map

Situational map of elements, actors and discourses relevant to the enactment of subjecthood and objecthood of Maren at NMST.

<p>KEY INDIVIDUAL ACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employees NMST</i> <i>(informants)</i> • <i>Museum visitors</i> 	<p>IMPLICATED ACTOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maren</i> <p>KEY EVENT IN SITUATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upcoming exhibition</i>
<p>COLLECTIVES AND NETWORKS OF ACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NMST/NMM, OUH, National Commette for Research Ethics on Human Remains, ICOM, Scientific fields; museology, anthropology, biomedicine++</i> 	<p>RELATED ELEMENTS, ACTORS/ACTANTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exhibition space, texts, and captions, layout, glass case, lighting, fabric, stretcher, medical equipment, transportation vehicle, scans, digital technologies, webpage, videos,</i>
<p>CONTESTED ISSUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The enactment of subjecthood and objecthood of Maren</i> 	<p>INTERTWINED DISCOURSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Museum practice as performative, Museum epistemologies, Ethics of humans, Ethics of things, Emotions in the museum,</i>
<p>INTERTWINED ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ethics of displaying human remains</i> • <i>Narrative constructions</i> • <i>Constructing respectfulness</i> • <i>Issues of consent</i> 	<p>TEMPORAL (HISTORICAL) ELEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The history of exhibiting of Maren in the past and to the present</i> • <i>Legislations NAGPRA, Human Tissue Act</i> • <i>History of human remains in museums, history of museums, history of ethnographic/anthropologic collections, medical collections, colonialist practices, repatriation policies</i> • <i>National histories on human remains, Sami remains. Local histories</i>
<p>DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“object”, “subject”</i> • <i>“respect”, “dignity”</i> <i>“completeness/intactness”</i> • <i>“flesh” “being-in-the-world”</i> • <i>“The Gaze”</i> 	<p>SPATIAL (GEOGRAPHICAL) ELEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other museums and institutions that display and care for human remains, locally, nationally and globally</i>
<p>INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NMST’s National mandate as a museum for science and technology</i> • <i>Maren’s “instrumental value” as museum object</i> • <i>Obligation to follow ICOM Code of Ethics</i> 	<p>SOCIOCULTURAL ELEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Socioculturally situated ideas of respect, dignity, appropriate-ness</i> • <i>Aesthetic evaluation</i> • <i>Symbols of death, illness, funerary rites</i>