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Lecture 1

looking at museums- work they do, role in society, education.

Andrew – museum professional and teacher. Trainer for Museums Australia.

Concept of what a museum is

The urge to collect – every human society has the urge to collect things because it gives a sense of knowledge, insight into the world. Not the only species to do this – Neanderthals thought to have done this with stones and shells. What value would these have had to them? Survival. Have to transmit knowledge on how to survive so you collect things to show them. Cultural production and transition.

Impulse to organise collections so you can find things and put it to work. Taxonomy – collecting and naming. Framework for the knowledge you have built around your collection. Eg Gen2:19. Adam was the first taxonomist.

Underground caves in France and Spain. Some amazing artwork on the walls. Drawing from hunter gatherers of things like bison. Tells us that bison roamed freely over continental Europe – something they no longer do. Caves in very difficult places to get to, most not discovered until 1920-30's. why is it so inaccessible? A place used for special occasions and not open to all members. Consider an early art gallery. A way to transmit important information, telling stories. These animals could be hunted and used by the people. Initiation for new hunters.

Ancient Egypt – agrarian and not hunter gatherer. More complex social situation. Similar things depicted in their art – crops, animals, etc. all about transmitting knowledge. A lot found in tomb so very different religious world view. Valuable in next life.

Unit Content

All about objects, collections and organisations that represent objects and collections. 3 intertwined threads.

No textbook. All material provided online.

What does object data mean? 3 categories of data – observable, comparative and supplementary.

Object data and info systems – how they can crunch the object data.

Free online tools to work with object data.

Significance assessment – how you assess an objects significance. Set scheme devised in Australia and published 13 or so yrs. ago. Standard procedural process.