**00:00:00:00 - 00:00:04:21**

**B Martin**

Hello and welcome to the Pitt Rivers Museum.

**00:00:04:23 - 00:01:06:00**

**B Martin**

In this episode of Making the Pitt Rivers Museum we’ll be taking a deep dive look at the museum's collection of objects from the San communities of Southern Africa, with the expert guidance of Kileni Fernando, the inaugural San Visiting Fellow here at Oxford. Kileni has been working with the Making Museum Project to inform our understanding of making processes, object use and even design choices, as well as helping us improve our labelling and cataloguing. In case you're new here and wondering who's voices you have in your ears, you'll also be hearing again from me, Becky Martin, our project postdoc Beth Hodgett, and our project lead Chris Morton. I should just say, before we start, that the audio for this episode is being recorded with the objects in front of us in the museum's research space, this should give an exciting insight into how lively the museum is behind the scenes, but means that we do ask you to forgive a little background noise.

Check out the program notes if you want to look at the relevant collections whilst listening to our discussions. So, without further ado, I'll hand over to Beth to get us started.

**00:01:06:00 - 00:01:26:10**

**B Hodgett**

Um brill, so, um Kileni, you’ve come all the way to the Pitt Rivers to work with us for the past few weeks on some of our objects and archive collections and I was just wondering if you could introduce yourself and what brought you to the Pitt Rivers and also the project that you're working on yourself that’s sort of brought you to the museum and to this kindof collaboration.

**00:01:26:10 - 00:02:32:06**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. So, I'm Kileni Fernando and I'm a !’O woman from Namibia, specifically from Tsumkwe West. And I'm here at Pitt Rivers Museum as an AfOx Fellow and basically what I'm going to do here is to look at San collections, Khoisan collections, and then try to look at how we can be able to better label them as well as better represent them, either on the website and also in the museum itself, and then make sure that we add more information on the object. So, not just saying maybe an object as it is, but seeing it as something that's important that can also connect people to their identities and to their places, to their land as well. I'm also going to talk to the museum about possible ways for community members in Southern Africa to have access to these objects as well.

**00:02:32:06 - 00:02:38:14**

**B Martin**

Just before we can really get into things here, I just want to ask Chris Morton who’s our research project lead…

**00:02:38:14 - 00:02:39:19**

**C Morton**

Hello!

**00:02:39:19 - 00:02:45:17**

**B Martin**

to tell us a little bit more about the AfOx fellowship program for anyone who's listening and thinking, oh, that that sounds like it's for me.

**00:02:45:17 - 00:03:43:14**

**C Morton**

Yeah, sure. So, AfOx, which is the Africa Oxford Initiative, have these 12 month fellowships for African scholars to come to Oxford. They do ten months remotely, with meetings online with an academic partner here in Oxford. And then they spend Trinity term, that is May and June, here in Oxford, in person. And, they've been running for some years, or a few years. And we were looking for a partner to work with for our potential connection with the !Khwa ttu center in South Africa to bring a San curator over and AfOx seemed like the most obvious partner to work with. So, Yeah. So it's sort of a three way collaboration between AfOx, the !Khwa ttu centre and the Pitt Rivers.

**00:03:43:14 - 00:03:51:17**

**B Martin**

Cool, so obviously this is very unique for the Pitt Rivers, but the AfOx fellowships run across the university.

**00:03:51:17 - 00:04:06:06**

**C Morton**

Indeed. Indeed they do. So they could be medics or they could be social scientists, or they could be from the humanities. And as long as they're working with a partner in a department in the university, they can come.

**00:04:06:06 - 00:04:30:21**

**B Martin**

Cool, I know this partnership with Kileni has been already so productive, and transformational for understanding of the San collections. So I guess, without further ado, let's jump into the first thing we were going to be looking at here, which is the reproduction of San rock art, which we previously believed to be a depiction of a group of dancers with an eland, but I know Kileni you’ve had some other thoughts…

**00:04:30:21 - 00:05:40:12**

**K Fernando**

Actually what I'm looking at is not exactly a dance because a dance wouldn't look like this because people are so scattered all around. And for a dance, people have to sit around the fire and do the dance and an eland itself shouldn’t, it's not always there, it shouldn’t be there. So this could be people hunting the eland. And from my side, I think this could be the family members that are called to come to the place where the eland was slaughtered. And then, what I know about such kind of, gatherings also is that when the men slaughter a big animal like eland, kudu, or a gemsbock, they would go home and send 2 or 3 men to go call the families at home, and then they'll come together and then they'll make biltongs, yeah, dry the meat and then they'll go back home with bags of meat. But then I think back in the days people would move and then stay there around where the animals were slaughtered, and then they'll stay for a few weeks and then they'll move on again.

**00:05:40:12 - 00:05:49:00**

**B Hodgett**

People seem to be holding things or carrying things here. Are these weapons for hunting, or are these for carrying the meat or?

**00:05:49:00 - 00:06:41:05**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, these could be sticks, digging sticks, or maybe just weapons, things like that because that's what I can see. And then this one looks like he's carrying something like a bag, that's a carrying bag or a quiver that’s made out of hide, skin, skin from an animal. And then this one looks like a carrying bag, like skin that’s tied up to carry some things. So I think it's not really a dance, it’s a hunting session around here. And I think here it’s like people coming to the hunting area and they sing together, celebrate together, eat together and so. I also had a similar experience as well before there was conservancies back then in the Tsumkwe West area, so that was a once in a lifetime thing. I’m actually grateful for that so.

**00:06:41:05 - 00:07:00:11**

**B Hodgett**

So we were talking last week about the kind of the changes in hunting practices because of new legislation coming in and that kind of tension between the kind of the conservation and the kind of traditional ways of kind of living and moving through. How does it feel to kindof see the depiction of kind of these traditional hunting practices?

**00:07:00:11 - 00:07:47:14**

**K Fernando**

Actually it brings memories back, like, you know, those amazing memories, like, I was still maybe around ten years old, nine years old. So we had this kindof experience. So looking at this it’s like, so amazing, like, you know, these days I wouldn't be able to do such kind of activities anymore because of the laws and changes in the environment as well and these land issues around our area. So this kind of a picture, like memory that would never leave again. You know, it's like left in memory. So, and I'm actually lucky that I at least took part in such kind of activities, you know there are children who will never experience things like that.

**00:08:00:00 - 00:08:03:12**

**B Martin**

I know this depiction of an ostrich that we have here also caught your eye… Beth

**00:08:03:12 - 00:08:11:01**

**B Hodgett**

So I guess like, first of all, like what what's your initial impressions when you see depictions of ostriches like this?

**00:08:11:01 - 00:09:11:09**

**K Fernando**

Well, I think this is an amazing image actually. Ostrich is actually a very important bird for the San people because, apart from the ostrich egg, ostrich itself we have a myth, a story, about ostrich and how it got fire to the communities. So, the story goes like, back in the days, ostrich was the only one who had fire. You know, and usually it needs like at least fried on the fire and all that. And then the humans didn't have anything. There was a woman that was like, there was a time that they were playing a game, and then they were, and then the ostrich had the fire under the, under the wing, and they were dancing, dancing and the woman was trying to get the fire and then the ostrich was like \*laugh\*

**00:09:11:09 - 00:09:12:22**

**B Hodgett**

Almost being chased or?

**00:09:12:22 - 00:09:26:02**

**K Fernando**

Yeah preventing like, it was a dance like, something like a dance. And then the woman, actually danced and then she took the fire away from the ostrich and she ran. So that is why ostriches, they sometimes chase people…

**00:09:26:02 - 00:09:27:00**

**B Hodgett**

… to get the fire back…

**00:09:27:00 - 00:09:58:13**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. And then the eggs, it’s food, as well as storage for water. And the shells are also made for beads and the powder of the ostrich eggshell is also used for kids, like they drink it, for stomach problems as well. And then for a child to wear ostrich eggshell like this one, its like some kind of protection, like getting evil spirits away.

**00:09:58:13 - 00:10:15:07**

**B Hodgett**

When you're seeing pictures of the rock art, the way that these kind of are sparking these, these stories, is this what the rock art would have been for sort of kind of explaining these, these stories and putting them down, kind of, so people can kind of tell them or keep telling them?

**00:10:15:07 - 00:11:07:09**

**K Fernando**

Back in the days there was no text or anything like that, but and then like putting an animal there or some kind of a ritual explanation, all that. I think it was also about sharing information about what kind of animals are around this area. For the picture, when you see it, you can just, see that it's an ostrich and then you will know that, okay, around here we have ostriches. And then, I don't think it shows the exact stories, but then when people see the the the ostrich, that's exactly what they think about, like that’s, those are the stories that they already know. And so, it’s kind of looking at that, looking at the importance and then how the ostrich and the people can coexist and how they can survive together.

**00:11:07:09 - 00:11:26:06**

**B Hodgett**

And so when we were talking about the, the eland dance and we were talking about how, kind of contemporary legislation has sort of changed the ability to hunt in traditional ways. In terms of like ostriches, are we seeing fewer ostriches. Is this like as, you know, environmental change happens, are ostrich populations changing?

**00:11:26:06 - 00:12:47:22**

**K Fernando**

You know, you don't see ostriches anywhere anymore because they are all in, in game farms, so they are all, most of them are put in camps. And people are like taming them in a way for business purposes. And so, so it's actually quite rare to see a live ostrich around. Back in 2011, we had one in pur conservancy, there was one. And then after a while, like, I didn't see it anymore. I don't know what happened to it. And, so which was actually quite lonely for the, for the ostrich. And then it was kind of just disappeared. So, in terms of ostriches in our communities, it’s actually quite rare. Children who are growing up now, they have no idea what an ostrich looks like, you know, unless they're shown pictures. Then you explain to them what it is, and then you tell the story about the… people still tell stories about ostriches, but they, their kids have no idea how it looks like. There is not that that visual connection, but then people telling them stories and then they see this rock art. So if they see that they can remember the stories, and can connect with the ostriches for us.

**00:12:47:22 - 00:13:03:16**

**B Hodgett**

Does that, and also the kind of scarcity of the ostrich, because you were talking about the significance of like the ostrich beads and, kind of the powdered egg as medicine. Is that also kindof fading out of practice, or is it more that these are sourced more from different places?

**00:13:03:16 - 00:13:34:11**

**K Fernando**

Well, it depends on where you are and if you have access to it. Like in Namibia, we, especially deep in the rural areas, if they have access to the shells, they use it. But then otherwise mostly they, it faded in many areas because of the way ostriches are treated now. Otherwise, if you have enough money to buy it from farmers, then you can be able to use it. Otherwise, you can’t just get it in the bush.

**00:13:34:11 - 00:13:58:05**

**B Hodgett**

So this is quite a powerful image then because we've got not only a kind of a making practice for making the rock art that kind of speaks to the ways in which the ostriches used to move and kind of be in, in spaces, but also about how that then impacts a lot of other making practices and the making of beads, the kind of making of kind of stories, and how you can’t tell stories differently and all the things that are very entangled together in this one image.

**00:13:58:05 - 00:14:19:02**

**B Martin**

This actually helps us explain a lot of other items we have in front of us here made from ostrich egg shell. Let's take a look at these water carriers first… our listeners should note that these eggshells are held in tissue paper to protect them when off display, so you will hear it rustle \*rustling noise\* as we handle them.

**00:14:19:02 - 00:14:37:17**

**B Hodgett**

So we looked at this last week, kind of in the museum court when it's out on display on the ground floor and I wondered whether you might be able to just kind of tell us again, a little bit about, first of all, what the eggshell’s been used for and then also about the designs on the shell itself.

**00:14:37:17 - 00:16:29:17**

**K Fernando**

So, well, ostrich eggshell is actually such a nice container, it's cooler and then it keeps water or any kind of liquid, like cooler. And then what they do to make it extra cold is, like, they have to dig a hole and then put it inside the hole so to make it buried. And then, them putting it under the ground is also to keep it safe, like for later use as well. And the patterns around it, usually it's, it's some kind of a sign of a sign, a sign by a group of people, by a person who put it there so that it can show that know that somebody that was there, and then also some of the specific signs, belong to probably an individual or to a group of people so that that can be like respected, so it’s kind of a marking the territory where people were. So basically what happens is that they when they put the container with water in the sand, they'll have to put a sign there showing that, somebody actually came here, through here. And then this belongs to people that came through here. So it means that if, if that is identified that means that those people have to move on because it's a sign that there are people around in this area. So it was also kind of marking people's territory and then also stating that somebody's property is at that area. So basically, as I was talking about also about my research paper about sense of property, that was how it was back in the days as well so…

**00:16:29:17 - 00:17:23:20**

**B Hodgett**

So this is an incredibly complex object then, because it's kind of serving that kind of a very practical purpose in that you can kind of carry and store water, it's, you've got these designs that are about identity, both personal and familial and then you’ve also got of this kind of relationship to land that's kind of also encoded in this, in this egg, which is, yeah, I mean it’s a phenomenally complex object. I was also really shocked at how much heavier it was when I picked it up. Trip than I expected it to be. It's it's a very it's a very solid, object. I don’t think, you know, Chris was saying we don't usually get these out very often, if ever, so like to be able to kind of hold it and kind of see how secure it would have been as a container is fantastic.

So we've also got a couple of other eggs here, and these were collected quite a lot later, so these were collected in the 1970s. And what I was wondering if we could talk about maybe initially at least with this one is this little, this bit here, this sort of the plug?

**00:17:23:20 - 00:17:39:04**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. This is just the, the lid. So, I can’t see what kind of plant this is, but then it looks l like some kind of grass, grass that was pulled out and then used…

**00:17:39:04 - 00:17:40:17**

**B Hodgett**

…wadded together?

**00:17:40:17 - 00:17:45:15**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. So I think this was done while the grass was wet, it was still green.

**00:17:45:15 - 00:18:07:00**

**B Hodgett**

And you were saying earlier when we were looking at them, it's interesting that these two 1970s eggs have been bored from the kind of like the top, of the apex of the point, whereas this older egg is kind of bored in the centre. Is there, is that just kind of like the particular thinking of the person who made them? Is that, would that serve any particular purpose?

**00:18:07:00 - 00:18:26:08**

**K Fernando**

So I think it's also personal, like feeling of where to poke the, the hole. And then also this one specifically, I think it was also a way of sharing information. I think these people moved away from there. But then I don't know how it was, it was collected. I don't know if it was got, if it was from the ground or…

**00:18:26:08 - 00:18:48:15**

**B Hodgett**

In the database, Dunn says that he got this one from a person, he doesn’t give a name, he just gives a kind of vague region that they were from. And obviously, as with many of the historic records, it's very hard to tell under what circumstances, whether that’s something that has been bought, whether that’ something that has been given as a gift, whether it’s something that he's kind of taken. It's not always clear what that means.

**00:18:48:15 - 00:18:52:19**

**K Fernando**

So did it have some substance inside or water?

**00:18:52:19 - 00:18:58:13**

**B Hodgett**

He just describes the engravings, but doesn't say anything about whether or not it had water or…

**00:18:58:13 - 00:18:58:13**

**K Fernando**

… or some substance in it. Yeah, because I’m trying to see if this was done with pencil or was it with a with a chalk or something sharp or just?

**00:18:58:13 - 00:19:41:13**

**B Hodgett**

I think, certainly my understanding is, often it will be kind of kind of very gently incised in and then kind of rubbed with like charcoal to kind of put that colouring into the impressions.

And then we've got another example here, this is again from the 1970s, speaking of incisions and this one has again quite a different pattern on it. So we don't have any of the animal figures that we see there, and it seems to be quite a lot less complex. But would we still understand these, as those kind of, again, markers of personal identity and ownership?

**00:19:41:13 - 00:20:09:07**

**K Fernando**

This is more like, maybe it was, it was a pattern that was seen by the designer from other ethnic groups, maybe the !Xhosa or the Zulus maybe. This is the kind of art that they do on their beads and so, and also some clothing and so. So I think this was when people came together, they saw other patterns and then they just got inspired. I think it's a personal favorite design. So…

**00:20:09:07 - 00:20:20:16**

**B Hodgett**

So it’s this kind of, this kind of San art style taking on influences from other peoples, but kind of also practicing different artist crafts. That’s fantastic.

**00:20:33:00 - 00:21:40:23**

**B Hodgett**

So this egg is on display in a case that's labelled ‘vessels’ and this is because the Pitt Rivers Museum uses typological displays, this basically gathers together objects that have been used in some form or another as containers. But we were looking at the display the other day and we were talking about this label. It says ‘ostrich egg used as water jar Bushmen, Kalahari Desert’ and one of the things we were commenting on is how brief it is. And we’ve just heard you kind of speak very eloquently and beautifully about all of the kind of different significances of this egg. So I'd be really interested to hear kind of your thoughts both on, the kind of the brevity of the label, what you think it doesn't say what you would like it to say, but also I think about the language because we’ve got this term here, this ‘Bushmen’ term, which is very much a historic bit of terminology that, when the label was created, would have been the contemporary parlance for what we might now talk about as the San peoples, and how you feel that that term sits on display in the museum and how you feel about that?

**00:21:40:23 - 00:23:16:00**

**K Fernando**

Well, for me, I feel the term Bushmen can be used on display because it’s actually quite important to know about the historical terms of how people call and changes that came with it, or like looking at that term can tell that this is how this group of people are labelled as Bushmen because, you know, for the first time when you come to an area like you wouldn't know how to call the person, so people make up their own names to, to call the people because they're like mostly in the bush and things like that. But then, it depends on different individuals, how they would like to be called. For example, some of the people in… some of the groups in Namibia likes to be called by their language groups, like the !Kung, the Ju/\’Hoansi and things like that. But then, for me, I think for this collection in the museum especially, I think it's important to note where the shells are coming from, the eggshells are coming from, and then mention the name Bushmen. I think that’s fine. But then we also add the term San as well, because that's how the communities were called throughout history. And so, but then because we also don't know exactly from which group it came from, I think it's important to use the term Bushmen as well as San which are like collective names for, for this indigenous group of people.

**00:23:16:00 - 00:23:43:18**

**B Hodgett**

So what we're trying to get at in the label then is that sense of, we don't have the exact provenance and we don't know the exact peoples this has come from, so we’re trying to say this is broadly part of cultural a group, and also making like very clear the kind of the historic provenance of how the objects have come and how that limits what we can say about them in the present and just kind of having these conversations where we're trying to work out the way the way forward that feels right. And I understand you’re going to maybe write us a new label…

**00:23:43:18 - 00:23:44:20**

**K Fernando**

…Yessss…

**00:23:44:20 - 00:23:48:24**

**B Hodgett**

…for these so we can work on and have that on display.

**00:24:06:17 - 00:24:18:09**

**B Martin**

So we actually have quite a few objects in the collection made from ostrich eggshell, which these forthcoming new labels will help to better contextualize, one of which is this fabulous set of beads over here.

**00:24:18:09 - 00:24:50:13**

**B Hodgett**

So these were collected in the early 1800s, so these are some of the earliest collections from southern Africa, certainly in this museum and probably in quite a lot of British museums. And we were talking earlier a little bit about the uses of ostrich eggshells in the making of jewellery and this particular piece was on display in the museum and you were telling us a bit last week about how it would have traditionally been worn, and also a bit more generally about the kind of making of these beads.

**00:24:50:13 - 00:25:20:10**

**K Fernando**

This is what is worn at the waist or sometimes like, depending how long it is, people also use it to wear on their chest as well. But mostly, traditional healers and sometimes women as well if they just want to wear it, but then mostly they wear it around their waist. So looking at these, I think they've been used a lot, looking at…

**00:25:20:10 - 00:25:21:13**

**B Hodgett**

…like the discolouration?

**00:25:21:13 - 00:25:22:21**

**K Fernando**

Yeah like how it is. Yeah. Yeah.

**00:25:22:21 - 00:25:40:15**

**B Hodgett**

Because there is, there’s this striking kind of like the very bright whites and then this kind of almost browny purple kind of mottling coming on on the shells, which I'm assuming is that kind of degradation from age, possibly? Just looking at the beads you’re wearing on your wrist and how bright they are in comparison.

**00:25:40:15 - 00:25:52:15**

**K Fernando**

They become so smooth and then it shows that the person who used this, so it can show that this was a very precious piece of jewellery for someone.

**00:25:52:15 - 00:25:58:06**

**B Hodgett**

You can almost see those invisible hands kind of handling it over time again and again. It’s beautiful.

**00:25:58:06 - 00:26:02:11**

**K Fernando**

And then I think it’s also it’s made from leather?

**00:26:02:11 - 00:26:04:15**

**B Hodgett**

It looks very kind of hide-y doesn’t it?

**00:26:04:15 - 00:26:14:13**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. And so now we don't know exactly from which animal, but one can see that it all natural materials that was used here.

**00:26:14:13 - 00:26:25:07**

**B Hodgett**

Can I ask, so here it looks like there’s almost like a join, is this, that the kind of material kind of loops around on itself a bit here, is that so that it hangs in a particular way or…?

**00:26:25:07 - 00:26:41:11**

**K Fernando**

Usually this is how they tie it all together, and then they roll it into layers and it will be tied around the, the waist. And then nowadays what they use is this modern beads, um…

**00:26:41:11 - 00:26:43:19**

**B Hodgett**

Oh like a almost like a plastic manufactured bead?

**00:26:43:19 - 00:26:49:24**

**K Fernando**

Yes, yes, and then they put it around the waist or also the same on the chest.

**00:26:49:24 - 00:27:03:02**

**B Hodgett**

And would pieces like this be inherited, would they be passed down between family members, or would they be very unique to one individual, or would this be the kindof thing that like a grandmother or grandfather would kind of gift to children?

**00:27:03:02 - 00:27:37:22**

**K Fernando**

Well, it depends on, different groups and different families as well. So, if the grandmother wore this, she can give it over to a granddaughter or to a daughter as well if she passed away. But then sometimes, in some families, they were buried with the owners as well, so then sometimes they don't give to people. But then if, if it was really important to that person and buried with the person as well, so.

**00:27:37:22 - 00:27:58:03**

**B Hodgett**

So thinking then about how intensely personal that is, how does it feel to see this in a, in a museum with no real knowledge of who previously owned it? You know, because we can see on the label that there’s really no information at all about who might have owned it in the past. Do you have a sense of who might have worn it or?

**00:27:58:03 - 00:28:22:20**

**K Fernando**

Mostly women, I think. Looking at the state the, especially the ostrich shells, eggshells are in. You can see that it was worn like, throughout the time, and so, so especially women, if they have these, it's forever on their waist and like they take a shower with them, they...

**00:28:22:20 - 00:28:25:22**

**B Hodgett**

You're like, I'm not I'm not taking this off. This is. It’s staying on.

**00:28:25:32 - 00:28:38:16**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, this is, and then also sometimes these, when you’re a teenager and then they put it on your waist, they're saying that it will make your waist a bit smaller and then your behind a bit bigger.

**00:28:38:16 - 00:28:47:03**

**B Hodgett**

Ok, so it's just kind of like spanx basically. That’s what you’re saying, it’s kind of, it's shaping, it’s shapewear.

**00:28:47:03 - 00:28:53:12**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, exactly, and it's also a form of beauty as well. Like if you wear these then you’re a beautiful woman.

**00:28:53:12 - 00:29:31:22**

**B Hodgett**

Talking about this really delicate beadwork and also thinking about ideas of like, what it means to be a woman and like the way that the beads kind of relate into that, I wonder whether we could now talk a little bit about this object. This is a tortoise shell, decorated with a series of ostrich eggshell beads and inside there’s this tiny little kind of fur puff. And when we looked at this object before, you’d spoken a lot about the way in which this would have been used. I wonder if you could sort of give us a little introduction to this, to this beautiful new object?

**00:29:31:22 - 00:30:12:24**

**K Fernando**

The labelling said it’s from Namibia, from the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. So I think this is really close to, to my area and to people that I live with so, this is actually quite an important holder as well, like a container, like a purse or something. So in here what they do is they put in a powder called tza or any kind of powder that they would like to put in here. And then what they do is the tza that’s put in there helps with the smell of, like if you're breastfeeding there’s kind of a scent that you have, kind of like to make it a bit…

**00:30:12:24 - 00:30:17:02**

**B Hodgett**

Very kind of scented and kind of like a, almost cleansing, I think you were saying.

**00:30:17:02 - 00:30:43:17**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, exactly, so and one of the important things also is that, you know, decoration is also personal, of how you want it to look. It’s also having a very beautiful colour and designs on it as well. So basically, it's a container and tortoises are also food as well as, meat. And it's also a sign of good luck as well.

**00:30:43:17 - 00:30:51:26**

**B Hodgett**

And you were saying that sometimes tortoises, if you sort of come across one, it's quite fortuitous to kind of see a tortoise.

**00:30:51:26 - 00:31:08:00**

**K Fernando**

Exactly, yeah, yeah so it’s rare to see them but then if you see them it means that things will go well with you and then sometimes people will take it and then they make this kind of a container and that means it's good luck and you can carry it around everywhere you go, so.

**00:31:08:00** **- 00:31:26:18**

**B Hodgett**

And also with this very, very personal kind of, you’re shaping the container to kind of fit your own personal kind of sense of style almost. So you're very much kind of adapting it. And could you smell any of the powder? Or is it not really coming through anymore?

**00:31:26:18 - 00:31:56:07**

**K Fernando**

Not really, not really. Yeah. So in Namibia we use tza with it and then also sometimes they use, we call it, it's a [quiver?] tree and they use the bark that is red and then they pound it into powder as well. And then they also put it in here, so that, they're also using that for sun protection and for skincare as well, to the face. So like in this container you can put whatever you want that is useful to you.

**00:31:56:07 - 00:32:04:16**

**B Hodgett**

So it's not necessarily a woman with a child who's using it, it might be someone who's looking to kind of protect themselves from the sun, so there’s a lot of uses.

**00:32:04:16 - 00:32:15:02**

**K Fernando**

And you can also like hunters, if they want, they can put tobacco in that and then. But then otherwise it's a very special container that can be personalized.

**00:32:15:02 - 00:32:30:00**

**B Hodgett**

How long do you think it would take to make each of these kind of strings of beads, like in terms of like preparing the initial kind of disks from the ostrich egg, and then kind of threading them together and kind of assembling them. Because this is, this looks like a lot of work.

**00:32:30:00 - 00:32:33:07**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, sometimes it’s, it's the beads that you already have.

**00:32:33:07 - 00:32:35:02**

**B Hodgett**

Okay. So you can repurpose them?

**00:32:35:02 - 00:32:53:24**

**K Fernando**

Yeah. And then you put them in containers and then just leave them there for you to use later. But then otherwise if you have to start from scratch like beating the shells and then drilling them and then smoothening them and all that, I don’t know it takes maybe a half a day?

**00:32:53:24 - 00:32:57:20**

**B Hodgett**

Gosh OK so this is, this is quite an intensive labour!

**00:32:57:20 - 00:33:28:10**

**K Fernando**

Yeah, and it also depends on how experienced you, so two hours, three hours, half a day. It depends on different people, how long it takes for them to create this beautiful carrier. And then now not a lot of people use these anymore because this modern lifestyle now, so everybody wants nice handbags and so, but then otherwise there are still people who are using it in Namibia as well.

**00:33:28:10 - 00:33:32:01**

**B Hodgett**

Because this one was collected in the 1990s. So this is I mean…

**00:33:32:01 - 00:33:33:00**

**K Fernando**

… very recent…

**00:33:33:00 - 00:33:45:13**

**B Hodgett**

… certainly within in my lifetime, just about. But, um that that's still quite a continuity. And it's quite interesting bringing these two objects together right? The one from the very early 1800s and the one from sort of 30 years ago.

**00:33:45:13 - 00:34:18:05**

**K Fernando**

So like, women from the Nyae Nyae Conservancy and some in Tsumkwe West area they still it as well. But I don't know about other areas, but I'm sure that elderly women still use this. So from Namibia we use a lot of tza and then [quiver?] tree powder. And then in South Africa they use more [bogoe?] than tza, so depending on different areas what kind of powder you use, yeah.

**00:34:18:05 - 00:34:26:13**

**B Hodgett**

And you were saying that this is quite local to where you’re from, when you came to museum were you expecting to find objects so close to home in that sense?

**00:34:26:13 - 00:35:28:12**

**K Fernando**

Well, I actually saw this one on the online collection, which was like, this is the only thing that I've, I've seen this close from home within like, the rest are just sort of Botswana and South Africa. But then this actually feels good, you know, like, I feel like home. \*laughter\* Yeah, so then this is actually quite what we were talking about in March, when people were talking about repatriation. We were talking about if, the San people would want all the objects to come back to Namibia, they were saying, like, we can or we could ask some of the objects back, but then at least some of them should stay, because once in a while a student or person from the community will go to Europe, you know, and then at least going to a museum and then seeing something close to you, I think it's very important for that, I don't know, emotional support or like something like, you know, that you feel close to, that you feel at least at home, that…

**00:35:28:12 - 00:35:38:00**

**B Hodgett**

There is something really… having familiarity around you in strange places and through the ability of objects to somehow provide that kind of, anchoring…

**00:35:38:00 - 00:35:39:12**

**K Fernando**

… exactly…

**00:35:39:12 - 00:35:51:02**

B Hodgett

…sense, is really powerful. I always do that whenever I move house and I have to sort of start unpacking, once I see sort of my stuff in the new place then I’m like aw, I feel like I’m …. yeah you settle into it don’t you?

**00:35:47:01 - 00:35:57:05**

**K Fernando**

(overlapping) Yeah, you feel relaxed and then you feel… exactly. So that's, that's also some of the discussions that we had, so this is at least, feels great. Yeah.

**00:35:57:05 - 00:36:02:13**

**B Hodgett**

Well I’m really glad we were able to get these out of the cases so that we could see them so close up.

**00:36:10:00 - 00:37:00:28**

**B Martin**

Well, I guess all that's left for me to do is to say thank you, Kileni, for sharing all of this with us. And to our listeners, we hope you've enjoyed this episode’s insight into the collaborations and research which goes on behind the scenes at the Pitt Rivers. Our project focuses on making techniques and knowledge about makers, but in a more literal sense, it's these partnerships that make the museum what it is today, and will continue to make and remake the museum in the future. As I’ve said before, our episode release schedule is going to be quite sporadic, as and when we have relevant makers, researchers, artists and community experts in to work with us. So if you're waiting for our next episode, why not check out some of our videos on the museum YouTube channel, where you can also watch some of our discussions today and see us examine the objects in real time.

Until next time. We've been making the museum.