

Making Benin Bronzes in the Museum

Transcript

Becky Martin

Hello and welcome to the Pitt Rivers Museum. Welcome to Behind the Scenes at the Pitt Rivers Museum for this episode of Making the Pitt Rivers Museum. You've heard from a lot of us already before. I'm Becky Martin. I'm joined by Chris Morton, the project PI, and Beth Hodgett, our project researcher. And we're here today with Phila Madamwen. Phil is a sixth generation bronze caster from Benin City in Nigeria, and he's been working with the Making the Museum project to talk to us about lost wax bronze casting, but also the museum's commissioning a new piece from him to add to our collection. So, Phil, why don't you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your craft?

Phil Omodamwen

Thank you. My name is Phil. I'm A sixth-generational bronze caster from Benin City. We have 11 families in Benin that that has the blessing of the palace to practice this traditional bronze casting. My family is one of the families approved by the palace to practice it. And my family has been in the bronze tradition for over 500 years. From the reign of Oba Sigi till now, we've been it. It's been passed from father to son.

Prof. Chris Morton

So Phil, you were telling us that you really started, you can't remember when you started making work because you were so little and you used to crawl into the workshop as a child. Can you tell us about your earliest memories of growing up around the workshop?

Phil Omodamwen

Maybe before when I was 10. Before when I was 10, but when I was a baby, I started crawling to the workshop because I was born in the house that I foundry. So just In same my company. So I don't know the actual year I started, but I believe I started while I was a baby. In terms of maybe trying to destroy the works, my father. So, you know, works is very fragile. I can just go there, maybe because of the future, so I just pull it. So I can't really say the damage I've done, but that's of my son that I know. So that was how I started then. At about 10, I started making sort like a mask like that of the Canadian, though it was not.

Prof. Chris Morton

Copying what your father, you were seeing in the workshop.

Phil Omodamwen

So my father would just give me son and Mr. Clayson work with this. So that I started. So before I got to 15, I developed that interest. So trying to work even for commercial purpose, not, but my father tried to discourage me. that I should go to school. Because he saw the way I was, he saw that I was so focused on doing it. And he knew by the time I got attracted to this, I mean, it will disturb my education. He tried to stop me. But he couldn't.

Prof. Chris Morton

But he wanted you to work in the bronze foundry, didn't he? did want you to continue the tradition?

Phil Omodamwen

No, because of my education. So He never wanted me to have the interest at my tender age.

Prof. Chris Morton

Right. Get an education and then come back to the Foundry. Right.

Phil Omodamwen

But I was more interested in the Bronze Town in my education.

Becky Martin

You said that your second son, you're hoping that he's going to do the same. He's going to have his education and then come back and come back to the Foundry. Can you tell us about continuing the tradition in the future generations?

Phil Omodamwen

Like normally I have two sons. they are supposed to continue after me. But my first son is here in the UK, is married here. So he did his master's here. So I don't see him coming back to the workshop with the way. I mean, his family is here already. And my second son will be graduating in the coming weeks. Yes. So He came to me before I left Nigeria that he would like to come back to the workshop after I said degree program. So I was so happy. So I now need to encourage him to make him sit and do the job. And I'm so happy he's coming back. I mean, he came voluntary. I didn't go to him.

Prof. Chris Morton

And will his accountancy training be helpful for the business?

Phil Omodamwen

Yes. Yeah, again, you see, because one thing about one is doing something. Not like to those that believe, to the Christians, he said, by their fruit we shall know them. If you are doing something and one is not making progress, it will discourage them from coming into it. But they see the progress I've been making, getting commissioned by words from misuse all over the world. So I believe that one has aspired to come back to this approach business.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

Because you spoke this morning a bit about the challenges of getting people interested and how it seems quite easy to kind of go into a different career path and like you say kind of make that money quite quickly. So it sounds like there's options now when Bronze Casting is really seen as a very attractive or could be an attractive career prospect for people.

Phil Omodamwen

Yes, there are so there are so many things that we make it to be more attractive for a future generation. One, like I said before, By the time they see you struggling with what you are doing, because broadcasting is capital intensive and it is time taking, you have to be very patient if you want to remain in it. Otherwise, by the time you do a work that is not good and you deliver, if it's not good, your client will not be happy and next time they will not ask you to make another piece. So patience is very important. The work is tedious and is capital intensive. Then for the younger generation, most of them, they just want the money. Quick, quick. So the money is not, the most important thing is for you to do a good job. Let your client be happy with what you are doing. So with that, it will give you more work. Then like I said this morning, the younger generation, they are not willing to, I mean, that patience is not there. They just want something they do today, tomorrow they get the money. So that's why to go to all those social biases, I mean, internet fosters. There are so many Benin. So they don't like, I mean, to come to the workshop because they believe that by the time they go with their computer or not, they can scan people. So it's really a courage. I mean, I do talk to them, but I see a few with me that are still working with me. When my father was alive, we were over 50, but now they're less than 20.

Prof. Chris Morton

And brass casting historically has been based on the very well-known st in Benin City, Ugun Street, which leads down from the palace.

Phil Omodamwen

Yes.

Prof. Chris Morton

And could you maybe say a little bit what it's like there today and maybe your memories of what it was like in your grandfather's and father's days? Has it changed a lot?

Phil Omodamwen

Egun Street, that name Egun Street is a street meant for the brass casters. Then there's a musician in Benin, a little somebody. He used to sing a song that a good street that is known for bronze casting. But today, if you should go to a good street, even from the entrance, you'll see a garage. It meant not to be so. When the Uber allocated that section for the bronze gate, it was meant for the bronze casters alone. But now you see beer palace along the good street dominating the craft shop. 15 years ago, you hardly find other businesses along the good street. But now other businesses are taking over the shops. And you see in their shops, what was supposed to be bronze casting. But now you see woodwork mixed with bronze. Even the percentage of works in most of their galleries, bronze is just about 30. In some, bronze is even about 15%. whereas it's supposed to be 100% bronze. So things are just changing, but not for the better anyway.

Prof. Chris Morton

And you still have a shop on Ugun Street, but your workshop is now elsewhere, is that right?

Phil Omodamwen

Yes. My grandfather moved from Ugun Street because Ugun Street could no longer contain everybody. So he built his house around the urban market to about 5 minutes from the palace. So he settled there. Then there my father worked with him and I worked there before I moved. I moved about 70 years now from that place to where I work now. So my son can decide to locate to as far as he's working and as far as he's within Benin. And again, if you're not part of the gate and you are not in a group, you work in any way, they have a task force. They come and close on the place. So because I have the That is the right to do it, so I can do it anyway in Benin.

Becky Martin

And you were telling us earlier that you would be able to recognise your father, your grandfather's works. It's not necessarily that they have a mark or a signature on them, but you would know what they were. And could you talk a little bit about your memories of their work, but also why that has been lost or that knowledge has been lost over time?

Phil Omodamwen

You see, before 1897, the words that were made then, I believe our fathers then knew who did this, who did that. So because of the eviction from 1897 to 1994, that's about 17 years. So there was a distortion. So it could not continue. And people were losing

and the works even left our, I mean, the works even left Africa to Europe. So, not just 70 years, I mean, for a long time, not until about two, three years ago, we never had access to see not this works. Just like when I came last week, you opened the case. I mean, I went, I took some pictures and in Berlin for three or four years ago, they opened their storage for me to see works when I saw. I don't even, I'm even amazed that Like what they have in Berlin is even more than what they have in British Museum. Except maybe they have so many in their storage that wasn't displayed.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah, it was a very emotional visit to the British Museum we had a couple of days ago. What did it feel like to see those works on display?

Phil Omodamwen

As I believe Percy, the son of the son, someone from the Guild, Because when you're seeing our works on display, you see that's our life. That's our history. That's our history. So normally I feel emotional when I see them. That's just it. I feel emotional. And again, the way those works are being displayed and the way they kind of caption them, the inscription they put on them, I mean, not right. I see many of these works are not just maybe museum pieces, they are other pieces. So by taking them out of their contents, so and bringing them to these other parts, it's like you, I mean, a disservice, a disservice because some of these works are functional objects, not just a male works, ritual pieces, just like the bear. The bell is something that's supposed to be used for the altar every day. So, I mean, talk to your ancestors. First of all, the bell. Like the edge, the tusk, the altar pieces. They are not supposed to be the glasses. They are not supposed to be the glasses. But on the altar, with rituals every day.

Prof. Chris Morton

We have one of the bells that you made right here.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

It's wonderful to hear them. And when you were ringing them in the museum, that was a really wonderful moment to get to hear them all making that beautiful sound. Thank you. we were also in the British Museum, we talked a little bit about the way in which the plaques were displayed. And you were saying that because the plaques tell a story of the history, that they've been all mixed together so that the history was kind of out of order. And I wondered if you could tell us a bit about that.

Phil Omodamwen

The way the plots were displayed at the British or the way it's displayed, is that they don't display it for the public to come and see. So we have different obas. Like I told you today, we had close to 70 obas that reigned before 1897. Because when people talk

about Benin history, they always say for the start point of 1897, which is very wrong. So the Benin kingdom has reigned for over 2,000 years before 1897. So narrating Benin history from 1897, I think it's very wrong. And then you see with the way those plaques are displayed, normally the way it was in the palace, they were displayed on the wall, especially during the, from the reign of fall by Sige. That was when they released Titanic plaques. commissioned the geese to start making plans because of the way he ascended the throne. So much conflict. That is why Queen Idia is murdered. The way he fought, the way she fought, to ensure her son ascended the throne. So that is why he gave her mother the title of Queen Idia. So that was the first time a queen mother was given that title because of the way his mother fought for him. So after his accession, in our house, you can see most of those plots you see there, you can see what they are deputing, a battle because they fought so many battles. You can see most of those plots are representing Obasigi. The battles he fought, his achievement or not. That's what you see there. So if maybe plots were made before then, maybe they were to be harassed, you see the place before that of Obasigi. And you see, after 1897, we couldn't just talk. We see the works we still do now represents our current history, just like the one you asked me to do. So that is after or let's say after 1897 or during 1897, but all the stories we have in our place or another objects are just before 1897.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

It just felt very violent, the way that the plaques were being, not only that they'd been stolen and then put on display in England, but also the fact that they're not even slaved properly. Then they're mixing up the story and they're not telling the history properly. That just felt like a kind of a continued insult, really.

Phil Omodamwen

Yes. You see, we've been talking about restitution and reparation of our works. You see, by the time you go to the British Museum and see the words, it's like more insults, more insults on us because they just display them randomly. Randomly, just for people to see. So I don't think that is acceptable to a monarch because we are under the monarch. I don't think that is acceptable to us because, and again, there's no way they can get a Benin person to maybe collaborate with them on the arrangement. So that's not possible because what we're calling for is a reparation.

Becky Martin

And, we've been talking a little bit whilst you've been here about why it's so important to have these objects back in Benin City, right? And, you know, partly... having ownership over cultural heritage, but also thinking about inspiring that next generation and making sure that people can see the value of bronze casting as a tradition. Could you tell us a bit more about that?

Phil Omodamwen

Yes, one of the importance of returning the work back to us, one, like I said before, is not because we want it to be repatriated. Many of this work are altar pieces. So by taking them out of their community, you do a disservice to them. That's just a major, let's leave the gift for now. You do a disservice to them by taking that. You see some of these altars in the palace are CMT. They are CMT today. So because the palace is believing their ancestors that this was, will be returned to them one day, will be returned. And again, from the information I go from the palace. It's not that this job I can't get return with there need to be a collaboration with between museums where they have been kept and the palace. Some of this work can still be maybe it can be on loan to the museums for them to display. We need this work to be displayed in the museums in European. We need them. So because as a way of advertising Benin and then we have our children here in diaspora. So some have not been to Benin, some have not even come to Benin in their lifetime. But when these folks are here, they will have easy access to come and look at them. Then for people back home, one of the reasons we want these folks to be returned, like I've had the opportunity to visit many museums. And I mean, the privilege to see them and other them, just like what we did last week. I had access to them. So It's different from one that looks at it from the catalog, just seeing the front view. Like I told you before, the first bell I was permissioned to make, there were so many errors, so many errors. So by the time I got to, it was in Zurich, so they now brought it up from the case. Oh, I don't saw it all. So before I corrected that mistake. So seeing this works, it will give us a different perspective. And it will encourage some of us to encourage some of us.

Prof. Chris Morton

Because we take it for granted in Europe that we have got the history of our art in our museums and galleries for our students to learn from and to understand the history and to be inspired by. So What can you say about what it would mean of some of these really important historical art objects to be there in Benin City for that young generation to be able to see so much more easily?

Phil Omodamwen

Yeah. No, when these works are there in Benin, that's what you meant.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yes.

Phil Omodamwen

When they return. You see, students can come to the museum and learn about their history. Because these works are not just made artwork, they are our history. I mean,

the best way we could document, because there was no photograph, no authors to write our history. So by the time you see this work, you see our history. By the time you see a very good historian, like Patrick Orozaye, then Godfrey. because they are historians, they are specialists, and Patrick is very close to the palace. They have so much information.

Prof. Chris Morton

And do you think it will be good for the bronze casters in Benin to have important works of art on public display in the city? Do you think it will help with the industry?

Phil Omodamwen

Yes, it will. It will. It will.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

I think there's also a related question because earlier in the week we heard a presentation from someone who is making 3D printed replicas and often conversations about repatriation. People are always saying, you know, what about replicas? And you have very strong feelings about that. And I wonder whether you might want to tell us a bit about that.

Phil Omodamwen

Like they already have more, I think it was in silicon or some of these works. So they said they would like me to take the bus. So we are still talking on that back to Benin and reproduce those works for them, which is understandable. But by you taking our work, we have been complaining, we have been crying. So we are looking for a way to right the wrong. So how can you take a piece from your chef and take it to China that you want to reproduce it? We don't have any agreement for you to do that. This is something that I've been stolen. We're asking for it. Then you are, you know, it's like adding the way we call it, adding sort to, mental injury. Yeah. So if you want to, just like the way you commissioned me to make that plan. So it's a way of helping us all there's a language they use taking back to the community where this is that like the money you paid is going back to the gate. So it is a way of helping us to, I cannot call it compensation problem, but it's a way of helping us by giving us work to do. Because I have about people that are working with me, about eight of their families at home. And we are working, I told you, I don't work on the peace alone. We all work together as a family. But there are some areas I'm not sitting down now, especially the worst modeling. So we all work together. So you see, they're expecting me to come back now. So the kind of things we want from museums is a way of how can you assist us? How can you assist us to so this bronze can thrive? Not by taking the ones we have with you to go and replicate in a channel. If you want to replicate it, let it go through that same channel with which the originals were made. The people that made those ones, they are not

sprayed, they are human beings. Now that we will have more modern equipments, I saw some of the big works at the bottom. They could not make it smooth, maybe because of the equipment they had there. I saw some of them. Those some are very unique.

Prof. Chris Morton

Those were the 3D printed in steel ones, were they? Yes, they were.

Phil Omodamwen

Which?

Prof. Chris Morton

From Iboko.

Phil Omodamwen

Yes, the ones that brought, yes. So that of Iboko, I don't really have power or right over there. But that will be, I don't advise any person to do that. We are still existing. We are still there. So by the time you come, you try. maybe one or two pieces if you are not satisfied with it. Even that does not give you the right to go to China and then. So we are several. And we can replicate those works. We can replicate.

Becky Martin

Yeah, exactly. Why use technology that doesn't need to be used when you could actually go to people who practice the craft? Yeah, exactly.

Phil Omodamwen

And there's nothing like, this is the one that was done by their father maybe about 5, 600 years ago. Now, look at the generation. You put them side by side. So that's the reason why I'm happy this one is here. And I just want it to be there. So by time maybe people come from the Museum in Lagos or the Palace, I want there to be a dispute. That's no, this one is. from the looks. So by the time, maybe at the back, they just say his name and the dates. And there will be pictures or videos while I was working on it for them to know it's recent.

Becky Martin

For our listeners, it was April Fool's Day whilst Phil was here with us, and we did put the bell that he bought in amongst the other bells in the collection and asked museum staff to whether they could tell which one it was, and it was very difficult. So the challenge is real. I'd love for you to talk a little bit about the work that the museum is commissioning you to produce, because I think we as a museum thought it's really important to come

to people who know how to bronze cast and produce new works and commission new things to have. What are you working on?

Phil Omodamwen

It's up to three months now. We started. So Dr. Chris Martin said what they're having a project making the museum. So they said that they'd like me to replicate a plaque. And the title of the plaque was Looting of the Palace, of the Abbas Palace in 1897. When I saw that topic, I said, I was just thinking, what do I do? We're looking at pictures, looking at pictures. The pictures I wanted to work on were the regular pictures. Just when you have the British soldiers with the loot around them. But later I was just thinking looting. Looting is like a present Continuous. I don't. I'm right. Present continuous looting. Nothing. So that's in this in the heart. That's okay. So just palace. Why you said looting on the palace? So there was we need to depict the palace with the roof with the way it was. Then the walls or result are those lines, those models. So then the long door with this. So and the altar. because they may look, I mean, were done on the altar. And the way we were able to present it, one side of the, that was why the museum asked for a sketch before I could proceed. You said that was, that's stage one, that is necessary, I send you the sketch, which is very good. And you miss a few corrections. So, on the plaque, on one side, you have, let me say, before 1897. the way the palace was, that the complete altar, you see something better when it's finished. So the complete altar with the plaques on the wall, the way they were before it. Then on the other side, you can see the way it was vandalized, little or nothing left. And you see them trying to go out with the loot and they sit there by the door. So we've never done anything like this. Like the ones I made for other museums, they just look at the picture reference. But this one is first of its kind. First of its kind. And we are happy back home. The only person that comes to the washroom will see. So you don't need to explain to them. They just know.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah, we really love the way you've taken this theme and you've really enthusiastically sort of explored it and as you say, you're telling a story with this plaque in a new way that you maybe haven't done before. So we're so excited about this work coming to Oxford later this year and at some point sharing it with all of the visitors that come to the museum. So we think it's going to be an incredible new addition to the collection.

Becky Martin

And, we're really excited that it's completely different from everything else, Exactly.

Prof. Chris Morton

You won't see anything like it anywhere else.

Becky Martin

And everybody, going forwards will be able to be like, Oh, yeah, that was Philip Madam, and he.

Phil Omodamwen

Was the first person. I'm so happy. Like, my granddaughter was here when she was less than two. She came, and I believe when she's grown up, she'll come again. And so this, I mean, we have we took pictures that day, so I'm very happy. very unique day for our family, 3 generations. So, by the time she comes, she grows up, so I was young. So, why do we work is mattered? I will ask them to bring her again and take a picture with her.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

I was thinking, and Chris, you have this kind of beautiful vision of one day that plaque that we've commissioned being kind of the only object. everything else has been returned and this is this wonderful memory.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah, I mean, as everyone will know, we're in the midst of a repatriation process to which we've in principle agreed a large amount of that display case to be returned. So we do need to start thinking already about the future of it. And I want there to be a Kingdom of Ben in display in the museum. I don't want that space to go and be repurposed for some other display if the repatriation happens quickly. So it's good that we've got some new works in the pipeline. And as Phil reminds us, what is old was once new. And we can do a different display. And it'd be great. I think this piece will become the centrepiece. for a new display in the future and hopefully other pieces that could maybe come from Phil's workshop could be added to it. So, you know, it's got a future and I think it will be as engaging or perhaps more engaging for audiences than even the existing display because there will still be historical works in it and it's important that there are still historical works in it. But I think people are equally interested, as we found out this last couple of weeks, in the tradition as it exists today and the longevity of the brass casting tradition in Benin and who's still making these works. I think people are fascinated by that.

Becky Martin

I think we've really seen that over the past couple of days at the Forge where people have been walking past and walking through and no one has been able to resist putting their head around the corner to be like, what is going on here? This sounds amazing. Beth, I know you wanted to ask a few questions about this.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

So Bill, so you spent the past couple of days and it's been a wonderful process for all of us on the project. In that you've been in a local blacksmith's forge, which was founded in 1778 in Banbury, so about half an hour's drive from Oxford, and you've been working there to cast objects in England. And that was quite a different process for you because you're using very unfamiliar kind of workshop tools, even the fire and the materials used to kind of stoke the forge were very different. And I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about what that experience was like?

Phil Omodamwen

It was a new one and a pleasant one. I mean work with a local forge here in the UK. The way, the kind of equipment that was used is different from the one we used back home. Like firing the objects, we have a separate oval with which we do fire with firewood. But here, the works were fired in the same spot with this crucible, which we don't normally do that way. And if one is not very careful monitoring the most, you lose them. We almost lost one yesterday. So thank God we put them out on time. And though it's also fast, because I thought maybe it would take about two hours, but in less than an hour, they were ready. They were ready. And the little, I have some challenges. You see, by the time you, the base was, by the time you take it close to the source of it, becomes very soft. But while we were there, by the time you take it close to it, as you are leaving, go back to the other, to the pharmacist. So I couldn't I stressed my worst because of the weather was not friendly.

Prof. Chris Morton

It was a cold, it was quite a chilly April day and the wax was not behaving. I.

Becky Martin

Think the weather is not friendly is the best description of British weather we've had.

Phil Omodamwen

Maybe in the future, if we want to do a worst, then we can just look for a place that's very, maybe warm, just to be proper, how do I put it, to proper kiss. Yes. But you can't say we can't do it in any way, but just the modeling, even to work on.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

I mean, you've made some incredible objects though, despite all these challenges, which are also going to be incredible additions to the museum.

Prof. Chris Morton

Thank you. I know that you received a piece of blacksmith, a tool that was given to you by Ems, the blacksmith, wasn't it? Could you say what that was?

Becky Martin

I'll bring it tomorrow. Thank you.

Phil Omodamwen

Yeah, it's a pair of tongs. A pair of tongs. Yes, like the one we use at home, it's just a straight tongue. But this one, at the tip, with the weight towards it curved.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yes. Oh, you have straight tongs, do you?

Phil Omodamwen

Yes, straights.

Prof. Chris Morton

You just take it and...

Phil Omodamwen

But this one you don't like an L-shaped top. Yeah, this one you just turn your, yeah, just turn your ****. So I want to take it back or maybe we can make a bigger one of that.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah. That's great. So yeah, a bit of Banbury tool, blacksmith's tool going back to Benin City. That's great.

Becky Martin

And then you also left a crucible there. So a bit of your workshop.

Phil Omodamwen

I wanted to experiment with that. So if she can maybe make some bangles or let us have something with that. Maybe the future. Maybe I can walk with that. Nobody knows. But let us ask. Again, it will pass. There was a time, they get to my dad, like the crash chart, was it Pijot? They brought it for my father to produce it for this. We just take the mode. We were casting that car pass. So there are so many parts we can produce. outside our traditional work.

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah.

Phil Omodamwen

We can do, but it's just that there's no agency to assist us. So we are just limited. We are just limited. We can use it for items, even the less of a chair. We can do so many things, but there is no support, nothing. So the vision is very blessed. So we cannot, the

environment is not conducive for us to see the future. We are just thinking about now, so many challenges back home. You save money, you get money, millions, but before you finish, it's only big when you hear it, but by the time you spend it, it's gone.

Prof. Chris Morton

So I just wanted to ask you quickly about, you know, the commissions that you get now, typically. Obviously you're working for museums in Europe and America, but you also have some Nigerian patrons, don't you, who are either sort of, they're art lovers or enthusiastic about bronzes. Could you maybe talk about your order book? What does your order book look like?

Phil Omodamwen

Most of my clients in Nigeria are expatriates and consulates. They're diplomats in Nigeria. So yeah, because most Nigerians, they don't really appreciate our work. And some of them, by the time they buy for you to get your payment from them, it's a problem. Even some chips in Benin. So even when my father was like, he never worked for them. So we look at the kind of people we work for. Then my major, my major clients for about five years now has been since. So she, I really need to appreciate her new work because of the work she out there. I commissioned me to do even in a new hospital. It's a very big hospital. There's a mother and child. I mean for her.

Prof. Chris Morton

So Daisy Danjuma, she is a former politician. Yes. Very high important politician.

Phil Omodamwen

Yes.

Prof. Chris Morton

And what does she do now? She's in business now.

Phil Omodamwen

No, she's in business. This is a BOC in the UK. They are into business. They have properties everywhere. So she's a philanthropist?

Prof. Chris Morton

Yeah. And what sort of objects does she like? What does she want? Traditional pieces or.

Phil Omodamwen

Traditional in houses.

Prof. Chris Morton

In the houses.

Phil Omodamwen

In the houses, everywhere, feed the people in space. So when in one of my birthdays, so I traveled with her to my bear. So when I got there, I took some oxygen. And she was not showing me all that. I bought this from your dad many years ago. I saw some of my dad's work.

Prof. Chris Morton

So might be a very nice place to be. Yeah, very much.

Phil Omodamwen

It's just to draw the attention of the cars. They are not deaf.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

What do you think will stick with you the most from this visit?

Phil Omodamwen

Just the hospitality I received from you. That's just it. It's just that I'm later getting used to coffee when I'm living. She's been talking to me, coffee, coffee. I said, no, you people do too much coffee. I said, no. But I must appreciate her from the very day we came at the airport from day to now. You are be caring. You ask a question when we are having lunch. That's the question was the best from the place I visited.

Prof. Chris Morton

Something around the hospitality you've received from the different visits you've made to European museums and things.

Phil Omodamwen

No, I think you asked which of the places do I like best. I told you I cannot say I like a place when the people are not friendly. So again, I want to say thank you. For your support and collaboration.

Prof. Chris Morton

The thanks, the thanks are really due to you for your generosity and your sharing, and... you're a modest, modest man, but your work is truly outstanding, and it's been a pleasure having you, hasn't it?

Dr. Beth Hodgett

Yeah, absolutely delight.

Becky Martin

And we're really looking forward to having you back soon.

Phil Omodamwen

Yeah, it's just the beginning.

Prof. Chris Morton

Thanks, Phil.

Dr. Beth Hodgett

Yeah, until next time.

Becky Martin

Thanks so much for tuning into this episode of Making the Pit Rivers Museum. We hope you've enjoyed hearing all about our collaboration with Phil. Those of you with memories for detail might have noticed that this episode did not feature the Maori musician Ariana Takao as previously billed. We wanted to release this episode to align with our unveiling of Phil's commissioned piece for the museum. If you'd like to see the piece in all its glory before it's given a collections number and added to the online catalogue, do go and check out the museum's social media posts from the week of the 24th of November 2025. I'm sure you are all keen to hear from Ariana, so keep your eyes peeled for the release of our next episode, which should come around a lot sooner than our usually sporadic schedule allows. Until then, we've been making the museum. Excellent.

Prof. Chris Morton

Sorry, we've made you talk a lot today.

Phil Omodamwen

So they all have different songs.