

# The Seduction, Refusal, and Retention of Universality in Collections Care

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Universality as an intellectual and ethical imperative has substantially shaped museum work, including the management of collections. Critiques of the universal—including universal museums—contribute to current conversations encouraging the decolonization of cultural institutions. At the same time, the ethical impetus of universal design offers a new set of values with which to imagine the universal in museums. In this talk, Cara Krmpotich considers moves from universalism to relativism, and from singularity to plurality. In seeking to understand why universalism, its refusal, and its retention within museum spaces matters, Krmpotich proposes that museums' evolving interpretations of universality directly shape how they care—for their collections, their publics, and their environments.

Cara Krmpotich is Associate Professor and Director of the Museum Studies Program at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information. She is Past-President of Ontario's Council for Museum Anthropology and Co-Director of the Great Lakes Research Alliance (GRASAC), an Indigenous-Settler network committed to reuniting Great Lakes cultural belongings with Great Lakes places, knowledge systems, and peoples.

