

# 11<sup>TH</sup> AGENT OF DETERIORATION: INCORRECT CULTURAL CARE





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A professional portrait of a woman with long dark hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a turquoise beaded necklace. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a solid dark color.

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# AMANDA LANCASTER

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Independent Curator  
Sweden



# RELYNNE WILLIAMS

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer at Gila  
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# DISCLAIMER ON RESPECT



# HOW DID THIS START?

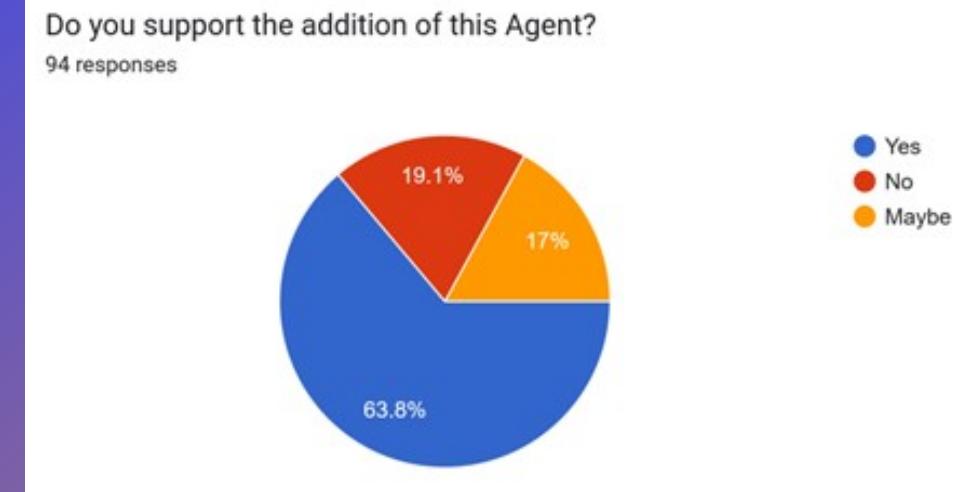
Melanie Deer's  
realization during  
teaching of  
collections

Gathered  
international and  
intercultural team

Created a survey to  
gain feedback

# PREVIOUS SURVEY

- 94 Respondents
- 83% support or possible support
- Based our understanding of this concept on the survey and follow up discussions



# WHAT IS CULTURAL CARE?

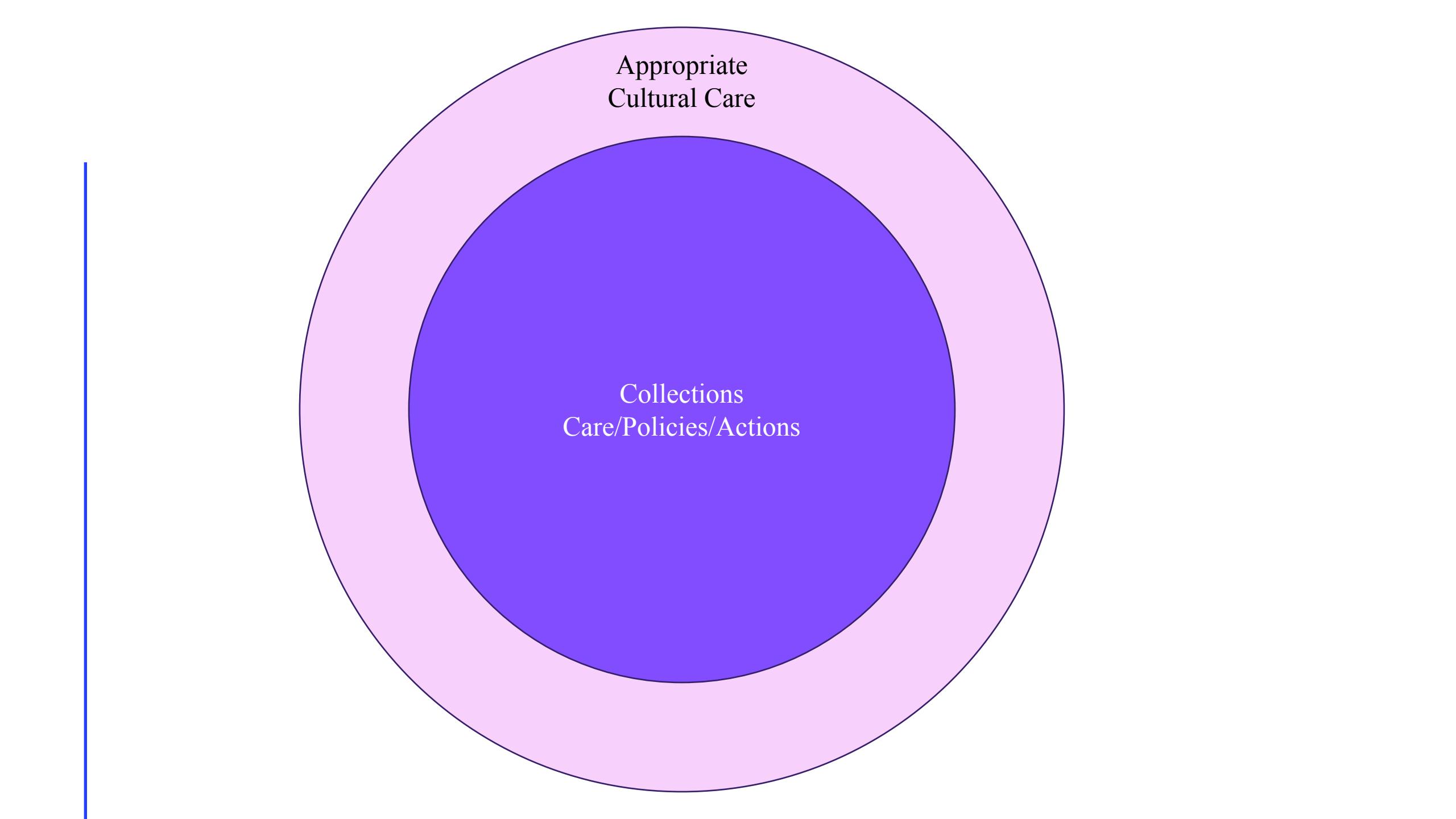
- Specific practices to care for an item or being based on appropriate cultural understanding
- Is typical “Western” care appropriate?
- Who determines if the care is incorrect?

## WHAT ARE WE DOING

- We are trying to make cultural care a standard of care

## HOW ARE WE DOING IT

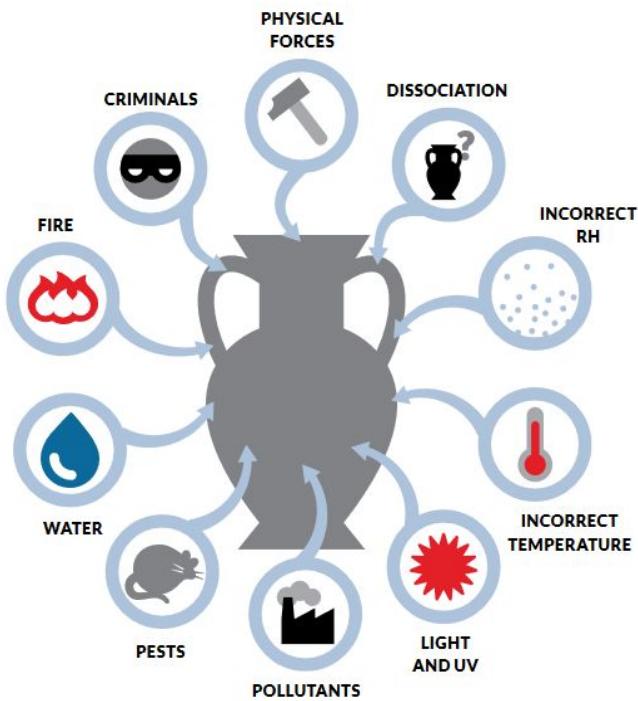
- We are targeting the international understanding of Agents of Deterioration established by the CCI in the 1990s.



Appropriate  
Cultural Care

Collections  
Care/Policies/Actions

# CURRENT 10 AGENTS OF DETERIORATION



- Water
- Fire
- Incorrect Temperature
- Incorrect Humidity
- Theft/Vandalism
- Physical Damage
- Chemical Damage
- Pests
- Light/UV/Infrared
- Dissociation/Curatorial Neglect

# HOW DOES INCORRECT CULTURAL CARE FIT?

- Placing another culture's guidelines on a different culture's items and beings
- A form of degradation, even if not physical
  - Suffocation of items
  - Harming the community it was taken from
  - Sami drums

# IMPORTANCE TO ORIGIN CULTURES

- The ability for indigenous people to care for their items was taken away from them
- Caring for items is more than just the preservation of a physical item, it is the care for a soul, and can impact the living people themselves
- Appropriate cultural care is key to a culture's survival

# IMPORTANCE INTERNATIONALLY

- Incorrect cultural care is an unfortunate global reality
- Some institutions have appropriate qualified staff, many do not
  - Especially ethnological museums in Europe
- UNESCO's Expert Mechanism for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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# CURRENT SURVEY





# THANK YOU

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