

# Structures

Self-guided Museum Trail

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## Pitt Rivers Museum Floor Grate

Location: Ground floor

When was the Pitt Rivers Museum built? Is it a neutral space or are there social structures here? Construction began in 1885 and was completed in 1886.



**“ You can still find the legacy of the colonial perspective. The labels use language and imagery that is derogatory, racist and Eurocentric. ”**

*Critical Changes*  
Pitt Rivers Museum booklet,  
p.10, 2020

**Zoom in on the detail of the museum floor grates and sketch the negative spaces that create the structure that forms the pattern that emerges.**

3

## 18th Century Model Boat

Case Location: C.49.A

What role did the Navy have in aiding the slave trade?



**“ While there had long been black sailors in British ships, the Navy had also long acted as defender of the British slave trade. A number of officers were slave owners. Some brought their slaves on board as personal servants, a practice the Admiralty disapproved of. There were even officers who owned slave plantations in the Caribbean. ”**

David Olusoga,  
British-Nigerian historian

**Reproduce the linear system of ropes and cables that form the complexed structure of the rigging.**

2

## Hawaiian Feather Cloak

Case Location: C.50.B

For objects like this one, why is the gender of the wearer or giver important to consider?



**“ In Hawaii, colonialism distorted the system of balance between women and men ... resulting in the restructuring of the status of Hawaiian women. ”**

*Critical Changes*  
Pitt Rivers Museum booklet,  
p.13, 2020.

**Look at the label for this cloak.**

**Try drawing 100,00 x 20 feather tufts structured in such a way as to create the coloured pattern that you see.**

**Create a grid to structure the design and placement.**

4

## The Haida Great Box

Case Location: C.45.A

Why was it important for professional artists Gwaai and Jaalen Edenshaw to study and create a copy of this structure, 'The Great Box', to take back to Haida Gwaii, on the North West Coast of Canada?



**“ We can see it in books, but to actually come up and see it and feel it and examine it – it can only benefit our community and our people. Having direct access to this will continue to inspire and challenge. ”**

Marnie  
Haida Secondary School assistant

**Closely observe and draw or photograph every detail of this box structure.**

**What have you learnt or found out?**

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## Model Arawak Building

Case Location: 54

Should the remains of structures like this one be uncovered and if so by whom?



“When I brought the pot out, I talked to it, and told it, I am just taking you outside to have a look.”

George Simon, an Arawak Guyanese artist and archaeologist. George Simon made many archaeological discoveries of pre-Columbian civilisation in Guyana. He retold a story in which a Western scholar on an expedition for clay pots failed to properly respect the ancestors, removing their remains and consequently fell ill. In contrast, Simon respected the ancestors by talking to the pot.

**Make a plan for creating a model structure like this.**  
**What tools, materials and equipment would you need?**  
**Make a list.**

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## Mica Painting

Case Location: L.4.B

What does East India Company Art and the sale of paintings like these as 'souvenirs' to a British audience tell us?



“The British focused on the native people shown in terms of their jobs only, to be studied to make them easier to rule and govern, but not to understand, and as curiosities to collect, which clearly showcases the colonial mentality towards those who were made their subjects.”

Ananya Sharma,  
Community Connector

**Capture the people as the main elements of these painted scenes.**  
**Research why sheets of mica might have been used as the surface these were painted on.**  
**Is there an alternative that could be used?**

6

## Seal Intestine Cloak

Case Location: C.9.A

How was this seal intestine cloak constructed?



“They put [the] intestines inside out and clean the inside...and they soak them in salt water to make them white...and then they blow air into it and dry them...they sew this [for] maybe a week or more.”

Anna Etageat,  
Village of Unalakleet, Alaska, USA.

**Draw this cloak.**  
**How would you emphasise the structure and its construction?**

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## Pitt Rivers Museum Ceiling

Location: 2nd Floor

Who designed the Pitt Rivers building as a structure?



“It was designed by Dublin-based architect T.N. Deane, whose father had provided the basic designs for the University Museum (now known as Oxford University Museum of Natural History), which is attached to the Pitt Rivers.”

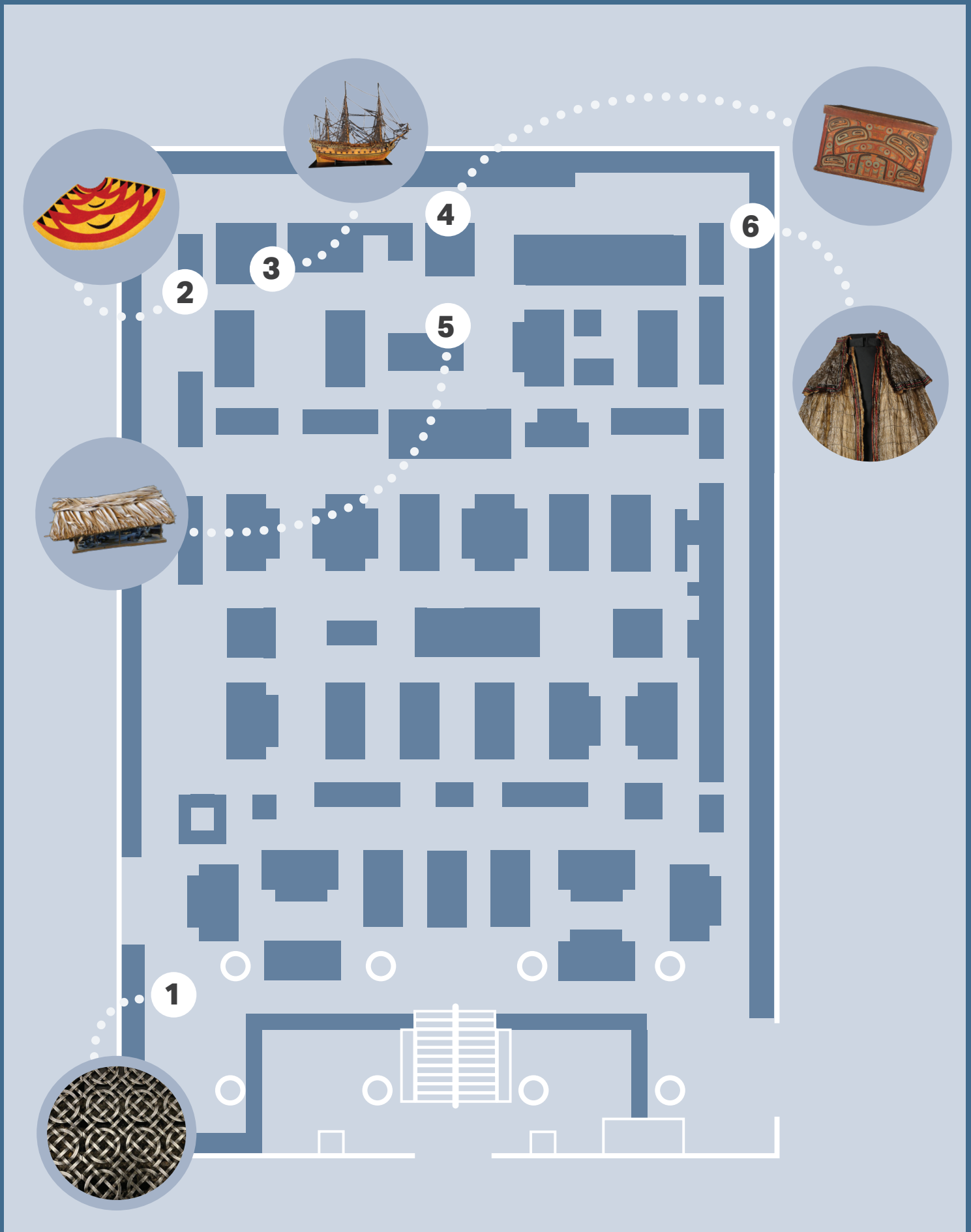
Melanie Rowntree,  
Learning Officer

**Look up and draw or photograph what you see.**

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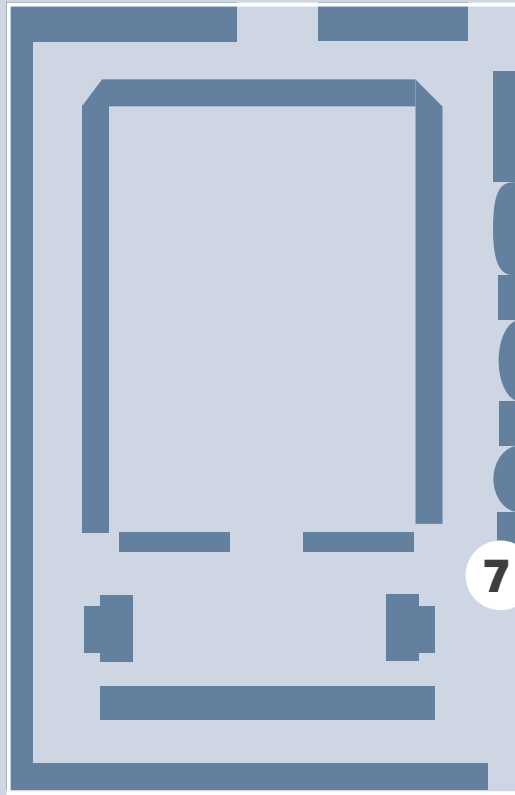
 Pitt  
Rivers  
Museum



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## First floor



## Second floor

