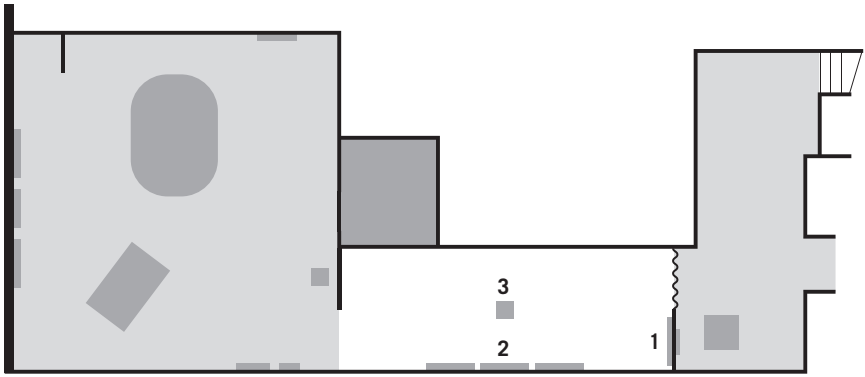
NORTH GALLERY CORRIDOR

The Dead Jumbo., 2011



1. *The Dead Jumbo.*
2. *The Dead Jumbo. (“Death of Jumbo.” Obituary)*
3. *The Dead Jumbo. (French Bull Dog, c. 1950)*

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The Dead Jumbo.

Based on an original photograph by Scott & Hopkins, St. Thomas, Ontario
(Thomas Hunter Scott, 1849–1918 and James Henry Hopkins, d. 1927)
Black-and-white pigment print on archival paper, with custom round blind deboss (3.8 cm diameter), mounted on museum-board, in ebonized poplar frame
Original newspaper illustration
Original publication: Harper's Weekly, Saturday, September 26, 1885 (Volume XXIX, No. 1901, p. 629)
66 3/16 (h) x 48 1/4 x 2 1/16 inches, 168.1 (h) x 122.6 x 5.2 cm

The Dead Jumbo. ("Death of Jumbo." Obituary)

Three black-and-white pigment print on archival paper archival paper, one print with custom round blind deboss (3.8 cm diameter), mounted on museum-board, in ebonized poplar frames
Original publication: *Harper's Weekly*, Saturday, September 26, 1885 (Volume XXIX, No. 1901, p. 629), uncredited author
The text is reset to run over three panels, the third marked with the round blind deboss in the lower right corner
61 3/8 (h) x 48 1/4 x 2 1/16 inches, 155.9 (h) x 122.9 x 5.2 cm each

The Dead Jumbo. (French Bull Dog, c. 1950)

Lithographed tin-plate, key-wind clockwork toy
Made in Nuremburg by the toy company Blomer & Schüler. "MADE IN GERMANY U.S. ZONE" marked on stomach. Blomer & Schüler Jumbo logo appears as a dog tag attached to the red collar. The logo also appears on both sides of the original winding key inserted in the side of the toy
Bulldog: 6 5/8 (h) x 8 x 3 1/4 inches, 16.8 (h) x 20.3 x 8.3 cm
Overall: 58 3/4 (h) x 15 x 15 inches, 149.2 (h) x 38.1 x 38.1 cm
Pedestal: 43 7/8 (h) x 15 x 15 inches, 111.4 (h) x 38.1 x 38.1 cm
Plexiglas cover: 15 3/8 (h) x 15 x 15 inches, 39.1 (h) x 38.1 x 38.1 cm

The Dead Jumbo. is an allegorical reference to the largest systematic, state-sponsored extermination program in the history of the world. Originally made as a site-specific extension to *THE BIRD THAT MADE THE BREEZE TO BLOW*, it includes wall panels based on material published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1885 and a Blomer & Shüler clockwork tin toy of a French Bull Dog (c. 1950) with the company's "Jumbo" logo on its collar tag.

In her practice, Hendeles frequently takes imagery and objects from one historical context and reorients them to precipitate insight into another. At a time when many cultures believe that they have experienced a "Holocaust" in their own histories, she summons the story of *Jumbo* to talk about the way a name—like "Holocaust"—has definitive roots, though its signification and usage mutates over time. Meanings change as shared values and belief systems play out in cultural and social dynamics—for better and for worse. The fate of "Golliwogg," explored in *From her wooden sleep…*, provides a different example.

The four hanging elements here recreate in word and image the violent end of an animal that had galvanized attention in North America and Europe, but whose celebrity and influence became global. The illustration was derived from a news photograph that showed a crowd of people around the animal. The image as it was etched showed the carcass of the animal, with its constant human trainer and companion standing over the body, while the anonymous text, from *Harper's Weekly* (a leading American publication that counted Mark Twain among its contributors), is an artfully written obituary that both records the event and provides a wry commentary on its circumstances and major characters.

The African elephant named Jumbo would become the first live animal superstar in popular culture, his celebrity appeal becoming equally great on both sides of the Atlantic and his influence pervasive and enduring. His name quickly entered the English language as an adjective to describe any super-sized object, and his image and name is still used to market and promote a wide variety of goods and services, from hotdogs to jet airliners. Jumbo is one of the very earliest cultural icons whose widespread fame was both a product of and a shaper of the emerging mass media, a creature of hyperactive marketing and promotion and blatant manipulation.

The exact origins of the elephant are unknown, with accounts placing his birth in various locations around what is now Sudan and Ethiopia. But as a baby elephant, he ended up in a diverse group of wild animals that a Bavarian-born animal collector, Johann Schmidt, assembled for shipment to Europe in 1862. African wild animals were already popular attractions in European menageries and travelling shows, exotic creatures that excited great interest at a time when the African continent was still being explored and opened for colonial development.

From Africa, the Italian adventurer and entrepreneur Lorenzo Casanova, Schmidt's boss, transported Jumbo to Trieste via Suez and Alexandria, and then by train on to Vienna and Casanova's home base of Dresden. Pressed for money, Casanova sold the animals to Gottlieb Kreuzberg (c. 1810–1874), a Prussian impresario with a travelling menagerie that was part circus and part itinerant pet shop. All of Kreuzberg's animals were for sale, and Jumbo, the first live African elephant seen around that part of Europe, was snapped up by the wealthy and prestigious Jardin des Plantes in Paris. It beat out the Zoological Society of London, which was looking for a specimen for its London Zoo.

Three years later, in 1865, London got its opportunity when Paris offered to swap one of its three African elephants for a rhinoceros and other animals and birds. At this point, Jumbo was about four years old, but hadn't grown much since arriving in Paris and was not in good condition. Matthew Scott (1834–1914), who would become Jumbo's principal keeper right up to the elephant's violent end, had a very poor assessment: "A more deplorable, diseased and rotten creature never walked God's earth."

In London, however, Jumbo thrived and became the storied mainstay of the animal collection. Just how he acquired his name is unknown, although some believe the elephant already had the name in Paris. One possible derivation is from Mumbo Jumbo, a West African holy man known from explorers' descriptions, who dressed in bark and leaves. On this account, Jumbo's sorry-looking state when he was bought from Paris might have suggested the holy man's appearance. An 1823 English dictionary of slang and sporting idioms also has the following entry:

> *Jumbo—a clumsy or unwieldy fellow. 'Go it, my jumbo' said to an ugly wallupping chap. Watermen to hackney coaches, market-porters and others, who wear heavy patched-up habiliments are addressed with 'My Jumbo.' Derived distinctly from Mr. Park, who relates* (Travels in Africa,) *that a scolding wife of a certain nation (of blacks) was corrected by a being huddled up and clumsily disguised, applying a tremendous birch to her bare —. He took for name 'Mumbo Jumbo,' but is shrewdly suspected (by us) of being the hen-pecked husband himself.*
> (*Slang. A Dictionary of The Turf, The Ring, The Chase, The Pit, of Bon-Ton and the Varieties of life* by Jon Bee Esq., T. Hughes, London, 1823)

No matter what the origins, the name became so associated with the animal that the large size it attained itself gave the term new meaning. A generally even temperament and willingness to carry children, first by saddle and then in a howdah, made the elephant a beloved beast of burden and turned him into a folkloric character. But as it approached full maturity, its behavior also became more unpredictable. Keeper Scott seemed to be the only person who could calm him, and the zoo became increasingly nervous about the risks of keeping the undoubtedly popular animal in a public place. In 1881, when he was about 20 years old, Jumbo's behavior was particularly erratic, perhaps fueled by the sexually charged state of musth in male bull elephants. Zoo Superintendent Abraham Dee Bartlett (1812–1897) was so concerned that he wrote to the Zoological Society Council: "In conclusion, I may ask that I should be provided with and have at hand, the means of killing this animal, should such a necessity arise." In December of that year, however, Bartlett received a telegram that offered a different solution: "What is the lowest price you can take for the African elephant?" It was signed "Barnum Bailey and Hutchinson."

Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810–1891) was already one of the most flamboyant characters in American popular entertainment, an impresario and huckster whose travelling shows and entertainments —"The Greatest Show on Earth"—drew big crowds with a wide array of genuine and fraudulent oddities, freaks and sports of nature. After Barnum merged his operation with three similar shows owned by James Bailey (1847–1906) and James L. Hutchinson (1838–1902), the three were looking out for new and bigger attractions. When a scout cited Jumbo as the biggest thing he'd seen on his travels, the circus owners asked the zoo for a price. Bartlett set it quite quickly at £2,000. It took a while for the American showmen to follow through—ironically, Barnum was not enthusiastic at first—but they finally signaled their firm intent to bring Jumbo to North America.

The sale attracted little attention initially. But after Jumbo acted up violently on the first attempts to get him to the ship for transportation and was returned to the zoo pending alternative plans, there was a new wave of Jumbo-mania. The press, including such leading establishment newspapers as *The Times*, whipped up a public outcry against the sale that even raised questions in the House of Commons and resulted in legal action. Zoo visits skyrocketed again, with thousands of visitors a day in February, when attendance would usually be measured in the low hundreds. Barnum fueled

the controversy with a canny eye on Jumbo's prospects in North America now that the purchase had become an international incident. Here's how London's *Daily Telegraph* characterized Jumbo's fate: "No more quiet garden strolls, no shady trees, green lawns, and flowery thickets… Our amiable monster must dwell in a tent, take part in the routine of a circus, and, instead of his by-gone friendly trots with British girls and boys, and perpetual luncheons on buns and oranges, must amuse a Yankee mob, and put up with peanuts and waffles." Even after the attempted assassination of Queen Victoria on March 2, 1882, Jumbo was still a bigger story in some newspapers.

A deal had been made, however, and despite protests and legal wrangling, Jumbo was hoisted aboard the *SS Assyrian Monarch* for the transatlantic crossing, with keeper Scott in attendance. The ship left London on March 25, 1882, picked up more than 400 immigrants bound for a new life in the New World at Gravesend, Kent, and then, after a further brief stop at Dover, steamed westwards until it dropped anchor in New York late at night on April 8.

Barnum, of course, had prepped the media for Jumbo's arrival, successfully rebuilding the hype around the elephant as a star attraction with his travelling circus. After an initial appearance at Madison Square Garden, Jumbo achieved the same celebrity status he had enjoyed in England. For the 1885 season, Barnum had revamped the Greatest Show on Earth program, and was laying plans to take Jumbo to western states that had not seen him yet and on an international tour back to Europe and to Australia. On September 15, however, the show was in St. Thomas in southwestern Ontario, the town then an important intersection for Canadian and U.S. railways.

After the show finished that evening, Barnum's crew packed up to move on to the next destination. There are numerous accounts of what happened, but it appears that Jumbo and a young elephant, named Tom Thumb, were moving down an empty railway track to board their own train when Scott, who was minding them, saw the lights of a freight train bearing down on them from behind. According to one account, Jumbo heaved the young elephant out of the way in time, though it's more likely that the train hit them both. Tom Thumb was injured, but survived; for Jumbo, the clash with the freight locomotive proved fatal. Scott, who by this time had been with the elephant for 20 years, broke down and reportedly lay on the body for hours weeping and sobbing.

Even in death, however, Jumbo exerted a powerful influence. Barnum lost little time getting the dead animal to a taxidermist, and for a while toured both a reassembled skeleton and a ghoulish replica made by nailing the animal's hide around a padded wooden frame. Indeed, in death Jumbo was truly larger than life, since Barnum encouraged his taxidermists to make the frame as large as possible with the injunction: "By all means...let him show like a mountain!" However, because they showed different sizes, the hide and the skeleton could not be displayed side by side. In the winter of 1889/90, Barnum's circus took both artifacts on tour to England, drawing English crowds once again.

Shortly after, the skeleton was loaned, then ultimately donated, to the American Museum of Natural History in New York—not Washington's Smithsonian Institution as "The Death of Jumbo." obituary text here on view suggests. It was on display until 1975, and brought out again in 1993 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first American circus (the museum promoted the bicentennial in a release titled, "Jumbomania returns to New York City"). Barnum gave the hide to what is now Tufts University in Massachusetts, an institution of which he was a major benefactor. Besides being a must-see attraction, Jumbo became a Tufts mascot, the elephant logo and "Jumbos" name still used by the college's sports teams. The hide stood in Barnum Hall (originally the Barnum Museum of Natural History) until April 14, 1975, when a fire destroyed the building and its contents. The only purported physical remains of Jumbo today are in ashes collected from the site of the fire the day after in a Peter Pan Crunchy Peanut Butter jar, and a fragment of tail, apparently broken off by a Jumbo fan by accident years earlier and now in the Tufts archive.

Nuremburg-based Blomer & Schüler made the toy Bull Dog shortly after World War II, when Germany was still occupied. The "Made in Germany U.S. Zone" shows the historical geography of its manufacture, though the company's Jumbo trademark on the tag on the toy dog's collar harks back to the company's pre-war success. So popular were its wind-up tin toys of Jumbo in the 1930s that the company adapted the image of the elephant for its logo. Britain's Moko Lesney, which developed the Matchbox series of toys, would issue its own clockwork Jumbo based on Blomer & Schüler's design.

Blomer & Schüler was well known for a variety of wind-up mechanical models, including carousels, helicopters and cars, including the Aero-Car design featured elsewhere in this exhibition. Here, however, is an animal from its toy menagerie—a small, rather wary-looking, pumpkin-coloured dog, who is a fan of Jumbo. In this composition, the dog appears to be reading the obituary of Jumbo, though it carries the legacy of the elephant in the logos on the winding key and the dog-tag collar around its neck.