



MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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DANIEL STOEVE SANDT - INSTITUTSLEITER GOETHE-INSTITUT NAMIBIA

Die Museumsgespräche waren ein großer Erfolg, der ohne den unermüdlichen Einsatz einer ganz besonderen Mischung von Teilnehmenden und Sprechenden aus verschiedensten Ländern Afrikas und aus Europa nicht möglich gewesen wäre. Sie kamen nach Namibia um verschiedene Aspekte der Museumsarbeit in Afrika zu diskutieren und gemeinsam künftige Konzepte zu erarbeiten. Wir erwarteten hitzige Debatten über Restitution, emotionale Momente wenn es um menschliche Überreste geht aber auch kontroverse Diskussionen über die Arbeit in afrikanischen Museen und deren Kuratation.

Seit wir diese Veranstaltungsserie vor etwa zwei Jahren gestartet haben, habe ich immer wieder gehört, Museen seien nicht afrikanisch, sie seien lediglich durch die Kolonialherren auf den Kontinent gebracht worden um die eigene Macht und Überlegenheit zu demonstrieren. Andere wiederum verwiesen darauf, dass obgleich dies stimme, Museen Teil einer afrikanischen Wirklichkeit geworden sind, schließlich wurden sie nach Unabhängigkeit der Ländern nicht etwa abgerissen, sondern

erhalten und weitergeführt – daher müssen sie weiterentwickelt werden.

Es ist daher höchste Zeit die Museumskonzepte in Afrika und die Art des Ausstellens zu überdenken – genauso wie es viele Museen derzeit auch in Europa tun. Die Konferenz hat gezeigt, dass dieser Kontinent gut daran tut, seiner jungen Generation zuzuhören, wenn es um die Neugestaltung von Museumsarbeit geht. Museen müssen nicht immer in den typischen Gebäuden verortet sein, die wir alle von den ersten Museumsbesuchen in unserer Kindheit im Kopf haben. Museen finden im öffentlichen Raum statt, in Form von öffentlichen Vorführungen, an den Wänden als Graffiti und in vielen anderen Formen von kultureller Darstellung in Afrika. Kulturelle Repräsentation findet auch in der Musik statt, die Referenzen zum historischen Erbe herstellt und natürlich findet es mehr und mehr im digitalen Raum statt. Die junge Generation will ihr kulturelles Erbe nicht länger in Museen eingesperrt sehen, sondern in einem modernen Alltag integriert finden.

All dies zeigt deutlich: Das Museum ist da, es ist weiterhin sehr relevant, da es eine Brücke zwischen der Vergangenheit und dem Heute schlägt, eine Vergangenheit die ohne Museen und Archive längst in Vergessenheit geraten wäre. Museen – nicht nur in Afrika – müssen partizipativer werden, ihre communities mehr einbeziehen und mehr digitale Angebote schaffen um auch ländliche Gebiete mit zu erreichen.

Wann immer man von Museen in Afrika spricht, berührt man auch die europäische Verantwortung in Afrika, die sich aus der Kolonialvergangenheit ergibt. Dabei geht es vor allem um Restitution von Objekten und menschlichen Überresten aus Europa. Diese Diskussionen sind oft nicht einfach, wie wir auch in dieser Konferenz erlebt haben. Aber hier in Windhoek merkte man, dass wir uns in kleinen Schritten vorwärts bewegen, meist auch aufeinander zu. Konzeptionelle Fragen werden immer mehr beantwortet und es gibt erste Restitutionsprojekte von denen man lernen kann. Ganz sicher hat in den vergangenen Jahren ein Prozess begonnen, der die Museen in Afrika hinterfragt, aber auch, der die Beziehungen zwischen Nord und Süd verändern wird.



IN RETROSPECT

DANIEL STOEVE SANDT - DIRECTOR GOETHE-INSTITUT NAMIBIA

Museum Conversations 2019 was a great success, mainly realised by an exceptional group of participants and speakers from all over Africa and Europe, who came to Namibia to discuss various topics around museum work in Africa and strongly engage with each other. We expected heated debates about restitution, emotional moments when it comes to human remains and also controversial concepts on how to curate and work in the future museums of Africa.

Since we started this event series two years ago, I've heard many times that the museums are not African and they are brought here mainly by colonial powers to demonstrate their strength. Others added, although this is very true, museums have become realities in Africa, they have not been demolished after the country's independence but maintained, and therefore need to be redeveloped.

It is about time to rethink the concept of museums and format of exhibitions in Africa. Many museums in Europe are doing this at the moment. The conference has shown that Africa needs to listen to its younger generation when it starts redeveloping and reshaping its museums. Museums no longer need to be in that typical building that many of us know from one of the first museum visits in our childhood. Museums are in the streets through public performances, murals, graffiti and many other forms of cultural expressions of a contemporary Africa. It also manifests through music that makes references to heritage and of course, it is more present digitally. The younger generation does not want its cultural heritage being locked away in museums; it wants to engage with the past through today's activities.

This all shows: The museum is present and relevant since it creates a bridge between the past and today that – without a museum or an archive – would often not exist. Museums – not only in Africa – have to become more participatory, community-focused and digital.

Wherever we talk about museums, it is to some extent also about Europe's responsibilities in Africa that derive from its colonial past. It is very often about the return of objects and human remains from collections in Europe or other parts of the world. These are not easy discussions, as we have witnessed during this conference, and despite the difficulties, we often see progress in small steps; there are more specifications in conceptual questions and lessons can be learnt from the first restitution projects. Certainly, over the

last years, a process has been started that will hopefully reshape not only museums in Africa but also relations between the North and South.



UNSERE VISION EINES MUSEUMS FÜR AFRIKA

BY GOODMAN GWASIRA, UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Das Symposium Museum Conversations, das vom 18. - 20. September 2019 in Windhoek stattfand, bot eine einzigartige Plattform für Diskussionen und den Austausch über aktuelle Fragen zu einem für Afrika im 21. Jahrhundert erstrebenswerten Museumsformat. Es war ein Diskussionsforum, eine Ideenschmiede, die dazu beitrug, Wege zu finden, bessere Methoden für unsere Herausforderungen in der Museumslandschaft zu entwickeln und bessere Lösungen umzusetzen. Zu den auf dem Symposium diskutierten Themen gehörten die Dekolonisierung des Museums, insbesondere der ethnographischen Museen in Afrika, die Rückgabe afrikanischer Museumsobjekte und neue Ansätze der Museologie in Afrika. Trotz zahlreicher Diskussionen zu den oben genannten Themen konzentriere ich mich in dieser Reflexion auf eines der dringlichsten Themen für den namibischen Kontext (und möglicherweise auch für andere Regionen Afrikas), die Dekolonisierung.

Ein wiederholtes Signal in einem Großteil der Diskussionen war, dass die Dekolonisierung ethnographischer Sammlungen und Museen nicht isoliert, sondern in Zusammenarbeit mit vom Kolonialismus entfremdeten Personen erfolgen muss, um emanzipatorisch zu sein. Es sind die integrativen und partizipativen Ansätze, durch die Museen im afrikanischen Kontext eine Relevanz erlangen können. Der Prozess der Dekolonisierung ist wesentlich komplexer als die bloße Beseitigung oder Rekontextualisierung von Exponaten und Sammlungen, die als anstößig betrachtet werden könnten. Es geht darum, Methoden zu dekolonisieren und die Umstände zu verstehen, unter denen bestimmte Sammlungen zusammengestellt wurden. Schon die Räumlichkeiten, in denen der Dekolonisationsdiskurs stattfindet,

haben eine enorme Auswirkung auf die Authentizität des Prozesses. Das Symposium enthüllte die allgemeine und oft irreführende Konzeptualisierung der Dekolonisierung als den Umgang mit afrikanischen „Objekten“, die unter den Bedingungen kolonialer Gewalt gesammelt und exportiert wurden. Erstens sind dies nicht nur Objekte - sie haben Seelen und, unter anderen Sachverhalten, handelt es sich um Vorfahren. Zweitens gibt es auch in unseren Museen einige „Objekte“ und die Auseinandersetzung mit der kolonialen Ethnographie sollte sich nicht nur auf exportierte „Objekte“ konzentrieren, sondern auch auf die in unseren lokalen Sammlungen, von denen manche aus den gleichen Hintergründen stammen wie beispielsweise jene in europäischen Museen. Das Argument hier ist, wenn wir uns zu stark auf die externe Herausforderung der Rückgabe von Kulturgütern an unsere Länder auf Kosten der internen Herausforderung kolonialer Sammlungen in unseren Museen konzentrieren, riskieren wir, die Kolonialität in der Darstellung und den Erzählungen, die wir um die Objekte herum entwickeln, zu replizieren.

Zwei herausragende Aspekte der Konferenz waren neben der Qualität der Keynotes, Workshops und Debatten, die Auswahl der Teilnehmer und die gezielte Wahl des Veranstaltungsortes in Katutura. Die Diskussionen spiegelten die Vielfalt der Teilnehmenden wider und profitierten davon. Neben Wissenschaftlern, Fachleuten und Kulturerbe-Aktivist*innen, zählten auch Studierende zu den Symposiumsteilnehmenden. Um die Notwendigkeit der Einbindung der Stimmen der jungen Generation zu unterstreichen, wurden die Teilnehmenden immer wieder daran erinnert, dass „die Zukunft im

Hier und Jetzt liegt“. Wir können die Jugend nicht ausgrenzen und davon ausgehen, dass ihre Zeit irgendwann in der Zukunft kommen wird. So war es erfreulich festzustellen, dass sich junge Menschen mit der Thematik des Museums auseinandersetzen. In diesem Sinne kann man mit Zuversicht davon ausgehen, dass die Museen in guten Händen sind.

Der Veranstaltungsort des Symposiums an sich war schon ein Dekolonisierungsakt der Räumlichkeiten, in denen solche Diskussionen stattfinden sollten. Es handelte sich dabei weder um eine Universität noch um ein Museum. Die Zusammenkunft in Katutura war ein Schritt, der Bevölkerung die Gespräche über das Museum näher zu bringen und anzuerkennen, dass niemand ein Monopol über die Diskussionen besitzt. Die Bedeutung marginalisierter Stimmen von Menschen aus den ehemaligen schwarzen Townships wurde wahrgenommen. So diente das Museum über das Goethe-Institut der Gemeinschaft. Eine Reihe von Community-Aktivist*innen unter den Symposiumsteilnehmenden, fühlten sich respektiert und schätzten es, dass sie an der Veranstaltung „direkt vor ihrer Haustür“ teilnehmen konnten. Das an sich war schon ein Schritt in Richtung des Museums, das wir für Afrika vor Augen haben. Ein Museumskonzept, das lokale Gemeinden einbezieht. Die Museumsgespräche 2019 sind für uns ein Ansporn zum Umdenken und zur Auseinandersetzung mit der Grundidee des Erbes. Sie waren ein Aufruf an Wissenschaftler, Aktivist*innen und Experten, Maßnahmen zu ergreifen und der Theoretisierung des Museums in Afrika ein Ende zu setzen. Vor allem aber wurde deutlich, dass jede Stimme entscheidend für das „Überdenken“ des Museums in Afrika ist.

THE MUSEUM WE WANT FOR AFRIKA

BY GOODMAN GWASIRA, UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

The Museum Conversations symposium that took place in Windhoek from 18-20 September 2019 provided a unique platform for discussions and exchanges on current issues regarding the desirable museum format for Africa in the 21st century. It was a forum for debates and cross-fertilisation of ideas that helped to think of ways of developing better methods and realising better solutions for our challenges in the museum world. Some of the themes that were covered in the symposium include decolonisation of the museum, specifically ethnographic museums in Africa, restitution of African “museum objects” and new approaches to museology in Africa. Although many issues were discussed around the aforesaid themes, in this reflection I focus on one of the urgent themes for the Namibian context (and perhaps relevant elsewhere in Africa); decolonisation.

A recurrent echo in most of the discussions was that decolonising ethnographic collections / museums cannot be done in isolation, it has to be done in collaboration with the people who were alienated by colonialism for it to be emancipatory. It is through inclusive and participatory approaches that museums can be relevant in the African context. The process of decolonisation is much more complex than removing or re-contextualising exhibits and collections that may be deemed offensive. It entails decolonising methodologies and understanding the circumstances that particular collections were assembled. The very spaces where the decolonisation discourse takes place have a huge implication on the genuineness of the process.

The symposium debunked the general and often misleading conceptualisation of decolonisation as denoting the dealing with African “objects” that were collected and exported under circumstances of colonial violence. Firstly, these were not just objects, they have souls - in other circumstances they are ancestors. Secondly, there are some “objects” in our museums and confronting colonial ethnography should not only focus on “objects” that were exported but also those that we have in our local collections, some of which were from the same contexts as those in European museums, for instance. The argument here is if we focus too much on the external challenge of restitution of heritage objects back to our countries at expense of the internal challenge of colonial collections that are in our museums, we risk replicating coloniality in representation and the narratives that we develop around the objects.

Two of the most outstanding aspects of the conference - besides the quality of keynote speeches, workshops and debates - were the selection of participants and the deliberate choice of venue in Katutura. The conversations reflected and benefited from participants' diversity. In addition to academics, practitioners and heritage activists, the symposium included students. It is important to include the voices of the youths, as participants were continuously reminded that the “future is now”. We cannot afford to marginalise the youth and expect that their time will come some day in the

future. It was therefore delightful to witness the youth engaging with museum issues and at this rate, it can be safely hoped that museums are in good hands.

The venue of the symposium was in itself an act of decolonising the spaces where such discussions should take place. It was not at a university or a museum. Being in Katutura was an act of taking the museum conversation to the people and acknowledging that no one has monopoly over the discussions. It recognised the importance of marginalised voices and of those who reside in the former black townships. Thus, the museum, through the Goethe-Institut was in service of the community. Some community activists who attended the symposium felt respected and appreciated that they could participate at their own “doorstep”. This, in itself, was one step towards the museum that we want for Africa. A concept of the museum that engages local communities. Museum Conversations 2019 encouraged us to think differently and confront the general idea of heritage. It challenged heritage academics, activists and practitioners to start acting and stop theorising the museum in Africa. Above all, it demonstrated that every voice is critical in the “rethinking” of the museum in Africa.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

PROF. KLAUS-DIETER LEHMANN, PRÄSIDENT DES GOETHE-INSTITUTS (GERMANY)

Der südafrikanische Maler Ernest Mancoba, 2002 verstorben, sagte in einem Gespräch, „Trotz unserer Wissenschaft, mit allem, was wir glauben zu wissen, kennen wir die Zukunft nicht, kennen wir nicht das Morgen. Doch Künstler und Poeten, diese Leute, die nicht nur mathematisch denken, könnten uns die Zukunft näher bringen.“

Das Nachdenken über die Welt von morgen ist ein zentraler Teil des Engagements des Goethe-Instituts für internationale kulturelle Zusammenarbeit. In Projekten und Initiativen werden global Zukunftsthemen mit Partnern identifiziert und formuliert.

Diese Lerngemeinschaften leben von der Vielzahl der Perspektiven, von Blick und Gegenblick, vom Austausch über Ländergrenzen und Sprachbarrieren hinweg. Wir glauben an die Kraft der Kultur, wir wissen aber auch, Kultur ist nicht per se friedensstiftend, sondern sie muss sich öffnen, eine gegenseitige Wertschätzung besitzen und Verständigung anstreben.



Museen sind geeignet, diesen kulturellen Dialog in und mit der Gesellschaft zu ermöglichen, Vergangenheit und Zukunft zu verbinden, als Bildungs- und Lernorte zu wirken, generationenübergreifend zu vermitteln und soziale Funktionen zu erfüllen. Ihre Prägung muss jedoch immer spezifisch das gesellschaftliche und historische Umfeld berücksichtigen und sie müssen unabhängig in ihrer inhaltlichen Arbeit sein. Nur dann sind sie Teil der Gesellschaft und glaubwürdig.

Das Goethe-Institut hat schon sehr früh mit seinen Partnern in der Welt große Projekte zu Fragen des Museums der Zukunft und seiner Rolle in der Gesellschaft durchgeführt, in Südamerika mit „Museale Episoden“, in Südostasien und dem Pazifik mit „Transitioning Museums in South East Asia“ und in Indien mit „Museum of the Future“. Afrika gehört in diesen großen Kontext. Außerdem organisierte das Institut internationale Konferenzen in Deutschland, die die Rolle der Museen auch im Zusammenhang mit der Restitution aufgrund der Kolonialgeschichte thematisierten. Alle Aktivitäten waren geprägt von der erweiterten Perspektive, Vergangenheit nicht als abgeschlossenes Kapitel zu behandeln sondern als historische Verpflichtung für die Zukunft. Das betrifft auch die politischen und ökonomischen Asymmetrien und Ungerechtigkeiten, die aus der Kolonialzeit fortwirken.

Zukunftsentwürfe für Afrika müssen in Afrika entstehen. Mit insgesamt 47 Ländern, mehr als 650 Millionen Einwohnern und mehr als 1.000 Sprachen ist Subsahara-Afrika eine stark heterogene, zugleich aber durch seine Vielfalt auch eine kulturell reiche Region. Das Goethe-Institut verfügt

über ein intensives Netz und arbeitet aktuell in elf Instituten sowie weiteren verschiedenen Präsenzformen. Für das Goethe-Institut ist es ein glücklicher Umstand, mit diesem Netz so eng mit den afrikanischen Kolleginnen und Kollegen, Wissenschaftlern und Künstlern zusammenarbeiten zu können. So war es möglich im Vorfeld unserer jetzigen Schlusskonferenz „Museumsgespräche 2019“ an sieben verschiedenen Standorten lokale und regionale Treffen zu veranstalten: in Kigali, Windhoek, Ouagadougou, Kinshasa, Accra, Dar Es Salaam und Lagos. Sie standen ganz im Zeichen der Stimmen Afrikas, zunehmend auch im Kontext globaler Fragen und einem übergreifenden konzeptionellen Diskurs über Museumsarbeit in Afrika. Auch wenn es in der Vergangenheit bereits einen Meinungsaustausch über Ländergrenzen hinweg zu Museumsfragen im Zusammenhang mit Panafrikanismus, Négritude und vorkolonialer Realität gab und auch bilaterale Beziehungen zwischen afrikanischen und europäischen Museen aufgebaut wurden, so hat dieses Projekt einen besonderen Ansatz und Ertrag. Durch seinen intensiven regionalen Vorlauf konnte das Thema in seinen Fragekomplexen zum einen gut fokussiert und damit konzentriert für die Schlusskonferenz genutzt werden. Zum anderen erlaubt die Vernetzung der afrikanischen und europäischen Diskussion zu Fragen der Restitution und der Bedeutung des kulturellen Erbes den aktuellen Stand der Debatten erstmals zu bündeln und damit auch Lösungsvorschläge zu erarbeiten. Insgesamt war die Vorgehensweise geeignet, den Kreis der Teilnehmer zu erweitern und damit die Zusammenarbeit über Ländergrenzen als Chance zu begreifen.

Diese regionalen Museums-Netzwerke mit einer eigenständigen Expertise und unsere Hauptkonferenz sind deshalb gerade jetzt so wichtig, weil die afrikanische kulturelle Infrastruktur vor einem Wendepunkt steht. Das gilt besonders für die Museen.

- Eine Reihe der bestehenden Museen in Afrika sind europäische Schöpfungen aus ethnologischer Sicht. Die Kolonialmächte etablierten beispielsweise zwischen 1825 und 1892 sechs Museen in Südafrika, es folgten in den Jahren 1900 und 1901 zwei Museen in Zimbabwe, je eins in Uganda 1908, in Kenia 1909 und Mozambik 1913. Generationen übergreifend setzen sich Experten, aber besonders auch Kuratoren und eine junge Bildungselite inzwischen kritisch mit den vorhandenen Sammlungen und ihrer Präsentation in ihren Ländern auseinander. Zurecht! Sie waren Ausdruck der vorherrschenden Ideologie, die die ungerechten und ungleichen Beziehungen in Zeiten des Kolonialismus wissenschaftlich legitimieren sollten. Sie dienten der europäischen Vorherrschaft. Geschichte geschieht nicht, sie wird gemacht. Deshalb geht es um einen grundlegenden Bedeutungswandel des Museums in Afrika, der die Rückgewinnung der afrikanischen Geschichte ermöglicht.
- Eine zweite Gruppe von Museen wurde im Zusammenhang mit dem Ende der Kolonialzeit unmittelbar mit der Unabhängigkeit der Staaten gegründet. Dabei spielten häufig nationale Narrative zur Bildung von Identitäten eine Rolle. Sowohl die erste als auch die zweite Kategorie vermitteln ein abgeschlossenes Thema und agieren nicht mit den gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen der heutigen Zeit, sie sind fixiert auf Vergangenheit. Um die Museen mit den Fragen unserer Zeit zu positionieren bedarf es eher eines mobilen, flexiblen und dialogfähigen Typus.

- Zur Zeit entstehen große Museumsprojekte in Äthiopien, Nigeria, Kongo oder sind fertig gestellt, wie in Ruanda, im Tschad oder in Tansania. Einige der Museen werden mit der Unterstützung ausländischer Staaten gegründet, wie beispielsweise das Zivilisationsmuseum in Dakar. Auch dort, wo der Museumsbau fremd finanziert wird, arbeiten die Museen beeindruckend unabhängig. Der intellektuelle Kolonialismus hat hier ein Ende gefunden. Das muss die Herangehensweise in der Gegenwart sein, die zentrale Stellung der afrikanischen Experten bei der Erforschung und Präsentation ihrer eigenen Kultur.
- Und weil die Museumsarbeit in afrikanischen Ländern aktuell stark durch die Diskussion um die Rückgabe von Kulturgütern bestimmt wird, müssen die kolonialen und postkolonialen Fragen zwischen den ehemaligen Kolonialmächten und den Ursprungsländern der Objekte gemeinsam verhandelt werden. Erklärtes Ziel muss die Dekolonisierung des Denkens sein. Es geht um mehr als um Restitution der Objekte, es geht um den Verlust des Selbstwertgefühls durch die Kolonialherrschaft und deren Folgen bis heute. Es genügt nicht, einfach Objekte zurückzugeben, es geht um die Menschen. Davon unbenommen: Raubkunst bleibt Raubkunst und muss entsprechend deklariert werden. Argumente gegen berechnete Rückgaben wegen unzulänglicher Ausstattung der Institutionen sollten eher dazu führen, die afrikanischen Museen zu stärken als das eurozentrische Weltbild zu zementieren.
- Schließlich geht es um die Herausforderungen der Globalisierung, der Modernisierung und Digitalisierung. Es geht nicht darum eine riesige Wissensmaschine in Gang zu halten, es muss eine verständliche Bedienungsanleitung geben, damit die Museen als Teil der Zivilgesellschaft sich nicht abschließen sondern ihre Sammlungen jeweils eine

Fortsetzung finden und die Gesellschaft abbilden und diskursfähig machen. Von gesellschaftlicher Relevanz ist die gleichberechtigte kulturelle Teilhabe.

Der afrikanische Kontinent muss darauf Antworten für sich und im globalen Kontext finden, nicht als defensiver Empfänger sondern als offensiver Ideengeber. Afrika hat nicht nur eine Zukunft, es wird sie auch maßgeblich gestalten. Ich sehe in der jetzigen Situation Chancen für einen wirkungsvollen Neubeginn in der Museumsplanung in Afrika, zum einen in der Neugestaltung bestehender Museen, zum anderen in der Neudefinition von Museumsstrukturen und -aufgaben. Während das europäische Museum stark durch die Aufklärung geprägt war, als ein Tempel der Kunst, auch als ein Mausoleum, kann das afrikanische Museum ein Kind der Emanzipation sein.

Ein Ort des Dialogs, der Aktion und der Lebendigkeit, ein Museum ohne Mauern, das die Straße und ihre Menschen mit ihren Fragen, ihren Erfahrungen und ihren Erlebnissen einbezieht – ein sozialer Raum, der die spezifischen Kulturtechniken aufnimmt und zum Klingen bringt. So kann das Museum nicht nur ein integraler Teil der Gesellschaft werden sondern zugleich auch befruchtend sein für die Debatten in Afrika und darüber hinaus. Es lohnt sich den Kanon neu zu überdenken.

Das Goethe-Institut bringt sich mit seinen Möglichkeiten und seiner Expertise gern in den gemeinsamen Erkenntnis- und Planungsprozess ein, um Entwicklungen anzustoßen, Alternativen zu diskutieren und internationale Beziehungen auf- und auszubauen.

- Es kann helfen, geeignete Voraussetzungen zu schaffen für Planungsgruppen, die unabhängig den afrikanischen Diskurs zur Museumsplanung definieren

- Es kann strategische Allianzen zwischen verschiedenen Disziplinen ermöglichen
- Es kann Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen organisieren, um einen guten Informationsstand bei Kuratoren, Planern und Regierungsstellen herzustellen
- Es kann Verbindungen schaffen zwischen künstlerischer Produktion und musealer Präsentation
- Es kann öffentliche Debatten initiieren und dabei besonders junge Leute, Schulen und Regierungsstellen berücksichtigen
- Es kann aus der Erfahrung mit der eigenen Vergangenheit ein Forum zur gemeinsamen Auseinandersetzung mit dem deutschen Kolonialismus bieten
- Es kann die derzeit auch in Deutschland intensiv geführte Diskussion über die künftige Rolle der Museen in der Gesellschaft mit der Meinungsbildung in den afrikanischen Ländern verbinden.



Es gibt eine direkte Verbindung zwischen dem kolonialen Geschehen und den aktuellen Themen. Deshalb ist und bleibt Restitution auch bei den hier behandelten strukturellen Themen eine zentrale Frage. Sie muss in den zivilgesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Initiativen Antworten finden. Deshalb gehört für das Goethe-Institut in diesen Kontext die Förderung der Provenienzforschung, das Öffnen der Archive, der Austausch von Experten, die Anerkennung des Unrechts und eine gemeinsame Verantwortung. Es geht um die Dekolonisierung des Denkens.

Bisher wurde die Debatte um das koloniale Erbe vorwiegend unter Intellektuellen, Politikern und Aktivisten mit europäischem Bildungshintergrund geführt. Es kommt dem Goethe-Institut darauf an, die Stimmen derer zu hören, deren Erfahrung, Wissen und Selbstverständnis in den Ursprungsländern geprägt wurden. Dafür Begegnungen, Netzwerke und Plattformen zu ermöglichen, ist deshalb eine wichtige Initiative.



Das Goethe-Institut kann einen Denkraum, einen Diskurs- und Resonanzraum anbieten. Es ist seit Jahrzehnten im Dialog mit staatlichen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Kulturakteuren und genießt deren Vertrauen. Es kann strukturell unterstützen oder ermöglichen, ohne in die gesellschaftliche Selbstvergewisserung einzugreifen. Es ist sich bewusst, dass dekolonisierte Beziehungen Grundlage für jede Kooperation sein müssen.

Die Erfahrungen, die bisher mit den verschiedenen Aktivitäten mit afrikanischen Partnern gemacht wurden, sind sehr positiv und von gegenseitigem Interesse geprägt, sei es auf dem Gebiet der Bildung, der Unterstützung beim Aufbau von kultureller Infrastruktur oder bei der Aufarbeitung des Kolonialismus. Dies kommt dem neuen Schwerpunkt Museumsgespräche und Museumsplanung unmittelbar zugute.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

PROF. KLAUS-DIETER LEHMANN, PRESIDENT GOETHE-INSTITUT (GERMANY)

The South African painter Ernest Mancoba, who died in 2002, said during a conversation, "Despite our science, with everything we think we know, we do not know the future, we do not know tomorrow. But artists and poets, these people who do not just think mathematically, could bring us closer to the future."

Thinking about the world of tomorrow is a central part of the Goethe-Institut's commitment to international cultural cooperation. In projects and initiatives, global topics of the future are identified and formulated with partners. These learning communities thrive on the multitude of perspectives, on views and counterinterviews, on dialogue across national borders and language barriers. We believe in the power of culture, but we also know that culture is not peace making as such, but must open up, have mutual appreciation and seek understanding.

Museums are suited for enabling this cultural dialogue in and with society, for connecting the past and the future, for acting as educational and learning places, communicating across generations and fulfilling social functions. However, their character must always take specific account of their social and historical environment and they must be independent in their work. Only then are they part of society and credible.

At a very early stage, the Goethe-Institut and its partners around the world carried out major projects on questions about the museum of the future and its role in society, in South America with the Museum Episodes, in Southeast Asia and the Pacific with Transitioning Museums in Southeast Asia and in India with Museum of the Future. Africa belongs in this big context.

In addition, the institute organised international conferences in Germany, which also addressed the role of museums in connection with restitution due to colonial history. All of these activities were shaped by the extended perspective of treating the past not as a closed chapter, but as an historic obligation for the future. This also applies to the political and economic asymmetries and injustices that continue to exist from the colonial era.

Future plans for Africa must be created in Africa. With 47 countries, more than 650 million inhabitants and more than 1,000 languages, sub-Saharan Africa is a very heterogeneous region, but at the same time it is a culturally rich region due to its diversity. The Goethe-Institut has an intensive network and is presently working in eleven institutes as well as in other different manifestations. For the Goethe-Institut it's a fortunate circumstance to be able to work so closely in this network with African colleagues, scientists and artists. For example, we were able to organise local and regional meetings in seven different locations – in Kigali, Windhoek, Ouagadougou, Kinshasa, Accra, Dar es Salaam and Lagos – in advance of this final conference of the Museum Conversations 2019. They were dominated by the voices of Africa, also increasingly in the context of global issues and an overarching conceptual discourse on museum work in Africa. Although there had already been an exchange of views in the past on issues of museums related to Pan-Africanism, Négritude and pre-colonial reality, as well as the bilateral relations between African and European museums, this project has a particular approach and yield. For one thing, due to its intensive regional forerun, the complex questions of the topic

could be well focused and thus used for the final conference. For another, the networking of the African and European discussion on questions of restitution and the significance of cultural heritage allows the latest state of the debates to be consolidated for the first time so that proposed solutions can also be elaborated. Overall, the approach was suitable for expanding the circle of participants and thus understanding the cooperation across borders as an opportunity.

These regional museum networks with independent expertise and our main conference are so important right now because African cultural infrastructure is at a turning point. This is especially true for museums.

A number of the existing museums in Africa were created by Europeans from an ethnological point of view. For example, the colonial powers established six museums in South Africa between 1825 and 1892, followed by two museums in Zimbabwe in 1900 and 1901, one each in Uganda in 1908, Kenya in 1909 and Mozambique in 1913. Experts from across generations, but in particular curators and a young, educated elite are now critically examining existing collections and their presentation in their countries. Rightly so! They were an expression of the prevailing ideology intended to scientifically legitimise unjust and unequal relations in times of colonialism. They served European hegemony. History doesn't happen; it's made. Therefore, it's about a fundamental change of meaning of the museum in Africa that facilitates the recovery of African history.

A second group of museums was founded at the end of the colonial era directly on the independence of the states. National

narratives for the formation of identities often played a role here. Both the first and second category convey a closed topic and do not react to the social developments of today; they are fixed on the past. In order to position the museums with the questions of our time, more of a mobile, flexible and dialogue-capable type is needed.

At present, large-scale museum projects are being worked on in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Congo, or have been completed as in Rwanda, Chad and Tanzania. Some of the museums, such as the Museum of Black Civilisations in Dakar, are being founded with the support of foreign countries. Even where museum construction is funded from the outside, the museums work impressively independently. Intellectual colonialism has come to an end here. That must be the approach in the present, the central position of African experts in the exploration and presentation of their own culture.

And because the museum work in African countries is currently heavily influenced by the discussion about the return of cultural assets, the colonial and postcolonial issues between the former colonial powers and the countries of the objects' origins must be negotiated together. The decolonisation of thought must be the stated goal. It's about more than restitution of the objects; it's about the loss of self-esteem through colonial rule and its consequences to this day. It's not enough to simply return objects; it's about the people. Notwithstanding this, stolen art is stolen art and must be declared accordingly. Arguments against legitimate returns due to inadequate institutional facilities should lead to strengthening African museums rather than cementing the Eurocentric view of the world.

Finally, it's about the challenges of globalisation, modernisation and digitisation. It's not about keeping a huge knowledge machine running; there must be an understandable instruction manual so that the museums as part of civil society do not complete themselves but so that their collections each find a continuation and depict their society and make it capable of discourse. Equal cultural participation is of social relevance.

The African continent must find answers for itself and in a global context, not as a defensive recipient but as an offensive source of ideas. Africa not only has a future, it will also shape it decisively. In the present situation, I see opportunities for an effective new start in museum planning in Africa, on the one hand in the redesign of existing museums, and on the other in the redefinition of museum structures and tasks. While the European museum was strongly influenced by the Enlightenment, as a temple of art, as a mausoleum even, the African museum can be a child of emancipation; a place of dialogue, action and liveliness, a museum without walls, which includes the street and its people with their questions and their experiences – a social space that takes up specific cultural techniques and brings them to life. Thus, the museum not only can become an integral part of society, but at the same time be fruitful for the debates in Africa and beyond. It's worth rethinking the canon.

With its possibilities and expertise, the Goethe-Institut wants to contribute to the common process of knowledge and planning in order to initiate developments, discuss alternatives and build and expand international relations.

It can help to create suitable conditions for planning groups that independently define the African discourse on museum planning.

It can facilitate strategic alliances between different disciplines.

It can organise training to provide good information for curators, planners and government agencies.

It can create connections between artistic production and museum presentation.

It can initiate public debates, especially taking into account young people, schools and government agencies.

From its experience with its own past, it can provide a forum for a common examination of German colonialism.

It can link the current intense discussion in

Germany about the future role of museums in society with the formation of opinion in African countries.

There is a direct link between colonial events and current issues. For this reason, restitution is and will remain a key issue in the structural themes discussed here. It has to find answers in civil society and cultural initiatives. For this reason, for the Goethe-Institut, promoting provenance research, opening archives, exchanging experts, recognising injustice and shared responsibility belong in this context. It's about the decolonisation of thought.

So far, the colonial heritage debate has been conducted primarily among intellectuals, politicians and activists with European educational backgrounds. The Goethe-Institut wants to hear the voices of those whose experience, knowledge and self-image have been shaped in the countries of origin. To facilitate encounters, networks and platforms is therefore an important initiative.

The Goethe-Institut can offer a space for thought, a space for discourse and resonance. It has engaged in dialogue with state and civil society cultural actors for decades and enjoys their trust. It can support or facilitate structurally without interfering with social self-assurance. It's aware that decolonised relationships must be the basis for any cooperation.

The experiences we've had so far in our various activities with African partners are very positive and marked by mutual interest, be it in the field of education, support for the development of cultural infrastructure or the reappraisal of colonialism. This directly benefits the new focus on museum talks and museum planning.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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DIE FRAGE VON RÜCKGABE UND RÜCKKEHR: EIN INTERESSENAUSTAUSCH

Die Frage des Erbes und dessen Rückgabe aus europäischen Museen ist in jüngster Zeit zu einem wichtigen Diskussionsthema geworden, zumal es sich auf politischer Ebene etabliert hat. Obwohl dies kein neues Diskussionsthema ist, hat die Einbeziehung von keinem geringeren als dem französischen Präsidenten Emmanuel Macron in der Debatte und seine Erklärung, sich zur Rückgabe der in Frage gestellten, afrikanischen Kulturgüter, die in der Kolonialzeit erworben wurden, zu verpflichten, die Debatte aufgeheizt und beispiellos vorangetrieben.

Diese Frage der Wiedergutmachung muss jedoch aus einer breiteren Perspektive betrachtet werden, wobei die globale Dynamik von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, einschließlich Kolonialismus, Geopolitik und Globalisierung, berücksichtigt werden muss. Oben genannte Kriterien prägen und definieren seit mehreren Jahrhunderten die menschlichen Beziehungen. Beziehungen, in denen Europa als Zentrum angesehen wird, während der Rest der Welt am Rande oder an der Peripherie agiert, wobei möglicherweise gegenwärtig Nordamerika - und insbesondere die USA - die Ausnahme bilden. Dieses Zentrum der globalen Dynamik war auch der Ursprung für Eroberungen und die Disposition fremden Erbes. Dies ist umso mehr der Grund, warum die Diskussion sowohl politisch als auch wissenschaftlich geführt werden sollte und warum Macrons Intervention überfällig war.



Im Mittelpunkt der früheren Aneignung von fremdem Erbe standen Museen - ein westliches Konzept, das die Sammlung von Objekten, die als einzigartig gelten, unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft und oft mit allen Mitteln, charakterisiert und fördert, um sie im Namen der „Nachwelt“ für immer zu erhalten. Obwohl sich dieses Konzept über die ganze Welt verbreitet hat, widerspricht es gelegentlich den lokalen Gepflogenheiten - vor allem in Afrika, wo ein Teil des Erbes zum Verfall bestimmt ist, nach ihrem Dienst in Tod und im Untergang zu verschwinden.

Heute besteht jedoch kein Zweifel mehr daran, dass es in Museen um Menschen geht, und dass Menschen Erbe schaffen, das entweder schon in Museen gelandet ist oder noch in Museen enden wird, doch sowohl der Mensch als auch das Erbe sind an sich politisch. Das Erbe ist Macht und Museen sind dessen privilegierte Verwalter, aber das Erbe, insbesondere das Kulturerbe, ist nicht unbeteiligt oder neutral.

Anhand des Erbes können andere unterstützt oder gedemütigt werden. Es ist daher nicht ungewöhnlich, dass viele der Sammlungen aus den kolonisierten Teilen der Welt entweder dazu verwendet wurden, die Unterlegenheit der Kolonisierten abzuleiten, oder, wenn diese Sammlungen als qualitativ hochwertig angesehen wurden, zu zeigen, dass es in anderen Teilen der Welt vereinzelt Orte gab, an denen große oder interessante Dinge gefunden worden sind, die mit denen im Westen vergleichbar sind. Beide Gründe galten als Rechtfertigung für die Eroberung und Herrschaft mit der daraus resultierenden Plünderung des fremden Erbes.

Abgesehen von ihrer oft behaupteten, aber unzutreffenden Absicht, die „Anderen“ „zivilisieren“ zu wollen, bestand die koloniale Agenda aus Eroberung, Aneignung von Land und Ressourcen und der Fremdherrschaft über bestimmte Völker. In einigen Fällen,

wie beispielsweise in Amerika, Australien und einigen Teilen Afrikas, führte dies zur Vernichtung von Bevölkerungen, Völkermord und zum Diebstahl von Land, natürlichen- und anderen Kulturerbe-Ressourcen im Allgemeinen.

So sind die Museen, insbesondere die im Westen, und die zur Zeit der Eroberung und Kolonisierung entstandenen, in ihrer Geschichte - der Geschichte des Sammelns ihrer Kollektionen und in ihren Sammlungen an sich - tief verwurzelt in Kontroversen, Widersprüchen und Auseinandersetzungen. Diese Auseinandersetzungen betreffen natürlich die Beziehungen, einschließlich der Machtverhältnisse zwischen dem Westen und dem Rest der Welt. Der Westen, der heute über großen Reichtum verfügt - welcher größtenteils auf die Enteignung von Ressourcen aus anderen Teilen der Welt zurückzuführen ist -, bewahrt in seinen Museen auch einige der größten und vielfältigsten Sammlungen, darunter auch solche, die unter Zwang, durch illegalen Handel oder reine Eroberung erworben wurden.

Die aktuelle Diskussion über die Restitution ist daher tief in diese vergangenen Zusammenhänge von Eroberung und Kolonisation eingebettet, deren Auswirkungen auch heute noch spürbar sind. Darüber hinaus ist weithin bekannt, dass westliche Museen und einige Institutionen nicht nur kulturelle Materialsammlungen besitzen, sondern auch menschliche Überreste, die illegal ausgegraben, verkauft und nach Europa transportiert wurden. All dies, wird heute noch als „Sammlung“ bezeichnet.

Die zugrunde liegende Realität ist, dass einige Teile der Welt immensen Ungerechtigkeiten ausgesetzt waren, darunter die Ungerechtigkeit von Sklavenhandel, Sklaverei und Kolonialismus, die bis heute Narben im menschlichen Gedächtnis hinterlassen haben. Es sei jedoch darauf hingewiesen, dass diese Ungerechtigkeiten nicht regional

begrenzt waren, sondern fast jeder Kontinent der Welt irgendwann einmal zum Opfer wurde. Die Rückgabe ist daher ein globales Phänomen und eine Herausforderung, die globale Lösungen, sowie eine gründliche Untersuchung der Auswirkungen der Kolonialisierung erfordert, um tragfähige Dekolonisationsmechanismen und -prozesse einzuführen.

Die Agenda der Dekolonisierung, die möglicherweise der Restitution vorausgehen sollte, sollte sich nicht nur mit der Frage der Rückgabe, Rückführung und der Wiedergutmachung befassen, sondern auch mit der Frage der Machtverhältnisse, der Sprache und des Vokabulars der Beziehungen; und im Falle von Museen, in denen ein Großteil des Erbes und der menschlichen Überreste aufbewahrt werden, mit der Dekolonisierung der Praktiken, der Erzählungen, als auch der Sammlungen in diesen Museen.

Andernfalls gäbe es keinen realistischen Prozess der Bereinigung vergangener Fehler und keine Wiederherstellung und Normalisierung der Weltbeziehungen.

Der Ansatz der UNESCO - Einer der Gelegenheiten für einen Dialog zu diesem Thema bot die UNESCO, die versuchte, die Fragen der Rückgabe, Rückkehr und Rückführung durch verschiedene Konventionen und Abkommen anzugehen. Es sei darauf hingewiesen, dass alle diese Terminologien zwar einige Unterschiede aufweisen, aber auf die eine oder andere Weise miteinander verbunden sind und die Wiederherstellung dessen bedeuten, was verloren gegangen ist oder sich der rechtmäßige „Eigentümer“ auf unethische oder illegale Weise angeeignet hat.

Selbst die jüngsten Äußerungen verschiedener politischer Führungskräfte sowie Stellungnahmen verschiedener Staaten deuten darauf hin, dass Erbe oder kulturelles Erbe Macht bedeuten. Es definiert nicht nur, wer wir sind, sondern auch unsere Beziehung zu anderen. Aus diesem Grund hat die UNESCO so viele Konventionen, die sich mit dem

(kulturellen und natürlichen) Erbe befassen.

Das UNESCO-Übereinkommen von 1970 über das Verbot und die Verhinderung der unerlaubten Einfuhr, Ausfuhr und Weitergabe von Kulturgütern regelt ausdrücklich die Rolle des Kulturgutes und die Verantwortung der Partner/Staaten. Es ist der Auffassung, dass der Austausch von Kulturgütern zwischen den Nationen zu wissenschaftlichen, kulturellen und pädagogischen Zwecken das Wissen über die menschliche Zivilisation erweitert, das kulturelle Leben aller Völker bereichert und den gegenseitigen Respekt und die Wertschätzung unter den Nationen fördert.

Die UNESCO ist eine Mitgliedstaatenorganisation, deren Mitglieder sich gemeinsam an ihre Zusagen halten sollten. Jedes Mitglied ist jedoch unabhängig und kann in der Praxis tun, was es will, und trotz dieser Übereinkommen bleibt das Problem, dass Vertragsstaaten illegal erworbenes Fremderbe besitzen. Da solche Konventionen auf internationalem Recht beruhen und Gesetze nicht rückwirkend anwendbar sind, sehen viele Länder keine Verpflichtung, diese vergangenen Ungerechtigkeiten zu korrigieren, da dies als Akzeptanz solcher Ungerechtigkeiten angesehen würde und als solche nicht nur alte Wunden öffnen, sondern die betroffenen Staaten auch einem Entschädigungsprozess aussetzen könnte. So versuchen Afrika und der Rest der ehemals kolonisierten Welt weiterhin fast erfolglos, ihren Fall zu vertreten.

Museen und Sammlungen - Der Mensch hat sich von jeher für fremdes Erbe interessiert, und die Sammlung des Erbes landete in der „Wunderkammer“, dem „Kuriositätenkabinett“ oder der „Kriegskiste“ und schließlich führte es zur Schaffung moderner Museen. Museen, insbesondere in der westlichen Praxis, sind jedoch keine Neuheit, weil es sie bereits in der griechischen und römischen Zeit gab. Das Besondere an Museen ist, dass sie durch ihre Sammlungen immer die nationale Leidenschaft geweckt haben.

Allerdings haben Museen durchaus von Sammlungen aller Art profitiert. Es ist wichtig anzumerken, dass nicht alle Sammlungen in den Museen weltweit illegal erworben wurden oder das Ergebnis unorthodoxer und unethischer Praktiken sind. Im Gegenteil, Millionen von Museumssammlungen wurden legal erworben und sind von großem wissenschaftlichen und anderen Wert. Allerdings verfügt eine große Zahl, insbesondere westlicher Museen, noch über Treuhandsammlungen, die durch Eroberungen, Invasionen, Diebstähle und Plünderungen erworben wurden - einige enthalten immer noch menschliche Überreste, die in der Vergangenheit auf unethische und illegale Weise erworben wurden.

Afrika und Kolonialismus - Der afrikanische Kontinent war Opfer von Sklaverei, Sklavenhandel und Kolonialismus. Der Sklavenhandel beraubte dem Kontinent einige seiner leistungsfähigsten Menschen und hinterließ viele Orte unerschlossen und brach. Der Kolonialismus mit den damit verbundenen Ausbeutungen, Unterwerfungen und Völkermorden zielte auf die Aneignung von Arbeit, Ressourcen, Erbe und sogar des menschlichen Geistes ab.

Präsident Macron lag also nicht falsch, als er in Algier, Algerien, sagte, dass der Kolonialismus ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit sei. Bis 2015 hat die Bundesregierung den Völkermord an den Herero und Nama in Namibia in den Jahren 1904 bis 1908 nicht anerkannt, und als sie es schließlich taten, war es nur vage.

Heutzutage gibt es viele ungelöste Fragen, darunter der Maji-Maji-Aufstand und die Niederschlagung in Tansania; die Invasion und Plünderung des Königreichs Benin durch britische Truppen im Jahr 1897, wobei die königlichen Bronzen weggeschafft wurden, die heute in zahlreichen Museen in Europa und Nordamerika untergebracht sind. Die Ermordung politischer und religiöser Führungskräfte im Namen der Zivilisation und die Überführung einer großen Anzahl von Kulturgütern auf die

Kolonialmächte sind Narben, die durch Verleugnung und politisches Geschick nur schwer zu beseitigen sind.

Wie der große kenianische Gelehrte Ngũgĩ Wathiong’o einmal bemerkte, „kamen die Europäer zuerst mit der Bibel und dem Kreuz und forderten uns auf, unsere Augen zu schließen. Als wir die Augen wieder öffneten, waren das Land und die Freiheit verschwunden. Als wir um die Rückgabe unseres Landes baten, wurde uns gesagt, dass irdische Güter uns nicht helfen würden, in den Himmel zu kommen. Dies könne nur das Wort Gottes, und wir sollten warten, bis wir „irgendwo dort oben“ im Himmel belohnt würden. Auf das Kreuz folgten dann Waffen.“

Kurz, uns wurde gesagt, dass unsere Trommeln und Instrumente der Macht, Autorität und Nationalität - unsere Musikinstrumente, die unsere Vorfahren und die spirituelle Welt repräsentieren - teuflische und heidnische Zeichen sind, die gesammelt und verbrannt werden sollten. Diese „heidnischen Symbole“ landeten jedoch als günstig erworbene Sammlungen in ausländischen Museen.

Museen im Norden profitierten daher von den kolonialen Aktionen der erzwungenen und „freiwilligen“ Übernahme des Erbes der „Anderen“. Viele große Museen im Norden waren nicht nur passive Nutznießer, oft von Militärexpeditionen, sondern planten und führten zusammen mit dem Militär Strafexpeditionen auf der Suche nach Kulturgut durch.

Diese wurden im Rahmen des Sammelns und der wissenschaftlichen Forschung vorgenommen und haben sich inzwischen als reine Plünderungsexpeditionen erwiesen. Mit den Worten eines Michel Leiris in einem Brief an seine Frau vom 19. September 1931: „Wir plündern die Afrikaner unter dem Vorwand, andere zu lehren, sie zu lieben und ihre Kultur kennenzulernen, das heißt, letztendlich noch mehr Ethnografen auszubilden, die sich ihnen nähern, sie auch ‚lieben

und ausplündern‘.“

Der Kolonialismus war nicht nur eine Realität, sondern auch bedrückend und böse. Daher müssen seine bösen Taten unweigerlich zu einer Art restaurativer Gerechtigkeit führen. Wenn die Rückkehr von „Dingen“, die für ein Volk von Bedeutung sind und dessen Erdenleben bis heute beeinflussen, dazu beitragen kann, dann soll es so sein.

Die Rückgabe ist jedoch nicht die ultimative Antwort auf diese vergangenen Ungerechtigkeiten; sie ist vielmehr als Teil des Dekolonisationsprozesses zu betrachten, der notwendig ist, um Macht und Machtverhältnisse auszugleichen, einige der vergangenen Ungerechtigkeiten zu beheben und eine neue Beziehung aller Gemeinschaften der Welt zu entwickeln, die die Menschenrechte als grundlegend anerkennen - einschließlich der Rechte des Erbes und der Gleichheit - für eine neue Weltordnung.

Rückgabe ist nicht nur objektbasiert - Die Diskussionen über die Wiedergutmachung sollten als Katalysator für die Korrektur vergangener Fehler dienen, wo immer sie auch begangen wurden. Darüber hinaus sollte die Frage der Rückgabe nicht objektbasiert bleiben, sondern auch das sogenannte Immaterielle umfassen, das sich gelegentlich auf das Gedächtnis und nicht auf physische Objekte oder den Raum beschränkt. Andere Formen der Rückgabe sollten auch Land und Eigentum einschließen, das afrikanischen Ländern weggenommen wurde.

In Südafrika muss das Problem der Landenteignung und Zwangsräumung, dass die Menschen nicht nur ihres materiellen, sondern auch ihres geistigen Eigentums enteignet hat, im Rahmen der Wiedergutmachung angegangen werden. Darüber hinaus sind viele afrikanische Museen ein Produkt des Kolonialismus, und einige setzen sich auch weiterhin für die gleichen Ziele der Enteignung und Einbehaltung des gesamten Erbes auf unbegrenzte Dauer ein. In Afrika gibt es zum Beispiel Museen, die noch immer

sowohl menschliche Überreste als auch heilige Gegenstände aufbewahren. Diese Museen müssen in einer Weise zerstört, dekonstruiert und rekonstruiert werden, damit sie einen wahren Paradigmenwechsel widerspiegeln.

Schließlich, so unterschiedlich die einzelnen Fälle auch sein mögen und spezifische Vorgehensweisen erfordern, sollte man auch aus einigen guten Beispielen lernen um das Rad nicht neu erfinden zu müssen. Dazu gehören unter anderem der Fall zwischen den Schweden und kanadischen Ureinwohnern, in dem die Kanadier und die Schweden über die Rückgabe von Objekten der kanadischen Ureinwohner verhandelt haben und neue Objekte für die Schweden angefertigt wurden, um die heiligen zu ersetzen. Ein weiteres Beispiel ist der Fall Dänemark/Island/Grönland, in dem Dänemark den beiden letzteren Ländern umfangreiche Sammlungen zurückgab und es gibt weitere Fälle, sogar zwischen einzelnen Museen im Norden und Süden.

Positiv ist auch der Ansatz der Bundesregierung, sich in einigen ihrer Museumsammlungen, insbesondere bei den verdächtigen, der Provenienzforschung zu verpflichten und eine Politik der Provenienzforschung und Restitution, insbesondere im Hinblick auf menschliche Überreste, zu entwickeln.

Was die Museen im Allgemeinen betrifft, so muss für eine normale und nüchterne Betrachtung der Restitutionsdiskussion, die einen annähernd akzeptablen Weg für die Zukunft darstellt, die Diskussion von der Prämisse ausgehen, dass Museen keine neutralen Orte sind und dass insbesondere viele westliche Museen immer noch ein umstrittenes Erbe enthalten. So sind sie Orte der Konfrontation und der umstrittenen Geschichte, einschließlich der historischen Ungerechtigkeiten einiger Gesellschaften weltweit. Dies muss behoben werden, damit die menschliche Normalität Bestand haben kann.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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FORMER ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HERITAGE STUDIES (UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS) THE QUESTION OF RESTITUTION AND RETURN: A DIALOGUE OF INTERESTS

The question of heritage and its restitution in the museums of Europe recently became a major topic of discussion, especially when it found its way in the domain of politicians. Although not a new topic of discussion, the involvement of none other than the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, in the debate with his statement committing to the return of African heritage properties under contestation after acquiring them during the colonial times, fuelled discussion and provided it with more impetus than ever before.

However, this question of restitution must be examined through a wider lens of past and present global dynamics, including colonialism, geopolitics, and globalization. These are the features that have shaped and defined human relations for some hundreds of years. Relations in which Europe is considered to occupy the centre, while the rest of the world remains on the fringes or the periphery with possibly now North America - and notably USA - being the exception. This centre of global dynamics has also been the source of conquests and



the disposition of others' heritage. This is more so the reason this discussion should be as much political as it is academic and the Macron intervention was therefore overdue.

At the centre of the past appropriation of others' heritage were the museums - a western concept that denotes and promotes collection of what is considered unique, irrespective of its source, and often by any means necessary that it then conserves with the view to preserve forever in the name of "posterity". While this concept has spread across the world, it in itself is at times in contradiction to local practices, especially in Africa where some heritage is made to serve, deteriorate and expire in death and extinction.

Today however, there is no doubt that museums in themselves are about people and people create heritage that have either ended up or end up in museums; both people and heritage are however intrinsically political. Heritage is power and museums are privileged to be the custodians, yet heritage and particularly cultural heritage are not innocent or neutral.

Heritage can be used to promote or demean others. It is therefore not uncommon that many of the collections from the colonized parts of the world were either used to infer "inferiority state" of the colonized or where these were considered of high quality, to show that there were a few places in other parts of the world where great or interesting things similar to the ones in the West could be located. Both reasons were justification for conquests and domination, with resultant looting of

other's heritage.

Thus, apart from its often-stated but inaccurate intention of "civilizing" the "others" the colonial agenda was one of conquest, appropriation of land and resources and domination of particular people by a foreign power. In some cases like America, Australia and some parts of Africa, it led to annihilation of populations - genocide - and theft of land, natural resources and other heritage resources in general.

Thus museums, especially in the West and borne at the times of conquests and colonization, therefore are within their history - the history of their collections and in their collections, deeply embedded with controversies, contradictions and contestations. These contestations of course touch on the relations including power relations between the West and the rest of the world. The West that is today endowed with great wealth - a lot of which arose out of the expropriation of resources from other parts of the world - also has some of the largest and diverse collections in their museums, including some collections acquired under duress, illicit trafficking or pure conquests.

Therefore, the current discussion on restitution is deeply embedded in these past relationships of conquests and colonization whose repercussions are felt to the present. More so, it is not lost on many that Western museums and some institutions do not only possess cultural material collections but also human remains that were dug, sold and transported to Europe illegally. Today, all these are still classified as "collections".

The underlying reality is that some parts of the world underwent immense injustices in human memory, including those through slave trade and slavery, as well as colonialism that have left scars to the present. It should however be noted that these injustices were not regionally based but nearly every continent of the world has at one time or the other been a victim. Thus, restitution is a global phenomenon and challenge that requires global solutions including a thorough revisiting of the impacts of colonization with a view to putting in place workable decolonization mechanisms and processes.

The decolonization agenda that should possibly precede the one of restitution should not only look at the question of restitution, repatriation and return but also the question of power relations - the language and vocabulary of relations - and for museums where most of the heritage and human remains are, the decolonization of both the practice, narrative and the collections in museums.

In the absence of this, no realistic process of correction of past mistakes and mending and normalization of world relations would take place.

The UNESCO Approach - One of the avenues for dialogue in this discussion has been UNESCO that has tried through various conventions and treaties to address the issues of restitution, return and repatriation. It should be noted that while all these terminologies have some points of difference, they are related in one way or another and imply restoration of what has been lost or appropriated in unethical or unlawful way to its rightful "owners".

It is clear even from the recent exclamations by various political leaders as well as responses from various states that heritage or cultural heritage is power. It does not only define who we are but also our relationship with others. That is why UNESCO has so many conventions dealing with

heritage (cultural and natural).

The 1970 UNESCO Convention on means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property is explicit on the role of cultural property and responsibilities of partners/states parties. It considers that interchange of cultural property among nations for scientific, cultural and educational purposes increases the knowledge of the civilization of humans, enriches the cultural life of all peoples and inspires mutual respect and appreciation among nations.

UNESCO is a member state organization whose membership should collectively adhere to what they commit to. However each member is independent and can do as it wishes in reality and despite these conventions, the problem of states parties holding illegally acquired heritage of others still persist. More so since such conventions are based on international laws and laws cannot be applied retroactively, many of the countries do not feel obliged to correct these past injustices as doing so is considered accepting these past injustices and as such, could not only open old wounds but expose the same states to litigation for compensation. Thus, Africa and indeed the rest of the formerly colonized world continue to argue their cases with little success.

Museums and Collections - Human beings have always had an appetite for others' heritage and the collection of the others' heritage led to the 'cabinet of curiosity' or 'war chest' that ultimately led to the creation of modern museums. However, museums, especially in the Western practice, are not new because they have existed even during the Greek and Roman periods. What is unique about museums is that they have always attracted national passion through the collections of what they hold.

Museums have however been beneficiaries of collections of all kinds by all means. It is important to note that not all museums of the world's collections have been illegally

acquired or are a result of unorthodox and unethical practices. To the contrary, millions of museum collections have been acquired legally and are of great scientific and other values. However, a large number particularly of western museums still hold in trust collections acquired through conquests, invasions, theft and looting - with some also still holding human remains acquired unethically and illegally in the past.

Africa and Colonialism - The continent of Africa was a victim of slavery, slave trade and colonialism. Slave trade extracted from the continent some of the most able-bodied humanity rendering many places undeveloped and wastelands. Colonialism with its attendant acts of exploitation, subjugation and genocide was about extraction of labour, resources, heritage and even human spirit.

Therefore, when President Macron said in Algiers, Algeria that colonialism was a crime against humanity he was not wrong. The German government did not acknowledge the genocide against the Herero and Nama people of Namibia carried out from 1904 to 1908 until 2015; when they did, it can be said it came in a lukewarm way.

Today, there are many pending matters including among others the Maji Maji rebellion and it's crushing in Tanzania; and the invasion and looting of the Benin Kingdom by the British troops in 1897, carting away its royal bronzes that now don many museums in Europe and North America. The killing of political and religious leaders in the name of civilization and the transfer of huge numbers of heritage to colonial powers is a scar difficult to erase with denial and brinkmanship.

As the great Kenyan scholar Ngugi Wathiong'o once observed, Europeans first came with the Bible and the cross, and told us to close our eyes. When we opened our eyes, the land and freedom was gone. When we

asked for our land back, we were told that earthly things would not help us go to heaven. Only the word of God and we should wait to be rewarded in heaven, “somewhere up there”. The gun then followed the cross.

In a nutshell, our drums and instruments of power, authority and nationhood - our musical instruments that had the representation of our ancestors and the spirit world - we were told are devilish and signs of heathen to be collected and burnt. However, these “symbols of heathen” ended up in museums abroad as prized collections.

Museums in the North were therefore beneficiaries from colonial actions of forced and “voluntary” acquisition of the heritage of ‘the others’. Many great museums of the North were not only passive beneficiaries, often through military expeditions, but also planned and executed punitive expeditions together with the military in search of cultural goods.

Carried out in the name of collecting and scientific researching, these have now been demonstrated as having been pure looting expeditions. In the words of Michel Leiris in a letter to his wife dated September 19, 1931: “We pilfer from the Africans under the pretext of teaching others how to love them and get to know their culture, that is, when all is said and done, to train even more ethnographers, so they can head off to encounter them and ‘love and pilfer’ from them as well”.

Colonialism was not only a reality but was also oppressive and evil. As such, its evil actions must by necessity lead to some kind of restorative justice. If restitution of “things” that matter to a people and influence their life on earth to the present can contribute to this, so be it

Restitution however is not the final answer to these past injustices; to the contrary it must be considered part of the decolonization process that is so necessary to balance the equation of power and power relations, mend some of the past injustices and develop a new relationship of all communities of the world that recognise human rights as fundamental - including heritage rights and equality - for a new world order.

Restitution is not only object-based - The discussion on restitution should act as a catalyst to correcting past mistakes wherever they have happened. More so, the question of restitution should not remain object-based but go beyond this to include even the so-called intangible that may at times be confined to memory, rather than physical objects or space. Other forms of restitution should also include land and property taken away within the countries of Africa.

In South Africa, the issue of land dispossession and forced removal that did not only dispossess people of their physical properties but also their spirit must be addressed as part of restitution. In addition, many African museums are a product of colonialism and some have continued to promote the very same agendas of dispossession and retention of all heritage in perpetuity. Thus, there are museums in Africa that continue to hold on to human remains as well as sacred objects. These museums must be disrupted, deconstructed and reconstructed in a way that reflects a true paradigm shift.

Lastly, as much as each case may be different and require specific ways of dealing with, it may be necessary to also learn from some good examples and avoid re-inventing the wheel. These include but are not restricted to the Swedish/Native Canadian case where the Canadians and the Swedes negotiated for the return of Native Canadian objects and instead made for the Swedes new ones to replace the sacred ones; the Denmark/Iceland/Greenland case is another example where Denmark has returned substantial collections to the latter two; and some cases even between individual museums in the North and those in the South.

The German government has also made a positive attempt by committing to provenance research in some of its museum collections, especially those suspect ones, as well as developing a policy on provenance research and restitution, especially of human remains.

For a normal and sober reflection on the discussion on restitution that will yield a near acceptable way forward, discussion must start from the premise that museums are not neutral places and that many Western museums in particular still hold contested heritage. Thus, they are places of contestations and of histories full of controversies, including historical injustices to some societies globally. This must be rectified for human normalcy to prevail.



Display Cases | Molobybe; Matsoso; Mashilo (SA)

MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019

DAY 1



LECTURE

NARRATIVE OF COLONIAL HERITAGE IN NAMIBIA

THE REITERDENKMAL

BY GINA FIGUEIRA, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS (NAMIBIA)

Gina Figueira critically analysed a statue erected during the German colonial period in honour of the German soldiers who died during Germany’s colonisation of Namibia. The Reiterdenkmal statue was removed in 2009 and relocated to make way for the recently erected Independence Memorial Museum. The statue is no longer visible to the public, which prompted its resurrection through a mini version at a restaurant in Swakopmund. This presentation examines the narratives around the statues and how these narratives form part of an authorised heritage discourse about German colonialism in Namibia.

The following points came across in the lecture; history of the German settlers in Namibia and key milestones at that time; the cultural process and narrative theory – looking at the formation of an identity for the colonial settlers that produced a collective memory and heritage. This object still stands; is this a question of restitution from Namibia to Germany? The replica in Swakopmund forms a nostalgic colonial object and therefore exists as a re-presentation of colonial domination. The Alte Feste – next to the new museum – was a concentration camp and headquarters of the Schutztruppe (German colonial forces). It is important to note how this statue was erected in honour of German soldiers who died in battle or of disease, while 50 to 60 thousand Nama and Herero people died by force or due to fatal conditions in the camps where their skulls were harvested and sold to scientists in Germany. Also, the role of churches such as the Christuskirche that has Schutztruppe names inscribed on its walls are symbolic of more than Germans seeking heimat and also a political statement of colonial domination.

The role of such buildings and statues in having colonial settlers formulate an identity and appease the discomfort of homesickness cannot be ignored, particularly in Namibia where the colonial settlers were allowed to remain after Independence. Colonial settlers focus on the permanent occupation of land, the removal of indigenous peoples and creation of an ethnically distinct national community. Settler colonialists are not contingent to the idea of discovery and carry their sovereignty and lifestyles with them; they transform the land into their image of themselves. This statue is a representation of that narrative and how the soldiers viewed themselves as the future of what is now Namibia.

A prominent suggestion from the audience: South Africa went through the “Rhodes must fall” phase, which through a social media campaign and mobilisation on the ground questioned the colonial landscape and surroundings of the monument depicting Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town. This debate went to Parliament and was stoked by the protest against an increase in university tuition – what about other colonial statues in South Africa? These monuments may have been removed but the spirit still stands – how does Africa deal with this?

Namibia’s plans or protocol in dealing with such matters, or the lack thereof, also surfaced. The Reiterdenkmal was simply relocated without the State and society through a law defining the process. South Africa is looking into creating a colonial park where all such statues will be on display for the public. The red paint on a soldier statue in Swakopmund goes widely unnoticed, showing how dominant the authorised

discourse is about the importance of the colonial statues and the fact that any challenge to them seems to go largely unnoticed because the colonial message of the statue is so dominant. Worth noting also is Namibia and the collective consciousness of hatred that stems from the nation accepting the violent colonial past that is easily denied by the descendants of the coloniser who now regard themselves as Namibians and not Germans.



Summary: Statues and churches played a prominent role in the German colonial settlers’ formulation of their identity and to this day, represent the colonial domination of the indigenous people. Oppression of the colonial narrative through disapproval of statues goes unnoticed in Namibia, which reflects the dominance of the colonial narrative.



GROUP WORK

CONFRONTING THE MUSEUM

PORTABLE HAWKERS MUSEUM

BY DR. ALISON KEARNEY (WITS UNIVERSITY, SOUTH AFRICA)

Alison Kearney shared information on the creation, implementation and traveling of her project “Portable Hawkers Museum” that hit the streets of South Africa as a mobile museum of mundane items regularly purchased at hawkers on the streets. The objects of the museum were not for sale and the goal was to disrupt the established order and highlight how the mundane objects reflect a lot of the community in which they function and their meanings are created – Objects in a museum could be regarded as an index to a community and how it functions.

The audience tend to feel alienated by what is in a museum – despite the mundane aspect of the objects of the Hawkers Museum, the audience’s interaction with the items were limited and serve as an example of what applies across museums in Africa, in which communities’ involvement in the selection of content and its presentation is highly lacked. The mobile museum travelled

around the world but was challenged by customs that do not allow traditional medicine and toxic substances such as rat poison to enter foreign countries. Alison then opted to create casts and take photos of the objects to overcome this challenge, which brought the aspect of arts and an artist into the equation, and also highlighted her ethnicity as a white woman producing knowledge; trajectory of artists to engage and critique institutions of art through the Portable Hawkers Museum.

Museums establish and maintain that colonial gaze that taints the production of knowledge - The mobility of the museum and its contents brought to the front a question regarding the policies and regulations of its content – something that applies to museums across Africa. The mobility also highlighted the colonial and out-dated concept of a museum, and how the parody of museums covers the crimes against humanity committed to obtain African objects



Summary: The Portable Hawkers Museum project highlighted the following: the involvement of artists and communities in museums, and for the institutions to understand the importance of defining and understanding their audience before selecting content are of high importance in Africa. The concept of a museum needs to be redefined for the institution to not establish and maintain the colonial gaze while covering up the crimes against humanity committed to obtain the many artefacts now in museums.

GROUP WORK

MOBILIZING HISTORICAL OBJECTS FROM NAMIBIA: “CONFRONTING COLONIAL PASTS, ENVISIONING CREATIVE FUTURES”

BY NEHOA KAUTONDOKWA (MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA)

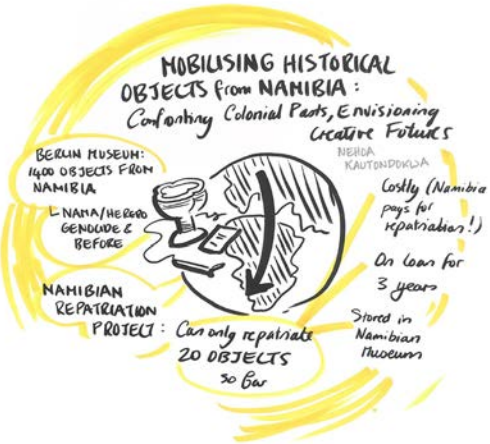
This lecture revealed that the Berlin Ethnological Museum in Germany has over 1,400 objects from Namibia, collected between from 1880 – 1919, and mostly during the German colonial era. Collectors included relatives to members of the German colonial administration, missionaries, traders and researchers. Although there are objects collected by members of the Schutztruppe who were in Namibia between 1904 and 1909, most were collected before the Nama and Herero Genocide. All in all, the Berlin Ethnological Museum has a collection bought from 52 persons and 7 institutions.

Broadly speaking, there is a project for restitution that involves the return of about 20 objects to Namibia through the National Museum of Namibia, Museums Association of Namibia and the University of Namibia. A team of Namibians travelled to Germany for some time to study the objects, assist in their curation and work towards their return.

Discussions revealed the people's disgruntlement because the process of restitution is proving difficult and

complicated. Not only are the objects too expensive to repatriate, they would only be in Namibia on-loan for three years, with a possible extension to a permanent loan. Once returned, the objects are kept and exhibited at the National Museum of Namibia and not in the communities of origin. In fact, some of the objects cannot be returned to the communities, as not only were they treated with highly poisonous chemicals in Europe, the collectors did also not document creators of the objects. With a series of wars, most documents regarding these objects were also destroyed. There is also the challenge of selection, given that the project funding can only afford to safely transport about 20 of the 1,400 objects.

Borrowing or borrowing permanently makes no sense: the objects should be defined as in a state of being returned to Namibia and not loaned. Since some Ovaherero and Nama people are in Botswana, it was also urged to liaise with the people of Botswana before pursuing the matters further. Such liaison is welcomed by Namibia.



Summary: Several resolutions were brought up including that Germany should fund the process and apologise to Namibia with no conditions set for the restitution. Should Germany wish for ‘appropriate’ facilities for these objects, they should fund them, and what happens thereafter, should not be of Germany’s concern. Political assistance in this process should be lobbied and all museums must come up with full disclosure of what is in their storage so that all know what is where. There is also a need to extend the level of community engagement/communications and commitment to re-define what is a museum.

LECTURE

COLONIAL COLLECTIONS AS ARCHIVAL REMNANTS OF RECLAMATION AND (RE)APPROPRIATION REIMAGINING THE SOUNDLESS AND SILENCED ISIGUBHU THROUGH 21ST CENTURY SOUTH AFRICAN POPULAR ELECTRONIC MUSIC: GQOM

BY AMOGELANG MALEDU (IZIKO MUSEUMS, SOUTH AFRICA)

The lecture focused on the colonial archive – as distorted as it is – that has been a vehicle for profound imagination, especially in envisioning a justifiable future.

However, current investigations of the assumedly redemptive vicissitudes of (un)packing the colonial archive must be met with suspicion. An ethnomusicologist, Percival Kirby, operating in the colonial period collected and archived a musical artefact: ‘Isigubu’ (drum). Such collections silenced the musical ability of the artefact through colonial museum practices. The lecture looked at the ‘Isigubu’ (allegedly played during the Bambatha rebellion in 1906 and found in the University of Cape Town’s Kirby Collection) – to speculate how it may have (un)intentionally influenced contemporary popular electronic music in South Africa called ‘Gqom’. What the colonial archive has revealed about this object is scant – imagination becomes a very important strategy of reclaiming agency and history. Since nobody has found recordings of how the ‘Isigubu’ from Kirby’s collection sounds, imagining its sound through ‘Gqom’ becomes a working methodology of thinking around new ways of curating erasure in museums, with the only evidence being its cultural artefact status.

Introduction to arts has been through popular culture in South Africa – particular development in music that combines traditional instruments with electronic beats. Iziko presented an ancient and traditional instrument that has somehow re-surfaced to influence contemporary music, yet been silenced

through its colonial archiving after its alleged use in the Bambatha uprising.

What the colonial archive has revealed: Imagination becomes an important strategy. The ‘isigubu’ seems to have resurfaced through contemporary South African Music; imagination of how the original object sounded. The archiving of the drum was presumably without narrative and knowledge of its real sound. Hence, defiance was born by music and musicians in the townships, where drums are the core of the vibrant and dance/groovy type of music – first Kwaito and then Gqom.

Discussions focused on the return of objects and cultural practices that remerge through music.

The reimagining of the drum’s utility through ‘Gqom’ is an embodied mythology as a practice of lived experience and memory. The speculative links can only be drawn with regard to how far apart genres can go or develop. African contemporary music tends to be boxed by means of names – branding and product placement – broadly speaking, ‘Afrobeats’. Additionally, curated objects that can’t be used anymore are still important. There are relationships that people can see; connect the historical instrument with contemporary music. Even though we can’t truly know the original sound of the drum today, its connection to present music traditions such as ‘Gqom’ cannot be denied.

Summary: Museums need to think about new curatorial practices in the presentation of their colonial collections, especially musical instruments that are evidently meant to be played. The museum convention of Do not touch (for preservation considerations) needs to be reconfigured in new contemporaneous ways to think about how the displayed objects can have new agency, meaning and speak to their utility: music.



GROUP WORK

POST-COLONIAL AND RACIST IDEOLOGIES IN MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS

BY WANDILE KASIBE (UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA)

Wandile Kasibe provided a thought-provoking presentation on how museums are perceived as innocent spaces, while they stem from sometimes-violent political projects.

Kasibe looked at two frameworks:

Natural History Museums – from about 1825 - the collection of human skeletons as objects for museums. Such displays were not limited to Africa and span around the world as extensions of the colonial empires manifested through museums.

The Anthropological Museums approach – Kasibe showed a video of how a museum was “cleansed” spiritually by applying traditional African practices – an intervention project. Museum regarded as a crime scene examined through the investigative lens. Cleansing the space = decolonising it.

Focal points of post-video discussion: the definition of Natural History Museums - indigenous peoples, such as the Khoi, within the glass boxes of display. Why did we advocate for the closure of this museum? Indigenous people are misrepresented and through the racist lens. How ethical is it to display a human cast in a display case - dehumanising. Is that art? The exhibition cements racial stereotypes as the objects on display were in the Animal Kingdom section of the museum - where are the objects depicting, for instance, the Caucasian people in the same section?

Some of the points brought forward by the audience in relation to revisiting the idea of a museum in a post-colonial context: who will be responsible for cleaning the crime scene? The “crimes” must be disclosed by perpetrators: museum professionals. Community consultation needs to take place for society to decide what roles

the museums must play. Curators need to decolonise their mind. Museums need to collaborate more often, such as through the Commonwealth Museums Associations. Consultation on changes to policies, particularly those from the colonial time, are not progressive. Societies must take greater responsibility of objects after their restitution - need to develop policies and protocols to follow regarding this. There is a need for greater museum forums to facilitate the exchange of ideas. Museums need to disclose their crimes - South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Committee is an example of uncovering the crimes committed and perpetuated.



Summary: Museums must be reimagined and decolonised, not only through the professionals and how they decide to display objects according to ideologies of the colonial times, but also through more community involvement in the formulation of policies and protocols that define a museum’s role in society.



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

ALEXANDRA HERITAGE CENTRE AND WOMEN’S LIVING HERITAGE MONUMENT

BY FRANCES ANDREW (SOUTH AFRICA)

Frances Andrew is part of a team that applies multiple disciplines when producing a number of New Museum and exhibition design projects. She feels strongly about working in a space that can change the existing and ‘incorrect’ models that governments are implementing in museums; such institutions should bring important voices together.

The Alexandra (Alex) Heritage Centre is a small (250m) community history museum. It was completed 3 years ago after a delay of 10 years on the building itself, which highlights the struggles of the process. Essentially, the space presents a history of Alexandra - although the vision is that it will also portray more than purely history in the near future. Being one of the poorest urban areas in Johannesburg and located next to one of the richest, the space is in a constant struggle in lending room to a rich history of activism.

Highlights: A booth records community stories for archive and community access. This allows stories from the past, present and future to be archived and accessed by visitors. The aim is to make this a growing +point of having a living archive that is accessible outside of the museum space via an app.

Curated in association with community members active in the development of music and other musicologists, the 14m-long mini music museum in the form of an interactive walk-through juke box, or gumba-gumba as the people of Alex call it, was produced. The jukebox contains 25 tracks that represent the breadth, depth and variety of music that hails from Alexandra’s rich history. “We found an original scratchy

recording of a piano track from 1942.”

The Women’s Living Heritage Monument: 2,4km² exhibition space showcasing one of the histories of the role that women have played and still play in South Africa. The history of women is a history of gaps – one where all share experiences but differ in their own story. The project drew on hundreds of women artists, performers, choirs, authors, academics and poets etc. to tell the story of South African women. A large part of the exhibition focuses on the living archive or the ever-unfolding history, and this is a space which harnesses social media platforms, public lectures and dialogues etc. to keep the history current.

Highlight: A soundscape has been developed, which runs as a backdrop to the entire museum and which draws on the incredibly rich heritage of women in music - women’s voice. It was important for the museum to emphasise women’s voice; “We needed women to be speaking loudly in this space.” Another important factor in the design was conversations rather than monologues and this runs through all aspects of the design.

Both projects have the same design principal of innovative and multi-media exhibitions. The community representatives from Alexandra stated that it was important for the exhibition to be aspirational rather than purely a reflection of Alexandra’s poverty. The WLHM stakeholders required a high-level exhibition, which does justice to the important role that women have and do play in South Africa, and is showcase in a variety of multi-media installations that harness technology, international standards and so on.



Summary: New Museums – particularly government run projects - in their design and planning need to be mindful of the difficulties in operational day-to-day running. The creation of such spaces also needs to embrace community involvement and harness the opportunities of technology to future-proof the spaces and have them remain relevant. The balance between these two driving factors in new museums – technology and community involvement - in South Africa seems to be a moving target with a lot of learning as the process unfolds.

NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

BENIN OPEN CITY MUSEUM: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BY DR. KENNEDY EWEKA (NIGERIA)

The presentations by Dr Kennedy opened with the following statements; It's time for African people to tell their story by themselves because most of the time, people have to buy books authored by non-Africans about places in Africa. Dr Kennedy showed a photo presentation about the Benin city and kingdom. The entire city is assumed a museum that instigates and initiates narratives on the discussion on community engagement, as it relates to cultural heritage of the people as a living culture existing in an open museum.

His paper is an outcome of field work in Benin City during 2015, 2016, 2017 and is on-going. The Benin Kingdom came to light after the 1887 British punitive expedition. The study directs attention from the conventional museum buildings or galleries where artefacts are housed for public views to the open city that is filled with evidences of the heritage of the Benin Culture in Edo State. Kennedy guided the audience through a slide-slide show to explain that the State revamped the original house of the kingdom to which he has personal relations. The story of the slides begins with the Oba of Benin, Oba II seated at Aro Ozolua in the modernized place in 2016, and proceeds to a cross section of Benin Chiefs paying homage to the monarch at the palace. Then, the Ekasa Masque dancers were depicted performing outside the palace. Images then showed the deserted traditional ground Edaiken of Uselu Palace after the ascension of the Oba Ewuare II to the throne in Benin City. The palace was bubbling with activities during the coronation ceremonies and the crown Prince Ediaken N'Uselu looks on the traditional infantry showing the Asaka Nosoeghian Oba.

Summary: Dr Kennedy presented the story of Benin City and the Kingdom that is rich in history but outside of official buildings such as museums and palaces that very often are regulated by the government and do not tell the story of the African people as they know it. His studies and the ongoing process of uncovering such important sites of heritage highlight the importance of having the people of Africa tell their stories themselves; instead of such institutions relying on books written by people not native to the city. Such buildings, not only because of their historical importance and functions within events for a monarchy, should be seen as the instigators for discussions on Africa's history as told by the people of the continent, to also bring forward the intricacies of heritage and its application to the city of today.



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

MEMORIALIZATION AS PLACEMAKING THE PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSIONS

BY MANDY SANGER, DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM (SOUTH AFRICA)

Sanger opens with a slide show through which she lays the context and describes Cape Town's history during the colonial and apartheid eras that both imposed laws of racial division and segregation that is still visible and felt in a modern South Africa. The apartheid ideology of marginalisation and exclusion still lives today. Identifying as an educational and learning specialist, she views the museum as a space for understanding a violent past of collusion; engaging with community members through innovative methodologies for them to tell their stories and develop a credible narrative; and a source for information in the heated process of restitution. The museum should be an active space for workshops, discussions and the house of objects with cultural heritage and value to a community.

The work of a museum from a pedagogical point of view. Cape Town is a city shaped by colonialists, apartheid, resistance and gentrification. Memorial sites have been dedicated to millions of people being killed or forced into slavery - a hierarchy of suffering. The issue of symbolic or systemic violence is something the community deals with in a deep way and museums have the potential to be the space for processing such experiences and thinking towards the future that despite definition of the word, is defined by the actions of today.

The District Six Museum is an example of professionals applying innovation, which involves rethinking the future and understanding it as the result of today's actions that can affirm, strengthen and consolidate or disrupt and uproot pathways to the future. The colonial model of exclusion remains hegemonic because of power relations that favour those with access to

cultural capital and economic resources. - something the museum is challenging with its approach of involving the community. The understanding of a museum visitor as someone seeking a thrill and wanting more is not the ethos of this museum, which instead encourages visitors to rethink, learn, reflect and reimagine their future. Visiting the museum is not an edutainment experience of traumatic histories.

Innovation to this museum means thinking more deeply and more creatively about ways of involving a diverse community in the everyday life of museums through encouraging and enabling the involvement of community members in the processes of curating, conceptualisation and research. People's stories are central to the archive, from those displaced and marginalised during the Apartheid era and those displaced in the present by gentrification. The museum embraces difficult dialogues that are not always easy to involve in the museum but contribute to having an archive of multiple narratives when excavating through activities such as oral workshops that have people's experiences shared collectively.

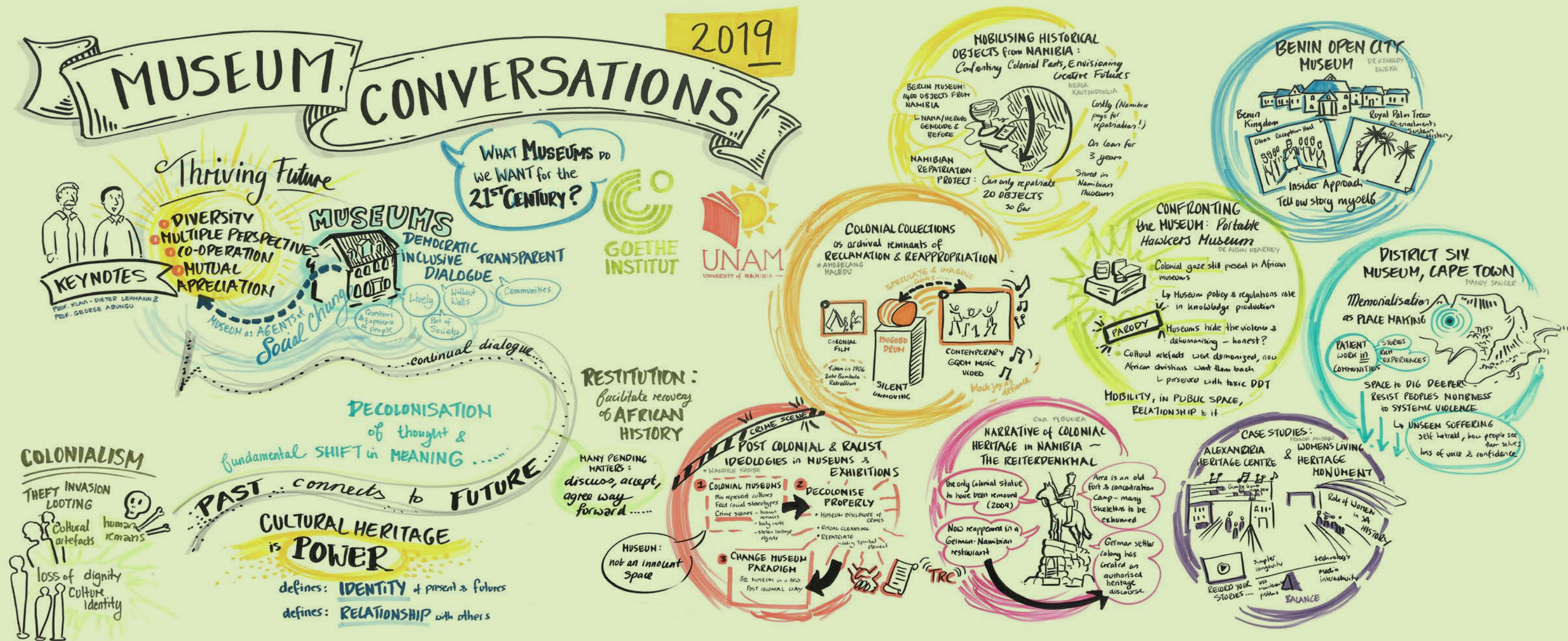
Museums as spaces of institutionalised cultural practice and their silencing of objects, stories and achievements of the marginalised is being challenged but theorizing this process is an unanswered question. The District Six Museum approaches the implementation of this paradigm shift through a series of learning journeys - some interconnected - but always towards contributing to a learning community in which public reasoning is enhanced. The transformations of museum is not as simple as breaking down the walls and requires a

complete disruption of not only the space but also site-specific performances and mobile exhibitions that travel outside of the regulated space. All aspects of curating need disruption for a real transformation to manifest.



Summary: The understanding of museums as a space of learning and where community members collectively share their stories to produce an archive of multiple narratives with regard to a traumatic past is exactly what the District Six Museum is an example of. The institution's model is different in that professionals are forced to work within the community and collect information on past traumatic experiences of the apartheid era and those of today - gentrification. Involving communities in the conceptualising and curating of a museum is crucial to transform museums and understand the future as the product of today's actions. A museum is a space for learning, reflecting and doing research to produce educational events and programmes - not simply entertain and provide visitors with a thrilling experience that they would want to supersede in another visit.

MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019 | DAY 1



MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019

DAY 2



GROUP WORK

NORTH-SOUTH MUSEUM COOPERATION

BY TERRY NYAMBE (INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS, ZAMBIA)

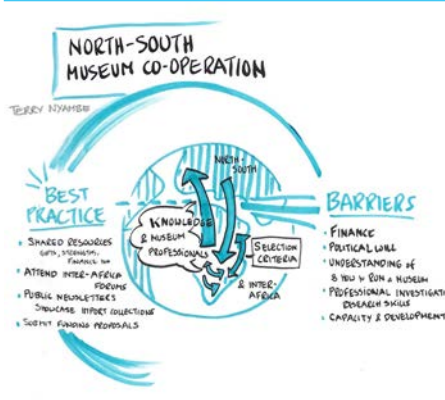
Terry Nyambe delivered a presentation on the planning and intentions of an exchange programme between museum professionals in the Northern and Southern hemisphere – Europe and Africa. This is envisaged to start in April 2020 and is aimed at sharing knowledge and skills - not only amongst the professionals - but also through universities. Visits between institutions are to occur for about 4 to 6 weeks and the funding of this project will be sourced from the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Germany and France. The intended outcome of this programme is a good example of cooperation between museums for young museum professionals to increase their capacities, as well as expand their professional network. Discussions during this presentation evolved around two elements: the reasons why this is not already happening and what can be done to overcome challenges.

What are the major impediments that hinder African museums' cooperation with those in Europe and beyond: Resources to manage African museums and lack of trust between European and African museums; diplomacy is a necessary component. On top of the lack of understanding cultural

heritage, not many African countries know what are in European museums for instances of restitution to take place. Lack of understanding how to effectively run institutions like museums makes the restitution process even harder.

Minor impediments: Museums' maintenance from a foreign partner is expensive and there is a need to localise operations, while technology expertise is a requirement not always met by those in positions of authority. There is also an absence of full control over projects in Africa. Capacity and development are much different between the two hemispheres in aspects including national policies – North has protocols to follow while the South does not. There are also not enough museums professionals to influence policies and powers. It is also difficult to access professionals in Africa as most do not have websites or do not work within the field. Governments are also not interested in national heritage matters; lack of political will. “We lack investigative research by our professionals.” The colonial past also hinders such mutual exchange, coupled with the domestic impediment.

How best can Africa pursue a North-South dialogue? Are there any best practices to share? What about South to South dialogue as a proposition? The following suggestions surfaced: Museums professionals need to attend forums within Africa to share ideas regionally. Cross-country boundaries also need to be overcome and diplomacy is required for this to materialise. Gifts exchange between museums and collections are also important to promote better relations and foster ties. A technological partner should be localised for technologically advanced museums and not outsourced in totality. Community involvement and awareness can be achieved through channels like museum newsletters. There is also a need to create a guide of where African collections are in the North, as this could make instances of restitution more possible. When contact is made with museums of the North, emails play a very important role in establishing communication and good relations; mail etiquette deserves close attention. Museums – North and South – can also have joint resources and share content of cultural relevance; attract the public and adversaries such as politicians to instigate the creation of policies and apply diplomacy.



Summary: The importance of dialogue between museum professionals in Africa and between those in the Northern and Southern hemispheres – as demonstrated by a project between Zambia and ICOM in France and Germany - has been identified as a solution to make the operation of museums and restitution more effective. The involvement of influencers and powers in the formulation of relevant policies in Africa is also important to the dialogue that shares skills and information on cultural artefacts taken during the colonial era. The localisation of development projects in Africa must also be applied but through museum professionals in Africa being more technologically savvy and able to communicate professionally.

GROUP WORK

HUMAN REMAINS RESTITUTION, RE-HUMANISATION AND THE NEW MUSEUM

BY PROF. CIRAJ RASSOOL & SOPHIE SCHASIEPEN (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA)

This presentation and discussion evolved around the restitution of human remains, exploring avenues and how it can benefit Namibia in putting dignity and legitimacy in this process.

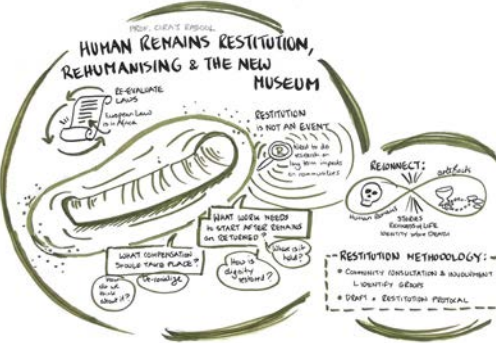
Interrogate current laws regarding the restitution of human remains: European law, in particular German law, defines human remains as objects – dehumanising – not alive and or belonging. Africa needs to evaluate important terms such as **restitution, return and re-humanisation**. Reconciliation in Africa is a way of masking the internal struggle and knowledge of past violence in pursuit of a ‘rainbow nation’. The use of “repatriations” is also problematic as it is associated with a nation and masculine nations, which collectively covers national agendas and lacks the acknowledgement of indigenous people. **Return – restitution – repatriation – restorations or restorative justice – reconciliation – re-humanisation.** Africa must be critical of the terms used in European laws as their definitions and implications are insensitive and lack of diplomacy: applying European law to Africa won't work.

Other information on human remains is also important during the diplomacy process of restitution, such as the date and cause of death etc. Restitution is not an event and there is a need for research and acknowledging the long-term effects of restitution. Government to government restitution and return of human remains is currently regarded as an event with the militarisation and parade of white coats. This is inadequate as the human remains are on display during the official event of return but once the day is over with political speeches and processions etc, what then happens is not something disclosed

or thought about in a sustainable way. Example being Germany and Namibia – Namibia and South Africa; they belong to each other forever and simply returning things for a glorious event is short-sighted and irrational.

Points that surfaced in the group discussions: **What work needs to start after the return of human remains?** A key issue, with Namibia as an example, is how it is not enough for human remains to simply return and mark victory for a post-colonial state, but also of concern is how the dignity of human remains is restored once returned. Africa needs to look at the complications and how these are to be addressed; what are the compensations and how do we think about it? What about how colonialism has destroyed countries? The return of artefacts is merely symbolic of a larger discussion. The returned objects often remain in the realms of museums, failing to engage with the broader community about colonialism and dehumanisation, which means the process fails to become a lesson from history to prevent new forms of dehumanisation on multiple levels. This process must become part of de-racialising remains. The political tension between Namibia and Germany is also complex to the point of whether the return of these objects is part of the political issues, need to be addressed. To bury or not to bury the objects that are proof of the imperial past? Who is responsible in the long run, museum or community? What about museums bound by policies and long processes – how can we move on when we are prisoners of those bureaucratic processes? There is a need to liberate the museology profession from the past! A second component is **reconnection through stories and the richness**

of life and identity – not only about events or human remains – but building the story of human remains - the story of the community. Museums, through labels, very often do little to give life and tell the story. Restitution methodologies approaches need also to be addressed regarding a lack of community consultation or involvement. Africa needs to draft a Restitution Protocol.



Summary: Namibia and other former colonies need to formulate a protocol for restitution – diplomacy - and work towards community involvement for museums to tell the story of communities and reflect the ethnic diversity of human remains that need to be de-racialised. Applying European law to Africa has resulted in a parade and the militarisation of human remains' restitution, which tends to be followed by the artefact of the imperial past being locked away and out of the public domain.



LECTURE

TOWARDS AN INTERCONNECTED & COLLABORATIVE MUSEUM IN AFRICA: DISCUSSION OF A CASE STUDY OF A TRIPARTITE MUSEUM CO-OPERATION

BY MOSES KAHURE (IGONGO CULTURAL CENTRE, UG); THOMAS LAELY (ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, CH) & AMON MUGUME (UGANDA NATIONAL MUSEUM, UG)

This discussion highlighted the partnership between African and European museums, and what successes they achieved from the partnership. Having deliberated the cultural history of museums, speakers noted that the museum of today should be a tool for deconstruction, breaking boundaries, participation and outreach. There is a paradigm shift in the understanding of what a museum is and what its purposes are. To achieve that, there is a need for professionals in the field, governments and societies to re-think a museum and decolonize the space for there to be contextual community involvement and the exchange of skills between professionals – locally and between North and South.

Ideally, museums should share knowledge, documentation and collections with museums and cultural organisations in the countries and communities of origin – in any context including post-colonial. Professionals and institutions should explore the possibility of developing partnerships with institutions and countries where access to information is limited; create awareness

and encourage appreciation of the heritage globally.

The Collective Keynote Address: while discussions on restitution continue, communities should use what they have to preserve the heritage. The outcome of a tri-lateral cooperation on the preservation techniques of milk in Uganda demonstrated fruitful cooperation between Africa (Uganda) and Europe (Switzerland). This project resulted in the first mobile museum that showcased the history of milk preservation techniques, which was 'a first' and generated lots of interest. The project reached people who had never seen a museum before. It also exchanged skills amongst professionals and established a channel of communication that could be used for future talks on restitution. Museum professionals in Africa tend to be challenged by the use of technology, managing foreign funded projects, lack of political interest in the management of museums and youth apathy in the field. This project addressed these shortfalls and challenged the definition of a museum for it to also be seen as an interactive custodian

of intangible cultural heritage that could be lost if the community is not engaged in preserving their history.

In particular, it was noted that most exhibitions exclude children because most objects in museums are locked in glass cases; children prefer interacting and touching objects. Thus, the interactive aspect of the milk preservation exhibition was important and gave children a chance to interact with the objects physically. Communication between professionals across the borders was achieved through digital technology such as Skype and email, despite shortcomings of travelling between Switzerland and Uganda. All Skype conversations were recorded to keep track. There was also a virtual tour through the exhibitions in Uganda, which meant the one in Zurich had literally three exhibitions in one.



Summary: The custodians of the cultures should learn to organize their own heritage and not have someone in another continent do it for them. This does not mean collaborations between communities, museums and countries are not possible; collaborations are important and could assist in making the process of restitution easier. The importance of community engagement with museums is also important for the institution to define itself in a post-colonial society.



GROUP WORK

REPHRASING MEANING OF OBJECTS AFTER THEIR RETURN

BY SUSANA SOUZA (INDEPENDENT CURATOR, ANGOLA)

Susana Souza began by narrating a story about Dundo Museum, Lunda-Norte in Angola. The role of public policy toward restitution remains a key question, following the development of a project that identifies artefacts that were stolen from Dundo Museum during the civil war. The museum, within the Chokwe Community in Eastern Angola, is the most paradigmatic example of the removal of historic and symbolic objects from the country and how these objects lack a narrative that defines them as cultural heritage.

The said museum was built by a coloniser company during the colonial era; established relations with German and Portuguese museums in the late 1950's/early 60's, from which point colonial narratives were changed. Examples include colonies being referred to as provinces of Portugal and that everyone was regarded as Portuguese. The museum played an important role in achieving this mentality, which lead to important questions on what the role of the museum was and who their audience were.

After 50-60years, with the help of the Angolan Government, about 9 objects (masks) were returned to this community. These were not accompanied by any narrative, bringing along with them the enigma of what exactly the meaning of these artefacts was/is to the communities of their origin after their return. What it means to the community for these objects to be taken from them, stay and even be traded abroad and eventually returned with no narrative is perplexing, and brings to question again the role and significance of the museum. The Chokwe community seems to have a different perspective from the people re-appropriating the

artefacts, as they were never consulted on the object's departure or return in the first place.

The discussion highlighted that because of confinement within artificial borders, such issues need to be confronted from an African - national as opposed to ethnic - perspective. Confrontation from an ethnic grouping might not garner much and should rather be approached as a national collective. Lastly, museums are seen as colonial instruments and hardly reveal the real layers within the meanings of objects collected (sold or stolen) and later returned. The significance of objects to their communities lies deeply in the interaction with the deeper meaning of the object, not merely as an object, but as an integral part of their culture. Thus, significance has layers, which can only be detailed by the communities themselves, and perhaps not the museum. The museum as walls does not include the communities in defining objects in layers such as spiritual and the intangible meaning of other layers around an object.



Summary: An example of the Dundo Museum in Angola was presented. The building originates from the colonial era and was constructed by the former colonisers (Portugal), who interpolated the mentality of the natives being defined as "European" before the trade of cultural artefacts destined for museums in Europe commenced. It is important to note the role of a museum in this process. About 60 years later and with assistance of the Angolan government, some of the objects were returned to the Chokwe community, whom after independence were not involved in the process of formulating a narrative behind the objects for a museum to communicate their cultural significance. All-together, the restitution of objects from Europe to Africa should be approached from a national and not ethnic perspective to establish a collective-national approach for these objects to not be accepted silently but with a discourse of their cultural heritage.

PANEL
CURATING THE COLONIAL LEGACY
BY MOLEMO MOILOA (INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER, SOUTH AFRICA)

This lecture focused on the colonial era leaving behind the European epitome of collecting and collections, as well as the concepts of scholarship & curatorship by ‘experts’. The colonial era also left behind dominating physical infrastructure. What then could these buildings and ideas do for the people now, to have a legacy today that is in touch with the people?

Questioning all of this led to the establishment of project Eyadini in Johannesburg. It deals with gardening and aims to involve the communities. The Black Urban Gardening was to engage with communities for them to invest their time in passionate work that is about leisure, pleasure, communality and sociality – contrary to the role of black people during the colonial and apartheid eras when them performing such labour was not for bringing pleasure to the self; challenge

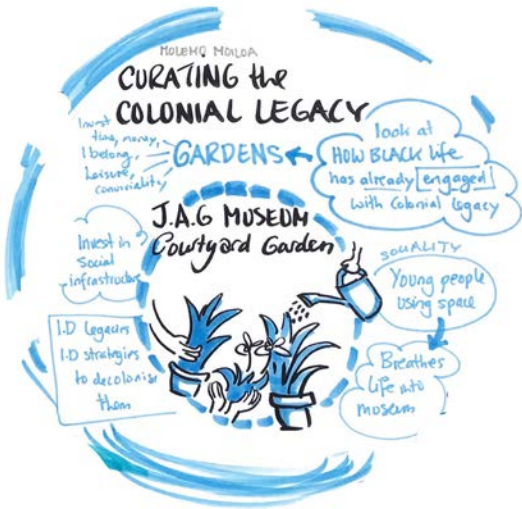
the idea of a ,worker’.

Eyadini started as a garden: food garden, ornamental, spiritual plants, medicinal plants.... etc. Several such social projects that included young people who come to ‘hang’ around the garden were facilitated for the youth to understand hanging around as being useful somehow within the project: working/interacting and keeping busy with the gardens.

How then do museums or custodians thereof get it right with museums that have ‘NOT DIED’ since museums are considered to have died? There is a dynamic between European mediums and African perspectives. There needs to be synergy between the two: inter-activeness between the museum and the community is encouraged.



Summary: Such legacies should be identified and strategies should be sought to decolonize other legacies particularly associated with colonialism. Sociality is one of the major shortcomings of modern museums and interactive museums are encouraged to have community involvement.



PANEL
CURATING THE COLONIAL LEGACY
THE CONCEPTION OF A POSTCOLONIAL MUSEUM
BY DR. WINANI THEBELE (BOTSWANA NATIONAL MUSEUM)

Dr Thebele started by reflecting on nearly 30 years of working in a museum and asking if the institution she started working for is the same museum that society talks about today? Is today's museum trans-cultural and has it done away with colonial issues? While yesterday's museums depict collections from colonial times, today's museums should look into re-intervention and decolonization, such as the Freedom Park in South Africa – a ‘new museum’.

The ‘new museum’ needs to be accessible to the wider public and relevant to the people. There should be a direct connection between the museum and the people because the museum is about the people and belong to the people. The ‘people’ include grown-ups, youth, women and men – all members of a community. Different concepts are at play to shape the new museum: indigenous communities, healing closure, shared heritage etc. Basically, the new museum is ready to deal with sensitive issues inherited from the colonial era and is about appreciating Africa's cultural heritage by providing a space where

Summary: There must be a different generation of curators who want to formulate a new perspective of a museum through an informed narrative about problematic matters and the role of a museum in a post-colonial society. The ‘new museum’ should focus on building trust with the communities that connect them to their inheritance. Community involvement in the functioning of museums and the selection of their content needs to be pursued for the concept of a museum to have adapted to the state of a post-colonial society.

one learns: it wants to transform a platform for addressing the issues that affect society. Examples: what do museums say about xenophobia, HIV and youth unemployment? If silent on such matters, then it's not meeting its mandate. It should strive to put things into context through new informed narratives built by curators who have moved on from the colonial approach to museums that lacks community involvement and applies the colonial gaze of an outdated anthropological paradigm.

Discussion: Concern was raised that when new museums materialise, various goals such as creating awareness of social issues and other sociological roles could possibly have it take over the roles of other institutions better suited to meet the mandate. This was disputed. For example, the ministry of health, in cooperation with museums, does exhibitions on matters such as HIV but if not done in cooperation, the museum could be stepping on the ministry's turf. The museum must realise that while it has the mandate to preserve traditions and cultural practices, it should also engage with communities on the dangers that ancient practices pose, such as sexual rituals and diseases. The new museum and its place in society needs to be examined and re-defined.



PANEL
CURATING THE COLONIAL LEGACY
CRITICAL LANDSCAPE APPROACH:
LANDSCAPES BETWEEN NOW AND THEN
BY DR. NICOLA BRANDT - UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD (NAMIBIA)

In her discussion, Brandt draws on the-
mes and ideas from her upcoming book
Landscapes Between Then and Now, where
the artist and scholar examines the increa-
singly compelling and diverse cross-disci-
plinary work of photographers and artists
made during the transition from apartheid
to post-apartheid and into the contempo-
rary era. She sheds light on established
and emerging concepts related to after-
math landscapes, embodied histories, (un)
belonging, spirituality and memorialization.
Brandt shows how landscape and iden-
tity are mutually constituted, and profiles
this process against the background of the
legacy of the acutely racially divisive poli-
cies of the apartheid regime that are still
reflected on the land.

As proposed by the South African photo-
grapher Santu Mofokeng, landscape is not
separated from the self – the landscape is
seen, experienced and embodied. In the
context of the urgency of land restitu-
tion, Mofokeng’s description has become
increasingly relevant. The ‘western’ histo-
rical meaning of land, or ‘landscape’, has
little relevance to the demands for land,
but nonetheless has a tenuous, uncom-
fortable historical connection. The scho-
lar Renzo Baas describes the mind-sets
behind many of the earlier representations
of landscape: ‘The colonizer – by first pos-
sessing the land artistically – can claim the
discursive landscape and start to infuse it
with ideals imported from the metropole
[colonial power networks in Europe] ...’

Summary: Brandt emphasizes the importance of trying to understand the layered and conflicting nature of memory production (and amnesia) situated in place, especially when creating or locating meaning in photographs or cross-disciplinary performance works. Brandt’s central claim is that landscape and identity are mutually constituted and cannot be separated. She challenges traditional ‘western’ understandings of landscape, and demonstrates how a number of emerging artists in the region of southern Africa are redefining their place in the contemporary landscape through an embodied and critical approach.

The coloniser projected her or his idea of
‘landscape’ in both subtle and direct ways,
which to this day continue to have practical
and psychological consequences on others.

The coloniser’s imprint, and value system,
can still be clearly seen in structures such
as architecture, monuments, museum exhi-
bits and artefacts, remaining street names
and fences containing vast tracts of com-
mercial and private farmland. In places like
Swakopmund and !Nami#nus/Lüderitz the
land and unmarked graves remain a silent
witness to the colonial legacy. For example,
the colonial photographic archives from the
period of German colonialism offer stark
contrasts. Notwithstanding the dehumani-
zing portrayals, these images also give
visual sovereignty and evidence of the con-
tinued presence on the land of those who
lived here prior to the arrival of the coloni-
ser. Nevertheless, these colonial photogra-
phic archives primarily reveal the attitudes
and aesthetics of white supremacist patriar-
chy and how it is mapped onto the land.

The politics around land today is based on
a deeply visceral identification with pos-
session and ownership, and the need for a
sense of belonging and safety, with a vision
towards a horizon without boundaries.
After waves of violence and displacement,
links to ancestral lineage, and in turn to
ancestral land, are now beginning to domi-
nate the conversation.

And yet today it seems as though more
than ever the land itself is not being heard.
This indifference is largely rooted in these
colonial-capitalist legacies and attitudes.
Fragile biodiversity is affected by expan-
sive new infrastructure developments or
mines that scour and dig up the land. Roots
of grass can no longer penetrate deeply
enough once the soil has been blown away
where trees and shrubs once kept it in
place due to drought and global warming.

Cross-disciplinary artists and activists,
including eco-feminists and queer bodies
challenge the mastery by only a few of
what should be our shared world. They use
a range of strategies and formats to try and
make visible memories and power structu-
res situated in place. Their ideas are com-
municated through aural histories, ritual,
in music, in places of historical significance
and most of all, in the gaps and spaces
in-between visual representation. Through
certain interventions, artists have the capa-
city to re-map possible new futures both
onto place and their own being.



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT
THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: JOHANNESBURG HOLOCAUST
& GENOCIDE CENTRE - A PLACE OF MEMORY, EDUCATION
AND WHERE LESSON FOR HUMANITY CAN BE LEARNT
BY TALI NATES (SOUTH AFRICA)

Tali’s presentation explained how the cen-
tre works with refugees, survivors from
Rwanda and Holocaust survivors. The cen-
tre consists of various departments and
platforms to engage with the audience
on various aspects of dealing with such
trauma. The building itself is full of symbo-
lism; what does Holocaust look like to you?
The centre composed music, displays poe-
try, arts and other audible elements wit-
hin the building that partially consists of
tangible artefact associated with the sites
of origin. One of the elements is railway
lines that are incorporated into the buil-
ding; from the Holocaust and Armenian and
Herero and Nama genocides.

Architecture and façade: “We try to ans-
wer these questions through the centre,
with regards to the loss of the potential
that happens after genocide. We have a
children’s memorial section - in the plaza,
[where] we chose a colour brick that is
burnt and of a style that resembles places

where genocides took place. The elements
of the genocide wall have names of children
from Europe and Rwanda on it. Since we do
not see the sense in only using numbers but
names or put differently, to speak to the
identity and not just numbers. How do we
connect history and now? How to make the
connection with the audience? The exhibi-
tion space is displayed with windows and
always in the light as opposed to darkness,
which at times is normalised in museums.”

Voices of genocide witnesses: Bystanders/
perpetrators and other voices are all a fac-
tor of the centre’s content. Stories about
Johannesburg are included as well, with
collected stories and identified mundane
objects such as keys that are also regar-
ded as artefacts. The centre is also aiming
for relevance and asks questions such as,
How does the centre deal with xenopho-
bia in South Africa? Also featuring are Life
and Death in the Shadow of the Holocaust,
which are 24 homegrown films through

which the stories are told in a thematic way
because it is never comfortable telling such
stories. When curating, other materials rela-
tive to the genocides were included, such as
clothes and objects from, for instance, the
Rwandan genocide.

Education at the centre: “Youth are the
change makers for leadership”. The cen-
tre’s educational component was executed
in collaboration with 13 African countries to
educate children and adults about genoci-
des, the Holocaust and human rights. Con-
tent and teaching materials for secondary
schools have been developed and univer-
sity students are sent on informative and
study tours to Poland, Rwanda and Ger-
many. Courses are also tailored for corpora-
tes and institutions for individuals to under-
stand and know how genocides affect their
workplace. “Through this, we advocate for
African solutions for African issues. With
our own voices and our own leaders.”



Summary: The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre deals with urging visitors to reflect on lessons from history and make a connection with their lives today. Contemporary issues assist in understanding human rights through memory and a shared reflection in the space.

NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ESTABLISHING ORAL HISTORY IN A MUSEUM CONTEXT BY ABITI A. NELSON (UGANDA MUSEUM)

Mr. Abiti showed how establishing oral history in a museum could help communities deal with traumatic experiences from the past. This was undertaken by the Uganda National Museum; a former art college that became an ethnographic museum. The artefacts contained there were collected by the colonial administration trying to find uses for these items. The presentation shows the intended benefits of the post-colonial museum that involves communities in the process of reconciliation.

Memory of conflict approach: the museum played a vital role and assisted in the post-independence process. The State stopped the function of the kingdom and exiled the king to England. The entire royal objects were confiscated and put in the museum but returned later on. In particular and after independence, the silenced drums that were lifeless in the museum are being redefined and a narrative is being developed for them to be understood as a significant tangible cultural heritage. To develop that narrative, engaging with the community from which the objects come from is vital and if not, then museums do the same as the independent government to which museums are not a priority.

Refugee camps north of Uganda: Chiefs approached authorities for help to preserve their intangible cultural heritage, which resulted in museums that share information on the process of forgiveness rituals by some tribes; families split during the wars were reunited and rehabilitated. "We work in sites where massacres happened." Interventions of performances including drummers and an exhibition on the road to reconciliation were established with community museums in cities for people to view the work in areas affected by the civil war – oral history materialised to assist people in processing trauma.

Summary: Work done by the Uganda National Museum through the collection of oral history and creating presentations from it to assist people in dealing with trauma has proven that museums have a very important role in the process of reconciliation by engaging with communities. This means persons in the profession need to engage in dialogue to reformulate their understanding of a museum in a post-colonial Africa



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT CONFRONTING A PAST THAT HURTS - ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS IN THE OWELA MUSEUM BY GOODMAN GWASIRA (UNAM) & NZILA MARINA MUBUSISI (NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAMIBIA)

This presentation used the San community exhibition – ethnographic collection – in the national museum as a point of departure in the critical discussion of how indigenous people were and are misrepresented in museums that perpetuate the colonial gaze and marginalization by race as a way of organising of society.

The colonial German administration started the development of museums in Namibia from as early as 1907. The depiction of themselves in the Owela Museum totally excluded the indigenous people; created an exclusive space separate from that of the Germans. Museums had the same status quo under the apartheid dispensation.

Techniques used by curators, especially the casting of indigenous peoples such as the San, interpolates the colonial gaze and dehumanises the San people. This was challenged after independence when the San communities were consulted to debunk the colonial representation and the narrative that comes with it. Inclusion of and engaging with communities before they and their cultures are represented in a museum is vital, as this contributes to the decolonisation of the museum and the mind – museums and their installations should be produced in collaboration with the communities they represent. This is a complex process that requires not only the removal of exhibitions that might be regarded offensive but also

the decolonisation of the methodologies and understanding the circumstances in which collections were assembled.

This process of decolonisation extends beyond the objects, some of which are still in Europe while objects obtained from the same circumstances are in Africa and part of national collections, but also without a soul or narrative. Crux of the matter: if Africa focuses too much on the restitution of objects from Europe and overlooks the collections that museums on the continent also have on display, African museums risk replicating colonialism in representation and the narratives developed around the objects.



Summary: Museums in a post-colonial Africa can perpetuate the colonial gaze and reinforce the racial marginalisation of the colonial and apartheid era, particularly through ethnographic displays such as that of the San community in the Owela Museum. New museums in Africa with community involvement can debunk this. Museums in Africa should not get caught up in the demands for restitution while objects from the same contexts have remained in African museums, but also without a proper narrative. Decolonising the museum space is a complex process that requires reformulation of the methodologies and understanding the contexts from which the objects were taken before made part of national collections in Africa and abroad.

LECTURE
SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURE AND DISCUS-
SING SHARED HERITAGE IN AFRICA; AFRICA AND THE
TRANSATLANTIC
BY PROF. TIAGO DE OLIVEIRA PINTO (FRANZ-LISZT-UNIVERSITY, GERMANY)

The purpose of this presentation was to show the value of intangible cultural goods on the African context. Point of departure: Prof Tiago noted how the Christ Church in Windhoek has a pipe organ (tangible artefact) and the tunes it produces are intangible cultural artefacts – as are the sounds of the bell ringing. History is made and heritage is lived; responsibilities can be shared as the experience of colonisation and transatlantic slave trade cannot be isolated. Therefore, people and communities should share knowledge and not focus only on objects. The role of museums, therefore, is to share knowledge and overcome intellectual colonialism.

Responsibilities of Governments: Brazil was presented as an example, where indigenous communities and the environment are not serious topics. For instance, the National Museum in Rio De Janeiro was burnt down in 2018, while containing an Egyptian collection that was a gift from the Portuguese Kingdom. Speculation was rife that the fire resulted from neglect by the previous government administrations, meaning these tangible objects of cultural heritage were not regarded as important at all. This has professionals in the field move on to questioning the importance of intangible cultural heritage, which could still exist after such disasters in which 95% of tangible cultural heritage was destroyed – cultural heritage associated with the colonial era but which can still be seen today.

Intangible cultural heritage can be orally transmitted through expressions, performing arts and social practices. About 60% of cultural heritage is accounted by music and performing arts, which are not easily seen as politically or socially important to preserve. Africa is moving ahead and in the process of rectifying treaties on this to recognise

dances, instruments, education and funeral music as examples of cultural heritage.

Demonstrating this is the interaction of sound & time. Interaction between the law of acoustics and physics: Harmonics regarded as a basis for polyphony – the combination of melody, harmony and rhythm to create a sound. Important to understand is the cognitive use of time framing; music occurs in time and is a reflection of the cultural ways at that time. The beats and tempos of music in Brazil, in particular Samba, can be traced back to Africa, such as in Angola and the Kachacha pattern that was most likely brought to Brazil by the slaves from Africa. Samba and Kachacha are both circular and but have a different timeline - Kachacha evolved for the new context in Brazil and contributed to the creation of Samba. Therefore, the complex landscape in which intangible cultural heritage is



Summary: What can society learn from intangible goods such as cultural heritage? Society must look at the concept of a 'living museum' through which it is deemed necessary to reimagine the role of a museum in the current context of a post-colonial world and the preservation

of intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage deserves more recognition of importance – politically and socially – as does the identification of agents responsible for its preservation.



Monkey (2): Intervention-contravention-contradiction | by Farieda Nazier (SA)

MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019

DAY 3



GROUP WORK

CULTURAL BANKS AND THE ROLE OF PRIVATE MUSEUMS

BY FRANCK PACERE (CAPP - BURKINA FASO / SENEGAL)

Pacere presented examples of three countries in which the concept of a cultural bank has been applied – some successful and some not. This was followed by motivation for the concept and its vision of contributing to the socio-economic development of communities in Africa. Looking towards the future, there is a need to develop policies for such banks’ regulation and how the values of items are determined. What does the bank do if a client default? Altogether, culture can be an engine for community development when applied accordingly.

The concept of ethnographic museums has been questioned since the 1980’s during which Alpha Oumar recognised the importance for Africans to decolonise the discipline and not alienate each other, while creating something that is in response to their indigenous needs and satisfaction for tourists. The concept of such a community bank is already engrained within most African cultures – stockvel – and this concept, as a cultural bank, could preserve a culture and create revenue for a community. It is shocking to note that in some cases such as Mali, many cultural artefacts found at archaeological



sites were easily sold off to tourists and foreigners, leaving the communities bare and clueless of their cultural heritage.

A cultural bank has a complex structure but simplified, it includes the bank itself, a cultural centre/museum that has the items on display and a training centre that provides skills in different kinds of artisan relevant to the community. A cultural bank accepts items produced or found by persons or families and has an elder council to evaluate the object before granting the loan according to its market and cultural value. This is a micro-loan system in which the cultural artefact is collateral for a loan with an interest rate of 2 to 3 per cent to make the bank sustainable. There are also other councils such as the credit council, general council and technicians for preservation etc. responsible for the regulation of the bank. It is important to remember that the bank belongs to the community and the community is in control of the bank. In the end, an object may be returned to its place of origin.

Issues of artefact trafficking, money laundering and corruption are of concern and highlight the need for policies of regulation. At the moment, the money of a cultural bank comes from either a private donation to a community or village, or from

international banks such as the World Bank or African Development Bank. There have been cases in which the cultural banks are burnt down, robbed or are just a failure because people default or the community cannot manage the bank effectively. It is also important that the building of the bank is in matrimony with the environment and community – a high-rise glass building would be obscene and disturb the community. “We also have to think about discrimination and how everyone has cultural knowledge of some value – the origin of the object and its cultural value are very important.”



Summary: The concept of a cultural bank is not foreign to most African countries and their cultures. The concept of having a cultural artefact be collateral for a monetary loan has been applied in countries such as Mali, where it has proven successful. A cultural bank not only finances the initiatives of community members and thus stimulates socio-economic development, it also preserves cultural heritage for the community and tourists. Artisan skills are also transferred at a training centre funded by the bank. However, the uneven distribution of cultural knowledge and heritage complicates the evaluation of objects in terms of market and cultural value; what to do if someone defaults? The dynamics behind the selection of councils that govern the bank and the absence of regulatory policies thereof need to be addressed before culture can be an engine for community development.

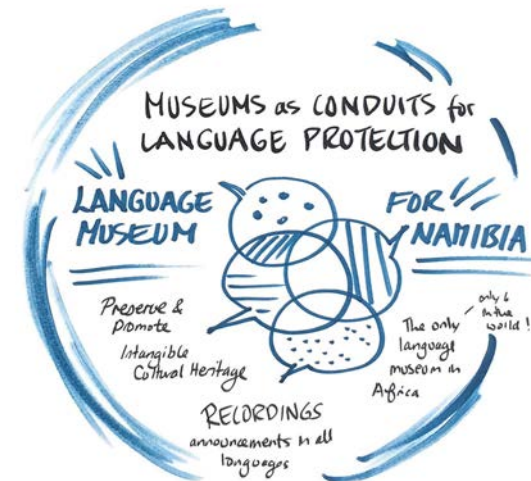
GROUP WORK

MUSEUM AS A CONDUIT FOR LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

BY CHRISTIAN HARRIS (UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA)

Mr Harris delivered a presentation about how museums, specifically a language museum, can contribute to the preservation of African languages. He discussed the process and benefits of preserving intangible cultural history, which also poses the potential of contributing to a country’s economic development through community involvement and tourism.

What is a language museum? Globally, there are 6 language museums of which not one is in Africa. Language museums are needed to value the diversity of Namibian culture. According to UNESCO, language and its intricate relationship with culture makes it intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage refers to practices, representation, expressions, knowledge and skills according to conventions; tradition. Museums can preserve and promote indigenous languages by recording more of each in many ways: written, audio or visual. This also contributes to the development of indigenous languages because it provides Namibians with the



Summary: Language is a marker of cultural identity, which makes it necessary for a government to play its part in preserving all of Namibia’s indigenous languages. Museums can assist in these regards and invest in the production of content regarding indigenous languages and their evolution. Language museums will not only preserve and promote indigenous languages, they will also contribute to the economic development of Namibia by promoting tourism and creating jobs.

opportunity to learn how languages emerge and how they have evolved/developed over time to promote harmony and social cohesion. A language museum could also contribute to Namibia’s economic development by directly involving communities in the production of content and create an institution for tourists to visit.

The current challenges facing a potential language museum in Namibia include lack of interest from organisations expected to expose and introduce this concept; lack of funds to implement bilingualism within a museum; and a negative attitude towards indigenous languages.



LECTURE
USAGE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN MUSEUMS
BY CHAO TAYIANA (FOUNDER: AFRICAN DIGITAL HERITAGE, KENYA)

Chao outlines a project uncovering the violence and oppression of the Kenyan people by the British colonialists, and how the use of social media in a post-colonial society made the information more accessible and powerful. Social media also has the potential to make community involvement in the museums possible by acting as a platform to their engagement. The importance – potential advantages and dangers – of social media in Africa are explored.

She outlined the colonial oppression experienced by the Kenyan people, following rise of the Mau Mau Movement that presented itself as a powerful state of mind and required civilians to take an oath of secrecy in favour of overthrowing the colonialists. The British retaliated with the “Pipeline” – a series of camps across Kenya. Suspected civilians were sent to camps for “rehabilitation” and to potentially disclose information on the resistance movement. Camps across Kenya were arranged by levels of torture, sexual violation and violence. Question: how do we communicate the gravity of this information that has not been part of the education system and that majority of Kenya either don’t know or don’t talk about?

She showed a diagram outlining the Pipeline, which she transformed into a simple but interactive map showing the camps’ geographical location – this visual representation is easier understood than the diagram, which brings the power of digital media to the forefront. Digital technology may sometimes not produce the most

comprehensive representations but is effective. This concept was extended to produce 3D models of the camps that today don’t exist physically and were converted into schools or belong to private owners who don’t allow access.

Kenya has three languages: English, Kiswahili and Silence – people either want to talk about the colonial past or simply remain silent. To understand this, the challenge of access to information must be discussed. If not in Europe, where there are many obstacles that delay access to information, it is also incredibly hard to obtain facts locally because most witnesses of the camps are either dead, very ill or too old, or simply refuse to talk about it. This challenge has brought the power of oral history to the forefront and its potential on social media platforms, where more people can access information and contribute to discussions about such sensitive topics. Example: the schools now have windows but the camps did not - this information surfaced through an interview with community members, which also highlights the importance of community involvement in museums. Important: dialogue and participation to achieve ownership of information and the availability of platforms that enable this ownership. Community involvement in museums need more discussion as Africa becomes digital.

Museums need to go the audience and the audience no longer should need to go to the institution. Museums perpetuate colonial imperial legacies because of matters including the

outdated methodologies applied at the institutions in a post-colonial society. African communities’ lack of engagement with the migrated objects and archives contribute to maintaining their suppressed & silenced histories. Museums also interpolate the racist representations because of power dynamics in digital spaces and the profession. This has African museums house objects but with a lack of information on the objects collected during the colonial times. Contrary to these norms, the positive responses to museum projects on social media shows that the digital world and its skills have a lot of potential, and should not be exclusive; digital technology should be used as a tool to engage with and involve communities in the process of creating accounts of history and enabling the access to information.

Summary: Digital technology has the potential to provide access to information and create a platform for civilians to engage on the development of museums that represent an account of history; assist societies in dealing with past trauma; and be the engine for oral history in Africa. All of this is demonstrated by the Museum of British Colonialism that produced an interactive map and 3D models of camps created by the British colonial administration.



GROUP WORK
WHY AFRICAN ART SECTORS NEED ART MUSEUMS
BY VALERIE KABOV (ZIMBABWE)

Valerie opened the session with a presentation on the Zimbabwe gallery scene that preserves local arts against Eurocentric influences and how the global arts scene is distorted. The purpose of such association such as the First Floor Gallery Harare and private galleries play an important role in the industry, and highlight the need to have a strong policy that secures the legacy of Zimbabwe. The gallery is part of a larger project and built on the basis of sharing and engaging with the community. Also active is the concept of swapping work and having the goal of collecting the artworks of other artists. These concepts make contemporary

arts fairs resources for members of the community and the gallery. Important to note: Artworks collected by a museum are done in terms of price and opportunities for the future; how will this add to the depository of arts? What history and cultural value does the object have? All of this evolves around the idea of preserving authenticity. The gallery in Harare also has educational programmes, welcomes international artists to residency in the country and enables contact with local artists by using the building as a space for experimenting.

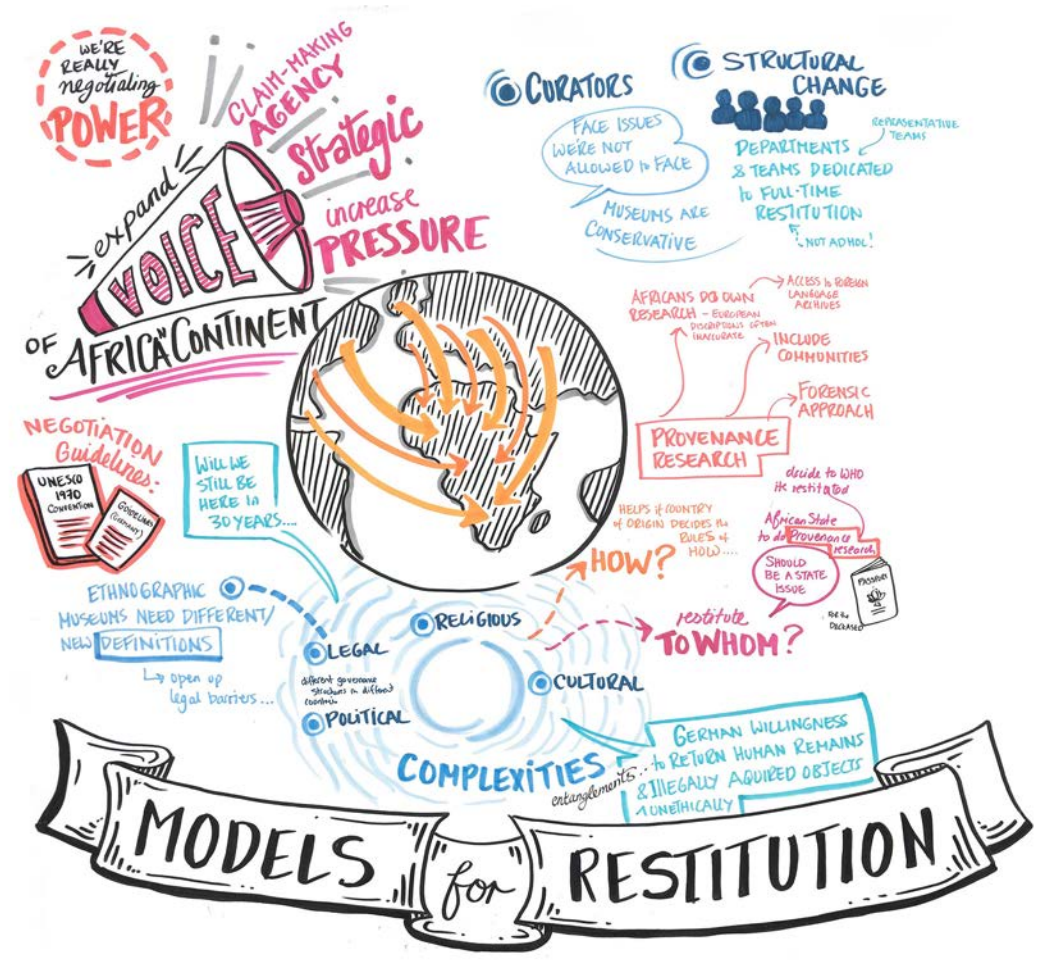
Africa has become the emerging artists’ space as many works are only produced on the continent, which also makes the artists and their own context important in the selection of art. Africa and its diversity should not be overlooked and embraced for arts development to make its contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage.



Summary: The Zimbabwe gallery scene and private galleries are significant in the preservation of the local arts scene against influences, such as those from Europe. The gallery is built on the basis of sharing with the community and the culture of collecting local artworks is rife. Africa has become the merging arts scene and is rich in diversity. There is a need to develop networks, have collaborations and share resources in Africa; not monetary resources alone but the human and intellectual resources as well for artists to work and express themselves.

PANEL
MODELS FOR RESTITUTION, LESSONS LEARNED
BY DR. SANDRA FERRACUTI (LINDEN-MUSEUM, GERMANY); PROF. WIEBKE AHRNDT (ÜBER-SEE-MUSEUM, GERMANY); SUZANA SOUSA (INDEPENDENT CURATOR, ANGOLA) & NZILA MARINA MUBUSISI (NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAMIBIA)

This discussion evolved around Namibia's restitution process, with a departure point of the whip and bible of Hendrik Witbooi, and other restitution claims. The process of restitution is complicated in Germany since it includes legalities and policies that require federal approval, while the artefacts are considered as the property of whichever federal State they are in. Some artefacts are also contained in private collections. Namibia is simpler in that only Namibia's ambassador to Germany, a representative of the arts and culture ministry, one of the National Museum, and one of the Cabinet of Ministers are involved in the process. The different levels of conversation detach politics from the process but despite this, it is important to note that most African governments do not have policies and laws for the direct regulation of this process and very often, the process of restitution is done according to the European laws.



The Angolan experience by Sousa: The process begins by tracking items from the official museum archives before encountering issues of methodology, which summons the involvement of governments that have said negotiations will occur according to in-place signatories to conventions. Restitution has occurred with no unpleasant interference from the governments.

Prof. Wiebke Ahrndt noted that every government should have its own solutions to challenges and take ownership of this process. Collections are public property in Germany. The government, due to the Nazi past, owns few museums. Most such institutions are independent. This process is fast in terms of approval and the politicians in power are generally in favour of restitution. Speaking from experience as the former co-chair of the German Museum Association, she said the association provides

guidelines on the restitution of human remains and colonial artefacts. These documents provide information on topics including the sensitivity and handling of objects. Reviews are welcome and the documents are not a blueprint. African States are responding to this, which indicates an imbalance that needs to be addressed.

How were these objects obtained and who owns them? The State should be the key actor for African countries. The global perspective is that artefacts/human remains cannot belong to the State but to the community that is aggrieved. The return of human remains is based on circumstances and there are exemptions. If it is a clear-cut case, the objects are returned according to Germany. "We are talking about colonial legacies and it should be addressed. The significant research needs to be done about the country of origins." Access

to the inventories available to see how objects were acquired remains a challenge for African governments and professionals. Challenges faced by Namibia include language barriers and little information on the objects, as persons involved in the process are not proficient in German. In general, objects in German museums very often have very little information - lack of narrative - such the bow from Tanzania that has the cultural meaning and symbolism of victory. German officials are of the opinion that African States must conduct their own research on the origin and meaning of artefacts - including human remains - to establish a narrative of something that was in some cases forcefully removed or stolen from the community of origin. Namibia lacks an agency - a multi-lateral institution - for making claims and political will is needed.



Summary: The involvement of African governments in the complex process of restitution is crucial to overcome challenges brought by the private and community ownership of African artefacts in German collections. While Germany has guidelines for the process of restitution and most federal States are in favour of the process, Namibia's lack of laws and policies and the language barrier of inventories in German makes the process complicated. Very often, objects in European states also lack narrative, which brings other challenges for the African States and aggrieved communities. African States should be included in the formulation of European policies on restitution.

NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

CO-CURATORSHIP AND COMMUNITY CURATORSHIP

BY NJABULO CHIPANGURA (MUTARE MUSEUM, ZIMBABWE)

This lecture examined the colonial practices of acquiring objects from African communities, the conventional methodologies of museums and how new museums in Africa are adopting methodologies different to those of conventional museums that originate from Europe. Chipangura opened the lecture by relating to how traditional objects were during the colonial period taken away from a community and placed in a museum without consent or understanding the cultural value of the object. Museums in Africa are now reconfiguring themselves to involve communities for access to information and understanding the cultural value of objects.

Example: The Mutare Museum in Eastern Zimbabwe during 2016 reorganised ethnographic objects understood according to conventional museology practices that reinforce the colonial gaze. During the

process, traditional drums were reconfigured and ascribed new meanings derived from every-day use in a contemporary community. New musicology concepts and co-curatorship were used in integrating multiple perspectives from the Hwesa community on the socio-cultural uses of traditional drums that were previously treated as mute objects. Collaboration with the community in reorganising drums was embraced in decolonizing the museum practice and space.

Discussions: Much like in other museums and countries, artefacts are removed from communities without any biography or narrative, which results in the object having no connection with its socio-cultural purposes and use. Adopting a methodology of community involvement can surface underlying narratives of objects such as rituals. **The collaborative approach is deemed**

to render professional curators as mere facilitators in capturing and documenting rituals and traditions. This is in contrast to using authoritarian means to ascribe a biography to the objects. Therefore, the drums found in the museum had their narrative directed by members of the communities. This was achieved through activities including dances in relation to their cultural meanings, which had curators, viewers and community members understand the meaning and purpose of the drums as a cultural artefact and heritage.



Summary: Co-curatorship allows communities to be a part of museums and provide them with the opportunity to add a biography to their objects that have the potential to communicate more about the community and its way of life. Dialogue and involvement of the communities generates more accurate narratives and has communities appreciate their cultural heritage as communicated by the objects in the museum. The curator is almost dead and then functions as a mere facilitator of discussions as demonstrated by the Mutare Museum in Zimbabwe that in 2016 reorganised ethnographical objects and engaged with communities to obtain members' contributions to the museum's content that communicates a lot about their way of life.



GROUP WORK

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITIES

BY PROF. ALINAH SEGOPYE (NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY)

Alinah Segobye posed a simple question to the audience before elaborating: What is a community? The concept of a community has a lot to do with the engagement of the people and the authorities. Engagement generally refers to the State that makes decisions and then informs the community. Example: there shall be a museum and we shall determine our cultural heritage. This has manifested as people buying into the preconceived idea that resulted from making a decision. However, the people of a community should be where such dialogue begins and be more involved in making those decisions.

Discussion began with acknowledging that Africa is not unique because other parts of the world were also colonized. Therefore, colonisation is not unique to Africa and the lack of the authorities engaging with communities when making decisions is not unique to Africa. There is a need for a paradigm shift and how people in positions of authority understand their roles. The roles of communities regarding museums should be confronted in comparison to heritage

practitioners/people in the museology profession. Questions such as: Who works for who? should be raised and answered. Should the communities co-curate with the heritage practitioners, or simply be a source of information for heritage practitioners, and not be a part of the process? It is felt that communities should rather be part of the museum and part of the processes in a museum. They should talk more about the objects/ideas since they are the communities where the objects and knowledge come from; they know better than practitioners who are just packers of knowledge/objects.

Discussion confronted the term 'community' in terms of its meaning and who defines a community as different people define it differently. Should someone else define a community as a group of people, or should a group define themselves as a community? Where should the line be drawn? The people need to have a specific value in a specific context in order to adequately define themselves as a community. When defining a community, there will most likely be conflict so is it worthwhile

to define a community? Communities have rejected a definition imposed on them such as in museums and other institutions, and redefined themselves. Defining a community should be an active conversation between members, including institutions such as museums that preserve and community objects that define an identity.

Summary: Communities are not easily defined but must play a huge and inclusive role in a museum. They should be a part of the museum; more than a source of information; with full contribution to it as the custodians of the exhibitions within, and not that the museum is a piece of hardware placed within the community.



LECTURE

HUMBOLDT FORUM: INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION

BY LAVINIA FREY & LARS-CHRISTIAN KOCH (GERMANY)

Lavinia and Lars discussed the importance of cooperation in putting together cultural projects for the benefit of all people. The Humboldt Forum has set off as one of Germany's largest cultural projects and is even before its actual opening, in the focus of attention to a national and an international public. More than 20 000 exhibits from Asia, Africa, the Americas and Oceania are the core of the Humboldt Forum's programme. The lecture gave insights into the current status of the conceptual and programmatic planning.

In September 2020, the Humboldt Forum will open as a unique place of experience, learning and encountering in the heart of Berlin. Inspired by Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, the fundamentals of its concept and work are inter and trans-disciplinarily, transculturally, international cooperation and the merge of three components: exhibitions, events, and outreach.

This forum will be a platform for the display of different cultures, historical and contemporary cultures. It aims to celebrate

and demonstrate interconnections between history and cultures across countries and continents, and connection and relation of activities across cultures, traditions, practices, countries and continents. This provides information on various activities and how they are connected to each other, such as slave trade, Asian movements, culture, dance and music, and how these establish possible connections between continents.

The museum is busy with several exhibitions from around the world and is aiming to achieve youth involvement through discussions that provide a platform for shared knowledge that can be accessed by anyone. This means that the Humboldt Forum brings different people together to talk about their issues, such as colonialism and post-colonialism. There is liaison and cooperation between the Humboldt Forum and the different countries that are the sources of the exhibits, and collections are handled in a sensitive way.

The post-presentation discussion covered the full involvement of communities from where the collections originate. While others are discussing restitution of particular items, this forum allows exhibitions from all over the world because cooperation on the exhibition of global histories together is important to understand the connections. Communities not happy with the exhibition of their cultural artefacts are at liberty to re-claim.



Summary: The Humboldt Forum will be traveling around the world with exhibitions from almost anywhere in Asia, Africa, Europe, Americas and Oceania to demonstrate the interconnectedness of countries' history and cultures through the components of events, exhibitions and outreach. The countries of origin and communities are involved in the project, not only as sources of information but also through discussions of issues such as colonialism and post-colonialism. The forum brings different people together and objects of the forum may be reclaimed if owners are not comfortable with the display of their artefacts.



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

PRIVATELY FUNDED MUSEUM ABOUT SOMALILAND

BY SAEED HUSSEIN (SARYAN MUSEUM, SOMALILAND)

Mr. Hussein provided a presentation about establishing a museum in Somaliland and the challenges faced in the process. Somaliland was under colonial British rule from 1884 to 1960, which was followed by a military rule from 1960 - 1991. After years of experience in international operations of the United Nations and its agencies, Hussein took it upon himself to establish the Saryan Museum after an agreement with the government. The museum, as an example of new museum, employs concepts of representation that override the colonial gaze and embraces community engagement as means of obtaining information.

The Saryan Museum is referred to as Somaliland's Heritage because it captures most of the country's history, including the wars and genocide that ravaged Somaliland. There was initially no funding to build this museum and lack of interest from the Somali government. The government, at the time of the museum's establishment in 2017, had several other issues of 'more national importance' to allocate a budget for the museum. This, coupled with pressure after the war - including pirates - made prioritizing the museum impossible.

Someone other than the government had to take the initiative and spearhead the museum project. This led to the intervention by Saeed Hussein, who collected hundreds of thousands of objects of cultural significance and heritage. Hussein explained how he continues to champion the objectives of the museum, despite limited funding, through collaborations and assistance from other institutions. The importance of this museum is highlighted by the vast loss of cultural artefacts from Somaliland during the colonial period and civil war, both periods during which the involvement of

communities in the sale and export of artefacts did not exist.

Through events such as Museum Conversations 2019, several things can be achieved and lessons taught by counterparts to address the challenges experienced by the museum: community engagement, government support, funding and repatriation. The rich history of Somaliland needs to be preserved: objects of historical and cultural significance, such as dress, need to be part of collections because cultural practices are dying. Demonstrations of cultural bearing by individuals are no longer common and artefacts are beginning to lose their cultural value and meaning. The objects in a museum - without a caption, documentation and preservation - would thus have no meaning and history would be lost.

Discussion after Hussein's presentation evolved around the story of the Somaliland capital, Hargeisa, that was destroyed by the government with artillery and aviation equipment bought from Asian countries during the civil war. Situated in a valley of the Galgodon Highlands (Ogo Mountains), the capital is home to rock art from the Neolithic period and is also the hub for businesses in the areas of precious stone cutting, construction, retail and general trading; all that have been part of the people's history. The people of Hargeisa have rebuilt the city but mostly without being aware of its historical importance.

Summary: History, cultural heritage and language are the cornerstones of the Saryan Museum that recently expanded to include a library that functions in the interest of also preserving intangible cultural heritage such as language. Hard work and dedication, not by the government but by members of the community, have played the biggest role in the development of a museum with limited funding and almost no political support. Community involvement is at the forefront of the museum that is constantly seeking collaborations and cooperation with other institutions to learn and overcome challenges. The museum is not complete and in need of assistance to preserve the cultural heritage of Somaliland, some of which was lost with artefacts during the civil war.



NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

A SPIRAL JOURNEY; THE MAKING OF LESOTHO NATIONAL MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

BY JONATHAN WEINBERG (LEAD PROJECT MANAGER DIJONDESIGN, LESOTHO)

Jonathan began by taking the audience on a virtual tour of Lesotho and its rich history, will hopefully be effectively represented by a national museum that involved a lot of community engagement in the processes of construction and selection of content. Other methodologies of conventional museology will also be challenged. Being a relatively small country, Lesotho is landlocked within South Africa and largely dependent on the latter. Maseru is the capital and boasts a low level of poverty. Unofficially, the SADC state has a population of about 3 million. Sesotho and English are the official languages. Lesotho is referred to as the “Kingdom in the Sky” because it is about 4,500m above sea level. There is a UNESCO world heritage site in Lesotho – the Maloti Drakensberg Park - known for its biodiversity and the highest density of pristine rock art in Africa that is 800 - 1000 years old. In 2000, government passed the Museums Act, which resulted in the formation of a consortium to build the first National Museum and Art Gallery of Lesotho. Architects were awarded to design the museum in 2017.

The project brief: Currently nearing completion, the circular building is opposite the Royal Palace (Maseru). The ground floor will house mostly artefacts and information on the country’s social history, while the top floor will focus on natural history and performance spaces will be arranged in between. **Stakeholder consultation has been absolutely critical on how this project is to unfold differently than others.** The social history section is envisaged to start in the present and not in the past as expected in most museums. The intention is to have

the audience enter the building from a current perspective and not a historical one. In addition, the museum has invested a lot in its presence on social media to connect with particularly the youth of Lesotho.

Other key narratives to be told by the museum include the making of Lesotho, the arts of Lesotho, and the kingdom’s garden. Over 25,000 heritage sites have already been identified through archaeological and paleontological excursions. Negotiations with the British Museum for the restitution of objects with great cultural and historical heritage to Lesotho are in progress. In particular, The King Moshoeshoe Collection is of a high priority.



Summary: Lesotho, with rich social and natural history as one of Africa’s kingdoms, is close to completing construction of the National Museum and Art Gallery that has embraced approaches different to conventional museums in a post-colonial Africa. Consulting with stakeholders such as communities directly and involving the youth of Lesotho through social media has been of high importance. Despite the optimism and community engagement, challenges remain in negotiating the restitution of objects from a former coloniser – Britain - as is with almost any other African country and its former coloniser. Officials from Paris are also engaging on the topic of cultural artefacts’ restitution to Lesotho.

NEW MUSEUM APPROACHES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

SELF-FILLING EXHIBITION OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

BY LAURA DE FRANCISCO CAMPILLO (SPAIN/SIERRA LEONE)

In her presentation, Laura de Francisco highlighted the power of images and how a street-art project showcased Sierra Leone’s high religious tolerance to the world. In an environment scarce of resources, a wall in a busy street was the perfect platform for artistic performance because it is a place open to everybody and where conversations could take place. The project is an example of how art can function as a medium of communication, particularly concerning sensitive topics.

The project wants to share the country’s spirit of an inter-faith community of which about 60% are Muslim and 40% Christian but they collectively distance themselves from the world’s perception of Sierra Leone that is based on images from the civil war and the Ebola pandemic. This collective consciousness is a positive aspect of that society and the project aims to reflect that. This project was put in place by Affixed Productions and with the support of the mayor of Freetown, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, and world-renowned artist Vhils.

One mural features an image of two siblings, Paul & Alfreda, of which one is Muslim and the other Christian. They school in one of the communities where the We Yone Child Foundation is working to improve the lives of vulnerable children through education and empowering their families. While in Freetown, Vhils conducted art workshops at schools that tend to lack artistic and creative classes.

Primary school children from the communities involved in the Yone Child

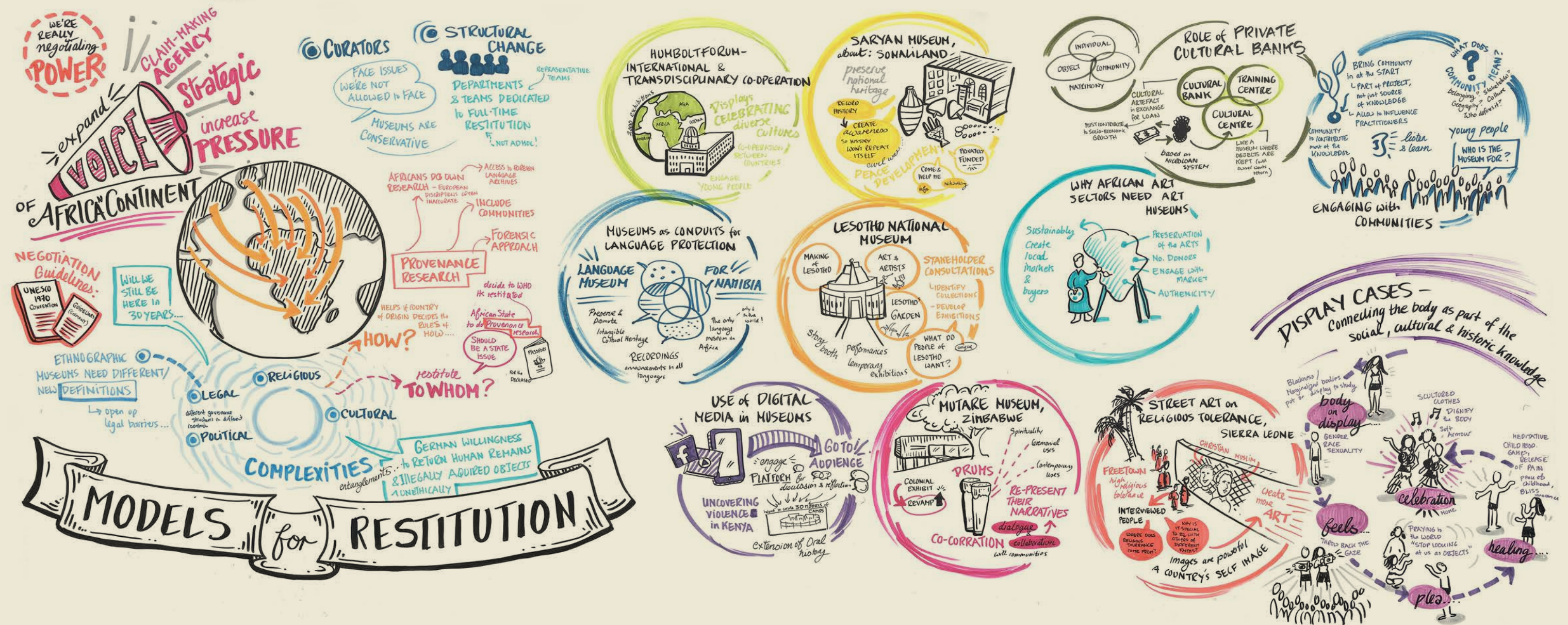
Foundation answered questions including: What is the best thing about spending time with people from different religions? Those answers were used to inspire fourth year arts students to continue painting murals on the wall to achieve a dynamic and inclusive wall produced by a mix of local and international artists.

The project is ongoing and each year will have a different theme that evolves around the concepts of togetherness and human rights. The youth are encouraged to see themselves and act as project leaders for them to be empowered. The long-term goal of this project is to have an annual music, street-art, skateboard, surf, film and dance festival in Freetown for the city to become an artistic hub.



Summary: The power of images and the use of art in public spaces as a medium of communication cannot be underestimated and have a lot of potential in transforming communities. A mural project in Freetown by a non-governmental organisation and artists has inspired the local youth to be agents and lead projects that would hopefully result in an annual multidisciplinary arts festival that could have the capital city be recognised as an artist hub. The murals by local and international artists were inspired by the answers of primary school learners on topics including the city’s diverse religious community that have put efforts themselves to live in harmony as faithful Muslims and Christians.

MUSEUM CONVERSATIONS 2019 | DAY 3





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