

# DECOLONIZING MUSEUMS AND COLONIAL COLLECTIONS

TOWARDS A  
TRANSDISCIPLINARY  
AGENDA AND METHODS

TRANSNATIONAL  
MATERIALITIES

IN2PAST  
PATRIMÔNIO | ARTE | SUSTENTABILIDADE | TERRITÓRIO

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ  
MUSEU MUNICIPAL  
SANTOS ROCHA



MMSR 22-F-170

TRANSMAT | IN2PAST CONFERENCE  
12 \_ 14 MARCH 2025  
BOOK OF ABSTRACTS  
LIVRO DE RESUMOS

## FRONT DESK

8h30

12  
MAR  
2025  
DAY 1

## OPENING

9h > 10h

*Secretary of State for Culture*

### ANTÓNIO CANDEIAS

*IN2PAST – Associate Laboratory for Research and Innovation in  
Heritage, Arts, Sustainability and Territory*

### ELISABETE PEREIRA

*TRANSMAT/IN2PAST, NOVA University of Lisbon/University of Évora*

### ROBERT TENDAI NYAMUSHOSHO

*Queens College, City University of New York*

### LENNON MHISHI

*University of British Columbia, Canada;  
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford – University/UK*

### MARÍLIA XAVIER CURY

*Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia, University of São Paulo*

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

10h > 11h

---

***TheMuseumsLab: Shaping the Future of Museums  
through international Collaboration***

### MERYEM KORUN

*Head of TheMuseumsLab at Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin*

**ABSTRACT** TheMuseumsLab is a pioneering platform designed to foster continuous learning, unlearning, networking, and career development among African and European museum professionals. Since its inception in 2021, the programme has been dedicated to building

connections across individuals, institutions, and nations, driving critical conversations on decolonization, provenance research, digitization, and the ethical reappraisal of colonial histories in museums.

By facilitating engaged discourse on the evolving role of museums in addressing global challenges, TheMuseumsLab contributes to shaping a more equitable future for the sector. The initiative aligns with the German Government's commitment to reevaluating colonial continuities and forging new models of international cooperation.

In this keynote, Meryem Korun, Head of TheMuseumsLab, will offer an insider's perspective on the programme's development, highlighting the complexities of engaging in inter-institutional, and intercultural collaborations. She will share lessons learned from navigating unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, technical crises, budget constraints, and cyber threats. This session will provide a thought-provoking reflection on the resilience, adaptability, and vision required to sustain meaningful collaboration in the museum sector today.

**KEYWORDS** *COVID-19 pandemic, international collaboration, African and European museums.*

## COFFEE BREAK

11h > 11h30

## PANEL 1

11h30 > 13h

---

### *The layered museum: The National Anthropology Museum in Angola*

**SUZANA SOUSA**

*University of the Western Cape, South Africa/Angola*

**ABSTRACT** Due to its location and colonial-style building the National Anthropology Museum in Luanda engages different periods and themes of the national history such as slavery and the late slave trade of Portugal, Portuguese occupation and colonialism, tropical architecture and the geographic and racial divide of the city of Luanda. However, all these layers disappear of the museum displays and are instead replaced by an ethnographic narrative of the recently independent people of Angola through their crafts, music instruments, everyday objects, masks and religious objects. The tension between the ethnographic gaze of the museum displays and the national political discourse that the museum intended to capture

is in no way addressed. Inaugurated to celebrate the first year of independence in 1976, most of its collection belonged to the Dundo Museum although it maintained a research practice until the late 1980's in the field of ethno-history developing a contemporary knowledge production practice.

This paper aims to understand the National Anthropology Museum through the traces that are present in the building, the collection and its museography. How can these gaps be considered as a counter-narrative able to challenge the political choices of the ruling single-party towards nation and national identity at the time of the museum foundation? And also, What's the place of the museum in the nation-building process taking place after independence. What kind of knowledge this museum has to generate in order to decolonize?

**KEYWORDS** *Anthropology museum, Angola, Colonial museums, Africa museums.*

---

## **Museums to Sustain Life: Scope and Limits of Co-Creation Grants for Community Peers and Co-Learning Spaces, from the Community Mediation Team of the Museums Foundation of the City in Quito, Ecuador**

**DANIELA CARVAJAL & ADRIANA COLOMA**

*Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, Lusophone University of Portugal/  
Portugal/Ecuador*

**ABSTRACT** This article presents an analysis of the project “Co-Creation Scholarships for Community Peers and Co-Learning Spaces”, carried out in 2024 by the Public Space and Community Mediation Department team of Fundación Museos de la Ciudad in Quito, Ecuador. This public call included financial incentives and the creation of an educational space, based on premises that challenge the traditional practices of museums and their participatory policies.

From a situated qualitative perspective, the study is based on the analysis of internal and public documentation (website and social media) from Fundación Museos de la Ciudad and on field notes derived from participant observations.

We argue that the “Co-Creation Scholarships for Community Peers and Co-Learning Spaces” project and its educational program challenge the epistemological foundations upon which museum institutions have been established, incorporating affectivity as a central dimension.

In dialogue with the analytical category of “generative bodies” by Primo and Moutinho (2023), we demonstrate that the subjects-bodies — in this case, the community actors of the scholarship program — are capable, through their own agency, of challenging and demanding from

the museum institution, as a knowledge producer, the redesign of its actions and the reorientation of its policies toward a territorial and decentralized perspective.

In summary, this research pushes us to think more critically and deeply about museums' participatory discourses, the welfare-oriented communalism inherent in many such proposals, and to place in debate the tensions between monetary economies, the sustainability of life, and the voluntary nature of community time.

**KEYWORDS** *Generative bodies, decoloniality, collaborative economies, popular education, community mediation.*

---

## **Collaborative research Portugal-Brazil: Collections, circulation and renewal of knowledge at the Santos Rocha Municipal Museum**

**ELISABETE PEREIRA, MARIA FIGUEIRA, JORGE RIVERA, MARÍLIA XAVIER CURY, KEVIN COCCHI, LETÍCIA SILVA**

*Projecto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

**ABSTRACT** Between 1893 and 1910, António dos Santos Rocha (1853-1910) gathered a collection of 1427 objects of transnational origin in a particular section of his archeology museum. The *Comparison Room* included mostly cultural objects from non-European peoples of around the world wrongly thought to share common traits and comparative material productions with those of prehistoric man. As part of this collection, 242 objects original from Brazil entered the museum. The Brazil collection, kept in the ethnographic storage of the museum, remained undisturbed, untouched and broadly understudied, mainly reflecting the ideas pinned by the museum founder in the end of the XIX century, exposing the life-long knowledge building hierarchies in museums.

How did these objects end up in Portugal? Who brought them? Why were they displaced from their place of origin? What role did they play in the museum collections at different stages? What values and meanings have been assigned to them over time? The Transmat Project sought to document the circulation of this collection, identifying the web of actors connected with the acquisition of objects and production of cultural knowledge in the museum, exploring artifacts such as Marajoara ceramics. For instance, fragments identified as generic ceramics were reclassified as ceremonial artifacts, including a Marajoara tanga from the Camutins group. Other findings include corrections of provenance, such as the Xingu River, previously misattributed to the state of Amazonas, and insights into indigenous craftsmanship based on historical traveler accounts.

A collaborative provenance research approach developed between the University of Évora (Portugal) and the University of São Paulo (Brazil), provided a deeper understanding of some of these object's stories. This research also emphasized the dynamics of the collection, highlighting connections of some collectors with Brazil and the historical interactions between Portuguese actors and the indigenous groups who produced these objects, ultimately reflecting on their hidden meanings and the new questions raised by confronting this history.

**KEYWORDS** *Collaborative provenance research, Archeology museums, History of collections, Museology, Object biography.*

**LUNCH**  
13h > 14h30

## **PANEL 2**

14h30 > 16h10

---

### ***Heritage education and governments missing links in the restitution, repatriation and reparation agenda in the third world countries***

**KIIZA WILSON**

*Founder and Executive director of Bugungu Heritage and Information Centre, Uganda*

**ABSTRACT** The debate on restitution, repatriations and reparation is gaining momentum across the globe; from the tribal peoples in Australia, to the Latin America, and Africa with different level of success.

Recently, we held a workshop restitution in Kampala, Uganda that brought together the players from the communities which lost their artifacts, the governmental officials from the ministry of culture, academics, media, and the Civil Society Organisations in order to have a comprehensive debate on which role each player can play in the restitution, reparation, and repatriation. We acknowledge that only one player can not succeed in this agenda alone.

The level of success in achieving restitution, repatriation and reparation has been directly dependent on the collaboration efforts of the different players; the community of origin, the state, the activists and the civil societies, and the cooperation of the museums/governments possessing the items in the Western countries.

In my article, I will be arguing that, when only one actor is involved in these processes, there are high chances that the restitution, repatriation and reparation agenda will not be achieved. I will draw my examples from the Kenyan government's (Kenya Revenue Authority)

lack of cooperation in the efforts to repatriate vigango among the Mijikenda and in Uganda, Bunyoro's failed efforts to get reparation from the British government for the untold injustices they committed on the Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom (BKK) due to the fact that it was a civil society (Bunyoro Kitara Reparation Agency) without involving the other key stakeholders like the BKK and the government.

I will be also expounding on the fact that, these topics need to find their way into the education syllabus/system, not only in the social sciences, but also in the sciences, so as create an awareness on the loss caused by the dememorizing efforts such as the change of the instruments of power from artifacts to the bibles and Quoran, the Constitutions, the foreign religious institutions. This has led to the generation that is delinked from their cultural heritage to the extent that topics such as restitution, repatriation and reparation doesn't make sense to them and some will have reasoning like *where will such things be kept upon return, and you are bringing back evil spirits that the royals had.*

**KEYWORDS** Cooperation, Education, Kenya, Uganda, museums.

---

## ***Between Carnations: The apology that Portugal still owes Angola and reconciliation with the past in a world marked by power imbalances***

**MARTA COELHO**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal*

**ABSTRACT** The end of the colonial era ushered in a period of introspection for the former colonial powers, which embarked on a path of reconciliation, recognising the injustices of the past and seeking to repair them. However, despite these efforts, the legacy of colonialism continues to shape contemporary global dynamics, manifesting itself in systemic inequalities and persistent power imbalances.

This text aims to explore the complexities of post-colonial reconciliation, with a focus on the relationship between Portugal and Angola. Despite attempts at reconciliation, such as apologies and restitution efforts, the official Portuguese narrative often obscures the injustices of colonialism, perpetuating the idea of lusotropicalism as a "softer" form of colonisation.

At the same time, selective non-memory prevents a full debate on past atrocities, such as slavery and forced labour, and perpetuates colonial mentalities in Portuguese society. In addition, neo-colonialism continues to exert influence and control over the former colonies, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and dependency.

In order to carry out these reflections, an extensive academic review will be carried out focusing on the works of Elsa Peralta, who is one of the Portuguese names that has done the most work on the colonial issues that haunt the present of Portuguese experience - emphasising the concept of non-memories and how the thesis of lusotropicalism, postulated by Gilberto Freyre, still echoes in political and colloquial discourses. To complement the ideas presented, case studies of discourses and media interventions that reinforce the power dynamics between Portugal and Angola that are still present today will also be discussed. Other authors of relevance to the theme are Weber and Foucault, more precisely with regard to their different understandings of power and its propagation.

Genuine decolonisation requires dismantling entrenched power structures and confronting historical amnesia. Amplifying Angolan voices and challenging Eurocentric narratives in cultural institutions is crucial to achieving a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the colonial experience, and the future demands a commitment to decolonisation, building fairer and more equitable cities where the legacies of colonialism do not determine the fate of future generations - studies such as this one, which explore the post-colonial dynamics between the colonising country and the colonised, are essential for broadening the dialogue and seeking to understand what actions need to be taken to begin dismantling the agencies of power present in neo-colonialism.

**KEYWORDS** *Portuguese Empire, Lusotropicalism, Power Dynamics, Non-Memory, Neo-colonialism.*

---

## ***An auto-ethnographic account of decolonised museum solidarities in the Global South & North***

**NJABULO CHIPANGURA**

*Manchester Museum, UK*

**ABSTRACT** This paper looks at empirical meanings of solidarity in museum practices based on an auto-ethnographic account of my curatorial experiences in the Global South and Global North. Museums in Africa as part of the global south were established during the colonial period and are grappling with problematic representations of cultures of the 'other' that are still exhibited as static, lifeless, and timeless way after political independence. It is against this background that I will draw on my positionality as a Curator of Archaeology at Mutare Museum in Zimbabwe between 2009 - 2021 to show how we deployed participatory democracies with originating communities in co-developing new meanings on a collection of living cultures looted without adequate biographical information at the height of colonisation.



The subsequent collaborative research resulted in the co-curation of an exhibition called “Traditional Aspects of the Eastern Shona” in 2016 at Mutare museum which I will critically examine in view of what decolonised community solidarities mean in an African context. Ultimately, the chapter will attempt to juxtapose different kinds of museum solidarity work by looking at the African collections provenance research that I have been undertaking since my appointment as Curator of Living Cultures at Manchester Museum in 2021.

**KEYWORDS** *Decolonial “Care”, Curatorial Humility, Inclusion, Global North & South, Collecting practices.*

---

## ***The Empty Showcase Syndrome – The toughest questions about colonial collections and restitution***

**JOS VAN BEURDEN**

*Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

**ABSTRACT** In most European countries, discussions on the return of objects, ancestral remains and archives taken from colonial territories have been ongoing for several years, while some restitutions have been done. At the same time, many former colonies are becoming increasingly explicit in their desire to recover pieces. And yet, the restitution process is making only slow progress. Why is this? This paper discerns three factors.

The first is the drive in the global north to hold on to pieces and to remain in charge of provenance research programs and the restitution process. The second factor is the friction in former colonies that arises when pieces are returned: will they go to the national museum in the capital, or will they go back to the community of origin or the former principality that once lost them? The third is the narrow focus in the restitution discussion on public collections. Inclusion of disputable collections in the art trade and among private collectors is avoided.

This paper makes clear why these factors can only be analyzed with a transdisciplinary approach. An analysis requires input from museum professionals, academics, investigative journalists as well as provenance communities. It requires study through the prism of a multitude of disciplines, even beyond the scope of science itself and of material and immaterial sources from both areas. The paper concludes that such study can only succeed if the global south is given a much greater say in the whole restitution process.

**KEYWORDS** *Decolonisation, provenance research, art dealers, minorities.*

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

16h30 > 17h30

---

### *The Museum of Babel: Metacolonial Curating the Metamuseum Age*

**MARK THURNER**

FLACSO-Ecuador/University of London/University of Florida

**ABSTRACT** If, as Walter Benjamin suggested in the *Arcades Project*, the ‘specific architectural problem’ of the nineteenth century was the museum ‘with its regressive tendency to allow itself to be saturated with the past,’ *the specific museographic possibility of the twenty first century is the museum’s progressive tendency to allow itself to be saturated with its own past.* This specific possibility – our opening —is born of a lingering crisis in the historicist regime that characterized the Museum Age, and by the revival of 200-year-old debates about ‘repatriation’ and ‘decolonization.’

In *The Museum’s Ruins*, Douglas Crimp argued that the modern history of museography was ‘a history of the various attempts to deny the heterogeneity of the museum.’ However, over the last decades we have witnessed a curatorial return to the museum’s ruined or stored heterogeneity. This curatorial movement, which I call *the metahistorical turn in museography*, has advanced under the twin banners of the ‘return of the object’ and ‘return of the subject.’ As a critical and productive return to museography’s own ruins, this ‘turn’ is surely ambivalent. On the one hand, ‘traditional’ or ‘age-old’ museums are now ‘renewed’ and popular again. On the other hand, as Crimp grimly noted, these same museums are increasingly ‘incapable of representing anything at all.’ My contention is that Crimp’s biting critique invites another, more productive if melancholy reading: namely, *that the museum’s true vocation is to fail to represent anything other than itself.*

This failure is a blessing in disguise. Principal among the blessings is the productive, archaeological realization that museums mirror not the world but themselves. In a word: *the museum’s true vocation is to be a museum of itself, or metamuseum.* This realization radically shifts the true target of any effort to ‘decolonize’ the museum. Another, related blessing in disguise is the unleashing of unruly object and display histories made and remade within the museum’s walls. These inner metahistories of materiality, provenance, plunder, displacement, and forgetting are poised in storage, waiting for the curator’s touch to leap through

like animated *trompe l'oeil*. These histories can, if properly curated, interrupt the museum's narrative and even 'stop it in its tracks.' When this happens, the museum becomes a heterotopic reservoir, equipped both to decolonize itself and inform current 'decolonial' debates, which frequently lack historical and material depth. In short, I argue that the metahistorical turn in museography decolonizes decolonization, and that it has been doing so for a long time. In this talk I illustrate my contentions with examples drawn from museums across Europe and the Americas.

**KEYWORDS** *Metamuseum, Metahistory, Heterotopia, Babel, Decolonisation.*

## **INAUGURATION OF THE EXHIBITION**

*Facing colonial legacy in the Museum*

**18h**

## **CONFERENCE DINNER**

**20h**

**CLOSING DAY 1**

**FRONT DESK**

8h30

13  
MAR  
2025  
DAY 2

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

9h > 10h

---

***Nation, People, and Territory in a Collection of  
“Popular” Material Culture: Rethinking Paradigms***

**DAVID WILLIAM APARECIDO RIBEIRO**

*Paulista Museum, University of São Paulo, Brazil*

**ABSTRACT** The Museu Paulista, inaugurated in 1895, originally followed the encyclopedic model typical of 19th-century museums. Its diverse collection spanned botany, zoology, archaeology, history, arts, and ethnography, establishing it as a key scientific institution for studying and disseminating knowledge about Brazil and its people. Over time, the museum shifted its focus to the history of Brazil, emphasizing a regional perspective that underscored São Paulo’s pivotal role in shaping the nation. In line with these objectives and driven by a desire to document the ways of life of rural populations — predominantly non-white communities perceived as vanishing in the face of “progress” — the museum began assembling the *Sertaneja* collection. Inspired by the model of the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro, this collection, developed primarily between the 1920s and 1950s, comprises over 900 objects reflecting a wide variety of origins, uses, and typologies. Key elements of the *Sertaneja* collection include objects from Afro-Brazilian religious practices seized by police forces, artifacts linked to festivals in São Paulo state collected by folklorist Alceu Maynard Araújo, and a diverse array of items associated with work and leisure. This heterogeneous assemblage offers invaluable insights into the cultural practices and material lives of Brazil’s rural populations. This conference seeks to present the guiding principles behind ongoing research into these objects, their creators, their origins, and their institutional trajectories. We argue that studying this collection can reveal alternative paradigms of nation, people, and territory, challenging colonial narratives that have historically suppressed or “frozen” their multiple meanings.

**KEYWORDS** *Brazil, material culture, popular culture, ethnographic collections, university museum.*

# PANEL 3

10h > 11h40

---

## *Decolonizing Academia: The Case of Coimbra's Cabinet of Curiosities*

**PEDRO GONÇALVES**

*University of Coimbra, Portugal*

**ABSTRACT** Museums and cabinets of curiosities were designed to preserve the multitude of objects withdrawn from colonial communities. The perverse portrayal of these objects was directly associated with power and prestige by the European elite that sponsored imperial assaults on local tribes to impose their political dominance. Such spaces integrated a vast array of exploitation of indigenous objects, from religious symbols to handicraft possessions that visually represented the collective identity of ethnic groups.

In a period of national discussion about the colonial past, academia, of all spaces, has the duty to bolster this discussion by opening platforms for reflection on the colonial violence perpetuated by the former Portuguese empire.

Even so, in 2022, the Coimbra Museum of Science, under the domain of the University of Coimbra, opened the so-called Cabinet of Curiosities, a phantasmagoric space that is supposed to encapsulate the bizarre artifacts collected by European explorers in the XVII and XVIII centuries. The cabinet is located in a dark room, full of artificial lights, creating a haunting atmosphere aligned with the strangeness of more than 4,000 objects.

The spectrum of possession ranges from animal skeletons, deformed animal corpses, human skulls from colonial territories, boxed butterflies, an ant-eater, a rat-eater, a donkey with six legs, a dinosaur bone, a magic lantern, or even a tuna fish, right above the canoe that "could" catch it. Thus, the exorbitant collection is horizontally displaced when it comes to dignifying the pieces: human parts are placed on the same pedestal as animal remains, with absolutely no historiographic description or brief contextualization of the period in which the object was acquired. Coimbra's Science Museum Director, Paulo Trincão, asserted that "There are no labels, no captions, not even a logical path. The challenge we present to people visiting this Cabinet is to find the pieces that amaze them the most and then each one to feel the desire to explore more of what they saw, to feel the desire to explore the vast collection of the Science Museum."

This assertion not only undermines the fundamental purpose of museology to provide civil society with a coherent and logically contextualized analysis of the displayed objects but also undermines ongoing discussions about the national aspiration for potential reparations

and/or restitution of objects stolen from local communities. These discussions are essential for concluding the challenging journey of former colonies toward 'self-determination'.

Our presentation will, therefore, deal with the role of academia in the present discussion of reparations for colonial violence, placing serious reliance on Coimbra's Cabinet of Curiosities as a grotesque case of abnormal museological proceedings when it comes to displaying the university's spoil of rare objects.

**KEYWORDS** *Academia, Colonial violence, Cabinet of Curiosities, Reparations, Museological proceedings.*

---

## ***Unearthing the biographies of the Zimbabwe culture collections at the Groote Schuur Museum***

**ROBERT TENDAI NYAMUSHOSHO**

*Queens College, City University of New York, USA*

**ABSTRACT** This study investigates the provenance and historical trajectories of archaeological and ethnographic collections housed at the Groote Schuur Museum. Acquired by Cecil John Rhodes through the Rhodesian Ancient Ruins Limited—an antiquarian enterprise led by Wallace, G. Neal, and Johnson G., and sponsored by Rhodes and the British South African Company between 1895 and 1899—these objects were extracted from archaeological sites across southern Africa in a quest for supposed “treasures.” Drawing on the art historical concept of provenance, and collaboration with Groote Schuur Museum curators, it reconstructs the spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts of these artifacts. By tracing their biographies, it critically reassess their colonial acquisition, reframing them as materials for contemporary academic research, and contributing to broader discussions on the restitution and ethical stewardship of African heritage collections.

**KEYWORDS** *Provenance research, Archeological collections, Zimbabwe, African heritage.*

---

# **(Tr)african(t)s. Museums and Collections in Catalonia in the Face of Coloniality**

**SARAI MARTÍN LÓPEZ**

*Department of Anthropology, University of Barcelona*

**ABSTRACT** In this presentation, the project *(Tr)african(t)s: Museums and Collections of Catalonia in the Face of Coloniality* will be introduced. This initiative, led by the University of Barcelona with the support of the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation, aims to study the provenance and acquisition conditions of objects and collections from the Spanish colonial empire or from African states that, while not part of the empire, maintain a significant postcolonial relationship with Catalonia. These countries include Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, the Philippines, and Nigeria. Using provenance research methodology, the project analyzes some of the most relevant collections in institutions within the public network of museums in Catalonia, in order to lay the groundwork for future reformulations and reinterpretations. Among the institutions studied are the Ethnological and World Cultures Museum of Barcelona, the Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona, the Víctor Balaguer Museum Library of Vilanova i la Geltrú, the Darder Museum of Banyoles, and the Anoia Leather Regional Museum and the Regional Museum of Igualada.

*(Tr)african(t)s* represents one of the first efforts to comprehensively study colonial collections within the Spanish and Catalan contexts, developing research methodologies and participation strategies, proposals for museological interventions, and knowledge transfer strategies. In doing so, the research team aims to simultaneously highlight the material and symbolic accumulation processes carried out and concealed by European museums until today, which they are now being forced to reconsider due to political and social pressures at both local and international levels. Specifically, the project is structured around three main action areas: (1) provenance research of collections; (2) the participation of the communities involved in the development of the project; and (3) the dissemination of results through various strategies that allow stakeholders to access this information. This presentation will address the structure of the project, its main findings, and some of the key debates that have emerged throughout its development.

**KEYWORDS** *Museums, colonial collections, decolonization, colonial memory, provenance research.*

---

# *All Eyes on Her! Decolonising collaborative curation for Institutional Change*

**HEBA ABD EL GAWAD & JOHANNA ZETTERSTROM-SHARP**

*University College London, Institute of Archaeology, UK*

**ABSTRACT** There is so much talk about museums, decolonisation, and social justice, but very little that is grounded in the day-to-day work of structural change and how it impacts the communities, activists, and artists who are relied on to implement it through collaborations. It is in this everyday work that relationships can breakdown when expectations are not met, misunderstandings arise, and the inherent inequalities of collaborative work within institutional settings are reinscribed. In this paper, we will critically reflect on what it means in practice to decolonise collaborative curation by sharing our experience working together and with Indigenous communities on All Eyes on Her!

All Eyes on Her! is a community collaborative project part of the AHRC funded [Mobilising Museum Collections for Institutional Change](#) which draws on the archaeological and anthropological Egyptian collection at the Horniman Museum and Gardens. It aims to dismantle the Eurocentrism of how Indigenous cultures are represented and spoken about throughout museum practices from collection database, curation and display to learning workshops and social media management. It does so by centring the everyday resistance of Egyptian women to social, cultural, and political injustices, reclaiming their position in public, and their role in revolutions past and present as an active Indigenous approach to documenting, curating, and displaying colonial collections.

We will transparently reflect on how we attempted in practice to challenge not only the specialists' knowledge of collections that is, usually, prioritised but also some of the engrained structural ways through which museums have historically approached exhibition making and working in partnership. This will be framed through a series of institutional and professional tensions that we have grappled with on our journey together so far and discussed in our podcast series [Only Collections in the Building](#). We explore the structures of practice that limit the possibilities of community led and change oriented work, outlining the importance of disruptive people-centred practice when working through and with these structures. Tensions include questioning embedded notions of institutional generosity, the process and practice surrounding financial transactions, language and mistranslation, and institutional perceptions of risk that does not adequately consider the risk that artists and activists take when engaging with colonial institutions.

**KEYWORDS** *Community-collaborative curation, meaningful partnerships, Indigenous ethics, structural change, relational accountability.*



**PANEL 4**

12h &gt; 13h20

---

**Re-Examining Ethnographic Museum collections and displays. Towards decolonizing Uganda Museum space****CHRISTOPHER SSEBUYUNGO***Uganda National Museum, Makerere University, Uganda*

**ABSTRACT** Although the concept of the ‘museum’ first appeared in Greek and Latin in the fourth century BC, over time, museums came to be part and parcel of European Modernity and the so-called Enlightenment, eventually evolving into temples of education. The new medium of the Museum was to document and showcase what was considered her “tribes”, a practice used in many colonies and protectorates for purposes of colonial dominance. In Uganda, the colonial occupation birthed the Uganda National Museum in 1908, aimed at understanding the societies the British occupied because elsewhere, museums had developed in response to the human need to understand the world through collecting object abstractions of the real world. Accordingly, the collection and display of “tribal” objects in the museum became a way to study the peoples of Uganda; their industry, hunting, livestock, arms, etcetera. Inevitably, ‘special’ commissioner Sir Harry Johnston directed the colonial district commissioners to collect ‘tribal’ tools and objects from 1901 on words. To this effect, collections accumulated and the Museum was officially opened in 1908 at old Kampala before it was moved to Makerere College, the present day Margret Trowel School of Industrial Fine Art at Makerere University, thereafter to its current location in Kitante, as an archival and preservation center of material culture. Over the years, the display has not changed much and, as a result, the Uganda Museum continues misinterpret and misrepresent Ugandan cultural knowledge. This work is revisiting these collections and displays thus presenting an opportunity to rethink the narratives constructed through the colonial lenses a great contribution to the decolonization of the Museum space, consequently untangling the present-day colonial hooks from the museum.

**KEYWORDS** *Museums, cultural heritage, tribal, museum practice, decolonization, colonial dominance.*

---

## **Sacred African objects as regalias: a decolonial approach to restitution**

**MURIELLE SANDRA TIAKO DJOMATCHOUA**

*Department of French and Italian, Princeton University, USA*

**ABSTRACT** In 1902, the Nso palace in Cameroon was ransacked and burned down, and the Queen Mother of the Nso people was looted during this punitive expedition. The statue depicting the Queen Mother and Matriarch, Ngonso, together with Nso paraphernalias and royal material cultures, were desecrated, looted, and displaced to German museums and private collections. Before being displaced to Western museums, Nso material cultures used to be discriminated against the backdrop of their energetic properties. The sacred object total energy is the criteria used to Nso material cultures in the same physical location. Displacing, desecrating, and dispersing Nso heritage culture across Europe during the colonial period, and mainly across German museums, led to the exile of many Nso material cultures. Reconstructing Nso heritage in Germany through a pan-museum action is the mission that the Linden Museum spearheaded in January 2024, in addition to the decision to return 28 Nso objects from their collection. Unfortunately, what this laudable initiative achieve was overshadowing the grassroots activism of the #BringbackNgonso movement that advocates for the return of Ngonso together with the other Nso material cultures that constituted her power ecosystem prior to commander Houben and colonel Kurt von Pavel's punitive expeditions. This advocacy is what motivates the approach this presentation proposes: how can we think of sacred African objects as regalias? And, what will be the implications of this approach to the museum traditions, standards, and conventions? Within the Nso community, there is a radical divide between what is sacred and what is profane. As a consequence, sacred objects are carefully preserved in secret or private areas, or even in open and public spaces that no member of the community dares to access, for fear of profaning or or facing well-known and internalized forms of systematic punishment. This shared cultural understanding defines the traditional custodians and stewards of Nso sacred objects, who have exclusive access to them. However, once these sacred objects entered into the museum world by various means, restituting them imposes decolonizing the knowledge produced on them. In the case of Ngonso, restitutions took two orientations: do we retribute the Ngonso as a single object? Or do we retribute Ngonso as a regalia? Why? And, how?

**KEYWORDS** *Regalia, immaterial knowledge, energy/power ecosystem, profanation/damnation, restitution/repatriation.*

---

## “The museum as a place of unlearning?”

**JULIA ALBRECHT & STEPHANIE ENDTER**

*Weltkulturen Museum, Germany*

**ABSTRACT** This core question of postcolonial museum criticism, which is decidedly political, is also the focus of questions and debates concerning the reorientation of ethnological museums, which have also gained momentum in the German-speaking world in recent years. Within this context, educators have the task of positioning themselves while being aware that they themselves are involved in the institutional power structure. How can the educational work in the museum address its own colonial heritage as well as that of the institution? Can an ethnological museum be a site of unlearning, and if so, how?

In our contribution to the conference, we would like to present a practical example of an ongoing and evolving project in decolonial education at the Weltkulturen Museum. In the workshop “What is that doing here?”\* participants are invited to critically examine the origin and acquisition narratives of individual objects in the museum collection, which are intertwined with the colonial history of Germany. The aim of the workshop is to create the conditions and space for critical, experimental, object-based investigations. It also aims to enable a multi-perspective discussion that situates the objects in a postcolonial context. In so doing, the workshop creates space for questioning: how can established archiving, and knowledge practices be disrupted? How to talk about ownership and restitution of museum objects from colonial contexts? How “logical” does the collection and archiving logic seem? It also seeks to disrupt or perhaps break through potentially linear, curatorial or institutional narratives by questioning which or whose perspectives and stories are missing?

*“If the museum is a place that has emerged from an appropriation of the world from Europe, which is critically examined today, then it can also be a place for unlearning this European view of the world.” (Nora Landkammer, 2018)*

**KEYWORDS** *Denaturalizing dominant narratives, Unlearning, Unearthing hidden narratives, Experimental approach, Open to friction.*

\* The original workshop elements were developed during the TRACES project by Nora Landkammer, Karin Schneider and Julia Albrecht in 2017. Since then it was further developed and adapted. [Weltkulturenmuseum - Projects](#)

**LUNCH**  
13h20 > 15h

## PANEL 5

15h > 16h30

---

### ***Restitution as Process: Provisional Notes on Restitution as Necessary Labour in Reshaping Planetary Relations***

**LENNON MHISHI**

*University of British Columbia, Canada; Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford – University/UK*

**ABSTRACT** What might it look like to fill a cultural and knowledge gap, in the aftermath of centuries of theft and dispossession? Is it enough to fight for the return of African art, of ancestral knowledge, of ancestors; of material culture that sits imprisoned in the elsewhere of museums and other cultural institutions? The answer will always be no, the work of restitution demands more than return. In the words of Ciraj Rassool, the work of restitution in the present is restitutionary work, the task of building different infrastructures to accompany return, not return without building these infrastructures. In other words, return is a necessary, yet insufficient step. If legacy cultural institutions are durational devices, then the task of restitution, is to demand the return of stolen life (if stolen life can be returned at all), to work towards dismantling the colonial present and its attendant cultural subjugations. This is to also argue that restitutionary work must, by necessity, exceed the frameworks and infrastructures of governing culture, and life, that bring the moments of violence and extraction into being. The precise logic of extraction, with all the contradictions therein, is not the logic of restitutionary work, which is why this work will happen away from, outside of, despite, and as a refusal of a normative reformatory impulse that desires the status quo.

**KEYWORDS** *African heritage and life, Restitutionary work, Legacy cultural institutions, Dismantling the colonial present, Infrastructures of governing culture.*

---

### ***Here and There: Colonial Collections, Postcolonial Meanings: The case study of Guinea-Bissau***

**ANA TEMUDO**

*PhD Candidate in Heritage Studies – CITAR/Univ. Católica Portuguesa, Portugal*

**ABSTRACT** This presentation sets out the central research of a doctoral project that seeks to raise a series of reading possibilities about Guinea-Bissau's colonial heritage by recog-

nizing its importance for civil society. Using a transdisciplinary methodology, the research confronts the archival or provenance research of these colonial collections with an ethnographic dimension that serves, in this context, to fill the gaps found in the history of the institutions and in the cultural context under study. With the aim of documenting the past and the present by confronting hegemonic and marginal narratives, this research was based on community engagement and was carried out with the participation of Guineans living in Guinea-Bissau and in the diaspora. The aim is to contribute to the debate on the restitution of cultural heritage from a perspective of reparation that brings together multiple voices in the reconstruction and questioning of the colonial past. It also purposes to understand the place and meaning of culture and heritage in Guinea-Bissau today aspiring to create a common space for sharing that breaks down North/South borders and promotes a space for the co-creation of knowledge and the sharing of resources.

**KEYWORDS** Colonial ethnographic collections, Restitution, Collaboration, Guinea-Bissau, Post-colonial studies.

---

## ***Reconnecting provenance with oral histories, biographies and memories***

**NOEMIE ARAZI**

*Heritage Studies, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium*

**ABSTRACT** This paper probes into the events that unfolded during the second half of the 19th century when the eastern Congo became entangled in territorial conquest, predatory extraction and the global trade in natural resources, initially led by Swahili and Arab merchants from the Indian Ocean coast and taken over shortly afterward by the agents of the Congo Free State. These tumultuous times coincided with the first universal exhibitions, where cultural goods and natural resources appropriated from the colony were showcased against alluring backdrops, instilling imagined geographies within the European public. Objects from the eastern Congo, whether they consisted of imported goods by the Swahili and Arab merchants or locally produced objects, constituted significant additions to what developed into the collections of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren and the Royal Army Museum in Brussels (Belgium). Many of them were seized during the Congo Free State's military operations and can thus be considered as 'historically sensitive'. However, provenance research reveals that contexts of appropriation were mostly silenced. At best the museum records imply the status of hard-won war trophies during military operations, which were embedded in the narrative of the anti-slavery campaign as well as in the legitimization of the Congo Free State. The objects thus became tools of colonial propa-

ganda, translated by their conqueror's narrative display that as such sustained the racial tropes of the colonial period. This is why dialogue and engagement with the communities from the countries of origin stand at the core of this work. Their biographies, memories and affective connections seem like an antidote to the epistemic violence of the archive, the ordering of objects in museums and the self-referential nature of provenance research. To illustrate these dissonances, museum records, archives and displays will be intertwined with the narratives and images from the communities of the spaces where the objects used to circulate. How to reconcile these opposing worlds remains open ended.

**KEYWORDS** *Provenance research, historically sensitive collections, military campaigns, Congo Free State, communities.*

## COFFEE BREAK

16h30 > 16h50

## PANEL 6

16h50 > 18h10

---

### *Investigating the Colonial Crime Scene: towards the Museum Truth, Repatriation & Restitution Commission (#MuseumTRRC)*

**WANDILE KASIBE**

*University of Cape Town, South Africa*

**ABSTRACT** This paper seeks to investigate the entanglement of the Natural History and Ethnographic museums in the construction of racist ideologies, the perpetuation of colonial reasoning and its continuities in South Africa today. It draws our attention to the fact that the museological institution was complicit and colluded in the perpetuation of colonial “crimes against humanity”, thereby rendering its own institutionality a colonial “crime scene” that requires rigorous “de-colonial” investigation in the “post-colonial” era.

In the attempt to shed more light into the miasma caused by colonial and apartheid rule, I turn to the practices of ‘scientific enquiry’ and public exhibitions to advance an argument that these museum exhibits were a precursor to genocide. The paper further argues that, these public exhibits of Africans were instrumental in popularizing theories of racial ideology and white ‘supremacy’, dehumanizing Africans and thereby creating public justification for colonial dispossession of Africans.

Furthermore, I make reference to the haunting narrative of an African Diaspora to provide context and perspective. This African individual is Ota Benga, a “Congolese Pygmy”, who

was displayed with an orangutan at the Bronx Zoo in America in 1906, and labelled “the Missing Link”.

In the end I argue that there needs to be a Museum Truth, Repatriation and Restitution Commission (#MuseumTRRC). The MuseumTRRC as both a socio-political and museological tool sharply invokes the interplay between the construction of race and the establishment of the colonial museum in a way that helps us understand how the museological institution influenced laws of racial separation that South Africa’s apartheid past was built on. The MuseumTRRC is a sine qua non in the framing of the ‘new museum’ of the future.

**KEYWORDS** *Museums, Decolonization, Race ‘Science’, Ethnography, Museumorphosis.*

---

## **Access to justice – The restitution of cultural heritage back to communities**

**FIONA BATT**

*Honorary research fellow – University of Bristol,  
Human Rights Implementation Centre, Tanzania/UK*

**ABSTRACT** This paper argues that the ‘trickle’ of returning cultural heritage back to states, indigenous peoples and local communities falls short of the legal principle of access to justice. Framing the debate on the restitution of cultural heritage within the principle of access to justice brings the law into play in relation to disputes over the restitution of cultural heritage. Equal access to justice has been said to be ‘the most basic human right of a modern, egalitarian legal system’. Laws and lawyers have typically been absent or excluded from disputes as museums and states and local communities choose non-legal mechanisms. This paper examines international laws relevant to the restitution of cultural heritage in the context of access to justice, to determine whether heritage law and human rights law can offer a more equitable ‘playing field’ to requesting states and communities. Additionally any relevant domestic laws of the UK, France, Spain and Germany as former colonial powers who hold large numbers of cultural heritage, which includes the cultural heritage of the African continent, South America and indigenous peoples are examined. Access to justice includes (i) the right to an effective remedy, (ii) procedural fairness (which includes delay), (iii) and the need for states to take positive measures to enable access to justice. The paper will examine international heritage and human rights laws and laws from the UK, France, Spain and Germany against point (i), (ii) and (iii) to determine whether international law and the domestic laws of the former colonial powers fulfil the full right of access to justice for all.

**KEYWORDS** *Repatriation, Access Justice, Cultural Heritage.*

---

# **Non-Aligned Movement's commitment to the decolonization of cultural heritage and the rearticulation of the concept of the museum institution**

**NATAŠA JAGDHUHN**

*Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany*

**ABSTRACT** The recent awakening of academic interest in the legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement has coincided with a revival in public and scholarly discussions on the decolonization of the museum sphere. This paper, which connects both academic areas, will show how Non-Aligned Movement's cultural diplomacy raised the profile of calls for the decolonization of museum theory and practice during the Cold War, by focusing on the example of the Gallery of the Art from Non-Aligned countries (1981–1990).

The analyses of historical, political and museological entanglements in the institutionalization of Non-Aligned Movement's cultural politics will be looked through two perspectives: 1) the speeches of its dignitaries at the Non-Aligned Movement summits and 2) curatorial strategies related to the establishment of the first, and only one, museum-line institution established on the idea of Nonalignment – Gallery for the Art of the Non-Aligned States (Titograd, Yugoslavia). The core principles on which the Gallery's decolonial mission was based, were: 1) "solidarity and reciprocity" – concept of the first permanent exhibition, 2) "mutual learning through encounters" – visible in the temporary exhibitions and 3) "South– South decolonial dialogues" (organizations of the global symposiums: "Art and Development" (1986), "The Museum-Gallery Cooperation of the Non-Aligned Countries at the Gallery" (1988), competitions for documentary TV films on the art and culture of the NAM countries (1988 and 1989).

It will be argued that to fully understand the causes of the post-1989 decolonial museal turn – strongly influenced by the idea of Nonalignment – it is necessary to place the development of museology as an academic discipline during the Cold War in a wider global context, one which includes not only East-West rivalry but also the world's multiple Souths.

**KEYWORDS** *Non-Aligned Movement, decolonization of the museum sphere, museum diplomacy, Cold War, solidarity.*



# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

18h10 > 19h10

---

## *Decolonisation, restitution and the politics of disciplines: Rethinking transdisciplinarity amidst different histories of colonialism and struggles for freedom*

**CIRAJ RASSOOL**

*Department of Historical Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa*

**ABSTRACT** This paper argues that it is necessary to move away from undifferentiated approaches to disciplines and the idea of transdisciplinarity. It suggests that the question of disciplines and their configuration in the government of museums and objectified belongings ('objects') needs to be understood in relation to the multiple and distinct histories of colonialism and struggles for freedom.

This paper argues that these disciplinary histories and distinctions need to be understood between different European former colonising societies, such as Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany. It shows how different a society like Germany has been and continues to be, where the work of facing up to colonialism occurs without that society ever having faced anti-colonial freedom struggles. In addition, Germany continues to live inside a denial of how decisive its violent African colonialisms were in its national formation. Without having faced these African freedom struggles which Britain and France had faced in the 1950s and 1960s, the disciplines of history and social anthropology continue to have a particular character in German universities and museums. For the most part Germany continues to be a society in which social anthropology in the university and the museum continues to be the discipline of the 'people without history', and the idea of an African history continues to be mostly unthinkable in German museums and universities.

I wish to approach these disciplinary questions as a South African who has been deeply immersed in the postapartheid project of rethinking museum disciplines beyond colonialism. In this work on South African museums, it had become apparent how decisive it was for the untenable colonial museum division between cultural history and ethnology was for the formation of a postapartheid society. Indeed, the decommissioning of this disciplinary division in the amalgamated postapartheid Iziko Museums of South Africa and the creation of the division of 'social history' stands as a landmark anti-colonial and postcolonial moment in museum history internationally. This paper will argue that any project of 'Transdisciplinarity' needs to be undertaken with due attention to a rigorous epistemic critique of different disciplinary histories and their complicities in different colonial situations. Such epistemic work needs to be an essential element of restitution, configured not as events, but as restitutionary work.

**KEYWORDS** *Multiple and distinct colonialisms, Decolonisation without Freedom Struggles, Decommissioning museum disciplines, Social history, Postcolonial and postapartheid. macy, Cold War, solidarity.*

**CLOSING DAY 2**

**FRONT DESK**

8h30

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

9h > 10h

14  
MAR  
2025  
DAY 3

---

***Power to communities: Resignification and reparation at MUHNAC, University of Lisbon***

**MARTA LOURENÇO**

*National Museum of Natural History and Science*

*MUHNAC/PRISC/CIUHCT, University of Lisbon*

**ABSTRACT** In 2015, the University of Lisbon received from the government the collections and archives from approximately 120 scientific missions to former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia. These collections include around 2.5 million objects, specimens, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and films gathered between 1883 and 1974, primarily from Africa, as well as the former colonial botanic garden in Belém, Lisbon.

The sheer volume and significance of these collections profoundly transformed the Museum. From the outset, the Museum recognized that engaging the so-called ‘communities of origin’—including diasporas, Afro-descendants, and museums in the countries of provenance—was essential. More than that, these communities needed to play a central role in decision-making regarding access, preservation, research, and public programs.

But how? What does this shift mean for museum practices, attitudes, and values? Who are the ‘communities’, and where do we begin?

In this talk, I will explore the Museum’s efforts toward reparation and resignification of colonial collections through the involvement of communities of origin. I will discuss the initial challenges, highlight past and ongoing community-driven projects, and examine the unique complexities of natural history colonial collections.

**KEYWORDS** *Natural History and Science museums, Colonial collections, Africa diaspora descendants, Community-drive projects, New museum practices.*

# PANEL 7

10h > 11h20

---

## *Deconstructing Longstanding Narrative Reinforcements in Museums: An Archaeological Example from the Meroitic Period*

**ANNISSA MALVOISIN**

*Associate Curator, Arts of Africa, Brooklyn Museum, USA*

**ABSTRACT** Circa 270 BCE along the Middle Nile Valley in Nubia (ancient territory: between southern Egypt at Aswan and northern Sudan to Khartoum), the shorelines where Nubian cultural hegemony expanded, a new type of ceramic emerged as a symbolic representation of power, faith, and cultural authority. Almost two-thousand years later, often mistaken for Egyptian or Hellenistic, and devoid of critical biographical stories, these vessels are housed in vast storages of museums across the world, rarely on display and seldom highlighted as a major ideological connector between disparate regions at a time of intense change. In fact, the largest collection of Nubian material is located at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where no Nubian gallery is present and there is minimal engagement with the region in the Egyptian Art or African Art galleries.

A close reading of two pottery types: (1) Sudanese-Saharan ware and, (2) fineware, from the Meroitic period (ca. 270 BCE – 343 CE) in Nubia reveal idiosyncrasies that present connections between late antique Northeast Africa and West Africa. This material relationship is often downplayed in traditional scholarship which rather elevates connections with southern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean and deviates from associations between regions on the African continent. This scholarly rhetoric is reproduced in exhibition and gallery interpretations and the classification of objects in museum databases, where the latter is maintained through a generational lineage of curatorial and collection's management custodians, ultimately producing "legacy data". The study of these ceramics clearly identifies the maintenance of categorizing knowledge according to colonial bias, specifically regarding Egypt and Nubia, excluding their numerous innate relationships with regions located on the African continent. This paper works within the disciplines of Egyptology, Nubian Archaeology, Museum Studies, and African Archaeology to approach the study and display of Nubian ceramic archaeological objects, closely associated to Egypt, and understand their biography through novel re-evaluation that prioritizes the object's complex story (through trade and, if not the most important, ideological exchange). Additionally, working closely with local and international Egyptian, Nubian, and Sudanese community partners actively contributes to

de-centering the conventional and usually accepted narrative interpretations imposed on these ancient societies by European and American archaeologists and Egyptologists. Rather, centering the perspectives of Nile Valley scholars and community members, while prioritizing the archaeological record – the material objects – will naturally produce new ways of seeing and storytelling in museums.

**KEYWORDS** *Trade, Ideology, Object Biography, Nubia, Museum.*

---

## Museum Cuts: Vedutas from the Sugar Palace

**IVA KOVAČ**

*Artist collective Fokus Grupa, Rijeka, Croatia*

**ABSTRACT** *Museum Cuts: Vedutas from the Palace of the Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka* is an artistic research project presented as a spatial installation dealing with the history of Rijeka's involvement in the global economy fuelled by slave labor.

In the oldest Austro-Hungarian sugar refinement plant, opened in the mid-18th century, in Rijeka (today) Croatia, a series of *idealized* landscapes painted by unknown artisans include depictions of slaves. The so-called *Vedute Ideate* is a rare depiction of the racialized slave labor in the Austro-Hungarian Empire that points to the *invisible* labor, which enabled industrial production of sugar and made visible the relation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, together with the peripheral port town of Rijeka, to the global flow of capital and the history of colonialism. By drawing on Catherine Baker's recently published book *Race and the Yugoslav region: Postsocialist, post-conflict, postcolonial?* (2018), Fokus Grupa looks at how the representation of slavery lacks critical assessment. While the resentment for the racialization across ethnic lines, about Europe proper, where the inhabitants of ex-Yugoslavia are themselves racialized as the European other, perseveres.

Since 2020, *Vedute Ideate* makes part of the permanent display of the Museum of the City of Rijeka, that highlights the building's history, acknowledging the involvement of slave labor in the sugar production chain. It also delves into the infrastructural networks and key stakeholders responsible for the company's development. Even though the exhibition highlights Rijeka's sugar refinement and recognizes the economic impact of sugar production on the city's growth, these themes are presented in well-rounded displays across detached rooms, purposefully or not omitting their interconnections. Thus, in our research we also focus on the question of aforementioned detachment – whether (and why) it blurs the link between colonial exploitation elsewhere and local development here.

**KEYWORDS** *Sugar, chartered company, industrial heritage, Habsburg colonial ambitions, decolonisation of European peripheries.*

---

## The Intervening Lens – Codifying Colonial Collections

SAMBA YONGA

Museum of Zambia, Zambia

**ABSTRACT** In the midst of the decolonisation discourse that has captured the imagination and research practices of scholars, artists, activists and populations of interest, there has been an advocacy to promote decolonial practices that centre the narrative of often marginalised African indigenous communities who have suffered the effects of the dominant and oppressive colonial policies that have shaped the African dominant narrative. The layered experiences of colonialism and the subsequent effects on the communities are not always given a nuanced examination. The resulting epistemic violence experienced by indigenous communities in the global south remains understudied. This paper aims to explore how intervening efforts could support indigenous and grassroots communities to engage and contribute to the discourse by engaging with colonial collections. Through tracing alternative historiographies and finding connecting points the paper will explore how practices of inculturation by colonised institutions in the global south and the cultural amnesia that impacted the communities as a result still influence or impede how decolonisation is being implemented. The paper will explore, with examples, how cultural amnesia has implications in contemporary interpretations of knowledge production and definitions of post-colonial social and cultural structures and how there is a need to use a critical language of intervention through alternative research and radical re-thinking to centre and create a space for deeper dialogue within the decolonial and decolonisation process.

At the Women's History Museum of Zambia, research is being conducted (by co-founder and curator Samba Yonga) to locate museum collections of the Makishi Ancestral Masks whose indigenous practices were banned in the communities of the Luvale people in the region of North-East Angola (former Portuguese colony) and North-West Zambia (former colony of the British Empire). These masks have been located in museums, private collections and galleries across Europe and North America and the research we are conducting is to look at how the care and display of the objects continue to disenfranchise indigenous knowledge systems attached to the objects. The research also hopes to forge pathways of return and opportunities of agency for the communities to be able to contribute to the process of reforming the future of museum-making and knowledge production.

**KEYWORDS** *Epistemic Violence, Cultural Amnesia, Indigenous Agency, Restorative Justice, Decolonial Practices.*

**PANEL 8**

11h40 &gt; 13h

---

***A pair of sunglasses from Omar al-Mukhtār: searching for the invisible through contemporary artistic practices at Museo delle Civiltà. From the Rome Colonial Museum to the Museum of Opacities*****IRENE QUARANTINI**

PhD Candidate Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy

**ABSTRACT** The sunglasses of Omar al-Mukhtār, leader of the Libyan resistance against the Italian invasion of the country during the 1920s, are one of the objects kept and concealed for years in the Colonial Museum of Rome and which are now clearly visible within a re-staging of these objects at the Museum of Civilizations in Rome, under a new section called *Museum of Opacities*, a title inspired by the work of Édouard Glissant.

These glasses are currently the focus of an artistic project in progress by artist Malak Yacout, exhibited in this new section.

The Colonial Museum of Rome, founded in 1914, has been closed and reopened numerous times over the years, just as its collection - consisting of almost 12,000 objects - has been partly unveiled and partly kept hidden in the storage rooms of the many locations that hosted its continuous wanderings and changes of venue.

Boosted as a means of propaganda during the violent colonization of Ethiopia by Italian fascist troops in the 30's, the museum was closed temporarily during WWII and then permanently in 1971. Since then, The Colonial Museum of Rome or the "Museum of Italian Africa", this being its second name, plunged into a long oblivion caused by the embarrassed silence of Italian cultural institutions.

Just as the traumatic memory was omitted, censored, denied, and romanticized in collective memory, the same fate also befell the collection of the colonial museum, that has been the subject of cataloging and in-depth study only in recent times (from 2017 onwards). As stated by Jonathan Fine, the intent of museums has always been to stop time: this proposal wants to retrace the work, both done and in progress, by the anthropologists and the new direction of the roman Museum of Civilizations to remediate a *ghost museum* into something alive and accessible. This to finally start building a critical horizon that problematizes and reflects on these extremely important objects and to also allow a realistic repositioning towards what

has been the Italian way of looking at *the other* and colonial violence. The proposal will focus on the methods, the results and the issues of this project entitled *Museum of Opacities*, calling for a direct involvement of contemporary artists invited to reflect on this complex materiality and to research into the museum's archives to convey new ways of looking at the objects on display and experiencing the collection.

**KEYWORDS** Colonial museum of Rome, colonial legacy, materiality, museums, contemporary art.

---

## **“From the World to Markneukirchen” – The Past and Future of a large 19<sup>th</sup> Century Collection of Musical Instruments in a small German Town**

**KIM GROTE & ROLF KILLIUS**

*Director Musikinstrumenten Museum Markneukirchen, Germany*

*Independent Researcher and Digital Creator, London*

**ABSTRACT** Founded in 1883 as a commercial museum, the Musikinstrumenten-Museum in the small-town of Markneukirchen in Saxony, Germany is one of Europe's oldest musical instrument museums.

The main aim of this museum has been to focus on the achievements of German and Western European instrument making traditions in order to inspire and educate local instrument makers. In addition to this focal point, in the decades before 1900 more than 200 instruments from Asia, Africa and South America had been added to the collection. Being the region with the highest density of instrument making workshops in the world, local instrument makers gained early inspirations from instruments especially collected in China, Korea and Japan. Until today the collection of “non-European instruments” as they were once called, had grown to 500 pieces.

From 2018 onwards the ethnomusicologist Rolf Killius (London) has started researching and cataloguing this collection on behalf of the Museum. In 2023 this led to the first of several planned special exhibitions called „China, Japan, Korea – Musical Instruments from around the world in Markneukirchen“.

The museum's collection has a unique colonial context. The first batch of these instruments was purchased in the countries of origin in the period of the 1880s. The visionary first museum director, Apian-Bennewitz expressed his wish, to collect musical instruments ‘from around the world to function as a showcase for the local instrument makers’. The then German chancellor Otto von Bismarck instructed the local embassies of the ‘German Reich’ (the



first German state) to collect musical instruments. With the help of local instrument makers and other experts in a very short time these embassies acquired instruments and sent cartloads of them to Markneukirchen. The instruments were mainly purchased in the selected regions of West-, East-, and South Africa, several countries in Latin America and in China, Korea and Japan.

In the first research concluded Rolf Killius had identified, documented and catalogued the musical instruments within their musical and social contexts, but numerous questions to the exact acquisition process still need to be addressed. Therefore the Museum, in corporation with the State Art Collections of Saxony (Dresden) and the German Centre for Loss of Cultural Property (Magdeburg) is presently in the process of setting up a provenance research project.

The conference's paper tries to achieve two goals:

\* To provide insights and tell fascinating stories of an old and important international musical instrument collection kept and displayed in a small municipal museum.

\* To outline a concept of provenance research, in order to investigate the acquisition process in the last part of the 19th Century. As a result, the aim is to de-contextualise and de-curate the whole display in the museum. This process includes new collaborations with international museums related to the present collection and the development of a new museum concept based on diversity and inter-cultural knowledge.

**KEYWORDS** *Markneukirchen, Historical Musical Instrument Collection, provenance research project, Paul Otto Apian-Bennewitz.*

---

## ***“Sailing away” reinterpreting the outrigger traditional-vessel collections in Maritime Museum Jakarta in the context of Indonesian archipelago’s maritime culture***

**MISARI MUSA, LINDA ENRIANY, NURUL IMAN,  
ARY SULISTYO, NOFA FARIDA LESTARI**

*Museum of Maritime Jakarta – Indonesia Hidden Heritage Creative Hub (IHHCH), Indonesia*

**ABSTRACT** The traditional-vessels collection of the Jakarta Maritime Museum from various regions in Indonesia shows the measure of civilization of maritime culture in the Southeast Asian region from prehistoric times to the early 20th century. The various types of vessels show a variety of forms, styles, functions, and different manufacturing methods even though they are simply known as Austronesian outrigger sail-less type vessels. This qualitative research uses a descriptive-interpretative approach, specifically outrigger-vessels without sails in the museum

collection. Based on the research results of thirteen of Austronesian type of sail-less outrigger vessels, through historical-sociological approaches and *things theory*, that the development of vessels from prehistoric times to the 20th century shows the relationship not only between humans and objects (vessel), but also objects (vessel) with other objects, objects (vessel) with humans, and humans with other humans. Thus, as part of the 'maritime culture' of museum narrative as well as in the context of decolonization of seafaring and commerce which dominated by Europeans in the past. The role of sail-less outrigger vessels as traditional vessels retrieved the "source community" of maritime culture that has already existed in the Indonesian archipelago to be recognized, continued and innovative in the era of modernity and globality.

**KEYWORDS** *Outrigger-vessels, museum, decolonization, entanglement, maritime.*

**LUNCH**

13h00 > 14h30

## **PANEL 9**

14h30 > 16h

---

### ***Against the fear of emptying, new relations between museums and communities***

**MANUELINA MARIA DUARTE CÂNDIDO**

*Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brazil*

**ABSTRACT** Since the end of 2016 I have been developing from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG, Brazil), the Karajá Presence Project: material culture, wefts and colonial transits. It brings together dozens of indigenous and non-indigenous researchers who work voluntarily in mapping collections of ceramic and/or wax dolls in anthropomorphic or supernatural formats. Called *ritxoko*, these dolls are produced and marketed by the ceramist women of the Iny Karajá people.

They were recognized as intangible diseases of Brazil in 2012 and studying them has provoked numerous reflections on the deep intertwining between intangible heritage and collections, and the role of museums in a preservation committed to life.

In this period the project has already been able to identify more than 80 museums in 16 countries that have the dolls in their collections and contribute to checking and improving the inventories of some of these institutions, helping to reconstruct the biography and some *ritxoko* or sets of them, in addition to working collaboratively with different exhibitions. Although it was not the intention at the beginning, we realized that the project is in the spirit of time, in dialogue with the provenance research now underway in numerous institutions.

This presentation will not only be a report but an opportunity to share reflections that help problematize old practices and taboos of institutions holding ethnographic collections, such as the fear of emptying museums by the demands of the communities of origin.

The Iny Karajá people not only have not shown interest in restitution of their objects present in foreign museums but, in a very emblematic way, made the first donation for the re-composition of the collections of the National Museum, of Rio de Janeiro, burned in 2018. Understanding what relationships they establish, as communities of origin, with museums that have Iny Karajá objects, may suggest new approaches to ethnography museums concerned with the future of their collections.

**KEYWORDS** *Iny Karajá, collections, ritxoko.*

---

## **‘Decolonising the Museum’ and African collections at the University of Cambridge**

**EVA NAMUSOKE**

McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, The Fitzwilliam Museum, UK

**ABSTRACT** African Collections Futures,’ is an investigation of African collections across the University of Cambridge’s eight museums and botanic garden, the library, and departments. A report on the findings of this research was published for a general audience in December 2024, exploring the histories of cultural and natural history collections, and human/ancestral remains that have been at the University for decades, many variably inaccessible to African scholars, diasporic and source communities. The report concludes with a set of recommendations intended to shape engagements moving forward. This project is partly an effort to reflect on the University’s colonial legacy across Africa and is one of several longer-term programmes investigating the ways the University benefited directly and indirectly from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and European imperialism, the largest public outcome of this research being two major exhibitions at The Fitzwilliam Museum. The African Collections Futures project could be labelled as ‘decolonisation’ work, especially as that term has become more broadly applied in recent years, but this paper will argue against the use of such a term while the scale, forms, and impact of the imperial connections are only slowly being unpacked. The University of Cambridge’s African collections, which span the whole of Africa, are littered with stories of erasure, violence, and exclusion, and engaging with the collections in new ways will be essential to begin reckoning with this legacy. Ongoing restitution processes with several African countries and communities also present opportunities to discuss the forms and challenges of new ways of working at this centuries-old British institution. Months after the launch of the African Collections Futures report, this paper reflects on the

research process, what it means to do this work as an African person, and what a decolonial future of this project entails, all within a wider UK landscape of similar research in several other institutions.

**KEYWORDS** *'African Collections Futures', University of Cambridge, Decolonization, Colonial legacies, History of collections.*

---

## ***Decolonizing African restitution, repatriations and reparations: the case for a transdisciplinary approach***

**RUDO SITHOLE**

Founding/Executive Director – AFRIMUHERE – *African Museums & Heritage Restitution, Kenya*

**ABSTRACT** An incalculable amount of Africa's heritage including objects, human remains, archives and ancestral remains looted from the continent during the slavery and colonial periods are currently in western museums and private collections. For decades Africa has been calling for the return of this heritage to their countries and communities of origin. Most of these calls have largely been unheeded until 2017 when President Macron of France made an unexpected and revolutionary statement that African heritage should be returned to Africa. Macron's declaration catalyzed increased calls by Africans for the return of their heritage. Because the call came from one of their own-Macron-the West started to negotiate with African governments and museums for the return of their heritage. Restitutions and repatriations were made to countries such as Benin, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Senegal, DRC and Namibia. However, during the last year or so the number of restitutions to Africa have stalled due to several reasons. One of the reasons is that a lot of Western countries are now saying that they need to come up with regulations to guide these restitutions and repatriations, but Africa sees this as countermeasures by the west to delay restitutions. Secondly, the recent uproar by the West when the NMMC of Nigeria handed over Benin Bronzes restituted from Germany to the Oba showed that the West still wants to dictate what happens to the objects even when they are back in Africa. Thirdly, although countries like Germany are paying reparations for Nazi looted heritage, they seem unwilling to pay reparations for looted African heritage and ancestral remains. The three aforementioned reasons demonstrate that the African-Western restitution landscape needs to be decolonized urgently to accelerate restitutions/repatriations, bring healing to victims of looting and colonization, restore African dignity and identity, revitalize African culture and bring justice where gross injustices were perpetrated. The current restitution negotiations and dealings are characterized by lopsided power relations, disrespect, arrogance which are vestiges of the servant-master relations that existed during colonial and slavery eras.

To decolonize the African-Western restitution space there is need to dismantle institutions that perpetuate colonial power structures and narratives, build new types of ethical relationships where heritage professionals from Africa and from the Western countries engage in joint provenance research, co-create joint exhibitions with new narratives that highlight the brutal histories of slavery and colonialism. The decolonization should foreground African leadership, perspectives and voices. Additionally, the restitution/repatriation should be part of holistic reparatory processes that include compensation, measures of satisfaction, guarantees for non-repetition and acknowledgement of wrong. For the decolonized restitutions/repatriations to be realized there is need to adopt a transdisciplinary approach and foster international partnerships where different types of experts collaborate including museum professionals, scholars, lawyers, politicians, diplomats, artists, journalists, community leaders. By adopting a transdisciplinary approach to decolonization meaningful restitutions, repatriations and reparations will become a reality.

**KEYWORDS** *Decolonization, African restitution, provenance, restitution guidelines and digital restitution.*

## **WRAPPING-UP SESSION...**

**16h > 16h30**

**ANA RITA AMARAL**

*Utrecht University, The Netherlands*

## **CLOSING SESSION**

**MARIA DE FÁTIMA NUNES & ELISABETE PEREIRA**

*IHC - UÉ/IN2PAST*

# NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

---

## ADRIANA COLOMA

*Lusophone University of Portugal /Portugal*

[adrika.coloma@gmail.com](mailto:adrika.coloma@gmail.com)

Mother, Latin American-Ecuadorian woman with a deep interest in art and education. She has navigated various territories and collaborated with several museums in Brazil and Ecuador. Her academic background focuses on visual arts and education, with interests in visual anthropology, contemporary photography, representations of motherhood, and social struggles. She understands the political as a daily practice. Adriana served as Executive Director of Fundación Museos de la Ciudad from 2020 to 2023.

---

## ANA RITA AMARAL

*Utrecht University, The Netherlands*

Ana Rita Amaral is a researcher at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University, Netherlands. Her position is integrated into the larger project 'Pressing Matter: Ownership, Value, and the Question of Colonial Heritage in Museums', funded by the Dutch Research Agenda. She is also an Associate Researcher at the Wereldmuseum and collaborates with the 'Religious Matters in an Entangled World' project at Utrecht University. Rita received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Lisbon (2018), following her role as Assistant Keeper of Ethnographic Collections at the Science Museum of the University of Coimbra (2006-2011). She subsequently held a postdoctoral fellowship at the International Studies Group of the University of the Free State, South Africa (2018-2022). With a robust interdisciplinary profile spanning anthropology, history, religious studies, and museum studies, her research focuses on West Central Africa and Angola. In 2025, she will publish her book *Missões, Museus e Antropologia: Os Espiritanos na Angola Colonial e os seus Legados Patrimoniais* (Missions, Museums, and Anthropology: The Spiritans in Colonial Angola, Heritage and Legacies) with Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

---

## **ANA TEMUDO**

*PhD Candidate in Heritage Studies - CITAR/Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal*

[anatglima@gmail.com](mailto:anatglima@gmail.com)

Has a degree in Fine Arts and a postgraduate degree in Art Studies from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto. Master in Museology from the Faculty of Arts, University of Porto. PhD student in Heritage Studies. Temudo collaborates on projects that promote interdisciplinarity between museum studies, art and social sciences. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2463-3975>

---

## **ANNISSA MALVOISIN**

*Associate Curator, Arts of Africa, Brooklyn Museum, USA*

[annissa.malvoisin@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:annissa.malvoisin@brooklynmuseum.org)

Curator and scholar of ancient African history with research interests in a globalized ancient world through the study of material culture and trade and from the perspective of African regions. Her scholarship contributes to understanding practical methods of rethinking outdated display paradigms that have settled into curatorial practice.

---

## **ARY SULISTYO**

*Indonesia Hidden Heritage Creative Hub (IHHCH)*

[indonesiahiddenheritage@gmail.com](mailto:indonesiahiddenheritage@gmail.com)

Graduated from Archaeology, University of Indonesia (2008). Ary is now the Director of Research at Indonesia Hidden Heritage Creative Hub. He is known as Cultural Heritage Expert Team. He also a Data Processing Team, Directorate of Cultural Protection, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. His book: *Kota dan Makna: Jakarta Masa Lalu yang Terekam Masa Kini* [City and Meaning: Jakarta's in the Past Recorded in the Present] in 2022.

---

## CIRAJ RASSOOL

*Department of Historical Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa*

[cirajrassool@gmail.com](mailto:cirajrassool@gmail.com)

Senior Professor in Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape and directs the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies. He served on the boards of the District Six Museum & Iziko Museums of South Africa and has written widely on museum collecting and transformation.

---

## CHRISTOPHER SSEBUYUNGO

*Uganda National Museum, Makerere University, Uganda*

[chrisbuyungo@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbuyungo@gmail.com)

Conservator, Sites and Monuments at the Department of Museums and Monuments (Uganda National Museum), an institution he joined as an intern. He is a passionate cultural heritage specialist with experience of heritage conservation, management and preservation, research and education. He has a Diploma in Tourism Management and a Graduate with a Bachelors Degree of Art (Archaeology, Museums and Heritage Studies) of Makerere University, Kampala. He is currently a Graduate student at Makerere, his current research is on decolonization of Museum spaces and restitution. He is also a co-researcher on the Human Origins Research project in the Rift Valley, Western Uganda, a Research Team Member on the Uganda Palaeontological Expeditions -UPE, and a Curator of Palaeontological collections at Uganda National Museum. He has led cultural heritage impact assessments for various development projects such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). He is an Alumnus of; [Museum Futures Africa](#), under which Program he co-curated *Facing Our Past: Rethinking Future* and [TheMuseumsLab](#) under which program, he implemented TheMuseumsLab Alumni CoLab and [On Forbidden Knowledge Series](#) Projects. He is a co-founder of [Disrupting and Reorienting Restitution](#) (DRR) collective.



---

## **DANIELA CARVAJAL**

*Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences/Ecuador*

[dani.carvajal.cultura@gmail.com](mailto:dani.carvajal.cultura@gmail.com)

Sociologist, holder of diplomas in Cultural Management and Community Feminisms, master's degree in Humanities, and an embroiderer. She has experience in developing community-based cultural and educational projects. She has also worked in the field of cultural policies and as a social researcher on various topics. Daniela served as Head of Public Space and Community Mediation at Fundación Museos de la Ciudad from 2020 to 2024.

---

## **DAVID WILLIAM APARECIDO RIBEIRO**

*Paulista Museum, University of São Paulo, Brazil*

[dwribeiro@gmail.com](mailto:dwribeiro@gmail.com)

Historian, curator, and professor in the Collection and Curation Division of the Museu Paulista at the University of São Paulo. He earned both his master's degree (2015) and Ph.D. (2021) in Social History from the same institution. Between 2021 and 2024, he served as a curatorial assistant and supervisor of Mediation and Public Programs at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP). Ribeiro is the author of *Por uma política cultural antirracista: as caminhadas indígenas, quilombolas e afro-diaspóricas diante das permanências coloniais e escravistas (1988–2020)*, published in 2023, which explores Indigenous, quilombola, and Afro-diasporic movements in the face of enduring colonial and slavery legacies.

---

## **ELISABETE PEREIRA**

*Projeto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

[ejsp@uevora.pt](mailto:ejsp@uevora.pt)

Principal Investigator of the R&D project "TRANSMAT - Transnational materialities (1850-1930): reconstituting collections and connecting histories". Researcher and member of the Board of Directors (2023-2026) at the Institute of Contemporary History (New University of Lisbon/University of Évora). Franco-German Research Fund Evaluator (Marc Bloch Centre, Humboldt University, 2024/2025); DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) fellow for TheMuseumsLab exchange programme 2023.

---

## **EVA NAMUSOKE**

*McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, The Fitzwilliam Museum, UK*

[enn21@cam.ac.uk](mailto:enn21@cam.ac.uk)

She is a Senior Curator, African Collections Futures, an initiative to map the African collections across the university museums, garden, libraries, archives, and departments. Eva's history PhD from the University of Cambridge focused on the development of the Anglican church in Uganda post-independence, and her broader research interests include East African postcolonial history and contemporary politics, and modern Commonwealth history. She obtained a Master's degree in African Studies from Yale University. After her PhD, Eva worked on the Commonwealth Oral History Project at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICwS) in London, followed by roles in academia, public health, and policy research in Mauritius and Kampala. Eva maintained an interest in the intersection between research and public engagement, participating in the Being Human festival while at the ICwS, and on the founding committees of the Black Cantabs Society and Africa Together conference. She has published work on the relationship between the EU referendum, the Commonwealth, and British imperial nostalgia.

---

## **FIONA BATT**

*Honorary research fellow – University of Bristol,*

*Human Rights Implementation Centre, Tanzania/UK*

[fb0884@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fb0884@bristol.ac.uk)

Honorary research fellow at the University of Bristol Law School, where she is the lead of the repatriation of cultural heritage division. She has a published monograph, 'Ancient Indigenous human remains and the law'. Additionally, she has published, 'The Repatriation of African Cultural Heritage: Shutting the Door on the Imperialist Narrative.'

---

## **HEBA ABD EL GAWAD**

*University College of London, UK*

[heba.abdelgawad@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:heba.abdelgawad@ucl.ac.uk)

Egyptian heritage and museum specialist, and research fellow at the University College London specialising in the history of Egyptian archaeology and representations of ancient Egypt. She co-developed the project: '[Egypt's Dispersed Heritage: Views from Egypt](#)' and has led various curatorial roles in Egypt and the UK.

---

## **IRENE QUARANTINI**

*PhD Candidate Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy*

[irene.quarantini@uniroma1.it](mailto:irene.quarantini@uniroma1.it)

PhD researcher in Museum Studies and History of Art. Her project focuses on the new methodological approaches of various European ethnographic museums including the Museum of Civilizations in Rome. Her academic interests include the global processes of decolonization of museums, relationships between contemporary art and anthropology, biennial culture.

---

## **IVA KOVAČ**

*Artist collective Fokus Grupa, Rijeka, Croatia*

[mail@fokusgrupa.net](mailto:mail@fokusgrupa.net)

Visual artist at Fokus Grupa since 2012, has worked as a program director of the City of Women Association in Ljubljana since 2021. She was the curator at PM Gallery in Zagreb from 2010 to 2012 and SIZ Gallery in Rijeka from 2013 to 2015. From 2017 to 2021, she was the curator at the GSG art space in Rijeka, where she initiated and (co)edited the first three issues of GSG magazine for Contemporary Art and Social Questions, published, also as an online edition @ArtsEverywhere.ca Iva works at the intersection of feminist and decolonial curatorial and artistic research. She has curated the South in Us program focused on decolonizing SEE Europe as part of the City of Women Festival in Ljubljana in 2022 and the exhibition entitled Archeology of Resistance: Corrective for the Future in 2023. In April 2024 she has curated an exhibition titled Looking-A-Way at Tranzit.sk art space in Bratislava and is preparing a seminar on artistic strategies on decolonisation of SEE and CEC Europe in the framework of the same institution in June this year. In June she will participate in an international symposium What's left of the friendship of nations? in the framework of Perennial in Berlin (Kiev Biennial). Iva co-edited the third issue of GSG magazine on the Othering in/of the Periphery. As Fokus Grupa, she published an article entitled A Room with a Landscape: Vedutas from the palace of the Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka in ARTMargins journal, which looks at the colonial history of the European periphery. She also curated the Sugar Everywhere conference in the framework of the Mine, Yours, Ours festival by Drugo more in Rijeka.

---

## **JOHANNA ZETTERSTROM-SHARP**

University College of London, UK

[j.zetterstrom-sharp@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.zetterstrom-sharp@ucl.ac.uk)

Associate Professor in Heritage Studies, at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. She was the deputy keeper and Senior Curator of Anthropology at the Horniman Museum and Gardens working on the African collections. At the Horniman, she has developed and led on a number of collaborative projects that placed community research and partnership at their core.

---

## **JORGE CROCE RIVERA**

CHAIA | UE-IN2PAST, Projecto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil

[jorgecrocerivera@gmail.com](mailto:jorgecrocerivera@gmail.com)

(1960) has a degree in Philosophy from the Faculty of Philosophy (Lisbon) of the Catholic University of Portugal (1983), a Master degree in Philosophy in Portugal from the Faculty of Arts of the Classic University of Lisbon (1990) and a PhD in Philosophy from the University of the Azores (1999). He is currently a professor at the Department of Philosophy at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Évora. He teaches several Philosophy disciplines and in the areas of Philosophy and History of Science, Ethics of Science and Technology, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Visual Arts. His interests have been mainly theoretical in the scope of Ontology, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science, mainly directed to the problems of truth, historicity and temporality, but they extend to various aspects of the experience of space, whether in the Theater, in Architecture and Landscape. He organized the personal archives of philosopher José Marinho (1904-75) deposited at the National Library of Portugal and is now responsible for the edition of "Obras de José Marinho". In its first phase this edition enabled the publication of eleven titles. Rivera is currently preparing a new phase which will allow the edition of eight more volumes.

---

## **JOS VAN BEURDEN**

Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

[jos.vanbeurden@inter.nl.net](mailto:jos.vanbeurden@inter.nl.net)

Researcher of colonial cultural collections and restitution (affiliated to the Free University, Amsterdam). His pioneering study *Treasures in Trusted Hands – Negotiating the Future of Colonial Cultural Objects* (Leiden 2017) put the issue on the agenda and was nominated for the

NWO Boekman Dissertation Price in the Netherlands. He wrote *The Return of Cultural and Historical Treasures – The Case of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 2012), *Inconvenient Heritage – Colonial collections and restitution in the Netherlands and Belgium* was published (Amsterdam 2022) and *The Empty Showcase Syndrome – Tough questions about cultural heritage from colonial regions* (Amsterdam Summer 2024). (All books have been published in Open Access). Jos van Beurden is founder of RM\* [restitution matters] which distributes news about colonial collections and restitution among over 3,000 heritage professionals worldwide.

---

## **JULIA ALBRECHT**

*Weltkulturen Museum, Germany*

[julia.albrecht@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:julia.albrecht@stadt-frankfurt.de)

Cultural educator and systemic consultant. Since the beginning of September 2018, she has been working in the Education and Outreach Department of the Weltkulturen Museum. In her work, she focuses on the development of decolonial, racism-critical learning approaches.

---

## **KEVIN COCCHI MARTINS REINA**

*Projeto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

[kevincocchi@usp.br](mailto:kevincocchi@usp.br)

Researcher completing his undergraduate studies at the University of São Paulo, with a focus on archaeology and museology. His academic experience includes research in archaeological and museological contexts, including a scientific initiation project that explored the dynamics of narratives and Brazilian objects in Portuguese museums.

---

## **KIIZA WILSON**

*Bugungu Heritage and Information Centre, Uganda*

[kiizawilson@gmail.com](mailto:kiizawilson@gmail.com)

Founder and Executive Director of Bugungu Heritage and Information Centre. Kiiza is a Ugandan cultural heritage practitioner and researcher passionate about the cultural heritage and the human rights of the Indigenous Ethnic Minorities. Kiiza sits on the Uganda's Working Group on Cultural Restitution.

---

## **KIM GROTE**

*Director Musikinstrumenten Museum Markneukirchen, Germany*

[kimgrote@museum-markneukirchen.de](mailto:kimgrote@museum-markneukirchen.de)

Musicologist with a broad practical experience. He holds a Master of Arts from the University of Leipzig. Working previously as research assistant in the University of Leipzig. Since 2022 he is the director of the Musikinstrumenten Museum in Markneukirchen, Germany

---

## **LENNON MHISHI**

*University of British Columbia, Canada; Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University/UK*

[lennon.mhishi@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lennon.mhishi@prm.ox.ac.uk)

Lennon is Assistant Professor at British Columbia University. Previously he worked at the University of Oxford - Pitt Rivers Museum, as part of the project, "Reconnecting Objects", funded by the VW Stiftung, collaborating with multiple international partners. He holds degrees in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Zimbabwe, Monash University (Australia) and SOAS, University of London. His doctoral work in London focused on the experiences of music and belonging amongst Zimbabweans, as part of the genealogy of African and Black expressive culture in the UK.

---

## **LETÍCIA RIBEIRO FERREIRA DA SILVA**

*Projeto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

[lekarib@hotmail.com](mailto:lekarib@hotmail.com)

Letícia is a PhD candidate in Archeology at the Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia - University of São Paulo (Brazil). She is a member of the Intermuseologies Laboratory (MAE/USP) and a researcher associated with the Araporã Foundation. She has worked in cultural projects in the areas of museums, heritage education, archaeology, indigenous histories and ethnic-racial education.

---

## **LINDA ENRIANY**

*Museum of Maritime Jakarta*

[upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com](mailto:upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com)

Received her master degree on Education Management from University of Management IMMI Jakarta (2016) and Regional Autonomy from University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta (2015). She has participated in 3rd KOICA Alumni Association Meeting (Republic of Korea), Training Program on Local Administration (Republic of Korea), Japan-Asia Youth Invitation Program (Japan), Introductory Certificate in Secretarial Computer Application (Wellington Polytechnic, New Zealand), etc. Currently, she is Head of Cultural Preservation at the Jakarta Culture Office.

---

## **MANUELINA MARIA DUARTE CÂNDIDO**

*Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brazil*

[manuelin@uol.com.br](mailto:manuelin@uol.com.br)

Professor of Museology at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). She was professor at the University of Liège for 5 years and visiting professor at the universities Lusófona (Portugal), Artois (France), Würzburg (Germany), Catania (Italy) and École du Patrimoine Africain (Benin). She was director of the Museum of Image and Sound of Ceará and of the Museum Process Department of the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM).

---

## **MARIA DE FÁTIMA NUNES**

*IHC - UÉ/IN2PAST*

Professor of History at the University of Évora and an integrated researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History - <http://ihc.fcsh.unl.pt/>. Scientific Coordinator of IHC - hub at the University of Évora, which hosts the History of Science, Technology and Environment Research Group (HCTA). Research and teaching domains: History of Culture and History of Scientific Culture - Modern and Contemporary. Coordinates the supervision team for the Doctoral Program in History and Philosophy of Science - Museology. Several publications in the history of science area in Portugal and the supervision of a large number of doctoral theses in the area and Co-IR and team member of active FCT projects whose research agendas are the History of Science, Technology and the Environment.

---

## **MARIA FIGUEIRA**

*Projeto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

[figueimaria@gmail.com](mailto:figueimaria@gmail.com)

Scholarship holder at the project TRANSMAT working with the Santos Rocha Museum colonial collection and a PhD candidate at the University of Évora (IHC-IN2PAST). In her PhD, she analyses the connections between Portuguese colonial history and the history of ethnographic collections in museums in center Portugal.

---

## **MARÍLIA XAVIER CURY**

*Projeto TRANSMAT, Portugal/Brasil*

[maxavier@usp.br](mailto:maxavier@usp.br)

Museologist and Museum Educator. Associate Professor II at the University of São Paulo (USP). Since 1992 she has worked as a teacher and researcher at the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology (MAE-USP, Brazil). She is a professor and advisor in the Interuniversity Postgraduate Programs in Museology (PPGMus-USP) and Archaeology (PPGARq-MAE-USP) and coordinates the CNPq Research Group «InterMuseologies – Interfaces among Museologies – Communication, Mediation, Publics and Reception», for which she leads the research project «Ethnographic collections and collaboration with indigenous groups – past, present and future: production of knowledge and innovations in museum management policy» (Fapesp). In 2021 she received the Medal of Museological Merit (COFEM) and the CECA Best Practice Award 2021 with the action “I’m here, and always have been!”. In 2022 she received the Waldisa Russio Camargo Guarnieri Medal of Museological Merit (SEC-SP).

---

## **MARK THURNER**

*FLACSO-Ecuador/University of London/University of Florida*

[mthurner@flacso.edu.ec](mailto:mthurner@flacso.edu.ec)

Mark Thurner’s recent books include *The Museum of Babel: Meditations on the Metahistorical Turn in Museography* (Routledge, 2025), *The Invention of Humboldt: On the Geopolitics of Knowledge* (Routledge, 2023), *New World Objects of Knowledge: A Cabinet of Curiosities* (London, 2021), and *The First Wave of Decolonization* (Routledge, 2019).



---

## **MARTA COELHO**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal*

[martacoelho2002@gmail.com](mailto:martacoelho2002@gmail.com)

With a degree in Anthropology and a master's degree in the same area with a specialisation in Visual Cultures, Marta Coelho focuses on the study of the different dynamics and issues that affect contemporary Portugal, with a greater emphasis on research into power dynamics and imaginary communities, especially those felt by subaltern groups.

---

## **MARTA LOURENÇO**

*National Museum of Natural History and Science*

*MUHNAC/PRISC/CIUHCT, University of Lisbon*

[mclourenco@ciencias.ulisboa.pt](mailto:mclourenco@ciencias.ulisboa.pt)

Researcher and present director of the National Museum of Natural History and Science of the University of Lisbon (MUHNAC). She has background training in Physics (University of Lisbon), a MA in Museology (Nova, Lisbon) and a PhD in Museology and History of Technology (CNAM, Paris). She is the PI of PRISC (Portuguese Research Infrastructure of Scientific Collections). She teaches Material Culture of Science in the Masters of History and Philosophy of Science (Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon) and is a research member of CIUHCT, the Interuniversity Research Centre for the History of Science and Technology (University of Lisbon). Since 2016, she is the President of the International Committee for University Museums and Collections (UMAC) of the International Council of Museums. She has been awarded the Vital Brazil Medal (2014) and the George Sarton Medal of the University of Gent (2015).

---

## **MERYEM KORUN**

*Head of TheMuseumsLab at Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin*

[Meryem.Korun@mf.n.berlin](mailto:Meryem.Korun@mf.n.berlin)

Head of TheMuseumsLab based at Museum für Naturkunde Berlin. She studied Cultural Theory and History as well as Area Studies at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and University of the Western Cape. While working for several years in the field of socio-ecological urban development in Berlin and managing a social enterprise, she gained interest in building international networks that are able to reflect on existing power relations. As a former Deputy Equal Opportunities Officer at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Meryem Korun is commit-

ted to diversity-oriented organizational development. Besides her commitment to TheMuseumsLab Meryem is currently participating in a programme on Good Governance, Human Rights and Justice at Leuphana Professional School. The programme is recommended and listed as an official human rights training programme by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

---

## **MISARI MUSA**

*Museum of Maritime Jakarta*

[upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com](mailto:upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com)

Graduate in Museology from University of Padjajaran, Bandung. She has been working for museums development since 1998. She has outstanding record while worked at Museum Textile Jakarta. As a certified Curator, she has participated in various trainings i.e. Museum Management Technology Course (Japan), Ethnology Museum (Basel Museum, Swiss), and Study of Collection and Preservation Management (Washington Textile Museum, USA). Currently, she is Head of Jakarta Maritime Culture Museum (Museum Bahari Jakarta, Indonesia).

---

## **MURIELLE SANDRA TIAKO DJOMATCHOUA**

*Department of French and Italian, Princeton University, USA*

[mt2200@princeton.edu](mailto:mt2200@princeton.edu)

Ph.D. student in French and Francophone Studies at Princeton University. Her academic work addresses decolonial approaches to African studies and slated for publication by ICOM next month is “The cosmogonies of economic growth in Nso communities: Exhuming homemade sustainable development from German museum archives”.

---

## **NATAŠA JAGDHUHN**

*Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany*

[natasa.jagdhuhn@hu-berlin.de](mailto:natasa.jagdhuhn@hu-berlin.de)

Museum and cultural theorist. She works as a research associate at the Chair of History of Science at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Her research is located at the intersection of (art) history, critical heritage and memory studies. Currently, she investigates the historical-political grounding of the decolonial turn in museum theory and practice, particularly

the Non-Aligned Movement's pivotal role in this process during the global Cold War. Her PhD thesis was published under the title "Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums: Reframing Second World War Heritage in Postconflict Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia" (Palgrave Macmillan 2022).

---

## **NJABULO CHIPANGURA**

*Manchester Museum, UK*

[Njabulo.Chipangura@mu.ie](mailto:Njabulo.Chipangura@mu.ie)

Curator of Living Cultures at University of Manchester Museum. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. He is currently working at the University of Manchester Museum as a curator of living Cultures and is responsible for the care of more than 20,000 objects from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas, as well as building new research and forming relationships and collaborations.

---

## **NOEMIE ARAZI**

*Heritage Studies, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium*

[noemie.arazi@africamuseum.be](mailto:noemie.arazi@africamuseum.be)

PhD in African Archaeology from University College London. Her practice usually combines archaeological data, archival research and the collection of oral histories and memories. She currently works at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren (Belgium) as lead researcher of the project Congo-Arab Heritage in Historical Narratives.

---

## **NOFA FARIDA LESTARI**

*Indonesia Hidden Heritage Creative Hub (IHHCH)*

[indonesiahiddenheritage@gmail.com](mailto:indonesiahiddenheritage@gmail.com)

Graduated from Law in University of Indonesia (2006). She is a Founder and Director Executive of Indonesia Hidden Heritage Creative Hub (IHHCH) in 2018, a consulting company to develop museums and heritages which collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Education, Ministry of Tourism and Economy Creative, President Staff Office, including International cultural center and embassies. IHHCH is also the first Asia's Affiliate Member of ICMM (International Congress of Maritime Museum).

---

## **NURUL IMAN**

*Museum of Maritime Jakarta*

[upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com](mailto:upmuseumkebaharian.disbuddki@gmail.com)

Graduated from department of History, University of Indonesia in 2012. He has participated in several conferences and workshops, i.e. The 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the Organization of World Heritage City (Suzhou, China) and Museum Management Capacity Knowledge Exchange Programme (Jakarta). He is now public serving as Head of the Collection, Education and Information Implementation Unit at Jakarta Maritime Culture Museum (Museum Bahari Jakarta).

---

## **PEDRO GONÇALVES**

*University of Coimbra, Portugal*

[goncalvesp852@gmail.com](mailto:goncalvesp852@gmail.com)

Portuguese historian born in Coimbra in 2002. He successfully completed his undergraduate program in history in 2023 and is now enrolled in the Master's program in contemporary history at the Department of History, European Studies, Archaeology, and Arts at the University of Coimbra. His main research interests lie in the intersectionality of political history with social and cultural movements, particularly in former colonial territories. Previously, he studied the role of Salazar's corporatist institutions as mechanisms for disseminating colonial thought. Currently, in collaboration with Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, he is focused on studying *situated violences* in Portuguese overseas territories while attempting to create a broader epistemological framework to compare Portuguese mechanisms of violence with those used by other European empires. (ORCID: 0009-0006-2683-7695).

---

## **ROBERT TENDAI NYAMUSHOSHO**

*Department of Anthropology, Queens College, City University of New York, USA*

[nyamushoshoroberttendai@gmail.com](mailto:nyamushoshoroberttendai@gmail.com)

Anthropological archaeologist whose research is centred on re-imagining Africa's place, and its diaspora in world prehistory. His primary area of interest is sub-Saharan Africa, with an active research program that focuses on understanding the early history of ancient civilizations such as Great Zimbabwe, Nyanga, and Chumungwa. Additionally, he explores Africa's contributions to other world civilizations through trans-Atlantic and Indian Ocean-based networks.

---

## **ROLF KILLIUS**

*Independent Researcher and Digital Creator, London*

[rolfkillius@yahoo.com](mailto:rolfkillius@yahoo.com)

London-based independent consultant (museums, exhibitions and media), exhibition curator, oral historian, ethnomusicologist, sound and film producer/editor and radio journalist. He works in exhibition curating, academic research, music and sound production, film production and editing and oral history (<http://www.rolfkillius.com>).

---

## **RUDO SITHOLE**

*Founding/Executive Director – AFRIMUHERE,  
African Museums & Heritage Restitution, Kenya*

[rdsithole9@gmail.com](mailto:rdsithole9@gmail.com)

PhD and Founding / Executive Director - AFRIMUHERE (African Museums & Heritage Restitution - <https://www.afrimuhere.org>). Coordinator-Baseline Study on African Restitution Commissioned by the Open Society Foundation. Member of the AU's Experts Working Group on the Common African Position on Restitution. Awarded Honorary Professorship by the Australian National University in recognition of restitution work.

---

## **SAMBA YONGA**

*Museum of Zambia, Zambia*

[samba@ku-atengamedia.com](mailto:samba@ku-atengamedia.com)

Award-winning journalist, communications specialist and cultural curator based in Lusaka, Zambia. She is co-founder of the [Women's History Museum of Zambia](#). Yonga explores how digital technology and AI intersects with indigenous heritage management to facilitate the validation of indigenous artefacts and knowledge through restorative justice and repatriation to communities of origin.

---

## **SARAI MARTÍN LÓPEZ**

*Department of Anthropology, University of Barcelona*

[saraimartin@ub.edu](mailto:saraimartin@ub.edu)

PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Barcelona. Since 2020, her research has focused on decolonization processes in Catalan museums through the project (Tr)african(t)s. *Museums and Collections of Catalonia in the Face of Coloniality*.

---

## **STEPHANIE ENDTER**

*Weltkulturen Museum, Germany*

[Stephanie.Endter@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:Stephanie.Endter@stadt-frankfurt.de)

Cultural educator and curator. She has been working in the cultural sector for 20 years. Since 2011, she has been curator for education and outreach at the Weltkulturen Museum. Her practice is based on an anti-racist approach. Her main areas of interest are decolonization, questioning Eurocentric perspectives, joint learning and transdisciplinary collaboration.

---

## **SUZANA SOUSA**

*University of the Western Cape, South Africa/Angola*

[suzana.h.sousa@gmail.com](mailto:suzana.h.sousa@gmail.com)

Independent curator, researcher and writer. PhD student at the History Department of UWC and fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research. Recipient of the 2022 Ivan Karp Research Awards. Recently co-curated the exhibition 'The Power of My Hands', part of the Saison Africa 2020.

---

## **WANDILE KASIBE**

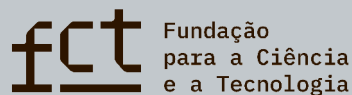
*University of Cape Town, South Africa*

[gwandile@gmail.com](mailto:gwandile@gmail.com)

Graduated with a PhD in Sociology from the University of Cape Town in 2020 and his thesis is entitled, "Museums and the Construction of Race Ideologies in South Africa". He was involved in the Rhodes Must Fall movement which sought to question colonial symbolism and institutionalized racism.



TRANSNATIONAL  
MATERIALITIES



O projecto **TRANSMAT - Materialidades transnacionais (1850-1930): reconstituir colecções e conectar histórias** (PTDC/FER-HFC/2793/2020) é financiado pela Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia. The project **TRANSMAT - Transnational materialities (1850-1930): reconstituting collections and connecting histories** (PTDC/FER-HFC/2793/2020) is funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology.

O IHC é financiado por fundos nacionais através da FCT — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., no âmbito dos projectos UID/04209 e LA/P/0132/2020 (DOI 10.54499/LA/P/0132/2020). The IHC is funded by National funds through FCT — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the projects UID/04209 and LA/P/0132/2020 (DOI 10.54499/LA/P/0132/2020).