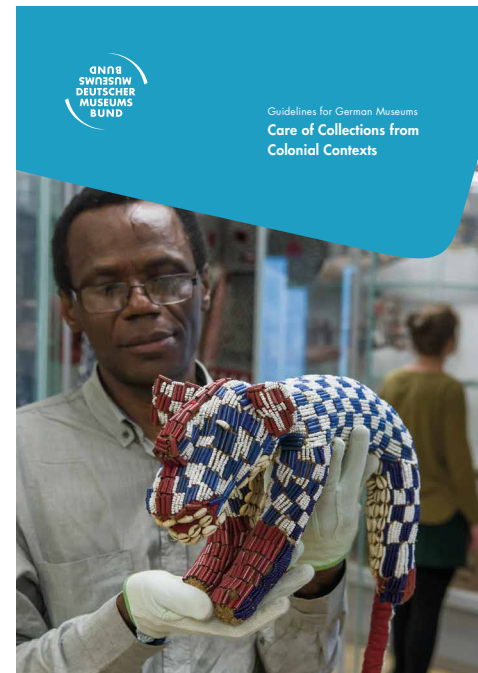


E-reader for the guidelines
**Care of Collections from
Colonial Contexts**



► Click here for the
[Guidelines for German Museums:
Care of Collections from
Colonial Contexts](#)

This E-reader complements and supplements
the guidelines of Care of Collections from Colonial
Contexts

IMPRINT

E-reader

Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts

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Übersee-Museum Bremen
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The E-reader is also available in German and French.

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CARE OF COLLECTIONS FROM COLONIAL CONTEXTS: AN E-READER TO COMPLEMENT AND SUPPLEMENT THE GUIDELINES

This E-reader complements and expands on the *Guidelines for German Museums. Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts*, 3rd edition 2021. It is intended as a more detailed supplement to the hands-on toolkit provided by the Guidelines. Drawing on examples from museum practice, policy guidelines and legal provisions, it provides museum staff with a comprehensive insight into how museums in Germany and around the world are working with collections from colonial contexts. The first section comprises a selection of brief examples from all areas of museum practice in handling collections and human remains from colonial contexts and offers museums some ideas for their own work; the texts contain links to websites providing further information. The E-reader also presents a series of practical examples on the return of collection items from Germany and other countries to the countries of origin.

The second section of the publication goes into greater depth, offering information on national and international policies, guidelines, recommendations and legal provisions that are relevant for museums. It concludes with an overview of the online databases of various museums as well as some recommendations for further reading.

The E-reader is available in German, English and French and can be downloaded from: museumsbund.de/kolonialismus

This accompanying publication makes no claim to completeness and will not be updated. All the information and links are those current on 22 July 2020.

The German Museums Association would like to thank all the institutions that have actively supported the compilation of this E-reader with examples from practice.

LEGEND OF SYMBOLS USED



COLLECTING



PRESERVING



RESEARCHING



EXHIBITING



EDUCATING



RETURNING



INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE



GERMAN EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE



INTERNATIONALE AGREEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS



GUIDELINES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



STATE-SPONSORED PROGRAMMES



MUSEUM GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



OVERVIEW OF FURTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES ISSUED BY INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE

The following is a list of examples from museum practice of how collections from colonial contexts are being handled in Germany and other parts of the world. Its focus is on collecting and preserving, researching, exhibiting and educating as well as returning collection items. Wherever possible, links to websites offering further information are provided and contacts and cooperation partners named. The projects, exhibitions and examples of returns of collection items are arranged chronologically starting with the most recent ones.

COLLECTING AND PRESERVING

NETHERLANDS

Words Matter Guide

Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Amsterdam, Berg en Dal, Leiden, 2018

Analogous to the Rijksmuseum project (see below) the Dutch Nationaal Museum has compiled a brochure devoted to museum terminology. In addition to short entries on use of language and choice of words in a museum context, which are designed to provide information and sensitise people to this issue, *Words Matter: An Unfinished Guide to Word Choices in the Cultural Sector* contains the beginning of an alphabetical list of sensitive words. It describes the contexts in which these have been used in the past or are used today and suggests more appropriate terms.

Adjustment of Colonial Terminology

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, since 2015

A research team is evaluating the museum's terminology, concentrating initially on object descriptions and labels. In its exhibitions, publications and audio guides and on its website, the museum's approach is to try to use the language of the present without falsifying history. Words that Europeans once routinely used to describe other cultures or peoples and that may be perceived as insulting are being re-evaluated and where necessary replaced by less racist terms. The project is taking the same approach to the digital registration system and is evaluating the use of anachronistic language and descriptions written from a Eurocentric perspective. The team comprises twelve curators who are in regular contact with other curators, information specialists, museums and interest groups.

- ▶ [Rijksmuseum Terminology](#)
[Rijksmuseum Removing Racially Charged Terms From Artworks' Titles and Descriptions](#), artsbeat.blogs, 2015





USA



File under: Indigenous

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts



This project evaluated the terminology of the library catalogue with regard to pre-judiced and European/Western terms for Indigenous communities and compiled suggestions for more inclusive terminology.

- ▶ Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous style: a Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*, Edmonton, Alberta, 2018

The Anchorage Project

Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Anchorage Museum of History and Culture, 2010

This project is part of the exhibition project Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska, in which around 600 objects from the NMNH and NMAI are being permanently loaned to the Anchorage Museum and thus returned to their region of origin. This offers conservationists an opportunity to focus on the preparation of objects made by Native Alaskans from the skin of whales, seals, walrus and sea-lions. In this context, comprehensive studies of this material are being carried out by various specialist disciplines and Native Alaskan experts in order to raise awareness and improve the treatment of this exceptional material.

- ▶ Landis Smith, Kelly McHugh, Michele Austin Dennehy, Kim Cullen-Cobb, The Anchorage Project: Gut Decisions in Cultural and Museum Contexts, AIC Objects Specialty Group Postprints, Vol. 16, 2009, pp. 73-86

[← GO TO CONTENTS](#)

RESEARCHING

GERMANY

Research projects approved by the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (German Lost Art Foundation):

Das Glas vom Gleis – Archäologie der Bagdadbahn unter kolonialen Vorzeichen (Glass from the Tracks – Archaeology of the Baghdad Railway in a Colonial Context)
Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz

Provenienzen von ethnographischen Objekten in Mittelhessen (Provenance of Ethnographic Objects in Central Hesse)
Oberhessisches Museum Gießen and Philipps-University Marburg

Provenienzforschung in der außereuropäischen Sammlung der Universitätsmedizin (Provenance Research in the Overseas Collection of the University Hospital)
University of Rostock

Koloniale Provenienzen der Natur. Der Ausbau der Säugetiersammlung am Museum für Naturkunde Berlin um 1900 (Colonial Provenances of Nature: the Expansion of the Mammals Collection at Berlin's Natural History Museum around 1900)
Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Die globalen Handelsnetzwerke der Alfelder Tierhandelsunternehmen Reiche und Ruhe (The Global Trading Networks of the Alfeld Animal Trading Company Reiche und Ruhe)
Georg-August University Göttingen and Stadt- und Tiermuseum, Alfeld

Ancestral Heads and Trophy Skulls from Former German New Guinea. Approaching Provenance and Acquisition of a Collection of Culturally Sensitive Objects at the Übersee-Museum Bremen
Übersee-Museum, Bremen

Sensitive Provenances – Human Remains from Colonial Contexts in the Collections of Göttingen University

Georg-August University Göttingen

07/2020–07/2023

Contact: Dr. Marie Luisa Allemeyer

Cooperation: depends on the respective provenance of the human remains

This project, funded by the VW Foundation, is investigating two collections of human remains from (proto-) colonial contexts in Göttingen with respect to their origin, the circumstances under which they were acquired, their transfer and their trans-





formation into “things of knowledge” in academic collections. The interdisciplinary project uses several different approaches: a critical evaluation of history, anatomical methods used by anthropologists and techniques for ethnography and cultural anthropology. This part of the project is intended as a reflection on the university’s own research practice that should inform any future treatment of mortal remains.

A central component of the project is the involvement of representatives and young scientists from the communities of origin via a post-graduate post and short-term grants. Ultimately, the aim is to develop a joint research agenda together with representatives of the communities of origin.

The Provenance of the Brandeis Collection

Museum Natur und Mensch, Städtische Museen Freiburg im Breisgau

07/2020–06/2021

Contact: Godwin Kornes

This provenance research project funded by the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (German Lost Art Foundation) concerns the collection amassed by Eugen and Antonie Brandeis, which was donated to the Museum für Natur- und Völkerkunde in 1900 and 1901. The project pursues two goals. The first is a historical investigation of the personalities involved, namely Eugen and Antonie Brandeis, which examines their biographies, networks and collecting activities. The second is a historical examination and re-evaluation of the collection of objects from Micronesia (279 objects) that they donated to the ethnological collection, which takes into account emic perspectives of cooperation partners from the communities of origin.

Provenienzforschung zur anthropologischen Schädelammlung (Provenance Research into the Anthropological Skull Collection)

Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg

12/2019–11/2021

Contact: Dr. Ivonne Kaiser

Cooperation: contacts in Australia

The aim of this project funded by the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (German Lost Art Foundation) is the interdisciplinary (anthropological and historical) investigation of the colonial provenance of thirty skulls of non-European origin. In addition to the non-invasive anthropological identification of the skulls, the project also includes a historical evaluation based on archive material on the origins of the objects and a history of how they were acquired. By bringing together these two strands of research, the project will ideally rework these people’s biographies. In the course of investigating the provenance, the project plans to initiate a dialogue with the communities of origin that will address questions of conservation, access and possible restitution. Two Australian skulls are soon to be returned.



Confronting Colonial Pasts, Envisioning Creative Futures

Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

09/2019–08/2022

Cooperation: Museums Association of Namibia (MAN), National Museum of Namibia, University of Namibia

In a previous project involving guest scholars from the MAN and in close consultation with community representatives from Namibia, twenty-three of a total of 1,400 objects in the Namibia collection were selected. They included jewellery, prestige objects and historically significant artefacts. These objects are now being further investigated at the National Museum of Namibia and the University of Namibia and made available to contemporary artists for creative exploration. In workshops lasting several days at the National Museum of Namibia and in cultural heritage communities the knowledge connected with these objects and other forms of non-material cultural heritage is being reactivated and documented. The inspiration offered by the objects from Berlin will also have a place in the Museum of Namibian Fashion planned by the MAN.

The open-ended cooperation process is being steered largely by the Namibian partners. Most of the funding is going into the work taking place in Namibia, including financing a restorer and a museologist at the National Museum of Namibia.

- ▶ Colonialism, Art, and Culture: Collaborative Research with Namibian Colleagues at the Ethnologisches Museum, Interview with project participants

Rekontextualisierung menschlicher Überreste mit kolonialem Erwerbungs hintergrund aus Ostafrika (Recontextualising Human Remains Acquired in a Colonial Context from East Africa)

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz

10/2017–10/2018

Contact: Dr. Bernhard Heeb, Marius Kowalak, Barbara Teßmann

Cooperation: Prof. Dr. Charles Kabwete, University of Rwanda

Since 2011, the museum has been storing 7,697 human skulls from virtually all corners of the Earth, which had been held in various nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historical collections. A majority of them were amassed by Felix von Luschan. Around a third of these holdings were acquired in a colonial context from the former German overseas territories in Africa and the Pacific region. From 2017 to 2019, a research project financed via the Gerda-Henkel Foundation set about re-contextualising human remains from former German East Africa. These comprise 907 skulls from what is now Rwanda, 201 from Tanzania and twenty-two from Kenya. Only four skulls were impossible to attribute. The research project was conducted together with African colleagues, mainly from Rwanda. The aim is to return the mortal remains.



DE

Schleswig-Holstein zwischen Weltoffenheit und Kolonialismus (Schleswig-Holstein between a Cosmopolitan Outlook and Colonialism)

Museumsverbund Nordfriesland, a joint project of 22 museums in Schleswig-Holstein and South Denmark

10/2017–09/2020

Contact: Tanja Hörmann

The aim of the project is to digitalise and make public as many of the ethnographic objects and photographs as possible, while at the same time conducting archive research into the contexts in which the objects were acquired and into the actors who were involved. The spectrum of museums participating in the project ranges from museums of natural history, pharmaceutical history and textiles to various local history and city museums and an artist's museum; it also includes the holdings of the University of Kiel's ethnological museum, which was closed in 1995. It was possible to identify some 15,500 objects and 1,000 photographs, mainly from former German colonial territories in West Africa, East Africa, East Asia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. An ethnological/geographical thesaurus of appropriate terminology is being compiled in collaboration with the software developer Digi-CULT-Verbund eG.

Schwieriges Erbe (Difficult Heritage)

Linden-Museum, Stuttgart

04/2016–03/2018

Contact: Prof. Dr. Inés de Castro, Director Linden-Museum Stuttgart; Prof. Dr. Gabriele Alex, Eberhard Karls University Tübingen; Prof. Dr. Thomas Thiemeyer, Eberhard Karls University Tübingen

The project partners examined how museums and scholars have treated colonial-era objects in ethnological museums. One task was to research the origin and biographies of collections and collected objects that found their way into the museums in a colonial context; another was to address the challenges the museum faces with respect to social diversity. A post for conducting research into the provenance of colonial-era objects was created on a pilot basis for the project. An international conference was held as part of the project. An exhibition of the same name is being planned.

► Abschlussbericht zur Provenienzforschung



DE

Museum Collections in the Emerging Colonial Situation: The Africa Collections of the Übersee-Museum Bremen from the Former German Colonies

Übersee-Museum, Bremen

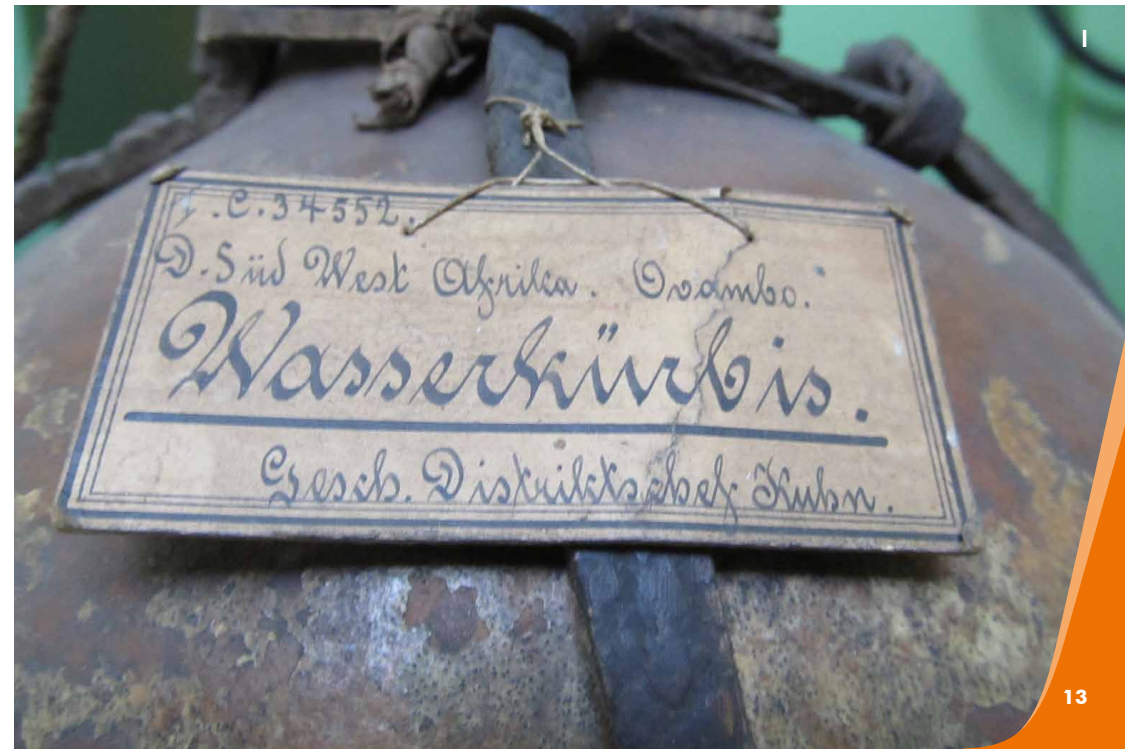
11/2016–12/2021

Contact: Prof. Dr. Wiebke Ahrndt (Übersee-Museum), Prof. Dr. Jürgen Zimmerer (University of Hamburg)

Cooperation: Jeremy Silvester (Museum Association of Namibia), Oswald Masebo (University of Dar es Salaam), Philip Maligisu (National Museum of Tanzania/University of Dar es Salaam), Albert Gouaffo (Université de Dschang) und Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III (Fondation AfricAvenir International)

The project provides an innovative perspective on the history of the origins of the collections above and beyond any contradictory visions of the absolute legality of the acquisition of the collections on the one hand and the complete powerlessness of the donor societies in the colonial system of total injustice on the other. Applying an interdisciplinary approach consisting of object research in museums, historical studies and ethnology, it is planned to develop detailed information on the context of the origins of colonial-period collections. By exploring the agency of both the donors and the collectors in the emerging colonial situation, the project will make a contribution to the international debate on the origins, the legality and the legitimacy of colonial-period collections, while taking ethical principles into account.

I: Object with colonial label, Namibia





Ultimately and on the basis of the specific collections in the Übersee-Museum Bremen, an actor-centred history of colonial collecting in the German colonies will be written and principles will be developed to show how the structure of a collection can indicate the provenance of the objects.

Provenienzforschung in neun stadtgeschichtlichen Museen Südniedersachsens (Provenance Research in Nine Municipal History Museums in Southern Lower Saxony)

03/2016–12/2020

Contact: Dr. Christian Riemenschneider

Cooperation: Government of Australia – Department for Indigenous Repatriation, National Museum of Namibia, National Archive of Namibia

Since 2016, the regional cultural association Landschaftsverband Südniedersachsen has been conducting provenance research projects in nine municipal history museums in the region, including the Uslar and Alfeld museums. The project's brief is to address cultural heritage seized in the context of Nazi crimes. Work in the collections has, however, also brought to light various ethnographic objects, which are also being investigated. The objects originate from the German colonies as well as from post-colonial contexts.

Important information was gathered about the Namibian objects during a visit by the curator of the National Museum of Namibia and the former director of the National Archive of Namibia to Uslar Museum as part of the PAESE project in Lower Saxony.

- ▶ Christian Riemenschneider. Ethnografica, Naturalia und human remains in stadtgeschichtlichen Museen Südniedersachsens. Bericht einer regionalen Bestandsaufnahme. In: Museumsblätter. Mitteilungen des Museumsverbands Brandenburg, Dec. 2019, 35, pp. 80–83.

Living Things in the Amazon and in the Museum – Shared Knowledge in the Humboldt Forum

Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK)

2016–2020

Contact: Dr. Andrea Scholz

Cooperation:

Brazil: Conselho Indígena de Roraima (Roraima), Organização dos Professores Indígenas de Roraima, Associação Wanasseduume Ye'kwana – SEDUUME (Roraima), Instituto Socioambiental und Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Alto Rio Negro (Amazonas).

Colombia: Escuela Normal Superior Indígena María Reina (Mitú, Vaupés).

Venezuela: Universidad Nacional Experimental Indígena del Tauca (Bolívar; currently not active in the project), Organización Indígena de la Cuenca del Caura “Kuyujani” (Bolívar).



The project “Shared Knowledge” continues and expands on the pilot project “Sharing Knowledge” (2014–2015) conducted under the auspices of Humboldt Lab Dahlem (2012–2015), a joint project of the SPK and the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation). Together with Indigenous partners, most of whom are active in Indigenous education, the project is investigating ethnographic collections from the north-eastern and north-western Amazon Basin, most of which came to Berlin as the result of expeditions and collecting journeys in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to give the partners permanent access to the Berlin collections, an online database specially developed for the project went into operation in 2015 as a secure platform. Other activities are taking place in the partner countries, e.g. workshops with elders and artisans that focus on the production and use of the objects. The project's main aim is to establish a long-term relationship of trust between the Ethnological Museum and the Indigenous partners.

- ▶ Spiritualität und Macht: Kooperationsprojekt zur Amazonas-Region in Dahlem, blog.smb.museum
- ▶ Projektdossier (Project dossier)

Brachiosaurus brancai as an Icon of Politics, Science, and Popular Culture

Museum für Naturkunde Berlin and Technical University Berlin

04/2015–03/2018

Contact: Dr. Ina Heumann

The dinosaur skeleton was excavated in 1909 in the former colony of German East Africa, now Tanzania, under the leadership of palaeontologists from Berlin's Natural History Museum. The joint project investigated *Brachiosaurus brancai* as a political, scientific and popular icon from its excavation to the present day. The political, scientific and museum history, function and presentation of the world-famous palaeontological finds were studied in three closely connected sub-projects.

- ▶ Ina Heumann, Holger Stoecker, Marco Tamborini, Mareike Vennen, Dinosaurier Fragmente. Zur Geschichte der Tendaguru-Expedition und ihrer Objekte 1906–2018, (Dinosaur Fragments: On the History of the Tendaguru-Expedition and Its Objects 1906–2018), Museum für Naturkunde (Natural History Museum) Berlin and Technical University Berlin, Berlin 2018.
- ▶ Sub-projects: Ausgrabung und Nachgeschichte: Der Dinosaurier als politisches Objekt (Excavation and Subsequent History: the Dinosaur as a Political Object); Der Dinosaurier als Wissenobjekt (the Dinosaur as a Scientific Object)



Die verstreute Sammlung Thorbecke aus Kamerun – Objekte, Hintergründe und neue Betrachtungen (The Dispersed Thorbecke Collection from Cameroon – Objects, Backgrounds and New Reflections)

Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim

2015–2019

Contact: Prof. Dr. Wilfried Rosendahl (Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim), Prof. Dr. Stefanie Michels (University of Düsseldorf)

Cooperation: Researchers from the University of Dschang (Cameroon), high-ranking local representatives

The Reiss-Engelhorn Museums and the University of Düsseldorf have been collaborating on the Thorbecke collection since 2015. In cooperation with the University of Dschang (Cameroon) the collection has now been extensively documented. In Cameroon, students from the University of Dschang as well as employees from the Musée des Civilisations in Dschang and the Kingdom of Bana worked with the objects. Reproductions of the watercolours from the Thorbecke collection in the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums were handed over in Bana. The publication of a book on the cooperation is planned for 2020, including contributions from all those involved.

Tamasese Lealofi, die Samoa-Völkerschauen und der Ethnographica-Handel der Gebrüder Marquardt (Tamasese Lealofi, the Samoan “Ethnic Shows” and the Trade in Ethnographic Objects by the Marquardt Brothers)

Museum fünf Kontinente, Munich

2012–2014

Between 1895 and 1911, several groups of mainly high-ranking Samoans brought members of their communities to Germany for display in “ethnic shows”, always accompanied by two German impresarios who simultaneously sold ethnographic objects from Samoa. Most of the Samoa collection at the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich originates from this source. In a three-year research project these journeys and the transfer of objects were put in context. As well as evaluating many sources of objects, texts and images in Germany, Samoa, New Zealand and Australia, a special focus of the project was to find descendants of the Indigenous people who had been put on display and to track down oral history sources. Numerous Samoan actors, including descendants of those who had been displayed, stakeholders in Samoan society, members of the German-speaking Samoan diaspora community and Samoan artists participated in both the project itself and in the resulting exhibition.

Further Projects of Provenance Research

The provenance research group Provenienzforschung e. V. presents a brief overview of projects undertaken in German-speaking countries since 2012 in a [List of Projects of the Working Group Colonial Provenances](#). This overview is regularly expanded and updated. It makes no claim to completeness.

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

Return, Reconcile, Renew Project

Australia

2014–2020

The ultimate goal of the joint project is to increase awareness and understanding of the repatriation of human remains belonging to ancestors and to support the practitioners and researchers involved in repatriation in their efforts to bring ancestors back home. Information about Australian ancestral remains (which are dispersed all over the world) and their repatriation is being collected in a database, which will be made available above all to representatives of Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islanders, but also to the general public.

- ▶ [Return, Reconcile, Renew: Understanding the History, Effects and Opportunities of Repatriation and Building and Evidence Base for the Future](#)(2014–2017)
- ▶ [Restoring Dignity: networked knowledge for repatriation communities](#) (2018–2020)
- ▶ [Return, Reconcile, Renew Project Outputs](#)

AUSTRIA

Sharing Stories. Speaking Objects

Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna

04/2015–10/2017

Contact: Bianca Figl

Cooperation: anyone who is interested

Ethnographic museums like the Weltmuseum Wien are encumbered with a difficult history with respect to their collecting, research and presentation. Many of the objects we find in these museums today were acquired or stolen in a colonialist context. The story of racially motivated research and expropriation and the problem of talking about and interpreting “others” often remains invisible in the way museum objects are presented. The project “Sharing Stories. Speaking Objects” set out to address this history and develop alternative practices of collecting and telling stories. It investigated the point at which different narratives about one and the same object encounter one another and start the process of negotiation. Between 2015 and 2017, various people were invited to bring an object that meant something to them to one of ten pop-up stations in Vienna, and to tell the story of that object. Based on an open interview format developed specially for the project, 150 personal, varied and exciting stories emerged. For the entire duration of the project, photos of the objects and summaries of their stories were regularly uploaded





to the website of the Weltmuseum Wien. The results of the project were shown in the eponymous exhibition (10/2017–02/2018).

CANADA

Reciprocal Research Network

Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the U'mista Cultural Society, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver since 2014

The project, involving twenty-nine institutions, seeks to promote community and socially responsible and interdisciplinary research across local, national and international boundaries. The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is an online tool to facilitate reciprocal and collaborative research about cultural heritage from the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. This will enable communities, cultural institutions and researchers to work together.

NEW ZEALAND

Pacific Collection Access Projects

Auckland Museum, Auckland
2016–2019

Cooperation: Representatives of Auckland's Pacific community

The project is part of the endeavours of the Future Museum to ensure that representatives of the communities of origin can access the collections and to document shared knowledge about objects in collections. The Future Museum promotes partnerships, collaborations and the development of creative solutions in educational and cultural institutions.

NORDIC COUNTRIES

Sami Trophy Project

Världskulturmuseet, Göteborg, Sweden
since 2012

In this project the Museo de América in Madrid, the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg and the Ajtte Museum in Jokkmokk, Sweden, are working on a collection of Sami objects donated to the City of Madrid by Ake Sjorgen in 1896. As well as evaluating the collection, the project will also focus on strengthening cooperation between the Museo de América and the Ajtte Museum.

- ▶ Cultura material Sami en el Museo de América

Bååstede: Return of Sami Cultural Heritage

Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway
2007–2018

The aim of the project was to repatriate half of the collection of Sami objects (around 2000 objects) to six Sami museums in central and northern Norway. An agreement signed in the Sami parliament in 2012 guaranteed that the objects would be properly treated and stored by the museums receiving them. The Bååstede agreement emphasised that responsibility for financing the repatriation of objects in line with Norway's obligations to the Sami as an Indigenous people must lie with the Norwegian government.

- ▶ Tilbakeføring av samisk kulturarv (Project report, in Norwegian)

Recalling Ancestral Voices

Norway, Sweden, Finland
2006–2010

The aim of this EU-funded project was the repatriation of knowledge about material cultural heritage in the form of a database for the Sami on the various museum collections in the Nordic countries. The physical repatriation of objects was not part of the project.

By the time the funding ended in 2010, part of the database was accessible online. The project concluded with a workshop on the topic of accessibility.

- ▶ Eeva-Kristiina Harlin, Recording Sami Heritage in European Museums, in: Larissa Förster, Iris Edenheiser, Sarah Fründt, Heike Hartmann (eds.), *Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit*, conference proceedings, Berlin 2017, pp. 69–84.

USA

Native American Fellowship Program

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
since 2010

The NAF programme came into being as part of an Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations grant to fulfil the need to embrace more museum and cultural heritage professionals of Native American descent. Fellows are mentored directly by PEM professionals.

- ▶ About our program





UNITED KINGDOM



The Invention of Museum Anthropology

Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford



The website publishes documents charting the history of Oxford University's anthropological museum and seeks to make a contribution towards evaluating the origins of anthropological and ethnological research. One project is devoted to the museum's founder, Augustus Pitt-Rivers, and the provenance of the collection. A large number of primary sources will be made available online.

- ▶ [Rethinking Pitt-Rivers](#)

EXHIBITING AND EDUCATING

GERMANY

Boundless: Colonialism, Industry & Resistance

Museum der Arbeit, Hamburg

09/2020–04/2021

This special exhibition at the Museum der Arbeit makes a contribution to the current debate about how the City of Hamburg should deal with its colonial history and the far-reaching consequences of colonial power structures, which can still be felt today. The historical starting point is the industrial processing of rubber, palm oil and coconut oil, which took place, for example, on the site now occupied by the Museum der Arbeit, the former New-York Hamburger Gummiwaaren-Fabrik. These and many other companies made everyday products such as hard rubber combs, bathing caps, margarine, packaged foods, candles and soap from the late nineteenth century onwards. The colonial links are not immediately apparent, but these products are closely connected with German and European colonialism via their raw materials.

The exhibition sets out to contrast the innocuous narrative of a "Hanseatic mercantile industry" with the violent realities of colonialism, but also the resilience of the people affected. In addition, it draws parallels with the present-day global economy.

These goals, moreover, include challenging the Eurocentric view of the topic and presenting the perspectives of people in colonised countries and their descendants. With this in mind, both the concept for and the content of the exhibition are being developed together with experts from civil society.

- ▶ Bookazine "grenzenlos" Kocmoc-Verlag (Berlin)

Cimeter, crocodile and canopic jars: global stories in Brandenburg museums

Museumsverband Brandenburg, joint project of eight museums

since 01/2020

The online exhibition presents nature and cultural objects from Brandenburg's museums that originated in a broader sense from colonial contexts. It is the product of a collaborative digitalisation project involving eight Brandenburg museums. Through the stories behind the objects, the exhibition illustrates how local and global history are closely linked. For the museums involved in the project, taking a closer look at "colonial collections" that have been largely ignored provided the starting point for devoting more intensive research to this aspect of the collections and including it in museum education work. In the course of the project it became evident that handling collections from colonial contexts is an issue that even small and medium-sized museums need to address.

Tracking the Past. The History of a Museum

Übersee-Museum, Bremen

since 10/2019

This permanent exhibition takes a critical look at the museum's past. From the museum's founding in the late nineteenth century through the years of the Third Reich and the immediate post-war era to the politically controversial 1970s and 1980s, the exhibition sets out to capture the zeitgeist of past eras.

The question of how the museum's collections evolved from the colonial era to the present day runs through the exhibition like a common thread, connecting the various sections. The collections of the Übersee-Museum originate from all over the world.

Were they purchased, stolen, received as gifts or exchanged? The exhibition tells the story of the objects' origins through the roles of the various protagonists who brought them to the museum – whether museum staff in their roles as collectors and commissioners, merchants and missionaries, members of the military, or dealers in ethnographic and natural objects – and examines the impact of shipping companies and the network of trading relationships. Moreover, the exhibition presents the findings of provenance research and documents objects that have already been repatriated.

- ▶ Wiebke Ahrndt (ed.), Spurensuche: Geschichte eines Museums, Bremen 2019.

Amani: Traces of a Colonial Research Centre

Museum am Rothenbaum. Kulturen und Künste der Welt, Hamburg

09/2019–04/2020

The exhibition is devoted to the history of the Biological Agricultural Institute Amani in the Usambara Highlands in today's Tanzania. In colonial times, supposedly civilised Europeans at the research centre investigated the lives of so-called wild Indigenous peoples. In the exhibition ethnologists and artists trace the story of the research





centre – both in the lives of those who worked there and in the Hamburg collections. They document the colonial and post-colonial stories, which often sound surprisingly modern.

► P. Wenzel Geißler, Rene Gerrets, et al., Amani – Auf den Spuren einer kolonialen Forschungsstation in Tansania, 2020



1519–2019: Cultural Colonialism and Survival Strategies/500 Jahre Eroberung Lateinamerikas: Kolonialismus und Überlebensstrategien (The 500th Anniversary of the Conquest of Latin America: Colonialism and Survival Strategies)

University of Bonn, Department for the Anthropology of the Americas; Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt (RJM)

06/2019–07/2019; 11/2019–01/2020

In 2019, the entire American continent marked the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Hernán Cortés in Mexico. In the view of the organisers – students from the department for the Anthropology of the Americas at Bonn University – what should be commemorated is not the event itself but its consequences – in the form of individual biographies. For this purpose they chose the biographies of Malintzin, Hernán Cortés’ Indigenous translator, the author Guamán Poma de Ayala (Peru) and the Quilombos (former African-American slaves). The lives of each of these people or groups illustrate the complex and difficult relationship between Europeans, Indigenous peoples and Black people, the destructive character of the Spanish colonial system, the role of the Catholic Church and the re-invention of African societies in America.

Near Life, the Gipsformerei – 200 Years of Casting Plaster

James-Simon-Galerie Berlin

08/2019–03/2020

Several plaster casts of body parts and one cast of an entire body are displayed in the exhibition. They show how “foreign races” were documented using three-dimensional plaster casts. The exhibition also tells the story of how the casting of a man called Mhonerera from the Tanzanian coastal city of Lindi was prevented when he resisted this discriminatory treatment by German researchers.

Wo ist Afrika? (Where Is Africa?)

Linden-Museum Stuttgart

since 03/2019

The exhibition “Wo ist Afrika?” invites visitors to revisit and take a critical view of the contexts and narratives of the Africa collections at the Linden-Museum, most of which were amassed during the colonial era. It investigates which stories are



I: Exhibition at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne

II: Malintzin mask (exhibit)

III: The exhibition “Wo ist Afrika?” (Where is Africa?)





I-III: Fotografías inéditas de Rapa Nui: Hans Helfritz 1946
(Unpublished Photographs from Rapa Nui: Hans Helfritz 1946)



ingrained in the objects and what they might stand for today. “Wo ist Afrika?” takes a process-oriented approach that challenges the museum’s interpretation prerogative, presenting numerous parallel narratives and asking questions about how we live together today as a society.

Fotografías inéditas de Rapa Nui: Hans Helfritz 1946
(Unpublished Photographs from Rapa Nui: Hans Helfritz 1946)
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt (RJM), Cologne
since 11/2018

In 1996, the estate of the travel photographer and film-maker Hans Helfritz was given to the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. Comprising more than 60,000 images, it is the largest holding in the museum’s historic photo archive, which encompasses some 100,000 objects. The holdings were digitalised in 2017 and made available for a project being conducted by two researchers from Chile and Rapa Nui. The places and people shown on the photographs were identified in the course of a collaborative process. The exhibition is on show at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastian Englert (MAPSE) on Rapa Nui until further notice.

Collected. Bought. Looted? Case Histories from a Colonial and National Socialist Context

Weltkulturenmuseum, Frankfurt am Main
08/2018–01/2019

The exhibition addressed the provenance of the objects in its own collection using a selection of examples from colonial and Nazi contexts. The histories of the objects shown here illustrate how important it is for museums to carry out long-term evaluations of their own collections. At the same time, it becomes clear that the process of re-evaluating the history of how objects were acquired – i.e. their provenance – often reaches its limits, in many cases raising new questions.

Fragende Blicke. Neun Zugänge zu ethnografischen Fotografien (Questioning Looks: Nine Approaches to Ethnographic Photography)

Institut für Ethnologie der LMU Munich, Museum fünf Kontinente, Munich
07/2018–01/2020

The exhibition was a result of the practice seminar “Ethnographisches Bildgedächtnis und museale (Re-)Präsentation” (Ethnographic Visual Memory and (Re-)Presentation in Museums). Nine students evaluated visual holdings from various contexts: photographs taken by ethnologists, travellers, colonial actors and photo studios.

- Paul Hempel, Anka Krämer de Huerta, Silvia Lamprecht (eds.), *Fragende Blicke. Neun Zugänge zu ethnografischen Fotografien*. Institut für Ethnologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, 2019 ([PDF](#))





Rassismus. Die Erfindung von Menschenrassen (Racism: the Invention of Human Races)

Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden

05/2018–01/2019

The exhibition analysed the methods used to develop racist thinking and showed images and media employed for disseminating such ideas. It focused both on the role of the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum as a propaganda machine for so-called “racial hygiene” during the Nazi era and on the racist political rule and exploitative policies of colonialism, the consequences of which extend all the way to the migration movements of the present day.

Alongside an examination of the term “race” from a cultural and historical point of view, each section of the exhibition gave a voice to people and movements who take a critical view of racist ideologies and have actively resisted them. Media kiosks, filmed interviews and video installations were used as starting points for discussing issues such as everyday racism, the debate about population genetics, the return of stolen cultural objects and the challenges of a post-migration society.

- ▶ Susanne Wernsing, Christian Geulen, Klaus Vogel (eds.), *Rassismus: Die Erfindung von Menschenrassen*, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, 2018

Noisy Images

Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt (RJM), Cologne

05/2018–07/2019

In her work with historic photographs in the collection, the Belgian artist Antje Van Wichelen brings this purportedly silent medium to life. During her Artist meets Archive residency she viewed thousands of these photographs. Together with pictures from the collections of other ethnographic museums, she developed an artistic approach that allows these images to be viewed in a completely new way. In the installations that Van Wichelen created for the exhibition, she addressed both the transient nature of the medium of photography and the people photographed. In an accompanying workshop she collaborated with residents of Cologne to develop an intervention on selected photographs in the permanent exhibition of the RJM.

- ▶ Booklet Antje Van Wichelen, *NOISY IMAGES*, RJM

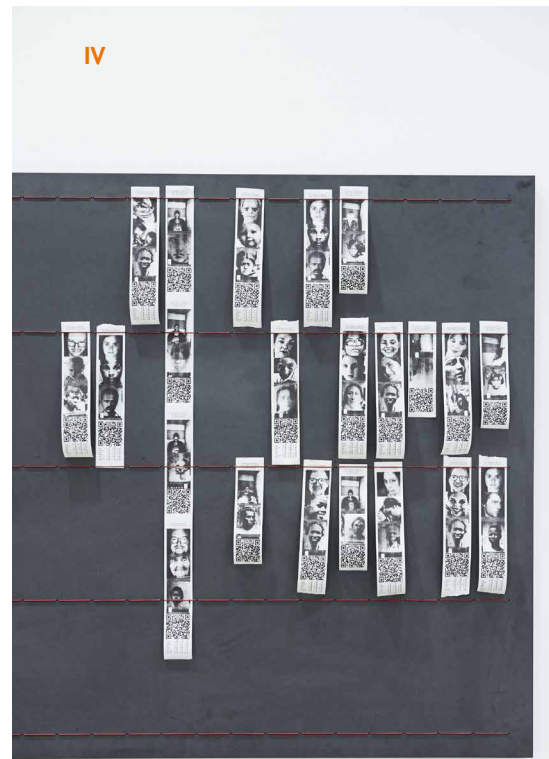
The Dead as far as [I] can remember

Tieranatomisches Theater Berlin

2018-2019

The theme of the exhibition was colonial violence, anti-colonial resistance, human remains and objects from the former colonies in museums and collections. In four chapters the diversity of knowledge and the controversies about colonial history

- I–III: The exhibition “Rassismus: Die Erfindung von Menschenrassen” (Racism: The Invention of Human Races)
- IV–V: The exhibition “Noisy Images”





were shown through transnational voices from the past and present, visual and performing artists, scholars and de-colonial activists. Thus, personal histories formed the subject of video sculptures and an animated film reflecting on the methods of collecting, measuring, categorising, storing and presenting skulls from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in terms of the ethical, scholarly and political implications of such collections and their display. The exhibition was supplemented by historical photographs and documents as well as an accompanying programme of performances, lectures and discussions.

Der Wilde schlägt zurück – Kolonialzeitliche Europäerdarstellungen der Sammlung Lips (The Savage Hits Back – Colonial-Era Portrayals of Europeans in the Lips Collection)

Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt (RJM), Cologne
03/2018–06/2018

In the 1930s the book *The Savage Hits Back* by Cologne ethnologist Julius Lips (1895–1950) made considerable waves, with its description of how Europeans became the object of artistic portrayals in the colonial territories. Lips interprets the portrayals as admiration for the foreigners, but also as criticism and mockery of the occupiers. His polemical interpretations reveal the “colonial ruler” as the true barbarian. The exhibition told the story of this book and showed a selection of portrayals of Europeans from the collection that Lips amassed in Cologne. The many-layered stories behind the objects reveal different historical perspectives on colonial history.

- ▶ Anna Brus, Lucia Halder and Clara Himmelheber (eds.), *Der Wilde schlägt zurück. Kolonialzeitliche Europäerdarstellungen der Sammlung Lips*, Edition Imorde 2018.

Zurückgeschaut (Looking Back)

Museum Treptow, Berlin
since 10/2017

The exhibition takes a critical look at the Berlin Trade Exhibition in Treptower Park – the first German colonial exhibition – in 1896 and more generally at German colonial history, which has yet to be properly addressed. It came about through co-operation between the Initiative Schwarzer Menschen in Germany (Black People’s Initiative in Germany – ISD) and Berlin Postkolonial.

The Blind Spot: Art in Bremen During the Colonial Period

Kunsthalle, Bremen
08/2017–11/2017

The exhibition examined the connections between the history of the Kunstverein art association in Bremen and the trading history of the Hanseatic city and looked at works in the collection in terms of their colonial context. It set up a dialogue between the European and extra-European viewpoints in the collection of the Kunsthalle Bremen, including contemporary standpoints in art. Its relevance for the present was discussed and our perceptions of ourselves and other peoples were placed in the context of today’s globalisation and migration.

- ▶ Julia Binter, Anna Brus, Anna Greve and Yvette Mutumba (eds.), *The Blind Spot: Bremen, Colonialism and Art*, Bremen 2017

Rum, Schweiß und Tränen – Flensburgs koloniales Erbe (Rum, Sweat and Tears – Flensburg’s Colonial Heritage)

Schifffahrtsmuseum, Flensburg
06/2017–03/2018

The exhibition project was part of the Fellow Me! programme of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation). Young curators from abroad were taught about various areas of cultural policy in German museums and then

I-II: The exhibition “Der Wilde schlägt zurück” (The Savage Hits Back)





had eighteen months to realise a project of their own. In the second of five topics: “Shifted Objects – Postkoloniale Praktiken in Museen” (Shifted Objects – Postcolonial Practices in Museums), the Jamaican cultural scholar Dr Imani Tafari-Ama realised the “rum project”. This told the story of the sugar cane plantations of the Virgin Islands (a Danish colony) in which millions of African slaves were “employed” to produce rum. Flensburg’s economy made huge profits from the rum trade, so that from the eighteenth century onwards it was known as Germany’s “rum city”. It still holds a Rum Regatta every year.

- ▶ Susanne Grigull, Rum, Schweiß und Tränen – Flensburgs koloniales Erbe, in: Museumskunde, Vol. 83 (2), Berlin 2018, pp. 21-23.

German Colonialism: Fragments Past and Present

Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin

10/2016–05/2017

The aim of the exhibition was to provide an insight into the interests at stake in German colonial history and to trace its course and dynamics. The aim was to reveal the underlying ideology of colonialism and the practices of German colonial rulers, which ranged from everyday violence to genocide. A further aim of the exhibition was to illustrate the broad spectrum of actors and their goals and motifs as well as the specific experiences of colonialism in individual colonies. A special focus was the scope for action of colonised peoples, who were named decidedly as actors. The exhibition was designed as a collaborative project with curators in residence from Tanzania and Namibia as well as in cooperation with the National Museum of Tanzania.

- ▶ Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum, *German Colonialism. Fragments Past and Present*, exhibition catalogue, 2016.

Benefactors’ Roll of Honour Project

Museum Natur und Mensch, Städtische Museen, Freiburg im Breisgau

04/2014–07/2016

In the Museum Natur und Mensch there is a panel dating from the years when the museum was founded, listing its benefactors – twenty-seven in all – and thanking them for their gifts to the natural history and/or ethnological collections. Among them are people who have proven links to the colonial era, e.g. Eugen Brandeis and Theodor Leutwein. A section of the museum’s website, a media kiosk and an online presentation introduced in 2015 all offer comprehensive background information on the biographies of the benefactors, the provenance of the collections and their links with German colonial history.



From Samoa with Love? Samoa-Völkerschauen im Deutschen Kaiserreich. Eine Spurensuche (From Samoa with Love? Samoan Travellers in Germany 1895–1911. Retracing the Footsteps)

Museum fünf Kontinente, Munich

01/2014–11/2014

Around 1900, several groups of mostly high-ranking Samoans travelled to Germany to put Indigenous people on show. They were accompanied by two German impresarios, who also sold ethnographic objects from Samoa to museums. For the German public these shows were a form of entertainment; for colonial administrations, part of their agenda. The groups from Samoa, on the other hand, travelled to Germany in pursuit of domestic political goals. The exhibition set out to show different perspectives on these ethnic shows. A special focus was placed on finding descendants of those who travelled to Germany for the shows and tracking down oral history sources.

All exhibition and catalogue texts on historical Samoan actors were authorised by Samoan Matai (the heads of Samoan extended families); at audio stations they introduce their ancestors and their views of the shows in their own words. The Samoan-New Zealand artist Michel Tuffery commented on the German-Samoan relationship in his Siamani-Samoa cycle of works presented parallel to the exhibition.

- ▶ Hilke Thode-Arora (ed.), *From Samoa with Love?: Samoan Travellers in Germany 1895–1911. Retracing the Footsteps*, Hirmer 2014.

Foreign Exchange (or the stories you wouldn’t tell a stranger)

Weltkulturenmuseum, Frankfurt am Main

01/2014–01/2015

The exhibition described the disturbing way that human beings have been viewed in the name of science, from the metamorphosis of the human body into an object to the fascination with “other” peoples; from the passion for collecting to the task of preserving “foreign” cultures for posterity and the need to find systems with which to do this. It showed the anthropological photographs of naked people taken by the museum’s founder Dr. Bernhard Hagen between 1879 and 1895 as well as more than a thousand historic artefacts and photographs from many different countries.

- ▶ Clémentine Deliss, Yvette Mutumba (eds.), *Ware & Wissen (or the stories you wouldn’t tell a stranger)*, Weltkulturen Museum, 2016



Decolonize Munich
Stadtmuseum, Munich
10/2013–02/2014



Three exhibition modules presented new perspectives on Munich's colonial history and its impact on the present. The module "freedom roads!" was devoted to today's post-colonial culture of remembrance and gave schools and individual visitors an opportunity to approach this topic creatively. The module "Spuren Blicke Stören" set out to trace the history of German colonial rule in Africa, Asia and Oceania, which was largely repressed in the public domain and in museums. The third module consisted of an installation by the Benin artist Georges Adéagbo, who contrasted the concepts of own and foreign and addressed the question: What does contemporary culture consist of.

- ▶ Eva Bahl, Sarah Bergh, Tahir Della, Zara S. Pfeiffer and Martin W. Rühlemann (eds.), Decolonize Munich. Dokumentation und Debatte, exhibition catalogue, Munich 2016.

AUSTRALIA

GADI
Australian Museum, Sydney
2018

The site of the Australian Museum is in Gadigal territory. The exhibition told the story of Sydney from the point of view of the Gadigal community and was understood as a response by the First Nation to the impact of colonialism. The central theme of the exhibition was the endurance of culture. Rare objects from Gadi were acquired as new cultural material for the permanent collection. The objects illustrate the survival of people and ongoing cultural practices in the Sydney region. The exhibition was conceived in collaboration with local Aboriginal Elders and communities.

ningina tunapri
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Hobart
since 2008

Ningina tunapri is the first exhibition at the museum to be developed by Aboriginal curators in collaboration with Aboriginal communities. It includes contemporary works of art and is intended to symbolise an adaptable culture that moves with the times. At the same time, it takes into account how important it is for Aboriginal peoples to question historical collections and archives in order to interpret their common colonial history.

AUSTRIA

A Colonial Thing
Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna
12/2019–09/2020

The exhibition was intended as a contribution to discussions and questions surrounding the repatriation of cultural objects from colonial contexts. It shed a critical light on various guidelines concerning the restitution of colonial objects and contrasted this with the reality of objects in museums. Twelve objects were considered in terms of the guidelines and each of them was commented on from up to three different perspectives. A booklet was compiled for the exhibition containing four recommendations and guidelines for the restitution of objects from colonial contexts.

- ▶ Joy Slappnig and Claudia Augustat, Ein koloniales Ding. Textheft, Vienna 2019.

Sharing Stories. Speaking Objects
Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna
2015–2017

Ethnographic museums like the Weltmuseum Wien are encumbered with a difficult history with respect to their collecting, research and presentation. Many of the objects we find in these museums today were acquired or stolen in a colonialist context. The story of racially motivated research and expropriation and the problem of talking about and interpreting "others" often remains invisible in the way museum objects are presented. The project "Sharing Stories. Speaking Objects" set out to address this history and develop alternative practices of collecting and telling stories. It investigated the point at which different narratives about one and the same object encounter one another and start the process of negotiation. Between 2015 and 2017, various people were invited to bring along an object that meant something to them to one of ten pop-up stations in Vienna, and tell the story of that object.

KENYA

Hazina: Tradition, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa
National Museum Kenya, Nairobi, and British Museum, London
2006–2007

As part of a cooperative exhibition project, 140 objects from the East Africa collection of the British Museum were loaned to the National Museum Kenya in Nairobi for a joint exhibition. The project raised questions of repatriation, which were discussed by the project group. The exhibition was initially regarded as a compromise.

- ▶ Kiprop Lagat, Julie Hudson (eds.), Hazina: Traditions, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa, National Museums of Kenya, 2006





- ▶ Kiprof Lagat, The Hazina Exhibition. Challenges and Lessons for International Museum Collaborations, in: Thomas Laely, Marc Meyer, Raphael Schwere (Hg.): Museum Cooperation between Africa and Europe, Bielefeld 2018, pp. 129-141.



NETHERLANDS

Afterlives of Slavery

Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam
since 10/2017

The exhibition confronts visitors with today's legacy of slavery and colonialism in the Netherlands. The exhibition places enslaved people and their descendants centre stage using personal stories from the past and present to bring the history of slavery to life. The objects on display – as tangible relics of the history of slavery – serve to intensify the experience. The exhibition tells the story of slavery in collaboration with scholars, activists and artists.

SWEDEN

A Stolen World

Världskulturmuseet, Göteborg
2008–2011

The exhibition was devoted to the collection of Paracas textiles that were smuggled illegally out of Peru in the early twentieth century and given to the museum. The title of the exhibition referred not only to the stolen nature of the exhibition objects, but also expressed the idea that what was stolen was more than just physical objects. In 2009, the Peruvian government made a request for restitution, referring explicitly to the exhibits that demonstrate the stolen character of the collection. Five objects were returned in 2014; another eighty-five are due to follow in 2021.

SWITZERLAND

Thirst for Knowledge Meets Collecting Mania

Museum der Kulturen, Basel
03/2019–11/2020

The exhibition references the current debate about the provenance and acquisition of objects in collections. It sets out to examine the motives behind collecting ethnography and raises questions about the treatment of sensitive collections of objects.

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Points of View: Visions of a Museum Partnership

Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich

04/2018–01/2019

Cooperation: Uganda National Museum, Kampala und Igongo Cultural Centre, Mbarara

Three joint exhibitions were conceived in a cooperation project. One of these was “Sichtweisen (Points of View)” at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich. Here the public was able to explore the controversial history of ethnological museums and the voyeuristic gaze upon the inhabitants of colonial territories. The exhibition looked at negotiation processes, the exchange of knowledge and the treatment of multiple voices and perspectives, as well as the use of media and communication culture. Visitors were able to follow Skype conversations and communication via WhatsApp. Via touch screens it was also possible to make virtual visits to Ugandan museums and experience the two jointly devised exhibitions “Drink deeply – Milk Exhibition” (in Kampala) and “The Power of Milk” (in Mbarara).

UGANDA

Road to Reconciliation Exhibition

Uganda Museum, Kampala
2013

The project was launched in 2010 as part of an overhaul of the exhibition. Curatorial practice focused on the re-evaluation, commemoration and mediation of war traumas incurred during the conflicts in Uganda's more recent history. Not only objects but also the practices of Indigenous people from northern Uganda were presented as examples of de-colonisation. Public ceremonies were used to bring about a kind of healing from the violent past.

UNITED KINGDOM

World Gallery

Horniman Museum and Gardens, London
since 2018

The exhibition project tests a new approach embracing multiple perspectives, with curators reaching out to develop exhibition concepts in cooperation with communities of origin. It is accompanied by a collecting initiative that allows doctoral and post-doctoral anthropology students to collect objects for the exhibition in collaboration with the communities they are studying and to bring their views of the objects and their manner of presentation into the exhibition.





The Past is Now – Birmingham and the British Empire

Birmingham Museum and Gallery, Birmingham

10/2017–06/2018

The exhibition took a critical look at the role of Birmingham in the British Empire. It was the result of the pilot programme Change Makers, financed by the Arts Council England. Various methods of interpretation and collaboration were tested in a Story Lab, with a series of short exhibitions that sought to give new direction to the historical collections.

The exhibition was conceived in collaboration with six external curators, consisting of graphic and textile designers, artists, writers, cultural archivists and researchers.

- ▶ [Evaluation Report](#)

RETURNING

The majority of claims for return to date relate to human remains and sensitive collection items such as insignia and religious objects. The following overview provides an insight into returns that have taken place in recent decades. It does not present the discourses and debates surrounding the restitution of collection items, nor does it claim to be exhaustive. The examples of returning are grouped into human remains and other collection items.

GERMANY

Human Remains

Andreas Winkelmann provides an overview of repatriations of human remains from Germany in [Repatriations of Human Remains from Germany – 1911 to 2019](#), in: [Museum and Society, Vol. 18\(1\)](#), University of Leicester 2020.

As part of the Charité [Human Remains Project 2010–2013](#)) human remains from anthropological collections were returned to Namibia ([2011](#), [2014](#)), Australia ([2013](#), [2014](#); Tasmania [2014](#)) and Paraguay (2012, p. 42).

REPATRIATIONS TO AUSTRALIA

Skulls

Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg (LMNM), planned for 2020

The two skulls from Queensland, Australia, were acquired by the collection of the then Naturhistorisches Museum Oldenburg before 1894. This means that they were acquired in a colonial context, which in the majority of cases we consider tantamount to a context of injustice. As far as can be determined, the skulls were never investigated scientifically, because the former Naturhistorisches Museum (now Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg) neither had an anthropological department nor did it or does it specifically conduct research into such issues. Since the skulls are not on display, the LMNM functions solely as a storage location. In the name of a fair and just treatment of the communities of origin, therefore, repatriation is required. Repatriation is being organised together with the Australian Embassy and the Department of Communications and the Arts (Canberra). The following persons are involved: Dr. Annette Schwandner for the Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (Lower Saxony's Ministry of Science and Culture), Dr. Ursula Warnke for the Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg, and Amanda Morley for the Australian Department of Communication and the Arts in the Department of Indigenous Repatriation.

Human remains of people of Roebuck Bay

Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen, Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden and GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, 2019

The human remains of inhabitants of Roebuck Bay in Western Australia were returned after a hundred years. The human remains were re-humanised, i.e. returned to the status of body parts of deceased persons rather than objects. A combination of historical and forensic methods was used to identify their provenance and cause of death. The initial findings were jointly evaluated in Broome; local history and tribal knowledge in the oral tradition provided important additional information. The human remains could be traced to the violent deportation of individuals into forced labour as pearl divers in the context of the colonial development of the region. The bones were sold to the museum in Dresden where they were used for racial research, eugenics and also as exhibits.

Ceremonies for a respectful handover were planned together with the communities of origin. In 2019, a delegation of Nyamba Buru Yawuru and Karrajari elders conducted joint mourning, cleansing and reconciliation ceremonies in the cities of Leipzig and Dresden. Furthermore, a Memorial Resting Place is being created in Broome; the Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen is involved in the concept and is also organising a joint exhibition on the history of these people, on race research and





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on repatriations, which will tour several Australian museums. A room in the Grassi Museum in Leipzig has been designated to display exhibits documenting the repatriation and cooperation.

- ▶ Freistaat Sachsen gibt menschliche Gebeine aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden nach Australien zurück, press release SKD, 2019

Aboriginal ancestral remains of a female member of the Lama Family Landesmuseum Hannover, 2017

In 2011, the Landesmuseum Hannover informed the Australian Embassy that it might have Aboriginal ancestral remains in the holdings of the Ethnology Department. The findings confirmed that the incomplete skeleton in a receptacle made of bark was the remains of a young woman. The provenance of the skeleton was also investigated by in-house and external researchers. Overall, a picture emerged of human remains of an Indigenous woman, which had been unlawfully removed from a burial context and never exhibited or further investigated in the museum. A ceremonial repatriation was staged in the Landesmuseum, attended by representatives of the Australian Embassy, the Repatriation Program, the Ministry of Culture of Lower Saxony and the Lama Lama family. It was conducted in accordance with the principles of the ICOM Code of Ethics and recommendations for the treatment of human remains in museums and collections drawn up by the German Museums Association (2013).

- ▶ Andreas Winkelmann, Repatriations of human remains from Germany – 1911 to 2019, in *Museum and Society*, vol. 18, University of Leicester, 2020, pp. 40–51.
- ▶ Aborigine-Frau kehrt nach 100 Jahren in Heimat zurück, HAZ 24 Oct. 2017

REPATRIATIONS TO EAST AFRICA

Human skull Übersee-Museum, Bremen, 1954

The repatriation of the skull of Sultan Mkwawa was stipulated in Article 246 of the Versailles Peace Treaty [of 1919/20]. Numerous attempts by the British government to procure the skull in the interwar years failed. Governor Edward Twining undertook a renewed attempt in 1953, obviously with the motive of securing Wahehe loyalty to British colonial rule. The Übersee-Museum, represented by its director Helmuth O. Wagner, granted permission for research to be conducted in the stack-room. At the handover in 1954, the authenticity of the skull had not been proven. Adam Sapi, who represented the community of origin, however, officially accepted it as the skull of Chief Mkwawa. The skull was sent to East Africa and handed over to Chief Adam Sapi in a festive



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- I: Cloth for the repatriation ceremony of ancestral remains of a female member of the Lama Lama family, see p. 38
- II-IV: Repatriation of Toi moko from the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne, see p. 41
- II: Members of the delegation signing the repatriation agreement (from left) Tamahou Temara and Hema Temara
- III: Moana Parata covers the *tūpuna* with a mantel of feathers (*kahu huruhuru*)
- IV: Welcoming ceremony for guests at the Māori assembly house Te Hono Ki Hawaiki in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa





ceremony on 19 June 1954. Today it is exhibited in the Mkwawa Museum in Kalenga, a village near Iringa.

- ▶ Bettina Brockmeyer, Frank Edward, Holger Stoecker, The Mkwawa Complex: A Tanzanian-European History about Provenance, Restitution and Politics, in: *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol. 18(2), 2020, pp. 1–23.

REPATRIATIONS TO NAMIBIA

Human remains (skull, upper section of skull, lower jaw)

Landesmuseum Hannover, 2018

The existence of two skulls from Namibia in the holdings of the Natural History Department and the general willingness to repatriate them was communicated to the relevant authorities (Ministry of Culture, Namibian Embassy, German Foreign Office) on several occasions. Anthropological investigations carried out in 2017/18 in consultation with the Namibian authorities found that the human remains were from three persons: the upper section of a woman's skull, a man's lower jaw, and a woman's skull. The findings revised the historical version based on information provided by the Hanoverian merchant August Rautenberg, which was evaluated in parallel by in-house provenance researchers. Rautenberg donated the skulls to the museum in 1909 and 1913 together with false information, although he evidently did on several occasions visit what was then German Southwest Africa where the remains were collected, presumably unlawfully, from burial sites. The repatriation took place in accordance with the principles of the ICOM Code of Ethics and recommendations for the treatment of human remains in museums and collections drawn up by the German Museums Association (2013). The remains were returned at a ceremony in the Friedrichstadtkirche, (French Cathedral), Berlin, together with human remains from other institutions.

- ▶ German-Namibian reconciliation process – memorial service held in Berlin for the return of Namibian remains, German Foreign Office, 31 August 2018.

REPATRIATION TO NEW ZEALAND

Since 1990, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa has returned over 400 Māori ancestors to Aotearoa (New Zealand). The ancestral remains, including Toi moko (tattooed heads), were repatriated from all over the world as part of the state-funded Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme. The museum website features a constantly updated overview of international repatriations.

- ▶ International repatriation
- ▶ Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme, Museum of New Zealand, 2003

Ancestral remains from 109 Māori and Moriori ancestors

Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, 2019

The repatriation honoured a commitment made by the executive board of the Charité in 2011 to return all human remains in the Charité's anthropological collections dating from the colonial period.

A restitution claim was registered in 2010 by the team in charge of repatriations at the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. The repatriation process was initiated during the visit of a delegation from the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to the Charité on 25 June 2018. The New Zealand Embassy in Germany and the German Foreign Office were involved in all decisions and in the handover ceremony. A Repatriation Coordinator was appointed by the Te Papa Museum as the contact in New Zealand.

The handover of the ancestral remains took place on 29 April 2019 at the Charité. A private ceremony was followed by festivities with traditional singing, recitations and speeches during which an official handover protocol was signed. The ancestral remains and a complete printout of all individual case documents were then handed over for transport.

- ▶ Thomas Schnalke, Charité returns Māori and Moriori ancestral remains, press release, Charité Universitätsmedizin, 29 April 2019.

Toi moko

Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt (RJM), Cologne, 2018

As part of its decolonial collection policy the museum actively contacts communities of origin in order to jointly develop approaches for dealing with the collection. When personal contact was first established at a repatriation ceremony in Bremen's Übersee-Museum in June 2017, the RJM indicated to the Repatriation Coordinator of the Te Papa Museum (HOR, Te Herekiele Herewini) that it wished to participate in New Zealand's repatriation programme. Following an official request from HOR, at the end of 2017 a working group was set up by Cologne City Hall headed by the RJM to compile a draft resolution for the Cologne City Council. The green light was given on 20 March 2018. Afterwards, in consultation with HOR, the museum drew up a contract and prepared the protocol for the return ceremony. This was held privately at the museum on 26 June 2018, attended by four members of the repatriation team, a Māori singing quartet and selected members of the press.

As part of a welcome ceremony in the Te Papa Museum on 13 July 2018, official representatives of various groups took delivery of the Toi moko and other human remains from other institutions in Europe and the United States. They have since been stored in a specially designed room.

- ▶ Māori-Schädel: Rautenstrauch restituiert, rheinische Art, 2018





Human remains of the Moriori and Māori

Übersee-Museum, Bremen, 2017

The human remains of Māori and Moriori from the holdings of the Übersee-Museum mostly stem from a collection and research expedition by the museum's founding director, Prof. Hugo Schauinsland, to New Zealand in 1896/1897. He excavated the Moriori remains on the Chatham Islands without explicit permission from the descendants. Presumably he did not get permission from the colonial British government of the time either.

In July 2013, New Zealand registered a repatriation request which the Senate of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen approved on ethical grounds in May 2016. The repatriation to the state of New Zealand took place on 18 May 2017 via a delegation of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the New Zealand ambassador, Peter Rodney Harris, in a handing-over ceremony at the Übersee-Museum Bremen.

- ▶ Rückgabe menschlicher Überreste der Moriori und Māori an Neuseeland, the Senator for Culture, Senate Chancellery, 2017.
- ▶ Moriiori and Māori remains return from Germany, Te Papa Tongarewa, 2017

Toi moko

Übersee-Museum, Bremen, 2006

Two Toi moko were de-accessioned by the Senate of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen in 1999, and an offer made to return them to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. After the Übersee-Museum received an official return request in 2006 the two heads were sent to New Zealand where a repatriation ceremony was held.

REPATRIATIONS TO PARAGUAY

Skull, scalp and preserved private parts of an Aché girl

Centrum für Anatomie, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, 2012

As part of the Charité Human Remains Project, interdisciplinary provenance research was conducted on a skull which is listed in the anatomical collection as “Guajaki Indian woman”, a pejorative term historically given to the Aché in Paraguay.

The research revealed that the anthropologist Lehmann-Nitsche had preserved the head of a girl named Damiana in La Plata in 1908. He sent it to Hans Virchow in Berlin for “racial research”, while the rest of her body remained at La Plata Museum. The physical-anthropological examination of the skull confirmed that it was indeed the skull in the historical case and that “consumption” had been the cause of death. La Plata Museum returned the skeleton to the Aché in 2010, when the whereabouts of the head was still unknown.

As far as the museum was concerned, the repatriation of the skull was a logical step. An official repatriation claim was registered by representatives of the Aché in Para-



guay. The human remains were packed into a simple parcel and taken to the Paraguayan embassy in Berlin together with documentation of the provenance research findings. There – after both parties had given a short speech – they were handed to the Paraguayan ambassador by the chairman of the Charité. An Argentinian film-maker documented the restitution in Berlin, the arrival among the Aché and the burial in Paraguay. The Aché replaced the colonial name of “Damiana” with the Aché name “Kryygi”.

- ▶ Katrin Koel-Abt, Andreas Winkelmann, The identification and restitution of human remains from an Aché girl named “Damiana”: an interdisciplinary approach, in: *Annals of Anatomy*, 195, 2013, pp. 393-400.

REPATRIATIONS TO THE USA

Human remains of Native Hawaiians

Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2017

Between 1896 and 1902, human remains were stolen from burial caves in Hawai'i and sold directly to the Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology), Dresden. For the provenance research the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) worked together with representatives of the Hui Mālama I Na Kūpuna 'O Hawai'i Nei (the group caring for the ancestors of Hawai'i) and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The repatriation ceremony was attended by high-ranking representatives of Hawaiian organisations as well as the Economic Officer of the Embassy of the United States, Robert Folley.

- ▶ Freistaat Sachsen gibt menschliche Gebeine aus Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden an Hawai'i zurück, press release, SKD, 2017

Other collection items

RETURNS TO THE CONGO

Christian African cult objects

Museum der Steyler Missionare “Haus Völker und Kulturen”, Sankt Augustin, 1986

A total of thirty-five cult objects reflecting a typological and religious syncretism of Christian and old Congolese beliefs were returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be exhibited as national heritage in the new National Museum in Kinshasa.



RETURNS TO NAMIBIA



Family Bible and whip of Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi (1830–1905)

Linden-Museum Stuttgart, 2019

The objects were looted by German troops in 1893 during the attack on Witbooi's headquarters in Hornkranz. A repatriation request was issued on behalf of the Republic of Namibia by the ambassador and the Witbooi family.

On behalf of the state of Baden-Württemberg, Theresia Bauer, Baden-Württemberg's Minister of Science and Education, returned Hendrik Witbooi's family Bible and whip to the Republic of Namibia on 28 February 2019. The ceremony was held in front of some 3,000 people in Gibeon, the seat of the Witbooi family and home of many Nama clans. President Hage Geingob accepted the objects in the presence of the Founding President of the Republic, Dr Sam Nujoma, former President Hifikepunye Pohamba, Parliamentary President Peter Katjavivi, Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila and other members of the government and parliament, representatives of the community of origin and the Witbooi family.

- ▶ [Hendrik Witbooi's Family Bible and Whip](#), exhibition, Linden-Museum, 2019

Stone Cross of Cape Cross

Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin, 2019

The Stone Cross of Cape Cross has been in the permanent exhibition of the Deutsches Historisches Museum since 2006. In a diplomatic note from 1 June 2017, the Republic of Namibia asked the Federal Republic of Germany to return the cross. In June 2018 the interdisciplinary symposium "The Stone Cross of Cape Cross – Colonial Objects and Historical Justice" grappled with the subject: more than 350 German and international guests took the Stone Cross as a starting point for a public and unprejudiced discussion of how to deal with colonial objects in museums from the point of view of philosophical ethics, history, museology and international law. The contributions to the symposium were published in the magazine *Historische Urteilskraft*. In May 2019, the advisory board of the Deutsches Historisches Museum agreed to return the Stone Cross to the Namibian state. The cross has been back in Namibia since late summer of 2019.

- ▶ [The stone cross from Cape Cross](#), press releases from the Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2018–2019.
- ▶ [Historische Urteilskraft, Vol.1](#), magazine of the Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2019.
- ▶ [Symposium "Die Säule von Cape Cross"](#), nine lectures, Deutsches Historisches Museum, YouTube 13.02.2019



Letter journals and historical documents of Hendrik Witbooi

Übersee-Museum, Bremen, 1996

In 1935, August Wulff sold two letter journals and other documents belonging to the Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi to the Deutsches Kolonial- und Übersee-Museum.

The price, according to the museum's register, was 425 Reichsmark. In a letter from November 1940, Wulff described how he had come into possession of the documents: "When the Witbooi revolt began in 1904, the Witboois left Gibeon where I was living at the time, to gather in Riedmond/Mariental. The population of Gibeon, around forty whites, was left to fend for itself for months on end. For safety reasons we burned all the natives' boat yards. Before that we made a cursory search of their huts and it was then that two native books and letters ended up in my hands."

In 1994, a history student discovered the historical Witbooi documents in the Übersee Museum archive. The Bremen city archive restored the documents. On the initiative of Dr Viola König, then director of the museum, as well as Dr Peter Junge, head of the Africa Department, the documents were returned to Namibia. Dr Henning Scherf, Mayor and President of the Bremen Senate, handed over the documents during a festive banquet in Bremen's town hall on 20 June 1996 to celebrate the first state visit of President Dr Sam Nujoma to Bremen. Today the documents are stored in the Namibian national archive.

RETURNS TO THE UNITED STATES

Grave goods of the Chugach

Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK), Berlin, 2017/18

In November 2015, a delegation from the Chugach Alaska Corporation visited the depot of the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. In February 2017, the EM in Berlin received a letter of inquiry from the Chugach Alaska Corporation, asking for support with the repatriation of objects from burial contexts in the region. The same month the US Embassy sent a diplomatic note to the German Foreign Office, stating that it supported the repatriation request. On 18 December 2017, the Board of Trustees of the Stiftungsrat der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Foundation of Prussian Cultural Heritage) agreed to return nine objects from the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum to the Chugach Alaska Corporation.

The objects were grave goods that Johan Adrian Jacobsen had brought to Berlin after travelling the North-west coast of America and Alaska from 1882 to 1884 on behalf of the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, now the Ethnologisches Museum. All evidence suggests that the objects were plundered from graves without the permission of the Chugach community (now Chugach Corporation). On 16 May 2018, a festive public ceremony was held in the Ethnologisches Museum at which the objects were handed over to the Vice President of the Chugach Corporation, Joe Johnson. At the same time, the two parties agreed to work together more closely in the future.



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INTERNATIONAL Human Remains

REPATRIATIONS TO AUSTRALIA

Human remains of Tasmanian Aboriginals

British Museum, London, United Kingdom, 2005

The human remains take the form of two ash bundles of Tasmanian Aboriginals believed to have died at the end of the nineteenth century. The ashes were wrapped in animal hide. The bundles were originally collected by George Augustus Robinson (head of the so-called Friendly Mission in Tasmania). Entries in Robinson's diaries suggest that he had considerable difficulties in procuring the bundles for the collection, because their owners were unwilling to part with them.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre asked the British Museum four times, in 1985, 1994, 2001 and 2002, to return the remains. Only when Section 47 of the Human Tissue Act came into force in 2004 could these requests be acted upon with effect: prior to this point the trustees had no authority to release them from the collection.

► [Final Dossier: Request for Repatriation of Human Remains](#), British Museum, 2006

The British Museum publishes repatriation requests and the decision processes relating to human remains on its website.

► [Claims on Human Remains in the British Museum](#)

REPATRIATIONS TO BOTSWANA

Remains of a man

Darder Museum Banyoles, Spain, 2000

The corpse of an African man, aged around twenty-seven (probably a member of the San), was stolen from his grave in 1830 by two French taxidermists, taken to France and prepared. The Spanish museum purchased the prepared body in 1916 and placed it on display. It remained there until 1997 under the label "Bushman of the Kalahari" ("El Negro"). His skin was treated with shoe polish to make it look darker. In 1991, the first conversations took place between a UNESCO secretary and the former mayor of Banyoles about what had become of the human remains. In 1997, repatriation was discussed once again by the UN and the Organisation of African Unity; thereafter the human remains were removed from the exhibition.

In 2000, the corpse was sent to the National Anthropological Museum in Madrid where the artificial parts (wooden spine, eyes, hair, genitals) were removed. The skull and the remaining bones were sent to Botswana in a coffin (the skin remained in

I: Return of Witbooi objects, see p. 43

II–III: Hermann Parzinger, president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, handed over nine funerary objects from Alaska to John Johnson, vice-president of the Alaska Chugach Corporation, in a public ceremony on 16 May 2018. The objects had been in the ethnological museum since the 1880s. see p. 45



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Madrid) and buried on 5 October 2000 in Tsholofelo Park in Gaborone. More recent research suggests that the man originally came from South Africa, had died there and been dug up.

- ▶ Frank Westerman, *El Negro en ik*, revised edition, Amsterdam, 2019.

REPATRIATIONS TO CANADA

Beothuk skulls

National Museums Scotland, United Kingdom, 2019

The skulls of Chief Nonosabasut and his wife Demasduit were stolen from graves in the Red Indian Lake region (Central Newfoundland) along with other grave goods, probably in 1827 by William Epps Cormack, the son of a Scottish merchant. He passed them on to his mentor for donation to the collection of the University Museum, Edinburgh (now the National Museum of Scotland). In 2017, the government of Newfoundland filed a formal request for repatriation of the remains; no genealogical descendants are known. The skulls have subsequently been exhibited in various Canadian museums.

- ▶ Beothuk remains to leave museum in Scotland only to go to another museum, APTN News, 2019

REPATRIATIONS TO NEW ZEALAND

A constantly updated overview of international repatriations can be found on the website of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

- ▶ International repatriation

Toi moko

Musée de Rouen, France, 2011

In 2007, the Natural History Museum of the city of Rouen was planning to proactively repatriate a head to New Zealand. The approval of the relevant ministry had been obtained but the minister of culture at the time tried to prevent the repatriation, and the administrative court decided in her favour. The head was then returned to the New Zealand ambassador in breach of the court order. Not until 2010 was a special act passed by the French parliament (LOI n° 2010-501) for the return of other Māori heads to New Zealand.

- ▶ First repatriation of Māori remains from Rouen Museum, France, press release, Te Papa Tongarewa, 2011
- ▶ LOI n° 2010-501 du 18 mai 2010 visant à autoriser la restitution par la France des têtes Māoris à la Nouvelle-Zélande et relative à la gestion des collections

Bone fragments

British Museum, London, United Kingdom, 2008

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa requested the repatriation of seven Toi moko and nine human bone fragments. The British Museum returned only the bone fragments in line with the Human Tissue Act (2004).

- ▶ Request for repatriation of human remains to New Zealand, British Museum, 2008

Mummified remains of small child, net containing nine human vertebrae, coffin with skeletal fragments and Māori Toi moko

Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna, Austria, 2015

The Austrian naturalist and museum curator Andreas Reischek travelled to New Zealand in 1877 to work as a taxidermist at the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch. During his twelve years in New Zealand he collected more than 450 artefacts from the Māori, which today form a major constituent of the New Zealand collection at the Vienna Weltmuseum. He also plundered abandoned settlements and burial grounds of the Māori and took skulls, skeletons, and samples of hair, skin and tissue. The human remains were handed back to a delegation from New Zealand at a festive ceremony on 19 May 2015.

- ▶ Die Heimkehr der Māori, kurier.at, 2015

REPATRIATIONS TO NORDIC COUNTRIES

Sami skulls

Historiska museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 2019

In the 1950s, twenty-five skulls were exhumed on an old Sami burial ground in Lycksele and taken to the History Museum for research purposes. After a repatriation ceremony they were buried in Lycksele.

- ▶ Swedish museum to return exhumed skulls of 25 Sami people, The Guardian, 2019

REPATRIATIONS TO SOUTH AFRICA

Human remains of Sarah Baartmann

Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, France, 2002

Sarah Baartman (or Saartje Baartman) was an enslaved Khoisan woman who was brought to Europe by a Dutch farmer in 1810 and presented at exhibitions in London and Paris. After her death in 1815 her body was cast, dissected and parts of it preserved. The cast and the skeleton were exhibited until 1974 in the Musée de





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l'Homme (a department of the National Museum of Natural History).

In 1994, Nelson Mandela requested repatriation in the name of representatives of the Khoisan; in 1996, the request was reiterated and in 2000, the South African ambassador registered an official request for the repatriation of the mortal remains of Sarah Baartman. Only in 2002 was a special law passed by the French government (Loi n° 2002-323), which enabled the return within two months of its coming into force.

- ▶ [Case Sarah Baartman - France and South Africa](#), C. Renold, A. Chechi, M.-A. Renold, Platform ArThemis, Art-Law Centre, University of Geneva, 2013
- ▶ [Loi n° 2002-323 du 6 mars 2002 relative à la restitution par la France de la dépouille mortelle de Saartjie Baartman à l'Afrique du Sud](#)

REPATRIATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

Native American human remains and other sensitive objects

National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Washington D.C., USA, 1990 until today.

The Smithsonian Institution provides an annual overview of national and international repatriation processes and presents special repatriations in detail. The majority of cases deal with objects that were returned to the communities of origin in line with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). But objects proven to have been acquired illegally are also repatriated.

- ▶ [Annual Report of Repatriation Activities of the Smithsonian Institution](#), Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, 2017
- ▶ [Overview of reports](#)
- ▶ [Repatriation Office of the National Museum of Natural History](#)

Native American human remains and other sensitive objects

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, USA, 1990–2015

In line with NAGPRA Penn Museum has returned countless sensitive objects to Indigenous communities of origin, among them more than 764 grave goods and more than 257 human remains.

- ▶ Williams, S. O. Espenlaub and J. Monge, [Finding Their Way Home](#): Twenty-five Years of NAGPRA at the Penn Museum, L.F., 2016.

Other collection items

RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA

Secret sacred objects and emu-feather headdresses from Aboriginal communities

Manchester Museum, United Kingdom, 2019

The objects were taken from the country without permission during British colonial rule in the twentieth century.

A total of forty-three objects were returned to representatives of the Aranda (Central Australia), the Gangalidda Garawa (Northwest Queensland) the Nyamal of Pilbara (Western Australia) and the Yawuru of Broome.

- ▶ [Manchester Museum Returns Ceremonial and Secret Sacred Material Back to Traditional Custodians](#), Manchester Museum, 2019
- ▶ [Gangalidda Garawa and Nyamal Nations receive significant material from Manchester Museum at Australia House handover ceremony](#), press release, AIATSIS, 2019

Other case studies of returns to Aboriginal communities

Australian Museum

- ▶ [Case Study: Western Australian Museum 2005](#)
- ▶ [Case Study: La Perouse 2002](#)
- ▶ [Case Study: Larrakia 1996/2002](#)

RETURNS TO CANADA

Objects of Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Vancouver Island

Royal BC Museum, Victoria, Canada, 2016

At the beginning of the twentieth century, cultural and art objects were brought to the Royal BC Museum from the territory of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations. In 2011 the Huu-ay-aht asked the museum to return part of their cultural heritage and art in a physical and legal transfer in line with the [Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement](#) (2006). A total of fifty-one objects identified as belonging to the Huu-ay-aht First Nations are in the Royal BC Museum. The remaining thirty-four objects will be returned when an official request is made.

- ▶ [The Return of Cultural Treasures to Huu-ay-aht First Nations](#) (Video), Royal BC Museum, 2016



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Sacred bundles of the Blackfoot First Nations, Alberta Province

Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada, 1990–2000

The following publication features a comprehensive summary of experiences and repatriation processes relating to objects from Blackfoot Communities: Gerald T. Conaty (ed.), We are Coming Home – Repatriation and the Restoration of Blackfoot Cultural Confidence

G'psgolox Totem of the Haisla Nation, Kitamaat Village, British Columbia

Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 2006

In 1872, Chief G'psgolox of the Haisla commissioned a carved totem pole to commemorate the meeting with the mythical being Tsooda. The totem pole was sold by the Swedish consul Olof Hanson to the Swedish Museum under dubious circumstances. The museum possessed no proof of purchase or such like, but only an export certificate. Repatriation talks dragged on for fifteen years. In 2000, the museum received a replica made by the Haisla. In the end, the repatriation took place on ethical – rather than judicial – grounds.

- ▶ Returning the Past: Repatriation of First Nations Cultural Property, Four Case Studies of First Nations Repatriation, UBC Museum of Anthropology, 2008
- ▶ The Repatriation of the G'psgolox Totem Pole: A Study of its Context, Process, and Outcome, Stacey R. Jessiman, International Journal of Cultural Property, Vol. 18, Issue 3, 2011, pp. 365–391

RETURNS TO THE CONGO

Congolese objects

Africa Museum, Tervuren, Belgium, 1977–1982

A total of 114 Congolese objects were transferred by the Belgian museum to the Institute for National Museums in Kinshasa (IMNZ) (928 of these objects hailed originally from the Musée de la vie indigène in Leopoldville, Kinshasa, and were being stored temporarily in Tervuren due to the instable situation). The IMNZ was plundered in 1990. Many of the objects are considered to have disappeared since.

- ▶ Sarah van Beurden, Restitution or Cooperation? Competing Visions of Post-Colonial Cultural Development in Africa, Global Cooperation Research Papers 12, 2015.
- ▶ ICOM, One Hundred Missing Objects: Looting in Africa, updated reprint 1997.



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RETURNS TO GREENLAND

Objects from Greenlandic communities of origin

Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen, Denmark, from 1982

After Greenland achieved self-government and autonomy in 1979, an intensive cooperation with Denmark took place from 1982 to 2001. In this context 35,000 archaeological and ethnographic objects were returned to the Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu (Greenlandic National Museum and Archive) from the Danish National Museum. This process was later described as *Utimut* (Greenlandic for return).

- ▶ UNESCO Museum International (Nos. 241–242, 2009, pp. 25–36), report by the Athens International Conference on the “Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin”
- ▶ Mille Gabriel, Jens Dahl (eds.), Utimut: Past Heritage – Future Partnerships, 2008
- ▶ Lill Eilertsen, Breaking the Ice: Conflicts of Heritage in the West Nordic Regions, University of Oslo, 2012

RETURNS TO INDONESIA

1,500 historical artefacts

Dutch government, 2020

The artefacts hail from the Nusantara Museum in Delft, which closed due to financial difficulties in 2013. It was the only museum in the Netherlands specifically dedicated to art and cultural objects from Indonesia, a former Dutch colony. The museum had originally offered to hand over around 12,000 artefacts to the Museum Nasional Indonesia in Jakarta, but the general director of culture decided on a selection of 1,500 objects.

The returning process began in November 2016 with a symbolic handing over of a Bugis keris (an asymmetrical dagger) from the collection to President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo. The last artefacts were handed over at the beginning of January 2020. The artefacts will be presented to the public in an exhibition.

- ▶ Netherlands returns 1,500 historical artifacts to Indonesia, The Jakarta Post, 7 January 2020

In 2019, the Dutch National Museum of World Cultures also announced that stolen art from the former colonies would be returned to the countries of origin and that it was considering the repatriation of objects of “great cultural or social value”. Other case examples are described in the publication

- ▶ Jos van Beurden, Treasures in Trusted Hands. Negotiating the Future of Colonial Cultural Objects, CLUES, Vol. 3, 2017



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RETURNS TO NIGERIA

Okukor

Cambridge University, United Kingdom, pending

The bronze cockerel from the Kingdom of Benin is described as a royal heirloom. British troops plundered it from the palace in 1897 during a punitive expedition. The British Commander Neville donated the bronze statue to Jesus College in 1905. After student protests it was removed from public display in March 2016. Its return was discussed with the Benin Dialogue Group.

- ▶ [A bronze cockerel stolen in the 19th century to be returned to Nigeria](#), CNN style, 2019
- ▶ [Cambridge University agrees to return bronze cockerel looted from Nigeria in 19th century after “Empire” row](#), Mail Online, 2019

RETURNS TO NORDIC COUNTRIES

Objects from the Sami

Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway, since 2007

A working group of representatives from the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History, the Sami parliament and various Sami museums is looking at different models for repatriating extensive Sami collections from Norwegian museums as part of the Bååstede project (Return of Sami Cultural Heritage).

The objects will go to six Sami museums, depending on their place of origin; the ownership rights of the repatriated objects will be transferred to the Sami. In return, the six museums are obliged to invest in modern standards of display and storage conditions. In July 2019 the first transfer contract for 1,600 objects was signed by all parties.

- ▶ [Samiske kulturskatter vender hjem](#), Norsk Folkemuseum, 2019
- ▶ [Bååstede: Return of Sami Cultural Heritage](#), Norsk Folkemuseum, since 2007

Sami objects

Kansallismuseo, Helsinki, Finland, 2017

The Sami collection of the Finnish National Museum is considered internationally relevant on account of its breadth and history. Approximately one third of the collection consists of objects of the Skolt Sámi, a small sub-group of the Finnish Sámi. More than 2,600 objects were given to the Siida Museum.

- ▶ [Finnish National Museum repatriates a collection to Sami Museum Siida](#), The Barents Observer, 2017

RETURNS TO THE USA

Teikweidi Totem of the Tlingit, Alaska

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge Massachusetts, USA, 2001

The *Teikweidi* totem was stolen from Gaash village in 1899 during the Harriman Alaska expedition. In 1999, the Cape Fox Corporation registered a request for its return on behalf of the Saanya Kwaan Teikweidi clan in line with NAGPRA. The totem was returned in 2001. The museum commissioned Nathan Jackson (a master Tlingit carver) to make a totem pole from the cedar tree that was gifted by the clan at the return ceremony. The Kaats' Xóots Kooteeya totem stands in the Peabody Museum.

- ▶ [NAGPRA in the Museum Galleries: Two Poles, One Story](#), Peabody Museum

Ghost Dance shirt

Glasgow Museums, United Kingdom, 1999

The Ghost Dance shirt was probably taken from a dead body at the Massacre of Wounded Knee in 1890. Together with a series of other objects, it was sold to the Kelvingrove Museum in 1892 by George Crager, the Lakota translator for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, when the show was in Glasgow for three months during the winter of 1891/92.

The first repatriation application was rejected in 1995. Glasgow City Council did not approve the repatriation until 1998, and it was agreed upon mainly owing to the circumstances of acquisition and the Shirt's status as a sacred and secret object – and on the condition that the Wounded Knee Survivors Association “preserve in perpetuity the Ghost Dance Shirt [and] ensure that the Ghost Dance Shirt is displayed at all reasonable times in an appropriate place where the Shirt and details of its historical and cultural significance are accessible to members of the public”.

- ▶ [Memorandum submitted by Glasgow City Council](#), Council to the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2000
- ▶ N. Curtis, [Repatriation from Scottish museums; Learning from NAGPRA](#), Museum Anthropology 33 (2), 2010, pp. 234–248.



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PROJECTS FOR DIGITAL AND VISUAL REPATRIATION



Foto zoekt Familie

Tropenmuseum Amsterdam, Netherlands
since 2012 (2013 online)

The “Photo Seeks Family” project is seeking to track down the owners or closest relatives of 300 photo albums containing more than 80,000 photos from Indonesia, which arrived in the Netherlands from the Dutch East Indies between 1945 and 1948 during the Indonesian war of independence.

The albums have been digitised and a website and smartphone app made to try to track down the owners or descendants. If owner families are found, they are asked about the stories behind the photos and these are then documented on the website.

Museum Affordance

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

In co-operation with: Pitt Rivers Museum, Royal Anthropological Institute, British Library, National Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, institutions in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and others.

The project uses the example of the collection of ethnologist N. W. Thomas to look at ways for museums to use colonial-era ethnographic archives and collections to promote intercultural understanding, recover lost histories, atone for past injustices, build relations, exchange knowledge and engage creatively across social and cultural borders. As well as addressing the historical circumstances that led to the creation of the collection, the project is reconstructing the route of Thomas’s travels using field research. Copies of Thomas’s photographic material and sound recordings are being given to the communities who live along the route and further field research conducted. All information about the project is provided on the [\[Re:\]Entanglements](#) website.

Kainai Visual Repatriation Project

Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom
2001–2003

The project involved digitising a photographic inventory compiled in 1925 in the territory of the Kainai Nation, Alberta, Canada. Additionally, copies of the photos were given to the communities of the descendants and questions regarding heritage objects and photos for Native Americans today were explored.

- ▶ Alison Brown, Laura Peers, and members of the Kainai Nation, Pictures Bring Us Messages/Sinaakssiiksi Aohtsimaahpihkookiyaawa’: Photographs and Histories from the Kainai Nation, Toronto 2006.



After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge

National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA, 2012

In this workshop, researchers from various anthropological fields talked to representatives of Indigenous communities and collection institutions about a number of approaches for the digital repatriation of collection items to Indigenous communities. Best practices and case studies of digital repatriation were documented..

- ▶ [3D printing is helping museums in repatriation and decolonisation efforts](#), The conversation, 2019
- ▶ [After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge](#), Museum Anthropology Review, Vol. (1–2), 2013

Digital Repatriation in Vietnam: Towards an (Alter) Native Media Tradition

The aim of this research project was to return a series of films made by the government about the thousand-year-old tradition of water puppetry to the village of Bao Ha in the Red River Delta, where they were originally shot.

As well as being asked their opinions on these films, five village inhabitants were selected and trained to make their own films about water puppetry. This second series of films symbolically represents the process of digital repatriation. The collaboration is intended to function as a model for ethnographic filmmaking.

- ▶ Sam Pack, [Digital Repatriation in Vietnam: Towards an \(Alter\)Native Media Tradition](#), Visual Anthropology, 26(3), 2013, pp. 215-222.



INT

ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS ON RETURN OF COLLECTION ITEMS

Status 31 July 2020

Hoa Hakananai'a (Moai) of the Rapa Nui

British Museum, London, United Kingdom

During the expedition of the HMS Topaze to Rapa Nui (captained by Powell) in 1868, Hoa Hakananai'a, a four-tonne basalt sculpture dating from 1200 BC, was removed from the sacred precinct of Orongo and given to Queen Victoria in 1869 by the Lords of the Admiralty. She donated the sculpture to the British Museum in the same year. Since 2017 the Rapa Nui have been requesting the return of the statue. To date the British Museum is only discussing a loan. The Rapa Nui sculptor Benedicto Tuki has offered to make an exact copy of the Hoa Hakananai'a in the hope that this might pave the way for a return of the original monolith.

- ▶ [Rapa Nui Representatives Visit British Museum to Discuss Repatriation of Moai Statue](#), Smithsonianmag, 2018
- ▶ [Collection online: Hoa Hakananai'a \("lost or stolen friend"\)/Moai \(ancestor figure\)](#), British Museum

Objects of the Taíno to Jamaica

British Museum, London, Great Britain

The British Museum owns several objects from the Indigenous Taíno culture. Jamaica's Minister of Culture publicly asked the museum to repatriate cultural objects collected on the island under British colonial rule. Of particular interest are the figure of a birdman spirit and the figure of Boinayel the Rain Giver.

- ▶ [Jamaica Joins a Growing Number of Nations Calling on the British Museum to Repatriate Its Cultural Artifacts](#), Art Net, 2019

Objects from Sri Lanka and Indonesia

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Netherlands

The objects were collected during the Dutch colonial and military campaigns. A diamond believed to have belonged to Sultan Panembahan Adam von Banjarmasin is probably among them, as is a ruby-studded canon. The Rijksmuseum allegedly has around 1,000 stolen artefacts in its collection.

In early 2019 it was announced that talks were under way with representatives from Sri Lanka and Indonesia to discuss the repatriation of ten objects.

- ▶ ['There Is No Excuse': Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum in Discussions to Return Looted Colonial Art](#), Frieze, 2019



INT

Artefacts of the Rapa Nui

Kon-Tiki Museet, Oslo, Norway

In 1855, the Norwegian explorer and ethnographer Thor Heyerdahl organised an expedition to Easter Island. During this trip and a follow-up visit in the 1980s he collected thousands of artefacts – among them tiny sculptures recovered from caves, ancient weapons and human remains. Heyerdahl promised to return the objects after analysing them and publishing the results. Some of the analyses are still ongoing today.

King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway signed an agreement in 2019, promising to transfer objects from the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo to a “well equipped” museum on Easter Island – probably the Father Sebastian Englert Anthropological Museum. The exact date of the repatriation has yet to be decided.

- ▶ [Norway Will Repatriate Thousands of Artifacts Taken From Easter Island](#), Smithsonianmag, 2019



POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows is a brief, illustrative overview of national and international guidelines and recommendations which might be pertinent for dealing with collections from colonial contexts. The overview distinguishes between international legal documents, government documents and documents of government authorities directly responsible for museums, documents of specialist associations and documents of individual museums. The examples are also intended as suggestions for museums wishing to produce their own guidelines.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

UNESCO, 1970

This convention is, to date, the most important instrument in international law for combatting the illegal trade in cultural property. The distinguishing feature of cultural heritage is that any country can designate it as being particularly important for archaeology, pre-history, history, literature, art or science on religious or non-religious grounds. As such it belongs to a state's national heritage and is assigned to the state in question (Art. 1 and Art. 4). Consequently, that state is also responsible for conserving and protecting this cultural property.

The provisions of the convention are only valid among its **signatories** and only take effect legally after states have adopted the convention in national law. Moreover, the convention cannot be applied to cultural property that was exported before it came into force.

The UNESCO website contains information on practical and legal resources, e.g.:

Illicit trafficking of cultural property

▶ [Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property](#)

▶ [Legal and practical instruments](#)

▶ [The Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention, UNESCO, 2015](#)

DOCUMENTS BY SPECIALIST ASSOCIATIONS

[Code of Ethics](#)

[International Council of Museums \(ICOM\), 2017](#)

Most museums base their work on the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums. It is designed for use by museums around the world and represents a minimum standard for museum work. In addition to listing a series of principles, it also provides recommendations on best professional practice. The ICOM Code of Ethics is not legally binding.

In some countries certain minimum standards are defined by national laws or government regulations. Country-specific codes of ethics have also been created which are in part based on the ICOM Code of Ethics.



Vermillion Accord on Human Remains

World Archaeological Congress (WAC), 1989

These ethical guidelines concern the treatment of human remains found during archaeological excavations. The main principles in this accord, to which states can commit voluntarily, are showing deference and respect vis-à-vis mortal remains, the wishes of the dead (to the extent that these are known or can reasonably be inferred), and the local communities, relatives and guardians of the dead. The accord emphasises the necessity of respecting the scientific research value of human remains. Moreover, it stresses that the concerns of various ethnic groups should be respected and that agreement on the disposition of human remains should be reached by negotiation.

Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects

World Archaeological Congress (WAC), 2005

This accord is an extension of the Vermillion Accord. When exhibiting human remains, care should be taken to obtain the relevant permission, and the context and manner of the display should be appropriate to the values held by the community of origin. Moreover, any potential objections to the display must be respected.



GUIDELINES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES (INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT POLICIES)

Since the 1990s, above all in countries with Indigenous communities, guidelines have increasingly been defined for and within museums which prioritise the rights of the communities from which the objects and human remains originated.

According to these guidelines, museums are generally obliged to supply information about their holdings, and to give communities of origin, traditional custodians or descendants a say in what happens to the objects as well as rights of access; moreover, the latter are also the owners of human remains and secret sacred objects. In giving access to objects, museums must observe the respective cultural requirements of the community of origin. In addition, they must support the communities of origin in conserving the objects. The production of replicas is only permitted in consultation with the community of origin, and the involvement of people from Indigenous communities must be increased in museums.

Indigenous societies demand that they should have the prerogative to interpret their own cultural heritage and to have a say in what happens to it. This claim is made primarily for objects and human remains currently situated outside the country of origin. Discussion is currently under way on the repatriation of objects and human remains.

National guidelines frequently refer to Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

United Nations/UNESCO, 2007

In resolution 61/295 Indigenous peoples were declared equal to all other peoples, and for the first time their rights “which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies” were universally affirmed. Article 12 states that: “Indigenous peoples have the right to [...] use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains. 2. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned.” The resolution is not binding and must first be ratified before it can be adopted into national law.



DOCUMENTS OF SPECIALIST ASSOCIATIONS

AUSTRALIA

[Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities: Principles and Guidelines for Australian Museums Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage](#)

Museums Australia,¹ 2005

These guidelines are a reworking of the 1993 document [Previous Possessions, New Obligations: Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) (2000 version). The document establishes standards for employing representatives of communities of origin, caring for collections and returning and administering secret sacred objects. The initial results of the [Indigenous Roadmap project](#) have been integrated into the reworked guidelines. The project features a ten-year roadmap which brings together strategies for achieving an overall goal. These guidelines are currently being reworked once more. Proposals can be accessed online for discussion – [First Peoples: Connecting Custodians](#).

[First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries](#)

Australian Museums and Galleries Association, 2018

This roadmap is based on five key elements for change, which aim to ensure that museums and galleries establish stronger relationships to Australian communities, move away from their Eurocentric foundations and secure a reconciliation between First Peoples and settler Australians.

According to the roadmap, the manner in which Indigenous communities are represented in museums should be changed and Indigenous perspectives should be enhanced. Indigenous values should be embedded into the museum business. Indigenous voices must be heard on committees and in cultural competency training. Indigenous staff and their knowledge should be valued and their conditions of employment should be improved. Responsibility for looking after Indigenous cultural material should be handed over to the respective Australian societies of origin; those responsible must receive training for this role. Moreover, the roadmap supports the repatriation of collection holdings.

¹ After a name change in 2018 it is now known as the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (a merger of Museums Australia und Museums Galleries Australia).



[First Peoples and Australian Museums and Galleries: A Report on the Engagement of Indigenous Australians in the Museums and Galleries Sector](#)

Australian Museums and Galleries Association, 2018

This report on the AMaGA Indigenous Roadmap Project is a comprehensive evaluation of previous guidelines and working practices adopted by Australian museums. It investigates the extent to which the participation of communities of origin has already taken place and which strategic opportunities exist for further expansion. Moreover, the report also contains case studies on exhibition projects and cooperative ventures as well as an overview of Australian laws and international agreements.

CANADA

[Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples](#)

Canadian Museums Association, 1994

This report was produced in conjunction with the Assembly of First Nations. Its key points call for an understanding of the significance of collections for First Peoples as well as for educating large sections of society. It stipulates that First Peoples should become more involved in interpreting the collections and gain better access to them. Human remains and illegally acquired objects should be repatriated. Representatives of First Peoples should be trained in museum activities, and museum staff should learn about the cultural values and knowledge of First Peoples. Moreover, the government should support First Peoples in making repatriation claims for objects held in other countries.

USA

[SAR Guidelines for Collaborations](#)

School for Advanced Research, 2017, updated 2019

These recommendations were developed in conjunction with Indigenous and non-Indigenous museum experts, leading cultural figures and cultural professionals. They provide information on establishing successful relationships between museums and communities, but are not specifically designed as a tool for consultations on the Native American Graves Protection Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). There are two sets of guidelines aimed at different groups of users:

- ▶ [Guidelines for Communities](#)
- ▶ [Guidelines for Museums](#)

Additionally, [various case studies](#) are presented on the website.



GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUSEUMS

AUSTRALIA

Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies

Australian Institute of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), 2012

The principles in these research guidelines for the specialist field of Australian Indigenous Studies are based on showing respect for the rights of Indigenous communities, including the right to full and fair participation in all the processes, projects and activities that affect them, and the right to monitor and preserve their culture and heritage. They are intended to ensure that research with and about Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders is founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between all people and/or communities involved in the research.

NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, too, the practices established by museums are intended to respect the rights of the Indigenous population. The country's national museum, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, is legally tasked with presenting, researching and preserving the national heritage of the country's cultures and knowledge of its natural environment. Numerous how-to guides are available via the museum's website:

New Zealand Museums Standards Scheme

2007

One aspect of these standards is bicultural practices, which address the recognition of Māori cultural values and knowledge. At the heart of this are the protocols (*tikanga*), which regulate the correct approach to cultural objects (*taonga*, meaning "treasures") in a museum setting. In addition to this, a series of resource guides and guidelines have been published online which deal with various topics embracing all areas of museum work, while also providing support for communities of origin. There is a complete overview on the website [Access guides, reports, and other useful material provided by National Services Te Paerangi](#).

- ▶ Mātauranga Māori and Museum Practice, resource guide for museums on integrating Mātauranga Māori²



- ▶ Bicultural Governance, resource guide covering options for and implementation of bicultural administrative structures at museums
- ▶ A Guide to Guardians of Iwi Treasures, 2001, resource guide for protocols when dealing with objects from New Zealand communities of origin

A 2015 evaluation of the Standards Scheme is intended to form the basis for reworking the guidelines: [Report on the New Zealand Museums Standards Scheme](#), National Services Te Paerangi, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2015.

SAMOA

In 2018, the National Culture Framework 2018–2028 was approved. Based on two UNESCO conventions, it sets out a vision for the protection and promotion of Samoa's cultural heritage.³

National Heritage Policy 2018–2028

Government of Samoa, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2018

These guidelines are intended to serve as Samoa's code of practice over the next decade in all its efforts to protect and promote Samoan cultural heritage. For example, stipends should be awarded in support of training for museum curators. The role of museums is to ensure that Samoa's cultural heritage is protected, while also assisting communities and working with them as they carry out this task.

² An all-embracing concept which includes all situations where Māori concepts, values, themes or perspectives become apparent.

³ Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003), Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005)



DOCUMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

AUSTRALIA

[Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol](#)

Museum of Art and Applied Sciences, 2018

In this protocol, the rights to Indigenous cultural and intellectual property are defined as being of fundamental significance.⁴ These rights relate to all aspects of the Indigenous communities' cultural heritage (tangible and intangible).

This heritage includes all traditional and cultural knowledge (sciences, knowledge of plants and animals, stories, designs and symbols, ritual knowledge, literature and language), cultural assets (including but not limited to art, crafts, ceramics, jewellery, weapons, tools, visual art, photographs, textiles, contemporary art practices), performances (ceremonies, dance and song), human remains, secret and sacred things (including sites) and the documentation of Indigenous heritage.⁵ The protocol briefly outlines the principles and associated specifications and procedures.

CANADA

[Indigenous Collections and Repatriation Policy](#)

Royal BC Museum, 2018

These guidelines regulate collaboration with First Nations in order to manage the care, preservation, documentation and interpretation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage through a process of cooperation. Repatriating the remains of ancestors is a priority of the museum.

The museum has a separate department, the [Indigenous Collections and Repatriation Department](#).

[Indigenous Repatriation Handbook](#)

Royal BC Museum and Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Ungaay, 2019

This handbook is primarily aimed at Indigenous First Nations societies and is intended to help them carry out repatriations. It provides basic information on specifications, procedures and potential contacts as well as a checklist for planning repatriations.

4 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property - ICIP.

5 See p. 3 of the protocol.



STATE-SPONSORED PROGRAMMES

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUSEUMS

AUSTRALIA

[Return of Cultural Heritage](#)

Australian Institute of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

With financial support from the Australian government, AIATSIS is leading a pilot project to intensify efforts to return objects, photographs, manuscripts, audio-visual recordings, etc. located outside Australia.

► Overview of [AIATSIS](#) projects

[Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation](#)

Australian Government, updated 2016

The aim of these guidelines is to repatriate all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human remains and sacred objects, whether located in Australia or abroad, to the respective Indigenous groups. The programme funds activities such as research into provenance, contact with and travel to institutions (including those outside Australia) that hold human remains of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in their collections, as well as organising the repatriation of objects and human remains, including transportation. An advisory board is developing strategies, and eight Australian museums are able to coordinate repatriations in consultation with Indigenous communities. Via the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian government is actively encouraging Australian ambassadors to establish contact with institutions in individual countries and set up preliminary negotiations. Since there is no internationally regulated legal process in existence, the goal is to reach decisions on a case-by-case basis and negotiate solutions. The Australian government views repatriation as an important step in healing injustices that have occurred, strengthening the rights and culture of Indigenous communities and establishing a positive relationship between collecting institutions and Indigenous communities.



NETHERLANDS

[Shared Cultural Heritage Programme](#)

Cultural Heritage Agency, 2018

This programme aims to promote international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge. Owing to limited resources, the partnership was limited to ten countries. For the period leading up to 2020, the following countries collaborated within the framework of the common cultural policy: Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname and USA. Funding was provided for training and workshops in cooperation with international institutes and regional/local stakeholders, promoting the professional development of experts in the partner countries and in the Netherlands. The training took place in the Netherlands or in a partner country and was organised on a bilateral or multilateral basis. The three main themes were underwater archaeology, collections and the built environment.

► [Programme brochure](#)

NEW ZEALAND

[Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme](#)

Museum of New Zealand, 2003

The New Zealand government granted the Te Papa Museum the authority and funding required to set up this state-sponsored repatriation programme. In addition to repatriating all the human remains of *kōiwi tangata*, *kōimi tangata* (Māori skeletons) and Toi moko (tattooed heads) located outside New Zealand, a further aim was to categorise and repatriate human remains to the respective community of origin within New Zealand. The Te Papa Museum coordinated and supervised all aspects of the repatriations on behalf of the Māori communities of origin. This included conducting research into provenance and carrying out negotiations on repatriations at the international and national levels. Human remains that could not be assigned to any community of origin were kept at Te Papa in conditions that respect Māori culture. This repatriation programme relied on individually negotiated solutions and the willingness of the institutions in question to return items.

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MUSEUM GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DOCUMENTS OF SPECIALIST ORGANISATIONS

AUSTRALIA

[Code of Ethics for Art, History & Science Museums](#)

Museums Australia, 1999

CANADA

[Ethics Guidelines](#)

Canadian Museums Association, 2006

GERMANY

[Recommendations for the Care of Human Remains in Museums and Collections](#)

German Museums Association, 2013, updated 2021

These guidelines provide practical assistance for all German museums on handling human remains and objects which contain human remains. The document poses key questions concerning various museum activities as well as repatriation and provides brief answers. A number of background accounts not only offer insights into various disciplines that deal with human remains in the context of museums, but also give the perspectives of communities of origin.

[Guidelines for German Museums: Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts](#)

German Museums Association, 2018, updated 2021

These guidelines, which apply to all German museums, deal with pertinent questions about how to treat collections from colonial contexts. In addition to giving recommendations for museum practice, the document also provides background information giving in-depth explanations on European colonialism, the history of collections in various kinds of museums, the general principles of provenance research, legal aspects and differing understandings of property and law. Experts from communities of origin explain the significance of sensitive collection holdings and illustrate decolonisation methods in managing collections and exhibitions. The guidelines conclude with an overview of formal colonial jurisdictions, illustrating the global scale of the phenomenon of colonialism.



**Dekolonisierung erfordert Dialog, Expertise und Unterstützung –
Heidelberger Stellungnahme (Decolonising Requires Dialogue, Expertise and
Support – The Heidelberg Statement)**

Directors of Ethnographic Museums in German-Speaking Countries, 2019

This declaration of intent was signed by more than thirty directors of ethnographic museums. They undertake to ensure that anyone associated with the collections by virtue of their history and cultural practices should ascertain the whereabouts of collections that affect them, as far as this is possible.

Wherever possible, preserved knowledge should be shared with its originators and their descendants, and ongoing research into collection holdings should be made public.

**Leitfaden zur Standardisierung von Provenienzangaben (Guidelines on
Standardising Provenance Information)**

Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e. V., 2018

These guidelines present the results of previous research into provenance, although they are not a guide to the methodology of provenance research. In addition to giving a short definition of provenance, the guidelines list basic content-related standards that can be used when preparing standardised information on provenance and illustrates these with examples.

**Empfehlungen zum Umgang mit Präparaten aus menschlichem Gewebe in
Sammlungen, Museen und öffentlichen Räumen (Recommendations for the
Care of Specimens Made from Human Tissue in Collections, Museums and
Public Spaces)**

Arbeitskreis Menschliche Präparate in Sammlungen, 2003

These recommendations comprised the first position paper in Germany about collections. They can be applied to anatomical, anatomical/pathological and anthropological collections, but do not give any recommendations for action with regard to ethnological collections or for dealing with repatriation claims by communities of origin.



NAMIBIA

Report on the Human Remains Management and Repatriation Workshop

Museums Association of Namibia, 2017

The Working Group on Namibian Human Remains in Museums (NaHRiN) was set up on the basis of the findings of the workshop.

NETHERLANDS

Ethische Code Voor Musea

Museumvereniging, 2006

NEW ZEALAND

Code of Ethics & Professional Practice

The Museums of New Zealand Incorporated, 2013

SAMOA

Code of Ethics for Pacific Museums and Cultural Centres

Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA), 2018

UNITED KINGDOM

Code of Ethics for Museums

Museums Association, 2015

USA

A Guide to International Repatriation: Starting an Initiative in Your Community

Association on American Indian Affairs 2015

National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums

American Alliance of Museums, 2008

This paper deals with a wide range of general tasks undertaken by museums, including those concerning archaeology and ancient art. The standards are divided into five categories: acquisitions, loans, existing collections, ownership claims and fiduciary obligations.



[Code of Ethics for Museums](#)

American Alliance of Museums, 1993 revised 2000

[Core Standards for Museums](#)

American Alliance of Museums

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUSEUMS

CANADA

[Preventive Conservation Guidelines for Collections](#)

Government of Canada

This website contains comprehensive information on caring for and conserving collections, including collections of sacred and culturally sensitive objects.

FRANCE

[The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics](#)

2018

The report by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy focuses on changing national legislation and developing bilateral agreements in order to enable repatriation. It proposes the immediate return of all objects with an assumed link to violent and/or illegal appropriation.

GERMANY

[Menschliche Überreste im Depot. Empfehlungen für Betreuung und Nutzung \(Human Remains in Storage: Recommendations for Care and Use\)](#)

Koordinierungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Universitätsammlungen, 2020

This handbook focuses on conservation standards for dealing with human remains in closed storage facilities not open to the public.



[Framework Principles for Dealing with Collections from Colonial Contexts](#)

The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the Federal Foreign Minister of State for International Cultural Policy, the Cultural Affairs Ministers of the Länder and the Municipal Umbrella Organisations, 2019

These principles comprise a political statement and brief recommendations, but they are not formal legal regulations. All museums, collectors and the art trade are called upon to encourage the reappraisal of the history of the origin of collection items from colonial contexts. Human remains from colonial contexts should be prioritised when reassessing collection holdings. These should be returned to the countries of origin, if the latter so wish.

In 2020, on the basis of the Framework Principles, the Federal Government, the Länder and municipal umbrella organisations set up the [German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts](#). The aim is to facilitate access to information about objects from colonial contexts in Germany for people and institutions from the countries and communities of origin.

The concept for the contact point is available here as a [PDF](#).

[Unmittelbarer Umgang mit menschlichen Überresten in Museen und Universitätsammlungen \(A First-Hand Approach to Human Remains in Museums and University Collections\)](#)

Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden, 2018

This publication documents the results of a workshop and provides a range of viewpoints from the spheres of science, museums – especially from the perspective of restoration and conservation – religion and ethics, as well as considering the standpoint of descendants of the deceased.

[Besitz und Eigentumsfragen \(Possession and Ownership Issues\)](#)

Koordinierungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Universitätsammlungen, 2020

This guide specifically addresses possession and ownership from a legal perspective, focusing on the distinctive aspects of dealing with scientific collections.

[Leitfaden zum Erwerb von Museumsgut. Eine Handreichung für die Museen im Land Niedersachsen \(Guidelines to the Acquisition of Museum Property: A Handbook for Museums in the Federal State of Lower Saxony\)](#)

Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, 2013

These guidelines are designed as a practical reference tool. They pose questions of general importance on acquiring collection items and explain provenance and legal principles.



SWEDEN

Good Collections Management: Guidance for Managing the Return of Cultural Objects

Swedish National Heritage Board, 2020

This guide briefly discusses key aspects of identifying collection items and presents basic approaches to repatriation that have a broader application than merely collection holdings from colonial contexts. It was implemented in consultation with the country's central museums and the Sami Parliament. It takes the view that knowing about the provenance of collection items is a fundamental element of good collection management. Bearing this in mind, it presents several suggestions for conducting provenance research. The points to be considered when returning objects from the collection are intended to support museums in formulating their own strategies for action.

Good Collections Management: Guidance for Handling Human Remains in Museum Collections

Swedish National Heritage Board, 2020

This guide provides assistance in dealing with human remains in collections. It establishes a basis for making decisions by giving a brief overview of ethical approaches, laws, agreements and existing ethical guidelines. The guide is intended to help museums to formulate their own guidelines for dealing with human remains. In addition, it addresses key aspects of dealing with human remains in every sphere of museum work.

SOUTH AFRICA

Draft National Policy on the Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects

Human Remains Repatriation Advisory Committee of the Department of Arts and Culture South Africa, 2019

These guidelines envisage certain protocols that should be observed by all parties, including protocols on dealing with objects and human remains, the participation of Indigenous communities and the procedure for repatriation and restitution.



Policy on the Management of Human Remains in IZIKO Collections

IZIKO Museums of Cape Town, South Africa, 2005

These guidelines distinguish between the unethical and ethical acquisition of human remains. Unethical acquisition of human remains is when they are collected solely for the purpose of racial study or without appropriate consent.

UNITED KINGDOM

Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums

Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003

This guidance was developed primarily with respect to non-European human remains in museums. It provides recommendations on appropriate storage, responsible and transparent communication and the sensitive handling of repatriation claims. A responsible approach is characterised by honesty and integrity, sensitivity, cultural understanding, respect for individuals and communities, responsible communication, openness, transparency and justice. All activities are subject to current law. The validity of claims to possession and ownership should always be ascertained. The recommendations advocate that repatriations should be made on a case-by-case basis, according to criteria (including significance, acquisition, age, status) established by the museum's management. Based on this British guidance, guidelines were then developed in museums in the United Kingdom. The publication is currently (as of 31 July 2020) being revised. The Report of the Working Group on Human Remains (2003) gives a summary of the discussion process and the participants.



DOCUMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

AUSTRALIA

[A Repatriation Handbook: A Guide to Repatriating Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestral Remains](#)

National Museum of Australia, 2020

This handbook provides comprehensive information on the processes involved in repatriating ancestors, viewed from the perspectives of museums as well as local communities. It is intended as a reference work on specific topics or problems and suggests strategies for action. It also contains an overview of contact details for repatriation coordinators in individual Australian states and information on the legal situation in Australia.

[Non-Australian Indigenous Human Remains Policy](#)

National Museum of Australia, 2009

These guidelines regulate the approach to human remains of non-Australian origin. Human remains are to be preserved appropriately and repatriated to legitimate claimants upon request. The museum itself makes no claims to decide about what happens to the human remains after they have been returned.

CANADA

[Repatriation Policy](#)

Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, 2001

This policy applies to human remains, sacred objects, archaeological and ethnographic objects and all related records (including collection notes, photographs, sound recordings) of the Canadian First Nations, Inuit and Métis. All human remains and objects are to be returned solely to an Indigenous government or to a government-authorized organisation. Requests from Indigenous people in other countries will be considered in accordance with international law or special agreements.

[Guidelines for Repatriation](#)

UBC Museum of Anthropology, 1995, updated 2000

These guidelines recognise all items belonging to the Canadian First Nations as their intellectual and cultural property. Requests for returning human remains or objects will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

NETHERLANDS

[Return of Cultural Objects: Principles and Process](#)

Museum Volkenkunde, Africa Museum, Tropenmuseum, Nationaal Museum van Wereldmuseum, Leiden, Dorp Berg en Dal Amsterdam, 2019

These guidelines list criteria that make repatriation possible. Under the terms of the Heritage Act, the Dutch state is designated the owner of the property. A transfer of ownership requires the consent of the state via the relevant minister or ministry. The museums advise the responsible ministry on the basis of the guidelines, but the final decision lies with the responsible minister.

Key criteria include proof that the collection or appropriation of the object was illegal at the time, and/or proof that the claimants were involuntarily separated from the cultural objects; moreover, proof must be furnished that a cultural object is of cultural, religious or traditional significance for a nation or community of origin and that continued storage in the collection can be examined in relation to analogous standards laid down in the 2016 Heritage Act (Erfgoedwet), which addresses Dutch national heritage and culture.

According to the guidelines, various international agreements should be taken into account: the Washington Principles (1998), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the UNIDROIT Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954).

A list of the guidelines is followed by definitions of the criteria. Claims for repatriation are examined according to these criteria, and questions of legality are clarified promptly by conducting research into provenance. Any claims submitted should include all known and documented aspects, including questions of ownership and history of the property, the connection between the applicant and the cultural property, the cultural and national context, and any rights and claims of other potential applicants.

USA

[A Step-by-Step Guide through the Repatriation Process](#)

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, 2014

This guide contains, among other things, sample letters for making requests for information and for officially appointing representatives of the communities of origin, requests for negotiations about repatriating and evaluating collections, as well as requests for the return of human remains, grave goods associated with human remains, and secret sacred objects and objects of cultural heritage.



OVERVIEW OF FURTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES ISSUED BY INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

The following compilation contains names and links to further guidelines and recommendations available online which have been issued by various museums worldwide. The overview is arranged according to the various areas of responsibility for museums and then alphabetically by title. It makes no claim to completeness.

GENERAL

- ▶ [Overview of policies](#), National Gallery of Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Overview of policies](#), National Museum of Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Overview of policies](#), British Museum (United Kingdom)

ENGAGEMENT POLICIES

- ▶ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Rights and Engagement Policy](#), National Gallery of Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human remains policy](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secret/sacred and private material policy](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Indigenous cultural rights and engagement policy](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)

HUMAN REMAINS POLICIES

- ▶ [Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Ground in England](#), Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Guidelines for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museum Collections](#), Museums Galleries Scotland (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Handlungsrichtlinien der Karl-May-Stiftung zum Umgang mit menschlichen Überresten und Gegenständen von religiöser Bedeutung](#), Karl-May-Museum (Germany)
- ▶ [Human Remains in Collections](#), British Museum (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Human Remains Policy](#), Penn Museum (USA)
- ▶ [Natural History Museum London Policy on Human Remains](#), Natural History Museum (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Policy for the Care and Use of Human Remains](#), Manchester Museum (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Policy on Human Remains Held by the University of Oxford's Museums](#), Pitt Rivers Museum (United Kingdom)



COLLECTING AND PRESERVING

- ▶ [Access Request Form Policy](#), Berndt Museum of Anthropology (Australia)
- ▶ [Access to Collections](#), Penn Museum (USA)
- ▶ [Acquisitions Policy](#), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (Australia)
- ▶ [Borrowing by originating communities](#), UBC Museum of Anthropology (Canada)
- ▶ [Care and Conservation Policy](#), Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collection Policy](#), Royal British Columbia Museum (Canada)
- ▶ [Collection Policy](#), University of Alberta Museums (Canada)
- ▶ [Collections Policy](#), Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (New Zealand)
- ▶ [Collection Policy](#), Otago Museum (New Zealand)
- ▶ [Collections Care and Conservation Policy](#), Pitt Rivers Museum (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collections Development Policy](#), Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collections Development Policy](#), Horniman Museum and Gardens (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collections Development Policy](#), Pitt Rivers Museum (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collections Development Policy](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Collections Guidelines](#), Sydney University Museums (Australia)
- ▶ [Collections Management Policy](#), University of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Collection Management Policy](#), Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology (USA)
- ▶ [Collections Management Policy 2012](#), Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (USA)
- ▶ [Collections Management Policy 2018](#), Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (USA)
- ▶ [Deaccessioning and Disposal Policy](#), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (Australia)
- ▶ [Digital Strategy](#), Royal British Columbia Museum (Canada)
- ▶ [Due Diligence and Provenance Policy](#), National Gallery of Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Governance Policy](#), Auckland War Memorial Museum (New Zealand)
- ▶ [Guidelines for Collection Access](#), UBC Museum of Anthropology (Canada)
- ▶ [Institutional Ethics Statement](#), Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (USA)
- ▶ [Management of Culturally Sensitive Materials](#), UBC Museum of Anthropology (Canada)
- ▶ [Policy and Procedures on Curation and Repatriation of Human Remains and Cultural Items](#), University of California (USA)
- ▶ [Preventive Conservation](#), Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (New Zealand)

RESEARCHING

- ▶ [Research Access Policy](#), American Museum of Natural History (USA)
- ▶ [Research Strategy](#), Canadian Museum of History (Canada)
- ▶ [Visiting Researchers Policy and Protocols](#), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (Australia)

EDUCATING

- ▶ [Online content and participation policy version no. 1.0](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)

RETURNING

- ▶ [Collections - return of cultural objects policy](#), National Museum Australia (Australia)
- ▶ [Repatriation](#), Sydney University Museums (Australia)
- ▶ [Procedure for handling claims for the transfer of stewardship of human remains](#), Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (United Kingdom)
- ▶ [Repatriation Policy](#), Canadian Museum of History (Canada)
- ▶ [Repatriation Guidelines](#), UBC Museum of Anthropology (Canada)
- ▶ [Indigenous Repatriation Handbook](#), Royal British Columbia Museum (Canada)
- ▶ [Indigenous Collection and Repatriation Policy](#), Royal British Columbia Museum (Canada)
- ▶ [Repatriation Policy](#), University of Alberta Museums (Canada)
- ▶ [Repatriation Policy](#), Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (USA)

NATIONAL LEGISLATION

AUSTRALIA

As statutory bodies, most large state-owned museums, libraries, galleries and archives have legal structures that determine all aspects of how their collections are administered.

The [National Museum of Australia Act](#) (1980) was the first piece of legislation to stipulate that museums should include a Gallery of Aboriginal Australia, which would present collections of historical material of the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Moreover, wherever possible these collections should be developed and maintained by Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders. The [National Museum of Australia Regulations](#) (2019) define specific functions and powers for this purpose. The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act](#) (1984) governs the preservation and protection of places, areas and objects that are significant for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, in line with the cultural stipulations. The [Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act](#) (1986) implements the 1970 UNESCO convention. The law bans the export of Indigenous objects such as rock art and sacred objects as well as human remains.

In addition, a series of laws at state level rule that only the Indigenous community with the closest cultural or biological association is legally entitled to own the respective human remains and sacred objects. The laws recognise that Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are the primary guardians of their cultural heritage. These acts also contain provisions on due diligence, which stipulate that all appropriate and practicable measures must be taken in order to prevent damage to cultural heritage. An overview of the legal framework in Australia is contained in Appendix 1 of [First Peoples and Australian Museums and Galleries: A Report on the Engagement of Indigenous Australians in the Museums and Galleries Sector](#) (2018).

CANADA

Since 1990, museums have been subject to the [Museum Act](#) (Bill C-49, amended 2012). This lists all the standards that museums must adhere to in order to work responsibly. It does not cover human remains or restitution claims.

The [Indigenous Human Remains and Cultural Property Repatriation Act](#) (Bill C-391) is intended to provide a national strategy for repatriating the remains of Indigenous people and cultural property (similar to NAGPRA). This includes objects of historical, social, ceremonial or cultural significance. The draft bill has been going through the parliamentary process since 2018. It was originally submitted under the name [Aboriginal Cultural Property Repatriation Act](#) (Bill C-391).

In 2004, the legislative assembly of the Canadian province Alberta passed the [First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriations Act](#) (FNSCORA, Alberta Regula-

tion 96/2004). The law governs the procedure for returning sacred ceremonial objects to the Blackfoot First Nations.

FRANCE

State museums in France are subject to the principle that all collection holdings are regarded as national heritage and are thus inalienable, i.e. in purely legal terms they cannot be surrendered without the agreement of an expert commission (LOI n° 2002-5, Article 11; Ordonnance n° 2004-178, Titre V, Section 2, L. 451-3). So far, any repatriations made have required an amendment to the law (e.g. LOI n° 2002-323: the mortal remains of Sarah Baartman to South Africa, LOI n° 2010-501: human remains to New Zealand).

GERMANY

Cultural property in the holdings of state and municipal museums or in comparable publicly run institutions and institutions that receive more than 50 per cent of their financing from public funds is protected by the Gesetz zum Schutz von Kulturgut KGSG (2016) KGSG (Cultural Property Protection Act, 2016) as “national cultural property”⁶. The federal law essentially regulates the export, import, trade in and – in certain cases – restitution of cultural property.

A licence is required to export any cultural property over a particular age and value (Section 24 Clauses 1 and 2). The import of any cultural property is forbidden if it comes from a member state of the European Union or a contractual partner of the 1970 UNESCO convention and, moreover, if it is protected there as national cultural property and it was exported contrary to the laws of the country in question (Section 28 No. 1). The trade in cultural property is banned if it has been “lost, unlawfully excavated or unlawfully imported” (Section 40 Clause 1). Only EU member states or contractual partners of the 1970 UNESCO convention have hitherto been able to make restitution claims for illicitly exported cultural property. Comprehensive assistance is available for applying this in practice.

The federal structure in Germany means that with the exception of the law to protect cultural property there are no fundamental national regulations that are pertinent to museums.

⁶ “Cultural property” shall mean any movable object or aggregates of things of artistic, historical or archaeological value or from other areas of cultural heritage, in particular of paleontological, ethnographic, numismatic or scientific value (§ 2 KGSG, 2016); these have to be listed in a registry.

NEW ZEALAND

In 1975, the New Zealand government passed the Protected Objects Act. The law was designed to regulate the export of protected and sensitive objects as well as human remains. Moreover, it enabled the restitution of illegally acquired or stolen objects. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act of 1992 laid the legal foundations for the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa as an institution that would protect New Zealand’s cultural heritage. The museum subsequently set up a repatriation programme.

UNITED KINGDOM

According to the British Museum Act (1963), the British Museum and the Natural History Museum (two state museums of United Kingdom) are not permitted to dispose of their collection holdings. Objects may only be disposed of if they are duplicates or of no scholarly value.

Section 47 of the Human Tissue Act (2004) permits museums to de-accession human remains in certain justified cases if they are less than a thousand years old. This provides the legal foundation for repatriations to communities of origin.

The Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act (2007) provides a degree of protection against courts being able to confiscate objects which have been loaned from abroad and are stored in museums in the United Kingdom (Part 6 Protection of cultural objects on loan).

USA

Passed in 1989, the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA, Public Law 101-185 Nov. 28) decreed that a museum dedicated to the history and art of Native Americans would be created under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution (Sec. 3). It also governed the identification and repatriation of human remains and the associated grave goods of Native Americans (Sec. 11).

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, Public Law 101-601 Nov. 16), which was passed as a federal law in 1990, legally mandated the national repatriation of human remains and all associated objects to the respective Native American communities of origin. The law is valid for all museums in the USA that receive federal funding. It has no effect on claims for the repatriation of human remains kept in museums and collections outside the USA.

NAGPRA obliges museums to provide lists of their collections of human remains, grave goods, secret sacred objects and cultural heritage objects for the communities of origin. The museums should consult representatives of the communities of origin when identifying the objects. The museums are obliged to make their archives and

documentation available in order to clarify cultural affiliation and ancestry. Native Americans and their descendants can use the published information as a basis for making restitution claims. Undertaking investigations and providing evidence is the responsibility of the claimant. This can be done in cooperation with the museums. Restitution claims then have to be examined by the museums. Specific deadlines have been set for this. The whole procedure is regulated by NAGPRA.

Further opportunities for research on NAGPRA:

Website of the National Park Service; videos und webinars, which explain the NAGPRA process; database of repatriations so far.

DATABASES

This overview presents examples of databases compiled by museums or by networks of institutions. They can be searched for using either the original language or English.

The overview is arranged alphabetically according to country. It makes no claim to completeness and will not be updated. All the information is current on 31 July 2020.

AUSTRALIA

- ▶ [Australian Museum](#)
- ▶ [Macleay Museum, Nicholson Museum, University Art](#)
- ▶ [National Gallery of Australia](#)
- ▶ [National Museum Australia](#)
- ▶ [Queensland Museum](#)

AUSTRIA

- ▶ [Weltmuseum Wien](#)

CANADA

- ▶ [Canadian Museum of History](#)
- ▶ [Museum of Anthropology at UBC](#)
- ▶ [Royal British Columbia Museum](#)
- ▶ [University of Alberta Museums](#)

DENMARK

- ▶ [Nationalmuseet](#)

FINNLAND

- ▶ [Kansallismuseo](#)

FRANCE

- ▶ [Musée d'Aquitaine](#)
- ▶ [Musée du quai Branly](#)

GERMANY

- ▶ [Archivführer Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte](#)
- ▶ [Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek](#)
- ▶ [Ethnologisches Museum Berlin](#)
- ▶ [Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena](#)
- ▶ [Museen Nord](#)
- ▶ [Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg](#)

- ▶ [Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden](#)
- ▶ [Proveana](#) –Research database of the [Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste](#) (German Lost Art Foundation). It primarily contains the findings of research projects sponsored by the Foundation.

JAPAN

- ▶ [Kyoto National Museum](#)

MEXICO

- ▶ [Museo de Antropología de Xalapa](#)
- ▶ [Museo Nacional de Antropología](#)

NAMIBIA

- ▶ [National Heritage Council of Namibia](#)

NETHERLANDS

- ▶ [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam](#)
- ▶ [Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen](#) (Tropenmuseum, Afrika Museum, Museum Volkenkunde, Wereldmuseum)

NEW ZEALAND

- ▶ [Auckland War Memorial Museum](#)
- ▶ [Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa](#)
- ▶ [Otago Museum](#)

NORWAY

- ▶ [Kulturhistorik museum](#)
- ▶ [Norsk Folkemuseum](#)

SOUTH AFRICA

- ▶ [Anglo-Boer War Museum](#)

SWEDEN

- ▶ [Stockholm National Museum](#)
- ▶ [Världskulturmuseet Gothenborg](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

- ▶ [British Museum](#)
- ▶ [Horniman Museum and Gardens](#)
- ▶ [Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#)
- ▶ [National Museums Scotland](#)
- ▶ [Pitt Rivers Museum](#)
- ▶ [University of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries](#)
- ▶ [World Museum](#)

USA

- ▶ [American Museum of Natural History](#)
- ▶ [Baltimore Museum of Art](#)
- ▶ [Bishop Museum](#) – various databases relating to specific collections
- ▶ [Brooklyn Museum](#)
- ▶ [Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology](#)
- ▶ [M. H. de Young Museum](#)
- ▶ [Museum at Southern Illinois University](#)
- ▶ [Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology](#)
- ▶ [Penn Museum](#)
- ▶ [Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology](#)
- ▶ [Smithsonian National Museum of African Art](#)
- ▶ [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#)
- ▶ [Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian](#)
- ▶ [St. Louis Art Museum](#)
- ▶ [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- ▶ [Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library](#)

FURTHER READING

FURTHER READING

COLLECTING AND CONSERVATION

Conservation ethics

- ▶ **Salvador Muñoz Viñas**, *Contemporary Theory of Conservation*, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 2005.
- ▶ **Marcelle Scott, Catherine Smith**, *Ethics and Practice: Australian and New Zealand Conservation Contexts*, in: Alison Richmond, Alison Bracker (eds.), *Conservation. Principles, Dilemmas and Uncomfortable Truths*, Oxford 2009, pp. 184–196.
- ▶ **Robyn Sloggett**, *Evidence and Authenticity – the Problem of Cultural Relativism in Conservation Decision-making*. Papers from the ICOM-CC and ICOFOM session at the 25th General Conference held in Kyoto, 4 September 2019. ICOM. Paris: ICOFOM, 2019, pp. 141–147, PDF: http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/icofom/images/Icofom-EssenceofConservation-FINAL.pdf#page=143 (12 May 2020).
- ▶ **Dean Sully**, *Colonizing and Conservation*, in: Dean Sully (ed.), *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Maori Meeting Houses outside New Zealand*, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek 2007, pp. 27–43.

Collaborative conservation and care of collections

- ▶ **Sanchita Balachandran, Kelly McHugh**, *Respectful and Responsible Stewardship: Maintaining and Renewing the Cultural Relevance of Museum Collections*, in: Lisa Elkin, Christopher A. Norris (eds.), *Preventive Conservation: Collection Storage*, Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, New York 2019, pp. 3–24.
- ▶ **Miriam Clavir**, *Preserving What Is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations*. Vancouver 2002.
- ▶ **Farideh Fekrsanati**, *Conservation's Role in Building Relationships with Source Communities*, in: *Sharing Knowledge & Cultural Heritage: First Nations of the Americas: Studies in Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples from Greenland, North and South America: Proceedings of an Expert Meeting National Museum of Ethnology Leiden*, No. 39, 2010, pp. 105–116.
- ▶ **Jessica Johnson et al.**, *Aspects of Consultation with Communities*, in: *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, 44 (3), 2005, pp. 203–215,

PDF: <http://resources.culturalheritage.org/osg-postprints/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/02/osg010-04.pdf> (12 May 2020).

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- ▶ **Jennifer R. O'Neal**, The Right to Know. Decolonizing Native American Archives, in: *Journal of Western Archives, Native American Archives Special Issue*, 6 (1), 2015, pp. 1–15.
- ▶ **Elizabeth Pye, Dean Sully**, Evolving Challenges, Developing Skills, in: *The Conservator*, 30 (1), 2007, pp. 19–37.
- ▶ **Robyn Sloggett**, Expanding the Conservation Canon. Assessing Cross-Cultural and Interdisciplinary Collaborations in Conservation, in: *Studies in Conservation* 54 (3), 2009, pp. 170–183.
- ▶ **Bruno Brulon Soares, Leandro Guedes**, Four Waurá Masks in the Indian Museum: a Decolonial Way to Conservation Practice and Theory.. Papers from the ICOM-CC and ICOFOM session at the 25th General Conference held in Kyoto, 4 September 2019. ICOM. Paris: ICOFOM, 2019, pp. 32–38, PDF: http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/icofom/images/Icofom-Essen-coefConservation-FINAL.pdf#page=34 (12 May 2020).

Digitalisation

- ▶ **GRASAC Knowledge Sharing System (GKS)**, network for the history, languages and cultures of the Great Lakes and a database on materials from around the world that relate to the Great Lakes: <https://carleton.ca/grasac/about/> (12 May 2020).
- ▶ **Christen Kimberly**, Tribal Archives, Traditional Knowledge, and Local Contexts: Why the “s” Matters, in: *Journal of Western Archives*, 6 (1), 2015, pp. 1–19, PDF: <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol6/iss1/3> (12 May 2020).
- ▶ **Mukurtu CMS Open-Source-Software** for communities to enable them to administer their own digital heritage. Developed by Washington State University, <https://mukurtu.org/about/> (12 May 2020)

Case studies

- ▶ **Carole Dignard, Kat Helwig, Janet Masory, Kathy Nanowin, Thomas Stone** (eds.), *Preserving Aboriginal Heritage: Technical and Traditional Approaches, Proceedings of a Conference Symposium 2007*. *Preserving Aboriginal Heritage: Technical and Traditional Approaches*, Ottawa, Canada, September 24–28, 2007. Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, Canada, 2008.
- ▶ **Diana Gabler, Helene Tello**, Das Wissen der Anderen: Über die Zusammenarbeit mit Indigenen in der Konservierung und Restaurierung, in: *VDR-Beiträge zur Erhaltung von Kunst- und Kulturgut* 2019/2, pp. 104–115, 2019, Text about the contribution to the VDR Blog: <https://blog.restauratoren.de/das-wissen-der-anderen-ein-beitrag-aus-restauratorischer-sicht-ueber-den-umgang-mit-aussereuropaeischem-kulturgut/> (12 May 2020).
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- ▶ **Nancy Odegaard**, Changing the Way Professionals Work: Collaboration in the Preservation of Ethnographic and Archaeological Objects, in: *Conservation: the Getty Conservation Institute newsletter*, 20 (1), 2005, pp. 17–20, https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/20_1/news_in_cons1.html (5 May 2012).

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- ▶ **Sarah Fründt and Larissa Förster**, Menschliche Überreste aus ehemals kolonisierten Gebieten in deutschen Institutionen. Historische Entwicklungen und zukünftige Perspektiven, in: Joachim Zeller, Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst (eds.), *Deutschland post-kolonial? – Die Gegenwart der imperialen Vergangenheit*, Berlin 2018, pp. 505–531.
- ▶ **Ina Heumann, Holger Stoecker, Marco Tamborini, Mareike Vennen**, *Dinosaurier Fragmente. Zur Geschichte der Tendaguru-Expedition und ihrer*

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- ▶ **Linda Tuhiwai Smith**, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edition, London 2012.
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- ▶ **Jos van Beurden**, *Treasures in Trusted Handpp. Negotiating the Future of Colonial Cultural Objects*, CLUES Interdisciplinary Studies in Cultural, History and Heritage, Vol. 3, 2017.

RETURNING

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- p. 39 IV: Welcoming ceremony for guests at the Maori assembly house Te Hono Ki Hawaiki in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
- p. 47 I: Return of Witbooi objects, photo: Shawn van Eeden
- p. 47 II–III: Hermann Parzinger, president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, handed over nine funerary objects from Alaska to John Johnson, vice-president of the Alaska Chugach Corporation, in a public ceremony on 16 May 2018. The objects had been in the ethnological museum since the 1880s. photo: BMG/photothek/FELIX ZAHN

LEGEND OF SYMBOLS USED



COLLECTING



PRESERVING



RESEARCHING



EXHIBITING



EDUCATING



RETURNING



INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE



GERMAN EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE



INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS



GUIDELINES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



STATE-SPONSORED PROGRAMMES



MUSEUM GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



OVERVIEW OF FURTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES ISSUED BY INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS



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