ZINE OF GLOBAL KNOWLEDGES

#DECOLONIZATION IS NOT A METAPHOR

A project by students of the Humboldt University
Scholars, academics, and activists have urgently called for a change to academic structures conveying a new constellation of discourses surrounding the decolonization of universities, classrooms, and education. Until today, universities have problematic good practices that perpetuate colonial epistemologies. This zine intends to contribute to the 'decolonial turn' and the reinvention of knowledge systems. It epitomizes critical reflections from a heterogeneous group of student identities working within the paradigm of a reinvention of eurocentric scholarship without privileging specific methodologies or elevating certain knowledge systems. It also constitutes a pilot project designed by and with students, originating from the Projekttutorium "Decolonizing Theory in Practice" at Humboldt University. Our coursework aimed to create a space that encourages the analysis of long-established hierarchies and the impact of colonialism in research, learning, and academia.

But even if we alter the limitations of current hegemonic discourses, new problems must be faced, such as the need to build a genuinely diverse university experience by tackling the need to counteract various forms of imperialism and establishing 'authentic' conditions of anticolonial practices. While students, especially students of color in the Global North, find themselves in hostile learning environments, it's a timely project to enable proficient knowledge acquisition for all students.

We owe a particular debt of gratitude to our guest lecturers, who enriched our project team with their contributions: Dr Stephen Temitope (Stellenbosch University) and Dr Ushehwedu Kufakurinani (University of Zimbabwe) offered profound insights into various theoretical topics, spurred many fruitful discussions, and shared personal experiences with our group. Furthermore, as our work often addressed issues related to the geopolitics of knowledge production, the legacy of colonialism and current global inequalities, we were greatly influenced by postcolonial scholars and thinkers who shared their ideas metaphysically with us.

Enjoy reading, learning, and multiplying knowledge.

**Luisa Schneider**
*On behalf of the zine creators*

*Statements made here are our own and not to be accounted as official statements neither of the Humboldt University, the Institute for African and Asian Studies (IAAW), nor of interviewees or guest lecturers.*
THIS MANIFESTO CONSTITUTES A GUIDE AND ANCHOR BASED ON THE COLLECTION OF WHAT THE ESSENCE OF OUR PROJECT REPRESENTS TO US AND WHICH CONCEPTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE MATERIALS, INDIVIDUALS, AND OUR MISSION STATEMENT INCLUDED IN THIS PROJECT.
Plurilingualism refers to the repertoire of multiple language varieties a person is competent to use and to switch between them depending on the situation of use (Gorter & Cenoz 2013).

Multilingualism refers to the coexistence of various languages in a society, which are utilized independently (Gorter & Cenoz 2013).


THROUGH DIFFERENT POWER RELATIONS, MANY PATTERNS OF MULTILINGUAL, POLYLINGUAL AND PLURILINGUAL LANGUAGE PRACTICES INTERMINGLE ON THE GLOBE TODAY. IN THE CASE OF COUNTRIES LIKE GERMANY, THESE INTERLINGUAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY TENSIONS BETWEEN PLURILINGUAL PRACTICES AND MONOLINGUAL MINDSETS OF PARTS OF THE POPULATION (ELLIS ET AL., 2010). BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF POLYLINGUAL SPEAKERS THEMSELVES AND MANY (SOCIO-)LINGUISTS EVALUATE POLYLINGUALISM POSITIVELY AS A REFLECTION OF CREATIVE VIRTUOSITY; WHILE OTHERS REGARD SUCH STYLES IN ACADEMIA, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, ADVERTISING, OR INFORMAL (COUNTERCULTURAL) YOUTH DISCOURSES AS A THREAT TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE?

TOGETHER WITH LECTURERS AND PROFESSORS OF THE LINGUISTIC DEPARTMENT OF THE INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES (IAAW), WE SCRUTINIZE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PLURILINGUAL LANGUAGE PRACTICES, LIMITATIONS OF MONOLINGUALISM; AND MULTI-FACETED FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGES WITHIN THE GERMAN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAD THE GREAT HONOUR TO TALK TO DR KOFI YAKPO (HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY/THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG) ABOUT ANTI-COLONIAL STANCES WITHIN CREOLE STUDIES, INCLUSIVE, PLURILINGUAL LANGUAGE PRACTICES WITHIN CLASSROOMS, AND GLOBAL LINGUISTIC POWER RELATIONS.
THE GERMAN CONSTITUTION DOES NOT DETERMINE A NATIONAL LANGUAGE. WHEREAS AS CONTEMPLATED IN ARTICLE §23 OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, GERMAN IS CONSOLIDATED AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES, AND LEGAL AFFAIRS. SINCE THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, GERMAN ALSO SUPERSEDED LATIN IN SCIENCE AND ACADEMIA WITHIN THE GERMAN "SPRACHBUND". A COMMON MISCONCEPTION DRIVEN BY FORCES OF NATION-BUILDING EPITOMIZES GERMANY AS A MONOLINGUAL AREA. WHILE THE CONTRARY IS THE CASE, MODERN PERSPECTIVES BEG TO DIFFER, EVEN CLASSIFYING GERMAN AS A PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGE (ELLIS ET AL. 2010: 443). MULTILINGUALISM IS PROMOTED THROUGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN ALL EDUCATION LEVELS, WITH THE MOST PROMINENT LANGUAGES ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH, LATIN, AND ANCIENT GREEK. TO DATE, THERE ARE ONLY A FEW OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED MINORITY LANGUAGES, NAMELY DANISH, SORBIAN, FRISIAN, FRENCH, DUTCH, AND ROMANI (IBID.: 446). IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE HERE THAT THESE AUTOCHTHONOUS MINORITY LANGUAGES ARE MORE PRIVILEGED THAN THE LANGUAGES OF MIGRANTS (IBID.: 448). GIVEN THIS RATHER UNFORTUNATE FACT, MULTILINGUALISM IS PRESENT, BUT PARTICULAR 'KINDS OF MULTILINGUALISM' ARE MORE PRESTIGIOUS. FOR A FEW DECADES, A NEW TURN IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF GERMAN ACADEMIA CAN BE RECOGNIZED WITH A LANGUAGE SHIFT FROM GERMAN TO ENGLISH. ESPECIALLY UNIVERSITY SETTINGS AS THE HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY AND COSMOPOLITAN LOCATIONS SUCH AS BERLIN CREATE SPACES WHERE STUDENTS, LECTURERS, AND STAFF FROM DIFFERENT LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS MEET. BRINGING WITH THEM THEIR UNIQUE LANGUAGE REPERTOIRES, MULTILINGUALISM AND PLURILINGUAL PRACTICES (CODE-SWITCHING&TRANSLANGUAGE,...) ARE EVERYDAY TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION.

**Translanguaging**
The act performed by bilinguals, characterized by the usage of multiple linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages to maximize the communicative potential (García 2009: 140).

**Code-Switching**
Codeswitching is the term used to identify alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation (Myers-Scotton 1993: 1).

**Creoles**
Creoles on the other side differ from Pidgins in terms of a vital native speaker population (Muysken & Smith 2008: 3).

**Pidgins**
Pidgins constitute speech forms without native speakers and are primarily used to communicate among people who do not share a common language (Muysken & Smith 2008: 3).
Within a questionnaire-based study titled "Language Matters", we collected opinions and experiences within the staff of the linguistic department of the IAAW. We are happy about the contributions of eight academics of the institute. The statements are presented anonymously to allow readers to focus freely and provide integrity for the interviewees.

**How do you evaluate multilingual communication forms and practices, e.g., “Translanguaging” or “Code-Switching”? Do you see them as future practices in domains such as education and academia?**

'AS FOR THE PROCEDURES DESCRIBED ABOVE, I DEFINITELY THINK THAT "TRANSLANGUAGING" OR CODE SWITCHING IS USEFUL AND AN IMPORTANT PART OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIA, FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, ENGLISH HAS BECOME THE PRIMARY INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE IN MOST DOMAINS INCLUDING SCIENCE. SECOND, IT IS IMPORTANT TO PUBLISH TEXTS AND LEAD DEBATES IN A WIDELY KNOWN LANGUAGE ESPECIALLY IN ACADEMIC FIELDS SUCH AS LINGUISTICS, AREA STUDIES OR COMPARATIVE CULTURAL STUDIES (IN A WIDER SENSE), SO THAT MEMBERS OF COMMUNITIES STUDIED OR RESEARCHED CAN FOLLOW AND, IF NEEDED, REACT. TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH EXCLUSIVELY IN AN INACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE MEANS THAT THEY ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ABOUT THEM, CONFINING THEM TO MERE OBJECTS OF RESEARCH. ON THE OTHER HAND, TO USE ENGLISH ONLY EXCLUDES OTHER LANGUAGES FROM THE DOMAIN OF SCIENCE. TO RESPOND TO BOTH CAVEATS, ONE NEEDS SOLUTIONS BASED ON SEVERAL LANGUAGES (E.G. ENGLISH OR GERMAN AS FOR THE CONTEXT OF GERMANY) AS ACADEMIC LANGUAGES.'

'OF COURSE THEY CAN ENRICH EDUCATION AND ACADEMIA AS THEY CAN ENRICH DAILY LIFE. HOWEVER, IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHING THE BASICS OF A LANGUAGE, IN MY VIEW, ONE HAS TO BE CAREFUL TO INTEGRATE SUCH PRACTICES, AND/OR TO WHAT EXTENT THEY ARE INTEGRATED, AND/OR ON WHICH LEVEL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING. THERE IS A CERTAIN DANGER THAT STUDENTS DON'T GET TO LEARN THE RESPECTIVE LANGUAGE/S, BEFORE ACQUIRING THE ABILITY TO USE TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES – ON A CERTAIN LEVEL – AND OUR AIM IS TO REACH SPECIFIC LEVELS OF COMPETENCE – BE IT OF A LANGUAGE, OF SEVERAL LANGUAGES, OR OF TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES.'

'CODE-SWITCHING IS A NECESSARY FORM OF COMMUNICATION, ESPECIALLY AMONG MULTILINGUAL SPEAKERS. THIS PRACTICE WILL BE IN CONTINUITY GOING BY THE FACT THAT, IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT, THERE ARE MORE MULTILINGUAL SPEAKERS THAN MONOLINGUAL SPEAKERS IN THE WORLD. EVIDENTLY, CODE-SWITCHING IS A POTENTIAL FUTURE PRACTICE IN THE DOMAINS OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIA.'

'I VIEW MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES AS ESSENTIAL LINGUISTIC ASSETS THAT CAN BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO ANY TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. FOR THIS, I DO SEE THEM AS FUTURE PRACTICES IN THE SAID DOMAINS.'
How do you evaluate multilingual communication forms such as Code-Switching, Translanguaging, and mixed language varieties such as Creole languages and Pidgins as future practices within academia? Science or academia is really just playing a catching-up game. If we think about the relationship, for example, that Latin had with German as languages of education and academia or Greek, probably there were plurilingual practices in place at some point. The object of investigation of Code-Switching or Plurilingualism, in general, is a return to an acknowledgement of what actual language practices are, away from a much more fixed and much more rarefied look. A way of looking at language through the lens of multilingualism and standardized languages.

Does the integration of these plurilingual and pluralistic communication forms lead to a more inclusive university experience, and what we thought as well as not just for students, but as well for lecturers.

The problem is that in the Global South, because of the often very fossilized and ritualistic use of colonial languages in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, you have this kind of ritualistic use of European colonial languages. The margin for variation is often smaller in the sense that the margin of freedom is often smaller because people are struggling. Students and also lecturers are still struggling so much with the medium. And there's so much you can do wrong while you are communicating in the colonial medium. You are constantly evaluated. Your performance in the language is constantly part of the evaluation of your whole discourse and your whole discursive practice. So, this creates a whole lot of insecurity, which makes it kind of difficult. So you have a very rigid approach. I realized that when I have with my own students. Most (all) of them are from the Global South. I have students from India, Ghana, Mainland China, and Indonesia. So, for all of us, language is always very high up on the level of consciousness because, for all of us, English is either a colonial language or a second language. So the use of language is very explicit. I mean, we talk very specifically about how we use language. It is not taken for granted that we all know how to communicate in this medium. And this is quite liberating, right? Because what happens is that you are using English much more for what you are supposed to. To be able to use it as a tool, but not to be subjected wholly and fully to this kind of linguistic ideology of how you are supposed to write and to understand, if at all, why you're supposed to write in a certain way.
Do you think Pidgins and Creoles could function as decolonial practices, or do they perpetuate power dynamics within global complex language ecologies?

I think as long as you call a language a creole and as long as you are aware that there is some kind of rupture with existing norms and existing language ideologies, then they are, by definition, subversive practices. The use of Creoles, in that sense, does it. You see at least many of the Creoles that I have been working on, and this is particularly for the African Creoles because the Caribbean are a bit different, where you have a longer history of where African languages moved out of the ecologies early. Maybe the last speakers of the African languages, maybe 100 or 150 years ago, and not larger numbers anymore. So, you had a kind of situation developing which is very similar to Europe, in the sense that you have a kind of dialectical relation. A kind of straight relation where you have a substandard ideologically, which is the dialect of Heidelberg or Kölsch or something, then you have a standard, and then you have an interaction. In many Caribbean Creole ecologies, that is really how it is. But in Africa, the Creoles, in that sense, are really different because usually, they are really in the majority spoken as Lingua francas. So, they are spoken in the house, in the families as well, but people have options, so they speak African languages, and many also speak European languages, many don't, most do, but many do, right? So, in that sense, I think the languages themselves offer space for being decolonial practices because when speakers speak Naijá or Ghanaian Pidgin, they are not perpetuating or exercising or displaying entrenched hierarchies or fixed social relations neither on the African language side nor on the European language side. A language like Yoruba, for example, in Nigeria, has a very complex system of the expression of politeness, which has to do with age grading, has to do with gender, and has to do with economic and social power. All this can be subverted when you are talking Naijá. First of all, you don't have to use the politeness or politeness pronouns anymore. So, this distinction between "Sie" und "Du". At least as much more complex, it's expressed as well, you know, by avoiding, for example, the second person singular, but if it's, it's, you know, you don't have to use some pronoun. So, the registers are not as fixed as they are in a language like Yoruba, and of course, a language like English with all the connotations of power when you're using it. So, in that sense, definitely, again, decolonial practice. The question is whether they're going to remain like that. I don't see any reason why Naijá would not develop some kind of standard.

WE THANK PROF. DR. KOFI YAKPO FOR THIS UNIQUE AND INSPIRING TALK!
Multilingualism, Code-Switching, and other plurilingual practices are common phenomena to the international academics and guest fellows at the IAAW. The majority has encountered Code-Switching in the classroom, most frequently between English and German, but occasionally also between other languages. While this is the norm, several respondents voiced caveats regarding the prospective exclusion of students lacking the level of bi- or plurilingual language skills within the extensive use of Code-Switching or Translanguaging. Primarily written materials and Code-Switching were deemed problematic. It may exclude those with a different linguistic background, as demonstrated by previous universal academic languages (Greek or Latin), which many academics may be unfamiliar with nowadays. However, the consensus view regarding the utilisation of Code-Switching is demonstrated in the statement, “Code-Switching is a vital mode of communication, particularly for multilingual speakers” (excerpt of the questionnaire responses). Furthermore, in the personal interview with Dr Kofi Yakpo, he argues that giving students the freedom to speak a language variety and linguistic register they feel most comfortable with is highly beneficial. Multilingual linguistic practices are prevalent in academia and facilitate multidirectional communication. The unique role of Creoles becomes apparent with the growth of speaker numbers and widespread popularity in diverse African countries, where they serve as lingua francas for people from diverse ethnolinguistic language backgrounds. “The languages themselves provide space for decolonial practices to exist because when speakers speak Naijá or Ghanaian Pidgin, they may not perpetuate, exercise, or display entrenched hierarchies or fixed social relations on either the African or European language side” (Interview with Dr Kofi Yakpo). Language contact and its intrinsic evolution of new dynamics constitute common ground within global relations of historical and modern times. To conclude, we observe that monolingual environments, even though long described as such, are uncommon in academia, and multilingualism plays a principal role in everyday conversations. Different plurilingual language techniques are already used in classrooms, allowing students and staff with multiple linguistic repertoires to communicate more effectively and convivial.

In damit verbundenen Prozess der Rassifizierung wurden Menschen nach angeblichen Eigenschaften und nach Wert kategorisiert, was zu einemothering der Kolonialisierter geführt hat. Dies ist als globales Unterdrückungssystem des Rassismus bis heute wirksam. Nur durch diese hierarchischen Strukturen war die Aufrechterhaltung des Kolonialismus über 500 Jahre hinweg möglich.

Nicht zuletzt inszenierte dieses Denksystem eine grundsätzliche Überlegenheit weißer Menschen gegenüber kolonialisierter Menschen, was auch implizierte, dass sich ein koloniales Naturverständnis durchsetzte, welches weiße Menschen gegenüber der Natur als überlegen darstellte und diese allein zum Forschungsobjekt machte. Die Kolonialherren und -frauen grenzten sich damit klar gegenüber dem nichtmenschlichen Leben ab und verschleierten so jegliche Abhängigkeit von diesem. Das, was als „Natur“ verstanden wurde, erschien durch die Annahme ihrer angeblichen Unterlegenheit kontrollierbar und beherrschbar und wurde außerdem massiv ausgebeutet, um Profit zu machen und globale Machthierarchien zu erhalten. Damit wurde die Natur in eine kapitalistische Ökonomie und Logik eingeordnet.

**KLIMABEWEGUNGEN**

In Berichten über den Kolonialismus wird häufig sowohl die indigene Widerständsgeschichte gegen den Kolonialismus als auch die heute vorhandene große Gefährdung von Aktivist*innen im globalen Süden ausgespart; im Zusammenhang damit wird auch der Naturschutz, um den sich Menschen im globalen Süden schon seit langer Zeit bemühen, nicht weiter beachtet. Durch die damit einhergehende geringe mediale Beachtung nicht weißer Klimaaktivist*innen entsteht auf der anderen Seite das Bild des weißen rettenden Klimaaktivisten.

Dies ist besonders problematisch, da sich damit der globale Norden, sofern er gegen Klimaerwärmung und Umweltzerstörung kämpft, als 'fortschrittliche und rettende' Region darstellen kann und folglich das (Selbst)Bild der überlegenen Gesellschaft reproduziert wird, wobei zugleich die Folgeschäden eines scheinbar nachhaltigen technologischen Fortschritts immer noch in den globalen Süden ausgelagert werden. Es wäre daher gerade wichtig sich im Zusammenhang mit diesem Thema vor allem mit der historischen Verantwortung des globalen Nordens und mit dessen Machtstrukturen zu beschäftigen und darüber hinaus zu versuchen, die vorhandenen Privilegien mit dem Ziel einer größeren Klimagerechtigkeit abzuschaffen.
Das Beispiel der Widerstandsbevölkerung der Samin

Interview mit Lucía Muriel

WELCHE ZUSAMMENHÄNGE SEHEN SIE ZWISCHEN KOLONIALISMUS UND DER ZERSTÖRUNG VON NATUR/ KLIMA?

„Es gibt einen Mangel an Wissen, was wir heute haben. [...] wir haben nicht so den richtigen Zugang zu der Narrative. Aber zu den Besetzern und den Kolonialisten, den Eroberern haben wir eine Narrative. Das ist für mich der erste Moment der dekolonialen Bildungsarbeit, dass ich versuche dafür Bewusstsein zu schaffen, dass in der gesamten Narrative der letzten 530 Jahre der Menschheit, absolut mindestens eine Narrative noch fehlt. Dann dass wir in diesen narrativen finden würden, dass die Besetzer sich um die Menschen, die Bewohner*innen nicht vorrangig gekümmert haben, sondern um das, was sie sich dort gewünscht haben. Also manche sagen, Kolumbus habe nach wertvollen Gewürzen und Stoffen gesucht, manche sagen, Gold und Silber, [...] dass diese Reise von klaren ökonomischen Interessen geprägt gewesen sein muss und dass auf dieser Reise jegliche Mitmenschlichkeit, jeglicher Respekt auch für die, die man treffen würde, gefehlt habe“ (12). Mit dieser gleichen Gier und Rücksichtslosigkeit, mit der man da auf die Kontinente und auf die Menschen zugegangen ist, dass man auch mit der gleichen Haltung auf die Natur zugegangen sein muss, also gerade die Erde kahl zu schlagen, kaputt zu schlagen, obwohl die Menschen, die da schon vor Ort gelebt haben, gewusst haben, dass die Berge, die Wälder und die Seen ihre Bedeutung haben“ (13). Und das ist das Gleiche, was wir bis heute einfach als Kontinuität finden können.“

WIE KANN DIE STÄRKRERE BETROFFENHEIT DES GLOBALEN SÜDENS Gesehen werden, ohne dass dieser wieder in eine OPFERROLLE GERÄT?

„Eines der Hauptziele von diesem Projekt Klima dekolonial und solidarisch ist, diese Perspektive zu korrigieren. Erstens sind die Menschen im Süden nicht nur um ein vielfaches mehr bedroht und belastet von den Auswirkungen des Klimawandels, sondern sie sind sich schon immer dessen bewusst."
Also nehmen wir nur die indigenen Bevölkerungsgruppen in dem Amazonas, die sind sich schon seit Jahrhunderten darüber bewusst, dass der Amazonas, so wie der Amazonas gewesen ist, einer der schützenswertesten Räume des Planeten ist, und die Meere oder die Flüsse, also das wissen die Menschen vor Ort, sei es in Indien, sei es in afrikanischen Ländern, in Nigeria [...]. Dass indigne Bevölkerungsgruppen, klimaschutzbewegte Menschen auch schon seit sehr sehr langer Zeit, seit Jahrhunderten, sich auf den Weg machen, diese zu schützen. Denen ist zu verdanken, dass bpsw. in Lateinamerika oder Mittelamerika auch so viele Naturparks entstanden sind, das ist nicht eine Weisheit von den Weißen oder den Mestizen, sondern das sind die Indigenen vor Ort, die diese Naturparks oder Schutzparks initiiert haben und herauskristallisiert haben (21). Es ist eine komplett falsche Darstellung zu sagen, Umweltschutz und Ökologismus, die sind hier aus Europa oder aus dem Norden entstanden (22).

Das zweite ist, dass die Menschen sich schon lange auf den Weg gemacht haben ähnlich wie man es hier jetzt sieht mit Klimaaktivismus, auch dort mit Kämpfen, mit Widerständen, mit organisierten Netzwerken, mit großen Organisationen, sich dem zu widersetzen.

Das dritte ist, dass wir nicht bemerken, gar nicht erwähnen, gar nicht sichtbar machen hier im Norden, [...] dass sich die Menschen dort einer viel größeren Gefahr aussetzen, als wir uns das hier vorstellen können. Es ist so, dass in Kolumbien, Philippinen, in vielen Ländern Klimaaktivisten verfolgt und ermordet werden, dass genau diejenigen, die an der Spitze stehen von Bewegungen am ersten in der Gefahr sind, ihr Leben zu verlieren. Das ist die Massivität von Aggressionen, von Gegengewalt, was sich die Menschen aussetzen. Indem wir das ausblenden, entsteht schließlich das Bild, weiße Klimaaktivisten wären diejenigen, die die Welt retten und wären diejenigen, die als Helden zu betrachten sind. Eine komplette Verfälschung von Realitäten, die uns dann wirklich große Sorgen macht, wo wir denken, das kann nicht sein, das müssen wir einfach korrigieren, mit Bildungs- und Informationsarbeit, denn das macht uns Menschen aus dem Süden zu Opfern. dann sind wir viel leichter Objekte von anderen Projektionen. Deshalb gibt es das Projekt Klimadesol. Dekolonialisierung bedeutet, das Narrativ zu verändern, das im Norden besteht.
Das erste, was wir erwarten von Aktivist*innen im Norden, ob sie weiß positioniert sind oder einfach hier aktiv, ist, sich mit Kolonialgeschichte macht- und rassismuskritisch auseinander zu setzen, das gehört dazu. [...] Wie genau ist der Planet zu dem geworden, wie wir es heute sind, mit diesen Problemen, die wir heute haben, wie genau ist dieser Planet so geworden? Und da, wenn wir dann auf die Geschichte des Rassismus stoßen und auf die stoßen wir leider sehr früh, dann damit auseinandersetzen, was macht der Rassismus mit mir, wie bin ich davon geprägt. Jetzt ist es so, dass ich mir die jüngere Bewegung zur Klimagerechtigkeit hier in der Bundesrepublik angesehen habe, einerseits mit großer Begeisterung, aber auch mit der Wahrnehmung, dass diese Bewegung sehr stark sich in der weißen deutschen Mittel- und Oberschicht ansiedelt, und mein Gefühl ist, reproduzieren wir da nicht wieder noch einmal diese white supremacy Konzeption von Leben, von Menschen, indem wir andere junge Menschen, die genauso von dem Klimawandel, von der Erderwärmung betroffen sind, warum bleiben sie wieder zurück? Auch diese tolle Bewegung von Schülerinnen und jungen Menschen für Klimagerechtigkeit sollten wir versuchen, gleich auf antirassistische Füße zu stellen, gleich mit einer dekolonialen Empathie, einer dekolonialen Sensibilisierung auszustatten.“

GLOKAL E.V.
DER VEREIN BESCHÄFTIGT SICH MIT MACHT UND RASSISMKRITISCHER BILDUNGSRARBEIT UND HAT SICH DER ABSICHT VERSCHRIEBEN DURCH MACHTKRITISCHE BILDUNGSARBEIT UND WISSENSVERMITTLUNG MENSCHEN DAZU ZU BEFÄHIGEN SICH VON UNTERDRÜCKUNGSSTRUKTUREN ZU BEFREIEN.

LUCÍA MURIEL
SIE IST DIPLOMPSYCHOLOGIN UND PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIN. DES WEITEREN IST SIE AKTIVISTIN IN BEZUG AUF MIGRATION, RASSISME UND KOLONIALISMUS UND IN VIELEN ORGANISATIONEN TÄTIG. SIE GRÜNDETE DAS PROJEKT KLIMADESOL-KLIMA DEKOLONIAL UND SOLIDARISCH, DASS BEI GLOKAL E.V. ANGESIEDELT IST.
The climate crisis is closely linked to colonialism, racism, and social inequality, so it is essential to understand it in the context of the continuity of colonialism. Colonial history, which began in 1492 with the brutal oppression of non-European people by colonial masters and colonial women, led to the crimes of murder, enslavement, and displacement of millions of people on the American, African, and Asian continents, and at the same time to the exploitation of “nature”, i.e., the destruction of ecosystems.

As part of this violent colonization process, the demand for products from the colonial territories increased in Europe, leading to an intensified exploitation of local labor and nature, and ultimately to the development of global capitalism. With the aim of maintaining colonial rule for as long as possible, the colonial masters and women also tried to suppress indigenous ideas of knowledge and belief and to impose a colonial way of thinking on the people that was determined by Western rationality and science. In doing so, they were also concerned with establishing a new social system and justifying their brutal acts. In the related process of racialization, people were categorized according to alleged characteristics and value, which led to the othering of the colonized people. This is still effective today as a global oppressive system of racism. Only through these hierarchical structures was it possible to maintain colonialism for 500 years.
That which was understood as "nature" appeared controllable and manageable through the assumption of its alleged inferiority and was also massively exploited in order to make a profit and maintain global power hierarchies. Thus, nature became subsumed into a capitalist economy and logic.

CLIMATE MOVEMENTS

Reports on colonialism often omit both the indigenous history of resistance to colonialism and the great threat to activists in the global South that exists today; in connection with this, the protection of nature, which people in the global South have been striving for a long time, is also not considered any further. The resulting lack of media attention to non-white climate activists, on the other hand, creates the image of the white activist saving the climate. This is particularly problematic, as it allows the global North to present itself as a 'progressive and saving' zone, insofar as it fights against global warming and environmental destruction, and consequently reproduces the (self-)image of the superior society, while at the same time the consequential damages of a seemingly sustainable technological progress are still outsourced to the global South. Therefore, it would be important in the context of this topic to deal with the historical responsibility of the global north and its power structures and to try to abolish the existing privileges with the goal of greater climate justice.

THE CASE OF THE SAMIN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The Samin community, or the Sedular Sikep (the kindly-minded), living in Java, was founded by Samin Surosentiko, in order to mount a nonviolent resistance to colonial oppression. He was then exiled from Java by the Dutch occupation in 1907. The Samin community has always practiced agriculture without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, and also does not send its children to government schools and refuses to pay government taxes. Since one of the largest cement companies in Indonesia, cement is one of the most important building materials today, especially since it is used as a binder for concrete.
However, cement production is problematic because it harms the environment as it requires the removal of mountains and disrupts ecosystems and water cycles. In addition, the mining process releases toxins into the environment.

It also requires an enormous amount of energy, which means that the production of 4 billion tons of cement leads to 3 billion tons of greenhouse gases every year. The women received special media attention when they cemented themselves in front of the presidential palace in Jakarta in 2016. In 2020, they filed a complaint against HeidelbergCement with the German government. In the example of the Samin, one can see very clearly the connection between their earlier resistance to colonialism and their current resistance to the destruction of indigenous nature.
Afro Cyber Resistance or Resistance to a digitally colonized space

by Leonie Hugendubel

Question: Is the Internet a colonized space?

In her video Afro Cyber Resistance, the artist Tabita Rezaire[1] criticizes the inherent hegemonic structures of Western society in the digital world and blames the Internet as a colonized space that repeats and reinforces the old system of exploitation based on distinct factors such as who built the infrastructure of the World Wide Web and who owns it. The domination of domains and content ownership by former colonial powers induces an underrepresentation of the African individuals, discourses, and knowledges in the digital sphere. For Rezaire, artists and collectives from Africa resisting this exclusion phenomenon constitute the Afro Cyber Resistance movement capable of disrupting this digital imperial structure. "Confronting the unilateral flow of online information, Afro Cyber Resistance is a socially engaged gesture aiming to challenge the representation of the African body and culture through the online project (Tabita Rezaire 2014: 185)."

Even though she claims the Internet to be a "colonized space", where roles within production and usage of cultural properties are replicated, Rezaire emphasizes that it is a medium to change the disparity between the West and the Global South. "The utopia of the Internet as a place of freedom and expression where everyone could contribute equally to its content and challenge dominant discourses and traditional forms of media propaganda is unfortunately still to be realized as the web repeats and reinforce the old systems of exploitation (Tabita Rezaire 2014: 186)."

[1] WWW.TABITAREZAIRE.COM
She uses a computer-generated voice while reading excerpts from her essay titled "Afro Cyber Resistance: South African Internet Art" and employs other visual tools: animations, photographs, collages, and video samples. Through visual interference effects and virtual backgrounds, Rezaire is often only fragmentarily visible, despite the screen-filling position of her head.

Furthermore, she presents three artistic examples of Afro Cyber Resistance in her video: WikiAfrica, the creative intervention Video Party 4 by Cuss Group, and Virus SS 16 by Bogosi Sekhukhuni. These artistic projects have been realized by individuals and collectives, for example, in South Africa, displaying a digital form of cultural and social resistance of artists against hegemonic Western power relations in the respective socio-political space.

The platform Wikipedia (more broadly: Wikimedia) is a bonafide example of the exclusionist infrastructure on the World Wide Web. Specific rules have been established to ensure that articles are reliable, while some members have the power to decide which articles are relevant and which sources are trustworthy (Judy Wajcman 2017). Written sources are considered valid compared to oral tradition, which is a general problem for publishing oral knowledge. Those regulations are in place because Wikipedia wants to be an academic collection of expertise rather than opinions. But the system is built on (male) Western knowledge production and hardly open for change, making Wikipedia not an open platform for knowledge but a westernized one. Articles have been rejected "because their relevance was not proved [...]" or "[...]the style or tone of those entries was too personal or not deemed appropriate to the world's most 'open' Internet platform" (Dyangani Ose 2012: 117). Wikiafrica is an alternative to Wikipedia and was launched in 2011 to challenge the lack of contemporary and historic African knowledges online. It is a collaborative project between Lettera 27, the Moleskine Foundation [2], and Africa Center [3], which organizes workshops and training for the use and publication of information on the platform. They collaborate with schools (WikiAfrica Education) to encourage a new generation of editors based in Africa to write articles that reflect their geographical and social reality. Although it is not a digital art form, their articles focus on cultural production from literature, music, art, and cinema. Tabita Rezaire argues that "it can be understood as an online platform for active social resistance against occidental hegemony and online information control" because it produces and provides a history that is "rewritten, readdressed and re-evaluated without the patriarchal-white-imperialist prism of supreme knowledge that is nowadays still prevalent" (Tabita Rezaire 2014: 188).

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, people working with WikiAfrica translated and created new vocabulary in nearly 20 different African languages to make public health communication more accessible [4].

As shown in Tabita Rezaire's video project Afro Cyber Resistance, there is a need to fill the gaps of uncountable different stories from the African continent that are currently not represented on the Internet. Only by that can Western narratives be actively changed, and alternative perspectives and structures of knowledge production can be introduced.

WHITE HEGEMONY IN MEDIA AND FASHION

CLICHÉS AND OBJECTIFICATION OF MODELS IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

DALANDA MOUKALA

Behind every fashion item hides a considerable amount of employees that are either doing their job by passion or are being exploited. For its impact on the global economy, environment, high tech, and society, fashion acts like a legitimate source and a testimony of each historical period. Its design, crafting methods, or trends illustrates our modern society also shaped by colonialism.

"In art and in life, only that which is true to culture is true to nature," writes L. Fleck in his book *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. By saying this, Fleck advocates that science is a cultural product of history. Therefore, science has a social origin, tradition, meaning, practice, and institutions, as well as fashion. The Western vision then prevails in every objective account of world history. The consequences of colonialism, a fundamental social culture that strengthened itself since the Antiquity, based on the notion of expansion of a society beyond its original habitat, also reinforces this phenomenon. In the case of this article, we address modern colonialism: it entails submitting peripheral societies to the metropolises, is unwilling to make cultural concessions to subjugated communities, and interprets the relationship with an ethnocentric arrogance which often takes an expansionist turn.

FROM A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE, THE WORLD IS DIVIDED INTO AND ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTS. WESTERN CREATE BEAUTY’S CRITERIA FOR THOSE BELONGING TO THE "THIRD WORLD", CRITERIA THAT COULD ONLY POSSIBLY BE REACHED BY MODIFYING BODIES.
An extensive and forthright investigation published in October 2020 in the New York Times exposed the ‘toxic’ and ‘racist’ environment at US Vogue, maintained by its head Anna Wintour since her appointment in 1988. Testimonies employees confirm the systemic racialized culture of exclusion and ‘tokenization’ (the use of a person as a prop) experienced especially by black women. The magazine’s aesthetics reinforces an ideal on their image: a white, Euro-centric idea of beauty. A former black employee explains that the definition of ‘This is Vogue’ or ‘This is not Vogue’ depends on how thin, rich, and white the model looks.

The problem is this is not an isolated case of the US Vogue. In the July 2021 edition of Vogue France, the cover model Imaan Hammam is being shown in a stereotypical “exotic setting”. Being the only Black model in the magazine, she wears a complete safari outfit while drinking coconut water (picture on the right. The environment is similar to a paradisiac island, and she represents the thinnest and whitest version of a Black model. These choices show how representations of non-White bodies still remain whitewashed in mainstream media despite progressive movements like Black Lives Matter.
Nevertheless, this expansive approach to "beauty" has hit some walls in communities that wouldn’t automatically conform to Western European beauty and fashion standards, which Vogue played a role in making seem unanimous. A modern-day example of this is a "Beauty Without Borders" initiative Vogue sponsored in 2002 which opened a cosmetology school in Kabul, Afghanistan to offer education and career opportunities to Afghan women. In Wintour’s words: "Through the school, we could not only help women in Afghanistan to look and feel better but also give them employment" (Halbfinger 2002). Despite its charitable intentions, the school was heavily criticized and ultimately closed just a few years later. On the one hand, only teaching American-style beauty standards and practices creates a simple materialistic dependency by which "the beauty school could not be judged a success if it did not create a demand for American cosmetics" (Halbfinger 2002). Furthermore spreading only a one-sided ideal of beauty which they as "outsiders" have placed and taught there, mirrored a sort of colonial expansions in culture and ideals, which failed to realize Afghan women’s material realities, interests, and needs at the time as well as devaluing “other” forms of beauty. “[Where] the beauty school features a picture of Greta Garbo […] and a few other white women, the home salons [of the school’s students] display pictures of glamorous Afghan, Iranian, and South Asian women and a few Bollywood posters” (Bose 2009). Eventually, one of the American teaching stylists published a financially successful memoir about her experience and went on a U.S book tour before leaving the venture, which ran out of money and closed soon after. This tour apparently led to quotes of her students, as well as pictures of them without their headscarves, circulating in Afghanistan, actively endangering their lives. The parallel to American foreign policy, entering countries “with a great deal of fanfare, good intentions, and little actual knowledge of the local culture” by choice and leaving chaos behind, seems clear (Bose 2009). But while the U.S. has recently started backpaddling on its image as the "world police", beauty ideals are still being portrayed as universal and are exported and applied to other communities. (Social) Media has obviously played a main part in this, but so have magazines like Vogue. Examples of this are the abundance of sales of skin-lightening creams and surgeries like blepharoplasty and rhinoplasty.

Jessica Daves, one of the magazine’s editors-in-chief over the years, famously stated that "taste is something that can be taught and learned" (Hicks 1960: 2) but it seems that at the same time “[cultural] specificities were at best ignored, at worst derided” (Miralles 2021 C) in this spread of ideals. Under the leadership of current editor-in-chief Anna Wintour the magazine has rebranded itself to a wider audience by making its recommendations more accessible, youthful and its approach to fashion more reproducible by being more affordable (Orecklin 2004), therefore creating a greater legitimation for its hierarchy and (globally) wider consumer base.
In past years it has become evident, that some people behind Vogue magazine are trying to make a conscious effort to redirect their influence in a progressive way but visions of how this can be achieved seem misguided. One example by Wintour herself is her involvement in American politics. Ahead of the 2012 U.S. presidential election, Wintour used her industry clout to host several significant fundraising events in support of Barack Obama (HuffPost 2010). In terms of anti-racism and decolonization, this might be a stance many agree on, yet a single individual like Wintour having this extent of power through economic capital to help form political realities in her own interest comes with its own set of issues that can be criticized. Through the hard power of financial support Wintour, Vogue, and Fashion Media, in general, are able to secure soft power (Miralles 2021 A). On the other hand, lots of efforts by the magazine itself easily come off as performative because being a magazine, they are purely presentational in nature on the consumer side. “[Fashion] performs the ideologically necessary task of visually displaying power structures, while denying inequities in access to power” (Choong 2017). Even though Vogue has a history of casting Black people or people of color as their cover models (e.g. Toto Koopman as the first biracial cover model in 1933 and finally Beverly Johnson 1974 as the first Black model) earlier than other comparable institutions in fashion, there has been less structural change and diversity behind the camera and in leadership positions. For example, the very first Black photographer of a Vogue cover shoot, Tyler Mitchell, was only hired in 2018 (in Vogue’s 126th year of existence). Even this step didn’t come from the magazine itself but from that month’s cover model, singer Beyoncé, who was given total editorial control for the feature (Street 2018).

To avoid being “called out” or “canceled” it has become quite common to perform "wokeness" as part of a modern aesthetic without actually having to be a progressive force. Edward Enninful has been chosen as editor-in-chief for Vogue UK in 2017 and has often been criticized from both sides, either for centering his Queer- and Blackness and talking about inequalities openly or for apparently virtue-signaling (Morey 2020) while supporting a prestigious idea of class which the magazine represents no matter how “woke” it seems. According to some critiques, “diversity is contained and only celebrated in order to exploit multiculturalism for its economic value” (Choong 2017).
After being called 'a colonial dame' who would never "let anything get in the way of her white privilege" by long-time editor-at-large for American Vogue and friend André Leon Talley (Sinha 2020), Wintour herself admitted some of Vogue’s mistakes in a candid statement: "I want to say plainly that I know Vogue has not found enough ways to elevate and give space to black editors, writers, photographers, designers, and other creators. We have made mistakes, too, publishing images or stories that have been hurtful or intolerant" (Mansey 2020). But at the end of the day, it is quite hard to believe that there is an intrinsic interest in the underlying power structures to reform or change anything about how Vogue operates. According to the parent company Condé Nast, the publications reach 8 million readers in the U.S. alone and another 14.5 million internationally (Condé Nast n.d.). Additionally, the annual "Met Gala", an event celebrating the opening of the Metropolitan Museum’s fashion exhibit which is attended by celebrities, fashion experts, and designers as well as politicians is hosted by Vogue as well (Friedman 2015). All this gives certain people working for Vogue an immense influence through different forms of capital as well as soft power. A personified example of this influence to shape our collective media is Cara Delevingne, who shot to supermodel fame [after being heavily exposed by Vogue, who] is the goddaughter of Nicholas Coleridge, then president of Condé Nast International” (Miralles 2021 A).

The power structures and distribution within the magazine are also quite rigid (Miralles 2021 B). Anna Wintour has been editor-in-chief of the American Vogue since 1988 as well as being artistic director of Condé Nast which publishes all Vogue editions. Starting in 2020 there has been a reorganization by which the position of global editorial director and the chief content officer has been created for Wintour as well, giving her “ultimate control over content at all Condé Nast-owned Vogues” (Miralles 2021 C). There is no incentive for the higher-ups at Vogue to give up any of their control and power that comes with it (in form of different capital) and no perspective of how a magazine like Vogue could exist without its dominant, omnipresent position, "teaching" people American and Eurocentric taste since this is the actual product behind the fashion and lifestyle content which is being created and reproduced.

Apart from all these factors which create and stabilize Western European beauty standards and support Vogue’s monopoly on class, the capitalist and materialistic approach it emboldens also heavily supports the fashion industry which relies on the exploitation of many people in the global south, specifically women and children as well. Environmental factors must be considered in any critique of the magazine too, making it important to state that many regions in the global south will be the first to be hit hardest by global warming. The wider industry around fashion media must face compensation towards sustainability at some point.
When looking at some of the issues Vogue has published since the #blacklivesmatter movement in 2020, one might prefer to look at this as a sign of a post-racial, post-colonial society in which even powerful fashion media companies decide to take a stance (Morey 2020). Edward Kobina Enninful’s rise within the magazine and fashion media has made people especially hopeful since he seems to be aware of some of its problems when he writes: “We need black people ingrained within the infrastructure of the fashion industry, not just on the other side of the camera or appearing on an Instagram feed” (Enninful 2020). But by doing so Vogue attempts to portray our societies as already cohesive and inclusive. Instead, we mustn’t think of anti-racist and decolonizing processes as being completed, but as them being international transitions we as a society are going through “from the formal end of colonialism to neo-colonialism under new guises” which must be overcome as well (Choong 2017). At its current state, Vogue still contributes to the reification of “colonial frameworks of power and conservative politics towards race” (Choong 2017) through a dominant ideal of beauty and class as well as an abundance of unevenly distributed capital.

TO STAY RELEVANT IN TODAY’S WORLD, MEDIA HOUSES LIKE CONDÉ NAST MUST ALLOW FOR A MORE DIVERSE REPRESENTATION, EVEN WHILE REPRODUCING BEAUTY IDEALS AND AN IDEA OF TASTE IN THE FORM OF WHITE EXCEPTIONALISM, AND TRY TO CHANGE INTERNAL STRUCTURES TO REDISTRIBUTE POWER AS WELL. BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY IT ISN’T LIKELY THAT A COMPANY PROTECTING WESTERN ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND OTHER FORMS OF CAPITAL WILL BE THE SOLUTION TO DECOLONIZING MEDIA, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT REFORMS.

ENNINFUL, EDWARD (2020): “RACISM IS A GLOBAL ISSUE”: EDWARD ENNINFUL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING AN ANTI-RACIST AGENDA. IN: VOGUE...

**DAS FÜR UND WIDER**


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**GRIOT.** “BOOK REVIEW/FIRST LOOK: NOT AFRICAN ENOUGH BY THE NEST COLLECTIVE BY GRIOT.” GRIOT. OCTOBER 1, 2017.


The Institute for Oriental Languages was formed in 1887 to facilitate further colonial expansion. Understanding the colonized and their cultures was a crucial tool to foster imperial goals beyond the European metropoleis. Surprisingly, this is not even covered in the institute's curriculum and is only stated briefly on the official website[1].

[1] https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/en/region/SouthAsia/South/history
Our recently conducted survey shows that most students and even people working at this institute are not aware of its colonial past. How can we aim to decolonize our institute and university if we are not even able to address our colonial past sufficiently?

1. **DO YOU THINK THE HU’S COLONIAL HISTORY IS ADDRESSED SUFFICIENTLY AT IAAW?**

   - Not sure: 27.5%
   - Yes: 12.7%
   - No: 59.8%

2. **HAS THE HISTORY OF THE IAAW BEEN ADDRESSED IN ANY COURSE?**

   - Yes: 33%
   - No: 67%
3. DO YOU THINK BIPOC ARE REPRESENTED ENOUGH WITHIN THE STAFF OF THE IAAW?

![Circle chart showing percentages]

- 71.8% of the participants think that BIPOC are not represented in all levels of power.*
- Not at all 11%
- Not really 75%
- Yes 14%

*Because multiple answers per participant were possible, the total percentage may exceed 100% (yes 6.8%, not sure/I don’t know 21.4%)

The aim of our survey was to find out how far – in the eyes of students and staff - the IAAW as an institution has been decolonised and what might still need to be done in the future. We based the survey on texts, lectures and discussions from our seminar. While we did not intend to make it a comprehensive study, our goal was more to get an idea of how the people studying and working at our institute see this matter. In the light of the Black Student Union’s recent open letter as well as the outcome of our survey, we think it is indispensable that the topic of decolonisation is tackled. The matters of representation of BIPOC within the staff and IAAW’s and HU’s own colonial history have provoked the most meaningful responses. Students as well as staff showed themselves through the survey to be open for discussions and have brought up a number of interesting ideas on how to further decolonise the IAAW: a quota for hiring BIPOC, creating a position to tackle questions of diversity and decolonization, offering awareness-courses to staff are just a few of the suggestions made.

SMITH, L. T. 2012. DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES: RESEARCH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES / 2ND EDITION. LONDON: ZED BOOKS.


CHILISA, BAGELE (2012): INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES. LOS ANGELES, LONDON, NEW DELHI, SINGAPORE, WASHINGTON DC: SAGE.


Thanks for sticking through our Zine with us! Because this Zine is an ever-evolving project, we’d like everyone to be able to contribute to. You can contact us by email if you’d like to give us feedback or include. Our project sets out to explore the long tensions and traditions of multidirectional interactions existing between the Global North and the Global South, while multidirectional never meant equal or fair. This issue propelled upheaving discussions within our project and we sought to find the uttermost responsible and self-reflected way to this conflicts. African Studies and Academic Publishing have transformed into a business industry due to the transnational commodification of knowledge. This is not a commercial Zine and we are happy to share it with everyone, who is interested and those who aren’t as well. Feel free to use the information of our Zine for your own research and get inspired by what you may discover. Credits to thinkers and scholars providing us with a wide range of powerful social thought from the colonized and postcolonial words have been tagged accordingly. The right corner of the cover displays a brass Oni head from the Kingdom of Ife (Wunmonije Compound–Ife, Nigeria), most likely from the 14th century – early 15th century. After the Humboldt Forum opened to controversy, the scholarly community and the public comunitry critiqued that displaying art and artifacts that ended up in German museums, where evidence of plunder was plentiful, opens the Pandora’s box. Thousands of metal panels and sculptures from the Royal Palace of Benin were sent to Europe and the United States after the British looted by Benin City in 1897. A substantial chunk of them went to German museums, being sold in auctions and through marketplaces. We undeniable wish to put distance between ourselves and this colonialist tradition, but also valorize the long tradition of African art as a part of global culture.

We're sure you're somewhere out there. Please contact us!
THE TEAM

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Picture on the cover (left bottom):
Head of an Oni by Yoruba (Ife) artist (National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria, 19 (79.R.11)) © Dirk Bakker

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