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Ruangrupa

*LUMBUNG*

Lumbung is the Indonesian word for a collectively governed 'rice-barn' where harvest surplus of farmers is store for common good. It serves community's well being on longer term through shared resources and mutual care.

And it's organised through a set of values, collective rituals and organizational principles.

Thatched roof

Bamboo structure

Baan

'Bale' social space

'Vimpat' Stone pedestal

Sasak Tribe's Lumbung, Lombok island

1

Lumbung Drawing, Iswanto Hartono, 2020.

Lumbung is not only a traditional architectural typology from Indonesia but a whole social construction. It really shows, how architecture is not only material and form but that architecture is always a part of a larger social context and social practices. The traditional rice barns in Indonesia have to platforms. One with a roof to protect the harvest and another to work on or as a social space. The whole Lumbung one could say is a social space. It is about sharing the surplus of the harvest. In a way it's a social security system which strenghtens the community. Lumbung is as much about harvesting as it is about sharing.

shift in value from product to process - value (n.) latin valere “be strong, be well; be of value, be worth” - not only is the product valuable when it is finished, but the value is continuously and immediately passed on to all those involved - the conversion of work into benefit is much more direct and cannot be appropriated by someone who is not involved in the process

From Lumbung I understand the concept of sharing harvested information, to support eachother and achieve multi-perspectivity. This can be a from of interchange.

ETH Zürich, Studio Caruso. Redesigning Museums. Reader HS2023.

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HISTORY IN PIECES

David Joselit Documenta 15 and the 50th Venice Biennale

By David Joselit 30

THROUGHOUT THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, modern and contemporary art in the West sought either to show history or to transcend it. To chest history is to outrun it in gestures aimed at original achievement (as witnessed by Segmentation on the walls of the 1950s) or to display destruction (as witnessed by the 1960s). The 1970s, however, offered a necessary dialectical framework for its own representation—the

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With David Joselit's text “History in Pieces” I understood that Documenta 15 invited the viewer to a “spectatorship of translation”: as a foreigner to a culture you have to understand that there are things that are translatable but there is also a dictionary of untranslatability.

“The death of the viewer gives way to the birth of the participant.” - With the birth of the participant comes the death of the didactic museum

“We try to produce a new aesthetics- an ethical paradigm where the viewer is obsolete.” - quote from a drawing by Safdar Ahmed, published in the Documenta 15 handbook.

The viewer is not just a consumer, he is part of the artpiece - a constant process of discussing, translating and harvesting.

Comprehension is a translation into one's own language and thus probably incomplete - one doesn't always have to understand everything - get used to being astonished, surprised, overwhelmed - to comprehend (v.) latin (prehendere) “to lay hold of, to grasp, snatch, seize, catch; occupy violently; take by surprise, catch in the act; to reach, arrive at;” - comprehensible (adj.) 1520s, “able to be contained,” - comprehension makes things exhaustive

History in Pieces, David Joselite, Artforum International, Vol. 61, No. 1, New York USA, 2022

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Savoy was tasked by Emmanuel Macron to prepare a report to his demand in 2017 to “restitute all African cultural artifacts held in French possession within five years.” Savoy agreed to do so, on the condition that she wouldn't undertake this endeavor alone, and she brought Sarr on board. It's a fact that 90% of African cultural artifacts are located outside the continent. Additionally, it's a fact that African countries have consistently requested the return of a few culturally significant items since gaining independence in the 1960s. The concern that many voices have, that French museums will be “emptied” by Macron's demand, is not accurate. No African country is seeking the complete restitution of all objects and goods. It is about a new ethical framework for these relationships. The collections originate from a time of colonialism characterized by asymmetric power dynamics.

Is it even possible to reconstitute all the objects stored in european museums? Both artists we talked to were skeptical. However what those museums need for sure is to open up, to share, to show themselves vulnerable.

The question of restitution fundamentally challenges the sought after neutrality of the museum, specifically also in the context of the Swiss national myth of neutrality

Sarr, F., & Savoy, B. (2018). The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics. Ministère de la culture.

https://www.about-africa.de/images/sonstiges/2018/sarr\_savoy\_en.pdf



if we do take these objects as art, how can art not only be “viewed” by “viewers” as aesthetic objects, but also become sources of information - and by that not just one singular narrative being presented and explained by the museum - how can these objects become active bodies of knowledge, be valued that way and so transform the viewer into a participant?

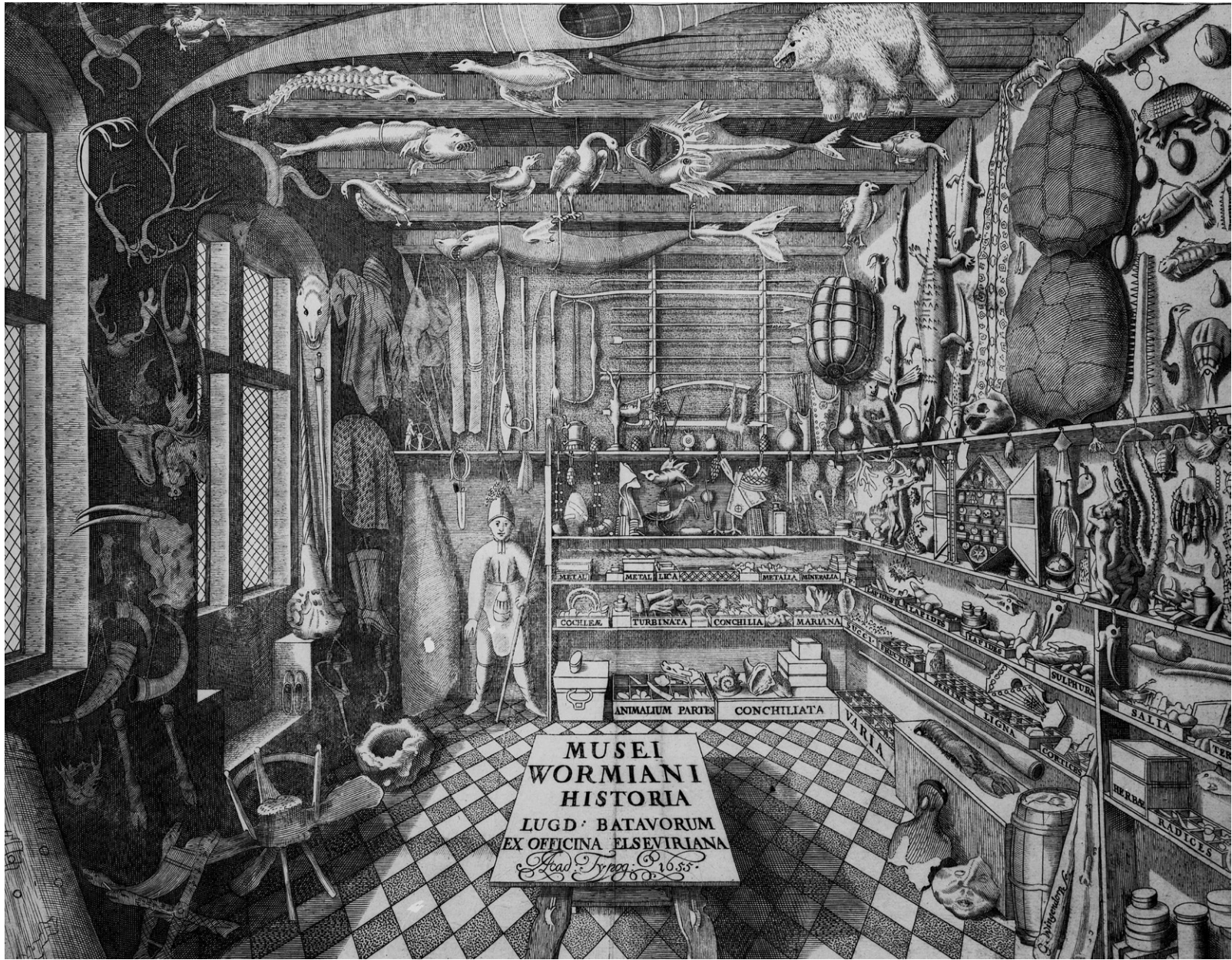
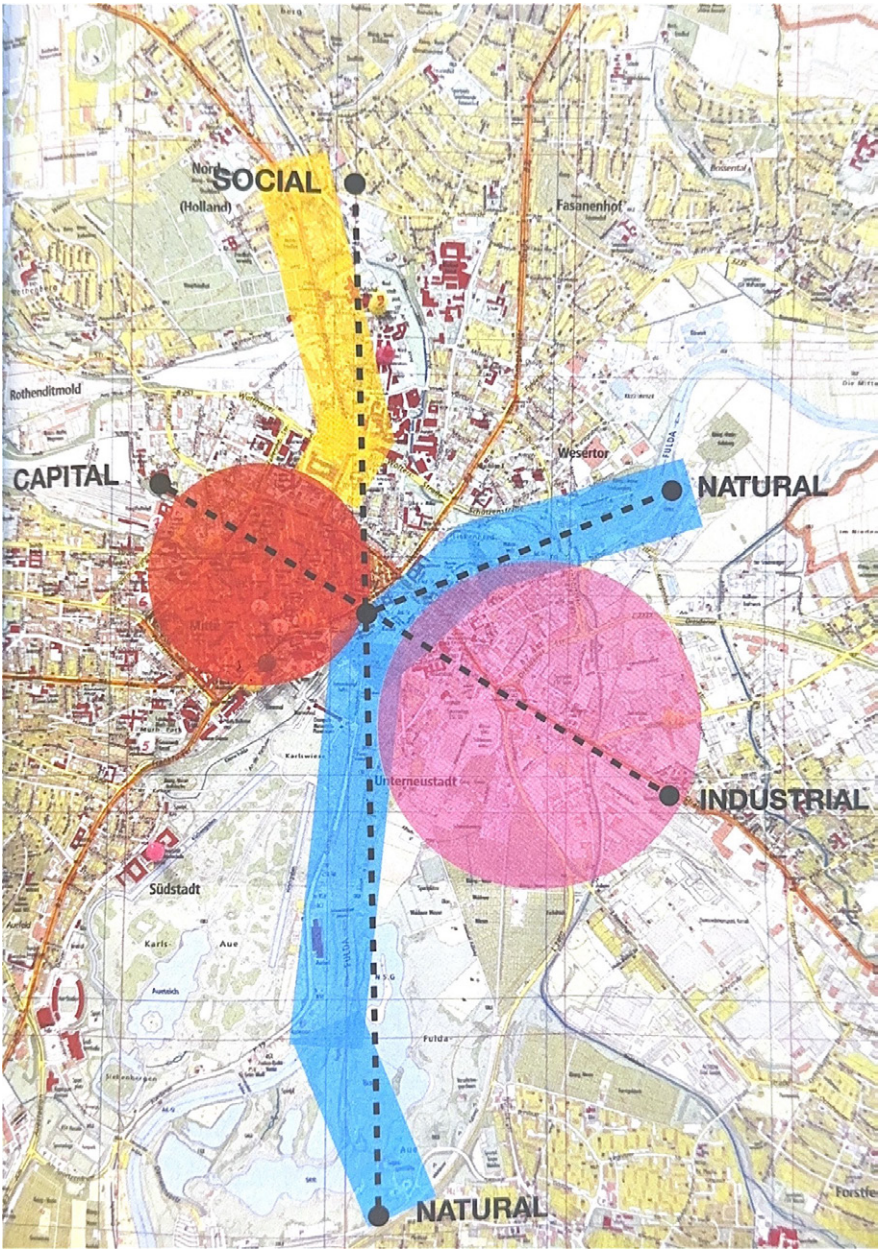
The pathways of art exhibition breaks up the traditional exhibition design at Rietberg. It introduces an element which you would maybe expect in a historical or ethnographic museum. Who is it meant for? its very didactic. Who designed it? It reminds me of English textbooks at school.

the paradox of the object: you have this attempted transparency and yet the object itself is still here...

Pathways of Art is in my opinion a poor attempt to communicate knowledge, as it reinforces the idea of western knowledge production. On top of it the Schaudapot is an immense amount of objects that thus loose their individual importance.

Pathways of Art Exhibition in the Villa Wesendonck





Gespräch mit dem zuständigen für das Schaudapot. Hier ist nur ein Teil der Sammlung. Es gibt ein neues Ordnungssystem. Die Logistik scheint komplex, ein großer Teil der Objekte, Textilien und Malerei sind in einem anderen Depot in Oerlikon. Er arbeitet 2 Tage in der Woche hier. Das Museum wächst. Es werden immer mehr Objekte.

The accessible depot is an overwhelming space. It is full with objects from all over the world. You have no idea where they are from and what they are. Why are there so many of them? Why are there so many similar objects. Why collect them in the first place? What is their value and what do they tell us. One way of approaching this space is to walk through and pick out one object to observe carefully, looking exactly at how it was made. The storage allows you to create your own stories, to form connections. to get inspired, without a text or any background knowledge about the works. You can just admire the artistic qualities of the objects. What if you could start curating? what if you could pick objects and assemble them, creating connections between objects, times and places?

Schaudepot

I love the plan

Handbook, Documenta fifteen, Ruangrupa, Kassel D, 2022

Wunderkammer: Origin of Museums and the beginning of representation of other cultures as the “exotic” in order to construct the concept of nationstate. The collections were products of expeditions.

The “Wunderkammer” is closely associated with collecting various objects with lacking categorization. It is rather a reflection of possession.

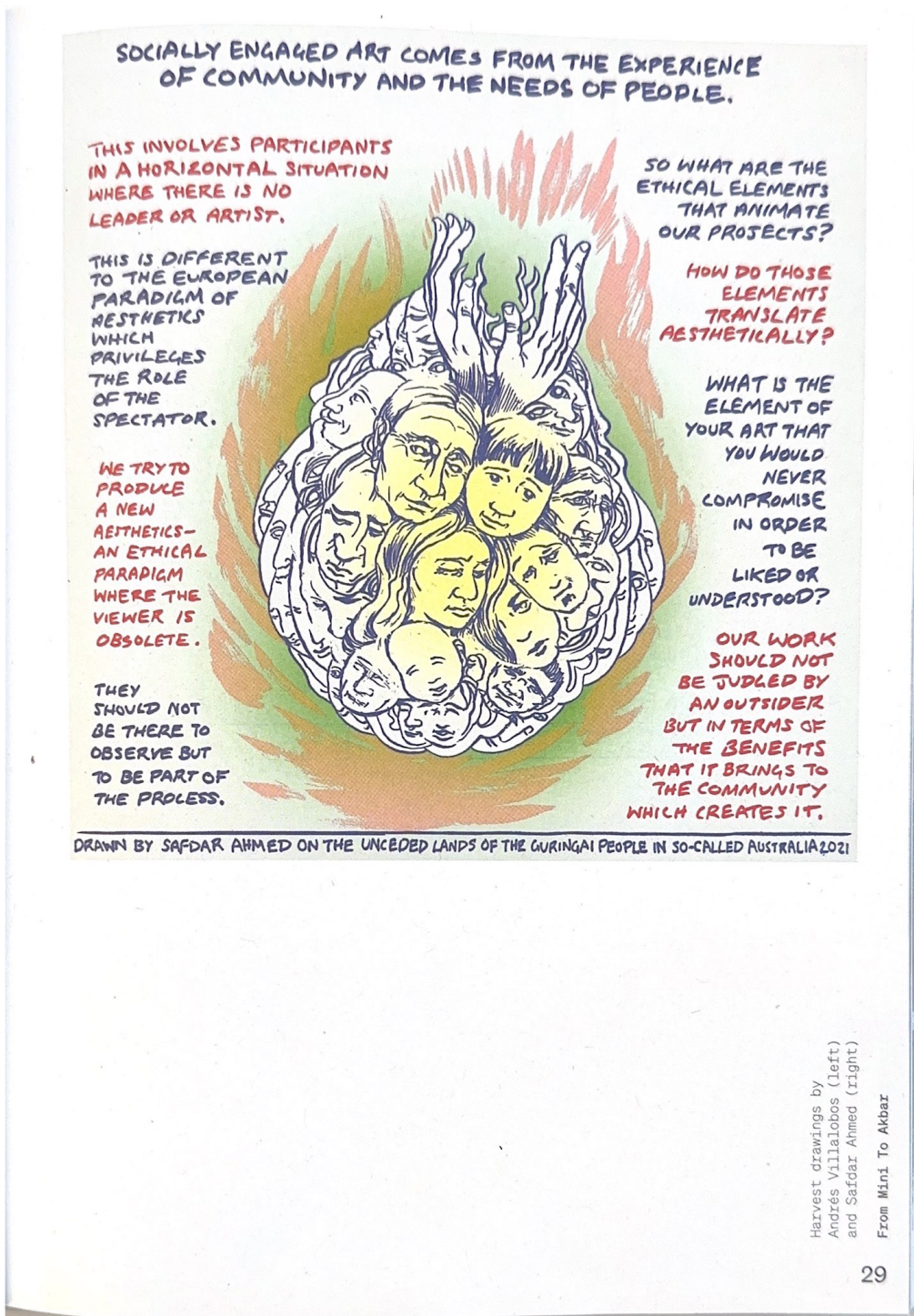
A place of wonder?

As a child i had an exposition in my room. Containing various animal skulls, gemstones, and daggers. Although they are not on display anymore a lot of them are stored in boxes in the cellar.

wonder (n.) - Old English wundor “marvelous thing, miracle, object of astonishment,” from Proto-Germanic \*wundran (source also of Old Saxon wundar, Middle Dutch, Dutch wonder, Old High German wuntar, German wunder, Old Norse undr), of unknown origin. In Middle English it also came to mean the emotion associated with such a sight (late 13c.). To be no wonder was in Old English. The original wonder drug (1939) was Sulfanilamide.

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wunderkammer>



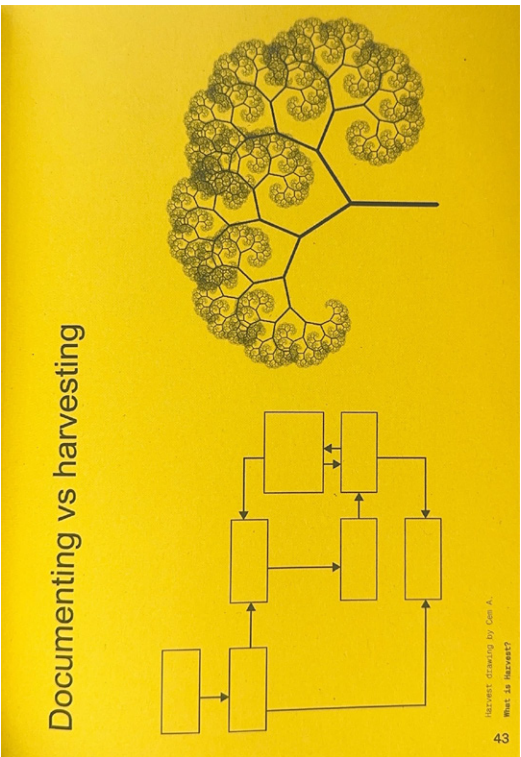


<h2 style="text-align: center;">Glossar</h2>	
<b>Begutachtung (Schätzungen)</b>	<p>Die Bestätigung der Echtheit und Ermittlung eines Schätzwerts eines Objektes oder Gegenstands. In bestimmten Ländern wird der Begriff für eine unabhängige Schätzung eines vorgesehenen Gegenstands zum Zwecke von Steuerbegünstigungen verwendet.</p>
<b>Gemeinnützige Organisation</b>	<p>Ein als natürliche oder juristische Person rechtlich anerkanntes Organ, dessen Einkommen (einschließlich aller Überschüsse und Gewinne) ausschließlich zum Nutzen dieses Organs und seiner Funktion verwendet wird. Der Ausdruck «Nicht gewinnorientiert» hat die gleiche Bedeutung.</p>
<b>Gewinnorientierte Aktivitäten</b>	<p>Tätigkeiten zur Erzielung finanzieller Vorteile oder Gewinne zugunsten der Institution.</p>
<b>Gültiger (Rechts-)Titel</b>	<p>Das durch vollständigen Herkunftsnachweis von der Entdeckung oder Herstellung eines Gegenstandes an unweifelhaft festgestellte Eigentumsrecht an einer Sache.</p>
<b>Handel</b>	<p>Kauf und Verkauf von Gegenständen zum persönlichen oder institutionellen Vorteil.</p>
<b>Herkunftsnachweis (Provenienz)</b>	<p>Die vollständige Dokumentation eines Gegenstandes und seiner Besitzverhältnisse vom Zeitpunkt seiner Entdeckung oder Schöpfung bis in die Gegenwart, wodurch Echtheit und Eigentumsansprüche festgelegt werden.</p>
<b>Interessenkonflikt</b>	<p>Eine durch persönliche oder private Interessen verursachte Kollision von Prinzipien in einer Arbeitsituation, die die Objektivität eines Entscheidungsprozesses dem Anschein nach oder tatsächlich beeinträchtigt.</p>
<b>Konservator/Restaurator</b>	<p>Angestellte oder selbstständige Personen, die befähigt sind, Kulturgüter technisch zu untersuchen, zu erhalten, zu konservieren und zu restaurieren (für weiterführende Informationen siehe ICOM News, Bd. 39, Nr. 1 (1988), S. 5 f.).</p>
<b>Kulturerbe</b>	<p>Alle Ideen und Dinge, die als asthetisch, historisch, wissenschaftlich oder geistig bedeutsam erachtet werden.</p>
<b>Mindeststandard</b>	<p>Ein Standard, der nach realistischem Ermessen von allen Museen und deren Mitarbeiter/innen erwartet werden kann. Manche Länder haben eigene Mindeststandards festgelegt.</p>
<b>Museum*</b>	<p>Ein Museum ist eine gemeinnützige, auf Dauer angelegte, der Öffentlichkeit zugängliche Einrichtung im Dienste der Gesellschaft und ihrer Entwicklung, die zum Zwecke des Studiums, der Bildung und des Erlebens materielle und immaterielle Zeugnisse von Menschen und ihrer Umwelt beschafft, bewahrt, erforscht, bekannt macht und ausstellt.</p>
<b>Naturerbe</b>	<p>Jede natürliche Sache, jede Idee oder Erscheinung, die von wissenschaftlicher oder geistiger Bedeutung ist.</p>
<b>Provenienz &gt; siehe «Herkunftsnachweis»</b>	
<b>Qualifiziertes Museumspersonal*</b>	<p>Qualifiziertes Museumspersonal bezeichnet alle entgeltlich oder ehrenamtlich beschäftigten Mitarbeiter/innen von Museen oder der Definition in Artikel 2, Absatz 1 und 2 der ICOM Statuten entsprechenden Einrichtungen, die in einem für die Leitung oder Funktion eines Museums relevanten Bereich ausgebildet wurden oder über entsprechende Berufserfahrung verfügen, sowie Selbstständige, die die ethischen Richtlinien für Museen von ICOM anerkennen und für Museen oder im oben zitierten Staat definierte Einrichtungen tätig sind. Das gilt nicht für Personen, die mit für Museen und deren Dienstleistungen benötigten kommerziellen Produkten und Ausstattungen Handel treiben oder für sie werben.</p>
<b>Rechtstitel</b>	<p>Das gesetzlich verankerte Eigentumsrecht an einer Sache im betreffenden Land. In manchen Ländern kann dies ein verliertes Recht sein, das nicht ausreicht, um der Sorgfaltspflicht zu genügen.</p>
<b>Sorgfaltspflicht</b>	<p>Die Verpflichtung, alle Anstrengungen zu unternehmen, um die Fakten eines Vorganges zu ermitteln, bevor man über das weitere Verfahren entscheidet, insbesondere die Feststellung von Ursprung und Geschichte eines zum Erwerb oder zur Nutzung angebotenen Gegenstandes vor seiner Anschaffung.</p>
<b>Trägerschaft)</b>	<p>Die Personen oder Organisationen, die laut Museumsstatut für Fortbestand, Weiterentwicklung und Finanzierung des Museums verantwortlich sind.</p>

\* Es soll darauf hingewiesen werden, dass die Bezeichnungen «Museum» und «Museumspersonal» und «inhabere» lediglich Definitionen zur Interpretation der ethischen Richtlinien für Museen von ICOM sind. Die Definitionen von «Museum» und «inhabere» Museumsmitarbeitern und professionellen Museumsmitarbeitern, wie sie in den ICOM Statuten verwendet werden, bleiben in Kraft, bis die Überarbeitung dieser Statuten abgeschlossen ist.

29

Ethische Richtlinien



police (n.) / policy (n.) 1530s, “the regulation and control of a community”; from Middle French police “organized government, civil administration” (late 15c.), from Latin *politia* “civil administration,” from Greek *polis* “city” (see *polis*).

Until mid-19c. used in England for “civil administration;” application to “administration of public order, law-enforcement in a community” (1716) is from French (late 17c.), and originally in English referred to France or other foreign nations.

The sense of “an organized civil force for maintaining order, preventing and detecting crime, etc.” is by 1800; not even in a place of “wonder” you can escape the Hausordnung

## Institution as a product of rules.

<https://rietberg.ch/files/Downloads/Besucherordnung/Besucherordnung-2019-DE-print.pdf>

producing, sharing and reflecting upon knowledge, all require an act of translation and this as an ongoing process needs to be expressed and shown

Handbook, Documenta fifteen, Ruangrupa, Kassel D, 2022

“Kulturerbe” as “all ideas and things considered aesthetically, historically, scientifically or spiritually significant” - for whom? - and the “Begutachtung” as “the confirmation of the authenticity and determination of an estimated value of an object or item” - by whom? - which “authenticity”? - how does one estimate a value?

[https://www.museums.ch/assets/files/dossiers\\_d/Standards/ICOM\\_Ethische\\_Richtlinien\\_D\\_web.pdf](https://www.museums.ch/assets/files/dossiers_d/Standards/ICOM_Ethische_Richtlinien_D_web.pdf)

harvest and sharing is a process that becomes an artwork for itself.

This what we tried in our entire process? Not to document and explain but to harvest and expand. Not to control the research but let it run wild. The interviews provided temporary focus points.

Handbook, Documenta fifteen, Ruangrupa, Kassel D,  
2022



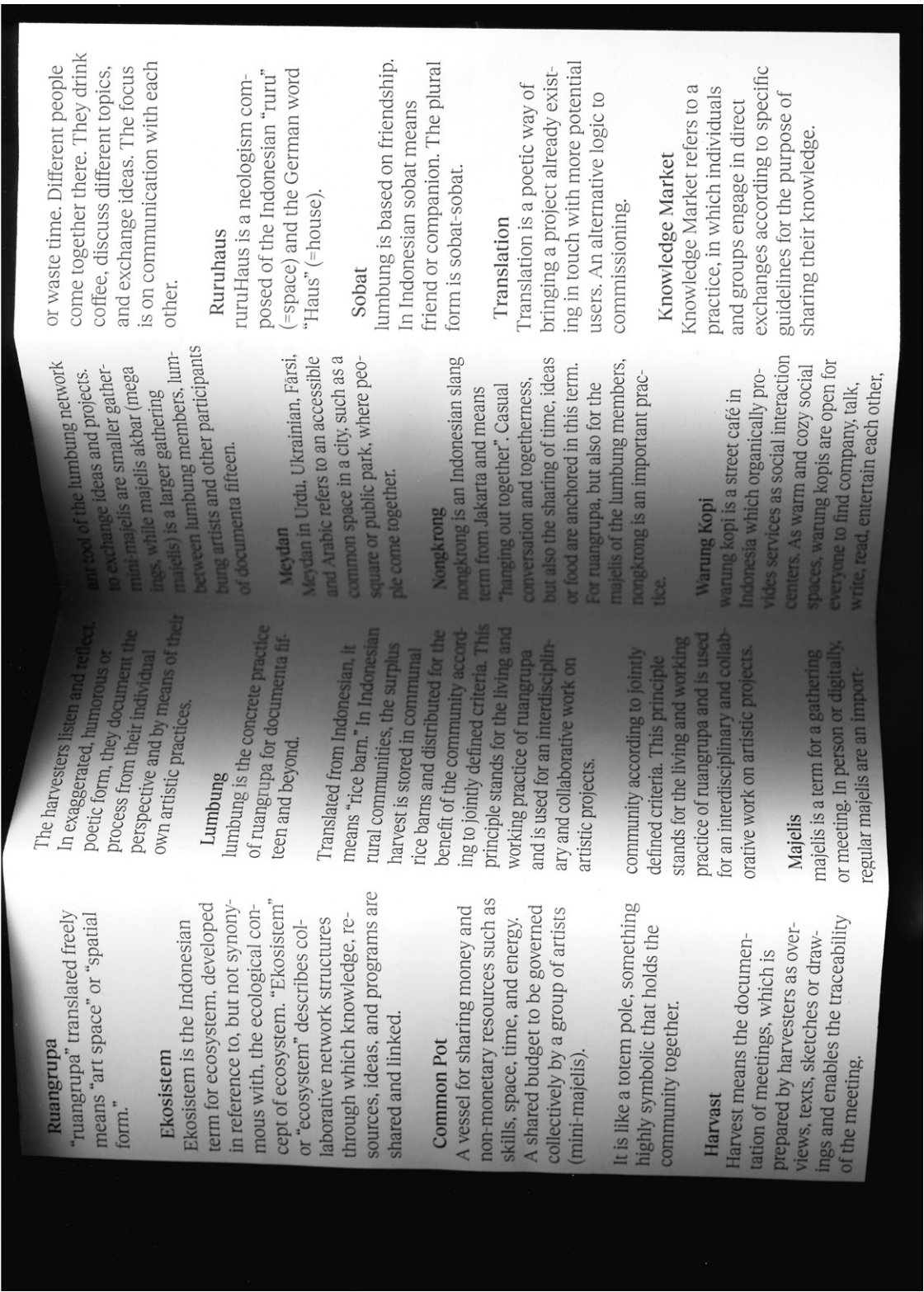
These exhibitions promote the status of non-European cultures and the concept of tolerance, and thus signal the cosmopolitan nature of Zurich.

It is very interesting to listen to the political narratives behind the museum. Does it really show the cosmopolitan nature of Zurich? What about participation? What tolerance does the museum show?

The emphasis on NON-european cultures is strange. What about this is ars una?

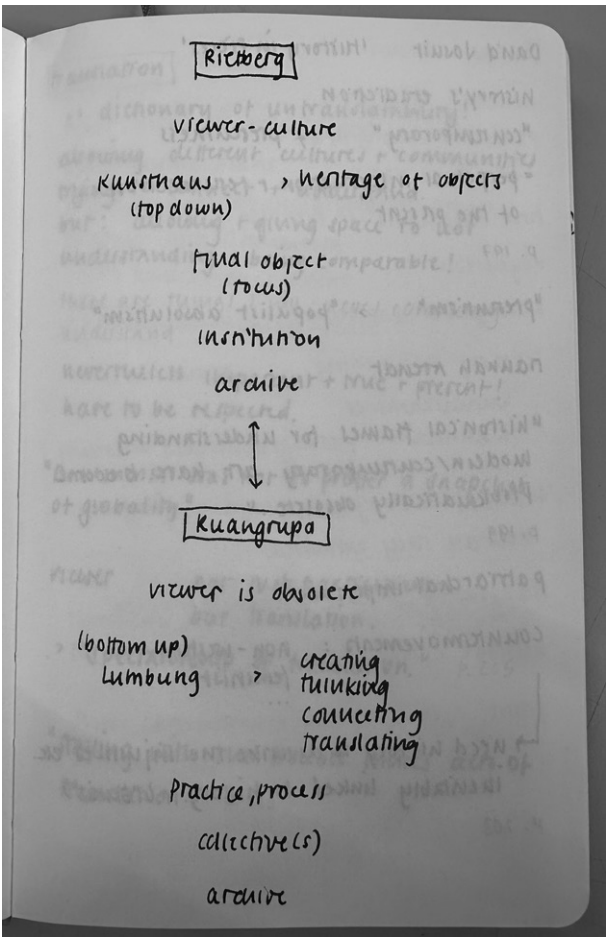
the cosmopolitan sphere of Zurich is not Zurich when we spoke to Helen, she said that for her the Rietberg Museum embodies Swissness

https://rietberg.ch/ueber-uns



Ruangrupa translated their practice into a glossary for the visitors of Documenta to understand what they are doing - words as lumbung or harvest, they are full of meaning for Ruangrupa, probably evolved and gained significance over years of discussion and work. How do you translate this meaning to Kassel, to the visitors of Documenta? Is a glossary powerful enough?

Ruangrupa's Glossary for the Dokumenta 13

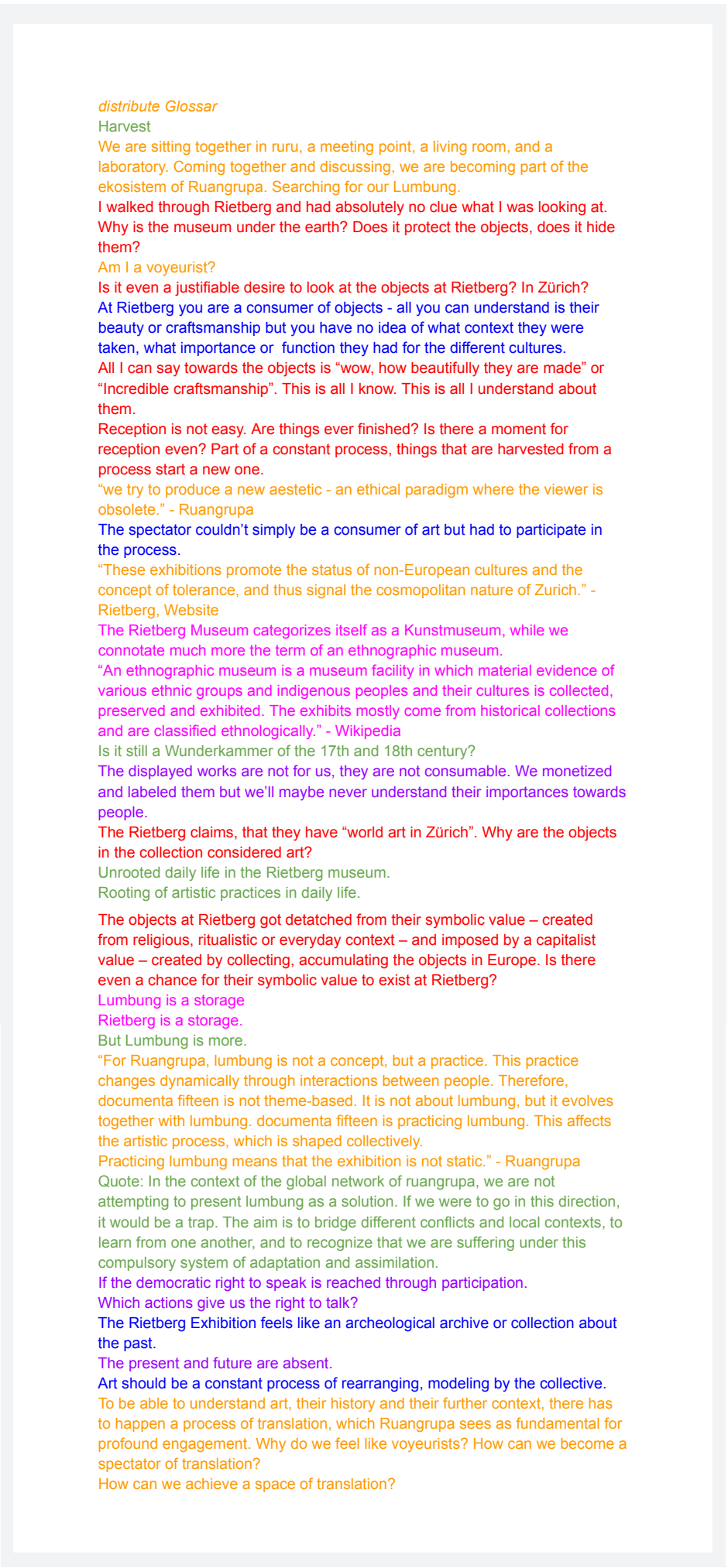


We started by comparing Ruangrupa and Rietberg Museum and pin pointed the first crucial differences. By seeing the differences we encountered the overlay: both are forms of an archive, even though differently executed. This was the start for our own development of our archive.

to translate means to alienate.

If I encounter something foreign to me I will try to locate it within my own context of knowledge and create associations in order to grasp its meaning.

The idea of the viewer becoming obsolete through participation is not working for every purpose the same. The corporate identity of Museums and the character of Institutions feel like a forced together collective. @091\_20230926\_1449



Overlay of informations and perspectives forming a whole.

patchwork of our different notes form one text. first questions, suppositions and ideas rise. assemblage

to assemble is to collect in a way that is not categorizing, that is not following the old line of order, asserting dominance, putting up boundaries. How can we gather in a way that each individual part may still be independent but can start to relate with the other parts in an associative, open way

first pinup, 20230920



Seen against this background, archives are a kind of central nervous system enabling us to reconstruct the archaeological layers of human lives or works of art.

These archives need to be used, and must be useable. Their users should not be, as has been the case so far, mainly provenance researchers, legal advisors and lawyers with their own particular interests, but by all means and far more frequently than until now, historians and art historians, intent on uncovering the complexities of the events and all their implications (cultural, political, economic, emotional, for the history of memory. etc.). Archives should not only be open, but made useable and should be used, so as to further transparency and objectivity in these questions.

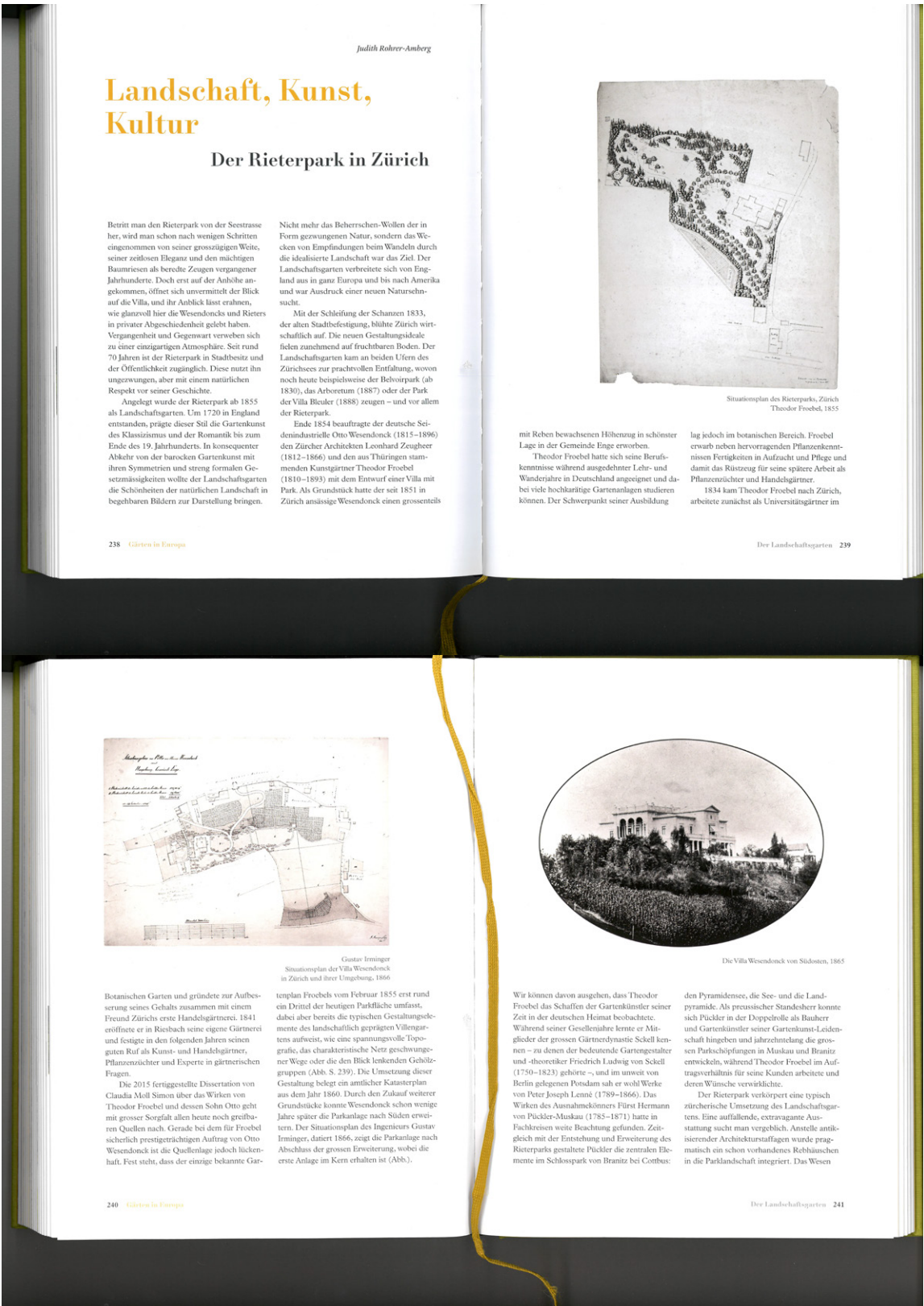
What is an archive? A source rather than knowledge.

the last sentence of this quote, does the director of Rietberg mean something like that when talking about their plans of a "living archive"?

archives require active engagement and interpretation

i remember when we visitied the werner oechslin library in the first year - it is important for him that the archive is used and touched - one can touch and read the very old and prescious books without gloves

Benedicte Savoy Plunder, Restitution, Emotion and the Weight of Archives: A Historical Approach (p.16)



Which plants did Otto and Theodor Froebel import? The discussion about "exotic" plants is as big as about the objects in the Museum! The topic of plant racism I find to be very interesting: Why should a plant that grows and flourishes eventhough is not "originally" from that place be less justified or valuable.

Gärten der Welt: Orte der Sehnsucht und Inspiration (2016)

Aby Warburg - Bildatlas Mnemosyne

In Warburgs Forschung stand die italienische Renaissance im Vordergrund, an ihren Kunstwerken konnte er zeigen, wie sich mythologische Szenen der Antike verwandelt hatten und „weiterlebten“. Solches „Nachleben“ setzt sich bis in die Gegenwart fort, sodass Warburg gerne Fotos aus Illustrierten hinzufügte, ebenso wie Briefmarken oder Werbeanzeigen, in denen er dem unbewussten, aber eben vorhandenen Bildervorrat nachspürte.

Zur Vorbereitung ließ Aby Warburg große, mit schwarzem Stoff bespannte Tafeln anfertigen, auf die er Abbildungen von Kunstwerken wie Botticellis „Geburt der Venus“ oder Manets „Frühstück im Grünen“ neben Postkarten, Zeitungsausschnitten, Briefmarken oder Buchseiten anordnete und immer wieder umsortierte. Als er starb, gab es 63 dieser Tafeln, die ebenso wie Vorgängerversionen in Form von Schwarzweiß-Glasnegativen überlebten.

Auch sein „Mnemosyne“-Projekt zielte nicht auf wissenschaftliche Exaktheit, sondern auf Annäherung, auf die Eröffnung von Denkräumen. Mag sein, dass er es nie hätte abschließen können, weil endlose Variationen denkbar sind.

Aber wie er sich jenseits kunsthistorischer Klassifizierungen einen Weg bahnte durch eine überbordende Bildgeschichte. Das ist überhaupt das Herausragende und Besondere an ihm, wenn ich Ihr Buch da richtig verstanden habe, dass er eben nicht, wie es in seiner Zeit ja üblich war, herabgesehen hat auf die Kunst der sogenannten Primitiven und von einer kulturellen Höherentwicklung ausgegangen ist, sondern dass er die Kunst eben der Indianer als mindestens gleichrangig angesehen hat zu dem, was er in der Antike oder in der Renaissance gesehen hat.

The continuity of antique depiction until today is well taught in Europe. Similar traditions remain unknown

Horst Bredekamp: „Aby Warburg, der Indianer. Berliner Erkundungen einer liberalen Ethnologie“ Verlag Wagenbach, Berlin 2018 176 Seiten, 18 Euro <https://www.weltkunst.de/ausstellungen/2020/09/aby-warburg-posterboy-derkunstgeschichte>



Would love to see the collection at Rietberg, rearranged by Aby Warburg.

What categories would he come up with?

Horst Bredekamp: „Aby Warburg, der Indianer. Berliner Erkundungen einer liberalen Ethnologie“ Verlag Wagenbach, Berlin 2018 176 Seiten, 18 Euro <https://www.weltkunst.de/ausstellungen/2020/09/aby-warburg-posterboy-derkunstgeschichte>



Mnemosyne (n.)  
in Greek mythology, the name of a titaness, mother of the Muses, from Greek mnēmosynē, literally “memory, remembrance,” from mnēmē “memory, a remembrance” (from PIE root \*men- (1) “to think”) + -synē, suffix of abstract nouns. Sometimes translated into Latin as Moneta (see money (n.))

ethnology (n.)  
“science of the characteristics, history, and customs of the races of mankind,” 1832, from ethno- + -logy, perhaps modeled on French or German. Related: Ethnologist; ethnological. Ethnology is a very modern science, even later than Geology, and as yet hardly known in America, although much cultivated latterly in Germany and France, being considered an indispensable auxiliary to history and geography. [“Atlantic Journal and Friend of Knowledge,” Philadelphia, summer 1832]

ethno-  
word-forming element meaning “race, culture,” from Greek ethnos “people, nation, class, caste, tribe; a number of people accustomed to live together” (see ethnic). Used to form modern compounds in the social sciences.

-logy  
word-forming element meaning “a speaking, discourse, treatise, doctrine, theory, science,” from Greek -logia (often via French -logie or Medieval Latin -logia), from -log-, combining form of legein “to speak, tell;” thus, “the character or deportment of one who speaks or treats of (a certain subject);” from PIE root \*leg- (1) “to collect, gather,” with derivatives meaning “to speak (to ‘pick out words’).” Often via Medieval Latin -logia, French -logie. In philology “love of learning; love of words or discourse,” apology, doxology, analogy, trilogy, etc., Greek logos “word, speech, statement, discourse” is directly concerned.

Is the Museum Rietberg really a Kunstmuseum or not rather an ethnological Museum?

Why does the Rietberg call itself a “world art museum”. What is world art even?

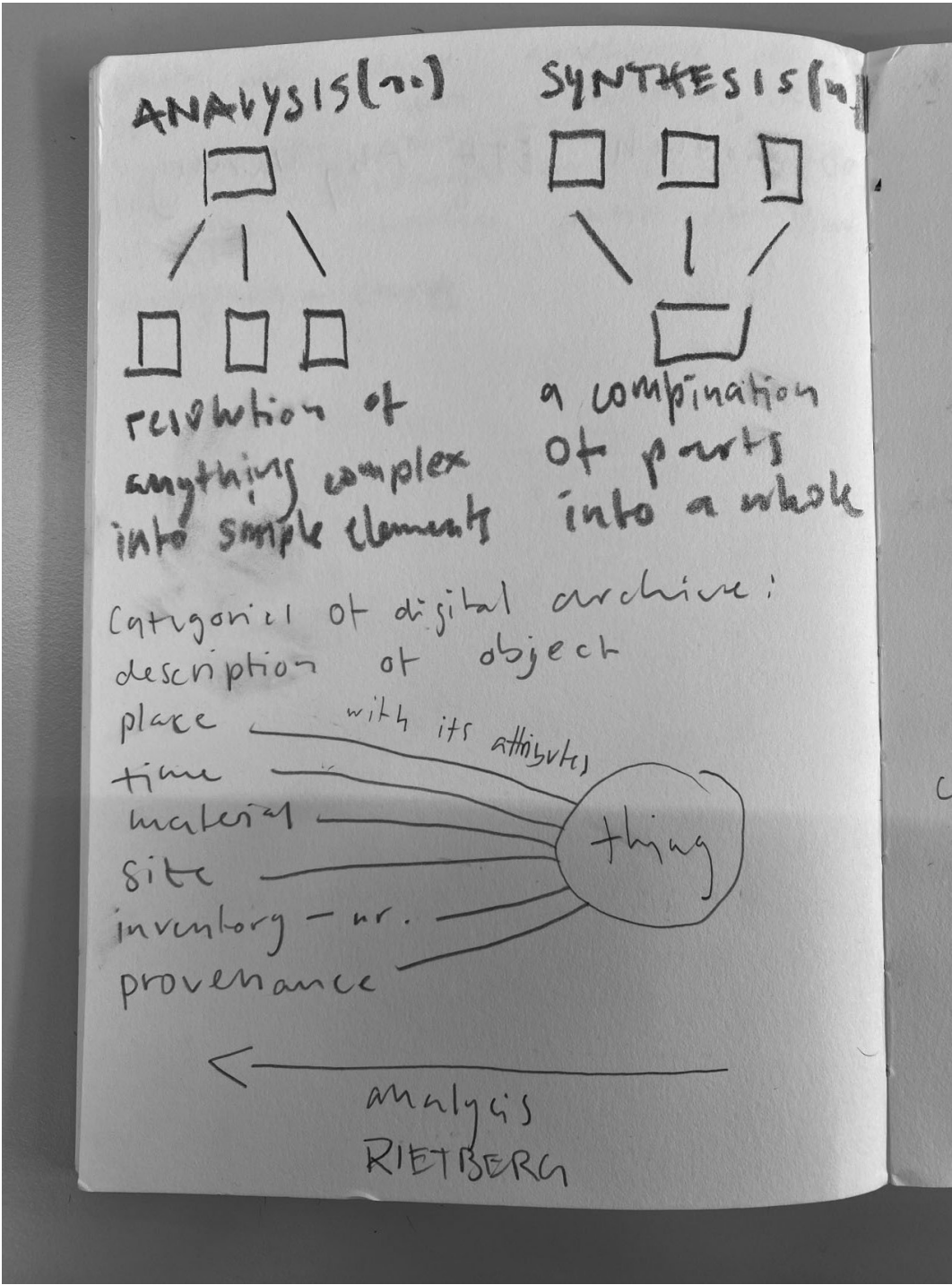
<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ethnology>

museums house memories  
<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=mnemosyne>

René Worms states that, according to the etymology, ethnology is simply the description of peoples; sociology is the science of societies. The former only assembles the materials; the latter, with the materials, builds structures. The former analyses, the second synthesises. Moreover, ethnology studies only barbaric and savage societies; sociology is interested, at least as much, in civilised societies. Ethnography can only be linked to the present, for one can only describe what one has seen; sociology also takes into account the past. From all this it may be concluded that sociology borrows from ethnography a part of the facts that it elaborates, but only a part. Only, is that part the most important? There is some reason to doubt it.

While analytical writing is about breaking something apart and looking at the pieces individually, synthesis is about putting ideas and information together to see an overall pattern how things come together. Philosophical analysis and synthesis are two different methods of understanding and interpreting philosophical ideas. Analysis is the process of breaking down a complex idea into simpler parts, in order to better understand its meaning and implications. For example, analyzing the concept of “free will” might involve examining different definitions and theories of free will, as well as the implications of different perspectives on the concept. Synthesis is the process of bringing together different ideas, perspectives, or pieces of information, in order to form a new understanding or viewpoint. For example, synthesizing different theories of free will might involve finding commonalities and differences between them, and using that information to form a new, more comprehensive understanding of the concept. A good example of philosophical analysis is the study of the concept of “knowledge” in epistemology, where philosophers analyze different theories of knowledge, such as empiricism, rationalism, and skepticism, and their implications for understanding the nature of knowledge. A good example of philosophical synthesis is the study of the concept of “mind” in philosophy of mind, where philosophers synthesize different theories of mind, such as materialism, dualism, and idealism, and their implications for understanding the relationship between the mind and the body.

Durkheim, E. (1982). Debate on the Relationship between Ethnology and Sociology (1907)



analysis (n.) 1580s, “resolution of anything complex into simple elements” (opposite of synthesis), from Medieval Latin analysis (15c.), from Greek analysis “solution of a problem by analysis,” literally “a breaking up, a loosening, releasing,” noun of action from analuein “unloose, release, set free; to loose a ship from its moorings,” in Aristotle, “to analyze,” from ana “up, back, throughout” (see ana-) + lysis “a loosening,” from luein “to unfasten” (from PIE root \*leu- “to loosen, divide, cut apart”).

synthesis (n.)

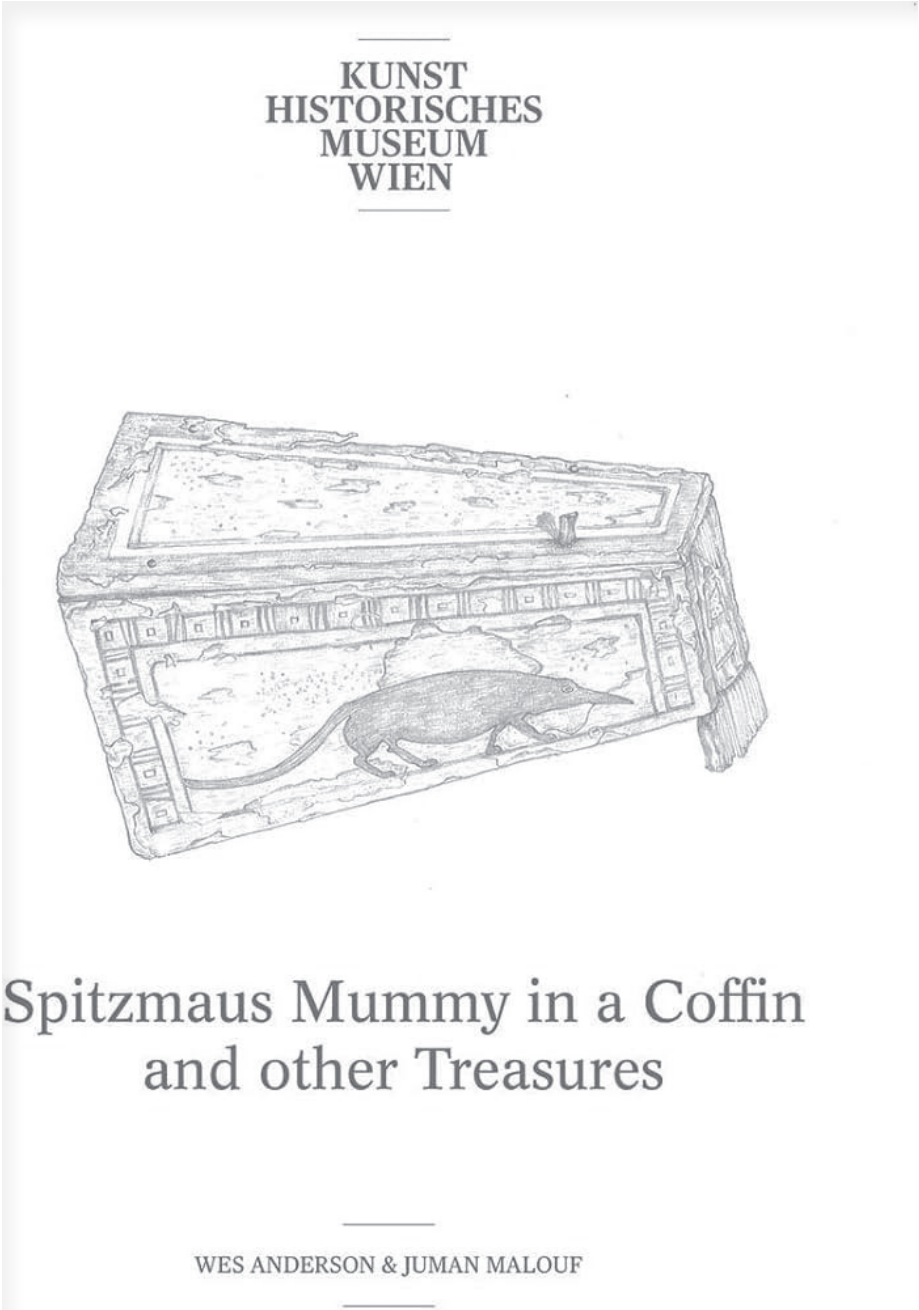
1610s, “deductive reasoning,” from Latin synthesis “collection, set, suit of clothes, composition (of a medication),” from Greek synthesis “composition, a putting together,” from syntithenai “put together, combine,” from syn- “together” (see syn-) + tithenai “to put, to place,” from reduplicated form of PIE root \*dhe- “to set, put.” From 1733 as “a combination of parts into a whole.” Earlier borrowed in Middle English as sintecis (mid-15c.). Plural syntheses.

[https://www.etymonline.com/word/analysis#etymonline\\_v\\_13394](https://www.etymonline.com/word/analysis#etymonline_v_13394)











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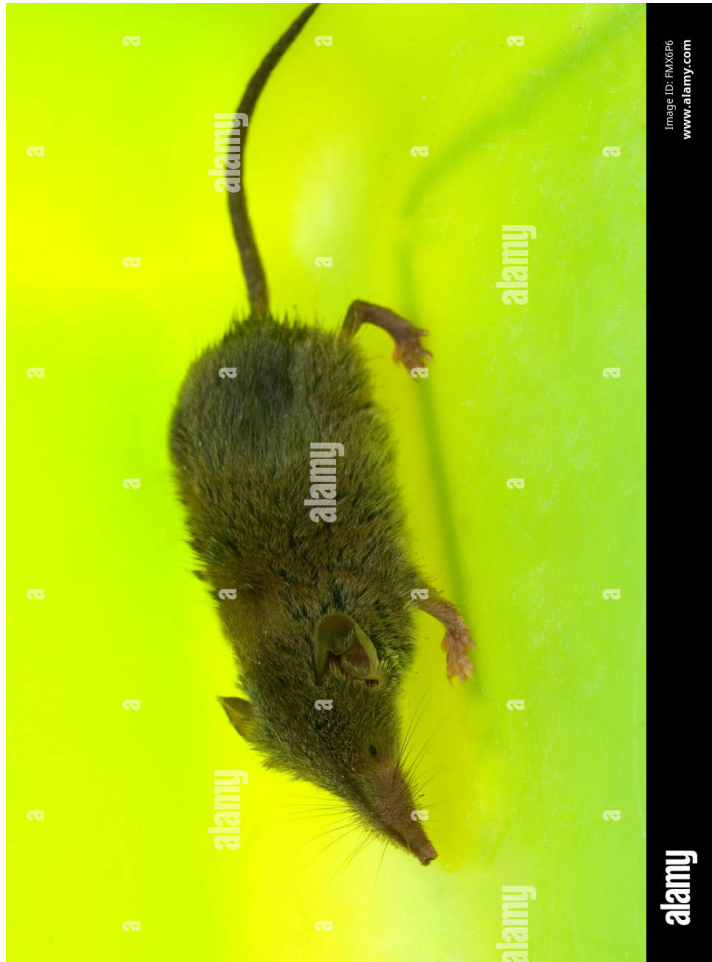
“Il sarcofago di Spitzmaus e altri tesori” explores the reasons behind the decision to create a collection and the ways in which it is housed, presented and experienced. Looking back to the past and drawing inspiration on the model of the Wunderkammer, the exhibition challenges traditional museum canons, proposing new relations between the institutions and their collections, and between their professional figures and their public. The choice of exhibited works, based on a non-academic, interdisciplinary approach, not only illustrates Anderson and Malouf’s deep knowledge of the two museums, but also reveals unexpected parallels and resonances between the works included in the project and the creative universes of the two artists.

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Can we think of alternative categories?  
<https://www.minniemuse.com/musts/see/wes-anderson-at-prada-foundation>

033\_20230923\_1438



<https://www.alamyimages.fr/photos-images/spitzmaus.html?sortBy=relevant>

034\_20230923\_1440



Statuetta decorativa per scale, XIX sec., Cina; ceramica smaltata.  
<https://www.saltedititions.it/il-sarcofago-di-spitzmaus-e-altri-tesori-lassurda-collezione-di-wes-anderson-e-juman-malouf/>

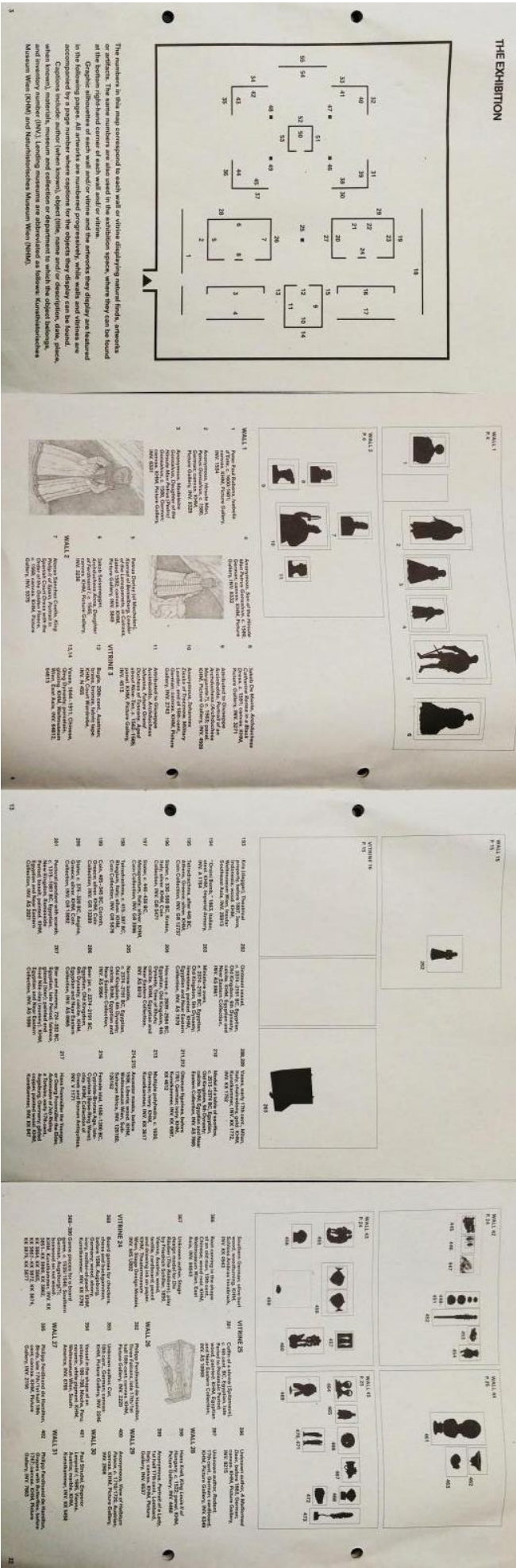




In der Renaissance lebten Haarmenschen an den königlichen Höfen Frankreichs, Italiens und der Niederlande, wo sie unterrichtet wurden und als menschliche Kuriositäten Teil des Hofstaates waren. Bekannt in der Überlieferung wurden zum Beispiel der Affenmensch Petrus Gonsalvus (1537–1618), der am Hof des französischen Königs Heinrich II. lebte, bevor er dem Statthalter Alessandro Farnese zum Geschenk gemacht wurde.

Als Hypertrichose, Hypertrichosis (altgriechisch ὑπερ, ὑπέρ: über, τρίχ: Haar) oder Polytrichie bezeichnet man das Symptom einer über das übliche Maß hinausgehenden Haardichte bzw. Behaarung, die weder dem Altern, noch dem Geschlecht oder der ethnischen Herkunft entsprechen.

<https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/086172-000-A/wes-anderson-und-die-spitzmaus-mumie/>



[https://www.gramma.it/eos/index.php?id\\_articolo=3800](https://www.gramma.it/eos/index.php?id_articolo=3800)



artificial (adj.)

late 14c., “not natural or spontaneous,” from Old French artificial, from Latin artificialis “of or belonging to art,” from artificium “a work of art; skill; theory, system,” from artifex (genitive artificis) “craftsman, artist, master of an art” (music, acting, sculpting, etc.), from stem of ars “art” (see art (n.)) + -fex “maker,” from facere “to do, make” (from PIE root \*dhe- “to set, put”).

The earliest use in English seems to be in the phrase artificial day “part of the day from sunrise to sunset” (as opposed to the natural day of 24 hours). The meaning “made by man, contrived by human skill and labor” is from early 15c. The word was applied from 16c. to anything made in imitation of, or as a substitute for, what is natural, whether real (light, tears) or not (teeth, flowers). The meaning “fictitious, assumed, not genuine” is from 1640s; that of “full of affectation, insincere” is from 1590s.

<https://www.amazon.nl/-/en/Sabine-Haag/dp/3960984448>



038\_20230923\_1830



Johannes Itten (1952-1955)

Elsy Leuzinger (1956-1972)

Eberhard Fischer (1972-1998)

Albert Lutz (1998-2019)

Annette Bhagwati (since 2019)

Momentums of exhibition making from Ars Una to Pathways of Art. Did it really change at all?

Johannes Ittens time begins with a very minimalist style of exhibiting. Easy Leuzinger and Eberhard Fischer seem to have continued in that tradition. Ambert Lutz formalises the approach or even institutionalises it a bit more and then Annette Bhagwati breaks with the minimalist exhibition strategy at the Rietberg.

pathways of art is the inverse of the idea ars una -

The information-boxes of "Pathways of Art" lack presence. Still, the dominant concept of exhibiting is showing every object as an artpiece, as it was 70 years ago. With these boxes, I feel a bit being in a weird hybrid-space of two curatorial logics.

feels like a quickfix

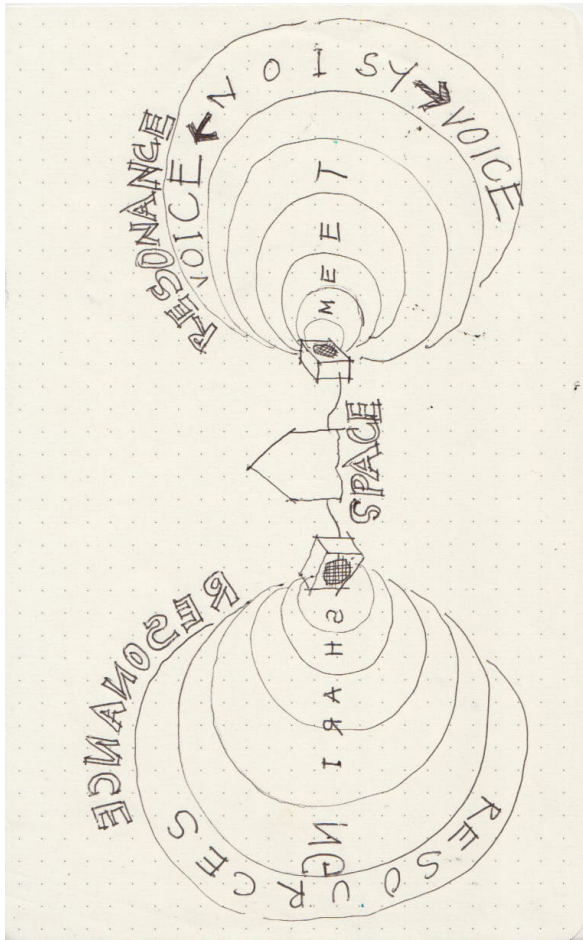
The museum doesn't only tell us alot about art or other cultures but it tells a lot about itself and the culture it is rooted in. It really depends on the perspective you take, what the museum can tell you.

The different eras of the museum show very beautifully, how the museum became more complicated, concerned with the security but also its own history in the current ara. The exhibition deisgn did not change for the better. Annette Bhagwati introduces a school textbook into the permanent collection.

But there's still a certain continuity that the museum is trying to hold onto, a continuity without any rupture - a treasured stability, a stability that is deeply rooted in the swiss identity. if there were to be a rupture, that would imply that there was something wrong in the first place - and that would mean taking a strong position, counteracting the notion of neutrality. Perhaps a careful stance is the only way to deal with us Swiss...

<https://rietberg.ch/sammlungspraesentation>

039\_20230923\_1832



Ruangrupa is a collective that challenges the topic of institutions and knowledge production. Not only do they want to formulate a new type of culture archive but also a space for interaction between cultures and languages. Their use of words inspired us to think words as something fluent and spectral which with everybody's understanding of the word can span up a field of discussion.

[www.ruangrupa.id](http://www.ruangrupa.id)

040\_20230923\_1840



<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/wes-anderson-curator-kunsthistorisches-museum-1387429>

041\_20230923\_1855

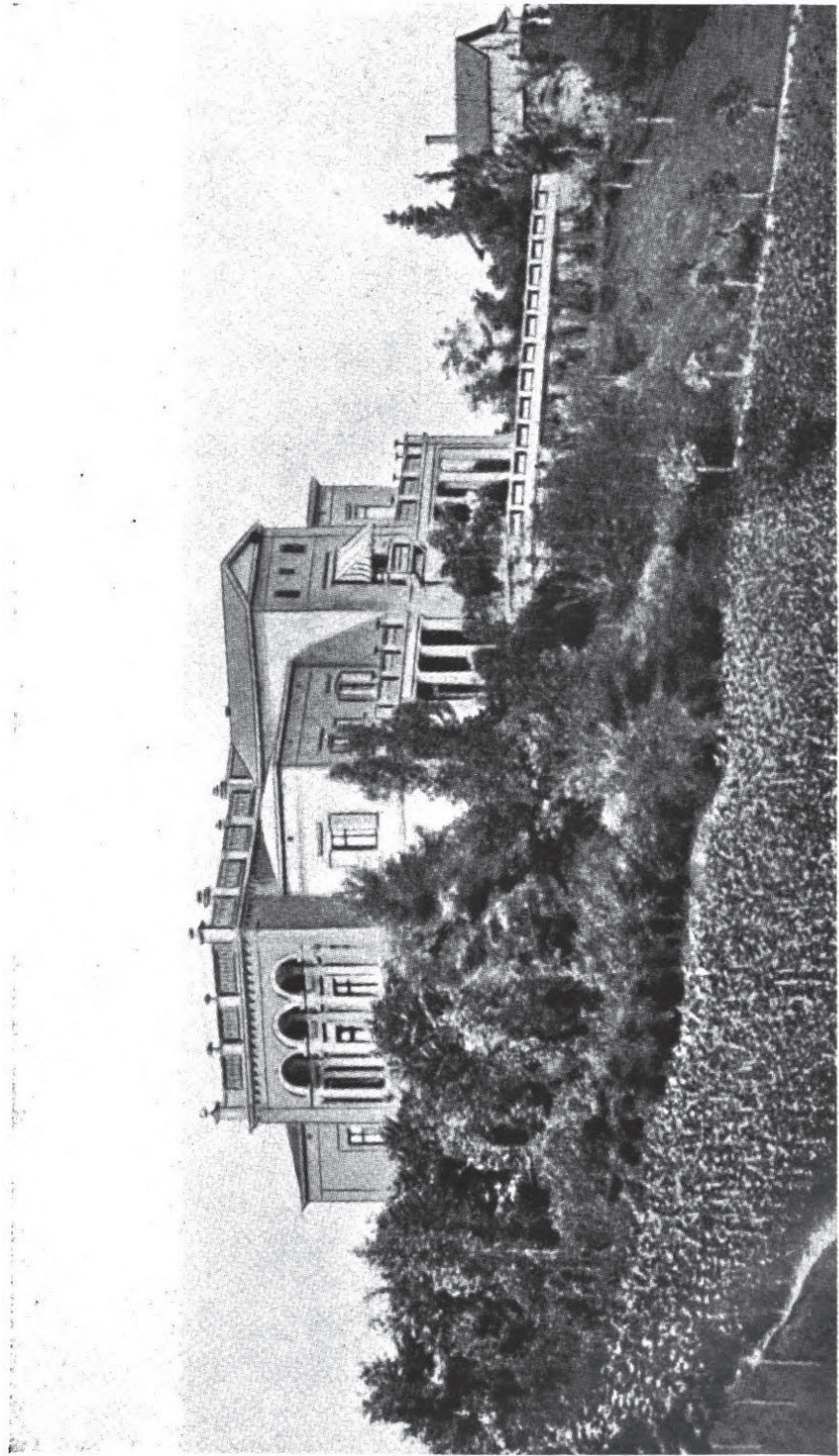


The collective process feeds on itself and feeds into itself while it continuously expands and grows.

What was great to see during our research, is that there are multiple perspectives and none of them is right or wrong. All of them are real and there are reasons for why they exist. Through our conversations our picture of Museum Rietberg became more colourful.

[www.ruangrupa.id](http://www.ruangrupa.id)





Villa Wesendonck und „Nyl“  
auf dem grünen Hügel in Gänge bei Zürich.

Villa Wesendonck was a place of interaction between the richest and most important people of Zurich.

Family Wesendonck were silk merchants from Germany. They were in contact with Richard Wagner, Gottfried Semper, Adolf Hitler, Escher Family and many more. People from guilds and people with political or financial power. Some of them were directly linked to colonial actions. Even the Family Wesendonck themselves traded for their silk industry. The following owners of the Rietberg ensemble called Family Rieter had a cotton industry and thus very similar in their position as the Wesendonck's.

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_Wesendonck](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Wesendonck)

Villa Wesendonck

Villa Wesendonck

Creation 1853 – 1857

1857-1872: Otto and Mathilde Wesendoncks move into their new villa

Architect: Leonhard Zeugheer

Landscape “Gartenkünstler”: Theodor Froebel

1872: Adolf Rieter (from Winterthurer industrial family) acquires the Villa

1885: Fritz and Berta Rieter move in

Renovation 1952 by Alfred Gradman

Extension 2006 – 2007 Architects: Alfred Grazioli/Alfred Krischanitz

Kommunales Schutzobjekt

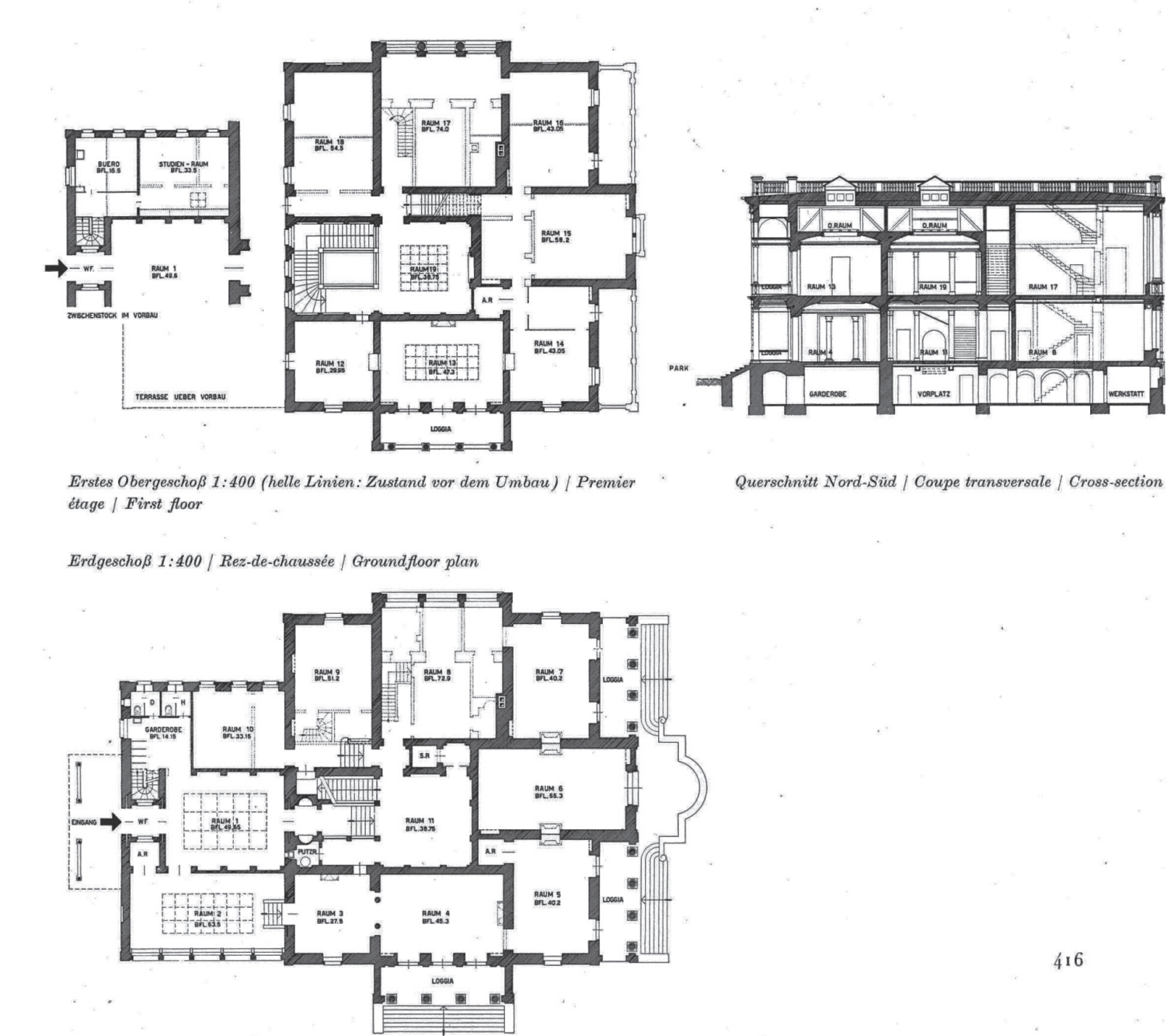
It is interesting to note that to the time Villa Wesendonck was conceived, Gottfried Semper was in Zurich and wrote his Stoffwechsel-Theorie, theory of metamorphosis or metabolism.

If we look back to the start of industrialisation, where objects started to lose meaning in a sense that now in a globalised world and with the technical revolution, the chemical industry and the invention of new synthetic materials, the handarbeit / craft of objects could just be imitated and replaced by new materials being brought back from the colonies. This enabled for reproductions of objects that carried no meaning and reflection to how they were actually produced and became mere commodities (1851 Crystal Palace).

In a time when not only artifacts from the colonies were brought back to Europe, but also new materials were discovered and enabled these various copies to be made.

Semper's concept of metabolism aims to bring order to architecture, defining the relationship and expressive relationship between materials and original substances. The form remains constant, while the substances are continuously changing. Metabolism emancipates the form from its substance.

For Semper, elemental human needs remain the same, but materials change over time. Future generations must adapt a new language to new materials. It is about a translation from one material to another.



so many stairs, I counted five, did I get all?

Umbau der Villa Rietberg zum Museum Rietberg : 1951/52, Alfred Gradmannm Arch. BSA/SIA  
Das Werk : Architektur und Kunst = L'oeuvre : architecture et art, Band (Jahr): 39 (1952)  
<https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-30306>



Die Ausschleifung des Gütertransportes, so wie dieselbe in Schweden sich entwickelt hat, gibt einen Wink, auch für andere Länder. Dabei ist Nichts zu erzwingen. Wenn die Eisenbahn den Bedürfnissen der Industrie einer Gegend

ausserordentlichen Fällen in Betracht kommt: für den Gütertransport aber dann lebensfähig ist, wenn die Beförderungskosten zu Schiffe gegenüber denjenigen mit der Locomotive klein sind. Auch in diesem Falle kann der Schiffsverkehr neben der Eisenbahn nur dann bestehen, wenn zu transportierende Güter, deren Werth klein ist, im Verhältnisse zu ihrem Gewichte und ihrem Umfange, in genügender Menge vorhanden sind. Auch in diesem günstigen Falle ist gegenüber der Eisenbahn der Wassertransport nur dann vortheilhaft, wenn auf rasche Beförderung der betreffenden Güter wenig Werth zu legen ist.

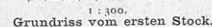
Bei Untersuchung der Frage, ob es zweckmässig sei,

Park-Villa Rieter in Enge bei Zürich.

Entworfen und ausgeführt von Prof. *Friedrich Bluntschli.*

(Text auf Seite 4.)

besser entspricht als der Wasserweg, so wird man erstere benutzen und wir haben gesehen, dass Canäle ihren Betrieb einstellen müssen.



Grundriss vom ersten Stock.

wenn, ihnen gleichlaufend, dem Verkehre besser dienende Eisenbahnen entstehen. Unter anderen Umständen aber kann die Schifffahrt fortbestehen und da, wo beide Verkehrsmitteln nebeneinander vorhanden sind, findet eine natürliche Ausschcheidung des Gütertransportes statt. Der letzte Fall gestaltet sich in der Regel so, dass dem Wasserwege die Beförderung der Rohstoffe, der Eisenbahn die fabricirten Waaren zukommen. Unter diesen Umständen kann die Binnenschifffahrt den ihr gleichlaufenden Eisenbahnen erheblich nützen. fährt, die Anlage von zweigen und zu weiterer Gewerbsthätigkeit durch für die Rohstoffe Anlassbahnverkehre durch von neues Leben zuführen. handlung der Metalle, am müsste, wenn nicht zu Se könnten mit so geringe bahn Verluste erlitten, v Dafür gewinnt aber die werthvollen Metallwaaren

### III. Bedingungen für die Verwendbarkeit der Binnenschifffahrt.

Die vorhergehenden Andeutungen zeigen, dass die Binnenschifffahrt für Personentransport nur in einzelnen

für die Güterbeförderung den Wasserweg einzuschlagen, treten immer die Transportkosten in erste Linie. In dieser Beziehung erweisen sich folgende Bedingungen als vorteilhaft:

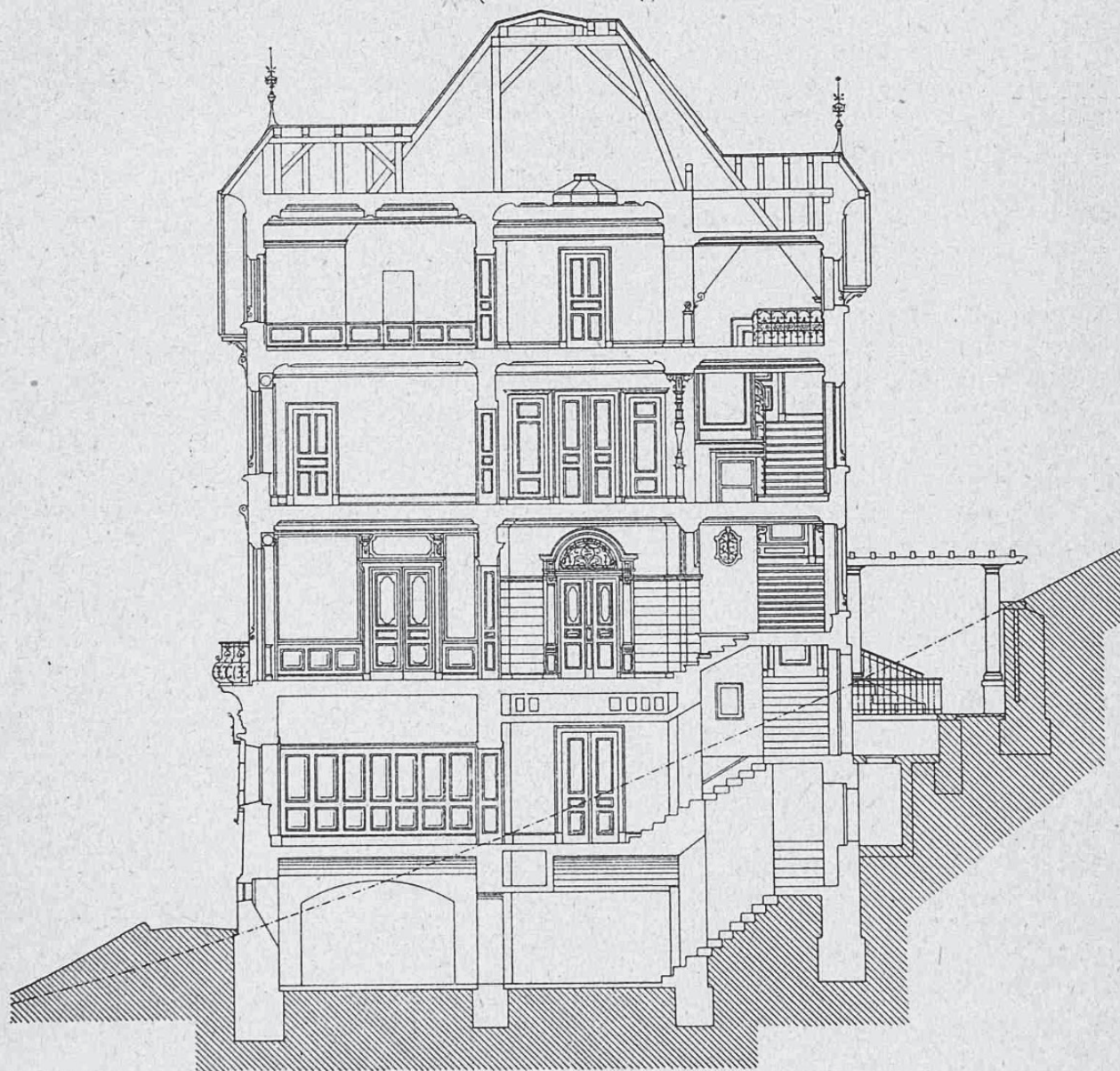
Verwendung von möglichst grossen Schiffen.  
Vermeidung von Verzögerungen der Fahrt.  
Verwendung möglichst kleiner Kraft für die Fortbewegung d. Schiffe.  
Die Grösse und mit ihr die Tragfähigkeit der Schiffe ist abhängig vom Tiefgange und damit auch von der Beschaffenheit der Wasserstrasse. Da

gleichzeitig Verzögerungen durch Umladen vermieden werden müssen, so kommt bei der Flussschifffahrt die kleinste Tiefe, folglich in der Regel diejenige der obersten Strecke, für die ganze Linie in Betracht. Wenn wir berücksichtigen, dass bei Verwendung von kleinen Schiffen die Transportkosten so zunehmen, dass die Förderung der Güter auf der Eisenbahn wohlfeiler wird, so ist damit auch die Grenze der Flussschifffahrt bedingt. Man kann nun allerdings den Verkehr flussaufwärts mit grossen Schiffen künstlich ausdehnen: Durch Flusscorrection, Canalisation oder Anlage eines Parallelcanals. Unter Umständen erweisen sich sogar Canäle mit Überschreitung von Wasserscheiden als vorteilhaft. Es versteht sich von selbst, dass die Verzinsung und die Unterhaltungskosten dieser Bauanlagen bei der Ausmittlung der Transportkosten mit in Betracht fallen.

### Park-Villa Rieter in Enge bei Zürich.

Entworfen und ausgeführt von Prof. *Friedrich Bluntschli*.

(Text auf Seite 4.)



A horizontal number line with tick marks labeled 0 through 10. The line is labeled 'M' at the right end.

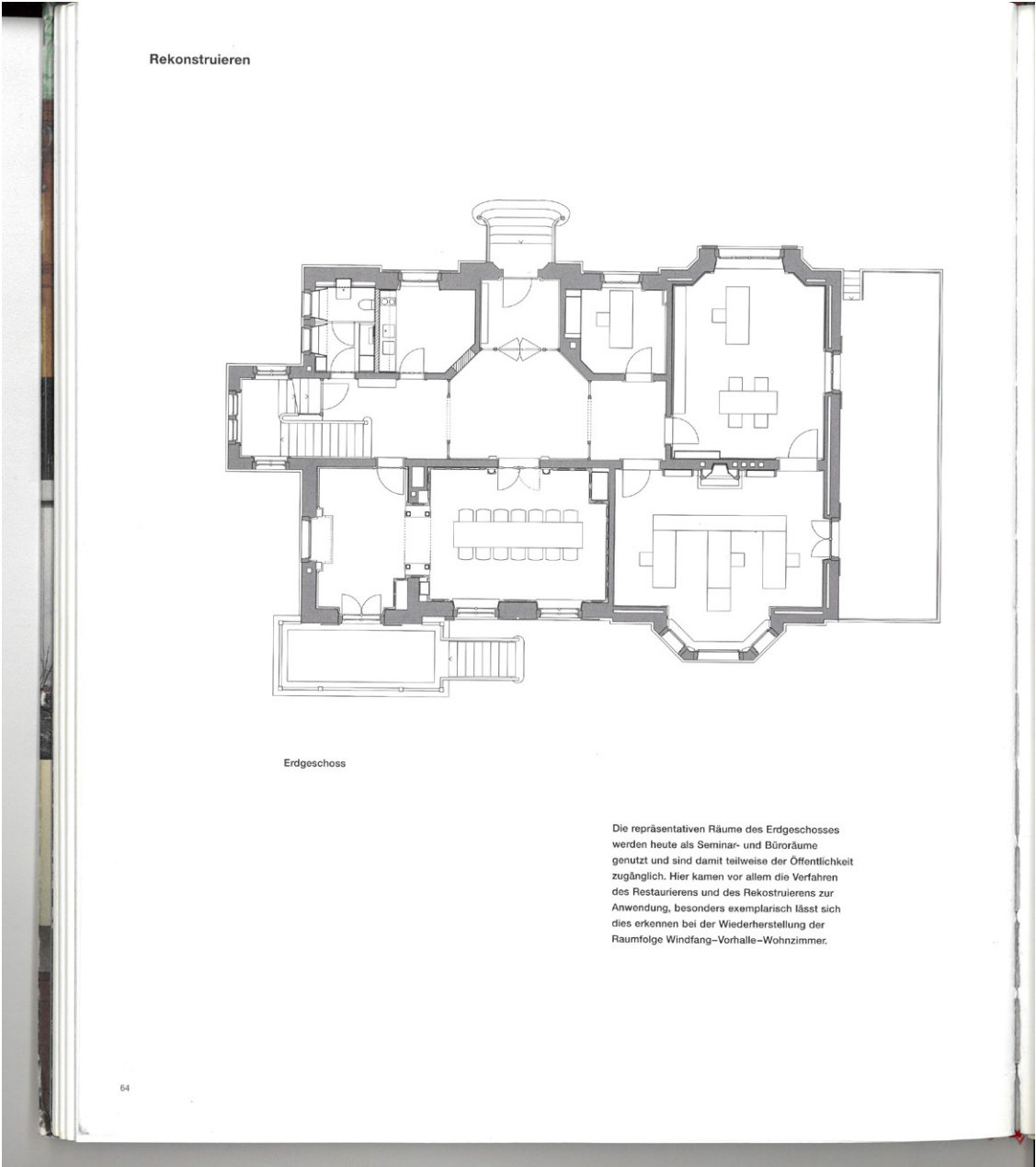
1 : 200

Quer-Schnitt.



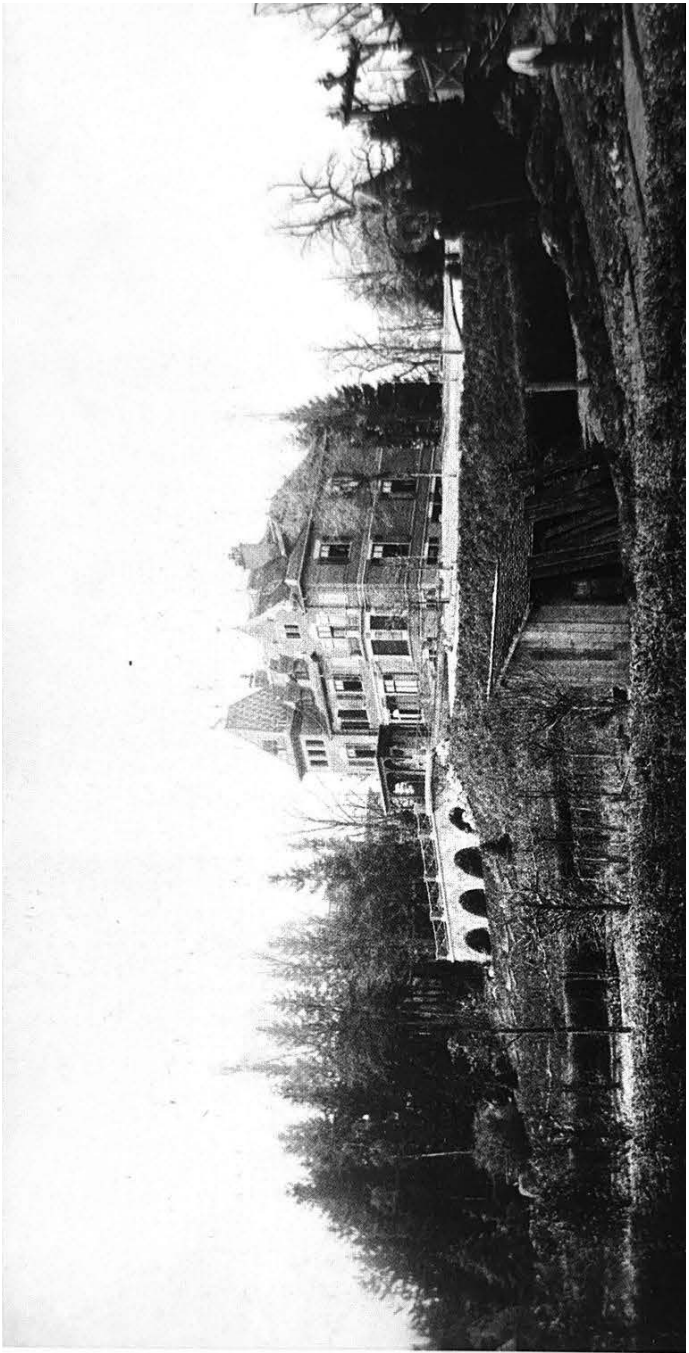
What characterises post-colonial thinking is entanglement and concatenation, unveiled chiefly through its critique of identity and subjectivity.

From this viewpoint it is opposed to a particular Western illusion, that there can be no subject other than in the circular, permanent referral to oneself, to an essential and inexhaustible singularity. In countering this, postcolonial thinking stresses the fact that identity arises from multiplicity and dispersion, that self-referral is only possible in the inbetween, in the gap between mark and demark, in co-constitution. In this situation colonisation no longer appears as mechanical and unilateral domination forcing the subjugated into silence and inaction. Quite the reverse -- the colonized person is a living, talking, conscious, active individual whose identity arises from a three-pronged movement of violation, erasure and self-rewriting.

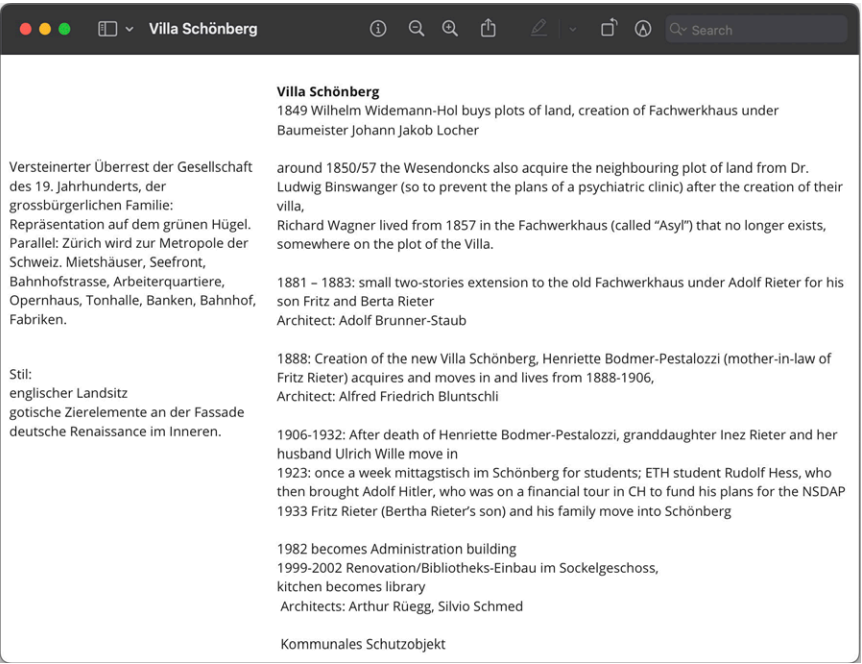


Today it's used for the offices of the administration and a library. From dwelling to managing, exemplary model for adaptable architecture.

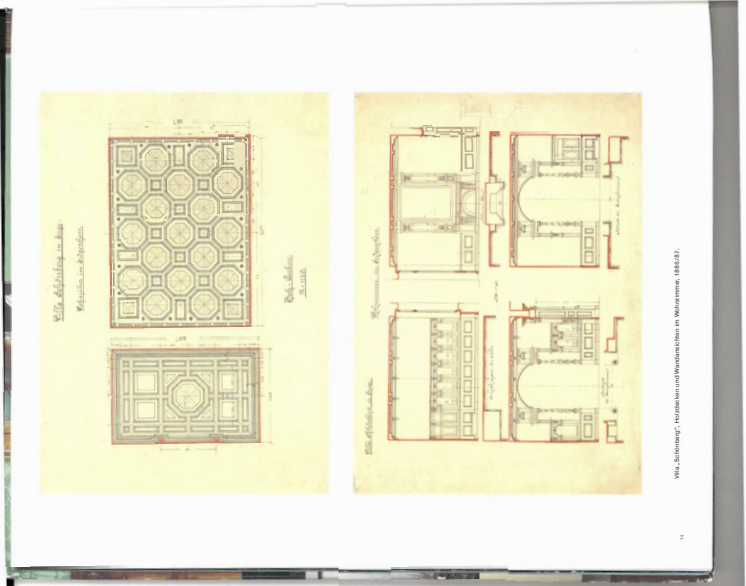
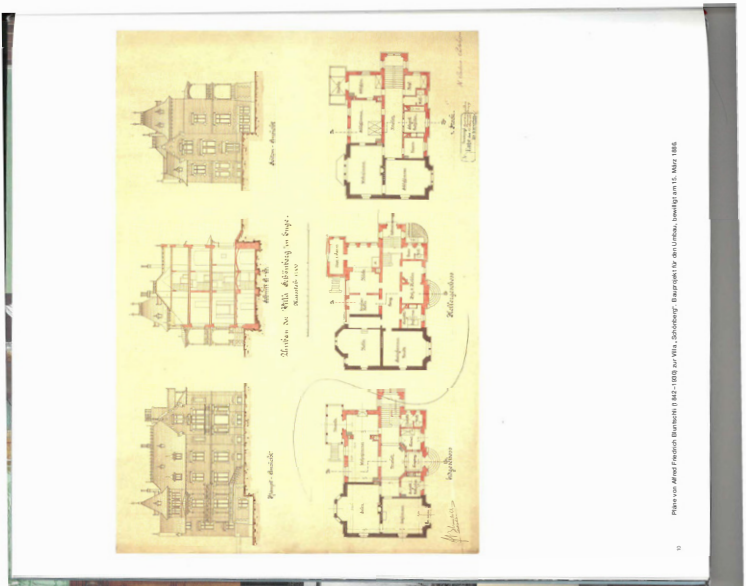
there was a renovation in 1999-2002 where the kitchen was transformed into a library  
Villa Schönberg, Silvio Schmed, Arthur Rüegg, Museum Rietberg, Zürich CH, 2003



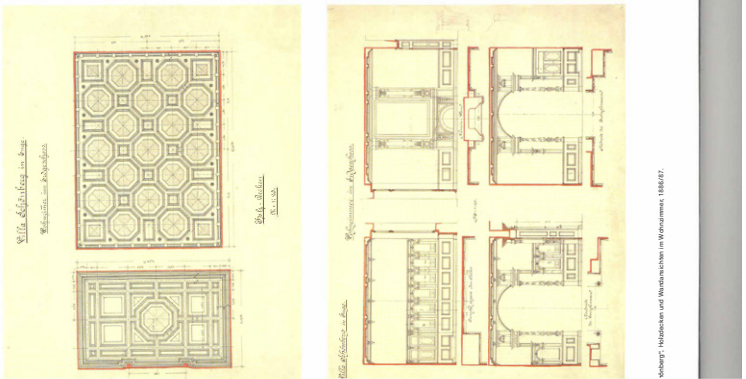
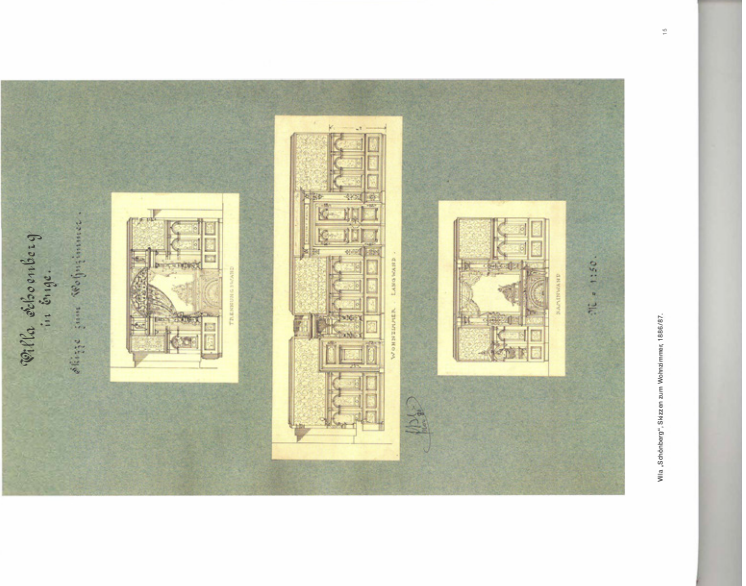
If you could choose one of the three villas, which one?  
Gartendenkmal Rieterpark, Grünstadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2016







Villa Schönberg, Silvio Schmed, Arthur Rüegg, Museum Rietberg, Zürich CH, 2003



the Villa Schönberg also reveals a much more intimate, domestic space compared to the other two Villas, there aren't any enfilades; rooms that cross into the next, but a much clearer privately demarcated, domestic sphere, the chimney with the window above it, symbolizing warmth and air...  
in the plans the farce is revealed, an oppulent chimney reproducing only an idea of bourgeoisie life clinging on to the continuity of the past, hiding in the wooden walls is a modern central heating system  
Villa Schönberg, Silvio Schmed, Arthur Rüegg, Museum Rietberg, Zürich CH, 2003



Isn't this a Wunderkammer to us, providing a voyeurist peak into the objects of daily life of a foreign archaiv culture, long forgotten; the 19th century bourgeoisie  
Actually yes. I am doing more or less the same when looking at this photo as when I am looking at the objects at Rietberg  
full of objects, a different kind of collection.  
richness of materials, objects, ornaments  
If this interior knew that it will be replaced by the empty loft in 100 years... Would it be offended?  
Villa Schönberg, Silvio Schmed, Arthur Rüegg, Museum Rietberg, Zürich CH, 2003





ERWEITERUNG  
MUSEUM RIETBERG  
ZÜRICH-ENGE

Projektwettbewerb im selektiven Verfahren  
inkl. Überarbeitung von zwei Projekten  
Bericht des Preisgerichts

Juli 2002



Hochbaudepartement der Stadt Zürich  
Amt für Hochbauten

In an open competition through a selective process for the expansion of the Rietberg Museum in 2002, eight of the submitted proposals were selected, with two of them being chosen for further refinement (the projects by Grazioli and Krischanitz and the project by SANAA). The focus of the competition program was on preserving the balance of the Villa Wesendonck ensemble and its annex, maintaining the existing tree cover, and enhancing the connection to the Villa, which had been operating as a museum since 1952.

Apparently Sanaa won the competition under the condition to not build that close to the Villa Wesendonck because of preservation reasons (Denkmalpflege). They did not manage to convince the jury in their second try and thus Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten won the execution project.

SANAA won it in the first round and Grazioli Krischanitz made 2nd. The two offices had to undertake a revision of their proposals. After the revision, Grazioli Krischanitz won.

Jury report of the competition (selective process)  
<https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/hbd/de/index/hochbau/bauten/bauten-realisiert/archiv-bauten/realisiert-2006/museum-rietberg.html>

In 1949, the Zurich electorate voted "yes" to the transformation of Villa Wesendonck into a museum and "yes" to the establishment of the Rietberg Museum. The new museum was intended to house the collection of Baron Eduard von der Heydt (1882–1964), which the collector and banker had promised to the city of Zurich as a gift. Eduard von der Heydt had primarily acquired his collection of Asian, African, American, and Oceanic art during the 1920s and 1930s. He referred to his guiding principle as a collector as "ars una," meaning there is only one art (regardless of when and where it originates). Even before von der Heydt was arrested at the age of 46, the political will of the city of Zurich and the efforts of Johannes Itten led von der Heydt to express his intention to give his entire collection to the city of Zurich if it could find a suitable place for it. The city of Zurich had earmarked the Villa Wesendonck for this purpose. In 1952, the new museum, under the leadership of Johannes Itten (1888–1967), was opened as the "Rietberg Museum of the City of Zurich." Following Johannes Itten, Elsy Leuzinger (1910–2010) assumed the museum's directorship in 1956. Subsequently, Eberhard Fischer led the institution from 1973 to 1998, and Albert Lutz from 1998 to 2019. Since 2019, Annette Bhagwati has been the director of the Museum Rietberg.

As it is a public project by the Stadt Zürich it had to be accepted by the majority of the population that is eligible to vote.

Im Treibhaus

Hochgewölbte Blätterkronen,  
Baldachine von Smaragd,  
Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,  
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,  
Malet Zeichen in die Luft,  
Und der Leiden stummer Zeuge  
Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

Weit in sehndem Verlangen  
Breitet ihr die Arme aus,  
Und umschlinget wahnbevangen  
Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl, ich weiß es, arme Pflanze;  
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,  
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,  
Unsre Heimat ist nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet  
Von des Tages leerem Schein,  
Hüllet der, der wahrhaft leidet,  
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

Stille wird's, ein säuselnd Weben  
Füllet bang den dunklen Raum:  
Schwere Tropfen seh ich schweben  
An der Blätter grünem Saum.

Mathilde Wesendonck

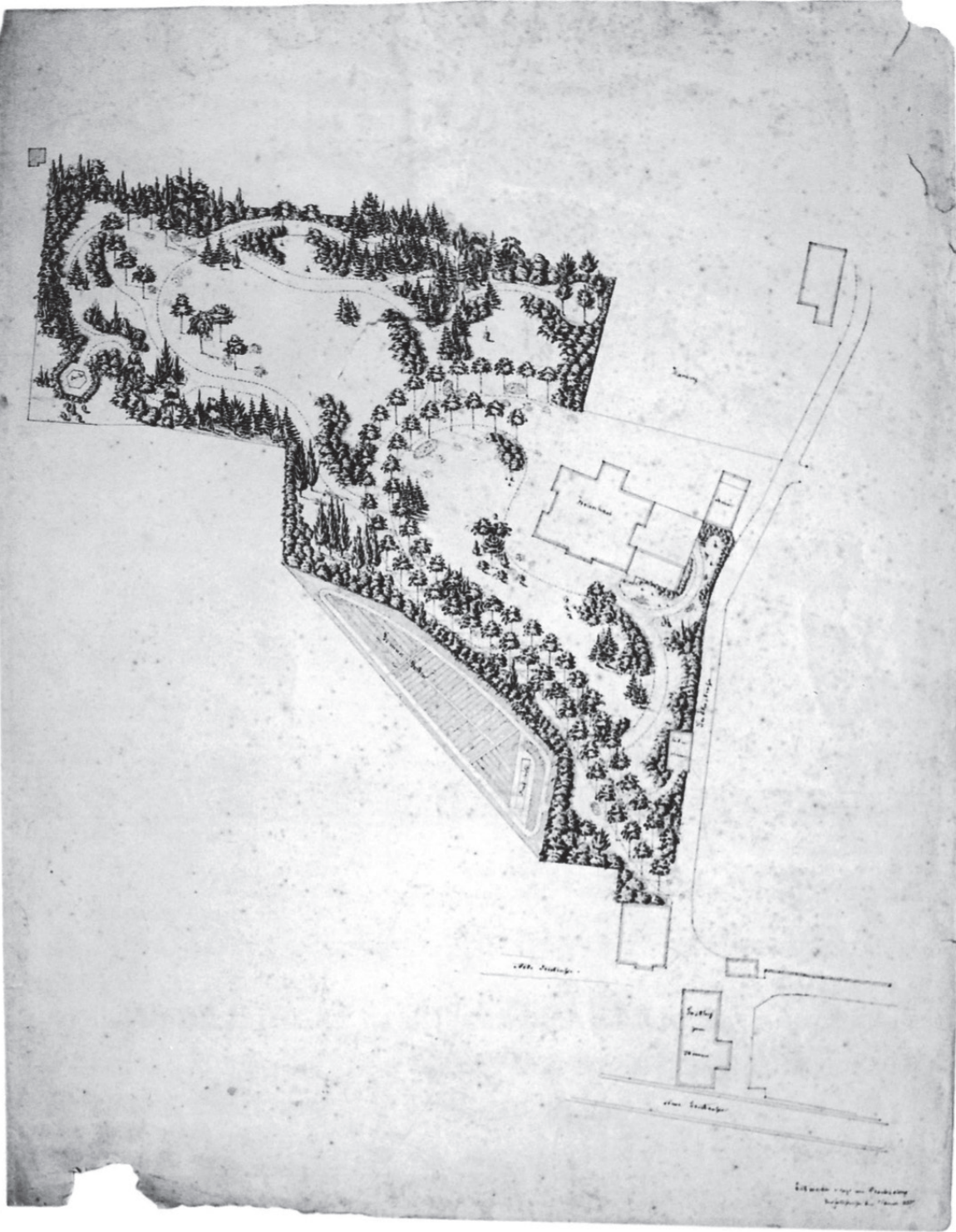
Mathilde looking at her exotic plants, "poor plants whose home is not here". Would she write a similar poem today, when looking at the objects from all over the world?

It is said that this poem was influential for the design of the extension of the Museum Rietberg. Like other speeches by Alfred Lutz it is based on an orientalist suggestion.

the second line of the poem gave the title to the winning architectural project for the extension. The glass box entrance as an emerald canopy?

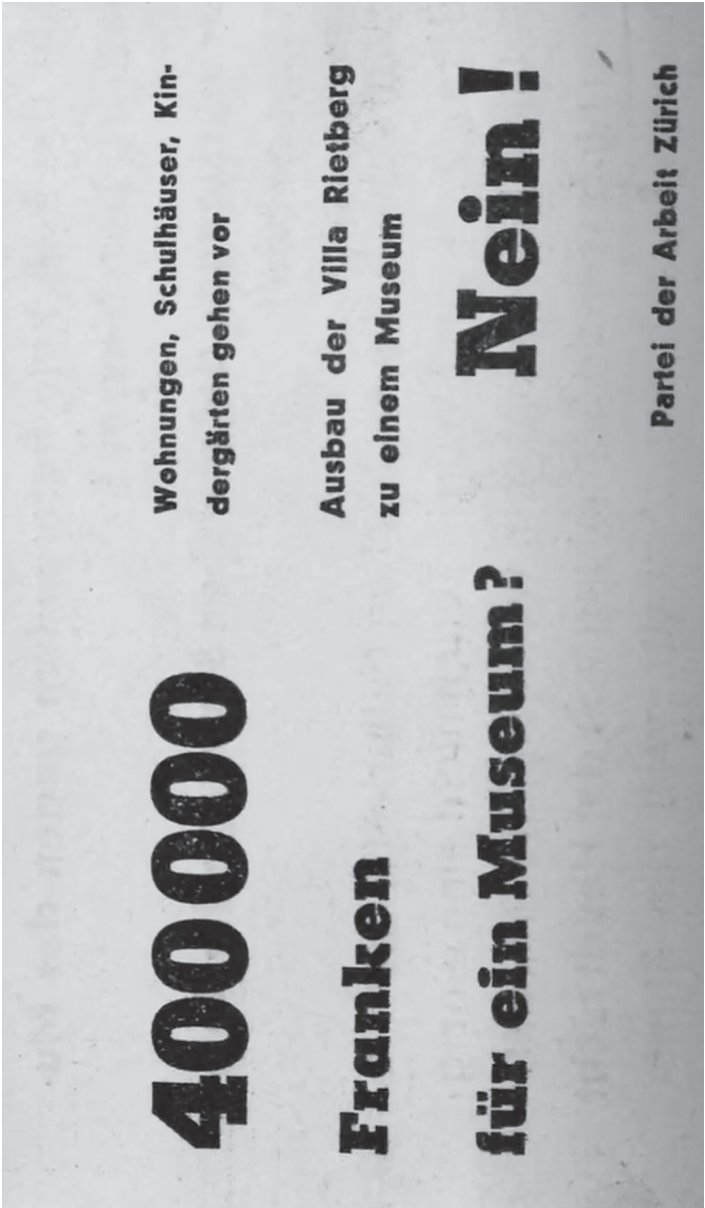
The Baldachin and the Smaragd look at each other to this day.

Im Treibhaus (1858), Mathilde Wesendonck



The park is still very much as it was first conceived.  
Gärten der Welt: Orte der Sehnsucht und Inspiration (2016)





The “Partei der Arbeit Zürich” was the only political voice against the founding of the museum

perceptions differ

how much would it cost to empty a museum, today?



<https://www.youtube.com>

## Neue Zürcher Zeitung

### In öffentlichen Schweizer Sammlungen befindet sich Raubkunst aus Benin

Acht Schweizer Museen haben gemeinsam die Provenienzen ihrer Sammlungen von Kunstwerken aus dem Königtum Benin in Nigeria untersucht. Bei den geplünderten Objekten stellt sich nun die Frage der Restitution.

Philipp Meier  
02.02.2023, 18.14 Uhr



Gürtelmaske, Messing, Königliche Gilde der Bronzegiesser am Hof von Benin, 17. oder 18. Jahrhundert.  
Museum Rietberg

The Swiss Benin Initiative is probably an example that is being executed carefully and specifically to its context: The Museum has contacted different groups of interest - forming together the group of recipients - which voice their concerns and ambitions to allow the transfer to be reflected. The role of the Museum Rietberg and the Stadt Zürich as current owner of the objects is to settle the legal basis to make the transfer as smooth as possible.

In öffentlichen Schweizer Sammlungen befindet sich Raubkunst aus Benin, Philipp Meier, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zürich CH, 2023

Mwazulu Diyabanza – Aktivist. Aktionen in Museen, in denen er Objekte aus Afrika aus ihren Vitrinen oder Ständern nimmt und behauptet, er bringe sie zurück nach Hause. Evoziert die Frage "wer ist hier der Dieb und wer hat Eigentum an den Objekten?"

Anstatt zehn Jahre Gefängnis und 100`000 Euro Strafe, muss Diyabanza 1000 Euro bezahlen. Von Seiten Frankreichs/der Justiz ist also sehr wohl Verständnis für diese Ungeduld vorhanden.



[abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au)





Ruangrupa and their spaces of interchange, organization and harvesting.

art as an expression of life. ruangrupa has first fomed itself in domestic spaces like living rooms, in a time in Indonesia under Suharto's regime, it was difficult to gather together.

So out of the domestic they developed their practice, and this still influences their practice until today.

do-MESS-tic

What about a little bit of this at the Rietberg?

[www.ruangrupa.id](http://www.ruangrupa.id)

Werden Sie Partnerin oder Partner, Sponsorin oder Sponsor eines der international innovativsten und erfolgreichsten Museen. Das Museum Rietberg hat als erstes Schweizer Museum eine Stelle zur Provenienzforschung eingerichtet. Oftmals zeigt es als erstes Museum Werke aussereuropäischer Künstlerinnen und Künstler ausserhalb ihres Herkunftslands. Diese und viele andere Projekte sind auch dank grosszügiger Unterstützung realisiert worden. Wir danken allen Unternehmen und Stiftungen für ihr leidenschaftliches Engagement.

Parrotia-Stiftung  
Swiss Re  
Vontobel-Stiftung  
Schwyzer-Stiftung  
Clariant Foundation  
Avina Stiftung

## PATRONS

Rund 80 % des Sammlungsbesitzes des Museums sind Schenkungen oder Legate von Privatpersonen, von Sammlerinnen und Sammlern. Ihnen verdanken wir die hohe Qualität und den Reichtum unserer Sammlungen:

Eduard von der Heydt Johannes Itten Julius Mueller J.F.H. Menten Willy Boller Robert Akeret Mary Mantel-Hess Reinhard J.C. Hoeppli Regina und Julius Böhler Luzia J. Bühler Elsy Leuzinger Gret Hasler und Charlotte Holliger-Hasler Emma Streicher Heinz Brasch Alice Boner	Georgette Boner Herbert Ginsberg Rudolf Schmidt Charles A. Drenowatz Lucy Rudolph Camille Graeser Alice und Pierre Uldry Monica und Fritz von Schulthess Nanni und Balthasar Reinhart Marcelle Reinhart-Bühler Lisa und Ivan Vajda Ursula Dohrn Barbara und Eberhard Fischer Ann und Reinhold Schuepp Marina und Willy Staehelin	Ernst und Lily Gamper Familie Rücker-Emden Ernst Winkler Wera Esslinger Endre und Eida Ungar Berti Aschmann Elsa Maria Luchsinger Andreas Reinhart Hans Vontobel Regula Brunner Catharina Dohrn Helen Denzler Yvonne Lang Ruth Rahn Dominik und Madeleine Keller	Gilbert und Stephanie Zuehlgi Horst Metzger Konrad und Eva Seitz Martha Wirz-Oeler und Ursula Wirz Toni Gerber Dorothea und Jean-Pierre Zehnder Heidi und Hans Kaufmann Gabriele Louise Aino Schnetzer Elena Probs Thomas Schmidheiny
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Die Mitglieder des Rietberg-Kreises

I wonder what the legal policies and requirements are before accepting a Schenkung or Legat.

<https://rietberg.ch/engagement>

1994/1995 → college fine →

1996/1997 → meet Ade from

1998/1998 → monetary crisis, reform area, student college movement →

1999/2000 → Liwanto went to Jakarta → Ade + 6 others friends as founder →

2000 → Ade's back from first rented house →

2002-2004 → our second rented house →

2004-2006 → our third rented house →

2007-2015 → our fourth rented house →

2010 → decompression on many things →

2011 → started guide on artist initiative →

2015-2016 → Budang Saringah →

2017-present → BudSul ecosystem →

Te bet area South Jakarta

ndra, Daniella, (Rosa)

10th years anniversary

system with others 2 collectives

since 2004

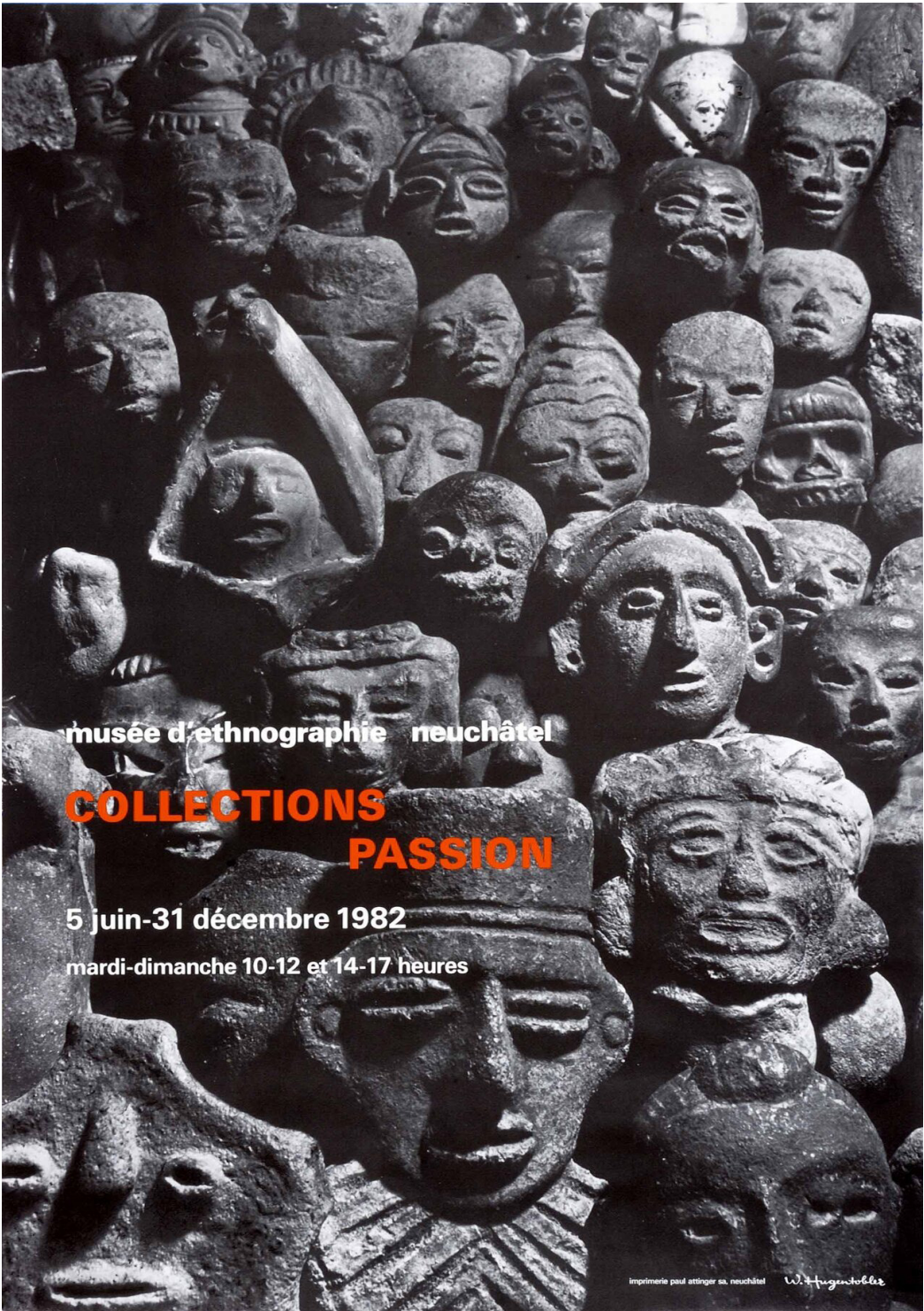
9

Skizzen von Reza Afina aus dem Gespräch mit The Collective Eye im März 2022

Ruangrupa's development

ruangrupa, The Collective Eye, DISTANZ Verlag, Berlin D, 2022





Über die Motive des Sammelns  
liefern Psychologen, Soziologen und  
Ethnologen zahlreiche Antworten.  
Was kann einen vernünftigen  
Menschen dazu bringen, mit einem  
unsinnigen Einsatz an Zeit, Geld  
und Geduld irgendwelchen alten  
Blechbüchsen nachzurennen oder  
seinen Wohnraum eines Heeres bunter  
Frösche einzuschränken?  
Die Woche, Zürich, 04.06.1982







L'embarras du choix  
L'embarras du choix  
La culture matérielle constitue la part tangible de l'expérience du monde, celle qui apparemment résiste le mieux au temps et se transmet de la manière la plus directe. Les êtres passent, les idées s'estompent, les objets et les choses restent – une bonne partie d'entre eux tout au moins – et finissent par former une masse critique que les sociétés humaines gèrent et organisent, en assimilant, négligeant, recyclant ou détruisant, sous peine d'être submergées par elle.  
L'appétit vient en classant  
L'appétit vient en classant  
Spécifiquement occidental, le phénomène muséal propose une réponse ambiguë à l'envahissement par l'objet, dans le sillage de la compartimentation du savoir en diverses disciplines. Peur de perdre, difficulté de détruire, volonté de transmettre et souci de classer s'allient pour engorger d'innombrables institutions consacrées à la sauvegarde du patrimoine mondial, qu'il s'agisse d'artefacts ou d'échantillons extraits du monde minéral, végétal, animal ou humain. Redoublement muséographique du monde, une telle mise en ordre fait jouer pleinement l'arbitraire des processus de choix et les aléas du classement, consistant à légitimer certaines parties du lot et à en refouler d'autres, à retenir certains critères et à en rejeter d'autres.  
Le goût des autres  
Le goût des autres  
Le cas des musées d'ethnographie est particulier dans la mesure où ils sont essentiellement dépositaires du patrimoine des autres. Constituées au fil des années au travers de dons et de ventes ainsi que par une succession de missions de collecte sur le terrain, effectuées pour la plupart durant la période coloniale, leurs collections tendent à désigner une relation historique de prédation entre l'ici et l'ailleurs. Elles témoignent du désir d'incorporer une altérité d'autant plus valorisée qu'elle semble radicale.  
La chambre noire  
La chambre froide  
Arrachés à une conception indigène qui échappe au moins partiellement à ceux qui en ont aujourd'hui la garde, les objets exotiques sont à la fois recontextualisés et réinterprétés. Le programme de connaissance de l'ethnographie, dont la focale reste les hommes que ces objets désignent, se développe donc paradoxalement en l'absence de ceux-ci, état de fait qui favorise le remplacement d'une logique théorique complexe par une rassurante présence matérielle. Du fait du poids des collections, de leurs exigences concrètes et de leur tendance à s'autojustifier, tout conservateur peut légitimement se demander si ce ne sont pas les objets dont il s'occupe qui le conservent plutôt que l'inverse.

La boîte noire  
La boîte noire  
Pour nourrir les visiteurs de leurs expositions, les muséologues extraient périodiquement de leurs réserves des morceaux de culture matérielle qu'ils apprennent sur la base de recettes contrastées destinées à présenter tel ou tel aspect d'une similarité ou d'une différence entre l'ici et l'ailleurs. Ils le font selon une rhétorique plus ou moins convenue, encore mal analysée et mise en pratique de manière non systématique, qui mêle juxtaposition, esthétisation, sacralisation, mimétisme, changement d'échelle, hybridation, relation logique ou association poétique dans un contexte de simple mise en vitrine ou de complexe mise en espace.  
Au bon vivant  
Au bon vivant  
La cuisine ethnomuséale produit un repas de cérémonie offrant de multiples manières de consommer les autres – qui tout à la fois transparaissent et disparaissent derrière les objets mis en scène –, à la fois contrastées par les recettes choisies et orientées par le décorum de la salle de banquet: bons ou féroces sauvages, indigènes folkloriques ou acculturés, primitifs, artistes inconnus ou citoyens du monde sont ainsi périodiquement servis à des convives affamés d'altérité. L'échange reste paradoxalement hanté par la figure de l'autre comme «cannibale», qui incarne pendant plusieurs siècles une différence inassimilable par nos catégories de pensée.  
La chambre double  
La chambre double  
Au-delà de l'absorption de nourriture, les convives sont invités à digérer un lien social complexe avec l'humanité tout entière. Repus mais pris entre la difficulté d'interpréter l'altérité, le risque de la refouler et le désir latent de la réduire pour n'en retenir que ses aspects les plus sécurisants et valorisés, ils sont amenés à prendre du recul et à s'interroger sur le fossé qui se creuse entre le monde dans lequel ils voudraient vivre et celui dans lequel ils sont jetés. Avec peut-être derrière la tête cette question lancinante: ne suis-je pas moi aussi susceptible d'être mis en vitrine, et par-là même d'être mangé?

Cannibale toi-même  
Cannibale toi-même  
Effets d'inversion et de miroir: qui est finalement le cannibale de qui ? Création symbolique, communion sacrificielle et mode de lecture de l'autre, le thème du cannibalisme, qu'il soit ou non muséal, ramène aux liens que les revendications identitaires et les croyances religieuses entretiennent avec la violence et le sacré. Et s'il faut que les cultures se mangent entre elles pour que les musées existent, ceux-ci peuvent en retour désigner ce moment d'ingestion cérémonielle pour en faire enfin une forme pensée et assumée, et non un simple allant de soi justifiant a posteriori une histoire controversée.





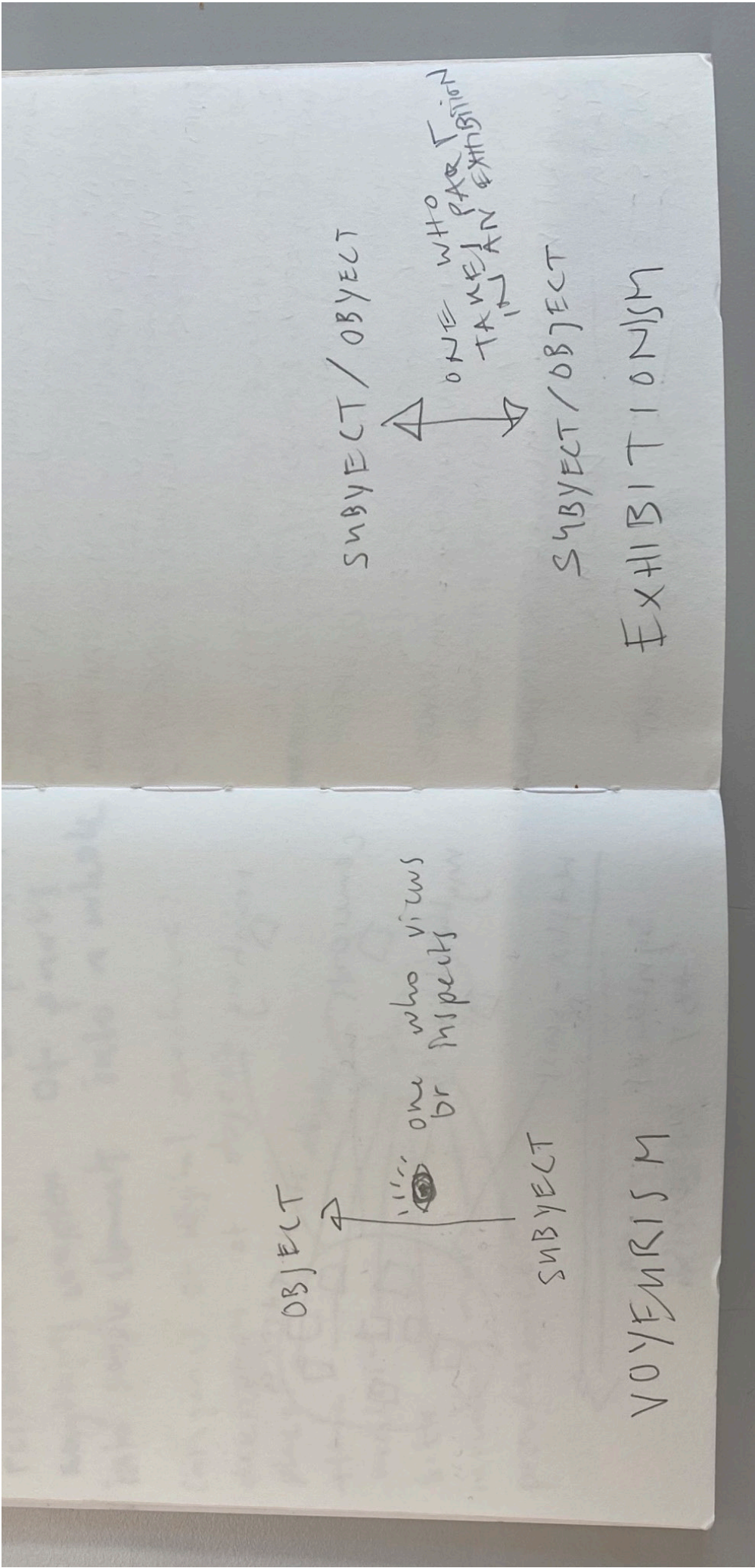


OBJEKT ATLAS  
Feldforschung im Museum

Die Ausstellung zeigt  
Objekte aus der Sammlung  
des Weltkulturen Muse-  
ums gemeinsam mit neu  
geschaffenen Arbeiten  
von sieben internationalen  
Künstlern. Statt in ferne  
Länder zu reisen, betrieben  
sie als Artists in Residence  
zwischen Februar und  
September 2011 Feldfor-  
schung im Weltkulturen  
Labor am Schaumainkai  
37.



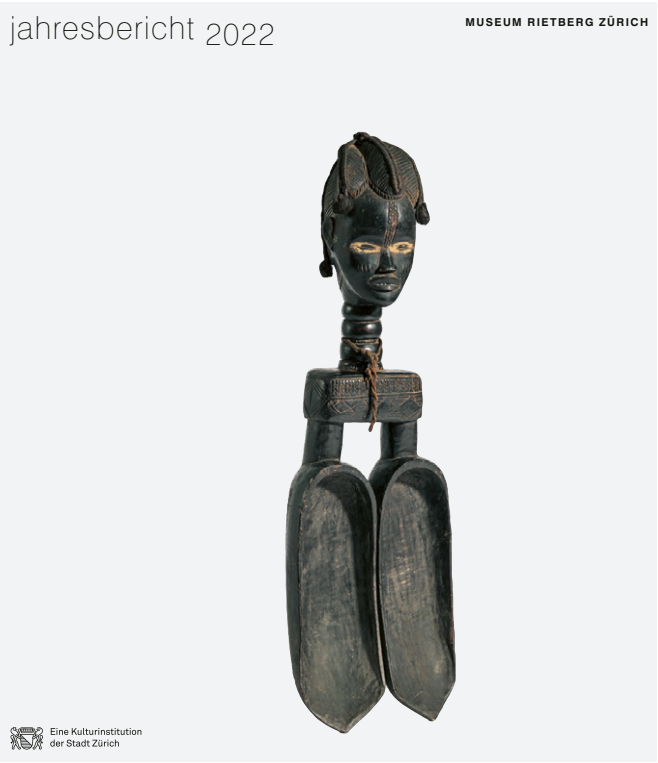
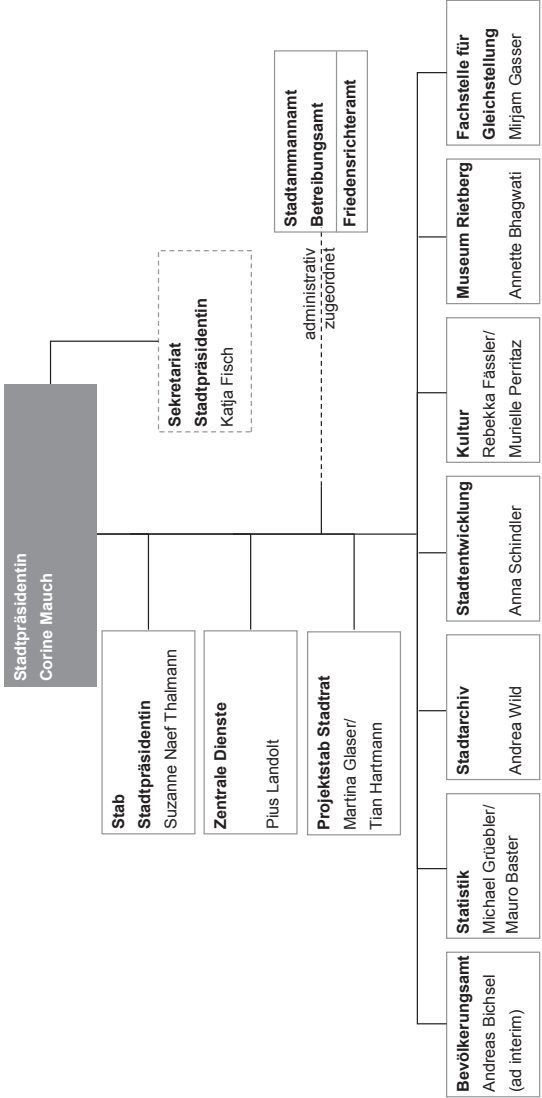




voyeur (n.)  
a scopophilic, 1889 as a French word in English, from French voyeur, literally “one who views or inspects,” from voir “to view,” from Lat-in videre “to see” (from PIE root \*weid- “to see”).

exhibitionist (n.)  
1821, “one who takes part in an exhibition;” psychosexual sense is from 1893, in Craddock’s translation of Krafft-Ebing; see exhibition + -ist. Related: Exhibitionism (1893); exhibitionistic (1909 as “proper to or suitable for an (art) exhibition”). Exhibitioner is from 1670s in the English university sense.

Organigramm Präsidialdepartement





Vorschriften zum privaten Gestaltungsplan  
«Erweiterung Museum Rietberg», Zürich Enge

Gemeinderatsbeschluss vom 2. Juli 2003

Art. 1 Geltungsbereich

<sup>1</sup>Der private Gestaltungsplan im Sinne von §§ 83 und 85 ff. des Planungs- und Baugesetzes (PBG) gilt für das im Plan Massstab 1:500 bezeichnete und innerhalb des Grundstücks Kat.-Nr. 2261 liegende Areal des Museums Rietberg an der Gablerstrasse 13 und 15.

<sup>2</sup>Der Gestaltungsplan setzt sich aus den nachstehenden Vorschriften und dem zugehörigen Plan im Massstab 1:500, datiert 10.02.2003 zusammen.

Art. 2 Geltendes Recht

<sup>1</sup>Im Gestaltungsplan-Gebiet gelten unter Vorbehalt vorgehenden Bundes- und kantonalen Rechts die Vorschriften des Gestaltungsplans.

<sup>2</sup>Soweit der Gestaltungsplan nichts Abweichendes festlegt, gelten die Bestimmungen der kommunalen Bau- und Zonenordnung (BZO).

Art. 3 Teilgebiete

Das Gestaltungsplan-Gebiet umfasst das Gebiet A mit den beiden Schutzobjekten Villa Wesendonck und Ökonomiegebäude und das Gebiet B mit dem Erweiterungsbau.

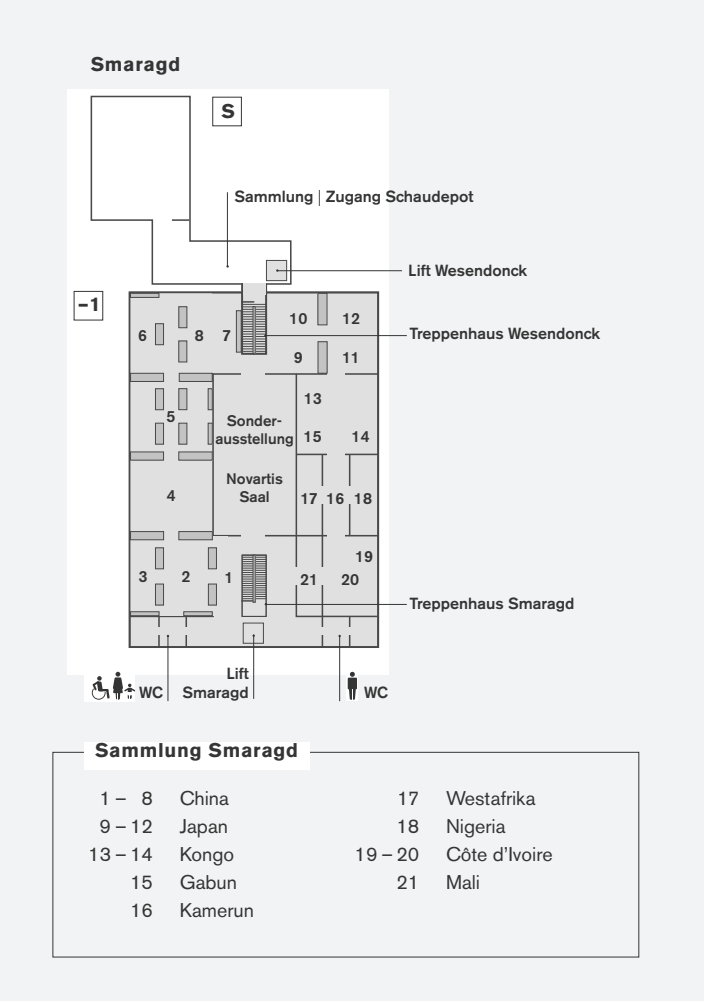
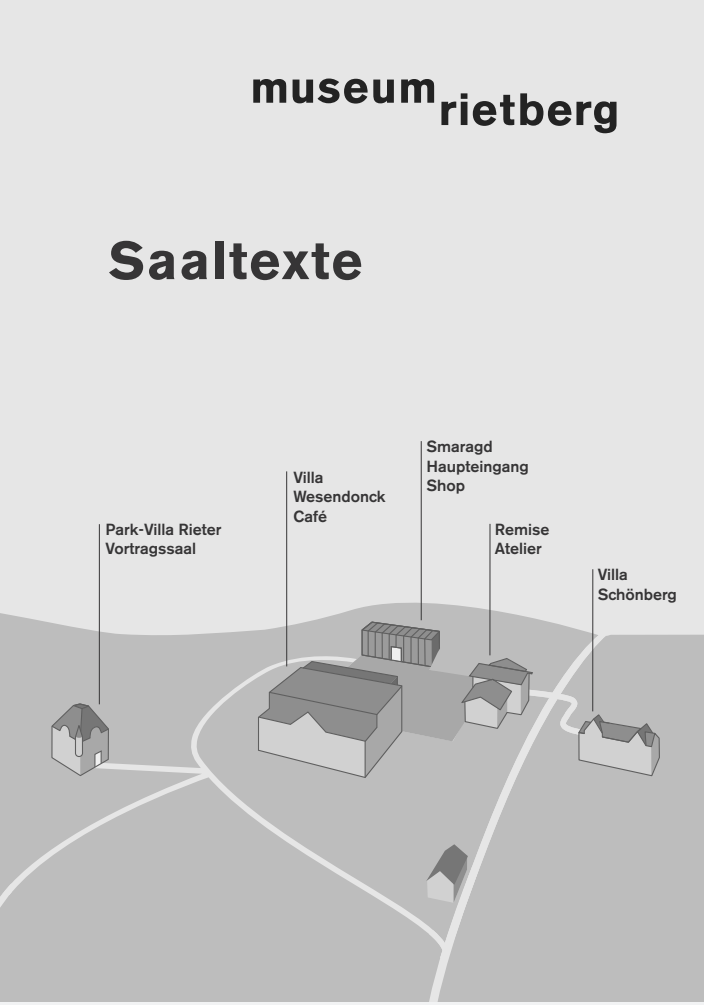
Art. 4 Nutzweisen

Die Gebiete A und B sind für Museumsnutzungen, einschliesslich der dazugehörigen Neben- und Infrastrukturnutzungen bestimmt.

Art. 5 Überbauungsvorschriften

<sup>1</sup>In den Gebieten A und B ist die Anzahl und die Ausnützung der anrechenbaren Untergeschosse frei.

<sup>2</sup>Im Gebiet A gelten im Weiteren die Bestimmungen der W2 (0% WAP) gemäss BZO.



Welcome to Rietberg! - the collections today are still mainly cathegorized into different geographical cultures and nation-states: in Smaragd you can visit artifacts from China, Japan, Kongo; Gabun, Cameroon, Westafrika, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. in Villa Wesendonck you can travel to India/ Pakistan (I guess before they were divided), India, Himalaya and Tibet, Southindia, South East Asia, Indonesia, -Swiss masks- ,Alaska, Meso-america, Westmexico, peru, Oceania. In Park-Villa Rieter you may find Indian paintings - but for the duration of our visits that has been closed.

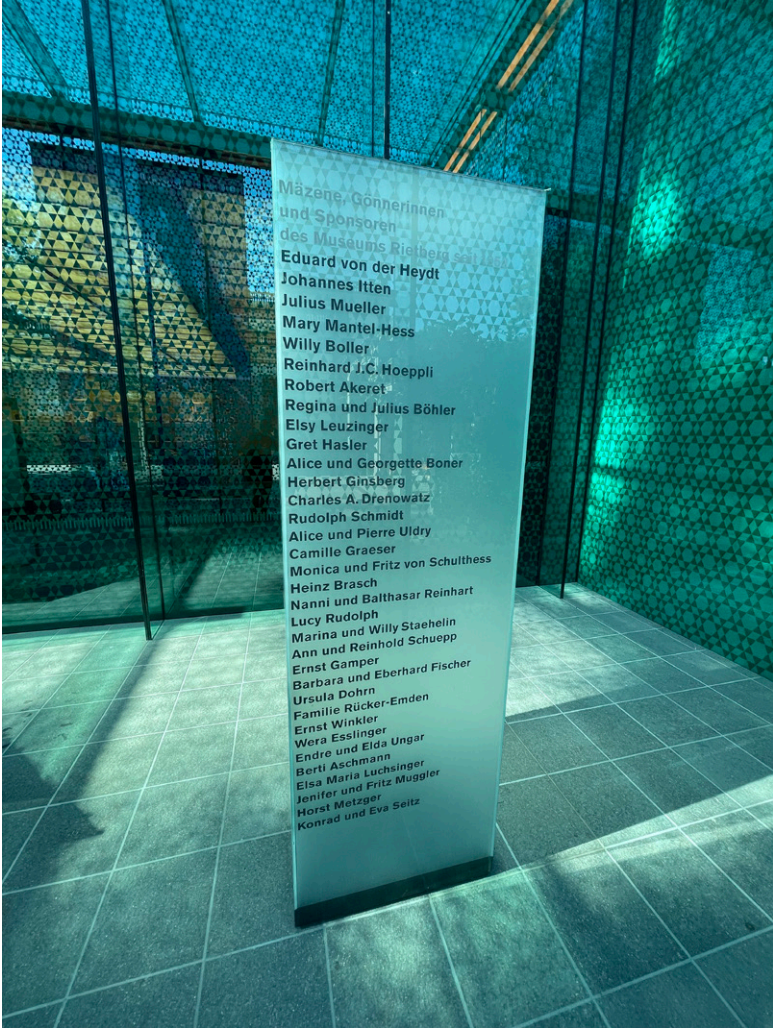
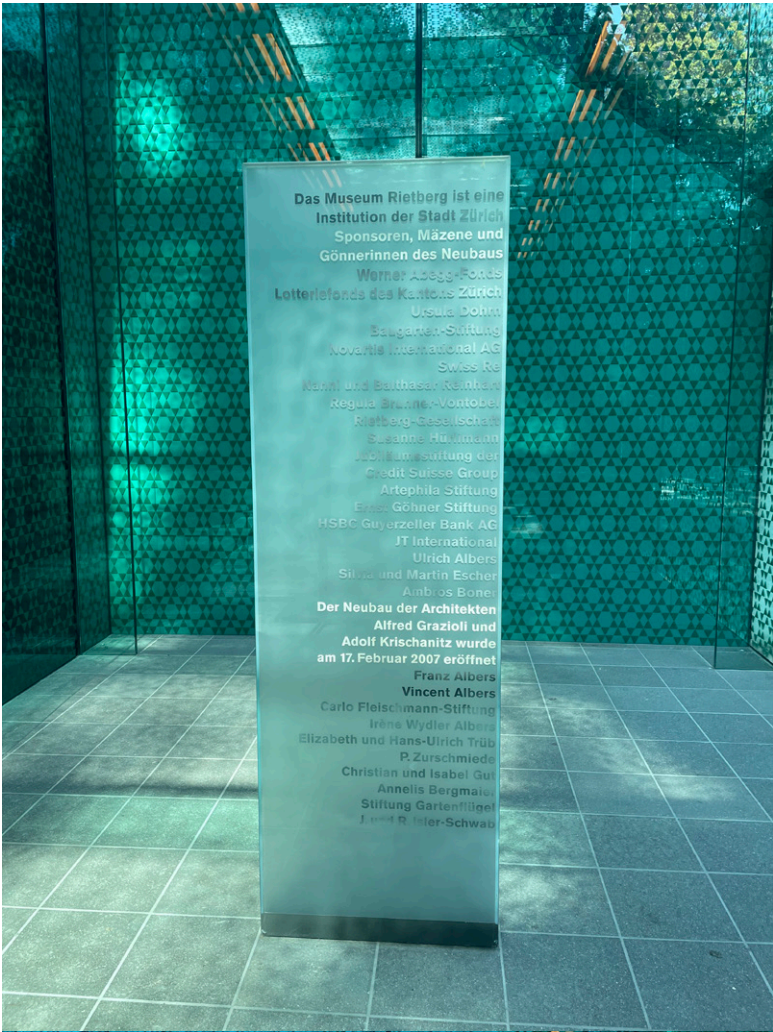


The Park is a place people like to go to and hang out. We even played football there once. Still the Park and the Museum seem to be separate things. They do not fuse seamlessly. What going to the Museum were like going to the park? What if the museum were more part of a lively culture?

You can even buy a picnic basket!

the people coming to the museum look wealthy and old but in the park traces of a younger generation and night activity can be found

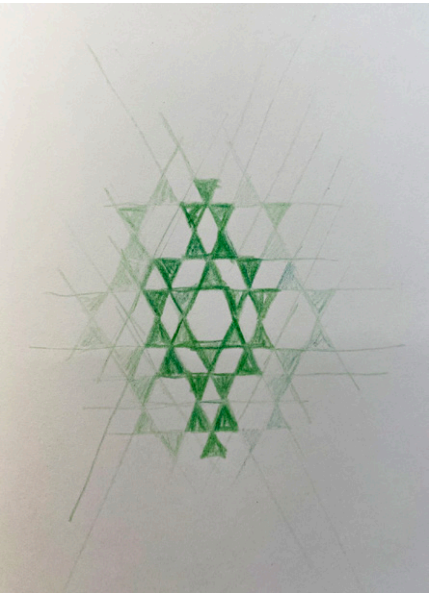




Compared to the golden letters of the Kunsthau it is a bit less decadent, but still a very prominent object in the biggest vitrine of the museum - the Vestibule.  
an empty space which looks like a memorial



uprooted identities



The vitrine. The Vestibule. The Pattern of a Smaragd.  
The pattern of the Smaragd with its function of protecting birds from flying into the glass  
Legend says the architect drew it on a napkin  
on a napkin! at the bar! peak of early 2000s stararchitecture, no?



087\_20230926\_1336



Everything needs maintenance and costs money.  
Mitarbeiter vom Hausdienst meint es gibt viel Platz auch im Museum. Nur in den Lagern und reinigungsräumen ist alles ein bisschen eng. Er ist noch nicht lange hier. Sein Chef heißt Silvan

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objects in crisis  
The contrast between the uprooted objects and the very Swiss space and furniture.

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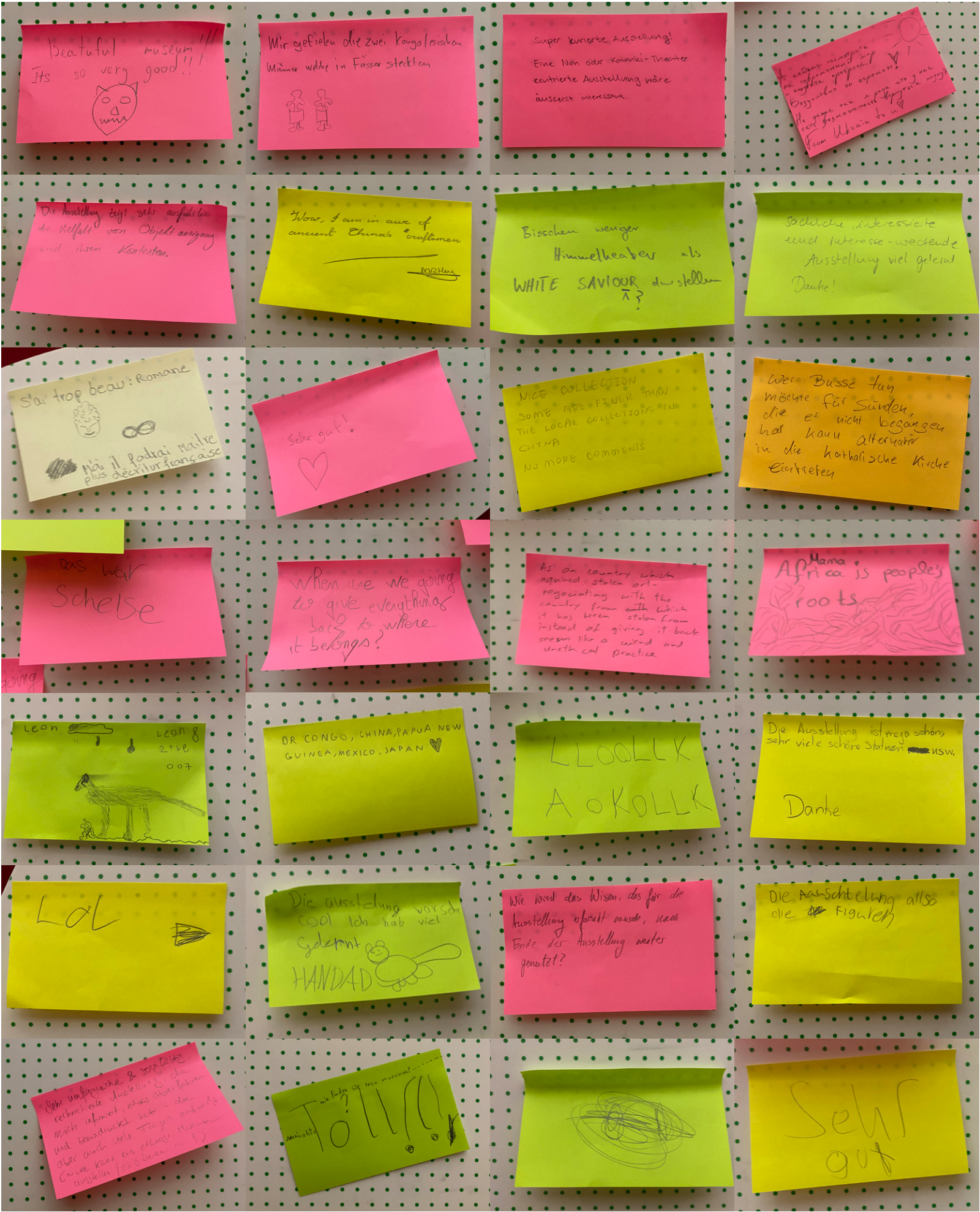
In the middle of the park there is a private tennis court - i asked three old men with tennis rackets sitting on a bench - drinking beer - if they know where i have to call if i want to rent the court and they laughed and said it is not possible

090\_20230926\_1359



Could this place have a more public character as well?  
Begegnung mit einer Frau im Verwaltungsgebäude durch das Fenster oben. Platz hat es hier keinen. Es mangelt. Ja relativ aber. Die Direktorin ist zwischen zwei Meetings...  
The office building: Today a place for maintenance of the Museum under maintenance work, 150 years ago the home to Richard Wagner, a Swiss writer.  
The library of the museum is hidden here. You are supposed to inform the museum before your arrival. At the moment it is not opened due to maintenance work  
Every now and then appears a part of a building in the park. A sneakpeak





This is how the museum engages with visitors

I would never write on a post it

The handwritten post-it notes by visitors bear potential. But they are displayed in a boring way. It would be perfect to stick them on all the vitrines

Agreed, I wanted to write the same thing! How good our collective minds work

lol

Some Post-Its are funny.

Rietberg Museum Ausstellungsraum

Idylle  
eine grosse Idylle,  
Ruhe,  
Picknick,  
Bänke,  
Pause,  
Spaziergang,  
Hund,  
Kinder,  
alte Menschen,  
Kontinuum von  
Überraschungen,  
Balance,  
Licht und Schatten

Idylle.



The swissness of the space was not visible at first sight. Before our conversation with Helen Thomas we described this space as neutral.

I like how the vitrines visually merge into one object

Gespräch mit dem Museumswerter. Er sieht aus wie der Manager und ist fast jeden Tag hier. Öffnen und schließen. Betrieb und Sicherheit. Er kennt sich gut aus über die Ausstellung. Heute ist relative viel los für einen Dienstag und am Mittwoch ist das Museum bis 20:00 geöffnet.

It's as if we're walking through a mirror. A space of absolute symmetry.



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traces

memory of a past exhibition

Do they install a new exhibition or dismantle an old one?

095\_20230926\_1515



The cafe is highly frequented by wealthy retired people. A friend told me the story of a lady who came in and wanted her salad in a proper bowl to take out in the park. The person serving her, poured the salad from the cardboard box into a bowl but the lady wasn't happy with how they were doing it. She then spillt the whole thing over herself, got very angry and left without paying, blaming the service person.

The café creates a very unconventional intermezzo in the exhibition sequence: Coming from the Swiss extension you climb the stairs and reach an off-space that guides you to the cafeteria. To extend your visit to the Villa exhibition needs convincing.

096\_20230926\_1515



I did not know that the villa is part of the museum and visited only the extention.

\*whisper\* \*whisper\*

The Villa staircase is a mixture of pompous and necessary

The routing to the exhibition rooms of the villa doesn't work.



097\_20230926\_1524



The "exotic" object confronting the Swiss park.

098\_20230926\_1530



Begegnung mit einer Gruppe Schülern. Die Kunstvermittlerin spricht über die Geste eine Statue welche Fear ausstrahlt. Ich sehe sie nicht um die Ecke. Aber sie strahlt Fear aus.  
The objects confront their colonial past.

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Why are there fences around some of the trees?  
another boundary

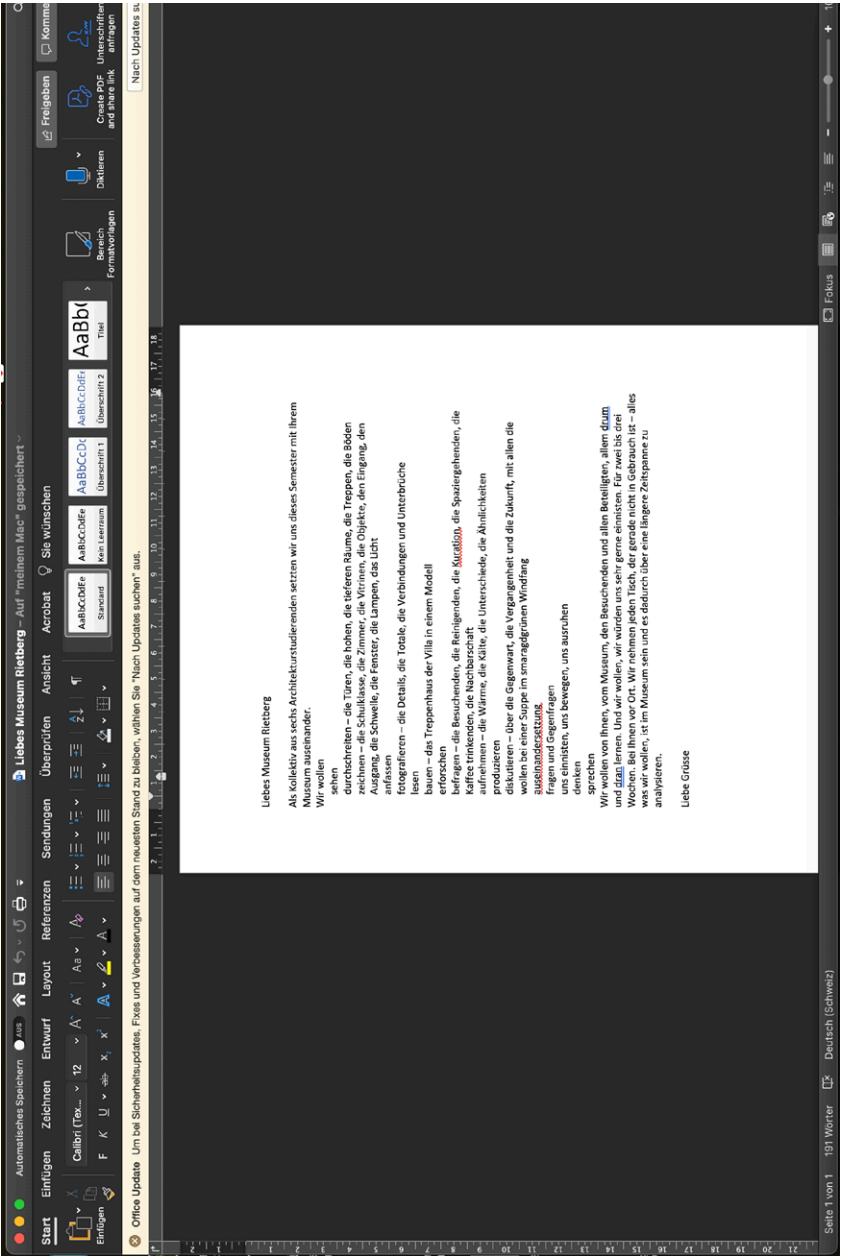




Park. Is it wild? or is this just another form of maintenance?



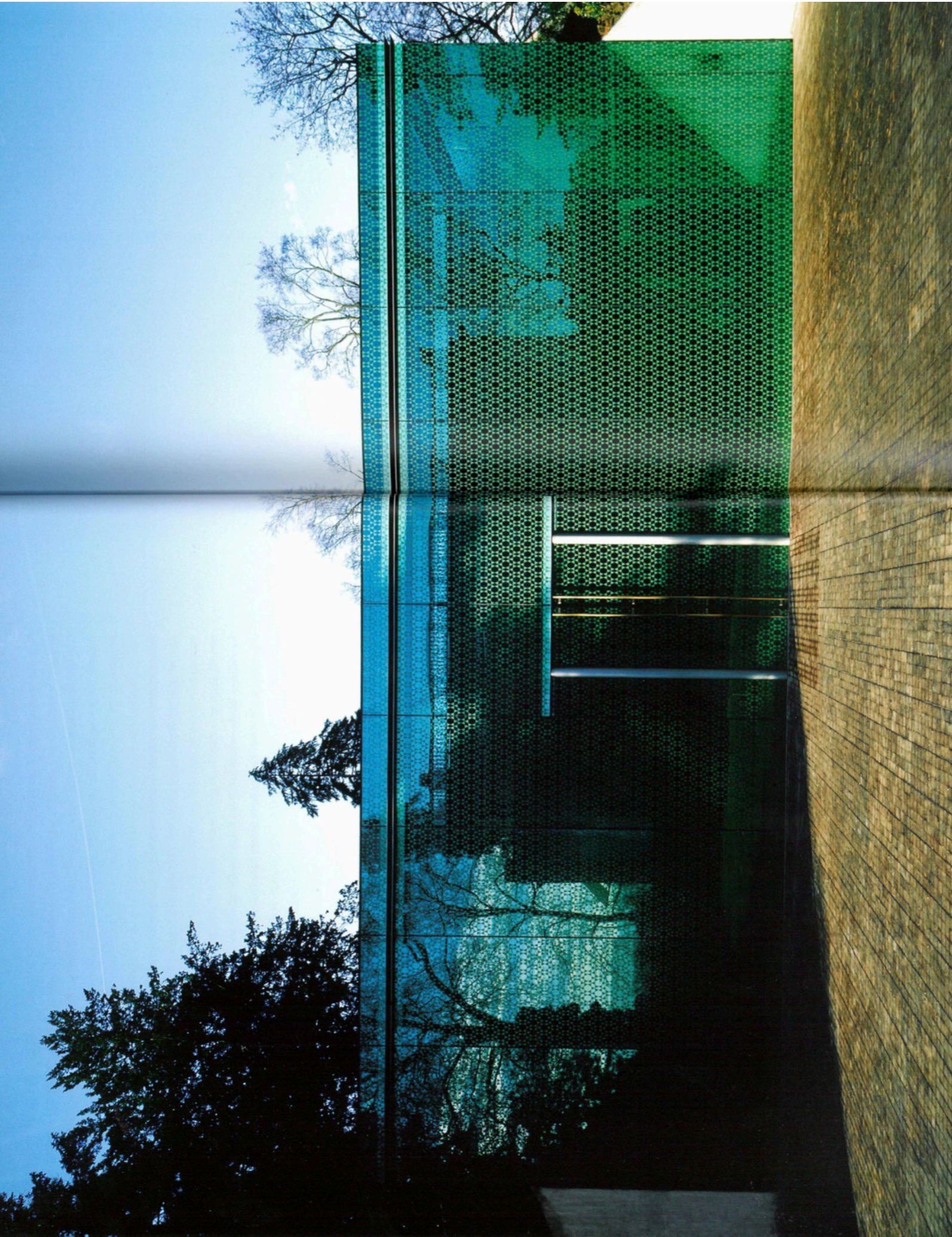
Here again a sneakpeak.




We wanted to work at the museum. Ideally in one of their spaces. Unfortunately the museum wasn't flexible enough to accommodate us. Maybe they weren't interested in us. But why not engage with students? Why not use the opportunity to discuss spacial opportunities for the museum, ways of thinking about the place. Clémentine Deliss, deliberately invited people from outside of the museum to share the museum space during residencies. Anette Bhagwati, the director of the Rietberg talks about a living archive but what we experienced was not life but bureaucracy. A lady in the administration building told us that they don't have enough space themselves. When we peaked into the administration villa there was a large room empty in front of us. The museum has a laboratory which is used for events and other activities. It's empty most of the time.

We were hopeful. Maybe too optimistic for the real world: "Willkommen in der realen Welt" - Woman from the Window





Do you understand now what I mean with the word vitrine?  
modern grotto  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

	Stadt Zürich	236.810
<b>Reglement Videoüberwachung Museum Rietberg Zürich</b> vom 31. Januar 2019		
<i>Der Direktor des Museums Rietberg Zürich,</i> gestützt auf Art. 10 Abs. 1 Datenschutzverordnung (DSV) vom 25. Mai 2011 <sup>1</sup> und in Anwendung von Art. 9 DSV, verfügt:		
<b>A. Allgemeiner Teil</b>		
Art. 1 Dieses Reglement regelt die Videoüberwachung des Museums Rietberg der Stadt Zürich.		Geltungs- bereich
Art. 2 Die Videoüberwachung nach diesem Reglement be-		Zweck der Videoüber- wachung
a. den Schutz von Personen;		
b. die Sicherung der Kunst- und Archivgegenstände des Museums, insbesondere die Verhinderung sowie Ahndung von Diebstählen, Sachbeschädigungen und Verstössen gegen die zweckbestimmte Nutzung;		
c. die Sicherstellung von Beweismitteln zur Geltendmachung von zivil- und strafrechtlichen Ansprüchen.		
<b>B. Besonderer Teil</b>		
Art. 3 <sup>1</sup> In den folgenden Bereichen der Gebäude und der Anlage des Museums erfolgt die dauerhafte (24 Stunden / 365 Tage) Bildaufzeichnung ohne Tonaufnahmen:		Umfang und Art der Videoüber- wachung
a. Innenbereich sämtlicher Ein- und Ausgänge der Gebäude;		
b. Empfangsbereich beim Erweiterungsbau sowie bei der Parkvilla Rietberg;		
c. Ein- und Ausgänge sowie innerhalb der Ausstellungsräume;		
d. Ein- und Ausgänge sowie innerhalb des Schaudepots;		
e. Ein- und Ausgänge sowie innerhalb von Archiven und Kunstlagern.		
<sup>1</sup> AS 236.100		
<sup>2</sup> Die Qualität der Bildaufzeichnungen wird so gewählt, dass die Identifizierung von Personen möglich ist.		
Verantwortlichkeit und Zuständigkeit		Art. 4 <sup>1</sup> Die Gesamtverantwortung für den Einsatz und die Umsetzung der Videoüberwachung liegt bei der Direktorin oder dem Direktor des Museums.
<sup>2</sup> Immobilien Stadt Zürich (IMMO) ist zuständig für die Installation, den Betrieb, den Unterhalt sowie die erforderlichen Sicherheitsmassnahmen sämtlicher Videoüberwachungsanlagen.		
<sup>3</sup> Die Direktorin oder der Direktor des Museums erteilt die erforderlichen Aufträge gemäss Abs. 2.		
Einsichtnahme		Art. 5 <sup>1</sup> Videoaufzeichnungen dürfen nur eingesehen werden, wenn ein Ereignis festgestellt wurde, für das die Geltendmachung von zivil- oder strafrechtlichen Ansprüchen zu prüfen ist.
<sup>2</sup> Die Einsichtnahme setzt einen schriftlichen Antrag der Leitung Sicherheit des Museums an die Direktorin oder den Direktor des Museums voraus. Es muss dargelegt werden, aus welchem Anlass und für welche Bereiche die Videoaufzeichnungen eingesehen werden und welche Person Einsicht nimmt.		
<sup>3</sup> Die Direktorin oder der Direktor des Museums entscheidet schriftlich über die Einsichtnahme im Einzelfall.		
<sup>4</sup> Die Einsicht nehmende Person hält in einem separaten schriftlichen Bericht zuhanden der Direktorin oder des Direktors des Museums folgende Angaben fest: Zeitpunkt des schriftlichen Entscheids, die Namen der Einsicht nehmenden Personen, den Zeitraum und Umfang des ausgewerteten und gesichteten Bildmaterials, die Sachverhaltsfeststellung sowie die empfohlenen Massnahmen.		
Verwendung der Videoaufzeichnungen		Art. 6 <sup>1</sup> Videoaufzeichnungen dürfen ausschliesslich zur Geltendmachung zivil- und strafrechtlicher Ansprüche verwendet werden.
<sup>2</sup> Zuständig für die Geltendmachung gemäss Abs. 1 und die damit verbundene Verwendung der Videoaufzeichnungen ist die Direktorin oder der Direktor des Museums. Sie oder er zieht unverzüglich den Rechtsdienst des Präsidialdepartements bei.		
Aufbewahrung und Löschung		Art. 7 <sup>1</sup> Die Videoaufzeichnungen werden automatisch gespeichert und spätestens nach 14 Tagen seit der Aufzeichnung automatisch und unwiederbringlich gelöscht oder überschrieben.
<sup>2</sup> Vorbehalten bleibt eine längere Aufbewahrung im Falle der Geltendmachung von zivil- oder strafrechtlichen Ansprüchen gemäss Art. 5 und 6. In diesen Fällen dürfen die Videoaufnahmen		
so lange gespeichert werden, wie sie zur Geltendmachung der Ansprüche notwendig sind.		
Art. 8 <sup>1</sup> Der Zugriff auf die Aufnahmen wird durch restriktive Zutritts- und Zugriffsrechte sichergestellt.		Sicherheits- massnahmen
<sup>2</sup> Die im Zusammenhang mit der Videoüberwachung eingesetzten Technologien entsprechenden dem aktuellen technischen Stand und stellen sicher, dass unberechtigte Datentransfers ausgeschlossen und die Aufzeichnungen bis zu ihrer Löschung in unveränderter Form verfügbar sind.		
<sup>3</sup> Sämtliche Zugriffe auf die Aufzeichnungen werden automatisch protokolliert. Die Protokolldaten umfassen die Person, die Zugriff genommen hat, die Aufzeichnung, auf die zugegriffen wurde, die Bearbeitung der Aufzeichnung sowie den vom Zugriff betroffenen Zeitraum.		
<sup>4</sup> Die Protokolldaten werden in unveränderter Form mindestens 12 Monate aufbewahrt. Auf die Protokolldaten darf nur auf Anordnung der Direktorin oder des Direktors des Museums zugegriffen werden.		
Art. 9 An allen überwachten Bereichen gemäss Art. 3 Abs. 1 werden Piktogramme oder Hinweisschilder angebracht, die auf die Videoüberwachung hinweisen.		Information und Kennzeichnung
<b>C. Schlussbestimmungen</b>		
Art. 10 <sup>1</sup> Das Reglement wird durch die Direktorin oder den Direktor des Museums erlassen.		Erlass und Änderung des Reglements
<sup>2</sup> Das Reglement ist vor Erlass und bei jeder Änderung der Datenschutzstelle der Stadt Zürich zur Prüfung vorzulegen.		
Art. 11 Dieses Reglement tritt auf 1. April 2019 in Kraft.		Inkrafttreten

monitored environment  
Reglement Videoüberwachung Museum Rietberg, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2019

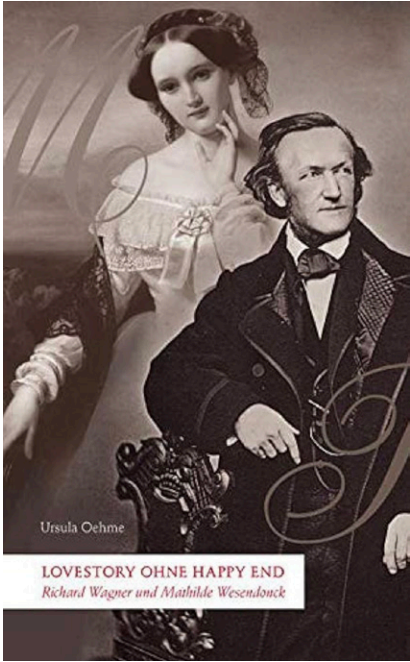
<b>Projekt Nr. 3: Baldachine von Smaragd</b>	
(Antrag zur Weiterbearbeitung und Ausführung)	
<b>Verfassende / Gesamtleitung / Baurealisation:</b> ARGE Alfred Grazioli / Adolf Krischanitz Rheinstrasse 45C, 12161 Berlin <b>Mitarbeit:</b> Dipl. Ing. Birgit Frank Dipl. Ing. Wieka Muthesius Cand. Ing. Ralf Wilkening	
<b>Bauingenieurwesen:</b> Ernst Basler + Partner AG, Zürich Verantwortlich: Markus Neukom	
<b>Elektroinstallationen:</b> Ernst Basler + Partner AG, Zürich	
<b>Haustechnik (HLSK):</b> Ernst Basler + Partner AG, Zürich	
<b>Landschaftsarchitektur:</b> Ruth Hanna Stahel, Landschaftsarch. BSLA, Uster	
	
Eingangsperspektive	
	
Museumsfoyer	
12	Projektwettbewerb: Erweiterung Museum Rietberg, Zürich-Enge

Die Verfassenden haben bei der Überarbeitung an der oberirdisch sehr präzisen und äusserst zurückhaltenden Situation festgehalten. Der zwischen dem neuen Ganzglaspavillon und der Villa Wesendonck aufgespannte Vorhof überzeugt und ergänzt den Pergolahof in wohlproportionierter Weise. Im Innern ist der Nutzen der Kaverne als Museumsshop betrieblich willkommen, die edel anmutende Materialisierung mit hinterleuchteter Onyx-Kassettendecke und Stampfbeton-Boden stellt eine bewährte Strategie dar, abstrakt und technologisch auf der Höhe der Zeit, die Welt der Wesendoncks zu reflektieren.


Die eigentlichen Ausstellungsräume im Untergeschoss überzeugen durch das grossflächige, sehr flexible Layout. Ein schwer wirkendes Trennwandsystem wirkt nach Bedarf einem gänzlich auf Kulissen angewiesenen Ausstellungsraum entgegen. Im Gegensatz zum rational ausgebildeten Erdgeschoss erscheinen die Untergeschosse durch die Symmetrie und den Deckenraster eher starr. Der Versuch, diese Symmetrie über Lichtschächte zu brechen und Tageslicht in die Untergeschosse zu transportieren, überzeugt nicht. Verbesserungspotenzial sichtet die Expertenkommission auch in den teilweise doppelkammerigen Treppenhäusern sowie in der Anbindung der Treppe in die Villa Wesendonck.

Insgesamt nimmt das Projekt stark Rücksicht auf den Park und das bestehende Villen-Ensemble. Es überzeugt durch seine bis zur Materialisierung gediehene Ausarbeitung. Das neue Museum tritt nach Fertigstellung nur lokal und sorgfältig gesetzt in Erscheinung. Die grossen und grosszügig bespielbaren Ausstellungsflächen ergänzen den Museumsbetrieb in idealer Weise.





Das Schweizerische Kulturgütertransfergesetz (KGTG) ist am 1. Juni 2005 in Kraft getreten. Beim KGTG handelt es sich im Wesentlichen um die Umsetzung der 2003 von der Schweiz ratifizierten UNESCO-Konvention vom 14. November 1970 über die Massnahmen zum Verbot und zur Verhütung der rechtswidrigen Einfuhr, Ausfuhr und Übereignung von Kulturgut. Das KGTG regelt insbesondere die Einfuhr von Kulturgut in die Schweiz, seine Durch- und Ausfuhr und seine Rückfuhrung aus der Schweiz sowie Massnahmen gegen die rechtswidrige Übereignung.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI  
**Bundesamt für Kultur BAK**  
Dezember 2022

## Checkliste «Kulturgut»

Sämtliche Rechte und Pflichten gemäss Kulturgütertransfersgesetz (KGTG; SR 444.1) basieren auf der in Art. 2 Abs. 1 KGTG verankerten Definition von Kulturgut:

*«Als Kulturgut gilt ein aus religiösen oder weltlichen Gründen für Archäologie, Vorgeschichte, Geschichte, Literatur, Kunst oder Wissenschaft bedeutungsvolles Gut, das einer der Kategorien nach Artikel 1 der UNESCO-Konvention 1970 oder nach Artikel 1 Absatz 1 Buchstabe a des UNESCO-Übereinkommens 2001 angehört.»*

Die nachfolgende Checkliste dient zur Bestimmung, ob ein Objekt als Kulturgut eingestuft werden kann. Die Checkliste ist gemäss dem Prinzip der Selbstanmeldung auszufüllen. Die Fragen I sowie die Frage II muss beantwortet werden<sup>1</sup>.

**Wenn bei Frage I und II je mindestens eine Eigenschaft bejaht wird, handelt es sich um Kulturgut.**

I. Fällt das Objekt unter eine der Kategorien der UNESCO-Konvention von 1970 (Art. 1) oder der UNESCO-Konvention von 2001 (Art. 1 Abs. 1 lit. a)?	Ja	Nein
• seltene Sammlungen und Exemplare der Zoologie, Botanik, Mineralogie und Anatomie sowie Gegenstände von paläontologischem Interesse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• die Geschichte betreffendes Gut, einschliesslich der Geschichte von Wissenschaft und Technik, der Militär- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte sowie des Lebens der führenden Persönlichkeiten, Denker, Wissenschaftler und Künstler und der Ereignisse von nationaler Bedeutung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ergebnisse archäologischer Ausgrabungen (sowohl vorschriftsmässiger als auch unerlaubter) oder archäologischer Entdeckungen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Teile künstlerischer oder geschichtlicher Denkmäler oder von Ausgrabungsstätten, die zerstückelt sind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Antiquitäten, die mehr als hundert Jahre alt sind, wie beispielsweise Inschriften, Münzen und gravierte Siegel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Gegenstände aus dem Gebiet der Ethnologie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Gut von künstlerischem Interesse wie Bilder, Gemälde und Zeichnungen, die ausschliesslich von Hand auf irgendeinem Träger und in irgendeinem Material angefertigt sind (ausgenommen industrielle Entwürfe und handverzierte Manufakturwaren); Originalarbeiten der Bildhauerkunst und der Skulptur in irgendeinem Material; Originalgravuren, -drucke und -lithografien; Originale von künstlerischen Zusammenstellungen und Montagen in irgendeinem Material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• seltene Manuskripte und Inkunabeln, alte Bücher, Dokumente und Publikationen von besonderem Interesse (historisch, künstlerisch, wissenschaftlich, literarisch usw.), einzeln oder in Sammlungen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Briefmarken, Steuermarken und ähnliches, einzeln oder in Sammlungen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Archive einschliesslich Phono-, Foto- und Filmarchive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Möbelstücke, die mehr als hundert Jahre alt sind, und alte Musikinstrumente	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Spuren menschlicher Existenz, die einen kulturellen, historischen oder archäologischen Charakter aufweisen und seit mindestens 100 Jahren ununterbrochen ganz oder teilweise unter Wasser liegen oder zeitweise unter Wasser gelegen haben (z.B. Artefakte, menschliche Überreste)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

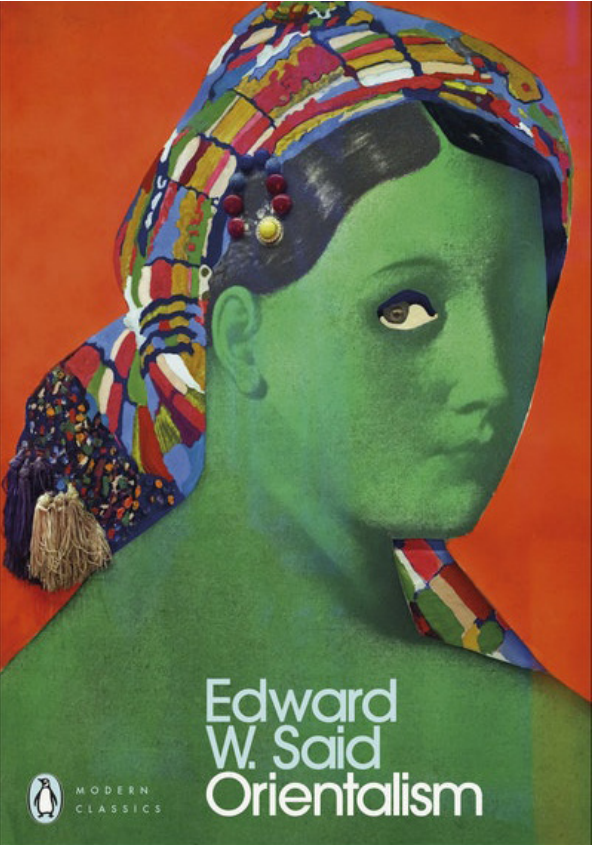
Kein Kulturgut

II. Ist das Objekt für einen der in Art. 2 Abs. 1 KGTG angeführten Bereiche von Bedeutung?	Ja	Nein
• Archäologie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Vorgeschichte	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Geschichte	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Literatur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Kunst	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Wissenschaft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kulturgut

Kein Kulturgut

<sup>1</sup> Für weiterführende Informationen siehe Dokument «FAQ – Häufig gestellte Fragen zur Anwendung des KGTG».





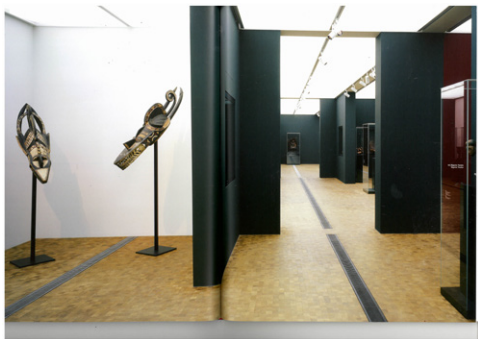


Räbeliechtli, Räbeliechtli,  
wo gasch hii?  
I de dunkle Nacht,  
ohni Stärneschii,  
do mues mis Liechtli sii.  
Räbeliechtli, Räbeliechtli,  
wo bisch gsii?  
Dur d'Strass duruuf  
und s'Gässli ab,  
gäll, Liechtli, löscht nid ab.  
Räbeliechtli, Räbeliechtli,  
wenn gohsh hei?  
Wenn de Biiswind chunt  
und mir s'Liechtli löscht,  
denn goni wieder hei.

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Bildarchiv / Fotograf: Baumann, Heinz / Com\_L22-0531-0001-0003 / CC BY-SA 4.0  
<http://doi.org/10.3932/ethz-a-001008285>



Bennett, Tony. The Birth of the Museum : History, Theory, Politics. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.



the shop is the place where the institution/museum starts to lose its grip

Helen Thomas called these spaces “very swiss”. To me, they are rather “very museum”.

Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



I understand Grazioli and Krischanitz. Can't deny that I like it.

love the green

The vitrine again. This time with light.

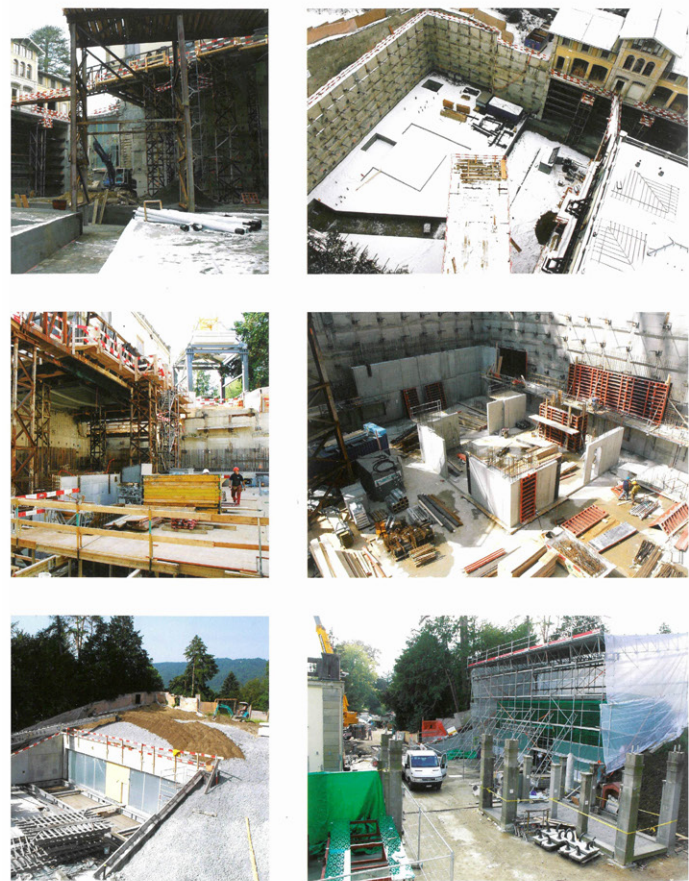
Another Crystal Palace, where objects are valued as mere commodities. Here you may gaze, acquire and own your own souvenirs to remind you of your trip to the museum. wrapped into a plastic bag with the Smaragd pattern printed onto it.

What is this space? What an entrance to an underground building.?

Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



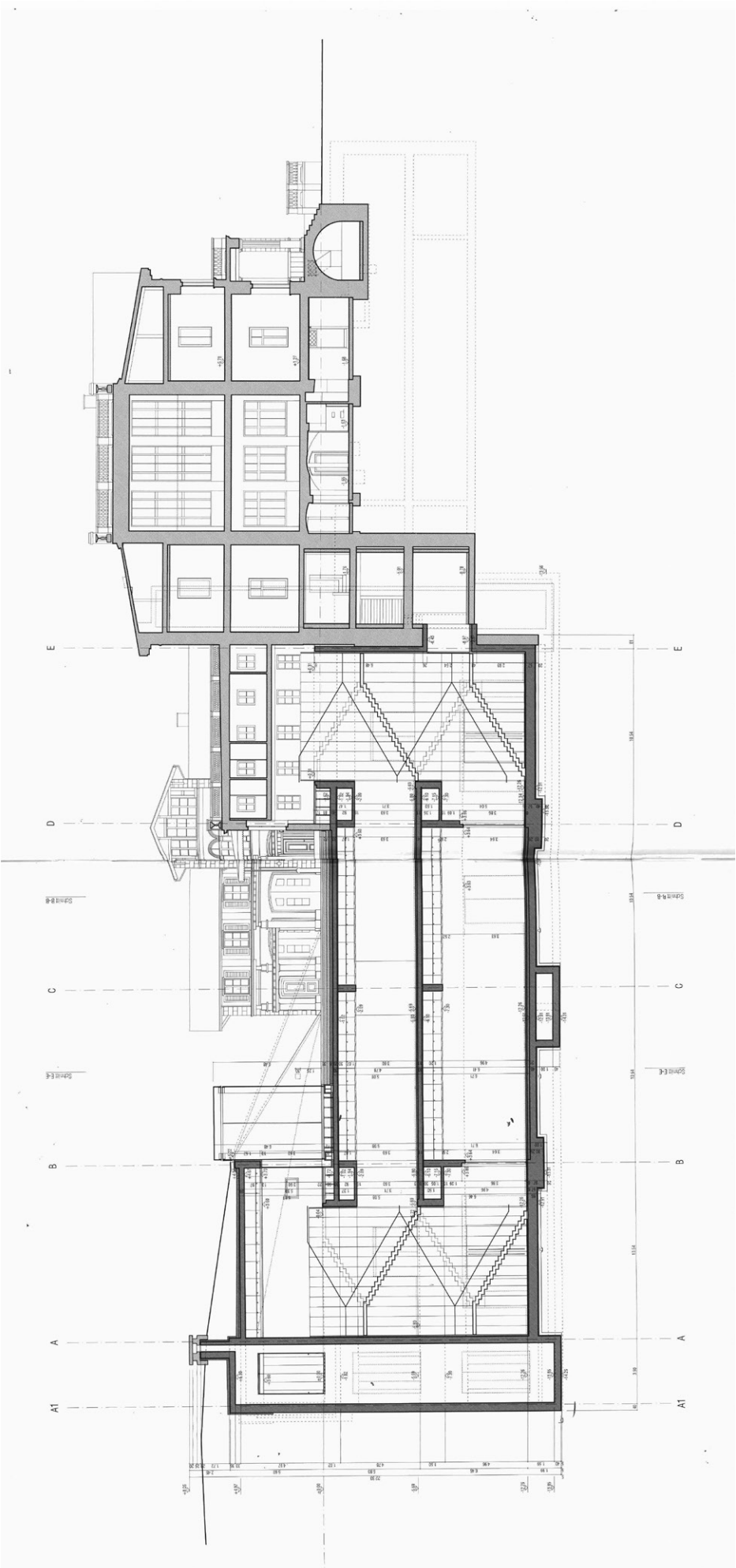
rozess



The construction process of the most swiss building you could imagine: it is even underground. A Bunker.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

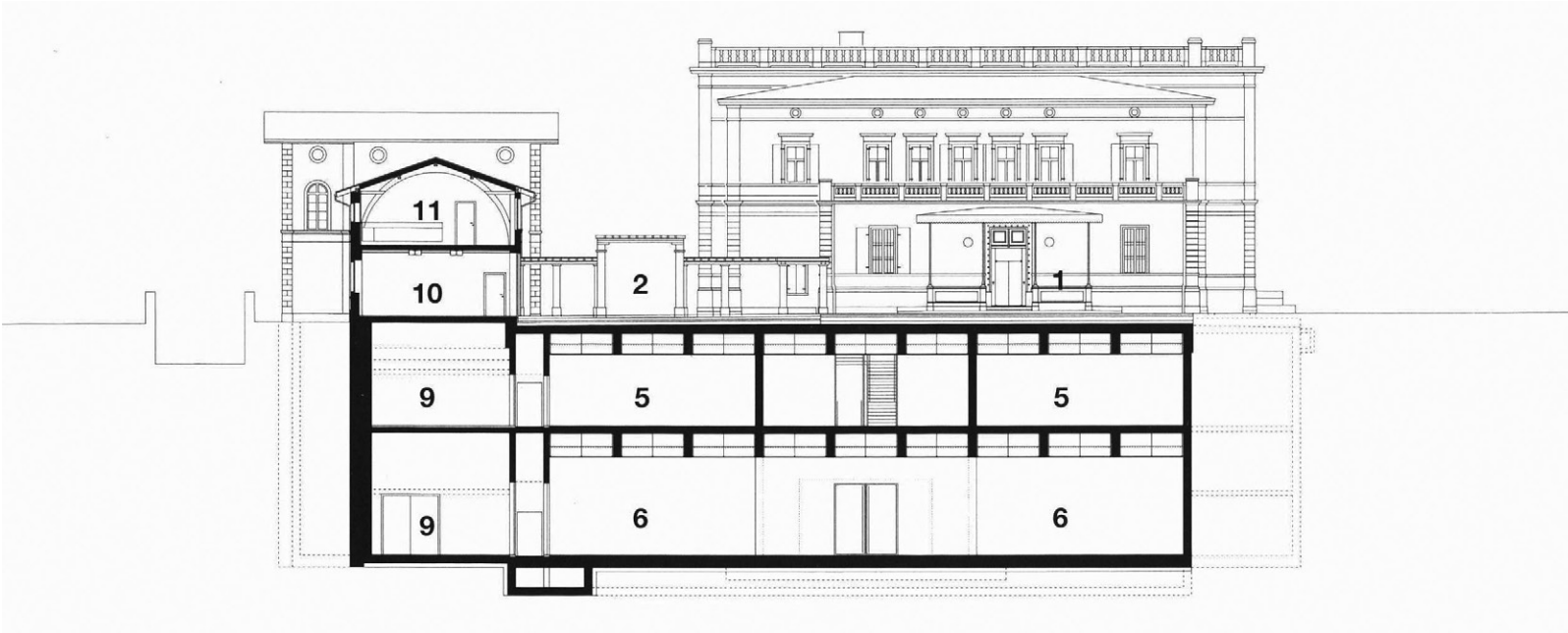
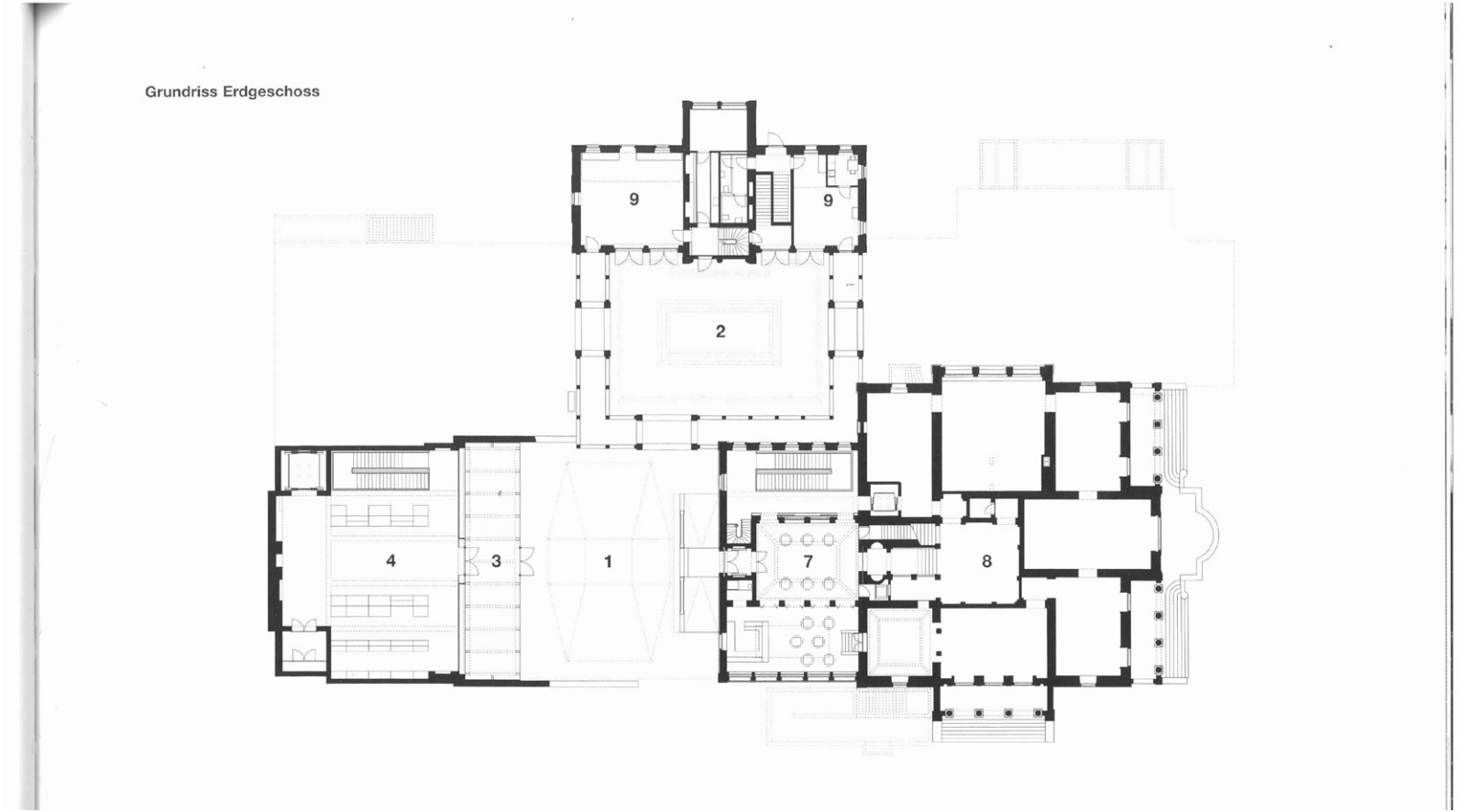


The descent and ascent of the swiss Bunker.  
The staircase almost has the dimensions of a domestic staircase. It feels very intimate and warm. At the same time because of its grid it feels very oriental and prepares the visitor for what they will see below  
The perforated body made of oak wood, in which the staircase extends, is not standing, it hangs from the ceiling of the first floor.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



The project that looks so delicate in the park suddenly becomes a monstrosity of concrete. An other swiss Bunker in the hills of Zürich. Does it hide the objects?  
On the 1st basement is the collection, on the 2nd basement the temporary exhibitions. A spatially strategic decision that the collection is not skipped by the visitor.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

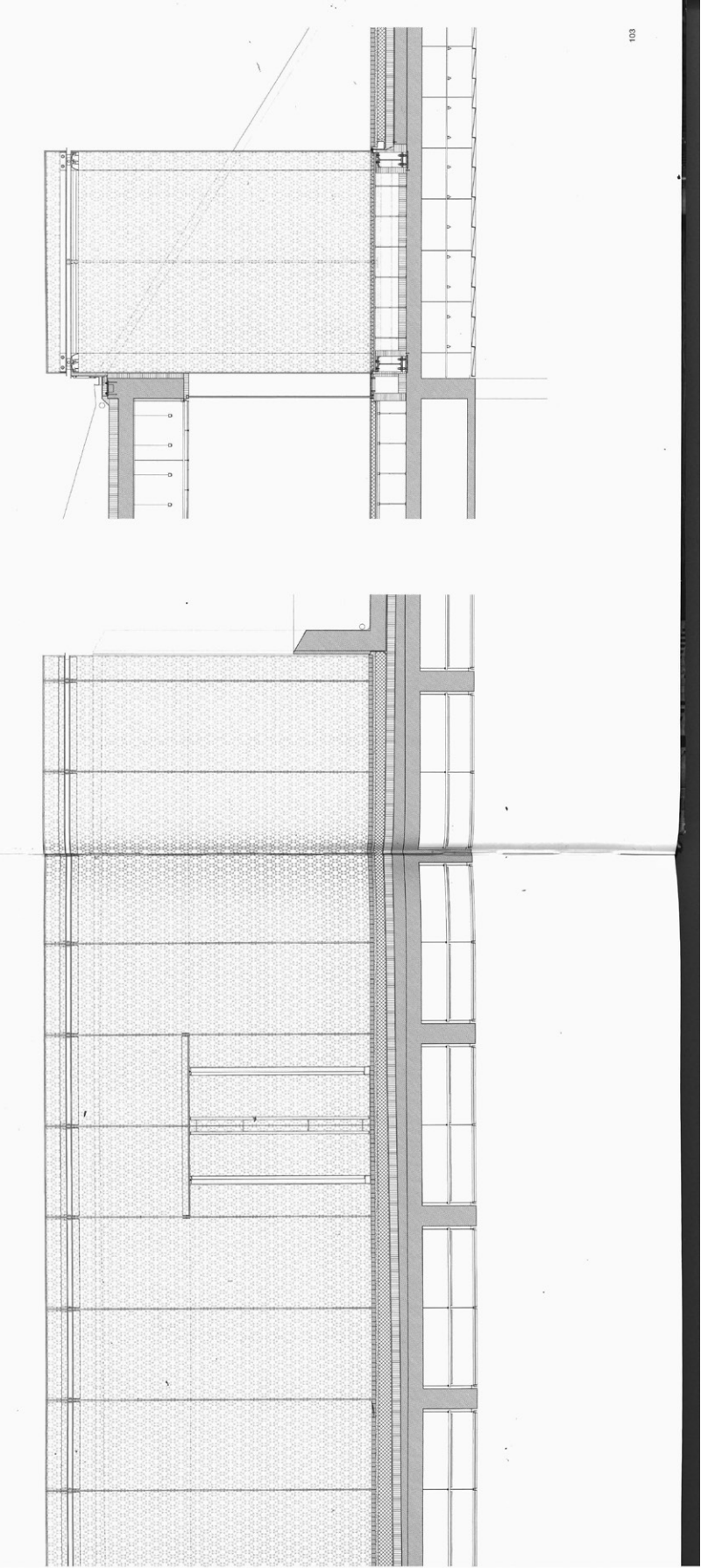




I think the placement of the aligned volumes and the urban gesture to the center, is powerful. The Smaragd and the Baldachin still face each other.  
symmetry and proportion  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

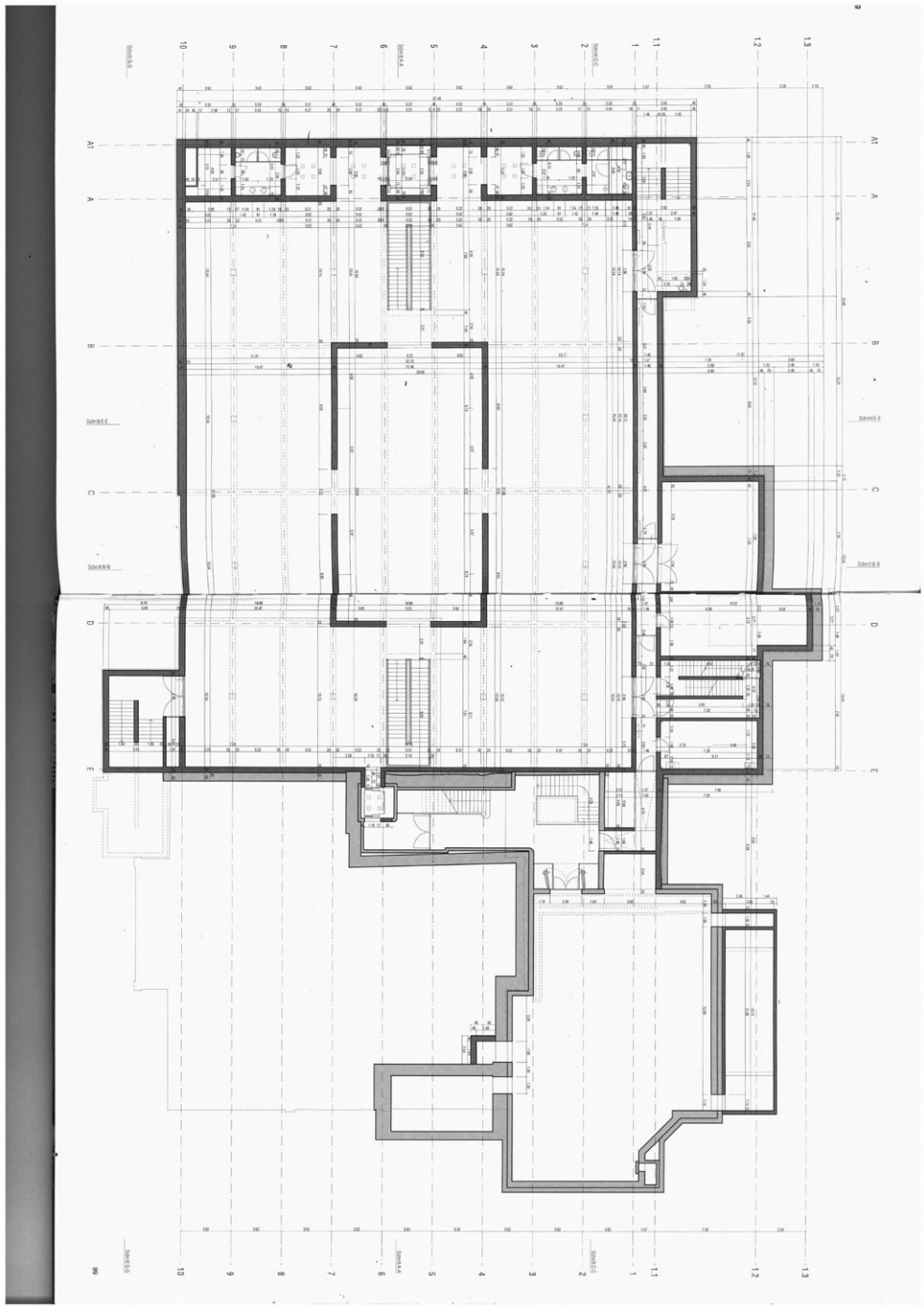


Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



The entrance volume is completely dissolved in glass, which becomes the load-bearing structural element. The height of the structure is given by the maximum production length of float glass: about 6 meters.  
The vitrine again.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

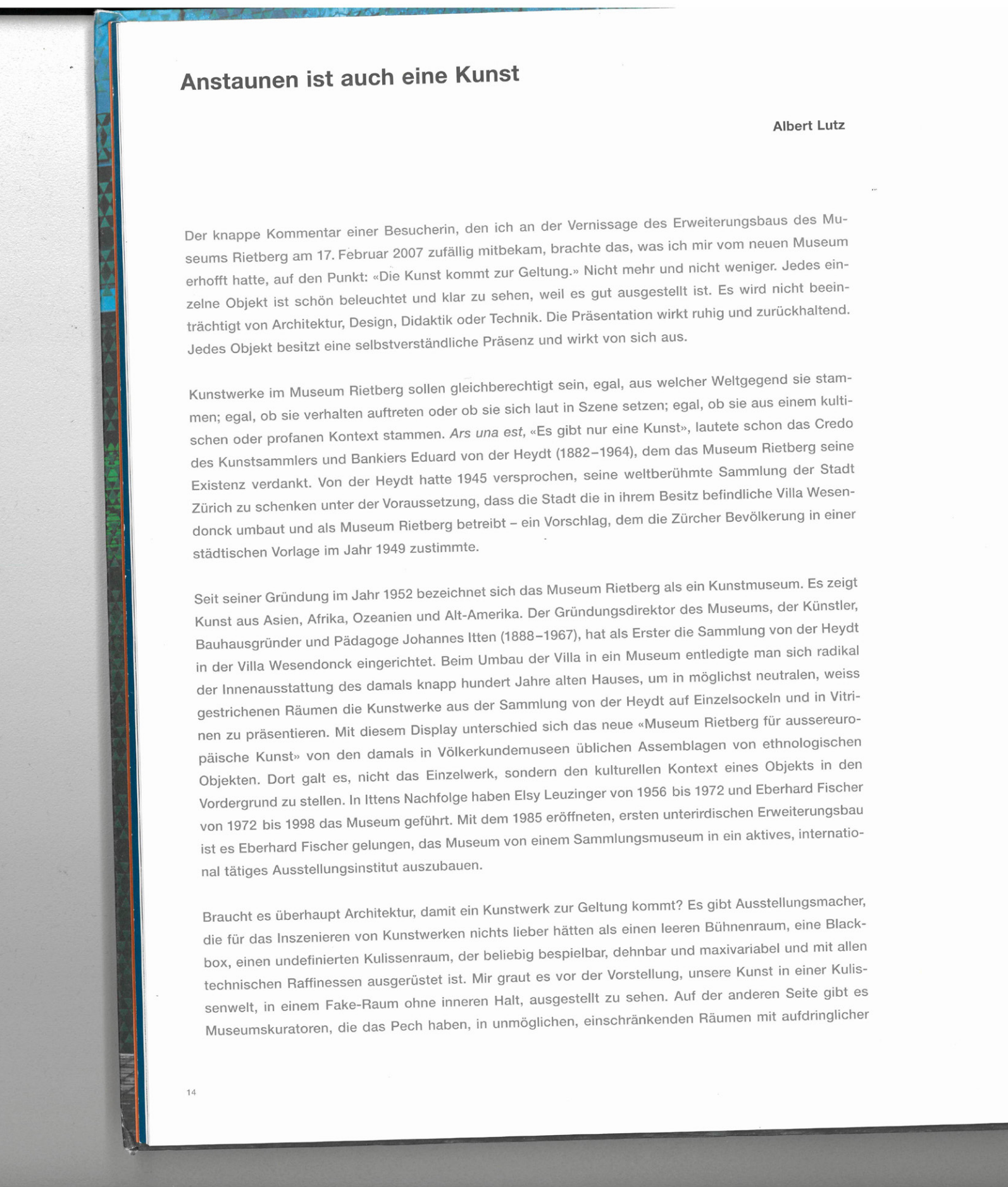




The grid of the main exhibition space in the extension allow to create temporary wall partitions without them seeming like a stage scenery.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



What is the reason for the colors?  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007



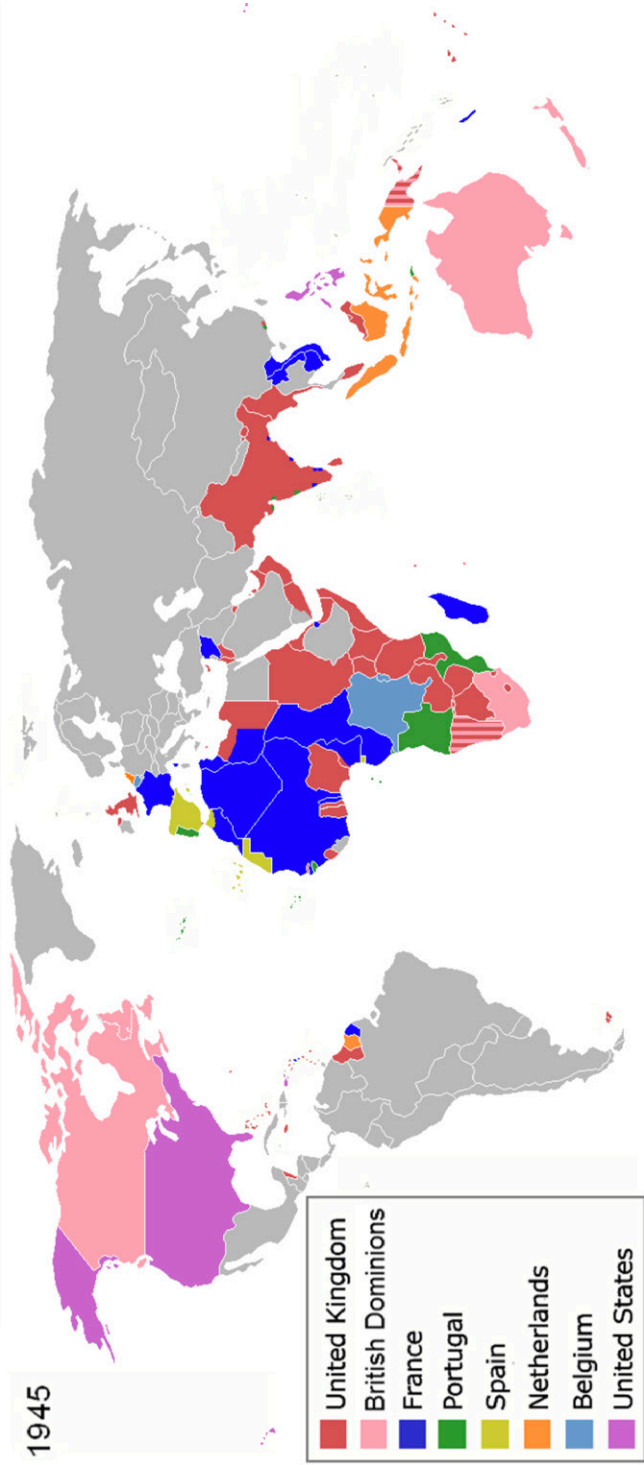
“Anstaunen” - why is this considered an artform?  
What is clear is that the object only becomes valuable when it is exhibited, when you can “anstaunen” the object. The everyday objects are inherently not as valuable as they are at the moment on the art market. Why? Demand! Neoliberal economy creates value through demand. Maybe only through “anstaunen” Kunst is created.  
Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007





About the collective

Farside Collective is artist run project space based from the village of Sankar; Leh on the higher Himalayan region of North India. They are small-scale art book publishers and run an art book store housing books and zines. The art-space also has a art book/photobook and zine library housing independent publications from around the world for viewing along-with a fully functional photographic dark room in the art-space. Farside primarily works with artist-books, zines and related printed matter.



2Di  
Mai  
2023

Präsentation

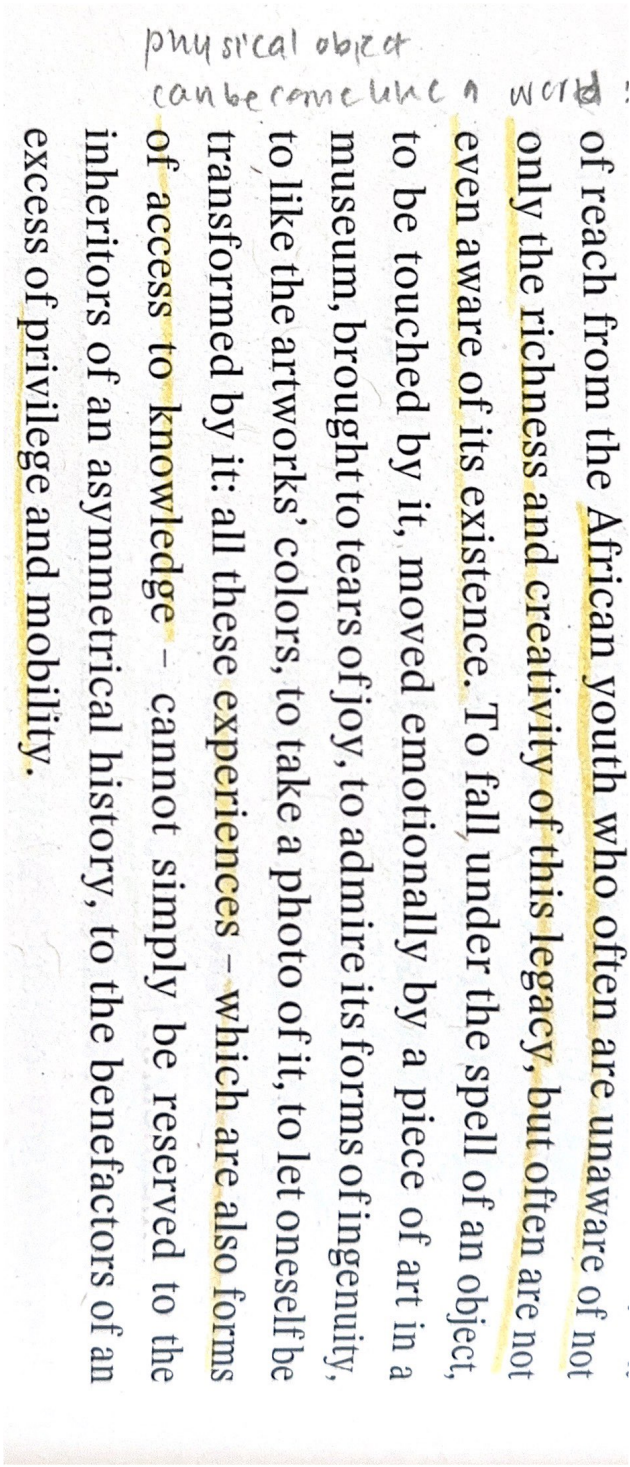
Unschöne Museen: Talk by DEBASISH BORAH & Screening of AYO AKINGBADE

Events on occasion of the current exhibition UNSCHÖNE MUSEEN at GTA Exhibitions: The non-museum is a term Debasish Borah has defined to conceptualize and, in photographic and video work, capture places of cultural memory-making that are not those of canonical knowledge production. In his research, Borah examines what he would term the fiction of the post-colonial museum – the idea that Western museums have become more inclusive and self-reflexive since claiming decolonial processes to be part of their practice. This, he states, is the paradox of Western museums, by which he means not only the museums of past colonizers but also of their “photocopies” in formerly colonized countries. Borah is a doctoral fellow at the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zurich and is interested in the unattainable, in hidden and secret places, objects and their histories apart from these gestures, the non-institutional that contains the potential for resistance. //





Debasish Borah's video installation *The museum goes* (2023) comprises a replica of what he calls "non-museums," small photo studios with painted backdrops found in many grocery stores in India, which he refers to as "places of cultural memory-making" outside of the traditional art world. The footage inside shows the artist with his back turned to us and scrutinizing a painted garden-escape as if it were a masterpiece, a send-up of the codes of Western museum-going. His zine *Lie to me like one of your French museums* (2023), which accompanies the installation like a press release, excoriates museal decolonial discourse as empty promises and feel-good stories that, while depending on former colonies for reification, ignores that the receiving institutions of restituted art and artifacts are themselves elite-run "photocopies" Western colonial forms.





**Anschaffungskommission**  
Das Museum Rietberg wird bei seinen Anschaffungen von Kunstwerken unterstützt von einer Kommission, die sich für das Berichtsjahr aus folgenden Fachleuten zusammensetzt: Prof. Dr. Willibald Veit, Prof. Dr. Franz Zelger, Dr. Eberhard Fischer und Dr. Albert Lutz.

Decolonization is the *elimination of this gap between image and essence*. It is about the “restitution” of the essence to the image so that *that which exists can exist in itself and not in something other than itself, something distorted, clumsy, debased and unworthy.*

Decolonialisation is a process where knowledge is produced within and not imposed by others.

Mbembe, Achille.  
2015. Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive.



tem, von dem man wusste, dass es sogar dem traditionellen Ofen in der Heizleistung weit unterlegen war. Auf diese Weise fand der neue technische Komfort des Hauses im Bild des Kamins, in dem das Feuer flackerte, einen anschaulichen Ausdruck. Dass es gleichmässig warm war, verdankte man der Zentralheizung, aber sieht man der Zentralheizung diese Leistung an? Ein Grundproblem im Umgang mit modernem Komfort wird hier auf eine einfache Weise gelöst: Man camoufliert die unanschauliche Technik und überträgt die Aufgabe, ein Bild von Wärme und Lebendigkeit zu schaffen, an eine zwar alte, aber ausdrucksstarke Infrastruktur. Dass es vor allen Dingen um das «Bild» der Aufgabe des Kamins geht, wird auch im Kontrast zwischen Feueröffnung und sprossenlosem Fenster überdeutlich: Hier treffen die beiden Elemente Feuer und Luft zusammen, das eine nährt das andere.

Mit der demonstrativen Geste, die den Kamin der Villa Schönberg auszeichnet, wird das Haus zudem als autarke Einheit gefeiert, die es schon längst nicht mehr war, denn die Versorgung mit Wasser und Gas machte es abhängig von weit gespannten, ur-

banen Versorgungsnetzen. Genau diese Abhängigkeit und der damit verbundene moderne Komfort werden aber in diesem Raum ausgeblendet. Einladend und festlich gestaltet wird dagegen eine bestimmte Stimmung, das Poetische, Kommunikative des Kamins; der Komfort einer informell behaglichen Sphäre. Dieser Komfort lässt sich geschmeidig mit einer Ästhetik verbinden, die über historische Zitate, über Ornamente und die Komposition verschiedener Materialien wie Seide, Samt und Holz den Ausdruck individueller Besonderheit suchte; eine Individualisierung, die man in hohem Masse schätzte. Der typische serielle Ausdruck eines technisch modernen Komforts konnte in dieser Atmosphäre nicht gezeigt werden, und insofern verkörpert das Wohnzimmer der Villa Schönberg mit seinem seltenen Motiv des «Fenster-Kamins» die präzis gesteuerte Inszenierungskunst des späten Historismus, die vielleicht gerade im bürgerlichen und grossbürgerlichen Milieu ihren eigentlichen Platz fand.

The chimney, the window, and the hidden modern heating system

Zur Inszenierung von Komfort : der Kamin der Villa Schönberg in Zürich, Kunst + Architektur in der Schweiz = Art + architecture en Suisse = Arte + architettura in Svizzera, 2004



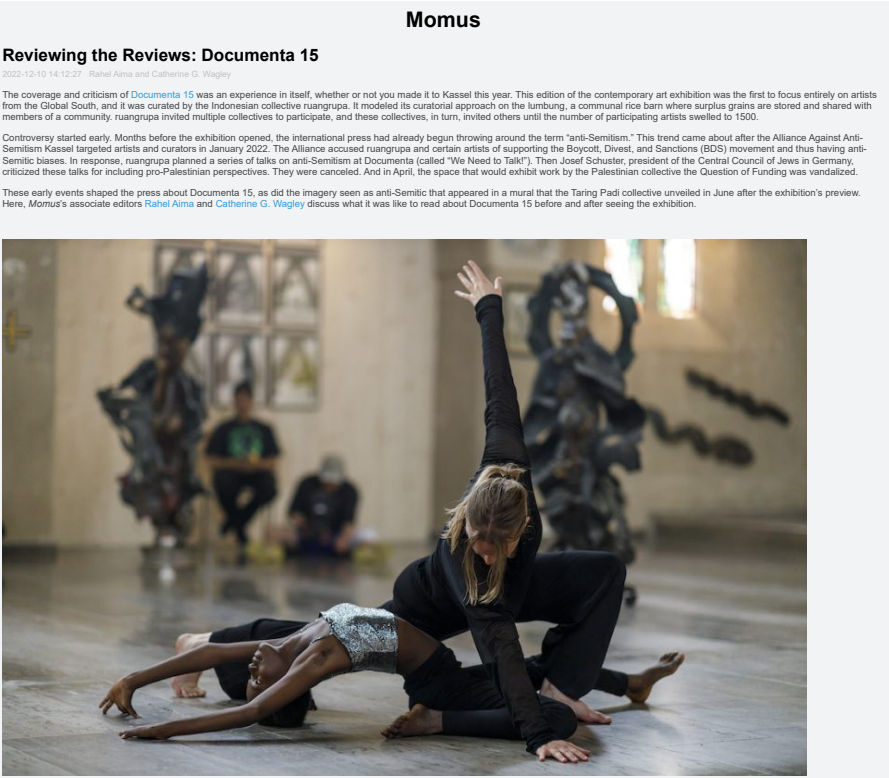
This is the Gesprächsraum/ Wortraum i was talking about. This almost tangible thing in the space between me and you when we are discussing a topic. The words form a language which is linked to a place and a culture what in turn influences the use of the words.

cultural 9/11?” and it just got worse from there. Mostly I kept tripping over this weird way people talked about the lumbung like it was donning a Hawaiian shirt to do the lambada or something like that—as a kind of suspension-of-reality, we’re-on-holiday tourism. They had a lightly bemused, performing tolerance of difference almost. It felt like a way to deal with the slipperiness, and perhaps even illegibility, for many, of this particular curatorial model.

CW: To me it felt like a lot of the “work” at Documenta was about being able to do the work. I was really drawn in by a video in the Gudskul installation, in which members of different collectives were talking about the spaces where they gathered and worked: Whose name was on the lease, how many other people shared the space with them? Was that video art, or about the conditions of making art? That seems like a kind of tired question to me, and I don’t really care what the answer is, but I know other visitors, and critics, did care.

CW: Although it also feels like an act of desperation on the curators’ part. In the September 10 [open letter](#) from Kassel, titled, “We are angry, we are sad, we are tired, we are united: Letter from lumbung community,” the collective “we” say they have tried multiple times to be heard by Documenta officials. The letter actually, in a way, answers that question you pose, about Documenta’s role and “the” important exhibition. It responds to a preliminary report by a panel appointed by Documenta’s supervisory board, which found that the curatorial approach “allowed an anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli mood to prevail.” The collective rejects this finding as censorious and racist in its conflation of criticism of Zionism with anti-Semitism, and argues that it pits one oppressed community against each other—while ignoring the reality of anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian racism. Then the letter describes the lumbung model as something that existed before Documenta and exists beyond it. In other words, it does not need the institution of “Documenta,” the “most important exhibition,” to validate its existence.





Documenta 15: Als Resistans | Ghetto Biennale, "Ghetto Gucci," performance, St. Kunigundis, Kassel, 17 June 2022. Photo: Frank Sperling.

**Catherine Wagley:** For me, it seemed clear, from the swirl of press that led up to the opening of Documenta 15, that these "controversies" were not about Documenta or its (many, many) artists at all, but about issues that a travel-gazing version of the Western art world just had not figured out how to effectively address. But also from the very start, it was hard to keep track of the conversation. There were so many threads: in local contexts, in German publications (and since I don't read German, I feel I've missed a lot), in [open letters](#) from ruangrupa and participating artists.

When Eyal Weizman of Forensic Architecture wrote about Documenta 15 for the *London Review of Books*, he [pointed out](#) that when it began, "the antisemitism row at Documenta" was "not about the institution's own legacy—its co-founder Werner Haffmann was a Nazi war criminal—or the ongoing violence against Germany's Jewish community." Interestingly, Weizman was supposed to participate in Documenta's talk about anti-Semitism—which was canceled.

**Rahel Alma:** I think I was only loosely aware of these canceled talks, or rather dismissed them as something adjacent to but not all that relevant to the event itself. What did put me on edge, however, was the attacks on the Question of Funding a few weeks before the opening. Authorities opened a criminal case which went nowhere. Later, I would learn of racist and transphobic attacks on the Italian collective the Ghetto Biennale and Party Office from New Delhi. It's nothing new—remember the *disqualification* (twice!) of Nicole Eisenman's genderqueer figures at Shikhar Projects Münster a few years ago? In each case, the events were reported to the authorities, who did nothing. It quickly became clear how contingent and specific their definitions of a hate crime were. I don't think anyone realized at that point that the white supremacy was coming from inside the house. I thought Jörg Heiser's early piece at *Art Agenda* did a great job of *contextualizing the accusations of anti-Semitism vis-a-vis* the German context, even as he objected to the Israel Defense Forces being compared to European fascists. And it continues: to be accused of supporting BDS remains such a serious charge, and one that marks the person as unfit to hold a prominent role in the German cultural landscape, as we [saw most recently](#) with incoming Haus der Kulturen der Welt museum director Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung.

Still, even with this looming over it, the preview days were a limited period when it actually could be about the exhibition itself. Taring Padi didn't happen until the opening day. So much of the preview felt like sets for the programming and activations—though that's not the right word—that would later unfold. You visited quite a bit later. How was your experience?

**CW:** For all the praise for the decolonial implications of Enwezor's Documenta, there wasn't a non-Western artistic director again until this year (twenty years later!)—though for Documenta 14, artistic director Adam Szymczyk oversaw a large, fairly diverse team of curators. That edition was similarly shaped by open letters and publicly aired fractures between officials and curators. The program ran on \$8 million deficit, which, the German publication *HNA* reported, *threatened the future* of the quinquennial. Then the curatorial team [wrote an open letter to HNA](#), arguing that the real problem was that Documenta officials wanted to scale up the event (this iteration, in 2017, was held in both Kassel and Athens) without properly supporting it. The curators wrote that they "denounce the exploitative model under which the stakeholders of documenta wish the 'most important exhibition of the world' to be produced."

**RA:** Is that what's happening here? Is Documenta no longer the most important exhibition in the world? The world has changed so much in the last nearly seventy years, and what was once "the art world" has become several art worlds that do not overlap except in name, and that feels like what we saw here. Perhaps it's time. Also, apropos of nothing, I find this move of open letters so very strange. You have this feeling of different groups speaking not to but past each other, turning to face the camera like they're breaking a fourth wall.

**CW:** Although it also feels like an act of desperation on the curators' part. In the September 10 [open letter](#) from Kassel, titled, "We are angry, we are sad, we are tired, we are united: Letter from lumpung community," the collective "we" say they have tried multiple times to be heard by Documenta officials. The letter actually, in a way, answers that question you pose, about Documenta's role and "the important exhibition. It responds to a preliminary report by a panel appointed by Documenta's supervisory board, which found that the curatorial approach "allowed an anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli mood to prevail." The collective rejects this finding as conscious and racist in its conflation of criticism of Zionism with anti-Semitism, and argues that it pits one oppressed community against each other—while ignoring the reality of anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian racism. Then the letter describes the lumpung model as something that existed before Documenta and exists beyond it. In other words, it does not need the institution of "Documenta," the "most important exhibition," to validate its existence.

I thought Skye Arunthall Thomas's piece for *Art Agenda* did a good job of [showing the curatorial model](#) as part of something bigger—specifically, how community networks across the Global South have already been redistributing funds and resources to meet needs while also challenging oppressive structures.



Als Resistans | Ghetto Biennale, "The Big Chair von Joe Winter, 3," Ghetto Biennale, 2013, Port-au-Prince. Photo: Multiversal Services / Lazaros.

**RA:** Speaking of which, I also loved Abhijit Tolo and Pujita Guha for Forest Curriculum at *Artforum*, [pointing to a line](#) in one of those snaking timelines on a mural in the basement of nuruhaus. "Documenta is invited to join the ruangrupa ecosystem." And also: "Lumbung, then, thought of as method rather than theme, proposes a refreshingly uncynical inquiry into an aesthetics of redistribution, one informed by both the strategies and the failures of generations of institutional critique."

Who curators are accountable to: indeed, Arts Collaboratory's method of accounting, in which collectives [report to one another](#) rather than to a central organizational body, finds reflection in the overall structure that ruangrupa produce and therefore in the mural as well. We see a form of public accounting, where the distribution of funding at various stages is clearly laid out.

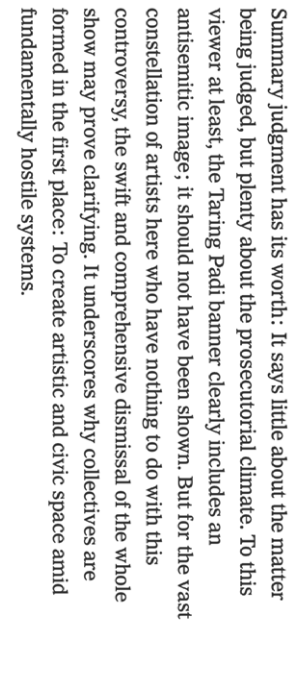
**CW:** So good! I think again of Weizman, who wrote that "the whole arrangement was irrelevant, non-hierarchical, a much needed corrective." I still feel like the controversy and a close-minded, or at least cagey, framing of the exhibition dominated the press too much. But there were so many carefully wrought perspectives like this one, which excised from the controversy hopeful possibilities. Yet where will those possibilities live in the future?

In Documenta Halle, stacked next to the big communal printing press, I saw a broadsheet that read "Grateful to be part of the last Documenta." And while I doubt Documenta will actually end in five years, I don't doubt that it could turn toward conservatism, which would erode its relevance. I always fall back on a version of the same thought: that we can't rely on existing institutions to build another art world.



Documenta Fifteen formulated an apology letter through the media in the name of Documenta and Ruangrupa after one of the artists (not part of the collective) participated at the festival with an art work that was critiqued to be antisemitic.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/24/arts/design/documenta-review.html>



<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/24/arts/design/documenta-review.html>



Dear Christian Geselle, Angela Dorn, Susanne Völker, Claudia Roth, the Supervisory Board and the Shareholders of documenta,

**We are angry, we are sad, we are tired, we are united.**

We have tried our best to stay above the chaos, hostility, racism and censorship that have engulfed this edition of documenta. We have tried our best to stay focused and committed to our work and the promises and hopes of the lumpung. We have been resilient and in solidarity with our communities, friends, supporters, hosts and guests.

But then Ruangrupa also wrote a second apology letter: representing their opinion and critiquing the handling of the topic by Documenta Fifteen. They were angry, they were sad, they were tired and they were united. The letter expresses frustration and rejection of the first apology letter regarding the Documenta art exhibition by the institution of Documenta. It claims the letter unfairly accuses the exhibition of promoting anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli sentiments without evidence. The letter emphasizes solidarity among marginalized communities, rejects the letter's approach as unscientific and divisive, and asserts a commitment to inclusivity and resilience. They refuse to be defined or controlled by an institution. This was their way to speak their voice in a sea full of media publications.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/24/arts/design/documenta-review.html>





CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

# Documenta Was a Whole Vibe. Then a Scandal Killed the Buzz.

Accusations that an image was antisemitic broke the mood at a daring festival of experiments. This year's Documenta deserves a closer look, our critic says.

Share full article



## Speech by Ade Darmawan (ruangrupa) in the Committee on Culture and Media, German Bundestag, July 6, 2022

Dear members of the Bundestag,

my name is Ade Darmawan, and today I'm addressing you as part of ruangrupa.

Let me start with a brief comment about history. In 1955, Arnold Bode established documenta in Kassel, Germany, to heal the wounds of the Second World War. A few months before, in that same year, a group of leaders collectively laid the ground for what would be known as the Non Aligned Movement, in Bandung, Indonesia, discussing a way forward independent from and built on the wounds of the colonial powers. I feel the need to retell these historical facts because histories can show us how the world imagined how to deal with atrocities and deep wounds at the same time but differently.

These differences now come closer to each other in documenta fifteen. We had a great and joyful opening week. While the journey to the opening was full of unforeseen challenges, the corona pandemic being one, we are proud of what we, our partners and collaborators have achieved.

An extra, unexpected challenge presented itself six months ago. Unfounded accusations of antisemitism against us were made in an individual's blog and taken unquestioningly over by the mainstream media. The pressure on us to prove a negative – that we are not antisemitic – has been relentless since that moment. Throughout this additional crisis, it was our hope that with the opening of documenta fifteen, it would become possible and sufficient for our collective work to speak for itself about our intentions. This is apparently not the case. Nevertheless, we hope this meeting today can be a chance to speak truth, and move towards mutual understanding and learning.

I would like to continue by speaking about the two subjects here: the work “People's Justice” by

Seven skinny cows gobble seven fat ones. They sequentially appear in your dream. Seven dry wheat stalks and seven wet wheat stems emerge. You are awake. Your mind is struck by the dream's address. You have a hunch that it is a sign, perhaps a message from the universe? The increasing confusion leads you to search for the meaning of the dream. You need an interpreter, and the news is quickly spreading throughout the kingdom.

In the kingdom is a prison. Here a handsome young man is incarcerated because of a false accusation. The prisoner has an unusual skill. He understands the language of dreams, and is precisely the person you need. You invite the young man to the palace. You ask him for advice. He says, “Seven years of difficult times are coming, O King.” The man not only interprets the dream, he also explains what you must do: “Save enough supplies to get through the coming seven years of famine.”

Believing the prisoner's advice, you announce it to your people. You order them to build a store house that can stockpile enough grain to face the coming famine. Afterwards, your actions are eternally recorded in the stories and sermons of the Abrahamic religions. You are an Egyptian King, and the dream interpreter is Joseph the prophet. Centuries later, this practice of saving enough provisions to face uncertainty is found in many world cultures.

Perhaps it is indeed destined by fate that humans grow through a series of adversities in the course of their lives. Births and deaths come and go, as well as disasters, wars, famines, and epidemics that emerge at any time, seemingly without warning. It's like when we hear about the rotting of potatoes on a plantation and the presence of hunger that changes the face of Ireland.


Since ancient times, humans have had the ability to learn from tragedy, from nightmares, from bitter experiences, from distress, from famine, and they have constantly searched out ways to prepare themselves. A crisis became the catalyst for understanding stockpiling as a method of surviving what the unknown days ahead might bring.

In Indonesia, miles away from Egypt, people also practice this long tradition. They live collectively and grow crops on fertile ground. There are thousands of islands, languages, and cultures, but all are familiar with lumbung, a storage building made of wood and sago palm, ingeniously designed to allow air flow that keeps the grain dry. From month to month, crops are stockpiled for collective use.

However, lumbung is not only an architecture for grain storage. It is also a spirit and a way of living that is revealed in your day-to-day life. From the granary, ceremonies, parties, art, tales and stories emerge. lumbung is a place to gather and share. You may have problems to solve, or you may be celebrating the harvest, partying and performing rituals together.

**lumbung** is one of the points where culture manifests itself.






PDF

Emergency Red List – Egypt




PDF

Emergency Red List – Iraq (2003)




PDF

Emergency Red List – Yemen




PDF

Red List – Africa




PDF

Red List – Central America and Mexico




PDF

Red List – Central America and Mexico



PDF

Red List – Dominican Republic




PDF

Red List – South East Europe



PDF

Emergency Red List – Haiti



PDF

Emergency Red List – Libya



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Emergency Red List – Ukraine



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Red List – Brazil



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Red List – China




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Red List – China




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Red List – Latin America




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Red List – West Africa




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Emergency Red List – Iraq




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Emergency Red List – Syria




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Red List – Afghanistan



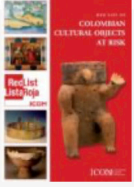
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Red List – Cambodia



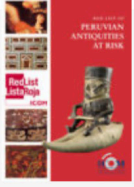
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Red List – Colombia



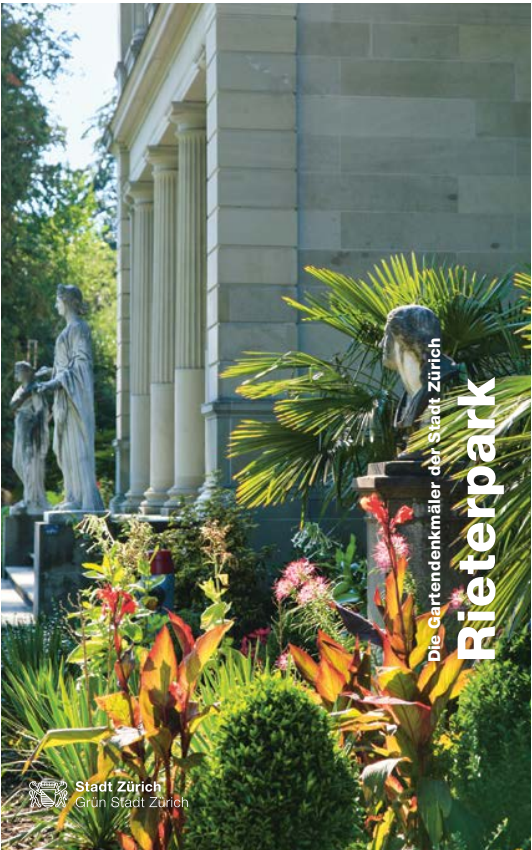
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Red List – Colombia



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Red List – Peru





6. Abschnitt: Übertragung von Kulturgut

Art. 15 Übertragung an Institutionen des Bundes

- Institutionen des Bundes dürfen keine Kulturgüter erwerben oder ausstellen, die:**
- a. **gestohlen** worden sind, gegen den Willen der Eigentümerin oder des Eigentümers abhanden gekommen sind oder **rechtswidrig ausgegraben** worden sind;
  - b. **Teil des kulturellen Erbes eines Staates sind und rechtswidrig aus diesem ausgeführt worden sind.**

<sup>2</sup> Die Institutionen des Bundes, denen solche Güter angeboten werden, benachrichtigen unverzüglich die Fachstelle.

Art. 16 Sorgfaltspflichten

<sup>1</sup> Im Kunsthandel und im Auktionswesen darf Kulturgut nur übertragen werden, wenn die übertragende Person nach den Umständen annehmen darf, dass das Kulturgut:

- a. nicht gestohlen worden ist, nicht gegen den Willen der Eigentümerin oder des Eigentümers abhanden gekommen ist und nicht rechtswidrig ausgegraben worden ist;
- b. nicht rechtswidrig eingeführt worden ist.

<sup>2</sup> Die im Kunsthandel und im Auktionswesen tätigen Personen sind verpflichtet:

- a. die Identität der einliefernden Personen oder der Verkäuferin oder des Verkäufers festzustellen und von diesen eine schriftliche Erklärung über deren Verfügungsberechtigung über das Kulturgut zu verlangen;
- b. ihre Kundschaft über bestehende Ein- und Ausfuhrregelungen von Vertragsstaaten zu unterrichten;
- c. über die Beschaffung von Kulturgut Buch zu führen und namentlich den Ursprung des Kulturgutes, soweit er bekannt ist, und den Namen und die Adresse der einliefernden Person oder der Verkäuferin oder des Verkäufers, die Beschreibung sowie den Ankaufspreis des Kulturguts aufzuzeichnen;
- d. der Fachstelle alle nötigen Auskünfte über die Erfüllung dieser Sorgfaltspflichten zu erteilen.

<sup>3</sup> Die Aufzeichnungen und Belege sind während 30 Jahren aufzubewahren. Artikel 962 Absatz 2 des Obligationenrechts<sup>5</sup> gilt sinngemäss.

Art. 9 Rückföhrungsklagen auf Grund von Vereinbarungen

<sup>1</sup> Wer ein Kulturgut besitzt, das rechtswidrig in die Schweiz eingeföhrt worden ist, kann vom Staat, aus dem das Kulturgut rechtswidrig ausgeführt worden ist, auf Rückföhrung verklagt werden. Der klagende Staat hat insbesondere nachzuweisen, dass das Kulturgut von wesentlicher Bedeutung für sein kulturelles Erbe ist und rechtswidrig eingeföhrt wurde.

<sup>2</sup> Das Gericht kann den Vollzug der Rückföhrung aussetzen, bis das Kulturgut bei einer Rückföhrung nicht mehr gefährdet ist.

<sup>3</sup> Die Kosten der erforderlichen Massnahmen für die Sicherung, Erhaltung und Rückföhrung des Kulturguts trägt der klagende Staat.

<sup>4</sup> Die Rückföhrungsklage des Staats verjährt ein Jahr nachdem seine Behörden Kenntnis erlangt haben wo und bei wem sich das Kulturgut befindet, spätestens jedoch 30 Jahre nachdem das Kulturgut rechtswidrig ausgeführt worden ist.

<sup>5</sup> Wer das Kulturgut in gutem Glauben erworben hat und es zurückgeben muss, hat im Zeitpunkt der Rückföhrung Anspruch auf eine Entschädigung, die sich am Kaufpreis und an den notwendigen und nützlichen Aufwendungen zur Bewahrung und Erhaltung des Kulturguts orientiert.

<sup>6</sup> Die Entschädigung ist vom klagenden Staat zu entrichten. Bis zur Bezahlung der Entschädigung hat die Person, die das Kulturgut zurückgeben muss, ein Retentionsrecht an diesem.

Does museum Rietberg have the right to exhibit objects?  
What is stolen art when looked at it through the lense of the law?  
Kulturgütertransfergesetz KGTG

BIS

Swiss Benin Initiative

Joint Declaration of the Swiss Benin Forum

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

Addressing the Future of the Benin Collections in Swiss Public Museums

We, the participating museums of the Swiss Benin Initiative (BIS), the representatives of His Royal Majesty the Oba of Benin, the Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria, the representative of the Nigerian Embassy to Switzerland, along with Nigerian researchers and artists, have wholeheartedly reached the following agreement on the Benin objects currently in Swiss public museums:

1. The ownership of the objects which were looted or likely to have been looted in 1897 should return to the original owner.
2. The participating museums are open to a transfer of ownership of these objects which could involve repatriation, circulation or loans to Swiss museums.
3. The Benin objects are items of social, religious, historical and aesthetic importance with emotional value.
4. The Benin objects carry histories that need to be told and the public should be informed as to how and why the objects came to be in Swiss museums.
5. The Benin objects can be ambassadors that draw admiration and understanding, show beauty and skills and enhance respect.
6. The Benin objects shall serve education for pupils, students, artists and society in general.
7. The BIS can set an important example for dealing with colonial heritage.

The BIS will pursue its collaborations with the values and commitments presented below:

On the Future of our Collaborations

8. The BIS commits to developing new models of exemplary collaboration that foster sincerity, transparency and restore dignity. These relationships are foreseen as long-term, open engagements that respect the plurality of worldviews and adopt a new relational ethics.
9. As a hub, the BIS will seek to enable multi-level initiatives. This network will connect people with one another and engage communities of origin, the Swiss and Nigerian general public and the diaspora.
10. The artists, guilds and artisans of Benin should be encouraged and enabled, in order that the artistic production of Benin remains alive.
11. We will contribute to the interflow of knowledge, developing joint exhibitions, research and exchanges with museums, universities and art schools.
12. We will explore our entangled and shared histories along with the provenance and circulation of objects, shedding light on museum histories in Nigeria and Switzerland.
13. We will collaborate to improve our shared research on care, conservation and display of Benin heritage. This will enliven objects with renewed interpretation and recognise their value and cultural significance in a way that can be of benefit to the people of Nigeria and Switzerland.
14. As we develop our future collaborations, making new history together, we recognise that the objects are an expression of Benin identity and the Benin people's reverence for the Oba of Benin.

The Swiss Benin Initiative is a method by the Rietberg Museum to tackle the topic of provenance and restitution. They are proud of their achievements and exchange with local people. Shouldn't there be many more projects like this?  
Swiss Benin Forum, CH, 2023



Museum Rietberg: Die Erweiterung, Grazioli und Krischanitz Architekten, Stadt Zürich, Zürich CH, 2007

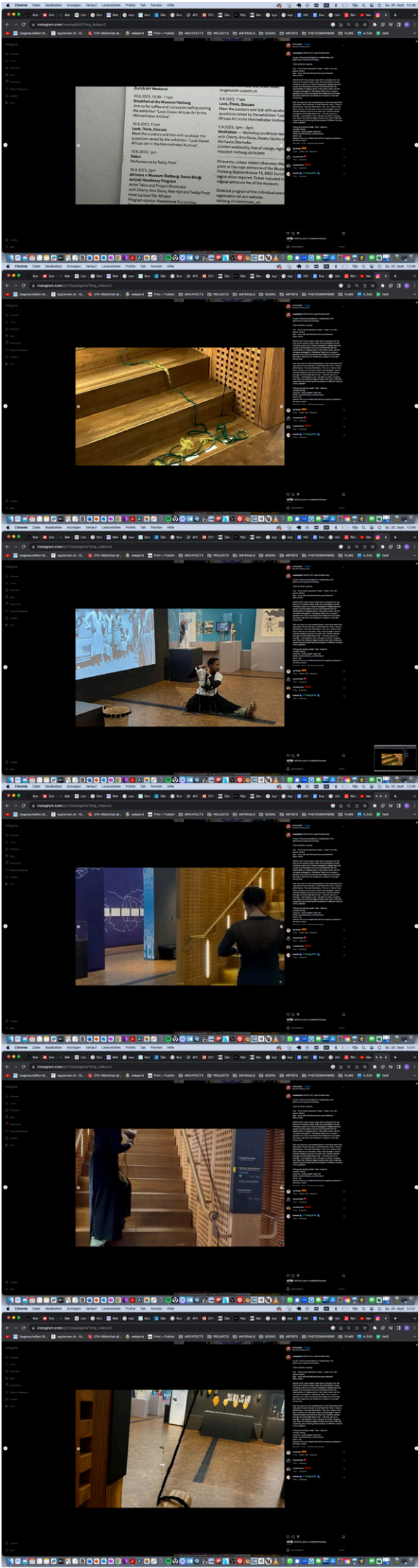




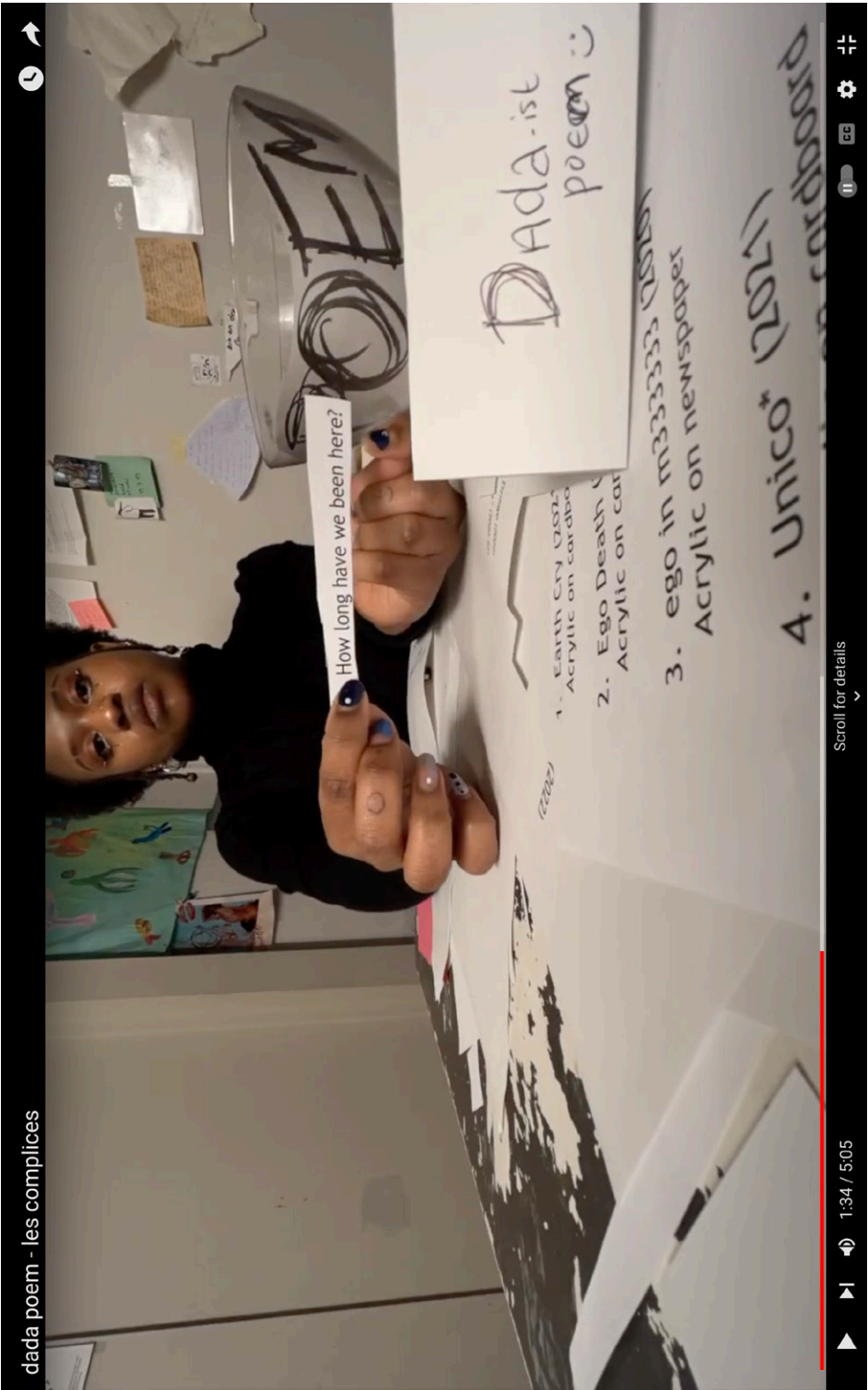
The Vestibule is a vitrine with a performance by New Kyd.

A performance to which only Diasporans were invited to. Using a thread of hair to represent connection, a bridge. I liked how she subtly appropriated the spaces of the museum with a long braid of hair, weaved around the handrails, spilling on the wooden stairs, from the bottom of the exhibition space up until the outside. At the same time, she had a camera on her body filming the viewers, and two other people recording at the same time - multiple layers of perspectives, a subversion, who is being viewed is subverted. She talked to us about how bodies in spaces have a charge. I believe that a lot of times when we walk through a museum, we forget how our bodies also perceive and access art, we are dependent on our vision, on our eyes to see, gaze and access knowledge. How could an architecture accommodate other ways of exhibition, other ways for us to perceive art, not just through our eyes, but also through our other senses.

<https://www.instagram.com/newkyddd3/>



<https://www.instagram.com/newkyddd3/>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=K5l3ffprc4Y>





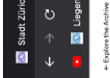
- ☐ We are talking about hundreds of thousands of objects, and no one is demanding the complete return of all objects.
- ☐ Not at all, it's not about that at all. It's about a new ethics of relationships.

- Wir sprechen von hunderttausenden von Objekten, und niemand fordert die vollständige Rückgabe aller Objekte
- Überhaupt nicht, es geht überhaupt gar nicht darum. Es geht um eine neue Ethik der Beziehungen

... vielleicht ist sie heute eine schwangere Frau, vielleicht morgen etwas anderes.  
Der Blick ändert sich auch.  
Deshalb ist es sehr angenehm, sich vorzustellen, dass diese Gegenstände uns beo-  
wachen sind die Gegenstände.  
Sie ist die Figur, die über die Geschichte wacht...

As a result, one must wait until 1899 with the “Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land”, signed at the Hague by 24 sovereign nation-states to make the practice of pillaging and plundering of cultural artifacts during military campaigns an illicit act. Two articles

from section III of the convention (Of military authority concerning the territory of a State enemy) evoke the question: article 46 stipulates that "Family honors and rights, individuals lives, and private property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated." Article 47 stipulates that "Pillaging is formally prohibited." The same convention, renewed in 1907, specifies in article 56 that "The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or willful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings."



Umgang mit sensiblen Inhalten im Archiv Himmelheber

Das aus Objekten, Bildern und Texten bestehende Archiv von Hans Himmelheber entstand in der Kolonialzeit und reicht weit in die nachkoloniale Phase. In seinem Archiv sind wir in unterschiedlicher Weise mit dem N-Wort konfrontiert. Es findet sich in die 1970er Jahre und darüber hinaus in Himmelhebers Briefen, Manuskripten und Veröffentlichungen. Heute verbietet sich der Gebrauch des N-Wortes in jedem Fall. Wir möchten niemandem diesem Wort aussetzen und zitieren es daher in unseren Texten nicht. Lässt es sich wie bei Buchtiteln nicht umgehen, ersetzen wir es durch N.

**Richtlinien zum Fotoarchiv Himmelheber**

Das Fotoarchiv enthält 15'000 Fotografien, die Hans Himmelheber zwischen 1933 und 1976 in der Côte d'Ivoire, Gabun, Kamerun, der Demokratischen Republik Kongo, Liberia, Mexiko, Sudan und den USA aufgenommen hat.

- [illegible]

Wir aktualisieren die Datensätze ständig, ergänzen und verbessern den Inhalt. Wir freuen uns über Ihr Feedback und alle Fragen oder Bedenken, die Sie uns mitteilen möchten. Bitte senden Sie uns eine E-Mail mit Ihren Kommentaren.





**40th day**, Skulptur, 2021, Stoff und Weissleim, 215 x 110 x 99 cm  
**Once You Open the Box**, Ausstellungsansicht, Toni Areal, Zürich, Schweiz

**40th day**

In Sierra Leone glaubt man, dass nach dem Tod eines geliebten Menschen dessen Seele noch auf der Erde herumwandert.

Erst am 40. Tag beginnt die Abreise ins Jenseits und seine Seele verschwindet komplett von der Erde.

An diesem Tag werden für die verstorbene Person verschiedene Gerichte in einem abgeschlossenen Raum angerichtet. Mit diesem Brauch wird der verstorbene Mensch geehrt und seiner Seele eine letzte Beschürung auf Erden bereitet, bevor sie diese verlässt.

In dieser Arbeit befasste ich mich damit, ein Trauerritual aus Sierra Leone anhand von Stoff/Textil zu verbildlichen.

Als Trauertätigkeit bezeichnet man eine Vielzahl unterschiedlicher Handlungen oder Bräuche, die nach dem Tod eines geliebten Menschen Trost spenden und die Erinnerung an den Verstorbenen wachhalten sollen. Manche dieser Rituale werden öffentlich vollzogen, andere im Stillen begangen. Trauertätigkeiten sind ein Teil der Alltagskultur und stark von den vorherrschenden Religionen beeinflusst. Sie unterscheiden sich daher sich von Region zu Region. Weltweit betrachtet, gibt es sogar sehr große Unterschiede zwischen den bekannten und bis heute praktizierten Ritualen.



variety of ritual objects are gathered and displayed (talismans, masks, entire tombs) taken by Catholic and Protestant priests from the African peoples targeted by their attempts at Christian conversions. When these artifacts, that bore witness to an African obscurantism, or, to use the words of a missionary from Lyon, Théodore Chautard – these “vulgar idols [...] misshapen, soaked in palm oil and the blood of their victims”<sup>18</sup> –, when they were not immediately destroyed at the sites themselves, they were transferred on to Europe and displayed as a means for civil education: to display the courage of the Missionaries and the dangers which they exposed themselves to; as a reminder to the public of the importance of the civilizing mission of the Church on the dark African continent. In 1925, the largest missionary exhibit of the century is presented in Rome, the *l'Esposizione missionaria vaticana*, for which we see the mobilization of dozens

Throughout the 1960s in Europe, this subject was completely ignored and no one dared to have the courage to face the situation directly. No truly ambitious negotiations were undertaken concerning the old colonial powers. There was no structured reflection devoted to the role objects of cultural heritage could play in the emancipation of formerly colonized African countries. During the very same time period France was granting independence to a number of nation-states, it nevertheless continued to secure its economic, military, industrial, monetary and even scholarly power over the African continent, and the question concerning the thousands of cultural works that had been transferred from the colonies to French museums never even seemed to be a question worth posing.

But in reality, the question had certainly been posed – and in a much more fervent and intense manner than the voluntary discretion of the authorities would like us to believe. In fact, very early on, while the newly formed young independent African countries were still in the midst of rejoicing in their newfound freedom, the French administration took a variety of measures so as to avoid as much as possible any potential claims on the collections formed in the colonies and to assure the enjoyment and long-term holdings and proprietary rights for France alone. Already in the 1960s, both the African and Oceanic collections and the former museum of the colonies housed in

The connection of colonialisation to missionaries is very interesting. Through the conversion they tried to impose "civilization". This connected to Debasish Borah's comment that restitution comes from the moral conundrum of wanting to resolve the christian guilt, I think is very interesting and yet very raw therefore I would like to learn and to discuss more on this topic.

Colonialisation has created a huge gap between the cultural heritage and the population and has imposed in my opinion a way of nation state into each detail like the institutional structures that has not existed before. Consequently, even after decolonialisation there were big dependencies and no emancipation possibilities whatsoever. This is the concept of exploitation.

The link between the cultural heritage and the emancipation of the population this cultural heritage was taken from is something that has to be looked at simultaneously.

The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics, Felwine Sarr &amp; Bénédicte Savoy





portions of indigenous culture. The text specifies very clearly: “methodically constitute on the spot collections that certainly have a greater value than the price paid for them and which several years down the road it will no longer be possible of enriching the museum with, even with an unlimited backing of financial resources. The exploitation of both the natural wealth as well as the cultural wealth of colonized countries is inseparable. Applied to the translocation of cultural goods, the vocabulary of “collecting” and of “harvesting” only further implies the interconnectedness of the two operations. It also suggests and undeniable cynicism: that after the harvest season, the objects will magically grow back again like fields of wheat. To follow this logic of harvesting is precisely to deny the very principle of culture itself that – in Europe as elsewhere – is generated and regenerated throughout the centuries by way of the transmission, reproduction, adaptation, study – and transformation of knowledge, of forms and objects at the heart of society. Certainly, European cultures have benefitted from the input they’ve acquired from these remote objects that will soon become integrated into the Western repertoire. But their massive departure and then their rather long absence from the countries affected by this violence, has also left a legacy that is just as important, even though it is much more difficult to measure (since its effects are derived from an absence) than the spectacular cultural production that they sparked in Europe (from Picasso to the Surrealists via the German Expressionists).

A half-century after African nations gained their independence, the question concerning cultural heritage restitutions still seems stuck within a dual temporality: on the one hand, within a temporality of those who continue to wait and are filled with resignation, and on the other hand, within a temporality of those with the confidence to think that they will finally be able to confer to others, after a great many decades, the feeling of ownership, scientific legitimacy, and the proper services rendered to the cultural heritage of humanity. Both of these temporalities seem to converge around the same point: both temporalities seemed to have generated a sense of institutional numbing. Among our interlocutors, above all in France, it has often been said that our present work around restitutions was a “mission impossible”. In April 2018, Oswald Homécky, the young minister of Culture and Sports in Benin, confided to us that from his position, at Cotonou, if one day France truly restituted Africa’s cultural heritage items back to Africa it would be akin to “the fall of the Berlin Wall or the reunification of North and South Korea.”

and their inalienability and inaccessibility. Within the framework of our mission, we have chosen to provide the following definition for the expression “temporary restitutions”, as it appears in the mission letter: a transitory solution, allowing for the proper time to create the juridical dispositives allowing and assuring the definitive return, without any other stipulations or conditions, of cultural heritage objects of sub-Saharan Africa back onto the African continent.

Here the term harvesting is used in an entirely different context than Ruangrupa used this word. This again underlines the concept of the Gesprächsraum/Wortraum, the multi-perspectivity and the power of the collective. Here it is about exploitation and profit, about steeling and owning. This goes hand in hand with the idea of value as inherently western construct that Debasish Borah was talking about. Restitution insinuates if done poorly, that there should still exist something like the original but like this text already discribes: cultures evolve with or without the objects.

institutional numbing

The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics, Felwine Sarr & Bénédicte Savoy

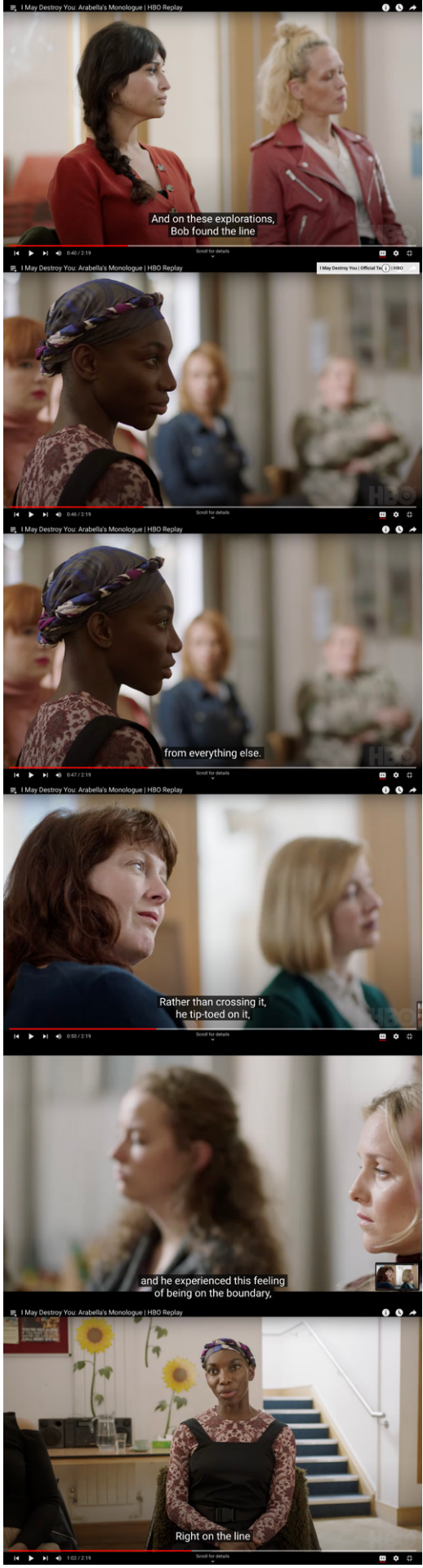




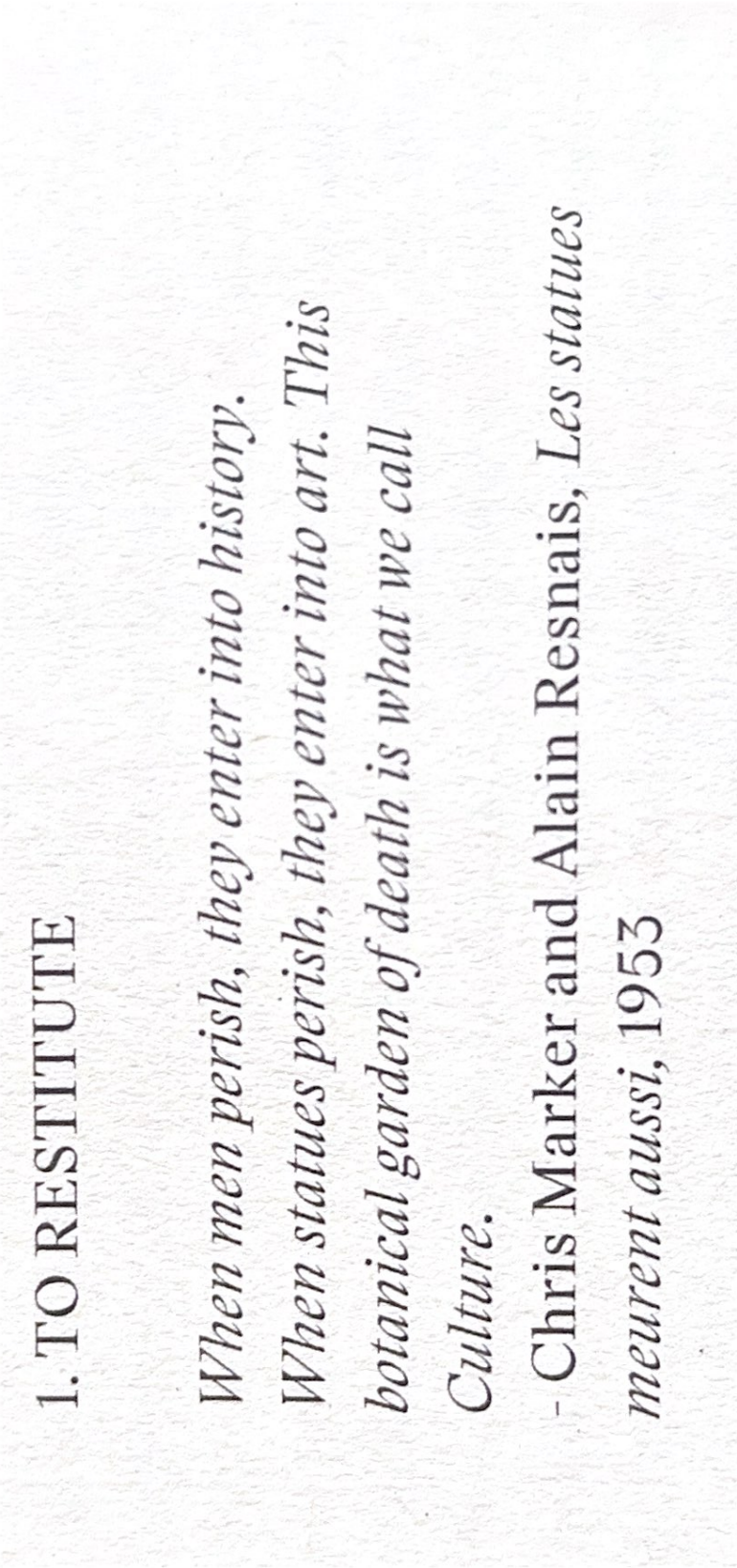
robert vallois  
jean baptist bedaux  
joe mullholland  
mark walker

JAN 22ND - EPISODE 8 - SALMON PAGES 21.11.19

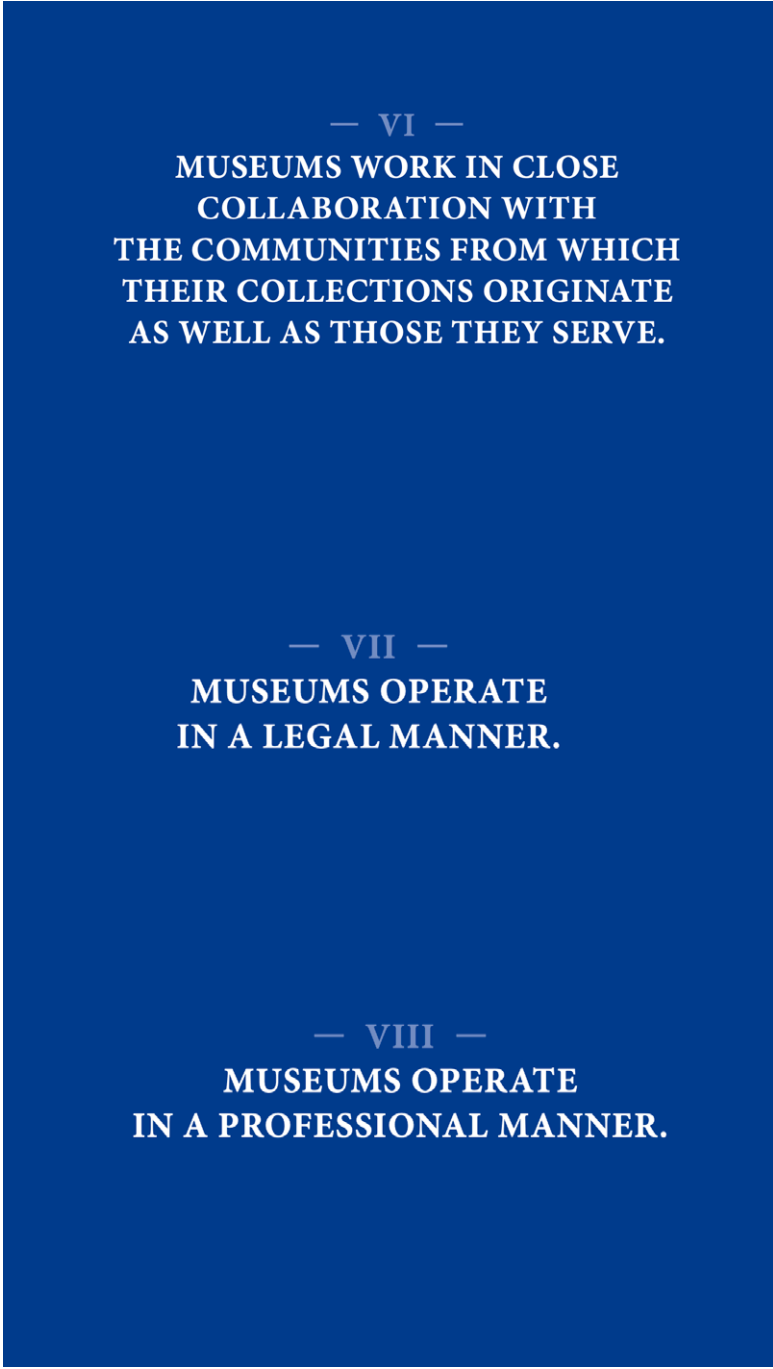
ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
Bob does think you're crazy. He  
thinks it's all a little uncalled  
for, and this personal thing is  
going too far. And he's very  
confident in his view, because he's  
gone exploring to see what  
boundaries and violations women  
might be banging on about because  
Bob's thorough. On his travels  
through boundaries and borders, he  
found the line that separated him,  
from everything else. He looked at  
the line in detail, and tiptoed on  
it, and Bob experienced the feeling  
of being on the border, boundary,  
right on the line; of being neither  
in one place, or another, neither  
one thing or the other, and saw how  
in this grey, where nothing is  
quite clear, no one can be...  
clear, we can't articulate, we  
fuddle our words we can't pinpoint  
exactly what it is. So yeah, Bob  
thinks you're crazy, Bob thinks  
he's the smartest man in the room  
who knoweth all things because he's  
observed the details. We have to  
start observing Bob, and telling  
him we too see the detail; We see  
you Bob, and if we see you it means  
we're with you, tiptoeing in the  
line right behind you, and in that  
place where rules, clarity, law,  
and separation cease to exist we  
will explain exactly what we mean,  
by violation.



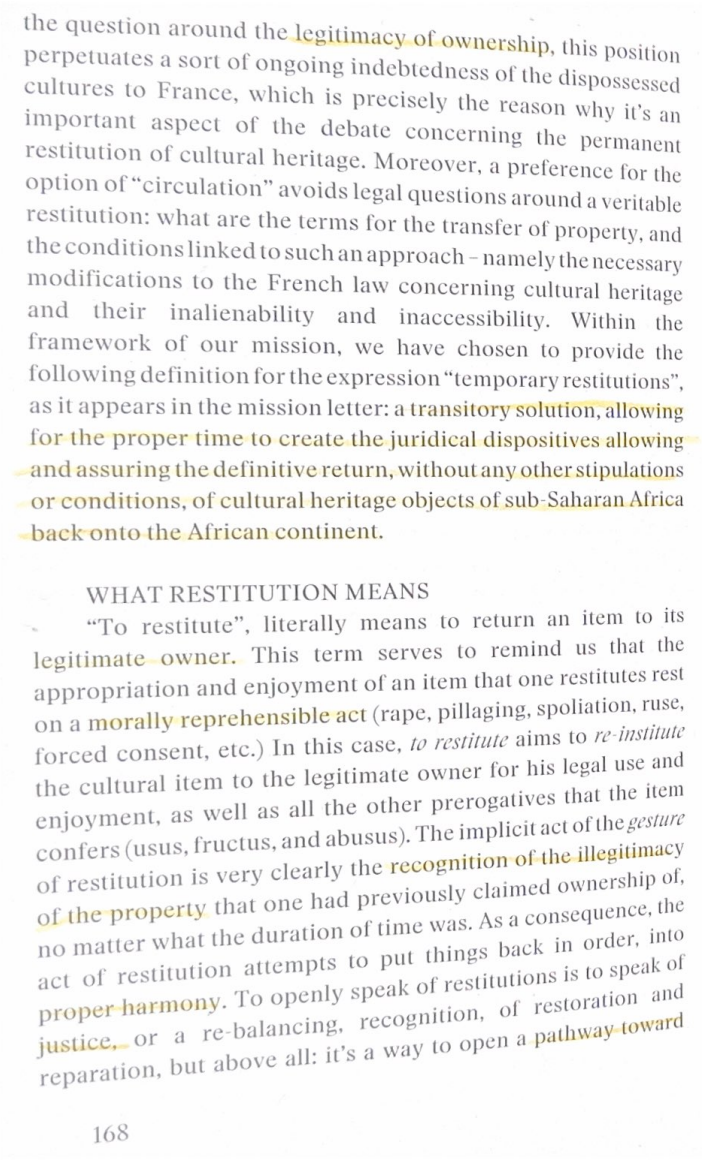




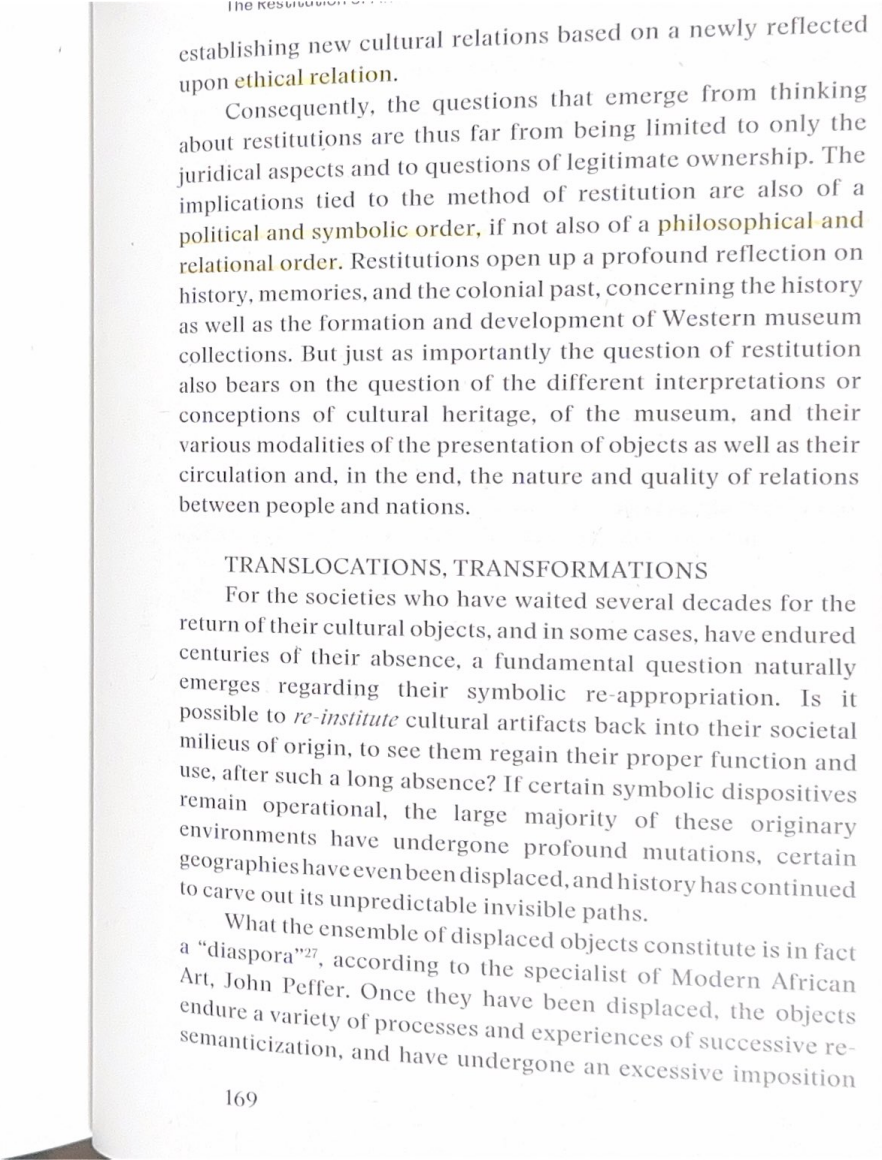
Restitution.  
The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics, Felwine Sarr & Bénédicte Savoy



It laughed a little when I read the ICOM Code of Ethics for the first time.  
ICOM Code of Ethics



In my opinioin this text from Sarr and Savoye reflects deeply upon the topic of restitution in a dialectic manner.  
The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics, Felwine Sarr & Bénédicte Savoy

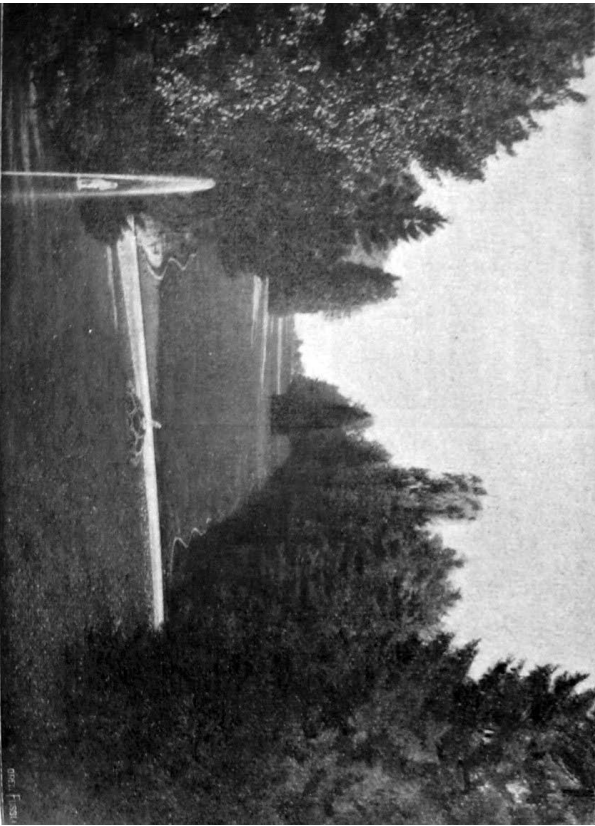






Theodor and Otto Froebel were gardeners in Zurich planting and planning almost all known gardens, parks and even the lake promenade. They were known for importing and trading exotic plants

An den Wurzeln der Profession. Die Zürcher Kunst- und Handlungsgärtner Theodor Froebel und Otto Froebel, Claudia Moll Simon Dissertation ETH Zürich, Zürich CH, 2015



An den Wurzeln der Profession. Die Zürcher Kunst- und Handlungsgärtner Theodor Froebel und Otto Froebel, Claudia Moll Simon Dissertation ETH Zürich, Zürich CH, 2015

The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics

Felwine Sarr & Bénédicte Savoy

Paris, France: Philippe Rey/Seuil, 2018, pp. 1-24.

I always took this text as the only right solution. In a way it turned when Debasish said, that receiving institutions of restituted art and artifacts are themselves elite-run “photocopies” of Western colonial forms. To restitute can be an approach but it does not solve the problem conclusively.

Yes i was a little bit ashamed at first that I never thought about it

I did briefly wonder about that, when I read it, but then put the thought quickly away, because who was I to judge whether their museums wouldn't just be the same as ours, if I don't even know what to think about my own museum... but the reality must be the same for all museums.... they just aren't spaces for the whole public, they won't be accessible to all and will mostly remain elitist spaces... So when Debasish mentioned it, it was like a epiphany - no, don't just be ashamed and hide your intuition away, dig deep into it, articulate and discuss it with others

The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics, Felwine Sarr & Bénédicte Savoy



This is a document from 1866 that must have been a copy from the original plan of the park by Theodor and Otto Froebel.

Topiaria helvetica : Jahrbuch, Claudia Moll Simon, Zürich CH, 2012



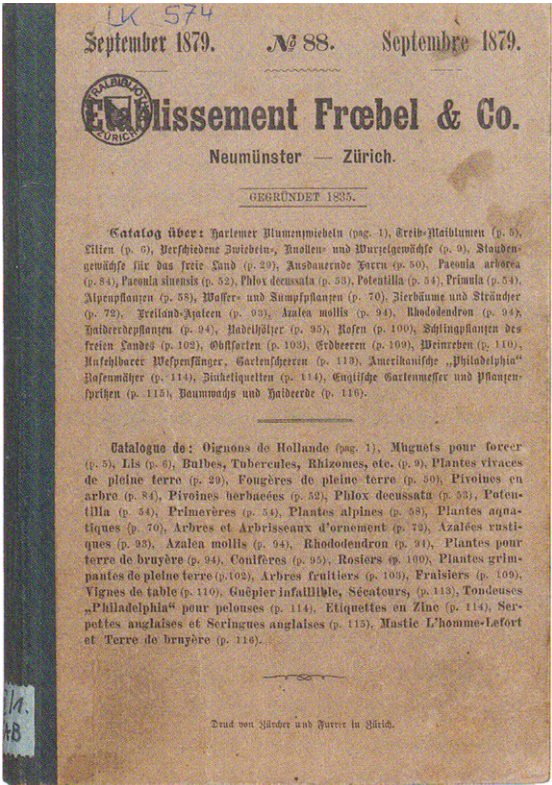


Abb. 3: Anthurium-Scherzerianum-Varietäten, Otto Froebel, Generalkatalog No. 124, 1899, S. 10, 11.

ist. Das zweite vorliegende Kompendium, das «Collectionsbuch für Stauden- und Gruppenpflanzen», datiert von 1874, verzeichnet Eingänge zwischen 1868 und 1911: Rund 50 Stauden, Kleinsträucher und Topfpflanzen mit den jeweils dazugehörigen Arten und Sorten sind darin aufgeführt.

Das aufgelistete Sortiment entspricht in etwa dem damals gängigen Angebot von Handelsgärtnereien und ist keine Sammlung ausgewählter Raritäten. Nur einzelne Pflanzen stechen hervor, so bei den Gehölzen der aus Nordamerika stammende Kleinobstbaum *Anona triloba* (heute *Asimina triloba*, zu deutsch Dreilappiger Papau oder Indianerbanane), der bis heute wenig verbreitet ist.<sup>16</sup> Was jedoch überrascht, ist die grosse Arten- und Sortenvielfalt der Handelsgärtnerei. So sind beispielsweise 88 Arten und Sorten der Gattung Ahorn, 33 Arten und

Sorten Ceanothus oder 29 Arten und Sorten Liguster im Buch zum Sortiment der Baumschule aufgelistet.<sup>17</sup> Von der Gattung Clematis führte die Firma 132 Arten und Sorten und listet gar knapp 600 Rosenarten und -sorten auf. Für die Vielfältigkeit der letzteren beiden Gattungen war sehr wahrscheinlich der 1884 in den Betrieb eingestiegene Obergärtner Stephan Ölbrich mit verantwortlich, der ein ausgewiesener Rosen- und Clematisspezialist war.<sup>18</sup> Vor allem bei den Obstbäumen beeindruckt die im Collectionsbuch aufgelistete, überwältigende Diversität: Unter anderem sind 235 Birnenarten und -sorten, 213 Äpfelarten und -sorten und 60 Pflaumenarten und -sorten verzeichnet.

Im «Collectionsbuch für Stauden- und Gruppenpflanzen» erstaunen vor allem die grosse Diversität von Warmhauspflanzen wie *Caladium* (70 Arten und Sorten)



English landscape garden, there are axes, but they have been shaken a little. Again and again you are surprised with new views, sights and moments.

The english Landscape garden at Rietberg is in a way very pragmatic. It's not too much

Topiaria helvetica : Jahrbuch, Claudia Moll Simon, Zürich CH, 2012



This zine is not made with anger, on the contrary, it is made with love, love for museums and their purpose of being, the *raison d'être*. When something I love is broken, I try to repair, give it a new life, this zine is an attempt to give a new life to the sick museum, the dying museum. Jalal Al-I Ahmad speaks of Occidentosis, a disease which originated in global north and how it infected social lives, economy and politics of the global south; I think museums are the first victims of Occidentosis, this zine is an attempt to cure, rather an offer to heal from the disease.



lie to me like one of your French museums

Maybe museum Institutions are ashamed of their colonial past and its legacy, you want to rush towards decolonisation, asking all of us to ‘forget’ and move ahead.

However, quoting Milan Kundera- “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”, in this context remembering is what all I have, intangible memories of my being, my ancestor’s being.

Maybe museum Institutions are ashamed of their colonial past and its legacy, you want to rush towards decolonisation, asking all of us to ‘forget’ and move ahead.

However, quoting Milan Kundera- “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”, in this context remembering is what all I have, intangible memories of my being, my ancestor’s being.

Remembering is a political act.

Jalal Al-I Ahmad says- “as an Asian or an African I am supposed to preserve my manners, my culture, religion, music and so forth untouched, like an unearthen relic, so that the gentleman can find and excavate them, so they can display them in a museum and say- yes, another example of primitive life!”

What you don’t know is that I lied at your face, I have been lying, I have been giving you what you wanted, I buried the dead remains of my superficial being for you to ‘discover’. You museumified everything we had, even our bodies, however, you couldn’t museumify our stories; stories told in my native tongue, our stories are like the fireflies which you couldn’t catch, and they hid in their secret abodes, our stories are alive with these fireflies. You think you museumified our lives? No, you museumified our fake external appearances, you museumified the lies we told you while secretly preserving our memories in those secret abodes of the fireflies.

The western museum is restituting museum objects to an Institution which is built by the coloniser, like I stated previously, brick-and-mortar colonial buildings converted into museums. This restitution is not only counter-productive but dangerous; the urban elite of global south learned to use the museum Institution as a tool of oppression; from their western counterparts, they learned to use it as a tool of ‘othering’. Now with the newly acquired objects, the museum Institutions of the global south will not only use them as a medium of populist pre-colonial cultural purity propaganda pushing the marginalised further, but they will also use them as trophies to prove the success of post-colonial nation building. Susan Ashley says that nationalism is a great achievement of capitalism, where with the consent of the masses, the interests and identity of a dominant culture are established, and museums contribute to achieving so.

I think you should keep the objects with yourself, suspend them inside your glass boxes, hang your head in shame each time you see them as trophies of your violent colonial conquests. It will help us expose the hypocritical ‘civilisational’ discourses you propagate, it will help us understand the garden of Europe and the jungle outside it, like Josep Borrell, the EU foreign-policy chief said on the floor of the European parliament in 2022.

Let’s start with the word; museum, with a Greek etymology as a site of the ‘muse’, we started by separating the Institution from our lives, the word is removed from our lived experiences and elevated on a pedestal; if us, Asians, Africans, South Americans have to start building a new ‘machine’ for memories, we can’t afford to start at a higher pedestal, as Ahmed said we will make the same mistakes the west did. We have to find words in our vernacular tongue, languages we speak with our parents and children, in the languages we dream.

bell hooks said we can’t speak in the same language with the coloniser and the colonised.

In my mother tongue Assamese, the word for museum is জাদুঘৰ, Jadughor- literally translating to ‘house of magic’, what does it tell us about the imagination of museums as seen from Zomia, the land of the ungoverned? My native language has a particular word for museum, not only particular, rather specific and transcendental; understanding jadughor and its meanings within Assamese society has the agency to help you, help the sick museum to re-imagine its association with memory. Imagining museums as Jadughor the ‘house of magic’ makes them humane, it instantly breaks down the conceived and perceived Institutional proportions and offer us the ability to interact with museums as lived spaces. It infuses child-like curiosity and museum discourses move away from ‘civilisational’ and ‘nationalist’ agendas and interact with deep human emotions of wonder, joy, and unknown fascinations.

Debasish Borah is a visual artist working with mediums of photography, video, performance, and publishing. He was born and brought up in the fringes of the Indian nation-state; in Arunachal Pradesh. In his research and practice, he attempts to understand Imperial frontier-making and political modernity in North-east India. His practice is an attempt to acknowledge and curate the flux in epistemic authority of cultural memory between locality and nationality. His works often include mundane micro-histories, found objects, and self-made photography and video.

After graduating from CEPT University Ahmedabad, India with a Master’s degree in architecture history, theory, and design in 2013, he co-founded Farside Collective, a project space focusing on photography in Leh, Indian Himalayas. He is also the co-founder of Art Book Depot, India’s first independently organized art book festival. Debasish Borahl joined the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture at ETH Zurich in 2022 as a doctoral fellow.

What is behind the provocative claim seen in the loving zine you created about museum: there is no post-colonialism?

The institutional museum we know today did not change over time and even you consider it a fiction that it became more inclusive since decolonisation. Why do museums fail to be more inclusive and self-reflexive?

You propose an approach towards this issue, you call it the “non-museum”, a kind of counterproposal. Non-museums are places of cultural memory-making, outside of the traditional western art-world and the canonical knowledge production. In the exhibition “unbeautiful museums” a few months ago you showed a non-museum, it was a replica of the small photostudios found in many grocery stores in India. Given your counterproposal of the non-museums, we ask ourselves: is the museum as we know it today obsolete?

You draw attention to a very particular way of how, probably most of us, physically act and move in a museum - devotional poses, being immersed, the alternation between closeness and distance in front of an artwork, taking one’s time, creeping around lost in thought. Can you tell us more about this code of western museum-going?

But then you do something very interesting: you take this way of moving and acting, but you transfer it to an environment unusual for this type of behavior - the non-museums, for example the IKEA, as we saw on your instagram or the photostudio in the unbeautiful museums exhibition. It seems like a performative translation. Do you see this performative act as a step towards a transition from a museum to a non-museum, or is it more of a critique on western museum practice?

tion work to start the process of transition from museum to non-museum?

In your instagram post about IKEA you write “contact me for a guided tour”. It could be really interesting to collect the non-museums in a way and formulate some kind of guides for them, so that maybe people really start to visit non-museums as you practice it. Are you collecting/planning to collect non-museums? In many texts concerning the museal decolonisation, restitution is often displayed as the desirable goal, even the solution, as we can read it in Bénédicte Savoy and Felwine Sarra’s text “The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage” for example. You point to the problem that the receiving institutions of restituted objects are themselves elite-run “photocopies” of western colonial forms. What are your views on Restitution?

What role does Architecture play in all this? And where do you see the role of the architect in this whole topic?

You quote Milan Kundera- “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”. What is the role of museums in this? Are museums contributing to a culture of forgetting or memory?

Museums are like amusement parks, great for a day trip, amazing to cool down in the large, centralised air-conditioned halls in a hot day, drink the overpriced café americanos, but museums are not a place of memory. What are Museums then? Can and should memory ever be institutionalised? The encounter with the Meebu shows very convincingly that it is impossible to museumify certain things. What are your thoughts about the collections at Museum Rietberg in this respect? What are those things even doing in a museum?

The western museum is lying that the object is sent back to its place of origin, you don’t know what the place of origin is, your allies at the former colonies don’t know the place of origin, it is untraceable. We want to look more closely at the notion of intractability. A whole scene of Provenance has emerged to do exactly that trace the history of the objects back to their legitimate owners. Do you think this kind of research is in vain? What would intractability imply?

Have we considered the possibility that such ‘objects’ might be after all not important for the society it belongs to? Maybe such objects are made, destroyed, and remade over and over again, can we consider the possibility that the objects western museums hold are

worthless for the societies it belongs to? Can we say that the western museums have museumified the touristic contact they had with such societies and these museum objects are physical manifestations of such touristic contacts; are museum objects souvenirs? What you say here is certainly thinkable but it might also be the other way round or not? Doesn’t that imply a huge importance for provenance research?

In my mother tongue Assamese, we have an expression that when you can’t solve a problem just cover it under a basket, this is what I see of the whole restitution politics. Asking difficult question makes you uncomfortable, museum as a ‘civilisational story telling machine’ falls apart, so you ignore, you lie that you don’t understand the complexity of ‘other’ cultures. At the same time you cannot pretend to understand everything. What would you expect of a Museum like Rietberg, what could be an approach of dealing with a collecting such as theirs?

You argue that the cure of the colonial disease of museums lies in the marginal places, far away from urban cores, places where people live their mundane lives running mundane chores; museums must go there, talk to the working class, the farmers and the marginalised. Talk to them about what? What role can Museums even play in the margins?

In this context, I would like to ask how do we, the former colonised, ‘build’ museums which are ‘ours’? But why build Museums in the first place?

You talk about the Assamese word for museum Jadughor which translates to ‘house of magic’ Did museums exist in Assamese society prior to colonisation? What were or are they like?

The institutional museum we know today did not change over time and even you consider it a fiction that it became more inclusive since decolonisation. Why do museums fail to be more inclusive and self-reflexive?

How does your work in archiving differ from the photographic collection at Museum Rietberg?

Are you aware of Ruangrupas work? Where do you locate them in all of this?

Can you recommend books to read, things to listen to or watch? You can also send us a list if you want.

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His practice is an attempt to acknowledge and curate the flux in epistemic authority of cultural memory between locality and nationality. His works often include mundane micro-histories, found objects, and self-made photography and video. After graduating from CEPT University Ahmedabad, India with a Master’s degree in architecture history, theory, and design in 2013, he co-founded Farside Collective, a project space focusing on photography in Leh, Indian Himalayas. He is also the co-founder of Art Book Depot, India’s first independently organized art book festival. Debasish Borahl joined the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture at ETH Zurich in 2022 as a doctoral fellow.



So tell me what can I do - we have one and a half hours. At three I have a Zoom Meeting... But one and a half hours is more than enough time. So, tell me what do you want from me? How can I help you?

The idea is to share a bit of what we're interested in and then we also have prepared some questions and we'll try to ask them at some point.

Okay, okay.

Okay, so, we have the task this semester to work on the museum Rietberg in the context of a collective of artists that's called Ruangrupa. And now for the first phase, until the middle of October, will be to do research through the lens of this artist group. Now we're researching a lot about different topics of interest, about restitution, about institutions in general, museums, about the topic of colonization and decolonization. Always looking at the museum Rietberg and its collections. So, the interest for us, in this conversation, will be to focus on the more colonial or postcolonial words and topics. Learning your take on that and the connection to museums.

Your zine was great for that because it basically laid out all the questions already in front of us, which we are also researching about.

I wrote that text last year in October, November, I think. And the next three years will be an attempt to answer some of the questions in my PhD, actually.

So it was at the beginning of your time here at ETH.

It was the beginning. I came last year around September. I wrote it for an GTA exhibition called "Unbeautiful museums". Can you also tell me about this artist group who is relevant in this scenario?

Ruangrupa is an artist group from Indonesia. They're not doing art pieces for themselves but use their way of working as a collective as an artwork itself. They do a lot of festivals where the interest lies in finding new ways of presenting art, and start building a dialogue with the goal to make the viewer obsolete. Viewers should become active participants of the artwork and not just a passive onlooker.

Okay. Okay. Okay. So, it's more to do with exhibition making, curation and organization.

Let's start with the first question. In our eyes (post-)colonialism nowadays has become a very fashionable term. As an introduction we would like to know your take on post-colonialism as you state in your zine that there is no post-colonialism.

There is a good text by a writer from India working in South Africa. He wrote a text called: "When is the postcolonial?" Fundamentally speaking there is no postcolonial.

This must be understood in the context of my work and my perspective and cannot be used in any other context. When the British left India in 1947, there was already a "class and caste" division of society. Like Europe, in India, class exists but is quite related to caste. People who were already there, having a Western education, with the resources of 5000 years of cultural and economic capital of the upper caste strata, replaced the British and inherited a system, which is based on oppression. This is not revised yet. Any system you talk about, any element of Imperial modernity, call it border making, frontier making, bureaucracy, police, whatever... All the tools with which imperialism works are not being replaced with anything else.

Just different people?

Different people.

Was this upper caste already in charge during the colonial occupation?

Exactly, they were Collaborators but also fought. They were collaborators because they had the tools of the English language and they were resisting because they had the tools to resist. You cannot resist If your stomach is not fed. So why did I say that there is no postcolonial? The place I come from, in the east of India, is a frontier region with Myanmar and China. It's not mainland India, but a part which is on the other side of Bangladesh. This region has been a frontier since colonial times. It was taken as a frontier and the policymaking is still like a frontier. It seems that the systems of administration, bureaucracy, policy- and border making have not changed. Actually, even "change" is a quite radical word. It's not even thought that something else could be. I don't even talk about changes. It's delusional.

Does the term post colonialism imply a will to change? Or ist it actually describing an ongoing condition?

No, I think it has to be seen in two ways. The Post-colonial condition is a real condition. I don't deny it. It's a real condition. But the mechanisms on which postcolonial writings and thinking are developed are still hierarchical. It's not the West and the East debate. This is very shallow, I think it's very easy. One layer is east versus west. Second is... There is east and west also in the east. There is a second level. Without talking about that, making it only a broad east-west debate, doesn't work. The internal power dynamics of formerly colonized countries must be understood as well. Otherwise, it's post-colonial, but for whom? Maybe it's postcolonial for people who already were in power and still are in power, but not for others. These dynamics need more thinking.

The primary criticism towards the "Subaltern Studies Group" is that the people who are writing about the subaltern are not subaltern themselves, they are people from

a higher status society. Unless the subalterns don't write for themselves it's problematic. At the same time, I'm not saying that they can't write for each other. There are two things. One is the identity politics: I am X and this is my politics. My politics come from my background; this is identity politics. And the second is the politics of identity: What I do, my politics becomes my identity. The first is who I am is my politics, that is identity politics. Second is what I do, my politics is my identity. It's complicated for someone like me who comes from that region and works there. It's more nuanced. I haven't resolved it, but I think I use both. I use my identity politics, but at the same time, as a researcher, I feel that it's also important to also use the politics of identity. What I do also becomes my identity, I am building it at the same time and not putting it somewhere.

So if we transfer this to your work at ETH. This would also be your method on using ETH as a tool?

Of course. I have to use the position to strategically work both sides. I use my identity when I need it. And I also have to use ETH when I need it. Some individuals may choose to refuse or resist institutions, I respect that. But it's important to also look at it in a different way, I don't think that these are very separate. The last six months I was in a research group, talking about institutions. What is an institution and what is a non-institution? Ursprung and I were talking about all institutions being western institutions. When people are saying that institutions are Western it's a general statement, but you also need general statements to provoke. There is no other way of instituting. All institutions are western institutions, wherever they are. Geography doesn't matter. So what happened is, in that research group one guy who is a philosopher said: "but there could be other personal institutions also". Then what is the opposite of institution? And he's saying that maybe the opposite of institutions is the individual. That is the only way. But for example, someone said, when your mother asked you to eat your food when you were a kid and you said no, I don't want to eat. Then, the mother would force you by telling you - you have to eat it - I'm telling you as your mother! Now, she's drawing from the institution of motherhood, to enforce that eating. Is this an institution then?

In a different sense...

In a different sense, maybe.

And also about the individuality question, I think. We look at Ruangrupa who work as a collective and they live and share everything together, even money. Would we call them an institution, or are they maybe the opposite to an institution, but not an individual. Is there a collective opposite to institution?

Defining institution is very difficult. And non-defining also is very difficult. But like

you were telling me that they're a group of people who do exhibition, curation or artworks together, I see them as an institution. This is an institution.

I wonder if this would also happen here in Zurich? Is Ruangrupa the reaction to the absence of institutions in the art market in Indonesia? Because here in Zurich, we have a totally different setting of how artists are working.

I'm thinking and working about it. It's not developed yet. I am more and more thinking that the opposite of institution is the individual. You cannot have a non-institution or anti-institution. In my work I'm thinking that it's not wise to be so radical. I need both. The institution is not enough, but it's also indispensable. There's a duality.

I think it's very interesting. With Ruangrupa, or also in the text you wrote, "lie to me like one of your French museums", there is always this question about the word and what the meaning of this word is. And, how everybody understands something different, under for example the word of institution.

Yeah.

So that there can exist simultaneously different spaces of word-meaning, that kind of overlap and in a way work together. So maybe the idea of an institution as we know it as something policy-making can also develop into something or can be connotated with another form of group.

Yeah, yeah.

What could bring the institution and individual under the umbrella of a museum? Or create a vis à vis situation?

Right, how can they go together in the museum? A Museum is an institution, it has things, objects, everything. It's undeniable that the institution exists in a museum. It has its policy, its border-making. You cannot touch something, there's a border, a glass border with the vitrines. And all the other elements, the bureaucracy for example. You cannot do anything you want, you have to ask permission. This is bureaucracy. You have everything. What I am doing to bring the individual into the museum is what I call "gossip at the museum". So you gossip at the museum. Exhibitions are made of objects, texts, whatever, no? And museums keep a very high authority, a high moral ground, a place, which is like the epitome of culture. Here we display cultures, we keep cultures. One of the writers calls it "museum as a site, which is like the climax of Western enlightenment". Museums are the climax of Western enlightenment. So, what happens is that the museum curates objects and things and exhibits. But why should I give the museum the authority to tell me how I should look at my culture? Which they do by giving you audio guides or guided tours, in which they tell you this is this and this is this. They close

the culture, it's a cultural closure. In this closure, there is no space for negotiation, this is it. But if you look at how the objects are taken, I am not talking about violence, this is a different part already, I'm not even going there. I'm talking about how people, researchers go to, in the case of Rietberg, Africa, China, Japan, whatever. Now they're buying. It's very different now. Objects are art or religious or social, they don't even know. If you ask Museum Rietberg they would say "we are an art museum", which doesn't make any sense.

This was the first thing we stumbled upon. Something is wrong with that claim.

Yeah, because they don't know what to say. If you, as Rietberg, are an art museum, what is the Kunsthhaus then?

They say they're a "world art museum", which makes a difference to the Kunsthhaus, but it's weird at the same time, because this implies that there are different kinds of art. There is a Western art and then there's world art which is from India, Africa.

Yeah. But why is the Kunsthhaus not in the Rietpark? They should be together then, if it's one art museum. They basically don't know. Museums value objects, right? That's why they put it in storage, air condition, in glass, you cannot touch, whatever. So museums put value on objects. But the value of objects is not in the object, but in the exchange of it. In its social life. How is it made? How is it used? The idea of value is very different. So actually, it's like, they put objects in crisis I like to say. Because the objects have lost their social life and it's put in a museum or storage or whatever you call it. What happens when you do that? When you get objects from somewhere, in the case of Rietberg for example Africa, China, there is this whole concept called reverse ethnography. When researchers go to places to ethnograph people, the people are also ethnographing the researchers. When you are profiling someone, you're also being profiled. So when you are being profiled, there is a high chance you take the objects which they give you, because they have profiled you. They know what you're looking for. They know, ah okay, this guy's looking for this! I'll give him this and you get money or whatever. And there's another part, looting for example, which also happened. That's a different discussion. There's a whole mission from France, they went to Sub Saharan Africa and during 18 months, they collected objects, photographed people. So the thing is, when I know I have profiled the researcher, I have reverse ethnographed him. Now this researcher is asking me "I'll photograph you", I can give him anything I want to give him, he will take it right. I can give him anything here, because I know what he wants, right? I can do some random things, he will photograph it or random objects, he will take it. So then what happens to the value of the

objects which are here? Is it then, in my work I call it, a souvenir? Is it only a souvenir from a touristic contact?

Yeah of course. We also had the discussion, after the first day we visited Rietberg, that we are very limited in our understanding of the objects. They tell stories really similar to childhood stories about other cultures. They reduce the diversity of a culture to very few images.

Yeah, so, then you can gossip there. That's what I meant by gossip in a museum. So when I see an object, which comes from my cultural background, why do I take the museum's position for granted? letting it tell me what the object is for? I can gossip about it, no? I can add or subtract to the museum's curation by gossiping about the object.

But only if you're more knowledgeable.

About what?

Knowledgeable about the object.

No, you don't have to be knowledgeable. No, no, no, you don't have to be knowledgeable about the objects. You have to bring your subjectivities to the museum. Just a day before, I went with the chair to Dresden for a talk in the museum. And they have a boat there, an ivory boat. I choose the object to talk about it. So, my subjectivity of looking at boats is associated with the whole mission of Vasco de Gama coming to India, in a postcolonial sense, as an ethical nuisance. The boat is something which brought modernity. That's my subjectivity of looking at the boat. And that is the gossip I'm doing in the museum. I'm de-centering museum curation of looking at it in the way "this is such a beautiful ivory boat". I'm bringing my subjectivity as "it's also used for the colonial invasion. The boats bring invasion", which is my subjectivity. So I bring depth, subjectivity, to gossip about exhibitions and museums.

And with Rietberg, I mean, what was your experience? Because it used to be this museum where they would just show those pieces of word art as pieces of art. So no description, nothing just a date maybe and where it's from. And now they've only started to introduce these new exhibitions where they add information where the objects are from.

Yeah, Pathways of Art...

And in a way you could say that, just having the objects there like in an art exhibition creates a lot of space to gossip.

Yeah, a lot of space to gossip. Of course.

What do you think about that? What is the best way of exhibiting such kinds of works?

The Pathways of Art?

Yes, and the old way of exhibiting too. Both the old way and the new way of exhibiting. What do you think about the old way and how does the new way change



that?

You know, I really like to go to museums. Before, I went to India, then I went to Paris to see the Musée du Quai Branly, one of the biggest ethnographic museums in Europe. I turned it into my methodology - gossip - because I realized, honestly, I'm not interested in what the museum is telling me. I mean, yes, Information-level. Yeah, this was made in 1850, okay, nice. Good. What do I do with it? I don't know. But then I'm not interested in the whole thing, no? I like to see things or objects and all of us do this. I think I realized it from my father, he's old now, 65, 70. When we go to museums, he always says "we had a similar thing in our childhood which was like this". Of course the object is not this at all, but he refers to something which somehow is related to this object. If you think through the idea of reverse ethnography, these are random things in a museum, why shouldn't I be bringing my subjectivity and talking about it and gossiping about it? That way I deconstruct, add, and subtract. Actually, I think I am trying to help the museum institution. If all of us work together, then different people, different subjectivities will come together. I think museum curation can be very interesting, because we don't close cultures then, we open it up.

So, with exhibitions like pathways of art, they wouldn't enforce gossiping in the museum?

Because museums think they are very serious, they are doing serious things. They somehow think they are very serious. But it doesn't make any sense. Your researchers went and took whatever they were given. How is this serious? I don't understand. What is this whole façade of being so serious in the museum? I went to the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, and they had these dark halls with lighting here and there, like what's going on here? Why do you do this, what is the surprise you're trying to create by showing something which no one has ever seen before. What is this? Sculptures and objects have been a part of global cultural flows since millions of years. You know, museums want you to believe that this is the original object. Original. They are obsessed with originality. Originality is a very European, modernist thinking.

Why is that? Is that because museums try to uphold themselves as institutions?

This is a hypothesis which I have: What happened in the 19th century is that museums sort of started to be obsessed with originality. If you go to the British Museum you see, they had the cast courts, so they would go around the world and make copies of architecture elements, whatever. If you go to the ethnographic museum here, they also have it. Like sculptures of David and so on. They just made copies of the objects in gelatin, and recast it so that people could see and appreciate it. So, in the early 20th century, my hypothesis contains two

things: Firstly, Duchamp's urinal. When he makes a urinal to an object of art. I think it raises the question of seriousness. This fake and authentic thing, like now everyone can be an artist but art markets and museums don't want everyone to become artists. So no, now museums need to focus on original objects. Second Walter Benjamin in the 30s wrote this article called "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in which he talks about the aura. Only the original has the aura. If you want to copy or make new photographs of it, the aura is gone. This is the second thing which really changed the way museums, institutions, and art look at the concept of the original and the duplicate. I'm hypothesizing. I'm thinking about it. By the 1950-60s the British Museum destroyed cast courts. They don't want it anymore, they still have some, but it's not respected, it is just a duplicate.

As I remember from your article. You said something about making copies leads to the loss of meaning?

When you make photocopies so much, and here I'm comparing it to copying, if there is an object in the Rietberg, if you make a copy and put it in the shop, it becomes a photocopy. And if you do again and again. How do you differentiate between original and the duplicate? Only material wise? No not really, I don't know the material anyways, I can't touch the original anyways. Looking at the social life of things and people who used the objects, they don't necessarily differentiate so much between originals and duplicates.

Recently I was also thinking about Duchamp's object trouvé, the ready-mades and how Rietberg does the same and gives the objects meaning and value. I think maybe it's also the only way that the West can incorporate these objects into their language. This is the only way we can appropriate them into our understanding of the world.

Yeah, I think so as well, I mean if you look at the origin of museums, starting with the cabinets of curiosities, where people brought objects from everywhere and put them together, it's a weird thing. I think after the turn of the 18th century, especially the French and the British with the East India Company, and the Dutch all over Asia and Africa, what happened is - these states were also building their own states. It was a time of war; the German state was forming as well. Nation-building was going on in Europe, it was not well defined like it is today. So, you needed the other to define our civilization and their civilization. You needed the other to say, look at that civilization, it is not as mature, it is savage. We are the better, without the other, you cannot value yourself. And it was a time when the objects were turned into still-lives in the metropolises. For people to see and understand how people lived there. Museums refuse the contemporaneity of culture. When you define an original object,

you imply there is an original culture from where it comes from. What is an original culture? There are many people who wrote about this idea that cultures are always in hybridity. The French ethnographers in the 20s traveled to Polynesia, to study pure original cultures. The criticism is that this person went to this far off island to study these original, untouched cultures. The person never tells you how they reached there themselves. If you can reach that place, anyone can reach it. It deconstructs the idea of original, untouched cultures. It's like 5000 years of human history. In the ethnographical museum in Zurich, I found jewelry from my region with seashells. The closest sea would be at least 3000km from that place. How did they get there? They were trading! When you trade objects, you also trade knowledge. You are trading the idea of how to deal with these objects. So, knowledge transfer is also part of the cultural flow. I met some indigenous people from Sámi, in northern Norway, and they very strongly advocate for Indigeneity. I don't... we are part of cultural flows which are moving around and by making original objects and original cultures, you are refusing the contemporaneity of culture. When Europe reached India, or anywhere else, Europe brought imperial modernity. By modernity I mean, border-making, bureaucracy, map-making. These are modern tools, after the 15th century. Renaissance brought the start of modernity. And when the Europeans left, these things didn't leave. So imperial modernity became political modernity, which all of us inherit and all of us share. Government bureaucracy, nation-building, nation-states, borders. Everything is in place, why are we claiming that this object is from some pre-colonial culture. It has gone through all the stages. It has added different layers of modernity to it. So why are we not talking about the journey through their social lives?

The objects in Rietberg are losing their journey.

They're in crisis.

Most of the objects are meant for rituals or just daily activity.

And then they are put for viewing in the museum. Another thing that complicates the whole situation are the objects in storage. What you see displayed is only like 30% of what they possess. So, let's take the perspective of the Rietberg, they say "we are an art museum", ok agreed you are an art museum, but then when you put an object to be viewed as art, this object becomes an art object because of the gaze of the viewer. Without the gaze of the visitor, how is an art object still art?

When you talk about the object and whether it is original or not, here the picture carries all the knowledge, symbolic meaning and everything that is in it. Seeing restitution also as something symbolic, political, something to

give back and make a statement of the importance of these objects as historical events that happened. How do you stand on the topic of restitution?

Different people will have different opinions. The most general statement I can make is that restitution comes from christian guilt. This morality, the sin. Imperialism is related to the Enlightenment.

The question is what way round, because David Graber and David Wengrow in their book The Dawn of Everything, they say that Enlightenment probably only took off because some Indians from North America came to Europe and had discussions with some European thinkers and then European thinkers through that asked themselves, oh what are we actually doing?

Yes.

Today we learn that Western geniuses started the ideas of enlightenment.

Ah interesting! Going back to the original question about restitution. I think restitution does not work for a couple of reasons. Very fundamentally. Firstly, by means of restitution, you are again reinforcing that there is an original culture that will take back the original object. This is a fundamental problem, I think. So, you are denying that those societies are working with modernity – have changed. We are modern subjects of a nation state. A nation state works with culture very differently than pre-colonialism cultures. So, you are denying the modernity of individuals and societies. You are saying that the people still are in a pre-colonial cultural bubble. But time has passed, and modernity has taken its place in society. You cannot refuse modernity, because the act of refusing modernity is only possible by being part of modernity first. You can refuse modernity only by being conscious about modernity. By being conscious of modernity you are part of modernity. So, by doing restitution you are saying that non-western cultures are still in pre-colonial times. You are again looking at the topic in a very Western Museum ontological sense. For example the straight borders of nations in Africa, western modernity cuts through cultures, societies, and former countries. Where do you send the objects to? To the country it came from. But there was no country at the time Westerners took it. So, you are again trying to enforce that a nation state is the ultimate way of the organization of societies. This is the theoretical problem of restitution. But a more practical problem is visible for example in the restitution of a statue to India: It was restituted from one museum to another in India. It did not go back to its social life. I think it is a difficult topic and it would need much more people discussing and working on it. I am interested in people countering with other arguments to enrich this discussion. It would be nice to hear more people and their views,

for example people who claim indigeneity, maybe they can take it back. I cannot say that for them.

Maybe to dive into the topic of cultural memory: It is said that a lot of objects carry the history of their society and therefore have huge value for those people. Don't they have to go back to them?

The cases I work with, it is not like this, but it would be interesting to talk to someone who claims indigeneity. For example, Indian people in the US, they claim indigeneity. In this case, the question for me is, how far back do you go in history? Historically, the Indian people from the US originally came from Asia and migrated to the American continent. This is a part of the topic of indigeneity. But indigeneity is also about the environment: where do you build your society or your social structures? This is related to land and surrounding societies. However, I am not able to comment on indigeneity. For me indigeneity is something which re-reinforces again the museums notion on cultures.

You said that restitution is a morally driven Western idea of giving back and therefore sort of a political gesture bound to a Western way of thinking. What would be a political statement or first step to start thinking about museums? The objects that are here but belong to non-western cultures that want to emancipate themselves from the Western world, what happens with them?

I see the possibility in curation and exhibition-making, but it must be a collaborative work and it must work in two directions. It cannot just be in Rietberg, because only a small part of the population can come to Rietberg. So, for example a collaboration between Ruangrupa and the Rietberg and at different international locations.

I think, depending on the object and on culture, if we refuse the idea of originality, the cultures already have the objects which are now here. I think the actors just need to meet somewhere. What I am saying is that what the Western world has is valuable for the Western world, but not for the culture it comes from, because they have ten more of the same objects, as they do not differentiate between copy and original.

But it really depends on the object.

Yes, it depends on the objects, and it depends on the culture.

The Benin Bronzes for example are probably quite unique.

Probably, I cannot say. It really depends on the objects, and it depends on the culture. But then again there were thousands of Benin Bronzes: all the museums in Europe and America have Benin Bronzes. Then which one is original? Everything becomes original and a copy at the same time. They used a metal cast, so they could reproduce it repeatedly. It is valuable for the Museum because you put value on them. But

the craftsman did it every day. If we were talking to a person from Benin, they would say it is very valuable, but this is because we're thinking with the same pattern as Museums. Because the museum is telling us: "It is valuable ". It is all in the capitalist mindset of selling and making money. That is also why the Rietberg Museum says they are an art museum, because for them these are objects that they bought.

This aspect is interesting because until this day the Rietberg is still acquiring. All the objects are still in circulation.

In your text "Lie to me like one of your French museums" you write about Ja-dughor, translated 'house of magic' as an alternative to the Western Museum as an institution. Could you extend on that? Is it really about memory? Is the museum a memory machine?

When you gossip in a museum it becomes a magical space. Because then possibilities become fluid. The idea of the museum as a cultural memory machine then depends on how the people, objects and cultures meet. We remove that from the museum, when we look at the museum as a house of magic. It needs a lot of work. But magic is something that interests everyone.

What is the history of museums where you come from?

Museums in former colonial countries, like India, are not for culture but for nation building. "We are one country" or "this is our national cultural heritage". This helps to build a nation. India is only 60 years old as a nation state. So, they need a cultural warehouse of collective memory, which will help people feel as one. It is an imagined community by means of media, like Benedict Anderson wrote about.

Are there examples of pre-colonial museums?

No, the first museum in India was opened in the 1790ies in Kolkata.

Memory is something that is passed on by people.

It is also passed on orally.

Yes, and museums try to institutionalize memory. I wonder whether this is a fruitful thing to do.

I think you must see the role of a museum very personally. What do you seek in a museum, what do I seek in a museum? So, here we come back to the topic of the opposite of an institution, which I define as the individual. All of us seek different things in a museum. But how do we put this in a theoretical work?

How does the museum see itself? On Wednesday we are going to talk to the director, and it is going to be very interesting to see how she thinks of the institution museum. So, how would an architect tackle this topic?

A lot of people think museums are obso-



lete or that we need to resist museums. But I think museums do what they do and should do it by themselves. It is not my problem to solve. What I'm trying to say is, we need temporary festivals and exhibitions, which somehow work with culture. Instead of institutionalized buildings, which have their own architectural language, like the steps and the pillars, why not create makeshift exhibitions, where we bring objects from other cultures and take objects from here to there and create a bridge. And after the exhibition we throw the objects away because there are millions of these objects. An exhibition is a brief moment where an object turns into an artwork. We bring our subjectivities and talk about them in panel discussions, conferences, and workshops. And when it is over, we burn everything.

we saw a post on Instagram where you visited IKEA -

yeah, yeah –

and we asked ourselves when you looked at these objects like in a museum - is it a way of seeing IKEA as a possible non-museum - an exhibition of western culture or is it more of a critique of the way western museums see themselves?

No - I don't think I see it as a critique of that - I am really interested in IKEA – in India we finally have one IKEA, or something – I traveled to Dubai for an exhibition in 2019 and it was the first time I went to IKEA and it is amazing - no? - To see IKEA – It's amazing! I've not seen it before - it is amazing! I can say a hundred years from now, when it is closed it can become a museum! why not? The thing with IKEA now and why I am interested in it now is because I went to the storage of the ethnographic museum in Zürich and they have the same racks and boxes like in the IKEA basement - It's exactly the same! Like with the metal racks, with – maybe IKEA boxes also, I don't know – with grey boxes with objects inside. And then people can interpret it in different ways – and that's also the work of art – you leave something there. If I tell you what you already want to know, then I don't think art is productive... art should not tell you what you want to know, it should trouble you!

Yeah! It's also interesting in the context of when you talked about the museum as an institution and how it claims power or the authority to give meaning to objects and then when you say okay no it has to be the individual it's an empowerment of the individual to claim this authority to give meaning to objects rather than letting the institution do it for you.

Yes, yes, I think so. Totally!

So it's an emancipation of the Individual.

Yeah, yeah. I do not mean a resistance movement by saying this. I'm just trying to say. This can be helpful for the museum.

What is difficult for the museums then is that they have to be respectful of the

objects. As an institution you cannot just take all no meaning from them. Don't say anything about them and arrange them in a way which tells funny stories. Or at least it would probably get a lot of backlash...

museums in themselves cannot be subjective because it's not singular.

But I'm happy about it – I'm happy because - if they cannot do it, I will do it. I'm happy that museums cannot do it because it is an interesting position.

Shouldn't they trigger that? isn't it a good first step of the whole provenance research?

Yes, they should, they should. On Sunday evening we had a talk at the Museum of Dresden(?) Philip did this project called “17 volcanoes” in Indonesia and they made an exhibition. Inside the museum. And it was a work of art but it was displayed like a museum display: random objects - stones and stuff – with numbering and everything. Random things you know. And the Curator was very critical of it: why do you have to classify objects like this - they come from some culture - and maybe you should do something different – maybe put them together - whatever. But I said: you have a storage right here, right? And you have classified objects. Don't you think it is hypocritical? It's like saying no - we – the museums – know how to classify and arrange and you don't know. You do something funny because you are an artist. It's like saying why do you classify; we know it better we do it better so you should not. All irony is that we have learned from you to classify. Then she was like: when can it change? And I was like: you tell me when it can change! You are responsible to tell me when it can change!

Why do you classify – you have a collection of photographs, right? And you work on a collection of photographs and archiving, right? What's the motivation behind that and how do you do it?

It started because I like to work as a photographer but the more you try to catch the more it goes away... it's always like this... Now rather than taking photographs I really like to look at photographs. What I do is I go from house to house to different people - to look at their photo albums. I hang around in markets or shops or whatever – I talk to the young guys hanging around – like what's going on – de de de – and they connect me to someone else. I'm interested in gates – I'm really interested in temporary and permanent gates – so I'm looking at photographs of people taking photos with gates, to understand what “gate” does... it is an element of modernity. When you build a border, you need a gate to go in or out. Now it's getting clear why I'm looking at these photographs because I want to understand what modernity does to culture, by looking at people taking photographs with gates – then I ask them why

do you take photographs with gates? And they say because it looks nice... but whats nice about it?

The collection of photographs is really more about your artistic practice than it is about archiving – so you are not trying to archive or build a museum?

No, no, no! This is my research methodology. Other People get books or go to archives to look at photographs. I'm looking at photographs that people already have instead of an official archive. I also go to studios – in India we have those photostudios – now it's almost going away – where people would go and take photographs of themselves.

The one you exhibited here last year in the “Unschöne Museen” exhibition?

Yes, yes.

Do you classify the photos you collect?

No, no... I just classify them as: “with a gate” or “with a tiger” or whatever –

And how do you find the photographs again? Do you collect them in a finder?

I don't name them yet - I should name them to be honest. What I do sometimes, when I have a series of photographs and I like them and they form some kind of a pattern I put them in some other folder.

You find them by the moment you collected them then?

Yes, the moment I collected them is important.

Rietberg also has 44'000 photographs from the 70s or 90s, I think.

But the problem of the photography of Rietberg is the photographers – because of reversed ethnography. “I will dress up to show my indigeneity to show to a photographer who has come to photograph me”. But people who photograph themselves, within themselves, are very different. They are not afraid of claiming modernity.

I think it's also a collection of photographs by people from the countries. So I think it would be interesting to see how one could work with such a huge archive.

Interesting, yeah. Because then it would be nice to look at these photographs not as – again, classifying as year or who took it or geographic region – no, find some other parameters – people taking photographs with gates for example, this is one parameter, which I am using for my work – people taking photographs with animals – whatever, you know?

Do you know this exhibition by Wes Anderson where he went to an ethnographic museum and re-curated it. He rearranged all the objects into new categories – for example children in Renaissance paintings – some quite funny but if we would do that in our project now for this semester it would feel disrespectful – you know? – in what position am I to do

this? We really have this dilemma where we as architects are always or at least most of the time - work for institutions, investors etc. always with money and through this work in this system –

Of course, but that's what I said you don't say you refuse the institution. You use your position to refuse and accept depending on situations. You use it when needed and let it go when you don't need it. This can happen if we look at institutions not as unitary objects. Institutions are more like shifting spheres which have different actors, different things, so I think it would be innovative to think in these borders where institution is no more institution. There is this book by James C. Scott called “Seeing like a State” and he says that state oversimplifies to see everyone – they say this is one people, one culture – and there is the opportunity to be innovative – because there they lose their grip – in the oversimplification.

In your text you also wrote Western nations are all about homogeneity and it's losing the detail. It's all the same.

Yeah, and it's there where you can be innovative. They're oversimplifying to govern, to rule. So, I think there is an opportunity in those places to do something. In my work I'm looking at museum shops – museum shops are interesting places – the museum shop is a place where the museum is losing its grip - because you can touch the objects in the museum shop but if you look at the people in it they behave like they're in the museum exhibition. They can do anything right? It's a shop! So, I think it's innovative to think in those small spaces. The corridors of a museum, which are interesting places where the institutional curatorial grip is loose, you know? It could be interesting to think in small spaces.

For me the trap is – not to rebrand the museum – we have to do a good project and we cannot make it in a satirical, cynical or negative way – but have to find a positive one!

But critical – yes, I get it!

The artist in residency, for me, is a difficult topic because these artists – are part of a possible rebranding which tries to cleanse the museum of its past – to become a “good” and “responsible” museum again - without really taking part in it.

Do you know this book, “the metabolic museum”? You should look at it. It answers many of your questions. She works in Frankfurt in the World Culture Museum and it discusses many of the things which you are saying. And there is this book, it's called “Architectural History or Geography of Small Spaces”. She talks about small spaces and what they do. A Very nice book.

What is your Ph.D. about? Is it about Museums?

It's about Modernity. In a nutshell my Ph.D. is about the leftovers of imperial modernity

and what it does to culture by looking at museums and festivals.

Festivals are a very interesting concept also in opposition to institutions.

Difficult to say. Festivals can be very institutional as well. More and more I look at everything as an institution and then you can intervene to do something inside, for example in the small places. I think it's more innovative to think that you don't have to abandon everything. I think it's important to take the position that you want to help the museum. If they don't want it, it's their loss.

Do you have a vision of what the museum could be?

No, no vision (laughs)

Are you interested in developing something like that?

Yes, I think so. What they do is a fabrication. So, let's push that fabrication more. Make it really nice by fabricating it till the end. This whole idea of objects as original. This is fiction. So, let's make it a nice fiction. They're doing a bad job at creating this fiction. Let's make it magical. That's where the idea of magic comes in again. There is this thing. If you do something badly, do it very badly then it becomes good again. You know that way.

And what are other ways of creating that magic place where people want to go?

By gossip, which I am doing.

But this is happening on a very individual level. What does it have to do with other people and how can the Museum become a place for the community?

This gossip is creating memory. So maybe we can curate the gossip with the museum together.

The fact that institutions want to bundle and make packages to sell. How could museums transform into spaces where dissonance and different ways of working, thinking and being can come together without trying to homogenize everything again?

Yes. But we must keep in mind that there is no one size fits all solution. Different museums have different contexts, so it must be different. It's also important that what happens at Rietberg cannot happen in the national museum in Zimbabwe or Delhi or wherever. It's very important to keep this distinction in mind.

So, it's specific to each space?

I think if we do it repeatedly, maybe we can find patterns. If I do it in Rietberg, Kunsthau, in Humboldt in the British Museum, in Delhi, Zimbabwe. It might be something there. But you would do a small part for your work. And then we would think about the global maybe something could happen if we can find patterns. And that's what research is about. You try to find ways.

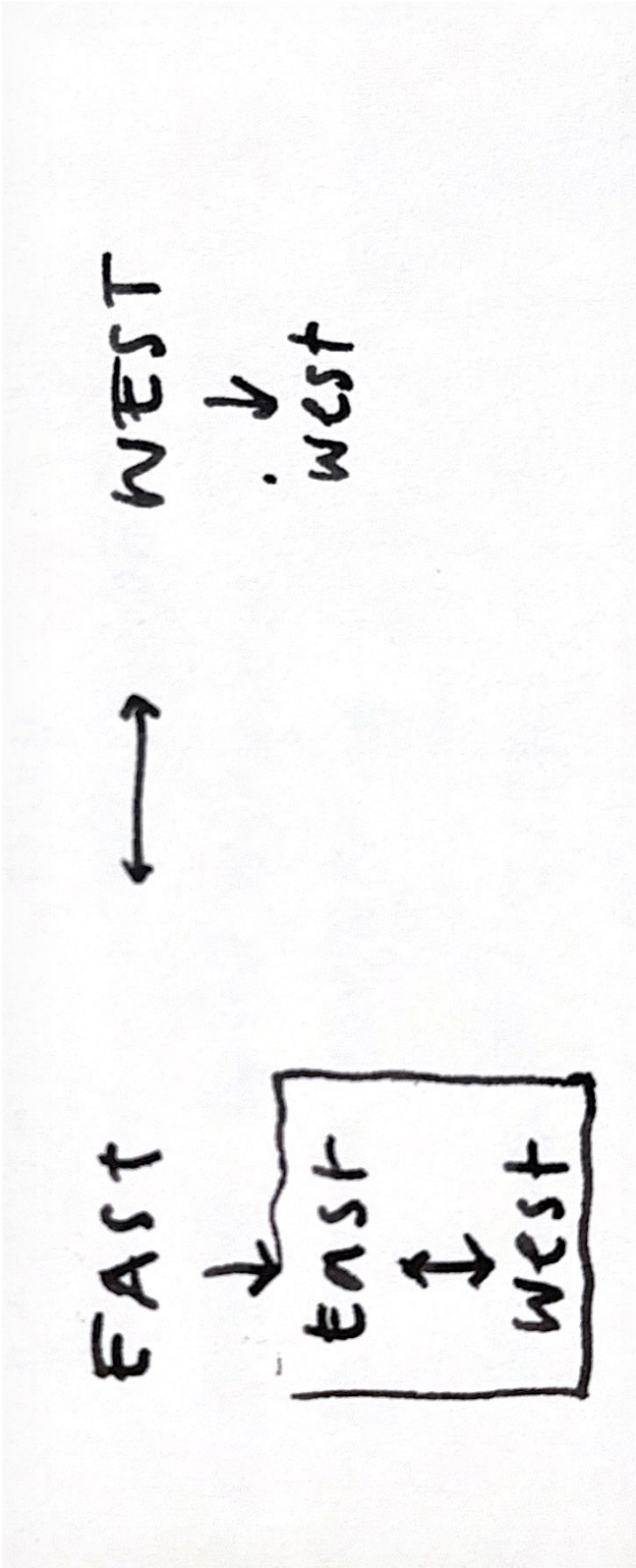
So, you believe institutions can break out of their patterns?

Institutions don't break out. Its people, or artists or curators who need to think innovative to break out and then close again.

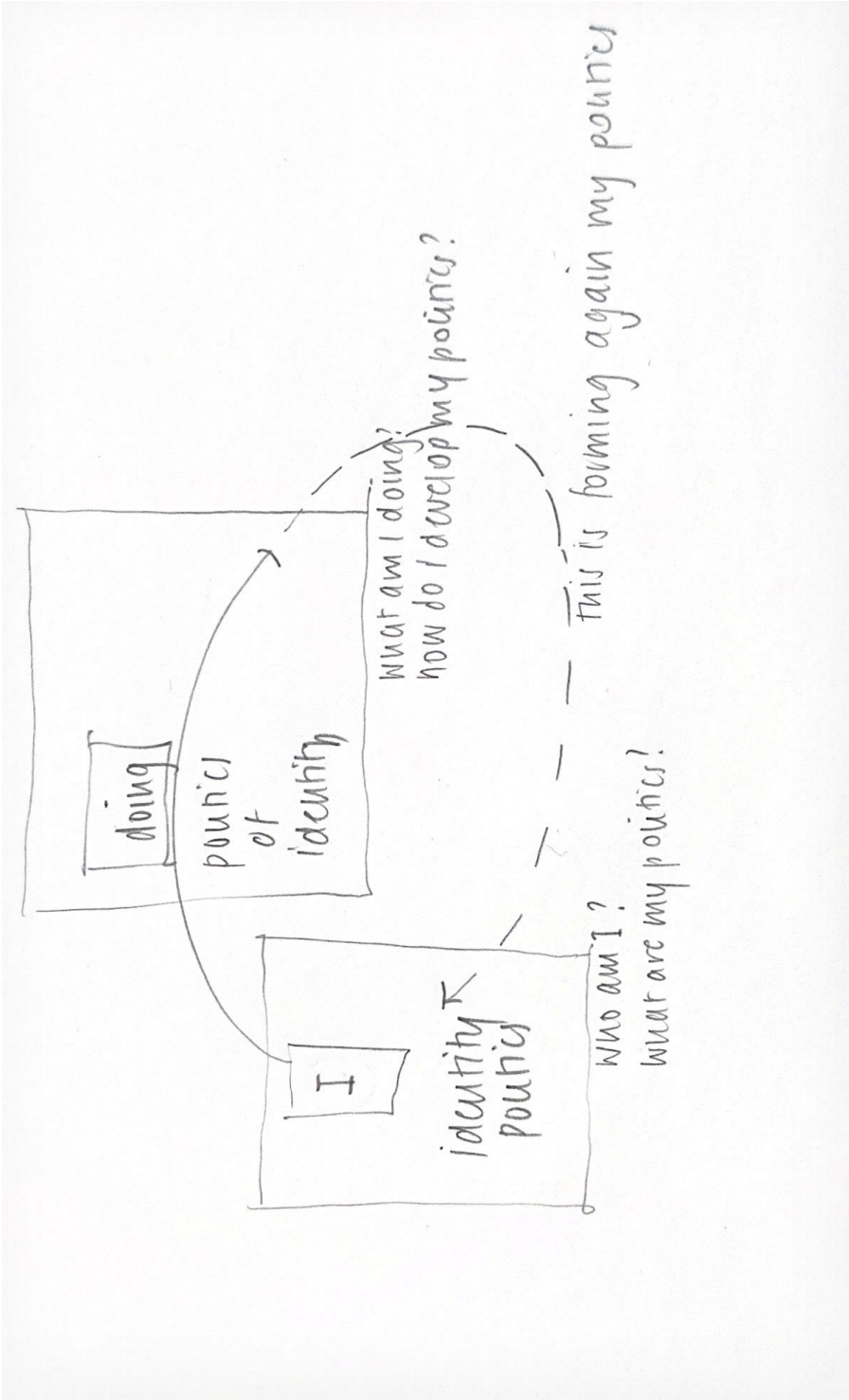
Do you count architects to the group of artists or the institutions.

Again, you can be both at the same time. It's about negotiation. Because the other radical side is the other side. It's important to be flexible.

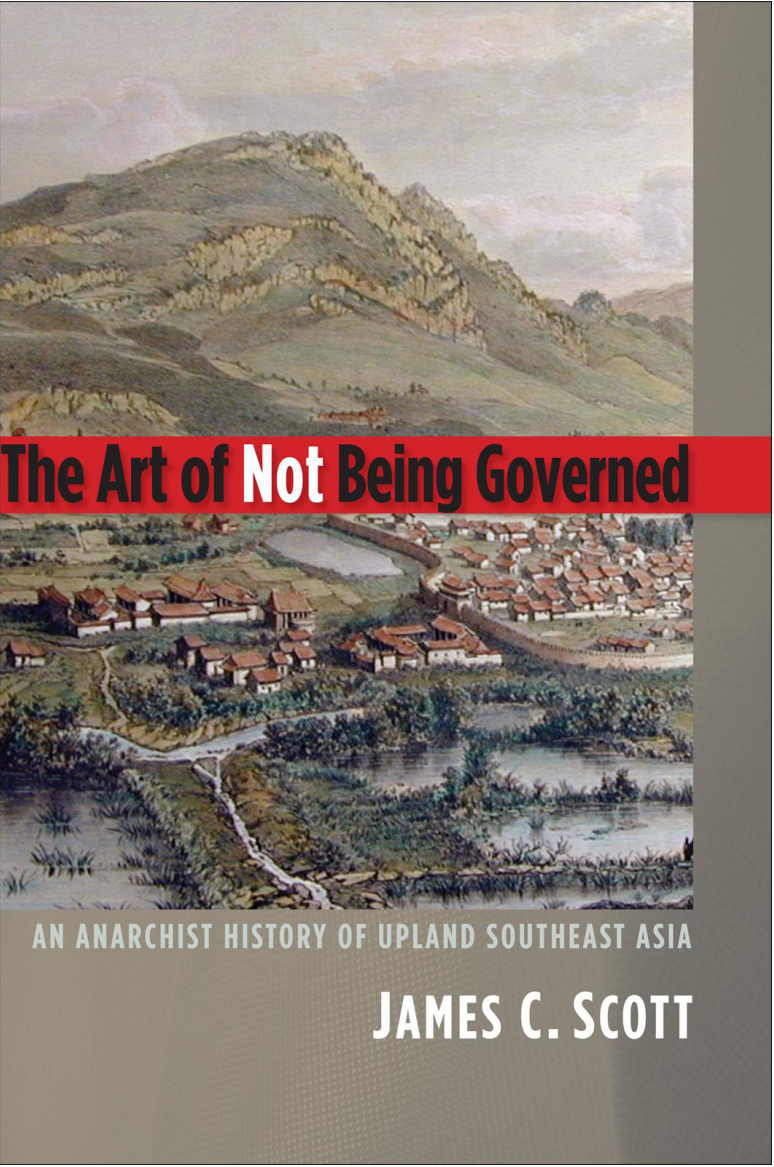




In the west the conflict is west versus east and there is always the fight and the comparison of the westerners to the east - The other. In the east this conflict is also fought but they also have the internal conflict of their own nation that is now after colonialisation whether completely east nor west. Debasish Borah argues that there must happen a internal discourse in India to find their own identity again.

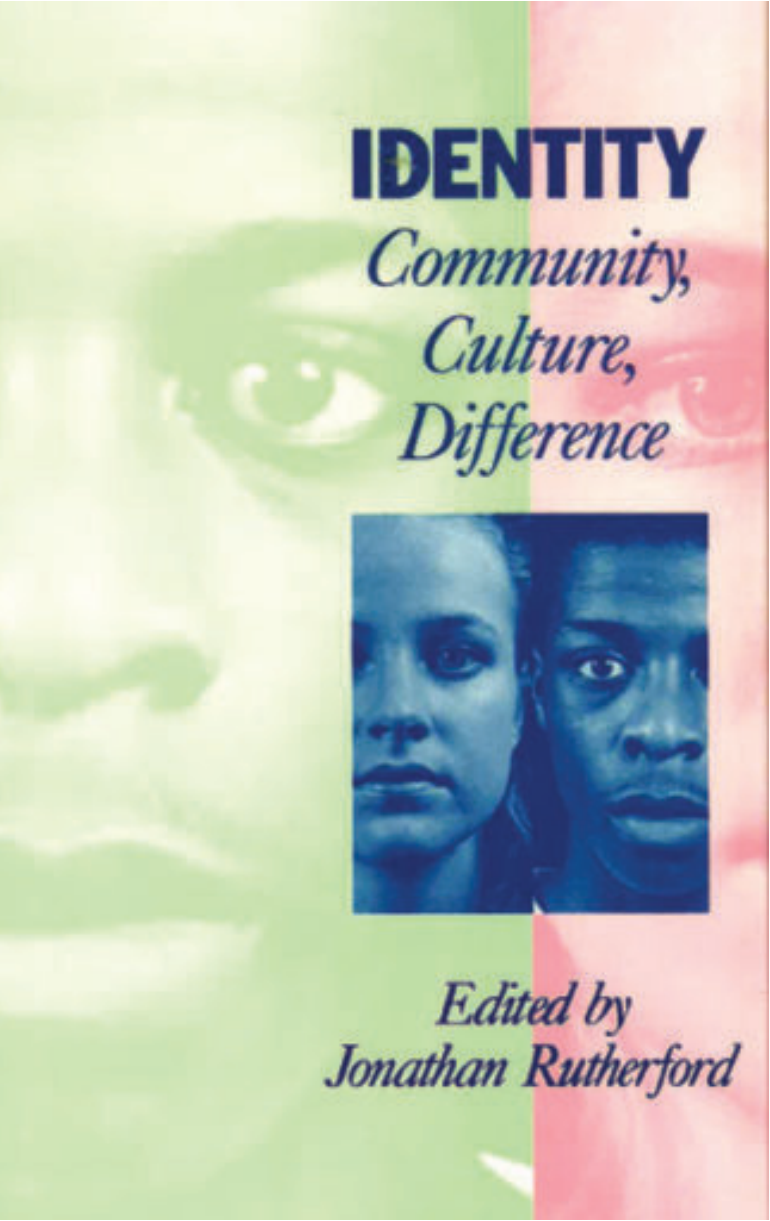


The topic of identity is argued by Debasish Borah as shown in the sketch: One should differentiate between what your own identity is and what is an external identity that you allow and take in while doing things within a bigger structure like an institution or even a nation.



Debasish Borah mentioned this book in our conversation with him. It tells the story of power structures in south east asia. The control of an administrative centre thined out the further you went to the periphery. This meant, that people there were less bound to the rules created at the centres.

Scott, James Campbell. The Art of Not Being Governed : an Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. Print.

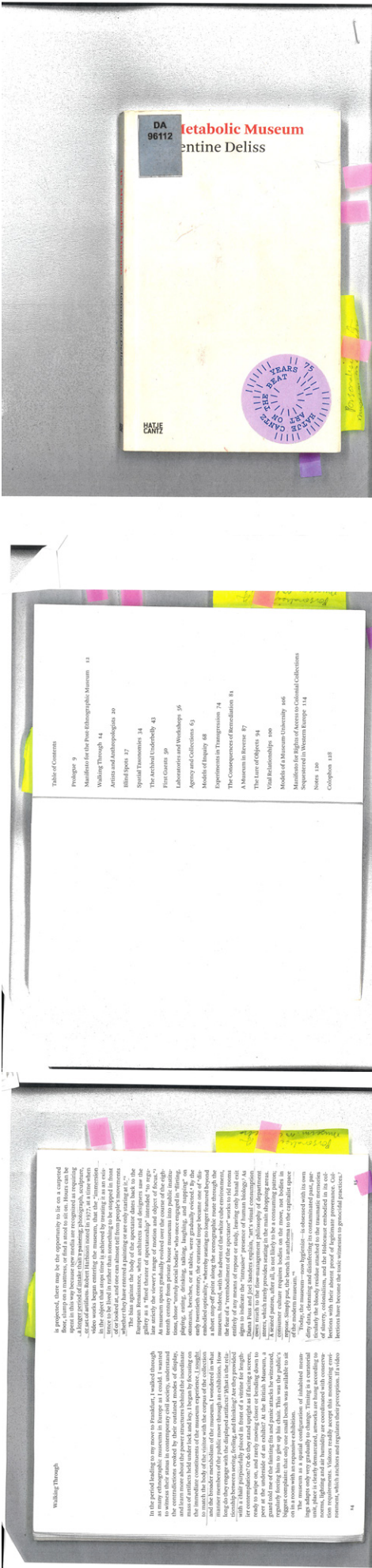


Rutherford, Jonathan. Identity : Community, Culture, Difference. 1st ed. 1990, repr. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998. Print.

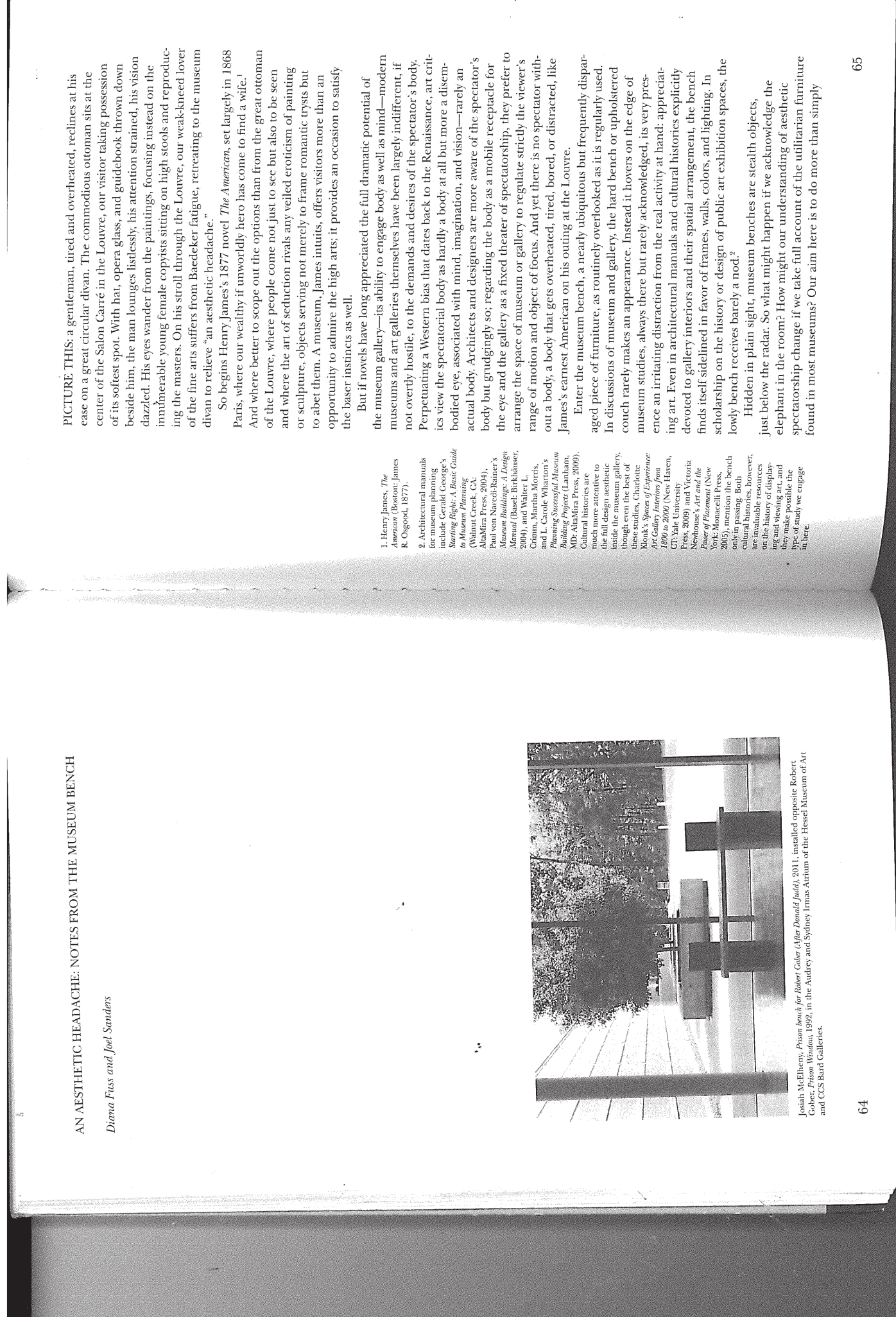




Lie to me like one of your French museums, Debasish Borah, ETH Zürich, Zürich CH



Deliss, Clémentine. The Metabolic Museum. Berlin, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2020. Print.



The museum bench is one of many objects which consolidate the authority of the museum. During our conversation with annette, we sat on museum benches. For our second conversation with Helen Thomas, we each took our own chair and sat directly in the exhibition. It felt a bit like a rebellious act, the supervisor accepted it without comment, but reminded us not to set off any alarms. An Aesthetic Headache: Notes from the Museum Bench, Diana Fuss, Joel Sanders



UN SETTLING  
TERR.  
holly ambar

FIELD NOTE

Architectural History or a Geography of Small Spaces?

SWATI CHATTOPADHYAY  
University of California, Santa Barbara

An aesthetics of big scale dominates our historical imagination.<sup>1</sup> As architectural historians we are seduced by the swagger of Daniel Burnham's 1910 invitation to think big: "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized." This masculinist call to envision big plans suited the high age of imperialism, when the United States emerged on the global stage as an imperial power.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of imperialist Westward expansion was now projected outward, making formidable occupation seem inevitable, necessary, and the "White Man's burden."<sup>3</sup> The achievements in city planning for which Burnham is lauded were drafted from authoritarian planning scripts well honed in Europe and in the European empires. The neobaroque vistas in Burnham's 1909 plan for Chicago visually overrode the city's grid and declared the territorial sublime of imperial ambitions in the manner of Louis XIV's Versailles and Baron Haussmann's Paris (Figure 1).

The aura of bigness and the abstraction on which such grandiose plans were premised gained new ethical value by being attached to modern architecture's promise of solving the big problems of twentieth-century nation-states.<sup>4</sup> That aesthetic predisposition and attendant abstraction continue to inform the history of architecture and design.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the aesthetics of bigness has now been compounded by the anxiety about not being big enough in our historical imagination. The large scale of spatial complexities that constitute global histories and the scalar anxiety of manifold planetary crises prompted by the threat posed by the Anthropocene have

brought scalar imagination to the forefront of historical writing with a new urgency.<sup>6</sup> To think big is no longer to think only about big space but also about the bigness of time, which demands even more abstraction.

It is at this critical juncture of scale and historical imagination that I wish to posit a way of thinking about architecture that interrogates the entanglement between bigness and imperialist thinking and its production of the "color line," to use W. E. B. Du Bois's phrase.<sup>7</sup> And I ask, is it possible to counter the aesthetics of bigness by taking small spaces as the primary focus of architectural history?

...

The small spaces I have in mind are neither entirely about size nor often about scale, but involve both these parameters. Spaces such as verandas, courtyards, terraces, fire escapes, and stoops may be small in dimension, but they often, by themselves or as collectivities, occupy large areas. They are part of a global lexicon of spatial types and yet are rarely deemed sufficiently important to merit close reading. Even when such spaces are physically substantial, they do not register in the dominant scheme of things.<sup>8</sup>

Smallness is typically thought of in terms of size—that is, in terms of the dimensions of an object or space. Size and scale are related but distinct concepts. Scale is about enlargement or contraction of size to produce meaning. As Andrew Hamilton beautifully expounds in his discussion of the Andean world, scale is "a perceptual quality of art" and "plays a primary role in the ways viewers engage with and subsequently interpret objects." The comprehension of scale, he points out, is not universal; it is culturally specific.<sup>9</sup>

Smallness, when it comes to space, exceeds both scale and size. It involves the politics of materials and labor. Small spaces are fragments, products of division, isolation.

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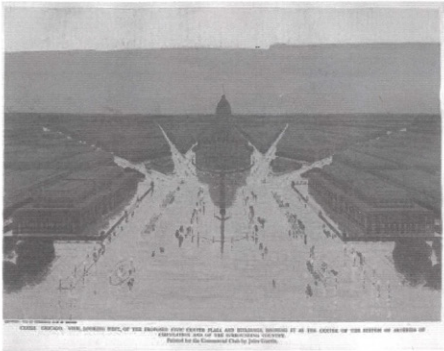


Figure 1 Jules Guerin, "View, looking west, of the proposed civic center, plaza and buildings, showing it as the center of a system of arteries of circulation and of the surrounding country." 1909 illustration in Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, Plan of Chicago (Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909). Wikimedia Commons.

and excision: they make up a fragmentary landscape created through repeated processes of racial, caste, gender, and class sorting. They are adjunct spaces that play supporting roles to the main architectural event in a building. Servants, the enslaved, children, and women fill in and out of these spaces. Once in a while, they take charge and become the center of commentary.

Size, placement, materials, and nomenclature of buildings are deliberately used to make social distinctions and to marginalize British residents in colonial India referred to servants' quarters as "godowns." Storage spaces—since it seemingly made no difference whether the spaces housed people or things. Indeed, storage spaces were often better built than the spaces for servants and the enslaved. Slave owners in colonial America and the antebellum United States used scale, size, and location to place the enslaved "literally out, away, apart, down, at the back, to the side, or confined in storage areas" to visibly and corporeally render the subordination of labor explicit.<sup>10</sup>

Small spaces as interstitial spaces are connectors: they force us to engage with fragmentation and disruption, and enable us to think of other ways of viewing the landscape. When we begin with small spaces, we notice subjects and effects that remain invisible at the large scale of analysis.

Small spaces can shock our collective naïve belief that spaces function as they are intended—that they are what they are named to do, that modernity's gift resides in calling out defined activities for particular spaces at distinct times. In a geography of small spaces, the kitchen in a plantation appears no longer just a place of round-the-clock toil but also a place of sexual assault, of a whipping so brutal that it traumatized a young Frederick Douglass.<sup>11</sup>

Defined by unanticipated expansion and contraction of time, small spaces are experienced in terms of waiting, watching, servicing time. Take Harriet Jacobs's description of the "loophole of retreat" in her 1861 autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. As a young enslaved woman, for seven years Jacobs hid in a garret to escape the sexual predation of a white enslaver. The garret was connected to the store room in her grandmother's house:

Some boards were laid across the joists at the top, and between these boards and the roof was a very small garret, never occupied by anything but rats and mice. It had a pent roof, covered with nothing but shingles according to the southern custom for such buildings. The garret was only nine feet long and seven feet wide. The highest part was three feet high, and sloped down abruptly to the loose board floor. There was no admission for either light or air.<sup>12</sup>

6 JSAH | 81.1 | MARCH 2022



Pathways of Art

26. September 2023 at 08:36

Pathways of Art

11

Objects of artistic quality

Galleries and auctions thus make an aesthetic and material evaluation of objects and contribute to the creation of art categories and to the formation of taste, respond to demand and create an offer.

The history of the collection at Museum Rietberg is not free of contradictions and has proven to be quite ambivalent.

45,000 Photographs

Collection of collections

14

Museum need to address the history of their collections and share this with society. Auto upon the history?

19

Purchases are ade either with municipal funds or funds from private sponsors and patrons.

47

Footnote 2: So far Switzerland has not received any demands for restitution.

48

Footnote 3 tells were to find list of Benin Bronzes in Switzerland

87

Accumulating and preserving creates identity, represents ideals and world views and generates prestige and power.

The Collective Eye

26. September 2023 at 07:56

The Collective Eye

49

dass es uns nicht weiterbringt, immer nu gegen das System und antagonistisch zu sein. Wir kritisieren, indem wir etwas anderes tun. Wir konnten keinen Raum finden, also gründeten wir einen. Wir hatten keinen Markt, also schufen wir uns einen. So lernten wir, Dinge einfach zu tun.

51

die keine Kunstwerke kreieren, sondern, Veranstaltungen organisieren und Plattformen schaffen.

Für uns ist dies die falsche Frage, weil uns fremd ist, Trennungen zwischen visueller und Klangkunst, Design und Architektur vorzunehmen. Da wir alle unterschiedliche Interessen, Leidenschaften und Vorlieben haben, sind wir entsprechend offen für alle Disziplinen und Medien. Wir verfolgen alles und kreieren daraus etwas Eigenes. Wir bauen Welten.

55

Was ist Gudsukul?

Ein öffentlicher Lernraum, den wir mit den Kollektiven Serum und Gravis Hury hart entwickelt und Anfang 2018 gegründet haben. Es ist die Jüngste Artikulation unserer Idee was wir als Kollektiv sein können. Eine Schule keine Formale Bildungseinrichtung sondern ein Ort der Wissensproduktion, Ein Raum der Verbreitung und eine Schule des Denkens.

110

Frage: Wie denkt ihr über da kollektive un das teilen ist es etwas was ihr promotet, habt ihr eine Haltung diesbezüglich oder seid ihr ganz offen ohne Wertung. Speculative collectivity könnte als promotion verstanden werden...

113

Koloniale Themen Triennale

116

Wir sehen Lumbung als ein Prinzip für Zusammenarbeit, das auf Großzügigkeit und Empathie beruht. Die Nachhaltigkeit ist nur dann gewährleistet, wenn Ressourcen kontinuierlich erneuert und aufgefüllt werden.

137

Wir gehen eher spontan und impulsive als nach Plan vor...

143

Uns kam nie in den Sinn und es drängte sich uns auch nie auf hervorzuheben, was der eine, was die andere und was wir gemeinsam gemacht haben, denn wir inspirieren uns gegenseitig und vertrauen unserem Prozess. Das waren unsere Grundzutaten.

156

Unsere Ausstellungen sind ein Alibi

Handbook

25. September 2023 at 08:37

Handbook

9

And remember! "Make friends not art!"

Why are there never enough or any chairs in museums?  
ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Bildarchiv / Fotograf: Schmid, Josef / Com\_M26-0154-0001-0002 / CC BY-SA 4.0

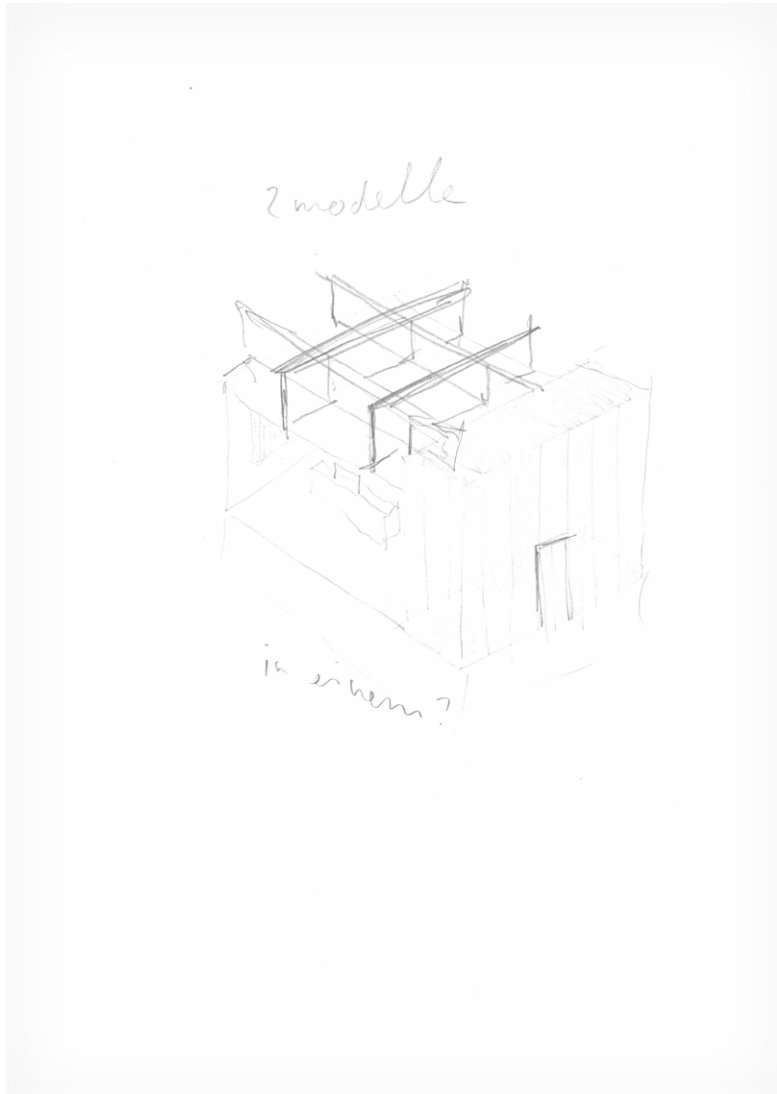
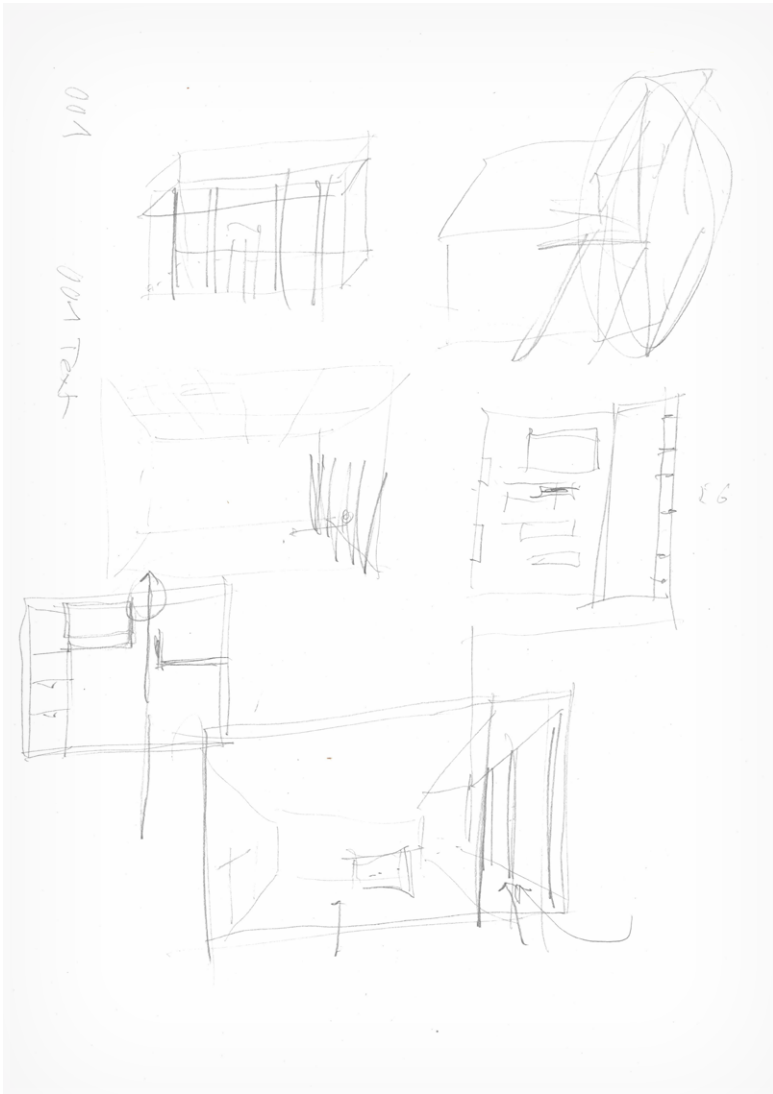
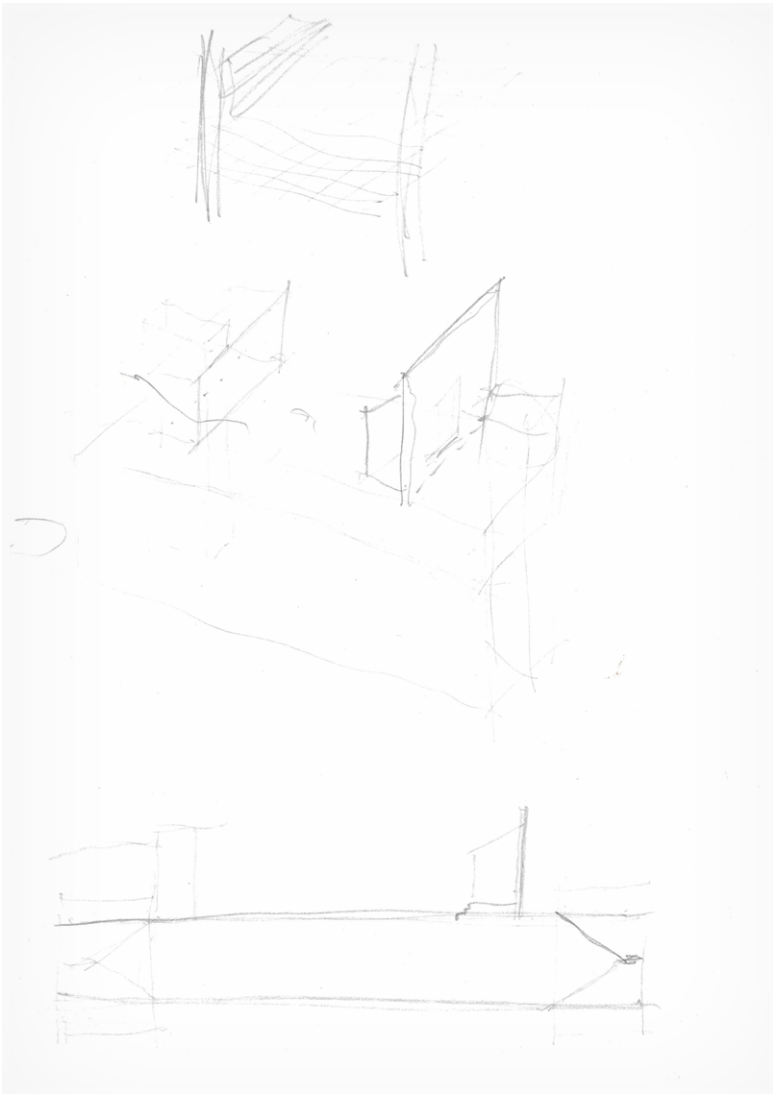






So, firstly, why are there 3 posters next to each other? Is this a marketing strategy? Secondly, what happens on this poster? This poster should invite to the Kimono exhibition at Museum Rietberg. Please look at the poster carefully and explain what you see. (maybe think about the words: identity, cultural appropriation, cultural exchange, cultural heritage,...)







**Kapitalismus als Motor kolonialer Abenteuer**

Die Ausbreitung des Kolonialismus als modernes Phänomen geht auf den Kapitalismus zurück. Die postkolonialistische Theorie behauptet dagegen, dass der Kapitalismus aus dem Kolonialismus entstanden sei. Das Problem mit dieser Ansicht ist nur: Historisch gesehen sind Eroberung und politische Dominanz etwas sehr Übliches. Die moderne Ausbreitung des Imperialismus kommt dagegen mit der britischen Herrschaft.

Der Band kombiniert diese Paragrafen mit Gramscis Texten aus der Zeit vor seiner Haft, die sich mit der sogenannten Südfrage in Italien befassen. Damit war das Problem der »Entwicklung« des bäuerlichen Südens Italiens gemeint, der im Gegensatz zum industrialisierten Norden des Landes als »rückständig« gesehen wurde. Gerade Gramsci verband damit nicht nur das Problem eines quasi-kolonialen, ökonomischen und politischen Verhältnisses des Nordens zum Süden des Landes, sondern auch die Frage der Mobilisierung der bäuerlichen Bevölkerung auf Seiten des Proletariats. Gramsci benutzte diese Begriffe wie auch andere immer in analytischer und strategischer Absicht.

Chibber entkräftet die These, wonach das Kapital bei seiner Ankunft in der kolonialen Welt seine universalisierende Mission – die Mehrwertproduktion – aufgegeben habe. „Was jedoch unter der Herrschaft des Kapitals universalisiert wird, ist nicht das Streben nach einer konsensuellen und integrierenden politischen Ordnung, sondern der Zwang der Marktabhängigkeit“, so Chibber. Kapitalismus bedeutet Abhängigkeit vom Markt. Dem widerspricht nicht das Fortbestehen archaischer Machtverhältnisse, der Rückgriff auf traditionelle Symbole, die Stabilität von Bündnissen auf der Basis von Kastenzugehörigkeit oder Verwandtschaft – all dies lässt sich mit der weltumspannenden Tendenz des Kapitals in Einklang bringen.

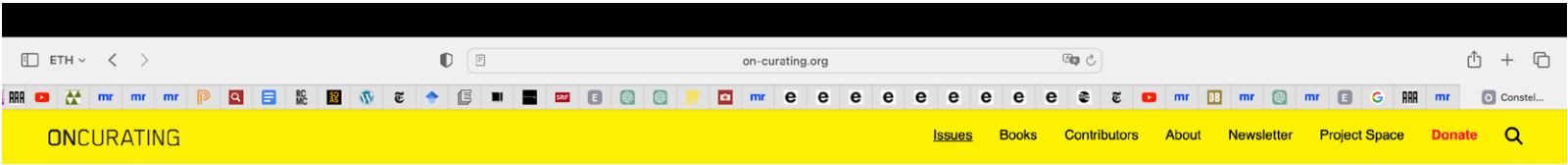
Du hast uns Künstlern ja frei gelassen, welche geographische Gegend, welche Objekte wir auswählen wollen. Wir haben eine gemeinsame Leidenschaft für die japanische Kultur, die der schweizerischen ja sehr ähnlich ist. Die Ausenprojektion war quasi Deine Idee, Du wolltest nicht auf der offensichtlich Seite profilieren, sondern auf der Eingangsseite, die ja wiederum selber ein Gesicht ist. Die Türe ist ein Mund, die Augen sind die Fenster, durch die sieht man hinein, man wirft aber durch sie auch Blicke in die Welt hinaus. Das ist dann gestaffelt mit der Maske hinten im Haus. Weiter ist der Körper unser Haus, das Hirn ist dahinter, und wir reden, *personae*, das Wort *Person* kommt vom Durch-tönen, man nimmt andere Menschen durch die Stimme und die *persona* wahr. Dann hat Dave Lang Projektionsabszeichnungen gemacht, Tamara Voser ein Budget, Metallteile wurden gezeichnet und geschweisst.

Ich wurde ein bisschen nervös, weil an der Technik bis zum Schluss gearbeitet werden musste.



To curate, to shape a program, always means to include and represent and thereby, by definition, also to exclude. Every curatorial attitude is based on a narrative. Even if this narrative is only a horizon, and the curatorial self-image is a moderating, rather than a determining gesture, the HKW still remains a particular institutional framework to which curators are committed. Whatever efforts are made to share or abolish interpretative sovereignty, and thus overcome colonial structures or discursive affiliation, each project will produce new inclusions or exclusions. What is needed is a radical transparency, a disclosure of selection criteria and curatorial choices, which lay open the narrative, while at the same time also serving as references to other practices, other communities, other languages, and horizons of experience that might remain hidden. An authoritative truth might thus become a narrative position, which can be discussed and challenged – until it is changed again.





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Interviewed by Gőzde Filinta

## Constellations of Knowledges: Annette Bhagwati

Gőzde Filinta

3 March 2020

Gőzde Filinta: What is your professional background?

**Anette Bhagwati:** My professional practice began as an assistant to the department of exhibition in film and media in the early 1990s at Haus der Kulturen Welt (HKW), a multidisciplinary cultural institution in Berlin. I studied in Germany and the UK at the School of Oriental African Studies (SOAS). I’m an art historian, anthropologist of art, and geographer.

In the year 2000, I became the deputy head of the visual arts exhibition department at HKW and stayed until 2006. In conjunction with external curators I managed and oversaw numerous exhibitions that looked at rising and emerging contemporary art scenes from specific regions like Iran or China. Exhibitions included China-Between Past and Future, DisORIENTATION: Contemporary Arab Artists in the Middle East.

In 2006, I left HKW for family reasons and moved to Canada for 6 years, where I worked as an affiliate professor at Concordia University in the Department of Art History. In my teaching and research I focused on exhibition studies, curatorial studies and global art.

In 2012, I returned to Berlin and joined the HKW again, this time as the project director of long-term curatorial research projects, including ‘The Anthropocene Project.’ I managed the project, devising the overall concept together with the artistic director and initiator of ‘The Anthropocene Project’, Mihaela

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Issue 48

Zurich Issue: Dark Matter, Grey Zones, Red Light and Bling Bling

by Ronald Kolb and Dorothee Richter

Editorial

Eva Maria Würth interviewed by Dorothee Richter

Between Art and Politics: Eva-Maria Würth

Giovanna Bragaglia, Miwa Negoro, and Camille Reigl

I might be wrong: Focus on Off-Spaces—Unravelling Success in a Discursive Series

by Brandy Butler, Yara Dulac Gisler, Deborah Joyce Holman, and Sarah Owens

A discussion on Blackness and the Arts in Switzerland

by Jose Cáceres Mardones

In Search of the Locality of Globalization—Ursula Blemann’s Postcolonial Critique

by Pablo Müller

Dead End?

by Tanja Trampe

CAN I WORK LIKE THIS? In Search of Presence in Pandemic Times

Interviewed by Ronald Kolb

Nadja Baldini

Interviewed by Dorothee Richter

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J. D. Hill and T. M. Wilson

tics.

As we anticipated in our introduction to volume 9 (Hill and Wilson 2002), critical analyses of identity politics have continued to form a major focus for *Identities*. But in some respects an interesting distinction has emerged both in the essays recently published in the journal, and in essays to come in this and later volumes. “Identity politics” is one way we suggest to view how culture and identity, variously perceived to be traditional, modern, radical, local, regional, religious, gender, class, and ethnic, are articulated, constructed, invented, and commodified as the means to achieve political ends. In this sense we see identity politics as discourse and action within public arenas of political and civil society, wherein culture is used to subvert, support, protect, and attack, and where identity cannot be understood without some recourse to wider theorizing and comparisons of the institutions, practices, and ideologies of national states, governments, political parties, transnational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and international and supranational organizations, like the United Nations and the European Union. We contrast this with the “politics of identity,” which, while overlapping in real terms with the type of identity politics just suggested, here refers more to issues of personal and group power, found within and across all social and political institutions and collectivities, where people sometimes choose, and sometimes are forced, to interact with each other in part on the basis of their shared, or divergent, notions of their identities. The politics of identity can take place in any social setting, and are often best and first recognized in domains of the private, the subaltern, the subversive, where culture may be the best way or means to express one’s loss or triumph, whereas identity politics depend to a great deal on institutions and application of economic and political power, within and sometimes across generally accepted administrative boundaries.

We recognize that these are relative types of political action and ideas, which are linked if not motivated by what are perceived by self and group as “identities.” We also see that they are related to each other: one does not exist in isolation from the other, and both hinge on power relations. “Identity politics” refers mainly to the “top down” processes whereby various political, economic, and other social entities attempt to mold collective identities, based on ethnicity, race, language, and place, into relatively fixed and “naturalized” frames for understanding political action and the body politic. Such “natural,” in some cases “primordial” categories (in contradistinction to “modern” categories) can be approached in many ways, as can be seen through the analyses of our contributors: for example, as fetishized, commoditized, nationalized, exoticized, folkloricized, and so on. The “politics of identity” refers to a more “bottom up” process through which local people challenge, subvert, or negotiate culture and identity and contest structures of power and wealth that constrain their social lives.

While “identity politics” is a type of formal, structural, and public politics, practiced by governments, parties, and corporate institutions, in the political arenas of cities, regions, and states, the “politics of identity” refers more to political

Identity Politics and the Politics of Identities

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practices and values that are based on subscription or ascription to various and often overlapping social and political identities. These politics of identity have been the chief focus of contributions to this journal since its inception, in part because ethnographers have increasingly examined the interplay of power, culture, and identity in the everyday life of individuals and communities, in the interstitial spaces and dechronologized times of recent local and global transformations. However, we notice too in the pages of *Identities* an increased interest in the institutions and policies of state and international agencies, as they are brought to bear on a broad range of social processes, such as indigenous movements, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, diasporas and migrants, and territoriality.

These two ways of approaching the global and more local intersections of culture and power, often understood and discussed in societal circles as well as academic ones in terms of “identities,” have both been strong themes in the *Identities* essays of volume 9 and they continue apace in volume 10. The essays in this issue, volume 10, number 1, lean strongly in the direction of critical analyses of “identity politics.” Rebecca Overmyer-Velázquez, for example, is concerned in her essay on “The Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples” with critiquing the biases toward nation-states and individualism in UN and other international agencies. She demonstrates how these biases limit the potential usefulness of international law

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„SOUVENIR: ist eine schöne Sache oder ein Foto. Ich habe ein Oma-Foto, und ist Souvenir, und ich schaue. Weil Oma ist in Rumänien.“ (Glantschnig 2010)

Was ein Wiener Schulkind mit „Migrationshintergrund“ als Souvenir definiert, würde die kulturwissenschaftliche Fachliteratur wohl eher als *Memento* bezeichnen, als Gegenstand mit einer tiefen persönlichen Bedeutung, der vom Besitzenden meist nicht käuflich erworben wurde. Der Begriff *Souvenir* hingegen, so die Experten, meint ein kommerziell hergestelltes, überall erkanntes und in der Regel gekauftes Objekt. Es steht im Spannungsfeld zwischen Individuum und Kollektiv, zwischen Einzelstück und Kommerz, zwischen Lokaliät und Mundialität. Souvenirs sind, wie der Designkritiker Volker Fischer es formuliert, eine „Sollbruchstelle des Authentischen“.

We first talked about souvenirs with Debasish Borah that said the museums shop is the epidome of institutions in a capitalist world and reflects upon the objects shown in the museum. He asks the question of the original and the copy: Which one is more valuable? The epidome of an souvenir is to create memento but isn't it the same for an object in a museum. Why are the objects in a museum so valuable anyways?

https://edoc.unibas.ch/54288/1/20170213\_diss\_nyffenegger\_franziska.pdf

https://on-curating.org/issue-48-reader/annette-baghwarti.html

Jonathan Hill, Thomas Wilson (2003) Identity Politics and the Politics of Identities, Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 10:1, 1-8, DOI:10.1080/10702890304336



**memento (n.)**

late 14c., "Psalm cxxxi in the Canon of the Mass" (which begins with the Latin word *Memento* and in which the dead are commemorated), from Latin *memento* "remember," second person singular imperative of *meminisse* "to remember, recollect, think of, bear in mind," a reduplicated form, related to *mens* "mind," from PIE root **\*men-** (1) "to think." Meaning "a hint or suggestion to awaken memory, a reminder, an object serving as a warning" is from 1580s; sense of "keepsake" is recorded by 1768.

also from **late 14c.**

Musealization of Objects: Art History versus Cultural History?/Objekte im Museum: Kunstgeschichte versus Kulturgeschichte?05

Annette Bhagwati

Musealization of Objects: Art History versus Cultural History

Art and Artifact – The Plural Nature of the Object at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver

It is a well established idea that the way an object is read informs the strategies of its representation. Over time, this situation may change through new readings of objects or new types of objects that demand new approaches – while these new objects may not even be canonized yet. Both cases pose a considerable curatorial challenge that forces us to critically review established practices of collection and presentation.

Since the »discovery« of so-called »Primitive art« by Western avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century, both ethnological museums and museums of cultural history have grappled with the question of whether objects should be presented as art or artifact or as evidence of cultural history. The attention to formal-aesthetic qualities of objects of African or Native American provenance inspired by the engaged interest of artists such as Braque or Picasso – canonized by an emerging art market and later conceptualized within the discipline of »Anthropology of Art« – impelled a range of museums to highlight artistic quality and individual skill with the development and appropriation of new modes of display. It became common practice to combine representational strategies from cultural history and anthropology – such as the contextualization of the display by means of elaborate texts, images, films, and, more recently, the installation of multimedia stations – with strategies characteristic for art museums such as lighting, spacing or placement. This hybrid practice ostensibly served a common purpose: to enable a full appreciation of the formal qualities of the object displayed.

In the late 1980s to early 1990s, several dramatic shifts and developments introduced a new set of challenges to museums – challenges that continue to pervade the debate today. These changes were driven both by new attention to non-canonized cultural expressions, and by new approaches in cultural and art theory (post-colonial discourse, global art studies, critical museology, etc.).

In reflecting on the impact of cultural developments on research, exhibition, and collecting practices of museums of cultural history, Charles Ardouin, head of the Africa section of the British Museum, described the main challenges to his department as, firstly, the integration of evidence of cultural change in the collection (pop culture, tourist art, urban cultures, or hybrid forms resulting from intercultural exchange) and, secondly, the recognition of a blossoming creativity among new generations of contemporary African artists, the growth of the African Diaspora overseas, and the acquisition and display of contemporary art.<sup>1</sup>

Ardouin’s reflections hold equally true for museums dedicated to other regions of the world, as does the problem of coherence he sees – how to reconcile new or not-yet-canonized categories of objects with the existing logic or master narrative of a collection. Ardouin writes: »Far from being a mere mechanical addition to the collection of another category of material culture, the focus on African art opens a complex and important area of the debate on reshaping the ways we display and discourse on cultures in a world-wide context. [...] Should one interpret the whole collection – cultural history as well as contemporary art – as being art works [...] or at the contrary should the multiple interpretative links offered by the anthropology collection be used in conjunction with [...] contemporary art works for exploring the rich cultural history and creativity of the African continent [...]?»<sup>2</sup> The Africa Department of the British

Museum opted for a compromise with the opening of a new wing – the Sainsbury Art Galleries – where works by »contemporary artists [are shown that are] inspired, informed or simply comment upon African cultural traditions«.<sup>3</sup>

Problems with this conceptual intertwining of heterogeneous narratives become immediately obvious: Where do African artists who do not comment on African culture fit in? Or new forms of artistic expression, such as popular art or tourist art, that are not covered in the canon of treasured »pre-contact« collections established by the other galleries of the Africa section.

In my paper, I want to present a museum that has in my view been able to successfully integrate various categories of objects into a consistent strategy of collection and exhibition: the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver.

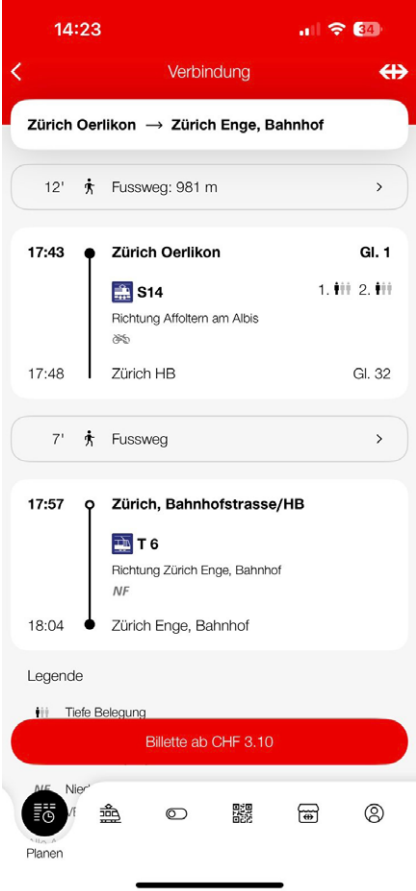
Beginning with an analysis of the permanent exhibition, I will argue that the MOA’s curatorial approach is informed by an understanding of objects that significantly differs from established conventions. My investigation is inspired by space syntax theory, as well as material-semiotic and textual approaches pioneered in studies of material culture and further developed in museum studies, which allow for the reading of an object like a text for its narrative structures and strategies. In extending the notion of an object to complex structures such as a museum, »the textual approach can involve analysis of the spatial narratives set up by the relationship of one gallery or object to another, or it might consider the narrative strategies and voices implicit in labeling, lighting or sound.«<sup>4</sup>

The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia

With its iconic modernist architecture designed by the renowned Canadian architect Arthur Erickson, a collection spanning more than 37,000 ethnographic works, and – not least – its spectacular location on a cliff overhanging the Pacific Ocean, the MOA in Vancouver is certainly one of the major attractions of the Canadian West Coast. Administratively, the museum is part of the Faculty of Arts at the University of British Columbia, and its focus is on the cultural communities and First Nations peoples of British Columbia. From the 70s onward the MOA has built a strong reputation, not only for its impressive collection but also for its innovative museum politics, characterized by close collaborations with First Nation peoples and the systematic integration of indigenous people into all areas of museum work (collection, conservation, curation). In addition to artists’ residencies, the MOA conducts participatory action research programs, develops virtual archives for family heritages, and collaborates with First Nations curators in expanding the collection and experimenting with new formats of exhibition and display.<sup>5</sup>

Museum tour and exhibition analysis

Let us begin with a quick tour of the museum. The focus will be on the analysis of narrative strategies as they appear in the spatial design of the museum and the objects on display. Our tour starts in the garden of the museum. The modernist style of the impressive main building with its clear-cut concrete pillars and a fifteen-meter-high glass facade echoes the modernist consensus on art museum architecture – a clear departure from the traditional treasure chest



museumrietberg

VORTRAGSSAAL

Factsheet

Der Vortragssaal in der denkmalgeschützten Park-Villa Rieter ist idyllisch im Rieterpark, einem der schönsten Parks in Zürich, gelegen. Der moderne Saal verfügt über eine Bühne, eine feste Bestuhlung und eine vielfältige Technikinfrastruktur. Verbinden Sie Ihren Event mit einem Spaziergang durch den Park und einer Führung durch unsere Ausstellung.

EIGNUNG

Präsentation, Vortrag, Lesung, Konzert  
täglich, 7 bis 24 Uhr

KAPAZITÄT

145 Personen

INFRASTRUKTUR

Vortragssaal, 120 m<sup>2</sup>  
inkl. Reinigungspauschale und technischer Grundausstattung: Beamer mit Projektion auf Wand, Rednerpult mit Mikrofon, HDMI und VGA-Anschluss (kein Adapter für Mac vorhanden), ein Handmikrofon, drei Headsets, Deckenbeleuchtung, DVD und Blueray, kurze Einführung. Technische Betreuung nicht inklusive.

Feste Bestuhlung

inklusive

145 Sitzplätze, schräg abfallende Sitzreihen

inklusive

Bühne: ca. 13m<sup>2</sup>

inklusive

5.5m x 2.3m, Höhe 0.8m

inklusive

Personenlift

inklusive

Toiletten

inklusive

Künstlergarderobe

inklusive

Tische

inklusive

1.7 x 0.85m, Höhe 0.74m, 2 Stück

inklusive

ORGANISATION & PERSONAL

Organisationspauschale CHF 250  
(zwei Besprechungen vor Ort à einer Stunde inbegriffen, weitere Besprechungen: CHF 80 pro Stunde)

Anlassleitung

CHF 80/h

Sicherheitsverantwortlicher

CHF 80/h

Techniker

CHF 120/h

Ummöblierung, Aufsicht, Catering

CHF 60/h

Zuschlag nach 22h sowie Sonn- und Feiertage ganztags

20%

Die Einsatzstunden der Mitarbeiter werden den effektiven Einsatzzeiten entsprechend verrechnet.

Alle Preise inkl. MwSt. Preisänderungen vorbehalten.

Museum Rietberg, Events  
Gablerstrasse 15, 8002 Zürich

Tel. 044 415 31 11, www.rietberg.ch/events,  
events.rietberg@zuerich.ch

the auditorium is really not the greatest space to experience at Rietberg.

Is this the place of exchange?

https://rietberg.ch/files/Museum/Tagen-und-Feiern/PDFs/Factsheet\_Vortragssaal.pdf





The auditorium of the museum is not a nice place. Its hidden in the Basement of Parkvilla Rieter. Definitely not the place to have lively events.  
Auditorium in the Villa Rieter  
<https://rietberg.ch/tagenfeiern/vortragssaal>

Beltz\_017.pdf  
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humanism equals science has been significantly challenged. In recent years, therefore, many European museums have made efforts to reinvent themselves. Programmatic names such as “world museum” or “museum of cultures” suggest dialogue and multivocality, and convey an intention to interact with the various “communities” involved (above all, the societies of origin) on an equal footing. These decolonising measures, however, have – often rightly – been dismissed as a purely cosmetic exercise or (empty) rhetoric.<sup>1</sup>

This essay presents a model for museum practice in Switzerland that has largely remained outside the current debate and the media spotlight because the institution has only indirect links to colonialism and is more firmly located within the context of art. For these very reasons,

1 Cf., among others, Kravagna, 2015.

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as they offer important perspectives that could substantially expand the discussion in ethnological museums.<sup>2</sup> Swiss museums are not generally regarded as repositories of treasures from the colonial era. Switzerland did not have any colonies, nor did it seek to acquire such territories. One might think, therefore, that the subject of decolonisation has no relevance to the country,<sup>3</sup> but closer inspection soon reveals that colonialism is indeed an issue for Swiss museums. Because although Switzerland did not have any colonies of its own, it was involved in the trading of colonial commodities and maintained trade offices in many parts of the world. Switzerland even played a key role in areas such as the silk and cotton trades, and as a strategic partner, it supported the European colonial powers in their expansionist efforts. The slave trade also falls within the scope of this topic.<sup>4</sup>

The focus of the following analysis is on the Museum Rietberg, which as a museum of non-European art was not founded until 1952. At first glance, therefore, it does not appear to be burdened with the problematic past of colonialism. However, large parts of the museum’s collections date from the colonial era or were acquired during that period, often using profits derived from overseas trade.

2 This article is also a review of and outlook for my years of work at the Museum Rietberg, where I am currently employed as Curator of South and South East Asian Art, but also chair the Curatorial Board, head the Department of Art Education, as well as serving as Deputy Director. My focus on

Switzerland is all about indirect contribution to colonialism: They profited from the onsided trade.  
Promote Cooperation!  
Collecting, researching and collaborating in the postcolonial, digital age, Johannes Beltz, Tübingen D, 2021

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**VILLA SCHÖNBERG**  
Gablerstrasse 14

**REMISE, ATELIER**  
Gablerstrasse 13

**VILLA WESENDONCK, CAFE**  
Gablerstrasse 15

**HAUPTTEINGANG, SMARAGD**

**SOMMERPAVILLON**

**PARK-VILLA RIETER, VORTRAGSSAAL**  
Seestrasse 110

**Tram 7**

**Seestrasse**

**Gablerstrasse**

**Richtung Stadtzentrum und Bahnhof Enge**

**Richtung Kilchberg, Thalwil etc.**

**1** Zufahrt ausschliesslich für speziell grosse Anlieferungen und Park-Villa Rieter! Die Einfahrt an der Seestrasse 110 ist eng, keine Anhänger möglich. Max. Grösse Lastwagen: L = 9,75m, B = 2,6m, H = 4m.

**2** Vorplatz Max. Belastung: 20t

**3** Warenlift Max. Grösse von Kisten: L = 2,68m, B = 1,9m, H = 3,55m Max. Belastung: 2t

**4** Terrasse/Sommerpavillon hinter Villa Wesendonck Max. Belastung: 3.5t

**5** Hauptzufahrt für Anlieferungen (kleinere Lieferwagen) via Seestrasse/Gablerstrasse

**6** Masse Einfahrt: B = 2,6m, H = 3,8m

**7** Haupteingang Museum Rietberg Max. Grösse von Kisten: L = 2,68m, B = 1,9m, H = 3,55m

The situation plans of museums, parks, zoos, I like them. I should start collecting them.  
I think I've got some you may not yet own... you wanna trade?  
[https://rietberg.ch/files/Museum/Tagen-und-Feiern/PDFs/Factsheet\\_Vortragssaal.pdf](https://rietberg.ch/files/Museum/Tagen-und-Feiern/PDFs/Factsheet_Vortragssaal.pdf)

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value (n.)

c. 1300, "price equal to the intrinsic worth of a thing;" late 14c., "degree to which something is useful or estimable," from Old French *valere* "worth, price, moral worth, standing, reputation" (13c.), noun use of fem. past participle of *valoir* "be worth," from Latin *valere* "be strong, be well; be of value, be worth" (from PIE root *\*wal-* "to be strong"). The meaning "social principle" is attested from 1918, supposedly borrowed from the language of painting. *Value judgment* (1889) is a loan-translation of German *Werturteil*.  
also from **c. 1300**

valere

Latin

be strong; be of value

valoir

Old French

be worth

value

Old French

worth, price, moral worth; standing, reputation

value

c.1300

price equal to the intrinsic worth of a thing; degree to which something is useful or estimable

value (n.)

exchange (n.)

late 14c., *eschange*, "act of reciprocal giving and receiving," from Anglo-French *eschange*, Old French *exchange* (Modern French *échange*), from Late Latin *exambiare*, from *exambiare*, from Latin *ex* "out" (see **ex-**) + *ambiare* "barter" (see **change** (v.)). The practice of merchants or lenders meeting at certain places to exchange bills of debt led to the meaning "building for mercantile business" (1580s).  
also from **late 14c.**

exchange (v.)

late 15c. (Caxton), in commerce, "to part with in return for some equivalent, transfer for a recompense, barter," from Old French *eschangier* "exchange, barter" (Modern French *échanger*), from Vulgar Latin *\*exambiare* (source of Italian *scambiare*); see **exchange** (n.). Non-commercial sense of "to give and receive reciprocally" is from c. 1600. Related: *Exchanged*; *exchanging*.  
also from **late 15c.**

Entries linking to exchange

change (v.)

c. 1200, "to alter, make different, change" (transitive); early 13c. as "to substitute one for another;" mid-13c. as "to make (something) other than what it was, cause to turn or pass from one state to another;" from late 13c. as "to become different, be altered" (intransitive), from Old French *changier* "to change, alter; exchange, switch," from Late Latin *combiare* "to barter, exchange," extended form of Latin *cambiare* "to exchange, barter." This is held to be of Celtic origin, from PIE root *\*kembh-* "to bend, crook" (with a sense evolution perhaps from "to turn" to "to change," to "to barter"); cognate with Old Irish *comm* "crooked, curved," Middle Irish *cimb* "tribute," *cimbid* "prisoner;" see **cant** (n.2).

From c. 1300 as "undergo alteration, become different." In part an abbreviation of *exchange*. From late 14c. especially as "to give an equivalent for in smaller parts of the same kind" (money). The meaning "to take off clothes and put on other ones" is from late 15c. Related: *Changed*; **changing**. To *change (one's) mind* is from 1590s.

The objects at Rietberg got detached from their symbolic value – created from religious, ritualistic or everyday context – and imposed by a capitalist value – created by collecting, accumulating the objects in Europe. Is there even a chance for their symbolic value to exist at Rietberg?  
<https://www.etymonline.com>







Johannes Itten's exhibition practice followed Eduard von der Heydt's idea of *ars una*. This idea has persisted over many years. In the context of international attention on colonial issues, the question also arises here of how to handle such a collection. You are breaking with the exhibition practices of your predecessors, for example, with the exhibition “Wege der Kunst” (Paths of Art). We are interested in whether Itten's exhibition practice is still current and contemporary, what the alternatives are, and which direction you intend to take. This also relates to the question of whether the designation of the Rietberg Museum as an art museum or, more precisely, a world art museum is accurate, and to what extent the Rietberg Museum differs from the Kunsthaus or the galleries in Löwenbräu.

That strikes at the heart of the considerations we are currently addressing, planning, and taking steps towards. We want to address precisely that and thus question how to handle the collections in order to develop new approaches. We are currently working on a new concept for the permanent collection presentations. In other words, rethinking our collections based on exactly this question we are asking ourselves.

To go back to the beginnings of the museum, you are absolutely right: it was the concept of Eduard von der Heydt and Johannes Itten's *Ars Una*, which at the time was a quite revolutionary step. In other cities, ethnological museums divided the arts according to an evolutionary logic, ethnographically, among non-stratified societies and so-called “primitive” cultures in Africa, Oceania, and the Northwest Coast. How objects were dealt with has to do with the genesis of these museums.

That was the first step Eduard von der Heydt took in terms of recognizing the objects and their aesthetic content. Influenced greatly by Johannes Itten, the masterpiece narrative also played a significant role. You have probably seen images of the first exhibitions. It is quite clearly a different representation than in ethnographic museums, where attempts are made to portray cultures through objects. However, the object is not the focal point. We see many architectural and exhibition design strategies on how to create this masterpiece narrative. As you can see in the pictures, the objects are placed on a pedestal. They are raised to eye level within a museum. For example, Indian figures were mounted much higher in temples. So the original height is not the museum height. The

idea behind the masterpiece narrative was to isolate the objects, meaning a figure would be placed on a pedestal with plenty of space around it. You could walk around it and examine the object, much like a modern artwork, a three-dimensional piece. The lighting is such that you can appreciate the formal, aesthetic aspects of an object. In other words, everything is focused on seeing.

However, this ultimately underpins a very Western understanding of art. In the early days of collecting, there was a clear focus on sculpture and painting. These are the classics in European art museums. This defines the canon of art. We also have architecture as a third major category. But if you look at today's collection, for example, in the display depot, there are textiles, graphics, and other things that would typically be housed in an ethnological or decorative arts museum, but not in the main exhibition rooms.

It must be understood that Eduard von der Heydt never conducted field research or research. He never traveled to the countries; he bought on the art market. That means he really operated within this art market logic and was subject to this canon of art. Highlighting the formal aesthetic aspects is an appreciation that I think is very closely related to an artist's intention.

The artist, of course, is also a problematic term, so the one who created the object has had particular thoughts. The creator's thoughts and the interests of the art market can differ. There is definitely the possibility that I misread the object if I do not have enough knowledge of the creator's intention. So, I might interpret it with my Western perspective, as in the case of African art, which often has very clear forms and is therefore perceived as very abstract by Western modernist-trained eyes. These are all categories in which the creator might not describe it that way at all. That is not their intention.

To what extent can or should we consume these objects and artworks, which undoubtedly bear witness to great artistic creation but are actually ritual objects or everyday items, and are thus removed from their context, in the same way we consume art in an art museum?

This is a very important question. Earlier, we passed by numerous masks: they are exemplary for me regarding this question. We see them lined up side by side, but we see only a very small part of what this mask truly signifies. When you examine

the masks closely, you can see holes on the sides. It was a costume attached, as logically one should not recognize who is behind it.

When putting on the masks and costumes, the individuals behind them undergo transformation. Either they represent the transformation or in some ritual contexts, they truly transform into this persona. So something happens to the mask in the process of personification. For the art market (sculpture, painting), this textile part was often cut away. The focus was on the sculptural work of wood. This, in turn, means that when we look at it in the Museum Rietberg without contextual information about how the mask was danced, how it was sung, in what context it was used, we only understand a part of what the creator had in mind when designing the form.

If the creator had crafted an animal figure, for example, a raven mask from the Northwest Coast, only the wood of a giant beak remains in the museum. But historical photographs show that there was something like a feather costume. The creator had the whole thing in mind, and it had to fit together proportionally. But we do not see that because it is missing.

You can appreciate Eduard von Heydt's impulse because he focuses on craftsmanship. However, the question arises about what exactly I am reading and what exactly I am seeing when I look at this object. Why was it made this way? There is still a lot of information missing.

When we talk about artistic intent, the mask was not created as artwork but for a very specific ritual purpose. So, to what extent, especially because, for example, the textile parts are missing, is it justified to consider these objects as art?

As I said, I think both aspects need to be considered together because how it is made also matters. There are individual styles: how this artist, especially at that moment, conceived this mask, for example, was done in a certain cultural context. However, they designed it individually, constrained by the prevailing iconography. The individual style is a question for art history. But you are absolutely right; we cooperate, for example, with partners in Africa or Asia, where the question of how to deal with things arises. They are artistically crafted but clearly have a spiritual identity. For us, the question arises: What do we call them? What goes on a label?

Exactly, that would be the next question. How do you handle information? When we look at such works, do we not need much more background? It is generally difficult to draw conclusions about cultural content from individual objects. In an article by you, I read “the object as a focal point, as a contact zone,” and that information can then revolve around it. Specifically, how do you deal with this at the Museum Rietberg? Our first experience

here was similar for everyone: We come here, we see many impressively crafted objects, about which we can read a little, including the century and geographical origin. What do we do with it now?

This is exactly one of the areas where we are trying to develop many new models. It is a large apparatus here, and it takes a long time to get it started.

The term the question revolves around is “multiperspectivity.”

Multiperspectivity precisely means that you can indeed look at an object in terms of its formal-aesthetic value, also in the artist's interest, but contextual knowledge is at least as important.

It can also be museum knowledge; there is currently a lot of that. We have minimal information about the context, but then we have who donated it, from which endowment, from which collection, and what the inventory number is. The museum information was given to the object at some point, but mostly it didn't have an inventory number because it was never intended as a museum exhibit.

I always call it a thing on purpose because it has so many different meanings inscribed in it. Our task as a museum, I believe, in the future is to unravel it again. To make visible these different layers of history that have been inscribed. If I don't make them visible, I'm telling everything from one perspective, and many other perspectives that are important are left out.

How do I talk about things? How do I want to deal with them later? I have to unravel that first, which is why “Ways of Art” is, for example, a first step for us to uncover what is actually in our objects. From there, we want to develop how we want and should deal with them in the future.

Do you conduct research within the museum? Who is involved in it? Are there different categories, and how do these groups work together? Is research already directly linked to an execution idea, or is it first just a question, for example, of provenance? Are all research projects always associated with exhibition curation?

Yes, that's a very good question. Provenance research doesn't necessarily lead to an exhibition right away. Because we are an art museum, provenance research has a much longer history with us than with museums with comparable collections. This goes back to 2007 for us. Provenance research is ongoing. As soon as we are offered legacies and donations, we have been scrutinizing where the objects come from extremely carefully for decades before accepting such offers. But beyond that, provenance research is fundamental research to uncover these layers of history.

Further research is closely related to exhibitions. Once there's an exhibition idea, curators, who are all research scientists, work on it. They primarily research objects

within the context of exhibitions.

A part of the research that has significantly increased is collaborative research. We have this, for example, with Benin, where we approach things together with origin societies and bring knowledge together. It can also be the case that there are disagreements about it or an acceptance that different perspectives must be made visible simultaneously when presenting this object.

Perhaps a follow-up question on the concept of “multiperspectivity.” If the information comes from the museum, and research also takes place there, what possibilities are there to involve other actors? It might be interesting to invite visitors to participate.

On Monday, we had an interesting conversation with the PhD candidate and artist from India, Debasish Borah, who has some provocative positions and has formulated the concept of “gossip.” In a certain way, he practices this “gossip” in museums. He wants such artistic positions to also influence curatorial processes.

Of course, we always strive to include contemporary perspectives. In the digital space, many opportunities will arise in the future. We are in the process of rethinking the “Visitor Journey.”

I speak for Marketing and PR. I am not involved in art education or curatorial work. What interests me is how visitors become aware of us, how they are guided through our premises, through the building - also online, digitally - and how they then, after completing their museum visit, deal with this information, what they take away from it, how they share it. I haven't quite understood “gossip.”

I think Debasish Borah doesn't mean “gossiping” in the sense of going home after a museum visit and gossiping about it. He is in the museum, and on-site, he invents his story about an object and tells it to himself or a friend. He mentioned the example that a boat means something entirely different to him than it does to us.

I see. I believe that with the development of social media and the digital realm, entirely new possibilities have emerged that museums didn't have 20-30 years ago. If you compare the classic museum visit in the 80s and 90s with today, the interaction with the audience, from my perspective as a marketing person, is much more interesting because people, including visitors, produce content. You can see this on many museum channels: visitors who sometimes also stage themselves with art and present their own perspective.

I think museum visitors have become more demanding simply because there is so much available, and every museum tries to offer the best experience. On the other hand, it is no longer enough just to walk

through the museum and look at art as something beautiful but also to question what it has to do with oneself. With social media, it has become very easy to share in public what one associates with the museum. I believe that the museum can only benefit from this interaction.

We are currently sitting in a room that addresses this interaction and the opinions of visitors in a very analog way. We collect opinions and inputs and incorporate them again. This shouldn't be just a gesture; it's very important to us. This room is the endpoint of the “Ways of Art” exhibition, but it also serves as a starting point for the next steps. Not only the need but also the desire of a visitor to connect what they have seen with themselves and to reflect on it has grown significantly, which we see as an incredible enrichment. We see that people look at something, and we would love to get inside their heads and see what they think about it. Of course, we wonder if they have understood our intention, but on the other hand, criticism is very exciting for us. It helps us see what works or where we have also failed.

Regarding multiperspectivity, we have, for example, the African Art Archive; I don't know if you've seen it. This is precisely a project where, in the end, we try to do exactly that - make various approaches visible simultaneously with a small collection. It is designed and programmed so that if a gossip, that is, an individual perspective, were to come, we would actively invite such perspectives to be uploaded. This is, of course, a question for the curatorial filter, i.e., how does the visitor and their gossip get on there? But there are definitely such possibilities, for example, if you look at the website, you can click on a scholarly article or on social media.

All of this is, for me, the nucleus that is forming. This is important to me because a work in the museum is not the endpoint but rather another station, a chapter in this biography, which ends differently depending on the object. It may be that the work leaves the museum again.

But everything should be alive. We strongly pursue the goal of a living archive that is continually enriched through exchange and new perspectives.

You mentioned that, in the case of Benin, you talk to local people, exchange information, and learn a lot from each other. What interests us is who you are talking to? What professions or positions do the people involved have? Are they part of an institution?

We actively established the Benin Initiative in Switzerland because we didn't want to wait until we received a restitution request here at the museum. But that wasn't even a question: we have objects from Benin, we are aware of the international discussion, and we wanted to research ourselves which objects, if any, are connected to the



1837 punitive expedition.

It was clear from the beginning that we didn't want to conduct this research on our own but rather with partners from Benin and Nigeria.

Of course, the question of who to approach is crucial. We start from these objects and their many stories. Who is connected to these objects?

We have representatives from the palace who bring their perspective based on their iconography or history. Their knowledge of materiality is also important to us, as well as what this object meant in the past.

We are also in contact with historians from the university and representatives of the National Commission of Museums of Monuments. This is about the question of restitution: Benin is still a kingdom, but within Nigeria's federal structure. From Nigeria's perspective, it is a national treasure, so in many cases, the nation is the interlocutor for Europeans. This is not always compatible between the National Commission and Benin: the Beninese say it is actually ours, and Nigeria says it is actually state-owned. We have invited both.

We have invited guilds, the craftsmen who still make Benin bronzes today. They provided us with fascinating insights into topics we were not aware of.

There is always talk about the importance of the loss of the visual memory. The English thoroughly cleaned up and took everything that was in the palace to England, so the visual references were missing. This is naturally portrayed as a huge loss, which it is.

However, what the guild members told us is that the King of Benin also had very strict regulations, and the ancestors of the guild members were strongly restricted in their freedom. They had to adhere exactly to the guidelines. But they were artistically gifted and would have liked to do something else, but they couldn't. According to the guild members, it was almost a liberation, even though the ancestors started from nothing because suddenly they could do what they wanted. However, they also had to attract new customers. A completely different practice developed from this. We learned this mainly through the guilds.

These were the large groups that we set up in a broad and diverse way.

What is the museum's target audience? Thus, the question of what is the museum's goal? What justifies the existence of such a museum in the first place?

What is it about? Is it about research? Is it about education? Is it about the production of knowledge? That would also be research. What is it really about, and does marketing only target visitors? Or is it also about completely different target groups?

Generally, the marketing of a museum

is there to attract visitors. Whether it is existing visitors or new visitors. That's what advertising is for. The museum belongs to the city of Zurich, so we address everyone.

It is a public mandate, which is really important.

Exactly, we have a public mandate. We stay within our theme because we are a museum of non-European art, and that may not interest everyone.

We aspire to communicate as broadly as possible: as soon as a temporary exhibition opens, we promote it in Zurich and beyond. We also try to reach specific target groups more strongly for each exhibition. For example, with the Kimono exhibition, it is about Japan, so we know it might interest people who are into fashion, design, Japanese culture, and Asia in general.

My job as a marketing manager is to attract more visitors and increase ticket sales. Curators, on the other hand, have different tasks.

Exactly, so maybe again, as a museum, we are part of the International Conference of Museums, ICOM, which you probably know, and most private and all public museums are members. At ICOM, there are four major areas for museums, starting from collections.

It is important to note that a museum always develops around a collection. There are museums that don't have a collection, but that's very rare and would be better described as an art house or art hall.

Starting from collections, there are four classical areas that are expanding more and more.

The first one is quite classic, "Preservation": The museum's task is to preserve things. The stakeholders are all those who are concerned with preservation.

The second is "Collecting": Traditionally, a museum always has a collection mandate. This is changing significantly right now. Museums don't want to invest money in objects but use it for communication.

The third is "Exhibiting": The objects should not be kept in an archive or storage but, due to the public mandate, should be made visible.

The fourth is "Mediating": I think this is currently the largest area that is gaining enormous weight, while the other classical areas are receding into the background.

This defines the range of stakeholders. We are obliged to our sponsor, the city of Zurich, in the public mandate, which prescribes these four areas.

As soon as the public mandate changes and it's not just about showing things but also about mediating, the museum's obligations change. We feel it's our duty not just to use this place ex-cathedra and communicate in one direction, but we want to engage in dialogue: We put things up for

debate, we allow ourselves to be criticized, and we address socially relevant questions.

With this fourth area of "mediation," we struggle because it's only one facet of our concern. We want to be a contact zone where we propose various things. But it doesn't end there because we are interested in what it triggers in the visitors.

We want to make progress in our handling of things. This is the major area that occupies museums. Architecturally, it has enormous implications that we can sit here so comfortably. Normally, you stand and move around.

This is also the visitor journey I mentioned. Museums didn't really think about this in the past. It was enough to exhibit something, and then you didn't really know what visitors did with it. Nowadays, with Google reviews, you have a very good insight into how visitors perceived it.

Where does the visitor journey start today?

I am speaking solely from a marketing perspective: It actually begins with how people become aware of the museum. For example, through a flyer, a poster, or hearing about it from someone. Then they visit the website. Typically, the website is the first point of contact nowadays, where people want to learn more and decide whether or not to visit the museum. What will be much more pronounced in the coming years is through channels like YouTube. This means that if you are looking for something on a particular topic or searching on Google, you will come across our content. In the next few years, content will play a very important role for us as we try to communicate our themes in various ways to the outside world and reach people who may not have necessarily come to the Museum Rietberg but who, through Google, search engines, YouTube searches, TikTok videos, Reels, etc., somehow come across a topic related to us.

Does this already lean towards performance marketing?

For example, but it's not exclusively performance marketing. I mean, if you look at the museums' YouTube channels, they don't have hundreds or thousands of views. So the goal is not to achieve hundreds of thousands of views with a video but to communicate the themes so that we reach your generation. We can't do that anymore with traditional publications.

Do you have ideas on how this communication should take place, and have you developed methods for it?

Yes, we're working on it. Organizationally, from an external perspective, what you don't see: where is communication positioned in the hierarchy or in the organizational chart? So what is its importance? This is a very important point. We are an institution. So it's subordinate on the third level, connected to a board of trustees,

for example. First, exhibitions are developed. Normally, even if you have a budget, museums have to change things. Content is developed by curators with experts in the field. Then they have their theme and their objects. Suddenly, even though everything is decided, everything is fixed, and even the architecture is already in place, they realize that everything still needs to be communicated. Then art education is brought in, and they have to figure out how to get this theme, which might not be easy, to everyone who is interested. Visitors notice this. Is it a craft table that I also place next to it? Or was it integrated into the exhibition? Was it part of the planning from the beginning? Do I have communication? Did I incorporate a different perspective from communication from the start? Because curators are experts who focus on whether Artist X and Y are included. Today, it's more important how we represent faces and connect that with Instagram. How do I want to be portrayed, actually? So we have to think completely differently. In recent years, we have made changes; we have removed communication from the board of trustees and now made it part of the executive management, at the very top where strategic-programmatic decisions are made. They now have the same say. Communication is now part of the contact zone, so it's closer to the visitors. Then we also receive more feedback. We have a new position called "Audience Development, Outreach," which doesn't just think in terms of exhibitions but develops formats, such as long-term collaborations with schools, for example. Previously, a school project was small and maybe lasted for an afternoon. Currently, with the "Kimono-Kyoto to Catwalk" exhibition, there is a project on identity and patterns where we collaborate with three schools for over six months. This should also be part of the Living Archives. These are formats that we want to run parallel to exhibitions in the future so that it's not just a gesture. It's a question of impact, how we can continue to be productive.

You mentioned the term "Living Archive," what does that mean?

Our museum is a repository, an archive of stories and things. But these are only valued and serve their purpose in our view when they are brought into exchange. Anyone interested can invest and develop something new. Ideally, this leads to things that we then add to the collection. In the exhibition "Fiction Congo," there were commissioned works by contemporary artists who engaged with the archive and developed works from it. It was the first time we acquired contemporary art because it genetically belongs to our museum. They originated from this archive and are an extension of this archive.

And how do you handle new donations or loans or other acquisitions? We read that you continue to expand your collection. Why?

Outside of our mandate to make purchases because we are a municipal institution.

It's a process. I believe the reality of museums looks a bit different.

Firstly, we have a very small acquisition budget. Most objects have come to us through donations and bequests. We don't have the means to buy. We occasionally try to bid at auctions. We quickly see how easily we are outbid; we can't compete with well-funded buyers.

We acquire 15 - 16 objects every year. We can't afford more. We don't want to expand. When we acquire, it's very targeted, to tell a story.

A museum like this one has developed through various collections that are also very eclectic. That means it's not controlled. If a collector wants to give their giant collection of African combs to the museum, and we agree, then suddenly we might become the museum with the largest European collection of African combs, but that's more influenced by the collector's taste and interest than by us.

We've stopped talking about the museum's collection. We now always talk about the collections.

That's what we are. We are a museum composed of many different collector perspectives.

When a donation is offered to us, we always ask if we can treat it with dignity and appropriateness. So, is there space? Does it fit in? Can it be used for an exhibition? Out of respect for the works.

What's very interesting is, in international comparison, we exhibit almost all objects. In international comparison, where only 5% of the collection is exhibited, here it's 80%. Which is an incredible number.

For conservation reasons, we can't exhibit paintings permanently. But we constantly rearrange. Every two weeks, we have a collection meeting, and we grapple with very difficult considerations.

There are collections that don't fit with us. We don't see a proper thematic context. But we see that the items are excellently crafted. Now a grandchild says, you know what, if you don't take it, I'll throw it away. These are very difficult situations we have. Because we actually say we have a mandate to preserve, but at the same time, we don't want to be the ones who accept things just for the sake of having them, and then they disappear into a box and into storage. What's the point of having it then?

Nevertheless, it is partly about completing a collection.

Exactly, but that's a narrative.

But when it comes to the narrative, what role does ownership play at all? So when you think about the international museum network: to what extent can you think more in terms of object movement?

Theoretically, that would be great. Theoretically, we would be delighted. Practically, you can't imagine how difficult it is. In the three and a half years I've been here, loans have been extremely difficult. When we want to borrow something from the British Library and prove that we're on a hill with sprinkler systems and a fire department nearby. Still, we have to put nine millimeters of glass plus a metal wall around a small object. Currently, there's even discussion about having someone sit next to it throughout the entire exhibition. Otherwise, it won't be loaned.

In the context of the climate discussion, one has to ask whether this is even justifiable?

Exactly, transportation is an extreme CO2 catastrophe. It's not just the crate that travels. The crate has to be built. A showcase must be built. It's calculated per exhibit, if it's normally valuable, at least one courier who travels with it, stays here for a week, then is there for dismantling and travels back for a week. We're talking about one object. Imagine an exhibition with 200 objects! Not always 200 couriers, but sometimes we have setups where there are 18-20 couriers involved.

It's interesting how a museum or an institution like the British Library attaches such immense value to objects. And you're now telling that there are heirs who sometimes throw away entire collections. That's also known with antique furniture, which is sometimes discarded. These are incredibly skillful things.

What value is attributed to an object?

Where does the value come from? How did Eduard von der Heydt collect? He probably collected relatively subjectively and simply took what fit into his collection.

In recent days, we've also talked about Reversed Ethnography, so the question of which objects were even given or sold?

Very variable, you have to say. This also shows the paths of art. We see, for example, migration: China enters Tibet. Many people have to flee, take their belongings with them, and have to sell them. Or the collapse of the Japanese Empire: Many noble families become impoverished, throw their belongings onto the market, and then there are "pivot people" who recognize the potential of Japonism and have a world exhibition. They then interpret it into art and sell it to European traders.

There are always waves, and these depend on when things come onto the market. These values are also created because when supply and demand are right and the most important top pieces are gone, demand rises. Benin is a great example of dark sums being paid because everyone wants to have a part of that royal treasure. It's super interesting to look at how prov-



enance information creates market value. A very interesting study is provenance and the description at Sotheby's. Because that's how values are made.

As a permanent museum, we almost always reject offers for long-term loans from heirs or collectors. For them, it's a shame to leave it unexhibited and they want a long-term loan. However, this increases the value through provenance information and even more so because it becomes visible. The collector can wait for 10 years, and as soon as the market value has risen, take the objects back. And besides, the collector has 10 years of provenance research at the Museum Rietberg.

So where does the value come from now? I mean, where does the demand for certain objects come from in the first place? Why are the things shown here or in the archives considered valuable?

This is highly dependent on discourse. As I mentioned, there is an interaction between gallery owners, dealers, critics, exhibitions, museums. For example, the major Africa exhibition at MoMA in 1935, where ethnologists suddenly find themselves at the Museum of Modern Art, elevated by the nexus with modern art. Suddenly, they are not just ethnologists who can be ticked off by a ship's trader coming from the Congo, but there is a dealer you have to buy it from. You can easily understand that.

There is a whole system in place until today. But it's like with all things that come on the market, you simply need promoters or advertising.

The media also play a role. You could see that, for example, when the Louvre Abu Dhabi had a Da Vinci. Before that, no one talked about it, then a hype was created, and suddenly, it became sought after.

Auction houses then stage the auctions. They hype it up for weeks in advance, really fueling demand. Then the critics are invited - there's a very interesting nexus - for example, Christie's, as an auction house, sets up and co-finances the Art History Department in Doha and advises, surprise, surprise, the sheiks who buy art. The circle is very tight. It doesn't have to be a bad thing, but that's how value can also be created.

Is the collecting mandate a contract with the city, with defined quantities, or how should I imagine it?

It's very administrative but essential. Once a year, the budget for the museum is determined, along with the preamble. It contains all the tasks, framework conditions, and expectations of the museum. This is the basis for arguing the budget because it's part of my mandate. But it's set, I inherited it, and it's written into the museum.

Does it change, or does it always remain the same?

Yes, that's a good question. If it changes,

then, as I have learned now because I wanted to expand it a bit into participation and infusion, it has to be incorporated there. If I want to change it in writing, it has to go through the city council. It can also be larger. I can't just do it on my own because we are a city museum.

And the interface with the city? If you look on the website of the city of Zurich and go to the Department of Culture, the Rietberg Museum is listed separately as its own category. How and why is that?

That's because there is international exchange. This is a special exception. Usually, most museums are subordinate to the Department of Culture. But I am indeed my own administrative department. That means my direct supervisor is the city president.

I also attend meetings of the Building and Construction Department, in official meetings. Another reason was so that we could have our own website. We have an external presence, and that is a motivation to clearly present the museum's profile to the public. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to convey.

All of this was made possible by my predecessor. I have taken it over, and it is a great gift because, in practice, it means that I am not subordinate to a global budget. Like any administrative department, I receive a budget that I have to explain and justify once a year. However, museums that are subordinate to the city's Department of Culture have to go all the way up the chain if they make a purchase, whether it's a laptop or anything else. That makes us much more agile. I believe it's a wonderful model for museums. And we see it as a great gift and privilege because we can, for example, take action. I don't have to coordinate every little thing; I can discuss it strategically with the city president and place it within the museum. We can react. For example, in discussions about restitution and such.

Regarding the budget: I'm very interested in how it's negotiated with the city. There is no self-financing rate; what are the city's goals, how high should it be?

Depending on how you look at it, it's 35%. That's very, very important.

And you have to achieve that?

If we don't achieve it, for example, in the case of Corona, we can request additional credits to compensate. However, these must be well-justified because, for example, visitor numbers dropped even though we had already planned the exhibitions. When we see small discrepancies between expenses and income, we have to act quickly. We have various moments during the year when we analyze this. Then we have to take measures. But these are small amounts; we have a lot of experience and can assess it relatively well.

Back to a completely different question, namely post-colonialism. This is, of

course, associated with restitution but also with provenance research. Where do you see this heading? And maybe also from the history of the museum, which has certainly been guaranteed through these debates.

Yes, in exchange. Of course, we feel that we have managed to stay in dialogue with all parties. Step by step, we want to work out a path and find out how we want to deal with it in the future. This takes a lot of time. Agility is also a great gift in this regard.

What I find difficult is a debate without prior research. We are often placed in categories that are dead ends for the discussion, all for the sake of clickbait. Journalists often approach me, saying, "Mrs. Bhagwati, we actually want to talk about Japan, but we can't avoid talking about looted art," which makes discussions difficult. This is not constructive. Especially, it does not consider the perspective of the countries of origin. Because these discussions are very, very interesting and very differentiated. And I would like to see, in which direction it goes, that we have a truly differentiated view of the object, in terms of the works, their creation, movement, but that it moves in a positive direction and does not harden and get stuck in ideological trench warfare that benefits no one.

This is also mentioned in the report by Bénédicte Savoy and Ferdinand Sarr. When I read it, I was initially surprised that the countries of origin are very cooperative and almost only want to take back what was taken from them.

That's important. When you look at the media landscape, this is too rarely taken into account. We are in exchange with them.

For example, with Benin, it is now about property transfer for the first time, which opens up a whole range of possibilities. Some colleagues from Nigeria have said: We want our history to be told in Rietberg as well. If it says "On loan, Benin Royal Court" under the object, that's good and desirable for us. We want the stories to be told here.

That also promotes engagement with the topic in Switzerland.

Exactly, it promotes engagement. And that's something that comes from them. As a director, I'm immediately accused of using it as a cheap excuse not to have to give things back.

In the case of full restitution, how does one proceed? What are the steps?

This is a political process. There are ethical components where you ask yourself: Do you want to give it back, as a museum is theoretically not obligated to do so, but if it was obtained unjustly, regardless of the legal situation, you start the restitution process.

But then there is the legal process, which I have to pursue as an administrator for

the city as the owner. The city acts legally. In the case of Benin, the city is currently examining the legal processes. From a legal perspective, we have not received a restitution claim. The items were taken away in 1897. The Hague Convention, which stipulates that war booty should be returned, came into effect two years later. So there are no legal requirements.

Currently, it is being discussed how to de-accession the objects and how to redefine the ownership and assets of the city of Zurich so that they can be gifted or returned.

Would that be similar to a donation? Who would receive this donation, specifically in the case of Benin?

Very good question. They are currently addressing this. They are clarifying it among themselves, and we are preparing the legal process.

So you are in contact with various stakeholders, and then you decide together.

There is a lot of uncertainty right now about where it should go. They have said, please wait until we have figured it out, then we can move on to the next step. We always follow the official process. In the case of Benin, too, between the Benin Royal Court and the National Commission negotiating it.

A quick question before we run out of time: what about the architecture? We have heard several times that space is very limited. Are there plans to further develop the museum?

Yes, we are actually thinking about it in terms of the Living Archive concept. It's still in the early stages and not anywhere near concrete, but if you are consistent, the spaces are not suitable for inviting exchanges. We have a lecture hall that is very frontal with a stage and an audience. We want to create spaces where people can sit down on the same level. But there is a lack of places where you can experiment.

You have a large storage facility in Oerlikon. Are you interested in expanding to such locations in the future? Especially if you look at the Kunsthau, which may have made a mistake by rebuilding at its current location.

No, there are also catalog storage, operational storage, various storage areas, and not just art. The Eggbühl storage still has space. We don't want to expand continuously. For what purpose and for whom? We are very careful with donations in general. We don't want to be overcrowded just to have it.

If not all art, what is it then?

Equipment, for example. In the name of sustainability, we have a wall storage because we reuse the walls. In the exhibition hall, there is a section that you don't see, and that's where we pull out our large exhibition walls, which are then adjusted so that we don't constantly have a material

battle. Wall storage, screens, technology, toilet paper, chairs, catalogs for the shop. All of this requires space.





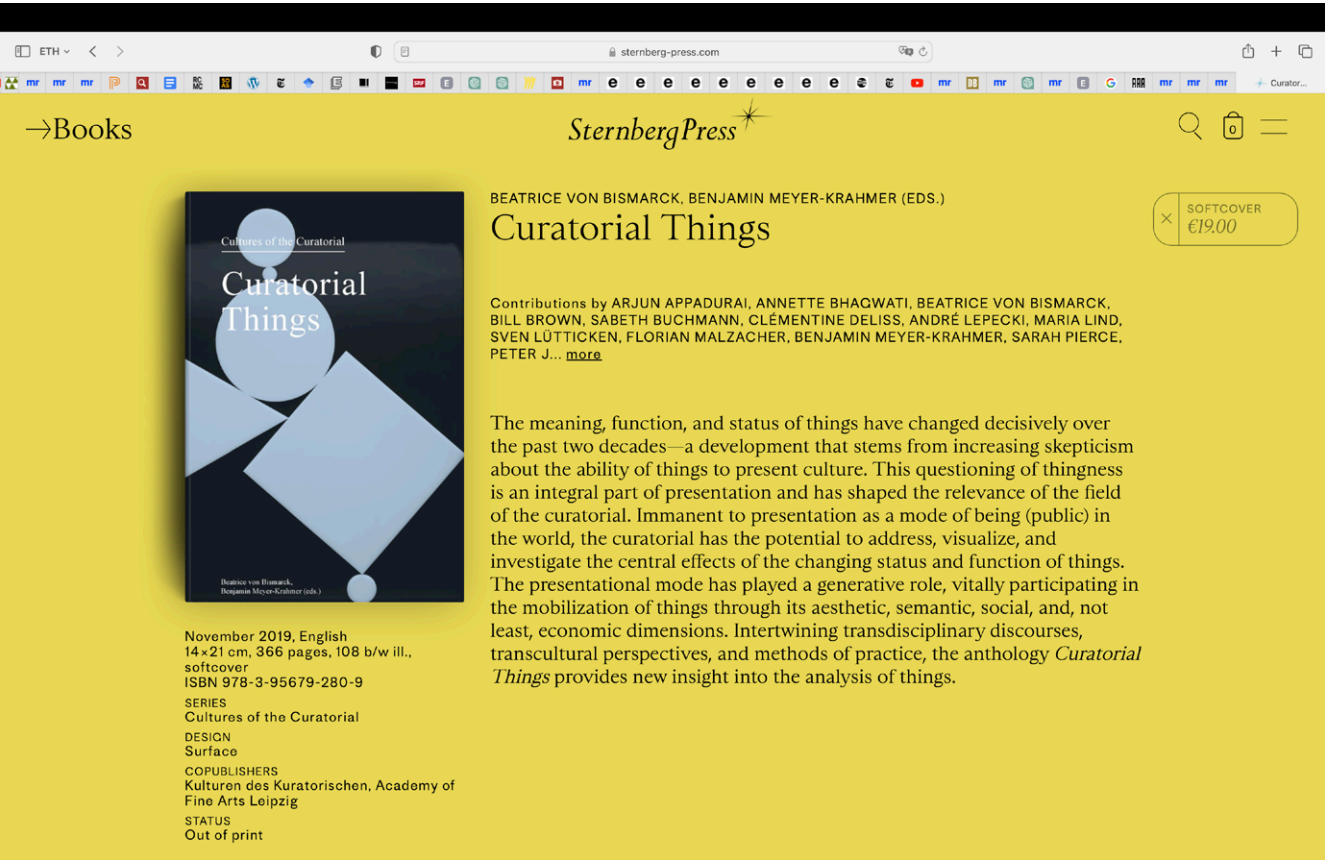
Can`'t go wrong with artificial light through big glass facade at night. Why is seeing into a building so intriguing?

The strive for transparency?  
A transparency that reveals secrecy.

The lighted virtine, the evening of our interview with Annette Baghwati and Esned Nezc. A choreographed façade. Very institu- tional and not surprising at all.



“word art in Zurich”, the slogan - what is world art? Is museum Rietberg really an art museum?



Scepticism about the ability of things to presnent culure. What would that mean for the museum? For a museum like the Rietberg?  
<https://www.sternberg-press.com/product/curatorial-things/>

Glossator

I like the word Glossa- tor because it implies the generation of a combination of words. This is something I would like to achieve with our combination of words. What I see differently is the word Glossary. Our aim is to not define words. Ev- erybody has their own complex definition.  
<https://womenwritingarchitecture.org/forum/>



IMPRESSIONS ON WOMEN WRITING ARCHITECTURE

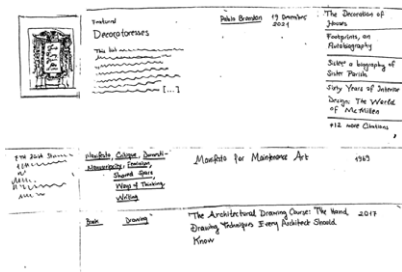
A LIST-LIKE ARRANGEMENT

when i first open the homepage, i encounter a list-like arrangement that seems to embed the whole content of the web-site,

giving the impression that i can scroll until the last entry without interruption.



the arrangement is far from what one could call 'strict'. many exceptions are made in a way that the rows are varying in size and the lines dissolve or go beyond the frame. in many cases, the rows do not follow the frameless columns that are to give certain information in a certain space.

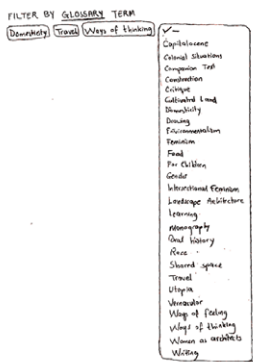


based on which categories the order of the listing is made is unclear. i look closer to understand if it is chronological, alphabetical, or according to which 'type' they are belonging.

my brain, so used to categorizing, putting into some kind of order, classifying, and clarifying, tries to find some kind of rule, but it can't. The way the listing is made seems arbitrary, intentionally arbitrary.

SEARCH BOX AND GLOSSARY TERMS

a search box is placed on the top of the 'list' with recommended terms 'domesticity', 'travel', 'ways of thinking' with an arrow for an extended list: capitalocene, colonial situations, companion text, construction, critique, cultivated land, drawing, environmentalism, food, for children, gender, intersectional feminism, landscape architecture, learning monography, oral history, race, shared space, travel, utopia, vernacular, ways of feeling, ways of thinking, women as architects, writing.

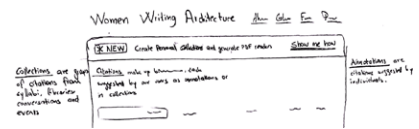


the terms are nothing close to usual, nothing close to what 'one' would use to sort writings.

they seem to have nothing to do with each other. they seem to have a lot to do with each other.

POP-UP DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

the 'list' is accompanied by a series of instructions/definitions that pop up at the very top of the page.



they give an impression of an interface that is a work-in-progress rather than a completed, rigid, unchangeable bibliography.

they evoke an impression of a not-yet-published online platform where the 'users' are expected to be involved.

the terms that are underlined and 'defined' seem to re-defined/re-interpreted in the context of the website, and the structure of the website is based on these re-definitions:

'Collections' are groups of citations drawn from syllabi, libraries, conversations, and events.'

'Citations' make up the bibliography, each suggested by our users as annotations or in collections.

'Annotations' are citations suggested by individuals accompanied by their thoughts, opinions, and research.'

THE FLOW AND THE FEELING OF BEING LOST



the platform does not direct me to a certain reach point, it is, as if these underlined texts show me around or accompany me to come over various stations that are interconnected in some ambiguous way.

i lose track of time. i lose track of the pages that land me where i am.

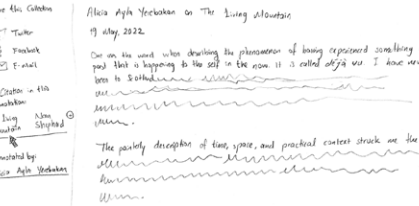
WRITING ON WRITINGS OF WOMEN: AN AMBIGUOUS IMPRESSION



when i look closer, i get confused about who the author of the listed work is for an instance,

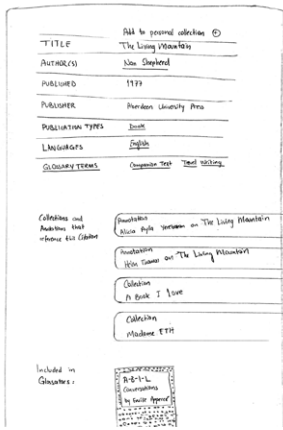
then i realize that the listing is a collection of writings of people ('annotations') on writings of women.

a collection of impressions that a woman's writing left on another person. these impressions ('annotations') are so personal that they somehow create a mental connection, an invisible network between the annotator and the page visitor.



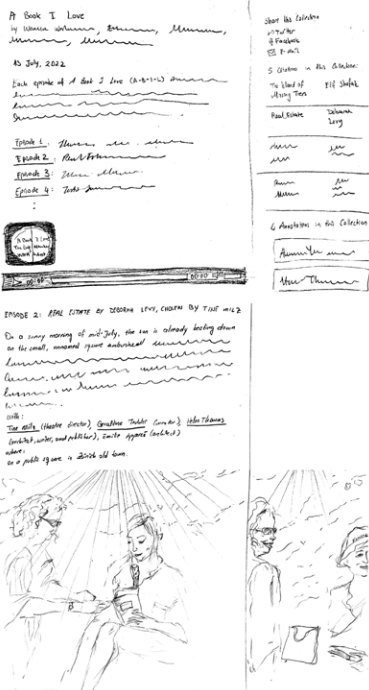
AN ACTUAL NETWORK, THE FEELING OF BEING A PART

clicking on the name of the writing opens another page, with a list of information about the writing, a list of further annotations (impressions), collections, glossators.



the section 'a book i love' attracts my attention. it opens a page with a list of episodes of a podcast and when i scroll down i see the actual spaces of encounter, with real faces of the actors behind this platform.

Creating a strange feeling of intimacy, a feeling of collectivity.



# Testing Oral History Helen Thomas

This collection reflects the term 'oral history' in the Women Writing Architecture bibliography, testing it to see what the boundaries of this idea on the website are. Not all the texts included here come under that term, but each one gives it sense.

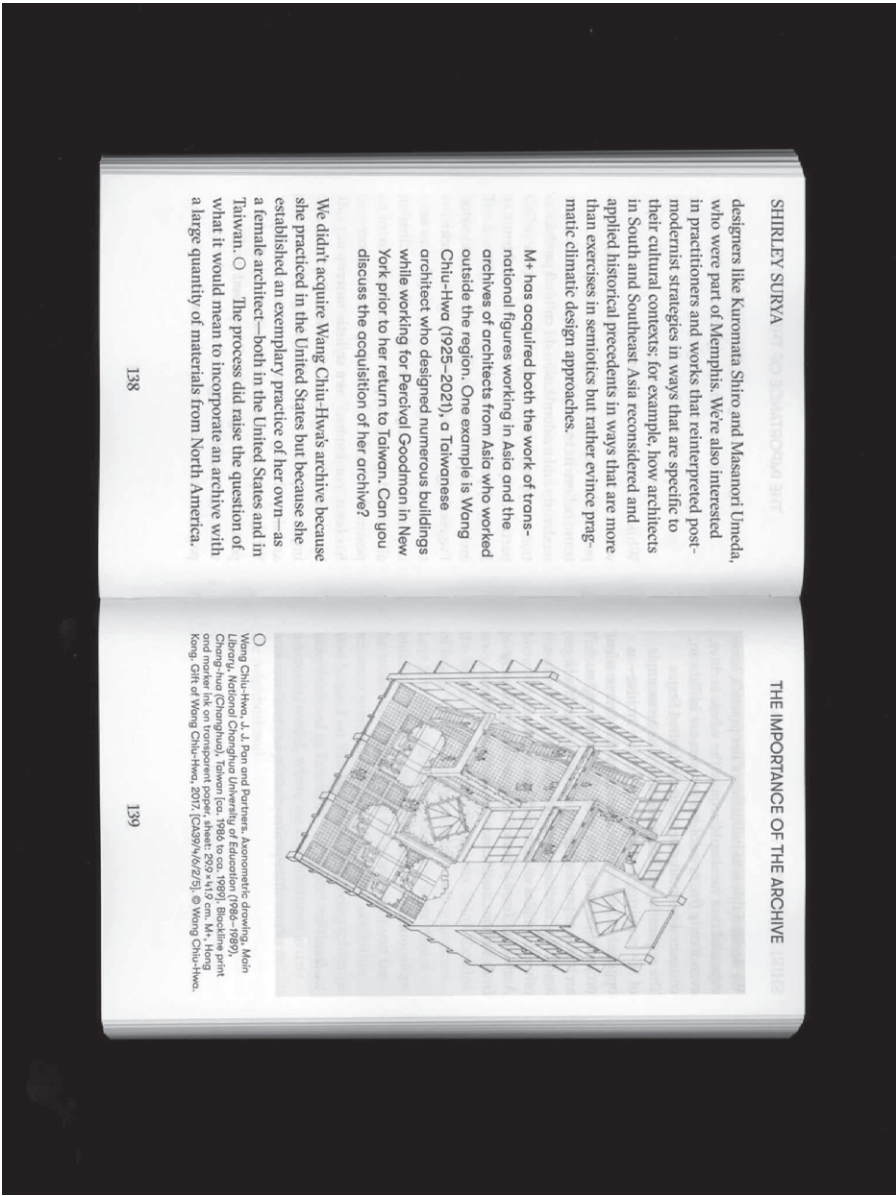
Searching using the word 'speak' and extending what this could mean (the personal voice, speaking in diaries and journals, for example) was especially interesting because it brought citations to the list that, while not belonging to oral history in the strict sense, gave the concept an unexpected depth.


Dates	Texts and Annotations from 1010 to 2021	
Themes	Construction, Critique, Domesticity, Drawing, Environmentalism, Feminism, Food, For children, Gender, Monography, Oral history, Shared space, Travel, Ways of feeling, Ways of thinking	
Publication Types	Book, Book chapter, Catalogue, Diary, Essay, Manuscript, Online article, Podcast	
Authors	Anna Funder Anabella Pollen Annemarie Burckhardt Araceli Tinajero Beate Schnitter Deborah van der Plaats Dorothy Wordsworth Elizabeth Burnet Flora Tristan Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak Jane Drew Janina Gosseye	Julia Gamolina Kirsten Grimstad Kirsty Bell Laurence Cossé Linda Martin Alcoff Lisa Robertson Lucia Berlin Maria Graham Mary Wortley Montagu Murasaki Shikibu Naomi Stead Paul B. Preciado Susan Renni


Women Writing Architecture







ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY



### hegemonic (adj.)


"ruling, predominant, supreme," 1650s, from Latinized form of Greek *hēgemonikōs* "ready to lead, capable of command," from *hēgemon* "leader, an authority" (see **hegemony**). Earlier in same sense was *hegemonical* (1610s).  
also from **1650s**

Entries linking to *hegemonic*

#### hegemony (n.)

1560s, "preponderance, dominance, leadership," originally of predominance of one city state or another in Greek history; from Greek *hēgemonia* "leadership, a leading the way, a going first," also "the authority or sovereignty of one city-state over a number of others," as Athens in Attica, Thebes in Boeotia; from *hēgemon* "leader, an authority, commander, sovereign," from *hēgeisthai* "to lead," perhaps originally "to track down," from PIE *\*sag-eyo-*, from root *\*sag-* "to seek out, track down, trace" (see **seek**). In reference to modern situations from 1850, at first of Prussia in relation to other German states.

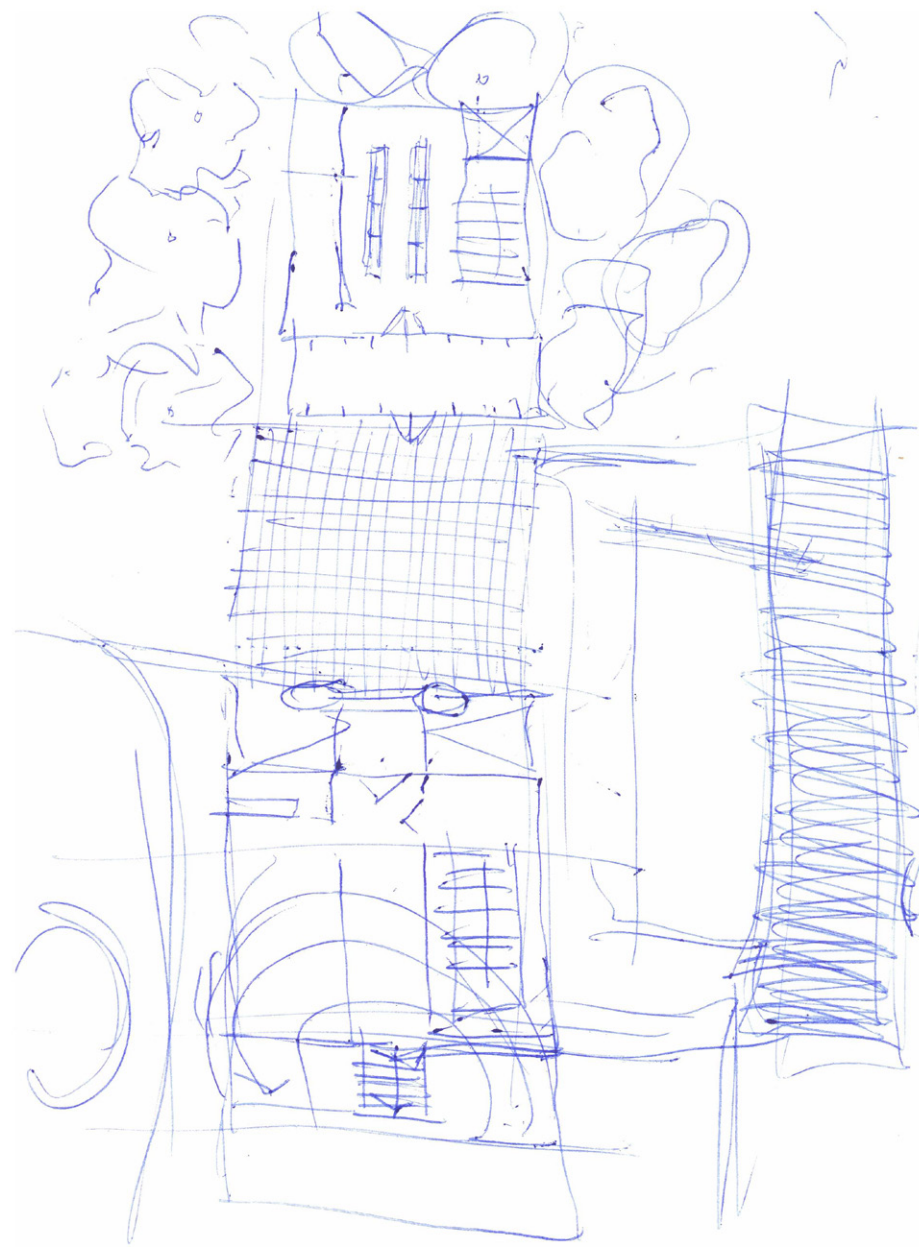
Trends of *hegemonic*



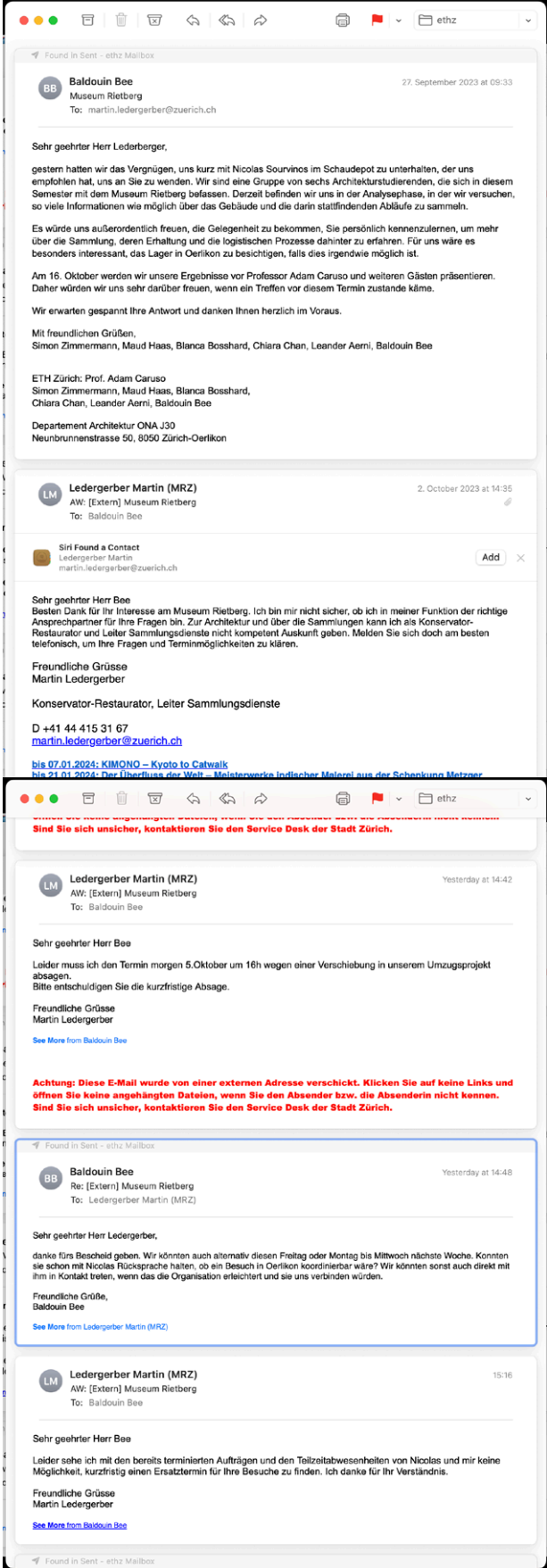
adapted from [books.google.com/ngrams/](https://books.google.com/ngrams/). Ngrams are probably unreliable.







On the surface, it's about a volumetric vis-a-vis; underground, it's about connecting that vis-a-vis spatially.  
groundfloor sketch



We have written many mails to various people that work at Rietberg, asking for a conversation. All of them didn't have time, except the director. Did the director tell the others we asked to cancel? No, that would be a very unfair insinuation on our part.

20231005 Interview

→ Bookshop Rietberg

**Helen**  
Helen Thomas, born 1964, is a registered architect with a strong background in practice, including in London and Seville. Her expertise lies in exploring the formation of history, particularly in colonial and post-colonial contexts, with her PhD focusing on Mexican landscapes and architectural interventions. With a decade of experience as a senior lecturer in architecture, she transitioned to a unique role at the V&A/RIBA Architecture Collections and later contributed to Phaidon Press' Atlas projects. Since 2012, Helen has been a freelance writer, editor, and publisher, collaborating on various projects. Her notable works include books and projects such as tischzwei.org, Drawing Matter Reviews, Architecture in Islamic Countries (2023), The Hybrid Practitioner (2022), and others. Helen Thomas continues to make a significant impact in the field of architecture through her diverse contributions. Why did the image of the Rietberg you had change?

**Rietberg**  
Opinion? → it changed?  
A museum like the Rietberg, should it name itself a Kunstmuseum?  
What is your experience of the space as an architect?

**Post-Colonialism**  
field of research? Mexico  
How do you locate the Museum Rietberg in the discourse of Post-Colonialism? in general!

**Women Writing Architecture**  
How do you categorize the website? We saw that you have a glossary system. How do you determine the words?  
you said "naming is political, Hegel", how did you take this into consideration?  
Categorizing. Naming in the Rietberg?  
Mycorrhizal network  
→ Ruangrupa

Could the principle be applied to Rietberg? "living archive" homepage

This collection reflects the term 'oral history' in the Women Writing Architecture bibliography, testing it to see what the boundaries of this idea on the website are. Not all the texts included here come under that term, but each one gives it sense.  
what do you understand under the term oral history and how could it be executed, in particular the example of Rietberg?  
Gossip Concept of DB  
How did you combine the texts? you used 'speak' as search and created a combination?

Why is your instagram account called 'archive\_experiment' and what would you like to explore with it?

The political economy of the art system itself is predicated on hegemonic narratives, written on property, and governed by gatekeepers and canon-makers. Is it even possible to get out of the current narrative of the art-market with the museum as an institution? Is it possible to change with so many responsibilities and restraints?

museums put value on objects. some objects in the rietberg only became valuable through the exchange from the previous owners into a western understanding of the objects value. for example daily objects like combs, plates or bowls? why is it then so important to give the objects back?

**Literature**

**Helen Thomas**, born 1964, is a registered architect with a strong background in practice, including in London and Seville. Her expertise lies in exploring the formation of history, particularly in colonial and post-colonial contexts, with her PhD focusing on Mexican landscapes and architectural interventions.

With a decade of experience as a senior lecturer in architecture, she transitioned to a unique role at the V&A/RIBA Architecture Collections and later contributed to Phaidon Press' Atlas projects. Since 2012, Helen has been a freelance writer, editor, and publisher, collaborating on various projects.

Her notable works include books and projects such as tischzwei.org, Drawing Matter Reviews, Architecture in Islamic Countries (2023), The Hybrid Practitioner (2022), and others. Helen Thomas continues to make a significant impact in the field of architecture through her diverse contributions.



I think the biggest question, which remains for me, is as a museum, why do you want to attract people to come to the museum? Why do you want to convert people in the first place?

Convert. That is a powerful word. Yes, but convert to what?

It is like customer conversion. I think it is a marketing term which they use. The customer journey starts somewhere on Instagram over to their website until you finally arrive here. I was just wondering whether museums have a need to self-preserve.

There are two directions we can go: One is about money, about funding to keep the museum going. So that footfall raises money. The other one is then - and your word “convert” - is really interesting, it is almost like a religion. A museum like the British Museum is about creating a national instrument. So they are creating a national concept of what being British is like, being a colonial power. All of that - very destructive, in the national psyche story - But then in a museum like the Rietberg, do you think it is playing a national role within the Swiss psyche?

I think they and the city of Zurich think that they have a very high stance. They are also a separate Department directly under the Presidential Department.

I was surprised to learn from the director yesterday that the Rietberg Museum has international relevance. It had never occurred to me that this museum could also be building my nation. The Rietberg Museum did not make me feel more Swiss.

But the Rietberg gives out certain messages. What kind of messages about Swissness is the Rietberg giving out? What would you say?

Actually, I thought about it now. From the outside it seems like a really important place to Zurich, but not for the whole of Switzerland. I grew up in Lucerne and I imagined that you guys from Zurich always came here as children again and again.

Once or twice. I didn't even come that often.

I would say it is more important than, for example, the Kunsthaus. I have been here more often as a child, but I think it is also because it is misused as a cultural education system.

For the population they are much more profiled as an ethnographic museum. But we all only discovered now - with the research - that it actually is an art museum and it has been founded as an art museum. But because of the object and how they display them, it still could be an ethnographic museum. Nevertheless, they insist on being a Kunstmuseum.

Surely that doesn't get outside. That self

concept isn't a wider public concept. Nevertheless, this is one of the few museums in Switzerland that represents cultures that aren't Swiss. Often Swiss museums are about Swissness. This is absolutely not about Swissness. It is, indirectly, but not in an explicit way.

I think the political framing is that it is about representing Swiss open mindedness, as well as, representing the Swiss as open to the world and Zurich as a very multicultural place, a very international place. Which makes sense in a way. But I think that is the main story behind it.

Yes, does anybody else have any thoughts about what the Rietberg might represent as an idea of Swissness? It is very sophisticated culturally, and the way it presents collections is amazing.

For me, what is kind of Swiss about the Rietberg is that if you come to the difficult discussions about restitution and stolen art, then the Rietberg's position is: But the Rietberg has done very well since 2007! Which, to me, is very Swiss. You have problems, but you are doing quite great. You are handling it quite differently. Musée du quai Branly is questionable, but the Rietberg could actually be a role model of how to do it! Although they have Benin bronzes and everything. This, to me, is the Swiss part about Rietberg. It is very neutral.

Yes, absolutely. Switzerland has no history of colonialism.

But then in the end, you still have all these objects. A lot of the collection came as gifts from a Swiss person, for example from the founding collector Eduard von der Heydt. How did he come across these objects? I think this institution or this museum allows visitors to question the truth of what they see and hear.

That is the dark secret that doesn't want to be discussed. The museum includes very luxurious and wealthy collections. Wealthy collectors who have brought these artifacts into Switzerland. They are bringing these objects and there is a narrative to it. I think reflecting on that reveals an aspect of Switzerland, but not always in a negative way. However, it is definitely something that isn't really discussed or is only beginning to be discussed.

In your email reply to us you mentioned that the Rietberg changed for you. What changed?

That is a really good question because I think it speaks to what we are just talking about. To be totally honest and upfront, even if it may sound a bit naive and very surface level, I found the Rietberg very sophisticated in the way it was presenting objects. Sophisticated in that there was very little interpretation. They were just put there. As a visitor you just took the objects completely at face value. There was not

really any way of locating them apart from their ages and where they originated from. I found that lack of the interpretive structure very evocative, you could have your own personal relationship. I would just love to come here. And also the way it is displayed, it is very associational. You can have a relationship with an object, but then the object is amongst many other objects. For me, it was just like an imaginative explosion coming here. I really appreciated the fact that this museum did not explicitly locate its collections within a national framework like most other museums. This made it much less didactic.

Do you think that the Rietberg is not as much instrumentalized for nation building?

The Rietberg might not be explicitly connected to nation building, but I think implicitly, it is very important.

One of you said that the museum seemed to be important internationally because it is directly underneath the leader of the council. And I think that is true, it exists within the international art market, not necessarily the contemporary art market, but rather within an international market of art objects. Consequently, Switzerland has acquired a lot of very valuable objects by who knows who and how. There is a kind of secrecy about it, which is also quite Swiss. And so I think you can read the museum as being a lot about creating a message of nationhood. Switzerland isn't a natural nation, it is a confederation. It is very different to most European countries in that way. Each canton has a very strong identity of its own. It is not centralized in the way Britain is. It is completely different, the mentality of being Swiss and being British.

When it comes to Swissness, the Swiss, despite their small size, really like to have world class institutions. And I think Rietberg is one of those examples.

All nations want to have pride in themselves. I think being proud is one of the main emotions of nation building. Why?

This whole idea of exhibiting the works like they are being exhibited goes back to Eduard von der Heydt and the first director who came from the Bauhaus, Johannes Itten. Only now we gradually see it changing, probably connected to the questions around restitution and coloniality. What is it exactly that changed your mind or your perception of the museum?

I think it is becoming more populist. More didactic and more responsive to what they think middlebrow culture would be interested in. I am just being totally honest here. I liked it because it was very highbrow. I didn't want it to be middlebrow. I didn't want loads of narratives mudding my relationship with the objects.

It is really interesting, because you see it now as something good that it is dis-

played as an art object. And now, the museum is trying to change things with the “Pathways of Art” exhibition for example. They want to create more transparency.

I think if we thought about it, we would definitely think of a better way of doing so. And maybe that is one of the things that you're going to be doing. I don't know. But this pathways' narrative I just found very patronizing.

Yesterday the director of the museum talked a lot about multiperspectivism and education, which are both very important for the museum. They also work together with schools to share their research. In contrast Debasish Bora likes to go to museums and gossip. He is looking for something similar to you, he wants to create his own narratives around the objects.

And anyone can have that narrative wherever they are from. Whether they are two or a thousand years old.

It is interesting how they are really determined to do the right thing.

But they want to impose their interpretation on the mind of the visitor.

I think both approaches have to coexist in a way. When I was younger and came with my parents, my understanding was very different. And also the education you draw from it is completely different compared to when I come here now. I am aware of some of the objects' backgrounds. Perhaps only through this awareness I am interested in uncovering my own stories. So maybe you have to get people to think about it to begin with.

I agree.

Do you think the information the “Pathways of Art” exhibition provides is important? Is it important, because of the context of colonization, to have a broader understanding of the objects?

I think the questions are very important. I think there is a certain element of dishonesty. The key thing is that the objects aren't from here. In itself that is not necessarily a bad thing. The object's journey is far more important. Thinking about the world as a series of contracts is quite useful. What was the contract for an object in order for it to come here? If it was just a pot that was used for drinking tea and it was properly paid for then that is fine, but this is rarely the case. What are they being dishonest about? That is what I'm trying to think about while I'm telling other stories. What is the museum being dishonest about when it creates a journey like the “Pathways of Art” exhibition?

I found it strange to discover that, despite the museum's aspirations to be transparent, and with the “Pathways of Art” they acknowledge that many of the objects in its collections were acquired in an asymmetrical way, affirming that the contract

was not fair. Nevertheless, the objects are still being displayed. For me this creates a paradox. You have the information and the object here to reflect upon the paradox of the object.

That is a nice way of describing it. The paradox of the object. It is a paradoxical object. It has a paradoxical presence and value.

Also the content of the text, what it focuses on and the opinions expressed could be viewed as instrumentalisation. I'm thinking of knowledge that may be biased or one sided.

It is creating a hegemony of knowledge emanating the correct message.

In a way they are trying to open up the discussion but at the same time they are closing it off.

Yes, that is the dishonesty of it. The discussion is being narrowed down.

It is like providing the answer to your own problem.

Here is a question, here is the answer.

Debasish Borah challenged us to consider whether the museum's narrative is creating a fiction, and if so, how we could make it better. He asked why we don't make it a good fiction, or even so, a bad one that becomes good again. The director told us yesterday that they consulted with a variety of stakeholders in Benin, including guilds and craftspeople. The British looting caused a huge loss of imagery, which the guilds saw as an opportunity for new freedoms. Yet, we don't see these perspectives reflected in the museum's collection.

Exactly. Those conversations to me are much more successful in discussing the objects because it is a conversation of equals. The craftspeople making the objects are being conversed as equal. It is a very different thing to this provenance research. When you are telling me that story, I don't know if it was explicitly said within this exhibition, but there was an exhibition here in the past which was really interesting because it was going back to the conditions of the objects being made and what that meant at the time.

In the context of the practice of gossip that Debasish Borah introduced us and connecting it to the “Women Writing Architecture” website. There was this collection on oral history. Is there a connection between gossip and oral history? And do you think such forms of content can find their way into a museum like this one?

They are two different things, oral history and gossiping. I really like the idea of having spontaneous conversations around objects. It is a bit like in Britain we call it show and tell. Sometimes it is used in a creative way, sometimes it is used in schools. Is the “Pathways of Art” exhibition for school

children?

I think they are for everyone. But you do feel a bit like a school child the way it is designed.

I'm shocked, because it is so much below the level of what they normally do here. But to go back to the gossiping and the show and tell - it is kind of what you are saying, that the show and tell allows you to have your narrative about the object, share it, and then hear other people's opinions about it. Rather than you are just being given the correct story, the idea that it is an objective truth. The thing about oral history is that there is never a truth. Memory is fallible and you also have your own interpretation. It is never true, but it is a truth, it is an individual truth. If you take somebody talking about their work, for example, as evidence for a piece of writing, or a piece that you are writing about their work, and they tell you a story about how it came about. How important is their voice about the meaning of the object and how it came about? Is it more important than other people's voices? I think not, because precisely with this issue of oral history and fallible memory. Nevertheless, it is still valuable. I'm thinking about Yasmeen Lari, specifically. I was writing about her and she has an incredibly powerful way of talking about her work, partly because that is her work and she has to convince people to buy into it, in order to do it. But then many people, when they write about her, just write down exactly what she says, which is a bit like the marketing guy here at the Rietberg. He has just got the one line. But underneath there are so many other stories or realities or meanings, and it is about getting to those. And I suppose oral history enables that to happen. I was trying to think about Janina Gosseye, who did the oral histories book. There was one about the Barbican and talking to all the different people who worked on the site and what they did. You get a constellation of realities that then you can start to see a coalesced reality out of. It is about moving away from the one correct hegemonic interpretation and how do you find a way of dispersing that.

In this context it is very interesting what the Museum does in the frame of discussing the topic of the Benin Bronzes. They select many different people from different professions, groups and backgrounds to discuss the fate of these objects. That is the biggest question, where do these objects belong to?

After our first visit to the Rietberg with the studio we were a little bit disappointed because we expected more after seeing the way it was presented on the website in contrast to how it was presented in reality. And we have to do a project, right? And I still cannot imagine how, as an institution like Rietberg, one could make the display more fruitful. I mean, we can talk about it, the voices, the multi-perceptiveness and everything



that we think is so important, but how do you do it, when you have to find architectural answers? I don't have one practical example where it works.

I think performance is a very interesting way to do it, even if it is a reconstructed performance of them speaking. I just find performance is a very direct emotional thing.

I was wondering whether "Women Writing Architecture" may even be an example of how to do something where you break this hegemonic position. Isn't it an archive or a collection, which is annotated?

With "Women Writing Architecture", definitely, there is a challenge to the notion of value. It is a bibliography but the bibliography cannot be made by someone who has written three books, and wanted them to be on there. I mean, this happens so much with American women, academics. And they just send a list. or they get their assistant to send a list which shows: here is what I have written. Put it on. And I go: I'm really sorry, but this can't go on to our list, it can't just be valuable to you and your career. It has to have a meaning and have value to somebody else. It either has to be part of a collection of books that somebody has made or somebody has to write about it. And then it can go on. Something becomes valuable the more annotations it has, and the more it speaks to us. For example, a text might be in five collections and seven people have written annotations. So that text is like a very valuable text in our system, but it has to do with what it means to individual people.

I think we strive to do the same in our booklet now, because we have an archive of things. We collect screenshots, photos, drawings, notes etc. and we archive them in a really strict way, with numbers and all the information. And then yesterday, we had the idea:. Now we have to kind of synthesize it. We have to give it a story. It can't just be a collection. Now, we thought of writing comments to everything that is interesting to us.

You could actually think of them as value, you are giving values to them.

And then we can look up words and find all these things that several people have found or written about. In the interviews, you can see the words or concepts talked about a lot. For our project afterwards, we have a kind of a tool of different perspectives, opinions and stories that we have collected and then can pick out. It is not a tag of popularity or size or other measurable factors, but it is a really personal tag, an inspiration, or thought, or a story.

In this context of the glossary we could briefly talk about the Ruangrupa. They are from Indonesia and they are much more like curators than artists, they orga-

nize events.

Yeah, I saw the Documenta.

They use language. That is kind of their one thing, that they use words to communicate their ideas and inspirations and concepts. So that is the reason why we are interested in those keywords. And I wonder how you decide on words that you put in the glossary for "Women Writing Architecture"?

I mean, that is such a fascinating example of what a word means in different places with our glossary. In the beginning, I decided on the words. What I was looking for were alternatives to the kind of words that we usually use in a library to categorize. So, for example, urbanism was a word I definitely did not want to use. What could be an alternative to urbanism that starts to change what that word means. I called it shared space. I thought, what is the urban? And then what if you boiled it down? I thought it is shared space, because what makes a city are the spaces that we share. That enabled the idea of the urban to then become relevant in other places. For me that worked. One of the main ideas of the Glossary is that, if possible, you have more than one definition, you have an infinite number of definitions. A word can start to have a meaning from all these things. I was reading a lot of articles about queer space and I was thinking, if they were looking for things around this subject, what term would you use?

This is something also to consider, and it is an issue of generation. My generation thinks about sexuality and gender in a different way. We have to make an intellectual effort, it is not intrinsic and emotional. Some younger people were there, and they said, spectra is the word you are looking for. We have actually chosen the word spectra, which embraces the whole idea of who you are, being on a spectrum, instead of it being binary or even broken up and granular. Now, going back to the gossip and the conversation idea. It is always about having a conversation. It is not just coming from one mind. To have an idea that you like, the people you are working with have an idea, and then talk about what words you can use. There is also the issue of different languages. So we had another workshop around being a stranger and the word Heimat came up, it is a German word, but has different connotations in different languages. Some words have got more power somehow. Perhaps it is about finding words that have a power and an ambiguity.

The thing about Heimat, especially in Germany, is that it has got a very political connotation and it is related to political movements in the present, as well as the past. And Germans have a very problematic relationship with their Heimat.

I mean, it is a real nation building term. It just really became a movement after the

unification. Perhaps Heimat is the word that is relevant to you. Actually, I think it really is. What is homeland? What is Heimat for those objects?

Did this thinking about the origins of the objects and where they come from, where they should actually belong to, play a role when you came here in the past, where the museum hadn't changed in the way it has now? Also in relation to your background in postcolonial theory.

That is quite old fashioned now. I was interested in the late 90s, early 2000s. Nobody was really interested in it, then. The way I was engaging with it was a lot like how we are talking now. My PhD was about Mexico and the value of the land, and I was looking at how different ways of colonizing America affected the conceptualization of land. Mexico is hardly ever acknowledged as part of North America, and was colonized in a very different way. I wrote four stories using pairs of verbs to kind of activate the story. And it was really hard, although the British Library had an amazing collection of documents from British India, it was covering almost only the British perspective. I tried to create narratives that came from different perspectives about this same seemingly innocent piece of land. Coming back to the topic of the museum, which isn't innocent at all, and where you are thinking about different narratives. Perhaps even thinking about narratives not only for the objects, but for the museum as a whole could be quite interesting.

Possibly the vitrines with the few information there is do not result in a narrative. Maybe that is why the museum was so successful in trying to avert this whole discussion about coloniality and the problems related to this museum or the collection in the past.

I'm not sure, because for example in the British Museum there is this room called the Elgin, with a collection of Greek sculptures and objects, called the Elgin Marbles. In the room that they are in, there isn't very much interpretation, but it is quite obvious that they should be in Athens. And that has been a question for a very long time. So I'm not sure if it is the amount of written information or the amount of explicit interpretation. I think it has more to do with the anonymity of these objects, like they are more everyday objects.

The question, in the end, is, how does the museum deal with the background of these objects? I was wondering whether there is already a piece of the answer in this way of exhibiting them, which has been the case right from the start, because it used to not be patronizing or didactic, and therefore allowing a lot of different, one could say, gossip happening around us.

I think there has to be some sort of balance between both, because one side would just exhibit them without all of

these pathways. It would just be kind of, again, exoticizing and detaching it from the origins. Perhaps it is important to acknowledge and discuss the fact that they are not from here. But then again, maybe it is not the solution to have such a, like we called it before, patronizing way of transmitting knowledge. Possibly the solution would be to have a lot of different perspectives and different people working on it. Different researchers from all over the world contributing with quotes to such an exhibition.

I think there are many things. I do think the issue of provenance is quite interesting. They do deal with us a little bit with their narratives. To reiterate my point about the contracts, even if they just said this was stolen, if each object had their little contractual thing saying what was the contract for its initial acquisition, you can see that some things are fair and some things really aren't. And I think even what you were saying about the Benin Craft people, that is contractual, what they are saying: for us, this bought our freedom. I think that is one way to think about the origins of ownership and it being here, was it fair or not?

Another thing I'm struggling with is the term of origin and this kind of the essence of the object. The true story of the object, finding all the little steps to find the right way to follow all these steps where it originated from. I just feel like it is impossible to look at all these objects and tell the true story.

No, they have got in their records. Just assume that is already known. You don't have to find that. They will have in their records where everything came from. It is hidden, really.

I believe the museum primarily has the later transactional information about objects, such as how they were acquired and passed from collector to collector. However, the object's provenance with its original meaning is much more difficult to trace.

I'm just thinking of the online catalog of the Bishop Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, they often have these narratives of the collectors. And to be honest, I don't agree with that. There is the whole idea of accruing value through aristocratic ownership.

In the main pavilion of this year's Venice Architecture Biennale, curated by Leslie Lokko, every person who has taken part is described in the same way as these labels on the exhibits. Where and when they were born and where they live. You know their age, you know where they came from and where they are. And there is a photograph of them. I find that quite strange because I think it is definitely a strategy for making a narrative. What happens is, if you put enough just facts together, they make a narrative. You don't have to actually make that narrative yourself. In a way, you could

start to subvert things by deciding what facts you put up about something. I guess that is what I'm saying about the contracts. You don't have to know them. You are exactly right. You don't have to go tracing them. You can make them up. But that is one thing. We always assume that you need to know specific facts. What if you start to say other things, like the weight of it, or its value in 1962. There are so many facts.

Maybe it would also be interesting to just write stuff you don't know.

Anti-facts.

We don't know how it got created.

We don't know how it came to be here.

Making the absence of that knowledge present.

That is a huge problem in research, because most research is published where there is an effect which can be identified, especially in statistical research or in drug research. For example, companies do the same research for years, spend a lot of money to then find out that the competitor was doing the same thing. HELEN: Secrecy. I think the issue of secrecy, Swiss secrecy, is quite intriguing. Maybe secrecy is one of your words.

It also speaks to the power of the language that I think a lot of texts, they tell you, we are guessing that. But if you write it and you tell somebody else, it becomes a fact. It is not, we are guessing, anymore. Maybe this could be an interesting change, too. Somehow this not knowing and just guessing becomes strange to a point of narrative.

But I think it is interesting. Like you said, you have the facts, the facts on the other side, like we have the facts from what we think are the facts about something. Take the perspective of the Benin craftsmen. What would their facts be about the object? It would be different facts, because it would be irrelevant, the facts, the other ones that we think are. So you have facts on the other side, as well.

You mentioned that there are other museums you think are even more successful now, in the way they are exhibiting. Do you have anything on your mind, like an example where you think that they are very successful in the way they treat the object?

There is a computer museum about a place near London, where they did all the code breaking in the war. The computers were really designed in relation to the problems of code breaking. There was this huge computer called Colossus. And the problem was the tape coming through with the binary information on, was it just ripped or burnt off? They had to think about other ways of producing this binary information, and they made this amazing machine. In this museum the objects really are just

as they are, you open a door and there is a load of old Apple computers just lying on the floor and that is the museum. It is like detritus. And then the people in the museum, they are all quite of a certain age and of a certain size, a certain smell, and they have their narratives. And then you also realize that many of the early coders were women. They had their own businesses and they had their computers. They might just have what their office was like with all the furniture there. And then you got this big smelly man telling you about this woman. I love that museum. One day soon they are going to get some funding and change it, but it is really what you're talking about is these people to whom it means so much, telling you their version of the story and then there will be whole loads of computers like washing machines just there. It is very evocative because there is no choice being made about which is the most important one or the most representative one. They are just a whole load of computers from 1972.

Do you think it kind of goes into the same problem with trying to be for everyone? I mean the popularizing we are talking about.

The popularizing consists of a group of curators educated in a certain way, trying to make their vision for everyone. That is a different thing to making something available to everyone.

I mean yesterday, when we talked to the marketing guy, it seems like all the museums kind of have the same font and the same fancy website and kind of the marketing making money and this museum could be anywhere, when seen from their marketing strategy.

The museum becomes a glossy advertising campaign.

All over the globe we see the same museums. This style of a museum is a globalized idea of these museums. Whereas the computer museum is completely outside of this globalized version and is a much more specific museum.

It is not analogous to the Rietberg at all, but the computer museum is quite fascinating as a museum, because you really do get a sense of the history of the computer. It is just fascinating to all sorts of people.

There used to be workshops, where you could build your own computer and of course you would buy it afterwards. Raspberry Pi, it was called. They would show you how to do it, but I don't know how that would be the same here at Rietberg. I mean it is completely different.

What do you think is the difference between a global museum and a specific museum?

The global museum is like this world in which rich people go around and where it is the same everywhere. The global museum is almost like a country which is



overlaid on top of all the countries in my point of view. But I don't think the Rietberg museum is like that really.

The Museum Rietberg started because Eduard von der Heydt gifted his collection to the city of Zurich and because Family Rieter sold the Villas to the City of Zurich in order for them to found a Museum. From a social narrative, why do you think there is something like the rich collector?

The social narrative is very interesting. That is one of the hidden histories. I mean, I was going to tell you a little bit about the Wirtschaftsarchiv: There is a museum and it tells a story of the journeys with maps and objects, and it has some incredible objects; books, fabrics and letters. They went on journeys around the Philippines. They had a story and they are incredibly proud of that. They went to the Philippines and saw Batik being made. Batik is very expensive, and it takes a lot of time. So only wealthy people in the Philippines could afford to have Batik cloth. They copied all the patterns and colors, brought it back, and worked out how to print it in Glana land. They managed to produce it cheaper than in the Philippines. Then they exported the Ursats Batik fabric back to the Philippines and sold it to poor people. They thought it was really great that they are making this Batik available to poor people. But on the other hand, they were taking this industry away from the Philippines as well as the cultural aspects. By doing this, they were degrading the process. I think there are direct analogies here. The person who has made this archive, she was part of it. She is around 90 years old, and was helped by a volunteer for 20 years. Their narrative is about the rich family who were running the business. The people I went with, they found this horrifying that there were no other narratives apart from that of the owning family. And in a way, the same happens here at Museum Rietberg. It is the narrative of the former owners of the house, but it is not made explicit in any way, whatsoever.

There is this bizarre confrontation of the objects with the villa. When you go from the new underground exhibition spaces and reach up to the villa, suddenly, the miniature paintings and the statues are confronted with the history and architecture of the Villa Wesendonck and its surroundings, which are definitely referential to a time where colonialism was very much in process. This already presents a narrative that is kind of contradictory.

When you are here, it is like being in a bunker, a treasure bunker. But do you see this space as being more global than the rooms in the villas?

In a sense, yes.

The villas could be colonial buildings anywhere. I know they are Zurich vernacular architecture.

I now understand that perhaps this space is very anonymous for us, but it is not for others.

Well, to me this addition is like a bunker. It is as Swiss as a room in the villa.

This is very interesting, because until now we talked about it as being a very anonymous and global space, and maybe that is because we are used to Swiss architecture.

I would say that the whole thing is quite Swiss. I think seeing it as something that is Swiss, and questioning that would be quite interesting and crucial. I would be really interested to see what you come up with.

Maybe a more general and theoretical question: What do you think our role is as European white people in this discussion about post colonialism, and specifically regarding museums like this one and their topic of restitution? What is our role, what are our responsibilities and how do we talk about it? You did a PhD about this topic in Mexico. How did you situate yourself in it?

When I was student, we only learned Eurocentric and North American history. When I was teaching, I was interested in teaching about histories that weren't taught at all. My interest was to put a focus on it as it has been important to me all of my professional life. Therefore, I did a whole series publishing. I was doing atlases, trying to make a geography of 20th century architecture, which embodied architecture from everywhere.

I was working in a group of people and we had advisors. There was always a conversation. It was extremely difficult between 2000 and today to find examples of architecture from African countries. We have spent so much more time looking for architecture in African countries than anywhere else and we could barely find anything. Today, it is much easier: Instagram really helps to look at f.e. African Brutalism.

I think it is about looking and revealing, then it is about adding into the conversation. I believe it is also about always seeking conversations amongst different representatives.

There are many battles to be fought and often people are just trying to fight their own battle.

For example, Black Lives Matter, there is a battle and it is being fought within the affected group as well as sympathizers. But that doesn't happen so easily. I'm always seeking for the connections between the things to fight battles together. I found that often things go into silos. How do you break those boundaries between things? Going back to the spectra idea, how to stop things being isolated and separated from each other and have a cross fertilized conversation? It seems like that would be an easy thing to do. I guess because we are privileged, it is easy to do. But actually

if you have lived a life of constantly being harassed by the police and made to feel in danger all the time, then you are not as open and much more focused to see a threat or a disparagement or a lack of respect. That is the essence of decolonization.

I, in my innocent, privileged way, think, it is easy to make these connections. But the act of reflection, realizing and understanding the other side: that is decolonization.

It is quite hard to do, but crucial. That is why I keep saying: What is Swissness and what is underneath it, because that process of reflection is decolonization.

I think it is asking yourself very uncomfortable and difficult questions. An example would be what you guys were telling me at the very beginning about the marketing strategy, there is a glossy cover over things, which are quite painful, difficult, and secret. It is quite hard, because you have to leave the way you used to think behind, like for example the words you are used to.

If you try to think of other ways of making words or descriptions, instead of using the words you think are normal, that would be a start. Like saying this is a bunker instead of an international art space. It is quite difficult to do.

What is your experience with "Women Writing Architecture"? Because that is certainly all about participation.

It is part of a whole spectrum of things and mainly about decentralizing everything. The women aspect of it could have been about other topics. But I'm a woman, so for me, it had to be that thing. The structure would have allowed for it to be about something else.

Is it difficult to get people involved? I'm asking that question because at Museum Rietberg, if we are thinking about this idea of gossiping or multiperspectivity, how do you actually get interested people involved? Are there people who are actually willing to contribute, and to take part in the discussion? If we look at the marketing, it is just about getting people who want to consume the collections on a Saturday afternoon.

Again, thinking of contracts generally is a useful way to think about life. It may sound very cynical, but for example the marketing is, they are selling you glamour, so they want money off of you. You feel that you are becoming more glamorous by being here. And that is the contract. With "Women Writing Architecture", we thought that we would be mechanized. So if we did it, then we would get people to send emails. But that is not the case. It is always about conversations, actually. Therefore, the gossip in conversations is a good example. It is about a human connection and human exchange but then think about it, so if you want people to be interested in here, what is the other side? What are you giving?

What could the contract be? That is why I think thinking of contracts can be very useful, because it forces you to go into the other person's perspective, and wonder what they want.

What do you think the point of the museum is, and what could it maybe become?

There is no one point.

What defines an institution? I think here, for example, I would say it is the hierarchy for sure is. That everything is rule based.

Rules and hierarchy, definitely.

When you think about architecture, I think the spatial quality of the place makes it into an institution. Also the collection itself, because that requires spaces and then spaces are going to need organizational structures.

It has a public element to it, as well. There are different ways to look at it. And if you think about the French idea of an institution, from its political structure, it is very different to an Italian idea. The institution to an Italian is essential. You can't have a city without whole sets of institutions, so in a way, institutions form the Polis, the city.

It has got to do with authority, as well.

And I think it is also knowledge construction. Museums define knowledge construction.

Do you think they are really relevant in that sense? Because I mean, research plays a role.

But relevant to whom?

Where is knowledge happening today? I don't think it is in museums anymore.

I think institutions in general always have this aspect of education, because even though they are not teachers, they still are a tool to enforce a system. And that system is something that should keep you in your place. So, it kind of educates you on what your place is.

Debashish would say everything except the individual would be an institution.

And in that sense even the family would be an institution.

And then he arrived at a certain point where he was like, but what defines an institution, then? The contrary, the opposite of an institution is the individual. So maybe, Ruangrupa might be an institution. They curate exhibitions because maybe they are.

Since we said they are an example of an institution, which is not individual, but collective.

I'm not sure I agree with him about institutions, I think what you said about the family is interesting, because the family, as an idea, is an institution, but the family itself isn't necessarily an institution. It is probably a dysfunctional system. When you are talking about the rules and the hierarchy, they are definitely mechanisms of

an institution. It depends how you ask the question about what an institution is, but it is something that exists within society in order to define what society is.

Yes, and it is also interesting, with the example of the family, the idea of the family is kind of institutional, but it is a corrupt system. It is always about this face of an institution that is really not grabbable. So, the face of the Rietberg is really clean and they do it correctly. But perhaps if you look behind the facade, you might see they are kind of in crisis, that they are scared or under pressure.

But is it even really possible to look behind the institution? Because I don't think that there is anything behind it. You can find alternative stories, but I don't think that there is.

Perhaps not behind, but more looking at some aspects specifically: For instance the shop, where it starts to show how they think about it, or how they see themselves or what their interests are.

I see the potential more in the concept of gossiping than defining it as critique.

It is interesting to mention Sylvia Federici, when talking about gossiping. She is interested in how women work. The work of women and their bodies were co-opted in medieval times as part of the process of capital accumulation during early capitalism. She is mostly interested in witches and how the witch trials kind of like were an institution that were used as an instrument. So maybe an institution is also a state instrument, we could say. They were used as an instrument in order to put women in their place. The gossip is a little part of that. The word gossip originally meant something like Godparent. Basically she connected it to friendship. Your gossip would be like your friends who you would go down to the pub with and have a drink. Gradually women were taken out of that. I'm not sure how much is true. Women had this communal friendship power and they had this knowledge that was valuable, the knowledge of the herb and the medicine and et cetera, which was then labeled as witchcraft and made something negative, but in fact had been the operative knowledge up until then. The whole process of the witch switched. What the value and meaning of this knowledge and the ability of women to socialize and have certain jobs and roles in society. That is what she is saying. And then gossip itself is subverted into this negative thing about swapping tales about people, and undermining them. Instead of being about friendship, it is about a negative social process.

If you talk about institutions like that, do you even see a future for them? I mean, you would say with "Women Writing Architecture", you would never call yourself an institution. It is important for you that it exists out of the interest of people. And here at the museum, it just exists. Even

if no one will come, probably, they will close because of monetary reasons. It is like they are imposing their knowledge or their view. But it is not a collection made out of having this object that I like, and therefore I bring it here.

There were two sides of who it is for. There is this ostensible audience who it is for. But we are questioning that. Knowledge production is being instrumentalized for other purposes by people with different agendas.

Making a circle back to language. In a presentation that you did for the website, you said that Hegel says that naming per se is political. It would be interesting to kind of just conclude it on this topic of naming and categorizing and building an archive to kind of talk about this. I think you also thought about it quite a lot.

It kind of goes with describing the same kind of thing, how you name something. It is about classifying. Classifying is just making a system, making something that seems like it is self evident, that is a reality. Creating a reality. The reality, in which the museum is a museum, isn't the only reality. It is a constructed thing. And the museum is part of the construction of that reality. I don't like the word utopia at all, but I mean, you could use the museum to construct another kind of reality that would be also interesting, too. That is quite a big ask. When you say museum, maybe it has another name. Perhaps this collection of objects has another name, becomes something else. What other name could you apply to it?

The director was talking about a living archive for the future of the museum.

You know, I've been having a little bit of an argument with somebody. I said something that we were doing, could have a map room and an operations room. I had an idea, which I thought was quite geographic, so I wanted to have a map room. And if you have ever been to the Vatican, both of them are quite political and about control. A map room, making a map, is like naming. Have you heard of Benedict Anderson, imagined communities? That could be quite interesting. Making maps is a way of controlling a territory, because you are recording it in your image, in a way. And that is what words are doing, and that is what classification is doing. And that is what a museum is doing. It is making a reality in the image you want it to be in. The map room is where you can plan and coordinate the logistics, once you have obtained the necessary maps. You can start to track people and move them around. It is absolutely about control and that is why it is really interesting, because you can start to subvert it. If you subvert a map room, what do you do? If you subvert a museum, what do you do? That is the question. It certainly must be possible. If the museum is about control, how is it controlling? What is it controlling? And then if you know that, then you can turn it around.



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Happy Birthday!  
How does a house want to celebrate its birthday?

With cake

The beautiful thing is that the park is public and all the time open, there are a lot of families and people coming there to enjoy their afternoon or weekend.

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<http://www.antjemajewski.de/portfolio/doubles-weltkulturen-museum-frankfurt-2012/>

242\_20231005\_2200



Mallarmé's poem with this deconstruction of syntax, strives to dissolve language of its binding rules, the language used in the poem is still full of metaphors and symbolism, figures and kind of overused analogies that are now set free from their original context and open for new readings and associations. What would this mean in the context of our research, and how could this inform a new approach for a museum and its objects?

Stéphane Mallarmé, Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard, 1897



Information, available everywhere, makes forgetting possible. It circulates through the air we breathe. What is the use of quoting or copying a list of disciplines or articles that anyone can procure in an instant? Why burden an already long list with a new item that includes the list itself all over again? When memory becomes objective, the thinking subject becomes forgetful. When access to knowledge encounters no obstacle, the status of knowledge itself changes. When language is transformed, all is transformed.

Memory and language are set free. The first, by machines and networks – we shall no longer write theses. We are going to think, directly, light-heartedly, freed from references stored in the bank – out of the text, out of the body, out of the subject.

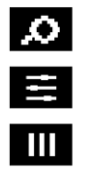
Seeing our knowledge outside ourselves, learning it in snatches, living it in the objects that are born of it, we forget that it lies within us. That, without it, we could not learn it. We forget more and more that we are forgetting it.







# MULTIPLE READINGS



Ein Archiv wie das von Hans Himmelheber kann auf unterschiedliche Art gelesen und bearbeitet werden: wissenschaftlich, künstlerisch, kuratorisch oder auch persönlich. Multiple Readings bedeutet für uns verschiedene Zugänge, Perspektiven und Lesarten bei der Arbeit mit seinem Archiv und den darin vorhandenen Texten, Bildern und Objekten. Die Multiple Readings sind Ergebnisse der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Archiv von Himmelheber.

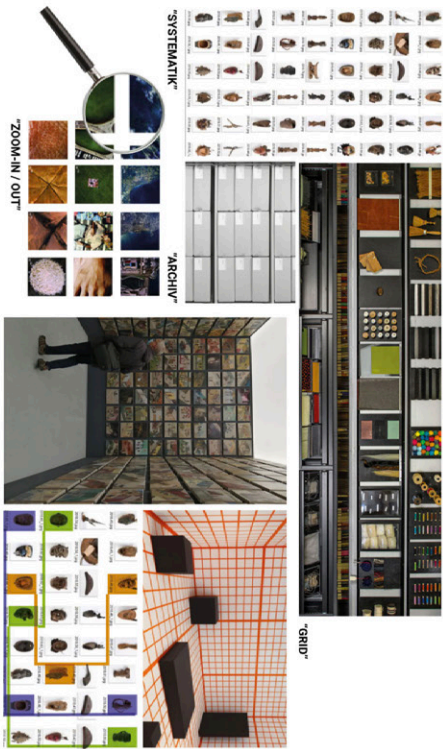
This website called African Art Archive is initiated by the Rietberg Museum and is one of the first attempts to initiate the discourse within a multi-perspectivity while also digitalising objects from the African continent. But it is based on the archive of Hans Himmelheber who is a ambiguous character, perceived by the museum as not linked to the Raubkunst. But New Kyd says: "To respond to your question, the thing about Hans being cheeky, we told the museum as well. It was interesting. They were surprised by that, not us saying it, but by the fact he was cheeky. And it was interesting. We were like, nah, this guy's a snake. We don't like him at all. He's giving creeps, he's crossing boundaries, he has exploited the system, he's giving coloniser with a smile on his face, like all of that. We told them very directly this is how we felt about him."

<https://africa-art-archive.ch>

rooted life  
The park is extremely rich in every detail.

Trees are planted in groups.  
Trees are planted in groups . From the outside they form a visual barrier. Inside of some treegroups there is a less dense spott, feeling almost like a tent. You can see the people passing by without beeing discovered. Some trees are very old and crooked their branches touch the ground.  
We played football in the park once. It was beatiful.

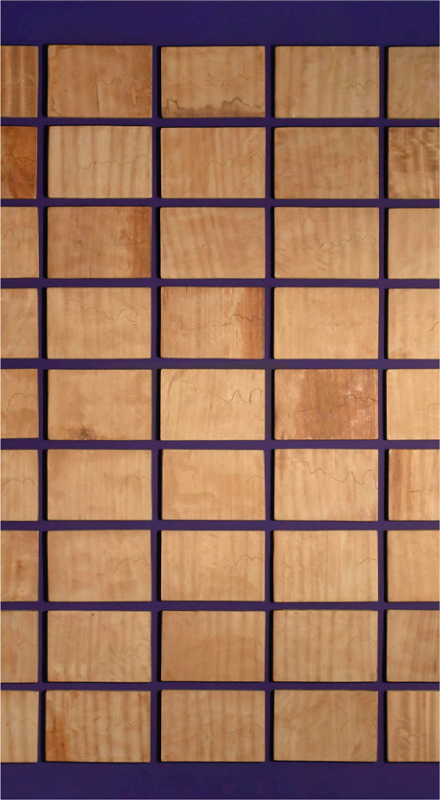




Sonia Koch

# Das Archiv als gestaltungsgebendes Element

Eine szenografische Perspektive auf die Ausstellung  
Closer



Nanina Guyer

# Michèle Magma – Pfade für die Erinnerung und Linien zur Wiedergutmachung



Nanina Guyer

# Gefürchtete Masken, kubistische Ikonen: kifwebe aus der Songye-Region

TICKETS    BARRIEREFREIHEIT

## Die Sammlungspolitik des Museums Rietberg

Das Museum Rietberg Zürich wurde 1952 gegründet. Es ist das einzige Museum für außereuropäische Kunst in der Schweiz und besitzt bedeutende Sammlungen mit Werken aus Asien, Afrika, Amerika und Ozeanien. Die Bestände umfassen zurzeit etwa 76'000 Objekte (Malerei, Skulpturen, Keramik und Textilien, davon 50'000 Fotografien), von denen grosse Teile in den permanenten Sammlungen oder im Schaudépot ausgestellt sind.

Die vom Internationalen Museumsrat veröffentlichten «Ethischen Richtlinien für Museen von ICOM» (Erstveröffentlichung 1986, überarbeitete Version vom 8. Oktober 2004) sehen vor, dass jedes Museum seine Sammlungspolitik schriftlich festlegt und veröffentlicht (§ 2.1).

Die Sammlungspolitik des Museums Rietberg umfasst fünf Punkte:

### 1. Sammeln

Das Sammeln ist Teil des Leistungsauftrages des Museums. Die Erweiterung der Sammlungen wird durch Ankäufe, Annahme von Schenkungen und Legaten sowie durch Begünstigungen aus Stiftungen und Dauerleihgaben Rechnung getragen. Das Kuratorium ist für sämtliche Erwerbungen verantwortlich. Bei Erwerbungen über CHF 50'000 wird zusätzlich die Meinung externer Spezialisten (Anschaffungskommission) eingeholt.

Folgendes ist bei der Sammlungserweiterung zu berücksichtigen:

#### a) Geografisch-thematischer Ausbau der Bestände

Beim Ausbau der Sammlungen ist in erster Linie darauf zu achten, bestehende Sammlungsgebiete durch kunsthistorisch und ästhetisch qualitativ hochwertige Objekte zu erweitern oder zu ergänzen. Zudem können im Zusammenhang mit neu hinzukommenden Erwerbungen in Absprache mit dem Kuratorium neue Schwerpunkte gesetzt werden.

#### b) Sorgfaltspflicht und Provenienz

Vor einem Erwerb muss alles unternommen werden, um sicherzustellen, dass die angebotenen Objekte aus legaler Quelle stammen. Die Kuratorinnen und Kuratoren klären die Provenienz der betreffenden Objekte möglichst lückenlos ab und überprüfen bei Unklarheit die gängigen Datenbanken (Art Loss Register, Interpol, rote Liste von ICOM). In Fällen, in denen ein Zweifel an der rechtmässigen Herkunft der Objekte besteht, wird vom Erwerb abgesehen.

c) Rechtliche Grundlagen werden. Der sachgerechten Pflege und Aufbewahrung der Sammlungen ist höchste Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen. Der Schutz vor Diebstahl und Elementargefahren muss jederzeit gewährleistet sein.

Entscheidungen über konservatorische und restauratorische Massnahmen werden in Absprache zwischen dem Kuratorium und den Sammlungsdiensten gefällt.

### 3. Präsentation und Vermittlung

Definitionsgemäss ist das Museum eine Bildungseinrichtung im Dienste der Gesellschaft. Das Museum präsentiert wesentliche Teile der Sammlungen in Dauer- und Sonderausstellungen und macht sie auf diese Weise der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich, wobei der Kunstvermittlung eine besondere Rolle zukommt. Das Museum unterstützt externe Forschungen an den Sammlungen und stellt Werke aus eigenen Beständen Dritten (in der Regel Museen) für Ausstellungszwecke zur Verfügung.

### 4. Dokumentation

Das Museum Rietberg verpflichtet sich, die Sammlungen nach professionellen Standards zu dokumentieren und wissenschaftlich aufzuarbeiten. Daher gehört es zu den wichtigsten Aufgaben sicherzustellen, dass alle Kunstwerke, die entweder temporär (Dauerleihgabe) oder dauerhaft (Erwerb) in das Museum aufgenommen werden, möglichst umfassend dokumentiert sind. Die Dokumentation umfasst die Beschreibung der Kunstwerke, ihre Herkunftsgeschichte sowie eine Auseinandersetzung mit den Künstlerinnen und Künstlern. Sie nennt die Umstände, unter denen das Objekt entstand (Entstehungskontext wie z.B. Auftraggeberschaft) und später in die Sammlungen des Museums gelangte (Creditline). Sie wird durch gezielte Forschung von den jeweiligen Kuratorinnen und Kuratoren ständig ergänzt. Diese Informationen werden in der Datenbank und im Archiv des Museums erfasst und in Ausstellungen, Katalogen oder im Internet (Sammlungen Online) öffentlich zugänglich gemacht.

### 5. Kooperation

Ergänzend zu den oben genannten Aufgaben und Verpflichtungen fördert das Museum Rietberg gezielt die Zusammenarbeit mit Forschungs- und Kulturinstitutionen, Museen und Universitäten weltweit. Ein besonderer Fokus liegt auf den sogenannten Herkunftsländern, insbesondere in der Kulturgütererhaltung (Restaurierung und Konservierung), Dokumentation, Forschung, Vermittlung sowie des Wissensaustausches. Die Einrichtung des GBE Center for Cooperative Research on Indian Art and Artists ist hier wegweisend.

Die Sammlungspolitik wird alle zwei Jahre überprüft und gegebenenfalls überarbeitet.

Im Juni 2023

Conformity to the Sammlungspolitik, a collection policy, of course based on ICOM, the international council of museums, the Rietberg necessarily has to follow certain rules of conduct; in collecting, presentation and mediation, documentation and cooperation, and has to achieve certain financial goals each year to attain its right as a "städtisches" Museum. This reinforces stability and continuity.





Als eine Momentaufnahme individueller Seh- und Hörgewohnheiten begleitet die Serie *Hyperlinks* das Ensemble auf ihren Wegen durch das Internet. Dieses Mal mit Titilayo Adebayo.

von Mathis Neuhaus  
erschieden am 25. März 2021

I’ve been doing a study into the ‘Black Fantastic’ art movement. I heard of post-black, but I was curious about how I can become more attuned to recognising it.

BLACK FANTASTIC

I found this extract which made me curious about going deeper:

«Scholar Richard Iton explored two ideas - the ‘Black fantastic’ and ‘Post-Blackness’. Ideally, the Black fantastic is the source of ‘minor-key sensibilities’ that provide a basis for a substantive post-colonial imaginary and politics. Post-Blackness, on the other hand, has been used to describe both artistic and popular identity movements that aim to lift the ‘burden of representation’ from Black artists or Black people generally. I argue that although those who fashion Post-Blackness as a popular identity movement divest it of much of its subversive force, at least one type of artistic Post-blackness enables the Black fantastic.»

Points of Departure

"Window Seat": Erykah Badu, Projective Cultural Politics, and the Obama Era by Emily Lordi

Afrofutures of Cosplay: Deviance and DIY in Black Fantastic Performance by Tobias C. Van Veen

In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era by Richard Iton

**“Window Seat”: Erykah Badu, Projective Cultural Politics, and the Obama Era**  
Emily Lordi / 12.04.11

On the afternoon of March 13, 2010, neo-soul singer Erykah Badu walked though Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas, the site of John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination. Rarely meeting the eyes of the people she passed--groups of adolescents, men and women, parents with children--Badu sequentially removed her sunglasses, coat, hooded sweatshirt, shirt, pants, bra, and underwear. When she arrived, nude, at the approximate site of Kennedy's attack, a gunshot rang out and she collapsed as if struck in the back of the head. Filmed in one take, "guerilla style," this event became Badu's soon-to-be-infamous video for "Window Seat," the lead single from her album, *New AmErykah Part Two*.

The video begins with a radio announcer's description of Kennedy's motorcade, recorded moments before the President was shot, and grainy footage of Badu driving up to the Plaza in a 1965 Lincoln Continental. 1 Once Badu's simulated death has fulfilled the analogy, the video abandons its realist conceit. Blood-like ink spills from Badu's head to form the word "grouphink," and Badu's voiceover drives home the contrast between "grouphink" and the term "evolved," which the viewer has now had occasion to see tattooed on Badu's bare back: "They play it safe, are quick to assassinate what they do not understand. They move in packs, ingesting more and more fear with every act of hate on one another... They are us. This is what we have become. Afraid to respect the individual. A single personal event or circumstance can move one to change. To love herself. To evolve." 2 During this voiceover, the camera pans up to the American flag waving in the blue sky. When it returns to Badu, she is standing and wearing a long beaded wig that covers her body. She smiles at the camera and walks out of its frame.

*In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era*  
by Richard Iton

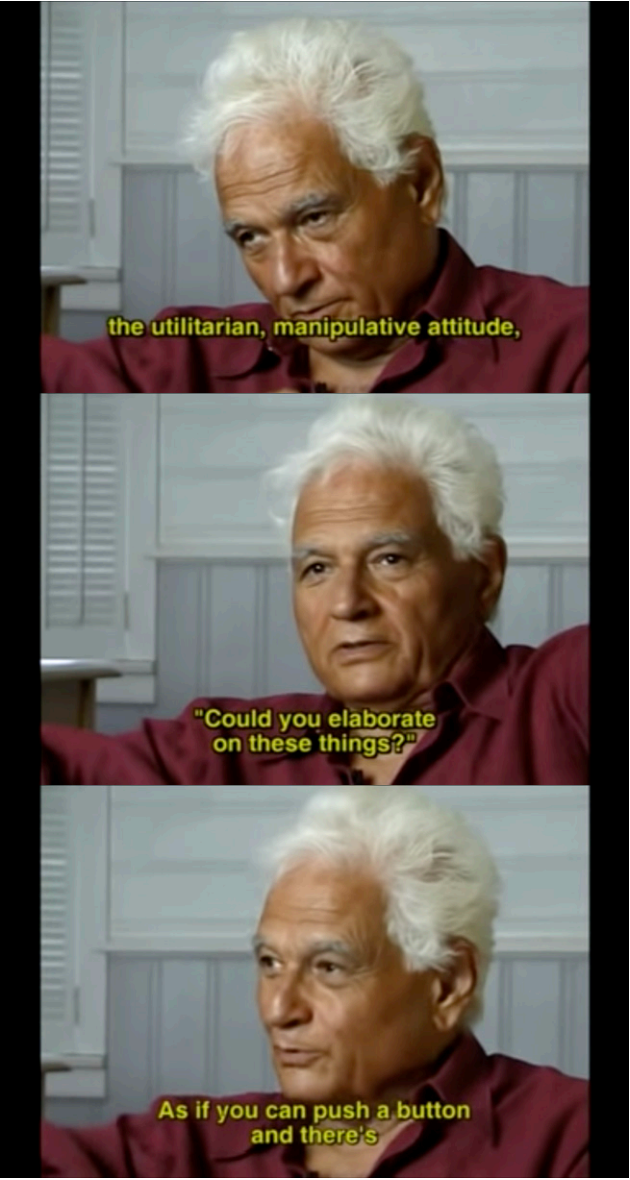
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008  
(ISBN: 978-1-1997-3360-6). 424pp.

Catriona McAra (University of Glasgow)

‘They who play it safe are quick to assassinate what they don’t understand...’  
– Erykah Badu, 2010

*In Search of the Black Fantastic* is a critical quest which interprets the historical harmonisation and discord of black aesthetics and black politics. The loaded title conjures an interesting set of images for its prospective reader. ‘Black Fantastic’ is deliberately provocative; suggestive of something wicked, magical and deliciously sinful; a witty, subversive play on ‘dark’ narratives and the fetishisation of skin tone. For Richard Iton, the fantastic serves as a space of the other, both spatially and racially. He uses it to ‘destabilise’ and fragment the arenas of so-called ‘rational’ modernity (p.289–90) via ‘underground’, ‘deviant’ strategies (p.16). Though his evocation of the ‘surreal’ is rather too broad, and, therefore, misleading in my view, the fantastic genre is more usefully deployed to encompass African-American cultural production from the last half-century.

Iton raises issues of black identity and the position of its voice(s) since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and ‘60s. He justifies that his ‘aim is to be suggestive rather than comprehensive’ (p.191) with a political and historical mapping of African-American



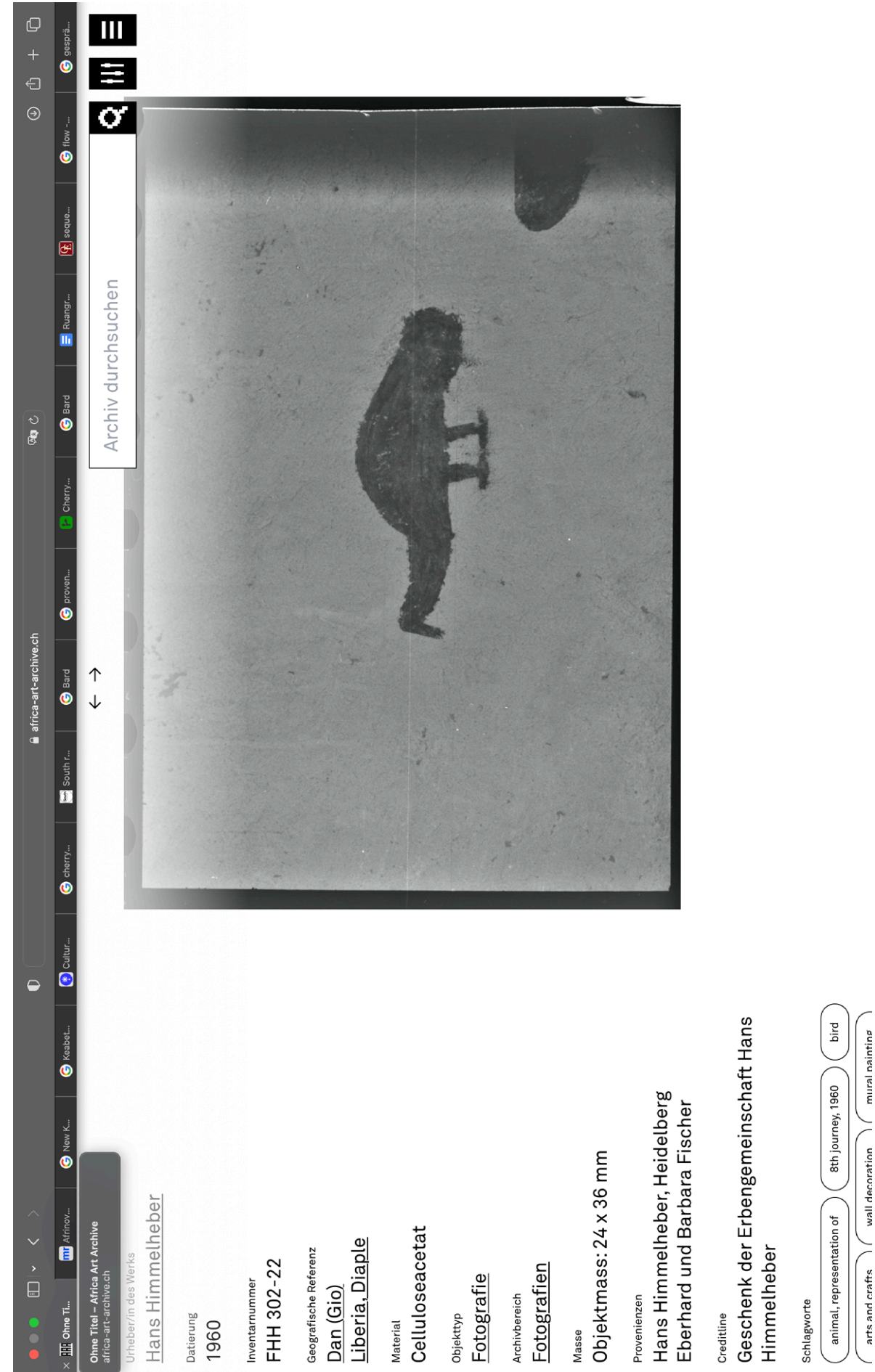




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Yet what many Western museums and institutions wrongly and forcefully harbouring many so-called 'objects' from the non-West do not understand, or have not fully recognised, is that most of the so-called 'objects' have never been and will never be objects. The objectification of these ritual and spiritual beings, historical carriers, cultural entities, orientations and essences is in line with the dehumanisation and objectification of humans from the non-West.

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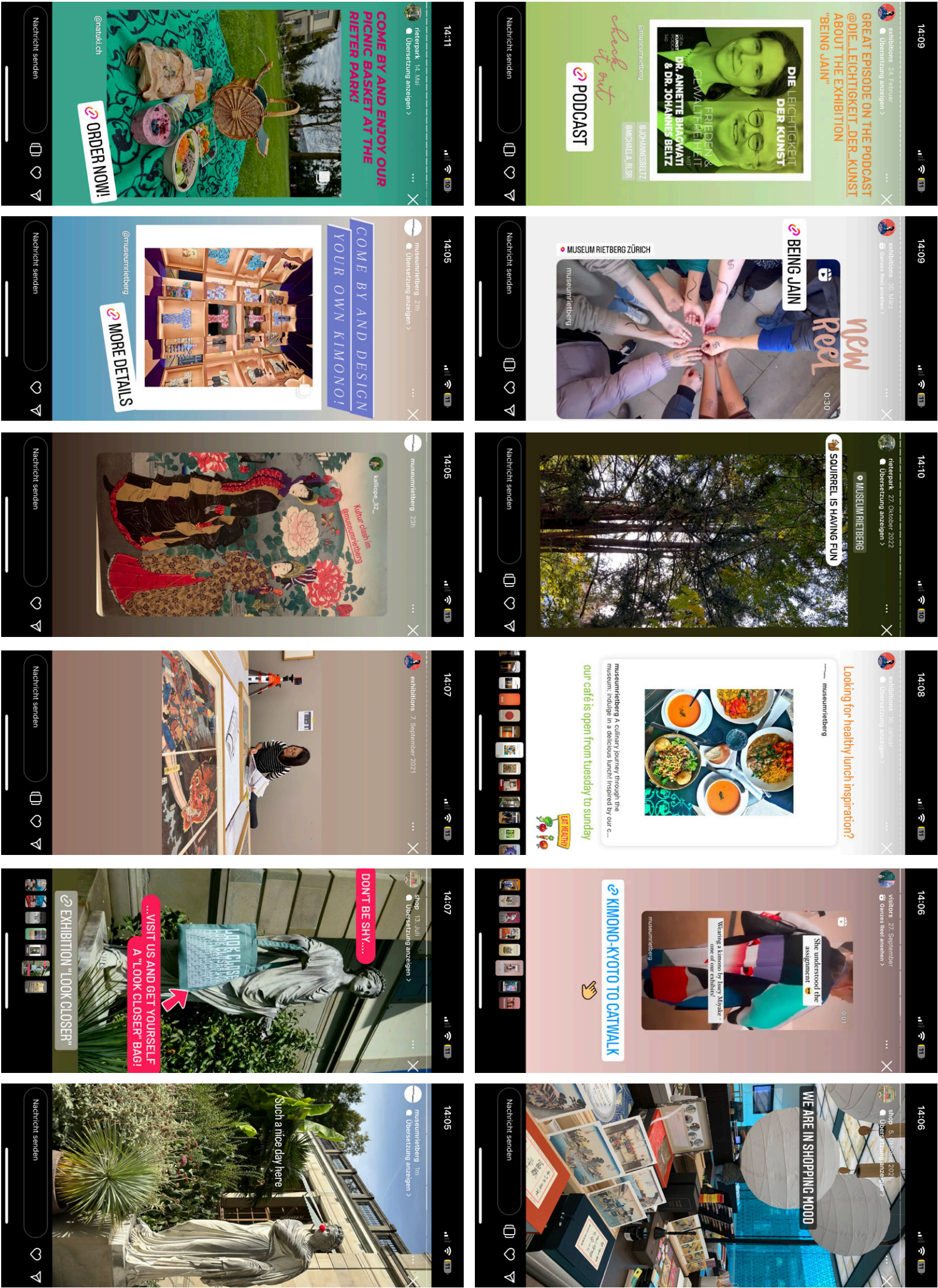
<https://southasastateofmind.com/south-remembers-those-who-are-dead-are-not-ever-gone/>

I think it is interesting what New Kyd has to say about Himmelheber.  
<https://africa-art-archive.ch/archive-viewer>

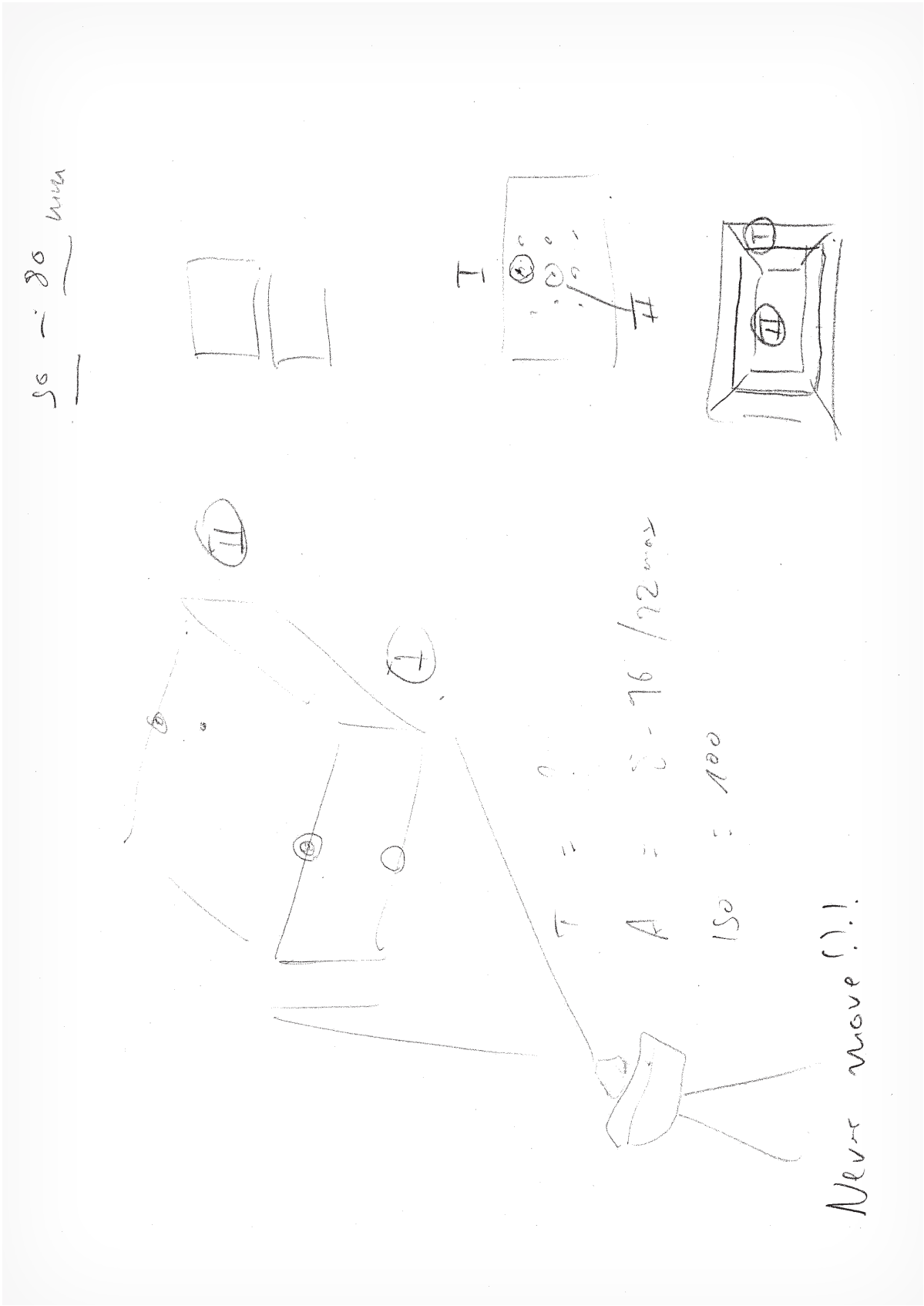








This gives me attraction, entertainment, "funny + cool", "young + hip". but in a forced manner...  
instagram.com/museumrietberg

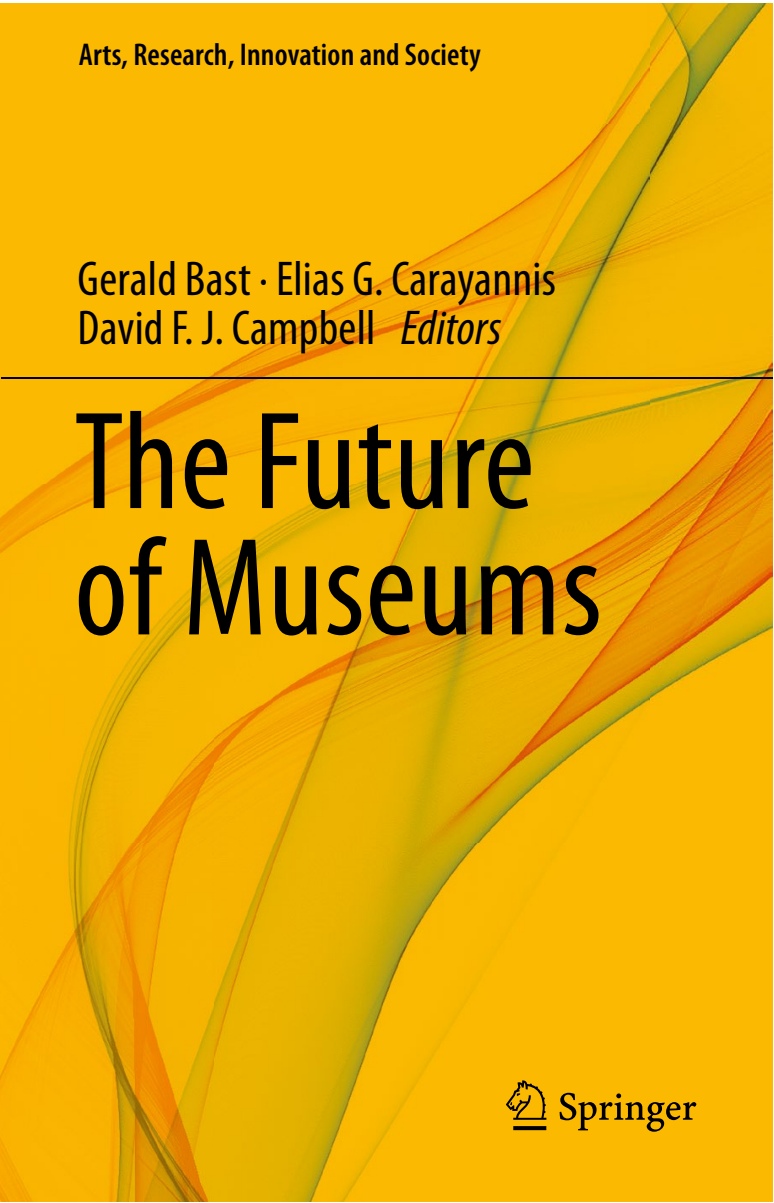


Tibor Bielicky



Or one of the biggest museums, as Debasish might say?  
Is a Ikea just a etnographic museum of europe?  
instagram.com/guardian





## Representation of Culture(s): Articulations of the De/Post-Colonial at the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* in Berlin

Annette Bhagwati

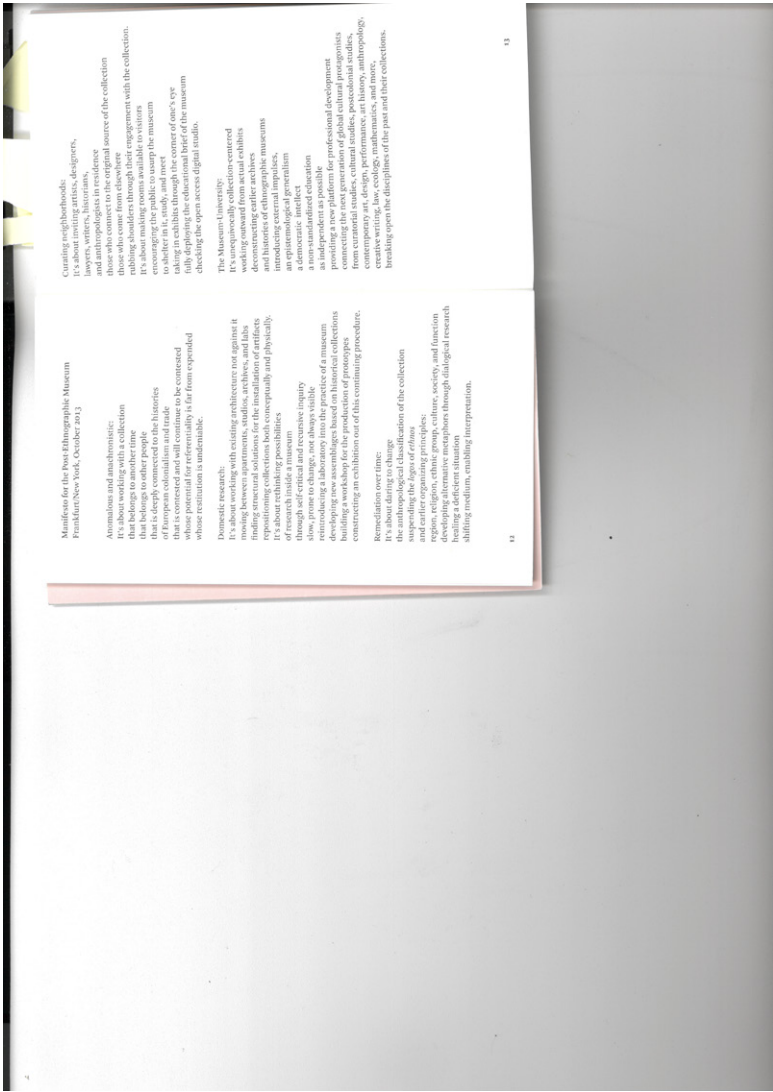
### Preliminary remarks

Across *Anthropology* – the title of this book – could not more accurately describe the conceptual frame, or the challenges of this essay.<sup>1</sup> This text deals with the question of how to represent cultures, a central question of anthropological inquiry, and – at the same time – one of the core questions of curatorial practice in a ‘transcultural’ context.

Footnote 1: The term “transcultural” is closely linked to a specific understanding of culture or a specific discourse on art and culture. As the discussion will show, ‘transcultural’ has come under increasing scrutiny from the perspective of an entangled history approach, especially over last ten years. Nevertheless, it was of central importance for a certain period of curatorial work, especially in the 1990s and 2000s. Thus, when the term is used in the following text, it is placed in quotation marks to refer to this discursive context of practice.

But how do you write when you are both the recording ethnographer and the ethnographic subject, both the observing participant and the participant observer? This essay is, firstly, an (ethnographic) approach to and an account of a specific cultural institution, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1989 as a forum for contemporary international arts and cultures





What would Annette Bhagwati say about this? Is her idea of a living archive in any way related?

Clémentine Deliss (2020 ) The Metabolic Museum



Lothar only killed some of the old trees.

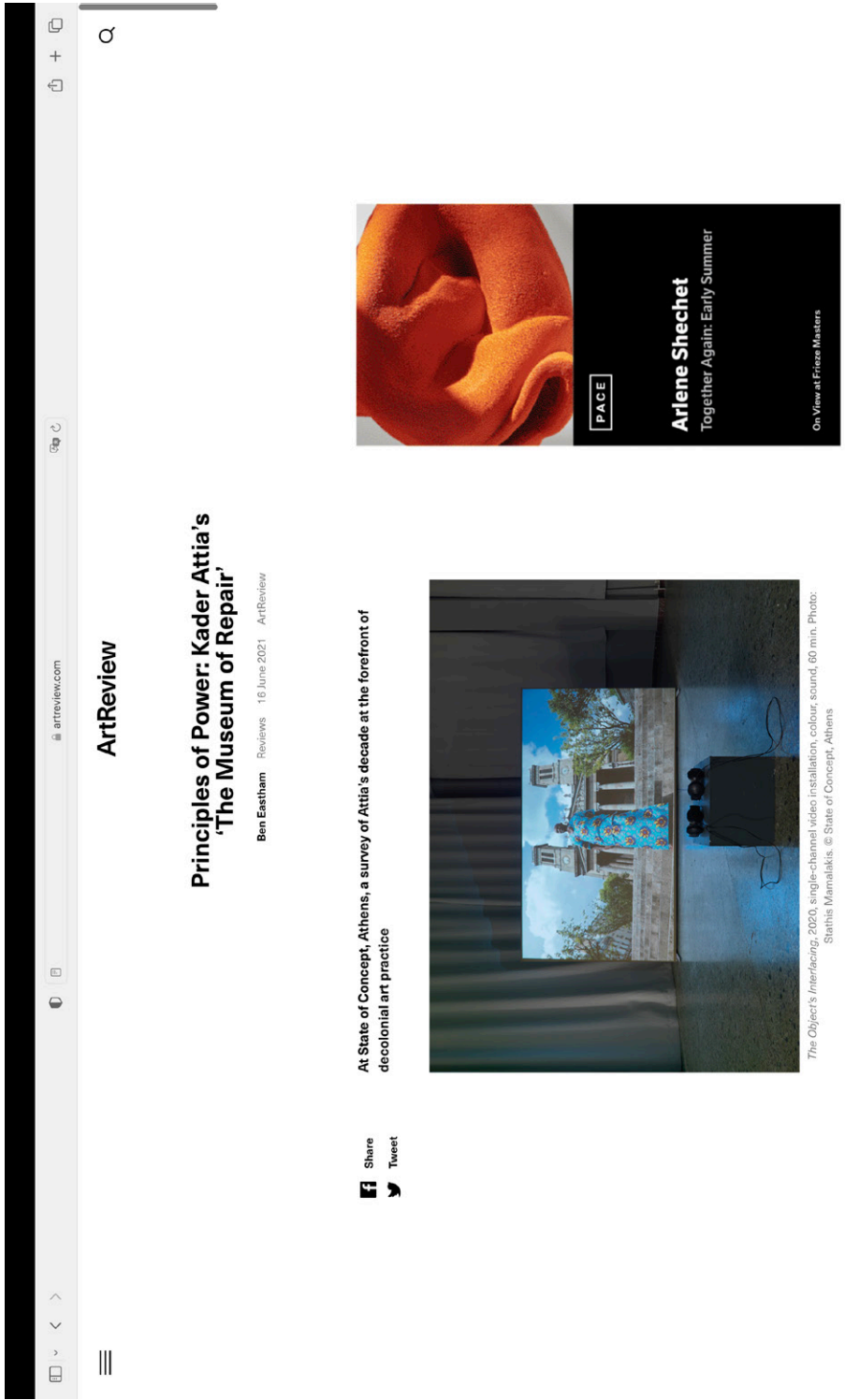
Annette Bhagwati

## Of Maps, Nodes and Trajectories: Changing Topologies in Trans-cultural Curating

In the summer of 1989, the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* opened in Paris. Hailed as “the first actually global exhibition of contemporary art” (*la première exposition réellement mondiale d’art contemporain*) (Gazette des Arts quoted in Belting/Buddensieg/Weibel 2013: 181), the exhibition promised to change the geography of international contemporary art from the ground up (Belting 2013: 180). Until then, the points of reference for contemporary art merely spanned the Western centres of London, Paris, and New York. Located at the periphery of this space were artistic practices outside of this frame of reference: practices that either did not correspond to the Western concept of modern art or were dismissed as inferior – as secondary forms of modernity, deriving from and imitative of the centre. While ethnographic museums and art circles continued to pay attention to a number of so-called ‘traditional arts’, most current developments in non-Western ‘contemporary’ art remained almost completely invisible.

With a curatorial concept that was as simple as it was effective, *Magiciens de la terre* irrevocably and fundamentally questioned this centre/periphery model. “50 renowned Western artists were exhibited with an equal number of formerly excluded artists from the former colonies. Each artist was given equal treatment, two pages in the catalogue, giving only his or her name, work title, and place of birth.” (ibid.) In the catalogue, small icons of the earth were re-centred around the respective artists, mapping the world into ever new formations. Rather than being fixed by a central perspective, the centre was redefined through the artistic practice of each individual artist. This shift in perspective not only called into question the notion of art itself, including established distinctions between art and artefact. Harsh criticisms levelled at the curatorial realization of the show attest to the fact that *Magiciens de la terre* also posed new challenges to longstanding exhibition practices in the Western art context and set new developments in motion (Araeen 1989: 3–14; Buchloh 1989; O’Neill 2012: 57).

Today, more than 25 years after *Magiciens de la terre*, I would like to review some of the curatorial strategies that emerged in the decades after 1989 and aimed at making ‘global’ – often just taken to mean ‘worldwide’ – contemporary art more visible. What exhibition concepts have been devised

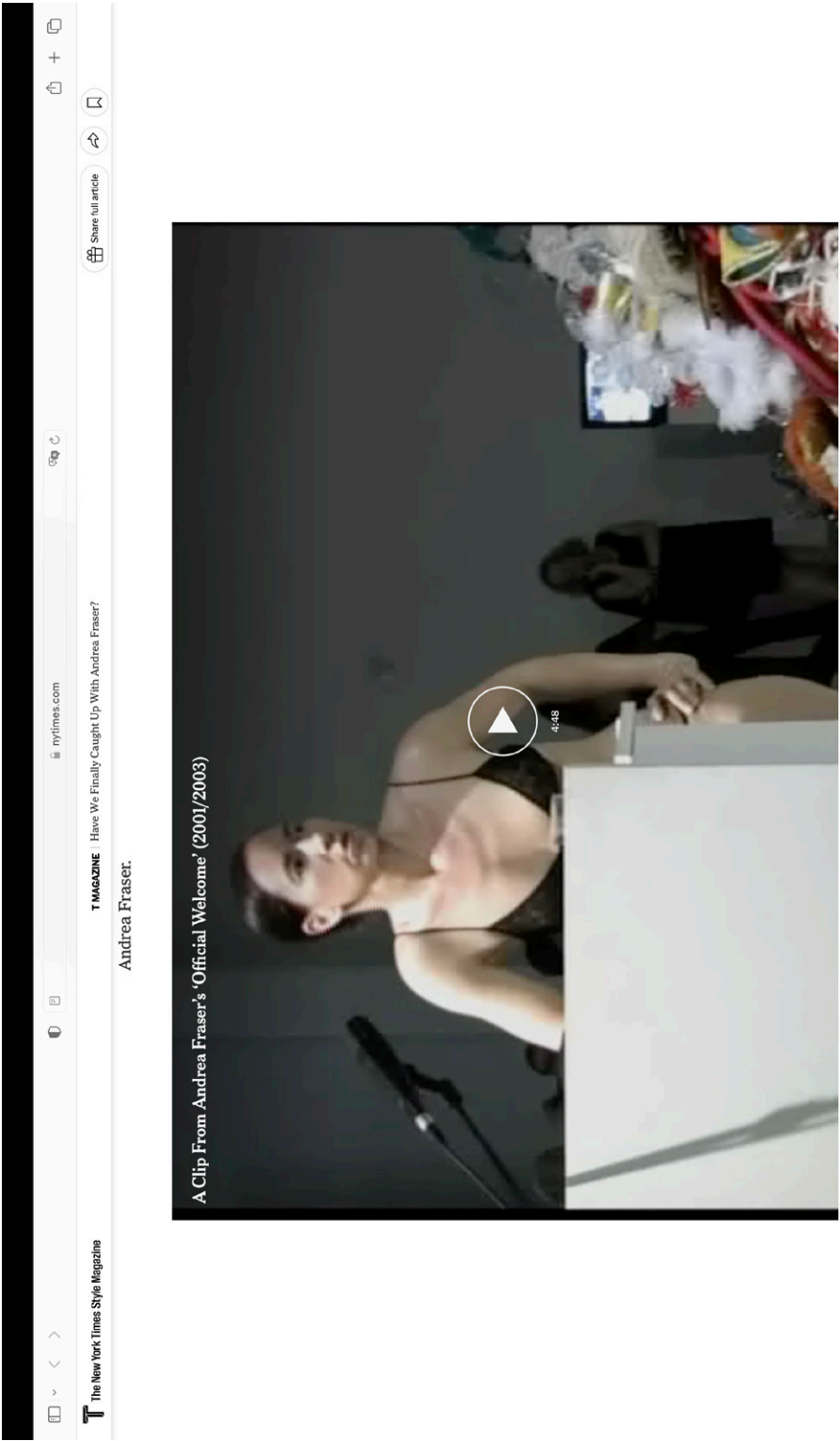


<https://artreview.com/principles-of-power-kader-attia-the-museum-of-repair/>





The soap dispensers in the toilets are extraordinarily luxurious.



I like the aspect of representing various characters in one person.

Adam is always talking about institutional critique. So I looked up the term and understood, that it is an artistic practice. What is the role of architects in institutional critique, however, how can architects practice institutional critique. I understood that we are supposed to practice institutional critique. I think would we did here is something closer to understanding institutions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/t-magazine/andrea-fraser.html>



The artist's physical powers are on full display as she stomps and strips and mimics the gestures of recognizable art-world figures. Courtesy of the Artist

"WHAT DO YOU need to know about me to understand my work?"





Achille Mbembe  
What is postcolonial thinking?  
An interview with Achille Mbembe

The faults in Europe's universalism, especially when confronting its colonial history, have nurtured a variety of critical perspectives in the West. Talking to French magazine *Esprit*, theorist Achille Mbembe says that postcolonial thinking looks so original because it developed in a transnational, eclectic vein from the very start. This enabled it to combine the anti-imperialist tradition with the fledgling subaltern studies and a specific take on globalization, he says.

**Esprit:** "Postcolonial theory" is present in Africa, India, Great Britain, Australia and the United States, but hardly at all in France. Can you tell us what it is all about and what lies behind it? How, in particular, does it differ from anti-western and third-world currents of thought?

**Achille Mbembe:** What's known in the English-speaking world as "postcolonial studies" and "postcolonial theory" is characterised by its heterogeneity, so what constitutes its originality cannot be summed up easily in a few words.

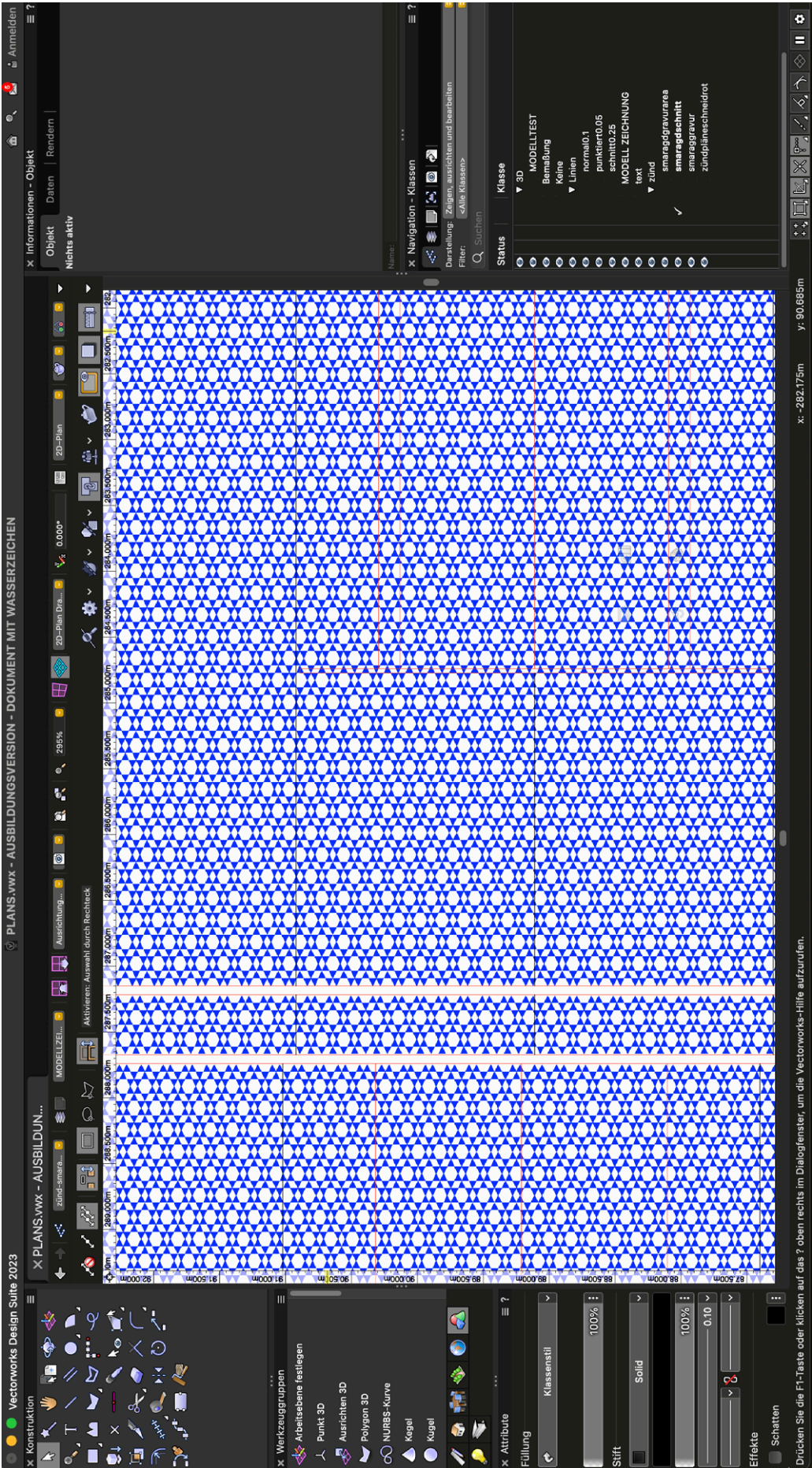


Perhaps I'd better start by making clear that it has little to do with the caricature of "third-worldism" projected by the chorus of penitents in France. In truth, it's a way of thinking that derives from a number of sources and that is far from constituting a system because it is in large part being constructed as it moves forward. That's why it would in my opinion be an exaggeration to call it a "theory". It derives both from anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles on the one hand, and from the heritage of Western philosophy and of the disciplines that constitute the European humanities on the other. It's a fragmented way of thinking, which is both a strength and a weakness. In spite of its fragmented nature there are some forms of reasoning, and some arguments, which distinguish this current of thought and which have made a major contribution to alternative ways of reading our modernity.

To begin with I'd draw your attention to the critique, not of the West *per se*, but of the effects of cruelty and blindness produced by a certain conception — I'd call it colonial — of reason, of humanism, and of universalism. This critique is different from that once made by the existentialist, phenomenological and post-structuralist movements in post-war France. Of course, it is chiefly concerned with the issue of self-creation and self-government. But its approach is not wholly confined to the problem of the "death of God" à la Nietzsche. It differs in many respects from the Sartrean idea of "man without God" taking the place vacated by the "dead God", and hardly subscribes either



© EditiOne Esprit | Télécharge le 24/09/2023 sur [www.calm.info](http://www.calm.info) (IP: 87.159.222.71)



On the facade and the roof, there is this pattern made up out of triangles. In total, there are 84`138 triangles. It should apparently represent the pattern of a Smaragd. drawing of the vestibules facade

**New Kyd**, born 1994 in the UK with Nigerian descent, studied musical theatre at Birmingham Ormiston academy for two years and graduated from University of Roehampton in dance.

During this time she also did a semester studying abroad in New York. Ever since finishing at University she has been working as a freelance dance artist in Europe.

She worked closely with Akram Khan for Big Dance in 2016 during her final year in university. Early in her career she already collaborated with Trajal Harrell (Barbican and Onassis), Jeremy Nedd (Palais de Tokyo), Paul Maheke (Chisenhale Gallery, London and Lafayette in Paris) and Ligia Lewis, touring with Water Will (in melody). As part of the Schauspielhaus Zürich Dance Ensemble, she joined Trajal Harrell in his move to Zurich in 2019.

Rem Koolhaas has been interested in bigness also in the contexts of museums. In a talk at Verbier Art Summit, he describes different experiences and approaches to the issue of scale. He talks about the museum as a city. What if we talked about the museum as the world? What if we dug out the Rietberg Museum and made it a link in a global museum network organised around questions of world art. Museum Rietberg describes itself as a museum of World art but what if it were actually a part of a world museum art? Information technologies provide the means to transcend scale altogether, to connect and to create a global collective practice. What is a museum like Rietberg about? It's about the objects, its about research, preservation, education, exhibiting, its about sparking our collective imagination, about understanding ourselves within a global context, about self-awareness and awareness for each other. What if a global platform could facilitate finding solutions to the problems of the past which are very present still now. What if a collective practice of museums could solve questions of ownership? Imagine how a museum could grow in all directions without even having to build new exhibition spaces. Could a globalisation of the museum even free up spaces. Could those spaces serve the community? Could those spaces play their role in creating and living culture?



To tell you a bit about us, we're a group of architecture students, and this semester, with the chair of Adam Caruso, we are looking at museums. We're looking at three museums, which are the Löwenbräu complex, the Rietberg Museum, and the Kunsthaus. Our group is working on the Rietberg Museum together with a reference, Ruangrupa, which you might know, is an artist collective from Indonesia.

No, I was going to quickly look it up.

They did the last Documenta in Kassel. But our main focus at the moment is really on the Museum Rietberg. We're trying to have conversations with as many people as possible. We talked to the director and the marketing manager already. We also had a discussion with Debasish Borah, who's a visual artist from India. And then we talked to Helen Thomas, who's a researcher in architecture and is interested in the museum as well. Later today, we'll also talk to one of the architects who was involved in the project of the extension. We're really interested in getting as many perspectives as possible.

That's why we're especially happy to talk to you, to find out more about your perspective. You've completed a residency at the Museum Rietberg. Could you share some insights about that experience? How did it come about, and what motivated you to take part in it?

So, with the program, there was a call. So I submitted, and then we had a small interview process after which I got accepted into the program with two other artists, Teddy and Cherry. Teddy is a visual artist based in Bern, and Cherry is a visual artist as well. She's very intellectual, I think a researcher in textiles, but also many other things. Her knowledge about museums and all of this stuff is beyond me. I'm just an artist. So when the museum invited us, we looked at the exhibitions and we had loads of very intense conversations about the Hans Himmelheber exhibition and were asked to respond directly to that. And they also showed us the stuff in the museum, like the African Objects, and very important artefacts they have. We had discussions about exchange, like what it means to own an object, what it means to share objects, and what it means to create new dynamics between countries and stuff and new relationships, and also talking about our personal reaction to it.

Were it the three of you discussing, or were other people involved?

It was the three of us, and then we were talking to another lady who works as a curator at the museum; her name escapes me.

Did you know the museum before? Have you been there?

Yeah, I did. They had a Manga exhibition. So I went to the manga exhibition. And

then I saw the Hans Himmelheber one. And then I saw the Yoruba Exhibition. Because I'm Yoruba. I'm Nigerian. So when I saw the Yoruba artefacts, I was like, what is this? I don't like it. When I got invited again to respond to it, it felt like, okay, I should do this. I should listen and respond. At first, I was very offended. I was very angry. And I just learned to transmute that. What happened with the piece I made is to figure out how, although I felt that my anger is valuable, I can find something more valuable in the reality of things as opposed to just being... I don't know.

Since I had the range and capacity to react from a place that isn't pure rage, I gave myself the opportunity to do that. And I decided to work with hair because my mom is a hairstylist. So I made this braid, which would be like a bridge because they talked a lot about bridges and making connections. So I got this piece of braid. I can show you, it's a really long hair extension that I braided, which came from the bottom of the gallery space all the way to the outside of the gallery space. And then I made a film and a ritual to kind of think about coping and also telling stories about my interactions with the space. One story was about these spoons. I think it was Hans Himmelheber himself. He wanted some spoons from when he went to visit a tribe. I can't remember where specifically. Maybe it was in Togo. And then what happened is they said, no, you can't have the spoons. And so he went away and he came back and asked again, and they were like, sorry, the spoons have gone. And of course, they probably didn't actually go, but I love that they set that boundary with him. Like, hey, look, we said no, and if we say no and you come back, then we're going to pretend it doesn't exist anymore. And I kind of really liked this story. So I told this story as part of the film and we made sure it was only people from the diaspora who attended the performance ritual I did, as a way to kind of create new spaces and create new ways to understand our relationships with each other. Like we are not totally safe to these museums and these anthropologists. It was a matter of finding this between space and compromise. But that's just my approach. Right. I thought it's very important that I'm making a conscious decision to say, look, I chose not to react in anger, but it doesn't mean anger isn't welcome here still.

Can you maybe tell us a bit more about your first reaction and this anger, where it comes from? It's admirable to hear that you try to transform that anger and make it productive. Everything you just said really touches the heart of the issue with this museum.

Yeah, totally.

We're diving right into the important issues.

Yeah. The anger came from betrayal, I think, and feeling a bit gaslighted to take something from my home, especially in this day and age. A long time ago, they would have just been freshly stolen artefacts, and who knows if I would have even seen them myself. And now it's almost like the space has normalised that they have betrayed us, they've normalised that they have stolen from us. And to the point they're confident enough to show us these objects as opposed to sending them back to where they came from, or at least understanding they're not in a position of power with the relationship to these objects. I think that's where the frustration came from because I'm the one who put that into words. They didn't come with these words, and I still had to teach them, like this thing of sharing is still quite mythical, and it's creating an illusion. And I think I really didn't like that. I felt like I'm a very direct person, and I think, especially with the history of the museum, it's important to not keep this illusion up, that perhaps they are virtuous. I think it's wrong.

I think especially in the case of the Himmelheber archive, they're trying to uphold this idea that it's a legitimate collection. But as you just told the story, it sounded like he was quite a cheeky guy as well, trying to get to places and information which weren't meant for him. The spoons you were talking about are probably ritual spoons, right? So they're not meant for him, they're not meant for a collection, they're not meant for a museum. How did you find out about that story?

Again, all the names have escaped me. Another person, she actually has a photo of herself with a spoon, she was another person, I think, researching the gallery. But basically she was the one who, through the research for the exhibition, was helping me find stories and stuff. And she said they recommended that she should tell me this story, and then that's how I found the story.

But was she part of the museum?

I don't know, maybe a visitor to the museum, but definitely in a very close relationship with the museum. You can definitely probably get even more information talking to her as well. To respond to your question, the thing about Hans being cheeky, we told the museum as well. It was interesting. They were surprised by that, not us saying it, but by the fact he was cheeky. And it was interesting. We were like, nah, this guy's a snake. We don't like him at all. He's giving creeps, he's crossing boundaries, he has exploited the system, he's giving coloniser with a smile on his face, like all of that. We told them very directly this is how we felt about him.

And also, another thing is when we looked at the archives, there were photos he had of Africans in their homes, in contemporary clothing. So they had clothing like this, but

he would refuse to show those in the exhibition. And so he was omitting the reality of these people and continuing to perpetuate this barbaric idea. And the thing is, there's no issue with either way of us being in those times. What was problematic is he chose to frame them only that way. It's like going and saying Africans still live in huts. And sure, in the village they do, but then we have billionaire Nigerians who are having a great time. So I felt like with Hans, he was very intentional with how he framed us and how he framed himself in proximity to us. And I felt like the museum and the gallery is doing exactly that right now.

They're perpetuating it?

Yeah.

You didn't feel like they were addressing those questions in the exhibition.

This is the thing, I don't know if you know, but I also work with the Schauspielhaus. This thing I've realized is choosing people to represent change, but not actually doing the structural change. And so it felt like with the museum, it's a performance of change. But is it really change? What changes after we leave? What do they do differently after we leave? And the same with the Schauspielhaus. I mean, they're going back—I don't know if you know what's going on, but they're going back to German-speaking theatre. So me, my director and Wutsang have both been dropped as directors, and they're going back to German-speaking theatre.

And so, you know, these things with museums and institutional spaces, what happens is they hire a few people in, it looks like changes have happened, and then these people end up being pushed out, and then the system goes back to how it was in the first place. And with the museum, I don't know, I can't say. The part that is always frustrating is I'm sure we're not the first people to confront them and to say, hey, this exhibition is wrong. They even introduced us to his grandkids and stuff. It was just like, very strange. It was strange, in a sense, of how to feel about it, right? Like, this is the grandson of Hans Himmelheber. Do I tell his grandson, hey, what are you doing? Or do I just continue being someone in a residency program?

And how much space do I have to offend these people? Am I protected after I offend them? And I think this was something that was very complicated about this exhibition. I think that's why I chose peace instead of rage. And that's why I chose to just make my own material and to work with my own material because it felt like the line between change and just allowing things to stay the same is very thin. And it's very fragile to be in the position to tell someone they're wrong and for them to actually change anything, really, they just usually go, hmmm ahh, yes, I understand. Nothing changes. And so this is what's interesting with the museum. I don't know, but I think

we had very important conversations, and I think us, me, Cherry, Teddy, it was an interesting trio of us because we are all like nah, and there were other people who were like yes.

What did the residency look like in practice? You probably didn't sleep there, right? You would just come in, but where would you work? How would you move around the museum? Were you free to do whatever you liked, or was it very controlled?

We had a lot of talks, and they showed us through the actual museum. They gave us a proper tour of everything. And then they also took us down to some of the archives. One thing which is maybe also fun to know is that they're getting rid of the textiles in the museum as part of their archives to save money or something. For me, it was why I also chose hair because I felt like the textiles somehow represented the fluidity of femininity, and how femininity is usually not so much valued, whereas something like an object or masculinity and something which is clear and precise is valued and kept and preserved.

And so the fact that the textile part of the exhibition is being removed, now for me, was interesting and can create loads of conversations. So they showed us their textiles, deep in the archives, and you have to wash your hands and be very careful with these objects. And they would tell us where they come from, who they come from, how they were found. We also had a session where they showed us part of Hans Himmelheber's collection, which isn't allowed to be seen with the public.

And then we were also invited to attend lectures and seminars at the University of Zurich. And then also some talks individually and research.

And with the museum, of course, there are loads of museum rules. For example, you can't have certain objects there because of the artifacts. But other than that, they gave us quite a lot of freedom to do what we liked, and it gave us a lot of liberty. It was just more so about not causing a problem for the objects, but other than that, we just had to do what we wanted. And of course, we received a lot of support from the museum in finding information we needed or resources we needed.

And for me, I decided to do a performance. Well, a performance which was made into a film, kind of like this double take. Cherry, she actually set up an exhibition in the space for the whole month, I think, or maybe a few months. And then Teddy also made a film which was also shown in the gallery.

Was your film also shown for everyone to see?

Yeah. And it stays in the museum collection as well.

Earlier you said that you performed a rit-

ual which was exclusive to the diaspora community. How did the museum react to that? How did that work?

They were very moved. Oh, do you mean the gallery?

Yes, because you did something in there which they couldn't participate in.

Right, yeah. Basically, they were fine with it. They understood that's the thing with the gallery, with the museum, it was very nice and interesting that they were so open and they weren't like, oh, but... They kind of more so understood and allowed things to happen. And of course, I feel like speaking from a diaspora perspective, we always compromise in our offers. It is very rare a diasporan is going to say, I don't know, it's very rare. It was even hard to ask for just our own space. And I think this is where it was interesting that in that asking, it wasn't met with "why", and "but we need this". They were just like: Okay, you need this space. You want it to be safe and it's fine. And then, actually, I was really grateful that it happened because for the diasporans who came, they were very moved. And also for us, it was nice to sit in this space and to think what it means for us to be in this space. And even that the diasporan thing, it was a bit loose because I have friends as well, are not diasporan, but for example, I have a friend, she has a son who is mixed race. I should say, what was really important with this exhibition, I thought about diaspora who don't have the resources to travel home, so maybe they never, ever get the chance to. And this is one thing I learned about the museum and anthropology museums that I found interesting: what about people who don't have the privilege and access to go home and to experience what home is like? This might be the only way of seeing what parts of home are. And so I kind of wanted to make the performance and the thing about what it means to hold space for the people, truly, as opposed to the outside, which was the museum.

I tried not to think of reacting to the museum. I thought, what if a diasporan came in and came to see this piece? I want them to feel good. I want them to feel welcome, and I want them to feel proud of where we are in history right now. That was not easy, but it was a fun challenge.

And I also tried to remind myself that I have my own individual journey as an artist and to not just react to what the museum wants from me. Because I felt like the museum wanted me to make them look good. I was like, absolutely not. Trying to just be honest, to just show a mirror, perhaps. And it was interesting also in noticing this feeling of I want them to look bad. I wanted to sabotage everything. I wanted to fight everyone. And I was like, damn. But in the end of the day, I was like, this everyone, who is everyone, right? The museum isn't everyone, and there's always us here wait-



ing to be seen and heard. So I had to really manage the internal space to see what it would be like for other people to come in.

Do you feel like the museum and the people had the courage to lose their facade a little bit? Or did you feel like they want to rebrand or make themselves look good? Or do you think on some levels they had the courage to be vulnerable?

Or even sincere? We met with the marketing guy from Rietberg, and when he talked about how he wanted to attract people to come to the museum, it was always only out of the marketing perspective. And for us, it felt kind of like how the museum seems to be engaging with the topic of cultural heritage and also wanting to be open and transparent. But at the same time, with their marketing strategy, we didn't really know what to think about it.

That's the thing. Yes. So the marketing strategy, the first thing I would say is that this institution is made of so many individuals, and every individual has a different job. And so I think, for example, the marketing person, it could have been someone who does care about bigger, better things, but it turns out it's someone who's just a very practically thinking guy. And then in the museum, I feel like we had a range of people. We had some people who I felt like were open and understanding and I could empathise with. And I felt like they, even in themselves, felt isolated in the work they're doing within the museum.

And then other people who are constantly triggered by the things we were saying, and they just have a moment of recognizing the problem and then cutting off again. And I even called them out on it. I was like, hey, I could sense that when I tell you these things, you know it's wrong, and you're even hesitating to say it to me, and yet you still say it. And I realised they're in this system, and it's their job. I don't think it's right or wrong that it's their job. I think at the end of the day, if you want to see a change, you have to make it happen. And I think the museum and institutions in general are very frustrating in this way because it really depends on many individuals.

And this is something that came up a lot with us in the residency, that there's very rarely more individuals wanting change. It's usually the mass who couldn't care less about it, and it's usually most of the people in the room who are kind of comfortable with how things are. And so with the museum and this institution, it felt like they were uncomfortable with the fact that people are aware, perhaps, but I don't know if they were uncomfortable enough for the changes to happen, perhaps.

At the same time, really, I was very detached. I would say I really didn't go deep with them in this way. Cherry was really good with this. She really went deep in the conversations and the dialogue she

would have with the museums. But I kind of chose another side because I know how I truly feel about this. I know it would only end in a debate where I'm asking people to change their jobs in a way. I don't mind, but it's not my job. They have to make the choice for themselves to change things. And I think with the museum, I did feel and recognize this. I think this happens to diasporans a lot, where we're brought into projects where we're used as puppets to create propaganda. I can't say I don't think this was any different. I think it was the same thing. How do we escape this system and this pattern of being instrumentalized by people who actually aren't particularly bothered by what we're bothered by.

I would say, though, there were people in the museum I did think they genuinely are doing the work and they're genuinely trying. Luckily, people in positions of power within the museum are able to do this as well. But I think the institution itself, I don't think they are globally trying. The program was set up by Kia from the Black Artists In Residence program. So she's the one who saw this opportunity to make this happen. She's South African. I think she's based in Bern, but she came from the outside, came up with the idea, gave it to the museum, and then they made it happen.

Where did it come from? The inside or the outside? It came from the outside, and therefore the institution isn't really the one making this work happen. They're just the one who is trying their best to help us make it happen.

That's really interesting, because when we talked with the director of the museum, she told us about how they're very active and engaging and trying to work with different participants. It sounded like she was being sincere.

I would say for her, it's definitely sincere. I remember meeting her. I do believe it's sincere. It's just that the work is a lot easier said than done. And it takes the whole institution being behind it, not just the leader.

And my experience at the Schauspielhaus is that just because the person leading the institution has these intentions, it doesn't mean that 50 or 20 people working under them are going to really work as hard as they are to make that happen.

She seemed like a very cautious person in how she navigated the debate with us. And when you were describing the situation in the Schauspielhaus, I was thinking of Clémentine Déliiss, who was the director of the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt. She was brought in because they thought she could make a change and revitalise the place. But in the end, I think after five years, she was fired because, for example, she employed a chef. "We're not a kitchen, we're a museum." What she ended up doing during those five years is really what you, in a way, experienced at Rietberg, that

she brought in other people from outside, so artists but not only artists, also lawyers, anthropologists, lots of different people who would bring in their outside perspectives and really work with the collection. I think, at least from what I've read about it, it was much more open and accessible. If you'd been an artist in their residency, you'd probably be able to go down into the cellars and pick pieces and rearrange them and do things with them. So I'm wondering how you see a way also, because of your performance, how you see a way of transforming a museum like the Rietberg. Have you got an imagination about what a place like this could be? Or what it could mean to you as an artist? Is it interesting to work with such a collection for you?

Yeah, totally. In the experience I realised a lot of artists, especially what white artists have the privilege of doing, is just accessing themselves, just spending time with themselves and things outside of themselves, which the government provides and gives money for them to do. And with this whole experience with the museum, with making the braids, with going deeper, with my own practice, that was very valuable. Also the conversations I was able to have with friends, the really amateur research I did in regards to interviews with people I knew personally, as well. It was really enriching and it was really empowering. And also people were really moved by the films, which I was also surprised by. I wasn't sure if people were like, "Stop." It was also really a nice feeling. Also talking to friends about it as well, because I felt like as a diaspora, and I wasn't sure if I was betraying myself and my own people and my own politics, as well. And so it was a nice way to challenge myself in this way. What does my politics mean? Does it mean refusal of spaces like this all the time? Or does it mean going into these spaces because before I studied dance, I wanted to study anthropology, so it also felt very fitting to be there.

Sorry for the Zoom delay. The question was about where you see the potential in a museum like this and where you see it going. Is there something you would like to see in that museum, or can you imagine a different kind of museum based on what there is? How would you develop it?

With my vivid imagination, it would be more like a city. I think cities are melting and boiling pots of shared information of people from different cultures and backgrounds. I think I said at the museum, I was like, what would happen if Nigeria had a Swiss museum, for example? I think I would start there, like, questioning what it means for us to hold European artefacts and objects the same way they hold onto our own. And if that is ethical, is it ethical? Because I think sometimes it's with European countries or America as well, with white-centred spaces, I would say, in general, there's usually this lack of mirrored empathy.

Because another thing that I said is, as a Nigerian, where I'm from in my country, we understand things are shared with words, with sounds. The second you put it into a box or you make it an object, it loses its value. And so we really believe in things not being held into place. And I also came up with this question of what it means to be remembered and why do we aspire to be remembered so much? And so I see museums as this way of Americans and Europeans being so fearful of being forgotten, so fearful of losing culture, that they're making museums to preserve culture. And for me, the question is, why do we preserve culture? Why do we want to see? Why do we want to be remembered? Or when you look at the erasure of us in history, of course there's reasons, and they're good reasons, but I feel like I don't know yet whether there's a right or wrong answer with that.

But I do think I could imagine museums as places where people go and see. And I mean, I guess in a way, this is what museums are now. But the only thing is that it needs to be globalised. It needs to be made equal. I hate that word, but it kind of does need to be a very, like the same way you look at the Earth map, even that's manipulated, but the same way you look at the map of the Earth is the same way you would look at the museum, in a way like you'll experience it. So it's not about the Swiss, for example, showing us artefacts from Africa. It's being in Switzerland and seeing stuff from the globe. And I think it's a very slightly different way.

And also, I had this question as well about why we have these spiritual, very heavy spiritual objects in these spaces, as opposed to the church holding these spiritual objects. And why is there this kind of thing where our religious objects are not treated as sacred as they are here, like Christian objects? And I think I would like to wonder if it's about, I don't know, the church becoming a place where they hold art and then it gets complicated because absolutely not. There's no way I want my ancestors chilling with these Swiss ancestors with their object. I don't know. It feels weird for me. I don't like it. But I do think there is a way museums and anthropology museums are places where people who want globalisation and who want diversity and all of this to really come together and to find answers and to preserve our moments in history.

And also, it's interesting because I think museums are kind of based on objects and holding objects and keeping objects. And also, it's very expensive to move these objects. Actually. That's the thing. It's not so easy to move these objects. And so I don't know if it's worth sending everything back. But I do think it's worth analysing what it means to share things, and I think it's worth re-changing the way we relate to each other.

I think we should imagine that the museum is a space where people learn about

the similarities, perhaps between cultures as opposed to differences, because, you know, at the end of the day, every culture has its own religious practices. Actually, not practice. Every culture has many religious practices. So I think a museum can be a place where you go to learn where all the practices from each country are, and that a museum is a city everywhere, as opposed to getting what the city thinks of another country, which they have a relationship with. Because I think the issue with museums as well is the power always comes down. It's very rare, like the people who own these objects have the power to know how it's seen, where it's seen, who sees it.

And I think also changing the structures in such a way that the people who own these objects can maybe just talk about them as opposed to a stranger telling us about it. But it feels like a long time ago now. We did this, it was July. It's like a lot of these ideas were first fresh, but now they're kind of jumbled in my head. But amazing questions.

You just touched upon it, that the museum is based on objects. It's based on a collection most of the time. And I think what's interesting about those objects is that they provide an opportunity as a node to develop something around them. But as it is today, it's just they're sitting there in their shrines and they're being viewed as or consumed like we consume everything now. The first time I went back to the museum recently it really felt like we're exhibiting all those objects which come from daily life or rituals, spiritual life. And it almost feels like we have to go there because of our own lack of culture. So we have to go and see objects of very rich cultures there. It was really weird.

I was going to say as well. I think one thing we said in the residency is like, how come they're so interested in our objects, but they're still killing us? And it's mind blowing that they killed us or burned down our people to gain our objects, to bring back. It's like the actual human who made the objects they desire is disposable. And their objects are indisposable. And that was something that I felt. And yeah, this thing of outsourcing interests. I think Hans Himmelheber was definitely someone who I feel like he was a reject in society, and he found a way of being accepted in this society by finding Africans who are outside of his society that are interesting to the Swiss. And I just did not like it.

And it feels like it's the same thing in general now, even with contemporary art, with music, with society, this relationship between black white diasporas and white people, because it's not just black people where it feels like we're always objects to be viewed by white people for entertainment and very rarely seen as fully embodied beings who also have our own narrative who also have our own way of relating to

these objects. And actually, sometimes they don't learn that our relationships to these objects are not the same. And this is why we might not have museums, or maybe we don't have museums because our resources are being starved. And I think this is also another thing that I find interesting, I guess, conversations about this, like asking ourselves, what does it mean to have cultural values? Because we're in a time of a lot of individuals and individualism. And I think it's interesting how we still have what a norm looks like. But then as you speak to individuals, it's clear. It's almost a myth somehow. And we're just taught norms.

In the end, when you look at the Pathways exhibition which weaves through the collection, it's very didactic. And it's just from one perspective, the perspective of the museum, and where are the other perspectives? Because it seems like the museums, which are also like research institutions in a way, are trying to explain those objects based on the information they can get or based on the research Himmelheber, for example, did. But then there's maybe also something like reversed ethnicity. The artist we talked to, he was talking about that a lot. And I was thinking about it earlier when you were talking about Himmelheber. The thing with the clothing, but also the thing with the spoons. They wouldn't give him everything. There's a very strong awareness on the other side of what maybe they want to share or what's even legitimate to share, maybe also in a ritualistic or spiritual sense. So it's like the Western museums are creating their own narrative, which is probably far off from the reality which those objects actually originate in.

Yeah, totally. Because at the end of the day, these objects, no matter how beautiful they are, weren't made to be put in a museum somewhere. And I think it's normalised. Of course, there's also this question of power. Again, power relations. Like, if someone came to my home right now as I'm living, and said, hey, I'm going to give you 1 million for your home, I'm going to be like, fucking take it. What else do you want? And I think this is a thing with museums that I think is very, I'm sure people have researched about it, but I think it's very, and also the same with the religious artefacts. Like at the end of the day, why? I don't know. Are there churches which are now, I mean, I think there are churches which are treated as museums.

It's also a question of how the Swiss, I mean, it's not just the Swiss. I would say Europeans relate to their own stuff. Architecture, for example. How they relate to buildings and how they kind of build this big building to honour maybe one person. And you're like, Yo, why? They're alive. Just love them while they're alive. And it's interesting how it seems that there's always this



ritual of having to maybe prove something or to take more space or to establish space. I think it's quite disastrous, the need to have so much dominance everywhere. But I also understand, I think a lot of humans are inherently insecure. And we've created insecurity because of our history. And now we're just in this melting pot of different values and different desires. And I think some people, it's from ego. I think other people, it's from understanding erasure. And I think the issue is they're erasing our voices, usually in the name of this bigger picture. And I'm like, but what is the bigger picture and what's the lens? And is it really in service to us or is it in service to the Swiss narrative?

Also going back to your performance and architecture in general. We only saw snippets of it, of Waterfoot, but from the images we've seen, there's the one shot where you start in that in-between space. In front of the museum shop. And then there are the snippets of the braid along the handrails and how you subtly appropriate the space. I love that you still found a way to leave these traces there. So even if you could not really, I guess, touch the object in person or deal with it in that way. So it's interesting for us how you used the space, the architecture of it.

Yes, and also the idea to take a camera, because I use a camera on my body. And also there were two people recording at the same time. And so you also got to see the people witnessing me witnessing them. And yet I also accidentally broke a jar. I still got to, like even if it's a tiny bit of chaos, I was able to cause some chaos. And I think also my friends said when they got to see it in the gallery itself, like, this kind of really doubles this, like you're seeing the exhibition within the exhibition, in the exhibition. And this was something that I felt like I wanted to express, is that we always have to take so many layers of perspective, and sometimes they're damaging, sometimes they're helpful, sometimes they serve us, sometimes they don't.

I think working with the space, thinking of seeing the hair as a bridge and seeing how our bodies in these spaces also have their own charge. At first, I wanted to just be in a glass box in space. What's her name? Bella Hadid. And what's her name? This other artist did this, where she put herself in a box and she just slept, and people came to watch her. And I wanted at first to try something along these lines. I was actually in a lecture. I can't remember what the theme of the lecture was, but it was kind of like talking about how objects are shared and how they're displaced or put in different places. And I don't know what it was. I just remember seeing or hearing about a thread, and then that's when it occurred to me: I think that's what I want. I think I want a connection. And I think I really desire connection, and I appreciate their desire for connection. I appreciate my own desire

for connection. But it's so violent. And so it was almost like I wanted to create a bridge to escape the violence, and I wanted to create a bridge to cope with the violence of the pain of things, while also recognizing the joy and beauty of how we deal with violence and also the beauty of how throughout history, we've had these things everywhere. And there's also a lot of bonding that happens through hair and a lot of, especially for the diasporans, hair can make or break a job interview, art piece, entrance into a space. And I think this was a discovery I didn't expect when I first got asked to do this. I mean, when I first got asked to do this, my friend was like, sure, let's break something. I was like, we can't. I'll get sued and I'll be broke.

At first, I wanted to make something criticizing the museum. But I'm glad because my theme was refusal. So in my refusal of giving the museum what they wanted, that's how I found this thing, I guess, this artwork and this response. And, yeah, it was, in a way, just me, like, finding practice. I have another film I made once where I also used my own hair on my head in a different way, and I was really entangled in it. And so I just kind of wanted to continue this research with hair and also femininity, because in school, a lot of the white girls would make pieces with their hair, and they just didn't think of me when they made this artwork.

And it was quite violent, of course, but also at that time, I just kind of was like, okay, you know what? When my time comes, I'll cross that bridge when I get to it in my own relationship to other performers with different hair. It was so interesting because we had everything equal, right? But the choreography was that they would get their hair and they would dip it in water, and then they would bring it out really slowly. And with my little Afro, I was like, I can't do that. I felt very excluded because of that. And so it was always something I wanted to address eventually with my work as a dancer. Because also with feminist artworks, you would see them often, like the hair and moving the hair in the wind or the hair flicker stuff. And it's like, I really, truly can't relate to that, and I have no issue with that. But I think it's important to be aware of what it means to be in a position where you're not even having to consider what the other feels about the thing and then being the other towards the thing. Like how to grace. I don't have to be graceful, but I decided to be graceful. So how to gracefully bring people to awareness about perhaps the, I don't think it's important to bring people awareness about the pain it caused, but more so about how else can we talk about this thing? What is it about the use of the hair?

And is there another way to say that thing? Or is there an inclusive way to say that thing? Or is it necessary to be inclusive as well? I think it's also important. I think

sometimes people just want to have their own narrative and story that they want to talk about? The same with the museum as well. I felt like I didn't want to rob them of the fact that they wanted to have this interaction with us from the diaspora. And also it wasn't us from the diaspora who made this project in the first place. So I didn't want to turn around and be like, oh, fuck your work. I wanted to also help her dreams come true. Right. And I think this is where I went off of it from the architecture thing. But I think this is where I was honored and also challenged and like, okay, it's bigger than just my individual perspective and things. It's like there's other people always working outside of me to make certain things happen and to dismantle systems and to also do work that I, at least as a very chaotic artist, I don't have the range, I think, for certain things, and I stay in my lane. So it's nice to sometimes just be the artist as a vessel to support that bridge that's being made and to support the work that they're doing to make the world a little less violent, I guess. Yes.

That's certainly what they frame themselves as. It's really interesting if you look at the way politicians write about the Rietberg because, you know, it's part of the city. So the director of the Rietberg is just one hierarchy below the president of the city. The other thing is that the museum calls itself an art museum. It calls it not only an art museum, but a world art museum. And that's interesting because if you go to the Kunsthau, then what's the difference between the objects in the Kunsthau and the things here? Why is it not mixed? Why are the objects at the Rietberg not shown in the Kunsthau? And then maybe is it not actually an ethnographic or anthropological museum? In a way, it's really difficult to see what it actually is, this museum. It all started with this idea of Ars Una, that there's only one art. I also wonder whether maybe because they've had a very specific way of exhibiting the work as art pieces. So you had paintings and sculpture and you would exhibit them in a certain way, but they were just shown as objects without a lot of information. And now they're only starting to try and explain everything in a didactic way. I wonder whether there's maybe a potential in viewing those pieces as art and looking at them not through the question of where the objects are from, what they were used for and being very anthropological or ethnographic about it. But to look at it and ask yourself, where does the object originate in an artistic sense? What is the artistic intention behind it? Why is it shaped in the way it's shaped? So I wonder whether you can relate to that and how you see the way they exhibit things.

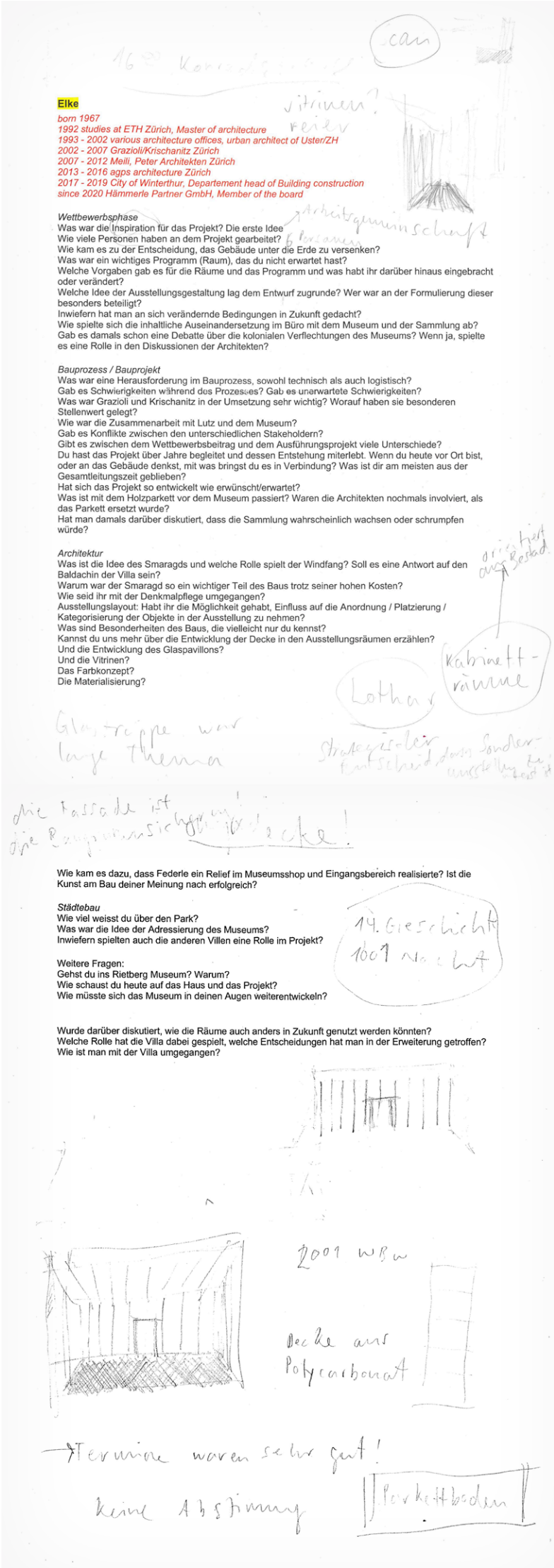
This was a conversation that came up. We were asking ourselves what is the line between these being historic objects and

these just being artworks? And for us the theme was religion. I think there's something sacred about religious artefacts, as opposed to these spoons these people used. But spoons are a bad example. And also, before I move on, it's like, yeah, what is the line and what are the boundaries? It felt very blurred sometimes that these spiritual objects were treated as art. And they are not art, they are spiritual objects. And so that was something that came up a lot. Ultimately, it was like, yeah, it came up where we were asking ourselves why we feel like we're only valued because of our position, perhaps in relation to the gallery. But who are we besides tools for their narrative, perhaps? And how could we be more empowered, perhaps, from our experience? And how can we be less annoyed by the experience? And how can we really engage in a way that doesn't feel like we're being exploited by the museum?

And yeah, it's weird because it gets into, like, a bigger philosophical question about what art is and I think what I didn't like is feeling like they were just showing these objects to just be seen and consumed, as opposed to an opportunity to really learn about different cultures. Because I don't know, if you had been to the basement where they have just those loads of objects, and for me, that's when I was like, this is a graveyard, this is really bad. And this is really cruel, actually, in a way. And who made that decision for these objects to just lay there and be there. Oh, shit. I have to go. But yeah, I have to go quite soon. Like, maybe in, like, five minutes. I think, honestly, the museum having this much power over these objects already for me is, like, such a problem because it speaks of the culture of Swiss neutrality, again, where they're speaking as if they're being neutral when actually they're just wielding power very coercively and ambiguously, I would say. I have to run.

Thank you so much.







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We met Elke on Thursday in her office. She was in a good mood, rushed us up to a meeting room, and then bombarded us with our own questions, and answered. She had asked for the questions in advance so it wasn't really a conversation. Time was tight. We started at 16:00, and she needed to leave latest by 17:30. She seemed very controlled about what she told us but was still willing to share some interesting stories from the building process. She had been asked by Grazioli and Krishanitz to run the Zurich office, which they had to open to supervise the building process locally. The authorities were afraid that the two architects would be in Berlin and Vienna, and the building site in Zurich wouldn't get enough attention.

The old trees and the park as a whole played an important role in the construction. Only after Cyclone Lothar had taken down several of the trees, Albert Lutz, the museum's director, was able to convince the planning authorities to launch a competition. When the building works started, the parkways had to be improved so heavy loads could be transported on them. The responsible administrator wanted the architects to plan a new platform in front of the Villa Wesendonck to avoid destroying the lawn. However, after a couple of years of construction, the lawn would have died anyway. The architects got their way.

Elke told us that what is now the Schaudepot used to be a bunker-grade cellar built during the Cold War. Initially, it was considered as a space for temporary exhibitions. The temporary exhibitions ended up at the bottom of the new extension. This was a strategic decision by Albert Lutz, so people would have to pass by the collection. Albert Lutz was not only very strategic in this case. The new building project didn't have to be voted on by the public. The building costs were 46 million. For public projects above 20 million, a referendum was mandatory. A part was covered by the Kanton, and the remaining roughly 20 million were collected from wealthy individuals, companies, and foundations close to the museum. This way, the building could be set up from competition to the opening in five years. Elke told us that today a comparable project would take up to ten years to be realised.

To our question about the costs of the Smaragd, she reacted almost outraged. The whole building is underground. And if the whole building had a facade, it would have been far more expensive. What is the space for? It's an entrance, and then she read a part from "One Thousand and One Nights." The space closely resembles the story she read:

"Then, suddenly, the door opened by itself. Padma Naba and Hassan entered a courtyard. Unlike the first one, this courtyard was not guarded by terrifying monsters. On the contrary, there were six charming statues at the entrance, each made of a single

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diamond, depicting six beautiful women playing the tambourine. The gate, carved from a single emerald, stood open, and behind it was a magnificent hall. Hassan couldn't tire of admiring everything that met his eyes. After thoroughly inspecting everything from the outside, Padma Naba allowed him to enter the hall, its floor made of solid gold and the ceiling adorned with porphyry, studded with pearls everywhere. Here, a thousand diverse objects, each more striking than the last, captivated the young man's eager gaze."

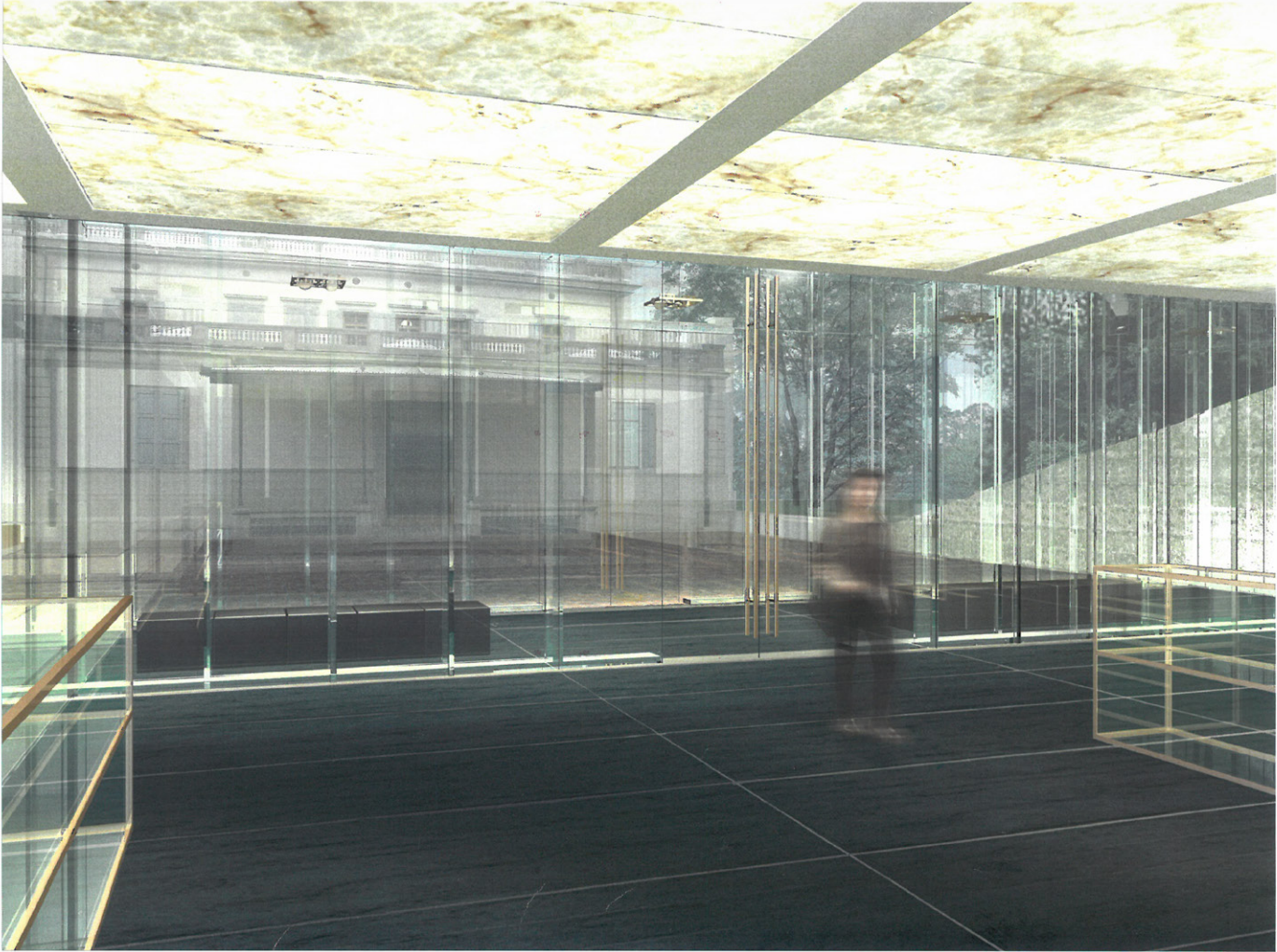
The pavilion-like glass structure was a completely new development. At that time, there were no norms or prior experiences with such a structure. When you enter through the glass structure, you walk toward a wall relief by the artist Helmut Federle. Apparently, Asian temple architecture was a strong reference for that piece. Other artists also submitted proposals, but they were not convincing. One of them wanted to write on the glass of the Smaragt, which, of course, was a no-go for the architects. Because of bird security, however, the architects had to come up with a solution for the glass. Sitting in a bar in the evening, Adolf Krischanitz sketched a pattern based on the crystals of emerald (Smaragd). This pattern was then printed on the entire glass facade of the entrance pavilion.

Another thing we were curious about was the ceilings in the exhibition spaces. Elke told us how they developed a solution for that on a one-to-one model in spaces of the Toni Areal. The Z-profile polycarbonate panels are very successful, not only in lighting but they are also easy to maintain. A single person can replace lights, for example.

The villa was only renovated because there was an accident on the building site which led to a lot of cracks. She told us how the visitors left the museum very quickly and voluntarily. The only part that didn't have cracks was the terrazzo floor in the winter garden. The heritage preservation agency was very clear about the preservation of the floor. So the architects, with the construction experts, developed a complicated solution. The floor was glued to metal grids from above, and then the ground was excavated from below. New concrete was poured in between the hanging floor and the formwork.

Towards the end, we discovered an early rendering of the project within her pile of documents, but Elke was quick to hide it from our eyes. She looked at it for a while, smiled, and then told us how bad it was and that she won't share it with us. Other documents, however, she was willing to share.

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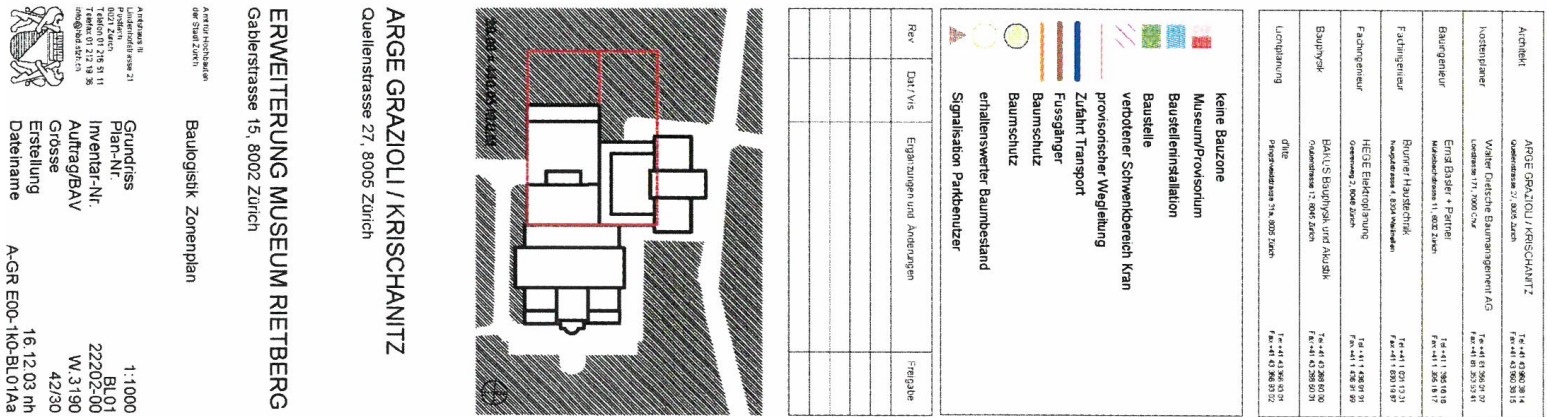
How did an office in the early 2000s make visualizations? I want to attend a workshop.

There was a third visualization at the talk with Elke Eichmann. She didn't want to show it to us because she considered it too ugly.

competition visualizations

Elke Eichmann





Elke Eichmann

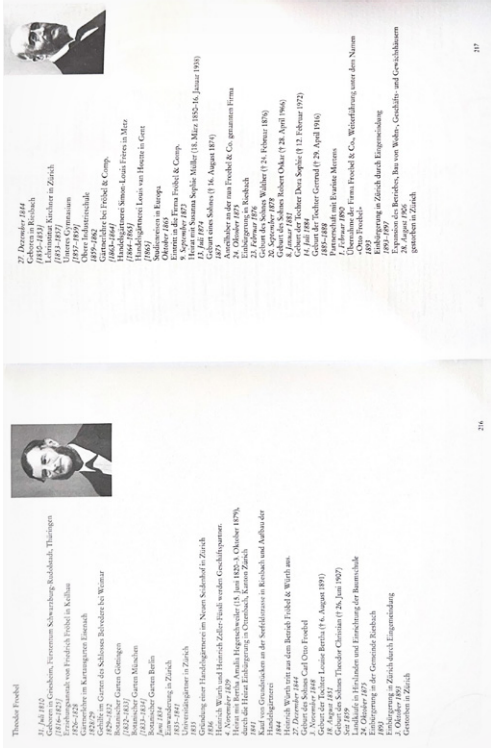




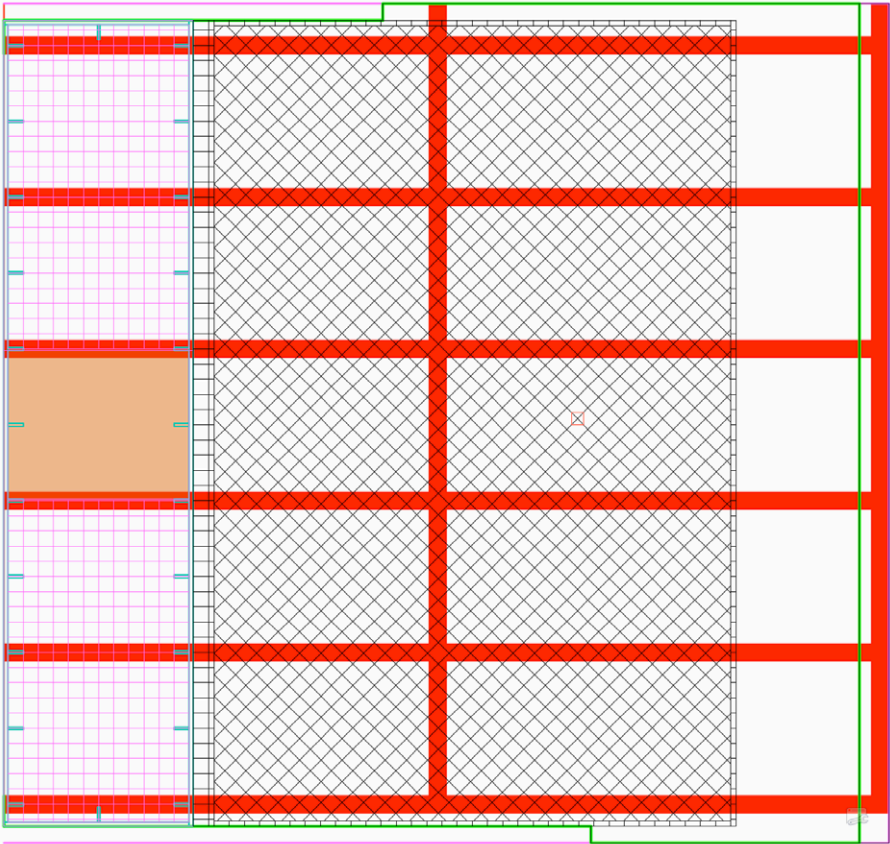
Tschumi was here.  
Elke Eichmann



Elke Eichmann



Theodor and Otto Froebel traded and imported exotic plant from non-european countries often colonialized countries. Then they drew them and gave them latin names, some even have their last name.  
Theodor & Otto Froebel, Claudia Moll Simon, gta Verlag, Zürich CH, 2019



The original parquet floor in the vestibule and on the square in front of it had to be replaced with a stone floor after a few years.  
How do the stone tiles, the coconut mat, the glass wall and the structure beneath it come together?  
Plan for our model



