



UBremen
Research
Alliance

Conference

Seeing the 'Other'? Theories & Histories
of (Post-)Colonial Visual Cultures



Seeing the 'Other'? Theories & Histories of (Post-)Colonial Visual Cultures Virtual Conference

8 – 9 April 2021

German Maritime Museum Bremerhaven

in cooperation with the Institute for Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies,
the Institute for Anthropology and Cultural Studies and the Institute for Art
History/Film Studies/Art Education at the University of Bremen

PD Dr. Gisela Parak, Prof. Dr. Kerstin Knopf, PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel, Jun.-
Prof. Dr. Elena Zanichelli

Conference Language: English, Time zone Central European Time (CET)

Thursday, 8 April 2021

- 9:00 – 9:10 **Welcome Address**
Prof. Dr. Iris Pigeot (Deputy Chair U Bremen Research Alliance,
Scientific Director Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research
and Epidemiology – BIPS)
- 9:10 – 9:30 **Introduction**
Prof. Dr. Sunhild Kleingärtner (Director, German Maritime
Museum Bremerhaven - GMM) and PD Dr. Gisela Parak
(GMM)
- 9:45 – 12:00 **Panel „Theories and Methodologies“**
Chair: Jun.-Prof. Dr. Elena Zanichelli (University of
Bremen)
- 9:45 – 10:30 **Colonial Heritage in Museums. Critical Whiteness Studies in
Practical Work**
Prof. Dr. Anna Greve (State Museum for Art and Cultural
History Bremen-Focke Museum/University of Bremen)



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- 10:30 – 11:30 **KEYNOTE: A Problem with Categories: Some Thoughts on Colonial Photographs in Museums**
Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Edwards (Professor Emerita, De Montfort University / Andrew W. Mellon Visiting Professor, V&A Research Institute, London)
- 11:30 – 12:30 **Break**
- 12:30 – 14:45 **Panel „German-Namibian Stories“**
Chair: PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel (University of Bremen)
- 12:30 – 13:15 **“Ovizire - Somgu” From Where do We Speak? Confronting a Colonial Photo Collection in the Museum am Rothenbaum**
Vitjitua Ndjiharine, artist & cultural scientist (Windhoek, New York) in dialogue with Ulrike Peters, historian (University of Hamburg)
- 13:15 – 14:00 **Visual Analysis of Material Culture Represented via Two Stages of Governance in Namibia from Colonial to Pre-Apartheid Era**
Dr. Frauke Stegmann (Visual Arts, University of Namibia)
- 14:00 – 14:45 **Didactics of Decolonization in Higher Education: “Walking Windhoek” – Insights from Interdisciplinary Collaboration During a Workshop on Visual Storytelling**
Dr. Martin Gruber & PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel (University of Bremen)
- 14:45 – 15:15 **Break**
- 15:15 – 17:30 **Panel „China and Japan“**
Chair: Dr. Helga Rathjen (University of Bremen)
- 15:15–16:00 **Johann Lauts’ Amateur Photographs. A Merchant’s Perspective on China**
Jan Waßmann, M.A. (University of Oldenburg)
- 16:00–16:45 **Souvenir Photography in Japan - Between Stereotype and Art**
Dr. Renate Noda (Übersee-Museum Bremen)
- 16:45–17:30 **Picturing the Boxer War: Public and Private German Photo Albums**
Prof. Dr. Thoralf Klein (Loughborough University)



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Friday, 9 April 2021

8:00 – 10:15 Panel „Pacific“

Chair: Prof. Dr. Kerstin Knopf (University of Bremen)

8:00 – 8:45

Say My Name: Countering Visual Narratives of Papua Niugini Bodies

Lisa Hilli (Artist & PhD researcher, Australian National University)

8:45 – 9:30

“Euer Deutscher Blauer Junge” – German Sailors & Samoans in the Early 1900’s: Snapshots from Private Albums

Tony Brunt (Independent Historian, New Zealand / Samoa)

9:30 – 10:15

Images Matter: Germans in the Pacific 1889-1914

Dr. Nicole Perry (University of Auckland)

10:15 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 13:00 Panel „Dealing with Anthropological Photo Collections in Museums and Other Research Institutions“
Chair: Dr. Elke Bauer (Herder-Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung)

10:45 – 11:30

Re/actions. Putting Images Online

Dr. Agnes Matthias (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

11:30 – 12:15

Archives of the Future: Dealing with Colonial Photo Collection Items

Carolin Bräuer / Lucia Halder (Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne)

12:15 – 13:00

Creating Accessibility – Whom, Why, and How Digitisation Might Help

Dr. Beatrice Voirol (Museum der Kulturen Basel)

13:00

End of Conference



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Deutsches
Schiffahrts
Museum

Conference Abstract

Preceding the German Maritime Museum's exhibition, "Seeing the Other? The Colonial Gaze", to be opened on 17. April 2021, the conference "Seeing the Other? Theories and Histories of (Post-)Colonial Visual Cultures" brings together an international network of renowned scholars in the field of postcolonial studies and visual history. The conference aims to provide an overview of the explosive issue of dealing with pictorial expressions and reflections of our colonial heritage in order to foster discussion.

Five thematic panels will discuss methods and theories dealing with colonial history and postcolonial practices and bring together perspectives of different academic disciplines such as ethnology, cultural history, history, postcolonial studies and art history. The panels will consider the geographical structures of the former German colonies of Northeast China, German New Guinea and Namibia and point out specific agendas and histories that accompanied the imperialist conquest of these territories.

No matter how "unencumbered" and "harmless" some individual travel photographs involved in the colonial seizure of the world may appear, the colonialist gaze with its ideological dispositions runs through all Western image collections like a red thread. Under the cloak of photographic objectivity, imagery stored in photographic travel albums contain numerous examples of an anthropometric "measurement" of strangers and of a violent oppression of indigenous cultures. Following the discussion of "robbed shadows" and a "photography against one's will", some representatives of postcolonial studies today demand that the photographs taken under coercive power relations should no longer be displayed in public, because no consent of those depicted can be assumed. The unlawful act of "taking a picture" symbolically perpetuates oppression and the ideology of white supremacy. Other scholars argue against iconoclasm and eliminating the material traces of a colonial past, highlighting the dangers of social amnesia. Instead, the wounds caused by colonialism should be left open in order to continually prompt public debate.

In recent years, visual historians have diversified our understanding on the ambivalences and contradictions inherent in the colonial gaze. At the turn of the century,



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despite an incarnated Eurocentrism, indigenous cultures appropriated Western pictorial conventions and subverted them to their advantage.

Today, museums have started to include knowledge from people of origin in their refurbishment of pictorial collections and attempt to make this contested heritage accessible. Finally yet importantly, postcolonial scholars have sensitized the public to ongoing acts of racism to which some parts of Western societies still fall prey. Taking up these issues, the conference will question and illuminate examples of a historic distribution of images taken during the colonial period and seeks to develop recommendations for dealing with these materials.

Registration: The conference will take place online as a Zoom webinar. Free admission, but registration is required. To register, please follow https://uni-bremen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YBh9xNDeTOi22grj8hsydA