

Points of Views – A Museum Cooperation on Milk, and conditions of cooperating in Uganda and Switzerland

Challenge: For around three decades, museum experts, curators and researchers have increasingly started to develop innovative strategies to challenge the violent historical burden and ideologies of colonial legacies inherent in collections. Against this background, numerous initiatives worldwide review their collection, research, communication and exhibition strategies. The presented project aims at meeting this challenge through international scientific and professional exchange and collaboration.

Cooperation: Besides acquiring, conserving, researching, communicating and exhibiting “tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment”, as defined by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a sixth core activity of museums emerged: cooperation – with the collection’s ‘source communities’ and museums in countries of provenance.



Uganda Workshop Jan 2016 group picture

Approach: Drawing on the expert knowledge and collections of three museums, this project aims at jointly working on exhibitions on Ugandan and Swiss milk culture and museum cooperation in Kampala, Mbarara (Western Uganda) and Zurich (Switzerland). Hence, the cooperating institutions believe that there is great potential for the contemporary museum in bundling expertise in research and curating. This process of reciprocal scientific and practical exchange and collaboration will be documented, reflected upon and shall nourish the debate of the future of the ethnographic museum.



Installation with milk Tetra Paks (exhibition in Zurich)

Milk: Bongo (sourmilk), eshabwe (milk sauce), fresh milk, cheese, chocolate,... Milk is the national drink par excellence, as well as a fundamental food ingredient, in Uganda and Switzerland – both countries host rich milk material culture, knowledge and skills, traditional and modern. The involved museums strive for exhibiting a holistic picture of the cultural, environmental, social, economic, political, etc. facets and implications of milk in both countries.

Progress: Currently, after the establishment of this project in 2014/2015, a laboratory in September 2015 and a workshop in January 2016, the project team is working on the upcoming exhibitions in terms of exhibition conceptualization, fundraising and the planning of respective research and object collection, and an academic conference on the topic in December 2016 (for more info please visit <http://www.musethno.uzh.ch/conference-2016>). In a follow-up project, a mobile exhibition on milk is planned in order to take the exhibition to people in remote areas – an approach to enlarge the radius of cooperation to source communities.

Project Core Team

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