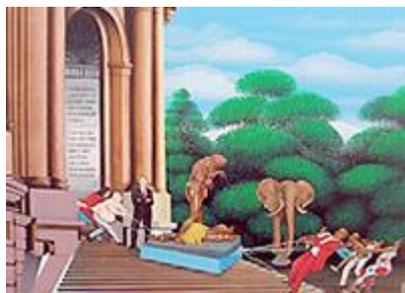


Decolonising the Museum - Limits and Possibilities

9 September 2016

On the occasion of the ongoing renovation (2013-2017) of the Royal Museum for Central Africa at Tervuren (Belgium) and the drastic budget cuts faced by the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam), we devote our 16th meeting (on 6 June 2014) to a postcolonial reflection on the limits and possibilities of such museums in the 21st century.



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Gr. *mouseion* (‘testimony of a past’) and etymologically related to the Muses of Greek mythology, who were the daughters of Mnemosyne, the Goddess of memory, and personified the arts and knowledge) – museums exhibiting Europe’s colonial legacy

increasingly have been subjected to criticism. All too often they focused on exhibiting the past, as well as its correlative, the geographically distant, as a way of making progress more tangible and promoted a unilinear evolutionist modernity that subordinated the Other.

Postcolonial theories of decolonization prompt us to reconsider these (neo-)colonial relations and to examine the possibilities of decolonization, as well as to perceive, articulate and possibly transcend the limitations of decolonization. How irreversible is the colonial appropriation and assimilation of one’s cultural heritage? Can the institutional framework of the museum be separated from the ideologies within which it took shape? What are the challenges of a radical postcolonial museum? Can it exist at all? And if so, how do we go about privileging postcolonial approaches to our colonial legacy? Can there be a (re)new(ed) responsiveness to the colonial archive from within the archive itself? Or can amnesia towards our colonial past better be altered by renewing the archive from the outside, for instance, by letting the museum focus on contemporary practices which challenge western self-satisfaction?

When? Friday, 6 June 2014, Amsterdam (precise location to be announced)

The meeting aims to gather enthusiastic researchers for a keynote lecture/debate, followed by close readings and intensive discussions revolving around developments within postcolonial studies today. A reader will be distributed in preparation of the seminar and on the day itself foods and drinks will be provided.

The meeting is open to all researchers but is specifically aimed at Research Master and PhD students working in the field of postcolonial studies. Participation is free of charge, but please register with Eloe Kingma of NICA/OSL. Young scholars interested in presenting their research project in the light of the meeting’s topic should contact Sarah De Mul (Sarah.deMul@ou.nl). Active participation by Research Master students (presentation, response, short paper) may be awarded with 1 EC credit..

The organizes seminars for all (junior) researchers in the Netherlands and Belgium who are committed to issues of postcoloniality and globalization. As an open network, platform for debate, and reading group, our meetings are open to all, but registration is required.

Organizers: Elisabeth Bekers (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Sarah De Mul (Open Universiteit), Isabel Hoving (Universiteit Leiden), Liesbeth Minnaard (Universiteit Leiden); guest organizer: Matthias De Groof (Universiteit Antwerpen)