

International Meeting

on the theme
Migrant subject / object

13 - 14 October 2011

at the Royal Museum for Central Africa

ROYAL MUSEUM
FOR CENTRAL
AFRICA

Afrijca

TERVUREN

The meeting addresses the representation and status of the 'Other' in European ethnography museums and the patterns of thought behind its production. To museums, this 'Other' is both an *object* of study and exhibition, to the extent that it is represented by its material heritage, and a *subject* encouraged to take part in the production and transmission of knowledge that seeks to grasp what it is. Ethnography museums are increasingly committed to taking a critical look at colonial heritage and, in this vein, initiate or strengthen collaborations with 'diaspora' associations, 'source communities', or both.

The goal is to study different practices that have emerged in museums focusing on populations of 'others', and debate the aesthetic and epistemological impact of these collaborations. Do they break with or bear out colonial and post-colonial rationales?

This is used as a starting point for analysing the critical efficiency of different contemporary practices that developed in ethnography museums (exhibitions, cultural events, scientific collaborations, etc.). We compare experiences and measure the diversity of political, cultural and social challenges that coalesce around immigration and the representation of the 'Other'.

Meeting days will be devoted to the different reappropriation processes that diasporas develop with regard to cultural institutions. Participants will debate the ties that exist between '*migrants*', seen here as '*subjects*', and the collections from their

countries of origin and kept in Western ethnography museums. How are these viewed? Which ones are 'meaningful' to them, especially in relation to their migratory pathway? What is their role in cultural institutions?

These meeting days are biased toward placing '*migrant subjects*' at the heart of museum practices to see how the public arena is refashioned by such collaborations.

This meeting is the fruit of a collaboration between four research laboratories¹ as well as four ethnography museums² in the European project Read-Me II³.

¹ UFR de Paris-8 (France), Doctoral School of Copenhagen (Denmark), Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes contemporains (Belgium), and the Ethnography section of the RMCA Tervuren

² Pigorini Museum (Italy), Musée du quai Branly (France), Museum für Völkerkunde (Austria), Royal Museum for Central Africa (Belgium)

³ Read-Me II (Réseau européen des associations de diasporas et de musées d'ethnographie, *European network of diaspora associations and ethnography museums*)