

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THIRD PARTIES IN OR AROUND THE AFRICAMUSEUM

The Royal Museum for Central Africa is a federal scientific institute under the authority of the Minister for Science Policy.

As a government institution, the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) is especially committed to applying all legislative measures aimed at protecting individual rights and combatting all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or skin colour. By virtue of its specific historical colonial context, the RMCA pays special attention to racism and Afrophobia. For this reason, it has drawn up a set of standards to (1) ensure the respectful treatment of persons and objects of African origin and (2) contextualize references to the colonial past. These standards must be followed by third parties using equipment and facilities placed at their disposal inside the AfricaMuseum or its immediate surroundings.

The RMCA assumes its social responsibilities, in the sense that society still manifests the consequences of colonialism. These responsibilities are spelled out in a code of ethics.

The RMCA makes a distinction between two types of events that may be organized by third parties in the AfricaMuseum.

- 1.** Private events. Private events are events that are open only to guests of the organizer, and for which no communication is addressed to the public (on the internet or by other means). Examples of such events are groups organizing guided tours of the museum for their members; renters of meeting rooms located in the museum's seminars complex; conferences organized by international organizations, scientific institutions, or universities; or sponsors offering a private late-night opening to their invitees.
- 2.** Public events. Public events are events open to the general public and for which announcements, advertisements, and features are disseminated in the public sphere. Examples include sponsored events that are open to the public; debates in meeting rooms that are livestreamed or recorded for future online posting; outdoor events, events in the immediate surroundings of the museum, etc.

For all types of events, participants must behave in an ethically appropriate manner towards the AfricaMuseum and persons of African origin. A set of additional directives must be met for public events. These are outlined in a code of ethics attached to the agreement signed by the RMCA and the event organizer.

In all cases, both private and public events must adhere to European, federal, and regional laws in force. If, among other things, violations of the anti-racism law are noted, the RMCA may contact the police and/or file a legal complaint.

## CONTEXT: THE SOCIAL AND ETHICAL GOALS PURSUED BY THE RMCA THROUGH ITS PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

In addition to its scientific mission, the RMCA pursues the following goals through its programme of activities:

- ▶ promote a contemporary vision of Africa;
- ▶ stimulate critical thought for a better understanding of the African continent and its place in the world;
- ▶ promote cultural and natural diversity, by encouraging a better grasp of global issues;
- ▶ deconstruct stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination targeting Africans and persons of African descent;
- ▶ promote a united, equitable, inclusive and sustainable world;
- ▶ build the capacities of cultural, scientific, and artistic parties of African descent, by facilitating access to its expertise and collections;
- ▶ expand the visibility of said parties by encouraging co-creation;
- ▶ deconstruct and reset, through culture and science communication, the images and representations of Africa, Africans, and persons of African descent;
- ▶ reinforce synergy between Belgian entities involved in the sectors of culture, development education, and science communication.

## CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC EVENTS ORGANIZED IN THE AFRICAMUSEUM AND ITS DIRECT VICINITY

Any entity wishing to organize an event in the AfricaMuseum or its direct vicinity agrees with the directives listed below. In accordance with the **'comply or explain' principle**, the organizer shall be required to comply with these directives or explain why it is unable or unwilling to do so.

The directives apply to any activity focused on the theme of Africa, its inhabitants, or persons of African origin.

- ▶ The content of the public event has a connection with the RMCA, and more specifically, with the themes developed by the latter in its research work or in the museum; it shall also contribute to one or several of the RMCA's objectives:
  - ▶ promote a contemporary vision of Africa;
  - ▶ stimulate critical thought for a better understanding of the African continent and its place in the world;
  - ▶ promote cultural and natural diversity, by encouraging a better grasp of global issues;
  - ▶ deconstruct stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination targeting Africans and persons of African descent;
  - ▶ promote a united, equitable, inclusive and sustainable world;
  - ▶ build the capacities of cultural, scientific, and artistic parties of African descent, by facilitating access to its expertise and collections;
  - ▶ expand the visibility of said parties by encouraging co-creation;
  - ▶ deconstruct and reset, through culture and science communication, the images and representations of Africa, Africans, and persons of African descent;
  - ▶ reinforce synergy between Belgian entities involved in the sectors of culture, development education, and science communication.

- ▶ The public event is organized in collaboration with African associations, institutions, or institutes, or with persons of African origin, or with organizations giving the floor to Africans.
- ▶ The organization shall demonstrate, in its communications and public relations material (including public video or audio content taken by the organization and by event participants) that it rejects stereotypes that may be hurtful to persons of African origin. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - ▶ not using images of animals, in or out of their natural environment, for an event involving cultures of Africans or persons of African origin;
  - ▶ not depicting Africans or persons of African origin in a stereotypical fashion, for instance, as though they resembled apes more than other persons do;
  - ▶ not reducing African cultures to pre-colonial cultures or presenting them as traditional, ahistorical, fixed, isolated, and unaffected by contact with the outside world;
  - ▶ forbidding the use of make-up to imitate the appearance of a black person (also known as 'blackface');
  - ▶ not allowing participants to wear disguises or costumes, except for Carnival-related events or for actors as part of a performance; should this nonetheless occur, such disguises and costumes should not mock minorities or Africans, persons of African origin, or other persons of foreign origin, by imitating their manner of dress;
  - ▶ being cautious in the use of adjectives that would cultivate the 'African' stereotype, such as 'of colour', 'poor', 'joyful', 'under-developed', 'savage', 'wild', 'traditional', or expressions such as 'rhythm is in their blood' which would suggest that the behaviour of Africans, unlike other peoples, is not (culturally) learned, but (biologically) innate; and avoiding practices, vocabulary, or representations that may be interpreted as forms of cultural appropriation.
- ▶ The role of the RMCA or the AfricaMuseum in the organization of the event shall be clearly communicated, and no references to the museum's name, logo, or any member of its staff shall be made without the explicit agreement of the RMCA and, when applicable, the person(s) concerned.

Organizers of a public event must submit any event-related promotion and communications (including those made after the event has taken place) to the RMCA for approval. If approval is denied or if the agreement is violated, the museum reserves the right to distance itself publicly from the event, after notifying the organizers, on the basis of the present code of ethics and the clauses violated. The RMCA can, in this case, render public any or all documents used during the consultation that preceded the signing of the agreement. By signing this code of ethics, the organizer accepts the possibility of the publication of personal data such as the name of persons responsible for the organization, or the persons named during the aforementioned consultation. Moreover, the organizer cannot hold the RMCA liable for any financial or moral damages resulting from any such public distancing or from the publication of the said documents. In addition, RMCA representatives can, during the event itself, issue orders or require changes of any elements that are deemed to be in violation of the code of ethics or the concluded agreements.

The RMCA can demand payment from the organizer for damages caused by the violation of the code of ethics, whether these are caused by the organizers or the participants of the event.

## COMPLY OR EXPLAIN

Should the organizer and the RMCA sign the agreement while deeming certain aspects of the code of ethics unenforceable, the agreement itself shall include the justification for the waiver regarding those aspects.