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### PROJECT

## Performative Ghosts: Transforming the Ethnographic Museum into a Future Museum-University

"Ich will ja die Museen zu Universitäten machen, die dann praktisch ein Department für Objekte haben." (Joseph Beuys in *Das Museum. Ein Gespräch über seine Aufgaben, Möglichkeiten, Dimensionen*, ed. Joseph Beuys and Frans Haks. 1993.)

Based on five years of experience directing and transforming the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, I would like to prepare a publication that draws together possible models for a "post-ethnographic" museum. Here I argue for a new form of "museum-university" marked by interdisciplinary inquiries led by artists, writers, lawyers, and anthropologists and based on experimental assemblages of historical collections. In Germany today there exist approximately fifteen ethno-graphic museums that control - administratively, legally, and pedagogically - more than five million objects from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Beyond contested proprietary rights, their sheer scale impedes a mass restitution from taking place, be this back to their original source or, more controversially, to new, twenty-first century diasporic homelands. Indeed, where is "home" for these material migrants from the nineteenth century or earlier? How is indigeneity verified today if more and more individuals chart new geopolitical routes forging synthetic alliances that creolize colonial, ethnic, and gender identifications from the past? How does an ethnographic collection with its apparent anachronism become incisive and operational in the twenty-first century? How can new models of appropriation be forged? Why is the circulation of these objects within European institutions so restrictive today? What constitutes a research collection today? With interviews and analyses, the publication aims to push the parameters of museum anthropology beyond the superficial revisionism of world cultures toward interdisciplinary innovation, heterodox knowledge sharing, and experimental production methods.

### Recommended Reading

Deliss, Clémentine, ed. *El Hadji Sy: Painting, Performance, Politics*. Zürich: Diaphanes, 2015.

- *Foreign Exchange (or the stories you wouldn't tell a stranger)*. Zürich: Diaphanes, 2014.

- *Object Atlas: Fieldwork in the Museum*. Bielefeld: Kerber, 2012.

## Occupy Collections!\* Access, circulation and interdisciplinary experimentation: the urgency of remediating ethnographic collections (before it really is too late).

Is it possible to transform the role of a museum and provide it with an educational remit distinct from that of the university? Can we change the consumerist imperative of the museum and re-implement its architectonic, conceptual, and economic properties? What makes the situation within the European (read, German) ethnographic museum so particular and urgent today? What are the hindrances that currently stymie the potential for a new collection-centred inquiry to take place (the toxicity of objects, seriously?)? Whatever happened to the notion of a "research collection"? How can one prioritise experimental, interdisciplinary work on these artefacts and what methodology might one employ to do so? What does it mean to do fieldwork in the museum? Could there be a new choreography of the inanimate, effectively bringing the collection back into life? How does one contend with the changing roles and requirements placed on custodial and curatorial competence? Why does conservation continue to outweigh remediation? Should it? Whose world(s) decides?

(\*lie flat on the floor of a storage unit in a museum, ideally as a group but a single person will have the requisite effect too. Stay there for as long as you can. Only then will the police and the press - hopefully - comprehend the physical and epistemological closure surrounding these collections).

Deliss, Clémentine (Berlin,2020)

The metabolic museum

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1693779242>

Deliss, Clémentine (Manchester,2016)

Remediation, and some problems post-ethnographic museums face

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1763616940>

Deliss, Clémentine (Kassel,2016)

Occupy collections! : Clémentine Deliss in conversation with Frédéric Keck on access, circulation, and interdisciplinary experimentation, or the urgency of remediating ethnographic collections

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1762714388>

Deliss, Clémentine (2015)

Objects actanciels

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=842604766>

Deliss, Clémentine (Zürich,2015)

El Hadji Sy : painting, performance, politics

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=822031515>

Deliss, Clémentine (2014)

Entre-Poloiste : das ethnographische Museum als Experimentierfeld

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=865522189>

Deliss, Clémentine (2014)

Brothers in arms : laboratoire AGIT'art and Tenq in Dakar in the 1990s

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=840003455>

Deliss, Clémentine (Zürich,2014)

Foreign exchange : (or the stories you wouldn't tell a stranger) ; [anlässlich der Ausstellung Ware & Wissen (or the Stories You Wouldn't Tell a Stranger) im Weltkulturen-Museum, Frankfurt am Main]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=781595371>

Ware & Wissen

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=781595371>

Deliss, Clémentine (Zürich,2014)

Ware & Wissen : (or the stories you wouldn't tell a stranger) ; [diese Publikation erscheint anlässlich der Ausstellung "Ware & Wissen" im Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=775974935>

Ware und Wissen

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=775974935>

Deliss, Clémentine (Bielefeld ,2013)

Trading style : [with Buki Akib ... ; to accompany the Exhibition Trading Style - Weltmode im Dialog at the Weltkulturen-Museum, Frankfurt am Main from 08.11.2012 - 27.10.2013]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=767171330>

Kerber culture

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=767171330>