

**Laely, Thomas, Meyer, Marc and Schwere, Raphael (eds.)**  
**2018. *Museum Cooperation between Africa and Europe: A New Field for Museum Studies*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag/Kampala: Fountain Publishers. 240 pp. ISBN 978-3-8376-4381-7.**

Burdensome legacies of colonial injustices have complicated the history of Europe-Africa relations. For centuries a significant part of African cultural heritage was either neglected or transferred to Europe, mainly to the detriment of Africa (see e.g. *Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property in Africa*, International Council of Museums, 1995, ISBN 92-9012-121-1). This colonial burden concerning the material legacy of African history, arts and culture has not yet been overcome. Therefore, the contemporary management of the historical and ethnological art collections existing in both Africa and Europe is striving to provide access to all specific features of African heritage. To enhance and modernize exhibit forms and methods the exchange of experiences and the cooperation between different museums is necessary. The museum was never only a Western institution. In African countries as well as many other places, museums of art, ethnography and history existed in various forms. Today, they are opening fresh perspectives and creating opportunities for international exchange. However, even successful projects like the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM) established in 1999 as a Pan-African NGO and local institutions like the Centre for Heritage Development (CHDA) in Mombasa, Kenya, struggled with issues such as donor dependency and the repatriation of African collections. Conceptual questions, financial limits and various other problems are connected with the African museum practice. For these and other reasons, a profound debate is needed to establish a new African critical museology, inaugurate an intellectual programme, and critically engage with the cultural politics of museums and their partnership with European institutions.

The annotated anthology under review is one of the outcomes of a cooperation project between the Uganda National Museum in Kampala, the Igongo Cultural Centre in Mbarara (Uganda), and the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. It resulted from a conference of museum scholars in December 2016, which aimed at discussing experiences in museum cooperation

between Africa and Europe. Fourteen contributions refer to diverse aspects of museum practice in Africa, and discuss possibilities of cooperation with European partners.

In their Introduction, the editors suggest a paradigm shift in the understanding of museum cooperation between Africa and Europe. In the methodological and theoretical Part I *Mapping the Field – The History and Context of Museum Cooperation between Africa and Europe*, George Okello Abungu (National Museums of Kenya) compares the tradition of leading Western museums with the African experience. He opposes the concept of a universal museum representing the interests of all humankind, demanding the “museum decolonization” and a better cooperation that corresponds with the age of migration. Germain Loumpet (University of Paris) is aware of different traditions of museums in sub-Saharan Africa when describing various African examples of the museum practice in the article “Cooperation between European and African Museums: A Paradigm for Démuséalisation.”

Part II *Local Communities and International Networks – Relations or Partnership?* contains three case studies. In his contribution “Shifting Knowledge Boundaries in Museums. Museum Object, Local Communities and Curatorial Shifts in African Museums,” Jesmael Mataga (Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley) highlights how museum objects collected during colonial times that have previously been confined to museum store rooms have the potential to inspire a new approach to museum practice in Africa. He provides apt examples from Zimbabwe and repeatedly demands the “decolonization” of such African objects connected with traditional rituals or worship. Rosalie Hans (University of East Anglia) analyses the importance of several institutions for cultural tourism and education in her text “Who Shapes the Museum? Exploring the Impact of International Networks on Contemporary East African Museums.” Above all, she inquires into the relation between local museums and global network. “The Road to Reconciliation. Museum Practice, Community Memorials and Collaborations in Uganda” by Nelson Adebo Abiti (Uganda National Museum) is a report on the exhibition initiated in 2013 in collaboration with four Northern Uganda communities as well as the Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage. The aim was to restore the cultural heritage of several communities that moved away from their ancestral lands during the civil war of 1986-2006 and resettled there

again later on. Specific cultural rituals help to grant reconciliation in the aftermath of the conflict.

The following Part III *Accessibility of Collections from Africa* is dedicated to European and South African museums displaying their African collections. Cynthia Cross (University of the Witwatersrand) and Anneliese Mehnert (University of South Africa) inform about “The Junod Collection” assembled between 1889 and 1920 by the Swiss missionary Henri-Alexandre Junod. The ethnographic objects held in three different museums require not only the cooperation between the Swiss and South African museums, but also the “decolonization” of some author’s opinions and the digitization of all artifacts divided up to now. Jeremy Silvester (Museums Association of Namibia) describes Namibian ethnographic objects collected by the Finnish missionary Martti Rautanen. His article “The Africa Accessioned Network. Museum Collections make Connections between Europe and Africa: A Case Study of Finland and Namibia” deals with various Namibian objects, artifacts and historical photographs held in European museums. The Africa Accessioned Network has been established to inspire debate about the provenance and significance of some objects in museums. In the author’s opinion, collections should generate connections; museums can build bridges between communities. In his chapter “The Hazina Exhibition” Kiprof Lagat (form. National Museums of Kenya) gives an account of the exhibition project “Hazina: Traditions, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa,” which was jointly developed between the British Museum and the National Museums of Kenya. The project, brought into existence in 2006, received vast financial support of the UK government, the Getty Foundation and the Ford Foundation, which made it possible to display important artifacts from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Rwanda. This exhibition, focusing on the history and cultural heritage of the region, mainly targeted educational institutions. Katrin Peters-Klaphake (Makerere University, Uganda) describes “Artworks Abroad: Ugandan Art in German Collections.” Numerous activities of German collectors, German artists living in Uganda and/or Ugandan students in Germany have created opportunities to gather and exhibit Ugandan ethnographic and plastic art objects, paintings and other artistic artifacts either in Germany (the *Weltkulturen Museum* in Frankfurt am Main is most renowned) or in Africa, especially in the Makerere Art Gallery.

The final Part IV, entitled *Critique and Evaluation of Museum Cooperation*, begins with the contribution “New Considerations in Afro-European Museum Cooperation in Africa. The Examples of PREMA and Other Initiatives in Ghana” by Kwame Amoah Labi (University of Ghana). Although African museums were created as elitist and paternalistic institutions during the colonial era, contemporary projects like PREMA (Prevention in Museums in sub-Saharan Africa) help to make necessary structural changes in order to modernize the museum concept. On the basis of the cooperation with European partners, some local private museums in Africa displaying the cultural heritage will be able to attract local interest. The following article by Emery Patrick Effiboley (University d’Abomey-Calavi), “Investigating Museum Development in Africa: From Museum Cooperation to the Appropriation of Praxis,” gives examples of the successful cooperation between African and European, Canadian, Brazilian and other institutions. While mentioning some cases of the Republic of Benin, the author argues that revisiting African history is a condition for modernizing the African museum concept. The contribution by Michaela Oberhofer (Museum Rietberg, Zurich) “Conservation and Restoration as a Challenge for Museum Cooperation: The Case of the Palace Museum in Fouban, Cameroon” concerns the cooperation project developed by the *Museum Rietberg*, since 1952 conceived as a museum for the arts of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. The exhibition “Cameroon – Art of the Kings” held at Zürich in 2008 made apparent the differences between international and Bamum Kingdom concepts of museums and the materiality of objects. After discussions, and thanks to international cooperation, the new Palace Museum of the Bamum kings in Cameroon combines traditional symbols of the Bamum Kingdom with a modern museum architecture.

Cynthia Kros (University of the Witwatersrand) provides a conclusion entitled “What are the Opportunities, Challenges and Modalities for African and European Museum Cooperation?” She stresses the importance of (1) accurately locating the sources of decision-making processes within the contact zone; (2) taking steps to increase local agency, which is almost always deficient in some respects; (3) recognizing the role of the community – which is sometimes fractious and divided; (4) avoiding costly designs in a deluded bid to attract tourists; (5) providing more feasible loan arrangements and more affordable insurance premiums; (6) using simpler software that does

not demand a high level of expertise; and (7) adjusting and advancing the very concept of what a “museum” is.

This anthology discusses the important question of how African history should be interpreted, remembered and displayed in a modern museum practice. The contributions deal primarily with cases from English- and French-speaking sub-Saharan African countries, without paying attention to the Portuguese- or Spanish-speaking parts of the continent. The difference between European and African perceptions of history, museums as institution of arts and the accessibility and conception of exhibiting practices is made apparent. The cooperation with European museums, projects and foundations can maintain and develop some African museum exhibits and/or cultural heritage institutions, but it predominantly is based upon the colonial history (e.g., the Bamum throne given as a present to the German *Kaiser* during the German colonial era in Cameroon; the British Museum cooperating with Ghana (the former British Gold Coast colony), which provokes repeated demands of “decolonizing” African historical artifacts displayed in museums. All articles offer a rich bibliography connected with the respective theme. Illustrations, photographs and documents provide rich illustrations in the texts. Thus, the book is a valuable contribution to understanding museum practice about Africa and a welcome call for the deepening of Europe-Africa cooperation in the field.

Jan Klíma

**Karareba, Gilbert, Clarke, Simon and O´Donoghue, Thomas. 2018. *Primary School Leadership in Post-Conflict Rwanda: A Narrative Arc*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 242 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-60263-9.**

The issue of education in Africa is often and widely discussed as part of the broader developmental context by scholars from Africa as well as by those from the Global North. Education constitutes a crucial variable in the economic and social development of each country; it empowers children to be active members of the society and serves as a mechanism for learning values and attitudes. As such, it has