

NEWS & EVENTS > Positioning Ethnological Museums in the 21st Century | Germany

BY **JORDI BALTÀ PORTOLÉS**
21 JUN 2015 - 23 JUN 2015

Positioning Ethnological Museums in the 21st Century | Germany



A Symposium entitled "**Museum of**

Cultures, Wereldmuseum, Världskulturmuseet, ... What Else? Positioning Ethnological Museums in the 21st Century" will be held in **Hanover, Germany, on 21-23 June 2015**. The event, organised by the Volkswagen Foundation in cooperation with the Deutscher Museumsbund (German Museums Association), will discuss the need for a critical appraisal of the past, present and future of ethnological museums. The symposium will address topics like the history of museum collections, provenance research, the special case of "restitution", different forms of cooperation as well as how these aspects can become part of ethnographic exhibitions. "Positioning Ethnological Museums in the 21st Century" is open for researchers and experts working in this field. The sessions will highlight the following topics: **1. History of Museum Collections / Provenance Research:** In the public discourse there are calls for more in-depth research into the provenance of ethnological objects. The claim is that objects may only be exhibited when their provenance is untainted. But what should such provenance research entail in concrete terms? What are the necessary prerequisites? What results are expected? This session will explore examples of provenance research and the consequences for museum collections. **2. The Special Case of "Restitution". Legal Aspects and Others:** Public interest in the topic of ethnological collections is frequently aroused by restitution issues. There are both: International standards that determine how to deal with these collections as well as the possibility of finding individual solutions. The reason for restitution claims vary, depending for instance on whether they refer to objects or human remains. Both aspects will be dealt with in this session. **3. Cooperation/Networking/Knowledge Transfer:** The debates on provenance, restitution, ethnology in universities and museums, and the role of ethnological museums have given rise to various approaches to cooperation between museums and countries of provenance or source communities. This session will serve to illustrate and discuss examples of

how to deal with collections in view of the foregoing discussions. 4.

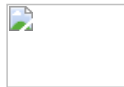
Exhibitions: How can topics like provenance, restitution, and the history of collections be addressed in actual exhibitions? How do museums position themselves when it comes to the history of their collections and their institution? And does this fit in with the goal and the function of museums to mediate knowledge about other (predominantly non-European) cultures and contribute towards better understanding between peoples? Attendance of the symposium is free, but registration is necessary. The Volkswagen Foundation offers **up to 15 travel grants for young researchers** who wish to attend "Positioning Ethnological Museums in the 21st Century". PhD students or early Postdocs (maximum 5 years since the completion of their PhD) working on independent and challenging projects in the field of ethnographic museums and collections **are invited to apply by 7 April 2015**. For **additional information and access to the application form**, please

visit <http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/de/veranstaltungen/veranstaltungskalender/veranstdet/news/detail/ethnological-museums-in-the-21st-century.html> **Picture:** Bremen Ethnological Museum / Matthias Haase

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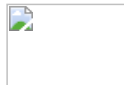
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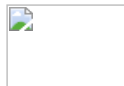
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