

International Conference – Call for Contributions

Postcolonial Digital Connections

16/17 May 2018, Halle (Saale)

Center for Interdisciplinary Area Studies (ZIRS) at Halle University and UCL Department of Anthropology

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The conference “Postcolonial Digital Connections” will critically assess the ways in which new forms of digitization are affecting the governance, management, and circulation of cultural heritage. Researchers from social sciences (anthropology, history, geography etc.), digital humanities, museum and cultural heritage studies, as well as museum and archive professionals are invited to discuss practices and politics of digitization in a decidedly transnational context. One aim is to explore how digitization is creating new frameworks (and critiques) for intellectual property, indigenous and traditional knowledge and cultural rights, as a growing proliferation of digital content is conjoined with anxieties of ownership and circulation. Museums and archives with their collections are also confronted with new ways to engage with repatriation and new digital epistemologies. Another potential issue of the conference is the materiality of digital archives and the status of digital objects as collections are intertwined in production and circulation of digital collections; and how—in a more expanded, comparative context—the nature of participation and the role of users play out in the creation of digital cultural heritage.

The key themes guiding the conference are:

- (a) Digital cultural heritage in intercultural, transnational, and postcolonial contexts
- (b) New practices for museums and archives
- (c) New legal and epistemological frames for digital collections

The conference will debate along these core strands shared challenges and constraints in processes of online dissemination of cultural heritage material. As this dissemination crosses borders, jurisdictions, conceptualisations and notions of what digital cultural heritage signifies and can bring about, it is important to facilitate conversation between professionals from the global South and Euro-America, to understand and discuss the relations between digital possibilities and on the ground realities of heritage collections, and to evaluate the distribution of digital skills and expertise. We are hereby inviting working professionals and researchers from the global South and Euro-America to contribute to a discourse of digitization intertwined with postcolonial agendas within museum and archives.

The organisers (Katja Müller, ZIRS Halle University, and Haidy Geismar, UCL Department of Anthropology) welcome abstracts of no more than 400 words, which should be submitted to katja.mueller@zirs.uni-halle.de by **28 February 2018**. We will be able to provide up to four participants with a scholarship covering their travel and accommodation costs; this financial support will be prioritised for participants from the global South.