

BOUNDARY OBJECTS

3 NOV 15 — 28 FEB 16



Dierk Schmidt, *Ohne Titel (Human Remains in Berlin)*, 2014 — 2015

CA2M

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo
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Kader Attia

Born 1970 in Paris, lives in Berlin and Algiers.

Le Corps Reconstruit #14, 2015. B/w photographs on cardboard

In his series entitled *Corps Reconstruit*, Kader Attia creates collages of his own early photographic works dealing with the liberation of the body, which is determined by birth and the sociocultural context. Attia searches for utopian bodies as a means of resistance. In the 1990s, he already photographed Algerian transsexuals in Paris. Kader Attia regards the body in the tensional field of post-colonial power relations, manifesting themselves in threats of deportation, of being murdered by Islamists in Algeria, or the necessity of pursuing sex work. The body itself becomes a “boundary object” between genders and cultures.

Burning Museum

Founded in 2013 in Cape Town (South Africa) by Justin Davy (b. 1987), Jarrett Erasmus (b. 1984), Grant Jurius (b. 1984), Tazneem Wentzel (b. 1987), Scott Williams (b. 1980)

We Are Tired. We Are Burning, 2015. Paper, wheat pastes

The interdisciplinary collective Burning Museum evolved in 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa, from the work of the five members on questions related to dealing with histories of exclusion, identity and structures in the urban space of their city. With collages made of enlarged historical photographs, documents and texts pasted to walls at publicly accessible places, they reveal layers of history. The collective criticizes the politics of suppression and silence, and the effects of the gentrification of urban spaces, especially in post-apartheid South Africa. The collective has travelled back to the Old World. The mother countries welcome us because we bare the marks of value. Stamped, sealed, and gold plated. They have been “schengen-ed,” have jumped through hoops to bring a wheat paste to the white walls of the museum. Many others are not so lucky in their dreams to go to Europe, confronted with a social reality rooted in colonial history.

2/14

The showcases of the ethnological museum are shattered. Current debates in discourse among museums and in contemporary art are focusing on the future of European, African and Latin-American collections whose historical origins are directly tied to colonial geographies and ethnographies. In the light of the historical situation —the racist practice of colonial and world exhibitions, human zoos, medical-historical collections to classify humans— questions related to the restitution of artifacts, the repatriation of human remains and the power of cultural heritage are attaining significance in international (museums) politics. With the exhibition *Boundary Objects* in Madrid, the research and exhibition project *Artificial Facts* (2014 — 2015) opens after the exhibition in Dresden, which followed *Activations* in Cape Town (South Africa), Porto-Novo (Benin) and Dresden (Germany). New commissions for the exhibition and other selected works by international artists pose a challenge to the visual colonization of the museal gaze, examining established visual regimes and calling the gestures of displays and representation—and ultimately the construction of the “other” in the museum—into question. The artists are interested in the future status of objects that were once collected as pieces of cultural-historical evidence, as souvenirs and trophies, and are today increasingly attributed to a globalized World Art. Spotlights and pedestals are now replacing the showcases once used to display artifacts.

Applying the term ‘Boundary Objects’, the exhibition focuses on the potential of objects to transcend established contexts and meanings: as opponents of their own history, the objects become mediators for larger contexts of a shared commemoration of the violence of unethical collecting, which filled the European museums of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and for the necessity of new creations of transcultural narrations.

Curated by Sophie Goltz.

Artificial Facts is a transnational exhibition and research project of Kunsthaus Dresden – Municipal Gallery for Contemporary Art (Artistic Director: Christiane Mennicke-Schwarz, project team: Bettina Lehmann, Tobias Mörike) with the artist group Artefakte // aktivierung (Brigitta Kuster, Regina Sarreiter, Dierk Schmidt) and the curator Sophie Goltz, in collaboration with the partners Burning Museum in Cape Town (South Africa), the École du Patrimoine Africain in Porto-Novo (Benin) and the University Abomey-Calavi in Cotonou (Benin).

The project is supported by the TURN (Fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation) and ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen / German Institute for Foreign Relations).

1/14

Sammy Baloji / Lazara Rosell Albear

Baloji was born 1978 in Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo), lives and works in Lubumbashi and Brussels.

Albear was born 1971 in Havana, lives and works in Brussels.

Bare-Faced, 2015

4 pigment prints on archive paper on aluminum
Video, b/w and color, sound, HD, 16:9, 20 min

Bare-Faced was created in 2011 as a collaboration between Sammy Baloji and Lazara Rosell Albear for TRANCEMEDIAMIX 2 in Brussels. The two searched for a common personal history and followed Congo’s central African culture to Cuba on the tracks of inherited religious practices, in which trance plays an important role. The work breaks open ossified cultural attributions made during the long history of racist constructions. *Bare-Faced* is an installation, documentation, concert, and performance. The video work is based on a performance that is similar to a boxing match, divided into six rounds, making numerous references to other works by Baloji. In an interview, Maarten Couttenier, anthropologist and historian at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, first speaks about the absence of the history of King Lusinga in the permanent exhibition, a chief who was beheaded by the colonizers. His skull was brought to Belgium as a trophy on behalf of Leopold II and is today included in the collection of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels. In an earlier work, Baloji had taken photographs of the skull in the style of 19th-century anthropological (race-theoretical) measurements. In further rounds, Rosell Albear’s body becomes the projection screen for colonial images, her mother talks about the Afro-Cuban religious practices of her grandparents, a male voice relates racist experiences in Brazil and the attempt of Afro-Brazilians to grasp their blackness with new terms.

3/14

Mariana Castillo Deball

Born 1975 in Mexico City, lives and works in Berlin.

UMRISS, 2014

Laser chrome print on dibond
 Courtesy Kurimanzutto Gallery, Mexico City

The work *UMRISS* is a series of large-format photographs based on a Mexican advertisement of the 1980's promoting Stelazine, an antipsychotic medicine. The flyer used the following slogan: "Schizophrenic patients sometimes hide behind a mask of psychotic withdrawal, which can make them inaccessible to therapy. Stelazin: Remove the mask of the psychotic patient."

This brochure was illustrated with images of Mexican masks with extravagant and texturized color backgrounds, which was in turn a translation of the US-American advertisement for the same brand. The original version used the African and North American equivalents of these masks. Mimicking the style of the promotional folder, *UMRISS* uses items from the Mesoamerican collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Berlin; acquired at the beginning of the twentieth century and originating primarily from the South of Mexico and Guatemala. The photographs in the exhibition depart from the original ones in that they only show the backside of the masks.

4/14

Peju Layiwola

Born 1967 in Benin Edo State (Nigeria), lives and works in Lagos and Ibandan (Nigeria).

Columns of Memory, 2015

Medium, plastic, bronze, aluminum foil, fabric, wood

The work *Columns of Memory* explores the expansions of meaning that objects can experience when being cited and reworked in art. By combining replicas of classical Benin objects with her own painterly and sculptural statements, Peju Layiwola makes explicit the absence of the artefacts plundered during the notorious "punitive expedition" of the British Empire in 1897 against the Oba (king) of the Kingdom of Benin (today's Benin City, the capital of Edo State in Nigeria). The new commission *Columns of Memory* is part of a series of works related to "looting" and "restitution." The return of two bronzes to the Oba of Benin in 2014 by a descendant of one of the members of the expedition troops that plundered Benin City in 1897 is an attempt to remedy an historical injustice. Many of the Benin sculptures are still in European and American museums – more than 4,000 are outside of Nigeria, 10 per cent of which alone in Dresden – some of which argue for keeping the stolen works in Western museums. The work *Columns of Memory* opens up a more conciliatory understanding of history and offers new perspectives on this problematic heritage and identity. The works reference the iconography of the classical Benin objects and seek to establish a connection between the old idiom of Benin art and its contemporary interpretation. In the traditions of the old Kingdom of Benin, the Oyo bird stood for the herald of fate; the bell was used to summon the ancestors during religious ceremonies. They are thus important picture signs, but at the same accessible in a new history and the commemoration of this historical return in 2014. The columns symbolize a new historiography connecting the past with the present.

6/14

Regina José Galindo

Born 1974 in Guatemala City, lives and works in Antigua (Guatemala).

The Looting, 2010

Video, color, sound, HD, 4:3, 12 min

Regina José Galindo has developed a socially and politically engaged practice in which she strives to acknowledge the thirty-six years of civil war endured by her country while looking into a more democratic and productive future. On one side, conquest, war, scorched earth policies, pillage of the soil, the humiliated. On the other, the conqueror, he who gives the orders, the man from the Old World, he who raises his hand and takes the gold and keep it for trade and cultural heritage.

In 2010 Galindo created the performance *The Looting* as part of the exhibition *On Rage* (2010) at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. In Guatemala, a dentist perforates the molars of the artist and places 8 fillings of Guatemalan gold of the highest purity. In Berlin, a German doctor extracts the fillings from the molars. These small sculptures, 8 in total, are exhibited as objects of art as well as the video documentation.

5/14

Michelle Monareng

Born 1991 in Johannesburg (South Africa), lives and works in Johannesburg.

Boloka ba lahlegileng, *Removal to Radium*, 2015.

Video, color, sound, 8mm on HD, 4:3, 2:23 min.

C-prints

O re boloke bosegong- Protect us in the night
Gomme o tse ba dibe tse - You know the bad that has happened
Le tse di fihlilweng- You also know the bad that is hidden
O re kwe ba re go lopang- Hear those who cry out
O thuse ba lahlegileng- Help those who are lost

(Song from the Lutheran Songbook in *Sepedi*, Bantu dialect and one the 11 officially accepted languages in South Africa, lyrics altered by the artist)

Since 2012 Michelle Monareng has been working with the archive of her grandfather, in which he collected and recorded the history of the expulsion of the inhabitants of Rietspruit No. 417 I.R., a farm in Heidelberg southeast of Johannesburg, in 1965. The archive consists of memoranda, photos and chronicles, old VHS and audiocassettes of gatherings and meetings, as historical documents of the struggle to reclaim this area. Monareng is interested in how voids in the archives can be revealed by reversing historical interpretations. In her video work, she follows the sensed trails in the landscape and asks how perceptions and memories can be condensed into a narrative. She began looking for voids in the landscape and the archive. The Berlin Missionary Society and the apartheid government had tried to eradicate all traces of the community. Timelines and memoranda become landscapes of silence. The Natives Land Act (Act No. 27/1913) and the Promotion of Bantu-Self-Government-Act (1958), which regulated the division of the available land of South Africa's white minority, were the pivotal tools to violently enforce apartheid in South Africa. One hundred years ago, it laid the foundation for the systematic disfranchisement and economic deprivation of the black population. The consequences can be felt until today.

7/14

Asunción Molinos Gordo

Born 1979 in Aranda de Duero / Burgos, lives and works in Cairo (Egypt), Muscat (Oman) and Guzmán (Spain).

El Fella Ando Fes (The Peasant Has A Hoe), 2014

Paper, pen and pencil

Within the context of public schooling, calligraphy and grammar have a big place in the workload of learning the Arabic language and culture. Often the figure of the small farmer or peasant is used as the main subject of syntax exercises, performing tasks of an idealized nature as using a hoe, sleeping under the shade of a tree or going for a ride on a horse. Until today this image is being used to describe contemporary peasantry in the Arab world. But this is also a way in which peasants are described as part of a civilization based on agriculture, not to say “low culture,” in ethnographical museums often symbolized through environments with racial stereotyped figurines. Today’s situation is different: from small producer to potassium factory worker to soldier; the main character of the work *El Fella Ando Fes* goes through a series of reforms including the privatization of water and the introduction of open market policies, that will not only disrupt the continuation of sustainable farming practices but will also let indigenous knowledge about the land disappear.

8/14

Lisl Ponger

Born 1947 in Nuremberg (Germany), lives and works in Vienna.

Western Still Life, 2015

C-print, mixed media

Western Still Life is a subgenre of 19th-century American painting that used depictions of cowboy boots, Navajo blankets and similar objects to convey a picture of life in the American West, into which forms of expression and rest of the conquered indigenous cultures were integrated as trophies. US-American museums most likely house the largest collections of body parts of indigenous people. During the so called Indian Wars, body parts and even brains were gathered from battlefields and graves and can today be found, for example, in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The United States was the first country to pass a restitution law, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRPA), to cope with the history of human remains. Lisl Ponger arranges objects—skulls, masks, textiles, a sniper uniform of the U.S. Army—to a period picture in the style of opulent Dutch still lifes, thus addressing the themes of exploitation and appropriation. The sniper uniform is a response to the first ethnological feature film, *In the Land of the War Canoes* (1914) by Edward Curtis, and it is still used today by the U.S. Army in missions abroad.

10/14

Lisl Ponger, *Western Still Life*, 2015

Paulo Nazareth

Born 1977 in Governador Valadares (Brazil). Lives and works in Belo Horizonte (Brazil).

Agudah, 2013

Video, b/w, sound, 7:03 min

Maria Auxiliadora, 2014

Video, b/w, sound, 5:03 min

Pamphlets (°1 – °9), 2015

C-prints

Until today, more than 200 indigenous groups live in Brazil, with some remaining as yet “uncontacted.” Before the Portuguese colonial times, there had been more than 1,000 peoples, many of which fell victim to introduced epidemics and slave labor in the decades after colonization around the year 1500. In the mid-16th century, the first (of a total of three million) Africans were shipped from the colonies to meet the demand for human labor, especially in the mines and on the sugarcane plantations. In 1888 Brazil abolished slavery as the last country in the world. With more than 70 million Afro-Brazilians, it ranks among the countries with the largest African descendents. The class relations imposed in earlier times are still in place in the economy, politics and culture. The artist Paulo Nazareth examines the historical and present-day subjectivizations as an Afro-Brazilian in his works. The videos *Agudah* and *Maria Auxiliadora* retrace symbols of Catholicism, exposing their omnipresent “otherness” in the mirror of the passing landscape in a missionized country. In his *Pamphlets*, Nazareth examines historical and present-day forms of black subjectivization and their imagery. On hikes through the Americas and Africa, he followed the territorial occupation of the continents by the Europeans and explored the trace of his ancestors. They resulted in a series of photographs, a weblog and the *Pamphlets*, in which he ironically questions his identity in different social contexts.

9/14

Jorge Satorre

Born 1979 in Mexico City, lives in Mexico City and Barcelona.

Emic Etic? (Greenstone), 2013

In collaboration with Joe Sheehan

Jades stones, pencil on paper

El retroceso 10, 2013 — 2014

Stones, pencil on paper

The eponymous words, “emic” and “etic”, describe two different approaches to cultural analysis. The missionary and linguist Kenneth Pike coined the terms in the 1950s as a hermeneutical contribution to cultural anthropology. “Emic” analyses the research dealing with the perspectives of natives, while “etic” incorporates the research perspective based on local knowledge. Satorre combines these two perspectives in his work *Emic Etic?* created for an exhibition in New Zealand. What knowledge would he bring along as an artist and how would he thus (not) understand the local culture? A 2.5-kg jade from Guatemala, an important basic material for objects of the local Mesoamerican culture, was broken into two parts and sent to New Zealand. The artist Joe Sheehan replicated the two fragments in detail with jades from his family collection. Only the size was altered. In New Zealand mainly the Pakehas (inhabitants of European descent) traded with jade. In 1997, the British Crown gave the exclusive right to deal with jade back to the Maori (indigenous people) through the Treaty of Waitangi Act.

In *El retroceso 10*, Satorre examines the handling of ethnological objects in Mexico. Since the 1970s, found pre-Columbian objects belong to the Mexican state and thus to the Anthropological Museum in Mexico City. A small community of Valle de Chalco Solidaridad built their own museum in agreement with the municipality, in which found objects are classified according to a unique system of order and usage—thus not only contradicting official museum categories but also calling into question their epistemic hegemony.

11/14

Penny Siopis

Born 1953 in Vryburg (South Africa), lives and works in Cape Town (South Africa).

Lay Bare Beside, 2015

Video, color, sound, 8mm auf HD, 4:3, 5 min

Boundary Thing 1&2, 2015

Mixed media

The video piece *Lay Bare Beside* shows the personal quest for an ethically appropriate handling of human remains in public and private collections and its failure. Penny Siopis recently inherited two skulls from a medical draftsman, in whose artistic work the skulls played an important role. The burial of the skulls marks the beginning of the artist's endeavor to expose different levels of history: the drawing of body parts as a scientific practice and their origins, the unexplained source of the (real) skulls, and the handling of inherited objects. The work combines 8mm films that Siopis found at flea markets and charity shops with video sequences she shot herself. In texts, music and images, the film interweaves personal stories into a reflection on human remains.

In *Boundary Things 1&2*, found objects are combined with each other, the adoration of objects as relics and the beginnings of ethnographic collecting in Europe merge with echoes of colonialism and missionary work. Saint Rita, who is venerated by Catholics because of a bleeding wound on her forehead believed having been caused by a thorn of Christ's crown, stands on the cast of a foot. A hand touches a bone with an eye.

12/14

Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa

Born 1976 in Glasgow, lives and works in London and Kampala (Uganda).

Von Eingeborenen beschädigt (Damaged by Natives), 2015

C-Prints, books, digital slides, plastic trees, antlers, sisal, wood

On the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War, the German government organized a colonial exhibition ("Kolonialausstellung") in the Eastern city of Dresden. This could be viewed as a somewhat strange undertaking given that, in 1919, Germany had been forced cede to sovereignty over all of its colonies to Britain, France, Portugal and Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and so, in effect, had no colonial 'possessions' to exhibit.

It was central to the project of the Third Reich that Germany's colonies were restored. They were, the Nazis argued, vital for the proper functioning of the European nation-state. The 1939 Colonial Exhibition—together with a vast array of popular government-backed publications, books, films, posters, postcards and souvenirs—served to explain the importance of colonialism to the German people, to acculturate them to their status as colonizers, to celebrate Germany's colonial 'achievements'. There are no physical traces of the 1939 Colonial Exhibition in present-day Dresden .

14/14

Dierk Schmidt

Born 1965 in Unna (Germany), lives and works in Berlin.

Ohne Titel (Human Remains in Berlin), 2014 — 15

Oil on glass

Broken Windows 3.1 (Prototypen), 2014/2015

Processed perspex, color copy on foil, black pigment, felt-tip pen

In 1905, the Berlin painter Hans Looschen exhibited the triptych *Altperuanische Gräberfunde* at the Große Berliner Ausstellung . The Berliner Tageblatt wrote at the time: "The subject matter is quite harsh: mummies, skulls, masks, with colorful ornaments, grotesque and ghastly." While grasped as a vanitas depiction, Looschen's painting also documents the exhibition practice of the Königliche Völkerkundemuseum in Berlin: the display of mummies, which are today termed human remains. In Dierk Schmidt's glass painting that deals with the triptych and its time of origin, periods overlap: In 1905, the German Empire waged war against the Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa; in 2011, 20 skulls of colonial provenience were returned to Namibia (the former German Southwest Africa) at the Berliner Charité. As in Looschen's painting, two skulls were presented in showcases on this occasion, upon the wish of the Namibian side. One part of Looschen's triptych is today on view in the Alte Nationalgalerie under the genre of still life. The human remains, on the other hand, are stored in the depot of the Ethnological Museum, withdrawn from the public by the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation). So what does cultural heritage mean? This is a question that Schmidt pursues with *Broken Windows 3.1*. The miniature showcases correspond with the dimensions of the showcases of the Neues Museum in Berlin. They are meant to fulfill the museum's promise of modernism: a thin, fragile framing of museum objects. Schmidt shows empty showcases with scratches and holes. The gaze is directed to the showcase itself and overlaps with the pictures on the wall. Exhibiting objects becomes an aggressive act of exposing unresolved possessions (looted art).

13/14

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| Boundary Objets | 3 Nov 2015 — 28 Feb 2016 | Exhibition tours Saturdays 12:30 h. Sundays 18:30 h. |
| Curator | Sophie Goltz | |
| Other exhibitions | Colección XII | Until 31 Jan 2016 |
| | Fernando Sánchez Castillo. Más allá | Until 28 Feb 2016 |
| | Patricia Esquivias. A veces decorado | 18 feb — Jun 2016 |
| Activities | Cinema on Sundays <i>Sexualities in Troubled Times.</i> Sundays 18 Oct — 22 Nov 18:30 h. | Adult Learning <i>The Affective Life of Objects</i> 21 oct — 25 nov Wednesdays 18:30 h. |
| | Families <i>Ni pa' tras ni pa' lante. Here. Singing.</i> Workshop for families with Poderío Vital Saturdays from 7 Nov. 12:00 — 14:00 h. o 16:30 — 18:30 h. | Teens <i>UHF. Shoot under the Water</i> Experimental Sound Workshop with Alex Reynolds Fridays and saturdays: 23, 24, 30 y 31 oct. Fridays 17:30 — 20:00 h. Saturdays 12:00 — 14:00 h. |
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