



Workshop

> Digital Restitution

Bridging Access, Conservation,
and Ethical Challenges

3-5 September 2025

› Digital Restitution

The digitization of cultural heritage represents a **transformative shift** in how we document, access, and engage with the history of colonial collections and the responsibilities to return these to the originating communities. This workshop explores the extent to which digital replicas can address restitution demands and offers **practical strategies** for improving access to displaced objects as a means of facilitating their physical repatriation.

For decades, **repatriation requests** for looted and appropriated objects held in museums of the Global North have been met with institutional resistance or political indifference. In response, some source communities are now advocating for **alternative restitution models** – including virtual heritage archives, shared custodianship, and co-curation frameworks. This raises **critical questions**: can digital restitution meaningfully address historical injustices, or does it risk becoming a temporary substitute for material restitution?

Through keynote lectures and case studies, the workshop examines both the **opportunities and limitations of digital restitution**, informed by international examples and collaborative heritage initiatives.



> Programme

Wednesday, 3 September 2025

01.30 pm **Welcome and Introduction**
Ursula Frohne, Jolanda Saal

1st Panel: Ethical Aspects in Digital Restitution

Chair: Reinold Schmücker

01.45 pm **The Ontological Status of Artworks and the Related Goals of Restorative Justice. Perspectives from African Philosophy**
Franziska Dübgen (Universität Münster)

02.30 pm **Ways of Seeing. Beyond Restitutions**
Carlos Korassi Téwéché (Universität Münster)

03.15 pm Coffee Break

2nd Panel: Digital Restitution and Legal Frameworks

Chair: Eberhard Ortland

03.45 pm **Legal Postcolonialism in the Digital World. Some Thoughts on Possible Outcomes**
Antoinette Maget Dominicé
(Université de Genève)

04.30 pm **Scan It, Own It? How Copyright May Challenge Digital Restitution**
Anaïs Bayrou (Université de Genève)

07.00 pm Dinner
at *Vinothek am Theater*, Neubrückenstraße 16

Thursday, 4 September 2025

3rd Panel: Digital Restitution as Artistic Intervention

Chair: Jolanda Saal

09.00 am **IIP Kenya Lecture Performance – Untitled (T**he empty Museum)**
Simon Rittmeier, Jim Chuchu (International Inventories Programme), Lydia Nafula, George Juma Ondeng (National Museums Kenya)



10.30 am Coffee Break

10.45 am **Who Owns Cultural Data? The Improbable Case of the Nefertiti Bust Scan**
Josina Dehn (Universität Münster)

11.30 am **What's Art Got To Do With It...
Challenging Colonialism 4.0**
Isabel Hufschmidt (Centre for Advanced Study
"Access to Cultural Goods in Digital Change",
Universität Münster)

12.30 pm Lunch
at *Sylt am Bült*, Am alten Fischmarkt 11a

4th Panel: The Role of Digitalization in Decolonizing Colonial Collections


Chair: Josina Dehn

02.00 pm **Pre-History of the Restitution Debate –
A Case Study**
Jolanda Saal (Universität Münster)

02.45 pm **Digital Transformation of the African Ecosystem
Through Collaboration, Community, and
Creativity: A Milele Museum Case Study**
Melissa Kurkut (Milele Museum)

03.30 pm Coffee Break

Chair: Isabel Hufschmidt

04.00 pm **"I want to see our objects". The meaning of
'digital' in cultures of touch and spiritual
connection** 
Mikáel Assilkinga (Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

04.45 pm **"Forum der Völker, Werl": Navigating Restitution
– Digital Tools and Concepts for Colonial
Collections Management**
Tanja Pirsig-Marshall
(LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster)

05.30 pm Break

Keynote

Chair: Ursula Frohne

05.45 pm **"Militarist Realism": Some Thoughts on Copies,
Colonial Legacies, and Cultural Restitution**
Dan Hicks
(University of Oxford | Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford)

07.00 pm Get together – Wine & Cheese

Friday, 5 September 2025

5th Panel: Technological Innovations in Heritage Preservation

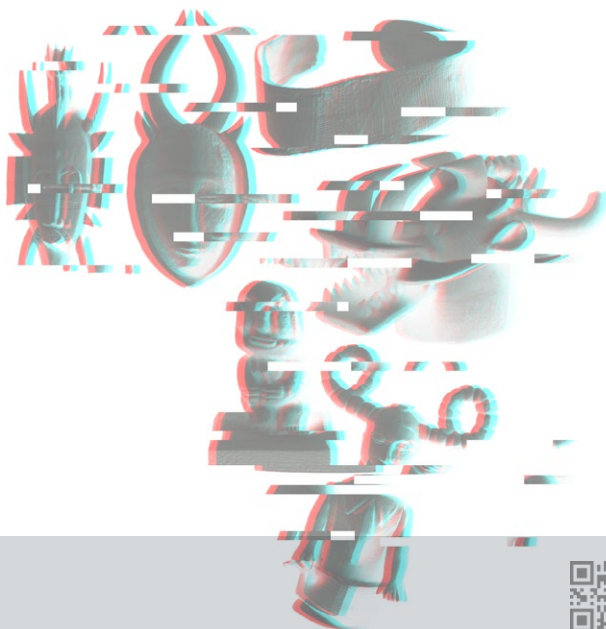
Chair: Alina Selbach

- 09.30 am **Transcontinental Techno-Accessibility:
Collaborative Digitisation of
Colonial Heritage Collections**
Agustina Andreoletti (Universität zu Köln)
- 10.15 am **Beyond Restitution: The Role of Replicas in
Cultural Transmission and Heritage Preservation**
Renée Riedler
(Universität Wien | Weltmuseum Wien)
- 11.00 am Coffee Break

Keynote

Chair: Ursula Frohne

- 11.15 am **Cultural Heritage in the Post-Digital:
Berlin's Pergamon Museum and the Panorama
Exhibition by Yadegar Asisi**
Annette Löseke
(Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig)
- 12.30 pm **Concluding Remarks**
- 01.00 pm Farewell Snack



› Scientific Organisation

Ursula Frohne, Jolanda Saal

The workshop has been organized by the Centre for Advanced Study “Access to Cultural Goods in Digital Change”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

› Centre for Advanced Study

The digital transformation has fundamentally changed the modalities and conditions for access to cultural goods and will continue to require new ways of producing, reproducing, preserving and protecting cultural goods in the future.

The Centre for Advanced Study “Access to Cultural Goods in Digital Change” explores the opportunities and risks of the new forms of access to cultural goods made possible by the digital transformation. Its working principle is intensive cooperation with scholars from Germany and abroad (“fellows”) who are invited to Münster for research stays.

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ACCESS
Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe
Zugang zu kulturellen Gütern
im digitalen Wandel
ZUGANG