

RAUTENSTRAUCH-JOEST-MUSEUM

CULTURES OF THE WORLD - COLOGNE

Press Release



RESIST! The Art of Resistance

27 November 2020 to 2 Mai 2021

Resistance to the effects of colonial heritage in the here and now is growing louder: it can be seen in the debate about the renaming of colonial street names, the restitution of looted cultural assets from the colonial era, the destruction of colonial monuments and, last but not least, the #BlackLivesMatter movement. This current development forms the background for the next major international exhibition at Cologne's Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Cultures of the World: It will illuminate 500 years of practices of anti-colonial resistance in the Global South.

The exhibition pays homage to the women and men who resisted in the most diverse ways and whose stories have hardly ever been told or heard to this day. At the same time, it focuses on the dramatic effects and persistence of colonial power relations. This exhibition is thus an attempt to uncover the hidden layers and stories of resistance.

“As an anthropological museum with a colonial heritage, we want to present colonial resistance stories in a deliberately polyphonic way from the perspectives of artists and activists from the Global South and the diaspora”, says Nanette Snoep, director of the RJM. “This is why the exhibition is designed to be participatory and evolutionary, providing a space in which these voices can speak for themselves.”

Six women, curators and activists were therefore invited to curate their own spaces for the exhibition. The Nigerian artist and art historian **Peju Layiwola** addresses the restitution debates surrounding looted cultural assets from the Kingdom of Benin (Nigeria), which are still in the RJM collection today, and links the debates with the current #BlackLivesMatter movement in the USA. Namibian activists **Esther Utjua Muinjangue** and **Ida Hoffmann** talk about the German genocide of the Herero and Nama in Namibia and their struggle for recognition. Hungarian art historian and curator **Tímea Junghaus** shows the long struggle of

Roma and Sinti (Europe's largest minority) for cultural self-determination and what this has to do with colonialism and decolonisation. Finally, Cologne activists **Elizaveta Khan** and **Mona Leitmeier** establish a link between anti-colonial resistance and local resistance by people from the diaspora in Cologne.

On the basis of numerous historical objects from the anthropological collection of the RJM, so-called testimonies of resistance actions, which bear the traces of colonial oppression, violence and trauma, of rebellion, resistance and struggle, of survival, resilience and healing, the RJM's own collection will also be examined and illuminated anew. Historical archive material, newspapers, correspondence, photographs, documentaries and numerous biographies and quotations of known and unknown resistance fighters worldwide complement these narratives.

Works by 27 contemporary artists from the Global South or from the diaspora such as **Kader Attia**, **Kara Walker**, **Patricia Kaersenhout** and **Ayrson Heráclito** will show further perspectives on 500 years of resistance. Dealing with the past and rebelling against its continuities is addressed in the works in different ways. The open and subversive struggles of resistance are made visible, audible and tangible through the artistic works. The effectiveness of racist images and stories is challenged and deconstructed by counter-images. The psychological aftermath of colonial atrocities is expressed and becomes part of a process of processing through appropriation and the curative experience of community. By (re-)learning old knowledge through the practice of language, techniques and rituals, the artists rebel against the loss of their own past and construct many-voiced plans for the future.

Dance and music have an important place in the exhibition: **Rokia Bamba**, sound artist and DJ, will develop a sound and voice archive of resistance during the exhibition period and two urban dance choreographers **Bahar Gökten** and **Daniela Rodriguez Romero** will perform in the exhibition space with young urban dancers on the theme of resistance.

The exhibition is designed to be processual and participatory and will evolve over the course of the exhibition. With the help of new participatory and inclusive formats of mediation, which are also specifically aimed at adolescents and young adults, the exhibition's themes will be explored in greater depth. Thus, in **workshops** in the exhibition space with live speakers, artists, activists, school classes, students, initiatives and visitors, the topic of resistance will be discussed, worked on and reflected on in different ways, and new aspects of the topic will be added in the exhibition. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive supporting programme for different age groups with workshops, film series, performances, film screenings and narrative cafés.

The project is funded by the Federal Cultural Foundation, the Peter and Irene Ludwig Foundation and the F. Victor Rolff Foundation, the Museumsgesellschaft e.V. as well as the 360° Fund for New City Cultures programme of the Federal Cultural Foundation.

With the "360° Fund for New City Cultures" programme, the Federal Cultural Foundation supports cultural institutions in dealing more intensively with migration and cultural diversity and in creating new access and visibility for groups in society which have not been adequately reached so far. To this end, the model programme promotes a variety of approaches aimed at opening up to diversity in the areas of programme, audience and staff.

Further information:

Curators Autonomous Spaces “It’s Yours!”

Ida Hoffmann & Esther Utjua Muinjangué (Namibia), Tímea Junghaus (Hungary), Elizaveta Khan & Mona Leitmeier (Germany), Peju Layiwola (Nigeria)

Curator Sound: Rokia Bamba (Belgium)

Curators Urban Dance: Bahar Gökten (Germany), Daniela Rodríguez Romero (Germany)

Participating Artists

Patricia Kaersenhout (Netherlands), Grada Kilomba (Germany/Portugal), Kara Walker (USA), Omar Victor Diop (Senegal), Kader Attia (Algeria/France), Luiza Prado de O. Martins (Germany/Brazil), Mohammed Laouli (France/Morocco), Ayrson Heráclito (Brazil), Nura Qureshi (Germany), Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (Canada), Keviselie/Hans Ragnar Mathisen (Norway), Peter Magubane (South Africa), Wantok Music Society (Papua New Guinea/Australia), The Singh Twins (England), Huỳnh Văn Thuận (Vietnam), Juan Manuel Sandoval (Mexico), Diego Sandoval Ávila (Mexico), Belkis Ayón (Cuba), indieguerillas (Indonesia), LaPiztola (Mexico), Gaëtan Nossouglo (Togo), Kiri Dalena (Philippines), Tania Willard (Canada), Edward Venero (Peru), Dhuwarrwarr Marika (Australia), Medu Art Ensemble (South Africa), Tshibumba Kanda Matulu (DR Congo), Mamadou Sall (Senegal), Robert Gabris (Slovakia/Austria), Emília Rigová (Slovakia/USA), Selma Selman (Bosnia and Herzegovina/USA), Małgorzata Mirga-Tas (Poland), Alfred Ullrich (Germany)

Idea and Concept Nanette Snoep, RJM Director

Project Management Lydia Hauth

Project Participation Agustina Andreoletti, Nada Schroer

And the RJM Team: Carla de Andrade Hurst (Diversity Manager), Carl Deußen (Scientific Adviser), Lucia Halder and Caroline Bräuer (Photographic Collection), Dr. Clara Himmelheber (Africa Collection), Dr. Oliver Lueb (Oceania Collection), Ricardo Marquez Garcia (Junior Curator), Vera Marušić (Directorate, Programme and Strategic Planning), Sonja Mohr (Insular Southeast Asia Collection), Aurora Rodonò (Diversity Manager), Dr. Anne Slenczka (America Collection), Dr. Annabelle Springer (Asia Collection), Dr. Stefanie Teufel (Scientific Adviser)

Exhibition Design

raumlaborberlin

Florian Stirnemann and Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius
with Louise Nguyen, Sarah Bovelett and Thomas Quack

Exhibition Graphics

Elsa Westreicher and Studio Quack

Opening Hours

Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm; Thursdays, 10 am to 8 pm

1st Thursday of the month until 10 pm; closed on Mondays.

On public holidays 10 am to 6 pm; closed on 24 and 25 December 2020, 31 December 2020 and 1 January 2021.

Press photos and texts as well as information on the supporting programme are available for download at www.museenkoeln.info.

As contact person for the media, Judith Glaser is available by telephone on 0221/221-31319, 0173/3450402 and by e-mail at judith.glaser@stadt-koeln.de.

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