Unfinished Histories
Art, Memory and the Visual Politics of Coloniality

Program & Abstracts
Thursday November 30, 2017
Venue: The Royal Danish Library

9.00-9.30: Registration and Coffee (Atrium)

9.30-9.45: Welcome and Introduction (Queen’s Hall)
Mathias Danbolt and Mette Kia Krabbe Meyer, Conference Organizers

9.45-10.45: Keynote (Queen’s Hall)
Krista Thompson, “Photographic Fugitivity: On Outrunning Capture in Colonial Jamaica”

10.45-11.00: Break (Atrium)

11.00-12.00: Keynote (Queen’s Hall)
Temi Odumosu, “Unable to Hear the Tears: In Search of Empathy During Denmark’s 2017 Commemorations”

12.00-13.00: Lunch (Atrium)

13.00-14.30: Parallel Sessions

Decolonizing the Museum (Queen’s Hall)
Chair: Mathias Danbolt


Julia Binter, “Decolonizing the Art Museum: Unfinished (his/her)stories from the Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany”

Monica Marin, “Migrating Histories: Collective Curatorial Practices”

Archival Interventions (Rotunda / Blind Spots exhibition)
Chair: Daniela Agostinho


Sara Magno, “Contamination and Decolonization: Revisiting the Guinean Liberation Movement Film Archive”

Renée Ridgway, “The Anarchival”

14.30-15.00 Coffee (Atrium)
15.00-16.45 Parallel Sessions

Curator Panel on Decolonizing Exhibitions (Queen’s Hall)
Chair: Mathias Danbolt

Priscilla Rivera Hintz Knight, "An Island is a World: Curating in a Small Place"

Louise Lassen Iversen and Rie Hovmann Rasmussen, "Shaking the Habitual"

Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen, "The Drive to Remember: Kuratorisk Aktion’s Curatorial Engagement with Invisibilized Colonialism and Indigineity in the Nordic Region"

Mirja Thaulow, "Behind Colonial Mirrors: An Exhibition in the Royal Reception Rooms at Christiansborg Palace"

Gitte Westergaard, "Stories of Migrant Fragments"

Archival Encounters (Rotunda / Blind Spots exhibition)
Chair: Mette Kia Krabbe Meyer

Daniela Agostinho, "Archival Encounters: (Un)speakability and the Ethics of Seeing and Showing Colonial Images"

Randi Marselis, "Pinning Antropometric Photographs"

Nina Cramer, "Tracing Meaning: A Vernacular Colonial Photograph’s Shifting Conditions of Visibility"

16.45-17.00: Break

17.00-18.00: Keynote (Queen’s Hall)
Cynthia Oliver, "Monuments, Myths, and Performing Acts of Memory"

18.00-20.00: Conference Dinner (Atrium)

20.00-21.00: Performance (Queen’s Hall)
Oceana James, For Gowie the Deceitful Fellow
Friday December 1, 2017
Venue: University of Copenhagen, Southern Campus

09.00: Registration and Coffee (Outside 23.0.50)

09.30-10.30: Keynote (23.0.50)

10.30-11.00: Coffee

11.00-13.00 Parallel Sessions

Colonial Memories and Affects (23.0.50)
Chair: Mathias Danbolt

David Knight Jr, “Strange Dreams in the Afterglow: Responses to U.S. Sovereignty in Virgin Islands Contemporary Art”

Bart Pushaw, “Contesting the Colonial Subject: Anxious Aesthetics in the Danish Empire, 1922-1938”

Sigrid Lien, “Colonial Shame and Bourgeois Pride: The Story of an Unknown Painting”


Strategies of Resistance: Art, Spirituality and Grief Work (27.0.17)
Chair: Lene Myong

Ellen Nyman, “Performative Strategies – Dimensions of Emancipations”

Michelle Eistrup & Anders Juhl, “(Traces of) the Transition of African Spirituality via the Americas into (Decolonial) Art: A Perspective from the Interdisciplinary Platform Bridging Art + Text (BAT)”

Therese Kaspersen Hadchity, “History in the Hurricane Season: Hi-tech and Low-tech Approaches to the Middle-Passage in a Recent Exhibition of Contemporary Caribbean Art”

Doro Wiese, “Caught in a Flash: William Kentridge’s Black Box, German Colonial History and the Holocaust”

Revisiting Colonial Visualities (27.0.09)
Chair: Louise Wolthers

Åsa Bharathi Larsson, “Nordic Colonialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Sweden”

Mette Sandbye, “Negotiating Identity: Photography in Contemporary Greenland”

Christian Vium, “Bricolage-Work in the Brazilian Amazon”
Alice Feldman, “Re/Entangling the Genealogical Imbrications and Inheritances of Irish Nigerian Diasporas: The Decolonial Aesthetics of an Archive-Assemblage Practice”

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-16.00: Parallel Sessions

Dememorialization / Rememorialization (23.0.50)
Chair: Anne Ring Petersen

Siona O’Connell / Nick Shepard, “A Hauntology of Cape Town: Snapshots from the Edges of History, Memory and Representation”

Michael K. Wilson, “The Only Christopher We Acknowledge is Wallace’: Public Monuments, Collective Memory and the (De)memorialization of Coloniality”

Helle Stenum, “Freedom: Memory Intervention in Spaces of Coloniality”


Reconfiguring Colonial Landscapes (27.0.09)
Chair: Mathias Danbolt

David Winfield Norman, “(De)Colonial Space-Time, or Land as Participant”

Helene Engnes Birkeli, “Translation, Sensation and Colonial Landscapes in the Danish West Indies, 1780-1855”

Lena Quelvennec, “#NoDAPL: Drone, Landscape and Activism”

Kate Keohane, “Édouard Glissant and the Tout-Monde: Global Relation of the Caribbean Landscape in Contemporary Art and Exhibition Practice”

Revisiting Colonial Heritage in Art and Exhibitions (27.0.17)
Chair: Anne Folke Henningsen

Anna Vestergaard, “Hidden, Unspoken, and Invisible: Some Approaches Towards Opening Up the Darker Sides of Danish Art Institutions”


Troels Degn Johansson, “Recycling Colonial Cultural Heritage: Superflex’ Porcelain Pirates”

16.00-16.30: Coffee

16.30-18.00 Plenary Artist Panel (23.00)
Colonial Memories, Decolonial Futures
La Vaughn Belle
Jeannette Ehlers
Oceana James
Nanna Debois Buhl

18.45–22.00 Post-conference dinner, book launch event and after-party for BAT / Bridging Art + Text, with music & performance at CAMP: Center for Art and Migration Politics

Adress: CAMP is located in Trampoline House, Thoravej 7, DK-2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark (http://campcph.org).

A bus will take conference participants to CAMP which is located in the Northern part of Copenhagen. The bus departs at 18.15 from the parking lot at Rued Langgards Vej 5, next to Copenhagen University Southern Campus. The bus returns to the city center at 21.15

BAT is a 3 volume publication edited by Michelle Eistrup and Annemari B Clausen, produced by Anders Juhl & published in collaboration with The Karen Blixen Museum. The overriding themes are: Spirituality, Black Identity and Aesthetics, Art & Independence and Spaces for Art & Literature. Contributers: Artists Christopher Cozier, Gillion Grantsaan, Ebony Patterson, Sasha Huber, Jeannette Ehlers, Charl Landvreugd, Yo-Yo Gonthier, James Muriuki, Curators and Writers Carlos Moore, Françoise Vergès, Britt Kramvig, Nicholas Laughlin, C. Daniel Dawson, Robert Farris Thompson and many more.
Abstracts for Thursday 30/11
Photographic Fugitivity
On Outrunning Capture in Colonial Jamaica

By Krista Thompson

One of the most reproduced images to come out of Jamaica is a photograph of Jimmy Cliff posing as the real-life Jamaican fugitive and folk hero from the 1940s, Ivanhoe Martin. The photograph of Cliff circulated widely as part of the promotion of the Jamaican-produced independent film *The Harder They Come* (1972). This paper considers the prehistory of this photograph examining the material transformations of the image across time, geography, and media, and the many performative returns to this representation, whether in film or contemporary art. Noting how the iconic image has its roots in Martin’s missing mug shot, I argue that the fugitive’s representation was about a literal and figurative outrunning of colonial uses of photography to bring about arrest, and reveals a certain rejection of the indexicality and even materiality of the photographic form.

Krista Thompson is the Weinberg College Board of Visitors Professor in the Department of Art History at Northwestern University. She is author of *An Eye for the Tropics* (2006), *Developing Blackness* (2008), and *Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice* (2015). Thompson is the co-editor (with Claire Tancons) of *En Mas’: Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* (2015) and author of articles in *American Art, Art Bulletin, Art Journal, Representations, the Drama Review*, and *Small Axe*. Thompson is currently working on *The Evidence of Things Not Photographed*, a book that examines notions of photographic absence and disappearance in colonial and postcolonial Jamaica and *Black Light*, a manuscript about Tom Lloyd, electronic light, and its archival recovery in African American art.
Unable to Hear the Tears
In Search of Empathy During Denmark’s 2017 Commemorations

By Temi Odumosu

This presentation reflects upon the outcomes and questions posed by an experimental activity conducted during workshops I hosted earlier this year for the What Lies Unspoken project at the Royal Library of Denmark. The activity was focussed on encouraging emotional engagement with an early 20th century colonial photograph in the Library’s collection, which depicts an unnamed Black infant, alone and crying outdoors somewhere in St Croix (then under Danish rule). The image of this child can be seen reproduced in differing contexts within the collection: pasted randomly into private photo albums and also as a postcard with the added pejorative title “A St. Croix Pickney, D.W.I.”

Asking workshop participants to focus their attentions on this child in varying ways, and to speculate more carefully about the terms of image production, naturally evinced a range of reactions, which I will explore. However, the deliberate orphaning of this Black child from its caretakers - by the original photographer, by reproductive processes, and by conditions of coloniality that include archival practices enacted over time - reveal something more. The image and its reproduction can be read as an index for deeper emotional ambiguities that trouble the Danish (post)colonial mindset. In particular a curious form of distancing from embroilment in this global history that is unable to meaningfully register, and thus take seriously, the full extent of African/Black/Indigenous/Non-European pain.

Meditating on the challenges of demanding empathy for silent Black subjects in the Danish colonial archive, as well as for living descendants, the presentation also invokes work by artists from the African diaspora who have used their practice to materialise and honour the tears denied relevance in other cultural contexts.

Temi Odumosu is an art historian, creative educator, and postdoctoral researcher for the Living Archives Research Project at Malmö University in Sweden. Her international research and cultural practice is concerned with the representation of African peoples, visual politics of slavery and colonialism, colonial archives and archiving, Afro-Diaspora aesthetics, and more broadly exploring how art mediates social transformation and healing. Her PhD thesis at the University of Cambridge explored the construction and use of African caricatures in British satirical prints during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This work provided the basis for her recent book Africans in English Caricature 1769-1819: Black Jokes, White Humour (Brepols, 2017).
Re-thinking Re-presentations
African-Caribbean Perspectives on the Colonial Legacy of Flensburg and Altona

By Thomas Overdick, Sven Klomp and Joe Sam-Essando

The marking of the Centennial of Denmark’s sale of the Caribbean islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix has also brought a shift in the reflection and representation of the colonial legacy of the former Danish cities Flensburg and Altona in Germany. For the first time, the Flensburg Maritime Museum, the Museum of Altona and the Local History Archive Ottensen have curated exhibitions that open African-Caribbean perspectives on the supposedly familiar topics of the cities’ history of sugar, rum, trade, merchants and seafaring. The Flensburg Maritime Museum has invited the Jamaican cultural anthropologist and pan-Africanist Dr. Imani Tafari-Ama as a curator for the exhibition “Rum, Sweat, And Tears”. The goal was a shift in perspective away from the colonial amnesia and heroic nostalgia that has shaped the city’s and the museum’s representation of Flensburg’s colonial history towards a critical reflection of the legacy that the Danish-European colonialism has left behind. The scenography of the exhibition, developed by Sven Klomp, centers around the life size outline of an enslavement ship, evoking associations of a crime scene and putting the visitor into a humble position of perception.

The Museum of Altona has invited the Ghanaian artist Joe Sam-Essandoh to realize the installation “AHOOBAA” as an intervention in the permanent ship model collection. Sam-Essandoh has created mask objects of diverse discarded materials. His assemblages point to products and raw materials that are related to the colonial a post-colonial relation between Africa and Europe. The museum regards the installation as a first step for its future representation of Altona’s colonial legacy and the participation of Altona shipowners and merchants in the transatlantic trade with the Danish West Indies. The forgotten connection between Altona and the Westindies becomes visible in the installation “TRANSIantic” that Sam-Essandoh has realized together with the Finnish artist Hannimari Jokinen at the Local History Archive Ottensen. A Danish-German grammar booklet from 1811, an objet trouvé from a paper recycle bin in Altona, provided the starting point for the installation on the biography of Hans Jonathan, who was enslaved as a valet in the household of the colonial governor Ludvig Schimmelmann. Both installations, “AHOOBAA” and “TRANSIantic”, are part of the program “SANKOFA – ALTONA IN THE CARIBBEAN” that Jokinen has curated as a critical reflection of the Centennial. The program is an important contribution to the development of the post-colonial remembrance concept of the City of Hamburg.
Thomas Overdick is a cultural anthropologist, former director of the Flensburg Maritime Museum and co-curator of the exhibition *Rum, Sweat, and Tears. Flensburg’s Colonial Legacy*. Today, Overdick’s museum consultant and co-ordinator for the colonial legacy at the Cultural Ministry of the City of Hamburg.

Sven Klomp is an architect, scenographer, lecturer and project manager. Klomp is a artistic director at Impuls-Design. Scenographer for the exhibition *Rum, Sweat, and Tears. Flensburg’s Colonial Legacy*. He lives and works in Hamburg.

Joe Sam-Essandoh, born in Ghana, lives and works as a visual artist in Hamburg. Has worked during the last 25 years in silk screen, graphics, painting, mask objects, sculpturing, and photography. Participated in numerous exhibitions, teaches in art workshops. Installations *AHOOBAA - Dedicated to the Ancestresses and Ancestors* at the Museum of Altona and *TRANSliant - Hans Jonathan* at Local History Archive Ottensen (together with Hannimari Jokinen).
This paper takes the exhibition *The Blind Spot. Bremen, Colonialism and Art* at the Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany (2017) as its starting point to discuss the potentialities and challenges of putting postcolonial theory into museum practice. The exhibition tackled issues of institutional and collecting history, looking at patronage and colonial trade, colonial modes of collecting and exhibiting and European modern art’s links to hierarchical worldviews and broader colonial visual culture. It brought the European artworks in the collection in dialogue with historical and contemporary works of art from Africa, Asia, the Pacific and South America in order to question dichotomous notions of active (European) perpetrators and passive (non-European) victims, stressing the African, Asian, American et al. agency in colonial contact. Moreover, it sought to break open the anonymous authority of the museum to create meaning and to establish a polyphonic discourse on the colonial past and the postcolonial present. I invited students from the University of Bremen to create labels for some of the artworks on display and collaborated with the Africa Network Bremen on the narrative and the events program of the exhibition. In this paper, I will focus on the different interests involved in the making of this exhibition and emphasize the fact that “The Blind Spot” was a beginning rather than an end of the ways in which to negotiate unfinished colonial his/herstories in Bremen and in Germany more broadly.

The history of the Caribbean comprises not only the history of coloniality, being historically the laboratory for colonialism, but also the histories of migration, movement, and resistance. My curatorial work has been informed by working with artists (cultural producers) who are committed to social justice and who have used their work as a voice of resistance to both educate, inspire and take back the narrative to tell the stories of those who have been historically silenced. Art is at its most powerful when it has the capacity to heal and transform and my practice has been largely inspired by vernacular traditions rooted in both the political and spiritual. Focusing on collaboration as the basis of a decolonial curatorial methodology, my presentation will describe my work as a practice that, although moored and inspired by the Caribbean where I was born and raised, expands through a global network of colleagues thinking and doing at the margins of conventional institutionality. Beginning with *Migrating Histories*, a discursive performance project conceived with Carla Acevedo-Yates and which approached the body as a space of resistance, I will expand upon the concept of decolonial curating as a method that transcends geographical boundaries and envisions curating as a long-term commitment to collaboration and institutional critique.

**Monica Marin** is a curator, artist, and educator from the Virgin Islands. Her work and research addresses the structural history of colonialism and the ways in which coloniality is manifested today through tourism, environmental racism, and the privatization of public land. She has exhibited her work in the Caribbean, the USA and Europe and participated in exhibitions including the International Caribbean Triennial, Santo Domingo and Contemporary Art from the American Caribbean at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Current projects examine the missing African-Caribbean art history in the archive, and dance and vernacular cultural expressions as a space of resistance. Recent curatorial projects include *Invisible Heritage*, a community arts project in Frederiksted, St. Croix in collaboration with CHANT and a travelling group exhibition featuring Virgin Islands artists who are critically engaging 2017 centennial transfer. Past projects include *Migrating Histories* a two part performance festival in collaboration with Carla Acevedo-Yates at CMCArts; *The Great House: A Reimaging of Power, Place and History*, in collaboration with La Vaughn Belle at Whim Great House on St. Croix; and *Paradise Lost* at CMCARTS and AREA Lugar in Caguas, Puerto Rico that examined the negative impact of US industrial development in both regions. Marin works for the VI Department of Public Works on historic restoration projects that promote arts and culture and works as an independent curator helping to manage CMCArts artist in residency program, some of their exhibitions and community outreach.
Vertigo of Archive
Fragments for a Video Installation

By Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld

For the occasion of the centennial marking Denmark’s sale of its former colony the Danish West Indies to the United States, Danish National Archives are undertaking a mass digitisation of their archival records from St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John. In the video presentation I interweave my personal encounters trying to navigate the digital colonial archival records together with an attempt to untangle my own family’s involvement in the Danish Colonial System.

In the presentation I explore how the digitization of the archive participates in the distribution of the past’s racial hierarchies today. Or, how the digital interface that structures the archive is built on the very same technologies, terminologies and structures of chattel slavery that created the archive in the first place. What are the new sites of forgetfulness and unspeakability created by the desire for data visualization and mass digitization? How to account for the viscerality inherent in the archival records? How do historical cartographies mix with personal cartographies building a multidimensional space, creating “stereograms” of deferred perception and memories? How do I position myself in relation to the archive? Or rather how does the archive orient and position me?

The digitisation of the archive was presented as a gift, even though Denmark stole 250 years of memory after selling off its colony to another colonial power. It was presented as a gift to avoid reparation. To gain access to the archive, I draw on the figure of the Data Thief, which I have appropriated from the Black Audio Film Collective’s seminal work The Last Angel of History from 1995. I find in the figure of the Data Thief, which was made at the advent of the Internet – but which somehow excels the vulnerabilities and ethical dilemmas of today’s data desire – a sensibility that attunes us to the sonorous and affective reverberations of the archive. A sensibility in which time keeps enfolding on itself in the present. A sensibility that is suitable to advance an ethico-aesthetic practice, one which we might situate with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a “reparative critical practice” that forces us to stay in the cybernetic fold of radical, creative, decolonial & technological reimagination.

Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld is a visual artist and postdoctoral researcher at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, affiliated with the Uncertain Archives Research Group, University of Copenhagen. She has developed the video installations Djisr (The Bridge) 2008, TIME: AALBORG | SPACE: 2033 (2010), movement (2012), Leap into Colour (2012-2015), Schizo Archive (2016), The Christmas Report & Other Fragments (ongoing). Her current artistic work & research explores notions of affect, time and materiality through a collective engagement with the bar & cultural venue Sorte Firkant/ Abajour, which she is a co-founder of.
Contamination and Decolonization
Revisiting the Guinean Liberation Movement Film Archive

By Sara Magno

Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, this paper proposes to perform a close reading of elements of the Guinea Bissau film archive as it was encountered in 2011 by Portuguese artist Filipa César. Dating from 1963-73, the archive was dedicated to the documentation of the liberation movement of the colony led by the charismatic Amílcal Cabral whose tragic death/assassination also led to the neglect of the archive. By the time César rediscovered the films they were already severed contaminated by vinegar syndrome, a phenomenon that spreads through the film’s animal gelatine causing a slow but irreversible destruction of its materiality. In order to make the films visible again, the solution was to document and digitise the films in their advanced state of deterioration, a state that was altogether informative of the films own “psychochemical” narrative.

In this paper I question, what is represented in the films’ materiality now contaminated by vinegar syndrome? And, how might we recognize, in the effects of vinegar syndrome, the film’s own always already historical and cultural interlocked systems and forces. It may be argued that a kind of “death drive” infected the film, a manifestation of the passage of time, the neglected state of the archive, and a reflection of 40 years since Portuguese decolonization. The vinegar syndrome could be interpreted, therefore, as an indicator of the film’s state of decay visually expressing the fragile condition of the images of Guinea’s independent movement, offering themselves to an ambiguous ontology.

I focus, also, on the production of two films by Filipa César, Cacheu and Conakry, where the artist combines a selection of material found in the film archive. César’s films open a relevant discussion that questions the relationship between history, memory and image. The films form a network of potentialities about the past while, at the same time, they do not guarantee a successful encounter with the past. The archive essentially works against the desire of continuity and reveals discontinuity, gaps, absences, silences and ruptures. The archive presents an agglomeration of independent pieces and a concentration of silences that we are forced to deal with when we approach Portuguese decolonization.

Sara Magno is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies both at The Lisbon Consortium and the Department for Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. Sara holds a Master in Communication and Art by the New University of Lisbon with a thesis on The Image-Document: Refigurations of the Archive in the Films of Harun Farocki, Hito Steyerl and Filipa César, 2014. Currently Sara is developing research on contemporary documentary practices in Portuguese context, as well as on the notion of documentality, based on the works of Michel Foucault, Hito Steyerl and Maurizio Ferraris.
The Anarchival

By Renée Ridgway

In a digital era of so-called ‘big data’, we all are un/consciously building archives of ourselves, activities, memories and works, online as well as offline. As an artist I adopt a position that reflects on this new environment by developing strategies reminiscent of DJ practices (sampling, remixing and counterpointing). After querying the archive, which has now been digitalised and takes form as a database, I elucidate this search process of digging and finding through artistic and online installations. With visual, sonic, social, museological and vernacular frameworks and stagings, I present re-assemblages in the form of objects, prints, videos and texts. This process is not necessarily about the correctness or the factual, rather it focuses on obscurity and subjective interpretation, where the incompleteness of the ‘anarchival’ surfaces instead (Foster 2004:5).

Excerpts from the archive, which I find or those I create, are living, growing and evolving, whether they are collections of 17th c. colonial documents, libraries full of maps, online video collections, databases of audio recordings or results from Freedom of Information Act requests. With the shift from the physical excavation to searching databases, there is also a transformation in the interaction between the (digital) archive and the user. The generation of value, along with agency in the form of metadata and new documents (archives) produced by users, reflect in particular memory and shareability by being public and accessible. This recyclability and reuse of digital imagery in the present addresses the (colonial) past – images are open to reinterpretation and become imbued with new meanings. During the ‘transfer’ year (2017) I have been mining Danish colonial archives and their contents, specifically the online collection of the Royal Library and the American Library of Congress of USVI and will present a selection of images and their (re)contextualization.

Renee Ridgway is an artist, researcher, educator and freelance curator based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Copenhagen, Denmark. Her international exhibitions and presentations include Albany Museum of History and Art (Wampum World), dOCUMENTA13 in collaboration with Winning Hearts and Minds (CAE), Manifesta8, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Museum De Lakenhal, Gouda Museum, Conflux Festival and P.S.1 MoMA Hotel New York. Recently, Ridgway has researched Danish colonial archives in regard to the purchase of the former Danish West Indies by the US in 1917, mining archives and online collections of the Royal Danish Library and the Library of Congress (USVI) for an exhibition at Astrid Noack’s Atelier (ASA) in Copenhagen. Ridgway is presently completing a PhD at Copenhagen Business School in their Management, Philosophy and Politics department and is a Research Associate at Leuphana University’s Digital Cultures Research Lab (DCRL).
An Island is a World
Curating in a Small Place

By Priscilla Rivera Hintz Knight

My curatorial practice has been deeply informed by my grassroots community arts background. It is based on the philosophy held by community arts advocate, Richard E. Gard, “...let us start by acceptance, not negation—acceptance that the arts are important everywhere, and that they can exist and flourish in small places as well as in large; with money, or without, according to the will of the people...”

This methodology is a challenging one to achieve within the visual arts in the Virgin Islands given our lack of available arts infrastructure. However, obstacles can be overcome with some degree of creativity. What poses the greatest challenge is the legacy and perpetuation of our colonial social dynamics, reinforced by the tourist gaze.

Priscilla Hintz Rivera Knight is an independent curator and arts advocate, and Director of the Bajo El Sol Gallery on St. John. Priscilla holds a Masters Degree in Arts Administration from Goucher College and a BA in Social Sciences with a concentration in Caribbean studies from the University of the Virgin Islands. She has worked for and collaborated with such organizations as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., the Turabo University Art Museum and Center for Humanistic Studies in Puerto Rico, The St. Thomas Historical Trust, El Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Casa de las Américas, in Cuba and was co-founder of Artfusion Magazine.

Priscilla recently co-founded the Gri Gri Project with writer and photographer David Knight Jr. The Gri Gri Project’s mission is the creation of interpretive exhibitions, critical writing, events and archives related to the cultural patrimony of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Caribbean region. The Gri Gri Project has been involved in arts-related projects and exhibitions in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the United States, Aruba, Barbados and Cuba.
Shaking the Habitual

By Louise Lassen Iversen and Rie Hovmann Rasmussen

Throughout 2017 as we marked the Centennial of Denmark’s sale of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John several exhibitions and institutional initiatives have been presented, all with their own approach to the topic of Danish colonial past and present; while some seemed to reproduce narratives of colonial greatness, others took this as an opportunity to rethink logics of display and revisit collections as well as invite others than the usual suspects of cultural producers and thinkers to join the conversation. But what happens once the exhibitions close and the spectacle of the Centennial is over? If this year is to have an impact we need to think about what it would mean to make a more long-term structural change.

For this paper we wish to explore how decoloniality can become an integrated part of curatorial practices and institutional structures. Walter Mignolo theorizes that we are always already inscribed in Western epistemic thinking. Taking the consequences of this notion to heart in order to engage in a decolonial curatorial practice there is a need to address the fact that the fundamental structures and thinking within the curatorial and institutional critique are formed by logics formulated within a European tradition. We will discuss the necessity to not only work with exhibitions that critically explore coloniality and represents minority voices. It is also imperative to build a curatorial practice informed by decolonial thinking. This calls for an awareness of the traditions that we are formed by and a selfexamination of one’s own thinking and doing. In the paper we will draw on our curatorial research and development of the two-year programme at our exhibition space, meter, in Copenhagen. The programme opened in January 2017 with the exhibition Unravelings. Over a six-month period, the exhibition’s participants were invited to explore how coloniality shaped our society today. We will discuss how the space we created became a stepping-stone to re-approach questions explored in our own curatorial practice and the overall programme.

Rie Hovmann Rasmussen og Louise Lassen Iversen are curators and founders of the exhibition space meter in Copenhagen.
The Drive to Remember
Kuratorisk Aktion’s Curatorial Engagement with Invisibilized Colonialism and Indigeneity in the Nordic Region

By Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen

Denmark, Sweden, and Norway all participated in the European project of colonialism and acquired colonies within as well as beyond the Nordic region. However, this history remains alarmingly absent in the collective memory of Scandinavians as well as on the global map of postcolonial studies. Only a few scholars and cultural producers have made past colonialism and present postcoloniality in the Nordic region their field of examination.

For the past eight years, the practice of the Danish curatorial collective, Kuratorisk Aktion (Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen), has been driven by a desire to understand why the colonial legacies of the Scandinavian countries have remained structurally invisible and to what degree colonial relations of rule continue to haunt the present. In a broad body of projects, Kuratorisk Aktion has aimed to provide curatorial platforms for the aesthetic-discursive interrogation into gendered indigeneity, postcolonial trauma, and processes of mental decolonization in the Nordic region.

In their presentation, co-founding members Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen will give an account of a number of their projects and their tentative conclusions. In different ways, these testify to the aftermath of colonialism’s catastrophic race and gender-thinking in our globalized present (rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org and troublingireland.com).

Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen are the founders of Kuratorisk Aktion [Curatorial Action] a Danish curatorial collective that employs art and curating to address inequalities in the global community and introduce other ways of organizing the world. The collective was formed in 2005 and has produced numerous major exhibitions and publications both in Denmark and abroad. The collective’s practice is based on a firm belief that art and curating can contribute to social and political change.
Behind Colonial Mirrors
An Exhibition in the Royal Reception Rooms at Christianborg’s Palace

By Mirja Thaulow

After the sale of the Danish West Indies in 1917, the furniture from the Government Houses was sent to Denmark. Originally this furniture was bought by Governor von Scholten in the 1800s. He created a magnificent reflection of the Danish King’s palace, full of gold and mirrors – as in the Royal Reception Rooms where the furniture is now on display. The title of the exhibition should tempt the visitors to go ‘through the looking glass’ and into von Scholten’s world of splendor. But it also indicates that the story has a downside: the fashionable furniture from Europe was made of soft wood and the Caribbean termites immediately went to work eating it. Only the golden shells remained. Consequently, the exhibition is able to reflect upon the fact that the beauty of all colonial objects – and the entire colonial system – is based on a rotten core.

But will this message be lost in the overwhelming opulence of the setting which is the Royal Reception Rooms? Some critics have raised this as an important question. The visitors to the Royal Reception Rooms come primarily to look at beautiful things and enjoy a fine ‘Royal’ experience. And that is indeed how this exhibition starts. The public step into von Scholten’s world to the sound of music and the scents of tropical flowers. But as the public move on and von Scholten’s magnificence begins to crumble, the mood changes and the air becomes heavy with the far too sweet smell of rum, succeeded by the smell of burning wood when the revolts flair up.

How does the public react to this and how do they feel about Denmark as a colonial power after seeing the exhibition? We are now carrying out studies of the reactions of the public, which we would like to share.

Mirja Thaulow is an art historian and curator at the Christiansborg Palace/National Museum of Denmark. She has worked at the Danish Royal Palaces since 2003.
Stories from Migrant Fragments

By Gitte Westergaard

Fragments of European ceramics are buried under the soil of St Croix. They are everywhere, but only visible to the person aware of their existence. Occasionally, they make their appearance in the surface providing a glimpse into a colonial past of the island, that like the broken nature of the fragments themselves, is not as glamorous or romantic as once believed. St Croix was a wealthy cosmopolitan port from the 1750’s until the middle of the 19th century. The broken fragments of ceramic vessels imported as part of the transatlantic system of trade are symbols of a cross-cultural exchange. The properties of this material make it a valuable tool for historical archaeologists to study in understanding the societies who created them, used them and disposed them. But it is not only the historical archaeologists who find use of this colonial material today. Its aesthetic attachments embodied in the materials shininess also attract other people to collect and re-use the fragments into new constellations. For example, the fragments have been encapsulated in silver and gold into jewelry in order to reclaim the negative parts of the history and La Vaughn Belle re-captures the fragments into new assemblages of the fragmented Caribbean identity in her paintings. This presentation will argue that the agency of cultural material i.e pottery and the re-interpretation of it can contribute to an understanding of the continuum of past-present realities of post-colonial societies. The properties of the material are not fixed but are mutual and dependable on the present engagement with it. It builds upon a body of empirical material collected on St Croix as part of my master degree in ‘Sustainable Heritage Management’ exhibited at Fort Christiansvaern in Christiansted for the Transfer Day Commemoration March 2017 in collaboration with La Vaughn Belle.

Gitte Westergaard is a cultural heritage researcher and graduate student at Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark, and co-curator of the exhibition Chaney: Stories From Migrant Fragments (2017) with artist La Vaughn Belle.
Archival Encounters
(Un)speakability and the Ethics of Seeing and Showing Colonial Images

By Daniela Agostinho

The digitisation of colonial archives carried out on the occasion of the centennial of Denmark’s sale of the Caribbean islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix has raised archival problematics that continue to haunt different postcolonial contexts across the globe. For one, the digitisation and online release of a large number of photographs from the colonial period unearthed the uneven dynamics of seeing and showing inherent to both archival logics and colonial imagery. If the archive, in Foucauldian terms, can be thought as “the law of what can be said”, the digitisation of Denmark’s colonial records has foregrounded the archive as a “fractious site of (un)speakability” (Mawani, 2012): on the one hand, the public release of such images posits unsettling questions about the ability to speak, about “the parameters of knowability and speakability” (Edwards, 2016) of past and present. What kind of knowledge can we draw from the epistemic instruments of colonial powers? And who is allowed to voice out this knowledge? On the other hand, the online availability of these images has rekindled the debate on the violence of looking and the ethics of seeing implicated in the photographic encounter (Hartman, 2011; Campt 2017). Under which conditions of visibility do we encounter these images? What kind of subject positions does the archive create for viewers and objects of looking? And can these images “speak” outside the technologies of capture that produced them in the first place? At play in this process is the uneasy nature of archival encounters, whereby the shared colonial past is made visible whilst remaining an open wound. This paper wishes to theorize such archival encounters and the double articulation (Bhabha, 1994), with legacies for both the colonised and the coloniser, in which they are embedded. With examples from Lusophone artistic practices, in particular the works of Rita GT, Filipa César, and Grada Kilomba, this presentation will problematize the conditions of visibility under which colonial images are made to speak, and the ethics of seeing and showing produced by encounters with the archive. In emphasizing the relational nature of the digitized archive, the paper casts light on the affective implications of shared colonial heritage, while also foregrounding the archive as a possible critical site where past and present can be reimagined together.

Daniela Agostinho is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, where she is affiliated with the Uncertain Archives research group. She studied Media and Culture Studies in Lisbon and Berlin. She holds a PhD in Culture Studies with a dissertation on the photographic records of Ravensbrück women’s concentration camp. She is the author of the volume Panic and Mourning. The Cultural Work of Trauma (with Elisa Antz and Cátia Ferreira, Walter de Gruyter, 2012). Her research interests are cultural theory, visual culture, film and moving image studies, and feminist theory. Her current research focusses on archival temporalities, the conditions of seeing and being seen under Big Data regimes, and the visual politics of remote warfare. She is also a curator and a member of the curatorial and research collective Pipi Colonial, which works on the relations between gender and coloniality.
Photography was an important tool in colonialism, and historically photographs of quite diverse origin, such as anthropological photographs of ethnic types, anthropometric photography, colonial family photos, and commercial postcards, were all used to support race theories. Some indigenous museums have been highly sceptical towards the exhibition of colonial images, since these often reflect racializing strategies and are “manifestations of the majority society’s or outsiders’ view” (Lien and Nielsen 2012: 297). The inclusion of colonial photographs in contemporary museum exhibitions can be difficult and controversial. However, Elizabeth Edwards and Matt Mead (2013) have shown how careful curatorial framing can acknowledge numerous perspectives and thereby address the complexity of colonial societies. They argue that in order to avoid recirculation of racist attitudes and celebratory approaches to colonialism, it is sometimes necessary to guide visitors’ decodings by explicitly pointing out “misreadings” (2013: 32). In this way curating exhibitions with colonial photographs becomes “exercises in controlled readings” (2013:33). However, such curatorial ethics are difficult to maintain when photos are digitized. Photographs may entirely lose their historical context – be stripped of their provenance – as they are transferred from museums and archives into social media. This is especially the case when private users grab photographs from museum websites and share them online without consent.

This paper focuses on the circulation of anthropometric portraits in the social curation website Pinterest. To what extend is it problematic that such photographs circulate ‘freed’ of their historical contexts? Are the photographed persons posthumously ‘freed’ from previous racialization or are they rather re-exploited in this commercialized media site? How can museums facilitate that the social biographies of anthropometric photographs are acknowledged – and hereby counter the current European tendency to claim white innocence and suppress knowledge about historical racism (Wekker 2017)?

Randi Marselis is an associate professor in Cultural Encounters at the Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University, Denmark. Her research examines European memory politics in relation to migration and postcolonial history. She is currently particularly interested in how migration memories and cultural encounters are mediated through digital heritage project and museum exhibitions. She has most recently published on these issues in Museum Anthropology (2016), Memory Studies (2016) and in Global Mobilities: Refugees, Exiles, and Immigrants in Museums and Archives, edited by Amy Levin (Routledge, 2017).
Tracing Meaning
A Vernacular Colonial Photograph’s Shifting Conditions of Visibility

By Nina Cramer

The Royal Danish Library’s collections contain eight photo albums with images produced by the white Danish pharmacist Alfred Paludan-Müller who resided on St. Croix in the years 1879-1904. This presentation considers such vernacular photography as a quotidian colonial practice that mediates social relations between photographer, sitters and viewers within and across boundaries of class, race, gender and ability. The paper proceeds by examining the charged visual patterns that course through the Paludan-Müller family albums before honing in on a single image in a series of photographs of people affected by Hansen’s disease, living at Richmond Hospital, St. Croix in the early twentieth century. A highly mobile image, this particular photograph of a mother and child has mutated in its movement between various contexts from its creation until the present moment. What meanings are generated in the photograph’s repositioning in these different contexts? How does the image address and challenge us as contemporary viewers? And to what extent can we identify in the photograph and its multiple framings what Tina Campt refers to as frequencies of “refusal”?

Nina Cramer holds an MA in Art History from the University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on resistance to colonial visual cultures in contemporary art and photographic representations of the African diaspora in Danish historical archives. She is an editor at the decolonial journal Marronage.
Since the 2016 presidential election in the United States, there has been growing conflict over the use, importance and relevance of national monuments. Seen as symbols of patriotism in some quarters, in others they are demonstrations of outright racist power moves to retain or regain white supremacist claims to space and national recollection. Memory functions in these arenas as a moveable malleable subject/object. North American Civil War figures once unquestioned as rigid features of the public landscape have come under fire for reinforcing white supremacy in rapidly changing local and national environments. While the battle over these public spaces continues and monuments are being removed, in some spaces to be replaced by Civil Rights figures, I am interested in considering the ways in which the selection of figures and choices around what periods are upheld and which are abhorred reflect changing national consciousness and a reckoning with colonial legacies. To whom do these figures belong? What memories are selected as they inhabit various public and private spaces? What histories are we choosing to uphold? How do these histories memories and myths support or question our deeply held beliefs about ourselves? I will look at the US national conversations/battles around monuments and relate them to my own scholarly work on queen figures and their usefulness in a black imaginary in the US Virgin Islands and the more recent work in my performance project Virago-Man Dem which places black male bodies, a most controversial subject in American social life, at its center.

Cynthia Oliver is a New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award winning choreographer who has danced with notable US Companies, David Gordon Pick Up Co., Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, Bebe Miller Company, and Tere O’Connor Dance. She has performed in theatre works by Laurie Carlos, Greg Tate, Ione, Ntozake Shange, and Deke Weaver. She holds a PhD in performance studies, and is a professor in the Dance Department and Affiliate in Gender and Women’s Studies and African American Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of numerous published essays and the book *Queen of the Virgins: Pageantry and Black Womanhood in the Caribbean*. 
For Gowie the Deceitful Fellow

Performance by Oceana James

Oceana James’ performance *For Gowie the Deceitful Fellow* is a theatrical experiment that examines the institutional racism of our societies. It is the intersection & cosmic dialogue of a haunted Caribbean woman and a young man claiming his identity. It looks at slavery and its role in who we all are—the oppressed & the oppressor, the victim & the victor. Finally, it is an explanation of personal growth. The piece combines Butoh movement, projections, sound & light to tell a deeply personal story.

**Oceana James** (USVI) is a Crucian New York City based performance artist, theater actor, writer and dancer. Her work re-tells & re-imagines her Caribbean roots & American experiences. It comments on the socio-political, cultural & economic realities of people of African descent. She deconstructs language & uses her Caribbean “Nation Language” to further explore the mythologies that she grew up hearing. Oceana James has MFA in theatre from Sarah Lawrence college and has most recently completed a writing intensive at the Obie-Award winning JACK in Brooklyn.
Abstracts for Friday 1/12
Free Gut Project
Honoring Ancestral Memory

By Frandelle Gerard

As a Crucian woman who is neither an artist nor an academician, how do I address the subject of this conference? Unfinished Histories: Art, Memory and the Visual Politic of Coloniality opens the door to the lost and hidden art of the African men and women transported to a little island in the Caribbean against their will. Ancestral memory is imbedded in the culture of their descendants today and visible to those who can see beyond the veil of coloniality.

As the direct decedent of Africans brought to the Danish West Indies in the 18th century, I will attempt to bring to the discussion a personal perspective. One informed by the humanity of my ancestors, their resilience and determination to hold on to their ancestral heritage and culture against the systematic dehumanization imposed on them by the colonial powers.

“Art is in the eye of the beholder” – my ancestors were stripped of their language, their spiritual practices, their music and their humanity yet today, hidden in the intricate fretwork and craftsmanship of historic buildings their art emerges. Sung in the lyrics of Cariso, their culture and art emerges. Etched in stones, in Maroonberg, their art emerges! All we have to do is look for it and acknowledge its’ existence and acknowledge their work as Art.

The Free Gut Project has initiated a search for the artisans and their surviving work in the back streets of the town of Frederiksted. As the project commenced, initial research revealed names of the first residents of Free Gut:

1777-1785  Domingo, free Negro at 37 Hospital Street
1777-1779  John Woodjett, free Negro at 38 Hospital Street
1777-1779  Mary Reed, free Negro at 39 Hospital Street
1777-1797  Andreas Buntin, free Mulatto at 40 Hospital Street
1782-1788  Isabella Barnes, free Negro at 41-42 Hospital Street

These men and women owned and occupied the houses as free human beings! They were artisans, craftsmen and entrepreneurs who we honor today as artists in their own right. Their artisanship informs the instruction of young men and women today to carry on these rich traditions.

Frandelle Gerard is Executive Director of Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism Foundation (CHANT).
Performative Strategies – Dimensions of Emancipations

By Ellen Nyman

My artistic research is a study of black artists working with performative interpretation in performing and visual arts. “Our lives have no meaning, no depth without the white gaze. And I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one in any of my books.” Toni Morrison, author and Nobel Prize winner. In the project Performative Strategies - Dimensions of Emancipations, the assumption is that the structure of this white perspective affects one’s identity building and thereby also one’s artistic and aesthetic practice. This research is based on how black artists handle performativity. The aim is to shed light on the interplay between the conscious work with the body as a symbolic tool and the site-specific influence on how race / ethnicity are constructed, this through spatial and comparative context analysis. The question that the project poses is: how do black artists in Scandinavia create methods to navigate within the white gaze, a perspective that surrounds cultural institutions, aesthetic norms and the audience in a historical and national context?

The starting points are considerations made in preparation or rehearsal before a work is performed, considerations that reflect the relationship between the sender and the receiver. An important aspect of this is what these different institutions and artistic spaces represent and the artistic concessions made concerning self-censorship, internalization, identification, separatism and resistance. Studying these various strategies will hopefully reveal complexities of aesthetic factors and belonging as well as analysis of representation and expectations. The research is based on my artistic practice, as a comparative study together with other artists’ practices. The aim is to collect experiences of mediation, perception and identification, to examine and highlight the conscious methods and strategies that are being made to build up aesthetic expression beyond the normative requirements and expectations. Performative Strategies - Dimensions of Emancipations also has the ambition to build bridges to other fields of humanities and other disciplines within the same field of knowledge.

Ellen Nyman is a Ph.D.-student in Performing Arts at Malmö Theatre Academy / Lund University, based in Stockholm. Her artistic research practices has an interdisciplinary focus on performativity and blackness within Stage Art and Visual Art. Nyman is educated from The Danish National School of Performing Arts / Aarhus Theatre (1993-97). Since her graduation, she has mainly worked as an actress and a director but also with happenings and video works. Recently Nyman directed a performance influenced by the biography of Assata Shakur, Black revolutionaries don’t fall from the moon at Theatre Tribunal, Stockholm (2017). Nyman also participates with two video work at the Gothenburg biannual GIBCA 2017 and their conference PARCE Journal.
Michelle Eistrup and Anders Juhl will present a new publication called BAT: Bridging Art + Text, edited by Annemarie B. Clausen and published in collaboration with The Karen Blixen Museum. The book is the result of a long-stretched effort of more than 30 artists, scholars, curators and writers, who collaborated at a workshop in Denmark in 2012, with the overriding themes: Spirituality, Black Identity and Aesthetics, Art & Independence and Spaces for Art & Literature. The BAT workshop aimed at creating bridges between professionals working with parallel sources of inspiration, primarily anchored in the Caribbean, the US, Africa and Europe.

Our talk will focus on presenting a summary of the 3 volumes of BAT with visual examples from the publication with artists such as Ebony Patterson, Gillion Grantsaan, Yvette Brackmann, Chris Cozier, Sasha Huber, James Muruiki and many others.

We will then focus on Spirituality with a screening of the video, Face of Elegba with Robert Farris Thompson, who focuses on the lore of Elegba, the god of the crossroads from the Fon and Yoruba tradition to the Black Diaspora in the Americas, and to the Caribbean. It will give a glimpse into this important field, that some artists and scholars for many years have explored, but which has yet to become a more substantial and integrated part of the (academic) approach to decoloniality. The radical act of decolonialisation is a long and hard journey, filled with many crossroads, and it will demand a great deal of any individual or society bound on this awakening. It demands Contentious Consciousness, a term coined by Professor C. Daniel Dawson “This Contentious Consciousness isn’t just a spiritual or religious tradition it is a way of contextualising, reinventing and restructuring your own universe and it is one done in a hostile atmosphere”

Michelle Eistrup is a visual artist, arts producer and instigator of artistic collaborations who lives in Copenhagen, Denmark. Eistrup has a Fine Arts Degree from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, a B.A. Major in Socio-Anthropology and a Minor in Arts from Haverford College, Pennsylvania, US. Michelle’s art incorporates themes of identity, corporeality, faith, memory, and post-colonialism, where her transnational background, Danish, Jamaican, and American, is sometimes a point of departure. She traverses varied artistic expressions that include photography, drawing, video, sound and performance, and yet all are integrated in a heart-centred practice that is led by spirit and a strong belief in the transformative potential of the collective. Rooted in a vibrant global arts community, she has exhibited internationally, and organized events that facilitate in-depth dialogue and research between artists, writers and curators, for the overall purpose of encouraging a more integrated, sensitive and equitable
creative exchange. From 2016-2019, she participates in SPACE 3, north by southeast, a recurring international program of context-responsive art presented by International Art Space (IAS) in Australia. She also collaborates with producer Sasha Dees on a film project on Niombos figures and Bakongo cosmology with the The Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm and for the Kalmar Art Museum in Kalmar, Sweden.

**Anders Juhl** is a historian, writer, composer, curator and executive producer. He has made sound pieces and composed music for many of Michelle Eistrup’s art videos as well as film scores and songs e.g. for the animated film “Help! I’m a Fish” performed by actors Terry Jones and Alan Rickman. For 6 years, he has held the position as Chief Operating Officer at The Karen Blixen Museum, Denmark, while developing his activities as a consultant and trustee to museums, the art scene, artists, musicians and other entities organisations and institutions within the cultural sector. He holds a master in Musicology with a focus on Creative Industries, and a Minor in Law and Sociology from the University of Copenhagen. Currently he also chairs the Association of Centre of Colonial History, Copenhagen.
History in the Hurricane Season
Hi-tech and Low-tech Approaches to the Middle-Passage in a Recent Exhibition of Contemporary Caribbean Art

By Therese Kaspersen Hadchity

Over the last two and a half decades, the internal dynamics and international reception of Caribbean art have registered significant developments. With its attention to processes of migration and hybridization, a segment of this field (once seen as embarrassingly ‘belated’) can now claim hyper-currency and prescience in its anticipation of recent global dynamics. In an apparent process of mutual rapprochement, the image of Caribbean art has thus become more cosmopolitan, while the world has become more attuned to issues that are inherently central to Caribbean history and discourse. Within the region, however, this process has not been without contestations.

Drawing on some of the works included in the recent Carifesta 2017 Masters Exhibition (which I curated), this paper explains how these contestations are reflected in divergent artistic approaches to Caribbean history and competing perspectives on the challenges of post-coloniality. Dwelling in particular on the representation of the Middle Passage in the works of Barbadian artists Ras Ishi Butcher and Joscelyn Gardner, the paper examines the two artists’ explicit and implied positions, considers the added significance of their media and methods and of their critical reception. Along the way, it touches on the compulsion to ‘speak the unspeakable’, the problems associated with historical representation, the challenges of overcoming identity politics - but also suggests that history appears to repeat itself in these artists’ local and international trajectories.

Therese Hadchity was born in Denmark in 1963, and has lived in Barbados since 1990. She has worked as an independent critic and curator since 1997 and was the owner of the Zemicon Gallery in Bridgetown from 2000-2010. She currently teaches art history, contemporary art and aesthetics at the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies. Her doctoral dissertation (defended January 2015) was about the emergence of a ‘post-nationalist post-modernism’ in the visual arts of the Anglophone Caribbean.
Caught in a Flash
William Kentridge’s Black Box, German Colonial History and the Holocaust

By Doro Wiese

In this talk, I seek to articulate in one image the diverse genocides in German history, an image able to conceive the piling wreckages of history in a flash. My point of departure is a multimedia installation by William Kentridge called *Black Box* (2005), in which he thematizes the Herero and Namaqua genocide during German colonial rule between 1904 and 1907. On the backdrop of a miniature theater, Kentridge superimposes symbols of German fascism on fleeting images of Herero and Nama people being clubbed to death, hunting parties, hangings, and natural sites like the Waterberg where a Herero insurrection was originally defeated. A possible source of enlightenment, a switched-off lamp, is recurrently towed across center stage, accompanied by songs of lamentation and grief. In my research, I want to answer to Kentridge’s demand for grief work, and seek out theoretical and conceptual possibilities that allow me to posit simultaneously the singularity of the Holocaust, and to articulate its deep connections with colonial crimes. In this regard, the multimedia aspects of *Black Box* are particularly enabling, since they allow for a multidirectional understanding of history and memory – an understanding that is, according to Walter Benjamin, the task of the historical materialist. It is the latter’s responsibility “to blast open the continuum of history,” a material practice of bombarding the time of the present with remnants of the past. Relying on Benjamin’s vision, I develop a notion of history-writing as a necessarily material practice that reshapes in particular our understanding of time.

Doro Wiese, PhD, is a researcher at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry at Utrecht University and in the Department of Anglophone Literatures at Düsseldorf University. She was trained in literary studies, film studies, and cultural studies at the University of Hamburg and Utrecht University. In her current research project, she analyzes how a current debate in Germany frames the connection between German colonial crimes and the Holocaust. This project explores whether an understanding of history as an assemblage of actors, institutions, ideas, things and events will allow the debate to move forward and to accommodate potential memory conflicts. Doro Wiese has a strong commitment to the fields of postcolonial studies, indigenous studies and genocide studies. Further interests include conceptual history, the relationship between literature and historiography, New Comparative Literature and un-translatability, intermediality, theories of affect, and critiques of (neo-)colonialism.
Nordic Colonialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Sweden

By Åsa Bharathi Larsson

My recently published dissertation Colonizing Fever: Race and Media Cultures in Late Nineteenth-Century Sweden (2016) investigates visual representations of the colonial world and makes the argument that these representations created a mutual vision to the European colonial project and the civilizing mission. Colonizing Fever claims that a mutual vision was reinforced by visual strategies and descriptions in how to visualize and understand the European colonial expansion and the civilizing mission for a Scandinavian audience at the end of the nineteenth century.

In Scandinavia at the end of the nineteenth century, ethnographical exhibitions, wax museums, illustrated journals, ephemerals, and illustrated mass press were overflowing with images from the colonial world. In the visual arts, the orientalist art was reaching its height at the European salons and art market. Moreover, racial photography and the displaying of indigenous populations in Scandinavia, also called ethnological exhibitions, were as common as in the colonial empires such as Great Britain, France and Germany. These various visual representations were circulated in an area that by historians has been described as being “in the periphery of European colonialism”. Inevitably, the question that arises is: how were these rather “extraordinary” representations given meaning in a region considered far from the centre stage of colonial politics?

This paper will specifically problematize representations in the illustrated mass press and contemporary entertainments such as the ethnological exhibitions and wax museums.

Åsa Bharathi Larsson holds a PhD in art history and is a researcher and a lecturer at the Department of Art History, Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research focuses on nineteenth-century visual culture, Scandinavian colonialism, visual culture, race, gender and transnational history.
Throughout the 19th and most of the 20th century, photography was among the main tools for communicating knowledge about Greenland to the rest of the world, not least to the Danish public. Photography was actively used by Arctic explorers as well as the colonial system. With few exceptions, such as the documentary photographs and films of Jette Bang, the visual image transmitted through photography was highly stereotypical: ice and wild nature, peopled by tough sealers and hunters. Although there have been indigenous photographers in Greenland since the early 20th century, this image has been the most dominant, also from 'within'. Recently, however, new photo-based narratives have begun emerging. With an entrance quote from Niviaq Korneliussen’s recent novel *Home Sapienne*, “Enough of that post-colonial piece of shit”, this talk gives a brief survey of recent uses of photography in Greenland, from art projects (by Julie Edel Hardenberg, Pia Arke and Inuuteq Storch) to social citizenship projects. In order to ‘re-negotiate’ Greenlandic identity the referentiality of photography still plays a major role. But photography is also a ‘messy’ medium (as Pia Arke has described it), which can be used for all sorts of purposes. Therefore it is important to ‘blast’ this medium of colonialism by using it and at the same time deconstructing it, playing with and circumventing the codes and the archives in order to challenge the conventions of photographic representation and renewing the discourse of photography. This is what many have realized in today’s Greenlandic visual culture.

*Mette Sandbye* is Professor of Photography Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies.
In this paper, I present and discuss material from my archive-based photographic interventions among Ticuna, Miranha and Caixana people along the upper Solimões River and its tributaries, deep in the Brazilian Amazon.

Carrying a selection of some of the first photographs made in the Amazon some 150 years ago by the German photographer Albert Frisch, I retraced his 1867 journey, with the aim of repatriating the photographs to descendants of those depicted in Frisch’s photographs, inviting them to dramatize and re-enact these original photographs with me as part of a visual culture critique across time. With a point-of-departure in one specific case from the settlement of Umariaçu, I shall discuss how this particular methodological approach enabled the unfolding of a set of complex cosmological reflections that reframe conceptions of historical time, representation and cultural encounters through a form of embodied dialogue.

Analytically, I employ Claude Levi-Strauss’ term ‘bricolage’ to investigate how the people I work with in the field appropriate external cultural elements introduced during the colonial era into their cosmologies and in so doing perform elaborate forms of cultural critique that reverse the colonial gaze.

The work presented here is part of the ongoing visual anthropological research project Temporal Dialogues, which is currently being edited into a book publication and an exhibition set to open in February 2018.

Christian Vium is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow affiliated with the ARTlife research unit at the Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University.
Re/Entangling the Genealogical Imbrications and Inheritances of IrishNigerian Diasporas
The Decolonial Aesthetics of an Archive-Assemblage Practice

By Alice Feldman

This paper explores the ways in which colonial amnesias obscure the connections between the global histories of Anglo-European coloniality and the necropolitics underpinning the crisification of contemporary migrations. It focuses on a project that develops a decolonial archive-assemblage methodology of “genealogical re/entanglement” to exhume the contours of IrishNigerian diasporic imbrications, and make visible the inheritances of these prior encounters. Working the inter-relationships of decolonial knowledge and aesthetic/aesthesic projects, and of socially engaged art and research practices, this method evolves through the re/appropriation of art historical modes of archival and assemblage art, themselves deeply implicated in global projects of western coloniality and epistemic violence. The paper critically reflects on this attempt to cultivate an affective, generative and interventionist practice that seeks to “familialise” longstanding genealogies of IrishNigerian diasporas and diasporans that continue to remain un-known in Ireland. It considers the potential of such ways of re-membering these (already creolised) inheritances for actively reshaping the grounds for future imaginaries, encounters and “re-existences” in Ireland in the present moment.

Alice Feldman (School of Sociology, University College Dublin) uses arts-informed, collaborative and decolonial methods to intervene in the intersecting global colonial legacies underpinning the current necropolitical moment. Issues of particular interest include creative agency, ‘knowledge creation and mobilisation’, and ‘reflexive solidarity’. This research has informed her techniques of ‘pedagogical bricolage’ for methodology training around creative research practices, the reflexive imagination and research justice. She has worked in research, advisory and volunteer capacities with many civic, community and other organisations in Ireland involved in anti-racism, migration and interculturalism work. She has recently launched a new Master’s programme in Race, Migration and Decolonial Studies and an associated Decolonising the Curriculum Platform racemigrationdecolonialstudies.com
Strange Dreams in the Afterglow
Responses to U.S. Sovereignty in Virgin Islands Contemporary Art

By David Knight Jr.

The 2017 centennial that marks 100 years since the former Danish West Indies were transferred to the United States has, perhaps paradoxically, been met with a turn back towards Denmark and the Danish colonial era by many cultural workers in today’s Virgin Islands of the United States. After a brief discussion of the possible reasons for this turn, this paper will identify a few instances of contemporary visual artists responding to U.S. rule in the post-transfer era, which can be, and often is, read as colonial. The paper discusses a handful of contemporary artists whose work raises the question of political sovereignty in a place where even critical work has often avoided the subject.

David Knight Jr. is a writer, art critic, and editor based on St. John, US Virgin Islands. He is the co-founder and co-editor of the journal Moko - Caribbean Arts and Letters. Knight Jr. is the co-founder of the curatorial project GriGri Project with Priscilla Hintz Rivera Knight.
Contesting the Colonial Subject
Anxious Aesthetics in the Danish Empire, 1922-1938

By Bart Pushaw

The loss of the Danish West Indies and Norway’s growing interests in the North Atlantic plummeted Denmark, and its legitimacy as an empire, into crisis in the interwar era. This talk examines how three artists, Emilie Demant Hatt, William H. Johnson, and Svend Rathsack, contended with the fluctuating boundaries of Nordic colonialism as their artworks variously reified imperialist longing, immortalized colonial subjectivity, and reversed modernism’s racialized obsession with the “primal” onto Danes themselves.

Demant Hatt painted colorful canvases of the Virgin Islands while overseeing archaeological expeditions alongside her husband Gudmund Hatt in 1922-23. Painting lush verdant landscapes with such titles as *Slave Church, St. Thomas*, she paradoxically concealed Denmark’s role in the slave trade and the islands’ once enslaved population. Curiously, Demant Hatt would paint black islanders only in the 1930s as “memory pictures” of African-Creole bamboula dances. As the Caribbean became a site of Danish shame, Greenland became a site of imperial pride. Svend Rathsack’s *Greenland Monument* — a sculpture group of Inuit women laboring as seal hunters and fisherwomen, and a central towering male figure by a kayak — was a surprising testament to the role of indigenous labor in the Empire’s prosperity. Yet the American artist William H. Johnson would lay bare that racialization not was merely for the Empire’s “Others.” In his abstract portraits of Danish fishermen, Johnson deployed exaggeration, distortion, and brightly colored hues to convey ineffable racial essences about his sitters, couching their whiteness within discourses about primitivism and authenticity.

Bringing these works together demonstrates the racial hierarchies of Danish imperialism as driving forces within interwar global modernisms. Seen through the lens of Charmaine Nelson’s notion of “transoceanic art,” these works are a pivotal site of empire making and empire critique, revealing the oft-ignored reality that the Black Atlantic and North Atlantic are intimately intertwined and mutually constitutive.

Bart Pushaw is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on race, colonialism, and gender within global modernisms between 1850 and 1950, especially in the relation to the Nordic and Baltic countries. He has recently published articles on Sámi representation in Nordic art and Baltic Orientalist portraiture. He is an upcoming CAA panelist on “Critical Race Art Histories in Germany, Scandinavia, and Central Europe” with his talk “Visual Reparations: Scandinavian Privilege and Nordic Art’s Colonialist Turn.”
Colonial Shame and Bourgeois Pride
The Story of an Unknown Painting

By Sigrid Lien

The proposed paper will discuss an unknown, early nineteenth century painting, which originally was mounted on the wall in a private residence in the coastal town of Bergen, Norway. It is a group portrait that refers to an unhappy love story between a wealthy ship-owner and merchant’s son, Christopher Harmens (1774-1829), and a young, black woman from the then Danish-Norwegian colony St. Croix in the Caribbean. But the painting is definitely much more than a representation of past forbidden love. Looking at it from a present-day perspective, it comes across as a manifestation of early local, colonial engagement and racism. The Harmens-painting thus belongs to the part of Norwegian history which has been absent, not only in the national history writing, but also in the exhibition practices of the museums – even though a considerable amount of the objects in Norwegian cultural history museums originate from colonial- or colonial related stories: trade, shipping, explorers’ expeditions and missionary engagement. The painting’s original 19th century location indicates that it had a representative, public function. This makes the image even more enigmatic: Why was it painted? Why was such a “difficult story”, which involved shame and pride – strong, conflicting sentiments – put on display in a prominent citizen’s residence? But the painting is not only interesting in relation to its original context. As images in general, it has a social biography, or life in history (Edwards 2001) – and is thus also to be understood as an arena for the battle of historical articulation. Memories of the colonial past can be likened to a subterranean stream, which runs its course without anybody paying much attention, until someone stumbles on a place where the brook wells up through the earth (Cole 2001). This paper will discuss the painting as such a stumble stone, through which an unsettled past again and again has been projected into the present.

The paper discusses the feature film *Guldkysten* (Daniel Dencik, 2015) as a recent example for how colonial guilt is staged, and managed, in Danish visual culture. Questions of guilt, apologies and reparations are a central theme in this year’s commemoration of the transfer of the Danish Virgin Islands to the United States in 1917. These questions form an obvious context for a reading of the film, while the focus on the West African counterpart of the transatlantic enslavement system can add another dimension to the Caribbean-centered discussion.

*Guldkysten* is the first feature film to depict Danish colonial rule and slavery on the Gold Coast, today’s Ghana. The central plot revolves around issues of guilt and atonement: it follows the main character’s development from innocent complice of the colonial system to militant critic of slavery and ultimately his death as a result of the punishment by his peers who strive to uphold the colonial economic order. Drawing on film historian Thomas Elsaessers’s concept of guilt management and Matthew W. Hughey’s framing of the white savior motif, and commenting on the film’s aesthetics, narrative style, and use of historical sources, I will trace the film’s ultimate ambivalence between acknowledgement and assuagement of colonial guilt.

**Lill-Ann Körber** holds a PhD in Scandinavian Studies from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany. She is a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Oslo, Norway, in the research project “Scandinavian Narratives of Guilt and Privilege in an Age of Globalization.” Her recent work focuses on the legacy and remembrance of Scandinavian colonial history, in particular the transatlantic slave trade. Related research interests include Greenlandic contemporary culture, Scandinavian Arctic discourses, and past and present relations with Africa and the Caribbean as represented in Scandinavian literature, art, and film. Recent publications include her doctoral thesis *Badende Männer. Der nackte männliche Körper in der skandinavischen Malerei und Fotografie am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (2013), *The Postcolonial North Atlantic: Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands* (co-edited with Ebbe Volquardsen, 2014) and *Arctic Environmental Modernities: From the Age of Polar Exploration to the Era of the Anthropocene* (co-edited with Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport, 2017).
A Hauntology of Cape Town
Snapshots From the Edges of History, Memory and Representation

By Siona O’Connell and Nick Shepard

Taking the central challenge of the notion of decolonial aesthesis as our starting point (to escape from the constraints of Western aesthetics; to knit together mind and body, the personal and the political, reason and emotion), we explore ideas around history, memory and representation in the city of Cape Town. Presented as a series of snapshots, we move rapidly across contexts: from apartheid forced removals to #RhodesMustFall, from the “Spring Queen” pageant of garment workers to contested memories of racial slavery, and from the destruction of the Stone Age site of Peers Cave to the visual archive of the ANC in exile. How do we find forms of history and representation that open us to the full force of the challenge of the past? How do we bring these materials into this space (the academy, the seminar room, the gallery) without taming and framing them for academic consumption? How are we not complicit in the cannibalization of history? (Can history cannibalize the present?) How do we have a conversation around decolonial futures in a time of neo-fascism and the re-inscription of racial and national identities? How do we find a way out of the labyrinth?

Siona O’Connell is a visual scholar, curator and filmmaker at the University of Pretoria. Her research interests pivot on ‘colouredness’, memory and trauma and how to think about freedom after apartheid. She has curated numerous exhibitions and directed and produced 6 films including ‘An Impossible Return’ which looks at forced removals in Cape Town, as well her most recent, ‘Promises and Lies: Fault Lines in the ANC’.

Nick Shepherd is an Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Aarhus University, and Artist-in-Residence at the Reinwardt Academy of the Amsterdam University of Arts. He has been a Mandela Fellow at Harvard University, and a visiting professor at Brown University, Colgate University, and the University of Basel. His books include: La Mano del Arqueologo: Ensayos 2001-2015 (2017), Arqueología y decolonialidad (2016), The Mirror in the Ground: Archaeology, photography and the making of a disciplinary archive (2015), and After Ethics: Ancestral voices and post-disciplinary worlds in archaeology (2014).
‘The Only Christopher We Acknowledge is Wallace’
Public Monuments, Collective Memory and the (De)memorialization of Colonality

By Michael K. Wilson

The title quote draws from a song lyric within the 2013 single, “Oceans”, where Hip-Hop artist Jay-Z criticizes the public memorialization of Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus. Alternatively, Jay proposes the collective “we” within his community preferring late Hip-Hop artist Christopher “Notorious BIG” Wallace as a more appropriate figure to be memorialized. This rhetorical strategy is more than a witty play on words, but an example of how communities engage in both the (de)memorialization and (re)memorialization of historic narratives and public figures.

Throughout the world a growing number of artists, intellectuals and activists are critically engaging the current role and impact that the public memorializing of colonial history has on the communities they are housed in. These memorializations range from the naming buildings and public spaces after white supremacists, to historic statues and monuments of colonial figures. The various critical engagements that challenge these memorializations include but are not limited to counter-narrative based tours, performative protests for removal, community petitions for renaming, and creating and erecting counter statues and monuments. As a result, these critical engagements have the potential to teach us valuable lessons regarding the relationship between public space, collective memory and community identity.

This project draws from bell hooks notion of insurgent commemoration where artistic practices serve as counter-hegemonic responses to colonial narratives in order to remake and transform contemporary radical Black subjectivities. This project specifically identifies several initiatives around the world, led by women of African descent, who use a form of insurgent commemoration to creatively (de)memorialize various public spaces that house various colonial narratives. Focusing on Jennifer Tosch of Amsterdam, Sethembile Msezane of South Africa, Sasha Huber of Switzerland, La Vaughn Belle of St. Croix and Jeannette Ehlers of Denmark, this diverse group of creative practices reflect a growing global consciousness of colonial resistance, where public spaces are re-imagined in order for communities to engage in agency-based memory making.

Michael K. Wilson is a doctoral student at Michigan State University in African American and African Studies. His research focuses on contemporary African diaspora art. He is currently a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Copenhagen, working on a dissertation about African diasporic artists including Jeannette Ehlers and La Vaughn Belle.
**Freedom**

**Memory Intervention in Spaces of Colonality**

*By Helle Stenum*

*Who are monuments for? The living, the dead? The ancestors, the descendants, the disciples, the friends? The winners the losers, the city, the economy, the cultural historians, the artists? The future or the past?* – Lubaina Himid, 2009

The sculpture *Freedom*, created by the Ghanaian-American artist Bright Bimpong and donated by a group of people from the US Virgin Islands, arrived and was displayed in Copenhagen on ‘Transfer Day’, the 31. March 2017.

The sculpture depicts an Afro-Caribbean man, leaning backwards with his eyes closed, a sugar knife raised above his head in one hand and a conch shell in the other ready to blow a signal of resistance and emancipation. The sculpture is a working copy of similar sculptures located on St Croix and St John since 1998 to commemorate the 150 anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

On the occasion of the centennial of the Danish sale of the USVI in 2017 and motivated by the fact, that there was no public memorial in Denmark commemorating the shared colonial past between Denmark and the USVI, a group of USVI citizens decided to donate the sculpture as a gift to the ‘Danish People’. The nomadic sculpture crossed the Atlantic and arrived in Denmark with a tour-plan but no permanent place in the space of the former colonial power. ‘Freedom’ will during the ‘Transfer’ year be installed at three different locations, or rather intervening in three public spaces dedicated in 2017 to memorialisation of the colonial past. The permanent location for the sculpture is yet to be politically decided, but several locations have been suggested.

Reading the sculpture as an intervention in different Danish contexts of (re)constructing the colonial history, the paper will investigate possible forms of ascribed meaning and significance of the mobile monument, such as “guerilla memorialisation” (Rice); installation of Afro-Danish agency (Begin and Rupprecht) or an absorption into the trend of remembering abolition whilst forgetting slavery (Wood).

**Helle Stenum**, PhD is an independent researcher/activist. She is director of 2017 documentary *We Carry It Within Us. Fragments of a Colonial Past*. Stenum is a lecturer at Roskilde University (Department of Communication and Art) and Århus University (Danish School of Education)
On Human Remains
Shifting Grounds in Postcolonial Aesthetics

By Emilio Distretti

This paper explores the intersection between colonial and postcolonial history by focusing on the role human remains play in the pursuit of justice to victims of past and present violence. The project introduces human remains as the objects around which colonial visuality and representations of ‘otherness’ have been shaped cyclically: anonymous, de-humanised and excluded from the narrative of civilisation. The paper argues that the construction of anonymity or ‘anonymisation’ informs both the history of ‘Empire’ and postcolonial migrations, deriving its inspiration from the dehumanising relation to the ‘black body’ upon which colonialism was built. Starting from unidentified body parts (mummified heads) and skeletal remains preserved as specimens in European museums, I argue that today’s ‘anonymised’ and ‘de-identified’ others are present within the contemporary postcolonial discourse as undocumented migrants who often die at sea borders. This parallelism is founded on a shared origin that is marked by the total loss of identity and on the assumption that human remains de facto ‘contain’ the stories and the images of forced invisibility: not only names, faces, and families are vanishing but also the testimonies, tales and memories of colonisation, transnational migration and global economic inequality. The paper explores the contemporary ways in which human remains, through political and legal actions, enter public spheres producing evidence and justice. These pursuits of justice question, on the one hand, the ‘anonymisation’ practices of 19th and 20th centuries anthropologies of race and eugenics to contemporary mechanisms of illegalisation fostering undocumented migration. Furthermore, these movements seek to foster new frameworks of global justice in the postcolonial present by agitating for returns, repatriations and — when it occurs — compensation plans. Dealing with the evidentiary function of human remains, the paper investigates epistemological and aesthetic, political, scientific and legal controversies around questions of the right to identity, repatriation and burial.

Emilio Distretti is a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Department of Politics and International Studies, SOAS. Prior to this he was Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Kenyon Institute (Council for British Research in the Levant) in East Jerusalem and Assistant Professor and Director of the Urban Studies and Spatial Practices programme at A1 Quds Bard College for Arts and Sciences, Abu Dis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He is an interdisciplinary scholar and educator, with a PhD in Aesthetics and Politics of Representation from Portsmouth University (UK), whose research and teaching focus is in the field of critical international relations and geography particularly in relation to postcolonial theory, human rights, aesthetics, material and visual culture and critical urban studies.
(De)Colonial Space-Time, or Land as Participant

By David Winfield Norman

In the fading light of Danish natural romantic projections, land remains a contested concept in Greenland studies, both conceptually and politically. These researchers are often quick to suspiciously discount any focus on land as a resurrection of the colonial image of the Naturvolk, a concept that paternalistically framed Greenlanders as inseparable from a pure, originary nature. Yet in effect such reticence subsumes land into landscape – assuming land can play no other role than continuing the imperial dreamwork of pictorial romanticism. What if instead we position the green land of Greenland as a skeptical witness to these developments, one that in an immediate sense can reconnect discrete historical events with the broader representational patterns of erasure and naturalization on which coloniality relies?

Shifting from the dominant temporal framing of Greenland’s colonial history to a spatial account, this presentation will address some of the myriad ways the colonial has imbedded itself into place by looking to artworks that have problematized the human “scaping” of land. These projects span practices of land art, photography, collective performance and community theater and travel from sites of forced relocation to the Eternity Fjord and to uranium-enriched mountainsides. Collectively, they envision site as a process that continuously responds to and remembers social movements unfolding across it, a continuous present as well as a developing present saturated with past movements – which it can also project back to its human spectators.

No longer willing to accept the roles of sublime alterity, untouchable aura, distant origin or a passive resource waiting to be consumed, these projects envision land as a participant fully capable of transforming the human subject into object.

David Winfield Norman is a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen’s Department of Arts and Cultural Studies. He holds an MA in art history from the University of British Columbia. His thesis research addresses performance and the performative in Greenlandic art history as well as theories of new materialism and their discontents.
Translation, Sensation and Colonial Landscapes in the Danish West Indies, 1780-1855

By Helene Engnes Birkeli

This paper explores land and landscape representations in what was known as the Danish West Indies in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. More specifically, it will consider the ways in which modes of producing and perceiving the Caribbean landscape has been integral to both Afro- and Euro-Caribbean cultural practices. This expressed itself for instance in the use and cultivation of plants with healing or poisonous qualities in or outside provision grounds, and the use of fetish objects replicating, or staged in, particular locations to affect persons and conflicts. The project of colonialism translated land into a European ideal of productive order, in maps and prospective landscapes, relying on enslaved labour for its fulfilment. During a period of imperial success and profitable sugar industry, these representations narrate the Danish colonizing effort as justified and impenetrable, denying the presence of resistance. By the early nineteenth century and proceeding their loss in the Napoleonic wars, however, Denmark found itself increasingly struggling in their imperial ambitions, contributed by falling sugar prices and slave revolts. A simultaneously developing Romantic tradition in tropical landscape painting reveals representational modes in which the land and its inhabitants resist ordering efforts, and increasingly creolised experiences emerge. In Fritz Melbye’s paintings in the early 1850s, after the slave uprisings that had led to Emancipation, focus was relocated from the order of the sugar fields, to maroon hills and forested tropical vegetation. Small groups of black figures now occupy central positions within the compositions, preoccupied in localised social exchange, cooking, and walking. The privilege of looking and sensing the landscape, normally contained in the colonial gaze, seems to be dispersed and escaping the central axis of viewer, colonial architecture and compositional order. Such practices challenge Eurocentric and monolithic narratives of the colonial landscape, calling forth notions of ‘countervisuality’ and the Decolonial.

Helene Engnes Birkeli is a PhD student in History of Art at UCL. She is researching images and concepts of landscape in the US Virgin Islands/Danish West Indies in the 18th and 19th centuries. Her thesis questions the overemphasis on European image making in the colonies, seeking to explore Afro-Caribbean landscape concepts as formative and informative to visual culture.
Can activism use dominant visual codes and technologies to represent itself?

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests started at the beginning of 2016 by the initiative of Native American activists. They have produced a lot of images, often ignored by the mainstream media, but very present on the Internet. They are raising claims about Native representations, struggles against colonial violence, climate change and ecology, uses of technologies, independent journalism, anti-capitalism… This presentation focus on the creation of subversive images, resulting from the appropriation of drone technology in these activist discourses, by comparing 19th century landscape paintings and their drone videos.

Drone aesthetic is related to the hunter’s gaze in a military context. Coming from the sky, seeing and knowing everything, drones are weapons that kill without any chance of reciprocity. Vertical views watch and dominate, until they fall and the images stopped. (Steyerl, 2011; Shinkle, 2014; Chamayou, 2015) But what happens when the technology is diverted? What happen in these videos, shared on YouTube by a group called Digital Smoke Signal, when the relations to the drone and to the landscape shift into a different narrative? With their gazes from above, these media activists hijack different aspects of western landscape utilizations to help their colonial and ecological struggles (Malcom, 1999; Mitchell, 2002; Grittmann, 2014). Asking how human ecology and indigenous perspectives can address the question of responsibility, their images witness.

These recordings played their role in the mobilizations at the end of 2016. On the 7th February 2017, Donald Trump’s new administration lifted the ban imposed by the previous administration. Even after having to left Standing Point camp the 22sd February 2017, the protesters have not given up. Can we hope for change by using this kind of technology? Or will the authorities always fire back?

**Lena Quelvennec** is a MA Student in Visual Cultures at Lund University, Sweden.
Édouard Glissant and the Tout-Monde
Global Relation of the Caribbean Landscape in Contemporary Art and Exhibition Practice

By Kate Keohane

The writings of Édouard Glissant have gained cultural prevalence over the past decade: curators have used his work to discuss the fluctuations of identity in the ‘global age’, and to correlate artists working with themes of diaspora. In an attempt to assess and contextualize this theoretical trend, my paper will consider three exhibitions: *Caribbean Art at the Crossroads of the World* (2013), *New York, Poetics of Relation* (2015), *Miami, and Mondialité* (2017), Brussels. Glissant had ambitions to develop an archipelagic museum for the ‘Tout-Monde’, but the uses and manipulations of his ideas by these exhibitions raise prescient questions about the ownership of ideas and the visibility of identity.

Glissant offers an alternative global model that allows space for imagination and flux, but which also focuses upon difference in relation, as opposed to assimilation. I will argue that these exhibitionary manifestations of Glissant’s ideas overlook the centrality of the Caribbean to his theorization. While Glissant’s view shifted towards ecological concerns in later years, his major works, *Caribbean Discourse* (1981) and *Poetics of Relation* (1990), provide the greatest potential for the analysis of art and unfinished histories, with particular ramifications for the genre of landscape. Through this reassessment, it is possible to correlate the assumption of Glissant into the contemporary canon with the circulation of the image of the Caribbean landscape in the ‘global’ imaginary. This multi-faceted landscape is too often reduced to a series of tropes echoing Glissant’s central themes: namely, the interstitial space of the sea, the connectivity of the archipelago, and the spiral of intense migration – symbols also used to represent the experience of the ‘contemporary’. Through this analysis, I aim to address a gap in landscape studies which, I contend, progressed rapidly from a Marxist critique of histories buried beneath the soil, to contemporary global ecological concerns; thereby overlooking the intricacies and power relations inherent to the individual encounter of place and space.

Kate Keohane is a PhD candidate in History of Art at the University of St Andrews. As a part of an EU, Latin America and Caribbean wide project [http://eulacmuseums.net/], her thesis considers the staging of the Caribbean landscape in contemporary art. Through sustained analysis of works by artists working within, beyond and through the region in relation to the writings of Édouard Glissant, her work draws out the complexities underlying the global dissemination and ‘uses’ of images of this specific site, working relevant critical theories, literature and art together to allude to the surreality of lived experience and the framing of place.
Hidden, Unspoken, and Invisible
Some Approaches Towards Opening Up the Darker Sides of Danish Art Institutions

By Anna Vestergaard

In recent years, Danish artists and curators have started working increasingly with the art museum as something problematic or discomforting. Institutional critique is not a new discourse – however, in a Danish context the focus on Danish and European colonial history has not been seen to this extent before. In the article “Museums in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity”, Walter Mignolo points out that museums have functioned as “crucial institutions for the accumulation of meaning and the reproduction of the coloniality of knowledge and of being.” But museums are also places of opportunities for a delinking from this coloniality.

The titles of the exhibitions in questions – eg. “What Lies Unspoken” (SMK), “Citizen X” (Øregaard), and “Blind Spots” (KB) – emphasise the fact that this is a history that has not been told before and maybe even cannot be fully told within the reality of the given institution’s collection or identity. In this respect the coloniality of the museum can be seen as the darker side of its history – something in line with Sigmund Freud’s concept of “das Unbehagen”, or in English the “discontents”.

This paper takes its departure in the idea that the increased focus on Danish colonialism can be considered an institutional decolonisation, thus asking: how have the institutions approached their work with colonial history? Which curatorial and aesthetic strategies have been used? What comes into display when the museum opens up for its discontents? And which further questions might this decolonisation point towards? Although the colonial history is broadly approached by the institutions as something based in the past, it is clearly a new – or unfinished – history in the present, and something that might point towards other potential futures for the institutions themselves.

Anna Vestergaard is a PhD fellow at Statens Museum for Kunst and University of Copenhagen where she is researching the increased focus on European colonialism in art museums these years. She holds a MA in Art History from the University of Copenhagen and Barnard College.
Unfinished Business?
Searching for Postcolonial Europe in the Blind Spots and Racism and Citizenship Exhibitions in Copenhagen and Lisbon

By Lars Jensen

‘Unfinished business’ is a term that has long been used by Australian Aboriginal communities generally and Aboriginal scholars more specifically to address the legacies (or continuity?) of settler colonialism’s destructive influence on Aboriginal lives. But also on the barriers faced by Aborigines and others who push for non-Aboriginal Australia to recognise racism and discrimination as part of colonial and ‘postcolonial’ nation-building in Australia. Looking at the two exhibitions concerning Portuguese and Danish colonial relations through this prism invites similar reflections on postcolonial nation narration in Europe. While clearly the imperial-colonial histories of Denmark and Portugal are vastly different – as indeed are their postcolonial realities – what interests me in this paper is how the exhibitions stage a critique of prevalent conceptualisations of nationhood in the two countries. In other words, what interests me is the implied prevalent narratives which the exhibitions understand themselves as challenging. But I am equally interested in what are the (counter-)narratives offered by these exhibitions?

While Blindspots can here be a taken-for-granted reference point, Racism and Citizenship is a smallish exhibition housed in the fascist monument to the discoveries erected in 1960 in Belem, Lisbon. A monument which survived (with surprising ease), the Portuguese transition from dictatorship to democracy (1974) and the collapse of the Portuguese African empire. Yet, the exhibition also details a much longer history of a ‘Black’ presence in Portugal (particularly Lisbon) dating back to the 1400s, while Blindspots is preoccupied with Danish history in the then Danish West Indies and less with the repercussions for Danish society (at home). It is these trajectories of sameness and difference, I am going to explore further in my paper.

Lars Jensen is Associate Professor in Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University. He has worked at the crossroads of Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies for many years. His most recent monograph is Beyond Britain: Stuart Hall and the Postcolonializing of Cultural Studies (Rowman and Littlefield 2015). He is the co-editor with Kristín Loftsdóttir, University of Iceland, of two volumes on the Nordic countries seen through a postcolonial prism. He is also the co-editor with Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Zoran Pecic and Christian Groes of Postcolonial Europe: Reflections after the Empires (Rowman and Littlefield, November 2017). His monograph Postcolonial Denmark: Nation Narration in a Crisis-Ridden Europe is currently under consideration by an international publisher. And he is the chief editor the postcolonial journal Kult.
Recycling Colonial Cultural Heritage
Superflex' Porcelain Pirates

By Troels Degn Johansson

Danish art collective Superflex' project Porcelain Pirates for the Zeeuws Museum in Middelburg, the Netherlands, is a fascinating and complex example of how a museum collection of artefacts from a colonial past may gain critical new meaning by means of cultural production and curatorial strategy. By means of a museum installation (Porcelain Pirates, Zeeuws Museum, 2009) and a popular TV-series (Porcelain, Propellerhead, 2010) produced in Vietnam by a Vietnamese production company, Superflex seeks to explore and question a complex piece of colonial history with an important Asian-European as well as a nationally Dutch and regionally Zeelandish dimension.

The installation and the television series is based on peculiar historical construction based on the Zeeuws Museem's collection of porcelain: The Dutch capture of the Portuguese vessel San Jago which set sail from Goa bound for Lisbon in 1601 with one of the first consignment of South East Asian porcelain destined for the European market. San Jago's cargo of porcelain was realized economically by a big auction in the Netherlands. According to the Museum and it's installation, the "importance of this auction was unprecedented and it provided enormous economic stimulus in the entire region and also provided diplomatic gifts that were used to cement the Dutch war of independence against Spain." Authentic artefacts from San Jago were used as props in the TV-series produced in Vietnam and were subsequently included as artefacts in the installation.

This paper provides an analysis of Superflex' project with special reference to the cultural recycling of artefacts tied up with a sensitive colonial context. The analysis focuses especially on the role of the artefact and the way the project contributes to and challenges regional and national postcolonial identity (Zeeland, Netherlands, Vietnam). The paper will finally discuss its findings with reference to Superflex' general profile as artists.

Troels Degn Johansson is an Associate Professor and head of the Glass & Ceramic Crafts department on Bornholm at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts’ Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation. Dr. Johansson has served as Head of KADK’s Institute of Product Design and Head of Research at the Danish Design School. His main research focus is avant-garde strategies in contemporary crafts and design. Since 1998 he has been collaborating with art collective Superflex in a number of different ways, e.g. as a project partner, a commentator, and by hosting the collective as artists-in-residence.
The Subversive Potential of Visual Violence
An Analysis of Jeannette Ehlers’ *Whip It Good* and La Vaughn Belle’s *Cuts and Burns*

By Ida Højgaard Thjømøe

In 2017, which marks the Centennial of Denmark’s sale of the Caribbean islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix to the USA, discussions about the consequences of colonial history and neocolonialism in Denmark have been many. This has given rise to the production of a variety of remarkable exhibitions, publications, and archives which all comment on coloniality, where some will be discussed in this paper. According to Walter Scheiden, professor of history and classical culture at Stanford University, Western civilization, as we know it, has come at the cost of a massive inequality since the dawn of civilization. The sole possibility, in his account, of limiting this inequality is through violence – wars, pandemics, civil unrest; only violent shock have substantially reduced inequality over the millennia. In this paper, I examine and discuss how visual violence contains the same subversive potential by analysing two artworks from the contemporary art scene which consider the topics of Danish colonial history, violence, and the female body: Jeannette Ehlers’ video performance *Whip It Good* (2014) and La Vaughn Belle’s installation work *Cuts and Burns* (*ledger series 002*) (2016-). By drawing upon methods from postcolonial criticism, art history and gender theory I examine how the violent acts of whipping, cutting and burning (visually represented in the two artworks) reveal and disrupt a colonial visuality. In my analyses of these artworks, I discuss how the use of elements of shock and violence constitutes a return – a return of silenced histories which uncovers a void in a narrative where there should have been a voice, a subject; a *counter-narrative*, which can help us question the established archives in Denmark today pertaining which sources they contain and who is in the position of power to tell these stories.

Ida Højgaard Thjømøe is a Master Student in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, where she writes her master thesis in Art History; a preparatory research project for an upcoming postcolonial exhibition at the David Collection, which will exhibit colonial photographs from India. Her research interests focus on visual art from 1850 to today, especially contemporary art; cross-cultural and cross-aesthetic relations and influence on art. She has published in and edited *AF·ART Magazine*, and worked as a co-editor at the artist book *Say It Loud!* by Jeannette Ehlers.
La Vaughn Belle

La Vaughn Belle was born in Trinidad and Tobago in 1974 and relocated to the US Virgin Islands the same year. She holds an MFA from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba and an MA and BA from Columbia University, NY. Her work has evolved from figurative and symbolic explorations in painting to variety of modes that include video, performance, installation and public intervention projects. For several years her work has responded to the questions surrounding the coloniality of the Virgin Islands, both in its present relationship to the US and its past one to Denmark. The resulting vocabulary borrows from elements of architecture, literature, history, archeology and social protest to create narratives that challenge the colonial process. She has exhibited her work in the Caribbean, the USA and Europe and participated in such exhibitions as the Havana Bienal and the Caribbean: Crossroads of the World exhibit at the Museo del Barrio in NY. She currently lives and works in St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

Oceana James

James is a Crucian, New York City-based performance artist, theater actor, writer and dancer and educator. Oceana has a MFA in theatre from Sarah Lawrence College (where she studied performing, writing and directing); and a BA (magna cum laude) in English from the University of the Virgin Islands. In her work James deconstructs the idea of language as one’s sole means of communication and experiments with the use of time. Her current work engages re-telling/re-imagining her Caribbean roots and American experiences. It is a commentary on the socio-political, cultural and economic realities of peoples of African descent. Right now, her research centers around epigenetics, trees (the biology and mythology), the intersection of science and religion; and the use of the body to embody and then exorcise the traumas of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

James has most recently successfully shown For Gowie the Deceitful Fellow for the Slesvia Kolonial project with the Flensburg maritime museum and at The Brick in New York City. James and has completed a writing intensive at the Obie Award winning Jack Theatre in Brooklyn. She has worked with such acclaimed artists as Opal Palmer Adisa, Sibyl Kempson, Paloma McGregor and Nia Witherspoon, and has most recently performed with renowned French director and sound designer Roland Auset and with 7 Daughters of Eve Performance Company at the Whitney Museum of American Art. James has been commissioned to write a play 7 Daughters will produce in 2018.
Jeannette Ehlers

Ehlers is based in Copenhagen, Denmark and graduated from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts 2006. Experimental nature generally characterizes Jeannette Ehlers’s work. Image manipulation is often included in the artist’s photographic and video based works. On these changeable terms meaning and identity are explored, in both a sophisticated and immediate way.

For years she has created cinematic universes that delve into ethnicity and identity inspired by her own Danish / West Indian background. She challenges and explores the film medium’s ability to communicate in a visually fascinating and engaging language. Creating imaginative stories with both edge and sharpness, her work still retain the broad appeal. Her pieces revolve around big questions and difficult issues, such as Denmark’s role as a slave nation - part of the Danish cultural heritage, which often gets overlooked in the general historiography.

In the Spring 2014 Jeannette Ehlers had a major solo presentation of her works at Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center. Her works were also part of the group show CARIBBEAN: Crossroads of the World, Pérez Art Museum Miami as well as DAK’ART 2014, Biennale of Dakar, Senegal among more.

Nanna Debois Buhl

Buhl is a visual artist who lives and works in Copenhagen and New York. Her practice investigates historical and cultural knowledge seen through botany, animal life, imagery, and architecture. Through photographic “close readings” her projects reflect on how artifacts and ideologies are interrelated, how they travel through, and change over time. She works with a conceptual and experimental approach to the photographic medium, and by using historical and new photographic techniques she connects what is depicted in her images to how they are made. Her projects materialize in several forms and scales: as photographs, films, installations, site specific works in public space, and artist’s books.

Buhl participated in The Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program, New York (2008-09) and received her M.F.A. from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (2006). Her installations and films have been exhibited at institutions such as the Pérez Art Museum, FL; SculptureCenter, NY; Art in General, NY; The Studio Museum, Harlem, NY; El Museo del Barrio, NY; Lunds Konsthall, Sweden; ARKEN Museum of Modern Art; Kunsthall Charlottenborg; Kunsthallen Brandts; Museum for Contemporary Art, Roskilde; and Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark. Her work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Denmark, the Museum for Contemporary Art, Vejle Kunstmuseum, and The National Museum of Photography, Denmark. She has created several large-scale public works commissioned by Percent for Art, NY and The Danish Arts Council.
Venues

The conference takes place at three locations. The first day of the conference, Thursday 30/11, will take place at The Royal Danish Library in the center of Copenhagen. The second day, Friday 1/12, will take place the University of Copenhagen, Southern Campus, on Amager in Copenhagen. The post-conference book launch event for BAT / Bridging Art + Text, with music & performance will take place at CAMP: Center for Art and Migration Politics.

Venue on Thursday November 30:
The Royal Danish Library
Søren Kierkegaards Plads 1, Copenhagen

The conference will take place in the Royal Library’s Queen’s Hall (Dronningesalen) and in the exhibition Blind Spots Images of the Danish West Indies colony.

Getting there: Nearest metro station is Christianshavn. The metro is accessible throughout the city where both lines, M1 and M2, connects with Christianshavn. From Christianshavn st. there is a 10-12 min. walk to The Royal Danish Library. You can also take bus 66 from the Central Station, and get off at bus stop “Det Kongelige Bibliotek”. The library will appear on your left.

Venues on Friday December 1:
University of Copenhagen
Njalsgade 120, 2300 Copenhagen S

The conference will mainly take place in Auditorium 23.0.50, with parallel sessions in conference rooms 27.0.09 and 27.0.17.

Getting there: Nearest Metro station is Islands Brygge. Line M1 takes you to Islands Brygge from which there is a 5-7 min. walk to the University campus. After ascending the stairs, turn right on Njalsgade. Walk for about 7-8 minutes till you reach the campus area with a number of large sand-colored buildings.

CAMP: Center for Art and Migration Politics
Trampolin house, Thorsavej 7, DK-2400 Copenhagen NV

Getting there: CAMP is located in Trampoline House (http://campcph.org). A bus will take conference participants from the Copenhagen University Southern Campus to CAMP, which is located in the Northern part of Copenhagen.