

Vying for Museum Space: Re-writing Object Biographies in the Age of

Decolonization

Alice Stevenson, Mirjam Brusius, Jonathan Fine, Latika Gupta, Golda Ha Eiros, Heba Abd el-Gawad, Laura Osorio Sunnucks, and David Francis

Transcript for **100 Histories of 100 Worlds**

00:12

Welcome to the 100 Histories of 100 Worlds in 1 Object podcast. Our project turns to the formerly subaltern stories that museums in the West have left out. How can previously excluded voices be empowered to tell their own histories about these objects?

00:32

In this episode we bring together staff from the British Museum with some of the participants from our launch event in Kingston, Jamaica, with a view to discuss new approaches to object biographies and we bring a focus to the question of how such narratives can be incorporated into museum display, and longer term practice. The eight member panel consists of Mirjam Brusius, Alice Stevenson, Heba Abd el Gawad, Latika Gupta, Golda Ha Eiros and Jonathan Fine from our Kingston, Jamaica workshop with David Francis and Laura Osorio from the British Museum.

01:18

My name is David Francis and nowadays, I kind of work as a freelance Interpretation Producer, but I have previously worked at the British Museum as an Interpretation Officer in the Learning and Audience department for 10 years, where I worked on the original History of the World in 100 Objects

project, and I also worked on the South Asian spin-off, 'India and the World: A History in Nine Stories'. For people who don't know what the role of the Interpretation Officer or Producer is, you kind of sit as a liaison between the curators and the designers, and you're there to act as the kind of audience advocates. Really interesting idea to think about what would a new history of the world or 100 histories look like rather than looking at the centre, moving to the peripheries? And I think that that's kind of, I guess, one of the issues that I'd kind of like to explore in this kind of panel discussion today. So I think I'll leave it at that and allow Alice to speak.

02:27

Brilliant. Thanks very much, David. For our listeners, this is Alice Stevenson here. I am one of the organizers of the 100 Histories of 100 Worlds project, and I'll be chairing some of the discussion today, along with my colleague, Mirjam Brusius. I want to pick up on your point, David, about shifting centres. I'm thinking how is that then developed in the curatorial voice and display? Because, you know, exhibitions offer this opportunity to present objects and people from diverse contexts as co-present, but if we're trying to aim for something that's decentered, how do we do that in the voice? You know, you've got the limitations of institutional structure and so I'm thinking about authorship, the label is the omnipresent the museum. So, what are kind of some of the strategies to literally have different voices in museums, I wondered if you were any of the other panelists had thoughts on that?

03:30

I think I think—this is Jonathan Fine here, I'm the head of the ethnographic or ethnological museum in Berlin, and also curator for the collections from Africa. I suppose I'm really struck by the strangeness of musealization itself, of sort of putting things in a museum and thinking that it's a good way to tell stories

using objects or through objects. I mean, when I think about the DI boxes, I think about them as extremely strange things that don't really talk much themselves. And when I think about Golda's presentation about !Uros and I hope you'll forgive me the pronunciation of the '!' that it's a kind of object that is incredibly intimate, and would be very strange to be showing in a museum context if it came from a European or North American context, right? I mean, you know, does your grandmother's perfume satchel or potpourri satchel really belong in a museum? And if so, what does that say about who your grandmother was and who you are. So I guess I'm sort of struck less by sort of how we write our way out of the problem of who's talking and why we're talking, then by the question of why do we think that objects in museums are the kind of appropriate medium to talk about different people and different histories and different experiences in the first place? It strikes me that also that it may make sense to not show objects, to withhold objects to prevent people from sort of making the connection between what we call material culture and personal stories in the first place, and maybe we need to back away from an object centred museum practice?

05:40

Can I just jump in here for a second? I'm Mirjam Brusius, I'm one of the co-organizers of this panel. Jonathan now reflected about on what kind of stories actually should be in the museum, and during our workshop in Jamaica, Golda made this very powerful statement that many objects in European storage areas are just numbers, while in Namibia they have meaning. So one question I have for all of you, the curators on the panel, is what should happen with such objects and storage that will never be shown anyway? If they are returned, how can museums display stories of plunder, colonial collecting and repatriation along the lines of what Jonathan just said about what are the stories about the objects that are no longer visible? But then I also wonder, just as Jonathan just did, that dormant knowledge that

Golda, you talked about in your presentations about these objects that you mentioned, that is in a way sacred and private, should that be told in a museum at all?

06:49

I think I'd like to jump in and say that one of the curators from the Central African Museum in Tervuren Bambi Ceuppens said at a Museums Association panel last year, that the problem that confronts many people who work in museums now is that we recognise that the collections that are in the museums probably shouldn't be there in the first place, that in an ideal world, these institutions might not exist. And since that's the case, what kind of ethical responsibilities flow from that? And I mean, I think the first mistake is thinking that one can speak with an authoritative voice about things that are by their nature, not authoritative or don't lend themselves to authoritative interpretation. I think David said that very beautifully when he said it would be difficult for the British Museum to put up a map with contested, difficult and unclear borders. And I think that's the sort of starting point of the problem. Because we accept that peoples tell stories and can tell stories, but we often in institutional contexts attempt to do more than just tell stories, we attempt to tell authoritative stories, stories that are true, and stories that aim to be the kind of last word or a definitive word on a particular subject. And I think that's irrevocably tied to the materiality of the things that we're using to tell the stories. If I say, and Ross is a tortoise shell, I've made a statement and but if, if it's just words, and I don't have the Ross there, then it's words that dissolve in space and air. If as soon as I put a tortoise shell in front of a visit, or or as soon as Golda puts a tortoise shell in front of a visitor or takes a tortoise shell away, that gives those words a different quality, it makes them performative and lends them a weight that they wouldn't otherwise have. So I think I come back to the idea that I like the idea of museums without objects. And I like the idea of

making the object the problem. And I like the idea of thinking, is it possible to think about a museum practice that doesn't depend on the authority of the object to make its points.

09:53

Laura, I see that you want to come in on this point. Laura Osorio is the head of the Santa Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American research at the British Museum, Laura.

10:05

Yeah. All I wanted to add was I agree that, that, you know, the problems with the ways that museums use their collections in exhibitions, particularly, you know, more traditional museums and institutions. But I suppose I think that the problem between let's say, which I spoke, which is in the sense, what you're talking about the problem between the concept, the interpretation and the object, that's but that interpretational space, which has traditionally been the space of the curator, or the space of the institution that has this sort of authoritative, neutral narrative. That's precisely what is interesting, I think, in less conforming exhibitions, that's the space that's interesting to play with because it puts it helps the visitor to put critical stress on the information that has been handed down to them through these kinds of displays over time. So I suppose what I'm trying to say is that, in that sense, do we need to actually subtract the object? Or can or are there ways of using interpretational material, for example, to make to to let the visitor understand that the person who created the project is not unbiased. So for example, I was at a museum recently in Chile, it's a museum that's run by a group of Indigenous communities in the Pewenche which actually has a very problematic political past, because the reason that that museum exists is because the government and the companies that bought that effectively bought slash stole the Indigenous land, in order to create dams in order to create hydroelectric power,

which have obviously served to hugely economically and culturally destabilize these communities, gave the money to the museum and started the museum as a kind of silencing mechanism or reward, in a sense to this community for what they'd done. So, but in any case, the interpreter just to get back to what Alice was saying about the labels as the sense of authorship. Labels are very interesting, because they are obviously written by people from, you know, from those communities. But they, they do something very subtle, which I don't think is necessarily a museological position, but works really well. So for example, they have objects that have belonged to people from the community. So for example, in one case, a basket to carry children on your back, and then it says, this basket belonged to X person, who hadn't used it since his son was one. But of course, there's no timescale on all of this, so you know, when the object was acquired, and you know when the museum was opened, so you can figure out how old it is, but it's all through this sense of life story, rather than, you know, a normal way of dating museum objects. And the choice like that stabilizes the idea of the label as being this kind of all-seeing narrator.

13:40

Yeah, if I, if I can come in here. I think what's useful in this discussion the ideas of the Czech museologist, Zbyněk Stránský's idea that museology is really about the creation of value. So when we're talking about an object list, why are objects being used in the museum because they are being, you know, there's a certain amount of value attached to them, and that materiality makes them you know, something that that a value, you know, a price but also have kind of emotion and symbolic meaning. And I think I think that's also important when thinking about some of the ideas that Heba is putting forward in in her work about the Rosetta Stone, that what isn't being valued in the current interpretations of the Rosetta Stone either in the British Museum galleries or in the History of the World in 100 Objects is either the colonial violence that happened Rashid's or the kind of the work of non-European

translators of hieroglyphs. So in the case of Ibn Wahshiyah, which she puts forward. so I think that's like an interesting thing in terms of what is being contested or fought over. And also what kind of a difference a different history of the world or history of 100 Histories in One Object is kind of playing.

15:13

Just briefly on this point and Heba's presentation, I wondered if you could reflect a bit about Heba's contribution and how that story of colonial resistance and local contributions to knowledge making can be reconciled with the displays that are already out there and that are still committed to this 19th century colonial narrative that identify places like Egypt and Mesopotamia as the cradle of European civilization. So if we had a new display that included, for example, stories such as Heba's, would that mean that we would have to abandon such concepts entirely in order to make space for stories that are told by modern Egyptians such as Heba's story?

16:02

I think you have to ask yourself, why do you need a Rosetta Stone to do that in the first place? I think for me, value production is kind of effective museums and for art museums, it may be a purpose. But for the kind of Museum in which I work at the notion of value is a little more diffused. And I would say, I think I'm confronted less by the question of value production than by the question of the sort of substitution of object for person, and I think that's for me, what what's kind of central in Heba's story is the way in which the Rosetta Stone is thought to speak itself and therefore, it's unnecessary to have the other stories of where it comes from, who translated it and where it's there. I'm not sure that you rescue that position by adding stories, as much as you may rescue that position by subtracting, subtracting objects and resisting the temptation to say, objects speak for people, because when I think about the classic

ethnographic move, the classic ethnographic movement, it may be different in archaeology, well, no, I think it's probably quite similar. The classic ethnographic move is to say, people without writing, that is people who can't tell stories using a written medium, are represented by their material culture, and their material culture does the work of telling the stories that they would have told if they'd had writing and I think, you know, in archaeology, it's the object speaks for the people who are no longer there to speak. So I think we need to get into a kind of subtractive museology, rather than a kind of additive museology.

18:04

Latika, I can see that you'd like to come in on this point. Latika Gupta is a researcher currently working on a project looking at Tibetan Buddhist ritual and material culture in the trans Himalayas, through a fellowship from the Indian foundation of the arts, Latika.

18:20

Particularly I'd like to respond to both you, David and also Jonathan. I think this idea of museology without objects could also be thought about as actually doing away with the iconic object and I think that is where the problem lies. So to think of difficult objects, which don't necessarily then become the singular, whether it's in terms of aesthetic value, or the fact of representing civilizational, sort of grand narratives, but to do away with the iconicity of that. So even if there are objects, and I'm thinking of the trade routes artefacts museum in Kargil, because that's a difficult place. These histories, when they're no longer available to the people in the present, the material culture of a previous time actually becomes very, very empowering, and all the more so because the museum as it's understood, for its sort of legitimizing framework, then serves to have the people reclaim these histories, which otherwise aren't actually allowed the national narratives and here I'm thinking about within the country itself, so really,

to do away with an object centered museology for me would be to do away with an iconic object and this speaks absolutely directly to also Heba's presentation, whether Rosetta Stone in the British Museum becomes the single iconic object, you know.

19:43

Thanks Latika. Maybe this is a good time to bring in Heba into the discussion. Heba Abd el Gawad is a researcher on the Egypt's Dispersed Heritage project together with myself, Alice Stevenson at University College London. Heba has a podcast on the 100 Histories of 100 Worlds in 1 Object website on the Rosetta Stone. So do take a listen to that if you haven't already. Heba over to you.

20:07

What is really my problematic is that for me, the concept of a museum itself is quite Western. This is, it's not something that I can imagine myself, or perhaps maybe members of my family, this wouldn't be how we would want to narrate our story, we wouldn't we would never be placing in around four walls and having sort of panels or discussions, we would, we would usually have some sort of an oral discussion or an oral communication. So to put something instead of the Rosetta, I would perhaps put that is not also to make it as a digital display, but to have some sort of an oral story. that's something that could be equally visually, and also, like an audio and visual mix of people to see the real story of Rashid, as told by the people themselves. I think the question that came for even the Rosetta stone and taking Jonathan's point is how that we need to subtract the stone, that's true, and that's why I was proposing that maybe we should talk about Rosetta, as in the people as in the place with the people. And it stone because sadly, now people only know that there is this point spot called Rosetta that where the stone came from, no one knows anything about the people themselves. But I don't know, it's just I think

that the way that museums are constructed, and the concept of museums itself, is it is in and by itself quite Western like it grew from, like, let's say Ptolemaic Egypt from the Greeks, something that is I don't know, I find it very, I would say very strange, and perhaps something that is very out of context for me, as someone who's Egyptian, or someone from the Middle East, we are not into wandering around spaces, staring at objects, we are into interacting, communicating, having some sort of an interactive communication, to stand and stare to something that would be difficult, and this comes even from the concept of a market, you will never go to a market and you will just settle for the price of anything that is given to you, you will always you will always haggle that that's that's what you do in the Egyptian street or anywhere. So I'm not really sure if I, if I'm into the concept of museums, it's something that is there and we need to work with. I'm not saying that we need to deconstruct all museums in the world. That's not what I'm saying, but we need to be aware that the concept itself of museums are quite exclusive and it's quite Western, and it doesn't really fit with the preferred means of expression or means of communication of the rest of the world. So I'm not sure that this, the displays or the interpretations as they are, could really could really be fixed because at the end of the day, I also have my biases. And whatever I will be proposing would just be representative of just myself. It's it's again, another context story. So perhaps focusing more on how all of the narratives that we could produce are quite personal at the end of the day and emotional if we if we let them be as emotional and personal as they should be moving away from Interpretation Officers, no offence for you, David, but I mean, with less authority and more like openness, I would say.

23:31

Golda, I can see that you've been keen to get in on the discussion for some time now. Golda Ha Eiros is a curator in the Namibian heritage sector and has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, where she's co-curated an exhibition on collaborative research at the Humboldt Forum, Golda.

23:51

Yeah, maybe I could just come in where Heba was talking about museums being a Western concept, and it's actually interesting, because I know taking my younger brother to a museum, and he will say, I think the one time he was like, oh, but this is just like going to the farm, you know? And I explained, yeah, but what we consider as museums is definitely what we see on our farms. The objects that are collected, and that are shown in the museum is definitely what we can find. And, it took me back to how we in Namibia, we package heritage and museum and history, and it seems like we've packaged it for a tourist and it's not inclusive of us, you know, so I was saying that there comes a time where we need to do away with the Western approach and the academia and maybe do something that works for us, you know, if I'm drawn to communication and people and telling stories and connecting with people on that stand and not having to go and look at a basket and not really and wonder, what is the relationship? Or what is the significance of this basket? Or there's no title or story attached to it. So maybe a way for us to have museums is to redetermine the museum to our own understanding, to something that works for us. And yeah, so I think I agree with Heba, but I also feel like, we need to somehow create that connection, especially for the youth so that they do understand why certain things are the way they are, especially today in Namibia and not only see it like this belongs to tourists. So this is for tourists. So I agree, we just need to repackaging it.

25:58

Just a very brief question, actually. Perhaps either Mirjam could reflect on this or anybody else who was there at the Jamaica workshop. One of the most successful museum models and again, they came up from where Golda are left off in terms of making a colonial institution one's own, to be able to not just archive histories but keep difficult histories or questions around them alive, whether Jamaican National Museum is an exhibition that we saw of the Taino people, and their very violent extermination. So I wonder if you could reflect on even that exhibit? And how would with either very little objects or the non-iconic object, they did manage to tell a very difficult story or stories quite effectively.

26:47

I mean, what was very important about Jamaica was locality, and moving away from the museum, from the European museum as a colonial space and kind of relocate the objects to where they were originally from. And what struck me about Golda's presentation and Latika's presentation was also the locality of you know, where you were speaking from, you weren't actually speaking from Europe, you weren't speaking about Europe either. And so one worry I kind of have about the project as we're running it is, whether it's a problem that we kind of recentering the European museum again, because ultimately, it's also about, you know, kind of educating the European public, once again, by producing these news stories, and then it's about Europe again. And so, whereas the whole point of it was that it's not about Europe, so maybe people have some final comments about whether that could be an issue, whether there is potential danger, that this could be the case, and how we can really recentre the object stories by not making it about Europe, again, since we went all the way to Jamaica, how can we avoid sort of travelling back to Europe, or there might be a danger of appropriating the stories again, after the objects were appropriated?

28:19

Yeah, I'd really like to come in here and think about the fact that you know, museology. That there is a difference between, you know, European museology and North North American museology, and that different museologies exists around the world. So within China, the Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong in the 1950s deliberately tried to make a different type of museum to the ethnographic and folklore museum divide, which he saw in Europe where Europeans were represented in folklore museums and non Europeans were represented in ethnographic museums, and so he talked about there being a kind of what was in a nationalities museum, which had the Han majority in China, alongside the ethnic minorities, and that you looked at the material and non-material culture together. Now, Fei Xiaotong's vision for this museum was never really realised the Chinese National Museum of Ethnology still doesn't have a permanent building now and operates as a touring exhibition. But I think there, there are different museologies out there that offer alternative models by which this kind of 100 Histories of 100 Worlds in 1 Object and look to an operate to get away from just the deconstruction of the European museum according to postcolonial narratives.

29:54

If I just may intervene, something that I've been worried about, especially afterwards and in preparing my presentation for this for the panel, and even in writing of the essays, I felt that not only we are a bit recentering in Europe, again, or European museums by perhaps choosing the same objects, but offering, even if we're offering a counter narrative, is the extent to which whatever we're proposing, remains quite academic. And in the sense that, for any, for any of these attempts to be successful, it needs to be actually aimed by the public for more for the people rather than for the academic discourse. Because in the end, this is this is where the real change can come from. It is the public who can push for a true

institutional and structural and knowledge production change. But if we keep on having the same conversations within exactly the same circles, I'm not sure if this will take us any further if we're not be producing another hierarchy, but maybe this one is, like non-Western, but it remains another powerful hierarchy over a narrative that should be by and for the people not really dominated by, by us as academics or as like, curators. I don't know, it's just, it's just a free thought, I don't know.

31:22

I think it's a really valuable one, Heba, and one of the questions that I always have is, you know, in the creation, and David may be able to speak to this and the creation of these, you know, certainly in the British Museum and other places, there is a lot of public consultation. But there's a difference between public consultation and providing the resources on which sort of academic decision, you know, the sorts of the the elements, the collections, history, the alternatives, the means to acquire, you know, the means to have these conversations. And then I think particularly in terms of Egypt, where there is such a strong expectation, the public already seems to know what it wants when it comes to see a display of ancient Egypt. So how do you provide the tools to allow for more critical, you know, the opportunity for the public to engage in critical discussions?

32:18

Can I just come in as a contrarian, not in disagreement with what Heba and you others are saying, but more with the view to problematise the idea of the public, right? What is this mass of people that we're talking about? Are the representatives of the public that are brought in to speak for a country or region or community? For who? What if the, I mean, are we going to then lean towards the majoritarianism, to say that this is the maximum number of people who want something a particular way? How does one

avoid that? So how do we actually just keep things messy? I mean, I, I am in favour of messiness, you know, rather than even to say that, for instance, David, in your response, you had spoken about India and the world and nine stories as a counter to the right wing, ... central sort of government narrative. But for me, it precisely did not do that, because the public response to the exhibition was one of the glory of this country and the cradle of civilizations where everything that is good in the world has its roots in India, and we did it first, we did it at the same time. So I would like to also think about the idea of the public and how those networks are made, how we can keep it as porous as possible. If we really do need to decentre It can't just be about a conversation, which has Europe and America on one side and the rest of the world on the other side. But it has to really, really critically examine and not treat non-Europe, non-America as some sort of pure form of unproblematised knowledge either.

34:13

Maybe one final point to look at very briefly, would be the practical aspect of the object biographies that we're trying to create. We talked about labels earlier, and my understanding was that labels are often about consensus, it's a negotiation process in a museum where you come up with something, you know, where everyone sort of is alright with, but what we trying to create is not consensus, but multiple voices and the argument that stories that there can be multiple stories about objects. So from a practical point of view, no matter whether the object will be around or not. Maybe all the creators on the panel can briefly say how they could actually see these object biographies on display, whether that will be an audio guide or a tour or a label? Do you have ideas about this?

35:16

I think one of the things that we've tried to do in the exhibition that I've worked on with Golda was to multiply, I don't even want to say labels, but sort of texts, and images and information in a kind of in yeah, multiplicative approach rather than attempting to sort of do a label, but to sort of have different information in different forms in different formats around a given object, or around an image of a given object, because I think we're not going to be actually showing objects in their physical instantiation. And I think, and then to sort draw up connections between the different texts, or video clips, or audio clips that allow you to sort of negotiate your own way as someone who's a viewer, or a museum visitor, exploring the object, exploring the views and the stories about the object and exploring the stories that the different people are telling about the things that the object raises for them. So I would I kind of kind of like something a little bit like Marcel Duchamp's *valises* you know, with this sort of images, and things and pictures and texts that don't necessarily form a coherent, unidirectional narrative, but sort of allow a different approach through different ways of knowing about a certain topic or about a certain thing.

36:59

Obviously, that sounds really good, I suppose I personally feel like, and I don't want to sound contrary here, but that, although in theory, providing multiple different voices and different kinds of information around objects around displays, seems like a way to kind of create a plural narrative, I wonder whether for the audience that might come across as just a kind of orgy of information, that that still reinforces this idea that the museum has collected all of this information and owns all of it, and therefore, and is a research space and an educational space. I think that to some extent, that's part of the problem with the identity of the museum. And that's perhaps and I know that this this isn't certainly isn't a solution, because I think this can be also intimidating for audiences, but I feel like sometimes a more creative or

more evocative sort of accompanying, whether it's text or image or whatever, can do something to kind of show, I suppose this is the big question about whether or not contemporary art installation or intervention is useful with collections. But it's, it's sort of to effectively communicate that there that there is no you know, right voice which relates to which is full of knowledge, which relates to the collections, because there of course, lots of different perspectives, which I suppose to some extent fits into what Latika was saying about this idea of the audience, or this idea of the communities that museums collaborate with. And there are always these really, sort of quite complex political relationships underlying how those relationships are built and who is chosen to speak and whose story is being told, and that's something that I think, you know, would be would be interesting to communicate to visitors.

39:16

Yes, perhaps even creating an awareness for the fact that there are different voices that should be speaking. I don't think that audiences are aware of the fact that there isn't a museum voice that is speaking. So problematising that I think that's very important. David, do you want to make a final comment about this?

39:41

Well, yeah, I just put my face on that to try and get some time. Yeah, I think what the original the History the World in 100 Objects managed to do was by not being in the museum space, but being a radio series managed to escape some of those constraints of labels in the gallery space, it didn't have to worry about showing the difficult borders on maps, because it was just a voice, there was no, you know, physical objects kind of there. I think, as well, we can move beyond the label to think about the

exhibitionary discourses that are latent within the kind of the object that we're talking about, you should always go back to whatever locality that's there.

40:26

Thanks, David. I'm going to have to bring the panel to a close now, but I would like to thank all participants for a really stimulating discussion.

40:40

One of the most pertinent questions in our project is how we will actually implement these stories. That set, our panellists just asked some very difficult questions. Firstly, is telling stories through objects actually the way to go? And the museum, as Jonathan argued, does not actually depend on the authority of the object to make its point. So why do we even need a Rosetta Stone to tell a story? We also learned that iconic objects can be really problematic, that objects that store sacred knowledge shouldn't really be retained, and that many of the objects in European museums shouldn't really be there in the first place. So can there be a museum without objects? Perhaps we should subtract objects instead of just adding stories about them. Or perhaps we can make objects the problem of the story. David encouraged us to also rethink how the value of an object is actually created. Secondly, we often hear that objects can speak for themselves. But that's not really true. There's always someone who speaks for them. Laura also questions whether interpretations of objects can be presented as something that is unbiased. There is no fixed interpretation or neutral and knowing voice of the museum. Why should visitors not reflect on this as well, and be invited to think about who's chosen to speak and why? Thirdly, we really need to think about why it is that museums seem to focus so much on objects rather than people. What really matters as you will learn in Heba's podcast are the people of Rashid, not just the Rosetta Stone. So for whom

are museums and also our project speaking, and to whom? For stories to be relevant to the wider public, they must be accessible, but would museums even be the right place for more interactive conversations. Finally, Heba, Latika and Golda rightly reminded us that the concept of museums is itself Western. In Namibia, Golda explained, they are even packaged for tourists. How can local communities make these colonial institutions their own? And how can we avoid recentering the British Museum? These are grand challenges. But thankfully for now, Latika suggested to stick to keeping things messy. There is no actual need for consensus. The question is more how do we move from a static concept of the museum to one that is a process constantly in flux? So instead of just reflecting on how we can change narratives with new approaches, our project will in future podcasts and also in a series of digital world cafes we are planning this year, reflect on alternative models, where the museum itself is not the lone authority and centre. After all, the value of our project is precisely that it exists outside of the museum project, but in conversation with it. I'm Mirjam Brusius. I edited this episode together with Alice Stevenson, who has also produced this podcast. The music you're hearing is played by the band Kwan Pa from Ghana. Thanks to all our panellists and the Association of Critical Heritage Studies for inspiring us to produce this panel discussion. Join us soon for more podcasts of 100 Histories of 100 Worlds in 1 Object.

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