Working on Things (Berlin, 21–22 Nov 16)

Berlin, Nov 21–22, 2016
Registration deadline: Nov 13, 2016

Mareike Vennen

Working on Things. On the Social, Political, and Economic History of Collected Objects
Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum, Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 1/3, 10117 Berlin

Various kinds of work have to be invested in objects before they become worthy of collection, before they can be researched, preserved, and exhibited. Work on the dinosaur skeleton of Brachiosaurus brancai in Berlin's Museum für Naturkunde, for example, extended far beyond the decades of the fossil's preparation in the Museum. This object's history also includes the colonial forced labour on cotton plantations in German East Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century that produced the packing material necessary for transporting the findings to Europe. Such figurations of work across time and space form the focus of the conference: Which materials and what kinds of immaterial labour were necessary to acquire or produce a given object, in order to transport it, examine it, exhibit it, or valuate it? What existing knowledge, and which social, political, and legal conditions characterized this work? What types of materials, tools, or techniques were used?

The conference is part of the research project „Dinosaurs in Berlin. Brachiosaurus brancai as political, scientific and popular icon". It is conceptualised and organised in cooperation with the base project Mobile Objects, Cluster of Excellence Image Knowledge Gestaltung of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Programme

Monday, November 21, 2016

From 9:00 REGISTRATION
9:30–11:00 INTRODUCTION

9:30 Welcome Address
Ina Heumann, Holger Stoecker, Marco Tamborini, Mareike Vennen, Joint Research Project "Dinosaurs in Berlin"

10:00 Keynote Lecture I
Objects in Transit: Commodities and Communication
Jim Secord, University of Cambridge

11:00 Break

11:30–12:50 HIERARCHIES
Chair: Gerd Spittler, Universität Bayreuth

11:30 Hunting, Investigating, and Exhibiting Great Apes. On Working Conditions in Colonial Cameroon and the German Reich, 1890–1926
Britta Lange, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

12:10 Collecting Fossils in Colonial German East Africa. Work and Workers at the Tendaguru Excavation, 1909–1913
Holger Stoecker, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

12:50 Lunch Break

14:00–16:00 GLOBALIZATION
Chair: Anke te Heesen, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

14:00 The Journey of a Man with a Fish: The Life of a Han Dynasty Object in a South Africa Museum
Nicola Kritzinger, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

14:40 'A noble instrument for instruction': Assembling International Collections in the Cambridge Zoological Museum, 1866–1910
Boris Jardine, University of Cambridge

15:20 Excavating at Kuumbi Limestone Cave: Regional and Global Links in East African Prehistory
Felix Chami, University of Dar es Salaam

16:00 Break

16:30–18:00 COMPETITION
Chair: Bärbel Küster, Technische Universität zu Berlin

16:30 Building Dioramas as Socialist Work: Cuban Corals at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, 1965–1975
Manuela Bauche, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

17:10 The Epistemology of Authenticity: Plaster Cast Reproductions in 19th Century Museums
Lukas Rieppel, Brown University, Providence

17:50 Catering at the Grimm-Zentrum

19:30–22:00 FILMWELTEN DES WISSENS
Knochenarbeit. Oder: Dinosauria museologica;
Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Sauriersaal,
Invalidenstr. 43, 10115 Berlin

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

9:00 INTRODUCTION
Irina Podgorny, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Barbara Göbel, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Preußischer Kulturbesitz

9:30 Keynote Lecture II
My Sloane Museum
James Delbourgo, Rutgers University

10:30 Break

11:00–13:00 MANAGEMENT
Chair: Jochen Hennig, Scientific Collections of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

11:00 Working on Photo-Objects: Photographs as Mobile Actors in Archeology, Ethnology, and Art History
Stefanie Klamm, Kunstbibliothek, Petra Wodke, Antikensammlung, both Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz

11:40 Reconstructing the Puzzle: Argentine Theater and Literary Periodicals of the Early 20th Century – Piece by Piece
Peter Altekrüger, Christoph Müller, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut

12:20 Belabouring the Catalogue: Classifi cation Work in the British Museum
Sebastian Felten, Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte Berlin, Rebecca Kahn, King's College London

13:00 Break

14:00–16:30 VALUATION
Chair: Anja Schwarz, Universität Potsdam

14:00 Transporting the Tropics: Collecting and Preserving the Victorian Botanical Empire
Elaine Ayers, Princeton University

14:40 The Rhino Horn in the 21st Century: Collecting, Storing, and (not) Displaying
Nicky Reeves, University of Glasgow

15:20 Break

15:40 Economies of Collecting, Transporting, Conserving and Exhibiting Natural History Objects in the Ottoman Natural History Museum 1835–1850
Semih Çelik, European University Institute, Florence

16:20–17:00 FINAL DISCUSSION
Comments: Irina Podgorny, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Barbara Göbel, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Preußischer Kulturbesitz

REGISTRATION (closing date November 13, 2016):

https://hu.berlin/workingonthings

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Reference:

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