

Edited volume: The Future of the Dutch Colonial Past

Deadline: Dec 1, 2021

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The Future of the Dutch Colonial Past (Amsterdam University Press, 2022)

The Amsterdam Museum, in collaboration with various key partners, is seeking submissions for an upcoming peer-reviewed publication on the topic of Dutch colonial heritage in the context of the present. This publication will build on the symposium by the same title that will take place in Amsterdam on November 26th and 27th, 2021, The Future of the Dutch Colonial Past. Besides the contributions originating from this symposium, the publication aims to include six additional essays from upcoming and established scholars and practitioners in the international field of Dutch colonial heritage. The goal is to compile a topical and polyvocal reader which offers a critical overview of recent developments in dealing with the Dutch colonial past in heritage institutions, archives, and academia, as well as insight into future developments.

Theme

The Netherlands has seen many recent examples of cultural institutions addressing the Dutch colonial past, its legacies, and afterlives. Museums are dedicating exhibitions to similar themes and incorporating present-day perspectives, such as Slavery (Rijksmuseum), Aan de Surinaamse grachten (Museum van Loon), and The Golden Coach (Amsterdam Museum). In 2020 the government-commissioned report Colonial Collections and Recognition of Injustice was published, which stated that the government should show a willingness to return looted colonial art. Research projects such as the Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (PPOCE) and Pressing Matters: Ownership, Value and the Question of Colonial Heritage in Museums address the methodology and execution of provenance research, from which concrete steps towards restitution and redress can be taken. From the archive to artistic practices and public space, a reckoning with the Dutch colonial past is simultaneously taking place in different areas. Not just heritage objects, but the knowledge, symbols, and language that we work with today are subject to a re-evaluation.

Symposium and publication

The symposium is aimed at confronting this deep-rooted prevalence of the Dutch colonial past in our present-day cultural and academic practices. The publication will expand the exploration of the questions posed during the symposium, through which we seek to connect the approaches of cultural institutions, artists, and academics in order to further the collective conversation and turn it into tangible results. Though the initial focus is directed at the Dutch context, it is evident that the Dutch colonial past connects to multiple international contexts and has influenced cultural and academic institutions worldwide. We therefore invite contributions that connect to the Dutch

colonial past in a multiplicity of ways. Contributions from writers who are based in Indonesia, the Dutch Caribbean, and Suriname, as well as Africa and Asia, are highly sought after, in addition to writers in other international contexts who see a connection between their academic, curatorial, or artistic practice and the Dutch colonial past (in the present). We encourage contributors to refrain from writing practice-based articles, but instead to use a broad, reflexive approach towards curatorial and artistic practices, methodologies, and policies. How does your practice relate to broader societal developments, institutions, and power structures, and what are the takeaways for future research?

Amsterdam Museum and the Golden Coach exhibition

The Amsterdam Museum is the key organising partner of this symposium. By putting this subject on the agenda, it aims to take its own practice as an object of analysis. The symposium follows the museum's major exhibition *The Golden Coach* (June 18, 2021 – February 27, 2022). The exhibition reflects on the Golden Coach, a widely discussed object that has been loaned to the museum by the Royal Collections of the Netherlands. The carriage was gifted to the Dutch queen, Wilhelmina, for her inauguration in 1898, and until recently it has been used annually by the royal family on Prince's Day, as well as for weddings and other ceremonies. It has become contested heritage, partially due to the romanticized depiction of the Dutch colonies on the panels on one side of the carriage. The exhibition features a multiplicity of voices and perspectives on the carriage, both current as well as historical, and also gives insight into the shifting social and political contexts of Amsterdam from the late 18th century until today. With an extensive public program and a large-scale research project, the Amsterdam Museum aims to facilitate a public dialogue on a national level regarding contested heritage and identities.

In 2019 the museum initiated a public discussion on the use of the term "Golden Age." After years of New Narratives programmes and numerous discussions with different communities, this was a logical next step in the process of removing invisible societal barriers and promoting inclusiveness. The intense national and international discussion that followed taught the museum the importance of talking and listening to one another. These conversations may cause friction along the way, but can eventually create connection and understanding. In order to stimulate this debate, the museum involved people from all over the Netherlands in the research project on the Golden Coach from an early stage. It did this by setting up a public study room, a traveling installation that poses questions to people on the street about the Golden Coach, a quantitative national research project, a programme of events to accompany the exhibition, and a consulting collaboration with a sounding board group, and by including reflections by contemporary artists on the current debate. The focus has been on an interdisciplinary and polyvocal methodology, where dialogue and the exchange of ideas and opinions has been central.

The practices applied within this particular project, in connection with all the other initiatives which are currently taking place in the wider Dutch context, in which the questioning of Dutch colonial heritage is the focus, motivate the necessity of this publication. What meaning will we assign to Dutch colonial heritage in future cultural and academic institutions and their practices?

We are interested in the following themes:

- Repair and Redress
- Iconoclasm: Toppling Statues, Changing Street Names, Challenging Dominant Narratives

- Curating Contested Heritage
- Decoloniality in Academic Research, Activism, and Artistic Practice
- Artistic Practices and Reflections
- Rereading the Archive

Contributions should reflect on, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- In what ways do contemporary cultural practices within, on the margins of, and outside institutions contribute to shaping and establishing new narratives concerning the Dutch colonial past?
- What challenges do you face in an institution's reckoning with the colonial past, and what solutions do you propose within your field or practice?
- What recent developments in artistic/academic/curatorial practices have made key changes to the context in which you operate, and how do these reflect grappling with the (Dutch) colonial past?
- What does decolonizing mean in the context of your practice?

Deadline for submissions: December 1, 2021

Please submit an abstract of max. 300 words along with your CV to Rowan Stol (r.stol@amsterdammuseum.nl).

Deadline for a first version of your full essay: February 28, 2022

The total word count for full essay submissions should be 5,000–6,000, including references.

The book will be published in September 2022

Editorial board: Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, Imara Limon, Wayne Modest, and Margriet Schavemaker.

Reference:

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