Cowrie Shells and Critical Fabulation (Oldenburg, 4–5 Mar 27)

Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg, Mar 4–05, 2027
Registration deadline: Dec 1, 2026

Louise Adams

Cowrie Shells and Critical Fabulation – Collaborative Narratives in and out of the Archive.

We warmly invite you to participate in our collaborative and reflective workshop focused on sensitive heritage held at the Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg as part of a research project on cowrie shells.

During the workshop, participants will encounter a selection of cultural belongings, most of which were taken in colonial contexts, primarily from Tanzania. Together, we will examine catalogue records, provenance data, and archival descriptions to identify gaps, biases, and missing perspectives within museum documentation. Drawing on Saidiya Hartman's concept of critical fabulation, we will engage with the limits of institutional records, which are often incomplete, silent, or shaped by colonial perspectives.
Reflecting on these archival absences, participants will have the opportunity to creatively imagine possible histories, meanings, contexts, and trajectories.

Confirmed guest speakers and collaborators are Alma Simba (Justus Liebig University Gießen) and Matthew Hansen (SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin). The programme further includes tickets for the performances of the artists Khaleb Brooks and Ludomir Franczak at the Spielraum of the State Theatre in Oldenburg on 4th March. Both artists will also take part in the workshop.

The workshop is open to anyone interested in critically engaging with colonial history, archives, creative curation, and/or with an interest in cowrie shells. To sign up for the workshop, please send an email stating briefly why you would like to participate to Louise Adams (kontakt@prosadi.de).

Programme

Thu, 04th March
Location: Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch

09:45-10:15
Arrival, Registration

10:15-11:00
Welcome & Introduction

11:00-11:30
Critical Address: Displaced Cultural Belongings and Colonial Contexts
Speaker: Alma Simba

11:30-12:30
Revisiting Cultural Belongings at the Oldenburg Museum
Speaker: Jennifer Tadge

12:30-13:30
Lunch Break with Catering

13:30-15:00
Workshop Session: Archival Analysis
Facilitators: Matthew Hansen, Louise Adams, Fiona Möhrle

EVENT: ARTIST APPROACHES TO COLONIAL ARCHIVES
18:30
Location: Spielraum, Staatstheater Oldenburg

Live Performances:
- AFTER FIRE COMES THE RAIN - Khaleb Brooks
- GUTTA - Ludomir Franzcak

Fri, 5th March
Location: Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch

10:00-11:00
Registration & Warm Up

11:00-12:30
Workshop Session: Critical Fabulation
Facilitators: Matthew Hansen, Louise Adams, Fiona Möhrle

12:30-13:30
Lunch Break with Catering

13:30-15:30
Group Presentations/Reflections

15:30-16:00
Wrap Up

https://prosadi.de/

Reference:
CONF: Cowrie Shells and Critical Fabulation (Oldenburg, 4-5 Mar 27). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 26, 2026 (accessed Nov 27, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/58057>.