

Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts German Museums Association publishes guidelines

Berlin, 23. April 2021

The German Museums Association publishes the final version of the guidelines "Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts". It supports museums working with their colonial legacy and starting a transparent and constructive dialogue about it - both nationally and internationally. The publication is available in German, English and French.

Over a four-year work process, the guidelines were developed by an interdisciplinary working group led by Prof. Dr. Wiebke Ahrndt, Director of the Übersee-Museum Bremen. The guidelines are now published in the third and final version. Enriched by contributions from colleagues from Alaska, Australia, New Zealand and Tanzania, the guide also includes international perspectives.

German Minister of Culture Prof. Monika Grütters explains: "To responsibly handle cultural goods from the countries of origin is of great importance for the honest discussion of the German colonial past. I would like to thank those responsible at the German Museums Association, for the fact that the German museums with the new guidelines have a practice-oriented tool for the care of their collections. An open attitude towards possible repatriations and a forward-looking, respectful understanding with the societies of origin are decisive here."

Prof. Dr. Wiebke Ahrndt explains: "The work process on the guidelines was designed to be transparent and open-ended from the start. The guidelines were carefully discussed with experts from 11 societies of origin to ensure that their perspective is included. International colleagues had the opportunity to actively participate in the revision of the texts through contributions, reviews or statements."

The guidelines, supported by the German Minister of Culture, offer practical working tools for caring for objects from colonial contexts and for working with societies of origin. The publication is aimed at all German museums, since collections from colonial contexts can be found not only in ethnological museums, but in almost all museums. The guide also serves as an information base on the subject of "Colonialism and Museums" – for German museum workers as well as for international colleagues, political decisionmakers and representatives of post-colonial initiatives and diasporic communities.

With the published guidelines, the German Museums Association is calling on Public funding agencies and cultural politicians to support museums in further implementing measures to come to terms with our colonial past. "The reappraisal of the colonial heritage is a necessary task for museums. This can only succeed if the museums are provided with the appropriate resources by the sponsors so that the museums are able to carry out their fundamental tasks, which include provenance research and digitization," emphasizes Prof. Dr. Eckart Köhne, President of the German Museums Association.

The guideline is accompanied by an e-reader. The online publication complements the guide by including practical examples, guidelines and legal regulations. It gives museum workers a comprehensive insight into working with collections from colonial contexts, in Germany and internationally.

The guidelines and the e-reader are available in German, English and French. Order and download at: museumbund.de/colonialism

Media contact

Deutscher Museumsbund e. V.
In der Halde 1, 14195 Berlin
Tel.: 030 - 84 10 95 17
office@museumbund.de
museumbund.de