

Transcultural relations and colonial legacies. Restitution beyond objects, cultural memory and digital mediation

**International Hybrid Conference | 5 – 7 May 2026
Zeppelin University | Germany**

On-Site Programme

Concept and thematic focus

The international conference will engage in a critical discussion on transcultural relations and colonial legacies by presenting diverse perspectives from Europe and Africa. With three interconnected thematic areas, the international conference will examine how collaborations across regions can grow from shared interests and reciprocal recognition of distinct histories, knowledge traditions and experiences:

- (1) The central aim is to rethink African cultural heritage and colonial legacies through decentering transcultural relations, cultural policy and soft power. Here the focus lies on restitution beyond the return of objects, addressing immaterial dimensions and processes of decolonisation by taking the examples of the Asante regalia (Ghana) and photographs as colonial propaganda (Togo).
- (2) The second thematic strand expands the discussion towards community-centred and pluriversal memory cultures by examining how diaspora communities articulate claims to memory and restitution, how spiritual artefacts sustain communal knowledge, and how curatorial practices negotiate these plural frameworks.
- (3) In the field of digital mediation, decolonial digital practices and digital memory and counter-histories as practices of resistance will be discussed. The use of Augmented Reality (AR) as a digital tool for critical mediation of memory cultures between Africa and Europe will be presented.

The inputs and discussions will connect situated experiences and invite participants to consider how different histories, experiences and practices shape transcultural relations and create spaces for mutual learning and shared responsibility in the cultural field.

The international conference is part of the two years project “Reframing Colonial Legacies”, co-organised by Zeppelin University and the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). It brings together a group of academics and cultural actors from Europe and Africa to share perspectives gained through the project and to open these reflections to dialogue with the wider public, researchers, cultural practitioners and institutions working in related contexts.

The conference will take place from 5 to 7 May 2026 in a hybrid format at Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen, Germany to ensure inclusive participation and strengthen exchange across different geographic, institutional and linguistic realities.

Participation is available both online and on-site.

Programme

Tuesday 05/05/2026 | 1.08 | hybrid format

10:00–11:30 **Welcome and thematic opening**

**Decentering transcultural relations, cultural policy and soft power.
Otherwise perspectives from Africa and Europe**

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Meike Lettau | Zeppelin University

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eric Debrah Otchere | University of Cape Coast

Dr. Özlem Canyürek | Zeppelin University

Dr. Madinatu Bello | University of Cape Coast

11:30–12:00 **COFFEE AND TEA BREAK**

12:00–13:00 **Keynote** (online)

**Reclaiming looted heritage through legal decolonisation and the
restitution of Asante Regalia to Ghana**

Prof. Dr. Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel | University of Education, Winneba

13:00–14:30 **LUNCH BREAK**

14:30–16:00 **Community-centred and pluriversal memory cultures** (in person)

**Heritage, memory, and identity: The Ethiopian diaspora in the UK
and the politics of looted heritage**

Dr. Fisseha Fantahun Tefera | University of Gothenburg

**The collective memory of Ewe-communities in West Africa regarding
colonial collections of their spiritual artefacts**

Dr. Kodzo Abotsi | University of Lomé

Responsibility in heritage photogrammetry

Dr. Jens Fehrenbacher | University of Bonn

16:00–16:30 **Campus tour**

Wednesday 06/05/2026 | 1.07 | in person

- 10:00–11:00 **Alumni working session: Collective futures of Reframing Colonial Legacies**
facilitated by participating alumni and RCL team
- 11:00–11:15 **COFFEE AND TEA BREAK**
- 11:15–12:00 **Networking presentations**
Prof. Dr. Ernst Wagner | Exploring Visual Cultures
Dr. Anika Becher | Africa Centre for Transregional Research
- 12:00–13:30 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 13:30–14:30 **Alumni working session: Collective futures of Reframing Colonial Legacies**
facilitated by participating alumni and RCL team
- 15:00–16:00 **Restitution work and memory culture in today's museums: Excursion to Zeppelin Museum & Guided tour**

Thursday 07/05/2026 | 1.07 | hybrid format

- 10:00–11:30 **Decolonising the digital space (online)**
Digital colonialism: Cultural mediation and Northern hegemony in contemporary digital spaces
Dr. Alasambom Nyingchuo | University of Bamenda
Uneasy coordinates: Reframing colonial geographies in the PAESE database
Nnenna Onuoha | Harvard University and University of Potsdam
Student reflections on AR experience from the Ghana study trip
Till Gerasch | Zeppelin University
- 11:30–12:00 **COFFEE AND TEA BREAK**
- 12:00–13:00 **Participatory memory practices (in person)**
Held in practice: Sound, community, and participatory memory in the context of creative economies in Africa and in the diaspora
Jack D. Mensah | Artist and independent researcher
Unfolded mountains
Javier Estupiñán | Artist and independent researcher
- 13:00–14:30 **LUNCH BREAK**



18:00–19:30 **Panel discussion | Colman Forum (in person)**
African cultural heritage as a decolonial practice

Harriet Nana Akua Agyapong | University of Ghana

Prof. Dr. Ernst Wagner | Exploring Visual Cultures (tbc)

Dr. Richard Legay | Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut Freiburg (ABI) | University of Göttingen

Moderators: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eric Debrah Otchere | University of Cape Coast
and Jun.-Prof. Meike Lettau | Zeppelin University

Convenors

Jun.-Prof. Meike Lettau | Zeppelin University

Assoc. Prof. Eric Debrah Otchere | University of Cape Coast

Dr. Özlem Canyürek | Zeppelin University

Dr. Madinatu Bello | University of Cape Coast

Team

Kamila Brugger | Zeppelin University

Lars Linnenbürger | Zeppelin University

Lilli Kim Schreiber | Zeppelin University

Till Gerasch | Zeppelin University

Speakers

Dr. Alasambom Nyingchuo | University of Bamenda

Dr. Anika Becher | Africa Centre for Transregional Research | University of Freiburg

Prof. Dr. Ernst Wagner | Exploring Visual Cultures

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Africa Centre
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Funder

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