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Representing African Art and Cultures (SER54)

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Senri Ethnological
Reports

54

SYMPOSIUM AFRICA 2001

**Representing African
Art and Cultures**

Edited by

Yukiya Kawaguchi

Kenji Yoshida

**National Museum of Ethnology
Osaka 2005**

Senri Ethnological Reports

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CONTENTS

Preface	i
PART I Art, Museums, Biennales: Some Questions from Africa	
Objects and Agendas After the Banquet: African Art since 1989 Yukiya KAWAGUCHI	3
Session 1 How Do Africans Evaluate a General Increase of the World's Interest in Contemporary African Art since the 90s ?	
African Art in the New Millennium: From the Playground of Fancy to the Promised Land Krydz C. IKWUEMESI	9
Comments	
Masahiro USHIROSHOJI	19
Kenji YOSHIDA	22
Discussion	25
Session 2 On Biennales: Through Art, Who Represents What for What?	
Secular Sacrilege: The Space of Representation in <i>Graft</i> , 2nd Johannesburg Biennale Colin RICHARDS	33
Comments	
Yukio TOYODA	45
Kazuo YAMAWAKI	47
Discussion	51
Session 3 (General Discussion) Art and Africa in the 21st Century: Seeking for the Possibilities of Mutual Representation	59
Coordinator Yukiya KAWAGUCHI	

PART II Representing “African” Art and Cultures: A Review through African Eyes

Objects and Agendas	New Attempts in Art and Cultural Exhibitions on Africa	
	Kenji YOSHIDA	75
Session 1	A New Attempt in Cultural Exhibition: The Smithsonian’s Challenge	
	<i>African Voices: A Dynamic Collaboration between the Museum and Its Communities</i>	
	Mary Jo ARNOLDI	79
	Comments	
	Jerry BUHARI	93
	Shoichiro TAKEZAWA	98
	Discussion	101
Session 2	A New Attempt in Art Exhibition: From the <i>Seven Stories</i> Exhibition	
	Representing African Art: A Challenge by the Exhibition <i>Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa</i>	
	Everlyn NICODEMUS	107
	Comments	
	David KOLOANE	123
	Mayako ISHIKAWA	127
	Discussion	129
Session 3	(General Discussion) Towards New Ways of Exhibiting “Africa”	135
	Coordinators	
	Kenji YOSHIDA	
	Yukiya KAWAGUCHI	
	Program of the Symposium AFRICA 2001	149
	List of Participants	154

Part I

Art, Museums, Biennales: Some Questions from Africa

Part II

Representing “African” Art and Cultures: A Review through African Eyes

Program

Symposium AFRICA 2001

Tokyo Symposium

Art, Museum, Biennales: Some Questions from Africa
on Nov. 3, 2001 at the Japan Foundation Forum

Osaka Workshop

**Representing “African” Art and Cultures:
A Review through African Eyes**
on Nov. 10, 2001 at the JICA Osaka International Center

Symposium AFRICA 2001

Tokyo Symposium

Art, Museums, Biennales: Some Questions from Africa

1. Date: Nov. 3, 2001
2. Place: The Japan Foundation Forum²
3. Organized by:
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Japan Foundation,
The Setagaya Art Museum
4. Under the auspices by:
Africa Society of Japan, Minzoku Geijutu Gakkai (Society for Ethno-Arts)
5. Aim:

Today, the basis for art and the constructs surrounding it such as museums and biennales, are being eroded. Since the middle of the 80s, problems arising from these constructs have been discussed. For instance, criticism has arisen over the way in which museum exhibitions display the "other" through a one-sided representation. Furthermore, in the 90s with *Les Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition acting as a catalyst, contemporary art from Africa, Asia, and Oceania has come under close scrutiny. A growing interest in these formerly marginalized areas, has paradoxically brought attention to a structure based on a Western modernist history.

However, unfortunately, in many cases these discussions have often failed to take into full account the voices of the party concerned, in particular the viewpoint of Africa. With the invitation of art specialists from Africa, as part of the cultural exchange program by the Japanese government, we would like to take this opportunity to hold a symposium in Tokyo and Osaka to hear the viewpoint of Africa and foster a dialogue between specialists from Africa and Japan.

The Tokyo Symposium titled "Art, Museums, Biennales: Some Questions from Africa" will be based on reports and propositions from Africa and the participants will discuss issues on art and the constructs surrounding it and visions for the future.

The aim of the organizers is to foster a deeper understanding between Africa and Japan as well as seeking possibilities for a new interpretation of civilization in the 21st century.

6. Program

- 10:00–10:10 Welcome Speech by the Organizer
- 10:10–10:30 Background of the Symposium
Yukiya KAWAGUCHI
- 10:30–12:30 Session 1 How Do Africans Evaluate a General Increase of the
World's interest in Contemporary African Art in 90s ?
- Presentation by Krydz C. IKWEMESI
African Art in the New Millennium: From the Playground
of Fancy to the Promised Land
- Comments by Masahiro USHIROSHOJI
Kenji YOSHIDA
- Discussion
- 13:30–15:30 Session 2 On Biennales: Through Art, Who Represents What
for What?
- Presentation by Colin RICHARDS
Secular Sacrilege: The Spectre of Representation in *Graft*,
2nd Johannesburg Biennale
- Comments by Yukio TOYODA
Kazuo YAMAWAKI
- Discussion
- 16:00–18:00 Session 3 General Discussion
Art and Africa in the 21st Century: Seeking for the
Possibilities of Mutual Representaion
- Coordinated by Yukiya KAWAGUCHI
Briefing the Domestic Environment of Each Country
- 18:00–19:30 Reception

Symposium AFRICA 2001

Osaka Workshop

Representing “African” Art and Cultures: A Review through African Eyes

1. Date: November 9 (Fri)–10 (Thu)
2. Place: Osaka International Center, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
3. Organized by:
 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
 - The Japan Foundation
 - National Museum of Ethnology
 - Osaka International Center, Japan International Cooperation Agency
4. Under the auspices by: Minzoku Geijutsu Gakkai (Society for Ethno-Arts)
5. Aim:

During the last two decades, one-sided displays of “other cultures” have been strongly questioned, and museum curators are now trying a variety of new approaches.

In December 1999, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History celebrated the opening of the new permanent exhibition of African history and cultures. The exhibition, entitled *African Voices*, is noteworthy in that it was developed with substantial input of African and African American voices.

How to embody *African Voices* is also at issue in the field of art exhibition. The exhibition *Seven Stories about modern art in africa*, which was held at Whitechapel Art Gallery in London in 1995, was a milestone in the history of representation of African art in Europe; it was curated by five African curators although the whole was co-ordinated by an European curator.

The Japan Foundation has invited eleven African artists and art historians to Japan for the purpose of promoting cultural exchange. By taking this opportunity, we are going to hold the workshop in Osaka on “Representing ‘African’ Art and Cultures.” The Aim of the workshop is to find our new and more appropriate way of representing African art and cultures by examining the above mentioned challenging exhibition projects.

We do hope this workshop will help us to gain fresh insights into issues of cultural representation in museums, and thus further mutual understanding between African countries and Japan.

6. Program

- 10:00–10:10 Opening Remarks
Naomichi ISHIGE
- 10:10–10:30 Objects and Agendas
Kenji YOSHIDA
- 10:30–12:30 Session 1 A New Attempt in Cultural Exhibition:
The Smithsonian’s Challenge
- Presentation by Mary Jo ARNOLDI
 *African Voices: A Dynamic Collaboration between the
 Museum and Its Communities*
 Comments by Jerry BUHARI
 Shoichiro TAKEZAWA
- Discussion
- 13:30–15:30 Session 2 A New Attempt in Art Exhibition:
From the *Seven Stories* Exhibition
- Presentation by Everlyn NICODEMUS
 Representing African Art: A Challenge by the Exhibition
 Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa
 Comments by David KOLOANE
 Mayako ISHIKAWA
- Discussion
- 15:45–17:45 Session 3 General Discussion
Towards New Ways of Exhibiting “Africa”
- Coordinated by Kenji YOSHIDA and Yukiya KAWAGUCHI
 Proposals by Margaret NAGAWA
 Chipo SIMUNCHEMBU
 Oussouby SACKO
- Discussion
- 18:00–19:30 Reception

List of Participants

Part I Tokyo Symposium

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Senri Ethnological Reports (Recent Issues)

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- No.52 Cultural Heritage of the Nivkhi: Ethnological Collections in Museums in Japan (2004; Chuner Mikhailovich Taksami, in Russian)
- No.51 Current Status and Issues of Cultural Heritage Management and Tourism (2004; ed. Noriaki Nishiyama, in Japanese)
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- No.41 The Twentieth Century in Mongolia: Interviews About the Way to Socialism (2003; ed. Yuki Konagaya; in Japanese)
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