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## IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

SAVE THE DATE: CARMAH Conference Now, to the Future! Transforming Museums and Heritage, Berlin, 11-12 June 2020

New research project Curating Digital Images: Ethnographic Perspectives on the Affordances of Digital Images in Heritage and Museum Contexts

The end of the semester...

CARMAH Reflections and Publications

Goodbyes and Welcomes

CARMAH at Museums and the Work of Reconciliation and Remembrance, 9-11 May 2019, Jewish Museum Berlin

Upcoming CARMAH Presentations, Talks, Workshops....

## SAVE THE DATE:

***CARMAH Conference Now, to the Future! Transforming Museums and Heritage, Berlin, 11-12 June 2020***

What are the most significant transformations underway in museums and heritage? What still needs addressing? And what are the most promising ways of changing museums and heritage to do so in the future?

This CARMAH conference looks at key social, political and technological challenges for museums and heritage. Calls to decolonise museums, ambitions to diversify gallery spaces and attempts to embrace new media in traditional curatorial practise, are just some of these. What are museums and heritage doing about them? Where are the limits and aggravations, and where is the untapped potential?

The conference brings together wide-ranging expertise and international commentators to address these. It draws on the findings of the major research project, [Making Differences – Transforming Museums and Heritage in the 21st Century](#). The conference will take place on 11-12 June 2020 in Berlin. Please save the date!

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## New research project

### *Curating Digital Images: Ethnographic Perspectives on the Affordances of Digital Images in Heritage and Museum Contexts*

CARMAH will host the DFG-funded project “Curating Digital Images”! The project is located within the frame of the DFG priority programme “Das digitale Bild” / “The Digital Image” and focusses on ethnographic research on practices of digital curation related to the field of museums and heritage. It brings the competencies of CARMAH - with its main applicants being Christoph Bareither and Sharon Macdonald - together with perspectives and approaches of media and digital anthropology as well as information science, with Elke Greifeneder as the project's co-applicant. The empirical core of the project consists of two interconnected ethnographic studies, both focussing on the curation practices of laypeople: the first study examines how the users of digital image archives actually view, search, sort, alter and creatively rearrange these images and for what purposes; the second study concentrates on the digital image practices and social media activity of museum and heritage visitors, which become an integral aspect of the emotional and aesthetic experiences related to the visit. Besides the empirical insights (which are valuable for academic researchers and practitioners in the field alike), the project will make a significant contribution to the conceptual and theoretical debates of the DFG priority programme regarding the digital image. From an ethnographic perspective, the particularities of the digital image – and therefore its theory – can only be understood in relation to the practices enacting such images. Thus, the question “What is the digital image?” is not to be answered by theory and by examination of the images alone but is, crucially, about their lives in use.

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## The end of the semester...



We look back at a semester full of concerted energies with wonderful events, exchanges and experiments. A few exciting examples below.

This semester, CARMAH started to open up its weekly informal [research meetings](#). We discussed with, amongst others, Jonathan Bach, Diana Young, Damani Patridge, Philipp Schorch, and Afonso Ramos Dias. [Debbie Onouha](#) organised a fascinating programme for [CARMAH Kino](#) every two weeks, interrogating relations between museums and heritage. [Christine Gerbich](#) and [Chiara Garbellotto](#) brought together museum professionals and scholars in the [Museumslabor](#). Don't hesitate to contact us if you're interested in joining the upcoming CARMAH events, information on the upcoming semester's programme will be posted under the rubric CARMAH Activities page soon.

Chiara Garbellotto organised [ODDKIN°labs](#) with Sina Ribak, which are prototype workshops that explore the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin by questioning objects, spaces and narratives with a transdisciplinary approach. They respond to the ecofeminist call for crafting new modes of co-living in our damaged planet from the coordinates of a natural history museum, a fertile place where to nurture and follow unexpected relations.

In July, Jonas Tinius was in conversation with artist Nora Al-Badri on 'Restitution and Technoheritage' at the ifa-gallery in Berlin, a recording of which is available [here](#). He was also invited to speak on 'Authenticity, Objects, and Migration' at the Annual Symposium in Phenomenology in Perugia (Italy).

Duane Jethro was invited to present at the Conference of the Council of European Studies, in [a symposium](#) which centred the national and transnational troubling and traction generated by these categories in Europe. Discussing the contested renaming of M\_hrenstrasse Berlin, Duane Jethro's paper raised the relevance of race for understanding debates about the national past in Germany. At the [Anthropology of Race and Ethnology](#) Meeting, '[Decolonizing European Anthropology?](#)' in Leiden (NL), Duane Jethro discussed embodied difference and reflexivity as a method for troubling fixed notions in the anthropological research enterprise. He also comes on board as a new network convenor.

Alice von Bieberstein participated in the conference [Monstrous Ontologies: Politics Ethics Materiality](#) in London, where she presented a paper on 'Ghoulish objects, charnel grounds: on death and monstrosity'. In Berlin, she participated in the workshop '[Beyond Trauma? A Transregional Perspective on Trauma and Aesthetics](#)' with a paper on 'Aesthetics of Denial'.

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## CARMAH Reflections and Publications



Image Harriet Merrow, Jonas Tinius at Anthropology, Art, and Alterity

Our [Reflections page](#) continues to grow. You can consult a report [on our ongoing research](#) within the [Making Differences](#) research project. Our guest Diana Young also contributed to Reflections with a text on [Berlin Street Ecologies](#).

[Sharon Macdonald](#) discussed how museums forget in [Wie Museen vergessen – Sieben Weisen](#) for the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, and [reviewed two recent monographs](#) on Creationist Museums in the USA for JRAI.

[Jonas Tinius](#) published experimental and fragmentary 'Fieldnotes' on aspects of his research with the gallery Wedding, which is part of the catalogue [Post-Otherness Wedding / Unsustainable Privileges. Galerie Wedding – Space for Contemporary Art Berlin](#), edited by Solvej Helweg Ovesen and Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung. Bielefeld / New York: Kerber.

Duane Jethro reflected on [the Commemoration Service on the Occasion of the third Repatriation of Human Remains from former German South-West Africa on the 29th of August 2018 at Französische Friedrichstadtkirche](#), Berlin, published online, *Material Religion*.

Sharon Macdonald wrote about [Reframing Islam in the “Refugee Crisis”?](#), *Material Religion*, 15(3).

Alice von Bieberstein (with Corinna Trogisch, and Steffen Käthner) alerts to the conditions of doing research in Turkey in [Was kommt danach? Solidarität mit bedrohten Wissenschaftler\\*innen in und aus der Türkei](#), *Forum Wissenschaft* 19(1).

Jonas Tinius organised a conference at HKW on ‘[Anthropology, Art, and Alterity](#)’ with speakers including Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Martin Holbraad, Bonaventure Ndikung, Nora Sternfeld, and others. The video recordings of this three-day event have now been [made available online](#) and can be watched in the HKW Mediathek. Watch the [introduction](#) and [other recordings](#) here.

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## Goodbyes and Welcomes

This semester brought some changes in our research team: Larissa Förster is leaving CARMAH's Making Differences: Transforming Museums

and Heritage project - funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation under Sharon Macdonald's Professorship - for new ventures at the German Lost Art Foundation, whereas Duane Jethro and Tal Adler join the project.

An artist and researcher, **Tal Adler** will work with colleagues in the Humboldt Labor – the Humboldt University's exhibition-space in the Humboldt Forum – to develop an innovative exhibit exploring questions of difficult heritage in relation to objects in the University collections.

As a CARMAH post-doctoral research fellow, **Duane Jethro**'s work continues to explore contested resonances of the post-colonial in Berlin manifest in urban space and religious dynamics that arise in and around the Humboldt Forum.

We are delighted that Larissa Förster has secured a highly significant post at the German Lost Art Foundation, where she heads the newly established **Department for Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts**. This builds on her two and a half years' work while a full-time postdoc at CARMAH, during which she investigated the nexus between German colonialism and the history of German (ethnographic) museums, and chronicled the current restitution/repatriation debate and explored the history and theory of (postcolonial) 'provenance'. See her co-edited **book for download** and **CARMAH's Media Review, which Larissa initiated**. In her new post she will further develop the field of postcolonial provenance research and will develop practical applications of this knowledge for museums. We look forward to continuing collaboration with Larissa, in her role as Associate Member of CARMAH, and welcome that she will offer courses in her area of expertise in the Institute of European Ethnology's MA course.



All images Tal Adler

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**CARMAH at Museums and the Work of Reconciliation and Remembrance, 9-11 May 2019, Jewish Museum Berlin**





Image Tal Adler

For this closed two day symposium Prof. Pamela Klassen (Toronto) and Monique Sheer (Tübingen) set up a series of workshop sessions that brought together scholars, heritage professionals and curators “to consider a pair of juxtaposed terms—one a more conventional curatorial concept and the other with religious or spiritual inflections”. The terms were “entry points into how language and practices of religion and spirituality shape how museums engage in the work of reconciliation and remembrance”.

CARMAH had a strong presence at the two-day event.

Hosted by the Jewish Museum Berlin, the conference kicked off with **two keynote addresses** on the evening of the 9th of May. The first, titled, Yahguudangang – To Pay Respect was delivered by Nika Collison, Executive Director of the Haida Gwaii Museum, and the second by Léontine Meijer-van Mensch Director of the Ethnological Museums in Dresden, chaired by **Sharon Macdonald**. You can watch the video recording [here](#). On the panel moderated by **Sharon Macdonald**, “Conservation and Spiritual Care”, post-doctoral research fellow **Duane Jethro** presented work on the use of indigenous knowledge systems as a foundation for the design and work of the //hapa museum at Freedom Park in Pretoria in South Africa.

Researchers **Tal Adler** and **Anna Szöke** spoke about their project, **Dead Images** (developed in the framework of the Horizon 2020 funded **TRACES** research project), on the panel 'Acquiring and Relinquishing'. They presented their strategies of creatively engaging the question of how to address collections of human remains held at national museums. Thinking through the relationship between Curation and Stories, doctoral candidate **Christine Gerbich** presented a paper that grappled with how one curates relationships in the museum of Islamic Art in Berlin.

It was a hugely stimulating two days of workshop sessions that we thoroughly enjoyed contributing towards.

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**Upcoming CARMAH Presentations, Talks, Workshops....**

- Sharon Macdonald, keynote **Castles in the air... and on the ground: utopian worlding and troubling temporalities in heritage-making**, ASA 2019 Conference, University of East Anglia, Norwich 3-6 September 2019
- Alice von Bieberstein and Jonas Tinius, Panel '**Shadows of the Present: Generative Ambivalences Across Art, Heritage, and Materiality**', ASA 2019 Conference, University of East Anglia, Norwich 3-6 September 2019
- This September, CARMAH will host the first symposium of the **Anthropology & the Arts (ANTART) Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA)**, co-organised by the network convenors Roger Sansi and Jonas Tinius. More information soon on our CARMAH website.
- Nazlı Cabadağ, roundtable **From Turkey to Berlin: Rethinking Queer Ethnography and Writing against, within and, without**, workshop **"Writing Difference, Writing Differently"** by European Network of Queer Anthropology at Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, 9th September - 10th September 2019
- Katarzyna Puzon, Talk 'Manoeuvring through the City of Beirut', **conference of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie**, University of Konstanz, 29 September - 2 October 2019.
- Larissa Förster, book launch of **Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung** (*Museum ethnology. An Introduction*, edited with Iris Eidenheiser), **conference of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie**, University of Konstanz, 29 September - 2 October 2019.

More upcoming and past events on the [website!](#)

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