

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

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

Online Streaming

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 on 5 and 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

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**

**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



Thursday 07/05/2026

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**

Rehearsing plural memory: Curating non-alignment as a living practice

Assoc. Prof. Ana Letunić | University of Zagreb

Unfolded mountains

Javier Estupiñán | Artist and independent researcher

13:00–14:30 **LUNCH BREAK**

18:00–19:30 **Panel discussion**

African cultural heritage as a decolonial practice

Harriet Nana Akua Agyapong | University of Ghana

Melissa Kurkut | Milele Museum

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

Speakers:

zeppelin university

bridging
business culture politics



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

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Cooperation partners:



Africa Centre
for Transregional
Research



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