

# Kolloquium zur Kunst Afrikas

Wintersemester 2015/2016



**14.12.15**

Sarah Van Beurden

## Arts, Crafts and the Colonial Logic of Cultural Guardianship in the Belgian Congo

This lecture considers the role of cultural politics, and in particular the protection of Congolese arts and crafts, in Belgian colonialism in the Congo. I will investigate the development of a new perspective on African art and cultures that replaced older notions of colonialism as the 'civilizing mission' with a logic of 'cultural guardianship.' This shift in perception had consequences for how cultural life in the colony was viewed and organized, which we can trace in the creation and implementation of a plan for a colonial cultural economy, in which

the production, display, and sale of Congolese arts and crafts were envisioned as activities that could, through state-led organization and control, lead to a revitalized 'authentic' and 'traditional' Congolese life. By questioning the construction of categories such as 'traditional' and 'authentic' in tandem with an exploration of the efforts to implement the plan for a cultural economy in practice, this talk lays bare the tensions that existed at the heart of the colonial enterprise and its relationship with 'modernity.'

Moderation

**Prof. Dr. Kerstin Pinther**

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Zentnerstraße 31 | Raum 004

**Montag, 14.12.2015, 18-20 Uhr**

