

A digital
colloquium

Heritage & Justice

Unpacking Legal Narratives in Natural History

Natural history collections come into existence through a myriad of avenues – colonial extraction, war time plundering, and donations from naturalists and game hunters to name just a few. The legal and ethical justifications for each avenue provide unique insight into how “nature” is turned into a collectable natural history object. What bureaucracies and paper trails exist to establish and protect museum collections? How do modern digital technologies perpetuate or transform concepts of heritage, ownership and access? Are taxidermies, fossils or herbarium specimens legally defined as cultural artifacts and what consequences do these definitions have for indigenous sovereignty and restitution? This lecture series brings together international scholars with diverse perspectives across legal, ethical, and professional frameworks. It aims to open up a research field and map the complexities that lie at the intersection of law, ethics, politics, sovereignty, and natural history collections.



Confirmed Speakers (more TBA in 2025)

27.11.2024 - Ulrike Schaper
(Freie Universität Berlin)

Multinormativity and Institutional Plurality. Methodological Reflections on Understanding the Legal Situation in the German Colony of Cameroon, 1884-1916

04.12.2024 - Anna Echterhölter
(Universität Wien)

Pacific Patterns of Justification. „Nature“ and Management of Nature in German Colonial Collections of Indigenous Law (1884-1914)

11.12.2024 - Anne MacKinney
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Owning nature: Transforming Specimens into Property in 19th Century Prussia

18.12.2024 - Dorothy Lippert
(Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington)

Intellectual Property and Repatriation (tbd)

22.01.2025 - Alicja Jagielska-Burduk
(University of Opole, Poland)

Natural Collections and New Technologies

Wednesdays

1-2pm
CET

Language - English

Zoom Link



<https://t.ly/C9sW6>