



Pathways of Art

How Objects Get to the Museum

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- Offers an important and multi-faceted contribution to the current controversial debate around the colonial history of collections of art works from indigenous cultures and the loudly voiced claims for their restitution
- Demonstrates the importance of provenance research for a critical approach in the assessment of the complex biographies of artefacts
- Contributes to a higher awareness of colonial and post-colonial contexts of trading and collecting art created by indigenous people and to establishing new, more informed and just museum narratives

Art works created by indigenous people on other continents in European and American museums have become subject of controversial debate. How exactly these collections of tribal art from Africa, North and South America, Asia, and Oceania in rich countries have been amassed over centuries, and how such works continue to be sourced and traded today, is under close scrutiny and claims for their restitution to the places and people of their origin are voiced loudly.

Zurich's Museum Rietberg, one of Europe's most renowned museums of non-European art, has undertaken an extensive research project to explore the history of its own collection. The essays by expert authors in this illustrated publication investigate the pathways along which objects travelled from their origins to the museum. They shed light at the shifts in meaning of these artefacts that have occurred in the course of the transfers. And they demonstrate the importance of provenance research for learning comprehensively about and taking a critical approach in the assessment of the complex biographies of artefacts.

Pathways of Art offers an important contribution to the current debate about the status and impact of non-European art in the global North. It aims to foster awareness of colonial and post-colonial contexts of trading and collecting such art works and to help establishing new, more informed and just, and less Eurocentric, museum narratives.

Esther Tisa Francini, born 1972, is a historian and head of archives and provenance research at Zurich's Museum Rietberg. **Sarah Csernay**, born 1984, studied art history and literary studies at the Universities of Zurich and Bern. She works as a research assistant in provenance research at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich.