

**From anatomic collections to objects of worship:
conservation and exhibition of human remains in museums**

International Symposium

February 22 and 23, 2008

Théâtre Claude Lévi-Strauss

The treatment of human remains in museums has been a controversial issue over the past twenty years. This ongoing debate attests the necessity of a public discussion on a number of questions. To what extent are objects involving human remains persons or subjects? What is their ownership system? How to arbitrate between the contradictory interests linked to these objects? How to negotiate shared relationships of these problematic items? Under what conditions is it possible to conserve and show these items in acceptable ways?

These questions will be raised in the symposium organised by the musée du quai Branly. During two days museum directors, representatives of countries or populations claiming an interest in the collections involved, politicians, members of international organisations and governments, jurists, philosophers and scientists (ethnologists, historians, archaeologists, biological anthropologists, etc...) will be convened to discuss the issues involved in the debate over human remains in museums.

This international scientific conference, open to the public, will be held on 22-23 February 2008, at the musée du quai Branly, in the Claude Lévi-Strauss theatre. Four successive round-tables will be organised, gathering from 6 to 8 participants around a chairperson. Each session will last about three hours.

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Friday 22 February 2008

- **1st session : 9:30 – 12:30**

Opening by Stéphane Martin, President of the musée du quai Branly

Round table n°1

Repatriating human remains: why, for whom, under what conditions?

This first session will aim at fostering a better understanding of the origins of the requests for repatriation, of the arguments underlying them and of different repatriation policies.

Participants invited:

William Billeck	Program Manager and Case Officer for the Plains, Repatriation Office, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History
Michael F. Brown	Lambert Prof. of Anthropology, Williams College, USA
Steven Engelsman	Director, Museum Volkenkunde of Leiden
Jonathan Friedman	Anthropologist, Research director, EHESS
Eva Gesang-Karlstrom	Director general, Statens Museer för Världskultur of Göteborg
Maori representative	
Aboriginal representative	

Chairperson: Dr. Amareswar Galla, professor of Museum Studies, University of Queensland, Australia

- **2^{nde} session: 14:30 – 17:00**

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Round table n°2

Do human remains belong in today's museums?

This second round-table will aim at fostering a better understanding of the circumstances under which these objects found their way into museums. The discussion will also explore the issue of the history embedded in these artefacts, ways of exhibiting a shared past, and the cultural and scientific value of human remains and of objects made of or including human remains.

Participants invited:

Marcellin Abong	Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Gilles Boëtsch	Anthropologist, CNRS
Abdulaye Camara	Director of Dakar museum
Yves Coppens	Prehistorian, Collège de France
Maurice Godelier	Anthropologist, Research director, EHESS
Viola König	Director of du Musée Ethnographique-Dahlem Berlin
Neil Mc Gregor	Director of the British Museum
Gérard Noiriel	Historian, Research director, EHESS

Chairperson: Claudius Müller, Director, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, München

Saturday 23 February 2008

- **3rd session: 10:00 – 12:30**

Round table n°3

The status of human remains from a legal, ethical and philosophical point of view

The discussion will examine French and international law relative to the treatment and property of human remains, the possible interpretations of the French bio-ethics bill of 1994, the ethical and philosophical questions raised by the extension of the notion of person to human remains.

Participants invited:

Kwame Anthony Appiah	Philosopher, Princeton University
Renaud Denoix de Saint Marc	Member of the French Conseil Constitutionnel
Jérôme Fromageau	Law lecturer, Faculty of Law Paris XI
Marie-Angèle Hermitte	Research director, EHESS
Norman Palmer	Professor of Commercial Law at University College London
Juliana Rangel	Jurist, Senior Officer at the International Court of The Hague

Chairperson: Monique Canto-Sperber, philosopher, Director of the Ecole National Supérieure

- **4th session: 14:30 – 17:30**

Round table n°4

How to reach an understanding. Institutional mediations and negotiations

The discussion will examine the solutions proposed by international organisations, state-run institutions, parliamentary commissions, diplomats and NGOs aiming at developing tools for an equitable management of human remains.

Participants invited:

Seddon Bennington	Director of Te Papa Museum, New-Zealand
Marie Cornu	Jurist, Research director, CNRS
Alissandra Cummins	President of ICOM
Yves Le Fur	Associate director in charge of permanent collections, musée du quai Branly
Luis Lumbreras	Archeologist, Director of Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Lima, Peru
Marc André Renold	Lawyer and Law lecturer at Geneva University
Jacques Rigaud	State counsellor
Samuel Sidibé	Director of National Museum of Bamako, Mali
Ian Tattersall	Director of the Natural History Museum of New York
Michel Van Praët	Gallery director, National museum of Natural History, Paris

Chairperson: to be determined