



Chéri Samba, Réorganisation, 2002. Oil on canvas. Musée Royal de L'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium.

Seminar on African Art: Curating Cultures: Poetics and Practice of African and African Diaspora Exhibition Display

ARHS 6307
Fall 2021

Thursday 2:00 – 4:50 pm

This class will explore ways that audiences and curators co-create the poetics and practices of exhibition display. With a particular emphasis on the arts of Africa and Afro-Atlantic, we will discuss, interpret, and research cultural objects and the histories of colonialism, cultural exchange, and ethnographic research that underpin the ways that curators conduct their work. As we examine material and intangible heritage in exhibitions, public displays, performances, cultural heritage sites, world fairs, and on websites, we will also ask questions including: What messages do these exhibitions and displays communicate and what stories do they tell? How can we account for those histories while exploring new avenues for displaying and portraying the histories of diverse cultures in specific spaces? We will discuss ways that museums “place” the sacred and precious objects of others and consider how exhibition design determines the improvisational possibilities for placing our bodies in relation to these objects. We will consider the importance of text and visibility in curating and learn ways that exhibitions “perform” even as they evoke the previous lives of objects in relation to the experiences of the viewing public.

Dr. Elyan Hill