



# WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

19.01.2023 (Thursday!), 17:00 Uhr, SR-D  
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

## Jonathan Fine (Weltmuseum Wien)

What are ethnographic museums good for in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?



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**Jonathan Fine** is director of the Weltmuseum Wien. Before coming to Vienna in 2021, he served as head of collections and curator for the collections from West Africa, Cameroon, Gabon, and Namibia at the Ethnologisches

Museum Berlin. Jonathan's scholarly and curatorial work has focused on colonialism and museum collections, with an emphasis on works of art and cultural objects from West and Central Africa. He is one of the authors of the German Museums Association guidelines for collections from colonial contexts and is chair of the Advisory Committee for Guidelines for Collections in Austrian Federal Museums from Colonial Contexts. Jonathan holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

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### kommende Termine

25.01.2023 **Jaanika Vider**  
On the tracks of Maria Czaplicka: An Ethnography of a Collection

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Ethnographic museums have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. What began as a critique by scholars and activists with the opening of the Musée du quai Branly, the scrutiny has grown to a thunder with the inauguration the Humboldt Forum, which was deeply entangled with Germany's attempt to reimagine its relationship to the world and to its past apparently seemingly without confronting colonialism and Prussian militarism.

The sharpest critics of ethnographic museums – and their collections – have drawn attention to these institutions' origins in the ambitions of Europe's colonial powers, the troubling links of iconic objects in their collections to colonial plunder and violence, and to their roles as purveyors and amplifiers of racist ideas and ideologies. The call for decolonizing ethnographic museums and their collections has become, rightly, deafening.

What then are ethnographic museums good for in an era in which we reject racism, in which we decry collecting through violence and other unethical means? This lecture suggests that there is tremendous potential in ethnographic collections and in the institutions that house them.

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