

https://dspace.org/

The South African Arts Scene and European Cultural Institutions - A Troubled Relationship?

Heide, Josephine Elisabeth

2023-02
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/39959
Heide, Josephine Elisabeth. (2023). The South African Arts Scene and European Cultural Institutions - A Troubled Relationship? [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/39959

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

MA research by Josephine Elisabeth Heide

Title:

The South African Arts Scene and European Cultural Institutions - A Troubled Relationship?

Framed within the conceptual idea of decoloniality, this research critically investigates the power dynamic between South African artists and European cultural institutions that operate in South Africa. The study examines colonial legacies of exploitative practices, knowledge imposition and neo-colonisation disguised as charity and development aid in the Arts. It highlights the disproportionate dependence on European institutions due to a lack of sufficient sources of funding and support available to artists in South Africa. The study further establishes the legitimate place of European cultural institutions in the cultural landscape and their significant role according to the perspectives of the interview partners who shared their experiences as art practitioners and cultural policy experts.

A qualitative research process comprising six semi-structured narrative interviews with South African artists was conducted. The collected data are explored using experienced-centred Narrative Analysis, focusing on the identification of colonial legacies that surface from the narratives. The research uses decolonial theory as a theoretical lens into the investigated power dynamics in the field of cultural cooperation between European institutions and South African partners. Decoloniality helps to unpack and dismantle the underlying complexities. The analysis elicits the perspectives and experiences of art practitioners which indicate perpetuated colonial relations on different levels. The study concludes with a set of recommendations for practitioners on how a more decolonised practice in the field of transcultural collaboration between South African artists and European cultural institutions can be achieved.

Key words:

Decoloniality, coloniality, colonia legacy, European cultural institutions, artists, art practitioners, South Africa, transcultural collaboration, cultural cooperation