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Middernacht, Sari Martine

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Research Report

Masters in Heritage Studies

Sari Middernacht
1304977

Title: From collective curating to sharing curatorial authority: Collaborative practices as strategies of democratisation in exhibition making in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Abstract:

Many museums in Africa, such as the National Museum of Lubumbashi, are complex spaces with layers of burdened histories of colonisation and post-independence nation building, of contested objects and displays. This research traces two community-based art and heritage projects conducted in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and explores how a sharing of curatorial authority can function as a strategy that democratises museum practice. The study will explore how mediation between public, researchers, curators and community participants engage a strategy of 'collective curating', which forms part of collective practices. At the intersection of art history and heritage studies, this study extends considerations of the notion of collective curating into issues of authority, using Michael Frisch's concept of 'shared authority' and the practical application on exhibition making, exploring what can be called 'shared curatorial authority'. Collective curating and the sharing of curatorial authority will operate as a concept that explores the way in which diverse collaborative approaches worked for the two case studies in Lubumbashi, D.R.C, and explores how those projects start to speak about the role of museums in Africa as social agents, and as places of active participation of the communities they serve.

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Supervisor: Nontobeko Ntombela