

A digital
colloquium

Heritage & Justice

Unpacking Legal Narratives in Natural History

Natural history collections come into existence through a myriad of avenues – colonial extraction, war time plundering, and donations from naturalists and game hunters to name just a few. The legal and ethical justifications for each avenue provide unique insight into how “nature” is turned into a collectable natural history object. What bureaucracies and paper trails exist to establish and protect museum collections? How do modern digital technologies perpetuate or transform concepts of heritage, ownership and access? Are taxidermies, fossils or herbarium specimens legally defined as cultural artifacts and what consequences do these definitions have for indigenous sovereignty and restitution? This lecture series brings together international scholars with diverse perspectives across legal, ethical, and professional frameworks. It aims to open up a research field and map the complexities that lie at the intersection of law, ethics, politics, sovereignty, and natural history collections.



2025 Speakers

22.01 – Alicja Jagielska-Burduk
(University of Opole, Poland)
Natural Collections and New Technologies

29.01 ***5pm CET***
Nazune Menka
(University of Seattle School of Law)
Mitigating Colonialism: Indigenous Peoples, Legal Pluralism, & Restitution

12.02 – Linda Poppe
(Survival International)
Nature Conservation: Protecting the Idea of “Terra Nullius”

19.02 Naazima Kamardeen
(University of Colombo)
Biopiracy of Traditional Knowledge: From Colonial Roots to Modern Implications

26.02 – Anna Möllers
(Universität Erfurt)
The Construction of Land as Property in Colonial Discourse of the 18th and 19th Century

12.03 – Paul Philipp Stewens
(Maastricht University)
Distinction Without Difference? Natural vs. Cultural Heritage in the Spotlight of Restitution Claims

19.03 – Taissa Rodrigues Marques da Silva
(Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo)

Repatriating Fossils: Some Case Studies from Brazil

Wednesdays

1-2pm
CET

Language - English

Zoom Link



<https://zoom.us/j/98618562756>