

VISUAL STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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FALL 2021 EVENTS

Images Out of Time Seminar



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

12:30-2pm PST
Zoom

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:
Palimpsest of the Africa Museum

MATTHIAS DE GROOF

Filmmaker and Director

FIORI BERHANE

Provost Post-Doctoral Scholar for Faculty Diversity

MEGAN LUKE

Associate Professor, Art History, USC

DEBORA SILVERMAN

Distinguished Professor & University of California Presidential Chair
in Modern European History, Art and Culture, UCLA

STEPHANIE SPRAY

Associate Professor, Anthropology and Cinematic Arts, USC

Join us for a discussion of the 2019 documentary film, *Palimpsest of the African Museum*, with the filmmaker Matthias De Groof and a panel of distinguished scholars. The film documents the renovation of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Brussels and the discussions of the process of decolonisation that occurred between Afro-descendent advisors guiding the process and museum staff. A link to view the film will be made available on RSVP, and attendees are strongly encouraged to view the film prior to the discussion.

The Images Out of Time seminar considers how images travel through time, dropping in and out of linear histories and reshaping perception, institutions, and social practices along the way. We will study images and objects that are at odds with the moment of their appearance, whether they outlived their initial function or lost contact with their original cultural contexts. Monuments to unjust pasts; icons manifesting fallen gods; ancient ruins in modern structures; replicas and forgeries; old images restored by new technologies: these images force a paradox into view. While they endure within continuous histories, they also remain stubborn signs of vanished worlds, out of step with the present. Images in the wrong place at the wrong time have justified the civilizing mission of empire and acts of iconoclasm. They continue to structure debates about repatriating artifacts, dismantling monuments and museums, and preserving cultural heritage destroyed by war or exploitation. When "images out of time" suddenly upset our faith in the march of history, they challenge our ability to measure our distance from the past, to understand ourselves, and to imagine collective futures.

Events include speakers, reading groups and writing workshops that intersect art history, religious studies, history, anthropology, literature, and film, and cuts across divisions separating premodern and modern, as well as European, Atlantic, and Pacific spheres.

Open to all interested participants.

Film Still, Palimpsest of the Africa

Museum, Courtesy of Cobra Films and Matthias de Groof.

RSVP

to

vsri@usc.edu for
more information
or to be added to
our Slack channel.

