The seminar will introduce students to the foreign valuation of African artifacts as ethnographic objects and “primitive” or “tribal art.” We will travel to museums, collections, galleries and fairs, looking at the politics of collecting and exhibiting from the 19th century to the present. In contemporary Africa, we will examine art through two angles, first through the production of tourist art, and second through the work of contemporary African artists (“fine art”) and popular painting for middle-class consumption.

For the first 8 weeks, students will do book length readings and start researching for their final paper. The remaining weeks will be devoted to researching and writing. Students will write a draft of their research essay and give an oral presentation on it in class on week 15.

Requirements

Participation in class discussions: 20%
Paper 1 on Live Exhibits (6 page), due 02/16 in class: 10%
Report on African Section in Chazen (6 page) due on 03/08, instructor’s mailbox: 10%
Paper 2 on Tourist and Fine Art (6 page) due in class 03/15: 10%
Final Essay (15-20 page): 50%

Readings

We will read several articles and/or book length studies every week, so be prepared for intensive reading. I collected essays in a reading packet available for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center, room 1651. Articles not included in packet will be handed out in class ahead of time. The following books are required. They are available at the University Book Store, and on reserve at the College Library.


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**Weekly Sessions**

1. **Thursday January 26— Introduction**

   available on: <www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1997/apr/24/the-arts-of-africa/?pagination=false>
   James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones,” in *Routes*, 1997, 188-219

2. **Thursday February 2 -- The Politics of Collecting, and Creating the Primitive**


3. **Thursday February 9 -- British Museums and Imperialism**


4. **Thursday February 16 -- Freak Shows: Ota Benga, Pygmy in the Bronx Zoo (c. 1883-1916)**

   ***Five-Page Paper on Live Exhibits due in class***


   On Ota Benga:
   Parezo Nancy and Don Fowler, “Anthropology Villages,” in *Anthropology Goes to the Fair*, 2007, 194-233
5. Thursday February 23 -- Exhibiting African Art in the US


6. Thursday March 1st -- Tourist Art in Africa

Christopher Steiner, *African Art in Transit*, all book

7. Thursday March 8 – Visit to the Chazen. No class meeting

Plan a visit to the Chazen Museum, African Section. Use Bickford Berzock and Clarke, *Representing Africa Art in American Museums* for guidance and comparison. You can also plan a meeting with a curator. Write a critical appraisal of the Chazen exhibit on Africa.

***Five Page Report on Africa Section in Chazen Museum due on 03/08 before 5:00 pm (instructor’s mailbox)***

8. Thursday March 15 -- Contemporary African Artists

***Five Page Paper on Tourist Art and "Fine Art" in Contemporary Africa due in class***

Elsbeth Court, “Africa on Display,” in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, edited by Emma Barker, 1999, 147-173]

9. Thursday March 21 -- Working on Research Project

*** Summary of Research Project and Bibliography due ***
10. Thursday March 28 -- Research Workshop

   Students meet individually with Prof. Bernault to discuss their research project.

11-14. Working on Research Paper

   ***Put a completed draft of your essay in instructor’s mailbox on ***

15. Thursday April 26—Students’ Oral Presentations on Research

16. Thursday May 3rd – Finalizing your Research Essay

   ***FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY DUE ***
Other Readings

[Note that African Art books are located in the Art Library, call numbers N 7380 to N 7399]


